New Hanover County Schools
Beginning Teacher Support Program

A. STAKEHOLDERS IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Efforts to design the New Hanover County Beginning Teacher Support Program began in January of 1984 when the LEA (Local Education Agency) became a pilot unit in the beginning teacher component of the Quality Assurance Program. Input from a “Beginning Teacher Planning Team” comprised of members from both the LEA and IHE (Institute of Higher Education) were utilized in formation of the original LEA plan. Since the original plan, revisions have been made from internal reviews from the LEA as well as external input from the supporting IHE.

B. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

1. Conceptual Framework for Program Implementation

The Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP) is a 3-year period of support and assessment for novice teachers. At the end of this period, the teacher is granted or denied a Standard Professional 2 (SP2) License based on:
   - The individual must have 3 years of successful teaching experience, at least one of which is in North Carolina.
   - The individual must have the LEA recommendation.
   - The individual must complete any professional development activities prescribed by the LEA.
   - The individual must be deemed at least accomplished in all standards on the summary rating in order to be recommended for an SP2 license according to the New Hanover County Board of Education Policy 6233.

If an SP2 License is granted, it is issued with a five-year renewal cycle.

The fundamental purpose of the BTSP is to offer support for an individual’s professional growth during the first three years of employment. The New Hanover County Schools’ support system is described in section C of this document.

Teachers with fewer than three years of experience (normally considered to be public school experience) are issued a Standard Professional 1 (SP1) License and must participate in the BTSP.

Each BT in New Hanover County has a minimum of four formal observations annually. The first one must be announced. One formal observation is performed by a peer observer as recommended by the Excellent Schools Act. The remaining two observations must be conducted by an administrator and may be announced or unannounced.

Each Beginning Teacher employee is required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program for three years. Beginning teachers employed for full-time service will be considered to have participated for one (1) full year if they participate for six (6) successive calendar months in the same LEA. BTs employed under a temporary contract prior to a predetermined December
date and for less than six (6) successive calendar months in a single year will not be enrolled in the BTS Program.

Individuals hired for at least 50% of the time will be enrolled in the BTS Program. These individuals can complete BTSP requirements in three years. The individual will not move to SP2 until all requirements have been fulfilled and approved by the Beginning Teacher Support Program Coordinator in collaboration with the Licensure Supervisor. Upon successful completion of BTSP requirements, the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources shall recommend the BT to have the certificate converted to a SP2 License.

2. Overall Administration and Organization

The New Hanover County Schools’ BTS Program emphasizes professional growth and support as well as licensure. The BTSP Supervisor is responsible for the overall coordination of the program. Professional growth and support activities are coordinated through the collaborative efforts of Human Resources and Instruction and Curriculum Department and status assignments are coordinated through the Certification Office.

At the end of the BT’s third year of employment, the BTSP Coordinator and the Certification Supervisor will review performance records and staff development evidence in order to identify those BTs who have met program standards. The Licensure Specialist will subsequently inform the locally designated official who will make the licensure recommendations to the Department of Public Instruction.

The Licensure Specialist will prepare Form C for the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resource to make the appropriate recommendation regarding continuing certification. The primary evaluators for BTs are responsible for summative performance appraisals from which recommendations for SP1s are made. Licensure decisions are legally and clearly separate from employment decisions. The issuance of a license is not a property right. Each decision has a different purpose and the two decisions are separate. Licensure is a State Board of Education responsibility and employment is a local board of education responsibility.

C. SYSTEM SUPPORT TEAM

New Hanover County Schools believe strongly that effective support to help new teachers begin their careers is in the best interest of every person connected with the schools. We believe that providing that support requires interest, caring, and other personal and professional contributions from all members of the school community.

1. Components of the Support System Team

Responsibility for assigning mentors for first, second, and third year beginning teachers and setting up a support system team for the SP1 teacher will be shared by the school
administrator, the BTSP Supervisor, and the Evaluation Specialist. In situations of need, the support system may be expanded to include curriculum instruction specialists, Institution of Higher Education (IHE) representative(s) and any other individuals deemed appropriate by the School-Based Administration and the BTSP Supervisor. Additional persons from other LEAs and NC State Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) may be invited to serve as a resource. In all arrangements, the degree of involvement may vary according to the needs of the SP1.

**Principal**
The principal shares responsibility for providing support to the SP1. Other individuals, such as other school administrators, may perform the same role of the principal if designated.

**Trained Mentors**
Based on the belief that quality mentors are a critical key to the success of beginning teachers, providing needed emotional, instructional and organizational support, each novice teacher is to be assigned a qualified, well-trained mentor as soon as possible after employment. To ensure that the mentor has sufficient time to provide support to the beginning teacher, it is recommended that the mentor teacher be assigned not more than two beginning teachers at a time. The principal (or designee) must assure that the mentor is provided sufficient time to meet with and support the beginning teacher.

The following guidelines for mentor teacher selection have been adopted:

a. Successful teaching in the area of licensure
   - Appraisal ratings among the highest in the school regardless of instrument/process used;
   - Strong recommendation from principal and peers;

b. Commitment
   - Willingness to serve as a mentor;
   - Willingness to participate in on-going annual staff development related to mentoring;

c. Other
   - Preference for career status teachers who have experience in the district norms, culture, and mission as well as the state’s goals (ABCs), strategic priorities, and standard course of study;
   - Preference given to those who have successfully completed a mentor training program.

In New Hanover County, assigned mentors are not to conduct any of the four required formal observations of their mentees. Mentors may assist in the formal observations of beginning teachers that they are not assigned to mentor.

**Peer Observation**
Each beginning teacher receives the services of a Peer Observer who provides technical support in the form of observations and feedback to help the Beginning Teacher refine teaching practices. The Peer Observer also serves as a resource that helps the Beginning
Teacher by (a) locating needed resources, (b) identifying exemplary teachers to observe, and (c) clarifying observation and evaluation procedures in the system. The Peer Observer conducts one of the four required observations on first, second, and/or third year teachers.

**Professional Development Plan (PDP)**
A formal document as mandated by the state developed cooperatively by the BT and support team which delineates professional growth goals and proposed strategies for increasing one’s skills.

**North Carolina Educator Evaluation System-McREL**
A document as mandated by the state that shows demonstrated success in the job assignment.

2. **Coordination and Monitoring of Support System Activities**

The coordination of the support system activities will be the responsibility of the BTSP Supervisor in the Human Resources Department along with assistance from the BT’s support system team.

**D. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

1. **Formal Orientation Process**

A formal 3-day orientation session for beginning teachers hired prior to the beginning of the school year is scheduled before the students arrive. This orientation is conducted by the Human Resources Department. Beginning teachers employed during the school year also receive an orientation. This orientation will be conducted by the Beginning Teacher Supervisor or designee.

The orientation topics may include:
- Overview of state and local strategic aims, goals, policies, and procedures
- Overview of state and local curriculum
- Overview of the State’s ABC Program
- Description of employment benefits
- Description of available services and training opportunities
- Examination of Harry Wong’s *First Days of School*
- Requirements of House Bill 1032
- Introduction to NHCS Policies

Revised September 19, 2011
Administrators are informed as to the importance of faculty support of BTs and the optimum working conditions for beginning teachers as revised by the State Board of Education in August 1999 to reflect legislative action.

Research indicates that beginning teachers are often placed in difficult assignments that do not allow them the opportunity to learn and grow as professionals. The beginning teacher is often assigned the most difficult students, multiple preparations, and multiple extra-curricular assignments. These working conditions prohibit on-the-job learning and negatively influence teacher job satisfaction.

To ensure that beginning teachers have the opportunity to develop into capable teachers, the following working conditions are strongly recommended:

- Assignment in the appropriate licensure area;
- mentor assigned early and in close proximity for 3 years;
- orientation that includes state, district, and school expectations;
- not be expected to float between classrooms unless it can not be avoided
- limited preparations;
- limited exceptional or difficult students;
- minimal non-instructional duties [Required by GS115C-47(18a)] ; and
- no extra-curricular activities unless the initially licensed teacher requests the assignment in writing [Required by GS115C-47(18a)]

These requirements will be shared with administrators on an annual basis at an administrators’ informational meeting or in writing by the BTSP Supervisor.

2. Observation/Data Collection Procedures

Observations and data collection procedures shall follow the NC Educator Evaluation System-McREL.

For each Standard Professional I licensed teacher, the principal (designee) shall provide for the execution of the observations. There shall be a minimum of four observations per year (GS115C-333) - the first an announced observation which must be for at least one period of instructional activity (45 minutes minimum), proceeded by a pre-conference and followed by a post-conference. The other three may be announced or unannounced, for the same period of time, and must be followed by a post-conference for appropriate feedback within 10 school days.

3. Conference/Feedback Process

All observations, announced and unannounced, must be followed by a feedback conference within 10 school days. This conference should occur as quickly as possible. It should provide feedback regarding the results of the observations and it should provide for development of the PDP for the following year.
4. **Professional Development Plan (PDP)**

An individual PDP as mandated by the State of North Carolina must be prepared for each BT, the purpose of which is to facilitate and document the systematic growth of the BT, clearly delineating the strategies, service deliveries and resources available. The PDP will be developed cooperatively between the support team and the BT. The PDP will be generated from observation data; it will identify strengths, areas needing improvement and strategies for improving skills; it will be reviewed and discussed at least three times each year. It will be housed online at the McREL site along with the teacher’s self assessment, observations, and summary rating form.

5. **Staff Development**

The BT must complete 30 hours (3.0 CEUs) of high-quality professional development hours over the course of the Beginning Teacher Support Program. These hours may be gained by attending the BTSP Orientation, BTSP seminars, and workshops deemed necessary by the building administrator. BTs are not subject to reading and/or technology CEU requirements. It is highly recommended that they average at least 10 hours per year; these hours are cumulative for the three year program. BT seminars offered through the Beginning Teacher Support Program may include the following:

- Behavior Strategies
- McREL Teacher Evaluation Process Overview
- NC Teaching Standards
- Grading Practices
- Diversity
- Working with Para Educators
- Tools for Teaching
- Thinking Maps
- Classroom Instruction That Works
- Cultural Perspectives
- Connecting with Students
- Common Core

6. **Resource/Service Delivery**

The resources and services available for mentors and support team members include the following: (1) Central Office generalists/specialists; (2) IHE personnel; (3) NCDPI consultants; (4) specified training programs; (5) other workshops; (6) university coursework; (7) classroom visitation of resource teachers; (8) IHE library (9) Public Libraries.

E. **IHE COLLABORATION**

Revised September 19, 2011
Cooperation remains between IHE (UNC-Wilmington, Cape Fear Community College, and Shaw University) and the New Hanover County Schools in the implementation of the North Carolina Beginning Teacher Support Program. We have a strong working relationship with UNC-W through the Professional Development System University-School Partnership.

F. REVIEW/VERIFICATION PROCESS

1. No later than April 15th of the third year of employment of the BT, the principal shall verify successful/unsuccessful completion of the BEGINNING TEACHER SUPPORT PROGRAM. No BT shall be recommended for a SP2 license who has not met the State of North Carolina mandated performance appraisal protocol or the New Hanover County Board Policy 6233.

2. The principal shall immediately review and sign all documents online (formal evaluations, summary rating, and PDP). The locally designated official in consultation with the BTSP Supervisor recommends the conversion of an SP1 license to an SP2 license.

3. The beginning teacher must also submit annually to the BT Supervisor their mentor logs and their required PD hours. The BT must also provide evidence of completion of all online documents in McREL (formal observations, summary rating, and PDP). They will be given a receipt as proof of this submission.

4. Any BT not recommended by the locally designated official for conversion from an SP1 to an SP2 license may have that recommendation reviewed in accordance with Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

G. PROGRAM EVALUATION DESIGN FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Program evaluation is the responsibility of the Office of Human Resources.

Interviews, training evaluations, and surveys are the techniques used in the evaluation process. The data is collected and used to monitor and adjust the Beginning Teacher Support Program annually.