**Congratulations on your first teaching experience,**

**and welcome to the Special Education profession!**

**Maine’s Alternative Certification and Mentoring (MACM) program**, a Maine Department of Education and University of Maine, was created to support you during your first year of teaching with a conditional certification.

**Here is how it will work:**

* You will be assigned ***a special educator mentor from MACM*** who may or may not be in your school or district. You will have the same mentor for the entire year.
	+ If s/he is NOT teaching in your district, or nearby, you and your mentor may stay in contact by phone, by text, video chat, email- you can work this out together.
	+ For those whose mentors are not in the same building, your school will assign a veteran teacher to help orient you to the school’s resources and culture. This person will not be your formal mentor; s/he will help you learn things like how to use the laminator, what to expect at staff meetings, etc.
	+ Maintaining contact with your mentor will be your responsibility- take the initiative to use this valuable resource person!
	+ Mentors are NOT evaluators, and discussions between you and your mentor remain confidential (just between the two of you). Mentors are instructed to contact the MACM Coordinator if problems or concerns arise.
	+ If problems develop between you and your mentor, try to first address them with your mentor. If this doesn’t work, contact the MACM Coordinator for help.
* Early in the school year, you, a member of your school’s certification team, and your mentor will develop your **professional growth plan**. This plan (think of it as your personal IEP) should overlap with any teacher induction or certification plan required by your school district, and will include your plan to achieve professional certification in three years AND tangible, specific goals you want to achieve during the school year.
* Your mentor will conduct **at least 2 formal observations** of your teaching each semester. These observations are not evaluations; rather, they are intended to help you polish your teaching skills.
	+ Observations can be in person, real-time observations using Swivl technology, or videotaped lessons agreed upon in advance by you and your mentor. Observations will include a pre-observation conference so that you can discuss the upcoming lesson, the context and anything else your mentor should know about the lesson, and the specific things that you want your mentor to pay attention to. There will be a post-observation conference for you to talk about the lesson and receive your mentor’s feedback
	+ Your school will also observe you during the year; these observations may be evaluative in nature as required by the district or Maine DOE.
* You will enroll in the online graduate course **Special Education Mentorship** for two consecutive semesters. The 6 course credits will count toward your professional certification. You must take both parts of the course.
	+ The Special Education Mentorship course is being offered at three campuses- you can choose the campus you prefer:
		- U Maine: SED 598 Parts 1 and 2
		- U Maine Farmington- SED 578 Part 2
		- U Southern Maine- PDS 555 Parts 1 and 2
	+ The course will be essentially the same across campuses and is taught by carefully selected special education professionals. Some are special education directors; others are experienced instructors or faculty members from higher education. ***All have extensive teaching experience in schools like your own***. This course is offered for graduate credit and you will receive grades for participation and course assignments. Assignments are designed to be things you will apply in your teaching- no term papers will be required!
	+ Check with your school district about **course expenses**- most districts will pay for both semesters of this course. Many also will pay for your course texts.
	+ **COURSE TEXTS** may be ordered directly from the publishers. These texts will be used both semesters, and are the kind that you’ll want to keep in your classroom after your first year. Check with the publisher- at least one of these texts is also available as an e-book:
* Janney, R.; & Snell, M. (2013). Modifying School Work (3rd ed.) Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. ISBN 1-59857-293-8 (paperback)
* Bambara, L.; Janney, R.; & Snell, M. (2015). Behavior Support (3rd ed.) Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. ISBN 978-1-59857-886-7(pbk), 978-1-59857-943-7 (epub3)
* Martin, C., & Hauth, C. (2015). The Survival Guide for New Special Educators 2nd ed. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children. ISBN 978-0-86586-506-8 (soft cover); 978-0-86586-507-5 (eBook).
* Winterman, K. G.; & Rosas, C. E. (2014). The IEP Checklist. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. ISBN 978-1-59857-389-3 (paperback), 978-1-59857-545-3 (epub)

**ABOUT YOUR MACM PROGRESS:**

* If you pass both semesters of the course and your mentor believes that you’ve made progress throughout the year, you will exit MACM. Your district may assign you a mentor for subsequent years, and may be the same person if s/he is in your school or district, or may be someone new.
* If you do NOT pass both sections of the course, you will not be eligible for professional certification. When your conditional certification expires, your teaching career will end.
* If you do NOT make progress toward your goals or cooperate with your mentor during your MACM year, you will be required to repeat MACM mentoring next year, and the requirements for demonstration of progress will be closely monitored and documented.

MACM is intended to give you intensive support from an experienced educator during your first year as a teacher. Don’t hesitate to reach out to your mentor when you want ideas, feedback, or someone with whom to share your thoughts and feelings! MACM mentors are among the best educators in the state, and each of them is committed to helping you become an effective, skilled, and confident special educator.

Best wishes for a successful first year!

Valerie Smith

Valerie M. Smith, Ph.D.

MACM Coordinator