

ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL **EXCELLENCE**

2025–2030
Strategic Plan for
North Carolina Public Schools



ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



PILLAR 1

Prepare Each
Student for
Their Next
Phase in Life



PILLAR 2

Revere
Public School
Educators



PILLAR 3

Enhance Parent,
Caregiver, and
Community
Support



PILLAR 4

Ensure
Healthy, Safe
and Secure
Learning
Environments



PILLAR 5

Optimize
Operational
Excellence



PILLAR 6

Lead
Transformative
Change



PILLAR 7

Celebrate the
Excellence
in Public
Education



PILLAR 8

Galvanize
Champions to
Fully Invest in
and Support
Public
Education



By 2030, North Carolina will
have the **best** public school
system in the nation.



ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL **EXCELLENCE**

Actions launched
as of
February 2026:

26

Actions launched
since November
2025:

19

Actions launching
in 2026:

69

**By the end of 2026, 78 of the 110 actions in the
Strategic Plan will have launched**



Actions launched since November 2025 Quarterly Update



PILLAR 1

Prepare Each Student for Their Next Phase in Life

- P1.F1.A1 Expand high-quality pre-K and strengthen kindergarten readiness by partnering with North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) and PSUs to align standards, coordinate inclusive early learning systems and enhance transition supports. (January 2026)
- P1.F4.A2 Provide PSUs with technical assistance to implement Career Development Plans so that students graduate with a purposeful plan for their future. (January 2026)



PILLAR 2

Revere Public School Educators

- P2.F2.A2: Establish an SBE task force to develop: a licensure model that is more transparent and includes multiple pathways into the profession; an updated online licensure system that is user-friendly and guides applicants through the application process; apprenticeship models; pathways for professional advancement, such as exploring mentoring or coaching opportunities and additional local or state financial incentives for serving in advanced roles or high-need schools; and valid and reliable measures of teacher impact and effectiveness. (February 2026)



PILLAR 2

Educator Licensure & Advance Task Force

The Challenge:

- For decades, data has shown teachers feel undervalued, under-supported, and under-compensated.
- In addition, testing barriers and bureaucracy have prevented talented candidates from entering and staying in the profession.
- Teachers are the difference-makers for students' success. The single best thing we can do to improve education in North Carolina is to focus on improving the experience of educators - from recruitment to preparation to retention.



PILLAR 2

Educator Licensure & Advance Task Force

Project Plan Highlights:

This project will establish an educator licensure and advancement task force that will:

- Bring a coherent, forward-looking recommendation to the State Board of Education to modernize North Carolina's educator licensure framework so that it:
 - Support recruitment and retention,
 - Recognize professional growth and expertise,
 - Create advancement opportunities within classroom practice, and
 - Align with the strategic plan and workforce needs.



PILLAR 2

Educator Licensure & Advance Task Force

Next Steps

- Establish task force of leaders and practitioners
- Develop theory of action for licensure, including best practices learned from flexible models and consideration of changing technological landscape
- Design, debate and achieve consensus for frameworks of licensure and advancement
- Bring recommendation to State Board of Education



PILLAR 3

Enhance Parent, Caregiver & Community Support

- P3.F1.A1 Identify ways to develop translations of NCDPI resources based on student demographics. (January 2026)



PILLAR 4

Ensure Healthy, Safe and Secure Learning Environments

- P4.F2.A1 Guide PSUs in identifying and applying best practices to limit distractions from wireless devices and promote responsible social media use to support safe and focused learning environments (January 2026)
- P4.F1.A2 Support PSUs in creating safe and secure online learning environments by providing tools, best practices and advanced training for educators on virtual classrooms and secure online interactions. (January 2026)



PILLAR 4

Safe Online Learning Environments

Project Plan Highlights

- P4.F2.A1- Digital Balance and Social Media
 - Establish Statewide Guidance for Device Distraction and Responsible Use
 - Develop and Release Student Facing Micro-Credentials and Teacher Support Toolkit
 - Develop and Release Parent Toolkit
- P4.F1.A2- Safe and Secure Online Learning Environments
 - Establish Statewide Guidance for Secure Online Learning
 - Provide Professional Learning and Instructional Supports for Secure Online Instruction
 - Provide Professional Learning and Supports for PSU Technology Teams



PILLAR 4

Safe Online Learning Environments

Next Steps- P4.F2.A1 (Digital Balance and Social Media Responsibility)

- A Task Force for Digital Learning has been established with 99 educators from all 8 regions.
- A Screentime Guidance Document is in development and already through the first round of feedback with the Digital Learning Task Force.
- Educators are developing student micro-credentials that will be released for use by PSUs in early April so schools can be ready for the legislative requirements outlined in Session Law 2025-38 (HB959)



PILLAR 4

Safe Online Learning Environments

Next Steps- P4.F1.A2 (Safe and Secure Online Learning Environments)

- A Task Force for Digital Learning and School Connectivity has been established with 99 educators from all 8 regions.
- Beginning in March 2026, development of a Digital Security and Wellness Framework will begin with a look to share out in the fall.
- The framework and feedback from the Task Force will drive the work that follows, with the goal of creating certifications for both educators and technicians to ensure safe and secure online learning environments in both instructional and technical practices.



PILLAR 4

Ensure Healthy, Safe and Secure Learning Environments

- P4.F2.A2 Identify and share effective practices for reducing chronic absenteeism and strengthening student attendance. (January 2026)



PILLAR 4

Reduce Chronic Absenteeism



Project Plan Highlights

- **Project Overview:** Office of Research and Promising Practices initiative to reduce chronic absenteeism through coordinated research, practical resources and tools, and a statewide communication campaign.
- **Why AttendNC Counts?** Chronic absenteeism in NC rose to nearly 32% in 2021–22 and remains steady at 24%; nearly 400K students missed a month of school or more on average, limiting learning and student success.
- **Asset-Based Approach:** Build from what PSUs already do well, and providing actionable resources and technical assistance that emphasize feasible practices, effective use of data, and ongoing cycles of improvement.
- **Current Partners:** Carolina Demography, Communities in Schools, Attendance Works, EPIC (UNC-CH), and NC Early Childhood Foundation.



PILLAR 4

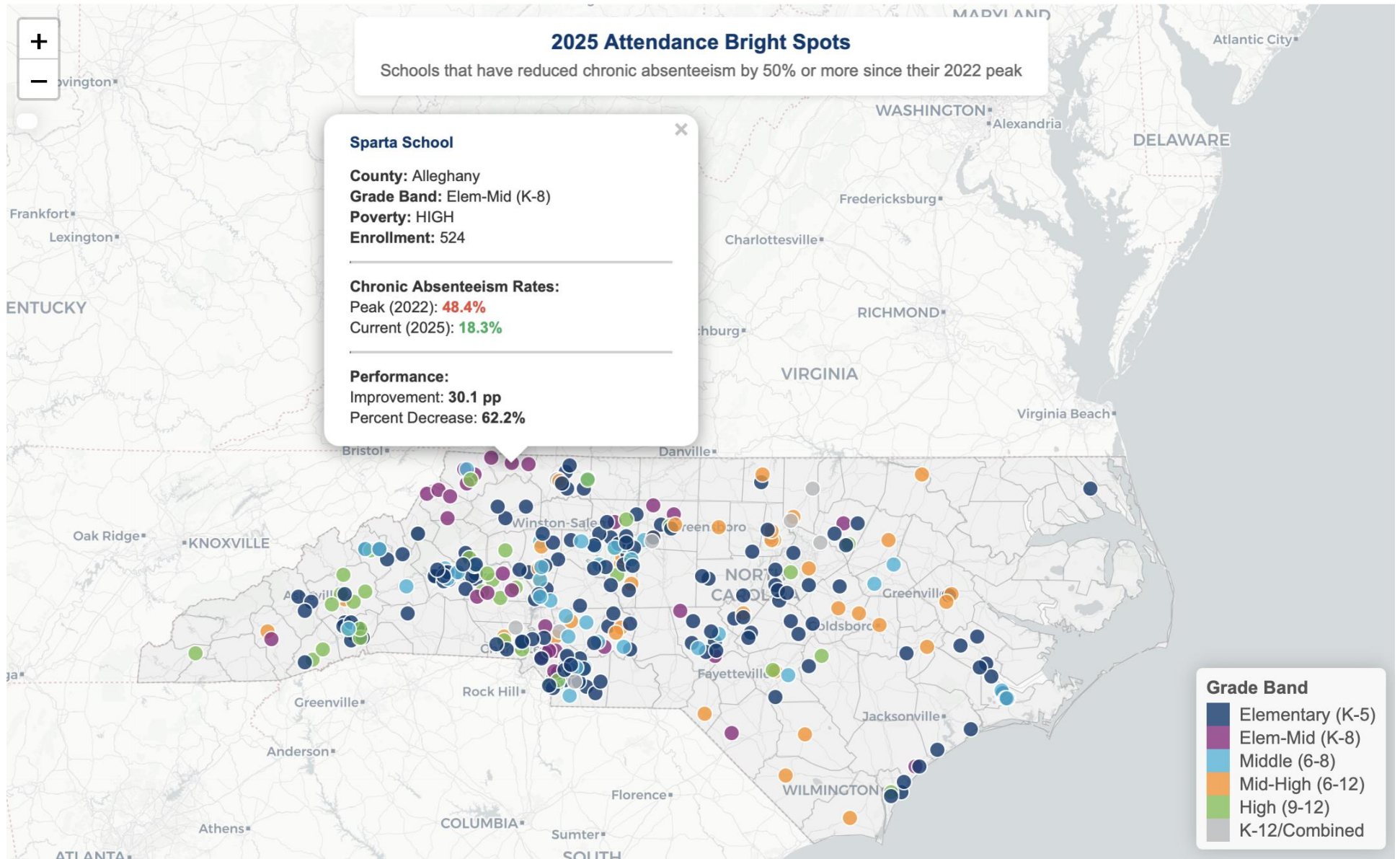
Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

Next Steps

1. **AttendNC Hub:** Build the central home for research, tools, guidance, and supports, organized for districts, schools, and families to move from awareness to action.
2. **Data Analysis and Products:** Produce actionable analyses and products (e.g., district profiles, dashboards, early warning flags) that help districts identify patterns, target supports and monitor improvement over time.
3. **Communication Campaign:** Develop and help disseminate a coordinated set of statewide and local-ready messages, visuals, and outreach materials to normalize the mindset that “every day counts.”
4. **Bright Spot Learning:** Surface and share attendance bright spots, highlighting routines and conditions that enabled success, and create pathways for peer learning from positive deviant schools.



PILLAR 4





PILLAR 5

Optimize Operational Excellence

- P5.F1.A1 Implement an agencywide language access plan and ensure communications and website materials meet accessibility standards to better serve diverse PSU needs. (January 2026)
- P5.F2.A1 Establish an intra-agency working group to identify and address barriers to operational consistency, collaboration and communication across NCDPI offices. (January 2026)
- P5.F2.A2 Reestablish the NCDPI Agency Roundtable to monitor collaboration and communication with PSUs. (January 2026)



PILLAR 6

Lead Transformative Change

- P6.F4.A2 Enhance interim assessments aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, promote multiple measures beyond standardized assessments and provide PSUs with the resources to increase progress monitoring using assessment data. (January 2026)
- P6.F1.A1 Create a cross-sector Innovation Leadership Council (charter, district and lab school leaders, along with NCDPI staff) to guide knowledge transfer and scale-up. (January 2026)



PILLAR 6

Cross-Sector Innovation Leadership Council

Project Plan Highlights

- **Project Overview:** The Innovation Leadership Council (ILC) is a statewide initiative to identify, vet, elevate, and spread Strategic Plan aligned innovations.
- **Why the ILC?** North Carolina needs a shared, evidence-based process to surface “what’s working,” reduce fragmentation across school models, and accelerate adoption of practices that can succeed in varied local contexts.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration and Learning:** The ILC will be composed of educators from PSUs, charters, lab schools, and IHEs, with structured cross-sector learning so these groups can compare approaches, learn in context, and adapt practices across settings rather than operating in parallel.
- **What Success Looks Like:** A trusted, publicly visible set of North Carolina innovations that are evidence-informed, usable by PSUs, and likely to improve outcomes across settings.



PILLAR 6

Cross-Sector Innovation Leadership Council

Next Steps

- 1. Establish Council Membership and Governance.** Identify and recruit a group of district, charter, lab school leaders, IHE partners, and NCDPI staff to serve on ILC; confirm leadership roles and operating norms.
- 2. Release Annual Innovative Practices Call.** Identify annual focus areas aligned to Strategic Plan actions; release a statewide Call for Evidence-Based Innovations Practices for PSU submissions.
- 3. Review, Select, and Elevate Practices.** Apply a common rubric emphasizing evidence of efficacy and scalability; curate practices for the annual compendium and statewide learning networks.
- 4. Connect Learning to Scale and Strategy.** Share insights with NCDPI leadership and the State Board of Education; inform network convenings, Celebrate the Good campaign, and future pilots.



PILLAR 7

Celebrate the Excellence in Public Education

- P7.F2.A1 Engage, align and support PSU communications staff to align communication efforts that celebrate public education. (December 2025)
- P7.F3.A1 Work with education partners on statewide communication efforts that uplift success stories, testimonials and positive narratives about public schools. (December 2025)
- P7.F1.A2 Work with partners to develop and test comprehensive public education messaging. (January 2026)



PILLAR 7

Find Your Fit Initiative

Project Plan Highlights

- Six-week initiative to align messaging, voices and stories about choice within North Carolina public schools
- Weekly focus on different pathways and choices across the entire state
- Engaging Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, School Board Chairs, PIOs, education non-profits, TOYs and POYs and others





PILLAR 7

Find Your Fit Initiative

Week	Dates	Theme
1	Jan. 26–30	Celebrating Choice — Magnets, Charters, Neighborhood Schools
2	Feb. 2–6	Celebrating Future Ready — Early College, CCP, NC College Connect, JROTC
3	Feb. 9–13	Celebrating CTE — Career & Technical Education Pathways
4	Feb. 16–20	Celebrating Global Learning — Virtual & World Languages
5	Feb. 23–27	Celebrating Student Supports — School Nutrition, Transportation, Counseling Programs, Athletics,
6	Mar. 2–6	Celebrating Arts and Innovation — Arts, music, drama, science and innovation & initiative close



PILLAR 7

Find Your Fit Initiative

Next Steps

- Sharing toolkit with partners
- School visits
- Building a regular cadence of communicating
- Annual initiatives to highlight excellence within North Carolina public schools



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No Admit
to this Area

Your Logo



PILLAR 8

Galvanize Champions to Fully Invest in and Support Public Education

- P8.F2.A1 Develop and launch a statewide reading campaign, such that students will collectively read 10 million books annually, in collaboration with state and local partners. (January 2026)

Questions and Discussion