



2022 NC LAB EDUCATION INNOVATION

Converging to Strengthen Teacher Recruitment

September 7, 2022



NC STRIDE Planning Team



Brenda Berg
President & CEO,
BEST NC



Dr. Laura Bilbro-Berry
Executive Director of
Educator Preparation
& Lab Schools,
UNC System Office



**Matthew
Bristow-Smith**
2019 Burroughs
Wellcome Fund NC
Principal of the Year,
Edgecombe County
Public Schools



Dr. Jason Caldwell
Director, TeachNC and
Educator Recruitment
Partnerships, NC DPI



Jill Camnitz
Board Member,
NC State Board
of Education



Keiyonna Dubashi
Founder &
Executive Director,
Profound Ladies



Dr. Lisa Mabe Eads
Associate Vice
President of
Academic Programs,
NC Community
College System



Emilee Higdon
2021 Prudential
NC Beginning
Teacher of the Year,
Macon County Schools



Cecilia Holden
President & CEO,
myFutureNC



Neal Kapur
Alumnus,
Charlotte Teacher
Early College



Dr. Alvera Lesane
Asst. Superintendent
for Human Resources,
Durham Public Schools



Dr. Patrick Miller
Former Chair,
Professional
Educator Preparation
and Standards
Commission (PEPSC)



Dayson Pasiòn
Teacher Advisor,
Office of Governor
Roy Cooper



Dr. Paula Groves Price
Dean of the College
of Education, NC A&T
State University



Olivia Rice
Education
Research Analyst,
RTI International



**Dr. Thomas R.
Tomberlin**
Sr. Director of Educator
Preparation, Licensure,
and Performance, NC DPI



Claudia Walker
Math Instructional
Coach, Murphey
Traditional Academy,
Guilford County Schools



Tom West
Vice President for
Government Relations
& General Counsel, NC
Independent Colleges
and Universities



Every stride has led to this point.

Welcome to the 2022 North Carolina Education Innovation Lab!

In 2020, BEST NC formed the NC STRIDE working group to examine the teacher recruitment landscape in North Carolina and develop a set of recommendations to move our state forward with a coordinated and impactful teacher recruitment strategy.

NC STRIDE stands for North Carolina Strategic Teacher Recruitment with Intentionality, Diversity, and Excellence, and the working group sought input and expertise from more than 100 education stakeholders including teachers, school leaders, researchers, and policymakers.

In 2021, NC STRIDE released the NC STRIDE Teacher Recruitment Action Plan, a set of detailed recommendations and strategies to help strengthen teacher recruitment in our state. This year, the NC STRIDE planning team continued to meet and track progress toward achieving the goals of the Action Plan.

Through those conversations, it became clear that there are a number of organizations, entities, and initiatives converging around the critical issue of teacher recruitment and the imperative that we develop a set of solutions to transform the way we recruit and support high-quality teaching candidates across North Carolina.

That brings us to today.

Every stride has led to this point: to ensure that North Carolina strengthens its teacher recruitment initiatives and becomes the best state in the nation to teach and learn.



2022 NC Education Innovation Lab Agenda

- 8:30 - 8:45 am** **Welcome & Opening Remarks**
Walter McDowell, Chairman, BEST NC
Brenda Berg, President & CEO, BEST NC
- 8:45 - 9:00 am** **Video: *Converging Around Teacher Recruitment***
- 9:00 - 9:30 am** **Keynote Address: Why Great Teachers Matter for Students**
Introduction: Matthew Bristow-Smith, Principal, Edgecombe Early College High School; 2019 Wells Fargo NC Principal of the Year
- **Dr. Matthew Springer**, Hussman Distinguished Professor of Education Reform, UNC-Chapel Hill
- 9:30 - 10:30 am** **Exploring Recruitment Challenges: Professional Pathways for Teachers**
Moderator: Leah Carper, Teacher, Northern Guilford High School; 2022 Burroughs Wellcome Fund NC Teacher of the Year
- **Dr. Valerie Bridges**, Superintendent, Edgecombe County Public Schools; 2022 Craig A. Phillips NC Superintendent of the Year
 - **Dr. Alfred Bryant, Jr.**, Dean of the School of Education and Human Sciences, Campbell University
 - **Keiyonna Dubashi**, Executive Director, Profound Ladies
 - **Dr. Kimberly Gold**, Chief of Staff, North Carolina Community College System
 - **Dr. Anthony Graham**, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Winston-Salem State University
- 10:30 - 10:45 am** **Break**
- 10:45 - 11:00 am** **Video: *Collective Hope for the Teaching Profession***
Introduction: State Superintendent Catherine Truitt, NC Public Schools
- 11:00 - 11:45 am** **Overview: NC Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals**
Moderator: Julie Pittman, Special Advisor on Teacher Engagement, Office of the State Superintendent, NC DPI; 2018 Western Region Teacher of the Year
- **Dr. Van Dempsey**, Dean of the Watson College of Education at UNC-Wilmington; Chair, PEPSC Commission
 - **Maureen Stover**, Teacher, North Carolina Virtual Public Schools; 2020 Burroughs Wellcome Fund NC Teacher of the Year; Member, PEPSC



11:45 am - 12:30 pm **Lunch Break**

12:30 - 2:30 pm **Breakout Sessions: Key Components of the Pathways Plan**

North Carolina's Unique Opportunity for Statewide Teacher Apprenticeships

Speakers: **Kathryn Castelloes**, Director, Apprenticeship NC; **Tammi Ward**, Interim Superintendent, Hertford County Schools; **Dr. Hank Weddington**, Dean of the College of Education, Lenoir-Rhyne University

This breakout session will explore opportunities to develop teacher apprenticeship models across North Carolina, examining the various types of candidates who may be eligible and exploring potential financial assistance.

Innovative Evidence for Teacher Licensure: Student Surveys and New Evaluation Models

Speakers: **Dr. Thomas Kane**, Walter H. Gale Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education; **Dr. Lynn Moody**, Strategic Advisor, SparkNC; Former Superintendent, Rowan-Salisbury School District

This breakout session will provide an overview of research around new and innovative ways to measure teacher effectiveness, including reliable and valid student surveys and new approaches to teacher evaluation.

What are Advanced Teaching Roles? Best Practices for Design & Implementation

Speakers: **Nikki Buxton**, Multi-Classroom Leader, Welborn Middle School, Guilford County Schools; **Abe Hege**, Principal, Fairview Elementary School, Guilford County Schools; **Dr. Sean McWherter**, Director of Restart Programs, Guilford County Schools

This breakout session will share more about the Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR) initiative and about the impact ATR is making in Guilford County Schools.

Reimagining Professional Development: Micro-Credentials and Professional Advancement Accounts

Speakers: **Dr. Jackie Ennis**, Dean of the School of Education, Barton College; **Erin Shoemaker**, Executive Director of Learning & Teaching, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools; **Dr. Thomas R. Tomberlin**, Senior Director of Educator Preparation, Licensure and Performance, NC DPI

This breakout session will provide an overview of how micro-credentials are being developed and utilized across the state and will share more about how professional advancement accounts could help support teacher growth.

2:40 - 3:00 pm **Closing Remarks & Next Steps**

Brenda Berg, President & CEO, BEST NC



A Note About Social Media: We encourage you to share positive Innovation Lab learnings and takeaways using the hashtags **#NCEdLab2022**, **#NCSTRIDE**, and **#EdConvergence** while also asking you to keep participant conversations in confidence to create a safe space for dialogue.



NC STRIDE Key Strategic Priorities

NC STRIDE

As a state, one of the highest-leverage investments we can make is recruiting the next generation of teachers to North Carolina public schools. In service of that goal, BEST NC and the NC STRIDE Planning Team convened more than 100 stakeholders and experts to analyze the teacher recruitment landscape and develop a set of recommendations to move our state forward with a coordinated and impactful teacher recruitment strategy.

The resulting *NC STRIDE Teacher Recruitment Action Plan* was released in spring 2021 and includes 8 recommendations, 20 strategies, and more than 150 specific actions that can help us recruit high-quality, diverse teachers into classrooms across the state. The *Action Plan* also identified 5 key strategic priorities that can serve as a catalyst for other strategies and actions:

Teacher Recruitment Entity

- The recruitment efforts of 54 EPPs, 115 LEAs, charter schools, and the TeachNC initiative are largely disconnected.
- Establish an entity, staffed by NC DPI and with a statewide advisory board, that can also collect and report data and best practices.

Teacher Pipeline Data

- Current teacher vacancy and supply data are very limited, making it difficult to recommend policies or programs that will effectively address specific staffing needs.
- Implement consistent vacancy and applicant tracking systems that will accurately identify the most critical needs in the teacher supply pipeline.

Fill Critical Vacancies

- Districts report persistent vacancies in secondary math and science, which are critical skills for college and career readiness.
- Consider sustained compensation for high-skill/high-demand careers, like the military does with their critical positions.

Reimagine Licensure

- The current licensure system creates entry barriers and is not aligned with professional priorities.
- Reimagine the licensure and professional pathway system based on teacher effectiveness, embedded professional development, and paid career opportunities for effective teachers.

Paid Teacher Apprenticeship

- While pre-service experience is critical for success, it is a financial barrier.
- Offer a paid experience for candidates before becoming the teacher of record (EPP student teacher and residency paths, etc.). Consider compensation for effective teachers as mentors.



Below are updates on the progress that has been made on each of these key strategic priorities.

Teacher Recruitment Entity: COMPLETED!

The 2021 state budget created a full-time teacher recruitment director position at NC DPI, and the 2022 state budget provided ongoing funding for TeachNC.

Teacher Pipeline Data: IN PROGRESS

The 2021 state budget modified the State of the Teaching Profession Report policy to clarify the types of positions that are considered vacancies (including positions that are filled by long-term substitutes or teachers with an emergency or permit to teach license). NC DPI is also utilizing job posting data from the statewide teacher jobs board on TeachNC to get a real-time look at vacancies across the state.

Filling Critical Vacancies: MINIMAL PROGRESS

Many public school units (PSUs) have allocated a portion of their federal COVID relief funding to provide increased compensation for specific hard-to-staff positions; however, those efforts are not consistent across the state and salary increases are temporary as they are funded by one-time relief dollars.

Reimagine Licensure: IN PROGRESS

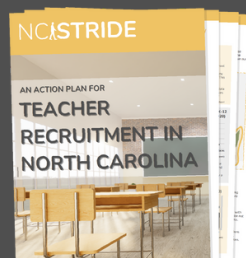
The Professional Educator Standards and Preparation Commission (PEPSC) is developing a draft plan called the Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals that reimagines teacher licensure and may be considered by the State Board of Education later this fall.

Paid Teacher Apprenticeship: IN PROGRESS

Apprenticeship NC has included education as an area in which they intend to develop new registered apprenticeship programs. Several districts have started initial work to develop teacher apprenticeship programs. Teacher apprentice positions are also included in the Pathways Plan mentioned above.



Follow the QR code and download the **NC STRIDE Teacher Recruitment Action Plan** to learn more about NC STRIDE's continuing work and recommendations for improving the teacher recruitment landscape in North Carolina!





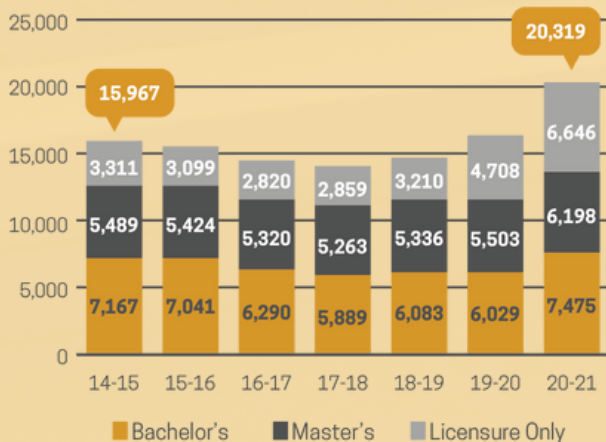
Converging Around Teacher Recruitment

As we look at the teacher pipeline in North Carolina, there are several critical challenges that inhibit the recruitment of a diverse and high-quality teacher workforce. These challenges limit the number of effective educators in our state's education system and restrict students' access to a high-quality teacher. This impacts schools across the state but is disproportionately felt in high-need and rural schools.

Challenge: Barriers to Entry and Perceptions of the Profession

Despite a recent increase in educator preparation program enrollment, there are many barriers to entry to the teaching profession that deter talented individuals from becoming teachers, including early career pay, entrance exams, college affordability, and required unpaid student teaching that deter talented individuals from entering the teaching profession.

Public and Independent Educator Preparation Enrollment, by Degree Type (2014-15 to 2020-21)



Source: NC DPI (Data Request)

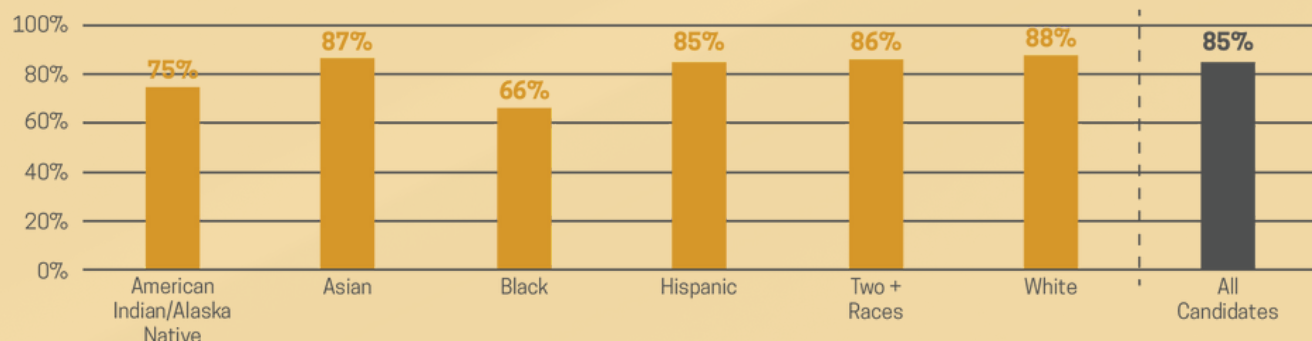
Average Beginning Teacher Pay in Southeast Region, Adjusted for Cost of Living (2021-22)

State	Avg. Beginning Teacher Pay
Alabama	\$45,399
Mississippi	\$43,233
Tennessee	\$43,106
Louisiana	\$42,577
Florida	\$42,212
Arkansas	\$40,442
Virginia	\$40,293
South Carolina	\$40,059
Kentucky	\$39,975
Georgia	\$39,946
North Carolina	\$39,695*
West Virginia	\$37,730

*North Carolina's nominal average beginning teacher pay is \$37,127.

Source: [2020-21 NEA Teacher Salary Benchmark Report](#)

North Carolina Teacher Licensure Exam Pass Rates, by Race/Ethnicity (2013 to 2019)



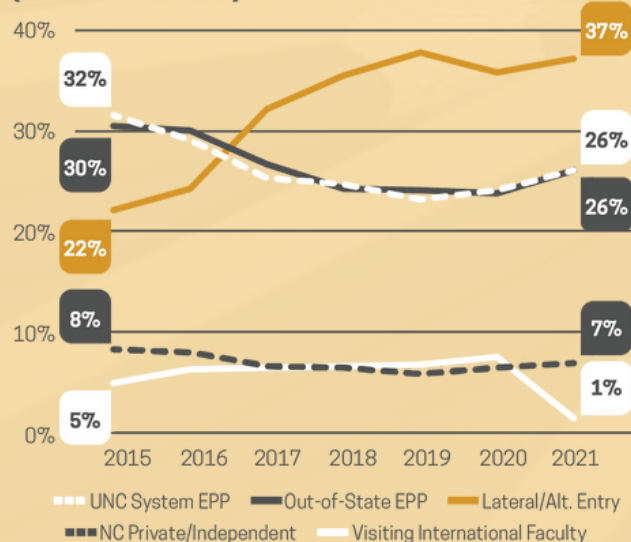
Source: [NC DPI EPP Dashboard](#)



Challenge: Non-Traditional Routes to Entry are Growing with Insufficient Professional Supports for Educators

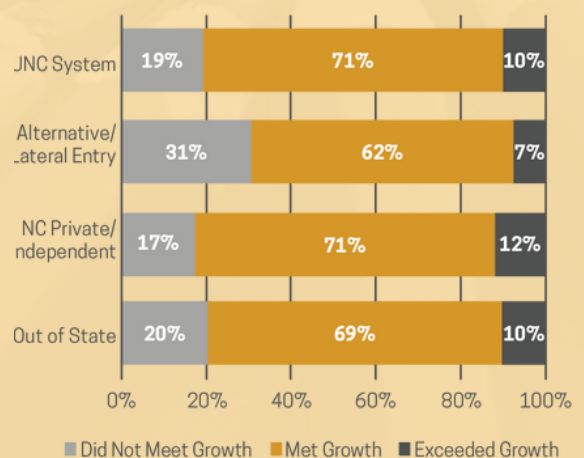
The percentage of teachers prepared outside of traditional educator preparation programs has increased significantly in recent years. This pathway now represents more than one-third of all new teachers and is more diverse than traditional routes. Unfortunately, these alternatively prepared teachers receive few classroom experiences before becoming a teacher, have very limited early career support, are less effective than traditionally prepared teachers, and leave the profession at higher rates.

Distribution of Preparation Routes for Newly Hired K-12 Public School Teachers (2015 to 2021)



Source: NC DPI (Data Request)

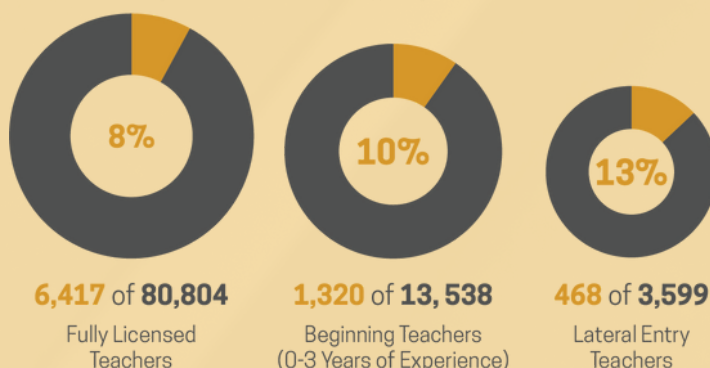
Distribution of EVAAS Scores for First Year Teachers, by Preparation Route (2018 to 2021*)



*Teacher EVAAS scores are from 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2020-21 school years.

Source: NC DPI (Data Request)

Teacher Attrition Rates in K-12 Traditional Public Schools, by Teacher Category (2020-21)



Source: NC DPI 2020-21 State of the Teaching Profession Report



In the 2021-22 academic year,

38%

of residency license teachers were Black, compared to 17% of the overall teacher workforce.

Source: NC DPI (data request)

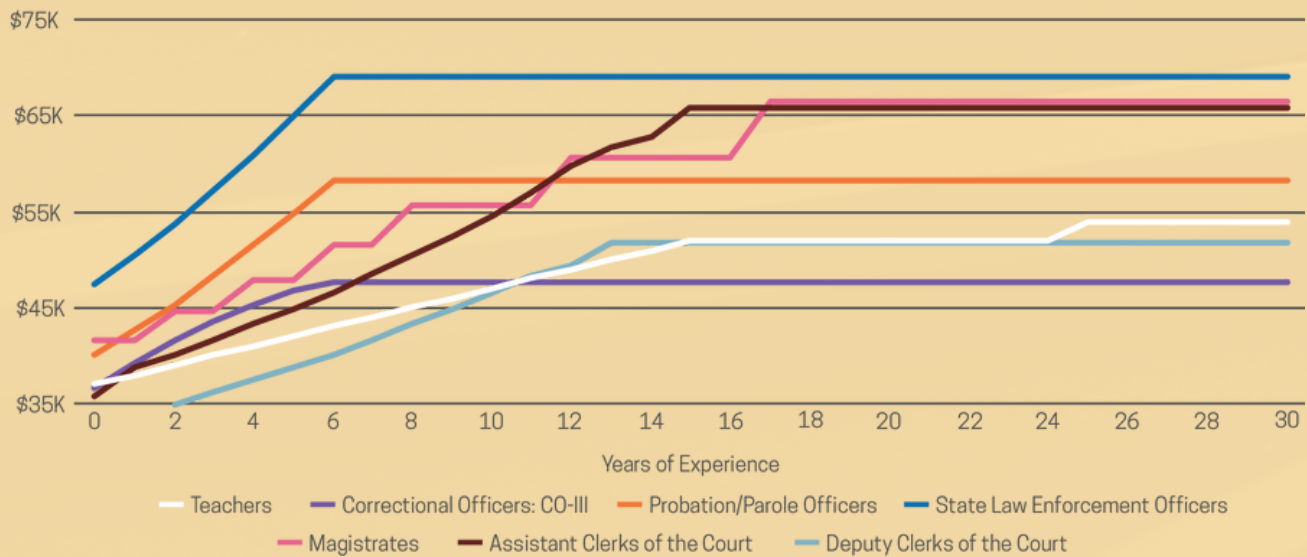


Converging Around Teacher Recruitment

Challenge: Lack of Professional Pay and Opportunities for Professional Advancement

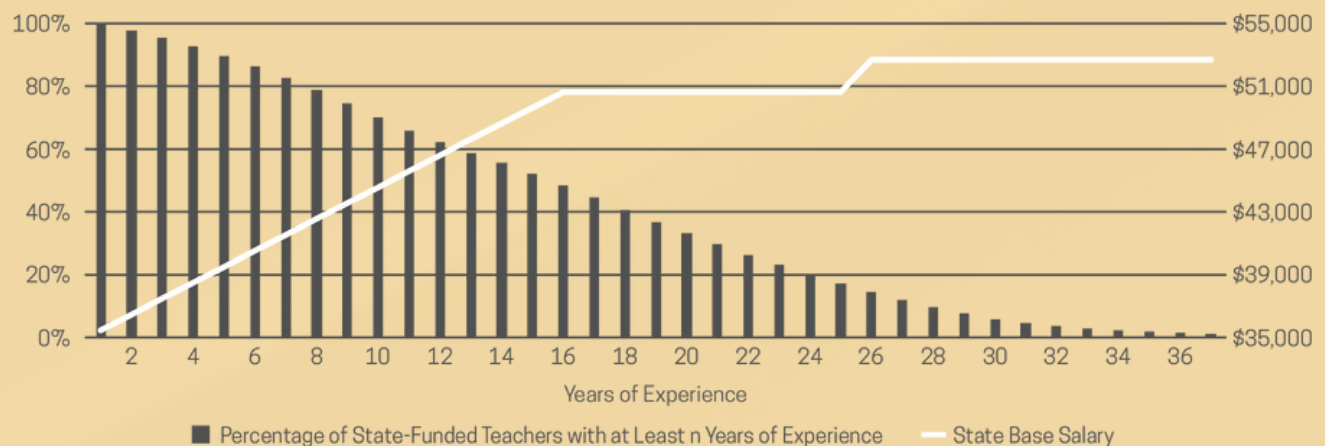
Average teacher pay in North Carolina lags behind several of its regional neighbors, and it takes teachers longer to reach the top of the state salary schedule than it does other highly-skilled state employees. Additionally, outside of the state's Advanced Teaching Roles program, there are not currently opportunities for professional advancement that allow highly effective teachers to stay in the classroom and receive increased pay for increased responsibility, which many are already taking on without additional compensation.

Comparison of State Salary Schedules for Public Sector Employees in North Carolina (2021-22)



Source: [Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2021](#); NCGA Fiscal Research Division (Data Request)

Distribution of State-Funded Classroom Teachers by Years of Experience and State Base Salary in North Carolina K-12 Public Schools (2021-22)



Source: [NC DPI Highlights of the Public School Budget](#)



Average Teacher Pay in Southeast Region, Adjusted for Cost of Living (2021-22)

State	Average Teacher Pay
Georgia	\$63,235
Alabama	\$61,579
Arkansas	\$59,286
Tennessee	\$59,228
Kentucky	\$58,374
North Carolina	\$57,355*
Virginia	\$57,186
South Carolina	\$56,729
Mississippi	\$55,629
Louisiana	\$52,862
West Virginia	\$49,975
Florida	\$49,104

*North Carolina's nominal average teacher pay is \$53,644.

Source: [2022 NEA Rankings and Estimates Report](#)

Advanced Teaching Roles

Nineteen districts across North Carolina are offering career advancement through Advanced Teaching Roles. Follow the QR code to learn more and download BEST NC's free policy brief.

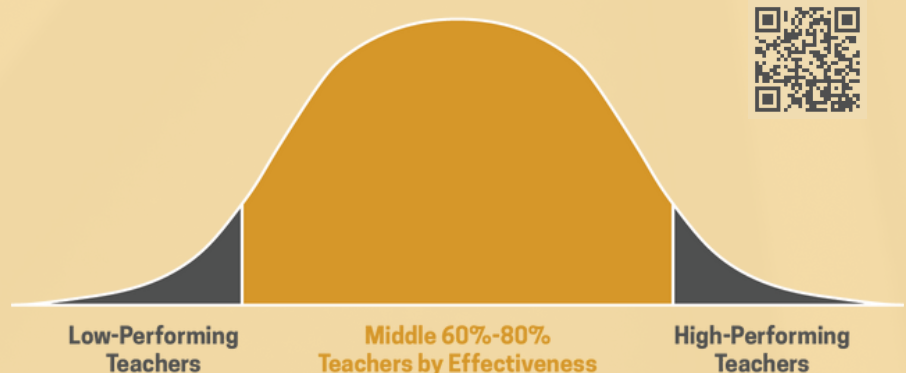


Challenge: Licensure is Disconnected from Effectiveness

Under the current teacher licensure process, teachers renew their licenses based on the accrual of continuing education units and principal evaluation ratings. Research shows that, when state licensure systems measure professional development (PD) by the number of hours completed, teachers often receive PD that does not increase their effectiveness or spur professional growth.

Additionally, evidence shows that while principal evaluations are able to identify the 10%-20% of teachers who are most effective and the 10%-20% that are least effective (according to value-added models), they cannot reliably distinguish between the middle 60%-80% of teachers.

Principal Evaluations More Consistently Identify the Highest- & Lowest-Performing Teachers



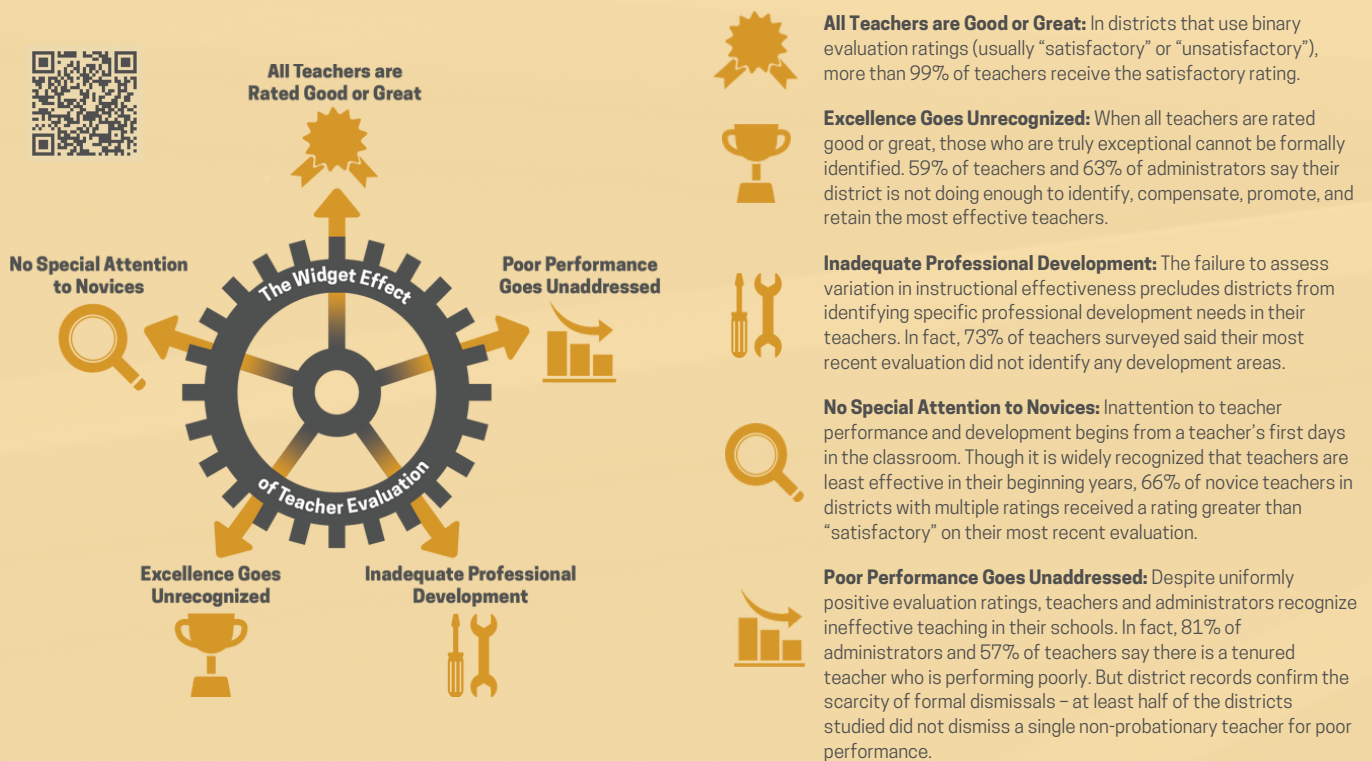
Source: [When Principals Rate Teachers: The Best--and the Worst--Stand Out \(2006\)](#)



Converging Around Teacher Recruitment

Teacher Evaluation Systems Fail to Recognize Differences in Teaching Quality

In 2009, TNTP's report *The Widget Effect* analyzed teacher evaluation data from across the country and found that school districts largely assume classroom effectiveness is the same from teacher to teacher, rather than recognizing key differences in performance and targeting resources to reward excellence teachers and support improvements in teaching quality. Key findings can be found below:



Source: [The Widget Effect: Our National Failure to Acknowledge and Act on Differences in Teacher Effectiveness \(2009\)](#)



Putting Your "Best Foot Forward" on Teacher Evaluation

The Best Foot Forward Project investigated whether video technology can make the classroom observation process easier to implement, less costly, and more valid and reliable. From 2013-2015, researchers put cameras in the hands of 350 teachers and allowed them to select their best lessons for evaluation. Giving teachers control of the video collection and submission process resulted in greater perceived fairness of the teacher evaluation system and more insightful self-reflection by teachers, and allowed administrators to shift observation duties to quieter times of the day when they had more time to devote to giving thoughtful feedback.

Sources: Best Foot Forward Project; Visibly Better

Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals



The Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals is a draft plan that reimagines North Carolina's teacher licensure system to address several of the key challenges highlighted in the previous pages. The initial drafts of the Pathways Plan offer a set of solutions to help strengthen teacher recruitment across the state, including:



Professional Pay: Significantly increasing teacher pay and transforming the salary schedule so individuals reach the top of the schedule faster, as in many other high-skill professions.



Effectiveness-Based Licensure: Offering teachers multiple methods for demonstrating effectiveness and persisting in the profession, rather than relying solely on licensure exams.



Career Advancement Opportunities: Providing effective teachers the opportunity to extend their reach and earn more with Advanced Teaching Roles.



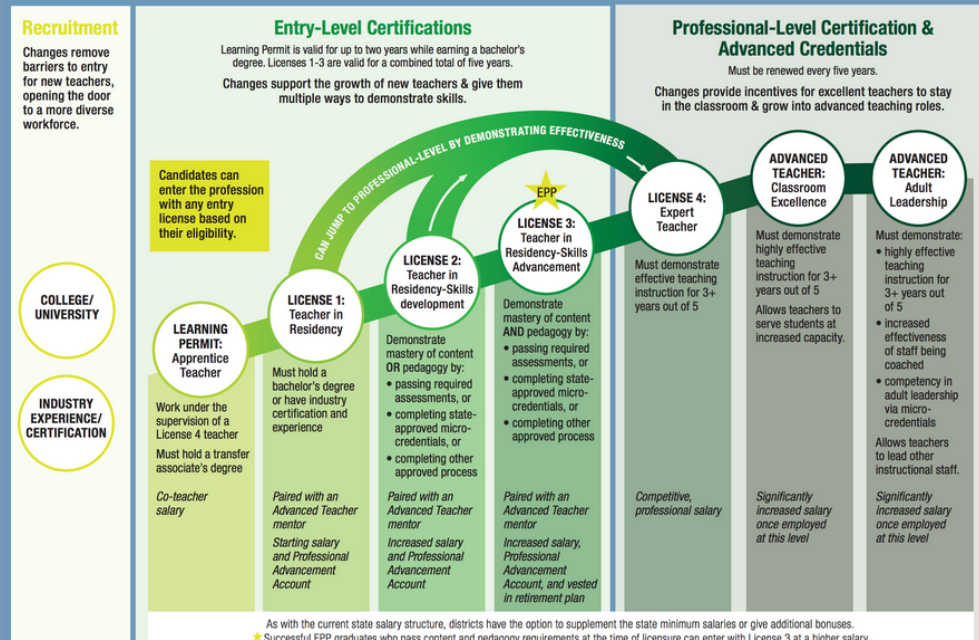
Early Career Support: Providing embedded professional support for early career teachers, including those pursuing teaching through an apprenticeship position or a residency license.



Traditional Preparation Valued: Emphasizing the value of traditional educator preparation programs, which currently produce more effective teachers with lower attrition rates than other alternatively prepared teachers. In the model, teachers graduating from traditional preparation programs would enter the profession at a higher license and compensation level than teachers who enter through other routes.

North Carolina Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals

Every student deserves a great teacher, but North Carolina is facing a shortage of high-quality educators. If we update our complex teacher licensure process, we can expand the pool of qualified candidates, help them grow into great teachers, and give them incentives to stay in our classrooms helping our students succeed.





2022 Innovation Lab Speakers



Dr. Valerie Bridges

Dr. Valerie H. Bridges is Superintendent of Edgecombe County Public Schools. She has served as Associate and Assistant Superintendent in Edgecombe and Washington County Schools. Dr. Bridges is also the 2022 A. Craig Phillips North Carolina Superintendent of the Year.



Dr. Alfred Bryant, Jr.

Dr. Alfred Bryant, Jr. is the Dean of the School of Education and Human Sciences at Campbell University and is an enrolled member of the Lumbee American Indian Tribe. He served as the Dean of the School of Education, the Founding Director of the Southeast American Indian Studies Program and Full Professor in the Educational Leadership and Counseling Department at UNC-Pembroke.



Nikki Buxton

Nikki Buxton is a 20-year educator currently serving as a Math Multi-Classroom Leader (MCL) at Welborn Academy of Science and Technology in High Point, N.C. She has previously served as a middle school math and science teacher, Instructional Facilitator, and Instructional Math Coach.



Jill Camnitz

Jill Camnitz of Greenville is a representative of the 1st Education District on the State Board of Education. Camnitz is Chair of the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Coastal Plain Board of Directors. She also serves on the Parents for Public Schools of Pitt County, Pitt County Educational Foundation, and Brody Foundation. She previously served as a member and as Chair for the Pitt County Board of Education.



Leah Carper

Leah Carper is the 2022 Burroughs Wellcome Fund NC Teacher of the Year. She has been a high school English teacher for Guilford County Schools since 2006. She has served on various commissions at the state level, including the NC Educator Effectiveness and Compensation Taskforce and the Principal Fellows Commission.



Kathryn Castellones

Kathryn Castellones is the Director of Apprenticeship NC. She began working with the NC Department of Labor in 1994 in the Pre-Apprenticeship Division. After working there for four years, she became an apprenticeship consultant with the Apprenticeship and Training Bureau. In 2006, she began working as the Western Field Supervisor and, in 2008, started as the Bureau Chief for Apprenticeship and Training.



Dr. Van Dempsey

Dr. Van Dempsey is the Dean of the Watson College of Education at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. In 2019, he was appointed to Governor Roy Cooper's Task Force to Develop a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education (DRIVE). In 2022, Dr. Dempsey began serving as the Chair of Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC).



Keiyonna Dubashi

Keiyonna Dubashi is a National Board-Certified educator with over 16 years in education as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Profound Ladies. Her background is in elementary education and administration. After teaching for over a decade, Dubashi joined the nonprofit world, creating professional development centered on culturally-responsive teaching for educators all over North Carolina.



Dr. Jackie Ennis

Dr. Jackie Ennis serves as the Dean of the School of Education at Barton College. She taught middle grades math, science, and technology in North Carolina public schools for 15 years. Dr. Ennis earned her Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on Instructional Technology from North Carolina State University.



Dr. Kimberly Gold

Dr. Kimberly Gold is Chief of Staff for the NC Community College System Office. Previously, Dr. Gold served as president of Robeson Community College in Lumberton and worked at Isothermal Community College in Spindale. She earned her doctorate in educational leadership from Appalachian State University, Master of Business Administration from Western Carolina University and Bachelor of Science in business administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Dr. Anthony Graham

Dr. Anthony Graham is the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Winston-Salem State University. Prior to this position, Graham was a tenured full Professor and Dean of the College of Education at North Carolina A&T State University. Additionally, he serves as the Chair of Governor Roy Cooper's DRIVE Task Force and Co-Chair of the University of North Carolina System Educator Preparation Advisory Group.



Abe Hege

Abe Hege is the principal of Fairview Elementary in High Point, NC and a Principal of the Year Finalist for two consecutive years in Guilford County. This is his fifth year as principal of Fairview where, over the years, he led his staff in lowering referrals and suspensions by over 90% and raised school proficiency by more than 10%.

2022 Innovation Lab Speakers



Dr. Thomas Kane

Dr. Thomas Kane is an economist and the Walter H. Gale Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is also the faculty director of the Center for Education Policy Research. His work has spanned both K-12 and higher education, covering topics such as the design of school accountability systems, teacher recruitment and retention, and race-conscious college admissions.



Dr. Sean McWherter

Dr. Sean McWherter serves as the Director of Restart Programs in Guilford County. In this role, he supports the district's 24 Restart Schools and the district's Advanced Teaching Roles initiative. Dr. McWherter has worked across all three levels of education and has served as an administrator in both elementary and high school settings.



Dr. Lynn P. Moody

Dr. Lynn Moody is a Strategic Advisor for the Innovation Project. She was school superintendent for the past 15 years in two school districts; Rock Hill Schools in South Carolina and Rowan-Salisbury Schools. She served on a number of boards and participated in several organizations such as North Carolina High School Athletic Association, Responsive Classroom, Schlechty Network, ERDI Network, Novant Health Rowan Medical Center, and United Way.



Julie Pittman

Julie Pittman is a Special Assistant to the State Superintendent on Educator Engagement at NC DPI. A 23-year educator, Pittman was a National Board-Certified high school English teacher in Rutherford County Schools, and was named the 2018 Burroughs Wellcome Fund Western Region NC Teacher of the Year. Prior to joining NC DPI, she was a teacher on loan to No Kid Hungry, serving as the Education Outreach Manager in North Carolina.



Erin Shoemaker

Erin Shoemaker is the Executive Director of Learning and Teaching for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. She has served for over 16 years as a teacher, instructional facilitator, Dean of Students, and Director of Digital Innovation & Personalized Professional Learning. She enjoys collaborating with her team to meet the needs of educators and to provide professional learning experiences that integrate the use of digital tools.



Matthew Bristow-Smith

Matthew Bristow-Smith is the 2019 Wells Fargo NC Principal of the Year and principal of Edgecombe Early College High School in Edgecombe County, NC. Bristow-Smith has served Edgecombe County Public Schools his entire career. Under Bristow-Smith's principalship, Edgecombe Early College's enrollment has grown by 50% while maintaining a 100% graduation rate and a North Carolina School Performance Grade of A.



Dr. Matthew Springer

Dr. Matthew Springer is Hussman Distinguished Professor of Education Reform, UNC-Chapel Hill, where he focuses on the role of accountability and incentives in K-16 education. He advocates for research-practice partnerships whereby rigorous academic research is conducted collaboratively with district and state partners.



Maureen Stover

Maureen Stover is an AP Physics I teacher at the NC Virtual Public School, and the 2020 Burroughs Wellcome Fund North Carolina Teacher of the Year (NCTOY), a 2021 National Teacher of the Year finalist, and a 2022 National Educators Association California Casualty Excellence in Teaching awardee. She has taught at the elementary, middle and high school levels and worked as an educational consultant for the National Science Teaching Association.



Dr. Thomas R. Tomberlin

Dr. Tom Tomberlin works for NC DPI as the Senior Director of Educator Preparation, Licensure, and Performance, where he collaborates with state, district, and local leaders on developing measures of educator effectiveness and opportunities for professional growth and development. He has worked as a Latin Instructor at Tulane University, a statistical support specialist for HGSE, and as a strategic data fellow for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.



Superintendent Catherine Truitt

As North Carolina state superintendent, Catherine Truitt's work is focused on improving the state's public schools, expanding innovation, and creating new opportunities for students to learn, grow, and successfully transition into the postsecondary plans of their choice. Truitt's service in education began as a high school English teacher, where she spent 10 years in the classroom at both the high school and middle school levels.



Tammi Ward

Tammi Ward is the Interim Superintendent of Hertford County Schools. Ward began her career in education in 1996 as a middle school CTE teacher. Since that time, she has served public schools in northeastern North Carolina in various roles ranging from classroom teacher, administrator at the middle and high school levels, and director positions in Career Technical Education and Human Resources.



Dr. Hank Weddington

Dr. Hank Weddington serves as Dean of the College of Education and Human Services and Professor of Education at Lenoir-Rhyne University. He currently serves as a commissioner on the PEPSC Commission, for which he co-chairs the Preparation and Entry sub-committee. Weddington also serves as Immediate Past President for the NC Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators, an organization that advocates for and supports K-12 teachers and teacher educators.



NC First in
Teaching

NC STRIDE

Connect with Us:



www.BESTNC.org



info@BESTNC.org



[@BESTNCorg](https://twitter.com/BESTNCorg)



[/BESTNorthCarolina](https://www.facebook.com/BESTNorthCarolina)



Special thanks to SAS Institute for
its continued support of the North
Carolina Education Innovation Lab.