The Alabama Teacher Mentor Program: Mentor Professional Learning and Teacher Effectiveness

ATMP participants engaged in two professional learning experiences with support from the New Teacher Center (NTC): Pilot Mentor Forums and Foundational Institute for Coaching (FIC). NTC’s coaching model is grounded in real-world application and job-embedded support – best practices of adult learning theory – with the ultimate goal of strengthening capacity of district leaders to build program sustainability.

Pilot Mentor Forums
During the 2021-2022 school year, mentors from eight districts were selected for a professional learning series pilot consisting of 8 forums to support their learning and understanding for effective implementation of NTC’s model for instructional mentoring and the Optimal Learning Environment.

Forum 1: Introduction to NTC and the Optimal Learning Environment (OLE)
Forum 2: Engaging in Planning Conversations
Forum 3: Coaching Elements and Collaboration
Forum 4: Implementing an Effective Induction Program
Forum 5: Joint Forum with Mentors and School Leaders
Forum 6: Analyzing Student Learning to Address Diverse Student Needs
Forum 7: Effective Feedback Delivery
Forum 8: End of Year Reflection/Success Analysis

Forum Experience and Key Takeaways

I enjoyed the video segments. It was great to have a visual piece to apply our learning.

Great learning session on personalities and how to improve conversations between mentor and mentee.

Each session I leave with excitement to share my new learning.

...the school leader’s relevance in the mentoring partnership. The collaboration between the school leader and the mentor is a critical component when building an effective mentoring program.

Build purposeful criteria for recruiting mentors.

“This session was very beneficial in helping us to identify challenges in communication and in implementing new ideas, and collaboratively discuss ways to solve those challenges.”

9.1 Overall Forum Series Rating (1-10 scale)

"Gained learning from the sessions will be used to move Hale County’s coaching and mentoring programs onward and upward."

Source: 2021-2022 Post-Session Surveys and 2022 NTC Program Quality Survey for Teachers and Mentors
Foundational Institute for Coaches

NTC’s Foundational Institute for Coaches is a nationally recognized professional learning series focused on implementing the coaching cycle to support equitable instruction. 86 mentors participated in this summer learning opportunity.

Session 1: Foundations for Equitable Coaching
Session 2: Creating Optimal Learning Environments (OLE)
Session 3: Effective Planning Conversations: Context and Standards
Session 4: Planning Conversations: Knowing Students/Knowing Teachers
Session 5: Pre-Observation Conversation
Session 6: Observation and Post-Observation Conversation
Session 7: Analyzing Student Learning Tool
Session 8: Supporting and Planning for Effective Coaching

Forum Experience and Tool Application

I always enjoy the opportunity to share ideas with others with different perspectives.

The training was sensational. I've learned several strategies that will enable me to be an effective mentor. I'm looking forward to the next session.

This is one of the most valuable professional learning opportunities I have experienced. The activities are engaging and the conversations with colleagues have been powerful. Thank you!

I am excited about the opportunity to use the tools provided with the mentors in my district. I enjoyed using the Kiano to navigate the collaborative assessment log and the planning conversation guide. Great tool to mentor/coach teachers.

Selective scripting was a little difficult to start, but I am sure it will get easier. I like the fact that it focuses on the evidence and it is not just theory. The activities are engaging and the learning opportunities I have experienced.

I feel they would love the opportunity to move beyond the basics of mentoring. I always enjoy the opportunity to share ideas with others with different perspectives.

I feel more prepared to create a student-centered environment and feel more confident to support equitable instruction. The mentors are very knowledgeable of the subject and have contributed to this summer learning opportunity.

95% of teachers agree/strongly agree that work with their mentor has impacted their teaching practice.

100% of teachers feel more prepared to create a student-centered environment.

Overall Forum Series Rating (1-10 scale)

9.2

Impact on Teacher Effectiveness

Source: 2021-2022 Post-Session Surveys and 2022 NTC Program Quality Survey for Teachers and Mentors

95% of teachers

will apply strategies learned

made permanent and substantive changes to teaching practice

Agree/Strongly Agree that work with their mentor has impacted their teaching practice.
The Alabama Teacher Mentor Program: 2022 Program Quality Survey

Data from 26 Teachers and 29 Mentors
Source: 2022 NTC Program Quality Survey for Teachers and Mentors

New Teacher Experience and Impact on Practice

I meet with my mentor...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twice per month</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>At least weekly</td>
<td>76%</td>
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100% of teachers met with mentors at least monthly during the 2021-22 school year.

Because of work with my mentor...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feel more prepared to create a student-centered environment</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made permanent and substantive changes to my teaching practice</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will apply teaching strategies</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact on student learning</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kiano

63% agree tools in Kiano help facilitate conversations with their mentor

69% agree Kiano surfaces actionable information about practice and student learning

Mentor Experience and Impact on Practice

Mentors agree/strongly agree that...

| Agreement                                                      | Percentage |
|                                                               |------------|
| NTC professional learning is relevant to my needs as a mentor | 100%       |
| I have made permanent and substantive changes to practice     | 93%        |
| I am confident implementing effective coaching strategies     | 82%        |

Mentor Role Satisfaction and Climate

| Satisfaction                                                      | Percentage |
|                                                               |------------|
| Feel supported by principal(s) in the schools(s) where they work | 85%        |
| Agree the role as mentor is clearly defined                      | 93%        |
| Have enough time to adequately meet the needs of their mentee/new teacher | 54%        |

Kiano

100% agree Kiano surfaces actionable information about teacher practice and student learning

97% agree Kiano enables them to effectively apply the coaching model

Kiano

61% rated training and support 9-10 on a scale of 0-10

74 minutes were spent supporting each teacher per week, on average
Mentors used NTC tools in Kiano to facilitate interactions with teachers. The chart below highlights the tools most frequently used in the 88 interactions documented in Kiano.

### Priority Student Populations

Source: 2022 NTC Program Quality Survey for Teachers and Mentors

**Teachers:** To what extent has your mentor supported you in meeting the academic and social emotional needs of NTC priority student populations?

**Mentors:** To what extent did NTC professional learning enhance your knowledge in supporting teachers to meet the academic and social emotional needs of NTC priority student populations?

#### Mentoring activities teachers and mentors would like additional training/support in the upcoming school year.*

- Discuss how to support students’ social and emotional needs
- Discuss effective/appropriate responses to student (mis)behavior
- Discuss your instructional content area(s) to develop deeper knowledge
- Model instruction (either in your classroom or theirs)
- Analyze samples of student work
- Discuss how to manage job-related stress (e.g., time management, etc.)

*Top 5 rated responses for teachers and mentors

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**Instructional Mentorship**

Source: 2022 NTC Program Quality Survey for Teachers and Mentors

**Mentoring activities according to teachers and mentors**

- Provide emotional support
- Discuss effective/appropriate responses to student (mis)behavior
- Discuss how to manage job-related stress (e.g., time management, etc.)
- Discuss managing classroom procedures (e.g., groups, transitions, materials and supplies)
- Discuss how to support students’ social and emotional needs
- Discuss how to engage resource personnel to support student learning

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**ASL Tool** 10%  **Analyzing Student Learning Tool**

**Observation Tool** 19%  **Planning Conversation Guide** 28%

**Pre-Observation Tool** 15% **Post-Observation Tool** 8%

Source: 2022 Kiano Teacher Tool Metrics

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Teachers and mentors received intentional development that supports high quality instruction for NTC priority student populations.
Impact on Teacher and Mentor Practice

I have learned some things that they don’t teach you in college that you can only learn from experiences of your own or someone going through similar things as you.

My mentor observed my lessons... This feedback helped me plan my lessons in a more successful way. I was able to make small changes that helped student engagement and understanding.

I am a lot more reflective of my own teaching practices – almost like I am self-mentoring. Mentoring has become even more of a collaborative experience.

I have had more opportunities to reflect on my job as a mentor and coach.

Impact on Relationships

My mentor treats me with respect beyond my years of experience and has been excellent to work with. I appreciate the support she has given me throughout not only my first year at Valley, but my first year as an educator. She is phenomenal and I will miss her near everyday conversations...I will be eternally grateful.

I absolutely loved my mentor. The insight I was given this year was extremely valuable. I look forward to continuing my teaching years with the knowledge I received from her. I also feel comfortable coming to her in the future as needed. I am extremely thankful for this opportunity to learn and grow from my mentor.

The Kiano Experience

I enjoyed using [Kiano] to navigate the collaborative assessment log and the planning conversation guide. Great tool to mentor/coach teachers.

Having time to self-reflect on my mentoring practices was very helpful; working within the Kiano platform is always a PLUS.

I am excited about the opportunity to use the tools provided with the mentors in my district. I feel they would love the opportunity to move beyond the basics of mentoring.

Recommendations for 2022-23

Based on responses (open ended and multiple choice) from 2021-2022 NTC Program Quality Survey for Teachers and Mentors

Special Education Focus
Both teachers and mentors identified a need for a special education focus for professional learning, and tool application.

“I just wish there was a part more geared towards special education.”

Add some parts that make it easier for special education/inclusion teachers that don’t really plan lessons.

Collaborative Professional Learning
Mentors stated that collaborative professional learning with administrators was beneficial in aligning teacher needs and school support.

“The key takeaway from today’s session is the school leader’s relevance in the mentoring partnership. The collaboration between the school leader and the mentor is a critical component when building an effective mentoring program.”

“Allowing the mentee to attend a training session. This way they can better understand what and why we are doing what we are doing to try and help them.”

Time
Mentors expressed a desire for more sanctioned time to observe, model or co-teach with their mentees to support teacher learning and application. Some also wished for time to collaborate with school administrators.

“My only wish is that there was more (any) dedicated time for meeting between mentor/mentee, and also actual dialogue between mentor/admin.”

“More time for in-classroom practice with my mentee.”
The Alabama Teacher Mentor Program: Teacher and Mentor Retention

Data from 26 Teachers and 29 Mentors
Source: 2022 NTC Program Quality Survey for Teachers and Mentors

**RETENTION OF TEACHERS AND MENTORS**

- **New Teacher Retention Rate**
  - 89% plan to continue teaching at their school
  - 6% plan to continue teaching at another school
  - 6% plan to leave education entirely

- **Mentor Retention Rate**
  - 93% plan to mentor again next year
  - 7% plan to return to the classroom

**2021–2022 Mentor Attrition**

- **86** mentors started in 21–22 cohort pilot and participated in Foundational Institute of Coaching
- **59** mentors remained in the program at the end of the 2021–22 school year.
- **31.4%** 21–22 mentor attrition rate

**Reasons for Mentor Attrition**

- Resignation/Separation from district
- Work balance
- Promoted within district
- Retired
- Personal/Medical reasons
- Unknown withdrawal
- ALSDE Mentoring Pilot Policy*

*Participation in the ATMP Pilot Program was voluntary. Some districts chose to opt out after initial professional learning occurred. One entire district opted out (15 mentors)

The partnership with NTC has shown to have a positive impact on the teacher and mentor experience. The retention rate is based on responses from participants that completed the entire year. The high retention rate for both teacher and mentor creates a strong foundation for the continuation of learning, application of strategies and mentoring relationships.