

excellence^{nc}

North Carolina's Education Vision





Excellence: **North Carolina’s Education Vision**

SEPTEMBER 2015

Excellence: North Carolina’s Education Vision was created with input from education stakeholders and experts from across the state and the nation working together to develop a shared strategic vision to transform education in North Carolina.

Excellence is a living strategic vision and collective action plan that you can find online at www.excellenceNC.org

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North Carolina's Education Opportunity

North Carolina has long been a national leader in education, beginning with a constitutional commitment to educate all students in the state. A core element of that history — and our past academic successes — has been a series of visions for education in North Carolina.

Today, North Carolina's academic performance is solidly average compared to other states, an uncomfortable position for North Carolinians, who are used to being highly ranked amongst other states. Perhaps more worrying is that North Carolina, based on NAEP scores — the nation's report card — is not keeping up with the progress of other states.

Other states and nations are improving faster in both academic achievement and the development of "soft" skills, such as collaboration and critical thinking, that students need to be successful in school, work and life.

As of 2014, North Carolina ranks 50th in improving fourth grade math scores and 41st in improving fourth grade reading achievement over the past decade.¹ Most of North Carolina's 4th graders are not proficient readers² and our ACT scores are tied for last place with Mississippi.³

CONSIDER THESE FACTS:

67% By 2020, **67 percent** of North Carolina jobs will require some post-secondary education⁴. But in 2013, only **58 percent** of adults in our state had attained that level of education.⁵

40% Last year, **40 percent** of North Carolina employers reported "absolutely critical" vacancies.⁶

16% Only **16 percent** of North Carolina students graduate high school career and college ready. NC ranks last among states with comparable ACT participation rates, tied with Mississippi and behind Louisiana in composite scores in every subject but math.⁷

56% **56 percent** of North Carolina's public school students come from low-income backgrounds, meaning they enter school — and life — with greater barriers to overcome.⁸

Students in North Carolina cannot wait for our schools — from preschool through graduate and retraining programs — to improve. Our knowledge-based economy is increasingly dependent upon a well-educated workforce and the demand for qualified employees is not being met locally. As the need for skilled talent intensifies, so does the importance of preparing our students to fill these high-quality, living wage jobs.



Excellence: North Carolina's Education Vision

Other states that have a bold, shared vision for education have realized rapid, steady and significant improvements in education. Inspired by the success of these plans and our state's strong history of educational excellence, we believe that North Carolina is uniquely prepared to create the best education system in the nation.

In 2014, BEST NC and RTI International embarked on the North Carolina Education Vision initiative — now known as Excellence. Designed to create a comprehensive Vision for education in North Carolina, the initiative brought together more than 400 education stakeholders and experts from across the state and the nation. Together, Vision participants produced more than 600 recommendations that were then combined with more than 20 education strategic plans and synthesized to produce Excellence. Above all, the participants agreed on one point:

North Carolina is uniquely positioned to have the best education system in the nation.

North Carolina's Constitutional Commitment to Education

North Carolina has placed a high priority on education since its founding. We were one of the first states to lay the groundwork for public education in the nineteenth century, and we have one of the strongest legal foundations for public education in the nation. In the state's Reconstruction Constitution of 1868, we recognized that "The people have a right to the privilege of education, and it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that right."

Our Constitution States...

"The General Assembly shall provide by taxation and otherwise for a general and uniform system of free public schools wherein equal opportunities shall be provided for all students."

"The General Assembly shall provide that the benefits of The University of North Carolina and other public institutions of higher education, as far as practicable, be extended to the people of the State free of expense."

When examined as a whole, three strategies for success stood out as consistent areas of focus across the span of education. Whether stakeholders talk about early education or the transition from college to career, it is clear that North Carolina's system of education needs to:



support **students**

early, often and comprehensively by creating seamless systems of educational support to give every student the resources that will help them succeed academically, including early education, health, wellness, and out of school time supports.



elevate **educators**

to ensure the state's best teachers and educational leaders, from early learning to higher education, have opportunities to lead, grow, and help foster new teachers by transforming North Carolina's education systems to make teaching and educational leadership careers competitive with other top professions.



raise **expectations**

of learning in North Carolina to ensure the state is focused on developing the next generation of learning by creating innovative, relevant and stimulating education that is accountable for meeting each student where they are and preparing them to collaborate and compete in the 21st century economy.

// **Goals**

By 2030, North Carolina will lead the nation in academic achievement and the number of young people who are well prepared to succeed in school, work, and life.

By 2020, North Carolina will show the most rapid academic growth in the nation and demonstrable progress toward the 2030 goal.

// **Milestones**

We envision a future in which the NC education system will ensure...

- > Children are ready to learn when they enter school,
- > Excellent educators are cultivated, supported, and retained,
- > Students master basic skills on time and reach proficiency,
- > Students are prepared for high school,
- > Students are prepared to succeed in college and/or work, and
- > Students graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in North Carolina's job market.

Current results for each of these milestones can be found on page 18.

Good simply is not good enough for North Carolina. Now is the time to raise expectations and work together to make our state's education system the best in the nation. When we do, every student will be ready to succeed in school, work and life and North Carolina will have the educated citizens needed to grow and prosper.

Moving from Vision to Action

Achieving the goals set forth in Excellence: North Carolina's Education Vision will require the collaborative effort of North Carolina's diverse education community, including parents, educators, businesses, nonprofits, and policymakers. Beginning in the fall of 2015, education stakeholders from across the state will be invited to participate in a collective action approach by participating in Action Teams focused on three to five top-priority, cross-sector, and interdisciplinary issues.



The focus of the Action Teams will be identified by the state's top education leaders, experts, and stakeholders at the second annual North Carolina Education Innovation Lab in late September 2015.

Detailed information about the collective action approach to implementing the vision will be added to the Excellence website www.excellenceNC.org in early October 2015.



Strategies for Success

The three strategies identified in this vision directly address the disjointed nature of education policy that currently afflicts our state. Supporting Students, Elevating Educators, and Raising Expectations will enable us to prioritize, align and build upon existing initiatives across the state.

Each strategy in Excellence is supported by specific priorities and approaches that show the greatest promise of creating significant, lasting change as quickly as possible. Similarly, each approach outlined below will have at least one initiative associated with it – a specific action or series of actions needed to move the approach forward. Many approaches will

have several related initiatives, and many initiatives will relate to more than one approach. Each initiative will be prioritized by its impact upon the milestones.

When the vision is fully developed, it will potentially encompass hundreds of initiatives. But no single stakeholder or group will be responsible for moving forward on every initiative. Rather, the vision will require a collective impact approach to succeed. With each organization and stakeholder doing what they do best, we will achieve our Excellence vision and North Carolina will lead the nation in academic achievement.





// Support Students



To achieve our vision for education in North Carolina, we must work together to create a seamless system of support that provides every student the opportunity to succeed academically.

All students need a healthy foundation that enables them to attend school ready to learn at every stage of their education. Students from low-income backgrounds often have a unique set of challenges that impede their ability to take full advantage of the learning opportunities available at school. But every student – from pre-kindergarten through postgraduate – may at some point require extra support to thrive in a learning environment. North Carolina’s public and private sectors, parents and communities, all have a role to play in creating holistic systems that are responsive to students’ diverse needs.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Leading the Nation in Early Learning Success

North Carolina has an outstanding track record of innovation and success in early care and education. With Smart Start, our state pioneered the nation’s first comprehensive early childhood initiative to improve the quality of childcare, provide access to health screenings and offer support to families. Since 2001, North Carolina has provided early childhood education through NC Pre-K (formerly known as the More at Four Pre-Kindergarten Program). Our state was also the birthplace of the T.E.A.C.H. project, a national model to provide early educators with scholarships to obtain higher levels of education. In addition, we were the first state in the country to make full-day kindergarten available to all children.¹⁰ Read to Achieve continues this focus on the foundations for learning.

S1. Expand Access to High-Quality Educational Opportunities

This priority is focused on approaches designed to ensure students are engaged and ready to learn at every stage of their education experience.

S1.1 Provide access to high-quality early learning programs that ensure students are ready for kindergarten, such as increasing the number of seats in highly-rated programs and increasing support for low-income students to attend.

s1.2 Expand high-quality K-12 learning opportunities for every student, such as offering strategic enrollment options, equitable access to advanced coursework and specialized educational models, and replication of highly-effective programs.

s1.3 Increase learning opportunities, including programs that innovate within existing school days to better meet student needs, and those that add targeted and high-quality programming to build on each student’s individual talents.

s1.4 Increase student access to high-quality postsecondary education to ensure that every student who wants to pursue education beyond high school has the opportunity. This includes initiatives to continue course alignment between two- and four-year institutions and managing tuition affordability.

S2. Surround Students with Systems of Support

In addition to expanding access to high-quality educational opportunities, North Carolina must engage all sectors in providing wrap-around supports that precede or supplement core academic content. This includes:

s2.1 Increasing meaningful parental involvement through awareness and engagement initiatives, such as providing meaningful reports on school and student performance and helping parents develop skills to support their child’s educational success.

s2.2 Supporting families of young children so that students enter the classroom ready to learn. This may include research-based programs to improve healthy births among at-risk mothers, initiatives to improve early literacy, and other family-focused programs that help with early learning.

Early College High Schools: Accelerating At-Risk Students Toward College

Early College High Schools (ECHS) blend high schools and colleges to create an academically rigorous and supportive environment where students can attain a high school diploma and two years of college credit within five years. The school model typically targets students who are traditionally underrepresented in college, including students from low-income backgrounds, first generation college students, and racial and ethnic minorities.

North Carolina’s ECHS Initiative was launched in 2004, funded by the General Assembly, and designed and supported by North Carolina New Schools. Our state leads the nation in the number of ECHS (70 in 2014) and evaluations of the Initiative show that their students have higher rates of participation and success in core college preparatory courses, higher attendance, and lower suspension rates than their peers in traditional schools. North Carolina’s Early College Students are also more likely to enroll in both two and four-year colleges.¹¹

s2.3 Building communities of support in schools that include nurses, counselors, college and career advisors, drop-out and prevention services, as well as staff who strategically coordinate school-based services with broader community services.

S3. Pursue Personalized Learning Models to Meet Students' Individual Needs

An important element of supporting every student's readiness to learn is customizing their education as much as possible to build on their unique needs and talents. This includes utilizing approaches inside and out of the classroom.

s3.1 Transition to mastery-based learning for more students. This approach creates greater flexibility and allows students to progress as they master academic content, regardless of time, place, or pace of learning.

s3.2 Replicate and expand strong programs to meet student's special needs, including providing services for students who are academically gifted, young people with disabilities, or students with learning differences.

s3.3 Provide sufficient learning resources, whether book-bound or electronic, to ensure that students have access to rich and relevant information related to their coursework.



// Elevate Educators



To achieve our vision, we must transform North Carolina's education systems to make teaching and educational leadership careers competitive with other top professions in the nation, fostering the talent we need to help students become highly skilled, prosperous professionals and well-rounded citizens.

Educators are far and away the most important school-based factor in student success. Despite this, North Carolina – like every other state in the nation – lacks a comprehensive talent plan for recruiting, developing, and retaining exceptional educators. On the whole, careers in education have failed to keep pace with the rest of the country and hamstrung educators with an outdated bureaucracy. North Carolina must commit to building a first-rate workforce at every level of our education system in which educators thrive.

PRIORITY ACTIONS

E1. Cultivate First-Rate Early Childhood Educators

Provide young children in North Carolina's early education settings with opportunities to learn from and build relationships with first-rate educators, by:

E1.1 Increasing education requirements for early childhood educators and promoting continuing education options to provide high quality programs that support positive child outcomes.



E1.2 Rewarding and retaining top early learning talent, such as by offering more competitive compensation that reflects the enormous impact these educators have on children's future success.

E1.3 Recruiting, retaining, and supporting strong early learning administrators. Initiatives may include gathering data to better understand the support gaps they face, and ensuring **early care and education administrators** are well trained in the importance of **quality education talent** and the importance of early literacy.



E2. Recruit, Support and Keep Top K-12 Teachers

Teachers in our public schools receive a lot of attention, both positive and negative, for a simple reason – teachers are the number one factor in school-based influences on student performance. In recent years, North Carolina has made progress in improving what it means to be a teacher, particularly regarding compensation and accountability. However, we are nowhere close to achieving the level of respect, reward and flexibility that great teachers need and deserve. To recruit, prepare, and continuously develop excellent teachers in our public schools we must:

E2.1 Cultivate top talent by proactively recruiting aspiring educators, setting high standards for entry, and rigorously screening applicants based on the skills and competencies needed for success on the job, especially for hard-to-staff schools and subjects across the state.

E2.2 Increase the rigor and responsiveness of teacher preparation programs, including setting high standards for entry, to achieve closer alignment with schools' needs, emerging technologies, and the increasing demands of a college, work, and life-ready curriculum.

E2.3 Reward and retain top K-12 talent through innovative approaches, such as phasing in new types of compensation and credentialing structures that recognize and reward excellence, enabling teachers to advance their careers without leaving the classroom, and incentivizing positions in the state's highest-need areas.

E2.4 Provide teachers more time to teach through initiatives, such as increasing non-academic supports for students, working to integrate real-time assessment into each class period, and minimizing unnecessary administrative tasks.



North Carolina's National Board-Certified Teachers

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was established in 1987 with the goal of setting high standards for the teaching profession. North Carolina's Governor Hunt served as the first chair of the NBPTS Board of Directors, and today, the state has the largest number of National Board Certified teachers in the country. Today, over 20 percent of North Carolina's educators are Board-certified. This is good news for our students, as the majority of research suggests that students of National Board-certified teachers make higher gains in achievement compared to non-NBPTS certified teachers.¹²

E2.5 Maintain a high-quality educator evaluation system by continuing to examine and improve the state's current system. Ensure that each component of the system has a valid connection to student success, uses fair and reasonable measurements, and offers meaningful feedback for teachers.

E2.6 Provide teachers with high-quality leadership and continuous professional development, such as exploring options to shift centralized training to dynamic, classroom-based learning led by peer and teacher leaders.

E3. Develop and Support Inspiring K-12 Leadership

Research suggests that principals are second only to teachers in the level of their impact on student learning, and, given that one of teachers' top priorities is having inspiring leadership in their building, the importance of excellent principals cannot be overstated. Yet, as with teachers, North Carolina does not have a comprehensive leadership talent plan. To better recruit, prepare, and support inspiring leadership in our public schools we must:

E3.1 Recruit aspiring principals from our top teachers and rigorously screen based on the skills and competencies needed for success on the job.

E3.2 Increase the rigor and responsiveness of principal preparation programs through initiatives that expand research-based preparation programs that elevate the status of principalship, integrating on-the-job training, and continuously improve to meet the changing demands of the role.

E3.3 Provide multiple career pathways and modernized compensation for school leaders in order to foster ongoing development, recognize success and improve retention beyond moving from small to larger schools or across grade spans.

E3.4 Empower principals with more flexibility over school operations, from staffing to scheduling and curriculum, so they can determine the best strategies for their student population and enable real accountability for results.



E4. Recruit, Support and Retain Outstanding Educators in Institutions of Higher Learning

Research has confirmed that educator talent plays a crucial role in student success. The same holds true in higher education, as well, including North Carolina's 58 community colleges and public and private colleges and universities. Institutions of higher learning invest heavily in personnel costs, but many have struggled in recent years to recruit and retain top faculty in a highly competitive marketplace. Working group members identified the following strategies to address these challenges:

E4.1 Allow institutions of higher education to adopt policies to more successfully attract talented faculty and staff, especially in high-need areas. Potential innovations include structuring compensation and benefits to be competitive and strategic.

E4.2 Encourage higher education institutions to provide high quality instruction and ongoing professional development for educators.

E4.3 Reward and retain the most effective post-secondary educators, such as by rethinking personnel policies, increasing awareness of the importance of teachers on student performance in institutions of higher learning, and increasing understanding and spreading information about the personal and statewide economic advantages of top talent in higher education.



// Raise Expectations



To achieve our vision, we must create the next generation of learning that is innovative, relevant and stimulating – and is accountable for preparing every student to collaborate and compete in the 21st century economy.

For too long, the United States has been engaged in a “race to the bottom.” Under various pressures, the bar for student achievement was lowered to serve the interest of comfort, rather than setting expectations that encourage students’ life-long success. It is time to change the tide and start demanding the best for and of our students.

North Carolina deserves credit for increasing rigor and expecting more from every level of the education system to help students become informed, productive citizens. In spite of past excellence, we cannot rest on our laurels. Having emerged from the Great Recession with a significantly changed – and much more dynamic – state workforce and increasingly competitive global economy, we must raise our expectations to meet new demands. To assure a bright and vibrant future for all of our students, North Carolina must expect excellence and dynamism from every classroom, school building, community organization, agency and institution.



PRIORITY ACTIONS

R1. Prepare Every Student to Succeed in School, Work and Life

By the time they reach the end of their education in North Carolina (whether at age 18 or 58), every student should have the skills, knowledge and abilities to succeed on their chosen path – whether that is college, post-secondary job training after high school, certification or technical education after college, or moving directly into a career. Students should be well rounded and prepared to succeed in school, work and life.

R1.1 Protect and maintain high P-20 learning standards through an adoption and ongoing review process that includes feedback from diverse stakeholders, guarantees that North Carolina’s learning standards remain among the most rigorous in the nation, and is responsive to a rapidly changing world.

R1.2 Promote student and family awareness of career options and paths by facilitating regular, meaningful, and transparent communication with counselors and other advisors, educators, higher education institutions, and employers to ensure that lack of knowledge is not an obstacle.

R1.3 Expand partnerships between schools, businesses and other sectors to help students transition from education to career. Provide opportunities for students to gain college life and work experience in programs such as early college high schools, internships, apprenticeships, and applied baccalaureate programs.

R1.4 Improve partnerships between the business and education communities to utilize private sector expertise to inform the design and delivery of top-quality educational content at all levels, and prepare students to take advantage of workforce opportunities.

R2. Sharpen the Focus of Educational Agencies and Governance

Higher expectations for all includes asking more of our educational agencies at all levels. Identifying scalable successes and replicating model programs are two concrete steps that can be taken to improve student outcomes. Other approaches include:

R2.1 Identifying efficiencies and opportunities for economies of scale, when appropriate and with respect for local control. Possibilities include administrative and operational systems that could be shared across district and geographic borders, and purchasing opportunities that would pass savings all the way to the student level.

R2.2 Ensure clear governance for education at all levels by better understanding the connection between North Carolina's current education governance structures and our strategic priorities.

R2.3 Scale up and identify successful strategies, such as proven educational models, practices and curricula, and facilitate expansion of those strategies in appropriate educational environments through local or statewide systems.

R2.4 Improve systems for data collection, privacy and reporting to better utilize available data, reduce unnecessary or repetitive data, and make meaningful educational results transparent and easily accessible.

North Carolina's Public Universities

North Carolina is home to the oldest public university in the nation, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Chartered by the General Assembly in 1789, the University of North Carolina was the first public university in the United States to open its doors and the only one to graduate students in the eighteenth century. Over the past two centuries, UNC has grown to include all public

educational institutions in North Carolina that grant baccalaureate degrees. Today, the UNC system enrolls more than 220,000 students across 16 campuses, as well as the NC School of Science and Mathematics, the nation's first public, residential high school for gifted students. UNC-Chapel Hill, the flagship institution, was recently rated a Best Value School by US News.¹³

R3. Provide Information, Flexibility and Incentives to Drive Student Success

Highly skilled and talented educators at all levels of our education system need information and autonomy to unleash excellence. This requires a balance between the possibility of higher quality site-based decision-making and the value of equitable system solutions. At the state and local levels, North Carolina can help to create the conditions and incentives to enable every student and educator to be their best. This priority includes approaches such as:

R3.1 Provide increased flexibility for highly effective educators at multiple levels.

Examples of innovations include increasing classroom-level decision-making authority over curricula, instruction, and pacing; building-level authority over calendars, schedules, and staff; and system-level flexibility over school interventions, support, and overall talent management.

R3.2 Create and maintain tools to invest in high-impact programs by approaching investments creatively and with a commitment to evidence, research, and the potential of public-private partnerships.

R3.3 Prioritize high quality, developmentally appropriate assessments for students at all levels that measure higher-order thinking skills, utilize evolving technologies, and provide data to inform real-time instruction and accountability at the system- and state-levels.

R3.4 Maintain school and program accountability by committing to and continually upgrading rating systems for schools at all levels that provide meaningful information to all “consumers” of North Carolina’s education system.



A Historic Commitment to Finance Equity

In 2012, North Carolina’s public schools tied for fourth in the nation in relative school finance equity – a measure of funding fairness across K-12 public school districts in an economically diverse state. Variations in state per-pupil spending across districts were, on average, nine percent above or below the state average. That year, the gap between the highest and lowest spending counties in North Carolina was \$2,280 per student.¹⁴



North Carolina's High Return on Investment

In the 2014 Leaders and Laggards report, the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation awarded North Carolina's K-12 public schools an "A" for Return on Investment. The state showed high state performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress

(NAEP) relative to the amount of money spent on public K-12 education. According to that analysis, spending per pupil (\$8,480, adjusted for cost of living) in North Carolina ranked 45th in the nation, while NAEP performance ranked 24th.¹⁵

Milestones

Together, we have envisioned a future in which NC's education system will ensure...

GOAL	METRIC	CURRENT	CURRENT GROWTH
Children are ready to learn when they enter school.	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment ¹⁶	Tool to launch in 2015-16 school year	N/A
Excellent educators are cultivated, supported, and retained.	Reduced teacher turnover rates ¹⁷ and increased retention of new teachers (>5 yrs)	2013-14 Teacher turnover: 14.1% Beginning teacher turnover rate: 23.1%	N/A
Students master basic skills on time and proficiently.	Increased scores on 4th grade NAEP ¹⁸	2013 Math: 45% Reading: 35%	2013 Math: 50th Reading: 41st (2003 to 2013)
Students are prepared for high school.	Increased scores on 8th grade NAEP ¹⁹	2013 Math: 36% Reading: 33%	2013 Math: 36th Reading: 34th ¹⁵
Students are prepared to succeed in college and/or work.	Increased scores on ACT ²⁰	2014-15 ACT: Avg. composite score: 19 (tied for last among comparable states)	2014-15 Increased from 18.7 in 2012-13 to 19 in 2014-15.
Students graduate with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in North Carolina's job market.	Increased number of credentials, certificates and degrees aligned with workforce needs ²¹ that are earned by NC students.	2013 Current levels meet 87% of need 46th in the nation	New model in development

About the North Carolina Education Vision Initiative

BEST NC and RTI International kicked off the North Carolina Vision Initiative in the summer of 2014 with the NC Education Innovation Lab, engaging more than 80 top education stakeholders and thought leaders from across the state and the political spectrum in an ambitious and critical discussion about the most promising strategies to take education in North Carolina from good to great. The Innovation Lab included an entire day of discussions around historic and current education issues in North Carolina.



Participants divided up into four working groups and then reconvened at the end of the day, and all agreed on one important point:

**North Carolina is
uniquely positioned to
have the best education
system in the nation.**





Innovation Lab participants also agreed that improving education in North Carolina would require a coordinated and comprehensive approach, and agreed to work together to create a shared education vision for the state. Based on the recommendations of the four Lab groups, BEST NC convened 17 working groups on subtopics that the Lab groups identified.

Co-chairs of the working groups included elected and appointed officials from the NC House, Senate, State Board of Education, and the Governor and Lt. Governor's Office; university and community college presidents; NC Teachers of the Year; practicing principals and superintendents;

and non-profit, philanthropic, and thought leaders from across the state (see page 21 for the full list of working groups and co-chairs). More than 300 education stakeholders participated in one or more working groups, which featured over 40 presentations on emerging issues and best practices. The working groups met for a minimum of three 90-minute discussions, for a total of 52 meetings.

Collectively, working group members submitted more than 600 recommendations. In addition to these recommendations, Excellence: North Carolina's Education Vision synthesizes existing education-related strategic plans from across the

state, including the State Board of Education, UNC Board of Governors, NC Community College System, the NC Digital Learning Plan, the Southern Regional Education Board, the NC Education Cabinet, the NC Chamber of Commerce, and several others.

In February of 2015, a draft of the proposed North Carolina Education Vision was released for public comment and feedback. Hundreds of comments were collected through an online survey, web-based presentations and in-person meetings. This feedback was incorporated into this final vision.

Appendix 1: Working Group Participants

During the Working Group meetings in Fall 2014, more than 300 top education stakeholders engaged in the visioning work, representing more than 200 organizations. These individuals contributed their time, energy, sense of urgency and valuable experience to inform this Vision. We are humbled and incredibly grateful for each participant's thought leadership and feedback. Their inclusion here does not imply any endorsement of Excellence: North Carolina's Education Vision.



WORKING GROUP	CO-CHAIRS
Ready to Learn (Chair: Emma Battle)	
Early Learning Programs	Susan Gates, Special Advisor on Education Initiatives, SAS
	Sen. Tamara Barringer, NC Senate
K-3 Literacy	Marcella Savage, Board Member, State Board of Education
	John Pruette, Executive Director, NC Public Schools Office of Early Learning
Expanded Learning Programs (including families & at-home care)	Tricia Willoughby, Board Member, State Board of Education
	Michael Willoughby, Researcher, RTI International
Birth-Age 8 Transitions	Christopher Hill, Director, Education & Law Project, North Carolina Justice Center
	Johanna Anderson, Executive Director, Belk Foundation
Talent (Chair: Ann Goodnight)	
Early Childhood Educators	Lisa Eads, Program Coordinator, Early Childhood, NC Community Colleges
	Sen. Gene McLaurin, NC Senate
K-12 Teachers – Recruiting & Training	Rep. Tricia Cotham, Education Vice-Chair, NC House of Representatives
	Karyn Dickerson, NC Teacher of the Year 2013, Guilford County
K-12 Teachers – Compensation, Evaluation and Retention	Rep. Rob Bryan, Education Appropriations Vice-Chair, NC House of Representatives
	James Ford, NC Teacher of the Year 2014, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
K-12 Leadership – Boards, Principals and Superintendents	Eric Guckian, Advisor to Governor, Office of the Governor
	Heath Morrison, Superintendent, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Higher Education Faculty & Staff	Sen. Josh Stein, NC Senate
	David Belcher, Chancellor, Western Carolina University
	Dale McInnis, President, Richmond Community College
	Sen. Jeff Tarte, Senator, NC Senate



WORKING GROUP	CO-CHAIRS
Career & College Ready (Chair: Paul Wiles)	
K-12 Standards	Caroline McMullen, Member, Wake Ed Partnership, Hire Standards
	Terry Stoops, Director, Research & Education Policy Studies, John Locke Foundation
Access to/Delivery of Information	Don Phipps, Superintendent, Beaufort County Schools
	Kristy Teskey, Executive Director, John M. Belk Endowment
Post-Secondary Standards	Bill Ingram, President, Durham Technical Community College
	Peter Hans, Former Board Chair, UNC Board of Governors
Business-Education Partnerships	Sue Breckenridge, Executive Director, NC Business Committee for Education
	Sec. Sharon Decker, Secretary of Commerce, State of NC/Dept. of Commerce
Systems & Structures (Chair: Brenda Berg)	
Facilities, Technology & Supplies	Lt. Gov. Dan Forest, Lt. Governor and President of the Senate, State of NC
	Glenn Kleiman, Executive Director, Friday Institute
Accountability, Transparency & Communication	Rep. Craig Horn, Education Appropriations Chair, NC House of Representatives
	June Atkinson, NC Superintendent of Schools, State of NC/DPI
Finance	Rep. Bryan Holloway, Appropriations Chair, NC House of Representatives
	Martez Hill, Executive Director, State Board of Education
Governance	JB Buxton, Consultant, Education Innovation Group
	John Hood, President, John William Pope Foundation

Joe Ableidinger, Public School Forum of NC	Anna Brady, Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy at UNC-Greensboro	Peter Cookson, The American Institutes for Research
Lauren Acree, The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at NC State	Sue Breckenridge, NC Business Committee for Education	Jeni Corn, The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at NC State
Ben Adams, KIPP Eastern North Carolina	Patty Briguglio, PFB Connect	Dave Corsetti, Wake County Schools
Linda Allbriton, Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute	Robin Britt, Guilford Child Development	Representative Tricia Cotham, NC House of Representatives
Kathy Allen, Blue Ridge Community College	Marcia Brooks, Lakewood Avenue Children's School	Kendra Cotton, NC Office of State Treasurer
Bill Anderson, MeckEd	Robert Broome, North Carolina Association of REALTORS	Julie Crain, Wake Education Partnership
Gayle Anderson, Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce	Adrienne Brown, RTI International	Bob Greczyn, NC New Schools
Johanna Anderson, The Belk Foundation	Nancy H. Brown, NC Partnership for Children	Ed Croom, Low-Wealth Consortium and Johnston County Schools
Margaret Arbuckle, Guilford Education Alliance	Representative Rob Bryan, NC House of Representatives	Max Crowley, Duke University
Ailen Arreaza, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations	JB Buxton, Education Innovations Group	Tracy Crump, Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute
June Atkinson, NC Public Schools	Russ Campbell, Burroughs Wellcome Foundation	Elizabeth Cunningham, North Carolina New Teacher Support Program
Anne Bacon, NC Community College System	Mary Carey, Bootstraps	Patrick Danahy, Greensboro Partnership
Lorie Barnes, NCAeysc	Nora Carr, Guilford County Schools	Eric Davis, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education
Susannah Barr, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	Paul Carr, The Friday Center at UNC-Chapel Hill	Janice Davis, Strategic Leadership by Design
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Terry Stoops, John Locke Foundation	Jennifer Whittington, Bladen Community College	
Cay Stratton, MDC	Paul Wiles, Novant Health	
Linda Suggs, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Hope Williams, NC Independent Colleges and Universities	
Tammi Sutton, KIPP ENC Public Schools		
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Catherine Tahaney, Carteret County Public Schools		



Appendix II: Reflections on the Working Groups

As we wrapped up the initial working group meetings, we asked participants to share their thoughts on the Working Group process and the need for a North Carolina Education Vision. The following statements reflect common themes across the Working Groups.

// What is most important for the business community to know about the Working Group process?

- > We are grateful to have the business community taking a strong role in convening a diverse group of education stakeholders. Our state needs business leaders and BEST NC to be willing to put themselves out front on this crucial issue, be willing to be bold, and be willing to hold the line to see the vision through.
- > Education transformation and the business voice in particular must be driven by the belief that all students can learn. Unfortunately, not everyone today believes this is true.
- > Education is complex and cannot be solved with just a few policy changes.

// What are you most worried about?

- > We don't want this Vision to collect dust. It must be a living document. We have a window of opportunity now – more than we have had in a long time.
- > What I worry about is how to move so many groups to a common agreement on the Vision.
- > The working group conversations have had such breadth, I worry that we will lose focus and not be able to communicate something easy to understand. Education is complex and the Vision must honor that complexity while prioritizing the most important goals.
- > That we won't meet again. These conversations have been productive and built new connections.



// What are you most excited about?

- > The education stakeholders involved in this process are in this for the long term, and won't change every two years as political leadership does.
- > We are excited that these conversations have been so comprehensive, robust and substantive, not ideological, and yet we have so much alignment from group to group.
- > Too many discussions are immediately focused and not strategic or visionary. I am excited about the contributions of this process to a longer-term Vision for North Carolina education.

Appendix III: Footnotes

¹NC student proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

²IBID.

³2014 ACT results. Among 12 states with 100% participation, North Carolina ranks last in composite scores in English and reading, 8th in math and 11th in science.

⁴Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce (2013). Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/recovery2020>.

⁵North Carolina Association of Workforce Development Boards & NC Department of Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division (2014).

⁶2014 Employer Needs Survey. <http://www.nccommerce.com/Portals/11/Documents/Commission/2014%20Employer%20Needs%20Survey.pdf>.

⁷2014 ACT results. Among 12 states with 100% participation, North Carolina ranks last in composite scores in English and reading, 8th in math and 11th in science.

⁸North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2012-13). Free and Reduced Price Meals Application Data. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/fbs/resources/data/>.

⁹Article I, Section XV; and Article IX, Section 2(1), North Carolina State Constitution. <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/legislation/constitution/nconstitution.html>.

¹⁰National Institute for Early Education Research (2013). The State of Preschool 2013: North Carolina Profile. http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/North%20Carolina_2013.pdf; North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation (2014). <http://buildthefoundation.org/>.

¹¹Berger, A., Turk-Bicakci, L., Garet, M., Song, M., Knudson, J., Haxton, C., Zeiser, K., Hoshen, G., Ford, J., Stephan, J., Keating, K., Cassidy, L. (2013). Early College, Early Success: Early College High School Initiative Impact Study. Washington, DC: AIR; Edmunds, J., Berger, A., Lauen, D. (2014). "Replicating Impacts for Early College High Schools: Comparing the Designs and Results for Three Studies." Panel presented at the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness Conference, Washington, DC; Edmunds, J., Bernstein, L., Unlu, F., Glennie, E., Wilse, J., Smith, A., Arshavsky, N. (2012). Expanding the Start of the College Pipeline: Ninth-grade Findings from an experimental study of the Early College High School Model. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*. 5:136-59.

¹²Center for Educator Compensation Reform (n.d.). Research Synthesis: Measurement. http://cecr.ed.gov/researchSyntheses/Research%20Synthesis_Q_D19.pdf; North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2013). North Carolina Continues to Lead the Nation in National Board Certified Teachers. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/newsroom/news/2012-13/20130108-01> 1/15/2015; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2014). <http://www.nbpts.org/who-we-are>.

¹³North Carolina State Constitution. <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/legislation/constitution/nconstitution.html>; UNC General Administration (2014). <http://www.northcarolina.edu/?q=content/about-our-system>; US News & World Report (2015). Best Value Schools: National Universities. <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-universities/best-value>.

¹⁴Federal Education Budget Project (n.d.). <http://febp.newamerica.net/k12/NC>. The per-pupil expenditure for every school district is compared to the average per-pupil expenditure for the state and weighted according to size and poverty level.

¹⁵US Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2014). Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on K-12 Educational Effectiveness. <http://www.leadersandlaggards.org/sites/default/files/Leaders and Laggards A State-by-State Report Card on K-12 Educational Effectiveness.pdf>; chart of state rankings, here: <http://www.leadersandlaggards.org/report-card/roi>. To determine return on investment of state expenditures, the Chamber divided the state NAEP performance index by the average per pupil expenditure, adjusted for cost of living.

¹⁶Kindergarten Readiness Assessment: A new Kindergarten readiness assessment is still in development for the 2015-16 school year.

¹⁷Turnover Rate by effectiveness rating will need to be compiled at the state level in future years based on available data.

¹⁸NC student proficiency on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

¹⁹IBID.

²⁰North Carolina ranks last among "comparable" states, meaning those that also require 100% student participation on the ACT.

²¹Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce (2013). Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020. http://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.SR_Web_.pdf.



Excellence: **North Carolina's Education Vision**

North Carolina's Education Vision is a living strategic vision that is developed and owned by education stakeholders from across North Carolina, supported by BEST NC as the backbone organization for the collective action work.



BEST NC (Business for Educational Success and Transformation in North Carolina) is a non-profit, non-partisan coalition of business leaders committed to improving North Carolina's public education system through policy and advocacy. Formed in 2013, BEST NC's mission is to unite an engaged and informed business perspective to

build consensus toward dramatically transform and improving education in North Carolina. We achieve this through visioning, convening and advocating to ensure that every student in North Carolina has the skills he or she needs to be ready for school, work, and life. Learn more at www.BEST-NC.org.

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