

The Just ASK September Mentoring Calendar

Using the Calendar

- "V/FF" represents the phrase "virtual or face-to-face" throughout the calendar.
- Read through the extensive list of possible mentor actions and identify actions that are appropriate for you or your mentoring team's work.

Personal

- Create a **Who's Who** at your school by putting together a short biography of each staff member, new and veteran. List educational background including degrees, certifications, professional affiliations and appropriate personal information such as hobbies and history. Provide copies to all staff members. (V/FF)
- Plan for multiple meetings (V/FF) of new teachers and mentors where all can get acquainted, logistical issues can be addressed, and "off-the-record" questions can be answered in an informal but professional way.
- Acknowledge the fact that these are trying times while sending the messages "We are all in this together!" and "We can do this!"
- Stop by classroom daily to say hello. (V/FF)
- Put personal notes in their mailboxes. (V/FF)
- Check, without prying, to see that teachers new to the area are happy with the life they are creating beyond the school community. As appropriate, assist in resolving any issues.
- If the teachers are new to the area, provide information about recreational facilities including gyms and parks with information about what is open.

Professional

- Have new teachers complete a self-assessment or needs assessment to help you identify areas of challenge and concern. See pages 240-261 in *The 21st Century Mentor's Handbook*. (Also available as an online tool)
- Using data from the needs assessment, set collaborative goals for the mentoring relationship. Revisit those goals at least monthly.
- Explain the teacher performance evaluation system by going over the process and the criteria. Use stories and examples as needed.
- Help new teachers prepare for the first observation cycle by doing some form of peer observation together and discussing the teaching and learning using the district's teacher performance criteria. See pages 308-311 in *The 21st Century Mentor's Handbook* for possible peer observation formats. (V/FF)
- Have new teachers do a self-assessment(s) and then establish realistic and focused professional goals for the first quarter. See pages 244-265 in *The 21st Century Mentor's Handbook*. (All tools are available online.)

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- Keep new teachers apprised of professional development opportunities.
- Remind the new teachers to refrain from discussing private issues with students, parents, or colleagues in the lounge and other public places.
- Be a role model by always speaking professionally about administrative staff, support staff, and other teachers. Refrain from gossip!

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

- Fill in any gaps in the overview of curriculum not covered by district or school meetings, podcasts, webinars, etc.
- Locate and provide access to, either in hard copy or online, district standards, pacing guides, and other curriculum documents.
- Use the pacing guide and the district standards to assist the novice teacher in chunking the year. Use **Tools for Instructional Planning** on pages 323-357 in *The 21st Century Mentor's Handbook*.
- Based on the year-long outline and the goals the new teachers have for a virtual, blended, or all face-to-face the learning community they want to create, assist the novice teacher in creating detailed plans for the first weeks of school. See pages 187-188 in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*
- Use district lesson plan formats or the lesson and unit design templates in **Chapter X, Tools for New Teachers** in *The 21st Century Mentor's Handbook* as discussion points for the planning process. (These tools are all available online.)
- Do overview of the standardized testing program as it relates to and is aligned with curriculum and instruction.
- Provide ready-to-use and field-tested lessons or units based on state learning standards and district's curriculum. Explain and model the SBE Planning Process.
- Emphasize appropriate use of formative assessment data (to inform instructional decisions) and the power of growth-producing feedback.
- Reiterate your "open files" policy.

Organizational Systems

- Point out the classroom organization tips found in **Chapter IX** of *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*
- Explain procedures for attendance, e-mail, voice mail, etc.
- Continue to collect materials needed by new teachers.
- Coordinate with department chair, grade level, or team leader to ensure that the new teachers have what everyone else has.

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- If in a brick and mortar setting, discuss and share examples of bus/hall passes, fire drill sheets, referral sheets, etc. See page 209 in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*
- Ensure novice teacher has either a print or online calendar. As appropriate, provide one with important dates already placed on it. Go over district and school calendars. Have new teachers note important (V/FF) meeting dates, including collaborative learning teams, and due dates in either their print or on-line calendars.
- Ask how paper/digital document-flow management systems are working.
- As appropriate, share the strategies for organizing instructional materials found on pages 210-212 in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*
- Share strategies for organizing all the paper work to and from the school and district offices. See pages 207-209 in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*
- Go over procedures for collecting fees
- Where appropriate, explain the school transportation system, including after school and athletics schedules.
- Provide guidance, and if available, exemplars of substitute folders or kits for use in all settings. See pages 217-218 in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?* guidelines. (The substitute situation may be challenging for novice and meentor alike.)

Students

- Provide new teachers with a calendar of extracurricular events in which their students might be participating. Encourage them to attend a few events to get to know their students outside the classroom.
- Brainstorm strategies for learning all students' names by the end of the first week or two of school.
- Discuss community building activities that work well with students of this age in this school. See pages 25-28 in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*

Colleagues

- Remind colleagues of their role in seeking out and helping new teachers get established as positive and productive staff members.
- Go over policies, possibilities, and potential pitfalls of working with paraprofessionals.
- Discuss relationships and co-teaching with regular or special educators. See pages 286-291 in *Instruction for All Students*.
- Clarify discussion and decision points at faculty, team, and grade level meetings.
- Share your mentor "To Do" list with the principal.

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School and School System

- Identify all possible drill and crisis situations and gather appropriate information to share with new teacher. Update this information as instructional location change.
- Continue to ask about needed resources.
- Examine how new teachers are managing their time.
- Check on non-instructional duties assigned to new teachers and discourage them from volunteering for additional duties for at least the first semester.
- Verify that the new teachers' technology tools are in good working order and that the new teacher, students, or parents are feeling overwhelmed by multiple demands, frequent changes, or interruptions in service.
- Explain how special education referral and pre-referral processes work.
- Arrange for the new teacher to sit in on a child study process as an observer.

Parents and Community

- Ask about parent contacts and how they are going; encourage the new teacher to make frequent contact with families and caretakers and to include "good news" contacts as a regular part of their practice.
- Have new teachers listen in on your parent video conferences and phone calls.
- Share newsletters, memos, and letters you send home.
- Model "parents as partners" practices and discussions.
- Discuss Back-to-School Night agenda and presentation ideas. See pages 267-268 in *Why Didn't I Learn This in College?*
- Organize a panel of teachers to share Back-to-School Night strategies.

Especially for Special Educators

- Explain district policies about aligning IEP goals with state learning standards.
- Model preparing an IEP and then co-repare one
- Coach the new teachers in the use of technology and specific software programs for IEP preparation.
- Think aloud and model preparing paperwork for an IEP meeting.
- Model an IEP meeting and then co-facilitate an IEP meeting.
- Provide contact time and access to district special education coordinators so that new teachers can hear first hand the expectations for them and ask questions that can be answered in the moment.
- Discuss methods of documenting progress on meeting IEP goals and grading policies and procedures for special education students.
- Go over student performance on the previous year's standardized testing and assist the new educator in making instructional decisions based on that data.