

# **POLICIES MENTOR TEACHER PROGRAM 2010-2011**

The Kansas legislature appropriated full funding for mentors to first year teachers and partial funding for mentors to second year teachers. The statute states

**“Subject to the availability of appropriations for mentor teacher programs.....the amount of grants to be awarded school districts by multiplying an amount not to exceed \$1,000 by the number of mentor teachers participating in the program maintained by a school district.”**

At this time the anticipated stipend will be \$1000 to a mentor of a first year teacher. The amount of the stipend to a mentor of a second year teacher is anticipated to be in the range of \$300-\$700. The exact amount is dependent upon total number of mentors submitted at the end of the school year. The total amount paid to one mentor will not exceed \$1000.

**To receive payment both the mentor and the new teacher must be recorded in the licensed personnel report.**

Commonly Asked Questions:

**1. What is the definition of a “new teacher”?**

A new teacher.....

- has never been in the classroom
- has an initial teaching license
- is coded “new teacher” in the licensed personnel report
- is reported with “0” years experience in the licensed personnel report

**2. What is the definition of a second year teacher?**

A second year teacher....

- has only been in the classroom for one year
- is reported with “1” year of experience in the licensed personnel report
- has an initial teaching license

**3. If we hire a new teacher after the school year has started, will the mentor be eligible for payment?**

- Yes, KSDE will prorate the payment based on ten months – August through May (rounded to nearest tenth). If the teacher begins employment in January the state will pay ½ of the amount during the current school year and the additional amount the following year. The prorated amount would also apply to second year funding.
- It is critical that all new hires regardless of the start date be reported in the licensed personnel report. This report remains open until March for late hires.

**4. Will teachers from other countries qualify for a state funded mentor?**

- Most teachers coming to Kansas from other countries have experience in their native country. The teacher must be new to the profession, not new to Kansas.
- The same policy applies to teachers moving to Kansas from other states. While we do not disagree that the teacher may benefit from a mentor the legislative statute only allows KSDE to pay for mentors for teachers who are new to the profession.

**5. What about teachers we have hired who are in the alternative program and have a restricted teaching license?**

- The first year a teacher is in the classroom is considered the first year regardless of the type of license.
- Appropriate licenses for first year teachers include
  - conditional license
  - one year nonrenewable license
  - exchange license
  - restricted license
  - visiting scholar license
- A teacher on a standard five year or professional teaching license would be considered not new to the profession and would not be eligible for a state funded mentor.

**6. The best/only person available to mentor a new teacher has taught for over ten years, but has only been with our district for two years. Will we still get mentoring money?**

No, per statute the mentor teacher must have been employed by the USD for three (3) years prior to the start of school year.

**7. Can we hire a retired teacher to be a mentor?**

- Yes, as long as the mentor was an employee of the USD for at least three (3) years before the start of the school year AND is reported as mentor teacher in the licensed personnel report.
- Report the retired teacher with “0” FTE and select mentor for the teaching assignment. See the licensed personnel report manual for further reporting instructions regarding salary and FTE.

**8. We have two new teachers, can one experienced teacher mentor both new teachers?**

Yes, but the maximum payment to one mentor teacher is \$1,000.

**9. Who pays for the mentor training?**

The district must provide the mentor training and release time for the mentor and new teacher to work together. This is commonly known as a nonfunded legislative mandate.

**10. Our district mentoring policy pays mentors \$750 per teacher for any new teacher to the district. We will not need the full \$1000 allocation. Can we use the remaining funds to cover training expenses?**

- No, the district must pass the total amount of the state payment onto the mentor teacher. The statute mandates all participating mentors be paid the same amount regardless of local district policies.
- Since this is a voluntary program districts can opt to pay mentors locally and not apply for state funds.

**11. Are school psychologists and school counselors eligible to receive state payment as a mentor teacher?**

No, the mentor teacher must be a teacher.

**12. We just hired a new to the profession school psychologist. Will the state program pay for the mentor?**

No, the state funded mentor teacher program is limited to mentors for teachers. School psychologists do not meet the regulatory definition of a teacher.

**13. Why does KSDE wait so late in the fiscal year to send school districts the money?**

- The statute specifies the district must provide an entire year of opportunities for the mentor and the new teacher to work together. KSDE will distribute the funds in June after the school district signs an assurance form stating the sequence of activities submitted in the fall plan have been completed.
- Since the mentoring payment is treated as a reimbursement to districts, districts may pay teachers at any time.