

TEACHER EDUCATION AND MENTORING (TEAM) PROGRAM
Support Plan for Beginning Teachers and Mentors

District: Vernon Public Schools

The Mission of the TEAM Program: *To promote excellence, equity, and higher achievement for Connecticut students by engaging teachers in purposeful exploration of practice through guided support and personal reflection.*

I. List your district's three-year objectives and supporting activities related to the state's mission statement for the Teacher Education And Mentoring (TEAM) Program. (Consider: alignment to district/school initiatives related to teaching and learning; teacher retention, professional development, etc.)

Goal 1: Establish and maintain a collaborative culture and mechanisms that nurture and support the professional growth and retention of beginning teachers.

- Teacher Induction Series
- Grade level (elementary level) or Department meetings (secondary level)
- Data Team meetings

Goal 2: Build capacity of educators to serve in the role of mentor teacher

- Provide opportunity for update training for existing mentors
- Recruit new mentors; Provide opportunity for three-day initial support teacher training

Goal 3: Provide high quality professional development in the “practices of improving schools” aimed at maximizing achievement for all students and minimizing achievement disparities for subgroups of students (Data Driven Decision Making, Data Teams, Priority Standards, Unwrapped Priority Standards, Common Formative Assessments, Effective Teaching Strategies, Positive School Climate, Scientific Research-Based Interventions, Leadership).



II. Describe the criteria and process that you will use for

- **identifying TEAM Coordinating Committee (TCC) members;**
- **establishing the term length for members (3 years recommended); and**
- establishing a timeline for the TCC to meet or communicate with the superintendent or central office regarding TCC activities. (*Consider: roles and responsibilities of the TCC*)

- A. IDENTIFYING TCC MEMBERS** – the committee will consist of the following members: a DF (assistant superintendent), a building administrator, a teachers’ union representative, and a trained mentor. TCC members will be recruited from the district’s Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development Committee and approved by the DF.
- B. TCC MEMBERSHIP LENGTH** – all TEAM Coordinating Committee Members will serve for a minimum 3-year term, with the exception of the DF, which will be dictated by the position. To provide stability and continuity, no more than two members of the TCC will be replaced in any given year.
- C. TCC COMMUNICATION** – The DF will meet with the Superintendent no later than October 1 of each year to review the TCC membership and to discuss the current number of Beginning Teachers expected to complete each module. The DF will meet with the Superintendent no later than February 1 of each year to provide an update of TEAM activities, including the process of Beginning Teachers completing modules.

TIMELINE FOR MODULE COMPLETION – The purpose of the suggested timelines are to assist Beginning Teachers (BTs) and mentors in planning professional growth activities for the year (see exceptions below*).

MODULE 1: *Classroom Environment, Student Engagement and Commitment to Learning*

- By the third Thursday in December; completed in Year 1 of TEAM

MODULE 2: *Planning for Active Learning*

- By the third Thursday in May; completed in Year 1 of TEAM

MODULE 3: *Instruction for Active Learning*

- By the first Thursday in December; completed in Year 2 of TEAM

MODULE 4: *Assessment for Learning*

- By the third Thursday in February; completed in Year 2 of TEAM

MODULE 5: *Professional Responsibilities and Teacher Leadership*

- By the third Thursday in May; completed in Year 2 of TEAM

* All Year 3 BTs, teachers hired mid-year, teachers on approved leaves of absence, or other approved circumstances will work with the DF to establish a revised schedule of module completion.

III. Describe the criteria and process that you will use to:

- **select mentors;**
- **ensure that they have received appropriate state training (initial training and update training every three years); and**
- **assign mentors to beginning teachers based on subject areas; grade levels and need.**

Describe any additional professional development opportunities provided by the district to mentors to address further development of best practice and essential content knowledge.

A. MENTOR SELECTION CRITERIA – Teachers will be invited/encouraged annually to participate in the mentor program based upon years of experience, grade level and specialty, current training, and recommendation from the building principal. Specifically, applicants must meet the following qualifications to be considered:

- Possesses a professional or a provisional educator certificate and has a minimum of three years of successful teaching experience;
- Has been employed by the Vernon Board of Education for at least one school year; and
- Demonstrates effective teaching practice as defined by Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching.

Applicants will be reviewed by the TCC and successful applicants will be notified by the DF.

B. STATE MENTOR TRAINING

NEW MENTORS – teachers selected to serve in the role of mentor/cooperating teacher will be eligible to attend a 3-day initial support training sponsored by the state or participating universities.

CURRENT MENTORS – at least once annually, the DF will review the current list of active mentors to ensure that they have attended TEAM update training within the past three years. The DF will notify building administrators and current mentors of their training status.

C. ASSIGNMENT OF MENTORS TO BEGINNING TEACHERS – The DF will work with the building principals to assign mentors to beginning teachers. Assignments will be as closely matched to grade level and teaching assignment as possible.

IV. Describe the process you will use to develop capacity for and review of Module Reflection Papers:

Note: Regardless of whether a district elects to review reflection papers in-district or participate in a regional review process, reviewers must be recruited (number of reviewers will depend on the number of reflection papers that will need to be reviewed), attend a one-day training prior to reviewing papers, and participate in update trainings in subsequent years. Sections A and B should be completed by all districts.

A. Identify the review option selected by the Superintendent:

in-district review regional review

B. Identify the criteria and process for selecting individuals to review the reflection papers:

The full TCC will serve as the review committee. Each reflection paper will be reviewed by two members of the TCC and adjudicated by a third member of the TCC, if the need arises. TCC members who are currently mentoring beginning teachers may not review their mentees reflection papers.

C. Identify a process for in-district review:

- *Assigning Papers for Review* – The DF will assign the TCC members the BTs reflection papers within five school days of the established deadline. Consideration will be made to assign reflection papers with similar grade levels and teaching assignments as possible. Reflection papers will be equally distributed among viewers.
- *Establishing and Monitoring Timelines* – The TCC will review their assigned reflection papers within 20 school days of the assignment by the DF. The TCC will subsequently meet as a committee to review the results of the reflection papers. The DF will communicate results to the BT with a copy to the building administrators.
- *Assuring Confidentiality* – At least once annually, members of the TCC will attend a TEAM Update training focused on the review of reflection papers based on the standards for successful completion. Included in annual update training will be a review of procedures to assure confidentiality as stated in Connecticut's Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers (Sec. 10-145d-400a of the State Certification Regulations).

- V. **Describe the procedure that you will use for dissolving mentor placements, if not working, and for the removal for good cause of teachers from the eligible pool of mentors and/or cooperating teachers, if necessary.**

DISSOLVING MENTOR PLACEMENTS:

- Concerns about an individual mentor, cooperating teacher and/or mentor and beginning teacher matches should be placed in writing to the DF.
- The DF will contact the building administrator(s) or university supervisor to assist in the mediation and possible resolution of concern.
- If resolution cannot be reached, the DF will work with the building administrator to determine additional strategies for possible resolution or consideration of dissolution. Reasons for dissolution may include:
 - i. Practicability – assignment out of building/subject area
 - ii. Illness – health or prescriptive measures for curing health problems create a hardship
 - iii. Personal – family considerations
- The District Facilitator will notify parties concerning the decision to dissolve placement or not.
- If placement is dissolved, the DF works with the building administrator to assign another mentor. The DF will determine if mentor qualifies for partial/entire mentor stipend.

REMOVAL FOR GOOD CAUSE OF TEACHERS FROM CURRENT MENTOR POOL:

- The TCC will decide upon the matter of “good cause” based upon the following standards of performance for mentors:
 - i. Guiding mentees through the successful completion of module process
 - ii. Attendance at required district/building meetings; update trainings; PD workshops
 - iii. Electronic mentor logs between the mentor and the mentee (as monitored by the DF) will serve to validate that required meetings have taken place during the course of each 6 –10 week module; summaries of meetings are focused on each respective module.
 - iv. Demonstrating professional conduct reflecting support of the district's goals.

VI. Describe the process that you will use to:

- ensure that mentors and beginning teachers are working together to complete the beginning teachers' Professional Growth Action Plans (PGAP) and are participating in the module process.
- collect beginning teachers' two-year support plans; and

A. Mentors and mentees will collaborate to:

- Identify a need/opportunity for professional growth by
 - Exploring the CCT and the CCT Performance Profile
 - Using the CCT Performance Profile to guide data collection and personal analysis of current practice
 - Identifying challenges/opportunities for support for professional growth within the CCT domain
 - Creating a goal
- Develop a two-year Professional Growth Action Plan (PGAP) by
 - Planning for professional growth that is meaningful and achievable
 - Identifying resources and activities to support new learning
 - Determining data collection processes to document the development and application of new learning and meeting with building administrator to review plan
 - Meeting with building administrator to review the plan
- Implement a PGAP to develop and define new learning by
 - Participating in and documenting support and learning activities
 - Trying out new learning in classroom and gathering data on impact
 - Analyzing data on an ongoing basis to determine if plan is working, if goal is being reached, and if plan and/or goal need to be modified
- Reflect on and document new learning and impact on students by
 - Creating and submitting a short reflection paper (3-4 pages)
 - Summarizes the modules goals and activities
 - Documents and reflects on the teacher's new learning and the impact it had on student performance
 - Describes potential next steps to extend new learning

Electronic mentor logs between the mentor and the mentee will serve to validate that required meetings have taken place during the course of each 6 –10 week module; summaries of meetings are focused on each respective module.

B. By October 1, or within 30 days for new hires, the BT will submit to the building administrator an electronic of the PGAP. The building administrator will forward the PGAP to the DF.

- The DF will meet with the Superintendent no later than October 1 and February 1 of each school year to provide an update of TEAM activities.

VII. Describe the process that the district will use to resolve appeals and to process the request for special accommodations.

A. APPEAL RESOLUTION PROCESS

The TCC will follow the procedure established for in-district review of reflection papers (sec. IV). If a BT has a dispute about the outcome of the reflection paper, the BT may request, in writing, a review by the full TCC. Requests will be submitted to the DF within five school days of notification of non-completion standard.

B. SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION REQUEST

Requests for special accommodations will be submitted to the DF in writing and will be reviewed by the TCC on a case-by-case basis. Such request must include the type of accommodation(s) requested and a description of why the(se) accommodation(s) are necessary. Teachers making such requests will be notified of the results of the review within 10 school days.

VIII. Describe the resources needed and the budget required to carry out the activities described in the plan to support beginning teachers and mentor activities as outlined here and in the beginning teachers' Professional Growth Action Plans. Provide actual amounts budgeted toward these activities. (Consider: time and opportunities for beginning teachers and mentors to meet, for individuals to serve on the TCC and/or review committees, and substitute coverage needs.)

Resources and budget will be reviewed annually by the DF, based upon expected number of teachers who will be completing PGAPs and the modules these teachers are expected to complete during the following year. Considerations will include:

- Annual stipends for mentors according to established contract agreement
- Substitute coverage for mentors/mentees to observe each other and/or other colleagues as related to specific professional growth activities outlined in the PGAPs as needed
- District-sponsored PD for mentors and BTs after school (Teacher Induction Series)
- Registration for professional development workshops as related to BTs' modules/PGAPS
- Compensation for TCC members for reviewing reflection papers and other TCC responsibilities
- Release time provided (during school hours) for TCC business
- Teachers and mentors will participate in district PD opportunities. Online resources include webinars, videos, journals made available on www.ctteam.org

IX. Complete the Annual Activity Report (due to the superintendent at the end of the school year): Evaluation of the implementation of the three-year plan annually to inform changes as necessary for the following year. (Consider: documentation of support provided to beginning teachers, feedback from program participants).

The DF will complete TEAM Mentor/Beginning Teacher Annual Activity Report Form and submit the report to the Superintendent by June 30 of each year. The report will recognize successes and identify changes that may be needed in the Three-Year District Support Plan for Beginning Teachers and Mentors.

Recognizing the 2010-11 school year as the first year's implementation of Vernon's Three-Year District Support Plan for Beginning Teachers and Mentors, changes will be addressed by the TCC on an as-needed basis.