
BEST Walla Walla

Beginning Educator Support Team Walla Walla Public Schools Handbook

BEST program mission

The BEST program aims to support and retain new educators and ensure an equitable, high-quality education for every student attending Walla Walla Public Schools. When we set up our novice teachers for success, we set up their students for success.

Who is involved?

Our team is made up of people across the district, in every building, who work together to support teachers new to the profession and new to our district. BEST Walla Walla includes administrators, teacher mentors, building buddies, demonstration classroom teachers, and other stakeholders across WWPS who want to help new teachers and their students be successful.

What is teacher induction?

Teacher induction at Walla Walla Public Schools strives to provide a comprehensive, coherent, and sustained support system for beginning educators and guide them into a lifetime of teaching and learning.

The goals of teacher induction are:

1. Reduce teacher turnover
2. Improve teacher quality for student learning
3. Ensure equity of learning opportunity for all students
4. Help build a diverse teaching force

Walla Walla Public Schools measures, adapts, and refines its teacher induction using the Standards for Beginning Teacher Induction (Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, 2014). Those standards include considerations around hiring, orientation, mentoring, professional learning, formative assessment for teacher growth, and collecting evidence of impact.

For details about the Standards for Beginning Teacher Induction and Washington's Beginning Educator Support Team, please visit: <http://www.k12.wa.us/BEST/>

News and research

"Washington school districts who are fully engaged in the BEST mentoring program retain new educators at a four percentage-point higher rate than school districts who do not use the program, according to a study published by the University of Washington (UW) College of Education's Center of Teaching and Policy."

- Press Release from Superintendent Chris Reykdal

[Full text Examining Beginning Teacher Retention and Mobility in WA State – UW – May 2017](#)

[Full text Understanding Teacher Retention and Mobility in WA State – UW – January 2017](#)

Roles and Responsibilities

<p>BEST Program Coordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build and maintain non-evaluative, confidential relationships with teachers and mentors ● Collaborate with mentors and teachers to plan and engage in reflective, learning-focused conversations, observations, and other mentoring activities, which are intended to ensure equitable, high-quality learning opportunities for all students ● Maintain accurate records of professional learning and mentoring activities, and their impact on student learning ● Communicate and meet regularly with teachers, mentors, and administrators about mentoring activities, professional learning, and support efforts, within the parameters of the Confidentiality Agreement ● Facilitate professional learning opportunities designed for mentors and beginning teachers to consider areas of growth to improve student learning ● Provide elements of focused and advanced support to teachers, including video coaching, focused coaching cycles, learning walks, demonstration lessons, and more, to positively impact student learning
<p>Mentor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build and maintain a non-evaluative, confidential relationship with teacher ● Meet with assigned teacher regularly to engage in reflective, learning-focused conversations, observations, and other mentoring activities, which are intended to ensure equitable, high-quality learning opportunities for all students ● Provide support around curricular implementation and planning, as applicable ● Maintain accurate records of mentoring activities, and their impact on student learning ● Participate in professional learning designed to build mentoring expertise ● Communicate with teacher, coordinator, and administrators about mentoring activities, professional learning, and support efforts, within the parameters of the Confidentiality Agreement
<p>Teacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meet regularly with mentor to engage in reflective, learning-focused conversations, observations, and other mentoring activities, which are intended to ensure equitable, high-quality learning opportunities for all students ● Participate in professional learning designed to build instructional practice and consider areas of growth to improve student learning ● Communicate with coordinator, mentor, and administrator about mentoring activities and professional learning, within the parameters of the Confidentiality Agreement
<p>Administrator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publicly endorse and support the WWPS Teacher Induction Program and Beginning Educator Mentoring as an important part of ensuring equitable, high-quality learning opportunities to all students ● Collaborate with induction coordinator to select and assign mentors, building buddies, and demonstration classrooms ● Guide teachers to prioritize their workload to reserve time for their own learning and reflection ● Foster a climate in which colleagues feel a collective responsibility for supporting new teachers and their students ● Hold realistic expectations for early-career teachers in teacher evaluation ● Keep the needs of new teachers and mentoring in mind while making decisions about structures, schedules, and procedures ● Check in regularly with teachers and mentors to provide support, feedback, and encouragement ● Understand the importance of trust in the mentoring relationship and the need to protect it as non-evaluative and confidential, in order to maximize teacher growth and student learning ● Communicate with coordinator, mentor, and teacher about mentoring activities, professional learning, and support efforts, within the parameters of the Confidentiality Agreement

Mentor Selection Guidelines

Thoughtful mentor selection is a critical first step in providing effective support to beginning teachers. A potential mentor should demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions below, as outlined in the 2014 CSTP Standards for Beginning Teacher Induction.

In addition, carefully consider the contexts of the beginning teacher and the potential mentor, including content area, grade level, and other commitments or opportunities for informal mentoring. See also the “Mentor Roles & Commitments” document.

A POTENTIAL MENTOR...

Professional Qualities and Characteristics	<p>Demonstrates a passion for teaching and learning and a commitment to the future of education</p> <p>Believes everyone has the capacity and desire for growth</p> <p>Is respected by peers and leaders for professional knowledge and skills</p> <p>Values equity, opportunity for all, and developing own cultural proficiency</p> <p>Sets high expectations for self and others</p> <p>Seeks growth through feedback, reflection, and coaching, and ongoing professional learning</p> <p>Works to effect change</p> <p>Takes initiative and follows through with responsibilities</p> <p>Prioritizes effectively and manage time well in an unstructured environment</p>
Effective Interpersonal Communication	<p>Demonstrates positive, open, honest and sensitive communications with students, staff, administration, and parents</p> <p>Respects confidentiality</p> <p>Builds rapport and trusting relationships with both students and adults</p> <p>Listens with compassion and empathy</p> <p>Addresses conflict proactively</p>
Effective Practice	<p>Is proficient in all 8 of the WA State Teacher Evaluation Criteria</p> <p>Uses equitable classroom practices that support the learning of all students</p> <p>Creates a classroom community of mutual respect and appreciation for differences</p> <p>Understands and translates research and theory into practical application</p> <p>Uses appropriate and current classroom applications of technology that deepen learning</p> <p>Holds a Continuing or Professional Certificate and has documented successful contracted teaching experience</p> <p>Understands the district’s adopted instructional framework</p> <p>Demonstrates knowledge of the state’s assessment system</p> <p>Supports and implements school/district policies and initiatives</p>

Mentor Roles & Commitments

Thank you for your interest in being involved as a mentor with the Walla Walla Public Schools Teacher Induction Program. Mentoring is at the heart of supporting our newest colleagues in providing high-quality learning opportunities for all students and “developing Washington’s most sought-after graduates.” The table below outlines the commitments of each mentoring role:

Year 1 Colleague Mentor <i>(working with teachers who have fewer than 180 days of certificated teaching experience)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weekly contact with teacher• At least 1 hour per month face-to-face learning-focused conversations• Attend OSPI Mentor Academy 101 (dates and locations TBD)• Attend at least 5 Mentor Roundtables throughout the school year• Engage in at least 4 observations of the teacher with feedback, in-person or via video recording• Allotted 2 pull-out days with teacher for observations/mentoring activities• Provide “just-in-time” calendar information to teacher that might be unique to the building or teaching placement• Maintain accurate records of mentoring activities, using a Google Form <p><i>(Up to 10 OSPI clock hours per mentee (30 total) and \$850, dependent upon accurate records of work)</i></p>
Year 2 Colleague Mentor <i>(working with teachers who have 1 year of certificated teaching experience)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bi-weekly contact with teacher• At least 30 minutes per month face-to-face learning-focused conversations• Attend OSPI Mentor Academy 101 (dates and locations TBD)• Attend at least 5 Mentor Roundtables throughout the school year• Engage in at least 4 observations of the teacher with feedback, in-person or via video recording• Provide “just-in-time” calendar information to teacher that might be unique to the building or teaching placement• Maintain accurate records of mentoring activities, using a Google Form <p><i>(Up to 10 OSPI clock hours per mentee (30 total) and \$425, dependent upon accurate records of work)</i></p>
Building Buddy <i>(a resource for teachers who have more than 2 years of teaching experience but are new to WWPS)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly contact with teacher, electronic or face-to-face• Provide “just-in-time” calendar information to teacher that might be unique to the building or teaching placement• May attend Mentor Roundtables <p><i>(Up to 10 WWPS clock hours are available for this role)</i></p>
Demonstration Classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be willing to open your classroom to new teachers and their mentors for observations of best practices in instruction, classroom management, etc. and discuss your planning and decision-making processes.

For questions about mentoring a beginning teacher, please contact:

Erin Dorso

Program Coordinator, Beginning Educator Support Team

Teaching and Learning Department

Walla Walla Public Schools

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509-526-6782 (office)

Confidentiality Agreement

(from OSPI Beginning Educator Support Team, *Mentoring Standards for Washington State*, 2017)

Confidentiality

Effective mentoring relationships create a safe environment where novice educators can openly share their struggles, authentically articulate their thinking, and bravely take risks to improve their teaching practice. Trust is essential to creating these mentoring relationships. The development of trust comes through a commitment to confidentiality and is an essential component of mentoring. When the new educator is confident in the mentor's intention and discretion, there is a higher level of honesty and investment in the relationship.

Communicating with Administrators and Colleagues

Mentors need to maintain confidentiality in conversations with administrators and colleagues. Sharing information with others can compromise the trusting relationship that a mentor must have with a new educator. It is even inadvisable to share good things a mentor sees. A new teacher who walks into the staff room and hears the end of a story about his or her effective lesson will wonder if the same stories are being told of those lessons that did not go well.

It is critical that mentors refrain from becoming the go-between for the new educator and other staff members, including the principal. New teachers need to develop their own relationships with colleagues. Likewise, new educators and administrators need to develop a professional relationship in order to maximize the growth of the novice. If the principal communicates concerns to the mentor (in a one-sided conversation), it is effective practice for the mentor to encourage the principal to also communicate those concerns to the new teacher.

Separating Mentoring from Evaluation

Assisting new educators to understand the evaluation process, use the district's instructional framework, and gather evidence of student learning is the shared responsibility of mentors, coaches, colleagues, and principals. These are essential for teacher growth (See *Standards for Induction: Formative Assessment for Teacher Growth*, <http://www.k12.wa.us/BEST/InductionStandards/default.aspx>). While mentors *do* use instructional frameworks, observe, and give feedback, they *do not* provide information to administrators that might be used in evaluation. The confidential trusting relationship between mentors and educators is necessary for real improvement in performance and must be carefully protected (See WAC 392-196-077, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=392-196-077>).

While mentors should *not* share information and comments that could influence the administrator's evaluation of the new educator, it is important for mentors and administrators to work in partnership to support the needs of novices. Mentors can address three areas without breaking confidentiality: teachers, time, and topics. For example, "I am meeting with Ms. Smith two times per week and we are focusing on effective transitions." This form of communication keeps the administrator aware of the content and frequency of the work without adding mentor judgement or evaluation of the work. It is also important that the mentor and new educator ask for input from the administrator about areas for growth and a focus for the mentoring work.

When a Mentor Must Break Confidentiality

If a new educator breaks the OSPI "Code of Professional Conduct for Education Practitioners" a mentor *must* share information with an administrator or assist the new educator in doing so. This is the only circumstance when confidentiality should be broken. When in doubt, a mentor should consult with an outside administrator who is not part of the mentor or new educator's evaluation process regarding possible Code of Conduct violations (See www.k12.wa.us/ProfPractices/CodeConduct.aspx).

I have read and understand the confidentiality agreement.

Signature

Date

Tiered Support System

Basic Support <i>(Year 1 teachers - fewer than 180 days of certificated experience)</i>	Focused Support <i>(as recommended by administrator, mentor, or induction coordinator)</i>	Advanced Support <i>(as recommended by administrator, mentor, or induction coordinator)</i>
<p>Weekly contact with mentor</p> <p>Monthly contact with program coordinator</p> <p>At least 4 observations with feedback per year with mentor, in-person or via video recording</p> <p>Enrollment in monthly BEST PLC</p> <p>At least 5 self-selected professional learning experiences via Teaching Channel</p> <p>Co-observe a master teacher's classroom (in-person or via video recording) and debrief with mentor</p> <p>Teaching Channel Plus subscription</p>	<p>Weekly contact with mentor</p> <p>Monthly contact with program coordinator</p> <p>At least 5 observations with feedback per year with mentor or program coordinator, in-person or via video recording</p> <p>Enrollment in monthly BEST PLC</p> <p>At least 5 self-selected professional learning experiences via Teaching Channel</p> <p>Co-observe a master teacher's classroom (in-person or via video recording) and debrief with mentor</p> <p>Teaching Channel Plus subscription</p> <p>Participate in a grade level/content area learning walk</p> <p>Identify a co-planning partner, if applicable</p> <p>Additional supports, as appropriate</p>	<p>Weekly contact with mentor</p> <p>Monthly contact with program coordinator</p> <p>At least 6 observations with feedback per year with mentor or program coordinator, in-person or via video recording</p> <p>Enrollment in monthly BEST PLC</p> <p>At least 5 self-selected professional learning experiences via Teaching Channel</p> <p>Co-observe a master teacher's classroom (in-person or via video recording) and debrief with mentor</p> <p>Teaching Channel Plus subscription</p> <p>Participate in a grade level/content area learning walk</p> <p>Identify co-planning partner, if applicable</p> <p>Master teacher demonstrates or co-teaches in the teacher's classroom</p> <p>Intensive coaching cycle for improvement with program coordinator or consulting instructional coach</p> <p>Additional supports, as appropriate</p>
<p><u>Teacher Profile:</u> This is a teacher who demonstrates a foundational understanding of effective classroom management and/or instructional practice. S/he is learning and improving steadily within</p>	<p><u>Teacher Profile:</u> This is a teacher who demonstrates a developing understanding of classroom management and/or instructional practice and needs more time and support for further growth.</p>	<p><u>Teacher Profile:</u> This is a teacher who may be in danger of not having a contract renewed. S/he demonstrates little understanding of classroom</p>

<p>a trusting mentor-mentee relationship. S/he appears excited to be in the classroom and support student learning.</p>	<p>S/he is interested in learning and improving but may be unsure of how to do that within the mentor-mentee relationship. S/he may have a limited understanding of expectations for effective classroom practice or of methods to support student learning.</p>	<p>management and/or instructional practice. S/he may be resistant to learning and improving and may struggle to establish a trusting relationship with his/her mentor. S/he appears dissatisfied with and overwhelmed by his/her teaching role.</p>
<p><u>Warning indications to recommend <i>Focused Support</i> might include:</u> Struggles to see how instructional moves and interactions with students contribute to difficulty with classroom management or student learning Struggles to respond to suggestions with regard to concerns around classroom management or student learning Resistance to engaging in reflective, learning-focused conversations Considerable fatigue or difficulty with time management Difficulty establishing a relationship with a mentor</p>	<p><u>Warning indications to recommend <i>Advanced Support</i> might include:</u> Struggles to see how instructional moves and interactions with students contribute to significant difficulty with classroom management or student learning Struggles to to respond to suggestions with regard to concerns around classroom management or student learning Resistance to engaging in professional learning/mentoring activities Considerable fatigue and a general feeling of being overwhelmed most of the time</p>	

Enrichment Support (Year 2 teachers)		
<p>Bi-weekly contact with mentor</p> <p>At least 4 observations with feedback per year with mentor, in-person or via video recording</p> <p>At least 2 professional learning experiences appropriate to the individual, in-person or via Teaching Channel</p> <p>Invitation to continue enrollment in monthly BEST PLC</p> <p>Teaching Channel Plus subscription</p>	<p><u>Teacher Profile:</u> This teacher feels secure in his/her foundational knowledge of classroom management and instructional practice and still has opportunities for growth. S/he is learning and improving steadily within a trusting mentor-mentee relationship. S/he appears to be excited to take the lead in his/her own classroom and support student learning.</p>	<p><u>Warning indications to recommend <i>Basic Support</i> might include:</u> Insecurity in foundational knowledge around classroom management and instructional practice Student learning is stagnant Student behaviors and teacher responses to behaviors frequently interfere with instruction</p>

Program Contact

For questions, concerns, or more information about joining BEST Walla Walla, please visit <http://www.wwps.org/departments/curriculum/beginning-educator-mentoring-program>

Or contact:

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