



Public Schools of North Carolina

# RETAINING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

January 30, 2015

# What Are the Primary Practices that Positively Impact Teacher Retention?

- Improving working conditions
- Providing administrative support and leadership
- Providing high-quality professional learning on research-based strategies for improving student outcomes
- Implementing effective mentoring programs



# IMPROVING WORKING CONDITIONS



- Select your target population to focus upon
- Use the information from surveys you have/or use a survey designed just for special education teachers --***do not ask for input unless you plan to do something with that input***
- Determine the highest priority issues related to special educators, by position and setting, if possible
- Ask for input from your teachers and staff on strategies for improvement in those areas—this is evidence of their value to the program and to you. Consider use of such techniques as Interest-Based Problem Solving to develop strategies





Public Schools of North Carolina

**ONE WAY TO USE THE  
INFORMATION TO IMPROVE  
WORKING CONDITONS:  
INTEREST-BASED  
PROBLEM SOLVING**

# PRINCIPLES

- Focus on issues, not personalities
- Focus on interests, not positions
- Create options to satisfy both mutual and separate interests
- Evaluate options with standards, not power
- Focus on present, not past



# STEPS

- Identify Issues
- Identify Interests
- Develop Options
- Develop Standards
- Judge Options with Standards
- Achieve Interest- Based Solution
- Develop Steps for Implementation



# STEP 1 IDENTIFY THE FOCUS ISSUE(S)

- Looking at the results of the Working Conditions Survey or a Survey Designed Just for Special Education Teachers, determine what a majority of the teachers and administrators agree is a finding they wish to improve upon





# STEP 2: IDENTIFY INTERESTS

- Bottom Line: Why is making an improvement in this area important to teachers and to administrators?



# STEP 3: GENERATE OPTIONS-- BRAINSTORIMING

- Don't critique ideas
- Use freewheeling imagination
  - Let your mind work freely
  - Don't prevent ideas from emerging by rigidly adhering to logical thinking
  - Don't feel bound by budget, time, staff or other resource constraints
- Build on the ideas of others
- Aim for quantity
- Record each idea
- Work through the pause



# NARROWING OF SOLUTIONS BEGINS

- Red Dot Voting



# Step 4: Develop Standards (Wait, why now after options)

- Is legal
- Could it be acceptable to the Board
- Is possible—might be able to designate resources
- Addresses the issue
- Is less complex or difficult than the issue itself
- Addresses the parties' mutual interest
- Solves the problem and does not create negative side effects



# NOW LET'S APPLY YOUR STANDARDS TO BEST OPTIONS



# Finally, Create Action Steps To Implement Selection Options



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**START RETENTION  
EFFORTS  
FROM THE BEGINNING  
DISTRICT-WIDE EFFORT  
AND SCHOOL EFFORT**





# Providing Administrative Support And Leadership



# Help New Teachers Acclimate to Geographic Area

- Welcome Center
- Living Accommodations/ Room Mate Leads
- School Plan for Welcoming and Acclimating
- Community Day/Outside Interests
- Enlist Student Councils and PTAs
- Plan Social Events or Outings



- Help them become familiar with area and its offerings
- Show genuine concern about issues of moving to a new area and/or starting a new job
- Help spouse find a job—involve community
- Appreciate surrounding area through sight seeing
- Take a bus route tour of areas from which students will come
- Ask family from area to come in to talk about family life and challenges they face
- Ask high school student council members to come in to talk about family life and challenges they face
- Ask community leaders to share traditions and culture



- Special educators indicate that a supportive principal is the top-rated incentive for remaining in special education



# SUPPORTED TEACHERS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN THEIR LESS SUPPORTED COLLEAGUES TO REPORT:

- Job satisfaction
- Commitment to their work
- Greater colleague support
- Fewer role problems
- Less stress and burn out

(Billingsley, 2005; Gersten et al., 2001)



- Building capacity among administrators
  - Do they understand legal mandates ?
  - Do they understand the work of the various service providers?
  - Are they receiving on-going professional development as instructional leaders?
  - Are they receiving on-going professional development as team builders?



# Administrative Actions That Can help

- Explain to the new teacher expectations of their roles and responsibilities
- Arrange time for new and experienced teachers to have shared planning time or to work in professional communities together or just to have common professional development
- Take time to get to know new teachers
- Encourage new teachers to ask questions and check in frequently about their support needs



# Helping New Teachers Acclimate to Their New Profession

- Consider the applicant's match for the job (at hiring)
- Encourage a sense of belonging
- Create a learning culture
- Support inclusive and collaborative practices in schools
- Provide support with curriculum and materials
- Support school wide expectations for behavior
- Support new teachers' work with paraprofessionals
- Support role clarity
- Provide "protected" status

**Source:** Billingsley (2010) "Work Contexts Matter: Practical Considerations for Improving New Special Educators' Experiences in Schools." *JSEL*. V23, N1.





- Stop by new teachers' classrooms, listen to their concerns, observe them, learn about their needs by asking them
- Encourage them to request assistance in areas of perceived need
- Provide opportunities for continued learning, including visiting the classrooms of skilled and effective teachers—Research shows that teachers who feel they are provided with opportunities to learn on the job tend to be less likely to leave



- Be personally supportive:
  - In area of discipline and behavior management
  - In helping them obtain the necessary resources and materials
  - In giving recognition for their work which helps to combat stress and burnout
  - In providing emotional support by seeking teachers' input in decision making process and taking a genuine interest in their work
  - In showing concern for their students and the students' progress



- Ensure that evaluation systems, both formal and informal, provide feedback that informs practice and teachers' professional learning.
- Ensure that principals and other school personnel are effectively supporting teachers and responding to primary concerns that prohibit teachers from improving student learning. Teacher support should be accessible, proactive, and collaborative.
- Celebrate successes.



# What are the primary practices that positively impact teacher retention?

- Improving working conditions
- Providing administrative support and leadership
- Providing high-quality professional learning on research-based strategies for improving student outcomes (really this is also administrative support)
- Implementing effective mentoring programs



# Providing High-Quality, Targeted Professional Development

- Teachers with a solid understanding of content and the ability to teach their respective subject effectively have the greatest impact on student achievement.
- Therefore, both the quality of their preparation programs and their professional learning opportunities after being hired are important for student achievement as well as **for job satisfaction and retention.**



# Focus of Professional Development

- May be a mandated district-wide focus or even a State-wide focus
- May be individual focus based upon the needs of the individual teacher
- May be a combination of both mandated and individual
- We will consider the focus on the needs of the individual teacher



# WHAT SHOULD BE THE TARGET OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AREAS OF SUPPORT TO CONSIDER	HIGH NEED	MOD. NEED	LOW NEED
Assessing student progress			
Making accommodations or modifications for students			
Lesson planning—long- or short-range plans			
Writing goals and objectives			
Writing IEPs			
Completing paperwork related to district procedures			
Managing classroom instructional time or downtime			



AREAS OF SUPPORT TO CONSIDER	HIGH NEED	MOD. NEED	LOW NEED
Setting up the classroom environment			
Creating classroom rules			
Enforcing classroom rules			
Obtaining and locating classroom materials			
Understanding testing materials			
Sharing ideas for teaching specific lessons			
Organizing student papers and records			
Motivating students			
Working with paraprofessionals			
Working with parents			
Collaborating with general education teachers			





# EXAMPLE OF CHECKLIST OBSERVATION OR CONVERSATION

## Instructional Accommodations:

- Pref Seating: \_\_\_\_\_ Increased Time for Assignments \_\_\_\_\_
- Indiv Instruction: \_\_\_\_\_ Small Grp Instruction \_\_\_\_\_
- Peer Tutors/Wk Buddies: \_\_\_\_\_ Modified Assign: \_\_\_\_\_
- Rd Class/Test Mtls Orally: \_\_\_\_\_ Study Guides/Outlines \_\_\_\_\_
- Alternate Assign: \_\_\_\_\_ Graphics/Pictorial Mtls \_\_\_\_\_
- Color Code Mtls: \_\_\_\_\_ Allow Breaks \_\_\_\_\_
- Transition Cues: \_\_\_\_\_ Indiv Testing \_\_\_\_\_
- Sm Grp Testing: \_\_\_\_\_ Manipulatives \_\_\_\_\_
- Alter Mtls (font, spacing, highlight): \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



# ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF CHECKLIST FOR OBSERVATION OR CONVERSATION

## Behavioral Strategies:

- Proximity: \_\_\_\_\_
- Positive Praise: \_\_\_\_\_
- Redirection: \_\_\_\_\_
- Thumbs-up/High Fives: \_\_\_\_\_
- Teach Expectations: \_\_\_\_\_
- Provide Structure/Routine: \_\_\_\_\_
- Peer Supporter: \_\_\_\_\_
- Model/Role Play: \_\_\_\_\_
- Free Choice: \_\_\_\_\_
- Time Out: \_\_\_\_\_
- Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_
- Call Parent: \_\_\_\_\_
- Note Home: \_\_\_\_\_
- Referral: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- **Assistive Technology to be Implemented:**
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



**5. LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS**

**INTASC Principle/Standard**

**Principle/Standard #5:** The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

**Implications for students with disabilities:** Students' affiliation and acceptance within a community is an important basis for developing social responsibility, self-esteem and positive peer relations. Students learn more effectively when they are valued members of a learning community in which everyone can grow and learn. Teachers welcome students with disabilities and take deliberate action to ensure that they are included as members of the learning community. Teachers may also need to structure activities that specifically foster engagement, self-motivation and independent learning in students with disabilities.

Indicators	CEC STDS	1	2	3	4	5
		The teacher has knowledge of the competency. The teacher does not have or lacks experience in the demonstration of the competency.	The teacher understands the competency, attempts to apply it, and accesses resources to enhance instruction of students with disabilities.	The teacher works with support to apply the competency with students with disabilities. The teacher begins to demonstrate self-initiated planning.	The teacher works independently to apply the competency consistently across all environments accessed by students with disabilities. The teacher demonstrates self-initiated planning.	The teacher models the competency, makes adjustments upon reflection, and serves as a resource for others responsible for meeting the needs of students with disabilities.
A. Designs activities that incorporate students' with disabilities interests and preferences	5 and 7	Articulates an understanding of designing activities that incorporate students' with disabilities interests and preferences	Identifies and sometimes provides activities that incorporate students' with disabilities interests and preferences	Often provides activities that incorporate students' with disabilities interests and preferences	Consistently designs and provides activities that incorporate students' with disabilities interests and preferences	Serves as a role model in designing activities that incorporate students' with disabilities interests and preferences
B. Develops positive strategies for students with disabilities to cope with frustrations to optimize student success	5 and 7	Articulates an understanding of developing positive strategies for students with disabilities to cope with frustrations to optimize student success	Identifies and sometimes uses positive strategies for students with disabilities to cope with frustrations to optimize student success	Often uses positive strategies for students with disabilities to cope with frustrations to optimize student success	Consistently develops and uses positive strategies for students with disabilities to cope with frustrations to optimize student success	Serves as a role model in encouraging students with disabilities to take academic risks and persist in challenging situations



# **ACTION PLAN**

## **OVERALL GOAL: IMPROVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

- Specific goals to accomplish
  - Participate in the classroom management behavior management workshops
  - Observe teachers with effective classroom management skills
  - Practice using reflective thinking after teaching a lesson
- Target dates for implementing new strategies



# WORK WITH TEACHER TO CREATE ACTION PLAN

WHAT YOU WILL DO	HOW YOU WILL DO IT	HOW YOU WILL REFLECT
Participate in Workshop	Check district professional development calendar. Register and fully participate in classes.	Discuss the classroom management techniques I learn about with mentor.  Try the techniques slowly and reflect on effectiveness with mentor.
Observe teachers with effective classroom management skills	Observe at least two teachers in my subject area suggested by my mentor/administrator. Discuss the techniques observed with that teacher and my mentor.	Decide with my mentor if I should apply the techniques observed . After applying techniques, think about and discuss with mentor their effectiveness.



- Professional Development Resources Are Always Available through the Department of Public Instruction, Along with Resources for Using Those Resources



Free High-Quality Professional  
Development Available Free On  
The Web—

# IRIS RESOURCES



# IRIS RESOURCE MODULE TITLES

- Accommodations
- Assessment (includes Progress Monitoring)
- Assistive Technology
- Behavior and Classroom Management
- Collaboration
- Content Instruction
- Differentiated Instruction
- Disability
- Diversity
- Learning Strategies
- Math
- RTI (includes Early Intervening)
- Reading, Literacy, Language Arts
- Related Services
- School Improvement/Leadership
- Transition
- Grades: PreK - 3
- Grades: 4 - 8
- Grades: High School





# MAKE UP OF EACH MODULE

- **CHALLENGE:** Presents an issue or problem facing educators today (presented through video and text)
- **Thoughts:** Before study begins captures participants thoughts based on current knowledge concerning issue or problem presented—what they already know
- **Perspectives and Resources:** Provides information from research literature that reflects the issue. Presented generally through video streaming and text



- **Assessment:**

- Questions that serve as a chance to demonstrate through paper and pencil what has been learned.
- Reflection on Initial Thoughts

- **Wrap Up:**

- Highlights some of the key points of the module.
- Serves as a review of the strategies offered by the research literature that support the issue being addressed through the use of quizzes and assignments to be completed.



# NOW LEARNER IS READY TO APPLY THE KNOWLEDGE HE HAS GAINED AND THE SKILLS HE HAS LEARNED

- Case Studies—Can we identify and utilize sources of knowledge, skills and values that will enable us to wrestle with challenges productively?
  - **Level A Gathering Information**—Could be Used with Beginning Teachers
  - **Level B Analyzing Information**—Could be Used with More Advanced Beginning Teachers or with Groups of Teachers
  - **Level C Synthesizing Information**
    - **Star Sheets of Research Based Strategies**
- Activities—Designed to help users synthesize information or as attention getters
- Information Briefs—Quick facts and details



# WAYS TO ENGAGE OUR TEACHERS USING IRIS RESOURCES

- Individually, as the administrators or the mentors identify with the teacher that there is a need or an opportunity to grow professionally in a certain area
- In small groups of teachers in the same school. Part of the material could be assigned to be prepared before the session. Then questions, research-based strategies suggested, case study analysis could be discussed by the group. Results of strategies used in their actual classrooms could be discussed.



# ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR ENGAGING OUR TEACHERS

- In a school-based emphasis
- District-wide subject focus
- Voluntary professional development course
- OR???



# Additional Web-Based Resources

- UNC's Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute is a rich source of resources.



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- Two studies have shown that students, taught by teachers who have received comprehensive mentoring support for two years, show significantly greater learning gains than their peers who have teachers who have not received that support.
- Studies show new teachers in comprehensive mentoring programs are about as effective as more experienced peers despite generally being in more challenging classrooms.
- Reduce rate of new teacher attrition. Two studies have shown that 88 percent of new teachers remain in teaching after six years with effective mentoring.





# Why a Special Education Specific Mentoring Program?

- Attrition rates for special education teachers are twice the rate of general education teachers.
- Many states hire between 25 to 50 percent more new special educators prepared through alternative preparation programs than those prepared through traditional programs.
- Considerably fewer new special education teachers are assigned mentors than general education teachers, due to lack of experienced job-alike professionals in their schools or even districts.



# New Teacher Center's eMSS: e-Mentoring for Student Success Program Models 2011-2012

## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE:

Pre-service and New Teachers

- Access to a facilitated online community of practice.
- Specific content or exceptionalality focused discussions
- Opportunities to ask questions and receive prompt feedback.
- \$300 per year per teacher

## INQUIRIES:

Professional Development for New Teachers

- Inquiries are a guided inquiry of practice focusing on pedagogy and/or content topics in special education.
- Application of practice directly to the classroom.
- Each beginning teacher receives individualized feedback
- \$150 per Inquiry per teacher [fall, winter, spring]

## COMPLETE PROGRAM:

Online Mentoring + Community + Inquiries

- **CONTENT FOCUSED MENTORING:** A highly qualified online mentor.
- **COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**
- **INQUIRIES:** Opportunity to engage in three (3) inquiries that focus on instruction
- \$1200 per teacher per year



# CHECKLIST FOR DESIGNING MENTORING PROGRAM

Activity	Start Date	Completion Date
Develop goals and expected outcomes for program		
Develop roles and responsibilities of mentor, mentee and administrators—then qualifications		
Generate options for recognition of mentors		
Review policies to enable program to operate (fiscal and contractual constraints, responsibilities of teachers)		
Develop mentor support plan		
Establish timeline for mentoring activities		
Develop and present mentor training workshop		



# Resource for Designing Mentoring Program for Special Education Teachers

Duffy, M.L. & Forgan, J. (2005) Mentoring New Special Education Teachers: A Guide for Mentors and Program Developers. X Corwin Press: Thousands Oaks.



Activity	Start Date	C ompletion Date
Method to match mentors to mentees		
Plan and offer first meeting as a social event for all mentors and mentees to meet		
Present mid-year and end-of-year mentoring program activities		
Collect data for the mentoring program evaluation		
Evaluate the mentoring program based on goals and outcomes established at the beginning of planning process		



# WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE IDEAS AND STRATEGIES YOU HAVE SELECTED?

- Develop a realistic action plan together
- Monitor progress internally and with each other
- Share successes with each other
- Share challenges with each other
- Be involved in continuous learning

