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# BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM

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2019

THE OFFICE OF NEW TEACHER SUPPORT

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## Guilford County Schools Beginning Teacher Support Program Plan

The Guilford County Schools Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) focuses on building the capacity of our beginning teachers (BTs) to promote high achievement among students. It provides a comprehensive program for beginning teachers based on the philosophy that learning to teach is a continuous cycle of planning, teaching, and reflecting. Instructional teachers with less than 3 years of experience are required to participate in the GCS Beginning Teacher Support Program regardless of their licensure status. Licensed instructional support staff are not required to participate in the BTSP.

Our primary goal is to provide a program of support to assist teachers in learning new strategies to move their practices forward, as well as to

- develop teacher capacity as defined by the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and the BTSP standards as outlined in the State Board of Education (SBE) policy TCED-016;
- provide support toward improving student achievement;
- provide professional learning in teaching best practices as defined by the GCS Instructional Framework;
- document professional growth;
- model and encourage continuous self-assessment and reflection;
- foster collaboration and leadership among teachers;
- foster reflective practices;
- promote and embrace diversity and racial equity in the classroom;
- promote district consistency in educational practices;
- build teachers' capacity to establish effective relationships with students and uphold a culture of learning in which critical thinking and a growth mindset are encouraged; and
- provide a supportive environment in which new teachers are retained.

A major component of the GCS New Teacher Support Program is the individualized support given to beginning teachers during their first three years of teaching. A supportive relationship between the beginning teacher, mentor, principal and the induction support coach is essential to the success of all support strategies. The input and feedback of new teachers is collected during each phase of support and is a driving force behind the creation of this plan and the design of BT support programming.

### **I. Formal Orientation**

Each beginning teacher is provided a district-led formal orientation into their careers as teachers. This orientation, called Right Start, is a minimum of three days of professional learning held prior to the start of school for beginning teachers with less than six months of experience. A two-day orientation make-up session is held monthly for teachers who begin teaching after the start of the school year, while induction coaches support schools to conduct site-based orientations in compliance with BOE TCED-016 within two weeks of hire. The New Teacher Support department utilizes the Performance Matters professional learning platform to document that each new teacher has attended an orientation.

During Right Start, teachers receive the following:

- Beginning teacher services from the departments of Professional Learning and Leadership, Teaching and Learning, Human Resources, Equity and Diversity, and Data and Analytics

- Professional learning in the GCS Instructional Framework, GCS Core Beliefs, state and local curricula, and classroom management
- An opportunity to collaborate with their induction support coach in reflection, goal setting, and structuring their year for success
- An overview of the North Carolina State Board of Education's mission and goals
- An overview of Guilford County Schools' goals, policies and procedures
- Training in The North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process and North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards
- Professional learning in equitable teaching practices for a district that champions diversity
- A copy of the Beginning Teacher Support Plan (BTSP) and the process for achieving a continuing license
- The NC Standard Course of Study and local curriculum guides including end-of-grade and end-of-course testing;
- Training in ethical practices, including the safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint of students
- An overview of the required working conditions for new teachers (See section III)
- training on the North Carolina Educator Evaluation System

In addition to the support provided by Right Start, Residency License teachers receive deeper training in the topics above, as well as the following:

- Professional learning in data literacy and formative assessment
- Professional learning in effective lesson design as well as an opportunity to create lessons that maximize student engagement
- Models of effective classroom management systems and an opportunity to create a classroom management plan
- Classroom observations of master teachers in their schools
- Seminar in the routes to licensure and an opportunity to meet with their staffing specialist
- Extended learning in promoting an inclusive learning environment that promotes diversity as an asset
- Professional learning in supporting special student populations including academically gifted, exceptional children, and English learners
- Extended learning in the NC Professional Educator Standards
- Description of available services and professional development opportunities
- Process for achieving a continuing license
- Training in lesson planning
- Assistance in classroom organization
- Instruction on classroom management including positive management of student behavior, effective communication for defusing and deescalating disruptive or dangerous behavior
- Overview of the identification and education of children with disabilities

The professional learning content provided for Residency License teachers complies with State Board of Education policy [LICN-001](#).

As a part of the Right Start agenda, beginning teachers visit their schools and communicate with school leaders regarding school level expectations for the following:

- Arrival/departure time

- Mentor teacher meetings
- Lesson planning
- Student records
- Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
- Emergency procedures
- Parent communication
- Daily work schedule
- Open house procedures
- Teacher professionalism

Additionally, mentors support the beginning teacher orientation during their school site visits that feature a meeting with the new teacher's assigned mentor as well as an introduction to the school.

## II. Teacher Licensure

The Department of Human Resources follows a documented process for identifying and verifying all beginning teachers through a thorough review of candidate transcripts and prior experience to ensure that teachers meet eligibility requirements for licensure in compliance with the State Board of Education. Teachers are required to pass all licensure exams for their content area and are assigned a teaching position in their area of licensure.

Teachers are eligible to convert to a continuing license once all required coursework has been successfully completed, all NCSBE approved teacher licensure exams have been passed, and three years of teaching have been completed. Teachers are not required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program when adding additional licensure areas to their continuing license.

## III. Optimum Working Conditions

The Department of Human Resources and the Office of New Teacher Support communicate state required working conditions for beginning teachers with school leaders. These include limited preparations, and in accordance with North Carolina State Board of Education Policy [TCED-016](#) and Guilford County Policy [GBBAA](#), beginning teachers are not assigned non-instructional duties nor extracurricular assignments unless they request them in writing. Additionally, care is taken to place the teacher in a position in which they will thrive, ensuring that new teachers serve students with a diverse range of abilities. The beginning teacher and the administrator directly supervising the BT must sign a district provided form approving any assignment of extracurricular duties.

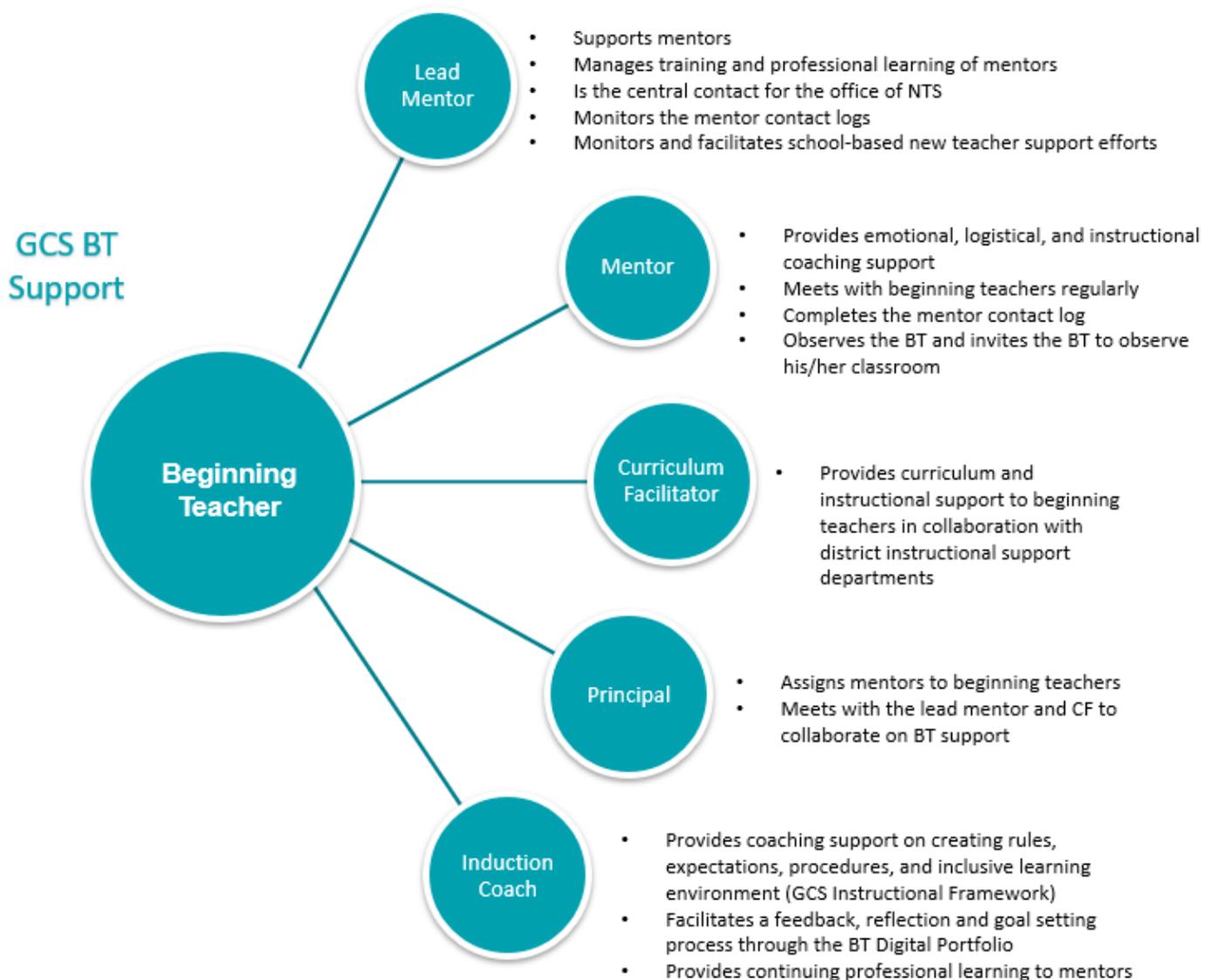
Human Resources utilizes the NCEES platform as well as a personnel management system called Scribbles to confidentially file and secure BT personnel files. Additionally, BT files are transferred to subsequent employing LEAs, charter schools or non-public institutions within the state in a timely manner.

#### IV. Layers of New Teacher Support

A system of layered support is in place to ensure that the beginning teacher is supported by a team that collaborates over the success of the new teacher.



The Office of New Teacher Support, the induction coach, the lead mentor, teacher mentors, and principal all work to provide a collaborative network of support for the beginning teacher.



## V. Mentor Teachers

Each first, second, and third year beginning teacher is assigned a site-based mentor. The mentor is assigned within the first month of hire and care is taken to ensure beginning teachers are in close proximity to their mentor. Administrators are provided guidelines for assigning mentors.

Appropriate candidates for mentors include school-based teachers on the same grade level or in the same subject area (if possible) or program facilitators (not school-based administrators). As outlined by the Department of Public Instruction, GCS uses the following criteria for selecting mentors:

- 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” on all standards on the most recent summative evaluation, or on standard 1 and 4 for teachers on an abbreviated evaluation cycle.

- If a principal determines that a teacher rated as “proficient” is the most appropriate mentor for a new teacher, the principal shall maintain records of the reasons for that determination. The Office of New Teacher Support collects this documentation annually.
- Principals may use the most recently available evaluation for teachers who lack an evaluation from the prior year. Teachers without evaluation data for two or more consecutive years shall not be eligible to serve as mentor teachers.
- Any teacher who is assigned to be a mentor to a BT must meet eligibility requirements in the year of the assignment. No mentor whose evaluation falls below the “proficient” level may continue to serve as a mentor to a BT, regardless of existing mentor-mentee relationships.
- The principal will use input from a variety of stakeholder groups to select appropriate mentors for beginning teachers, as well as using a process for mentor application that is transparent, clearly articulated, and uniformly applied. Principals invite accomplished and distinguished teachers to attend mentor training when a new hire is anticipated in an accompanying department. Once trained, the principal may pair the mentor with a new hire in their subject area or grade level.
- Mentors should possess licensure in the field in which the mentor is assigned, when possible.
- Mentors must have the support of the school’s principal to mentor.
- Mentors must receive initial mentor training on the NC Mentor Standards.
- Mentors must have completed their beginning teacher status.

GCS does not currently use retired teachers to serve as mentors, nor does GCS utilize the practice of assigning off-site mentors.

High-quality mentoring is dependent on the presence of a supportive environment, teacher engagement in instructional decision making, school leaders who facilitate the creation of clear and predictable decision-making processes, opportunities for mentor and beginning teacher professional learning, and time for educators to work collaboratively. Mentors are provided a mentor contact log in order to track new teacher support and growth. Mentors are expected to provide emotional, logistical, and instructional coaching to beginning teachers in their first year once a week, in their second year twice a month, and in their third year once a month. Mentors also create opportunities for their beginning teachers to observe their teaching. In addition, mentors observe and provide feedback on the instruction of their beginning teacher, with specific attention to improved instruction and learning while providing ongoing support and encouragement for the BT.

The Office of New Teacher Support is responsible for facilitating new mentor training. Mentors are trained on the NC 21st Century Mentoring curriculum module provided by the Department of Public Instruction and developed to support learning of the NC Mentor Standards. This training provides mentors with the 21st century skills and knowledge needed to support beginning teachers. The North Carolina 21st Century Mentoring Module assists mentors in implementing best practices for guiding beginning teachers to reach their fullest potential.

The Office of New Teacher Support works to provide leadership and professional learning experiences for mentors by providing a monthly mentor webinar series in which mentors across the district are able to participate in professional learning communities of mentoring practice.

## VI. Lead Mentors

In addition to the mentor teacher, each principal appoints a lead mentor for the school. The role of the lead mentor is to facilitate the mentoring process, plan seminars with beginning teachers, manage the training of mentors, monitor the activities of the mentor meetings, facilitate school-based new teacher support, and support mentors. The Office of New Teacher Support holds an annual meeting in August with all lead mentors to coordinate support for mentors and BTs. Additionally, lead mentors work closely with principals to pair mentors to mentees.

## VII. Induction Support Coaches

GCS has induction support coaches based at central office who provide coaching to first year teachers. The induction support coach provides targeted support to the beginning teacher following a coaching model that enacts a continuous coaching cycle of feedback on classroom observations, analysis of artifacts, facilitated teacher reflection around the instructional framework, and structured short-term goal setting. Induction coaches use the GCS Instructional Framework as their guide for providing specific support in the areas of creating inclusive learning environments and preparing for classrooms whose rules expectations and procedures create an effective, predictable learning environment for students. Coaches also work with BTs to facilitate communication with mentors, curriculum facilitators and administrators.

The induction coaches work to provide a psychologically safe environment in which some conversations between the coach and the BT are held confidential from those who evaluate the teacher. The induction coach collaborates with mentors and principals to identify specific new teacher needs and to differentiate coaching support for BT1s. Coaches also work with BT2s and BT3s upon the request of the principal or lead mentor.

Induction coaches review mentor logs regularly to ensure that all BT1 teachers are meeting with mentors a minimum of 20 minutes each week.

Principals work closely with the lead mentor and curriculum facilitator to identify specific areas of support needed for each new teacher. Through this partnership, principals ensure that beginning teachers complete all required or prescribed professional learning to support their growth and improvement in the profession.

## VIII. GCS Alternative Certification Track

In an effort to encourage more teacher candidates to teach, in 2008, the General Assembly of North Carolina passed Senate Bill 1115 granting Local Educational Agencies the right to offer an approved program of study to certify alternatively licensed candidates.

Guilford County Schools was the first district in the state to offer alternatively licensed secondary teachers an opportunity to apply to an in-district licensure program, GCS Alternative Certification Track (GCS-ACT).

GCS-ACT is designed around core [North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards](#) and supports the guiding mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education. It is a one-year, intensive program that provides research-based, practical classroom applications for lateral entry and residency license teachers. The program is designed to foster professional growth and opportunities for college graduates and mid-career professionals who have been hired as classroom teachers.

**GCS-ACT provides support through:**

- 1) Foundations of Teaching and Learning: weekly, skill-based instruction;
- 2) Instructional Coaching: one-to-one coaching to meet the individual needs of diverse learners throughout the district;
- 3) Explorations for Learning: learning tasks that fully immerse candidates into the school climate and culture;
- 4) A Training Institute: professional development workshops conducted by master teachers who are former graduates; and
- 5) Building Blocks: intensive summer coursework focused on unit design.

Completion of this program fulfills the state licensure requirements. Additionally, candidates must pass all state required licensure exams for their subject areas in order to obtain a Standard Professional I Teaching License.

**IX. Residency License Support for Teachers Not Enrolled in GCS ACT**

The Office of New Teacher Support will work with organizations including The New Teacher Support Program (NTSP) through UNCG and the New Teacher Center for additional support for Residency License teachers not enrolled in GCS ACT. The goal of the collaboration is to increase the capacity and retention of alternatively licensed teachers through comprehensive coaching and support. The collaboration will provide coaching specific to the needs of Residency License teachers in teaching best practices as well as support in preparing for state required licensure exams. Support begins with a comprehensive needs assessment to determine the teachers to be served and alignment to the GCS Instructional Framework. Examples of services include:

- Goal setting to prepare for licensure exams
- Intensive individualized instructional coaching provided weekly through face-to-face meetings
- Coaching framework that provides observation, feedback, reflection and goal-setting to improve practice
- Minimum of three professional learning sessions anchored in the NC Professional Teaching Standards

**X. Beginning Teacher Evaluation Process**

Guilford County Schools requires beginning teachers to participate in a formalized evaluation process following all criteria outlined in [GS 115C-333](#), State Board Policy [TCED-016](#), [EVAL-004](#), and [HB1030](#) section 8.32 (h) and (i), in addition to local guidelines. Principals conduct this formal evaluation process in which teachers actively participate through the use of self-assessment, reflection, presentation of artifacts, and classroom demonstration. This evaluation process includes an orientation, self-assessment, a professional development plan (PDP), four formal observations and a summative evaluation.

School administrators are responsible for conducting an orientation on the teacher evaluation process within two weeks of the teacher's first day. During this orientation, principals provide the teachers with the evaluation rubric, policy, and published schedule of evaluation activities.

Additionally, beginning teachers are given an overview of the evaluation process during Right Start Orientation, including the self-assessment and PDP procedure. The self-assessment guides the development of the PDP

with input and guidance from the site-based mentor and/or induction support coach. The self-assessment and PDP are discussed in the pre-observation conference prior to the first announced observation. The PDP is based on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards and includes goals, strategies, and assessment of the BT's progress in improving professional skills and is developed in collaboration with the principal and mentor.

Formative assessment conferences are held at the beginning, middle, and end of each year with the beginning teacher to facilitate reflection on the BT's progress in meeting their PDP goals. The PDP is signed for each of these conferences by the BT, mentor, and principal.

Principals provide for a minimum of four observations throughout the year, three completed by an administrator with at least one observation completed by the principal, and one by a peer teacher (not the BT's mentor). The evaluation calendar is prepared by GCS through the collaboration of the departments of Professional Learning and Leadership and Human Resources and ensures required spacing of observations throughout the year as well as indicating the date for the final summative evaluation conference.

GCS follows all requirements of HB1030 section 8.32 (h) and (i). Some of the expectations of this policy include:

- The evaluation should occur early enough in the school year to provide adequate time for the development and implementation of a mandatory improvement plan if one is recommended.
- All teachers with less than two years of experience in low-performing or non-low performing schools must be formally observed at least four times annually. Three of the observations must be conducted by an administrator, with at least one being the principal. One of the observations must be conducted by a peer teacher.
- Two of the four formal observations must occur within the first semester, and if practical, one of the observations must occur within the first grading period.

## **XI. BT Digital Portfolio**

A cumulative beginning teacher digital portfolio is established during the new teacher's formal orientation and is maintained throughout the year by the induction coach and the teacher. The purpose of the portfolio is to provide structured coaching and support between the Office of New Teacher Support and the beginning teacher. The portfolio contains a reflection process as well as a collaborative coaching instrument. Both tools lead the induction coach and the beginning teacher through a cycle of continuous support in observation, feedback, reflection, and short-term goal setting.

## **XII. Evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Support Program**

To ensure program quality, effectiveness, and efficient management of the Beginning Teacher Support Program, multiple data sources are utilized, including the following:

- Department of Public Instruction new teacher support work plan BTSP review process
- Beginning teacher data dashboard
- GCS retention data
- Formative and summative evaluations of the Right Start orientation program
- Number of active, trained mentors
- North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey

- Surveys of beginning teachers to collect information about all levels of support, including induction support coaches, lead mentors, and site-based mentors
- Student achievement data
- Teacher evaluation data for BT1s and BT2s
- Submission of BT Data for the State of the Teaching Profession report
- District participation in and demonstration of proficiency in the Department of Public Instruction's BTSP Monitoring activities in compliance with State Board Policy, which includes an annual BTSP peer review process

An analysis of these data sources, as well as participation in the Piedmont-Triad region of the NC Department of Public Instruction's beginning teacher support work plan, informs program improvement.

### **Local Board Approval of Beginning Teacher Support Plan**

The Beginning Teacher Support Plan has been submitted to the Guilford County Schools Board of Education for approval on September 10, 2019. The plan and documentation of local board approval will be filed by the Office of New Teacher Support and the Department of Public Instruction through the Guilford County Schools' Regional Consultant.