

THE NORTH CAROLINA CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING

276 NCCAT Drive • PO Box 5121 • Cullowhee, NC 28723 • Phone 828-293-5202 • www.nccat.org









Increasing teacher effectiveness is fundamental to improving public education in North Carolina. NCCAT provides high-quality professional development programming for North Carolina teachers that is innovative, effective, and efficient.

Teacher leaders build their corps at NCCAT

"Leadership is action, not position." These words of the late Donald H. McGannon, revered for raising standards for radio and television while president of Westinghouse Broadcasting, have never been more true than they are for teachers today.

"Teachers are by definition leaders," said Dr. Elaine Franklin, executive director of NCCAT. "If we are to attract and retain the best and brightest, we must view teachers in that light." In addition to leading their own classrooms, teachers are the professionals who design curricula, implement the standards, and mentor colleagues.

To build the understanding and skills necessary for teachers to actively take on these important leadership roles, NCCAT's professional development offerings work to broaden participants' view of leadership, cultivate proficiencies, and move them toward mastery of their profession.

Last spring, NCCAT's seminar "US Coast Guard: Guardians of the Sea" allowed teachers to experience firsthand the leadership model of the US Coast Guard. Held at NCCAT's Ocracoke campus, seminar participants took to the sea on Coast Guard vessels to experience for themselves how crew members take charge of their own area.

"What they saw was a broader view than just one leader. They saw personal responsibility and teamwork,"

said Alton Ballance, NCCAT fellow and a former public school teacher who facilitated the seminar.

Teachers also learned that Coast Guard crews are focused on their mission to protect the nation's coastline and save those in peril no matter the changing ocean. "These crews make that mission happen with fewer resources by depending on each other in rapidly changing conditions," Ballance said. "Obviously, there are a lot of parallels with the classroom. As teachers, our mission is educating students. Being a teacher leader means accomplishing that regardless of a change in circumstance. None of us knows how we'll be challenged in the classroom," Ballance said. "Our mission as teachers is to make it work."

Ballance actually had the opportunity to demonstrate the value of being flexible during the seminar. Due to unexpectedly low water levels over a shoal, the ferries that were supposed to carry participants to different events were unable to operate. As the seminar leader, Ballance quickly came up with alternative learning opportunities and transportation. He talked to the Coast Guard about the situation; they sent a 47-foot motor lifeboat that carried teachers to one activity and later a former Coast Guard helicopter pilot and rescue swimmer, Dwight Burrus, met with teachers and offered them an aerial view of the Outer Banks (teachers paid for the flight out of their own pockets).

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Jill Martin, a physical education teacher at Baily Middle School in Cornelius, said, "This seminar taught me to roll with the tide, literally. As teachers, we can't control everything but we can stay with the mission, which Ballance demonstrated. Part of being a good leader is being flexible, knowing what we want to accomplish, and being okay with making an alternative plan should we need to."

Martin plans to develop her students as leaders, too. "I already have plans to incorporate what I learned in this seminar into my stress management units. I want my students to know how to take charge and adapt instead of stressing. I want them to be leaders in their own right."

At NCCAT's Cullowhee campus in June, Teachers of the Year from across the state gathered for NCCAT's seminar "Leadership, Creativity, and Change: Positive Paths for North Carolina Teachers."

"Leaders empower the people around them to achieve excellence," said Dr. Donna Glee Williams, the NCCAT fellow who facilitated this seminar. "As Teachers of the Year, these participants already have been recognized as leaders. This seminar gave them the opportunity to explore

their role as leaders, as well as exchange ideas about developing educational leadership in general."

Seminar participant and North Carolina 2012–2013 Teacher of the Year Darcy Grimes said, "To me, teacher leadership is not about one teacher leading—it's about creating a team of leaders. It's about all of us having a willingness to push our students forward, to push education forward." Grimes is a third-grade teacher at Bethel Elementary School in Watauga County.

With Parker Palmer's groundbreaking work *The Courage to Teach* as their guide, the Teachers of the Year worked on various concepts in the book to deepen their own capacity for leadership. Renowned national speaker, author, and coach Brian Biro donated his time to NCCAT to assist participants in increasing their focus, further defining their vision, and fully realizing their ability to create a classroom and a life that meets their goals—while inspiring and supporting others in doing the same.

"Being with this group of teachers has been energizing," Grimes said. "We've already created an online community for all of us who attended the seminar. We want to keep the conversation and exchange of ideas going."

The New NCCAT: "Working on a Dream"

For more than twenty-five years, NCCAT has provided North Carolina teachers with exceptional professional development experiences. As an institution, we have examined the effectiveness of our programs and learned much about what teachers need in order to grow intellectually as well as professionally and to become re-inspired. These elements form the philosophical foundation of NCCAT and will always influence our work.

However, the specific priorities of Judy Phillips (left) we the institution change over time based on the shifting needs of education in the state. In order to effectively respond to these needs, we at NCCAT have spent a considerable amount of time developing a new strategic plan that will guide our work over the next five years. "Working on a Dream" is the title of a Bruce Springsteen song that is filled with a message of persistence and hope; I am borrowing the phrase for this article because it well reflects the spirit of the new NCCAT and our new strategic plan.

The four priority areas of the plan emphasize the development of professional educators and the needs of students in the twenty-first century, growing the



Judy Phillips (left) with Dr. Elaine Franklin

institution's capacity to more fully engage in and contribute to educational research and evaluation, advancing the development and use of educational innovations, and fostering a culture of service.

We owe a great deal of thanks to Judy Phillips, CEO of Partnership for Excellence and a member of the Board of Directors of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc., for donating her time and guiding us through the strategic planning process. In addition,

we are grateful to the numerous teachers, administrators, board members, university faculty and others, who contributed their time and their ideas. All told, more than eight hundred individuals were included; the plan received the approval of the NCCAT Board of Trustees in April. We at NCCAT are eager to move forward and partner with others around the state as we begin working on this dream.

Warm regards,

Elaine Franklin, PhD

Executive Director, NCCAT

Science heads outside

Teachers attending NCCAT's professional development seminar "The Outdoor Classroom: Integrating Natural Experiences with the Curriculum" were introduced to a host of relevant and innovative strategies for getting students engaged in and excited about science.



The Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center's programming is correlated with the National Science Education Standards and North Carolina curriculum standards. Find out more at www.nps.

Find out more at www.nps. gov/grsm/naturescience/pk-homepage.htm.

"We developed this seminar using the North Carolina Essential Standards for high school biology, but everything we did could be adapted easily for other science courses as well as interdisciplinary instruction," said Peter Julius, the NCCAT fellow who developed this seminar. "We also introduced teachers to learning activities and resources they can access on their own school campuses." Julius holds a master's degree in biology and was a classroom science teacher himself before joining NCCAT.

With the seminar held at NCCAT's Cullowhee campus, participants were able to use the Great Smoky Mountains National Park for their outdoor classroom. Susan Sachs, education coordinator for the Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center at Purchase Knob in the national park, escorted the group on several expeditions. With Sachs, teachers learned how to use nature to support their curriculum. They learned proper techniques for recording observations using sketches and notes. And they participated in hands-on activities designed to illuminate scientific principals and allow students to experience the thrill of scientific discovery.

Perhaps most exciting, teachers learned about a host of scientific research projects they and their students could incorporate into their lessons in order to conduct research at their own schools. One of those projects was for USA National Phenology Network. The network partners with public agencies, academic institutions, and scientists throughout the United States to monitor phenological patterns. Sachs explained: "They are studying life cycle events in plants and how these are influenced by variations in climate. Your students' job would be to monitor and record the timing from bloom to brown for plants on your school campus." Teachers were then instructed how to correctly collect and record data for this specific project.

Sachs also introduced teachers to the many resources available to them through the Appalachian Highlands Science Learning Center. The center offers K–12 curriculum online with activities to accompany each unit.

Kaye Culberson, legislative assistant to Sen. Jim Davis of Franklin, joined the seminar for a day. "My background includes a graduate degree in nursing education with an emphasis on and a passion for creative teaching strategies," she said. "With well prepared and engaging facilitators and nature as our classroom, my educator soul was abundantly fed. I want every teacher I know to have such an opportunity as I had that day. My 'Outdoor Classroom' experience was just one of many examples we have seen of NCCAT's excellent stewardship of its resources."

The 7th annual "Old Fossil" Golf Tournament

The annual A. Craig Phillips "Old Fossil" Golf Tournament was held in June in honor of the late Dr. A. Craig Phillips, state superintendent of public instruction from 1969 to 1989. Initiated seven years ago by the Phillips family to raise funds for the first A. Craig Phillips Honored Educator Scholarship at NCCAT, the tournament is now helping to endow its third such scholarship. The goal is to raise funds for eight Honored Educator Scholarships in Phillips' name.



Pictured here are (left to right): Alden Webb, Andy Phillips, Judy Phillips, Carrie Sharp, Marian Sharp, Sullivan Sharp, Stacey Webb, and Ben Webb.

NCCAT Alumni and Friends Weekend Seminar: "North Carolina from the Mountains to the Sea" January 25–27, 2013 at Pinehurst Resort. Visit www.nccat.org for more information.

One amazing year for NC teachers

What would it take to make the next twelve months the most amazing of your life? And what would you need to do to make that happen?

Those are the questions a group of North Carolina public school teachers were challenged with last fall as they embarked on the "One Amazing Year" program at NCCAT.

"We wanted to provide teachers with an experience that would help them create the best year of their lives thus far, however they defined it," said Doc Klein, co-director of the program and founder of Unchartered Territories, which provides strategic planning, team building, and "amazing year" challenges for businesses and organizations.

At the opening five-day seminar in September 2011, teachers participated in exercises to determine what an amazing year would look like for them and to put together a plan to get there.

"The projects ran the gamut," said Dr. Donna Glee Williams, NCCAT fellow and co-director of the program. "Some were quite ambitious and pedagogical while others were about achieving more balance in life." In addition to the initial seminar, teachers received two personal telephone coaching sessions from both Klein and Williams, one weekend seminar in February, and a capstone seminar in July to document what they achieved over the course of one year, and to set more goals.

Wendi Pillars, who teaches English as a second language (ESL) at Virginia Cross Elementary in Chatham County, decided that making the time to explore her interest in neuroscience, especially as it pertains to learning, would create an amazing year for her. "Studying neuroscience is something I have tried to get on my calendar for years," Pillars said. "To come to NCCAT, put my goals in writing, and then say them out loud to the group kept me true to what I wanted to accomplish."

Since that initial seminar last fall, Pillars has applied for and received two grants: one to support her studies and one to attend a conference on neuroscience. She also published an article "Teachers as Brain Changers: Neuroscience and Learning" in *Education Weekly* and has been contracted to write another. In addition, Pillars has put her new knowledge into practice in her classroom. "I have discovered my job as a teacher is not to deliver the facts and hope my students get it," Pillars said. "My job is to provide opportunities for students to make connections on their own so that their neural pathways change and real learning occurs."

For Mark Dillon, band director at Jordan-Matthews High School in Siler City, an amazing year meant a new perspective. "Between budget cuts and other pressures,



The "One Amazing Year" program was comprised of a five-day institute at NCCAT, coaching calls during the school year, two weekend seminars, plus projects that improved the classroom or school community.

schools are not always the happiest places these days,"
Dillon said. So his "One Amazing Year" challenge was
simply to be joyful. "I decided I was going to be happy no
matter what I'm doing," said the naturally dry-witted Dillon.

To his surprise, his new attitude quickly generated solid returns that went beyond his own well-being. "My students suddenly took ownership of their education; they were self-educating, engaging, asking great questions, and taking the lesson beyond its typical scope," Dillon said.

June Arthurs, a colleague of Dillon's and an art teacher at Jordan-Matthews High School, took what she benefited from most directly back to her classroom. "Writing down my goals with specific ways to measure progress did so much for me that I decided to have my students set measurable goals. I worked with them to define goals and then I had them design cards with those goals clearly stated. One of my students set the goal to pass a class in school. I was taken aback. I didn't think he cared about school. But he admitted to himself on that card and then out loud to his peers that he wanted to pass. It changed the way I looked at my responsibility to him and helped me be more committed to him," Arthurs said. Arthurs reported that her students continue to carry and refer to their goal cards.

In addition to these classroom triumphs, Dillon and Arthurs used the opportunity of "One Amazing Year" to start an arts foundation for Jordan-Mathews High School. To date, they have recruited a governing board and raised nearly \$7,000 in funding. "It's something June and I have discussed before, but 'One Amazing Year' helped us put it into action," Dillon said. "Every time I come to NCCAT, I find the validation I need to be bold as a professional," Arthurs said. "I find I am surrounded by teachers whose creativity inspires and nourishes me. I return from NCCAT wanting to do the same for my students."

NCCAT announces new chief of staff



Angela Hambling, former principal of Rolling Prairie Elementary School in New Carlisle, Indiana, has been appointed chief of staff at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, effective August 1.

In making the announcement, NCCAT Executive Director Dr. Elaine Franklin said, "We are very fortunate to have Angie Hambling joining us as chief of staff. The depth and breadth of her experience, as well as her open communication style, make her exactly the right fit for this position. She possesses a keen understanding of K–12 education, particularly in the area of educational leadership, and exhibits a deep respect for the teaching profession."

"As the new chief of staff, I am energized and excited to be a part of this organization, and look forward to working with teachers, administrators, and educational leaders from across the state," Hambling said.

NCCAT gets to the core of Common Core

As school bells ring in 2012–2013, many public school teachers across North Carolina are for the first time implementing Common Core State Standards to their English language arts and mathematics curricula. Adopted by the state in 2010, the Common Core State Standards were devised to build the knowledge and the critical thinking skills students nationwide need for success in the twenty-first century. To date, forty-five states, the District of Columbia, and three US Territories have signed on to Common Core.

North Carolina was one of the first states to embrace the national standards. "Our state has been a leader in the movement from the beginning because we believe that it makes sense to collaborate with other states that share our vision for clear and rigorous standards," said State Board of Education Chairman Dr. William C. Harrison upon North Carolina's acceptance of Common Core.

To support teachers in making a successful transition to the new standards, NCCAT is offering several seminars to provide educators with an in-depth explanation of and hands-on strategies for translating the new guidelines into everyday classroom work.

"Once educators have the opportunity to thoroughly study Common Core, they come to realize that for North Carolina teachers it is more a change in the approach to education than a change in the specific information taught," said Dr. Deb Teitelbaum, the NCCAT fellow and former classroom teacher who developed NCCAT's Common Core seminars. "The actual Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics are very similar to what North Carolina previously required. The difference is in maintaining an active awareness of how each grade builds towards the next and ensuring a focus in both instruction and assessment on the development of analytical thinking in addition to factual knowledge."

Twenty-four teachers from Cherokee Elementary School were the first to benefit from NCCAT's professional development programming for Common Core, thanks to a generous \$25,000 grant from Harrah's Cherokee Casino and Hotel. "The value of the NCCAT seminar was immeasurable," said fourth-grade teacher Keri Carpenter. "It gave us the opportunity to break Common Core down into manageable and meaningful pieces. It gave us time to digest the strands, become familiar with the language of Common Core, and see how the strands are interconnected from kindergarten through twelfth grade."

During the seminar, participants were able to look at the Common Core State Standards as they relate to their current textbooks, current unit planning, and differentiated instruction. They were given the opportunity to work within the standards to develop interdisciplinary unit planning where appropriate. "This seminar helped to take away the burden I was feeling about Common Core," said Carpenter. "I would strongly recommend the seminar to all teachers as a way to become comfortable with everything to do with Common Core. The more comfortable we as teachers are with the curriculum, the better able we'll be to teach it."

This fall, NCCAT is offering "Integrating the Common Core State and North Carolina Essential Standards" seminars in two sections (kindergarten through second grade and third through fifth grade), and another seminar titled "Critical Thinking and the Common Core." For customized professional development focusing on integrating Common Core into the curriculum at the school or district level, contact Teitelbaum directly at *deborah*. *teitelbaum@nccat.org* or 828-293-5202 extension 1103.

For a schedule of upcoming professional development seminars for North Carolina public school educators, please visit www.nccat.org.

Honored Educator Scholarships established for NC teachers

The North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching recently honored retired superintendent of Pamlico County Schools and Pamlico County education icon George R. Brinson with the presentation of an Honored Educator Scholarship in his name.

NCCAT's Honored Educator Scholarship Program gives tribute to outstanding individuals and educators by providing scholarship funds in their names. Scholarship funds can be named in honor of classroom teachers, coaches, administrators, school board members, or community volunteers—anyone who has made a positive difference in the field of education.

The fully endowed George R. Brinson Honored Educator Scholarship will be awarded each year to an eligible teacher from Pamlico County to attend one of NCCAT's professional development seminars at either the Cullowhee or Ocracoke campus.

Also, Scotland County Schools has established a fully endowed Honored Educator Scholarship to be awarded to the Teacher of the Year from that school district. Dr. Richard Thompson, who previously served as the director of NCCAT (1992–1994), has a fully endowed Honored



Richard Schwartz, president of the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc. (left), and Dr. Elaine Franklin, executive director of NCCAT, honor George R. Brinson for three decades of service as a teacher, principal, and superintendent for Pamlico County Schools.

Educator Scholarship in his name to be awarded to a North Carolina teacher. And a second Phillip J. Kirk Jr. Honored Educator Scholarship recently was changed to honor Kirk's late wife, Margaret Simmons Kirk, who passed away May 12. To make a secure online donation, visit www.nccat.org/givenow.

Foundations continue to invest in professional development for NC teachers

NCCAT helps retain new teachers while giving them the tools, instructional strategies, and professional support they need to positively impact student achievement. The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation continues to support NCCAT's Beginning Teachers Program with a remaining \$125,000 of an original \$250,000 grant to fund the NCCAT Connections program for 2012–2013.

The jobs of tomorrow are going to require expanded skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). To support a global economy that demands creativity, ingenuity, and a strong STEM-based workforce, the Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation recently awarded \$10,000 to NCCAT's Teaching Students of the 21st Century STEM Initiative.

Geitner joins NCCAT Board of Trustees

Governor Beverly Purdue appointed Clement Geitner of Hickory to the NCCAT Board of Trustees. His four-year term as a representative from Educational Region Seven began in April.

Well respected as a business and civic leader, Geitner believes that a strong education system is the key in lowering unemployment and propelling the economy forward. "This can be accomplished only by elevating our teaching community to its highest levels of performance, and NCCAT is dedicated to this goal," Geitner said. "I will certainly be both challenged and proud to be part of this organization's efforts."

Two new directors join the Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc.

The Development Foundation of NCCAT Inc. is pleased to welcome two new members to its Board of Directors, Dr. Samuel H. Houston Jr. of Raleigh and Dr. Mary D. McDuffie of Surf City. Though new to the foundation board, both Houston and McDuffie have long histories of service to public education and to NCCAT. McDuffie previously served as the executive director of NCCAT.

In other news, the Board of Directors also re-elected Richard A. Schwartz of Raleigh to another term as president and elected David M. Farris of Rocky Mount as vice president.

Dropout solutions that work

Educators who participated in NCCAT's "Dropout Solutions: Review and Implementation of Best Practices from the Field" in January regrouped for a weekend in June. The twenty-nine teachers, mostly from Teir 1 counties (the most economically distressed in North Carolina), attended a five-day professional development seminar held in January at NCCAT's Cullowhee campus. These teachers took part in professional coaching over a five-month period, and tracked their students' progress. The program was implemented by NCCAT and funded by a grant from the North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention, established by the North Carolina General Assembly.

During the June weekend wrap-up, which took place in Greensboro, the teachers evaluated the student-retention strategies they put in place during the spring semester and expanded their knowledge of additional student-retention resources.

According to Dr. Ernest Johnson, NCCAT fellow and the project/grant coordinator, the teachers reported that they customized dropout prevention strategies presented at the five-day seminar to meet the needs of their student populations. Most agreed that whatever tack they took, their success in keeping students engaged and in school came down to creating opportunities to build strong relationships with the students. Teachers also agreed that a schoolwide effort with more than one teacher involved significantly increased the chance for success of any program.

For instance, Mattie Perry-Johnson and Tracy Bell, media coordinators at Southern High School in Durham, put their own twist on the "chess club" strategy presented at the initial five-day seminar. "We were unable to have an after-school program," Perry-Johnson said. "So we invited students to play chess during lunch."

According to Perry-Johnson, once a few students started to play, they were hooked, and then they brought their friends to play. "Once you have piqued a child's curiosity, you have them," Perry-Johnson said. The teachers used the time to teach students not only chess but also critical thinking skills for life. "We'd get to connect with them one-on-one while we played," Perry-Johnson said. "We would relate chess strategy to making choices in the classroom and in life. We'd ask them why they were making certain moves. What were the rewards? What were the consequences?" Bell and Perry-Johnson also worked with the school counselors and social workers to find out more about their chess players and understand and address their specific needs.



R. Dwayne Burks, a site coordinator for Communities in Schools, encourages educators to take a multi-faceted approach to keeping students in school by integrating a variety of effective programs, including the WhyTry Program.

To their surprise the impact of the game went beyond their initial target population; Perry-Johnson noted that just having chessboards on the tables in the library built community. "Administrators, other teachers, and adult visitors would just sit down and start playing with students and give advice on moves," Perry-Johnson said. "One time, I saw an African American student and a student of Chinese descent playing together. When the game was complete, they got up and shook hands. I know chess is just a game, but the changes it made in our school, in our students, were remarkable," she said. "It was good to have the weekend to compare notes with other teachers in the program and find out that what we were witnessing at our school was happening in other schools as well."

In addition to sharing successes and challenges, participants also received information about the causes and consequences of students leaving school before graduation. Danya Perry, director of program and youth development for Communities in Schools, presented the group with some current statistics. "Each year's class of dropouts will cost the country more than \$200 billion during their lifetimes in lost earnings and unrealized tax revenues," Perry reported. "Seventy-five percent of America's state prison inmates are high-school dropouts."

The seminar offered teachers a possible roadmap to students' success by sharing the "15 Effective Strategies for Dropout Prevention," developed by the National Dropout Prevention Center in association with Franklin P. Schargel. Find out more at www.dropoutprevention.org/effective-strategies.

To help others benefit from what teachers learned during "Dropout Solutions: Review and Implementation of Best Practices from the Field," Johnson is in the process of compiling data gathered from participating teachers during the five-month program.

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NCCAT partners with NC Teaching Asia Network



In April, the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching partnered with the North Carolina Teaching Asia Network (NCTAN) to provide our state's educators with the professional development seminar "Closing the Global Achievement Gap: The United States and Asia" at NCCAT's Cullowhee campus.

With a mission to enhance instruction on Asia in the K–12 curriculum, NCTAN provides teachers who complete the network's requirements with the opportunity to apply for a learning expedition to East Asia.

"The missions of both NCCAT and NCTAN, of course, meshed perfectly," said Dr. Ernest Johnson, the NCCAT fellow who developed this seminar. "We were excited by the opportunity to create an intensive, five-

day professional development experience for teachers on the subject of Asia." Johnson worked closely with Yoko Kano, an instructor and coordinator with NCTAN, to design the seminar. During the seminar, Asian studies experts immersed participants in Asian culture, commerce, language, and more.

The centerpiece of the seminar focused on looking at the similarities and differences between American and Asian school systems, students, and teachers.

"This seminar not only helped North Carolina teachers open their eyes to Asia and the world," Johnson said, "but also helped us take a critical look at our own education system and our own classrooms to see where we can do better at helping our students be ready for the unique challenges and opportunities that life in the twenty-first century holds."

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