



GLOSSARY

Assessment: The process of evaluating and documenting a person's level of competency mastery. There are several types of assessments used in the education systems.

Attainment: The educational levels of the state population. At the individual level, attainment is not a one-time destination; there are opportunities for continued education attainment and credentialing throughout an individual's career. At the population level, changing attainment levels requires attention to students already enrolled as well as the enrollment, persistence and completion of new students, particularly those from underserved populations.

- **Attainment Goal:** An attainment goal refers to the educational levels of state's population; this is different than a completion goal, which speaks to the credential completion of students enrolled at an institution or group of institutions. To impact a state's education attainment levels requires the collaboration of all educational institutions and other partners, such as K-12 and workforce. It also requires focusing on the completion of students already enrolled, as well as the engagement, enrollment, and completion of new students to meet the broader needs of the state, its workforce, and its residents. Common characteristics of attainment goals are that:
 - » The goal is quantifiable. It includes a number or percentage increase that can be quantitatively measured over time.
 - » The goal is challenging. It requires "stretching" in that it cannot be easily achieved through population increases.

- » The goal includes a long-term target date that is tied to a specific date to demonstrate commitment and drive expectations.
 - » The goal addresses equity through closing postsecondary attainment gaps for underrepresented populations such as minority, low-income, and working adult (age 25 and older) populations.
 - » The goal is codified in a way that it serves as the overarching framework for the state's postsecondary strategic plan, budgeting practices, and state policy initiatives, such as articulated in statute and/or the state's strategic plan for postsecondary education.
- *For the purposes of this Commission, a working definition of attainment is having a postsecondary degree, credential, and/or certification with current and future NC labor market value. The myFutureNC Commission has recommended a **coordinated statewide attainment goal** that requires participating educational institutions and systems throughout North Carolina to work together toward meeting the desired attainment levels. North Carolina's education governance is spread across several distinct systems, but this work must be a **joint effort** that requires strong commitment and regular communication from leadership of all systems.*

Career Pathway: The career pathway approach connects progressive levels of education, training, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way that optimizes the progress and success of individuals with varying levels of abilities and needs. This approach helps individuals earn marketable credentials, engage in further education and employment, and achieve economic success. Career pathways deeply engage employers and help meet their workforce needs; they also help states and communities strengthen their workforces and economies.

Certificate: Certificates are awarded upon the successful completion of a brief course of study, usually one year or less but at times longer, primarily in institutions of higher education, university extension programs or nondegree-granting postsecondary institutions such as area career and technical education schools. Certificates are sometimes issued for participation or completion, other times for attainment of competencies. Certificates are used at many levels of knowledge and skills, ranging from foundational skills to learning at the postgraduate level. At NC community colleges, certificate programs are designed to provide entry-level employment training and are offered at all North Carolina Community College System (NCCC) colleges. Certificate programs range from 12 to 18 semester hour credits and can usually be completed within

one semester by a full-time student. Associate degree level courses within a certificate program may also be applied toward a diploma or an associate in applied science degree.

- **Certification:** Indication of mastery of or competency in specific knowledge, skills, or processes that can be measured against a set of accepted standards. These are not tied to a specific educational program, but are typically awarded through assessment and validation of skills in cooperation with a business, trade association, or other industry group. After attaining a certification, individuals often must meet ongoing requirements to maintain the currency of the certification.
- **Postsecondary Certificate:** A certificate obtained from a community or technical college or other school after high school, and that included at least 40 hours of instruction and did not require being enrolled in or having completed a bachelor's or higher degree program.

Chronic Absenteeism: A student is chronically absent when he or she has missed so much school, for any reason—excused, unexcused, or disciplinary—that he or she is at risk of falling behind. The North Carolina State Board of Education defines a chronically absent student as one whose total number of absences is equal to or greater than ten percent of the total number of days he or she has been enrolled in a school during a single school year.

College and Career Readiness: College and career readiness means that students graduate from high school prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary opportunities—whether it's college or a career—without need for remediation. Students should graduate fully prepared to pursue the college and career options of their choice.

Competency: A learnable, measurable and/or observable, role-relevant, and behavior-based characteristic or capability of an individual.

Credential: A documented award by an authorized body attesting that an individual has achieved specific learning outcomes or attained a defined level of knowledge or skill relative to a given standard. In this context, credential is a broad term that includes degrees, diplomas, licenses, certificates, badges, and professional/industry certifications.



Culturally relevant curricula: Standards-based content designed to be more accessible to students from a variety of backgrounds via incorporation of relatable aspects of students' out-of-school experiences.

Degree: A title given by an institution (usually a college or university) that has been granted the authority by a state, a recognized Native American tribe, or the federal government to confer such degrees. Degrees are provided for accomplishment in academic, vocationally related, or religious studies, and the degree requirements differ within each of these three realms, but are presumed to be comparable in accomplishment. A degree is granted by an institution to individuals who are presumed or who have been attested to have satisfactorily completed a course of study from which the individual can demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and ability commensurate with the degree requirements within the specific field of study. Degrees vary in the level of knowledge and skills that holders of the degree are presumed to have.

- **Community College Degrees:** Students can earn several different types of degrees from a community college. They are:
 - » **AA (Associate in Arts):** The Associate in Arts degree is designed for students who want to pursue a four-year degree in one of the liberal arts disciplines or training at a professional school that requires a strong liberal arts background. Students in this program can transfer to a university to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree.
 - » **AS (Associate in Science):** The Associate in Science degree is designed for students who want to pursue a four-year degree in areas of study such as computer science, engineering, mathematics, the sciences, or professional programs that require strong mathematics and science backgrounds. Students in this program can transfer to a university to complete a Bachelor of Science degree.
 - » **AAS (Associate in Applied Science):** Associate in Applied Science (AAS) programs are designed to provide entry-level employment training and are offered at all NCCCS colleges. AAS programs range from 64 to 76 semester hour credits. A full-time student can typically complete one of these programs within two years. In addition to major course work, associate in applied science degree programs require a minimum of 15 semester hour credits of general education. General education requirements include coursework in communications, humanities/fine arts, social/behavioral sciences and natural sciences/mathematics. Certain



courses in associate degree programs may be accepted by a four-year college or university for transfer credit in an associated field.

- » **AE (Associate in Engineering):** The Associate in Engineering degree is designed for students who want to pursue a four-year degree in engineering. Students in this program can transfer to a university to complete a Bachelor of Engineering degree.
- » **AFA (Associate in Fine Arts):** The Associate in Fine Arts degree is designed for students who want to pursue a four-year degree in the fine arts (visual arts, music, and theatre). Students in this program can transfer to a university to complete a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.

Education Continuum/Education Pipeline: The notion that an individual's educational experience is connected from the earliest levels of education through his or her career advancement, despite the fact that the individual moves through several different learning institutions in separate educational systems.

High-Quality Certificate: High-quality certificates generally are defined as certificates that help the holder to earn a significant earnings premium, but the specific characteristics of a certificate that allow the holder to earn that premium can vary from state to state (Carnevale et al., 2012).

Living Wage: A formal definition for the purposes of myFutureNC's work is still to be determined, but in general, a living wage is the minimum wage necessary to meet a family's basic needs while also maintaining self-sufficiency; it takes in to account living costs and thus varies by location. It is an alternative to using the federal poverty threshold as a measure of the minimum income required for a basic standard of living.

Postsecondary Completion: Completing, and graduating from, a postsecondary course of study. *On-Time Postsecondary Completion* is considered completing a postsecondary course of study within two years for a two-year degree program and within four years for a four-year degree program. *Within-Time Postsecondary Completion* is considered completing a postsecondary course of study within three years for a two-year degree program and within six years for a four-year degree program.



Postsecondary Education: Education beyond high school. In North Carolina this includes attending a public university within the 16-campus UNC system or one of the state’s 36 private colleges and universities, enrolling in a two-year program at one of the 58 community colleges within the North Carolina Community College System, or earning a credential or license from an authorized or accredited organization.

Reverse Transfer: Allows for students enrolled at a senior institution to apply lower-level general education courses taken at the university toward completion of their Associate’s degree at the community college.

Sector: In this document, *Sectors* refer to the major periods in an individual’s growth and development: Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade; Postsecondary (credential, 2-year, and 4-year programs), and Workforce. These sectors can—and often do—overlap (e.g., an individual can be engaged in the Postsecondary sector and simultaneously be a member of the workforce).

Upskill: To provide extra training to workers to improve their aptitude at their job.





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Friday Institute: Staff from the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University convened Listening Tour events in each of the state's eight Prosperity Zones to solicit feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders about attainment in their communities. The Friday Institute also contributed to the Commission's final report by consolidating findings from Commission meetings, Listening Tour events, myFutureNC policy briefs, and other sources.

MDC: Staff from MDC managed three working committees throughout the Phase I planning process. The three teams included 49 Commissioners and 18 Subject Matter Experts whose tasks included reviewing pertinent research and information on the education pipeline into the workforce that guided each committee's decisions on Action Steps and direction for a 10-year plan.

Education Strategy Group: Staff from Education Strategy Group provided strategic counsel and support to myFutureNC beginning in the second half of 2018. In addition, they supported the Commission by providing external validation of this Call to Action through national benchmarking, supporting stakeholder engagement and assisting in the development of a sustainability plan to move the work forward.

EdNC: Supported the nine listening sessions with video, interviews and community-wide surveys. They also partnered with the Institute of Government to video best practices that are already taking place across the state.

nclImpact Initiative at the UNC-CH School of Government: In collaboration with EdNC, nclImpact documented ten demonstration efforts across the state that are working to increase educational attainment in North Carolina. These demonstrations are evidence of the many great work already occurring around NC's education system to help reach our state's 10-year attainment goal.



The Hunt Institute: Elevated and continued the myFutureNC communication and advocacy efforts through a monthly blog written by Commission members. The Hunt Institute also convened as state and local leaders to deepen understanding of the importance of a comprehensive education to workforce plan for North Carolina and the great resources that are already in place to help achieve the set goals. <http://bit.ly/myfuturenc-blog-series>

ECONorthwest: ECONorthwest used economic data and rationale to help the myFutureNC Commission determine the most appropriate postsecondary attainment goal and pipeline benchmarks that, if met, will meet our state's labor market needs.

Carolina Demography: Dr. Rebecca Tippetts provided a research study with North Carolina individual student data that investigates the education pathways of students beyond high school graduation. This study shows where students went to college, when they went and if and when they completed. This information will assist state and local leaders with a full education gap analysis to help determine where interventions can be helpful. Visit <https://www.myfuturenc.org/resources>

Policy Brief Experts: The following Policy Brief authors represent experts across the state from our public and private institutions that provide great incite about North Carolina's education pipeline and the work that needs to continue over the next ten years to reach our determined goals. Visit <https://www.myfuturenc.org/resources>

- *"Talent Development Pipeline for Youth: Creating a Career-Ready Workforce in NC"*
 - » James E. Bartlett, II, Ph.D., Co-Director of Community College Leadership Doctoral Cohorts, North Carolina State University
 - » Pamela B. Howze, EdD, Program Director of Work Based Learning, The National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- *"Advancing Student Achievement & Development in NC: Promising Policies & Practices for the Teaching Workforce"*
 - » Kevin Bastian, Senior Research Associate, Dept. of Public Policy, UNC Chapel Hill
- *"A Focus on Non-Completers: One Strategy For Upskilling the Existing Workforce in NC"*
 - » Anita Brown-Graham, ncIMPACT Director and Professor of Public Law and Government
 - » Catherine Moga Bryant, Executive Director NC Works Commission



- *“Community College to University Transfer”*
 - » Mark D’Amico, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership, UNC Charlotte
 - » Lisa Chapman, Senior VP/Chief Academic Officer, North Carolina Community College System
- *“The Transition from High School to College in North Carolina”*
 - » Julie Edmunds, Director of Secondary School Reform, SERVE Center at UNC Greensboro
- *“North Carolina K-12 Achievement”*
 - » Douglas Lauen, Assoc. Professor of Public Policy, UNC-Chapel Hill
 - » Thomas Tomberlin, Director, School Research, Data and Reporting (NC Department of Public Instruction)
- *“Improving Educational Outcomes in North Carolina: Aligning Policy Initiatives in PreK through Grade 3”*
 - » Clara Muschkin, Associate Research Professor of Public Policy, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University
- *“Affordability in NC’s Colleges and Universities: Policy Solutions to Minimize Student Debt & Maximize Repayment”*
 - » Jenna Robinson, President, James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal
- *“Reaching a Postsecondary Attainment Goal: A Multistate Overview”*
 - » Patrick Sims, Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute

Sarah Smith: Sarah Smith at the University of North Carolina System Office masterfully managed the financials for this initiative.

Andrew Kelly, Sherri Cloyd, Shun Robertson: Andrew, Sherri and Shun at the University of North Carolina System Office served as thought-partners in this work and contributed their expertise to the content in this Call to Action.

Adrial Designs, Inc.: Adrial Dale designed the myFutureNC brand and look from the logo to all official Commission materials and the final report.

Amy Fulk: Served as the editor for all the policy briefs and research documents. Every capitalization and period is in the correct place thanks to her thoughtful review.



Matthew Chamberlin: As Deputy Director of myFutureNC's Phase I work, Matthew was responsible for the development and implementation of strategic communications that included print and electronic media relations and social media properties.

Kristy Teskey: Served as the Executive Director for myFutureNC's Phase I work and led the collective, cross-sector Commission process that resulted in a 10-year attainment goal and coordinating Call to Action, which will be used to guide the next phases of this work.