



What is the New Teacher Mentoring Project?

Historically in British Columbia, the induction of new teachers into the teaching profession has been delivered through initiatives and resources within individual school districts and locals. Although there are many examples of excellent induction programs throughout the province, including effective mentorship programs, the implementation of practices and procedures often lack systemic vision, long-range planning, training for participants, and dependable funding. Past and current experience for new teachers entering the profession varies widely across the province, adversely affected by shrinking budgets, employment instability, unmanageable assignments, isolation in more rural areas, and lack of inclusion within collegial communities.

The New Teacher Mentoring Project (NTMP) has emerged from aligned interest within the BC Teachers' Federation, the University of British Columbia, and the BC School Superintendents' Association, to seek a more formalized and integrated system of support for inducting, developing, and retaining teachers in BC. The current Ministry of Education BC Education Plan also acknowledges the complexity of teachers' roles and identifies mentoring as an integral means of supporting ongoing professional learning, both in teachers' formative years and throughout their careers.

A grant from the Ministry of Education was first approved in Spring 2012 to provide the NTMP with funds to develop structured mentoring programs in school districts that did not yet have formal mentorship or had lost their program.

Essential goals and principles of the NTMP are:

- ❖ to provide a **coherent, research-based, and sustainable** system of support for teachers in their early years throughout the province
- ❖ to be responsive to the **diversity and distinctiveness** of district cultures and practices in all regions of BC
- ❖ to ensure that mentorship is **non-evaluative** and **non-remedial**, and that participation is **voluntary**
- ❖ to demonstrate **joint commitment** from the participating district administration and teacher union
- ❖ to reach out to educators in **rural** areas of BC
- ❖ to provide professional learning through **inquiry and critical reflection** on practice.

In the pilot year (2012–13), applications for participation were received from 20 school districts across BC. The three districts of Haida Gwaii, Kootenay Columbia, and Kamloops Thompson were chosen as they represent differing characteristics in size, urban/rural mix, and cultural geography. A framework for mentorship continues to evolve through different models in these

three pilot districts, highlighting the very different dynamics and needs of their participating teachers. In its second year, the NTMP expanded to work with the school districts of Sooke, Sea to Sky, and Peace River North, strengthening existing mentorship activities and providing workshops throughout the year in building learning-focused and reciprocal mentoring relationships.

With two more years of committed funding from the Ministry of Education for 2014–2016, the NTMP will be offering direct consultation and support to five more rural school districts in Stikine, Vancouver Island West, Peace River South, Okanagan Shuswap, and Revelstoke.

As the scope of the NTMP widens, new sustainable models of mentorship will build regional strength and mentor leadership throughout the province. With guidance from the partnership of the BCTF, UBC, and the BCSSA, goals have been realigned to build greater systemic influence provincially. The aims for continued growth and development of the NTMP are to:

- ❖ continue developing sustainable models of mentorship with districts/locals
- ❖ build strong peer mentoring relationships that contribute to strengthening collaboration and innovation within teaching communities
- ❖ explore ways to use technology to better support new teachers in all areas of BC
- ❖ build a website representing mentorship skills and processes that reflect teachers working in the context of BC schools and make mentoring resources available across the province
- ❖ build a provincial network/community of mentorship leaders to expand the reach of the NTMP
- ❖ gather, analyze and disseminate research and evaluation data to inform development and implementation of province-wide induction policy and practice.

The New Teacher Mentoring Project is committed to building a mentoring culture within British Columbia schools that welcomes BC's newest teachers into the profession, provides for continuity of teachers' embedded professional learning, and reinvigorates teaching and learning communities.

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