Orchard Park Central School District
Professional Learning Plan

2025-2026

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Introduction

As the world changes and education evolves, educators need to keep up with the latest trends and best practices in their respective fields. The following professional learning plan outlines a series of initiatives and programs that Orchard Park Central School District implements to ensure its teachers are well-equipped to teach and inspire students in the 21st century.

Purpose of the Plan

The overarching goal of this professional learning plan is to provide New York School District teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective and successful educators. Specifically, the goals of this plan are to:

1. Enhance teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills to increase student learning and achievement.
2. Provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn from one another.
3. Develop teachers' skills in using technology to enhance instruction and support student learning.
4. Foster a culture of continuous improvement and lifelong learning among teachers.
5. Align professional learning opportunities to District goals.

To achieve these goals, the following strategies will be implemented:

1. Collaboration: The district will support collaboration, bringing together teachers from different schools and grade levels to share best practices, discuss student data, plan instruction, and develop shared assessments.
2. Curriculum Development: The district will provide professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop and align curriculum to state and national standards. This includes training on how to use data to inform instructional decisions and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners.
3. Technology Integration: The district will provide professional learning opportunities for teachers to integrate technology into instruction effectively. This includes training on how to use online resources, learning management systems, and other technology tools to enhance student learning and engagement.
4. Coaching and Mentoring: The district will provide coaching and mentoring for teachers to support them in implementing new instructional practices and strategies. This includes instructional coaching, peer coaching, and mentoring for new teachers.
5. Conferences and Workshops: The district will provide teachers with opportunities to attend conferences and workshops to learn about the latest trends and best practices in education. These include national and regional conferences and local workshops on specific topics.
6. Evaluation and Feedback: The district will evaluate the effectiveness of its professional learning programs and provide feedback to teachers to help them improve their practice. This

includes using data to assess the impact of professional learning on student achievement and teacher effectiveness.

The OPCSD Professional Learning Council has designed the following plan to ensure that each staff member is provided with job-embedded opportunities for growth and participation, leading to improved quality job performance. The plan emphasizes collaboration and reflection with colleagues, site-determined experiences responding to expressed needs, and individually designed activities to further one's competence and expertise.

Orchard Park Community Demographics

The Orchard Park Central School District covers approximately 50 square miles and includes portions of six adjacent townships: Orchard Park, West Seneca, Hamburg, Boston, Elma, and Aurora. Four elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school serve 5,100 students.

We continue a long tradition of excellence in academics, athletics, service, and the arts. Our schools are known for outstanding academic achievement at all levels. Over 90 percent of our graduates go on to higher education.

Orchard Park CSD Source for Demographics at a Glance

2023-2024

ENROLLMENT BY GENDER

MALE	
2,308	50%

FEMALE	
2,298	50%

NON-BINARY	
11	0%
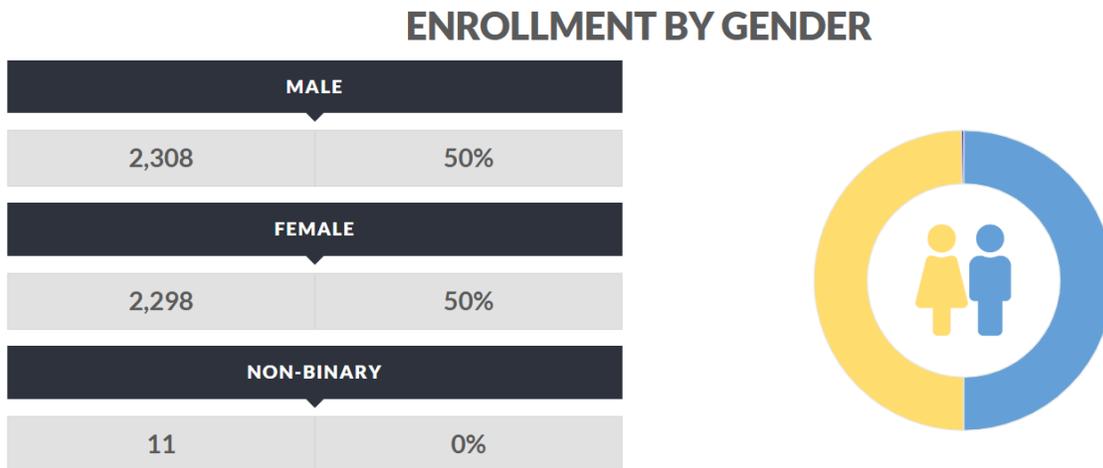
OTHER GROUPS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS		STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES		ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	
34	1%	701	15%	741	16%

MIGRANT		HOMELESS		FOSTER CARE		PARENT IN ARMED FORCES	
—	—	14	0%	13	0%	24	1%

ENROLLMENT BY GRADE
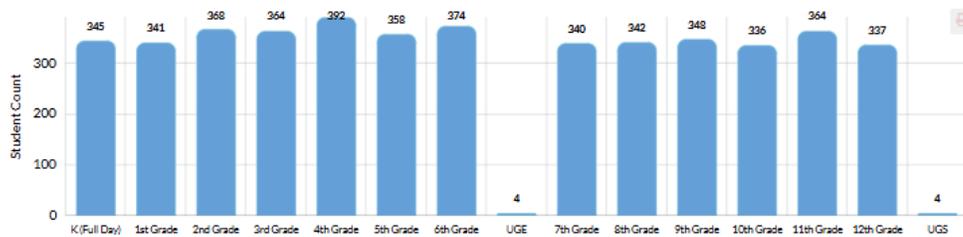
K (FULL DAY)		1ST GRADE		2ND GRADE		3RD GRADE	
345	7%	341	7%	368	8%	364	8%

4TH GRADE		5TH GRADE		6TH GRADE		UNGRADED ELEMENTARY	
392	8%	358	7%	374	8%	4	0%

7TH GRADE		8TH GRADE		9TH GRADE		10TH GRADE	
340	7%	342	7%	348	7%	336	7%

11TH GRADE		12TH GRADE		UNGRADED SECONDARY	
364	8%	337	7%	4	0%

ENROLLMENT BY ETHNICITY

AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE	
6	0%

BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	
55	1%

HISPANIC OR LATINO	
181	4%

ASIAN OR NATIVE HAWAIIAN/OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	
71	2%

WHITE	
4,176	90%

MULTIRACIAL	
128	3%

ELL ENROLLMENT BY GRADE

K (FULL DAY)		1ST GRADE		2ND GRADE		3RD GRADE	
9	26%	9	26%	6	18%	1	3%

4TH GRADE		5TH GRADE		7TH GRADE		8TH GRADE	
3	9%	2	6%	1	3%	1	3%

10TH GRADE	
2	6%
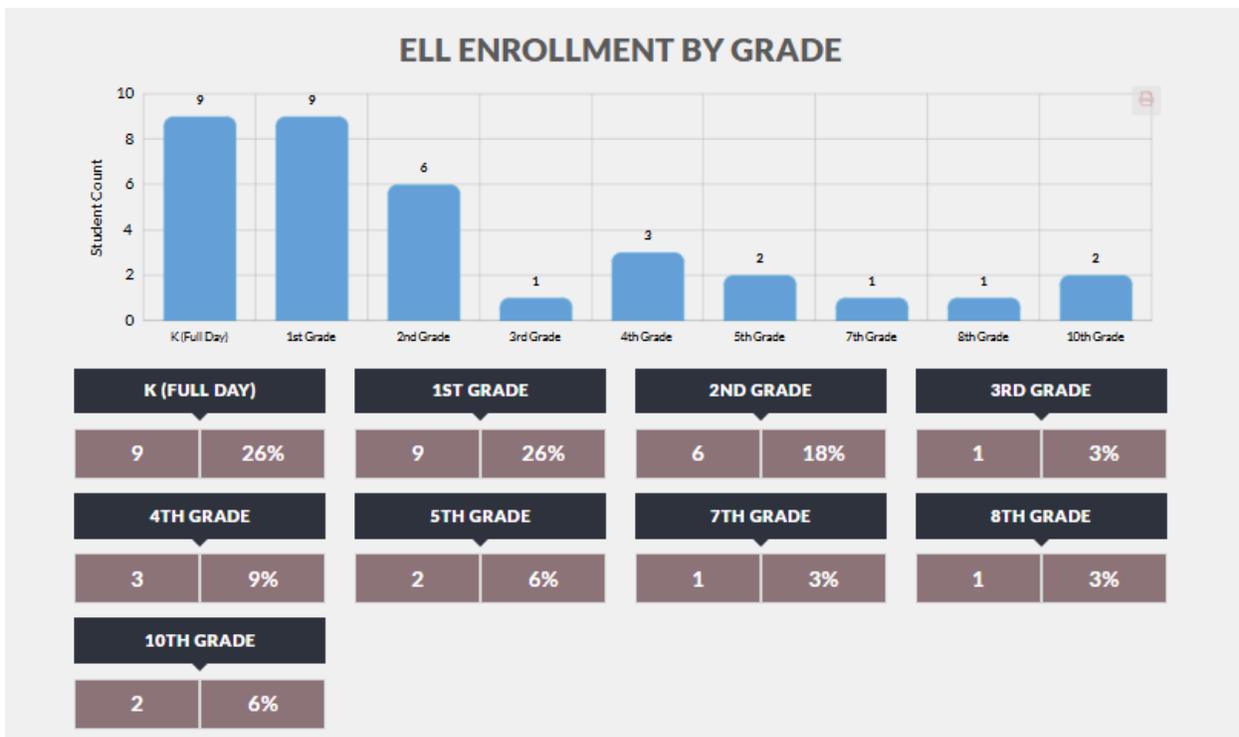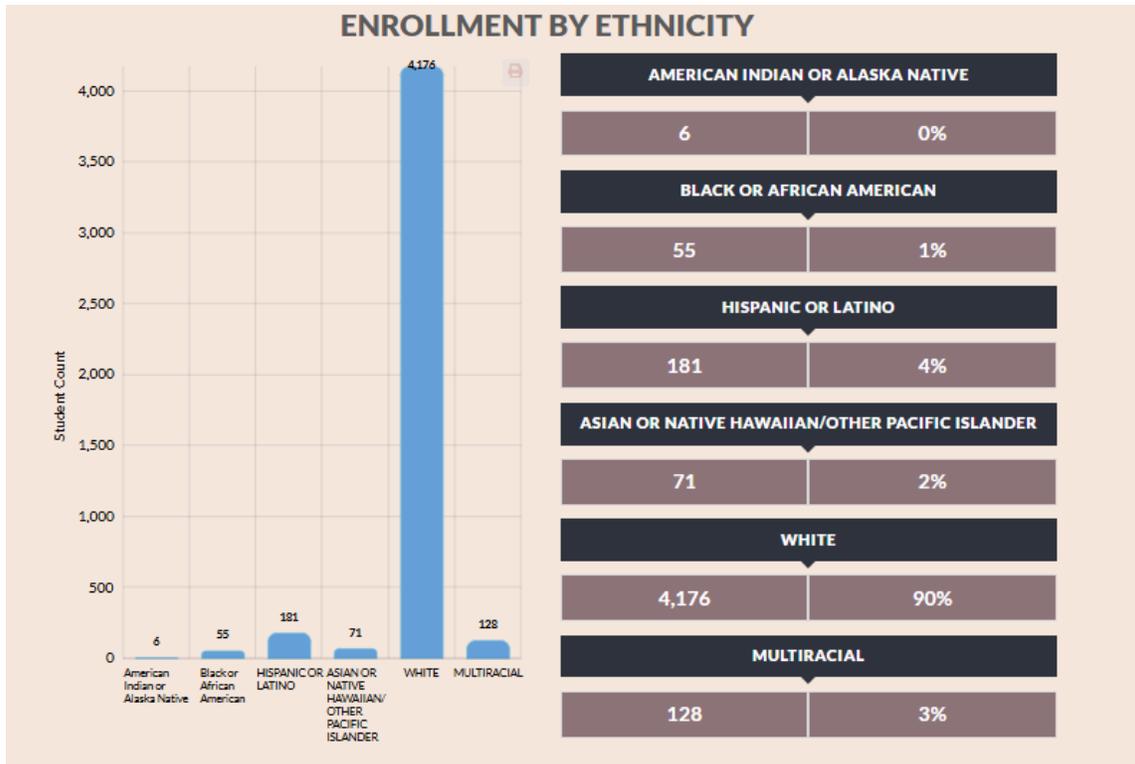
OPCSD Professional Learning Council Membership 2025-2026

Representative	Title, Building
Paul Pietrantone	Director of Student Services and Professional Learning
Sarah Hornung	Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Innovation
Aaron Grupka	Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Jill Sengbusch	Assistant Director of Special Education
Jeffrey Dolce	Principal Representative
Kate Cullen	OPTA, OPMS
Eileen Riter	SRP (appointed)
Elaine Lelonek	SRP (appointed)
Jen Regan	Parent Representative
Brian Sepe	Instructional Coach
Jen Wright	Instructional Coach
Elizabeth Andros	Technology Coach
Patrick McMillan	Technology Coach
Alie Kuitems	Technology Coach
Lauren Kerzee	Higher Education
Lisa Josker	Special Education Coach/Coordinator
Kim Kent	ELA Coordinator
Nancy Hartung	Math Coordinator
Anthony Botticelli	Science Coordinator
Sue Chudy	Social Studies Coordinator
Diane Bond	PK-12 Art Coordinator
Rebecca Filsinger	PK-12 Music Coordinator
Joe Bella	PK-12 CTE Coordinator
Anna Cartwright	World Languages Coordinator

Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles, District Goals

Orchard Park Central School District's Vision Statement

We give our students the vision to reach for the stars, the skills and fortitude to climb the ladder, and the wisdom to appreciate the beauty of the journey.

Mission Statement

Through a partnership with families, community, and the Orchard Park Central School District, students will:

- Achieve their fullest potential
- Develop critical thinking, creativity, and character
- Become healthy, lifelong learners
- Be responsible and contributing members of an ever-changing and global society

Guiding Principles

Our belief in fostering partnerships with parents, students and the community to provide an education of distinction and excellence has led to the formulation of these Guiding Principles.

The Orchard Park Central School District will:

- Provide a healthy, safe, and innovative learning environment.
- Focus resources on continuously improving student achievement, citizenship, and character development.
- Make informed decisions based on data analysis, educational research, and professional and/or community input.
- Foster a professional learning community that is enhanced through the support of staff development, ongoing curriculum evaluation and design, effective instructional practices and integrated technology.
- Embrace and encourage communication, accountability, long-range planning, and fiscal responsibility among constituent groups.

Based on these guiding principles, a District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) was developed and approved initially for the 20-21 school year. During the 2021-2022 school year, a DCIP Committee consisting of members of all stakeholder groups convened to discuss priorities and goals. During the 2025-2026 school year, a strategic plan will be developed and shared with the District community. This strategic plan will provide goals to guide decisions for profession learning.

District Comprehensive Improvement Plan:

To maximize the potential of all students through our daily mission, we will :

- Promote equity and inclusion;
- Recognize and embrace diversity;
- Identify and remove barriers to ensure access and opportunities.

Standards Alignment

The Orchard Park Central School District recognizes the importance of aligning professional learning opportunities with state standards to ensure its teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to teach their students effectively. The district's professional learning plan focuses on providing opportunities for teachers to enhance their content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and use of technology in the classroom, all aligned with the state standards. By aligning professional learning with the state standards, the district can ensure that its teachers are meeting the expectations of the state and providing students with a high-quality education that prepares them for success in the future.

NYS Professional Learning Standards

The Ten Standards for High-Quality Professional Learning

1. **Designing Professional Learning:** Professional learning design is based on data; is derived from the experience, expertise and needs of the recipients; reflects best practices in sustained job-embedded learning; and incorporates knowledge of how adults learn.
2. **Content Knowledge and Quality Teaching:** Professional learning expands educators' content knowledge and the knowledge and skills necessary to provide developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and assess student progress.
3. **Research-based Professional Learning:** Professional learning is research-based and provides educators with opportunities to analyze, apply and engage in research.
4. **Collaboration:** Professional learning ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill and opportunity to collaborate in a respectful and trusting environment.
5. **Diverse Learning:** Professional learning ensures that educators have the knowledge and skill to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.
6. **Student Learning Environments:** Professional learning ensures that educators are able to create safe, secure, supportive, and equitable learning environments for all students.
7. **Parent, Family and Community Engagement:** Professional learning ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to engage and collaborate with parents, families, and other community members as active partners in children's education.
8. **Data-driven Professional Practice:** Professional learning uses disaggregated student data and other evidence of student learning to determine professional learning learning needs and priorities, to monitor student progress, and to help sustain continuous professional growth.
9. **Technology:** Professional learning promotes technological literacy and facilitates the effective use of all appropriate technology.
10. **Evaluation:** Professional learning is evaluated using multiple sources of information to assess its effectiveness in improving professional practice and student learning.

NYS Teacher Standards

(Revision by the Board of Regents, September 2011)

The New York State Board of Regents has endorsed the following seven (7) teaching standards:

Standard I: Knowledge of Students and Student Learning
Teachers acquire knowledge of each student, and demonstrate knowledge of student development and learning to promote student achievement.

Standard II: Knowledge of Content and Instructional Planning
Teachers know the content they are responsible for teaching and plan instruction that ensures growth and achievement for all students.

Standard III: Instructional Practice
Teachers implement instruction that engages and challenges all students to meet or exceed the learning standards.

Standard IV: Learning Environment
Teachers work with all students to create a dynamic learning environment that supports achievement and growth.

Standard V: Assessment and Student Learning
Teachers use multiple measures to assess and document student growth, evaluate instructional effectiveness, and modify instruction.

Standard VI: Professional Responsibilities and Collaboration
Teachers demonstrate professional responsibility and engage relevant stakeholders to maximize student growth, development, and learning.

Standard VII: Professional Growth
Teachers set informed goals and strive for continuous professional growth.

Each of our six (6) building professional learning committees is represented by the District Professional Learning Council, which is responsible for designing this plan. Some members of the committee are appointed by OPTA or SRPA. One teacher coordinator will represent each content area. All members of the Committee, including administrators, teachers, parents, support staff, and higher education representatives, are appointed by the Orchard Park Central School District Board of Education.

Professional growth and participation hours per year is the standard set by, but not limited to, Superintendent's Conference Days, the annual school calendar, and school site activities determined by each building.

NYS Next Generation English Language Arts and Mathematics Learning Standards

This professional growth and participation plan is aligned with the NYS Next Generation Learning Standards and assessment program.

Access the New York State Next Generation Learning Standards:

- English Language Arts Standards
- Mathematics Standards

NYS Educational Leadership Standards

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) 2008 standards organizes the functions that help define strong school leadership under six standards. These standards represent the broad, high-priority themes that education leaders must address in order to promote the success of every student.

The **Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium** (ISLLC) Standards for Educational Leaders were developed by a group of educators, policymakers, and practitioners to provide a framework for effective school leadership. There are six standards in total:

Visionary Leadership: Educational leaders should have a clear and compelling vision for their school or district, and they should be able to communicate that vision to others.

Instructional Improvement: Leaders should promote a culture of continuous improvement and be able to use data to inform decision-making and improve instruction.

Effective Management: Leaders should be skilled at managing people, resources, and processes to create a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Inclusive Practice: Leaders should be committed to creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment where all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Ethical Leadership: Leaders should model ethical behavior and ensure that all members of the school community uphold high standards of integrity and accountability.

Contextual Leadership: Leaders should be able to understand and respond to the unique needs of their school or district, and they should be able to adapt their leadership style accordingly.

These standards are intended to guide the preparation, evaluation, and professional learning of educational leaders at all levels, from aspiring principals to district superintendents.

The PSELs communicate expectations to practitioners, supporting institutions, professional associations, policymakers, and the public about the work, qualities, and values of effective

educational leaders. These standards are organized around the domains, qualities, and values of leadership work that research and practice indicate contribute to students' academic success and well-being.

Needs Analysis for Professional Learning

A needs analysis is a crucial step in developing an effective professional learning plan. It helps to identify areas where teachers and staff need additional support or training so that professional learning can be tailored to meet those needs. Orchard Park CSD uses the following steps to conduct a needs analysis:

1. **Define the Purpose of the Needs Analysis:** The analysis is based on the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) and student achievement data and focused on improving student outcomes.
2. **Gather Data:** OPCSD gathers data throughout the year to identify areas where teachers and staff need additional support or training. This is done through a variety of methods, such as stakeholder surveys, student input, classroom observations, and assessment results - local and state - as well as building-based professional learning committees (PLC) and the district professional learning council.
3. **Analyze the Data:** The building and District PLCs and administrative groups, review data to identify patterns and trends, focused on areas such as teacher knowledge and skills, student performance, and school culture and climate, and to identify any gaps or areas where additional support is needed. They then discuss these needs and make decisions on professional learning opportunities that address those needs.
4. **Prioritize Needs:** The identified needs are prioritized based on the impact that addressing each need will have on student outcomes and based on available resources.
5. **Develop Professional Learning Goals:** The District develops professional learning goals based on the prioritized needs. These goals are specific, measurable, and aligned with the district's strategic plan and goals. They also address the identified needs and are focused on improving student outcomes.
6. **Identify Professional Learning Opportunities:** With the professional learning goals in place, the District has identified professional learning opportunities that will address the identified needs, including workshops, conferences, webinars, and online courses, offered locally, through BOCES or other organizations.
7. **Develop a Professional Learning Plan:** Finally, the district develops and revises its professional learning plan that outlines the specific activities, timelines, and resources needed to achieve the professional learning goals. This plan also identifies the measures that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning.

Guidelines

- Teacher needs should shape professional learning, as evidenced by the Annual Professional Performance Reviews results.
- A demonstrated increase in teaching skill (or instructional methodologies and/or content knowledge) is an expected outcome of an individual's professional learning.
- Teachers must remain current in their knowledge base of content subject matter and instructional strategies.
- Teacher learning opportunities should be clearly constructed and based on research in effective teaching.
- Teachers can minimally meet professional learning expectations by completing hours related to contractual obligations and planned activities on designated staff development days.
- Professional learning activities/experiences must be assessed on an ongoing and continuous basis for intended impact. Use of defensible evaluation tools/methods must be used to determine modifications to planned activities/experiences

Congruence Among Student And Teacher Needs And District Goals

Student performance deficiencies are identified by:

- Students not actualizing their maximum potential in personal and academic development.
- Students not achieving the state reference point on the New York State Standards and Assessments.
- Students not performing with distinction on the New York State Testing Program.
- Students not making reading progress at expected rates as determined through the universal screening tool.

District Professional Learning goals are focused on accomplishing the following:

- Academic success as measured under ESSA. The District will use NYS assessment data (3-8 assessments, Regents exams), Graduation data (graduation rates, percent of students earning advanced diplomas), and other measures of accountability under ESSA. *(Teaching Standards I, II, III and V.)*
- We will enhance professional knowledge, skills, and awareness of pedagogical experiences. The District Comprehensive Improvement Plan (DCIP) has identified these focus areas: recognize and embrace diversity, promote equity and inclusion, and identify and remove barriers to ensure access and opporutnities. The complete DCIP plan is linked here. Additionally, we will provide professional learning to teachers aligning with New York State's Culturally Responsive Education Framework.*(Teaching Standards I, II, III, IV and V)*
- We will promote research, collaboration, and reflection to improve professional performance through our embedded professional learning support with Instructional Coaches. Teaching Standards V, VI, and VII

Needs Analysis Sources To Be Used For Planning

- ESSA Accountability Measures and NYS School Report Cards
- Basic Educational Data System (BEDS)
- Locally administered assessment tools such as:
    - Fastbridge or STAR universal screening tools
    - DIAL & new student screening tools
    - Midterms and final exams
- New York State Assessment results for grades 3-8
- Progress reports and report cards
- National benchmarks for student performance - SAT, PSAT, ACT
- College Board Advanced Placement performance
- Student, parent, and teacher surveys (stakeholder surveys)
- Interviews with students one year post-graduation
- Exit interviews with retiring staff members
- Superintendent's Conference Day evaluation data
- Professional Learning Council course evaluation data (Frontline)

Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE)

CTLE stands for **Continuing Teacher and Leader Education,** and it is a requirement mandated by the New York State Education Department for all teachers and leaders to renew their certification. Holders of professional certificates in classroom teaching, educational leadership service, and Level III teaching assistant certificate holders are required to successfully complete 100 clock hours during the registration period if they practice in a NY State school district or BOCES. Orchard Park is an approved CTLE sponsor pursuant to Section 80-6 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The term of approval is from July 1, 2021, and ends on June 30, 2026.

As part of Orchard Park School District's Professional Learning Plan, the district will offer CTLE-approved professional learning opportunities for teachers and leaders to meet their certification requirements. These opportunities will align with the state standards and focus on enhancing the knowledge and skills of teachers and leaders in areas such as curriculum development, technology integration, assessment, and instructional practices. By offering CTLE-approved professional learning opportunities, the district ensures that its teachers and leaders meet the state's requirements and stay up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices in education, ultimately leading to improved student learning and achievement. This document outlines acceptable CTLE activities.

Educators should maintain personal records of completed CTLE hours. Teachers and Teacher Assistants should enter learning activities into Frontline Professional Growth to track CTLE hours.

Once an activity is complete, a certificate of completion is available in Frontline. It is the responsibility of the teacher or teacher assistant to print the certificate in the event the Department of Education requests it.

Language Acquisition Requirement and Exemption

Teachers who have the ESOL certificate, English to Speakers of Other Languages, must complete a minimum of 50% of their required CTLE in language acquisition. All other professional certificates must complete a minimum of 15% of the required CTLE clock hours in language acquisition. However, Orchard Park School District has received a waiver that is available to school districts where there are less than 30 English Language Learners (ELLs) enrolled, or ELLs comprise less than 5% of the district's enrollment. The waiver only applies to the language acquisition hours, not the 100 total CTLE hour requirement.

Record Of Professional Learning

The District uses a web-based system for teachers and staff to maintain their record of professional learning activities. It is the responsibility of the staff member to enter such activities, obtain necessary approvals, and verify attendance. Such records may be helpful for teachers as evidence of their required professional learning for CTLE credit.

Professional Learning For Administrators

The professional growth and participation of the district administration will honor the same expectations it proposes for teachers. Beyond the three (3) staff development goals for teachers, the administration has established a fourth (4th) goal. That goal states:

> *The District Administration will develop a common understanding, procedure, and criteria for the evaluation of all personnel.*

Administrative staff development activities to achieve this goal include common substantive knowledge about performance standards, role expectations, observation 18 items, student population, evidence of effectiveness, and the recording of information for evaluative purposes consistent with Education Law 3012d. To this end, administrative staff assigned to observe and evaluate teachers will meet the requirements outlined in Education Law 3012d to be deemed by the Superintendent of Schools as lead evaluators. This includes but is not limited to, evaluation and observation training for all new administrators and ongoing inter-rater reliability sessions to ensure consistency and reliability in our observation/evaluation practices. The time to pursue these goals will be ongoing throughout the year in the format of summer in-service weeks, Superintendent's Conference Days, Administrative Cabinet agendas, in-service training, and the annual school year and day calendar. Further, all Orchard Park Principals' Association members shall participate in a mentoring program during their first year of appointment to a new position. The goal is to support building-level administrators in leadership, building and district operations and resources, school and community culture, contractual matters, and professional growth.

Professional Learning For School-Related Professionals

Our district believes that all of its employees share the responsibility for creating an environment conducive to success for all students. We must continually reflect on the experiences provided for these students. Therefore, training and education will be made available to every SRP. This effort will improve the total school environment for our students and staff.

Each new member of the SRP unit will be offered mentor job training and educational opportunities to enhance his/her daily job performance. Among the priorities here will be training in student behavior management, instructional support, computer technology, emergency medical training, job-specific health and safety training, and legal issues.

Forms of Learning Opportunities for Faculty & Staff

OPCSD PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

FORMS OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY & STAFF

Below is a summary of the various learning opportunities available for faculty.
Where appropriate, these opportunities may be available for staff.
Please reach out to the Curriculum Office if you have any questions.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CATALOG (PLC)

A catalog of course offerings aligned with District and CDEP goals.

Characteristics:
Faculty/Staff propose courses for consideration;
- Course proposals are reviewed by District PDC and SubCab;
- Courses can be face-to-face, online, or hybrid instruction and occur outside of the workday;
- An instructor is named, who is responsible for the planning and facilitation;
- A co-instructor can be considered when the class size exceeds 25;
- Generally, the class must have a minimum of 10 participants to run;
- The District PLC has a budget to support 100 instructor hours each trimester.

BUILDING SPECIFIC ACTIVITY (BSA)

A course offered within a school building, which is responsive to the interests, needs and/or goals of the building.

Characteristics:
- Faculty/Staff propose BSAs for consideration, which are reviewed, approved/denied by the building PLC, Principal and Assistant Superintendent for C&I;
- Face-to-face professional learning taking place outside of the workday;
- An instructor is named, who is responsible for the planning and facilitation;
- A co-instructor can be considered when the class size exceeds 25;
- Class must have a minimum of 10 participants to run;
- Enrollment is limited to the school for the first 5 business days -- If appropriate, the offering can be opened up to others after 5 business days;
- Each building is provided a budget to support up to 15 hours of instructor pay for BSAs.

STUDY GROUP

A group who meets to study a particular subject and then reports their findings or recommendations.

Characteristics:
- Differs from a book study in that it may include several sources of information (articles, research studies, websites, visitations, etc.);
- Shared participation and facilitation among the group;
- No paid instructor as all share the role of researcher and facilitator;
- Credit is given for the discussion group meeting time (not for the reading time);
- Generally, participants are responsible for securing the texts (i.e., public library, purchase, or borrowing from a professional learning library in the district, etc.);
- The findings or recommendations from a study group will be shared with others (i.e., faculty meeting, district-level committee, etc.).

BOOK STUDY

A group assembles to discuss the reflections and learning of a book that will lead to the application of new ideas, knowledge or skills in the classroom.

Characteristics:
- Shared participation and facilitation among the group;
- No paid instructor as all share the role of facilitator;
- Credit is given for the discussion group meeting time (not for the reading of the text);
- Generally, participants are responsible for securing the text (i.e., public library, purchase, or borrowing from a professional learning library in the district, if available).

PLEASE NOTE:
Other opportunities for teachers/staff include Superintendent's Conference Days, faculty meetings, conferences (outside of District), visitations, and courses through universities, colleges, BOCES, and other organizations.

Professional Learning Sources & Activities

All teachers and staff members may enroll and submit for professional learning hours from acceptable professional learning providers. *Please note:* Some of these activities may or may not qualify for CTLE or district professional learning credit, pending administrator approval. This document outlines the approval process for credit.

Source /Activity	Description
Orchard Park New Teacher Orientation & New Teacher Academy *For newly hired K-12 teachers*	● Provide newly hired teachers with background information, orientation on technology, mission and vision of the district,
Professional Learning for Teacher Cohorts	● Teachers come together to explore and discuss various education-related topics and apply them to their classrooms.
Superintendent's Conference Days	● Guidance from coordinators on professional learning for departments.
Building Faculty/Staff Meetings	● Updates on school policies, curriculum changes, student performance, ongoing learning towards district initiatives and goals, etc.
District Professional Learning Catalog (PLC) Fall / Winter / Summer	● Orchard Park teachers submit course proposals to provide learning opportunities in alignment with district goals *(*See description below.)*
Building Specific Activities (BSA)	● Courses are developed by building-level professional learning committees to meet the learning needs of its teachers.
Book Studies & Study Groups	● Structured guided reflection activities focused on student learning.
Outside sources: ● Regional BOCES and Regional Information Centers (RIC) ● Erie-Catt Teacher Center ● NYSCATE	● Teachers sign up for courses based on interests or needs.
Curriculum & Special Projects	● Grade levels/departments participating in collaborative planning and revision of curriculum, new programs, and instructional methods.
State and National Conferences	● Gain valuable information, resources, and networking opportunities that help stay up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices in education (when the budget allows)

NYS Master Teacher Program	• Designed to recognize and support experienced STEM teachers in New York State

The Orchard Park Central School District values professional learning opportunities that are offered by Orchard Park faculty and staff. This document provides guidance for developing professional learning courses. Orchard Park School District Learning Catalog is released three times per year.

When Orchard Park Staff find professional learning opportunities provided by organizations outside of the Orchard Park School District, they should enter this learning into Frontline as Activity Not in Catalog.

Position-Specific Recurring Professional Learning

The District has committed to the following professional learning activities for faculty and staff in specific positions:

Professional Learning Activity	Position-Specific Audience
New Teacher Academy • FERPA & Confidentiality • Technology • Content-Specific Offerings (ELA, Math)	Newly Hired Teachers/Administrators
Crisis Prevention and Intervention (CPI)	Building-Level Teams
Orton-Gillingham Classroom Level (30 hours)	K-3 Classroom Teachers Elementary Special Ed. Teachers AIS Teachers
AED / CPR / Stop the Bleed	Emergency Response Teams Athletic Coaches
DASA (annual faculty meetings)	All Staff
Violence prevention and intervention (annual faculty meetings)	All Staff
Child abuse recognition (annual faculty meetings)	All Staff
The Reading League - The Science of Reading	K-6 Teachers
UFLI	K-3 Teachers

Instructional Coaching

Quality teaching has been found to be the single most important factor in raising student achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wenglinsky, 2000). Educators are required to continually learn and improve their skill sets in all content areas. Research has shown that educators only have a 10% retention and implementation rate of new information transferred to the classroom following traditional training sessions. Whereas educators receiving Instructional Coaching following traditional training had a 92% implementation rate of new information transferred to classroom instruction (Bush, 1984; Cornett & Knight, 2009; Knight, 2007; Parise & Spillane, 2010). The Orchard Park School District has incorporated Instructional Coaching as a way to increase 14 academic skills of students, raise student achievement, and improve the pedagogy of teachers.

What is Instructional Coaching?

Instructional Coaching is defined as a partnership approach to working with teachers to improve instruction and student learning through targeted research-based instructional practice (Knight, 2007). Instructional Coaches partner with educators to identify student-focused goals and use research-based practices to improve student learning.

What is the Impact Cycle?

The teacher and coach will collaboratively decide on the framework that is best for them and their situation. However, one highly effective coaching cycle is the Impact Cycle (Knight, J. 2007). In this model, the teacher/coach partners focus on Identifying a goal, Learning, and Improvement, as detailed below.

IDENTIFY: The teacher gets a clear picture of current reality by watching a video of their lesson or by reviewing observation data. The coach asks questions to help the teacher to identify a student-focused goal.

LEARN: The coach shares teaching strategies or instructional tools to aid the teacher in progress toward the student-focused goal. The teacher chooses an approach to modeling that they would like to observe and identifies a time to watch modeling. The coach provides modeling in one or more formats, and the two establish a timeline to implement the practice.

IMPROVE: As the teacher implements the practice, data is gathered (by the teacher or coach in class or while viewing video)about the effectiveness and impact of the strategy and the coach and teacher meet to confirm the direction and monitor progress. The data is also used to make adaptations, as needed, and plan the next actions until the goal is met.

The power of coaching can improve school culture, open classroom doors to new possibilities of learning on the part of the teacher and student, place the needs of overwhelmed teachers front and center and provide them with support, and place an emphasis on lifelong learning for all (Knight, 2011). Equally important, coaching promotes collaboration and can lead to a reduction in teachers feeling isolated. Teachers' feeling of isolation directly correlates to teacher burnout, whereas teacher collaboration is a protective factor to avoid burn-out. According to Lortie (1975) isolation is a defining characteristic of the teaching profession which ultimately can lead to a series of negative aspects such as job dissatisfaction and burnout (Gaikwad and Brantly, 1992) as well as a sense of being completely alone (Fimian, 1982; Eisner, 1992). When teachers engage in instructional coaching, they are afforded a "thought partner" and a colleague to collaborate with, explore strategies to improve student learning, and engage in reflective practices. Teachers are not left to "go it alone" when engaged in the collaborative, supportive structure that instructional coaching offers.

OPCSD Annual Professional Performance Review

The Orchard Park Central School District is committed to supporting the development of effective teachers and administrators. To this end, the District engages in an evaluation process of all professional staff. Consistent with Education Law §30-2.3, the Orchard Park Central School District has an APPR process in place. The state-approved Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan can be found on the District website, located here. The APPR process and evaluation tool drives the professional growth experience for each individual.

For those teachers and principals subject to Education 3012d, the Board of Education has approved a plan that will result in a professional receiving a single composite effectiveness score and a final quality rating of "highly effective," "effective," "developing," or "ineffective." Such scores will be based on assessment data (i.e., student growth and local measures) and state approved rubrics to evaluate performance, including observations, goal setting, and artifacts. Teachers will be evaluated using the Framework for Teaching (2007) by Charlotte Danielson, and principals and assistant principals will be evaluated using the Multidimensional Principal Performance Rubric.

Those teachers and principals not subject to Education Law 3012d (i.e., school psychologists, etc.) will participate in an APPR process to determine the goals and improvement needs of each professional. Effectiveness will be measured by manifest changes in teacher professional behaviors and so documented on the APPR form.

Assessment Instruments

This professional growth and participation plan is aligned with the NYS Next Generation Learning Standards and assessment program. Student learning gaps are identified by individual performance on the English Language Arts and Mathematics assessments (Grades 3-8); the science assessment (grades 4 and 8); and in Grades 9-12, on the Regents examinations program. In addition, universal screening tools, district-developed assessments, such as publisher and teacher made tests; local common assessments; and the quarterly report cards are all measures of benchmark performance used to determine student success and to articulate student needs.

We recognize that public education in New York is a standards-driven process with significant assessment experiences to provide accountability for the student, teacher, school, and district. Therefore, the District encourages the work of the Professional Learning Council; the Teaching and Learning Committee; Administrative Cabinet; and the Community Engagement and Wellness Committee.. The role of administrators, curriculum coordinators, instructional leaders, grade, team, and department-level discussions aimed at analysis, diagnosis, and corrective action is of critical importance to filling learning gaps and providing classroom experiences for students to meet and exceed the standards.

Program Evaluation

This plan will be evaluated for both individual and programmatic effectiveness. Effectiveness is measured by a resultant change in teacher/staff practice and behavior as well as the attainment of DCIP goals. The district staff will enhance the quality of teaching and learning for all through the processes of reflection and self-assessment, collaboration with peers, and extending a knowledge base for improved instructional delivery. Interdependence with professional colleagues is the conceptual hallmark of this plan.

The implementation of the plan will be manifested in the efficient scheduling of time currently available by contract, calendar and the creation of more hours through substitution and release time.

Orchard Park School Related Professionals (SRP) Association Mentoring Program

Introduction

Working as an SRP encompasses intuitive, cognitive, affective, and judgment abilities. Effective mentoring can help the intern develop these skills. Webster defines a mentor as a trusted counselor, guide, tutor, coach, or friend entrusted with education. The goal of mentoring is to improve the quality of education through the collegial interaction of the entire staff – administrators, instructional leaders, classroom teachers, counselors, and support staff. The mentor is an important facilitator in fulfilling the goals of the program. Mentoring at OPCSD should encourage excellence in the instructional program through good collaboration between teacher and support staff.

Recommendations of the mentors and interns are vital to the success of the Orchard Park Central School mentoring program. Therefore periodic re-evaluation of this document is recommended.

The term "intern" refers to a person for whom a mentor has been provided. No other definition is intended either implicitly or explicitly.

The Mentor Coordinators

Individuals will be chosen to serve as Mentor Coordinators, (one in elementary, one in Middle School, and one in High School). The selection will be made in a timely fashion in order that she/he may begin the process prior to the opening of school. The coordinators will usually not be assigned an intern. Compensation will be equal to that of a mentor.

The applicant for the position of Mentor Coordinator must meet the following qualifications:

- Be on the current school mentor eligibility list (see Mentoring Assignments)

The Mentor Coordinator will have the following responsibilities:

- Maintain the list of eligible mentors.
- Initiate the mentor selection process as soon as an opening is anticipated.
- Consult with the school principal/supervisor to identify appropriate intern/mentor partnerships.
- Implement the mentoring process prior to the opening of school or as soon as possible.
- Coordinate the mentor training sessions.
- Collect Statement of Completion (see last page of checklist) and submit to the Human Resource Office for filing.
- Act as a consultant in mentoring matters.

- Collaborate with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources regarding program progress.

Mentoring Assignments

Who qualifies to be a mentor? Any SRP who has completed an OPCSD sanctioned mentor training program and has been with the district for 1 year or more. Staff members who meet this criteria will have their names placed on the list of eligible mentors by the mentor coordinator.

Who qualifies to be assigned a mentor? All first year SRPs, new to the Orchard Park Central School District, qualify. A transferred SRP who has never been in that building before may be assigned a mentor depending on the circumstances. There will be discussion with the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. These are usually half year assignments.

Mentor Selection Process

The mentor coordinator will consult with the supervisor to identify appropriate intern – mentor partnerships. SRPs hired before the September opening of school should have a mentor assigned prior to the first day of school. SRPs hired subsequent to the opening for school should have a mentor in place on their first day of employment.

Mentoring Responsibilities

Interns and mentors are required to participate fully in the Mentoring Program. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to,

- Attendance at meetings scheduled by the mentor coordinator
- Visitations
- Discussions focusing on professional development (see mentor checklist)

Length Of Service, Stipend, Meeting Times

Mentoring is a relationship beginning on the date of Mentor-Intern assignment and concluding 10 school months, or 12 school months, depending on the position of the intern. A mentor will be paid a stipend as stipulated by the current "Collective Negotiations Agreement between the Orchard Park Central School District and the Orchard Park SRP Association." Mentor and intern will meet whenever the two can find the time they both are available, before or after school, lunch or any agreed upon time.

Orchard Park Teachers' Association Mentoring Program

New York State Education Department Amendment of Professional Learning Plan to Include Mentoring Program --- 8NYCRR 102.2 (dd) In accordance with the Board of Regents regulations [8NYCRR 102.2 (dd)], which amends school district professional learning plans to include mentoring programs, the Orchard Park Central School District has developed and include the following mentoring program as a component of its plan for professional growth and participation:

Introduction

Teaching encompasses intuitive, cognitive, affective, and judgment abilities. Effective mentoring can help the intern develop these skills. Webster defines a mentor as a trusted counselor or guide, tutor, coach, or friend entrusted with education. The goal of mentoring is to improve the quality of education through the collegial interaction of the entire staff – administrators, instructional leaders, classroom teachers, counselors, and support staff. The mentor is an important facilitator in fulfilling the goals of the program. Mentoring in the Orchard Park Central School District encourages excellence in the instructional program through good teaching.

Recommendations of the mentors and interns are vital to the success of the Orchard Park Central School District mentoring program. Therefore, periodic re-evaluation of this document is recommended.

In this plan, the term "intern" refers to a person for whom a mentor has been provided. No other definition is intended either implicitly or explicitly. The term "teacher" is defined by the "Collective Negotiations Agreement between the Orchard Park Central School District and the Orchard Park Teachers Association."

Attributes Of The Teacher Mentoring Model Used At OPCSD

1. Mentors are trained.
2. Mentors receive a stipend as described in the teacher's contract.
3. Each mentor preferably is assigned no more than one intern per year.
4. Mentoring at OPCSD is non-evaluative.
5. Mentoring at OPCSD encourages self-reflection.
6. The Mentor-Intern relationship is confidential and collegial in nature.
7. Administrators may share, with the mentor and the intern, their thoughts regarding the performance and progress of the intern. However, administrators will not request mentors to report on the progress and performance of an intern.
8. Mentors visit their interns and watch them do their job at least twice during a year of mentoring.
9. Mentors meet both formally and informally with interns.

10. Mentors are expected to cover all items on the checklist. Some items are covered in greater depth than others, depending on the needs of the intern.
11. Mentors are expected to arrange a 3-way meeting involving the mentor, the intern and the administrator in charge of the intern's formal observation process to discuss the observation process.
12. Administrators are open to the possibility that the mentor might participate in the pre-observation conference and/or the observation and/or the post observation conference. The mentor's participation in the above mentioned parts of the observation process would be with the agreement of the intern and the administrator.
13. Mentors and interns acknowledge the end of their contractual relationship by signing the "*Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience*" form. The mentor and intern are to complete both sides of this form and send it to the Human Resource office. The Personnel office will review the form, have the superintendent sign the *Verification* form and will place a copy into the intern's file. The original *Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience* form will be returned to the intern.

Procedure For Selecting Mentors

After being trained, an individual may nominate himself in order to be placed in the mentor pool. A copy of the training certificate received from completing the training should be sent to the shared decision making/building effectiveness team (SDM/BET) or its designated representative (mentor coordinator or other teacher).

The mentor/intern pairing will result from the collaboration between the principal and the mentor coordinator or other teacher(s) from the mentor pool who have been empowered by the SDM/BET. Teachers hired before the September opening of school should have a mentor assigned prior to the first day of school.

Teachers hired subsequent to the opening of school should have a mentor in place on their first day of employment. Mentors are to be provided to all new teachers and new regular substitutes.

Further, the district will consider providing limited mentor assistance for unusual situations if requested in writing by a teacher. The teacher should provide his or her rationale, including the impact on instruction, to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Pupil Services. An administrative decision will be made promptly, and the parties informed.

The District expects that most grade level changes and building changes, particularly those that are voluntary, would not warrant a mentor assignment, and those that do would typically only require a mentor on a short term or reduced basis. However, each situation will be considered separately.

Preparation Of Mentors

All those involved with the mentoring program in the Orchard Park Central School District recognize the importance of ongoing mentor training. This program will be provided by the District and the

Orchard Park Teachers Association. An analysis of the training needs will be ongoing in order to determine training topics. Mentors will be involved in the collaborative planning of training sessions.

The current mentor training course in the Orchard Park Central School District consists of a mandatory 15-hour training. This course includes two out-of-class assignments that require participants to do a classroom visit within the school day. The course also includes but is not limited to, activities and topics such as:

1. OPCSD Mentor Program
2. Purpose of mentoring
3. The nature of the mentor/intern relationship
4. Time management of the mentor/intern relationship
5. Building culture
6. Comparison of educational philosophies
7. Role-playing scenarios
8. Purpose and Process of Formal Observations and APPR
9. The required *Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience* form

Types Of Mentoring Activities

In the Orchard Park Central School District, a mentor will be expected to do the following:

1. Provide guidance and stability to the intern.
2. Assist the intern in the implementation of the policies and procedures of the school building and system.
3. Familiarize the intern with the curriculum and assist in the planning and execution of the educational program.
4. Assist the intern in identifying the various human and curricular resources that can assist in the educational process.
5. Observe the intern, provide advice, and demonstrate various techniques in instruction, discipline, classroom management, and professional responsibilities.
6. Facilitate opportunities for the intern to observe other professionals in the classroom environment.
7. Provide guidance in dealing with parents and community groups.
8. Encourage and establish communication among the administration, mentor and intern for periodic review of the mentoring process.
9. Discuss relevant items on a district approved checklist.
10. Submit the statement of completion referred to as S*uperintendent Verification of Mentored Experience* form to the Personnel office at the end of the mentoring experience. The Personnel office will review the form, have the Superintendent sign the form, and will return the original to the intern. One copy of this form will be maintained in the intern's personnel file. personnelThe intern is responsible for submitting the form to the State Education Department.

Time Allocation For Mentoring

Time allotted for mentoring in the Orchard Park Central School District may include, but shall not be limited to, scheduling common planning sessions before and after the school day and during summer orientation sessions. The length of service for a mentor will begin on the date of Mentor/Intern assignment by SDM/BET and conclude 10 school months later. The mentor will be paid a stipend as stipulated by the current "Collective Negotiations Agreement between the Orchard Park Central School District and the Orchard Park Teachers Association". Mentoring experiences of less than a full 10-month year are prorated.

Record Keeping Requirements

It is acknowledged that the Orchard Park Central School District is required to maintain documentation of the implementation of the mentoring program. Such documentation shall include for each individual receiving mentoring pursuant to the mentoring program the following:

- Name of the intern
- The certificate title under which the intern is employed
- The name of the mentor
- The length of the mentoring experience

The mentor and intern are required to submit a "Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience" form to the Human Resource office at the end of the mentoring experience. The Personnel office will review the Verification form, have the Superintendent sign the form, and will return the original form to the intern. One copy of this form will be maintained in the intern's personnel file.

Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience

The Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience form is to verify that a mentored teaching experience was completed by the individual named below. It is to be confirmed by the superintendent of schools or, if the mentored experience was completed while the candidate was employed by a nonpublic school, the principal or person in an equivalent position with the school.

This form must be completely filled out by candidates who are submitting an application for a PROFESSIONAL teaching certificate. Candidates for Professional certification are required, in accordance with Part 80-3.4 of Commissioner's Regulations, to complete a Mentored teaching experience in their first year of teaching with a New York State Initial classroom teaching certificate. Please complete the shaded areas verifying that the candidate received a mentored experience in his/her first year teaching while employed by the district/BOCES/nonpublic school or was exempted from this requirement.

Orchard Park Central School District Mentoring Checklists

★ OPCSD K-8 Mentoring Checklist

Tenured Teachers In Need Of Intervention

At any time should a teacher be unable or unwilling to successfully address the identified criteria outlined in the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) document or should criteria rated unsatisfactory be so severe, the teacher will be placed in a teacher intervention program (TIP).

1. The teacher will be offered an intervention mentor in accordance with the current collective bargaining agreement. The mentor will be an active participant in this process including attendance at all formal communication meetings.
2. Together with the responsible administrator, teacher, and mentor, measurable goals will be established and a timeline for progress/successful completion will be set.
3. The intervention plan will continue to focus on criteria within the Annual Professional Performance Review. It will also include recommendations for professional growth, i.e., university course work, in-service, staff development, peer observation/coaching, portfolios, etc. directly related to the identified area(s) rated unsatisfactory.
4. It is expected that the responsible administrator(s) will perform on-going formal and informal observations.
5. It is expected that ongoing meetings, as well as oral and written communications, will be provided to assess and document progress.
6. The assumption is that the goals for improvement will be met and the tenured teacher will then return to the regular Annual Professional Performance Review process.
7. If the goals are not achieved, the matter shall be referred to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Administration for further considerations/actions.

Teachers With An Initial Certificate – NYS Mentoring Requirement

Per State Education Department requirements, holders of the Initial or Conditional Initial certificate must receive mentoring in their first year of teaching or school building leadership service in a public school district. An exception to this requirement applies to certificate holders who have at least two years of teaching or educational leadership service, respectively, prior to receiving the Initial or Conditional Initial certificate; they may be exempted from this requirement.

The purpose of the mentoring requirement is to provide beginning educators in teaching or school building leadership service with support in order to gain skillfulness and more easily make the transition to one's first professional experience under an Initial certificate. Satisfaction of a mentored experience is one of the requirements individuals must meet in order to qualify for the Professional certificate. Public school districts must maintain documentation of the mentored experience. Intern must submit a *Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience* (see attached) to SED when applying for their "Professional" certificate. Instructions regarding completion of the *Superintendent Verification* form are provided below.

All new teachers (Initial & Professional certificate holders) are strongly encouraged to create an individual TEACH account at the SED Office of Teaching Initiatives (OTI) website: www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert. OTI provides very important information for all Initial and Professional certificate holders.

Important Information Regarding the *Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience* Form

This form is only to be used for candidates who are submitting an application for a PROFESSIONAL teaching certificate. It is to be completed by the superintendent of schools or, if the mentored experience was completed while the candidate was employed by a nonpublic school, the principal or person in an equivalent position with the school.

Orchard Park Principals' Association Administrative Mentoring Program

The purpose of the mentoring program is to provide new association members in the probationary period of their development an opportunity to be mentored by an experienced and tenured building level administrator. The duration of the program is planned for one year, with the option to continue beyond that year with the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

The District will also consider providing a limited mentor experience to an OPPA member for assuming a new leadership role within the district. The administrator should provide his/her request and rationale, in writing, to the Superintendent of Schools for consideration.

The Superintendent of Schools will be informed of the proposed mentor selection by the OPPA President prior to formalizing the assignment. The Superintendent may provide insight on the mentor pairing, however, the final decision on the appointment rests with the association president. The mentor and probationary administrator will create a meeting schedule, which has them meeting for a minimum of 40 hours throughout the year.

- Mentors receive a stipend described in the OPPA contract.
- Mentoring is non-evaluative.
- Mentoring encourages self-reflection.
- The mentor-mentee relationship is confidential and collegial in nature.
- Mentors will visit their interns at least twice during the year to observe the mentee leading and/or facilitating a staff meeting, parent meeting, or other group.
- Mentors are expected to cover all of the topics listed on the mentor checklist.

Reassignment of Mentors: During the course of the mentor relationship, there may be a need to reassign a mentor. The process of reassignment will be conducted by the OPPA president.

Orchard Park Central Office Administrators' Mentoring Program

The purpose of the mentoring program is to provide new association members in the probationary period of their development an opportunity to be mentored by an experienced and tenured district level administrator. The duration of the program is planned for one year, with the option to continue beyond that year with the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.

The District will also consider providing a limited mentor experience to an OPCOA member for assuming a new leadership role within the district. The administrator should provide his/her request and rationale, in writing, to the Superintendent of Schools for consideration.

The Superintendent of Schools will be informed of the proposed mentor selection by the OPCOA President prior to the formalizing the assignment. The Superintendent may provide insight on the mentor pairing, however, the final decision on the appointment rests with the association.

The mentor and probationary administrator will create a meeting schedule, which has them meeting for a minimum of 40 hours throughout the year.

- Mentors receive a stipend described in the OPCOA Memorandum of Agreement.

- Mentoring is non-evaluative.

- Mentoring encourages self-reflection.

- The mentor-mentee relationship is confidential and collegial in nature.

- Mentors will visit their interns at least twice during the year to observe the mentee leading and/or facilitating a staff meeting, a parent meeting, or other group.

- Mentors are expected to cover topics listed on the checklist and any other topics that are appropriate to the position.

Reassignment of Mentors: during the course of the mentor relationship there may be a need to reassign a mentor. The process of reassignment will be conducted by the OPCOA President.

Important Information Regarding the Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience Form

At the end of an intern's mentoring experience, it is necessary to complete the Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience form. Both sides of the form must be filled in and signed.

The Orchard Park Central School District is required to maintain documentation of every mentoring experience, which includes the following: name of intern, certificate title of intern, name of mentor, and length of mentoring experience. The verification form is a very important document for both OPCSD and the State Education Department.

Once the mentoring experience is concluded, the intern must submit the completed Superintendent Verification of Mentored Experience form (signed by the Supervisor and the mentor) to the HR office. Human Resources will review the paperwork and obtain the superintendent's signature on the verification form.

A copy of the form will be maintained in the intern's file in the District Office, and the original form will be returned to the intern. As required by New York State for Professional Certification the intern is responsible for submitting the completed original form to NYSED Office of Teaching Initiatives, 89 Washington Ave EB RM 5N, Albany, NY 12234.

Appendix