



# MENTORING HANDBOOK

2024-2025

FOR THE NOVICE TEACHER  
& THE MENTOR



**BLACK HORSE PIKE  
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

WHERE INSPIRING EXCELLENCE IS OUR STANDARD  
AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IS THE RESULT



*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 mentee and the mentor 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.*

## **MENTORING PROGRAM 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 OF THE MENTORING PROGRAM**

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 .....	Ryan Varga
Principal, Timber Creek High School .....	Kelly McKenzie
Principal, Triton High School .....	Melissa Sheppard
Assistant Superintendent .....	Julie Scully
Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction .....	Marcie Geyer
Chief Academic Officer .....	Mary Baratta
Director of Special Services .....	Erika Silich
District Supervisors .....	Steve Arena Jennifer Gramble Lori Hunt Erin Sarin Michael Jones Gail Shelly Lisa Steele Dina Tomczak Samantha Trapp
Special Education Supervisors .....	Megan Blackman (Triton) Jessica Caffrey (Highland) Christine Hubbert (Timber Creek)
Building-Based SCIP Teams	

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Each heading is linked and will take you directly to the corresponding section.*

Topic	Page #
<a href="#">Qualities of Effective Mentoring</a>	4
<a href="#">Ongoing Communication Expectations</a>	4
<a href="#">Roles &amp; Responsibilities</a>	4
<a href="#">Topics &amp; Activities for the Mentor Relationship, Before School Starts</a>	6
<a href="#">Topics &amp; Activities for the Mentor Relationship, Marking Period 1</a>	6
<a href="#">Topics &amp; Activities for the Mentor Relationship, Marking Period 2</a>	7
<a href="#">Topics &amp; Activities for the Mentor Relationship, Marking Period 3</a>	8
<a href="#">Topics &amp; Activities for the Mentor Relationship, Marking Period 4</a>	8
<a href="#">Questions Mentees Can Ask Their Mentors</a>	10
<a href="#">Effective Language for Mentors</a>	11
<a href="#">Mentor Payment</a>	13

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## QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS

Effective mentoring relationships:

- consist between teachers who are reflective, proactive, and growth-minded.
- center conversations related to classroom practices, instruction, assessment, etc. in student outcomes;
- are inquiry-centered and committed to ongoing learning;
- focus not just on the craft of teaching, but also on the well-being of the educator;
- rely on trust and confidentiality; and
- require consistent and ongoing communication.

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## ONGOING COMMUNICATION & THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

Mentors & Mentees should create a system of communication that works for both of them. This should be something that the Mentee could write on daily as questions, concerns, etc. come up, and the Mentor can easily check and follow-up on. An example would be an ongoing Google document through which a Mentee can jot down notes, and the Mentor can check and support as needed (*via the doc and also in follow-up in-person meetings*).

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## ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### MENTORS

**Mentors are coaches, guides, and role models for new teachers.**

Mentors act as **information providers** for new teachers. Examples of teachers' needs include:

- Logging in and using software to take attendance
- Knowing the procedure for requesting a substitute
- Using the copy machine

Mentors act as **thought partners** for new teachers. Examples of teachers' needs include:

- Talking through the physical layout of their classroom *f*
- Determining the best ways to collect, grade and enter assignments *f*
- Writing an informal script to prepare for parent conferences

Mentors act as **skill developers** for new teachers. Examples of teachers' needs include: *f*

- Developing critical thinking questions to gauge student learning *f*
- Differentiating assignments for a variety of student needs and abilities *f*
- Creating high expectations and compassionately supporting students in achieving them

Mentors act as **friends** and **confidants** for new teachers. Examples of teachers' needs include:

- Managing stress and fatigue
- Coming back from feelings of failure
- Venting about classroom situations

## MENTEES

Mentees should be **reflective**. Examples of reflection include:

- Maintaining a journal of your experiences, lessons, etc., noting what you're learning and what you'd do differently next time
- Communicating your experiences with your mentor
- Comparing student outcomes to objectives and adjusting as needed

Mentees should be **on-going learners**. Examples of on-going learning include:

- Utilizing appropriate constructive feedback to grow
- Inviting your mentor in to observe and coach you
- Observing your mentor and other teachers

Mentees should be **proactive**. Example of proactiveness include:

- Asking questions whenever they arise;
- Communicating frequently with your mentor
- Sharing and seeking feedback on new ideas

Mentees should **prioritize their well-being**. Examples of prioritizing well-being include:

- Finding time for self-care
- Seeking support when feeling overwhelmed
- Being kind to yourself when things don't go the way you intended them

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## MARKING PERIOD BREAKDOWN OF POSSIBLE TOPICS & ACTIVITIES FOR MENTORS & MENTEES

### BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS FOR STUDENTS

- Building Orientation, including a physical building tour & building dynamics
- Identification of Resources such as the Reading Specialist, Library/Librarian, I&RS, Student Success Coach, Building Mentor, RTI Coordinator
- Classroom organization & design (review seating charts for any IEP-specific seating requirements)
- Developing classroom norms/rules/expectations
- First Impressions: Beyond Reviewing the Syllabus on Day 1
- Set up gradebook with appropriate categories and weights

### MARKING PERIOD 1

#### Topics

- Self-Care check-in
- Genesis, Google Classroom, lesson planning format
- SGOs - who? what? why? how?
- Emergency procedures - fire drills, evacuations, etc.
- Subject-specific grading policies & percentages
- Understanding & implementing IEPs and 504s
- Emergency sub-plans
- Establishing routines
- Cultivating connections & building rapport
- Promoting growth mindset
- Responding restoratively
- Academic integrity & honor code
- Back to School Night
- Effective parent/guardian communication
- Unit planning around end-goals
- Student-centered lesson-plan design
- Observation process & evaluation documents
- Grading calibration
- Reflection & goal-setting

#### Activities

- Co-write & review correspondence with parents/guardians
- Prepare for parent/guardian meetings and phone calls
- Create pre-assessments for student growth objectives (SGOs)
- Co-create/review plans for Back to School Night
- Mentee observation of Mentor parent phone call with post-phone call reflection
- Mentor observation of Mentee parent phone call with post-phone call feedback
- Mentee observation of Mentor with pre-observation meeting & post-observation reflection

- Mentor observation of Mentee, with pre & post meetings & reflection
- Formal observation co-planning & reflection
- Calibrate the grading of an assignment (that isn't multiple choice)
- Review and reflect on gradebook and assignment weights
- Conduct mid and/or end-of-marking period reflections that look at student outcomes

## MARKING PERIOD 2

### Topics

- Self-Care check-in
- Student outcomes & practice
- Unit planning around end-goals
- Lesson planning - reflect and refine
- Classroom management
- Struggling students
- Establishing & sustaining Growth Mindset
- SGOs (Student Growth Objectives)
- Establishing/Sustaining Routines (including reflection on how routines worked last marking period)
- Cultivating Connections & Continuing to Build Rapport - Practices that help vs. hinder
- Parent/Guardian communication - What have you tried? What's working? What's next?
- Seeking Feedback from Students/Student Surveys

### Activities

- Reflect on student progress; develop a unit plan based on unit/marketing period end-goals
- Determine what feedback from students would be helpful; create a student survey appropriate to desired feedback
- Review student work to evaluate and inform practice
- Review parent/guardian contact logs
- Prepare for parent/guardian conferences and/or IEP meetings
- Mentor observation of Mentee - specific to identified goal
- Mentee observation of Mentor or another colleague, specific to the mentee's desired growth or needs (could be something they're struggling with in the classroom or something identified on an observation)<sup>1</sup>
- Formal observation co-planning & reflection
- Continue grade calibration
- Review and reflect on gradebook and assignment weights

## MARKING PERIOD 3

### Topics

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<sup>1</sup> The New Teacher Coordinator, District Supervisor, and/or Building Admin can help identify and coordinate these efforts as needed

- Self-Care Check-In
- Unit Planning around end-goals
- Lesson Planning - reflect and refine
- Review Routines - what supports do students need? Where can I encourage greater independence?
- SGOs - Mid Year Review
- Parent Communication - What have you tried? What's working? What's next?
- Routines & Establishing Independence - how are we building students (behaviorally and academically) towards independence?

### Activities

- Review student work to evaluate and inform practice
- Reflect on student progress; develop a unit plan based on unit/marking period end-goals
- Set a goal for improvement based on observation feedback
- Create a plan/strategies to help meet instructional goals
- Reflect on effectiveness of parent/guardian contact
- Review parent/guardian contact logs; set goals for improved parent communication
- Review and reflect on gradebook and assignment weights
- Mentor observation of Mentee - specific to identified goal
- Formal observation co-planning & reflection

## MARKING PERIOD 4

### Topics

- Self-Care check-in
- Unit Planning
- Lesson Planning
- Moving students towards greater independence
- SGO evaluation
- Parent Communication - What have you tried? What's working? What's next?
- Summative Preparation
- Reflection - where did you grow?
- Goal-setting - what are your goals for next year?
- End of year procedures

### Activities

- Determine unit end-goals and develop a big-picture plan
- Review student work to evaluate and inform practice
- Reflect on student progress; develop a unit plan based on unit/marking period end-goals
- Reflect on effectiveness of parent/guardian contact
- Mentor observation of Mentee - specific to identified goal/growth-oriented based on feedback throughout the year
- Collaborative reflection from the year/Mentee's journal - what are the wins? The lessons?
- Compose a professional development plan for the 2022-2023 school year



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## PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS & EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

### Suggested Questions Mentees Can Ask Their Mentors

#### Getting to Know Them

- Is there anything that you wish you'd known as a first-year teacher?
- What's the best advice you've been given about teaching?
- In your opinion, what's the best part of teaching?
- What's the hardest part of teaching?
- How do you stay organized?
- How do you take care of yourself so you don't burn out?
- What is your approach to classroom management?
- What's the best lesson you've ever taught?
- What's the worst lesson you've ever taught? What did you learn from it?
- Do you have a favorite "success story"? What failures did you experience along the way?
- What's a time where you wish you'd done something differently?
- Why do you teach?

#### Relationships & Classroom Management

- What routines do you establish in your classroom that work for you?
- How do you establish effective routines in your classroom?
- What are my options for student seating and classroom setup? How can classroom set-up impact classroom management?
- What classroom rules/expectations do you establish? How do you introduce them? How do you remain consistent in upholding them?
- What have you tried with that student that worked well?
- How do you build relationships with students?
- I have an ongoing problem with a student, but I don't want to damage the trust in our relationship. How else could I address it?
- What are restorative practices and how do I implement them effectively?
- What about coworkers? What have you found helps create relationships with them?
- How do you build relationships with parents and students' families?
- Can I sit in on that meeting to observe that process?

#### Lessons & Professionalism

- How do you begin your class? How do you end your class?
- I'm having this problem \_\_\_ with my lessons, what else can I try?
- What about my lessons could I improve?
- How would you teach this content?
- How do I support students in learning these difficult concepts?
- How can I meaningfully engage students?
- How can I use student feedback to improve my practice?
- When should I support my students and when should I take some supports back to encourage independence?

- When do you reach out to parents/guardians? How do you work with parent/guardians as advocates for their children?
- How do you know which constructive feedback to take and which to ignore?
- What about my professionalism could I work on?
- How do I find and apply for professional development opportunities?
- Can I observe another teacher who is good at \_\_\_?
- Could you videotape my lesson on \_\_\_ next week so I can watch it and see how I can improve?

### Language for Mentors when Working with New Teachers

From the [Mentor Language](#) document provided by newteachercenter.org, which is available in the Shared Drive.

Paraphrasing	Clarifying
<p><b>Paraphrasing</b> communicates that the listener has...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listened carefully,</li> <li>Understood what was said,</li> <li>Extends thinking, and</li> <li>Cares</li> </ul> <p>Paraphrasing involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restating in your own words</li> <li>• Summarizing</li> <li>• Organizing</li> </ul> <p>Possible paraphrasing stems include:</p> <p><i>So,...</i>  <i>In other words,...</i>  <i>It sounds like...</i>  <i>There are several key points you're bringing up...</i>  <i>From what you're saying,...</i>  <i>You're primarily concerned with...</i></p>	<p><b>Clarifying</b> communicates that the listener has...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heard what the speaker said,</li> <li>but does not fully understand what was said</li> </ul> <p>Clarifying involves asking a question (direct or implied) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather more information</li> <li>• Discover the meaning of the language used</li> <li>• Learn more about the speaker's reasoning</li> <li>• Seek connections between ideas</li> <li>• Develop or maintain a focus</li> </ul> <p>Possible clarifying stems include:</p> <p><i>Would you tell me a little more about...?</i>  <i>Let me see if I understand...</i>  <i>Can you tell me more about...</i>  <i>It would help me understand if you'd give me an example of...</i>  <i>So, are you saying/suggesting...?</i>  <i>What do you mean by...?</i>  <i>How are you feeling about...?</i></p>
Teachable Moments	Attitudes for Effective Listening
<p><b>Teachable moments</b> are spontaneous opportunities that offer the mentor an entry point to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fill in instructional gaps</li> <li>• Help the teacher make good choices</li> <li>• Encourage the teacher to take "the next step"</li> </ul> <p>Taking advantage of a teachable moment involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing in the spirit of support</li> <li>• Being brief—focus on the essential</li> <li>• Being strategic</li> <li>• Avoiding using jargon or sounding pedantic</li> </ul> <p>Possible teaching moment stems include:</p> <p><i>One thing to keep in mind is...</i>  <i>If you're interested in ____, it's important to...</i>  <i>What I know about ____ is...</i>  <i>It's sometimes/usually helpful to ____ when...</i></p>	<p><b>Effective listening</b> communicates that the listener is...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectful</li> <li>• Focused on building the relationship</li> <li>• Increasing his/her knowledge and understanding</li> <li>• Encouraging</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> </ul> <p>Effective listening involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truly hearing what the other person has to say</li> <li>• Viewing the other person as separate from yourself with alternative ways of seeing what you see</li> <li>• Genuinely being able to accept the other person's feelings, no matter how different they are from your own</li> <li>• Trusting the other person's capacity to handle, work through, and find solutions to his/her own problems</li> </ul>

Mediational Questions	Non-Judgmental Responses
<p>Mediational questions help bring about a new understanding by posing questions that extend thinking, learning, and planning.</p> <p>Mediational questions help the colleague:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hypothesize what might happen</li> <li>• Analyze what worked or didn't</li> <li>• Imagine possibilities</li> <li>• Compare intended plans and outcomes with what actually happened</li> </ul> <p>Possible mediational question stems include:</p> <p><i>What's another way you might...?</i>  <i>What would it look like if...?</i>  <i>What do you think would happen if...?</i>  <i>How was ___ different from (like)...?</i>  <i>What sort of an impact do you think...?</i>  <i>What criteria do you use to...?</i>  <i>When have you done something like ___ before?</i>  <i>What do you think about...?</i>  <i>How did you decide...? (come to that conclusion?)</i>  <i>What might you see happening in your classroom if...?</i>  <i>What might have contributed to...</i>  <i>What do you think ___ might have been thinking or feeling?</i></p>	<p>Non-judgmental responses communicate that the listener is open-minded, encouraging, and interested.</p> <p>Non-judgmental responses help to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build trust</li> <li>• Promote an internal locus of control</li> <li>• Encourage self-assessment</li> <li>• Develop beginning teacher autonomy</li> <li>• Foster risk-taking</li> </ul> <p>Possible non-judgmental responses include:</p> <p>Identifying what worked and why  <i>I noticed when you ___ the students really ___</i></p> <p>Encouraging  <i>It sounds like you have a number of ideas to try out!</i></p> <p>Asking the teacher to self-assess  <i>In what ways did the lesson go as you expected?</i>  <i>What didn't you expect?</i></p> <p>Asking the teacher to identify her or his role  <i>What instructional decisions made the lesson successful?</i></p> <p>Showing enthusiasm for and interest in the teacher's work and thinking  <i>I'm interested in learning/hearing more about...</i>  <i>I'm really looking forward to...</i></p>
Suggestions	Suggestion Stems
<p>Suggestions...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are expressed with invitational, positive language and vocal tone</li> <li>• Offer choices to encourage ownership</li> <li>• Are often expressed as a question (or include a "tag question" to invite further thinking and elaboration)</li> <li>• Are achievable—enough to encourage but not to overwhelm</li> <li>• May provide information about the mentor's thinking and decision-making strategies</li> <li>• That are accompanied by research and/or rationale are more likely to be either accepted or elaborated upon by the teacher</li> </ul>	<p>Express suggestions that represent using strategic practices, embed choices, and encourage thinking/experimentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Perhaps __, __, or __ might work for...</i></li> <li>• <i>From our experience, one thing we've noticed...</i></li> <li>• <i>Several/some teachers I know have tried different things in this sort of situation, and maybe one might work for you...</i></li> <li>• <i>What we know about __ is...</i></li> <li>• <i>Based on your question, something/some thing to keep in mind when dealing with...</i></li> <li>• <i>There are a number of approaches...</i></li> </ul> <p>Following a suggestion with a question invites the teacher to imagine/hypothesize how the idea might work in his/her context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How might that look in your classroom?</i></li> <li>• <i>To what extent might that work in your situation/with your students?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do you imagine might happen if you were to try something like that with your class?</i></li> <li>• <i>Which of these ideas might work best in your classroom (with your students)?</i></li> </ul>

## Mentor Payment

The district oversees the payment of mentors.

- **Traditional Route Teachers (CEAS holders)** will have \$550 deducted from their paycheck to pay their mentors.
- **Alternate route (CE holders)** will have \$1,000 deducted from their paycheck to pay their mentors.
- Mentees will have the mentor fee deducted from their paycheck in *equal installments* throughout the school year.

Mentors will be paid upon log submission in June.

*Please note that mentoring that starts mid-year will be prorated based on the number of weeks that the novice teacher is mentored for that school year.*