

*my*FUTURENC

A CALL TO ACTION

for the State of North Carolina



A Report by the Steering Committee of the myFutureNC Commission



TO OUR FELLOW NORTH CAROLINIANS

Our state is at a critical crossroads. One path leads us to a North Carolina with empowered individuals, strong communities and a prosperous economy. The other is characterized by large disparities in opportunity, vitality and competitiveness.

Right now, the data are stark. If we do not come together to redirect our state, we will fail to realize a future in which all North Carolinians thrive.

Today, **fewer than half of North Carolinians ages 25-44 hold a postsecondary degree or high-quality credential**, but the vast majority of newly created jobs require education beyond a high school diploma. By next year, 67 percent of the jobs in our state will demand a postsecondary credential or degree.

Indeed, over the last 30 years, **our state has experienced considerable declines in blue-collar jobs and unprecedented surges in skilled service jobs such as finance or healthcare**. But our talent supply is not keeping pace with these changes. Last year, North Carolina employers cited lack of technical skills and education among applicants as the primary reasons why they struggled to fill job vacancies.

And, importantly, **our educational opportunities are not equitably distributed across the state**: far fewer North Carolina students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds earn postsecondary credentials than do students with greater economic stability.

Recognizing that no one system or organization can tackle this crisis alone, the myFutureNC Commission was created to bring together North Carolina's thought leaders in education, business, philanthropy, faith-based and non-profit communities, and *ex officio* representatives from the North Carolina House of Representatives, Senate, and Governor's Office. Over the last year, we have conducted research and collected input from experts across the state to develop a vision—from preschool through postsecondary and the workforce—for a stronger and more competitive North Carolina.

Our vision begins with an ambitious goal: 2 million North Carolinians with a postsecondary credential or degree by the year 2030. This will mean more than doubling our projected attainment growth over the next 10 years. But this is not simply attainment for attainment's sake. We are dedicated to ensuring that the postsecondary credentials and degrees counted in this goal will align with the needs of North Carolina's rapidly changing economy.

Establishing the goal is only the first step. The real work will be to deepen collaboration across the education and workforce continuum in order to eliminate systemic barriers to achievement, prepare students for work, and expand opportunities for skills training in our local communities. Our success will be dependent on both state and local leadership, and we ask for the support and engagement of our local communities as we take this next step together.

The myFutureNC Steering Committee is committed to seeing this work through to 2030. In the months ahead, we will focus our efforts to engage local communities, but we will also lay plans to catalyze action and monitor progress toward the goal. Together, we will put North Carolina on a path to a more prosperous future.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The myFutureNC Commission's call to action proposes a statewide attainment goal, along with benchmark measurements, focus areas, and a comprehensive list of priorities, to serve as a beacon for better coordination of our state's education sectors over the next 12 years.

WHAT MOTIVATES US TO ACT?

North Carolina is growing—not just in size, but also in diversity and in economic activity—and in many cases these changes are happening at a faster pace than our education systems can match. Employers in some sectors already struggle to fill vacancies, and as many as half of the occupations available today are projected to transform significantly in the coming years, increasing demand for workers with a broader portfolio of higher education experiences. These changes create a host of opportunities for our state, but also a number of challenges — particularly for our ongoing efforts to strengthen the alignment between our education systems and our economy, as well as to project labor market needs to inform that alignment. In response to these challenges, the *myFutureNC Commission* was formed to create a vision for education across North Carolina, from early childhood through

postsecondary, that includes a state-level attainment goal, key benchmarks for measuring progress toward that goal, and priority areas to guide the state as it works collaboratively to turn the vision into reality. The result of the Commission's work is this stakeholder-generated, multi-sector call to action.

OUR 2030 GOAL:

2 MILLION 25- TO 44-YEAR-OLDS WILL HAVE A HIGH-QUALITY POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL OR DEGREE.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

ATTAINMENT GOAL

The Commission recommends an overall statewide attainment goal by 2030 of *2 million 25- to 44-year-olds* (about two-thirds of the projected state population in that age range) *with a high-quality postsecondary credential or degree*. This goal balances a desire to measure and promote ambitious, near-term improvements with the longer time horizon required to realize systemic change across the education spectrum.

EDUCATION CONTINUUM INDICATORS

The Commission further recommends tracking a set of performance indicators to ensure that progress across the education continuum will help the state meet the overall attainment goal. Indicators might include:

1. Enrollment in high-quality pre-kindergarten
2. Fourth grade NAEP proficiency
3. Eighth grade NAEP proficiency
4. Share of ACT test takers with composite mean score of 17 or above
5. K-12 student chronic absenteeism rate
6. Five-year cohort high school graduation rate
7. Share of qualified high school seniors completing the FAFSA
8. Postsecondary enrollment¹ rate
9. Postsecondary persistence rate
10. Postsecondary completion rate

LABOR MARKET OUTCOME MEASURES

In addition, the Commission recommends tracking labor market supply and demand outcome measures to ensure that progress toward the goal is having a positive impact on the state's social, educational, and economic well-being. This might include:

1. Share of young adults enrolled in school or working
2. Overall labor force participation rate
3. Share of mid-career adults with family income at or above a living wage
4. Current workforce demand compared to supply of graduates by market sector category
5. Forecasted workforce demand compared to supply of graduates by market sector category

1. Enrollment, persistence, and completion in postsecondary degree and high-quality credentialing programs.

FOCUS AREAS:

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

ACCESS TO LIFELONG EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

PREPARATION FOR EDUCATION, CAREER AND LIFE

COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

ATTAINMENT GOAL 2030

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

To meet the goal, the Commission recommends four *focus areas* to guide the state's work as well as key *priorities* that fall under each focus area. The focus areas and priorities in this document evolved from the discussions that took place during Commission and Committee meetings held between November 2017 and December 2018, from technical papers commissioned and distributed by myFutureNC, and from feedback and information derived from myFutureNC's statewide listening tour (conducted in the spring and summer of 2018).

There are four broad focus areas: **Education and Workforce Alignment**; **Access to Lifelong Educational Opportunities**; **Preparation for Education, Career, and Life**; and **Comprehensive Support Systems**.

1. **Education and Workforce Alignment**
 - » Align Academic Expectations Across P-12 and Postsecondary
 - » Ensure Seamless Transitions Across Education Sectors
 - » Develop More Pathways from Education to Meaningful North Carolina Careers
2. **Access to Lifelong Educational Opportunities**
 - » Ensure Access to a High-Quality Learning Environment for Every Student at Every Level
 - » Improve Postsecondary Access and Affordability
 - » Strengthen Educational Opportunities in Economically Distressed Communities

3. **Preparation for Education, Career, and Life**

- » Recruit, Develop, and Retain Excellent Educators Statewide
- » Adopt Rigorous, Standards-Aligned, Culturally Relevant Curricula
- » Prioritize High-Quality Early Learning
- » Strengthen Postsecondary Readiness
- » Accelerate and Expand Pathways to a Postsecondary Credential
- » Expand Work-Based Learning Opportunities

4. **Comprehensive Support Systems**

- » Coordinate Student Support Systems
- » Raise Postsecondary Aspirations and Improve Access to Information about Postsecondary Opportunities
- » Strengthen and Expand Guidance for Postsecondary Student Success
- » Increase Adult Continuous Learning and Re-Entry into the Workforce



BUILDING AND SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

Meeting the challenges posed by these priorities so that we can reach our ambitious attainment goal will not be easy. In order to do so, North Carolina must leverage all of the important work already under way in the state and support the establishment and growth of the new work necessary to fill in critical gaps. To move this important work forward, the myFutureNC Commission proposes four *action areas* for sustaining momentum:


1. **Communications and Advocacy:** Launch a statewide communications and marketing campaign that emphasizes the economic value of industry-aligned postsecondary credentials.
2. **Governance:** Develop and implement a plan for moving the work forward in 2019 and for quickly catalyzing public and private actors to work collectively to achieve the attainment goal.
3. **Data-Driven Execution and Improvement:** Expand North Carolina's longitudinal data system—from P-12 through the business and industry sector—to securely manage data, inform research to develop and revise policies and practices, and develop priority public reports and dashboards aligned with metrics that support the postsecondary attainment goal.

4. **Accountability:** Establish and maintain an accountability structure to ensure delivery on the priorities outlined in this call to action.

These components also will provide guidance to the myFutureNC initiative as its stakeholders work to translate the Commission's *call to action* into a *plan of action*. The call describes where we want to go as a state; the plan, which will be developed beginning in 2019, will outline how to get there.

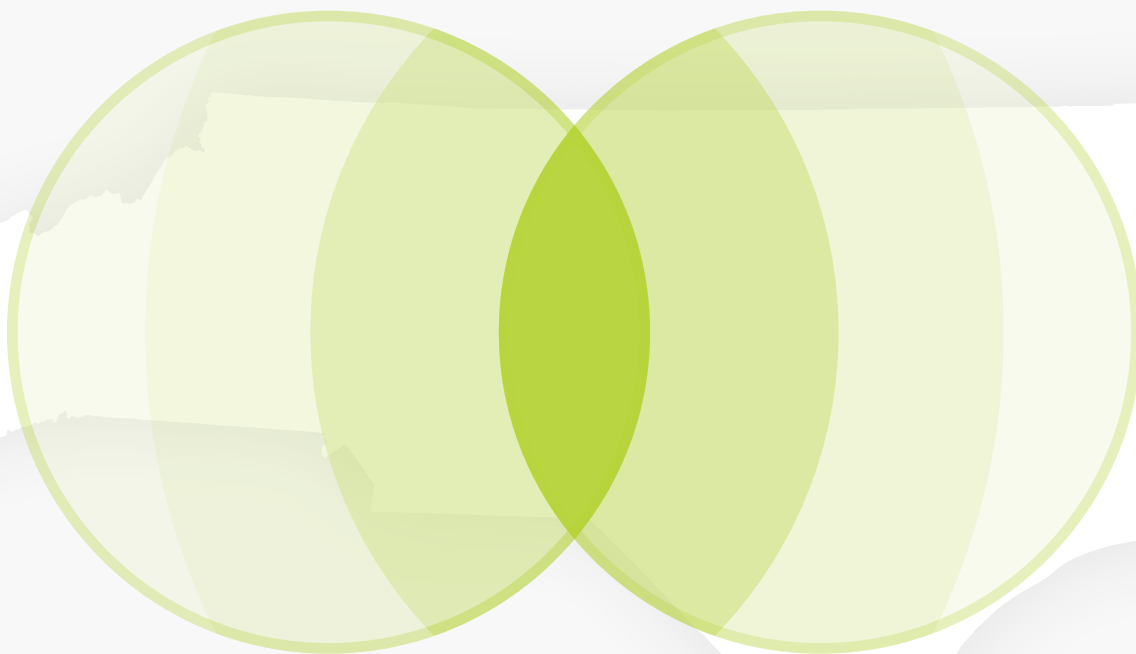


A CALL TO **ACTION** FOR OUR STATE



North Carolina is growing—not just in size, but also in diversity and in economic activity. Our growth creates a host of opportunities for our state, but also a number of challenges.

In particular, North Carolina's growth impacts our ongoing efforts to strengthen the alignment between our education systems and our economy, as well as our ability to project changes in the labor market that should inform that alignment. In response to these challenges, the *myFutureNC Commission* was formed to create a vision for education across North Carolina—from early childhood through postsecondary—that includes a state-level attainment goal, key benchmarks for measuring progress toward that goal, and priority areas to guide the state as it works collaboratively to turn the vision into reality. The result of the Commission's work is this stakeholder-generated, multi-sector Call to Action.



TWO NORTH CAROLINAS, ONE SHARED FUTURE

At the turn of the present century, in a time of general prosperity, our state's leadership warned against becoming complacent and allowing our state to fracture into, as one leader put it, "two North Carolinas—a poor one and a thriving one."²

The concern then was that overall positive outcomes might prevent us from seeing underlying disparities that ultimately could undermine the foundation of those outcomes and eventually overturn our progress. The economic events of a few years later helped to underscore the importance of maintaining constant vigilance in order to ensure the ongoing success of the entire state.

We are reminded continually that outcomes for all of us depend at least in part on outcomes for each of us, and that the economic and social results of large geographic, demographic, and economic disparities can touch all of us, regardless of our personal prospects (Rowlingson, 2011). North Carolina continues to be home to many such disparities, and they manifest in different ways across our diverse state.

2. Lieutenant Governor Beverly E. Perdue, in remarks to the North Carolina Senate, January 24, 2001 (<http://bit.ly/senate-journal>)

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Increasing access to educational opportunities long has been a focal point in our state, with roots extending deep into the preceding century. And in many ways, North Carolinians continue to experience steady growth in the educational opportunities available to them. For example, 2016 marked the first time that our state had more adults with an associate degree or higher (about 42 percent) than adults with a high school diploma or less. However, the majority of those degree-holders (60 percent) are not homegrown talent. Furthermore, they are not evenly distributed across the state, instead concentrating in only a few urban counties (Tippett, 2017). This imbalance is impacted not only by economics but also by geography: Far fewer North Carolina students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds complete degrees in six years or less than do students with greater economic stability (33 percent versus 58 percent; Tippett & Kahn, 2018c), and a North Carolina community's challenges in providing a diverse and high-quality educational experience often are tightly coupled with that community's rurality (Antoszyk et al., 2018e).

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the primary data-gathering tools the Commission used to better understand the diversity of the state's educational and economic strengths and needs was a statewide listening tour, conducted between February and July 2018 in each of the state's eight prosperity zones. As we learned on the tour, community-maintained infrastructure differs greatly by geographic area. Not all communities are equally equipped to provide housing, amenities, childcare, reliable transportation, and social services for all residents, and even in communities that can provide these services, they are not accessible by all residents. When students and families are unable to access all of the critical resources in their communities, they are unable to participate fully in education and workforce preparation opportunities. A good example of these disparities is access to broadband Internet: Many communities in North Carolina have access to this increasingly standard amenity, but for some communities, access is blocked either by geography or by affordability, and sometimes by both. More than just a modern convenience, access to broadband Internet quickly is becoming a deciding factor in an individual's access to educational opportunities as well (Antoszyk et al., 2018e).

GAPS BETWEEN OUR IDEAL AND OUR REALITY

These persistent disparities not only prevent the state from reaching its economic potential, but also run counter to the rights and core beliefs that undergird our identity and our civic fabric. The North Carolina Constitution highlights the right of all North Carolinians “to the privilege of education,” and further states that “equal [educational] opportunities shall be provided for all students.”³

And yet, North Carolinians do not have confidence that we are providing these opportunities. In a summer 2018 poll conducted by Gallup for this Commission, more than half of the North Carolina residents surveyed (53 percent) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that all students receive the same quality of education regardless of their background. In addition, half or more felt that North Carolina’s primary and secondary schools are never or only sometimes good places for students with learning disabilities (56 percent), for students who speak English as a second language (55 percent), or for low-income students (50 percent); more than 40 percent expressed similar concerns for racial or ethnic minorities. In another summer 2018 poll conducted by EducationNC and the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation on behalf of the Commission, 61 percent of North Carolinians surveyed indicated that schools are an area in need of improvement in their community.

We must ensure that our constitutional commitment reaches every resident, regardless of her or his race, ethnicity, background, age, location, or experience—a challenge made even greater by our ever-diversifying population (Johnson, 2017). For decades, we have persisted in our efforts to secure and maintain those rights, but our rate of return for each new effort is shrinking. North Carolina has reached a crossroads beyond which the state will need more than replication, expansion, or tweaking of current approaches in order to fully align our education systems, address social disparities, and improve our state’s economic competitiveness.



ALL NORTH CAROLINIANS
HAVE THE RIGHT **“TO
THE PRIVILEGE OF
EDUCATION”** AND
“EQUAL [EDUCATIONAL]
OPPORTUNITIES SHALL
BE PROVIDED FOR
ALL STUDENTS.”

— NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION

3. Article I, Section 15; Article IX, Section 2

FROM GOOD TO GREAT

To move from the looming prospect of two distinct North Carolinas to one North Carolina characterized by shared prosperity and opportunity, we must begin by aligning postsecondary education attainment and credentialing goals not only with our state's current and emerging market needs but also with the goals and aspirations of our residents.

A STRONG HISTORY

Many states claim leadership in education, but few can match the decades of forward-looking innovations that have made North Carolina a reliable source for national inspiration. Each education sector has maintained a significant commitment to improving education, and each has developed initiatives that have served as national models. For example:

- North Carolina's **Smart Start** and **More at Four** pre-kindergarten programs were ahead of their time when first introduced, and under their new name—the NC Pre-K Program—they continue to set the standard for state-funded early instruction.
- The state created several **nationally renowned models for statewide support of students with exceptional talents**: the nation's first statewide high school dedicated to exemplary instruction in mathematics and science; a school of the arts that bridges secondary and postsecondary education; and a residential summer enrichment program with multiple campuses.
- Many states have emulated North Carolina's **Career and College Promise** and **Early College** models, which merge high school and postsecondary curricula and provide clear pathways to meaningful degrees.
- The North Carolina **Comprehensive Articulation Agreement** provides statewide guidance for credit transfer between community colleges and public universities, as well as a transfer-assured admissions policy.
- **NC Promise** continues the University of North Carolina System's longstanding commitment to affordability by reducing tuition costs at key campuses to a nominal \$500 per semester; the state also provides generous tuition support for residents who attend the state's independent colleges and universities.

Even with the support of these and many other innovations and initiatives, we are not yet where we want to be; there is much more work to be done. Thousands of our youngest students enter kindergarten each year already well behind their peers. Scores on national reading and mathematics tests indicate that fewer than half of all North Carolina middle school students can demonstrate proficiency (Dyke & True, 2018), and improvements in achievement as measured by state tests have stalled (Lauen & Tomberlin, 2018).

High school dropout rates continue to fall, and graduation rates continue to rise, but each year thousands of students still leave the education continuum before they finish their high school years. Of those who do graduate from high school, fewer than one in five meets or exceeds all college readiness benchmarks as measured by ACT scores, and nearly half meet none of those benchmarks (Tippett & Kahn, 2018a). And, perhaps most tellingly, in the midst of the most dramatic transformation of the employment landscape in decades, fewer than half of all working North Carolinians hold postsecondary degrees or credentials (Dyke & True, 2018).

A BOLD NEW APPROACH

Our state has come so far and accomplished so much in education, especially over the past 30 years, but the time has come for bold new plans and even bolder actions that will take our state even further. Perhaps the most critical action needed is a collective willingness to abandon our traditional sector-by-sector approach to addressing isolated issues in favor of a cross-sector, coordinated approach that tackles systemic challenges and barriers across the education continuum, from earliest childhood through postsecondary and beyond.

- **Creating Personal Opportunities.** First, our education sectors and systems need to follow through on the promises of past reforms and the possibilities of the digital age to truly become more completely *student-centered*. As part of that work, we must embrace a much broader definition of “student”—one that understands that adult learners are as much a part of the student landscape as are our youth. A greater focus on student-centered learning will provide the support necessary for every resident not just to fit personal strengths to existing economic opportunities but also to create new opportunities.
- **Expanding Talent Development.** Next, we must commit to comprehensive and sustainable *talent development*. As with student-centered learning, talent development is about more than just training

workers who can meet the demands of economic development or marketplace competitiveness; it is also about continuing to support the growth of our residents' aspirations, their sense of civic purpose, and their personal drive. These characteristics long have been hallmarks of North Carolinians, and none should be neglected in deference to economic needs alone; indeed, fostering those characteristics as part of our overall talent development commitment will enhance our state's economic competitiveness.

- **Cultivating an Attainment-Driven Mindset.**

Perhaps more critical than any of these, however, is our responsibility to continue to cultivate a mindset and culture statewide that embraces the importance of postsecondary attainment. As indicated by survey results (Gallup, 2018) and by increases in the number of first-generation college-going students, that transition is well under way. Another step involves changing the narrative about distinctions between four-year degrees, two-year degrees, and other forms of postsecondary credentials. Currently, four-year degree-holders outnumber two-year degree-holders three to one (Dyke & True, 2018), and survey responses suggest that many North Carolinians continue to identify a four-year degree as the best path to a good job (Gallup, 2018). Many students and parents remain unaware of the variety and depth of certificate programs, two-year options, and opportunities for work-based learning now available (Antoszyk et al., 2018c). As we learned during our listening tour, this information gap can create a barrier, particularly for lower-income students and for working adults interested in re-training or upskilling—both of whom may believe that a marketable degree is less accessible for them due to cost and time. The challenge does not just affect college recruitment; businesses that rely on students from community colleges or training programs also struggle as a result of fewer graduates with the training those businesses need. Even increasing numbers of positive reports of job placement and job satisfaction from students who earn two-year degrees or industry certification have not yet changed these trends (Antoszyk et al., 2018a).



[F]OUR-YEAR DEGREES
AREN'T FOR EVERYONE;
EVERY JOB IN THIS WORLD
DOES NOT REQUIRE A
FOUR-YEAR DEGREE. **BUT**
[MOST JOBS] REQUIRE
POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION FOR SURE.

— LISTENING TOUR PARTICIPANT

- **Integration and Coordination across Sectors.** We must acknowledge and tear down the barriers that prevent us from better integrating the shared work of all of our education sectors, and we must coordinate their collective work with the work of our economic sector. Our residents know these gulfs exist and that they hinder our ability to meet our potential as a state. During the listening tour, participants conceded that sectors may connect on paper to form an education continuum that starts with early childhood education and ends in a career, but they contended that, in reality, each sector tends to operate independently of the others. They expressed concerns that actors along the continuum lack a shared mission, impeding cross-sector coordination and communication (Antoszyk et al., 2018a).

A WAY FORWARD

If we can find ways to work together to tackle these challenges and push our systems into a new era, we can increase the strength and diversity of North Carolina's homegrown talent — which in turn will improve economic opportunities for all North Carolina residents, including underserved populations.

To develop a plan for achieving this vision for North Carolina, the myFutureNC Commission proposes the framework described in this document—a cross-sector, long-term, coordinated, and stakeholder-generated *Call to Action* for our state.⁴ Unlike so many efforts before it, however, we envision a state-led and state-supported plan that is locally owned and locally actualized. Our history has shown that top-down, state-level mandates can go only so far; our state is large and diverse, and our communities need plans tailored to their specific strengths and challenges. As one listening tour participant put it, “[O]nce you’ve seen one [North Carolina] community, you’ve seen one [North Carolina] community.” A successful *plan of action*, developed by a collaborative team of representative stakeholders from across the state in response to this Call to Action, should provide a general framework for local plans and for the state support that will be necessary to develop those plans, but in the end the most successful plans will be those that respond directly to local contexts.

Once developed, these community-centered plans of action will define the future that each community wants for itself, collaboratively envision a path for attaining that future, and identify ways that each community can coordinate its efforts and resources with other communities across North Carolina. As we learned during our listening tour, this work already is under way in many communities across our state, but often in isolation. We believe that through the collective actions of myFutureNC, we can strengthen existing local efforts, inspire new ones, and pave the way for realizing our vision for the future of our state.



4. See Appendix A for details about how the Commission developed this Call to Action.

WHAT MOTIVATES OUR WORK



WHY ATTAINMENT MATTERS

Our drive to establish an ambitious attainment goal is rooted in projections for the future of our state. Our state's economy is changing rapidly, and in many cases those changes are happening at a faster pace than our education systems can match. Some projections estimate that as many as 50 percent of the occupations available today will be gone by 2050 (Walden, 2017b). But these occupations are not so much disappearing as they are *transforming*. By 2024, there will be almost 100,000 *more* new jobs than there will be similar growth in the entire working-age population, with many of those jobs requiring at least some form of higher education experience (Bartlett & Howze, 2018; Tippet, 2017; Tippet, 2018).

The wave already has begun: between 1991 and 2015, North Carolina experienced a net loss of 6,000 high-quality blue-collar jobs (in areas such as manufacturing, transportation, construction, and retail), but a net surge of 196,000 skilled services jobs (in areas such as finance, business, education, healthcare, and government services; Sims & Siddiqi, 2018). By 2018, employers who struggled to fill vacancies cited lack of technical skills and lack of education among applicants as primary reasons (cited in Brown-Graham & Moga Bryant, 2018). In the near future, the healthcare and social assistance sector, North Carolina's largest industry by employment, is projected to add 135,000 jobs, with healthcare support and healthcare practitioner/technical occupations leading the way (Bartlett & Howze, 2018). While not every job added will require skills beyond

high school, it is becoming clear that many will (D'Amico & Chapman, 2018)—and that, relative to our current attainment trajectory, there will be more such jobs than there will be North Carolinians to fill them (Figures 1 and 2).

FIGURE 1: **OVERALL PROJECTED NC WORKFORCE NEEDS (2020) BY DEGREE TYPE VS CURRENT (2016) DEGREE DISTRIBUTION⁵**

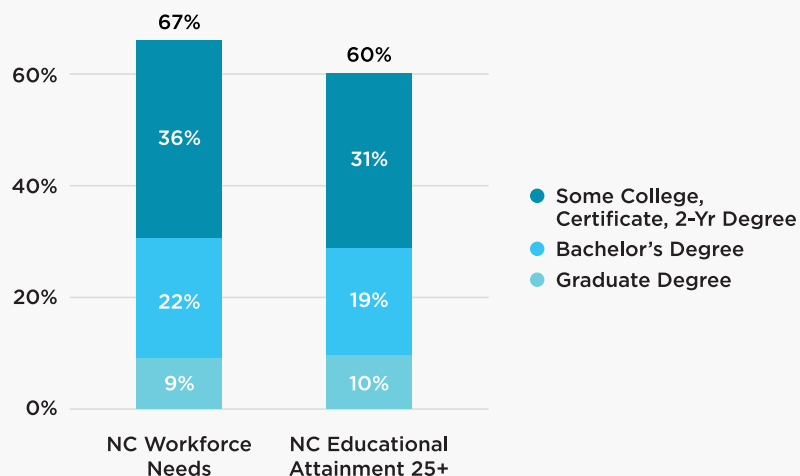
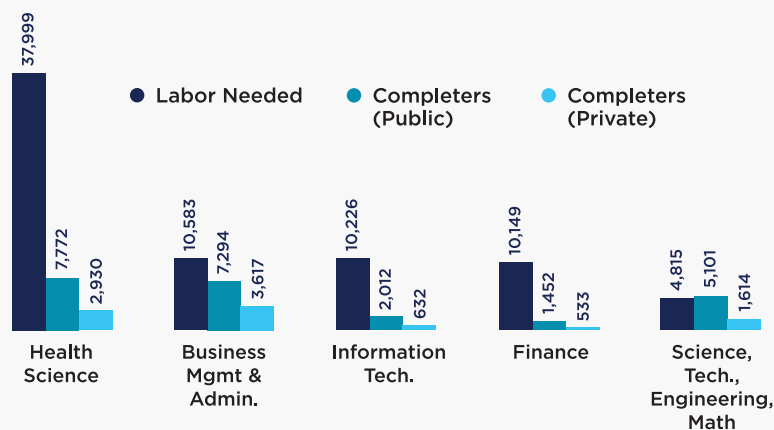


FIGURE 2: **CURRENT LABOR NEED IN HIGH-SKILL SECTORS VS DEGREE PRODUCTION (2018)⁶**



Add to this challenge the fact that even the majority of jobs that do *not* require postsecondary education already are being filled by people with postsecondary experience (Sims & Siddiqi, 2018), and the importance of elevating the proportion of residents with a high-value postsecondary credential or higher degree becomes clear. Already, North Carolina imports

5. Cited in D'Amico & Chapman, 2018; Sources: Carnevale et al., 2013a; Carnevale et al., 2013b; US Census Bureau, 2016.

6. Cited in Brown-Graham and Moga Bryant (2018); Source: NC LEAD (Labor and Economic Data and Analysis), 2018, based on an analysis of data provided by the US Census Bureau, the Conference Board, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the National Center for Educational Statistics (IPEDS). Note: Multi-year averages (Labor supply/demand: 2014 through 2016; education program completers: 2010-2015).

talent (with about 60 percent of the state's adults with an associate degree or higher coming from out of state; Tippet, 2017), and a sizable proportion of North Carolina employers report they are not able to hire the workers they need, citing in particular lack of employability skills, technical skills, and overall education as the main reasons (NCWorks Commission, 2018).

At the regional level, unemployment rates are lowest in North Carolina counties with higher proportions of residents who hold postsecondary degrees (Walden, 2017a). At the individual level, the prospects for being well-paid increase dramatically as an individual's attainment level rises—from 13 percent of workers with no high school diploma to about two-thirds of workers with a bachelor's degree or higher—as do the prospects for better health and civic participation (Sims & Siddiqi, 2018).

WHERE ARE WE NOW? ATTAINMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA TODAY

Postsecondary attainment can be defined in many different ways. As will be discussed in greater detail in a later section, the most comprehensive and useful definition from the perspective of economic competitiveness includes all types of postsecondary degrees and credentials. Using this definition, the current estimated attainment rate for North Carolinians between the ages of 25 and 44 is a little less than 50 percent—that is, about 50 percent of the population in that age range has a two-year degree, four-year degree, or some form of marketable credential. That rate positions North Carolina at about the midpoint relative to all other states (Dyke & True, 2018)—not low, but not remarkable, either, and certainly not reflective of where a state that has long prioritized education ought to be (Table 1).

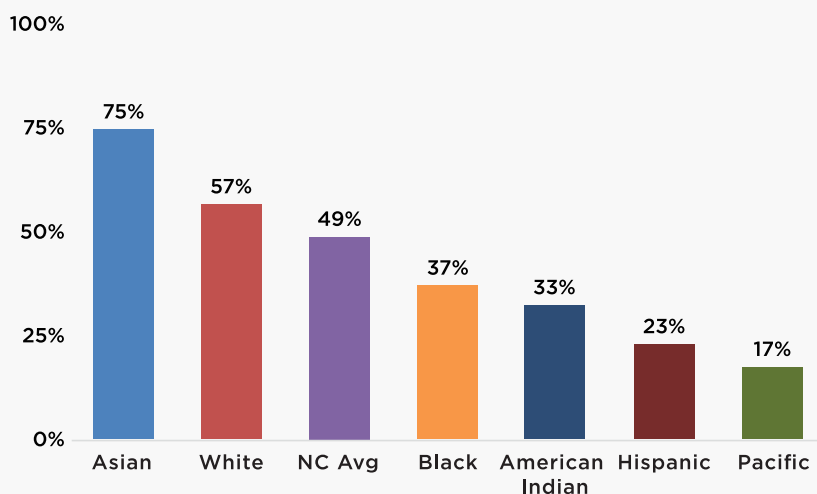
TABLE 1: **ATTAINMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA RELATIVE TO OTHER STATES (2016)**

	Attainment Rate*
State with highest attainment (MA)	60%
States at 75th percentile (MD and KS)	53%
North Carolina (50th percentile)	49%
States at 25th percentile (AK, NM)	45%
States with lowest attainment (NV, WV)	35%

*25- to 44-year olds

Perhaps even more disconcerting, the attainment rate varies—sometimes significantly so—by race and ethnicity. For example, while Asian and White residents consistently outpace the state attainment average, Black, Hispanic, and Native residents consistently fall below that average (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: **NORTH CAROLINA ATTAINMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY (2016)**⁷



Gaps exist among men and women, too, with far more women (55 percent) than men (47 percent) holding an associate degree or higher (Tippett & Kahn, 2018c).⁸

7. Dyke & True, 2018

8. Among 2009, 2010, and 2011 high school graduates

THE NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION CONTINUUM

In keeping with our overall desire to see greater coordination across education sectors, we recognize that postsecondary attainment does not exist in a vacuum; it is the end result of a much longer process that begins at birth.

Therefore, to develop strategies for raising postsecondary attainment statewide and in a thoughtful way that corresponds to current and projected economic opportunities, we first need a better understanding of the entire education continuum, from early childhood through postsecondary, to help us identify where our current education efforts are working well, as well as where we need to focus the most energy and attention.

OUR SUCCESSES ALONG THE CONTINUUM

On one of our first listening tour stops, participants reminded us that, while the state needs to embrace the change and growth proposed by myFutureNC, that change and growth should not come at the expense of dismantling all of the good work made possible by our current education structures. We listened, and many of the policy briefs commissioned by myFutureNC helped us to catalog those successes and get a better understanding of the breadth and depth of North Carolina's progress over the past several years. In addition to the high-level bright spots we outlined in the previous section, the policy briefs and other resources remind us of our state's long and successful history of good work in each education sector. We highlight only a few here:

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRE-KINDERGARTEN

- By the end of 2018, more than 183,000 children from birth through preschool (plus an additional 59,000 school-age children) were served across more than 6,000 child care facilities in North Carolina—75 percent of which were eligible for subsidized care (DCDEE, 2018).
- The statewide NC Pre-K Program has enrolled about 30,000 students from lower-income families every year since 2009 (Muschkin, 2018).

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

- Every year, North Carolina's elementary and secondary schools educate more students. In 2000-01, public and private schools served about 1.4 million students; during the 2016-17 school year, that total climbed to over 1.8 million, with traditional public schools serving

nearly 1.5 million of them. An additional 95,000 were served by charter schools, and private schools and home schools served an additional 228,000 students.

- Across time, initial elementary student scores on North Carolina assessments in mathematics and reading (third grade) have increased, with each cohort of students demonstrating slightly higher proficiency than the cohort before it (Lauen & Tomberlin, 2018).
- The proportion of students who graduate from high school has increased steadily over the past several years, rising from about 74 percent in 2010 to nearly 87 percent in 2017 (Edmunds, 2018).
- The number of students taking college-level courses before graduating from high school has almost tripled over the past three years (from just over 3 percent in 2014 to nearly 9 percent in 2017; Edmunds, 2018).

POSTSECONDARY

- Eighty-one percent of students who enrolled in postsecondary education immediately after completion of high school persist into their second year of postsecondary education (Tippett & Kahn, 2018b).
- More students than ever before are transferring from two-year to four-year colleges (more than 12,000 in 2016, compared to only 3,400 in 1986; D'Amico & Chapman, 2018).
- Fifty-one percent of our high school graduates in the Classes of 2009 through 2011 earned a postsecondary degree within six years of enrollment, with bachelor's degrees making up the bulk of those degrees (73 percent), followed by associate degrees (20 percent) and other credentials (7 percent; Tippett & Kahn, 2018c).
- Eleven percent of those degree earners completed an additional, higher degree within six years (Tippett & Kahn, 2018c).

OUR EDUCATION CONTINUUM CHALLENGES

Alongside all of those successes, however, and behind many of those numbers are a host of students who, every day, continue to slip through the cracks and fall off the continuum. In order to improve attainment across North Carolina, we must identify and address these slippages. The following challenges are just some of the motivations for the work of myFutureNC:

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRE-KINDERGARTEN

- NC Pre-K typically only enrolls about half of all eligible students from lower-income families, primarily due to a cap on its state-funded enrollment slots. As a result, among all kindergarten enrollees in 2016, only about 56 percent demonstrated adequate kindergarten entry literacy skills (Muschkin, 2018).

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

- During the listening tour, parents and educators both identified steadily growing parent disengagement across the elementary and secondary years, with reasons ranging from feelings of being out of place in a setting in which they did not experience success to challenges related to language barriers (Antoszyk et al., 2018c). Parent disengagement can contribute directly to student disengagement.
- The impressive growth across years in early-grade mathematics and reading scores slows as students enter middle school, and that slowing has increased over time. In addition, the gaps in reading proficiency between white students and minority students typically remain about the same or close only slightly between third grade and eighth grade, and the gaps in mathematics proficiency grow—in some cases, to the point of doubling (Lauen & Tomberlin, 2018); similar trends are present for students with disabilities and students from economically disadvantaged or second language backgrounds (Tomberlin, 2018).
- Though it has risen slightly over time, the proportion of high school students who meet or exceed state-defined college- and career-readiness levels on state tests still hovers around the 50 percent mark, and the gaps across different subgroups of students are very wide, with little sign of closing (Edmunds, 2018).
- Listening tour participants consistently identified three elementary and secondary transitions as particularly difficult for students and families:
 - » Preschool to kindergarten (social, emotional, and academic adjustments);
 - » Grade 2 to Grade 3 (entry into the first high-stakes testing year);
 - » Grade 8 to Grade 9 (middle school to high school; Antoszyk et al., 2018c).

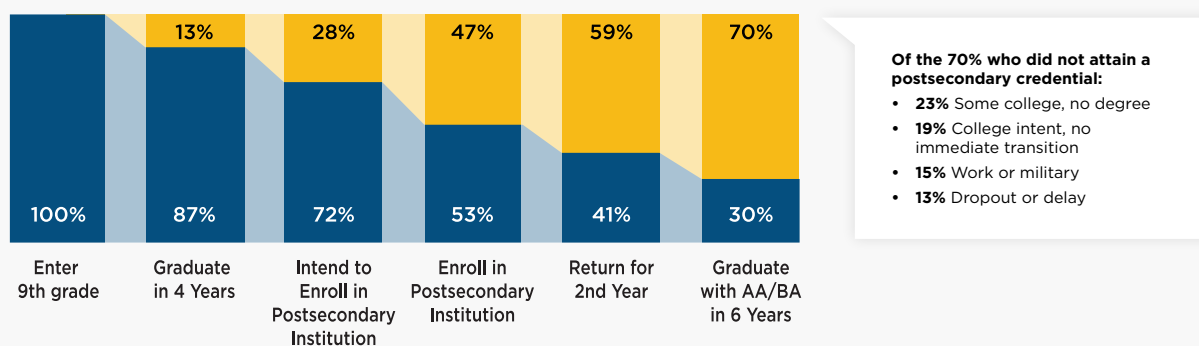
POSTSECONDARY

- Just over half (54 percent) of respondents to the EducationNC survey conducted in parallel with the listening tour identified the transition from high school to community college or technical training as the transition for which students and families need the most guidance; almost the same percentage (52

percent) identified the transition from high school to four-year college as the area of second-greatest need (EdNC, 2018).

- Those concerns are supported by the dramatic drop-off of students along the postsecondary portion of the continuum. For every 100 ninth graders there are 87 high school graduates, of whom 72 express a desire to pursue postsecondary schooling (Tippett, 2018). Of those who graduate, only 67 end up enrolling, and only 51 persist into a second year. Of the 51 who start a second year, only 34 end up earning a degree or credential within six years of first enrollment (Tippett & Kahn, 2018e; Figure 4).

FIGURE 4. HIGH SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION PIPELINE LEAKAGE



- In addition, the proportion of high school graduates who express postsecondary intent varies widely across districts (Tippett, 2017), indicating that postsecondary aspirations are not consistent across the state.
- Postsecondary enrollment rates peaked in 2009-10 but have declined ever since (Tippett & Kahn, 2018a).
- Over the past several years, only 50 percent of high school students who delay postsecondary enrollment (that is, those who enroll after taking a break for work or other pursuits) persist into a second year. Persistence is most challenging for less academically prepared students, lower-income students, students from outside of the Triangle area, male students, and most racial or ethnic minority groups (Tippett & Kahn, 2018b).
- Most postsecondary dropouts occur in the first year (Tippett & Kahn, 2018b).
- Students who delay enrollment are only half as likely to receive a degree within six years as those who enroll on time (22 percent versus 56 percent; Tippett & Kahn, 2018c).

As these outcomes make clear, the time is now for North Carolina to renew its commitment and energy to increasing educational attainment. In the sections that follow, we outline our proposal for an attainment goal for our state. In support of that goal, we also propose benchmarks and indicators that can help us track our progress toward that goal, as well as focus areas and priorities that we believe can guide all individuals and communities across the state as we work together to create the conditions necessary for preparing our residents to contribute to a better, stronger, and more vibrant North Carolina.



WHERE

DO WE WANT TO GO?



DEFINING ATTAINMENT FOR OUR FUTURE

As noted above, there are several ways to measure attainment. In some states, attainment is calculated by counting only certain types of postsecondary degrees, but for the myFutureNC Commission, the focus has been more on identifying all of the avenues for success after high school and less on singling out specific postsecondary categories.

Therefore, myFutureNC's *definition of attainment* is having a postsecondary degree, credential, and/or certification that has current and future value in North Carolina's labor market.

Just as the concept of attainment should be more nuanced than earning a certain type of degree, an attainment *goal* should be more than just a head-count target. It should resonate with a state's current attainment context as well as a projected vision for how that context will change over time. It should address issues of equity by highlighting not only the overall attainment level of a state but also the gaps in attainment among different populations. Perhaps most importantly, it should be challenging, requiring a state to find ways to stretch beyond what would be possible through population growth alone.

AN ATTAINMENT GOAL FOR NORTH CAROLINA

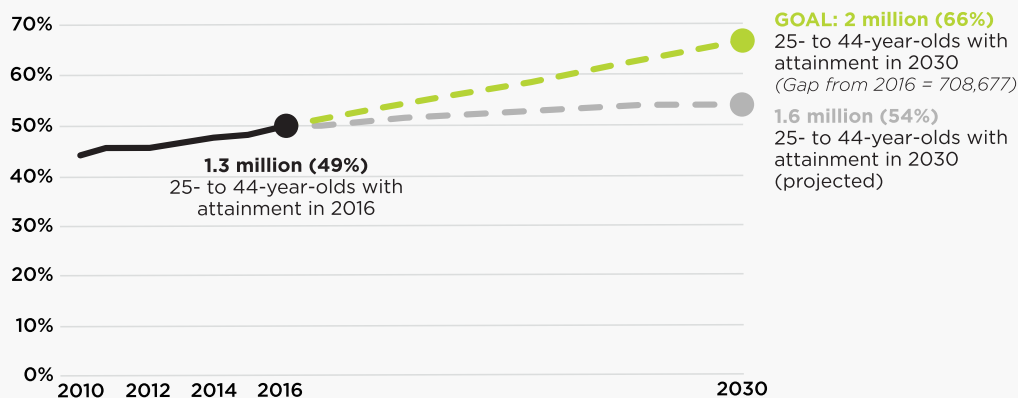
In this spirit, the myFutureNC Commission recommends the following overall statewide attainment goal:

By 2030, 2 million North Carolina residents between the ages of 25 and 44 will hold a high-quality postsecondary credential or degree.

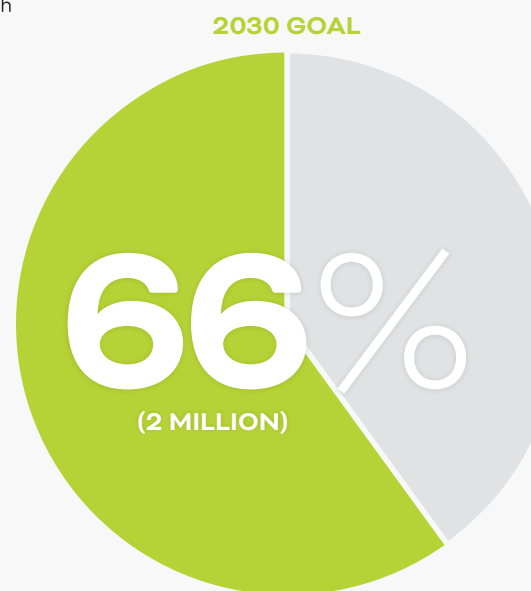
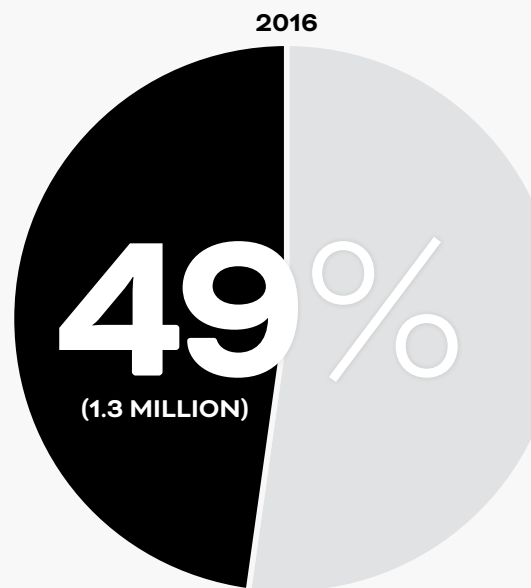
Currently, about 1.3 million 25- to 44-year-olds (about half of the population in that age range) have met this goal. Without any changes, North Carolina is projected to have about 1.6 million residents who meet the attainment definition, which means the state will need to help an estimated 400,000 additional residents reach postsecondary attainment (Figure 5).

In addition to tracking progress toward the overall goal, the Commission recommends tracking the attainment rate for multiple populations in addition to the overall rate, so that the challenges faced by some populations are not masked by overall successes at the state level. See **Appendix B** for more details about the data behind the goal.

FIGURE 5. CURRENT, PROJECTED, AND TARGETED ATTAINMENT



NC ADULTS WITH POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL OR HIGHER



HOW THE COMMISSION ARRIVED AT THIS GOAL

The recommended target age range and year for achieving the goal balance a desire to measure and promote ambitious, near-term improvements with the longer-time horizon required to realize systemic change across the educational spectrum. The numeric target itself reflects the myFutureNC Commission's desire to set an ambitious goalpost that will spur that change. Had the attainment goal been achieved today, North Carolina would have one of the best-educated workforces in the country. Achieving the goal by 2030 will require the state to exhibit attainment growth that exceeds the maximum growth observed in any state over the past decade (Dyke & True, 2018).

MEETING THE GOAL

In other words, while our attainment goal may be ambitious, it is also necessary. And we can meet it.

Our current 1.3 million residents who have met the attainment level defined above (about 49 percent of the population of 25- to 44-year-olds) have done so along a number of paths. About two-thirds of them have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, with the other third holding either an associate degree or a high-quality certificate.⁹ To reach 2 million by 2030, our state will need to see increases in each of those categories, but getting there will not require increasing the number of high school graduates who pursue postsecondary degrees or credentials by the estimated 400,000. Some of those 400,000 will come from the population of adults who started postsecondary programs or who want to re-enter the continuum. Even today, there are 643,000 North Carolinians between the ages of 25 and 54 who have completed at least some college courses but have yet to earn a degree (Tippett, 2017), and 39 percent of the respondents to one of our surveys indicated that they have not yet reached their desired level of educational attainment (EdNC, 2018).

9. 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). High-quality certificate-holders are estimated to make up about 5 percent of the current population of 25- to 44-year-olds in North Carolina (Dyke & True, 2018). Part of myFutureNC's work in the next year will be more clearly defining and identifying data to count high-quality certificates more accurately in the North Carolina context.

As part of the next steps for our work, myFutureNC and its partners will project not only the optimal balance of postsecondary degrees and credentials, but also the fields in which those degrees and credentials are likely to be of greatest value, given parallel projections for the economic areas of highest growth in North Carolina.

BENCHMARK INDICATORS AND OUTCOME MEASURES

In addition to projecting where the greatest opportunities will be in the North Carolina of 2030, we also need to start measuring *now* the indicators that will help us determine whether we are on track to meet our goal.

ECONorthwest recommended nine educational attainment indicators¹⁰ and five workforce indicators that, considered together, illustrate the current status of North Carolina's educational pipeline. Additionally, these measures also can help track the state's progress toward its overall attainment goal and systemwide improvement in education delivery. ECONorthwest also identified 2030 targets for each education indicator to help North Carolina chart a course for reaching these ambitious goals.¹¹

In selecting indicators, ECONorthwest focused on regularly updated, publicly available data disaggregated at least by race and ethnicity. The selected education and workforce indicators highlight important milestones that in many cases link educational and workforce systems. If North Carolina reaches the selected targets, the state would rank in the top quartile among states in each area, based on present values for each indicator; overall, our education pipeline would rank among the top in the nation. As with the overall attainment goal, the indicator targets balance ambition and feasibility (Dyke & True, 2018).

10. As detailed below, the myFutureNC Commission added a tenth educational attainment indicator (5. K-12 Student Chronic Absenteeism Rate). In addition, the Commission made other changes to some of the indicators and measures based on proposals by myFutureNC Commission members; these changes are noted below and in Appendix B.

11. While the myFutureNC Commission reached consensus on the indicators and outcome measure labels, the specific data sources and target goals for each will be set during the next phase of work. All figures in this report reflect initial estimates provided to the Commission by ECONorthwest (Appendix B).

EDUCATION CONTINUUM BENCHMARK INDICATORS

The Commission recommends tracking and regularly reporting on education indicators (both in the aggregate and by subgroup), such as the ones below, to ensure that progress across education sectors will help the state meet the overall attainment goal (see **Appendix B** for more details about each indicator).

1. Enrollment in high-quality¹² pre-kindergarten (share of eligible 4-year-olds enrolled)

[The Commission amended the initially recommended measure for this indicator (**Appendix B**); revised baseline and target values will be determined as part of the next phase of work.]

Only about 22 percent of all 4-year-olds in North Carolina currently are enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program; in Florida, Vermont, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin, 72 percent or more are enrolled (Dyke & True, 2018).

2. Fourth grade NAEP proficiency¹³

38.5% → **42%**
(2017) (2029)

About 39 percent of North Carolina's fourth-grade students score at or above proficiency on the NAEP fourth-grade reading assessment; in the state with the highest reading proficiency rate (Massachusetts), over 50 percent are proficient (Dyke & True, 2018). In 2015, only 21 percent of economically disadvantaged students demonstrated reading proficiency on the fourth-grade reading test, compared to 52 percent of their more-advantaged peers (Muschkin, 2018).

12. Definition of "high-quality" to be determined as part of the next phase of the work.

13. Projections available only for NAEP fourth-grade reading (see Appendix B); projections for NAEP fourth-grade mathematics to be determined as part of the next phase of the work.

3. Eighth grade NAEP proficiency¹⁴

34.8% → **42%**
(2017) (2029)

About 35 percent of North Carolina's eighth-grade students score at or above proficiency on the NAEP eighth-grade mathematics assessment; in Massachusetts, the proportion is again about 50 percent (Dyke & True, 2018).

4. Share of ACT test takers with composite mean score of 17 or above

58.8% → **70%**
(2017) (2029)

Overall, North Carolina students currently appear to perform well on this measure (about 59 percent), but that number masks significant discrepancies. In 2016-17, while 73 percent of white students scored at or above 17, only 35 percent of black students and 44 percent of Hispanic students met that mark (Lauen & Tomberlin, 2018). In addition, almost half (47 percent) fail to meet any of the ACT's four college-ready benchmarks (Sims & Siddiqi, 2018), and of the 17 states with 100 percent participation rates, North Carolina ranks only 14th (Edmunds, 2018).

5. P-12 student chronic absenteeism rate (percent of students identified as chronically absent/year)

[The Commission recommended this indicator after completion of the *Attainment Goal and Performance Indicators Technical Report* (**Appendix B**); baseline and target values will be determined as part of the next phase of work. The North Carolina State Board of Education recently approved a definition of chronic absenteeism (February 2018),¹⁵ which will inform initial baseline and target estimates for this indicator.]

14. Projections available only for NAEP eighth-grade mathematics (see Appendix B); projections for NAEP eighth-grade mathematics to be determined as part of the next phase of the work.

15. North Carolina State Board of Education Policy ATND-004, Definition of Student Chronic Absenteeism Rate: <https://stateboard.ncpublicschools.gov/policy-manual/student-attendance/definition-of-chronic-absence-and-chronic-absenteeism-rate>

6. Five-year cohort high school graduation rate

87.5% → **95%**
(2018) (2030)

North Carolina is a leader among states on this measure, with nearly 88 percent of all students graduating within five years; however, that number has flatlined since 2016 (Dyke & True, 2018).

7. Share of qualified high school seniors completing the FAFSA

[The Commission amended the initially recommended measure for this indicator (**Appendix B**); revised baseline and target values will be determined as part of the next phase of work.]

North Carolina's current rate is about 59 percent statewide (Dyke & True, 2018), with lower rates of completion in 52 of 115 school districts in 2017 (Edmunds, 2018).

8. Postsecondary enrollment rate (ages 18-24)

40% → **47%**
(2016) (2030)

North Carolina's current rate of about 40 percent is significantly higher than some states and is about on par with the national average (41 percent) but is well below rates in Rhode Island (55 percent) and Massachusetts (53 percent; Dyke & True, 2018).

9. Postsecondary persistence rate

76.6% → **80%**
(2016) (2030)

Persistence, or the rate at which postsecondary students enroll for a second year, has slowly increased over time in North Carolina (from 73 percent in 2009 to 77 percent in 2016) and is close to the rates in the highest-performing states (South Dakota, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island, with rates between 82 percent and 85 percent; Dyke & True, 2018).

10. Postsecondary completion rate (ages 25-44) for two-year, public four-year, and private four-year institutions¹⁶

Two-Year¹⁷



Four-Year Public



Four-Year Private



North Carolina's rates currently hover near (two-year, private four-year) or exceed (public four-year) rates in other states (Dyke & True, 2018).

LABOR MARKET BENCHMARK OUTCOME MEASURES

In addition, the Commission recommends tracking and regularly reporting on labor market supply and demand outcome measures (both in the aggregate and by subgroup), such as the ones below, to ensure that progress toward the goal is having a positive impact on the state's social, educational, and economic well-being (see **Appendix B** for more details about each outcome measure;¹⁸ targets have not yet been set for these measures):

16. Both on-time (within two years for a two-year degree, and within four years for a four-year degree) and within-time (within three years for a two-year degree, and within six years for a four-year degree) measures.

17. A more complex definition of "completion" for the community college sector—which provides its students with market-valued credentials via a number of paths in addition to the standard two-year degree pathway—will be determined during the next phase of the work.

18. Current baseline values are available only for measures 1 and 2; establishment of current baseline values for measures 3 through 7 to be determined as part of the next phase of work.

1. Share of 16- to 24-year-olds engaged in the school-to-workforce continuum

- *Current (2016): 86%*
- In 2016, 86 percent of North Carolinians between the ages of 16 and 24 were connected in some way to the school-to-workforce continuum, but even a rate that high placed North Carolina at only about the 25th percentile among all states (Dyke & True, 2018).

2. Labor force participation rate for 25- to 64-year-olds

- *Current (2016): 76 percent*
- This current rate also appears to be high, but again ranks only at about the 25th percentile among all states (Dyke & True, 2018).

3. Share of 35- to 44-year-olds with family income at or above a living wage¹⁹

[The Commission amended the initially recommended measure for this indicator (**Appendix B**); revised baseline and target values will be determined as part of the next phase of work.]

Almost three in ten (29 percent) of the respondents to one of our surveys reported that they are either “Finding it Difficult to Get By” or “Just Getting By” financially (EdNC, 2018).

4. Current workforce demand compared to supply of graduates by market sector category

- Workforce demand should emphasize “high-quality jobs,” which will be defined as part of the next phase of work.
- Workforce demand should track job openings both for existing companies and for companies the state is seeking to attract.

5. Forecasted workforce demand compared to supply of graduates by market sector category

- Forecasts for workforce demand should emphasize “high-quality jobs,” which will be defined as part of the next phase of work.
- Forecasts for workforce demand should include job openings related to state economic development goals.

19. Specific definition of “Living Wage” to be determined; see, for instance, this location-based measure: <http://livingwage.mit.edu>.

FRAMING

THE WORK AHEAD



4 FOCUS AREAS:

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

ACCESS TO LIFELONG EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

PREPARATION FOR EDUCATION, CAREER AND LIFE

COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

**ATTAINMENT
GOAL 2030**

Reaching 2 million by 2030 will move North Carolina from middle-of-the-pack status to the forefront of attainment in our country. Ambition alone will not get us there; our ambition must be coupled with coordinated, long-term actions across multiple sectors.

Therefore, to provide a starting point for the development of a *plan of action* for our state that will help us to meet our goal, the Commission recommends four *focus areas*—Education and Workforce Alignment; Access to Lifelong Educational Opportunities; Preparation for Education, Career, and Life; and

Comprehensive Support Systems—along with sixteen more specific *priorities* within those focus areas to inform our work.²⁰

The Commission developed these focus areas and priorities over the course of its five Commission meetings (November 2017 through December 2018). Subject-matter and technical experts, policy briefs and other papers and surveys commissioned by myFutureNC, and feedback and information derived from myFutureNC’s statewide listening tour all contributed to the development of each component; we include illustrative examples from each of these sources throughout this section.²¹

I. EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

KEYWORDS: *Alignment across Education Sectors (Pre-K, K-12, postsecondary); Education-Workforce Alignment; Education-Community Alignment; Community-Workforce Alignment*

A dramatic increase in postsecondary attainment in North Carolina will require closer alignment across and within education sectors, as well as better alignment between those sectors and the business community. Alignment begins with development of a deeper, mutual understanding across sectors of what “college and career readiness” means. Each education sector must build on that understanding by structuring its curricula and supports to ensure that students who work to master the knowledge and skills embedded in those curricula are prepared to succeed at the next level. In particular, in order to achieve higher postsecondary matriculation rates and



I BELIEVE A NEW EDUCATION MODEL FOR PRE-SCHOOL TO COLLEGE HAS TO DEVELOP TO ADDRESS ... LEARNING GAPS, COLLEGE COMPLETION, AND CAREER PLACEMENT. [IT] SHOULD BE A COLLABORATION WITH MULTIPLE BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND OTHER NON-PROFIT AND FOR-PROFIT PARTNERSHIPS IN EACH COMMUNITY.

— EDUCATIONNC SURVEY RESPONDENT

20. For connections between these priorities and the benchmark indicators and outcome measures detailed in the previous section, please see Appendix C; for connections between these priorities and the work of other recent and current North Carolina education commissions, please see Appendix D.

21. All resources commissioned by myFutureNC are summarized in Appendices E, F, G, and H, and they are available in full online at www.myfuturenc.org; readers are encouraged to review those materials for greater depth of coverage of the data that inform each Focus Area and priority. For more details about the process for developing these focus areas and priorities, please see Appendix A.

to reduce remediation, high schools and colleges must cooperate to clearly identify and communicate postsecondary readiness standards. In addition, postsecondary leaders must work together to mitigate loss of credits due to cross-institutional misalignment or inadequate transfer guidance. Finally, the entire education system must collaborate with the business community to ensure that the skills and competencies taught match the skills and competencies employers seek.

Each education sector has made great strides in many of these areas in recent years, but only by closer coordination of efforts across all levels of education can North Carolina fully address the needs of every student, identify and eliminate systemic differences in achievement that limit educational attainment, and provide every student with a seamless path from preschool to gainful employment.

1. ALIGN ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS ACROSS P-12 AND POSTSECONDARY

Broaden and improve academic alignment within and between P-12 and postsecondary systems by continuing to refine current and, when necessary, establishing new cross-sector partnerships, policies, and processes that support clear, understandable, and shared academic expectations as students transition between education sectors.

As we noted in an earlier section, listening tour participants across the state spoke often of the differences between the strong relationships among the various education sectors as they appear in diagrams versus the somewhat less consistent relationships as they tend to play out in day-to-day interactions. In the current system, participants contended, educators struggle to prepare students to achieve long-term academic success because their performance typically is measured using within-

IF YOU WANT . . . SMOOTH TRANSITION[S WITHIN] K-12, THEN . . . K-5 HAS TO KNOW WHAT IS NEEDED FOR 6-8. IF YOU WANT A SMOOTH TRANSITION BETWEEN 6-8 AND 9-12, THEN 6-8 HAS GOT TO KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED IN ORDER FOR A CHILD TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN 9-12. . . . **[Y]OU'VE GOT TO HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT IS TO COME, NOT JUST KNOWLEDGE OF WHERE YOU ARE.**

— LISTENING TOUR PARTICIPANT

sector tools like standardized tests that emphasize specific and short-term outcomes rather than more global outcomes such as preparation for life after school (Antoszyk et al., 2018a). The end results of the lack of alignment across the major sectors are challenging academic disconnects or misalignments, with a consequent loss of some students from the pipeline. More than half of the EducationNC survey-takers identified the various high school-to-postsecondary moves as the ones for which they needed the most guidance (EdNC, 2018), but, as indicated in several other sections below, these academic disconnects are present at nearly every juncture.

2. ENSURE SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS ACROSS EDUCATION SECTORS

*Smoothing the procedural components of transitions—tasks that students and families must complete to move from one sector to the next, such as application processes—is equally as important as academic alignment. Review and revise policies and processes to ensure that student transitions within P-12 and between the pre-kindergarten, K-12, and postsecondary education sectors are seamless. Focus in particular on the transitions into kindergarten; between elementary, middle, and high school; and into postsecondary certificate and degree programs.*²²

One of the keys to reaching our ambitious attainment goal will be ensuring that we eliminate some or all of the policy and paperwork barriers that keep new and returning students from smoothly transitioning between sectors. In 2016, nearly one-third of all UNC system students were transfers, most of whom were coming from community colleges, but the rate at which North Carolina students transfer from community college to UNC is well below the national average (about 24 percent within a six-year period, versus about 33 percent nationwide; D'Amico & Chapman, 2018).

Chief among the barriers that suppress transfer rates are admissions procedures and course credit transfer rules—the two barriers most often

22. For students with associate degrees, North Carolina has both a Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (between North Carolina Community Colleges (NCCC) and UNC System Schools) and an Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (between NCCC and ICUs); the state can build upon these as it works toward broader, more streamlined articulation coverage (D'Amico & Chapman, 2018).

mentioned on the listening tour by students, parents, and administrators alike when discussing cross-sector transition. Students and parents felt that admissions requirements sometimes lack clarity and that credit transfer is not always standardized, predictable, or logical, sometimes resulting in course repetition at a cost of both time and money (Antoszyk et al., 2018b). The vast majority of Gallup poll respondents noted the importance of the ability to transfer credits—particularly when those credits are being transferred to a four-year college (Gallup, 2018).

3. DEVELOP MORE PATHWAYS FROM EDUCATION TO MEANINGFUL NORTH CAROLINA CAREERS

*Alignment does not end at the postsecondary level. Ensure that P-12 and postsecondary sectors coordinate with employers to provide guided pathways that are industry-aligned and that develop the knowledge, employability skills, and competencies students need to succeed in high-wage, high-demand jobs. Successful coordination will require development of accessible, clear, and streamlined processes for linking businesses with educators.*²³

Only about one quarter of the respondents to the EducationNC survey (26 percent) believed that their educational opportunities were very well aligned with jobs available in their communities, and about the same proportion (25 percent) believed that their educational opportunities provided avenues for gaining needed work skills for available jobs (EdNC, 2018). As noted earlier, in order to position more people for better employment, the state must encourage more residents to develop a mindset that values not only postsecondary education in general, but also a wider array of career paths and postsecondary pathways that can help connect them to more meaningful careers (Antoszyk et al., 2018a). Expansion of a host of work-based learning models that help educators and businesses work together—from internships to co-ops to on-the-job training programs to apprenticeships—is a good place to start (Brown-Graham & Moga Bryant, 2018).

23. A prime example of such a program is the Certified Career Pathways program, one of the NCWorks Commission's primary initiatives for developing sustainable talent pipelines for high-demand occupations; as of May 2018 there were 30 certified pathways (Brown-Graham & Moga Bryant, 2018).

II. ACCESS TO LIFELONG EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

KEYWORDS: *Access; Affordability; Responsiveness to Demographic Changes; Attentiveness to Local Needs*

Every state in the nation continues to grapple with cultural and structural barriers, both historical and current, that prevent many individuals from reaching their full potential. As North Carolina grows, meeting the needs of each of our residents from increasingly diverse backgrounds, preschool through workforce, is the key to talent development, economic competitiveness, innovation, and prosperity.

In particular, the state must prioritize strategies that intentionally create opportunities for every North Carolinian—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, background, age, location, or experience—to earn high-value degrees and credentials and pursue meaningful, high-wage, high-demand occupations. More broadly, our state will thrive when we ensure that every student²⁴ has access to high-quality child care and early education, effective public schools, and top-notch lifelong postsecondary opportunities. Only by doing so can we eliminate systemic barriers to achievement and attainment, prepare students for work that enables them to support their families, provide them with ongoing options for expanding their skills, and help them to maintain a fulfilling quality of life.

24. Our use of the term “student” throughout this document is comprehensive, including any North Carolinian at any stage of life who accesses any of the educational opportunities available in our state.

1. ENSURE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT AT EVERY LEVEL

Dedicate the resources necessary to ensure that every student has access to high-quality, positive, and effective learning environments—challenging, academically robust educational settings that are staffed by competent, well-trained educators; have the resources necessary for supporting an effective instructional program; and in which students both believe they can succeed and feel a sense of belonging, encouragement, and support—from the earliest years of schooling through postsecondary, anywhere in the state.

The challenges of providing a high-quality learning environment extend across the education continuum, and they can be physical, fiscal, and pedagogical in nature. Feedback from North Carolinians collected on behalf of the myFutureNC Commission highlights all three types of challenges. For example, almost half (48 percent) of the respondents to the EducationNC survey rated the school facilities in their communities as either fair or poor (EdNC, 2018). In addition, respondents to the Gallup poll most frequently identified funding as the biggest challenge facing K-12 schools in their communities (74 percent)—outpacing identification of any other challenge by 18 percentage points or more (Gallup, 2018)—and listening tour participants concurred (Antoszyk et al., 2018d). Finally, Gallup poll respondents indicated that North Carolina schools serve some students better than others, with nearly seven of ten identifying school as a good place for gifted students, but only a little more than four of ten saying the same for students with learning disabilities (Gallup, 2018). Listening tour participants cited a lack of trained personnel as one of the main reasons that schools at every stage along the continuum sometimes struggle to provide environments in which the needs of all students can be met (Antoszyk et al., 2018d).

2. IMPROVE POSTSECONDARY ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

Improve postsecondary affordability and increase accessibility by developing strategies not only to make access to postsecondary opportunities less expensive for families and more responsive to the needs of both new and returning students, but also to make delivery of those opportunities more efficient and more flexible for institutions.

Relative to other states, many of North Carolina's postsecondary options are affordable, with support from the state ranking in the top ten nationally, and with less than half of all two-year and four-year students taking out education-related loans. When students do take loans, they tend to be for amounts that are well below national averages, with the average North Carolina debt per bachelor's degree (about \$25,500)—private and public combined—ranking 42nd in the nation (Robinson, 2018).

Affordability relative to other states is not the same as *actual* affordability, however. Less than half (48 percent) of Gallup poll respondents were satisfied with the affordability of the state's two-year options, and even fewer were satisfied with the affordability of public and private four-year options (26 percent and 14 percent, respectively). In all cases, most respondents believed that the cost of a degree is an important factor in failure to complete a degree (Gallup, 2018), and North Carolina loan default rates are higher than the national average (Robinson, 2018). In addition, while many postsecondary institutions offer support services to help with matriculation, about one in five students who qualify for financial aid do not even apply (Edmunds, 2018). Increased financial aid guidance not only would help students and families determine how to pay for postsecondary education but also may help make that education seem more accessible (Antoszyk et al., 2018c; Edmunds, 2018).

3. STRENGTHEN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES

Better prepare North Carolinians in our most economically distressed communities for higher-wage, high-demand employment opportunities by coordinating public sector and business community efforts to increase outreach and promote evidence-based policies and practices.

The North Carolina Department of Commerce identifies the most economically distressed counties using a calculation that takes into consideration unemployment, household income, population growth, and property tax value.²⁵ The counties designated as most economically distressed are called Tier 1 counties. Among all respondents to the Gallup poll, those from Tier 1 counties were least likely to say that there are good jobs available for residents with professional certificates (15 percent versus 30 percent in Tier 3 counties), two-year degrees (19 percent versus 36 percent), or four-year degrees (24 percent versus 56 percent; Gallup, 2018). Similarly, while EducationNC survey participants across the state responded that the availability and quality of local job opportunities was either only “Poor” or “Fair” (57 percent and 54 percent, respectively), those responses typically were higher among participants from regions with more Tier 1 communities (EdNC, 2018).

Changing those perceptions is made even more difficult when schools in those counties struggle to provide consistent support to their students. While teacher attrition is a perennial challenge across North Carolina, it is highest in Tier 1 counties (Bastian, 2018), and postsecondary pipeline outcomes such as enrollment, persistence once enrolled, and completion are consistently lower for students in regions with the highest concentrations of Tier 1 communities (Tippett & Kahn, 2018e).



MANY IN [OUR]
COMMUNITY NEED
GUIDANCE. WITH A
POPULATION NEAR THE
POVERTY LINE YOU NEED
TO CREATE PROGRAMS TO
**GET KIDS INTERESTED
IN EDUCATION. . . .**

— EDUCATIONNC SURVEY RESPONDENT

25. <https://www.nccommerce.com/grants-incentives/county-distress-rankings-tiers>

III. PREPARATION FOR EDUCATION, CAREER, AND LIFE

KEYWORDS: *Quality Education across All Sectors;*
School-to-Workforce Continuum

North Carolina's employers do not have access to enough homegrown talent with the skills needed to help the state remain competitive. Employers' responses to the North Carolina Department of Commerce's 2018 Employer Needs Survey²⁶ indicate that half are not able to hire the workers they need. They cite a lack of employability skills (65 percent), technical skills (49 percent), and overall education (43 percent).

To address these requirements, every North Carolina student should receive rigorous academic and career preparation from well-prepared teachers and school leaders. In addition, schools must provide each student with opportunities to engage in college-level coursework and to explore multiple career pathways. Finally, while students need to be ready for each level of education, every institution—from pre-kindergarten to postsecondary—also needs to be student-ready. In order to ensure that every student is prepared to meet the demands of our growing economy, each individual must have access to a student-centered education that optimizes her or his academic and career preparation.

The task does not end with academic preparation and acquisition of technical skills alone. Across all education sectors,²⁷ North Carolina also should help students improve social-emotional skills like self-regulation and communication, as well as transferable skills, which, in the state's emerging economy, means developing broad skills like problem-solving and critical thinking alongside the more specific skills each employer needs.

26. <https://www.nccommerce.com/nc-workforce-development/workforce/commission--workforce/2018employerneedssurvey.pdf>

27. 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 also simultaneously be a member of the workforce).

1. RECRUIT, DEVELOP, AND RETAIN EXCELLENT EDUCATORS STATEWIDE

Improve recruitment, preparation, support, constructive evaluation, and retention of high-quality educators at all levels: childcare center and preschool teachers and leaders; K-12 teachers, teacher-leaders, and administrators; and higher education faculty and leadership.

To ensure that all students have access to educators who can meet their unique needs, the Commission recommends focusing initial efforts on improving compensation; increasing the pool of teachers and leaders of color; preparing high-quality teachers and leaders for childcare and preschool centers and for schools with the greatest need; enhancing educator preparation for working with students with special needs; and expanding access to evidence-based professional development that maximizes educator potential.

Next to funding, Gallup poll participants identified teacher quality and teacher turnover as the biggest challenges facing K-12 schools (Gallup, 2018). Listening tour participants—many of whom were practicing educators—said that many people shy away from teaching as a profession because of the high expectations and low pay. For those who do enter the profession, perceptions of lack of support often contribute to early exits, as do the added responsibilities that fall to teachers in understaffed schools. At times, policies designed to reward top performers (such as differentiated teacher pay) may undermine the teacher collaboration critical to fostering growth in educator capacity within schools. (Antoszyk et al., 2018b).

One result is a relatively inexperienced teaching force, with about 16 percent of all North Carolina teachers having three or fewer years teaching experience. Another is a teaching force that does not reflect the racial demographics of the student population: the percentage of black students is twice as high as the percentage of black teachers, and the percentage of Hispanic students is seven times as high as the percentage of Hispanic teachers. A third is an overreliance on recruitment from out of state or from alternative pathways, both of which tend to result in less beneficial outcomes: Only about half of our teaching force is trained in state (public and private), but teachers prepared in state are more effective and are more likely to remain teaching in North Carolina than are those who are prepared out of state or who enter the profession via alternate paths (Bastian, 2018).

2. ADOPT RIGOROUS, STANDARDS-ALIGNED, CULTURALLY RELEVANT CURRICULA

Provide guidance to help every school district adopt and use high-quality, evidence-based, NC Standard Course of Study-aligned, and culturally relevant²⁸ curricula and instructional materials.

The state revises content standards on a regular basis, and it has increased graduation requirements many times in the past. One of the more notable changes affects standards and graduation requirements. Starting with the students who entered high school in the 2012-13 school year (that is, students who for the most part graduated in 2016), graduation now requires completion of a college preparatory course of study aligned to UNC-system requirements (Edmunds, 2018). But standards and requirements are not the same as curricula—the instructional materials selected by school systems to help students master those standards and meet those requirements. While the state provides some guidance (for instance, a statewide committee recommends textbooks that best match the standards), curriculum development remains largely a local responsibility. Listening tour participants shared concerns that some of the curricula used in their high schools do not adequately prepare students for postsecondary work, and that curricula all along the continuum often favor narrow and specific assessments of student progress over broader and more holistic assessments (Antoszyk et al., 2018b). In addition, curricula often do not include systematic programs for or emphasis on other college readiness skills, such as communication and time management (Edmunds, 2018).

28. Culturally relevant curricula refers to 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.

3. PRIORITIZE HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

*Ensure that every learning environment in pre-kindergarten through third grade has the capacity to prepare every student for transition into fourth grade and for success in the grades beyond.*²⁹

One of the clearest messages across all of our data sources and stakeholder groups was the fundamental importance of comprehensive, high-quality early learning. Half of all Gallup poll respondents said that they believe preschool has a major impact on students' long-term success (Gallup, 2018), and listening tour participants across the state contended that achievement gaps form before enrollment in kindergarten and that overcoming those gaps is difficult (Antoszyk et al., 2018b). In addition, they shared that many students who do not attend preschool have greater difficulty adjusting not just academically but also socially and emotionally to kindergarten (Antoszyk et al., 2018c). Research supports these impressions: Preschool programs positively impact cognitive skills, and benefits increase with program quality and persist over time. Even more importantly, gains for preschool students who are at risk academically are more likely to persist when they are supported by a comprehensive early learning framework that includes early elementary grades and that emphasizes program access, quality, and alignment (Muschkin, 2018).

There are many examples of early learning successes across our state, but the quality, availability, and affordability of early childhood education options vary by community (Antoszyk et al., 2018e; Gallup, 2018; EdNC, 2018), and many parents shared that researching preschool options can be challenging (Antoszyk et al., 2018c). Currently, the state-supported NC Pre-K program serves only about 50 percent of eligible low-income students annually, and that number is lower in some years based on funding (Muschkin, 2018).



I BELIEVE THAT EXPANDED PRESCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES IN EVERY PUBLIC SCHOOL WILL HELP CLOSE THE GAP FOR STUDENTS WHO CURRENTLY ENTER KINDERGARTEN WITHOUT THE NECESSARY READINESS SKILLS.

A SUCCESSFUL EARLY START TO SCHOOL WILL GIVE CHILDREN A BETTER CHANCE AT ACHIEVING BENCHMARKS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND BEYOND.

— EDUCATIONNC SURVEY RESPONDENT

29. The Pathways to Grade-Level Reading initiative's Action Framework provides guidance for this work by establishing expectations for North Carolina's birth-through-age-eight child and family systems and recommending actions to realize those expectations (<https://buildthefoundation.org/initiative/pathways-to-grade-level-reading>)

4. STRENGTHEN POSTSECONDARY READINESS

Evaluate and strengthen postsecondary readiness through targeted, regular interventions that address both academic and social-emotional preparation, beginning in middle school and extending through the postsecondary transition years (11th grade through the first year of postsecondary education).

When asked how to improve postsecondary prospects for students, listening tour participants often said, “start earlier,” and the numbers bear them out. Scores on eighth-grade reading and mathematics tests indicate the likelihood of eventual enrollment in a UNC-system school with about the same level of accuracy as do ACT scores taken toward the end of high school (Lauen & Tomberlin, 2018). And, while the proportion of high school students whose test scores indicate that they are college- and career-ready has increased slightly over the past four years, the overall rate remains at about only 50 percent (Edmunds, 2018).

In addition, participants at several listening tour sessions emphasized the importance of including instruction in non-academic areas as well, such as in soft skills development and financial literacy. They reminded us that developing these skills is just as important in preparing students for postsecondary and workforce success as is the development of academic skills (Antoszyk et al., 2018d and 2018f).

5. ACCELERATE AND EXPAND PATHWAYS TO A POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL

Provide both first-time students and returning adult learners with more opportunities to reduce the time necessary to complete credential and degree programs (e.g., opportunities to earn college credit in high school or for work-based experiences).

Much of myFutureNC’s work is predicated on the growing importance of postsecondary degrees and credentials in our changing economy, and most North Carolinians agree; over 80 percent of respondents to the Gallup survey do not believe that there are a lot of economic opportunities for

individuals with only a high school diploma (Gallup, 2018). One of the keys to meeting our ambitious attainment goal will be finding more ways for students of all ages to complete a wider variety of postsecondary options efficiently—whether they are fresh out of high school or returning to school after years in the workplace.

For example, we may need to expand initiatives like our state’s early college high schools, which provide students with opportunities to earn college credit while still in high school. Studies of North Carolina’s early colleges suggest not only that they improve students’ college readiness but also that they have a large impact on postsecondary credential attainment (Edmunds, 2018)—not surprisingly so, given that they reduce the time to a degree and the cost of a degree, and given that they increase exposure to advanced curricula earlier in a student’s trajectory by providing pathways for high school students to earn college credits. Finding more ways for students at any stage in life to complete postsecondary options more efficiently also means requiring more of our colleges and universities to adapt more nimbly to our rapidly changing occupational landscape and to create more ways to serve mid-career adults who want to re-skill in order to be better prepared for that new landscape (Walden, 2017b). Some two-year and four-year campuses have programs that help shorten the time to a degree for adult learners—for example, by supporting adult learners who did not complete degrees but who have some credits,³⁰ or by providing credit for prior learning experiences—but the state does not yet have a fully coordinated process for doing so (Brown-Graham & Moga Bryant, 2018).



[OUR STATE] SHOULD EXPAND . . . EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS TO **PROVIDE MORE STUDENTS WITH THE CHOICE TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR A CAREER** AND WITH AN ASSOCIATE’S DEGREE. FOR MANY STUDENTS, THE VISION OF GRADUATING AT 19 WITH SOLID CAREER OPTIONS IS MORE ATTAINABLE AND PRACTICAL.

— EDUCATIONNC SURVEY RESPONDENT

30. See, for instance, the various Part-Way Home initiatives—<http://bit.ly/part-way-home-initiative>—available on several UNC System campuses to adult learners with some college credits but no degree.

6. EXPAND WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

*Promote and expand current educator-business community partnership efforts to expand and scale work-based learning opportunities (such as internships and apprenticeships for youth, postsecondary students, and returning adults) that support development of both industry-specific and social-emotional, cross-industry (transferable) skills.*³¹

Almost all of the credits required for graduation in North Carolina (22 of 26) are academic courses, leaving little room in a student's course schedule for career preparation (Bartlett & Howze, 2018). Expansion of experiential options such as work-based learning opportunities can help to fill that void. Focus group participants noted that doing so successfully will require more than just cursory involvement from employers, but that the reward potential for this involvement was high—for students and employers alike. Employer engagement with students, families, and schools through career fairs, job shadowing and site visits, mentorships, internships, and apprenticeships not only helps students prepare for careers but also helps employers promote pathways to employment about which students may have little knowledge. In addition, these experiences provide employers with opportunities to manage student expectations about life beyond the classroom well before they enter the workforce (Antoszyk et al., 2018c).



WE NEED TO . . . PROVIDE MORE APPRENTICESHIP-TYPE SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS THAT **REQUIRE SCHOOLS, GOVERNMENT, AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY TO WORK TOGETHER AND PROVIDE REAL-WORLD APPRENTICESHIP** PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS. [WE NEED TO] PROVIDE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY TO EMBRACE THIS . . . INITIATIVE.

— EDUCATIONNC SURVEY RESPONDENT

31. An example of current work in this area is the state's new Navigator tool, developed through a partnership between the Governor's Office, the North Carolina Business Committee for Education, and private investors: <http://bit.ly/classrooms-and-careers>

IV. COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

KEYWORDS: *Coordinated Support Services; Aspirations; Lifelong Growth*

Students of all ages and experience levels, as well as their families, need access to coordinated services that can help them actualize their aspirations and reach their full personal and professional potentials. Some students need support to attend school regularly, to succeed in foundational middle school and high school courses, to catch up on needed knowledge and skills prior to high school graduation, or to navigate successfully the path toward postsecondary and labor market success. Others require greater support once they arrive at college to complete essential postsecondary tasks like course enrollment or the FAFSA, to pass credit-bearing coursework, or to graduate on time. Still others outside the education system, like disconnected youth and adult workers, may benefit from services integrated across workforce and education sectors, such as childcare support, transportation, housing assistance, and food security. This group of students in particular would benefit from greater engagement on the part of the business community in the development and promotion of these services and opportunities. Beyond specific supports such as these, equally important are cross-sector efforts to cultivate a statewide culture that values and encourages postsecondary attainment.

Without clear and aligned support systems that work together to inform students about available education and training opportunities, how to access them, and how to succeed once enrolled, too many promising students will lose opportunities to earn and realize the benefits of postsecondary credentials.

1. COORDINATE STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Connect and sustain support systems within and across schools, as well as into the business and industry sector. These systems should support not only entering preschoolers and current students but also disconnected youth and adults as they navigate the various education systems. Couple this work with an effort to elevate awareness of and community support for the goals of this coordinated support system.

In particular, use data, school and community resources and partnerships, and evidence-based solutions to help schools and communities reduce the number of students who face barriers to full engagement in school³² by directly addressing those barriers.³³

During the listening tour, many participants talked about the importance of meeting the basic needs of students as part of a complete strategy for improving attainment across the education continuum. Students need supports to deal with academic challenges and transitions, but also with challenges like mental health issues, military deployment of a family member, death, abuse, and more. In addition, listening tour participants raised concerns about the lack of trained staff available to help students navigate all of these issues (Antoszyk et al., 2018d).

The number of schools across the state that find it necessary to provide support services like meals, counseling, and medical care to students in order to achieve their education goals is growing. Wraparound services in schools can help to foster a sense of community and increase attendance, but schools need additional support from community and government organizations to provide these services—especially in the forms of trained personnel and funding (Antoszyk et al., 2018d).

[OUR CHILDREN ARE] DEALING WITH THINGS AT HOME, THEY'RE DEALING WITH ISSUES. THE LEAST OF THEIR CONCERN IS, **'HOW AM I GOING TO BECOME A WELDER?'**

— LISTENING TOUR PARTICIPANT

32. For example, students who are chronically absent from school, or who have disengaged as adults

33. For example, by addressing the contribution of punitive discipline to chronic absenteeism (as well as its disproportionate allocation by race), or by reducing obstacles to potential re-entry for older learners

2. RAISE POSTSECONDARY ASPIRATIONS AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES

Strengthen and align current postsecondary and career advising, awareness, and preparation strategies for students of all ages and their families (including financial literacy training) to encourage and support more students as they transition into postsecondary, whether from high school or from the workforce.

Attainment is about more than earning a specific type of diploma from a certain kind of college—it is about earning a postsecondary degree or credential of any kind that makes it possible for the earner to meet or exceed her or his personal goals. That broader perspective about postsecondary options is the first step toward raising the aspirations of potential new and returning students who otherwise may not realize that a wider array of viable postsecondary options exists than they may have first suspected. As many listening tour participants noted, widening knowledge of the value of postsecondary options beyond the four-year college pathway is critical (Antoszyk et al., 2018a).

In order to choose the best path to personal attainment, each student should understand all of the options available and also should receive the guidance necessary to weigh various paths against each other. That level of understanding begins with thorough and consistent communication.

Almost a quarter of the respondents to the EducationNC survey (23 percent) identified better information about degrees and credentials that are the most relevant for the jobs available in their communities as the most helpful way to increase educational attainment among students in their communities (EdNC, 2018), and about one-third (32 percent) of Gallup survey respondents cited the lack of guidance counselors as one of the biggest challenges facing K-12 schools (Gallup, 2018). Currently,



STUDENTS IN MY COMMUNITY ONLY CONSIDER FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY TRACKS, EVEN IF THEY CANNOT AFFORD IT OR DO NOT NEED IT FOR THEIR DESIRED CAREER PATH. **WE SHOULD BE MORE INTENTIONAL ABOUT MAKING A [COMMUNITY COLLEGE] CERTIFICATE OR DEGREE AN ACCEPTABLE, VALUED PIECE OF EDUCATION FOR GOOD JOBS.**

— EDUCATIONNC SURVEY RESPONDENT

while about 83 percent of high school students who graduate on time express an intention to enroll in a postsecondary program, about one-quarter of those expressing intent do not enroll (Tippett, 2018).

3. STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND GUIDANCE FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENT SUCCESS

Evaluate and strengthen postsecondary success through targeted “navigational supports,” guided pathways (e.g., pre-defined course sequences), and innovative financial supports that encourage more students—regardless of age and past educational attainment—to complete a degree or certificate in a timely fashion.

About one-quarter (23 percent) of EdNC survey respondents rated “better guidance about successfully moving between education levels” as the most helpful way to increase educational attainment among students in their community (EdNC, 2018). Postsecondary students who took part in the listening tour helped us understand better why that might be. They said that, of all of their transitions along the continuum, they struggled most with the transition from high school to postsecondary. The challenge begins in high school, when students first wrestle with the admissions and course transfer processes. Once enrolled, they identified navigating what for many of them was an entirely new school structure—from course scheduling to classroom expectations to planning a course of study to constantly managing financial aid—as a sometimes overwhelming challenge, and one that they often had to tackle with little guidance and even less understanding of who to turn to on their new campuses for support and assistance.

Parents face similar challenges when their students make the switch from high school to postsecondary. These challenges can be particularly acute for parents of first-generation college students. As one listening tour student participant put it, every student and family needs at least one go-to personal connection “who knows more about the student than a test score” (Antoszyk et al., 2018c).

I THINK THE PROBLEMS MY FRIENDS ARE DEALING WITH NOW IS [THAT] MOST OF THEM ARE IN SCHOOL BUT **THEY JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY WANT TO DO**, SO THEY ARE JUST TAKING CLASSES AND SWITCHING DEGREES.

— LISTENING TOUR STUDENT PARTICIPANT

4. INCREASE ADULT CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND RE-ENTRY INTO THE WORKFORCE

Improve and expand practices, policies, and programs that support continuous engagement of adults in learning opportunities that provide avenues for them to upskill.

Many of the priorities in this document refer to the importance of ensuring that the changes proposed impact not only students who are transitioning from high school to postsecondary for the first time but also students who may want or need to return to school from the workforce. Indeed, more than one-third of EducationNC survey respondents (39 percent) said that they had not yet reached their desired level of educational attainment (EdNC, 2018), and hundreds of thousands of residents have some postsecondary credentials under their belts but have not yet completed a degree or certificate (Brown-Graham & Moga Bryant, 2018; Tippet, 2017). Reaching our overall attainment goal will not be possible without acknowledging the critical importance of helping current working adults and adults who have left the workforce to obtain the skills and training they need in order to upskill for or re-enter the job market. As noted above, part of the process requires instilling a value of lifelong learning more broadly across our state, but an even larger part requires making targeted efforts to re-engage adults who could benefit from returning to school for more training.

In our current education system, many institutions lack methods not only for providing information and supports to people who are considering a return to school but also for supporting the flexibility those people may need in order to incorporate school into an already complex life. For example, most pathways to bachelor's degrees are characterized by full-time enrollment, but colleges may need to find more ways for their four-year pathways to incorporate some of the characteristics of pathways to marketable credentials and two-year degrees, which often include part-time enrollment and delayed completion (Tippet & Kahn, 2018d).

Listening tour visits to workplaces across the state uncovered many examples of employees who were interested in changing careers or upskilling but who did not know how to plan a return to school or were unable to do so due to scheduling or financial constraints. Once enrolled, many of these students will need specially tailored supports, as school re-entry after time away can be difficult (Antoszyk et al., 2018c).

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING MOMENTUM

Meeting the challenges outlined in the priorities described above so that we can reach our ambitious attainment goal will not be easy, but it is something that North Carolina can accomplish if we leverage all of the important work already under way in the state and support the establishment and growth of the new work necessary to fill in critical gaps.

To move this important work forward, the myFutureNC Commission proposes four *action areas* for sustaining our momentum. The first task is to ensure that economically driven attainment remains a sustainable, high priority for all partners via a comprehensive communications and advocacy strategy. In addition, myFutureNC must establish a governance model for the work, which will entail not only identifying state agencies and private actors who will take responsibility for meeting the postsecondary attainment goal but also providing coordination for their collaborations. Finally, myFutureNC must help establish accountability guidelines for ensuring that our work is efficient and effective, always with an eye on measuring our progress toward our attainment goal. The sections below provide greater detail about each of these action areas.



I. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY



Launch a statewide communications and marketing campaign that emphasizes the economic value of industry-aligned postsecondary credentials.

Meeting North Carolina's attainment goal will require the active coordination of public and private partners from all corners of the state. To realize success, we will need to broaden and deepen stakeholder engagement immediately and maintain that engagement through target year 2030 and beyond. The myFutureNC Commission suggests:

- Evaluating and expanding public awareness of the value of all postsecondary degrees and credential pathways, including Career and Technical Education programs;
- Conducting a public awareness campaign about the limits to workforce opportunities for people without degrees and certifications;
- Developing a toolkit for stakeholders to clearly communicate the value propositions for and between workforce and education.

II. GOVERNANCE



Develop and implement a plan for moving the work forward in 2019 and for quickly catalyzing public and private actors to work collectively to achieve the attainment goal.

Transforming the priorities in this call to action into a plan of action will require careful deliberation and ongoing management. Governance should include development of structures for convening stakeholders on a regular basis, as well as evaluation procedures. As highlighted in the opening section of this Call to Action, the governance structure also should recognize that myFutureNC's statewide goal will be achievable only through local and regional action; as such, the governance model should be co-developed with regional and local leadership to promote alignment and co-ownership. In addition, the myFutureNC Commission suggests:

- Codifying North Carolina's statewide attainment goal in legislation that ensures broad stakeholder support but that also encourages refinement and innovation to meet the goal;
- Identifying responsible parties, timelines, and specific measurable goals and indicators for each recommendation;
- Establishing a formal agreement between education sectors that is specifically related to a shared commitment to the attainment goal and to working together to support the recommendations to ensure that the goal is met;
- Embedding cross-sector strategies—both new ones and current sector-level strategic priorities—into each state agency's or system's core priorities;
- Establishing an appropriate governing and convening body to execute agreed-upon actions and to oversee initiatives;
- Coordinating efforts at the regional level to meet state-level attainment goals; and
- Expanding and cultivating leadership that is reflective of demographic shifts, to diversify thought leadership and to support wider adoption of core principles.

III. DATA-DRIVEN EXECUTION AND IMPROVEMENT



Expand North Carolina’s longitudinal data system— from P-12 through the business and industry sector— to securely manage data, inform research to develop and revise policies and practices, and develop priority public reports and dashboards aligned with metrics that support the postsecondary attainment goal.

A robust, coordinated, and fully functional longitudinal data system that brings together data from the P-12, postsecondary, and business and industry sectors is vital to North Carolina’s attainment efforts. Such a system can help inform public reports and dashboards, shape policy and practice, and monitor performance. North Carolina already has started work toward such a system; the myFutureNC Commission suggests the following additional steps:

- Adopting and embedding a series of metrics that are shared across the P-12, postsecondary, and business and industry sectors and that support ongoing accountability, public reporting, and return-on-investment (system effectiveness and productivity) analyses;
- Developing data dashboards to help students, parents, and other stakeholders make critical decisions about postsecondary preparation, access, and success;
- Regularly evaluating the effectiveness of myFutureNC-related initiatives; and
- Highlighting critical education pipeline data, such as progress of transfer students and first-year performance of K-12 graduates in credit-bearing coursework in community college and university programs.

IV. ACCOUNTABILITY



Establish and maintain an accountability structure to ensure delivery on the priorities outlined in this call to action.

This Call to Action identifies several metrics for tracking progress toward the overall attainment goal, but these measures alone will not be enough to ensure full accountability for all actors. That level of accountability will require completion of a substantive process to identify the comprehensive set of key metrics necessary for producing strong analytics and for supporting sound decision-making related to the execution of initiatives designed to address each priority. This process should inventory metrics currently collected by state agencies and other organizations, identify missing fields, and determine necessary steps for obtaining data for those fields. In addition, the myFutureNC Commission makes the following suggestions for development of a rigorous accountability process:

- Providing support for high-quality evaluations that assess the effectiveness of all initiatives related to addressing the priorities;
- Embedding labor market outcomes and return-on-investment metrics into the accountability system;
- Making postsecondary readiness for entry-level credit-bearing courses a more meaningful success metric for high schools on annual report cards;
- Ensuring that accountability systems are relevant and meaningful to all parents, students, and other stakeholders by engaging representatives from North Carolina's many constituencies (e.g., from low-income communities, communities of color, etc.) in the design of the accountability measures; and
- Enhancing accountability by institutionalizing an ongoing process for continually upgrading rating systems for schools and programs at all levels so that they provide meaningful information for all stakeholders.





APPENDIX A

HOW THE COMMISSION DEVELOPED THIS REPORT

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION

Formed in late 2017, the myFutureNC Commission is a statewide commission focused on educational attainment that brings together North Carolina's thought leaders in education, business, philanthropy, the faith-based and nonprofit communities, and *ex officio* representatives from the North Carolina House of Representatives, Senate, and Governor's office.

COMMISSION CHARGE

The Commission's primary goal is to create a statewide education plan for early childhood through postsecondary education that recommends a clear attainment goal, identifies key benchmarks for measuring progress toward that goal, and proposes priority areas to guide the future of education in North Carolina. This report is the final product of Phase I of that work.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

Between November 2017 and December 2018, the full Commission convened five times in different locations across the state. Over the same period, subject matter experts in P-12 education, postsecondary education, and workforce, along with many other myFutureNC partners, produced multiple policy

briefs and fact sheets, conducted nine listening sessions across the state, commissioned a statewide Gallup survey, and created a webinar series, all with the goal of building a comprehensive attainment plan that serves all North Carolinians. The priorities in the main section of this report evolved from the discussions held during all Commission and Committee meetings to date, technical papers commissioned and distributed by myFutureNC, and feedback and information derived from myFutureNC's statewide listening tour.

The work of the Commission was facilitated by several partner organizations, including ECONorthwest, EducationNC (EdNC), Education Strategy Group (ESG), Gallup, the Hunt Institute, MDC, the myFutureNC staff (myFutureNC), ncIMPACT at the School of Government at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (ncIMPACT), and the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University (Friday Institute).

PROCESS DETAILS

The Commission's work took place across several phases.

IDEA GENERATION

(NOV 2017-AUG 2018)

Leads: ECONorthwest, EdNC, ESG, Gallup, MDC, myFutureNC, ncIMPACT and Friday Institute

The Commission met in November 2017, February 2018, and June 2018 to hear from experts about demographic trends across North Carolina, as well as about employment projections. The June meeting included a presentation from ECONorthwest about setting postsecondary attainment goals. The Commission meetings also provided opportunities for the Commission's committees—P-12 Education, Postsecondary Education, and Workforce Development—to discuss in greater detail the education and workforce preparation issues raised in the general meetings and in myFutureNC-commissioned policy briefs.

- **P-12 Education Committee.** The P-12 committee framed the attainment challenge as a problem of *opportunities*: for a quality education for all students; for access to human, social, and material supports; and for stakeholder involvement. The committee highlighted current strengths in P-12 education and examined *areas in need of the most attention*, from better coordination across sectors, to strengthening

non-instructional support systems, to changes to teacher training that support cross-sector student preparation. The committee refined its focus to seven areas: 1. *universal access to pre-K*; 2. *improved teacher recruitment and retention strategies*; 3. *a unified student data and tracking system*; 4. *increased student and parent engagement*; 5. *soft skills training for students*; 6. *alignment of curriculum and professional development throughout P-12*; and 7. *broader articulation agreements across secondary and postsecondary institutions*.

- Postsecondary Education Committee.** The Postsecondary committee framed the attainment challenge as a problem of *supports*: supports for students and their families, supports for the education sectors that prepare students for postsecondary work, and supports for postsecondary institutions as they work to understand the needs of all of the populations they want to serve. The committee identified *transfers* as a major area of focus for facilitating student advancement along pathways that meet projected workforce education needs. The committee also discussed *structural barriers* to attainment and proposed key benchmarks for measuring progress. The committee identified *student ambition gaps*, *student information gaps*, *a client-driven focus*, and *finance reform* as the most promising focus areas for improving postsecondary attainment.
- Workforce Development Committee.** The Workforce committee framed the attainment challenge as a problem of *gaps*: between each segment of the education sector, between the education and business and industry sectors, and between both sectors and public perceptions. The committee focused on ways to *re-define education pathways* by identifying existing best practices, building flexible education frameworks, and broadening the definition of attainment, with a key goal of expanding access. The committee noted that progress toward statewide goals and a shared attainment target might mask problems at the regional, sector, and subgroup levels, as well as at intermediate stages. The committee agreed that tracking progress on the *demand side* is as important as tracking progress on the supply side, that *feasibility* is an important criterion for longer-term solutions, and that it will be important to *scale up existing successful approaches and programs* in the interim.

- **Policy Briefs, Surveys, and Listening Tours.** During the spring and summer of 2018, myFutureNC released a series of 18 fact sheets and policy briefs related to the attainment goal-setting process, workforce preparation, the P-12 and postsecondary education sectors, and the transition points along the education-to-workforce continuum. Also during this phase, several myFutureNC partner organizations engaged North Carolina residents in the process through focus groups and surveys. Descriptions of each of these data sources are included in **Appendix E**; full results of the work are posted on the myFutureNC website³⁴; and summaries of the results are included in **Appendices F, G, and H**.

SYNTHESIS

(SEPT 2018)

Lead: Friday Institute

In September 2018, the Friday Institute began the process of reconciling the ideas generated during the previous phase. Eighty-one themes identified in Commission meeting discussions and in analyses of listening tour data (26 identified by MDC, 21 by ESG, and 34 by the Friday Institute) were combined into 12 action areas, and these action areas were grouped into five Challenges. The action areas and challenges are listed below. In addition, 267 recommendations—94 from commissioners, 23 from policy briefs, 45 identified by ESG from other states, and 105 from the listening tour—were consolidated into 174 specific strategies.

- **Five Challenges:**
 - » Access to Opportunity
 - » Preparation
 - » Support
 - » Alignment
 - » Coordination
- **12 Action Areas:**
 - » Affordability
 - » Aspirations
 - » Responsiveness to Local Needs and Demographic Changes
 - » P-20 Pipeline
 - » School-to-Workforce Continuum

34. <https://www.myfuturenc.org>

- » Comprehensive Support Systems
- » Lifelong Growth
- » Education-Community Alignment
- » Education Sectors Alignment
- » Education-Workforce Alignment
- » mFNC Strategy
- » Accountability and Measurement of Progress

CONSOLIDATION, PART I

(SEPT-OCT 2018)

Leads: ESG and Friday Institute

With input from committee leadership and subject matter experts, ESG and the Friday Institute reduced the 12 action areas and five challenges to four challenge areas. The 174 strategies were further combined into a tighter list of 115, all of which were elevated into 18 high-level recommendations distributed across the first four challenge areas:³⁵

- Access to Opportunity (3)
- Preparation (7)
- Support (5)
- System Alignment (3)

PLANNING FOR NEXT STEPS

(OCT-DEC 2018)

Lead: ESG

To begin the process of planning for the sustainability and longevity of the myFutureNC project, ESG began working with Commission members on the fifth challenge area (Building and Sustaining Momentum) and its four corresponding recommendations.

CONSOLIDATION, PART II AND RECONCILIATION

(OCT-NOV 2018)

Leads: ECONorthwest, MDC, myFutureNC committees, and Friday Institute

35. The final set of specific strategies has been archived (Appendix I) for use during the next phase of myFutureNC's work.

In October 2018, the Commission convened to hear ECONorthwest's recommendations for a statewide attainment goal and related benchmark indicators (**Appendix B**), and the committees met to discuss the reconciled and consolidated recommendations. Feedback from the three committees' discussions were merged³⁶ to create a call to action with four focus areas to guide the state's work: Education and Workforce Alignment; Access to Lifelong Educational Opportunities; Preparation for Education, Career, and Life; and Comprehensive Support Systems. Sixteen cross-sector priorities were identified for the focus areas, with each one addressing at least one of the following 10 criteria:

1. Implementation Feasibility
2. Political Feasibility
3. Cost Neutrality
4. Intensity and Breadth
5. Immediacy
6. Sequence
7. Scalability
8. Momentum
9. Leadership
10. Equity

REVIEW AND FINALIZATION

(NOV-DEC 2018)

Leads: myFutureNC and Friday Institute

The myFutureNC committee co-chairs, the heads of each North Carolina education system, and the myFutureNC Steering Committee reviewed and revised the Call to Action ahead of its release in its final form to the full myFutureNC Commission in December 2018. The Commission met in December and voted to approve the focus areas and priorities.³⁷

36. For connections between each committee's recommendations and the final set of focus areas and priorities, please see Appendix J.

37. Caveats and limitations of the Call to Action are detailed in Appendix K.



APPENDIX B

ATTAINMENT AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

NORTH CAROLINA'S OVERALL ATTAINMENT GOAL³⁸

After the myFutureNC Commission identified the age range of 25 to 44 for its postsecondary attainment goal, myFutureNC partner ECONorthwest calculated the postsecondary attainment rate for this age cohort for all 50 states using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS) data. ACS PUMS data contain anonymized person-level observations that can be used to create custom tabulations of U.S. Census data. To calculate the postsecondary attainment rate, ECONorthwest relied on the ACS PUMS variable that indicates an individual's educational attainment ("SCHL"). Using SCHL, it is possible to code individuals with no college, some college, an associate degree, bachelor's degree, or graduate degree.

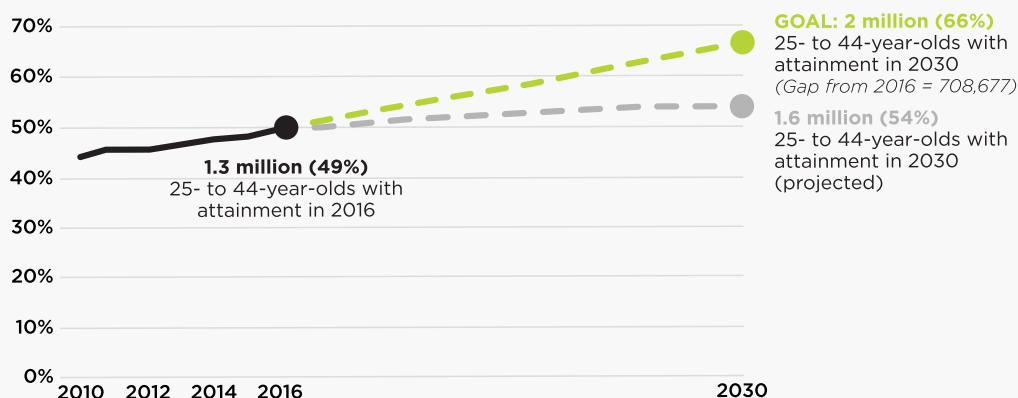
Unfortunately, ACS PUMS does not include high-quality certificates. To add certificates, ECONorthwest added certificate rates from a 2012 Georgetown University report (Carnevale et al., 2012; one of the few studies in which certificate rates by state are calculated) to ACS PUMS attainment rates. ECONorthwest assumed that the share of the population with certificates remained constant across all analysis years. If a Georgetown University

38. Some text and all figures for this Appendix: Dyke and True (2018)

certificate estimate was unavailable, ECONorthwest assumed a value of 5 percent (approximately the national average for high-quality certificate attainment).

Figure B1 shows North Carolina's actual and projected attainment levels for 25- to 44-year-olds using this approach.

FIGURE B1. OVERALL ATTAINMENT GOAL: NORTH CAROLINA ATTAINMENT PROJECTION AND GAP



Data sources: Carnevale et al. (2012); US Census Bureau (2016)

The gray dotted line indicates North Carolina's projected attainment level if the state remains on its current educational trajectory. The green dotted line shows how North Carolina's trajectory will need to shift to reach a goal of 2 million 25- to 44-year-old North Carolinians with a high-quality postsecondary credential or degree by 2030.

TOP-LINE INDICATORS

Table B1 includes nine educational attainment indicators and three workforce outcome measures as originally proposed by ECONorthwest in October 2018. The myFutureNC Commission added a tenth educational attainment indicator (5. K-12 Student Chronic Absenteeism Rate). Other changes to these indicators and measures as proposed by myFutureNC Commission members are reflected in the main report text and also are noted in the descriptive text that follows the table.



TABLE B1: **TOP-LINE INDICATORS**

Indicator		NC Current Rate	75th Percentile Rate (U.S.)	NC Percentile Rank (U.S.)	Target	Target Percentile Rank	Level of Possible Sub-State Disaggregation**	Data Source Year
Educational Attainment								
1	PreK enrollment (share of 4 year olds enrolled in NC PreK)	22%	37%	41st	37%	75th	None	2017
2	Fourth grade NAEP proficiency, reading	39%	40%	66th	42%	90th	Guilford Co. (NAEP TUDA district)	2017
3	Eighth grade NAEP proficiency, math	35%	38%	54th	42%	90th	Guilford Co. (NAEP TUDA district)	2017
4	Share of ACT test takers with composite mean score of 17 or above	59%	*	*	70%	90th*	District	2017
5	K-12 Student Chronic Absenteeism Rate	TBD	*	*	TBD	TBD*	School	TBD
6	5-year cohort high school graduation rate	88%	*	*	95%	75th*	School	2018
7	Share of HS seniors completing the FAFSA	59%	62%	63rd	66%	90th	School	2018
8	Postsecondary enrollment rate (ages 18-24)	40%	45%	36th	47%	90th	PUMA	2016
9	Postsecondary persistence rate	77%	77%	65th	80%	90th	None	2016
10a	Postsecondary completion rate (2yr)	35%	42%	23rd	45%	82nd	None	2016
10b	Postsecondary completion rate (public 4yr)	74%	72%	80th	80%	96th	None	2016
10c	Postsecondary completion rate (private 4yr)	73%	81%	34th	80%	73rd	None	2016

Indicator		NC Current Rate	75th Percentile Rate (U.S.)	NC Percentile Rank (U.S.)	Target	Target Percentile Rank	Level of Possible Sub-State Disaggregation**	Data Source Year
Potential outcome measures								
A	Share enrolled in school or working (ages 16-24)	86%	89%	34th	N/A	N/A	PUMA	2016
B	Labor force participation rate (ages 25-64)	76%	80%	30th	N/A	N/A	PUMA	2016
C	Share with family income > 300% FPL (ages 35-44)	51%	60%	24th	N/A	N/A	PUMA	2016

- *Note: PreK=Pre-kindergarten; NAEP=National Assessment of Educational Process; ACT=American College Test; FAFSA=Free Application for Federal Student Aid; FPL=Federal Poverty Level*
- **NC-based indicator*
- ***Based on available public use data. More granular data may be available for purchase or via data request.*

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT INDICATORS

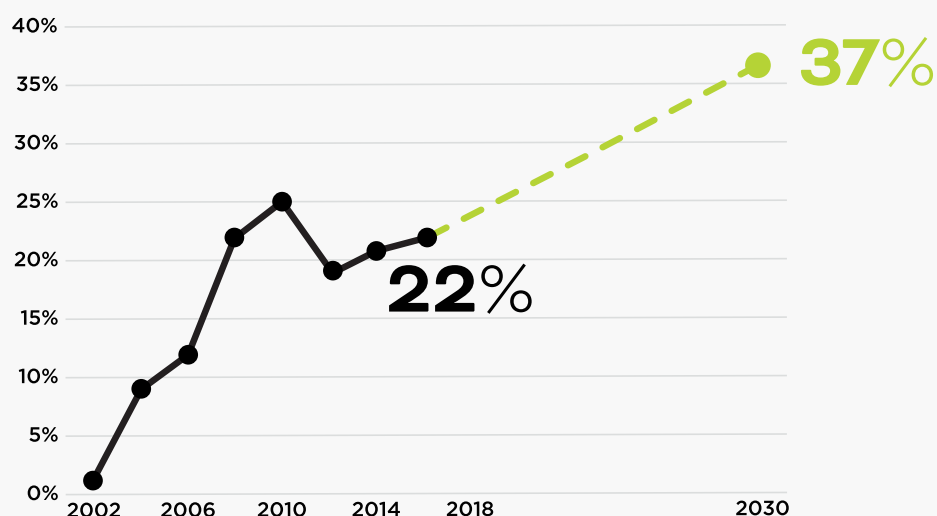
The ten educational attainment indicators span the pipeline from pre-kindergarten through postsecondary.

1. PRE-KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT (4-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN NC PRE-KINDERGARTEN)³⁹

For this indicator, ECONorthwest retrieved data from the National Institution for Early Education and Research (NIEER). NIEER publishes an annual state preschool yearbook that reports state levels of pre-kindergarten enrollment in state-run, public programs over time.

ECONorthwest used this data to create a time series of enrollment in North Carolina pre-kindergarten from 2002 through 2017 and to compare North Carolina's enrollment with that of other states. ECONorthwest relied on historical trends in North Carolina enrollment to determine a 2030 enrollment target for North Carolina of 37 percent (75th percentile among states). This target is less ambitious in an absolute sense than most other targets, as it reflects North Carolina's below-average current enrollment levels, relative to other states.

FIGURE B2. TARGET SHARE OF NORTH CAROLINA 4-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN PRE-KINDERGARTEN



Data source: Friedman-Krauss, Barnett, Weisenfeld, DiCrecchio, & Horowitz (2017)

39. Note: Per myFutureNC Commission discussion, this indicator will be amended to: Enrollment in High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten (Share of Eligible 4-Year-Olds Enrolled)

Please note that the myFutureNC Commission has amended this indicator. The Commission recommends measuring the proportion of *eligible* 4-year-olds who are enrolled in pre-kindergarten. In addition, the Commission recommends establishing a common definition for “high-quality.” Values and projections for this revised indicator will be completed during the next phase of myFutureNC’s work.

2. FOURTH-GRADE NAEP READING⁴⁰

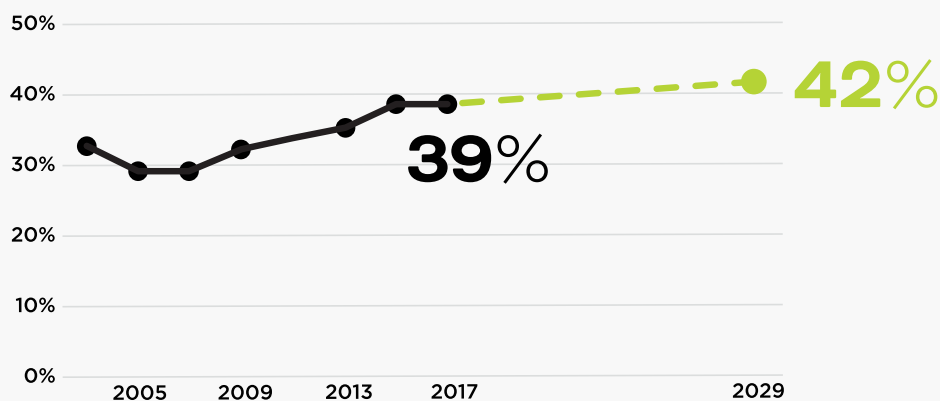
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), provides a national snapshot of student performance in a variety of subjects.

ECONorthwest used NAEP data to create a time series of the share of North Carolina fourth graders scoring “at or above proficient” on their NAEP reading assessments (both overall and by race/ethnicity) from 2003 through 2017. In addition, ECONorthwest benchmarked North Carolina’s reading performance against that of other states. Students scoring “at or above proficient” have mastered the reading material at their grade level. Reading proficiency in the fourth grade is highly correlated with student performance on future NAEP assessments and with American College Test (ACT) scores.

Based on trends in North Carolina NAEP performance and the relationships between NAEP reading proficiency and other indicators, ECONorthwest recommended that North Carolina bring 42 percent (90th percentile among states) of its fourth graders up to the “at or above proficient” level by 2030 in order to achieve its overall educational attainment goal. Achieving the target would result in a seemingly small numeric increase in the indicator but represents a potentially significant improvement in this relatively hard-to-move indicator.

40. Note: Per myFutureNC Commission discussion, this indicator will be amended to: fourth Grade NAEP (covering both reading and mathematics)

FIGURE B3. **TARGET NAEP FOURTH GRADE READING PROFICIENCY**



Data source: U.S. Department of Education: National Center for Education Statistics (2018)

Please note that the myFutureNC Commission has amended this indicator. The Commission recommends tracking annual progress on both fourth grade reading and mathematics results. Projections for NAEP fourth-grade mathematics to be determined as part of the next phase of the work.

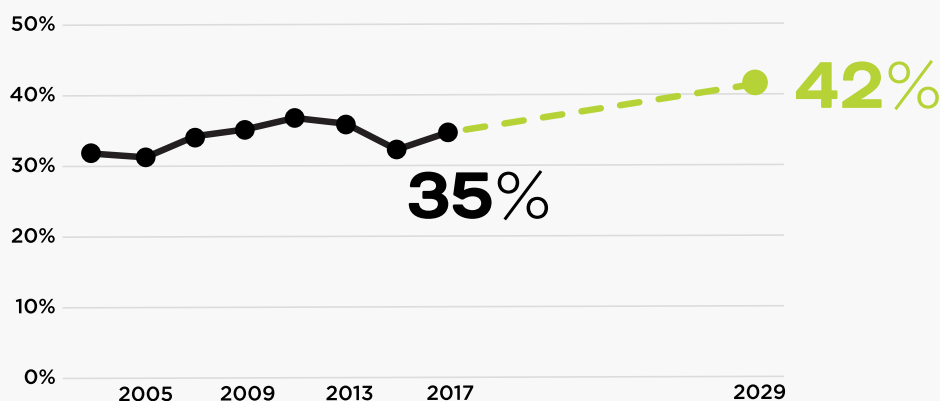
3. EIGHTH GRADE NAEP MATH⁴¹

ECONorthwest gathered NAEP data from NCES to create a time series of the share of North Carolina eighth graders scoring “at or above proficient” on their NAEP math assessments (both overall and by race/ethnicity) from 2003 through 2017. In addition, ECONorthwest benchmarked North Carolina’s math performance with that of other states.

Based on trends in North Carolina eighth grade NAEP math performance and the relationships between NAEP math proficiency and other indicators, ECONorthwest recommended that North Carolina bring 42 percent (90th percentile among states) of its eighth graders up to the “at or above proficient” level by 2030 in order to achieve its overall educational attainment goal.

41. Note: Per myFutureNC Commission discussion, this indicators will be amended to: Eighth Grade NAEP (covering both reading and mathematics)

FIGURE B4. **TARGET NAEP EIGHTH GRADE MATHEMATICS PROFICIENCY**



Data source: U.S. Department of Education: National Center for Education Statistics (2018)

Please note that the myFutureNC Commission has amended this indicator. The Commission recommends tracking annual progress on both eighth-grade reading and mathematics results. Projections for NAEP eighth-grade reading to be determined as part of the next phase of the work.

4. ACT SCORE OF 17 AND ABOVE

ECONorthwest examined detailed North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Accountability Services Division ACT data disaggregated by district and by race/ethnicity. The data included the share of North Carolina test takers receiving composite scores of 17 or above by district and by race/ethnicity for 2013 through 2017. ECONorthwest selected this metric to align with the UNC System minimum for college admission.⁴²

Because this indicator was specific to North Carolina, ECONorthwest included two comparisons between North Carolina's average ACT composite scores⁴³ and those of other states to understand how North Carolina performs nationally. Not every state requires all high school students to take the ACT like North Carolina does, so ECONorthwest produced separate rankings comparing North Carolina to other states that require the ACT and to all states regardless of requirements.

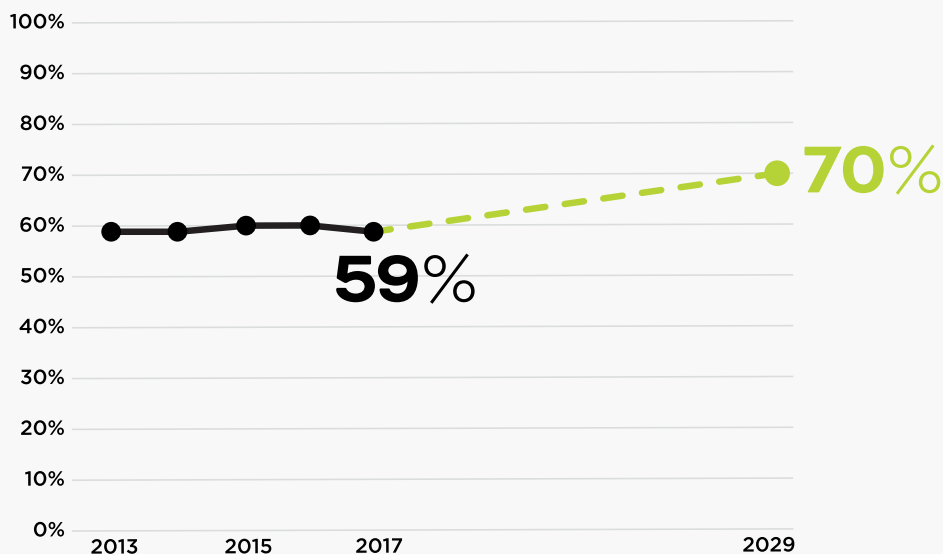
For this indicator, ECONorthwest recommended the following target: By 2030, 70 percent of ACT test-takers in each North Carolina district will earn a composite score of 17 or above on the ACT. Achieving this goal would put

42. ACT can provide customized reports (i.e., share of students with at least a composite score of 17) for a fee; we did not have access to these data for this project.

43. National data source: ACT. "The Condition of College and Career Readiness: National 2017." (2017). 14-15. <http://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/condition-of-college-and-career-readiness-2017.html>

statewide performance at the 90th percentile (relative to individual county scores nationwide) under current conditions.

FIGURE B5. **TARGET ACT SCORES AT OR ABOVE 17**



Data source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2018a)

5. P-12 STUDENT CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM RATE (PERCENT OF STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS CHRONICALLY ABSENT PER YEAR)

This indicator was not provided by ECONorthwest but was instead proposed and approved by myFutureNC Commission members. Historical, baseline, and projected data will be constructed during the next phase of myFutureNC's work.⁴⁴

6. FIVE-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

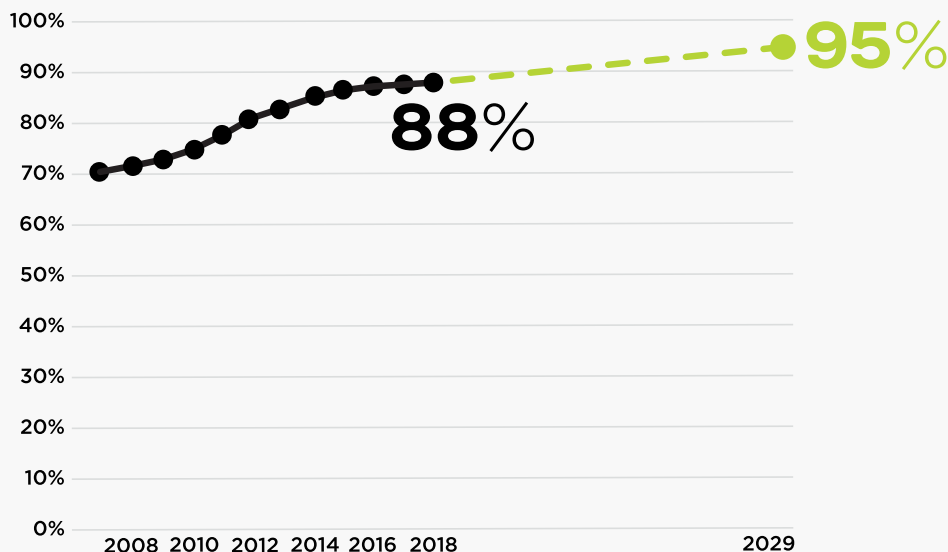
Graduating high school is a prerequisite for enrolling in postsecondary education. Using NCDPI data, ECONorthwest constructed a time series of North Carolina's five-year graduation rate by race/ethnicity and overall from 2007 through 2018.

For national context, ECONorthwest also compared North Carolina's 2016 four-year graduation rate against the rates of other states; national data were unavailable for more recent years or as a five-year rate by state.

44. North Carolina State Board of Education Policy ATND-004, Definition of Student Chronic Absenteeism Rate: <https://stateboard.ncpublicschools.gov/policy-manual/student-attendance/definition-of-chronic-absence-and-chronic-absenteeism-rate>

ECONorthwest recommended that North Carolina target a five-year high school graduation rate of 95 percent by 2030. Achieving this goal would put statewide performance at the level of the 90th percentile North Carolina high school based on current conditions.

FIGURE B6. **TARGET FIVE-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE**



Data source: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2018b)

7. FAFSA COMPLETION

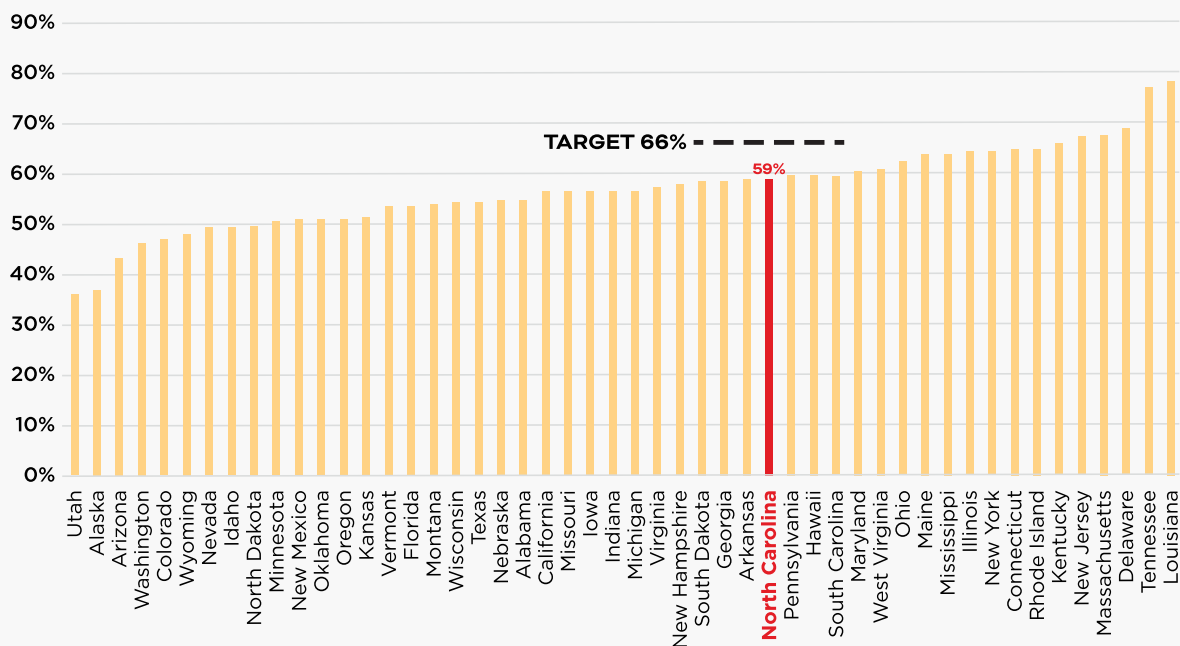
Completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) gives potential college applicants access to billions of dollars in federal financial aid. Submitting the FAFSA application also can help unlock a wide variety of local and private scholarships. Receiving federal aid can put a postsecondary education within reach for low-income college applicants.

ECONorthwest extracted national data from the National College Access Network's (NCAN) FAFSA tracker, which estimates FAFSA completion rates by state. As of 2018, there was no comprehensive database for FAFSA completion rates at a state or national level.

NCAN released its FAFSA Tracker tool in 2018, making it impossible for ECONorthwest to assemble a time series of FAFSA completion rates.

ECONorthwest compared North Carolina's FAFSA completion rate to other states and recommended that North Carolina target a FAFSA completion rate of 66 percent (90th percentile among states) by 2030.

FIGURE B7. **TARGET FAFSA COMPLETION RATE, RELATIVE TO OTHER STATES**



Data source: National College Access Network (2018)

Please note that the myFutureNC Commission has amended this indicator. The Commission recommends measuring the share of qualified high school seniors completing FAFSA. Values and projections for this revised indicator will be completed during the next phase of myFutureNC's work.

8. POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT (AGES 18-24)

ECONorthwest calculated the postsecondary enrollment rate for all 50 states, including North Carolina, using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 ACS PUMS data.

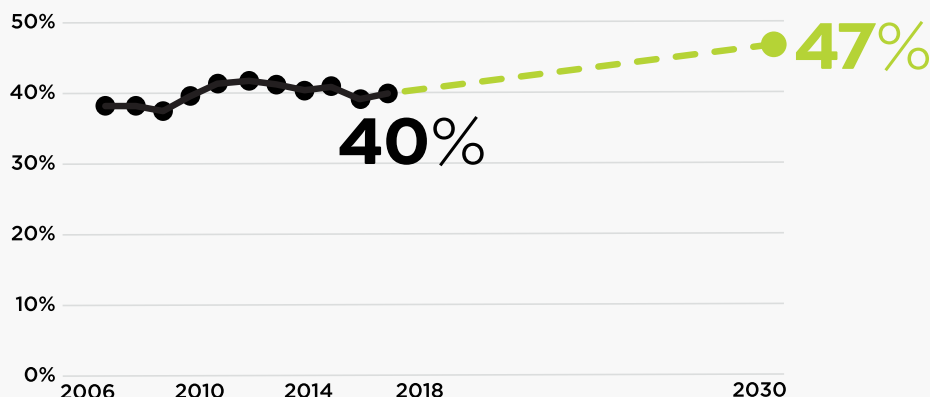
ACS PUMS data contain anonymized person-level observations that can be used to create custom tabulations of U.S. Census data.⁴⁵ To calculate the postsecondary enrollment rate, ECONorthwest relied on the PUMS variables that indicate an individual's school enrollment status and grade level attending ("SCH" and "SCHG"). Those who were coded as "College undergraduate years (freshman to senior)" or "Graduate or professional school beyond a bachelor's degree" were counted as being enrolled in college.

As would be expected, postsecondary enrollment and attainment are tightly linked. Based on the relationship between the two indicators, North Carolina's 2016 level of enrollment, and North Carolina's overall attainment goal,

45. Although the ACS PUMS dataset is a sample, it contains a series of replicates weights, making it possible to produce reliable estimates for the entirety of the population of the chosen geography.

ECONorthwest recommended a 2030 enrollment target of 47 percent (90th percentile among states).

FIGURE B8. **TARGET POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT, 18- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS**



Data source: US Census Bureau (2018)

9. POSTSECONDARY PERSISTENCE

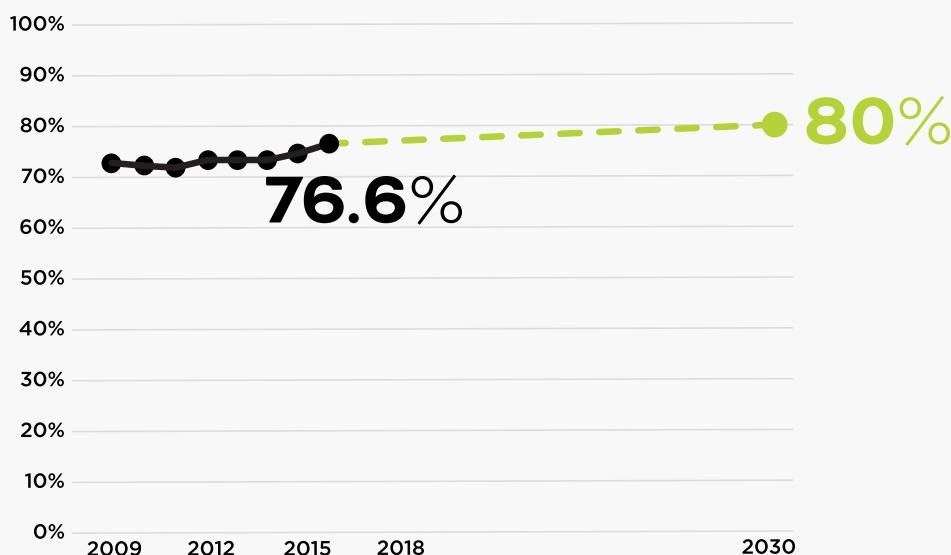
The postsecondary persistence rate measures whether or not a postsecondary enrollee continues with her or his education in the following year (regardless of whether at the same institution or not).

ECONorthwest retrieved 2017 postsecondary persistence data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Research Center's 2018 state-level data tables showing overall first-year persistence⁴⁶ and retention rates from fall 2009 through fall 2016. ECONorthwest used these data to construct a time series for North Carolina and to rank North Carolina against other states.

Based on North Carolina's postsecondary persistence performance, its ranking against other states, and its overall attainment goal, ECONorthwest recommended the following target: By 2030, 80 percent of North Carolina postsecondary enrollees will persist in their education (90th percentile among states).

46. NSC data measures first-year persistence, meaning a postsecondary enrollee (full-time or part-time) is counted as persisting in their education if they continue on from their first year of enrollment to their second at any institution of higher education.

FIGURE B9. **TARGET POSTSECONDARY PERSISTENCE RATE**



Data source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2018a)

10. POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION

The postsecondary completion rate measures the extent to which postsecondary enrollees complete a credential within a set period of time.

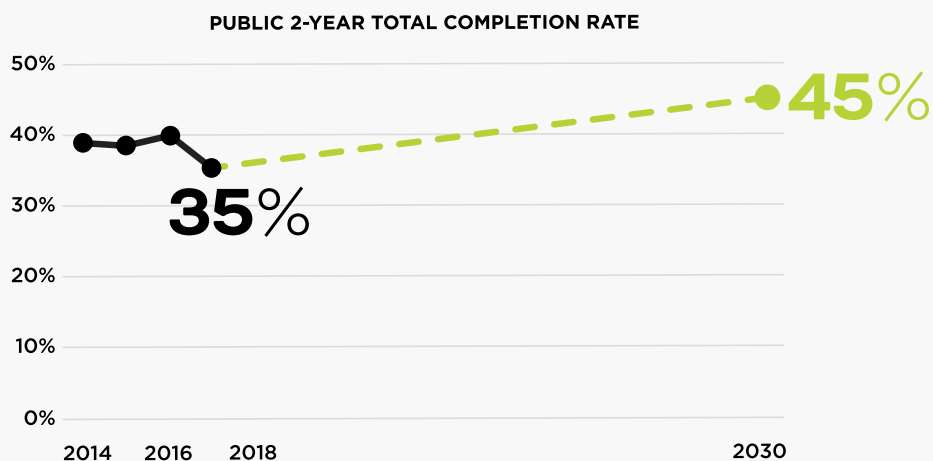
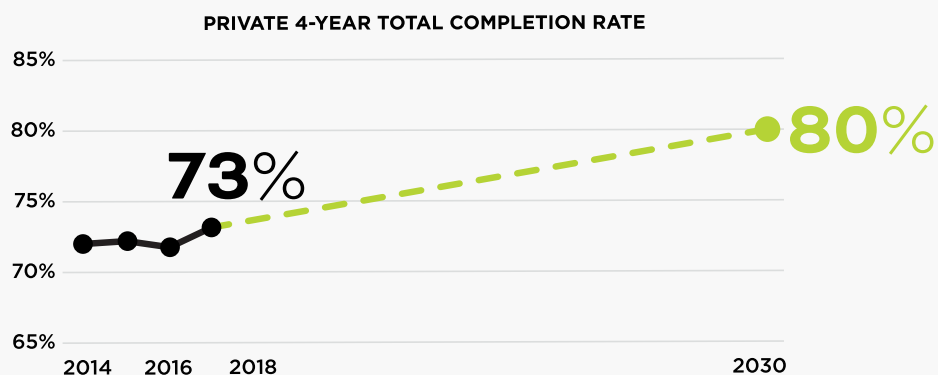
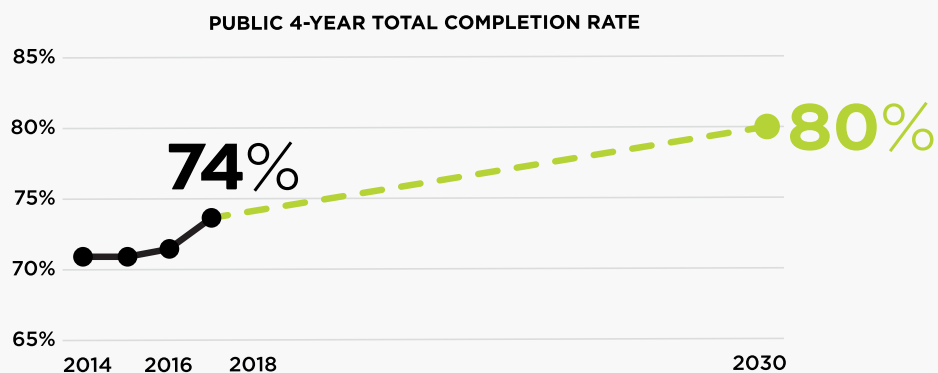
ECONorthwest compiled completion data from National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reports from 2015 to 2018 to understand trends in North Carolina's postsecondary completion rates. ECONorthwest analyzed completion data from all 50 states for two-year and four-year institutions (including both public and private four-year institutions).

Based on the available data, ECONorthwest recommended a North Carolina completion rate target of 80 percent for four-year institutions (both public and private) by 2030.

The public-sector goal is equal to the 96th percentile among states (North Carolina already performs well on this metric). The private sector goal is less ambitious in comparison to other states; however, the state's private institutions currently perform less well, in a relative sense, compared to North Carolina's public institutions. Given the variation in private institutions across states, assigning public and private institutions the same goal should help to promote a sense of common purpose, and aligns reasonably well with pre-existing performance differences across sectors in the state.

ECONorthwest recommended a target of 45 percent for two-year institutions (82nd percentile among states). The implied improvement is slightly more ambitious than that required of the private four-year institutions to achieve the target, and would close significantly the performance gap, in terms of rank among states, between North Carolina's public two-year and four-year institutions.

FIGURE B10. **TARGET POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION RATES**



Data source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2018b)

Please note that the myFutureNC Commission has amended this indicator. The Commission recommends measuring both on-time (i.e., two-year and four-year) and added-time (i.e., three-year and six-year) graduation rates. Values and projections for this revised indicator will be completed during the next phase of myFutureNC's work.

WORKFORCE INDICATORS

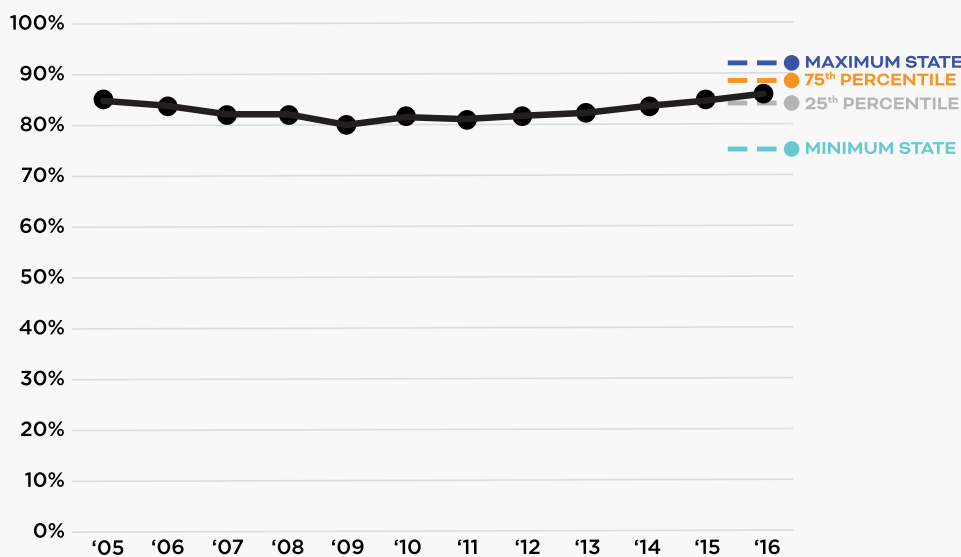
The labor market supply and demand workforce indicators were selected to provide a range of possible workforce outcomes all along the age continuum, from young adults (16- to 24-year-olds) to older workers (through age 64). Targets were not determined for these indicators.

A. SHARE ENROLLED IN SCHOOL OR WORKING (AGES 16-24)

ECONorthwest calculated the share of 16- to 24-year-olds in school or working for all 50 states, including North Carolina, using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 ACS PUMS data.

ACS PUMS data contain anonymized person-level observations that can be used to create custom tabulations of U.S. Census data. To calculate this share, ECONorthwest relied on the PUMS variables that indicated an individual's school enrollment status ("SCH") and employment status ("ESR"). Those who were coded as being enrolled in school or in the labor force were counted as either enrolled in school or working.

FIGURE B11. **SHARE OF 16- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS ENROLLED IN SCHOOL OR WORKING, RELATIVE TO OTHER STATES**



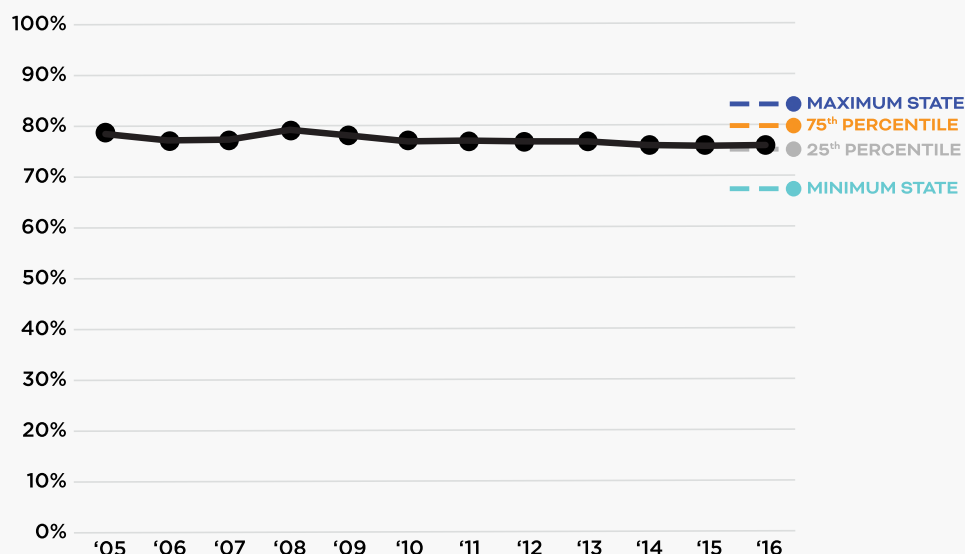
Data source: US Census Bureau (2018).

B. LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (AGES 25-64)

ECONorthwest calculated the labor force participation rate for all 50 states, including North Carolina, using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 ACS PUMS data.

ACS PUMS data contain anonymized person-level observations that can be used to create custom tabulations of U.S. Census data. To calculate the labor force participation rate, ECONorthwest relied on the PUMS variable that indicated an individual's employment status ("ESR"). Those who were coded as anything but "Not in labor force" were considered to be in the labor force.

FIGURE B12. **SHARE OF 25- TO 64-YEAR-OLDS IN WORKFORCE**



Data source: US Census Bureau (2018).

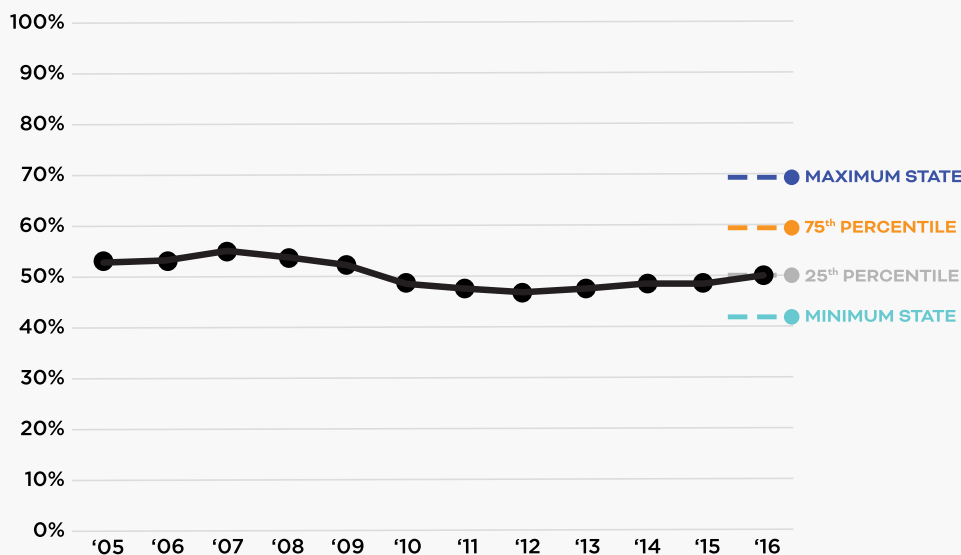
C. SHARE WITH FAMILY INCOME ABOVE 300 PERCENT FEDERAL POVERTY LINE (AGES 35-44)⁴⁷

ECONorthwest calculated the share of individuals living in families above 300 percent of the federal poverty line for all 50 states, including North Carolina, using the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 ACS PUMS data.

ACS PUMS data contain anonymized person-level observations that can be used to create custom tabulations of U.S. Census data. To calculate this share, ECONorthwest relied on the ACS PUMS variables that indicated an individual's poverty status ("POVPIP") and family income ("FINCP").

47. Note: Per Commission discussion, this proposed Indicator will be replaced with a related measure—Share of 35- to 44-year-olds with family income at or above a living wage—with the definition of "living wage" to be determined in 2019. See, for instance, this location-based measure: <http://livingwage.mit.edu>

FIGURE B13. **SHARE OF 35- TO 44-YEAR-OLDS IN FAMILIES WITH INCOMES ABOVE 300 PERCENT FPL**



Data source: US Census Bureau (2018).

Per myFutureNC Commission discussion, this indicator will be replaced with a related measure—Share of 35- to 44-year-olds with family income at or above a living wage—with the definition of “living wage” to be determined during the next phase of myFutureNC’s work.⁴⁸ Current baseline values for the four measures that follow also will be determined as part of the next phase of work.

D. CURRENT WORKFORCE DEMAND COMPARED TO SUPPLY OF GRADUATES BY MARKET SECTOR CATEGORY

- Workforce demand should emphasize “high-quality jobs,” which will be defined as part of the next phase of work.
- Workforce demand should track job openings both for existing companies and for companies the state is seeking to attract.

E. FORECASTED WORKFORCE DEMAND COMPARED TO SUPPLY OF GRADUATES BY MARKET SECTOR CATEGORY

- Forecasts for workforce demand should emphasize “high-quality jobs,” which will be defined as part of the next phase of work.
- Forecasts for workforce demand should include job openings related to state economic development goals.

48. See, for instance, this location-based measure: <http://livingwage.mit.edu>.

APPENDIX C

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PRIORITIES AND INDICATORS

The education continuum indicators and labor market outcome measures are cross-cutting measures and were not designed to provide direct tracking of progress in each priority area; as noted in the Moving the Work Forward section of the main report, identification of specific indicators for each priority will be a component of the next phase of work. Even so, there are connections between the indicators and the priorities, as demonstrated in the table below.



TABLE C1. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PRIORITIES AND INDICATORS

	Education Continuum										Labor Market						
	Pre-kindergarten enrollment	Fourth grade NAEP proficiency (reading)	Eighth grade NAEP proficiency (math)	Share of ACT test takers w/ composite score ≥ 17	K-12 student chronic absenteeism rate	5-year cohort HS graduation rate	Share of qualified HS seniors completing FAFSA	Postsecondary enrollment rate	Postsecondary persistence rate	Postsecondary completion rates	Share of young adults enrolled in school/working	Overall labor force participation rate	Share of mid-career adults w/ family income ≥ living wage	Demand by market sector category	Supply of grads by market sector category	Forecasted demand by market sector category	Forecasted supply of grads by market sector category
Education and Workforce Alignment																	
Align Academic Expectations across P-12 and Postsecondary																	
Ensure Seamless Transitions across Education Sectors																	
Develop More Pathways from Education to Meaningful North Carolina Careers																	
Access to Lifelong Educational Opportunities																	
Ensure Access to a High-Quality Learning Environment for Every Student at Every Level																	
Improve Postsecondary Access and Affordability																	
Strengthen Educational Opportunities in Economically Distressed Communities																	

Education Continuum

Labor Market

	Pre-kindergarten enrollment	Fourth grade NAEP proficiency (reading)	Eighth grade NAEP proficiency (math)	Share of ACT test takers w/ composite score ≥ 17	K-12 student chronic absenteeism rate	5-year cohort HS graduation rate	Share of qualified HS seniors completing FAFSA	Postsecondary enrollment rate	Postsecondary persistence rate	Postsecondary completion rates	Share of young adults enrolled in school/working	Overall labor force participation rate	Share of mid-career adults w/ family income ≥ living wage	Demand by market sector category	Supply of grads by market sector category	Forecasted demand by market sector category	Forecasted supply of grads by market sector category
Preparation for Education, Career, and Life																	
Recruit, Develop, and Retain Excellent Educators Statewide																	
Adopt Rigorous, Standards-aligned, Culturally Relevant Curricula																	
Prioritize High-Quality Early Learning																	
Strengthen Postsecondary Readiness																	
Accelerate and Expand Pathways to a Postsecondary Credential																	
Expand Work-based Learning Opportunities																	
Comprehensive Support Systems																	
Coordinate Student Support Systems																	
Raise Postsec Aspirations and Improve Access to Information about Postsec Opportunities																	
Strengthen and Expand Guidance for Postsecondary Student Success																	
Increase Adult Continuous Learning and Re-entry into the Workforce																	





APPENDIX D

CURRENT AND RECENT N.C. EDUCATION COMMISSIONS

This appendix lists currently and recently active commissions whose work is related to education in North Carolina. Commissions are listed chronologically by start date. This list does not include standing education commissions or committees (e.g., Charter Schools Advisory Board, Governor’s Teacher Advisory Committee, Joint Legislative Oversight Committee, Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on the North Carolina State Lottery, North Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council, etc.).

Two tables follow the committee and commission descriptions. The first table highlights overlaps between each committee or commission’s work and the work of the myFutureNC Commission. The second table indicates each committee’s or commission’s overall timeline for completion of its work.

EXCELLENCE: NORTH CAROLINA’S EDUCATION VISION

- **Commission Co-Sponsors:** Excellence was an initiative spearheaded by BEST NC and RTI International.
- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** BEST NC and RTI International kicked off the 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. This diverse group of stakeholders 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 that included supporting students, elevating educators, and raising expectations.

- **Timeline:** Efforts began in August 2014 and a final report was released in September 2015.
- **Links:**
 - » Website: <http://excellencenc.org/excellence-vision>
 - » Final Report: <http://bit.ly/nc-education-vision>

PATHWAYS TO GRADE-LEVEL READING INITIATIVE

- **Commission Co-Sponsors:** Pathways is an initiative of the NC Early Childhood Foundation in collaboration with NC Child; the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.; and BEST NC.
- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** The Pathways to Grade-Level Reading (Pathways) Initiative is all about possibility. This collaborative of diverse leaders is building on North Carolina's history of innovation and success to reach for a bold vision: All North Carolina children, regardless of race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status, are reading on grade-level by the end of third grade, and all children with disabilities achieve expressive and receptive communication skills commensurate with their developmental ages, so that they have the greatest opportunity for life success. Reading well in the early grades predicts a child's academic and career success. Research shows that improving third grade reading takes a coordinated birth-through-age-8 approach with aligned policies and practices that focuses on: 1) Children's Health and Development, Beginning at Birth. 2) Supported

and Supportive Families and Communities. 3) High-Quality Birth-through-Age-8 Learning Environments, with Regular Attendance. Driving the Pathways initiative is the foundational belief that together we can realize greater outcomes for young children than any of us can produce on our own. Pathways partners work across disciplines, sectors, systems, and the political aisle.

- **Timeline:** Began in 2015 with work ongoing.
- **Link:** <https://buildthefoundation.org/initiative/pathways-to-grade-level-reading>

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR PREPARATION AND STANDARDS COMMISSION

- **Commission Co-Chairs:** Dr. Patrick Miller (Chair); Dr. Michael Maher (Vice Chair); Dr. Ann Bullock (Secretary)
- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** The purpose of the Commission as an advising body to the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) is to do the following: involve stakeholders in establishing high standards for North Carolina educators. Make rule recommendations for the SBE regarding all aspects of preparation, licensure, continuing education, and standards of conduct of public school educators. Exercise its powers and duties independently of—while located administratively under—the SBE.
- **Timeline:** Created on September 1, 2017, and annually reports to the General Assembly beginning on December 1, 2018.
- **Link:** <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/epp/pepsc>

JOINT LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION FINANCE REFORM

- **Commission Co-Chairs:** Representative D. Craig Horn; Senator Kathy Harrington
- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** In consultation with the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction, the Task Force shall study various weighted student formula funding models and

develop a new funding model for the elementary and secondary public schools of North Carolina based on a weighted student formula. As a part of this process, the Task Force shall do all of the following:

(1) Review the State's current public school allotment system and undertake an in-depth study of various types of weighted student formula funding models. In its study, the Task Force is encouraged to consider models used by other states. (2) Determine the base amount of funds that must be distributed on a per student basis to cover the cost of educating a student in the State. (3) Identify the student characteristics eligible for weighted funding and the associated weights for each of these characteristics. (4) Resolve the extent to which the base amount of funds to be distributed would be adjusted based on the characteristics of each local school administrative unit. (5) Decide which funding elements, if any, would remain outside the base of funds to be distributed under a weighted student formula. (6) Study other funding models for elementary and secondary public schools, including public charter schools, in addition to the weighted student funding formula. (7) Study funding models to provide children with disabilities with a free appropriate public education. This shall include a consideration of economies of scale, the advisability and practicality of capping additional funding for children with disabilities, and additional costs associated with services required for particular disabilities. (8) Study any other issue the Task Force considers relevant.

- **Timeline:** October 2017 through October 2018, or until the final report is released.
- **Link:** <https://www.ncleg.gov/Committees/CommitteeInfo/NonStanding/6685>

BOARD OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION CREDENTIALS

- **Commission Chair:** Lieutenant Governor Dan Forest
- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** The purpose of the Board is to review and make recommendations for the development of a statewide system of postsecondary education that links industry, corporations, and businesses in this State with educators, government, and community organizations to identify workforce skills and training needs and to ensure that appropriate courses of study and vocational

training are available to North Carolinians, including those preparing to pursue postsecondary education, entering the workforce, or seeking to update skills and training for purposes of retaining employment and advancing in the workforce.

- **Timeline:** Initial report submitted on March 1, 2018.
- **Link:** <https://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/board-post-secondary-credentials>

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON ACCESS TO SOUND BASIC EDUCATION

- **Commission Chair:** Brad Wilson
- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** The landmark *Leandro* ruling reaffirmed North Carolina's constitutional obligation to ensure all children have the opportunity to receive a sound, basic education. The Commission is focused on what the state needs to do to meet its constitutional obligation and to help improve the state's public schools so that all students receive the education they need to thrive. The Commission includes experts from a wide range of fields that are relevant to education and student and school success.
- **Timeline:** First meeting November 2017; efforts are ongoing.
- **Links:**
 - » Website: <https://governor.nc.gov/issues/education/commission-access-sound-basic-education>
 - » Executive Order: <http://bit.ly/executive-order-27>

B-3 INTERAGENCY COUNCIL

- **Commission Co-Chairs:** Deputy Secretary Susan Perry-Manning (NC DHHS); Associate Superintendent for Early Education Pamela Shue (NC DPI)
- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** The Council shall have as its charge establishing a vision and accountability for a birth through grade three system of early education that addresses all of the following: Standards and assessment, data-driven improvement and outcomes, including shared accountability measures such as the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading, teacher and administrator preparation and effectiveness, instruction and environment, transitions and

continuity, family engagement, governance and funding. The Council is specifically charged with reviewing the recommendations developed by DHHS and DPI pursuant to Session Law 2017-57, Senate Bill 257, Section 7.231.(a). Establish B-3 Interagency Council.

- **Timeline:** Must submit an initial report by April 15, 2018, and then again by February 15, 2019, with final results.
- **Link:** <https://www.b3council.nc.gov>

JOINT LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMITTEE ON THE DIVISION OF LOCAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

- **Commission Co-Chairs:** Senator David L. Curtis; Representative William Brawley
- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** The Committee shall study and make recommendations on the following: (1) The feasibility and advisability of enacting legislation to permit local school administrative units that were merged from separate units to be divided into separate local school administrative units once again. (2) The varied and best ways by which the division of a local school administrative unit could be achieved. (3) Whether legislation permitting the division of local school administrative units should require as a prerequisite to the division a majority vote of the qualified voters of the county through a referendum or election. (4) Whether legislation permitting the division of local school administrative units should require as a prerequisite to the division a petition from a certain percentage of the qualified voters of the county and, if so, to what entity the petition should be delivered. (5) Any other issue the Committee considers relevant to this study.
- **Timeline:** Final report submitted April 2018.
- **Link:** <http://bit.ly/joint-legislative-study>

COMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- **Commission Co-Chairs:** Representative John R. Bradford, III; Senator Michael Lee

- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** The Committee shall study and recommend changes in policy for consideration by the General Assembly regarding the quality and availability of evidence-based services to support individuals with intellectual and/ or developmental disabilities (“IDD”) in retaining employment. The Committee may examine the following: 1. The current resources and programs available in North Carolina to transition those with IDD into integrated, paid, competitive employment; 2. Review what services and supports are necessary to provide transition from education to employment for those with IDD; 3. Review what programs the State should support and invest in to allow more individuals with IDD to become employed, including programs within State and Local Governments to employ those with IDD; 4. Review what role the North Carolina Education System can play in the transition from education to employment for those with IDD; 5. Reviewing County-level coordination between programs and agencies serving individuals with IDD and how to increase awareness of available services to local governments and target populations; and 6. Care solutions and opportunities for those with IDD that are not capable of fully transitioning into a work environment.
- **Timeline:** Report made to General Assembly on April 16, 2018.
- **Link:** <https://www.ncleg.gov/Documents/378>

HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL SAFETY

- **Commission Co-Chairs:** Representative David R. Lewis; Representative John A. Torbett; Representative John Faircloth
- **Mission Statement/Purpose:** The Committee shall examine the current safety standards and procedures throughout North Carolina’s elementary, middle and high schools and make recommendations on statutory and non-statutory changes in order to ensure the highest level quality of safety for North Carolina students, teachers and other school personnel. In light of recent devastating national events that have threatened school safety, the Committee may consult with local governments and LEAs on processes and procedures that have proven to be useful in unsafe situations in our schools. The Committee may seek information from experts in the fields of education, law enforcement, mental health, crisis management and any others deemed appropriate by the Chairs. In addition, the Chairs of this Committee may

use their discretion in identifying other relevant topics to enhancing and ensuring safety in our schools.

- **Timeline:** Final report submitted December 2018.
- **Links:**
 - » Interim Report: <http://bit.ly/house-select-committee-school-safety>
 - » Final Report: <http://bit.ly/house-select-committee-school-safety-report>

TABLE D1. **OVERLAPS BETWEEN COMMITTEE/COMMISSION WORK AND THE WORK OF MYFUTURENC**

		Excellence: North Carolina's Education Vision	Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative	Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission	Joint Legislative Task Force on Education Finance Reform	Board of Postsecondary Education Credentials	Governor's Comm. on Access to a Sound Basic Education	B-3 Interagency Council	Joint Legislative Study Committee on the Div. of Local School Admin. Units	Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	House Select Committee on School Safety
Education & Workforce Alignment	Align Academic Expectations across P-12 and Postsecondary										
	Ensure Seamless Transitions across Education Sectors										
	Develop More Pathways from Education to Meaningful North Carolina Careers										
Access to Lifelong Educational Opportunities	Ensure Access to a High-Quality Learning Environment for Every Student at Every Level										
	Improve Postsecondary Access and Affordability										
	Strengthen Educational Opportunities in Economically Distressed Communities										
Preparation for Education, Career, and Life	Recruit, Develop, and Retain Excellent Educators Statewide										
	Adopt Rigorous Standards-aligned, Culturally Relevant Curricula										
	Prioritize High-Quality Early Learning										
	Strengthen Postsecondary Readiness										
	Accelerate and Expand Pathways to a Postsecondary Degree										
	Expand Work-based Learning Opportunities										

Comprehensive Support Systems	Coordinate Student Support Systems	Excellence: North Carolina's Education Vision	Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative	Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission	Joint Legislative Task Force on Education Finance Reform	Board of Postsecondary Education Credentials	Governor's Comm. on Access to a Sound Basic Education	B-3 Interagency Council	Joint Legislative Study Committee on the Div. of Local School Admin. Units	Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	House Select Committee on School Safety
	Raise Postsecondary Aspirations and Improve Access to Information about Postsecondary Opportunities										
	Strengthen and Expand Guidance for Postsecondary Student Success										
	Increase Adult Continuous Learning and Re-entry into the Workforce										

TABLE D2. COMMITTEE/COMMISSION TIMELINES

Committee/Commission	2014				2015				2016				2017				2018				2019				Ongoing
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Excellence: North Carolina's Education Vision																									
Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative Action Framework																									
Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission																									
Board of Postsecondary Education Credentials																									
Governor's Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education																									
Joint Legislative Task Force on Education Finance Reform																									
B-3 Interagency Council																									
Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities																									
House Select Committee on School Safety																									
Joint Legislative Study Committee on the Division of Local School Admin Units																									





APPENDIX E

COMMISSIONED DATA SOURCES

As part of the process described in **Appendix A**, myFutureNC commissioned several partners and subject matter experts to develop multiple data sources to inform the Commission's work, including policy briefs, surveys, and a statewide listening tour. This appendix provides a brief overview of each data source.

POLICY BRIEFS

A series of policy briefs and fact sheets were written to provide information and data about topics relevant to the myFutureNC Commission's work. These briefs cover five broad categories: 1) the North Carolina context and the talent pipeline; 2) preschool, elementary, and secondary achievement; 3) transitions to and across postsecondary opportunities; 4) student debt; and 5) workforce talent development. Each of these policy briefs provides an overview of the topic, as well as North Carolina-specific data and trends, an alignment of the topic to postsecondary attainment, key findings, and recommendations for policy or system changes. A summary of each brief is included in **Appendix F**.

GALLUP SURVEY

To better understand current perceptions regarding the state of education opportunity in North Carolina, myFutureNC partnered with Gallup to conduct a study of the state's adult population. The survey of nearly 3,500 North Carolina

residents measured opinions and perceptions about all levels of education in North Carolina, from early childhood to K-12 schools, and from two-year community colleges to four-year public and private colleges and universities. Written and published by Gallup, this survey provides a holistic view of the current state of public opinion about education in North Carolina and where the public believes efforts needed to be focused in order to improve educational opportunities in the state. The results of the survey are available on the myFutureNC website.⁴⁹

EDUCATIONNC REACH NC VOICES SURVEY

Concurrent with the listening tour (described below), EducationNC and Reach NC Voices administered a survey to different constituencies in order to include the voices of more North Carolinians. The survey was distributed from late April to early June of 2018. During that time, 1,033 respondents completed the survey, and a total of 46,014 total data points were collected. The survey was distributed via [EdNC.org](https://ednc.org), EdNC email lists and newsletters, social media, the Reach NC Voices membership group, and via in-person sessions across the state. Data collected through the survey included information regarding quality of life, employment status and local job opportunities, desired education and actual educational attainment, local P-12 school quality and ratings, perceptions of the impact of education and of supports needed for education, and transitions across education sectors. A summary of the survey results is included in **Appendix G**.

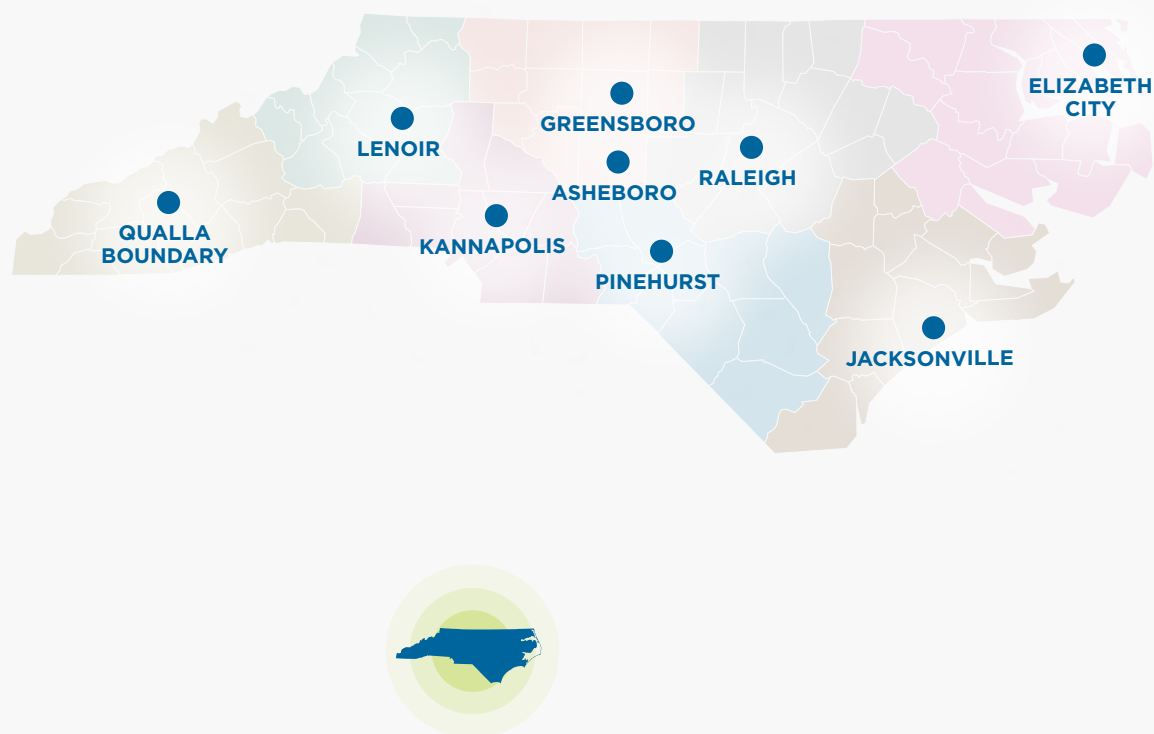
LISTENING TOUR

During the spring of 2018, the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at North Carolina State University organized a listening tour to gather feedback from stakeholders across the state about the Commission's emerging Call to Action and its components. In each of the state's eight prosperity zones, tour staff convened stakeholders at a central location and conducted focus groups and panels related to the theme of attainment. At many of the stops, staff also led focus groups at local schools or colleges, as well as at local businesses, in

49. <https://www.myfuturenc.org>

order to collect information from teachers, students, employees, and others who otherwise would not have been able to participate in the events. Over the course of the tour, nearly 400 event participants and over 170 on-site student, teacher, and employee participants provided input in the following locations: Asheboro, Cherokee, Elizabeth City, Greensboro, Jacksonville, Kannapolis, Lenoir, Pinehurst, and eastern Wake County (Figure H1). In addition to the daytime events, EducationNC hosted evening gatherings in surrounding communities, allowing for even greater participation from community members who were unable to attend the daytime meetings. Six documents created by The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation summarize the challenges and barriers identified during the listening tour (one for each of the different themes), and a seventh document summarizes listening tour participant recommendations for how to move the work forward. A summary of the listening tour findings is included in **Appendix H**.

FIGURE E1. MYFUTURENC LISTENING TOUR STOPS





APPENDIX F

POLICY BRIEF SUMMARIES

NORTH CAROLINA CONTEXT AND TALENT PIPELINE

REACHING A POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT GOAL: A MULTISTATE OVERVIEW

(SIMS & SIDDIQI, 2018)

In response to disappointing results on national and international assessments of student learning and a decline in the United States' standing in international education attainment rankings, both President Obama and the Lumina Foundation announced ambitious national postsecondary attainment goals in 2009. The purpose of these goals was to raise awareness of the need to bolster economic competitiveness by increasing the number of Americans earning some form of credential beyond a high school diploma. This push from the federal level, along with Lumina's grant making and advocacy, led to a flurry of state activity. State attainment goals were largely absent until 2010, but since that time, all but nine states, including North Carolina, have set postsecondary attainment goals that have been formally adopted by a statewide leadership group. While most states used similar criteria in their goals, the 41 state-level attainment goals vary in a number of ways, including the definition of postsecondary attainment, time frame, and ambition. This policy brief reviews the differences in states' postsecondary attainment goals, outlines how states have approached this important and challenging task—with a deeper focus on lessons learned from Tennessee, Virginia, and Maine—and offers recommendations for North Carolina policymakers.

POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENTS REPORT: 2009-2016 NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

(TIPPETT & KAHN, 2018A)

Individual educational attainment and barriers to attainment are not readily captured by a single indicator. Educational attainment is a process with multiple key steps. After completing high school, individuals must enroll in college and persist in their enrollment until degree completion. In a series of four data briefs, the authors use National Student Clearinghouse data to better understand key transition points and the college-going behaviors of North Carolina public high school graduates from 2009-2016. This report examines the question of access: How many students are going to college? It focuses on the details related to college access among North Carolina high school graduates, examining enrollment timing, the characteristics of students who enroll, where students enroll, and whether they are enrolled full- or part-time.

POSTSECONDARY PERSISTENCE REPORT: 2009-2016 NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

(TIPPETT & KAHN, 2018B)

Individual educational attainment and barriers to attainment are not readily captured by a single indicator. Educational attainment is a process with multiple key steps. After completing high school, individuals must enroll in college and persist in their enrollment until degree completion. In a series of four data briefs, the authors use National Student Clearinghouse data to better understand key transition points and the college-going behaviors of North Carolina public high school graduates from 2009-2016. This report examines the question of persistence: How many students are still enrolled in postsecondary after their first year? It focuses on the details related to persistence among North Carolina high school graduates, examining both college persistence and retention, and how these vary by students' demographic and enrollment characteristics, including timing of enrollment, intensity of enrollment, and institution of first enrollment.

POSTSECONDARY COMPLETION REPORT: 2009-2016 NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

(TIPPETT & KAHN, 2018C)

Individual educational attainment and barriers to attainment are not readily captured by a single indicator. Educational attainment is a process with multiple key steps. After completing high school, individuals must enroll in college and persist in their enrollment until degree completion. In a series of four data briefs, the authors use National Student Clearinghouse data to better understand key transition points and the college-going behaviors of North Carolina public high school graduates from 2009-2016. This report examines the question of success: How many students persist in their postsecondary enrollments to successfully complete a degree or credential? It focuses on the details related to success among North Carolina high school graduates who enroll in a postsecondary program, examining degree completion within six years among 2009-2011 high school graduates and how this varies by students' enrollment and demographic characteristics.

POSTSECONDARY PATHWAYS AND BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY REPORT: 2009-2016 NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

(TIPPETT & KAHN, 2018D)

Individual educational attainment and barriers to attainment are not readily captured by a single indicator. Educational attainment is a process with multiple key steps. After completing high school, individuals must enroll in college and persist in their enrollment until degree completion. In a series of four data briefs, the authors use National Student Clearinghouse data to better understand key transition points and the college-going behaviors of North Carolina public high school graduates from 2009-2016. This report examines the questions of postsecondary pathways and barriers to opportunity: What are the most common pathways through postsecondary? What are the potential barriers to success as suggested by pathways that end in stop-out or dropout? It examines the key transition points in the postsecondary pipeline to understand how losses or leaks from the pipeline can compound over time, identifies postsecondary outcomes and examines how patterns of institutional and enrollment characteristics come together to reveal common postsecondary pathways among the 2009-2011 North Carolina public high school graduates, and identifies the academic and economic characteristics

of students on these pathways to highlight opportunities for interventions to promote postsecondary success.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: LEAKS IN THE POSTSECONDARY PIPELINE

(TIPPETT & KAHN, 2018E)

This report serves as a supplement to the authors' data briefs on the individual aspects of the postsecondary pipeline: enrollment, first-year persistence, and six-year attainment, and examines these three distinct milestones in combination to understand how group differences at each point may contribute to widening or narrowing educational disparities over time. It focuses on differences by geography, sex, race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage, and high school academic performance, and suggests interventions for improving postsecondary attainment for different groups based on their trajectory through the educational pipeline.

PRESCHOOL, ELEMENTARY, AND SECONDARY ACHIEVEMENT

IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN NORTH CAROLINA: ALIGNING POLICY INITIATIVES IN PRE- KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 3

(MUSCHKIN, 2018)

High-quality early education provides the foundation for children to succeed in school, graduate from high school, enroll in postsecondary education, and complete a higher education degree. Programs that optimize learning gains during Pre-K through Grade 3 have important positive effects for student outcomes, particularly among children who are at academic risk. However, for some children these gains tend to fade out as they progress through school. Early gains are most likely to persist if educational efforts are integrated in a pre-K to Grade 3 policy framework that emphasizes improved program access, quality, and alignment. North Carolina is a leader in developing initiatives for enriching early environments and reducing academic achievement gaps, and is committed to a pre-K to Grade 3 early education strategy, which has led to important improvements in the state's early education landscape. Nonetheless, many children are currently entering kindergarten lacking school readiness skills, while others fail to sustain early learning gains and are unable to achieve reading proficiency by the end of third grade. This policy brief provides recommendations for strengthening and sustaining early learning through strategic alignment of policies and practices.

K-12 ACHIEVEMENT AND PROFICIENCY GAPS

(TOMBERLIN, 2018)

The goal of North Carolina Public Schools is not only to raise proficiency rates among all students, but to ensure that there are no significant gaps in achievement among student demographic groups. In order to give a brief overview of how North Carolina's public education system is serving students, this brief presents achievement data from the 2016-17 school year. This overview focuses on three critical points in a student's educational path: fifth grade, eighth grade, and high school. For fifth and eighth grade students, data are presented on students' performance in the subjects of mathematics, English language arts (ELA), and science. For high school students, the data

reflect student achievement in the three subjects tested by state End of Course Exams (EOCs): Mathematics I, English II, and Biology.

NORTH CAROLINA K-12 ACHIEVEMENT

(LAUEN & TOMBERLIN, 2018)

When considering a postsecondary attainment goal for North Carolina, it is critical to examine key elementary and secondary academic benchmarks. Students who perform well on standardized tests will have more opportunities for postsecondary education and in the workforce than those who perform less well. Most economically disadvantaged students and some minority groups do not have ACT scores high enough to gain access to many of the more selective UNC campuses. Because test scores are highly correlated across time, it is possible to predict with some accuracy how a student will perform on the ACT based on prior test score performance. To aid in the establishment of a postsecondary attainment goal for North Carolina, as well as strategies for meeting that goal, this policy brief summarizes key data points about elementary and secondary academic achievement. The brief works backward through the age span of students from postsecondary, to high school, middle school and elementary school to emphasize that educational achievement is strongly linked across time. Learning begets learning, which means that raising and maintaining achievement takes concerted action across many different levels of schooling.

ADVANCING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN NC: PROMISING POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR THE TEACHING WORKFORCE

(BASTIAN, 2018)

Teachers matter to the short- and long-term trajectories of students. In the short term, teachers influence student achievement and the development of social and emotional skills. In the long term, teachers affect educational attainment, employment, and earnings. Given the importance of teachers, North Carolina's state and local officials are charged with enacting policies that recruit, prepare, develop and retain a highly effective teacher workforce. North Carolina has been a regional and national leader in many of these policy areas; however, there are also opportunities to innovate and better align policy initiatives to strengthen the teacher workforce. This policy brief describes the importance of teachers, what we know about improving teacher quality and retention, and how policy and practice can accomplish these goals.

TRANSITIONS TO AND ACROSS POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES

THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE IN NORTH CAROLINA

(EDMUNDS, 2018)

The transition from high school to further postsecondary education is a joint in the educational pipeline with the clear potential to leak. The K-12 sector needs to consider whether students are prepared with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in postsecondary education, while the postsecondary sector needs to consider the types of supports that are needed to facilitate the transition and ensure that students are successful in postsecondary education. Data show that North Carolina has made improvement in some areas relevant to the transition to college but challenges remain, particularly in the area of mathematics achievement and in reducing performance gaps between different groups of students. North Carolina has already undertaken key policy initiatives facilitating the transition to college, but the K-12 and postsecondary sectors could take additional steps to improve the transition. This policy brief outlines these strategies, as well as proposes a more radical re-envisioning of the education continuum that would reduce the potential for leaks.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE-TO-UNIVERSITY TRANSFER

(D'AMICO & CHAPMAN, 2018)

This policy brief outlines the community college-to-university transfer landscape and assesses how well North Carolina is positioned to improve experiences and outcomes for transfer students. Key factors to consider when developing strategies for improving these experiences and outcomes include: educational attainment for community college students who transfer to public and private universities is imperative for meeting state workforce needs at the certificate, associate degree, and baccalaureate levels; while North Carolina falls behind the national average on some benchmarks, the growth in transfer shows there is promise in this area; and transfer students too often have lower completion rates and follow inefficient pathways to the baccalaureate. No single initiative is likely to improve outcomes on its own; however, the state should consider leveraging a host of strategies, including statewide transfer

pathways in key program areas, universal course numbering for public higher education, emphasis on articulation of credit to universities for students completing a workforce preparation-focused associate degree, improved data quality and sharing, incentives for pre-transfer associate degrees, and communication during secondary education. Combined, these initiatives would demonstrate an enhanced commitment to transfer students, lessen uncertainty, and clarify a way forward for future community college transfer policy improvements.

STUDENT DEBT

AFFORDABILITY IN NC'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: POLICY SOLUTIONS TO MINIMIZE STUDENT DEBT AND MAXIMIZE REPAYMENT

(ROBINSON, 2018)

As North Carolina considers a postsecondary attainment goal, it is critical to include affordability and student debt as part of the discussion. In order for students to successfully transition from higher education to the workforce, they must navigate several hurdles: paying for college, graduating from college, and obtaining work that is commensurate with their education and skills. There is strong evidence that North Carolina is serving most of its students well. Postsecondary education in the state is more affordable than elsewhere in the country and most students have little trouble finding the resources needed to pay for college in the forms of federal, state, and institutional financial aid. However, there is a subset of institutions and students who struggle. In particular, students who fail to complete their education, either because of financial or academic difficulties, often default on their student loans. This policy brief examines the questions: how much does postsecondary education in North Carolina cost and how do students pay for it? The brief first examines the current landscape of affordability and financial aid in North Carolina's postsecondary institutions—from community colleges to four-year public and private universities. Then, it discusses the relationship between affordability, debt, and postsecondary attainment. Lastly, it suggests several policy reforms to address the biggest challenges to current and prospective college students.

WORKFORCE TALENT DEVELOPMENT

TALENT DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE FOR YOUTH: CREATING A CAREER-READY WORKFORCE IN NORTH CAROLINA

(BARTLETT & HOWZE, 2018)

In order to sustain the economy, North Carolina residents must have the skills, education, and training to fill the jobs available in the future. This brief provides an overview of the state's workforce pipeline through a review of employment projections, current workforce preparation curriculum in the K-12 and postsecondary sectors, student educational and work outcomes, and problems and best practices.

A FOCUS ON NON-COMPLETERS: ONE STRATEGY FOR UPSKILLING THE EXISTING WORKFORCE IN NC

(BROWN-GRAHAM & MOGA BRYANT, 2018)

Efforts to develop North Carolina's talent pipeline must include strategies for reaching people of all ages and experiences. This paper explores opportunities for upskilling our existing workforce—that is, developing workers' skills to improve performance, allow for advancement to higher positions, and fill unmet employer needs—and developing the talents of people who should be but are not currently in the workforce. In particular, this brief explores the opportunity created by the hundreds of thousands of people in North Carolina's workforce who are non-completers. These residents have some postsecondary experience but no credentials. Strategies for helping workers upskill and non-completers attain a credential include work-based learning programs, "part-way home" programs that help individuals who have college credit return to school and finish their degree, and higher education programs that award credit for military experience.





APPENDIX G

EDUCATIONNC SURVEY RESULTS

(In some cases, percentage totals are greater than 100 percent due to rounding.)

I. DEMOGRAPHIC / GENERAL INFORMATION QUESTIONS

AGE (RESPONSE RATE: 97%, N = 1305)

	%	n
Under 18	3%	38
18-24	12%	157
25-34	24%	302
35-44	21%	263
45-54	21%	262
55-64	15%	184
65+	5%	66

GENDER (RESPONSE RATE: 99%, N = 1305)

	%	n
Female	70%	904
Male	29%	381
Other	less than 1%	5
Prefer not to identify	less than 1%	6

RESPONDENT IDENTIFIES AS: (RESPONSE RATE: 100%, N = 1305)

	%	n
American Indian/Alaska Native	2%	20
Asian	2%	25
Black/African-American	11%	147
Caucasian/White	77%	1004
Hispanic/Latino	2%	30
Multiracial	2%	27
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	less than 1%	5
Other	1%	14
Prefer not to identify	2%	28

RESPONDENT'S HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: (RESPONSE RATE: 100%, N = 1305)

	%	n
Elementary, middle, or high school, but no diploma/GED	3%	39
High school diploma/GED	6%	80
Some college credit, no degree	10%	127
Postsecondary certificate (i.e., from a community college/technical college)	3%	33
Associate degree (AA, AS, etc.)	5%	67
Bachelor's degree (BA, BS, etc.)	36%	467
Master's degree (MA, MS, MBA, etc.)	31%	404
Doctorate degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)	3%	43
Professional degree (JD, MD, DDS, etc.)	3%	40

DID RESPONDENT REACH HER/HIS DESIRED LEVEL OF EDUCATION? (RESPONSE RATE: 99%, N = 1305)

	%	n
Yes	61%	779
No	39%	507

(If respondent answered "no" to the above question)

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS AFFECTED YOUR DECISION REGARDING WHEN TO END YOUR FORMAL SCHOOLING? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY) (N = 507)

	n
Too expensive to continue	190
Still in school/currently enrolled in a program	146
Wanted to work	71
Did not think benefits were worth the cost	65
Needed to earn extra money	63
Other	59
Child care responsibilities	52
Supported or cared for parents/siblings/extended family	27
Was not admitted to program(s) of choice	11
Was not interested in continuing education	9

**LENGTH OF TIME RESPONDENTS HAVE LIVED IN THEIR COUNTY.
INCLUDES ALL YEARS OF RESIDENCY, EVEN IF RESPONDENT LEFT
AND RETURNED. (RESPONSE RATE: 100%, N = 1305)**

	%	n
Less than a year	4%	46
1-5 years	21%	267
6-10 years	14%	179
11-15 years	14%	185
16-20 years	15%	192
21+ years	33%	432

**RESPONDENTS WHO LIVE WITHIN 50 MILES OF WHERE THEY
ATTENDED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.
(RESPONSE RATE: 99%, N = 1305)**

	%	n
Yes	38%	492
No	62%	800

(If respondent answered "yes" to the above question)

**THINKING ABOUT YOUR FAMILY WHEN YOU WERE IN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, HOW WOULD YOU SAY YOUR FAMILY
MANAGED FINANCIALLY AT THE TIME?
(RESPONSE RATE: 98%, N = 492)**

	%	n
We lived comfortably	31%	151
We did okay	39%	189
We were just getting by	20%	96
We found it difficult to get by	9%	44
No opinion	less than 1%	2

RESPONDENT'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS: (RESPONSE RATE: 99%, N = 1305)

	%	n
Employed, full-time	69%	894
Employed, on a contract basis	3%	33
Employed, part-time	11%	139
Not employed, looking for work	4%	55
Not employed, not looking for work	5%	71
Other	8%	105

**YOU MAY HAVE MANY ROLES IN YOUR COMMUNITY, BUT FOR
THIS SURVEY, WE WOULD LIKE FOR YOU TO ANSWER QUESTIONS
WITH ONLY ONE ROLE IN MIND. PLEASE CHOOSE A PERSPECTIVE
BELOW THAT BEST REFLECTS THE ROLE YOU WILL HAVE IN MIND
AS YOU ANSWER: (RESPONSE RATE: 100%, N = 1305)**

	%	n
Business Owner/Employer	4%	49
Current Student	10%	124
Educator	46%	602
Employee (Private Sector)	16%	211
Employee (Social Service)	5%	60
Parent	12%	156
Other	8%	100

II. MYFUTURENC QUESTIONS

(Responses disaggregated by respondent role)

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES HOW WELL YOU ARE MANAGING FINANCIALLY THESE DAYS?
(RESPONSE RATE: 98%, N = 1305)

	Living comfortably	Doing okay	Just getting by	No opinion	n
Business owner/employer	50%	26%	15%	0%	46
Current Student	28%	35%	17%	5%	121
Educator	19%	43%	27%	less than 1%	595
Employee (Private Sector)	25%	46%	20%	1%	210
Employee (Social Service)	43%	40%	16%	0%	58
Parent	33%	36%	20%	0%	154
Other	31%	39%	17%	1%	99

PLEASE RATE THE QUALITY OF THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

... COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP (RESPONSE RATE: 91%, N = 1305)

	A strength in my community	An area in need of improvement in my community	Neither a strength nor an area for improvement
Business Owner/Employer	25%	61%	14%
Current Student	32%	45%	24%
Educator	29%	51%	20%
Employee (Private Sector)	31%	46%	23%
Employee (Social Service)	24%	65%	13%
Parent	31%	50%	20%
Other	21%	61%	18%

... SCHOOLS (RESPONSE RATE: 91%, N = 1305)

	A strength in my community	An area in need of improvement in my community	Neither a strength nor an area for improvement
Business owner/employer	30%	58%	12%
Current Student	30%	64%	6%
Educator	35%	59%	6%
Employee (Private Sector)	33%	56%	11%
Employee (Social Service)	28%	65%	9%
Parent	28%	68%	4%
Other	29%	63%	8%

... PUBLIC SAFETY (RESPONSE RATE: 91%, N = 1305)

	A strength in my community	An area in need of improvement in my community	Neither a strength nor an area for improvement
Business owner/employer	65%	26%	9%
Current Student	45%	38%	17%
Educator	47%	38%	15%
Employee (Private Sector)	49%	37%	14%
Employee (Social Service)	52%	41%	9%
Parent	45%	42%	13%
Other	43%	44%	13%

... HEALTH CARE (RESPONSE RATE: 91%, N = 1305)

	A strength in my community	An area in need of improvement in my community	Neither a strength nor an area for improvement
Business owner/employer	32%	48%	20%
Current Student	40%	43%	18%
Educator	37%	50%	13%
Employee (Private Sector)	41%	42%	19%
Employee (Social Service)	41%	44%	17%
Parent	37%	49%	14%
Other	45%	48%	7%

... HOUSING (RESPONSE RATE: 91%, N = 1305)

	A strength in my community	An area in need of improvement in my community	Neither a strength nor an area for improvement
Business owner/employer	28%	60%	12%
Current Student	48%	42%	11%
Educator	27%	55%	18%
Employee (Private Sector)	32%	54%	16%
Employee (Social Service)	35%	56%	11%
Parent	30%	54%	16%
Other	29%	58%	12%

... PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (RESPONSE RATE: 91%, N = 1305)

	A strength in my community	An area in need of improvement in my community	Neither a strength nor an area for improvement
Business owner/employer	9%	55%	36%
Current Student	31%	58%	11%
Educator	13%	67%	20%
Employee (Private Sector)	16%	66%	19%
Employee (Social Service)	15%	80%	7%
Parent	13%	73%	15%
Other	8%	76%	18%

PLEASE RATE YOUR GENERAL OPINION OF THE ...

... AVAILABILITY OF LOCAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES. (RESPONSE RATE: 91%, N = 1305)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	No opinion	n
Business owner/employer	7%	21%	47%	5%	44
Current Student	9%	38%	31%	11%	104
Educator	4%	34%	39%	4%	560
Employee (Private Sector)	11%	35%	32%	1%	190
Employee (Social Service)	7%	41%	32%	4%	55
Parent	8%	29%	34%	4%	144
Other	8%	24%	37%	7%	91

... QUALITY OF LOCAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES. (RESPONSE RATE: 91%, N = 1305)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	No opinion	n
Business owner/employer	9%	21%	40%	2%	43
Current Student	7%	41%	30%	11%	105
Educator	5%	37%	37%	3%	561
Employee (Private Sector)	12%	40%	27%	1%	190
Employee (Social Service)	6%	41%	33%	2%	54
Parent	8%	31%	32%	3%	145
Other	9%	27%	31%	6%	90

IN YOUR COMMUNITY/REGION, HOW MANY JOB OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH ...

... HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS/GEDS. (RESPONSE RATE: 86%, N = 1305)

	Many opportunities	Some opportunities	Few/no opportunities
Business owner/employer	19%	58%	23%
Current Student	35%	45%	19%
Educator	22%	58%	20%
Employee (Private Sector)	24%	56%	22%
Employee (Social Service)	37%	48%	17%
Parent	20%	60%	20%
Other	18%	55%	25%

... JOB-SPECIFIC TRAINING. (RESPONSE RATE: 86%, N = 1305)

	Many opportunities	Some opportunities	Few/no opportunities
Business owner/employer	26%	54%	21%
Current Student	20%	69%	12%
Educator	22%	68%	10%
Employee (Private Sector)	26%	67%	9%
Employee (Social Service)	27%	62%	14%
Parent	23%	67%	11%
Other	28%	61%	12%

... TWO-YEAR DEGREES. (RESPONSE RATE: 87%, N = 1305)

	Many opportunities	Some opportunities	Few/no opportunities
Business owner/employer	30%	51%	19%
Current Student	20%	68%	11%
Educator	24%	70%	6%
Employee (Private Sector)	21%	71%	10%
Employee (Social Service)	33%	56%	14%
Parent	20%	67%	13%
Other	21%	67%	12%

... FOUR-YEAR DEGREES. (RESPONSE RATE: 86%, N = 1305)

	Many opportunities	Some opportunities	Few/no opportunities
Business owner/employer	35%	42%	23%
Current Student	46%	39%	13%
Educator	23%	61%	16%
Employee (Private Sector)	38%	43%	19%
Employee (Social Service)	39%	50%	14%
Parent	29%	48%	23%
Other	25%	52%	23%

PLEASE RATE THESE ASPECTS OF PRESCHOOL OPTIONS (PUBLIC AND PRIVATE) IN YOUR AREA:

... AFFORDABILITY (RESPONSE RATE: 90%, N = 1305)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	No opinion	n
Business owner/employer	7%	26%	31%	19%	43
Current Student	3%	28%	23%	35%	101
Educator	5%	23%	32%	22%	551
Employee (Private Sector)	5%	19%	22%	36%	187
Employee (Social Service)	6%	28%	26%	28%	55
Parent	8%	17%	39%	18%	142
Other	2%	16%	31%	38%	91

... AVAILABILITY (RESPONSE RATE: 90%, N = 1305)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	No opinion	n
Business owner/employer	7%	26%	31%	19%	42
Current Student	9%	36%	18%	32%	101
Educator	10%	36%	28%	18%	557
Employee (Private Sector)	9%	26%	19%	39%	188
Employee (Social Service)	7%	32%	24%	28%	55
Parent	9%	34%	32%	14%	142
Other	3%	31%	18%	34%	92

... QUALITY (RESPONSE RATE: 90%, N = 1305)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	No opinion	n
Business owner/employer	10%	33%	24%	21%	42
Current Student	10%	34%	19%	32%	101
Educator	10%	44%	23%	19%	552
Employee (Private Sector)	10%	26%	22%	38%	187
Employee (Social Service)	7%	43%	20%	30%	55
Parent	11%	40%	26%	16%	142
Other	4%	36%	22%	36%	91

PLEASE RATE THESE ASPECTS OF THE PUBLIC K-12 EDUCATION SYSTEM IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

... ADEQUACY OF SCHOOL FACILITIES (RESPONSE RATE: 90%, N = 1305)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	No opinion	n
Business owner/employer	10%	48%	14%	12%	42
Current Student	13%	27%	30%	7%	109
Educator	7%	41%	36%	2%	551
Employee (Private Sector)	12%	32%	29%	15%	187
Employee (Social Service)	4%	43%	23%	19%	54
Parent	9%	39%	32%	3%	142
Other	3%	33%	41%	10%	90

... QUALITY OF TEACHING STAFF (RESPONSE RATE: 91%, N = 1305)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	No opinion	n
Business owner/employer	12%	36%	26%	14%	42
Current Student	16%	38%	31%	7%	101
Educator	23%	53%	19%	4%	551
Employee (Private Sector)	17%	32%	26%	18%	185
Employee (Social Service)	9%	40%	21%	25%	74
Parent	13%	42%	28%	5%	141
Other	13%	42%	26%	12%	90

... DIVERSITY OF SCHOOL OPTIONS (FOR EXAMPLE, MAGNET SCHOOLS, SPECIAL PROGRAMS, ETC.) (RESPONSE RATE: 90%, N = 1305)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	No opinion	n
Business owner/employer	5%	38%	19%	14%	52
Current Student	15%	32%	26%	6%	102
Educator	10%	32%	31%	5%	547
Employee (Private Sector)	14%	29%	20%	18%	187
Employee (Social Service)	9%	25%	26%	23%	54
Parent	11%	34%	21%	6%	140
Other	9%	26%	33%	14%	90

WHICH OF THESE THREE SUPPORTS DO YOU THINK WOULD MOST IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY? (RESPONSE RATE: 80%, N = 1305)

	Better coordination across educational levels (K-12 and higher education)	More info for families about educational opportunities	More opportunities for employers and educators to share ideas and information
Business owner/employer	29%	17%	55%
Current Student	47%	24%	28%
Educator	36%	33%	32%
Employee (Private Sector)	40%	33%	28%
Employee (Social Service)	34%	45%	21%
Parent	42%	34%	25%
Other	35%	30%	35%

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DO YOU THINK WOULD MOST HELP STUDENTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY REACH THEIR DESIRED LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT? (FOR THIS SURVEY, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT MEANS HAVING A POST-HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE, CREDENTIAL, AND/OR CERTIFICATION WITH CURRENT AND FUTURE VALUE IN THE STATE'S JOB MARKET) (RESPONSE RATE: 79%, N = 1305)

	More financial aid opportunities	Better information about degrees / credentials that are most relevant for the available jobs in my community	Better guidance about successfully moving between education levels (for example, moving from middle to high school, etc.)	Other	My community does not need additional support
Business owner/employer	14%	24%	17%	10%	2%
Current Student	32%	20%	33%	2%	0%
Educator	30%	22%	24%	6%	1%
Employee (Private Sector)	30%	23%	21%	5%	2%
Employee (Social Service)	30%	23%	32%	8%	0%
Parent	24%	28%	21%	8%	1%
Other	29%	29%	14%	9%	1%

III. ROLE-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

PARENT PARTICIPANTS

IS YOUR CHILD/ARE YOUR CHILDREN IN CHARTER, HOME, PRIVATE, OR PUBLIC SCHOOL(S)? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY) (N = 156 PARENT RESPONDENTS, RESPONDENT CAN CHOOSE MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

	n
Public	90
Charter	8
Private	12
Home	18

PLEASE RATE THE: (RESPONSE RATES: 81% AND 79%, RESPECTIVELY, N = 156)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	No opinion	n
Overall quality of your child's school.	20%	43%	27%	7%	127
Overall quality of other schools in your area.	11%	36%	37%	4%	124

EDUCATOR, EMPLOYEE, PARENT, AND "OTHER" PARTICIPANTS

HOW HAVE YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IMPACTED YOUR CURRENT LIVELIHOOD? (RESPONSE RATES: 82-83%, N = 1129)

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	n
How useful has your level of education been in getting a job?	71%	20%	8%	934
How useful has your level of education been in improving your work skills?	55%	34%	11%	931
How useful has your level of education been in increasing your pay?	26%	36%	36%	930

BUSINESS OWNER / EMPLOYER PARTICIPANTS

HOW HAVE AVAILABLE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES CONTRIBUTED TO EMPLOYEE READINESS?

(RESPONSE RATE: 90%, N = 49)

	Very well	Somewhat well	Not well	n
How well do educational opportunities in your community help people get jobs in your community?	18%	50%	25%	44
How well do educational opportunities in your community help provide people with the work skills needed for jobs in your community?	18%	46%	30%	44
How useful are the educational opportunities in your community for helping people increase their pay/marketability?	25%	43%	25%	44

CURRENT STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES WILL IMPACT YOUR LIVELIHOOD AFTER SCHOOL?

(RESPONSE RATE: 78%, N = 124)

	Very useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful	n
How useful do you think your education will be in helping you get the job you want?	64%	20%	5%	97
How well has your education program helped you improve your work skills?	42%	30%	12%	97
How useful do you think your education will be in helping you earn the salary you want?	46%	36%	6%	97





APPENDIX H

LISTENING TOUR SUMMARIES

Data collected on the myFutureNC listening tour were summarized in seven briefs, separated into two broad categories of findings—*challenges and barriers* to meeting personal and statewide attainment targets, and *recommendations* for moving the work of the myFutureNC Commission forward. Challenges and Barriers identified by listening tour participants include: *Foundational, structural, social, place-based, and fiscal challenges and barriers*, along with *challenges and barriers to engaging students and families*. Participants also provided specific recommendations for addressing these challenges and barriers. The seventh brief summarizes participants' overall *Recommendations for Moving the Work Forward*.

FOUNDATIONAL CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO STUDENT ATTAINMENT

Foundational challenges and barriers include challenges stemming from conflicting goals and values, both within and across education sectors. These conflicts often emerge between a) outcomes that the state measures; b) outcomes that the state values; and c) outcomes that each sector knows need to be the focus of its work. This brief details foundational challenges and barriers in four areas: *Siloed Sectors, Misalignment between State Policies and Desired Outcomes, Disconnects between Schooling and Community Needs, and Devalued Education Pathways and Professions*.

STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO STUDENT ATTAINMENT

Structural challenges and barriers are those related to the rules and policies that govern each sector's operation, as well as those related to coordination across sectors and between education sectors and the employment sector. This brief details eight structural challenges and barriers: *Insufficient educator preparation and development, insufficient job forecasting, unclear admissions requirements and inconsistent credit transfer guidelines, redundant and narrow program offerings, bureaucracy and lack of local flexibility, within- and cross-sector communications barriers, fragmented and uncoordinated cross-sector organizations, and unprepared students.*

ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO STUDENT ATTAINMENT

Challenges and barriers to engaging students and families are those that prevent students and their families from progressing along the education continuum and those that can cause students and families to drop out of the continuum. This brief details five main challenges and barriers to engagement: *Insufficient guidance for navigating sector admissions and transitions, little knowledge of career opportunities, insufficient information about financial aid, limited guidance for lifelong learning, and disaffected and disconnected families.*

SOCIAL/CULTURAL CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO STUDENT ATTAINMENT

Social and cultural challenges and barriers arise when social and cultural pressures outside of the continuum make attainment difficult for students. This brief details four social and cultural barriers to attainment: *Inconsistent wraparound services, failure to address student social and emotional needs, differences in student and family backgrounds and experiences, and poor development of soft skills.*

PLACE-BASED CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO STUDENT ATTAINMENT

Place-based challenges and barriers are geographic or regional obstacles to ongoing engagement and attainment. As evidenced through visits to all eight education regions in North Carolina, residents in different regions of the

state face very different challenges and barriers. As a result, it is of the utmost importance that solutions generated by the myFutureNC Commission balance local flexibility with equity of opportunity statewide. This brief details three geographic barriers to attainment: *Inequitable early childhood opportunities*, *inadequate coordinated public sector infrastructure resources*, and the *urban-rural opportunity divide*.

FISCAL CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS TO STUDENT ATTAINMENT

Fiscal Challenges and Barriers are instances in which funding and other financial considerations add to challenges and barriers, both for students and for sector providers. This brief details five main fiscal challenges and barriers: *Increasing student debt*, *insufficient financial literacy*, *inequitable funding within and across sectors*, *mismatches between state funding frameworks and local funding needs*, and *inadequate funding for key components of the education process*.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOVING THE WORK FORWARD

All of the recommendations included in the first six briefs in this series relate to specific challenges and barriers identified by listening tour participants. Other recommendations shared during the listening tour did not apply to a single challenge area, instead addressing in broader terms ideas for structuring an overall plan to achieve the goals set by the myFutureNC Commission. This brief presents these general recommendations in three sections: *Guiding Principles*, *Laying the Groundwork (Early Actions)*, and *Measuring Progress*.





APPENDIX I

STRATEGIES ARCHIVE

The original list of 267 recommendations, sourced from three Commission meetings (November 2017, February 2018, and June 2018), 18 policy briefs, efforts in other states, and the listening tour (nine stops between February and July 2018), formed the foundation for a list of 174 strategies. These strategies were combined to create a consolidated list of 115 strategies (some with sub-strategies), which became the backbone for the high-level recommendations that emerged in September and October 2018 as the focus of myFutureNC's work.

As those high-level recommendations evolved to become the final list of four focus areas and 16 priorities presented in the main report, the strategies were archived, with the intent of returning attention to them during the next phase of myFutureNC's work.

The most recent form of those 115 strategies is presented here. *Please note:* These strategies are presented in *draft* form only; they have *not* been completely vetted and are not presented here as a statement of the Commission's endorsed recommendations. Several strategies may apply to more than one Priority, but each is listed only once.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

1. ALIGN ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS ACROSS P-12 AND POSTSECONDARY

- Improve and expand partnerships between P-12, community colleges, and the university system to review and ensure learning standards are scaffolded from P-12 through postsecondary, to produce college- and career-ready high school graduates who do not need remedial coursework when they enroll in postsecondary.
- Introduce developmentally appropriate assessments for students at all levels that measure higher-order thinking skills, use evolving technologies, and provide data to inform real-time instruction and accountability at the system and state levels.
- Ensure that every North Carolina high school diploma is aligned with what it means to be truly college or career ready and includes a high school assessment with college readiness expectations so that students can successfully complete credit-bearing coursework.
- Develop and implement a long-term plan to establish an exit exam that includes funded systems to support students.⁵⁰
- Continue to align 11th- and 12th-grade high school assessments with college readiness expectations so that students can successfully complete credit-bearing coursework.
- Set clear and consistent articulation policies about earning postsecondary credit in high school.
- Identify ways to better standardize initial placement across institutions of higher education to promote fidelity in placement.

50. For future discussion: Consider highlighting an emphasis on ethics and character development as part of an overall "soft skills" curriculum.

2. ENSURE SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS ACROSS EDUCATION SECTORS

- Expand the number of counselors available across the primary, secondary, and postsecondary sectors.
- Expand auditing and support capacity at the NC Department of Public Instruction to identify, share, and integrate best practices across schools and districts.
- Improve and expand processes to review and ensure learning standards are scaffolded throughout the P-12 continuum.
- Expand existing Joint Admissions programs, such as “2+2” initiatives that jointly admit community college students into the four-year university of their choice and include early advising and other related benefits.
- Adopt common course numbering throughout postsecondary to produce seamless transfer of college credits.
- Ensure students enrolled at a four-year institution can transfer general education courses taken at the university back to a community college to earn an associate degree (reverse transfer).
- Identify strategies to eliminate and replace ineffective credit recovery programs; this may include providing a single point of contact at each college and university for the awarding of transfer credit.

3. DEVELOP MORE PATHWAYS FROM EDUCATION TO MEANINGFUL NORTH CAROLINA CAREERS

- Expand the NCWorks Commission's Certified Career Pathways work to align more local education trajectories with a wider array of employment options.
- Evaluate and scale pathways aligned with North Carolina's high-demand fields to ensure there are corresponding rigorous credentials of value.
 - » Review existing career technical education programs of study to ensure they are aligned with local and regional labor data and economic growth projections.
 - » Review all technical program offerings regularly to identify gaps between employer needs and postsecondary offerings; scale and phase out programs as appropriate.
 - » Prioritize the development of industry-aligned postsecondary certificates valued by employers.
 - » Incentivize recruitment within specific certificate or degree programs based on labor market needs.
 - » Conduct a program productivity review to identify undergraduate programs graduating fewer than five students per year and graduate programs with fewer than three graduates for four to five consecutive years; phase out or grow numbers in these programs.
- Incentivize and expand regional partnerships to promote cross-sector collaboration and alignment between P-12, postsecondary, and the business community at a more local level.
 - » Incentivize businesses to invest more (both financially and educationally) in the students they want to attract to the workforce (e.g., help pay for the cost of programs that train their future employees).
- Partner with the NCWorks Commission to reconcile myFutureNC recommendations with their strategic priorities. Develop a statewide system (or coordinated regional systems) to provide ongoing signals of employers' needs that can be translated into new certificate and degree program development.
- Scale up the availability of cooperative innovative high schools (including career-focused early college high schools).

- Recognize quality non-traditional learning experiences in high school and the workforce for postsecondary credit.
- Provide a uniform approach to awarding credit for prior learning that acknowledges work-based learning and military experience. For example, consider uniform adoption of the American Council of Education process, already used by many North Carolina campuses.
- Conduct annual career pathways analyses across all schools and institutions; phase out, build new, or scale pathways based on alignment with industry needs.
- Require adhesion to specific criteria, such as those of the NCWorks Certified Career Pathways, for all career and technical pathways.
- Expand opportunities for high school students to earn industry-recognized credentials that are articulated for credit at postsecondary institutions.
- Engage employers systematically to: 1) apply private sector expertise to the design and delivery of top-quality educational content at all levels; and 2) better prepare students to take advantage of workforce opportunities.
- Adopt or build on work already being done in the state, such as the NCWorks Commission's employment skills training, to develop a statewide curriculum or core set of standards for employability skills at both the high school and postsecondary levels.⁵¹
 - » Embed employability skills benchmarks into high school graduation requirements for all students.

51. For future discussion: Consider highlighting an emphasis on ethics and character development as part of an overall "soft skills" curriculum.

ACCESS TO LIFELONG EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. ENSURE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT AT EVERY LEVEL

- Ensure equitable access to rigorous coursework through technology or other innovative solutions, especially at schools serving low-income students in rural and urban areas.
- Invite and facilitate the participation of a wider range of participants to policymaking conversations from the beginning, including intentional seats for families and youth of color. “Design with” instead of “designing for.”
- Increase per-pupil funding for students with disabilities.

2. IMPROVE POSTSECONDARY ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

- Encourage and expand Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion efforts statewide; begin by reviewing current and piloting new supports for students and parents/guardians.
- Increase state investment in need-based financial aid grants and work-study jobs and expand to make such aid more available for adult students.
- Expand state-supported aid (such as the NC Promise model and last-dollar and other need-based scholarship programs) to more institutions across the state.
- Develop a “pay it forward” tuition and fee scholarship endowment for low-income students to access funds as undergraduates and repay after entering the workforce.
- Conduct a review of institutional aid (or tuition discounting) practices at each postsecondary institution to ensure that such funds are not too tilted toward merit aid.

- Review what it costs to produce a graduate at each institution and set and monitor improvement goals to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
 - » Review the impact of compliance on administrative spending and seek to reduce regulatory compliance and increase accountability for results.
 - » Explore consolidation of administrative operations—such as information technology, purchasing, or accounting—across institutions.
 - » Consider which operational functions can be outsourced to produce savings.
- Pilot college savings accounts for low-income students.

3. STRENGTHEN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES

- Evaluate incentives to employers to locate in or hire from more remote regions of the state.
- Leverage and expand opportunities to use technology, such as online courses and telecommunication, to reach individuals in more remote areas. Examples of better leveraging include wider access to high-quality instruction and to workforce training pathways; examples of expansion include greater access to devices and to high-speed internet access.
- Provide targeted support to ensure students in low-income rural and urban areas have exposure to experiences that build toward postsecondary aspirations and attainment.
- Document existing policies and strategies that serve underserved students as a baseline for monitoring progress and developing future strategies.
- Address funding equity for schools in low-income rural and urban areas.
- Identify existing policy levers available to influence institutional behavior (e.g., funding mechanisms, accountability reporting, support for local partnerships and other forms of collaboration, etc.), with a particular focus on affordability.

PREPARATION FOR EDUCATION, CAREER, AND LIFE

1. RECRUIT, DEVELOP, AND RETAIN EXCELLENT EDUCATORS STATEWIDE

- Increase the rigor and responsiveness of teacher preparation programs:
Set higher standards for entry;⁵² and ensure that coursework and clinic experiences are aligned to evidence-based practices, schools' needs, emerging technologies, and the increasing demands of a college-, work-, and life-ready curriculum.
- Increase the rigor and responsiveness of principal preparation programs:
Expand research-based preparation practices; integrate more on-the-job training; and formalize a continuous improvement process.
- Advance existing policies that support professional opportunities for effective teachers to expand their impact without leaving the classroom.
- Create new networks of professional learning to support improvement of student success in priority areas such as early literacy, middle-grades mathematics, and early high school courses.
- Explore competitive compensation models that attract and retain exceptional talent into the teaching profession, particularly in hard-to-staff schools and subjects.
- Develop a sustainable plan (including incentives and loan forgiveness) for aligning early childhood educator compensation with that of P-12 educators.
- Recruit and prepare new teachers for hard-to-staff subjects and schools, such as middle and high school courses in high-demand subjects that require technical expertise.
- Prepare teachers to support young children's development in skills that are needed for adaptive coping, sound decision-making, and effective self-regulation, including executive functions such as inhibitory control, planning, and cognitive flexibility with attention to trauma and resilience.

52. For future discussion: Higher standards for these programs should be considered only if higher standards are considered for other (e.g., alternative entry) pathways as well.

- Ensure educators and administrators have pre-service training and in-service training on implicit bias and cultural awareness.
- Adopt evidence-based standards for culturally-relevant instruction, ensure educator preparation programs build pre-service educators' competency on the standards, and provide professional learning opportunities for in-service educators to gain competency on these standards.
- Develop a comprehensive state plan to recruit and retain educators and school leaders of color using a variety of strategies, including financial incentives, recruitment legislation, recruitment centers, pre-college programs, and alternative certification programs targeting substitute teachers and mid-career paraprofessionals.
- Develop a separate state plan specifically to recruit and retain educators and educational leaders of color at all levels.

2. ADOPT RIGOROUS, STANDARDS-ALIGNED, CULTURALLY RELEVANT CURRICULA

- Convene educators at the district level to review and rate curricula according to evidence-based criteria on quality, effectiveness, alignment, and cultural relevance; report criteria and ratings.
- Provide incentives for local districts and schools to adopt highly-rated curricula (for example, by funding professional learning on use of highly rated curricula).
- Adopt evidence-based standards for culturally relevant instruction that support young children's development in skills that are needed for adaptive coping, sound decision-making, and effective self-regulation.
- Provide professional development opportunities for educators to implement personalized learning opportunities in their classrooms.

3. PRIORITIZE HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

- Increase investment in NC Pre-K, moving incrementally to universal access to all 4-year-olds.
- Invest in childcare subsidies to allow more families to access affordable early care and education. Options include raising childcare subsidy rates to better reflect the actual cost of providing high-quality care, reimbursing providers even when a child is absent, and providing higher rates to public and private early care and education providers in high-poverty, underserved, and/or rural communities.
- Communicate proven practices, grow local pilots, and improve P-12 data sharing to promote seamless transition of students from pre-K to kindergarten.
- Review and recommend aligned curriculum from pre-K to third grade.
- Boost efforts to recruit and prepare additional pre-K teachers as enrollment increases.
- Create collaborative professional development opportunities for early childhood to third grade teachers (and child care center directors and principals) to learn together.

4. STRENGTHEN POSTSECONDARY READINESS

- Ensure students enroll in a rigorous college preparatory or career/technical high school curriculum by making these the default curricula.⁵³
- Build statewide postsecondary transition courses offered in the junior and senior years of high school that, upon successful completion, will place students directly into specific entry-level postsecondary English or mathematics courses.
- Require enrollment in a mathematics course in 12th grade to be considered for admission to UNC institutions so that math skills are current for all entering postsecondary students.
- Revise postsecondary placement policies and practices to consider multiple measures that may include high school assessments or grade point averages.

53. For future discussion: There are only two current state graduation requirement categories (<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/curriculum/home/graduationrequirements.pdf>), and both are identified as "Future Ready" (Future Ready Core and Future Ready Occupational); consider amending the strategy to focus on better alignment of those requirements with UNC System, NCCC, and workplace requirements.

5. ACCELERATE AND EXPAND PATHWAYS TO A POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIAL

- Advance personalized learning to ensure each student can work based on the pace at which they master content.
- Ensure all students—elementary through high school—have the opportunities and supports to “speed up” through incentives to expand advanced coursework. Examples include: expanded AIG, honors, AP, and IB opportunities; dual enrollment (e.g., via expansion of the Career and College Promise Initiative, which provides advanced coursework offerings and enrollments for early opportunities to earn college credit while in high school.), etc.
- Expand structured pathways that incorporate easy-to-follow program requirements and sequential class scheduling that accelerate students’ time to credential.
- Enforce objective placement policies for high-performing students, particularly 6+ math placement in Grade 6 and Math I placement by eighth or ninth grade.
- Expand innovative early college high schools, as well as those focused on career and technical education.
- Incorporate a measure of success in “speed-up” courses in determining high school ratings.
- Build awareness and understanding among families and students about the importance, availability, and benefits of rigorous opportunities and pathways that will prepare them for different job opportunities.
- Review the number of credits required for each degree program in the public postsecondary system (UNC system and community college system) to ensure that requirements are reasonable and uniform across campuses, unless there are compelling reasons that can be documented for requiring more.
- Introduce co-requisite remediation policies and programs that place students in credit-bearing coursework upon entry into postsecondary instead of traditional non-credit bearing remedial coursework.
- Rethink the traditional credit hour; start by experimenting with competency-based education models.

6. EXPAND WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Incentivize and reduce burdens on North Carolina businesses and local governments that offer work-based learning opportunities (internships, co-ops, on-the-job training, transitional jobs, and apprenticeships) to students through partnerships with public and private postsecondary institutions. For example, provide businesses with opportunities to work with high schools and community colleges to experiment with work-based learning programs before committing to full participation in those programs.
- Build capacity in intermediaries to more efficiently place and support students in work-based learning experiences.
- Capitalize on federal funding opportunities such as *scaling apprenticeships through sector-based strategies* to expand postsecondary apprenticeships; connect these with pre-apprenticeship opportunities in high school.
- Improve current work-based learning opportunities by providing additional funding support, program approval criteria, and accountability metrics.
- Extend career exploration activities down into elementary schools through expansion of career competition, science fair, and service learning opportunities.

COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SYSTEMS

1. COORDINATE STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

- Ensure early care and education programs are accessible by providing services such as transportation to and from school, before- and after-school care, summer care, and meals.
- Eliminate or minimize the use of suspension and expulsion in birth-through-third grade classrooms; incorporate cultural competency into and develop common expectations around disciplinary policy, recognize the impact of trauma on many children of color.

- Require high schools to do regular “graduation audits” to make sure students are on-track for graduation, and to make individual action plans for students who are not on track.
- Formalize, standardize, and scale assimilation support for new postsecondary students who are potentially at risk, including older students, low-income students, historically underrepresented minorities, underprepared students, and first-generation students.
- Complete an asset map of workforce support service providers across the state and disseminate this information to both education and workforce providers to help disengaged youth.
- Ensure educators and administrators have pre-service and in-service training on adverse childhood experiences, child development, and social-emotional learning.
- Invest in support staff, including trained social workers, nurses, school psychologists, and behavioral health specialists; increase school nurse ratios to the national standard.
- Promote the use of “life navigators” provided to students to help students and their families navigate school administrative requirements and social support systems so that students have fewer barriers to consistent school attendance.
- Support best practices for parent engagement including practicing shared decision-making in planning student services; taking an asset-based approach; and recognizing and building parent strengths, learning, and leadership.
- Identify promising strategies, including parental involvement and outreach that is currently implemented within school districts to reduce chronic absenteeism.
- Deploy a statewide public awareness campaign about chronic absenteeism and how schools and communities can address it.
- Publicly report chronic absenteeism rates for all schools and student groups.
- Screen for disabilities and have standardized referral channels for support.

2. RAISE POSTSECONDARY ASPIRATIONS AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES

- Encourage P-12/postsecondary partnerships to give students and families exposure to postsecondary campuses and workplaces.
- Develop learning plans for every middle school student that expose students to pathways from high school into postsecondary based on interests and competencies.
- Notify middle school students about their postsecondary options, potential financial aid eligibility, and academic expectations for college enrollment via personalized communications from the state.
- Implement data-driven early alert systems with an “on track indicator” in middle schools, high schools and postsecondary institutions to identify and alert faculty and advisors of students who may not be meeting necessary benchmarks; develop technical assistance tools (e.g. toolkits, convening networks, coaching) to support effective use of the indicator.
- Leverage partnerships, such as those with the College Advising Corps and employers, and braid together federal, state, and philanthropic funds to help recruit and expand the capacity of available college advisors.
- Create a statewide college and career advising framework for high school youth and adult learners, providing training for teachers and communications to students and parents to support its use.

3. STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND GUIDANCE FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENT SUCCESS

- Provide system incentives for institutions to expand summer bridge programs that help students navigate the transition from P-12 to postsecondary education.
- Deploy text-based “nudges” to prevent “summer melt,” or students not persisting towards postsecondary enrollment.
- Leverage adaptive and personalized learning to increase student success rates in key gateway courses.
- Scale cohort-based learning communities for first-year students.
- Develop a statewide articulation agreement that clearly defines transfer pathways.⁵⁴
- Ensure that financial aid programs create incentives that encourage credit accumulation and timely completion.
- Provide incentives that encourage student success and timely completion.
- Create a statewide mentorship program with in-depth pre- and post-enrollment peer mentoring.

54. For future discussion: Consider instead a strategy that prioritizes development of statewide articulation agreement foundational principles that can guide discipline-specific agreements.

4. INCREASE ADULT CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND RE-ENTRY INTO THE WORKFORCE

- Develop a statewide framework for direct outreach and support to adult learners, especially those who have completed a high school degree, but have not yet attained a postsecondary credential.
- Expand flexible course offerings to better accommodate the schedules of working adults.
- Provide employer incentives to encourage adult students already in North Carolina's workforce to upskill by earning their first degree or credential of value.
- Coordinate *part-way home* programs offered at many public institutions statewide.
- Build and expand a sequence of certifications that can be accumulated over time (stackable) that are aligned with and contribute progress toward degree programs.





APPENDIX J

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMISSION PRIORITIES

As indicated in **Appendix A**, myFutureNC committee work was merged and consolidated between the third and fifth Commission meetings (August through December 2018), with the result being the priorities and focus areas included in the main report. This Appendix maps each committee's final recommendations onto the merged versions. The table below also includes each committee's sustainability recommendations and an indication of how those connect to the final sustainability recommendations included in the **Moving the Work Forward** section of the main report.

(Table begins on next page.)

P-12	Postsecondary	Workforce	Merged
Education and Workforce Alignment			
Embed shared metrics across P-12, postsecondary, workforce in accountability and public reporting systems at the school, district, county, or regional levels			1. Align Academic Expectations across P-12 and Postsecondary: Broaden and improve academic alignment within and between P-12 and postsecondary by continuing to refine current and, when necessary, establishing new cross-sector partnerships, policies, and processes that support clear, understandable, and shared academic expectations as students transition between education sectors.
Ensure the school and early learning accountability systems are relevant and meaningful to parents, students, and other stakeholders			
Set clear and consistent articulation policies about earning postsecondary credit in high school, including working across P-12 and postsecondary to create transparent articulation policies and hold each sector accountable	Expand, smooth, and align transfer processes across the secondary and postsecondary sectors and within postsecondary systems to promote student success	Recognize quality, innovative learning experiences in high school and the workforce for postsecondary credit for non-traditional students	2. Ensure Seamless Transitions across Education Sectors: Smoothing the procedural components of transitions—tasks that students and families must complete to move from one sector to the next, such as application processes—is equally as important as academic alignment. Review and revise policies and processes to ensure that student transitions within P-12 and between the pre-K, P-12, and postsecondary education sectors are seamless. Focus in particular on the transitions into kindergarten; between elementary, middle, and high school; and into postsecondary certificate and degree programs.
	Develop a comprehensive strategy to support seamless transitions into postsecondary education for both K-12 and returning adult students		
Ensure all career and technical pathways are high-quality and industry-aligned	Improve postsecondary preparation and cultivate awareness and aspirations by developing a statewide approach to transitioning students from K-12 to postsecondary, as well as to assisting adult learners who are entering or reentering postsecondary education	Prioritize employability skills development within the education continuum statewide	
	Ensure graduating postsecondary students are prepared to succeed in a high-wage, high-demand job	Ensure all career and technical education pathways are high-quality and industry-aligned, meeting workforce demand through sufficient talent supply	
	Align postsecondary program offerings with current and projected state and regional workforce needs		
	Establish or strengthen structures to align postsecondary degree and career pathways with labor market needs	Increase state-level support for efforts to improve and expand education-to-workforce alignment	3. Develop More Pathways from Education to Meaningful North Carolina Careers: Alignment does not end at the postsecondary level. Ensure that P-12 and postsecondary sectors coordinate with employers to provide guided pathways that are industry-aligned and develop the knowledge, employability skills, and competencies students need to succeed in high-wage, high-demand jobs. Successful coordination will require development of accessible, clear, and streamlined processes for linking businesses with educators.

Access to Lifelong Educational Opportunities			
Invite and intentionally facilitate the participation of a wider range of participants to policymaking conversations from the beginning, including intentional seats for families and youth of color. "Design with" instead of "design for"		Elevate the state's commitment to equity by coordinating a state-level review, revision, and expansion of efforts to provide equitable opportunity across all sectors	1. Ensure Access to a High-Quality Learning Environment for Every Student at Every Level: Dedicate the resources necessary to ensure that every student has access to high-quality, positive, and effective learning environments—challenging, academically robust educational settings that are staffed by competent, well-trained educators, have the resources necessary for supporting an effective instructional program, and in which students both believe they can succeed and feel a sense of belonging, encouragement, and support—from the earliest years of schooling through postsecondary, anywhere in the state.
Make racial equity an agency-wide priority for state and local agencies by setting ambitious and achievable racial equity-related goals within and across divisions that are tied to broader state and local goals and strategies			
Gather and publicly report robust myFutureNC metrics by race/ethnicity, income, gender, learning differences, and urbanicity/geography, and take action based on the patterns and trends illuminated by the data			
Take urgent action to promote positive learning environments and elevate opportunities for African-American male children and youth, beginning in the earliest years and continuing through high school and beyond			
	Make the postsecondary system more affordable by increasing investment in state need-based financial aid		2. Improve Postsecondary Access and Affordability: Improve postsecondary affordability and increase accessibility by developing strategies not only to make access to postsecondary opportunities less expensive for families and more responsive to the needs of both new and returning students, but also to make delivery of those opportunities more efficient and more flexible for institutions.
	Make the postsecondary system more affordable by reducing the cost of educational delivery		
Address the unique needs of schools and students in low-income rural and urban areas		Identify, evaluate, and scale efforts to significantly reduce educational and workforce quality disparities that exist in some rural areas	3. Strengthen Educational Opportunities in Economically Distressed Communities: Better prepare North Carolinians in our most economically distressed communities for higher-wage, high-demand employment opportunities by coordinating public sector and business community efforts to increase outreach and promote evidence-based policies and practices.

P-12	Postsecondary	Workforce	Merged
Preparation for Education, Career, and Life			
Ensure all students have access to educators who meet their unique needs, improving strategies to recruit, prepare, support, and retain high-quality principals and teachers, particularly for schools in greatest need			1. Recruit, Develop, and Retain Excellent Educators Statewide: Improve recruitment, preparation, support, constructive evaluation, and retention of high-quality educators at all levels: childcare center and preschool teachers and leaders; K-12 teachers, teacher-leaders, and administrators; and higher education faculty and leadership. To ensure that all students have access to educators who can meet their unique needs, focus initial efforts on improving compensation; increasing the pool of teachers and leaders of color; preparing teachers for high-need childcare and preschool centers as well as high-need schools; enhancing educator preparation for working with students with special needs; and expanding access to evidence-based professional development that maximizes educator potential.
Support local districts and schools in adopting and using high-quality, aligned curriculum and instructional materials			2. Adopt Rigorous, Standards-Aligned, Culturally Relevant Curricula: Provide guidance to help every school district adopt and use high-quality, evidence-based, NC Standard Course of Study-aligned, and culturally relevant curricula and instructional materials.
Expand access to high-quality learning environments from pre-kindergarten through third grade			3. Prioritize High-Quality Early Learning: Ensure that every learning environment in pre-kindergarten through third grade has the capacity to prepare every student for transition into fourth grade and for success in the grades beyond.
Beginning in the early years and continuing through high school, improve awareness about postsecondary and career options/pathways among students, families, and educators, and strengthen counseling	Significantly increase the number of high school graduates who possess college-ready skills in English Language Arts and mathematics and immediately enroll in non-remedial coursework in postsecondary		4. Strengthen Postsecondary Readiness: Evaluate and strengthen postsecondary readiness through targeted, regular interventions that address both academic and social-emotional preparation, beginning in middle school and extending through the postsecondary transition years (11 th grade through the first year of postsecondary education).
Ensure all students have high-quality opportunities in 11 th and 12 th grade to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in postsecondary credit-bearing coursework, particularly in English, literacy, and mathematics			
Ensure that every student who receives a North Carolina high school diploma is truly college or career ready			
Provide students with opportunities to accelerate their momentum toward postsecondary attainment			
Develop, pilot, and scale work-based learning opportunities such as internships and apprenticeships aligned to NC high-demand fields, ensuring equitable access for students		Scale work-based learning opportunities (such as internships and apprenticeships for youth, postsecondary students, and returning adults)	5. Accelerate and Expand Pathways to a Postsecondary Credential: Provide both first-time students and returning adult learners with more opportunities to reduce the time necessary to complete credential and degree programs (e.g., opportunities to earn college credit in high school or for work-based experiences).
			6. Expand Work-Based Learning Opportunities: Promote and expand current educator-business community partnership efforts to expand and scale work-based learning opportunities (such as internships and apprenticeships for youth, postsecondary students, and returning adults) that support development of both industry-specific and social-emotional, cross-industry (transferable) skills.
Comprehensive Support Systems			

P-12	Postsecondary	Workforce	Merged
<i>Build and sustain systems of support for students and families across the P-12 continuum</i>		<i>Connect and enhance wraparound supports—social, emotional, and health-related supports outside the traditional scope of public education—across education and workforce sectors to help more disconnected youth and adults navigate the system</i>	1. Coordinate Student Support Systems: <i>Connect and sustain support systems within and across schools, as well as into the business and industry sector. These systems should support not only entering preschoolers and current students but also disconnected youth and adults as they navigate the various education systems. Couple this work with an effort to elevate awareness of and community support for the goals of this coordinated support system. In particular, use data, school and community resources and partnerships, and evidence-based solutions to help schools and communities reduce the number of students who face barriers to full engagement in school by directly addressing those barriers.</i>
<i>Use data, partnerships, and evidence-based solutions to help schools and communities reduce the number of pre-K to 12th-grade students who are chronically absent from school</i>			
<i>Support student access and matriculation into postsecondary education, with a focus on students of color, students with low family incomes, and other students who have been traditionally underserved</i>		<i>Align career awareness and advising opportunities between high schools and community colleges, and eventually extend these down through elementary school</i>	2. Raise Postsecondary Aspirations and Improve Access to Information about Postsecondary Opportunities: <i>Strengthen and align current postsecondary and career advising, awareness, and preparation strategies for students of all ages and their families (including financial literacy training) to encourage and support more students as they transition into postsecondary, whether from high school or from the workforce.</i>
<i>Develop and deploy systems to provide targeted supports to help students access and succeed in career and college-ready courses</i>	<i>Postsecondary systems and institutions should evaluate existing practices and develop new policies and strategies to improve rates of student persistence, and degree completion</i>		3. Strengthen and Expand Guidance for Postsecondary Student Success: <i>Evaluate and strengthen postsecondary success through targeted “navigational supports,” guided pathways (e.g., pre-defined course sequences), and innovative financial supports that encourage more students—regardless of age and past educational attainment—to complete a degree or certificate in a timely fashion.</i>
		<i>Prioritize the continuous engagement of adult learners and expand opportunities for them to upskill</i>	4. Increase Adult Continuous Learning and Re-Entry into the Workforce: <i>Improve and expand practices, policies, and programs that support continuous engagement of adults in learning opportunities that provide avenues for them to upskill.</i>
Building and Sustaining Momentum			

P-12	Postsecondary	Workforce	Merged
	Deploy a communications and engagement plan for the postsecondary attainment goal, including communications materials, regular engagement with stakeholders, and messages that elevate local and regional successes	Launch a statewide communications and marketing campaign that emphasizes the economic value of all high-quality postsecondary credentials and of lifelong learning	1. Communications and Advocacy: Launch a statewide communications and marketing campaign that emphasizes the economic value of industry-aligned postsecondary credentials.
<i>Develop a plan for moving the work forward, immediately after the goal is set and report is finalized, that catalyzes public and private actors to work collectively to achieve the attainment goal</i>	<i>Develop a plan for moving the work forward immediately after the report is finalized, with identification of responsible parties, timelines, milestones, etc.</i>	<i>Develop and execute a plan for moving the work forward immediately after the report is finalized</i>	2. Governance: Develop a plan for moving the work forward in 2019 and quickly catalyzing public and private actors to work collectively to achieve the attainment goal.
	<i>Codify North Carolina's goal in statewide legislation to ensure there is broad stakeholder support that encourages refinement and innovation across public and private sectors</i>		
<i>Build data and research infrastructure across P-12, postsecondary, and workforce</i>	<i>Complete implementation of the state longitudinal data system (NC School Works) across the P-12, postsecondary, and workforce sectors to govern data (including security and privacy), establish priority research questions to inform policy and practice, and determine priority public reports and dashboards aligned with metrics that support the postsecondary attainment goal . . .</i>		3. Data-Driven Execution and Improvement: Improve and employ North Carolina's longitudinal data system (LDS) across the P-12, postsecondary, and business and industry sectors to securely manage the data, inform research to develop and revise policies and practices, and develop priority public reports and dashboards aligned with metrics that support the postsecondary attainment goal.
	<i>. . . and hold systems and institutions accountable for their performance</i>	<i>Keep stakeholders informed and maintain accountability to deliver on the recommendations in this report</i>	4. Accountability: Establish and maintain accountability to deliver on the recommendations in this report.





CAVEATS AND LIMITATIONS

The myFutureNC Commission completed a significant amount of work during its first year, but much remains to be done to transform the priorities outlined in this document into a working plan. Part of that work will include conducting deeper and broader reviews of educational and economic data, extant initiatives, estimated costs, applicable laws and policies, and other information that will help to define better the direction of the initiative during the next phase and beyond.

In short, this Call to Action is a work in progress, and as such it is subject to several caveats and limitations, the most prominent of which are outlined here.

- *Transformation of the Call to Action into a Working Plan:* As noted in the **Moving the Work Forward** section of the main report, the Call to Action is not yet a fully-executable Plan of Action. To transform the Call to Action into a Plan will require greater specificity about several different components, including responsible leadership and supporting actors for each priority, specific deliverables and other targets, measurable outcomes for each specific action, and sustainable funding sources.
- *Incorporation of Birth-to-Pre-Kindergarten Concepts and Components:* The current set of myFutureNC priorities begins at preschool, but education begins at birth. During children's earliest years, the brain's architecture is shaped, creating the foundation for future learning. Work in the next phase and beyond will benefit from a more

intentional incorporation of our best knowledge about this critical stage in the development of a child's future prospects.

- Involvement of Private Sector P-12 Education:* The development of the Call to Action benefitted from significant contributions from representatives of many of North Carolina's private colleges and universities, but involvement from nonpublic pre-kindergarten, elementary, and secondary education providers was more limited. A large proportion of the P-12 schooling provided in the state is nonpublic, but only a small amount of data and information has been included in this Call to Action from nonpublic P-12 sources, relative to the data and information included from nonpublic postsecondary and business and industry sources. As a result, while the next phase of myFutureNC's work in the postsecondary and business and industry sectors will include the voices of private sector participants from the start, expansion of work into the P-12 private sector will require additional time, communication, and relationship development.
- Expansion of Non-Education Partners and Affiliates:* As the Call to Action acknowledges, the overall success of many of the proposed activities is predicated on the state's willingness and ability to integrate seamlessly the work of a number of currently disconnected sectors. Full realization of many of the priorities may require coordination with an even wider array of public, private, and governmental actors (e.g., local governments, private foundations, etc.) than those currently identified in this document.
- Identification, Development, and Application of More Extensive Data:* North Carolina collects a wider and deeper array of education- and workforce-related data than do most other states, and the Commission took advantage of the availability of those data to strengthen the development of the priorities. In addition, myFutureNC commissioned the creation of several supplemental data sets and other products to directly support the work of the Commission. Even so, the formulation of several segments of the Call to Action revealed key information that currently either is incomplete or is not yet collected. Defining, collecting and analyzing these data will be an important part of the next phase of work, and doing so may lead to revisions to some of the priorities as currently framed to ensure that the work of myFutureNC addresses the needs of our state as efficiently and effectively as possible.



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 into 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 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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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 Commission members 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.

ncImpact Initiative at the UNC-CH School of Government: In collaboration with EdNC, ncImpact documented 10 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 North Carolina'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 Tippettt 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 insights about North Carolina's education pipeline and the work that needs to continue over the next 10 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 and Development in NC: Promising Policies and 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 and 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.