

Mentoring Handbook

2017-2018



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“The delicate balance of mentoring someone is not creating them in your own image, but giving them the opportunity to create themselves.”

— Steven Spielberg

Why the Need for a Mentor?

“...beginning teachers who participated in some kind of induction had higher job satisfaction, commitment, or retention. For classroom instructional practices, the majority of studies reviewed showed that beginning teachers who participated in some kind of induction performed better at various aspects of teaching, such as keeping students on task, developing workable lesson plans, using effective student questioning practices, adjusting classroom activities to meet students’ interests, maintaining a positive classroom atmosphere, and demonstrating successful classroom management. For student achievement, almost all of the studies showed that students of beginning teachers who participated in some kind of induction had higher scores, or gains, on academic achievement tests.” (Ingersoll and Strong 2011)

Teaching is a complex and demanding profession. The first year teacher, or a teacher new to the school division, needs a support system to successfully integrate into the work of ACPS. Successful teaching depends on shared developmental experiences and collegial nurturing under the guidance of an experienced professional. To meet this need, Alexandria City Public Schools is committed to teachers helping teachers through our mentoring program.

Alexandria City Public School teachers have a commitment to excellence in education. Since the classroom teacher is the most important contributor to excellence, we have an interest and a responsibility to see that beginning teachers or teachers new to our division continue to develop as successful teachers.

Mentoring Program Goals
To integrate new teachers into the culture and climate of our schools and our school district.
To continue to develop and practice effective teaching strategies to meet the needs of all learners.
To enhance teachers’ practice through professional learning and reflection on their practice and on student learning.
To increase and improve recruitment, success, and retention of new teachers to ACPS.
To promote and develop teacher leadership in the division.
To improve student outcomes across all schools and ensure that every student succeeds.

Core Mentoring Activities and Roles

The mentoring relationship is shaped by the activities that a mentor and new teacher participate in together. Research shows that effective mentoring requires 60 to 90 minutes of support per week between mentor and new teacher. These interactions will look different depending on the mentor relationship, but will consist of some common activities.

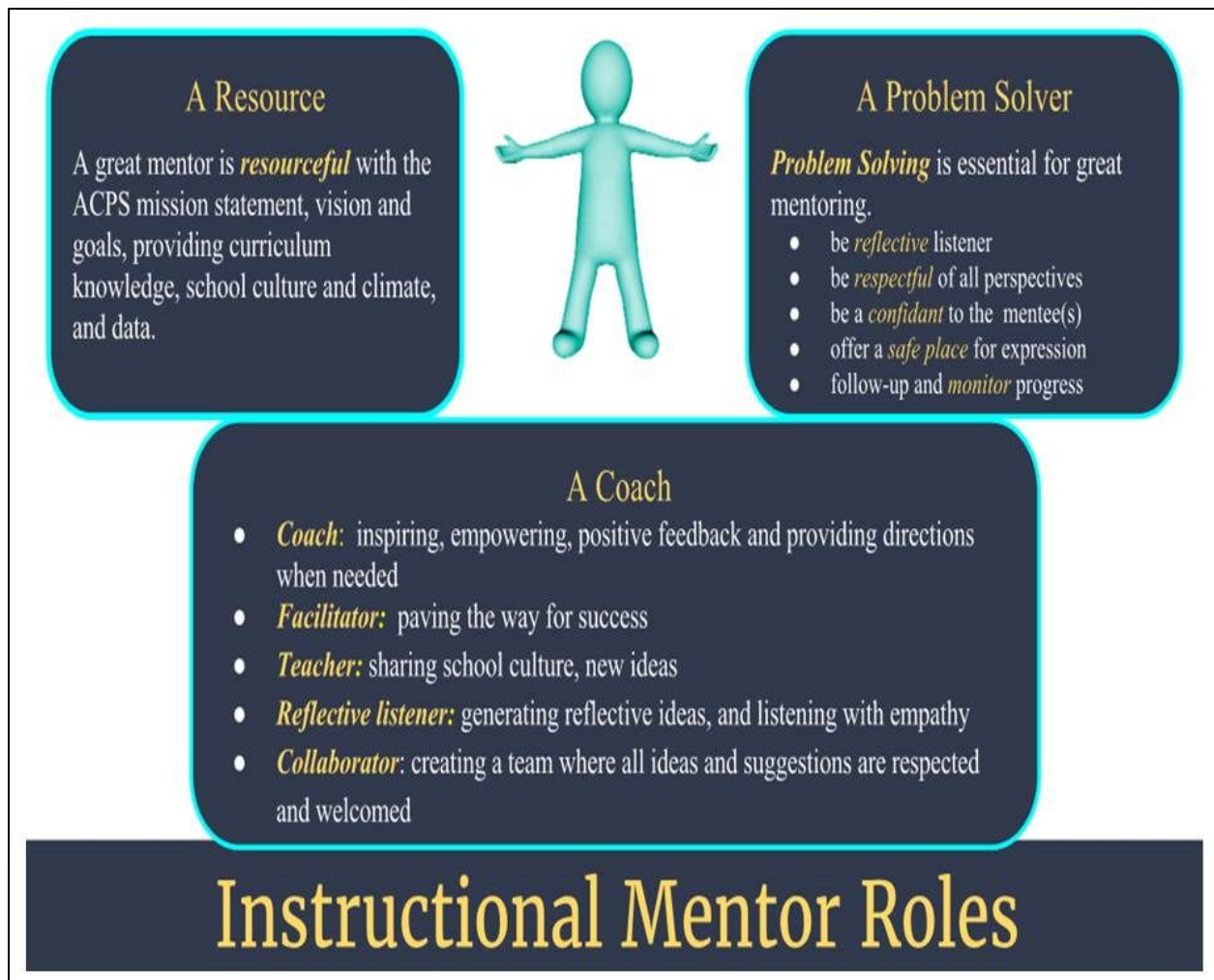
Mentoring Is...	Mentoring Is Not...
Meeting frequently during the school year to plan lesson content and instruction.	Waiting until the new teacher asks for help, or there is a problem.
Providing feedback on instructional strategies observed in classrooms.	Providing only positive feedback or no feedback.
Anticipating upcoming deadlines and expectations.	Assuming new teachers know timelines and expectations.
Addressing issues of personal, social, and emotional support.	Focusing only on teaching and school related topics and ignoring work life balance.
Providing individual support.	Sitting near each other in a common team meeting.
Purposeful conversations with a focus on the individual needs of the teacher.	The same conversation you would have with other colleague.



New teachers have provided a wealth of feedback on the interactions they see as valuable. Your interactions should be specific to the needs of the new teacher. The mentoring activities that you engage in with the new teacher should be focused on:

- 1. Improving instructional practice**
- 2. Clarifying division and school expectations**
- 3. Social/Emotional support**

Refer to the following graphic for more information on the key roles of effective mentoring



Engaging with Feedback

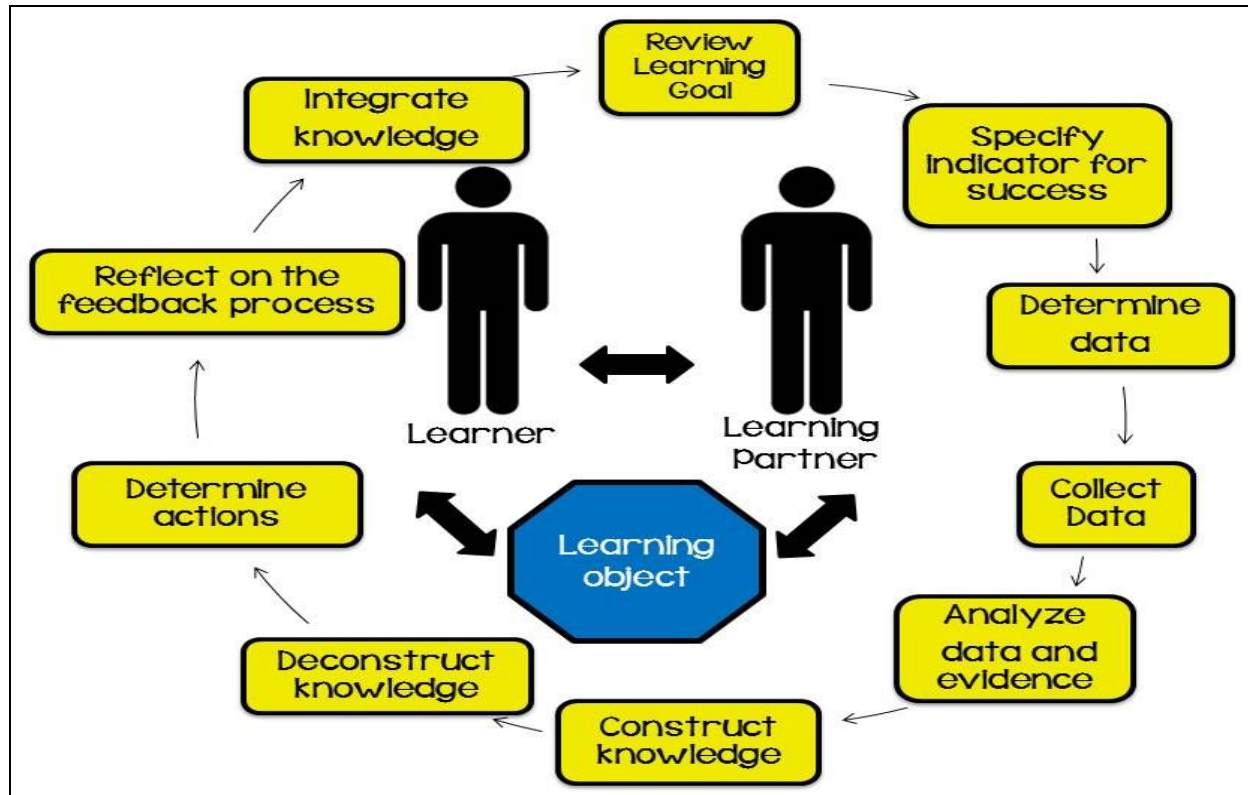
New teachers report that they would like more feedback on their job performance that comes from a *non evaluative* source. This is a natural place for you as a mentor to offer some feedback on a variety of job responsibilities. *The Feedback Process* by Joellen Killion is an excellent resource for engaging in feedback with teachers. The table below identifies the nine types of feedback and provides an example of each kind. Consider this as you engage in feedback. None of these types is better than another, but there is more demand on the new teacher as you move down the list. Consider using several different types of feedback with the new teachers as you engage in feedback.

Feedback Type	Example
Desistance	Don't guess about your students' learning.
Correction	Use multiple types of formative assessment to determine if students grasped the lesson.
Approval/Disapproval	I like that you created an anchor chart to facilitate students' achievement and use of learning.
Attribution	You are a natural teacher.
Evaluation	Your performance is a 3 on a 4-point scale.
Assessment	You are a 3 rather than a 4. You did not meet all the criteria in the area of instructional planning.
Analysis	Your instructional planning is based on data about student performance, yet there was no evidence that you integrated formative assessment into to determine if students achieved the learning target.
Construction	As you think about this lesson and your analysis, what conclusion are you drawing about your use of formative assessment that will help you plan future lessons?
Deconstruction	Under what circumstances might the kind of formative assessment we have been discussing not be appropriate? What unknown limitations might be created in designing appropriate formative assessments for the lessons?

Killion, J. (2015). *The Feedback Process: Transforming Feedback for Professional Learning*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward

Feedback Model

Below is a model for effective feedback conversations. Following this model will help clarify and specify the feedback and work that you and the new teachers will be engaging in. Consider this as you engage in interactions with new teachers that you mentor.



Killion, J. (2015). *The Feedback Process: Transforming Feedback for Professional Learning*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward

Mentor as Learner and Learning Partner

The terms “Learner” and “Learning Partner” are intentionally vague. Mentoring is a reciprocal activity and should be as valuable to the mentor as it is to a new teacher. As a mentor, you are not expected to be an expert or to have all of the answers. Modeling your participation in this cycle can help open the door to stronger relationships and growth with new teachers. There are times when the feedback process may include you as the learner and the new teacher as the learning partner. Mentoring should be a learning experience for all involved and a chance for mentors to be reflective about their own practice. As a mentor, you are encouraged to engage in feedback, both as a learner and as a learning partner, to develop your own leadership and to honor the expertise of new teachers.

Qualifications, Roles, and Responsibilities

Mentor Qualifications

Certified teachers and administrators who want to be mentors must be excellent teachers, must have at least three years of experience, and be actively teaching in the division. Qualities of an effective mentor include:

- A commitment to the goals of the school division.
- An awareness of the merits of different teaching styles and pedagogical strategies/methods.
- An ability to teach to the diverse learning styles of students.
- A knowledge and ability to identify and access division and school resources
- A similar teaching assignment or similar schedules to the new teacher.

Mentor Role and Responsibilities

Ensure a strong start to the year. Mentors can help beginning teachers launch into a productive year by making sure they know where to obtain all needed materials and by explaining the routines and schedules that are pertinent to them. Support will look different between mentors and new teachers, and research indicates that 60 to 90 minutes of personal interactions per week will lead to the best results.

Provide instructional support. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing opportunities for observation of teaching.
- Engaging in feedback conversations around instructional decisions.
- Maintaining open communication with mentee either face to face or electronically.
- Supporting teaching and learning standards of the state curriculum frameworks.
- Recognizing and addressing addressing differentiation strategies for individual student needs.

Provide professional support. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Alerting new teachers to school based policies and norms.
- Reminding new teachers of professional responsibilities.
- Supporting the teacher with technology including gradebooks, canvas, talent ed, and Zimbra.
- Connecting new teachers with job alike colleagues or networks.

Provide personal support. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Providing an outlet for non-judgemental communication.
- Recommending appropriate working hours and budgeting time.
- Celebrating successes.

If an unresolvable issue arises in the mentor/mentee relationship, the mentee will request to meet with the mentoring coordinator and the mentor to reach a resolution to the issue. If no resolution is reached, the mentee will request to meet with the mentor, the mentoring coordinator, and the principal for further discussion to reach a resolution. All changes in mentoring assignments will be reported to Cory Kapelski. (cory.kapelski@acps.k12.va.us)

Mentor Coordinator

A Mentor Coordinator has the following responsibilities:

- Work in conjunction with the principal to assign mentor teachers to newly-hired teachers.
- Collaborate with the school administration and other experienced new-teacher mentors to address the basic orientation of first-year teachers and the varying levels of support needed by experienced teachers new to ACPS.
- Provide mentoring support for all mentors in the building
- Communicate regularly with Cory Kapelski in the Office of Talent Development.
- Participate in quarterly Mentor Coordinator Meetings.
- Monitor the mentor program at the school site to assure that new teachers receive the support they need.

School Administration Team

As a school administrative team, you can support the mentoring program in the following ways:

Establish a school culture

- Foster a school culture of collegiality professional collaboration among new and veteran teachers.

Maintaining the mentor/mentee relationship

- Encourage the new teacher to use the mentor as a primary support.
- Regularly check-in with mentors to update and address questions.
- If an unresolvable issue arises, request to meet with the Mentor Coordinator to resolve the issue. If no resolution is reached, the Mentor Coordinator should contact Cory Kapelski to discuss next steps.

Provide opportunities for classroom visits

- Provide opportunities for observation and co-teaching.
- Frequency will vary but an ideal would be once a month.

Stipends

Mentor

Upon the completion of all activities and the submission of the Time and Effort Logs, mentors will be paid a stipend.

The stipend is \$900/year or \$450/semester if mentoring one mentee who is a novice teacher. Mentors will not be assigned two novice teachers without review and approval from Cory Kapelski in the office of Talent Development.

Stipend is \$600/year or \$300/semester if mentoring one mentee who is new to ACPS but not a novice teacher. If mentoring more than one mentee, then an additional stipend of \$300 a year or \$150 per semester will be paid. Mentors will not be assigned more than two new teachers without review and approval from Cory Kapelski in the office of Talent Development.

Mentor Coordinator

Mentor Coordinator stipends will be paid based on the number of mentors at the school. Please refer to the table below to see the breakdown of stipend payments. If a school chooses to appoint two Mentor Coordinators, the stipend will be split evenly between the two. Stipends will be paid in the spring.

Number of New Teachers	Stipend Amount
1-5	\$700.00
6-10	\$900.00
10-20	\$1,200.00
20+	\$1,600.00

Getting Started

It is important to ensure that the mentee has all of the information possible to ensure a positive start to the new school year. Remember, even the most basic information will be useful. Below are some suggestions of topics to cover within the first week of the new school year.

Getting to Know the New Teacher: Find out:

- What the new teacher feels his/her strengths and weaknesses are
- What kind of communication for logistics the new teacher prefers
- What days and times does the new teacher prefer to meet
- What is important for the new teacher's work/ life balance

Office Basics: Communicate:

- Where the mailboxes are located
- Location of faculty or break rooms, vending machines, water coolers, refrigerator
- How to use the copier, copier codes, extra paper, what to do if there is a paper jam
- Location of extra supplies
- Location or procedure for obtaining student files
- Telephone basics, setting up/retrieving voicemail
- Parking requirements and advice

Professional Behaviors/Expectations: Discuss:

- Dress code and professional expectations
- Work day start and end times
- Classroom etiquette and practices for shared space and materials
- Protocol for requesting and hosting a substitute and leave policies
- Unplanned absence notification – whom to call
- What to do if there is a delay of school
- Procedures for reporting and addressing personal incidents at school

School Procedures: Explain:

- How to contact a custodian
- Protocol to send a student to the nurse
- Emergency Procedures – Fire drills, lockdowns, etc.
- Taking attendance
- Maintaining the grade book
- Procedures for when there is a student injury or illness
- Planning for the Open House and Back to School Night
- Homework policy
- Discipline procedures
- Student Dress Code
- Layout of the school
- Lunchroom procedures
- School library usage

Curriculum Related: Explore:

- Accessing the Curriculum – Canvas
- Division Wide Assessments
- Student Supports/Intervention: SST, IAPs, IEPs, ELL, SPED, 504's
- Resources: textbooks, book room, math manipulatives, computer carts

Technology Related: Discuss:

- Using the SMARTboard and other classroom technology
- TIS's name and location
- Resources available for use in your classroom
- Student Use Policy
- Contacting HelpDesk

Mid-Fall Reflection

Once the school year has begun, it is important to check back in with the new teacher to see how things are progressing and guide him or her to reflect. Below are some guiding questions and resources to help you as you facilitate a mid-fall reflective conversation with the new teacher. Please refer to the [coaching language document](#) as you engage in this reflection.

Reflection Conversation

- Celebrate:** What is going well? What has worked? What are you most proud of?
- Assess:** What hasn't worked? Why didn't it work? What roadblocks did you experience?
- Plan:** What steps can you take to help remove those roadblocks? What specifically can I do as a mentor to help address those problems? What additional resources do you need?
- Refine:** What can you refine or "restart" at this point in the year? What professional learning or growth opportunities would you like to explore?
- Goals:** Help the mentee to create a SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound) for her own professional growth.
- Relationship:** What more do you need out of our mentor-mentee relationship? How can I further support your growth and learning? What specific things worked best for you or would you like to explore next (formal meetings, informal check-ins, lesson study, support with lesson planning, observations, etc.)?
- Resources:** Talk with the mentee about all the resources available to them. You may want to check out some of the [professional learning videos](#) available on the ACPS Professional Learning Website. The [Classrooms in Focus](#) videos and [Coach's Cuts](#) can be especially helpful to new teachers. They may also want to check out the [New Teacher Survival Guide](#) video series from the Teaching Channel.

Before Parent-Teacher Conferences

It is important that mentors check in with new teachers near the first set of Parent-Teacher Conferences. Conferences can be particularly stressful for new teachers. Take some time to talk with the new teachers about conferences, share your tips on how to make them go as smoothly as possible, how to be truly and effectively heard, and how to convey understanding about the student as a whole child. You may even want to role-play different scenarios with the new teacher so that he/she feels more prepared. Below are some of our tips that may help you with your Parent-Teacher Conference mentoring session:

- Start Positive & Personal:** Remind the new teacher that it is always good to begin a conference with a positive and personal anecdote about the student. Sharing an anecdote or short story conveys to the parents that the teacher knows the students as individuals, and values them. It also helps to build trust, puts parents more at ease, and can help to soften less positive information that may be communicated later in the conference.
- Be Knowledgeable:** Make sure the new teacher has a thorough understanding of the ACPS progress monitoring tools he or she will be using to share data about the student. Make sure the new teacher has a full and thorough understanding of any assessment tools he/she is using or may reference.
- Share Knowledge:** Remind the new teacher to make sure that their message to the parents clear and understandable. When the teacher references specific data tools or assessments, he/she needs to make sure the parents understand what is being measured. Additionally, make sure the new teacher is made aware of available translators, and/or how to use ACPS Language Line so that he or she is able to communicate with all parents and guardians. Additional information about ACPS Language Access Services can be found on the [ACPS Website- Translation and Interpretation Services](#).
- Provide Data:** Remind the new teacher to be prepared for conferences with accurate data. Teachers provide student work samples and multiple data points to discuss, reference, and elaborate on during the conference.
- Stay Goal Oriented:** Help new teachers to stay goal-focused and positive during their conferences. Teachers should prepare a checklist to facilitate the conference, so that at the end of the conference, all parties should leave with an understanding of the student's current progress and an action plan to help the child reach a concrete goal.

Prior to School Breaks (Winter, Spring)

The days leading up to school recesses can be a difficult time for some of our students. The upcoming loss of routines, structures, and for some students, a loss of meals, can be very stressful for them. Students in both primary and secondary schools may act out behaviorally and/or academically. Due to the possibility of these issues, it is important for mentors to check in with their new teachers so that they are adequately prepared.

- Communicate:** It should be communicated to new teachers that their students may begin to display uncharacteristic behavior in the days and weeks leading up to the break. They may act out, be disruptive, overly talkative, or become withdrawn. The reasons behind this behavior vary greatly by student. Mentors should take this time to offer guidance on classroom relationship and management routines to help teachers keep disruptions to a minimum.
- Inform:** Mentors should talk with new teachers about the various school-based programs available for students, and their families. Families who may have difficulties securing meals during the break should be made aware of any school-based programs (many run programs for food donations and vouchers), and city offerings. Information about school-based food programs can be found on the ACPS website- [School Nutrition Services](#).
- Procedures:** It is also important to make sure the new teacher knows the building's procedures for leaving during extended breaks. Make sure the new teacher is made aware of any check-out procedures involving equipment, electronics, or other materials. Even if these expectations were communicated via email or announcement, mentors should check-in with new teachers to clarify and provide support with these procedures.

Mid-Spring Reflection

The spring season is a great time to check-in with the new teachers and engage him/her in professional renewal. Guide the new teacher in a conversation using the 4 C's below.

- Clean:** Encourage a spring cleaning of the new teacher's classroom or learning environment. Help him/her to organize and categorize materials for next year, and cleanse their space of unnecessary materials. Mentors are great at helping teachers differentiate between what should be kept for data, reference, or re-use, and what is no longer needed. Often new teachers just do not know what will be important later. Remind the new teacher that being organized now will help tremendously during the close out procedures for summer and will make finding lesson plans and materials next year much easier. In addition, remind the new teacher that a well-organized, well-provisioned classroom leads to a better class climate and may even improve student engagement.
- Check-in:** Check in with the new teacher in regards to your mentoring relationship. Ask him/her how he/she feels your partnership is going and what can be improved upon. Ask what form of communication the new teacher prefers, does an emailed check-in suffice, or does he/she need a personal debrief? Ask if the new teacher needs more support with lesson planning, guidance with school programs, or more instructional support. We all have different learning and communication preferences when it comes to a mentoring or learning partnership, so make sure the way you are interacting with the new teacher is the best for him/her.
- Celebrate:** Take a moment to celebrate the new teacher's accomplishments in his/her first year of teaching at ACPS. Guide the new teacher to reflect on some of the positives he/she have experienced. Ask the new teacher how the positives made him/her feel and guide the new teacher to concentrate on the positives throughout the season.
- Collaborate:** Work with the new teacher to come up with a shared professional area where you both would like to grow. Although you both are at different stages of your career, it is important to model how great professionals never stop learning or growing. Are you both interested in improving classroom management or student engagement? Would you like to incorporate more collaborative learning practices or learn to address more learning modalities during a lesson? Choose a shared area that you are both interested in developing, then move forward with your learning. Check out the [ACPS Classrooms in Focus](#) videos and [Coach's Cuts](#) for exemplar teaching practices, definitions, and guidance. You may even want to check out the [Available Professional Learning](#) tab to see if there are related workshops being offered that you can enroll in together. Or you may want to pick out a book from the [Virtual Professional Learning Library](#) to use in your own personalized book club.

Mentor Time and Effort Logs and Cover Page

In compliance with state-mandated mentoring program requirements, and in order to receive compensation, each mentor must record and document his/her professional mentoring activities. This documentation is comprised of two pieces: the *Time and Effort Log Cover Page* and the *Time and Effort Log*. Both of these documents, with the necessary signatures, must be submitted through the [mentor log submission form](#) twice a year. This form will be the only accepted method of submission. Please do not email or physically mail the mentor logs.

First Semester Documentation – Due Friday, December 8, 2017. The submission window will be open beginning December 1st.

Second Semester Documentation – Due Friday, April 27, 2018. The submission window will be open beginning April 20th.

Failure to have the appropriate documentation submitted on time will result in non-payment.

The Mentor Time and Effort Log and the cover page is available on the Professional Learning Website [Mentor Page](#).

To submit your mentor log and cover sheet:

1. Fill out the forms with mentoring activities, hours, and signatures from your principal.
2. Scan a copy of the completed document and save a copy to your computer.
3. Complete the [mentor log submission form](#) with all required fields.
4. Upload both the cover page and mentor log to the form.
5. Click “submit” and you will receive a confirmation message.

The Time and Effort Log Cover Page will not be considered complete until it has the necessary signatures.

Additional Credits

Per VDOE requirements, in order to earn 90 recertification points for a yearlong mentoring responsibility, participants must be officially designated as a mentor by their principal and have prior approval by the Office of Professional Learning. **Mentors must** register in PLMS using course code 14478 by the given deadline if they want to receive recertification points. A maximum of 90 points can be accrued by the five-year licensure cycle. Mentor recertification points can only be claimed once every five years.

Mentor Time and Effort Log and Cover Page

These documents are also available on the Professional Learning website. Click the *Mentor Program* tab and the documents are listed towards the bottom of the page.

