



Plan Approval and the Local Board of Education

State regulations for mentoring: requirements established in New Jersey code that require districts to implement a rigorous one-year mentoring program for all novice teachers. (<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/code/title6a/chap9/index.html#8>)

Quality Assurance Annual Report (QAAR): an annual report submitted to the Department of Education by the district board of education which includes an evaluation of the implementation and impact of the local mentoring plan.



Key Resources

- Graphic for District Mentoring Plan Development and Approval Process (R 1)
- Graphic for Timeline of District Mentoring Plan Development and Approval Process (R2)
- District Mentoring Plan Checklist (R3)
- Rubric for Assessment of a District/School Mentoring Plan (R4)
- Mentoring for Quality Induction Program Checklist (R5)
- Sample Table of Contents for District Mentoring Plan (R6)
- District Profile Sheet (R7)
- LPDC Signoff Sheet (R8)
- District Board of Education Approval Form (R9)
- District Board of Education Approval Notification (R10)
- New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers Awareness Activity (R11)
- New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers (R12)

State Regulations Governing the District Mentoring Plan

State regulations require the following components be included in the mentoring plan (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9-8.4(c) 1*):

- Goals that, at a minimum, enhance teacher knowledge of and strategies related to the Curriculum Core Content Standards (CCCS) in order to: facilitate student achievement; identify exemplary teaching skills and educational practices necessary to acquire and maintain excellence in teaching; and assist novice teachers in the performance of their duties and adjustment to the challenges of teaching;
- An application process for selecting mentor teachers;
- Criteria for mentor teacher selection;
- Provisions for comprehensive mentor training;
- Identification of mentor teacher responsibilities;
- Logistics for mentoring plan implementation;
- Consideration of collaborative arrangements with colleges and universities; and
- Provisions for the use of state funds.



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To the Board of Education: Before You Begin

Since 2000, local professional development committees have had the responsibility for planning and implementing district professional development for teachers and for submitting those plans both to county level review boards and to district boards of education. This experience makes LPDCs the ideal group to focus on the specialized professional development needs of novice teachers. Take a moment to review the graphic for plan development (R1) to see how all the component parts fit together to create a support system that will aid novice teachers in assuming their professional responsibilities.

Mentoring plans must align with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers. In order to enhance your ability to review your plan in light of these standards that underlie what New Jersey expects teachers to know and be able to do, please take the time to work through the standards alignment activity (R11 and 12) as a group. Doing so will make your review more effective and will serve to clarify your own understanding of the standards and their role in supporting teacher focus on those things that will enhance professional practice and support student achievement.

Beyond reviewing and approving the local mentoring plan, the board of education has a vital role in the success of the Mentoring for Quality Induction program within the district. Members of the board of education can further support their district's efforts to create a strong induction program by:

- Welcoming novice teachers and verbally supporting the mentoring program;
- Advocating for the mentoring program because it is good for the students, school, district, and community;
- Maintaining open communication about the mentoring program with teachers, parents, and community; and
- Facilitating ongoing program evaluation.

The Components of the District Mentoring Plan

The Department of Education recommends the following components (Figure 1) for developing the district mentoring plan. Boards of education can expect to see these components in the plan submitted by the LPDC. The sections checked at left are required by the state regulations governing mentoring. They are aligned with the approval criteria for beginning plans in the Rubric for Assessment of a District/School Mentoring Plan (R4).

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Figure 1. Key Components of District Mentoring Plan

Regulations	Components of District Mentoring Plan
	Section 1: District Profile
	Section 2: Needs Assessment
✓	Section 3: Vision and Goals
✓	Section 4: Mentor Selection
✓	Section 5: Roles and Responsibilities for Mentors
✓	Section 6: Professional Learning Components for Mentors
✓	Section 7: Professional Learning Components for Novice Teachers
✓	Section 8: Action Plan for Implementation
	Section 9: Resource Options Used
✓	Section 10: Funding Resources
✓	Section 11: Program Evaluation

Section 1: District Profile

This section includes basic demographic information about the district (district profile sheet), LPDC signoff sheet, and local board of education approval form.

Section 2: Needs Assessment

This section includes a current needs assessment of the mentoring for quality induction program. The needs assessment should include data on mentors and novice teachers, training components of the current mentoring program, and identified needs of the mentoring program. The needs assessment should establish priorities which align with state regulations for mentoring and the district goals.

Section 3: Vision and Goals

This section includes a vision statement for the district mentoring for quality induction program. The goals for the mentoring plan must align with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers and state regulations. At a minimum, the goals must: enhance teacher knowledge of and strategies related to the CCCS in order to facilitate student achievement; identify exemplary teaching skills and educational practices necessary to acquire and maintain excellence in teaching; and assist novice teachers in the performance of their duties and adjustment to the challenges of teaching.

Section 4: Mentor Selection

This section includes the application process and criteria for selection of mentors in alignment with the state regulations for mentoring. Minimum criteria include selection of a certified teacher with at least three years of experience, commitment to the goals of the mentoring plan, agreement to maintain confidentiality of the mentor-novice teacher relationship, demonstration of exemplary content knowledge and pedagogy, and a match to the subject area of the novice teacher, if possible.



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Section 5: Roles and Responsibilities for Mentors

This section identifies the roles and responsibilities of the mentors, as they provide support and guidance to novice teachers.

The LPDC may wish to include roles and responsibilities of other involved stakeholders (e.g., novice teachers, school leaders, program coordinator, the local association).

Section 6: Professional Learning Components for Mentors

This section includes the professional learning components the district will use to train and support mentors. The district must ensure that these components are aligned with New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, NCLB professional development requirements, and the New Jersey Professional Development Standards. Training components could include: roles and responsibilities; transition to mentoring; communication and building trust; mentoring challenges; adult learning theory; questioning techniques; using standards-based formative assessments; classroom visitations; collegial coaching; designing professional growth activities; and ongoing networking for mentors.

Note: Section 6 should be referenced in the district's local professional development plan.

Section 7: Professional Learning Components for Novice Teachers

This section includes the professional learning components the district will use to provide novice teachers with rigorous mentoring to impact teacher effectiveness and student learning. The district must ensure that these components are aligned with the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers, NCLB professional requirements, and the New Jersey Professional Development Standards. Training components could include: new teacher orientation; understanding and applying the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers; working with a mentor; classroom and behavior management; meeting the needs of diverse students; lesson planning; and designing professional goals.

Note: Section 7 should be referenced in the district's local professional development plan.

Section 8: Action Plan for Implementation

This section includes the steps to develop an action plan for implementation of the district mentoring plan. Resources for action planning include: listing goals and expected outcomes; procedures for mentor selection; professional learning activities for mentors and novice teachers; and the timeline for development, approval, implementation; and evaluation of the program components.

Section 9: Resource Options Used

This section includes the district resources that will be used to support the implementation of the mentoring plan (*i.e.*, release time for classroom visitations, video resources, published resources, substitute coverage, training providers, *etc.*).



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Section 10: Funding Resources

This section includes the funding as outlined in state regulations and additional funding options available within the district, from the state, or through grants. District funds might be used for additional professional learning and training materials (*e.g.*, books, videos, printing, *etc.*), additional stipends, and salary for a program coordinator.

Section 11: Program Evaluation

This section includes resources for planning the program evaluation required in state regulations. The purpose of program evaluation is to support program improvement, as well as to ensure accountability for resources. By building in a plan for evaluation at the outset, districts will be able to gather and analyze data to support program refinements as well as to meet state reporting obligations. Resources for program evaluation include types of evaluations, sample evaluation questions, and methods for data collection and analysis. State reporting requirements are included in Folder Three.

The Approval Process for the District Mentoring Plan

The approval process is intended to ensure that the district mentoring plan is aligned with the state regulations and the New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers.

The regulations require:

- All provisional teachers receive a mentor upon hire;
- All provisional teachers receive a rigorous mentoring program; and
- All mentors are selected through an application process and receive a comprehensive training program.

The Rubric for Assessment of a District/School Mentoring Plan (R4) provides a clear picture of the minimum requirements for all district mentoring plans. Boards should ensure that the plan they review meets, at a minimum, all the criteria for a beginning plan. Failure to satisfy the criteria for a beginning plan should result in rejection of the plan, returning it to the LPDC for revision. Three additional benchmarks on the rubric (developing, established, sustaining) show increasing levels of depth, sophistication and quality in district mentoring programs, and reflect best practices in mentoring and induction. Boards of education should encourage growth over time in district mentoring plans and the rubric provides a means of recognizing those enhancements to the program.

Boards may find district mentoring plans have sections that can be rated at various levels on the rubric. Please note that no section that falls below the beginning level can be approved. The District Board of Education Approval Form (R9) provides the place for the board of education to comment on its review of the district mentoring plan. Comments may highlight noteworthy plan elements or provide suggestions for improvement. Plans that are rejected as not meeting minimum state criteria for a district mentoring plan should be returned with comments that will give specific guidance to the LPDC in revising its plan to meet the required standard.



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District Plan Approval Timeline

The deadline for submission of the 2005-2006 mentoring plan will be **September 2005**.

- The LPDC must submit the local mentoring plan to the district board of education by **September 1, 2005**.
- After review and approval, the district board of education must submit the approved mentoring plan to the county superintendent by **September 30, 2005**.
- The county superintendent must certify receipt of approved plans to the Commissioner by **October 15, 2005**.

Updated information about timelines can be accessed through the Department of Education (DOE) web site at <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/mentor/>.

Building Support and Understanding for the District Mentoring Plan

About 25% of new teachers leave the profession within the first year and about 30% leave within the first five years. These percentages are even higher (about 50%) in urban areas. (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, 2000).

Why is it Important for a District to have a Mentoring Program?

Mentoring for quality induction programs saves districts' resources. Due to the high turnover rate, some states are using induction programs to help provisional teachers, from either traditional or alternative preparation programs, make a successful transition into the classroom and teaching profession. Novice teachers who are involved in mentoring for quality induction programs are more likely to stay in the teaching profession and move beyond the initial survival issues to teacher competency as defined by teaching standards (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996, 2000).

Why is it Important for the Board of Education to Support a Mentoring Program?

Mentoring is a critical component of induction. Effective induction programs:

- Promote universal participation for new teachers from both traditional and alternative preparation programs;
- Use experienced teachers as mentors;
- Include mentor preparation;
- Facilitate release time or reduce teaching loads for beginning teachers and mentors;
- Have earmarked funding;
- Are based on clear standards;
- Are structured and defined by input from beginning and veteran teachers;
- Assess beginning teachers' performance;



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- Have a subject-specific focus;
- Extend throughout the school year and beyond the first year of teaching; and
- Provide teachers with working conditions – including placement in subjects that they are qualified to teach, placement with students who are not the most challenging, opportunities to participate in targeted professional development, and opportunities to observe and be observed by veteran teachers – that enable them to focus on strengthening their teaching skills (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Issue Brief, Jan. 9, 2002, pp. 3-4).

What are Some Key Readings to Support the Local Board of Education in Gaining More Knowledge About Mentoring and Induction?

Articles to assist the local board of education in clarifying and supporting the latest research on mentoring and induction include:

- Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). (November, 2000). *Mentoring beginning teachers: Lessons from the experience in Texas*. Retrieved from <http://www.sedl.org/pubs/policy23/welcom.html>.
- Alliance for Excellence Education. *Tapping the potential: Retaining and developing high-quality new teachers*. Retrieved from <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/TappingThePotential/ExecutiveSummary.html>.
- Public Education Network (PEN). (Fall 2003). *The voice of the new teacher*. Retrieved from <http://www.publiceducation.org/PENreports.asp>.



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References

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1996, 2000). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future*. New York: NY: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Retrieved from http://www.glef.org/php/orgs.php?id=ORG_306335.

NGA Center for Best Practices. (Jan. 9, 2002). Mentoring and supporting new teachers. *Issue Brief*. Retrieved from <http://www.nga.org/center/1,1188,,00.html>.

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Key Resources

- F7-R1 Graphic for District Mentoring Plan Development and Approval Process
- F7-R2 Graphic for Timeline of District Mentoring Plan Development and Approval Process
- F7-R3 District Mentoring Plan Checklist
- F7-R4 Rubric for Assessment of a District/School Mentoring Plan
- F7-R5 Mentoring for Quality Induction Program Checklist
- F7-R6 Sample Table of Contents for District Mentoring Plan
- F7-R7 District Profile Sheet
- F7-R8 LPDC Signoff Sheet
- F7-R9 District Board of Education Approval Form
- F7-R10 District Board of Education Approval Notification
- F7-R11 New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers Awareness Activity
- F7-R12 New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers