



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

To: Higher Education Committee

From: Joseph P. Frey

Subject: Recommendations from the State Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching on New York State Mentoring Standards

Date: December 6, 2010

Authorizations:

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Should the Board of Regents accept the attached draft of New York State Mentoring Standards as developed by the Professional Standards and Practices Board?

Reason(s) for Consideration

Review of Policy.

Proposed Handling

At the December 2010 Higher Education Committee meeting, the Professional Standards and Practice Board for Teaching will present its recommendation for the establishment of the attached New York State Mentoring Standards.

Background Information

Priority Agenda

The co-chairs of the Standards Board, in their 2008 - 2009 annual report to the Board of Regents, indicated that the Board's priority agenda included the development of mentoring standards. The drafting of mentoring standards was done in coordination with the NYS Teaching Standards and the established NYS Professional Development standards. Together these sets of standards will serve to guide and support the development of NYS teachers through the continuum of their teaching careers.

The Need for Mentoring Standards

In 2004, the Board of Regents adopted regulations (CR 100.2 (dd) (iv)) requiring all school districts and BOCES to provide a mentored experience to initial certificate holders during their first year of employment. These regulations leave the design and implementation of mentoring programs to the discretion of the local school districts. Reasonable and appropriate variations among the programs have been documented.

The process of becoming an effective teacher is multi-faceted and requires quality teacher induction programs in our schools. Research demonstrates that beginning teachers need three to seven years in the field to reach proficiency. Time, practice, adjustment and reflection pave the way as beginning teachers develop into highly effective educators.

The New York State Professional Standards and Practices Board (PSPB) is charged with advising the Regents and the Commissioner on matters pertaining to teacher education, and certification and practice, and to recommend strategies to support teaching and learning in New York State. Induction through mentoring is perhaps the single most powerful way we can influence the quality of and sustain future generations of teachers.

The problems of recruiting and retaining quality teachers who are ready to embark on the challenges and joys of the profession have been documented extensively. This is particularly evident in high-need schools. Having high-quality teachers in classrooms is key to closing the achievement gap and accelerating learning for an increasingly diverse student population.

Upon review of teacher shortage data, studies of existing research, as well as extensive review of mentoring standards and models developed by other states, the PSPB concluded that New York State needs a set of standards that articulates a vision of mentoring programs that provide intensive support and development for beginning teachers. These standards are intended to serve as a guide for mentoring/induction programs towards the goal of enhancing teaching and learning.

The PSPB supports the new Race to the Top initiative to develop the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Induction Programs. The establishment of the attached New York State Mentoring Standards is timely and will support these and other mentoring programs throughout the state.

The Development of the Draft

In September 2009, PSPB members presented a first draft of the proposed mentoring standards to the Higher Education Committee. That fall, the Department sent a preliminary draft set of standards to the field for review. Response to the proposed standards was overwhelmingly positive and we received a wealth of comments and suggestions over a two-month period. Input from the Regents and from the field was incorporated into the revised draft. At its meeting in June 2010, the Professional Standards and Practices Board unanimously voted that this revised draft be submitted to the Regents for consideration.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Regents endorse the proposed New York State Mentoring Standards.

*Recommended***New York State Mentoring Standards**

The purpose of this document is to offer a set of standards that guide the design and implementation of teacher mentoring programs in New York State through teacher induction. A high-quality induction program with an effective mentoring component positively supports the recruitment and retention of new teachers, while strengthening teaching practice as guided by the NYS teaching standards. Teacher induction is critical to the overall preparation and professional development of beginning teachers. It builds on teachers' continuum of experiences – from pre-service programs and accomplishments to continued development over the course of teachers' careers. As such these standards provide guidance to providers of mentoring programs throughout the teacher's career. Induction programs coupled with mentoring strategies accelerate the process of becoming a highly effective teacher whose goal is to advance student achievement. Induction, in this context, refers to sophisticated and systematic efforts to "initiate, shape, and sustain the first work experiences of prospective career teachers¹." These standards are intended to be reflective of research-based best practices to inform educators as they plan, implement, or enhance mentoring programs. They are not intended to be imposed on school districts as regulation, or in any other form. Quality mentoring programs must also reflect local needs and local decision-making processes.

Mentoring is a vital component and essential strategy of a comprehensive induction program whereby new teachers are guided by mentors to apply teacher competence acquired from teacher preparation to the new context and professional culture of the classroom and district. New teachers and mentors build upon their prior accomplishments and use these experiences as a starting point for present learning and development. As such, new teachers have the opportunity to be co-creators of the induction experience.

Mentoring Standards Ensure Consistent Quality Teaching Leading to Increased Student Achievement

New York State's Mentoring Standards provide guidance in creating effective mentoring programs that are essential to the induction process of new teachers. It is hoped that the direction provided by these programs will immediately affect new teacher performance in the classroom with improved student learning as the constant and ultimate outcome. The mentoring process acclimates beginning teachers into a new environment through a mentor-mentee partnership, which by its very nature, helps shatter the wall of isolation that teachers often experience at the outset of their careers.

These mentoring standards are offered for school districts to shape their mentoring programs that enable teachers to build upon their skills, knowledge and dispositions as they transition into the academic and social culture of their place of practice. The professional learning community that embraces the new teacher is significantly strengthened by dedicated mentors who are essential to the induction process, and

¹ Mager, G. M. The Place of Induction in Becoming a Teacher. In *Teacher Induction and Mentoring: School-based Collaborative Programs*.

who, through their avowed commitment to education, recognize the need to increase student achievement through effective teaching practices.

Effective mentoring exhibits certain holistic attributes.

Effective Mentoring:

- ***Is Carefully Designed.*** Effective mentoring aligns to the standards in this document, and promotes successful, shared mentor/mentee work that positively impacts student learning.
- ***Is Student Centered.*** Effective mentoring is focused on new teachers developing their understanding of the needs of their students.
- ***Is Professionally Grounded.*** Effective mentoring embraces the research based NYS Teaching Standards and guides teachers during the initial phase of the life-long process of professional learning that is centered in the learning community located at the heart of each school.
- ***Is Pragmatic.*** Effective mentoring is the essential element of teacher induction and is the most direct and practical route toward inclusion of new teachers into the school culture.
- ***Is Universally Supported.*** Effective mentoring programs are supported by all education stakeholders, who recognize the value of such programs to the educational enterprise.
- ***Is Humanistic.*** Effective mentoring programs offer structured processes for the appropriate pairing of the mentor with the mentee thereby building relationships characterized by professional conduct and mutual trust.
- ***Is Resource Based.*** Effective mentoring programs are backed, as far as is practicable, by school resources, including time, people, and materials.

There are ten standards for effective mentoring.

1. *Program Philosophy and Purposes:* The philosophy of the mentoring program upholds the assertion that induction is a crucial transition between teacher preparation and continuing professional development. The mentoring program facilitates the transition of the beginning teacher from success in preparation programs to effective practice in new contexts of the classroom and school district.
2. *Program Design:* The mentoring program is designed as a critical component of a comprehensive induction plan and is embedded in an integrated professional culture. The design supports a district's mission and vision and is consistent with school, district and state standards in addressing Pre-K -12 learning standards.

3. *Beginning Teacher Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions:* Beginning teachers bring valued knowledge, skills, and dispositions to the new context of the classroom, school, and districts where they are first employed. The beginning teachers must display a readiness to continue learning about teaching, and invite collaborative support and guidance.
4. *Mentoring Skill and Knowledge:* Mentors must be familiar with research-based practices that promote student learning and growth at the various stages of development. Additionally, mentors should be immersed in the knowledge, research base and best practices of mentoring.
5. *Mentors Have Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities:* The role of the mentor is to engage, inspire, assist, encourage and advance the professional learning of a beginning teacher. The mentor as a teacher/leader serves as a model of professional conduct and embodies a vision of excellence in teaching.
6. *Mentor Development:* Mentoring is a professional practice with its own knowledge and research base, strategies and best practices. Mentor development is a comprehensive and continuous program extending from initial preparation through ongoing professional learning.
7. *Shared Leadership and Administration:* Leadership of the mentoring program is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders. Administrative processes that provide instructional support to both beginning teachers and mentors are embedded within the comprehensive induction program.
8. *Program Implementation:* The mentoring program is implemented to meet New York State Teaching Standards and sustain program activities that support the development of all beginning teachers. An infrastructure (resources, time, staff, and preparation) is established to help ensure that beginning teachers receive the continuum of support and development necessary to foster effective teaching and learning.
9. *Mentor Selection:* Mentors are recruited and selected through a rigorous and transparent process using well-articulated and accepted criteria that consider the mentor candidate's commitment to the profession and teaching experience. The mentor selection process is aligned with a district's needs as well as those of the beginning teacher.
10. *Program Evaluation:* The mentor program has a comprehensive system of formative and summative assessments that evaluates and analyzes program concepts, involves program participants and other stakeholders, and leads to substantive and continual improvements.

Standard 1: Program Philosophy and Purposes

Standard: The philosophy of the mentoring program upholds the assertion that induction is a crucial transition between teacher preparation and continuing professional development and indicates the expected and continuing engagement of those associated with the points of entry and ongoing professional learning along this continuum. The purpose of the mentoring program is to facilitate the transition of the beginning teacher from success in preparation programs to effective practice in new contexts of the classroom and school district. A comprehensive mentoring program provides support to the new teacher and is intended to sustain a vibrant teaching career, which embodies a learner-focused practice resulting in student achievement.

Indicators:

1.a The philosophy of the mentorship program connects teacher induction to what teachers need to know and be able to do. The new teacher must receive articulated strategic guidance to become an effective teacher.

1.b. The philosophy includes the central role of a highly proficient mentor and provides for the support of the mentor teacher.

1.c The mentorship program provides a clearly stated purpose and set of goals based on a philosophy of teacher growth and development that addresses the unique needs and learning styles of the beginning teacher, as well as teaching practice that reflects the New York State Learning Standards, school, school district, and state goals in closing the achievement gap

1.d The purpose and goals reflect a multi-year effort and are part of a continuum of professional learning that builds on and extends the development of the beginning teacher from preparation into induction and practice.

1.e The program purpose and goals include a focus on a strategic support system, which includes adequate allocation of time, resources, and staff, for the support of beginning teachers.

1.f The mentorship program utilizes a data driven formative and summative evaluation process for continuous program improvements.

Standard 2: Program Design

Standard: The mentoring program is designed as a critical component of a comprehensive induction plan and is embedded in an integrated professional culture. The program incorporates a purposeful, logically sequenced structure of extended preparation and professional development that is comprehensive, coherent, and sustained. The design supports a district's mission and vision and is consistent with school, district and state standards in addressing Pre-K -12 learning standards. The mentoring program is designed in a way that ensures quality mentors, effective mentoring relationships, and feedback for program improvement. A sound, well-articulated philosophy grounded in research and effective practice guides program purpose and goals.

Indicators:

2.a The mentoring program seeks input from and directly involves partnerships with all district stakeholders, statewide mentoring networks and teacher preparation programs to collaborate in support of beginning teachers (P-16).

2.b The mentoring program is embedded into the school and district-wide culture and reflects long-term planning for teaching and learning that is aligned with the instructional philosophy of the school and district. It is an integral part of the district's professional development plan and is therefore based on relevant data, and is responsive to local contexts.

2.c The mentoring program includes well-structured teacher networks and "study groups" to extend the mentor relationship beyond a stand-alone design to a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained learning community. Sufficient resources are allocated (funds, time, and personnel) for sustaining the learning community.

2.d The mentoring program is standards based, informed by NYS Teaching Standards to ensure that all students meet or exceed New York State learning standards. Program goals and intended outcomes are clearly articulated, reviewed, and revised as necessary, based on formative program evaluation data.

2.e The mentoring program is designed to build on the strengths of beginning teachers in the continuum of development from pre-service to ongoing professional learning and provides for the ongoing identification of beginning teacher needs as they emerge.

2.f The mentoring program delineates clear roles and expectations for district and school leaders (i.e., superintendent, principal), program administrators, other stakeholders in the Pre-K – 16 continuum and in the general community, and the mentor and beginning teacher.

2.g The mentoring program establishes formal structures (e.g. a mentor selection committee) for the selection of mentors and the matching of mentors and beginning teachers based on grade levels, subject areas, or other factors related to the needs of the beginning teacher.

2.h The mentoring program is designed to allow sufficient common time for classroom visitations, reflection on teaching practices, feedback, and instructional skills support. The design considers the need for reduced workloads, release time and placement in classes with less, rather than more, demanding students.

2.i The mentoring program is designed to ensure that mentors are sufficiently prepared and adequately supported in their continuous professional learning. Partnerships with universities, Teacher Centers, and regional BOCES should be sought for the design of this professional development strategy.

Standard 3. Beginning Teacher Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Standard: Beginning teachers bring valued knowledge, skills, and dispositions to the new context of the classroom, school, and districts where they are first employed. The beginning teachers must share what they have accomplished in prior experiences as a starting point for present learning and development. They must display a readiness to continue learning about teaching, and invite collaborative support and guidance.

Indicators:

3.a The beginning teacher shares evidence of a teaching philosophy and prior learning such as might be represented in a professional portfolio, lesson and unit plans, and draws upon this learning in the development of their classroom practice.

3.b The beginning teacher is an active participant in the mentoring program which is a continuation of the preservice experience.

3.c The beginning teacher plays an active role in helping to determine the scope and depth of the mentoring program, providing ongoing feedback on progress towards meeting established goals and on other elements of the mentoring program.

3.d The beginning teacher collaborates with the mentor teacher in developing professional relationships with colleagues and other beginning teachers.

3.e The beginning teacher seeks feedback from the mentor teacher and other colleagues in order to inform practice. Such topics as teaching in a standards-based environment, the use of formative and summative assessments, differentiation, and lesson and unit planning should be addressed.

3.f The beginning teacher engages in reflection and self-evaluation as a means to continually develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to effective work in the classroom and in the school.

Standard 4: Mentoring Skill and Knowledge

Standard: The mentor embodies the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to create a collaborative and supportive learning relationship with a beginning teacher within the learning community. Mentoring skills and knowledge reflect the content and pedagogical base inherent in the profession. Mentors must be familiar with research-based practices that promote student learning and growth at the various stages of development. Additionally, mentors should be immersed in the knowledge, research base and best practices of mentoring. The mentor maintains and upholds the principles of ethical standards and establishes opportunities for reflective practice.

Indicators:

4.a The mentor establishes a reciprocal learning relationship with the beginning teacher.

4.b The mentor utilizes coaching time effectively to ensure that the mentee receives the necessary support and guidance.

4.c The mentor demonstrates the use of appropriate interpersonal skills in order to communicate effectively with the beginning teacher.

4.d The mentor demonstrates practice guided by the New York State Code of Ethics for Educators. (add citation and link to the Code of Ethics).

4.e The mentor demonstrates the ability to analyze student work and other data to inform practice and assists the mentee in using data to develop goals and monitor progress towards achieving goals.

4.f The mentor demonstrates practice informed by cultural sensitivity.

4.g The mentor is familiar with current research about the mentor/mentee relationship, multiple behavior management strategies, and a repertoire of instructional strategies.

Standard 5: Mentors Have Clearly Defined Roles and Responsibilities.

Standard: The role of the mentor is to engage, inspire, assist, encourage and advance the professional learning of a beginning teacher. The mentor serves as a model of professional conduct with a strong commitment to collaboration and a demonstrated understanding of content, pedagogy, human development and the many issues teachers face in their practice.

Indicators:

5.a The mentor maintains professional conduct at all times, demonstrating pride in the profession.

5.b The mentor assists in creating and facilitating a network of supportive collegial relationships within a professional community of learners, helping them to acclimate to the academic standards and vision of the district, and the broader educational community (e.g. professional organizations).

5.c The mentor establishes and maintains a relationship built on trust and confidentiality in which the skills of the beginning teacher are recognized and nurtured.

5.d The mentor participates in initial and ongoing professional development and other activities related to the knowledge, and best practices of mentoring.

5.e The mentor engages in ongoing dialog with the beginning teacher seeking to encourage reflection about all aspects of the teacher's practice.

5.f The mentor guides the teacher towards mastering elements of effective teaching including planning and preparation, the classroom environment, and pedagogy aligned with accepted teaching standards (district, state, or national).

5.g The mentor advocates for policies, practices and working conditions that promote teacher success.

5.h The mentor establishes a plan for mutual peer classroom observation, and assists the beginning teacher in fostering relationships and trust with members of the school community.

5.i The mentor anticipates and is responsive to the various concerns and challenges facing the new teacher, identifying opportunities and resources for professional development and problem solving.

5.j The mentor assists the beginning teacher in the use of data to inform instruction. The mentor promotes the use of multiple instructional methodologies to support student learning and the use of research-based instructional practices.

Standard 6: Mentor Development

Standard: Mentoring is a professional practice with its own knowledge and research base, strategies and best practices. Mentor development is a comprehensive and continuous program extending from initial preparation through ongoing professional learning. Initial preparation provides the foundation for mentors as they begin their mentoring assignments, and ongoing development deepens mentors' skillfulness, knowledge, and effectiveness at providing instructional support for the beginning teacher. Mentor development provides for systematic application, practice, and follow up that results in professional growth for the mentor and beginning teacher. The design of mentor development programs is informed by best practices of professional development.

Indicators:

6.a Mentor development is aligned with teaching standards, best practices in pedagogy, content knowledge, and uses of data to inform instruction.

6.b Mentor development utilizes current research on effective mentoring and induction to improve teachers' instructional skills and knowledge.

6.c Mentor development provides adequate time and resources for mentors to engage in ongoing activities that enable them to reflect on and refine both their mentoring skills and their continuous work with beginning teachers.

6.d Mentor development results in professional growth for both mentor and beginning teacher. It prepares mentors to utilize effective strategies in coaching and providing feedback.

6.e Mentor development is aligned with school/district /state professional development goals and initiatives and is supported through mentor participation in ethical and professional learning communities including online and on-site networks.

6.f Mentor development provides effective strategies, grounded in adult learning theory, to meet a teacher's continuing growth. Mentor development enables teachers to assess teachers and differentiates instruction based on the individual needs and learning styles of mentees.

6.g Mentor development promotes communication skills that help to establish, develop and maintain a trusting, collaborative, peer relationship.

Standard 7: Shared Leadership and Administration

Standard: Leadership of the mentoring program is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders. Formal leaders are committed to a vision of mentoring as a means of improving student achievement and developing and retaining beginning teachers. Administrative processes that provide instructional support to both beginning teachers and mentors are embedded within the comprehensive induction program.

Indicators:

7.a The vision, goals, and action plans of the comprehensive mentoring program are part of the school district's comprehensive education plan.

7.b Leaders promote institutional commitment for a comprehensive induction program representing the continuum from pre-service to on-going professional learning and the District Professional Development Plan.

7.c Leaders of the mentoring program operate within the context of shared and sustainable leadership, ensuring participation of appropriate stakeholders. Consensus on goals, expectations and outcomes is established and broadly communicated within the school community. Roles and responsibilities for each participating partner are clearly articulated.

7.d Administrators and staff have clear authority, and sufficient resources to support implementation of the program. Administrative processes are coordinated to enhance communication and opportunities for systemic change.

7.e Leaders rigorously monitor program outcomes to ensure that mentoring practices support student learning. Leaders facilitate regular meetings of key stakeholders to discuss program design, development, implementation, and program improvement

7.f Program leaders possess deep knowledge regarding teacher induction. Additionally, leaders include on-going research and professional development related to mentoring as part of their own professional development.

7.g Program leaders facilitate the use of data for continuous improvement by using a variety of sources indicating student growth.

Standard 8: Program Implementation

Standard: The mentoring program is implemented to meet New York State standards and sustain program activities that support the development of all beginning teachers.

Implementation is research-based and reflects core best practice principles of effective mentoring/induction. A comprehensive infrastructure of resources is established to ensure that beginning teachers receive the continuum of support and development that foster effective and imaginative teaching and learning.

Indicators:

8.a The mentoring program is implemented as a comprehensive, district-wide initiative seamlessly aligned with district goals, plans, and improvements.

8.b The mentoring program is implemented within the context of the community, the mission of the school, and the diverse learning characteristics of the students.

8.c Mentor development is a transformational process that promotes active teacher participation in the reform and improvement of the profession

Standard 9: Mentor Selection Process and Criteria

Standard: Mentors are recruited and selected through a rigorous and transparent process using well-articulated and accepted criteria that considers the mentor candidate's commitment to the profession, teaching experience, interpersonal and communication skills and professional competence. The mentor selection process is aligned with district needs as well as those of the beginning teacher.

Indicators:

9.a The mentor selection process and criteria should be well defined, transparent and consistent with the mentor responsibilities and local program purpose and needs.

9.b The mentor selection process takes into consideration the needs of the newly hired teacher, teaching assignments (subject and grade level), geographical proximity, and qualifications of the mentor.

9.c The mentor selection process makes use of a selection committee comprised of a majority of teachers, and reflects shared decision making between the administration and local teachers' bargaining associations.

9.d The selection process and criteria should be known by teachers throughout the district. The process should also ensure confidentiality of the selection committee's deliberations and outcomes.

9.e The mentor selection process includes use of a candidate selection rubric to ensure that final consensus on the selected mentor is based on a common reference point of high-quality teaching.

9.f The selection of mentors is guided by high standards of knowledge, expertise, and evidence of reflective practice. Mentor candidates are fully certified and tenured. The selection committee should determine what qualities make for effective mentors. They must be of high moral and professional character, highly competent, experienced and possessing strong interpersonal skills. Mentors should possess extensive knowledge of pedagogy, content and best practice. They should be highly respected teachers with demonstrated classroom success.

Standard 10: Program Evaluation

Standard: The mentoring program has a comprehensive system of formative and summative assessments that evaluates and analyzes program concepts, involves program participants and appropriate stakeholders, supports the needs of the District, and leads to substantive and continual improvements. The program evaluation is aligned with professional standards, state and district learning standards, teaching standards, and their respective assessments. The methodology provides meaningful involvement of professional practitioners and P-16 partners in program revision. Evidence of the effectiveness of a comprehensive mentoring program includes the retention of teachers and enhanced student achievement, providing improvement strategies and projected goals of the program.

Indicators:

10.a The program develops well-defined evaluation plans which are inclusive of multiple data types and based upon the articulated goals and intended outcomes of the program. Ongoing evaluation of the impact of the program on teacher practice, teacher satisfaction, retention, and student achievement should be included in the plan. The evaluation should address and capture emerging research-based knowledge about teaching and learning.

10.b Program leaders identify or design instruments and procedures for collecting data relevant to the questions that guide the evaluations (i.e., surveys, interviews, focus groups, case studies, journal entries), describe and broadly communicate the process for gathering, reviewing, and analyzing evaluation data and providing timely program adjustments.

10.c Evaluation includes formative and summative processes using data from multiple sources such as teachers, stakeholders from the P-16 continuum, program staff, and administration. The set of questions that guide the mentoring program evaluation should address all the important practices and issues and include input from the stakeholders who participate in the content, design and implementation of the program.

10.d Program leaders collect ongoing feedback on program quality and effectiveness from all participants using formal and informal methodologies. District record keeping requirements and systems should be used as appropriate to ensure consistency and reliability of analyses and reporting.

10.e Data related to the dynamics and effectiveness of the mentor/mentee partnership are collected in the evaluation with opportunities for adjustments as needed. The mentor's role should be evaluated as an integral part of the program.

10.f. Periodic needs assessments should be designed to determine needs and to ensure a continuous feedback loop for program design and implementation.

10.g Appropriate data are used to influence policy at the local, state and federal levels. Data are to be collected, analyzed, and used for mentoring program improvement.

10.h Program evaluation data are not used to monitor individual teacher performance, nor are they used for individual teacher or pre-service preparation evaluations except insofar as this use is explicitly represented in the district's collective bargaining agreement.