Mentors and Beginning Teachers Collaboration Initiative

Description of Initiative
The professional relationship between mentors and beginning teachers is supported when each role has designated time to observe in each other’s classrooms followed by reflective conversations on students’ achievement and the design and implementation of curriculum lessons.

Learning Forward, a national association recognized as leaders in professional learning, has established standards for professional learning that set a high bar for quality learning experiences. One of the standards states, Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning. Such resources include time, people, and funding. In an effort to support this standard, the Oklahoma State Department of Education invites districts to apply for participation in the Mentors and Beginning Teachers Collaboration Initiative that will support up to 300 educators serving in the roles of mentors or beginning teachers.

The initiative requires commitment from districts to provide support structures that encourage collaborative conversations between these teachers. The support may include the following types of activities:

- The use of substitute teachers to allow release time for mentors and beginning teachers to observe each other while teaching. Such observations should occur multiple times and not be a one-time occurrence. The observations need to be completed by May 10, 2017.
- The use of substitute teachers to allow site-based professional learning communities (PLCs) to meet and work on supporting beginning teachers. The PLC meetings should occur multiple times and not be a one-time occurrence. The meetings need to be completed by May 10, 2017.
- District-provided stipends. Districts may designate some or all of the funds to be used as stipends for mentor teachers provided that additional collaboration time for mentors and beginning teachers was provided during second semester.
- Site-based designed activities that support collaboration between mentors and beginning teachers.

Targeted Audience
Mentors
Lead teachers
Beginning teachers with two years or less of experience

Timeframe
March – May 2017

District Payment for Participation
Districts will sign an agreement to implement the initiative with fidelity as explained on the application form. Upon completion of the activities selected at the local sites, mentors and beginning teachers who participated will complete feedback reflections that will be submitted to the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). Upon receipt of the feedback forms, OSDE will provide payment to districts of $350 per participating teacher.

How to Apply
Complete the application form and return it to Susan Pinson, Executive Director for Professional Learning, at the Oklahoma State Department of Education by February 27, 2017. Applications can be emailed to Susan.pinson@sde.ok.gov or faxed to (405) 522-0496. Districts will be notified by March 1, 2017, if their applications have been approved.