



# INTRODUCING THE LEGACY TEACHER NETWORK

## Mentoring in Action

*One of the saddest things about U.S. education is that the wisdom of our most successful teachers is lost to the profession when they retire. ~ John Dewey*

With the creation of the **Legacy Teacher Network**, I am recommending a new stage of educational expertise be added to the current stages of preservice and inservice education. This newly articulated vision called *continuing service* will expand the developmental continuum for teacher education and utilize retired educators serving as mentors to support the social and emotional development of beginning teachers.

*What will make the biggest difference in improving schools is bolstering the skills and morale of those who are already on the job. ~ Gene Maeroff, School and College: Partnerships in Education*

We can meet the current challenges in education with thoughtful reflection, shared wisdom, conversations that promote well-being, and messages that inspire us to participate fully in our careers as educators. Retaining high-quality dedicated teachers is crucial to the success of our education system. Using our most successful teachers to support the well-being needs of our novices will make a difference in the induction of our most vulnerable teachers.

I invite school leaders who see the value of this idea to create **Legacy Teacher Networks** in their districts and *pay it forward* by using the untapped resources of our most successful teachers NOW. There is no time like the present to begin. Reach out to me if you need a push to get started.

This new mentoring role of retired “legacy” teachers in continuing service of the profession will support not only the next generation of teachers but also our next generation of students.

Sincerely,

Carol

Carol Pelletier Radford EdD

Legacy Teacher

Founder, Mentoring in Action

<https://mentoringinaction.com/>



# Continuing Service to Education

CAPTURING THE WISDOM OF RETIRED TEACHERS

## The Legacy Teacher Network: Questions and Answers to Clarify Next Steps

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### WHAT IS THE LEGACY TEACHER NETWORK?

The Legacy Teacher Network is an idea inspired through Mentoring in Action's founder, Carol Pelletier Radford, after she read the words of John Dewey lamenting the loss of "the wisdom of our most successful teachers . . . when they retire."

The idea to add *continuing service* to the developmental continuum after the *preservice* and *inservice* stages would offer a place for retired teachers to continue to contribute to existing mentor programs offered by the district. The term *legacy teacher* was inspired because these volunteer teachers bring their legacy of experience with them to this role.

### WHO IS A LEGACY TEACHER?

A legacy teacher is a retired teacher volunteer who is still inspired to share successful practices with novice teachers in a conversational mentoring role.

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND FOCUS OF THE LTN?

The purpose of the network is to acknowledge successful teachers as experienced wise sages who can be powerful influences on the success and retention of beginning teachers in the district.

Legacy teachers focus mentoring conversations on teacher well-being and social and emotional development. LTN is not a network using retired teachers for substitute teaching, coaching in the content areas, or paperwork. Conversations may take place one on one with a struggling teacher, in small groups, or as part of existing mentor training and induction programs.

Protocols and conversation starters are offered through the Mentoring in Action website (<https://mentor.ingination.com/>), and these are valuable tools for sparking conversations that support teacher well-being. This new book, *"When I Started Teaching, I Wish I Had Known . . .": Weekly Wisdom for Beginning Teachers*, and a recent book, *Teaching With Light: Ten Lessons for Finding Wisdom, Balance, and Inspiration*, are inspirational guides to conversations that will help beginners understand how to sustain a career in teaching.

## HOW DO LEGACY TEACHERS SUPPORT THE DISTRICT?

Legacy teachers who join the Legacy Teacher Network will be recognized as *continuing service* teachers. They may participate by just posting one piece of advice on the district website that will be shared with beginning teachers, or they may wish to collaborate with the mentor leaders in the district to share more wisdom in a formal way at group meetings or one to one as needed. Members of the network are volunteers without compensation. Mentoring conversations are focused on teacher well-being, resilience, and ways to maintain balance, which will support teacher retention.

## HOW DOES A DISTRICT GET STARTED?

District leaders and lead mentors share the *continuing service* concept with teachers who are planning to retire and invite them to join this district chapter of the Legacy Teacher Network.

Each teacher would be invited to submit a photo, short biography, and one piece of wisdom for beginning teachers. The goal is to share ideas that will support retention, inspire beginners, and provide insight into how to sustain a career in education. The district would introduce these teachers on the district home page, and the mentor coordinators in the district would share the wisdom with the novices.

## WHAT ELSE MIGHT A DISTRICT DO TO SUPPORT LEGACY TEACHERS?

The district could formally bring all the legacy teachers together for a “launch” meeting where they could all meet each other and share their positive perspectives on being teachers. Mentor leaders could share how the legacy teachers might be useful in supporting teachers in years three to four of teaching, when mentoring is often not funded.

The focus of the mentoring support is to inspire the beginning teachers and to let them know that the challenges in teaching can be overcome with good advice and valuable wisdom from successful teachers.

A copy of the book *“When I Started Teaching, I Wish I Had Known . . .”: Weekly Wisdom for Beginning Teachers* could be given to each legacy teacher and used as a guide for mentoring conversations.

A formal celebration of legacy teachers could be held at the end of the year to celebrate their participation as mentors and to thank them for continuing to serve the district.

An article for the district newsletter and local paper would honor this new program and demonstrate the commitment of the district to supporting the induction of their novices while using the valuable wisdom of the retired teachers.