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PRESS RELEASE

To: The Bertie Ledger-Advance
The Roanoke-Chowan News-Herald
WNCT 9 On Your Side
WITN Channel 7 News
From: Bertie County Schools
Date: January 17, 2019
Re: Advanced Roles for Teachers Grant

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Bertie County Schools is one of the four LEAs in the state to receive grant funding to transform North Carolina's Teacher Compensation Models and to develop Advanced Teaching Roles!

All eyes are on Bertie County Schools as they blaze the trails for teachers to have advanced roles with new compensation models—without becoming an administrator!

RALEIGH—Out of the 13 school districts, which applied for this grant, Bertie County Schools was recently announced to be one of only four LEAs to receive the 2019 award, and has already begun to move forward with the planning phase of “Bertie THIRVEs: Teachers Raising Instructional Voice and Excellence” program.

Bertie County Schools Superintendent Dr. Catherine Edmonds said, “This is a game-changer for Bertie County ... We have national entities that are going to work with us to help provide our teachers with a unique opportunity to be inspired in a new way, and to earn new credentials that can lead to higher pay, without having to pursue an administrative role in education.”

All LEAs with an average daily membership of 4,000 or less were eligible to apply—a total of 40 LEAs. Thirteen LEAs applied for the grant.

The North Carolina counties benefitting from the grant are: Bertie, Hertford, Halifax and Lexington.

Bertie will partner with Northampton County. Bertie will be the lead pilot program to pave the way for the model to be implemented in Northampton County, which has a similar staff and student make-up, as well as a close size comparison to Bertie.

Bertie County Schools will use the remainder of the current year to continue planning for the launch, and the grant will be implemented with the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

The State has allocated approximately \$700,000 for the grant—which is further earmarked as \$200,000 in non-recurring funds and \$500,000 in recurring funds through the life of the grant to support the LEAs chosen to receive the grant.

The goals of the “Bertie THRIVES” are:

- To cultivate a thriving teacher corps.
- To create thriving career pathways for teachers.
- To build a thriving teacher culture.
- To foster thriving learning communities while extending the reach of highly effective teachers.

Teachers who participate will focus on:

- **Teacher Voice:** Teachers want a voice when it comes to decision making at the school level.
- **Cultural Leadership:** Teachers will reinforce and set a school culture that promotes students’ abilities to learn and that fosters a positive work environment for teachers.
- **Instructional Coaching:** Teachers will coach beginning teachers in their schools.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Goals will be set, met and refined—perpetually.

Teachers who have success in these areas will benefit from:

- Meaningful incentives
- Differentiated pathways
- Salary supplements, clearly linked to student and teacher performance.

This will lead to improved teacher recruitment, development and retention, as well as to develop and to extend the reach of highly effective teacher leaders—who can gain the credentials of either Teacher Guide or Teacher Mentor, and be compensated based upon the merits of the credentials and the improvement in staff and student performance that result.

The following major entities will partner with Bertie County Schools for the implementation of the awarded grant: RTI International, Elizabeth City State University, Hope Street Group, Best NC, National Center for Teacher Residencies, and Schools that Lead.

RTI International is a North Carolina-based nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. RTI’s work in education seeks to promote thriving learning environments that facilitate success for all students. The Center for Education Services division of RTI will provide support for Bertie County Schools through *Program Implementation, Teacher Coaching, Culture Leadership, and Continuous Improvement*.

“It is very exciting for Bertie County to be selected for this grant,” said Dr. Angela Quick, Director of the Center for Education Services. “This award demonstrates the confidence our state has in Bertie County; in general and regarding the actual plan that was submitted.”

“We are honored to be thought partners and implementation specialists with Bertie County Schools to help the vision become reality,” Quick said.

“We are also excited to collaborate with the team of partners in this endeavor,” she added. “This initiative has the potential to seed real transformation in the Bertie community. Our goal is to bridge the research-to-practice and the practice-to-research gap.”

“The plan that Bertie submitted creates more chances for students to have access to excellent teachers. By focusing on new opportunities for staff growth and development from within, Bertie is *walking the walk* in terms of commitment to current teachers,” Quick concluded.

Thanks to an emerging partnership with **Elizabeth City State University and National Center for Teacher Residencies**, teacher participants who reach the Teacher Mentor role will be expected to have an undergraduate teacher resident to work with them during each school year. This is directly aligned with the long-term BCS strategic vision to “grow your own” teachers. This type of partnership builds a real movement for education reform from the ground up, and will establish a true teacher residency program.

Hope Street Group’s focus is cultivating and supporting the leadership development of NC educators to productively engage in policy, and practice-based problem solving that addresses the pressing issues affecting educators and students in schools across North Carolina. HSG will provide support to help develop teacher voice and culture leadership. HSG uses expository writing to engage in critical conversations about equity.

“The intent is for the project to be collaborative and based on an identified community issue—in Bertie’s case, the needed professional learning for educators to be agents of system change and active participants in feedback loops for continuous improvement,” said Katharine Correll, the Director of the North Carolina Teacher Voice Network for Hope Street Group.

Schools that Lead is an organization that leads networked improvement communities focused on equitable outcomes for students. Bertie County Schools became a part of the inaugural North Carolina network in October 2018, focused on solving shared problems of practice to accelerate learning across schools. The improvement science and school improvement skills learned through participation will provide a foundation for goal setting and data use to accomplish the goal/priority of continuous improvement.

Bertie County Schools also submitted, along with the grant application, letters of support from the following entities: Northampton County Schools (to scale implementation of the model in their district in 2020); and SpokeHub (a communications app to streamline conversation around a specific topic).

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