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To: Board of Education

From: Kevin Lancaster

Date: September 12, 2011

Re: Beginning Teacher Plan – Consent Agenda Item

Attached you will find the proposed BT (Beginning Teacher) Plan for your consideration.

I will be available to answer any questions that you may have.

This is an action item and will require a vote.

Montgomery County Schools

Beginning Teacher Licensure (BT) Plan

Background Statement

The Montgomery County School System is comprised of eleven schools which vary in size and organizational pattern. From the central office, these schools range in distance from one to fifteen miles. The average LEA student enrollment figure is 4,300 and the number of certified employees serving the student population is approximately 325. This number includes approximately ten library media specialists, twelve counselors, and ten instructional coaches. During the past five-year period, the number of beginning teachers hired fluctuated from approximately thirty to forty.

In order to accommodate the intent of the Beginning Licensure Program and to meet the unique needs of the LEA, the Assistant Superintendent of Operations will implement this program using the lead mentors designated in each school. Funds from state and local staff development monies will be allotted (as needed) for training and lead mentor expenses as outlined in the plan. (based on availability of funds)

Collaboration efforts with the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT) and the North Carolina Teacher Academy have been established. In addition, resources within 70 miles of the LEA have been tapped from Pfeiffer, UNC-Pembroke, Gardner-Webb, St. Andrews, Sandhills Community College, UNC-Greensboro, and Montgomery Community College. Distance Learning opportunities from Montgomery Community College, Western Carolina, and East Carolina have also been accessed.

Involvement in Program Development

Design of the Beginning Teacher Program was completed by a planning team that consisted of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, principals, and lead mentors. As the program proceeds, more members from each area will be involved in assessing the program and helping to make any needed changes or adjustments.

Program Administration

The **Assistant Superintendent of Operations** will be responsible for the general administration and supervision of the program. An initial licensure system team composed of lead mentors, mentors, instructional coaches, assistant principals, and principals will execute the components of the projected plan under the authority of the Assistant Superintendent of Operations.

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations will have the primary responsibility for overseeing the training, orientation, support system, and evaluation activities. Periodic feedback will be given to the Assistant Superintendent of Operations by the initial licensure system team. Review of schedules and assignments will be made throughout the school year to ascertain that the program requirements have been met.

The **role of the lead mentor** will be to oversee mentor/mentee relationships in the individual schools, provide building level orientation prior to the start of school, facilitate monthly meetings with mentors/mentees, assist principals with the assignment of mentees to mentors, observe as needed, and collect documentation as required by county/state including mentor logs. The lead mentor will also serve as a mentor to second year teachers within their school, as well as serve as a “buddy” mentor to third year teachers.

The **role of the mentor** will be to provide support mentees on a day-to-day basis, assist mentee with writing his/her IGP, provide appropriate technical assistance, monitor the completion of the cumulative file, conference with mentee on regular basis and keep logs of meetings, and provide feedback. All first year teachers will be assigned an individual mentor, preferably one who is closely matched with their assigned grade level or subject area. Lead mentors, and other school based mentors will share in the responsibility of mentoring second and third year teachers.

The **role of the instructional coach** is to provide technical assistance with curriculum issues, provide support in using pacing guides and standard course of study materials, observe classrooms as needed, provide staff development opportunities, and to confer with lead mentors as needed. Due to current lack of funding for lead mentor positions, instructional coaches will provide support for BT's in their individual schools.

The Lead Mentor/Mentee support team at each school is responsible for the program implementation at the school level which will include monthly meetings with BT's(Beginning Teachers) expanding on topics that include: Individual Growth Plans, professionalism, classroom management, curriculum planning with the standard course of study goals and objectives, Personal Education Plans, classroom strategies, technology tools, active learning, observations and summative evaluations, parent conferences, and time and stress management. This support team will hold an orientation for BT's prior to school that will include: tour of school, staff introductions, orientation to building procedures and policies.

Formal Orientation Process

Each Beginning Teacher will participate in a county-wide in-service prior to the first day of school. The training will include:

- An in-depth analysis of the teacher evaluation instrument
- An introduction to available support services available through county office
- Overview of benefits/financial information
- The BT process
- State and LEA expectations
- Per the availability of funds, the district will continue to partner with NCCAT to provide the Connections program for first year teachers which is a ten day professional development series. Session topics include: classroom management, differentiation, assessment, brain-based learning, and meeting the educational needs of students in poverty.

Each Beginning Teacher will participate in an individual school orientation prior to the first day of school. The orientation will include:

- Tour of the school
- Introduction of staff
- Orientation to the building
- Procedures and policies
- Model best practices for the first days of school
- Mentor/Mentee time in classroom

Optimum Working Conditions for Initially Licensed Teachers

The following optimum working conditions will be adhered to so that beginning teachers have the opportunity to develop into exemplary teachers:

- Assign beginning teachers in their area of licensure
- Assign mentors early in close proximity(location and/or certification area) to beginning teachers
- Provide orientation that includes state and school expectations
- Require no extracurricular assignments (Policies and Benefits Manual 14.3.1)
- Limit pulling beginning teachers from the classroom first 30 school days
- Provide a Master Teacher (retired or unassigned certified teacher) for first year teachers one day prior to school start to assist with planning and organizing (when funding allows)

Mentor Teacher Selection Criteria

- Continue to grow professionally
- Committed to and supportive of peers
- Minimum of four years of *successful* teaching with two in Montgomery County

- Listen and communicate effectively
- Recommendation by principal and lead mentor

Mentor Training

In order to train and support mentor teachers in their efforts to assist beginning teachers they will complete an accredited 24 hour mentor training program, will have a yearly refresher session organized by the Assistant Superintendent of Operations. Each mentor will participate in meetings throughout the year to stay abreast of information and needs of the BT's.

Principal Support

Principals are responsible for summative performance appraisals based upon the five standards of the NC Teacher Evaluation Instrument and for employment recommendations. Using prescribed forms, the principal will be involved in the pre-and post-conference for the formal observation of each BT. When supervisors or other teachers are involved in the observation, they will be present for the post-conference. Principals will be responsible for designating mentor assignments in collaboration with the lead mentor. Principals will keep mentors updated in order to help mentors best meet the needs of the mentees. Principals will work with mentors to collaborate with the beginning teacher to develop their PDP. Principals will use such strategies as allowing BT's to observe master teachers using best practices so BT's gain the skills needed to be successful in the classroom.

Observations

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations will adhere to the state recommended guidelines for conducting observations and conferences. *The Executive Director of Personnel must ensure that all BT's observations are appropriately spaced throughout the year, and specify a date by which the annual summative evaluation is to be completed.* The Assistant Superintendent of Operations shall review each school's observation/conference schedule and confirm that the following procedures have been followed and completed.

First, Second, and Third Year Teachers:

- BT teachers will be observed by the principal or his/her designee (if needed) during the first observation period. The principal or his/her designee will conduct the second and third required observations.

- A teacher trained in the NC Teacher Evaluation Instrument, other than the assigned mentor, will be involved in one of the four observation phases (peer observation).
- The assigned mentor/lead mentor/ may observe at any time to make suggestions to the mentee; however, the observation will not be a part of the evaluation process.
- When the need arises, the principal may request an observation by the Assistant Superintendent of Operations or other county office staff.

Using prescribed forms, the principal will be involved in the pre-and post-conferences for the formal observation of each BT. When county office staff is involved in the observation, the principal will be present for the post-conference. Follow-up conferences will be held by the individual(s) making the observations.

The following stipulation will assist in regulating the observation/conference settings.

- Of the four required observations, the first must be a formal, announced observation and the other three formal (announced or unannounced).
- All post-conferences must be conducted within ten (10) days following the observations.

Professional Development Plan

A Professional Development Plan (formerly known as an Individual Growth Plan) will be developed by the BT and mentor following completion of the self-assessment rubric at the beginning of the year. The purpose of the PDP is to facilitate and document the systematic growth of the BT. At midyear, the PDP will be reviewed by the BT and mentor and by the BT, mentor, and principal at the end of the year.

Technical Assistance

Means of identifying and delivering services to BT's:

- PDP's
- Observations
- Self-evaluation
- Collaborative meetings
- Workshops (school and county level)
- Conferences (curriculum specific)
- Professional/curriculum libraries
- Accomplished teachers
- Connections (NCCAT)

- Learning Bridges (computer program)
- Learnnc.org (New Teacher Support)
- NCWISE OWL
- NCpublicschools.org (Curriculum/Licensure)
- Higher Education coursework

Cumulative File of the Beginning Teacher

For each year of the initial licensure program, the cumulative file should contain:

- Copy of teaching license
- Documentation for completion of required new teacher orientation or Lateral Entry 10-day orientation
- Observation documents for the 4 required formal observations (3 by the principal or designee and one by a teacher)
- Summative evaluation by the principal
- Professional Development Plan (PDP)
- Monthly Mentor Logs
- Log of professional/staff development including contact hours and dates of attendance
- Record of teacher evaluation activities

Evaluation of Beginning Teacher Induction Program

BT's and mentors are surveyed by mid-May as a part of the annual evaluation process for our Initial Licensure Program. These surveys will be reviewed by the lead mentors and a summary with recommendations submitted to the Initial Licensure System Team. These surveys indicate what programs or activities were beneficial as well as those that were not as effective. This information is used to plan for the following year.

Record Transfer

It is the duty of the Assistant Superintendent of Operations to ensure a timely transfer of the cumulative beginning teacher file to successive employing LEA's, charter schools, or non-public institutions within the state upon the authorization of the beginning teacher.

Continuing License

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations and staff members will verify eligibility of beginning teachers for a continuing license on a year to year basis.