

**NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading  
Data Action Team  
Meeting Three Summary Report**

The NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Data Action Team met for the third time on March 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 am-2:30 pm at RTI International in Research Triangle Park.

All of the materials and presentations shared at the meeting are online at <http://buildthefoundation.org/data-action-team/>.

Purpose of the Data Action Team

The Data Action Team was co-convened by the [North Carolina Early Childhood Foundation](#), [NC Child](#), [The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.](#), and excelleNCe (an initiative of [BEST NC](#)) to identify and recommend – in collaboration with the larger Stakeholder Group – a set of population-level measures of success that impact third grade reading success. These measures will be whole-child, begin at birth, and align with the goals in Lisbeth Schorr’s [Pathway to Children Ready for School and Succeeding at Third Grade](#).

The Data Action Team will engage in a landscape survey of existing national birth-to-eight indicators and indicators being used by NC state-level organizations and select a limited number of measures of success that best suit NC’s context based on our state’s strengths and needs. The Stakeholder Group will be kept abreast of the Data Action Team’s work, and their feedback will be solicited on a regular basis as the Data Action Team moves through the process of selecting the measures of success.

Data Action Team Membership

As defined by the shared [Data Action Team Description](#), Data Action Team members include early childhood experts from inside and outside state government, academia, service providers and parents, and represented the Health, Family/Community, and Education sectors. It is a phenomenal group! *See Appendix A for a list of the Data Action Team members.*

**Data Action Team Meeting Three Summary**

**Welcome and Reminder of the Data Action Team Goals and Process**

Tracy Zimmerman (NC Early Childhood Foundation) started the meeting by welcoming the team and reminding everyone where we were in the process, acknowledging that this is messy work, and celebrating our forward momentum.

**Grounding in the Research**

The group then worked through an exercise designed to ground us in the research base behind what moves the needle on third grade reading proficiency. It has been an important principle since the beginning of this work that all measures chosen are research-based.

## Criteria for Prioritizing Measures

The main goal for meeting 3 of the Data Action Team was to begin paring down the long lists of measures for each outcome that the group had brainstormed during the first two meetings. To do so, the team needed to agree on a set of criteria that each Goal group would use to prioritize their lists of measures. After a good conversation, the agreed-upon criteria are as follows:

- **Research-based.** Connected clearly to the top-line result through research
- **Actionable.** Is something that can be reasonably affected through state or local legislation; policy, program or practice change; or community action
- **Impactful.** Will positively impact the lives of a substantial number of NC children and families
- **Easily Communicated.** Can be easily understood by parents, policymakers, and other key stakeholders
- **Equalizing.** Will reduce gaps and inequalities that currently exist among NC populations

It was suggested that we also keep in mind the unintended consequences of all decisions made. Whether it's data or strategy or policy, every decision has consequences outside of our intended purpose.

Before getting to work to begin paring down the lists of measures, the team took a moment to think about the meaning of consensus -- even though the decision may not be exactly what I want, I can live with and support it!

## Narrowing the Lists of Measures - Small Group Work

The team then broke out into their three Goal groups -- Health, Family/Community, and Education -- and began a facilitated process to narrow their lists of measures to five or fewer per Outcome. (Each of the three Goals has four to five Outcomes. Click [here](#) to revisit the Goals and Outcomes.)

After the Goal groups had worked through each of their Outcomes and narrowed the lists to five or fewer research-based measures per Outcome, they put them up on the wall for a gallery walk. Members of each Goal group considered the other groups' chosen measures and commented. The Goal groups then reconvened to consider those comments and assign who in their groups would collect NC data for each of the measures they had selected.

Before the next Data Action Team meeting, on April 28th, members from each Goal group will pull the NC data for each of the measures that are still on the lists, recognizing that NC may not currently collect data for some measures. Then at the April meeting, the Goal groups will consider both the NC context and input from the larger Stakeholder Group to narrow the lists still further.

## Stakeholder Group Input Needed

The Data Action Team will be informed by Stakeholder Group input to make their final recommendations at the next meeting. To that end, we will be sending a link to the Stakeholder Group that will allow them to consider the measures recommended so far by the Data Action Team

and rank them in order of importance, based on their connection to the top-line result -- third grade reading proficiency.

The Meeting 3 presentation is online [here](#).

### **Next Steps for the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative**

The goal of the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Project is to create partnerships among the state's early learning and education, public agency, policy, philanthropic and business leaders to define a common vision, shared measures of success and coordinated strategies that support children's optimal development beginning at birth.

After the Data Action Team develops the measures of success, next steps for the project include:

- Disaggregating the data for each priority measure of success.
- Understanding the needs of those who shape children's early environments.
- Identifying immediate ways to support alignment and progress on the measures of success.
- Developing a results-based action plan.
- Promoting best practice and policy to advance the measures of success.
- Measuring progress.

### ***Appendix A: Data Action Team Members***

**Gary Ander**, NC Infant Mental Health Association

**Laila Bell**, NC Child

**Jessica Murrell Berryman**, Parent Representative and Business Owner, Lango Kids RTP

**Brandy Bynum**, Rural Forward NC, Foundation for Health Leadership & Innovation

**Anna Carter**, Child Care Services Association

**KC Elander**, Department of Public Instruction

**Kelly Evans**, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy

**Paula Henderson**, SAS

**Brisa Hernandez**, Carolinas HealthCare System

**Jennifer Johnson**, NC Division of Child Development and Early Education

**Sandy Johnson**, Early Learning Teacher

**Mary Jones**, Principal, Bailey Elementary, Nash-Rocky Mount Schools

**Jennifer Mattie**, Parent Representative

**Kelly Maxwell**, Child Trends

**Priscilla Jacobs Maynor, Ph.D.**, imaginED

**Mark McDaniel**, UNC Center for Community Capital

**Karen Mills**, Johnston County Partnership for Children

**Tazra Mitchell**, Budget and Tax Center, NC Justice Center

**Nicole Gardner-Neblett, Ph.D.**, FPG Child Development Institute, UNC Chapel Hill

**Amy Hawn Nelson, Ph.D.**, UNC Charlotte Urban Institute

**Kristin O'Connor**, NC Division of Social Services

**Chris Payne, Ph.D.**, Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships, UNC Greensboro

**Ellen Peisner-Feinberg, Ph.D.**, FPG Child Development Institute, UNC Chapel Hill

**Olivia Rice**, RTI International

**Katie Rosanbalm, Ph.D.**, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy

**Meghan Shanahan, Ph.D.**, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

**Terry Stoops, Ph.D.**, John Locke Foundation

**Kim McCombs-Thornton, Ph.D.**, North Carolina Partnership for Children

**Kathleen Jones Vessey**, NC State Center for Health Statistics

**Marvel Andrea Welch**, Ph.D. Candidate in Public Health at Walden University