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**The Winston-Salem Foundation Announces
5-Year, \$2 Million Commitment for Professional Development
in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools**



WINSTON-SALEM, NC—The Winston-Salem Foundation and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS) are pleased to announce the **Peer Project**, a 5-year, \$2 million commitment by the Foundation to support local educators with a broad and varied range of professional development learning opportunities for all employees that will ultimately enrich the classroom experience and boost student achievement.

“We know that there is a desire throughout Forsyth County to show community support for our invaluable public school educators. By investing in a culture of continuous educator learning, we’re investing in both our students and in the community as a whole. The Foundation is excited to be making this significant investment in the school system to positively impact the instructional effectiveness in all of our classrooms,” said Scott Wierman, president of the Foundation.

The Foundation has worked closely with the school system to identify this new strategic priority to support the district’s stated goals and priorities, which include: by 2020, 90 percent of third-grade students will read on or above grade level; by 2018, the graduation rate will be 90 percent; and by 2018, the achievement gap will be closed between subgroups by 10 percentage points while increasing the performance of all subgroups.

The Peer Project will officially launch during the 2015-16 school year, and its first professional development opportunity will be a round of educator grants available to staff attending the August WS/FCS Collaborative Learning Conference. Additional Peer Project training opportunities will be shared in the coming months, and all programming will be planned and administered by the school system.

“The Foundation has a long history of supporting our educators, and we’re so pleased that it will partner with us to achieve our district goals. We know that in order to achieve these, we must work together to equip our staff with the tools, resources, and enrichment opportunities they need,” said Dr. Beverly Emory, superintendent of Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools.

The Peer Project aligns with other grantmaking investments that the Foundation has made in the school system, including 32 Community Grants totaling \$462,671 over the past 10 years. The Foundation also supports individual educators’ professional development through the Forsyth County Teacher Grants program, which in 2015 alone awarded 52 grants totaling \$78,446 for innovative and results-oriented educational opportunities. The Foundation’s educational support in Forsyth County also extends to nearly \$1 million in college scholarships that were given to local students in the 2014-2015 school year.

For updated information on the Peer Project in the future, please visit www.wsfoundation.org/peerproject.

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The Winston-Salem Foundation is a community foundation that supports charitable programs in the greater Forsyth County area. Founded in 1919 with a \$1,000 gift, it now administers approximately 1,300 funds and had total custodial assets of \$384.3 million at the end of 2014. In 2014, the Foundation granted \$24.8 million to charitable causes, over \$2 million of which was through the Community Grants program. Learn more at www.wsfoundation.org.

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools serves approximately 54,000 students in 81 schools in the Piedmont Triad area of North Carolina. At every school, students are led by teachers and staff members dedicated to helping them grow as students and people. Parents, students, schools and the community are working together to build the leaders of tomorrow. Learn more at www.wsfcs.k12.nc.us.