

Beginning Teacher Induction Program Plan

DRAFT

Transylvania County Schools

Revised August, 2011

Approved [date] by the Transylvania County Board of Education

INTRODUCTION

The Transylvania County Board of Education (the “Board”) believes that every child deserves a highly qualified teacher and that every teacher deserves to work in a supportive environment that promotes high standards and encourages high levels of professional performance. Toward that end, the Board establishes a Beginning Teacher Induction Program designed to support beginning teachers throughout the induction period and this Beginning Teacher Induction Program Plan (the “Plan”) to guide the operation and administration of that program.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Transylvania County Schools' Beginning Teacher Induction Program shall be coordinated by the school district's Director of Human Resources (“Director”) consistent with the guidelines established by the Plan.

ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSE CONVERSION

Beginning teachers shall be eligible to convert an initial North Carolina Standard Professional I (“SP-I”) license to a continuing North Carolina Standard Professional II (“SP-II”) license upon successful completion of Transylvania County Schools' Beginning Teacher Induction Program requirements and satisfactory completion of any additional licensure requirements individually prescribed for them by the North Carolina State Board of Education (the “State Board”) through the Licensure Section of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (“NCDPI”). The Director shall be responsible for verifying the eligibility of beginning teachers to convert an initial SP-I license to a continuing SP-II license.

ORIENTATION OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

All beginning teachers in Transylvania County Schools shall receive information regarding the nature, scope, and requirements of the district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program; available services and training opportunities; the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards; the teacher evaluation process; the process for achieving continuing SP-II licensure; and, other such topics as provided by State Board policy TCP-A-004. These topics will be featured among the agenda items and activities associated with the school district's annual New Teacher Orientation, attendance at which is required of all licensed teachers newly employed within the school district each year. For those beginning teachers who are hired during the school year and who are therefore unable to attend New Teacher Orientation, this information will be provided through individual consultation between the teacher and the Director or designee within the teacher's first ten (10) days of employment.

OPTIMUM WORKING CONDITIONS FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

Transylvania County Schools is committed to promoting optimum working conditions for beginning teachers. Toward that end, and consistent with standards established by State Board policy TCP-A-004, each beginning teacher shall:

1. Be assigned teaching responsibilities in his or her area(s) of licensure;
2. Be assigned a qualified mentor, preferably in close proximity to the beginning teacher and, when possible, in the same area(s) of licensure as the beginning teacher;
3. Participate in an orientation that includes state, district, and school expectations;

4. Be assigned teaching responsibilities that limit instructional preparations to the greatest extent possible;
5. Be assigned limited instructional duties and only be assigned extracurricular responsibilities consistent with N. C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-47(18a) and local Board policy GCKA, “Extracurricular and Non-Instructional Duties”; and,
6. Be assigned, to the greatest extent practical, a limited number of exceptional or difficult students.

MENTOR SELECTION, TRAINING, AND ASSIGNMENT

Selection

Transylvania County Schools recognizes that the training, selection, and assignment of qualified mentors is essential to ensure a positive induction experience for all beginning teachers. In order to serve as a beginning teacher mentor, teachers must:

1. Demonstrate and promote a consistently positive attitude toward education, student success, and the teaching profession;
2. Demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills;
3. Demonstrate superior professional teaching skills, preferably in a licensure area corresponding to that of the beginning teacher;
4. Demonstrate a strong willingness to invest the time, energy, and resources required of effective mentor teachers;
5. Hold a clear SP-II license;
6. Have achieved career status in Transylvania County Schools;
7. Successfully complete local peer observer training associated with the North Carolina teacher evaluation process;
8. Successfully complete local mentor teacher training or an approved alternative to local training provided through the Western Region Education Service Alliance (WRESA) or other appropriate agency or institution; and,
9. Demonstrate the personal and professional skills and dispositions required to meet each of North Carolina's standards for mentor performance.

The Director shall establish a transparent and uniform process for the selection of qualified mentors and shall make available to each principal a written description of that process. Teachers who wish to serve as mentors should consult their principals or the Director with questions regarding the selection process.

Training

The Director shall provide for the local training of aspiring mentor teachers. When local training options are not immediately available, the Director is authorized to approve, on a case-by-case basis, an alternative to local training provided through the Western Region Education Service Alliance (WRESA) or other appropriate agency or institution. All training, whether it is provided locally or by a third-party agency or institution, shall teach participants the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be effective instructional coaches, emotional supports, and organizational guides to those teachers entering the profession, and shall be aligned to the North Carolina Mentor Standards established by State Board policy TCP-A-004. The Director, other district leaders, and school administrators shall be available to serve as resources and support persons to all practicing mentors.

Assignment

The Director shall maintain a list of teachers selected and trained to serve as mentor teachers. Principals shall assign each beginning teacher a mentor teacher from the list of qualified mentor teachers within ten (10) days of employment with the school district. Principals shall annually report all mentor assignments to the Director by August 31. The Director shall maintain a roster of beginning teachers and their assigned mentors for a period of five (5) years.

DISTRICT SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

Based on the synthesis and evaluation of participant and stakeholder feedback collected in late Spring and early Summer of 2009, Transylvania County Schools' Beginning Teacher Induction Program was re-conceptualized and reorganized to better serve the needs and meet the expectations of the district's beginning teachers. Ultimately, the program aims to orient, support, and nurture beginning teachers as they enter the teaching profession and mature as professional educators. The program's current design reflects a continuum of differentiated support throughout beginning teachers' first three years in the profession. First-year induction activities focus on the new teacher's successful orientation to the teaching profession; second-year induction activities focus on professional learning and reflective practice as elements of effective teaching; and, third-year induction activities engage beginning teachers in action research that synthesizes professional learning, fosters professional collaboration, and empowers them to identify and solve instructional problems in their own classrooms and schools.

Year 1: Orientation

The first year of Transylvania County Schools' Beginning Teacher Induction Program aims to provide beginning teachers with a strong, effective, and relevant orientation not only to the school district, but also to the profession of teaching. Meetings of first-year teachers, coordinated and facilitated by the Director in collaboration with other district instructional leaders, will be held from 4:00 PM until 6:00 PM on four occasions throughout each school year. Meeting locations will rotate among the district's various schools. Meeting agendas will reflect an even balance of topics identified by district leaders and topics identified by participants, and will substantively focus on issues and concepts of particular relevance to emerging classroom teachers. Illustrative examples include, but are not limited to, North Carolina's professional teaching standards; classroom management and student relationships; grading and assessment practices; communicating effectively with parents and colleagues; and, accessing tools and resources to support and enhance instruction.

In order to leverage the leadership, experience, and talents of the district's veteran teachers and to promote professional collaboration and networking between beginning teachers and their veteran colleagues, meetings of first-year teachers will prominently feature breakout sessions taught and facilitated by a sampling of the district's veteran teachers who hold National Board certification, who hold graduate degrees in educational leadership, or who are otherwise qualified for and interested in demonstrating leadership in the teaching profession. In order to introduce and facilitate the emergence and development of reflective practice among first-year teachers, meetings will also feature opportunities for guided discussions between beginning teachers and their mentors. At least one meeting will feature a structured peer observation and reflection activity in order to initiate and facilitate discussions of teaching practice between beginning teachers and their mentors.

By the completion of their first year of induction, beginning teachers in Transylvania County Schools should be able to clearly conceptualize and articulate their roles and responsibilities as teachers; should demonstrate a sound understanding of fundamental teaching practices; and, should recognize and leverage opportunities for professional collaboration with other educators within their schools and across the district.

Year 2: Professional Learning

The second year of Transylvania County Schools' Beginning Teacher Induction Program aims to extend upon beginning teachers' pre-service professional training and their experiences as first-year teachers through structured professional reading and reflection circles. Meetings of second-year teachers, coordinated and facilitated by the Director in collaboration with other district instructional leaders, will be held from 4:00 PM until 6:00 PM on four occasions throughout each school year. Meeting locations will rotate among the district's various schools.

Throughout their second year, beginning teachers will read a variety of articles from professional journals, as well as one longer text to be identified at the beginning of each school year. Reading selections will be distributed to beginning teachers so that they have adequate time to read and individually reflect on their reading well in advance of quarterly meetings. Meeting agendas will feature discussion groups, reflection circles, and other activities designed to encourage group reflection and discussion of reading materials and their relationship to professional practice. Following each meeting, beginning teachers will utilize online discussion boards to post and discuss their ongoing thoughts, reflections, and activities related to their reading selections.

By the completion of their second year of induction, beginning teachers in Transylvania County Schools should be able to identify, access, read, and synthesize professional literature that informs their teaching practice; should engage in individual and group reflective practice to support their professional efforts; and, should demonstrate proficiency in the use of discussion boards to share, collaborate, and discuss matters of professional practice with their colleagues throughout the district.

Year 3: Action Research

The third and final year of Transylvania County Schools' Beginning Teacher Induction Program aims to prepare and support beginning teachers as effective practitioners of action research that improves teaching and learning processes within their classrooms and schools. The action research phase of the district's beginning teacher induction program accesses and leverages knowledge and skills developed during beginning teachers' pre-service professional training, their first and second years of induction, and their first two years of service in the profession. It represents a culminating induction experience and a springboard toward professional practice that is characterized by collaboration; the ongoing development of knowledge and skills through professional reading; individual and group reflection; and, an ongoing cycle of diagnosis, research, intervention, and evaluation to improve student learning.

Third-year beginning teachers will participate in an introductory meeting early in the school year, coordinated and facilitated by the Director in collaboration with other district instructional leaders, to learn about specific parameters, expectations, target dates, support, and resources for their action research projects. Action research projects will be conducted by individual beginning teachers or in small groups of no more than three beginning teachers. Generally, action research projects will include six stages conducted over the course of a school year:

1. Identification and description of an instructional problem within the classroom or school;
2. Understanding the instructional problem by reading from a variety of professional and academic journals and texts;
3. Synthesizing professional reading to formulate a hypothesis for improvement;
4. Implementing the hypothesis for improvement in the classroom or school;
5. Evaluating the results of the improvement effort; and,
6. Reflecting on evaluation results to inform future practice.

Beginning teachers' action research topics must be approved by their respective principals and by the Director before research begins. As they complete their action research projects, third-year beginning teachers will make extensive use of online discussion boards to communicate, collaborate, share resources, measure progress, and document results. District leaders will monitor and moderate online discussions and will, by assignment, offer guidance and support to small groups of individual researchers or research teams. In addition to providing specific support to their assigned research groups, district facilitators will work to identify and resolve organizational, procedural, and other barriers throughout the action research phase.

By the completion of their third year of induction, beginning teachers in Transylvania County Schools should be able to initiate strategies and implement processes to identify and solve instructional problems in their classrooms and schools; should communicate and collaborate effectively with colleagues in matters of professional interest and practice; should demonstrate proficiency in meeting each of North Carolina's professional teaching standards; and, should emerge as teacher leaders in their classrooms and schools.

PRINCIPAL SUPPORT FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

Principals shall support the successful induction and ongoing professional development of all beginning teachers by:

1. Helping to identify teachers qualified to serve as mentors;
2. Thoughtfully assigning available mentor teachers to support beginning teachers;
3. Providing timely, constructive performance feedback to beginning teachers;
4. Providing individual professional support and assistance as needed to beginning teachers;
5. Promoting optimum working conditions for beginning teachers; and,
6. Providing moral support and encouragement to beginning teachers throughout the induction period.

OBSERVATIONS AND EVALUATIONS OF BEGINNING TEACHERS

Consistent with the North Carolina General Statutes and local Board policy GCN ("Professional Educator Evaluation Process"), all beginning teachers shall be observed at least four times annually and shall be evaluated once annually. The first observation shall occur on or before November 15; the second observation shall occur on or before January 31; the third observation shall occur on or before March 15; and, the fourth observation shall occur on or before May 15. At least one of those observations shall be conducted by the principal; one of those observations shall be conducted by a qualified peer observer; and, the remaining observations may be conducted by the principal's designee consistent with local Board policy GCN. At no time shall a beginning teacher's own mentor be assigned

to conduct a formal observation of that beginning teacher for the purposes of performance evaluation. The principal shall complete each beginning teacher's summary evaluation on or before the last teacher workday of the school year. The requirements of local Board policy GCN are encumbered herein and supersede the provisions of this Plan in the event that inconsistencies emerge as a result of policy revisions.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Each beginning teacher shall annually develop a Professional Development Plan (PDP) in conjunction with the principal and mentor teacher pursuant to N. C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-307(e) and the provisions of local Board policy GCN.

ASSISTING BEGINNING TEACHERS

The school district shall use multiple mechanisms for identifying necessary services and technical assistance among beginning teachers:

1. Direct requests and feedback from Beginning Teacher Induction Program participants;
2. Input from district administrators, school administrators, and mentor teachers;
3. Published literature in professional and academic journals;
4. Beginning teacher PDPs;
5. Summary reports from the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System; and,
6. Guidance from NCDPI and other agencies and institutions.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Pursuant to N. C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-319, - 320, -321, and -325(b), the Superintendent shall maintain a personnel file for each teacher that contains a copy of each PDP, each observation report, and each summary evaluation completed throughout the beginning teacher's employment with the school district, along with other such records required by law or policy. The contents of the beginning teacher's personnel file are subject to confidentiality rules established by the applicable statutes.

Upon written authorization of the beginning teacher, the Director shall provide for the timely transfer of the contents of the beginning teacher's personnel file, in whole or in part as designated by the request, to successive employing public school districts, charter schools, or non-public institutions in North Carolina.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Pursuant to State Board policy TCP-A-004, the Director shall, by October 1 each year, submit to NCDPI a report on the school district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program that includes evidence of demonstrated proficiency on the Beginning Teacher Support Program Standards and of mentor success in meeting the North Carolina Mentor Standards. The report shall follow the format prescribed by NCDPI.

The school district, through the Director, shall participate in implementing a regionally-based annual peer review and support system designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program.

NCDPI shall formally review the school district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program every five years to review evidences and verify that program proficiency is demonstrated on all Beginning Teacher Support Program Standards. The monitoring team shall report to the Superintendent, the Director, and NCDPI any standards and key elements where programs are not deemed to be at least proficient. The Director shall implement corrective actions to improve any elements not deemed to be at least proficient and shall report those corrective actions to the Superintendent and NCDPI.

BOARD APPROVAL

The Transylvania County Board of Education approved the school district's Beginning Teacher Induction Program Plan by a vote of ____ - ____ during its regular business meeting held on ____/____/____.

Copies of this plan are available online at <http://www.tcsnc.org/> and in the Office of Human Resources at this address:

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