Right Start Newsletter

Elementary Edition February, 2008

GCS New Teacher Orientation for Teachers with Less than 6 Months Teaching Experience

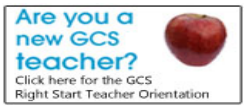
Who: **For Teachers with Less Than 6 Months Teaching Experience Who Have Not Attended a New Teacher Orientation**

Note:

Attendance is <u>mandatory</u> if you did not attend August 15, 16, and 17 or September 22 and October 6.

What: GCS New Teacher Orientation
When: February 27, 2008
4:30-6:30 PM
Where: Western Guilford High Media Center

- **Step 1: Create a GCS professional development account by going to www.gcsnc.com and Click on**



- **Step 2: Click on the link below to register:**
  GCS-Right Start New Teacher Orientation 2007-08-No Credit

Expand knowledge of U.S. presidency

The presidency is a vital and fascinating aspect of American history. This Presidents' Day, help your students expand their knowledge and understanding of this premier job and the men who have held it.

Here are three projects to consider:

1. Presidential Facts. Assign each student a different president to research. Charge them with finding a surprising (to them) fact or accomplishment.
   Example: Grover Cleveland was the only president to be married in the White House.
   Hold your own "Presidents Day." Have each student give a brief presentation about their president and include the little-known fact or accomplishment.
2. Presidential Monuments. Washington, D.C., features major monuments dedicated to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Mount Rushmore, near Keystone, South Dakota, features Washington, Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Lincoln.

But who else deserves a major monument? Let your students choose! Have them make the case for their favorite presidents. Then bring the issue to a vote. Have students design a monument for the winning president.

3. President for a Day. Pull five student names from a jar. Each gets to be "president for a day" during one week in February. The other students are "members of Congress." Set aside class time each day for the "president" to propose two laws he or she would like to enact. Have the "Congress" discuss these laws, make changes and vote on them.

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Boost homework completion rate

You're a fortunate teacher if all your students regularly turn in all their homework assignments. Most students need a little prodding once in a while—and some need a lot. Try these strategies:

- Ask parents to sign homework.
- Send a note home explaining the homework.
- Email parents and provide a website where they can access homework assignments.
- Require students to bring in a signed note explaining why homework was not completed.
- Send homework supplies home with students. Provide a bag for them to be returned the next day.
- Reduce assignments or change the format if a particular student has put forth effort but is truly unable to complete the assignment in a reasonable amount of time.
  Ten minutes of homework for first grade, 20 for second, 30 for third, and so on, is generally reasonable. This excludes assignments to read for pleasure.

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Use 'beginning-middle-end' graphic organizer

Too often, students tell stories from a "bed to bed" perspective. ("I woke up and it was sunny. I played outside with my dog. After dinner, it started to rain. I went to bed.")

A simple "beginning-middle-end" graphic organizer can help them focus on the most important action—and write a more compelling story.

Have students:

1. Turn a piece of paper sideways. Draw three large boxes. Label them "Beginning, Middle, End."
2. Start with the middle box. Sketch a scene or a character in an important situation. Then write a

sentence below the sketch to describe what is happening.

3. Picture the ending. Sketch it in the third box, adding a sentence or two of description below.
4. Do the same for the beginning of the story. What could have led to the situation that is depicted in the middle drawing?
5. Add details to expand their sentences, once they have these three scenes clearly in mind.
6. Connect the sentences for an interesting descriptive narrative.

After they have written the final draft, students can use their sketches as a reference for final illustrations.

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Help students overcome test anxiety

No one enjoys it, but test-taking is a reality in today's education environment. As a teacher, part of your job is to help your students perform as well as they can on these evaluations.

For many students, this takes little effort, but others need more coaching and options for success.

Here are some ways to help students become more confident:

- Offer students a choice on your tests. "Choose one of these three essay questions to answer." This gives students a chance to show what they know and to be more confident.
- Give students a rubric that shows exactly what you expect. They will feel calmer and more reassured when they have clear expectations.
- Allow students to retake tests, especially if you notice that they seem particularly anxious.
- Give lots of practice tests.
- Pass out study guides, especially if a test covers more than one chapter.

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REMINDER

Please remember to keep your GCS Professional Folder updated. Please be sure to keep all the documentation from this year. The documents that should be in your BT1 folder are listed below. Your third administrative observation should be completed by April 15th. Your administrator may choose to do an unannounced third observation. The only observation that should have been announced was your first one.

As a BT1, you should have 3 administrative observations, <u>1 peer observation from another career teacher other than your mentor</u>, a summative evaluation, an IGP, and your mentor log. North Carolina requires that you demonstrate continuous professional growth each BT year. The easiest way to document this growth is to earn a minimum of 2

CEUs between July, 2007 and June, 2008 and have it documented on the GCS Professional Development site. You should keep documentation for each BT year.

Documents That Should Be Included For First Year (BT1) Teachers
Mentor Log
FODA 1- Sept. 30th – Oct. 30th Observation 1
FODA 2- Jan. 15th Observation 2
FODA 3-April 15th Observation 3
Teacher (Peer) Evaluation
Summative Evaluation -April
IGP for Year 1
Documentation of Continuous Professional Growth (Example: Transcript from GCS Professional Development Site (minimum of 2 CEU's)

REMINDER

The 10 month payroll cycle for the 2007-08 school year is August 31, 2007 through May 31, 2007 even though the 2007-08 employment term is August 22, 2007 through June 16, 2008. To provide employees with a full check each month, it is necessary to pre-pay employees. Unless you chose the 12 month salary option or you work in a school that has an alternate school calendar, your last payroll check for the 2007-08 school year will be May 31st, even though you are required to work days in June to complete the 10 month employment term. We thought this might be a helpful reminder as you budget for the coming months.

Happy Valentine's Day from the Right Start Staff!

We appreciate you and thank you for the work you do each day with your students.☺

Right Start Office – 370-8098

Martha Snavely, Executive Director
Debby Bryant, Office Support
Sue Renn, Induction Support Coach Coordinator
Vernita Hill, Lateral Entry Coach

Induction Support Coaches

Karen Boyd	**Jane Higgins**
Karen Cannon	**Beth Koziol**
Brian Herndon	**Susan Phillips**
Stephanie Gallop	

We have moved from Eugene St. to:

Office of Induction and Success
501 West Washington Street
Greensboro, NC 27401