

# Quality Education For All

## Vision for 20/20

**A quality education is essential to success in an increasingly competitive, ever changing workplace. In order for citizens to be contributors to the state's economy, culture, and social and religious communities, as well as the overall well-being of the state, a sound education is necessary to provide the tools needed to make wise and informed decisions. So that North Carolina's children and adults will also actively participate in our democratic government, it is crucial they are offered a quality education from early childhood past retirement.**

**North Carolina's education system will strengthen public schools so every child has an equal opportunity to succeed and every graduate is ready for work or additional education. All citizens will have access to continuing education opportunities through a seamless education partnership between the secondary and post-secondary educational systems in the state.**



**Goal 1: North Carolinians have a basic 14-year education, and graduates will have the knowledge and skills needed to be competitive in the global economy and fully participate in our democratic system.**

Both jobs and daily life are becoming more complex and demanding higher levels of skill than they did a generation ago. The national 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce Commission outlines the elements of 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy as "the ability to read, write, and compute with competence, think analytically, adapt to change, work in teams, and use technology."

### **Facts:**

- 85% of all jobs by 2010 will require 14 or more years of education.
- North Carolina ranks 34th in college going rates among the 50 states.
- Less than 80% of adult North Carolinians have completed high school. (p65, F278)
- Only 3 states have lower high school completion rates than North Carolina.
- Less than a third of NC's fourth and eighth graders scored in the proficient range on standardized tests. (p64, NAEP chart)
- NC students rank in the middle among international competitors in science and math skills. (p 64, NCDPI/TIMSS chart)
- NC places 47<sup>th</sup> in a state comparison of SAT scores. The placement improves to 32<sup>nd</sup> when the scores are adjusted for the number of students being tested. (p. 66, chart)

### **Targets:**

1.) **Student Testing.** By 2010, nine out of 10 students score at or above grade level on End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) examinations. To reach the target, the percentage of students passing end-of-grade tests in grades 3-8 on average must move from 75% to 90% in reading and from 80% to 90% in math. On the end-of-course exams,

current scores at or above grade level range from 47% in history to 73% for physics. Students must improve from 17 to 43 percentage points in end-of-course exams.

2.) **National Assessment of Educational Progress.** NC will rank among the top 10 states in NAEP proficiency by 2010. To reach this, students must move up between two and 12 spaces in various grade levels.

3.) **Global Rank.** NC students rank above the national average on The Third (?) International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and have scores competitive with the countries in the top tier of the study. In these global comparisons of educational achievement, North Carolina and the nation must move up at least 5 spaces to be among the top tier nations in the world.

4.) **High School Diplomas.** 95% of North Carolina students finish high school, and 60% will have at least two years of education beyond high school by 2010. To do this an additional 16% of the current adult population over 25 must get a diploma or GED.

5.) **SATs.** The average SAT score (math and verbal) will be equal to the national average by 2010. Whether the comparison is on adjusted or raw scores, North Carolina must increase SAT scores by 14 to 28 points to reach the national average by 2010.

**Goal 2: All public school students will have access to schools that create a supportive learning environment, and every student is provided an equal opportunity to reach his or her potential.**

A supportive learning environment for students includes involvement of parents in activities, resources for schools to help students achieve their potential, quality teaching, and strong administration support. The challenge of creating such an environment is magnified by a rapid growth rate (fourth fastest among public school systems nationwide) and the increasing diversity of the student body. Of particular concern is an unacceptable achievement gap between white and minority students. North Carolina has focused considerable effort on improving public schools over the past two decades, yet *Education Week* graded North Carolina a "D-" for a category including class size, student engagement, parent involvement, choice, and autonomy. Efforts to improve teacher quality earned a "B+."

**Facts:**

- African-American students in North Carolina are 4 times more likely than white students to be designated as mentally retarded.
- African-American students in North Carolina are 2.76 times more likely than white students to be designated as emotionally disturbed.
- The nonwhite population in the schools is projected to outnumber the white population later this century, yet 85% of the teaching force is white.
- In the 1990s, a high school dropout was 4.5 times more likely to be unemployed than a college graduate.
- 12% of teens 16 to 19 are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates.
- North Carolina needs 10,000 teachers each year for the growing student population and to replace the teachers who leave.
- The turnover rate for teachers has increased to 13.44% annually.

- Only 66% of secondary teachers are teaching in the field in which they are licensed.
- Only 41% of Hispanics have a high school diploma. **Accurate? See page 65**

### **Targets:**

1.) **Dropout Rates.** North Carolina will be among the 20 states with the lowest high school dropout rate. The state currently has one of the nation's highest dropout rates, with 12% of children age 16 to 19 dropping out of school. Between 1997-2000 69,715 students dropped out, about 23,000 each year.

2.) **Qualified Teachers.** North Carolina will be among the top 10 states in the percentage of fully licensed teachers and in the percentage of teachers teaching in their licensed field of expertise. The state currently is slightly above the national average in the percentage of teachers meeting license requirements, but needs to move up 13 spaces to reach the top 10 by 2010. With only 66% of teachers teaching in field, NC is about average among states, but would need to move up 12 spaces to be among the top 10. The top 10 group begins at a total of 72% (and above) teaching in field.

3.) **ABCs.** 90% of schools will be recognized as Schools Making Everyday Growth/Gains or meeting Expected Growth/Gains Standards as designated by the NC ABCs of Public Education. Looking at all categories under the ABCs of Education, 20% of schools do not meet expected improvement standards.

4.) **Attention to Students.** 90% of parents will agree that their child is known and cared about as an individual at school. Only 79% of parents surveyed say their child is known and cared about in school.

### **Goal 3: More North Carolinians will complete two- and four-year degrees in preparation for a knowledge-oriented economy and society.**

Education pays. In strictly dollar terms, it pays a typical college graduate \$20,000 a year more than a high school graduate earns. As low-skill jobs vanish, increasing the state's education level becomes more critical. Despite significant investments in its public universities and community colleges, North Carolina lags significantly in the number of adults who hold college degrees. Furthermore, compared with other states, we're dropping further behind, from 37<sup>th</sup> to 39<sup>th</sup>. Increasing tuition rates could make it even more difficult for typical North Carolinians — especially first-generation college-goers — to afford post-secondary education.

### **Facts:**

- Between 1977 and 1997, the average income of men and women with only a high school diploma decreased by 4% in real dollars.
- Between 1977 and 1997, the income advantage associated with a college degree increased by 28% in real dollars.
- North Carolina has dropped from 37<sup>th</sup> to 39<sup>th</sup> in the US for the number of adults over 25 with a college degree.
- Only 14.7% of blacks over age 18 have a bachelor's degree.

- Only 11.3% of Hispanics over age 18 have a bachelor's degree.
- High-school graduates from lower-income families lag 32 percentage points behind higher-income families in the rate of college attendance.
- North Carolina provided \$158 million in student financial aid programs during 1999-2000, but only 1/3 of these funds went to students with a demonstrated financial need.

1.) **Bachelor Degrees.** North Carolina will move up 3 percentage points to reach the national average in bachelor's degree attainment by 2010, and the minority achievement gap, now 10 to 14 percentage points behind whites, will be narrowed.

2.) **Community Colleges.** 60% of the fall students of community colleges will complete their program or still be enrolled the following fall at the community college. The system has just started collecting the data, and it will not be reported until the fall of 2001. **GET DATA**

3.) **Financial Aid.** By 2010 grants will make up 50% of student financial aid with loans and work-study programs accounting for the rest. Of the total financial aid available for students seeking higher degrees, loans and work-study are now a greater proportion (56%) than grants. This discourages entry into higher education and delays completion of degrees.

**Recommendation:** A Blue Ribbon Study Commission should investigate education needs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and develop a *seamless* education system.