

# Davie County Schools Grant Proposal

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## Read to Achieve Summer Camp 2016

### I. Proposal Summary (Executive Summary)

Davie County Schools demonstrates remarkable success with moving nonproficient readers in third grade toward achieving reading mastery. The basis for this success was created in the dynamic, multi-faceted 2014 Summer Read to Achieve Camp and has continued through the 2015 summer camp and the 2015-16 school year.

Implementing both Hill Center Reading Achievement Program (Hill RAP) sessions and A+ Schools Instruction during the summer program and school year has built a consistent foundation for success. Significant growth both academically and in the student's confidence, engagement and stamina in approaching new learning experiences has been the result. Over the past two summers the expected number of students was reduced according to additional exemptions added to the state Read to Achieve law. This produced tremendous benefits as the student to teacher ratio was able to be maintained at 8/1. This dynamic of small groupings based on individual needs has been extremely beneficial for these struggling students.

This proposal requests funding to recreate this successful literacy instructional model and expand the range of students involved to include "at-risk" first and second graders. The total request is \$90,705.00 for the 2016 Read to Achieve Summer Camp.

### II. Organization Description and History

Guided by the strength of our organization's vision:

*Davie County Schools will be the national model in creating educational excellence through innovative and personalized experiences.*

With approximately 6,400 students, Davie County Schools is composed of 52% male students and 48% female students. The demographics are: 1% Asian students, 12% Hispanic Students, 6% Black students, 77% White students and 4% Multiracial students. With a four year graduation cohort for the past three years that surpass 75%, Davie County Schools continues to hold one of the highest graduation rates in the state with 2010-11 at 76.6%, 2011-12 at 83.2% , 2012-2013 at 84%, and 2013-14 a record high at 87.6%. During 2015 and 2016 school years the graduation rate has remained at 83.5-85%.

The students in Davie County Schools have demonstrated a high level of achievement over the past ten years. This is due to vigilant attention to continuous improvement and a concentrated focus on pedagogy designed to meet student needs combined with cutting edge technology. Ranking in the top ten in districts across the state, Davie County Schools continues to strengthen classroom success by providing engaging and rigorous curriculum through the expertise of a highly qualified teaching staff and attuned administrators. A strong focus on building literacy from kindergarten through high school is the underpinning for student achievement.

One of the most notable examples of progressive and research-based pedagogy is the ongoing affiliation with the Hill Center Reading Achievement Program, which began in 2007. Teacher training, data collection, and process monitoring were key components then and continue to be emphasized now. Maintaining a strong contingent of fully trained Hill RAP teachers has been an ongoing but often frustrating effort in the Davie County Schools.

Retirements and relocations have led to a need for more Hill Center certified teachers. While training Hill Center mentors has helped to bridge the gap of supervising progression through the certification process, there are now ten teaching positions that were filled with Hill Center certified teachers that are now filled by new teachers who do not have this experience. Davie County Schools continues to seek ways to send more teachers for training and equip newly trained teachers with the required Hill Center mentors.

An affiliation with North Carolina A+ Schools has led to innovative teaching methods being employed in classrooms across the district. This is the direct result of teachers being trained during the summer camp and retaining that expertise for use in their own classrooms in a variety of schools. Ongoing professional development has allowed DCS to employ the "teacher as trainer" model to increase the awareness of this methodology beyond the Read to Achieve Camp staff. North Carolina A+ Schools continues to provide training at state-wide sessions held in conjunction with the NC Museum of Art and the NCDPI. Student engagement is an essential factor in creating a resilient learner.

North Carolina New Schools also serves as an educational partner to the Davie County Schools with particular training opportunities for STEM Center teachers at Davie High School. The focus on cutting-edge technology in classrooms across the district was initiated by the Mebane Foundation's investment in infrastructure and hardware. This has been an enormous incentive to maintain and push forward as technology evolves and teaching needs change.

### **III. Background**

During the 2014 Legislative Session, North Carolina House Bill 950/S.L.2012-142 Section 7A was signed into law. This law required all third grade students who did not demonstrate proficiency on the NC End-of-Grade Reading Test to be barred from promotion to fourth grade until they met the required level of reading proficiency. For the past two years the prediction of non-proficient 3rd graders in Davie County Schools has been 8-12% higher than the actual number of non-proficient students at the end of the school year.

During the months leading up to the 2014 summer program, several adjustments were made to the requirements of the law, which resulted in only 60 students out of the expected 140 students being required to attend the summer reading program. In the summer of 2015 the camp numbers grew to 92 as we were allowed to involve both "required" and "invited" 3rd graders, in addition we added another 19 invited 2nd graders for a total camp enrollment of 111.

The 2016 projected non-proficient student percentage is 37% based on the results of 2015 End of Year testing. The North Carolina General Assembly has once again revised the original legislation to now include both 1st and 2nd graders who are not proficient in reading by the end of the 2015-16 school year. The funding formula has also changed as the funds are based on the allotted ADM of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders combined with the percent not proficient and a determined base rate for each LEA. With these calculations the state will provide approximately \$237.32 per student to cover all expenses related to summer camp. This is significantly less than the actual cost of a four week summer camp staffed by highly-qualified K-5 teachers who are required by law to be paid at their full monthly salary rate plus FICA and retirement. To achieve the positive results that have been associated with the DCS Read to Achieve camp, we are applying for additional funding to offset this gap through this grant.

At the end of the RtA Summer Camp in 2015, over 30% of the students scored proficient on the RtA test. Out of 82 students who took the test and other alternative assessments, 27.5% were proficient including 9 ELL students who had scored a low level 1 on their original EOG. In late October 2015, 12 more students passed their RtA test, further raising the percent proficient. These remarkable results are a sharp contrast to the low passing rates of neighboring counties and can be attributed to consistent use of strategies that worked during our summer camps. With over 53% of our original campers now demonstrating proficiency in reading, we are encouraged that the combination of Hill and A+ strategies combined with small student to teacher ratios are the key to individualizing success.

It is important to identify students as early as possible in the spring semester to properly determine their placement in Hill RAP groups. This information will inform all learning configurations and Hill RAP groups for the summer camp. The goal is to align Hill RAP instruction as closely to the most recently completed level within the Hill RAP continuum. The many lessons learned during the past two summers support our belief that no time can be spared. Students' goals will be specific and achievable with concerted effort on the part of students, teachers, and the program directors.

Third grade students must score a level "P" or better on a TRC assessment. TRC assessments are administered during MClass benchmark windows. Teachers conducting these assessments receive additional training to support best practice and consistent procedures across all elementary schools. MClass results will also determine the eligibility of 1st and 2nd graders for the 2016 summer camp. (see attached guidelines)

Reading Specialists, Principals and Instructional Coaches (expanded to Mocksville ES, Cooleemee ES, Cornatzer ES, William R. Davie ES, North Davie MS and South Davie MS in 2015-16) work together with third grade teachers to monitor the progress of students. The Curriculum Department continues to work with Principals and parents to keep communication open and frequent to verify that families are aware of the law, the methods we are using to meet the law, and the possible implications for their children.

Regular parent meetings are ongoing at each elementary school as we approach the 2016 testing window. Third grade students who do not score at the proficient level and who do not qualify for a good cause exemption through Exceptional Children services or have not met the STAR Assessment score of 5.1 will be invited to attend the DCS RtA summer reading camp. Attendance at RtA Summer Camp is required to advance to 4th grade in Davie County Schools, however, should the family choose to keep their child out of camp, those students will be tested at the end of the summer as required by state law. Throughout the four weeks, they will have prescriptive interventions in both Hill and A+. If the students are able to pass one of the state tests at the end of the summer camp, they will be promoted to fourth grade. If not, we will follow the requirements of the law and advance them to 4th grade with a Reading Retention code.

Davie County Schools has created and is eager to maintain a model program with the necessary skilled personnel and the appropriate materials and programming to increase the success of these students in reading fluency, reading comprehension, oral expression, and written communication. As in 2014 and 2015, the financial challenges of implementing the summer camp portion of the Read to Achieve Law are numerous. There continues to be no allocation from the state to support transportation costs, school nutrition costs, or specialized teaching and training costs.

These financial parameters severely limit many critical components of the camp, such as hiring seasoned teachers, providing aligned materials and supplies, and providing innovative training for all personnel. This is a critical time for non-proficient, retained 3rd graders and now non-proficient 1st and 2nd graders, who will need expert teaching, a proven methodology, and an engaging curriculum as well as the consistent monitoring that will assure positive results for these children.

## IV. Project Description

From June 27th through July 21st, 2016 Davie County Schools will conduct the 3rd annual RtA Camp. This four week summer reading camp will satisfy the requirements of the Read to Achieve Law. The summer camp session will be conducted for four days per week with an extended time of instruction from four hours to six hours, thus meeting the required hours while compressing the number of days that would involve transportation, salaries, and school nutrition.

Allotments from the state are to be published by March 2016, with the expectation that Davie County Schools will receive approximately \$237.32 per student with the addition of 1st and 2nd grade students to the 3rd graders. This is over \$100.00 less per student than was allocated in 2015. An allocation of \$335.00 per student with a total of \$58,625.00 was made in April of 2015. These allocations continue to fall short of the costs for a high-quality program with only a third of the anticipated expenses of the DCS RtA Camp being covered. These costs are predominantly associated with personnel and teacher salaries.

With the news that we are required to add 1st and 2nd grade students in the summer of 2016, we are now faced with hiring additional teachers, training and certifying more Hill Center teachers, training or providing instructional supports to new A+ teachers, creating a new curriculum for 1st graders (our 2015 2nd grade curriculum will be used again this year), and extending our terms to cover more student supervision by the YMCA staff. This is a significant challenge but it is also very exciting to be able to offer this unique learning environment and pedagogy to more students and to affect our younger students with these successful strategies.

The camp day will begin at 8:00 a.m., with a short combined session focused on goal setting for the day. Students will be grouped in small learning configurations with an average ratio of fourteen students per teacher except when students are in Hill RAP sessions at the four to one ratio. The student's day will be varied with Hill Rap sessions, writing to learn sessions, art and reading sessions, testing stamina sessions, music/theatre and verbal expression sessions, and diagnostic reading clinic sessions. Sessions will last approximately forty-five minutes. Each day will end at 2:45 p.m. At the end of the fourth week, students will be allowed to retake the EOG and the RtA Reading tests. A celebration of their accomplishments will be coordinated with the staff of the YMCA. All materials and supplies will be provided by Davie County Schools with support from this grant and state funding.

In 2014 and 2015 the number of teachers trained as A+ teachers doubled because students rotated between their Hill and their A+ sessions throughout the day, it continues to be important to build capacity in the teaching staff. This summer A+ Schools Arts Integrated Instruction will again include the entire staff in order to produce a more cohesive program. During these training days all planning and scheduling will be finalized, teachers will make their materials, and complete work to prepare their classrooms. This training will be conducted onsite if arrangements can be made with A+ Schools. If not our teachers will travel to Greensboro for training and planning each of the three days and return to work on classrooms on the fourth day. The costs for this training and for the update and new training in Hill RAP are included in this proposal.

During both the 2014 and 2015 RtA Summer Camp, the YMCA provided staff for supervision and active learning activities during the middle of the day. This time was crucial in the success of the program, as it allowed all of the teachers to have a shared planning and work with assessment data to determine next steps. Each unit of study was prepared with input from all teachers and included arts integrated learning; "read, tell, write, know" strategies; and a thematic approach to layering information and skills in each unit. Students will participate in a cohesive instructional pattern throughout the four weeks as a result of this planning.

## V. Project Timeline

### Activity #1 - Hire Personnel, Deliver Training, and Complete Program Organization

- Advertise positions (by Mar. 10th, conduct interviews by April 6th, and hire teachers (teachers from 2014 & 2015 will be re-appointed: positive performance and training)
- Advertise positions and conduct interviews
- Advertise for Director and Curriculum Coordinator
- Schedule training for Hill RAP and A+ Schools Literacy Model
- Form leadership team led by Program Director and Curriculum Coordinator
- Construct overall program structure and collaborate on flexible weekly schedule
- Order all materials and make arrangements to borrow musical equipment
- Make arrangements for use of iPads and other technology that are included in program
- Set up bus routes and coordinate school nutrition
- Coordinate with principals for all program communications and placements

### Activity #2 - Coordinate Placements, Complete Teacher Schedules, Conduct Weekly Reviews

- Work school by school with reading teachers and principals to place students in classes
- Match all teachers with appropriate student groups
- Establish all initial groupings for Hill RAP sessions according to tested levels
- Curriculum Coordinator leads unit formation with arts-based reading teachers
- Program Director organizes space requirements and assigned areas with local principal
- Establish and maintain regular observation schedules and data collection routines
- Conduct weekly updates with all teachers, review running records of student progress
- Coordinate celebration for the final day of camp (part of YMCA partnership)
- Organize and conduct parent conferences at the end of week three
- Communicate with principals as to progress and projections with regard to grade levels
- Continue weekly collaboration sessions with all teachers to review data and share input
- Share accomplishments/goal setting each week, regularly celebrate successes publically

### Activity #3 - Program Evaluation, Final Assessments and Placements, Teacher Feedback

- Conduct team meetings each week to share feedback and make adjustments
- End of Grade or Alternative Read to Achieve Tests will be given during the final week
- Data collections will be monitored throughout the four week summer camp
- Decisions related to grade placement will be made with principal input
- All final decisions will be made after Dr. Hartness has reviewed all portfolios
- Program monitoring will be consistent and shared regularly with Noel Grady-Smith
- Summer reading camp teachers will assist with determining areas for program improvement for the coming year

## VI. Project Budget

Please see attached document.