

Miranda Caisse
Edgewood School
Grade 3 Classroom Teacher
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To Whom It May Concern,

Hello! My name is Miranda Caisse. I am a 3rd grade classroom teacher at Edgewood School. I would like to be trained as a mentor/cooperating teacher because I understand the importance of having a positive experience in student teaching as well as working through the TEAM process. I was very lucky to have had an excellent cooperating teacher here at Edgewood School. She was confident and clear in her expectations as well as continuously supportive of me as I struggled with the realities of teaching. I was then lucky enough to be hired in the same school and able to become my cooperating teacher's grade-level teammate. She continued to have these same traits during our time working together on the 2nd grade team. Since my cooperating teacher is also a TEAM mentor, it was only natural for me to then become her mentee. During this time she continued to observe me in my own classroom, give me suggestions on how to improve my practice, and support me through the hardships of being a beginning teacher. As I said, I was very lucky. However, I have heard many stories from friends and colleagues who have had a very different experience in student teaching/TEAM. Friends and colleagues have spoken to me about how these bad experiences have made them want to leave teaching before they even began. As a teacher who is very passionate about this field, I notice the amount of teachers that we are needing in Connecticut and I would be honored to help encourage young people to become teachers and to work in this field.

If I were to become a cooperating teacher, then I would first and foremost create a positive environment for that person to be able to feel comfortable to discuss ideas, ask questions, and try new things. Once that environment is established, I would then have the student teacher observe me in all aspects of the teaching field. This would mean planning, preparing, teaching, attending meetings, and so on. I would answer any and all questions that this person had openly and honestly. After some time, I would then encourage the student teacher to take over pieces of the day and eventually the whole day in the classroom. During this time I would be constantly observing and giving the student teacher feedback in their practice. I would present this feedback in a way where the student teacher would know that they are doing good in some places and could improve in others.

As a TEAM mentor for a beginning teacher, I would like to first establish that same comfortable and supportive environment. I would want the beginning teacher to know that he/she can come to me with any and all concerns, fears, questions, problems, and celebrations. I would do what I can in terms of observing this teacher and providing feedback to them, but if that is not possible I would offer advice from my own experiences and guide them to helpful professional development (such as books, videos, articles, etc.) that would help them to improve. I would provide feedback to a beginning teacher in a way where they know that I am proud of them for what they are doing and am just offering different perspectives and ideas to help them improve.

I feel that I am qualified to be a TEAM mentor/cooperating teacher. I hold the provisional educator certificate for grades K-6 and am currently enrolled in a Master's program for Middle School math. I have been teaching within the Bristol Public School district for 5 years and, as stated previously, I also completed my student teaching in Bristol. I know I am prepared to work cooperatively as a team member because I work cooperatively with my current 3rd grade teammate by planning and preparing lessons together each week. I also work collaboratively with my ELA coach and math coach through our collaboration meetings and beyond. In addition to working collaboratively with my teammate and coaches, I have presented Professional Development on both NGSS as the Science Leader for my school and on how to use Google Classroom in the regular classroom. In addition to providing PD, I've also given individual help to teachers in regard to Science. Additionally, I currently participate in a few different committees both within my school and district wide. In my school I am a part of the School Leadership Team and district wide I am on the ELA Curriculum Enhancement team. In both committees we focus on student needs and how to best support those needs. Finally, I also participate in non-mandated professional activities as well. I've sat in on a number Dine and Discusses since I began teaching in Bristol, including the texts Heart! with Marie Hurd, Guided Math: A Framework for Mathematics Instruction with Deb Vitale, and Conferring: The Keystone of Reader's Workshop with Jill Thompson. Along with those Dine and Discusses, I've attended many conferences, participated in webinars, watched videos/tutorials online, and learned new practices from discussions with colleagues. Despite all of this learning I've participated in during my time in Bristol Public Schools, I still look for new things to learn and put into practice. I consider myself a continuous learner and am always looking for feedback and suggestions on how to improve my practice. In fact, I would enjoy having a TEAM mentee/student teacher because they would probably teach me some things in regard to the classroom as well.

Thank you for your consideration! I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Miranda M. Caisse