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# BROWNING PUBLIC SCHOOLS MENTOR HANDBOOK

2024-202

“Mentoring should be a fulfilling relationship between somebody with more experience and somebody with less, with the goal of helping both individuals become elevated versions of themselves.”

*JANICE OMADEKE, On Entrepreneurship and Why Values Matter*



*Browning Public Schools believes in the ability of a good mentoring program to help new teachers become acclimated to our school, and to support them in their quest to become better teachers. The mission of the Browning Public Schools Mentor Program is to provide guidance and support to new teachers in order to maximize their effectiveness in the classroom, to deal with challenges and to encourage retention of effective teachers.*

**M**odel the way

**E**xplore their knowledge

**N**urture a relationship

**T**rust

**O**pen your ears before you open your mouth

**R**ecognize, review and reflect on progress

### WHAT IS THE BROWNING MENTOR PROGRAM?

Mentoring is a cooperative relationship in which an experienced educator assists a novice teacher in achieving professional success. In Browning, mentoring

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is designed as a support system, centered on each campus, for all new educators to the district. The participants collaborate and create a shared trust and communication through one-on-one interactions. Each beginning teacher will be introduced to an experienced teacher (from their school and/or their grade level and/or curricular area) who will guide them through their first year in Browning.

*“A mentor enables the mentee to move toward their chosen goals with the benefit of their own insight and input based on the mentors experience.”* Mentoring Mindset, Skills and Tools. Anne Rolfe, 2021, pg 12.

## WHAT IS A MENTOR?

A mentor is an experienced teacher who formally agrees to advise, guide, support and develop a beginning teacher through a C relationship. In School District 9, a mentor is a teacher who has taught here for three or more years. Mentors generally have the respect of their peers, administrators and essential staff. Mentors use their knowledge of grade levels, curricular and extracurricular activities and district policies & procedures to counsel beginning teachers. Mentoring consists of a long-term relationship focused on supporting the growth and development of the mentee. The mentor becomes a resource of wisdom, instruction and support. A mentor is not someone who evaluates or critiques on specific actions or behavioral challenges in daily work.

**The idea behind mentoring relationships is that the more successful senior partner, will respectfully listen and respond empathetically and positively. While creating a safe space, offering resources for challenges and provide information for sound educational practices.**



## HOW ARE MENTORS CHOSEN?

Every teacher who is new to Browning Public Schools will be assigned a mentor for one year. Regardless of any previous teaching experience. The fact that beginning teachers have been chosen for mentor assistance is a symbol of the district's commitment to their first year of professional growth and their future with Browning Public Schools.

Mentors are chosen by the building administrators and the district mentoring coordinator. Certified staff members meeting the following qualifications should voice their interest to the principal at their school.

Certified staff members wishing to become mentors should satisfy the following criteria: 1) be willing to attend a mentor training AND monthly campus sessions. 2) be willing to designate/commit to the time necessary to provide a meaningful experience to the novice. 3) have a positive attitude towards the district, school and community. 4) mentor teachers should be leaders in student achievement, professional development, effective practices, positive student behavior, problem solving and decision making. 5) mentors should also demonstrate the following qualities: **BE** knowledgeable, open minded, reliable, realistic, cooperative, collaborative, available, trustworthy, leader, active listener, approachable, counselor, communicator, and friend.

Administrators generally strive to pair mentors with mentees in the same building and specifically the same grade. Every effort will be made to provide specialty/curricular mentors as needed. Rarely do mentors come from different campuses. Some mentoring assignments may extend to a second year at the request of the site administrator, principal. It is the responsibility of the administrator to clarify this situation with the mentee and mentoring coordinator.

## ARE THERE EXCEPTIONS TO ANY PARTS OF THE PROGRAM?

If a mentor/mentee pairing becomes incompatible changes may be made. Personality differences or philosophical differences could lead to the disengagement of the pairing and unsatisfactory professional growth. The principal may decide on a different mentor or may ask the mentor coordinator for another mentor.



If a mentor is aware of a situation concerning the well-being of the students in the mentee's classroom, he/she is expected to report these concerns to the administrator on site. Also, mentors must notify their administrators, and the mentoring coordinator, if the mentee refuses to participate in scheduled meetings, conferences, observations or any other part of the mentoring program.

### **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A MENTOR?**

The mentor is expected to help their protégé in a variety of ways. Generally speaking, mentors provide day-to-day site-specific information, help secure necessary materials, ease the transition into the district, share information and guide professional development through one-on-one interactions. The mentor's responsibilities are centered in facilitating their transition and supporting their growth as educators at their grade level. *See the staff support page.*

The relationship begins at "new teacher orientation" in August. At this time mentors should set up meeting times, both formal and informal. (As the administrators chose these pairings, they were thoughtful about plan times and free times that could be used in collaboration.) Mentors will be advising about classroom set-up, curricular materials, planning/organizing lessons, technology, discipline issues, school/district policies and day-to-day management (absence management, walk through, purchase orders.....).

Mentors are expected to introduce their mentee to the school/grade level staff. Also, as a friend and role model it is important that the mentor also facilitate within our community about services that are necessary and available, i.e.: churches, sports, gatherings, doctors, dentists, Christmas programs, Red Ribbon Week, child care, car care.....

Mentor Roles consist of five main over-all components:

Learning consultant-This role includes helping the learner to clarify their educational vision.

Counselor-The mentor may use counseling skills such as **questioning, active listening, reflecting** and **clarifying** to help the learner gain insight into their own thought processes.



Information resource-The mentor may also share his or her experience to help the learner to understand a particular work situation. The mentor helps the learner to integrate into their school community, manage paperwork & data, and aid their ongoing career development.

Role model- The learner may appreciate you because of the way that you handle certain situations/challenges. The learner will benefit from observing and reflecting how the mentor, or other colleagues, conducts their classrooms.

Critical friend- The role requires **giving constructive feedback, positive conversations, emotional intelligence and awareness of feelings.**

Mentors should devote an hour a week, estimated, with more time allocated for the first couple weeks, end-of-year of school and as grading periods come up. Expect the beginning of the year and end of the year to be hectic for the mentee. Therefore, as the experienced teacher you will need to budget your time to provide for the protégé and yourself.

- ✓ Conference times need to be outside of the scheduled grade-level & professional development meetings

Ideally, protégés should observe for an entire day, or more, at the beginning of the year. Realistically mentees may be given an opportunity to observe another teacher in their grade level for a short period of time. Our district has set up INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS as an observational tool. It is suggested that the coaches and principals include the mentor & mentee in the first set of instructional rounds. As the mentor you will need to relay this information to your mentee as part of the developmental process. At the conclusion of an INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS session the mentor, mentee and coach can collaboratively debrief using questioning & clarifying strategies.

Browning Public Schools Strategic Plan, Pillar 1, Support Staff Growth and Development has outcomes set to increase opportunities for staff to expand their skillset for the classroom. Included in this are needs assessments, data gathering & real-time feedback.

## HOW ARE MENTEES EVALUATED?

**Building administrators are responsible for staff evaluations.** The mentor/protégé' relationship is NOT evaluative. The communication between colleagues has



to be confidential and non-threatening to create trust. A mentor log will be filled out cooperatively at each conference.

### DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS FOR PAY

- \$1,500.00 stipend paid at the end of the school year upon the fulfillment of the contract. (see scale)
  - Prorated pay may be necessary based on hours logged.
  - >The expected number of hours by quarter is fifteen, for a total of sixty hours for the school year.

10 – 19 hours (for year) will receive a \$250.00 stipend
20 + hours (for year) will receive a \$500.00 stipend.
40 + hours (for year) will receive a \$1000.00 stipend.
60+ hours (for year) will receive the full \$1500.00 stipend.

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2023

- Signed contract on file with mentoring director and Human Resources director.
- Monthly time sheets kept in folder and turned in to the director at the end of the school year.
- Mentor Log Sheets filled out and signed for each conference. The log sheets will be kept in the folder and turned in at the end of the school year.
- Attendance at district mentoring meetings and functions.

**ALL MEETING TIMES NEED TO BE DOCUMENTED. You will be responsible for filling out a MENTOR LOG at each conference. You will be filling out district time sheets MONTHLY to be turned in to the director at the end of the school year. All documents must be kept in the folder provided!**

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