

Regular Board Meeting – April 15, 2008

SUBJECT: DISTRICT 68 NEW TEACHER MENTORING PROGRAM**OVERVIEW**

The District 68 2007-2011 Collective Bargaining Agreement stipulates that a mentoring committee, comprised of six teacher representatives and six administrative representatives, be formed to develop a recommendation by May, 2008, on implementing a new teacher mentoring program. A committee was established and began its work in October, 2007, meeting seven times through early April, 2008. A review of the research on new teacher mentoring and induction was conducted; our current new teacher orientation, induction, and professional development programs were reviewed, including a survey of faculty perceptions of our current practices; and a district definition of mentoring was created, as follows:

Induction is a broad, layered process spanning several years. Mentoring is a part of induction. The goals of mentoring focus on both emotional and professional support. The broad goal of induction is to develop instructional competence and retention of teachers leading to student achievement.

Members of the Mentoring Committee included the following teachers and administrators:

Terry Baranowski or Dan Farinosi	Sue O'Neil
Gail Bernero	Barbara Phillips
Tamara Deppen	Brooke Rolek
Leslie Gordon	Melissa Rothman
Frances McTague	Diana Schmidt
Randy Needlman	Steve Spiegel

CURRENT DISTRICT 68 ORIENTATION, INDUCTION, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

New teachers in District 68 attend a three-day orientation session during the week prior to the opening of the school year. Over the three-day period, teachers are introduced to the Skokie community and the culture of the district. An overview is provided on our K-8 curriculum, teacher leadership roles, technology, professional development, and student intervention programs. Introductory professional development is provided by job-alike colleagues on specific curricula and instructional techniques.

Throughout the fall of a new teacher's first year in the district, five induction meetings are provided covering parent communication and parent-teacher conferencing; special education and ELL services, and report cards.

On-site, job-embedded professional development is offered throughout each school year to new and veteran faculty. Using a professional learning community model, teachers plan together,

demonstrate lessons for each other, analyze student work, and refine lessons to insure district wide instructional competency and consistency. Teacher leaders are selected to facilitate many of these professional development sessions and to provide on-going support of their colleagues. Additionally, the district has employed two K-5 instructional coaches who provide individualized support and instructional guidance to their colleagues. The junior high uses department chairs and grade-level team leaders to serve in supportive, leadership roles.

The Mentoring Committee concurred that the current orientation, induction, and professional development activities of the district were clearly designed to support the instructional competency of the teaching faculty, and were effective in meeting that objective. Using the definition of induction and mentoring established by the Committee (noted above) in conjunction with our current practices, a District 68 Building Mentor program was developed, with implementation expected to begin with the 2008-2009 school year.

DISTRICT 68 BUILDING MENTOR PROGRAM

The purpose of the District 68 Mentoring Program is to provide on-going and consistent support to new teachers in District 68 schools. Because our existing induction and professional development programs are broad and layered, and are focused on developing instructional competency, the mentor's goal will be to supplement existing activities to more personally support new teachers. One teacher will serve as building mentor per school. Mentors will participate in and/or help facilitate district-sponsored orientation/induction meetings for a total aggregate commitment of seventeen hours, as follows:

- Two hours in August on one of the district's three-day orientation dates
- Five, one-hour district induction sessions between September and November along with five, one-hour follow-up sessions
- Five hours to be flexibly used to assist new teachers' acclimation to the culture and rhythm of their school:
 - ◇ Offer specific guidance about working with ELL, special education, gifted, and low income populations
 - ◇ Provide assistance on the application of student assessment data to instruction
 - ◇ Facilitate new teachers' awareness of the school culture, including specific school idiosyncrasies and common acronyms
 - ◇ Serve as a collaborative problem-solver with student/parent/colleague issues
 - ◇ Provide specific guidance for parent-teacher conferences
 - ◇ Offer guidance for establishing and monitoring ongoing communication with parents
 - ◇ Provide technical support for computerized grading programs
 - ◇ Provide technical support for instructional use of available technologies
 - ◇ Serve as a general source of information to new teachers

Teachers will apply to serve in the role of building mentor. Applications will be submitted to the building principal, who will bring them to the Administrative Cabinet for final selection.

Appointment will be made in May of the school year preceding the start of mentor service; assignment will be considered tentative pending the hiring of any new teachers in the mentor's school. Appointment as building mentor will be for one school year, with a second year commitment extended as needed. Mentors will be paid at the hourly curriculum rate as stipulated by the 2007-2011 Collective Bargaining Agreement for a total of seventeen hours:

2008-2009	17 @ \$30.30 = \$515
2008-2010	17 @ \$31.20 = \$530
2008-2011	17 @ \$32.10 = \$546

Mentors will be supervised and annually evaluated by their building principal.

CONCLUSION

The District 68 faculty is committed to developing and maintaining instructional competency leading to increased student achievement. In the spirit of collaboration and support which characterizes the professional culture of District 68 schools, the Teacher Mentor Program will enhance our existing orientation, induction, and professional development activities by offering new teachers a more personalized support network in which to acclimate to our district and the profession of teaching.