



# RCCSD Novice Teacher Education

## Helping Novice Educators in February

Winter can be a long, dreary season. With testing looming in the near future, it can be difficult to keep up the morale of even seasoned teachers. The focus question for February is: **How can we help new educators continue to love their jobs?**

The following list of tips has been adapted from *21st Century Mentor's Handbook: Creating a Culture for Learning* by Paula Rutherford.

- Show your new educators some love by giving them a note of encouragement. To make the gesture even sweeter, leave it on their desk with a candy bar.
- Help them to recognize cabin fever in themselves and their students. Hang a paper palm tree in their room and share a playlist of Hawaiian music they can play during their planning period or quiet work times.
- Notice and comment on appropriate professional attire.
- Review and discuss mentoring obligations. Are they on track for the end of the year checkout?
- Assist in planning for formal administrator evaluations.
- Discuss strategies for checking for understanding through informal assessments. With testing on the horizon, novice teachers may feel the need to rush through topics without checking to see if students are truly learning.
- Discuss how “Do Nows”, morning work, and anchor activities can be used to provide a review of concepts and information previously taught.
- Concentrate on efficient use of time. Start with a focus on the use of instructional time and then focus on time management of professional responsibilities.
- Explore ways in which technology can be used to organize professional and instructional materials effectively.
- Review concerns about specific students. Identify those who may need to be referred to the Problem Solving Team (PST).
- Offer a place for challenging students to take a “time out” when necessary.
- Encourage the novice teacher to preview testing procedures and processes with students. Make sure they are aware of (and are using) the preparation materials that are available.
- Encourage your principal to stop by and check in on the new teacher.
- Encourage the new teacher to be an active, participating member of his/her team meetings and PLC.
- Remind new teachers to inform parents of the schedule for upcoming standardized testing. Help them plan for letting parents know what they can do to support and prepare their students for testing.



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### Dates to Remember

- Valentine’s Day—Feb. 14th
- Parent Conferences—Feb. 16th
- President’s Day—February 19th
- Mentoring Sub Trackers Due—Feb. 28th
- Cooperating Teacher/Practicum Teacher Request Forms Due—Feb. 28th



## Novice Psychologist Spotlight—Carly Herring, Linden Hill Elementary School

### Talk about your experience as a student growing up.

Both of my parents are retired educators, so the importance of education was emphasized in my household. I generally enjoyed school, both socially and academically. Math was always easier for me than reading/writing – that being said, I learned from an early age that math was my strength, so if I didn't do well on a math assignment/didn't understand a lesson, I tended to become frustrated. With reading, I usually went into the activity expecting to have a harder time, so I tended to have a different mindset and was willing to persevere more.

### What made you decide to become a school psychologist?

I went to Clemson University for undergrad (go tigers!) and majored in psychology/minored in education. While exploring the different areas of those fields, I was torn between special education and mental health. School psychology combines both of those areas, so it seemed like the perfect fit. I also really appreciate that I have summers off.

### What does your job entail?

The majority of my job is completing evaluations (cognitive, academic, behavior) and assisting the IEP team in determining whether a child qualifies for special education services. I'm also responsible for completing FBAs/BSPs, coordinating the Check-In/Check-Out behavior system, facilitating lunch bunches, and counseling students.

*"...it can sometimes feel isolating and scary to have to make decisions regarding a child's future without consulting with a co-worker first."*

### New Handbooks Available

Handbooks for student teachers and cooperating teachers in Red Clay have been added to the district intranet. They can be found by going to the "Working Here" tab and then clicking on "Educator Mentoring". On the lower left-hand side of the page, you will see links to each handbook under the "Student Teaching" heading. These handbooks are meant to provide information and support by presenting information about policies and expectations for those serving in the program. Our student teachers for the spring session come from Delaware State University, University of Delaware and Wilmington University. The student teachers were given the handbooks at the district's Student Teacher Orientation. Cooperating teachers can access the handbook online.

### What has surprised you about your role?

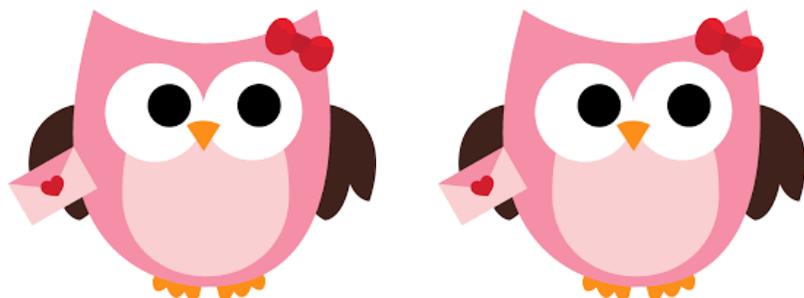
I've been pleasantly surprised by the support of other psychologists/special services staff in the district. As the only psychologist in my building, it can sometimes feel isolating and scary to have to make decisions regarding a child's future without consulting with a co-worker first. However, many of the other psychologists in the district, as well as the ED and related service providers in my building, have been more than willing to answer questions and brainstorm situations. It's been great!

### How has the mentoring program helped you during this first year in Red Clay?

This kind of feeds off my response to the last question – other psychologists in the district have consistently been willing to provide help. Additionally, my mentor (Matt Kupelian) was the psychologist at LHE last year, so he's been able to help with not only psychologist-related questions, but also LHE-related questions. Meetings with the other new psychologists and Gabi Koury, the lead psychologist mentor, have been helpful too in learning the ins and outs of RCCSD.

### What is one piece of advice that you would give to new school psychologists?

I feel like I'm still a new school psychologist and far from qualified to be giving advice! If I had to give advice, though, I would recommend utilizing available resources – reaching out to other psychologists in the district and/or teachers within the building rather than re-inventing the wheel. I would also suggest using the district resources such as those on Schoology.



## RCCSD Mentoring Program to be Featured on Red Clay This Month

In March, the RCCSD Mentoring Program will be the subject of a discussion on Red Clay this Month with Dr. Judith Conway. The recently filmed segment attempts to shine a spotlight on the necessity and benefits of a formal mentoring program. The discussion included: Stacie Zdrojewski, coordinator of the program, Angela Morrow, a first time lead mentor at Richey Elementary, as well as Von Morgan, a first year music teacher at Richardson Park Elementary. During the discussion, the participants discussed mentoring from three perspectives. Stacie discusses why mentoring programs are necessary and how Red Clay supports the program. Angela shares insight as to what knowledge and skills first year teachers need to develop and how the mentor/new teacher relationship can support that growth. Finally, Von shares information about what it is like to be a novice teacher and the importance of having mentoring supports. We hope that you will tune in to the show in March to learn more about Red Clay's Comprehensive Induction Program.



*“The most rewarding part of first year teaching so far is definitely developing relationships with the students and staff.”*

### Novice Teacher Spotlight—Nicole Ricci, Fifth Grade, Linden Hill Elementary School

#### What were you like as a student growing up?

Growing up, I absolutely loved going to school. I remember looking forward to each school year and begging my parents to buy me all the cool new pencils and folders. I enjoyed reading and writing the most, but I worked hard in math and started to like it more and more. I was an honor roll student throughout my academic career and loved participating in after school clubs/ activities, especially sports!

#### What was your student teaching experience like?

At the University of Delaware, I majored in Elementary Teacher Education with a concentration in Middle School English. I began the rigorous program as a freshman. Freshman year, I took general courses, but also immediately began to gain experience in the classroom. I tutored students one-on-one in both reading and math. Sophomore year I gained more classroom experience through observations and some small group instruction once a week. In addition, I took more major specific courses. In my junior year of school, I really found my passion for teaching. I took specific education courses and completed my method blocks where I was in a third grade classroom at Cecil Manor in Cecil County, Maryland. I spent my course work learning about research based strategies and Common Core curriculum to incorporate into my placement at Cecil Manor. I spent three total weeks in the classroom with a co-teacher implementing lessons in math, reading, science, and social studies. Although they were not consecutive, I was able to learn a lot from my cooperating teacher and experiences. During my final year in the program at the University of Delaware, I participated in two twelve week long student teaching placements. My first placement was in a 6th grade ELA classroom (at HB duPont) and my second placement was at Maclary Elementary in a 4th grade classroom. Both experiences were awesome and made me sure that teaching was the career I wanted to pursue!

#### New Teacher Spotlight, Nicole Ricci (Cont'd)

##### What has been the most challenging part of being a new teacher?

The most challenging part of being a new teacher is balancing all of the moving parts of what it means to be a teacher. I have learned it is far more than just implementing curriculum and building a rapport with students. Getting into a consistent routine has been challenging, but I have had awesome support from the staff that made my transition smooth!

##### What has been the most rewarding part of this first year?

The most rewarding part of first year teaching so far is definitely developing relationships with the students and staff. It has been awesome getting to connect with my students and learn their strengths and interests. In addition, it has been rewarding to see my work from student teaching pay off and realize it has fully prepared me to take on a teaching position!

##### What most surprised you about being a teacher?

The part that most surprised me about being a teacher is the amount of on-the-spot decisions I have to make everyday and how that affects myself and the students the rest of the day/week.

##### Was there a person or experience that influenced your decision to become a teacher?

A large part of my family are teachers, and I grew up especially being in my dad's fifth grade classroom. He has definitely influenced me to become a teacher, as did my uncles and grandparents. My dad has been teaching for 22 years and I remember going into his classroom all the time. I used to jump in and pretend to be one of his students, or ask if I could take over teaching. I loved hearing the stories he used to bring home about what happened at school and now it is really cool that we get to share those stories together. My family is all around super supportive, which makes the experience even more special.