

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
ACADEMIC AND UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS 2015

Great Teachers and School Leaders Matter.

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Great Teachers and School Leaders Matter.

THE DIVISION OF ACADEMIC AND UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS was established by the University of North Carolina (UNC) in 1998. The Division was created to acknowledge the University's priority of strengthening North Carolina's public schools and educator preparation programs. This work continues to be one of the University's highest priorities. The Division is the primary liaison with the fifteen UNC schools of education, inter-institutional programs related to PK-16 education, the NC Department of Public Instruction, the NC General Assembly for PK-16-related matters, and all other programs and organizations related to the University's support for public schools, students, and teachers.

Greetings,

WE ARE PLEASED TO SHARE the first Annual Report of the University of North Carolina Academic and University Programs Division and UNC's fifteen educator preparation programs, focused on the University's goal of preparing more, higher quality teachers and school leaders for North Carolina's public schools. Appropriately, the report is entitled, *Great Teachers and School Leaders Matter*.

In the following pages, you will see evidence of the University's commitment to improving PK-16 education in North Carolina through the stories of the educators, students, and community members we serve; our focus on implementing the UNC Board of Governors recommendations on Teacher and School Leader Quality; and the research and data that is the foundation of all we do.

We invite you to enjoy our Annual Report and in particular, the stories of students, teachers, school leaders, and community members you will find throughout. These stories reflect the important efforts of our educator preparation programs. They inspire our commitment and give purpose to our daily work.

Thank you for all you do to contribute to our success. We look forward to continuing to partner with you to achieve our shared goal of preparing world-class educators for our public schools.

Sincerely,

ALISA CHAPMAN

Vice President, Academic and University Programs

UNC General Administration

UNC System Educator Preparation Programs

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Robin Groce, Interim Dean

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

College of Education
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Gwendolyn Williams, Chairperson

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UNC Board of Governors Subcommittee on Teacher and School Leader Quality

PREPARING MORE, higher quality teachers and school leaders for North Carolina's public schools is one of UNC's highest priorities and is central to the mission of the University system. As a result, the UNC Board of Governors Subcommittee on Teacher and School Leader Quality adopted the following recommendations to strengthen, focus, and, where necessary, redesign UNC's educator preparation programs to produce a world-class educator workforce for North Carolina.

These recommendations drive the work of the UNC Academic and University Programs Division. We are striving to meet these recommendations through an emphasis on greater public accountability, research-based approaches to teacher and principal preparation, increased collaboration and partnerships, expanded and enhanced high quality clinical practice, increased use of valid and reliable teacher performance assessments, strengthened recruitment and selection of prospective candidates into our programs, and improved support for early career educators.

While there are no simple solutions to these ambitious recommendations, the UNC Board of

Governor's focus on these priorities provides the opportunity for increased emphasis and collaboration on the following key recommendations:

- 1. Ensure greater public accountability through development of a UNC Educator Quality Dashboard to monitor and measure the performance of UNC's fifteen nationally accredited teacher education programs.** The Dashboard serves as a public, interactive, web-based tool used for analyzing and displaying data about UNC educator preparation programs. It contains performance indicators and other information at the system- and campus-level across a range of factors, including recruitment, selection, preparation, employment, and induction.
- 2. Accelerate collaboration among UNC Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences in a more formalized process that emphasizes alignment of academic expectations, embraces data and evidence of effective practice, and promotes innovation in teaching and learning.** Closer alignment in these areas promotes rigor, excellence, and greater consistency in preparing educators across the University system, including assuring deeper content knowledge and modeling effective teaching practices.

3. Strengthen and align partnerships between colleges of education and PK-12 schools to achieve meaningful and mutually beneficial collaboration.

Formal partnership agreements align with statewide priorities, address regional supply and demand, use research and evidence-based practices aimed at PK-16 student success and program improvement, create and implement innovative models to support clinical preparation and placement needs, and offer support for beginning teachers that is focused on teaching quality and retention while ensuring that all new teachers are supported, monitored, and mentored in their first three years of service.

4. Improve teacher preparation by taking the following actions:

- Expand high quality clinical practice as a core, year-long, job-embedded experience in UNC teacher preparation programs so that candidates develop the knowledge base and skills necessary to meet the needs of students. The expansion addresses partnerships for clinical preparation, clinical educators, and clinical experience.



- Use research-based evidence to guide measurable improvement in teacher preparation programs and to better align programs, standards, and best practices across the University.
- Link candidate performance with valid and reliable performance assessments that are data- and evidence-based by adopting the edTPA, formerly known as the Teacher Performance Assessment, as a system-wide best practice through the expansion of the current UNC system pilot initiative. edTPA is a rigorously developed and widely accepted tool used for performance assessment to inform teacher candidates and programs.

5. Improve the selection process and criteria for entry into principal preparation programs, redesign programs where necessary, and scale best practices in evidence-based models for school leadership preparation and development. It is crucial for North Carolina to select and prepare high quality leaders for our PK-12 students and provide the regular support, development, and evaluation of school leaders that enables them to establish and maintain student success. UNC system school leadership

preparation programs must use research-based evidence to guide improvements in developing rigorous, highly selective processes for entry into programs for principals and other school-based leaders. The preparation they receive must be rooted in the skills and knowledge required of 21st-century school leaders, including an emphasis on evaluating and coaching teachers and promoting longer-term, structured internships with proven master principals.

6. Strengthen recruitment and selection criteria (both academic and non-cognitive) for prospective teacher candidates seeking to enter UNC system teacher preparation programs by taking the following actions:

- Establish a public-private teacher scholarship program that is merit-based and targeted to attract the very best prospective candidates who are preparing to teach in North Carolina's highest-need licensure areas (science, mathematics, special education, and middle grades) as well as in high-need districts and schools across the state.
- Support a pay differential for North Carolina public school teachers with in-field advanced degrees.

- Develop campus-based recruitment plans that reflect current market research and regional school district needs to ensure that UNC campuses are individually and collectively responding to the state's need for high quality teachers and school leaders. The recruitment plans are linked to projections of enrollment growth for individual education programs and focused on increasing the supply of new, initially licensed teachers. Plans place an emphasis on North Carolina's highest-need licensure areas: science, mathematics, special education, and middle grades.

7. Improve support for early-career teachers by adopting and expanding statewide the NC New Teacher Support Program, an induction program that provides intensive support for beginning teachers in their first three years of service. This program has had success in reducing North Carolina's teacher quality gaps by focusing on retaining teachers in high-need schools and ensuring that the teachers who remain in the profession produce student achievement gains.

Ensure Greater Accountability and Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Provide research evidence to inform program improvement

THE 2015-16 ACADEMIC YEAR

marked the eighth year that the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC) partnered with the University of North Carolina Division of Academic and University Programs to carry out an agenda of research designed to better understand teacher and school leader quality in North Carolina and to provide educator preparation programs in the UNC system research evidence to inform program improvement efforts.

This research partnership, the UNC Educator Quality Research Initiative, has previously addressed key issues, such as: 1. estimating the value-added effectiveness and evaluation ratings of teachers entering the profession through different routes of preparation or prepared by different UNC institutions; 2. examining early-career teachers' on-the-job learning and attrition; 3. evaluating the North Carolina Teaching Fellows and UNC Masters of School Administration programs; and 4. administering a Recent Graduate Survey to all first-year teachers in North Carolina.

In 2014-15, the UNC Educator Quality Research Initiative completed several important research projects. Particularly noteworthy among these:

- Analysis of the relationships between the National Council on Teacher Quality's (NCTQ) ratings of teacher preparation programs and the performance of program graduates in North Carolina public schools,
- Evaluation of the NC Principal Fellows program,
- Examination of beginning teacher personality traits and their associations with teacher performance and persistence,
- Analysis of graduate degree impacts on teacher performance and retention, and
- Completion of the 2015 educator preparation program effectiveness analysis.

In these studies we found that NCTQ's ratings do not have a strong relationship with the performance of program graduates, that conscientiousness predicts higher value-added evaluation ratings and persistence, and that



Additional information on the **UNC EDUCATOR QUALITY RESEARCH INITIATIVE**, including reports, policy briefs, and publications, are available at eqdashboard.northcarolina.edu

graduate degrees in a teacher's area of teaching have positive effects on student achievement gains.

In 2015-16 the UNC Educator Quality Research Initiative has another ambitious research agenda. Highlights include:

- Developing and administering a survey for principals and assistant principals in North Carolina to assess the quality of UNC system principal preparation programs and learn more about the experiences of assistant principal experiences,

- Examining the individual and workplace characteristics that predict moving into principal positions,
- Estimating how student teaching characteristics impact edTPA scores,
- Developing an empirical framework that teacher preparation programs can use when analyzing edTPA data for program improvement, and
- Analyzing the value-added and evaluation ratings of teachers entering the profession through different routes of preparation.

This set of studies will provide important evidence regarding school leadership preparation, clarify whether school and classroom context impacts teaching candidates' edTPA scores, help programs use their edTPA data for evidence-based reform, and address key policy questions on the staffing of NC public school classrooms.



Ensure greater public accountability, transparency, and access to data

AMONG ITS RECOMMENDATIONS, the UNC Board of Governors directed the Academic and University Programs Division to develop a UNC Educator Quality Dashboard to monitor and measure the performance of UNC's fifteen nationally accredited teacher education programs. Working in collaboration with the SAS Institute, UNC has met this core recommendation – the development of a

public, interactive, web-based tool designed to ensure greater public accountability, increase transparency, and facilitate data access for all education stakeholders.

The new Dashboard, available at eqdashboard.northcarolina.edu, provides unprecedented public access to the University's research and trend data on the performance of North Carolina's PK-16 institutions and

educators. Built with SAS® data visualization software, the Dashboard provides an easy-to-use interface that enables education stakeholders, including educators, administrators, policymakers, parents, and students, to analyze and display data on educator quality within selected populations, geographic regions, or subject areas. Visitors to the Dashboard may also examine performance indicators at the system and campus levels across a range of factors, including

Since its launch in May of 2015, the **UNC EDUCATOR QUALITY DASHBOARD** has received over

1,000 VISITS
and more than

6,500 PAGE
VIEWS.

The **UNC EDUCATOR QUALITY DASHBOARD** is available at eqdashboard.northcarolina.edu

educator recruitment, selection, preparation and performance. The Dashboard is useful for evaluating the impact of educator preparation program graduates on PK-12 student learning, measures associated with national accreditation, and other outcome-based indicators. Employment outcomes and information on the retention of beginning teachers in North Carolina's public schools are also readily available.

To ensure the UNC Educator Quality Dashboard remains at the forefront of research and development, the UNC Academic and University Programs Division has established two advisory committees.

The Internal Advisory Committee, comprised of campus representatives from UNC educator preparation programs, will provide feedback on indicators, data, and the functionality of the site. The members of the Internal Advisory Committee provide an important perspective as they are familiar with the data presented and many of its potential uses.

The members of the External Advisory Committee, nationally recognized researchers and educators, will offer their experience

and perspective on the development of the Dashboard with a focus on:

- 1. Institutionalizing Innovative Content for the Dashboard** – to tap the very best current research for development of new measures and refinement of current indicators of quality to ensure the Dashboard is addressing the most important questions about educator preparation programs in North Carolina;
- 2. Driving Innovative Program Improvement** – to advise the University of North Carolina on the content and display of the data that facilitate its use for program improvement and help to create evidence-based decision-making cultures among its educator preparation programs, UNC Council of Education Deans, PK-12 partners, and state policymakers;
- 3. Sharing Innovations in Accessibility and Content** – to continue to drive innovation among educator preparation programs in North Carolina and across the nation by advancing the dissemination of the information, the content, and the platform for making the content accessible for the Educator Quality Dashboard.

PROFILE: Katie B. Morris, Chair, Belk Foundation

TO CHANGE and to improve are two different things. – German proverb

Improvement of K-12 public education through investments in early grade learning and quality teachers and school leaders are the focus of the Belk Foundation. Research and programs, including many from the University of North Carolina (UNC) system, inform the foundation's investments, partnerships, and advocacy.

In 2010, The Belk Foundation decided to examine and redefine the mission of the family foundation. "After over 80 years as a foundation with a broad mission, we asked ourselves: How much impact are our grants having and how will we measure this impact? What has changed in the world as a result of our grants? These were hard questions to answer. Since 1928, the foundation has spent more than \$60 million to support organizations doing important work across our communities. But when we looked across our multiple investments, we weren't quite sure what social change they had actually

accomplished. Once we realized that we did not know exactly what impact we were having, we knew we had to change."

In response, Morris led the foundation through a process of learning and evaluation. Research and analysis from the UNC system informed the foundation's realignment. The outcome? While there are many critical issues facing the communities in which the foundation invests, the foundation elected to narrow its focus to an area of great importance: K-12 public education. After three years of studying the field and learning from grantees and experts, the foundation was compelled by evidence that providing young people with quality teachers and a solid base of achievement by the third grade impacts their life-long success. Thus, the foundation committed to focus its grantmaking on lasting improvements in these two critical areas.

In the examination process, "We looked at research and took a lot of time to talk with different thought leaders in the field. Of course that brings

us to Chapel Hill, to UNC General Administration (UNC GA), and we're very keen on the research that they're doing on the field of teaching."

The UNC Educator Quality Dashboard provides a robust source of information and research with easy access. In May of 2015, UNC GA launched the Dashboard as a way to extend research on the teacher preparation to others. At the foundation, Morris has used the Dashboard to better understand the state of teacher preparation and assess potential grant endeavors: "The UNC Educator Quality Dashboard is a game changer. It's like none other in the nation. For the first time, we have information that we can look at that compares apples to apples."

Cutting edge research and data collection into the teaching profession has been taking place for years across schools of education, school districts, and other state agencies. Working together, the SAS Institute, UNC's fifteen educator preparation programs, and the UNC system were able to bring it together in a public,



KATIE B. MORRIS

*Chair, Board of Directors
Belk Foundation*

interactive, transparent web-based tool. In addition to benefitting organizations like the foundation, Morris has heard from deans of education how valuable the Dashboard has been for their faculty. “I was with a dean of a school of education recently. She created a scavenger hunt through the data to help faculty use and understand the Dashboard. One of the things that really caught their eye was that their graduates said they didn’t feel well prepared to teach English Learners. They all kind of had an ‘ah-ha’ moment there. Right on the spot, they brainstormed a strategy to fix the problem. [Data] helps us ask the important questions.”

At the foundation, Morris and the board have been learning about different strategies to attract, develop and retain teachers. They are seeing innovative work firsthand in classrooms. “We’re looking at real-time coaching, mentoring, and adaptive change. I was in some schools where I was just bowled over. They were doing real-time coaching right there in the classroom. A teacher was changing her methods as the coach helped her understand how she might approach a child differently and better. It’s pretty amazing. It’s just like what top companies are doing.”

The foundation is committed to supporting and sharing best practices and models for developing, supporting and retaining quality teachers in the profession. They look to the UNC system for research in action. The UNC system continues to be North Carolina’s primary source of new teachers, helping fill the State’s need for over 10,000 new teachers each year. These teachers are entering a profession under pressure from declining relative wages, a shifting policy landscape, and a curriculum in flux. But Morris and the foundation see these pressures as opportunities for progress, “With the new federal legislation ESSA, we’re going to see innovation, and we’re all going to be adapting and changing as we go. The emphasis that the UNC system is putting on doing research on what works, being transparent and sharing it, matters for the whole state.”

At the NC New Teachers Support Program, a partnership between UNC GA, educator preparation programs, and school districts, instructional coaches are paired with first-, second-, or third-year teachers in high-need schools to provide individualized classroom coaching and professional development. The program has registered meaningful gains in

teacher retention and student performance. As Morris observes, “the first few years of teaching are very difficult. Often, not what people expect, especially if they haven’t spent much time in a classroom actually applying what they’ve learned

to the experience. That support, mentoring, and coaching makes a world of difference.”

Bolstered by research, the foundation is committed to asking good questions and

advocating for quality public education. As Morris describes, “If it hadn’t been for this research and review, we might have continued to fund all kinds of different things, not really knowing our impact.” The focus on teachers as the most important in-school factor for students achievement, Morris says, has helped the foundation realize “just how large the opportunity is for impact.” The teaching profession – and future generations of students – can only benefit from the foundation’s ongoing commitment to its mission.



DANIEL GITTERMAN

*Thomas Willis Lambeth Distinguished Chair
Public Policy*

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Daniel Gitterman is the Thomas Willis Lambeth Distinguished Chair in Public Policy at UNC-Chapel Hill. His book *Boosting Paychecks* examines the role of federal income tax and minimum wage in supporting low income working families in the U.S. He is also co-author of *A Way Forward: Building a Globally Competitive South*, *Moving Beyond Plato vs. the Plumber: Individual Education and Career Passways for All* and “Can ‘Some College’ Help Reduce Future Earnings Inequality?”

Meet North Carolina's Need for a Supply of High Quality Educators

Strengthen educator recruitment and selection

UNC'S EDUCATOR Quality Research reveals that more than one-third of the teachers in North Carolina classrooms received their initial preparation through UNC campuses, making UNC the largest provider of teachers in the state. However, since 2010, average enrollment in UNC teacher preparation programs has declined more than 30 percent, including a 12 percent decline in 2014 and 3.4 percent decline in 2015. These declines in enrollment severely impact the pipeline of high quality teachers prepared by UNC campuses to North Carolina classrooms.

In an effort to reverse this trend, the Academic and University Programs Division has worked in collaboration with the fifteen UNC educator preparation programs to strengthen recruitment and selection of candidates.

- Each UNC teacher preparation program developed five-year teacher productivity goals and campus-based comprehensive recruitment plans that reflect current market research and regional school district needs to ensure the system and campuses

are individually and collectively responding to the state's need for high quality teachers and school leaders. Recruitment plans are linked to projections of enrollment growth and focused on increasing the supply of new, initially licensed teachers. All plans place an emphasis on North Carolina's highest need licensure areas – science, mathematics, special education, and middle grades.

- The UNC Academic and University Programs Division, in partnership with UNC campus recruiters, launched the Teach Now: North Carolina website, teachnow.northcarolina.edu. Teach Now: North Carolina promotes the teaching profession and UNC's educator preparation programs. Key features of the website include video clips of North Carolina teachers and UNC teacher education students sharing why they teach, news and information on recruitment activities, an interactive feature that guides visitors through their own path to a teaching license, and information about North Carolina, our PK-12 schools, and the UNC Schools of Education.



The **NC INSPIRE** program has supported

71

**FELLOWS PLACED IN
MATH, SCIENCE, AND
SPECIAL EDUCATION
CLASSROOMS IN**

22

**HIGH-NEED
SCHOOL DISTRICTS
ACROSS NORTH
CAROLINA**

North Carolina's sources of teachers

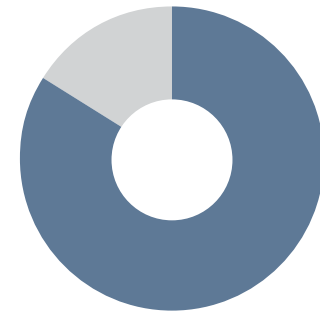
UNC SYSTEM-PREPARED teachers represent **37%** of NC's teaching workforce, **36,040** teachers.

OUT-OF-STATE-PREPARED teachers represent **29%** of NC's teaching workforce, **27,482** teachers.

ALTERNATIVE ENTRY teachers represent **15%** of NC's teaching workforce, **14,404** teachers.

NC PRIVATE INSTITUTION-PREPARED teachers represent **13%** of NC's teaching workforce, **12,100** teachers.

TEACH FOR AMERICA corps members represent **.5%** of NC's teaching workforce, **561** teachers.



UNC System, Out-of-State, and Alternative Entry represents over **80%** of NC's teaching workforce.

- The UNC Academic and University Programs Division assists UNC educator preparation programs in their efforts to recruit, prepare, and support educators in North Carolina, through efforts such as NC INSPIRE. The North Carolina Innovative Statewide Program to Improve the Recruitment of Educators (NC INSPIRE) is a statewide alternative entry teacher recruitment and preparation program funded by a Transition-to-Teaching grant from the US Department of Education.

In partnership with the NC New Teacher Support Program, NC INSPIRE recruits, prepares, and supports highly-qualified recent college graduates and mid-career professionals who did not major in education but have decided to pursue a career in teaching. NC INSPIRE Fellows serve as lateral entry teachers in high-need schools as they pursue their teaching license and complete a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) at **Western Carolina University** or the **University of North Carolina at**

Charlotte. Fellows receive tuition assistance of up to \$4,200 to cover the cost of their graduate coursework. The program has partnerships with thirty-four North Carolina school districts to place Fellows in math, science, special education, and middle grades language arts and social studies teaching positions. As a part of their participation in NC INSPIRE, each Fellow also receives in-classroom instructional coaching and professional development support through the NC New Teacher Support Program.

UNC educator preparation programs are the largest, most stable, and most effective source of teachers for NC.

UNC's **15** educator preparation programs prepare approximately **4,100** new teachers each year.

37% of NC's teaching workforce
86% remain in teaching at **3 YEARS**

ONE-THIRD are prepared in high-need licensure areas of **MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, MIDDLE GRADES, and SPECIAL EDUCATION, ONE-THIRD** in **ELEMENTARY EDUCATION,** and **ONE-THIRD ALL OTHER** licensure areas.



PROFILE: Yolonda Black, Student Teacher, North Carolina Central University



YOLONDA BLACK

Senior

*Elementary Education, Concentration in Literacy
North Carolina Central University*

The Natural: Finding a Teaching Identity

YOLONDA BLACK knew from an early age that she wanted to teach; she just didn't know exactly what that meant.

Yolonda grew up in Reidsville, North Carolina, where she first caught the teaching bug while watching her mother teach students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 (she is still teaching today). Says Yolonda, "I always wanted to be a teacher because of the positive influence [I saw my mother] have on her students." Yolonda knew that teaching was a lot of work for her mother, but she also saw how passionate her mother was about her job and decided, "I want to try that, too." Not wanting to wait until she was old enough to take on teaching as a profession, as a child Yolonda would line up her stuffed bears in her bedroom and teach them.

But entering the profession was not only about following in her mother's footsteps. Equally as

influential for Yolonda was the opportunity she knew teaching could provide for her to change the life direction of her students. Watching members of her own family struggle with education and finding success early in life providing advice to her peers helped her decide she wanted to be in a position to make school a better experience for as many children as possible.

And thus a teacher was born.

"I'm really good at teaching, I'm a natural at it," she says with pride, but she also understood from the beginning that natural talent alone would not be enough. "As an 18-year-old, I had the vision, but I had to shape it, to mold it. I had to go through college to really understand what that meant. My general purpose was to become a teacher, but . . . [it is] my [student teaching] experience that has helped me to shape who I am as a teacher and what I want to do."

A big part of that shaping has come at the hands of her instructors and mentors in the teacher

preparation program at **North Carolina Central University**. Yolonda has been particularly thankful for the feedback she gets from her clinical supervisor, who has watched her grow throughout her final student teaching semester and who confirmed for her, after a recent in-class observation, that she is, indeed, a natural. The support has come from her colleagues as well. One of the areas in which she has grown as a result of their support is in her ability to translate the advice she gets from other teachers into something that fits her personal style and that she can use in her own classroom. During one particularly challenging mathematics unit, she kept asking herself, “How can I break this down for them so that they can get it?” So I asked other teachers and realized that I could give my students multiple strategies to choose from, and that worked.” She has paid back their investment in her with interest. Her cooperating teacher and many other teachers in her school all have come to recognize the value Yolonda brings to their school.

After sharing resources from one recent successful unit, the entire team of first grade teachers at her school liked the projects she developed for her class so much they decided to use them, too. “That really helped me get through” some harder aspects

of the student teaching experience, she confides. “Sometimes, the teachers even come in and ask me questions, [and that is] really rewarding.”

It all came together for her a few weeks into her final clinical experience when, for the first time, she had the entire class to herself for a full day. “I realized that day that I was really finally and fully myself as a teacher. I was really into it, and I was excited, because it was my classroom. I haven’t always had a chance to really project, to really be me out there, [but that day] was one of the best days I have had as a student teacher, and I felt afterwards that, when I have my own classroom, it will be an even better experience.” Yolonda knew lightbulbs were going on for her students that day when she saw them get really excited about learning. “I really love the kids, and they were excited to work for me. It’s a rewarding experience to see a child grow.” Realizations like that are what help a teacher make the transition from aspiring novice to young professional.

Despite her enthusiasm and innate ability, not everything about teaching has come naturally for Yolonda, but she knows that the struggles are as important as the successes. She is quick to point out that student teaching is “hard because you

have to adjust to being in the real world . . . getting used to getting up early and completing an 8-to-5 work day,” but she contends that the experience has been well worth the adjustments she has had to make. In the beginning, “I was just so tired to the point where it felt like I couldn’t have a life outside of teaching, but I’m used to it now.” She also has a greater appreciation for all of the behind-the-scenes aspects of teaching that were not as evident to an aspiring grade-school girl whose first stuffed-bear “pupils” were perfectly passive receptacles. “You have to deal with a lot of outside issues [like student discipline and parents], and you also have to teach every subject every day in an elementary school. Handling all of that is, like, wow!” Dealing with student discipline can be the most frustrating for Yolonda, but she knows it is an important part of the teaching territory to which she will continue to adjust. “It drives me crazy sometimes. . . . I just wish I could go in there and teach, but that’s not teaching. That’s not reality.” Finally, she notes that it has been hard at times as a student teacher to establish a teaching identity under the shadow of an accomplished cooperating teacher. In the end, though, she acknowledges that all of these challenges are just part of her growth: “I think the experiences will make me better when I have my own classroom.”

These and other challenges notwithstanding, Yolonda knows she made the right career choice, and her preparation has been a key ingredient in helping her find her teaching identity: “It has helped me realize what I really want to do.” As a result of her student teaching experience, Yolonda also now knows that part of her identity and purpose is much broader than just what she can do in a single classroom. “I know that I’m good at teaching, but I also know that I really want to do something that makes a difference in a school system. [This experience] really helped me shape my perspective and my purpose.” Her future? Teaching, yes, but also graduate school to pursue a master’s degree (and beyond?) in education—preferably concurrently, if she can work out the logistics, so that she delays neither continuing her own education nor getting into her own classroom.

As a result of her preparation, Yolonda does not perceive any limits. “I’m really good at being in front of people and talking . . . [and] breaking down information for people to help them understand it. I have a passion: I want [my students] to get [whatever I am teaching], so I ask myself, ‘What can I do to help them get it?’ I’m also very creative . . .

very hands-on, and I like to incorporate technology. When the students walk in my classroom, I want them to be surprised, to not know what they are going to do that day and to be excited about it. That’s how I liked it when I was a student.” She also wants to take what she has learned and use it to help shape educational opportunities for other minority students, to keep them from having the same experiences as some of her peers who succumbed to the challenges of school. She believes in the original mission of historically black colleges and universities of providing opportunities for students who would not otherwise have them, and she wants to help her students learn how to create the opportunities she has created for herself. “I don’t like to say I’m smart—I hate that word—I say I’m determined,” and that is the message she hopes to give to her students to motivate them to succeed. She intends to be there for her students long after they have left her classroom: “I don’t help people and then let them go; I keep checking on them to make sure they are still doing well.”

And that is the difference between just knowing naturally how to teach and embracing one’s personal teaching identity.

TRIP STALLINGS

*Director of Policy Research
The William and Ida Friday Institute
for Educational Innovation
College of Education
North Carolina State University*

As Director of Policy Research at the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, Dr. Stallings managed the organization’s involvement in the evaluation of North Carolina’s implementation of its federal Race to the Top (RtT) grant. Currently, he leads the Policy and Funding Team that is part of the Friday Institute’s North Carolina Digital Learning Plan development process. In addition, he is developing the Friday Institute’s Education Policy Research Team (EdPoRT) that provides timely information about policy-relevant education research to North Carolina policymakers and other stakeholders.

Before arriving at the Friday Institute, he worked as an education policy analyst for several North Carolina-based organizations and taught at the middle school level for several years, followed by a stint in teacher education. He has completed graduate work in public policy (MPP, Duke, 2002) and education policy and politics (Ph.D., UNC-CH, 2010).

Meet North Carolina's Need for a Supply of High Quality Educators

Provide high quality support for early-career teachers

IN ITS STRATEGIC PLAN and recommendations, the UNC Board of Governors affirmed the importance of high quality support for early-career teachers and expanding statewide the NC New Teacher Support Program (NC NTSP).

The NC NTSP is a comprehensive induction program offering a research-based curriculum and support services designed to increase teacher effectiveness, enhance instructional skills, and reduce attrition among beginning teachers. The NC NTSP provides teachers in their first three years: 1. Institute “boot camps”, 2. intensive, individualized in-classroom coaching, and 3. aligned professional development opportunities.

The NC NTSP is coordinated by the UNC Academic and University Program Division and delivered through partnerships between the state’s public universities and PK-12 public schools and school districts. Teachers are served by experienced Instructional Coaches who understand their local community, the needs of beginning teachers, and quality instructional practice. The program works in partnership with **East Carolina University, North Carolina State University, University of North Carolina General Administration, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of North Carolina at Charlotte,** and **Western Carolina University.**

The **NATIONAL TEACHER SHORTAGE** is often attributed to insufficient production of teachers; data indicate these shortages are more likely attributable to **DIFFICULTIES WITH TEACHER RETENTION.**

Beyond monetary costs, **HIGH TURNOVER** leads to losses in teacher quality, school stability, and student achievement. Reducing turnover costs much less. It makes good sense to **INVEST IN SUPPORT** for beginning teachers.

The NC NTSP has had early success in reducing North Carolina's teacher quality gaps by focusing on retaining teachers in high-need schools and ensuring that the teachers who remain produce student achievement gains.

- 81 percent of students with teachers served by the NC NTSP met expected growth in mathematics and reading, compared to 77 percent not served by the NC NTSP.
- 84 percent of teachers served by the NC NTSP returned to teaching in North Carolina, compared to 79 percent not served by the NC NTSP.
- Teachers participating in the NC NTSP exhibited significant improvement in their instructional skills.
- Teachers served by the NC NTSP were significantly more positive about the quality of their coaching and professional development as compared to similar services provided by other entities.

There are currently 620 teachers participating in the NC NTSP, representing 123 schools and 37 school districts.

NC NTSP: % of BEGINNING TEACHERS who **RETURNED TO TEACHING** in North Carolina

84%

NC NTSP

79%

SIMILAR SCHOOLS

NC NTSP: % of BEGINNING TEACHERS who **MET EXPECTED GROWTH** in K-8 reading and mathematics

81%

NC NTSP

77%

SIMILAR SCHOOLS

Additional information on the NC New Teacher Support Program is available at ncntsp.northcarolina.edu

The NC NTSP offers a cost-effective solution to North Carolina's teacher attrition crisis. Each year, the state spends approximately \$12,900 per teacher, for a total of \$84.5 million, to recruit, support, and replace classroom teachers. Participating NC NTSP schools and districts provide financial support of \$1,900 per

participating beginning teacher for all program services and evaluation. This shared cost is derived by calculating all costs to operate the NC NTSP and deducting contributions received to support the NC NTSP from the State of North Carolina, the University of North Carolina, NC NTSP partners, and charitable foundations.



7% of teachers in NC are in their **1ST YEAR** - a higher percentage than any other year of experience and a teacher's least effective year.

Approximately **25%** of NC's teachers are in their first **5 YEARS** of experience.

Since 2010, UNC education enrollments at the undergraduate and graduate levels have declined by about **30%**. From fall 2014 to 2015, enrollments declined **3.4%**.

PROFILE: Jeff Vamvakias, Second-Year Teacher, Jackson County Public Schools

THE SIGNS are everywhere. They aren't immediately apparent at first, but once you see the first one, the others suddenly come into focus, scattered around the classroom.

There are the ones taped to the classroom door:

"Stay awesome."

"Science rocks"

There are two on the teacher's desk:

"Mr. V is the best teacher ever in history."

"Mr. Vamvakias is the #1 best teacher."

There's the random one on the wall that's been added to over time:

"You're amazing and the best."

"Best teacher ever!!!"

"Thank you for teaching us."

And there's even one scribbled in red marker in between the daily class schedule on the white board:

"Mr. V is the best science teacher ever."

Jeff Vamvakias, or "Mr. V" as he is affectionately called by his students, is a second-year middle school science teacher at Cullowhee Valley School in the Jackson County Public Schools.

After spending just a few minutes in Mr. V's classroom, it's easy to understand why his students admire him. He brings to the class an enthusiasm that literally has him leaping from desk to desk, joking with students, handing out fist bumps for correct answers, and at one point jokingly calling his class to attention with a very serious demeanor.

"Everyone, let me have your attention. This is a serious matter," says Vamvakias with deadpan humor to a class of energized middle schoolers who become suddenly still.

"If your wife makes a homemade lemon meringue pie and sends it with you to school, you should never eat it all before lunch," says Vamvakias, clearly speaking from experience.



JEFF VAMVAKIAS

*Second-Year Teacher, Grade 8 Science
Cullowhee Valley School, Jackson County Schools
Western Carolina University Region
NC INSPIRE/NC New Teacher Support Program*

The class relaxes and laughs, and Mr. V goes on to explain in scientific detail how the consumption of too much sugar can actually increase appetite.

A participant in the NC New Teacher Support Program (NC NTSP), Vamvakias' origin story, the path that brought him to Cullowhee Valley School and into the lives of the students in his class, is bookworthy, to say the least. He is a former marine. A former mountain climbing guide. A yoga teacher.

He created and taught a model environmental outdoor education program for deaf students in Texas. He has worked with farmers in Nicaragua. And he has pretty much surfed all the best spots around the world.

And that is only part of the story.

But his real life passion?

"Ever since I was a kid, I always wanted to be a public school teacher. It's always been my dream," says Vamvakias.

Though he was the first person in his family to go to college, had a master's degree in one discipline,

graduate work in another, and was currently pursuing a third, there was one problem.

"I never thought I was smart enough to do it," says Vamvakias.

The NC NTSP makes it possible for people like Vamvakias to pursue their dream of teaching by offering extra layers of support for teachers in their first three years of teaching, through individualized coaching and statewide convenings.

It gives teachers like Vamvakias the support they need to make the leap into teaching and nurtures them through the start of their new careers, the critical period when a teacher is most likely to leave the profession.

Participants in the program range from traditional education majors who just graduated with their degree to alternative entry teachers in their first year. The program also works in partnership with NC INSPIRE teachers who have had another career and are simultaneously pursuing a Master's in Education and teaching at the same time.

Tierney Fairchild is Vamvakias' Instructional Coach, and it's clear the two have a connection

and a mutual respect. Fairchild, like the other Coaches in the NC NTSP, is part sounding board, part counselor, part fixer. Her work covers a broad spectrum of issues and concerns weighing on the shoulders of new teachers.

"We do everything from giving a listening ear to pulling resources to help them enhance their curriculum. We lead professional development throughout the state to help them grow in their journey as teachers," says Fairchild, who covers the Buncombe, Jackson, and Haywood County Schools as part of the NC NTSP and works directly with 28 other new teachers in addition to Vamvakias. "We're a phone call away. If they've had a bad conference with a parent and they need some encouragement and some strategies to improve, we are there for them." "We are very flexible," says Fairchild with a laugh.

And with Vamvakias, sometimes Fairchild's support can take on a very literal meaning.

At one point in the day, Mr. V climbed onto a chair to make an announcement. When that didn't get the full attention of the class, he stepped up onto a nearby desktop.

After making his announcement, Mr. V rewards the class' attentiveness by telling them he is going to leap from one desk to another.

Fairchild happens to be in the class, and a slight look of concern flashes across her face. She reaches to brace the desk Vamvakias is aiming for. It's clear it's not the first time she's done this.

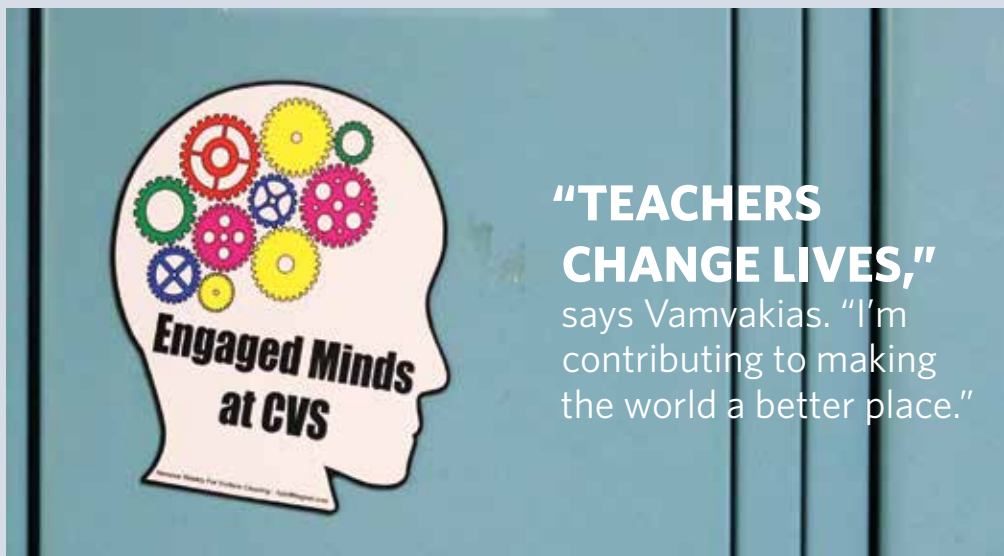
But there's no need. With a mountain climber's agility, Mr. V lands safely and soundly, throwing up his arms in victory as the class cheers.

"Tierney is amazing," says Vamvakias about his NC NTSP coach. "She helps me with everything." "She has such a wonderful heart," says Vamvakias. "She is just amazing and will bend over backwards to help me. She has made a huge difference." Vamvakias describes Fairchild as his "go-to for everything."

"Anything I need, she's there." says Vamvakias.

It's clear Vamvakias loves being a teacher.

"Teachers change lives," says Vamvakias. "I'm contributing to making the world a better place."



But that doesn't mean it's an easy job, and that's where programs like the NC NTSP help beginning teachers weather the first few years of acclimating to the classroom. "Is it difficult being a teacher? Absolutely," says Vamvakias.

What keeps him up at night? At first, it was the usual day-to-day stressors of the profession: grading papers, curriculum planning, End-of-Grade tests, on and on.

**"TEACHERS
CHANGE LIVES,"**
says Vamvakias. "I'm
contributing to making
the world a better place."

But ultimately the thing that worries him most is how to best connect with students in his classroom.

"How do I get through to them and help them learn?" says Vamvakias. "What am I doing wrong? Because it's never their fault, right? It's never a student's fault that they're not learning. It's always my fault. What am I not doing to reach that kid?"

“It’s my job to help that kid to see that this matters to that kid. This science matters to this kid’s life. That’s what keeps me awake.”

Vamvakias’ pedagogical style is hands-on. He wants his students to do science, not just study it.

He has a lab project with Trout Unlimited that has his students raising trout in the classroom to be released back into the wild. He is working with **Western Carolina University** professors to have his students collect field data that will be used in a research publication. Another **Western Carolina University** professor is helping the students do an energy audit of the school. And yet another is helping the students do fieldwork on frogs. He Skypes in experts from around the world to interact with his students.

“My goal is to build bridges between my kids and **Western Carolina University** because a lot of these kids – many of them – come from generational poverty; it’s just a fact.” says Vamvakias. “A university is something that is not familiar to them. I want to change that.”

For Vamvakias, there have been many high points. Particularly with the students who lag behind their peers, who are below grade level in reading comprehension and writing skills.

The moments when those students show up in class with detailed study notes or a well-written assignment, those are high points.

And when that happens, he takes the time to pick up the phone and share those moments with the students’ parents, parents who may typically get calls from the school for all the wrong reasons.

“I’ve had parents start crying,” says Vamvakias. “They say, ‘You are the first teacher to call and say good things about my kid,’ and I say, ‘I only have good things to say about your kid.’”

“And it’s true,” Vamvakias continues. “I’ve seen these kids do – over and over – amazing things.”

“There have been so many moments where I email my principal and say, ‘You will not believe this, this is amazing...’

“My kids frequently do things that almost bring tears to my eyes.” Vamvakias says and then pauses, and with a slight grin adds, “and maybe sometimes do.”

TODD BRANTLEY
*Author and Chief Operating Officer
EducationNC*

Todd Brantley grew up and attended public schools in Randolph County, North Carolina. Before joining EducationNC, he worked as the associate communications director at MDC providing strategic communications support. He shares an understanding of and vision for the educational institutions in North Carolina: “As a product of this state’s systems of public education, from secondary, to the community college system, to our public postsecondary system, I have seen firsthand how important these institutions are for the social and economic well-being of this state and its citizens. Regardless of whether you are a new resident or a native, a parent or not, we all benefit from the fruits of our current system of public learning, and the hard work and foresight of those who came before us who understood that, regardless of political affiliation, North Carolina needed to be a national leader in access to quality education for everyone.”

Improve Educator Preparation

Adopt valid and reliable research-based performance assessments

THE ACADEMIC and University Programs Division is facilitating the system-wide adoption of the ed Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA).

edTPA is a rigorously developed and widely accepted tool used for performance assessment to inform teacher candidates and preparation programs. edTPA is considered a viable measure to evaluate performance, support candidate learning, and generate program improvements. The assessment was developed by the Standard Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) in partnership with the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE). edTPA is an authentic measure that

addresses planning, instruction, assessment, academic language, and analysis of teaching to examine the impact of a teacher candidate's performance on their student's learning. To complete the edTPA, candidates submit a portfolio that includes several artifacts of teaching, such as unedited video clips of their instruction, lesson plans, assignments, teaching tools, and student work samples.

Seven UNC institutions volunteered to participate in a collaborative pilot to explore the potential benefits and applications of the edTPA. These institutions are in various stages of edTPA adoption.

OVER 100 TEACHER CANDIDATES

from North Carolina participated in the spring 2012 field test of the edTPA.

North Carolina has over

FIVE YEARS

of experience with the
implementation of edTPA.



edTPA PILOT PARTICIPANTS

East Carolina University
North Carolina State University
University of North Carolina at Asheville
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Western Carolina University
Winston-Salem State University

As of 2014, **NINETY-NINE FACULTY MEMBERS** and **296 PK-12 TEACHERS** in NC have been hired as trained edTPA scorers. In addition, **188 FACULTY MEMBERS** in NC are members of the edTPA online community and have access to the resource library.

During the multi-year pilot, the Academic and University Programs Division collaborated with SCALE and participating campuses to host orientations, professional development activities, and symposiums to support implementation. In addition, resources have been provided to support attendance at regional and national edTPA conferences and to expand the pool of trained scorers and consultants.

The edTPA pilot helped participating institutions: 1. generate accurate and useful

feedback to guide improvement of student teachers' performance over time; 2. accurately predict their later on-the-job performance, as measured by academic, value-added measures; 3. provide a basis for faculty to make improvements in teacher education programs; and 4. contribute to decisions on the preparation, development, and recommendation of student teachers for licensure.

As UNC moves toward system-wide adoption, the Academic and University Programs Division will

support educator preparation program leaders as they establish campus edTPA implementation goals and timelines. The Division will continue to serve as a resource for collaboration and research addressing the needs of all programs in accomplishing their goals.

PROFILE: Diana B. Lys, School of Education, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

TEACHERS ARE nation builders! And they build a nation – our nation – one student, one classroom, and, collectively, one school at a time. Beyond strong families, there is hardly anything more important to the long-term well-being of our communities, our state, and our nation than assuring we have competent, caring, and qualified teachers in our schools. But how are those teachers prepared? And how do we know they are effectively prepared to teach before they are actually licensed to practice in our public schools?

Dr. Diana B. Lys, recently named the Assistant Dean for Program Assessment, Accreditation, and Teacher Preparation in the School of Education at the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**, has an important role in helping to improve the preparation of teachers at the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** and beyond. She is helping to expand the implementation of a new empirically rigorous way to assess a teacher candidate's ability to

engage in successful teaching practices prior to being recommended for a license to teach using a performance assessment tool called edTPA. Without valid and reliable assessments, teacher preparation programs have little documentation for prospective employers and other stakeholders about their success in preparing strong beginning teachers. Educators and researchers at Stanford University developed edTPA, an assessment “for the profession by the profession.” Over the past several years, Dr. Lys has developed a deep understanding of the tool and the effective implementation of edTPA in teacher preparation programs.

As Dr. Lys explains, “Accountability in higher education is sharpening its focus on teacher preparation programs and their graduates. No longer can teacher preparation programs claim their graduates are well prepared; they must also demonstrate that their graduates can positively impact PK-12 student achievement. The research literature linking PK-12 students' performance and teacher characteristics is growing as more states



DIANA B. LYS

*Assistant Dean of Program Assessment, Accreditation and Teacher Preparation
School of Education, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

connect PK-12 student performance to teacher evaluations and teacher preparation program. There is little argument among educational researchers that a teacher's preparation and qualifications are the most predictive indicator of student achievement. Until recently, there was no standardized assessment that could be used to measure a teacher candidate's readiness to become a 'teacher of record.' Individual states determine the criteria for teacher licensure. In many states, teacher candidates are required to pass one or more tests to prove their knowledge of basic skills, subject matter, and professional practice. A majority are 'paper and pencil' tests that lack a performance component. In 2001, there were more than 600 aforementioned teacher tests in use."

Prior to joining the faculty of UNC-CH, Dr. Lys was a faculty member at **East Carolina University** serving for five years as the Director of Assessment and Accreditation in the College of Education. As Director, Dr. Lys played a pivotal role in the implementation of the edTPA in all initial teacher preparation programs at **East Carolina University**. Between 2010 and 2015, edTPA implementation grew to

include seventeen licensure areas in five colleges across **East Carolina University's** campus. Dr. Lys assisted in engaging over 100 faculty members and assessing over 700 new teacher graduates annually.

Three tasks are address by edTPA portfolios – planning, instruction, and assessment. A key component of edTPA assessments are the video clips of classroom teaching in authentic classrooms. Thus, one of the critical lessons Dr. Lys learned and shared from the scale-up and implementation of edTPA at **East Carolina University** was the need for close coordination, collaboration, and partnership among faculty and PK-12 partners to facilitate video recording. Aligning university and PK-12 faculty to the goals for teacher candidates is essential to the success of edTPA implementation. PK-12 teachers were especially helpful in smoothing implementation issues and supporting improved clinical practice for teacher candidates.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, East Carolina University, and Winston-Salem State University were among the initial institutions to pilot the use of edTPA in North

Carolina. Three other institutions, **North Carolina State University, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Western Carolina University** are now implementing edTPA. As Dr. Lys noted, "It is a process not to be rushed, nor mandated from the top down. It is essential for faculty to understand and support the use of edTPA, since it will replace 'home-grown' assessments, it will set a clear bar for teacher candidates, and it requires even closer working relationships with PK-12 partners, as mentioned earlier."

Dr. Lys has been on the forefront of helping others across the state and nation to better understand both the challenges and opportunities in full implementation of edTPA. The "lessons learned" at **East Carolina University** and **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** have been shared with colleagues in formal venues and informal conversations. In a 2015 conference in Savannah, Georgia, one of **East Carolina University's** Elementary Education graduates, Kelly McLees, stole the day when she exclaimed that she tires of hearing the adage, "Those who can do; those who can't teach!" Kelly noted, "Anyone who has successfully

completed edTPA has demonstrated a high level of rigor. Besides, if edTPA was easy, would I really want to be a teacher?”

Dr. Lys is ideal for this work. She began her career in education as a Middle School Science and Social Studies teacher in rural North Carolina. After 8 years in the field she joined the faculty in the College of Education at **East Carolina University** as a clinical coordinator, making field placements, supervising interns, and collaborating with clinical teachers. She credits these experiences with grounding her approach to working with faculty and PK-12 partners to continuously improve teacher preparation.

Dr. Lys completed her Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degrees at the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**. While her new position is a homecoming of sorts, she is most excited about the opportunity to continue to serve the students and teachers of North Carolina in her new role.

CHARLES R. COBLE

*Co-founding Partner, Teacher Preparation Analytics
Former Vice President for Policy Studies and
Programs, Education Commission
of the States
Former Vice President, University-School Programs,
University of North Carolina
Professor and Dean Emeritus, East Carolina University*

As Former Vice President of the University-School Programs Division of the University of North Carolina, Dr. Charles R. Coble led the development of University-School Teacher Education Partnerships in all UNC teacher preparation institutions and organized the University of North Carolina Center for School Leadership Development, a confederation of several high quality programs for the initial and continuing preparation of teachers and administrators. Over his career, Dr. Coble has directed multiple programs, grants, and research efforts to inform and improve educator preparation.

Improve Educator Preparation

Select and prepare high quality school leaders

IT IS CRUCIAL for North Carolina to select and prepare high quality leaders for our PK-12 students and provide the regular support, development, and evaluation of school leaders that enables them to establish and maintain student success. Created in 1993 by the North Carolina General Assembly, the NC Principal Fellows Program, coordinated by the UNC Academic and University Programs Division, is a well-established source of high quality school leaders for North Carolina's schools.

The NC Principal Fellows Program provides a competitive, merit-based scholarship loan to individuals of exceptional academic ability who have teaching or relevant experience and who desire to earn a Master's Degree in School Administration (MSA) and to serve as principals in North Carolina public schools. Fellows are selected through a rigorous application and interview process overseen by the appointed governing Commission and the Director of the NC Principal Fellows.

The NC Principal Fellows Program is offered on eleven UNC campuses. Each Fellow completes one year of full-time academic study and a one-year full-

time internship in a North Carolina public school. Participating universities have an experienced campus coordinator who manages the program, coordinates activities for the Fellows, and supervises the internships. During the internship, Fellows work in a school under the direction and supervision of the principal, who serves as a coach and mentor.

In addition, the NC Principal Fellows Program Director coordinates a series of enrichment seminars to enhance Fellows' preparation as school leaders and to provide them the opportunity to build a professional support network.

In their first year, Fellows receive \$30,000 to assist them with tuition, books, and living expenses. In their second year, Fellows receive an amount equal to the salary of a first-year assistant principal as well as an educational stipend. Fellows are required to maintain employment as a principal or assistant principal in North Carolina for four years to repay their scholarship loan.

Over 1,300 NC Principal Fellows have completed the program.

UNC NC PRINCIPAL FELLOWS PROGRAM PARTNER INSTITUTIONS



NC Principal Fellows are an academically-competitive, reliable, and stable source of school leaders for North Carolina. NC Principal Fellows are **MORE LIKELY TO ENTER SCHOOL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS** as assistant principals and principals in North Carolina than other UNC MSA graduates.

NC Principal Fellows have significantly **HIGHER** principal licensure **EXAM SCORES** than other UNC Master of School Administration (MSA) graduates.

NC Principal Fellows are at least **AS EFFECTIVE** as other UNC MSA graduates and all other principals and have **MORE POSITIVE IMPACTS** on student absences, teacher retention, and school working conditions.



PROFILE: Steve Lassiter, Principal, Pactolus Elementary, Pitt County Schools

FIVE MINUTES with the 2015 Wells Fargo North Carolina Principal of the Year Steve Lassiter are enough to persuade you that he is a person of great energy and personal initiative. His brilliant smile and obvious articulate enthusiasm for education tell you that right away. But the story of Lassiter's path to Pitt County's Pactolus Elementary School and the pinnacle of the principalship is not one of personal initiative alone. It is also the story of a whole series of encounters with challenges in an ever-broadening series of arenas and with other educators who inspired, encouraged, and supported his development into an outstanding leader in the eyes of his colleagues across North Carolina.

Lassiter's experiences as a student growing up in his beautiful hometown of Edenton convinced him that he wanted to be a teacher like those who had given him "a great education." He would be the first in his family to pursue a college education, and initially he planned to attend the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro**, halfway across the state. But "at the last minute"

he realized that he wanted to stay closer to home and enrolled at **East Carolina University** instead.

Nor would that be the last course correction in his path to the principalship. After aspiring initially to teach mathematics, Lassiter turned toward elementary education, completed his coursework, served his internship in nearby Winterville, and turned his sights again to the west, expecting to pursue a master's degree at **Appalachian State University**. But his path branched again when his principal impressed him with the need for more African-American representation in the Pitt County Schools and asked him to stay, shifting from third to fifth grade. At that point, Lassiter's entrepreneurial spirit showed itself: "I told him I would stay and make the shift if he would hire my friend to teach fifth grade with me." An interview convinced the principal that Lassiter's friend would further strengthen his school's fifth grade offerings, and the two enjoyed a successful year, cooperating in preparing and revising lessons.

Lassiter's path took another turn after he realized that he really wanted to concentrate on a single subject. But this time it was language arts, not mathematics. That would require a move to the middle school, considered by many the most challenging level of students to manage and teach.

Inspiration, Recognition, and Encouragement

It was there that Lassiter was inspired by the example of Principal Delilah Jackson, "the model of what it meant to be a good leader. If I were ever to leave the classroom," he recalls, "this is somebody that I aspired to be. I'd like to have professional conversations with staff members like her. I'd like to conduct meetings like her."

Jackson, Lassiter said, was always open and honest in her conversations with staff. Perhaps unconsciously following Jackson's lead, he recalled quite openly a discussion with her that was painful for him personally. Many students in the school were children of "doctors, attorneys,

STEVE LASSITER

Principal

Pactolus Elementary, Pitt County Schools

NC Principal Fellow

2015 Wells Fargo North Carolina Principal of the Year



prominent state employees, and others in the upper echelon of Pitt County,” and Lassiter found it difficult to adjust to parents who wanted to be so intimately involved in the details of their children’s education. When the time came for his annual evaluation, Jackson told him that “everything is above standard except this one,” the standard concerning communication with parents and the community. Looking at him levelly, she said, “I want you to work on this standard. You are going to be phenomenal in this district one day, and I don’t want this one thing to throw you off course. If you work on this, I guarantee, you’ve got it.”

Seeming a little pained even now, Lassiter said, “As hurt and offended as I was, I could see later that she was right. And that’s what good leaders do. They’re able to see and tap into the hidden potential of the people they serve, and not be afraid to make a course correction and help you re-chart your course and do better. She snapped my ego and got me started in a new direction.”

Lassiter went on to recall other examples of Jackson’s leadership. For example, “She gave us tips on how to relate to our African-American students who came from a large project here in

the district. She’d say, ‘I’m not going to support putting students out on the streets. We’re going to support our students. We have to engage our students while they’re here because we may be the only adults that they have a positive interaction with throughout the day.’”

Not long after Jackson’s reputation took her to another level within the district, Principal Julie Carey, her replacement, came to him and said, “Steve, you need to think about becoming a principal.” Carey may have been responding not only to the quality of Lassiter’s teaching, but also to the leadership he had taken on at his own initiative within the school, showing his colleagues how to integrate technology into their instruction, serving as chair of the School Improvement Council, and writing grant proposals to bring in additional resources for the school.

The interest was there, but the money and time to pursue a Master’s in School Administration (MSA) were not. Fortunately, a colleague who had been through the legislatively funded NC Principal Fellows Program encouraged Lassiter to apply: “Steve, you really need to go after this fellowship. You’d definitely be good.” Although he was reluctant to give up the satisfactions

of teaching, “I could see that I could have a much broader impact. As a principal, I could help 25 or even 50 teachers in a building to perfect their craft instead of working in my one classroom.” The NC Principal Fellows Program provided tuition, preparation, and a stipend to allow Lassiter to devote his full attention to his preparation for the principalship.

Master of School Administration Program: Coursework

Lassiter’s successful application enabled him to enter the MSA program in **East Carolina University’s** Department of Educational Leadership. The MSA courses that Lassiter recalls as most helpful in preparing him to serve as a school leader all shared one characteristic: they were intensely practical and case-based, built around real challenges taken from the experience of principals in schools like those Lassiter would later lead. Dr. Hal Holloman’s course left a particularly strong imprint in Lassiter’s mind. “He used scenarios in nearly every class session. Here’s the situation. Now what do you say to this person? What is it you’re going to say when a teacher who has been absent for two weeks comes into your office and tells you she’s been having cancer

treatments? When a student comes into your office and discloses something really bad that has happened with a parent. What do you say about those things? I am just so grateful that I had that course with Dr. Holloman, because he really taught us what it means to be a servant leader – leading from the heart and making sure you are saying to your staff, ‘What can I do to help you?’ I still do that every day. I walk around the building and I ask, ‘What can I do for you?’”

Lassiter also recalls Dr. Kermit Buckner’s class in School Law, which piqued his interest in Human Resources and Personnel. As Holloman did, Buckner worked from specific challenging situations. “You would have to present your response and justify it based on reasoning from previous cases in the law.” Dr. David Siegel’s course made a lasting impression as well. “It was really intense. You would have to write responses to complex cases – eight or ten pages – making sure that your response was well-informed, with evidence to support the way you handled the situation. At one point, I wasn’t sure I was going to survive that course, but it turned out to be a really good experience.”

From Lassiter’s point of view, a key part of many of these case-based classes was the opportunity

to compare and discuss his responses to the cases with other students. For example, one case dealt with a problem arising from the African-American Students’ club at a high school. Some other students took offense at the exclusiveness of the club. Asked how he would handle this problem, one MSA student proposed to shut down the club altogether. Another objected that this response would also be discriminatory. A third said that to avoid discriminating, he would just shut down all student clubs. A fourth challenged that proposal, arguing it would deprive all of students of valuable extracurricular learning opportunities. “That led to a big argument, and some of it got pretty hot, but in the end, we all learned a lot from that. Our professors didn’t shy away from really touchy issues, because they’re part of what principals have to deal with on a daily basis.”

Master of School Administration Program: Internship

The second year of **East Carolina University’s** MSA program consisted primarily of an internship in which Lassiter served for four days a week as assistant principal of an elementary school in Pitt County. The fifth day was devoted to further

coursework. Experience as an assistant principal “... really prepared me to be a school leader. I had to see and deal with all of the different facets of leading a school – Individualized Educational Program meetings with parents, student discipline, curriculum and instruction, setting up and adjusting the master schedule, recruiting, guiding, and evaluating teachers, services for Academically or Intellectually Gifted students, special education services, books, office staff, the cafeteria, janitorial services... there are just so many things to pay attention to, not just the students in your classroom.”

Fortunately, Lassiter says, the leadership of the MSA program recognized that preparation for the principalship was not solely a matter of acquiring new knowledge and skills, but also making a fundamental transformation of mindset. “From day one, we were told, ‘Hey, guys, you’ve gotta take off that teacher hat. You’re no longer a teacher. You can’t just think about your 25 students. You’ve got to start thinking in terms of what’s best for 600 or 700 kids and 20 or 30 teachers. They were definitely right about that.”

During the internship, Lassiter received guidance not only from the principal with whom he was

servicing, but also from **East Carolina University** faculty advisors, who visited the school on a regular basis, and from faculty who taught the final coursework one day per week.

Enriched Opportunities for NC Principal Fellows to Learn

In addition to coursework at **East Carolina University**, the NC Principal Fellows Program provided a variety of enriching experiences organized by the program's central office in the Academic and University Programs Division of the University of North Carolina General Administration, including seminars on specific topics in school law or dealing with diverse students. Of particular value were opportunities to hear from and interact with practicing principals from across the state – especially principals who turned around low-performing schools at one level or another.

Now that he is a practicing principal himself Lassiter “gives back” by speaking to each incoming class of NC Principal Fellows, providing them with advice on how to take maximum advantage of the opportunities the Fellows Program and their MSA programs will provide them. And he helps to cap off the Fellows’ experience with a final address at graduation.



Current Challenges and Opportunities

As 2015 North Carolina Wells Fargo Principal of the Year, Steve Lassiter has a new set of challenges and opportunities: he serves as an advisor to the NC State Board of Education and Superintendent of Public Instruction June Atkinson. As he closes his term as NC Principal of the Year, Lassiter is committed to speaking for the needs and interests of schools and school leaders: “There is a piece missing when it comes to our General Assembly,” Lassiter says, “and that is hearing the voices of people who are in the trenches, doing the work of educating students every... single ... day. We address teachers but not principals, and those two just cannot be separated. So when we advocate for teachers to have raises, for example, we should also advocate for principals to have raises. That’s my campaign for the rest of the year, advocating for our school leaders, and helping people to realize that if you find a great school, the research will show there’s gotta be a great leader there.”

“And we have to restore respect for the profession. As someone who is in the trenches, I’m telling you, teachers are leaving because they don’t feel valued, and there are only so many

things I can do as a principal until my teachers decide that they’re leaving teaching to go on to the next thing in their lives. And we can’t pit our beginning teachers against our veteran teachers by giving raises only to the beginning teachers. Because if the veterans are not there, who’s going to mentor the new teachers? Who’s going to bring them along?”

Summing Up

As our interview with him drew to a close, Lassiter grew quiet for a moment, then offered a summation of what he stands for:

“I will always openly support my staff. I will never do anything to tear them down, publicly or privately. But privately, I am not afraid to have a conversation about things that we just need to correct. Often leaders are just so afraid of backlash – whether it is community backlash, board member backlash, or parents. But if you know that it’s right and it’s in the best interests of children, then you have to act anyway. Of course, the question is when is the time to actually do it. Timing is everything. And so I live by that every day. If there is something I need to address with a staff member, I take notes as to what I want to say, I’m thinking about it to make sure I’m

saying it in the right way, because it has to be said for children. I’ve heard it said that principals are always just one decision away from losing their job, because it could be that one decision and – you’re done. But if you can stay true to the mission and vision of your school and your decisions can be made and justified on that basis, you can’t be afraid to make those good decisions in the interests of your children.”

Not a bad credo for a Principal of the Year. Or any other principal.

CHARLES L. THOMPSON

Charles L. Thompson, now retired, served as Research Professor of Public Policy and Director of Teaching Quality Research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill from 2012 through 2014. Earlier he taught and held administrative positions in education at East Carolina University, Michigan State University, and Harvard Graduate School of Education. He holds a BA from UNC-Chapel Hill and an Ed.M. and Ed.D. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Provide More Students the Opportunity to Access and Succeed in College

Focus on evidence-based practices for PK-16 student access and success

THE UNC ACADEMIC and University Programs Division is committed to strengthening and aligning partnerships between the UNC system, colleges of education, and PK-12 schools to achieve meaningful and mutually beneficial collaboration that uses research and evidence-based practices aimed at PK-16 student success and program improvement.

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs North Carolina (GEAR UP NC) is among the programs leading these efforts. GEAR UP NC is a competitive grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education by providing states and local community-education partnership grants to offer support services to high-need middle and high schools.

The United States Department of Labor estimates that 90 percent of new high-growth, high-wage jobs will require some post-secondary education. Today, many jobs once held by

individuals who had attained only a high school diploma are being automated or going overseas, leaving Americans without some post-secondary education with increasingly diminished options to support themselves and their families. This is certainly the case in North Carolina as the traditional industries of tobacco, textiles, and furniture manufacturing have moved out of state. As education beyond high school becomes the new norm, the work of GEAR UP NC becomes increasingly more important to North Carolina's students and their future.

Since 2012, UNC has operated GEAR UP NC in partnership with eleven rural school districts across the state. The program serves high-need middle and high schools, in which at least 50 percent of students qualify for free and reduced meals. To date, GEAR UP NC has provided critical early college awareness and support activities, including tutoring, mentoring, academic preparation, and financial education to improve access to higher education for more than 20,000 low-income, minority and disadvantaged first-generation students and their families.

GEAR UP NC builds cooperation among PK-12 schools, institutions of higher education, local and state education entities, businesses, and community organizations to significantly increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The objectives of GEAR UP NC are to:

1. Increase academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education for GEAR UP NC students;
2. Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education for GEAR UP NC students; and
3. Increase GEAR UP NC students' and families' knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation requirements, and financing.

From 2012-19, GEAR UP NC will provide supportive services and academic preparation to four cohorts of seventh graders. Each year twelfth graders are provided college application and financial aid information to increase their college-going rate. As a key component of GEAR UP NC, their families also receive information throughout the seven years, especially first-generation college families.

EARNINGS AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Education attained	Unemployment rate in 2014 (Percent)	Median weekly earnings in 2014
Bachelor's degree	3.5	1,101
High school diploma	6.0	668
Less than a high school diploma	9.0	488

Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

GEAR UP NC's efforts help to reduce the high school dropout rate in participating schools. This is critically important as the schools and districts engaged in the program have higher than average dropout rates. Dropping out of high school educationally and economically disadvantages students throughout their lives. A student with less than a high school diploma earns an average of \$9,360 less than a high school graduate and \$31,876 less than a college graduate each year.

The GEAR UP NC intervention model also seeks to provide students and their families a

better chance of entering and succeeding in postsecondary education. School leaders are engaged at all levels to understand how to align the goals of GEAR UP NC with the specific needs of students. Schools use data and evidence-based strategies to assist students in making decisions that align with their college aspirations. Without this support, many students who aspire to college never make it because of their lack of familiarity with the complex college and financial aid application systems. GEAR UP NC's in-school support systems break down these barriers for students and families.

GEAR UP NC 2012-19 PARTNER SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Alamance Burlington School System
Edenton-Chowan Schools
Lenoir County Public Schools
McDowell County Schools
Pamlico County Schools
Perquimans County Schools

Person County Schools
Rockingham County Schools
Scotland County Schools
Warren County Schools
Yancey County Schools



PROFILE:

Chase Schultz, Sophomore, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

CHASE SCHULTZ grew up in Mayodan in Rockingham County, North Carolina. Mayodan is a rural community of 2,500 near the Virginia border with a rich textile history and the beauty of its namesakes, the two rivers that converge nearby, the Mayo and the Dan. However, it has suffered from the economic downturn. Six percent of Rockingham County's citizens are unemployed, leaving nearly 25 percent of families living below the poverty level. Only 9 percent of adults have completed at least a bachelor's degree.

Growing up, Chase was acutely aware of a disconnect between his community and his determination to attend college. The Rockingham County Schools had one of the highest dropout rates in North Carolina – 4 percent of high school students, nearly double the state average, left school before graduation.

In 2008, as a student at Dalton McMichael High School in the Rockingham County Schools, Chase experienced many positive changes. The leadership of the school district and Dalton

McMichael High School communicated a focus on high expectations and future goals with the following mission: “to be a student-centered school that meets the academic, emotional, and social needs of all learners while preparing them to be productive citizens who enter college or the workforce with 21st Century skills.”

To achieve this mission for the 1,000 students of Dalton McMichael, the leadership, teachers, and staff analyzed and responded to a variety of data to understand how to best measure achievement and support student growth and well-being. Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs North Carolina (GEAR UP NC) joined this effort and brought awareness of college opportunities and, for Chase and many of his classmates, cemented their goals of succeeding in high school and attending college.

GEAR UP NC is a grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary



CHASE SCHULTZ

Sophomore

Business Major

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

GEAR UP NC is a grant program funded by the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education by providing support services to high-need middle and high schools.

Additional information on GEAR UP NC may be found at www.northcarolina.edu/gearup

education by providing support services to high-need middle and high schools. But GEAR UP North Carolina advisors did more than just describe the opportunity – they made it possible! In a graduating class of more than 200, six students from Dalton McMichael High attended the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** with Chase!

Chase credits his advancement to the knowledge and initiative of his GEAR UP NC college advisors. “They were amazing! The whole school became part of getting us to college. In English class, all of us were required to submit college applications and apply for scholarships during free application days. The GEAR UP NC

advisor also held one-on-one meetings to help us complete our Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). We went on college visits all over North Carolina – **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University**, Wake Forest University, and many more! Before the tours, all we knew was our favorite basketball stars, but on the tours we actually learned about the campuses. We really started to see ourselves in college!”

For Chase and many of his classmates, the work of their school leadership, teachers, staff, and GEAR UP NC advisors expanded their belief in their abilities and their future. As Chase described, “I thought I wanted to go to college.

I didn’t know what I wanted to study or what I wanted to be. I learned that everybody has options and talents – some kids in my class wanted to go to vocational training days, some to community college, and some to college. As soon I visited, I knew I really wanted to go to the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill!**”

As a sophomore business major, Chase has explored interests in information technology and education policy. He is currently studying and working at the **University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill** Kenan-Flagler School of Business and continuing to find that “there is so much to explore in college!”

Support Meaningful Partnerships Between Educator Preparation Programs, Colleges of Arts and Sciences, and PK-12 Schools

Accelerate collaboration among UNC Colleges of Education, Colleges of Arts and Sciences, and PK-12 schools

THE UNC ACADEMIC and University Programs Division leads the North Carolina Quality Educators through Staff Development and Training, or NC QUEST, initiative to promote a shared focus on deeper content knowledge, effective teaching practices, and shared responsibility across academic units.

In January 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed into law, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. The act provided state-based grants to increase teacher quality by engaging teachers in professional development activities grounded in scientifically-based research on instructional practices and methods that improve student achievement. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) and UNC Division of Academic and University Programs received a state NCLB grant to launch the NC QUEST initiative.

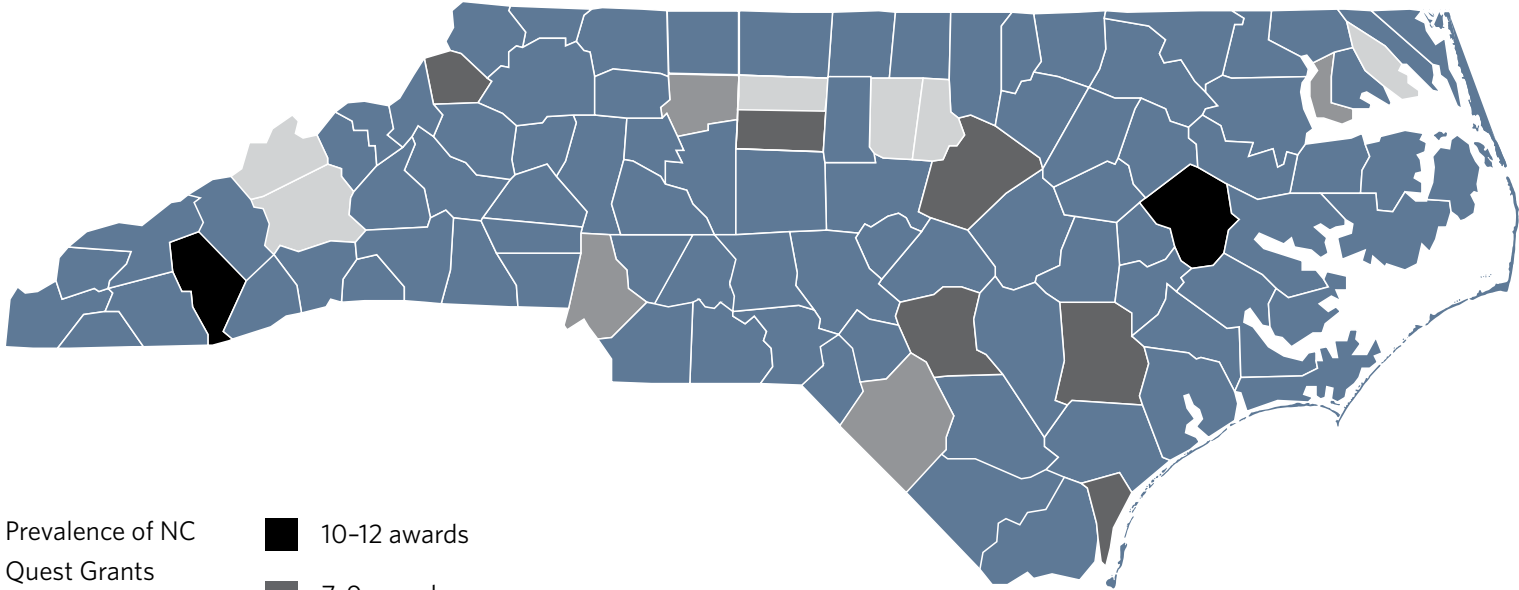
NC QUEST awards competitive grants to eligible partnerships comprised of an institution of

higher education, including a representative from both the educator preparation program and arts and sciences, and one or more high-need school district or charter school. The goal of all NC QUEST grants is to support professional development activities in core academic subjects to ensure that teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals have content knowledge in the academic subjects they teach and the teaching skills needed to enhance their instruction.

Projects provide PK-12 teachers individual hands-on training in proven teaching strategies and the most current technology. Projects include summer workshops and technical assistance/instructional coaching during the academic year to refresh, reinforce, and re-establish principles and techniques learned. Projects culminate with second-summer workshops and back-to-school activities prior to the next school year.

Since 2002 NC QUEST has completed twelve funding cycles, has one cycle of projects in

NC QUEST HAS EVALUATED 207 APPLICATIONS AND AWARDED OVER \$18 MILLION TO 88 PROJECTS.



Prevalence of NC Quest Grants Awarded to UNC Institutions

- 10-12 awards
- 7-9 awards
- 4-6 awards
- 1-3 awards

operation and has recently awarded grants for the fourteenth funding cycle. Through the first 14 funding cycles, NC QUEST evaluated 207 applications and awarded over \$18 million to eighty-eight projects across NC. All projects are monitored by NC QUEST staff throughout their operation and evaluated at their conclusion by an independent third-party evaluator.

Strengthen and align partnerships between colleges of education and PK-12 schools

THE UNC Academic and University Programs Division works collaboratively with educator preparation programs to strengthen and align their partnerships with PK-12 schools, community colleges, businesses, and community organizations. Meaningful PK-16 partnerships:

- align with statewide priorities,
- address regional supply and demand needs,

Conducting the work of NC QUEST in a systemic manner and as a shared responsibility has led to programmatic improvements and innovations shared across participating universities and partnering school districts.

- use evidence-based practices aimed at PK-16 student success,
- support clinical preparation and placement needs,
- offer support for beginning teachers focused on teacher quality and retention, and
- address key local and regional needs.



PROFILE: Core Math III: University of North Carolina at Greensboro and Huntsville Elementary School, Rockingham County Schools

IN 2009, the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro** School of Education, **University of North Carolina at Greensboro** College of Arts and Sciences, and Huntsville Elementary School in the Rockingham County Schools were awarded an NC QUEST grant entitled, Core Math III: Supporting Teachers in Using Learning Trajectories to Implement the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics.

The project was the third in a series of collaborations between these partners funded by NC QUEST and focused on improving the instructional practices and student outcomes of thirteen teachers and administrators. The project leveraged lessons learned from previous work to implement a revised ninety-one hour professional development curriculum that built upon a deep understanding of the learning trajectories that underlie the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics to support teachers in implementing pedagogies that engage students in mathematical practice.

A review of Core Math III confirms that when sound principles of change management and capacity-building work in concert, good things happen for educators and the students they serve.

It is clear that at Huntsville Elementary School in the Rockingham County Schools a culture change occurred as a result of partnerships and sustained, content-based professional development. This culture shift has been critical to the long-term sustainability of the effort. Seven years after the initiation of Core Math III, the staff and leadership of the school remain true to their original project goals in spite of multiple common circumstances that could have derailed their progress – teacher and school leader turnover, changes in state policy, scheduling demands, and other complications. Most importantly, 51.6 percent of Huntsville Elementary students scored at or above grade level on the 2015 End-of-Grade math assessment, 12 percentage points higher than the district average and 7.5 percentage points higher than the state average.



RODNEY SHOTWELL

*Superintendent
Rockingham County Schools
2015 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina
Superintendent of the Year*

As Huntsville Elementary School's instructional coach, Mary Kirkpatrick, explains, "Involving ... our staff ... in sustained professional development focused on understanding learning trajectories and student-centered teaching and learning for mathematics has truly transformed our school AND our mathematics classrooms. Previous efforts in math

professional development only touched the surface, but the Core Math III opportunity immersed our staff in continual professional learning, analysis, and reflection across a full two years.”

Because of their deepened mathematical content knowledge, teachers were confident and open to partnership discussions related to instructional practices and student performance. They drew from expertise within their staff, from the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro** School of Education, and from the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro** College of Arts and Sciences. These discussions helped to shape the professional development and guide behavior and decision-making in the classroom. As new teachers and school leaders join the staff, Core Math III participants model and mentor these practices and expectations. Huntsville Elementary’s NC QUEST grant was the impetus for real and lasting change that continues to impact instruction and planning today.

As a result of their NC QUEST partnership, Huntsville Elementary teachers developed a professional dialogue that evidences a deep understanding of research-based instructional practices. Great teachers ask, and learn to answer,

valid questions that foster effective learning. This is certainly true at Huntsville Elementary.

The significant and on going professional development also made a difference in the use of inquiry-based learning at Huntsville Elementary. Inquiry-based instruction is only possible when the instructional leader has a deep understanding of their content. Working with their fellow math teachers and content partners from the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro** School of Education and the **University of North Carolina at Greensboro** College of Arts and Sciences, Huntsville Elementary teachers became mathematicians and translated their learning to instructional practices that are evident in the classroom.

The three stated goals of Core Math III: Supporting Teachers in Using Learning Trajectories to Implement the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics were to:

1. increase mathematics knowledge for teaching;
2. reform instructional practices; and
3. develop support from leadership for instructional change.

While each of these goals were addressed, organizations as complex as a school never “stand still.” Comprehensive reform requires vigilance.

Huntsville Elementary School has developed the culture and partnerships to maintain this vigilance and be a better place for children as a result of the efforts of its teachers and leaders.

SAM HOUSTON, JR.
President and CEO
NC Science, Mathematics, and
Technology Education Center

Former teacher, principal, school superintendent, and adjunct professor, Dr. Sam Houston became president and Chief Executive Officer of the North Carolina Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education Center in 2003. The non-profit organization works to improve statewide performance for pre-kindergarten through high school students. Dr. Houston has an extensive career as a collaborative, innovative educational leader. Dr. Houston previously served as the Executive Director of the North Carolina Education Standards and Accountability Commission and Executive Director of the University of North Carolina Center for School Leadership Development.

PROFILE:

University of North Carolina Wilmington Watson College of Education and New Hanover County Schools

DEVELOPING PRODUCTIVE, innovative partnerships is a priority for the **University of North Carolina Wilmington** Watson College of Education (WCE). The College has established strong working relationships with local community agencies, community colleges, and over 146 public schools in the southeast region of North Carolina. These partners share a mission to develop exemplary education professionals dedicated to improving schools and society. Working in collaboration, they are impacting the lives and learning of students, community members, and education professionals across the state.

At the core of these outreach efforts are the dedicated faculty, staff, and students who engage with community partners in service and research initiatives that extend well beyond their classrooms. These initiatives provide opportunities for collaboration with school partners, local community agencies, non-profits, and regional groups and opportunities for mutually beneficial growth in teaching, research, and service.

Since 1993, the **University of North Carolina Wilmington** Watson College of Education (WCE) Professional Development System (PDS) has been the foundation for many of WCE's engagement efforts. Our longstanding relationship with the New Hanover County Schools (NHCS) is a prime example of in-depth, multi-faceted partnership work. This collaboration includes:

- placing student interns;
- providing critical professional development;
- developing research, grants, and other initiatives;
- collecting feedback to help redesign teacher education programs;
- engaging in reflective practice; and
- growing as a community of learners.

The WCE-NHCS partnership improves the quality of educator preparation and performance by providing an array of professional experiences, including site-based seminars and a coaching and supervision model that pairs interns with

partnership teachers and principal supervisors supported through professional development.

WCE's partnership with the NHCS affirms the importance of establishing partnership goals and responsibilities and pursuing them with integrity, continuity, and equity. The result for the WCE PDS is a comprehensive, broad based system of professional learning among over 1,000 partnership teachers in forty-three schools in New Hanover County, the WCE educator preparation program faculty, and **University of North Carolina Wilmington** College of Arts and Sciences faculty.

In 2014-15, New Hanover County partnership teachers and school administrators participated in twelve professional development conferences and thirty-nine professional initiatives. NHCS supported over 3,000 clinical placements – 221 teacher candidate interns, twelve principal interns, and 2,859 field placements.

In addition, New Hanover County has been a key collaborator in the Watson College of Education

Dropout Prevention Coalition. The Coalition's mission is to help students stay and succeed in school. The Coalition provides relevant research, local information, grant opportunities, and professional development to partners and the community.

On December 1, 2015, WCE hosted the GradNation Wilmington Regional Community Summit, convened by the WCE Dropout Prevention Coalition and America's Promise Alliance. The GradNation campaign is focused on raising the national high school graduation rate to 90 percent by 2020 and increasing postsecondary enrollment and completion. More than 250 educators, community leaders, parents, and students from New Hanover County and other partnering school districts attended the event. Sessions featured successful programs on early intervention, student mentoring, mental health, the role of student resource officers, faith-based support, and arts and recreation that helped to enhance student success and increase high school graduation rates. New Hanover County Superintendent Tim Markley, New Hanover County Commissioners, New Hanover County Board of Education members, Wilmington City Manager, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce participated in panels and sessions throughout the day.

The summit included increased support for relevant clubs in schools, regional events to be held at the university, mental health training initiatives for teachers and youth workers in the community, and additional collaboration between schools and community organizations.

The WCE-NCHS partnership has sparked a number of additional engagement efforts, such as:

- The Assistive Technology and Demonstration Lending Site, offering equipment and training to individuals and schools supporting individuals with disabilities.
- The Betty Holden Stike Education Laboratory, providing university students opportunities to learn about teaching by serving as supervised tutors for PK-12 students.
- The Center for the Education of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, providing professional development workshops, technology, and STEM-infused competitions to improve STEM engagement and outcomes in the region.
- Junior Seahawk Academy, engaging 60 students in a week of real-world, hands-on

field experiences to pique their interests in STEM, health sciences, and careers in education.

Each clinical intern in a classroom, each student who benefits from GradNation, and each teacher served by partnership professional development exemplify our shared commitment to the betterment of our local community and schools. The **University of North Carolina Wilmington** has built a complex and dynamic web of partnerships that allow us to meet the changing needs of our university, students, and community.

KIMBERLY O'BRIANT
Staff Development Supervisor
New Hanover County Schools

SOMER LEWIS
Professional Development System University-School Partnership Director
Watson College of Education
University of North Carolina Wilmington



Additional information on the **UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA WILMINGTON** Watson College of Education Professional Development System is available at uncw.edu/ed/pds

Strategic Vision for 2016 and Beyond

PREPARING MORE, higher quality teachers and school leaders for North Carolina's public schools requires a team effort. This work relies on consistent, collaborative engagement between UNC campuses and our public school partners. The UNC Board of Governors' recommendations on Teacher and School Leader Quality and UNC's educator quality research provided a roadmap for our work in 2015 and will continue to guide the University's efforts on the complex and challenging opportunities facing education in North Carolina. Among these, three areas of focus emerge for 2016.

As a first priority the data and information generated from UNC's educator quality research, which will be used to: 1. inform decisions to improve teacher and principal preparation programs; 2. align programs, standards, and best practices; 3. deepen the University's evidence base of school leader candidates and practitioners within North Carolina's PK-12 schools; and 4. raise the expectations for outcome-based research to support claims of quality. The research and outcomes will be accessible through the UNC Educator Quality Dashboard.

The second priority is to emphasize clinical practice as the core of teacher preparation. In

doing so, the UNC system will seek to improve the quality of teacher candidates through the expansion of clinical practice to a year-long experience. The growth and development of teacher candidates will be monitored through expanded use of edTPA, a valid, reliable, and evidence-based teacher candidate performance assessment. Follow-up research with emphasis placed on early literacy will help assess future impacts on PK-12 student outcomes.

Our third priority is continuing to address support for early-career teachers by expanding the NC New Teacher Support Program statewide. The goal of this program is to improve the effectiveness of beginning teachers at increasing student learning through intensive support based on each teacher's individual needs, teaching assignment, and school environment. Early outcomes of this comprehensive induction program show increased teacher effectiveness, enhanced instructional skills, and reduced attrition among teachers served.

By working together on these critical priorities, we will achieve our shared goal of providing world-class educators and quality educational opportunities for all of our students – because great teachers and school leaders matter.

Authors and Interviewers

AL MEYERS, *Director, Teacher Recruitment, Academic and University Programs, University of North Carolina*

ALEX GRANADOS, *Researcher and Reporter, EducationNC*

ALISA CHAPMAN, *Vice President, Academic and University Programs, University of North Carolina*

BRYAN ZUGELDER, *Director, NC New Teacher Support Program, Academic and University Programs, University of North Carolina*

CAROL WHITE, *Director, GEAR UP NC, Academic and University Programs, University of North Carolina*

CHARLES L. THOMPSON, *Former Research Professor of Public Policy and Director of Teaching Quality Research, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

CHARLES R. COBLE, *Partner, The Third Mile Group*

D. TRIP STALLINGS, *Director of Policy Research, The William and Ida Friday Institute for Educational Innovation*

DANIEL GITTERMAN, *Thomas Willis Lambeth Distinguished Chair, Public Policy, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

DIANE PAYNE, *Director, NC Principal Fellows Program, Academic and University Programs, University of North Carolina*

ELIZABETH CUNNINGHAM, *Assistant Vice President, Academic and University Programs, University of North Carolina*

KEVIN C. BASTIAN, *Research Associate and Director of the Teacher Quality Research Initiative, Education Policy Initiative at Carolina and Department of Public Policy, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

KIMBERLY O'BRIANT, *Staff Development Supervisor, New Hanover County Schools*

MIKE WILLIAMS, *Director, NC QUEST, Academic and University Programs, University of North Carolina*

MISSY JULIAN-FOX, *Director, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Visitors Center*

SAM HOUSTON, JR., *President and CEO, NC Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education Center*

SOMER LEWIS, *Professional Development System University-School Partnership Director, Watson College of Education, University of North Carolina Wilmington*

TIFFANY WATTS, *Director of Assessment, Evaluation, and Communications, Academic and University Programs, University of North Carolina*

TODD BRANTLEY, *Author and Chief Operating Officer, EducationNC*



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

910 Raleigh Road

Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514