

## Our Commitment

### Recruiting Teachers of Color

As part of the commitment to recruit, hire, and onboard highly qualified and diverse staff, RCPS partners with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), in addition to surrounding institutions of higher learning. Combined with these strategic partnerships, the BONDS mentoring program plays an integral part in the division's recruitment strategy for teachers of color.

*"Being able to gain advice on areas that I want to grow in as a teacher is very helpful. I'm very appreciative for the program and for the support I continue to receive."*

BONDS Mentee



### Retaining Teachers of Color

BONDS helps newly hired educators to stay motivated and focused and provides an instant network of collegial support. The data is clear that teachers of color feel underrepresented, unwanted, and underappreciated. These experiences leave them feeling disconnected and ultimately invisible, with nothing keeping them connected to their school, division, or one another. BONDS helps change that!



*"I believe making supportive relationships to be one of the most important things when finding success. I'm thankful for BONDS."*  
BONDS Mentor

## Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs

In Roanoke City Public Schools, we keep our students at the center of every conversation, decision, initiative, and in everything we do. Our mission, vision, core beliefs, and theory of action guide our work.

### Mission

Roanoke City Public Schools provides an inclusive and equitable, student-centered culture that empowers lifelong learning. Through meaningful, relevant, and engaging learning opportunities, we will empower all students to dream, excel, and meet their full potential to benefit our city and its citizens.

### Vision

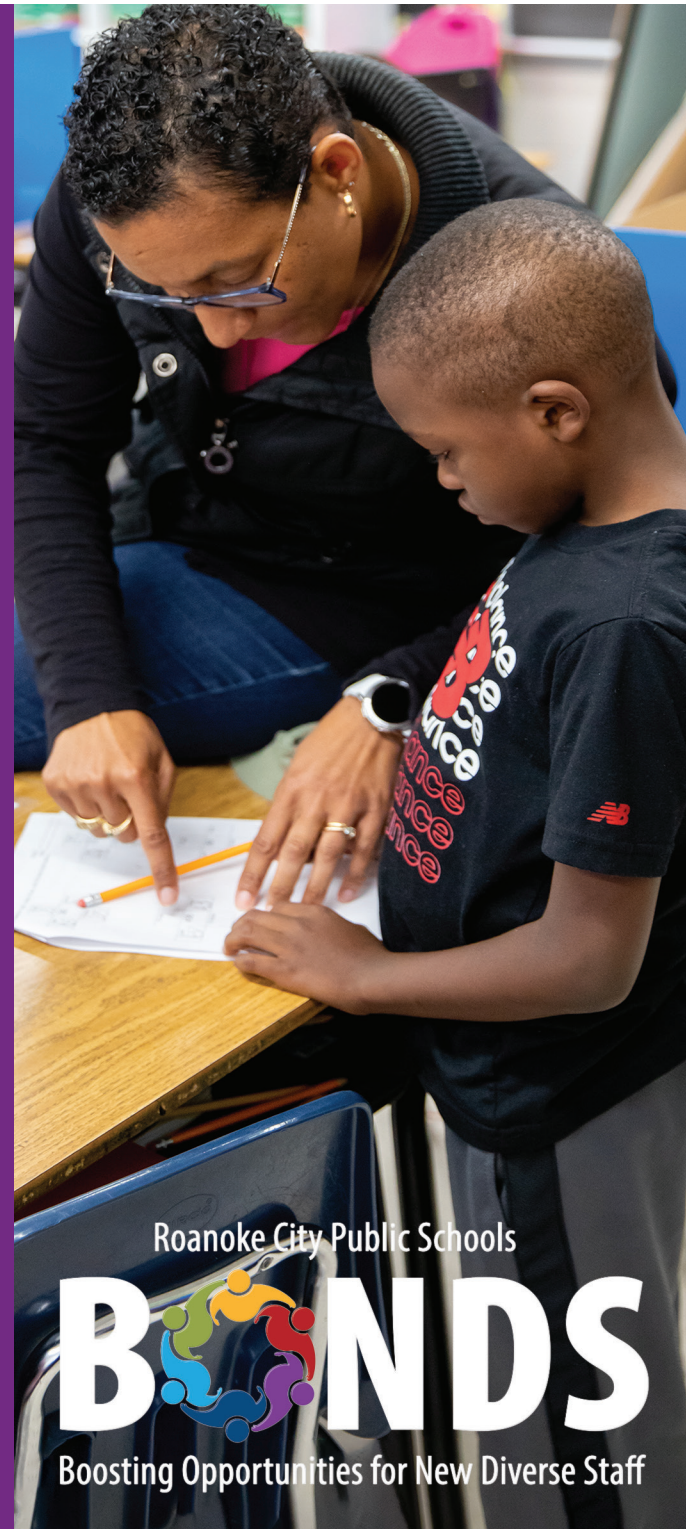
To provide all students with a strong educational foundation that enables them to become lifelong learners and contributing members and leaders of the global community.

### Core Beliefs

- We put students first.
- We embrace equity and celebrate diversity.
- We value effective, high-quality instruction.
- We value our community.
- We value YOU!



WE ARE ONE #RCSProud



## What is



Boosting Opportunities for New Diverse Staff is a mentoring program designed specifically to reach and support teachers of color working in Roanoke City Public Schools (RCPS).

BONDS aims to develop conscious educators who teach from a diverse, knowledgeable, and empathetic lens. Through its investment in peer mentors, RCPS seeks to support and empower a diverse staff.

## Why Staff Diversity Matters

The answer is simple: Students.

Research indicates that teachers of color are linked to both social-emotional and academic gains for ALL students. Improvements in test scores and discipline rates are only part of the equation, as statistically supported studies show improved problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity. Specific to minority students are the connections they make with teachers. These connections enable the students to also see themselves entering the education field, which assists school divisions in "Growing Our Own" future teachers.

*"There's a growing body of research on the qualitative end that suggests that teachers of color actually understand the lived experiences of their students of color better, because they have lived them — or similar ones — themselves."*

Travis Bristol  
Assistant Professor, University of California

## Benefits of Mentorship

Teachers who participate in mentoring programs report the following benefits:

- Self confidence and efficacy, which is essential for success in education.
- Career satisfaction and feeling happy with your work.
- Expanded network providing collegial support.
- Exposure to new ideas through collaboration and exposure to other creative approaches.
- Self-reflection and being able to determine if what you are doing is right and working for your students.
- Measurable increases in student and faculty success.
- A growth mindset, which is critical as educators are lifelong learners.
- Development of new skills.
- Increased retention due to enhanced connections and increased effectiveness.
- Support, which leads to improved mental health.
- Sense of Belonging. In RCPS, we are one and we understand it takes all of us working together, staying focused, and moving forward to support our students.



## The Focus of BONDS



BONDS mentors and mentees focus on the following to ensure new teachers of color in Roanoke City Public Schools are successful:

- Lesson planning, design, and implementation
- Learning the curriculum through content meetings
- Establishing an engaging and effective learning environment
- Developing positive relationships with students and families
- Developing positive relationships with colleagues and peers
- Disaggregating and implementing data to drive instruction
- Understanding the needs of diverse learners
- Strategies to support students' social and emotional needs
- Understanding division and school policies and expectations
- Understanding division and school traditions and norms
- Acclimation and integration to climate and culture

## How BONDS Aligns with the Strategic Plan

The RCPS Strategic Plan: The Roadmap to Student Success guides the goals of the Human Resources Department.

Pathway 6 focuses on Recruitment, Retention, and Talent Development. Goals are:

1. RCPS will actively recruit talent to create and retain a highly effective and diverse workforce.
2. RCPS will know our employees, learn what matters to them, and align our supports to their specific needs.



To achieve the above goals, the Human Resources department will:

- Target 1: Continuously examine the components of consistent high-quality instructional practice.
- Target 2: Achieve and maintain at least 90% overall retention rate and 95% retention of teachers who are effective or highly effective.
- Target 3: Annually increase the diversity of the teacher workforce to align more closely with student demographics.
- Target 4: Annually increase the number of staff reporting a positive work environment on the staff perception survey.
- Target 5: Increase the percentage of staff who report professional development is effective or highly effective.
- Target 6: Increase attendance rates for all staff.



## What the Research Shows

The research is clear: Staff diversity matters. By supporting our teachers of color, we are in turn supporting our students. Here's what researchers are saying:

- Students of color are more likely to persist in college with peer-networking and mentor programming (McClain and Perry, 2017).
- Teachers of color lessen the dropout and school-to-prison pipeline rates for students of color (Gershenson et.al., 2018).
- In addition to the diversification of teachers, there is a strong need for culturally responsive, socially-just pedagogy (Dilworth, 2018) that takes the reality of students' lives into account (Emdin, 2017) and addresses racism (Love, 2019).

## For More Information about BONDS, Contact:

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*Nearly three decades of research indicates that teachers of color can improve the academic success and overall social experience for both students of color and white students, yet 80% of all teachers are white.*

*(Ahmad & Boser, 2014; Dilworth, 1990; Hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1998, Nieto, 2003, NCES, 2018)*

