



A Community of Learners

Informational Memo – 2014 New Teacher Orientation & Mentor Training

TO: School Board
Trisha Kocanda

FROM: Maureen Hager, Director Human Resources

September 23, 2014

Overview & Background

Each year, the District hosts an orientation for the newly hired, certified staff. The New Teacher Orientation is modified each year based on feedback from the previous year's participants. The agenda for the two days is developed by a committee of teachers who also help facilitate the event. This year, based on suggestions from the planning committee, an additional component related to new Associate staff members was included in the program.

During the time that the new teachers are involved in the orientation program, their mentor teachers are engaged in a training session to sharpen their skills as a mentor.

Based on feedback from the class of new teachers who joined the district in the fall of 2013, we provided an optional early evening event on the first day, rearranged the order of events to accommodate planning time with mentors, and allowed for building-based planning on the afternoon of the second day. The Associate training was offered on the afternoon of the first day and included interaction with associates and teachers who direct associates in their various assignments.

Update

This year, on Monday and Tuesday, August 18 and 19, 2014, the District hosted an orientation for our new certified and associate staff members. Please see the attached agenda for details. Twelve (12) new certified staff members and three new associate staff members participated in the experience. The certified staff members were each accompanied by their respective mentors who had a role in the orientation experience. The New Teacher Orientation Committee members were also present for and facilitated some of the activities. Their participation was invaluable. Special appreciation goes to our New Teacher Orientation Committee members: Emily Berna, Katherine Blaker, Matt Boyer, Melissa Geisler, Betsy Gmitro, Marla Goldberg, Chris Joob, Alison Hawley, and Gwyn Seymour. The group also enjoyed the opportunity to hear from our Superintendent Trisha Kocanda and Kate Blaker regarding the history of progressive education in Winnetka.

We are also grateful to the Winnetka Historical Society's Patti VanCleve who provided an intriguing and entertaining tour of Winnetka in what has become one of the highlights of this experience, the trolley tour.

Training for mentors was ably provided by principals Cathy Rosen and Susan Hugebeck, and Committee Member Betsy Gmitro. The mentors were grateful for the information that was shared and are enthusiastic about the opportunity to participate in on-going support for our new teachers throughout the school year.

Based on our inclusion of the associates in the orientation, we learned a valuable lesson. In the future, we will wait until later in the month of August to provide an associate orientation. As this month's personnel report reflects, many of the positions for associates were not filled at the time of the orientation. Therefore, a smaller than desired incoming class of associates could attend.