

JEA Mentoring Program

VISION STATEMENT

The reality of the high school classroom for any beginning teacher may be one of the most challenging transitions faced by teachers in their entire professional careers; however, advising student publications adds untold pressures to the new teacher's work load.

The JEA Mentoring Program, with documented proof, helps beginning journalism teachers make a successful transition into journalism teaching by relying on the expertise of veterans who can help the fledgling adviser develop effective instructional strategies and apply theoretical knowledge.

New journalism teachers who are mentored typically receive higher ratings from their principals, develop better planning skills, handle discipline problems more effectively, conduct more productive classroom discussion and remain in classrooms longer than teachers who are simply left to "sink or swim." Furthermore, student publications of advisers in this program thrive with a knowledgeable, supportive adviser who helps students develop a culture of responsible journalism within the school community.

Finally, districts that provide effective support for new teachers attract the most capable candidates, who are more likely to become proficient and are less likely to resign.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Retaining quality teachers
- Improving the teaching practice of the novice adviser
- Building stronger scholastic journalism programs

The JEA Mentoring Program is designed to

- Provide on-going training and support for new journalism teachers and/or advisers
- Promote effective teaching and instruction including First Amendment rights and responsibilities
- Support new journalism teachers so that they will become highly qualified teachers in this field
- Create journalism programs that encourage diversity in classroom and student media
- Utilize the expertise of retired journalism educators with extensive knowledge of journalism and advising who have an enthusiasm for and have been trained for mentoring
- Encourage development of new journalism teachers professionally and personally, especially through the resources of continued training at workshops, conferences, conventions and classes
- Address needs of new journalism teachers by enhancing their knowledge and skills, thus improving the quality of student learning
- Provide an ongoing support system that is part of the professional learning community at and beyond the new journalism teacher's school

MENTORS

Selection

Mentors are identified and recruited by members of state scholastic press associations. As the program expands, an application process may be developed to help identify additional mentors.

Qualifications

- Outstanding, knowledgeable advisers who are retired or near retirement
- Recognition as an outstanding teacher who maintains positive peer relations
- Understanding of beginning teacher development
- Ability to share instructional ideas and materials with mentees and to discuss assessment information
- Commitment to their own professional growth and learning
- Possession of effective interpersonal and collaborative skills
- Good enough health to enable mentors to travel to schools and national conventions
- Be JEA certified as CJE or MJE; or become certified within one year of becoming a mentor

Role

- Facilitate the understanding of the responsibilities of a professional teacher based upon the professional teaching standards
- Have effective communication skills and ability to honor confidentiality
- Be familiar with own learning style and the learning style of the mentee
- Guide mentees to promote instructional excellence
- Learn and understand district policies and procedures in mentee's school as needed to understand that mentee's concerns
- Provide ongoing support, advice and counsel to mentee
- Understand and advise the use of effective assessments
- Establish a system of ongoing communication with mentee, which may include school visits, phone conversations and e-mailing
- Model and encourage reflection on teaching and advising
- Act as coach, suggesting strategies (when appropriate) relating to planning, time management, discipline, working with parents, etc.
- Act as motivator, helping build the mentee's confidence through encouragement and inspirational success stories
- Serve as a model of effective teaching and publication advising
- Promote awareness of diversity and inclusion issues for regular classroom instruction and for student media
- Have full command of journalism curriculum
- Suggest procedures necessary for efficiently running a publication staff such as daily meetings, staff organization, publication organization, deadlines, staff selection, grading, printer selection, etc.

Commitment

In order to build a national program to support scholastic journalism advisers, we depend on the knowledge and experience of veteran advisers and expect each to have a commitment to help the program in these areas:

- Commitment of two years to the mentoring program
- Completion of mentor training
- Agreement to communicate regularly with each mentee, including face-to-face meetings during the school year whenever possible
- Agreement to meet with each mentee's school administration both to establish the school's support of the mentorship and also to assist the mentee in establishing an effective setting for the journalism program
- Agreement to do data collection and required record keeping, including one report per semester
- Agreement to help secure in-state funding for stipend and miscellaneous expenses including workshops, conferences, etc. for the mentee
- Willingness to help with the development of the JEA Mentoring Program
- Realize that commitments may vary for long-distance mentors who work with new advisers in states other than their home state when no other JEA Mentor is available

MENTEES

Selection

- Be the newly assigned media adviser on campus
- Little or no experience with journalism or advising
- Willing to commit to two years of mentoring.

Role

- Be open to receiving suggestions, support, guidance, and constructive criticism
- Have true commitment to the mentoring program
- Establish professional goals with assistance from mentor
- Develop a working knowledge of the state teaching standards with the intent to improve the effectiveness of instruction
- Be willing to take risks, ask questions, and try new ideas
- Establish open communication and honor confidentiality
- Be determined to remain in a journalism position and improve the quality of the media being advised

BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS

- Support the journalism-specific mentor program even if the school has an established mentor program in place
- Act in a supportive way with the mentee
- Provide opportunity for mentee to observe practitioners who are exemplars and will advance the practice of the mentee
- Provide release time, if funding is available, for mentee to attend journalism workshops, conferences and conventions

- Support the student publication by guaranteeing the students their First Amendment rights
- Evaluate the mentee's teaching and training of students, not the student media

In addition, the building administrator is encouraged to attend a journalism convention, conference or workshop with the new journalism teacher/adviser to support that teacher and become better informed about scholastic journalism and media.

FINANCIAL DETAILS:

Mentor Stipends – funded at state level

- The recommended yearly stipend is \$1,000-\$2,500 per year. The stipend will cover the mentor's expenses related to the work, including gas and copies. Any funds remaining will be an honorarium for the work provided.
- The Mentor Program recognizes that states have found difficulty securing enough funding for the stipend for each mentor each year. While some stipend assistance is available from the Yellow Chair Foundation, we expect each state scholastic press association to make a good-faith effort to pay as much as they reasonably can toward its mentor stipends. States should take into consideration variables like the distances mentors travel to meet with their mentees, the amount mentors are spending on resources for their mentees, the number of mentees a mentor is working with.
- State funders send their stipend payments to JEA, a 501(c)(3) organization, by August 10. JEA pays the mentors in two installments – a payment at the end of each semester.
- A mentor will receive the stipend based on completing the required reports and documentation.
- The mentors should work together with their state scholastic press association to find in-state funding for the stipends.
- Suggestions of resources: state newspaper association, college/university journalism department, state or regional press association, state or local education association, any educational foundation in the region.

PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

Documenting the program is important as it

- Provides information to help expand the program to new mentors and new states.
- Helps determine how to make adjustments in the program to make it more effective.
- Establishes a record of documented success that can be used in soliciting funding.
- Provides a written report of the mentoring program to the JEA board prior to each convention.
- Obtains publicity, which could include articles in *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, information on the JEA and JEA Mentoring websites, webinars, and podcasts about the mentoring program.

Everyone who provides support for the program will receive regular reports on the program. The committee will report regularly to JEA.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluation of the mentor teacher program will focus on its effectiveness in meeting its three goals:

1. Retaining quality teachers
2. Improving teaching practice
3. Building stronger scholastic journalism programs

Both mentors and mentees will be asked to provide information regarding their experience in the mentoring program. Sources may include surveys, reflective journals, systematic observation (formal/informal), interviews, student outcomes, and mentor documentation (logs).

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Linda Barrington