

District Mentoring Plan: The District Plan Development and Approval Process



State Regulations Governing the District Mentoring Plan

State regulations require the following components be included in the mentoring plan (N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.4(c)1):

- Goals that, at a minimum, enhance teacher knowledge of and strategies related to the Curriculum Core Content Standards (CCCS) in order to facilitate student achievement; identify exemplary teaching skills and educational practices necessary to acquire and maintain excellence in teaching; and assist novice teachers in the performance of their duties and adjustment to the challenges of teaching;
- An application process for selecting mentor teachers;
- Criteria for mentor teacher selection;
- Provisions for comprehensive mentor training;
- Identification of mentor teacher responsibilities;
- Logistics for mentoring plan implementation;
- Consideration of collaborative arrangements with colleges and universities; and
- Provisions for the use of state funds.

To the LPDC: Before You Begin

Since 2000, the LPDC has had responsibility for planning and implementing district professional development for teachers. This experience makes the LPDC the ideal group to focus on the specialized professional development needs of novice teachers. Take a moment to review the visual graphic for plan development (R1) to see how all the component parts fit together to create a support system that will aid novice teachers in assuming their professional responsibilities.

The mentoring plans LPDCs develop must align with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers. In order to enhance your ability to align your plan to these standards that underlie what New Jersey expects teachers to know and be able to do, please take the time to work through the standards alignment activity (R2 – R5) as a group. Doing so will make your planning more effective and will serve to clarify your own understanding of the standards and their role in supporting teacher focus on those things that will enhance professional practice and support student achievement.

Beyond writing the local mentoring plan, the LPDC has a vital role in the success of the Mentoring for Quality Induction initiative. The LPDC can further support its district's efforts to create a strong induction program by:

- Welcoming novice teachers and verbally supporting the mentoring program;
- Advocating for the mentoring program because it is good for the students, school, district, and community;
- Maintaining open communication about the mentoring program with teachers, parents, and community; and
- Facilitating ongoing program evaluation.

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Assess Current Status of District/School Mentoring Efforts

Many districts have been engaged in mentoring activities or have even piloted and established mentoring programs prior to the Mentoring for Quality Induction initiative. Other districts are beginning now to address the issue of mentoring for novice teachers in a systemic way. It is important for LPDCs to assess their districts' current state with regard to mentoring. LPDCs may find their districts already have programs that meet or even exceed the regulatory requirements. Documenting this should make creation of the local mentoring a simple and straightforward activity. For LPDCs that are guiding the development of their districts' first systemic mentoring programs, the items on the checklist for developing a Mentoring for Quality Induction program (R6) will serve to highlight those program components and activities that contribute to a strong program of support for novice teachers and will satisfy state requirements.

Begin with the End in Mind

LPDCs that are beginning to draft a local mentoring plan will want to study the rubric (R7) that district boards of education will use to assess and approve local mentoring plans. The categories on this rubric match the sections of the mentoring plan (needs assessment, vision and goals, mentor selection, professional learning opportunities for mentors and novice teachers, program evaluation, etc.). District plans must satisfy the "Beginning" level, which aligns with state regulations, in order to be approved. As districts implement and refine their local mentoring plans, they may move on to "Developing," "Established" or "Sustained" levels. The resources in this toolkit are intended to help LPDCs and districts not only satisfy state regulations, but create powerful Mentoring for Quality Induction programs that will help novice teachers acclimate to the demands of a complex profession and will focus all professional staff on enhancing teacher effectiveness and student success.

Write the District Mentoring Plan

LPDCs who have written district professional development plans will find writing the local mentoring plan a familiar experience. Figure 1 shows the component parts of the local mentoring plan. The checkmarks to the left indicate those portions of the plan that are required in the state regulations governing mentoring. The Department of Education strongly recommends that LPDCs provide information for each section of the plan. Resources to assist the LPDC in writing each section of the local mentoring plan are described briefly in each section and are included in the Appendix. There is a District Mentoring Plan checklist (R8) to help LPDCs organize and assemble the materials needed for each section of the plan.

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Figure 1. Key Components of District Mentoring Plan

| Regulations | Components of District Mentoring Plan |
|-------------|---|
| | Section 1: District Profile |
| | Section 2: Needs Assessment |
| ✓ | Section 3: Vision and Goals |
| ✓ | Section 4: Mentor Selection |
| ✓ | Section 5: Roles and Responsibilities for Mentors |
| ✓ | Section 6: Professional Learning Components for Mentors |
| ✓ | Section 7: Professional Learning Components for Novice Teachers |
| ✓ | Section 8: Action Plan for Implementation |
| | Section 9: Resource Options Used |
| ✓ | Section 10: Funding Resources |
| ✓ | Section 11: Program Evaluation |

Section 1: District Profile

This section includes basic demographic information about the district to aid in the data-gathering essential for ongoing program evaluation. Resources for this section include a district profile sheet (R9), a sample table of contents for the plan (R10), LPDC signoff sheet (R11), and a local board of education approval and comment form (R12) that will be returned to the LPDC once the board of education reviews the mentoring plan.

Note: The district profile sheet may be the same sheet referenced in the local professional development plan.

Section 2: Needs Assessment

This section includes a current needs assessment of the mentoring program. The needs assessment should include data on mentors and novice teachers, training components of the current mentoring program, and identified needs of the mentoring program. The needs assessment should establish priorities which align with state regulations for mentoring and the district goals. A mentoring plan development checklist (R6) and a self-assessment tool (R13) will aid LPDCs in the needs assessment process.

Section 3: Vision and Goals

This section includes a vision statement for the district’s Mentoring for Quality Induction program. The goals for the mentoring plan must align with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, the NCLB Key Elements of High Quality Professional Development, and state regulations. At a minimum, the goals must:

- Enhance teacher knowledge of and strategies related to the CCCS in order to facilitate student achievement;
- Identify exemplary teaching skills and educational practices necessary to acquire and maintain excellence in teaching; and
- Assist novice teachers in the performance of their duties and adjustment to the challenges of teaching.

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Section 4: Mentor Selection

This section includes the application process and criteria for selection of mentors. Minimum criteria include selection of a certified teacher with at least three years of experience, who demonstrates commitment to the goals of the mentoring plan, agrees to maintain confidentiality in the mentor-novice teacher relationship, demonstrates exemplary content knowledge and pedagogy, and is matched with the novice teacher's content area, if possible. The Appendix contains resources that identify qualities of effective mentors (R15), lists selection criteria (R16), and offers sample mentoring applications (R17 – R19). The Appendix also offers a sample mentoring contract (R20), an ethical code of practice (R21), and a no-fault exit process (R22).

Additional resources for mentor selection are included in Folder Four.

Section 5: Roles and Responsibilities for Mentors

This section identifies the roles and responsibilities of the mentors as they provide support and guidance to novice teachers. LPDCs are encouraged to use material contained in Folder Four, *District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training*, in developing this section of the local mentoring plan. LPDCs should also refer to the chart indicating stakeholder roles and responsibilities that is located in the Overview that precedes Folder One.

Section 6: Professional Learning Components for Mentors

This section includes the professional learning components the district will use to train and support mentors. The district must ensure that these components are aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, NCLB professional development requirements, and the New Jersey Professional Development Standards. Training components could include: roles and responsibilities; transition to mentoring; communication and building trust; mentoring challenges; adult learning theory; questioning techniques; using standards-based formative assessments; classroom visitations; collegial coaching; designing professional growth activities; and ongoing networking for mentors. The Appendix contains sample training agenda and schedule (R23 – 24) and common mentoring activities (R25), but most of the material to support planning this section will be found in Folder Four, *District Mentoring Plan: Components of Mentor Training*.

Note: Section 6 should be referenced in your local professional development plan.

Section 7: Professional Learning Components for Novice Teachers

This section includes the professional learning components the district will use to provide novice teachers with rigorous mentoring to impact teacher effectiveness and student learning. The district must ensure that these components are aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, NCLB professional development requirements,

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and the New Jersey Professional Development Standards. Training components could include: new teacher orientation; understanding and applying the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers; working with a mentor; classroom and behavior management; meeting the needs of diverse students; lesson planning; and designing professional goals. The Appendix contains a sample training schedule (R26) but most of the material to support planning this section will be found in Folder Five, *District Mentoring Plan: Components of Novice Teacher Training*.

Note: Section 7 should be referenced in your local professional development plan.

Section 8: Action Plan for Implementation

This section includes the steps to developing an action plan for implementation of the local mentoring plan. Resources for action planning, which include listing goals and expected outcomes, procedures for mentor selection; professional learning activities for mentors and novice teachers; and the timeline for development, approval, implementation and evaluation of the program components are included in the Appendix. The Appendix offers sample action plan templates (R27 – R29), one of which has been completed, to help LPDCs understand and implement the planning process.

Section 9: Resource Options Used

This section includes identification of the district resources that will be used to support the implementation of the local mentoring plan (*e.g.*, release time for classroom visitations, video resources, published resources, substitute coverage, training providers).

Section 10: Funding Resources

This section includes plans for use of the funding outlined in state regulations and additional funding options available within the district, by the state or through grants. District funds could be used for additional professional learning and training, materials (*e.g.*, books, videos, printing), additional stipends, and salary for a program coordinator.

Section 11: Program Evaluation

This section includes resources for planning the program evaluation required in the state regulations. The purpose of program evaluation is to support program improvement as well as to ensure accountability for resources. By building in a plan for evaluation at the outset, districts will be able to gather and analyze data to support program refinements as well as to meet state reporting obligations. The Appendix contains guidance as to five levels of professional development evaluation (R30). Additional resources to support the planning and implementation of program evaluation are located in Folder Three, *District Mentoring Plan: Program Evaluation Process*.

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District Plan Approval Process

The procedure for approving the local mentoring plan is outlined in the visual graphic for mentoring plan approval (R31):

1. The LPDC presents the mentoring plan to the district board of education for approval;
2. After the review and approval, the board of education submits the plan to the county superintendent; and
3. The county superintendent notifies the Commissioner of the receipt of the approved local mentoring plan from the district.

District Plan Approval Timeline

The deadline for submission of the 2005-2006 mentoring plan will be **September 2005**.

- The LPDC must submit the local mentoring plan to the district board of education by **September 1, 2005**.
- After review and approval, the district board of education will submit the approved mentoring plan to the county superintendent by **September 30, 2005**.
- The county superintendent will certify receipt of approved plans to the Commissioner by **October 15, 2005**.

Updated information about timelines can be accessed through the Department of Education (DOE) website at <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/mentor/>.