

**Black Horse Pike Regional  
School District**

MENTORING  
HANDBOOK FOR  
THE NOVICE OR FIRST YEAR  
TEACHER AND THE  
MENTOR

2020-2021

The *Black Horse Pike Regional School District* is committed to providing the support and training that our new colleagues deserve in the first years in the teaching profession. We believe that a structured mentoring program will facilitate the development of a collaborative and reflective relationship between the novice teacher and the veteran teacher that will encourage content mastery and deepen the understanding of pedagogical skills. This handbook will serve as one of the many resources available to guide our new teachers, our mentor teachers, supervisors and our administrators through the Mentoring process.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The *Black Horse Pike Regional School District* believes that novice teachers will benefit and grow in the teaching profession. The mentoring program will focus on the professional growth of the novice through the support, guidance, and advice of the Mentoring team. As new teachers enter the profession, they have the right to a collaborative and reflective process that enhances their learning and enables the students they teach to achieve at higher levels.

## GOALS

As stated in N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.4, the goals of the *Black Horse Pike Regional School District's* Mentoring Plan are the following:

- To enhance teacher knowledge of and strategies related to the Core Curriculum Content Standards in order to facilitate student achievement and growth
- To identify exemplary teaching skills and educational practices necessary to acquire and maintain excellence in teaching
- To encourage the formulation and successful implementation of rigorous student growth objectives
- To assist novice and first year teachers in the performance of their duties and adjustment to the challenges of teaching

Additionally, the Black Horse Pike Regional School District commits to supporting teacher understanding of the Common Core Standards, the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, the New Jersey Learning Standards and the Stronge Model of teacher evaluation.

## BHPRSD Mentoring Support Team

Superintendent of Schools..... Brian Repici, Ed.D.

Principal, Highland High School ..... Lisa Owen

Principal, Triton High School.....Melissa Sheppard

Principal, Timber Creek High School.....Kelly McKenzie

Assistant Superintendent..... Julie Scully

Director of Curriculum and Instruction .....Matthew Szuchy

Supervisor of Planning, Research, Evaluations,  
Assessment & Special Projects & CARE.....Mary Baratta

District Supervisors: Jessica Caffrey, Marcie Geyer, Jennifer Gramble,

Tanya Harper, Gail Shelly, Lynne Sireci, Erika Silich, Glenn Smith

Highland SciP Teachers

Triton SciP Teachers

Timber Creek SciP Teachers

## COMMON DEFINITIONS

**Novice Teacher:** Any full or part-time teacher who has not completed one year of full time teaching under a state teaching certificate.

- **First Year Teacher:** Any teacher with prior experience in another district or who took an extended leave of absence from Black Horse Pike Regional School District, who is entering the Black Horse Pike Regional School District as a new teacher.
- **Mentor Teacher:** A tenured veteran teacher who willingly models and supports strategies and techniques that encourage new teachers to develop successful classroom practices and techniques that will enhance the learning of the students.

A Mentor Teacher will be:

- Rated Effective or Highly Effective in the previous year
- Has three years of teaching experience with at least 2 completed within previous 5 years
- Skilled in the delivery of instruction and knowledgeable about core curriculum content standards
- Enthusiastic about the profession
- A confidant who listens and guides
- Willing to take risks and look for new approaches
- Respected and trusted by colleagues
- Sensitive to the needs of others
- A team player
- Available for help and support
- Patient
- A teacher leader

**Provisional Teacher Holding a Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing:** A new teacher who has completed a state approved college teacher training program and has been hired to work within the classroom.

**Provisional Teacher Holding a Certificate of Eligibility (Alternate Route):** A new teacher who has not completed a state approved college teacher training program and who must undergo formal instruction that consists of approximately 200 clock hours of study in essential areas of professional knowledge and skills at a district-operated or state-operated training center.

**Induction Partners:** A veteran teacher and novice or first year teacher who are paired by the principal/supervisor in order to provide support and guidance.

**Mentoring Support Team:** A building team consisting of the principal, vice principal, supervisor, and mentor teacher who will guide the new teacher in the first years.

**Special Education Teacher:** A fully certified new teacher who has a special education certification and will be mentored under the new state program.

## **WHO BENEFITS**

### **THE NOVICE TEACHER:**

- Gains knowledge about district policies, job responsibilities, and school culture
- Has emotional support that eases many concerns and anxieties
- Improves teaching performance and promotes student learning
- Engages in professional growth activities that enhance knowledge of effective strategies and techniques
- Systematically builds on successful classroom practice
- Chooses to remain in the teaching profession and retains initial enthusiasm

### **THE MENTOR TEACHER:**

- Becomes a more reflective practitioner
- Is more open to the challenges of systemic change
- Is able to transfer the knowledge and skills in effective classroom practice
- Retains the enthusiasm and motivation for teaching
- Functions as a teacher leader
- Is recognized for contributing to the professional growth of themselves and others

### **THE STUDENT:**

- Benefits from the experience of the veteran teacher
- Experiences the enthusiasm and energy of the novice or first year teacher
- Receives instruction that is based on the most recent research and best practices
- Learns in an environment that models collaboration, collegiality and life-long learning

### **THE ADMINISTRATOR AND SUPERVISOR:**

- Is supported in efforts to improve teacher quality and effectiveness
- Has developed a cadre of teacher leaders to support reform efforts
- Retains the “best and brightest” teachers for the school
- Builds a feeling of collaboration within the school that encourages collegial problem solving
- Identifies and resolves the problems faced by new teachers

### **THE SCHOOL DISTRICT:**

- Retains quality teachers who understand the district and school culture
- Identifies and assists new teachers in resolving problems
- Creates cohesive schools that promote teacher professional training through learning communities
- Becomes known for their support of the professional staff and the achievement of their students

# **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

## **PRINCIPAL/VICE PRINCIPAL/DEPARTMENT SUPERVISOR:**

- Selects a mentor from the applicants for each novice and first year teacher as soon as they begin their assignment
- Provides a list of all induction pairs to the office of the Superintendent
- Observes and evaluates new teachers according to state and district requirements
- Participates in and supports mentor and novice or new teacher trainings
- Monitors on-going activities of the mentoring pair

## **MENTOR TEACHER:**

- Serves as a professional role model in both professional and classroom practice
- Fosters a trusting, confidential relationship
- Meets with the novice teacher on a regular basis
- Provides appropriate feedback after a non-evaluative observation or visitation
- Models effective instructional techniques for the novice or first year teacher
- Orients the novice teacher to district and school policies
- Provides a variety of resources to help the novice or first year teacher begin to form a repertoire of effective strategies and techniques (including suggested books, online resources and a thorough “walk through” of the curriculum resources site)
- Participates in training modules that will assist the mentoring process
- Participates in a summer orientation meeting to help the novice or first year teacher establish goals for the beginning of school
- Encourages the novice or teacher to record needs, questions, and descriptions in a journal, using that journal for discussion purposes
- Helps the novice or first year teacher identify best practice material for a portfolio
- Participates in site-based mentoring meetings, as needed, with the mentoring coordinator
- Maintains continued involvement in professional growth opportunities
- Maintains a log of interactions with novice teacher



### **NOVICE AND FIRST YEAR TEACHER:**

- Develop a professional learning plan within 30 days of being hired
- Develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for optimal student learning
- Accept and implement appropriate suggestions in a professional manner
- Ask questions
- Meet with your mentor on a regular basis and document the meeting times
- Observe your mentor and other teachers in several teaching situations and discuss new learnings
- Allow your mentor to observe your classroom to provide feedback and support
- Keep a journal of your experiences that will help you reflect and build on successful practices
- Use the journal as a communication tool with your mentor
- Develop a portfolio of best practices that you would share with other new teachers
- Demonstrate enthusiasm for and a commitment to the school and district and the profession of teaching
- At the end of the first year, design a professional learning plan
- Participates in new teacher orientation and novice teacher program through the school year
- Research new educational trends, mandates and best practices

## **MENTOR OBSERVATIONS**

Observation is an integral part of the mentoring process. It gives participants the opportunity to view techniques and strategies that would enhance classroom practice. It allows for coaching and tutoring. It opens discussion and provides the avenue for problem solving and reflection. Veterans and novices alike find that learning from watching others, a demonstration of effective skills, is a two-way street. Observation offers the chance to visually experience a new technique or an introduction to new concepts. From the observation, feedback and support is given that allows participants to gain a better understanding of the teaching practice. As one practitioner expressed, "It provides a mirror for me to view myself in actual practice."

Observation in the mentoring process is both ***non-evaluative*** and ***non-judgmental***. Its purpose is to help the participants view and react to the learning and the teaching that occurs within the instructional setting.

The following procedures have been designed to make the observation meaningful and relevant:

1. A request must be made to the administrator of your intent to participate in an observation when release time is needed. He/she will set up the observation schedule based on funding, substitute availability, and the specific needs of the participants.
2. Upon completion of the observation, the participants must conference. It is suggested that the novice teacher record the goals of the lesson, the learnings that resulted from the discussion, and the possible implementation plans.

## **MENTOR OBSERVATION PROMPTS**

There are many useful questions that will help teachers reflect on their lessons after an observation has been completed. Using a series of questions enables both participants to discuss the skills and strategies used during the lesson, and their ultimate effectiveness in improving the teaching and learning of the classroom.

1. How do you think the class went in light of the objectives you set?
2. How do you feel the students grasped the concepts? Can you give examples that speak to that point?
3. Did you need to alter your plans at any time during the lesson? Why? How did you accomplish that?
4. Was there any one aspect of the lesson that you would like to teach differently? How would you like to change it?
5. Were the materials you used helpful in making the concept come alive?
6. Are there any teaching methods you would like to further explore that might help you in teaching this type of lesson?
7. Can you describe a strength in the lesson?
8. Describe an area of concern during the lesson. What could be done to change the outcome?
9. Were there behaviors in the class that are not normally present? What could be done to retain the focus of the students while addressing the behavior?
10. How did you react to (describe an event or behavior) the way you did?
11. How will you follow-up the lesson?
12. What strategies did you use to encourage student participation?
13. Can you describe how the students interacted with one another?
14. Identify how you incorporated a variety of questioning techniques that assist students in using higher level thinking skills.
15. How did you vary teaching techniques to address the needs of all of the students?
16. Can you identify elements of the lesson that help students relate the learning to real-world situations?
17. Identify ways that you were sensitive to the behavioral and academic needs of your students.
18. Describe some techniques that were used to assist students in working cooperatively that enables them to process their learning.

## **DISTRICT OBSERVATIONS AND EVALUATION**

First-year teachers and all non-tenured teachers who have received their Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (Traditional Route) or their Certificate of Eligibility (Alternate Route) will be observed four times per year. The State of New Jersey requires all holders of provisional certificates to be evaluated at the end of the tenth week, the twentieth week, and the thirtieth week. The Stronge Evaluation Model will be the foundation for all observations and evaluations.

### **Observation:**

Observation by your department supervisor as well as other school district administrators is an important aspect of the teaching and learning process. There are several areas that will be assessed that will give your supervisor a picture of your strengths and areas that might need improvement.

**Performance Standard 1: Professional Knowledge:** The teacher demonstrates an understanding of the curriculum, subject content, and the developmental needs of students by providing relevant learning experiences.

**Performance Standard 2: Instructional Planning:** The teacher plans using the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, the school's curriculum, effective strategies, resources, and data to meet the needs of all students.

**Performance Standard 3: Instructional Delivery:** The teacher effectively engages students in learning by using a variety of instructional strategies in order to meet individual learning needs.

**Performance Standard 4: Assessment of/for Learning:** The teacher systematically gathers, analyzes, and uses all relevant data to measure student academic progress, guide instructional content and delivery methods, and provide timely feedback to both students and parents throughout the school year.

**Performance Standard 5: Learning Environment:** The teacher uses resources, routines, and procedures to provide a respectful, positive, safe, student-centered environment that is conducive to learning.

**Performance Standard 6: Professionalism:** The teacher maintains a commitment to professional ethics, communicates effectively, and takes responsibility for, and participates in, professional growth that results in enhanced student learning.

**Performance Standard 7: Student Progress:** The work of the teacher results in acceptable, measurable, and appropriate student academic progress.

### **Evaluation and Professional Development Plan:**

All staff members will be involved in a formal summative evaluation at the end of the school year. This evaluation will look at the job performance of the individual based on formal and informal observations by the administrative team. You will be fully aware of which areas you and your supervisor determine professional development is needed to either improve or enhance your instruction. Professional development may be suggested at any time during the year.

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Black Horse Pike Regional School District is committed to providing staff members with professional development opportunities and activities that are relevant to their professional responsibilities. The activities are offered through the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. All buildings are notified of upcoming professional development opportunities within the district.

### **State of New Jersey: Continuing Education Initiative:**

Every active certificated teacher and educational services personnel must accrue 20 hours of approved professional development each year, according to regulation. Provisional teachers do not begin this requirement until the beginning of the second year. Special Education teachers must develop a PLP and begin the accrual of the hours when they begin their teaching assignment. The Continuing Education Initiative ties all professional growth activities to the annual professional improvement plan (PLP) process.

Each school has building level School Improvement Panels (SciP) are under the auspices of the Principal. The SciP teachers work with their principals to plan specific PL for their buildings. The BHPKSD district offers many in-house professional development workshops throughout the school year.

## **YOUR PROFESSIONAL FILE**

It is important that you maintain a personal and professional file of records that are critical to your job. Proper documentation can help you keep a potential problem from becoming a problem at all.

### **Please keep the following records:**

- Your teaching certificate
- Your letter of employment and a copy of your contract
- All subsequent contracts
- Professional Learning Hours (PLH) certificates from the district and other professional experiences; log all in house PL on the Certificate Request Form
- Transcripts for college courses
- Observations
- Evaluations
- Anecdotal notes from evaluations or observations that required improvement in any area
- Professional Development Plans
- Letters of commendation from parents, administrators, Board of Education, or community organizations
- Awards and honors
- Records of any incidents involving discipline, violence, or other disruptive behavior – this includes reports of phone calls, copies of letters of disciplinary referrals, and logs on student behavior
- An updated resume
- Summaries of parent conferences
- Information on insurance
- Pension information

### **Graduate Work:**

All certified teachers can receive graduate credit reimbursement, as defined in the contract.

## **IT'S TIME TO BEGIN THE YEAR**

1. Learn the layout of your school. Know how to get from your classroom to wherever you are going.
2. Get to know your principal, the vice principal, and your department supervisor. They will guide you through your first days in the school. Meet with your administrative supervisor to make sure the expectations of classroom practice are clearly defined.
3. Get to know the office staff and the facilities staff.
4. Familiarize yourself with the technology aspects of the job.
5. Make sure that you have the curricula/text books and teacher's manuals for all of the textbooks you will be using.
6. Think about the instructional strategies you will be using at the beginning of the school year and establish the layout and a seating chart for your students.
7. Organize your classroom based on the needs of your grade level.
8. Check the paper supplies in the class and order what you will need for the first month of school.
9. Put up bulletin boards that are welcoming and that invite class participation.
10. Establish goals for the first couple of weeks of school.
11. Write lesson plans for the first week of school.
12. Establish routines for attendance, for class jobs, for homework, for class rules, etc.
13. Talk to other members of your grade level or department to get an understanding of the procedures for the first week of school.
14. Ask questions, ask questions, when you are unsure of what to do.
15. Take care of yourself. Stress levels can be minimized by making sure to schedule time for activities that relax and fulfill you, getting enough sleep and eating properly.

## **TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

You are about to begin the journey of your life. To help you get started, here are some tried and true tips that are guaranteed to bring success. Read on!

- Make a good impression on your students and your colleagues. Be the kind of person that instills respect and trust. Be courteous, friendly, enthusiastic, and confident.
- Organize your classroom and your students. Organization is the key to moving through the transitions of the day.
- Move slowly through the first days of school. It is important to set the tone, your expectations, and the routine for the year with constant reinforcement. Being consistent in the early days will make your class run smoothly all year.
- Get to know your students as soon as possible. Highlight positive qualities and let them know you believe in them. Understand the unique needs of your students and look for resources that will promote curiosity and critical thinking. Expect success and you will get success!
- Establish rules that are firm, but fair. Have the students help in writing the rules in order to encourage them to establish fair parameters for the classroom.
- Develop support from the parents. Communicate, communicate, communicate! Let parents know your expectations and policies. Be prompt in returning calls or responding to notes. Maintain a positive and cheerful attitude. Listen carefully to concerns.
- Keep good records. Learn the policy of the district and the building.
- Build relationships with your colleagues. Get involved in school and professional activities. When you are involved in the system, you will have a better understanding of the system.



## *Back-to-School Night*

Back-to-School Night is the time to begin the communication process with your parents. It is a time to introduce yourself and talk about your philosophy. It is a time for you to explain your expectations for their children, walk them through the curriculum, tell them about the school routines, and let them see the creativity that will flow from your classroom activities. Back-to-School Night is not for individual parent conferences, which will come later as you become more familiar with the needs of your students.

### **Talking Points:**

1. **Welcome:** Introduce yourself giving a short summary of your educational background and some of your personal history. Let the parents know what a privilege it is to be a part of their child's life and the importance of building a partnership to support the classroom learning. Discuss your goals for the year (i.e., organization of time and materials, responsibility, listening, respect, curricular goals).
2. **Academic Expectations:** Review the curriculum standards and concepts for each subject (or course) that will be the focus of classroom activities.
3. **Daily Work:** Discuss your procedures for daily work. What does a class period look like? What expectations do you have for class work? Go over the daily schedule.
4. **Assessment and Grading:** It is important to review the report card and your policies for grading. Go over how students will be assessed on tests and for their classroom performance.
5. **Homework Policy:** Let parents know what is expected from homework and the purpose of homework. This is also the time to talk about effective study habits and the student's need for proper supplies to accomplish homework tasks.
6. **Special Services:** Review the Special Services that are available to all students.
7. **Conferences:** Let parents know how to contact you and that they can schedule an in person conference through the school counseling office.

## PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Parents care deeply about their children and want to be involved in the education of their children. You, as the teacher, want to give your students the best possible year. Together, as a team, YOU can! Most parents are reasonable, respectful, and cooperative when they deal with teachers. The following suggestions can help you build a successful connection between the home and the school:

1. Get to know your parents as soon as possible. In the first weeks of school, find time to call student's parent(s). Make this first call a positive one giving example of the successes the child is experiencing.
2. Update your website with your expectations for the class, your routines, and the responsibilities of the child and the parent.
3. Before sending a response to a parent's written concern, have the supervisor, mentor or vice principal review what has been written.
4. Remember to say "thank you" to parents for their efforts.
5. Listen carefully and think before you speak.
6. Always respond to a parent's concern. A problem should be addressed quickly to eliminate future concerns.
7. Be accessible to parents for conferences. Communicate to the parents the appropriate procedure to schedule a conference.
8. During conferences:
  - Address specific concerns and give possible solutions.
  - Be organized and keep notes.
  - Allow enough time for the conference.
  - Greet the parents at the door.
  - Always open on a positive note.
  - Encourage both parents to be involved in decisions.
  - Review what has been discussed before the parents leave.

## **Mentor's Checklist**

### **Before school begins...**

- ❑ Call to introduce yourself
- ❑ Ask the beginning teacher to assemble a list of questions
- ❑ Tour the building
- ❑ Make certain that supplies and Teacher's Guides are available
- ❑ Answer questions and supply additional related information

### **On the first day...**

- ❑ Introduce the beginning teacher to other staff members, especially those they will be working with most closely
- ❑ Review daily routine
  - ❑ Homeroom period
  - ❑ Attendance
  - ❑ Changing classes
  - ❑ Special schedules
  - ❑ Duty Assignments
- ❑ Review the paperwork to go home with students on their first day
- ❑ Explain textbook distribution
- ❑ Assist with substitute plans, lesson planning and website navigation

### **During the first week...**

- ❑ Check DAILY to make sure the beginning teacher has settled into a smooth routine
- ❑ Assist with any needed changes to the schedule
- ❑ Be certain that first day paperwork has been returned and processed properly
- ❑ Help the beginning teacher set up a grade book and do the first full week's lesson plan
- ❑ Review posting grades in the Genesis program
- ❑ Set up a regular WEEKLY meeting time to check on progress and answer questions
- ❑ Offer to allow the beginning teacher to observe you as you teach.

*Before progress reports are due...*

- ❑ Provide needed information and advice for “Back to School Night”
- ❑ Review grading formulas
- ❑ Assist with progress reports
- ❑ Assist with pre-observation forms and answer questions about observation by administrators

*Before first report cards are due...*

- ❑ Help the beginning teacher prepare for any parent conferences or phone calls
- ❑ Assist with the completion of report cards as needed

*As the year proceeds...*

- ❑ Continue to meet WEEKLY to answer questions and offer assistance
- ❑ Explain standardized testing procedures
- ❑ Guide the beginning teacher through:
  - ❑ Referral to I&RS
  - ❑ IEP meetings
  - ❑ Child Study Team referral process

*At year's end...*

- ❑ Explain procedures for:
  - ❑ Final grades
  - ❑ Needs assessment form
  - ❑ Professional Improvement Plan
- ❑ Review end-of-year checklist

The following link provides specific information for Alternate  
Route Teachers:

<http://www.nj.gov/education/educators/license/alternate.pdf>

## **Mentor Payment**

The district oversees the payment of mentors.  
Traditional Route Teachers (CEAS holders) \$550 deducted from pay  
Alternate route (CE holders) deducted from pay \$1,000

Mentors will be paid upon log submission in June.

Mentees will have the mentor fee deducted from their pay check in equal installments throughout the school year.

Mentoring that starts mid-year will be pro-rated based on the number of weeks that the novice teacher is mentored for that school year.