



MAKING NC A TOP 10 EDUCATED STATE

Common Ground Solutions
for NORTH CAROLINA

Governor Cooper is laying out a road map to make North Carolina a “Top 10 Educated State” by 2025.

What Does Being a Top 10 Educated State Mean?

Governor Cooper’s forward-thinking plan aims to have North Carolina in the top 10 in these categories by 2025:

- ***Early Childhood:*** Increase enrollment of four year olds in pre-kindergarten from 22% to 55%.
- ***K-12 Schools:*** Improve high school graduation rate from 85.6% to 91%.
- ***Higher Education:*** Increase percentage of adults with higher education degrees from 38.7% to 55%.

Governor Cooper’s Plan to Get There

Investing in Early Childhood and Getting Kids Ready to Learn

Governor Cooper’s budget funds nearly 4,700 additional NC Pre-K slots to eliminate the waitlist of at-risk four year olds. It increases Smart Start funding by \$15 million (over 10%) to help children get to school with the skills they need to learn. His budget provides childcare subsidies to help 2,000 more children find quality childcare. And, it supports restoring the Child Care Tax Credit to help working families afford high-quality child care.

Improving Student Outcomes in Public Schools

Governor Cooper’s budget invests \$30 million of lottery funds to hire more classroom support staff, and to purchase new textbooks and digital learning materials. It also provides \$10 million for district and school transformation services to help close the achievement gap.

Recruiting and Retaining Excellent Teachers

Teachers would see an average 5% raise this year and another 5% average raise next year under Governor Cooper’s plan, bringing teaching salaries up to best in the Southeast in three years and to at least the national average in five years. Governor Cooper’s budget provides all public school teachers with a \$150 stipend to cover school supplies at the beginning of each school year.

The budget also draws talented North Carolina students into the teaching profession by creating the Best and Brightest Scholarship to provide forgivable loans of \$10,000 per year to students who commit to teaching in a North Carolina public school for four years after graduation or three years for those who teach at a low-performing or low-wealth school.

Preparing Students for the Workforce

Beginning in 2018, Governor Cooper proposes creating the NC GROW (Getting Ready for Opportunities in the Workforce) Scholarship to cover last-dollar tuition and fees for recent high school graduates to attend a North Carolina Community College. Also beginning in 2018, this budget recommends providing up to \$1,000 in financial assistance to students pursuing non-credit, short-term workforce training programs that lead to an industry credential.

To ensure students are ready for 21st century jobs, Governor Cooper also proposes \$15 million for workforce training programs and \$3 million to seed new, high-cost industry requested programs.

Making Universities Work

The budget funds a competitive grant program for UNC campuses to implement innovative programs that help students’ complete degrees. It fully funds the NC Promise Tuition Plan, which offers \$500 tuition per semester for residents at certain schools. Governor Cooper’s budget also recommends funding several innovative research projects in engineering, sciences, and technology.