



# A Newsletter for Beginning Teachers in NC



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

A Message from the 2018 Western Region Teacher of the Year, Julie Pittman



**I TEACH. WHAT'S YOUR**  
**Superpower?**  
 teach • design • grow

When I was growing up, I thought of my mother as Wonder-Woman. She is a life-long educator - who taught me that no person and no obstacle could hold me back - **EVER**. My mother, sister and I - together - have honestly been through more than anyone could imagine. However, my mom - she never let us succumb to our situation. I thank my mom for my resilience in the classroom and in life.

At five years old, I was the student who sat in your classroom, that qualified for free lunch and “put up a front” because of the real-life horror story that was happening at home. I was the student that on some days was fortunate enough to be alive and sitting at my desk. I was present but not present. I was also the student whose mom saved us and who pushed us towards a better life. Along the way, there were a few special teachers God put in front of me. These teachers pulled me to the other side allowing me to triumph over many obstacles.

Today, I am struck by the honor of this magnitude because I am a teacher. Being a teacher isn't just a role that we take to stand in front of a classroom and instruct students about the curriculum we've mastered. Being a teacher isn't **JUST** about hall duty, PTA, field trips, IEPs or SSMTs. Teaching is **ALSO** about building leaders and giving them the opportunity to **LEAD**. It is about helping others find their passion and giving them the **COURAGE** to pursue it. It is about seeing the impossible and finding a way to transcend it. Teaching is about seeing a child as someone who will change the world, and setting him/her on the path to do it.

Our students have become the leaders, forging their own paths with their voices and passions about changing the way things have always been. How awesome it must be to be a student right now and see the world as one to mold. What a great honor it is to be a teacher today and know that **WE** can help those students down those paths. We can **WORK** together as a **TEAM** to make dreams happen. I see education as our most important right as citizens of the United States, and it is our responsibility to use our superpowers as teachers to advance that right.

## Special Announcement

My platform as a teacher has always been that students must see the value in education. You cannot put a price on purpose. Your purpose is to feed your kids – mind, body and soul because what happens inside the classroom effects the world beyond. We can do this by fostering a collaborative classroom environment, where we are not only leaders of our students, but also active learning participants **WITH** our students. We are a team!

As a team, we are battling other teams. There are teams who wish to tear down public education and who think students, teachers, and the work we do every day only amounts to one test score. There are also teams who believe that on top of our multiple roles, that we can add security guard to that enormous list. Some teams think that teaching - is **JUST** a job - not a profession. Teaching is **WHO WE ARE** as individuals and citizens of this world. This is our **CALLING**, and we are in it together. Teaching today is about relationships and making a difference in the lives of others.

About a year ago, while judging senior projects for my school, I witnessed this in the most profound way. The last student of a very long day nervously entered my classroom and paced in front of his four judges. His audible breathing and visible shaking were indicative of his anxiety. He was one of those students who thought his only ticket to make it in life was to play sports — but those dreams were crushed with a pre-season injury. He said that he grew up with peers calling him stupid, and teachers calling his mom about his behavior at school. He was ready to give up, but one of his teachers would not let him. She found a mentor who tirelessly worked with him to complete his project and graduate from high school. She believed he could finish what he started, and she would not give up on him until he believed it too. At the end of his presentation, that student said he knew that he wouldn't go to college as a student athlete, but that after finishing his project he knew he would go to college as a **STUDENT**. And then he said: “I may not have learned a lot about my actual subject here, but what I did learn from my project is that every single kid deserves to have an adult believe in him. My teacher and mentor were the team who believed in me.”

I think about this story every single day and about how lucky kids are to have teachers who are heroes - real superheroes.

Teaching is my superpower. I have the power to teach, the power to love, the power to see, the power to give my voice and the power to show others that their voices matter. So, I urge you to use your powers. We are teachers and teaching is our **SUPERPOWER!**

[Troops to Teachers](#) (TTT) is a military career transition program that helps eligible members of the armed forces begin new careers as K-12 public school teachers. This program also is a resource to armed forces members once they become new teachers. BTs that meet certain time in service, registration window criteria, and are teaching in a “high need” school could receive up to \$10,000 in incentives. These teachers must register in their first year of teaching. Additionally, there is military experience credit available (since 2013) through the [Corporal Pruitt Rainey Brass to Class Act](#). For a typical 20-year retired military service member this could mean as much as about \$9-\$10,000! If these resources apply to you, please click the linked text to receive more information.