Guiding First Year Teachers Through Peer Mentoring

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STAR Mentor Program

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Competency: Leading the Profession

• Builds capacity for continual improvement and learning
• Shows educational leadership and understands union’s role in student learning and leading our professions
• Advocates for policies and strategies that positively impact our professions and student learning
• Analyzes and applies research, policies and trends to determine potential impact on our professionals and student learning
Background

• The STAR Program was developed in 1995 as a joint effort between the Cherry Creek School District Administration and the Cherry Creek Education Association, replacing sabbatical leaves.
Original Memo of Understanding

Memorandum of Agreement
Cherry Creek Teacher Assistance Program

In an ongoing effort to improve student achievement and provide the highest quality educational program to all students, the Cherry Creek School District and the Cherry Creek Education Association work continually to examine practices and processes that reflect continuous improvement. We understand that, in order for students to achieve and improve, teachers must succeed in their teaching. With that understanding in mind, the District and Association agree to cooperate in exploring the development of a teacher assistance program during the SY 1995-96 with the intent of implementing such a plan in the fall of SY 1996-97. The goal of this plan will be to improve the quality of instruction through a peer assistance program for beginning teachers and for intervention with other staff members where necessary and appropriate.

1. The work study group will utilize up to $25,000 from the previously allocated and agreed upon amount of $175,000 (alternative proposals for sabbatical funds, Policy 4152) for the purpose of investigating the teacher assistance plans used in other school districts, e.g., the model used in Seattle Public Schools. One hundred seventy-five thousand dollars will be allocated to this program in the 1996-97 school year for its successful implementation.

2. The District and the Association will each appoint five members to this work study group.

3. The intent of this study will be to develop and implement a plan for improving the quality of instruction in the District in the fall of SY 1996-97 through a system of consulting teachers who would be identified based on their outstanding abilities and would coach, assist, and informally provide feedback on the performance of teachers.

4. The group will seek a source of funding that will supplement the District resources in order to ensure a long-term commitment to the success of the program.

5. The group will submit a plan to the Superintendent and CCEA President by February 1, 1996, recommending language to replace the existing Policy 4152.

[Signatures]
for the District
for the Association

Date March 9, 1995
Study Team

• Made up of equal numbers of Association leaders and District Administrators

• Jointly visited:
  – Columbus, Ohio
  – Seattle, Washington
Memorandum of Agreement
Cherry Creek Teacher Assistance Program

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1. The District will appoint three members and the Association will appoint four members to a Governing Panel that will supervise the implementation of this program.

2. The Governing Panel will provide necessary assistance to the negotiations teams recommending language to replace the existing Policy 4152 by June 30, 1999.

Date 9/2/97

for the District

for the Association
Awards and Recognition

- SATURN Award for Management/Labor Cooperation
- NCUEA Training 1998
- Selected for Innovation at New Teacher Leader Conference
- Selected for presentation at New Teacher Center Symposium
- PEBC
- STATE board
Program Goals

• To accelerate the growth of novice teachers through mentoring
• To focus on increasing the novice teacher’s skills in classroom management and instruction
• To assist veteran teachers who have been placed on a directed improvement plan
• Satisfies State Induction
Current Structure

• Governed by STAR Panel made up of 4 Association members and 3 administrators
• Co-chaired by Association President and District Level Administrator
• 7 master teachers are released from their teaching assignment for three years.
• Mentor teachers receive training in teacher evaluation, cognitive coaching, and district initiatives.
• Each mentor has 12 – 16 teachers on his/her caseload.
How Mentors Are Chosen

• Program Announcing openings every January by current Mentors—see STAR Gazing Packet

• STAR Mentor Positions are then posted

• Mentors must have seven(7) years teaching experience in Cherry Creek

• Paper screening by STAR Panel and current mentors

• Interviews by STAR Panel and current mentors

• Final selection by STAR Panel Interview Team
Mentor Training

• Newly hired Mentors shadow outgoing Mentors
• Two Day Summer Retreat
• Current Evaluation System
• Cognitive Coaching
• Strengths Training
• C2MO
• Weekly Study Sessions
• Book Studies
Weekly Meeting

• Full Day Meeting
• Weekly agenda prepared in rotation by each mentor
• Usually on Wednesday
• Substitutes for daily planning time
First Year Forum

• How can a great first week launch a great first year?
• How do I intentionally create a classroom that reflects my values and beliefs?
• How do I let my students know I care about them as people?
• How do I actively engage my students as learners?
STAR Mentoring Process

• Mentors meet with each building principal to let them know who they are mentoring
• Mentors do not mentor in their normal building assignment
• Mentors must uphold a “data curtain” and do not share any observations, etc. with evaluators. This ensures a true mentor/mentee relationship.
Mentee Meetings

- Process
- Planning Meetings
- Field Trips
- Record Keeping
- Data Curtain
- Non-evaluative
- Contact with principal/evaluator
Sometimes it is just a balancing act
TIME FOR A BREAK
Welcome Back!

- Based on what you have heard so far, how is STAR different from PAR (Peer Assistance and Review)?
- What are the advantages or disadvantages to each?
Renewal/ Sabbatical

• Mentors agree that the personal growth as a teacher was the best part of being a STAR Mentor.
Creating Teacher Leaders

• Eileen Elles – “It forced me to shed my ego, which is very important in my work as a coach, a trainer of trainers, a data consultant, and a mentor to struggling teachers. My work was not about me, but about helping others realize their own potential.”

• Elizabeth Maloney – “I received training and learned how to be a coach. This prepared me for my current job as a district-wide instructional coach. I could never do the work I am doing today without having been a STAR mentor.”
Returning to Classroom as Leaders
ESP and STAR

• 2 EOP’s handle all the logistics.
• Virtually no mentoring in District
• Unique jobs prevent one Released mentor for EOP’s
• Mentoring of District logistics would be valuable
Our Contact Information

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Session Outcomes (final slide)

- The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:
  - Initiate collaborative bargaining with administration to create a similar program
  - Help in recruiting new teachers by demonstrating the Association’s desire to help them in their first years as teachers
  - Improve public perception of Association because of work to improve the professions
Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!