

Achieving Educational Excellence: 2025-30 Strategic Plan

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Strategic Planning Process

- **Spring 2025** – “Mo Wants to Know” listening and learning series
- **June 2025** – Initial draft of Strategic Plan presented to State Board
- **June – July 2025** – Gathered feedback on initial draft
- **Today** – Final draft of Strategic Plan presented to State Board for approval



Input Process

- Feedback from NCDPI leaders and staff
- Feedback from "Mo Wants to Know" listening and learning series
 - 8 regional convenings
 - 16 school visits
 - 34 sessions with stakeholders including students, educators, parents, charter school leaders, nonprofits, foundations, businesses, and legislators
 - 500 website submissions
 - Over 5,000 North Carolinians heard, including nearly 1,000 educators



Feedback on Initial Draft

- NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Staff
- State Board of Education Members
- Advisory Boards
 - Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission (PEPSC)
 - State Advisory Council on American Indian Education (SACIE)
 - Charter School Review Board (CSRB)
 - Whole Child NC
 - Superintendents' Student Advisory Council (SSAC)



Feedback on Initial Draft

- Local Superintendents and Charter School Leaders
- Local School Board Members
- Regional Teachers and Principals of the Year
- University of North Carolina System
- NC Community College System
- NC Independent Colleges and Universities



Feedback on Initial Draft

- Educator Associations
- Members of the NC General Assembly
- NC Department of Health and Human Services
- Governor Josh Stein's Office
- Members of the General Public



Proposed Joint Mission

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction is to use their constitutional authority to guard and maintain the right to a public education for every student in North Carolina and to support public school units in providing every student an excellent education that prepares them for success in their next phase of life.



Strategic Plan Vision

Achieving Educational Excellence is the vision for this strategic plan. This vision has three main components: high academic achievement; character development; and making North Carolina public schools the best statewide public school system in the United States of America.



Plan Organization

- **Pillars** are thematic goals that guide the framing of the overall plan.
- **Measures** are the outcomes that are expected to be achieved as a result of the implementation of the actions in the plan.
- **Actions** are the discrete activities that will be undertaken to accomplish each pillar. Each action will have its own detailed project plan.
- Actions under each pillar are grouped into **focus areas**, which are intended to further organize the scope of work for that pillar.
- Each action in the plan has an associated **launch date**, which is when DPI will begin executing the project plan for that action.



“Best in Nation” Measures

- Four-Year Cohort High School Graduation Rate
- ACT Composite Score
- Participation in Advanced Placement (AP) Exams
- Performance on Advanced Placement (AP) Exams
- Participation in Dual Enrollment Courses



“Best in Nation” Measures

- Participation in Career and Technical Education (CTE) Courses
- Performance in Career and Technical Education (CTE) Credentials
- Performance in 4th and 8th Grade Reading and Math (as measured by NAEP)
- Participation in Character Education
- School-Aged Children Enrolled In Public Schools



Eight Pillars

1. Prepare Each Student for Their Next Phase in Life
2. Revere Public School Educators
3. Enhance Parent, Caregiver and Community Support
4. Ensure Healthy, Safe and Secure Learning Environments
5. Optimize Operational Excellence
6. Lead Transformative Change
7. Celebrate the Excellence in Public Education
8. Galvanize Champions to Fully Invest in and Support Public Education



Pillar 1

Prepare Each Student for their Next Phase in Life



Pillar 1 – Focus Areas

- *Ignite early learning*
- *Elevate teaching and learning*
- *Promote excellence for all*
- *Reimagine the student experience*
- *Launch life-ready graduates*



Pillar 1 – Highlighted Actions

- Build on the implementation of North Carolina’s Science of Reading initiative by continuing to expand high-impact literacy practices and launch a parallel focus on foundational mathematics to support early learning. (January 2027)
- Support PSUs in expanding access to rigorous pathways, such as AP, International Baccalaureate (IB), Cambridge International, Career and College Promise (CCP), credentialed Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC), to ensure every student takes and passes a college level and career-connected course. (April 2026)



Pillar 1 – Highlighted Actions

- Promote whole-child development and student engagement by expanding access to arts, athletics and student-led leadership opportunities that are aligned to academic standards and designed to cultivate students' strengths, interests and well-being. (August 2026)
- Develop a statewide toolkit to support schools in implementing high-quality character education that teaches students to be good citizens, as well as important values, such as respect, responsibility, integrity, perseverance, courage, justice and self-discipline. (January 2027)
- Create awards for student service learning projects at the school and district levels, as well as a state-level high school diploma endorsement from NCDPI. (January 2028)



Pillar 2

Revere Public School Educators



Pillar 2 – Focus Areas

- *Improve educator recruitment and retention*
- *Expand career pathways for education professionals*
- *Increase educator compensation*
- *Elevate and restore pride in the education profession*



Pillar 2 – Highlighted Actions

- 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 – Highlighted Actions

- Advocate to the North Carolina General Assembly, in partnership with educators, business leaders and community leaders, for competitive teacher, principal and other school staff compensation, including pay for advanced degrees. (November 2026)
- Explore models that increase instructional capacity by reducing burden on teachers, including eliminating or significantly reducing unpaid teacher duties, streamlining compliance processes, increasing teacher planning time and increasing flexible scheduling. (August 2026)



Pillar 3

Enhance Parent, Caregiver and Community Support



Pillar 3 – Focus Areas

- *Engage and empower families*
- *Strengthen community partnerships*



Pillar 3 – Highlighted Actions

- Create a virtual NCDPI Family Academy that could be linked to PSU websites that will offer accessible, webinar-style learning sessions for families. (May 2027)
- Advocate for evidence-based school models, such as “community schools,” that reduce barriers by promoting community resources to support student and family well-being. (May 2027)



Pillar 4

Ensure Healthy, Safe and Secure Learning
Environments



Pillar 4 – Focus Areas

- *Ensure safe school environments*
- *Improve student and staff health and well-being*



Pillar 4 – Highlighted Actions

- Promote student and staff well-being by supporting PSUs in implementing Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child models to foster positive school climates and elevate student voice and belonging. (March 2026)
- Partner with community and health service organizations to identify and share strategies to expand school-based health services for students and staff, including telehealth. (December 2027)



Pillar 5

Optimize Operational Excellence



Pillar 5 – Focus Areas

- *Improve NCDPI's services to stakeholders*
- *Improve collaboration and communication across NCDPI offices*
- *Modernize NCDPI and PSU operations*



Pillar 5 – Highlighted Actions

- Develop and administer a survey to central office staff (a “DPI Customer Service Survey”) to assess customer service strengths and needs. (June 2026)
- Identify and promote PSU best practices for operational efficiency, such as shared services models, as well as engage the business community to leverage expertise on operational effectiveness. (January 2027)
- Explore ways to leverage machine learning, artificial intelligence and advanced analytics to enhance NCDPI efficiency and extend value and insights essential to all statewide stakeholders. (January 2027)



Pillar 6

Lead Transformative Change



Pillar 6 – Focus Areas

- *Transform schools through research and development*
- *Connect North Carolina public schools through education networks*
- *Promote integrated support systems for schools and districts*
- *Explore accountability and funding reform*



Pillar 6 – Highlighted Actions

- 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)
- Establish statewide, regional and partner education networks to facilitate implementation of key strategic plan priorities, share scalable resources and support continuous improvement across PSUs. (September 2026)
- Expand SBE and NCDPI efforts to support districts designated as low-performing and districts experiencing financial challenges. (March 2028)



Pillar 6 – Highlighted Actions

- Establish an SBE Task Force to develop a new school-level accountability system that will:
 - Consider the variability among high schools with respect to available opportunities and funding, such as AP and CTE courses, etc.;
 - Reliably assess multiple measures of student performance in grades 3-12 that includes measures of progress towards ensuring all students graduate prepared for their next phase of life. (October 2025)



Pillar 7

Celebrate the Excellence in Public Education



Pillar 7 – Focus Areas

- *Develop comprehensive public education messaging*
- *Engage partners on education*
- *Share public education messaging and stories*



Pillar 7 – Highlighted Actions

- Engage, align and support PSU communications staff to align communication efforts that celebrate public education. (December 2025)
- Work with education partners on statewide communication efforts that uplift success stories, testimonials and positive narratives about public schools. (December 2025)
- Encourage joint events and community engagement activities where NCDPI and education partners present unified messaging about public education. (May 2026)



Pillar 8

Galvanize Champions to Fully Invest in and Support Public Education



Pillar 8 – Focus Areas

- *Build community voices*
- *Promote engagement initiatives*
- *Move champions to action*



Pillar 8 – Highlighted Actions

- Develop and launch a statewide reading campaign where students will collectively read 10 million books annually, in collaboration with state and local partners. (January 2026)
- Create a statewide foundation to fund various initiatives in this and future strategic plans. (December 2026)
- Work with partners to explore creating an endowment that will allow all public high school graduates, regardless of income, to attend at least two years of postsecondary education completely tuition-free inclusive of federal and state financial aid. (June 2030)



Implementation

- Plan is designed to be dynamic and evolve through a continuous improvement process that strengthens and refines efforts over time
- NCDPI will establish an **Office of Strategic Planning** tasked with overseeing the execution and evolution of the plan
 - Office will assign NCDPI business owners for each plan action in collaboration with NCDPI leadership and staff
 - Business owners will lead project teams in developing and executing a detailed project plan for each action



Implementation

- NCDPI will convene a **Strategic Plan Monitoring and Accountability Committee** composed of senior leaders from across the agency, which will be primarily responsible for
 - Reviewing and approving project plans developed by business owners and project teams
 - Providing direction, support and resources to business owners and project teams
 - Managing timelines, milestones and deliverables
 - Identifying implementation challenges and addressing barriers
 - Developing an Excellence Report Card that relates to the pillars of the plan
 - Monitoring progress toward strategic goals
 - Reporting quarterly on plan implementation to the state superintendent and the SBE, which will serve as a transparent mechanism for tracking progress and ensuring accountability



Next Steps

- **August 20, 2025**

- Strategic Plan Launch Event (evening - Neuse River Middle School, Wake County)

- **Fall 2025**

- Launch events across the state in all eight regions and virtually
- Strategic Plan Monitoring and Accountability Committee will convene
- Begin development of action project plans for actions to launch this fiscal year



Questions and Discussion

