

Cherokee County Schools



Beginning Teacher Support Program

Revised and Approved by the Cherokee County Board of Education October 13, 2016

Pertinent Information

LEA	Cherokee County Schools
Superintendent	Ms. Jeana Conley
Beginning Teacher Induction Program Coordinator	Pam Pressley
Designated Official to Authorize Continuing License	Kim Gibson

Induction

The Beginning Teacher Support Program for first, second, and third year teachers (to include teachers with a standard Professional I, lateral entry, and provisional license) is a comprehensive program to support the growth and development of beginning teachers in Cherokee County Schools. The participants are provided a formal orientation, mentor support, the required annual observations, and evaluations prior to being recommended for a continuing license. The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator, with support from the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent of Human Resources, and the BT Induction Program Coordinator manages the BTSP.

Professional Development Plan

The Beginning Teachers will be introduced to the Professional Development Plan (PDP) during the New Teacher Orientation before the start of the school year. They will complete the PDP after the completion of their self-assessment and before their first observation, in collaboration with their mentor and principal. The plan will be updated annually and a copy will be maintained in the beginning teacher personnel file.

Optimum Working Conditions for Beginning Teachers

Condition 1: All beginning teachers shall be assigned to their area of licensure. Before employment offers can be extended, principals will consult with the Superintendent/Associate Superintendent to ensure that selected candidates meet the necessary licensure requirements and are assigned to teach in their certified content areas.

Condition 2: All beginning teachers shall be assigned a mentor early in the school year, in close proximity to the beginning teachers and in their licensure area, if possible. The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator, in collaboration with principals and other district directors as needed, selects mentors for new teachers after being hired. The selection process focuses on the grade level/content area of the new teacher, proximity, and the qualities of both the new teacher and mentor. According to state law, teachers serving as mentor teachers for beginning teachers must be *accomplished* on their most recent evaluation AND demonstrate *expected growth*.

Teachers in unique positions in a school (music, art, etc.) will be assigned an appropriate mentor in the same licensure area if possible and in the closest proximity possible. When both of these conditions cannot be met, the beginning teacher is assigned an unofficial school-based mentor who is in close proximity and an official mentor in the licensure area meeting state requirements, based at another school, who is available on a consultative basis for content area questions and monitoring.

Condition 3: Provide orientation for beginning teachers that includes state and school expectations. Each Beginning Teacher is provided an orientation prior to the first day of school. This orientation focuses on state and local expectations including but not limited to the BT program, licensure requirements, ethics, code of conduct, and the district employee handbook.

Condition 4: Provide a schedule requiring limited preparations. Beginning Teachers in Cherokee County are provided a schedule when possible that includes a minimum number of preparations for varying classes. However, when this is not possible, the principal ensures that the Beginning Teacher is given adequate planning time in which to prepare.

Condition 5: Beginning Teachers are assigned limited non-instructional duties. All schools in Cherokee County are small and therefore require everyone to take on non-instructional duties such as bus duty, lunch duty, etc. However, every effort is made by principals to ensure that these duties are kept to a minimum for Beginning Teachers while still ensuring the safety and supervision of all students.

Condition 6: Maintain diverse classrooms; however, assign Beginning Teachers a limited number of exceptional or difficult students. Principals are aware and maintain a balanced student classroom assignment for all beginning teachers.

Condition 7: In compliance with the Excellent Schools Act of 1997, Beginning Teachers should not be required to assume extra-curricular duties unless the teacher has volunteered in writing to assume duties. Beginning Teachers who wish to assume extra-curricular duties will sign a form volunteering for the extra-curricular responsibility.

Orientation

Each Beginning Teacher is provided an orientation. If the BT is hired before the start of school, this orientation is conducted before the arrival of students. However, if the BT is hired after the school year begins; the orientation is provided within the first 10 days of employment.

The first day of orientation takes place at the local level where the new teachers are introduced to the Central Office Administrative Staff and given information regarding the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, county discipline procedures, payroll, policies, observations, and evaluations. They are given an overview of available services and professional development opportunities, the Beginning Teacher Support Program, the Initial Licensure regulations and the requirements for achieving a Standard Professional II license, North Carolina Teacher Evaluation process and instrument, the state ABC program and the Board of Education Mission and Goals.

The Beginning Teachers then participate in the Western Carolina University or WRESA Beginning Teacher Symposiums which provides speakers and break-out sessions to cover

classroom management, motivation, and communication with parents. Beginning teachers who are hired after the August orientation will meet with the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator for the district orientation and will then attend the New Teacher Symposium for Late Hires at Western Carolina University or WRESA in September.

Beginning in September, the first year teachers will meet monthly and second year teachers will meet bi-monthly with the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator for training and support in the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, Individual Growth Plans, curriculum and observations/evaluations. These meetings also cover topics such as the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Instrument, diverse learners, model lesson plans, multiple instructional strategies, digital learning tools, classroom discipline (examples of incidents and solutions), communicating with parents, conducting parent conferences, collaboration with other professionals within the school, issues with confidentiality, and e-mentoring. Meetings will be held after school on selected afternoons. Mentors will be required to attend two of these meetings per year. The Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator will set the agenda and notify the beginning teachers, their mentors, and principals.

Mentor Assignments and Selection

Teachers who are interested in becoming a mentor in Cherokee County Schools make this request to their school principal. The principal then reviews this request and determines if they would recommend the teacher to serve as a mentor based on their attributes as a teacher and a collaborative team member. Those mentors who are approved and recommended by the principals are required to complete the 21st Century Mentoring online, self-paced certification module through HomeBase, as well as receive mentor training provided by the Beginning Teacher Support Program Coordinator. After successful completion of the training, the teacher is then eligible to serve as a mentor to a Beginning Teacher. When mentors for new Beginning Teachers are selected, it is a collaborative decision made by the principal, the Beginning Teacher Support Program Coordinator and other district level directors and veteran teachers as needed. The list of potential mentors is reviewed and applications are reviewed or interviews are conducted to find the most suitable mentor based on the following:

The *mentor must*:

- Hold a Standard Professional II License
- Be highly qualified in the area of licensure
- Have completed current mentor training
- Be in close proximity to the Beginning Teacher
- Received “accomplished” in three of the five standard levels on their most recent evaluation
- Demonstrate “expected growth” based on student performance
- Have experience in and have a licensure area that matches the Beginning Teacher (sometimes this cannot be achieved at the building level and must be met through the addition of a secondary curriculum mentor)
- Have a high degree of professionalism
- Be dedicated to the profession and students
- Be caring and compassionate and a good listener

- Have a willingness to commit time and positive energy to ensure retention of competent new teachers

Mentors are then provided a formal orientation to the Beginning Teacher Support Program and given a foundational training on mentoring their specific Beginning Teacher before they begin work as a mentor. Many times this is a review of the Mentoring Standards from their Mentor Training but will also include training on specific documents required for the program, a timeline of mentoring activities and duties and refresher training on the Teacher Evaluation Tool with emphasis on how the tool is applied to Beginning Teachers.

Mentor Training

Cherokee County Schools will provide mentor training and support for teachers who are either serving or would like to serve as a mentor. This training will follow the “North Carolina Mentor Training” developed and approved in 2010. When updates are added to the current training set forth by the state, mentors must complete refresher training before being permitted to serve as a mentor. Mentors are also required to attend two district trainings with their Beginning Teacher. The BTSP Coordinator and principals will ensure that mentors have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be effective instructional coaches, emotional supports, and organizational guides to Beginning Teachers before assigning them to serve as a mentor.

After being assigned as a mentor, they will continue to receive formal training pertaining to mentoring, participate in ongoing professional development and participate in professional learning communities to refine their mentoring skills and improve their practice so they can positively impact Beginning Teachers as they strive to improve student learning in their classrooms.

Observations and Evaluations

In compliance with the Excellent Schools Act and subsequently GS 115C-333, each initially licensed teacher shall be observed at least three times annually by a school administrator or designee. In addition, the teacher is required to be observed by a peer teacher who is deemed qualified by the principal. The peer teacher should possess the same qualities as a mentor but should not be the mentor of the beginning teacher they are observing. Each observation must last for at least one continuous period of instructional time and followed by a post-conference attended by the school administrator, the observer (if the observation was conducted by a peer), the Beginning Teacher and the mentor. Each observation must also be spaced at least one calendar month apart. The Beginning Teacher shall also be evaluated at least once annually by their principal. The observations and evaluations of beginning teachers, for all three years, will be kept in the Beginning Teacher file at the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator’s office.

Technical Assistance

The *Beginning Teacher Coordinator* will:

- Meet individually with new teachers and mentors for specific requested support
- Work with principals to provide class coverage for new teachers to observe in classrooms of master teachers
- Watch/observe in classrooms of new teachers as requested by the new teacher, mentor, or principal and offer feedback and suggestions
- Provide demonstration lessons, as requested
- Find curriculum materials/resources to support new teachers
- Meet monthly with first year teachers and bi-monthly second year teachers for staff development in the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and other issues
- Inform new teachers/mentors about appropriate professional development opportunities
- Organize/conduct appropriate professional development for new teachers
- Develop/facilitate the New Teacher Orientation

Conversion Process

The Beginning Teacher will submit the following to the Beginning Teacher Support Coordinator:

- Three formal observations by the principal and one formal observation from a peer (a mentor, but not the BT's mentor)
- Record of Teacher Evaluation Activities
- Summative Evaluation
- LEA Statement
- Request for Extra-Curricular Duty, if applicable
- PDP
- Professional Development Log
- Mentor Conference Log

When all of these items are received, the BTSP Coordinator will notify the district Personnel Director and certify that the requirements for the year have been met by the Beginning Teacher and recommending that their license be renewed for the following year. At the end of the third year, if all requirements have been met, the BTSP Coordinator will recommend the approval of the Beginning Teacher for a continued Standard Professional II license.

Higher Education and Degree Advancement

Cherokee County Schools recognizes the importance of maintaining, developing, and extending the professional knowledge and skills of all staff members. Teachers are strongly encouraged to engage in programs and activities that will lead to their professional goals and growth, expand their skills, and increase their job competence. Within budgetary limits, and subject to the

approval of the superintendent or designee, Cherokee County Schools offers employees a Graduate School Incentive Program which reimburses the employee for tuition costs (100% of the tuition of core courses in the professional component and 50% of other courses) leading to an advanced degree.

Beginning Teacher Support Program Plans

Beginning Teachers will be surveyed for the following purposes:

- To solicit professional development needs
- To evaluate the New Teacher Orientation program
- To evaluate the WCU and WRESA Beginning Teacher Symposiums
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the first year of the Beginning Teacher Support Program of Cherokee County Schools
- To evaluate the amount and/or quality of principal support for the Beginning Teacher

The results of these surveys will be used to strengthen the program in the following school year.