

Press Release - March 8, 2002

SUBJECT(S): Education, NC Public Schools, Jobs

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**ECONOMY, ALTRUISM SPUR INCREASE IN APPLICATIONS FOR
TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM**

More employees from some of the state's largest companies and corporations are headed back to school. Not only to continue their educations, but ultimately to teach in our state's public schools.

"This year we have more applications from research and biotech fields, the high-tech and telecommunications industries, and even airline pilots," says Dorothy Mebane, PhD, director of NC TEACH. "I think the economy and the events of September 11 are causing many people to reaffirm what is important. I think people want to help shape our children's lives and our nation's future in a positive way."

The April 15 application deadline is nearing for NC TEACH, a model program which recruits, trains, and licenses professionals from a host of fields for a career in teaching. The program is entering its third year and has already trained 255 professionals who are teaching across the state. With word of the program's excellence spreading with participants and school administrators, NC TEACH hopes to more than double that number this year.

Called 'lateral entry,' programs such as NC TEACH help supplement the supply of education majors being trained in our state's public and private colleges and universities to keep up with the state's rapidly growing school-age population.

"High-quality lateral entry programs are filling a vital need for our state," says Mike Ward, State Superintendent for North Carolina. "NC TEACH targets people who have made gains in their careers and who are now choosing to put their knowledge and experiences to work for our public school students. The program is truly a wonderful collaboration of our state's public and private universities working together to train these professionals for successful teaching careers in North Carolina."

At the core of NC TEACH is an intensive, five-week summer institute where candidates learn essential skills for beginning teachers -- how schools are run, ways diverse children learn, classroom management, the role of technology, and student assessment. With realistic expectations, candidates are more likely to survive the crucial first year, evidenced by NC TEACH's impressive 80% retention rate. NC TEACHERs continue to

take courses and seminars during their first year of teaching and can gain full licensure after a minimum of 12 months. NC TEACHERs already at work in schools across the state say the program is the best and fastest way to get lateral entry certification.

"As Lt. Governor, one of my priorities has been to continue building a first-class public education system, a cornerstone of which is exceptional teachers. Through lateral entry programs such as NC TEACH, we are identifying highly-skilled professionals who can make significant contributions in our state's classrooms," says Lieutenant Governor Beverly Perdue. "With the excellent pre-service training offered by NC TEACH in collaboration with the state's public and private universities, these professionals know the real expectations of the classroom and how to share their knowledge and career experience to benefit our children."

Through NC TEACH, college graduates of all backgrounds - law, medicine, engineering, mathematics, science, social work, language arts, etc. - can gain licensure in K-12 Special Populations; Spanish and French; Middle Grades (6-9) Math, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts; and Secondary (9-12) Math, Science, Social Studies and English.

"NC TEACH provides high quality, compressed, practical training for those who desire to enter the exciting, challenging teaching profession, says Phillip J. Kirk, Jr., chair of the State Board of Education. "I highly recommend it."

Classes for the 2002-2003 NC TEACH Program are offered at the following sites: East Carolina University, Fayetteville State University/UNC Pembroke; UNC Wilmington; NC Central University; UNC at Chapel Hill; UNC Greensboro; UNC Charlotte; Lenoir-Rhyne College; and Western Carolina University/UNC Asheville.

To be considered for NC TEACH, applicants must hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and have at least three years of full-time successful work experience since graduation from college.