



## Mentoring in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century<sup>®</sup>

Issue I

by Paula Rutherford and Sarah Hartman

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide advice, insights, and suggestions helpful to mentors and induction program coordinators as they strive to support new teachers. The focus of this issue is possible mentoring actions during the first month of school.

Please forward this checklist to all your mentoring colleagues so that they too can benefit from the collective wisdom of hundreds of mentors across the country. Even if your school year has already started, there are rich possibilities for mentors to consider throughout the next few weeks.

### The Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! We are pleased to begin this school year with **The Mentor's Opening of School Checklist**. We are modeling our mentoring checklist on our wildly popular *Just for the ASKing!* **Opening of School Checklist** for school administrators and plan to update and publish it annually. Suggestions for ways to support new teachers are organized into the eight categories of challenges and concerns identified in *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook*. Be sure to note the section at the end of the checklist that focuses on the unique needs of special educators.

The first issues of the previous three school years also focus on suggestions for positive and productive starts to the school year for new teachers and mentors. The first issue of 2006-2007 provides an overview of the challenges and concerns new teachers face, suggestions to guide mentoring practice in those areas, and a **New Teacher Needs Assessment**. The first issue of the 2007-2008 school year addresses the fact that while all mentoring programs have the same goals, the reality is that they operate with different resources in terms of time, human power, materials, and money. That being the case, mentoring programs must maximize available resources. A form to use in the creation of a **Mentoring Team** is included in that issue. The first issue of 2008-2009 provides guidance for developing a year-long plan for site-based support for both new teachers and mentors and includes worksheets for planning site-based new teacher and mentor support and training.

Our plan is to publish the *Mentoring in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*<sup>®</sup> e-newsletter five times this year. To ensure that we can accomplish that goal, we are adding a new voice to this project. Sarah Hartman, Director of Consulting and Client Services for Just ASK, joins me as co-author of the newsletter for the 2009-2010 school year. Sarah was most recently a Professional Development Specialist in Prince William County Schools (PWCS), Virginia. In that district she was instrumental in the development and delivery of several components of the induction program. That work included leading workshops for new teachers, mentors, and lead mentors. Since PWCS usually has over 800 new teachers, 800 mentors, and close to 90 lead mentors each year, she has had the opportunity to not only lead but learn from all of those educators. Welcome, Sarah!

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# The Mentor's Opening of School Checklist

## Using the Checklist

- Read through the extensive list of possible mentoring actions.
- Identify the ones that are appropriate for your mentoring work. Note selection on the Action to take column.
- Establish a time line for action.
- After completing the selected task, record next steps.

Personal	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contact the new teacher as soon as possible after she is hired.</li> <li>● Make a welcome bag or basket. (See page 85 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b>.)</li> <li>● Greet the new teacher on first day of orientation, escort him to meetings, and sit with him at those meetings. Quietly explain jargon and references for which he may not have background knowledge.</li> <li>● As appropriate, provide information and assistance with housing, local services, and recreational facilities.</li> <li>● Take or obtain photographs of new teachers; use the photos to create a <b>Our New Colleagues</b> poster and post it in a prominent place for all staff members to see when they return to school.</li> <li>● Create a <b>Who's Who</b> 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.</li> </ul>			

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Personal	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Organize informal and voluntary social gatherings for new teachers to network with other new teachers.</li> <li>● Discourage the new teacher from volunteering for additional duties for at least the first semester.</li> <li>● Stop by her classroom daily to say hello.</li> <li>● Take a walk around the block at lunch or after school and talk about things other than school.</li> <li>● Leave a note in his mailbox or on his desk.</li> <li>● Share a brown bag lunch.</li> <li>● Celebrate the completion of the first week of school.</li> <li>● Invite her to stop by your classroom at any time.</li> </ul>			
Professional	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain the induction and mentoring program. Include what the new teacher can expect from you and the new teacher's responsibilities as well.</li> <li>● Discuss professional dress.</li> <li>● Go over payroll and benefits. If payroll and benefits are explained at the district level, check for understanding. If not covered in other settings, provide sufficient information for the new teacher to make informed decisions about direct deposit, 403(b)s, medical plans, etc. This may be the first time a novice teacher has dealt with these issues.</li> </ul>			

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Professional	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have new teacher complete a needs assessment to identify areas of challenge and concern. (See pages 242-243 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b>.)</li> <li>● Use data from the needs assessment to set collaborative goals for the mentoring relationship and professional goals for the year. Revisit those goals at least monthly.</li> <li>● Explain the teacher performance evaluation system by going over the process and the criteria.</li> <li>● Help the new teacher prepare for the first observation cycle by doing some form of peer observation together and discuss teaching and learning using the district's teacher performance criteria. (See pages 308-311 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b> for peer observation formats.)</li> <li>● Assist with the start of a portfolio as required for the teacher performance evaluation system. If available, share exemplars created by colleagues.</li> <li>● Keep the new teacher appraised of professional development opportunities.</li> <li>● Remind the new teacher to refrain from discussing private issues with students, parents, or colleagues in the lounge and other public places.</li> <li>● Be a role model by always speaking professionally about administrative staff, support staff, and other teachers.</li> </ul>			

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Professional	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Caution the new teacher about the use of social networking sites. Remind her that the community can access what is posted on those sites.</li> </ul>			
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Debrief district and school curriculum meetings. Some terms and examples may have no meaning for the new teacher.</li> <li>● Provide access to, either in hard copy or online, district standards, pacing guides, and other curriculum documents.</li> <li>● Use the pacing guide and the district standards to assist the novice teacher in chunking the year. (See pages 321-355 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b> for instructional planning tools.)</li> <li>● Assist the new teacher in creating detailed plans for the first week of school. (See pages 160-169 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b>.)</li> <li>● Do an overview of the standardized testing program.</li> <li>● Provide ready-to-use and field-tested lessons or units based on the district's learning standards. (See pages 132-135 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b>.)</li> <li>● Explain the SBE planning process. (See pages 125-126 and 325 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b>.)</li> </ul>			

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Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Let the new teacher know that you have an open files and open door policy.</li> <li>● Discuss formative assessment and the role of growth-producing feedback. (See pages 154-156 in <i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i> and pages 138-167 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i>)</li> </ul>			
Organizational Systems	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Set up a card file, three-ring binder, or online communication system to provide the novice teacher organizational tips throughout the year.</li> <li>● Point out the classroom organization tips found in <b>Chapter IX</b> of <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></li> <li>● Explain procedures for attendance, email, voice mail, etc.</li> <li>● Help new teacher obtain necessary furniture, materials, and supplies. Help him set up the classroom.</li> <li>● Coordinate with department chair, grade level, or team leader to ensure that the new teacher has all necessary materials.</li> <li>● Discuss and share examples of bus/hall passes, fire drill sheets, referral sheets, etc. (See page 209 in <i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i>)</li> </ul>			

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Organizational Systems	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure novice teacher uses a print or online calendar to record important meeting and due dates for the school year. Go over district and school calendars.</li> <li>● “Trade Spaces.” Go into other classrooms and discuss room arrangement. (See pages 243-246 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> <li>● Share strategies for organizing instructional materials. (See pages 210-212 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> <li>● Discuss strategies for organizing the paper work and emails to and from school and district offices.</li> <li>● Verify that the new teacher's voice mail and email systems are functioning smoothly.</li> <li>● Go over procedures for collecting fees.</li> <li>● Explain the after-school bus system.</li> <li>● Provide guidance, and if possible, exemplars of substitute folders. (See pages 217-218 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> </ul>			
Students	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Go over the student demographics. Describe any recent changes.</li> <li>● Discuss building a learning community in the classroom. (See pages 9-44 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> </ul>			

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Students	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with the new teacher to identify necessary procedures and routines. Help her plan how to organize for, model, and teach the procedures and routines. (See pages 29-30, 222-223, and 238-241 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> <li>● Provide the new teacher with a calendar of extracurricular events. Encourage him to attend a few to get to know students outside the classroom.</li> <li>● Brainstorm strategies for learning the names of all students by the end of the first week.</li> <li>● Discuss the importance of community building activities during the first week of school. (See pages 25-28 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> </ul>			
Colleagues	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with your principal in planning the induction program for the novice teacher. Keep her informed about your mentoring activities.</li> <li>● Explain to colleagues the role they can play in welcoming new teachers and helping them be successful and contributing faculty members. (See pages 293-294 in <b><i>The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Mentor's Handbook</i></b>.)</li> <li>● Introduce new teachers to all appropriate staff members. (See page 204 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> </ul>			



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Colleagues	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain the support services available and provide a list of the names of providers at the school and district level.</li> <li>● Identify staff members who have expertise in particular areas and who would be willing to help the new teacher.</li> <li>● Provide the new teacher with a map of the school with teacher and staff member names written in their main work area or classroom.</li> <li>● Go over policies, possibilities, and potential pitfalls of working with paraprofessionals.</li> <li>● Discuss relationships and co-teaching with regular or special educators. (See pages 286-291 in <b><i>Instruction for All Students.</i></b>)</li> </ul>			
School and School System	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide overview of procedures and policies. Use the district or school handbook for new teachers. If a handbook is not available, see pages 199-202 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b> for procedures and policies to consider.</li> <li>● Provide a map of the school layout and take the new teachers on a building tour.</li> <li>● Provide a map of the district with important buildings highlighted. If possible, take a tour.</li> </ul>			

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School and School Systems	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify whom to call for what at the district level. Provide a list of names and telephone numbers and email addresses.</li> <li>● Explain which resources will and will not be provided.</li> <li>● Review procedures for fire drills and school crisis plans.</li> <li>● Explain how the special education referral and pre-referral process works.</li> </ul>			
Parents and Community	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain the importance of early home contact and assist the new teacher in thinking through how to establish positive partnerships with parents. (See pages 260-266 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn This in College?</i></b>)</li> <li>● Have the new teacher listen in on your parent phone calls.</li> <li>● Take on tour of community pointing out demographics and local institutions of note.</li> <li>● Discuss the importance of keeping parents informed about curriculum, course content, and important dates throughout the year.</li> <li>● Share newsletters and other modes of parent communication you and other teachers have found successful.</li> <li>● Explain how community resources including the school/business partner and other programs outside the school system can provide additional support to the school.</li> </ul>			

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Parents and Community	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Explain how email as well as classroom and school websites are used as communication tools.</li> <li>● Discuss Back-to-School Night outcomes, agenda, and presentation ideas. (See pages 267-268 in <b><i>Why Didn't I Learn this in College?</i></b>)</li> <li>● Organize a panel of teachers to share Back-to-School Night strategies.</li> </ul>			
Especially for Special Educators	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide an overview of the special education services offered in the school and in the district.</li> <li>● Explain the referral process and pre-referral process used in the district with details about how the process operates in the school.</li> <li>● Supply a list of key personnel at the school and district, their responsibilities, and contact information for each of them.</li> <li>● Explain and provide models of paperwork requirements, procedures, and time lines for child study, evaluations, and IEPs.</li> <li>● Coach the new teacher in the use of technology and software programs for IEP preparation.</li> <li>● Explain district policies about aligning IEP goals with district or state learning standards.</li> <li>● Model preparing an IEP.</li> <li>● Think aloud and model preparing paperwork for an IEP meeting.</li> </ul>			

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<b>Especially for Special Educators</b>	<b>Action to Take</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Model and/or co-facilitate an IEP meeting.</li> <li>● Discuss methods of documenting progress toward meeting IEP goals and grading policies and procedures for special education students.</li> <li>● Assist the new teacher in accessing general education curriculum materials including student texts and teacher's manuals.</li> <li>● Provide an inventory of supplies and instructional materials available in the department and explain the process for ordering additional supplies and instructional material.</li> <li>● Provide overview of alternative assessments available for students with special needs.</li> <li>● Discuss strategies for early contact with parents and suggest setting up introductory meetings to establish a positive context for future interactions.</li> <li>● Provide an overview of the norms and practices around curricular adaptations, inclusion, and co-teaching.</li> <li>● Assist the new teacher in reviewing his caseloads and reading IEPs.</li> <li>● Go over student performance on the previous year's standardized testing and discuss performance in relation to adequate yearly progress.</li> </ul>			

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Especially for Special Educators	Action to Take	Deadline	Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review accommodation forms and guide the new teacher in completing the forms.</li> <li>● Discuss with the new special education teacher the best way to introduce herself and her students to the general education teachers with whom they will be working.</li> <li>● Either provide or help the new teachers prepare a calendar of when IEPs and TRAs are due.</li> <li>● Discuss role of teaching assistant, one-on-one aides, and related service providers.</li> <li>● Check on the new teacher's experience with and skills for working with paraprofessionals and provide guidance as appropriate.</li> </ul>			