

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Ashe County School System is comprised of five schools: one high school (grades 9-12), one middle school (grades 7 & 8), and three elementary schools (grades PK-6). The student enrollment figure is approximately 3,185 and the number of teachers employed to serve this student population is approximately 246.

The Director of Human Resources will be responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating the Beginning Teacher Support Program. In order to accommodate the intent of this program, current administrative staff and designated teachers will assist in providing support services. Funds from state and local staff development allocations will fund the training component expenses as outlined in this plan.

Requirements for the Beginning Teacher Support Program, formerly the Initial Licensure Program, were revised by the State Board of Education in November 2010. It is designed as a three-year period of support and assessment for beginning teachers.

Initial licenses (Standard Professional I) are issued to beginning teachers with fewer than three years of appropriate teaching experience in their initial licensure area. All teachers with a Standard Professional I license and fewer than three years of teaching experience are required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program (these individuals are hereafter referred to as beginning teachers).

The initial license (Standard Professional I), which is valid for three years, allows the teacher to begin practicing the profession on an independent basis. At the end of the three-year period, the teacher is either granted or denied a continuing license (Standard Professional II). The Beginning Teacher Support Program is designed to offer the necessary support for an individual's professional growth during the first three years of employment.

It is expected that beginning teachers be assigned in their area of licensure. Three years of teaching experience, of at least six months each, are required in the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

Upon successful completion of all licensure requirements and recommendation from Ashe County Schools, the employee is eligible for continuing licensure (Standard Professional II) and further career growth in the profession. The Director of Human Resources is the locally designated official to verify eligibility and make recommendations for a continuing license (Standard Professional II).

Completion of the Beginning Teacher Support Program requirements in one teaching area satisfies the Beginning Teacher Support Program requirement for all teaching areas. Once a continuing license (Standard Professional II) license has been earned in one teaching area, additional teaching areas do not require a Beginning Teacher Support Program experience.

Student service personnel (e.g. media coordinators, counselors), administrators, and curriculum instructional specialists are not required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

Ashe County's five schools have a support team for each beginning teacher. This support team consists of the school's principal (or designee), a teacher trained in the Revised Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument, and a trained mentor teacher. A central office staff member may be included on this team. The support teams are responsible to support the beginning teacher and to certify program completion. They are also responsible for submitting the required Beginning Teacher Support Program documentation to the Director of Human Resources.

The primary supervisor or designee is responsible for summative performance appraisal and for employment recommendation. Licensure decisions are legally and clearly separate from employment decisions. Licensure is a State Board of Education responsibility and employment is a local board of education responsibility.

The support team's periodic assessment of skills, satisfactory evaluations of performance, and completion of a Professional Development Plan (PDP) assist the beginning teacher in documenting satisfactory performance. Assessment of satisfactory performance is determined through the use of instruments currently adopted by the State and Local Boards of Education.

FORMAL ORIENTATION

Each beginning teacher in Ashe County is required to attend a three-day New Teacher Orientation, which is held prior to the beginning of each school year. New Teacher Orientation includes, but is not limited to, the following information:

- State Board of Education's Strategic Priorities and Goals;
- Description of available services offered by Ashe County Schools;
- Teacher evaluation process;
- Process for achieving a continuing license (Standard Professional II);
- Common Core/Essential Standards and local pacing guides

Throughout the year, monthly support sessions are provided focusing on topics such as inclusion and accommodations, conferencing with parents, instructional methods, lesson plans, classroom management, and other topics as identified on needs assessments.

Building administrators and assigned mentors provide orientation specific to the school. Training in the safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint of students is offered at the school level.

OPTIMUM WORKING CONDITIONS

Research indicates that beginning teachers are often placed in difficult assignments that do not allow them the opportunity to learn and grow as professionals. The beginning teacher is often assigned the most difficult students, multiple preparations, and extracurricular assignments. These working conditions prohibit on-the-job learning and negatively influence teacher job satisfaction. To ensure that beginning teachers have the opportunity to develop into capable teachers, Ashe County Schools strives to provide the following working conditions:

- Assignment in the area of licensure;
- Mentor assigned early, in the licensure area, and in close proximity;
- Orientation that includes state, district, and school expectations;
- Limited preparations;
- Limited non-instructional duties;
- Limited number of exceptional or difficult students;
- No extracurricular assignments unless requested in writing by the beginning teacher.

As used in these guidelines, the term “non-instructional duties” refers to those that are not directly involved with the instructional program or the implementation of the standard course of study, but that all teachers are expected to do. Examples would be bus duty, lunch duty, and hall duty. The term “extracurricular activities” refers to those activities performed by a teacher involving students that are outside the regular school day and not directly related to the instructional program.

Principals are encouraged to consider these conditions when assigning classes, students, and duties to beginning teachers.

MENTOR SELECTION, ASSIGNMENT, AND TRAINING

Based on the belief that quality mentors are a critical key to the success of beginning teachers, providing needed emotional, instructional, and organizational support, each first, second, and third year beginning teacher will be assigned a mentor teacher. While not directly involved in the formal evaluation process, the mentor is responsible for observation, demonstration, and support as a coach.

Mentors need the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be effective instructional coaches, emotional supports, and organizational guides to those entering the profession. Veteran teachers who strive to become mentors to beginning teachers must undergo a mentor training program approved by the Director of Human Resources. Training programs developed by the NC Department of Public Instruction, the NWRESA, and the NC Teacher Academy are current approved

programs. Standards for mentor training which have been adopted by the State Board of Education are attached to this plan.

Mentors are assigned to each beginning teacher by the principal or designee as soon as possible after employment. The Director of Human Resources assists administration as necessary in the process of recruiting and assigning mentors.

The following guidelines will be used for mentor teacher selection:

1. *Successful teaching in the area of licensure*
 - Appraisal ratings among the highest in the school;
 - Strong recommendations from principal and peers;
2. *Commitment*
 - Willingness to serve as a mentor;
 - Willingness to participate in on-going annual professional development related to mentoring;
3. *Other*
 - Preference for career status teachers who have experience in the district norms, culture, and mission, as well as North Carolina's strategic priorities, and standard course of study;
 - Preference given to those who have successfully completed a minimum of 10 contact hours of mentor training.

During the school year, mentors are required to meet with first year teachers a minimum of four times each month, second year teachers a minimum of two times each month, and third year teachers a minimum of once a month and as needed.

OBSERVATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

In compliance with the Excellent Schools Act and GS 115C-333, each beginning teacher shall be formally observed at least three times annually by a qualified school administrator or designee and at least once annually by a teacher. Each observation must be for at least one continuous period of instructional time that is at 45 minutes in length or an entire class period, and followed by a post-conference. Before the first formal observation each year the principal shall meet with the teacher for a pre-observation conference. All persons who observe teachers must be appropriately trained. The required observations must be appropriately spaced throughout the school year. In Ashe County, the assigned mentor may not conduct one of the required formal observations.

Observation and data collection procedures shall follow those outlined for beginning teachers in the new North Carolina Educator Evaluation Instrument.

Training - Before participating in the evaluation process, all teachers, principals and peer evaluators must complete training on the evaluation process.

Orientation - Within two weeks of a teacher's first day of work in any school year, the principal will provide the teacher with a copy of or directions for obtaining access of the following:

- Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers
- State board policy governing teacher evaluations
- Schedule for completing all the components of the evaluation process

Teacher Self-Assessment - Using the Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers, the teacher shall rate his or her own performance at the beginning of the year and reflect on his or her performance throughout the year.

Pre-Observation Conference - Before the first formal observation, the principal shall meet with the teacher to discuss the teacher's self-assessment based on the Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers, the teacher's most recent professional development plan, and the lesson(s) to be observed.

The primary supervisor or designee will schedule formal observations. Each year, at least one formal observation must be unannounced. All formal observations must conclude with a post-conference to give appropriate feedback. The required formal observations must be appropriately spaced throughout the year:

- One formal observation completed by October 30 (by principal or designee);
- One formal observation completed by December 20 (by principal or designee);
- One formal observation completed by February 24 (by principal or designee);
- One formal observation completed by peer teacher by April 15;
- Summative evaluations must be completed by May 1.

Additional formal or informal observations for the purpose of giving technical feedback and assistance may be conducted as necessary.

All observations, both formal and informal, must be followed by a conference for providing feedback. The conference should occur within ten working days following the observation, providing feedback regarding the results of the observation and provide for development, monitoring, and revision of the PDP.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Each beginning teacher will develop Professional Development Plan in collaboration with his/her principal (or designee) and mentor teacher. The PDP is based on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June, 2007 and must include goals, strategies, and assessment of the beginning teacher's progress in improving professional skills. In developing the plan, the beginning teacher, principal (or designee), and mentor teacher will begin with the Rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers required for self

assessment and observations. Throughout the year, formative assessment conferences should be held to reflect on the progress of the beginning teacher in meeting the goals established for professional growth. These conferences may be held in conjunction with observation post-conferences. The PDP should be reviewed during the mid-year and end-of-year each year of the Beginning Teacher Support Program. A copy of the PDP should be included in the beginning teacher's cumulative file. Forms are to be provided by the Director of Human Resources and the NCEES online evaluation system housed in NCDPI Home Base.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance available to beginning teachers include, but are not limited to:

- Mentor teacher;
- Principal or designee;
- Central office staff;
- NC Department of Public Instruction resources and personnel;
- NWRESA staff development opportunities;
- Local staff development opportunities;
- Classroom visitations;
- Resource teachers and support staff;
- Local, regional, and state conferences and workshops;
- College/University courses.

BEGINNING TEACHER CUMULATIVE FILES

The North Carolina Department of Instruction implemented the online evaluation system in 2010-2011. With this new system many of the forms shall be maintained for each year of participation in the Beginning Teacher Support Program within the system as it is submitted annually. These documents will include:

- The Professional Development Plan (PDP) including any additions/modifications of the plan; copy of identified strengths and areas for development determined from observations, evidence of completion of strategies, and appropriate electronic signatures;
- The North Carolina Teacher Educator Evaluation formal observation documents, including summative evaluation with ratings, teacher's comments at end of year, and appropriate electronic signatures;
- Record of Teacher Evaluation Activities
Additional documents will be added to the Beginning Teacher file
- Mentor Log, which documents mentor/beginning teacher meetings throughout the school year;
- Professional Development Log, which documents professional development completed by the beginning teacher during the school year;

- Any written memorandum related to instructional performance of the beginning teacher;
- Written request for extracurricular duty assignment, if applicable.
- Beginning Teacher Final Verification, to be completed by the principal each year.

The beginning teacher will have electronic access to all observations completed on the online system.

The beginning teacher is responsible for completing his/her PDP and Professional Development Log and submitting to the principal at the end of each school year. The mentor is responsible for maintaining the Mentor Log and submitting to the principal at the end of each school year. All beginning teachers are encouraged to keep a copy of all observation and evaluation documents, PDP, Mentor Log, and Professional Development Log for their own professional files.

The principal is responsible for the security of beginning teacher cumulative files, which are confidential. These files shall be forwarded to the Director of Human Resources annually by May 15.

The beginning teacher cumulative file shall be maintained separately from the employee's personnel file. Documentation included in the cumulative file does not require five days' notice as designated in GS 115C-325 (b).

Beginning teacher cumulative files will be transferred in a timely manner to a successive employing LEA, charter school, or non-public institution upon the employee's written request. Otherwise, beginning teacher cumulative records will be maintained on file at the central office for a period of five years.

EVALUATION OF BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for gathering evaluation data on the Beginning Teacher Support Program to ensure program quality, effectiveness, and efficient management. Data for the evaluation will be collected throughout the year through on-site visits, surveys, meetings, interviews with beginning teachers, focus groups, peer reviews with neighboring school districts, and periodic inspections of beginning teacher cumulative files. The process will focus upon the quality of the support team, in-service opportunities, and program administration. Continual assessment will serve as the basis for program clarification and revision.

LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION APPROVAL

The Ashe County School System is committed to assisting beginning teachers achieve professional success by providing optimum working conditions and necessary support.

The Beginning Teacher Support Program, revised Winter, 2014, is approved by the Ashe County Board of Education.

Signature of Board Chairman

Signature of Superintendent

February 3, 2014

Date