

# NC Beginning Teacher Newsletter

Regional Education Facilitators – North Carolina Department of Public Instruction – [bit.ly/NCDPIREF](http://bit.ly/NCDPIREF)



## A Message from the 2019 Southeast Regional Teacher of the Year, Christen Howe



Hello, fellow educators! December marks the final month of the 2019 calendar and the beginning of a new year. I love December because it signals a chance for a fresh start and new possibilities. For me, December is a time to reflect, rejuvenate, and recommit myself to my purpose and passions as a

teacher.

As you begin to set goals and make plans for the new year, I invite you to join me in the three following endeavors:

### **One: Let's build real relationships that matter with every student.**

Learning is a deeply personal experience. As James Comer states, "No significant learning can occur without a relationship." So let's make time to know our students as people, both in and out of the classroom. Let's learn about their interests, strengths, hopes, and fears. Let's build relationships based on trust and respect. Let's treat our students the way we want to be treated. Let's believe in each and every student and let them know that they matter. Every day.

Our little efforts and actions can make a big difference. This year, let's

- Greet students at the door, say hello and goodbye every day.
- Let's seek student feedback - find out what's going well and what we can do better.
- Let's take an afternoon to attend a student's extra-curricular activity.
- And let's keep trying, even when it's difficult.

Building a strong relationship with each and every child is not always easy, but it is so important. This is the beauty and responsibility of what we do. We work in a profession where we have the chance every day to change someone's life with our words, our actions, and our belief in their ability.

We must not underestimate the power of our words and the potential impact of our efforts. As teachers we must seek to connect with and find the strengths in every student every day.

### **Two: Let's build a life-long love of learning.**

Learning is at the core of what we do every day in schools, and it is important that we help our students understand that it is more than a score on a test or a grade at year's end.

What if we create experiences that help our students see that learning matters? And not because they need to learn information for a test, but because it allows them access to ideas, opportunities, and the world around them. Children are born full of wonder and a desire to learn. As an educator/innovator George Couros says, "If our students leave school less curious when they started, we have failed them." So let's teach to inspire, ignite curiosity, and create wonder.

Let's provide learning opportunities that invite students to see what's possible and then empower them with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make it happen.

### **Three: Let's believe in ourselves and know, without a doubt, that what we do matters.**

Every day is an opportunity to do something great for kids. A strong foundation for children and learning begins with us.

There are - and will continue to be - challenges in education, but let's remember why we are here. We are here for children, and we make a difference. Every day. Never doubt your sphere of influence or the capacity you have to affect change. We can't allow the things that are out of our control to interfere with all the things we can control. As teachers we are at the heart of education; we have the collective capacity to be the change our students need.

Best wishes for a wonderful December and New Year! Thank you for all you do to serve our children each and every day. You are appreciated!

## How to Re-engage Students After a Holiday Break

Holiday breaks are a common source of distraction, but with proper organization, teachers can use this time to re-focus and motivate students. Learn more about how this post-break period can affect students and pick up some strategies for keeping your students engaged.

Holiday breaks represent an enormous distraction for students, no matter what age. Whether it's winter break, summer vacation, or even Thanksgiving, a prolonged disruption to a student's education is bound to hinder progress for first and eighth graders alike. After a break, it's likely that students will return to your classroom feeling sluggish and not prepared to immediately resume learning.

Fortunately, this post-holiday malaise is not incurable. There are plenty of viable strategies to help you reconnect with students and, with meticulous planning and a [touch of creativity](#), you can ensure that extended breaks do not upset your curriculum or students' focus. Read more: <https://study.com/blog/how-to-re-engage-students-after-a-holiday-break.html>