

NC Education Human Capital Roundtable

Pathways to Excellence
for NC Teaching
Professionals

NC Education Human Capital Roundtable

Pathways to Excellence for NC Teaching Professionals



The Problem

North Carolina is facing a teacher shortage that threatens students' access to a quality education.

Major Causes

Complex licensing processes and a lack of professional advancement opportunities.





How did we get here?

As a result of short-term fixes, North Carolina's current teacher licensure process has become overly complex and offers a combination of options with no clarity as to how they all work together. In addition, the ability to advance as a teacher is absent, driving many to leave the classroom or profession altogether. These issues create an unnecessary barrier to teachers entering and staying in the profession.

The Solution

The NC Education Human Capital Roundtable (Roundtable), a multi-sector coalition of North Carolina education leaders, has met since 2018 to evaluate how to address the teacher shortage in North Carolina and how to create pathways to excellence for NC teaching professionals.

North Carolina should bolster its ability to attract, develop and reward the best educators by implementing clear, sequential pathways for NC teaching professionals to enter and progress in the profession. North Carolina needs to reimagine teachers' licensure and professional career paths in a way that:

-  **INVITES** a more diverse population into the profession
-  **OFFERS** individual advancement and growth opportunities
-  **ENCOURAGES** the best teachers to lead from the classroom
-  **PROVIDES** fair compensation that grows as teachers expand their professional impact

Your Input is Needed!

Teachers are the difference-makers for students' success. The single best thing the state can do to improve education in North Carolina is to focus on keeping great teachers in the classroom and encouraging more to enter the profession.

The Roundtable has outlined its vision to the State Board of Education and legislative leaders. Now, your input is needed. North Carolinians must work together on a solution that fairly evaluates and supports existing teachers, and increases the quality, quantity and diversity of new teacher candidates.

Let's all act now to change this trajectory, fill critical vacancies with highly effective teachers and attract teaching professionals of the future to North Carolina.

NC Education Human Capital Roundtable

NC Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals

Frequently Asked Questions

The NC Education Human Capital Roundtable

- » **What is the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**
 - The NC Education Human Capital Roundtable is a multi-sector coalition of North Carolina education leaders that has worked diligently since 2018 to address the teacher shortage in North Carolina and to create NC pathways to excellence for teaching professionals.
- » **Who is part of the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**
 - The Roundtable comprises educators, school and district leaders, advocacy groups, four state education agencies, and representatives from the Professional Educator Preparation Standards Commission and the State Board of Education.
- » **Who leads the Roundtable?**
 - By design, there is no chair or designated leader of the Roundtable. It is a collaborative effort.
- » **What's the mission of the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**
 - The Roundtable is working to modernize the teachers licensure process in a way that fairly supports and encourages continuous improvement of existing teachers, and increases the quality, quantity and diversity of new teacher candidates.

- The Roundtable is gathering input and feedback from stakeholders across North Carolina including school, district and state leaders, teachers, educator preparation programs, and researchers in education.

About SREB's Involvement

- » **What is the Southern Regional Education Board's role in the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**
 - SREB promotes holistic changes to end teacher shortages and is working to help several states achieve this, including North Carolina through the Roundtable process.
 - SREB supports the Roundtable's vision by facilitating open dialogue and providing research and best practices from other states.
- » **How was it determined which organizations and individuals were part of the NC Education Human Capital Roundtable?**
 - SREB convened the Roundtable and recommended which organizations should be represented. The leaders of each recommended organization assigned a designee to be an acting member of the group.
 - SREB intentionally kept the group small to maximize productivity, creativity and candor. SREB designed the meetings to be closed for the same reason.

The Current System

- » **How does the existing teacher licensure system in North Carolina work?**
 - As a result of decades of short-term fixes, North Carolina's current teacher licensure system has become overly complex and offers a combination of license options with no clear indication of how they all work together.
 - The current licensure system relies solely on educator preparation and exams to grant candidates a license. The envisioned model expands the routes by which a candidate may become licensed.

» **What is the problem with North Carolina's current licensure system?**

- The complex path to become a teacher in North Carolina and the lack of opportunities to advance as a professional discourages talented teachers from entering and staying in the classroom.
- A pathway for professional growth is currently absent in North Carolina's teaching profession without leaving the classroom to pursue administration roles.
- These challenges have created a flat expanse with no opportunity for growth or advancement for teachers, contributing to the growing teacher shortage in North Carolina.

» **How does this envisioned system fill the gaps of the current policy approach to education in North Carolina?**

- Licensure, professional pathways, compensation, and professional support are currently siloed in North Carolina policies and programs. To be more effective, they should be integrated into educators' experience as they grow in their profession.
- A pathway for substantial, compensated professional growth is also currently absent in North Carolina's teaching profession without leaving the classroom to pursue administration roles. Some limited roles exist in individual school districts, but a statewide model will help expand those roles.
- Teachers are the difference-makers for students' success. The single best thing we can do to improve education in North Carolina is focus on keeping great teachers in the classroom and encouraging more to enter the profession.
- The Roundtable's vision is for North Carolina to bolster its ability to attract, develop and reward the best educators by implementing clear, sequential pathways for NC teaching professionals to enter and progress in the profession.

Why It Matters

» **How will this envisioned system address the teacher shortage in North Carolina?**

- Statewide, we've seen a 30% decline in Educator Preparation Program enrollment compared to 2010.
- Even with an increase in lateral entry into the profession, North Carolina still has more than 800 critical teacher vacancies, threatening students' access to a quality education.
- The Roundtable's vision for North Carolina to revitalize teachers' licensure and professional career paths is intended to replenish the pipeline to ensure all students have access to a great teacher.

» **What outcomes should we expect to see that the current system isn't yielding?**

- Research shows that teachers are the difference-makers for student success.
- There is no data to suggest that the current pathways for teachers actually create better outcomes and significant evidence that they repel high-quality candidates and beginning teachers.
- The new envisioned system is outcome-focused with embedded professional support systems and compensated professional pathways. It holds all teachers to a high standard of effectiveness while allowing them to demonstrate it in different ways — not just passing an exam.
- Lack of adequate professional development or support is often a top-five reason teachers leave the profession ([Journal of Applied Biobehavioral Research](#), 2019) and yet — even when available — the type of professional development most often provided to teachers is generally ineffective. The envisioned system would provide teachers with personalized professional advancement opportunities.
- As with any profession, teachers want to see that there are achievable career opportunities where they can be compensated for doing more or better work. The current one-size-fits-all system does not provide any meaningful career paths.

- Dozens of school districts have already created or are working to create advanced teaching roles that extend the reach of their best teachers. Where it is implemented well, student achievement is higher, proving it is as good for students as it is for educators. This new system will more firmly establish the gold standard for those career opportunities, allowing other districts to move forward faster as they choose to implement this strategy.

» **Does North Carolina stand to benefit economically from a system like the one envisioned?**

- The Roundtable's proposed reform is not only important for our teachers and our students but also for North Carolina's education system and economy as a whole, as teaching is the profession that makes all other professions possible.
- The envisioned system has the potential to put North Carolina at the forefront of education innovation in the United States and to make the education sector a strong foundational element of our state's economy.

» **How will the envisioned system help ensure more high-quality teachers in the classroom?**

- The Roundtable wants to work together on a solution that's more coherent, focuses on teacher professional growth and rewards teacher effectiveness — all in the service of supporting students.
- The new envisioned system is outcome-focused. It holds all teachers to a high standard of effectiveness while allowing them to demonstrate it in different ways — not just passing an exam.
- The envisioned system provides state-funded professional advancement dollars to help support personalized professional growth for teachers.
- The envisioned system provides ways for highly effective teachers to achieve advanced credentials based on effectiveness that come with greater compensation, and opportunities to lead and specialize — while also allowing them to continue teaching students. The plan

also provides clear exit ramps for teachers not meeting expectations.

» **How will the envisioned system help elevate teaching as a profession?**

- The current path to becoming a teacher and developing that craft has not kept up with other high-skill professions.
- The Roundtable has begun developing a vision for the future, NC Pathways to Excellence for Teaching Professionals, which is intended to revitalize teachers' licensure and professional career paths in a way that:
 - invites a more diverse population into the profession and fills critical vacancies with highly qualified candidates;
 - better measures teacher effectiveness, providing better outcomes for students;
 - treats teachers as professionals, offering compensated advancement and personalized professional growth opportunities in the classroom.

Specifics of the System

» **It sounds like this envisioned system is trying to fix a host of issues rather than one single issue. How practical is that to implement?**

- The Roundtable's vision was intentionally developed as a comprehensive solution to entering and advancing in the teaching profession. We understand that it is a big undertaking, but we believe it's necessary to keep great teachers in the classroom and attract quality candidates to the profession.
- Should it need to be rolled out in stages, our meetings with stakeholders like you will help determine which aspects of the envisioned system are a priority.

» **Why not just focus on a plan to increase teacher pay since compensation is the primary factor contributing to the teacher shortage?**

- While the Roundtable agrees that compensation is a major factor contributing to the teacher shortage, it is not the only factor. Licensure, professional pathways, compensation and

professional support are currently siloed in North Carolina policies and programs. To be more effective, they should be integrated into educators' experience as they grow in their profession.

- The Roundtable's vision is a comprehensive approach to redesigning teacher licensure, support and salary structures in North Carolina to provide fair compensation that grows as teachers expand their professional impact on students and fellow teachers.
 - The envisioned system provides ways for highly effective teachers to achieve advanced credentials based on effectiveness, which come with greater compensation and opportunities to lead and specialize—while also allowing them to continue teaching students.
- » **Are licensure exams the best and only objective way to measure teacher effectiveness?**
- No. A model based on outcome-driven success is a more direct measure of teacher effectiveness than measuring inputs. Rather than measuring the time and effort an educator spent learning theories of practice before entering the classroom, the envisioned system focuses on measuring an educator's success based on multiple measures such as proven skills, competencies, instructional capabilities and student outcomes in the classroom.
 - The goal is to hold all teachers, no matter the entry pathway, to a high standard of effectiveness while allowing them to demonstrate it in different ways. The envisioned system will offer a menu of options that sustain the rigor and quality of the profession, yet provide flexibility to the diverse needs of teachers.
 - The Roundtable has considered a number of research-based effectiveness measurement tools under the new, envisioned system, but looks forward to input and suggestions as we collaborate on a solution that effectively supports our teachers and students.
- » **Will the envisioned system lower standards for teachers entering the profession?**
- No. The envisioned system will hold teachers to a higher standard, requiring them to

demonstrate multiple measures of effectiveness to advance in the profession.

- The new envisioned system is built around teacher and student outcomes rather than inputs, which will allow us to better evaluate effectiveness. The proposed system holds all teachers to a high standard of effectiveness while allowing them to demonstrate it in different ways—not just passing a teacher licensure exam.
 - The envisioned system will offer a menu of options that sustain the rigor and quality of the profession, yet provide flexibility to the diverse needs of teachers.
- » **How does this system support quality teacher professional development?**
- The envisioned system provides state-funded professional advancement dollars to help support personalized professional growth for teachers. The professional advancement opportunities in this envisioned system are school-embedded alternatives to top-down 'sit and get' professional development, which has been proven to be ineffective in the past (TNTP Mirage report).
- » **Will the envisioned system provide pay incentives for teachers who have earned a master's degree?**
- The envisioned system will be agnostic to inputs, meaning teachers can advance in their career by proving multiple effectiveness measures with or without a master's degree. If a master's program proves successful at improving a teachers' effectiveness with students, this will assist the teacher in moving ahead in the new envisioned licensure system and salary scale.
 - This is particularly important given the teaching profession struggles to attract and retain new generations of teachers, including diverse candidates. To do this better, the framework is dependent upon instilling new quality supports for all early-career teachers and a restructured, professional pay scale that rewards effectiveness, increased mastery and positive student outcomes.

- » **Has the envisioned system been piloted elsewhere?**
 - There is no data to suggest that the current pathways for teachers actually create better outcomes and significant evidence that they repel high-quality candidate and beginning teachers. The new envisioned system is outcome-focused with embedded professional support systems and compensated professional pathways.
 - The envisioned system is built around student outcomes rather than inputs, which would allow us to better evaluate effectiveness.
 - If North Carolina were to move forward with this envisioned system, it would be the first state to implement a comprehensive approach to entering and advancing in the teaching profession without leaving the classroom.

- » **Why should this be a priority for legislators and the education sector in the midst of a pandemic?**
 - At a time when teaching is more unpredictable than ever, some would argue the pandemic makes the issue of solving teacher shortage even *more* urgent.
 - Like the rest of the nation, North Carolina is facing a significant teacher shortage that threatens to deprive students of access to a quality education.
 - We understand that there are many competing priorities right now. However, North Carolina's narrowing pipeline of qualified teachers will fail to meet the educational and economic demands of our growing state if we do not act soon.
 - The single best thing we can do to improve education in North Carolina — virtual or not — is focus on keeping great teachers in the classroom and encouraging more to enter the profession.
 - There is no replacing an exceptional teacher. Teachers have been important throughout the pandemic and will be needed more than ever when students return to the classroom setting.
 - The creation of advanced teaching roles will provide opportunities for highly effective teachers to move to “Leandro” districts

where they can be instrumental in raising the effectiveness of other teachers.

- » **Is the State Board of Education looking to PEPSC Subcommittees to essentially rubberstamp the existing Roundtable proposal?**
 - No. The State Board of Education is relying heavily on collaboration with PEPSC subcommittees to build out the details of the Roundtable's initial vision and to carry the proposal across the finish line. The Roundtable has been working on this issue for two years, but it is far from complete. PEPSC's ability to consult numerous stakeholders from across the education industry can help complete the proposal and bring it to life. There are a number of details that are waiting to be developed, including determining the appropriate research-based measures of effectiveness.

Timeline

- » **What is the proposed timeline for transitioning from the current system to the new, envisioned system?**
 - Band-aids and incremental fixes have slowly created the current state of the teaching profession. North Carolina's children deserve a top-flight teacher force. Now is the time to modernize the system that recruits, prepares and advances our educators.
 - Overhauling a new system is a big undertaking, and we understand it may need to be rolled out in stages. But we need big change to get big results.
 - The Roundtable's envisioned system was intentionally developed as a comprehensive solution to combat the issues of North Carolina's current system. However, we understand that it is a big undertaking and may need to be rolled out in stages.
 - We look forward to collaborating to determine the most feasible timeline for rolling out the new system.