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Special Education: K-5 Extended Resource

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Becoming a mentor to other teachers is an area that I am very passionate about and I believe that I can help to make a difference in the induction and retention process for a beginning teacher. Over my nearly 11 years as an early childhood then special education teacher, I have held various roles that have granted me the opportunity to build capacity in those I work with by providing them with opportunities to contribute to students' plans and lesson development. Several paraprofessionals and teaching assistants that I have worked with over the years have since returned to college to become teachers; they have shared that their experiences in my classrooms have impacted this decision. In addition, as special education department chair, I was able to play a large role in training all new special education faculty/staff at my school, coordinate and guide all current faculty/staff, conduct observations, and serve as an evaluator and informal mentor. I am dedicated to my students and improvement of special education programming through collaboration with my special education team, general education teachers, and administrators. We conduct ongoing problem-solving to find the best ways to meet student needs; I am confident that my experience working as a member of a cohesive team would lend itself to being a member of a cooperative team to assist in the professional growth of a beginning teacher. As a teacher, overall, I have received at least Effective but primarily Exemplary scores every year of my teaching career; I believe the two areas where I am strongest are positively influencing others within my team, school, and district and strong instructional methods.

For my doctoral dissertation, I completed a mixed methods sequential explanatory study exploring the influence of school and district administrator support on special educator retention, due to the finding that the turnover rate of special educators is 2.5 times greater than any other

position in education. Findings of the study showed that while special educators most receive feedback and information, what special education teachers want and need most are emotional support, time, and resources. I believe that through this study and my own experiences, I have a plethora of valuable techniques, strategies, and familiarity with how to best support a new teacher.

Finally, I am a lifelong learner who continuously finds ways to become involved in my school, district, and the profession. During my Masters degree, I was selected as the Teacher Support Facilitator for the behavior and curriculum committees for fellow graduate students, and was asked to present my research regarding student self-monitoring during a research symposium. In previous teaching positions, I have participated in various committees, including PBIS, School Improvement Team, Leadership Team, District Autism Problem-Solving Team, Behavior Committee Facilitator, Classroom Accommodations and Techniques, and Special Olympics Training Coordinator and coach. In my current position, I previously held the role of Team Leader of the Student Recognition Committee, and was a member of the school and district Climate and Culture committees. I have been a member of PDEC since the 17-18 school year, where I have had the opportunity to assist with updating and revising teacher evaluation documents. This year, I will be joining the 2nd grade ELA curriculum enhancement team.

As a teacher leader, I strongly value supporting other teachers and finding ways to continually improve the teaching profession. Support, whether it is emotional, informational, appraisal (feedback), or instrumental (time, resources), are all essential components of a teacher's success and retention. I have a variety of experiences, through teaching positions, leadership roles, my education, and participation in various committees and professional

development opportunities, that I firmly believe would positively impact the growth of an upcoming or new teacher. It is my hope that I can be given this wonderful opportunity to positively impact others.