

Miranda Shortt  
Chippens Hill Middle School  
Grade 8 Classroom Teacher  
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To Whom It May Concern,

Hello! My name is Miranda Shortt. I am an 8th grade mathematics teacher at Chippens Hill Middle 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 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 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 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 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 well 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 feel that I am qualified to be a TEAM mentor/cooperating teacher. I hold the provisional educator certificate for grades K-6 and in 6-8 mathematics. I have been teaching within the Bristol Public School district for 11 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 teammates by planning and preparing lessons. I have presented Professional Development on a variety of topics such as the Next Generation Science Standards and on new technology tools in the hybrid classroom. In addition to providing PD, I've also given individual help to teachers in regard to Science when I was the Science Leader at Edgewood School. Finally, I've attended many conferences, participated in webinars and book clubs, 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. Shortt*