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### **Project Impact Funds First Initiatives: Pathway to K, Summer School and New Pre-Kindergarten Classes**

WINSTON-SALEM, NC (JULY 21, 2016) – Project Impact, a community initiative to provide additional operating funds to Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools to address critical student achievement gaps, has provided funding for three initiatives: \$308,300 for Pathway to K; \$400,000 for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools summer school and \$856,470 for six new pre-kindergarten classrooms. The Project Impact advisory board voted to approve the request for funding that was submitted by Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Superintendent Dr. Beverly Emory.

Project Impact has goals to improve third-grade reading and math proficiency beginning with pre-kindergarten programs and to close literacy gaps within Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools as compared to other North Carolina urban school districts. Although still in the early stages of soliciting support, Project Impact already has commitments of approximately \$22 million toward its \$45 million goal.

Pathway to K is a three-week program focusing on about 225 children who have been on a pre-kindergarten wait list but who have not had the pre-kindergarten experience. The goal is to improve children's readiness for kindergarten academically, socially and emotionally. The program is being offered at 10 sites by teaching and support staff from Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools.

After several years of contracting summer school services, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools is using the Project Impact grant to supplement the existing budget and enable summer school to be staffed using highly experienced teachers from the school system. Teachers are being paid one additional month of their state salaries for teaching summer school during July, which is being offered at Easton Elementary, Kimmel Farm Elementary, Gibson Elementary, Forest Park Elementary, Kernersville Elementary, Hall-Woodward Elementary, Ashley Elementary, Diggs-Latham Elementary, Mineral Springs Elementary, North Hills Elementary, Winston-Salem Preparatory Academy (middle school) and Flat Rock Middle School. The summer program has grown to support nearly 2,300 students in first through eighth grades.

The expanded pre-kindergarten initiative will serve 105 additional children at six sites covering five elementary school zones. Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools will track the progress of the 105 students as they enter the school system and move through primary grades to validate pre-kindergarten learning as it correlates to third grade literacy.

“We thank the Project Impact leadership for having the wisdom and foresight to quickly fund three critical needs. Bold steps like this will demonstrate that Project Impact truly lives up to its name,” Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools Superintendent Dr. Beverly Emory said. “I’m particularly thrilled with the funding of our summer school program, which allowed us to double the number of students served in grades 1 through 5 and meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Read-to-Achieve requirement.”

A focus of Project Impact is intensive early intervention that targets proficiency gaps among lower-performing schools. Project Impact will fund programs to be evaluated over six years, beginning with the 2016-2017 school year. Using strategies proven successful in other school districts, the initiative includes pre-kindergarten expansion, extended learning options, and expanded staff development and instructional support.

Project Impact is a collaborative effort among many stakeholders, evolving from discussions over time among community and business leaders who have a keen interest in this issue. The \$22 million committed to Project Impact includes commitments by local employers and their foundations, including Flow Companies, BB&T, Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, Novant Health, Reynolds American Foundation and The Winston-Salem Foundation, as well as pledges by individuals.

### **About Project Impact**

Project Impact is a community initiative to provide additional operating funds to Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools to address critical student achievement gaps. Although still in the early stages of soliciting support, the initiative already has commitments of approximately \$22 million toward its \$45 million goal. A focus of Project Impact is intensive early intervention that targets proficiency gaps among lower-performing schools. Using strategies proven successful in other school districts, the initiative includes pre-kindergarten expansion, extended learning options, and expanded staff development and instructional support.

The Project Impact Fund is a component fund of The Winston-Salem Foundation. Project Impact’s Advisory Board consists of eight community leaders and two non-voting, non-local members who are experts in the early-childhood education field. For more information about Project Impact or to make a contribution, please visit [ProjectImpact.WS](http://ProjectImpact.WS).

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