

To Whom it May Concern

Re: Letter of application to become a TEAM Mentor

May 18, 2021

Dear TEAM Coordinating Committee,

It is with a great sense of excitement that I write this letter applying to become a TEAM mentor. My name is Anya Rochester and as the 2020–2021 school year approaches its end, I am coming up on the end of 17 years as a public school teacher, the last 13 of which have been at Bristol Central High School. I hold the following teaching endorsements: 018 (French, 7–12), 023 (Spanish, 7–12) and 105 (Department Chairperson). I currently teach French levels 1 through 4, both academic and accelerated.

My career within the field of public school education somewhat skipped the student teaching aspect. In 2004, I stepped into a classroom of middle school students under a Durational Shortage Area Permit with very little experience in the setting and without the prerequisite weeks under the tutelage of an experienced teacher. While I didn't have the privilege of having a professional with me in my classes, I fully believe that I wouldn't have made it very far without having supportive colleagues to whom I could turn for advice, starter activities and overall classroom management ideas. Making the decision to transition from the middle school classroom to the high school classroom was another point in time where I greatly appreciated the fact that the teaching population is like a family; a nurturing family. In fact, it was at the start of this teaching assignment where I found myself teaching Spanish 1, Spanish 2, Spanish 3 and French 1 that a colleague of mine told me to adopt a new philosophy: it is easier to edit than to create. I learned the true value of sharing knowledge and using the shared knowledge in ways that worked for me and my learners. These, my own personal experiences, delineate for me the importance of sharing what I have learned over the years with individuals who have chosen to help guide the future of our children.

Well, what do I have to offer a student or a beginning teacher you may ask? One of the key elements that is important in helping to shape a new teacher is the ability to model effective teaching. Not only does this include imparting academic knowledge in ways that reach all learners but also modeling classroom management techniques, relationship building skills, many of which cannot be taught in a college classroom setting. Similar to teaching my students, learning and producing work can become a lot easier if an individual sees it being done first.

One of the aspects of teaching that can easily become overwhelming is the amount of planning that goes into being responsible for delivering content and using feedback to then adjust said plans. As a mentor, I would use the skills that I have developed over the years to guide a new teacher towards effective use of time and towards the concept of adjusting lessons to meet the needs of the learners. This I would do through a combination of co-teaching lessons and more importantly, co-planning lessons and finally, reflecting on the success (or not) of the lesson after the teaching process. During the teaching process and through the reflection piece, I would seek to incorporate relevant and appropriate feedback frequently to ensure a successful experience. In ways that are similar to how I am formally evaluated by my administrator, I would also seek to ensure that a new teacher knows what the expectations are prior to starting and follow up by

being honest. In the big picture, my students' learning would still be sitting on my shoulders so it would behoove me to ensure that the teaching process is benefiting them across the 5 Cs that govern World Language learning.

As every teacher, veteran or otherwise knows, there is no stopping when it comes to learning how to teach. Society changes almost daily, which means that the people who look to us for their education are not the same as how they were 5 years ago, 2 years ago or even last week. As such, partaking in programs such as those offered by CT COLT and AATF on the latest trends in language teaching and learning are a part of my continuous growth as a language teacher.

Probably one of the most enjoyable aspects of my career as a teacher is introducing my students to education beyond the 4 walls of Bristol Central High School. Not only do I get the luxury of being the first person to formally teach them French, I get the chance to take them into a world that they have seen on TV shows and on the Internet. Planning to take students out of the country to experience the French culture requires careful attention to detail and the ability to work with colleagues who share the same passion for education. To be able to effectively and safely provide authentic experiences to these students, I learned from my experienced colleagues. As the current person in charge of planning these experiences currently, I guide and work alongside colleagues who provide the support needed. I say this to highlight the importance of being able to work collaboratively with other adults for the success of students while at the same time preparing students "to live in a diverse 21st Century world."

To conclude, I believe that years of being a successful classroom teacher have taught me skills associated with educating and guiding the learners with whom I work. As a teacher, I believe that making connections through communication will foster an environment of growth and development and I consider myself to be good at interpersonal communication. Being a mentor within the Bristol Public Schools would provide a way to share what I have learned and what I continue to learn. I welcome the opportunity to apply for this position and would be happy to meet with you to further discuss my qualifications.

Sincerely,

Anya Rochester

860-680-1401

anyarochester@bristol12.org