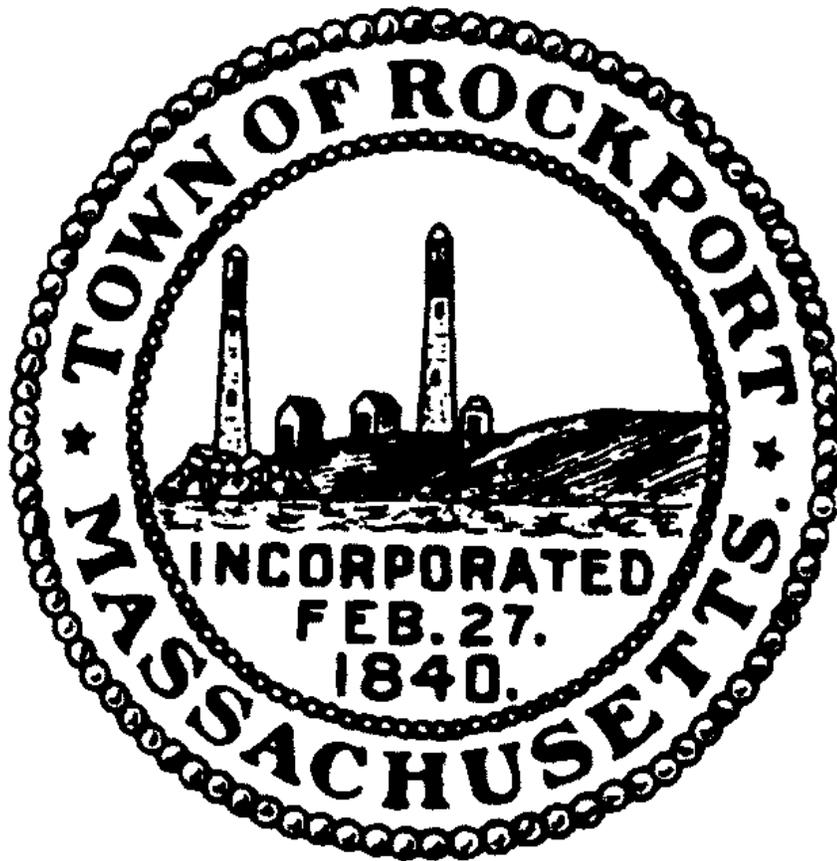


ROCKPORT
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MENTOR PROGRAM HANDBOOK



2018- 2019

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Rockport Middle / High School Core Values and Beliefs

Rockport Middle and High School, in partnership with families and the community, provides a safe environment that fosters integrity, respect, and success. We promote intellectual curiosity and pride in achievement. We challenge all students to pursue academic excellence, develop interpersonal skills, and value civic responsibility. Students learn 21st Century skills in order to fully participate in a diverse and ever-changing world.

Rockport Middle and High School Expectations for Student Learning

The **C**hildren of **R**ockport **S**chools will:

1. **T**hink critically and creatively
2. **C**ommunicate effectively
3. **R**espect self and others
4. **S**erve society responsibly

Rockport Elementary School Mission Statement:

At Rockport Elementary School, our mission is to create an inclusive community that will promote respect and responsibility to support a safe learning environment with high expectations for student success.

ROCKPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS STATEMENT OF VALUES

The Rockport school community includes parents, students, teachers, support staff, volunteers, and all who share a commitment to **excellence** in public education. It is the **mission** of the Rockport Public Schools to uphold the following values and to continually expand and refine our means of achieving them.

We value the pursuit of knowledge.

- We meet learners at their own levels.
- We challenge learners to reach their individual potentials.
- We provide worthy role models and positive reinforcement.
- We encourage development of self-awareness, good decision-making, and problem solving skills.
- We support self-motivation, self-discipline, and risk-taking.
- We develop responsible use of freedom.

We value lifelong learning.

- We encourage learning and teaching as mutual processes.
- We work cooperatively, competitively, and independently.
- We are involved in the life of the school and broader communities.

We value a safe and nurturing environment.

- The buildings and grounds are clean and in good repair.
- People extend themselves to support each other.
- Needs are addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- Individual differences are respected and initiatives are welcomed.

We value accomplishment.

- We are committed to completing tasks.
- We display student work.
- We recognize the achievements of school community members.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING SUPPORT IN THAT FIRST PIVOTAL YEAR

Becoming an excellent teacher is a continuous process – initiated by a decision to become a teacher; bolstered by gaining knowledge, skills, attitudes and values generally required of all teachers in pre-service preparation programs; refined by practice during induction at a specific site; and further honed by professional development activities throughout a teacher’s career (Dubea 1990). In this continuum, the transition year is pivotal for new teachers as they assume the overall responsibility for the education of a classroom of children. It is in this year that they will adopt habits regarding continual professional development and will determine whether they will continue to teach.

MENTOR PROGRAM GOALS

- To assist beginning teachers in the management of the challenges common to new teachers (e.g. discipline, classroom management, interaction with parents, diversity of students, and instructional issues)
- To orientate experienced teachers new to the system
- To enhance new teachers’ personal and professional development, enabling them to obtain instructional competence
- To provide instructional and interpersonal collegial support that furthers this personal and professional development
- To offer opportunities for new and experienced teachers to analyze and reflect upon their teaching
- To build a foundation for lifelong learning
- To retain highly qualified new and experienced teachers
- To integrate new teachers into the culture and climate of the school, the district and the community

ROCKPORT MENTOR PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Mentor requirements: Mentor Training course

Familiarity with *The Skillful Teacher*

Familiarity with Harry Wong's *The First Days of School*

Mentor training is to be attained through an accredited college or university or may be offered in-house through Rockport's Mentor Program Summer Institute. *The Skillful Teacher* and *The First Days of School* are important elements of the mentor program because they help to establish a "common language" between teachers and administrators. Gower and Saphier, the co-authors of *The Skillful Teacher* have put together a resource that is extremely beneficial to teachers which helps teachers navigate toward good teaching. Harry Wong focuses in on coping skills for the first year. Both texts are available for use.

The Rockport Public Schools Mentor Program is a program designed to train veteran teachers to work with new induction year staff. The program is designed to work for two years with the mentors and mentees meeting on a bi-weekly basis throughout the first year and on a monthly or as needed basis in year two. All first year meetings should be logged on the log provided. Each year of the program both the mentor and mentee will have the opportunity to work closely together, share experiences and observe each other within the classroom.

A mentor will be recommended by the building principal and a stipend contract will need to be signed.

RTA Contract Definitions:

- Beginning teachers and experienced teachers are differentiated
- Beginning teachers are defined as under four years of teaching experience and will follow the mentee/mentor guidelines in this handbook
- Experienced teachers are defined as having completed three years of teaching experience and/or were previously mentored. However, the Superintendent may assign a mentor at their discretion.
- Part-time teachers are defined as under .6 and can be picked up by the mentor coordinator for an additional payment per mentee
- New teachers at .6 or higher will receive an individual mentor
- Mentors may be asked to take on two mentees if they are two part-time experienced teachers OR one full time and one part-time experienced teachers. **The stipend in this situation will be equal to 1.5 of a Mentor Teacher stipend and will be a two-year commitment with the stipend paid across the two year period in two equal amounts.**

The Rockport Mentoring Program is designed to promote new teachers to constructively reflect on their own teaching for improvement as well as stimulate continued reflective growth for professional teachers.

Mentor Qualities

In order to serve as a mentor, the teacher should possess particular personal and professional qualities, such as:

- Achievement of professional status
- Enthusiasm, commitment to teaching and demonstrated ability to work with peers.
- Knowledge of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and an ability to support the new or experienced teacher in incorporating the frameworks into his/her teaching practices.
- Demonstration of insight and reflection about one's teaching
- Belief that one's philosophy about teaching and learning is ever-evolving
- Demonstrated commitment to the profession and openness to new ideas and approaches
- Exemplary practice and understanding of current issues in education
- Skill as an active listener
- Knowledge of and sensitivity to the climate, ethos and rituals of the Rockport community and schools
- A sense of humor

Teachers are assigned a group of students, given the key to a classroom, introduced to their colleagues in a faculty meeting and expected to teach.... Teaching is one of the few professions in which the novice is expected to assume full responsibility from the first day on the job (Hall 1992, 53).

ROCKPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS MENTOR PROGRAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of the Beginning Mentee Teacher:

- To participate in the August two day orientation program
- To participate in frequent informal conversations with their mentor
- To meet with the mentor twice a month for one hour to discuss progress, identify needs and maintain a log of activities. The experienced mentees may need fewer formal meetings after the first marking period
- To observe their mentor or another appropriate experienced teacher at least two times during the first year and record reflections
- To implement a mentor visitation at least two times during the first year – highlighted on logs
- To meet and conference regularly (monthly) with other beginning teachers as organized by the mentor coordinator
- To welcome feedback and practice reflective teaching
- To actively learn and actively listen
- To seek help when needed
- To follow-up on agreed plans and to try again
- To demonstrate openness
- To share new ideas
- To take responsibility to act professionally
- To develop his/her own professional development plan that is consistent with the plan of the district

Role of the New Experienced Teacher:

- To attend initial August orientation
- To attend first quarter's monthly peer mentee meetings
- To connect individually with mentor coordinator at least once a month the first quarter
- To pass in a log of time spent at the end of the school year

Role of the Mentor Teacher:

- To attend initial Mentor Training provided by the school system
- To attend mentor peer meetings
- To provide daily support for their mentee teachers
- To maintain a mentor/mentee meeting log which will be submitted to the mentor program coordinator – observations highlighted
- To meet with the mentee teacher twice a month for one hour, outside instructional time to determine the mentee's progress, identify needs and offer assistance
- To invite the mentee teacher to visit their mentor's classroom or another appropriate teacher's classroom at least two times during their first year
- To visit and provide feedback to the mentee teacher at mutually set times. Ideally these visitations will include pre and post conference times. These visits are non-evaluative and cannot be used by administrators for evaluation
- To model professionalism (for example, collegiality with peers, continuing professional development and confidentiality)
- To share teaching strategies or information about all aspects of the instructional process
- To offer support through active listening and sharing of experiences

Role of the Mentor Teacher: continued

- To support new teachers when difficulties arise and direct them to appropriate resources
- To demonstrate and support complex reflection and instructional practices

Time Expectations

- Mentors and mentees will attend a two day orientation program before the faculty return from the summer recess
- Mentors and mentees will meet formally twice a month
- Mentors and mentees will participate in mutual peer observations at least twice during the school year, preferably during the first semester
- Mentors will offer mentees daily support as needed
- Mentors will meet mentor peers as scheduled by coordinator
- Mentees will meet mentee peers as scheduled by coordinator

Compensation:

- Mentors will receive a contractual stipend for services rendered for a two-year period. **Stipend paid across two year period in two equal amounts.**
- Mentees will receive a certificate for 15 PDP's towards salary advancement at the end of the second year

Role of the Secondary and Elementary Coordinators:

- Responsible for working with the superintendent's office for mentor/mentee communications
- Set-up summer orientation to introduce all participants and stakeholders to the philosophy, practices, programs and procedures of the individual school building, the school district and community
- Set-up mentor/mentee peer meetings

Role of the Secondary and Elementary Coordinators: continued

- Collect mentor/mentee meeting logs
- Conduct an end of the year program evaluation
- Send in an annual report to the Dept. of Education as required
- Mentor coordinators will be compensated for extra hours of preparation and scheduling

Role of the Principal:

- To select and match a beginning teacher with a mentor with the appropriate grade level, certification and proximity
- To support and facilitate observation and visitation time for mentors and first year teachers
- To model professionalism (for example, to serve as a role model, to set high expectations)
- To respect the confidentiality of the mentor/mentee relationship
- To promote a collegial culture for the support and encouragement of beginning teachers
- To participate in a recognition program for the mentor and beginning teacher
- To be involved in the on-going evaluation of the program
- To support the observation process with substitute coverage for observing teachers

Role of the Superintendent:

- To serve as an advocate for the program to School Committee and community
- To provide verbal commitment at the opening of school

iRole of the Superintendent: continued

- To provide staff support through communication, visibility and role modeling
- To provide financial support in training, time, materials
- To communicate actively with the administrative team the need for respecting confidentiality, providing for ongoing dialogue, promoting and facilitating the program's successes
- To act as a liaison to School Committee and community
- To communicate through understanding of the program, including Department of Education Guidelines, the beginning teacher induction program guidelines, state and local teachers' association implications
- To create a climate that encourages ongoing program assessment
- To promote the intrinsic belief in the positive impact of mentoring on students
- To support the observation process with substitute coverage for observing teachers

Role of the School Committee:

- To act as community ambassadors supporting the program
- To provide verbal commitment at opening of school
- To provide financial support
- To adopt a policy insuring all beginning teachers will have a mentor and guidelines
- To facilitate contractual negotiations that support mentoring
- To continue ongoing dialogue with parent and community groups

Role of the NEA:

- To demonstrate association support for the beginning teacher induction program
- To inform beginning teachers about association opportunities
- To inform experienced teachers about mentoring and training
- To lead in promoting the importance of providing support for beginning teachers
- To interpret the contract and develop new contract language that supports experienced staff in mentoring new teachers
- To recognize and acknowledge that strong beginning teachers represent the future of the teachers' association
- To support non-mentor teachers in their desires to facilitate the mentor/mentee relationship
- To recognize the mutual benefits of mentoring programs, such as enhancing the community's support for the teaching profession

Role of the School Faculty:

- To welcome new teachers to the school
- To provide information and procedures, practices, policies and resources
- To encourage and support both mentees and mentors through:
 - Friendliness
 - Sharing supplies
 - Sharing curriculum
 - Serving as resources to mentors and new teachers
 - Respecting confidentiality
 - Supporting, understanding and helping to implement the program
 - Cooperation and respect for the people participating in the program
 - Modeling open-mindedness and contributing ideas
 - Participating in a workshop to learn about the program
 - Creating a positive climate

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

The issue of confidentiality in the mentor-mentee relationships as sensitive as it is important. Each school or organization that seeks to create helpful mentor relationships will need to discuss and come to agreement about how participants will respect the novice teachers' need to grow and to learn in a professional environment.

Here is draft statement of confidentiality that may serve as a platform for group discussion:

In general, mentors will not discuss their mentee's teaching performance with anyone, including school and district administrators, except under the following conditions:

1. Mentor teachers will be able to discuss, in confidence and with permission, any aspect of their mentee's performance with other members of the mentoring team.
2. Mentors, with the mentee's knowledge and permission, may discuss the mentee's teaching performance with resource professional whose job it is to help teachers.
(For example, if the novice needs help in designing hands on science lessons, the district science coordinator may be consulted for help and advice.)
3. Mentors, with the mentee's knowledge, may discuss the mentee's teaching performance with appropriate administrator's if, in the mentor's professional judgment, the academic growth and development, social well-being, or physical safety of the students is at risk.