Jason Griffin is principal of Hertford Grammar School (HGS), a rural Title I school serving 419 students, where he previously served as Dean of Students and third grade teacher. As one HGS teacher notes, since making the transition from teacher to administrator, Griffin “has not forgotten the role of the classroom teacher and the desire for every student to succeed.” On the contrary, he has leveraged his classroom experience and his instructional expertise to lead the school out of low performance status, increasing overall proficiency from 42.5% to 71.4% in just a few years. This growth earned HGS a “B” from the state of North Carolina, a distinction only held by six elementary schools in the northeast region. Griffin practices instructional leadership through his active participation in PLCs and by building staff capacity through teacher-led professional development, encouraging shared reflection to generate strategies for improvement. By facilitating data-driven analysis and problem solving through structures such as weekly vertical planning sessions, he has cultivated a collaborative environment in which teachers feel empowered to lead with a common vision. Griffin is the 2017 Wells Fargo Principal of the Year for North Carolina. He holds an M.A. in School Administration from Elizabeth City State University, as well as an Ed.S. in Supervision and Leadership, an M.A. in Middle Grades Math, and a B.A. in Elementary Education, all from East Carolina University.