

# NEW SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST MENTORING PROGRAM

## Steps for Cycle One – *Mentors*

Cycle one of the program is similar to the program for teachers focused on Domain two of Danielson's Framework: *The Classroom Environment*. For school psychologists *Enhancing Professional Practice, A Framework for Teaching, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* by Danielson is utilized. The purpose of this cycle is to help new school psychologists get a clear picture of their school, district, and community environments and begin enhancing their skills. The new school psychologist has had specialized training in the interface between psychology and education, including school systems and organizations. The school psychologist is a child advocate working within the educational system to assure all students are provided with opportunities to learn in safe, healthy and supportive environments. They utilize multiple means of assessment to determine student's strengths and needs, and to identify resources available to solve problems. They engage in collaborative consultation with students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community resources to design interventions that address student needs and effectively utilize or develop resources. Interventions are designed to create opportunities for improving student achievement and behavior to promote academic success. School psychologists often address students' social and emotional needs and engage in training and program development. They also facilitate or participate on school teams such as Instructional Support, Response to Intervention, Positive Behavior Support and Crisis Response. The new school psychologist will need to assess the environment of the school, establish rapport, trust and a culture of positive mental health throughout the school community while beginning the process of self-reflection and personal evaluation for improvement of practice

The new school psychologist's journey is a personal one. The length of time needed to complete the steps is not prescribed, though it is anticipated that the Mentoring and Induction Program is to be completed in three years. School psychology standards require school psychologists to evaluate their own practices and make decisions for improving personal performance using evidence based practice and best practices. Your role is to help the new school psychologist with orientation, resources, and assessment of personal performance so that she/he can make accurate decisions about current performance levels. You may be asked to secure resources or other support as each one works reflectively to refine a component of practice.

### Refresher Before You Begin

1. You are a coach in this process. Resist the urge to tell the new school psychologist how you would do things. Let them develop their own skills and knowledge. They may not do what you would do, but the question is: Are they effective?
2. Remember to reflect on your biases so that you are able to focus on the practices that you see and hear without being influenced by your own professional style.

3. You are an advocate for the new school psychologist. This role may require you to see that the new school psychologist has the support, resources, and other things needed to be successful. This may mean that you are the person who makes the requests. If you discover a barrier to the new school psychologist's success over which you have no control, it is appropriate to bring this to the attention of the lead school psychologist mentor.

4. You are not the judge of practice in this role. While you may disagree with the decision(s) of the new school psychologist in terms of his/her practice, it is ultimately his/her own responsibility to assess and highlight current performance levels. If you think the assessment is not accurate, you should use questioning techniques and ask for concrete evidence of practice to help the new school psychologist consider his/her ratings. An exception to this comes with any unsafe or unethical act. As a school psychology professional, you are obliged to intervene if you see or learn about an unsafe or unethical act about to be performed. Remember, your role is to point out what you see and hear in terms of your mentee's practices.

### **Documents used in this cycle:**

**Guiding Questions-** These documents provide potential questions that you may be asking the new school psychologist and/or an administrator. The questions are not to be answered in a written form. You should review the questions and ask several of them during your discussion to help the new school psychologist develop confidence in responding.

**Discussion Logs (2 filled out by mentor) -** These one page documents are to be completed by you as you meet with the new school psychologist to discuss their practice. Give them the notes and either make or ask for a copy for your files. This document is to celebrate their successes, identify their challenges, and determine the support and resources you may need to secure for them.

### **Initial phase:**

In the early days of the first year as a school psychologist, the focus needs to be on building a secure, accurate and practical basis of understanding about the role of the school psychologist. Documentation of Resources (one for each building assignment) and a Technology Access Log will be completed. These two documents will be handy maps for the new school psychologist on an important journey.

Once the new school psychologist is ready to move on to the practice consultation, two observations will be completed by the mentor. These are not evaluative! They are for information sharing to enable the new school psychologist to reflect on a single area of practice for self-improvement.

## **Procedural Steps for School Psychologist Observations (2) by Mentor**

1. Set up the observation of the environment with the new school psychologist. We encourage you to video your observation, if appropriate and you have student permission, as it allows both of you to see the practices in action. You should give a copy of the video to the new school psychologist prior to your second meeting. Make notes of what you see and hear during the activity. It is a good idea to provide the notes to the new school psychologist as quickly as possible after the observation and prior to the second meeting.
2. During your meeting you will complete the discussion log with your new school psychologist's comments. After considering their practice, they will select one component (for example: time management, assessment procedures, establishing rapport) as an area of focus. At the conclusion of this meeting you should determine any needs and resources that you will secure for the new school psychologist as they work on this area of focus.
3. The new school psychologist should spend anywhere from 2 to 4 weeks refining their practice. If they spend more than four weeks in this, you should check with them to assure that things are on track or to determine if you need to intervene with additional support. The school psychologist may choose to review works by Charlotte Danielson or NASP to find "best practices". The school psychologist may seek your input into ideas or strategies or changes to practice they will use. Use your questioning techniques to help them evaluate different options.
4. When ready, the new school psychologist will ask you to schedule a second observation date. Again, if appropriate, you may video this session. Reminder: This observation is to focus only on the area of need selected by the new school psychologist.
5. As soon as possible, set up the next meeting with the new school psychologist. Complete the second discussion log, review the practice skill, and record any notes or questions that you wish to share.

At this point you will be discussing their next steps in the process. If their ratings were in the "proficient" range they should move on to the next cycle. If the performance is still "basic" in some areas, you should discuss how refining some of those areas may lead to greater success in practice. Remember that evidence of good practice should lead to movement forward. However, in the end, it is the new school psychologist's decision about moving forward or continuing to refine a certain area of practice.

### **Sign Out**

At the end of this cycle complete the Verification of Services form. This should not be done while the two of you are meeting. This is a personal statement. You only need to check the statements and sign the form. This is the opportunity for you to note any

issues that you may have regarding the new school psychologist. If you feel that he /she needs more help, this is the time to make that recommendation. If you feel that you are not able to continue your work with the new school psychologist, please be candid. Send the completed form your district/charter school's designated mentoring site coordinator.

### **Document Collection**

Documents to be completed by the NEW SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST;

- Documentation of Resources
- Technology Access
  
- Verification of Services form.

New school psychologists will be given a certificate for cycles one and four which must be kept for a period of three years The portfolio may be reviewed before the continuing license is issued.

***The basic documents should be kept in a portfolio, a binder that includes all notes, forms, certificates and verifications for the three years of mentoring.***

Documents to be completed by the MENTOR :

- Two Mentor Formative Observation logs (copy kept by mentor-original to new school psychologist's portfolio)
- Two Discussion Logs and notes about the discussions during observation (copy kept by mentor - original to new school psychologist's portfolio)
- Verification of Services form

**Keep copies of forms for stipend.**

### **Important Information**

*Mentors, please help the new school psychologist to determine whether the evaluation process is being properly followed and that he/she is provided with a summative DPAS II evaluation for specialists at the end of this year.*

*\*\*\* If a school psychologist moves to another district/charter school during the period of time when they hold an initial license, he/she will be required to present the specified documents related to each of the three cycles. If the person cannot provide the documentation, they may not be able to secure a new school psychology position or may be required to repeat some or all of the cycle.*

*After the first year as a school psychologist, the new school psychologist's portfolio should contain copies of his/her summative DPAS II evaluations. School psychologists moving from the initial license to a continuing license must have proof of two successful summative evaluations. Failure to have these summative evaluations may result in a required extension of the initial license or the inability to secure a continuing license.*

*Please verify with your new school psychologist that they are moving through the correct path of evaluation and that they were provided with a summative evaluation at the end of each of their three years on the initial license. A lesson analysis or informal formative assessment is not a summative evaluation. In the event that administration does not provide the new school psychologist with a summative evaluation at the end of the year, you should notify your site coordinator for teacher mentoring and the lead school psychologist mentor immediately.*