Hello (Name of Mentee),

On behalf of SAANYS I officially welcome you to the Capital Region Professional Growth Circle. I am honored and excited to serve as your Circle Facilitator. Your Circle is one of several getting started in the state this fall

To begin, I bit of background on who I am. I have been involved with formal mentoring and mentorcoaching for over a decade with both teachers and administrators. School leaders and mentor/mentorcoaching are my passion. Having been trained in the internationally acclaimed Toronto Canada Principals Center Mentorcoaching Model that I currently use with my mentees, I have recently worked with a group mentorcoaching model for school leaders (principals, assistant principals, supervisors, directors, athletic directors, and more) in two small city school districts and at a BOCES. I bring this experience along with over three decades in education serving as a teacher at Holland Patent Central School District, a curriculum specialist at Oneida BOCES, an elementary principal at Vernon Verona Sherrill Central School District, and a director of elementary education and a principal for planning and instruction at Cobleskill and then Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School through their merger and reorganization process. Along the way I served on the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Board of Directors representing elementary principals in NY, NJ, and Pennsylvania and was a two-term SAANYS president. Named a state and nationally distinguished principal in 2007, I then earned a scholarship to complete my doctoral degree. My dissertation was on, you guessed it, mentorcoaching school leaders! Enough of my past, as the work we will do together requires us to check our titles at the door as we become success partners for one another. In order to begin this exciting and engaging process there are a couple of things I need you to do.

First, please complete the attached *Needs Assessment Form* and email it back to me. This will help me get a better handle on how I can best serve you and be in communication with you. In turn, my contact information is below. Know that you may contact me anytime for any reason as I open up my experience base and my contacts to you.

Second, I will bring a copy of the book *Strengthsbased Leadership*by Rath and Conchie to each of you when we meet for the first 1:1 conversation. In the book is a code to take the StrengthsFinder survey. Take the survey. When finished you will receive a printout of your top five strengths. A real skeptic at first, I am now a true believer in the results that come from this Survey, as understanding how one uses their strengths helps navigate through the tough stuff! (In hopes that you will share your strengths, I’ll start by sharing mine. My top five strengths are: learner, input, strategic, connectedness, and communication - hopefully you will see how I use my strengths in facilitating our Professional Circle. And to allay any fears you may have about your strengths, please know this. If you are breathing you have strengths and there is no such thing as having better or worse strengths than someone else. But we’ll talk about that later)!

Third, I will be contacting you by phone and/or email within the next two days to set up our first 1:1 meeting. We will have two 1:1 sessions, each about an hour long, before we start our eight, 90-minute monthly Professional Group Sessions. The two 1:1 sessions, to take place in November, are purposed to review the tenants of a Professional Growth Circle and its commitments, with the second designed to review the StrengthsFinder results and set two to three goals as they relate to your personalized *Learning Plan*. Other than to complete the attached *Professional Circle Membership Information Form*, take StrengthsFinder Survey, and identify a couple of goals you want to work on during our time together, the rest of our work together is all active participation.

Given that your districts, Amsterdam and East Greenbush, are about 45 minutes from one another hopefully we can secure a convenient room in your buildings where we can gather for our monthly 90-minute Professional Growth Circles. We can also think about meeting at the SAANYS Offices in Latham if that proves to be easier for everyone. My goal is to have the first Circle session scheduled for early December so please think about a date and time that would be good. I have learned that getting busy administrators' calendars to sync can be a challenge so let’s get a jump start on this by giving it some good thought up front.

I am really looking forward to meeting you and facilitating our Circle. Establishing opportunities for extended learning using a cohort model helps address professional needs and creates a foundation for future dialogue that builds professional relationships. These relationships can last a lifetime!

Hopefully you will have a minute to complete the attached *Needs Assessment Form* before you move on the many, many things on your to-do list. Doing so would make my day. Will be talking with you soon.

Best,

Bonnie

Bonnie Tryon, Ed.D.

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