

Mentor Update Professional Learning Series

Beginning in 2021 the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) along with the RESC Alliance and other stakeholders launched a new *Mentor Update Professional Learning Series* which will replace the previous online Mentor Update Training.

The new *Mentor Update Professional Learning Series* is a suite of professional learning units designed to build on and enhance the knowledge and skills that were learned in Initial Support Teacher¹ Training (IST). Mentors will be able to select from a menu of professional learning units (PLUs) that address a wide variety of topics designed to meet their learning needs. This allows them to direct their own professional growth as they build skills to effectively support beginning and student teachers.

Mentors are expected to complete a minimum of three PLUs every three years. We suggest completing at least one PLU per year over the three years. Mentors are encouraged to select PLUs that meet their immediate professional learning needs and the needs of the beginning teachers and student teachers whom they are supporting.

While mentors are required to complete three PLUs over three years, they may find that there are several PLUs they would like to complete beyond the required three. There is no limit to the number of PLUs a mentor may complete.

Professional Learning Units are designed to provide mentors with a variety of options from which to choose. The "units" focus on mentor needs, are research based, and address a wide range of topics.

Mentors are a critical part of induction. High-quality mentors/cooperating teachers are needed to support and guide the development of beginning and student teachers through their challenging early years in the classroom.

The educational landscape is rapidly changing. There is an increase in racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity in the student population. Emerging innovative technologies are changing the ways in which we learn, think, and interact. Expectations for accountability have increased. Teaching and learning standards influence instructional design, classroom culture, and relationships with parents and the community. These are just some of the many reasons why beginning teachers and student teachers face multiple challenges in the classroom. Without high-quality support, many beginning teachers will leave the profession. However, research strongly indicates that mentoring and induction make a real difference.

Our goal is to provide mentor/cooperating teachers with the professional learning they need to successfully support beginning and student teachers through these challenges. We will continue to add new topics to the series each year. If there is a topic you would like to see offered, please email your suggestions to Claudine Primack at claudine.primack@ct.gov.

¹ Support Teacher is a mentor who supports both beginning and student teachers and serves in the roles of both mentor teacher and cooperating teacher.

