

# Chapter 9 – The Beginning Teacher Support Program

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## Background

Initial, Standard Professional I (SP I) licenses are issued to teachers with fewer than three years of appropriate teaching experience (normally considered to be public school experience) in their initial licensure area(s). All teachers who hold initial (SP I) licenses after January 1, 1998, are required to participate in a three-year induction period with a formal orientation, mentor support, observations, and evaluation prior to the recommendation for continuing, Standard Professional II (SP II) licensure. **(See SBE Policy QP-A-004, dated 01/05/2006)**

Teachers with three or more years of appropriate experience (as determined by the Licensure Section) are not required to participate in the Beginning Teacher Support Program (BTSP), nor are student service personnel (e.g., media coordinators, counselors), administrators, and curriculum-instructional specialists. *It is the responsibility of the employer requesting the exemption to verify experience.*

Completion of the BTSP requirements in one teaching area satisfies the BTSP requirement for all other teaching areas. Once a continuing (SP II) license has been earned in one teaching area, additional teaching areas do not require a BTSP experience.

Each local education agency (LEA), in collaboration with institutions of higher education (IHEs), must establish a plan of assistance and evaluation for teachers participating in the BTSP.

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## Overview of the Beginning Teacher Support Program

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### The BTSP support system

The fundamental purpose of the BTSP is to offer support for an individual's professional growth during the first three years of employment. Support consists of the following:

- a mentor
- periodic assessment of skills
- evaluations of performance
- an individual growth plan (IGP)

All beginning teachers (BTs) must be assessed using the current State Board of Education (SBE)-approved evaluation process.

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### Determining eligibility requirements

The LEA-designated BTSP coordinator is responsible for determining eligibility for continuing licensure based on completion of the BTSP requirements approved by the SBE.

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### Who is required to participate in BTSP?

Teachers with fewer than three years of public school teaching experience are issued initial licenses and must participate in the BTSP.

*Note: It is expected that beginning teachers be assigned in their area of licensure. Three years of teaching experience, of at least six months each, are required in the BTSP.*

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### Who does not have to participate in the BTSP?

Teachers with three or more years of appropriate experience (as determined by the Licensure Section) are not required to participate in the BTSP.

The following special service personnel positions do not participate in a BTSP:

- student services personnel (media coordinator, counselors)
- administrators
- curriculum-instructional specialists

An out-of state teacher is not subject to BTSP requirements, if the teacher

- has a North Carolina license based on meeting NC testing requirement, **AND/OR**
  - has National Board Certification, **AND**
  - has three or more years of teaching experience.
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**Special requests for exemptions**

Employers may request an exemption from the BTSP for teachers with equivalent non-public teaching experience. Requests must be made in writing to the Licensure Section on Form R (*Special Requests*). ***It is the responsibility of each LEA to verify experience.***

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**Equivalent non-teaching experience requirements**

To be equivalent to a public school teaching experience, the non-public teaching assignment must be equal using the following characteristics:

- number of professional staff
  - average class size
  - grade range and student ages
  - length of school day
  - length of school year
  - accreditation.
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**Periods and extensions**

A license with an active BTSP status is issued for up to 3 years.

When an active BTSP coded license is not automatically extended at the end of the fiscal year, the personnel administrators must make a written request on Form R (*Special Requests*) to the Licensure Section for an extension.

*Note: Teachers in positions that do not qualify for the BTSP can have their initial licenses extended beyond the three-year period if the individual has not completed the BTSP and is now serving in a non-teaching capacity.*

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**Charter schools and non-public schools**

Charter schools and non-public schools can submit a BTSP plan to the State Board of Education to establish a BTSP. This allows the charter schools and non-public schools to recommend teachers for continuing licensure.

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**Regulations**

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**Introduction**

This section covers the BTSP regulations that apply to all teachers as well as those specific to the type of license.

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## Regulations that Apply to All Teachers

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### **BTSP for multiple teaching areas**

Completion of BTSP requirements in one teaching area satisfies the BTSP requirements for all other teaching areas. Once a continuing license has been earned in one teaching area, additional teaching areas do not require a BTSP experience.

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### **Beginning teacher individual growth plan (IGP)**

Each beginning teacher is required to develop an individual growth plan (IGP) in collaboration with his/her principal (or the principal's designee) and mentor teacher. The plan should be based on approved SBE standards, and must include goals, strategies, and assessment of the beginning teacher's progress in improving professional skills. In developing the plan, the beginning teacher, principal (or designee), and mentor teacher should begin with an assessment of the beginning teacher's knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Throughout the year, formative assessment conferences should be held to reflect on the progress of the beginning teacher in meeting the goals established for professional growth. The plan should be updated on an annual basis for each year of the BTSP. IGP's will be audited as part of the Title II monitoring process.

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### **Optimum working conditions for beginning teachers**

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 area of licensure;
- early mentor assignment, in the licensure area, and in close proximity;
- orientation that includes state, district, and school expectations;
- limited preparations;
- limited non-instructional duties;
- limited number of exceptional or difficult students; and
- no extracurricular assignments unless requested in writing by the beginning teacher.

As used in these guidelines, the term “non-instructional duties” refers to those that are not directly involved with the instructional program or the implementation of the standard course of study, but that all teachers are expected to perform. Examples are bus duty, lunch duty, and hall duty. The term “extracurricular activities” refers to those activities performed by a teacher involving students that are outside the regular school day and are not directly related to the instructional program.

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## **Orientation**

Each beginning teacher must be provided an orientation. This orientation should be conducted prior to the arrival of students. If the teacher is employed during the school year, the orientation should be conducted within the first ten days of employment. At a minimum, the orientation should provide the beginning teacher with an overview of the school's/system's goals, policies, and procedures; a description of available services and training opportunities; the beginning teacher support program and the process for achieving a continuing SP II license; the teacher evaluation process; the NC standard course of study; local curriculum guides; the safe and appropriate use of seclusion and restraint of students; the state's ABC's program; and the state board of education's strategic priorities and goals.

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## **Mentor assignment/ Guidelines for mentor teacher selection**

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 beginning teacher is to be assigned a qualified, well-trained mentor as soon as possible after employment. If the beginning teacher is not assigned a full-time mentor, it is recommended that the mentor teacher be assigned only one beginning teacher at a time to ensure that there is sufficient time to provide support to the beginning teacher. If the assigned mentor is not housed in the same building as the beginning teacher (e.g., to provide a mentor in the licensure area [art, music, physical education] the system may assign a mentor housed in another school), the system must assure that the mentor is provided sufficient time to meet with and support the beginning teacher.

The following guidelines should be used for mentor teacher selection:

### **1. Successful teaching in the area of licensure**

- appraisal ratings among the highest in the school (regardless of instrument/process used);
- strong recommendations from principal and peers;

### **2. Commitment**

- willingness to serve as a mentor;
- willingness to participate in on-going annual professional development related to mentoring;

### **3. Other**

- preference given to career status teachers who have experience in the district norms, culture, and mission, as well as the state's goals (ABC's), strategic priorities, and standard course of study; **AND**
  - preference given to those who have successfully completed a minimum of 24 contact hours of mentor training.
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**Mentor training**

Local school systems are responsible for providing training and support for mentor teachers. Systems may choose to use programs developed by the Department of Public Instruction, use other programs (e.g., Teacher Academy), or develop programs of their own. Mentors need the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be effective instructional coaches, emotional supports, and organizational guides to those entering the profession. Standards for Mentor Training are attached to this policy.

**Observations/  
Evaluation**

In compliance with the Excellent Schools Act and subsequently GS 115C-333, each beginning teacher shall be observed at least three times annually by a qualified school administrator or a designee and at least once annually by a teacher, and shall be evaluated at least once annually by a qualified school administrator. Each observation must last for at least one continuous period of instructional time and must be followed by a post-conference. All persons who observe teachers must be appropriately trained. The required observations must be appropriately spaced throughout the school year. The BTSP Plan must specify the role of the beginning teacher's assigned mentor in the observations. Whether or not the assigned mentor may conduct one of the required observations is a local decision.

**Beginning Teacher Support Program Timetable**

Year 1	<p>The beginning teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is assigned a mentor</li> <li>• is provided an orientation</li> <li>• develops an IGP</li> <li>• completes any professional development required/prescribed by the LEA</li> <li>• is observed at least four times, culminating with a summative evaluation.</li> </ul>
Year 2	<p>The beginning teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continues to have a mentor teacher</li> <li>• updates the IGP</li> <li>• completes any professional development required/prescribed by the LEA</li> <li>• is observed at least four times culminating with a summative evaluation.</li> </ul>
Year 3	<p>The beginning teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continues to have a mentor teacher</li> <li>• updates the IGP</li> <li>• completes any professional development required/prescribed by the LEA</li> <li>• is observed at least four times culminating with a summative evaluation.</li> </ul>

## Overview of the Beginning Teacher Support Program

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### **Conversion process**

Each May, the Licensure Section uses an automated process to convert from initial SP I to continuing SP II the licenses of those teachers who are employed in LEAs and who may be eligible for conversion. The official designated by the LEA in its approved BTSP plan is responsible for approving the acceptance of the continuing license issued through this process. If a teacher has not taught three years, or if the designated official has knowledge of any reason related to conduct or character to deny the individual teacher a continuing license, then the automatic conversion license cannot be accepted. Forms indicating the denial of a continuing license must be returned to the Licensure Section immediately.

When teachers employed in charter schools or non-public institutions with approved BTSP plans, or teachers employed in LEAs and completing alternative routes to licensure (e.g., lateral entry, provisional licensure, etc.) successfully fulfill the BTSP requirements, the employer must submit a recommendation for a continuing SP II license for it to be granted.

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### **Due process**

Licensing is a state decision and cannot be appealed at the local level. Any teacher not recommended for conversion from an initial SP I license to a continuing SP II license may have that action reviewed by filing a contested case petition in accordance with Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. Unless the denial is based on reasons of conduct or character, the teacher may alternatively affiliate with an approved IHE teacher education program and complete a program of study as prescribed by the IHE to address identified deficiencies. After the prescribed program is successfully completed, the IHE must recommend the person for another initial SP I license. The teacher is then required to complete another BTSP when employed. Local boards of education are responsible for explaining appeal rights to teachers not qualifying for continuing licensure when employed.

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**Beginning Teacher  
Support Program plans**

Each LEA must develop a plan and provide a comprehensive program for beginning teachers. This plan must be approved by the local board of education. Charter schools and non-public institutions that have a state-approved plan to administer the licensure renewal program may submit a BTSP plan to the SBE for approval. The plan must:

- 1) Describe adequate provisions for efficient management of the program.
- 2) Designate, at the local level, an official to verify eligibility of beginning teachers for a continuing SP II license.
- 3) Provide a formal orientation for beginning teachers which includes a description of available services, training opportunities, the teacher evaluation process, and the process for achieving a continuing license.
- 4) Address compliance with optimum working conditions for beginning teachers identified by the SBE.
- 5) Address compliance with the mentor selection, assignment, and training guidelines identified by the SBE.
- 6) Provide for the involvement of the principal or the principal's designee in supporting the beginning teacher.
- 7) Provide for a minimum of 4 observations per year in accordance with GS 115c-333, using the instruments adopted by the SBE for such purposes. The plan must address the appropriate spacing of observations throughout the year, and specify a date by which the annual summative evaluation is to be completed.
- 8) Provide for the preparation of an individualized growth plan (IGP) by each beginning teacher in collaboration with the principal, or the principal's designee, and the mentor teacher.
- 9) Provide for a formal means of identifying and delivering services and technical assistance needed by beginning teachers.
- 10) Provide for the maintenance of a cumulative beginning teacher file that contains the IGP and evaluation report(s).
- 11) Provide for the timely transfer of the cumulative beginning teacher file to successive employing LEAs, charter schools, or non-public institutions within the state upon the authorization of the beginning teacher.
- 12) Describe a plan for the systematic evaluation of the BTSP to assure program quality, effectiveness, and efficient management.
- 13) Document that the local board of education has adopted the LEA plan, or that the charter school or non-public institution plan has been approved by the SBE.

***Plan must be on file for review at the LEA, charter school, or non-public institution.***

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**Beginning Teacher  
Support Program  
annual reports**

Each LEA, charter school, or non-public institution with an approved BTSP plan must submit an annual report on its BTSP to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) by October 1 of each year. The format of the report follows.

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# Beginning Teacher Support Program Report

LEA: \_\_\_\_\_ School Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Submitting Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

		1 <sup>st</sup> Year		2 <sup>nd</sup> Year		3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	
		TE	LE	TE	LE	TE	LE
<b>Number of Beginning Teachers</b>							
<b>Number of Beginning Teachers Not Returning to LEA</b>							
<b>Of those not returning, how many</b>							
<b>Turnover Initiated by LEA</b>	Non-renewal (probationary contract ended)						
	Interim contract ended – not rehired						
	Resigned in lieu of dismissal						
	Dismissed						
<b>Turnover Beyond Control</b>	Reduction in Force						
	Resigned due to family responsibilities/childcare						
	Resigned due to family relocation						
	Resigned due to military orders						
	Resigned due to health/disability						
	Resigned to continue education						
	Did not obtain or maintain license						
<b>Turnover that Might be Reduced at the LEA/State Level</b>	Resigned to teach in another NC LEA						
	Resigned to teach in a NC Charter School						
	Resigned to teach in a NC non-public/private school						
	Resigned to teach in another state						
	Dissatisfied with teaching or career change						
	Resigned for other reasons						
	Resigned for unknown reasons						
<b>Other</b>	Moved to a non-teaching position in education						
	Please specify:						
<b>Any additional information that you would like to provide.</b>							

## Data Related to Lateral Entry Teachers

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1. Of the new lateral entry teachers employed by your system this year, what percent (approximately) were employed for each of the following reasons:
  - a. exceptional expertise in the license area \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. licensed applicants were not interested in the position \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. licensed applicants did not appear to be a good match for the position \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. no appropriately licensed teachers were available \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Of the new lateral entry teachers employed by your system this year, what percent (approximately) were employed prior to the start of the school year? \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Which of the following programs/services did you provide your lateral entry teachers:
  - assigned a mentor in the same license area
  - assigned a mentor prior to the first day of employment
  - provided additional assistance during the two-week orientation period
  - employed a full-time mentor for lateral entry teachers
  - held monthly meetings especially for lateral entry teachers
  - provided focused professional development for lateral entry teachers throughout the school year
  - assisted lateral entry teachers in having their transcripts reviewed and programs of study prescribed
  - assisted lateral entry teachers in locating classes
  - provided tuition assistance for required coursework
  - sponsored Praxis II preparation workshops
  - Paid for the Praxis II exam(s)
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Did your lateral entry teachers encounter difficulty with any of the following:
  - a. classroom management  yes  no
  - b. implementing school policies  yes  no
  - c. instructional delivery  yes  no
  - d. differentiated instruction  yes  no
  - e. understanding child development  yes  no
  - f. finding needed coursework  yes  no
  - g. availability of needed coursework  yes  no
  - h. having their transcripts reviewed  yes  no
  - i. passing Praxis II  yes  no
  - j. understanding licensure requirements  yes  no
  - k. complying with licensure requirements  yes  no
  - l. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. From the areas identified in #4, please list the top 3 (from a central office/system-wide perspective) and briefly describe your efforts to support the lateral entry teacher in the area.

Area of Difficulty		LEA Efforts to Assist Lateral Entry Teachers in this area.
#1		
#2		
#3		

6. From the areas identified in #4, please list the top 3 (from a principal/school level perspective) and briefly describe your efforts to support the lateral entry teacher in the area.

Area of Difficulty		LEA Efforts to Assist Lateral Entry Teachers in this area.
#1		
#2		
#3		

## NORTH CAROLINA MENTOR PROGRAM STANDARDS

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The mentor performs a unique function in the total educational environment. Personnel who function in mentor roles designed to assist others in professional growth must themselves possess a practicing knowledge of the Core Standards for Teachers developed by the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission and adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in November 1999. In addition, the mentors must possess competencies which facilitate the building of an environment conducive to professional growth.

The mentor is expected to perform functions designed to promote growth among other adults in the school environment. These work roles include, but may not be limited to, mentoring initially licensed teachers and licensed support personnel and supervising student teachers and interns.

The prospective mentor should possess a willingness to commit to a mentoring relationship and must provide documentation of successful experiences relevant to the role of mentoring. These experiences must include teaching successfully for at least three years and holding a continuing SP II license. Additional documentation may include leading and coordinating activities for adults in a work setting; observing and documenting classroom teaching; diagnosing and prescribing growth activities based on the criteria set forth in the North Carolina Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument and the Individual Growth Plan, as undergirded by the INTASC Standards; conferencing with other adults to communicate results of observation, documentation, and diagnosis; and organizing and presenting training experiences to adults in an educational setting.

Mentors must possess effective oral and written communication skills to identify and address the needs of the novice teacher. They must understand the use of non-verbal behaviors, and be able to use questioning techniques and active listening skills on a variety of cognitive levels appropriate for achieving multi-purposes.

Mentors must understand the various roles to be played in mentoring relationships. They must be effective coaches. They must work collaboratively with colleagues at the school, system, and community levels.

Mentors must model effective practices. They must apply learning theory and research findings to classroom instruction. They must model effective planning and classroom instruction, developing and utilizing instructional materials and techniques, and identifying and effectively using available school and community resources. Mentors must understand the importance of establishing overall curricular goals and objectives. They must communicate respect for the dignity and worth of a diverse student population. They must demonstrate the importance of continuous participation in professional growth activities.

Mentor training programs must place emphasis on the learning of cognitive concepts, as well as the application of these concepts, in appropriate educational settings. Experiential learning through simulations, case studies, field experiences, and other activities requiring interaction with a real educational environment is appropriate for addressing the requirement for application of concepts. Mentor programs should have structure, yet be flexible enough to allow for recognition of the varied backgrounds and experiences brought by the participants. Learning experiences should be designed to allow for application to all job roles of the mentor. Training in the North Carolina Teacher Appraisal Instrument, the Individual Growth Plan, and licensure requirements should be provided.

**Standard 1: Mentors demonstrate the skills necessary for the establishment of productive helping relationships.**

Mentors:

Indicator 1: Identify and address the needs of the novice teacher.

Indicator 2: Employ the characteristics of helping relationships in the support process.

Indicator 3: Recognize the importance of individuals becoming independent as they grow professionally.

Indicator 4: Use strategies to encourage independence through professional growth.

Indicator 5: Convey a genuine regard for the needs of persons being served by a mentoring relationship.

**Standard 2: Mentors demonstrate effective communication skills.**

Mentors:

Indicator 1: Show sensitivity to the needs and feelings of a diverse population being served by a mentoring relationship.

Indicator 2: Use elements of effective communication.

Indicator 3: Recognize and use appropriate non-verbal behaviors.

Indicator 4: Develop effective communication techniques for use in the school community.

Indicator 5: Use questioning techniques and strategies on a variety of cognitive levels.

Indicator 6: Use active listening skills as a means to improve communication.

Indicator 7: Respond effectively to verbal and/or written reflections.

**Standard 3: Mentors demonstrate a working knowledge of mentoring relationships.**

Mentors:

Indicator 1: Provides information about alternative support systems, with rationale, for persons in mentoring relationships, including but not limited to mentors, administrators, and cooperating teachers.

Indicator 2: Conduct an initial conference with the beginning teacher.

Indicator 3: Provide guidance and assistance as the novice teacher assumes new roles and responsibilities.

Indicator 4: Provide a variety of growth experiences for the beginning teacher.

**Standard 4: Mentors demonstrate knowledge of the diverse roles of mentoring relationships.**

Mentors:

Indicator 1: Plan jointly with persons in a mentoring relationship.

Indicator 2: Assist the new or beginning teacher in analyzing observation data and identifying teaching behaviors needing change.

Indicator 3: Create an awareness of the resources available in the school, community, local education agency, and the institutions of higher education.

Indicator 4: Work collaboratively with the school, community, local education agency, and institutions of higher education to plan experiences for persons being served by a mentoring relationship.

**Standard 5: Mentors demonstrate an understanding of concepts of the adult as a learner.**

Mentors:

Indicator 1: Describe the ways in which adults identify and solve problems.

Indicator 2: Identify the implications of adult conceptual development for the mentoring relationship.

**Standard 6: Mentors demonstrate the ability to utilize appropriate instruments and strategies for promoting growth in the beginning teacher.**

Mentors:

Indicator 1: Clarify the role of observation and evaluation.

Indicator 2: Use appropriate data collection strategies and instruments for the purpose of identifying areas of strengths and areas needing improvement.

Indicator 3: Use the coaching cycle to promote growth.

Indicator 4: Assist in the development of a formal growth plan such as the Individual Growth Plan.

Indicator 5: Understand and communicate state evaluation and licensure requirements.

**Standard 7: Mentors demonstrate the ability to assist beginning teachers in developing and utilizing materials and techniques for instructional presentation.**

Mentors:

Indicator 1: Help beginning teachers relate course objectives to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

Indicator 2: Help beginning teachers develop and implement units of study and lesson plans that relate to content goals and to the needs and interests of diverse learners.

Indicator 3: Help beginning teachers provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively and to solve problems.

Indicator 4: Help beginning teachers work collaboratively in the school community to continually support the school improvement plan.

**Standard 8: Mentors demonstrate the ability to assist beginning teachers in applying learning theory and research to plan and implement effective classroom instruction.**

Mentors:

Indicator 1: Help beginning teachers evaluate and use varied resources in instructional activities to meet diverse learning styles.

Indicator 2: Help beginning teachers design long and short-range plans based on the disaggregation of student assessment information and the needs of the diverse student population.

Indicator 3: Help beginning teachers identify and use appropriate school and community resources.

Indicator 4: Help beginning teachers use a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to measure student learning.