



# The Mentor Program

## An APS/ATF Partnership



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## Fast Facts for Level-1 Teachers

### Welcome to APS!

First, let us congratulate you, and thank you, for choosing a career in education! However, as a Level 1 teacher, you may have several questions about getting started for the school year. Some of those questions may have to do with support, resources and guidance. The Mentor Program is here to help! Below are some Fast Facts:

### Why do I need a Mentor?

The NM Public Education Department (PED) mandates that all Licensure Level-1 teachers need one year (2 semesters) of formal mentoring by a state-approved program in order to be eligible to apply for Licensure Level 2, in addition to other requirements. Often Level-1 teachers are referred to as “Beginning Teachers (BTs),” although some Level-1 teachers may have more teaching experience.

### What is The Mentor Program?

The Mentor Program is a state-approved mentoring program and is a component of the APS Human Resources Department. It is managed in a partnership between APS and the ATF Union as a means of providing support for new teachers. National research that shows how mentorship of new teachers is critical to their success and retention in the field.

The Mentor Program approves Mentors into its ‘pool’ based on application, references, and interviews. The Mentor Program formally assigns Level-1 teachers to approved-program Mentors, oversees the required documentation, and verifies completion of the program for licensure application to Level 2. It also provides the state-required professional development classes for Mentors by Lead Mentor Teachers.

### How does Mentorship work?

Level -1 teachers are assigned a Mentor based on a combination of location, content, and grade level, as well as availability. Assignments can only be performed during the first 9 weeks of each semester. An agreement to Mentor must be signed by both the Mentor Teacher and the Level-1 teacher.

Mentors meet with their assigned Level-1 teacher at least 2 two times a week, and submit all required documents into their assigned Google Classroom. Level-1 teachers also are assigned to a Google Classroom for submission of their portion of these documents.

A schedule of required documents is available, along with other resources, in all the Google Classrooms. They are to be used as a guide for mentoring and fulfilled in conjunction with the Level-1 teacher: Contact Log, Needs Assessment, SMART Goal & Progress Statement, Observation & Debriefing. The Mentorship Report is submitted only by the Level-1 teacher and is intended to be completed independent of the Mentor, for confidentiality. Also, a survey is provided via Survey Monkey for program feedback.

Upon Mentorship completion, The Mentor Program updates your Lawson records and provides you a Letter of Completion for Licensure Level 2 application with your HR staffer. **You should keep a copy for your own records.**

### **What if I am a Level-1 teacher, but not a beginning teacher?**

At any point during a teaching career, professional collaboration is beneficial and encouraged. The Mentor Program is limited to serve only Level 1 teachers, but is directed to serve them all. If a teacher has taught previously, but is identified at NM PED as Level 1, they are mandated to receive Mentorship in order to apply for Licensure Level 2. You may feel like an experienced teacher, but the NM PED determines your licensure level, not APS or ATF. Non-compliance could result in licensure restrictions. However the type of Mentorship provided would be tailored to meet your current needs.

### **What if my principal assigns me to a mentor teacher?**

Principals often assign a school-based 'buddy' to new teachers, regardless of teaching level, as an orientation into the school and its systems. This practice is encouraged. However, only The Mentor Program assigns approved formal Mentors to Level-1 teachers. Any informal assignments cannot be counted towards state mentorship mandates. Any Level-2 or Level-3 teachers that are new to a school or the district would still benefit from a 'buddy' but would, unfortunately, be ineligible for formal Mentorship services from The Mentor Program. For verification, an assigned Mentor will be able to provide a Letter of Assignment as well as a BT Agreement Form from The Mentor Program.

### **What if my supervisor has questions about my Mentorship?**

Sometimes principals may not be aware that Mentorship is state-mandated and that The Mentor Program assigns Mentors. The program works together with principals and supervisors, but only The Mentor Program can officially make assignments. Principals may also not be aware that any documents of Mentorship are to be submitted only to The Mentor Program, as Mentorship is confidential and non-evaluative. Please direct any inquiries of Mentorship details from a supervisor or administrator to The Mentor Program.

### **What does 'non-evaluative' mean?**

Your Mentor is a teacher leader, but is not evaluative of your work. Your Mentor is provided to guide you, be a resource, offer support, and help you reflect on your practice. Your documentation is not part of the NM PED evaluation process for teachers, and is intended to be completed in confidential collaboration. Your Mentor is not a supervisor, and their reflections and notes are opinions only, as they have no bearing on another teachers' performance, review, nor employment eligibility.

### **What if my position changes?**

Please make sure that you are in communication with The Mentor Program for any changes in employment, such as a shift in position or school location. Please do not assume that we know about employment changes in real time, as they take time to process.

## **The Mentor Program: An APS/ATF Partnership**

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