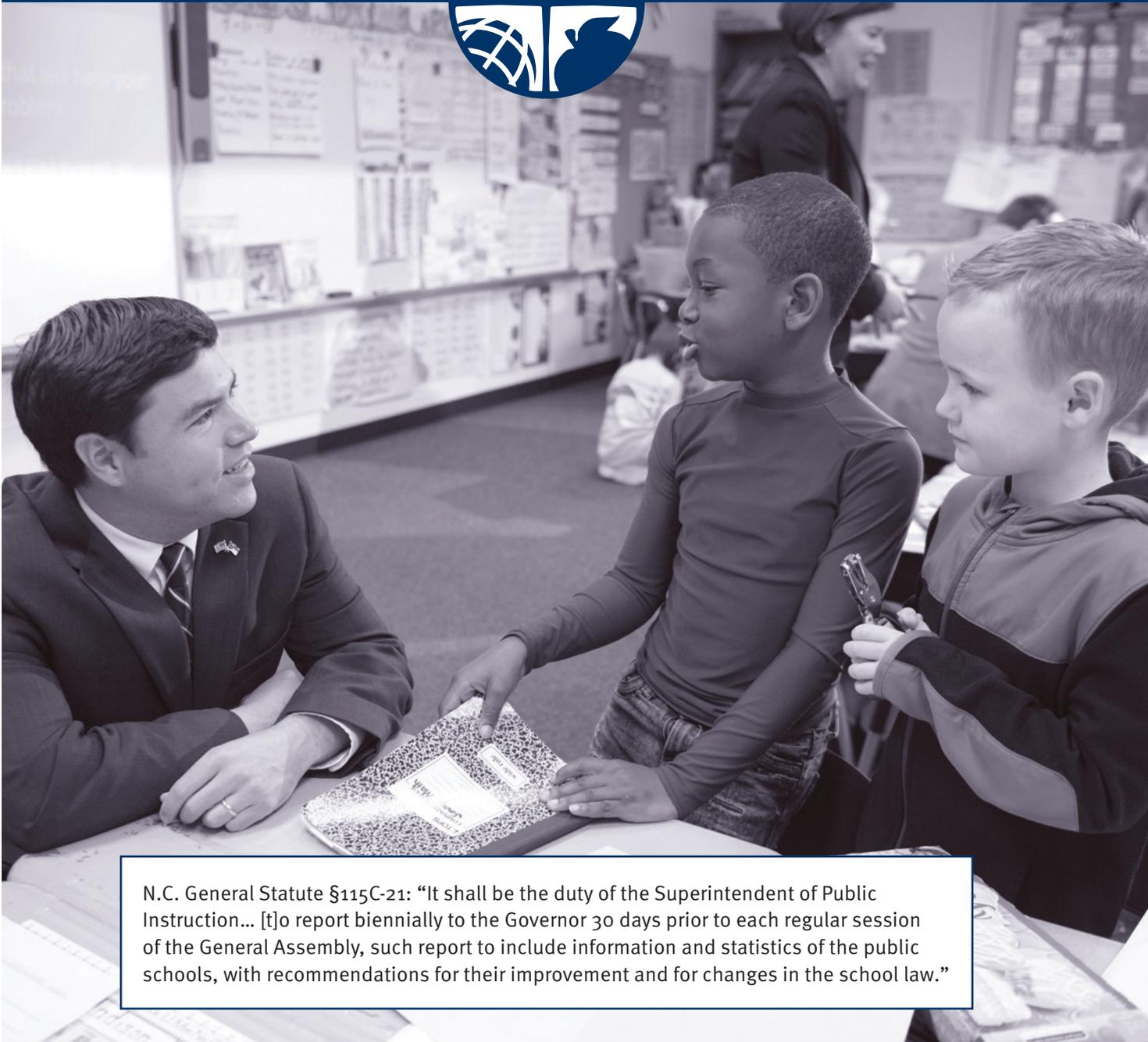


PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS



INTRODUCTION

“ State leaders must foster innovative solutions to attack persistent problems faced by students and teachers. ”



N.C. General Statute §115C-21: “It shall be the duty of the Superintendent of Public Instruction... [t]o report biennially to the Governor 30 days prior to each regular session of the General Assembly, such report to include information and statistics of the public schools, with recommendations for their improvement and for changes in the school law.”

A MESSAGE FROM STATE SUPERINTENDENT MARK JOHNSON

As superintendent of North Carolina’s public schools, I believe that we must give all students a great start and a navigable path to success. As you will see in this report, our top priorities include early childhood education – making sure students are ready to start kindergarten and can read proficiently by the end of third grade; and career pathways to success – ensuring students understand early that there are many ways to be successful in the 21st Century, and whether their choice is a four-year degree, a two-year degree, military service, or a post-secondary technical training program, our schools must provide them the opportunity to work hard and reach their American Dream.

We must transform the state’s education agency and the way we educate to respond better to the needs of parents, students, and educators. State leaders must foster innovative solutions to attack persistent problems faced by students and teachers in our

current system. We must support students and parents by updating our state standards so that they make sense to parents and educators and promote progress for students. We must move away from high-stakes standardized testing and toward a system that provides accountability for students and educators while maximizing instructional time and minimizing lengthy summative tests.

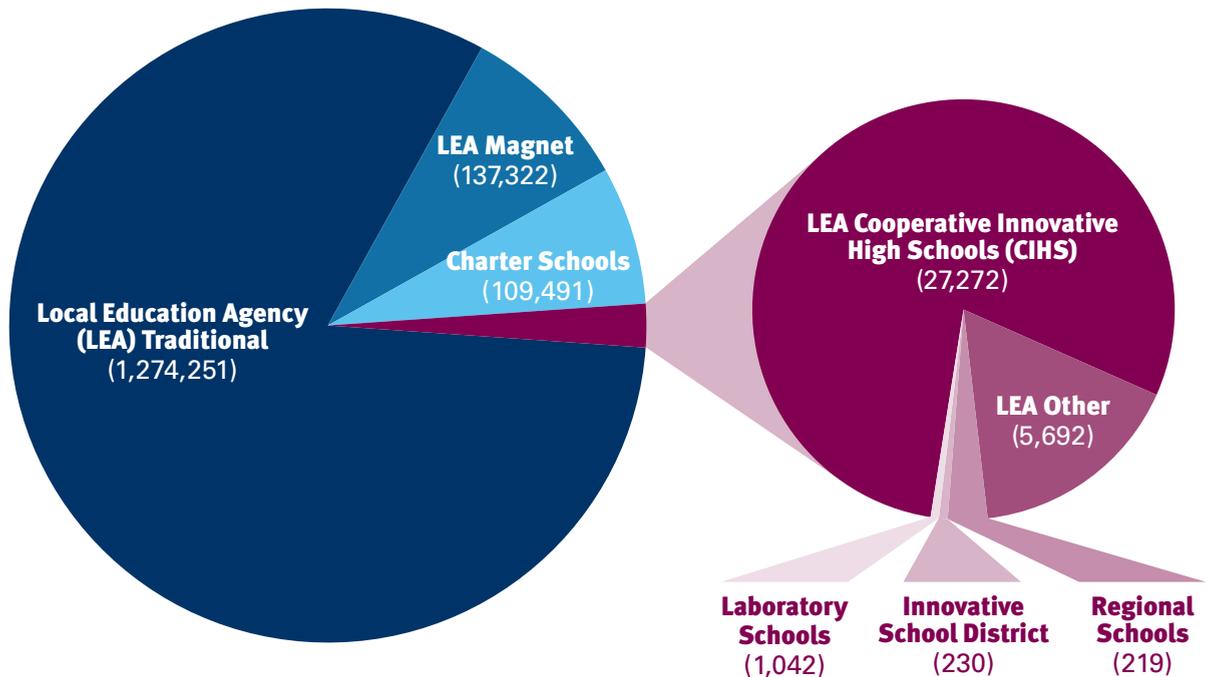
Another priority is school safety. In the past year, we have worked to increase funding for school resource officers and mental-health professionals so that one student’s challenges do not become a school tragedy.

In my career, I have been a teacher, a school board member, and since January 2017, I have had the honor and privilege of serving as State Superintendent. But this year, I dropped my daughter off to start kindergarten in one of our public schools. Now, my mission to transform education is even more personal.



Mark Johnson
 NC Superintendent of Public Instruction
 December 2018

TOTAL ENROLLMENT 2018 - 2019



SCHOOL SAFETY



We are increasing school safety measures, including more School Resource Officers as well as mental-health resources.



Our students' success in school and beyond must be our top priority. To reach that goal, we must make sure we create safe environments for all students.

As the father of a daughter in one of North Carolina's public elementary schools, I have a personal interest in the safety of students and educators. We must ensure that all students, educators and staff will be safe in our schools.

We are increasing school safety measures, including more School Resource Officers as well as mental-health resources in our schools. Teachers and other school staff members work hard to ensure safe environments, but they need everyone's help.

Parents, students, educators and the community all play important roles to keep our schools safe. Together, we can work to keep one student's challenges from becoming a school tragedy.

SCHOOL SAFETY PROGRAM

In 2018, Superintendent Johnson secured the following amounts to increase safety across North Carolina:



School Resource Officers

\$12 million for School Resource Officers in public elementary and middle schools across the state.



Safety Equipment

\$3 million to schools for equipment to enhance the safety and security of school buildings and grounds.



Students in Crisis

\$2 million for community partners to provide crisis services and training to help students develop healthy responses to trauma and stress.



School Mental Health Personnel

\$10 million to support more innovative mental health support programs in our schools.



Training to Increase School Safety

\$3 million for training that will address school safety by helping students to develop healthy responses to trauma and stress.



Anonymous Tip Line Application

An anonymous tip app is in process. Supported by a 24/7 safety command center, this mobile app will allow parents, educators, students and others to report suspicious activity without fear of embarrassment or reprisal.



Needs-based Grants for School Construction

\$171 million since 2017 from the NC Education Lottery has funded new school buildings in the most economically distressed areas of the state.

SUPPORTING EDUCATORS

“

The best way we can support teachers is by listening and communicating with them — and then acting for them.

”



North Carolina’s teachers and school leaders are working harder than ever, and we must do everything we can to support them.

The best way we can support teachers is by listening and communicating with them and then acting for them. To do this, I visit schools nearly every week during the school year, and we also provide all teachers with ways to share their thoughts with us about various topics. But we don’t just listen – we take action.

When teachers told us that testing guidelines coming out of Raleigh were too strict, we acted to give teachers more discretion in the classroom. When teachers told us that they wanted more reading resources for their youngest students, we sent them \$200 per K-3 classroom to use how they saw fit.

We were also able to get previously unused education funds to classrooms by buying new iPads for K-3 reading teachers. No matter how much technology we add to schools, though, the teacher always has been and always will be the most important part of the classroom. Technology will help make the teacher’s job easier by the addition of personalized learning for students.

Importantly, to give teachers back time to teach, we also need to reduce over-testing in our schools at all levels – we need fewer, better tests.

Being able to recruit, retain and support teachers is one of the best ways we can improve our public schools. Continuing to increase teacher compensation and career support is an important part of that support strategy. When we support teachers, we empower them, and as a result, parents, educators and students all benefit.

TEACHER PAY

While leaders are always looking for ways to improve the profession, recruiting and retaining the very best educators means letting students know that teaching is a great career path to consider.



The average annual teacher salary in North Carolina



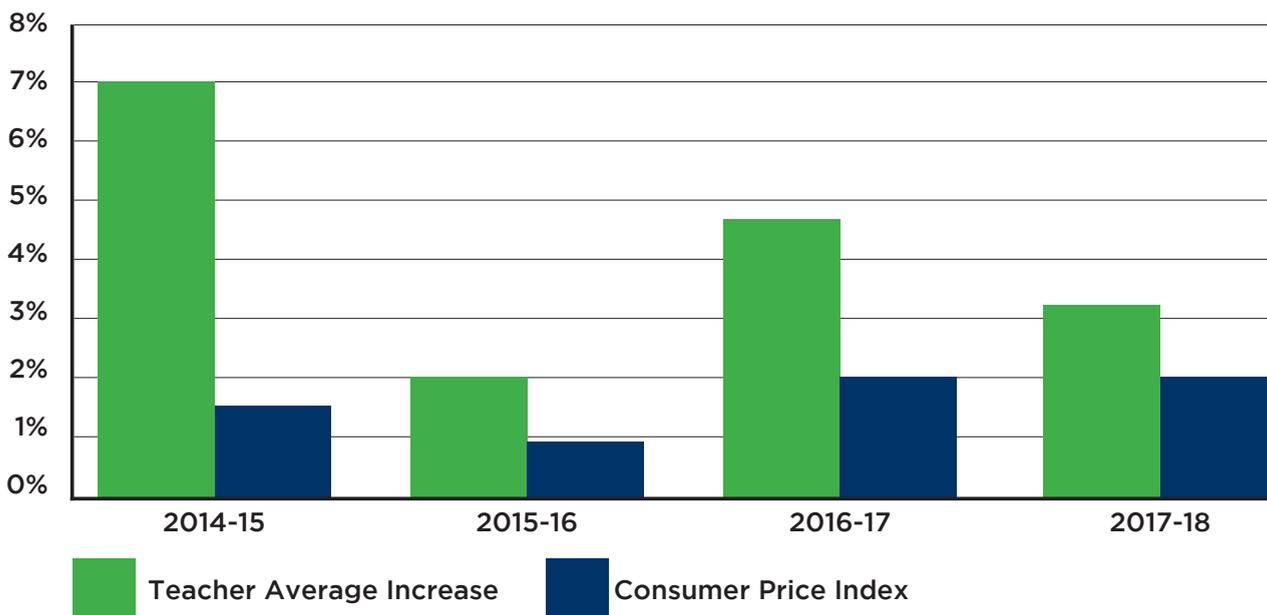
The median annual earnings for adults with bachelor’s degrees in North Carolina



The median household income in North Carolina (includes families, not just individuals)



The median wage for an individual in North Carolina



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



We will continue to push innovative strategies to ensure that our youngest students start strong at school.



Less than half of our fourth graders in North Carolina have the reading skills they need. While this situation is not unique to North Carolina, it is a problem we're tackling head-on.

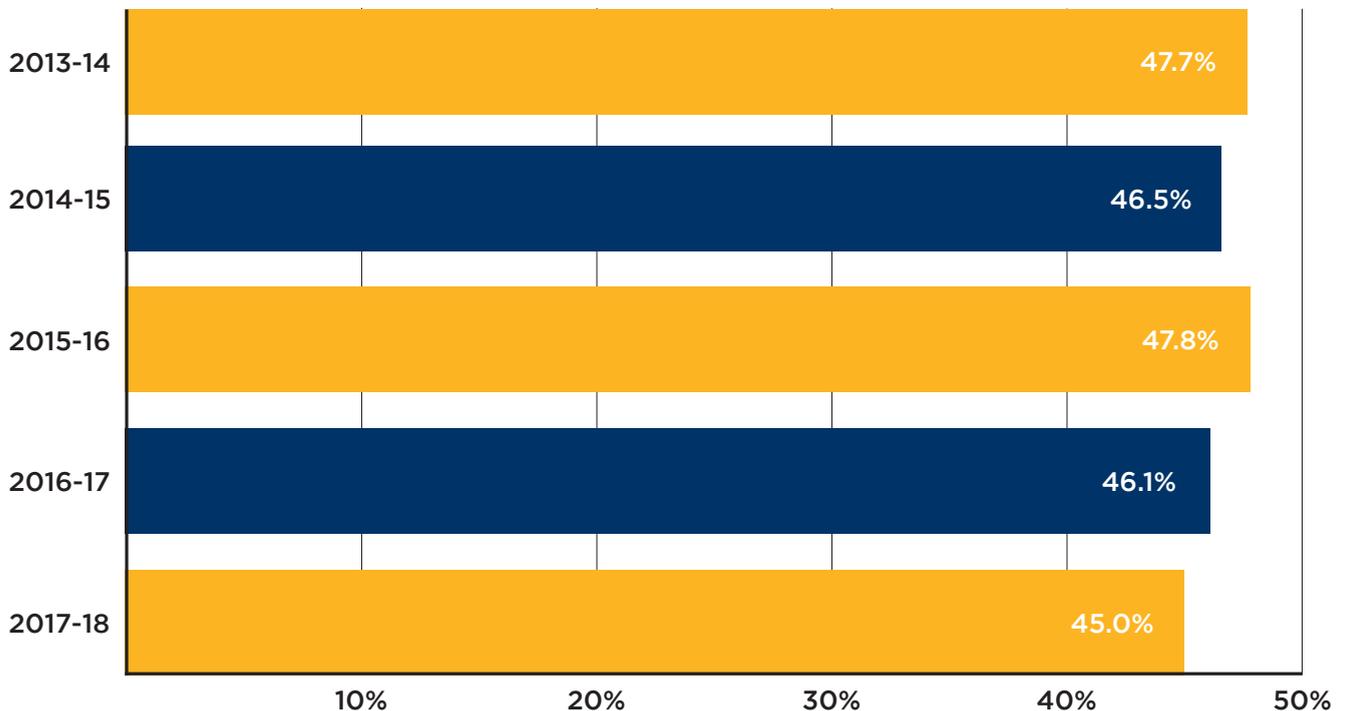
When we talk to early-grade classroom teachers, they tell us they need two things: flexibility and resources. That's why we delivered \$200 and a brand-new device for every K-3 classroom to support literacy in 2018. We also have taken steps to increase flexibility and reduce the time teachers and students must spend taking tests. And we partnered with the College of Education at NC State University to introduce Wolfpack WORKS, a professional development program that helps our newest teachers become more effective reading instructors.

Additionally, we have supported pre-K programs and smaller class sizes in the K-3 years to enhance literacy support for our youngest scholars. And the Read to Achieve program provides funding for reading diagnostics for classrooms and even summer camps for students who need more help.

We are working hard in schools to help students, but this load is too heavy for educators to carry alone. Parents, caretakers, and volunteers have a role to play. Whether we're sending reading tips home to encourage parents to be involved in their child's reading journey or using the NC Reads program to promote book drives, we will continue to push innovative strategies to ensure that our youngest students start strong at school.

3RD GRADE EOG READING PROFICIENCY (LEVEL 4 AND ABOVE)

Changes are needed to shift the trend of third-grade proficiency on end-of-grade reading tests.



CAREER PATHWAYS

“ The right career pathways provide students the best opportunity to pursue their American Dream. ”



North Carolina has more than 1.5 million students in our public schools, and they all have different strengths and weaknesses, talents and interests. Accordingly, each student’s path to success will be different.

Students can work right after they graduate from high school, join the armed forces, or attend community college or a university. Each one of these choices is a pathway to success. The right career pathway provides each student the best opportunity to pursue their American Dream.

We need to transform our education system to provide the training our students need in the 21st century by empowering students to make informed decisions early in their scholastic careers about their chosen path. Every student should, and

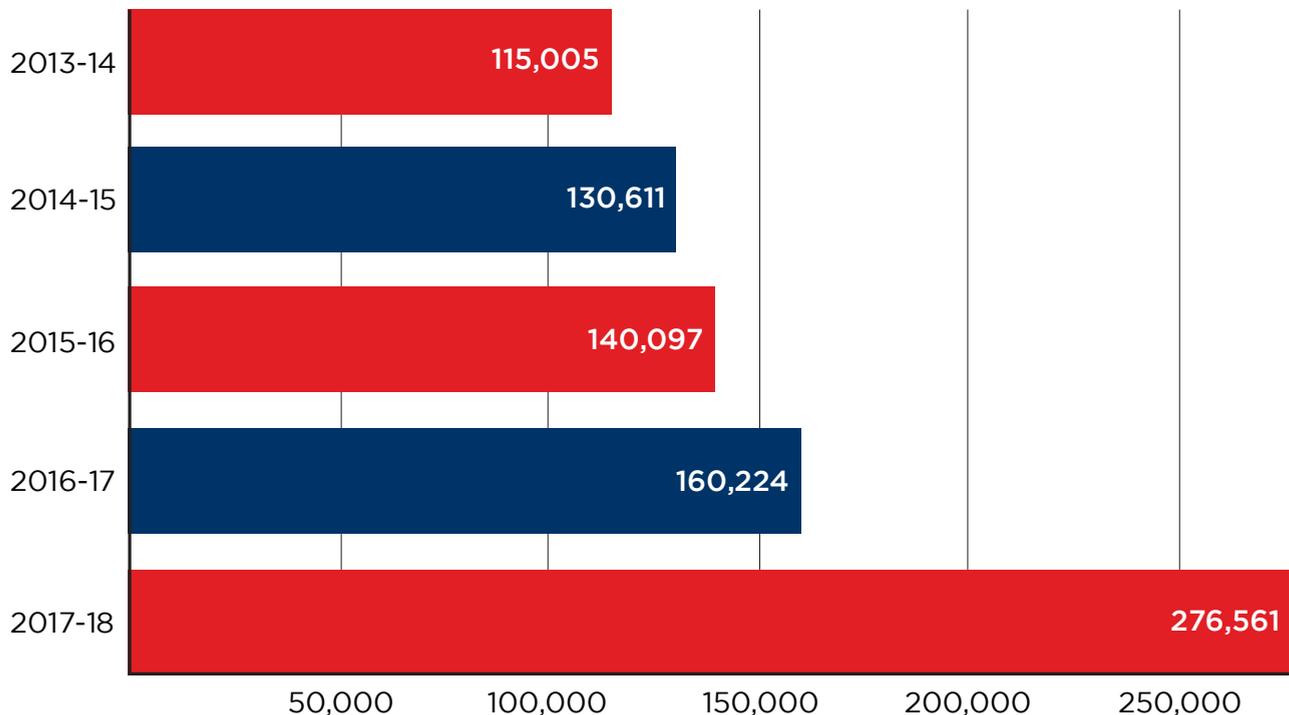
must, have the opportunity to go to a four-year institution if that’s what they want – but it’s not the only pathway to success.

We are working on expanding career and technical education programs, providing an easier path to military service, and making sure students know that federal and state educational aid programs can be used for a variety of programs after high school – not just four-year college.

Just as importantly, we are committed to helping educators start the career conversation earlier than high school. Students should know what options are available to them early enough to make decisions that will put them on their chosen path.

RISE IN CTE CREDENTIALS IN NORTH CAROLINA

Since 2010-11, when North Carolina Career and Technical Education (CTE) began collecting data on credential attainment by secondary students, 1,043,284 credentials have been earned.



COMPUTER SCIENCE & CODING

“ North Carolina has more than 20,000 unfilled computing jobs with an estimated \$1.5 billion in annual salaries available. ”



Over the last two decades, a surge of technological advancements has radically changed the way we operate in everyday life. Handheld devices and applications use innovative approaches to simplify and expedite everyday tasks. In North Carolina, we have many large corporations and small companies that have infused technology into their businesses and rely on a steady pipeline of computer programmers and software engineers to complete complex tasks.

In fact, North Carolina has more than 20,000 unfilled computing jobs with an estimated \$1.5 billion in annual salaries available, yet there are fewer than 6,000 students enrolled in computer science courses. Those careers do not all require bachelor's or master's degrees – many can be

obtained after high school, community college, or military service. By expanding computer science education, we will provide all North Carolina students with the access, tools, and knowledge in the fastest-growing career field in the nation. Such expansion will translate into more jobs and continued economic growth for our state. More importantly, we will provide our children the opportunity to work hard and reach their American Dream.

We will provide opportunities for all North Carolina students to learn computer science and gain the skills needed to create and contribute in the growing digital economy. Providing this for our students will prepare them to enter a successful career in the tech industry.

STEPS TO EXPAND COMPUTER SCIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

The NC Computer Science Plan is on track to provide opportunities to the state's public school students and help employers find talent.



Newly created Director of Computer Science and Technology position at the Department of Public Instruction



Pre-service and in-service professional development programs that prepare at least 500 certified computer science teachers by 2021-22



K-12 Computer Science Standards added to the NC Standard Course of Study



One computer science course offered to all middle school students



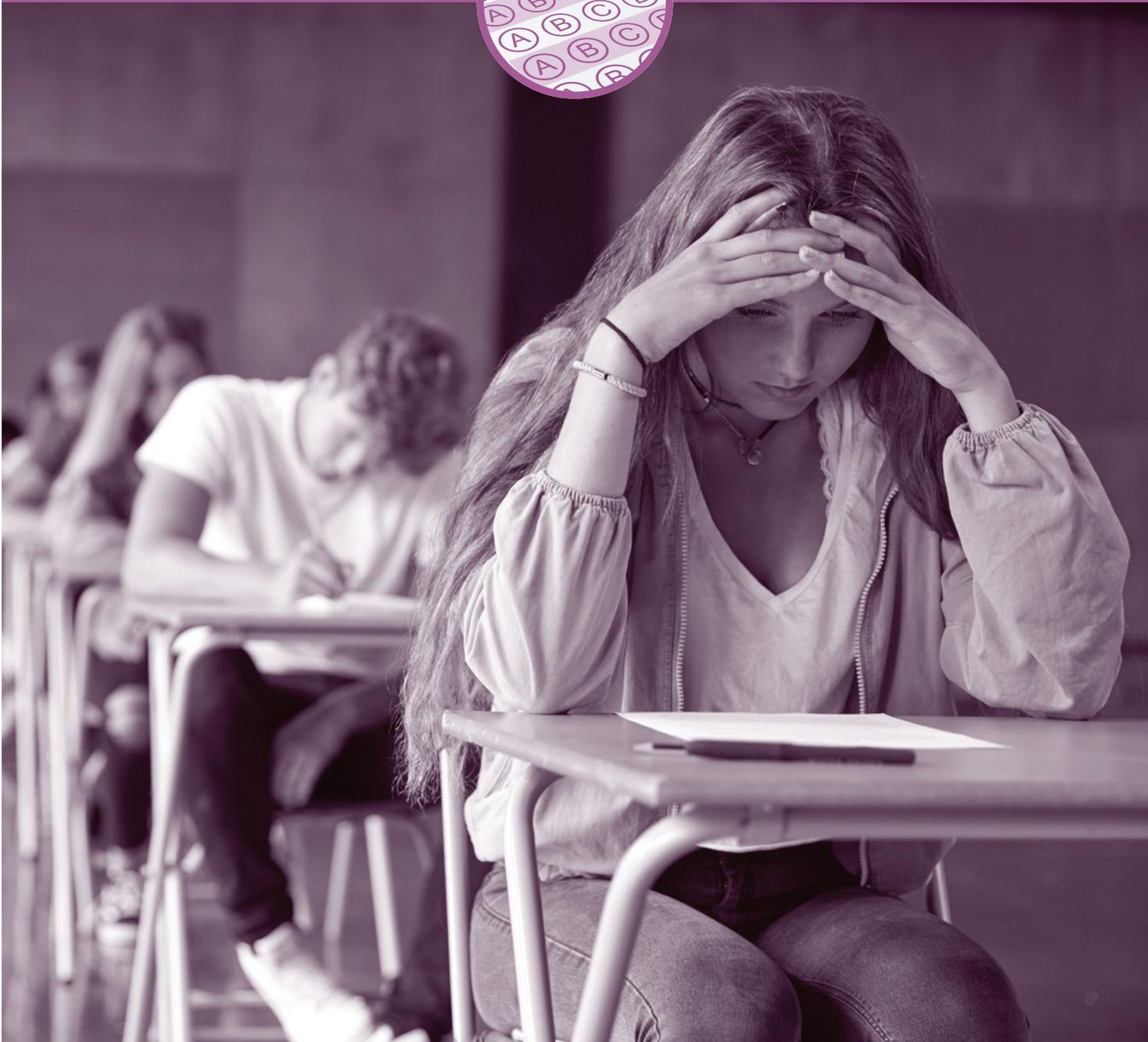
High-quality computer science curriculum materials, aligned with the content standards, available to all schools



Both an introductory and an Advanced Placement course offered to all high school students (in-school, virtual, or blended)

REDUCING OVER-TESTING

“ The layering-on of standardized tests must stop. We need fewer, better tests. ”



We hear it from students, parents, and educators. Our current education system has too many high-stakes, standardized tests. We can and must do better.

For years, the education system has given our students and teachers only one-size-fits-all, 20th-century tools and strategies. But, that same system now demands 21st-century results. We must work together to transform the education system to better support all teachers and students. The current system has too many tests layered on by different levels of the education industry. There are federally required tests, state-required tests, and tests required by local school districts and individual schools.

We must measure student progress and teacher effectiveness, but we can do that with fewer, better tests and by using new technology to replace outdated testing methods.

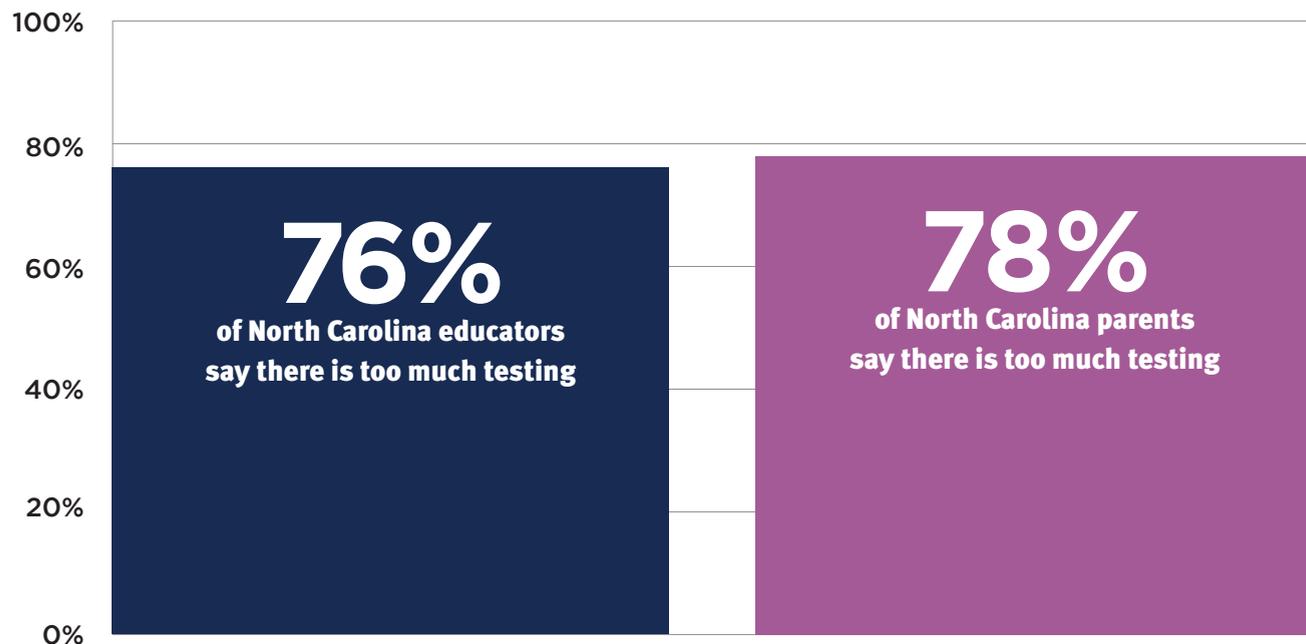
In a recent survey, we found that 76% of teachers think that North Carolina's students are tested too much. In a survey of parents, 78% of those responding said their children are required to take too many tests. I agree with them, as both an education leader and as a parent of a child in our public schools.

Testing less and testing smarter will get back the time for teachers to do what they entered the profession to do: teach. We should take advantage of new technology so that teachers can get the information they need about students' progress. Especially in the early grades, progress checks can feel like a normal, engaging lesson instead of a high-stakes examination. In many cases, students won't even know we are checking in on their progress.

Transforming our education system so that it better supports all students and educators is one of my top priorities, and the future is bright.

EDUCATORS' AND PARENTS' VIEWS ON TESTING

In 2018, 25,825 educators and 42,684 parents took the time to respond to Superintendent Johnson's perspective surveys about over-testing in our schools. Teachers were asked whether "Students in the grade I teach are tested too much." Parents were asked whether "My student takes too many standardized tests."



MARK JOHNSON

NC SUPERINTENDENT



1,000 copies of this public document were printed at a cost of \$3,650 or \$3.65 per copy.