



Raising Student Achievement in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

BL BetterLesson

“This partnership has been instrumental in my school reform work at Nations Ford. The sustainability of this coaching model has significantly impacted student outcomes. My hope is to continue expanding this approach to continue building teacher capacity, which in turn impacts student outcomes.”

Alejandra Garcia

Principal, Nations Ford Elementary

A Holistic Approach to School Improvement

In 2017, three Title I elementary schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg sought an effective way to raise student proficiency and growth. Beyond these quantitative outcomes, however, leaders wanted to see the following changes take place in their schools:

1. Shifting to more student-centered classrooms.
2. Developing environments in which students could be more self-reflective.
3. Providing teachers with support to better differentiate their instruction.

During the previous school year, Nations Ford Elementary had partnered with BetterLesson to bring personalized, job-embedded coaching to a cohort of teachers. The results were powerful, which led the leadership teams of Piney Grove Elementary and Starmount Academy of Excellence to initiate their own partnerships with BetterLesson heading into the 2017-18 school year. Across the three schools, 28 teachers were selected to work with BetterLesson coaches, with the goal of making significant progress toward the three schools' quantitative and qualitative goals.

Implementing 1:1 Coaching

BetterLesson's Partner Success Team worked alongside leaders from Nations Ford, Piney Grove, and Starmount to establish clear outcomes for coaching. Once a plan for implementation was developed, coaches were matched with teachers based on individual teacher needs.

Throughout the school year, coaches and teachers met one-on-one every other week via videoconference. BetterLesson's iterative coaching process supported teachers to try proven strategies, measure student growth, and reflect on the impact of the new strategies in their classrooms. Teachers collected and shared evidence of growth (theirs and their students) in BetterLesson's online Professional Learning Lab. Coaches served as both thought partners and accountability partners to teachers to encourage risk taking, data-driven experimentation, and a learner mindset.

Via an administrator dashboard, principals could assess the specific outcomes individual teachers were working on and evidence of progress. BetterLesson's Partner Success Team also met quarterly with principals to evaluate the progress of the entire cohort.

"I loved talking to someone disconnected from my school. A fresh set of eyes, so to speak. It felt like the possibilities were endless. I genuinely enjoyed talking with [my coach] and was never afraid to share an idea or ask a question. [She] built me up and helped guide me through many things I never thought I would accomplish in my first year of teaching."

Timothy Stumpff

4th Grade Math Teacher, Piney Grove Elementary

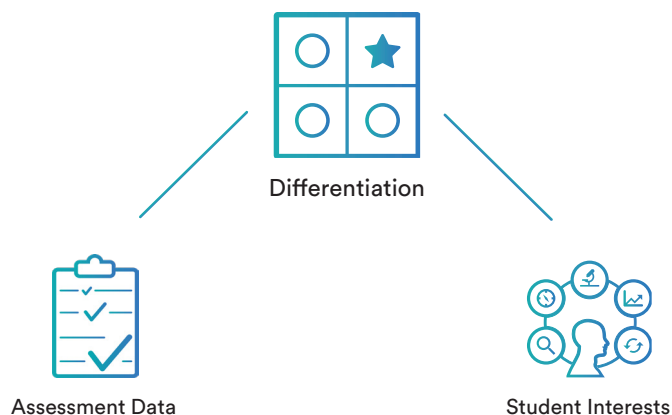


From Coaching to Impact

Each school collected data to measure the correlation between BetterLesson's coaching and changes in student growth, student ownership, and teaching practices in the 28 teachers' classrooms. Teachers and principals also provided qualitative feedback through mid-year and end-of-year surveys, and during the quarterly progress meetings.

Shifts in Teaching Practices

Teachers participating in bi-weekly coaching cycles were able to make deep shifts toward more student-centered learning. 84% of teachers focused their efforts on **differentiating instructional action plans based on formative assessment data, student learning preferences, and interests**. A majority of teachers supported students to set personalized learning goals, reflect on their progress regularly, and adjust their learning pathways based on this data.



I wanted teachers to use data folders with students, but it was the principal saying it. Once it was organically born with the aid of their BetterLesson coach, they took ownership and ran with it, and did it on their own. Then everyone got on the bandwagon. When we give a voice to students about their learning, we're going to see a better pathway for learning."

Nancy Martinez

Principal, Starmount Academy of Excellence

Teachers Say Coaching Improves Practice and Culture

2016-17 End-of-Year Participant Survey

100% of participating Nations Ford teachers gave a **net promoter rating of 10/10** to the experience, indicating they would strongly recommend BetterLesson coaching to a peer. All of these participants agreed that this type of professional development was much more effective for them than any other type of PD. Every teacher rated BetterLesson Coaching **5 out of 5** for its impact on students' ability to reach their outcomes that year.

2017-18 Mid-Year Participant Survey

In December 2017, after four months of coaching, the expanded cohort of participants gave equally positive feedback:



would recommend
BetterLesson Coaching
to a peer



observed a positive impact
on student outcomes



agreed there was
alignment with
administrator's expectation

Student Achievement on the Rise

The strategic focus on these outcomes led to a steady improvement in teaching and learning practices that also translated into impact on student achievement at each school.

"I am such a better teacher for my students. I am using strategies and changing things in my classroom that is taking it to a new level. They are getting what they need because it's more personalized."

Steffany Stanic

Teacher, Nations Ford Elementary

Leaders isolated data from teachers coached by BetterLesson from the rest of the staff to better measure the impact of the coaching. Below are a few highlights from each school:

Piney Grove Elementary School

Principal Campbell examined the proficiency levels of Piney Grove students on the last Case assessment and found that **77% of all students** who achieved proficient scores were taught by two out of three fourth grade math teachers who worked with BetterLesson coaches.

Starmount Academy of Excellence

Principal Nancy Martinez focused her analysis on the various MAP assessments given to students this year. BetterLesson coaches worked with 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th grade teachers at Starmount. From Spring 2017 to Spring 2018, Principal Martinez observed **double-digit growth in students' math and reading scores** for all grade level teachers who were coached by BetterLesson.

Nations Ford Elementary School

In its third year of partnership with BetterLesson, Nations Ford Elementary School achieved an overall **EVAAS school Growth Composite of 5.51**. The institute had a science growth rate of 6.0, and the highest 4th grade math growth rate of 7.2 — **outpacing all other 169 elementary, middle, and high schools**. In 3 years, Nations Ford went from being rated a D/F school by the state to a C school under Alejandra Garcia's leadership, and she strategically invested in BetterLesson coaching to support this growth.

