

North Carolina's College- and Career-Ready Commitment

The Economic Imperative

Today, nearly every good job requires some postsecondary education and/or training (e.g., an associate's or bachelor's degree, certificate, or apprenticeship or significant on-the-job training). All students need to be academically prepared to compete for good jobs in the global economy.

In 1950, 60% of jobs were classified as unskilled, attainable by young people with high school diplomas or less. Today, less than 20% jobs are considered to be unskilled.ⁱ

- **80%** of North Carolina's jobs are middle or high skills (i.e., require some postsecondary education or training).
- **Yet only 38%** of North Carolina's adults have some postsecondary degree (associate's or higher).ⁱⁱ

More education is associated with higher earnings and higher rates of employment in North Carolina.ⁱⁱⁱ

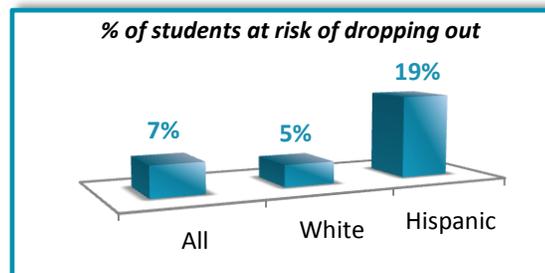
Mean Income	Education Level	Unemployment
\$9,605	HS Dropout	23%
\$23,055	HS Graduate	13%
\$29,671	Some College	9%
\$57,714	Bachelors & Above	6%

The Equity Imperative

Far too many students drop out or graduate from high school unprepared for success, closing doors and limiting their options and opportunities – in particular minority and low-income students.

North Carolina's achievement gaps begin in the earliest grades and extend through college enrollment and admissions.^{iv}

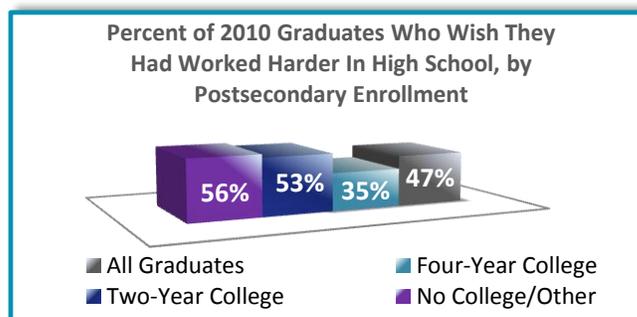
	All	White	Black	Hispanic	Low SES
4 th Grade Math Proficiency	44%	58%	18%	30%	28%
8 th Grade Reading Proficiency ^v	31%	40%	14%	22%	18%
HS Graduation Rate ^{vi}	68%	75%	56%	54%	N/A
College Completion Rate ^{vii}	59%	62%	47%	64%	N/A



The Expectations Gap

The bar has been set too low for too long, keeping students from reaching their full potential. If we want students to achieve more, we need to expect more.

- **32%** of North Carolina's students in two-year colleges and **5%** of North Carolina's students in four-year colleges require remediation.^{viii}
- Less than two-thirds (**59%**) of students who enter public colleges in North Carolina earn their degrees.
- **34%** of employers deem the preparation of newly hired employees with only a high school diploma as "deficient," (and only 16% find their preparation "excellent.")^{ix}
- **49%** of employers surveyed noted they anticipate requiring higher levels of education for most jobs – and another **60%** noted more specific technical skills will be required – in the next 3-5 years.^x



All too often, students regret not working harder once they leave high school.^{xi}

North Carolina's College- and Career-Ready Commitment

The College- and Career-Ready Agenda

Over the past five years, states have driven the college- and career-ready agenda – a policy agenda that seeks to ensure all students graduate high school, and graduate ready for their next steps.

North Carolina is among the states that have made college and career readiness a priority for all students.^{xii}

- North Carolina adopted the Common Core State Standards in June 2010.
- North Carolina is a Lead State Partner in the development of the Next Generation Science Standards.
- In 2007, North Carolina adopted a college- and career-ready curriculum as the state's default graduation requirements.

North Carolina is one of only 24 states (including DC) with graduation requirements at this level

- North Carolina administers the ACT to all high school students.

North Carolina is one of only 18 states with high school tests used by higher education for placement decisions letting students know if they are ready for college-level coursework while still in high school to give them time to address any readiness gaps

- North Carolina is a governing state in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), a group of states working to develop a common assessment system using Race to the Top Common Assessment funds.
- North Carolina's meets seven of the ten State Actions identified by the Data Quality Campaign, as well as all ten of the Essential Elements, providing a strong foundation for student-level data collection.
- North Carolina tracks and uses one indicators of college and career readiness and will need to expand its range of indicators to get a more complete picture of how their students are faring in K-12 and beyond.

College- and Career-Ready Indicator	Publicly Reported	State Set Goal	Incentive to Improve	Accountability Formula
CCR Diploma				
CCR Assessment				
Postsecondary Remediation		YES		
Exceeding CCR				

How North Carolina Can Further Advance the College- and Career-Ready Agenda

- ✓ ...Fully realize the promise of the Common Core State Standards by implementing them fully and successfully, taking into account the related curricular, professional development, and policy changes.
- ✓ ...Closely monitor which students are completing the college- and career-ready curriculum, and which are opting out.
- ✓ ...Remain committed to the goals of SBAC and developing and administering a next-generation, computer-based assessment system anchored by college- and career-ready tests in high school that will let students know if they are ready for college-level coursework and measure the full range of the CCSS.
- ✓ ...Continue to make progress on the state's data collection efforts, particularly around linking student-level K-12 and postsecondary data and making data available to relevant stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and counselors.
- ✓ ...Re-examine the state's K-12 accountability system to determine how it can further reward measures of college and career readiness in alignment with the state's standards and graduation requirements.

ⁱ Carnevale, Anthony P. and Donna Desrochers (2003). *Standards for What? The Economic Roots of K-12 Reform*, Education Testing Services. www.learndoeearn.org/For-Educators/Standards-for-What.pdf

ⁱⁱ Skills to Compete <http://www.skills2compete.org>

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Census Bureau (2011). *Current Population Survey*. Figures are based on the total persons in the civilian labor force.

www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstc/cps_table_creator.html

^{iv} Annie E. Casey Foundation. Kids Count Data Center. 2010. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/acrossstates/Rankings.aspx>

^v Analysis of NAEP data downloaded from nationsreportcard.gov

^{vi} Education Week (2009). *Graduation in the United States*.

www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2012/06/07/

^{vii} NCES. *IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey*, analyzed by National Center for Management of Higher Education Systems.

^{viii} www.completecollege.org/docs/North_Carolina_Feb28.pdf

^{ix} Corporate Voices for Working Families & Civic Enterprises (2011). *Across the Great Divide: Perspectives of CEOs and College Presidents on America's Higher Education & Skills Gap*. www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/across-the-great-divide.pdf

^x Achieve/SHRM

^{xi} College Board (2011). *One Year Out: Findings From A National Survey Among Members Of The High School Graduating Class Of 2010*. www.collegeboard.org/OneYearOut

^{xii} Achieve (2012). *Closing the Expectations Gap 2011: 50-State Progress Report on the Alignment of High School Policies with the Demands of College and Careers*.