



A Union of Professionals



**Illinois
State Board of
Education**



Illinois Virtual Instructional Coach and Building Mentor Program

Background

The State of Illinois estimates that at least 4,000 new K-12 teachers will be hired to fill vacancies for the 2020-21 school year. Many of these teachers did not have the chance to complete their clinical training because of COVID-19. However, teacher candidates who were eligible for this exemption already underwent extensive coursework, pre-clinical fieldwork experiences, and a licensure content test.

These new teachers and others who are new to the profession will be expected to help students' recover from learning loss and the social-emotional toll of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, while mastering digital teaching and learning technologies. Illinois' students experienced at least one quarter of remote learning last school year; and as of September 14, 2020, nearly two-thirds of Illinois' students are beginning the new school year remotely. Teachers also must be prepared for intermittent transitions between remote and in-person instruction as the school year progresses. In both settings, teachers will be expected to provide much needed social-emotional support and manage challenging circumstances for their students. New teachers need more support than ever before.

IEA and IFT Offer Comprehensive Professional Support

To support beginning teachers in these challenging circumstances, the Illinois State Board of Education engaged the Illinois Education Association and the Illinois Federation of Teachers to design a comprehensive program that will offer every participating district's new teachers wraparound professional support including:

- Virtual instructional coach trained to provide support to beginning teachers regarding effective practices for online instruction, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices;
- Trained and certified building mentor with the sole responsibility to make the teacher feel welcomed, supported and connected in their new school;
- Access to robust virtual coaching platform with comprehensive online library of instructional resources, including effective-practice videos, and software tools that help teachers analyze examples of each other's teaching and provide feedback and support to one another; and
- Support and feedback through one-on-one and small group virtual coaching sessions organized around Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching Clusters*.

ISBE partnered with IEA and IFT through a \$6.5 million grant, funded by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.



Rolling Admissions

Beginning in September, districts in collaboration with their local unions are invited to join the Virtual Instructional Coach and Building Mentoring program on a rolling basis. We encourage district administration and local union leadership to discuss and consider participation in this program.

Training Program

The Virtual Instructional Coaches (VIC) and Building Mentors (BM) training program has three components:

- VIC Webinars - Monthly 60-min sessions focused on effective coaching using the *Framework for Teaching Clusters*. Each webinar will address (1) a Cluster (or focus area within a Cluster) most likely to be relevant to new teacher practice and (2) an aspect of the Danielson Group coaching model that will benefit coaches in supporting new teachers
 - Session 1
 - Environments Filled with Safety and Belonging
 - *Framework for Teaching Clusters*- Positive Developmental Relationships (from Cluster 2) and Routines & Procedures (from Cluster 3)
 - Coaching Focus - Building Trust in the Coaching Relationship
 - Session 2
 - Cultural Competence and Anti-Racism
 - *Framework for Teaching Clusters* - Positive Developmental Relationships (from Cluster 2) and Collective Responsibility (from Cluster 3)
 - Coaching Focus - Constructivist Coaching (Active listening & leading asset-based coaching conversations)
 - Session 3
 - Engaging Families and Communities
 - *Framework for Teaching Clusters* - Learning Outcomes and Instructional Decision Making (from Cluster 1) and Collective Impact (from Cluster 6)
 - Coaching Focus - Aligning growth plans with student, school, team, and teacher goals
- VIC Modules & Toolkits - The focus each month will be further supported by online, asynchronous modules that coaches and teachers can complete. Monthly toolkits will be provided to coaches with protocols, resources, and guidance for conversations and activities to engage in with individual teachers or small groups.
- VIC Office Hours - Each month, Danielson Group Framework Specialists will hold office hours when coaches can sign up to discuss specific problems of practice and other needs.

Role of Virtual Instructional Coaches

- Address teacher and student trauma as well as basic instructional routines, classroom management, remote learning and core curricular needs and instructional strategies.
- Work with between 2 and 9+ teachers for the duration of the academic year.
- Dedicate up to 5 hours per week over a 36-week school year to provide one-on-one and small group virtual instructional support working with no fewer than 2 and up to 9+ new teachers.
- Work closely with the program's instructional leaders to ensure that the program's high standards are rigorously applied.
- Receive ongoing networking and support from program managers.
- Coaches will be compensated based on the number of new teachers they coach.

Role of Building Mentors

- Acclimate the new teacher, recognize early signs of teacher trauma and recommend supplemental help to teachers facing potential burnout.
- Dedicate two hours per week, on average, over a 36-week school year working with new teachers one-on-one, introducing them to cultural, organizational and operational norms of the school and district.
- Work closely with the Program’s instructional leaders to ensure the Program’s high standards are rigorously applied.
- Building mentors will receive a stipend.
- Depending on the district program, if one is available, building mentor training will be a required program component.

Role of New Teacher

- Each new teacher will have access to a trained and certified in-building mentor whose sole responsibility will be to make the new teacher feel welcomed, supported and “connected” in their new school.
- New teachers will have the opportunity to “interview” and select their virtual instructional coach, who will also be trained and certified in the same area of instruction.
- New teachers will have access to resources. All instructional resources (classroom videos, lesson plans, classroom assignments, and samples of student work) will be organized around Charlotte Danielson’s Framework For Teaching Six Clusters.

Role of Building Administrator

- Participate in the Virtual Instructional Coach & Building Mentoring program orientation to better understand their role, the roles of the building mentor and virtual instructional coach, and alignment to the district goals.

Program Oversight Webinar

Participating District Administration, Principals and Union Leaders will participate in an orientation meeting, “Supporting the Virtual Coaching and Mentoring Process”. The Orientation will be designed to provide understanding of the Virtual Coaching & Mentoring Program Design including the program evaluation, providing insight to the role and responsibilities of the virtual instructional coach, and guidance on how to best provide support for the building mentor and new teachers in their respective school districts.

For more information, email:

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