



School Leaders Program

Department of Educational Leadership

MENTOR HANDBOOK

Producing educational leaders who will “hit the ground running”

**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION / DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
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EDL Web site: www.leadership.fau.edu Pilot Program Web site: www.leadership.fau.edu/leadership_new/pilot_program.htm

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Purpose of Mentors

The role of a mentor is to prepare a foundation and framework that puts into place the conditions necessary for learning, and to nurture a climate consistently conducive to learning. The mentor and intern share responsibility for the process-oriented relationship of application of knowledge acquisition and critical reflection, while sharing in accountability for achieving the intern's learning goals. Effective mentoring practice is consistent with what is known about effective adult learning principles (Knowles).

It is important that mentors keep the following in mind as they approach their role:

- Adults learn best when they are involved in diagnosing, planning, implementing, and evaluating their own learning.
- The role of the mentor is to create and maintain a supportive climate that promotes conditions necessary for learning to take place.
- Adult learners have a need to be self-directing.
- Readiness for learning increases when there is a specific need to know.
- Life's reservoir of experience is a primary learning resource; the life experiences of others enrich the learning process.
- Adult learners have an inherent need to immediacy of application.
- Adults respond best to learning when they are internally motivated to learn.

In this program, mentors are seated school leaders who have voluntarily committed to contribute to and oversee the on-site experience for their interns through modeling, reflection, critique, and assessment. They are the seasoned veterans in the field who will help to ready the intern for the transition from teacher leader to administrator. Their purpose is to:

- Ensure that aspiring teacher leaders are provided the opportunities to engage in competency based learning through job-embedded learning activities as part of a quality internship program.
- Devote the time necessary to guide intern through the types of experiences that help develop leaders who can improve student achievement.
- Engage in building capacity to improve the quality of leadership in schools to increase student achievement.
- Serve as a guide on the intern's journey. Engage in a process of discovery with their intern and be able to ask the right questions but not always able to provide all the right answers.
- Help in preparing a qualified pool of potential school-based administrators for the school district.

- Create a concrete connection between theory and practice in school leadership for the intern.

Professional Characteristics of Mentors

Modeling is an important part of the mentoring process. Therefore, mentors should give consideration to what kind of leadership they are demonstrating to the intern, as this will have a significant influence upon his or her formation. An effective school site mentor should demonstrate the following professional characteristics:

- Exhibit strengths in areas of communication, problem solving, educational leadership and human relations skills.
- Be able to ask the right questions more than simply providing the right answers.
- Foster self-directed and continuous learning and self-reflection.
- Demonstrate a willingness to commit time and energy to the professional development of their intern.
- Be able to listen and respond sensitively to intern's ideas, doubts, challenges and successes.

The Mentoring Process

Mentoring can be a powerful growth experience for both the mentor and the intern. It is a process of engagement. No one can mentor without connection. In fact, mentoring is most successful when it is done collaboratively. Commitment by and engagement of mentoring partners are key elements to establishing, maintaining, and experiencing successful mentoring relations. Keep in mind that successful mentoring is a reflective practice that takes preparation, dedication, and time.

Mentoring focuses on developing mutually understood and shared learner-centered relationships, balancing the mentor's roles of offering support to that of facilitating the structured activities that are at the heart of this program. The mentor will facilitate the development of professional identity and vision with ongoing levels of accountability, and by moving the intern through the continuum of observing, participating, and leading. This all will take place on a developmental sequence, and it can vary in length from one stage to another. That is to say, a mentor may find that an intern is ready to move quickly on the continuum in some instances or for some activities, whereas in others will need to move more slowly and allow the intern to receive the appropriate exposure needed. To make progress in fostering these relationships, it should be emphasized that:

- Mentors should meet frequently and regularly with the intern. Such meetings should be guided by the Internship Planning Guide and Internship Activities charts that are aligned to the Florida Leadership Standards.
- Time spent in the very beginning, during the initial meetings which are a part of the first phase of setting expectations and clarifying roles and accountabilities, will set the stage for success.
- As the internship begins to develop, coaching and communication skills are critical in the second phase of the relationship to encourage progress.
- Mentors must work at developing their skills in coaching, promoting reflection, dialogue (questioning, listening, reflecting), providing and /or receiving feedback, modeling the conscious application of good leadership practice, networking and praise.

Mentoring Phases and Specific Activities

There are three phases that a mentor should go through with the intern during the process of mentoring. They are:

1. preparing and understanding roles,
2. implementation and applying mentoring strategies, and;
3. assessment, evaluation and closure.

These phases, melded with the appropriate activities which have already been contemplated for this internship, are explained in this section.

Preparing and Understanding Roles

In this stage the mentor explores personal motivation and readiness to become a mentor. The mentor needs to assess his/her own mentoring skills to identify areas for his or her own learning and development. Just going through this handbook and understanding both the structure of the internship and the roles and responsibilities, not only of the mentor, but of all the participants, will help the mentor engage in the appropriate preparatory self-reflection needed. It is imperative that at this stage in the process the mentor can identify clear expectations and roles for establishing a productive mentoring experience for both the intern and mentor.

Mentor Strategies and Considerations for Preparing and Understanding Roles

Action	Strategies and Mentor Questions for Conversation	Purpose and Considerations	Questions for Relationship Readiness
Take time to get to know each other and talk about mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain the intern’s bio to further knowledge about intern through initial conversation • Have you ever been engaged in a mentoring relationship? What did you learn? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Rapport • Exchange Information • Identify points of connection • Build mutual respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I need more information about my intern to help prepare an effective mentoring relationship? • Can I work productively with this individual? • Do I honestly think I can further this person’s learning?
Determine intern’s goals, needs, and expectations of the internship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you want to learn from this internship? • What would a successful internship look like for you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and clearly define goals and expectations • Identify areas of experience or expertise that is relevant to the intern’s learning goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I understand the needs and goals of this individual? • What are my time constraints? • How can I make the time to facilitate the intern’s learning experience? • Do I need to involve others to facilitate the growth of the intern?
Share you assumptions, needs, expectations, goals, and limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss assumptions about the internship • What are the implications for our learning relationship? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand communication styles • Identify if assumptions, etc...are congruent? If not, further discuss for clarification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do I foresee obstacles in the relationship? • What framework needs to be in place to limit obstacles?
Discuss specific options and opportunities for learning and in regard to internship activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the most useful kind of assistance I can provide? • Do you any thoughts on how you would like to go about engaging in your internship tasks/activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification and Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I understand the tasks/activities in which the intern will be engaged? • Am I clear on the timeline of events? • Am I clear on formative and summative assessments and evaluation?

Initial Meeting between the Mentor and Intern

The initial meeting will set the tone and expectation for the mentoring relationship. Interns will receive the appropriate handbooks and accompanying forms at their first orientation meeting. Interns will be instructed to set up an initial meeting, as soon as possible, with their mentor in order to provide the mentor with the initial set of instructions for the internship.

The initial meeting should be set up as an initial formal conversation with the intern, preferably prior to the beginning of school or within the first week of school. At that meeting the mentor and intern should cover the following:

- Discuss the mentoring experience with the intern and begin a discussion of the intern's goals, both in terms of this internship and in terms of his or her career.
- If needed, the mentor should encourage the intern to think through what she or he wants from the mentoring relationship.
- Define what each is willing and capable of contributing to the relationship. Share assumptions, needs, expectations, and limitations candidly.
- Schedule the planning meeting as soon as possible.

Initial Meeting between the Intern, Clinical Adjunct, and Mentor

The adjunct will contact the mentor to discuss the expectations for the semester. This **should occur within two weeks of the beginning of the course.**

Suggested Guidelines:

1. Discuss the entire processes of the internship and clearly define roles and responsibilities.
2. Discuss realistic expectations regarding activities. Addressing this up front will help avoid stress and pressure in the relationships.
3. Clarify roles and responsibilities of the mentor, clinical adjunct, and intern by reviewing each list of responsibilities in the appropriate section of the Internship Program Guide.
4. Using the Internship Learning Planner and Internship Activities Charts to decide on the sequence of activities for the intern to complete with timelines and target dates for progress if possible.
5. Preparing a plan with the Clinical Adjunct to help facilitate opportunities for completion of the internship activities. (Identify other personnel needed to help intern with activities.)
6. Discuss specific strategies, including those recommended by the program or those that the intern, mentor or clinical adjunct feel would benefit the activity.
7. Setting-up the appointment for the Mid-Semester Fall Meeting.
8. Review the **Task Performance Assessment (TPA)** assessment instrument and clearly define expectations.
9. Mentor should provide a formal entrance to the internship at the school site. (Introduce intern at faculty meeting, discuss internship in newsletter, announcements, etc.)

Implementation Plan and Applying Mentoring Strategies

This is the most complex phase because it is the developmental stage where the intern engages in competency based learning through activities and begins to accomplish the purpose of the internship experience. The mentor's role during this phase is to nurture the intern's growth by establishing and maintaining an open and supportive learning environment, and by providing thoughtful, candid, and constructive feedback in a timely manner.

The following chart reflects how support, challenge, and vision relate to the ongoing nurturing of the intern and how the mentor can facilitate and promote the intern's learning.

Facilitating and Promoting Internship Learning

Conditions that Nurture Growth	Actions Necessary to Create Conditions for Success	Mentor's Key Tasks to Ensure Framework for Growth
Support	Managing the Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocating time for frequent, regular contacts with intern • Listening without judgment and providing emotional support • Providing consistent structure and necessary resources for the intern to engage in tasks/activities • Expressing positive expectations with encouragement • Making the intern in the internship feel special 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an environment conducive for learning • Building and maintaining the relationship
Challenge	Maintaining Momentum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in formal and informal discussions • Observing intern in conducting activities/tasks • Setting high expectations in an action plan with timelines for progress and benchmark analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the process • Providing coaching for skill development • Evaluating progress formally
Vision	Encouraging Movement and Progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling learning and reflection • Modeling leadership competencies and make one's leadership choices explicit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering reflection for further growth and independence • Assessing learning outcomes honestly and providing ongoing constructive feedback

Weekly Progress Meetings

The mentor will meet weekly with the intern to review the **Semester Activity Planner** and review the **Internship Log** (available at http://www.leadership.fau.edu/principal_internship.htm) to see what has taken place since the last meeting. At the meeting the following should happen:

1. Mentor initials the **Internship Log**.
2. Assess the intern's performance of completed activity using the **Task Performance Assessment (TPA)**, if and when the activity has been experienced to completion.
3. The mentor will address concerns and refine plan as needed.

Mid-Semester Monitoring Progress Meeting

The clinical adjunct will contact the mentor to:

- Review Progress of **Semester Activity Planner**.
- Address concerns and refine learning plan as needed.
- Collect **TPA** completed forms.

End of Semester Progress Meeting

The clinical adjunct will contact the mentor to cover the following:

- Review Progress of **Semester Activity Planner** and address concerns.
- **TPA** completed forms
- Review Assessment and feedback from **TPA** forms.
- Address problems or concerns.

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation of the intern’s internship experiences will be undertaken through different vehicles by the clinical adjunct, the mentor, and the university supervisor. Tasks are designed to assess the intern’s skills in problem solving, decision making, data analysis, and interpersonal communication.

The developmental tasks are designed to enhance the intern’s skills in problem solving, decision-making, data analysis, and interpersonal communication to become an effective assistant principal. The intern’s degree of achievement in leading tasks is assessed as *highly skilled*, *skilled*, or *novice*. The following chart provides criteria for each assessment category.

PERFORMANCE SKILL LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Highly Skilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intern demonstrates the ability to accept genuine responsibility for leading, facilitating, and making decisions typical of those made by beginning assistant principals. • The intern’s work exceeds expectations. This level of achievement has been demonstrated through effective planning, action, and response to multiple tasks. • The intern is able to reflect on his or her performance, and to effectively apply knowledge and skills to both similar activities and other seemingly unrelated activities. • The intern demonstrates a sophisticated level of understanding of process and value in completing the activity.
Skilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intern’s work meets all expectations, and tasks are completed with appropriate knowledge and skills through counseling or advising. The intern is able to self-correct in subsequent attempts at similar activities. • Although performance meets expectations the intern requires continued monitoring in implementing required activities. • The intern demonstrates an intermediate level of understanding of process and value in completing activities.
Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intern exhibits awareness of the role and skills required to complete the task to a satisfactory level with supervision, guidance, and counseling. • The intern demonstrates an emerging level of understanding of process and value in completing the activity.