

# CELEBRATING PROGRESS:

## NORTH CAROLINA LEADERS REFLECT ON THE IMPACT OF RETHINK EDUCATION.

All students in North Carolina deserve the support and resources that address their unique needs today and prepare them for a successful future, regardless of potential learning disruptions.

**Rethink Education partners with North Carolina districts and schools to improve blended and virtual learning, provide implementation support for educators, and create content for students in grades K-8.** As an initiative of the Office of Virtual Instruction Services Virtual Instruction Support Services Division at the NCDPI, and with support from a US Department of Education grant, the Rethink team has been hard at work for the last few years.

Now that we're moving into the third year of this grant, **we're taking stock of the difference that Rethink Education has made** for the participating lab school, 81 school districts, and 41 charter schools!



**81**  
SCHOOL  
DISTRICTS



**41**  
CHARTER  
SCHOOLS

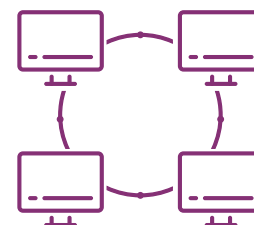


**1**  
LAB  
SCHOOL

We asked district leaders across the state to **reflect on the impact of the initiative** and how educators across North Carolina are rethinking the ways they serve students with blended learning.

First, we heard reflections on how **blended learning is preparing North Carolina's students for a more collaborative, digital and agile future work environment.**

"We hear from businesses that they need students that are team players. Students that can communicate, that can think critically, that can collaborate and work together as a team that have all these other skill sets," shares Dr. Heath Belcher, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and Innovation at Lincoln County Schools. "Now, we have a teaching model that allows that to happen. **I think [the blended learning teaching model is] one of the greatest benefits for the student, and how we can transform [education] from just measuring content acquisition or knowledge, to some of those other skills that we're looking for out of our students.**"



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Dr. Heath Belcher, Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and Innovation at Lincoln County Schools



Next, we heard that **blended learning has provided more opportunities to engage all students**. Educators who are adept with blended-learning models can increase student engagement during class time, instill positive behavior and social skills, and use time efficiently in and out of the classroom.

“Small-group instruction and one-on-one and personalized learning pathways bolster the chances that that student who wasn’t engaged before **will now be engaged in their learning and as a result, show growth,**” explained Jacob French, Director of Digital Teaching and Learning for Hoke County Schools. **“Blended learning is providing teachers with strategies to engage students.”**



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To help meet the needs of all students, **Rethink Education provides educator training that goes above and beyond the average professional development.** These professional learning programs not only impart best practices for using the statewide blended-learning models, but enable the educators to train their peers on how to use blended learning.



**These success stories from North Carolina education leaders inspire us as we continue our mission to build schools’ capacity for blended instruction that engages all students and empowers all educators.**

One example of a best practice is using ‘walkthroughs’ to provide meaningful feedback to teachers. During these walkthroughs, “teachers are getting out of their classroom, and going into other teacher’s classrooms to see what they’re doing. That is the best professional development you can provide a teacher, hands down!” shares Dr. Deanne Meadows, Superintendent of Columbus County Schools. “We can give feedback, but it’s friendly feedback. **Everybody knows we’re there to support them** and that is the reason for it. Also, teachers don’t realize what we [as district leaders] learn when we go into their classrooms as well. We do learn a lot going into classrooms and learn a lot from our teachers.”

These success stories from North Carolina education leaders inspire us as we continue our mission to build schools’ capacity for blended instruction that engages all students and empowers all educators.

As we look back at the past two years of the grant period, **the power of blended learning to transform education across North Carolina is evident**, and we are excited for the continued growth that the upcoming school year will offer.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Educators can [learn more about Rethink Education programs online at dpi.nc.gov](https://dpi.nc.gov).
- [Hear more from LuAnne Llewellyn on Episode 5.3](#) of the Education Empowered Podcast, hosted by the Office of Virtual Support at NCDPI and Rethink Education NC.
- Reach out to [rethink@ncpublicschools.gov](mailto:rethink@ncpublicschools.gov) with questions.



**RETHINK EDUCATION**  
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction



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**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**