

From the perspective of newer teacher, and one who was fortunate enough to have a mentor, as well as attend all beginning teacher seminars offered by DCNTP, I believe there is a great amount of value in being a member of DCNTP. Throughout my first year of teaching, I had many emotions, questions, challenges, and rewards. My mentor was always there to not only support me as an individual, but also to continue to push me forward in my choices and practices to ensure my students received quality instruction. Together, we used numerous DCNTP resources to guide observations, discussions, reflections, and even schedules. These tools allowed me to see beyond merely surviving my year, to instead becoming better for my students. The tools also showed that what my mentor and I were doing was not something I was solely responsible for, but rather something we would work together on all year. At the beginning teacher seminars, I learned about the strength in numbers. When I was able to come together with other new teachers I felt much less isolated and alone in the journey I was undertaking in my first year. Hearing the research from presenters and talking with fellow beginning teachers taught me to reflect and grow with each challenge I faced and relish each success. Beginning teacher seminars also gave me the chance to learn new strategies for assessments, gain new insights into communicating with parents, as well as getting ready for my PDP. These seminars took away many of the unknowns and calmed my fears. Being a benefactor of my district's membership in DCNTP made me become a better teacher faster for my students.

Ruthie Schaap  
Newer Teacher – Marshall Public School District

*"Our relationship with the Dane County New Teacher Project has provided consistency and assurance to our school board on how we are handling our new teachers. Our superintendent reported to the board that around 50% of our teaching staff is new to our district every ten years, so we want to know we have a good plan for bringing new teachers into our school family. The New Teacher Project is a great partner in that plan. Also, it's amazing to watch our veteran teachers pitch in and help new ones as a part of structure of this project."*

*Arlyn Halvorson*

*McFarland School Board President*

### **The Value of DCNTP Membership to McFarland:**

We know that effective teaching is the number one factor influencing student achievement. It typically takes new teachers between three and five years to attain the skills and hone their content expertise to a level that maximizes student growth and achievement. We also know that teachers new to the field need the support and professional feedback of trained mentors in order to accelerate their effectiveness and make the greatest impact on student learning. McFarland has been a member of the Dane County New Teacher Project (DCNTP) since its inception; we have seen the difference it makes to have our newest colleagues partnered with mentors who have learned in collaborative settings with their peers, who have sharpened and shared their own understanding of the new developments in teacher education and evaluation, and who act with confidence, knowing they are supported by a county-wide network of professional educators who share their commitment to helping new teacher begin an effective and fulfilling teaching career. DCNTP provides professional development for our teachers and mentors that is tailored specifically to the challenges that new teachers face; it helps ensure that McFarland's teacher leaders have the opportunity to benefit from the research and best practices supported by the New Teacher Center, resulting in a much more comprehensive and coherent induction District program that addresses the “just in time” needs of new teachers, improves instructional qualities, and helps our new teachers succeed in their first classrooms, resulting in higher satisfaction and retention of effective teachers in our noble profession.

What do our teachers have to say about their experience with the DCNTP professional development opportunities? “The conferencing and observation protocols are terrific!” “Love the tools and ideas; I can't wait to implement them with my mentee!” “(DCNTP) provides the best professional development I have experienced. I'm excited to infuse a lot of new goodies into my work this year!” “I really appreciate the opportunity to collaborate and discuss - and would like even more. But I understand we are teachers and probably would go on forever!” “Thank you for encouraging us to have those courageous conversations.” Need we say more?

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Date: September 16, 2013

To: Tom Howe and Melissa Ohm

From: Nancy Evans, Monona Grove School District

The role of the DCNTP in supporting teachers and staff in our district is quite extensive. The following list includes my reflections based on my years as a teacher, leader of our district mentor program, and as a retired teacher now serving as a mentor of new teachers.

The Dane County New Teacher Project provides the following:

- A positive model of a professional organization: strong leadership, superb organization and communication, strong mission and vision with measurable goals, welcoming and inclusive, flexible and responsive to all members
- Mentor training that is research based, effective and immediately applicable. Training is presented by trained and knowledgeable facilitators. Superior quality.
- After-school seminars for new teachers that are based on new teacher needs and are grounded in best practice.
- Resources for teams and individuals in the area of teacher induction
- Website with links to professional reading, training, examples of best practice
- National material on mentoring new teachers and other topics in education
- Mentor forums that provide monthly support for mentors
- An opportunity to learn from other districts around the state
- An opportunity to learn from national programs with a long history of success
- MAGA documents and tools for assessment and accountability of mentors
- Model for other programs district might want to adopt---our steering committee has developed a process for introducing new ideas that is a model for other initiatives
- Guidance in learning about and implementing DPI initiatives: PI34, PDP process, Educator Effectiveness

My name is Heather Lott and I am the New Educator Coordinator in Madison Metropolitan School District. At a time when we are striving for excellence and we have unprecedented numbers of new educators joining our ranks, I have been so thankful for the DCNTP consortium. DCNTP provides a solid foundation of research, standards and professional development of the New Teacher Center that help us in developing our new educators to be their best in a short amount of time. Over my two years in this role, I have learned from DCNTP how to support mentors and new educators, how to design program evaluation and how to strengthen our district's new educator induction program. DCNTP has provided me with the guidance, consultation and professional development I need in order to do my job well. Together with the consortium members, we are engaged in rich professional development, collaboration, and consultation through our gifted chair, Tom Howe. DCNTP is responsive to the needs expressed by our member districts by offering professional development in a timely manner such as Educator Effectiveness Presentation, Induction Team work day, and Program Leaders Coffee. For me, the need to connect with other program leaders to learn about induction, share our thinking and problem-solving, and improve the way we induct new educators would not be met without DCNTP.

Tim Mommaerts

Assistant Principal, Waunakee High School

The value of DCNTP to me:

- a. Professional Development and Collegiality for mentors in an otherwise isolated district position
- b. Provides regular support and a student achievement focus from colleagues for teachers new to the profession rather than infrequent feedback from a building administrator
- c. Provides administrators with strategies for communicating with new teachers in a timely and efficient manner
- d. Principal Breakfasts allow administrators to share and learn strategies of impact from colleagues for improving teacher practice and for providing leadership in an otherwise isolated district position
- e. Provides new teachers a voice in their own professional development that may not be heard in traditional district evaluation/development models
- f. Provides strategies for all teachers and administrators on effective practices that lead to improved student achievement
- g. Is supported by a world renowned organization in new teacher development...New Teacher Center