

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE ALABAMA TEACHER MENTORING (ATM) PROGRAM**

Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year all local education agencies (LEAs) were required to have a mentoring program in place that meets ATM guidelines. Fortunately, the mentoring program will continue in the 2017-2018 school year. Mentors must be provided to each new teacher with no prior teaching experience.

### **Need for Program**

1. Research clearly shows that a systemic and well-planned mentoring program provides numerous benefits:
  - A. Reduced teacher attrition.
  - B. Reduced recruitment and retention costs.
  - C. Increased student achievement.
2. The money appropriated by the legislature will encourage multiple organizations (e.g., professional associations, LEAs, and the Alabama State Department of Education [ALSDE]) to work together in the development of the program.
3. While some LEAs have already committed time and resources to developing a mentoring program, others have not had the resources or opportunity to do so. This program will provide flexible support to all LEAs regardless of their current state of readiness.

The success of this program is dependent upon the knowledge and support of the leadership team overseeing implementation and its ability to ensure that:

1. The right individuals are selected as mentors.
2. The right matches are made between mentors and mentees.
3. Mentors and mentees are provided ongoing support.
4. A supportive culture of trust, mutual respect, and collegiality is in place to support the program.

I am asking superintendents to ensure that this year is as successful as possible by:

1. Committing to the continued development of the best mentoring program possible.
2. Identifying an LEA mentor liaison or assuming that role themselves.
3. Communicating with principals about the purposes and characteristics of the Alabama Teacher Mentoring (ATM) program and encouraging them to take advantage of opportunities provided by their professional associations to learn more about their role in the ATM program.

## **Overview of Guidelines for the Alabama Teacher Mentoring Program**

### Component 1:

Each new teacher will receive mentoring for a minimum of two years with an option of a third year based on mastery of competencies.

### Component 2:

Active teachers will mentor new teachers on a 1 to 1 basis.

Retired teachers can mentor new teachers on no more than a 5 to 1 ratio.

### Component 3:

Each new mentor should be chosen by a committee comprised of teachers and administrator(s) and must successfully complete Alabama Beginning Teacher Mentor Training or an equivalent locally developed training program. In this first year of the ATM program, individual mentors for each new teacher must be in place by the end of October 2017.

### Component 4:

Mentors will receive a stipend of \$1,000.00 per year for the new teacher they mentor.

### Component 5:

Mentors and mentees should strive for an average of 2.5 hours of contact time during each week of the school year. It is understood that contact hours will vary from week to week, but sufficient time should be scheduled to provide the mentee with the appropriate level of support and guidance.

### Component 6:

Each mentored new teacher will complete regularly scheduled assessments of mentor program effectiveness.

## **Recommended Timeline for Development Year of Alabama Teacher Mentoring Program**

**The following timeline is a recommendation for guidance purposes only. Some LEAs may have already identified and trained mentor teachers by June 2016. However, in the first year of this program, some LEAs may need additional time to identify the appropriate mentor for each new teacher. Ideally, and in subsequent years, new teachers will be matched with mentors prior to the opening of school.**

### August

1. Superintendent identifies an LEA mentor liaison.
2. Superintendent communicates purpose/scope of ATM program to principals.
3. Principals participate in ATM orientation/training provided by ALSDE personnel.

## ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### September

1. LEA mentor liaison receives SDE-sponsored training from ALSDE Staff through Webinars.
2. LEA mentor liaison provides principals with training and materials to:
  - A. Organize new teacher support team to provide orientation and support in first month of school.
  - B. Implements suggested processes for recruiting and selecting teacher mentors (e.g., committee of teachers and administrator).
  - C. Provide orientation to new teachers.
3. LEAs and schools collect baseline data.
4. Every new teacher has an individual mentor assigned to him/her.

### October

1. New teacher support team provides assistance to new teachers (using state-developed materials if appropriate).
2. In this initial year of the program, if teacher mentors have not already been selected, the final selections are made by October 2017.
3. LEA mentor liaisons attend state-sponsored training provided by the ALSDE and the Instructional Partners Network (A+)(focus of training is coaching and feedback around the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards [AQTSS]).
4. LEA mentor liaisons provide training to mentors during last week of September.

### November

1. Interim online formative assessment developed by the SDE.

### Remainder of School Year

1. Mentors support new teachers.
2. LEA mentor liaison supports principals and mentors.
3. LEA mentor liaisons receive training updates every four to six weeks and provide training to mentors and principals

### **Job Description for Mentor Liaisons**

#### Qualifications:

1. LEA mentor liaisons have a minimum of five years' successful teaching experience and are recognized for their instructional leadership.
2. LEA mentor liaisons model professional learning and growth through participation in (and/or leadership of) job-embedded professional development activities.
3. LEA mentor liaisons demonstrate excellence in communicating and collaborating with colleagues.
4. LEA mentor liaisons have strong facilitation skills and demonstrated effectiveness in provision of professional development or training to individuals and groups.
5. LEA mentor liaisons are committed to the mentoring and development of new teachers and are enthusiastic about the potential of the ATM program.

Roles/Responsibilities:

1. LEA mentor liaisons will successfully complete the Alabama Teacher Mentor Training provided by the ALSDE and will actively participate in a mentor liaison network in their region for purposes of follow-up and support.
2. LEA mentor liaisons will communicate with the ALSDE Educator Effectiveness staff and will respond to the coordinator's and the SDE's data collection and information requests, including participation in activities designed to evaluate the statewide mentor program.
3. LEA mentor liaisons will coordinate mentor training and support for mentors in all schools in their school system. Specifically, they will:
  - A. Provide initial training for all mentors in their school system prior to the beginning of the school year.
  - B. Provide follow-up training for mentors as suggested by the ALSDE.
  - C. Introduce all mentors to the Alabama Quality Teaching Standards and assist them in using these standards for personal reflection, self-assessment, and improvement planning—and in the mentoring of their new teachers.
  - D. Provide ongoing support to mentors in individual schools—offering information and technical assistance as needed.
  - E. Coordinate the conduct of formative and summative assessments by mentors and mentees as suggested by the ALSDE.
4. LEA mentor liaisons will communicate with their school system's principals about the ATM program and work to ensure that the principals have a deep understanding of the purposes and processes associated with the ATM program—particularly the criteria for mentor selection and the nature of the mentor-mentee relationship.
5. LEA mentor liaisons will work with building administrators to ensure that mentors and new teachers receive the assistance and support they require.
6. LEA mentor liaisons will continuously monitor and assess the effectiveness of their school system's teacher mentor program.

**Job Description for Mentor Teachers**

1. Mentor teachers have a minimum of three years' successful teaching experience and subject-area expertise.
2. Mentor teachers demonstrate effectiveness in classroom instruction via provision of such evidence as: (a) student achievement growth including standardized test scores; (b) portfolio of student work documenting evidence of student learning; and (c) documentation of effective teaching, e.g., results of observations by principals/supervisors, videotaped lesson.
3. Mentor teachers model professional learning and growth through participation in (and/or leadership of) job-embedded professional development activities.
4. Mentor teachers demonstrate excellence in communicating and collaborating with colleagues. Prospective mentors work collaboratively toward professional growth and improvement goals.

## Alabama Beginning Teacher Mentoring Program—Rubric for Mentor Selection

**Purpose:** The purpose of this rubric is to serve as a tool for individuals charged with recruiting and selecting mentors as well as a reflective tool for prospective mentors. Indicators on this rubric supplement basic requirements for mentors, e.g., three successful years of teaching and subject-area expertise

KNOWLEDGE, SKILL, DISPOSITION	3	2	1
<p><b>Professional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Alabama Quality Teaching Standards (AQTS)</li> <li>○ District and school policies and procedures</li> <li>○ Alabama Educator Code of Ethics</li> <li>○ Continuous learner</li> <li>○ Collegiality and collaborative approach</li> </ul>	<p>Uses the AQTS as a tool for personal growth</p> <p>Seeks ways to improve policies/procedures</p> <p>Consistently aligns behavior with Code</p> <p>Seeks professional growth experiences; current with research and professional literature</p> <p>Actively works with colleagues in promoting the development of professional learning communities</p>	<p>Is conversant with the AQTS</p> <p>Adheres to all district &amp; school policies &amp; procedures</p> <p>Understands the implications of the Code for professional behavior</p> <p>Actively participates in professional development; is somewhat familiar with current literature</p> <p>Works with colleagues and is not averse to sharing ideas and teaching strategies</p>	<p>Is not that familiar with the AQTS</p> <p>Sometimes seems confused about policies/procedures</p> <p>Does not appear to be familiar with the Code</p> <p>Does not seek professional growth opportunities</p> <p>Rarely works with colleagues in a collaborative manner</p>
<p><b>Personal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Building and maintaining relationships</li> </ul>	<p>Has positive relationships with all adults and students</p>	<p>Gets along well with most adults and students</p>	<p>Has occasional relationship problems</p>

Knowledge, skill, disposition	3	2	1
<p><b>(Personal)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Communications</li> <li>○ Respect for diversity</li> <li>○ Problem solving</li> <li>○ Reflecting</li> </ul>	<p>Expresses self clearly orally and in writing; exemplary listening, questioning, and nonverbal skills</p> <p>Seeks to understand divergent points of view; works well with students and adults of all backgrounds</p> <p>Uses critical thinking skills to identify problems, outline alternatives, seek relevant data, and find evidence-based solutions</p> <p>Consistently thinks back on experiences and behaviors for the purpose of self-assessing and learning to continually improve performance</p>	<p>Adequate communication skills; is seldom misunderstood</p> <p>Demonstrates a basic respect for all individuals, regardless of their background</p> <p>Usually makes good decisions and/or identifies workable solutions</p> <p>Engages in occasional reflection individually and with others</p>	<p>Sometimes develops misunderstandings due to communication errors</p> <p>Does not always exercise tolerance for different points of view or for individuals of different backgrounds</p> <p>Oftentimes jumps to conclusions without seeking relevant information</p> <p>Does not exhibit reflective approach to practice</p>
<p><b>Instructional</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Relationship between identified instructional practices and student achievement</li> <li>○ Curriculum and state standards</li> </ul>	<p>Uses appropriate instructional strategies to improve achievement of all students</p> <p>Has deep knowledge of assigned content areas and of state content standards</p>	<p>Has a repertoire of research-based practices associated with increased student achievement</p> <p>Has good working knowledge of assigned content areas; familiar with state standards</p>	<p>Does not demonstrate knowledge of research-based best practice</p> <p>Does not have mastery of all content assigned content areas and/or of state standards</p>

Knowledge, skill, disposition	3	2	1
<p>(Instructional)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Classroom management procedures and practices</li>   <li>○ Monitoring and assessment of student progress</li>   <li>○ Differentiation of instruction</li> </ul>	<p>Demonstrates exemplary classroom management; handles almost all behavior issues without administrator involvement</p> <p>Uses a wide repertoire of strategies to monitor and assess student progress for purpose of providing students with formative feedback; uses a wide range of techniques to evaluate student learning for purposes of grading and reporting</p> <p>Uses assessment results to plan appropriate instruction for all learners, making modifications in strategies as appropriate</p>	<p>Knows best practice in classroom management; experiences few management problems</p> <p>Knows the importance of both assessment for learning and assessment of learning and uses a range of assessment strategies</p> <p>Knows the basic principles of differentiation</p>	<p>Does not always exercise effective classroom management</p> <p>Does not use a wide range of formative assessment strategies and/or has some difficulty in accurately or appropriately evaluating student progress</p> <p>Tends to provide the same instruction to all students, regardless of their prior learning or readiness</p>
<p><b>Commitment to Mentoring</b></p>	<p>Has a strong desire to serve as a mentor; articulates a commitment to inducting new members to the profession</p>	<p>Is willing to serve as a mentor, but not altogether enthusiastic</p>	<p>Expresses reservations about ability (or time) to serve in this capacity</p>