

## VCSTA/CISVA Teacher Mentorship Program

### Goal of the Program:

- To provide personal and professional support for beginning teachers.

### Objectives of the Program:

- To create opportunities for professional growth and leadership capacity building within schools and across the CISVA, while respecting and honoring the developmental and career needs of both new and experienced teachers.
- To increase student learning by expanding the shared knowledge-base of the best practices in teaching, as well as to increase the teachers' ability to reflect and to determine which strategies, resources, and methods to use in order to respond to a diverse range of student needs.
- To create a community of teachers as learners within a school and the CISVA.

### Overview:

- Principals hiring a new teacher in the school would select an appropriate mentor (see criteria).
- Mentors will be provided with some materials to use as they work with their protégés throughout the year.
- Principals would provide mentors and protégés with some time to meet. The time may be used to attend professional development sessions together, or to observe another class, or to do some planning together. In addition, brief weekly informal meetings may also take place depending on the mentor and protégé. Meeting times may take place before or after school. Principals and staffs may find creative ways to find release time during the day.
- The VCSTA has agreed to provide some funds for each participating teacher.

### Advantages:

The mentoring program would benefit and enhance other recent initiatives in the CISVA, while ensuring it follows what is known about effective adult learning theory, professional development, and school improvement. The following are some advantages of the program, as it:

- provides a means of transmitting the school culture and vision.
- would shift the focus and language from "school reforms" to student learning outcomes, thus enabling staffs to develop a common language and knowledge base in order to discuss the goals and objectives, as well disseminating ideas of best practices
- would make the goals of teaching more explicit (measurable and attainable)
- increases the sense of ownership at the school level
- should be mutually beneficial to both participants.

### Criteria for Choosing a Mentor

The ideal mentor may exhibit many of the following characteristics:

- Have a minimum of five years of successful teaching
- Be knowledgeable of school and CISVA procedures, resources, and policies
- Demonstrate empathy
- Have good communication skills
- Be able and willing to dedicate time to spend with a protégé (a minimum of one year's commitment)
- Be a reflective, faith-filled, and committed Catholic
- Be able to model the problem solving process
- Be excited about teaching
- Believe in the importance of on-going professional development
- Be supportive and non-judgmental