



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

Impact of Mentor Program Flexibility on Teacher Retention

*SL2003-284, sec. 7.30(a) and (d) (HB397, the
2003 Budget Bill)*

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**Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee
on the Impact of Mentor Program Flexibility on Teacher Retention**

Executive Summary

The 2003 Budget Bill contained a special provision to allow LEAs flexibility in the use of mentor funds. The provision required that LEA plans for the flexible use of mentor funds be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval and that the State Board of Education submit a report on the impact of the mentor programs on teacher retention. Last spring, the Board approved plans from 21 LEAs to be implemented during the 2004-05 school year. A summary of those plans is included in this report. The report also includes information provided by five LEAs that implemented full-time mentoring programs during the 2003-04 school year. The five systems are Buncombe County, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Pitt County, Wake County, and Winston-Salem Forsyth County.

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the Impact of Mentor Program Flexibility on Teacher Retention

Background

The 2003 Budget Bill contained a special provision to allow LEAs flexibility in the use of mentor funds. The provision required that LEA plans for the flexible use of mentor funds be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval and that the State Board of Education submit a report on the impact of the mentor programs on teacher retention.

In October 2003, LEAs were invited to submit plans for the flexible use of mentor funding. Twenty-one (21) LEAs did so and received approval from the Board for the flexible use of mentor funding. The plans will be implemented for the 2004-05 school year.

Format for Plans

LEAs requesting approval for the flexible use of mentor funding submitted plans that included the following information.

- I. A detailed description of the proposed mentoring program. The description should include:
 - (a) the number of teachers and entry-level instructional support personnel in the LEA who are to be provided mentors;
 - (b) the number of beginning teachers and entry-level instructional support personnel to be served by the proposed program;
 - (c) the activities and services to be provided through the proposed program;
 - (d) the training that has been/will be provided to mentors in the proposed program;
 - (e) the training that has been/will be provided to mentors not participating in the proposed program;
 - (f) the rationale for the proposed program.
- II. Measureable Outcomes. What is (are) the expected outcome(s) of the program? Baseline data for each outcome is to be provided.
- III. Budget. How will the mentor teacher funds be used?

The plans were reviewed by staff before they were submitted to the State Board for approval.

Summary of Approved Plans

Asheville City Schools

The Asheville City Schools will hire one full-time lead mentor to serve approximately 50 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. A combination of site-based mentors and a full-time mentor will be used. Funding sources will include state mentor funds and federal funds for support of this program.

Avery County Schools

The Avery County Schools will support 26 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. Three (3) retired teachers will be employed as mentors to support ILTs. The retired teachers will be compensated \$100 per beginning teacher. Additional funding from federal fund will be used to support this program.

Bertie County Schools

The Bertie County Schools propose to use their mentor teacher funds to employ a retired educator on a contracted basis to serve all new teachers and to pay site-based mentor teachers for the number of new teachers they are serving. The proposed program is designed to improve student achievement by promoting and analyzing teacher effectiveness in the classroom. The teacher/mentor will focus on effective instruction and the impact that instruction has on student success. The program will provide new teachers with intensive on-site assistance from full-time mentors in the areas of instruction, assessment, positive discipline, and interpersonal communication. Twenty-nine beginning teachers are to be served by the program.

Buncombe County Schools

Buncombe County Schools proposes to use the flexible funding to employ three recently retired teachers on a part-time basis to serve as mentors to beginning teachers. The proposed program will provide consistent and on-going support for all beginning teachers in Buncombe County, allow for the development of a network of support for beginning teachers based on needs observed or requests, draw from the wealth of experience and knowledge provided by recently retired educators, and help create/maintain open avenues of communication among all stakeholders. The funds will be used for salaries for the three retired educators and cover mileage.

Carteret County Schools

The Carteret County Schools will support 54 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. Two (2) retired master teachers will be contracted for a minimum of 20 hours per week for 36 weeks during the school year to support beginning teachers.

Caswell County Schools

The Caswell County Schools propose to use their mentor teacher funds to employ a certified teacher to serve as a mentor for first and second year initially licensed teachers. The individual employed in this position will meet with each beginning teacher on a weekly basis, informally observe each beginning teacher and provide written feedback, model effective teaching practices, assess the professional growth needs of each beginning teacher and make recommendations regarding available staff development opportunities, and help beginning teachers access instructional resources. The program will serve fifteen beginning teachers.

Catawba County Schools

The Catawba County Schools propose to use their mentor funds to provide additional support to initially licensed teachers by creating a tiered system of assistance. Mentors will serve two beginning teachers, lead mentors will serve one beginning teacher and facilitate school-based activities for beginning teachers, and master mentors will be employed centrally to serve beginning teachers identified by the system's Director of Professional Learning. Lead mentors will apply and be selected centrally. Master mentors will apply and be selected centrally. It is expected that the master mentors will be retired teachers. The program will serve 154 beginning teachers. The system will use a portion of its Title II funding to supplement the cost of the program.

Chapel Hill/Carrboro Schools

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools will support 144 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. A comprehensive program of support will include traditional one-to-one mentoring, full-time mentoring by a retired teacher, school level coordination by lead mentors and focused assistance to identified beginning teachers. One (1) retired teacher will be hired to serve 15 new teachers and contract for \$150 for 90 days. A lead mentor will be designated per school for 15 schools with \$1,000 per year compensation. Site-based one-to-one mentors will be paid to work with beginning teachers not served by the full-time mentor. A focused assistance mentor will be hired part-time to provide additional assistance to identified beginning teachers.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will support approximately 1,650 beginning teacher in the 2004-2005 school year. Twenty-four (24) full-time mentors will be employed. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg plan includes a combination of full-time mentors and site-based mentors with a combination of funding from state mentor funds, grants, and federal monies. Site-based mentors will serve up to 2 ILTs. The full-time mentor pilot has strengthened the site-based mentoring program in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Cumberland County Schools

The Cumberland County Schools propose to use their mentor funds to hire retired teachers to serve as mentors for first year teachers at the middle school and high school levels at a ratio of one retired teacher for every 15 first year teachers. The middle and high school levels were selected as the focus because the ratio of new teachers to mentors and turnover rates are highest at these levels. The retired teacher mentors would be selected based on demonstrated excellence in teaching. If sufficient numbers of retired teachers are not available, the system will use the funds to provide released time for on-staff veteran teachers to serve in these roles. The proposed program is designed to address needs identified by the system. It will provide a support person who has the flexibility to create an accommodating schedule to assist new teachers without having full-time teaching responsibilities. The proposed program will serve four hundred eighty-nine (489) teachers.

Davie County Schools

The Davie County Schools will serve approximately 50 beginning teachers in the 2004-2005 school year. Up to ten (10) retired Master Mentors will be hired to serve no more than 5 ILTs per month. The Master Mentor will be employed for \$100 per month per ILT served.

Guilford County Schools

The Guilford County Schools will serve approximately 780 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. A comprehensive program of site-based mentors, lead mentors and full-time instructional specialists will be used in this program. Five (5) full-time Instructional Specialists will work with beginning teachers to do lesson planning and aligning teaching strategies with the NCSCOS. The Instructional Specialists will be contracted at \$100 per day for 90 days. Building level lead mentors will be compensated \$500 per year. Site-base mentors will serve up to 2 ILTs.

Henderson County Schools

The Henderson County Schools will serve approximately 150 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. Three (3) full-time mentors will be employed for 80 days at \$175 per day to work with first and second year teachers. Additional funding to support this program will come from federal sources.

Hoke County Schools

The Hoke County Schools will serve approximately 100 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. A combination of site-based and full-time retired mentors will be used. One (1) full-time retired mentor will be employed for \$25 per hour up to 20 hours per week to serve 15 beginning teachers. Site-based mentors will be assigned at a 2 to 1 ILT/mentor ratio, but elementary school mentor should only serve one ILT.

Iredell-Statesville Schools

The Iredell-Statesville Schools will serve 212 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. Retired teacher will be employed as full-time mentors working with up to 15 ILTs each. These retired teachers will be employed for 90 days at \$150 per day. Additionally, one-to-one mentors will continue at the school level with an "accomplished" mentor serving 2 ILTs. Lead mentors will be designated as the school level to coordinate mentoring activities

Jones County Schools

The Jones County Schools will serve approximately 15 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005. One (1) retired master teacher will be employed to work with all of the ILTs in the system. The master teacher will be employed for 100 days at \$150 per day. In-kind local monies will be used to supplement the funding for this program.

Orange County Schools

The Orange County Schools will serve 48 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. Four (4) full-time mentors will be contracted to work a minimum of 20 hours per week and serve 12 to 16 beginning teachers. Contracted pay rate will be \$25 per hour for these fulltime-mentors. Schools with the highest turn-over rate will be targeted by the full-time mentoring program.

Pitt County Schools

Pitt County Schools proposes to use the flexible funding to hire three retired master teachers/administrators to mentor beginning teachers through a "content area assignment configuration." The proposed program will allow for expanded mentoring support based on continued assessment of the needs of beginning teachers, improved selection and matching of mentors and beginning teachers, provide the beginning teacher with several different mentors, and affect change in the classroom by providing additional on-site assistance to beginning teachers. The system proposes to pay 127 mentors \$125 per month to mentor two beginning teachers each, 33 mentors \$125 per month to mentor one beginning teacher and serve as lead mentors, and three retired teachers/administrators on a contracted basis to serve as content specialists.

Wake County Schools

The Wake County Schools will support approximately 1700 beginning teachers for the 2004-05 school year using currently employed mentor teachers who are also teaching. Additionally, twelve (12) retired teachers will be employed as mentors. The retired teachers will each serve 1-15 initially licensed teachers. The retired teachers are compensated \$100 per beginning teacher. Two of the retired teacher mentors serve as Initial Licensure Program Coordinators at the school level. Data from the pilot has indicated that the use of retired teachers as mentors has been instrumental in retaining beginning teachers.

Wilson County Schools

The Wilson County Schools will serve 147 beginning teachers during the 2004-2005 school year. Fifteen (15) retired master teachers will be employed at \$100 a day for 90 days each to work with up to 10 beginning teachers. Additional federal and staff development funding will be used to support this program.

Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools

The Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools propose to pilot a Dedicated Mentor Program that will utilize personnel whose full responsibilities are to serve as mentors for new teachers in the system. Dedicated mentors will be selected based on successful teaching experience in the school system, current knowledge and theory regarding teaching and learning, demonstrated strong classroom management skills, and a history of successful supervision of student teachers or previous mentoring experiences. Eighty-one (81) beginning teachers and sixteen (16) dedicated mentors will participate in the pilot program.

Impact

The impact of the full-time mentor programs on teacher retention will be evaluated after the 2004-05 school year using the baseline data provided by the LEAs and data available through the Department's Licensure/Salary system. Comparison will be made of beginning teacher turnover in the LEAs implementing the full-time mentoring programs and those not doing so. Comparison will also be made of beginning teacher turnover in the LEAs implementing the full-time mentoring programs before and after program implementation.

Reports from LEAs Implementing Full-time Mentor Programs in the 2003-04 School Year

Five LEAs implemented full-time mentoring programs during the 2003-04 school year. The programs in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and in the Wake County Schools have been operational for three years. The programs in the Buncombe County Schools and the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools were operational throughout the 2003-04 school year. The Pitt County Schools' program was implemented in March 2004. The reports submitted by these systems on the impact of full-time mentors follow.

Report from the Buncombe County Schools

The Buncombe County Schools hired three recently retired educators to serve as district-wide mentor teachers. These teachers were a valuable resource, providing guidance to new teachers facing daily challenges which might otherwise seem overwhelming. Special attention and training was given to those new teachers entering the profession through lateral entry. The district-wide mentors met with new teachers during the 10 days prior to entering the classroom and continued to keep in close touch throughout the year.

As a result of the one-on-one attention provided our Initially Licensed Teachers, retention of beginning teachers improved from 88% to 96% for the 2003-04 school year. Our mentor teachers served 69 first year teachers and 77 second year teachers. All teachers in the third year of the Initial Licensure Program were assigned a "Buddy Teacher" at the school level to provide feedback and encouragement on a daily basis.

Report from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

In the first year of the full-time mentor program, the data showed that the program retained 82.5% of the first and second year teachers served by the program, while the site-based mentoring program retained only 68% of teachers. During the second year, the program's retention rate went up to 87%, while the site-based mentoring program rate was 75%. For the year 2003-2004, the retention rate in the full-time mentor program was 89% for the first and second year teachers served by the program and the retention rate for the site-based mentoring program was 77.9%. Because of the success of the full-time mentor program model, the training for site-based mentors now incorporates and adapts strategies from that program. As a result, the retention rate of teachers served by the site-based mentor program has also seen improvement.

Research shows that the cost of replacing each new teacher who leaves education is in the tens of thousands of dollars. Improved teacher retention not only will save money in mentor funding, but also in the replacement costs such as recruitment, of hiring new teachers every year.

Research also shows the direct correlation between increasing teacher quality and student achievement. Teacher quality has the greatest impact on student achievement, more than reduction in class size and other non-instructional programs. Improving teacher competency leads to increased student achievement at a fraction of the cost of recruitment, lost productivity and other direct and indirect costs. If funding permits, we would like to study the comparative student achievement scores of teachers who have benefited from the two programs for two years.

Report from the Pitt County Schools

The Pitt County Schools funded one retired master teacher (RMT) for a twenty-day flexible period from March-June 2004. The RMT served 13 beginning teachers at the elementary level. Of the 13 beginning teachers, three were first year lateral entry teachers and two were second year lateral entry teachers. Eleven received assistance focused on classroom management; four received assistance focused on planning; two received assistance focused on instructional strategies; two received assistance focused on time management; and one received assistance focused on organizational skills. A total of 36 classroom visits were made to the beginning teachers.

The rationale for implementing the program from March-June 2004 was to:

- Expand the mentoring support program based on continued assessment of the needs of beginning teachers as a basis for growth in skill and knowledge;
- Provide the novice teacher several different mentors, offering assistance in specialized areas;
- Affect change in the classroom by providing additional on-site assistance; and
- Develop strategies for fostering career independence in initially certified personnel.

Of the 13 beginning teachers served by the RMT, 84.6% were retained in the Pitt County Schools. Six remained in the same position at the same site; three remained in the same position, but at different sites; one changed positions, but remained at the same site; one changed positions, and transferred to a different site; one was not reappointed; and one resigned.

The above data suggests that this program in a short period of time was effective in helping retain teachers in our system. The unanimous support of the administrators was vital in implementation. The RMT noted that in working with the beginning teachers she "often had to focus on the need for their awareness that students should be engaged in the lesson. Lateral entry teachers were more open and willing to receive help. Classroom management continues to be the number one priority in working with lateral entry teachers as overall it is their weakest area."

The RMT kept a contact sheet on each beginning teacher, which was provided by the Initial Licensure Teacher Coordinator for the system. The focus for the initial visit was given to the RMT who had the flexibility to add focus areas, as she deemed necessary in order to provide sustained feedback.

The program will be fully implemented with the 2004-05 school year. The RMT who served the elementary level during the March-June 2004 period will start 2004-05 during teacher workdays by visiting prior contacts to see that they are prepared to start the year and visiting first-year beginning teachers (especially lateral entry) for early identification of needs.

Note: We did not phase in the change in mentor assignments during this short period of time. The vast majority of beginning teachers did not have to share the on-site mentor.

Report from the Wake County Public Schools

The Wake County Public School System used the services of eleven retired teachers who were trained as mentors by the system. These mentors were assigned to support initially licensed teachers in schools where mentor availability was limited. Several of the mentors were involved in our mentor update meetings. In addition, several of the mentors completed the advanced mentor training offered this summer to assist in meeting the needs of lateral entry teachers designated as initially licensed teachers.

There were 36 initially licensed teachers mentored by retired mentor-trained teachers. Twenty or 55.55% of the teachers taught at the elementary-school level and sixteen or 44.44% of the teachers taught at the middle-school level.

Outcomes:

- Thirty-two or 88% of the initially licensed teachers mentored by mentor-trained retired teachers continue to teach with the WCPSS for the 2004-2005 school year.
- Sixteen or 80% of the elementary school teachers continue to teach with the WCPSS for the 2004-2005 school year.
- Sixteen or 100% of the middle school teachers continue to teach with the WCPSS for the 2004-2005 school year.
- Three or 27% of the mentor-trained retired teachers elected to take advanced mentor training geared to assist lateral entry initially licensed teachers.
- One additional retired teacher was trained to mentor initially licensed teachers for the 2004-2005 school year.

We hope to continue to increase the number of mentor-trained retired teachers available to provide and enhance mentor services to initially licensed teachers for this year. To maintain this initiative, we hope to have the funding continued for this program.

Report from the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools

Winston-Salem Forsyth County's Dedicated Mentor program is designed to utilize retired teachers whose sole responsibility is to provide support and serve as mentors. These teachers have received 30 hours of mentor training and are certified for the position. In addition to that training, the dedicated mentors participated in seven support meetings designed for them.

The program design was flexible to allow for the individual needs of novice teachers. The dedicated mentors spent a minimum of one hour per week with each beginning teacher. During

the 2003-04 school year, the maximum number of beginning teachers served by a dedicated mentor was 14.

The dedicated mentors, the beginning teachers, and the principals (or designee) at the schools of each beginning teacher served by a dedicated mentor completed program evaluations. Approximately 95% of the respondents reported that overall the program was of great or some value. The retention rate of beginning teachers before and after program implementation was comparable (80.1% for 2002-03; 79.3% for 2003-04).

Appendix A Legislative Requirement

From **Session Law 2003-284**

MENTOR TEACHER FUNDS MAY BE USED FOR FULL-TIME MENTORS

SECTION 7.30.(a) The State Board of Education shall grant flexibility to a local board of education regarding the use of mentor funds to provide mentoring support, provided the local board submits a detailed plan on the use of the funds to the State Board and the State Board approves that plan. The plan shall include information on how all mentors in the local school administrative unit have been or will be adequately trained to provide mentoring support.

Local boards of education shall use funds allocated for mentor teachers to provide mentoring support to all State-paid newly certified teachers, second-year teachers who were assigned mentors during the prior school year, and entry-level instructional support personnel who have not previously been teachers.

SECTION 7.30.(d) Each local board of education with a plan approved pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall report to the State Board on the impact of its mentor program on teacher retention. The State Board shall analyze these reports to determine the characteristics of mentor programs that are most effective in retaining teachers and shall report its findings to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 15, 2004.