Sweet Home Central School District

Professional Learning Plan

2026-2027

Updated and Approved by BOE - September XXX

CTLE Provider # 1766

Sweet Home Schools....
Every student, one community, ready for the future.

Sweet Home Central School District

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Introduction

The key components of NYSED regulations regarding the development of Professional Learning Plans included the following:

A. A committee representing teachers, administrators, parents, and higher education institutions was formed to develop the PLP. A majority of the members of the professional development committee must be teachers selected by their collective bargaining unit.

B. District staff must work collaboratively to identify student needs, teacher needs, goals, objectives, strategies and activities for professional development.

C. The PLP must describe the alignment of professional development with the New York Common Core Learning Standards and assessments. It must also address how the school district will measure the impact of professional development on student achievement and teachers' practices.

D. While this plan supports district goals to be achieved over a three-year period, it is updated annually for the Board of Education.

E. Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, in line with Continuing Teacher and Leadership Education (CTLE) requirements, each school district must describe how it will provide their newly certified teachers and Level II teaching assistants with opportunities to participate in 100 hours of professional development every five years (20 hours per year) by a sponsor approved by NYSED. The professional development provided by the district must align with the goals outlined in the Professional Learning Plan and must include training in language acquisition addressing the needs of English language learners, including a focus on best practices for co-teaching strategies, and integrating language and content instruction for English language learners.

Purpose

The purpose of the Professional Learning Plan (PLP) is to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that educators participate in substantial professional development in order to remain current with their profession and meet the learning needs of students. The plan is a "living document" that will be monitored and modified, at least annually, in order to reflect the dynamic needs of students and educators.

This plan shall serve as the basis for all professional development activities in the Sweet Home School district. This plan recognizes that educators may make recommendations for professional development. Such recommendations should be made in writing and submitted to the Office of Instruction for consideration. The District will solicit partnerships with other providers including the Betty Summers Teacher Center. Approval of such educator generated professional development opportunities will be contingent upon the proposal's level of congruency with the goals and objectives of the Professional Learning Plan.

The role of the PLP team is to:

1. construct the District's Professional Learning Plan utilizing multiple data sources including student achievement data and teacher needs assessments.
2. establish priorities for district-based professional development activities.
3. establish a set of criteria for building and course/grade level learning teams to follow in developing professional development activities.
4. serve as a "clearinghouse" monitoring professional development activity in order to:
    - determine congruence of professional development activity to District strategies and priorities and priorities established by and within the Professional Learning Plan.
    - foster two-way communication and coordinate activity between levels to maximize efficiency of resources.
    - ensure that all professional staff have opportunities for substantial professional development.

PLP Planning Process

The DEI Committee developed the Sweet Home Central School District Strategic Plan for school years 2026-2029. The Strategic Plan which was Board approved in June 2026, was used to align the PLP to the district's top priorities. The PLP team ensured that there was alignment between the Strategic Plan and the PLP.



District and Building decision-making for utilization of resources will be made within the framework of the PLP as the Strategic Plan is implemented. The team will identify needs for professional development by engaging in supporting the strategies identified in the Strategic Plan by using key data points such as, student achievement and faculty survey data. This process will be used to assess the strategies and goals of the Strategic Plan and adjust those priorities on an annual basis. The plan will include a rubric for use by the District and Buildings in evaluating professional development opportunities.

The PLP committee will regularly monitor professional development programming. It will hear reports on professional development activity across the district and provide feedback on those efforts.

Composition of the Team

A team representing teachers, administrators, higher education and parents was formed to develop the Professional Learning Plan. A majority of the members of the professional development team are teachers selected by their collective bargaining unit. As of September 2024, the current membership is as follows:

Mallory Pisarek	Special Education Teacher	Maplemere Elementary School
Marissa Dauria	Principal	Sweet Home High School
Elaina Blenk	Math Interventionist	Heritage Heights
Sharon Notaro	Math Interventionist	Willow Ridge Elementary
Kendra Ciezki	Social Worker	Glendale Elementary School
Karen DeLaPlante	Principal	Glendale Elementary School
Melinda DiBernardo	Library Media Specialist	Glendale Elementary School
David Etkin	Grade 6 Teacher	Sweet Home Middle School
Kathryn Barillari	Director of Special Programs	District Office
Lindsay Marcinelli	Assistant Director for Special Programs	District Office
Antonio Perry	Principal	Heritage Heights Elementary School
Paul Szymendera	District Technology Coach/ TC Coordinator	Sweet Home High School
Jeremy Traverse	Grade 8 Science Teacher	Sweet Home Middle School
Toyia Wilson	Assist. Sup. for Curriculum & Instruction	District Office

Sweet Home District Vision and Achievement Targets

District Mission Statement:

"Sweet Home Schools….Every Student, One Community, Ready for the Future.

We empower students to be innovative, self-directed, curious, compassionate, resilient, persistent, lifelong learners."

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Mission: Cultivating a community where all members experience a sense of belonging.

Vision: To foster an equitable environment that is culturally responsive, inclusive of all voices, and dedicated to lifelong learning.

Strategic Plan Goals

Goal 1: Sweet Home provides learning experiences that are focused on supporting students in developing strong academic skills through experiential learning while amplifying student voice.

Goal 2: Sweet Home coursework provides real-world experiences that engage students across a series of pathways while teaching and nurturing critical life skills in everyone.

Goal 3: Sweet Home students grow and learn in an environment that is fully engaging, welcoming, accepting, and safe, where students believe their voices are heard and where they have opportunities to actively engage with each other in all subject areas through relationships and the real world.

Board of Education/ District Achievement Goal and Targets:

Board of Education goals from 2025-2026 (approved October 21, 2025)

**Please note that the BOE goals from the previous year were used to support the development of this plan due to the timelines to complete this plan and renew the BOE goals (this usually happens in October annually).*

Goal #1:
The Board of Education will continue to lead in the promotion, advocacy, and implementation of the Sweet Home Strategic Plan. The Board will collaborate with District Office and building administration to ensure that key benchmarks in academics and social-emotional development are being met. Regular updates will be requested at Board of Education meetings to monitor progress and assess outcomes.

Rationale
The Sweet Home Strategic Plan was approved by the Board in June 2023. The Board emphasized that the plan must not "sit on a shelf." Instead, benchmarks outlined in the plan must be achieved, with the District adopting a 21st-century, student-centered learning approach that benefits all students.

Goal #2:
The Board of Education will lead efforts to educate the community regarding the next major capital project by providing accurate, transparent, and comprehensive information about the two propositions to be presented to voters. The Board will collaborate with all stakeholder groups. This communication plan will ensure consistent dissemination of information to all district residents in advance of the public vote scheduled for December 16, 2025.

**Additionally, the Board of Education will develop and adopt a fiscally responsible 2026–2027 budget aligned with the district's strategic plan and long-term priorities. The Board will direct district administration to continue advocacy efforts for adequate state and federal funding to support program development, maintain educational quality, and address evolving student needs.*

Rationale
An increase in enrollment, evolving student needs, real estate development within the District, expansion of mental health services, and demographic shifts in several neighborhoods have led to space concerns in our elementary buildings. This capital project addresses those concerns, which were identified through the 2022 ThoughtExchange and subsequent focus group discussions. Successful passage will enable the District to meet community expectations and transform elementary buildings to support 21st-century learning.

Goal #3:
The Board of Education will strengthen stakeholder engagement by fostering deeper connections with school buildings, educators, and the broader community. The Board will promote frequent, transparent communication to clearly convey District priorities and decisions, while also creating regular opportunities for feedback to support collaborative and informed governance.

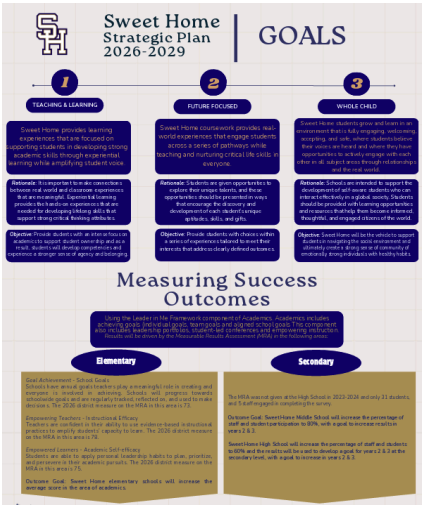
Rationale
The Board is committed to ensuring that we are "One Community." We believe the best way to achieve this is through transparency and strong relationships, particularly with our teachers. It is essential that all members of our school community are informed, engaged, and heard. Open and honest discussions will help move the District forward, ultimately enhancing our ability to serve the students of Sweet Home.

Goal #4:
The Board of Education remains committed to advancing student achievement across the district, ensuring that all students benefit from the full range of programs and support that Sweet Home offers. The Board of Education is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment that ensures every student has access to equal opportunities for success and growth. This work will help continue to unify our District and support our mission of "Every Student, One Community" Ready for the Future".

Rationale
Sweet Home's strength lies in the cultural diversity students experience every day. This diversity provides rich learning opportunities that prepare students for success after graduation. After three years of successful implementation by the District DEI Committee, it is now essential for individual schools to integrate this work into their own systems, such as Leader in Me. This will ensure that all students have access to transformational learning experiences and equal opportunities for growth.

District Focus and Areas of Improvement

Creating a positive school culture is critical to student success. This teaching and learning culture starts with positive relationships within a safe, supportive environment shaped around a consistent, shared vision. It is then fostered through communication, collaboration, personal responsibility, focusing on priorities, shared values, and experiences. Students within the learning community then rise to the challenges that come with rigorous standards and expectations. Additionally, we strive to create student-centered learning environments that encourage student voice, acknowledging the rich diversity that makes our district strong and foster positive academic outcomes for every student.



Focused priorities for continuous improvement impacting school culture and guiding our professional development center around six district improvement areas. These improvement areas cut across the three main goal areas of the Strategic Plan which are: Teaching & Learning, Future Focused and Whole Child.

Practices and learning activities that support the areas should be considered through the lens of 21st Century Learning leading to deeper learning for all students. These **major areas of improvement** include:

1. **Safe, Respectful, and Supportive Learning Environments:** Intentionally designing structures and activities to cultivate connection, build leadership, and promote student well-being, creating a strong sense of community.
2. **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)/ Culturally Responsive Teaching:** Foster a culture of inclusion and care where every SH community member feels supported and experiences a strong sense of belonging. Utilize culturally responsive practices to improve learning for students.
3. **Curriculum and Assessment Alignment:** Revise the local K-12 curricula (curriculum and assessment) to meet the rigor of Next Generation Learning Standards and/ or National Learning standards while using a DEI lens to evaluate content, pedagogy and assessment practices.
4. **Program Design/Delivery/ Professional Learning Communities:** Build the capacity of teachers to utilize a focused set of best professional practices promoting higher levels of learning for all students adapted to their diverse learning styles.
5. **Responsive Teaching:** Revise and implement data analysis cycles/ protocols of state and local assessment data to identify trends in student performance and make instructional adjustments that are responsive to student needs.
6. **Technology Integration:** Implement the meaningful integration of technology to deepen student engagement and personalize the learning experience.

Professional Learning Plan: Needs Assessment

Focusing on the whole child, student needs are identified by examining academic, social and behavior information. Academic needs are identified by examining assessment results against the Next Generation Learning Standards. This includes universal screening assessments, NYS 3-8 assessments in ELA, Math, and Science, NYS Regents examinations as

well as grade level common formative assessment in literacy and math assessment. Social and emotional needs are identified by examining screening tools (ie. BESS) school climate survey data as well as attendance information and office discipline referrals.

While many professional development needs that influence this plan were identified pre-COVID, the structures and processes that impacted instruction during the pandemic will have a lasting impact on the learning needs and delivery of instruction moving forward. Goals areas and professional development activities address these needs. Teams are asked to continue to take a student-centered approach as we emerge from the learning conditions that developed during the pandemic.

This includes:

- leveraging instruction around the focus skills identified by standard measures used for students that align to NYS Learning Standards;
- being proactive in leadership development, while taking a more trauma-informed approach to address the social and emotional needs of students that may have arisen during the pandemic;
- promoting efforts to support cultural diversity, special needs, culturally appropriate, and responsive practice ;
- addressing learning gaps while continuing to re-alignment curriculum as we transition into full implementation of the NYS Next Generation Learning Standard and Assessments for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science as well as Social Studies and Civic Readiness;
- identifying opportunities for change that exist to improve the experience and opportunities for teachers and students;
- creating a more collaborative and social classroom experience;
- enhancing engagement and creating authentic learning experience; and
- leveraging the continued use of technology.

High Quality Professional Development

The Sweet Home Central School District is committed to providing meaningful learning opportunities for teachers. With a focus on job embedded, collaborative practices, professional development at Sweet Home will be delivered in a variety of ways that allow teachers time to learn new instructional strategies over time and with a level of support that leads to transfer of skills in the classroom and improvement in student learning. Modes of professional development will include teachers working with colleagues as a professional learning community, focused workshops and seminars, team planning, lesson study, study groups, online course work, mentoring and student-centered, instructional coaching. Professional development experiences may be district-initiated, school-based, or teacher, self-directed.

Professional development that improves the learning of all students is:

1. Results-oriented and transformative;
2. Collaborative and collegial;
3. Closely connects current theory to practice;
4. Responsive to our students' ever-changing needs Pre-K through 12;
5. Sustained, continuous, and ongoing; and
6. Designed to promote active learning and a range of opportunities.

High Quality Professional Development:

- sets clear goals and objectives based on desired student outcomes.
- aligns with State, District, School, and/or Educator goals or priorities.
- is designed and assessed on the analysis of data relevant to the identified goals, objectives and audience.
- creates collaborative relationships among educators to encourage, both the sharing of ideas and working together to achieve the goals and objectives.

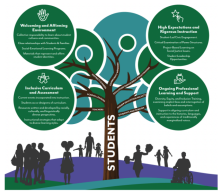
- advances an educator's ability to apply learning from professional development to his or her particular content and/or context.
- models good pedagogical practice and applies knowledge of adult learning theory to engage educators.
- provides reflective dialogue that offers individuals a challenge to their thinking as well as new perspectives on their practice and beliefs.
- promotes commitment to implementation of new learning.

Professional Learning Major Areas

The major improvement areas are the foundation of our Professional Learning Plan. They addressed the priorities we have as a school district, as well as the outcomes and expectations summarized.

Major Areas	Alignment Area	Outcomes and Expectations
Strategic Plan Implementation		**Goal Objectives:** • Goal 1 Teaching & Learning - Provide students with an intense focus on literacies to support student agency and as a result, students will experience a stronger sense of belonging. • Goal 2 Future Focused - Provide students with choices within a series of experiences tailored to meet their interests that address clearly defined outcomes. • Goal 3 Whole Child - Sweet Home will be the vehicle to support students in navigating the social environment and ultimately create a strong sense of community of emotionally strong individuals with healthy habits.
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Communities: • **Supporting Newer Teachers**		**Newer, probationary teachers and administrators obtain success in their position and are granted tenure.** • The mentoring program is effective in supporting and retaining teachers and administrators as measured by intern feedback (the success they are feeling), recommendations from the building principal (success interns have had meeting the standards of teaching), and the achievement of their students. • Teachers receive training and coaching during their probationary period around high-impact instructional strategies as well as practices outlined and measured by Danielson's Framework for Teaching in support of Teacher Competencies. • New administrators strive to exemplify the nature and qualities of work articulated in the National Policy Board Educational Administrators Professional Standards for Educational Leaders.

Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Communities	 **Ongoing professional learning**	**A culture of continuous improvement exists at each level throughout the organization improving learning outcomes for all students.** ● The Danielson Framework for Teaching and Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) tools and processes, establish the essential knowledge and skill required for all teachers. ● The APPR process promotes continuous improvement through timely, constructive feedback while encouraging self-reflection. ● Teachers receive the support needed to implement programs/strategies as defined by district, building, and grade level/course goals. ● A cycle of continuous learning is set in place within the work of the learning teams and the school improvement process. o Teachers and principals utilize a process that is results-oriented, reflecting on student achievement, teacher practice, and leadership practice as a catalyst for action.
Safe, Respectful, and Supportive Learning Environments	 **Welcoming and affirming environment**	**Healthy, safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments exist in each school, enabling students and adults to learn at high levels.** ● Systems and structures are in place to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment. o Multi-tiered, School-wide System of Support (MTSS) includes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. ▪ Students are empowered to learn, practice habits, and develop a growth mindset that leads to personal and interpersonal effectiveness (i.e. responsibility, vision, integrity, teamwork, cooperation, and collaboration). o A data-driven, problem-solving approach, integrating both academic and behavioral instruction and intervention, is responsive to the unique needs of students. ● School staff is keenly aware of the unique, adverse situations that might impact children, addressing and supporting emotional issues that arise, and proactively teaching social and emotional skills that influence student learning and motivation. o Members of the learning community: ▪ have a comprehensive understanding of the consequences; (educational, emotional, and social), of childhood adversity; ▪ recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role trauma may play in an individual's life- including school staff. ▪ utilize practical tools, skills, and resources (appropriate to their settings and job scopes) to teach proactive skills while also combating the negative impact of these adverse situations on the well-being of the student; and ▪ are empowered and optimistic about their ability to continually maintain a safe, calm, and secure environment with supportive care, for both staff and students.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching		**Recognizing the full potential of each student, teachers promote equity, inclusion, and excellence in the classroom and schools at-large, understanding how culture influences both their actions as well as the thoughts and behaviors of their students.** • Teachers understand the unique characteristics of special populations that are linguistically, culturally, and economically diverse. • Teachers create a learning environment with lessons and units that are culturally responsive and address the diverse learning styles and language needs of students while engaging them in essential content. Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) attempts to bridge the gap between teacher and student by helping the teacher understand the cultural nuances that may cause a relationship to break down—which ultimately causes student achievement to break down as well. • One example of Culturally Responsive Teaching in Sweet Home is one of our foundational programs, Franklin Covery's Leader in Me (LiM).
Responsive Teaching	 	**Teachers respond to data and instructional practice using quality assessments that accurately assess each student's knowledge, skills, and abilities.** • Strong, collaborative teacher teams utilize the inquiry model and address the conditions of learning that support the achievement of all students. • Teachers set and assess progress toward goals and address individual or group needs. • Teachers evaluate the effectiveness of practices and assess whether student needs are being met. • Schools reallocate resources in reaction to outcomes and enhance processes to improve outcomes.

Program Design/Delivery / Professional Learning Communities	 Inclusive curriculum and assessment	**A guaranteed, viable, and prioritized curriculum, aligned to the NYS Next Generation Learning Standards, exists for every course of study; teachers utilize high-impact instructional strategies to engage students as they learn how to learn.** ● Shifts to inquiry-based instruction and a focus on self-directed learning are evident across content areas. ● Students demonstrate advanced literacy skills necessary to be academically and personally successful in today's literacy-and knowledge-based society. ● Instructional practices include the use of engaging texts, rich discussions (Accountable Talk), frequent writing, and explicit teaching of academic vocabulary and language. ○ Every teacher deeply understands the language and literacy associated with their content and is supportive of the teaching of reading and writing. ● Assessment for learning is used to guide instruction. Questioning, and feedback help shape student learning. ● Teachers instruct essential mathematical big ideas and practices. Math concepts and procedures are understood and transferred to new situations. Students are expected to think critically, reason, and communicate their mathematical understanding. ● Effective intervention strategies in literacy and mathematics are embedded in classroom instruction and supplemental settings. ● Non-fiction writing is used as a learning strategy that increases with use as a student progresses from the intermediate to secondary levels of instruction.

Technology Integration	 Inclusive curriculum and assessment  High expectations and rigorous instruction	**Teachers leverage the use of technology to support the curriculum, enabling each student to take an active role in their learning by choosing, achieving, and demonstrating their understanding of learning outcomes.** ● Teachers design lessons using digital tools to construct knowledge, innovate, produce artifacts, and enhance meaningful learning experiences for students. ● Teachers design learning experiences requiring students to apply the knowledge and skill of a given discipline, to create authentic products for authentic audiences. ● Students practice digital literacy and utilize technology to access to the world (one-to-world) ○ Teachers design assignments that are empowering—and engage students in a learning community with 24-hour access. ● Students use technology to redefine learning. ● Students recognize the freedom and responsibility that exists in the use of technology for learning while practicing digital citizenship. ● Teachers use technology to facilitate their own learning and foster a professional learning community.

Improvement Strategies/ Action Steps

1. Establish strong, collaborative teacher teams that address the conditions of learning that support the achievement of all students.
    a. Establish data teams at the district, building and grade level that review student data (social/emotional/academic), establish goals, and assess progress toward those goals.
    b. Develop and inspire staff both personally and professionally with the leadership principles found in the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

2. Create coherent direction and consistent results (i.e. Data Teams, Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), data-driven instruction, workshop model, literacy, and math instruction) while reducing fragmentation and overload.

    a. Utilize common language, routines, models and assessments that identify needs and successes.
    b. At the elementary level, focus on foundational skills and understandings in literacy and mathematics while promoting reasoning and critical thinking (Note: Content areas provide the context for more inquiry and authentic use of skills, impacting units of study).
    c. Establish MTSS with meaningful and manageable structures and components (i.e. school-wide screening/ assessments, a clearly articulated tiered service delivery system, and progress monitoring) that can be implemented across buildings with fidelity.

3. Develop in students the advanced literacy skills necessary to be academically and personally successful in today's literacy-and knowledge-based society.
    a. Strengthen foundational literacy and effective use of the written code at K-2.
    b. Foster and support instructional practices that include the use of engaging texts, rich discussions (Accountable Talk), frequent writing (across content areas daily), and explicit teaching of academic vocabulary and language.

4. Create an authentic, engaging learning experience for students- inquiry and self-direction (i.e. project-based learning, design learning, Genius Hour, etc.)
    a. Develop more inquiry where students learn to generate the questions and find answers to their questions (i.e. Literacy Integration Inquiry Curve, C3 Framework, Right Question Formulation Technique, etc.).
    b. Utilize practices that encourage critical thinking and discourse using argument (claim, evidence, reason).

5. Identify and promote related knowledge, disposition and 21 Century skills that define- *Ready for the Future* and enable all students to be good at learning and good at life while encouraging high levels of respect for self and others.
    a. Create a portrait of a graduate that clearly articulates our district's vision for the 21st century and deeper learning for every student.
    b. Identify data that can be used to gauge our progress to ensure all students are making progress.
    c. Evaluate lessons and learning experiences through the lens of 21 Century Learning with the goal of promoting deeper learning for all students and the ability to tackle the uncertainties of the future.
    d. Provide experiences that build both connectedness, character and civility.
    e. Develop a collection of evidence/ experiences that match the skills, knowledge, and depositions we want all students to have by the time they leave high school (i.e. digital portfolio, community service, Senior Capstone projects, job shadowing, internships, etc.)

District Improvement Focus 2026-2027

Long-Term Improvement Strategy	Major Area	District Improvement Focus/ Outcomes
1. Intentionally designing structures and activities to cultivate connection, build leadership, and promote student well-being, creating a strong sense of community.	Safe, Respectful, and Supportive Learning Environment Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Communities	Establish building-wide support to foster orderly, structured learning environments. ● Clear Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) are established and communicated. ● Explore restorative practices as community and culture building which is focused on healing, responsibility, building and rebuilding relationships. Recognize, understand, and utilize practices that support a student's social-emotional growth and overall mental health. ● Explore NYSED Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Benchmarks and establish programs and practices that address each student's Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs in school. ● Utilize a strength-based, trauma-informed approach. ● Implement Leader in Me in grades K-12.
2. Foster a culture of inclusion and care where every SH community member feels supported and experiences a strong sense of belonging. ● **Utilize culturally**	Safe, Respectful, and Supportive Learning Environment Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching	Establish and maintain strong, inclusive, equitable learning communities. ● Have an increased awareness of diversity issues within the community. ○ Gain an increased understanding of how those issues impact the school and community. ● Continue to learn, grow and challenge our own perceptions and biases. ○ Work to understand and lessen the effects of unconscious bias, by providing opportunities for community members to meaningfully engage with this issue. ● Learn the skills needed to improve relationships in and around the school that also impact our communities in positive ways. ● Celebrate the diversity in our schools and the contributions each person makes to our culture of learning. Enhance our use of relevant and responsive instructional practices by developing an understanding of "culturally responsive classrooms" and instructional designs.

responsive practices to improve learning for students.	Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Communities	• Create a dialogue by examining our practices against NYSED's Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework. • Support teachers in self-reflection and analysis of the curriculum to identify specific areas of growth in the ability to create a culturally responsive learning environment. • Review current curriculum materials and content to determine areas of alignment and gaps in culturally responsive pedagogy.
3. **Revise the local K-12 curricula (curriculum and assessment) to meet the rigor of Next Generation Learning Standards and/ or National Learning standards & New York State's Portrait of a Graduate.**	Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Communities	Work collaboratively to audit and update the K-12 curriculum for alignment to NYS Next Generation Learning Standards (both content and performance). • Examine and revise curriculum as necessary: o K-2 Foundational Literacy o K-12 Mathematics implementation o K-12 Science- Curriculum review and implementation for Next Generation Science Standards, MS (6-8) OpenSciEd implementation o K-12 Social Studies ▪ Civic education components 7-12 (Seal of Civic Readiness) o Elementary and Middle-level Career Readiness Curriculum ▪ Career and Technical Education 6-12 ▪ Seal of Civic Readiness implementation o K-12 Physical Education Strategic Planning o Mental Health Curriculum/ Trauma-Informed Care o Personal Finance instruction
4. Build the capacity of teachers to utilize a focused set of best professional practices promoting higher levels of	Safe, Respectful, and Supportive Learning Environment Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Communities	Establish highly effective collaborative teams. • Create conditions in schools where learning teams thrive. Continue to support the growth of instructional coaching as an effective tool to build teacher capacity and achieve District program goals. • Instructional Coaching (math, literacy, technology) supports growth. • Individual coaching plans address student-centered goals. • Teacher rounds are utilized to promote lesson study and instruction practice with grade-level teams and as relevant across content areas.

learning for all students.	Responsive Teaching	
5. Revise and implement data analysis cycles/ protocols of state and local assessment data to identify trends in student performance and make instructional adjustments that are responsive to student needs.	Responsive Teaching Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Communities	Continue to expand responsive teaching practice- making instructional adjustments for groups and individual students based on a wide range of assessment data and information. ● Identify gaps in each student's content understanding and skill and create a response plan with specific opportunities to address gaps. ○ Apply data team model and responsive action planning to core content areas, especially K-8 reading and math instruction. ○ Continue to implement an improved intervention system for literacy and mathematics in grades K-12.
6. Implement the meaningful integration of technology to deepen student engagement and personalize the learning experience. *(See Sweet Home Instructional Technology Plan)*	Technology Integration Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Communities	Provide team and individualized coaching support and professional development opportunities at all levels to assist teachers in raising the level of student learning and creativity while encouraging responsible digital citizenship. Student Learning and Creativity ● Students will use technology to apply knowledge and skill to create and curate authentic products that promote creative thinking and inspire innovation. o Teachers will increase their use of technology resources to support curricular goals, providing opportunities to build deeper understanding, while fostering personalized, blended, or self-directed learning. ▪ Use the Technology Integration Matrix (TIMS) Matrix as a framework for describing and targeting the use of technology to enhance learning and reflective practice.

		▪ Build the capacity of teachers with the Computer Science and Digital Fluency Learning Standards. Communication and Collaboration ● Students and staff will use digital tools to foster more authentic, timely communication and collaboration linking students, parents, staff, and others. ○ Effectively communicate information while encouraging collaborative learning communities that contribute to their own and the learning of others. Responsibility Use of Digital Tools ● Students will recognize the freedom and responsibility that exists in the use of technology for learning and sharing learning. ○ Understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to the use of technology and practice personal responsibility and safe use, responsibly gathering, evaluating, and using digital information. ● Students will communicate clearly and express themselves appropriately on various digital platforms for a variety of purposes and tasks. ○ Given a task or assignment, independently choose and access a tool without complaint or excuse, expressing productive work clearly to the audience in a responsible way. ○ Display responsible use of social media platforms by posting messages that positively impact themselves and others.

District Professional Development Activities 2026-2027

The following activities provide an overview of the professional development work that will continue to allow us to meet our district and school improvement efforts.

*CTLE: Continuing Teacher and Leader Education.

Improvement Area	Topic/Focus	CTLE* Provider	Dates
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning	**English/Language Arts (ELA) UPK-12** 1. Foundational Literacy Skills: Phonic, Spelling and Word Study (K-2) ● Strategically assist students in becoming active word solvers who can recognize words, take them apart or put them together, know what they mean, and connect them to other words - all directed toward efficiently reading and writing continuous text. ● Embed word study across the literacy framework. ● Grow K-2 classrooms through an integrated inquiry model (reading/writing workshop), lab classrooms and coaching. ○ Develop a strong coaching team around literacy learning (coach, interventionist and principal). ○ Embed word study across the literacy framework. o Understand the role of guided groups in differentiating word study. o Understand and explicitly teach the continuum of written code. o Examine Units of Study. o Understand and analyze assessment data to address student individual needs and plan instruction. 2. Responsive Teaching (Intermediate- Grades 3-5) ● Presence of an effective literacy blockstructure is utilized to engage students in meaningful writing each day (mini- lesson, independent writing, share).	Literacy Coaches Kristin Witkowski BOCES Erie 1	Coaching Cycles Grade Level/Course meetings BOCES ELA Days 10/6/26, 12/15/26, 1/12/27, 4/13/27 Additional Days ongoing

	● Exploring relevant literacy- content (i.e. Next Generation Learning Standards, Literacy Continuum, Science of Reading) that support instruction. ● Examining data that can help us be responsive to our readers and writers. ● Utilize small group instruction to meet the differentiated needs of learners during the workshop. ● Grow knowledge-based and instructional strategies to teach phonics, word study and vocabulary in the intermediate grades. 3. Examine Next Generation Standards K-12 reflecting on units of study and revising as needed so the topics studied are compelling and worthy of a student's time and attention. ● Use structures that increase the time students get to read, write and talk during lesson periods. ● Mindfully plan for the three different types of engagement- emotional, cognitive and behavioral ● Find ways to show students how they can monitor their inner voice as they construct meaning ● Provide different ways for students to make their learning visible; formative information used to provide them with meaningful feedback and guide their instruction.		
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning	**Mathematics UPK-12** Utilize skills learned to continue to build teachers' capacity to utilize a constructivist approach when teaching mathematics through the use of a new curriculum program, Illustrative Mathematics (Imagine Learning K-5, Desmos 6-8). ● Deepen Understanding of the NYS Next Generation Standards (K-8). ● Continue to develop fidelity in the use of the Imagine Learning (K-5). ● Math Workshop- key strategies for students of all ability levels (K-8). ● Assessment - Data-driven instruction in response to unit/interim assessment; use formative assessments and math notebooks (6-12). Support for our elementary math coaches. ● High-leverage math routines to support the development of teacher pedagogy and content knowledge. ● Reflect on their practice and through structured coaching session ● Feedback that facilitates each coach's growth simultaneously in multiple areas (content, pedagogical content, lesson planning, and coaching)	SH Math Coaches Elizabeth Kramer, Erie I BOCES	Coaching Cycles Grade Level/Course meetings BOCES Math Days 2/3/27, 3/24/27, 4/21/27 Additional Days ongoing

Curriculum and Assessment Alignment Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning	**Social Studies UPK-12** 1. Plan and facilitate lessons and inquiries that allow students to: ● collaboratively learn social studies content; ● ask good questions and develop investigations into them; ● consider possible solutions and consequences; ● separate evidence-based claims from opinions; and ● communicate and act upon what they learn. 2. Explore strategies surrounding the construction and instruction of the Enduring Issues essay and the Constructed Response Questions (CRQs). 3. Collaborate to promote vertical and horizontal alignment of units of study. 4. Research and design scaffolded instructional materials and assessments that promote historical thinking and align with SS Practices and Regents assessment tasks. 5. Analyze results from social studies assessments- use results to inform instruction 6. Continue Seal of Civic Readiness 7. Examine NYS Civic Readiness Initiative and build learning experiences that: ● Encourage students to believe in the power of their own voices and actions. ● Equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to engage responsibly in our culturally diverse democracy. ● Empower students to make informed decisions to enhance our interconnected world. ● Mobile Museum of Tolerance ○ Holocaust education 6-12 ○ Civil Rights education 6-12	TBD, Erie 1 BOCES	Grade Level/Course meetings BOCES Social Studies Days 11/12/26, 1/6/27, 3/3/27, 5/12/27 Additional Days ongoing
Curriculum and Assessment Alignment Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning	**Science K-12** 1. Build an understanding of the New York State Science Learning Standards (NYSSLS) and redesign unit to match 3-dimensional learning/assessment ● design units and apply instructional strategies to engage all students in challenging science, with attention to equity, and provide the means for them to show what they know. 2. Create lessons that utilizing 3- dimensional learning ● Students will use disciplinary core ideas, crosscutting concepts with scientific practices to explore, examine, and explain how and why phenomena occur and to design solutions to problems.	Science Coaches (elem) Jessica Kaufman Erie 1 BOCES	Grade Level/Course meetings BOCES Science Days 7/16/26, 8/5/26, 3/18/27, 4/16/27, 5/7/27 Additional Days ongoing

	■ utilize the Question Formulation Technique from the Right Question Institute to have students develop questions to lead learning and experiments in each unit. ■ Utilize National NGSS Assessment Project (SNAP) for unit assessment design. NGSS = Next Generation Science Standards ■ Investigate and utilize Amplify Science units in grades 6-8 3. Implement OpenSciEd curriculum program and resources 6-8 ○ ask questions, design investigations, and solutions- question driven by students ○ strategies and structures to encourage classroom dialogue and accountable talk ○ strategies to get students to think, read, write and argue as scientists and engineers. ○ Growing understanding of phenomenon-based learning 4. Examine K-5 science units to align with NYSSLS ● Shape our science curriculum, assessment and instruction as we work to align our practices to the new NYS UPK-12 Science Learning Standards. 5. Implement Next Generation Science Standards grades 9-12 ● Growing in our understanding of the shifts to implementing Next Gen standards for teachers and students ● Develop common formative assessments to support implementation ● Engage in data driven protocols to identify gaps		
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Technology Integration	**Technology Integration** 1. Leverage the use of technology during lessons to allow students to take an active role in choosing, achieving and demonstrating their understanding of learning outcomes. ● Teachers will better understand blended learning strategies to design lessons using digital tools to construct knowledge, innovate, produce artifacts and enhance meaningful learning experiences for students.. ● Promote the integrated use of technology as a tool to: ○ present rich content and engaging activities ○ encourage innovation, creativity and curation. ○ expand use of digital formative assessment tools to give quality feedback.	SH Tech Coaches Teacher Center	Ongoing

	○ connect and communicate with both students and families. ○ assist each student in developing agency in their learning. ○ enhance each student and teacher's ability to research, collaborate, communicate, think critically, and problem solve. ● Continue to grow to higher levels of technology integration and student self-directed learning as measured by the Technology Integration Matrix (TIM Matrix). ● Examine, understand and apply the Computer Science and Digital Fluency Learning Standards within courses of study *Other topics to be determined by Instructional Technology Plan* 2. Continue to reinvent the library-media center to create space that is a cornerstone of creativity, as well as, a learning environment for students to research (alone or in teams) and plan innovation using technology. ● establish Makerspaces for exploration encouraging creativity, innovation and learning ● provide a place for teachers to plan and guide content instruction that integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) standards ● review and revise K-12 library curriculum	Library Media Specialist with Support of Tech Coaches -Erie I BOCES Technology Support	Ongoing
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning	**Instructional Coaching** Literacy Coaching/ Building Literacy Team Development District Literacy Coaches, Administrators, Reading Specialist ● Engage in continuous, ongoing professional development to enhance each coaches own expertise in areas of literacy (see ELA for targeted areas). ● Support to design and lead professional development in schools, building a common language around best practices and rationales for the whole group, small group and individual teaching of students within a reading and writing workshop model especially at the primary level. District Instructional Coaches ● Examination and application of the instructional coaching model, "the coaching cycle" working with adults through the "partnership principles", setting student focused goals, and instructional strategies to help meet those goals. ● Understand and utilize a student-centered, results-based coaching tool in	Collaborative Study Groups- Literacy, Math and Technology Coaches	Coaching Cycle Dates TBD within buildings

	classrooms. ● Study, develop, and utilize as needed, coaching strategies to support teachers during periods of remote learning. ● Technology Integration implementation		
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching	**English as a New Language (ENL) Training/Support- Elementary/ Secondary** Sessions will explore topics that enhance the learning experience for English language learners and directly impact all learners. Topics include: ● co-teaching in the integrated English as a New Language (ENL) setting. ● applying principles of culturally responsive teaching (cultural sensitivity, understanding culturally and working with linguistically diverse students). ● drawing on background knowledge and experience of students to make content meaningful and to accelerate language transfer. ● recognizing and understanding the language proficient levels of English Language Learners (ELLs), their impact on instruction and student learning. ● clearly communicating academic expectations and modeling strategies to increase student independence. ● providing explicit instruction in vocabulary and the academic use of language. ● discovering ways to help all students engage with text in multiple ways. ● strategies to engage students during periods of remote learning.	Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (R-BERN) West English as a New Language (ENL) Teachers Administrators	TBD
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching	**Special Education Training/Support- Elementary/ Secondary** **Inclusive Co-Teaching Models (General Education + Special Education)** ● roles and responsibilities of co-teachers ● station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and push-in support structures ● planning instruction that is truly co-designed, not divided **Data-Driven Instruction and Progress Monitoring** ● using formative data to adjust instruction in real time ● interpreting IEP progress monitoring data to guide next steps ● aligning instruction to IEP goals and grade-level standards	BOCES Professional Development Specialist, Gregg Rosowski Office of Special Programs	TBD

	Equitable Access to Grade-Level Content ● ensuring students with disabilities are not removed from rigor ● adapting text, tasks, and assessments without lowering expectations ● strategies for access to complex reading and writing tasks **Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Systems** ● introduction to AAC tools (low-tech, mid-tech, and high-tech systems) ● modeling language on AAC devices (aided language input) ● supporting consistent AAC use across all environments (not just therapy sessions) ● avoiding common barriers such as over-questioning or "testing" AAC users **Understanding and Supporting Diverse Learning Profiles** ● characteristics of common disabilities and their instructional implications ● executive functioning supports (organization, initiation, task completion) ● attention, processing, and working memory supports in classroom instruction		
Curriculum and Assessment Alignment Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Responsive Teaching	**Team Collaboration** ● Cultivate a collaborative culture by developing high performing teams. ● Focus on results. ● Review current collaborative team process: o Establish goals/ clear team focus as part of strategic planning processes to close achievement gaps. o Take action using a Plan, Do, Study, Act research-based methodology to ensure all students benefit from the team's collective efforts. o Answer critical questions- What do we want students to learn? How will we know they learned? What will we do when they don't learn? What do we do for students that have already learned? ▪ Build collective knowledge of standards and clearly identify what students should know and be able to do as a result of each unit of study (guaranteed viable curriculum). ▪ Construct and utilize common assessment to monitor learning (common formative assessment). ▪ Study best practice to address learning needs- take action ▪ Establish and structure time for intervention and enrichment during the course of the day and school year Response to Intervention (RtI framework). ▪ Monitor, analyze and study results. ▪ Adjust intervention cycles and support based on progress monitoring data.	Administrative Leadership Group	Ongoing

Safe, Respectful, and Supportive Learning Environments	**Student Leadership and Empowerment-** **Leader in Me** ● Develop and inspire staff both personally and professionally with the leadership principles found in the 7 Habits. ● Continue to enhance school cultures using the whole school model to create structure and systems that help students cultivate leadership qualities within themselves, empowering them to lead their own learning. ○ Continue to support the Lighthouse Team in developing and implementing action plans to fortify their launch leadership, create culture and align 7-habits to academics. ○ Continue building the capacity of the school community to maintain and achieve Lighthouse school status. ○ Align instructional strategies to Leader in Me paradigms. ○ Address common barriers that limit student-led learning. ○ identify actionable empowerment techniques in the classroom. **Sweet Home Way- College, Career, and Life Readiness** ● Establish supports that help students learn and follow the tenet of the HS Sweet Home Way while equipping students with the essential skills they need to succeed. ● Develop experiences that help students practice the 7-Habit of Highly Effective teens and core values of the Sweet Home Way ○ Strength of Mind and Body ○ Accountability ○ Quality Relationships ○ Courage to Lead ● Establish student led leadership academies and opportunities that provide students with the skills and experiences that allow them to leading others (i.e. leading teams and projects, mentoring and coaching other students, meeting management) ○ Study and consider course work and content area studies as well as student-led academies career readiness activities (i.e. résumé writing and interviewing, presentation skills, giving and receiving feedback, digital etiquette) and college readiness (i.e. goal setting/achievement, college test prep, college applications, study	Gary McGuey Franklin Covey Building Lighthouse Teams Elementary Principals	On Going Summer 2026 Superintendent's Conference Days Lighthouse Team/ School Coaching Faculty Meetings Superintendent's Conference Days Summer 2026

	skills, weekly planning, financial Literacy, living away from home, health and fitness).		
Safe, Respectful, and Supportive Learning Environments	**School-wide Systems, Structures and Supports to Promote Safety and a Positive Learning Environment** 1. Strategically develop practices that address the needs of students who demonstrate academic, social, emotional, and behavioral challenges because of skill and ability, motivation and performance, and/or personal or situational experiences. 2. Establish clear Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is present at all levels. 3. Work to ensure a consistent, school-wide student management system is in place. ● Proactive and positive approaches to classroom management and dealing with difficult students and defusing aggressive situations. ● Staff actions to provide a safe, learning environment. ● Providing multi-tiered systems of support. ● Alternative forms of discipline and restorative justice.	SH Administrative Staff Lisa Kilanowski Niagara University Other Supports TBD	TBD Thursdays throughout the year TBD

Safe, Respectful, and Supportive Learning Environments	**School-wide Systems, Structures and Supports to Promote Safety and a Positive Learning Environment (cont.)** 4. Establish and reinforce practices/procedures and learning experiences to create a safe learning environment that promotes the social, emotional and academic growth of all students. ● Crisis Response Awareness and Training (adult and student level- i.e. CPI). ● Drug/Alcohol- Substance Abuse Awareness. ● Social and Emotional Learning ○ Study and utilize strategies that proactively teach students how to manage their emotions. ○ Utilize positive discipline practices to respond to students' needs. ● Culturally Responsive Practices. ○ Background and strategies- Working w/ Diverse Population (Framework for Poverty, cultural backgrounds, etc.). ○ Study then work to establish positive and culturally responsive discipline policies and practices. ○ Nurture practices of equity and inclusion that respect and celebrate the diversity with our school and community. ○ Identify and establish school-wide instructional practices that are culturally responsive. ● Mental health awareness ○ Resources related to mental health-related prevention, resilience training (curriculum and instruction) and early identification initiatives. ○ Promote feelings of physical, social, and emotional safety in students. ● Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition - support establishing Restorative Practices districtwide. ● Alternative Program Development- Ready Academy ○ Through BPLs- NY Internship Pathway Membership, teachers will receive regular coaching and access to resources that will continue to help them apply five core practices that are student-centered and innovative in their approach to learning. They include:	Crisis Prevention Intervention for Schools (CPI) Trainer- Evelyn Watson BOCES Professional Development Specialist, Gregg Rosowski Regional Bilingual Education Resources Network (R-BERN) West Faculty Meeting Dr. Lisa Kilanowski Niagara University SH DEI Task Force Family Support Center Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition (ECRJC) Big Picture Learning	TBD as needed Summer 2026 TBD Team Meetings Thursdays throughout the year TBD On-going Superintendent's Conference Days On-going

Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning	■ "One Student at a Time"(deep personalization, wrapping a curriculum around a student, developing individual learning plans to drive learning and work). ■ Advisory (core organizing structure that supports students to build deep relationships with peers and adults over several years). ■ Real-World Learning (students engage in internships, often 2 days per week, 9th-12th grade). ■ Interest-Based Learning (students work on projects and in internships that support interest exploration and pursuit). ■ Authentic Assessment (students present their learning through regular Exhibitions and receive authentic feedback from their peers, teachers, and mentors). 5. School Safety ● Right to Know, Annual Trainings ○ Blood-borne Pathogens ○ Right to Know: Hazard Communications ○ Mental Health ○ School Safety Training ○ Reporting Child Abuse in an Educational Setting ○ Student Data Privacy Education Law 2-d ○ Child Abuse in the Educational Setting ○ Timeout and Physical Restraints ○ Dignity for All Students Act/ Code of Conduct ○ Workplace Violence in Schools	Erie I BOCES and Global Compliance Network (GCN)-Asynchronous Training Module	Summer 2026
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching	**Art Education** ● Development of future district-wide Art Fair ● Poetry Unit development and implementation (grade 8)	Art Teachers Arts in Education	TBD TBD

Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching	**Music Education** ● Revise and update music curriculum to meet NYS learning Standards. ● Culturally responsive music integration. ● Music programming and concert offerings. ● Music Festivals and preparation.	Music Teachers Arts in Education	TBD TBD
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching	**School Library Program** ● Continue ongoing evaluation of our district K-12 and its role in fostering learning, empowerment and achievement for all students while nurturing a culture of shared values. ● Take action and utilize the NYSED School Library Program Rubric as a resource to advance the program. ○ Continue to redesign the library program in support of 21st Century skills. ● Unpack Kindness Suitcase Resources for elementary school libraries.	District Librarians Lauren Bloomberg Buffalo Jewish Federation	Ongoing Dates TBD
Safe, Respectful, and Supportive Learning Environments Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching	**New Teacher Induction Competencies** ● Provide teachers new to Sweet Home with a breath of teaching and learning experiences that support Danielson Framework for Teaching. o Community Building/ Classroom Management o Lesson Design and Preparation o Instruction- Effective Teaching Core Areas o Assessment o Professionalism	Sweet Home Administration Mentor Teacher Coordinator Mentor Teachers Teacher Center	New Teacher Induction- Summer Monthly New Teacher Meetings-3rd Thursday of the month Mentor Sessions

Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching	**APPR- Lead Evaluator Training- Annual** Annual calibration sessions required for all evaluators to assist in: ● Recognizing evidence versus opinion and practice in observation techniques. ● Understanding of the NYS Teaching Standards and their relationship to Danielson rubric. ● Examine the Danielson rubric and discuss effective practice. ● Having collaborative conversations to calibrate and aligning evidence observed and rating across the four domains to the rubrics.	Deidre Stasiak Erie I BOCES	August 2026
Program Design/ Delivery/ Professional Learning Diversity, Equity & Inclusion/ Culturally Responsive Teaching	**Sweet Home Strategic Plan** ● When identifying new curriculum programs, systems and protocols, professional learning will be provided. ● On-going development of professional learning opportunities for all staff involved.	Identified as needed	TBD

Induction and Mentoring

New Teacher Induction and Mentoring

(2025-2026)

The Sweet Home New Teacher (Intern) Induction Program is designed to ensure that every new teacher is successful and effective during each of his or her probationary period of teaching. Mentoring is but one component of an effective comprehensive teacher induction process. It is the philosophy of the Sweet Home School District that all members of the Sweet Home community are responsible for supporting newly hired teachers during the entire induction process.

In this document:

- the new teacher is referred to as the intern
- PLP refers to the Professional Learning Plan Committee or its designated subcommittee

I. Program Mission Statement

The Sweet Home Mentor Program will help ensure success for all newly hired teachers through collaboration, observation, inquiry and dialogue about effective teaching practices with experienced teachers serving as positive role models.

II. Beliefs

We believe that successful mentoring/induction process:

- Provides interns with explicit, differentiated expectations, training in those expectations and coaching/ feedback to implement and master techniques related to those expectations.
- Involves all members of the educational community.
- Enhances recruitment and retention of newly hired teachers.
- Provides a structured system for teachers to gain new ideas, share their experiences, and seek advice.
- Provides an atmosphere where peers can examine classroom procedures and teaching methods in pursuit of continuous improvement.
- Contributes to student success through the use of instructional methods of best practice.
- Promotes the restructuring of schools by establishing norms for professional interactions and the work of educators.
- Promotes the development of a common vocabulary relative to effective teaching practices.
- Respect for the privileged nature of the mentor-intern relationship is essential. Intern and Mentor participation in mentoring activities is separate and distinct from the supervision/evaluation process.

All members of the Sweet Home school community must demonstrate proper respect for the confidential nature of the mentor-intern relationship.

III. An Effective Mentoring Program- Outcomes

As a result of participating in an effective mentoring program, interns will:

- Consistently plan and deliver effective, sound, fundamental lessons/instruction
- Become confident in themselves, their practices and their position in the district through differentiated professional learning
- Be able to verbalize a clear understanding of effective teaching and learning
- Assess student learning and make adjustments as needed
- Confidently practice strong management skills
- Clearly enjoy being with students
- Feel "like an educator"
- Have a clear understanding of what being a Sweet Home community member
- Feel valued and supported by the entire school community
- View mentoring as a positive experience
- Understand the commitment needed to be a professional educator
- Become more comfortable with the Annual Professional Performance Review and the evaluation process by:
    - Fostering a clearer understanding of the district's instructional/ professional expectations.
    - Making connections between the feedback provided through the mentoring process, and that provided by the district's administrative supervision/evaluation process.
    - Receiving constructive feedback.
    - Viewing evaluation/observation as a two-way process.

IV. Who Shall Be Mentored?

Individual mentors will be assigned to:

- newly hired first year *probationary teachers;
- newly hired encumbered teachers and/or long term substitutes who will be teaching in the district *up to one year of mentoring*; and
- new, part-time teachers given annual appointments. *(Note: Part-time teachers will be provided with 10 hours of mentoring support outside the school day).*

**For probationary teachers hired mid-year or later, mentoring would be extended to the next school year in order to complete their full year mentoring experience (i.e. 10-month period of mentoring).*

After mentoring occurs, all teachers will continue to be supported through district and building-based activities just as any other tenured teacher in a particular content area. Mentoring support for second year teachers will be determined and provided on an individual basis in the event the non-tenured teacher is placed on an improvement plan, as recommended by the building administrator.

VI. Characteristics of Effective Mentors

Effective mentors will exhibit the following characteristics:

Attitude and Character	Professional Competence and Experience
• Primary motivation is a love of the profession and a desire to give back • Possesses a clear understanding of the Sweet Home philosophy of teaching and learning • Willing to be a role model for other teachers • Exhibits strong commitment to the teaching profession • Believes mentoring improves instructional practice • Willing to advocate on the behalf of colleagues • Willing to receive training to improve mentoring skills • Demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning • Is reflective and able to learn from experiences • Is eager to share information and ideas with colleagues • Is resilient, flexible, persistent and open-minded • Exhibits good humor and resourcefulness • Enjoys new challenges and solving problems	• Is regarded by colleagues as an outstanding teacher • Has excellent knowledge of pedagogy and subject matter • Has confidence in his/her own instructional skills • Demonstrates excellent classroom management skills • Feels comfortable being observed by other teachers • Is a meticulous observer of classroom practice • Collaborates well with other teachers and administrators • Is willing to learn new teaching strategies to share with and model for new teachers. • Can model expected practice. • Can verbalize teaching/learning expectations
Communication Skills	Interpersonal Skills
• Is able to articulate effective instructional strategies • Listens attentively • Asks questions that prompt reflection and understanding • Provides feedback in positive/productive ways • Is efficient with use of time • Responds in a timely a manner • Conveys enthusiasm, passion for teaching • Is discreet and maintains confidentiality • Practices effective principles of feedback.	• Is able to maintain a trusting professional relationship • Is approachable; easily establishes rapport with others • Is patient • Knows how to express caring to support others emotionally and professionally

VII. Mentoring Roles, Responsibilities and Compensation

Mentor Role

The role of the mentor is to provide guidance and support to the intern by serving as a non-judgmental critical friend capable of providing feedback on practice lesson design instructional delivery. The mentor will:

- Provide a model of expected practice.
- Provide daily support/answers to intern questions.
- Assist interns or refer him/her to appropriate contacts within the building and district.
- Serve as a resource to provide curricular guidance and planning.
- Facilitate reflection and implementation of best practices following observation/modeling.
- Familiarize interns with school physical plans, staff and services.
- Collaboratively set goals for the intern.

Mentor Responsibilities

The mentor is responsible for participating in/ facilitating the following activities:

- Initially as a new prospective mentor, complete a total of five digital badges then every 5-years complete three badges out of the five available
- Encouraged to collaboratively develop an intern growth plan to provide:
    - Goal setting for internship for the school year.
    - Daily support
        - Feedback on lesson design
        - Facilitate the observations of the mentor and/or other teachers.
        - Provide at least one observation of the intern (by the mentor) guided around the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) process and the NYS Teaching Standards
        - A timeline for implementation of activities and goals.
        - Guidance on curriculum content, design and pacing.
- Attend two, one-hour mentor training/support sessions outside the school day.
- Facilitate intern observations of other teachers.
- Facilitate completion of the mentoring activity log.
- Maintain confidentiality as guided by NYSED regulations (100.2, iii.d). The confidential nature of the mentor-intern relationship is essential to the program's success. Mentors must ensure that information obtained from mentoring activities remains confidential.

VIII. Mentoring Activities/ Time for Mentoring

Mentor teachers in the Sweet Home Mentoring program will participate in the following program activities:

- **Weekly Contact and Support**: Beginning or End of Day as determined by the collaboratively developed Mentor/Intern plan
    - Provide support
    - Respond to questions

- **At least one release day** (taken as full- or half-days as outlined in the Mentor/Intern plan) for Mentoring Activities including:
  - Discussion of best practice
  - Extended conversation/planning: Lesson/Unit design
  - Observation of lessons
  - Discussion/Reflection
  - Implementation- turning observation into practice.

- **Up to 20 hours <u>outside</u> day** (Additional time for mentoring activities may be applied for and approved by the Mentor Teacher Coordinator and then the Assistant Superintendent).
  - Lesson design feedback/co-planning
  - Assessment design/analysis
  - Classroom management strategies/case studies
  - Relationship building
  - Routines and procedures
  - Discussion of individual needs and possible resources.
  - Attend the August New Teacher Induction Meeting to meet their intern.

IX. Mentor Compensation

A. Stipend:	Each mentor will receive $1,100 per year for 20 hours of service outside the school day as described in Sweet Home Mentoring Plan. Note: If a mentor provides support for one-half year or for a part-time teacher, they will receive $550 for 10 hours of service outside the school day.
B. In-service:	Five hours of training are required to be a mentor. Up to, one-hour will include introductory material to the mentor process. The training is required to work with an intern but will be offered to anyone wishing to complete the mentor training program.
C. Additional Hours:	If additional hours are necessary the mentor will get pre-approved by the Teacher Coordinator and Assistant Superintendent at the rate established in 4.2.4. The Assistant Superintendent will authorize any additional funds required beyond the initial pool. ● Compensated hours beyond 20 may be requested and approved by the Teacher Coordinator and then Assistant Superintendent. These hours will be compensated at the contractual rate established by 4.2.4. and paid from a $3000 pool provided by the District.

X. Identifying and Matching Mentors

A. Identification of Potential Mentors.

- Establishing a Pool of Eligible Mentors
  - Interested **Tenured* teachers submit a letter of intent to the Teacher Coordinator.
  - Interested teachers complete an application including a self-assessment of mentor characteristics plus recommendations from the building principal and a colleague. (Principals

must inform the teacher applicant of an unfavorable recommendation prior to sending it to PDP.)

- The Professional Learning Plan (PLP) Committee or its designated subcommittee reviews all applications employing consensus models for approving/ denying each applicant.
- The PLP Committee or its designated subcommittee will notify all applicants in writing of their final status. Any applicants denied to the mentoring pool will receive a written rationale as part of that notification.
- Approval to the pool makes a teacher eligible to be selected as a mentor for five years.

**Note: In the event, there is no qualified tenured teacher in a specific area, principals will weigh experience, performance, and other relevant factors when selecting a mentor to fill a needed position. (i.e. some teachers may have years of teaching experience beyond their time at Sweet Home that could be considered, contributing to an individual's ability to be a successful mentor.)*

B. Mentor Training

- All approved mentor applicants must complete introductory training. An approved application plus completion of initial training qualifies individuals to enter the mentoring pool. This training will be in the form of digital badges through the Sweet Home Teacher's Center.
- Approved applicants selected as mentors must complete additional advanced training **before** serving as mentors. Any individual completing the initial training is welcome to participate in advanced training regardless of whether or not they have been matched with an intern.
- In recognition of the need for periodic retraining in order to remain current, mentors will need to complete a 6-hour refresher training course at least every 5 years. This training will be in the form of digital badges through the Sweet Home Teacher's Center.

C. Matching Mentor to Interns

- The Professional Learning Plan Committee or its designated subcommittee will receive a list of newly hired teachers requiring mentors from the Assistant Superintendent. The PLP or its designated committee which will include the building principal as an ad hoc member in order to match prospective mentors with interns based upon:
    - Common building
    - Common certification
    - Common teaching assignment

- Matches will be based upon the criteria above; the goal is to establish mentor/ intern relationships based upon the greatest number of criterion matches. The committee will give consideration to the needs of interns and the specific talents/resources of the mentors.

D. Mentor/Intern Relationship:

- Effective mentoring programs are built upon the quality of the relationship between the mentor and the intern. This plan recognizes the significance of that relationship, and the possibility that matches between mentors and interns may not always prove beneficial to one or both parties and, thus, need changing. In those cases, either the mentor or the intern can initiate action on the change by approaching the Teacher Coordinator. The Teacher Coordinator will work with both participants to remedy any issues interfering with the effectiveness of the relationship. Should these difficulties prove

to be irreconcilable, the Teacher Coordinator will work with the PLP Committee to facilitate the change process and new mentor match.

XI. Program Coordination

A District administrator and teacher will work together in order to fulfill the responsibilities of coordinating the Sweet Home School District's Mentoring Program.

A Teacher Coordinator will work collaboratively with the administrative coordinator and represent the unique needs of teachers in planning, facilitating and evaluating mentor program activities. The teacher coordinator will not be an active mentor in the program but will serve as the lead contact for both mentors and interns once the mentoring relationship commences.

A. Responsibilities of the Teacher Coordinator

Specific responsibilities of the teacher coordinator will include:

1. Meeting regularly with the administrative coordinator in order to:
    a. Jointly plan, implement and facilitate:
        i. Training programs for mentor teachers.
        ii. Meetings at least two times/year with district mentors.
            1. Training programs and bi-annual meetings will include segments devoted to the unique concerns and questions of teachers in the program. Note: The Teacher Coordinator will solely facilitate these sessions: the Administrative Coordinator will not be present at these sessions nor will he/she become privy to any topics discussed in them.
        iii. The creation of program forms including the mentoring activities log.
2. Review logs of mentoring activities with the administrative coordinator and support those teacher-intern teams needing assistance in completing mentoring activities.
3. Mentor-Intern teams requesting hours beyond the twenty mandated by this plan will submit that request to the Teacher Coordinator. The Teacher Coordinator will review and approve and forward to the Assistant Superintendent for final approval to authorize payment as per 4.2.4 for work outside the school day.
4. Providing support for mentors and interns in the mentoring program. These contacts will facilitate open, non-threatening communication by providing an alternate means of asking questions and expressing concerns related to the mentoring program.
5. Supporting the mentor-intern relationship by serving as a sounding board for concerns, mediating difficulties and brainstorming possible approaches to improve these relationships, as needed.
6. Serving as a liaison as needed to the Professional Learning Planning Committee.
7. Remain current on mentoring and developments related to best practice in mentoring.
8. Provide a teacher perspective when appropriate in contact/collaboration with other mentoring programs.

B. Selection of the Teacher Coordinator:

The Teacher Coordinator will be selected through the following process:

a. Individuals interested in serving as the Teacher Coordinator will submit a letter of intent to the Chair of the Professional Learning Plan Committee outlining his/her qualifications for the position.
b. A committee of one administrator and two teachers (one appointed by the PLP committee, and one appointed by SHEA) will review applications, conduct interviews and recommend an individual to the Professional Learning Plan Committee for approval.

C. Term of Service for Teacher Coordinator:

The Teacher Coordinator will be appointed to the position for a three-year term. At the end of one full-year of service, the Teacher Coordinator will participate in mid-term review with the Administrative Coordinator and a representative from the PLP. The review will serve as an opportunity to discuss the current state of the Mentoring Program and the Teacher Coordinator's contributions to the program.

D. Compensating the Teacher Coordinator:

The Teacher Coordinator will receive an annual stipend as determined by 3.5.6 of the SHEA contract.

An Administrative Coordinator, working in partnership with a Teacher Coordinator, will be responsible for coordinating and facilitating the administrative components of the mentoring program and its related activities. Inherent in this position is an understanding and respect for the confidential nature of the intern/mentor relationship. The administrative coordinator will have responsibilities including**:**

1. Identifying and distributing resources supporting mentoring.
2. Supporting mentors by:
    a. Working with the teacher coordinator to plan, facilitate and implement mentor training.
    b. Working with the teacher coordinator to plan, facilitate and implement bi-annual mentor meetings.
        i. Training programs and quarterly meetings will include segments devoted to the unique concerns and questions of teachers in the program. The Teacher Coordinator will implement these segments. The Administrative Coordinator will not be present at these sessions nor will he/she become privy to any topics discussed in them.
    c. Working collaboratively with the teacher coordinator and mentors in the program to create forms related to mentoring activities.
3. Facilitate the distribution, collection and collating of forms including the mentoring activities log.
4. Review logs of mentoring activities with the teacher coordinator and support those mentor-intern teams needing assistance in completing mentoring activities.
5. Serving as a liaison to District and building administration and the Professional Learning Planning Committee.
6. Answer questions and provide support for teachers in the program.
7. Staying current on mentoring.
8. Contacting/collaborating with other mentoring programs.
9. Create and maintain records of mentoring activities to meet NYSED mandated recording and documentation regulations.

Like all other aspects, the effectiveness of program coordination will be evaluated annually by the PLP. Modifications will be made as necessary based upon recommendations of teachers, coordinators, principals and members of the Professional Learning Planning Committee (or its designated subcommittee).

XII. Role of the Principal

- Serve as an ad hoc member of the PLP in the matching of interns with prospective mentors.
- Encourage the participation in building-based mentoring activities including the use and scheduling of release time.
- Be part of the mentor application process.
- Value and support the mentoring process.
- Maintain open communication with mentors and interns in order to support the process.
- Continue to serve as the intern's supervisor and evaluator.
- Participate in the new teacher orientation process as needed.
- Participate in introductory mentor training. Participate to the greatest extent possible in advanced mentor training.
- Work with other building and district administrators to support and maintain the mentoring program.
- If approached by either the teacher or the mentor/intern team with specific needs, the principal will coordinate/ facilitate resources to assist the intern.
- Recognize and respect the confidentiality of the mentor/intern relationship, and ensure that confidentiality is not violated.

XIII. Role of the Professional Learning Plan Committee

The PLP Committee or its designated sub-committee's will be responsible for:

- Approving the selection of the Teacher Coordinator.
- Reviewing and approving all applications for the mentor teacher pool.
- Provide direction and approve the development and implementation of mentor training and mentoring activities by the Coordinator team.
- Matching mentors with interns, making adjustments in the matches when necessary
- Approving the development and implementation of tools methods and reports created and used for mentoring program evaluation by the mentor program Coordinator team
- Annually reviewing and revising the New Teacher (Intern) Induction and Mentoring Plan, using a variety of data collection instruments and feedback from all appropriate stakeholders
- Prepare an annual report of mentoring activities.

XIV. Evaluating the Program

The mentoring program will gauge its effectiveness by measuring its impact on teacher retention rates, improved teacher effectiveness and other indicators. The following areas and information listed provide possible sources of criterion and data sources upon which to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Data Sources:

1. Teacher retention rates.
2. Principal appraisals of teacher effectiveness.
3. Intern self-assessment of abilities/confidence in key competencies.

4. Intern self-assessment of social-emotional components of teaching.

Data Collection Instruments:

1. Have interns complete surveys three times per year.
2. Prepare/complete survey for mentors
3. Mentor/Intern Plans
4. Successful APPR – intern successfully attain a minimal overall performance rating of effective tenure.
5. Feedback at mentor meetings about program (annual feedback forms)
6. Teacher Retention Reports

Program Feedback:

1. Were appropriate participants (mentors) selected for the program?
2. Was the mentor/intern match appropriate and effective?
3. Did the mentoring program increase the amount and quality of feedback the intern received on their teaching?
4. Did activities meet the needs of the intern? Did the activities meet the needs of the program/district?
5. Did the program/ training meet the needs and expectations of the mentors?
6. Was sufficient time allotted for mentoring activities?
7. Were the resources allocated to the coordination of the mentoring program adequate to meet the participants' needs?

Structure for Feedback

1. Use teacher survey again with (revised questions)
2. Need a mentor survey
3. Mentor self-evaluation
4. Mentor-Intern Plans
5. Monthly feedback forms.
6. Report: Teacher retention
7. Mentor/Intern Logs
8. Experienced Teacher survey on intern needs.

The PLP committee will continuously reflect upon the plan and modify it as necessary to provide support for both the interns and mentors in the program.

Administrative Mentoring Plan

A. Standards for Educational Leaders

Schools and school districts need effective leaders to take on the challenges and opportunities facing education today and in the future. The nature of the role and responsibilities of educational leaders are complex, making the need for mentoring critical as individuals transition into this important role or are new to the school district. Whether in their first year or as veterans of the profession, educational leaders need ongoing support to succeed in a job that is dramatically changing.

Experienced educational leaders serving as mentors should strive to exemplify the nature and qualities of work articulated in the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. These standards serve as a foundation for high-quality professional development opportunities that include mentoring relationships so that educational leaders can continually develop and refine their abilities to excel at their work. They are divided into the following ten standard domain areas:

1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values
2. Ethics and Professional Norms
3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
5. Community of Care and Support for Students
6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel
7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
9. Operations and Management
10. School Improvement

B. Administrative Mentoring Roles and Responsibilities

a. **Mentor Role-** The role of the mentor is to provide guidance and support to the probationary administrator by serving as a non-judgmental professional confident capable of providing feedback on their leadership, team building, and building management. The mentor will:
   i. Model behaviors of expected practice.
   ii. Provide regular check-in answers to the probationary administrator's questions.
   iii. Assist the probationary administrator, referring him/her to the appropriate contacts within the building and District.
   iv. Serve as a resource to provide decision-making guidance and task analysis/planning.
   v. Assist the probationary administrator in setting goals and building action plans to achieve them.
   vi. Create a shared understanding of collective bargaining agreements (i.e. SHEA, SHSEA)
   vii. Provide meaningful observation opportunities throughout the district (i.e. building walkthroughs, faculty meetings, building leadership team meetings, etc.)

b. **Mentor Responsibilities-** The mentor is responsible for participating in or facilitating the following activities:
   i. Work collaboratively with the probationary administrator to:
      1. Use varied resources to reflect on their knowledge, skill, and practice to identify strengths and areas of growth development.
      2. Using the NPBEA's Professional Standards for Educational Leaders as a guide, establish a goal/focus for the year and construct plans to meet that goal.
      3. Provide regular, consistent feedback and support in areas such as:

a. major issues, actions, and decisions.
b. planning for tasks and responding to situations.
c. communication around tasks.
d. planning and the facilitation of organizational structures and meetings such as faculty and Building Leadership Team (BLT) meetings.

ii. Provide training/support sessions (visitation within buildings and across the district).
iii. Facilitate probationary administrator's observation within the district.
iv. Facilitate completion of the mentoring activity log.

NOTE: The confidential nature of the mentor–probationary administrator relationship is essential to the program's success. Mentors must ensure that information obtained from mentoring activities remains confidential.

C. Mentoring Activities/ Time for Mentoring

Newly hired SHASA members (as of 2023-2024 school year) will be mentored for three years by approved SHASA mentors. An appropriately certified administrator who is a current SHASA members may serve as an approved leadership mentor. Administrators or Supervisors moving to new positions may be mentored with Superintendent approval. This includes unit members who transfer under the same title. The Superintendent, in consultation with the SHASA President, will assign approved SHASA mentors to new administrators/ supervisors. The mentoring assignment will be up to three (3) years. If a mentor should leave the district before the end of the three years, the Superintendent and SHASA President will designate a new mentor collaboratively.

- Year 1: The mentor will collaborate with the new SHASA member for 20 hours of service outside the school day in support of the newly hired SHASA member in year one. Approved SHASA members providing mentoring will receive a stipend of $1500 after year 1.

- Year 2: The mentor will collaborate with the new SHASA member for 15 hours of service outside the school day in support of the newly hired SHASA member in year two. Approved SHASA members providing mentoring will receive a stipend of $1200 after year 2.

- Year 3: The mentor will collaborate with the new SHASA member for 5 hours of service outside the school day in support of the newly hired SHASA member in year three. Approved SHASA members providing mentoring will receive a stipend of $500 after year 3.

The assigned mentor shall not act in a supervising capacity to the new SHASA member.

a. Mentor administrators in the Sweet Home Administrative Mentoring Program will participate in the following program activities:

i. **Provide consistent contact and support** at regular intervals each week, to check in and provide support/answer questions.

ii. **Mentor up to 20 (Y1), 15 (Y2), 5 (Y3) hours outside the regular school day** (school day defined by student arrival to student dismissal). *Minimally once per month for the duration of the administrator or supervisor's first year of service.*

iii. **Participate in release time activities** for school visitations to either the probationary administrator or the mentor (Upon prior approval of the Assistant Superintendent).

b. In support of the NPBEA's Professional Standards for Educational Leaders, mentor activities include::

i. discussion of case studies.
ii. attending administrative team meetings.
iii. assisting in planning faculty/BLT meetings.
iv. observing daily practice.
v. taking learning walks through the building.
vi. participating in the administrative activity and providing feedback.
vii. reviewing and analyzing relevant school data and providing suggestions and feedback in responses to this data.
viii. discussing school building student management strategies/case studies.
ix. assisting with relationship building, decision-making processes, and school/community input.
x. providing assistance and feedback on routines and procedures.
xi. discussing individual needs and possible resources.

D. Mentoring Procedures / Protocols

a. Mentor Assignment- The Superintendent, in collaboration with the SHASA President will assign an administrative mentor to a new administrator or supervisor within *30 days* of their appointment.

Additionally, as per the SHASA contract- The Superintendent will determine and approve appropriately certified administrators currently serving in the district or retired from SHASA as an approved SHASA member. Administrators moving to new positions may be mentored with Superintendent approval.

b. Mentoring Support- The SHASA President will serve as a support for the mentoring program, offering support to matters in the form of feedback and guidance and probationary administrator issues and questions. They will provide a venue for both mentors and probationary administrators to offer confidential assistance in negotiating the mentor/probationary administrator relationship.

c. **Mentoring Plans-** All mentors/probationary administrators will develop a mentoring plan. The plan will include a self-reflection, focus/goal, and tentative plans for support. Plans will be submitted to the SHASA President within 30 days after a mentor has been assigned. Note: the Professional Learning Plan can be used as a tool in this process.

d. **Mentor Logs-** All mentors will maintain a log of mentoring activities. The probationary administrator will not be required to maintain a log/record of mentoring activities. The log will include dates, times, and topics of discussion. Logs can be maintained digitally and shared with SHASA President. Final logs will be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent as a final record of mentoring for professional certification requirements and for mentoring compensation as outlined in the SHASA contract.

e. **Visitation Time Requests-** Requests for school visitations by either the mentor or probationary administrator will be made via email by the mentor to the Assistant Superintendent. The request will include the date and times requested. Activities will be documented in the mentoring log.

Mentoring Review- The SHASA President will review the mentoring activities on a quarterly basis and provide feedback as needed in support of the mentoring program

Appendix

The following documents are central to the development of this plan (See attached):

- Coaching as a Theory of Practice
- Professional Development Rubric
- Danielson Framework for Teaching (overview)
- Professional Collaboration at Sweet Home

Appendix A:

Coaching as a Theory of Action

The learning expectations facing students have increased dramatically- for school and graduation for sure but more importantly to be equipped for a productive life full of opportunities. These rising expectations require students to not just know more but to understand more and be able to transfer their knowledge and skill authentically to solve problems, make decisions and face a world bursting with information and conflicting perspectives. Perhaps most importantly, our students need to know how to learn- what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like- to be able to engage the world authentically and independently. This requires a culture of inquiry and thought, collaborative action and personal reflection.

These changing expectations have dramatically shifted the expectations of those charged with teaching our kids and ensuring their learning. Indeed the very nature of the job has changed and the core questions of our profession are no longer "Did I teach it?" but rather "Did each of them learn it?" We must build the capacity of our system to meet this expectation by ensuring that effective teaching is found in every classroom every day. We would posit that there is not an educator at any level of our system that neither received the pre-service training nor experienced first hand the pedagogy necessary to meet the needs of each and every child in meeting these expectations. We must know and understand our content deeply and with understanding for, without this, how can we expect to develop understanding in our kids. We must know how to design instruction such that we engage our students, each and every one of them, deeply in that content; requiring them to think more and more deeply; making each student's thinking visible not only to deepen their engagement and facilitate learning but to monitor and respond to their progress.

These rising expectations require a very different stance for today's educator- from a deliverer of content to a facilitator of learning. Indeed, learning must be the stance of every level and each individual claiming membership in our organization. Every educator must be a learner- asking questions, studying practice, trying strategies and reflecting on their success. It is incumbent upon the district and building leadership to build a system capable of supporting professional learning but no longer can teachers wait to be "staff developed"- they must recognize the inherent shifts in their job and invest in themselves in the service of children. This must include studying their content deeply and the teaching strategies necessary to build that same level of understanding in children. None of us may take the stance that "You can't make me because you didn't tell me how."- each of us must read professional articles and books, watch videos or others in practice. Educators may not cast out blanket statements such as, "That wouldn't work." They have to try- to give it their all and if it "doesn't work" - then ask for help. As educators in the service of children, taking on the duty of care we accept in joining the profession, none of us may say "I don't have time for this- I have a life." Certainly, we recognize that each of us has commitments and joys beyond one's professional position and that balance is critical for personal and professional health. However, that balance means study and learning. It requires an understanding of the compact that exists between educators and parents sending their children- their most precious resource- to us each day. It requires a belief in our individual and collective efficacy and a growth mindset- a belief that I will get better, I can learn… and so can each of my children.

As a system, we may not refer to the collective "you"- teachers, administrators, aides and everyone else that impacts the experience of our children- and simply say "you must get better; it is your responsibility to improve" without committing to support them in the process. We may not simply say "It's your professional responsibility to learn it'- we have an obligation to support our staff in meeting the expectations we challenge them with as learners; to collaborate and partner in their learning; to provide the resources and support needed to help each teacher on their learning journey.

We will contract with expert consultants to provide training and stimulate thought around best practice. We will provide critical resources that will help us to collaborate and unite in collective study. Like all learners, we need to provide teachers with models of expected practice and feedback on their own attempts. Feedback is the critical link to create shifts in daily practice, celebrating successes and offering guidance and adjustments to make

practice more effective. Consultants cannot provide feedback- they are not in daily practice. Administrators can provide feedback but couched in the cloak of evaluation it may not be as timely and "on-going" as needed to create true shifts in practice and belief. The best feedback is provided non-judgmentally, often and right in the context of daily practice.

We believe that coaching is a critical component of our quest to build the capacity of individual teachers and our collective organization. Consider the best "coaches" we've experienced either on the athletic field, the art studio or the music hall. They teach and model and then let us practice. They celebrate successes. They know their players deeply both in what they can do and what to work on next. They prompt thought with questions and feedback and prepare us for "the game." We believe that every professional is deserving of the same support in helping to shift their work and attend to new, rising professional standards. Coaching should not be seen as "the people" or something that is done to us but instead should be considered an integral component of a process of community learning; supporting us individually and pulling us together as one "team," one community.

Coaching offers an opportunity to provide both depth and scale to create the instruction, classrooms and leadership we seek. Every professional needs a coach and we aspire to create an organization where each and every person is coached- not because they are "bad" but because we are all learners and at times need that support to continue that process. As leaders of study, coaches can help bring theory to practice. They can prompt and foster dialogue. They can ask powerful questions, help test tentative theories, and offer a high five and a shoulder when needed. They assess strengths and offer ideas, possibilities and theories to try.

Coaching at Sweet Home is seen therefore as a process to build such a community. The concept of coaching- regardless of the person serving in the role- is designed to provide the support necessary to facilitate the study and learning of content and craft directly within the context of student learning. While reading, study, and workshops provide the input to build these capacities, it is only through one's study in practice that they become part of our personal schema and repertoire. The concept of coaching seeks to provide a schooled eye to study alongside others honing their craft and building their capacity to produce stronger learning in others. It is a mechanism to recognize- just like students in classrooms- that each of us has different strengths and needs and requires both a common experience and individualized support.

Effective coaching requires a focus for learning, a clear picture of the quality of practice desired, consistent expectations for practice as well as an opportunity to differentiate to meet the needs of the individual learner. Effective coaching requires time- time for study; time for discussion; time for reflection. Effective coaching requires commitment- of both the coach and the teacher to learning. It requires open, honest professional communication and a respect for the challenges inherent in both roles. Effective coaches need strong practice and skills, deep content understanding, a growth mindset, and ego and humility all at once. They need strong communication skills, a sharp eye, and a willingness to risk and lead. They require time to learn and study the art of coaching and communication- with an expert in coaching and others engaged just as they are.

Our organization is only as strong as the model we provide for our children. If we seek engaged, thoughtful, inquisitive, independent learners- is this likely to happen if their daily models don't emulate the same characteristics themselves? Engaged, motivated learners will never take root unless they are nourished in an intellectually fertile environment. Thus, at Sweet Home, we seek a learning culture inclusive of everyone in the community. The important adults in our students' lives must collaborate, discuss, study and openly seek to grow in the knowledge of their craft- both the content they teach and the strategies necessary to effectively build that knowledge in others. This is critical not only to build our capacity to push all students to learn but to also live and experience true learning, to model and experience daily what we seek to instill in our children.

Appendix B:

Professional Development Rubric

Professional Development Rubric						
		Level 1 *Not Meeting Standards*	**Level 2** *Partially Meeting Standards*	**Level 3** *Meeting Standards*	**Level 4** *Exceeding Standards*	**SCORE**
Strategic Design	**Shared Goals**	• PD has specific and measurable goals or outcomes. • PD goals align with the goals of the district and/or school, including the district and/or school's strategic plan. • PD facilitator explicitly communicates expected outcomes, and shares evidence of meeting outcomes by end of PD.				
	Adult Learning Strategies	• Learning strategies align with intended outcomes, adult learner needs, and content. • Multiple learning strategies are used to provide application of principle to practice. • PD includes best practice demonstration or exemplar modeling. • PD structure supports learners at various stages of implementation and levels of use, and accommodates various adult learning styles, preferences and motivations to learn.				
	Follow-up Support	• PD facilitator encourages participants to self-assess areas of strength and need relative to PD content, and to reflect upon connection between PD content and personal professional growth goals. • Actionable steps or action plans have been created in collaboration to define next steps for implementation. • Expectations for ongoing support and assessment of progress are outlined and integrated with school follow-up structures (instructional coaching, peer observations, administrative observations and feedback, department meetings, new teacher mentors, etc.)				
Modeling Effective Instruction	**Quality Teaching**	• Content and delivery of PD models aspects of quality teaching and essential elements of effective instruction, including: o anticipatory/ warm-up activity o teaching input o modeling o multiple checks for understanding o guided practice o independent practice o proving activity o closure with opportunity for feedback (exit slip/ ticket)				
	Effective Use of Time	• The majority of PD time is focused on learning related to the strategic focus rather than announcements of other 'business' • Appropriate time is allocated to each segment of professional development (i.e., warm-up) to ensure that there is proper time to complete the proving behavior and provide closure. • Structures are in place to ensure smooth transitions between topics and appropriate opportunities for balanced teacher input				

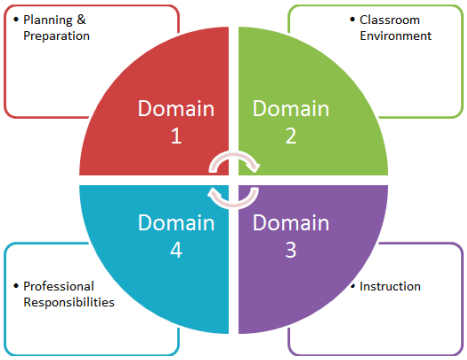
Data	**Data Analysis**	● The PD content is aligned with the data-driven needs of the school. ● Evidence has been researched and presented to confidently suggest that current PD or strand of PD will produce desired results. ● PD facilitator has communicated what data will be reviewed and how frequently it will be reviewed to determine progress toward implementation goals or student performance targets. ● Data has been disaggregated in a way that is clear, specific and actionable for the area of focus.	
Collaboration	**Collaborative Learning Community**	● The PD lesson-design promotes collaboration and group problem solving on issues of importance to student achievement relative to the PD goal. ● Collaborative groups are strategic, allowing participants to interact and learn with a variety of colleagues (grade-level, subject alike, etc.). ● PD participants are encouraged to provide constructive feedback to one another and engage in reflective dialogue. ● Each PD participant has a personal understanding of the role he/she owns in the collaborative implementation of practices outlined in PD and how he/ she will be held accountable for implementation.	

Sample- Professional Development Participant Evaluation Form

Appendix C:

Overview- A Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation



Instructional planning includes a deep understanding of content and pedagogy and an understanding and appreciation of the students and what they bring to the educational encounter. But understanding the content is not sufficient; the content must be transformed through instructional design into sequences of activities and exercises that make it accessible to students. All elements of the instructional design – learning activities, materials, and strategies –must be appropriate to both the content and the students, and aligned with larger instructional goals. In their content and process, assessment techniques must also reflect the instructional outcomes and should serve to document student progress during and at the end of a teaching episode. Furthermore, in designing assessment strategies, teachers must consider their use for formative purposes, and how assessments can provide diagnostic opportunities for students to demonstrate their level of understanding during the instructional sequence, while there is still time to make adjustments.

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Teachers create a learning environment through positive interpersonal interactions, efficient routines and procedures, clear and consistent standards of conduct, and a safe physical environment that supports the learning purposes. In addition, the environment encourages students to take pride in their work and to assume responsibility for their learning. Students respond to the warmth and caring of teachers, their high expectations for achievement, and their commitment to students. Students feel safe with these teachers and know that they can count on the teachers to be fair and, when necessary, compassionate. Students are also sensitive to the subtle messages they receive from teachers as to their capabilities. The components of Domain 2 are not associated with the learning of any particular content; instead, they set the stage for all learning. The teacher establishes a comfortable and respectful classroom environment, which cultivates a culture for learning and creates a safe place for risk-taking. The atmosphere is businesslike, with non-instructional routines and procedures handled efficiently; student behavior is cooperative and non disruptive; and the physical environment conducive to learning.

Domain 3: Instruction

Domain 3 contains the components that are at the essential heart of teaching – the actual engagement of students in learning, through the vision of students developing complex understanding and participating in a community of learners. Students are engaged in meaningful work, which carries significance beyond the next test and is relevant to students' lives. Teachers who excel in Domain 3 have finely honed instructional skills. Their work in the classroom is fluid and flexible; they can shift easily from one approach to another when the situation demands it. They seamlessly incorporate ideas and concepts from other parts of the curriculum into their explanations and activities. Their questions probe student thinking, and serve to extend understanding. They are attentive to different students in the class, and the degree to which they are thoughtfully engaged; they carefully monitor student understanding as they go (through well-designed questions or activities) and make minor mid-course corrections as needed. And above all, they promote the emergence of self-directed learners fully engaged in the work at hand.

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

The components in Domain 4 are associated with being a true professional educator: they encompass the roles assumed outside of and in addition to those in the classroom with students. Students rarely observe these activities; parents and the larger community observe them only intermittently. But the activities are critical to preserving and enhancing the profession. Educators exercise some of them (for example, maintaining records and communicating with families) immediately upon entering the profession, since they are integral to their work with students. Domain 4 consists of a wide range of professional responsibilities, from self reflection and professional growth, to participation in a professional community, to contributions made to the profession as a whole. The components also include interactions with the families of students, contacts with the larger community and advocacy for students. Domain 4 captures the essence of professionalism by teachers; teachers are, as a result of their skills in this domain, full members of the teaching profession, and committed to its enhancement.

Appendix D: Professional Collaboration at Sweet Home

Professional collaborative experiences provide an opportunity to foster improved student learning through effective teamwork and professional learning in the quest to cultivate the critical attributes of a true learning community.

Professional collaboration is designed to promote the following big ideas, concepts and values:

Collective Efficacy	*Collective Responsibility- the most effective teams have shared interests and mutual accountability. Team members are concerned about the results of all kids, not just "their" kids.*
Common/ Shared Goals	*Common goals foster interdependence and a shared sense of purpose.*
Collaborative/ Interdependent Teams	*Effective teams take advantage of the strengths of all members to produce new knowledge and shared products.*

Using an inquiry cycle, high performing collaborative teams work interdependently to improve student learning. Teams should consider the following questions and engage in following activities:

	Essential Questions	Typical Activities
Inquiry Cycle	**How will we operate as a team?**	• Setting team norms or collective commitments • Periodically reflecting upon and evaluating the team's commitment to these norms.
	What exactly do kids need to know and be able to do?	• Standards and unit unpacking to identify knowledge, skills and understandings. • Data analysis of formative or summative assessments to identify points of focus for student learning. • Identification of prior knowledge required to successfully learn the identified knowledge and skill.
	What evidence will we accept that they have learned?	• Formative assessment development • Summative assessment development • Rubric development • Common scoring of student work
	How will we respond when kids don't learn? How will we respond if kids	• Data analysis • Creation of intervention lists • Reviewing progress monitoring data

	have already learned?	
	What are the most effective strategies to help kids learn?	● Lesson designs ● Lesson study ● Discussion of best practices

Team Composition:

- Membership on a collaborative team should be based upon those individuals sharing common interest in learning of a set of students and the curriculum they need to learn.
- Grade level team teachers form the foundation of teams at the elementary level.
- Other professionals such as instructional coaches, literacy specialists, interventionists, special educators, or special area teachers may be part of teams provided they can all support the identified knowledge and skill.

Agenda Building:

- The creation of meeting agendas is the collaborative work of teams.
- Agenda development is driven by team progress through the inquiry cycle.
- Collaborative teams at the elementary level should focus on the content areas of literacy and mathematics. Other content areas can periodically be the focus of the inquiry cycle.
- As teams complete one phase of the cycle, they generally should move to the next phase.
- At the end of each meeting, the team reviews its progress and sets the agenda for the next meeting.
- Most of the available meeting time should be spent in activity aligned to the inquiry cycle.

The Administrative Role:

- Help build the capacity of teams to do the work well.
- Be interested and involved in the work- ask questions, celebrate successes provide feedback
- Monitor the work of teams and provide supports needed to help grow collective and individual capacity
- Help provide direction and boundaries for team collaboration in the collaboration cycle. Ensure that teamwork is congruent to and aligned with the inquiry cycle.
- Intervene and direct the team if their work is not aligned to the District's vision for effective collaborative work.