



Op-Ed from Illinois Education Association President: IEA, IFT and ISBE Join Together to Provide Support for First-Year Teachers

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Education Association (IEA) today released the following op-ed from IEA President Kathi Griffin:

Being a first-year teacher is hard.



Being one amid a pandemic

is even harder.

That's why The Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Federation of Teachers and the Illinois State Board of Education have joined together to create a program designed to help provide wraparound professional support for first-year teachers.

The Illinois Virtual Instructional Coach and Building Mentor Program for New Teachers pairs first-year educators with a virtual coach, a trained and certified building mentor, a virtual coaching platform and the support of other first-year teachers.

The State of Illinois estimates there about 4,000 new PreK-12 teachers who will be hired this school year, and many did not have the chance to complete their clinical training because of COVID-19. Now, they will be expected to help students recover from learning loss and the social-emotional toll of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, while mastering digital teaching and learning technologies. They also must be prepared for intermittent transitions between being remote and in-person instruction as the school year progresses, all while meeting students' needs.

That is a lot of added stress. So, here's what the comprehensive program, which encourages school districts to work with their local union leadership to enroll jointly, provides:

Virtual instructional coach trained to provide support to beginning teachers regarding effective practices for online instruction, social-emotional learning, and trauma-informed practices;

Trained and certified building mentor with the sole responsibility to make the teacher feel welcomed, supported and connected in their new school;

Access to robust virtual coaching platform with comprehensive online library of instructional resources, including effective-practice videos, and software tools that help teachers analyze examples of each other's teaching and provide feedback and support to one another; and

Support and feedback through one-on-one and small group virtual coaching sessions organized around Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching Clusters.

ISBE partnered with IEA and IFT through a \$6.5 million grant, funded by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act.

Admissions to the program are still being accepted for all roles and for new teachers. Encourage districts in your community to participate.

To learn more, contact:

IEAcoachingandmentoring@ieanea.org or IFTcoachingandmentoring@ift-aft.org.

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The 135,000 member Illinois Education Association (IEA) is the state's largest education employee's organization. IEA represents preK-12 teachers outside of the city of Chicago and education support staff, higher education faculty, retired education employees and students preparing to become teachers, statewide.