

Creating a Supportive Environment

An Administrator's Handbook
for Working With Beginning Teachers



Beginning Teachers Resources Advisory Committee

Shannon Bergstrom

Sutherland School

Jackie Bouck

Lloydminster Comprehensive High School

Barbara DeWitt

Vibank Regional School

Cheryl Erlandson

Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit

Ferrah Graham

Pense School

Noreen Jeffrey (Writer)

Saskatoon

Erica Long

St. Peter School

Heidi MacKay

Hague Elementary School

Bruce Mellesmoen

Hepburn School

Jesse Nokinsky

Hague Elementary School

Meaghan Reynolds

Holy Cross High School

Carol Sarich

St. Luke School

Alan Sharp

Good Spirit School Division

Dion L. J. Tootosis

College of Education,
University of Saskatchewan

Guy Werbicki

St. Paul's RCSSD

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Preamble

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation plays an active role in the induction of beginning teachers by providing a beginning teacher section on the Federation's website, organizing and facilitating a beginning teachers' conference, maintaining a section in the *Saskatchewan Bulletin* titled "Starting Out", as well as developing and distributing this document and the complementary handbook for beginning teachers. Most school divisions in Saskatchewan have recognized the importance of programs to support beginning teachers and provide a variety of induction programs. However, research on the induction process reveals that induction works best when it is systematically embedded in the culture of a school (McCormack et al., 2006; Stobaugh and Houchens, 2014; Wood, 2005). Induction research is also quite clear that administrators serve as the builders of this culture (Alberta Teachers' Association, 2012; Flores and Day, 2006; Peters and Pearce, 2012; Richardson, 2008). Research points to the lack of support from the school administrator as one of several reasons new teachers leave the profession early in their careers (Carlson, 2012; Johnson, 2004; Moir, 2005).

We all want to see our beginning teachers succeed, but the question is often, how do we best support them? What do they need and what can we provide for them? The literature cites at least three major roles of principals in relation to novice teachers:

- Builder of school culture.
- Instructional leader.
- Co-coordinator of mentorship program.

Wood (2005)

This handbook provides some guidance in each of these three areas as well as other aspects of support that can be offered to these, the newest members of our profession.

Some Advice

As administrators, your role is critical. You can ensure that those new teachers entering our classrooms for the first time are provided with the type of appropriate support that maximizes their likelihood of success in the profession.

I can barely keep my head above water.

My stomach is constantly in knots.

I wasn't given my own classroom, so I am 'floating' from classroom to classroom carrying all my books and supplies for the entire day. I am finding the other teachers resent my being in their classrooms during their prep period. Today one of the teachers actually locked his chalk away so I couldn't get it.

I'm drowning in marking and I have so much prep to do that I don't know when I'm going to get any sleep this week.

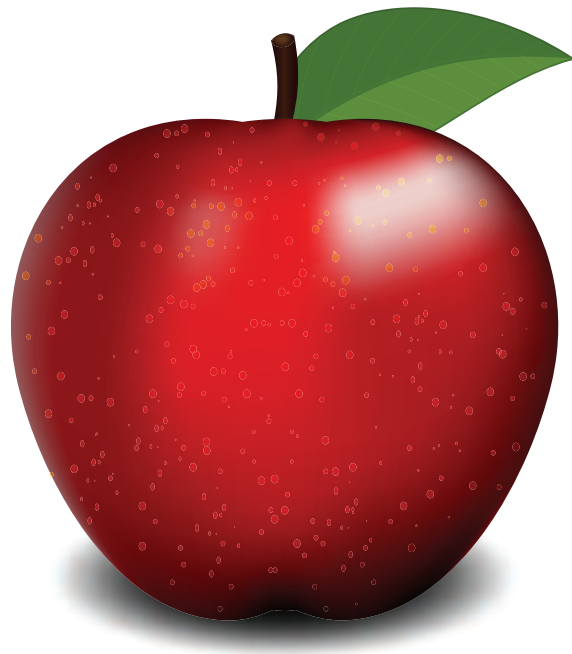
Teacher retention, especially the retention of beginning teachers, is an issue in education. The teaching profession has a turnover rate higher than that of most professionals (Borman and Dowling, 2008; Harris and Adams, 2007; Roberson and Roberson, 2009). We need to pay attention to the retention statistics as well as the telling comments of beginning teachers. It is our responsibility to help new teachers be successful.

In a longitudinal study of beginning teachers in Saskatchewan, it was revealed that Saskatchewan loses eight per cent of its beginning teachers after their first year. Some respondents in this research project, *Beginning Teachers in Saskatchewan: Trends, Transitions and Transformations* (2008), indicated that workload and work life demands in the first year of teaching presented considerable challenges. They felt they were in survival mode and hardly able to keep up with their instructional timelines for the week or month. Several participants commented that the workload they had as interns was much less than what they experienced as beginning teachers. Case study participants noted how difficult it was to maintain any semblance of a personal life, let alone balance their personal and professional lives. Sometimes it is hard for those of us with many years of active teaching under our belts to remember what it felt like to be a beginning teacher. As a profession, we need to try to remember the anxiety and the exhaustion.



Understanding the Beginning Teacher

Beginning teachers typically experience profound changes in their lives as they enter their new careers. We should be conscious of the stress that may be caused by these changes.



Who Is the Beginning Teacher?

There are many types of beginning teachers. There are still many inexperienced young people entering teaching as a first career. However, there are also more and more older people, often with one or more careers behind them. New teachers entering the profession today tend to have more professional experience, often accompanied by higher expectations of their employers.

Susan Moore Johnson in *Finders and Keepers: Helping New Teachers Survive and Thrive in Our Schools* (2004) states that today's generation of beginning teachers tend to want opportunities to share and talk about their craft, whereas our more experienced educators expect to work alone and be more self-sufficient. She discusses how this “egg-crate” arrangement in schools with one teacher for one classroom was once the expected culture but it is no longer. There are things every staff member needs to know, but it is wise to also remember diversity when addressing the needs of beginning teachers.

The excitement that new teachers feel when they obtain their first teaching position often subsides when the reality of setting up their classroom, developing effective classroom management strategies and planning engaging lessons sinks in. Those challenges, coupled with professional isolation, can cause even well-prepared new teachers to struggle.

Adapted from Stobaugh and Houchens (2014)

1 Teachers who are new to the profession must alter their self-identity. They are often making the major transition from being students to being teachers and need to recreate themselves by “taking on” the identity of a professional teacher. Their choice of dress, conduct, lifestyle and communication skills may need to alter in many cases. They need to look and sound like professionals. They need to be aware that they are now held to different standards.

2 Beginning teachers are likely to be experiencing a new set of demands. They are coming from an academic setting or an established career where they had a sense of confidence and competence regarding their skills and abilities. They may encounter some sense of disillusionment as they face classroom realities. There may be a serious mismatch between perceptions of what teaching was supposed to be like and the actual demands of dealing with student behaviour, parental expectations and trying to stay on top of everything. Many are testing their experiences with the knowledge and skills learned in their pre-service program, particularly their internship. Does theory

reconcile with practice? Not always, they may find. Beginning teachers are often frustrated believing they are the only ones to have these feelings, yet we know these are common struggles for beginning teachers. In addition, they may be struggling with managing finances and positioning themselves in a new, unfamiliar community.

3 Beginning teachers often experience a change in the dynamics of their interpersonal relationships. When they leave school each day, new teachers are engaging with family and friends who may or may not be sympathetic to the stresses they are experiencing. They may have relocated or may be away from their home communities for the first time. They may be feeling isolated as they have left familiar contacts and networks of support. They are facing new challenges and stresses in their personal and professional lives at a time when they may be feeling inadequate and overwhelmed by the role of “teacher.” There may be other personal implications as well. They may encounter a loss of personal time and privacy. They are learning that this is an occupation that can eclipse one’s personal life if one lets it.

Even I was struggling with the challenges I would face as I gave the new teacher my classroom. My feeling was like that of my other experienced colleagues - I've been here 15 years and just got a classroom with a window! It is hard to imagine my having to float rather than making our new teacher do it. It was a difficult decision, but our entire department feels that it has paid off in terms of increased student achievement as well as satisfaction in doing the right thing for our new teacher.

Words of a secondary school department head and mentor as reported in Blank & Kershaw (2009)

What Are the Needs and Issues of the Beginning Teacher?

Though all new teachers face a variety of challenges in the classroom, there are several that seem common to most (Breux, 2011). Research surrounding new teacher retention regularly points out that new teacher issues tend to fall into several predictable categories – management, personal, instructional and socialization needs and concerns.

- 1. Management concerns:** Issues around classroom management are high priorities for beginning teachers. How do I manage student behaviour? How can I discipline students yet still be approachable? What if they don't listen to me? What about their parents?
- 2. Personal concerns:** Where am I going to live? How will I survive till my first paycheque? Since many beginning teachers are starting their first full-time jobs after graduating from university or changing careers, they are concerned with establishing financial arrangements and paying off loans. They are possibly moving to a different community and setting up their residence, maybe finding services and schools for their own children. They are meeting new people and making new friends. They are establishing a place in the school community and the neighbourhood. They have numerous needs associated with their personal concerns.
- 3. Instructional concerns:** How do I address the needs of students in this class? There's such a wide ability range. There's such a diversity of language abilities. I hear people talking about a variety of evaluation options. Besides multiple choice, true/false, and short-answer tests, what other assessment approaches can I use? I am really confused about pacing. I can barely see to the end of the week – how do I address long-range planning? Is there some good system for keeping track of student grades? For organizing my material and notes? What are the roles of support personnel? How can they support my work?
- 4. Socialization concerns:** What does it mean to be a teacher? There are so many “unwritten rules.” How can I ever understand all the expectations? I don't want to look like I'm not managing, but who can I ask for some advice and support?

Professional development for beginning teachers needs to bridge theory and practice in order to create high-quality learning environments. Professional development for beginning teachers should address:

- Organizational and planning strategies.
- Instructional strategies.
- Assessment strategies.

Organizational and planning strategies are hidden from most classroom observations. The beginning teacher may only see the mentor teacher's classroom in the middle of the year, missing the advance work and classroom management strategies that the mentor teacher used during the first few days of classes in order to set the tone for a positive learning environment. Also, beginning teachers spend much more time planning instruction than do experienced teachers. These more experienced teachers can help beginning teachers with “big picture” planning. These organizational and planning strategies help create the necessary conditions for learning and teachers can acquire these skills systematically rather than depending on trial and error.

Instructional strategies exist on a continuum from most teacher-centred to most student-centred. Some new teachers may be more comfortable with teacher-centred instructional strategies and may use them to maintain a sense of control or revert to them when under pressure. With exposure to alternatives and subsequent support, new teachers can begin to incorporate a wider range of strategies.

Assessment strategies refer to both student assessment and reflection on their own professional learning. Beginning teachers may rely on those methods used by their own teachers when they were

students. Beginning teachers and their students benefit from professional development in this area. As well, everyone benefits when a teacher regularly reflects on his/her practice and makes adjustments based on that thoughtful reflection. Beginning teachers can be assisted in this process. Teachers should be encouraged to constantly ask themselves the question, “Why?” Why am I using this resource? Why this strategy? Why am I considering this alternative evaluation? The ability to articulate these reasons leads to the teacher becoming a more self-conscious, in the best sense, reflective practitioner.

The Alberta Teachers' Association (2012); Bambrick-Santoyo (2014); and Johnson (2004) write about the importance of on-site and on-time professional development to meet the needs of beginning teachers. According to Donder (2011), the era of expert-centred “drive-by” professional development, with little expectation of reflection, has not proven to be effective. Conventional in-service with its intermittent after-school training just isn't enough to meet their ongoing needs. New teachers need access on short notice when a lesson goes awry, a student is not responding to a strategy or when a parent requires an immediate conference. Beginning teachers need to know there are staff members there to help them in a timely manner.

It is important to reassure beginning teachers that we have all struggled. These teachers need to hear your stories about your early trials and tribulations. They need to know that you were not always the competent professional you are now.

What Are the Stages of Focus for the Beginning Teacher?

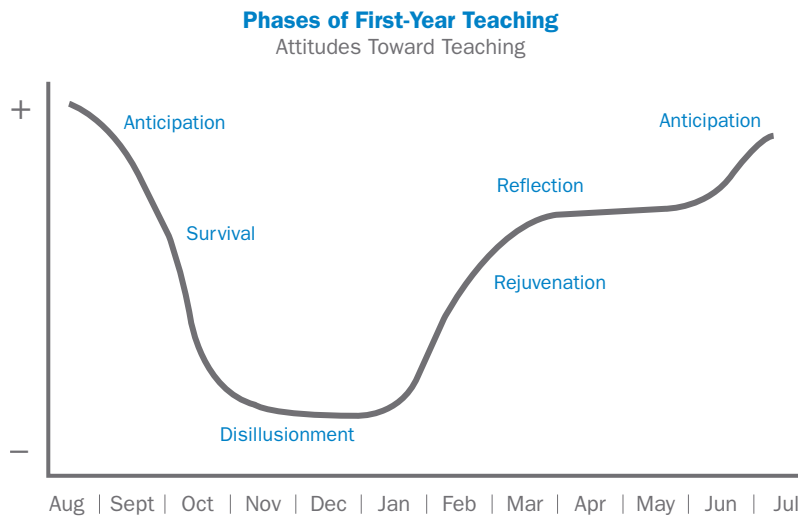
Typically, teachers define their learning needs in accordance to a perceived problem or poor performance in a particular area. Their motivation for learning is to “correct” a problem; that is, they are self-directed and focused on their performance. As part of your induction plan for a beginner, you will want to capitalize on this characteristic by assisting the teacher in creating an individualized program to address specialized needs. Beginning teachers will exhibit different levels of concern that will direct, in part, the kind of program that will be most helpful to their development as professionals at any particular point in time.

- A focus on self: The primary concern of teachers in this stage is on survival. Teachers will be interested in making good impressions when an administrator is nearby, on getting along with colleagues and on learning procedures and routines.
- A focus on teaching tasks: The central concern is in refining the “act” of teaching. Classroom management, instruction, planning, curriculum, evaluation issues and an orientation to “teaching the subject” mark the characteristics of teachers in this stage. You may find there are teachers who may need to be encouraged to move beyond this point, as, after finding methodology that works, they may be inclined to rest in the security of having survived.
- A focus on serving the student: The teacher is now ready to look at teaching as a more flexible process. They are more likely to look for alternative strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students, to be more innovative and to be more concerned with the emotional and social well-being of students.

We entrust doctors with the physical lives of their patients. Similarly we entrust the educational lives of our children to their teachers. When doctors perform surgery for the first time, they don't do it alone. If we assume surgeons will need in-the-moment guidance, then we must believe it's equally constructive to offer real time feedback to our new teachers.

Adapted from Bambrick-Santoyo (2014)

Many beginning teachers are on an emotional rollercoaster their first year. They start with a sense of anticipation that becomes more a sense of survival after a few months. Some experience profound disillusionment in the period just before winter holidays. Moir (1990) captured this in the Phases of First-Year Teaching illustrated below. This feeling occurs as a new member of the profession experiences concern about competence and commitment. As one beginning teacher described his first November in the classroom, “I may be mixing my metaphors, but I felt like water swirling down the drain wondering who I could call while I was hanging onto the end of my rope.” Reassure your beginning teachers that others have felt this way too.



Phases of First-Year Teaching (Moir, 1990)



Effective Induction

In teaching, unlike some other professions, a beginning teacher assumes the same level of responsibility that is taken on by more experienced colleagues. Unfortunately, in some cases, a beginner may even be given an assignment with greater challenges than their more experienced peers. According to numerous educational researchers – Borman and Dowling (2008); Donder (2011); Johnson (2007); Sweeny (2008) – beginning teachers are often stunned to discover their assignments may include multiple preparations, multiple classrooms, multiple grades in one classroom, the most difficult and challenging students, courses for which they have no pre-service training, and numerous and demanding extracurricular responsibilities. More experienced teachers would complain. However, new teachers don't always know these are unfair expectations.



Because there are such high expectations for the province's teachers and the challenges involved in the profession are considerable, a sound introduction to our professional culture is regarded as more and more of a necessity. Induction is the umbrella label for the process of welcoming beginning educators to their new profession and preparing them to effectively assume the full responsibilities of their career.

Effective preparation includes a number of components:

1. Orientation to the school, division, community, job expectations and the curriculum.
2. Professional development designed specifically for the beginning teacher's needs, including professional development goals and plans for improvement.
3. Peer support activities, necessary for both the beginning teachers and those mentors working with them.
4. Observation by new educators of the work of exemplary colleagues followed by analysis of their observations with experienced teachers.
5. Provision of individualized support to beginning teachers in the form of a mentor who can guide planning and application of what the beginning teacher is learning in other induction areas.

Adapted from Sweeny (2008)

Recognizing that beginning teachers are still learning is crucial. When principals recognize that beginning teachers are learning to teach at the same time they are teaching, that necessitates a change in the way they think about the new teachers' needs. It sounds so simple but it's a fundamentally different way to think about beginning teachers.

Adapted from Richardson (2008)

Why Is Induction Important?

Induction serves a number of critical roles in orienting beginning teachers to the teaching profession and supporting their understanding of what it means to be a skilled educator.

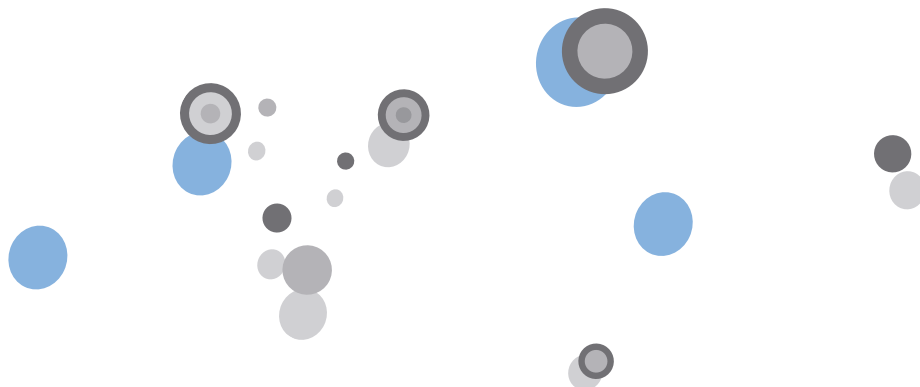
Effective induction can result in the following:

- Improved educational performance of students as a result of improved teacher performance.
- Increased retention of new teachers.
- Promotion of personal and professional health and well-being of teachers.
- A more thoughtful and reflective school climate for all teachers.
- Improved collegiality and collaboration.

Adapted from Hanson & Moir (2008);
Stobaugh and Houchens (2014); Strong (2009); Sweeny (2008)

To Think About

“Orientation is often confused with induction. Orientation is the first phase of induction and generally deals with practical aspects of the teaching situation.”



How Is an Effective Induction Program Structured?

Each induction program operates within a particular situation and accommodates its own specific needs. However, they all use common steps which you can use as a guide to plan your own beginning teacher's induction.

- Research and gather information on successful programs. Contact other schools and/or school divisions to see what is working. Peruse some of the resources suggested in this handbook. Ask for resources to be sent from the Stewart Resource Centre.
- Determine what is already in place within your school division:
 - Is there a mentoring program already in existence?
 - Does the school division offer any professional development opportunities for new teachers?
 - Are there funds available for the induction program?
 - Are your beginning teachers registered for the Federation's Taking Your Place in the Professional Community, A Conference for Beginning Teachers?
- Determine how the induction process will be structured:
 - Where will the initial induction take place?
 - Will there be a number of days of initial induction before school starts?
 - Will there be a second induction session for those hired after the beginning of the school year?
 - Who will attend the induction? Will it be beginning teachers only or those new to the school division as well?
 - Will there be a mid-year session offered?
 - Choose the topics to be addressed. Characteristic topics for beginning teachers include:
 - Classroom management.
 - Instructional strategies.
 - Lesson planning.
 - Policies and procedures.
 - Assessment and evaluation.
 - Relationships with parents.
 - Accommodating individual differences.

What Does the Research Say Are the Qualities of an Effective Induction Program?

An effective induction program can be designed, organized and delivered in many ways dependent on a variety of factors specific to the school, the school division and possibly the number of beginning teachers involved. Induction programs are best designed in response to the needs of the teachers who are served by them. However, research consistently points out several common qualities of an effective induction program.

Typically, successful induction programs are built around a framework that includes:

- A set of goals and intended outcomes for the program.
- A commitment of collaboration from division, schools and individuals involved in the process.
- An understanding that this is a team initiative involving shared responsibility.
- An orientation prior to school opening to provide an overview of the school, community and division.
- A mentorship component with structured time for both mentor and beginning teacher to observe and discuss.
- A commitment to professional development opportunities.
- A structure that provides the beginning teacher with feedback based on classroom observations with discussion of potential strategies for improvement.
- An attention to teaching assignments and workloads for the novice teacher.
- An assumption that induction is ongoing and is likely to continue beyond the first year of teaching.

Adapted from Bartell (2005); Breaux & Wong (2003); Bickmore, Bickmore & Hart (2005); Donder (2011); Lazovsky & Reichenberg (2006); Stobaugh and Houchens (2014); Wong (2004)

What Is My Role in Induction?

As an administrator, you have an opportunity to be influential in the professional lives of all the teachers in your school. In your role as the “developer and nurturer” of school culture, it falls to you to share information and support the beginning teacher’s understanding of the culture within your school. Coupled with that responsibility is the value that beginning teachers place on your opinion. Research demonstrates that the principal’s influence on beginning teachers is significant if not profound, Richardson (2008) and Roberson and Roberson (2009). The principal is a major person in the school

as far as most beginning teachers are concerned. They may consider you to be responsible for hiring them, as well as for making the decision as to whether or not they will receive a favourable evaluation. Your approval is essential to them.

One difficulty that beginners face is the tension that exists between the “principal as support person” and the “principal as evaluator.” Beginning teachers will feel more comfortable if they have a clear idea as to how their performance is approximating your expectations.

Principals’ roles are integrally tied to the major goals of teacher induction: teacher retention and improvement of novice teacher performance.

Johnson (2004)

Just before the Christmas holiday, our principal said he really appreciated my work as a teacher. That was so nice to hear.

A First-Year Teacher

Some Advice

- Communicate to your new teachers that you appreciate their efforts.
- Ask for their input about how you can better support them. Have a few suggestions at hand in case they can't think of anything specifically. Sometimes we don't know what we don't know. Also, remember that beginning teachers may be reluctant to ask for help as they feel it may be an admission of their incompetence. Beginning teachers may find it difficult to describe their professional aspirations, capacities (e.g., workload capacity) and needs (e.g., instructional strategies, professional development needs, etc.).
- Articulate your expectations clearly. Make sure your expectations are realistic. It takes time for teachers to develop their craft. Induction programs can certainly accelerate teacher growth, but beginning teachers still need an extended period of time in order to become accomplished practitioners.

I would rather be disturbed than surprised.

A Secondary School Principal

- Discuss the sometimes “unwritten expectations” in a school or division. Beginning teachers want to fit into the school and will be eager to adopt the norms and assumptions that seem to be dominant in the school environment. Create a school culture that values collegiality, professional development and reflection, in order to help a beginning teacher become socialized into professional norms.
- Commit to meet with the teacher regularly.
- Visit the classroom frequently on an informal basis to develop comfort and familiarity. Start these visits early. Don't try to cram everything in at the end of the school year. Also, more frequent visits give a better picture of classroom instruction than does an isolated lesson.
- Promote a healthy, collegial workplace by providing time and resources for action research, encouraging discussion, collaboration and peer coaching, supporting the development of materials and challenging teachers to engage in reflection surrounding their practice.
- Consider the purchase of some of the resources found in *Taking Your Place In The Professional Community: A Handbook For Beginning Teachers* for your beginning teacher's use.
- Highlight the following section of the Code of Professional Ethics with staff and initiate a discussion about the information and supports which might be needed by beginning, as well as experienced, teachers in your school.

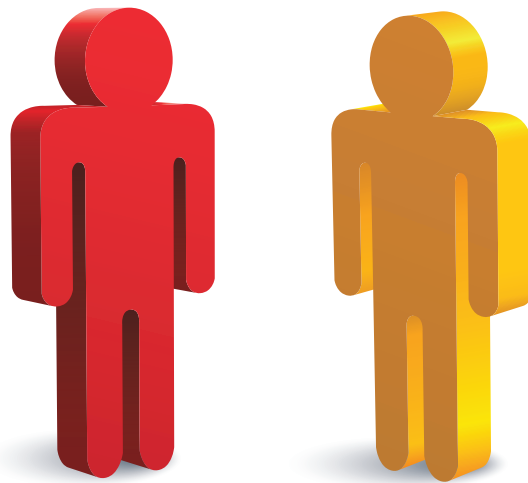
Article 4 of the Code of Professional Ethics reminds us of our professional obligation to beginning teachers, “to respond unselfishly to colleagues seeking professional assistance.”

It is a professional duty of experienced teachers to assist new members of the profession. Any information that would enable a beginning teacher to succeed and remain a productive member of the teaching profession should be made freely available.



Mentorship

Mentor is the name given to an experienced teacher working in a similar situation who assumes the primary responsibility for guiding and supporting beginning teachers through the necessary transitions that are part of being an effective educator and career-long learner. The goal for mentor teachers is not to create clones of themselves but to help the mentees develop into the best teachers they can be. A mentor serves as a guide, a supporter, a friend, an advocate and a role model.



What Do Mentors Do?

One special form of collegiality that you may be involved in is mentorship. What exactly do mentors do? This is a question asked repeatedly by beginning teachers and mentors alike. One of the main objectives of mentorship is to support and enhance a vision of professionalism. In a mentorship you and a partner (usually an experienced teacher in a similar context or situation) work on tasks that are important to you as you develop your professional abilities. Mentorship is increasingly being acknowledged as a critical piece in any beginning teacher induction. It is removed from any supervision or performance appraisals aspect.

Mentors serve various roles, such as:

- Assisting with orientation (tours, explanations of procedures, etc.).
 - Providing opportunities for observation of lessons taught by experienced teachers.
 - Working with beginning teachers in the classroom and discussing lessons afterwards.
 - Identifying beginning teacher strengths and building on them.
 - Sharing (or helping to develop) materials, examples of performance assessments, resources, etc.
 - Facilitating reflection through collecting classroom data and conferencing.
 - Facilitating problem solving around issues of planning, management and curriculum.
 - Assisting the beginning teacher in understanding the norms of the school, especially in areas of interpersonal communication, roles and responsibilities, philosophy of discipline, etc.
 - Listening.
 - Modelling good professional practice.
- Demonstrating sensitivity towards the beginning teacher.
 - Responding to the professional needs as identified by the beginning teacher: classroom management, questioning techniques, dealing with parents, etc.

It has long seemed logical to have an experienced teacher serve as a mentor for the beginning teacher. However, there is more and more research that indicates that it is not just reasonable, but is, in fact, necessary, if we are to retain the calibre of teacher we wish to have working with our children.

The mentor relationship has been widely identified as the most significant component of the induction program for beginning teachers (Blank & Kershaw, 2009; Johnson, 2004; Lipton & Wellman, 2003). Mentorship can have positive benefits for all those involved: students, beginning teachers, experienced teachers, administrators and the professional teaching organization as a whole.

Whether you know it or not, by being a mentor you have also become my coach. I want to hear your advice. I want to hear your similar stories. I need someone to bounce ideas off of. I need someone to help me deal with the stress I feel as well as the hurtful remark that leaves me sobbing behind the closed classroom door at the end of the day.

Adapted from University of British Columbia, New Teacher Mentoring Project, mentoringbc.ca

Mentorship Benefits

Students

For students, mentorship:

- Provides teachers who are more reflective and disposed to continuous improvement.
- Provides teachers with the self-confidence to use a wider range of instructional and evaluative strategies.
- Provides increased instructional continuity from reduced teacher turnover.

For beginning teachers, mentorship:

- Provides access to the knowledge, experience and support of an accomplished professional.
- Provides a vision of theory being translated into practice.
- Provides beginning teachers with the awareness that they are “part of the team.”
- Produces an enhanced sense of confidence and competence in both their instructional and management strategies.
- Provides emotional support.
- Reduces isolation and builds a collegial network among professional colleagues.
- Reduces trial and error learning, and accelerates professional growth.

Beginning Teachers

“Effective mentoring directly impacts student achievement. When new teachers are coached by their talented colleagues, they develop effective skills far sooner than do those left to learn to teach on their own.”

Blank & Kershaw (2009)

Mentor Teachers

For mentor teachers, mentorship:

- Increases conscious reflection on their own teaching practices.
- Produces a renewed enthusiasm for the profession.
- Increases motivation to be innovative and try new approaches.
- Develops and/or enhances the specific skills associated with successful mentoring, including listening, observing, conferencing, analyzing, encouraging and providing feedback.

“Mentors clearly help support and retain new teachers, but the mentoring experience also helps refresh and retain veteran teachers. Mentors describe their improved reflective practices, their higher levels of professional responsibility, their broadened view of the profession and their renewed appreciation for the field of education.”

As reported in Scherer (2003)

For administrators, mentorship:

- Provides valuable assistance for orientation and support of the beginning teacher.
- Provides increased quality of instruction for both beginning and experienced teachers.
- Enhances the function of the school as a learning community, as many features of mentorship (reflective practice, collaboration, support, teamwork, shared understandings, etc.) are also the qualities found in professional learning communities.
- Opens up conversations about professional culture.
- Reduces teacher attrition and time required for beginning teacher recruitment, development and supervision.

Administrators

“Site administrators who understand the role of the mentors and the professional development activities in which the teachers will engage can reinforce the messages that novice teachers receive. It is important that site administrators are supportive of and knowledgeable about the full range, purpose, and activities of the induction program. Site administrators who understand and support induction activities are able to work with those who also provide support to ensure new teacher success.”

Bartell (2005)

Education in General

For education in general, mentorship:

- Contributes to the retention of teachers.
- Contributes to the enhancement of the profession through improved classroom practices.
- Results in a more capable, energized staff.
- Retains experienced teachers who find a new challenge by serving as teacher mentors.
- Results in a commitment to lifelong learning.
- Facilitates the development of professionalism.

“A good team multiplies the potential of everyone in it.”

Superior-Greenstone District School Board (2011)

The Role of the Principal in the Mentorship Program

1. Recruit mentors.
2. Match mentors with beginning teachers.
3. Train mentors.
4. Monitor the mentorship process.
5. Provide the necessary resources for the process, including release time, classroom location, professional development opportunities and assignment of workloads.

Recruiting Mentors

One of the main roles of the administrator is certainly to identify potential mentors for this aspect of the induction process, but there are other responsibilities as well. You need to discuss expectations of the mentorship role with potential mentors to ensure they have a clear and realistic understanding of their commitment.

There is a growing body of research in the area of mentoring for the beginning teacher. The first quality generally mentioned to look for in an effective mentor is that of being a good teacher, but simply being a good teacher does not ensure that a person would be a good mentor. There are a variety of skills and

abilities that go beyond those required of a good classroom instructor. Although there is no magic recipe to ensure that all potential mentors will be effective, research does point out several personal and professional qualities common to effective teacher mentors.

These qualities include:

- Demonstrated teaching excellence.
- Disposition toward collaboration and inquiry.
- Commitment to professional growth and change.
- Flexibility and tolerance for ambiguity.
- Curiosity and an eagerness to learn.
- Observable respect of colleagues.
- Communication of optimism and enthusiasm.
- Sound communication skills, particularly that of being a good listener.
- An open, approachable nature.
- Confidence.
- Demonstrated belief in the value of the mentoring process.

Adapted from Blank & Kershaw (2009); Kelley (2004); Superior-Greystone District School Board (2011)

Matching Mentors and Beginning Teachers

There are no exact rules to follow when assigning mentors to beginning teachers, but there are certain factors that should be considered. One aspect that is critical is physical proximity. The beginning teacher and mentor should have classrooms near each other to allow for consistent and frequent monitoring and observation. Another factor is to match according to similar teaching assignments so beginning teachers can be guided through specific instructional strategies, pacing, homework assignments, grading and assessments, resource selections and other subject/grade related issues. There should be common planning times for the team with the clear understanding that this time is designated for mentorship activities. Research indicates that while age differences should be considered, a difference in the level of experience is the more significant factor (Blank & Kershaw, 2009; Daresh, 2003; Sweeny, 2008). *Mentoring as Collaboration*, Blank and Kershaw (2009), includes a chart that explores the differences as to professional characteristics and professional needs among a range of generations from baby boomers to millennials. These factors might be considered in making mentor/beginning teacher pairings. Also, consider if cross-gender mentoring would be a potential issue in your school. Is there any possibility of the potential appearance of impropriety?

Two factors contribute most strongly to productive mentor/new teacher pairings – proximity and same grade/level or subject area!

Villani (2004), as quoted in Blank and Kershaw (2009)

Training of Mentors

Mentoring is a skill that even the best teachers must learn, so all successful mentoring programs need to include focused training which should take place prior to teachers becoming mentors. First, there needs to be a shared understanding of what the role involves. Discuss the parameters with the teacher mentors. What are the responsibilities? What are the expected outcomes? What are the resources that will be allocated? What are the timelines? What about confidentiality? Make sure the teacher mentor and the beginning teacher are very clear that this mentorship is a supportive, not an evaluative relationship. Lipton & Wellman (2003) describe the mentor as the novice's growth agent.

In order to fulfill the mentorship role, the teacher mentor should have training in principles of adult learning, peer or cognitive coaching, and techniques which promote reflection on, and inquiry into, teachers' thinking and instructional practices. Potential mentors need the opportunity to develop coaching techniques, strategies for observation in the classroom, communication skills and problem-solving skills. This mentor training can be accomplished in a

variety of ways. The teacher mentors can be given opportunities to attend professional development seminars, the school division may offer mentorship training or the potential mentors may be provided with research time to pursue these areas, in order to prepare for working with the beginning teachers.

The *Superior-Greenstone Mentoring Handbook* (2011) suggests professional development topics suitable for teacher mentors. Some of these include:

- Stages of teaching in the first year.
- The needs of beginning teachers.
- Instructional strategies.
- Adult learning and development.
- The mentoring role and the qualities of effective helpers.
- Observation strategies.
- Coaching and conferencing.

Make sure that each teacher mentor has a copy of *Taking Your Place in the Professional Community: A Handbook for Beginning Teachers*.

Monitoring the Process

Despite everyone's best efforts and intentions, problems do arise. You have the responsibility of monitoring the mentorship to ensure things are running smoothly. However, when a mentor and beginning teacher are not working well together, it is not necessarily time to dissolve the relationship. Resolution of conflicts can be productive opportunities. About a month after the mentoring begins, separately talk to each about what has been happening and how things are going. Ask about problems encountered and how these are being resolved. Encourage feedback throughout the year, and beyond, to determine the strengths of the program and what could be done to improve the mentorship process. Have an evaluation plan from the onset. How will you know if the program is successful? (See the resource section of this handbook for material which can guide this process.)

Commitment and support is demonstrated by designing programs that ensure adequate time and resources for new teacher learning and mentor development.

www.bctf.ca/NewTeacherMentoringProject.aspx

Providing the Necessary Resources

One of the most valuable resources in our lives is that of time. Arranging time for the mentoring team to plan, observe and discuss is the most valued resource you can provide. Lack of time with the mentor partner is consistently identified as a frustration in the mentor relationship. Look for creative ways to create time for sustained interaction and opportunities for observation. Possibly consider utilizing substitute teachers to allow time for collaborative work. Perhaps you could free up one of the team to observe by stepping into the classroom yourself. You could reduce the teaching assignments of the team so there is more time for them to spend together. Another suggestion would be to release each from some of the extracurricular load so that there is more contact time for the team. There would be more time commitments placed on the rest of the staff, but it would be accepted if the mentoring is regarded as an important initiative. Pay the registration fees for mentorship teams to attend workshops which address the beginning teacher's professional goals. Turley, Power & Nakai (2006) write that it is essential that time is given to the team away from the school to plan and work together. This way there are none of those constant interruptions which seem to define our lives.

Three important conditions guide a successful mentorship.

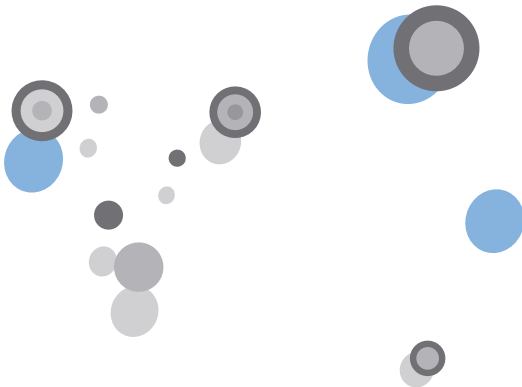
1. The first condition is that the mentorship team should have significant control as to the content of their work together. In other words, the topics that the team pursues should be determined by the team itself. The implication for the administrator is to refrain from being overly directive or prescriptive about the team's work.
2. The second condition addresses pre-service training. The mentor would benefit by having a good working knowledge of the nature of the pre-service training that takes place at the universities. Much may have changed since the mentor was attending university.
3. The last condition is the clear separation of support and evaluation. All those involved must be clear that the mentorship is not a part of the evaluation process. Beginning teachers and mentors need to develop a trusting relationship, confident that information from the mentor concerning the progress of the beginning teacher is not used for the purpose of evaluation.

The Mentorship Competencies Checklist

- ✓ Will the mentor be able to provide support and guidance to the beginning teacher without encouraging dependence?
 - ✓ Will the mentor ask the right questions of the beginning teacher ... not merely provide the right answers?
 - ✓ Will the mentor encourage and model reflection, self-appraisal and continuous improvement?
 - ✓ Will the mentor have the confidence to open his/her own teaching practices to close scrutiny?
 - ✓ Does the mentor foster a respectful and challenging classroom climate?
 - ✓ Will the mentor be encouraging, avoiding sarcasm and cynicism?
 - ✓ Is the mentor approachable?
 - ✓ Does the mentor have a solid knowledge of curriculum, student assessment and evaluation, instructional strategies and diversity issues?
 - ✓ Does the mentor thoroughly understand the school division, the community and the school's culture?
 - ✓ Is the mentor student-centred?
 - ✓ Does the mentor demonstrate excellent communication and conferencing skills?
 - ✓ Does the mentor display a willingness to invest considerable time and professional energy to the process?
 - ✓ Does the mentor practice action research?
 - ✓ Is the mentor's grade level and/or subject area compatible to that of the beginning teacher's assignment?
 - ✓ Is the mentor's age, gender or interests compatible with those of the beginning teacher's?
-

Beginning teachers provided the following suggestions for mentors in the Toronto School Division's 2010/2011 publication, *Building Effective Mentoring Relationships*. Some of these suggestions might apply to administrators too!

- Make the new teacher feel welcome (go out for a coffee, ask how they are doing?)
- Provide practical information about how to start out.
- Sometimes just listen as we talk out our frustrations, joys, fears, hopes, etc.
- Share resources...we'll give them back (promise!)
- Provide positive input to reduce our anxiety.
- Open, non-judgmental communications will build trust and rapport.
- Schedule time to discuss issues and share ideas.
- Be reassured you don't need to have all the answers.



Supporting the Beginning Teacher's Professionalism

Beginning teachers need to fully understand what it means to be a professional. As an administrator, you have the responsibility to ensure that the standards of the teaching profession are clearly communicated to these new members of the profession so that they can integrate these standards into their practice.



The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is committed to an expansive, holistic vision for teaching and learning in Saskatchewan; that vision is encapsulated within a set of ideals for the profession. The identified ideals fall into four broad, interrelated themes – social justice, inclusion and equity; respectful relationships; professional responsibility; and professional stewardship – that are the roots of teachers' professional commitment and inform everything that the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation does today. In *Taking Your Place in the Professional Community: A Handbook for Beginning Teachers*, there are direct references to these ideals and the ways in which they can be realized.

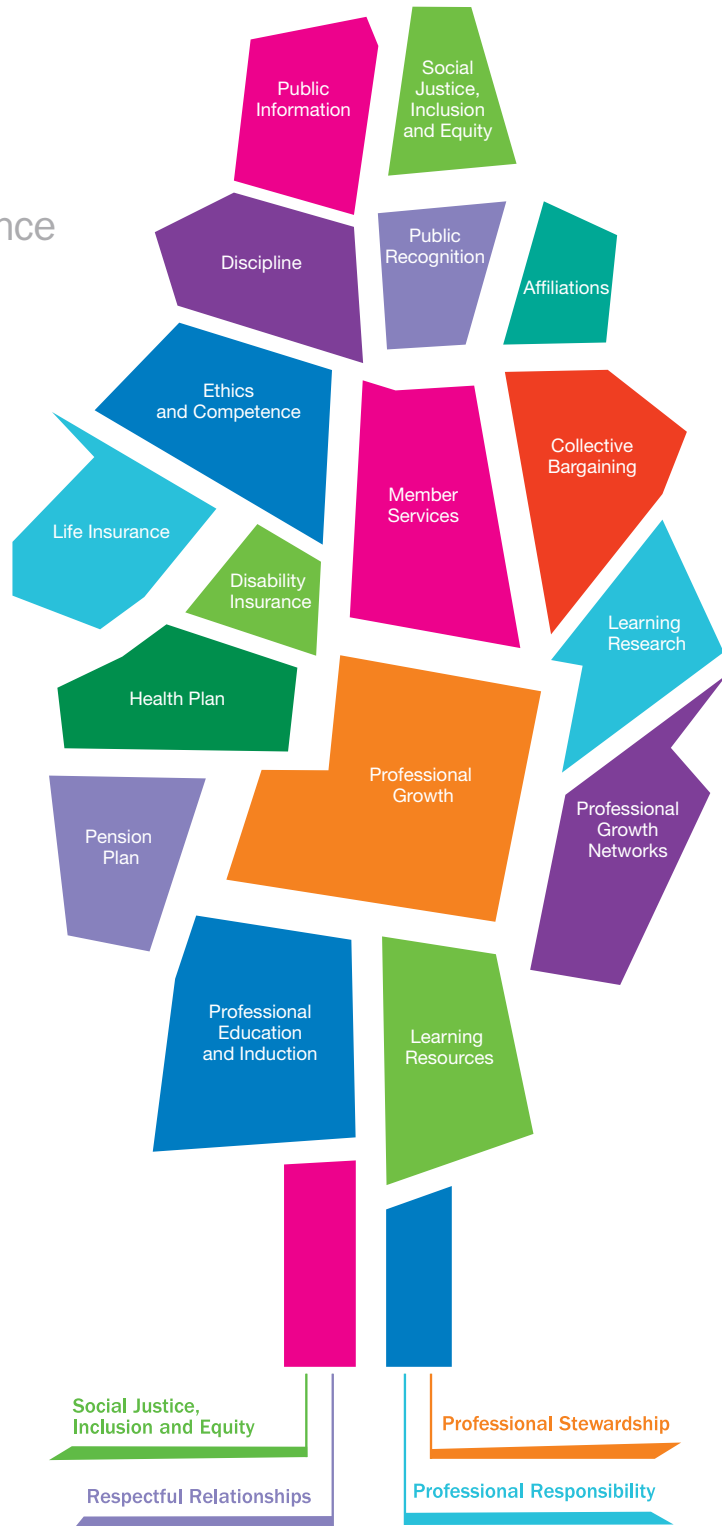


Mission

Inspiring and supporting teaching and learning excellence in public education.

We do this by:

- Celebrating the accomplishments and championing the rights, interests and well-being of students, teachers, schools and communities.
- Fostering and elevating the highest ideals of teachers and the teaching profession.
- Supporting lifelong learning of teachers through innovative professional growth.
- Securing conditions that support teachers in providing the best possible professional service.
- Administering pension and benefit plans for the wellness of teachers and their families.
- Governing and administering the affairs of the Federation with integrity.



Social Justice, Inclusion and Equity

A commitment to provide a public education that:

- Recognizes and respects every child or youth's diversity, enriches their character, and prepares them for life's opportunities and challenges.
- Is based on a student-centred, broadly based understanding of education that prepares children and youth to become confident, creative and caring individuals while gaining valuable experience and knowledge to fuel future endeavours.
- Is accessible and equitable for all children and youth regardless of their circumstances or learning potential.
- Serves a common good that is beneficial to all of society, not just to the students currently enrolled. Schools are a source of community and provincial pride which greatly contribute to the quality of all our lives.

Professional Responsibility

A commitment to engage in exemplary practices that:

- Demonstrate high standards of care, conduct and competence to ensure the well-being and growth of all children and youth.
- Create classroom and school cultures, which respect individual diversity, create a sense of belonging, and promote intellectual freedom and sharing by all.
- Exercise professional autonomy and agency focused on authenticated teaching and learning activities with students.
- Adapt and evolve through reflection, lifelong learning and collegiality.

Respectful Relationships

A commitment to model positive values, practices and relationships that:

- Honour the dignity and roles of all individuals in the educational community and elevate the status of the teaching profession.
- Create a uniquely Saskatchewan experience in public education marked by a co-operative spirit and healthy relationships.
- Strengthen relationships with parents, communities, colleagues, employers and government in order to support student and teacher success.

Professional Stewardship

A commitment to act on shared understandings and agreements that:

- Support student and teacher success by addressing a wide range of issues and needs regarding teacher professionalism and the quality of education.
- Assure public confidence and trust in professionally led systems and standards of teacher conduct and competence.
- Ensure all teachers have working conditions and professional opportunities that will attract, nurture and retain individuals who are committed to providing high-quality public service.

Professional Identity

What Does It Mean?

Although all teachers as individuals have their own unique ways of teaching, they are also members of a profession bound by a social contract. The public trusts members of the profession to be committed to high professional standards of conduct and competence.

This social contract carries the implication that teachers share with their colleagues an identity based on certain kinds of specialized knowledge, skills and other characteristics.

Many factors shape this professional identity, including pre-service preparation, the professional contexts of teachers' work, continuing professional growth and the other common experiences of most teaching careers. In turn this identity, or who teachers are, is central to teachers' professional practice and relationships.

The three codes of Professional Competence, Professional Ethics and Conduct Respecting the Collective Interests of Teachers, developed in Saskatchewan by teachers for teachers, are statements of shared principles about this professional identity and what it means to be a teacher in this province.

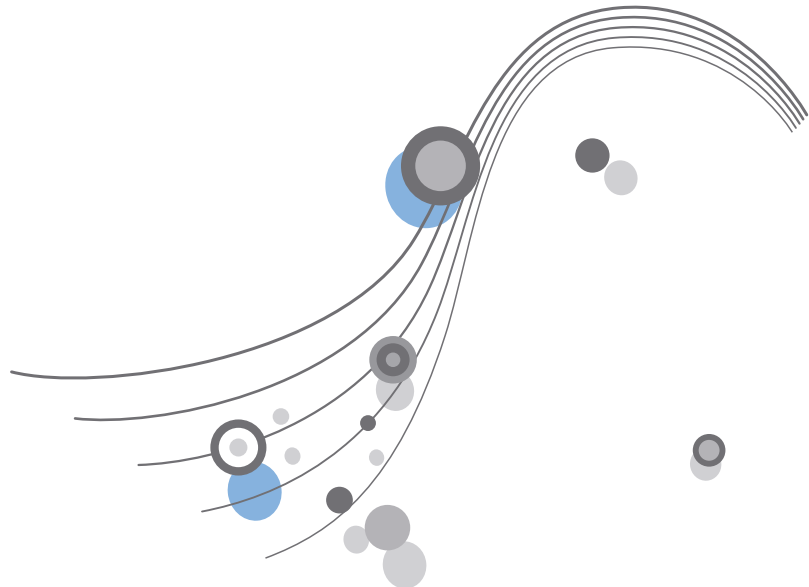
Professional Practice and Contexts

Teachers teach. The public trusts professional teachers because they have the qualifications, including specialized knowledge, skills and judgment, to serve students' educational needs. In turn, teachers have a responsibility to act at all times in a manner that is worthy of this public trust and consistent with the teaching profession's expectations.

Many factors affect teachers' daily activities and their conduct and competence as they carry out this work. A few examples include addressing the diversity of students' needs, the demands of the teaching assignment, the challenges of class size, the condition of the school facilities, as well as access to preparation time, quality learning resources and parental support.

The three codes of Professional Competence, Professional Ethics and Conduct Respecting the Collective Interests of Teachers speak directly to several closely related dimensions of professional practice. These codes and the processes used to implement them also recognize that teachers' work lives involve very complex contexts that must be carefully considered whenever there are questions about an individual teacher's professional conduct or competence.

Ultimately, the codes outline what ethical conduct, competent professional practice and collective interests mean, and what the teaching profession expects from its members in these regards.



Professional Relationships

Teachers work with many individuals, including students, colleagues, administrators, educational assistants, support staff, social workers, health-care professionals, parents, volunteers and other community members. Effective professional relationships are essential to teaching practice and teachers share the responsibility for the quality of these relationships.

In Saskatchewan, individual teachers also have professional relationships with both the Federation and the employer. The Federation has the legislated authority to develop and implement the three codes of Professional Competence, Professional Ethics and Conduct Respecting the Collective Interests of Teachers that express what it means to be a member of the teaching profession. Boards of education or other employers have the authority to establish their own policies and procedures regarding what it means for a teacher to be a staff member or employee.

It is important to note that these are two distinctive sets of expectations, policies and procedures, and that one should not be used in place of another. Concerns or complaints about an individual teacher's conduct or competence may be addressed through the teaching profession, the employer, or both, either at the same time or at different points in time.

Teachers are strongly encouraged to become knowledgeable about the Federation's codes and procedures, and their employers' policies and procedures, to ensure they are aware of the expectations in both regards.

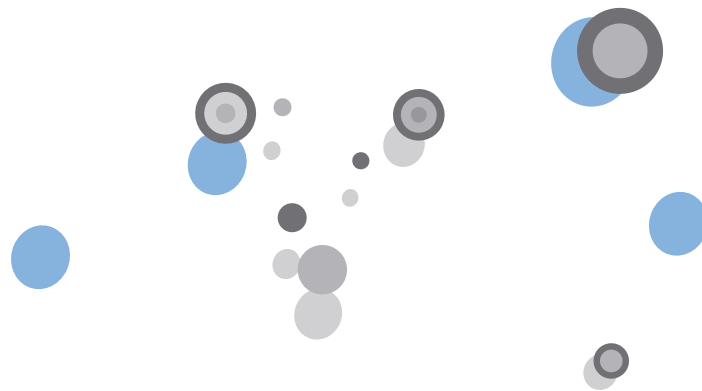
A Proactive Approach to Professionalism

Saskatchewan is unique in that the public, via legislation, grants teachers and their professional organization the autonomy to regulate the professional competence, professional ethics and collective interests of its members. By proactively developing codes and disciplinary processes, Saskatchewan teachers demonstrate accountability and reinforce public confidence in, and support of, the profession.

Some teachers may feel uneasy about the idea of having professional codes. It is important to keep two key points in mind, however. First, procedures are in place to adjudicate complaints about the alleged misconduct or incompetence of a teacher. These procedures are based on the principles of due process. They are designed to focus on professional conduct and practice, not personalities, and to protect individual teachers from frivolous or malicious complaints.

Second, experienced teachers developed the three codes governing the professionalism of Saskatchewan teachers. All members of the teaching profession should be able to recognize at least some aspects of themselves and their work in the codes. At the same time, however, individual teachers will see their situation as somewhat unique. As teachers reflect on what the codes mean for their own practice, it is essential to keep exploring the complexities of teachers' professional identity, practice, contexts and relationships.

The codes can be viewed as a starting point for teachers to think about these kinds of issues, as well as to discuss with colleagues what is important to them as professionals, what teaching practice should involve and what, if anything, they should change in their practice to meet students' learning needs.



When Questions or Concerns Arise

Questions or concerns about an individual's teaching practice or professional competence should always be raised first with the teacher. In most cases, taking this step will address the issues that an administrator, teacher colleague, parent or other individual may have.

Teachers have an ethical responsibility to take their concerns first to the colleague in question. As noted in Article 6 of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Code of Professional Ethics, teachers must "... inform an associate before making valid criticism, and inform the associate of the nature of the criticism before referring the criticism of the associate to appropriate officials."

Before approaching a colleague with their concerns, teachers are encouraged to contact the Federation's Senior Administrative Staff for advice and assistance. It is not a violation of the Code of Professional Ethics for a member to make this request. The role of the Federation's staff in these kinds of situations is to help clarify issues and procedures, not to judge or penalize Federation members.

If questions or concerns about an individual's teaching practice or competence continue after a discussion with the teacher has occurred, then a formal complaint about a teacher's professional conduct and/or competence may be made to the board of education and/or the Federation.

Two routes may be followed:

1. The board of education may implement teacher supervision and evaluation processes in accordance with its policies.
2. A complainant, including a board of education, may forward the allegation to the Federation.

In either situation, the teacher involved should seek advice and assistance from the Federation's Senior Administrative Staff.

Federation Programs and Services

Teachers may wish to explore the implications of their professional codes with colleagues in their school, local association or other settings. As they do so, they may want to access the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation programs and services regarding teacher professionalism. For example, the Federation:

- ✓ Encourages and supports teachers at the provincial, local association, school staff and individual levels to create and carry out professional development plans.
- ✓ Offers various professional development opportunities regarding teacher professionalism (e.g., pre-service workshops, Code of Professional Ethics and ethical decision-making workshops, summer short courses, beginning teacher conferences, sessions at teacher conventions, etc.).
- ✓ Promotes the professional development activities of professional growth networks.
- ✓ Maintains an extensive professional resource collection and reference service (Stewart Resources Centre).

In addition, the Federation:

- ✓ Provides information and advice to members regarding professional matters.
- ✓ Promotes teachers' understanding and practice of teacher professionalism, including the principles and ideals of professional competence, professional ethics and collective interests.

- ✓ Advocates strengthening teacher professionalism in various ways, including promoting better understandings of teachers' professional needs by educational partners and stakeholders.
- ✓ Supports and works with various affiliates and partner organizations with a focus on teacher professionalism initiatives.

Visit the Federation's website, www.stf.sk.ca, or contact one of the offices in Saskatoon or Regina for more information on programs and services for Saskatchewan teachers.

There are many ways for new teachers to become involved in the activities of the Federation; you may serve on committees, draft resolutions to be considered at the Annual Meeting of Council, attend Federation-sponsored professional development, avail yourself of materials at the Stewart Resources Centre, apply to evaluate learning resources, contribute articles to the *Saskatchewan Bulletin* or become a member of a professional growth network. Remember that your most important commitment to your professional organization is to strive for excellence in your practice.

Professional Codes

Codes of Professional Competence, Professional Ethics and Conduct Respecting the Collective Interests of Teachers

The Federation's ideal of professional stewardship:

- Assures public confidence and trust in professionally led systems and standards of teacher conduct and competence.
- Addresses a wide range of issues and needs regarding teacher professionalism and the quality of education.

Code of Professional Competence

The code includes the following core principles of competent teaching practice, each of which teachers may demonstrate in various ways.

1. To create and maintain a learning environment that encourages and supports the growth of the whole student.
2. To demonstrate a professional level of knowledge about the curriculum and the skills and judgment required to apply this knowledge effectively.
3. To demonstrate and support a repertoire of instructional strategies and methods that are applied in teaching activities.
4. To carry out professional responsibilities for student assessment and evaluation.
5. To reflect upon the goals and experience of professional practice, and adapt one's teaching accordingly.
6. To work with colleagues in mutually supportive ways and develop effective professional relationships with members of the educational community.
7. To conduct all professional relationships in ways that are consistent with principles of equity, fairness and respect for others.

This code, set by Council, guides:

- The teaching practices of Federation members.
- The Federation Executive in decision-making regarding the disposition of complaints.
- The deliberations and judgments of the Federation Professional Competency Committee.

Code of Professional Ethics

These are the ethical ideals for Saskatchewan teachers:

1. To act at all times in a manner that brings no dishonour to the individual and the teaching profession.
2. To act in a manner that respects the collective interests of the profession.
3. To make the teaching profession attractive in ideals and practices so that people will desire to enter it.
4. To respond unselfishly to colleagues seeking professional assistance.
5. To respect the various roles and responsibilities of individuals involved in the educational community.
6. To inform an associate before making valid criticism, and inform the associate of the nature of the criticism before referring the criticism of the associate to appropriate officials.
7. To support objectively the work of other teachers and evaluate the work of other teachers only at the request of the other teacher or when required by role as a supervisor.
8. To strive to be competent in the performance of any teaching services that are undertaken on behalf of students, taking into consideration the context and circumstances for teaching.
9. To deal justly, considerately and appropriately with each student.
10. To develop teaching practices that recognize and accommodate diversity within the classroom, the school and the community.
11. To respect the right of students to form their own judgments based upon knowledge.
12. To encourage each student to reach the highest level of individual development.

13. To seek to meet the needs of students by designing the most appropriate learning experiences for them.
14. To implement the provincial curriculum conscientiously and diligently, taking into account the context for teaching and learning provided by students, the school and the community.
15. To be consistent in the implementation and enforcement of school, school system and provincial Ministry responsible for PreK-12 education policies, regulations and rules.
16. To render professional service to the best of the individual's ability.
17. To keep the trust under which confidential information is exchanged.
18. To keep parents and the school community informed of and appropriately involved in decisions about educational programs.
19. To model the fulfilment of social and political responsibilities associated with membership in the community.
20. To protect the educational program from exploitation.
21. To seek to be aware of the need for changes in local association, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, school, school division and provincial Ministry responsible for PreK-12 education policies and regulations and actively pursue such changes.

These ideals, set by Council, guide:

- The ethical behaviour of Saskatchewan teachers.
- The Federation Executive in decision-making regarding the disposition of complaints.
- The deliberations and judgments of the Federation Professional Ethics Committee.

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation *Governance Handbook* (2014)

Code of Conduct Respecting the Collective Interests of Teachers

A member shall:

1. Apply for an available position on the basis of the member's highest professional qualifications.
2. Undertake to perform as a condition of employment only those duties required by statute.
3. Neither apply for nor accept a position with an employer during a period in which the Federation has declared that a dispute exists between the Federation and the employer.
4. Adhere to all terms of a contract of employment until it is legally terminated.
5. Participate actively in Federation affairs at both the provincial and local levels, working for needed changes in Federation policy, and shall respect those decisions made by elected representatives of the profession.
6. Respect the collective bargaining process as the appropriate means to determine all conditions of employment.
7. Adhere to all terms of applicable collective agreements.
8. Participate in legal sanctions requested by the bargaining unit following a vote of the membership.

This Code, set by Council, guides:

- The conduct of members of the Federation.
- The Federation Executive in decision-making regarding the disposition of complaints.
- The deliberations and judgments of the Federation Collective Interests Committee.

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation *Governance Handbook* (2014)

Teacher Supervision and Evaluation

The process of supervision and evaluation is a critical element in beginning teachers' growth as professionals. Teachers need to have administrators visit their classrooms frequently on both an informal and a formal basis to observe, collect data and provide feedback on which to build their professional skills. These processes serve to provide direction and assurance for beginning teachers during the critical first years.

A frequently asked question by beginning teachers is one similar to the following:

My principal talks about my "supervision" and my "evaluation." My colleagues talk about their "performance appraisal" and "developmental supervision." I don't understand what all these words mean. Are they different? As a beginning teacher, what do I need to be concerned about?

A problematic issue is the distinction between supervision and evaluation. Although they are both important and they are closely related, they are not the same thing.

Let your beginning teachers know that school divisions may use different vocabulary to communicate similar processes. As a beginning teacher, they should expect that their principal or superintendent will be involved in the evaluation process.

Teacher supervision is a planned, developmental process intended to support teachers' career-long success and continuing professional growth. There are a variety of approaches that can be used to support a beginning teacher in planning and implementing professional growth. All of these processes are supportive of the developing skills of beginning teachers, focus on identifying resources and additional supports and are individually developed by teachers as each takes on responsibility for directing his/her own growth as a professional.

Effective approaches include the following:

- Cognitive Coaching.
- Mentoring.
- Peer Coaching.
- Professional Portfolios.
- Action Research.
- Study Groups.
- Critical Friends.
- Professional Growth Plans.

Professional Growth Plans

By actively supporting the development of the beginning teacher's professional growth plan, you ensure that the teacher is aware of the significant benefits these plans can return for both themselves and students. There may be numerous aspects the novice teacher wants to include in the professional growth plans, but caution them not to take on too much initially. Keep the goals manageable and realistic to ensure success for them as well as their students.

The teachers professional growth plan might include:

- Specific learning activities in which they will engage.
- Possible ways the learning could translate into the classroom.

- Descriptions of the impact the learning will have in the classroom.
- Description of resources that will facilitate learning.
- Action plans to direct learning.
- Measures of the success of the learning activities.
- Reflective writing.

Teacher evaluation is a planned, developmental process in which, in order to support teachers' career-long success and professional growth, there is a formal written appraisal or judgment as to an individual's professional competence and effectiveness at a particular point in time. An evaluation may also serve to provide a written record of teaching service. Teacher evaluation is characterized by the specific purposes and formality of both the process and the recordkeeping involved.

I find it valuable to ask the beginning teacher, 'What do you want me to notice today?' That provides focused support for our conversation later.

A Secondary School Administrator

'I feel so much better!' commented Carla, a 4th grade teacher, following an evaluation conference with her principal.

Before, I had no idea what my principal was looking for - I had to be a mind reader! So I just played it safe, taught a familiar lesson, one I knew would go well - but did the process improve my teaching? Not at all! In my old school, the principal just came in with a checklist, but we never really talked. There was no dialogue. But this time, we had a great conversation about how to help my students want to write. It really made me think. As a result, I've got a new approach.

Adapted from Danielson (2011)

Seven belief statements appear in the Federation's Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Policy.

1. The individual teacher is primarily responsible for setting personal goals and objectives for a successful professional practice; conducting one's professional practice in ways that are consistent with the Code of Professional Ethics, the Code of Collective Interests and the Federation's policies on Teacher Success and Professional Growth and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation statement of Guiding Principles and Supports for Successful Teaching Practice; engaging in career-long personal and professional reflection, and self-directed professional growth opportunities as necessary.
2. Teachers must have direct involvement in the development and renewal of supervision and evaluation policies and procedures.
3. The principles of natural justice must be integral to supervision and evaluation policies and procedures.
4. Supervision and evaluation policies and procedures should clearly distinguish between the definitions, purposes and roles that refer to supervision and those that refer to evaluation.
5. Supervision and evaluation policies and procedures should encourage individual teachers to try different or new approaches as they carry out their professional responsibilities and receive feedback in an environment that is characterized by truth, respect and mutual support.
6. As a fundamental premise of supervision or evaluation processes, teachers should be provided with opportunities and any necessary resources or supports, as identified by the teaching profession, for appropriate professional growth.
7. School principals, who have responsibility for teacher supervision, and the school division administrative staff, who have responsibility for teacher evaluation, should have training that includes the successful completion of programs that have been designed for these purposes. The goals, objectives and content of these programs should be developed collaboratively by the partner organizations in education.

Article 7 of the Code of Professional Ethics provides additional information about the intent of evaluation, which is to improve performance. In addition, we are reminded that the administrators who have the responsibility of evaluating beginning teachers "have a duty to be accurate, objective and honest" as well as to "ensure that the teacher has been informed of the evaluation." (p. 15)

Credibility in an evaluation system is essential. A principal or a superintendent must be able to say to the school board and the public, 'Everyone who teaches here is good – and here's how I know.'

Danielson (2011)

What Do You Do When Things Are Not Going Well?

If you observe that things are not going well with a beginning teacher, what can you do?

First of all you, along with the teacher mentor, may want to work on the “why’s,” helping the beginning teacher reflect on the factors contributing to the difficulties. It is almost always a good idea to address one problem at a time. A beginning teacher may simply be overwhelmed if you are looking at multiple factors simultaneously. No one can improve in a state of near panic.

You will also want to consider the induction that the teacher has been given. Has the teacher received the supports needed to be successful? In addition, consider other avenues you can pursue in identifying and obtaining additional resources and supports.

- Peer coaching opportunities or additional mentorship might prove to be beneficial.
- Numerous professional development opportunities arise that might benefit the beginning teacher.
- Federation staff members are available to provide both counselling services and professional coaching for teachers.

- Central office staff may be available to offer additional coaching and support.
- The Stewart Resources Centre has many books, videos and articles devoted to supporting beginning teachers. There are many resources to address particular areas of concern, such as classroom management, assessment and evaluation, instructional planning, etc. Examine some of the resources listed in this handbook for support.

The consequences to the entire school community of not supporting beginning teachers as they develop into professional educators are staggering. There may be limited student learning, heightened home and student concerns, high levels of teacher stress and teacher absenteeism. Therefore, it is imperative that we ensure beginning teachers are supported as best we can. It is important they receive diverse, differentiated opportunities in order to develop their identity, skills and understandings of what it means to be a professional educator.

Effective administrators with high teacher retention rates do what they can to help create success conditions for the protégé, mentor and the mentoring process.

Sweeny (2008)



A Calendar for Administrators

Even though each school is different, there are patterns to the school year that can be universally predicted. This monthly checklist can serve as your “to-do” list of many of the things you should be alerting your beginning teacher(s) to in the course of the year. There are many other aspects of our professional culture that could well be discussed during those early days, but be conscious of beginning teacher overload.



The reality for many beginning teachers is that they are hired after school is already underway. If this is the case for one of your beginning teachers, ensure you alert your newest staff member to the absolute essentials before diving in. Consider what is definitely needed and what can possibly go on the “wait awhile” list.

Ensure all teachers new to the school are aware of basics such as:

- School calendars, including reporting periods.
- Assessment and evaluation expectations.
- Any assessment software used by the school.
- Any division or provincial student assessments.
- School protocols.
- Teaching and extra-curricular expectations.
- Arrangements for substitute teachers (see Appendix A for a template you can adapt).

We, as educators, tend to assume too much regarding what new teachers are ready to handle. New teachers need support from day one, if they are going to succeed in their classrooms.

Breaux (2011)

June

- Develop orientation information package.
- Develop mentorship information package.
- Decide on content for first orientation meeting (held in August).
- Arrange for a meeting with the beginning teacher when you can give the new teacher your total attention. Expect a lot of questions. You might want to introduce the beginning teacher to some key personnel at this time. You may wish to take the teacher on a tour of the school.
- Discuss extracurricular opportunities.
- Arrange for any materials that the beginning teacher may need, such as filing cabinets and other furniture, card swipes, keys, etc.
- Remind beginning teachers to consult the Ministry of Education's website, www.education.gov.sk.ca, for curriculum information. Alert them to the Federation's website, www.stf.sk.ca, particularly the section designed for beginning teachers and the Stewart Resources Centre site accessible through the Federation's address.
- Invite exemplary veteran teachers to consider a mentorship commitment for the upcoming school year/semester.
- Provide beginning teachers and prospective mentors with mentorship information packages.
- Be sure to inform the beginning teacher about summer hours, access to the school, caretakers' schedules, photocopy codes and any security protocols.
- Encourage the teacher to walk or drive around the town or area surrounding the school to get a feel for the community. Assist them in seeking accommodations for August.
- Communicate the school's Learning Improvement Plans.

Orientation Package

If your school does have an orientation package, it might include the following information. If there isn't an orientation package, you might want to ask about some of these items:

- A schedule of a typical school day, with dismissal times, recesses and breaks noted.
- A schedule of any alternate days.
- A list of staff members (with photographs?) and their assignments.
- A list of staff phone numbers and email addresses.
- The name and telephone number of your mentor or other colleagues willing to be of assistance.
- A list of paraprofessional staff (with photographs?) and the tasks for which they are responsible.
- The names, job descriptions and contact information of all support staff available (e.g., community liaisons, school counsellors, instructional consultants, psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers).
- School discipline policy.
- School assessment policy.
- School mission statement or philosophy.
- A "first-day" checklist, including ideas about storage of extra materials, classroom routines, etc.
- The location of teacher washrooms, mailboxes, supplies, photocopier, computers and telephones.
- The location of resources and equipment, including sign-out policies and procedures.
- A description of bookkeeping procedures (e.g., what expenses will be covered, how to be reimbursed for expenses, how to collect and submit fees, how to issue receipts).
- A school year calendar with dates indicated for progress reporting, parent conferences, professional development days and holidays.
- The location of student records (e.g., medical information, contact phone numbers, cumulative folders).
- Your local association directory.
- A community resource directory with contact information for agencies and organizations that might support your work with children and youth.
- Procedures around arranging for a substitute teacher.
- Maps of the school with fire exits.
- A copy of the school's Learning Improvement Plan and school mission statement.
- A copy of the division's strategic plan.
- Research articles concerning school and division goals and initiatives.
- Recent articles on instruction and assessment especially regarding the need for variety.
- The location of student records - cumulative folders, contact phone numbers, medical information.
- The school's attendance procedures.
- A list of who's who in the school division including the names and job descriptions of support personnel.
- LINC agreement.
- Guidelines for professional behaviour.
- The evaluation and reporting process timetable and forms.
- Addresses of important websites such as the Ministry of Education, the Federation, the school division.
- Planning templates.
- Samples of forms that will be encountered during the year/semester.
- Information on working with support personnel (See www.stf.sk.ca).

- Parking allocations.
- Staff room expectations.
- Information on staff funds (i.e., possibility of delaying payment until later in the year).
- _____
- _____
- _____

Unfortunately, the reality for many beginning teachers is that they are hired after school is already underway. If this is the case for you, then do not hesitate to find out the essentials as soon as you can. Ask your administrators to tell you the most important things they think you should know as you dive in.

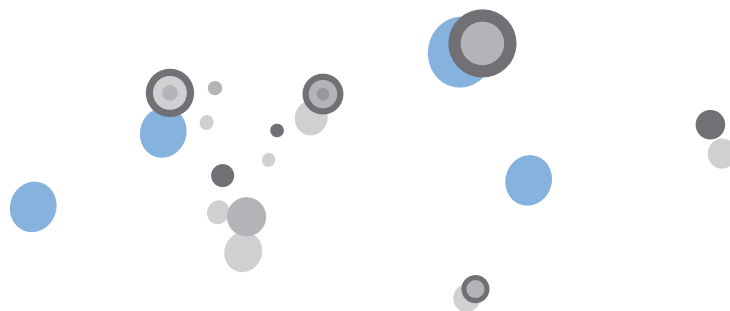
Make sure you are aware of basics such as:

- School calendars, including reporting periods.
- Assessment and evaluation expectations.

- Any assessment software used by the school.
- Any division or provincial student assessments.
- School protocols.
- Teaching and extra-curricular expectations.
- Arrangements for substitute teachers (see Appendix D for a template you can adapt).

If you are fortunate to be hired before school begins, it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the neighbourhood in which your school is situated. Walk or drive around the neighbourhood to get a better understanding of your future students' home milieu.

Make as many arrangements as you can for your own living needs. Do you want to live close to the school so you may walk? Would you prefer to find a place further away possibly creating a separation between work and home? Could anyone at the school help you find suitable accommodations?



August

- Mail orientation package to all new staff.
- Organize and conduct the first school orientation meeting. Make sure that new teachers are clear about what happens during the startup days (schedule of meetings both at the school and at the division level, student registration responsibilities, social events, etc.).
- Decide on content for second orientation meeting to be held in September.
- Take the teachers on a tour of the school (if not done in June), introducing the new teachers to school personnel.
- Introduce beginning teachers and mentors.
- Make sure that beginning teachers are aware of aspects regarding teacher associations: LINC agreements, STF school staff liaisons, etc.
- Encourage the beginning teachers to develop their personal wellness plans and emphasize the importance of sticking to them. Remind yourself of the importance of your wellness plan too!
- Discuss the philosophical, as well as, practical expectations of your staff, including discipline and classroom management.
- Assure them that you will be touching base with them frequently and this attention does not indicate a problem. However, if a potentially serious problem does arise, you expect to be the first to know. You don't want surprises.
- Discuss community expectations, dress expectations, cyber issues such as Facebook and YouTube, as well as other "off school" behaviours.
- Emphasize the importance of long-term planning.
- Introduce the concept and templates associated with Learning Improvement Plans (LIPs).
- Discuss policies and protocols for out-of-school trips. Help them anticipate trips for the entire year.
- Highlight the paperwork they will be working on at various times during the year. Show them copies of the appropriate forms and reports they will be responsible for completing and when they can expect them. Remind them that even though assessment and evaluation are ongoing, there are set reporting windows and procedures. Ensure that they are aware of expectations regarding the submission of curriculum maps or yearly plans.
- Ensure their familiarity with protocols surrounding access, custody and potential abuse issues.
- Communicate how collaborative groups/professional learning communities are organized and function within the school.
- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of support staff. Point out *So You Have a Special Student*, a resource document from the Federation.
- Arrange meetings between new staff and the Learning Assistance Teacher, the Teacher-Librarian, as well as the EAL teacher(s).

September

- Support attendance at the Taking Your Place in the Professional Community: A Conference for Beginning Teachers sponsored by the Federation.
- Discuss other professional development opportunities, how to apply for them and where to seek funding as needed.
- Make sure new staff members know how to inform the school of their absence and how to prepare for substitutes.
- Organize and conduct the second orientation meeting.
- Plan to provide as much classroom release time for beginning teachers and their mentors as possible. Time for the beginning teacher to watch his/her mentor in the classroom is important, as is release time for the teacher mentor to work with, and provide feedback and support for, the new teacher.
- Plan classroom management support with the beginning teacher and mentor.
- You may wish to organize parent volunteers to assist the beginning teacher with technical tasks such as photocopying, filing, preparing lab materials or organizing art supplies.
- Introduce beginning teachers to the school community council. Consider introducing beginning teachers to trustees.
- Consider asking both your beginning teachers and their mentors to volunteer for reduced extra-curricular loads.
- Discuss the harassment policy for your school division.
- Discuss the importance of First Nations and Métis perspective in all curricula.
- Explain how the beginning teacher can access funds for classroom supplies and materials.
- Ensure there is clarity regarding the division's financial policies and procedures.
- Discuss the school division's policy with respect to the supervision and evaluation of teachers. Make certain there is an understanding regarding the difference between supervision and evaluation. Encourage them to ask questions about the supervisory process. Make sure times have been set for your classroom visits and follow-up conferences.
- Assist the beginning teacher with preparations for Education Week in October.
- Set aside regular contact times throughout the year now and keep these time commitments with your beginning teachers firm. You need to touch base frequently.
- Teachers will be receiving their first cheque. Remind your beginning teachers to check that they have received the accurate amount.

Because new teachers are eager to obtain permanent contracts, they often accept the most difficult teaching assignments and undertake more than their fair share of extracurricular activities. Stopping this cycle might require intervention on the part of administrators willing to ask experienced staff to take on additional assignments so that new teacher's assignments are more manageable, thereby enabling them to focus on learning to teach well.

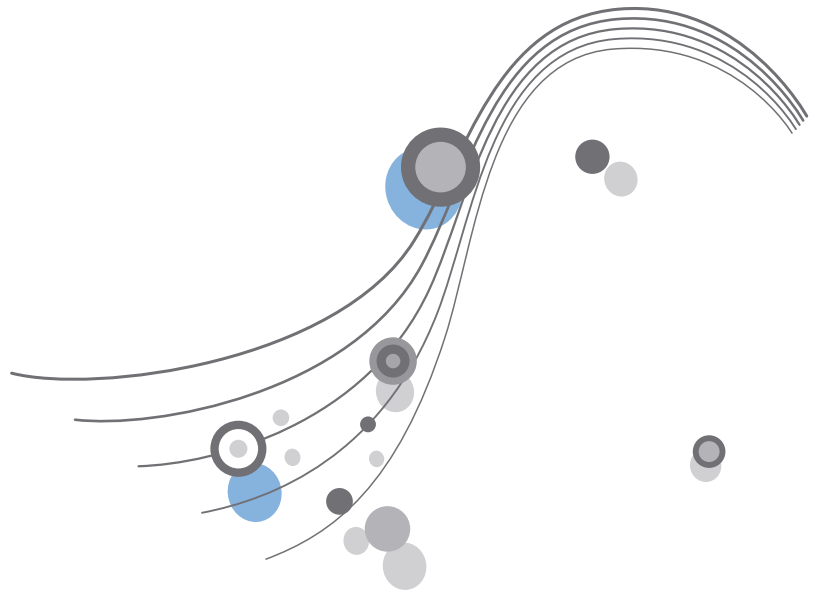
Adapted from the Alberta Teachers' Association (2012)

Protect your beginning teachers from themselves. Watch out for the newbie who tries to volunteer for everything.

Secondary School Administrator

October

- Assist the beginning teacher with any standardized testing that may occur at this time of year.
- Provide support for student assessment and evaluation in anticipation of the first reporting session.
- Explain the interview process that your school uses, including the format, times, scheduling procedures and location of the meetings. Assist teachers to prepare for the interviews by anticipating certain situations and discussing how the teacher might handle those situations. Offer to attend any parent conference that may benefit from your presence. Remind teachers that they are not expected to tolerate any intimidation or abuse; any such behaviour should be documented and shared with an administrator.
- In preparation for celebrations that take place in the first part of the school year (Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas), plan to discuss the nature of the celebration and how different holidays are observed in your school community. What special considerations are made for students and how has this been addressed in the past?
- Meet with the beginning teachers to discuss their professional growth plans.



November

- Find authentic opportunities to affirm the strengths of the beginning teacher.
- Reassure them that many beginning teachers feel a sense of disillusionment at this time during the school year as they question their competence and commitment. Encourage them to “hang in there.”
- Either you or the teacher mentors should collaborate with the beginning teacher to identify student assessment and evaluation challenges for the second half of the first term.
- Help beginning teachers review the wellness plan discussed in August – don’t forget about your own plan.
- Encourage all staff to spend informal time together. Consider the different age groups within your staff. Are there ways those differences could benefit the new teacher?
- Meet with mentorship teams to determine how things are progressing and whether any midstream adjustments need to take place.
- Arrange to meet with the beginning teachers to discuss how the Federation’s codes are applied. Consider discussing some hypothetical situations and invite a dialogue about how each of the situations could be addressed.

The little things count. There is not a magic bullet, not one single thing that the principal can do that will make the difference. It’s the accumulation of little things that matter.

Richardson (2008)

December

- Assist teachers to plan for a variety of winter/holiday events that recognize the diversity within your school.
- Emphasize that learning is still to remain the focus despite the increased excitement. Also alert them to the stresses many children/youth feel at this time of year and how a teacher needs to be sensitive to these feelings.
- Remind secondary teachers about the final exams that will be taking place early in the new year and the end of semester procedures.
- Encourage beginning teachers to plan for a relaxing holiday involving little or no school work.

January

- Plan to meet with the beginning teacher to discuss the teacher supervision activities that have been accomplished.
- Either you or the teacher mentor should review November's student assessment and evaluation modifications.
- Secondary school teachers will be finishing one semester and starting a new one. Plan to support your teachers through this busy time.

Thought:

If a beginning teacher arrives mid-year, have I considered what I could do to best support them?

February

- Alert teachers to the “February blues” that affect some students and teachers, and discuss how to deal with this.
- Support beginning teachers as they prepare for student placement decisions (i.e., special programs or farewell/graduation programs).
- Assist the beginning teachers as they plan for any spring outdoor education experiences.

March

- Continue to dialogue with your beginning teachers about both student progress and their own performance appraisals.
- Meet with your beginning teachers to review their professional growth plans.
- Revisit your school’s Learning Improvement Plan with your staff.

April

- Discuss employment options for the next year. Provide frank advice for beginning teachers regarding what is available for them.
- Ensure that there are opportunities for the beginning teacher to observe and practice some new instructional strategies with a mentor or a colleague.

May

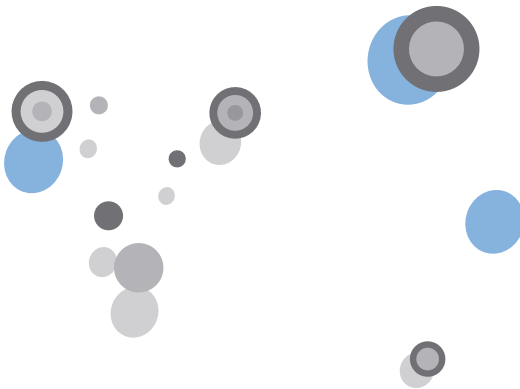
- Encourage the beginning teacher to articulate how his/her professional identity has emerged throughout this formative year.
- Review the role of the Federation and encourage the beginning teacher to pursue opportunities to be involved in Professional Growth Networks, advisory committees, or as a Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation school staff liaison to local associations.
- Revise orientation and mentorship information packages with input from the beginning teachers and from teacher mentors. Elicit suggestions from the mentorship teams about how the program might be enhanced.
- Prepare and distribute year-end procedures packages for staff.

Who better to teach novice teachers than those with the best skills in the same school with the same students?

Donder (2011)

June

- If it is your responsibility within the school division, review the evaluation report with the beginning teacher and submit it.
- Encourage beginning teachers to prepare for their next assignment by setting curricular, instructional and personal growth goals.
- Develop an orientation information package and mentorship information package.
- Invite exemplary experienced teachers to consider a mentorship commitment for the upcoming school year.
- Provide beginning teachers and prospective mentors with mentorship information packages.
- Arrange for any materials or equipment that new teachers will require for the next school year.





Wellness, The Beginning Teacher and You

Beginning teachers recognize that the principal is a significant person in their workplace – possibly the most significant. They will look to you for support, affirmation, guidance and, in some cases, evaluation.

Because you are of importance to them, your guidance, direction and feedback can be very influential. The climate of support for innovation and reflection that you create will be a factor in the success of a new teacher.



Reflecting on Personal Wellness

Although teaching involves intensive interaction with youngsters, the work of teachers is usually done in isolation from colleagues. This isolation can be especially difficult for beginning teachers who are frequently left to “sink or swim.” According to some educators, teaching is a profession that eats its young (Anhorn, 2008; Carlson, 2012; Ingersoll, 2012).

Beginning teachers commonly put in long days during their first year of teaching. According to the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit’s (SIDRU) 2013 study titled *Teacher Time*, excessive working hours can negatively affect a teacher’s health, well-being and quality of education offered to students.

There are proactive measures that can be taken to ensure a climate of support.

- Beginning teachers may need an engagement in conversations about time management and workload stressors, or perhaps some counselling to reduce pressures and increase job satisfaction. Having an opportunity for personal connections can make the beginning teacher’s experience more pleasant.
- Perhaps one of the most significant decisions that you can make in your relationship with a beginning teacher is to model and encourage personal wellness. Talk to your beginning teachers about how you felt when you first started in the profession, with all its challenges and workload demands. Be explicit about how you deal with the challenges of stress and balance. This type of support can be invaluable to a person starting out.

Remember that all members of the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation are encouraged to look to the counselling services of the Federation for support in personal and professional problem solving. Contact the Saskatoon office at 306-373-1660 or the Regina office at 306-525-0368. The toll free number is 1-800-667-7762.

“A happier and better adjusted teacher means potentially a better classroom experience for the student, and also a teacher who may be more likely to stay on the job.”

Dr. Ron Martin, University of Regina, as quoted in the Regina Leader Post, April 3, 2014

As a whole, beginning teachers' stories reveal histories of hard work and frequent frustrations; but they also report satisfaction, a will to persevere and a sense of mission. They believe what they do is vitally important. The keys to helping novice teachers thrive are complex. The first year of teaching is critical. New teachers need help to realize the importance of their work and find the resources that will allow them to continue their work in an effective and satisfying way. Mentors and supervisors should be proactive and not wait for beginning teachers to approach them for help. Colleagues should listen and assist beginning teachers without judging them.

Those who train teachers and support their professional development should focus on two areas: alleviating a potentially demoralizing workload and developing positive relationships with students. The first year of teaching is critical, and the proactive supports that teacher training and mentoring programs can provide to help novice teachers overcome challenges will increase the likelihood that new teachers will remain in the teaching profession.

McCann & Johannessen (2004) Final Reflections

Novice teachers look foremost to principals for guidance and direction.

Ingersoll & Kralik as cited in Wood (2005)

Consider using the following as a checklist of wellness practices for both you and your beginning teachers.

Do You ...

- ✓ Ensure that you eat at regular times during the day?
- ✓ Ensure that you sit down to eat (somewhere other than at your desk?)
- ✓ Ensure that you eat healthy, balanced meals?
- ✓ Plan for and participate in regular exercise?
- ✓ Plan for work-free evenings and weekends as much as is possible?
- ✓ Sleep adequately?
- ✓ Take time for family and friends?
- ✓ Leave work concerns at work?
- ✓ Remind yourself you cannot fix everything that is wrong in the lives of your students?
- ✓ Utilize school, school division and Federation supports for wellness, if needed?
- ✓ Understand that we work as a team and asking for help is not a sign of weakness or the inability to cope?
- ✓ Remind yourself that an event is not stressful in itself; rather, it is our reaction to the event that causes stress?
- ✓ Remind yourself of the positive things that are happening every day, rather than beating yourself up about those things that were negative?

New teachers know that going into teaching is going to be hard. If they know that people are paying attention to them, valuing their presence, and recognizing that they're still learning, then they're likely to be tolerant of the bumps and challenges. We lose teachers when these bumps and challenges happen and nobody seems to care.

Richardson (2008)

Supporting Wellness in the Beginning Teacher

In addition to modelling personal wellness, consider the active and practical decisions that may help the beginning teacher to experience a feeling of control over the demands and challenges of this new and exciting career. Work at interrupting some unfair practices that sometimes occur when a staff learns about the arrival of the “new kid on the block.” Principals cannot afford to ignore these actions and certainly should not participate in them. Wood (2005) refers to it as the “hazing of novice teachers” and writes that this kind of disenfranchisement leads to novice teacher attrition (p. 59). Some of these unfair practices include:

- Removing furniture, supplies and other resources from a classroom before the new teacher arrives.
- Having a new teacher without an assigned classroom as a base.
- Assigning multiple preparations/grades.
- Expecting that the beginning teacher will have a similar, or heavier, extracurricular load to that of an experienced teacher.
- Leaving all the “leftover” extracurricular assignments to the new teacher.
- Omitting new teachers from scheduling of computer lab, gymnasium, etc.
- Placing high-demand students en masse in the new teacher’s classroom.
- Placing the novice in an assignment for which he/she is poorly prepared.
- Assigning large numbers of students to the novice teacher’s classroom.
- Assigning students to the novice teacher’s classroom whose parents/guardians are known to be intimidating or confrontational.

Article 8 of the Code of Professional Ethics highlights the importance of considering the experiences and education of the beginning teacher when creating a teacher assignment and taking into account the effect of these factors on teaching competency. Administrators are reminded that consulting with members of the staff is critical and that school staffs that take a collaborative approach to the assignment of roles and duties are likely to maximize the competence of staff members.

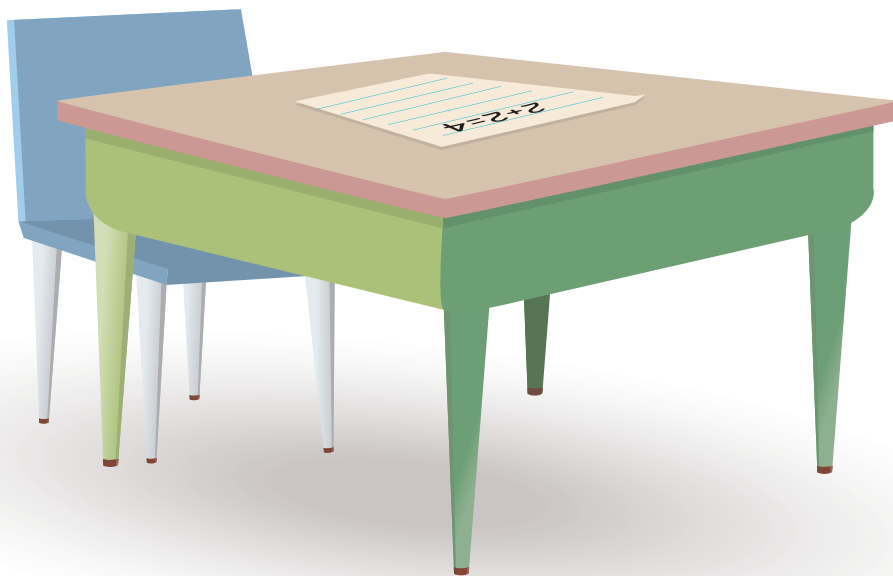
How to make a difference in the life of a beginning teacher:

- ✓ Ensure at least an equitable workload in terms of class size, number of preparations and assignment of students with special needs. A reduced workload is even better.
 - ✓ Discuss the extracurricular load taken on by the beginning teacher. Because these teachers are in the process of learning to teach, ensure they have a manageable extracurricular workload.
 - ✓ Provide guidance as to when it is appropriate and even necessary, to say no, as first year teachers often think they have to do everything that is asked of them and do it well.
 - ✓ As much as possible, ensure that a beginning teacher has an assignment for which he/she is prepared, and has access to the resources needed in order to prepare for that assignment.
 - ✓ Carefully plan a meaningful induction program for new staff.
 - ✓ Ensure that a beginning teacher has access to all necessary resources before the school year/semester begins.
 - ✓ Be explicit about recognizing, encouraging and praising the efforts and the accomplishments of the beginner.
 - ✓ Provide the beginning teacher with all necessary information concerning the supervision and evaluation processes early in the school year.
 - ✓ Make frequent visits to the classroom.
 - ✓ Provide regular feedback to beginning teachers on classroom management, instructional and assessment approaches, and content knowledge.
 - ✓ Assure beginning teachers that they have the right to tell students and parents that they cannot call them at home or stop them on the street with questions regarding grades, assignments or other non-urgent matters; rather, they should be contacted at the school.
 - ✓ Assure beginning teachers that many of the challenges they face are typical for new teachers and they are not alone in experiencing difficulties.
 - ✓ Practice asking specific, focused questions that produce meaningful and reflective thought.
 - ✓ Asking the teachers how they are doing as they hurry to their next class is no substitute for quality time with the beginning teacher. Initiate a conversation with, “What successes have you had this week?” “What challenges?”
 - ✓ Purchase resource material for beginning teachers and their mentors – see suggestions in the annotated bibliography.
 - ✓ Assure new teachers that your door is open to them.
 - ✓ Share some of the challenges you faced as a beginning teacher.
- AND ...**
- ✓ Be particularly aware of the support needed for a teacher coming into a new teaching situation during the school year.



Supporting Classroom Organization and Management

One of the most frequently reported challenges for beginning teachers is that of classroom management. What does managing the classroom mean to beginning teachers?



Those of us who have taught for a number of years understand classroom management is simply the level of organization and order necessary to establish a productive learning environment that allows for learning to take place. It takes some experience for teachers to develop an understanding of the relationship between planning, instruction and responding to a diversity of student needs.

A focus of the induction process for beginning teachers should be classroom management. When a beginning teacher has little or no experience in setting up a classroom, guidelines need to be discussed. Management is a need identified by most beginning teachers and sound management in all your school's classrooms makes for a healthier school culture.

Classroom management involves everything you do to make the classroom run smoothly. Discipline is not the number one problem in the classroom; rather, it is the lack of a clear, concise management plan. Clearly established and communicated procedures and routines are the most important part of any good classroom management plan.

Adapted from Breaux (2011)

There is no magic formula that will work for all teachers in all situations, but share some underlying principles with your newest staff members:

- Make sure you are prepared. Have both short- and long-range plans clearly thought out.
- Ensure that your classes have students and student learning at the centre. Students “buy in” when they feel ownership in their learning.
- Make objectives clear to students.
- Be proactive. Being proactive simply means recognizing potential problems and stopping them before they become actual problems.
- Catch students behaving, rather than misbehaving.
- Develop classroom management policies before the year/semester begins and share them with your students.

- Classroom policies should be simple and easy to enforce.
- No two classroom management plans will be identical. Your personality will influence classroom management.
- Management systems should allow for some flexibility. Listen and ask questions before inflexibly applying consequences. Is the student at fault for being late when the school buses are running behind schedule? Are there personal issues that are at play?
- Anger and sarcasm are almost always counter-productive. Humour is often a far more effective way to resolve management issues before they become significant problems.
- Disruptions are bound to occur in every school. Accept that it is to be expected and try to stay as focused as possible.
- Attack the problem, not the person.
- Learn what it is wise to overlook. Pick your battles.

Adapted from Breaux (2011)

As a supportive administrator, you can help beginning teachers understand their own strengths in management and you can clearly exemplify the aspects of your school's culture you wish them to emulate. Be explicit about your expectations regarding classroom management and invite teachers to engage in dialogue about the belief systems that support your expectations.

You can further support beginning teachers in some of the following ways:

- Being available to assist with challenging and/or disruptive students. Perhaps accommodating disruptive students for a time until the teacher and the student have had time to consider alternatives.
- Looking for alternatives to detentions and suspensions.
- Being visible in classrooms, hallways, school grounds and school functions.
- Communicating with all staff about behavioural expectations and discipline procedures to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- Recommending resources that support management questions a beginning teacher might have. See the resource list in this handbook for some suggestions.
- Supporting a teacher's attendance at a classroom management workshop.
- Reminding beginning teachers that the problems they may be encountering are common during the first years of teaching and that most teachers have classroom management issues sometime during their careers.
- Read *10 Things I Want All New Teachers to Know* and share this advice with your new teacher(s). www.justintarte.com/2013/07/10-things-i-want-all-new-teachers-to.html.

Great teachers establish clear expectations at the start of the year and follow them consistently as the year progresses. Great teachers expect good behaviour and that is generally what they get.

Whitaker (2011) p.17



Resources

The Stewart Resources Centre, located in Saskatoon, has a comprehensive collection of resources to support the induction process.



With a collection of over 26,000 books and audio-visual resources, 140 journals, a selection of teacher-prepared units, plus a friendly and knowledgeable staff, the Stewart Resources Centre is able to meet classroom, research and professional development needs. The Centre's online catalogue is accessible at www.stf.sk.ca.

The Centre can:

- Assist you and your administrative colleagues as you work with mentors and beginning teachers.
- Provide guidance for experienced teachers in their role as mentors.
- Offer professional resources and classroom materials to beginning teachers.

Most materials may be borrowed by educators in Saskatchewan for a period of four weeks with the option to renew. Prepaid return mailing labels are provided for print materials sent out of Saskatoon. Requests for information or to borrow materials may be emailed to the library using the E-Reference Service Form. Ensure your teachers are aware that if they are looking for resources to supplement classroom instruction and don't know exactly what resources are available, simply include the subject and grade level if applicable and the staff at the Centre will do the rest.

The benefits of mentoring have become more widely recognized with various jurisdictions in Canada actively involved in supporting mentoring initiatives. At least three of these initiatives might well support induction and mentoring in our Saskatchewan schools.

- The BC Teachers' Federation, UBC Faculty of Education, and the BC Superintendents Association, funded through a grant from the Ministry of Education, launched *The New Teacher Mentorship Program* in 2012. The website has research, support documents, workshop materials and other resources to assist administrators, mentors and teachers new to the profession. Available at: m2.edcp.educ.ubc.ca/mentoringbc/.
- The Toronto District School Board has produced *Building Effective Mentoring Relationships, Information and Resources for Mentors*. This resource has a variety of supports for the mentoring process, including suggested mentoring models, roles of the mentor, ideas to consider while coaching, effective mentoring strategies, thoughts from beginning teachers regarding the mentoring process, etc. The resource is available online at: schools.tdsb.on.ca/asit/standards/btstart/MentorsTDSB.pdf.
- The Superior-Greenstone District School Board in Ontario has developed the *Mentoring Handbook for New Teachers and Mentors*. This resource provides information on a variety of aspects of the induction and mentoring process. Some topics include: the goals and benefits of mentoring; the basis for mentoring partnerships; supporting the mentoring program; the challenges of the mentoring program; the various roles of those in the mentoring process – mentor, mentee, principal; professional learning for mentors, etc. The resource also includes professional development activities, as well as print and electronic resource selections. Available at: sgdsb.on.ca.

General Resources to Support the Induction Process of Beginning Teachers

Blank, Mary Ann & Kershaw, Cheryl (2009). *Mentoring as collaboration: Lessons from the field for classroom, school, and district leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

The authors present a field-tested model that defines roles and expectations for new teachers, mentors and administrators. School leaders are led through various aspects of building a team-based mentoring program, including aspects such as how to get started, how to select mentors, how to provide time, resources and support, how to assess the impact of the mentor program, etc. There are numerous reproducibles that may be adapted.

Daresh, John C. (2003). *Teachers mentoring teachers: A practical approach to helping new and experienced staff*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

This book is for the school leader who wants to develop and maintain an effective mentoring program. It discusses characteristics of a good mentor, approaches to take in training mentors, the assignment of mentors and evaluating the mentoring program. One difference with this resource from most others on the subject is that it also includes ideas on the mentoring of veteran teachers. The book allows for personal response and has a useful summary at the end of each chapter.

Heller, Daniel A. (2004). *Teachers wanted: Attracting and retaining good teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Chapter 3 of this ASCD publication explores the induction process for beginning teachers. It examines ways that the principal can support the mentorship program: support groups, finding common meeting time for mentors and novice teachers, and the effective assignment of mentors. Other chapters deal with topics such as pre-service education, professional growth and the challenges of administration.

Lieberman, Ann, Hanson, Susan & Gless, Janet (2011). *Mentoring teachers: Navigating the real world tensions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

The book explores the subtleties and struggles of becoming an effective mentor. The book discusses the five big tensions of mentoring: developing a new identity, developing trusting relationships, accelerating teacher growth, mentoring in challenging contexts and learning leadership skills. It also includes engaging vignettes, actual stories of the growth, the trials and the traps to avoid as mentors and beginning teachers work together.

Johnson, Susan Moore (2004, 2007). *Finders and keepers: Helping new teachers survive and thrive in our schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Based on a longitudinal study of 50 new teachers, this book reveals what really matters to beginning teachers. The voices of these novice teachers demonstrate the importance of the principal and experienced teachers in the induction process. It provides answers to the question of how best to support these beginning professionals.

Killion, J., & Harrison, C. (2006). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

This NSDC publication deals with leadership roles in a school. Chapter 7 explores the teacher mentor as leader. The chapter looks at the areas of focus for the beginning teacher, as well as the challenges for the mentor. There is a useful chart which outlines the stages of teacher development and what mentors can do at each stage to assist a teacher.

Prytula, M., Makahonuk, C., Syrota, N. & Pesenti, M. (2009). *Toward successful teacher induction through communities of practice*. Saskatoon, SK: McDowell Foundation.

This research study examines the inconsistencies in induction processes in Saskatchewan. It reports on three themes that contribute to these variations: whether the mentor is assigned or unassigned; whether the mentor is fully engaged or disengaged in the process; whether the mentorship experience exists through a single mentor or through multiple mentors. It examines aspects of the induction process such as compatibility and formality. The research centres on the professional learning community as a powerful support for the beginning teacher.

Sweeny, Barry W. (2008). *Leading the teacher induction and mentoring program*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

This resource would be valuable both for those at the division office and at the school. It gives a detailed design plan for an induction process, including a mentoring program. It includes a rationale, a description of roles and responsibilities, ways to find time for effective mentoring to take place and how to evaluate, improve and sustain the induction process of beginning teachers.

Yendol, Diane & Fitchman Dana, Nancy (2007). *The reflective educator's guide to mentoring: Strengthening practice through knowledge story and metaphor*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Stressing the importance of deep reflection on one's mentoring practice, the authors offer stories of a range of effective mentor teachers. The narratives illustrate proven strategies to help administrators and mentors as they work with beginning teachers. The book includes a chapter on what it takes to be an effective mentor. Each chapter is followed by exercises for discussion and reflection.

Resources to Suggest (or Purchase) for Your Beginning Teachers

Breaux, Annette (2011). *101 “answers” for new teachers and their mentors, 2nd ed.* Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

This resource provides suggestions as to how to handle difficulties new (and not so new) teachers may experience.

Breaux, Annette, & Whitaker, Todd (2006). *Seven simple secrets: What the best teachers know and do!* Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Not just for beginning teachers, each chapter in this book deals with a foundation of good teaching – careful planning, thoughtful classroom management, sound instruction, positive attitude, professionalism, effective discipline and motivation. Easy to read with lots of examples.

Campoy, Renee (2005). *Case study analysis in the classroom: Becoming a reflective teacher.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Beginning teachers are presented with typical classroom problems to analyze and solve. There are 17 cases covering a wide range of topics on which to reflect. A rubric follows each case so that the teacher can judge his/her response. Case study topics include parent conferences, reluctant readers, disruptive students, EAL students, inappropriate assessment, etc.

Gentzler, Yvonne (2005). *A new teacher’s guide to best practices.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Presented in a workbook format, this resource encourages reflection on many of the challenges faced by teachers on a daily basis. How am I to know what to teach? What if they don’t listen to me? What’s my role in the mentor and new teacher relationship? What is expected of me? Help! I can’t find time to get to the staffroom to be collegial! This resource could be used with mentors in the induction process or used by beginning teachers working at their own pace.

McEwan, Elaine K. (2006). *How to survive and thrive in the first three weeks of school*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

This resource works with a teacher to develop research-based “with-it-ness” qualities. It deals with organizing a classroom, establishing a positive environment and maximizing student involvement and achievement. Written to be immediately practical, there are hundreds of ideas for organizational routines, attention grabbers, noise breakers, silent signals, etc. There are sections for both elementary and secondary teachers with many specific examples from practicing teachers.

Martin, Kandace, & Brenny, Kathleen (2005). *1000 best new teacher survival secrets*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc.

This book has an appealing format with easy-to-find information. It covers most topics that would be of concern to beginning teachers, from reading the school's mission statement to dealing with a death in the school community. Websites are listed along with a list of useful books to read.

Whitaker, Todd (2011). *What great teachers do differently: 17 things that matter most* (2nd ed.) Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Whitaker writes, when a student misbehaves, great teachers have one goal: to keep that behaviour from happening again. Various sections in this resource deal with classroom management, particularly Chapter 5, “Prevention Versus Revenge.”

Wormeli, Rick (2012). *Good feedback=Active learning*. www.middleweb.com/1600/ricks-fundamentals-part-2/.

Wormeli's website has numerous articles that would be beneficial for beginning teachers. In this article he provides examples of specific feedback for active student learning.

... And Specifically On Assessment

Chappuis, J., Stiggins, R., Chappuis, S., Arter, J. (2011). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right—using it well* (2nd ed.) Toronto, ON: Pearson.

This book guides teachers as to how to create accurate classroom assessments and how to integrate assessment with instruction day-to-day, with a focus on student involvement.

Davies, A. (2007). *Making classroom assessment work*. Courtenay, BC: Connections Publishing.

In easy to follow steps, Davies shows teachers how to translate what research shows us we should do to what we actually can do in our classrooms. There are lots of ideas of using assessment for learning in order to guide instruction. Davies focuses on how we can involve students, the home and the community in the assessment, evaluation and reporting process.

Jones, P, Carr, J., Ataya, R., eds. (2007). *A pig don't get fatter the more you weigh it: Classroom assessments that work*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

This book explains how well-constructed assessments provide data that is essential to the development of learning opportunities for all students. The text includes contributions from teachers and teacher educators, classroom vignettes, and alternative approaches that have been proven useful in assessing the needs of a wide range of students. This book is intended for teachers who want their assessment to be a vehicle for instructional improvement.

McMillan, J. (2007). *Classroom assessment: Principles and practice for effective instruction*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

This resource is a guide to conducting a range of quality learning assessments, from portfolios to standardized testing. McMillan places assessment within the context of classroom instruction and the realities of the modern classroom. The book addresses the assessment of students with special needs within inclusive settings.

... And Specifically On Instructional Strategies

Harvey, Stephanie, & Goudvis, Anne (2007). *Strategies that work: Teaching comprehension for understanding and engagement*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

The first edition of *Strategies That Work* has become an indispensable resource for teachers who want to explicitly teach thinking strategies so that students become engaged, thoughtful, independent readers. In this revised and expanded edition, there are an additional 20 completely new comprehension lessons, extending the scope of the book and exploring the central role that activating background knowledge plays in understanding. Another major addition is the inclusion of a section on content literacy, which describes how to apply comprehension strategies flexibly across the curriculum.

Thompson, J. (2013). *The first-year teacher's survival guide: Ready-to-use strategies, tools and activities for meeting the challenges of each school day*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This resource gives beginning teachers support to meet many classroom fundamentals, including the use of effective instructional strategies. Topics include choosing appropriate instructional strategies and resources, meeting diverse student needs, techniques for motivating students and delivering engaging instruction.

Wiggins, Grant & McTighe, Jay (2005). *Understanding by design* (2nd ed.) Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

The second edition of this well-known resource poses the core, essential questions of understanding and design. The authors have put together a text that demonstrates what best practice in the design of learning looks like.

Resources to Suggest (or purchase) for Your Teacher Mentors

Blank, Mary Ann & Kershaw, Cheryl (2009). *Mentoring as collaboration: Lessons from the field for classroom, school, and district leaders*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

The authors present a field-tested model that defines roles and expectations for new teachers, mentors and administrators. School leaders are led through various aspects of building a team-based mentoring program, including aspects such as how to get started, how to select mentors, how to provide time, resources and support, how to assess the impact of the mentor program, etc. There are numerous reproducibles that may be adapted.

Lieberman, Ann, Hanson, Susan & Gless, Janet (2011). *Mentoring teachers: Navigating the real world tensions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

The book explores the subtleties and struggles of becoming an effective mentor. The book discusses the five big tensions of mentoring: developing a new identity, developing trusting relationships, accelerating teacher growth, mentoring in challenging contexts and learning leadership skills. It also includes engaging vignettes, actual stories of the growth, the trials and the traps to avoid as mentors and beginning teachers work together.

Rutherford, Paula (2011). *Creating a culture for learning*. Alexandria VA: ASK Publications.

Creating a Culture for Learning is based on the belief that all schools must create cultures that promote and support professional growth and collaboration. The second chapter, “Communication Skills for Collaboration,” and the third chapter, “Collaborative Practices,” would be particularly useful for mentors as they work with beginning teachers.

Zepeda, Sally (2012). *Informal classroom observations on the go: Feedback, discussion and reflection*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

The tools in this resource will help mentors give beginning teachers the helpful feedback they need to develop their professional skills. The areas addressed in this book include numerous instructional methods, data collection, follow-up discussions with teachers, studying student work, etc. There are over fifty observational tools that could be adapted.



Appendices



Appendix A

You may want to adapt this form (originally adapted from Saskatoon Public Schools) for use in the school.

Substitute Information

Thank you for taking over my class. I have provided information which should be helpful. There is also a school map attached.

Please join the staff for coffee in the staff room at break (to) and over the lunch hour (to).

Location of staff room

Location of staff washrooms

Staff names:

Principal

Vice- or Assistant Principal(s)

Educational Assistants

Secretary(ies)

Caretaker(s)

Teacher-Librarian

Library Technician

Resource Room Teacher

Teacher next door

School policies that you need to know:

Where to find:

- Lesson plans
- Class lists
- Seating plans
- Equipment (audiovisual, computers, texts)

Attendance procedures:

Students with special needs and/or timetables:

Students with allergies and/or other medical needs:

Class schedule:

Bathroom, hall or phone pass procedures during class time:

Dismissal procedures:

Bus students (Y/N):

Class rules or routines:

Management routines:

Discipline routines:

Emergency procedures:

Photocopier location and procedures:

Other relevant information:

Before you leave please ... :

Adapted from Saskatoon Public Schools

Appendix B

Professional Growth Networks Free Membership Offer for Beginning Teachers

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation supports 29 professional growth networks. This affiliation provides members with publications, networking and other professional growth opportunities.

Professional growth networks have been established in a variety of subject fields, service areas and interdisciplinary groups. The general purpose of professional growth networks is to support professional growth and lifelong learning of their members.

The success of each professional growth network is measured by teacher interest in becoming members and taking an active role in the work of the networks. Membership is not limited to teachers, but includes any person with a professional interest in the activities of the networks.

Several professional growth networks offer beginning teachers a free one-year membership. Complete the voucher below to receive a membership to the professional growth network of your choice.

Forward completed voucher to:

Professional Growth Networks
Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
2317 Arlington Avenue
Saskatoon SK S7J 2H8

Further information on professional growth networks can be found on the Federation's website, www.stf.sk.ca, or contact the Federation, 306-373-1660 or 1-800-667-7762.



This voucher entitles you to a one-year free membership in a professional growth network of your choice.

Teacher: _____

Teacher's Certificate Number (required to confirm STF membership status): _____

Home Mailing Address: _____

Home Phone _____ Email: _____

I would like a free membership to the following professional growth network: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Saskatoon – Head Office

2317 Arlington Avenue
Saskatoon SK S7J 2H8
T: 1-800-667-7762 or 306-373-1660
F: 306-374-1122
stf@stf.sk.ca

Regina – Appointments Only

www.stf.sk.ca

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