



**A+ Schools Program**  
**University of North Carolina at Greensboro**

**SUMMARY of COMPONENTS and TIMELINE**  
**FIRST 3 YEARS of A+ IMPLEMENTATION for North Carolina Schools**

**INTRODUCTION**

The A+ Schools Program began in North Carolina in 1993 with two pilot schools that were the inspiration for the development of the current 42-school statewide Network. Initial implementation is a three-year process, after which schools continue to work with A+ staff to collaboratively plan professional development to sustain and strengthen their A+ School over time. A+ also works with other states to develop large statewide A+ Networks similar to ours, or to develop one or two schools as pilot A+ Schools for their district, region or state. We will assist you in planning the scope and development of your initiative.

**OVERVIEW of KEY COMPONENTS of IMPLEMENTATION**

**A+ Institutes:** While becoming an A+ School is a process that involves the entire school over several years, the key event that launches a school into their first year of A+ implementation is a five-day A+ Institute for all staff members. The Institute is conducted by our A+ Schools Program staff and designed to prepare your staff, including teachers, administrators, specialists and teacher assistants, to begin implementing the eight A+ Essentials™, the key philosophical commitments made by A+ Schools. Ten years of Program evaluations from teams of researchers and from participants have identified the five-day Institute as a transformative process and *the* primary change agent in becoming an A+ School.

In years two and three, schools attend a three-day, whole-school A+ Institute. In subsequent years schools attend a one, two or three-day Institute as needs and resources indicate.

**Pre-Institutes:** Prior to the initial five-day Institute, however, schools participate in two or more Pre-Institutes conducted by A+ Schools Program staff and designed to assist schools in making an informed decision about becoming an A+ School. These are hands-on, experiential workshops that have proven to be a key step in developing the staff buy-in and level of commitment needed for successful implementation and sustainability of the Program. The Pre-Institutes are valuable professional development for schools even if they decide not to pursue A+.

**On-site professional development:** During each school year, A+ Schools Program staff conducts on-site professional development designed collaboratively with individual schools. Schools learn to conduct self-assessments to determine their particular needs and goals for each year.

**A+ Network:** One of the strengths of the A+ Schools Program is the networking of A+ Schools that provides mutual support while they work to become successful arts-based schools. In North Carolina, and in other states with which we have worked, we have developed a strong A+ Schools Network that includes within it a network of A+ principals, coordinators and A+ Fellows (professional development facilitators) who meet twice annually to share successful practices and guide the Network.