

# Role and Responsibilities of School-Based Mentors

## Why Mentoring?

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The mentor's overall role is to promote the growth and development of the beginning teacher to improve student learning. When new teachers are hired, they are given a full program and are expected to impact student learning immediately without the benefit of any period of apprenticeship. New teachers essentially have to learn how to teach while on the job. Mentors are critical supports in guiding new teachers to enhance their planning, instruction, and content knowledge. Mentors help orient new teachers to the school community and to teaching in general. Mentors also serve as collegial and emotional supports for this challenging phase of a teacher's career. On a practical level, mentors are required to document the new teacher's mentoring experience.

## When is Mentoring Required?

Pre-service teachers who graduate with a bachelor's degree and plan to teach in NYC public schools must apply to the State for certification. The certification issued by the State is Initial Certification. One-year of mentoring (two periods per week over 10 months) is required for Initial Certificate holders in order to obtain Professional Certification.

Once hired by a principal, the principal or assistant principal matches the new teacher with a mentor in the Mentor Tracking System, MTS, our online mentor documentation system. Upon the match, two automated e-mails go out to both the new teacher and mentor informing them of the match. Additionally, the mentor's e-mail includes a link to the MTS and information pertaining to guidelines for logging/documenting new teacher mentor contact in MTS.

## How are school based mentors (selected) recommended?

The New Teacher Induction Committee is comprised of the principal or designee; the chapter leader or designee; teachers (which make up a majority of members); and representatives of constituent groups. The committee interviews applicants and recommends mentor and new teacher matches. The final decision in matching is made by the principal.

## What are the minimum requirements for Mentors?

The minimum preferred requirement for mentors is 5 years of teaching in the New York City public schools. Mentors should also demonstrate mastery of pedagogical and subject matter skills; evidence of excellent interpersonal skills; and a commitment to participate in professional development. Please be aware that MTS will not allow supervisors and administrators to serve as new teacher mentors.

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## Role of the Mentor: *A mentor is a trusted counselor or guide*

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**Building a Trusting Relationship.** One of the mentor's initial responsibilities is to establish a trusting relationship with the new teacher. Research indicates that mentoring is most effective when the beginning teacher trusts the mentor. The mentor builds this trust by creating a risk-free learning environment for the beginning teacher by providing support that is non-judgmental and confidential<sup>1</sup>. Confidentiality invites honesty, risk taking, and self-reflection by the new teacher. While the mentor does not share any evaluative information about the beginning teacher with anyone (including administration and the principal), topics, content, and strategies can be shared with administrators.

## Mentor Activities

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### *Types of Interactions...*

The mentor meets with the beginning teacher for regularly scheduled structured meetings for a minimum of two periods per week. Meetings must include both in-classroom support and one-on-one conferences. When the mentor views the beginning teacher's practice, there is a mutually agreed upon purpose, driven by the needs of the beginning teacher, and the mentor shares objective non-judgmental data about classroom practice. When the mentor meets one-on-one with the beginning teacher, it's for the purpose of holding reflective conferences that build the teacher's capacity to make effective decisions. The mentor guides the beginning teacher in the use of classroom and student data to formulate strategies, solutions, and next steps.

### *Strategies...*

A wide range of strategies are available to the mentor in working with the beginning teacher. A list of some strategies is included below:

- introduce and orient the new teacher to the school
- use a research-based framework to guide the new teacher in reflecting on practice for the purpose of growth and development
- use structured tools (such as the Formative Assessment System) to guide interactions and keep the conversation focused
- view new teacher's classroom to provide objective non-judgmental data
- arrange reciprocal classroom visits
- model and conduct demonstration lessons

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<sup>1</sup> According to NYS regulations, *"information emerging from mentoring activities and the mentoring relationship is confidential..."*

*The information obtained by a mentor through interaction with the new teacher while engaged in the mentoring activities of the program shall not be used for evaluating or disciplining the new teacher..."*

- co-teach with the new teacher
- help the new teacher ...
  - identify and access school and community resources
  - develop classroom rules and routines
  - with classroom management
  - set-up classroom
  - meet City-wide Instructional Expectations
  - plan lessons
  - look at student work
  - use formal and informal assessment strategies
  - analyze student work to differentiate instruction
  - understand and use the curriculum and student standards
  - develop short and long term goals
  - prepare for supervisors' observations
  - communicate effectively with parents
  - prepare for parent-teacher conferences
  - understand and comply with clerical responsibilities

#### *Protocols for Mentoring Conversations...*

A key way to extend and deepen thinking is by posing questions. Your questions before a classroom visit can help clarify goals for student learning, explore teaching strategies, and identify a focus for data collection. Summarize or paraphrase key ideas and feelings that emerge in the pre-conference, and agree to follow up. In the reflecting conference, you may ask questions such as these:

- How do you think the lesson went?
- In what ways did the students meet or not meet your learning goals?
- How do you know?
- What do you notice in the observation data (mentor notes)?
- How might you follow this lesson?
- What are your thoughts about this process and our work together?

#### *Suggested Pacing Calendar...*

##### September

- Introductions: Begin a trusting relationship, share experiences
- Identify school and community resources
- Go over rules, routines, school policies
- Introduce the Collaborative Conference Guide to note areas of strength and concerns

##### October-November

- Active listening
- Assist with lesson-planning, pacing of curriculum

- Modeling and tips for classroom management
- Arrange inter-visitations
- Review available professional development opportunities

#### December-January

- Share data on the phases of the first year of teaching: <http://newteachercenter.org/blog/phases-first-year-teaching>
- Help set priorities
- Suggest need for self-care, time to rejuvenate
- Encourage collaboration with colleagues
- Use data collection such as low-inference transcript/Selective Scripting

#### February-March

- Assist with pre- and post-observations
- Incorporate Common Core Standards in planning
- Analyze student work and differentiation strategies
- Reflect on professional goals, create new goals

#### April-May-June

- Collect artifacts that show professional growth
- ARIS Learn Self-Assessments
- Plan for start of new year

## Documentation

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Each school must maintain official records for documenting mentoring experiences. The names of the new teachers, the names of the mentors assigned, the type of mentoring activities, and the number of hours of mentoring provided to each new teacher are the baseline items of information required by New York State. The *Mentor Tracking System (MTS)*, is a citywide on-line tracking system for documenting mentoring interactions in order to apply for Professional Certification.

Mentors are required to document in MTS. The structures built into MTS ensure accountability at four levels—School, Network, Cluster and the Central Office.

Just as important as maintaining official records of the mentoring experience is the use of data to inform support for the new teacher. Using MTS, school-based mentors can log the type of interactions, topics discussed, standards addressed, and the date and the duration of each interaction with their new teachers. Mentors, assistant principals, and principals can download summary reports to review past work and better inform future work with the new teacher.

The **Mentor's Guide to MTS** can help you navigate the required documentation process.

## Other Documentation Possibilities

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Documentation on the Mentor Tracking System is the required documentation. However, along with the MTS required documenting, mentors and new teachers can collaboratively supplement MTS data in various ways in order to support teacher growth. Schools may have a documentation system that all teachers are expected to use. Documenting mentoring should include the collaborative building of a teaching portfolio that demonstrates growth through artifacts which can include: low-inference classroom scripting, notes from conferences, lesson and unit plans, student work and feedback, etc.

## Completion of Mentoring

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Upon completion of mentoring, on the *MTS: Match New Teacher and Mentoring Plan* screen, your principal will see the following notation next to teacher's name: Requirement Satisfied. Three automated e-mails, will go to you, the new teacher, and the principal. Your principal has the option of continuing your mentor/new teacher relationship as a means of providing additional support. However, documentation of the additional support cannot be documented in MTS.

Every July, the office of Certification, Human Resources & Talent, will send the names of all applicants who successfully completed their mentoring requirement. Additionally, a hard copy of the Mentor Verification Letter will be sent to the home mailing address on file for each new teacher. When new teachers apply for their Professional Certificate, after all other requirements are satisfied, "satisfaction of mentoring" will show on their TEACH account.

**Teacher Development Specialists reside in each Cluster and seek to support mentors, schools, Networks, and Clusters in their efforts to strengthen teaching practice and student work. These individuals have been trained in mentoring and induction, and they currently provide a range of professional learning opportunities focused around mentoring and teacher development.**

## Teacher Development Specialist Team

Cluster	TDS	Email @schools.nyc.gov
1	Larry Keasley	LKeasley
2	Tim Gilday	TGilday
4	Lisa Langer- Baratz	LLanger2
5	Sonya Brown Ana Crisostomo	SBrown8 ACrisos2
6	Anita Dutt	ADutt
D 75	Marilyn King Yvonne Vega	MKing YVega2

TDS Support	E-Mail @schools.nyc.gov
Judi Fenton Lead TDS DAPS	JFenton2
Vidal Pabon Mentoring UFT Teacher Center	VPabon2
Melvin Thompson Human Resources MTS	MThomps2

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Your TDS can provide:

- ❖ Support for Principals and Teacher Induction Committees in designing and implementing rigorous mentoring programs
- ❖ Professional Development for Mentors and Coaches
  - 12 hour Mentoring Courses
  - Individualized Mentor trainings based on Network/School Priorities
  - Mentoring Modules
  - On-going mentor support groups