

Wanted: Mentors  
Dr. David Hook – Head of School  
Emmanuel Christian Academy  
Springfield, OH  
Bruce Hekman – consultant

In an effort to influence the culture of the campus, I developed a mentoring program that is designed to take a new teacher through the first year of teaching on the ECA campus. Mentor teachers are chosen and provided with guiding information both in a meeting with administration, and in a packet given to each mentor. The packet includes general guidelines for how the program works, topics that need to be covered, and a suggested meeting schedule for the school year.

This is a school culture project due to the desire to impact teachers new to the campus with the way things are done at ECA. Some topics included for discussion are educationally based such as lesson planning, classroom management, etc. Other topics are specific to teaching in a Christian school setting such as Kingdom Education, biblical integration and personal spiritual growth of the teacher. Any teacher new to the campus, whether straight out of college or a 10-year veteran of the classroom, will be included in the mentoring program.

A driving question that the program will answer for the new teacher is, “What does it mean to teach *here*?” Mentors are encouraged to follow the meeting calendar loosely while covering the topics needed by these newest members of the staff. Mentors are encouraged to create a relationship beyond the confines of the classroom/school setting as well as being attentive to whatever questions or topics come up in the formal and informal conversations that take place with their mentee.

Teachers new to ECA will be given a packet that walks them through the important aspects of the first year at ECA. Mentor program overview, working at ECA, biblical integration, the daily schedule, school communication, lesson planning, the bell schedules, school management software, etc. are all covered in the packet and more thoroughly explained in professional development meetings and conversations with the mentor teacher throughout the school year.

I have learned (been reminded of) the enormity of the task at hand as we try to show a teacher new to campus what it means to be a member of the teaching staff at *this* school. In reviewing what should be included I have learned again that fostering relationships is at the core of being a member of the teaching staff and not just a teacher at this school. It is my hope that this project and the future refinements will lead to greater teacher satisfaction in the work, a strengthening of relationships among staff, better biblical integration in the classrooms, and the creation of a school that can be likened to the idea found in Zechariah 8:23 where families will want to enroll their children at ECA because they have heard that God is with us.