



Research-Informed **Regular School Attendance Strategies**

Adopt a standard, statewide definition of chronic absence for North Carolina and create cross-agency policies and infrastructure to support regular attendance.

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.

Create definition of chronic absence and formulate comprehensive attendance policy.

Add a local attendance policy with childcare providers that includes:

- Clear expectations.
- Rewards for attendance, including statewide recognition.
- Subsidy (32 hours is paid for part time care – children should be in childcare for 32 hours).
- Tools.
- Consequences.

Shift age of compulsory attendance to 5-18 years old (from 7-16 years old).

Add to the compulsory attendance law:

- Impact starting at 4 years old (preschool).
- Clarify the language of chronic absenteeism and make consistent state- and agency-wide (Department of Public Instruction and Division of Social Services).
- Fund school social workers to service four-year-olds (including home visits).
- Name tangible consequences.
- Clearly define neglect so as to be able to involve Division of Social Services.

Use a race equity assessment tool to do an ecology check on attendance policies and policies intended to improve attendance to ensure they will improve equity and decrease disparities.

Create a cross-sector state leadership team to advance the work.

Designate an attendance lead to coordinate efforts across the state education agency and with districts and communities to maximize efficiencies in responding to the demand for technical assistance and support.

Include chronic absence data in P-12 data system, school report cards, other state reports, and include it as a performance measure, such as in ESSA plan.

Include reducing chronic absence in strategic/5-year plan.

Mandate that school districts develop district plans to reduce absenteeism.

Mandate that schools include measures of absenteeism and strategies to reduce it in their school improvement plans.

Institute school and district monitoring teams where there are high rates of absenteeism to monitor data and ensure interventions are in place. Advise any school with more than a 6 percent chronic absenteeism rate to pay closer attention to attendance trends.

Develop of a pool of community attendance ambassadors who will follow up with families whose children are chronically absent and work with families on attendance recovery hours.

Strengthen childcare facility, schools, and Division of Social Services (DSS) communication. Notify DSS case manager after three consecutive absences, and case manager will either assist with need or refer the parent to services.

Build a data-informed, comprehensive technical assistance system to support district and school efforts to increase attendance, including:

- Universal supports designed to provide all districts and schools with access to chronic absence data as well as guidance on how to improve attendance.
- Group professional development aimed at building districts' and schools' capacity to reduce chronic absence, including peer networks.
- Intensive technical assistance to districts or schools with the highest chronic absence, including a comprehensive needs assessment that identifies factors contributing to chronic absence, the resources to improve attendance, the top-priority actions and the support needed to implement them.

Leverage national entities like Attendance Works to help with the work.

Mandate that schools identified under the state accountability system as "in need of improvement" use an Early Warning System.

Create District Attendance Review Committees of community partners to avoid referrals to juvenile court.

Connect with networks, both education- and community-based, that are positioned to integrate strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism into their efforts to improve outcomes for children and families. Use the networks to share chronic absence research, data, guidance documents, and other resources and supports. Venues for messaging can include meetings, workshops, peer to peer learning sessions, and keynote addresses at conferences.

Develop a prevention and early intervention guide for grades preK-12 that offers success stories and concrete guidance on how to implement a comprehensive approach to reduce chronic absence.

Set maximum allowable absences and set criteria for interventions.

To improve Pre-K attendance, integrate prekindergarten into the school's larger operations, vision, and goals.

Document and evaluate results of interventions.

Share accountability across systems.

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. Make the case that equity benefits everyone in society.
Destigmatize owning implicit bias – not shaming and piling on.

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.

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.**

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.

Diversify leadership and stakeholders:

- Getting a broader swath of people access to pathways to power:
 - Parents as collaborative leaders training.
 - Communication back and forth with school board meetings.

- Identify known community leaders to bridge the gaps.
- Public agencies create opportunities for parents to participate.
- Be transparent, deliberate and intentional about relationships and share power.

Conduct outreach to raise parent, policymaker and broader stakeholder awareness about the causes and impacts of chronic absenteeism and the benefits of regular attendance.

Set clear, consistent, and tangible goals for attendance.

Implement research-based messaging with parents around absenteeism to build awareness about how absences can easily add up to too much time lost in the classroom.

Promote importance of attendance beginning in child care - before kindergarten. Discuss attendance with parents when administer child care subsidy.

Implement parent and family outreach, including phone calls and home visits.

Send parents personalized information through letter or text about the importance of attendance and their child's attendance (research-based, cheap and easily replicable). Do not send impersonal letters.

Connect with families about attendance in ways that are linguistically and culturally appropriate and work for them. Reach out to immigrant families.

Add incentive reward programs for families with good attendance, potentially at monthly or quarterly intervals rather than at end of school year. Develop non-monetary incentives to regular attendance that benefit parents and/or child (i.e., therapy services, financial literacy workshop, resume consultation, etc).

Communicate with parents specifically about absenteeism, not just general communication.

Do not send missed work home with no other communication, and do not just put information online without reaching out to parents, which increases disparities among groups of children/parents.

Convene a forum for legislators that highlights research on chronic absence and local success stories.

Conduct presentations at both the state level (at commissions and task forces) and the district level (at conferences for school district administrators).

Target outreach to a variety of stakeholder groups, such as faith communities, nonprofits, health providers, and philanthropic community and social service

agencies. Educate stakeholders about the relationship between attendance and achievement, aimed at the state's teachers' union, parent teacher association, elected officials and community leaders.

Host public service announcements on local radio stations.

Provide messaging tools- including handouts, buttons, banners and posters-to districts.

Publish articles in education membership organization publications.

Collaborate with youth advocacy organizations.

Develop a website to help local groups systematically address chronic absenteeism.

Show-case bright spots, best practices, successes.

Do a superintendent call to action.

Authentically engage with parents and provide parent education and support around child development, parenting and school attendance.

Schools and providers should ask parents what they need to support their children's education and health, and connect them with other parents and needed resources. Professional development should involve people of color/parents mentoring teachers and providers. (example: Family to Family Health information Network; Family Support Network).

Strengthen parents' understanding of their own power. Teach them to advocate for their own and their children's educational and health care needs.

Create an office of parent engagement to provide support to 0-5 and K-3. (NC: Create parent involvement coordinators.)

Align parent engagement standards and strategies among programs. For example, use Head Start family engagement practices/policies in other child care/PreK. **Implement Head Start model for universal attendance follow-up statewide.**

Develop family/school/community partnerships focused on increasing regular school attendance, including home visits and regular parent contact, attendance incentives, messaging the importance of regular attendance to parents, and referring chronically absent students to school counselors.

Create a No Shaming! Policy for absenteeism and tardies. All staff will approach families as caring and supportive advocates for success of that child/their children.

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. **Meet families where they are - in the community.**

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.

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. Provide many ways to engage.

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 teacher home visits

Offer family supports (child care, transportation) to make it easier for parents to engage in meetings and other school events. **Offer video conferencing options.**

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.

Educate parents on importance of and markers of quality services

Support adult literacy

Add social workers or case managers in pediatric practices

Get more information to parents about services available in the community

Expand parent education programs across the state, particularly offering information for new parents.

Make programs where pediatricians educate parents about reading and interacting with their children universal.

Parents want more information about

- Nutrition/Obesity
- Food vouchers
- Breastfeeding
- Mental health

- Normal child development and milestones

More North Carolinians know about outdoor spaces and fresh foods

Address (cultural) norms around need for regular dental care

Coordinated statewide support and advocacy system for families with children with special needs.

Involve families in all steps - agenda-setting, planning, implementation, evaluation - and mentor/ advocate to support ongoing involvement.

Build a strong screening, assessment, treatment pipeline for identifying and addressing children's health and learning issues.

Maintain North Carolina's high rates of health insurance for children and low-income children's access to screening, diagnosis, and treatment through Medicaid under the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment program (EPSDT).

Expand Medicaid in NC.

Ensure universal screening, including for developmental delays, social-emotional health, at-risk circumstances, hearing, vision, lead and maternal depression.

Engage pediatricians and primary care providers in screening for general child behavioral issues, more specific social-emotional needs, social determinants of health, maternal depression, and parental strengths, and then talking systematically with parents about those results.

Expand Help Me Grow partnership and integrate with 2-1-1. Parents need better referral systems.

Doctors should ask parents about family needs and what they need to support their children's health.

Reimburse for interpreter services

Expand Maternal Depression Screening and Access to Services: Partner with CCNC and health researchers to determine, as data is now becoming available, (1) the extent to which mothers are being screened for maternal depression at infant well-baby visits, (2) the sufficiency and effectiveness of needed services, and (3) the extent of racial/ethnic and/or geographic disparities in screening and service delivery to mothers with post-partum depression. Ensure widespread access to screening and treatment services.

Continue to review primary care practice and county ABCD screening rates and expand investment in the ABCD developmental screening program to reach all Medicaid-eligible children participating in EPSDT-recommended well-child visits.

Ensure that young children have medical homes, regular doctor appointments, and access to effective treatment for chronic health conditions, including for maternal depression (for parents), tooth decay, asthma, malnutrition and obesity

Ensure continuous, coordinated, accessible health services for children. Health Check coordinators assist Medicaid-eligible children in accessing comprehensive health care services. Children's health care is better managed through coordination among regional networks of practices (CCNC). **Ensure all kids in medical homes. CC4C to manage asthma cases. Connection between CC4C and medical home/ primary care.**

Scale-up screening for and identifying families at risk of poverty and other social determinants of health from the first pre-natal visit and share screening data with pediatricians after birth to ensure connection to needed services, including early intervention.

Doctors should follow up with parents to be sure they could access recommended or referred services.

Eliminate lead hazards and other toxic substances in housing, child care locations, schools, and water. Share strategies for lead paint abatement with parents
Review and strengthen school policies around medical requirements for sending kids home (i.e., fever, pinkeye, loose stool), and provide parents with information about how to tell if child is too sick for school.

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

Children have dental coverage through Medicaid and Health Choice and safety net dental clinics provide care to children. Increase dentists that take Medicaid/Health Choice by increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates.

Expand oral health screening tool to non-Medicaid patients in primary care

Expand the number of dental homes for children with special health care needs and developmental disabilities and train medical providers to deliver preventative oral health services to young children with special health care needs and disabilities. For example, children on chronic medications which cause dental issues, other conditions such as autism and other intellectual or developmental disabilities which can create challenges to receiving dental care and require sedation or other special techniques to deliver care.

Amend dental practice act to allow providers (hygienists) to practice at the top of their scope (e.g., provide additional services under the supervision of a dentist which may or may not include teledentistry). Licensure issues around scope of practice – ensure that CNAs and NAs can administer medications.

Address differential treatment by primary care providers and dentists of children on Medicaid.

Children in foster care have medical homes

Increase diversity of medical and dental workforce.

Increase capacity for seeing asthma patients in primary care, particularly those with Medicaid. Current practices are beyond capacity.

Integrate physical and mental health in NC 1115 Medicaid waiver.

Improve transportation for medical services - ex: allow other children in the family to ride on Medicaid vans.

Create mental health services continuum connecting 0-3 (Early Intervention) with 3-5 (gap) with 6+ (LME-MCOs).

Offer health services in early education and K-3 school settings.

Create close collaboration between schools and public health.

Use telehealth programs in schools to expand capacity (medical and dental).

Offer school-based mental health programs that include universal interventions, as well as screening and referral to treatment in the community. Ensure access to mental health counseling at school to help deal with social determinants of health kids are facing daily.

Increase access to infant and early childhood mental health consultation within early childhood programs.

School health assessment process supports regular well child visits and attendance.

Invest in school health and mental health professionals and school health clinics.

Increase school nurse ratio to national standard. School nurses can identify health issues early and manage connections with community providers, establish referral policies for chronically absent students, and improve documentation systems, including the use of standardized nursing language to demonstrate student outcomes. **Clinics can serve students and their families.**

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.

Add system for ensuring that required medical forms are completed on time (e.g., so kindergartners are not suspended because of not turning in health assessment). Have mobile clinics at schools first 30 days of school. Families without Kindergarten Health Assessment go straight to clinic. This is also an opportunity to vaccinate and connect children and families to formal services – medical home, Medicaid, etc. Handle KHA issue before start of school because 1) teacher allotment, 2) so hard to get appointment within the 30 days allotted, 3) Day 1 requirement would make it a higher priority:

- Media announcements.
- Reach through primary care.
- Reach through Pre-K, K registration.
- Increase access to primary care/ Medicaid.

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

Address oral health in schools, including providing community –based oral health programs, school-based sealant programs, and mobile dental clinics. Ensure parents know about good dental habits. Increase the number of school based health centers that provide oral health care and can serve as dental homes.

Provide school-based vision screening programs.

Families, child care, schools and medical and dental practices can partner to improve child health.

Schools and after-school programs can support children in getting recommended amount of daily physical activity.

Integrate 504 plans, IEPs, Individual Health Plans/ Emergency Action Plans into Electronic Health Records.

Focus school-based health resources on a subset of health issues that are highly prevalent and disproportionately affect urban minority youth, including asthma, aggression, bullying and violence, need for physical activity, hunger, and inattention and hyperactivity.

**Ensure high quality implementation of school based health services
Integrate efforts to address these high-priority areas.**

Asthma can result in absenteeism in numerous ways: as a result of symptoms, the need to attend doctor visits, hospitalization, the need to avoid environmental triggers at school, sleep deprivation due to nocturnal attacks, co-morbidity (e.g., respiratory illness) associated with increased susceptibility, among others.

- Increase the extent to which homes, schools and communities are “asthma-friendly,” as exemplified by early detection and treatment, and to minimize of environmental exposures to allergens and irritants.
- Establish management and support systems for asthma-friendly schools
- Provide appropriate school health and mental health services for students with asthma.
- Provide asthma education and awareness programs for students and school staff.
- Provide safe, enjoyable physical education and activity opportunities for students with asthma.
- Coordinate school, family, and community efforts to better manage asthma symptoms and reduce school absences among students with asthma.
- Do environmental assessments and provide a safe and healthy school environment to reduce asthma triggers.
- Share strategies for avoiding asthma triggers in the home.

Better treatment of asthma.

- Better pipeline for asthma – referrals to specialists and actually going. Connections between primary care and Emergency Departments.
- Education for teachers, administrators, parents on asthma prevention and treatment, importance of exercise, perception of symptoms before reach distress.
- Public education around symptoms of asthma – African Americans and boys less likely to recognize and acknowledge symptoms.

Aggression, Violence and Bullying: It is not surprising that students who perceive school as dangerous (physically or emotionally) might choose to avoid school. Students of color are more likely than white students to report being absent at least one day in the past month because feeling unsafe at school or traveling to or from school.

- Establish a Social Environment That Promotes Safety and Prevents Violence. The climate should create expectations for high academic standards, establish acceptable norms and rules of conduct that do not tolerate harassment, bullying,

undesirable gang activity or other aggressive behavior, and create and enforce fair policies for dealing with aggression if and when it occurs. The climate should also stress the importance of and exemplify empathy and caring in interpersonal interactions between and among students and school staff.

- Provide a Physical Environment, Inside and Outside School Buildings, That Promotes Safety and Prevents Violence. Adult supervision, avoidance of weapons on campus, safe routes to and from school.
- Implement Curricula and Instruction That Help Students Learn and Apply Knowledge and Skills to Adopt and Maintain Pro-Social Behavior.
- Provide Safe Physical Education and Extracurricular Physical Activity Programs.
- Provide Health, Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services to Meet the Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Social Needs of Students. On-site services provided in schools or through linkages with existing community resources are needed.
- Establish Mechanisms for Short- and Long-Term Crisis Response.
- Integrate School, Family, and Community Efforts to Prevent Violence.
- Provide Staff Development for School Personnel.

Physical Activity: School-based physical activity programs may improve attendance by reducing obesity, which has been associated with absenteeism, by increasing connectedness, and by favorably affecting the health status of children with asthma.

- A comprehensive approach that includes physical education, wise use of recess and after school times, co-curricular physical activity opportunities, and bicycling or walking to and from school.
- High quality physical education program based on national standards.
- A safe environment is essential. Safety is achieved through design and maintenance of facilities, use of appropriate protective equipment, and adequate supervision.
- There is a well-documented inverse relationship between environmental safety and physical activity.
- The psychological environment is also important. If recreational time is characterized by negative social interactions, benefits will be limited.
- Extracurricular activities, before and after school and in the summer, can greatly contribute to the acquisition of regular physical activity habits.
- School-day recess playtime can contribute significantly to children's overall levels of moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- Academic classroom time can be beneficially relieved with brief breaks for stretching or other activity associated with physical well-being.

Nutrition contributes to reduced absenteeism, particularly for children from low-income families.

- Implement a universal school breakfast program to increase participation and reduce stigma.
- Allow children to eat breakfast in the classroom rather than the cafeteria to avoid having to arrive to school very early.

- Educational outreach to parents to increase participation rates.
- Create food backpack programs.
- Create farm to school programs

Inattention and Hyperactivity. ADHD has been associated with absenteeism.

- School can help with identifying children who warrant further assessment to determine if they meet criteria for a diagnosis of ADHD, determining which children actually receive a diagnosis, monitoring the ways that a child may be responding to stimulant medication or other interventions, and implementing behavioral and environmental interventions to assist youth with ADHD to learn and practice performance skills to minimize the educational and social consequences of this complex behavioral syndrome.
- Organize classrooms to minimize distractions.
- Strategies for improving attention and behavior include improving the teacher-student relationship, presenting rules clearly, providing contingent reinforcement, strengthening the reinforcement system, using verbal correction strategically, improving the point system, engaging the school and family in a problem solving partnership, and implementing daily report cards.
- Strategies for promoting social competence include planning for an instructional match, providing novel tasks, setting appropriate goals, using peer-mediated strategies, using parent-mediated strategies, and incorporating computer-assisted strategies.
- Strategies addressing social competence include providing social skills training, promoting sustained friendships, intervening in the lunchroom, and intervening on the playground.
- Outreach and partnership with parents of children with ADHD.

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 regular attendance.

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. 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.

Offer necessities like diapers, financial services, child care, transportation, or low-interest emergency loans.

Support the inclusion of ACEs screening and trauma-informed care in schools and across governmental agencies at the state and county levels. ACE scores would enlighten school of possible barriers families are having regarding attendance.

Require dissemination and outreach of family-friendly written resources or technology-based applications that help caregivers better understand the impact of ACEs on healthy development, by all governmental agencies serving young children, their parents or other primary caregivers.

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 and support education liaisons at public housing sites to help ensure adequate, dependable housing for children and families.

Eliminate lead hazards and other toxic substances in housing, child care locations, schools, and water, which burden families and communities of color disproportionately and can cause health problems that contribute to chronic absence.

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

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.

Create policies across sectors that collectively lower the burden of stress on families due to the often interrelated threats of poverty, crime, mental illness, substance abuse, discrimination, and community violence, and support parents and other caregivers in their roles as nurturers and providers.

Maintain and strengthen a set of proven policies known to support the health and well-being of low-income families with young children, including subsidized parental leave policies, access to affordable and high-quality early care and education services, community recreation and support activities, home-visiting programs, behavioral and physical health services, income supports, nutrition programs, housing policies, and employment policies that promote good parenting during the child's earliest years, to reap benefits to society throughout the child's lifetime.

Encourage family-friendly employment policies. Employment policies that improve the stability of working hours, give parents more control over their work times, promote bonding and attachment, and improve conditions for young low income parents, including paid family leave for the birth of a child, paid sick leave, and predictable scheduling.

Provide parents with job training and help finding employment.

Maximize enrollment of eligible parents and families in federally-funded and reimbursed supports such as TANF, WIC, SNAP, and Medicaid coverage.

Expand Medicaid for pregnant women to 1 year postpartum.

Add support programs for parents to ensure they have the mental health, addiction, or other resources to support their needs.

Add more case managers, parent liaison, referral specialists at the Division of Social Services (DSS) for family connections.

Help parents with stress management.

Provide respite to parents caring for children with special needs.

Modernize and streamline North Carolina's benefits eligibility applications and process, including bundling and integrating formal family support services and eliminating barriers to re-entry into programs and services.

Locate services where families can access them using public transportation, and ensure access to services in rural counties.

Link work requirements for receiving cash assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) directly to the availability of high-quality child care.

Ensure equitable access for linguistically and culturally diverse families to a coordinated system that includes health care, voluntary home visiting, high-quality early care and learning, and early intervention, to yield the highest return on investment.

Provide convenient access to the highest quality programs for families of color experiencing poverty

Build family support settings and programs for ease of use:

- Produce materials in a variety of formats and make them clear and easy to read.
- Relate content of services to individual needs.
- Create organizational tools such as checklists and reminders that will help people manage the demands on their lives.
- Break down tasks into incremental steps.
- Incorporate technology into family support settings.

Implement tax credits for working families.

Expand home visiting throughout the state.

Improve access to affordable fresh foods to reduce food insecurity, including supporting the statewide system of food banks and helping more farmer's markets and farm stands accept food stamps (EBT).

Increase support for cooperative extension EFNEP (Enhanced Family Nutrition Education Program).

Make green spaces, walking trails, parks and playgrounds available to all neighborhoods to build exercise into all North Carolinians' daily lives. **Leverage access to Parks and Recreation/ structured activities in nearby towns for rural communities.**
Create joint use agreements for places to play.

Ensure curricula, materials and instructional time are culturally responsive.

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.

Ensure that children of color are reflected in school materials.

Incorporate languages other than English into the curriculum.

Offer alternative learning environments:

- Different types of seating.
- Can be student-led.
- Walking classroom.

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.**

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.

Provide extra academic supports for low-performing students.

Provide universal Pre-K, also more quality childcare, Head Start, Early Head Start, other opportunities for programs before elementary school.

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

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.**

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. **Value bilingualism when hiring teachers.**

Provide year-round schools to prevent summer slide.

Ensure safe and supportive learning environments and positive school climates, including focusing on social-emotional health and learning.

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.

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.

Build school-wide culture of attendance, including promoting a sense of belonging and connection including noticing when students show up.

Create and use social-emotional learning standards.

Hire support staff like trained counselors, social workers and behavioral health specialists in school settings who can work with children and families on attendance and other issues.

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. Do not use other policies that remove children from class for discipline.

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 (0-5). Collect data on 0-5 suspensions/expulsions through Power School-type system.

Stop corporal punishment.

Expand teachers' skill sets to minimize suspensions. Training for teachers in cultural sensitivity may reduce teacher-student conflict and result in fewer suspensions. In addition, schoolwide implementation of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program has been shown to reduce discipline referrals and the use of suspensions.

Parents want help managing their children's behavior.

Expand teacher and administrator training to create social-emotionally healthy and trauma-sensitive classrooms and schools. Train teachers on resilience factors, social determinants of health.

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.

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.

Train teachers in Mental Health First Aid.

Provide funding for teacher training on restorative justice. (example: Thinking for a Change at Department of Corrections).

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.

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.

Integrate analysis of teachers' ability to teach social-emotional competencies into licensure requirements and teaching frameworks.

Do not take away recess or force children to walk laps as discipline. Discourages physical activity. Include physical activity in learning when possible.

Create a tiered system of response to address individual students' attendance.

Tier 1

- Recognize Good and Improved Attendance.
- Educate and Engage Students and families.
- Monitor Attendance Data and Practice and set goals.
- Establish positive and engaging school climate.
- ID and address common barriers to getting to school.

Tier 2

- Provide Personalized Early Outreach.
- Partner with families/students to develop Student Attendance Success Plan.
- Connect to caring mentor.
- Recruit for engaging before-or-after-school activities.
- Connect to Walk-to-School Companion.
- Offer plan or contacts for health support.

Tier 3

- Intensive case management with coordination with public agencies and legal response as needed.

Connect with community agencies that can help provide resources and services along the three tiers, including:

- Community schools.
- Head Start family liaisons.
- School integrated service teams.
- Family resource centers.
- McKinney Vento representatives.
- Public agencies.

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.

Create transition outreach programs that enable parents and children to know what to expect from school and help parents support their child's educational success. **Equip home visitors with information about kindergarten transition to share with parents. Create a multi-lingual transition document to share with parents.**

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.

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

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.

Create a comprehensive, aligned, birth to third grade, trauma-informed educator and school leader professional development system.

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

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

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. **Invest further in resources (\$, etc.) to support licensure and degrees in Pre-K teaching population where a lot of teachers of color are.**

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.**

Make standards and licensure requirements more rigorous.

Create split licenses (P-3 and 4-8). Or create B-8 rather than K-8 licenses.

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).

Implement professional development to train and inform staff on causes (barriers to attendance) and effects of absenteeism, how to talk with families about absenteeism, and how to set up attendance plans.

Require all Kindergarten teachers to have an early childhood education (ECE) license.

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.

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

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).

Require B-8 child development content knowledge in teacher and school leader prep programs for state accreditation.

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

Ensure professional development opportunities are easily and equitably accessible.

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.

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

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.

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).** **Arrange for school teachers and leaders to connect with children in their homes and neighborhoods to understand their context.**

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 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
Train educators to teach/educate children who live in poverty
Provide mental health support to all school staff.

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

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).

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.

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 recruitment efforts at staff of community-based organizations.

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.

Intentionally target hiring 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.

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.

Examine and possibly revise local teacher dismissal policies. Consider teacher performance when making layoff decisions.

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.**

Reinstitute a robust Teaching Fellows program to develop pipeline of quality teachers.

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.

Institute statewide principal leadership training.

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.

Increase principal capacity to use best practices and connect with community resources to support families.

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.

Educate administrators/principals on early childhood and social-emotional health.

Improve collection, analysis and use of chronic absence data to improve attendance.

Collect chronic absence data disaggregated by race and other relevant factors, and report it in an understandable format. School districts should invest resources in determining whether and to what extent chronic early absence is a relevant problem for particular children, grades, schools, neighborhoods or student sub-populations.

Measurement of chronic absence should begin early. Chronic absence should be monitored beginning in prekindergarten, in order to determine which children should be contacted because they are beginning to miss too much school. **Then early outreach can be used to identify and address barriers to attendance** before students miss so much school that they require more expensive remediation. This is especially important among children living in poverty, who are most adversely affected by the lost time in the classroom. It is also especially critical during times that students transition to new school environments.

Ensure consistency and accuracy in reporting chronic absence data across districts. For example, clarify the difference between chronic absence and Average Daily Attendance. Also ensure teacher accuracy in recording attendance.

Use chronic absence data to inform policy and resource allocation.

Include chronic absence data in early warning systems.

Share absence data among state agencies.

School nurses can collect health data and connect it to absence data (track health causes of absences).

Offer professional development on understanding causes of absenteeism, interpreting data and best practice interventions (option: Title II training funds).

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.

Define “high quality birth-to-eight education” for NC.

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.

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.

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.**

Share accountability for students' attendance outcomes across agencies and domains.

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.

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.

Incorporate the statewide standard definition of chronic absence into the NC Longitudinal Data System and link databases across agencies to improve and report available information related to chronic absences.

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.

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 students of different races, but also, 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.

Publicly report teacher qualification data.

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

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.

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.

Rectify differential district funding for school facilities. Old and unsafe school buildings, which burden children and communities of color disproportionately, cause health problems that increase absence.

Fund schools well.

Use socioeconomic integration models to diversify schools and prevent re-segregation. 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 to gain better understanding of parents' transportation needs.

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.

More funding for bus drivers. Teacher assistants used to be bus drivers. With budget cuts that eliminated teacher assistants, now bus drivers aren't reliable because they are juggling multiple part-time jobs, so kids don't show up for school or miss breakfast.

Introduce families to government boards that impact transportation.