

Polk County Schools

Beginning Teacher Support Program Plan

Revised 4/17/26



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Polk County Schools

State Board of Education Policy: TCED-016

Beginning Teacher Support Program Standards

- Standard 1: Systematic Support for High Quality Induction Programs – This standard is designed to promote the commitment of all stakeholders in seeing mentoring and induction programs succeed. Key program elements include the creation of an institutional plan, demonstrating institutional commitment, and support and principal engagement.
- Standard 2: Mentor Selection, Development, and Support – This standard articulates the process and criteria for mentor selection, discusses mentor roles and responsibilities, and delineates foundational mentor training. Key program elements include mentor selection, defining the role of mentors, and mentor professional development.
- Standard 3: Mentoring for Instructional Excellence – Mentors are given protected time to provide beginning teachers with support to achieve success in the areas set forth by the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. Key program elements include providing time for mentors and beginning teachers, ensuring mentoring is focused on instruction, and addressing issues of diversity.
- Standard 4: Beginning Teacher Professional Development: Professional development is provided to beginning teachers that orients them to their new career and supports their efforts to meet the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards. Key program elements include structured orientation to the school site, as well as professional development designed to meet the unique needs of beginning teachers that is aligned with the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, and the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation System.
- Standard 5: Formative Assessment of Candidates and Programs – New teachers and mentoring programs are monitored and supported using a formative assessment system to guide their work. Key program elements include formative assessment systems and program evaluation

Introduction:

Polk County Schools Beginning Teacher Support Program is intended to guide practice and inform stakeholders to ensure teachers, new to the profession in Polk County, are given the support and resources they need to grow professionally and perform their function as teacher in an effective and efficient manner. The Beginning Teacher Support Program will also identify and describe the protocol and procedures in place to support the orientation and induction of beginning teachers in Polk County. Polk County Schools recommends that individual schools and principals develop their own extensions of this program to meet the specific needs of beginning teachers.

Teachers with fewer than three years of experience, regardless of licensure type and licensure pathway (e.g., temporary license, residency license, and initial professional license) are required to participate in the NC Beginning Teacher Support Program for three years.

Describe adequate provisions for efficient management of the program.

Coordinating and providing support for Polk County Schools' Beginning Teachers is a joint effort between the Superintendent, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Director of Personnel, other district-level directors, principals and mentors.

Designate, at the local level, an official to verify eligibility of beginning teachers for a continuing license.

The Director of Personnel is the official designated by Polk County Schools who is responsible for verifying that all beginning teachers meet the requirements for NCDPI's assignment of initial licensure. The Director of Personnel and the Director of Curriculum & Instruction work together to identify which teachers will/will not be included in the BTSP, based on appropriate experience and position held. The Director of Personnel and principals are responsible for ensuring beginning teachers are assigned in the area of their licensure. The Director of Personnel will follow NCSBE requirements for all required licensure tests and will be responsible for the license conversion of beginning teachers.

Provide for a formal orientation for beginning teachers which includes a description of available services, training opportunities, the teacher evaluation process, and the process for achieving a continuing license.

Beginning teachers will be encouraged to attend the Beginning Teacher Orientation facilitated by WRESA and/or complete the BT Orientation Module provided by NCDPI. Beginning teachers hired after August 1, will complete the BT Orientation Module and participate in a condensed orientation program facilitated by Polk County Schools Director of Curriculum & Instruction. This orientation will include an overview of the mission and goals of the NC State Board of Education, the mission and goals of Polk County Schools, and applicable district policies and procedures. The orientation will also outline services and training opportunities offered by state, regional and local entities to inform practice, improve their craft, and assimilate to teaching in North Carolina and Polk County. Additional orientation components will address the NC Code of Ethics for Educators, NCEES (North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System) for teacher evaluations, the optimum working conditions for Beginning Teachers, the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, the latest NC accountability information, the process for achieving continuing licensure, the safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint and the TWC (Teacher Working Conditions) survey. Beginning teachers will also receive specific information to their teaching assignment and meet and work with their assigned mentor on school-specific procedures, rules and expectations. Mentors will assist school administrators during the orientation process to ensure beginning teachers receive training and/or information on availability of instructional resources, access to technology in the school, and best practice tips. Polk County Schools will deliver orientation through face-to-face and digital formats with emphasis being placed on the provision of meeting time at the assigned school for mentor and mentee to review the information presented in the orientation process. Polk County Schools Director of Curriculum & Instruction will be responsible for organizing and delivering the Beginning Teacher Orientation Program.

Each beginning teacher shall be observed at least three times annually by a qualified Polk County Schools administrator or designee (at least once annually by a qualified school administrator), and at least once annually by a peer teacher. Each observation must last for at least one continuous period of instructional time and must be followed by a post-conference. All persons who observe beginning teachers must be appropriately trained in the NCEES platform and evaluation rubric. The required observations must be appropriately spaced throughout the school year (fall-winter-spring). Mentors will assist in the evaluation process by helping answer questions related to the NCEES standards; reviewing the beginning teacher's self-assessment to help establish PDP goals; working with the beginning teacher to address any standards marked as "developing"; and by providing appropriate mentor

signatures, verifications and documentation. Principals will meet with all beginning teachers to discuss and sign the NCEES summative evaluation document at the end of the school year.

Each May, through an automated process, the Licensure Section converts licenses to continuing for those teachers who are employed in Polk County Schools. The Director of Personnel is the official designated by Polk County Schools, who is responsible for approving the acceptance of the continuing license through this process. If a teacher has not taught for three years and successfully completed the Beginning Teacher Support Program, the Director of Personnel will immediately submit a form indicating the denial of a continuing license to the Licensure Section. For teachers who are completing alternative routes to licensure and who successfully complete the Beginning Teacher Support Program, the Director of Personnel will submit the recommendation for a continuing license to be granted. The Director of Personnel will work with all Polk County principals to ensure this process is completed correctly and in a timely manner, so that deserving teachers are awarded continuing licensure when appropriate.

Address compliance with the optimum working conditions for beginning teachers identified by the SBE.

Polk County Schools believes that beginning teachers need the opportunity to develop into capable and effective teachers through the provision of optimum working conditions in the district and in the school they are assigned. Polk County Schools will make every effort to satisfy the following required working conditions: mentor assigned early, in the licensure area, and in close proximity; limited preparations; limited non-instructional duties; limited number of exceptional and/or difficult students; and no extracurricular assignments unless requested in writing by the beginning teacher. Polk County will adhere to these conditions as long as it is feasible, based on a school's faculty and/or structure.

Address compliance with the mentor selection, assignment, and training guidelines identified by the SBE.

Polk County Schools shall select excellent, experienced, and qualified teachers to serve as mentors. Based on SBE policy and GS115C-296€, these mentors must be rated at least at the "proficient" level on the North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System (NCEES). Ratings of proficient or higher on all five standards on the most recent summative evaluation, or on Standards 1 and 4 on an abbreviated evaluation must be obtained. Teachers without evaluation data for two or more consecutive years shall not be eligible to serve as mentor teachers, unless the mentor is a retired teacher. Retired teachers are eligible to serve as mentors. Principals shall determine which mentor teacher best meets the needs of each new teacher and shall assign the most appropriate mentor teacher to new teachers, with priority consideration for mentors rated as "accomplished" or "distinguished." If a principal determines that a teacher rated as "proficient" or a retired teacher is the most appropriate mentor for a new teacher, the principal shall maintain records of the reasons for that determination. 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. A teacher may be a mentor at a different school building from which the mentor is assigned if the principals of each school and the mentor teacher approve the assignment, the mentor is rated at least "accomplished" (received ratings of accomplished or higher on three of five standards including Standard 4

on the most recent summative, or on Standard 4 on an abbreviated evaluation), and the BT's principal maintains a record of the reasons for selecting the mentor from a different school building.

- Mentor Assignment Guidelines shall follow BTSP Standard 2:

2a. Mentor Selection

- Selection criteria include input from a variety of stakeholder groups.
- Mentor selection criteria are clearly articulated by program leadership.
- Process for mentor application and selection is transparent and uniformly applied.

2b. Mentor Role

- Mentors support beginning teacher orientation and provide logistical and emotional support.
- Mentors focus their primary support on improving instruction and learning.
- Mentors provide ongoing support and encouragement for the beginning teacher.

2c. Mentor Professional Development

- Mentors receive initial training regarding their role as mentors and their responsibilities in the induction program.
- Mentors receive ongoing training to advance their knowledge and skills.
- Mentors have opportunities to participate in professional learning communities of mentoring practice.

The Director of Curriculum & Instruction will be responsible for ensuring training and support for mentors. Mentors will participate in training regarding their role as mentors and their responsibilities prior to the Beginning Teacher Orientation. Formal training for mentors will be offered through the NCEES professional development module, "21st Century Mentoring: Self-Paced" or in a face-to-face training session led by the Western District's Regional Education Facilitator. Mentor training will focus on the Mentor Standards presented in the NC Beginning Teacher Handbook. Polk County Schools will also develop and maintain a core group of highly-trained mentors to serve as school-based mentor leaders. Polk County Schools believes the selection of a well-qualified and effective mentor is essential to creating induction programs that support beginning teacher development, teacher retention, and improved student learning. Polk County Schools will make every effort to work with school-based administrators to select and assign mentors based on state guidelines.

Provide for the involvement of the principal or the principal's designee in supporting the beginning teachers.

The principal and/or the principal's designee at each school will play a vital role in supporting beginning teachers. Principals will work to ensure optimum working conditions for beginning teachers; to select appropriate mentors; to provide for NCEES observations and evaluations; to prepare and monitor Professional Development Plans; and to identify and ensure delivery of needed services and technical assistance.

Provide for a minimum of 4 observations per year in accordance GS115C-333, using the instruments adopted by the SBE for such purposes. The plan must address the appropriate spacing of observations throughout the year, and specify a date by which the annual summative evaluation is to be completed.

The Director of Curriculum will provide this yearly teacher observation/evaluation schedule to all school administrators at the Administrators' Retreat in early August 2020:

POLK COUNTY SCHOOLS
NC TEACHER OBSERVATION/EVALUATION PROCESS will follow this sequence yearly:

NCEES Training & Orientation
Self-Assessment due
Pre-Conferences
Initial PDP due
Observations & post-conferences (Round 1)
Observations Round #1 completed for BT1s and BT2s
Observations Round #1 completed
Observations & post-conferences (Round 2)
Observation Round #2 completed for BT1s and BT2s
Mid-Year PDP due
Observations Round #2 completed
Peer Observations (Round 3)
Peer Observations Round #3 completed
Observations & post-conferences (Round 4)
Observations Round #4 completed
End-of-Year PDP due
Summary Evaluation conferences

Provide for the preparation of a Professional Development Plan (PDP) by each beginning teacher in collaboration with the principal or the principal's designee, and the mentor teacher.

Polk County Schools, as part of the NCEES, will require each beginning teacher to develop a Professional development Plan (PDP) in collaboration with his/her principal (or designee) and mentor. The PDP will be based on the NC Professional Teaching Standards and the NCEES Self-Assessment of the beginning teacher's knowledge, dispositions and performance to date. The NCEES Self-Assessment will inform the development of goals, strategies, and activities in the PDP aimed at improving teaching proficiency and professional skills. After the Initial PDP is developed, formative conferences with the principal and mentor will then be held mid-year and at year's end to analyze and reflect on progress made toward the beginning teacher's goals established in the PDP. The process will be repeated each year the beginning teacher participates in the BTSP. Signatures of the beginning teacher, mentor and principal are required for each formative PDP conference.

Provide for a formal means of identifying and delivering services and technical assistance needed by beginning teachers.

Scheduled monthly meetings with mentors and/or the Director of Curriculum & Instruction will provide opportunities to identify and deliver services and technical assistance needed by beginning teachers. Online Google documents, in the form of Questions & Answers, will be available throughout the year and updated monthly by the BTSP Coordinator. These documents will be a place for beginning teachers to record their questions and receive answers/advice from the BTSP Coordinator. School –level staff meetings will also be a means for identifying and then delivering services and technical assistance. Google form surveys will be a way to collect information and identify areas whereby services and technical assistance may be delivered. Individual email and/or text requests from beginning teachers may be used to identify needed services and technical assistance. Beginning teachers will be expected to complete professional development that is required or prescribed by Polk County Schools.

Provide for the maintenance of a cumulative beginning teacher file that contains the PDP and evaluation report(s).

All digital PDP and evaluation reports can be accessed through the online North Carolina Educator Effectiveness System (NCEES). Principals are asked to produce and keep on file, following each summative evaluation, a paper copy of each beginning teacher’s Record of Teacher Activities in NCEES. Other personnel documentation is saved electronically using the school system’s Google Chrome system. Any paper copies of personnel documentation are kept on file in the Director of Personnel’s office or in the office of the Director of Curriculum & Instruction.

Provide for the timely transfer of the cumulative beginning teacher file to successive employing LEAs, charter schools, or non-public institutions within the state upon the authorization of the beginning teacher.

Polk County Schools Director of Curriculum & Instruction and BTSP Coordinator will work with Polk County Schools Director of Personnel to prepare and transfer Beginning Teacher files to subsequent employing LEAs, charter schools, or non-public institutions within NC within five business days upon the authorization of the beginning teacher and a written request from the subsequent employing LEA, charter school, or non-public institution.

Describe a plan for the systematic evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Support Program to assure program quality, effectiveness, and efficient management.

To measure the performance of Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) as stated in GS 115C-269.35, each Beginning Teacher (BT) will complete the recent graduate survey and the principal of the school during each BT’s first year of teaching will complete the employer survey at the end of the first year of teaching. Completion of the recent graduate survey will be required by the beginning teacher (BT) and the employer survey by the principal of the school during the BT’s first year of teaching, following the completion of an approved Educator Preparation Program (EPP) as part of the requirements to measure the performance of EPPs stated in GS 115C-269.35. The surveys will be administered at the end of each applicable year. Polk County Schools will participate in an annual self-assessment and a regionally-based peer review process. Polk County Schools will also collect information for the State of the Teaching Profession report. As with any program or initiative in Polk County, assessment of the BTSP will be an ongoing and dynamic process to ensure that annual, peer, and five-year reviews show the necessary data and feedback to produce an accurate evaluation of the program. Polk County

reserves the right to amend this plan to address any deficiency found during the continual monitoring process, in order to demonstrate proficiency in BTSP Monitoring for compliance with State Board Policy.

Document that the local board of education has adopted the LEA plan, or that the charter school or non-public institution plan has been approved by the SBE.

This plan was revised based on the new SBE policy #TCED-016, Section IV, #1, seventh bullet. The NCDPI Western Regional Education Facilitator reviewed and approved the LEA plan, Polk County Schools 2021-2022 Beginning Teacher Support Program, on October 8, 2021. The BTSP plan was presented to the Polk County Schools Board of Education on October 18, 2021. The Polk County Schools Board of Education voted to adopt the LEA plan for the Beginning Teacher Support Program on October 18, 2021.

Conclusion

Polk County Schools asserts this plan meets both the requirements of establishing and implementing a Beginning Teacher Support Program for Polk County Schools. Adjustments may be made to information, activities, dates, schedules and induction topics, if necessary. Polk County Schools wishes to express gratitude to the Polk County Board of Education and all instructional staff for their assistance in planning, facilitating, taking part in, and supporting these beginning teacher initiatives.

Revised Approved Date: _____

BTSP Coordinator:

Jan Crump _____ Date: _____

Regional Education Facilitator:

Angela Eudy _____ Date: _____

School Board Chairman:

_____ Date: _____

Mike Ashworth