

NC's 21st Century Literacy Coach Initiative



North Carolina Joint Legislative
Education Oversight Committee

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Office of the Governor

Literacy Coaches and the Connection to Increasing High School Graduation Rates

- ❑ The ability to read proficiently is linked not only to academic and workplace success but to overall quality of life and public health (Lyon, 1997, Lyon and Chabra, 2004 and Thompson, 2001; see Lyon presentation at <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0609MIDLITERACYSUMM.PDF>).
- ❑ Reading difficulties are not self-correcting, but they can be reversed (Hirsch, 1996; see Lyon presentation at <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/0609MIDLITERACYSUMM.PDF>).
- ❑ The lowest-performing readers are most at risk of dropping out of high school. In fact, those achieving in the lowest quartile are 3.5 times more likely to drop out than students in the next highest quarter of academic achievement, and 20 times more likely to drop out than top-performing students (Alliance for Excellent Education, http://www.all4ed.org/whats_at_stake/crisis.html).
- ❑ Sixth graders who fail English have a 1 in 8 chance of making it to the 12th grade on time, and only 16 percent graduate on time or with one extra year, according to a study of high-poverty Philadelphia middle schoolers. (Johns Hopkins University and Philadelphia Education Fund Research, see http://www.csos.jhu.edu/pubs/edweek/dropoutresearch_4.06.ppt#256, 1, Keeping Middle Grades Students On Track to Graduation).

In 2006, Governor Easley's budget included funding for "21st century literacy coaches" to be placed in 100 schools with an 8th grade, including funding to the NC Teacher Academy for training, utilizing the most recent research from the National Governors Association.

From Session Law 2006-66 LITERACY COACHES

SECTION 7.13. Funds are appropriated in this act to support the selection and hiring of 100 literacy coaches. The State Board of Education shall allocate these positions to the 100 schools with the lowest average scores on the eighth grade end-of-grade reading test over the most recent three years for which data is available.

- Approximately \$4.8 million for 100 positions and \$1 million (NR) to the NC Teacher Academy for two years of training, utilizing the most recent research from the National Governor's Association

By late fall, coaches had been hired in 96 schools and training was underway.

In 2007, there was very positive feedback from the field, including letters and calls from superintendents, parents, teachers, literacy coaches, and even grandparents. Preliminary results from spring EOG tests showed gains in the percentage of students attaining level 3 or 4 on the 8th grade reading EOG test as compared to when they were 7th graders.

Governor Easley's budget included an additional 100 21st century literacy coach positions. The final budget passed by the NC General Assembly included an additional 100 coaches and recurring funding to continue their training, as well as exempting NBCTs from the loss of their 12% bonus.

From Session Law 2007-323

21ST CENTURY LITERACY COACHES

SECTION 7.23.(a) Funds are appropriated in this act to support the selection and hiring of new literacy coaches for middle schools or other public schools with an eighth grade class. No more than one literacy coach shall be placed in each such school. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the North Carolina Teacher Academy, shall develop a site selection process including formal criteria. The site must receive formal approval by the State Board of Education to receive funds for this purpose. To be selected schools must:

- (1) Contain an eighth grade class, and
- (2) Ensure that literacy coaches will have no administrative responsibilities in the schools in which they are placed.

SECTION 7.23.(b) National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certified teachers serving in these positions shall be exempt from the requirements in G.S. 115C-296.2(b)(2)d. and shall remain on the NBPTS teacher salary schedule.

- \$5M for the positions; \$2M recurring, for the NC Teacher Academy to train all coaches for 2 years.

2007-2008 Selection Process was slightly different from the 2006-2007 process:

- The SBE was not limited to the next tier or the bottom tier of schools based on reading scores, but rather was able to implement a process whereby over 230 middle schools received a letter to apply for the position. (the next 230 on the “tier”)*
- Includes schools that are feeder schools to the Turnaround high schools and *Learn and Earn* High Schools

At Judge Howard Manning’s most recent *Leandro* Hearing, he asked for the literacy coach (David Lowe) from Montgomery County to testify about the program, and was specifically interested in ways that coaches are able to help teachers in subjects such as math, science, etc.

* See handout for the lists of all schools

The State Board of Education recently required schools accepting the state literacy coach funding to:

- 1) Agree to abide by a memorandum of understanding;
- 2) Implement the 21st Century literacy model designed by the NC Teacher Academy; and
- 3) Confirm that the individual employed as the literacy coach will complete all training prescribed by the NC Teacher Academy.

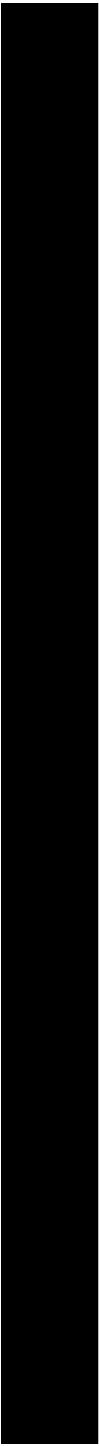
Additionally, a revision to the policy to allow the reallocation of the position for another school to participate in the literacy coach program if the original school can not fill the position within five weeks of notification.

NC's 21st Century Literacy Coaches

As A National Model

North Carolina 21st Century Literacy Coach Initiative builds upon the most recent national research on *effective use* of state policy dollars to improve high school graduation rates.

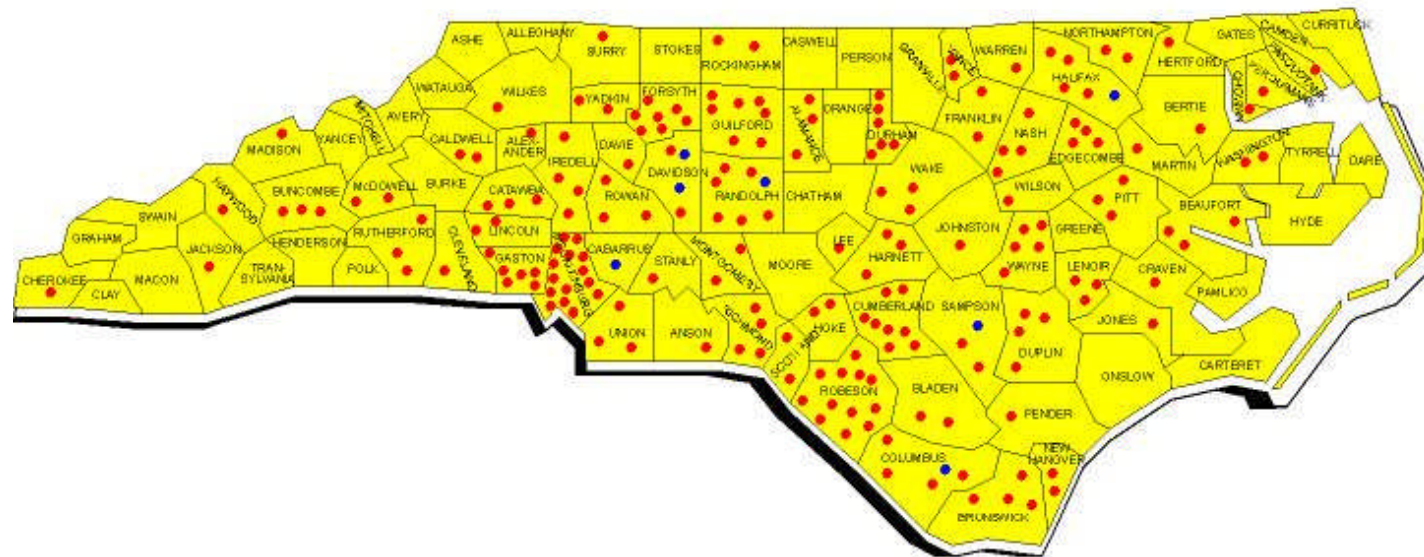
- 21st century literacy skills-it is no longer just about reading! (Oral and written communication, analysis, technology, use of the Internet, etc.)
- Placement of literacy coaches in middle schools rather than high schools
- Utilizes the “Train the Trainer” model so the literacy coach is working with fellow teachers of all subject areas throughout the entire year
- Weekly training that is on-going; in person and online
- Commitment from the school and district to support the training (signed *Memorandum of Understanding*)
- Selection of the coach by the elected School Improvement Team



Once again, NC is a national model...

- The National Governors Association will use NC's Literacy Coach Initiative as a model for other states
- The Carnegie Foundation has asked to use the video on their literacy website
- SREB- Representative Yongue, in his leadership role with SREB, has shared this successful program with other states

NC's 21st Century Literacy Coach Initiative



- District with Middle School Literacy Coach
- City District with Middle School Literacy Coach

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Reading has place in all lesson plans

TODD SILBERMAN, Staff Writer

"A year ago, Iris Sutton was helping students at North Garner Middle School who struggled with reading. Now she is teaching teachers how to do the same thing -- even if the subjects they teach are math, science and social studies."



"Although the goal is better readers, the coaches also help teachers strengthen their classroom instruction so students better comprehend the lesson. Teachers are given suggestions on how to engage students by drawing on what they already know about a subject, how to organize the lesson in ways that helps students organize material themselves, and finally how to help students comprehend and summarize."

Copy from a letter written by Bertie County Literacy Coach Retha Smith:

Besides helping the teachers, I am also able to make school a much more interesting place for our students. At one of the Teacher Academy meetings, I found out about the Bluford books published by Townsend Press. These books are very relevant to African American middle and high school students. In researching these books, I discovered that students could write personal letters to Townsend and receive 3 free books. I told my two groups in eighth grade who are really struggling with the end of grade tests about this and discussed how to write a letter to a business. The thrill of Jarvis rushing into the library to show me his three books which he had received in the mail at his home made me realize why teaching has been my love for all these years. Many of these students are probably getting some of the first books in their homes that were not borrowed from the library. I am enclosing a picture of some of the students enjoying their books. I am also

NC Literacy Coaches: Changing School Communities

Dear Mrs. R. Smith,

I just wanted to know if I could write a letter to the Bluford company. To order some of the Bluford Series books. I saw this book, all lost and found in the book fair. I really wanted it but I did not get any money until after the book fair. The book was a Bluford Series book. Then a friend of told me about the way you order it. I just wonder if you can order me some. I would really appreciate it.

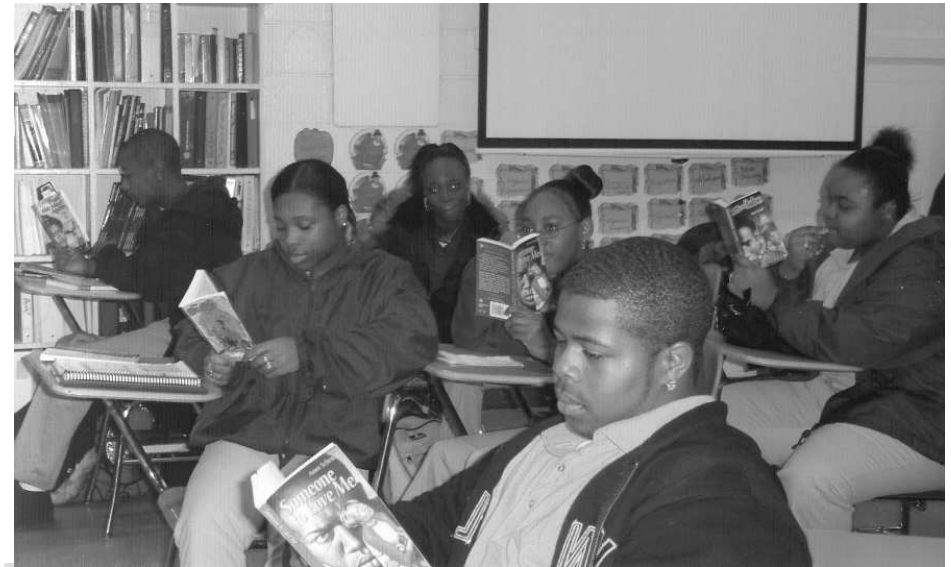
Thank you,
Shonta' Shonta'
Hyman Hyman

Dear Mrs. Smith,

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...I just wondered if you could order me some. I would really appreciate it.

Thank you



Literacy Coach
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Thank You, NC General Assembly!