

RCCSD Novice Teacher Education  
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# RCCSD Novice Teacher Education

## CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS OF NEW TEACHERS

The eight areas of potential challenges and concerns of new teachers are:

- Personal
- Professional
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Relationships with Students and Focus on Student Learning
- Organizational Systems for the Teacher, the Classroom, and Students
- School/District Policies and Procedures
- Collegial Interactions
- Parents and Community

### Personal

As we know from Maslow's Hierarchy it is all but impossible to concentrate on the needs of others when we are struggling with our own personal needs. Both novice teachers and experienced teachers new to a district, school, or assignment have to find their place in the social structure of the school and the community. Their need to find appropriate housing, establish personal relationships, and locate a gym or other recreational facilities can occupy much of their time and emotional energy. In the interest of having fully satisfied teachers who feel supported as human beings, mentors need to be appropriately helpful with both information and introductions. This sets the new educators up to concentrate on the work they were hired to do.

### Professional

The second challenge is one that novice teachers may not even know is an area of concern. If the new educators are twenty-somethings who have just completed an undergraduate program, they may never have had the need to think about medical benefits, investment programs, or saving receipts for taxes. Chances are good that they do not know which documents, hard copy or electronic, they should keep in well-organized folders. Such papers might include job offer letters, contracts, transcripts, permanent certification requirements, professional development expectations, certificates for recertification points, etc. While human resources departments usually provide an overview of these professional responsibilities, most new teachers' heads are in the classroom they soon will be working in; in fact, they are most likely thinking about the bulletin boards. Those who are listening quickly get a "deer in the headlights" look in their eyes! Mentors can assist by identifying the essential information that the new educators need to organize early in the school year and help their protégées set up appropriate files. Another professional issue that mentors should address early on is the teacher performance evaluation system. We can help the new educators not only understand how the system works but what the criteria looks and sounds like in the classroom and throughout the professional community.

### Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

While we want to ensure that new teachers feel supported as individuals that is not the whole picture of mentor responsibilities. Our main area of focus has to be on student learning and mentoring work around curriculum, instruction, and assessment has to be at the forefront of mentoring efforts. In most districts, gone are the days when new teachers did not know what to teach and wallowed in choices that resulted in "hobby teaching." That scenario has been replaced by lengthy documents which identify the standards of learning to be addressed, pacing guides, common assessments, and rubrics as well as information on standardized testing. Most of our mentoring time and energy should be focused on helping our protégées plan and implement instruction and assessment that addresses the curriculum and promotes student learning. This work ensures that there is a fully qualified teacher in every classroom.

*"The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves."*  
- Steven Spielberg

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Schoology for New Teachers Training will be held on November 20, 2019, from 4:30—6:00 pm. Location to be determined. Register in DSC, course 81314.





## CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS OF NEW TEACHERS (CONT'D)

### Relationships with Students and Focus on Student Learning

Building respectful relationships with students is a challenge for all teachers and especially for teachers new to the profession. The most important piece of advice we can give new teachers is that the best management program is a strong instructional program. Given that our goal is not well-managed students but rather well educated students we need to coach new teachers in the creation of a learning-centered environment where all students feel a part of the learning community. Many novice teachers spend inordinate amounts of time creating and monitoring deficit-model behavior programs in which students find their names on the board or their marker moved from green to yellow when they do not meet teacher behavioral expectations. We need to help our protégées understand that, rather than focusing on control and compliance, their time and energy is best spent designing active, engaging, and interesting lessons.

### Organizational Systems for the Teacher, the Classroom, and the Students

An important mentor responsibility is helping new teachers identify what procedures are needed, which ones are working, which ones are not working and why not, and then help them design alternative systems. In the recent past, novice teachers were focused on organizing their own learning; now they have to organize space, materials and time for five to fifty others. This is a daunting task. It is easy for them to get discouraged and even blame the students for the chaos that may occur. One shortcoming of the student teaching process

*“The most important piece of advice we can give new teachers is that the best management program is a strong instructional program.”*

### REQUIRED DISTRICT WORKSHOPS FOR YEAR 1 EDUCATORS

All Year 1 educators are required to attend four mandatory trainings on equity. The trainings will be held at District Office in the board room from 4:30 to 6:00 on the following dates:

- October 17th
- December 12th
- February 20th
- April 23rd

All Year 2 and 3 teachers are welcome to attend as well. Please note, there will be no EPER compensation for attendance. Mentors and Lead Mentors are welcome to attend as well.



is that student teachers are usually assigned to teachers and classrooms where all the systems are operating smoothly with no apparent effort; supervising teachers may not even think to explain what work had been done to set up these systems. Mentors may want to take protégées who are struggling with organization on a “learning walk” through smoothly functioning classrooms and have a coaching session about what the new teacher could try.

### School and School District Policies and Procedures

Policies regarding grading and reporting, fire drills, parking permits, leave policies, etc. can be mind-boggling to even the most experienced veteran. The professional new to the district can drown in the details and not be able to discern which are essential and which are nice to know, but not show-stoppers. Mentors can provide “just in time” guidance and support as particular events and due dates approach.

### Collegial Interactions

New educators can either be overwhelmed by too many offers of help or by a feeling of isolation and neglect. Mentors play an important role in helping teachers new to the district identify and access all the support staff available at the building and district level. Additionally, we need to be sure that new staff members know who the “untitled” but incredibly knowledgeable experts are on various aspects of teaching and learning and who among their colleagues is more than willing to lend a helping hand. Another responsibility of mentors is to keep the principal and all the other members of the staff informed as to what is happening in the mentoring program and how they can and should play an important role in the induction of new staff members.

### Parents and Community

This can be an extremely challenging area of concern for some novice teachers. One of the most challenging events of the year is Back-to-School Night when novice teachers have to explain what the children will be learning throughout the year when they, in fact, are not sure what they are doing the next day. Mentors can play an important role in helping these new teachers prepare for that event and parent conferences by role-playing and even sitting in on difficult conferences. Additional problems can surface when some parents appear to be either over involved in their child’s educational program or seemingly uninterested or unable to be supportive of the learning of their children. Mentors can help their protégées be positive, proactive, and if problems surface, problem solve with them. It is most important that mentors help new teachers see parents not as the enemy but as partners in their children’s education.

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*Warner Elementary teachers investigate the meaning of equity at New Teacher Orientation.*

## NEW TEACHER ORIENTATION

This year's New Teacher Orientation was held on August 12 –15, 2019. There were over 130 new educators (including teachers, nurses, psychologists, speech therapists, coaches and behavior specialists) in attendance. This year's group of new hires includes brand new educators, teachers from other Delaware districts, teachers from out of state districts and some former Red Clay paraprofessionals who are now teachers!

As is Red Clay tradition, Sam Golder and Amy Grundy lead the introductions of building principals through a fun video. This year's video provided a look at our principals from their high school years. The principals then introduced their new staff members. Superintendent Green was on hand to welcome the new staff and provided an inspirational welcome address. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Brian Starks who presented to the staff on the importance of being culturally responsive and of championing for equity within our schools and classrooms. The rest of the week consisted of training on the following topics: Schoology and blended learning, technology, curriculum, DPAS, 504s and IEPs, the substitute system, DPAS and mentoring. The newly hired educators were also given time to visit their buildings to meet their administrators and prepare for the upcoming school year. The Red Clay Education Association also sponsored a breakfast and presented to the new hires about the importance of joining the association. It was a great week of getting to know each other and we are so happy with the new members of the Red Clay family. We look forward to many years with this wonderful group of educators.

### Novice Teacher Education Lending Library

The Office of Novice Teacher Education currently has copies of professional books available for lending. If you would like to borrow a book, please contact: Stacie Zdrojewski.

#### Available titles include:

- 21st Century Mentor's Handbook: Creating a Culture for Learning
- Classroom Instruction that Works
- How Children Succeed
- Mentoring New Teachers
- Ordinary Magic
- Research-Based Strategies: Narrowing the Achievement Gap for Under-Resourced Students
- Smart but Scattered
- Teach Like a Champion
- The Cage-Busting Teacher
- The First Days of School
- The First-Year Teacher's Survival Guide
- Understanding Poverty
- Why Didn't I learn this in College?
- Working with Parents: Building Relationships for Student Success
- Working with Students: Discipline Strategies for the Classroom

stacie.zdrojewski@redclay.k12.de.us  
302-552-3792.

## MENTOR SPOTLIGHT

The mentoring program cannot exist without the support, hard work and dedication of our experienced staff members. In addition to the Novice Educator Spotlight, I also like to highlight the wonderful things that Mentors and Lead Mentors are doing in our schools. Do you have a mentor or lead mentor who is going above and beyond to support a novice teacher? Is there a mentor or lead mentor who is doing great things in their classroom, school, throughout the district or in the community? I know that there are wonderful things being done by our mentors. Please send me pictures and anecdotes about the great things that are happening. Just like with our novice educators, I would also love to come out to the schools and see firsthand the amazing lessons and activities that are being made possible because of the amazing work of our mentors. Let's spread the good news! To send pictures, stories and anecdotes for the Novice Educator Spotlight and the Mentor Spotlight, please send an email to:

stacie.zdrojewski@redclay.k12.de.us

All information must be received by the 20th of each month to be included in the upcoming month's newsletter. Thanks, in advance, for your help in telling our mentoring story!

### *The Mentoring Vision: Growth Mindset*

*Let's work together to continue to change the perception of mentoring. For many novice educators throughout the United States, mentoring is simply a set of requirements to check off the seemingly unending list of tasks that they must complete. I would like to see that perception change. I would love for our new teachers to see the mentoring program as a valuable avenue through which they can grow and hone their skills. I would like to see our new educators embrace the program as part of the process of cultivating a growth mindset that will become a part of their professional character. Mentors and Lead Mentors play a vital role in developing a protégé's growth mindset. As you work with the new teachers, explain the value of the activities required as part of the program. When talking about lessons, data, and student work, encourage them to think critically about their practice. Model the ways in which you reflect and seek to hone your own practice. Encourage them to attend state and district PD. Your role in helping them to create a growth mindset is critical.*

## EDUCATOR PREPARATION GRANT SCHOLARSHIPS

Two years ago during the 2017-2018 school year, the Red Clay Consolidated School District was awarded a grant to increase teacher recruiting, preparation, and retention. A major goal of the grant was to create a "Grow Your Own" teacher pipeline. During the first year of the grant, two high school seniors from Conrad and McKean who were interested in pursuing a career in teaching were awarded scholarships. This year, we have expanded the program. We have awarded scholarships to two AI du Pont 2019 graduates: Olivia Dooley and Madison Nickle. We also decided to support our paraprofessional to teacher pipeline and have awarded scholarships to the following Red Clay paraprofessionals who are pursuing degrees in education: Dylan Couto, Erika Pierce, Mary Kate Deflaviis, Marc Pipari and Yarimar Figueroa. Scholarship recipients are expected to maintain a 3.0 grade point average, remain a student in good standing, continue to major in education, and must agree to accept employment in the Red Clay Consolidated School District for a minimum of five years. We are excited about these scholarships and look forward to awarding more during this third, and final, year of the grant funding. We are also looking forward to the day that these members of our Red Clay family became a part of our teaching



*Mentor: Learning from someone who wants you to grow.*

## DISTRICT SITE COORDINATOR

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am Stacie Zdrojewski and I am the district Mentoring and Student Teaching Coordinator, as well as the AVID District Director. This is my 27th year as an educator in RCCSD. I spent the first five years of my career as a math teacher at Stanton Middle and spent the rest of my years as a teacher of grades 1, 2, 4 and 5 at Richey Elementary. I have been married to my husband, Tony, for 27 years and we have two grown children: Anthony, age 24, and Alison, age 22. We also have a fur baby, our lovable seven-year-old yellow Lab named Baylee. I am excited about this new year and about the renewed opportunity to help new teachers learn and grow. Please always feel free to reach out to me with ideas, questions or concerns about mentoring and student teaching. Together, we can ensure the continued success of Red Clay's novice educators, and as a result, Red Clay's students. Let's continue to make a difference together!



*"In learning you will teach and in teaching you will learn."*

## NOVICE EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

One of my goals each year is to help novice teachers see the value of the mentoring program. One way in which I work to instill a positive perception of the mentoring program is through a regular feature in this newsletter. Each month, I spotlight the great things that our new educators are doing in their classrooms, buildings, throughout the district or in the community. As always, I need your help as principals, mentors and lead mentors to accomplish this task. Please send me pictures and anecdotes about the great things that are happening. I would also love to come out to the schools and see firsthand the amazing lessons and activities being facilitated by the new educators. Our protégés are working hard and we need to spread the word. I also regularly recognize their accomplishments through social media via the Red Clay Novice Educator Facebook page and twitter. You can follow the program on social media at: Facebook -@RCCSDNoviceTeacherEd and Twitter— @NoviceTeacherEd. Let's show all of the great things our novices are doing!