

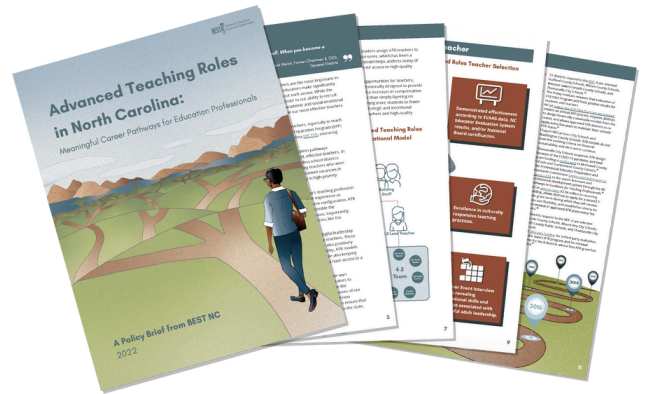
Advanced Teaching Roles in North Carolina:

Meaningful Career Pathways for Education Professionals

Executive Summary

Updated 2025

Across North Carolina, Advanced Teaching Roles are providing new avenues for teacher leadership, modernizing outdated school organizational models, empowering school leaders, and improving student achievement. BEST NC is pleased to share this executive summary of our Advanced Teaching Roles policy brief.



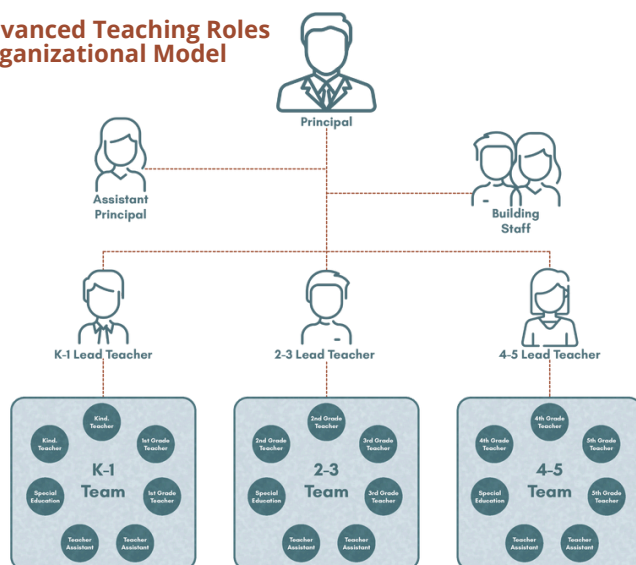
The Challenge: Lack of Career Opportunities and Professional Support

For decades, teachers have recognized that they are not given the same respect and experiences as other high-skill professionals. Most schools operate under a “one teacher, one classroom” structure that was designed more than a century ago and fails to treat educators as skilled professionals.

This outdated organizational structure suppresses teachers' career development, limits student access to effective instruction, and creates difficult working conditions throughout the school building. It also creates an unsustainable expectation that the principal should be the sole instructional leader to all teachers in the building, while also being the strategic leader of the school.



Advanced Teaching Roles Organizational Model



Modernizing Organizational Structures with Advanced Teaching Roles

Advanced Teaching Roles models create meaningful leadership roles and opportunities for higher pay for effective teachers while providing embedded professional support for novice teachers. These roles distribute leadership across the school, lessening the burden on principals while also positively impacting instructional quality and student performance.

When implemented with fidelity, ATR models improve student achievement by helping to recruit high-quality teacher candidates while also keeping excellent teachers in the classroom longer – ensuring that all students in North Carolina have access to a competent, well-trained teacher.

Evidence of Success

In a 2025 report, the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at NC State University found that:

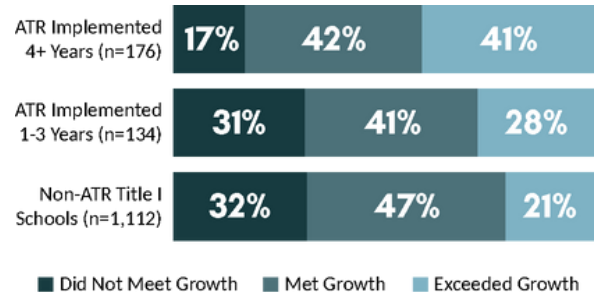
- The ATR program has **positively influenced beginning teacher retention** by providing personalized support and a culture of care that builds teacher confidence and job satisfaction.
- In schools implementing the ATR model, **students experienced ~1.7 months of learning gains in math** from 3rd to 4th grade.
- **Teachers in ATR schools tend to be more effective**, as measured by the Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), than teachers in non-ATR schools.

Additionally, data from NC DPI shows that students who attend a Title I school with an ATR staffing model meet or exceed growth expectations at a higher rate than students who attend traditionally-staffed Title I schools (right).

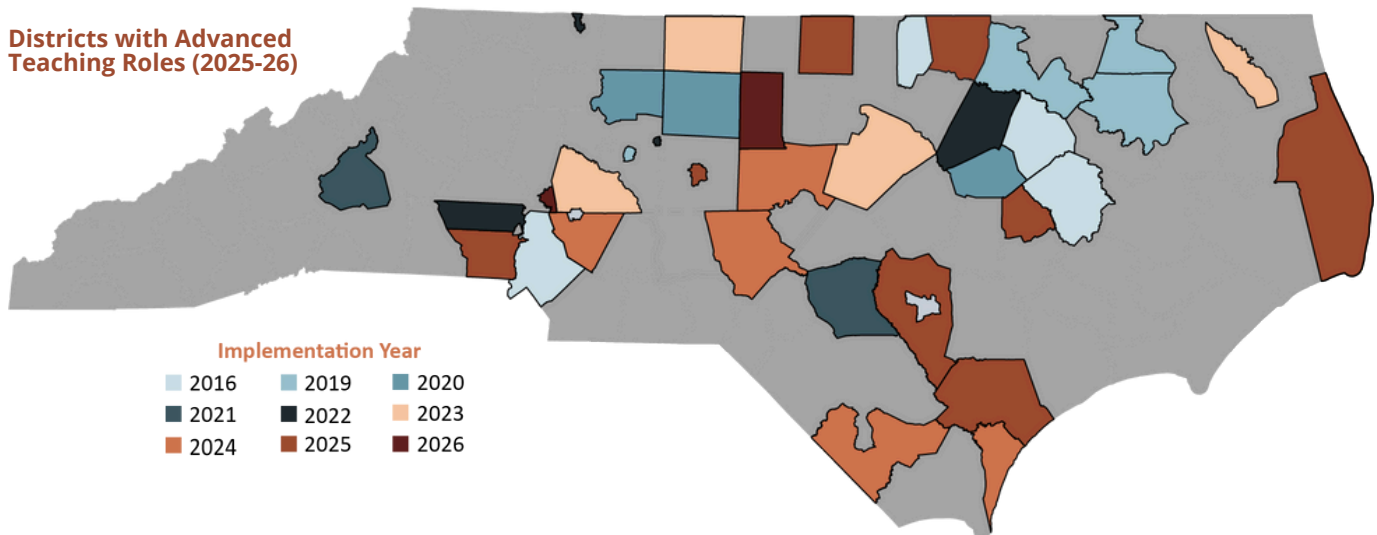
The Reach of Advanced Teaching Roles

During the 2025-26 school year, 508 schools across North Carolina were implementing their own ATR models. The majority of those schools were Title I schools, in part because those schools have more funding flexibility. As of the 2026-27 school year, there are 37 schools districts across North Carolina implementing ATR models, representing 32% of all districts in the state.

School Growth Status of Traditional Public Schools, by Title I Status and Advanced Teaching Roles Implementation Status (2024-25)



Districts with Advanced Teaching Roles (2025-26)



Best Practices for Advanced Teaching Roles Models

Since the inception of North Carolina's ATR program in 2016, our state has learned important lessons about building sustainable models that promote buy-in from districts, school leaders, teachers, and staff; and have a persistent, positive impact on student learning. Here are a few best practices in districts that help to drive continuous improvement:

- Focus on Student Success
- Expand to Additional Schools Steadily and Sustainably
- Engage Stakeholders in ATR Design
- Empower Principals to Align Teacher Skills with Student Needs
- Create Fair, Outcomes-Based Selection Processes
- Increase Compensation Substantially
- Invest in Professional Development for ATR Leaders
- Ensure Fiscal Sustainability
- Establish Flexible Roles
- Commit to Continuous Evaluation and Improvement

Learn More!

Scan the QR code to the right to access the full policy brief as well as videos and additional Advanced Teaching Roles content.

