Research-Informed **High-Quality Early Care and Education Strategies**

Build the capacity of leaders and staff to make educational equity a priority
and clearly communicate about race and equity with staff, students and parents.

Proactively initiate and lead conversations about equity. Talk directly about issues of race and equity and prepare the senior leadership team to speak effectively and comfortably about race and racism. As a system, operate from the ethos that racial equity is about helping all children (i.e., John Powell's targeted universalism). Race/racism as an issue must be explicitly incorporated in everything.

Educate decision-makers, partner with stakeholders and other state actors to create urgency, establish public commitments, and set ambitious and achievable goals for addressing inequities in the state. Need deep education in history and in racial literacy as a foundation for reckoning with the damage done to families/kids of color in educational systems on a macro level.

Lead conversations on the impact of poverty on education and advocate for the resources students and families need.

Highlight promising local practices for equity and convene and build an ongoing dialogue with local leaders who hold different roles and perspectives on how to learn about **promising practices and design new approaches to address inequity. Collect data on innovative ideas for interruptions to the status quo.**

Put in place state and LEA Educator Equity plans, and celebrate progress.

Make equity an agency-wide priority by **setting equity-related goals within and across divisions that are tied to the state's broader goals and strategies.**

Once equity commitments and goals have been established, state education chiefs should hold themselves and others in the state **accountable for making progress, and celebrate success where it is achieved.**

Create district equity departments with executive-level leadership to reduce the opportunity gap. Districts can operationalize their stated dedication to racial equity by placing district leaders in charge of elevating the issues, providing anti-racism training, monitoring data for racial disparities, and holding schools accountable for equity

outcomes. A few districts in North Carolina have dedicated this level of specific support for racial equity.

Diversify state level education agency staff and local/school leaders. ESSA could be a vehicle, through school improvement teams.

Invite a wider range of participants to policy-making conversations from the very beginning, including intentional seats for families of color and young people. "Design with" instead of "designing for."

Tie licensure renewal for teachers and administrators, evaluations of teachers and administrators, and accountability systems (ex: through ESSA) **to equity work and racial literacy.**

Develop a comprehensive birth-through-third-grade system for young children's academic success. Advancing students' academic success in the early grades will require an intentional, comprehensive system that involves students, families and teachers working together at the school, community and state levels.

Define "high quality birth-to-eight education" for NC.

Adopt a consistent definition of a whole child approach and a system of care and embed into all of 0-8, including enhancing classroom experiences and aligning classroom lessons with out-of-school activities (both afterschool and summer) that expand children's worldviews.

Based on evidence of effectiveness from national evaluations of school districts implementing PK-3 alignment and from North Carolina's FirstSchool Initiative, **determine what statewide educational policy change is needed to authorize and support broader statewide expansion of PK-3 alignment. Consider a new model of primary school (3 years-3rd grade).**

Create consistent high-quality standards including comparable educational prep standards, compensation available/expected across ages/stages (0-8) – modeled in NC PreK structure and funding, and **be informed by and use research-based standards and competencies by aligning various programs, educator preparation and child learning standards/competencies.**
   •   NC Foundation for Early Learning and Developmental Standards.
   •   NC Infant/Toddler Mental Health Competences.
   •   NC Professional Teaching Standards.
   •   NC Division of Child Development and Early Education

Birth-to-five, elementary, middle, high school divisions don't align with how children develop; **rethink how schooling is designed.**

Shift so that preschools that are housed in public schools fall under the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) instead of the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE).

Broaden Early Learning and Development Progressions from 0-5 to 0-8 and align the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) with the Progressions.

Base system on teacher-child interactions (evaluation, QRIS, teacher prep and PD).

Create a comprehensive, developmentally-appropriate B-8 Language and Literacy strategy with aligned language and literacy standards, curricula and assessments. Use QRIS criteria to promote research-based language and literacy instruction.

Create a research to policy partnership on using technology to support early literacy. Identify partners from the research community, business, government, early childhood organizations and parent groups to establish a new public-private Technology and Emerging Literacy partnership.

If retention is required in third grade by state law, allow exemptions, assign students who are held back to a different teacher, and give students the opportunity for promotion if they participate in an intervention.

Explicitly advocate for the inclusion of school- and community-based early childhood teachers and administrators in joint professional development opportunities with K-12 teachers and administrators.

Revamp policies to allow parents of young children to stay home - parental leave, paid leave, living wages - to support and value parents as first teachers rather than creating system where have to do low wage work and put child in low quality child care to be cared for by another low-wage worker.

Make high quality early care and education more affordable for families.

Expand eligibility for subsidies.

Ensure subsidy policies are consistent across counties, and fully use all subsidies.
Provide counties with technical assistance and expect corrective action plans until rates of subsidy expenditure are in-line with counties of similar demographics.

Address the subsidy cliff by creating a system of phased eligibility and increasing co-pays for child care as families' incomes rise.
   •   Expanded eligibility criteria.
   •   Increased funding (state).
   •   Increase availability of slots.
   •   Support for families that fall in the gap.

Stop terminating child care vouchers after five days of absence when we do not understand the barriers the families are experiencing in getting their child to child care.

Establish market rates across counties that reflect the actual costs of providing high quality care (increase rates paid to providers) and ensure that providers are reimbursed even on days when child is absent. Raise NC Pre-K and administrative support rates to reflect the true cost of care, so that funds raised locally in order to supplement state rates can be redirected to other critically needed services.

Offer tiered reimbursement based on QRIS system.

Increase resources for families to access early care and education services (reduce waiting lists).

Determine the Cost of Quality. Annually project additional costs for NC early care and education programs to achieve high quality as measured by NIEER quality standards, NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), accreditation, Head Start standards, and the North Carolina Star Licensing Program.

Increase access to high quality early care and education and PreK: Develop a multi-year investment strategy to:
   •   Increase the state's contribution to the total cost of Pre-K services.
   •   Raise the salaries of Pre-K staff to approach parity with kindergarten teachers with the same education and experience.
   •   Support parents to be able to afford and access high quality early care and education.

Raise eligibility levels for early childhood education programs/subsidies to include all children living in low-income families (75% of state median income - use federal guidelines) not just those living in poverty.

Provide many portals of access to apply for subsidies.

Need multiple whole-child, whole-family models to ensure high quality care for all infants/ toddlers, whether at home or a center. (examples: Early Head Start, home-based, subsidy priority, center-based).

Consider impact of increasing subsidies on disparities in access, because subsidy system is based on work requirement, and communities of color have less access to jobs than white communities. Could perpetuate or grow inequities.

Increase supply of high quality early care and education services, including wrap-around services.

Increase funding for early childhood programs to increase access for children of color. Target English Language Learners for enrollment in PreK.

Increase convenient access to high quality child care near where people live, including in rural communities. Many parents do not trust the quality of formal child care they can afford, so they stay home with children.

NC has strong system of organizations and programs that provide high quality early care and education (Early Head Start, Head Start, NC Pre-K, Smart Start, 5-star child care centers)
  • Coordinate efforts/systems.
  • Include 4-star centers.

Expand access to Early Head Start and other infant/toddler child care, targeting areas of highest need:
  • Teacher education levels with aligned pay/salary.
  • Paid family leave.
  • Parent education.
  • Funding.
  • Financial incentives to providers with infant/toddler care.
  • Higher rates to providers in high poverty, underserved, rural communities – through LEAs or paid to private providers.

Expand access to high quality pre-K and Head Start for 3- and 4-year-olds, targeting areas of highest need.

Identify barriers to full enrollment in high quality early education and establish a five-year investment plan for North Carolina that ensures access at ages three and four for all eligible children born in 2017, with prioritization of resources for all children born into families at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

Ensure full-day access to early care and education services and high quality full-day kindergarten.

Provide year-round early care and education, with wrap-around services.

Provide wraparound supports to families to extend pre-K benefits (examples: extra hours, health services, transportation, meals, summer programs, services for three-year-olds, more slots). **Enact policies that enable the disbursement of subsidy funds and**

use of pro-rated parent fees for part-time care. Create options for wrap-around care for children in part-day programs to match the parents' work schedules.

Child care resource and referral system supports child care quality.
- Expansion.
- Targeted support/professional development.
- Funding.
- Alignment to LEA/collaboration.

Modernize work and child care reporting requirements, worker supports and provider capacity to reflect current employment conditions for low-income parents (e.g., need for child care around the clock, easing reporting requirements when parents change jobs or move, etc).

Establish a research partnership on North Carolina informal care. Increase quality in informal care.

Provide more quality enhancement dollars -- funding to help 1, 2, and 3 star centers and serving vulnerable communities improve their star ratings through support for training/ higher education for teachers, etc. Or offer differentiated rates for high-poverty areas.

More power-brokers, lobbyists for early education.

Authentically engage with parents and provide parent education and support around child development, wellness, early literacy and parenting.

Schools should ask parents what they need to support their children's education and connect them with other parents and needed resources. "I wish my teacher knew project" – ask kids, ask parents. To understand the needs of the parents/ teachers. See Marilyn Friend for her work on true collaboration.

Strengthen parents' understanding of their own power. Empower parents to know how they can advocate with teachers in school, what questions to ask. Expand options for parent leadership training (ex: Smart Start partnerships have run these). Parents need to teach the teachers. Families can help determine what is or is not working, rather than school leaders.

Create an office of parent engagement to provide support to 0-5 and K-3. **Have parent/community liaisons, engagement coordinators who meet with parents.**

Align parent engagement standards and strategies among programs. For example, use Head Start family engagement practices/policies in other child care/Pre-K.

Hold on to Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) through age 8 (continued family engagement), and give every 0-8 child an IFSP.

Ensure every child has a family advocate or navigator (system of care concept).

Add standards communication tools to use with parents outside of child care and schools.

Target more funding toward outreach and communications, with a focus on directly engaging low-income families and families of color and building partnerships with organizations that have closer ties to families and community leaders.

Provide new parents with information about child development and how to keep children healthy and safe, as well as how to prepare children for kindergarten. Examples: new baby "kits" with child development and early literacy information, "literacy packets" are delivered annually to families with children up to age five, providing child-development activities and lessons that families can complete at home.

Use word of mouth, schools, child's teacher, Facebook, local library, family or friends, doctor's office, newspaper or flyers, internet, text messages, community organizations, and churches **to communicate with parents.** Do not use the radio, magazines, or Twitter.

Lower income families prefer word of mouth referrals, community agency referrals, friends and family, and flyers/brochures, while higher income parents prefer word of mouth and online resources.

Offer parenting classes, providing information on child development, early literacy, health, and constructive disciplinary practices, and offering more specific guidance tailored to specific parents' needs. Combo of group classes and one-on-one supports.

Take a dual-generation approach to offering family supports, including parenting supports and child development education for parents. Provide direct service or referrals for parents themselves (for example, employment services or crisis assistance), addressing issues beyond child development. Work with families to set and track progress toward goals in early childhood and to link this area of family support to goals in academics, housing, career and finance, and behavioral health. **Teach child development to all students in high school.**

Provide parents with resources and information about school readiness and transition to PreK and K through various methods, including fairs, informational events, using community providers as messengers, websites, family outreach staff in school systems, and meeting with PreK teachers in the community.

Provide extra support for parental engagement during PreK - K transition, particularly for parents of children with special needs.

Create a welcoming environment and support opportunities for parents to form relationships with school staff, Engage in respectful, two-way communication with parents, Practice shared decision-making in planning student services, and Recognize and build parent strengths, learning, and leadership. Build positive relationships through tools like home visits, workshops, orientations, family fun nights, parent suggestion boxes, required parent meetings, and technology communication.

Mitigate cultural and racial implicit bias and encourage engagement with non-English speaking families. Send home written materials in languages other than English.

Engage in principal and/or teacher home visits.

Offer family supports (child care, transportation) to make it easier for parents to engage. Include parents in decision-making groups and compensate them for their time.

Educate parents on importance of and markers of quality services and options available in the community.

Support home libraries and parent-child book reading. Provide books, in English and Spanish, for parents to read with children at home, to help prepare them for kindergarten and for summer learning.

Support adult literacy.

Create an early literacy campaign targeting parents, including requiring communication with families about child's reading progress.

Require programs to work on parent engagement and education by measuring engagement in QRIS system.

Reach parents where they are and ask them to share their knowledge. Leverage the capital of informal/ community groups and support them. Take an inventory of these groups and build relationships with its members (community centers, neighborhood playgroups, church groups etc).

Increase involvement and leadership of PTAs. State PTA works with school PTAs to create more inclusive PTAs and leadership pipelines for parents.

Provide wraparound supports through schools, such as home visits, summer learning opportunities, housing supports and health and nutrition services, to help meet families' basic needs and support early literacy.

Address children's living conditions to improve school success, including financial stresses and challenges, crime, violence, and safety.

Ensure access to resources shown to improve early literacy, like center-based pre-K care and literacy/reading and other activities, as well as the number of books a child has. Story-time for toddlers at the school.

Increase access to high quality afterschool activities and summer learning opportunities.

Ensure specific supports for children's reading and math skills.

Provide incentives or financial supports to childcare programs focusing on serving young children with special needs, including those most at risk for grade-level reading gaps.

Screen for developmental delays at early care and schools.

Intentionally provide more access to enrichment to at risk children, taking a whole-child approach, from preschool programs and home visits with parents to enriching summer programs, school-based health clinics, and more.

Adopt "community schools" models that leverage partnerships with service providers to decrease the opportunity gap. School partnerships with providers that help meet critical needs of students and their families can also help develop and sustain school-community connections and bring families into schools in non-threatening way. Provide incentives, competitive grants, or guidance to LEAs and local communities to design and offer school-based comprehensive services—such as community schools—to low-income communities and communities of color. (NC: Village of Wisdom model in Durham, Homework dinners, non-traditional hours, Communities in Schools model.)

Support the inclusion of ACEs screening and trauma-informed care across governmental agencies at the state and county levels.

Offer health services in early care settings, like Head Start. Children of color and low-income children are exposed to more health risks and exhibit more health problems than

other children, and that these health problems can negatively impact educational outcomes.

Establish health clinics in elementary schools, provide immunizations.

Direct additional funding and technical assistance for mental and physical health services to schools with the greatest need.

Offer nutrition services in schools, like Backpack Buddies, summer lunch programs, food pantries in the schools, and breakfast in the classroom.

Establish School District and Housing Coalitions.

Expand hours of operation of early care and education.

Ensure curricula, materials and instructional time are culturally responsive.

Ensure universal access to high quality curriculum that places all students on track to graduate college- and career-ready**. Monitor district course offerings and screening practices** to determine whether low-income students and students of color are being provided a college- and career-ready course of study.

Encourage LEAs to explore and select **high-quality, culturally-relevant instructional materials and pedagogy that is aligned to state standards**. Increase representation of diverse and culturally-sustaining materials in locally adopted curricula. Check for bias in curriculum and assessment as part of state-level review of instructional materials, and assist LEAs in implementing strategies to detect bias in curriculum and assessment, particularly for locally-selected or designed material.

Ensure personalized learning for student engagement. Personalized learning is a student-centered approach to learning that tailors' instruction to students' unique strengths and needs and engages them in challenging, standards-based academic content. Personalizing learning helps students develop skills including thinking critically, using knowledge and information to solve complex problems, working collaboratively, communicating effectively, learning how to learn, and developing academic mindsets. These skills, known as the deeper learning competencies, are not only the skills students need to succeed in school, but the ones that will enable them to succeed in careers and life. Results from a personalized learning pilot in Charlotte/Mecklenburg schools showed high increases in student engagement in learning.

All curriculum should be implemented based on child development.

Ensure students of color, English-language learners, students with disabilities and other vulnerable students have the academic supports they need to succeed, including high quality early education, gifted education, remedial supports, tailored interventions, and access to technology.

Monitor access for students of color to such resources as qualified teachers and teacher time, advanced courses, and appropriate high-quality instructional materials, **and eliminate disparities in disciplinary actions and extracurricular activities.**

Audit course enrollments to spotlight racial disparities in honors, AP, and other rigorous courses. As an accountability measure, schools should undertake regular audits of course enrollments that analyze disparities in enrollment numbers among racial subgroups and that critically examine the criteria being used by teachers and counselors to determine student readiness for advanced coursework. If racialized gaps emerge that expose differential treatment, immediate interventions should be instituted to make the numbers more equitable and give all student equal opportunity of access.

Provide extra academic supports for low-performing students.

Increase inclusion of children with disabilities in early education environments.

Conduct early identification of learning challenges, followed by effective intervention.

Ensure students with disabilities and English learners have access to accommodations in instruction and assessment.

Intentionally support dual-language learners by setting ambitious and achievable interim and long-term goals for English learners and ensuring they are making adequate progress achieving English language proficiency.

Provide grants for innovative, local programs targeted at specific disadvantaged groups of students.

Develop students' language skills.

Provide access to technology in school and at home.

Advance a social-emotional learning framework, such as the Pyramid Model, to promote the social and emotional development of infants and young children in birth through third grade settings statewide, and adopt a system of whole school, tiered and integrated student supports, like Response to Intervention (RTI). Use a common vocabulary for addressing students' social-emotional development and academic mindsets, and establish outcomes, measures, and benchmarks for schools to pursue. **Scale up use of tiered social-emotional support strategies in NC schools (MTSS).**

Establish a school climate improvement process. School leaders can engage community members, teachers, students, and parents in school climate improvement work through conversations, meetings, surveys, and creating school-community partnerships. School leaders should gather and incorporate the feedback of all of these groups in any school climate improvement work. **Create universal design on teaching behavioral expectations (routines, strategies) to build community. Tell story about assets in schools, in community, rather than failures.**

Create and use social-emotional learning standards.

Explore interventions to address chronic absenteeism.

Hire trained counselors, social workers and behavioral health specialists in school settings and ensure access for all students and families. Mentor/ train teachers around appropriate discipline of students.

Reduce use of suspension and expulsion. Kids can't learn if they aren't in the classroom, and these discipline policies remove a disproportionate number of students of color from the classroom and lead to higher school disengagement and drop-out rates.
(NC: Expand work to identify, prevent and modify challenging behaviors with a goal of reducing the expulsion rate and promoting social-emotional development of all children in NC licensed child care centers (0-8) and Eliminate 0-8 suspensions (out or in school) and expulsions).

Stop corporal punishment.

Implement Restorative Justice and Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) as alternative and preventative measures of discipline, to reduce discipline disparities. Decreasing gaps takes more than just a reduction in overall disciplinary actions. PBIS is a multi-level approach to dealing with student attitudes and behavior. Its tiers focus on collective school-wide, classroom, and individual student-level supports. Data collected on PBIS should include data on race, since the behavioral intervention alone

might alter disciplinary practices but not close gaps. PBIS combined with social-emotional learning (SEL) give schools a range of tools beyond punishment and push-out.

Parents want help managing their children's behavior.

Strengthen students' social-emotional health and learning through strategies like small group classes on bullying, nutrition; individual plans for students' SEL; referrals to outside mental health providers; working with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to comprehensively embed social and emotional learning in teacher training, teacher standards, curricula, and metrics for assessing student and school progress; having standards-based report cards that track key social and emotional skills; having constructive disciplinary policies that reengage students and build their soft skills instead of punishing them for infractions.

Create and expand mental health services in schools.
- District personnel.
- Partnerships with health department or agencies.
- Additional staff in schools provided by communities in schools or other nonprofits/agencies.

Foster close and positive adult-student relationships, including with teachers and staff, mentors and tutors, particularly for black boys.

Offer specific teacher and school leader professional development for social-emotional learning. Educators and administrators need professional development opportunities and training to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students to create a positive school climate. **Provide necessary guidance, information, and funding to train educators in mental health supports and intervention strategies, including NC mental health competencies for infants, toddlers, and young children and working with families.**

Train teachers in Mental Health First Aid.

Regular and special education teachers are being trained on effective Language and Literacy and Social-Emotional Health teaching practices for tiered social-emotional support strategies in NC schools (MTSS Tier 1). Should expand this training to 0-8 and expand to training on effective teaching practices for MTSS Tiers II and III as well. Integrate analysis of teachers' ability to teach social-emotional competencies into licensure requirements and teaching frameworks.

Provide funding for teacher training on restorative justice.

Provide safe spaces in schools for children to calm down.

Incorporate cultural competency into disciplinary policy. Recognize the impact of trauma on many children of color and support rather than punishing.

Ensure transitions (to kindergarten and between grades) are smooth and supported.

Align pre-K/early learning standards to K-3 standards.

Standardize the transition process for children from preschool to kindergarten, including a readiness measurement shared between preschools and elementary schools.

Provide joint professional development and collaboration for pre-K and elementary school educators, including on aligned early learning standards.

Get transition information to parents. Equip home visitors with information about kindergarten transition to share with parents. Create a multi-lingual transition document to share with parents.

Raise standards and compensation for early care and education teachers to professionalize the early childhood workforce.

Increase education standards and compensation for 0-5 teachers to approach parity with K-3 teachers. Place value/rewards on early care and education through compensation, incentives and loan forgiveness.

Compensate early childhood teachers for professional development and hiring substitute teachers. Provide high quality early education professional development on parity with public education teachers by public payor. Example: Through QRIS system, new funding stream that incentivizes) Don't currently have enough Smart Start or state dollars.

Require a BA for birth to five lead teachers and center directors, and a CDA for assistant teachers.

Provide more support for private programs to hire and retain teachers with degrees, including local financing options.

Include home-based providers and informal care providers in professional development opportunities.

Offer more endorsements for additional training, including a certification for infant-toddler specialists.

Improve educator knowledge on child development by training more early educators in the Early Learning and Development Progressions (the steps through which children develop skills from birth-to-five years). Should expand to include parents and all caregivers.

Institute a tax credit to address wage disparity. In lieu of or in addition to minimum wage adjustments, create an industry-specific, targeted tax credit to address early care and education wage inequities.

Support specific efforts to recruit, professionally prepare, compensate and retain a well-qualified workforce across multiple birth through eight settings, including family and center-based child care as well as public and charter schools.

Ensure high quality teachers, birth through 8.

Address high rates of teacher turnover in early care and education settings.

Create a comprehensive, aligned, birth to third grade, trauma-informed educator and school leader professional development system, with individualized professional development plans. Include screening of *Resilience* and other education on trauma, including in schools of education.

Make post-secondary education for early care and education teachers and administrators affordable and accessible and ensure professional development opportunities are affordable and equitably accessible.

TEACH early childhood scholarships are available statewide for teachers, directors, and family childcare educators to earn ECE certificates associate degrees and bachelor's degrees, to earn B-K or preschool add-on licensure or to earn a master's in EC leadership and management. Also consider expansion of TEACH, Teach for America (B-K license), Teaching Scholars, and WAGES.

Associate degree is available in all 58 community colleges and infant/toddler early childhood certificates.

Expand and improve high-quality online early educator (0-8) training and professional development modules tied to CEU, degree program, or continuous pathways (in addition to in-person coursework and check-ins).

Increase state and local training and capacity building on **use of evidence-based programs.**

Align educator licensing and certification systems to the latest research on effective teaching and leading. For example, instead of accepting degrees and coursework to satisfy professional development requirements, consider changing to a focus on **job-embedded professional development activities and performance evaluation. Include coaching and implementation strategies (ex: First School at FPG coaching on cultural awareness).**

Make standards and licensure requirements more rigorous.

Create split licenses (P-3 and 4-8).

Require all Kindergarten teachers to have an early childhood education (ECE) license Require B-8 child development content knowledge in teacher and school leader prep programs for state accreditation.

Offer specific professional development for teaching reading.

Offer coaching and mentoring. Create opportunities for teachers to observe each other, plan together, collaborate on curriculum, and provide each other with constructive feedback.

Create collaborative professional development opportunities for 0-3 and PreK teachers, and 0-5 and K-3 teachers, and center directors and principals.

Ensure that teacher and administrator preparation programs align with Common Core Standards.

Create universal curriculum for 0-8 educators at community colleges.

Assess the effectiveness of educator preparation program partnerships with 0-5 and K–12 districts and schools to provide accessible and affordable course work, professional development and financial assistance, and jointly develop strategies to strengthen the partnerships for mutual benefit.

Develop strong educator preparation program and local education agency partnerships to **streamline or revise approval processes for educator preparation programs and other teacher preparation providers to implement high-quality teacher residency or grow-your-own programs** that directly supply high-need local education agencies with more qualified and effective teachers.

Encourage educator preparation program and local education agency partnerships to **provide seamless transitions from preparation through induction to professional teaching.** To help balance teacher supply and demand, foster communication between local education agencies and preparation programs regarding local needs for new hires.

Assess the strengths and weaknesses of new teachers as the basis for developing in-service support:
- **Survey educator preparation program faculty, staff, and graduating students about their perceptions of program strengths and weaknesses.**
- **Survey recent graduates in their first year or two of teaching, especially graduates who have placements in high-need schools, about the most challenging problems they face in their work.**

- **If possible, survey principals and mentor teachers about program graduates' on-the-job performance.**

Establish opportunities for teacher leadership:
- Provide strong instructional support to teacher leaders.
- Empower teacher leaders to collaborate on curriculum and instructional design.
- Empower teacher leaders to provide constructive feedback to peers.
- Empower teacher leaders to provide induction, mentoring, and other professional development support to develop a strong collaborative school atmosphere.

Improve the validity and rigor of the assessments educator preparation programs currently use to measure the strength of their graduates' content knowledge, teaching skill, and commitment to teaching underserved students.

Increase rates of National Board Certification.

Provide technical assistance to early childhood programs to improve the quality of infant and toddler classrooms.

Create common set of teacher education standards and ratings for teacher evaluations for this workforce.

Raise teachers' and leaders' capacity to effectively teach children of color, English-language learners, children with disabilities, and children from low-income families.

Encourage states, districts and schools **to embed professional development opportunities that support a deeper understanding of families' race and culture, and explicitly teach teachers from all backgrounds how to develop and strengthen relationships with parents and the community (cultural competency training). For early educator license, B-K and K-3 licenses. Use Head Start standards and competencies as a model.**

Adopt a set of standards for culturally relevant teaching to assist teachers in understanding what competencies are needed to effectively instruct students of color -- research-based standards for cultural relevance and responsive pedagogy. The purposes of such standards would be to help teachers learn to instruct in ways that honor the customs, norms and traditions of all students; embed the diverse perspectives and histories of communities of color within the curriculum; and utilize these perspectives to inform best practices.

Teacher preparation programs should use standards for culturally relevant teaching to reassess their curriculum and to develop new course offerings, since efforts to boost racial awareness will be particularly impactful during teacher pre-service training. Creating space for students to discuss race, choosing materials that reflect the communities of the children served, and factoring in worldviews other than those of traditional westernized societies are example of strategies that standards-aligned training can provide that will improve teachers' ability to properly address cultural divides through pedagogy.

Ensure implicit racial bias training and racial literacy education, with Continuing Education Units (CEUs), for teachers and administrators to help break habits of prejudice and lead to more balanced treatment of students of color. Most of the racial disparities in discipline, special education, and AIG and advanced course enrollment are not the result of malicious intent as much as deep-seated, unconscious biases. But just because this type of racial bias is unintended does not mean it is harmless. Research has shown that undergoing such training can lead to dramatic reductions in bias.

Ensure that all personnel involved with the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and Response to Intervention (RTI) process have been trained in and understand systemic racism and overrepresentation.

Train teachers and counselors on the "belief gap." Emerging research has revealed the significance of the belief gap (also referred to as the Pygmalion Effect): frequently, the

absence of students of color in rigorous courses is not the result of an objective lack of readiness, but is instead due to teachers and counselors subjectively determining that students are not well-suited for the courses. Training on the belief gap can help teachers and counselors understand what to look for when assessing readiness for advanced coursework.

Provide training and professional development on how to work with families, particularly families of color, given that most teachers are white females.

Train educators to teach/educate children who live in poverty.

Require or incentivize participation in and funding for **high-quality trainings that address the needs of the whole child.**

Strengthen educator preparation program clinical training by:
- **Working together with partner schools to ensure that the program provides the best clinical experience possible for program candidates.**
- **Providing clinical opportunities that expose candidates to learners with diverse backgrounds and needs.**
- **Ensuring that the program's partner schools reflect the culture and the student demographics of the schools in which the majority of the program's graduates are initially placed.**

Improve education for students with disabilities by expanding professional development and program support services for teachers of students with disabilities.

Integrated regular and special education training for early educators (B-K license).

Teacher and principal training in use of evidence-based practices with young children with autism (create more comprehensive training, more accessible and consistent across the state).

Recruit and retain more teachers and school leaders of color, and ensure that students of color have access to teachers and school leaders of color.

Assign students so that every student of color has at least one teacher of color in the K-3 years.

Increase collaboration among early educator-training entities (community colleges and universities), such as creating articulation agreements between 2-year CDA programs and bachelor's degree programs.

Improve working conditions to attract, develop, and retain teachers for students from low-income and minority families.

Develop more comprehensive state plans to recruit and retain teachers and leaders of color that use a variety of strategies, including: financial incentives, government mandates, state recruitment legislation, recruitment centers, special programs (e.g. pre-college programs), and alternative certification programs targeting mid-career, paraprofessionals. (NC has minority recruitment policies, including financial incentives and recruitment programs. As of 2012, NC did not have government mandates for minority recruiting, a minority recruitment center/office or alternative certification.)

Invest significantly more support for retention efforts, including both 'voluntary' and "involuntary" sources of attrition:
- Efforts to minimize voluntary attrition should focus on **management, leadership, and working conditions in schools that impact teacher autonomy and decision-making.**
- Efforts to minimize involuntary sources of attrition should focus on the **disparate and adverse impact of accountability policies, school closings, and reconstitution plans on teachers of color who more often work in schools targeted for intervention.**

Create teacher preparation pathways for communities of color that begin recruiting prospective teachers in high school, and that expand lateral entry opportunities for professionals from minority groups who show interest and promise as potential educators. Efforts to attract students of color early in their academic careers have shown promise as a model for bringing more of these students into the profession. **Target Black male high school students to enter the teaching profession.**

Target substitute teachers and upgrade the skills of paraprofessionals.

Design "differentiated professional development" targeted at male teachers of color.

Implement racial and gender awareness training for new and current administrators.

Identify and intervene in schools with low numbers of Black male teachers.

Broaden financial incentives, including scholarships for education and salary supplements to attract and retain teachers and leaders.

Partner with universities to cultivate a pipeline of teachers of color.

Develop a fellowship program that incentivizes people of color to become teachers and offers them support to stay in the profession long-term.

Broaden selection criteria for teacher education programs.

Enact more robust marketing and recruitment strategies to actively pursue teachers of color.

Ensure equal access to high quality professional development for all teachers.

Ensure children of color and children in Title I schools have high quality teachers and leaders. Whether quality is defined as certification, subject knowledge or impact, poor students and children of color are less likely to be taught by well qualified teachers than their peers.

Support innovative incentives for effective teachers to stay in or move to disadvantaged, low-performing schools. Survey effective teachers and leaders currently working in high-poverty schools - and look at national incentive-based programs - to determine what type of financial compensation may influence their decisions to move to or stay in high-need schools. It may be that financial incentives alone do not play a large role in teacher and leader recruitment and retention and therefore should be combined with other efforts to increase access to great teachers and leaders.

Support local innovation related to recruitment and retention incentives (e.g., housing incentives and local market-based salary bonuses) as well as career advancement opportunities that encourage effective teachers to stay in hard-to-staff schools.

Provide nonmonetary incentives (e.g., reduced class size, teacher aides, increased autonomy, career ladders) for teachers who work in high-need schools.

Focus on improving teacher working conditions to help with recruitment and retention.

Create an atmosphere of trust and respect between teachers and school leaders and between students and staff.

Make part-time teaching or sharing a teacher across several schools an option when full time positions are not available in some subject areas. Provide more pathways for job sharing among teachers so that teachers and administrators have greater flexibility to staff schools to meet their students' needs.

Examine hiring practices and other human resource policies to ensure vacancies are filled with excellent educators. Ensure that late hiring timelines are not a barrier to recruitment.

More effectively compete with other districts for talent by **accelerating hiring timelines.** One way to do this is to identify vacancies early by providing a monetary incentive for early notification of resignation or retirement, and a monetary penalty for late notice.

Avoid assigning new teachers to low-performing students or lower tracked classrooms.

Determine which students have been repeatedly assigned a new teacher; reassign those teachers or students.

Provide new teachers with a reduced student load.

Every beginning teacher/administrator has access to mentor/coach to support whole child development and learning.

Examine and possibly revise local teacher transfer policies. Deny transfers of ineffective teachers to other schools or classrooms, especially lower-tracked classrooms or underperforming schools.

Expand access to teacher preparation programs, particularly in rural areas of the state.

Regional Leadership Academies. By identifying and nurturing effective teacher leaders in regional areas which have difficulty recruiting and retaining highly qualified personnel, the Regional Leadership Academies (RLAs) offer an incentive for the most capable educators to stay and build local capacity to bolster positive school culture and student outcomes.

Evaluate and consider expanding the professional development opportunities that colleges of education provide specifically to strengthen teaching in high-need schools:
- **Assess the staffing needs of high-need schools in the area served by the college, and develop programs for current teachers** that help them gain or strengthen content and pedagogical knowledge in high-need subjects.
- **Assess the pedagogical needs of teachers in the area's high-need schools, and develop programs and resources to help address areas for growth.**
- **Enhance preparation programs that help principals and teachers become effective administrative and instructional leaders in high-need schools.**

Invest in high-quality distance and virtual learning options.

Expand turnaround teams for low-performing schools.

Create loan forgiveness programs for early educators who work in high-need centers and schools. Consider Teaching Fellows-type program for 0-5 teachers.

Engage in classroom practices that are proven to improve early literacy.

Focus on teacher/child interactions.

Engage in dialogic reading.

Read in a child's native language.

Provide books matched to students' reading levels.

Ensure low student/teacher ratios.

Engage in practices of master teachers.

Do more work in school (projects, etc.) instead of as homework. Make the classroom more engaged during the day.

Build leadership capacity for effective teaching and learning in high-need schools and districts.

Strengthen leadership quality and support from leadership -- center director, principal, etc.

Expand masters-level degree programs in early childhood leadership and administration, link to principal certification. Administrators should have B-K as well as K-12 licenses.

Ensure principals are constantly present and engaged with classrooms.

Consider giving principals more input into teacher hiring and placement decisions.

Ensure that local education agencies focus on supporting instructional leadership in high-need schools to provide teaching staff the working conditions they need to succeed for improved teacher recruitment, development, and retention.

Invest in principals' ability to lead schools that support the whole child.

Provide principal professional development on equitable school scheduling and teacher assignment.

Initiate programs to **ensure the school leadership pipeline prepares principals to lead in urban, rural, and other disadvantaged or hard-to-staff districts.**

Build the capacity of principals and coaches in high-need schools to use evaluation frameworks and results to provide actionable feedback and tailor professional learning for individual teachers. Help them leverage educator evaluation results to identify targeted, job-embedded professional development.

Establish cross-district principal mentor networks to build the capacity of principal-mentors to give actionable feedback and helpful support.

Leverage principal evaluation systems to enhance leadership for effective teaching and leading in high-need districts and schools.

Encourage school leaders to use climate and working conditions data to focus and improve their school improvement plans and their own leadership performance.

Improve data collection and analysis and use data to ensure quality, including, among other things, equitable distribution of quality teachers, focus placed on school climate and non-academic measures of school success, and personalized education plans for individual students.

Support data analysis and communications functions at the state level and within districts.

Ensure that data are clear, accurate, and accessible to key stakeholders, with a focus on teachers, parents, legislators, and the media. **Provide hyper-local data** on what is happening and what is available at the local level.

Collect, disaggregate, analyze, publicly share and use data on other indicators of long-term success besides academics, including school climate, as one method of addressing achievement gaps.

Consider how best to integrate social-emotional development measures into state reporting and accountability systems, while acknowledging limitations of current measurement strategies.

Ensure that data are routinely collected and reported on access to pre-k programs by income and ethnicity and that data on quality is collected periodically.

Require all schools and districts to publish annual discipline reports disaggregated by race with cross-tabulation, with an eye toward transparency and dissemination of meaningful data to the public. Critique the categories of discipline data currently collected. Discipline reports should include data on all significant disciplinary actions that list types of infractions (with specific and standardized definitions), track instructional time missed, and allow cross-tabulation and analysis of data by subgroup - comparing, for instance, black or Hispanic economically disadvantaged students to white non-economically disadvantaged students. Reports of this nature will go a long way toward earning the trust of communities of color by ensuring that trends and patterns will be analyzed to see which schools are moving toward more equitable student discipline practices.

Track the placement, retention, and, if possible, effectiveness of graduates of teacher preparation programs to determine the extent to which the program serves the staffing needs of high-need schools.

Track and report on differential teacher retention and turnover rates. If teacher turnover at some of the partner schools is high, work with the schools to collect data that

may point to possible sources of the problem and suggest potential solutions (e.g., teacher satisfaction surveys and school climate indicators).

Conduct working conditions surveys, focus groups, and interviews among teachers, other instructional staff, and students, and encourage school leaders to use the resulting data to focus and improve their school improvement plans and their own leadership performance.

Publically report teacher qualification data.

Annually report on multiple indicators of the diversity of the educator workforce, including teachers, principals, and district leadership.

Ensure that measurement tools for young children and the classrooms in which they learn are culturally, linguistically and developmentally valid and reliable, and build culturally relevant accountability systems that measure student outcomes and classroom quality to ensure high quality education for children of color and those from low-income families.

Support the development and revision of QRIS (Quality Rating and Improvement Systems) that are as focused on the "Quality" and the "Improvement" as they are on the "Rating." Ensure quality rating and improvement (star) system embedded in licensing is consistent. Update star rating system to include measure of student-teacher interactions and measure of quality of instruction. (Example: FPG First School).

Measure student outcomes. Authorize, through administrative, regulatory or legislative action, a periodic review of the relationships between early care and education and early grade elementary school programs and actual student outcomes. Focus on student outcomes, not adult impacts.

Create a cross-district, standardized early warning system, including early grade attendance data, behavior data, and a set of academic performance measures (PreK-3rd grade), by which schools can identify and support students at risk of chronic absence, academic failure or grade retention.

Assess quality of classrooms. With participation from the educational policy and research sectors, recommend one or more tools to more adequately assess the quality of K-3 classrooms. This assessment would include environmental, social-emotional and academic factors.

Have high academic standards but less focus on testing. Give kids time to be creative and play.

Include measures of proficiency and progress and growth in the accountability system.

Add increased monitoring of early care and education programs, including more unannounced visits, evaluate on more than just the environmental rating score (need to use different tools), and monitor more than every three years.

Include measures of proficiency and progress and growth in the accountability system.

Ensure the accountability system is relevant and meaningful to parents, students, and other stakeholders by **engaging representatives from low-income communities and**

communities of color in the design, reporting, and refinement of accountability measures.

Partner with LEAs to ensure school improvement efforts are targeted to community needs and strengths **by cataloging and leveraging the assets of each school as part of the school improvement strategy.**

Increase coordination and share accountability for students' attendance outcomes across agencies and domains.

Ensure Pre-K is in the ESSA plan without assessments.

Evaluate teachers using multiple measures, ensure that teacher evaluations account for special attributes of PK-3rd grades, and ensure that teacher evaluations recognize unique linguistic trajectories for dual-language learners.

Add state assessment requirements (CDC Milestones) starting at 2 years old at childcare centers with mandatory reporting to child and youth branch of DPH.

Use a multiple-domain assessment for state-funded PreK.

Have a common, statewide Kindergarten entry assessment, formative assessments in K-3, and use data for individual student planning, building systemic interventions for struggling readers, and for continuous improvement.

Identify a K-3 specific fifth indicator as defined in ESSA.

Include K-3 data in state report cards.

Rate programs in QRIS system on use of child assessment and developmental screenings.

Develop referral and initial evaluation process that take cultural differences into account when assessing students for disabilities. Students of color are overrepresented in the specific categories of special education that are deemed most "stigmatizing," including intellectual disabilities, emotionally disturbances, and specific learning disabilities. In addition, students in overrepresented groups should be given opportunities at regular intervals to be reevaluated and potentially exit the system. This would serve as a way to decrease overrepresentation brought on by failure to account for cultural differences, which would in turn direct scarce resources where they are truly needed and provide incentives for students who have the capacity to work toward the goal of exiting services.

Analyze and publicly report rates of identification for special education services.

Adopt universal screening processes for academically gifted programs so referral systems are as objective and inclusive as feasible, and to reduce unnecessary variance in practice by district. A standardized process that sets parameters but allows flexibility for the unique nature of communities is paramount. Make the assessments multidimensional (not relying exclusively on test scores), focus on potential and not just performance, and look at subjects beyond just reading and math for consideration for AIG.

Ensure equitable and adequate funding for K-3 education, including investing in supports which are more likely to contribute to student academic success and decrease disparities, and monitor funding distribution.

Increase funding.

Fund the state PreK program (and 3-year-olds) through the K-12 school funding formula.

Keep per pupil funding at or above national average ($11k).

Use a funding formula that takes into account the extra costs involved in districts with high proportions of low-income students or students with special needs such as disabilities or English language learners. "Weighted funding formulas" count pupils based on need in order to achieve equity.
- The federal Title 1 formula, for example, is based on a calculation that assumes educating students in poverty costs 40 percent more than the basic per pupil allocation.
- California's new Local Control Funding Formula: All districts get higher per-pupil basic grants that vary by grade level. On top of that, districts also receive 20 percent more in "supplemental" per-pupil dollars based on the number of students identified as disadvantaged. If more than 55 percent of a district's students are disadvantaged, the district also receives "concentration" funding — tied to the percentage of disadvantaged kids above the 55 percent threshold. Concentration funding is equal to a hefty 50 percent of basic per-student base grants.

Allow schools and leaders authority over resources/autonomy.

Prioritize coordination of public funding and services, including working with related state agencies or divisions to ensure alignment across all programs.

Use a percentage of local tax dollars to fund early childhood education needs.

Use socioeconomic integration models to diversify schools and prevent resegregation. Race and class are strongly correlated, and policies that assign students to schools according to socioeconomic variables can also increase racial diversity.

Stop school segregation.

Create citywide (non-neighborhood based) student assignment policies to curb residential segregation and eliminate racially-isolated geographic areas. Recent research suggests that if school systems take the lead in delinking neighborhoods from schools, the housing sector will follow and in turn become more racially diverse.

Redraw attendance boundaries with consideration for socioeconomic balance among schools. Districts that choose to integrate by reconstructing neighborhood school boundaries in ways that encourage racial and economic interaction can create policies that affect every school in the district. In terms of general good practice, districts—particularly those that are growing or developing in significant ways—should be prepared to readjust population boundaries as demographics shift.

Make it easy to enroll in all school options.

Incentivize inter-district choice programs that create more diverse schools.

District-wide controlled choice policies explicitly consider diversity in program design while shifting student enrollment to a choice-based policy. Under controlled choice, districts shift entirely away from student assignment based on geographic zones to a system in which all families rank their choices of schools from across the district. Students are then assigned to schools based on their preferences and an algorithm that ensures a relatively even distribution of students by socioeconomic status across all schools.

Magnet schools are often a component of controlled choice plans, but they can stand alone from district-wide initiatives. Magnets are schools with specific themes that seek to draw students from across geographic areas and can be formed for the purpose of desegregation and diversity. Successful, integration-minded magnet schools strive to create diverse enrollments by factoring diversity into the admissions lottery, selecting themes that appeal to a broad range to families, and enrolling students from across a district or multiple districts. Research shows strong academic outcomes for students who, through an admissions lottery, win the chance to attend a racially and socioeconomically diverse magnet school. Review admissions processes and criteria for specialized schools,

including charter schools and magnet schools, to ensure that admissions requirements or assessments are not limiting opportunities for otherwise qualified students.

Charter schools are publicly funded and privately managed, and can enroll students from geographic areas larger than typical neighborhood school attendance zones. If designed with the goal of diversity in mind, charter schools can promote integration through use of a weighted lottery that considers socioeconomic status, or through reserved seating for low-income or at-risk students. Successfully integrated charter schools often have robust recruitment strategies to ensure that they reach families of varying backgrounds. Review admissions processes and criteria for specialized schools, including charter schools and magnet schools, to ensure that admissions requirements or assessments are not limiting opportunities for otherwise qualified students. Offer transportation and meals to ensure low-income students and students of color can attend.

Transfer Policies. Some districts seek to increase diversity by giving preference to school transfer requests that would increase the socioeconomic balance of affected schools, or by giving a priority to economically disadvantaged students when reviewing requests. While integration via transfer policy is limited in scope—that is, unlikely to reach across the entire district or produce consistently balanced schools—it can serve as an important check on inter-district open enrollment policies that tend to benefit higher income children and families.

Reduce barriers to getting to school.

Develop data indicators around transportation.

Ensure access to reliable and consistent public transportation - not just public transportation.

Add a question to childcare and school enrollment forms to ask how the child will get to school.

Improve access to transportation to schools and early care and education. Add a policy that transportation is required for all funded NC Pre-K programs. Add state funding for the transportation costs for all publicly funded Pre-K kids.

Coordinate transportation options across early care and education sites.
- Align policies for local and state transportation systems so that public (non-school) vans can unload children on school properties.
- Change school transportation law to allow school buses to transport Pre-K students to schools.

Provide funding to enable local school systems to purchase school buses outfitted to safely transport Pre-K children.

Subsidize the provision of transportation options for low-income families to access high-quality early care and K-3 education both within and outside their communities.

Reduce length of bus rides for children getting to school (i.e., 2-hour commutes). Add funding for transportation (more buses) so that buses do not have to leave so early and/or children won't have to travel so far. Particularly an issue in rural counties.

Encourage bus riding and "walking buses." Add communication piece to address stigmas associated with riding the bus because many tardiness issues are with children who are driven to school.

Provide attendance buddies.

Provide transportation for afterschool activities. Particularly a problem in rural counties.

Develop options for transportation to early care and/or schools:
- Develop a support network of families and community members that can work together to provide transportation.
- Add churches as option for transportation.
- Add Uber and Lyft as transportation options.

Do not use taxi vouchers as transportation options.