

FY23 Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Report Form

Instructions:

Please send an electronic copy of the Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant (TMRG) final completed report **by June 30, 2023** to Laura.Dyer@state.mn.us.

Report components:

- I. **Coversheet**
- II. **Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Program Narrative** – Please describe how your proposed activities for the teacher mentorship program has strengthened and/or supplemented your existing or attempted mentorship or retention efforts and how the awarded funds allowed you to do the work.
- III. **Program Data** – Please provide data from the past 3 years, as well as the year funded by the grant. Please also describe how grant funding has impacted the data from the most recent reporting year. You are welcome to include graphs.
- IV. **Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Funds Expenditure** – Please list all awarded funds, differentiating between funds spent and funds yet-to-be-spent this fiscal year. Fill in the “method of progress monitoring” and “data” columns based on the information in sections VI of your proposal.

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Report

Grantee Information

Legal Name of Applicant Organization	Owatonna Public Schools
Total Grant Amount	\$37,450

Identified Official with Authority

Name of official with authority to sign	Jeff Elstad
Title	Superintendent
Address	515 West Bridge Street
City, State and Zip code + 4	Owatonna, MN 55060
Phone Number and Email	507-444-8600; jelstad@isd761.org

Primary Program Contact

Name of program contact	Chris Picha
Title	Director of Human Resources
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City, State and Zip code + 4	Owatonna, MN 55060
Phone Number and Email	507-444-8602; cpicha@isd761.org

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Program Narrative

Activity 1: Expanding 1:1 Mentoring in the beginning teacher's second year of teaching allowed our district to provide two consecutive years of support with a focus on increased use of equitable teaching practices and increasing teacher retention. (fully completed). We were also able to **expand our mentor pool with mentor teachers of color** who was fully trained in culturally relevant teaching strategies and CLEAR training. Fully funding the second year of mentoring through a mentor stipend allowed us to achieve this goal at 100% participation (Outcome 2, partially met). We were able to pair one first year teacher with 1 mentor teacher, both self-identified as people of color (Outcome 3, partially met). 100% of mentors and mentees engaged in at least 2 interactions per month during the school year. (Activity 1B met)

We also recruited 3 new mentor teachers of color to our mentor pool, with 1 mentor teacher and 2nd year teacher, both self-identified as people of color, being matched (Outcome 3 met). One new teacher who identified as a person in an underrepresented group, declined to participate in the matching process and selected a mentor in their content area. Our trained mentor pool was maintained at a pool of 3 trained mentors. While our goal was to add 2 mentors of color, 2 were eligible but both declined to become mentors at this time due to their workload. Three mentor teachers of color continue to be on our trained mentor pool list for future pairings (Outcome 1, partially met). New teachers of color will continue to be given an opportunity to be matched with a mentor teacher of color and/or someone specific to their content and teaching location. As teachers are supported and move to continuing contract status, we will recruit and train additional mentors from this group, providing another pathway to leadership in our district. We will continue to recruit teachers of color to mentor and provide new staff who identify as a person of color to select both a mentor in content area/ grade level and a mentor who identifies as a person of color. Our feedback this year indicated that there is a need for support in both areas, skill and culture.

Owatonna Public Schools continues to deliver a robust 3-year mentorship program. We were able to expand mentoring to all Year 2 teachers with the grant funding. 100% of second year teachers were matched with a highly trained mentor (Outcome 2, met) The Owatonna Mentor Program components have been funded through district staff development funds and will continue to be funded this way. This grant provided a pathway to gather and present strong data to support a second year of mentoring for new teachers. The district has decided to fully fund a Year 2 program with mentors next year. The grant also pushed us to build our trained mentor pool to include more staff of color as mentor's /teacher leaders and allow new staff of color to have a voice in who is selected as their mentor. We are now realizing that our newest staff need to have a voice and choice in how they are supported. Also, mentor teachers of color need to be provided intentional training, support and pathways to become mentors and leaders in our district. Transparent conversations will lead to a culture of everyone feeling valued and heard. Teacher retention for the SY2020-23 showed no decrease and we maintain a teacher retention of 95%. As we stated in the grant application, Owatonna Public Schools truly believes that retention of our teachers begins with the first contact with the teacher which is typically the application process. OPS specifically focused on four areas in our teacher retention efforts which helped us increase our teacher retention rate: Clear and timely communication with several touchpoints with candidates via email and virtual or in person 1:1 meeting throughout the recruitment, selection and hiring processes. Our goal is to welcome the candidates, build a strong, trusting relationship, and let the candidate know that we value them as a teacher and person. The communication process is continuous with our candidates starting with recruitment and continuing throughout their entire employment with OPS.

Information rich process including information about the school district, the school building, co-worker backgrounds, community events, co-curricular opportunities to get involved, grade level curriculum, our challenges and fun facts about the district administration. We wanted to make sure the candidates felt confident in their decision in selecting OPS and know their purpose for being on our team. Strong mentoring engagement and practices in order for our new teachers to be successful. Our past surveys evidenced that our teachers strongly perceive their mentoring experience as an important and significant element in maintaining a positive attitude towards teaching and affected their retention decision with OPS.

Providing consistent and relevant professional learning and leadership opportunities for our principals and new teachers. Professional development of our principals is important because principals are doing the everyday work to develop their teachers and maintain a positive culture which retains their teams. OPS is focused on training our principals to have conversations with intentionality and empathy; to develop their ability to deepen relationships so we can meet each educator where they are at; and to help principals continue their equity journey. Professional development for our new teachers assures them that they are valued and supported in their growth. Our professional development opportunities have designed peak moments for our teachers to share their stories and the purpose of their work. Our professional development opportunities help our new teachers develop new relationships with their peers.

Throughout our four components of new teacher retention, building relationships is embedded in each area. Schools are ultimately about relationships: between students and their teachers; between colleagues; between teachers and administrators; and between parents and teachers. Our mentorship and retention efforts help teachers feel a part of something greater than themselves. We want our new teachers to know we are committed to their well-being, to helping them grow and to make a difference in the lives of our students. We were successful in SY2020-23 in demonstrating our commitment as evidenced by our retention rate of 95%.

Activity 2: CLEAR Training- NOT FUNDED THROUGH GRANT (Denied)

Activity 3: Affinity Groups (fully completed activity). All staff who identified as a person of color were invited to participate in an affinity group experience. Dr. Beatriz DeSantiago, PhD- Assistant Professor at MSU Mankato, facilitated all Affinity Group meetings. Three meetings were held in person and 6 virtually due to participant schedules. There were nine 2-hour sessions scheduled and held. The first session in the series of sessions was a focus group meeting and a post job satisfaction survey was given at the completion of all sessions. Dr. DeSantiago used the 20-21 Affinity Group survey results as a benchmark for the Affinity Group participants in the initial focus group sessions and wrapped the 22-23 sessions with a post satisfaction job survey. Overall, Owatonna Public Schools learned that as a district. We have continued to struggle with showing positive growth in our equity journey. The focus group and survey responses indicate that several of our current school policies, practices, and systems continue to be inequitable and there needs to be continued conversations and consistent review with an equity lens. While some of the responses indicated that the effects of the pandemic and some of the leadership changes attributed to the 22-23 focus group and survey results, it is clear from the responses that Owatonna Public schools needs to recommit ourselves to equity.

FY 2022-2023 is our third year for our Affinity Group participants and our survey data did not indicate any improvement. Overall, Owatonna Public Schools learned that as a district, we need to continue our equity journey. The survey responses indicate that several of our current school policies, practices and

systems are inequitable and need to be reviewed with an equity lens. The focus group and survey highlights that the majority of the participants feel valued by their supervisors; find their work meaningful and satisfied with their job duties; and plan to stay in Owatonna Public Schools in the foreseeable future. Additionally, the survey highlights that the majority of the participants don't feel their voice is being heard nor taken seriously; that they have a healthy work culture; that they have experienced racism and/or felt racially uncomfortable; and they believe the district needs to have the courage to increase their efforts toward racial equity.

Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Program Data

Table 1: Total number of teachers new to the profession or district that received mentoring as a result of this grant.

Number of teachers disaggregated by race or ethnic group	Tier 3 Teachers new to the profession or district	Tier 2 new to the profession or district	Tier 1 teachers new to the profession or district	Teaching residents	Teacher in license shortage areas	Teachers with special needs	Experienced teachers in need of peer coaching
American Indian or Alaskan Native							
Asian or Pacific Islander	3						
Hispanic							
Black							
Other							
Total	3						

Table 2: Total number of mentors who were paid stipends under this grant for providing mentorship to teachers.

Number of Mentors by race or ethnic group	Tier 3 Teachers new to the profession or district	Teaching residents	Teacher in license shortage areas	Teachers with special needs	Experienced teachers in need of peer coaching
American Indian or Alaskan Native					
Asian or Pacific Islander					
Hispanic					
Black	1		1		
Other					
Paid Mentors of color who received additional stipends			1		
Total	1		2		

Year 2 Program Job Satisfaction Results

Outcome 4; Partially Completed) A year end focus group meeting was held at the end of the 22/23 school year with the year 2 program grant mentees (36 total). Results indicated that over 89% of mentees were satisfied with their current job duties; 78% believed the district had a healthy work culture and felt valued and supported despite a very challenging school year for teachers. One mentee noted that their mentors did not hold the same license and that was frustrating for the mentee. Seven mentees stated that there needs to be more collaboration time given to mentor/mentees during the regular school day in order to improve student outcomes. Thirteen mentees stated that more conversations with mentor on culturally responsive classrooms should be embedded in the meetings. Overall, the mentees believed the following were the most effective mentor supports: Scheduled face-to-face visits, unscheduled/impromptu visits, observations and feedback by mentor, scheduled collaboration time with mentor, or observing mentor or mentor co-teaching.

Several participants commented on issues pertaining to inclusion and equity for all students. The data indicates that our district should continue with touchpoint surveys and focus groups and provide frequent feedback to our new staff and mentors to ensure that all teachers' needs are being heard and met. While not every concern can reach the desired outcome, it is important for staff to have a vehicle to voice concerns when it comes to how one is supported through mentoring. We have worked hard this year to provide an "opt out" or make a change in mentors when the pairing is not working. We need to continue to move towards a more transparent and process and more clarity in our communication.

Retention Strategies

Per Minn. Stat. § 122A.70, a school district that receives a grant must negotiate additional retention strategies for teachers who are of color or who are American Indian in their beginning years of employment, such as financial incentives for working in the school/district for at least five years or providing collegial support through teacher placement. Please describe the strategies your organization developed.

Owatonna Public Schools did not negotiate additional retention strategies or financial incentives with the local bargaining unit. We already have negotiated financial incentives for supporting our new teaching staff through the mentor program. We indicated this in our application. Bargaining will soon begin for the SY23-24 and SY2024-25 contract. We will move forward with additional money for mentor stipends and staff development rates of pay.

Our retention strategy was to provide an additional year of mentoring to all Year 2 teachers, add additional trained mentors to our mentor pool, specifically, mentor teachers of color and provide a majority experience for underrepresented groups through an affinity group. Affinity groups also provided input into new and existing policies in our district.

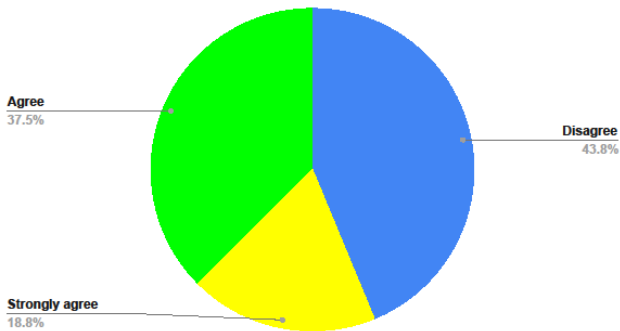
Additional Funding

Additional funding came from district staff development funds for the end of the year celebration of our learning for all participants, mentors and district leaders. Staff development funds were used for the original purposed Activity 2, including 12 additional hours of paid professional development around culturally relevant teaching practices, including building teacher capacity to implement these practiced into their classrooms/work environments all while being supported in a mentoring relationship. Stipends for facilitators were also paid through the district staff development budget.

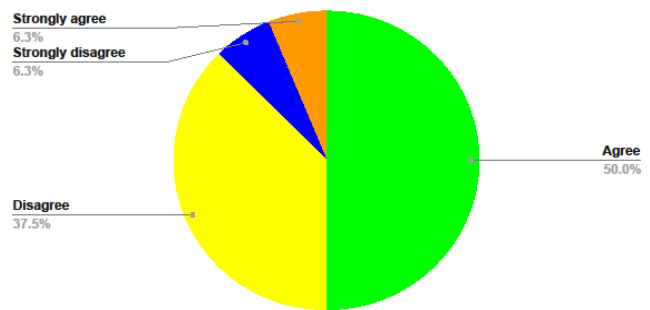
In addition to what the grant funded and our staff development budget, we also leveraged our partnership with Minnesota State University Mankato by engaging school leaders to attend equity training throughout the year. The partnership provides high quality professional development around racial equity and mentoring. Release time and stipends are funded through the staff development budget.

Owatonna Affinity Group Results

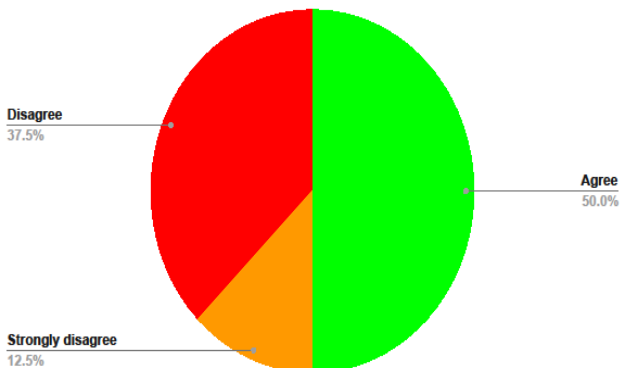
Count of 1. I am satisfied with my current job duties



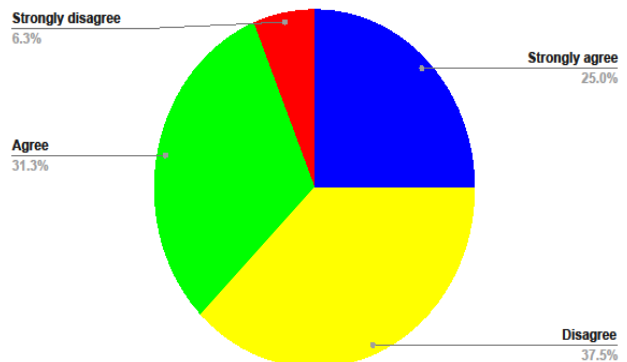
Count of 2. I have a voice to express my concerns to leadership



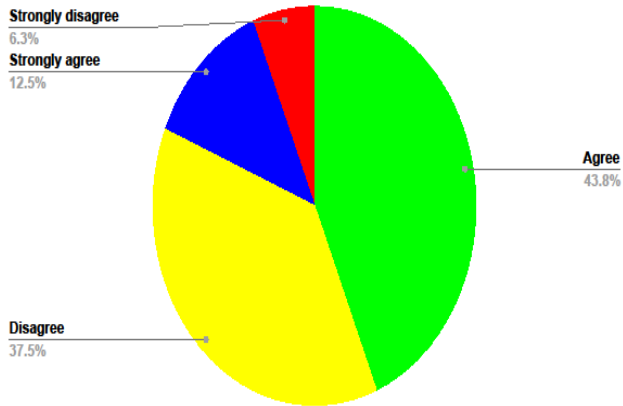
Count of 3. Leadership takes my concerns seriously



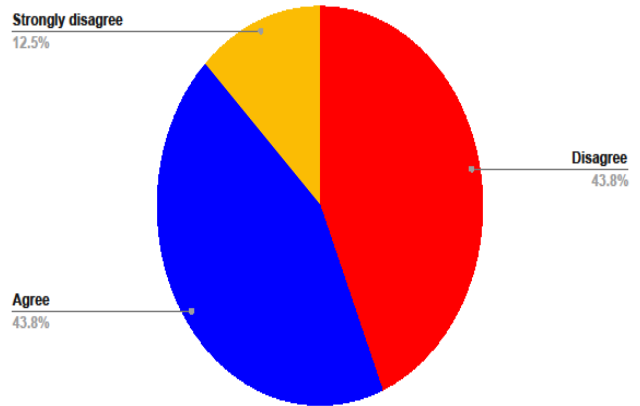
Count of 4. I feel valued by my supervisor(s)



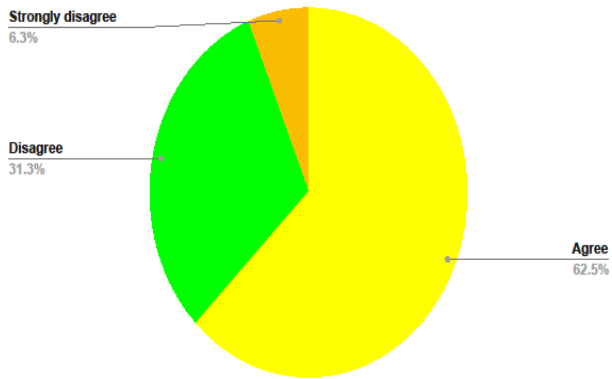
Count of 5. My district has a healthy work culture



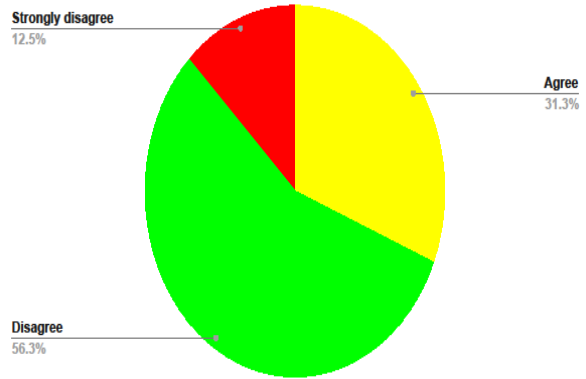
Count of 6. I have experienced racism on my job



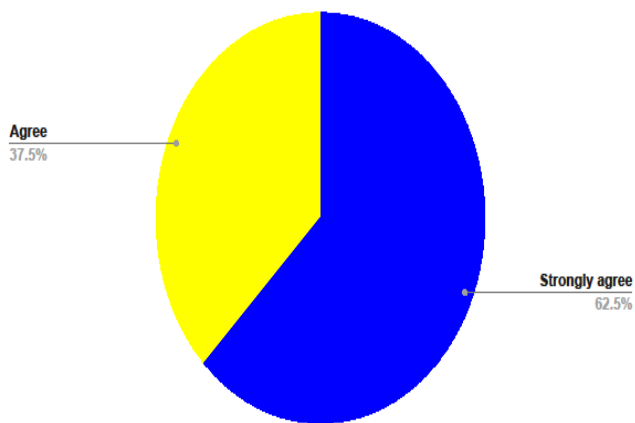
Count of 7. I feel connected to my co-workers



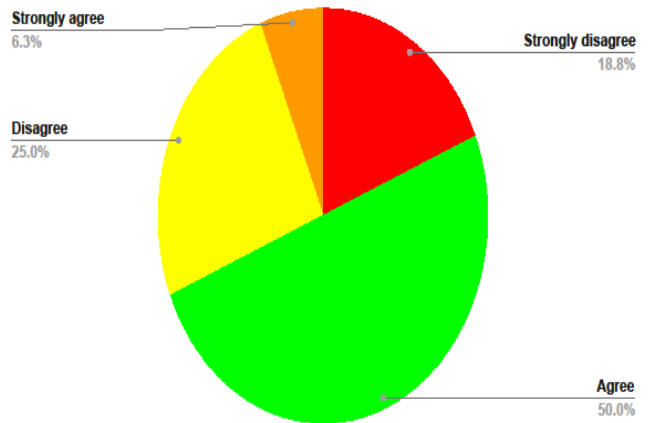
Count of 8. I am comfortable bringing up issues of race at work



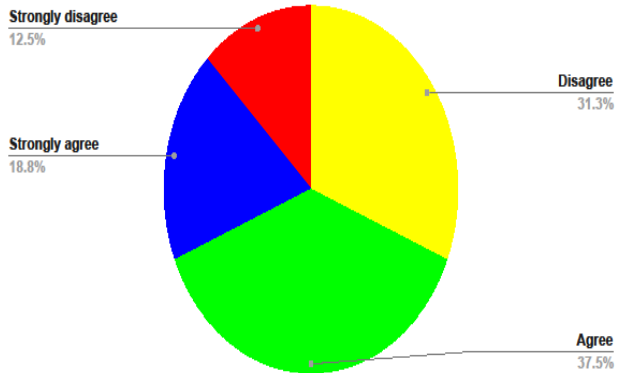
Count of 9. I feel that my work is meaningful



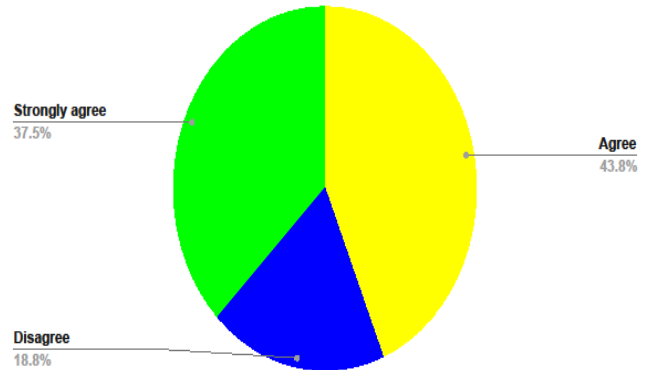
Count of 10. I have felt racially uncomfortable on my job



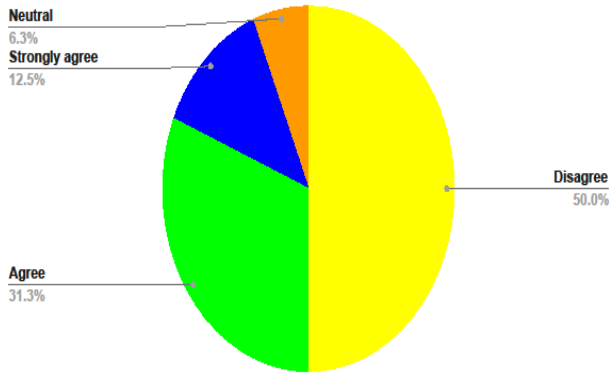
Count of 11. I see a pathway for career advancement in my district



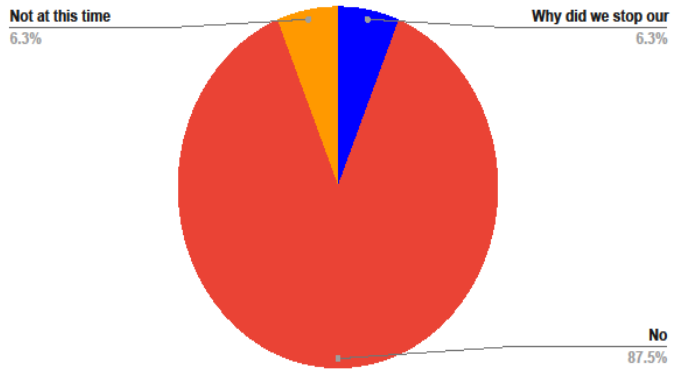
Count of 12. I plan to stay in Owatonna Public Schools for the foreseeable future



Count of 13. I am satisfied with the district's efforts toward racial equity



Count of 14. Are there any other issues not mentioned in this survey that you'd like addressed?





OWATONNA MENTOR PROGRAM

Owatonna Public Schools

WHAT IS IT?

The Owatonna Mentor Program is designed to reach all teachers who are new to the Owatonna Public Schools. By uniting experienced teachers with probationary teachers, the purpose of this program is to provide support, encourage professional development and enhance teaching performance during the first years in the district.

GOALS OF PROGRAM:

- To promote personal and professional growth through dialogue and reflection.
- To increase student achievement through the improvement of quality teaching.
- To foster positive relationships between students, staff, parents, administrators, and community members.
- To encourage collaboration in order to meet the needs of diverse learners in our community.
- To eliminate isolation of beginning teachers and those new to the district.
- To improve the retention of the district's quality teachers.
- To develop leadership capabilities in experienced teachers.

OUR MENTOR PROGRAM IS STRUCTURED TO DRIVE RESULTS



1:1 mentor for all new teachers to the district



Regular in-person, feedback and coaching



3 year program for novice teachers



High-quality and on-going mentor training



Consistent data use for program improvement

Teachers who are new to the district benefit from having experienced professionals guide them through the processes and practices of our district. The program creates a safe space for the teacher to ask questions, receive guidance and grow.

-Jim Kiefer, Alternative Learning Center Principal (2017-2020)

WHAT TO EXPECT IN YOUR FIRST YEAR TEACHING IN OWATONNA

- Every new teacher in the district will be matched with a mentor (1:1 ratio)
- Weekly meetings with mentor for the first year of employment in the district
- Collaborative approach with administrator, mentor and new teacher to support professional growth
- Professional development opportunities that are meaningful for all career levels
- Opportunities to observe mentor and other teachers
- Team building/celebrations throughout the year
- Induction to the district

INDUCTION TO THE DISTRICT

4-day induction prior to the start of the school year includes:

- Relationship building and team building
- Understanding the culture (building, district, community)
- Professional development
- Introduction to mentor, district personnel, buildings and administration
- Mentor support in classroom

"One thing that has surprised me the most about the program is the depth of knowledge gained and the support that is given to all new teachers within the Owatonna district."

- Past Program Participant

YEAR 1 Forum

For early career teachers

- Monthly professional development experiences are provided to meet the needs of the participants in the program

YEAR 2 Forum

- 6 hours of professional development aligned with the needs of the teacher and district commitments
- Opportunities to experience a coaching cycle with instructional and/or equity coach

YEAR 3 Forum

- 6 hours of professional development focused on leadership and inquiry via a self-directed classroom action research project
- Peer review training
- Opportunities to experience a coaching cycle with instructional and/or equity coach

Inspiring Excellence. Every Learner, Every Day.



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Teacher Mentorship & Retention of Effective Teachers Grant Funds Expenditure

Table 3: Grant Funds Expenditure

Amount	Description of Use of Funds	Primarily Used for:	Method of Progress Monitoring	Data
\$18,811.55 (7/1/22-6/7/23)	Mentor Stipends & Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Induction	2 interactions per month; Focus Groups	100% second year teachers were paired with a 1:1 mentor
\$928.91	Affinity Group Stipends	<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retention <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Induction	1. Post focus group 2. Ongoing dialogue during meetings with facilitator	See charts in Analysis of Data section above
\$2,281.17	New Mentor Training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Retention <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Induction	2 interactions per month with Mentor Coordinator; 3 group touchpoints	Vouchers were processed by payroll; 2 BIPOC teachers were trained and 1 BIPOC mentor was assigned to a first year teacher
		<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input type="checkbox"/> Induction		
		<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input type="checkbox"/> Induction		