



# MAASE Coaching & Mentoring Handbook **for Special Education Administrators**



# Welcome & Purpose

Welcome to the MAASE Coaching and Mentoring Initiative. This program provides structured, sustained support to new special education administrators across Michigan. It is designed to:



## Program Goals

- Build the capacity of new administrators to navigate special education policies, procedures, and compliance requirements in Michigan.
- Foster leadership development and decision-making aligned with the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) standards and MAASE guidelines.
- Cultivate a professional network to reduce isolation and promote peer learning among special education administrators.
- Ensure ongoing professional growth and commitment to equitable practices for all students.
- Promote collaboration between special and general education leaders to ensure inclusive practices that support the success of all students, regardless of their learning needs.
- Satisfy Michigan's legislative requirements for administrative mentorship (MCL 380.1249b)



# Program Overview

This handbook outlines a two-year coaching and mentoring program for special education administrators that combines individualized support, peer learning, and professional development to elevate leadership effectiveness and improve outcomes for students with disabilities. You can learn more information about the MAASE Mentor and Coach Experience [here](#).

## Eligibility

**Coachees/Mentees:** Special education administrators with 0–3 years of experience or new to the role

**Coaches/Mentors:** Experienced administrators (5+ years), active in MAASE or similar organizations

## Roles & Responsibilities

### Coaches/Mentors:

- Provide consistent, confidential support
- Facilitate problem-solving and reflection
- Share expertise, tools, and resources
- Track progress and give feedback

### Coachees/Mentees:

- Communicate needs and challenges
- Attend sessions and complete follow-ups
- Reflect on growth and maintain a learning mindset
- Take ownership of professional development goals

### Mentor-Mentee Pairing

Pairing based on geographic region, district size, and mentee needs to ensure relevant and context-specific guidance.

The link to the Coaching/Mentoring Request can be found [here](#).

## Program Structure



**Length**  
1–3 years



**Coach Pairing**  
Based on region, district size, and coachee needs



**Delivery**  
Blended virtual and in-person interactions



**Meeting Types**  
Monthly 1:1 sessions  
Quarterly statewide cohort meetings  
Attendance at MAASE conferences and regional events when possible



# Mentoring & Coaching Framework

## Coaching Core Competencies

Coaches in this program are expected to model and continuously develop key competencies, including:



**Active Listening**



**Paraphrasing for Clarity**



**Strategic Questioning**



**Holding Space for Reflection (not advice)**

Practice Prompts:

- “What’s feeling most urgent in your leadership right now?”
- “What might be another way to think about this situation?”
- “What do your data or instincts suggest?”

## Mentoring Core Competencies

Mentors in this program also bring essential strengths grounded in relationship-building and applied experience. Core mentoring competencies include:

- Sharing relevant professional experiences to contextualize learning
- Providing guidance while promoting autonomy
- Supporting role-specific problem-solving
- Offering consistent encouragement and accountability
- Modeling ethical leadership and inclusive practices

These competencies, inspired in part by the Mentoring Matters framework, ensure that mentors provide grounded, practical support tailored to the realities of special education leadership. to build reflective conversations that support leadership development and decision-making.



# Mentoring vs. Coaching in the MAASE Model

Mentoring	Coaching
Often directive; based on experience	Rooted in listening and inquiry
Answers questions and provides resources	Builds capacity through reflection
Role-specific support	Leadership-focused growth

## Leadership Focus Areas

Use the following domains to guide monthly themes or mentor-mentee discussions:

Focus Area	Sample Questions
Role Clarity & Orientation	What excites or worries you most about your new leadership role? What strategies have worked for you when leading IEP meetings or navigating team conflict?
Legal Compliance	How are you preparing for state reporting or audits? What are the top three compliance challenges you've faced so far? How did you address them?
Inclusive Discipline	How do you ensure behavioral practices align with FAPE and LRE? Can you share a strategy for working with teachers to implement effective behavior plans?
Budget & Resources	How do you prioritize funding decisions? What are the key components of building a special education budget for the year?
Professional Growth	What are your leadership goals for the next year? What PD are you pursuing?





# Documentation

## Monthly Reflection & Tracking Completed by Mentee/Coachee

Goal	Action Steps	Mentor Support	Target Date	Progress Notes
Example: Improve IEP facilitation	Attend IEP training, practice facilitation	Provide feedback	End of Month 2	Completed simulation; planning real IEP next

## Monthly Reflection Prompts

- What’s one challenge you addressed this month?
- How did your mentor or coach help?
- What are you focusing on next?
- What strategies or tools from this month’s session have you implemented?

## Mentor/Coach Log Example (template)

Date	Topics Discussed	Next Steps
03/12/2025	Data collection, staff resistance	Plan observation debrief



# Evaluation & Continuous Improvement



## 01 Feedback Mechanisms

- Regular surveys for mentees and mentors to assess program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- Coaching log



## 02 Progress Tracking

- Mentees submit quarterly reflections on their growth and challenges.
- Mentors provide qualitative feedback on the mentee's progress.



## 03 Program Metrics

- Retention rates of special education administrators.
- Mentee self-assessments of readiness in key areas (legal, financial, and leadership).
- Mentor satisfaction and recommendations for improvement.



## 04 Recognition

- Certification of completion for mentees.
- Annual awards for outstanding mentors/mentees.