



# BRISTOL CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

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*Be Creative, Be Conscientious, Be Collaborative, Be Committed*

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February, 25, 2025

Office of Teaching and Learning,

My name is Kenneth Gardiner and I am currently in my 18 year as a High School Social Studies educator. In my career I have taught various Social Studies courses for 9-12 graders. My career began in 2006 and I spent 12 years at Ellington High School before teaching the last 6 at Bristol Central. Currently my schedule consists of teaching AP Psychology, AVID, and Modern American History. I am submitting my application to become a TEAM Mentor/Cooperating Teacher for the March, 2025 due date.

Becoming a TEAM Mentor/Cooperating Teacher is something I have thought about many times during my career. I have many fond memories and deep appreciation for my own student teaching cooperative teacher and the many other teachers who have served as a mentor for me through my career. I certainly would not be the teacher I am today if it were not for the valuable learning experiences and collaboration these teachers have offered to me through the years. It is because of these positive and formative experiences that I desire to share my talents and guidance with a beginning educator. It is my motivation to give back to beginning educators and this is at the forefront of my desire to become a TEAM Mentor/Cooperating Teacher. I feel that I can be a positive force to help introduce and develop the practices of beginning educators. A second reason I would like to become a TEAM Mentor/Cooperating Teacher is to engage in the reflective practices that benefit new and experienced teachers. I truly enjoy and invite the collaborative aspects of teaching. I feel that an educator's best work happens when there is a sharing of ideas; some of my best experiences have come out of co teaching experiences and professional learning groups with colleagues. Even though most lessons are delivered alone with my students, I invite the collaborative, reflective practice that has certainly transformed my career.

As an educator with 18 years experience I feel that there is much I can bring to the TEAM Mentor/Cooperating Teacher program. At this point in my career I feel that I have developed a sound methodology for planning and instruction. Through my career my evaluative ratings have been consistently high and I value the feedback I receive from administrators and peers, using the feedback as part of a reflective process, not viewing it as threatening. It is of my opinion that my administrators and colleagues would describe me as a collaborative professional. Whether it is during professional learning, department meetings, or IIT work I always welcome the opportunity to work alongside colleagues, planning and discussing instructional strategies to meet the needs of students. Teaching can be an isolating profession at times and I try to do everything in my power to change that. This includes inviting colleagues in to observe lessons and reaching out to colleagues with questions or discussions around planning.

In my career I have always strived to be a resource to other educators when I can be. Especially now as an experienced teacher I have welcomed Uconn students and beginning teachers to observe and discuss teaching methodology. I enjoy sharing my planning ideas and I also like to hear the ideas of other educators as it often leads me to new understandings and keeps my planning and instructional ideas fresh. A highlight of the past 6 years teaching at BCHS has been my role as an AVID Elective Teacher. I have thoroughly enjoyed this role as I have formed deep connections with students and also have developed strong working relationships with counselors and AVID tutors. It has been a pleasure working with the tutors who have an interest in

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education and are being introduced to education from the professional side. I feel that I have served them as a mentor and have given them the freedom to create and conduct lessons, allowing them to be a co teacher of the elective class.

I would consider one of my strengths as an educator to be my reflective process. Being a reflective teacher is something I feel I do better today than at any point in my career. I try to incorporate this practice not only into my individual reflection but also try to make this a key part of my collaborative learning. A specific example which exemplifies many of the above mentioned qualities is when I recently encouraged my AVID tutor to develop and teach a socratic seminar with the AVID elective class. The tutor and I discussed the objectives we would like students to meet and I reviewed materials and helped the tutor adjust during the planning stage. The tutor next conducted the lesson and after we further discussed strengths/needs of the lesson and changes which might be beneficial for the future. The experience went very well for both the tutor and myself and I honestly learned just as much as the tutor by working through this reflective process closely. Another example which demonstrates my collaborative practice is the work accomplished during IIT time. This time serves as valuable time to not only plan and create learning activities/assessments, but also the fact that it is done collaboratively is an immense benefit. I greatly appreciate the ability to put minds together and hear new instructional ideas which ultimately helps me to be a better educator. A few other ways I have grown as an educator have been in seeking out various professional growth opportunities which include AVID trainings, College Board trainings, and district curriculum development. These collaborative experiences have helped me become a better educator while learning from administrators and peers. I have learned through my experiences that my development as an educator has been fostered the most by collaboration and reflection. I look forward to the opportunity to use my own learning and experiences to help develop future educators.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Gardiner

BCHS Social Studies

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