

## **New Teacher Residency Project update**

### **December 2013**

#### **Overview**

The New Teacher Residency Project (NTRP) is a 3-year teacher induction program that focuses on *teacher collaboration* as a means to support, develop, and retain excellent new teachers in the public school system. The NTRP was created through a partnership between the ANCS and Georgia State University and has been supported for the past year and a half by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement with over \$900,000 in funds from the U. S. DOE's Race to the Top program. Funding continues through September 2014.

The NTRP provides new teachers with an innovative system of supports that target specific needs during teachers' first three years in the classroom. A central focus of the NTRP is *teacher collaboration*. The project involves a three-year cycle with ongoing targeted interventions centered around on various forms of collaboration, specifically:

- active classroom engagement shared with a cooperating teacher (CT) who facilitates daily reflection and support,
- monthly participation in a Critical Friends Group (CFG) to build a supportive community and share professional knowledge among fellow teachers,
- goal-specific mentoring by a veteran educator trained in mentoring, and
- ongoing personalized support by the project director.

#### **Momentum of our work**

With a strong first year and a half behind us, we're moving into the spring semester of year 2 with a much deeper understanding of what works well and where our original ideas need adjustment. As the second year began, we had an improved and larger pool of veteran educators (mentors, CTs, CFG coaches) applying to help, thanks in part to last year's faculty recruiting new faculty involvement. Forty-four out of 80 teachers are now involved. We believe this is an effect of last year's NTRP veteran educators' feeling supported and successful in their work and more strongly connected to and invested in the school community as a result. In short, we are seeing that this program benefits new and experienced teachers, as well as the students they teach.

We have an extensive set of preliminary data on the early effects of the NTRP thanks to the research of Dr. Stephanie Cross, the grant's Principal Investigator from Georgia State University. This data has informed our choices regarding the timing and format of mentor training, the timing and format of written resident reflections, the scope of mentoring work, the expectations of teacher residents in the classroom, the ongoing support of CTs, and the composition of CFGs. Improvements include:

- Provision of an in-house two-day training for all mentors and CTs in July, designed specifically to address the needs of NTRP mentors at our school.
- A new partnership with the Center for Teaching, an innovative and experienced local non-profit, for the design of the mentor/CT trainings.
- The ability to offer stipends to all teachers who attend the 4-day CFG institute summer training, which boosted attendance considerably in summer 2013.
- Secured commitments for in-kind donations of time/space by area experts and education non-profits, totaling \$33,500.

## NTRP by the numbers

### Residents

Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015 (projected)
Total # residents served during year	13	16	18

- 16 of the 18 residents that entered the program remain in teaching, 14 of them at ANCS. (1 needed to leave the program for personal reasons beyond the NTRP; 1 withdrew from ANCS community and job is unknown)
- 93% of residents answered “probably yes” or “definitely yes” to the question: “Do you consider it likely that you’ll be a teacher in 3-5 years?”
- 93% of residents answered “probably yes” or “definitely yes” to the question: “Do you see yourself working as a teacher/educator as a lifelong career?”

### 2013-2014 veteran educators

Veteran educator role	mentors	cooperating teachers	CFG coaches	project director	
# Veteran educators serving residents in these roles	15	13	16	1	Total: 45
# Hours training/ veteran educator/ year	29	23	56	40	Avg: 49/educator
# Hours mentoring provided per resident by veteran educator(s) in these roles	22	50-60	24	4-8	Avg: 107/resident

### **Quotes from a Dec., 2013 survey**

“My CT, Ms. X, has been so supportive of my growth as a teacher! She has been more than a cooperating teacher, she has served as a mentor to me as well. I have gained so much knowledge of effective teaching practice. I am so fortunate to have been a part of this program. I have learned so much more this past semester than I have in any field placement throughout the program.” (Dec, 2013)

“I have truly enjoyed my NTRP experience thus far. When I compare my student teaching to those of my peers I feel I chose the best program to help me along my teaching career. There is so much support that a first year teacher needs to be successful in the classroom.” (Dec, 2013)

“My mentor, Ms. Y, plays a vital role in the progression I've made in my career thus far. I really appreciate having such a close and meaningful relationship with an experienced educator and all the wonderful ideas and suggestions she always brings to the table. I think it's very important that we meet on a regular schedule. For one, it provides some consistency and structure and it continues to build our relationship.” (Dec, 2013)

“There is a lot going on. I feel like there are so many things to do in the classroom that the NTRP aspects sometimes seem to be a struggle to accommodate. But, I am still grateful for the opportunities that have been presented.” (Dec., 2013)

“Overall I have appreciated my role in the NTRP program. I think, at times, my stress level has gotten to me and allowed me to not be as productive/involved in the program as I would have liked/wanted to be. But, reflecting on outcomes of experiences, I do see how this program has been beneficial in some aspects of the beginning of my teaching career (i.e. support from colleagues, further professional development, and opportunities to see how other educators work/perform in the classroom).” (Dec, 2013)

“I feel extremely supported by NTRP, even though I may forget some of the resources it offers from time to time, it is only because there are so many available.” (Dec, 2013)

“One strength is definitely the amount of support I receive from both my cooperating and mentoring teacher. At this point, I'm certain I can talk to either of them about anything whether it's related to teaching or some other aspect. I also enjoy the different protocols used during CFGs and really having time to think and reflect on the work of others. The observations where my mentor really reflects back on my words and actions without judgment has been very critical to my growth as an educator. There are also many wonderful opportunities associated with NTRP, such as being able to attend and present at the Coalition of Essential Schools conference in San Francisco.” (Dec, 2013)

## **Looking forward**

Despite strong evidence of its importance, there are few opportunities for meaningful *teacher collaboration* in most schools and school districts. The NTRP is an innovative system of interventions targeting powerful adult learning for early-career and veteran educators within a synergistic framework for collaboration. It is built on a platform of strong theory and powerful research, and focuses attention on reducing the common obstacles to productive idea sharing and mentoring.

While at present the NTRP is implemented only at ANCS, we believe that reaching out to a consortium of area schools for extensions of this work would be a way to test and improve the quality of this innovative program while extending its many benefits to a wider population. By touring area schools, sharing our ideas and methods, listening to other educators as they discuss best practices, and seeking common ground, we have begun to envision methods for increasing the scale of our work in a manner that remains true to our core values of personalization and authentic collaboration. We believe a collaboration of other southeast Atlanta schools will allow for enhanced teacher learning through connections with a wider range of educators, a greater number of possible student teacher placements in the area, a wider range of open positions for placement of residents graduating from the program, and a strengthening of the professional development in area schools. Most importantly, we see the opportunity to reduce teacher attrition in the region, including at several difficult-to-staff schools.