OPERATION POLARIS

Navigating Students Toward a Brighter Future

> **Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and diligence.**
>
> *— Abigail Adams*

Contents

Introduction

Operation Polaris, presented by State Superintendent Catherine Truitt to the State Board of Education on April 8, 2021, is the Superintendent's strategic vision for the next four years to support public schools across North Carolina. This outlines how the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), in tandem with the State Board of Education (SBE), will assist all education stakeholders as they work to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic while establishing a framework to achieve the long-term goal of ensuring a sound, basic education for all students in the state.

At the center of Operation Polaris is the Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration (OLR). The mission of the OLR is to serve public school units by providing the research and support needed to make evidence-based decisions that will stem learning loss and accelerate learning. The office will interface with the District and School Transformation team while collaborating with all programmatic divisions within NCDPI. The OLR will also partner with central office leadership, schools, and other stakeholders to bring needed solutions to long-standing challenges facing North Carolina public education.

Four satellites surround the two central components of learning recovery and transformation: Literacy, Student Support Services, Accountability and Testing and Human Capital.

LITERACY impacts all levels of learning for North Carolina's 1.4 million students. Persistent low reading and math proficiency rates call for a new approach to ensuring all children learn to read prior to third grade. Beginning summer of 2021, all pre-K through 5th grade teachers and elementary administrators will receive training in early literacy methods of instruction grounded in the body of research known as the "science of reading."

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES emphasizes the whole student, considering traditional elements such as school facilities, nutrition, access to broadband, and school safety as well the social and emotional learning needs of students as they and their families recover from the pandemic.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TESTING seeks to build consensus around a new accountability model that prioritizes growth while continuing to emphasize the importance of achievement alongside multiple other indicators to define school quality. Using a graduate portrait as a starting point, this new model will recognize the value of a competency-based approach to student progression and mastery of content.
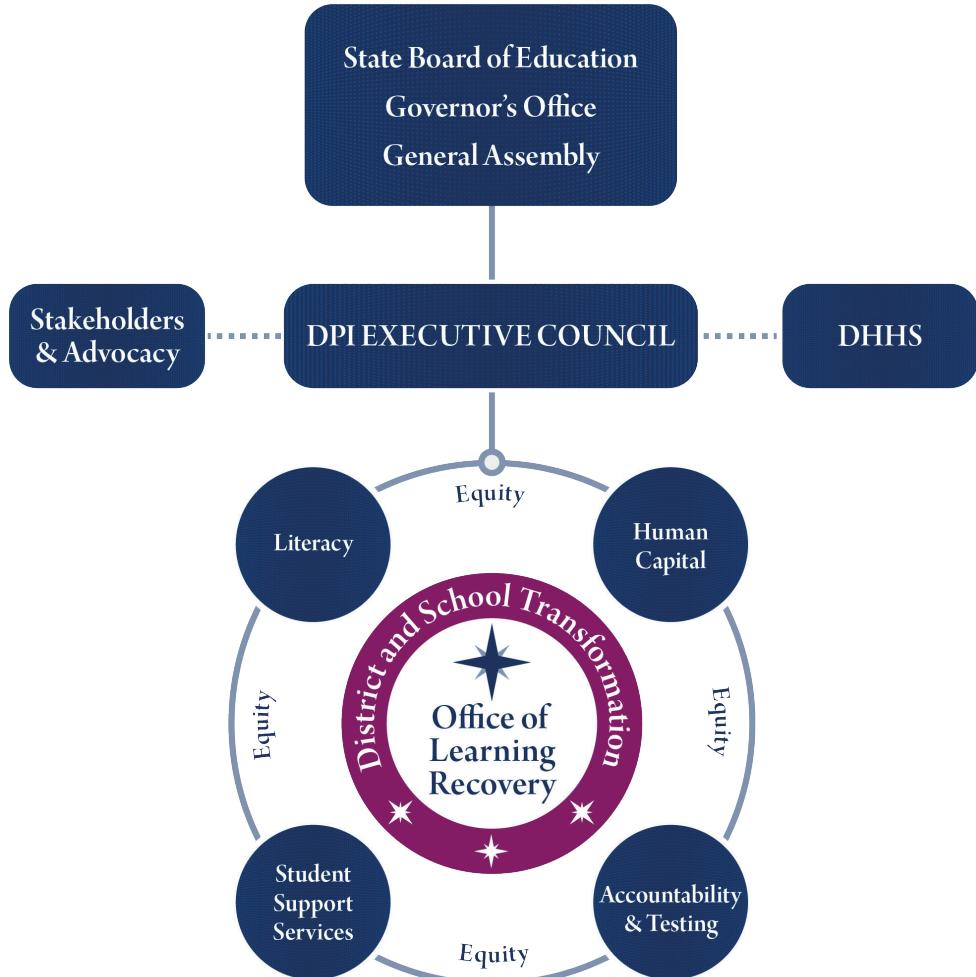
HUMAN CAPITAL represents North Carolina's biggest opportunity to providing an equitable education to all children. By leveraging the work of the Human Capital Roundtable, the group will implement innovative and relevant ways of recruiting, retaining, and compensating teachers such that students in hard-to-staff subjects and areas of the state have highly-qualified and excellent teachers.

NORTH STAR:
Every student deserves a highly-qualified, excellent teacher in every classroom.

Operation Polaris' forward-thinking vision provides the roadmap to a destination that allows all students to learn, grow, and successfully transition to the post-secondary plans of their choice.

Note: Many items outlined below will require corresponding updates as policy and legislation continues to take shape over the course of the year.

State Board of Education

Governor's Office

General Assembly

Stakeholders & Advocacy ········ DPI EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ········ DHHS

Equity

Literacy

Human Capital

District and School Transformation

Equity

Equity

Office of Learning Recovery

Student Support Services

Accountability & Testing

Equity

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Background

The COVID-19 pandemic placed Public School Units (PSUs) throughout North Carolina, and the nation, in an unprecedented position. In response to the pandemic, the federal government provided relief to states through the CARES Act and CRRSA. The NC Department of Public Instruction, under the leadership of Superintendent Catherine Truitt, created the Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration (OLR) to address learning loss resulting from disruptions to instruction caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The mission of the OLR is to serve PSUs by providing the information and support needed to make evidence-based decisions to address learning gaps and accelerate learning for all students. The OLR interfaces directly with District and School Transformation (DST) and collaborates with each of the constituent units within the Department of Public Instruction. The OLR partners with PSUs and other stakeholders to bring needed solutions to long-standing challenges in North Carolina public education.

> **Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.**
>
> — *Kofi Annan*

Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration

Vision

Identify areas of strength and areas for improvement as PSUs address learning recovery.

Develop and curate programs, policies and interventions related to learning recovery to provide a menu of solutions for PSUs.

Assist in matching these initiatives to PSUs and/or consortia of districts and providing technical and other assistance to those who need it via an OLR and DST collaboration.

SMART Goals

- Establish and routinely convene an ARP Committee of Practitioners to engage in meaningful feedback on learning recovery and acceleration activities and programs.
- Establish a research and evaluation section with the Office of Learning Recovery to assist the agency and PSUs in implementation of evidence-based practices.
- Develop, deploy, evaluate, and iterate NCDPI funded learning recovery and acceleration programs using a continuous improvement model.
- Develop cohorts of PSUs to assist in planning and developing ESSER funded learning recovery programs.
- Identify and promote Promising Practices throughout North Carolina.

Metrics

- Establish the Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration including the Research and Evaluation Section.
- Development and analysis of NCDPI developed Learning Recovery initiatives.
- Development of regular Learning Recovery reports (JLEOC Learning Loss Report)
- Development of a Dashboard of Promising Practices

Action items

- Select team members and advisors
- Define the roles of OLR team members and outside advisors
- Determine meeting dates and times
- Draft Recovery Playbook
- Draft dashboard
- Launch website

Dependencies

- Time constraints
- PSU engagement
- Support provided to the State Board of Education
- NC General Assembly

Levers

- ESSER I, ESSER II, ESSER III, and other federal funding
- School Performance Accountability System
- Continued General Assembly support of innovative programs
- Further development of student performance measures
- Passage and implementation of "science of reading" under the Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021 (Senate Bill 387). The "science of reading" is a body of research that explains how we learn to read.

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Background

Operation Polaris has provided the opportunity to rethink the way NCDPI supports our most challenged schools and districts.

A "transformation" allocation of resources from ESSER I funding has created the opportunity for increased support PSUs. This was the catalyst for a reset of the entire division, which has been re-named the Office of District and School Transformation (DST).

The DST positions NCDPI to operationalize the work of the Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration and to provide more comprehensive and generalized support in the field. The new Office of District and School Transformation will continue to evolve as we pursue opportunities to support major department initiatives in districts and schools while working cross-functionally with the Office of Learning Recovery.

"

Learning is like rowing upstream: not to advance is to drop back.

— Chinese proverb

Office of District and School Transformation

Vision

The Office of School and District Transformation will operationalize the work of the Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration (OLR) by developing and delivering support to districts and schools.

District and School Transformation will diagnose, customize and activate NCDPI support teams to address the critical components of the Operation Polaris workgroups. The goal is to support district work that results in sustainable and positive educational outcomes for all students.

District and School Transformation will prioritize support for the most challenged schools and districts in coordination with Leandro.

SMART Goals

- Build a structure that unifies Federal Programs Monitoring & Support, the Office of School and District Transformation and the Office of Learning Recovery to allow for the seamless support of districts and schools.

- Create a complete continuum of services and supports based on needs expressed by the school and/or district data, accountability data and Diagnostic Services tools.

- Develop and pilot a prototype for intensive intervention that includes how schools will be identified, supports offered and steps for engagement defined.

Metrics

- Indicators of measurable growth for low performing districts and schools served through DST

- Satisfaction surveys of PSUs for customer service and support through Regional Engagement

- Operation Polaris workgroups indicate support for operationalizing their statewide efforts (ESSER, Summer School, Transformation)

- CARES Act Districts and Schools demonstrate measurable improvements

Action items

- Organize workgroup and collaborate with all other workgroups, and specifically OLR.
- Ensure stakeholder feedback in the development work as well as from an expert "thought partner."
- Create a new organizational and delivery structure to ensure statewide support of department initiatives, legislative priorities and federal requirements.
- Determine human capital needs to fully build the "aspirational" organization of the Office of School and District Transformation.
- Redefine roles and responsibilities for effective collaboration, communication and implementation.
- Use ESSER applications and Summer School plans as a test pilot for renewed statewide support model.
- Continued application of diagnostics, school improvement resources and leadership development strategies to support the lowest performing districts and schools.

Dependencies

- Support actions required by other groups
- Timelines for launch and efficiency/urgency of actions
- Receptivity/relationships of/with PSUs
- Cooperation and collaboration of NCDPI divisions needed to create teams
- Resources and human capital

Levers

- ESSER I, II, III and Federal Programs Portfolio
- School Performance Accountability System
- Continued General Assembly support of flexibility/Transformation/Leandro
- WestEd Report
- State Statute for Low Performing Unit/School Identification

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Background

Much work has been done in the state among partners and education stakeholders to support literacy proficiency among students. As Operation Polaris is underway, reflections first must be made on the work accomplished across education groups and leaders, including the General Assembly and the State Board of Education.

Under Read to Achieve, which is part of the Excellent Public Schools Act that was enacted in 2012 and implemented in all schools at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, the goal is to ensure that every student reads at or above grade level by the end of third grade and continues to progress in reading proficiency so that he or she can read, comprehend, integrate, and apply complex texts needed for secondary education and career success. (2012-142, s. 7A.1(b).)

The intent of Read to Achieve is to ensure that (i) difficulty with reading development is identified as early as possible; (ii) students receive appropriate instructional and support services to address difficulty with reading development and to remediate reading deficiencies; and (iii) each student and his or her parent or guardian be continuously informed of the student's academic needs and progress. Additionally, Read to Achieve is to determine that progression from one grade to another be based, in part, upon proficiency in reading.

When assessments showed insufficient improvement in reading proficiency, the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) formed a Literacy Task Force in September 2019. The North Carolina Literacy Task Force was to develop a report that included recommendations for modifications to educator preparation and licensure to more effectively support the improvement of K-3 reading instruction. While the primary focus is to impact performance in grades K-3, the SBE expects overlapping recommendations expanding beyond grades K-3.

The Task Force's specific purpose, per the SBE's original charge, was to include recommendations that addressed, but were not limited to, the following issues related to early reading instruction and teacher preparation.

Ultimately their recommendations met each of these criteria:

- The minimum number of credit hours in literacy instruction that an educator preparation program shall include in its course of study. This shall include whether phonics instruction is adequately integrated into the course of study or if a separate course dedicated to phonics instruction is needed.

- The alignment of preservice educator preparation for early learning instruction with actual classroom instruction, including clinical experiences, that reflect well-designed, effective educator preparation programs for early learning instruction.

- Implications for teacher licensure and other teaching credentials, including potential incentives and compensation.

- The number and type of continuing education credits related to literacy that the State should require for the renewal of a teacher license.

- Professional development models for educator preparation program faculty and teachers throughout their careers on evidence-based instruction in literacy that is consistent with the most recent standards and curriculum established by the State and well-designed, effective educator preparation programs.

- Implications for administrator preparation programs and principal professional development to support evidence-based literacy instruction in the early grades.

One of the recommendations made by the State Board of Education's Task Force was a component of the Collaborative Guiding Framework for Action on Early Reading. It recommended the creation of a definition for high-quality reading instruction. With guidance and support from education stakeholders throughout North Carolina and elsewhere, the initial literacy preface and Birth-3 reading definition was created and adopted in July 2020 and revised in March 2021 to guide best practices in reading instruction informed by an evolving evidence base built over decades of research.

A comprehensive approach to literacy encompasses reading, writing, speaking, and listening and occurs in a safe, nurturing, and culturally responsive environment. Learning to read is a continuum of knowledge and skills, beginning at birth with oral language development and progressing to the development of written language skills and knowledge of the world that continues until adulthood.

High quality reading instruction is grounded in the body of research known as the science of reading regarding the acquisition of language (phonology, syntax, semantics, morphology, and pragmatics), and skills of phonemic awareness, accurate and efficient word identification (fluency), spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension. High quality reading instruction includes explicit and systematic phonics instruction, allowing all students to master letter-sound relations, and it is guided by state-adopted standards and informed by data so that instruction can be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. Ultimately, the purpose of high-quality reading instruction is to empower all children to become critical readers who have the foundational skills and word and world knowledge to read and understand increasingly complex text.

In 2021, Catherine Truitt, Superintendent of Public Instruction, shared a vision that clearly aligned to the current SBE's goals, sharing that all classrooms would have access to a highly-qualified teacher. This began with a focus around early literacy grounded in the science of reading.

In 2021, House Bill 196 designated Voyager Sopris Learning, Inc., as the provider for Language Essentials to Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training to teachers for improving the literacy and language development of students, building strong foundational early literacy skills by utilizing the science of reading. Training programs will be delivered to educators working with (i) children in the North Carolina Pre-kindergarten (NC Pre-K) program, in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, and (ii) children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Additionally, in April 2021, Senate Bill 387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021 modified the implementation of North Carolina Read to Achieve Program to better ensure statewide reading proficiency by third grade.

Senate Bill 387 provides a comprehensive plan for turning into practice years of recommendations, across education partners and groups. This legislation equips teachers to support students through research-based methods of early literacy instruction.

This background, and the work done by stakeholders over the last decade, serves as the basis from which the Literacy Workgroup directs its work.

Vision

Equip all pre-K through 5th grade teachers, literacy coaches, and administrators with early literacy instruction methods grounded in the body of research known as the "science of reading."

SMART Goals

- Train all pre-K through 5th grade teachers, coaches and administrators in the science of reading by spring 2025.
- Support Educational Prep Program alignment with science of reading beginning July 2022.
- Support the development of literacy instruction standards in alignment with the science of reading for implementation by June 2022.
- By August 2022 all districts will use Literacy Intervention Plans with aligned interventions to monitor and improve student literacy gaps.
- By 2022-23, all districts will implement Individual Reading Plans (IRP) to guide literacy instruction and improve overall student proficiency in grades kindergarten through third grade.

Metrics

- Number of teachers, coaches and administrators trained
- Percent of proficient Preschool students aligned to Kindergarten Readiness
- Number of transition teachers and staff trained
- Number of teachers meeting and/or exceeding growth
- Number of Educational Prep Programs implementing science of reading
- New teacher survey feedback
- First time passing rate of NC Reading Foundations assessment
- Completion of literacy standards
- Implementation of literacy standards
- Digital Children's Reading Initiative (DCRI) platform
- District web postings and expansion of DCRI platform
- Completion of Literacy Intervention Plan template
- Number of approved Literacy Intervention Plans
- Completion of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and Literacy Intervention Plan process
- Number of approved Literacy Intervention Plans documented through the Early Warning System
- Completion of Individual Reading Plan checklist
- Implementation of District/School Individual Reading Plans
- Completion of effective activities and instructional materials analysis
- Compiled list of literacy interventions

Action items

- Develop a cohort training process for all pre-K through 5th grade teachers, coaches and administrators.
- Develop a process for staff transition and turnover.
- Collaborate with Education Prep Programs to determine science of reading integration timeline plans.
- Ensure all Education Prep Programs are aware of science of reading revisions and test alignment.
- Develop a process with Standards Curriculum & Instruction to align and communicate literacy standards with science of reading.
- Develop and provide aligned Digital Children's Reading Initiative platform.
- Develop a process to support, review, and approve district intervention plans.
- Align and communicate a process to implement a multi-tiered system of early warning systems.
- Develop a process to support the implementation of Intervention Reading Plans.
- Conduct an analysis of the most effective activities and instructional materials.

Dependencies

- Universities, Community Colleges, Independent alignment with pre-K through 12
- Clear understanding of the science of reading and broad campaign
- Strong partnerships with those in the community and within the agency
- Stakeholder buy-in from teachers, coaches and administrators

Levers

- Aligned leadership
- Foundational support with external stakeholders
- Clear and frequent messaging
- The Path Forward collaborative work

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Background

Research indicates that in order to improve student performance, support services for students must be mobilized. This is critical to eliminating gaps that prevent students in poverty from accessing the full curriculum and benefitting from high-quality instruction.

The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) recognized this need to be an inherent priority, and as such, its strategic plan for the next five years addresses many issues related to equity and the well-being of North Carolina students. Two specific goals outlined by the SBE focus on eliminating opportunity gaps and improving school and district performance by 2025. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has widened gaps impacting student success and performance.

Operation Polaris provides the framework for developing operational strategies to implement the action plan developed by the SBE and to explore solutions in meeting students' needs in range of areas including: socio-emotional support, nutrition, school safety, broadband connectivity and school facilities.

This Workgroup is committed to developing approaches to student services that focus on policy development and implementation.

> **They cannot stop me. I will get my education, if it is in the home, school, or anyplace.**
>
> *— Malala Yousafzai*

Prioritizing Student Support Services

Vision

To coordinate support services to increase student access to high-quality instructional services through a focus on five key areas that impact student performance: socio-emotional, nutrition, school safety, broadband connectivity, and school facilities.

SMART Goals

- Complete a social emotional well-being profile of 100% of schools and districts for use during the 2021- 22 school year through 2025.
- Increase student and staff access to social-emotional professional staff by 5% annually for five years.
- Increase annually the number of elementary-school students receiving breakfast and lunch at no cost with 100% access to no-cost breakfast and lunch by 2025.
- Increase by 6% annually the number of homes in rural/suburban/urban settings with access to high-speed internet and devices to access this service for five years.
- Decrease by 15% the number of schools without a comprehensive safety plan by implementing a school safety review process to guide plan development over the next three years.
- Address annually during the next five years 5% percent of district school needs as listed on the Five-Year Facilities Needs Survey.

Metrics

- Agendas and meeting notes
- Socio-emotional profile for all schools and school districts for the 2021-22 school year
- School poverty indices and nutrition profiles
- School Safety Assessment Index
- Digital gap profile
- School construction indices
- SMART Goal implementation costs

Action items

- Select team members and advisors.
- Define roles of team members and advisors.
- Determine meeting dates and times.
- Review existing data and identify missing/ needed data.
- Develop profiles and indices for identified areas.
- Collect input from districts and other external stakeholders.
- Develop action steps and recommendations, vetting with key stakeholders.

Dependencies

- Progress of other groups
- Time constraints
- The General Assembly's openness to recommendations
- Support provided to the State Board of Education
- Funding available at the General Assembly
- ESSER Funds provided to districts, General Assembly, governor, state superintendent, and SBE that may be designated towards identified needs

Levers

- Legislation funding support services positions
- Approval of a statewide school bond measure
- USDA policy changes regarding school nutrition
- Defining school safety component
- Legislation defining minimal access to digital technology
- Legislation identifying federal impact on broadband connectivity
- Defining equity regarding support services initiatives

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Background

The 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 — the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) — provides states with the flexibility and responsibility to redesign their state education accountability systems to meet current challenges. Although ESSA establishes minimum requirements for state accountability systems, state leaders should expect more from their schools than these minimum thresholds for student achievement.

In 2013, the NC General Assembly created school performance grades that assign schools a single letter grade, A-F. School letter grades are based on a combination of achievement and growth scores. In most cases, the current overall grade assigned to a school represents the growth score weighted at 20% and the achievement score weighted at 80% to render a score out of a total of 100. The numerical score corresponds to a letter grade using the following cut offs: 0-39 = F, 40-54 = D, 55-69 = C, 70-84 = B, and 85 – higher = A.

Operation Polaris provides the opportunity for the Accountability and Testing (A/T) Workgroup to explore North Carolina's assessment and accountability system used to evaluate both students and schools. As noted by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization: "Many consider these school performance grades to be overly simplistic and not the best measure of a school's strengths and weaknesses. (SREB, 2020).

Education is for improving the lives of others and for leaving your community and world better than you found it.

— Marian Wright Edelman

Vision

To transform North Carolina's K-12 accountability system to ensure a sound, basic education for every student by measuring success based on preparedness for the workforce, higher education and robust civic participation.

SMART Goals

- Build a statewide portrait of a graduate to be used by districts and schools to frame local efforts and define student success. Fully deploy in the 2022-23 academic year.

- Outline a multi-measure model of student success including recommended growth and achievement weights, and in compliance with federal guidelines, no later than June 30, 2022.

- Develop a competency-based model and implementation methodology aligned to the established content standards, to be deployed in the academic year 2023/24.

- Present a revised School Report Card template by December 2022. Pilot in the academic year 2022/23 and fully deploy in 2023-24.

- Use North Carolina Personalized Assessment Tool (NCPAT) data to refine and operationalize the multi-measure model of student success, components of the revised School Report Card, and in the development of the competency-based assessment model.

Metrics

- A statewide portrait of a graduate that is informed by business, external stakeholders and higher education sector leaders; approved by NCDPI senior leadership and by the NC State Board of Education (SBE) and ready to deploy in fall 2022.

- A more balanced, multi-measure student success model to demonstrate growth and achievement metrics that highlight readiness for civic life, career and college. It will also ensure that NC is providing a sound, basic education for every student. Draft measures will be ready for stakeholder feedback by October 1, 2022.

- A new student report card that will help parents, students and school districts understand the individual strengths, gaps and readiness for civic life, career and/or college will be vetted and piloted for use in the 2022-23 school year.

- Additional data from the NCPAT will help NCDPI and external stakeholders make data-based decisions and ensure that a sound basic education is being measured and achieved in the newly designed accountability measures.

Action items

- Review a portrait of a graduate from other states to determine potential NC profile recommendations.
- Review existing LEA portraits to determine potential NC profile recommendations.
- Gather input from NCDPI leadership and NC SBE on potential NC portrait recommendations.
- Review and compare TIP, NCSSA, SREB, other state data, IA Pilot recommendations, and partner recommendations to determine potential accountability recommendations.
- Create cadence, timeline and structure for A/T future workgroup meetings to vet, preview, and gain feedback on recommendations with key stakeholders
- Create a communication plan to keep key stakeholders outside of the workgroup informed and engaged in the work.
- Identify work streams within NCDPI agency to prepare and support the accountability deliverables.
- Create a NC School Report Card Template to reflect sound, basic education criteria and preparedness for civic life, career or college. It should be easy to communicate and understand. The new school report card should allow for more visibility on school strengths and weaknesses.

Dependencies

- Progress of other groups
- Time constraints
- Passage of other accountability bills
- General Assembly's receptivity to changing current law
- Support provided to the State Board of Education
- Federal approval on ESSA and on Innovative Assessment Pilot recommendations
- Change in statute (growth/achievement)
- CARES act dollars to support innovation and technology in assessment
- NC Perkins V adoption

Levers

- Draft legislation unfolding in the General Assembly will inform if this work will feature a formal or informal legal and reporting structure
- ESSA plan boundaries and opportunities will drive creativity and innovation
- Evaluation of the A-F letter grade for schools in statute
- Growth vs Achievement percentages in statute
- Decoupling bonuses from student achievement
- Reducing overlap within NCDPI
- Reducing complexity of accountability measures without reducing rigor
- Alignment of legislature, SBE, NCDPI, and superintendents in shared accountability measures and graduate portrait

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Background

The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) in February 2021 adopted the recommendations from the Human Capital Roundtable: "... to help increase the quality, quantity and diversity of teacher candidates and prepare them to be licensed, hired, supported and retained as highly effective educators in North Carolina schools" (SREB, 2021). The current structures simply do not adequately address the challenges facing public schools when it comes to the aforementioned areas, nor do they meet the needs of our children and our communities. The same reality exists in administration, student support and classified areas. As such, the scope of work must be expanded. In addition, NCDPI must also be aligned with the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC), and the Governor's DRIVE Taskforce.

Vision

To cultivate multiple on-ramps for educational professionals and build effective infrastructure to recruit and retain high quality teachers, administrators and support personnel for every student in North Carolina.

SMART Goals

- Advocate for the transformation of the compensation system for educators by 2025 so it is based on competencies, skills and evidence of impact on student learning.
- Align classified salary grades with classification and compensation revisions from North Carolina Office of Human Resources by June 30, 2023.
- Create a plan to enhance the educator feedback model by adding metrics on well-being, workplace climate and other indicators that correlate with student and school success by 2023.
- Develop data resources (e.g., visualization dashboards) and training for public school units (PSUs) to use in human capital decision-making processes (e.g., hiring, evaluation, placement, professional learning, retention, advancement) within two years.
- Work to support the transformation of the licensure process to allow for a tiered, competency/skill-based progression.

Metrics

- Revised educator compensation system.
- Improved student learning outcomes across all subgroups.
- Improved indicators on factors related to school culture that drive improved student learning outcomes.
- Improved retention of effective educators, administrators and support personnel.
- Revised North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey feedback model.
- Data portal for human capital (HC) decision-making.
- A comprehensive list of HC data elements that have been identified by experts.
- NCDPI operational data store (ODS) is operational and all HC data elements included.
- Completion of HC dashboards.
- Completed training for all North Carolina public school units (PSUs).
- Data usage reports/surveys for how the PSUs are using the dashboards to inform decision making, including evidence that the dashboard itself is an effective tool.
- New routes to career advancement that are tied to student outcomes
- Pathways reform work completed by PEPSC and approved by SBE.
- Revision of SBE policies and state statute(s) to support/allow the reformed licensure system.
- Validity and reliability testing complete with all approved measures meeting standard.
- Completion of performance requirements for each pathway transition point and level of tiered license/advanced role.
- Completion of alignment between licensure levels and educator/leadership roles.
- Completion of training with all NC PSUs.

Action items

COMPENSATION

- Create "effective employee" profile, identifying desired competencies and skills.

- Develop measurements for identified competencies/skills to determine career advancement transition points.

- Develop both quantitative and qualitative measures of student learning (in addition to EVAAS).

- Create a hierarchy of competencies/skills and outcomes that serve as the basis for moving an educator through the compensation system.

- Work with OSBM to quantify the budgetary impacts of a new compensation system.

RECRUITMENT

- Define NCDPI's role in providing recruitment data and best practices.

- Implement statewide system for tracking vacancies.

- Develop a teacher apprenticeship program for both traditional and residency candidates.

- Advocate for flexibility to modify compensation models to help address critical needs.

- Support Teacher Cadet, Teaching as a Pathway (through Career and Technical Education), and similar programs.

DATA RESOURCES FOR DECISION-MAKING

- Identify HC data elements that impact PSU decision-making.

- Consider the feasibility of developing a survey option for classified employees.

- Move to an annual version of the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (e.g., scaled-down version in off years) focused on those conditions linked to improved student performance.

- Archive these data elements in the State's ODS (Operational Data Store).

- Create data visualizations that allow PSUs to see current and historical trends in data.

- Develop a comprehensive, integrated suite of visualizations with public and protected functionality.

- Set permission structures to ensure appropriate access to data.

- Train district personnel to navigate and use dashboards for human capital decisions.

PREPARATION, LICENSURE, AND CREDENTIALING

- Collaborate with PEPSC subcommittees to reform human capital processes.

- Identify measures that offer multiple pathways to progression within a pathway and completion of requirements for advancement.

- Partner with experts to ensure that selected measures are valid and reliable.

- Build out necessary knowledge and requirements for advancement through tiered licensure system.

- Establish leadership roles for educators and administrators and corresponding licensure levels required to hold those positions.

- Develop and deploy training for PSUs on the new licensure system and career pathways for educators, administrators, and support staff.

- Strengthen and expand partnerships with institutions of higher of education (IHEs).

Dependencies

Levers

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND ADVANCEMENT

- Identify the competencies/skills critical for an effective educator.

- Identify an appropriate process for educators to demonstrate these identified competencies/skills (e.g., micro-credentials, degrees, certifications, etc.).

- Develop a comprehensive, cohesive progression through the professional learning (PL) system that supports educators throughout their process of entering the profession and careers.

- Partner with districts, colleges/universities and third-party (vendor) to offer PL opportunities, evaluate, and store educators' PL progression.

- Develop a system to track professional learning opportunities and their impact on student learning/outcomes.

- Provide training to ensure PSUs and educators understand the new system.

- Cultivate a range of advanced professional roles for educators.

- Progress of other groups (e.g., PEPSC subcommittees currently engaged in teacher transformation work).

- Collaboration with education experts (e.g., professors, education non-profits and practitioners) to identify competencies/skills and appropriate process for measurement and development of menu of competencies/skills/evidence of impact on student learning.

- Time constraints.

- NCDPI IT Department; Business Modernization.

- Staffing capacity (e.g., to create visualizations, provide training, etc.).

- NCDPI IT Department, NCDPI Financial Services Division, Inter-agency coalition in NCDPI Financial Services.

- Education preparation programs, school districts, state agencies, and stakeholders.

- Work by all other groups affiliated with Operation Polaris.

- Working with the General Assembly to consider modifications to the rule-making process for NC State Board of Education/NCDPI

- Leveraging the recommendations from the Governor's DRIVE Task Force to inform diversification efforts for the educator workforce

- Ensuring that financial models are sustainable via the NC Office of State Budget Management

- Eliminating policies related to years of experience for compensation and developing policies related to integrating out-of-state teachers into the new NC system through the State Board of Education

- Utilizing the NC Office of State Human Resources compensation and classification work to update classified salary grades

- On-going collaboration with educator preparation programs

O peration Polaris outlines the agency's plan and path forward which will guide its work over the next four years. Cumulatively its work seeks to improve the state's public schools and create new opportunities for students to learn, grow, and successfully transition into the post-secondary plans of their choice.

The proposals as outlined by the Workgroups will guide the department's immediate efforts to address the effects of COVID-19 while also laying the groundwork to achieve Superintendent Truitt's North Star: every student deserves a highly-qualified, excellent teacher in every classroom.

While the plans in this document have been carefully curated, articulated, and refined, Workgroups will continue to meet throughout the course of the year. Plans, including those outlined in this document, will evolve and updates will be provided.

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The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.

— B.B. King