

Central Carolina RESA
Plan of Action for 2017-18
(Presented to Board of Directors on May 5, 2017)

The 2017-18 year promises to be a unique one for the Central Carolina RESA as we prepare to launch the Alternative Teacher Preparation Program. As we make plans for the year, we must recognize that this initiative will have a profound impact on the organization and how we go about providing services to our member districts. Each of the major program components of the CCRESA is outlined below.

Alternative Teacher Preparation (ATP) Program

In March, the State Board of Education approved the proposal that we submitted in response to the State Board's Request for Proposals for one or more school districts to offer an alternative path to certification for lateral entry teachers. Since that time the CCRESA has been working with the Department of Public Instruction, RTI, which partnered with us in the preparation of the proposal, and the Wake County Public School System, which is the formal applicant since the CCRESA was not allowed to submit a proposal on its own. By the end of June, we hope to have hired a Program Administrator and a Lead Instructor, who will be employed by WCPSS and be on loan to the CCRESA.

For the 2017-18 school year, we anticipate accepting 100 participants into the ATP Program and providing them with face-to-face instruction, blended learning, coaching, and mentoring. This will entail adapting the curriculum that the Guilford County Schools developed and shared with us, delivering this curriculum to lateral entry teachers throughout the region, and training and providing supervision to the coaches that each participating school district will provide. Mid-year we plan to hire a recruiter who will seek out non-traditional teacher candidates and recruit them to our districts and into the ATP Program.

Undoubtedly, the Executive Director's and Office Manager's roles will change significantly. The Executive Director will be supervising the additional staff members and monitoring the progress of the program. The Office Manager will be assisting with the administration and recordkeeping associated with the program. In light of this, we may need to cut back somewhat on the programming that we normally have done. Nevertheless, the services that we outline below are similar to those offered in 2016-17. It, simply, should be recognized that we might not be able to accomplish quite as much as we have in the past.

Collaboration

One of the unique services that the Central Carolina RESA provides to its members is the promotion of collaboration among its members, including its affiliate members. We will continue to support six job-alike Councils (C&I, Technology, Human Resources, Finance, PIO, and Principals) as well as the Board of Directors, which is really a seventh job-alike group. At a Board meeting earlier this

year, it was suggested that we consider forming an Equity Council. Only about four or five districts expressed interest in this. After discussing it with our C&I Council, we are planning on including administrators with responsibility for equity in our C&I Council and providing time during our Council meetings to address equity issues. Some C&I Council members felt that equity shouldn't, and can't, be separated from C&I.

We also will continue to collaborate with DPI staff. In particular, Angela Jackson and Jennifer Bass head up the service center that supports LEAs in the Northeast and North Central regions (East Zone). They attend many of our Council meetings, and we often collaborate on professional development that they have to offer. In some cases that simply means forwarding communications and encouraging attendance. In other cases we have provided supporting resources such as expenses associated with lunch or the use of our facilities. We also, on occasion, allow DPI staff to use our conference room, which doesn't involve any expense to us. In addition, we frequently invite DPI staff to attend and present at our Council meetings, and we're appreciative of their time.

In 2017-18 we also will continue to collaborate with DPI staff in conducting training associated with the Digital Learning Competencies (DLC). Each RESA received a two-year grant this year to assist with the logistics of the professional development that DPI will be conducting. Dana handles these responsibilities for the most part.

Advocacy

In recent years, the CCRESA has been responding to proposals emanating from DPI, the State Board of Education, or the General Assembly related to issues that impact our staff and students. In doing so, we have attempted not only to share our concerns but also to offer constructive solutions. We anticipate that we will continue to speak out on issues that we believe impact public education in North Carolina.

Focus on Important Educational Issues

A vital role that the CCRESA plays is to promote discussion of issues that may be central to the success of students in our member districts and provide assistance to districts interested in addressing these issues. For the 2016-17 school year, we had proposed focusing on three primary issues, and, in the interest of continuity, we believe that they should continue to have our attention this year. They are as follows:

- 1. Promote and support efforts to instill 21st Century teaching and learning in our schools through the effective use of digital resources, project/problem-based learning, formative and performance-based assessment, and other instructional strategies that promote creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, collaboration, and other "soft" and social skills that are becoming increasingly important to employers.**

2. Explore school-based leadership models that provide teachers with the coaching support and guidance that they need to achieve their potential in the classroom. Promote the concepts of distributed leadership within schools and principals functioning as “learning leaders,” to use Michael Fullan’s term.

3. Examine the approaches used to discipline students and monitor and control student behavior, and follow-up on the sessions we held this year on systems to support students in school while holding them accountable for their actions.

In addition to these priority areas, I expect that we will be collaborating with DPI on the development of the **State’s ESSA plan**, which is due in September, but must be implemented in the 2017-18 school year. As in the past, I expect that the RESAs will be asked to assist with the rollout of the State’s ESSA plan to school districts across the state.

Focus on Specific Curriculum Areas

We continue to believe that the most effective professional development for teachers is provided at the school or district level. With approximately 400 schools in our service area, the CCRESA simply can’t reach a critical mass of those teachers. That said, there are three specific areas of need that we have identified in which we can work directly with instructional leaders to support student success:

1. We will partner with SREB and DPI in supporting schools in the implementation of new standards for Math I, II, III, and Essentials for College Math).
2. We will collaborate with DPI on the finalization and implementation of ELA and Math standards as well as on the Digital Learning Competencies.

Leadership Development

- **Book Studies**

For the past two years, we have conducted a book study program that we called “Leadership Roundtable for Principals.” Each book study group consisted of 15-20 participants, and we read five books related to leadership. The program was well received. Below is a list of the books that we’ve read previously. We will continue with some of these and bring in some more recent works by these and similar authors.

- Blended: Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools by Michael Horn and Heather Staker
- Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work by Chip Heath and Dan Heath
- Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us by Daniel Pink
- Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing our Kids for the Innovation Era by Tony Wagner and Ted Dintersmith
- The Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact by Michael Fullan

- **VitalSmarts**

Over the past five years, eight cohorts of administrators have completed our VitalSmarts offerings, which include Crucial Conversations, Crucial Accountability, and Influencer. This year we worked with our facilitator, Lynn Williams, to redesign the program so that she can offer training based on the books in a manner that does not require us to purchase the licensed materials. This revised format proved to be quite popular and is financially sustainable. We will form another cohort to participate in the study of these three books again this year. Dr. Williams and I also would like to find an effective method to follow up and stay connected with graduates of the program.