

2019-2020
Thomasville City Schools
Beginning Teacher Support Plan for NC SBE Policy TCED-016

Introduction

In accordance with Policy TCED-016 (formally TCP-A-004/LICN-004), the State requires that each LEA develop an annual plan and provide a comprehensive program of support for beginning teachers. The plan must have Board of Education approval and must meet the Beginning Teacher Support Programs Standards. Additionally, the plan must demonstrate its alignment to the standards and be assessed according to the continuum. The Beginning Teacher Support Program includes initially licensed classroom teachers who hold an initial license during their first, second and third years of the required induction period. All beginning teachers (BTs) receive a multi-layered system of support in Thomasville City Schools (TCS) including an assigned mentor, administrators, the Assistant Director of Human Resources and central office staff. TCS holds a strong commitment to the support of our new teachers, and we believe that our Beginning Teacher Support Program reflects this commitment. We know that it is vital for new teachers to feel honored, appreciated, and supported, and we have designed a plan that offers these things to our teachers.

Program Administration

The Department of Human Resources of Thomasville City Schools is responsible for the Beginning Teacher Support Program. The Human Resources Department verifies the years of teaching experience for each new hire. When a teacher is hired with three or less years of experience, they are considered to be a Beginning Teacher. The principal is made aware and assigns a mentor based on licensure area and proximity to the BT. The mentor must display the qualities of an effective teacher and meet the qualifications that are outlined by policy.

The mentor is a crucial support for the BT because the mentor talks with the mentee daily/weekly and helps the BT to problem solve. The principal or his/her designee is directly responsible for ensuring that BTs receive the necessary training and assistance to make them successful teachers. The Assistant Director of Human Resources works with school administration and mentors to ensure all BTs receive the support needed throughout the year by monitoring and providing support.

Eligibility for a Continuing License

The Chief Human Resources Officer in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Human Resources explains and facilitates the License Conversion Process for BTs in traditional and alternative routes to licensure. The process for ensuring that teachers are given an assignment in the area of licensure rests on the Assistant Director of Human Resources and the Chief Human Resources Officer. The plan for documentation of required licensure tests requirements and the process for license conversion (coursework, exams passed, and three years of teaching) is processed by the Chief Human Resources officer. The Assistant Director of Human Resources will meet with BTs a minimum of two times yearly to discuss their progress towards

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meeting licensing requirements. The formal documentation for meeting TCS and NCDPI requirements is kept by the Assistant Director of Human Resources. The final documentation is housed in each employee's personnel file. The proof of burden is the responsibility of the employee. Data regarding Beginning Teachers for the State of the Teaching Profession in NC Report is collected and aggregated by the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Formal Orientation

TCS requires beginning teachers who are new to the district to attend a formal orientation. First year teachers attend for three days and second and third year teachers attend for one. Orientation is held prior to the first official teacher workday and is planned and facilitated by the Assistant Director of Human Resources and Curriculum & Instruction Personnel. The orientation consists of training which includes:

- An overview of procedures and policies for Thomasville City Schools
- Review of the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards & Evaluation Process (Observations & Evaluations and an introduction to the Professional Development Plan)
- Explanation of the teacher licensure process in North Carolina
- Discussions about the Code of Ethics for North Carolina Educators
- The State Board of Education's Mission and Goals
- An overview of the support services available to new teachers
- The North Carolina Standard Course of Study
- Classroom Management
- Training in system-wide curriculum initiatives
- Lesson Planning
- Instructional Technology
- Parent Communication
- Exceptional Children's Program
- Local BT requirements and expectations
- Any other information deemed necessary by the district

BTs also attend a benefits session where they receive information on insurance and relevant employment benefits. They are given access to the Beginning Teacher Canvas site that houses information including: tips for new teachers, State and Local Policies, NC Professional Teaching Standards, the North Carolina Teacher Code of Ethics, and other supplementary materials. All handouts and presentations from Beginning Teacher Orientation, BT meetings, and Professional Development are also stored on this site. Additionally, all first year teachers are given a copy of the book *Your First Year: How to Survive and Thrive as a New Teacher* by Todd Whitaker that will be used for a book study. Sign-in sheets for all three days of orientation are kept on file by the Assistant Director of Human Resources.

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A school level orientation is held during the workdays and time is designated for new teachers to work with their mentor.

In order to assure non-traditional teachers (non-education majors) experience a smooth transition into teaching, we plan separate sessions during orientation specifically for them, facilitated by the Assistant Human Resources Director. As the year continues, non-traditional teachers will also have the opportunity to attend monthly support sessions for continued training and support in the basics of classroom instruction and management facilitated by the Assistant Human Resources Director.

First year licensed teachers hired after the orientation are required to attend a make-up orientation during the school year. This orientation is for one day and includes a brief overview of the topics covered in the three day orientation. First year non-traditional teachers hired after the orientation are required to attend orientation prior to beginning in the classroom. This orientation includes self-paced modules designed to cover all of the material in the August orientation, NCEES courses, classroom observations, as well as meetings with school level administration and the assigned mentor. These individuals are also required to attend the orientation session prior to the start of the following school year.

Optimum Working Conditions for Beginning Teachers

The administration of Thomasville City Schools offers full support for our Beginning Teachers. Each principal understands new teachers will be given optimum working conditions, including limited non-instructional duties, a fair schedule, a qualified mentor, and adequate resources for teaching. As the instructional leader, the principal assures that new teachers will also be given adequate assistance and support needed throughout the three-year licensure process. To ensure Beginning Teachers have the opportunity to develop into capable teachers, principals are kept up to date with the suggested optimal working conditions for new teachers.

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. For those Beginning Teachers who are requesting additional extracurricular assignments, they are required to put this request in writing and submit this to the principal showing their intent to waive this mandate. Copies of these written requests are kept on file by the Assistant Director of Human Resources.

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Mentor Teacher Selection and Training

Because of the integral role of the mentor in fostering the growth of new teachers and the importance of the mentor's role in teacher retention, exceptional care is given to the choice of mentors at each school. Administrators at each school site select experienced teachers on the basis of criteria suggested for a good mentor. Mentors are then asked to sign a contract stating they understand their position and the work and commitment associated with it. As much as possible, mentors are paired with new teachers who teach the same grade level and/or subject area.

All mentors are required to receive mentor training. Mentor training focuses on an understanding of the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and the North Carolina Mentor Standards. Mentor training is completed via the NCEES system and record of completion is kept on file by the Assistant Director of Human Resources.

Throughout the school year, information from the HR Department is disseminated to mentors in a variety of delivery models. Mentors serve as the school-based facilitator to beginning teachers. Mentors are required to meet with first and second year BTs for a minimum of four hours each month and a minimum of two hours each month for third year BTs.

Support and assistance are provided for the new teacher at every level. The first line of support is the mentor who is trained to identify and address the needs of the novice teacher. During weekly meetings with the new teacher, the mentor may assist with lesson planning, classroom management, instructional strategies, etc., or he/she may just serve as a listening ear for the new teacher. The mentor serves as a liaison between the beginning teacher, the administrators and the Assistant Director of Human Resources.

Beginning teachers and their mentors receive continuous support from the principal and other school-based administrators. The Superintendent and the Chief Human Resources Officer instruct principals to dialogue with mentors and to encourage the development of mentors as teacher leaders in their schools. Each principal selects the mentor from his/her school, and participates in the planning for the site-based orientation. The Assistant Director of Human Resources also facilitates problem-solving for principals regarding any difficult mentor-mentee situations.

The Assistant Director of Human Resources communicates annually with the mentors prior to the start of the school year. Additional meetings with mentors and beginning teachers are scheduled periodically during the year, as needed. Currently, funding is appropriated through the Title II federal budget to compensate mentors of beginning teachers during their first three years of teaching.

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Beginning Teacher Professional Development Plan

One session of New Teacher Orientation is devoted to training beginning teachers on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation process which includes the development of the Professional Development Plan. All school-based mentors receive specific training in PDP preparation. PDPs are maintained in the electronic teacher evaluation tool and are to be reviewed and discussed minimally at the beginning, middle, and end of the year with the teacher. At the end of the school year, the principal will review the PDP with the beginning teacher at the summary evaluation conference. The beginning teacher, administrator, mentor, and central office administrators have access to the PDP in the electronic evaluation tool.

Observations

In compliance with GS 115-C-333, all beginning teachers are observed four times during each school year and evaluated annually. One of these is a peer observation, and three are by a qualified school administrator. The NC Rubric for Evaluating Teachers is used for observations and evaluation. Principals are encouraged to provide opportunities for new teachers to observe their mentor and other teachers, for each mentor to have release time to observe his/her mentee, and for peer observers to complete the official peer observations. Substitutes are provided to allow each beginning teacher the opportunity to observe his or her mentor (or another experienced teacher) for a minimum of one class period.

Evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Support Program

Informal learning groups within each of the eight North Carolina regions have been created. Under the leadership of the Regional Education Facilitators, the groups have been matched, to the degree possible, according to LEA size and new teacher population. Conscious Critical Friends work together during the annual network meeting to assess strengths and areas of improvement for each LEA's induction program.

Every fifth year the Department of Public Instruction will formally review Beginning Teacher Support Programs to review evidence and verify that program proficiency is demonstrated on all Beginning Teacher Support Program Standards. The monitoring team will report any standards and key elements where programs are not deemed at least "proficient" to the NC Department of Public Instruction. Programs that are rated "developing" on the standards continuum will be put on a Technical Assistance Plan.

The Thomasville City School System participates in the BTSP Monitoring process every five years as required. Any areas of concern addressed during the visit will be addressed through the Technical Assistance Response Plan.

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Cumulative Beginning Teacher File

The Assistant Director of Human Resources maintains an electronic file at the central office for each beginning teacher. Copies of required mentor contracts and quarterly mentor logs are kept in this file during all three years of the teacher's initial licensure. Electronic files of observations, evaluations, PDPs are maintained in the electronic evaluation tool. These files are made available to auditors during the LEA's Title II visit.

Timely Transfer of BT File to Successive LEA

Upon receiving a written request from a new employer, TCS copies and provides the requested and required documentation to the new employer in order for the beginning teacher to continue and complete his/her induction period.

Board of Education Approval

The Thomasville City Schools Board of Education approves the Beginning Teacher Support Program plan annually, and it is on file for review at the district office.