

## School District 148 Induction/Mentor Program (IMP)

School District 148 provides support for first- and second-year teachers through a formal Induction/Mentor Program that was approved by the State of Illinois during the 2003-04 school year based on the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching, using the PATHWISE research-based program as a model. The program is no longer state approved but continues to follow the guidelines of a state approved program and used the Illinois Induction Program Continuum (2010) to guide program development. If funding were to become available for approved districts, the program would be ready, with the necessary pieces in place, to apply.

This program is being developed by teachers for new teachers, with the support of administrators, in order to improve the quality of instruction for students in the classroom. The veteran teacher is matched with a new teacher and together they explore the current methods and strategies of instruction. This collaborative environment helps our students to receive the best possible education. It also helps the district to retain the teachers it has trained by developing relationships among the new and veteran teachers in a community of professional development.

The program incorporates the framework of the PATHWISE Induction Program. The process of professional growth in the Induction Program centers around the challenging yet realistic standards - the knowledge and skills described in *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, by Charlotte Danielson, ASCD, 1996. This program uses concrete and useful evidence provided through inquiries and formative assessment of the beginning teacher's practice. This process provides powerful techniques for using evidence to help the beginning teacher improve teaching, including reflective writing and conversation with knowledgeable and supportive colleagues.

The framework is based on research conducted by Educational Testing Services beginning in 1987 using PRAXIS III data. The line of thinking that developed resulted in *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*. This program supports beginning teachers in their development, having them learn to focus that development to become autonomous practitioners through a dynamic ongoing process: planning and teaching lessons, reflecting on the results, and making informed adjustments.

Protégés and building mentors in the program attend monthly meetings presented by Mr. Michael Hurst, the District Induction/Mentor Coordinator since the 2004-05 school year. At these monthly meetings, protégés are exposed to educational research concerning best practice for classroom management, planning, and instruction. Protégés are given the opportunity to discuss successes and challenges they are facing in the classroom. During the monthly meetings, building mentors are encouraged to attend with their proteges.

Protégés participate in the observation cycle with their mentor and with the program coordinator. Prior to the observation with their mentor, the mentor and protégé meet in a pre-observation conference to discuss the lesson to be

observed. At this time, the protégé will usually suggest a focus for the observation, however the building mentor may make suggestions as well. The focus may be classroom management, planning, or instruction. During the observation, the observer will concentrate on this area and provide the protégé with formative feedback during a reflective conference. The protégés also observe their mentors as a part of the program requirements. Again, both participate in a pre-observation conference, suggesting a focus. The building mentor will then model this focus during the protégé's observation. A reflective conference is held to discuss the modeling of the focus done by the building mentor. The coordinator observation was a pop-in visit at which time data was gathered around Domain 2 and Domain 3 of the Danielson Framework. The data was shared and discussed with the protégé during a reflective conference. Using information learned during remote mentoring (2020-21), the coordinator observation activity has become more formalized. It now has three parts. The coordinator and protégé communicate with a pre-conference, at which time the protégé provides a lesson plan, the coordinator asks targeted questions, and a date is set for the observation. During the observation, data is gathered around Domain 2 and 3 of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The data is shared and discussed with the protégé during a reflective conference.

Protégés are asked to participate with their mentor in monthly activities based on the PATHWISE program and the Charlotte Danielson Framework. These activities are designed to support the growth of protégés in the teaching profession. These activities are developed by the Induction/Mentor Coordinator based on the PATHWISE Program with input from other university programs and a SD148 IMP Committee. The activities were updated in 2016 to match protégé needs. These activities and other program information can be found at <https://www.district148.net/mentor/index>. Using information learned during remote mentoring (2020-21), the protégé portfolios continue to be paperless, are collected electronically, and stored by the coordinator.

In 2006, building mentors received formal training in the Danielson Framework and the PATHWISE program. This training was conducted by the Induction/Mentor Coordinator in conjunction with the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) which has provided the materials and another trainer for this professional development. Beginning in 2009, all mentors were trained in the Governors State University Foundational Mentor Training through the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Grant. They continued to be trained at the university through the conclusion of the grant in 2014. Since then, mentors are trained in SD148 by the IMP Coordinator using the TQP model. In addition to the initial training, mentors attend three meetings each year designed to enhance their practice as mentors. At these meetings, mentors receive the latest information from the ISBE concerning mentoring new teachers, practice their observation skills, practice their questioning techniques, review & discuss implementation of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, discuss the challenges they are facing with their protégés, report successes, and take information learned back to their protégés for discussion.

The program currently uses a survey developed in cooperation with National-Louis University through the ITEP to evaluate the needs of the District Induction/Mentor Program. Improvements are ongoing. Administrators, building

mentors and protégés are asked for input to further the development of the program. The survey is conducted at the end of the year. The results can be found on the website. The IMP also uses the workshop evaluation forms, and other meeting data throughout the year to foster improvements. Using information learned during remote mentoring (2020-21), the program also conducts a mid-year survey to gather information at the semester break which is used by the coordinator to plan agenda items for the future monthly meetings.

In March 2020 and through the 2020-21 school year, the program adapted to provide remote mentoring and to continue to support new teachers during the covid-year of remote learning. The monthly program meetings continued to occur using the zoom platform. The agendas were adapted to reflect teacher needs during remote learning. The monthly protégé activities were reduced and focused on the governor's recommendation concerning mentoring programs. The activities were paperless and collected in a remote environment. The building mentor and coordinator observations continued in the remote environment. Technology was key to providing this sustained support. Upon the return to in-person learning and mentoring in 2021-22, some of the technology incorporated during remote mentoring has continued. The protégé portfolios continue to be paperless and are collected electronically. The coordinator has created an archive of protégé portfolios beginning in 2020-21 and continuing today.

In the spring of 2022, The Danielson Group release the "Updated Framework for Teaching". We introduced these updates to building mentors and proteges during our monthly meetings in 2022-23. We have incorporated the updated FFT into the program activities during the 2023-24 school year. This included updating all mentor/protégé activities and re-creating the veteran activities to give veteran teachers more choice in the program.

The Induction/Mentor Program in District 148 has evolved over the past twenty years and will continue to improve upon the progress presently being made to support and challenge the new teachers entering our district.