



**Beginning Teacher Support Program
(BTSP)**

Approved by the
Transylvania County Schools
Board of Education

Tawny McCoy, Board Chair

Date

Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent

Date

I. 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, as outlined in State Board of Education Policy TCP-A-004, 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.

II. Beginning Teacher Support Program

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. Revisions to the Plan are necessary in order to comply with state regulations governing the Beginning Teacher Support Plan (BTSP) and, most importantly, to better respond to the needs of new teachers, mentors and other stakeholders. The program’s mission provides support during a time of personal and professional growth as well as fostering the skills and practices required for effective teaching. The North Carolina Standards for Beginning Teacher Support inform the development of our local support process.

Assisting Beginning Teachers

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

- Direct requests and feedback from Beginning Teacher Induction Program participants;
- Input from district administrators, school administrators, and mentor teachers;
- Published literature in professional and academic journals;
- Beginning teacher Professional Development Plans;
- Summary reports from the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System; and,
- Guidance from NCDPI and other agencies and institutions.

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

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

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 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.

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. All beginning teachers are assigned a mentor according to State Board policy TCP-A-004 and N.C. Gen. Stat. § 155C-296(e). Mentors are trained in accordance with standards set by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Mentors are selected due to their success as highly effective teachers. The function of the mentor is to provide formative feedback to assist in the refinement and development of essential instructional skills and practices. The mentor will help the beginning teacher build an understanding and appreciation of the school and community culture. The mentor will participate in quarterly district-level BTSP meetings and will provide assistance to the beginning teacher throughout the program. In accordance with best practices, an attempt will be made to maintain the same mentor teacher for the entire initial licensure period of the beginning teacher.

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.

Program Overview

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 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 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.

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.

Throughout their second year, beginning teachers will read a variety of articles from professional journals. 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.

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 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 beginning teachers. Generally, action research projects will be based on the construction, execution, and evaluation of effectiveness of a SMART goal (S-Strategic, M-Measurable, A-Achievable, R-Results-Oriented, and T-Time-bound). Beginning teachers' action research topics must be approved by their respective principals and by the Director before research begins.

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.

III. Beginning Teacher Evaluation

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 directions for obtaining access to the following:

- rubric for Evaluating North Carolina Teachers,
- State Board of Education policy governing teacher evaluations, and
- a schedule for completing all the components of the evaluation process.

Copies may be provided by electronic means. While a formal meeting is not required, supervisors may choose to hold this orientation as a group meeting at the beginning of each school year and/or individually as staff is added throughout the year.

Teacher Self-Assessment: Teachers rate their own performance using the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System's Rubric for Evaluating Teachers. This may be used during the post-observation conference.

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 teacher will provide the principal with a description of the lesson(s). The goal of this conference is to prepare the principal for the observation. Pre-observation conferences are not required for subsequent observations.

Observation(s): The principal or evaluator will observe the teacher in the classroom. Observations can be either announced or unannounced. The first observation for every teacher will be a formal observation. Probationary teachers are required to have four formal observations during the school year, one of which is conducted by a peer. The observations must have appropriate spacing, with two occurring in the first semester and the summative evaluation to be completed by the end of the school year.

Post-Observation Conference: The principal or evaluator will schedule a post-observation conference no later than 10 school days after the observation to discuss the teacher's performance. The conference will be based on the information from the pre-observation conference and the observation should be a vehicle for identifying areas of strength and areas in need of improvement.

Summative Evaluation Conference: The evaluator should provide specific performance feedback to the teacher based on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, evaluator observations, and artifacts submitted or collected as part of the evaluation process. To provide an overall rating for a specific standard, the evaluator uses his or her best judgment based on formal and informal observations as well as other evidences.

Professional Development Plan: Every beginning teacher is required to develop a Professional Development Plan (PDP) in collaboration with his/her principal and mentor teacher. The plan is based on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards 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 and mentor should begin with an assessment of the beginning teacher's knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Formative assessment conferences should be held at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year to reflect on the progress of the beginning teacher in meeting the goals established for professional growth. The PDP should be updated on an annual basis.

IV. Licensure and Working Conditions

Beginning Teachers will be assigned in their area of licensure. Once a continuing license has been earned in one teaching area, additional teaching areas do not require a BTSP experience. The beginning teacher must follow NC State Board of Education requirements for all required license tests. Teachers who hold an Initial License are eligible to convert to a continuing license once overall required coursework has been successfully completed, all NC State Board of Education approved examinations have been passed, and the teacher completes three successful years of teaching. 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. For licensing purposes, a “year” is determined by no less than the workdays indicated by the State Board policy in a full-time permanent position.

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:

- Be assigned teaching responsibilities in his or her area(s) of licensure;
- 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;
- Participate in an orientation that includes state, district, and school expectations;
- Be assigned teaching responsibilities that limit instructional preparations to the greatest extent possible;
- Be assigned limited instructional duties and only be assigned extracurricular responsibilities consistent with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-47(18a) and local Board policy 7405, “Extracurricular and Non-Instructional Duties”; and,
- Be assigned, to the greatest extent practical, a limited number of exceptional or difficult students.

V. Program Evaluation

The school district, through the Director, shall continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Beginning Teacher Induction Program. Monitoring will include, but is not limited to the following activities: (1) professional development plans evaluation, (2) communication and feedback processes between beginning teachers, mentors, curriculum and instruction team and principals and, (3) monitoring of teacher turnover data and survey results, including local survey data and the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions survey, (4) monitoring and peer review by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

VI. 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.