



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*.

