

## RCCSD Novice Teacher Education

### MENTORING NEW TEACHERS

A new school year is now well underway and with the new year comes a whole new group of first-year educators. At this point, many new teachers are in "survival mode" and need the support of more seasoned educators. The following list of tips for mentoring new teachers has been adapted from Paula Rutherford's book, *21st Century Mentor's Handbook: Creating a Culture of Learning*:

- Empathize with all the paperwork and unending meetings.
- Check in with the new teacher to find out what your protégé feels are his/her greatest areas of strength and greatest areas of need. Set collaborative goals for the mentoring relationship.
- Pass along information about PD opportunities.
- Remind new teachers that Delaware is a small state and they should refrain from discussing school issues or students in public places.
- Be a role model for your protégé by always speaking professionally about co-workers, parents and students.
- Explain the DPAS performance evaluation system. Review the process, paperwork and DOE site.
- Observe your protégé prior to their first formal administrator evaluation. Use the DPAS rubrics to review the new teacher's performance and as the basis for your post-observation discussion.
- Discuss interims. When are they due? What is the process for completing them?
- Review fire drill and school crisis procedures.
- Explain the systems for referring students for extra support, behavior issues, etc.
- Be a friend and a listening ear.

Rutherford, P. (2005). *21st Century Mentor's Handbook: Creating a Culture of Learning*. Alexandria, VA: Just Ask Publication.



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#### NEW TEACHER WORKSHOPS

- Successful Parent Teacher Conferences Workshop: October 9th
- Compassionate Classroom Training Part 2: October 16th





## MENTORING SPOTLIGHT—MARISSA MASH, HBMS

### What were you like as student?

I was definitely the ultra-organized, everything has to be color-coordinated type of student. I loved taking notes in class, I loved talking to - and forming relationships - with my teachers, and I loved reading! I was always shy when it came to participation. This is something I share with my students and can relate to, which in turn, helps them find the confidence to "take a chance" and raise their hand.

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

My mom (North Star Elementary teacher, Michelle Mash) definitely played a huge role in my becoming a teacher. I attended

the school where she taught, was helping with bulletin boards as early as I can remember, and reading to younger students whenever I got the opportunity! Growing up, I watched her form such strong bonds with her students and truly impact their lives in such a positive way - it inspired me to pursue the same profession!

### What have you found to be the most rewarding part of being a teacher?

There really are so many rewarding aspects of teaching. It's hard to pick just one. I think one of my favorites are when students greet me with a hug, tell me something that's happening in their lives, or simply say/do something that makes me smile. It reminds me that I do this because

*"Knowing I'm not alone in these beginning years of teaching, and knowing that I have support from my mentor and fellow mentees recharges my batteries and keeps me excited about my career choice."*

I love kids, and I love teaching them not only our curriculum, but also how to be kind and sincere human beings. When they greet me with a hug or we have these personal moments, I see that I am having an impact on their lives and that they are growing into such successful individuals both academically and personally. These encounters are so very rewarding and are why I absolutely love what I do.

### What has been the most challenging part of teaching?

The most challenging part of teaching is first figuring out how you like to teach and continuing to fine-tune your craft by figuring out the flow of a new classroom, diving into a new curriculum, or improving on classroom management strategies. Teaching is such a reflective profession, and sometimes it can be hard to figure out your exact formula - especially when it changes every year!

### What makes HBMS such a special school?

The people are truly what makes HBMS such a fantastic school. The staff here are so supportive, understanding, and encouraging. They give you a laugh when you need one, and advice when you need that too. It's the positive energy and people that make a place special - and HB has definitely found the right people for that!

### What have you gained from the mentoring program?

From the mentoring program I have gained such a strong support system. My mentor, Julia Morsberger, is such an amazing person to talk to no matter what kind of day you're having, or what kind of stress-level you have reached. She gives amazing advice, is always available to talk through a situation, and I always leave her classroom feeling better. In addition, attending the mentor meetings and workshops has been incredibly helpful. Seeing similar educators in my same shoes, and just knowing that other people are going through a similar experience that we can openly talk about, is a breath of fresh air. Knowing I'm not alone in these beginning years of teaching, and knowing that I have support from my mentor and fellow mentees recharges my batteries and keeps me excited about my career choice.

### What is one piece of advice that you would share with a new teacher?

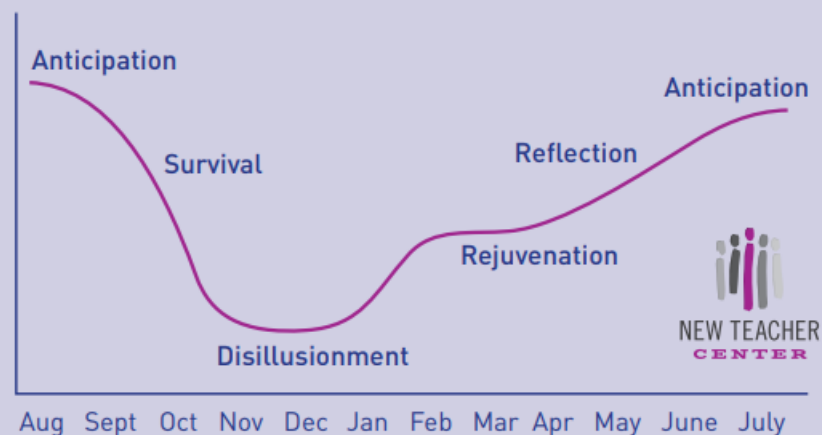
The piece of advice I would share with a new teacher is embrace it all! There are going to be days where you feel like you are truly changing the world - soak that up! There will be days where you don't even know how that incredibly thought-out lesson plan flopped - that's okay, reflect and improve. Then there will be days where you just need to laugh, and remember to laugh with your students. Showing them you are a real person, goes a long way in forming a strong relationship. Show them you can make mistakes, show them how much you value learning, and show them how much you care about them as a student and as a person, too. Give them a hug when they need it, talk about their lives often, and tell them you are always here. We are so lucky to have these young minds and personalities in our lives - embrace every moment you have with them!

### What grade and subject do you teach?

This year I am teaching 6th Grade Social Studies, and loving every second of it!

## Phases of First-Year Teachers' Attitude Toward Teaching

by Ellen Moir, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, New Teacher Center



For more information on Moir's model, visit [www.newteachercenter.org](http://www.newteachercenter.org).

## PHASES OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD TEACHING

New teachers tend to, fairly reliably, go through predictable stages in their attitudes during their first year of teaching. The first phase is Anticipation. Anticipation begins during student teaching and continues on with new teachers as they are hired for their first teaching jobs. During this phase, novice educators tend to romanticize the idea of what teaching entails. Teachers in this phase are very committed and have an idealistic view of how their first year will go. This phase typically lasts for the first few weeks of the school year. Then, during the first month of school, comes the Survival Phase. At this point, new educators tend to begin to feel very overwhelmed. New teachers in this phase tend to spend an enormous amount of time on schoolwork. They are typically struggling to keep their heads above water. First-year teachers generally still have a lot of energy and enthusiasm during this phase, despite the tremendous amount of work on their plates. Six to eight weeks into the school year, new teachers start to move into the Disillusionment Phase. At this point, the stress and workload may cause many new teachers to question their efficacy, their commitment to the profession and they may get sick. This may also be the time that novice teachers are getting their first DPAS evaluations which can definitely add to their stress levels. This is a very difficult time for new teachers and they may require a lot of support from mentors and administrators. Luckily, winter break occurs during this phase. This time to rest and recharge often sets the stage for the next phase: Rejuvenation. With renewed energy, most new teachers will emerge from winter break with a fresh perspective on their chosen careers. At this time, they tend to focus on curriculum development, planning and instructional strategies. Near the end of this phase, new teachers may stress about covering the required curriculum before the end of the year. They will also be excited and nervous to find out how their students will perform on assessments. The next phase generally starts in May and is known as the Reflection Phase. New teachers in this phase begin to really reflect back on their year to pinpoint their successes and failures. They also begin to think about changes that they will make for their second year of teaching. Thinking about what the new year will be like brings them back, full circle, to the Anticipation Phase. Mentors are a key factor in helping new teachers to navigate through these phases. Novices who feel supported and valued are much more likely to stay in the profession after the critical first five years of teaching. Remember, you don't have to be an official mentor to help novice educators. As with raising children, it takes a village.

Information from this article is credited to:

New Teacher Center. (2016). *New teacher development for every inning*. Retrieved from

<https://newteachercenter.org/wp-content/uploads/>

NewTeacherDevelopmentEveryInning.pdf

## 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:

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302-552-3792.

## MENTORING SPOTLIGHT— DESHONTA HARDY-COVERT, MCKEAN

### What were you like a student?

As a student I was very caring, always helping the less fortunate. I paid attention to the way people were treated. I was the student who would pack an extra lunch “just for sharing”. My high school career path was Art Major/Honors/College Prep. I had a small close knit set of “artsy” friends. We were different and knew we were different. We dressed and acted differently than the general population of high school (i.e. style of dress, colors & excitement for school). Academically, I had to be guided by my parents to maintain my grades. Unlike my genius brother, I had to study hard to excel. I loved school!

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

The most perfect answer should be my parents who are educators. However, Mrs. Oakley, my music teacher inspired me most. Her firm teaching style, care and individualized concern for students is what I remember. The chants she taught us about math showed she valued our education outside of her classroom. Through music, she exposed us to many places around the world. Playing the piano with craft and precision, her call and response songs encouraged us to learn. When I think of Mrs. Oakley, I still smile.

### What have you found to be the most rewarding part of being an educator?

Being an intricate part of someone’s growth and achievement is by far the most rewarding aspect of being an educator. It’s an investment into our future. Like a farmer, if you plant good seed, you will yield good fruit. Over the years, I’ve inspired students to take control of their educational experiences, empowered them to ask questions. Witnessing students uncover new ideas and grow into productive citizens, assisting them in developing the way they learn best, and exposing them to a different world is amazing! Who wouldn’t want to be a part of this process?

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

The most challenging part of being an educator is the idea that progress should be measured with a standard assessment tool. Standardized curriculum, assessments, teaching and evaluations are difficult when you encounter students that don’t quite fit into the measurement systems. Also, the most effective teachers are affected/being measured by policy makers who never see the amount of commitment, sacrifice, and dedication educators make to assist students with meeting the mark. Effectiveness for both students and teachers has to be measured but, in my opinion, a single test isn’t an indicator of teacher effectiveness or ability to motivate student performance.

### What makes McKean such a special school?

In my opinion, McKean is a special school because the staff are proving their commitment in serving and meeting the needs of students, ALL types of students. Unlike the popularity of the “lottery” of sorts type school where you are measured by your academic achievements, or your “at risk” school that measures you economic status, McKean accepts all. As stakeholder in education, everything I have witnessed at McKean takes on a holistic approach. Aside from the dedicated and qualified teachers, our students are fully supported in so many areas: healthy food choices, a fully staffed wellness center, education options for credit recovery, knowledgeable counselors, and English Language focused Advisories. In addition, the most impressive part of McKean is the inclusion model. Presented this year, McKean’s inclusion model includes autistic students attending regular classes, an ED self-contained class, a Supportive Education class, and independent supportive settings. There are additional classes that include students in various levels and types of disabilities.

### What have you gained from the mentoring program?

The Mentoring program has provided me a firm foundation. Mentoring has assisted me with meeting the requirement for licensure within the state of Delaware, assisted me with making connections within my school and ensures DPAS professional responsibilities are being met. Additionally, the program has connected me with quality educators to guide me through the beginning stages of a career with Red Clay Consolidated School District.

### What piece of advice that you would share with a new teacher?

Teach with love. You will have to have a love of children to be apart of changing the way a child views his or her education, views school, views citizenship and views connections to our world. Your students will feel your love and passion. Search for ways to make a child smile while engaged in learning.

Lastly, believe in your most challenging student with compassion, empathy, love and commitment. When was the last time you made a student smile?





## MENTORING SPOTLIGHT-JACQUELINE BALCH, HERITAGE ELEMENTARY

### What were you like as student?

Oh boy! As a student, I was very stubborn, talkative, motivated and generally excited. I loved learning, and still do today.

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

I have had several life experiences and people who have inspired me to pursue a career in teaching. Throughout my entire childhood, I took dance lessons. When I was old enough, I was asked to student teach in the dance class. This is where I learned to love working with kids! There is something magical about watching a student master a skill. I have also been a volunteer at several Special Olympics of DE games. It was in this environment that I realized I wanted to work in the Special Education field. I, as a Red Clay kid myself, have had some very inspirational teachers who come from very different points in my life. When I was in 3rd grade at Forest Oak, I had Ms. Lauren Brooks (who is now Mrs. Young). She was very creative with her teaching strategies, lessons, and she is the first teacher with whom I truly formed a bond. I remember I wanted to be exactly like her when I was in 3rd grade. I still try to fill these shoes everyday. Another fantastic



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***“ASK QUESTIONS! If there is something you do not know or understand, do not be scared to ask questions. Every educator has been in your shoes.”***

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teacher I had was Mrs. Hilda Koach at McKean High school. I may have not enjoyed the workload of her courses, but, she gave me my first taste of reality and life as an adult. She held us to such high standards everyday and refused to let us give up. I carried these “Koach” expectations with me to college, and it allowed me to work at my fullest potential.

### What have you found to be the most rewarding part of being a teacher?

The most rewarding thing about being a teacher so far is seeing my students smiling when they come in the classroom each morning. I have created an environment that the students enjoy coming to each day.

### What has been the most challenging part of teaching?

The most challenging part of teaching for me, currently, is prioritizing my To-Do lists. I attempt to do too many things in a day, and I have been leaving little to no self-care time.

### What makes Heritage such a special school?

Heritage has a supportive staff. They are all willing to jump in and help whenever needed.

### What made you choose to become a teacher in the autism program?

After completing my Master's Degree in Special Education with a focus in severe disabilities and Autism, I knew I wanted to work with this type of population. I was initially hesitant to accept the KN-1 classroom position, since I had mostly worked with secondary students previously. But I couldn't pass up on the opportunity!

### What is one piece of advice that you would share with a new teacher?

ASK QUESTIONS! If there is something you do not know or understand, do not be scared to ask questions. Every educator has been in your shoes.

