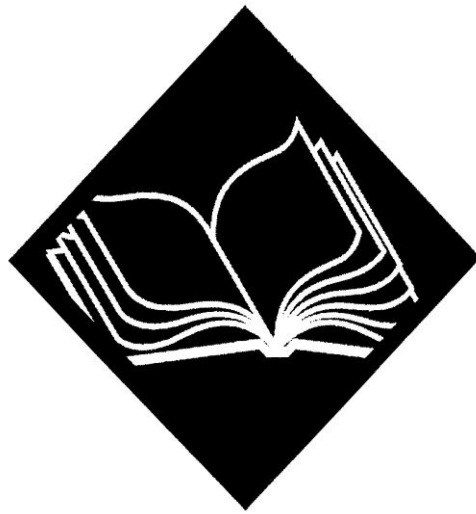


NIAGARA FALLS CITY SCHOOL  
DISTRICT

# MENTOR PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK



CYNTHIA A. BIANCO  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
REVISED 9/2015

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# MENTOR TEACHER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Dear Mentor Program Participant:

The Niagara Falls City School District's Mentor Program is designed to support all teachers in their first three years of teaching by pairing them with an experienced veteran teacher in their subject area and/or grade level. In addition, we offer mentoring to experienced teachers who change certification area or building level, as well our District Substitutes (Initial Teaching Certificate holders). Mentor and intern pairs are expected to collaborate in a professional, confidential manner with the expectation of achieving the highest quality teaching, thereby resulting in maximum student achievement.

In addition to an individual mentor or a building level mentor, each school building offers Instructional Specialists or "Coaches" to assist all staff in the successful implementation of District Initiatives. Substitute release days are available to interns and mentors for a variety of professional development activities, including work with your Mentor or Coaches as appropriate. Please refer to your handbook for additional suggestions on the uses of release time and the procedure for requesting these days.

For additional information, the Teacher Mentor Program web page can be accessed through the school district's website at [www.nfschools.net](http://www.nfschools.net) under the "Staff" heading. At the site, you will find program information, notices, links to valuable new Teacher/Counselor resources and access to all forms. I am pleased to work with you and look forward to both a great year and a great start to a long and productive career in teaching. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding the Mentor Program.

Sincerely,

The Mentor Program Advisory Board and Selection Committee

Kathy Urban  
Mentor Program Coordinator  
Gaskill Prep  
716-278-5820  
KUrban@nfschools.net

## MTIP ADVISORY BOARD AND SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Cynthia Bianco, Superintendent of Schools

Mark Laurrie, Deputy Superintendent of Schools

Richard Carella, Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction

Maria Massaro, Administrator for Human Resources

Marcus Latham, NFT Union President

Mary Kerins, Administrator

Joanna Antonacci, Teacher

Chris Calarco, Teacher

Tina Ligammare, Teacher

Karen Waugaman, Teacher

Amanda Molnar, Teacher

Laurie Mettler, Teacher

Susan Rhodenizer, Teacher Resource Center Director

Kathy Urban, Mentor Program Coordinator

## MENTOR PROGRAM HISTORY

The History of the Mentor Teacher Internship Program as practiced in Niagara Falls has spanned twenty-three years and has assisted over 1,500 teachers in entering and remaining in the teaching profession. The Mentor Program was established as part of the Niagara Falls Teacher Resource Center created in 1987. We are a part of the Far West Regional Network of New York State Teacher Centers.

Long before the New York State's Department of Education mandate for Mentor Programs, the Niagara Falls Board of Education supported the program's continuation and expansion. From its beginning, the Niagara Falls Mentor Program Advisory Board and Selection Committee, the governing body of this program, has consisted of a majority of teachers appointed by the bargaining unit plus administrators on the school and District levels. This committee continues to review and evaluate the program, making adjustments, and responding to needs as identified.

Our Mentor Program transfers the task of orienting new teachers to the experienced members of the faculty to ease the transition from college to the "real world" of the teaching profession. Pairing new teachers with veterans in the same subject area, grade level, and building, helps to ensure that Interns receive the most relevant mentoring experience.

While the fundamental goal of the program is to attract, retain, and train the highest quality teachers, we have found that the benefits to the teacher, student, and school community are numerous. The Mentor Program promotes a sense of collegiality and unity among all faculty members, reduces the traditionally viewed isolation of a classroom teacher, and stimulates reflective practice, not only among those new to the profession, but also among experienced staff members. Ultimately, the benefactors of this collaboration are the students of this community due to the positive impact on students' learning and achievement.

The Mentor Program is designed and determined to positively impact professional development for new and veteran teachers in the Niagara Falls School District.

## STRATEGIC GOALS OF THE MENTOR PROGRAM

All Mentor Program goals lead back to the NFCSD mission of continuous improvement of instruction and the creation of world class educational facilities for our students, teachers, and the surrounding community. In addition, the Mentor Program seeks to:

- Attract and retain the most knowledgeable and highly qualified professional teachers by addressing concerns and overcoming challenges common to beginning teachers. Research shows that the one consistent factor in determining student success is teacher quality.
- Provide new teachers with easily accessible instructional and interpersonal support in a professional, collegial, and non-judgmental manner.
- Develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are vital to one's successful personal and professional development as a teacher.
- Offer an opportunity for new and experienced teachers to analyze and reflect upon their teaching together and thus, build a foundation for the continued study of effective teaching strategies.
- Enable individuals to seek out those opportunities for professional collaboration which will result in effective classroom practices and positive interpersonal relations.
- Meet and exceed State and Local academic standards and focus on continuous improvement of learner outcomes.
- Furnish an opportunity for experienced mentors to be reenergized through their professional interactions and hand down to their successors the knowledge gained through their many years of experience.
- Achieve the highest level of employee trust, cooperation, and empowerment.

## MENTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Mentor Teachers must:

- Have tenured appointments.
- Hold a valid Permanent or Professional Teaching Certificate in the same certification area as the Intern.
- Have completed a minimum of five (5) years of teaching experience in the school district (probationary period plus two years beyond).
- Demonstrate mastery of pedagogical and subject matter skills.
- Demonstrate evidence of superior teaching, communication, and organization skills.

Mentor-Intern Pairs are created based upon:

- Certification Area
- Grade Level/Subject
- Building Location/ Proximity
- Building Principal input/ recommendations
- The review and approval of applications and pairings by the Mentor Advisory Board Selection Committee

## ROLE OF THE MENTOR

The Mentor:

- Serves as a non-evaluative guide, support person, counselor, friend, model, advocate, and colleague who attempts to initiate the newcomer into the teaching profession in a professional and caring manner. Mentors *do not* formally evaluate the intern in an administrative capacity.
- Assists in helping the intern reflect upon his/her own practices including: the implementation of District Initiatives, effective teaching and classroom management, appraisal of student progress, interaction with parents and community members, and motivation of a diverse population of students.
- Works with the intern to clarify what, when, and how to teach and to reflect upon those decisions and develop and carry out alternatives that build upon previous successes.
- Shares successful teaching strategies through regularly scheduled participation in co-observations and constructive feedback.
- Creates situations that will offer the new teacher non-threatening opportunities to exchange ideas. It is this foundation that will aid in the

continuous improvement that will be the cornerstone of the relationship, which will result in positive professional growth.

- Maintains complete confidentiality with regard to mentor-intern interaction.
- Agrees to spend and document the requisite number of hours to fulfill the mentoring responsibility.
- Attends the mandated six-hour Mentor Training Course (for first time mentors). This session may be used to fulfill the six-hour Personal Professional Development (PPD) commitment or it may be used for TRC clock hours.

## MENTOR TRAINING

The MTIP Advisory Board and Selection Committee have mandated a 6-hour minimum training requirement for participation in the NFCSD Mentor Teacher Internship Program as a Mentor.

Features of the training include step-by-step guidance for mentoring novice teachers including clear coverage of rules, roles, relationships, responsibilities, and procedures associated with the MTIP. Information on observation and feedback, planning and collaboration, professional growth and development, as well as reflective role-play exercises for Mentor and Intern will be presented.

A variety of additional course offerings and professional development opportunities are offered through the Teacher Resource Center and at the building level to support and promote effective mentoring.

## INTERN QUALIFICATIONS

Intern teachers must meet one of the following criteria:

- Be in their first three years of teaching in the Niagara Falls City School District.
- Be a veteran teacher who has changed Certification Area, Tenure Area and/or Building Level. The Committee *may* approve one additional year of mentoring for 30 clock hours total.
- Is an Initial Certificate holder employed as a District Substitute who is in need of the one-year mentoring requirement for NYS Professional Certification.
- And lastly-- the Intern must agree to articulate their needs and questions to their Mentor or Building Administrator(s) so that their concerns may be addressed.



## ROLE OF THE INTERN

The Intern Teacher will:

- Seek guidance and support from their Mentor in the following areas:
  - A. Federal/State Regulations or Standards
  - B. NFCSD Goals, Policies, Procedures
  - C. Building Expectations, Policies, Procedures
    1. Content Knowledge
    2. Preparation/Pedagogy
    3. Instructional Delivery
    4. Classroom Management
    5. Student Development
    6. Student Assessment
    7. Collaboration
    8. Reflective Practice

## PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS FOR MENTORS AND INTERNS

- Mentors and Interns must participate willingly and in a professional, collegial fashion with a focus on professional growth.
- The Mentor/Intern teams are expected to conference on their own time (before and after school, lunch time, prep, etc.) to collaborate and discuss issues and topics related to your professional growth.
- Mentors and Interns are expected to meet the requisite number of hours using the following guidelines:

Year 1: 2 hours per week

Year 2: 1.5 hours per week

Year 3: 1 hour per week

Year 3+: 1 hour per week

Mentoring for one-year mentoring requirement for NYS Certification:  
30 hours over at least two semesters. (~one hour per week)

- Mentors and Interns must document their work via monthly calendars, needs assessments, lesson or unit plans, final program evaluation surveys, and regular interaction with the Mentor Coordinator.
- Meetings and activities are to be recorded on given Mentoring Calendars together and **ONE** copy is to be forwarded to the Mentor Coordinator at Niagara Street School.
- Data from the calendars and surveys are then utilized to inform the training and professional development needs of participants.
- Interns are asked to keep a log of their activities for future reference and reflection and to document the essential components of the program.
- Trust and Confidentiality are key components of this program and it is stressed that every effort be made by all participants to respect this privileged relationship.
- Should you be unable to complete your commitment to the program, please contact the Mentor Coordinator as soon as possible so that alternate arrangements may be made.

## MONTHLY MENTORING CALENDARS

Monthly Calendars are utilized to document participant collaboration time. It is recommended that participants review the checklists provided in the back of this Handbook for discussion topics, as well.

In addition, participants are asked to please write “RT” on the days you utilize Release Time to collaborate, plan, or attend professional conferences, workshops and trainings.

Please utilize the following letter or number codes to indicate the topics discussed during your mentoring hours and the amount of time spent at each meeting. You are not limited to these topics and may add others if you wish by writing them in on your calendar.

- A. Federal/State Regulations or Standards
- B. NFCSD Goals, Policies, Procedures
- C. Building Expectations, Policies, Procedures
- 1. Content Knowledge
- 2. Preparation/Pedagogy
- 3. Instructional Delivery
- 4. Classroom Management
- 5. Student Development
- 6. Student Assessment
- 7. Collaboration
- 8. Reflective Practice

Please submit one copy per pair of the monthly calendar via inter-office mail to Kathy Urban, Mentor Program Coordinator at Niagara Street School.

## NO-FAULT CHANGES

Should there be a need to reassign the “pairs” due to any number of factors (change in assignment, personality conflict, etc.) it is done so with the input of the participants themselves and with no penalty. In addition, “Replacement mentors” are utilized when circumstances dictate a Mentor’s leave of absence.

Participants should notify the Mentor Program Coordinator as soon as any concerns arise or if there is a need for a change in pairing. Every effort will be made to accommodate requests in an appropriate and timely manner.

## SUBSTITUTE RELEASE TIME FOR FIRST YEAR PARTICIPANTS

Release Time is available for first year teachers and their mentors to plan, collaborate, observe, offer feedback, model, review and gather content area resources, research "best" teaching practices, incorporate technology, or attend relevant workshops.

Substitutes are provided so that sound instruction may continue in the classroom, while teachers are relieved from their instructional load. This flexibility allows the above mentioned collaboration to take place in a way that best meets the needs of individual teachers and students.

Upon completion of Release Time activities, teachers are asked to complete and submit the Release Time Feedback Form found in the Forms section of this website.

Sample Activities for Release Time may include:

- Observing each other (or other veteran teachers) with follow-up conferencing to provide feedback.
- Jointly planning and/or assessing student learning needs or teacher instructional or resource needs.
- Conferencing, collaborating and learning from each other.
- Gathering of resources and preparation of materials for instructional purposes.
- Reviewing available Professional Development resources for improved classroom management, effective teaching techniques, methods of discipline, and/or subject matter related to classroom instruction.
- Attending appropriate workshops, webinars, training, or conferences (with Administrator's permission if on school time or if funding is required).
- Collaboration with Instructional Coaching staff members.

## COMPENSATION

Compensation for each Mentor and Intern will consist of clock hours granted by the Teacher Resource Center under the following guidelines:

- 30 clock hours per semester (60 hours per year) for working with the first year intern. Mentors and interns are expected to work together two hours per week.
- 20 clock hours per semester (40 hours per year), for working with a second year interns. Mentors and interns are expected to work together one and one half hours per week.
- 15 clock hours per semester (30 hours per year) for working with a third year or Year 3+ intern. Mentors and interns are expected to work together one hour per week.
- **NFSTU Members (SOSA/BBS):** ~1 hour per week for a total of 30 hours with Building Level Mentor over 2 semesters. These hours will meet the NYS one-year Mentoring Requirement for Professional Certification and may NOT be utilized for clock hours, salary differential requests or other compensation. There is no compensation for substitutes who are Initial certificate holders seeking the meet the one year Mentoring Requirement outside of the formal one-on-one Mentor Program.

## MENTOR PROGRAM CONFIDENTIALITY GUIDELINES

The Mentor Teacher Internship Program is designed to provide Interns with guidance and support in a non-evaluative, professional, collegial and **confidential** manner. NYSED's Office of Teaching Initiatives lists the following ways the interactions of Mentors and Interns should be protected:

- ❑ All participants in the Mentor Program are instructed to maintain complete confidentiality concerning Mentor/Intern interactions. When assistance is required, they are instructed to speak to the Mentor Coordinator or a designated member of the MTIP Policy Board.
- ❑ Mentors are advised through training that it is unethical to discuss an Intern with any administrator without the express prior approval of the Intern.
- ❑ Material relating to the Mentor Program should **not** be utilized for purposes of evaluation, other than noting the fact that the Mentor and Intern were participants.

Through support of these guidelines, Interns are assured that they have a confidential and supportive place to grow as professional teachers. If you have any questions or concerns about the Mentor Program or its participants, please feel free to contact Tom Fisher, Mentor Coordinator, at x64259 or via 286-4259.

### TRUST IS A KEY FACTOR IN ANY SUCCESSFUL MENTORING RELATIONSHIP

- Mentors must create the situations that will offer the new teacher non-threatening opportunities to exchange ideas and facts about what the mentor program's goals are and how it will affect the relationship between mentor and intern.
- It is this foundation that will aid in the continuous improvement that will be the cornerstone of the relationship, which will result in positive professional growth.

## PEER COACHING, NOT PEER- EVALUATION

- Mentors will have completed the Mentor Training Course and additional workshops such as, peer coaching will be offered through the TRC to aid the mentors throughout the year.
- The mentor does not formally evaluate the intern in an administrative capacity. However, observations should take place to provide constructive feedback for improvement.

## MENTOR PROGRAM DISCUSSION CHECKLISTS

Checklists are provided in this booklet for use by mentor Program participants as a guide for the topics of discussion during regular meetings. These lists are by no means expected to limit the topics of conversation, but simply used as a starting point to ensure coverage of relevant information.

Certainly, topics listed in a particular semester may be discussed at any point during the school year or revisited on an as needed basis.

Please refer to the following checklists located in the remaining pages of this booklet:

- **OPENING OF SCHOOLS**
- **FALL SEMESTER**
- **SPRING SEMESTER**

## NFCSD MENTOR PROGRAM CHECKLIST: OPENING OF SCHOOL

### Building/Supply needs

- Keys/prox cards/parking/Entry door/Sign-In Procedures
- Where supplies stored/ what is available
- Locked storage for valuables
- SSS supplies/ budget
- Resources and Equipment
- AV location and checkout procedures, Tech Associate Location, Helpdesk
- Introduction to AV / Tech person in building
- Copy Machine location /use
- Downtown Copy room use

### Professional Development

- Mentoring
- Teacher Resource Center services
- 6 hour PPD Requirement and On-Line PD Form access via HRO webpage
- Technology Resources- NY Learns Curriculum Matrices and Pacing
- Teacher Webpage Creation and Resources
- The TEMPS (Technology Mentors)
- Technology Integrator(s)
- PD Tuesday And Professional Development Calendar
- Teacher Certification Requirements and Assistance
- Assist with Interactive White Board set-up/usage

### District information

- District/Building Goals, Policies, Procedures
- Tour of Building/district/community/website
- Pay procedures, Pay periods
- Credit Union Information- CEC
- Health care benefits information
- Salary Schedule
- Human Resources Forms
- Teacher attendance
- Call-in procedures – AESOP System- need log-in and password from HRO
- Preparation of a substitute folder/ Emergency lesson plan
- Personal Professional Development (PPD)
- Personal Day Requests
- Leave procedures (Maternity, Sabbatical, Personal, etc.)
- District demographic information
- School closing procedures
- Teachers Union- Niagara Falls Teachers, Officers



- ❑ Copy of NFCSD/NFT negotiated contract
- ❑ Building Committee members and Building Reps
- ❑ District Policies and Programs: Response to Intervention, Primary Enrichment Program (PEP), etc. as applicable to your grade level, subject area, etc.

#### Building/ School Information

- ❑ Introductions to building administrators, expectations
- ❑ Staff introductions/ staff lists/phone trees
- ❑ Specialists within building: custodial staff, classified staff, Instructional coaches, counselors, psychologists, etc.
- ❑ Emergency procedures
- ❑ Evacuation/Lockdown drills, Fire drills, etc.
- ❑ Student attendance and record keeping responsibilities- PowerSchool
- ❑ Lunch routine
- ❑ Forms for lunch card/ lunch money procedures
- ❑ School visitors/ sign in procedures
- ❑ School volunteers/procedures- no child left unsupervised!
- ❑ Guidelines for guest speakers
- ❑ Use of school phone
- ❑ Playground rules/equipment
- ❑ Parking lot/location/ policies
- ❑ Hang tags
- ❑ Schedules
- ❑ School/class/grade/team schedule
- ❑ Library use
- ❑ School calendar/key events
- ❑ School board meetings
- ❑ Record keeping
- ❑ Organization of student grades/attendance
- ❑ Lesson plan procedures/ expectations
- ❑ Discipline policies/ referral procedures
- ❑ Time-Out/ Independent Study Room procedures
- ❑ Cumulative folders
- ❑ Non-Instructional duties
- ❑ Hall duty, recess, lunch duty, am/pm duty, extra curricular

#### First Day Activities- Starting the year off right!

- ❑ Access to Curriculum, Pacing and Sample Assessments
- ❑ Planning
- ❑ Setting an appropriate tone
- ❑ Organization of classroom
- ❑ Classroom procedures/policies
- ❑ Rituals and Routines
- ❑ Niagara's Choice/ Workshop Model of Instruction

## NFCSD MENTOR PROGRAM CHECKLIST: FALL SEMESTER

### Parent Communication

- Open House
- Letters home/contracts with students or parents
- Course syllabi, procedures, grading, discipline policies
- Homework/ lab/ Physical Education Preparedness policies
- Parent- Teacher Conferences (early December)

### Student Information

- Background Info
- Medical condition/ health concerns/medications/ food allergies
- Confidential list
- Individual Education Plans (IEP's), 504 Plans
- Pupil Service Team (PST) referral procedures
- Academic Intervention Services (AIS) Plans
- Tutoring (Liberty partnership Program- NU)
- Safe Schools program- counseling/ crisis hotline
- Students on home teaching

### School/Building Procedures

- Attendance Procedures
- Field Trip Procedures (permission slips, money collection procedures, etc.)
- Class Parties/birthdays
- Work Orders/maintenance needs
- Classroom Volunteer Procedures/policies
- Special Education paperwork/ requirements
- School Assembly procedures

### Curriculum

- Curriculum review/planning
- Pacing Guides
- On-line curriculum
- Planning to meet State and Local Standards

### Assessment

- NYS Standards
- Progress reports
- Report Cards
- District grading input system
- Sample Assessments
- Portfolio Procedures: contents/format/storage of
- District-wide testing
- State-wide testing
- Student make-up work policy
- Changing grades: incompletes
- Testing procedures
- Review diagnostic testing procedures

Teacher Evaluation/ Mentoring/Reflective Practice

- ❑ Non- Tenured Teacher Evaluation Instrument
- ❑ Principal Observations/Evaluations
- ❑ Professional Development Opportunities
- ❑ Superintendent's Conference Days
- ❑ Best Practices Teaching Strategies
- ❑ Observation/feedback
- ❑ Model classroom visits
- ❑ End of semester procedures
- ❑ Strategies to get through the winter
- ❑ Plan for second semester
- ❑ Review teacher Certification Requirements

Additional Responsibilities

- ❑ Grade Level/Department Meetings
- ❑ Extra Curricular Activities/duties/responsibilities
- ❑ School related clubs/programs
- ❑ Building Committee/ Union membership
- ❑ Get Involved!

## NFCSD MENTOR PROGRAM CHECKLIST: SPRING SEMESTER

- ❑ Review District, School, and Individual Teacher Grading Policies/Procedures from previous marking periods.
  - Incomplete Grades
  - Changing Grades
  - Student make-up work policy
- ❑ Use State and Local Standards/ Curriculum Guides to plan units and pacing for remainder of school year.
- ❑ Review Non-Tenure Teacher Evaluation Instrument and meet objectives specified.
  - Examine First Semester written Evaluations
  - Invite your Principal to observe
  - Ask for a letter of recommendation for Graduate School, if needed
  - Review Teacher Certification Guidelines for a valid NYS License
- ❑ Read carefully and implement proper procedures for Administering, Proctoring, Collecting and Grading State Exams.
- ❑ Evaluate student preparation for end-of-year assessment
  - Conduct Diagnostic Tests
  - Prepare appropriate Review activities
  - Discuss study habits
- ❑ Begin to prepare records for end of year reporting
  - Special Education
  - Order SSS materials for next year
- ❑ Communicate with parents/students regarding:
  - Kindergarten Registration/Orientation for Fall
  - Scholarship Procedures
  - Summer School/ Summer Enrichment Programs
  - Scheduling for next year
- ❑ Plan any spring field trips/end of year activities.
  - Prom/Graduation
  - Moving Up/ Award Ceremonies
  - Concerts/Picnics
- ❑ Discuss ways to maintain student interest during warm weather.
- ❑ Refer to Student Handbook and/or District Dress Code policies and procedures for handling infractions.
- ❑ Talk about Summer Staff Development Opportunities
  - Watch for postings for Summer Curriculum Work/ Planning
  - Check the Teacher Resource Center offerings at ([www.nftrc.org](http://www.nftrc.org))
  - Make any proposals or share your ideas with your Principal
- ❑ Review last day “check out” procedures:
  - Classroom clean up/summer storage
  - Submit any work orders for repair work as needed
  - Paperwork
  - Keys
- ❑ If Intern’s final year toward tenure, plan to attend District/Union Tenure Reception and Retirement Activities.

- ❑ Take time to reflect upon what instructional and classroom management strategies worked this year and what to modify for next year.
- ❑ Celebrate!