Problem:
The 2002-2003 legislators voiced concerns about the appropriateness of the mentoring portion of the Excellent Teacher Program. Concerns seemed to fall into two categories:

1. Are NBCTs mentoring the most appropriate teachers?
2. Is the quality of mentoring consistent within and across counties?

A session was included in the 2003 Florida NBCT conference for the purpose of discussing both questions and determining a proactive method of addressing both concerns prior to the 2004 legislative session. Below are notes, suggestions and recommendations made at the three break-out sessions.

Notes/Suggestions
What is “mentoring”?
• Guided discovery that improves student learning
• Should include both time spent working teachers and time spent planning for meeting individual needs of the teachers
• Perhaps the term “mentor” is misleading to legislators…implies that the mentor knows all and doesn’t need to prepare. Would “Coach” be more appropriate? Maybe there’s another term that would more accurately reflect the teaching aspect of “mentoring.”
• In-service training
• Individualized staff development plan
• Shared collaboration
• A collaborative process between teachers that supports and enhances professional growth that is directly tied to positive impact on student learning

Who should NBCTs mentor?
Jim Horne is chairing a committee that will study the mentoring issue. It was suggested that a large number of NBCTs need to be heavily involved in this committee, not only as members of the committee but also in advisory roles. At the very least, a list of possible populations should be provided to this group along with rationale for each one:
• Veteran teachers
• Alternative Certification Personnel
• Teachers new to the school system (regardless of number of years experience)
• Beginning teachers
• 3rd year teachers (but not as “pre-candidates”)
• 6-7 year retainees
• NBC candidates
• Struggling teachers (however, potential problems with identification, jealousy, etc. were noted)

Should percentages be placed on populations for mentoring? (i.e., only 50% can be in one category, etc.)
• NO---each NBCT has specific strengths/talents that should be matched to the group most appropriate for those talents

How should teachers be mentored?
• All mentoring should revolve around 5 Core Propositions
• Candidate mentoring should revolve around the process not the task
• All NBCTs should be required to attend mentor training before clocking hours
• Mentor training should be standardized throughout Florida (should reduce questions about what counts and what doesn’t as well as assure liklihood of consistent quality)
• Mentor guidelines should be developed collaboratively among counties and distributed statewide
• NBCTs should be heavily involved in design of mentor training

How should impact of mentoring be assessed/communicated?
• Tying to student scores could result in lack of interest in mentoring
• Use teacher (IEP) – IPOP to track impact
• Educate legislators, legislative aides, and their constituencies (parents, etc) – maybe invite them to come into your classrooms on a regular basis.
• Mentees communicate impact to their legislators BEFORE FCAT scores are released.

Recommendations:
That a minimum mentor training for all NBCTs be designed and offered to the legislators as our way of recognizing and embracing the need for consistency across the state. To that end:
• FTLC, NBCTs of Dade, NBPTSflorida, NBCTsofFlorida should continue discussions on their websites and yahoo groups regarding appropriate definition(s) of mentoring and determination of appropriate groups to be mentored by NBCTs (to be used as input to J. Horne’s committee)
• Marty Hopkins should create a website that can be used as a clearinghouse for sharing mentoring training designs
• UCF should host a fall meeting in which:
  o one NBCT and one district level facilitator from each county will compare/contrast mentor training models presently being used throughout the state and develop an agreed upon statewide minimum mentor training
  o plans for disseminating the plan are finalized

ACTIONS
A Mentor Conference will be held at the Student Union of the UCF Orlando campus on Tuesday, September 23, 2003 from 8:00 – 3:00. Details about the conference agenda, location and hotels can be found in the “Facilitator” link of this website.