

3126 DISTRICT MENTORING PROGRAM

The Board of Education recognizes that all newly prepared teachers are required to serve their first two years of employment under provisional certification and in a district induction program designed to train and guide new teachers and to identify those teachers who qualify for standard certification.

The Board will approve a district mentoring plan for the induction of new teaching staff members and submit the plan to the Department of Education when required.

The goals of the district mentoring program shall be to enhance teacher knowledge of, and strategies related to, the standards adopted by the State of New Jersey to facilitate student achievement and growth; identify exemplary teaching skills and educational practices necessary to acquire and maintain excellence in teaching; and assist novice teachers in performing their duties and adjusting to the challenges of teaching. The Board of Education shall determine how each nontenured teacher in his or her first two years of employment shall be provided with supports as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-5.1(c). The Board shall provide an individual mentor to work one-on-one with a novice provisional teacher in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-5.1(d). The Superintendent shall oversee the mentor selection process and ensure the individual mentor meets the minimum requirements required in N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-5.2(a).

The Superintendent of Schools or designee shall develop the district mentoring plan in accordance with the requirements outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-5.3 as part of the school district's professional development plan (PDP) pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-4.4. The district mentoring plan shall include logistics for its implementation and describe the school district's responsibilities pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-5.1 et seq.

The Board of Education shall budget State funds appropriated for the novice teacher mentoring program in accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-5.1(f). The Board shall ensure that State funds appropriated for this program shall supplement, and not supplant, any Federal, State or local funds already devoted to planning and implementing a novice teacher mentor program. The Board of Education shall ensure that State funds shall be used for one or more of the following: stipends for mentor teachers; the costs associated with release time; substitutes for mentor teachers and novice teachers; and professional development and training activities related to the program.

Evaluations for a provisional teacher shall be completed in accordance with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.6.

N.J.S.A. 18A:26-2; 18A:26-2a
N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-8.4; 6A:9B-8.5; 6A:9B-8.6;
6A:9C-5.1

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The Board of Education is authorized to employ a holder of a certificate of eligibility (CE) or certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS) after its mentoring plan has been approved pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-5.1.

A. Definitions (N.J.A.C. 6A:9-2.1)

1. “Certificate of Eligibility or CE” means a certificate with lifetime validity issued to persons who have completed degree, academic study, and applicable test requirements for certification. The CE permits the applicant to seek and accept employment in corresponding positions requiring certification.
2. “Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing or CEAS” means a certificate with a lifetime validity issued to persons who have completed degree, academic study, applicable test requirements, and CEAS educator preparation programs for certification. The CEAS permits the applicant to seek and accept employment in positions requiring certification.
3. “District mentoring program” means a program of induction and support for non-tenured teachers, including novice provisional teachers and experienced teachers new to a school district, designed to develop them into effective professionals within the school district.
4. “Endorsement” means an authorization allowing a certificate holder to teach one or more specific subject area(s) or to serve in one or more specific teaching staff role(s).
5. “Mentor teacher” means an experienced, certified New Jersey teacher who is assigned to provide support and guidance to a novice teacher. The mentor teacher must have ‘effective’ or ‘highly effective’ status.
6. “Novice teacher” means any teacher serving full- or part-time under a provisional certificate who has not yet been issued a standard instructional certificate in any endorsement area.

7. “Professional Standards for Teachers” means the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that all teachers must acquire to practice as teachers in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:9-3.3.
8. “Provisional teaching period” means a minimum of two years of full-time teaching under a provisional certificate required of all novice teachers before they are eligible to be recommended for a standard certificate.

B. Requirements for District Mentoring Program

1. The district shall develop a mentoring program to provide non-tenured teachers, including novice provisional teachers who hold a CE or CEAS, with an induction to the teaching profession and to the school district community through differentiated supports based on the teachers’ individual needs and to help them become effective professionals.
2. The goals of the district mentoring program shall be to enhance teacher knowledge of, and strategies related to, the standards adopted by the State of New Jersey to facilitate student achievement and growth; identify exemplary teaching skills and educational practices necessary to acquire and maintain excellence in teaching; and assist novice teachers in performing their duties and adjusting to the challenges of teaching.
3. The Board of Education shall determine how each non-tenured teacher in his or her first two years of employment shall be provided with the following supports:
 - a. Comprehensive induction to school district policies and procedures including, but not limited to, introduction to school district curricula, student assessment policies, and training on the school district’s evaluation rubric, including setting and assessing student learning through student growth objectives;

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- b. Individualized supports and activities, which shall be assigned at the school district's discretion and shall be aligned with the Professional Standards for Teachers at N.J.A.C. 6A:9-3.3, the Standards for Professional Learning at N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-3.3, and the school district's Commissioner-approved teaching practice instrument. The supports and activities shall be guided by:
 - (1) The non-tenured teacher's degree of preparation and experience;
 - (2) The non-tenured teacher's individual professional development plan (PDP) developed within thirty instructional days of the beginning of the teaching assignment pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-4.4(f);
 - (3) Areas of focus within the district mentoring plan; and
 - (4) Goals of the school and school district plans for professional development as described in N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-4.2.

- 4. The district shall provide an individual mentor to work one-to-one with a novice provisional teacher and ensure:
 - a. Each novice provisional teacher is assigned an individual mentor at the beginning of the contracted teaching assignment;
 - b. The mentor teacher provides observation and feedback, opportunities for the novice teacher to observe effective practice, and confidential guidance and support in accordance with the Professional Standards for Teachers, and guides the teacher in a self-assessment on the school district's Commissioner-approved teaching practice instrument;
 - c. The one-to-one mentoring includes planned, in-person contact time between the mentor teacher and the novice provisional teacher holding a CE or CEAS over the course of the academic year, or proportionally longer if the novice provisional teacher holds a part-time teaching assignment;
 - d. The mentor teacher and the novice provisional teacher holding a CEAS meet at least once per week for the first four weeks of the teaching assignment;

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- e. The mentor teacher and the novice provisional teacher holding a CE meet at least once per week for the first eight weeks of the teaching assignment:
 - (1) The one-to-one mentoring shall support the novice provisional teacher in achieving the curricular objectives of the formal instructional program in which the novice provisional teacher holding a CE is enrolled.
 - f. All contact time between the mentor teacher and the novice provisional teacher shall be recorded in a log, developed as part of the district mentoring plan, submitted to the Superintendent or designee, and maintained within the school district.
5. All novice provisional teachers whose positions require possession of instructional certificates pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:26-2 and N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-5.1 shall comply with the district mentoring program requirements.
6. The district shall budget State funds appropriated for the novice teacher mentoring program.
- a. Subject to the availability of funds, the Department of Education shall appropriate State funds based on the number of novice teachers employed each year by the Board of Education.
 - b. The Board of Education shall ensure State funds appropriated for this program supplement, and not supplant, Federal, State, or local funds already devoted to planning and implementing a novice teacher mentor program.
 - c. The Board of Education shall ensure State funds are used for one or more of the following:
 - (1) Stipends for mentor teachers;
 - (2) The costs associated with release time;

- (3) Substitutes for mentor and novice teachers; and
 - (4) Professional development and training activities related to the program.
- d. If no State funds are available to pay the costs of mentoring fees, candidates who are required to complete a provisional period of teaching to obtain standard certification shall be responsible for payment of mentoring fees during the first provisional year. The Board may, at its discretion, pay all or part of the mentoring fees.
7. The school district's administrative office shall oversee the payment of mentors. Payment shall not be conferred directly from provisional novice teacher to mentor.

C. Mentor requirements

- 1. The Superintendent shall oversee the mentor selection process and ensure the individual mentor of a novice provisional teacher meets the following minimum requirements:
 - a. Holds an instructional certificate and, when possible, is certified in the subject area in which the novice provisional teacher is working;
 - b. Has at least three years of experience and has taught full-time for at least two years within the last five years;
 - c. Does not serve as the mentee's direct supervisor nor conduct evaluations of teachers;
 - d. Demonstrates a record of success in the classroom with a summative rating of 'effective' or 'highly effective', pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:10
 - e. Understands the social and workplace norms of the school district and the community it serves;

- f. Understands the resources and opportunities available in the school district and is able to act as a referral source to the novice provisional teacher; and
- g. Completes a comprehensive mentor training program with a curriculum that includes, at a minimum, training on the school district's teaching evaluation rubric and practice instrument, Professional Standards for Teachers, standards adopted by the State of New Jersey, classroom observation skills, facilitating adult learning, and leading reflective conversations about teaching practice.

D. District Mentoring Plan

- 1. The Superintendent or designee shall develop a district mentoring plan as part of the school district's PDP pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-4.4. The district mentoring plan shall include logistics for its implementation and describe the school district's responsibilities pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-5.
 - a. The Superintendent shall submit the district mentoring plan to the Board of Education for review of its fiscal impact.
 - b. The Superintendent or designee shall share the district mentoring plan with each school improvement panel, which shall oversee the school-level implementation of the district mentoring plan and shall communicate the plan to all non-tenured teachers and their mentors.
 - c. The Superintendent or designee annually shall review the plan and revise it, as necessary, based on feedback from mentor logs, each school improvement panel, and data on teacher and student performance.