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Jan. 18, 2012

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**Alternative Certification Program for STEM Teachers Wins State Approval**  
*Applications Open for Lateral Entry STEM Teachers*

College graduates interested in becoming high school science, math and technology teachers now have a new option for certification. The State Board of Education approved the North Carolina New Schools Project's STEM Teacher Education Program (STEP) this month, and applications are now available for the lateral-entry teacher certification program.

An initiative of NCNSP, the non-traditional teacher education program is supported by the federal Transitions to Teaching grant program, which supports efforts to recruit and retain highly qualified mid-career professionals and recent college graduates interested in earning a teaching license through an alternative route. NCNSP is one of 30 organizations nationwide awarded five-year grants from the U.S. Department of Education to train non-education graduates to teach in high-needs schools.

"We are excited to create a cost-free opportunity for experienced STEM professionals to become skilled, innovative teachers," said Dana Diesel Wallace, vice president of school development for NCNSP. "Students across the state will benefit from the real-world experiences these lateral-entry teachers bring to the classroom."

NCNSP STEP will focus on training teachers in innovative and effective instruction of subjects now considered critical for strong high school preparation -- science, technology, engineering and math -- STEM in shorthand. Candidates in the 15-month program will receive a year of on-the-job training at an innovative school supported by NCNSP, combined with NCNSP seminars and online coursework through WIDE World, a professional development program of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Initially, the teacher training programs will be conducted at the NCNSP-affiliated Learning Laboratory demonstration high schools: Caldwell Early College in Hudson; Cross Creek Early College in Fayetteville; Hillside New Tech High School in Durham; and the Wayne School of Engineering in Goldsboro.

"There is a significant shortage of professionals who are skilled and experienced in the fields of science and math, but there is an even more profound shortage of educators who have the talent, interests and background to teach math and science," said Candis Hagaman, principal of Caldwell Early College High School.

Under the Transitions to Teaching initiative, each of the four Learning Lab schools will begin this fall to accommodate four teacher candidates, who will be paired with experienced teachers

as mentors during the year-long apprenticeships. The goal for the first year calls for 16 newly licensed teachers ready for classrooms in NCNSP-affiliated schools.

During each of the following two years, in 2013 and 2014, four additional schools will participate in NCNSP's Innovative Pathways to STEM Teaching Careers, totaling 12 schools in all. The ultimate goal of the program is to prepare 48 teachers a year for STEM-related courses, primarily in NCNSP-affiliated schools in districts with the highest rates of under-qualified teachers.

Candidates for the tuition-free program will be drawn from recent college graduates and mid-career professionals in STEM-related fields. The program is aimed at ensuring that new teachers are well equipped to deliver integrated, project-based STEM learning experiences. After completing the program and three years of teaching, the new teachers would be licensed under state rules.

Interested applicants can find materials online at <http://newschoolsproject.org>. The application deadline is March 5.

*The North Carolina New Schools Project is a statewide public-private partnership that accelerates systemic, sustainable innovation in North Carolina secondary schools. Its goal is to ensure every student graduates ready for college, careers and life. The NC New Schools Project partners with school districts, businesses and higher education to link innovation in education to the emerging economy.*

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