

Feb 16, 2023

To TEAM Mentor Committee,

My name is Kathleen Stailey. I am the K-5 PE teacher at Ivy Drive School. This is the 4th year I have been an educator in the Bristol Public Schools and my 15th year total. I have taught pre-k students up to 8th graders. I want to be trained to be a TEAM mentor/cooperating teacher because I believe that I have a lot to offer a new physical educator. I still remember my cooperating teachers from my student teaching experience. There were lots of questions that I had about what it was like to really be a PE teacher day in and day out, year after year. I had 2 different placements and it was beneficial for me to be able to get two different answers. I think my experience working in three different schools/systems and multiple grade levels gives me a background of best practices that will be beneficial for any PE teacher in any school system.

One qualification that I have to bring to a student teacher/mentee is my ability to work cooperatively as a team member to aid the professional growth of a student or beginning teacher. My current schedule has me teaching alone for 4 days of the week with a colleague coming into my school to teach with me 1 day a week. When my colleague comes, we are constantly in communication with each other about the plans for the day, who will take the lead of what part of the lesson, and after each class we will discuss how things went and how we can change for the next class if needed. I have learned to be honest with my thoughts in a respectful way, and be able to offer ideas and thoughts to be able to enhance our lessons. This quality is very important to work with a student teacher/mentee as there needs to be constant communication and an exchange of ideas going both ways.

Another qualification I can bring to a student teacher/mentor is the ability to be reflective and the ability to talk about the art of teaching. I believe that teaching physical education is a unique task. There are best teaching practices that are important but it is also an ever changing environment with lots of moving parts. I believe modeling the practice of reflecting after each class and changing things that need to be changed at any time is very important. I am able to model changing a lesson mid lesson that is not going well, pivoting the activity to be able to meet the learning target and communicating how and why I made the changes I did.

I am involved in different activities inside and outside of school that also makes me a well rounded physical educator. I am a member of CTAHPERD (Connecticut Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance) and attend yearly professional development opportunities. I organize and run Jump Rope for Heart for our school community. I am a member of our school climate team and attended Climate camp this past summer. I was the lead member of the elementary physical education curriculum team that wrote and submitted our PE and health curriculum last school year. These experiences have let me work with different educators across the district and the state. I have learned so much about effective teaching and how to add elements to my lessons to make them highly effective and engaging for all students. I would be honored to be able to share these experiences with a student teacher/mentee.

In closing, I have all of the qualifications that are needed to mentor a student teacher/beginning teacher. I know what a physical educator has to deal with on a daily basis. I am able to communicate and model these confidently. I look forward to the opportunity to be trained to be a TEAM mentor.

Kathleen Stailey