



# Principal Leadership in North Carolina Public Schools

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House Select Committee on An Education System  
for North Carolina's Future

August 15, 2022

# About BEST NC

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BEST NC is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of business leaders committed to improving North Carolina's education system through policy and advocacy. We do this by convening a broad constituency; encouraging collaboration around a shared, bold vision for education; and advocating for policies, research, programs, and awareness that will significantly improve education in North Carolina.

Learn more at [www.BESTNC.org](http://www.BESTNC.org)

# The Importance of Principals



- ✓ The principal is one of the most important school-based factors for student success, second only to the influence of the classroom teacher.
- ✓ Approximately 1/4 of a school's impact on academic achievement can be attributed to the principal.
- ✓ Evidence from both business and education confirms that an effective turnaround – transforming persistent low-performance into a successful organization – requires a highly effective leader at the helm.

*Sources: Doyle, D & Locke, G. (2014). Lacking Leaders: The Challenges of Principal Recruitment, Selection, and Placement.*

*Hassel, E.A. & Hassel, B (2009). "The Big U-Turn: How to Bring Schools from the Brink of Doom to Stellar Success."*

# The Principal Landscape



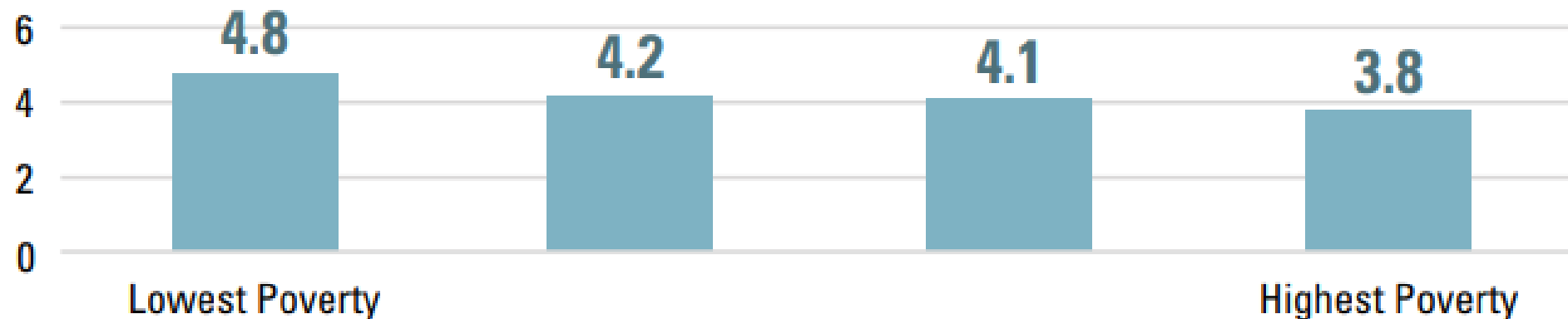
- ✓ There are approximately 2,600 Principals and 3,400 Assistant Principals in North Carolina Public Schools (traditional and charter schools).
- ✓ The average principal has more than 50 direct reports.  
(~40 teachers, plus support staff)
- ✓ The average school operating budget is around \$6 Million.
- ✓ Insufficient data on principal turnover.
- ✓ Principals tend to stay longer in more affluent schools.

*Source: NC DPI Statistical Profile*

# Principal Retention



## Average Years Principals Have Led Their Current K-12 Traditional Public School, by Poverty Quartile (2020-21)



**Source:** NC DPI (Data Request)

*NOTE: North Carolina does not collect or report principal turnover data, like we do for teachers. At this point, we don't have a reliable understanding of how many principal candidates we should have in the pipeline.*

# Principal Working Conditions

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- ✓ Insufficient Leadership Pipeline\*
- ✓ Too Many Direct Reports\*
- ✓ Limited Access to Resources
- ✓ Too Many Responsibilities

\*Solution is in progress.

# Conditions: Insufficient Leadership Pipeline

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A 2015 analysis of principal preparation in North Carolina found:

- Teachers largely self-selected into the profession, with very little proactive recruitment.
- Teachers were the primary “consumer” of principal preparation, incentivizing programs to offer the least expensive, fastest option.
- Most principals entered the profession in North Carolina without on-the-job training.
- School districts generally had very little, if any, influence on the preparation program’s students, content, or structure.

*Source: Hagan, K. (2015). Strong Leaders for North Carolina Schools: School Principal Preparation Programs.*

# Conditions: Too Many Direct Reports





# Conditions: Limited Access to Resources

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Despite leading schools with multi-million-dollar budgets, principals have very little access to their own budgets:

- Position allotments make up the bulk of school funding and are largely inflexible.
- Decisions on how to spend dollar allotments are often made at the district level, rather than the school level.

# Conditions: Too Many Responsibilities



## NC Standards for School Executives (Launched in 2006 and revised in 2013\*)

- ✓ Strategic Leadership
- ✓ Instructional Leadership
- ✓ Cultural Leadership
- ✓ Human Resource Leadership
- ✓ Managerial Leadership
- ✓ External Development Leadership
- ✓ Micropolitical Leadership



\*New Standards have been developed and are currently being piloted. However, the new standards do not remove any responsibilities.

# Conditions: Too Many Responsibilities



## Human Resource Leadership:

“The school executive practices effective human resource leadership when he or she

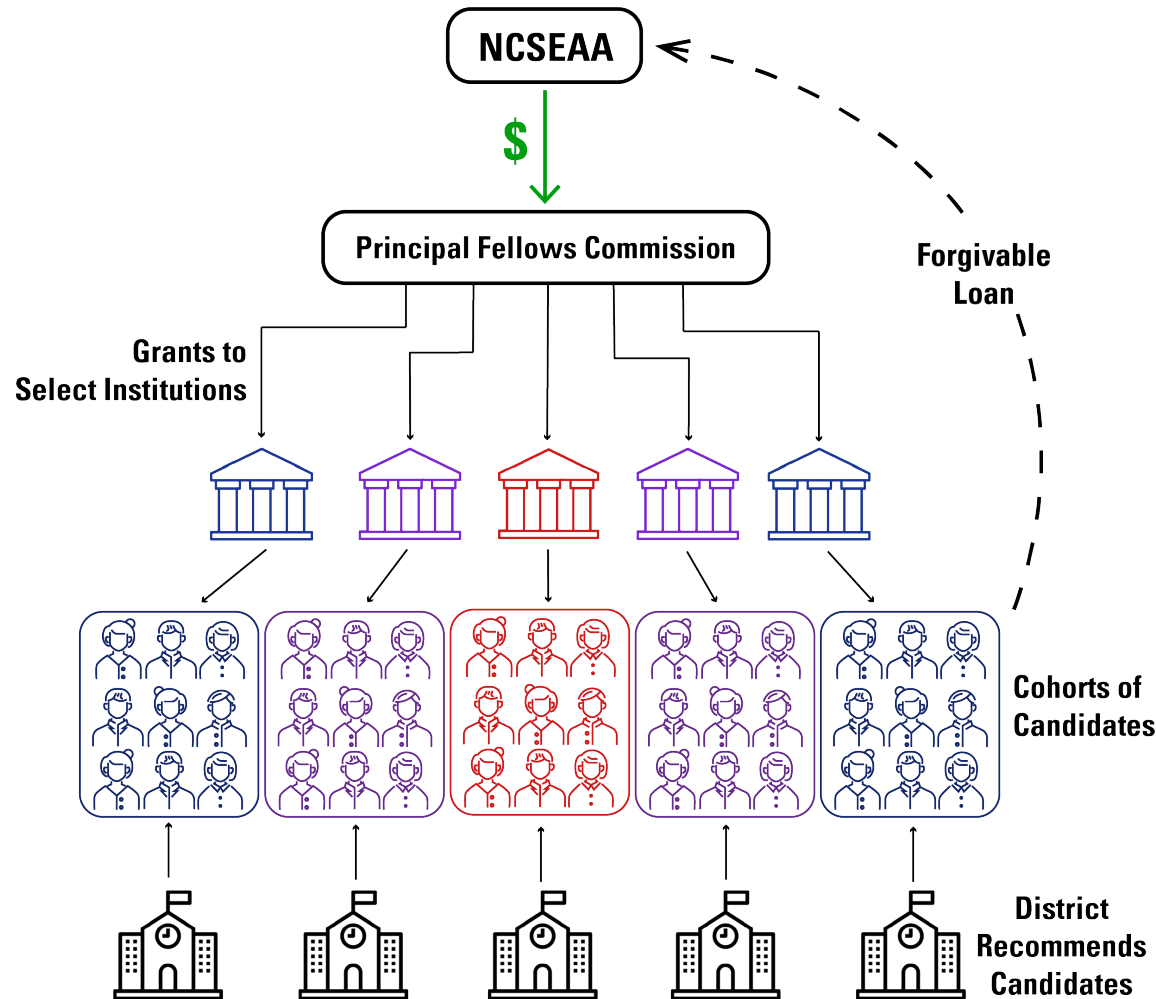
- Provides structures for the development of effective professional learning communities aligned with the school improvement plan, focused on results, and characterized by collective responsibility for instructional planning and for 21st century student learning;
- Models the importance of continued adult learning by engaging in activities to develop personal knowledge and skill along with expanded self – awareness;
- Communicates a positive attitude about the ability of staff to accomplish substantial outcomes to improve their efficacy;
- Creates processes for teachers to assume leadership and decision-making roles within the school that foster their career development;
- Creates and monitors processes for hiring, inducting and mentoring new teachers and other staff to the school;
- Uses the results of the Teacher Working Conditions Survey to create and maintain a positive work environment for teachers and other staff;
- Evaluates teachers and other staff in a fair and equitable manner and utilizes the results of evaluations to improve performance;
- Provides for results-oriented professional development that is aligned with identified 21st century curricular, instructional, and assessment needs, is connected to school improvement goals and is differentiated based on staff needs;
- Continuously searches for the best placement and utilization of staff to fully benefit from their strengths;
- Is systematically and personally involved in the school’s professional activities.”

# Promising Practices for Principals



- ✓ Principal Fellows Program – competitive-grant program for high-quality principal preparation programs that prioritize rigorous recruitment and school-based learning experiences. Currently producing ~40% of the principals needed statewide.
- ✓ Advanced Teaching Roles – state grant program that allows school districts to design and implement new organizational structures that distribute instructional leadership across the school building.
- ✓ Principal Compensation – significant increases in principal pay since 2017 and a transformed salary schedule that rewards student growth.

# Principal Fellows Program (formerly TP3)



**427**  
PF/TP3 Principal Graduates  
(as of Spring 2022)

Of those in school leadership positions in June 2020,  
**83%**  
work in high-needs schools\*  
across North Carolina.



**Beginning  
Teacher**



**Licensed  
Teacher**



**Highly Effective  
Teacher**



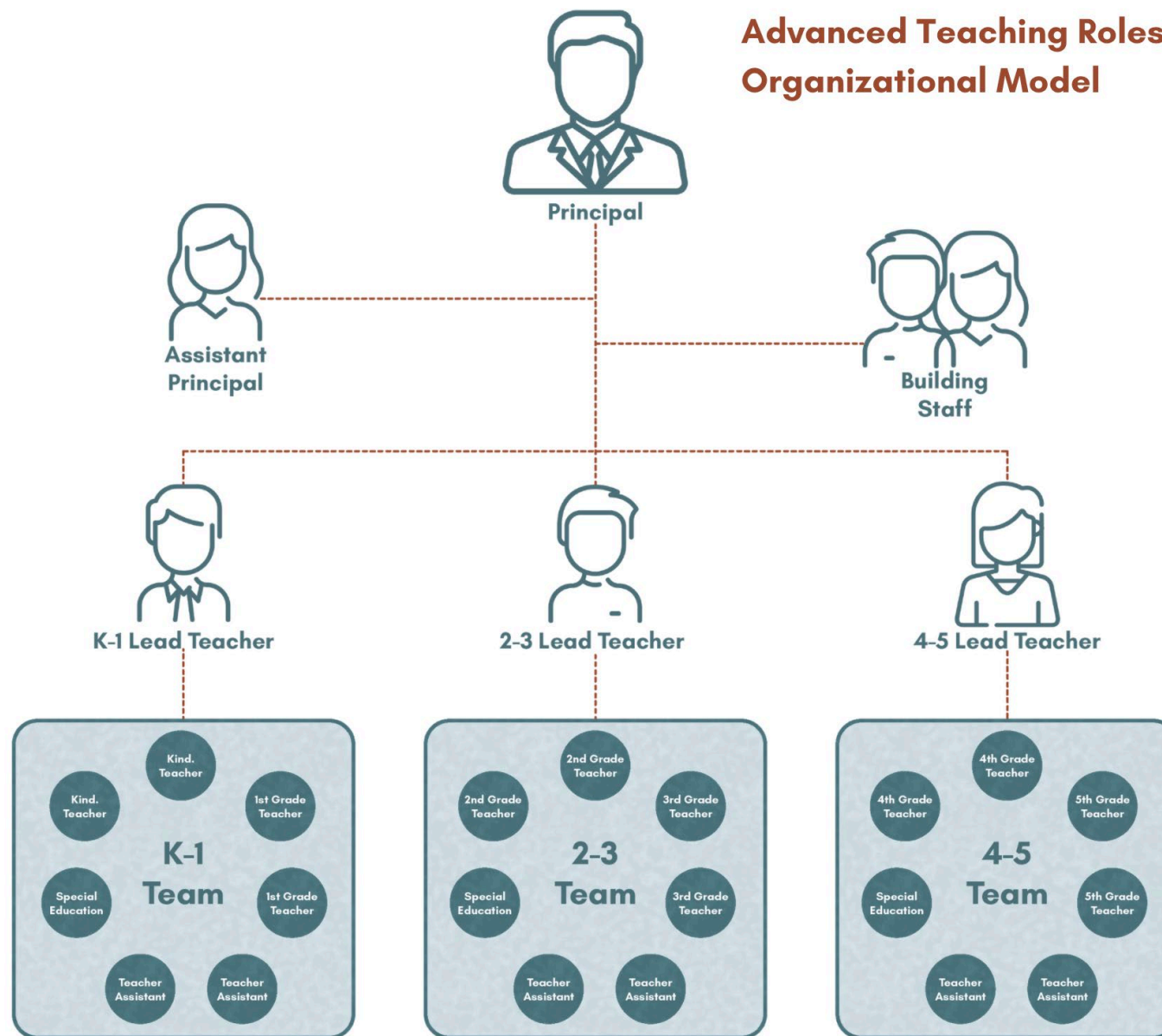
**Licensed  
Teacher**



**Effective  
Teacher**



## Advanced Teaching Roles Organizational Model





Beginning  
Teacher



Licensed  
Teacher



Highly Effective  
Lead Teacher



Licensed  
Teacher



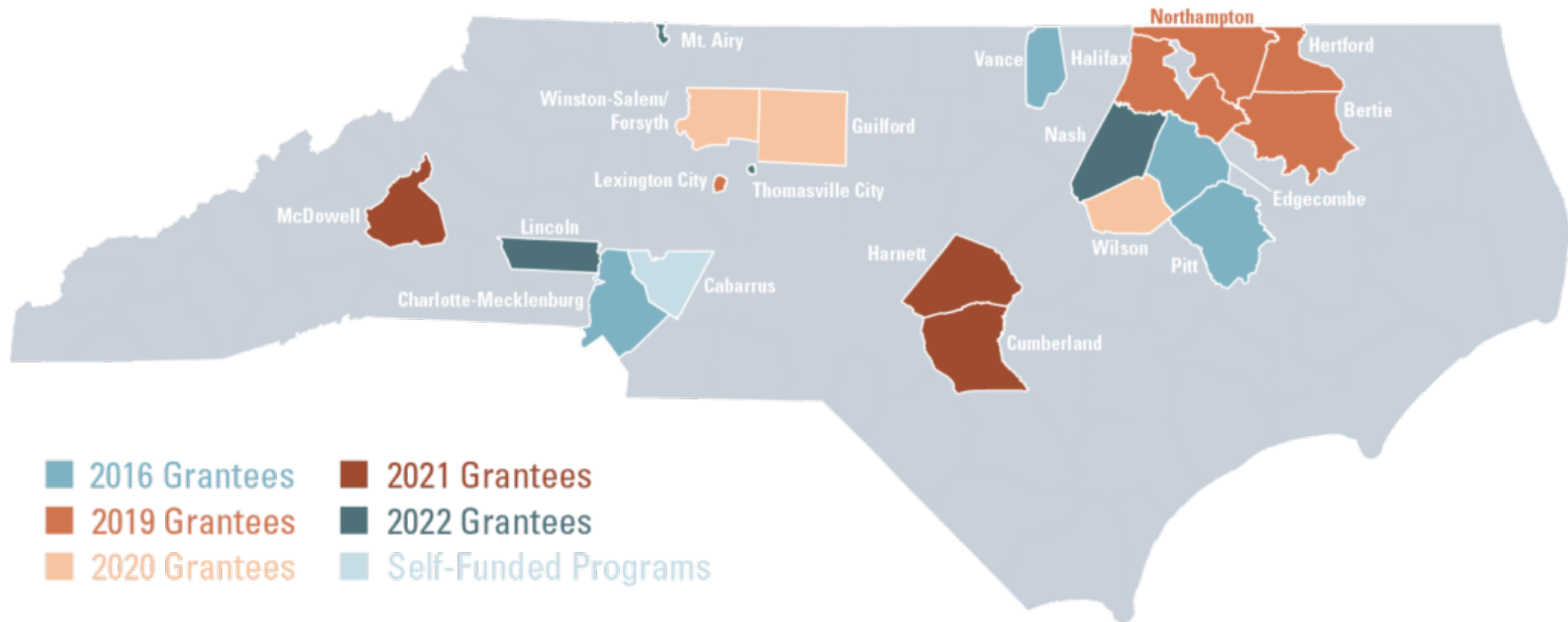
Effective  
Teacher





# Advanced Teaching Roles

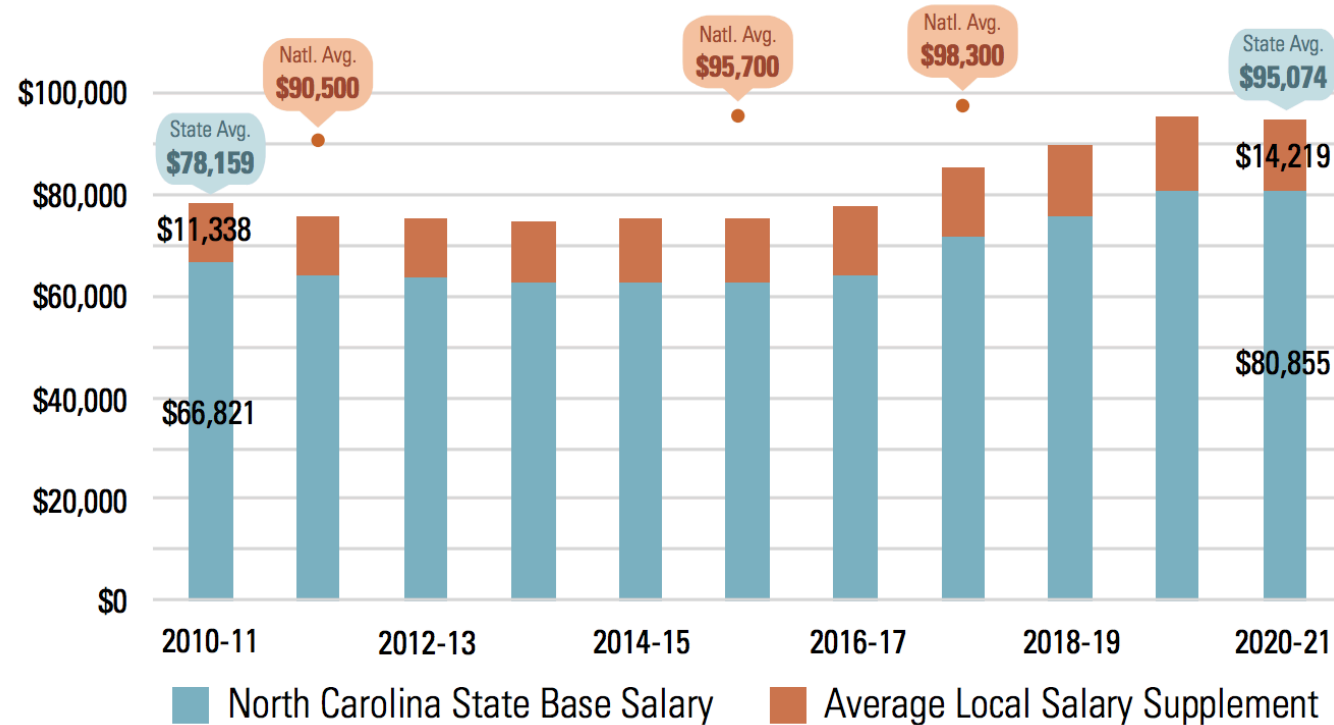
## Districts with Advanced Teaching Roles Programs, 2021-22



# Principal Pay



## Average K-12 Principal Salaries in Traditional Public Schools (2010-11 to 2020-21)



**Source:** NC DPI Statistical Profile Table 20; NC DPI Annual Highlights Reports (2010-2020); National Center for Education Statistics National Teacher and Principal Survey

# Principal Pay



## 2022-23 Principal Salary Schedule

Base Schedule		Student Growth Status	
School Size	Base State Pay	Met	Exceeded
0-200	\$72,621	\$7,262	\$14,524
201-400	\$76,252	\$7,625	\$15,250
401-700	\$79,883	\$7,988	\$15,977
701-1,000	\$83,514	\$8,351	\$16,703
1,001-1,600	\$87,145	\$8,715	\$17,429
1,601+	\$90,776	\$9,078	\$18,155

+ Local Supplements + Other Bonuses

# Recommendations



1. Expand the Principal Fellows Program to produce 80% of the principals needed
2. Expand Advanced Teaching Roles to additional districts (maintaining opt-in approach)
3. Collect Data on Principal Turnover
4. Evaluate Effective Restart and Charter Schools Resource Flexibility
5. Consider Revising Principal and Asst. Principal Roles & Responsibilities
6. Strengthen Principal Pay with Multiple Measures  
(including complexity measures that encourage retention in high-need schools)

# Questions?

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