



Postsecondary Readiness

POLICY BRIEF 1

Increase Commitment to Career & College Readiness Programs

Too many North Carolina high school graduates are **underprepared for completing postsecondary programs**,¹ resulting in almost 30% never enrolling, and two-thirds never attaining a postsecondary degree or credential.² Those numbers would be even higher without the presence of two key initiatives: Cooperating Innovative High Schools (CIHS) and the Career and College Ready Graduates (CCRG) program.

Recommended Legislative Actions 2021

To secure the ongoing impact of the CIHS initiative and to strengthen support for the state's CCRG partnership between the North Carolina Community College System and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction⁵, during the 2021-22 Session, the North Carolina General Assembly should:

- **Increase Access to Existing Readiness and Remedial Resources for All Qualifying Students**
- **Expand Support for Remedial Instructors**

myFutureNC Commitments for 2021

- Support Cross-Sector Efforts to Increase Remedial Student Success
- Champion Longer-Term Strategies for Eliminating the Need for Remediation

Key Initiatives

Cooperating Innovative High Schools (CIHS)

- Started in 2004, CIHSs give students opportunities to earn college credits and marketable certificates while still in high school.
- By 2020, there were 132 CIHS schools in operation, with more than 4,700 students earning associate degrees or credentials in that year alone.³

Career and College Ready Graduates (CCRG) program

- Statewide support for ensuring that all graduating high school students are prepared for postsecondary education.⁴
- Began providing remedial instruction for high school seniors in 2016-17.
- Full roll-out to every NC LEA is taking place this school year.



Recommendations

Increase Access to Existing Readiness and Remedial Resources for All Qualifying Students

Action: Continue Support for Cooperative Innovative High Schools.

CIHSs show promising gains not only in high school retention and completion rates, but also in certification and associate degree completion and four-year institution admission. Several CIHSs operate in each of the state's 8 Prosperity Zones, but 8 schools across 4 Zones [currently do not receive recurring state support](#), and several others will see state support drop as a result of changes in county Tier designations.⁶

For 2021: NCDPI is seeking support for these un- or under-funded CIHSs so that they can continue to support postsecondary readiness among high school students in the regions they serve.

Action: Fully Fund Online Remedial Content Subscriptions for all High Schools.

The state provides thousands of high school students each year with access to remedial mathematics, reading, and English content for the CCRG program through a third-party vendor. To date, [the state's subscription has been paid for](#) by the Department of Public Instruction [out of lapsed salary funds](#),⁷ with initial support from the Community College System for pilot implementation.⁸

For 2021: NCDPI is requesting coverage of subscription costs to ensure continued availability of support for high school students across the state who demonstrate a need for remediation in English or mathematics ahead of postsecondary enrollment.

Expand Support for Remedial Instructors

Action: Provide Funding for a CCRG Effectiveness Coordinator.

CCRG requires [coordination of efforts](#) across local school districts, NCDPI, and NCCCS, as well as ongoing training and annual assessment of CCRG's success. Establishing a position dedicated to CCRG cross-Sector implementation and assessment will strengthen the state's ability to provide training and support, track progress, and improve services.

For 2021: NCDPI's request for remedial content subscription coverage for CCRG students (detailed above) includes funding for a coordinator.





myFutureNC's Commitments for 2021

Support Cross-Sector Efforts to Increase Remedial Student Success

myFutureNC will continue to partner with NCDPI and NCCCS to enhance CCRG implementation. As a program with cross-Sector impact, CCRG is strengthened by [ongoing collaboration across implementing agencies](#), as well as by insights gained from both immediate and longer-term⁹ outcomes for program completers. myFutureNC will continue to support implementers as they work together to ensure CCRG's success.

Champion Longer-Term Strategies for Eliminating the Need for Remediation

myFutureNC will raise awareness of connections between early childhood and attainment. Reaching our [2M by 2030](#) goal requires a focus in the short term on high school students and young adults, but 2030 is not a final destination: It is just the first of many benchmarks for statewide postsecondary attainment (the number of adults with high-quality credentials or degrees). To reach even higher levels of attainment in the years beyond 2030, the readiness focus will need to expand beyond remediation alone to include [early childhood interventions](#) like universal pre-kindergarten enrollment and Science of Reading-supported¹⁰ early literacy programs.

Looking Ahead: Actions to Consider for 2022-23

The effectiveness of readiness initiatives also will require ongoing training. Going forward, the state should consider additional actions such as:

Providing Support for Statewide Remedial Instruction Training. Teaching effective, college-level remedial courses [requires special skills and understandings](#) beyond those acquired during traditional teacher preparation. NCCCS and NCDPI currently partner to provide this training but rely on limited allocations to do so.

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¹ Complete College America estimated ([2012](#)) that about 32% of students enrolling in 2-year colleges were placed in remedial courses upon enrollment, with only about one in 10 graduating in three years.

² Tippett & Khan ([2018a](#), [2018b](#))

³ NCDPI ([2021](#))

⁴ After a non-recurring initial appropriation to NCCCS of \$355,000 for CCRG implementation in FY 2018-19, the current recurring appropriation is \$135,000.

⁵ First codified in [SL 2015-241](#); modified in [SL 2016-94](#)

⁶ A county's economic well-being Tier designation helps determine the amount of state support received by a CIHS.

⁷ Lapsed salary funds are funds committed at the beginning of the year for anticipated salary costs that were unused as a result of resignations, retirements, and other job transitions.

⁸ The Department of Public Instruction has been solely responsible for providing the subscription since Fall 2020; past funding sources used to fund the subscription were stop-gap only and will not be available going forward.

⁹ Understanding the longer-term impact of initiatives like CCRG will benefit greatly from full implementation of the state's planned cross-sector Longitudinal Data System, which is addressed in myFutureNC Brief #5, [Postsecondary Foundations for Success](#).

¹⁰ The Hill Learning Center is one of several North Carolina-based groups that can provide additional information about the [Science of Reading](#); the Governor's budget recommendations for 2021-23 include an additional \$4M (non-recurring) for Science of Reading training (FY 2022-23) to supplement \$12M in dedicated federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds ([SL 2021-03](#)), as well as an increase of \$30M per year by FY 2022-23 (with \$20M of that \$30M covered by receipts) in recurring funds that support literacy-focused teacher assistants.