

Lamoille North

Supervisory Union

2021-2022

Colleague/Mentoring Support System

HANDBOOK

Creating a Community of Care

"Mentoring programs that employ a variety of techniques and supports, and which are guided by dedicated, experienced teachers, can have a positive impact on teacher retention. Such programs also improve job satisfaction and professional competence of beginning teachers, contribute to increased student achievement, and can ultimately lead to a self-extending system of collegiality, sharing, and support." The Power of Mentoring, June, 2002.

MENTOR SUPPORT MEETINGS 2021-2022

WHEN: **Wednesday, September 22 (3:30-4:30)**

WHERE: TBD

WHO: Mentors

AGENDA: Roles and Expectations

WHEN: **Wednesday, January 19 (3:30-4:30)**

WHERE: TBD

WHO: Mentors

AGENDA: Observation and Evidence Collection Strategies

WHEN: **Wednesday, May 11 (3:30-4:30)**

WHERE: TBD

WHO: Mentors

AGENDA: Survey and Reflective Discussion

Teachers' Guide to the LNSU Colleague/Mentoring Support System

Statement of Philosophy-

Lamoille North Supervisory District is committed to supporting the success of all members of its community. Establishing and maintaining a vibrant and ongoing process for colleague support is critical to maintaining the integrity and success of our learning environment.

Teachers and administrators have developed a mentoring program to promote and ensure successful inclusion of educators new to the schools of the Lamoille North Supervisory District (LNSD). This program has been designed to fully meet the needs of individual educators and extends significantly beyond the requirements for mentoring as described in Vermont's Education Quality Standards.

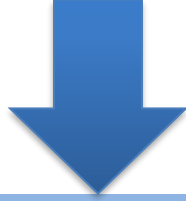
We would additionally like to credit and give thanks to our LSSU staff and administration in our neighboring district for their gracious guidance in sharing the structured elements of their well-established program incorporated here in our LNSD handbook.

Components of the LNSU Colleague/Mentoring Support System

- Year 1-** Mentoring for teachers who are new to LNSU.
- Focus:** Orientation to school and district procedures, routines and professional responsibilities along with informal observations for growth. See appendix for “Topics for Year One Mentors” and the Year One Timeline.”
- Year 2-** Mentoring for teachers who have had one year teaching in LNSU.
- Focus:** Improving professional practice in a selected component from Danielson’s Framework. See the appendix for the “Action Research/Inquiry Model” and the “Year Two Timeline”.

Benefits of Mentoring for Our School Community:

Improved School Climate & Student Learning



Improved Educator Performance

Educators who receive high quality mentoring are more effective. They are more focused on curriculum and instruction and less on management. They are better prepared to address the diverse needs of their students.



Reduced Educator Turnover

New teachers who are provided with high quality mentors are more likely to stay in the profession. High rates of turnover jeopardize the teacher – student relationships essential for student learning.



Benefits for Mentors

Skilled and experienced educators who guide and support a colleague enrich their own practice through collaboration, new learning, and reflection. Mentors are in an important leadership role that draws on their professional expertise.

Purpose of Mentoring

Mentoring enables educators to hone the practical skills required to be effective in the classroom, to experience the sense of personal and professional effectiveness and sense of belonging that will encourage them to remain in the profession, to defy the isolation of beginning teaching and to nourish the passion which led them into the profession.

What is Mentoring: Mentoring is a structured, comprehensive system of colleague support that provides highly skilled and experienced educators who are prepared through professional development to offer regular and personalized tutelage, support and guidance to beginning educators.

What Mentoring Isn't: Mentoring is not simply peer support, nor is it an orientation program. Although beginning teachers need assistance learning the “nuts and bolts” and “in’s and “out’s” of a the school, mentoring focuses on the development and growth of the professional skills that enhance student outcomes and elevate a new teachers confidence to remain in the profession.

Mentoring is not intended to be part of the performance evaluation.

Duration of the Mentoring Relationship: Teachers who are new to the LNSU will be provided with mentoring support for two years. The intensity and content of the partnership will vary depending on the mentee’s previous experience.

“Research shows that beginning educators who have had the continuous support of a skilled mentor are much more likely to stay in the profession and much more likely to get beyond classroom management concerns to focus on student learning... Like doctors in their medical residency, educators who have the support of a more senior colleague and opportunities for continuous learning become more skilled more quickly.” (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 1996).

Qualities of Effective Mentors

Effective educational mentors cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community culture that promotes the academic success of each student.

Approachability, integrity, honesty, sense of humor and the ability to listen are the top attributes rated by mentors themselves in the LNSU district as the most useful characteristics a good mentor must have.

The relationship between a mentor and mentee is one of collegial support, not of supervision and evaluation. This is critical, as building trust in this relationship is key to its success.

The mentor's feedback should be formative, not evaluative. It must belong to the mentee, and not be used for evaluative or other purposes. Developing this relationship of trust supports two key goals of a mentoring program: 1. Improving teacher performance and 2. Promoting the new teacher's professional and personal well-being.

A mentor program for new teachers can only succeed if its mentors are experienced teachers who have demonstrated high quality instructional practice. All good teachers are not necessarily good mentors. Why? Becoming an effective mentor takes training, practice, and strong communication and interpersonal skills.

Voices From the Field

Effective Mentors:

- ❖ Desire to become mentors and are committed to the profession
- ❖ Are reflective about their own teaching
- ❖ Have good problem solving abilities along with a sense of humor
- ❖ Want to make a positive difference in the lives of students
- ❖ Are professionals with integrity
- ❖ Are willing to expand their professional responsibilities to include working colleagues who are new to the profession
- ❖ Are willing to participate in professional development training sessions to develop and enhance their mentoring skills
- ❖ Listen attentively and include questions that prompt discussion, reflection and understanding
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality and discretion
- ❖ Offer positive and productive feedback
- ❖ Are able to build and maintain trusting relationships
- ❖ Are approachable, wise and caring individuals
- ❖ Easily establish a rapport with others
- ❖ Are attentive to sensitive political issues
- ❖ Have a wide repertoire of effective instructional and management strategies for working with diverse students in a variety of contexts
- ❖ Maintain a network of professional contacts
- ❖ Collaborate well with teachers and administrators
- ❖ Are willing to learn new teaching strategies from their mentees
- ❖ Have been successful in working with and teaching adults
- ❖ Are knowledgeable about the structures, protocols, mission, norms and culture of the district
- ❖ Are good resources
- ❖ Are committed to the success and sustainability of an effective colleague support system

Mentors need to model the qualities that their school district desires in its teachers, and they must be willing and able to work in a sustained way with beginning teachers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mentor

- Attend formal mentor training and other support sessions scheduled
- Help mentees learn school procedures and routines
- Offer support and function as a sounding board for the development of new ideas
- Share knowledge about new materials, planning strategies, curriculum development and teaching methods
- Support mentees in the development of classroom management strategies to address discipline issues and concerns
- Provide access to other classrooms, so mentees can observe colleagues and learn more about the different model and styles of teaching being practiced in the school/system
- Help mentees understand the implications of student diversity for teaching and learning.
- Provide professional, personal and instructional support to mentees on a regular basis
- Meet with mentee on a weekly basis to reflect on practice, identify needs, progress and plan activities
- Attend meetings as needed with the mentoring facilitator
- Participate in classroom observations
- Solicit and accept feedback from mentees and others
- Participate in the annual evaluation of the mentoring program
- Help mentees understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality

Roles and Responsibilities

Mentee

- Participate in the school's orientation program and the start of the school's activities
- Recognize that mentoring is a positive and supportive experience
- Engage in ongoing professional development to advance student outcomes
- Accept constructive feedback and practice reflective teaching
- Develop and pursue professional goals
- Meet weekly with mentor
- Be willing to share new ideas and practices
- Participate in classroom observations with the mentor and complete other professional activities relevant to the mentoring program
- Complete annual surveys for the mentoring program
- Maintain confidentiality regarding the mentoring relationship

Supporting the Mentoring Process

Informed administrative support is critical-

Administrative support is vital to building and sustaining a strong, effective mentoring program. Administrators in LNSU have a strong commitment to the program and an understanding of the demands the process will make on both mentor and mentees. Orientation for administrators is a component of the mentor program.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Mentor Program Facilitator

- Organization
- Public relations
- Program evaluation
- Integration
- Coordination
- Support & direction
- Selection & matching
- Communication
- Conflict resolution
- Planning & implementation of mentor training

Roles and Responsibilities of the Principals & Central Office Administrators

- Support & encourage participation
- Assist the coordinator(s) to make matches between mentor and mentee
- Provide logistical support
- Respect the confidentiality between mentor and mentee
- Grant funding
- Participate in annual program evaluation
- Prepare and disseminate communications

Incentives for Mentors

An opportunity for professional growth and renewal

An opportunity to help develop the colleague support system

Training and support to serve as a mentor

A \$1000 stipend for each year of service as a mentor

Educators in LNSU recognize that the development of professional relationships will be critical to the success of any organizational endeavor, including the implementation of the Colleague/Mentoring Support System. The maintenance of confidentiality and the ability to professionally resolve conflicts are important underpinnings in our work with each other. The following statements provide specific directions around these areas.

Confidentiality

- The mentor will not discuss the performance of his/her mentee with anyone, including school and district administrators, with the following exceptions: If the academic growth, social/emotional well-being, or physical safety of students is at risk. In each of these cases an administrator must be notified.
- The mentor may discuss the new teacher's performance, with the knowledge and approval of the mentee, with resource professionals to provide opportunities for assistance in areas that need improvement.
- The facilitator will respect the confidentiality of the mentoring relationship. Administrative support will be sought only with the consent of the mentor and/or mentee.

Conflict Resolution

It is the intent of LNSU to make every attempt to make sure that mentor/mentee matches are a suitable and acceptable; however, if the mentor and/or mentee feel the relationship is not compatible, the following steps will be taken:

- Mentor and mentee will discuss concerns.
- If unresolved, a mentor facilitator will be notified (Jacqui Gale)
- The mentor and mentee will discuss the concerns with the facilitator.
- The facilitator will work towards resolution.
- If the conflict is not resolved after considerable time and effort by all parties involved, the facilitator may seek administrative support with the knowledge and consent of both the mentor and mentee.

Bearing in mind the supportive role you play working through any potential conflict that could arise-consider addressing the challenges new teachers face and The Stages of a Teacher's First Year. Each stage is listed below in Appendix A to support you in building trust, empathy and understanding in the beginning stages of your new relationship.

LNSU MENTORING/COLLEAGUE SUPPORT SYSTEM

FACILITATOR: Jacqueline J. Gale Ed.D.

FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING: MENTOR COURSE TRAINER: Jacqui Gale

FRAMEWORK TRAINED MENTORS (These are mentors who have completed the summer or fall course training). This will be helpful for school principals, Special Education Director and GMTCC Director when selecting mentors in the future.

List by name and school:

LUHS/LUMS:

Hillary Bliss

Jon Brown

Jan Chapados

Allen Cook

Greg Davis

Danielle Peveril

Eric Hutchins

Kelly Keefe

Amber Carbine-March

Bethann Pirie

Jeff Robinson

Cori Rockwood

Will Widen

JES

John Lukens

Ellen McDevitt

Katie Foss

Charity Lanpher

Sarah Wheeler

Woody Belt

CES

Theresa Aiosa

Danielle Shoda Allen

Jacqueline Brosseau

Marie Dunbar-Cloutier

Alexandra (Zan) Dusablon

Laura Edgerton

Faith Horton

Jen Holtzman

Kathy Tobin

Laura Niedecker

Danielle Oldenburg

Emily Kingston

Allyson Spanier

Molly Spillane

Kathy Tobin

HPES

Donna Cullivan

Josh Gould

Dianne Deroches

Erin Carr

Crystal Koch

Erin Neckers

Kylie Richardson

ECS

Kaitlin Cunningham/Bartell

Carrie Bullard

Betzi Goodman

Kayla Zakrzewski

Anne McPherson

Audri Miller

Judith Wine

GMTCC

Doug Boardman

Mallery Daudelin

Dana Jourdan

WES

Sally Vargo

TOPICS FOR YEAR 1 MENTORS

*Please prioritize and customize this list according to the needs of the individual teacher based on experience. The topic highlighted in **red** need to be given special consideration.*

Please note: corresponding numbers and letters listed below are taken from Frameworks for Professional Practice Domain 1: Planning and Preparation.

Aligned specific to LNSU

1b. Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

How to access student data

IEP/504

EST and supports for students

1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources

District Action Plan, Vision, and Mission Related Goals

Where to find materials

School and Central Office Personnel

Phone System

Use of Technology & Smart Boards (if applicable)

School Website

1e. Designing Coherent Instruction

District Action Plan, Vision and Mission

Regular sub plans-how to create good sub plans

Emergency sub plans

2d: Managing Student Behavior

Lunch detention (specific to LNSU)

2e: Organizing Physical Space

Room set-up

Building Layout-various meeting rooms, etc.

Fire Drills

Secure the Building or Lockdown Drills

3d: Using Assessment in Instruction

Assessments and assessment windows (specific to LNSU)

4a: Reflecting on Teaching

Goal setting and reflection

District Action Plan, Vision and Mission Related Goals

4b: Maintaining Accurate Records

LNSU- example: PowerSchool

4c: Communicating with Families

Family Handbook (if applicable)

District Action Plan, Vision and Mission Related Goals

Confidentiality-especially with email and all technology

How to handle upset parents

Parent Conferences-what drives the conversation and how to keep it on track

Child custody issues

Requests for information/records/testimony

4d: Participating in a Professional Community

District Action Plan, Vision and Mission Related Goals

How to work with your team/department-the expectations & protocol at your school

How to arrange for a sub

School culture

School Calendar-with attention to school events (Open House/specific to LNSU)

Regular meeting schedules

4e: Growing and Developing Professionally

Reference Year 1 Danielson rubric with attention to blue highlighted levels of performance

Observation/Supervision process

Re-licensure process and Standards Board

Professional Development forms (color specific to LNSU)

4f: Showing Professionalism

Bullying

Harassment

Mandatory Reporting

Optional Events (dances, plays, sports events, etc.)

District messages: snow days/school closings, etc.)

Signing out technology/AV equipment

Field trips and Fundraising

Connections with other important personnel and services:

- Information Technology
- Supplies
- Computer Lab or Check-out
- Library
- Custodian
- Food Services
- Special Educators and Support Personnel (OT, SLP-specific to LNSU)
- Guidance
- Nurse
- Math and Literacy Teacher Leaders (specific to LNSU)

*You and your mentee may be ready for next steps before the end of the year.
Please proceed with observations and reference Group 1 Framework Rubrics.*

INQUIRY ACTION RESEARCH

INQUIRY PLAN/CONNECTION TO PRACTICE

Statement of the purpose/question

- The mentor collects evidence during informal observations to help identify an area of inquiry.
- The mentee uses the evidence that has been collected to select a focus component to enhance instruction.

Investigate and gather information/collaborate

- The mentee reads articles and interviews or observes other teachers.
- The mentor helps facilitate observations by suggesting or speaking with teachers who may be exemplars for the focused inquiry question.

Strategize

- The mentor and mentee will create a list of possible solutions and/or strategies to try out that will help seek new ideas.

Apply

TEACH

- The mentee tries possible solutions or strategies and keeps a reflective log/journal.
- The mentor continues informal observations, collecting evidence of the focused inquiry question and records the data in their own observation log or journal.

REFLECT

- The mentee reflects on new solutions/strategies and whether they have improved instruction as a result of applying new knowledge from the evidence collected from student work.

APPLY

- Together, the mentee and mentor summarize and reassess. At this point the mentee and mentor make a decision to either loop back and continue to work on the same inquiry question or select a new inquiry question for the purpose in the same domain, or select a new component in another domain to collaborate on.

Year 1: Mentor Timeline

Time	Task/Template
Prior to School (inservice)	<p>Meet with mentee to reinforce what they were introduced to during the new hire orientation.</p> <p>Reinforce the role of the mentor as support not supervision.</p> <p>Use the Year 1 Topics List* to guide your first discussions.</p> <p>Complete Class Profile Template*</p>
First 20 days	<p>Discuss teaching context.</p> <p>Use Teaching Profile Template* for discussion.</p>
First 6 weeks of school	Go through Domain 2 with mentee to prepare them for discussing with the principal what their goal for the year will be.
Week 6	Once the mentee has decided on a Domain 2 Goal with the principal, complete the Goal Setting Template* .
Prior to Thanksgiving*	<p>Assist the teacher in preparing documents for pre-and post-observation conferences with the principal.</p> <p>Use Planning Questions Reflection*</p>
December-April	<p>Continue to help the mentee use the plan, teach, reflect, apply model as they anticipate their second formal observation.</p> <p>Continue to assist the mentee in gathering evidence for their goal (data, student work, reflective journal, etc).</p> <p>Not required, but other activities could include: helping mentee find teachers to observe, doing practice observations or videotaping a lesson to reflect on, seeking out resources related to identified component/ goal.</p> <p>Gather questions/concerns for LNSD January mentor meeting.</p>
May	Reflective conference
End of Year	Summarize and discuss professional goals for next year.

	Complete mentor survey in preparation for final LNSU mentor meeting in May.
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Year 2: Mentor Timeline

Time	Task/Template
Prior to School (inservice)	Complete Class Profile Template * <i>1b: Knowledge of students</i> <i>Knowledge of students special needs</i>
First 20 days	Teaching context. Use Teaching Profile Template * for discussion.
First 6 weeks of school	At least 3 Informal Observations* <i>Provide evidence that the teacher can use to select a focus component**</i>
October	Find articles related to the component the teacher is pursuing and use as a discussion point. Assist the teacher in creating a system for keeping a log of activity related to this Action Research (strategies tried, articles read, relevant data, etc.)
Prior to Thanksgiving*	Assist the teacher in preparing documents for pre-and post-observation conferences with the principal. <u>Only if requested by the teacher.</u>
December-April	Minimum of one informal observation/month <i>Collect evidence related to the focus component***</i> <i>(Mentor give evidence for teacher for log)</i>
May	Reflective conference <i>Provide/organize evidence from observations and teacher's log to facilitate reflection discussion</i>
End of Year	Summarize and discuss professional goals for next year.

- *Informal observations do not have to be complete lessons. Try to observe at different times to see a variety of teaching scenarios.*
- *The teacher may be continuing work in Domain 2 with the principal. If so, choose a component from Domain 2. Either choose the same component that has been selected by the mentee for professional goal-setting or a component that is complimentary to the goal.*
- *At any point the teacher may choose a new focus component if the previous one has been mastered or deemed unnecessary because they feel comfortable enough to move forward.*

We recognize that it can be challenging to mentor teachers who come to LNSU with experience or who are in a specialized role. If you would like to discuss ideas about how best to meet their needs, your Mentor Facilitator is available to provide resources and support. Our focus is to provide ongoing support and reflection and growth for learning.

LNSU SUPPORT MATERIAL

CLASS PROFILE

Teacher:

Date:

Grade Level(s)

Subject(s):

In preparation for your conference with your supervisor, review your student data and be prepared to discuss the following:

After reviewing your student data from your action research, what do you know about current students and how does that inform your instruction?

You may write your response, bring supporting documents, and/or be prepared to record your discussion during your conference.

September 2007 Adapted materials from Pathwise: Framework Observation Program

LNSU SUPPORT MATERIAL

TEACHING PROFILE

Teacher:

Date:

Grade Level(s)

Subject(s):

DIRECTIONS TO THE TEACHER: Please review these questions. These questions will guide the discussion with your principal.

1. How do you stay current and up to date regarding the content of the subjects/content you teach?
2. How do you determine what your students already know and are able to do? How do you use formative assessment to determine what a student's next learning opportunity will be?
3. Are you familiar with the school/community's resources and how to access them? Which resources do you plan to use this year?

September 2007 Adapted materials from Pathwise: Framework Observation Program

4. Describe how you encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and to support them in taking pride in their work?
5. Describe how you convey the importance of your course content and your expectations for achievement?
6. Describe how you establish standards of conduct and respond to behavior that does not meet school or classroom expectations?
7. Describe how you will engage the parents/guardians of your students to become partners with you in their child's learning?

LNSU SUPPORT MATERIAL

GOAL-SETTING TEMPLATE

Teacher: _____ Group 1 _____ or Group 2 _____ Date: _____

Grade Level(s) _____ Subject(s) _____

DIRECTION TO THE TEACHER: For the coming evaluation cycle, identify professional goals linked to one or more components on your rubric of professional practice in Domain 1.

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Specific goal:

Strategies for working toward achieving the goal:

Collected evidence/documentation that will be used to collect data used to assess progress for this goal:

Domain 3: Instruction

Specific goal:

Strategies for working toward achieving the goal:

Collected evidence/documentation that will be used to collect data used to assess progress for this goal:

DIRECTION TO THE TEACHER: For the coming evaluation cycle, identify professional goals linked to one or more components on your rubric of professional practice in Domain 2.

Teacher Signature

Date

Principal's Signature

Date

September 2007 Adapted materials from Pathwise: Framework Observation Program

LNSU SUPPORT MATERIAL

PLANNING QUESTIONS

Teacher:

Date:

Grade Level(s)

Subject(s):

DIRECTIONS TO THE TEACHER: Please review these questions. You may write your response, bring supporting documents, and/or be prepared to record your discussion during your conference.

1. What will all students know and be able to do at the end of this lesson?
2. What enduring understanding underlies the lesson?
3. How will you know if all students are learning what we want them to learn?
What is your evidence of learning?
4. Describe your instructional plan. What is the teacher going to do? What are the students going to do? Consider:
 - Instructional strategies
 - Resources or technology
 - Formative assessment
 - Grouping of students
 - Activities/materials
 - Classroom environment
 - Specific modifications for students with learning and behavioral needs

LNSU SUPPORT MATERIAL

PLANNING QUESTIONS cont'd

TEACHER:

STUDENTS:

5. What will you do if students still need to learn what you want them to learn? What will you do for students who have already achieved what you want them to learn?

For students who need additional support:

For students who have achieved the desired outcome:

LNSU SUPPORT MATERIAL

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Teacher:

Date:

Grade Level(s)

Subject(s):

DIRECTIONS TO THE TEACHER: Please answer the following questions concerning the lesson that was observed. Collect two examples of student learning and bring them to the post-observation conference. One example can be from a student who met the goals of the lesson. The other can be from a student who had difficulty meeting lesson goals.

1. Think about the success of this lesson with regards to student learning.
 - a. What was successful and what were the struggles?

Successes:

Challenges:

- b. What did you learn about your professional practice and how will this inform your future instruction?
2. How did you use evidence of student learning to plan and strategize your next lesson for the class?

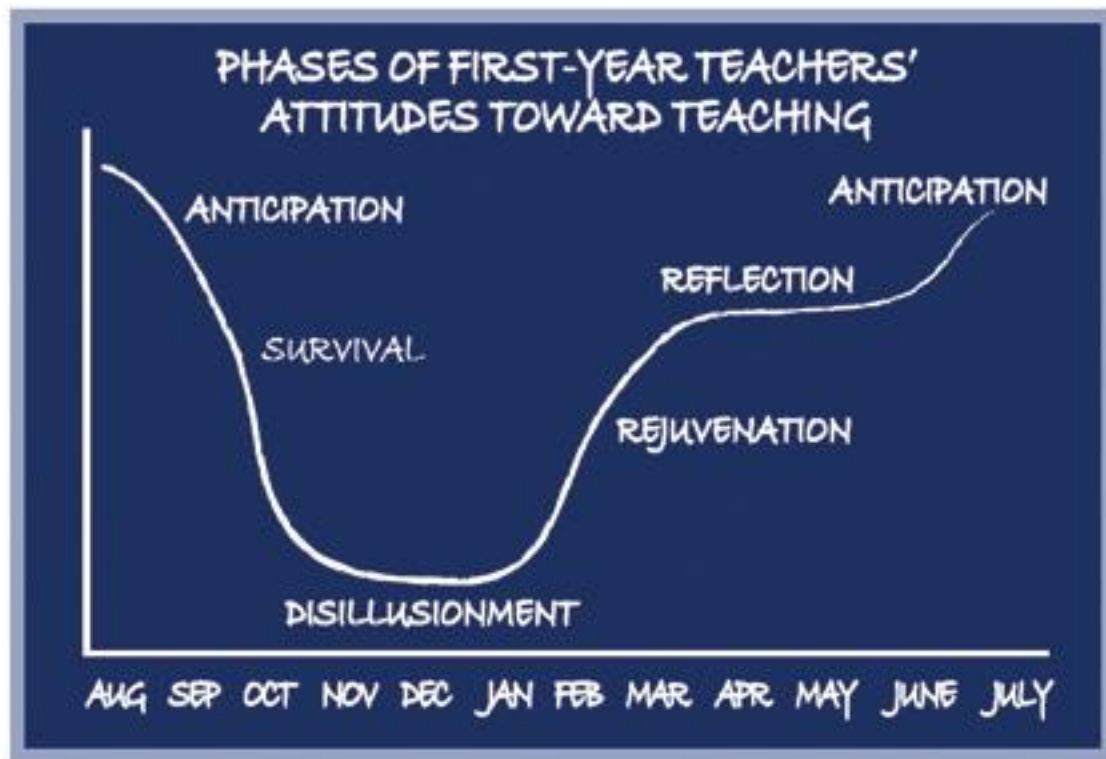
Teachers report high levels of occupational stress — more than people who work in medicine, sales, executive management, the service industry, business, construction, transportation or farming. Being *new* magnifies many of the stressors that teachers face.

The act of teaching is hard — that's why most mentoring programs for new teachers focus on skill-related goals, such as improving instructional delivery and applying feedback. But the ins and outs of being a teacher are hard too. Becoming a teacher can come with emotional challenges. New teachers want assurance that the professional *and* personal challenges they are experiencing are normal. Supporting new teachers needs to be more than just sharing information, providing instructional coaching and designing professional development. It also needs to come in the forms of empathy, perspective and advice. When mentors work on professional growth goals without probing a teacher's mindset or emotional health, skill development can become distracting, stressful and even counterproductive.

The Stages of a Teacher's First Year

To support new teachers effectively, educators must understand the phases that novices often experience during their pivotal first year. ~Ellen Moir, 1999

New teachers move through several phases: from anticipation, to survival, to disillusionment, to rejuvenation, to reflection, then back to anticipation. Here's a look at the stages exemplified from new teachers' journal entries and end-of-the-year evaluations outlined by Ellen Moir's research article, 1999.



Each phase is described in depth to give you a clearer picture of mentees needs.

Anticipation Phase

The anticipation phase begins during the student teaching portion of pre service preparation. The closer that student teachers get to completing their assignment, the more excited and anxious they become about their first year teaching position. They tend to romanticize the role of the teacher. New teachers enter classrooms with a tremendous commitment to making a difference and with a somewhat idealistic view of how to accomplish their goals. *"I was elated to get the job but terrified about going from the simulated experience of student teaching to being the person completely in charge."* This feeling carries new teachers through the first few weeks of school.

Survival Phase

The first month of school is overwhelming for new teachers. They are learning a

lot at a rapid pace. Beginning teachers are bombarded with a variety of problems and situations they had not anticipated. Despite teacher education courses and student teaching experiences, the realities of teaching alone catch new teachers off guard. There is so little time and so much to learn. *“I thought I’d be busy-something like student teaching-but this is crazy. I’m constantly running. It’s hard to focus on other areas of my life.”*

During the survival phase most new teachers struggle to keep their heads above water. They become consumed with the day-to-day routine of teaching. It is not uncommon for new teachers to spend 70 hours a week on schoolwork. They have little time to stop and reflect on their experiences.

Particularly overwhelming is the constant need to develop curriculum. Veteran teachers routinely reuse excellent lessons and units from past years. New teachers, still uncertain of what will really work, must develop their lessons for the first time. Even when given prepared curriculum or materials from veterans, teaching unfamiliar content is enormously time consuming.

“I thought there would be more time to get everything done. It’s like working three jobs: 7:30-2:30, 2:30-6:00, with more time spent in the evenings and weekends just to keep up.” Although tired and surprised by the amount of work, first-year teachers usually maintain a tremendous amount of energy and commitment during the survival phase and they harbor hope that soon the turmoil will subside.

Disillusionment Phase

After about six to eight weeks of nonstop work and stress, new teachers enter the disillusionment phase. The intensity and the length of the phase vary among new teachers. The extensive time commitment, the realization that things are not going as smoothly as they would like, and low morale contribute to this period of disenchantment. New teachers begin questioning their commitment and their competence. Many new teachers fall ill during this phase.

Compounding an already difficult situation is the fact that new teachers confront several new events during this time frame: back-to-school-night, parent conferences, and their first formal evaluation by the site administrator. Each milestone places an already vulnerable individual in a very stressful situation.

Back-to-school night means giving a speech to parents about plans for the year that are most likely still unclear in the new teacher's mind. Some parents are uneasy when they realize that the new teacher is a beginner, and they may pose questions or demands that intimidate a new teacher.

Parent conferences require new teachers to be highly organized, articulate, tactful and prepared to confer with parents about each student's progress. This type of communication with parents can be awkward and difficult for beginning teachers. New teachers generally begin with the idea that parents are partners in the teaming process, and they are not prepared for parents' concerns or criticisms. These criticisms hit new teachers at a time waning self-esteem.

The first formal evaluation by the principal also arrives during the disillusionment phase. Developing and presenting a 'showpiece' lesson are time consuming and stressful. New teachers, uncertain about the evaluation process and anxious about their own competence, question their ability to perform.

During the disillusionment phase, classroom management often becomes a major source of stress. *"I thought I'd be focusing more on curriculum and less on classroom management and discipline. I'm stressed because I have some very problematic students who are low academically, and I think about them every second my eyes are open."*

At this point the accumulated stress on new teachers, coupled with months of overwork, provoked complaints from family members and friends. In the disillusionment phase, new teachers express self-doubt, have lower self-esteem, and question their professional commitment. Getting through this phase may be the toughest challenge they face as new teachers.

Rejuvenation Phase

The rejuvenation phase generally begins in January, is characterized by a slow improvement in the new teacher's attitude toward teaching. Having a winter break makes a tremendous difference for new teachers. The free time allows them to resume a more normal lifestyle, with plenty of rest, food, exercise, and time for family and friends. The break also offers the opportunity to organize materials and plan curriculum. This breathing space gives new teachers time for reflection and a chance to gain perspective. Most of all, it provides hope.

Putting past problems behind them, new teachers return to school rested and reinvigorated. They now have a better understanding of the system with a better acceptance of the realities of teaching, and a sense of accomplishment for having made it through the first, and hardest, part of the school year. Although still months away, the end of the school year becomes a beacon of hope. By now, new teachers have also gained confidence and better coping skills to prevent or manage problems that they will encounter. During this phase new teachers focus on curriculum planning, long-term planning, and teaching strategies.

“I’m really excited about my story-telling center, although the organization of it has been haphazard. Story-writing has definitely revived my journals.” The rejuvenation phase tends to last into spring, with many ups and downs along the way. Toward the end of this phase new teachers begin to voice concerns about whether they can accomplish everything by the end of the school year. They also wonder how their students will perform on tests, once again questioning their effectiveness as teachers. *“I’m fearful of these big tests. Can you be fired if your kids do poorly? I don’t know enough about them to know what I haven’t taught, and I’m sure it is a lot.”*

Reflection Phase

The reflection phase begins during the last six weeks of school. These final weeks are a particularly invigorating time for first year teachers. Reflecting back over the year, new teachers highlight events that were successful and those that were not. They think about the various changes that they hope to make for the following year in management, curriculum, and teaching strategies. The end is in sight, and they have almost made it; but more important, a vision emerges about what their second year will look like, which brings them to a new phase of anticipation.

It is essential that we assist new teachers and ease the transition from student teacher to full-time professional. Recognizing the phases that new teachers go through gives us a framework within which we can begin to design colleague support programs to make the first year of teaching a more positive experience for our new colleagues.

Moir, Ellen, (1999). *The Stages of a Teacher’s First Year*.

See attached Frameworks for Professional Practice Rubrics.