

## **MASA Mentor Program**

### **Philosophy**

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) wants its members to be supported well so that they thrive and achieve success. We believe that a strong mentoring program will support administrators new to their roles in building their capacity to lead their schools in student achievement growth. The MASA Mentor Program provides new members with resources to address their specific development needs. We use multiple strategies, including guidance and coaching, networking, training, emotional, professional and social support.

### **Purpose of the Program**

- Ensure that professional development contributes to high quality practice
- Ensure that the experience impacts leadership quality in professional practice
- Provide a base of expertise for people who are emerging leaders in Minnesota
- Introduce administrators to their new roles and to other administrators who can offer support
- Help administrators new to their roles experience a good transition with a guide to assist them
- Provide an experienced colleague to lean on for emotional, professional, and social support
- Reduce a feeling of professional isolation
- Provide a safe and confidential environment for candid discussions
- Prepare administrators to be high quality mentors

### **Description of Program**

#### **What is Mentoring?**

Mentoring is the process by which an experienced person provides advice, support and encouragement to an administrator new to his/her role. The original "Mentor" was described by Homer as the "wise and trusted counselor."

#### **The Benefits of Mentoring**

In various studies across many fields, being mentored has consistently been linked with academic and professional achievement. Mentees receive guidance and advice, report higher levels of confidence, and gain access to networks and resources. It's not only the mentee that benefits, but also the mentor. Mentors appreciate the opportunities for self-reflection, and for networking with new colleagues.

#### **The Mentoring Relationship**

Mentoring relationships that start with a clear understanding of what is required by both parties will be rewarding. A successful mentoring relationship requires confidentiality, trust between the partners, and regular/frequent interaction.

#### **The MASA Mentor Program Structure**

The program is supported at the state and regional levels. MASA's role involves guiding consistency and collaboration across the state. MASA provides a framework upon which regions can tailor mentoring processes for their mentor/mentee teams to encourage efficient and effective use of limited resources. MASA also partly subsidizes the cost of mentoring by providing resources, materials, related training, and a \$500 stipend for mentors.

#### **Eligibility**

The mentor program will provide first year mentoring to any MASA member who is new to their role or new to their role in Minnesota. MASA may also provide mentoring to members who make special application for services based on extenuating circumstances.

## **Process**

1. Each MASA region will identify and notify MASA of one or more regional coordinators/contacts.
2. MASA and the regional contact will coordinate information to identify MASA members in the region who are new to their roles and eligible for mentoring subsidy.
3. The regional leadership team will recruit mentors through its regionally defined process. The process will include reference to MASA guidelines regarding the commitment to mentoring and program expectations. Regions will provide instructions on how to volunteer to serve as a mentor, highlighting the individual's professional expertise.

In the mentoring team, both mentor and mentee must be MASA members to receive the program stipend. Mentors may be Active or Retired members.

While it is preferable for both members of the mentoring team to be in the same role, it is not required that both members of the team be in the same component group. Some regions may have small numbers of certain component group members and may have a mentee who would benefit from a mentor who has experience in the practice area of the mentee but is not currently practicing in that area. For example, a superintendent with experience in curriculum leadership may be a suitable match for a curriculum leader if other mentors in that component group are not available. If necessary for regions with smaller numbers of members of certain component groups, mentors may come from another region.

4. MASA will support new mentors with professional development and resources.
5. The regional leadership team will initiate contact with the administrator new to his/her role about the Mentor Program and discuss the new mentee's interests and needs, the availability of mentors, and their preferences regarding a mentor.
6. At the beginning of the year, the region will match the new MASA member's needs with a mentor. The regional contact confirms the team's appointment.
7. The regional contact will send the list of mentees and their mentors to MASA.
8. MASA will send the \$500 stipend for each mentor to the region.
9. The mentoring partners will initiate their work together, identify topics and needs, timelines for meeting, methods of connecting, and establish their relationship.
10. The region will provide an accountability and reporting process to the mentor and mentee.
11. The region may establish a regional feedback process to inform continuous improvement of regional support of the program.
12. MASA will conduct an online survey of mentors and mentees and regional contacts to inform program development.
13. MASA will recognize mentors for their contribution.
14. MASA and regional leadership teams will encourage mentors and mentees to consider continuing their work together in a professional relationship.

## **Expectations**

### **MASA**

- Guide consistency and collaboration across the state
- Provide a framework upon which regions can tailor mentoring processes for their mentor/mentee teams to encourage efficient and effective use of limited resources
- Partly subsidize the cost of mentoring by providing a \$500 stipend for mentors, resources and materials, and related training.

### **MASA Regional Leadership Team**

- Assist the mentor and mentee in establishing their initial contact
- Take steps to prevent conflicts of interest between the mentor and mentee
- Select mentors who have interest and expertise
- Establish and manage the mentoring process as outlined in the process steps above
- Provide the mentee with regional contact information
- Establish/coordinate/facilitate mentorship activities within the region.

**Mentor/Mentee Team**

- Establish ground rules for the mentoring relationship
- Establish timeline and methods of meetings/contact, including face-to-face meetings
- Hold periodic meetings with best practice topics
- Review the MASA web site, including the “Members Only” resources.

**Mentor**

- Be an MASA Member (Active or Retired)
- Share skills, knowledge, and expertise
- Exhibit enthusiasm; value growth and ongoing learning
- Possess a global vision of education
- Demonstrate a positive attitude and act as a positive role model
- Create an open, confidential, and candid relationship, encouraging the growth of trust and confidence
- Listen “actively” and communicate respectfully
- Approach each meeting fully prepared
- Question and find out what is important to the mentee, exploring skills, aptitudes and aspirations
- Challenge assumptions and act as a sounding board
- Gain significant personal and career development from mentoring.

**Mentee**

- Be an MASA Member
- Self-Assess regarding professional learning needs and interests
- Be positive and committed to the mentor/mentee relationship
- Understand that the role of the mentor is to challenge and encourage but not to provide answers
- Approach each meeting fully prepared
- Be a good listener and communicator
- Accept constructive criticism and offer feedback
- Initiate contact with the mentor whenever questions or needs arise.