



**THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
SYSTEM**

Annual Educator Preparation Report

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

June 15, 2020

The University of North Carolina System

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Pursuant to GS 116-11 (12d), the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall provide a comprehensive annual report on teacher education efforts at The University of North Carolina each year to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education.

Introduction

Teacher preparation is a core part of the University of North Carolina System's identity. Many UNC System institutions were founded over the past two centuries for the purpose of teacher preparation. While their missions have expanded since those early days, the focus on educator preparation remains paramount.

The fifteen Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) in the UNC System are leaders in efforts to prepare teachers to be successful as they focus on continuous improvement of their programs. UNC System graduates make up 43 percent of the public school teachers in North Carolina, but that number could be a lot higher. To that end, the System's strategic plan, *Higher Expectations*, calls on our institutions to increase the number of high-quality credentials in several critical workforce areas, including K-12 education. UNC System teacher education programs are responding to this goal through several strategic efforts aimed at preparing more—and more effective—teachers and school leaders for the public schools of North Carolina through recruitment, preparation, and teacher quality research.

UNC Educator Preparation Trends

The UNC System's colleges of education have experienced significant declines in enrollment, mirroring a nationwide trend. Between 2011 and 2018 alone, enrollments in educator preparation programs in the UNC System dropped 30 percent. Those numbers have rebounded some since 2016, but are still far below previous levels.¹ Despite these enrollment declines, the UNC System is still the largest producer of public school teachers in North Carolina. Thirty-seven percent of the teachers in North Carolina's public schools are UNC System graduates and 43 percent of the beginning teaching corps (i.e., teachers with less than two years of experience) graduated from UNC System EPPs. Research indicates that, overall, teachers prepared at UNC System institutions generally have higher value-added estimates, earn higher evaluation ratings, and stay in the classroom longer than teachers prepared through most other routes.² Data from 2018 indicate that about 84% of UNC System graduates met or exceeded targets for expected student growth.³

Educator Preparation & P12 Partnership Efforts

The UNC System established the Division of University & P12 (Preschool through 12th Grade) Partnerships in 1998. The division was created to acknowledge the University's priority of strengthening North Carolina's public schools and educator preparation programs. This work continues to be one of the University's highest priorities. Now structured within the Strategy and Policy Division, the P12 Partnerships team is the primary liaison with the fifteen UNC System schools of education, inter-institutional programs related to P12 education, the NC Department of Public Instruction, the NC General

¹ See UNC Educator Quality Dashboard. "Enrollment". <http://eqdashboard.northcarolina.edu>.

² Research suggests that teachers who enter through Teach for America perform better than UNC-trained teachers, as do visiting international teachers in some subjects. See Bastian, Kevin and Qi W. Xing. "Staffing North Carolina's Classrooms: Evidence Connecting Teacher Preparation to Teacher Outcomes." Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC) (2015): https://publicpolicy.UNC.edu/files/2015/07/Staffing_North-Carolinas_Classrooms_Evidence-Connecting_Teacher-Preparation_to_Teacher-Outcomes_April-2016.pdf.

³ See UNC Educator Quality Dashboard. "Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS)." <http://eqdashboard.northcarolina.edu/performance-employment/>.

Assembly, and all other programs and organizations related to the University's support for public schools, students, and teachers. The division is primarily focused on the UNC System's goal of preparing effective teachers and school leaders for North Carolina's public schools. The division staff works toward this mission by supporting evidence-based programs, initiatives, and strategic research to improve P12 practices and educator preparation.

In 2015, the UNC Board of Governors Subcommittee on Teacher and School Leader Quality adopted a set of recommendations designed to strengthen, focus, and, where necessary, redesign UNC System educator preparation programs to produce a world-class educator workforce for North Carolina (Appendix A). These recommendations guided the work of the P12 Division for several years, and significant progress has been made in accomplishing these overarching goals. The state has re-launched the Teaching Fellows program, providing recruitment incentives for teacher candidates at three UNC System institutions to serve in high-need fields and schools in North Carolina; all educator preparation programs in the UNC System now use edTPA, a validated performance tool enabling data-driven improvements in candidates' preparation and teacher education programs; and the Educator Quality Dashboard has served as a national model for ensuring public accountability for the state's public EPPs enabling more data-driven policymaking for educator preparation across the state. The division has worked diligently to ensure greater public accountability, implement research-based approaches to teacher and principal preparation, increase collaboration and partnerships, expand and enhance high quality clinical practice, strengthen recruitment and selection of prospective candidates into educator preparation programs, and improve support for early career educators.

Educator Preparation & Recruitment

Even amidst this progress, the UNC System knows there is more work to be done, especially in light of new policies, higher expectations, and increasing demands upon P12 schools. In addition, System Office leaders recognize the benefit of multiple approaches to meaningful improvement and sustainable change, and have endeavored to build on state-level policy reforms and system-wide efforts by working with EPP leaders, practicing teachers, and other stakeholders on key initiatives. The P12 Division administers and provides support for the following initiatives:

North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program

First established in 1986, the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program is a forgivable-loans-for-service program designed to recruit high-achieving students into the teaching profession. Teaching Fellows provides up to \$4,125 per semester in financial aid that is repayable through teaching service in any North Carolina public school—traditional public, lab school, or charter school.

Reauthorized by the NC General Assembly in 2017, the Teaching Fellows program now focuses specifically on recruiting for the high-need subject areas of STEM and Special Education. There are currently five EPP partners -- two private and three UNC System institutions: North Carolina State University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In 2019, the Board of Governors included a proposal to expand the Teaching Fellows program to three additional EPPs. That proposal is currently awaiting legislative approval.

There are currently 164 Teaching Fellows, and the process is underway to select the third class of candidates for the 2020-2021 academic year. While the primary goal of the Teaching Fellows program is to produce high-quality educators in high-need subject areas, there is a particular focus on increasing the diversity of teaching fellows in terms of both racial and geographic representation.

North Carolina Principal Fellows Program/Transforming Principal Preparation Program (TP3)

The Principal Fellows Program, created in 1993, was originally designed to provide state-funded forgivable loans to principal candidates attending UNC System institutions. In 2015, the Transforming Principal Preparation Program (TP3), a competitive grants-based program for high-quality principal preparation, was established in North Carolina.

In 2019, the General Assembly took action to reform principal preparation by enacting Senate Bill 227: TP3/Principal Fellows Consolidation. The legislation consolidates the traditional Principal Fellows Program with the Transforming Principal Preparation Program (TP3), revolutionizing the way North Carolina recruits and prepares school leaders. The consolidated program retains the competitive grants-based model of TP3 and the state-appointed Commission governance structure of the Principal Fellows Program. In the first full year of the merger (2021-2022), there are 109 candidates scheduled to graduate.

Future Teachers of North Carolina

The purpose of the Future Teachers of North Carolina Program (FTNC) is to encourage high-achieving high school students to consider teaching as a profession by providing opportunity to enroll in college-level, introductory education courses that award up to six credit hours at a partnering UNC System institution. The three UNC System partner institutions are North Carolina A&T State University, the University of North Carolina Wilmington, and Western Carolina University. FTNC was established by the General Assembly in 2017.

As required by the authorizing legislation, the System Office worked with faculty members from each of the partner institutions of higher education (IHEs) to develop a course curriculum, supported by a team from RTI International. High school teachers who are accepted into the program attend a curriculum training and receive professional development support. Support is also provided to support targeted recruitment efforts to participating students by hosting campus visits to learn more about the respective education programs of the partner institutions.

The BOG has proposed legislative changes to the FTNC program that would expand the current program footprint from three institutions to all System EPPs. This pending change would provide institutions with greater opportunity to partner with school districts in their respective regions and strengthen the recruitment pipeline by providing a clearer pathway and easier transition from high school into an EPP.

Teacher Recruitment Fund

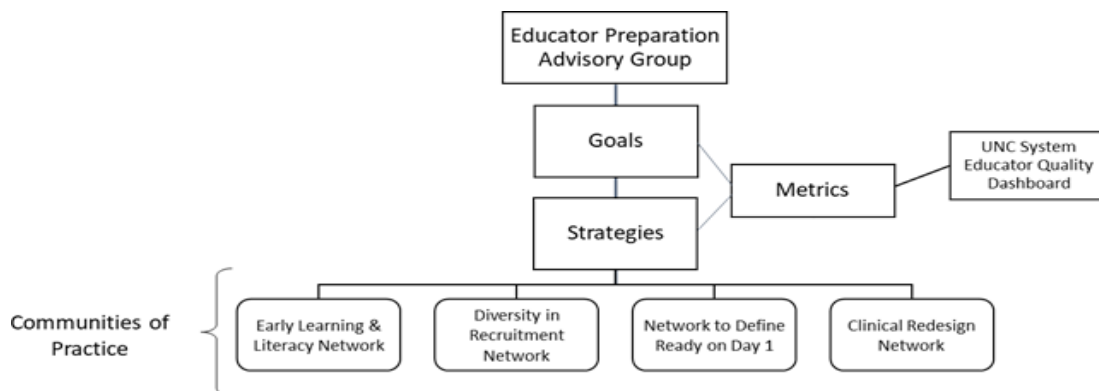
The UNC System receives an annual appropriation from the NC General Assembly of \$750,000 to support teacher recruitment efforts for the 15 EPPs. The funds are disbursed to EPPs on the basis of quantitative and qualitative metrics like student completion, production in high-need licensure areas, successful recruitment of diverse candidates, and the effectiveness of EPP graduates. EPPs are able to utilize recruitment funds in a variety of ways: hosting student campus visits, offering outreach at career fairs, providing targeted student support, increasing outreach to LEA partners, marketing efforts, and supporting program improvements, among others. The funds can also provide staffing support for campus recruiters.

Educator Preparation Advisory Group

In 2018, the UNC System Office commissioned a report, *Leading on Literacy*⁴, to examine undergraduate teacher preparation programs within its constituent institutions. The study identified several opportunities for improvement in teacher preparation, particularly in effective literacy instruction. It also identified several possible ways for the UNC System Office to better support faculty and leaders in teacher recruitment and preparation more broadly. In response to these findings, the System Office convened an Educator Preparation Advisory Group in 2018, comprised of education experts across P12 and higher education, with the mission to support and accelerate improvement of teacher preparation across the UNC System.

Over the course of 18 months, the advisory group developed a set of goals, strategies, and actions to accelerate improvement in educator preparation (Appendix B). Each of the strategies that the advisory group prioritized will generate an associated “community of practice” to *catalyze action* among a group of EPPs within the UNC System to accelerate their progress toward one or more of the Advisory Group’s goals (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Relationship between the Advisory Group’s Goals, Metrics, Strategies, and Communities of Practice



This internal review overlapped substantially with another state-wide effort to increase educational quality and attainment across the full P20 spectrum: the myFutureNC initiative. In its final recommendations, the myFutureNC Commission included placing a priority on recruiting, developing, and retaining excellent educators state-wide.

Early Learning and Literacy Impact Coalition

The Educator Preparation Advisory Group formulated the Early Learning and Literacy Impact Coalition as the first of the communities of practice. Teams from five diverse educator preparation programs (three UNC System institutions and two private institutions) developed a set of recommendations

⁴ Bryan, B.A., Hougen, M., & Nelson, K. (2018). *Leading on Literacy: Challenges and Opportunities in Teacher Preparation Across the University of North Carolina System*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina System Office. https://www.northcarolina.edu/UNC_Teacher_Prep_Report_2018.

over the course of year. The working group, facilitated by Deans for Impact, a national non-profit, based its recommendations upon the belief that educator preparation programs must set clear expectations for early childhood and elementary candidates such that they understand and organize their teaching around the principles and practices that are identified in *The Science of Early Learning*.⁵ The coalition established recommendations for the State Board of Education to advance improved practice in early learning and literacy (Appendix C).

In February 2020, the co-chairs of the Educator Preparation Advisory Group presented to the Board of Governors the recommendations set forth by the Early Learning and Literacy Coalition, in addition to a progress report of the advisory group's efforts. As noted previously, the Board of Governors passed a Resolution on Teacher Preparation (Appendix D), which charged UNC System educator preparation programs to develop a unified literacy framework to be adopted and implemented by all institutions by June 2022. In addition, the resolution outlined an annual timeline for reporting progress on each of the goals set forth by the Educator Preparation Advisory Group.

Other Initiatives

Laboratory Schools

In 2016, the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation requiring the UNC Board of Governors to establish eight lab schools aimed at improving student performance in low-performing schools. The legislation was modified in 2017 to require the creation of nine lab schools rather than eight. These laboratory schools are considered K-12 public schools of choice, operated by a UNC System institution rather than by a local school district. Five laboratory schools are currently open and operating: East Carolina University's Community School, Western Carolina University's The Catamount School, Appalachian State University's Appalachian Academy at Middle Fork, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro's Moss Street Partnership School, and the University of North Carolina Wilmington's D.C. Virgo Preparatory Academy. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) is scheduled to open an additional laboratory school in the 2020-21 academic year.

The establishment of the UNC laboratory schools provides the opportunity to redefine and strengthen university partnerships with public schools, improve student outcomes, and provide high quality teacher and principal training. The Lab Schools directly partner with local school districts to promote evidence-based teaching and school leadership, while offering real-world experience to the next generation of teachers and principals. UNC Lab Schools serve every part of the University of North Carolina System mission — teaching, research, and public service.

GEAR UP

In 2019, the University of North Carolina System Office was awarded a new, seven-year, \$25.7 million Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant. This is the fourth statewide GEAR UP grant that the UNC System has secured since 2000.

GEAR UP is a national college access initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Education, aimed at increasing the number of low-income students enrolled at and succeeding in postsecondary education. As a state grantee, GEAR UP North Carolina disseminates information about college access across the state. At designated target school districts, located in financially-disadvantaged areas, GEAR UP reaches

⁵ Deans for Impact (2019). *The Science of Early Learning*. Austin, TX: Author.

students to get them motivated and on track to pursue post-secondary education. The program's work with 12th graders is designed to help them transition from high school to postsecondary education.

GEAR UP NC uses a two-part strategy to serve students in fifteen high schools across multiple school districts. Services are provided to 6th and 7th grade students and their families in five middle schools, and their respective feeder high school also receives GEAR UP priority services. These services include customized instruction to improve math and science preparation, afterschool and summer academic enrichment, and access to STEM and computer science apprenticeship opportunities. These students will continue to receive services as they complete high school and their first year of postsecondary education. In addition to targeting the five feeder high schools, priority services are also provided in ten additional high schools across multiple school districts. Special consideration is given to high schools with low rates of college enrollment. Twelfth graders and their families receive just-in-time support, such as financial aid counseling, college advising, and college match and fit counseling. Students also receive student coaching during their first year of postsecondary education. By 2026, GEAR UP North Carolina will provide academic preparation and college exploration services to nearly 35,000 students and their families.

Digital Learning

The UNC System and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) are working collaboratively under a contract with the North Carolina State Board of Education to create a professional development strategy related to the Digital Learning Competencies for faculty at educator preparation programs. As part of this effort, working groups comprised of representatives from the UNC System and NCICU were established and have jointly recommended Micro-Credentialing as a professional development strategy for EPP faculty. During the 2019-2020 academic year, the working groups have jointly completed the following deliverables:

- Planning for the *2020 Digital Learning Research Symposium* and work on the refinement of the Professional Development Strategy
- Collaboration with Elon University to host the *2020 Digital Learning Research Symposium*, a joint meeting of the NCICU and UNC EPP deans/department chairs held on February 14, 2020. The symposium featured an agenda focused on digital learning techniques led by EPP graduates and EPP faculty teaching throughout the state.
- The working groups are jointly authoring a final report on their recommended Professional Development Strategy of Micro-Credentialing. The final report will also include a refined version of the Digital Learning Competencies for EPP faculty, as well as recommendations for a streamlined version of the Digital Learning Progress Rubric for EPPs.

Strategic Research Initiatives

Established in 2007, the UNC Educator Quality Research Initiative is an ongoing strategic research partnership among UNC System subject matter experts focused on the development and implementation of an annual agenda of research on educator preparation and effectiveness. This initiative provides educator preparation programs in the UNC System with research evidence to inform program improvement efforts, enhances state-wide understanding of critical workforce needs, and supports evidence-based education reform efforts. This collaborative partnership has investigated numerous topics, including: the value-added effectiveness of teachers entering the profession through varied pathways; on-the-job performance and retention of graduates of UNC System educator preparation programs; beginning teacher and employer perceptions of preparation quality; the predictive validity of teacher performance assessments; the effectiveness of teachers with graduate degrees; and beginning teachers expertise in evidence-based early literacy instruction. In addition, the annual research agenda

includes the rigorous evaluation of the efficacy and efficiency of several P12 programs and initiatives, such as Laboratory Schools, Principal Fellows, and the North Carolina New Teacher Support Program.

In 2015, the UNC Educator Quality Dashboard was developed to share and disseminate key findings from the strategic research agenda. The dashboard is a public, interactive, web-based tool designed to ensure greater public accountability, increase transparency, and facilitate data for all education stakeholders. Built with SAS® data visualization software, the dashboard provides an easy-to-use interface that enables users, including educators, administrators, policymakers, parents, and students, to analyze and display data on educator quality within selected populations, geographic regions, or subject areas. Visitors to the dashboard may examine performance indicators at the System and institution levels across a range of factors, including educator recruitment, selection, preparation and performance. The dashboard is also useful for analyzing the impact of educator preparation program graduates on P12 student learning, measures associated with national accreditation, and other outcome-based indicators. The dashboard can be viewed online at eqdasbhoard.northcarolina.edu.

In 2017, the Data and Strategic Research Advisory Committee (DSRAC) was established to better utilize the significant expertise at UNC System institutions to guide and inform the annual strategic research agenda, data dashboards, and required educator preparation program reporting. The DSRAC is comprised of university leaders and research faculty from all 15 UNC System educator preparation programs and is tasked with ensuring all research initiatives reflect the most accurate and beneficial data for program improvement. The DSRAC is also tasked with providing expert consultation on the development of new measures and refinement of current indicators of educator quality; ensuring data and research drive program improvement and evidence-based decision-making cultures among UNC System educator preparation programs, and ensuring all strategic research initiatives remain at the forefront of research and development.

Innovations in Educator Preparation

BWF Fast Track Scholars: The Burroughs Wellcome Fast Track Scholars Program began in 2006 as a partnership between the Burroughs Wellcome Fund and four University of North Carolina System institutions: North Carolina Central University, North Carolina State University, UNC Asheville, and UNC-Chapel Hill. The BWF Fast Track program was designed to create a “fast track” pathway to teacher certification for science and math majors. At each of the four participating institutions, the Provost, Dean of Education, and Dean(s) of Arts & Sciences collaborated to develop the “fast track” pathway offered to junior and senior science or math majors to obtain teacher certification in a science/math licensure area, along with a science or math baccalaureate degree.

The BWF program also provided scholars with financial support and the opportunity to participate in a STEM-focused international trip as a professional development opportunity after teaching in the classroom for two years. The BWF partnership was designed to support approximately 30 slots at each participating institution. While the funding for scholarships has ended, the BWF Fast Track program remains an important example of an innovative partnership that created specific pathways to foster recruitment and preparation of high-quality STEM candidates.

UNC-BEST and North Carolina A&Teach: The UNC-BEST and North Carolina A&Teach programs recruit STEM majors in either their junior or senior year and provide an accelerated pathway to teacher licensure, which includes careful instruction in pedagogy and time dedicated for students to be in a classroom environment. These abridged pathways provide students with the benefit and added marketability of

teacher licensure without additional time, coursework, or expense. Both serve as examples of how institutions can take the initiative to tailor pathways in a way that is organically supported by the campus leadership and faculty—particularly by independently securing grant funding for their respective efforts that allows for financial assistance to be offered to participating students. Funding from the National Science Foundation’s Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship program was utilized to support the North Carolina A&Teach work, and NSF Noyce funding has also supported similar STEM teacher recruitment efforts at other campuses, including Appalachian State, East Carolina, NC State, and UNC Charlotte.

Educator Preparation at UNC Asheville: Students at UNC Asheville have the opportunity to pursue a major of their choosing while also obtaining teaching certification in four years. The program currently offers teacher licensure in twelve areas of concentration, including middle and high school math and science.

The Walter and Daisy Carson Latham Clinical Schools Network: The Walter and Daisy Carson Latham Clinical Schools Network is a partnership between East Carolina University and 47 public school systems in North Carolina, encompassing approximately 600 schools and 22,500 teachers. The network represents a shared responsibility for the recruitment, induction, retention, and renewal of teachers across eastern North Carolina. The network provides quality field placements for pre-service teachers in diverse settings and authentic clinical experiences that promote interaction between university faculty, public school faculty, teacher education candidates, and public school students.

Pathway to Practice NC: The Pathway to Practice program helps North Carolina address its growing teacher shortage by providing a new avenue for residency-licensed or lateral entry teachers to gain licensure. To provide more effective teacher preparation for residency-licensed teachers, UNC-Chapel Hill’s School of Education and NC State’s College of Education established Pathway to Practice to provide residency-licensed teachers with the teaching skills and knowledge they need to be effective in the classroom. Pathway to Practice is affordable, self-paced, competency-based, and offered 100% online. The program launched in October 2017, with 15 residency-licensed teachers. In less than a year, Pathway to Practice had more than doubled its enrollment. Since it began, the program has seen 12 teachers complete the program and earn full teacher licensure, with another 86 residency-licensed teachers from across the state currently enrolled.

Conclusion

Preparing more high-quality teachers and school leaders for North Carolina’s P12 students is one of the University of North Carolina System’s highest priorities. This goal is central to the UNC System’s mission and Strategic Plan. While no single solution will transform North Carolina’s educator workforce alone, the work of the Division of University & P12 Partnerships makes an important contribution in fostering the success of North Carolina students.

The goals, strategies, programs, and initiatives outlined in this report reflect the UNC System’s long-standing contribution and renewed commitment to the long-term success of P12 education in North Carolina. It is worth noting that a global economy and an ever-changing policy landscape both underscore the vital need to continually expand and reexamine the System Office’s efforts to make meaningful reforms to educator preparation the linchpin of transformative change for P12 education.