

NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative
High Quality Birth-to-Eight Learning and Education Learning Team
Meeting One Summary Report

The NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading High Quality Birth-to-Eight Learning and Education Learning Team met for the first time on September 20 from 1-4 pm at SAS in Cary.

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

Pathways to Grade Level Reading Initiative Background

The NC [Pathways to Grade-Level Reading initiative](#) (Pathways) aims to ensure that every child has a clear pathway to an important developmental milestone – reading on grade level by third grade. To accomplish this, diverse partners are working together to make sure that children have everything they need, starting at birth, to reach that early reading milestone on time.

Research tells us that when children have good **health** (starting from birth), high-quality **education** (including early care, pre-kindergarten, and the early grades) and strong and supportive **families and communities**, they have the best opportunity to be on track by third grade.

Pathways has two major goals for all children:

- (1) **Children will be reading well by the time school shifts from learning to read to reading to learn.** Research has shown us that reading proficiently by third grade is essential for future school success and life outcomes. In fact, we can predict who is unlikely to finish high school based on third-grade reading scores.
- (2) **From the time they are born, children will be healthy, well-educated and living in supportive families and communities.** The three domains that research says are important for early literacy (health, education, and supportive families and communities) are the same things that children and families need for future school and life success.

In order for more children to be successful readers by third grade, partnerships are being created among the state's leaders in early learning and education, public agencies, policy, philanthropy, and business to agree on a common focus, identify key data indicators – measures of success – to track, and outline a set of shared strategies for taking action.

During the first phase of the Pathways work, [experts reviewed data](#) about the factors that matter in children's development and created a framework of key [measures of success](#). These measures – things like children's mental health, adults' parenting skills, and neighborhoods where children are safe to play – are the most important building blocks of healthy and well-

educated children and safe and supportive families and communities. Research tells us that if we can ensure more children have these building blocks in place from birth, more children will be reading on grade level by third grade.

Purpose of the Learning Teams

The second phase of the work involves [Learning Teams](#), whose charge is to understand how North Carolina is doing on these measures, including shifts in trends, what groups of children are struggling more than others, and how moving one data point might affect another.

The work of the Learning Teams will lead North Carolina into the third phase of Pathways work – partners, together, choosing which measures of success to begin working on first and outlining strategies for taking action.

Pathways is powered by the NC Early Childhood Foundation in collaboration with NC Child, The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc., and BEST NC.

See Appendix A for a list of the Education Learning Team members.

Meeting One Summary

Co-Chairs Khari Garvin of MDC, Inc. and Terry Stoops of the John Locke Foundation welcomed the Learning Team members.

Tracy Zimmerman, NCECF Executive Director, shared background on the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative, highlighted engaged organizations, and introduced (in-absentia) the co-chairs for all three Learning Teams (Health, Education, and Families & Communities). After the co-chairs asked everyone to introduce themselves, Tracy updated the group on how the Pathways Initiative arrived where it is today, including how the Data Action Team chose the Measures of Success.

The co-chairs then highlighted the characteristics that Learning Team members should embody, such as a commitment to being research- and data-driven, a commitment to acknowledging and eliminating systemic inequities, and an eagerness to think outside the box.

Co-chair Terry Stoops, who also was a member of the Data Action Team, introduced the group to the Measures of Success Framework. He asked everyone to think through individually which parts of the Framework are the most relevant to their work.

Mandy Ableidinger, Policy and Practice Leader at NCECF, then walked through the Learning Team responsibilities and what to expect at each of the four meetings of the Learning Team. She also outlined the goal of the meeting – specifically, to critically review the indicator data to identify inequities that need to be considered when designing strategies for action.

Mandy then walked the group through the data they will be considering during the Learning Teams process. The Pathways work is a data- and evidence-driven process.

- Where data was available, trends over time and data disaggregated by race/ethnicity, income, geography and/or age are presented for the group's consideration.
- Those indicators that are not regularly tracked in NC will comprise the Pathways Data Development Agenda. One of the goals of the Pathways project is to continue data advocacy around those data development agenda items to encourage NC leaders to begin collecting data systematically around all the measures of success in the framework.

Mandy walked the group through the data book, pointing out the different types of charts, chart features, and how to interpret the data.

The Learning Team then spent the rest of the meeting examining the data, specifically considering the question of equity. For each outcome, and each indicator in that outcome, each small group (table) moved through a process that included:

- Individual reflection – What seems important here?
- Small table conversation – What do you see in terms of inequities? Which ones are most important to pay attention to? Which groups seem most disadvantaged?
- Small table equity rating – To what extent does this indicator represent an area where great inequities exist?

Each table graphed its thoughts on the wall, adding sticky notes to columns headed by various subgroup titles (African-American, Hispanic, Other Race, White, Low-Income, Geography), as well as columns for Overall Changes in Inequities and Data Questions.

The results of the small-group work are included in this report as Appendix B. There was frustration around some aspects of the data, including difficulty comparing charts from different data sources, and NC data that might be available but was not accessible for this meeting. Data source suggestions were made that the facilitators will follow up on before Meeting 2. Several team members offered their assistance in gleaning the needed information from the Department of Public Instruction and other data files. The team had a rich discussion about the child care enrollment indicator, with many members suggesting that it does not belong under an Outcome focused on Quality.

After the small group work, there was a full-group discussion around the results of the table conversations. Some of the comments are included below:

- We want to look at the patterns of inequities across indicators – for example, with maps that have overlays for the different indicators.
- Suspensions, expulsions, retentions all had great inequities – by race/ethnicity and also by geography and age.
- Pulling data from so many sources makes it hard to compare. And yet, that's the way education data works in our state – it does come from many different sources.
- Can we see all the data behind the charts?

Mandy thanked the group for coming and reminded them that the next meeting is October 19, in the same room.

The PowerPoint presentation for the meeting is available online at <http://buildthefoundation.org/learning-teams/>

Appendix A: Education Learning Team Members (as of meeting 1)

Khari Terry	Garvin Stoops	Great Expectations - Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust John Locke Foundation
Anita	Barker	United Way of North Carolina
Lorie	Barnes	NCAeyc
Nancy	Brown	The NC Partnership for Children/Smart Start, Inc.
Anna	Carter	Child Care Services Association
Karla	Casteen	NC Department of Public Instruction/K-3 Literacy
Carolyn	Dickens	Motheread, Inc.
KC	Elander	NC Department of Public Instruction
Susan	Gates	SAS
Carolyn	Guthrie	NC Department of Public Instruction
Michelle	Hearon	Partnership for Children of Cumberland County, Inc.
Mary	Herbenick	Ready for School, Ready for Life
Suzanne	Hughes	NCAeyc
Mary	Jones	Nash/Rocky Mount Public School District
Julie	Kowal	BEST NC
Phillip	Lampron	Down East Partnership for Children
Debra	Lanham	Down East Partnership for Children
Elizabeth	Levene	Helps Education Fund
Stephanie	Lormand	Parent Representative
Mark	McDaniel	UNC Chapel Hill
Bruce	Mildwurf	NC School Boards Association
Karen	Mills	Partnership for Children of Johnston County
Karen	Patch	SAS
Ellen	Peisner- Feinberg	FPG Child Development Institute
John	Pruette	NC Department of Public Instruction/Office of Early Learning
Libby	Richards	Triangle Community Foundation
Pamela	Shue	NC Division of Child Development and Early Education
Cyndi	Soter O'Neil	ChildTrust Foundation
Rachel	Stine	Book Harvest
Keith	Sutton	BEST NC
Laurie	Williamson	United Way of the Greater Triangle
Adam	Zolotor	NC Institute of Medicine

Appendix B: Synthesis of Table Work

For this exercise, participants worked at their tables to examine the data for each indicator and answer questions like:

- What inequities seem really important to pay attention to?
- Which groups are most disadvantaged according to this data?
- Which areas of the state are most disadvantaged according to this data?

Tables mapped their conversations on the wall – these notes are included below.

Each table then determined to what extent each indicator represents an area where great inequities exist:

- Great inequities in this indicator area: Data on this indicator highlight significant racial or income inequities.
- Some inequities in this indicator area: Data on this indicator highlight some racial or income inequities.
- Little or no inequities: Data on this indicator reveal few racial or income inequities.
- Equity data not available: Race and income data was not available to evaluate this indicator.

These ratings are included below in the final chart of the report.

Outcome: School Attendance

Indicator	Overall Changes in Inequities	Age	Low Income	Geography	African American	Hispanic	Other Race	White
Regular Attendance	(NC below US average on absence)	PreK: all subgroups are chronically absent		Some counties have higher attendance.	K-3 disparities for African Americans	Racial inequalities among chronically absent- lower among Hispanic	K-3 disparities for American Indian, Alaskan/Native Hawaiian, 2+ races; lower for Asian	Racial inequalities among chronically absent- lower among white
	Relatively stable attendance by race (NC PreK)				Disparity for K-3		Disparities for K-3 in: Am Indian, Pacific Islander, Black, 2+ races	
	Very little disparity based on race (for NC PreK)						Multi-racial high absenteeism; Asian low	
School Stability		Kindergarteners have highest rate of mobility						
		Age disparity						

Outcome: Safe, Positive Climates that Support Social-Emotional Development

Indicator	Overall Changes in Inequities	Age	Low Income	Geography	African American	Hispanic	Other Race	White
Suspensions		3rd graders suspended more than younger children (K-2)			Black children ages 3-5 are suspended at much higher rate than other children in both US and NC; K-3: black children suspended at higher rate		American Indian and 2+ races suspended at higher rates	
					Black students disproportionately suspended in preschools		Asian suspensions about same between ISS and OSS	
					Preschool disparity for Af Ams		Preschool higher for 2+ races	
					K-3 disparity for Af Ams		Huge for Am Ind and 2+ races	
Expulsions	Overall decline; Nearly eliminated expulsions in NC elementary schools				Higher rates of expulsion (PK-5)		Higher rates of expulsion (PK-5) for American Indian, 2+ races	
					High for Af Ams		High for 2+ races and Am Indian	
					Overall decline, but still racial disparity (overall)			

Outcome: Safe, Positive Climates that Support Social-Emotional Development (continued)

Indicator	Overall Changes in Inequities	Age	Low Income	Geography	African American	Hispanic	Other Race	White
Retentions				Higher retention in K and 1 st grade in: Onslow, Columbus, Rutherford, Anson	Retained at higher rate than white children (K-3)		Children of color (except Asian) retained at much higher rates than white children (K-3)	
				Big geographic differences; Want to know racial/ethnic breakdown within counties	Above 3% is considered "over-retaining": Black	Above 3% is considered "over-retaining": Hispanic	Above 3% is considered "over-retaining": Am. Ind., 2+ races	
				East and West are higher				
Social/Emotional Strategies	There were no disaggregated data available on this indicator.							

Team members had questions about the data and made requests for additional data to be pulled. While much of the requested data is not available unfortunately, facilitators will bring what additional data is available to Meeting 2.

Data questions/requests included:

Child Care Enrollment
Group questions the connection of this indicator to the Outcome of High Quality Care.
Why use this indicator if know we are missing so many children?
High Quality Child Care Enrollment
Are the military child care centers covered by federal dollars or state?
Regular Attendance
DPI may be able to get attendance for K-3 by socio-economic status.
DPI may be able to get attendance for K-3 by race/ethnicity through CEDARS.
School Stability
DPI can get mobility for K-3 by race/ethnicity from CEDARS .
Need income data-expect more instability among FRL students.
Expulsions
Data by gender.
More preschool expulsions than this; they are just not being reported.
Retentions
Data by gender.
Fewer in 3rd grade than K. Is that because more kids ready by 3rd grade or because they can't be held back anymore?
Retention by grade numbers don't look right to DPI data experts. Will check for us.
Social/Emotional Strategies
Would be good to know saturation of PBIS by county, rather than counties with at least one school implementing .
What other programs besides PBIS? Can they be measured?
On PBIS, not enough information at school level within an LEA.
Districts without PBIS- are they doing something else?

Maybe look at rollout of MTSS going forward instead of PBIS.
How many schools have a social worker or school psychologist?

Indicators were ranked as having “great,” “some,” or “little or no” inequities, or there was not enough data to say. All three groups were asked to rate each indicator; their responses are noted by the ✓ marks on the chart below.

	Great Inequities	Some Inequities	Little/No Inequities	Not enough Data	Notes
Outcome 1: Access to High-Quality Birth-to-Eight Programs with Highly Qualified Professionals					
Indicator: Child Care Enrollment		✓		✓	Income and access inequity, but need demographic breakdown. Geographic inequities. <i>(One table did not rate this indicator)</i>
Indicator: High Quality Child Care Enrollment	✓✓	✓			Age and geographic inequities. Some racial/ethnic inequities; much income inequity.
Indicator: Kindergarten through Third Grade Reading Growth				✓✓✓	No data was available on this indicator.
Outcome 2: School Attendance					
Indicator: Regular Attendance	✓	✓✓			By age: K-3 – great race/ethnic inequities; PreK – no inequities. NC PreK looks stronger on attendance in some counties than other (geographic inequities). Consistency across years/races in PreK. No Hispanic data available.
Indicator: School Stability		✓✓		✓	Age disparities; need race/ethnic and income data.
Outcome 3: Safe, Positive School Climates that Support Social-Emotional Development					
Indicator: Suspensions	✓✓✓				Racial/ethnic disparities in preschool and K-3
Indicator: Expulsions	✓✓		✓		Race/ethnicity inequities
Indicator: Retentions	✓✓✓				Race/ethnicity and geographic disparities
Indicator: Social/Emotional Strategies				✓✓✓	Need data on # of schools; implementation measures; other programs besides PBIS