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"YOU'RE HIRED!"

25 MAT STUDENTS OFFERED CAREERS AND SIGNING BONUSES WITH NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

by [Kelley McGee](#) | November 30, 2023

Above: Photo credit: Kara Giuliani

Read time: about 2 min

It looked like a typical Friday afternoon in a campus meeting room. Students from the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program were getting settled, preparing for the mandatory academic workshop they'd been summoned to earlier that day. Most had no idea that they'd been tricked.

A team from Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) strode into the room and handed each student an envelope. Confusion was quickly replaced with excitement when the 25 MAT students discovered they had just been offered a career, an official contract and a signing bonus.

"It was such an amazing surprise!," said Mikayla King-Ortiz. "Myself and the other students were thrilled when we saw the NNPS hiring team walk in."

King-Ortiz signed on the spot. "I have known for a while now that I want to teach in Newport News, so there was no question or

hesitation about signing. The MAT program at CNU has done so much to prepare me to be a terrific teacher for my future students, and I am so excited to start my teaching career after graduation in May!"

The offers will go a long way toward reducing the pressure and uncertainty students often feel in the months leading up to graduation. The collaboration also helps address the teacher shortage impacting not only schools in neighboring Newport News, but nearly every school district around the country.

"The teacher shortage is real," said Nina Farrish, Director of Human Resources at Newport News Public Schools. "However, NNPS's relationship with Christopher Newport continues to be strong and mutually beneficial. We know when we extend early offers to Christopher Newport's MAT students, we are offering a career to well-prepared teachers who will lead productive, engaging lessons; who understand best practices and educational philosophies; and who are passionate about teaching and learning."

Lauren Colarossi was another student who signed on the spot.

"I have been a substitute teacher in Newport News since January, and have been volunteering in the school district since 2019, so I had been thinking about working as a teacher in NNPS for a while," she said. "I'm familiar with many of the buildings, staff and curriculum, and I really feel at home."

Colarossi credits the MAT program with giving her the skills and practical preparation needed for success in a field for which she is truly passionate.



Mikayla King-Ortiz

"Christopher Newport's MAT program has done so much to help me to prepare for the teaching field. The classes have given me a lot of theoretical knowledge, teacher pedagogy and strategies to better tackle behaviors and planning instruction," Colarossi said. "A compassionate, well-prepared teacher can make a huge impact on a child. Great teachers create a positive environment where children feel welcomed and cared for. I also hope to be that teacher who makes learning fun!"

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) recently recognized Christopher Newport as one of the top schools in the country for teacher preparation. The council identified the Master of Arts in Teaching at CNU as one of only 48 teaching programs in the nation's colleges and universities to earn an A+ and be designated as "exemplary" for the way it educates graduate students to help students achieve success in reading.

The employment collaboration with Newport News Public Schools has been in place since 2019. It's yet another distinction that makes Christopher Newport's teacher preparation program one of the top ranked in the country, and a strong endorsement of the quality of CNU's students and the preparation they receive, said Dr. Jean S. Filetti, Director of Teacher Preparation at Christopher Newport.

"The partnership between CNU's Teacher Preparation Program and Newport News Public Schools is incredibly strong," said Filetti. "Members of NNPS sit on our Teacher Preparation Program Council, and together we have

jointly built a program that produces exceptional teachers who are shaping the next generation of young minds.”
