

ESSEX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Growing Great Teachers

Mentoring Handbook

2020-2021

Congratulations! You have chosen one of the most noble and rewarding careers. Welcome to the teaching profession and to Essex County Public Schools! While your first year of teaching will be a very exciting one, it will also be a year of unexpected challenges and unanticipated frustrations. Throughout the year, it will be extremely important to frequently seek the guidance and wisdom of your mentor to assist you with any questions, concerns, and anxieties. Your mentor will be a tremendous source of support, encouragement, and understanding to guide and help you experience success in the classroom.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Growing Great Teachers mentoring program is to help beginning teachers improve their teaching skills and practices, learn professional responsibilities, and ultimately improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

Objectives:

The objectives of Growing Great Teachers are:

- Retain quality teachers who are dedicated to providing high-quality instruction
- Enhance beginning teachers' skills and performance
- Improve the quality of curriculum and instruction
- Promote and support teacher morale, communications, and collegiality to prevent teacher isolation
- Promote effective, ongoing communication, support, encouragement, and guidance
- Build a sense of professionalism and positive attitude
- Put theory into practice
- Facilitate a seamless transition into the first year of teaching
- Build self-reflection to enhance professional skills

Administrators:

School administrator responsibilities include:

- Creating a supportive school climate;
- Providing adequate time and opportunities for beginning teacher and their mentor teachers to work together on a regular, ongoing basis;
- Encouraging and monitoring participation in the program;
- Collaborating with other school administrators to implement the mentor program;
- Supervising and evaluating the professional relationship developed by mentors and teachers.

Mentors:

A mentor is a highly-skilled, experienced teacher who is dedicated to promoting excellence in the teaching profession and is a trusted professional willing to take a personal and direct interest in the development of a colleague. A mentor is one who provides ongoing support that will encourage a beginning teacher to further their professional commitment to the teaching profession at a high level of performance and bring them great personal pride.

A mentor is committed to maintaining confidentiality. *Communication between mentors and mentees must remain confidential and shall not be used for evaluation purposes. The mentor's role is to move the new educator's practice forward while building a trusting relationship.*

Mentor Selection Criteria:

- Recommendation of the school principal;
- Skilled in the delivery of instruction and knowledgeable about content;
- Willingness to provide ongoing support and training throughout the program;
- Completion of the mentor training;
- Recognition as an outstanding teacher who maintains positive peer relations;
- Three years of successful teaching experience;
- Ability to discuss assessment information and share instructional ideas and materials with beginning teachers;
- Possess effective interpersonal and collaborative skills;
- Commit to their own professional growth and learning.

Mentor Qualifications:

Mentors must possess the following qualifications:

- Hold continuing contract status in Essex County Public Schools or show competence and have a successful history in the classroom
- Be knowledgeable of the Virginia Standards of Learning and district curricula, policies, and procedures;
- Understand and be able to model effective instructional techniques and classroom management skills;
- Exhibit effective communication skills, integrity, and confidentiality.

A mentor must be a confidant who listens and guides, is respected and trusted by colleagues, is sensitive to the needs of others, is a team player, is available for help and support, is patient, is a leader, is a cheerleader and a coach.

List of Pairing Factors:

The following factors are helpful in determining a good match of mentors with new staff:

- Teaching experience (when & where)
- Grade level
- Content area
- Availability of common planning time
- Physical proximity of classrooms
- Teaching style and philosophy
- Common interests

Mentoring and Teacher Licensure:

The Virginia Department of Education (through the Licensure Regulations for School Personnel Manual and the Virginia Licensure Renewal Manual) provides for the following with regard to serving as a mentor:

"Mentor" means a classroom teacher hired by the local school division who has achieved continuing contract status or other instructional personnel including retired teachers who meet local mentor selection criteria. The mentor should work in the same building as the beginning teacher or be instructional personnel who is assigned solely as a mentor. A mentor should be assigned a limited number of teachers at any time. Instructional personnel who are not assigned solely as mentors should not be assigned to more than four teachers at any time. Mentors guide teachers in the program through demonstrations, observations, and consultations.

8VAC20-22-60. Designations on licenses for career paths to teaching:

A. Designations on licenses will reflect stages in the professional development of teachers and promote continuing growth and career paths as educators. Criteria and implementation of procedures will be set forth by the Virginia Department of Education.

B. Teaching licenses may be issued with one of the following designations and the designation will be processed as an add-on endorsement. These designations will not apply to the Division Superintendent License, School Manager License, International License, or the Pupil Personnel Services License.

Mentor Teacher: This voluntary teacher designation will be issued on a renewable teaching license for individuals who have achieved the career teacher designation, received a recommendation for the designation from an employing Virginia school division superintendent or designee or accredited nonpublic school head, served at least three years as a mentor teacher in Virginia, documented responsibilities as a mentor, and completed a local or state mentor teacher training program in accordance with the Board of Education requirements for mentor teachers.

Option 6. Mentorship/Supervision (for licensure renewal)

Mentorship/Supervision is a process by which an experienced professional provides assistance to one or more persons for the purpose of improving performance. Assistance may involve role modeling, direct instruction, demonstration, observation with feedback, development of plans, and informal contact. This option includes the supervision of field experiences of a pre-service student teacher or an intern in an approved teacher/principal preparation program. The option also may include mentor programs designed as part of the induction process for the beginning teacher or first-year administrator.

- A. Maximum number of points: 90
- B. Point value assignment: one point per clock hour
- C. Criteria: Must be in conjunction with an approved educator/principal preparation program, undergraduate/graduate degree program, or a clinical faculty/mentor program sponsored by the employing educational agency.
- D. Verification: Employing educational agency assignment list must be in conjunction with an approved educator/principal preparation program, undergraduate/graduate degree program, or a clinical faculty/mentor program sponsored by the employing educational agency.

Example: Mentoring a beginning teacher/beginning administrator during the first year of teaching/administration.

Elements of the training may include:

- Role of a mentor
- Analysis of teaching strategies
- Observation skills
- Strategies for conferencing and feedback
- Diagnosing and analyzing classroom management issues
- Problem solving skills
- Reflective practice
- Using student work to evaluate and inform practice
- Classroom management

Core Mentoring Activities:

The mentoring relationship is shaped by the activities that a mentor and beginning teacher participate in together. These activities should help the beginning teacher improve upon practice and develop an understanding of the professional standards of teachers. The activities may include but not be limited to:

- Meeting frequently during the school year to plan curriculum and lessons.
- Observing one another's classroom.
- Co-teaching the beginning teacher's class.
- Providing an array of assistance to mentee, arranging for help with policies and procedures, guidance on classroom management, feedback on instructional strategies and other aspects of professional practice.
- Analyzing and assessing the beginning teacher's practice in relation to evaluation criteria in order to help the beginning teacher to improve his/her teaching effectiveness.

Evaluation:

The Director of Human Resources will meet with mentors and mentees to introduce the mentorship program. Mentors and mentees will meet in individual or small-group conferences periodically. The purpose of these conferences is for feedback, diagnosis, and/or prescription. At the conclusion of the mentorship program, there will be a final evaluation survey conducted on the effectiveness of the Growing Great Teachers program to help ECPS evaluate the quality of the mentoring program and identify strengths and areas for improvement. Results of the evaluation will be compiled and analyzed. Necessary changes will be implemented for the following year.

OBSERVATIONS:

Observations are an integral part of the mentoring process. It gives participants the opportunity to view techniques and strategies that would enhance classroom practice. It allows for

coaching and tutoring. It opens discussion and provides an avenue for problem-solving and reflection. Veterans and novices, alike, find that learning from watching others—a demonstration of effective skills—is a two-way street. Observations offer the chance to visually experience a new technique or an introduction to new concepts. From the observation, feedback and support is given that allows participants to gain a better understanding of the teaching practice. As one practitioner expressed, “It provides a mirror for me to view myself in actual practice.”

Observation in the mentoring process is both non-evaluative and nonjudgmental. Its purpose is to help the participants view and react to the learning and the teaching that occurs within the instructional setting. The following procedures have been designed to make the observation meaningful and relevant:

1. An observation must be planned in advance.
2. Upon completion of the observation, the participants must conference. It is suggested that the mentee record the goals of the lesson, the learning that resulted from the discussion, and possible implementation plans.

Mentor/Mentee Visit

Complete the following information form before your peer visit. This form is OPTIONAL. The powerful conversation before visiting will help the mentee and mentor set a focus for the visit.

PRE-VISIT NOTES

POST-VISIT NOTES

MENTEE/MENTOR	MENTOR/MENTEE
The best time for you to visit my class will be ... Because ...	Okay, I will be there ...
While you are visiting my class, please look for ...	While visiting your classroom I saw ...
The best thing going on in my classroom right now is ...	What I really liked about your class was ...
I am currently struggling with ...	An area of opportunity I saw was ...
How do I ...	You might want to think about ...
NOTES:	NOTES:

MENTOR:

- **Ensure a strong start to the year.** Mentors can help beginning teachers launch into a productive year by making sure they know where to obtain all needed materials and by explaining the routines and schedules that are pertinent to them.
- **Provide instructional support.** This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Providing regular opportunities for mentee(s) to observe mentor teaching.
 - Participating in discussions following lessons that draw upon reflective thinking techniques.
 - Conferences with the beginning teacher following observed lessons.
 - Maintaining open communication with mentee either face-to-face or electronically.
 - Supporting teaching and learning standards of the state curriculum frameworks;
 - Refining various teaching strategies.
 - Addressing issues such as classroom management and communicating effectively with parents.
 - Recognizing and addressing multiple learning styles and individual students' needs.
- **Provide professional support.** Beginning teachers need to be informed of school policies and procedures, particularly regarding standards and procedures for teacher evaluation. Principals, Assistant Principals, and Directors as well as Mentors should be a resource for information on evaluation and professional practice.
- **Provide personal support.** Mentors can help relieve the stress on first-time teachers by introducing them to other faculty members and with support and encouragement help the beginning teacher to put problems in perspective.
- **Maintain a confidential relationship with the beginning teacher.** It is important that the beginning teacher is confident that the dialogue they have with their mentor is safe and secure and that they will get nurturing and supportive feedback from their mentor.
- **Participate in a support process for maintaining a mentor/mentee relationship.** If an unresolvable issue arises in the mentor/mentee relationship, the mentee will request to meet with the Director of Human Resources and the mentor to reach a resolution to the issue. If no resolution is reached, the mentee will request to meet with the mentor, the Director of Human Resources and the Principal to reach a resolution.
- **Serve as a liaison.** The mentor should have the knowledge and skills to refer the beginning teacher to other teachers and educational resources, so that the beginning teacher is exposed to a variety of perspectives and instructional practices.
- **Serve as a resource.** Inform the beginning teacher of opportunities and supports provided by various professional associations.
- **Attend mentor training(s).**

Mentoring Verification Forms

It is essential that mentors keep track of mentoring activities providing the following information:

- Listing the date of the activity
- Checking off the type of activity
- Listing the specific topic
- Recording the number of hours that you have participated in the activity
- Having your mentor or provider initial each entry.

MENTEE TEACHING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This is a tool to use as a self-assessment of your personal strengths and needs. This will not be used as an evaluative tool by anyone. The information that you collect here through your own reflection will help to shape your mentor/mentee experience.

Please describe yourself on the following questions. You may record your comments or just discuss each point with your mentor and/or your mentoring group.

1. What are your previous experiences as an educator, including student teaching, internship, or other teaching assignments?
2. What are your three strongest assets as an educator?
3. What are three areas of concern as an educator new to Essex County Public Schools or new to a grade?

Please rate yourself in the following areas according to the descriptors:

Novice: General idea of what needs to be done.

Proficient: Comfortable with responsibilities but have room to grow.

Expert: Mastery of the area and could train others/share expertise.

Areas of Support to Consider	Fall			Winter			Spring		
	E	P	N	E	P	N	E	P	N
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT									
1. Setting up the classroom environment									
2. Creating classroom rules									
3. Enforcing classroom rules									
4. Dealing with crisis in the classroom									
5. Implementing behavior management techniques									
6. Knowledge of disabilities with which you are working and necessary accommodations/strategies									
7. Ability to set up and follow routines									
EXPECTATIONS									
1. Identifying those students in the classroom with IEPs and 504 Plans, reading the plans, and implementing the classroom accommodations indicated									
2. Understanding the referral process									
3. Using technology as a tool									
4. Understanding and implementing emergency protocol—building, health, behavior									

TEACHING	E	P	N	E	P	N	E	P	N
1. Locating and using grade-level district standards, pacing guides, and state standards									
2. Differentiating instruction									
3. Motivating students									
4. Using a variety of teaching strategies									
5. Familiarity with content for grade level(s) taught									
6. Understanding testing procedures and materials									
7. Familiarity with district materials and programs at grade level(s) taught									
8. Providing students with clear and complete modeling of lessons and lesson expectations									
RELATIONSHIPS	E	P	N	E	P	N	E	P	N
1. Communicating with parents									
2. Working with grade level teams									
3. Collaborating with colleagues									
4. Working with special education staff									
5. Working with administration									
6. Asking for help									

Fall Date: _____

Winter Date: _____

Spring Date: _____

Growing Great Teachers

MENTOR/MENTEE CHECKLISTS

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER ANTICIPATION!!

The Mentee’s Perspective: As the school year begins the mentee feels excited, enthusiastic, energized and ready to work. Many have recently graduated college and are eager to apply their mastery of education courses to change the world. Others are switching occupations and are looking forward to sharing their wisdom with the minds of the future. Regardless of their experience enthusiasm, some also feel anxious and a little overwhelmed as they start a new career and/or settle into a new area.

Mentor’s Role: The main goals during these initial weeks are to encourage your mentee to maintain their excitement and help them adjust to a new community – both socially and logistically.

Suggested Actions:

- Establish communication with your mentee as soon as possible and set a schedule for routine meetings.
- Assist with logistics of moving to a new area – offer suggestions for housing, shopping, doctors, dentists, automobile repair shops, restaurants, entertainment.
- Personally introduce your mentee to key members of the school community (Mentee Handout).
- Explain procedures and expectations in your building—where supplies are located; emergency procedures; daily routines; copy machine use; forms for leave; lesson plan format; other resources specific to content area.
- Acquaint mentee with cumulative folders, test results, permanent records, confidential files and medical alerts
- Explain curriculum, access to the curriculum guides, pacing maps, and importance to lesson planning
- Review and discuss the ECPS teacher evaluation process and documentation
- Discuss importance of student behavior documentation, (i.e., date, behaviors, action taken, personnel contacted)
- Acquaint mentee with PBIS and other programs specific to your school.
- Assist in developing and implementing classroom management strategies.
- Discuss grading philosophy (what, when, how, why) and review recording/weighting data.
- Discuss policy for homework, make-up work and late work
- Discuss student assessment and progress reports
- Explain importance of accurate recordkeeping (gradebook, attendance)
- Discuss supplementary tools, materials, resources, media center and specialists, etc.
- Share lesson plans and other related schedules/activities (i.e. field trip procedures)
- Acquaint the mentee with Special Education referral processes and importance of following IEP/504 accommodations
- Discuss procedures for new students who enroll/withdraw after the school year has begun.
- Help establish a Substitute Teacher folder.
- Look ahead to the events occurring in the next few weeks and help your mentee prepare for them.

WHAT WENT WELL:

AREAS TO WORK ON:

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER SURVIVAL!!

The Mentee’s Perspective: Six weeks have passed and the honeymoon is over! Your mentee may feel he/she has been spinning their wheels—working and working. They may have “lost” themselves in the job as they struggle with the day-to-day operations of the classroom. They are spending countless hours outside of school trying to keep up with planning lessons, grading assessments, managing student behavior, answering un-ending emails, accommodating IEPs, attending this and that meeting, etc. Their communication with family and friends has diminished and/or changed in nature to express fatigue and frustration. They may feel overwhelmed and they have begun to lose sight of their initial enthusiasm.

Mentor’s Role: The main goals of the mentor during this time are to provide ongoing encouragement and moral support to help the mentee stay focused on the most important aspect of the job—helping students learn, to help them develop instructional strategies, and to remind them that they will succeed.

Suggested Actions:

- Continue to meet with the mentee regularly and have him/her focus on their successes and positive experiences. Help him/her recognize areas of growth and progress in their performance.
- Observe your mentee if you have not already done so and provide positive constructive feedback.
- Invite the mentee to observe you and other successful teachers so they can continue to model your best practices.
- Address concerns of classroom management and discipline.
- Discuss procedures for parent-teacher conferences prior to scheduled dates.
- Discuss benchmark testing procedures and data analysis.
- Review items from the beginning of the mentoring process to address any concerns.
- Assist the mentee through the first report card cycle.
- Review organizational and recordkeeping skills
- Prepare mentee for principal observation/evaluation.
- Discuss assessment techniques and data analysis.
- Advise mentee of special events, delayed opening and snow day procedures.
- Share information and process for professional development opportunities.
- Address concerns of classroom management and discipline.
- Continue to help the mentee form connections with other teachers and use their advice.
- Reflect on areas for growth.

What went well:

Areas to work on:

Share success stories and celebrate!!!!

DECEMBER – JANUARY DISILLUSIONMENT

The Mentee’s Perspective: Fall Break and Thanksgiving have provided a short and often timely break from school. Your mentee may feel somewhat re-energized, but is probably already counting the days until Winter Break. Although the mentee has probably developed several routines, they may still be struggling with classroom management, planning lessons, and staying on top of grading. Many first year teachers question their ability and desire to teach during these months. They may be physically and mentally worn out and are more susceptible to catching every flu bug that comes into the building.

Mentor’s Role: The main goals of the mentor during this time are again to provide ongoing encouragement and moral support, to help the mentee stay focused on the most important aspect of the job – helping students learn, and to remind them that they will succeed.

Suggested Actions:

- Continue to meet with the mentee regularly—perhaps even more frequently than before—and have him/her focus on their successes and positive experiences.
- Help your mentee recognize areas of growth and progress in their performance.
- Continue to help your mentee develop lessons and assessments, moving away from “next-day survival planning” to longer-term weekly or unit planning,.
- Continue to provide assistance with classroom management suggestions and guidance.
- Discuss different learning styles.
- Discuss end-of-semester procedures.
- Assist mentee through the mid-year report card process.
- Share information and process for professional development opportunities.
- Review curriculum guides and pacing maps to determine instruction.
- Continue to reflect on successes, progress and areas for growth.

What went well:

Areas to work on:

IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS:

FEBRUARY – MARCH REJUVENATION

The Mentee’s Perspective: We are half-way there! Many mentees feel reborn and have a sense of accomplishment. They are feeling more confident regarding the day-to-day aspects of the job and look to the future with determination. Many start to develop longer-range goals and plans for upcoming months. While they feel relief for making it this far, new obstacles loom. “How do I cover this much material in the few weeks left?” “How do I prepare the students for SOL tests?” “When do I stop teaching new material and start reviewing?”

Mentor’s Role: The main goals of the mentor during this time are again to provide ongoing encouragement and moral support, to help the mentee stay focused on helping students learn, and to help them develop plans for the few remaining months.

Suggested Actions:

- Although the mentee may be feeling more confident, continue to meet with the mentee regularly.
- Help your mentee recognize areas of growth and progress in their performance.
- Review policies and issues that relate to retention, failure of students and summer school options.
- Discuss benchmark testing procedures and data analysis.
- Discuss procedures for parent-teacher conferences prior to scheduled dates.
- Encourage mentee to contact parents in preparation for parent/teacher conferences.
- Review procedures for field trips, if necessary.
- Give suggestions for keeping momentum and interest at the end of the year for students and teachers.
- Discuss summer school enrollment procedures.

What went well:

Areas to work on:

IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS:

APRIL – JUNE

REFLECTION AND ANTICIPATION

The Mentee’s Perspective: As April rolls around, mentees have had another long break and feel refreshed. The end of the year is certainly in sight. By this time, many mentees have “found their groove” and finally have time to genuinely reflect on the past year. They will remember what worked and what did not. They will start to think about the next school year and begin to anticipate returning in the fall as an experienced teacher. Although energized and confident, mentees are still concerned about the remaining weeks and how they will finish the school year.

Mentor’s Role: The main goals of the mentor during this time are to encourage the mentee to review their successes and near-successes for the past several months, help them prepare for the remainder of the current year, and help them develop a vision for next year.

Suggested Actions:

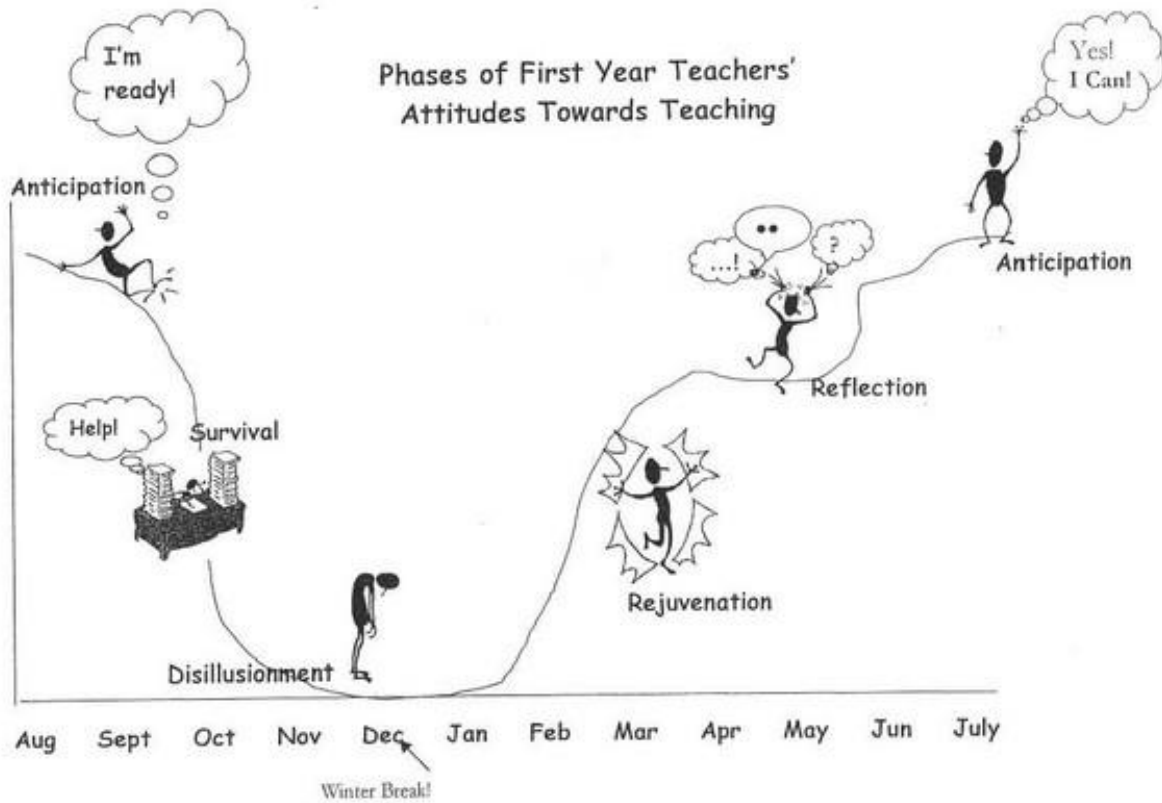
- Continue to help your mentee develop lessons and assessments.
- Help your mentee map out the rest of the school year and develop plans to cover the material effectively and in a timely manner.
- Help your mentee develop strategies for reviewing the end-of-the year process—collecting textbooks, disassembling classrooms, storing materials for the summer, etc.
- Help your mentee develop strategies to identify areas of student weakness and techniques to revisit the materials.
- Prepare your mentee for “Spring-induced” changes in student behavior—decreased focus, increased energy, tendencies to ignore dress codes, etc.
- Discuss retention procedures for specific students.
- Review plans for end-of-year student activities.
- Discuss end-of-year checkout procedures.
- Assist with final grading procedures and final report cards.
- Give suggestions for keeping momentum and interest at the end of the year for students and teacher.
- Ask for feedback on the mentor program.
- Celebrate successes, progress, and the end of the FIRST year!!!!

What went well:

Areas to work on:

YOU MADE IT!!!! CELEBRATE!!!

Phases of the First Year Teacher



Thank you for giving your time, your wisdom and your support to our mentees!