

Proposal Cover Page

Project Title: Bertie THRIVES: Teachers Raising Instructional Voice and Excellence

Section 1. Applicant Information

LEA: Bertie County Schools Tax ID/EIN: 56-6000110

Website: https://www.bertie.k12.nc.us/ Fax: 252-794-6071

Mailing Address: 715 US Highway 13 North City/State/Zip: Windsor, NC 27983

RFP Contact Name and Position: Dr. Catherine Edmonds, Superintendent

Phone: (252) 794-6025 Email: cedmonds@bertie.k12.nc.us

Section 2. Project Information

Project Director Name and Position (if different from contact): Same as above

Phone: Same as above Email: Same as above

Total Project Budget: \$842,000 Requested Grant Amount: \$434,000

Estimated Number of Schools Served: 14 Estimated Number of Students Served: 3,800

By signing below, I assure NCDPI that I am an official of the organization and authorized to bind the organization. I certify the following (*check each box so as to indicate your review and certification*):

- The information provided in this proposal is correct and complete.
- The applicant understands that this proposal and all attachments submitted are public records.
- The applicant understands that if awarded a grant, it will be required to:
 - Participate in all evaluation activities, including collection, recording, and reporting of data, as required by NCDPI, NCSBE, or third-party evaluators, in compliance with relevant privacy laws.
 - Submit required financial and performance reports to NCDPI.
 - Comply with the North Carolina General Statutes, the North Carolina Administrative Code, and any other rules or regulations that may govern the performance and oversight of this program.
 - Begin serving participants before or by July 1, 2019.

Signature and date: (in blue ink) Catherine Edmonds

Title: Superintendent Phone: November 19, 2018

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(1) Program Structure

Bertie County Schools (BCS) is a rural school district located in northeastern North Carolina with annual enrollment of approximately 2,200 students. Bertie County Schools strives to ensure that each classroom is led by a high-quality teacher. That goal is tested by the fact that BCS has historically had one of the highest teacher attrition rates in the state. In 2017, the percentage of teachers that left Bertie County Schools was 17.1%, nearly double the overall state attrition rate.¹ Further contributing to that challenge is the fact that BCS currently is unable to offer a local salary supplement, making neighboring districts attractive alternatives for many of the strongest teacher candidates. Nearby suburban districts such as Pitt and Edgecombe are able to offer more than \$2,100 in average annual local teacher supplements.² With new district leadership and a vision for regional collaboration, BCS is now prepared to directly address these challenges through the THRIVE initiative: Teachers Raising Instructional Voice and Excellence. Through the THRIVE program, BCS aims to:

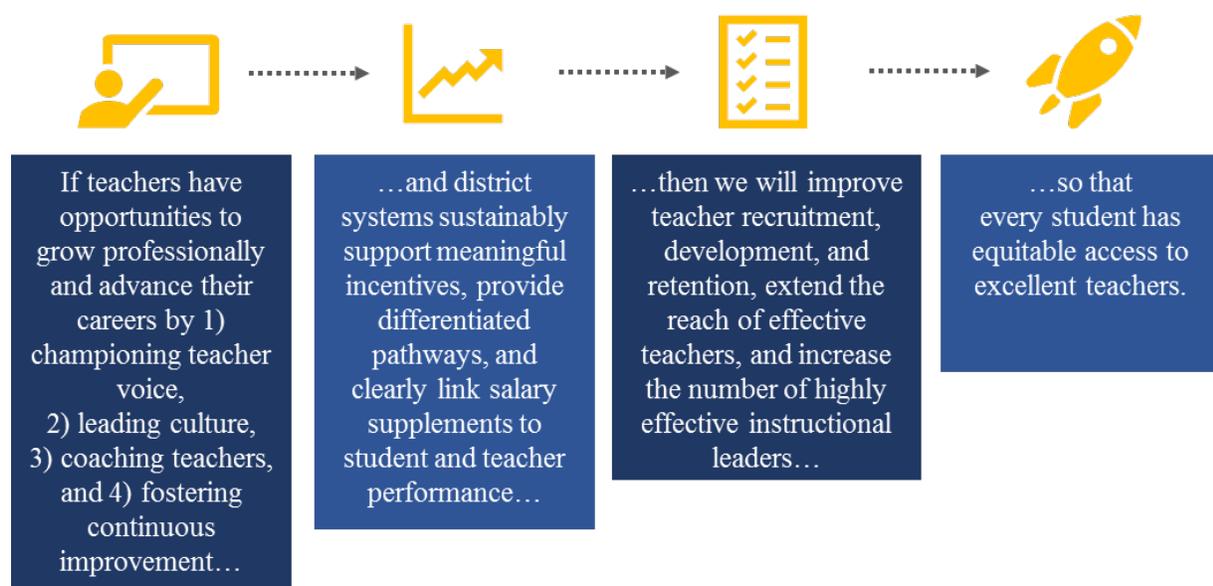
- *Cultivate a thriving teacher corps:* Competitively recruit and develop highly effective teachers.
- *Create thriving career pathways for teachers:* Keep the best teachers in teaching roles by offering meaningful pathways for career advancement.
- *Build a thriving teacher culture:* Reduce teacher turnover within the district by improving satisfaction.

¹ 2016-2017 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina. (2018). North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

² Selected Statistics of Local Salary Supplements: Year 2017. North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. <https://www.ncacc.org/DocumentCenter/View/2948/2017-Salary-Supplements>.

- *Foster thriving learning communities while extending the reach of effective teachers:*
Improve student performance by increasing the number of classrooms led by highly effective teachers.

Led by an initial district design team made up of senior administrators, school principals, teachers, and outside experts, BCS has developed the following theory of action based on insights from local context, research, and practice. All components of the THRIVE program are grounded in this logic.



The THRIVE approach emphasizes four key focus areas for participating teachers:

- **Teacher Voice** to build buy-in, engage the teaching workforce, and empower future leaders. A recent study by the Center on Education Policy found that nearly half of all teachers (47%) expressed that they did not have a voice in decision making at the school level; this was one of the top cited concerns that contributed to attrition.³ Teacher leaders will channel perspectives and foster a safe environment for input in order to better stabilize the teaching workforce and improve student-to-teacher relationships.

³ Rentner, D.S., Kober, N., Frizzell, M., & Ferguson, M. (2016). *Listen to Us: Teacher Views and Voices*. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy.

- **Cultural Leadership** to reinforce and set a school culture that promotes students’ ability to learn and fosters positive work environment for teachers while extending the reach of highly effective teachers. Teacher leaders will work with their peers to foster a culturally responsive school climate that sets high expectations for all students.⁴ Teacher leaders will use strategies such as Critical Friends Group® protocols to make high-quality teaching practices collaborative, embrace candor, and engage colleagues as professionals dedicated to improving student learning.
- **Instructional Coaching** to increase teacher capacity, implement effective teaching strategies, and improve teaching by coaching beginning teachers in their schools. Numerous studies point to instructional coaching as a vehicle to effectively change teaching practice.⁵ Teacher leaders will directly facilitate growth through observation, reflective dialogue, goal setting, and feedback.
- **Continuous Improvement** to set, meet, and refine goals that are informed by meaningful use of classroom data. Teacher leaders will lead action-planning efforts with teachers and reinforce principles of improvement in order to increase focus on the root-causes of teacher and student performance.⁶

BCS’s design team has crafted an approach tailored to the needs of the regional community that is informed by both research and practical implementation. From a research perspective, Odden and Wallace’s 2005 *Rewarding Teacher Excellence* describes a recommended compensation model that is based on elements of effectiveness as well as base-level training. Their work also suggests that small bonuses of less than \$1,000 are largely ineffective and that wage premiums at

⁴ TNTP. (2018). *The Opportunity Myth: What Students Can Show Us About How School Is Letting Them Down – And How to Fix It*. TNTP.

⁵ Charner, I., & Medrich, E. (2017). *Educator-Centered Instructional Coaching: What the Research Says*. FHI360.

⁶ Bryk, A.S., Gomez, L., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. (2015). *Learning to Improve: How America’s Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better*. Harvard Education Publishing.

least \$5,000 above state benchmarks are needed to impact both recruitment and retention.⁷ These research findings informed the initial THRIVE design.

In their 2007 work, *Teacher Performance Pay: Synthesis of Plans, Research, and Guidelines for Practice*, Heneman, Milanowski, and Kimball concluded that teachers must clearly see both the effort-performance link and the performance-pay link. In this way, salary supplements must be competitive and backed by a strong measurement system.⁸ Again, these conclusions represent foundational design components of the THRIVE program.

Recent implementation experiences have been published by the U.S. Department of Education and the Reform Support Network related to the differentiated compensation implementation effort in Tennessee from 2010 to 2015.⁹ Preliminary results suggest a few critical lessons, which we considered, including:

- *It is imperative to build consensus around effectiveness metrics before tying metrics to compensation.* BCS’s design team will engage the superintendent’s teacher advisory group to engage in a vetting process and “challenge session” during the spring months of 2019. Through this process, teachers will be able to voice concern, comment on the design, and offer improvements to the model. This effort will focus on making the change an on-going collaborative process and increase early awareness, buy-in approaches that are rooted in evidence (Kegeles, Rebchook, & Tebbetts, 2005).¹⁰

⁷ Odden, A., & Wallace, M. (2007). *Rewarding Teacher Excellence; A teacher Compensation Handbook for State and Local Policy Makers*. Madison, WI: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin.

⁸ Heneman, H.G., Milanowski, A., & Kimball, S. (2007). *Teacher Performance Pay: Synthesis of Plans, Research, and Guidelines for Practice*. Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

⁹ Reform Support Network. (2015). *Implementing Differentiated Compensation Systems for Educators*. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/differentiatedcompensation.pdf>.

¹⁰ Kegeles, S.M., Rebchook, G.M., & Tebbetts, S. (2005). Challenges and Facilitators to Building Program Evaluation Capacity among Community-Based Organizations. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 17(4):284-99.

- *Structures should be designed to be locally sustainable, with an emphasis on direct financial ties to strategies that improve student outcomes.* BCS will structure THRIVE to be sustainable within local budgets following the initial set-up period. This sustainability will be further reinforced by a regionalized network of districts engaging in this work to better share costs, co-train, and realize the full benefits of collaboration.
- *Districts should minimize one-time bonuses linked only to test scores in favor of sustainable promotion opportunities.* BCS will implement supplements of meaningful size that are driven by both process- and outcome-based aspects of the design. BCS will also implement differentiated career ladders for teachers to strengthen the appeal.

Furthermore, local implementation efforts have been underway in North Carolina over recent years. The in-process evaluation of those efforts, described in the most recent report to the NC General Assembly, dated June 2018, noted common program features among the existing local education agency (LEA) pilot efforts: professional development facilitation, coaching, mentoring, and *team teaching*, to name a few.¹¹ Furthermore, the report includes a state-level logic model that clearly defines expected goals and impact, such as *redesigning school culture*, *improving equitable access to high-quality teaching*, and *improving community perception*. In another local convening on advanced teaching roles, districts cited the challenge with training teachers in advanced roles to be effective coaches of other teachers. These insights, goals, and practices are evident in the design as we seek to align to both local need and state imperative.

The THRIVE approach is further detailed in the figure below, which summarizes the focus areas, incentives, and pathways available to qualified teachers.

¹¹ William and Ida Friday Institute for Educational Innovation. (2018). *Report to the North Carolina General Assembly – Advanced Teaching Roles Pilot Evaluation*.

		Teacher Guide		Teacher Mentor
	Focus Areas	Level 1		Level 2
Application and Selection →	Champion Teacher Voice	<i>Certification in all 4 focus areas</i>	Application and Selection →	Culture Focused Track
	Lead Culture			Coaching Focused Track
	Coach Teachers			
	Foster Continuous Improvement			
	Key Responsibilities	Lead school-based coaching and PD		Coach beginning teachers and lead district-wide PD
	Annual Supplement	\$3,000		\$3,000 + guaranteed 11-month contract
	Performance-based Supplement	Up to \$2,000		Up to \$2,000
	Total Possible	\$5,000		\$5,000+ 11-month contract

An application and selection process based on a weighted set of qualifications (further described in section 2) will result in a cadre of **Teacher Guides** who will engage in district training in the four described focus areas. Initially, this training is provided by external partners who specialize in these domains. Later, these training efforts are led from within the district by the Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors. Teachers in level one will complete training in each of the four domains and receive a certification that reflects their ability to lead others in that domain. Teacher Guides will be responsible for providing school-based instructional coaching and professional development in the four THRIVE domains (further described in section 3). BCS expects to maintain a cadre of up to 10 Teacher Guides in steady-state operations, each providing direct coaching to up to five additional teachers. Once Teacher Guides have completed all four

certifications and have completed at least one year at level one, they are then eligible to apply for level two: **Teacher Mentor**. Teacher Mentors choose a more specialized track that deepens their emphasis on either teacher voice and culture (Culture track) or coaching and continuous improvement (Coach track). Teacher Mentors will focus their support on beginning teachers (those in their first 24 months of teaching) and will provide leadership for district-wide teacher development efforts (further described in section 3). Teacher Mentors will provide coaching and mentorship to up to five beginning teachers. BCS expects to maintain a cadre of up to four Teacher Mentors in steady-state operations.

Thanks to an emerging partnership with Elizabeth City State University, Teacher Mentors are also expected to have an undergraduate teacher resident who will work with them during each school year. This approach directly aligns to the long-term BCS strategic vision. These students in residency will provide additional classroom capacity as well as support planning activities.

Teacher Guides are eligible for up to \$5,000 in salary supplement, based on components of completion as well as performance (further detailed in section 7). Teacher Mentors are also eligible for supplements as well as a guaranteed 11-month employee contract. Both Teacher Guide and Teacher Mentor roles are based on annual contracts that require reapplication for teachers who wish to continue in the advanced role and who demonstrate performance consistent with the expected standards. With total teacher head count in BCS of around 120, Guide and Mentor roles are available to approximately 10% of the teaching force. Importantly, these Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors will spend at least 70% of their time in primary classroom-teaching roles, with the remaining 30% focused on the responsibilities described in section 3. Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors will form a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to manage ongoing program improvement, share lessons learned and best practices, and

collaboratively troubleshoot challenges and issues. It is expected that these PLCs will interface with school principals on a regular basis to inform priorities, plan, and align priorities.

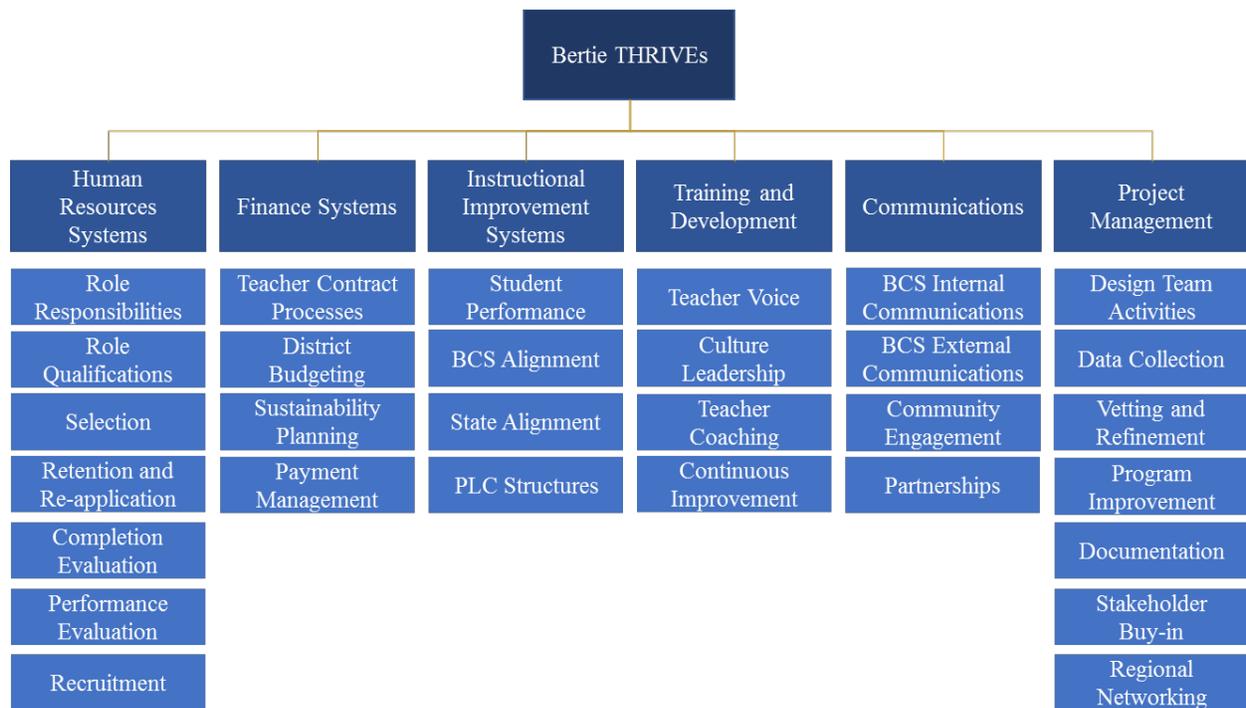
To assess local alignment, BCS's design team has conducted a preliminary needs assessment across the schools in the district to identify areas of highest demand. In some cases, a school may choose to prioritize a certain focus area for Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors who work at that school. This will result in differentiated goal setting for performance.

The THRIVE design process will begin in January 2019, and the initial cadre of Teacher Guides is expected to begin training in the spring of 2019 with initial implementation occurring at the outset of the 2019–20 school year.

A notable differentiator of THRIVE is the opportunity for **regional impact** that extends beyond the borders of Bertie County. The superintendent of neighboring Northampton County Schools (NCS) is committed to the proposed model and will scale implementation to their district in a gradual implementation schedule over the 2020–2022 timeframe (Northampton THRIVEs). NCS has a student population of approximately 1,600 students across seven schools. Due to the similarities in size and context, NCS will deploy the model with the same assumptions for size and scope. This regionalized approach will create efficiencies of scale with training efforts, further supporting the local sustainability imperative, will benefit from implementation lessons learned, and will create an opportunity for a regional peer network of Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors. Furthermore, this collaboration will offer more opportunities to engage with community partners such as Elizabeth City State University's College of Education. Letters of support from Northampton County Schools is included in the appendix, and the expected implementation budget implications are included in the budget section (appendix A). This networked approach will offer greater program scale at a lower marginal setup cost to the

Advanced Teaching Roles grant program. At full implementation, this model will impact more than 40 teachers and 7,000 students across three rural NC communities.

To successfully implement THRIVE, the following work-breakdown structure will be used to guide execution of the various work streams necessary to ensure success. The THRIVE design team (led by Dr. Catherine Edmonds) will manage this process and has already defined the needed time within the spring 2019 academic calendar to focus on this initiative.



This work breakdown translates into an implementation schedule structured in four phases.

Phase 1: Design – The *design* phase will focus on organizing the district systems to implement THRIVE. This will primarily involve activity in Human Resources and Finance. Human resource processes, such as hiring timelines and selection models, will be updated to efficiently implement the innovative staffing model. Concurrently, various project-management activities will serve to refine and finalize the programmatic components of the initiative. Central to informing the design, the BCS team will visit other LEAs that have implemented similar models

to collect first-hand feedback and suggestions for success. Phase one will also focus on finalizing partnerships with other regional districts, as well as Elizabeth City State University. Phase one will conclude by May 2019 and will result in a fully completed structural implementation based in continuous feedback by district, teacher, and community stakeholders; a training plan for the initial cohort; a performance evaluation rubric informed by BCS teacher stakeholders; a communications rollout plan; and a completed application process.

Phase 2: Launch – The *launch* phase begins in May 2019 and focuses on district and community stakeholders, the onboarding of the initial cadre of teachers, and training and development in the four focus areas in the summer. The recruitment, application, and selection process will occur during phase two. During the first year, the training plan will be modified to accommodate the compressed schedule, and future years will allow more time for training to occur over a period of months.

Phase 3: Implementation – The *implementation* phase begins in August 2019 and represents the time frame during which Teacher Guides begin operating in their advanced roles. During this time, the initial local evaluation process will be ongoing (further detailed in section 14), and the BCS team expects that lessons learned will inform design tuning in the early months of 2020 in time for the second full year of implementation. BCS will engage in a brief revision and tuning effort during the spring of 2020. As called for in the design, 2019–20 would only include Teacher Guides, and 2020–2021 will include both Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors.

Phase 4: Scale – The fourth phase begins in January 2020 and focuses on scaling to Northampton (2020) County. The *Design, Launch, and Implementation* efforts are expected to mirror those of the BCS in both timing and activity. This staggered scaling effort will allow efficiencies of learning to be implemented into the approach and fully realize the regional vision.

The initial 12-month implementation schedule, beginning in January 2019, follows.

	Phase 1: Design												
	Phase 2: Launch												
	Phase 3: Implementation												
	Phase 4: Scale												
Activity (2019)	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	→
Design team meetings to complete setup and implementation	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆				◆	
Plan vetting and refining based on teacher and community advisory group													
Development of detailed communication plan and documents													
Communication about the program within the district and community													
Study visits to other NC districts implementing similar advanced-teacher role models													
Performance evaluation rubric development with stakeholder input													
Development of detailed training schedule for the summer													
Organization of HR and Finance systems													
Formalization of partnerships with training organizations and Elizabeth City State University													
“Challenge session” to vet final guiding policies and documents with teachers													
Development of formalized program playbook and documentation													
Development of communication to advertise program and launch of three-part communication plan													
District “road show” to present program with teacher ambassadors													
Solicitation of teacher applications													
Selection of initial cadre													
Intensive initial training													
Launch of internal evaluation for improvement													
Assessment of early-stage lessons learned													
Communication within district about progress													
Refinement of design based on lessons learned and preparation for second year													
Launch in neighboring county													→

Effective initial implementation will require quality training and development in each of the four focus areas of THRIVE. To support this process, the following partners have been selected:

RTI International (RTI): Program Implementation, Teacher Coaching, Culture Leadership, and Continuous Improvement. RTI is a North Carolina-based nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. RTI's work in education seeks to promote thriving learning environments that facilitate success for all students. From the classroom to the board room, RTI supports four areas that are levers for change in education: strengthening instruction, developing leaders, improving organizational operations, and facilitating collaborative networks. Support for BCS will be led by the Center for Education Services. Composed of former teachers, principals, and administrators, this team is well positioned to support the implementation of THRIVE.

Hope Street Group (HSG): Teacher Voice and Culture Leadership. HSG's focus is cultivating and supporting the leadership development of NC educators to productively engage in policy, and practice-based problem solving that addresses the pressing issues affecting educators and students in schools across North Carolina. THRIVE participants will be trained and supported to work at each level of the education system, with crossover between state and local systems to create opportunities to impact the teaching and learning conditions in their schools. HSG also provides support to use expository writing to engage in critical conversations about equity.

Other training collaborators include Schools That Lead (STL), an organization that leads networked improvement communities focused on equitable outcomes for students. BCS is already a part of the inaugural North Carolina network focused on solving shared problems of practice to accelerate learning across schools. The improvement science and school improvement skills learned through participation provide a foundation for goal setting and data use and align well with the *Continuous Improvement* priority.

(2) Advanced Teaching Role Qualifications

Minimum qualifications for *Teacher Guide* roles include the following (in order of relative importance):

	Relative Weight	Qualification
Required	High	Evidence that the teacher has exceeded expected student growth based on three years of teacher evaluation data as calculated by the State Board of Education
	High	Demonstrated mastery of teaching skills based on BCS teacher evaluations
	Medium	Evidence of experience leading a team or providing training to others (e.g., serving as a BCS grade-level chair)
	Medium	A rating of at least <i>accomplished</i> on each of the Teacher Evaluation Standards 1-5 on the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation instrument or the equivalent on an out-of-state evaluation system
	Low	At least three years of teaching experience
	Low	Possess an active North Carolina Professional Educator’s License
Preferred	High	Possess certification in a tested subject area
	Low	Evidence of prior training or development in one of the four THRIVE focus areas
	Low	Master's degree in education or National Board certification

These qualifications intentionally place the highest emphasis on evidence of student growth. The three years of evidence of student growth will show that a teacher is not a novice, although they may be early in their career.

In addition to the previously described qualifications, Teacher Guides who choose to apply for *Teacher Mentor* roles must also meet the following criteria to be eligible:

	Relative Weight	Qualification
Required	High	Received a “meets” or “exceeds” rating on the Teacher Guide performance evaluation rubric (this rubric will be developed in the spring of 2019 with full teacher stakeholder input)
	Low	Served as a BCS Teacher Guide for at least one full year
Preferred	Low	Prepared to agree to commit to the role of Teacher Mentor for a period of two years

All teachers who are interested and meet the stated qualifications will complete a brief application and interview for final selection. The interview process will include a behavioral component to better identify teachers’ dispositions to be an effective coach, such as listening, engaging in reflective dialogue, promoting action, collaborating, and continuous learning. Interviewees will be assessed based on their application and recommendation (expected to represent ~35% of the total weight) and their interview (expected to represent ~65% of the total weight). The interview committee will comprise BCS administrators and members of the THRIVE design team.

After serving an initial year, Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors may choose to reapply for continued status in the advanced role. In these instances, teachers must submit a brief reapplication form, and determination about continuation will be based on successful job responsibility outcomes (described in section 3).

(3) Job Responsibilities

Teacher Guides will provide school-based coaching and professional development to other teachers in each of the THRIVE domains. Responsibilities for Teacher Guides include the following:

Responsibility (and alignment to theory of change)	Relative Weight	Measures*
<i>Continuous Improvement</i> Leading school-wide efforts to implement data-driven instructional models that include blended learning environments, utilizing digital learning and resources, and focusing on methods of improvement for school-wide performance issues	High	Lead at least four school-based teacher professional development sessions each academic year Receive >80% positive feedback from peers on professional development evaluations
<i>Teacher Voice, Lead Culture, Coach Teachers, Continuous Improvement</i> Completing training that certifies the teacher as an in-house provider of professional development or functioning as an instructional content area coach or a	High	Complete required training and local certification in all four focus areas Lead a PLC at home school based on focus areas

coach in another professional development area		
<i>Coach Teachers</i> Becoming a lead classroom teacher among a group of teachers and sharing instructional responsibility for all students taught by that group of teachers	Medium	Lead subject-area PLCs and organize co-teaching and peer-observation schedules in that subject area
<i>Coach Teachers</i> Providing job-embedded instructional coaching and engaging teachers in dialogue and reflection (provided for up to five other teachers)	Medium	Provide biweekly peer coaching at home school based on focus areas Receive majority positive descriptive feedback about coaching sessions from peers
<i>Lead Culture, Coach Teachers</i> Modeling effective instruction and co-teaching with other teachers	Medium	Co-teach at least once per month at home school
<i>Continuous Improvement, Coach Teachers</i> Leading purposeful coaching conversations and providing feedback (based on observational evidence, data analysis, and other means)	Medium	Receive aggregate rating as “effective” or “highly effective” by peers receiving coaching support Provide peer observation at least once per month at home school
<i>Continuous Improvement</i> Co-designing with teachers plans of action based on classroom and school data	Low	Develop action plans with all teachers who receive coaching support Achieve >50% follow-through on action-plan milestones
<i>Continuous Improvement</i> Working with Teacher Mentors to effectively support the needs of beginning teachers	Low	Majority positive qualitative feedback from beginning teachers

**To maximize local buy-in and awareness, measures will be further refined during the vetting process in spring 2019 with an advisory group of teachers.*

Teacher Mentors will focus their support on beginning teachers and will provide leadership for district-wide teacher development efforts. Responsibilities for Teacher Mentors include many similar activities to those of Teacher Guides at a leadership level, as well as a direct emphasis on supporting beginning teachers.

Responsibility (and alignment to theory of change)	Relative Weight	Measures*
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<i>Continuous Improvement</i> Leading <i>district</i> -wide efforts to implement data-driven instructional models that include blended learning environments, utilizing digital learning and resources, and focusing on methods of improvement for <i>district</i> -wide performance issues	High	Lead at least four district-based teacher professional development sessions each academic year Receive >80% positive feedback from peers on professional development evaluations
<i>Continuous Improvement</i> Leading the continuous development of one of the four focus areas of THRIVE	High	Improve training curriculum in focus area as measured by participant feedback year over year
<i>Lead Culture, Coach Teachers</i> Modeling effective instruction and co-teaching with other teachers, including Teacher Guides	High	Provide monthly coaching support sessions to Teacher Guides at home school
<i>Lead Culture, Coach Teachers</i> Mentoring undergraduate teachers in residency as assigned	High	Receive aggregate rating as “effective” or “highly effective” by resident teachers Support up to three teacher residents
<i>Lead Culture, Coach Teachers, Teacher Voice</i> Mentoring beginning teachers throughout their first two years (provided for up to five beginning teachers)	High	Receive aggregate rating as “effective” or “highly effective” by beginning teacher mentees Majority positive qualitative feedback from mentees
<i>Teacher Voice, Continuous Improvement</i> Facilitating THRIVE PLC meetings	Medium	Receive aggregate PLC rating as “effective” or “highly effective” by peers who are engaged
<i>Continuous Improvement, Lead Culture</i> Engaging with regional partners to share knowledge and bring back best practices	Medium	Engage in at least three networked sessions with regional colleagues each year
<i>Continuous Improvement</i> Curating, vetting, and compiling resources and tools for teachers to use in classrooms	Low	Prepare at least five new resources/tools for ongoing use each year

**To maximize local buy-in and awareness, measures will be further refined during the vetting process in spring 2019 with an advisory group of teachers.*

(4) Communication About Eligibility and Selection

BCS will take a three-part approach to informing employees and the public about THRIVE. This effort will serve the dual purpose of sharing information and recruiting new teachers to BCS:

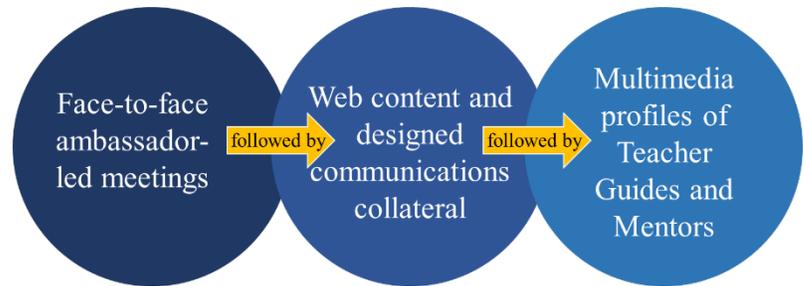
Face-to-face ambassador-led meetings about advanced roles.

BCS anticipates significant interest

in these teacher roles because of

their elevated status and increased salary. Simultaneously, we believe communicating about this will include risks and challenges. BCS believes direct conversations with teachers about the roles early and often will mitigate communication challenges. The communication approach will take advantage of BCS’s relatively small size as a district to gather a core group of central office staff and early adopters—*ambassadors* for the program—to hold after-school meetings with teachers to present the rationale for the Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors, the details of the responsibilities, eligibility requirements, and selection and evaluation processes. Additionally, BCS will onboard school leaders at regular principal’s meetings. BCS will fashion a succinct presentation with sharable facilitator notes and will use a common facilitator’s guide for the ambassador meetings. The potentially disruptive nature of this work is both a feature and challenge. Challenges will be mitigated by anticipating uncertainty and skepticism about the roles, selection, and salary. Because of this, we reason that these face-to-face meetings will be the first touch point to communicate with teachers.

Website and designed communications collateral. Building off the common slide deck from ambassador meetings and using common language and programmatic branding, BCS will develop web content and additional communication materials to inform employees and the public in simple, accessible ways about the big ideas and key concepts of THRIVE. These



mixed-media materials, documents, slide decks, audio recordings, and videos will convey key messages about the program and the imperative to advance, reward, and maximize the impact of BCS’s excellent educators. Sections of the website will be devoted to parents interested in understanding what these roles might mean for their students and the district as a whole. Others will focus on teachers and principals, helping them understand the rationale for the roles and inspiring the desire to be an early adopter of the program.

BCS’s web content managers will take a strategic approach to organizing the important policy documentation that will be required for application and selection, with an eye toward allowing prospective applicants to see the most important, innovative, and compelling aspects of the role (rather than the “here-is-the-link-to-the-application-good-luck” approach).

Multimedia profiles of teachers in advanced roles. Ultimately, the best representatives of the program will be the teachers themselves. Short video-based profiles telling the story of these teachers, from both their perspective and the perspective of colleagues, parents and students, will make the work real, relatable, and inspirational for others. These artifacts of teachers in practice will serve as a key component of cross-district sharing outlined further in section 13.

BCS’s communication work will create a demand for these roles, as well as constructive competition and a high bar for acceptance into the role, thereby motivating high levels of performance across classrooms. Review of previous efforts to implement advanced-teacher roles noted that lack of awareness (and low demand) was a notable lesson learned.¹² We believe careful and regular communication and storytelling about the advantages of these advanced roles can help Bertie County avoid this outcome and prove a key component to success.

¹² Reform Support Network. (2015). *Implementing Differentiated Compensation Systems for Educators*. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/differentiatedcompensation.pdf>.

Lastly, we recognize that not all teachers selected for these advanced roles will ultimately succeed or want to continue. Regular and ongoing communication will be critical to ensure that the program provides sufficient avenues for transition. All teachers selected will be rigorously evaluated on their additional responsibilities and leadership. In order to maintain a high bar, we will be clear about expectations with potential candidates during recruitment and will be explicit about the time, activities, deliverables, and levels of performance that are required in Teacher Guide and Teacher Mentor roles. Selection into an advanced teaching role involves additional responsibilities, commitment, and skills. Teachers in these roles are paid for additional responsibilities, not simply rewarded for being effective in the classroom (or being perceived as effective). The evaluation process in year one will be pivotal to maintaining high expectations and institutionalizing these roles as an *earned* responsibility within BCS moving forward.

(5) Communication About Criteria for Advancement

The proposed advanced teaching roles will elevate qualifying teachers. Inherent to this system are judgments about who will be a credible cultural leader, voice for teachers, and/or teacher coach. Transparency about the criteria for movement into this role will be very important for both its perception and successful functioning. We believe the data used to make this decision must be 1) multifaceted, 2) transparent, and 3) include both student outcomes and additional demonstrated mastery of skills required for the role.

We will use ambassador meetings, the website, and profiles to ensure we are transparent about the criteria to move into an advanced role. Additionally, we expect some movement out of advanced roles and will communicate the process for leaving the advanced role through similar means. We will use lessons learned from the first year to refine the selection process to ensure that we are selecting teachers who have an appetite for additional responsibilities, have skills to lead, and are perceived across their schools as good choices who have earned those roles.

(6) Voluntary Relinquishment of Advanced Teaching Role

BCS's advanced-teacher roles will be structured as 12-month supplements that require annual agreement for renewal by both the teacher and the district. Should a teacher choose to relinquish their role as a Teacher Guide or Teacher Mentor before the end of their 12-month period, they will be able to do so without penalty of demotion, as required by Part 3 of Article 22 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes. In this case, the teacher will be paid a prorated total and will forfeit their opportunity for additional performance-based salary supplement.

(7) Salary Supplement

Salary supplements for Teacher Guides (level 1) will be based on the following annual structure:

- \$3,000 upon completion of required training and development, including certification of knowledge and skill in each of the four THRIVE focus areas
- Up to \$2,000 to be paid based upon performance evaluation. The performance evaluation will be based upon the following scale:
 - \$2,000 for “exceeds expectation” on performance evaluation rubric, including student outcome indicators
 - \$1,000 for “meets expectation” on performance evaluation rubric, including student outcome indicators

Salary supplements for Teacher Mentors (level 2) will be based on the following annual structure:

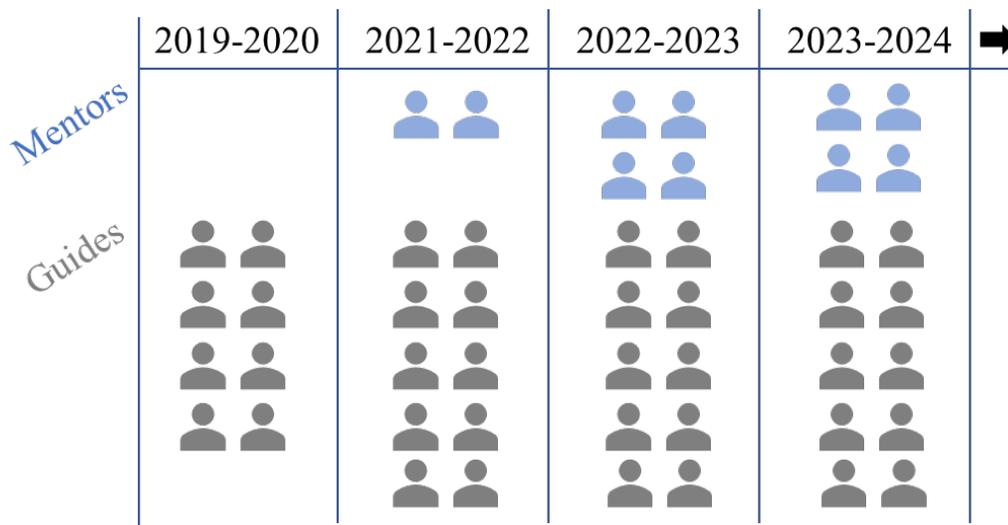
- Guaranteed 11-month contract (normal teacher contracts in BCS are 10 months). This results in an additional month of income based on the teacher's base salary
- \$3,000 for completion of duties, including providing peer training in specialized focus areas
- Up to \$2,000 to be paid based upon performance evaluation:

- \$2,000 for “exceeds expectation” on performance evaluation rubric, including student outcome indicators
- \$1,000 for “meets expectation” on performance evaluation rubric, including student outcome indicators

All THRIVE salary supplements are fixed payments that are unrelated to a teacher’s years of experience. The only component of the supplemental compensation model that is influenced by a teacher’s years of experience is the 11-month contract for Teacher Mentors. BCS’s administration will verify that salary supplements will be paid as a supplement to the classroom teacher’s regular salary and not be included in the average salary calculation used for budgeting state allotments. BCS’s administration also will verify that, if a classroom teacher in an advanced teaching role 1) fails to maintain the minimum criteria established for the position, 2) is not successfully performing the additional duties associated with the advanced teaching role, or 3) voluntarily relinquishes the advanced teaching role, the teacher shall only be paid the salary applicable to that individual on the NC state teacher salary schedule and any other local supplements that would otherwise apply to the classroom teacher’s compensation.

(8) Implementation Plan

In the initial year of implementation, 2019–20, teachers from a feeder pattern of three schools will be included in the program: West Bertie Elementary School, Bertie Middle School, and Bertie High School; a total pool of around 60 teachers. In the initial cohort, teachers who meet the baseline qualifications at each of these schools will be eligible to apply for up to eight initial positions. After the initial year, teachers from all schools within the district will be eligible to participate.



BCS's expected timetable for implementation. This model will scale to NCS as well.

After the implementation year, it is expected that lessons learned will guide tweaks to the design. However, at steady state, BCS expects to have up to 10 Teacher Guides and up to four Teacher Mentors at any given time, or approximately 10% of the total BCS teaching force. Eligible employee groups include all full-time BCS teachers.

(9) Sustainability

Following the conclusion of grant funds, each district will fund ongoing operations through local sources. It is expected that, during the initial year of operations, BCS will need to have approximately \$40,000–\$60,000 set aside for this initiative. Beginning in year two (2020–21), BCS will enter steady-state operations and will need to set aside an annual budget of \$90,000–\$100,000 to fully sustain the THRIVE program. That budget may fluctuate from year to year depending on changes to the state salary scale. A similar total is expected in NCS. In order to maintain that budget, districts will reorganize existing expenditures in the following ways:

- Retain a portion of the annual budget normally used for external professional development based on leveraging internal Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors to provide training (expected to account for ~50% of the needed funds)

- Leverage Title I and Title II funds to support internal professional development (expected to account for ~25% of the needed funds)
- Use existing ADM allotments to offset sustainability (expected to account for ~25% of the needed funds)

(10) Objectives and Measures

BCS has cultivated an appreciation for the power of evidence and well-used data. In fact, in 2018, BCS was recognized as the first LEA in the state to reach 100% participation in the biannual Teacher Working Conditions Survey (TWCS). For this program, BCS will track and measure the objectives as noted below, with an emphasis on outcomes for teachers and students. During spring 2019, BCS will establish a data baseline based on these measures to effectively measure growth. These measures will be examined on an annual basis by BCS administration as well as Teacher Guide and Teacher Mentor PLCs to inform continuous improvement and program refinement.

Objective	Measure	Teacher Outcome	Student Outcome
Improve the quality of classroom instruction	EVAAS* data, classroom qualitative observations, student performance data	Increase in the percentage of “highly effective” teachers in BCS	% increase in students taught by “highly effective” teachers; decrease in measurable differences in student results between teachers
Increase school-wide student growth	Student performance and growth data, EVAAS data	Increase in the percentage of “highly effective” teachers in BCS	Greater academic growth for students
Increase attractiveness of the teaching profession	Development of differentiated career-advancement pathways for teachers; teacher surveys and focus groups	Volume of eligible teachers applying for and seeking to remain in advanced-teacher roles	Percentage of students directly taught by advanced teachers
Provide recognition to high-quality classroom teachers	Teacher surveys and focus groups	Role-based incentives for teachers	Percentage of students directly taught by advanced teachers
Support retention of high-quality classroom teachers	Teacher retention data, EVAAS data, classroom qualitative observations, student performance data	Increase in high-quality teachers throughout the district	Percentage of students directly taught by advanced teachers
Provide assistance to and support retention of beginning classroom teachers	Teacher surveys and observations; student performance data	Leadership by teacher leaders for other teachers (growth across four domains); increase retention rates of beginning teachers	Percentage of students directly taught by advanced-teacher roles
Develop a long-term vision and strategy (sustainability plan)	Development of active partnerships with other school districts, including instances of regional sharing; teacher surveys; financial budget variance and sustainability	Teacher perceptions improved retention, development and recruitment processes, financial sustainability	Student awareness of positive changes in instruction and school culture

*EVAAS: Education Value-Added Assessment System

(11) Community Involvement

Parents, citizens, and businesses have an important vested interest in the performance of Bertie County Schools. BCS will engage stakeholders across the county as key design partners and advocates for the work in developing and implementing advanced teaching roles.

BSC will engage parents in a variety of ways. First, we will engage the PTA through their periodic meetings. We will focus communications with parents on the rationale, expected outcomes, and opportunity of the advanced roles, and we will place less emphasis on the internal process. We will craft messages to parents that emphasize elevating teachers' voices and acknowledging, rewarding, and sharing excellent teaching practices. As the program rolls out, we will seek ways to enlist the support of parent voices, especially those of students impacted by teachers in Guide or Mentor roles. Additionally, teachers themselves, both those serving in advanced roles and those not, will be encouraged to share videos and other resources to spread the word about the difference the THRIVE effort is having in e-mails home, classroom websites, and other less formal communication with parents.

BCS will actively engage business and faith communities as partners. Members of the external community will participate in the vetting and design sessions to provide a balanced perspective. We will use this committee as a sounding board to support this work and to advocate for THRIVE. We will emphasize the value to the whole community of elevating excellent teachers and teaching practices and creating opportunities for advancement that may be beneficial in attracting new teachers to district schools.

Additionally, we will regularly engage county commissioners and the Windsor-Bertie County Chamber of Commerce in understanding this work. We believe the commissioners will respond

well to the fact that this work is intended to do more with the current money allocated and will resonate as both innovative and fiscally responsible.

Elizabeth City State University is a key partner in this effort. We are in discussions with the university to provide pathways for undergraduate teacher candidates to complete their year of teacher residency with Teacher Mentors in BCS. This partnership will further strengthen the sustainability of the program by infusing additional capacity into the system while also providing a direct opportunity for new-teacher recruitment.

BCS has recently revisited and refined the ways in which we communicate with the community.

Some of the new strategies that will be employed by THRIVE include:

- *Community E-mail Lists:* We maintain a contact list across Bertie County that allows us to update key stakeholders within the community and allows the superintendent to contact most key stakeholders across the county quickly.
- *Newsletters:* A quarterly Bertie THRIVEs newsletter will be published for teachers in the district to learn more about progress. In addition, community updates related to the THRIVE program will be included in the periodic BCS parent newsletters.
- *Superintendent Listening Tours:* Dr. Edmonds has prioritized listening and learning through her first year leading the district and plans to continue this level of regular, open engagement. As THRIVE is implemented, the listening tour stops will provide an opportunity to hear feedback on the work as well as position the advanced-teacher role pilot as a response to some of the takeaways from earlier stops on the listening tour.
- *SpokeHub App:* A group of 80 teachers in BCS has recently had success hosting a SpokeHub pilot. We will leverage initial successes as we use this platform to further conversations and understanding within the community about the THRIVE program.

(12) Needs Statement

North Carolina's continued prosperity depends on a future population of citizens who are empowered and prepared through an excellent education. Achievement of that education is more impacted by *classroom teachers* than any other aspect of schooling.¹³ Particularly in rural communities, where resources and supplemental programs are often scarce, the imperative for teacher leadership is paramount. Students in rural communities are more likely than their peers in any other geography to live in poverty.¹⁴ Yet rural communities with small populations, such as this in northeastern North Carolina, face mounting challenges with recruiting, developing, and retaining excellent teachers. In 2016–17, Bertie County experienced 17.1% teacher attrition, a rate nearly double the average for NC LEAs (8.7%) and the fourth highest turnover rate among NC school districts.¹⁵ Nearby Northampton County Schools experienced teacher attrition >12%. The downstream effects of this trend have harmful implications for student achievement. In fact, a 2011 study by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that students in grade levels with high teacher turnover experienced drops in both English language arts and mathematics scores. Notable to BCS and NCS, the impact was particularly strong among schools with higher populations of low-performing and African American students.¹⁶ BCS's student population is 84% African American. Eighty-seven percent of BCS students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, with NCS reporting comparable percentages (more than 30% higher than the NC average). Specific to BCS, it is one of only five NC LEAs that is currently unable to offer *any*

¹³ *Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement*. (2012). Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/corporate_pubs/CP693z1-2012-09.html.

¹⁴ Smarick, A. (2014). *A New Frontier: Utilizing Charter Schooling to Strengthen Rural Education*. Washington, DC: Bellwether Education Partners.

¹⁵ *2016-2017 State of the Teaching Profession in North Carolina*. (2018). Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/district-humanresources/surveys/leaving/2016-17-state-teaching-profession.pdf>.

¹⁶ Ronfeldt, M., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wycoff, J. *How Teacher Turnover Harms Student Achievement* (NBER Working Paper 17176). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. http://dl.kli.re.kr/dl_image/IMG/03/000000012003/SERVICE/000000012003_01.PDF.

local salary supplement to teachers. The state’s average supplement in 2017 was \$4,194.¹⁷ This fact makes it even more difficult to recruit and retain teachers, and also magnifies the opportunity that THRIVE represents for both BCS and the northeastern region.

The imperative for change is clear. The THRIVE initiative seeks to change these statistics by implementing an advanced-teacher roles model designed to match the unique contextual needs of the northeastern region of NC. THRIVE will provide differentiated compensation pathways for teachers who champion teacher voice, lead culture, coach other teachers, and foster continuous improvement while maintaining a primarily role as a classroom instructional leader. The resulting will be more highly effective teachers to better enable BCS and NCS, to realize the collective mission to provide high-quality teaching and learning opportunities for all students.

(13) Sharing Information

Bertie THRIVEs aims to mitigate a significant human resource challenge in rural districts, namely that of deploying the limited number of available teachers to have the greatest impact on student outcomes. Because of this, we imagine that many rural, low-wealth districts will be keenly interested in learning from this work.

Bertie County will serve as the primary district in the first year of this grant. In subsequent years, we will extend the model to Northampton County—district with similar context and shared county borders. This will create a regional community using a common approach to foster peer sharing, build cross-county community engagement, and create more momentum for the model.

In year one, we will invite prospective partners in Northampton County to conduct joint classroom and professional development observations and to debrief with advanced-role teachers

¹⁷ *Selected Statistics of Local Salary Supplements: Year 2017*. North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. <https://www.ncacc.org/DocumentCenter/View/2948/2017-Salary-Supplements>.

and staff. As the cohort of teacher leaders across the district build core competencies, structural artifacts, and coaching practices, we will establish a learning community, meeting on a biannual basis to share best practices and dive deeper on common challenges. We will also create space on the website to highlight and disseminate associated resources.

With consulting partner, RTI International, we will gather data and teacher artifacts to formatively assess the progress of the advanced-teacher roles. In years two and three, we anticipate having gathered enough data to engage in conference presentations and submit research articles to education journals with initial findings and insight into the work, thus building scientific credibility and entering the lessons learned into the body of research around changing teacher roles and responsibilities.

Within BCS, we will integrate the learnings of the advanced-teacher roles into already existing structures, as well as create new ways to share information. BCS schools use PLCs to support collaboration and joint planning and problem solving. Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors will engage with PLCs to help them hear from and be representative teacher voices in the county. Additionally, subject-specific teachers in advanced roles will integrate lessons learned from coaching and support to focus on instructional problems of practice within subject- or grade-level specific PLCs.

Finally, the resources (session plans, observation tools, coaching tools, etc.) that are produced as part of the advanced role responsibility will be aggregated and organized via Google Drive and shared within BCS and with partner LEAs.

(14) Local Evaluation

BCS's administrative team will engage in data collection and monitoring of the objectives described above in section 10 and will work closely with RTI on the continuous improvement

process for implementation of this program. Baseline data will be collected before the start of the 2019–20 school year and then data will be collected throughout and at the end of each year.

Beginning with the 2019–20 school year, the annual local evaluation timeline is as follows:

August/September – Baseline and annual data on student/school performance and growth (EOC, EOG, EVAAS, school report card, etc.)

October – Teacher observations and surveys

December – Teacher observations and interviews, midyear data collection

February – Teacher observations

April – Teacher observations

June – End of year evaluation (interviews, focus groups, surveys)

This evaluation process will be completed by administrators at schools where Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors are employed. Throughout each year, schools will track and monitor student and teacher progress in a variety of ways such as assessments, observations, and planning sessions. Information from the Teacher Working Conditions Survey will be monitored over time through the implementation of the program for changes in teacher perceptions before and during implementation of this program. Qualitative feedback will also be collected at professional learning session for teachers and from teachers receiving mentorship or coaching as part of THRIVE.

Appendix A: Budget

The budget presentation below includes the expected funding needed to implement the THRIVE program in Bertie County Schools (BCS) and Northampton County Schools (NCS), through implementation phases 1–4 (further described in section 1). BCS agrees to serve as the singular fiscal agent with NC DPI for the entirety of the effort.

Phases 1-4: Implementation Budget, including the multi-year regional scaling approach

■ Shaded fields denote use of requested grant funds

Budget Item	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Salary Supplements				
Bertie County Schools				
Maximum supplement budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guides: up to \$5,000 per year Mentors: up to \$10,000 per year 	\$0	<i>Guides (8):</i> \$40,000 <i>Mentors (0):</i> \$0	<i>Guides (10):</i> \$50,000 <i>Mentors (2):</i> \$20,000	<i>Guides (10):</i> \$50,000 <i>Mentors (4):</i> \$40,000
Assumption for maximum increase to payroll taxes, benefits, and other employment costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicable only to Mentors 	\$0	\$7,000	\$14,000	\$14,000
Northampton County Schools				
Maximum supplement budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guides: up to \$5,000 per year Mentors: up to \$10,000 per year 	\$0	\$0	<i>Guides (8):</i> \$40,000 <i>Mentors (0):</i> \$0	<i>Guides (10):</i> \$50,000 <i>Mentors (2):</i> \$20,000
Assumption for maximum increase to payroll taxes, benefits, and other employment costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicable only to Mentors 	\$0	\$0	\$7,000	\$14,000

<i>Project Implementation</i>				
RTI International - <i>Overall project facilitation and coordination</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation project management • Study visits and peer facilitation • Project communication support • Design and stakeholder facilitation 	BCS Implementation: \$50,000	BCS Implementation: \$15,000 NCS Implementation \$45,000	BCS Implementation: \$5,000 NCS Implementation: \$10,000	BSC and NCS Implementation: \$10,000
Substitute teacher budget and district travel costs	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$0
Communication materials and resources, e.g., SpokeHub Tool	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$0
<i>Professional Development</i>				
Hope Street Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teacher Voice</i> • <i>Culture</i> 	BCS: \$56,000	NCS: \$56,000	\$0	\$0
RTI International <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Instructional Coaching</i> • <i>Culture</i> • <i>Continuous Improvement</i> 	BCS: \$30,000	BCS: \$20,000 NCS: \$30,000	NCS: \$20,000	\$0
Schools That Lead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continuous Improvement</i> 	\$6,000	\$12,000 Grant offset \$6,000	\$12,000 Grant offset \$6,000	\$12,000
Total budget	\$157,000	\$261,000	\$214,000	\$210,000
Total grant request	\$151,000	\$202,000	\$71,000	\$10,000

Total grant request over 4 years: \$434,000

The grant request is focused on costs that support initial implementation and capacity building. Costs that are expected to be maintained by the districts (such as supplements) are not being requested in the grant to reinforce sustainable practices.

Total budget for scaling THRIVE implementation: \$842,000

Budget Narrative: 2018-2019 (January 2019 – June 2019)

Project effort will begin in January of 2019 with a heavy focus on implementation planning in BCS. Expected costs are primarily related to partnerships with professional development providers and implementation support from consultants. Costs of substitute teachers as well as minor travel costs for study visits to peer districts are also included. Due to existing costs and infrastructure, some professional development costs are already budgeted by the district and are not be included in the grant request. A small budget is included for needed materials, such as reference books and digital resources.

Budget Narrative: 2019-2020 (July 2019 – June 2020)

Project implementation will continue in BCS with a focus on continued professional development. The initial supplements for Teacher Guides will begin being staged into the budget. To reinforce local financial sustainability, this supplement will be funded by BCS without using grant funds. Beginning in January 2020, implementation work will begin in earnest in NCS following the same implementation model. Marginal implementation costs are slightly reduced based on assumed efficiencies of learning. A small budget is included for needed materials, such as reference books and digital resources; this is scaled up based on two districts drawing from the budget.

Budget Narrative: 2020-2021 (July 2020 – June 2021)

Project implementation will continue in NCS with a focus on continued professional development. The initial supplements for Teacher Guides will begin being staged into the budget. To reinforce local financial sustainability, this supplement will be funded by NCS without using grant funds. BCS will stage in the first group of Teacher Mentors during this year. Some substitute teacher and travel costs may be used to support regional meetings among the three districts. A small budget is included for needed materials, such as tools and reference books.

Budget Narrative: 2021-2022 (July 2021 – December 2021)

NCS will stage in the first group of Teacher Mentors during this year. BCS will operate at full implementation during this year. Some substitute teacher and travel costs may be used to support regional meetings among the three districts.

Appendix B: Letters of Support



November 14, 2018

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing as the Superintendent of Northampton County Schools to express my support of the Bertie County Schools (BCS) Advanced Teacher Roles Grant Proposal. I believe that the proposed plan for BCS is an approach that we can scale in our district and regionally as a community of districts using a common approach to foster peer sharing, build cross-county community engagement, and create more momentum for the model.

Teacher recruitment, development, and retention is a common challenge among the districts in our region. We believe that this plan will allow us to better recruit and develop new and beginning teachers, keep our best teachers in teaching roles by offering pathways for career advancement, reduce teacher turnover, and improve student academic performance through improved teaching and learning.

The BCS model for Advanced Teacher Roles is an innovative approach and provides a great opportunity for other districts to share in the success and lessons learned. I look forward to the learning from the implementation in BCS and the partnerships that will grow within the region as a result. We share the vision for a powerful teaching workforce that is enabled by career advancement opportunities so that every student has equitable access to excellent teachers who prepare them to graduate as empowered members of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monica Smith-Woofter".

Monica Smith-Woofter, EdD
Superintendent Northampton County Schools

701 N. Church Street, Jackson, NC 27845
252-534-1371
smith-woofterm@northampton.k12.nc.us
www.northampton.k12.nc.us



October 23, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Hope Street Group, a national non-profit that strives to ensure every American has access to economic opportunity, for Bertie County's application to join and receive funding from the "Advanced Teaching Roles" pilot program.

In North Carolina, Hope Street Group manages the "North Carolina Teacher Voice Network," a two year fellowship program that cultivates 38 leadership competencies in educators through 21 formal professional learning sessions and multiple directed first-hand experiences. Over the course of three and a half years in state and close to twice that nationally, we have realized the importance of communication skills, relational trust vertically and horizontally across hierarchies, and data-based, goal oriented conversations to elevate and solve challenges that affect student learning. In order for educators to succeed in the types of leadership roles that "Advanced Teaching Roles" provide, they require training, coaching, and opportunity to move beyond an effective instructional leader to an effective peer leader and, importantly, a trusted colleague of administrators. We also realize how critical it is for decision-makers to rely on these trained teacher leaders to facilitate a feedback loop with their peers to lift up perspectives and productively engage in policy development and implementation.

Bertie County's leadership understands the need for this kind of professional learning support for "Advanced Teaching Roles" and we are happy to partner with them to provide those teachers selected for the pilot with the structure and benefits of a formal competency-based continuum to build leadership skills and create a productive feedback loop for the program. We have consulted with Dr. Catherine Edmonds on the needs of the district and feel confident that between her leadership, Hope Street Group's proven model for leadership development and constructive policy engagement by educators, and the funding support of the "Advanced Teaching Roles" pilot Bertie County is ripe to develop and implement such a model.

Hope Street Group is ready and eager to work alongside Bertie County Schools in this endeavor. Please contact me at dan@hopestreetgroup.org if we can further assist in your decision.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Cruce", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dan Cruce
Vice President, Education



3040 E. Cornwallis Road • PO Box 12194 • Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194 • USA
Telephone +1.919.541.6000 • Fax +1.919.541.5985 • www.rti.org

November 9, 2018

To Whom it May Concern;

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of RTI International for Bertie County Schools' proposal for funding an "Advanced Teaching Roles" pilot program.

RTI International is a North Carolina-based nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. RTI's work in education seeks to promote thriving learning environments that facilitate success for all students.

Through consultation with Dr. Catherine Edmonds, RTI understands the focus for Bertie County School on recruiting, developing, and retaining high quality teachers. We are excited about the opportunity to partner with Bertie County Schools in overall project management, professional development, and implementation of the advanced teaching roles program. We believe in developing and investing in leaders at all levels and we know Bertie County will be successful, not only within their district, but in serving as a catalyst and a model for other districts in the northeastern North Carolina.

RTI fully endorses this effort and is ready to support Bertie County Schools in the implementation process to make the program a success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela H. Quick', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Angela H. Quick, Ed. D.
Director, Center for Education Services
RTI International



November 12, 2018

Dear Dr. Tomberlin,

Schools That Lead is delighted to offer this letter of support for the Bertie County Schools proposal for Teacher Compensation Models and Advanced Teaching Roles. Under the leadership of Dr. Catherine Edmonds all K-12 schools in the district are partnering over the next three years with Schools That Lead to advance powerful student learning.

Each school will develop a specific aim based on their school's data. In general,

- 1) the elementary schools will work to decrease the number of students with early warning indicators in grade level performance, attendance and behavior,
- 2) the middle school will work to decrease the number of students who are not promoted on time from ninth grade, and
- 3) the high school will work to decrease the number of students who are not graduating on time.

Key to this work is developing teacher leaders from each school who will drive the work to meet the aim of their school. These teachers will become proficient in the use of the tools of improvement science as they work to improve student outcomes in their classrooms, their peers' classrooms, and across the district. As a part of Schools That Lead's first cohort of schools across North Carolina, these teachers will also learn from and contribute to the learning of teachers in the current 34-school network and of subsequent networks up to 60 schools formed before 2021.

We have already begun this work and the Bertie County Schools educators have shown great enthusiasm for the work and we have no doubt that this will result in improved outcomes for their students.

Thank you for presenting this opportunity to the state and to Bertie County Schools.

Sincerely,

Dana Diesel Wallace, EdD
President and CEO



BUSINESS FOR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND TRANSFORMATION

November 3, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of BEST NC for Bertie County Schools' (BCS) proposal to receive funding for the "Advanced Teaching Roles" pilot. BEST NC is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of business leaders committed to improving North Carolina's public education system through policy and advocacy.

Unfortunately, North Carolina's education system has been stagnant for far too long. Our students deserve better, and our economy demands it. At BEST NC, we believe that one of the fundamental flaws in our system is the outdated human resource structure utilized by our schools. In the current structure, principals are over-burdened with too many direct reports and highly effective teachers are stranded in positions that do not maximize their impact. This structure also leaves developing teachers without the supports these need to succeed and improve in their profession.

We believe advanced teaching roles represent a promising strategy to distribute leadership across the school building, expand the reach of our best teachers, and provide targeted support for the teachers that need it most. Research finds that advanced teaching roles are strongly linked to improve outcomes for students and educators and we are proud to support the expansion of these models across the state of North Carolina.

Additionally, BEST NC understands that advanced teaching roles may look different in different districts and schools, depending upon the size, location, culture, and other factors. We believe that BCS is well-positioned to accomplish the proposed work in a way that will meet the unique needs of their community. BCS has strong partnerships with key stakeholders to build an innovative and effective model for advanced teaching roles. The school district is partnering with the following state and national organizations:

- **RTI International** to manage the overall project facilitation and coordination; provide instructional coaching and group professional development; identify peer collaborators for key Bertie HR and Finance roles within North Carolina to establish ongoing opportunities to peer share and learn
- **Hope Street Group** to elevate teacher voice;
- **SpokeHub** to provide an innovative approach to communication and involvement of key stakeholders;
- **Schools That Lead** to work with principals and teachers to learn to use improvement science to articulate their theories and assumptions, select change ideas, and measure impact over time;
- **National Center for Teacher Residencies** to develop and support a teacher residency program to fill the educator pipeline with effective and diverse new teachers.

Should BCS receive this grant, BEST NC stands at the ready to help them meet their goals. Please contact me at Brenda.Berg@BEST-NC.org if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Brenda Berg

Brenda Berg
President and CEO

Info@BEST-NC.org + 919.531.1663 + www.BEST-NC.org



800 Park Offices Drive
Durham, NC 27709
info@spokehub.co
www.spokehub.co

November 3, 2018

To whom it may concern:

As Chief of Staff for SpokeHub mobile app, I am pleased to write this letter indicating our strong support for the proposed work for the Advanced Teaching Roles initiative for Bertie County Schools (BCS).

With roots in Durham and selected by the Google for Entrepreneurs Exchange Program, SpokeHub was 1 of 12 globally chosen companies that provided a much needed engagement solution. SpokeHub is the first content delivery platform to use Augmented Reality (AR) to unite people through unique experiences. With SpokeHub, you can immediately activate your assets through AR, bringing your content to life. Through that experience, you can drive your audience into your HUB for instant feedback and engagement. While your audience is engaging, we are aggregating the voice of your community and delivering you real time data analytics through a live dashboard. Our analytics suite provides you with hindsight, insight and foresight; allowing you to always have a pulse on the sentiment of your community and in turn make better decisions faster.

SpokeHub has the capabilities to track topics that come up multiple times, as well as tracking other useful analytics. The possibilities with using SpokeHub as the official communication tool for this initiative are endless. It's easy, it's fun, and it's real-time conversation, connecting staff, community, and stakeholders around ONE topic.

SpokeHub recently partnered with BCS for pre-buzz, live, and post-event communications surrounding the "Regional Discussion for School Safety" event on Oct. 26, 2018. For the event, SpokeHub was able to offer live chats and Q&A sessions with experts in fields related to keeping students safe; to provide a link to the registration site; to house conversation related to the topic at hand; to engage users

with thought-provoking questions and statistics about school safety topics; to provide opportunities to participate in polls; and more—all through one FREE mobile appl

Bertie County's leadership understands that effective communication and involvement of all stakeholders is key to implementing advanced teaching roles in BCS. SpokeHub is a great way to engage the schools and community at large, in keeping stakeholders in the loop.

SpokeHub is ready and eager to work with Dr. Catherine Edmonds and her team as the official communication tool for the implementation of advanced teaching roles. Please contact me at Allison.Smith@spokehub.co if I can be of further assistance in your decision.

Sincerely,



Allison Smith
Chief of Staff

Appendix C: Initial FAQ

Initial Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document

What is THRIVE?

THRIVE is a teacher leadership model that creates advancement pathways for teachers to become Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors. Selected teachers will be trained and certified in each of four focus areas—Teacher Voice, Cultural Leadership, Coaching, and Continuous Improvement—to directly support BCS’s teachers to both improve overall instructional practice and positively impact school culture.

Why is THRIVE being implemented?

Bertie County is a rural community that faces challenges with recruiting, developing, and retaining excellent teachers. BCS has a high teacher-attrition rate, nearly double the state average, and the fourth highest turnover rate among NC school districts. BCS needs a model to differentiate compensation pathways for teachers in order to keep their best and brightest and support the development of all teachers within the district.

What are the goals of THRIVE?

THRIVE aims to increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession in Bertie County, support retention of high-quality classroom teachers, and provide support to beginning classroom teachers so they remain in education. Ultimately, THRIVE will develop a long-term vision and strategy to create positive changes in instruction and overall school culture that supports both teacher and student success.

How will THRIVE impact students?

Through teacher advancement, development, and support, THRIVE will improve the quality of classroom instruction that students will be exposed to and increase overall student growth for the schools.

How will THRIVE impact teachers?

THRIVE will provide recognition to high-quality classroom teachers by selecting teachers to receive an advanced-teacher leadership role. Selected teachers will also receive an increase in salary. All teachers will benefit from additional guidance and support to enhance their professional growth.

What is the difference between a Teacher Guide and a Teacher Mentor?

Teacher Guides represent the first level within the THRIVE advancement pathway and are responsible for leading school-based professional development and coaching other teachers. Once Teacher Guides have completed all four certifications and have completed at least one year at

level one, they are then eligible to apply for level two: Teacher Mentor. Teacher Mentors choose a more specialized track focused on either teacher voice and culture or continuous improvement. Teacher Mentors primarily support beginning teachers.

Who is eligible to participate?

Teachers with a valid NC Professional Educator’s License with at least three years of teaching experience are eligible to apply for a Teacher Guide role. Teachers must also have a rating of accomplished or better on each of the NC Teacher Evaluation Standards, evidence of experience leading a team or providing training to others, and evidence that the teacher has exceeded expected student growth based on three years of teacher evaluation data.

How will teachers be selected?

Applications will be assessed using a weighted rubric based on required and preferred eligibility qualifications. Selected candidates will proceed to an interview process for final selection.

How will teacher pay change?

Teacher Guides and Teacher Mentors are eligible to receive an annual supplement of up to \$5,000, and Teacher Mentors are guaranteed an 11-month contract, which results in an additional month of income based on the teacher’s base salary.

If a teacher is not selected in the initial year, can they reapply?

Yes. The application and selection process is based on a mix of performance-based and experience requirements. Over time, interested teachers may continue to improve their competitiveness and be selected in future years.

How will BCS financially support THRIVE?

BCS will structure THRIVE to be sustainable within local budgets following the initial grant period. This sustainability will be further reinforced by scaling to neighboring district(s) that will operate programs like THRIVE to better share costs, co-train, and realize the full benefits of collaboration.