

# EDITORIAL



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORS

January has been proclaimed National Mentoring Month. Mentoring can strengthen families, schools, businesses and communities.

Despite the obvious benefits of mentoring throughout a career, the type of guidance or skills required will likely change over time. For example, at the beginning of a career, a more job-specific mentor may be appropriate. Longtime employees also might benefit from what Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, called “reverse mentoring” - partnering with someone from a younger generation to share expertise, update skills, and gain a different perspective.

When I was hired for my first teaching job several days before school actually started, I was supposed to be part of a team. However, the team I was assigned consisted of veteran teachers who didn’t need or want help from anyone. They were also not very helpful to a rookie educator. So basically I was going at it alone facing all the challenges that most first year teachers face without support.

In my second year teaching, I moved to a new school where the teams actually planned and worked together as a team. I was given plenty of sage advice and had a successful career at that school. Working together, we helped each other grow as colleagues and teachers.

Today it appears that many school districts are paying attention and seeing the positive results that come from teachers mentoring each other and planning as a team. However, with the many changes in technology, it is not just the young new teachers that need mentoring. There are plenty of experienced teachers that need assistance with the new technology that is thrust their way. Teachers are expected to be the expert on all aspects in their field of study.

Everyone’s skill levels are different and varied. You may be an expert in classroom management and can provide advice to struggling teachers. I may have a different set of skills that I can share expertise with you. We all need to mentor each other. This will significantly improve not only our own lives, but more importantly, teachers mentoring other teachers will impact the lives of the children they serve.

Professional Educators of Tennessee encourages all people to accept the challenges and rewards of mentoring someone knowing that both the mentor and mentee will experience benefits that will last each of you a lifetime. Together we can all reach our goals.

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#### SUMMARY

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