



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 adherence 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.

