Arlington Educator Mentor/Mentee Handbook

Welcome To Arlington!

The Arlington Central School District and the Arlington Teachers' Association (ATA) have jointly established the **Arlington Educator Mentor Program.** The purpose of this program is to provide peer guidance and support to teachers in their first year of employment in Arlington. It is our collective view that a strong mentor-mentee partnership helps to ensure an instructional staff of the highest quality whose goal is to enhance student learning and achievement.

Every teacher new to Arlington is assigned a mentor. Additionally, please know that your principal and teacher colleagues stand ready and willing to support you as well. Your mentor should be viewed as a professional leader who will offer guidance and support throughout the year on all aspects of your teaching responsibilities, such as creating a supportive classroom environment, instruction, and engaging families.

The Arlington Educator Mentor Program Handbook has been developed to provide the teacher new to Arlington and their mentor with guidance and resources to support the mentee's first year in Arlington.

Sincerely,

Phil Benante   *Bob Maier*

Dr. Philip Benante   Robert Maier, President
Superintendent of Schools   Arlington Teachers' Association

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INTRODUCTION

In 1996, The Arlington Central School District and the Arlington Teachers' Association (ATA) jointly established the **Arlington Educator Mentor Program (formerly Teacher Mentor Program),** one of the first mentoring programs in the region**.** The district firmly believes that a highly qualified and well-supported educator is the cornerstone of a student's educational success.

The goals of the Arlington Educator Mentor Program are to:

- Help the educator new to Arlington begin to embody the District's mission, core values and culture
- Help the educator new to Arlington identify and utilize pedagogical approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment that support our collective culture and values
- Provide the educator new to Arlington a mentor who will share informal feedback about the mentee's pedagogy and practice
- Provide the opportunity for both the mentor and the mentee to reflect upon their pedagogical practices
- Provide an opportunity for the mentor and mentee to contribute to District and school building leadership teams in curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Provide mentees with information about District and building procedures and policies

The handbook is the product of the contributions of many teachers and administrators since 1996. It was first revised in 2006 and most recently in 2024 by the Arlington Educator Mentor Handbook Review Committee.

As Arlington continues its commitment to high academic standards, the nurturing and development of teachers new to Arlington are critical. Who better to provide this support than Arlington's veteran teachers who have made valuable contributions to generations of students?

HISTORY

The Arlington Educator Mentor Program began in 1996. It was a joint effort of the Arlington Teachers' Association (ATA) and the administration of the Arlington Central School District to meet the professional needs of teachers entering the District. An educator mentor pilot program was first established in 1994 at Arlington Middle School. Both the ATA and the administration believed the District would benefit from a program that provided both support to teachers new to the District and recognition to many of its outstanding veteran teachers. During the 2006-2007 school year a Mentor Study Group made further revisions to the Arlington Educator Mentor Program. These revisions reflected the updated December 15, 2022, New York State Education Department Commissioner's Regulations for Mentoring Standards[1].

DISTRICT MISSION

To empower all students to be self-directed, lifelong learners, who willingly contribute to their community, and lead passionate, purposeful lives.

Core Values:

- All people have inherent value.
- Lifelong learning is essential for growth.
- A community thrives when all members embrace their interdependence with compassion and empathy.
- Potential can only be attained through commitment, resilience, and high expectations.
- All people can learn.
- Change is essential for progress.
- All people are responsible for their choices and actions.

Strategies:

- Develop systems that are clear and consistently applied across the organization that promote interdependence, efficiency, and trust in order to support and contribute to our strategic

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[1] New York State Mentoring Standards

objectives and mission.

- Develop trusting, collaborative, interdependent relationships and empower all employees to understand, support, and contribute to our strategic objectives and mission.

Strategic Objectives:

- Each student will continually pursue new knowledge, deeper understanding, or skill in a topic of their interest.
- Each student will continually and willingly contribute to their community.
- Each student will demonstrate initiative, responsibility, and action toward a goal of their choosing.

Strategic Delimiters:

- Adopt any new program or service unless that is:
  - aligned with and contributes to our mission.
  - accompanied by the resources needed for its effective implementation.
- Do not allow past experience or tradition to prevent consideration of new ideas.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Mentor Selection and Professional Development

All tenured members of the Arlington faculty are eligible to serve as a mentor. Effective July 1, 2007, in the spring of each year the building principal, through written or oral communication, will solicit nominations/volunteers to be a mentor for the following school year. From the pool of volunteers, the principal will select and assign a mentor to any educator new to Arlington in their building. Along with the principal, the Assistant Superintendent for PPS or his/her designee will select and assign a mentor for PPS staff members. Once assigned, the mentor will complete the Mentor Prior Approval form found in Frontline Professional Growth.

The following characteristics will be sought in selecting a mentor:

- Mastery of pedagogical skills and knowledge of current curriculum, instruction, and assessment approaches
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Commitment to their own professional learning
- A willingness to participate in the program and to devote time to assist the educator new to the Arlington Central School District

Teachers desiring to serve as a mentor are required to:

- Receive approval from their building principal and complete the Mentor Prior Approval form
- Participate in a three (3) hour Mentor Training course (normally provided by DC BOCES) that will be offered on several occasions throughout the school year. Participation in the Mentor Training course will yield three (3) hours toward an in-service credit.
- Participate in one (1) one-hour Mentor Seminar course (normally provided by ACSD) during the school year when working with a new staff member.
- Complete monthly Mentor Logs. (Mentors are highly encouraged to meet on a regular basis)

Mentee Expectations:

- Complete monthly Mentee Logs. (Mentees are highly encouraged to meet with mentors on a regular basis)
- Attendance in new educator training meetings and professional learning conversations are highly encouraged. Registration is available in Frontline and staff will receive in-service credits.

Although the Arlington Educator Mentor Program is designed for a staff member in their first year in Arlington, circumstances may necessitate a mentor for someone in their second year[2]. There may be circumstances related to staff transfers to another building that warrant the assignment of a mentor. Such circumstances will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the building principal, the teacher, and the Human Resources Department.

Mentor/Mentee Log Requirements

During the school year, the mentor and mentee will each fill out a log in Frontline Professional Growth (links above). These logs should be submitted by the end of each month. The log should include topic(s) discussed. There is a separate log for the mentor and mentee (links above).

At the conclusion of the mentoring assignment, the mentor will certify that mentoring took place by marking the Mentor Prior Approval Form "complete". Following verification by the building principal, the mentor will be awarded up to two in-service credits (15 hours for a semester - 1 credit or 30 hours for a full year - 2 credits).

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[2] NYS Mentoring Requirement for Certification

MENTOR EXPECTATIONS AND ROLE

Clear guidelines not only provide structure but also foster mutual respect and understanding between mentors and mentees. By outlining expectations, both parties are empowered to maximize the benefits of the relationship. Mentors can effectively guide and support their mentees, while mentees can actively participate in their own growth and development.

The following describe the expectations and role of the mentor:

- Provide the mentee with guidance and support (for suggested topics see Appendix A)
- Establish a positive relationship that supports the self-reflection and professional growth of the mentee and helps them develop a repertoire of effective pedagogical strategies
- Maintain confidentiality of all discussions, observations and other contacts between the mentor and the mentee unless doing so puts staff/student well-being at risk
- Model core values, competence, and professionalism
- Demonstrate tolerance, patience, and sensitivity to the mentee's concerns
- Serve as an advocate and advisor
- Provide feedback to the mentee on strengths and areas for improvement in a confidential manner
- Determine the regularity of interactions, set-up the communication structure, and adjust interactions and communications as needed throughout the year.

Appendix A provides a detailed list of discussion points for the mentor and mentee. These points should guide mentor/mentee conversations over the course of the school year.

MENTEE EXPECTATIONS AND ROLE

The district's expectation is that all members of our community will foster the mission, goals, and core values outlined in our [K-12 Comprehensive Student Support Plan](). All educators new to Arlington will be expected to actively engage in conversations with their mentors, colleagues, and school and district administration in order to continue their professional development and educate themselves about the Arlington community. Within the Arlington Educator Mentor Program, the mentee has defined expectations and roles.

The following describe the expectations and role of the mentee:

- Gain personal and professional growth as an educator new to Arlington.
- Participate in the Arlington Educator Induction Program (formerly New Teacher Induction) prior to the start of the school year
- Participate in any additional district or building programs that specifically support staff new to Arlington
- Meet with the mentor on a daily basis to discuss all things related to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and building practices and procedures
- Remain in the Arlington Educator Mentor Program for the school year
- Be open to constructive feedback from the mentor, colleagues, and administrators
- Assume responsibility for the process of self-reflection to further one's growth
- Remain open-minded and self-reflective in evaluating one's development within their classroom, building and the district
- Maintain confidentiality in relationships with mentor, families, students, and colleagues
- Participate in the evaluation of the Arlington Educator Mentor Program
- Complete monthly [Mentee Logs](). (Mentees are highly encouraged to meet with mentors on a consistent basis)

Appendix A provides a detailed list of discussion points for the mentor and mentee. These points should guide mentor/mentee conversations over the course of the school year.

A Comment about Confidentiality for Mentor and Mentee

The first years of teaching can bring many challenges and concerns. Mentors are selected to offer assistance and guidance to allow for a smooth transition for the mentee. Mentors should act as stewards of best practice and be responsive to the needs of new hires.

The quality of the relationship that develops between the mentor and mentee is critical. An honest and confidential relationship between the mentor and mentee will support the mentee's growth most effectively. <u>This relationship is not to be used in the formal evaluation process.</u>

The mentee, in interacting with the mentor as well as all administrators, should not be concerned that sharing challenges will reflect inadequacy. The sharing of ideas, problems, feelings, and resources should be done in a safe collaborative environment in which the mentor, administrators, and mentee are working together to support student learning.

APPENDIX A

Discussion Points for the Mentor/Mentee

The timeline that follows is a suggested outline; discussion points and timing of such should be modified to accommodate individual needs.

<u>During the First Month of School</u>

- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CIA)
    - Provide and discuss any required textbooks or resources such as curriculum maps, online resources, and supplemental materials, as well as keys to classroom and storage areas
    - Provide an overview of the curriculum timeline for the year
    - Familiarize mentee with other staff who support their students (AIS, Special Areas, Guidance, Nurse, etc.) and the procedures for accessing that support
    - Familiarize mentee with Building Leaders, such as SYSOP/Tech Leader, Union Representatives, Equity Facilitators, Math Leaders, Literacy Leaders, etc.
    - Review requirements for student Individual Education Plan(s) (IEP's) and 504 Accommodation Plans
    - Discuss the mentee's lesson plans for the first week
    - Make sure mentee has access to all online accounts such as; Classlink, Frontline, SchoolTool, Performance Matters, ParentSquare, etc. and is made aware of relevant professional learning
    - Prepare introductory communications to students and families introducing the teacher and their goals for the class; this could include a welcome letter and preparations for curriculum nights and/or Open House

- Logistics and Procedures
    - Review the school building layout, time schedule, and school calendar
    - Review safety procedures including fire drills, lockdowns, emergency folders, etc.
    - Ensure that the mentee has obtained a District ID badge and room key
    - Provide and review mentee's daily schedule and student roster
    - Review the procedures for the copy machines, fax machine, accessing technology, etc.
    - Review supervisory duty responsibilities
    - Review homeroom/morning procedures such as breakfast/lunch, student attendance, etc.
    - Review procedures for sending students to the bathroom, health office, music lessons, etc.
    - Review the technological tools utilized in the performance of non-instructional duties (i.e., student attendance, requests for substitutes)

<u>Early and Throughout the School Year:</u>

- Curriculum and Assessment
    - Discuss local, state, and/or national standards
    - Discuss pedagogical approaches to be used (i.e., gradual release of instruction, project based learning, inquiry instruction, the 5E model, whole-class instruction)
    - Discuss approaches for supporting students who struggle (i.e., RtI, staying after school, differentiation, etc.)
    - Discuss strategies for a positive classroom environment
    - Model lessons and their development; provide feedback to the mentee through informal visits
    - Discuss district assessments (i.e., dates for administration)
    - Provide an overview of the assessment tools and models to be used (i.e., iReady, Fountas and Pinnell, district unit assessments, Performance Matters, formative assessments, etc.)
    - Review and analyze student assessment data from the prior year (i.e., iReady,, Fountas and Pinnell, state test data, etc.)
    - Discuss approaches for supporting positive family engagement (i.e. curriculum nights, parent teacher conferences, etc.)
    - Ensure that the curriculum is being followed and discuss upcoming units
    - Discuss the Danielson Framework in more depth as well as details on the APPR process - https://www.danielsongroup.org/framework/
    - Support the mentee through the evaluation process
    - Review the extracurricular opportunities for students and mentee
    - Provide an overview of the technological resources available for delivering instruction (i.e., Google Drive/Classroom), and communicating with students and families (i.e., ParentSquare, email, teacher web sites, voicemail)
    - Discuss best practices for grading policies and procedures
    - Discuss approaches to homework
    - Provide an overview of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model in the building
    - Provide an overview of the building's approach to culture and behavior management, such as Responsive Classroom or Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
    - Provide an overview of library services and resources for students and staff (SORA)

- Logistics and Procedures

    - Discuss policies and procedures regarding sick and personal leave days
    - Discuss policies and procedures for field trips and Arts in Ed residencies
    - Discuss procedures for use of Frontline applications (AESOP, PG, etc.)
    - Review process and due dates for progress reports and report cards
    - Review expectations for faculty meetings and before/after school meetings
    - Review the Employee handbook, Code of Conduct, and Teacher Contract

- ○ Review Grade Level and Building Assembly procedures
- ○ Help with budget preparation for next year's classroom supplies
- ○ Review emergency days, early dismissal, and delayed opening notifications and procedures
- ○ Review the [New York State Education Department Office of Teaching Initiatives](#) web site for registration and Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) requirements
- ○ Review the ACSD [CTLE](#) and [In-Service](#) Guidance documents
- ○ Review the need to maintain proper certification status and contact information of staff in the Human Resources Department to navigate certification requirements prior to expiration
- ○ Review the [Arlington Bias Incident Response Handbook](#) and [One Sheet](#)

Prior to the End of the School Year:

- ● Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  - ○ Review final assessment procedures

- ● Logistics and Procedures
  - ○ Review end-of-year procedures for the classroom and building
  - ○ Review Frontline Professional Growth for items that need to be Finalized, Acknowledged, or Completed.
  - ○ Record any related CTLE activities such as Superintendent Conference Days, Faculty Meetings, and PLC meetings in Frontline Professional Growth

APPENDIX B

Suggestions for the Classroom Environment

Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport:

- Ensure that bulletin boards, visual displays, and student materials reflect the diversity of the district
- Greet your students as they enter your classroom
- Learn students' names, interests, backgrounds, and individual needs promptly and make appropriate accommodations
- Address student responses in a culturally appropriate manner with respect and dignity
- Model respect for all students and set expectations for all students to demonstrate respect for one other
- Learn about and implement building level positive behavior intervention strategies when applicable.

Establishing a Culture for Learning:

- Set high expectations for students and yourself
- Convey to students the belief they can meet high expectations and show your support for them
- Set up positive classroom structures that allow for peer feedback and collaboration
- Foster a growth mindset with your students

Managing Classroom Procedures:

- Determine developmentally- and age-appropriate classroom procedures
- Demonstrate consistency with classroom procedures
- Involve students in the determining of and managing of classroom procedures
- Outline classroom routines early in the year, and reinforce them frequently

Managing Student Behavior:

- Set clear expectations for positive, appropriate behavior; involve students in the development of standards of conduct

- Monitor student behavior and respond appropriately and consistently

- Respect the dignity of the student and respond to individual problems privately

- Be mindful of your body language and the manner in which you communicate

- Help students understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behavior

- Discuss students with your mentor, principal, guidance counselor, and/or social worker

- Establish parent and family engagement

Organizing Physical Space:

- Arrange room to reflect the needs of the students

- Arrange seating in a way that is safe and accessible for all students

- Store books and supplies so they are easily accessible

- Involve students in the organization and management of the classroom

* These suggestions in Appendix B align to Danielson Domain 2.

APPENDIX C

Suggestions for Instruction

Communicating with Students:
- Connect the lesson to student interests and to prior or future lessons
- Make sure that directions to students are clear and provide differentiation
- Ensure that students know why they are learning what they are learning
- Provide opportunities for students to communicate with each other

Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques:
- Use a hierarchy of questioning techniques (Bloom's Taxonomy)
- Provide opportunities for students to explore and discuss various topics

Engaging Students in Learning:
- Ensure that the learning tasks are aligned to the district's curriculum maps
- Provide scaffolding and extension opportunities for students as needed
- Incorporate opportunities for students to engage in inquiry learning, such as project-based learning, the 5E instructional model, or problem-based learning
- Provide students the opportunity to interact with each other
- Provide students the opportunity to reflect on their learning

Using Assessment in Instruction:
- Develop strategies for both formative and summative assessment
- Utilize information from assessments to plan future instruction
- Provide opportunities for students to self-assess

Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness:
- Develop a good "tool box" for student supports; if a student does not understand one instructional strategy, find another; talk to colleagues for additional ideas (Intervention Central)
- Seize a "teachable moment" when a student raises a question or shares an idea that would deepen the class discussion, even if it was not in your original plans

* The suggestions in Appendix C align to Danielson Domain 3.

APPENDIX D

Suggestions for Family Engagement

Recommendations to Foster Family Engagement:

- View families as partners in their child's education
- Use weekly newsletters, email blasts, etc. to share information about your instructional program
- Communicate frequently regarding student progress, both positive and negative
- Families should be informed of their child's journey frequently throughout the year
- Learn about and establish a culturally responsive and reflective learning environment for all students.
- Consider participating in your school's PTA