

# **THE MENTOR HANDBOOK**

**CARMEL CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# MENTOR HANDBOOK

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## **I. BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF PROGRAM**

The Mentor Program began in 1998 as a joint effort of the Carmel Teachers Association and the Administration to meet the professional needs of teachers entering the District. Both the CTA and the Administration believed that the District would benefit from a program that provided both support to teachers new to the District and recognition to many of the outstanding teachers on the faculty.

The Mentor Program affords the District an opportunity to recognize and reward some of the many outstanding teachers within the District, while easing the new teacher's entry into the system. The Mentor Program, designed to encourage those experienced teachers to share their knowledge, talents, and skills with new teachers to the District, supplements District and building orientation programs. Our goals are:

- to orient the new teachers to their new workplace, professional organization and community
- to familiarize the new staff with district and building procedures
- to work with the new teachers on curricular and classroom management issues

The program is funded through a collaborative effort between the CTA and the Board of Education. Stipends for mentors are included in the CTA/Board of Education Contract.

## **II. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **A. Governance of the Program**

The Mentor Program is governed by a committee consisting of three (3) teachers and three (3) administrators. The three (3) teachers, one which is the Mentor Coordinator, are appointed by the CTA, and the three (3) administrators are appointed by the Superintendent. The committee administers the policies and procedures of the program.

In the spring of each year, the committee sends a letter to the staff soliciting nominations for the next year's mentors. Once nominations are received, the Mentor Coordinator and Building Principals begin the process of making mentor-mentee matches. This process occurs over the next few months until every new teacher has been assigned a Mentor. During the spring, the Committee also reviews the organization of the Mentor-In-Service Program and the Mentee Staff Development offerings. A Mentor Training Program is required of all first year mentors.

## **B. Roles**

### **1. Mentor**

The Mentor role is of great significance in the school organization. The Committee recognizes the importance of the role of the Mentor and strives to select experienced teachers who have demonstrated an understanding of the art and craft of teaching. The Committee realizes that the Mentor can ease the transition of any teacher, experienced or inexperienced, to a new school, a new district and a new community. Mentors lend support and encouragement to their mentees, providing an open door policy in teaching, so that no first year teacher has to work in isolation.

The unique relationship between the Mentor and mentee grows out of the needs of the teacher and the District. In this collegial relationship, a Mentor may help with curriculum needs, in-house building procedures, classroom procedures or District policies. The Mentor and new teacher have the freedom to develop a working relationship beneficial to both of them.

The Mentor and mentee need a working relationship in which both can grow and learn from each other. In the beginning, the Mentor and the mentee have to establish trust. The Mentor must help the mentee create a safe, confidential environment necessary for honest exchanges to take place.

The Mentor's primary role is to aid and support the mentee. Nonetheless, some Mentors claim that the relationship offers them an opportunity to become more reflective about their own teaching strategies, methods and philosophies. Thus, the Mentor learns as well as teaches.

New teachers report that their experience with a Mentor has been most successful when the Mentor is supportive, caring and non-judgmental. Successful relationships between the Mentor and mentee occur when both feel valued as teachers.

### **2. Principal**

From planning stages through implementation, the principals play key roles in the Mentor program. Principals will meet with all Mentors and mentees during Summer Orientation to define the expectations of the program within the building. Principals will provide resources and opportunities for Mentor and mentee to meet together in a professional setting of trust, learning and sharing.

### **III. THE PROGRAM**

#### **A. Selection**

A Mentor-teacher's role is open to all experienced teachers. Each spring the Mentor Committee sends a letter to the staff seeking Mentor nominations for the following year. Nominations can be made by teachers, department chairs, or principals. A teacher may also volunteer to be a Mentor. The Mentor teacher must:

- be available for two (2) days the week before Labor Day
- participate in the new Mentor training
- meet with the new teacher for at least one hour a week

The Mentor Coordinator and Building Principal begin the matching process after they have received all the nominations. Matches between new teacher and Mentors are made according to school, grade level and subject matter. When more than one nominee or volunteer meets the criteria, selection is made at the discretion of the Mentor Coordinator and Building Principal.

#### **B. NEW MENTOR TRAINING**

The New Mentor Training is designed to assist the Mentor teacher in defining the Mentor role and its relationship to the new teacher. The Mentors discuss topics related to mentoring, such as needs assessments, problem solving, classroom visits, management, and communication skills. The course is designed to allow ample time so that the Mentor teachers can develop skills for their new role, and address any of the issues that arise during mentoring.

#### **C. VISITATION**

Mentors and Mentees can request release time from the Building Principal for classroom visitations. Several models have been helpful to the Mentors and new teachers. These models are suggestions; other arrangements can be made.

##### **1. The mentee visits the Mentor**

The Mentee might wish to visit the Mentor teacher in order to observe classroom management, room arrangement, curriculum ideas, or just to see another person work.

2. The Mentor visits the mentee

The mentee at some point, might find it helpful having a Mentor visit, permitting feedback. The discussion could center around the areas that would be most helpful to the mentee.

3. The Mentor and mentee visit a third teacher

The Mentor and mentee might wish to visit the class of another teacher. This third teacher would give the mentee an opportunity to observe someone other than the Mentor, would expose the mentee to more resources, (materials, books, ideas), and would allow for an extra support system.

#### **IV. PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The Mentor Program is evaluated informally as well as formally. During the year conversations with Mentors and principals, and Mentors and mentees provide an opportunity for informal evaluations and assessment of the program. In addition, each Mentor and mentee participates in a formal written evaluation of the program at the end of the year. These evaluations are used by the Mentor Committee when planning the next year's program.