

WS/FCS considering Teach for America

Local school district looking at creative ways to fill teacher vacancies

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

Aug. 29 is the first day of school for the 2016-17 school year. There could be more significance to that day than usual.

In an attempt to bring young, exciting teachers to the area, and fill the growing number of vacancies, the Board of Education is considering bringing Teach for America (TFA) into Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools.

"As many of you know, we have faced a teacher shortage here in Forsyth County, so we are trying to find creative new ways to fill those vacancies," said Matt Dixon, WS/FCS chief operating officer for human resources.

Dixon, who is the former principal at Southwest Middle School, said qualified teachers will help the district reach the goals they already have in place.

"We want to make sure qualified teachers are in front of our students, and Teach for America is one of the ways we are trying to do that."

TFA is a national teacher corporation of recent college graduates who commit at least two years to teach and effect change in the communities they work in. According to the TFA official website, the

mission of the organization is to enlist, develop and mobilize as many as possible of the nation's most promising future leaders to grow and strengthen the movement for educational equity and excellence.

If approved by the Board of Education, TFA's partnership with Winston-

TEACHFOR AMERICA

Salem/Forsyth County Schools will begin at the start of the 2017-2018 school year. Upon approval, with the help of board members, TFA will create a placement plan and use the 2016-2017 school year to recruit possible teachers.

During a full board meeting held on Tuesday, June 28, Piedmont Triad TFA executive director Nafeesha Irby made a presentation showing board members the impact the program has had on classrooms across the state.

Irby said that since partnering with North Carolina, TFA has been focused on building a strong pipeline of teachers into the most vulnerable schools, and closing the opportunity gap.

She also mentioned the program has proven to bring more diverse group of teachers into the classroom.

Of the 44,000 applications TFA received in 2015, more than 50 percent came from teachers of color. Irby also noted that more than half of the applicants

are Pell Grant recipients, which is a key indicator that they come from low-income backgrounds.

"Teach for America has served as one of our nations most diverse teacher prep programs. For years, we have been a top recruiter for teachers of color across the nation and here in North Carolina," she said



Irby

While TFA is celebrating its 25th anniversary, the program is still fairly new to the Piedmont Triad. In 2014, the teaching initiative began a partnership with Guilford County Schools (GCS). In just two years, TFA has brought 50 teachers into struggling secondary schools in Guilford County and is expected to add another 30 in August to impact students in primary or elementary schools.

According to a survey conducted on principals in Guilford County who had TFA teachers at their schools, 100 percent were satisfied with the performance of the teachers. Irby mentioned the recruitment process helps ensure teachers are placed in schools where they can make an immediate impact on the students as well as the community.

"We recruit people who have an unwavering belief in the potential of all students, who have demonstrated leadership, perseverance in the face of challenges,

strong critical thinking and organizational skills, and exceptional interpersonal skills," Irby said.

"This has helped us to build a strong movement toward educational equity."

In addition to possessing the above mentioned character traits, college graduates who are looking to join TFA must pass the Praxis II Series Professional Assessment before being interviewed for any position. Teachers will also receive ongoing support and professional development during their tenure.

"We welcome Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools," Irby said.

While the decision is not yet final, future educators are excited about the possibility of the partnership between TFA and the local school system. Shannon Hill, a Winston-Salem State University education major and city native, said although she plans to attend graduate school after receiving her bachelor's degree, TFA seems like a good second option.

"This definitely sounds like something I would be interested in," said Hill. "It's good to know that there is a program out there that helps students who want to be teachers."

"In this area where we have so many failing schools, it is good to see the school board trying new things to change that narrative. I'm excited to see what happens with this partnership."

For more information on TFA, visit piedmonttriad.teachforamerica.org.

School resource officer wins statewide award for heroics

SPECIAL TO
THE CHRONICLE

Winston-Salem Police Officer Travis McFadden, a school resource officer for the Kingswood School at the Children's Home, will receive the 2016 Hank Snyder "Beyond the Call of Duty" award from the N.C. Association of School Resource Officers for his actions in rescuing a toddler from a crashed automobile.

McFadden will be presented the award on July 11

during the Association's annual convention at Sunset Beach, N.C.

The Hank Snyder "Beyond the Call of Duty" award honors a school resource officer who goes above and beyond the call of his or her everyday duties.

The award is named in honor of Hank Snyder, a retired instructor at the N.C. Justice Academy.

On the morning of Oct. 21, 2015, McFadden was traveling on Northwest Boulevard on his way to

Kingswood School at the Children's Home, where he serves as the school resource officer, when he saw that a car had run off the road.

The vehicle was suspended in mid-air straddling the entrance to a pedestrian tunnel that passes under Northwest Boulevard. The transmission was still engaged and the wheels were turning, making the position of the vehicle very unstable. The driver had gotten out, but a 2-year-old child was still

inside, fastened in a car seat.

McFadden determined that the child might be killed or suffer a serious injury if the unstable vehicle shifted and fell into the tunnel entrance, about 10 feet down. McFadden climbed into the suspended vehicle through the back door and removed the child, who was not injured.

McFadden later received the Police Department's Medal of Merit for his actions.



McFadden

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Maximum loan amount is currently \$417,000.00 as of date of publication. Borrower may not have ownership in another home at the time of closing, must not have late payments in the last 6 months and must have a minimum of 12 months rental history. Borrower must contribute a minimum of \$500 and have two months of principal, interest, taxes and insurance in reserve. Escrow is required as applicable. Offer is subject to credit approval based on credit history, income and property appraisal. Minimum credit scores and maximum debt to income ratios apply. Structural and mechanical systems (such as roof, flooring, heating, etc.) must have a remaining life of at least 3 years or must be replaced prior to closing. 0% down payment will result in no property equity until such time the loan principal is paid down through regular mortgage payments and/or the property value appreciates. If property values decline borrower could owe more than the property's value. Interest on portion of loan that exceeds the value of the dwelling may not be tax deductible and borrower should consult a tax advisor. HUD median income varies by area and is the amount at which half of area incomes are above and half of area incomes are below that amount. Seller concessions allow the seller to pay up to 6% of the purchase price toward the home buyer's closing costs including loan origination fees, discount points, title search fees and prepaid items such as taxes, insurance and inspections. If combined loan to value (CLTV) is greater than 100% borrower must use eligible down payment assistance program (such as FHLBA, City's DAP, NCHFA, USDA, etc.).



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