

What is the WSE First Years of Teaching Support Program?

While efforts across our country are vast in implementing quality teacher induction programs, numerous studies have found that nationwide approximately “50% of teachers leave the profession after five years” (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). In North Carolina, we lose 56% of Beginning Teachers with no experience credit, 51.4% with experience, and 48.3% of Lateral Entry teachers (SBE Meeting Executive Summary 11/2008).

In our position at UNCW, with strong regional partnerships which include the WSE and 13 school districts, we continue to work towards retention of new teachers in a more global, systemic approach through the First Years of Teaching Support Program. Our work benefits school districts by providing many *flexible options* that meet individual needs. While the needs and innovation of a district may be unattainable or cost prohibitive, often they can be realized with university support. Our support program is driven by the needs expressed to us by the New Teacher Support Coordinators, teachers in our partnership districts, as well as retention and support research.

What is included in the First Years of Teaching Support Program?

- **Professional Development** on topics of interest to school systems and beginning teachers. A demand for embedded professional development with topics on classroom management, grant sources, teaching strategies and classroom climate have been requested by several partnership districts and are developed as requested.
- An **eMentor Program** where new teachers may choose to have an online mentor to provide electronic support through email. School systems use the eMentor component as a way to provide support for those teachers who do not have mentors in their subject or certification area (ELL teachers, for example).
- An **Online Forum** where new teachers and mentors can pose questions, participate in discussion threads, celebrate accomplishments and access a quarterly newsletter to keep in contact with other beginning teachers and mentors across partnerships districts. Teachers will have access to unit-wide information pertinent to beginning teachers including highlights of best practices and technology tools, as well as an online library of professional development resources.
- The **Promise of Leadership Group** is comprised of new teachers who show leadership and innovation in the classroom. Teachers are nominated by their school system and formally recognized by UNCW for their commitment and expertise with the Promise of Leadership Award. These teachers also have an opportunity to work with a UNCW mentor and provide professional development to other beginning teachers during spring workshop sessions at the Beginning Teacher Professional Development Days.
- The **Beginning Teacher Professional Development Days** provide leadership and learning opportunities for up to 100 new teachers from across North Carolina. Three days are planned each school year and breakout sessions are led by UNCW faculty, Promise of Leadership Award recipients, and other partners!
- The **Mentor Conference** is held each March to focus on the individual needs of mentoring, recruitment and retention in relation to the 21st Century Skills and the NC Professional Teaching Standards. In the past, the conference has welcomed over 150 participants from 45 districts or IHEs.

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