

## **Beaufort County Schools Beginning Teacher Support Program**

Beaufort County Schools has developed a comprehensive program for the support of beginning teachers and a plan for the management of this program. The Assistant Superintendent of Beaufort County Schools is to act as the monitor for this program. This plan includes contributions from teachers (both new and veteran who serve as mentors) as well as building administrators. In addition to using veteran teachers to serve as mentors to beginning teachers, Beaufort County Schools has partnered with RiverBay Consulting to supply highly effective retired teachers to offer informal classroom observations and feedback periodically throughout the year to those in their first and second years of teaching. The Beaufort County Board of Education is committed to the support of its beginning teachers and approves the updated plan on an annual basis.

The program shall consist of the following:

### **The Beginning Teacher Support Plan**

The Beginning Teacher Support Program is a three-year period of support and induction for beginning teachers. This program will follow the Beginning Teacher Support Program Timetable as described in NC State Board of Education Policy TCED-016. This timetable dictates a mentor to be assigned to each beginning teacher for three years as well as the opportunity for professional growth and meeting all components of the NC Teacher Formal Observation process. This program includes online and traditional professional development targeted for the unique needs of beginning teachers.

All beginning teachers are issued an initial license, which is valid for three years, that allows the teacher to begin practicing the profession on an independent basis while being supported by the school district by a variety of methods. At the end of the three-year period, the teacher can be granted a continuing license that must be renewed every five years thereafter. Effective July 1, 2016, teachers who hold an initial license are eligible to convert to a continuing license once all required coursework has been successfully completed AND all NCSBE approved examinations have been passed AND the teacher has completed three years of teaching. Conversion from an initial license to a continuing license does not require the recommendation of the employing local education agency (LEA). Teachers with fewer than three years of teaching experience, however, are required to continue participating in a Beginning Teacher Support Program regardless of their licensure status. The Assistant Superintendent will work in conjunction with the licensure specialist and the Curriculum and Instruction Department to manage the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

### **Required Participants**

All beginning teachers are required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program. Beaufort County Schools will identify those teachers that will participate in the program as part of the initial hiring process based on licensure and experience. Initial teaching licenses are issued to teachers with less than three years of appropriate teacher experience (normally considered to be three years of public school experience) in their appropriate content area by the NC Department of Public Instruction. The required testing rules from NC General Assembly and NCDPI Licensure Division apply as well. Teachers from states not included in North Carolina reciprocity agreements that have not completed an NCATE – approved teacher education program must participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program regardless of their length of experience. Those teachers completing alternate routes to licensure (e.g. residency licensure, alternative entry, provisional licensure, etc.) must also successfully fulfill the Beginning Teacher Support Program.

### **Who does not participate?**

Teachers with three or more years of appropriate experience are not required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program, nor are student service personnel (i.e. media coordinators, counselors),

administrators, and curriculum-instructional specialists. Employers may request an exemption from the Beginning Teacher Support Program for teachers with equivalent non-public school experience. It is the responsibility of the employer requesting the exemption to verify experience.

Classroom assignments for which no specific licensure area is mandated are ineligible toward satisfying the Beginning Teacher program requirement. Completion of the beginning licensure program requirements in one teaching area satisfies the Beginning Teacher program requirement for all other teaching areas. Once a Continuing teaching license has been earned in one teaching area, additional teaching areas do not require participation in the program.

### **Beginning Teacher Professional Development Plan**

Each beginning teacher is required to develop a Professional Development Plan in collaboration with his/her principal (or the principal's designee) and mentor. The plan must include goals, strategies, and assessments of the beginning teacher's progress in improving professional skills and should be focused on the NC Professional Teaching Standards. In developing the plan, the beginning teacher, principal (or designee), and mentor should begin with an assessment of the beginning teacher's knowledge, dispositions, and performance related to the key indicators for each of the standards. Beginning teachers will complete a confidential self-assessment using the teacher observation documents to use in the development of a Professional Development Plan. 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. After the initial creation of the Professional Development Plan, it should be reviewed for progress and updated if necessary at the mid-point of each year as well as the end of each year. The beginning teacher, administrator and mentor should all sign the Professional Development Plan each time it is formally reviewed throughout the year. The Professional Development Plan is an electronic document within the online teacher evaluation system used by Beaufort County Schools.

The Curriculum & Instruction Department for Beaufort County Schools has designated specific and targeted professional development for beginning teachers. This includes the development of a beginning teacher handbook as well as covering topics in PD such as:

- Developing important relationships with their students and gaining knowledge of how to communicate with colleagues and being an effective member of PLC's.
- Learning the purpose and difference of the different types of assessments and understanding how to use these assessments to drive instruction.
- Learning effective team member skills to collaborate, problem solve and succeed.
- Developing instructional routines/protocols that will get students engaged in learning.
- Developing skills and attitudes of reflection to modify instruction for better student success.

### **Observations/Evaluations**

In compliance with NC State Board Policy TCED-016 and NC General Statute 115C-333, each beginning teacher shall be observed at least three times annually by a qualified school administrator or a designee and at least once annually by a trained peer observer. Prior to the first observation, all beginning teachers will be given an orientation to include a discussion of the aforementioned policies and statutes as well as training on the NC Professional Teaching Standards and the correlated teacher observation process. The first observation by an administrator must be announced and include a documented pre-conference. Each observation must be for at least one continuous period of instructional time and followed by a post-conference. Each must be in the teacher's licensure area. All persons who formally observe teachers must be trained in the NC Teacher Evaluation process. Signatures of beginning teachers, mentors and school administrators are required for each formative assessment conference.

Beaufort County Schools will provide a calendar and reminders to principals to conduct observations on beginning teachers using a schedule provided at the beginning of each school year. When a beginning teacher is identified by the principal as needing support to enhance instruction, a request can be made to the Assistant Superintendent for such assistance. The request must be accompanied by information about what the grade and subject taught by the teacher, the areas of concern, and the interventions already used. At that point, the Assistant Superintendent will determine how support will be provided.

Beaufort County Schools will maintain electronic observation files for each beginning teacher to include observations, evaluations and Professional Development Plans. The information in these files pertaining to the beginning teacher support program can be shared with other LEAs when a beginning teacher leaves Beaufort County Schools, subject to the NC general statutes governing confidential personnel records, upon request.

### **Beginning Teacher Surveys**

All first-year beginning teachers and principals will complete surveys sent from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction related to recent graduate survey by the Beginning Teacher (BT) and the employer survey by the principal of the school during the BT's first year of teaching as part of the requirements to measure the performance of Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) stated in GS 115C-269.35. The surveys must be completed at the end of the first year of teaching.

### **Orientation**

The Assistant Superintendent will be responsible for conducting a formal orientation for newly hired beginning teachers to take place prior to the start of each school year. For those newly hired individuals who begin work during the school year, an orientation session will be held for them as well. This orientation will include an overview of the system's goals, policies, procedures as well as staff development opportunities, the Beginning Teacher Support Plan, teacher licensure conversion process, the NC Standard Course of Study and local curriculum guides and the NC Teacher Evaluation process. It will also include a discussion of the State Board of Education's Mission and Goals, NC Student Testing programs and information related to the safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint of students.

### **Optimum Working Conditions for Beginning Teachers**

In compliance with the North Carolina State Board policy on providing for optimum working conditions for beginning teachers, Beaufort County Schools' plan is as follows:

- Whenever possible, to assign beginning teachers to teach in their areas of licensure unless the teacher has agreed in the interview to accept a position that does not match their licensure area.
- Whenever possible, to ensure that a mentor is assigned early, in the licensure area and in close proximity.
- Whenever possible, schedule teachers to attend orientation prior to school beginning, or if hired too late, to attend an orientation held throughout the school year.
- Whenever possible, limit the beginning teacher's number of class preparations to no more than the average staff member.
- Whenever possible, limit the number of exceptional or difficult students assigned to the beginning teacher's class to no more than the average staff member unless the teacher is a licensed special education teacher or has agreed to a cooperative teaching situation.
- Whenever possible, avoid assigning beginning teachers any extracurricular activities unless they request such an opportunity in writing.

- Whenever possible, provide opportunities to network within the beginning teachers group and various Central Services departments (Curriculum & Instruction, Exceptional Children, Human Resources, etc).

## **Mentors**

In compliance with the North Carolina State Board policy on mentor selection and assignment, Beaufort County Schools plan is as follows:

- Ensure that each beginning teacher is assigned a qualified, well-trained mentor. Mentors will be trained on the NC Mentor Standards.
- Ensure that each mentor has achieved a rating of proficient on their most recent evaluation.
- The principal shall determine which mentor teacher best meets the needs of each new teacher and shall assign the most appropriate mentor teacher to the new teacher, with priority consideration for mentors rated as “distinguished” or “accomplished.” If a principal determines that a teacher rated as “proficient” or a retired teacher is the most appropriate mentor for a new teacher, the principal shall maintain records of the reasons for that determination.
- Ensure that the mentors are selected using a criteria that includes a range of characteristics, experiences, and dispositions that indicate mentoring potential from a variety of stakeholder groups.
- Ensure that the mentors selected are willing to participate in ongoing mentor training.
- Ensure that the mentors support beginning teacher orientation as well as the logistical and emotional support of beginning teachers.
- Ensure that the mentors selected have knowledge of and exhibit a positive attitude with regard to the district norms, culture, mission, strategic priorities, and state goals.
- Ensure that the mentors selected have demonstrated success with regard to student achievement and are committed to informally observe and offer feedback on classroom practice to beginning teachers.
- Ensure that mentors maintain regular contact logs to document their service as a mentor. The logs are uniform in nature and are given to the mentors by the Assistant Superintendent. The mentor logs are maintained electronically and copies are kept in the Beginning Teacher’s file.
- Ensure that mentors receive training and support needed to carry out their duties as a mentor.

## **Evaluation of Beginning Teacher Support Program**

At the completion of each school year, a variety of stakeholders including beginning teachers, mentors and administrators will be provided an opportunity to evaluate the Beginning Teacher Support Program as a means of continuous monitoring and improvement. Beaufort County Schools actively participates in BTSP monitoring for compliance with State Board Policy via procedures set in place by NCDPI. Our plan for participation in the annual BTSP peer review process is to follow procedures set in place by NCDPI.