

What Mentor Teachers Need to Know

The relationship between the beginning teacher (BT) and the mentor teacher (MT) is key to the success of the mentor program. How will you ensure that your BT's first impression of you will be a great one?

Remember: Mentoring is all about helping beginning teachers do a good job. This can be accomplished by:

- Using the language of professional empowerment,
- Asking hard questions about what's going on in the classroom, and seeking answers together,
- Modeling and coaching the pedagogical practices that lead to student success,
- Focusing conversations on learning and student achievement, and
- Demanding high standards of ourselves, our colleagues, and our students.

Strategies that help beginning teachers:

- Provide your BT with a notebook that he/she can record questions, concerns, etc. between visits
- Review curriculum benchmarks and show BT's a pacing guide for the year
- Demonstrate a lesson plan
- Provide a one-day lesson plan
- Share websites and resources to find lesson plans
- Attend a workshop together
- Develop a lesson plan together
- Co-observe another teacher and discuss afterward
- Role play a parent conference
- Accompany the BT during the evaluation conference with the administrator
- Explain school procedures (see What New Teachers Need to Know) and assist the BT in completing school forms
- Provide materials for a curriculum unit and assist the BT in developing a professional growth plan
- Develop a thematic unit together
- Provide suggestions for dealing with unruly student behavior
- Help select portfolio artifacts that demonstrate the teacher's growth
- Engage the BT in a reflective conversation about an issue or concern
- Ask the BT how a new strategy might impact student learning
- Identify the BT's strong points
- Examine examples of student work together
- Listen as the BT discusses his/her assessment of examples of student work
- Encourage the BT to try a new strategy if he/she has been unsuccessful
- Ask questions that clarify and deepen the BT's thinking around his/her self-assessment
- Encourage the BT to share a successful lesson at a grade-level meeting
- Practice the Mentor's Golden Rule: Do unto your BT as you would have it done unto you!