



## The Belk Foundation Helps Charlotte Design Schools to Pay Teachers More, Extend Great Teachers' Reach, and Meet Students' Needs

### Joint teacher/administration design teams will select and adapt models

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLOTTE, N.C.— In a rare, three-year commitment, The Belk Foundation will fund a partnership to help Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) select and adapt strategic school designs that extend the reach of excellent teachers to more students and better match resources to student needs. The school designs will reallocate funds to pay teachers more for additional contribution, increase on-the-job planning and development time, and provide for flexible scheduling and grouping, while remaining within budget.

Facilitated by two national organizations, Public Impact and Education Resource Strategies, school design teams that include teachers and school leaders will integrate the new models into 17 schools in the first year and add more schools each of the two years after that, with almost half of the district's schools implementing by 2017–18. The Belk Foundation will fund transition costs with a grant of \$505,000, after which the models will be budget-neutral. The grant is one of the foundation's largest ever.

The district is committed to great student learning in all the schools and to making them great places to work, CMS Superintendent Heath Morrison said. "These models do both because they let our most accomplished teachers develop other teachers and help more students," Morrison said. "And we greatly appreciate The Belk Foundation's show of confidence. Their support for transition costs is crucial to meet the high demand among our schools."

The Belk Foundation is highly dedicated to making Charlotte-Mecklenburg's public schools outstanding for everyone, said Katie B. Morris, The Belk Foundation's board chairwoman. "The Belk Foundation believes in the power of great teaching and the potential of all children," Morris said. "Knowing that these models will pay CMS teachers far more, but also be financially sustainable after our investment, motivated us to support this work."

The 17 schools are:

- Albemarle Road Elementary
- Ballantyne Elementary
- Barnette Elementary
- Beverly Woods Elementary
- Bradley Middle School
- Coulwood Middle School
- Hidden Valley Elementary
- James Martin Middle School



- Northwest School of the Arts
- Quail Hollow Middle School
- Shamrock Gardens Elementary
- Smithfield Elementary
- Torrence Creek Elementary
- West Mecklenburg High
- William A. Hough High
- Winget Park Elementary
- Winterfield Elementary

Building on their prior work in CMS and across the nation, Public Impact and Education Resource Strategies will assist participating schools. They will facilitate school teams, which include teachers, in selecting and modifying school designs that will work best for each school. The term “school design” refers to the strategic use of people, time, technology, and money, to increase student achievement. The new school designs for CMS will prioritize teaching effectiveness, target individual student attention, maximize time for learning, and selectively invest in noninstructional support for students.

This year, four schools within the Project L.I.F.T. zone of high-need CMS schools chose and began implementing school design models to better support students through extending the reach of excellent teachers, developed by Public Impact in consultation with teachers nationwide. The teachers piloting these reach-extension roles earn pay supplements of up to \$23,000, approximately a 50 percent increase above average teacher pay in North Carolina. In spring 2013, Project L.I.F.T. was flooded with 708 applications for the 19 new reach-extension teaching positions in the pilot schools, where some teaching jobs previously went unfilled. Subsequently, the principals of 50 district schools expressed interest in joining the initiative.

“I know from my own experience as a teacher and school leader that all students can achieve at high levels,” Project L.I.F.T. leader Denise Watts said. “These models give more opportunities to teachers who believe that and who make it happen.”

Project L.I.F.T. built on a tradition of focusing people, time, and money in the areas most likely to increase teaching effectiveness and improve student outcomes. In 2008, the district implemented the innovative Strategic Staffing initiative, designed to attract the district’s best school leaders and teachers to the highest-need schools, and then give them the autonomy to structure their schools to best meet the needs of their students. The Strategic Staffing model has been recognized and replicated nationally.

“Charlotte is one of the leading districts in the country making bold resource decisions to provide support to principals in making decisions around school designs, beginning with our collaboration with CMS on the Strategic Staffing Initiative,” said Karen Hawley Miles, president and executive director of ERS, which has worked extensively with CMS on strategic planning and the Strategic Staffing initiative. “We are delighted to work with Public Impact and CMS to continue this effort to make the most of their resources to help students.”

ERS’ pioneering work in strategic school design evolves from [The Strategic School](#), by Karen Hawley Miles and Stephen Frank, published in 2008 by Corwin Press. Since 2008, ERS has worked with districts and school leaders to explore the link between purposeful resource allocation and academic



achievement, culminating in [School System 20/20](#)—seven strategies to help district leaders transform systems to meet the needs of all students.

This new initiative respects hard-working teachers, said Bryan C. Hassel, co-director of Public Impact. “We are committed to helping teachers earn the rewards and respect due to them, and to providing them with time and access to their accomplished colleagues, so that all teachers and students can excel.”

Public Impact’s work in CMS grows out of its [Opportunity Culture](#) initiative, launched in 2011. In its quest to reach all students with excellent teachers by 2025, the Public Impact team published [school model summaries](#) and [detailed models](#) that use job redesign and technology to reach more students with excellent teachers and their teams, for more pay, within budget. Most of the models add significant time for teaching teams to collaborate and improve during school hours and make pay increases possible for all teachers—not just the best. In fall 2013, Hassel and Public Impact Co-Director Emily Ayscue Hassel updated their Opportunity Culture vision in [An Opportunity Culture For All: Making Teaching a Highly Paid, High-Impact Profession](#).

Excellent teachers—those in the top 20 to 25 percent—are the ones who, on average, help students make a year and a half worth of learning growth annually and improve students’ higher-order thinking skills. Without excellent teaching consistently, students who start out behind rarely catch up, and students who meet today’s grade-level targets rarely leap ahead to meet rising global standards.

To arrange an interview with The Belk Foundation’s board chairwoman, Katie Morris, contact Johanna Anderson, Belk Foundation executive director, at [Johanna@belkfoundation.org](mailto:Johanna@belkfoundation.org); 704.426.8322. To arrange an interview with officials at Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools, contact Tahira Stalberte at 980.343.0954. To arrange an interview with Public Impact’s co-director, Dr. Bryan C. Hassel, contact Carol Williams at [carol\\_williams@publicimpact.com](mailto:carol_williams@publicimpact.com); 919.240.7955. To arrange an interview with ERS’ Karen Hawley Miles, contact Allison Daskal Hausman, [ahausman@erstrategies.org](mailto:ahausman@erstrategies.org); 617.600.4619.

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### **About Public Impact**

Public Impact is a national organization based in North Carolina whose mission is to dramatically improve learning outcomes for all children in the U.S., with a special focus on students who are not served well. We are a team of professionals from many backgrounds, including former teachers. We are researchers, thought leaders, tool-builders, and on-the-ground consultants who work with leading education reformers.

Learn more about an Opportunity Culture on [OpportunityCulture.org](#). The website also provides [tools](#)—all free—for school design teams, and related [publications](#).

### **About Education Resource Strategies**

Education Resource Strategies (ERS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to transforming how urban school systems organize resources—people, time, technology, and money—so that every school succeeds for every student. We have worked hand-in-hand with more than 20 school systems



nationwide, including 16 of the 100 largest urban districts, on topics such as teacher compensation and career path, funding equity, school design, central office support, and budget development. In all of our work, we focus on the larger picture—how resources work together to create high-performing systems.

For more information, please visit [www.ERStrategies.org](http://www.ERStrategies.org).

### **About Project L.I.F.T. and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools**

Project L.I.F.T. is a groundbreaking initiative dedicated to supporting gap-closing reforms in nine high-need schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district. To ensure all children receive the promise of a high-quality education, Project L.I.F.T. aspires to lift up and accelerate the school district's efforts to improve academic outcomes for all students. The work of Project L.I.F.T. to eliminate educational disparities includes the following:

- Four key areas of intervention: talent, time, technology, and invested parents/community support
- Efforts to reform policy that will advance educational outcomes for students
- An unprecedented goal of raising \$55 million for a five-year initiative

For more information, please see [www.projectliftcharlotte.org](http://www.projectliftcharlotte.org).

### **About The Belk Foundation**

The Belk Foundation is a family foundation based in Charlotte, N.C., that supports public education by strengthening teachers and school leaders, and ensuring that students are achieving on or above grade level by the third grade. Now in its third generation of family leadership, The Belk Foundation serves as the public expression of gratitude and commitment shown by the family that created the Belk department store organization, which was founded by William Henry Belk and Dr. John Montgomery Belk in 1888.

For more information, please see [www.belkfoundation.org](http://www.belkfoundation.org).