

TEAM Program Support Plan for Newtown School District

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

DISTRICT PROFILE:

Superintendent: **Dr. Joseph V. Erardi, Jr.**

District co-Facilitators: **Linda Gejda, Kirsten Hardy**

District Facilitator email: gejda@newtown.k12.ct.us; hardyk@newtown.k12.ct.us

District Facilitator Phone: **203.426.7617**

Years covered by plan: 2014-2017

TCC Approved Plan *Date on which this plan was approved by the TCC :* June 2014

TCC Members *Names, staff role:*

Phillip Beierle – Reed Intermediate School, Teacher

Nancy Bradley – Master Mentor

Karen Dreger – Head O'Meadow, Teacher

Kris Feda – Sandy Hook School, Math-Science Specialist

Barbara Gasparine-Head O'Meadow Principal, Representative of Administrators

Dr. Linda Gejda – Assistant Superintendent of Schools

Kirsten Hardy – Newtown High School, Teacher; Master Mentor

Peggy Kennedy – Middle Gate School, Lead Teacher

Susan Lang – Newtown Middle School, Teacher; Newtown Federation of Teachers Representative

Kim Lowell – Newtown High School, Teacher

TBD – Hawley School, Teacher

I. Objectives

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

Newtown's three-year objectives and supporting activities are related to Connecticut's mission statement for the Teacher Education and Mentoring Program and Newtown's Strategic Plan. The district will continue to develop a collaborative, supportive culture which promotes the on-going and systemic professional growth of teachers to ensure student success.

Our district will:

A. Support the TEAM mentor program by:

- providing mentor update training for existing mentor teachers
- identifying and recruiting additional mentors and providing initial mentor training
- participating in the CSDE's survey or creating one of our own

B. Develop new teacher goals and objectives related to district initiatives by:

- updating new teacher induction session and materials
- developing a multi-year professional development plan and schedule for new staff
- reviewing and updating new teacher evaluation policies and procedures

II. TEAM Coordinating Committee

Describe the criteria and process that you will use for

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

Newtown has developed a process and the criteria for identifying TEAM Coordinating Committee (TCC) members, their committee membership terms and a timeline for the TCC to communicate with central office regarding TCC activities.

A. Newtown's TCC member will:

- include the district TEAM Facilitator, a representative from each level (elementary, intermediate, middle and high school), an administrator, and a teacher representing the bargaining unit.
- serve a minimum three-year term. After three years, volunteers (up to one-third of the committee membership) will be asked to step down from the committee and replacements will be selected through nominations, interviews by the district TEAM facilitator, and committee approval. For every year thereafter, the process will continue until committee members have staggered memberships. The district TEAM facilitator will be expected to remain a permanent committee member.
- be recently-trained mentors with recent mentor experience preferable.
- be expected to participate in mediation training provided by the district.
- be a trained TEAM paper reviewer.

B. The district TEAM Facilitator will meet with the Superintendent no later than October 1st of each year to review the TCC membership and to discuss the current number of Beginning Teachers expected to complete each module. A follow-up meeting with the Superintendent to update TEAM activities, including the progress of Beginning Teachers, will occur no later than February 1st.

III. Mentors

Describe the criteria and process that you will use to:

1. *select mentors;*
2. *ensure that they have received appropriate state training (initial training and update training every three years); and*
3. *assign mentors to beginning teachers based on subject areas, grade levels and need.*
4. *monitor mentor meeting logs to ensure support hours are meeting the mandated requirements.*

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

Newtown has criteria and a protocol for mentor selection and training as well as the pairing of mentors and mentees.

A. Mentors:

- are selected through an application process that includes a recommendation from the building administrator and two colleagues (can be verbal or simple email); interview with the district TEAM Facilitator and Building TEAM Facilitator; and notification to the Board of Education. Applications will generally be due in early May, with the specific date established each year.
- receive initial mentor training by the state or its designee and update training every 3 years. Newtown will seek opportunities to collaborate with surrounding districts and RECSs to update mentors on best practice and essential knowledge. Newly appointed mentors will be provided with Initial Support Teacher Training. Current mentors will receive update training.
- and Beginning Teachers will be as closely matched to grade level and teaching assignment as possible. The decision for mentor/mentee assignments will be made at the building level by the principal with input from the Building Facilitator as needed.
- are expected to continue training in successful teaching strategies and best practices.
- are encouraged to pursue training as TEAM paper reviewers.

IV. Reflection Paper Review

Describe the process you will use to develop capacity for and review of Module Reflection Papers: Note: Regardless of whether a district elects to review reflection papers in-district or participate in a regional review process, reviewers must be recruited (number of reviewers will depend on the number of reflection papers that will need to be reviewed), attend a one-day training prior to reviewing papers and participate in update training in subsequent years.

Sections A and B should be completed by all districts

A. Review Option: regional

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

Note that if selecting the **in-district** review option, the following options exist for composing a review committee:

1. The full TCC can serve as the review committee.

2. A sub-set of the TCC can serve as the review committee.
3. Others (outside of the TCC) can serve.

Note that if selecting the **regional review** option a number of reviewers from your district will need to be identified to participate in the regional review of reflection papers from teachers outside of your own districts.

Capacity for and review of Module Reflection Papers is essential.

The criteria and process for selecting individuals to review reflection papers:

- An invitation to all recently-trained mentors and retired mentors (if needed) will be sent by the District Facilitator in the spring to establish a reviewer candidate "pool."
- The candidate "pool" will be reviewed by the district TEAM Coordinating Committee. As needed, reviewers will be selected to participate on the regional review committee with consideration being given to active mentor experience, current grade level and teaching assignment, and previous experience in the TEAM program.
- Those selected will be trained by the RESC in the process of reviewing papers.

V. Beginning Teachers

Describe the process that you will use to:

1. *collect and annually update (if necessary) beginning teachers' two-year support plans;*
2. *ensure that mentors and beginning teachers are working together to complete the beginning teachers' Professional Growth Action Plans (PGAP) and are participating in the module process; and*
3. *establish and communicate timelines for submission of reflection papers and monitor program completion.*

The following process will be used to collect Beginning Teachers' two-year support plans and ensure that Mentors and Beginning Teachers are working together to complete the Professional Growth Action Plans (PGAPs) and are participating in the Module process:

A. The school Principal will collect beginning teachers' two-year support plan within 30 days from the start of the school year (or, for teachers hired mid-year, within 30 days of hire), review, and then approve the plans. The Principal will forward approved plans to the District Facilitator by October 15th.

B. Beginning teachers will communicate possible dates to the school Principal that Professional Growth Action Plans (PGAPs) (identify for which module) will be ready to share/discuss with Principal.

C. The Building Facilitator will review Meeting Logs at least once every other month. As necessary, the Building Facilitator will acknowledge success and address any concerns with the beginning teacher and/or mentor and notify the administrator if issues require his/her attention.

VI. Dispute Resolution

Describe the process that the district will use to resolve internal disputes or appeals. (Consider: disputes concerning the mentoring module process; the PGAP; mentor-beginning teacher

relationships - including a process to dissolve placements, if necessary; reflection paper outcomes (if reviewed in-district); and, requests for special accommodations based on disabilities.)

In order to resolve internal disputes or appeals related to the TEAM program, the district will use the following protocol:

A. Disputes concerning the mentoring module process, the PGAP or the mentor-beginning teacher relationships will be reported to the District TEAM Facilitator if not satisfactorily resolved at the building level. The DF will request from members of the TCC, as appropriate, to assist with mediation in an effort to resolve the concern, including, but not limited to: re-assignment of mentor/beginning teacher match, discussing concerns with the school principal and referring the situation to the Superintendent.

B. Requests by Beginning Teachers for special accommodations will be submitted to the District TEAM Facilitator in writing a minimum of three (3) weeks prior to the reflection paper due date and will be reviewed by the TCC on a case-by-case basis. Teachers making such requests will be notified of the results of the review within two (2) weeks. Each request must be dated, typed or printed on official letterhead and be signed by a physician, clinician or certified evaluator qualified to make the diagnosis (include information about license or certification and area of specialization). Such documentation must include a:

- clear statement of the diagnosed disability or disabilities
- description of the evaluation tests or techniques used
- description of the functional limitations resulting from the disability or disabilities (i.e., how does the disability limit major life activities)
- current diagnosis, i.e., completed within the last five years for learning disability, last six months for psychiatric disabilities, or within the last six months for physical disabilities/illness (these currency requirements may be waived upon a showing of the continuing relevance of older documentation); and
- description of the specific accommodations requested and specific relation to the diagnosed disability or illnesses

Documentation must also include:

- the type of accommodation(s) requested
- a description of why the(se) accommodation(s) are necessary
- the nature of the teacher's disability
- the date the disability was first diagnosed and the date of the most recent evaluation and
- what, if any, accommodations have been received within the past 5 years in employment

VII. Resources

Describe the resources needed and the budget required to carry out the activities described in the plan to support beginning teachers and mentor activities as outlined here and in beginning teachers' Professional Growth Action Plans. Provide actual amounts budgeted toward these

activities. (Consider: time and opportunities for beginning teachers and mentors to meet, for individuals to serve on the TCC and/or review committees, and substitute coverage needs.)

The resources needed to carry out the activities described in the District TEAM plan to support beginning teachers and mentor activities as outlined here and in Beginning Teacher's professional Growth Action Plans have budget implications.

A. District resources, connected to the district budget, are limited. Mentors and Beginning Teachers will be encouraged to seek no- or little- cost opportunities to obtain the skills and knowledge to be successful in the classroom. Teachers, mentors, and/or TCC members will:

- be provided substitute coverage as needed and approved for collaboration, professional development, meetings, classroom visitations, and participation on regional review committees or TCC business;
- be provided training in key areas (e.g., effective teaching strategies) as decided by the TEAM Coordinating Committee and the New Teacher Orientation Committee;
- participate in district professional development opportunities and district-approved professional development opportunities outside the district;
- be encouraged to use online resources such as webinars, videos, and journals such as those made available on ctteam.org.;
- be compensated for their participation in the TEAM program as a mentor, facilitator and/or Reflection Paper reviewer, as per contract;
- have access to the professional libraries in their building and throughout the district.

VIII. Module Five *Professional Responsibility*

1. Phase I- Facilitated Conversations: Ethical and Professional Dilemmas

- a. When will your facilitated conversations be conducted? – Before the end of the beginning teacher's first year.
- b. Who will facilitate your conversations? – TBD by building facilitators.
- c. How will your conversations be structured? With only beginning teachers? With beginning teachers and mentors? With whole faculty? Large groups, small groups? - TBD by building facilitators.

2. Phase II- Professionalism, Collaboration and Leadership

- a. What kinds of collaborative, leadership opportunities and supports exist in your district for beginning teachers? – Summer orientation, district and building/grade level PLCs, building-level new teacher meetings.
 - b. What kinds of professional development opportunities do you offer to beginning teachers and/or mentors? Opportunities to observe other teachers in the building and district, workshops both in and out of district, Bloomboard and Smarter Balanced web sites
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