

For Immediate Release

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Mebane Foundation Grant to Fund Five Year Multi-Million Dollar Transformative Strategic Initiative with Davie County Schools to Address Early Literacy

The Mebane Charitable Foundation, located in Mocksville, NC, has approved a grant of almost \$2.5 million to Davie County Schools to support a five-year early literacy initiative to improve kindergarten readiness and to increase the percentage of students reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

“The Mebane Foundation has been funding quality literacy interventions for years, but we felt it was time to find a partner and aggressively move the needle toward kindergarten readiness and reading proficiency by the end of third grade,” said Larry Colbourne, President of the Mebane Foundation. “Over the years we’ve invested heavily in Davie County and many of those assets remain and are alive and well, making Davie County the obvious choice for this long-term and strategic early literacy initiative.”

Davie County Schools has a rich history of academic success and consistently ranks in the top 10-15 percent of districts in the state of North Carolina. But despite the county’s successful academic performance, approximately 30 percent of students do not enter kindergarten “ready” according to DIAL scores (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning) and 34 percent do not show reading proficiency by the end of the third grade as demonstrated on the NC End-of-Grade (EOG) Reading Test

The goals of this initiative are to improve kindergarten readiness from 70 percent to 90 percent and to increase reading proficiency in third grade from 66 percent to 80 percent by 2022. This project will impact approximately 2,300 students each year over the 5-year implementation period.

“Our county leadership and community partners all seem to be working from the same sheet of music, thus we felt the time was right to throw out such a bold set of metrics that if reached, would put Davie County schools at the top in North Carolina,” Colbourne said.

“We’ve been following closely the recommendations of the Business Roundtable, a national group of CEO’s from around the country, led by folks like North Carolina’s own Jim Goodnight of SAS, and at this moment in time we believe, as do they, that kindergarten readiness and reading proficiency by third grade are the keys to the future success of our workforce and our country.”

Initially, this project will be a collaborative effort between Davie County Schools, Smart Start, and the public/private preschools. The grant from the Mebane Foundation will provide professional development, materials, and specialized support staff totaling \$2,447,188.00 over 5 years, with additional supplementary funding for the Read to Achieve Summer Camp for at-risk first, second, and third graders who need extra academic support beyond the regular school year. In addition, this project will develop and build the professional capacity of 111 preschool through third grade classroom teachers in Davie County Schools and 14 preschool teachers in private facilities. These educators will continue impacting countless students for years to come.

The partnership will demonstrate how districts can leverage high quality professional development and technology to support individualized learning and improve overall reading results, especially for those students who are most difficult to reach.

Colbourne added, “Through the partnerships created with the Healthy Davie Initiative we feel this five-year plan will only get stronger as we move forward. Initially, I see it heavily involving our partners at Davie County Schools, Smart Start and our county daycares, but as it evolves, we have the ability and county partnerships to make enhancements on the fly. We will do this!”

“Davie County Schools is extremely excited to partner with the Mebane Foundation and other community organizations to make significant improvements in early literacy,” said Dr. Darrin Hartness, the Superintendent of Davie County Schools. “This partnership will be a national model for ensuring early literacy in preschool through third grade.”

“This public-private partnership between Davie County Schools and the Mebane Foundation creates a unique opportunity to provide high quality professional development, strengthen instruction, and deliver the most effective learning experiences for all children in Davie County. We will focus efforts to ensure our children are developing foundational literacy skills from preschool through early grades. Research clearly indicates the correlation between reading proficiency by third grade and success in school; equipping our children early with these essential literacy skills prepares them for life. Through this collaboration, improvements in literacy will open doors of opportunity for students, and our community will be on a path to a more competitive and prosperous future.”

“We want to thank the Mebane Foundation leadership and Board of Directors for their confidence and continued investment in Davie County,” continued Hartness. “Your generosity and support allow us to provide experiences far beyond what can be funded in other public schools. You have challenged us to

dream and to sharpen our focus. Our teachers and the children we serve are blessed by your intentional efforts to change lives through literacy.”

About the Mebane Foundation

The Mebane Charitable Foundation supports collaborations and partnerships among educational professionals (public and private), business leaders, elected officials, and the community at large and has served as a catalyst by granting more than \$10 million to educational program partners across the state. The Foundation focuses resources to ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their highest potential in school, career, and in life.

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