

Mentoring Handbook 2025-2026



"Ten Schools, Three Districts, One Community of Learners"

**Northborough, Southborough, and
Northborough/Southborough Regional School Districts**

Table of Contents

Welcome from the Induction and Mentoring Support Team	2
Mission	3
Core Values and Principles	3
Vision: Portrait of a Graduate	3
Theory of Action	4
Strategic Objectives	5
Confidentiality Guidelines	5
Responsibilities of the Principals	5
Responsibilities of the Mentor Coordinators	6
Qualifications of a Mentor	6
Responsibilities of the Mentors	6
Responsibilities of the Mentees	7
Roles and Qualities of a Mentor	7
Pre-Observation Discussion	8
Purpose and Expectations	8
Questions and Concerns	8
Mentor's Role in Observation	8
Post-Observation Discussion	8
For the Mentee	8
*For the Mentor	8
Early conversations to have with your mentor:	9
Some practical information to know even before students arrive:	10
Mentor Log	11

Welcome from the Induction and Mentoring Support Team

Welcome to the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough. As an educational community, we know that our greatest assets lie in the skills, talents, and experience that you will bring to our community and to our students. We recognize, however, that whether you are beginning your career as a teacher or just opening a new chapter, this move to a new school system will pose significant challenges. With this in mind, the district has invested in an induction and mentoring program that matches each incoming teacher with an experienced colleague who can offer resources, support, and encouragement as you navigate your first year. Whether you are new to education or a seasoned veteran, we know that this partnership will help you make a smooth transition into your new school.

The goals of the induction and mentoring program are to establish a culture in each school that encourages professional collaboration and offers guidance, resources, and systematic support for teachers. Specifically, the goals are to:

- Ease the transition of incoming teachers and to help integrate them into our educational community
- Foster communication, cooperation, and camaraderie among all staff members
- Create an environment that encourages open dialogue and reflective teaching
- Address concerns and challenges common among incoming teachers: classroom management; interaction with parents; meeting the needs of diverse students; instructional issues; and role expectations
- Promote the personal and professional well-being of teachers
- Improve student learning and increase effective teaching at all levels

The time you spend in your mentor/mentee partnership will not only benefit you professionally, but it will also fulfill state requirements for licensure. Under Massachusetts Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) regulations, teachers seeking professional licensure must complete a one-year mentoring and induction program. In addition, a total of fifty hours must be completed during an educator's second and/or third year of teaching. The Public Schools of Northborough-Southborough are committed to providing every teacher the opportunity to meet these obligations.

Again, welcome! We wish you a fruitful, satisfying year of teaching as well as a productive and enjoyable partnership within the Mentor/Mentee program.

Sincerely,

The 2025-2026 Induction and Mentoring District Support Team

The Induction and Mentoring District Support Team:		
Kerri Brooks	Mentor Coordinator	Northborough PreK-8
Kristin Theve	Mentor Coordinator	Southborough PreK-8
Christina Smith	Mentor Co-Coordinator	Algonquin Regional High School
Christine Thompson	Mentor Co-Coordinator	Algonquin Regional High School
Gregory Martineau	Superintendent of Schools	District
Stefanie Reinhorn	Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning	District

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Ten Schools. Three Districts. One Community of Learners.*

Mission

Educate, Inspire, and Challenge

Core Values and Principles

Core values represent the “heart and soul” of a school district. Their importance should not be underestimated. They form the foundation for all the actions that the district takes. They are the underpinnings of beliefs, how the district operates, how it works with people at all levels, and what the district envisions as its purpose. The following represents the District’s core values:

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough believe in:

- Integrity
- Empathy
- Inclusivity
- Equity
- Perseverance
- Respect

Vision: Portrait of a Graduate

Our Students Will Be: Collaborators

- Enrich the learning of self and others through teamwork.
- Solicit and respect diverse perspectives and contributions.
- Seek, contribute, and react to feedback to achieve shared outcomes.
- Recognize and leverage strengths to build collective commitment, action, and understanding.

Critical and Creative Thinkers

- Transfer and connect knowledge and skills to deepen understanding.
- Demonstrate thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence.
- Use disciplinary knowledge and skills in routine and innovative ways.
- Make informed decisions, solve problems, and use a variety of tools to deepen learning.

Communicators

- Articulate thoughts and ideas using oral, written, and non-verbal communication skills for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Listen to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes, and intentions.
- Use technological skills and contemporary digital tools to explore and exchange ideas.

Socially and Civically Engaged

- Demonstrate personal, civic, and social integrity through ethical and empathetic behaviors.
- Recognize individual and communal impact on others and the natural world.
- Value and embrace diverse cultures and unique perspectives through mutual respect and open dialogue.

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Growth-Oriented

- Cultivate positive attitudes and habits about learning.
- Pursue one's own interests and curiosity to experience new learning.
- Consistently improve the quality of one's own thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing and reconstructing.
- Persist to accomplish difficult tasks and to overcome academic and personal barriers to meet goals.

Healthy and Balanced

- Develop and demonstrate awareness, sensitivity, concern, and respect to connect with self and others' feelings, opinions,
- experiences, and cultures.
- Use reflective practices to understand one's personal strengths, challenges, and passions.
- Make choices to support a lifestyle that is healthy, both physically and mentally.
- Demonstrate resilience through the ability to manage emotions, stress, and challenges.

Theory of Action

IF:

- District, school leaders and educators model a culture of continuous growth by collecting and using multiple sources of feedback to improve their professional practice.
- District, school leaders and educators assess, and where needed, reorganize the use of time, people, and resources to focus on instructional practice and improve student learning.
- District, school leaders and educators collaborate to develop a district-wide approach to supporting the social and emotional development and well-being of students.
- District, school leaders and educators define and employ a framework for highly effective learning and teaching based on current learning theory and culturally responsive practices.
- District school leaders and educators work together to create and implement focused, strategic school improvement plans including sustained and aligned professional learning.
- District, school leaders and educators use data to inform, plan, implement, and measure district, school, and student-level improvement.
- Educators design and implement lessons with instructional goals, assessments, methods, and materials that meet the individual needs of learners.

THEN:

- All students will actively engage in learning that meets their developmental needs academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Students will be prepared for the next level of learning, college, or career.

Strategic Objectives

1. *Empowering Learners*: Implement instructional practices that engage students in developing and demonstrating their knowledge and skills through rigorous, innovative, and relevant learning experiences.
2. *Equity of Opportunity*: Provide all students access to challenging and culturally responsive learning experiences that meet their individual needs.
3. *Healthy and Balanced Learners*: Prioritize social, emotional, and physical well-being of students.
4. *Educator Learning and Leadership*: Demonstrate continual growth through professional collaboration.
5. *Finance and Operations to Support Teaching and Learning*: Develop, support and operate sustainable, functional, and well-maintained schools.

Confidentiality Guidelines

Maintaining confidentiality between mentor and mentee is essential. Mentees must feel comfortable sharing experiences, practices, techniques and ideas with their mentors. Administrators and department chairs recognize this confidential relationship as one of support and encouragement rather than evaluation. This being said, there are a few special situations that need to be considered:

- Sometimes a mentor needs assistance in order to find ways to help a mentee. In such cases, the mentor will contact the mentor coordinator and troubleshoot the problem with the mentor coordinator while maintaining confidentiality.
- There are times when it may be beneficial for the mentor to meet with an administrator or department chair to discuss a mentee. Such meetings will take place only with: 1) the approval of the mentee; and 2) the mentee's presence at the meeting.
- The mentee must maintain the confidentiality of the program with the mentor by consulting only with the mentor coordinator if issues arise concerning the mentor/mentee relationship.
- The mentor, with the mentee's knowledge, may discuss the teacher's performance with the mentor coordinator and/or the appropriate administrator if, in the mentor's professional judgment, the emotional or physical safety of the students is at risk.

Responsibilities of the Principals

The responsibilities of the principals are to:

- Work with coordinators to make pairings between mentors and mentees
- Assist in providing teacher coverage for observations
- Observe the confidentiality statement as printed in the Mentoring Handbook
- Keep the lines of communication open between building principals and mentor coordinators
- Assist mentees by periodically identifying their strengths and offering strategies and resources to improve areas for growth

Responsibilities of the Mentor Coordinators

The responsibilities of the mentor coordinators are to:

- Oversee a comprehensive induction program in the school system.
- Plan and implement a teacher orientation program in August, at which time mentor teachers and their mentees will be introduced and the parameters of the program will be explained and discussed.
- Schedule and facilitate three (3) meetings during the school year for the mentors and mentees to enrich their professional relationships, to ensure the progress and success of the program, and to allow time to acquaint participants of the program on a social level.
- Trouble-shoot problems by meeting with the mentor/mentee pairing by consulting with the system-wide coordinator, and/or by communicating with the Assistant Superintendent of Schools.
- Keep a log sheet and evaluate the program, including making changes for a more successful program for the following year.
- Provide the Induction/Mentoring Support Team with an end-of-the-year report.

Qualifications of a Mentor

The *qualifications of a mentor are:

- Professional Teaching Status
- Completion of a mentor training program, which will be provided by the district.
- A full-time teacher

**When there is a shortage of qualified mentors, these requirements may be waived by the Induction/Mentoring Support Team. This provision is necessary to ensure the success of the Induction/Mentoring program.*

Responsibilities of the Mentors

The responsibilities of the mentors are to:

- Successful completion of a training program sponsored or approved by the Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough.
- Complete the formal application process.
- Support the mentee at a full-day orientation held prior to the opening of the school year. New teacher orientation is typically held the Thursday before the opening of school (Required).
- Attend one (1) mandatory after-school meeting to support and review the mentoring process.
- Meet, on average, about 45 minutes a week (or 7-day cycle at ARHS) with the mentee. These meetings can be planned, spontaneous, or a combination. Meetings must be recorded on the Mentor Log.
- Maintain a **Mentor Log** (found on page 11), recording meetings and observations with the mentee.
 - To maintain confidentiality include minimal information with the date, time, and topics discussed (e.g., met to discuss parent-teacher conferences and scheduling follow up meetings or met to discuss methods to engage students in whole-group discussions).
 - The two required observations should be noted on the Mentor Log.
 - The log must be turned in to the Superintendent's Office by June 1st.
 - The log must be read and signed by the mentee.
- Observe a minimum of two (2) classes to ensure the mentee's successful growth.

- Participate in an evaluation of the overall mentor/mentee process at the conclusion of the induction period.

Responsibilities of the Mentees

- Each mentee will meet with his/her mentor at a full-day orientation session before the start of the school year.
- The mentee will attend one (1) mandatory after-school meeting to enrich the mentoring process. The mentee will allow the mentor to observe his or her classroom at least two (2) times during the school year, as a way of gaining feedback. This will not be an evaluative process and the mentor's observation will not be shared with other faculty members or the administration.
- The mentee will observe their mentor and/or other colleagues in their school district at least two (2) times during the school year.
- The mentee will read and sign the Mentor Log that is kept by the mentor.
- In year 2 and 3, you are encouraged to attend group mentor meetings with your cohort. These will be organized by your mentor coordinator(s).

Roles and Qualities of a Mentor

Role of the Mentor	Qualities of the Mentor
• Act as a confidant • Be a sounding board • Encourage independence and problem-solving	• Active listener • Able to maintain confidentiality • Patient • Empathetic • Able to establish rapport • Available for informal contact • Open to other teaching styles
• Serve as an advisor • Be a resource • Facilitate a process so that new teachers can observe other teachers	• Well-grounded in teaching practices • Familiar with school procedure and culture • Willing to share
• Act as a role model	• Willing to be observed • Confident • Desires to be a mentor • Committed to teaching and learning
• Be a non-evaluative observer	• Non-judgmental
• Advocate for new teachers	• Supportive and encouraging • Valuing the new teacher
• Promote realistic values and goals	• Able to bring perspective

Pre-Observation Discussion

The mentor and mentee should meet for a pre-observation discussion. The mentee will lead the discussion while the mentor listens actively and refrains from coaching. The ensuing discussion should address the following questions:

Purpose and Expectations

- What are the objectives of this lesson?
- What events have led up to and will follow this lesson, including assessment?
- How does the mentee expect students to respond?

Questions and Concerns

- What are the mentee's concerns about this lesson and/or the students' responses?
- Is the mentee trying something new or looking for ideas?

Mentor's Role in Observation

- The mentee should choose two to three *Focus Observation Areas*. All dialogue should focus on these areas. Mentors should not lead either the pre or the post observation meetings as a coach but should instead remain an active listener.

Post-Observation Discussion

The mentor's observation of the mentee is **not a formal evaluation**. The observation process leads to professional growth. The experience is to be shared in a mentee-driven dialogue. While the mentee may receive the mentor's observation notes, the notes are confidential and must be given to the mentee for his/her records only. Formal evaluations are conducted by administrators.

For the Mentee

- What were the mentee's concerns after the lesson?
- Would the mentee make any changes to the lesson based on the student's responses?

***For the Mentor**

- What is the mentor's feedback regarding the Focus Observation Areas?
- Is there anything the mentor can do to help the mentee?

*Mentors/mentees are encouraged not to use preparation periods for peer observations. Substitutes will be made available for you.

Early conversations to have with your mentor:

- Does your school have a curriculum night or parents' night early in the year? If so, when is it? What do you need to know before that evening?
- What additional dates (conferences, progress reports, report cards, etc.) need to go on your calendar?
- How do the adults in your building typically dress on school days? What's the level of formality? What are the expectations for how students dress?
- What expectations exist for how your classroom will appear? What will custodial staff expect from you? What can you expect from them?
- What do you need to know about student support services in your building? Will there be an aide or aides in your classroom? What do you need to know about that professional relationship?
- What social occasions are available for you in the relatively near future to help you get to know and connect with colleagues?
- What are expectations regarding grading in your school? Is a certain kind of record keeping required? Are there computer resources that can help?
- How are attendance and tardiness tracked in your school? What is your responsibility?
- What will parents in your school look for in terms of your communication and availability? (How do teachers typically communicate with home? With what frequency? Do teachers typically have a homework hotline? Newsletter? Website?)
- What expectations will parents/administration have for your availability before and after school? Are there faculty or department meetings regularly? Will you need to make yourself available for extra help on a regular basis?
- What should you know about parent involvement at your school? How does the parent/teacher organization involve itself in the school? Parent volunteers?
- What does your principal expect of you in terms of communication with parents? (How frequent? By what method? Record keeping of contacts? When to involve an administrator?)
- How are discipline issues handled in your school? What procedures will you have in your classroom? When, typically, do teachers involve the office and/or parents?
- Who will evaluate you in your role? When will your first meeting with this person be? When will administrators observe in your classroom? What should you know about the process before beginning?
- What coaching or advisory opportunities might be open to you?
- What is the budgeting process? Is there anything you need to know in your position?

Some practical information to know even before students arrive:

- Where are postings and announcements found?
- Where can you get a cup of coffee or snacks during the school day??
- Where can you make copies? Are there any restrictions or things to know?
- Who do you call if you are sick for the day? _____
 - What is this person's phone number? _____
 - Who else needs to know you'll be out? _____
- Who should you go to in your building if you:
 - Have a question about a contract issue? _____
 - Have an academic concern about a student? _____
 - Have an IEP question/concern? _____
 - Are concerned about a student's social or emotional well-being? _____
 - Need someone for discipline support? _____
 - Need a room key or an extra bookcase? _____
 - Need some chalk or some graph paper? _____
 - Need technology support to troubleshoot a problem? _____
 - Want to get an announcement read on the PA? _____
 - Need a substitute for a planned absence? _____
 - Need someone to cover for you for five minutes while you head to the restroom?

 - Need resources in your particular discipline? _____
 - Need to complain about something in private? _____
 - Want to pursue funding for a new idea? _____
 - Need to vent in a confidential setting? _____
 - Is having a conflict with your mentor? _____

Mentor Log

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough

Guidelines

- Scheduled meetings: Forty-five minutes - weekly (including both planned and spontaneous meetings)
- Mentors keep a log of mentor/mentee meetings (including observations).
- Mentee must read and sign off on completed log – **due to the Superintendent's Office on June 1.**

WEEK of	Date:	Topic:	Meeting Time:	Total Minutes:

WEEK of	Date:	Topic:	Meeting Time:	Total Minutes:

WEEK of	Date:	Topic:	Meeting Time:	Total Minutes:

WEEK of	Date:	Topic:	Meeting Time:	Total Minutes:

WEEK of	Date:	Topic:	Meeting Time:	Total Minutes:
		TURN IN this signed LOG to your MENTOR COORDINATOR by the end of this week.		

Name of Mentor _____ (Print or Type)

Mentor's Signature _____ Date _____

Name of Mentee _____ (Print or Type)

Mentee's Signature _____ Date _____