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*Press Release*

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## **Students and teachers get a helping hand during the new school year**

While most students spent the last few weeks of their summer relaxing, John Bourgeois spent four days getting to know Lumberton High School. Bourgeois is participating in the Freshman Transition Academy. "The best part has been meeting new people, learning new friends and the dancing. It was fun working with the student mentor because they showed me stuff I didn't know and you can just go to them if you help or anything," said Bourgeois.

Bourgeois joined almost four hundred 9<sup>th</sup> graders in the program at Lumberton High. Dymone Coe is his new mentor. The Lumberton High Junior will work to support Bourgeois and 14 other students throughout the entire year. "I basically get them ready for high school. I teach them about the one-way hallways, how we do stuff here and I take them around. I feel in love with the students," said Coe.

The 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition is held at several high schools throughout the Public Schools of Robeson County to help students stay on track. Lumberton High has 79 mentors working with the freshman class. "We have mentors who have AB averages, no discipline issues and they were able to guide the students, have team building activities, give a tour of the school, a scavenger hunt, meet the teachers and administrators and learn their way the school instead of waiting for the first day," said Vanessa Robinson, Freshman Academy Coordinator, Lumberton High School.

As the ninth graders met their mentors, new teachers across PSRC will also have new mentors to guide them through their first three years. Teachers with less than six months in the classroom participated in a New Teacher Orientation during August. Karen Chavis said she hopes the program helps the teachers not only succeed, but also want to stay in the classroom long term. "We provide them with presentations on curriculum instruction, key personnel from central office speak about services provided by central office. We also go over classroom management, maintaining beginning teacher notebook, appropriate

use of social media, appropriate dress attire and the teacher evaluation instrument," said Chavis.

Brian Willis begins teaching 9<sup>th</sup> grade Health and PE for the first time next week at St. Pauls High School. Willis said the orientation provided him with the basics to get started. "It is a little scary because some of the stuff is kind of new to you because with student teaching you don't get all of the paperwork and everything, so it is a little scary. It gives you insight into the things you can expect in the classroom," said Willis. While Willis is from North Carolina, a number of the new teachers are from out of state. Coordinators say the orientation is key, but these teachers will also meet with mentors every month for three years. Alaina Kirk comes to Gilbert Carroll Middle from Temperance Michigan. "Because I am from out of state and don't know a lot of the laws and rules of North Carolina, this has been very helpful and insightful. I think it better prepares me to be a teacher and know what I need to maintain my education and be a teacher for a longer period of time and not just one year," said Kirk.

For more info visit <http://www.roberson.k12.nc.us>