

For further information on the low incidence mentoring programs, contact the following Statewide Specialists:

Autism Spectrum Disorders

Phil Sievers 612- 638- 1528
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DeafBlind

Cathy Lyle 612- 638- 1526
cathy.lyle@dbproject.mn.org

Developmental Adapted Physical Education

Bruce Suneson 612- 638- 1538
bsuneson@ecs.k12.mn.us

Developmental Cognitive Disabilities

Marcia Holman 612- 638- 1555
mlholman@int287.k12.mn.us

Other Health Disabilities

Pat Brandstaetter 218- 748- 7606
pbrand@nesc.k12.mn.us

Physical Impairments and Traumatic Brain Injury

Deb Williamson 612- 638- 1532
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For further information on mentoring in the area of Blind/Visually Impaired, contact:

Jean Martin 800-657-3859
jean.martin@state.mn.us

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Minnesota
Low Incidence
Projects



Mentoring Programs

For Special Educators New to
the Areas of:

- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- DeafBlind
- Developmental Adapted Physical Education
- Developmental Cognitive Disabilities
- Other Health Disabilities
- Physical Impairments
- Traumatic Brain Injury

Minnesota's Low Incidence Disability Mentoring Programs

In an effort to strengthen Minnesota's support for educators teaching in several low incidence disability areas — Autism Spectrum Disorders, Deafblind, Developmental Adapted Physical Education, Developmental Cognitive Disabilities, Other Health Disabilities, Physical Impairments, and Traumatic Brain Injury — statewide mentoring programs for special educators new to these areas began in the 2004-2005 school year.

The loss of qualified special education teachers is a significant barrier to ensuring that the federal mandate of a free, appropriate public education is provided to all of Minnesota's students identified for special education. Teachers are particularly vulnerable to attrition early in their careers or when making major changes in their assignments.

Research suggests that participation in well-designed and well-implemented mentoring programs can provide educators with the kinds of information, support, and connection to professional communities that may strengthen the start or continuation of their careers.

Many schools and districts throughout the state currently run successful mentoring programs providing educators with assistance of a generalized nature. Practitioners in low incidence disability areas can benefit from such opportunities. However, they also have very specific and unique needs that require the assistance of educators who are experts in their same fields. These might include, for instance, acquiring highly specialized knowledge and skills to serve their students, locating disability-specific resources and equipment, and adjusting to the isolation of working in a low incidence field, particularly in the rural areas of the state. It is for these kinds of needs that Minnesota's mentoring programs for special educators new to low incidence disability areas were designed.

