

NC Beginning Teacher Newsletter

Regional Education Facilitators – North Carolina Department of Public Instruction – bit.ly/NCDPIREF

A Message from the 2019 Northwest Regional Teacher of the Year, Laura Brooks



Happy March, and thank you for all you are doing for the students in your classroom! Thank you for not only knowing the content you teach, but how to facilitate true learning in your classrooms. Thank you for differentiating your lessons for the diverse population of students you teach. Thank you for going out of your way to continue to research and reflect on how you can make what you do each day better and better for your students.

Yet, there is something even more special that I want to thank you for. Thank you for loving each and every one of your students. Love is not something that you can take a college class about or attend a professional development workshop on, and it is something that the latest research in education is not going to tell you about. It's something that my 94-year old grandfather who was married for 73 years said he could not even define.

I am not using the word “love” in a cheesy or corny way, but I believe it is the greatest word in our vocabulary. It is the strongest, most important characteristic that describes what accomplished and distinguished teachers do each and every day – they love their students. They don't just say they love their students, but the word “love” is a verb for them, and they act upon this love in every instant, decision, and moment of their day. It's a love that is unselfish and spread to every one of their students regardless if they think they are going to get something in return. Love is the most vulnerable, yet the most powerful gift that can be given to the students of North Carolina. When teachers love their students without condition, they are going above and beyond to do whatever it takes to help them learn each day.

Thank you for doing whatever it takes to embrace your students as individuals so they will want to be successful. The efforts you make to foster both a sense of self-worth and efficacy in each student is worth your time and energy because you are ensuring your students can and will want to learn. One by one you are helping each student want to be successful and reach his or her greatest potential. No other career has such an exciting opportunity to influence society. Through education, you are changing our world for the better.

In honor of the overwhelming amount of love teachers have for the children of North Carolina, I would like for all of us to have an even greater mission this month – **I would like for us to share this love and passion we have for education at a time when our society needs it most.**

In October of 2018, USA Today published an article stating that education is “a profession in crisis.” This year, for the first time in a half-century, a majority of Americans said they would not want their child to become a teacher. Enrollment since 2010 of students majoring in education in college has decreased 30% nationwide and 41% within the University of North Carolina System. Unfortunately, these statistics are mirrored in my own high school classroom. I never hear my current high school students talking about wanting to be teachers when they “grow up.” During my first few years of teaching I would occasionally have students tell me they wanted to be teachers, but current students never say this. Out of the 85 students I taught in the fall, only one said she was interested in being a teacher. By the year 2023, 52 million kindergarten through 12th grade students will be enrolled in a public school in the United States and there will not be enough teachers to teach them.

We need to take care of our profession right now, but also preserve it for the future. We need to make sure that quality teachers will come along to teach our own children, grandchildren, and one day even take our place. So here is our mission - I challenge everyone to have the intention of meeting three goals this month.

First, **encourage one child that you know to grow up and become a teacher.** In your interactions with any child in the upcoming month, take note of their personality and interests. Become aware of who they truly are as an individual and find at least one child that you think would make a good teacher and tell them. Simply plant the seed by saying something such as, “You did a very good job explaining that” or “I like how much you care about helping your friend, you know you would be a really good teacher when you grow up.”

The second thing I would like for you to do is to **encourage one high school student to apply for the NC Teaching Fellows Scholarship.** Strong students will make strong teachers. Find at least one current high school student that you think has the potential to be a good teacher and tell them not only what a good teacher they would be, but encourage them to work hard in high school and apply to be a North Carolina Teaching Fellow during their senior year. High school students who are interested in science, technology, math, or working with students with learning disabilities can receive this scholarship that includes a forgivable loan if they commit to teach in North Carolina. There is even an accelerated loan forgiveness schedule for teaching in a low performing North Carolina school. Right now, these scholarships are available for Elon University, Meredith College, UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Charlotte, and N. C. State.

NC Beginning Teacher Newsletter

Regional Education Facilitators – North Carolina Department of Public Instruction – bit.ly/NC DPIREF

Cont.

Finally, the third thing I would ask of you – **find a way to show gratitude to one current classroom teacher.** Find a colleague within the next week and write them a note of appreciation for all they are doing day in and day out for the students in their room. Teachers work hard to encourage students, but we need someone to keep encouraging and motivating us. Kind words, a note of motivation, or even a small surprise such as a candy bar or a pack of copy machine paper can brighten our day and change our entire outlook.

A teacher's mindset and priority is helping students. Our students come first, and our day is made up of helping one student after another, while also making sure we have everything ready for our next lesson to run smoothly and successfully. We forget our own needs and definitely don't have time for our own wants. We are surrounded by the same four classroom walls from early in the morning until evening because we love our students and will do whatever it takes to help them be successful. An unexpected treat that is out of the ordinary and delivered straight to a teacher by someone who doesn't have to shows them they are valued and appreciated. It is little things like this that teachers need! They will be extremely grateful, and their energy for helping their students will be renewed.

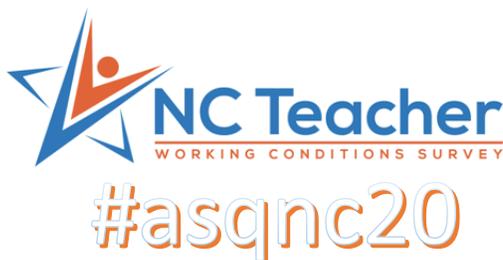
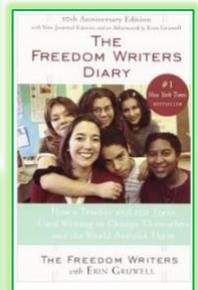
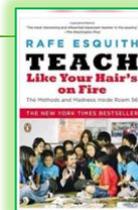
Our profession needs each of you. In honor of the overwhelming amount of love that you have for your students, think in your mind of the three people you are going to speak to or do something for this month. Who is one child you can encourage to grow up to be a teacher? Tell that child what a wonderful teacher they would make. Who is one high school student you can speak to about applying to be a North Carolina Teaching Fellow? Tell that student about the scholarship and help them make receiving it a reality. And who is one current teacher that you can send a note of thanks to or a small treat to because you see how hard they are working? Write the note tonight and give it to them tomorrow.

We know the power in answering the calling to become a teacher. Our lives have been forever changed by our students. Let's share this purpose-filled life with others. **Let's bring others into this wonderful profession.** Let's help retain and show appreciation to those who have already answered the call and are giving their hearts and souls to their students every day. Let's spread the love we have for our students beyond our own classroom walls. Together we can build each other, and while doing so, we can build our profession. If teachers and future teachers are motivated, inspired, and empowered, then they will be able to motivate, inspire, and empower their students and ultimately, the greatest job of all is accomplished — our community and world will be changed for the better when each student is reaching his or her greatest potential!

10 Inspiring Books Every Teacher Needs to Read

Whether you're a rookie looking for advice or a seasoned educator seeking inspiration, this collection of books will help you ignite (or rekindle!) your love of teaching and learning. You will find the complete list and book descriptions via this link:

<https://www.rd.com/culture/inspiring-books-for-teachers/>



“All students can learn and succeed but not in the same way and not in the same day.” William G. Spady

[Find a motivational educational quote](#) to keep your teacher-self encouraged. Reach out to your support team, mentor, instructional coach, principal, buddy teacher for help or to recharge one another at this time of the school year. **Do not forget to take the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, March 2-31, 2020. Your school representative, with support from the principal, will lead your school to 100% participation. Use the #ASQNC2020 to post your schools' survey excitement on any social media outlet.**