



# Lessons Learned Around Reducing Inequitable Access to High Quality Teachers

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This brief provides insights into some of the early lessons learned from the North Carolina Teacher Compensation Models and Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) pilot program.

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## Introduction/Overview

Low-performing schools often struggle with both teacher and principal hiring issues. Recognizing this inequitable access problem, in July 2014, the U.S. Department of Education launched the Excellent Educators for All Initiative. The initiative was intended to encourage states and districts to develop and implement plans to increase access to excellent educators. State Education Agencies (SEAs) were required to "submit a plan describing the steps it will take to ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers." In June 2015, SEAs submitted Educator Equity Plans describing how they would ensure that students (low-income, racial/ethnic minorities) have equitable access to effective educators. Educator equity continued as a statutory requirement in Title I, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) with updated components for SEAs to address.

The inequitable distribution of effective teachers is described as a multi-faceted problem involving teacher shortages, recruitment and retention challenges, and distribution/assignment decisions at Local Education Agency (LEA) and school levels. A recent report, *Equitable Access to Excellent Educators: An Analysis of States' Equity Plans* (Williams II, Adrien, Murthy, & Pietryka, 2016) described most state strategies to address the problem as falling into three categories; 1) teaching conditions, 2) educator preparation, and 3) human capital management systems. North Carolina, for example, has addressed the inequitable distribution issue by trying to provide teachers with more leadership and career pathway opportunities in high-needs schools, which falls under the category of human capital management systems.

Eighteen States proposed to enhance equitable access by providing teacher leadership and career pathway opportunities as a means to maximize the effect of and retain excellent teachers. **Kentucky, Maine, North Carolina** and **Oklahoma** planned to create leadership opportunities for teachers in high-need schools to help support and retain them (Williams et al., 2016, p. 32).

In 2016, the North Carolina State Board of Education (NCSBE) developed the Teacher Compensation Models and Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) pilot program. Through this state-funded pilot program, school districts applied for three-year grants to develop their own innovative models focused on the goal of increasing the number of students taught by highly effective classroom teachers and providing opportunities for classroom teachers to gain career advancement both professionally and through compensation. The districts were to also consider sustainability and replication of their model across the state. Initially, the legislation described this as a three-year pilot, however, in 2018 it was revised and became an eight-year pilot through the 2024 – 2025 school year. Through the ATR Pilot, 14 LEAs have developed and implemented a range of strategies to reduce inequities (Table 1). Currently, eight LEAs are still being funded.

*Career opportunities could be especially powerful recruitment and retention tools for low-performing schools; in one district, the percentage of teachers who would choose to work in a low-performing school doubled when the school offered teacher leader roles.*

Jacob, Vidyarthi, Carroll, & TNTP. (2012), p. 32

**Table 1. ATR Pilot Grantees**

Funding Cycle	Grantees
Cohort 1, 2016-2020	Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Charlotte Mecklenburg Edgecombe Pitt Vance Washington
Cohort 2, 2018-2022	Bertie Halifax Hertford Lexington City
Cohort 3, 2020-2024	Guilford Thomasville City Wilson Winston-Salem Forsyth

## Description of Grantee Approaches

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) is responsible for administering the ATR Pilot. When NCDPI launched the Advanced Teaching Roles Pilot, they did not prescribe any model. Each district could develop its own model if it created growth opportunities for teachers. A quick review of approved applications (Table 2) shows that North Carolina LEAs have taken three approaches: 1) LEAs developed their strategies independently; 2) LEAs developed strategies in collaboration with an external organization; or 3) LEAs implemented strategies developed and implemented by an external organization. A majority of grantees chose to use the Opportunity Culture model developed by Public Impact (see [Opportunity Culture Early Lessons Learned From the Field](#) for more information). The second largest group of grantees developed their own strategies independently, and finally one grantee collaborated with an external organization.

**Table 2. LEA Grantees Advanced Teaching Role Approaches**

Approaches	District (Year Grant Awarded)	Partnering Organization
LEAs developed their strategies independently that were aligned to the district’s strategic objectives.	Chapel Hill-Carrboro City (2016) Charlotte-Mecklenburg (2016) <sup>1</sup> Pitt (2016) Washington (2016)	
LEAs developed strategies in collaboration with an external organization.	Bertie (2018)	The RTI Center for Education Services (CES) provides <b>customized support services</b> for schools. RTI’s engagement with the Advanced Teaching Roles initiative began when a client reached out to request help in building an approach that would be tailored to their district needs.
LEA’s initiative was developed and implemented by an external organization.	Edgecombe (2016) Guilford (2020) Halifax (2018) Hertford (2018) Lexington City (2018)	Public Impact, a national education organization, designed the <b>Opportunity Culture</b> initiative. Through Opportunity Culture, they partner with districts to create advanced teaching roles and

Approaches	District (Year Grant Awarded)	Partnering Organization
	Thomasville (2020) Vance (2018) Wilson (2020) Winston-Salem Forsyth (2020)	advocate for the compensation teacher leaders receive to be funded entirely with school-level budgets as opposed to district-level budgets.

<sup>1</sup>Based on their Project LIFT work with Public Impact/Opportunity Culture

## Methodology for Generating Lessons Learned

Because Opportunity Culture was the most frequently used strategy, the Region 6 Comprehensive Center (RC6) asked Public Impact to summarize its lessons learned in their work with districts on ATR grants. Building on that summary, and in discussion with NCDPI, RC6 built on those lessons learned by talking to other LEAs/grantees who had used other approaches. Three LEAs were contacted: Washington, Pitt, and Chapel Hill-Carrboro. One organization that worked with a grantee was contacted, RTI Center for Education Services (CES).

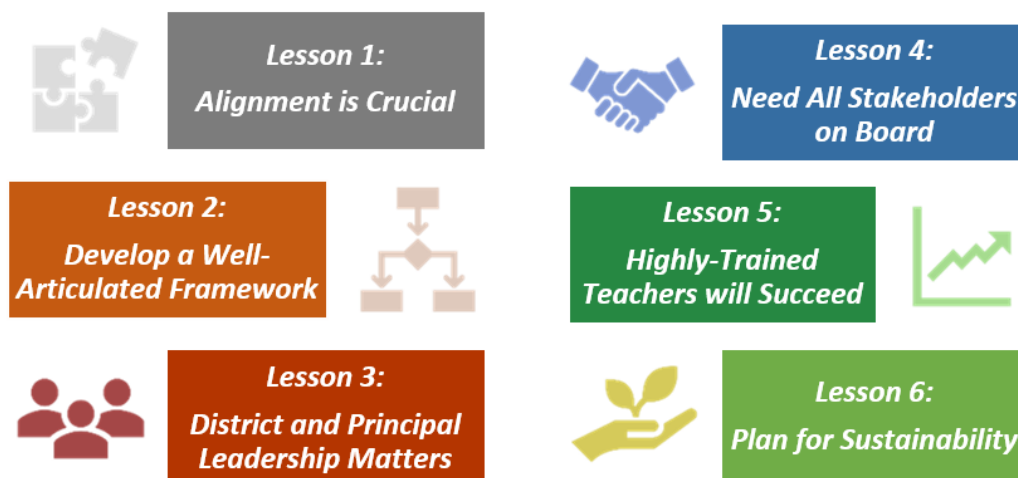
Arrangements were then made for a virtual interview via Zoom with contacts from the three districts. In addition, a few contacts provided some written responses to the interview questions provided in advance. The interviews with the three LEAs were conducted in July 2020. The common lessons learned that emerged from these LEA interviews and from the Public Impact [Opportunity Culture: Lessons Learned: An Executive Brief for District Leaders in North Carolina](#) brief are summarized below.

## Lessons Learned

Based on the experiences of the three LEAs, RTI Center for Education Services and Public Impact, we identified six lessons learned that we cover below (Figure 1.). These lessons are:

- 1) Alignment is Crucial;
- 2) Develop a Well-Articulated Framework;
- 3) District and Principal Leadership Matters;
- 4) Need All Stakeholders on Board;
- 5) Highly-Trained Teachers will Succeed; and
- 6) Plan for Sustainability.

Figure 1. Summary of Lessons Learned



## Lesson 1: Alignment is Crucial

- **Know your “why”** – It is imperative that the outputs from the project are aligned to the problem identified. For Bertie County Schools, the problem was clear; teachers were leaving the district after a few short years of service. Creating an initiative that would retain and develop exceptional teachers was their focus.
- **Alignment of initiatives** – Teacher leaders will be most successful when the district has established clear expectations regarding what initiatives, frameworks of instruction, or research-based instructional strategies are of most importance. These initiatives must be in line with the goals and priorities of the school so that teacher leaders are clear on what aspects of instruction are most essential to focus upon when working with their peers. As new competing initiatives and curriculums fought for a district leader’s attention, the most successful districts were those that had aligned efforts. When the ATR grant began, leaders in Chapel Hill-Carrboro found that establishing a sequence of professional development opportunities allowed the district to ensure that there was an alignment of priorities.
- **Intentionality** – District leaders, principals and teachers must be able to answer how this initiative fits into the district’s strategic plan and goals for improved student achievement.

## Lesson 2: Develop a well-articulated framework

- **Establish and explain the framework** – District personnel, principals and teachers reported greater success when a well-articulated framework was identified from the beginning. For some districts, this framework was created internally while others partnered with outside organizations who could serve as thought partners in the framework’s creation. Regardless of a district’s choice to partner with an outside agency, having a description of the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder as well as a timeline for implementation was crucial to the project’s success.
- **Plan for implementation** – Multiple districts articulated the need for a framework that clearly identified the timeline for implementation and expected milestones. An implementation team that includes staff from multiple departments (Human Resources, Curriculum & Instruction, Finance) can help to prevent unintended consequences that may arise during implementation.
- **Invest in teacher leaders who are embarking on the work** – For teachers who are taking on new leadership roles, clarity on their responsibilities is essential. In many instances the teacher leaders who are selected for these advanced teaching roles are the chair of many committees and serve in multiple leadership roles within the school. In their new role of supporting more students and fellow teachers, attention to a reasonable workload is imperative to avoid burnout. It is suggested that the teacher leaders be relieved of major responsibilities within the school so that their main role is to reach more students through coaching and support of their peers.

**Teacher Leaders:** Teachers who take on a leadership role by modeling, coaching and supporting peers to positively impact a greater number of both teachers and students.

**Multi-Classroom Leaders:** Teachers with a record of high-growth student learning and leadership competencies, known as multi-classroom leaders or MCLs, both teach part of the time and lead small, collaborative teams of two to eight teachers, paraprofessionals, and teacher residents in the same grade or subject to meet each MCL’s standards of excellence.

- **Coaching and feedback** – Within the framework, a communication plan that provides coaching and feedback is critical. Principals benefit from coaching and feedback from district personnel while teachers benefit from a different level of coaching from principals. In Vance County Schools, Multi-Classroom Leaders serve as teacher leaders who participate in coaching during their monthly “First Friday” meetings. During this monthly meeting, the Multi-Classroom Leaders work with district personnel to discuss their needs and receive relevant coaching and professional development.

### Lesson 3: District and principal leadership matters

- **Need a district champion behind the work** – The most successful initiatives in providing more equitable access to highly effective educators were those that were supported by a district leader who was a champion for the work. In many instances, this was a district associate superintendent or director who helped conceptualize the initiative from the beginning and was committed to see it through. In Pitt County Schools, a director from the Human Resources and Curriculum departments worked collaboratively to design and implement the *R3: Recruiting, Retaining, and Rewarding Educators through Multiple Career Pathways and Performance-Based Compensation* (R3) initiative. Together, they served as champions of the project and worked to ensure the program was moving forward and meeting all milestones.
- **Provide ongoing job-embedded professional development on all levels** – Within the framework, ongoing and embedded professional development for district personnel, principals and teachers was essential. When the focus of the professional development is geared towards just teachers, principals may lack pertinent information regarding the role of the teacher leaders. Successful initiatives supported principals with professional development, regular coaching and technical assistance from those that understood the end goal of the project.

### Lesson 4: Need critical stakeholders on board

- **Superintendent leadership is crucial** – The superintendent’s support of Advanced Teaching Roles allowed for associate superintendents and directors to embark successfully on implementing these roles within the district. In addition to supporting district staff in implementation, the superintendent’s ability to communicate the importance of the initiative empowered critical stakeholders.
- **Every department is critical to success** – Multiple districts described this project as “living” in one department, often Human Resources or Curriculum and Instruction. However, successful implementation was best achieved when there was cross-department collaboration. Having relevant departments involved in the planning and implementation of the initiative allowed for oversight on the many moving parts and minimized unintended consequences. Washington County Schools experienced success in their initiative due to a team of supportive central office staff that provided essential data, coordinated release time for principals and teachers and created avenues for coaching and support.

### Lesson 5: Highly trained teachers will succeed

- **Teachers as trainers** – When provided with the right supports and structures for advancement, excellent teachers can and will rise to the occasion to be leaders among their peers. Chapel Hill-Carrboro’s initiative found that allowing classroom teachers to lead professional development

helped the district identify teacher leaders who were gifted in training their peers and were ready for advancement.

- **Peer coaching can work** – Teachers often learn best from other teachers. Providing excellent teachers the opportunity to model effective teaching strategies for peers ultimately benefits not only their peers, but also the students they serve. In Edgecombe County, one middle school and one elementary school went from underperforming in 2016-2017 to meeting growth expectations in 2017-2018. Additionally, North Edgecombe High School has now exceeded growth expectations three years in a row and entered the top 20 percent of schools in the state on that measure. They attribute this student performance growth to the addition of Advanced Teaching Roles, including a heavy emphasis on peer coaching, in their district.
- **Create a recruitment plan** – This initiative is not for every teacher. There are limited resources and there should be some thought put into teacher quality. In the most successful initiatives, highly qualified teachers were recruited and trained to take the Advanced Teaching Roles or Opportunity Culture positions prior to taking the job. If highly qualified teachers were not available from within the district, leadership opportunities were created to train the current pool of teachers or the district looked outside its boundaries to recruit the highest quality teachers for the positions. The Guilford County Schools Director of Restart, alongside the communications and human resources departments, advertised Opportunity Culture positions through social media campaigns and recruitment fairs to build interest, resulting in a large pool of teacher-leader candidates.

## Lesson 6: Plan for sustainability

- **District leadership changes** – In multiple districts, superintendent changes occurred throughout the life of the Advanced Teaching Roles grant. These changes in leadership often led to changes in the original implementation plan. As new superintendents were hired, often district level personnel changes occurred, making the initiative more difficult to implement. Districts that found the most success had multiple stakeholders invested and the framework was flexible enough to withstand these leadership changes.
- **Teacher leader changes** – Personnel changes within a district are inevitable. Establishing a plan for teacher leader turnover will sustain the work and allow for continuity in the vision and implementation of the initiative. It is important to have a human capital strategy that includes succession planning for initiative participants.
- **Sustainability of funds** – Having a long-range plan for how to sustain the newly created positions is essential to the success of the initiative. Districts that had funding streams reserved for the newly created positions after the end of the Advanced Teaching Roles Grant were more invested in the long-range success of the positions and ultimately found greater success. Public Impact hypothesizes that school-level funds make the roles feel more permanent which motivates current and aspiring teacher leaders.
- **Program evaluation is critical** – Program evaluation allows for midcourse corrections and adherence to the milestones that were established at the onset of the project. Working with an outside evaluator allowed the team in Pitt County Schools to think deeply about what was working and what needed adjustment throughout the implementation phase. The outside evaluators served as not only compliance monitors, but more importantly as thought partners who could collaboratively brainstorm how to overcome obstacles.

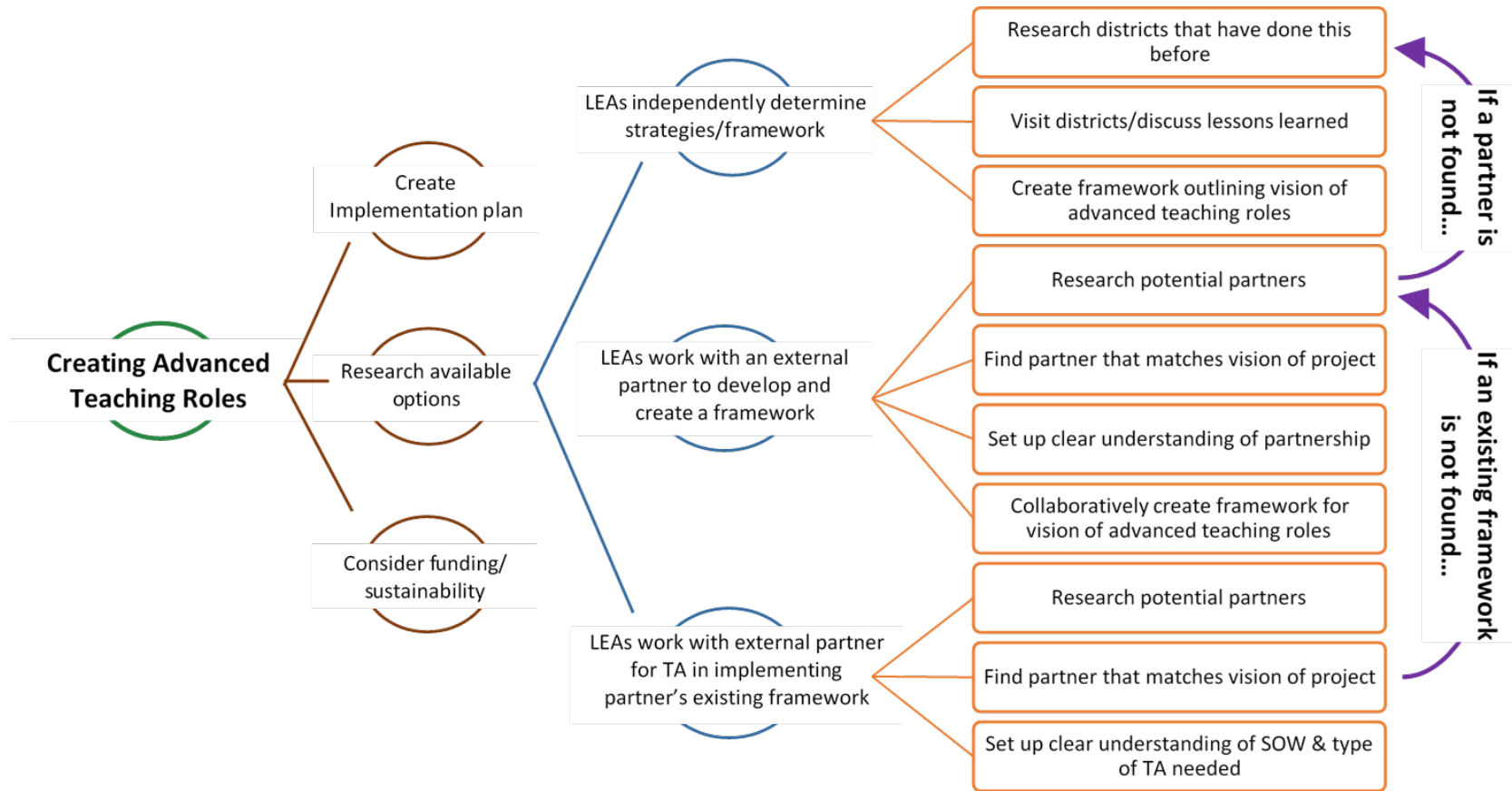


## Concluding Thoughts

LEAs shared different processes and paths that they had taken prior to and during their ATR Pilot grant. While some were more successful than others, they all learned critical lessons along the way and believed that those experiences could benefit others who were trying to determine their next steps. Based on their guidance, we summarize some concluding thoughts in Figure 2.

1. Deciding to address teaching roles and compensation models is a substantial commitment. Therefore, you need to examine several data points and determine if this is the best strategy to address your human capital challenges. Not only will it be important to look at your Human Capital Dashboard, but also climate/working conditions, leadership stability, teachers who are a flight risk, etc. Conduct some needs sensing activities and gain a greater understanding of the concerns.
2. If your district determines that the best way to address its challenge is to create advanced teaching roles, then it will be important to create a cross-sectional district implementation team to examine the options including developing your own initiative or working with an external partner. The implementation team should:
  - a. Look at the evaluation reports, studies and research around compensation models and advanced teacher roles.
  - b. Think about the initiative's ultimate goals and how those goals will be sustained.
  - c. Gain buy-in from critical stakeholders, determine the best option for the district; and develop a plan.
3. If the district selects an external partner, they should consider a partner that is aligned with their vision. More importantly, they need to determine if they are selecting a partner that already has an existing framework or one that will work with them to develop or refine a framework the district already has in mind. In either scenario, the implementation team needs to research potential partners and find a partner that matches the district's vision for the project. If the visions are not aligned, a district should not hesitate to take another pathway.
4. If a district decides to develop its own plan, leadership should ensure key departments are a part of the development process. The implementation team should also communicate with prior ATR grantees and discuss their lessons learned. This information will only strengthen their framework for advanced teaching roles.
5. Districts should consider selecting an internal or external evaluator to assist with progress monitoring and act as a thought partner so that there is a continuous feedback loop for improvement.

Figure 2. Creating Advanced Teaching Roles—Lessons Learned on Process



## References

- Jacob, A., Vidyarthi, E., Carroll, K., and TNTP (2012). *The Irreplaceables: Understanding the Real Retention Crisis in America's Urban Schools*. New York, NY: TNTP.
- U.S. Department of Education, Reform Support Network (2015). *Promoting More Equitable Access to Effective Teachers: Strategic Options for States to Improve Placement and Movement*. Washington, DC.
- Williams II, W., Adrien, R., Murthy, C., and Pietryka, D. (Westat Equity Team) (2019). *Equitable Access to Excellent Educators: An Analysis of States' Equity Plans*. US Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education: Washington, DC.

## Advancing Teaching Roles Resources

### Aspen Institute ([www.aspeninstitute.org/](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/))

- Seizing the Moment: A District Guide to Advance Equity Through ESSA – This is a suite of tools—including a series of infographics to help inform and guide local conversations—identifies eight equity priorities many leaders are already pursuing and identifies potential barriers to equity, key decision points, and opportunities to braid and blend federal funds to strengthen local equity priorities. [www.aspeninstitute.org/longform/seizing-moment-district-guide-advance-equity-essa/](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/longform/seizing-moment-district-guide-advance-equity-essa/)

### Best NC ([best-nc.org/advancedroles/](http://best-nc.org/advancedroles/))

- Advanced Teaching Roles in North Carolina: Policy Brief (Coming Soon!) [best-nc.org/policybriefs/](http://best-nc.org/policybriefs/)

### North Carolina Department of Public Instruction ([www.dpi.nc.gov/](http://www.dpi.nc.gov/))

- Advanced Teaching Roles RFP & Advanced Teaching Role Applications [www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/teachers-corner/evaluation-learning-and-leadership](http://www.dpi.nc.gov/educators/teachers-corner/evaluation-learning-and-leadership)

### Pitt County ([successforeverychild.com](http://successforeverychild.com))

### RTI ([www.rti.org](http://www.rti.org))

- [www.rti.org/centers/education-services](http://www.rti.org/centers/education-services)

# Appendices

## Appendix A. District Profiles

### Bertie County Schools

District Profile	Goal of Initiative
<p>Bertie County Schools is located in the Northeast region of North Carolina and has seven schools within the district. The district was awarded an Advanced Teaching Roles grant in 2017. Implementation of Bertie THRIVES: Teachers Raising Instructional Voice and Excellence began in the 2018-2019 school year.</p>	<p>The goal of Bertie THRIVES was to create a design that addressed teacher voice, cultural leadership, instructional coaching, and continuous improvement. The initiative was built upon the belief that if teachers have opportunities to grow professionally and advance their careers, the district will be able to improve teacher recruitment, development, and retention.</p>
Lessons Learned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; If working with an outside partner, customization is crucial. It is important to have a collaborative design that meets districts where they are. If the design of the support model is not tailored to meet the specific needs of the district, then it will not be as effective as it potentially could be.</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Reoccurring funding is important. The fact that the grant allowed districts and partners to work together over several years was a deciding factor in pursuing the Advanced Teaching Roles Initiative. There is always a great possibility of sustainable growth with the implementation of support over time.</li> </ul>	

### Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools

District Profile	Goal of Initiative
<p>Chapel Hill - Carrboro Schools is located in the North-Central region of North Carolina and has 20 schools within the district. The district was awarded an Advanced Teaching Roles grant in 2016. Implementation of CHCCS Project ADVANCE began in the 2017-2018 school year.</p>	<p>The goal of CHCCS Project ADVANCE was to establish four levels of career advancement. These four levels were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learn - Working on developing teacher's professional competencies.</li> <li>2. Grow - Working on enhancing teacher's professional competencies.</li> <li>3. Impact - Continuing teacher's learning while also supporting the learning and growth of others.</li> <li>4. Inspire - Teachers are a master at their craft who continue to advance their own learning while also advancing learning and growth throughout the district.</li> </ol>
Lessons Learned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Planning for sustainability is crucial. The offices of human resources, finance, data and accountability and curriculum and instruction all play vital roles in ensuring the program is sustainable. Through cross-department planning teams are able to ensure the success of the implementation efforts.</li> <li>&gt;&gt; A long-range vision of the outcomes is critical for both the district and the teacher leaders. District staff would benefit from determining how teacher leaders will continue to grow and strengthen their skills after the initial professional development plan has ended. This requires planning ahead for multiple years at a time to ensure teacher leaders are in a continuous cycle of leadership development and do not become stagnant.</li> </ul>	

## Edgecombe County Schools

District Profile	Goal of Initiative
<p>Edgecombe County Schools is located in the Northeast region of North Carolina and has 13 schools within the district. The district was awarded an Advanced Teaching Roles grant in 2016. Implementation of the initiative began in the 2017-2018 school year.</p>	<p>The goal of Edgecombe County Schools' Innovation Grounded in Research, Results and ECPS Strategic Priorities is to reimagine teacher classroom roles, create clear and enticing pathways for advancement, and embed a proven literacy intervention for struggling learners.</p>
Lessons Learned	
<p>&gt;&gt; Superintendent Leadership is critical. Prior to beginning Opportunity Culture design the superintendent engaged the school board, held meetings with principals, and ensured that Opportunity Culture was deeply understood and perceived as integral to all district efforts. This early communication allowed Edgecombe's Opportunity Culture implementation to thrive despite superintendent transition, a testament to both leaders.</p>	

## Guilford County Schools

District Profile	Goal of Initiative
<p>Guilford County Schools has 125 schools and is located in the Piedmont Triad region of North Carolina. The district initially started working with Public Impact in 2016-2017 without an Advanced Teaching Roles grant. However, they were recently awarded an Advanced Teaching Roles grant in the spring of 2020.</p>	<p>The goal of <i>Scaling and Accelerating Opportunity Culture in Guilford County Schools</i> is to reach all students with excellent teachers and transform the teaching profession into a high-paying, high-impact career. Guilford County uses this initiative as a turnaround strategy for its low performing schools.</p>
Lessons Learned	
<p>&gt;&gt; Multi-classroom leaders need intensive support. Multi-Classroom Leadership is a demanding advanced role aimed at reaching more students with excellent instruction. In addition to regular check-ins and guidance from principals, Guilford County multi-classroom leaders also receive one-on-one coaching support from Public Impact. Multi-classroom leaders receive feedback and support on facilitating productive and meaningful coaching conversations, using data to drive instruction, and building capacity in team teachers through team meetings.</p> <p>&gt;&gt; Early recruitment and a rigorous selection process lead to strong teacher-leader candidates. The Guilford County Schools Director of Restart, alongside the communications and human resources departments, advertised Opportunity Culture positions through social media campaigns and recruitment fairs to build interest, resulting in a large pool of teacher-leader candidates. To identify strong candidates in the pool, the district reviewed applications for leadership experiences, previous success with students, and strong data analysis skills. These candidates were then interviewed using the behavioral event interview technique, and principals chose candidates who best fit their school.</p>	

## Pitt County Schools

District Profile	Goal of Initiative
<p>Pitt County Schools is in the Northeast region of North Carolina and has 38 schools within the district. The district was awarded an Advanced Teaching Roles grant in 2016. Implementation of R3: Recruiting, Retaining, and Rewarding Educators through Multiple Career Pathways and Performance-Based Compensation began in the 2017-2018 school year.</p>	<p>The goal of Pitt County Schools' (PCS) <i>Recruit-Retain-Reward (R3) Framework</i> is to increase the number of high-performing schools across the district by improving the recruitment of high-quality teachers and the long-term retention of highly-effective teachers and teacher leaders. The primary method for accomplishing this goal is the introduction of several Career Pathways for classroom teachers.</p>
Lessons Learned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Be clear on the problem - The leadership's vision for the initiative never wavered because they were grounded in the teacher retention problem they were trying to solve. With every decision that was made, leaders were clear on the "why" which allowed for clearer decision making that was aligned to the district's goals and strategic plan.</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Go slow to go fast – The team at Pitt County Schools was able to take time to adequately research, plan, and develop an entire model. That plan was implemented deliberately over time in building the pipeline programs for Advanced Teaching Roles first and when the model was ready, there were highly trained and effective teachers ready to move into those roles. There was a focus on long-term systemic change.</li> </ul>	

## Vance County Schools

District Profile	Goal of Initiative
<p>Vance County Schools is located in the North Central region of North Carolina and has 17 schools within the district. The district was awarded an Advanced Teaching Roles grant in 2016. Implementation of Opportunity Culture - Extending the Reach of Great Vance Teachers began in the 2017-2018 school year.</p>	<p>The goal of Vance County Schools' initiative was to design and implement career pathways that extend the reach of excellent teachers to multiple classrooms. These career opportunities encourage educators to grow in their profession while continuing to teach and make rigorous classroom instruction accessible to more students.</p>
Lessons Learned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Superintendent Leadership is crucial. The Superintendent helped educators see Opportunity Culture as a strategy to make needed changes in teaching and learning. He gave principals and Multi-Classroom Leaders more flexibility and encouraged them to research and try innovative education solutions.</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Multi-Classroom Leaders can be used as a recruitment tool. Vance County Schools has drawn new hires from other competitive districts, including teachers from Virginia, thanks to the advanced teaching roles they offer career status teachers.</li> </ul>	

## Washington County Schools

District Profile	Goal of Initiative
<p>Washington County Schools is located in the Northeast region of North Carolina and has five schools within the district. The district was awarded an Advanced Teaching Roles grant in 2016. Their Advanced Teaching Roles project, entitled Lead Teacher Initiative began in the 2017-2018 school year.</p>	<p>The goals of the <i>Lead Teacher Initiative</i> were to improve teacher quality through specialized training, certifications and/or advanced degrees. The initiative sought to recruit and retain quality educators and decrease teacher turnover rates while simultaneously increasing the number of teachers pursuing advanced degrees and/or National Board Certification.</p>
Lessons Learned	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;&gt; Partnering with an outside organization can add strength to an initiative this large. Because Washington County is one of the smallest districts in North Carolina, implementing a grant of this magnitude was a challenge. The district worked hard to overcome this barrier and in year two, hired a coordinator for the grant who could oversee its implementation and serve the teacher leaders who were implementing in classrooms across the district.</li> <li>&gt;&gt; Create a plan that is nimble enough to withstand leadership changes. Throughout the life of the grant, district priorities shifted with the hire of a new superintendent. Because the original framework was nimble and flexible, the district was able to shift to meet the new leadership priorities while still maintaining the integrity of the program.</li> </ul>	