HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy New Year to all of our Beginning Teachers and Mentors!

While we may have said good riddance to 2020, we know that our pandemic norm will continue to be with us for several months. But there is always hope and one day soon we will no longer fear contracting this deadly virus. We will be able to see the faces of our children and our colleagues and our families and friends. We will never again take a smile for granted or a hug or handshake.

With that said, the lessons and skills you have learned this past year have made you a better teacher. You have built relationships with your students through a computer screen! Once students return to the classroom, those online relationships will be so much stronger in person.

Bravo to you as a Beginning Teacher for staying the course and continuing to dedicate your professional lives to educating the children of Lexington City!

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Don't miss your opportunity to chat with other Beginning Teachers in the state on 2/16.

#NCBTCHAT
North Carolina Beginning Teacher Twitter Chat #NCBTChat - Feb. 16th 7-8pm

KEY DATES

| January 29 at 2:00-Classroom Management Part 2 | February 19 at 2:00-English as a Second Language |
| February 5 at 2:00-Small Group Reading/Literacy | February 2-Ground Hog Day |
| February 14-Valentine's Day | |
| February 15-Annual Leave Day | |
| February 16-NCBT Chat at 7:00 p.m.-see above | |
BT Spotlight... Sharazod Sarsour from Lexington Middle School. Ms. Sarsour teaches grade 6 ELA and is a BT 3. She has some interesting and thoughtful answers to the questions we sent her.

1. Why did you decide to teach?

I really wanted to make a difference in the lives of as many students as I can. I wanted to encourage students and help them realize their potential.

2. As an ELA teacher, what is your favorite unit of study? It can also be a favorite book or lesson you teach.

I love to teach about the author’s purpose. The reason I love this unit of study is because students need to recognize different techniques that author’s use such as their word choice or tone. This also helps students recognize that authors are real people that have biases and different opinions that we may or may not agree with what they are trying to say. I believe this unit really opens the eyes of the students to the real world and helps them really understand the writing and the reason behind it.

3. What is the best thing about teaching 6th graders?

I feel that 6th graders have a curiosity built in themselves. They are always ready to learn something new. Everyday is rewarding in 6th grade because I feel as if I can make a real impact on their lives and the rewards of this are plentiful.

4. Aside from the past year and dealing with Covid and remote teaching, what do you view as the most challenging aspect of your job?

As a resident of Lexington, I realize that most parents have to work long hours and multiple jobs to provide for their family. Because of this, students do not have the support at home and time for communication. This is difficult for me because I believe that parent/teacher communication is crucial to the success of any child.

5. How have you tried to deal with the challenge?

I have tried to communicate with parents throughout the day at different times. I have used multiple outlets of communication such as phone calls, texts, and email.

6. Briefly share one of your most rewarding moments as a teacher.

The most rewarding moment as a teacher to me is when I see a student finally have an “aha” moment where they have understood something that they have been struggling with. Another rewarding moment is when students discover new and exciting things about the world around them. I really like to bring real world events to my students and I feel as if they really learn from this and apply it to their own real life.

7. What is one aspect of your career as a teacher that you cannot wait to return to once life resumes as normal?

Being able to create relationships with students. I honestly miss hearing the students laugh and play around me and just being kids.

8. How important is your mentor to your success as a teacher?

My mentor is important to me because if I ever have any questions or need some support, my mentor has always been there to help me in all ways possible.

9. What advice do you have for someone contemplating a career in education?

Education is the best gift you can give anyone. If you are ready to make a difference in a child’s life, this is the job for you. No two days are the same with each day being new and exciting. Teachers can make a difference with visible results that will make anyone proud. The benefits are endless.

10. Describe the perfect Valentine's date. (not the person but the actual date itself)

Valentine’s Day to me is about love. I cannot even describe the love I have for my husband and four children. My husband and four children are the most amazing thing in my life. The perfect date for me would be me and my family to be sitting around the TV eating popcorn and just laughing and talking about our lives.

11. What are you currently watching? Watching on TV?

I am currently watching the series The Crown. It is the story of the life of Queen Elizabeth II.

12. What is the first thing you would buy if you won the lottery?

The first thing I would buy if I won the lottery is a school in my beloved land of my parents Jerusalem. I really believe all children have a right to the best education possible. I would build a school and try to provide the best education possible to the students of refugee camps and of economically disadvantaged students in the city.
Welcome to the most wonderful, amazing career! You are beginning a journey of teaching with purpose for impact! I am so proud of all the new educator diplomats joining us in one of the best and most noble roles of our nation: educating the future.

As part of the Regional Teacher of the Year cohort, a few weeks ago I jumped out of a perfectly good airplane. The Army Golden Knights gave us this opportunity to celebrate teachers and allow us to jump for a cause. Honestly, all of 2020 has felt like jumping out of an airplane for me. The anxiety, excitement, fear of the unknown and many other emotions have plagued even veteran teachers.

I have had all of you on my mind. My beginning years were more typical and predictable. I have felt like a beginning teacher since March. I see you. I validate you. Every day we enter our classrooms we are jumping. Sometimes, we jump in tandem with lots of support. Other times, we jump alone hoping our chute will deploy, knowing that it might not, and we will need our reserve. These are the times we need to remember to keep our “why” handy. The “why” being our purpose for being educators.

I became a teacher in hopes that I could make a positive difference in the lives of others. Music is my area, but at the heart of it is the relationships and family that I want to form. You are now in this incredible position so jump!

You will help students to celebrate themselves and each other in the most radically inclusive way possible. You will help them to reach inside themselves and discern the possibilities to find a purpose, accept global responsibility, and be agents of change to propel our society into a future of equality and doing good for others! Just jump! You will be able to teach them to possess the social and emotional skills to show people with whom they interact that they are valuable no matter where life takes them in their journeys. Just jump!
Your curriculum is important to be sure, but your positive interaction will be the healing agent that your students will need. A smile, a kind word, an encouraging note or just a simple, “Hello! How are you today?” can be life changing. You have the skills and the determination to set the tone and the stage for your classroom whether it be face to face instruction, all virtual or a blended model. Just jump! You will make mistakes. The failure comes in the not trying. A simple apology and moving forward almost always leads to a fresh start. Give your students that fresh start every day. Give yourself a fresh start every day. Just jump!

As I mentioned earlier, you will be teaching with purpose for impact. You will have a positive impact on your students but be aware! They will have a much bigger and more positive impact on you! You will learn from them. Accept these lessons with joy!

What is the reason for my telling you to “jump?” The reason is the perspective you gain. When you take that leap, keep your eyes on the horizon. It will show you the way. Your students will thank you for it. They will come back to you and recall memories, stories, and experiences that moved and changed them.

On the day of the jump when I landed, my colleagues asked me to tell them my favorite part of the experience. I told them that it was the “spinning.” While we are in the classroom, we are in a constant “spin.” We spin our lessons to fit multiple intelligences. We turn upside down when things are not staying right side up. We take the ride in stride and often find that at the end, the spin was the best part.

Embrace the “jump” into teaching. Lean into the spin. I hope that even during chaos you have the most incredible experiences being an educator. I know that my life is better for having been a teacher. **JUST JUMP!**
Hello Lexington City!
In this month's issue of Our State magazine, our very own Lexington City is featured. Click on the link below to read Katie King's article as she follows our mayor around the city. Mayor Clark checks out our favorite eateries, watering holes, shops and places to play. Great suggestions for that Valentine's Date or just a break from the winter blues.

Our January Birthdays...
Julia Van Anda on 1/3 from SLDC
Ti'Kiyah Holloway on 1/13 from LMS
Phil Hartley on 1/16 from LSHS
Shanice Lyons on 1/18 from LSHS
Alice Hamilton on 1/18 from SW
and Commeka Spratt on 1/31 from SW

Belated birthday wishes to all and Happy Upcoming Birthday to Ms. Spratt!

Our February Birthdays...
Michelle Boutazar on 2/3 from CE
Queantin Fuller on 2/7 from SW
Brittany Scales on 2/22 from SW
Erica Stubbs on 2/23 from SLS
Kim Cassidy on 2/24 from LMS

On behalf of the BTSP, Happy Birthday. Hope you have a great day!

Welcome to the Lexington City Schools' Beginning Teacher Support Program.
The BTSP gained 2 BT I's in 2021.
Commeka Spratt is our new EC Teacher at Southwest Elementary and Fonda Nix is our new Grade 4 Teacher at Pickett Elementary.

Welcome Aboard. We are so excited to have you both in the program.