

## Client Spotlight: S. Hope Davis

### Durham Small Business Opportunity Loan Fund

In early 2020, Teach Tech U founder S. Hope Davis bet on herself.

She left teaching to invest full time into her business, which focused on offering professional development in the world of education. But as was the case for so many small business owners, the COVID-19 pandemic changed Teach Tech U's business model.

Leaning on the entrepreneurial spirit she inherited from her mother, Davis pivoted and began focusing on program development and consulting school districts on how to better use and leverage technology to foster student success. Davis began to grow her business using her own money and was

connected to Carolina Small Business Development Fund (CSBDF) when she applied for pandemic relief aid for her small business.

As her business grew and she gained insight into common challenges schools were facing, Davis found another opportunity to help Teach Tech U grow, and established Project LEAR. "The program assists school districts in finding and reengaging students who may have been lost during the pandemic."

With Project LEAR added to Teach Tech U's offerings, Davis needed more capital to help her expand and fulfill the needs of contracts signed with several school districts, including Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. But while Davis's business was growing, she experienced a hardship in her personal life that not only affected her credit but affected her ability to access the capital she needed to expand.

"I was betting on myself," says Davis. "But I went back to CSBDF and that's when everything changed. They said 'ok, let's bet on her as well,' and I wasn't alone in this anymore."





## Client Spotlight: S. Hope Davis

### Durham Small Business Opportunity Loan Fund

She returned to CSBDF, where the Business Solutions and Credit teams worked with her to understand her story and navigate an unrepresentative credit score. “They understood immediately what the issue was, and how we could overcome it together,” says Davis.

Davis ultimately secured the financing she needed to aid Teach Tech U’s expansion. A year later, Davis returned once again to CSBDF and received another loan, this time through the Durham Small Business Opportunity Loan Fund. The program - a partnership between CSBDF, the City of Durham, and Durham County - provides affordable financing to Durham-based businesses.

“The loans allowed me to sleep,” says Davis. “That was the main thing. As a business owner, you’re constantly thinking about how to make it through. With the loans, I sleep. I feel free to get people needed to fulfill parts of the larger contracts. It has allowed me to move forward instead of being stuck.”

