

## Possible Mentoring Activities

### CLASSROOM

- Provide sample parent/guardian communications (beginning of the year letters, good notes home, field trip announcements, progress reports, discipline forms, etc.).
- Provide sample substitute plans/folders and other necessary information (schedule, helpers, rules, etc.).
- Provide sample emergency plan (for unexpected times when the teacher becomes ill or must be absent).
- Help novice acquire needed necessities such as furniture, storage units, supplies, materials as well as nice-to-have items.
- Consult with novice about room arrangements and routine classroom procedures.
- Talk with the novice about Beginning of the Year activities—the checklist provided in the Focused Observations\* would be a good place to start. Modify it to reflect your needs and fit situation. Consider developing a similar checklist for Ending the Year activities.
- Arrange for the novice to observe other teachers (grade level plus grade above and grade below). When coverage is necessary, work out the arrangements for the novice with the appropriate administrator. Provide any of the Focused Observations\* that would be helpful. [Several are focused specifically on management concerns including ways to prevent problems and for reacting productively when problems occur.] Talk with the novice after the observations. Engage the novice in sharing what they have learned and how they will apply their new knowledge in their own classrooms. These observations provide many *teachable moments* in working with the novice teacher.
- Arrange with the novice appropriate times to observe lessons. Devise a strategy that will promote the novice's comfort and willingness (and even eagerness) to have someone observe. The rule of thumb is—the more appropriate feedback, the better. Use the Coaching-Mediational Questions (Cognitive Coaching Basics\*) and the suggested Recommendations\* (aligned with the TN Framework for Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development) to help the novice develop instructional expertise and to gain experience with the teacher evaluation process. [Using the Coaching-Mediational Questions (without observing) is also an excellent way to help the novice reflect, analyze, and problem solve. These planning and reflecting conversations also provide opportunities to reinforce effective practices and help the novice identify potentially more effective strategies or additional options.]
- Use the Planning Guide for Culturally-Relevant and Effective Teaching and Learning\* to collaborate with the novice on lesson and unit planning (with the novice individually and/or with the grade level or departmental team). Do not overwhelm the novice in addressing all the elements. Identify 3, 4, or 5 of the components you feel will make the biggest difference at this point in the novice's development.

- Another, more labor intensive idea is to videotape a demonstration lesson to share with the novice. As it is replayed, do a Think Aloud so the novice can gain a sense of your thinking as the lesson unfolds. This will help the novice begin to notice the indicators the mentor uses to assess the lesson's effectiveness and what indicators mean a change of plan is necessary.
- Volunteer to be the novice's buddy for discipline problems (if the location and situation are appropriate). The intent is to identify a secure "time out" location outside the novice's classroom—to allow time for "cooling off." If some other colleague would be a better choice, help make those arrangements. Talk through the appropriate procedures for sending a child to the other teacher's room.
- (If telephones are not an option), create some emergency signal with the novice to indicate the need for immediate assistance. Talk through how that might work.
- Orient novice to grading procedures. Share how you determine the sources for grades and the relative weight assigned to each. Research information on productive homework in terms of type, amount, and its weight in the overall grading system would be helpful.
- Engage in Action Research with the novice on an area of mutual interest and/or concern.