

RCCSD Novice Educator Development  
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# RCCSD Novice Teacher Education

## MENTORING IN JANUARY

The start of the new year is a wonderful time for reflection. Many people make personal resolutions and the start of the new year is the perfect time for educators to reflect on the procedures and practices that are being employed in their classrooms. For every educator, not just novice teachers, it is a good time to make changes in an effort to improve practice and instruction. *“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result.”* Encourage your mentees to make changes in areas where they can get the “biggest bang for their buck.” The following tips for working with mentees during the month of January have been adapted from the book, *21st Century Mentor’s Handbook: Creating a Culture for Learning*:

- Review second marking period professional goals.
- Have teachers self-assess and set new goals for the third marking period.
- Review the mentoring process. What is working? What should be adjusted?
- Set goals for the mentoring relationship for the remainder of the school year.
- Review pacing guides/curriculum maps and help teachers make necessary adjustments to lesson plans.
- Assist new teachers in reviewing assessment data to plan for grouping of students and for differentiation.
- Evaluate classroom arrangements, procedures, allocation of resources, time management, routines and procedures. What is working? What should be changed?
- Assist new teachers in developing systems for monitoring progress and supporting students who may be in danger of failing.
- Work with new teachers to increase displays of student work. Review grading and reporting procedures.
- Discuss the spring testing schedule and ways to prepare students.
- Make sure new teachers know procedures for early dismissals and late openings due to inclement weather.
- Write “Welcome Back” notes for the new teachers and leave them on their desks or in their mailboxes with a candy bar or a cup of coffee.
- Meet for coffee or a happy hour and debrief about the first half of the year.



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- January 8—Lead Mentor Meeting
- January 15—MLK Day  
Schools closed
- January 26—Grading Day  
Schools closed
- January 26—Cultural Awareness Conference 8:00 am—12:00 pm at Cab Calloway



## NOVICE TEACHER SPOTLIGHT—REBECCA SMITH, AUTISM SUPPORT TEACHER, BSES

### What were you like as a student?

As a student, I was always curious and wanted to know more. I had a never ending list of questions and was eager to find out more about how the world around me worked.

### What or who inspired you to become a teacher?

I have wanted to be a teacher ever since I can remember. I specifically ended up loving special education when I was in high school and joined the Best Buddies program at my school. The more time I spent in schools, the more I knew I would always be a special education teacher.

### What has been the most rewarding part of being a teacher so far?

Definitely all the sweet moments with my kids! My students have made incredible

progress and I'm so proud of them! I've also loved getting to know everyone at my school, each member of the community is so welcoming!

### What has been the most difficult part of being a teacher so far?

Finding time for things... like sleep! I have a long way to go to get the balance of work and relaxing down!

### What is one piece of advice that you would give to other new teachers?

Don't forget why you wanted to become a teacher. Even on the hardest days, we're still changing lives.

I'm incredibly thankful for Red Clay working hard to provide the right supports for my kiddos and couldn't be happier here!

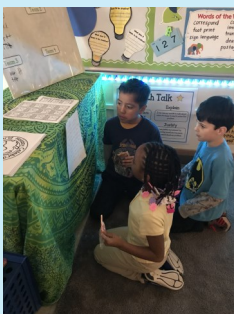
*“My teacher is what I like most. I love her so much!”*

### From the Mouths of Babes

I recently had the opportunity to interview the second grade class of first year teacher, Erika Kibblehouse, at Richardson Park Elementary. Here is what they had to say:

What do you like most about second grade?

- I like when we go on the Smart-Board to do math.
- I love specials. I really like library because we read lots of books and Mrs. Dworsky helps us with everything.
- She lets me do math with her and she lets me go to the board.
- My teacher is what I like most. I love her so much!

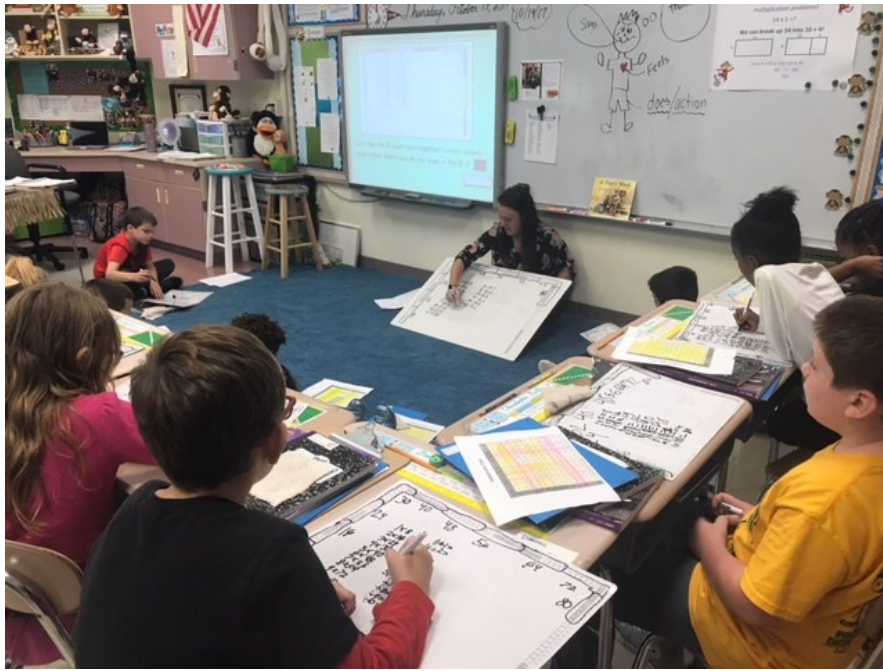


## NOVICE TEACHER PRIDE AT SKYLINE MIDDLE SCHOOL

As a lead mentor at Skyline Middle School, I have had the opportunity to work with many motivated, dedicated, and excited novice teachers. After teaching for over 15 years, it is inspiring and heartwarming to interact with these highly energized teachers who are new to the profession. Among these mentees, there is a group of year three teachers in my building who have truly left an impression on me. Last year, I met at least once a month with these five fun colleagues to discuss our monthly mentoring articles and, in addition to great discussions, there was an abundance of laughter, stories, and shared experiences that continued well past our designated hour meeting! Each time we met, I watched the bond between these teachers grow stronger and true friendships develop.

Through observations, feedback, and workshops, the mentoring program offers support, guidance, and encouragement to new teachers. Additionally, mentoring requirements include paperwork, reflections, and meetings to promote growth, learning, and development as a teacher. While these are important and essential foundations of the mentoring program, these experiences become even more enriching and rewarding when your colleagues become your good friends! These year three teachers are a special group and, not only do they lift me up and inspire me as an experienced teacher, they are a true asset to the teaching profession. Kudos to Lauren Ahrens, Nicole Bayless, Ciera Hackett, Meg Pierce, and Katie Stephens!

*Submitted by Vicki Simon, lead mentor for Skyline Middle School*



## NICOLE THOMPSON—RICHEY ELEMENTARY YEARLONG INTERN

### Talk about your school experience. What was school like for you as a student?

When I was a student, I never really liked school. I only wanted to go so I could talk to and see my friends. However, my favorite subject was math. I thought math was so much fun and could not wait to learn new concepts because it came very easy to me. I always did my homework and classwork and turned everything in on time thanks to my parents.

### Who or what inspired you to be a teacher?

When I was younger, I was excited to be sick and stay home from school. This is when I would pretend I had my own classroom. I would create a roster and check whether my “students” were here or not. I also would pretend to grade papers and teach lessons. I used my own white board and taught math most of the time because it was the quickest thing to teach and easy to think of on the spot. The teacher that inspired me was my seventh grade teacher, Mrs. Eno. She was my science teacher and I disliked science very much until she became my teacher. Science was very hard for me to understand, especially chemistry. She took the time to help me until I could do it on my own. She showed that she cared and that she wanted me to succeed just as much as I wanted to. This proved to me that she cared about her students and that she did whatever she could to make sure all her students understood at the end of the day.

### Why did you choose to participate in the YLR program instead of a traditional student teaching experience?

I chose to participate in this program because I thought this was an amazing opportunity. I remember when I was still at Del Tech, my dad had told me that WilmU was starting a yearlong residency program for teachers and I knew that I had to do whatever I could to make it into that program. I feel like this program can be compared to a first year of teaching except you have a mentor who is more than willing to go above and beyond to help you every step of the way.

### What has been the most surprising thing about teaching so far?

The most surprising thing is learning how to manage all of the different behaviors. I went to a private school until tenth grade, so there weren’t really any behavior issues in my school. Through this experience, I have learned different ways to work with and help all students to gradually move away from negative behaviors.

### What is one piece of advice that you would share with another student teacher?

The most important advice that I would give a new student teacher is to make sure you have classroom management skills. I believe this is the most important aspect in a classroom. A teacher can create beautiful lesson plans and know how to implement them, but without classroom management, everything will fall apart.

## NOVICE TEACHER BLOG

Lizzie Brady, Year 3 fourth-grade teacher at Richey Elementary School, has published her second blog in a series in which she is sharing her experiences as a new teacher. In Lizzie’s first blog, she chronicled four struggles that she encountered as a new teacher. In her latest post, Lizzie discusses how she balances blended learning in her classroom. This article is valuable for both novice and experienced teachers since so many are new to incorporating blended learning into instruction.

Through her writing, Lizzie is providing a realistic glimpse into the successes and struggles of a novice teacher. The Office of Novice Teacher Education is grateful to Lizzie for her contributions and willingness to provide a realistic glimpse into the successes and struggles of a novice teacher.

Lizzie’s first blog was published in October and can be accessed at: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/4-struggles-new-teacher-elizabeth-brady/>

Her latest blog can be accessed at: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-i-balance-blended-learning-tips-from-new-teacher-elizabeth-brady/?published=t>



## DELAWARE'S BEST SATURDAY ACADEMY

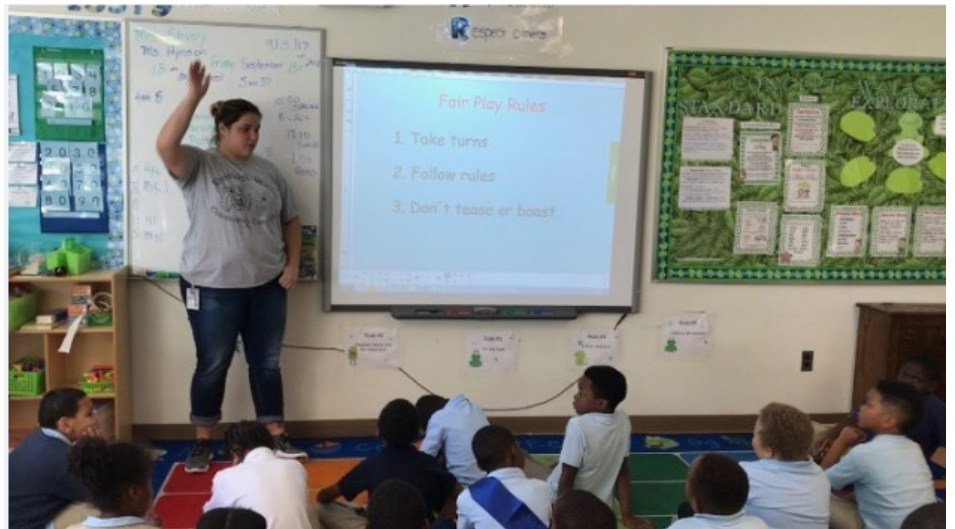
The students involved in the RCCSD Delaware's Best Saturday Academy met for a second session on December 2nd. There are now 8 students representing Cab Calloway, Conrad and McKean. These 8 students are participating in the program as part of Red Clay's "Grow Your Own" initiative. The Saturday Academy is a teacher preparation program that is being provided through a partnership with the district and the YWCA.

All 8 of the participating students have submitted scholarship applications for the RCCSD Appleseed Scholarship. This scholarship (amount TBD) will be awarded to select participants upon successful completion of the program. The scholarship may be used toward the cost of tuition at either Wilmington University or the University of Delaware. The scholarship recipients will also be given the chance to interview for a position within the Red Clay Consolidated School District upon successful completion of college and all required teacher certification assessments.

The program will meet four additional times this school year on January 20, March 10, April 14, and May 12.



*RCCSD Delaware's Best Saturday Academy*



## JULIANNA HYNSON—SHORTLIDGE ACADEMY YEARLONG INTERN

### **Talk about your school experience. What was school like for you as a student?**

During elementary and middle school, I did not have a very positive experience. I always felt like the student who was one step behind and was never academically inclined. It wasn't until high school that I had a teacher who really made a lasting impression on me. That teacher instilled confidence in me and made learning fun! It was not until then I realized what a positive impact teaching could have on a person.

### **Who or what inspired you to be a teacher?**

As I stated above, my high school English teacher was the reason I wanted to become a teacher. He always pushed me to be the best version of myself.

### **Why did you choose to participate in the YLR program instead of a traditional student teaching experience?**

I chose to participate in the YLR program because of the experience and the connections I would build with my students, their families, and the school. There is so much that goes into teaching, the traditional student teaching experience just didn't feel like enough time to truly learn everything required to be an effective teacher.

### **What has been the most surprising thing about teaching so far?**

I always knew that teaching took a lot of hard work and preparation but, until I was in the classroom, I had no idea how much time is truly spent after school hours. I have been so impressed with how much time and effort my mentor teacher and all the other staff members put in to ensure the students have everything they need!

### **What is one piece of advice that you would share with another student teacher?**

One piece of advice that I would share with another student teacher is to always be prepared and ready to think on your toes. Sometimes things just do not go as you planned so it is always important to be ready for whatever is thrown at you.