**C O N F I D E N T I A L**

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**SAMPLE QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

1. **There have been many education commissions before this one. Why is this one going to work?**

*First of all, if we want North Carolina and its citizens to be competitive in the next 10 years, we don’t have a choice. This plan must work.*

*Secondly, we’ve done the hard work of uniting the education and business communities around this attainment goal. We’ve also built metrics that we will measure over time, tracking and reporting our progress.*

*Third, this plan is based on similar plans endorsed and funded by the Lumina and Gates Foundations in other states. It’s high time North Carolina rises to the occasion and solidifies a path to a successful future for all its people.*

*Finally, and most importantly, this is a state-led, locally owned effort. We are encouraging local education, business and political leadership to rally around this goal and institute their own ways to contribute to us reaching the goal. This plan will not work unless local leadership in each of our 100 counties answer the call and position their communities and networks to make this a reality.*

1. **How will you ensure the work that needs to be accomplished will move out of the well-populated areas – away from Raleigh and Charlotte and throughout all of North Carolina?**

*This goal will not be reached in our urban areas alone. As a matter of fact, our research shows that some of our best opportunities to reach this goal reside in rural communities scattered across North Carolina.*

*The platform we have built will not only encourage leaders in all 100 counties to move toward this goal, but also will provide them the tools and foundation to support their efforts.*

1. **Will this alleviate college debt/improve teacher pay/decrease class size/school choice etc.?**

*This plan will better prepare 2 million more North Carolinians for the careers and job opportunities that come with a healthier state and local economy. As more of us are competitively positioned for the workforce of tomorrow, our state becomes more attractive for job growth. With job growth comes a healthier economy. With a healthier economy comes more resources to creatively address the important issues of our time like debt, teacher pay, class sizes, and educational opportunity.*

1. **Is this politically motivated?**

*Of course it is. And we saw at our announcement event in February, both legislative and administrative leadership along with every facet of our education system — even our private colleges and universities — fully support this goal because its good policy and quite frankly, every North Carolinian deserves this opportunity. And we firmly believe that good policy makes for good politics.*

1. **Is this a UNC System-driven initiative?**

*No. Every aspect of our educational system — public, private, small and large, pre-K through 12 — stands behind our goal and has been active and willing partners in our plans to date.*

1. **Wasn’t this President Spellings idea?**

*No. This idea was born out of a collaboration of business, public, and nonprofit interests, including the Gates, Belk, and Goodnight Foundations.*

1. **Is the North Carolina Chamber supportive of this effort, even without a leader?**

*Absolutely. Key leaders of myFutureNC are also active board members of the North Carolina Chamber.*

1. **How are the community colleges involved? Are all 58 presidents on board?**

*President Hans —a co-chair for myFutureNC — is best to speak to the specifics of community college president support. Early indications, however, show significant support from the community colleges throughout our state. They, of course, will play an important role, and myFutureNC stands ready to support their needs.*

1. **What is a high-quality credential?**

*A high-quality credential is obtained through a certified training program that unlocks meaningful job and career opportunities for the recipient well beyond what someone with only a high-school graduation can expect. Remember, 67 percent of the job and career opportunities today require a postsecondary degree or high-quality credential.*

1. **Explain how independent colleges and universities will be a part of this.**

*President Hope Williams is best to speak to the specifics of the important role independent colleges and universities will play. However, what we know is that our independent colleges and universities are an integral part of our educational system here in North Carolina.*

1. **How does private school (k-12) fit into all of this?**

*Just like our public partners in North Carolina pre-k through 12th grade, private and parochial schools are important platforms in helping us communicate opportunities to all North Carolinians. We look forward to working with all school administrators throughout the state.*

1. **Are all 16 UNC System chancellors supportive?**

*Dr. Roper is best to speak to the specifics of the 16 university chancellors and their support, but it is our belief that most all of them support our goals and are willing to help engage each of their campuses and programs in our efforts.*

1. **Have any organizations endorsed the goal?**

*Yes, as of April 16, the following statewide organizations have passed resolutions of support for myFutureNC and the education attainment goal: North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) and the State Board of Education.*

1. **Will this put additional pressure on teachers?**

*We certainly hope not. We look forward to working with teachers throughout the state to help prepare students, their families, and curriculums to meet the goal of “2 million by 2030.”*

1. **How much will this cost?**

*We will be working with state leaders on this important topic. Programs in other states have informed myFutureNC and their success suggests that there will need to be investments in certain areas to ready our state to meet “2 million by 2030.” But, our basic belief is that there is no more important investment than figuring out how to prepare North Carolina’s workforce for future opportunities that will improve their livelihood. As a matter of fact, choosing to maintain the status quo will cost our state more in the long run.*

1. **Who are your consultants and are they politically motivated?**

*An initiative this important and widespread requires many hands. We’ve employed several organizations to help keep our committee focused and successful. If they have political motivations perhaps they share the same belief that each one of our committee members has: This may well be the most important initiative our state has ever tackled together.*

1. **Is this yet another unfunded mandate on education?**

*No. We have the commitment of state political and educational leaders to help make this attainment goal a reality. It’s through that cooperation, along with that of the business community, that’s required to achieve the goal. And failure will happen if this is nothing more than an unfunded mandate.*

1. **What about K-12?**

*Just like our public and private partners in higher education, public, private, and parochial schools are important platforms in helping us communicate our message and create future opportunities for all. We look forward to working with all school administrators throughout the state.*

1. **How is this related to NC Promise and Fixed Tuition?**

*NC Promise and Fixed Tuition are examples of tactical programs that will, in part, help us reach our attainment goal. They will not, however, be the only tactical tools in our toolkit.*

1. **How is this funded? How will it be sustainable for more than a decade?**

*Currently, myFutureNC is possible thanks to funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the John M Belk Endowment, the Goodnight Education Foundation, and the Lumina Foundation. For the future, state leadership will help guide us on what’s needed in statutory and regulatory change and additional funding to meet the goal of 2 million by 2030.*

1. **How does this actually support economic development (ED) in the state? Are those ED groups supportive? Is EDPNC involved?**

*Anyone in the business of growing existing businesses and recruiting new businesses to our state will tell you that without an abundant supply of a workforce ready to go to work for the jobs in the next 10 years, we will miss out on transformative and meaningful job growth in our state. Without job growth, our economy will not grow. It’s that simple.*

1. **Who is doing this well? What’s worked/what has failed?**

*Look no further than to our neighbor, Tennessee, and their Drive to 55 program. This is the type of progress we want to see here in North Carolina. And better yet, we are convinced that we can do this.*

1. **How did you get to 2 million by 2030?**

*The math is simple.*

*North Carolina is projected to have approximately 1.6 million 25- to 44-year-olds with a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by 2030. That is simply not enough to match the growing number of jobs that require more than a high-school education.*

*Based on job growth predication analysis performed by XXXXX, we are forecasting that North Carolina’s workforce will be 400,000 short of people with a high-quality credential or postsecondary education to fill the type of jobs North Carolina employers will be offering.*

*Without a total of 2 million citizens qualified to fill these jobs, businesses will not grow or locate here, and as such our economy will suffer.*

1. **Explain the math.**

*Half of North Carolina employers indicate that they are not able to hire the workers they need, citing a lack of employability skills (65 percent) [e.g., critical thinking, organizational ability, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management], technical skills (49 percent), and overall education (43 percent).*

*North Carolina’s postsecondary education pipeline is leaky — for every 100 ninth graders, there are 86 high-school graduates, of whom 72 express postsecondary intentions, 67 enroll in postsecondary institutions, 51 return for a second year, and 34 end up earning a degree within six years.*

*Further, 39 percent of North Carolinians state that they have not attained the educational level that they hoped to. One-quarter of four-year college students don’t complete their degree and two-thirds of two-year college students don’t complete their degree.*

1. **Why are all these foundations involved?**

*Like our political, educational, and business leaders, our partners and funders have a deep and abiding belief that education opens up opportunity for North Carolinians and as such creates economic growth that can lift up communities and improve the lives of citizens from Manteo to Murphy.*

*These foundations have not only the passion for this initiative, but also the critical funding necessary to bring this coalition of diverse interests together and help set a statewide goal for every community to rally around.*

1. **What does success look like?**

*Two million members of North Carolina’s workforce qualified and ready to tackle the jobs of the future.*

*And with that vision will come an even stronger economy, providing our state and its leadership the resources necessary to tackle the problems of our culture in a meaningful, transformative way.*

1. **How does this fit with our other important funding initiatives?**

*Let me ask you this question, in response: What funding initiative could be more important than expanding educational opportunity to 2 million North Carolinians?*

1. **Why 25-44?**

*That demographic is the majority of the workforce of our future, and we must make certain that they are qualified and ready to tackle the jobs we predict will be available.*

1. **How will equity be achieved across the state and across geography?**

*That’s simple. This goal will not be reached by only focusing on rural or urban areas in our state. Everyone — all 100 counties — must adopt this goal and help us identify ways to reach it through local endeavors. We need to be innovative and collaborative. We need to duplicate and replicate things that are working. And, we need to be willing to change things that aren’t making a difference. Having all 100 counties involved, as well as people from all walks of life, helps us ensure educational opportunities will be expanded to all people, not just those with the means to obtain them.*

1. **Will this continue to widen the socioeconomic divide?**

*Of course not. As a matter of fact, making certain that 400,000 more adults have qualifications that will position them more competitively for the jobs of the future will improve the chance of household income increases.*

1. **With so many people moving to North Carolina each day, won’t we achieve this goal – or close to it – with implants? Can this goal be met with non-North Carolinians?**

*No. Our analysis factors in the number of new residents we expect to welcome over the next 10 years. This effort is focused on North Carolinians being strong and ready for the future.*

1. **What if you fail?**

*There is simply no room for failure. North Carolina and North Carolinians are at stake.*

1. **Are you coordinating with the Koch brothers?**

*No. They have not been involved in our work to date.*

1. **Is this just big business?**

*No. This is a coalition of public, private, and political influencers committed to increasing and expanding educational opportunity to more citizens in our state so that they can improve their livelihoods. If big business also finds a way to benefit from that, so be it.*