

Comprehensive Remedial Plan First Progress Report from the State – August 6, 2021

The North Carolina Supreme Court held in 1997 that the State is “denying children of the state a constitutionally guaranteed sound basic education.” The Supreme Court reaffirmed that holding in 2004, 2015, and again in 2018. The State Defendants have acknowledged that additional actions are required to meet this constitutional mandate. Consequently, on March 15, 2021 the State Defendants presented this Court with the Comprehensive Remedial Plan (“CRP”) which served to describe and outline those required actions.

The cost to fully implement Year 2 and Year 3 of the CRP is \$690.7 million in 2021-22 and \$1.06 billion in 2022-23. The State has the fiscal resources to implement the next two years of the CRP. As of July 16, 2021 the Office of the State Controller reports that the State has \$8.0 billion in unappropriated cash balance. Likewise, nonpartisan forecasts for FY 2021-22 put State revenues at a record high of \$29.7 billion in recurring revenue, nearly \$5 billion more than the base budget required to keep the State operating as it is today.

In addition, the American Rescue Plan (“ARP”) is injecting \$5.4 billion of one-time flexible federal funds into North Carolina state government. That money must be appropriated by the legislature, and obligated by the end of 2024. Moreover, based on the June consensus revenue forecast, the Office of State Budget and Management has projected that the State could implement the next four years of the CRP (through FY 2025) within existing revenues. That forecast accounts for inflation adjustments related to recurring expenditures, as well as expected new expenditures for the next biennium.

Given this data, Governor Cooper has sent a proposed budget to the General Assembly that fully covers the expected costs of implementing Year 2 and Year 3 of the Plan - \$725.6 million in 2021-22 and \$1.15 billion in 2022-23, respectively. Meanwhile, the appropriations bill passed by the N.C. Senate on June 25, 2021 includes \$191.6 million in 2021-2022, which equals approximately 27.74% of the estimated costs to implement the CRP in Year 2. Likewise, the Senate’s appropriations bill allocates \$213.7 million in 2022-2023, or approximately 20.16% of the estimated costs to implement the Plan in Year 3.

The proposed Senate budget also proposes reducing tax revenue by \$690 million in 2021-2022 and \$1.9 billion in 2022-2023. If adopted by the N.C. House, the Senate budget bill would also phase out the State’s corporate income tax beginning in 2024. Forgoing the implementation of these additional tax cuts would further allow the State to meet the Constitutional mandates articulated and reaffirmed by this Court and the Supreme Court.

As of the filing of this report, the N.C. House is considering the Senate budget bill. Upon passage by the House, the budget will move to a conference committee made up of House and Senate members. Republican legislative leaders have promised Democratic Governor Cooper that he would be included in trilateral negotiations. If any differences are resolved after these negotiations, the full House and Senate will ratify a conference report, and the budget bill will then go to the Governor for his signature or veto.

The State Defendants have and continue to maintain a commitment to meet its constitutional mandate of providing a sound, basic education to every child. Consequently, following is an update

of actions taken to comply with the CRP. This up-to-date progress report includes a summary of key actions taken to implement the CRP.

Specifically, the tables below list each CRP action item, and what the State (in collaboration with the SBE Defendants) have correspondingly done to accomplish those actions items. In that regard, it should be noted that on June 15, 2020, the Parties submitted to the Court a plan of actions the State Defendants would take in Fiscal Year 2021 to address the Constitutional violations cited in *Leandro* (the “Joint Report”). As noted in the CRP, not all of the Joint Report action items were able to be implemented during Fiscal Year 2021 “[d]ue to the unprecedented and unanticipated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.” Many of those actions that were designated for completion in Fiscal Year 2021 have therefore been incorporated into the CRP for completion in future fiscal years.

Details of Comprehensive Remedial Plan Action Items and Actions Taken as of August 6, 2021

I. Qualified and Well-Prepared Teacher in Every Classroom

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
<i>A. Increase the pipeline of diverse, well-prepared teachers who enter through high-retention pathways and meet the needs of the State’s public schools.</i>		
I.A.ii.1 - Funding to support the work of the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
I.A.ii.2 - Develop a plan for implementing a licensure and compensation reform model designed to offer early, inclusive, clear pathways into the profession, reward excellence and advancement, and encourage retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
I.A.ii.3 - Analysis of resources and structures necessary for the State's EPPs to increase their production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
I.A.ii.4 - Provide personnel and programmatic support for TeachNC, an initiative that seeks to provide accurate and compelling information about the teaching profession.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
I.A.ii.5 - Support for the expansion of student recruitment programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
I.A.iii.1 - Targeted funding and structures necessary to increase the number of teachers and instructional support personnel graduating by 10 percent annually.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
I.A.iii.2 - Targeted funding and structures to increase teachers and instructional support personnel of color graduating by 5 percent annually.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
I.A.iii.3 - Develop plan for a statewide system/entity to coordinate teacher recruitment and support.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
I.A.iv.1 - Implement and fund plan for a statewide system/entity to coordinate teacher recruitment and support.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
<p><i>B. Increase the pipeline of diverse, well-prepared teachers by expanding the North Carolina Teaching Fellows program.</i></p>		
I.B.ii.1 - Increase the number of eligible teacher preparation programs for the Teaching Fellows Program from 5 to 8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> House Bill 1096 (SL 2020-56), signed into law by the Governor on June 30, 2020, expanded the number of eligible teacher preparation programs for the NC Teaching Fellows Program from 5 to 8 and requires that the selected institutions “represent a diverse selection” of institutions. The NC Teaching Fellows Commission in June 2021 selected Fayetteville State University, North Carolina A & T State University and UNC-Pembroke as the three new campuses for the program. The first Fellows will start at new campuses in in the 2022-23 academic year. 	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
I.B.iii.1 - Increase funding to recruit and support up to 1,500 Teaching Fellows annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
<i>C. Support high quality teacher residency programs in high need rural and urban districts through a State matching grant program that leverages ESSA Title II funding.</i>		
I.C.ii.1 - Provide support for high quality teacher preparation residency programs in high need rural and urban districts.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
<i>D. Provide support for high quality teacher recruitment and development programs.</i>		
I.D.ii.1 - Increase access to high quality teacher recruitment and development programs, such as TAs to Teachers, Troops to Teachers, and Pathway to Practice.	To be initiated in FY 2025	
<i>E. Provide support for Grow-Your-Own and 2+2 programs that help recruit and prepare teachers in high need communities.</i>		
I.E.ii.1 - Expand Partnership TEACH and similarly successful research-based Grow-Your-Own and 2+2 programs in all regions of the State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
<i>F. Significantly increase the racial and ethnic diversity of North Carolina's qualified and well-prepared teacher workforce and ensure all teachers employ culturally responsive practices.</i>		
I.F.ii.1 - Develop a plan of actions by the State will take to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of qualified and well-prepared teachers through the work of the DRIVE Task Force.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Dec. 7, 2020, the DRIVE Task Force approved its recommendations to the Governor on actions the State should take to improve the racial and ethnic diversity of the educator workforce. The report is available at https://hunt-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/HI-DRIVE-Final-Report.pdf. 	
I.F.iii.1 - Implement the plan of actions recommended by Governor Cooper's DRIVE Task Force.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
I.F.iii.2 - Establish the Office of Equity Affairs at NCDPI to direct the recruitment and retention of a diverse educator workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See State Board Report 	
I.F.iii.3 - Monitor, review, coordinate, and implement programs and efforts to increase teacher diversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to report 	
<i>G. Provide high-quality comprehensive mentoring and induction support for novice teachers in their first three years of teaching to increase both their effectiveness and their retention.</i>		
I.G.ii.1 - Provide comprehensive induction services through the NC New Teacher Support Program to beginning teachers in low performing, high poverty schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
<i>H. Implement differentiated staffing models that include advanced teaching roles and additional compensation to retain and extend the reach of high performing teachers.</i>		
I.H.ii.1 - Create a permanent advanced teaching roles program that provides start-up funds to districts in FY21, class size waivers and other flexibility, and enables participating districts to study the effectiveness of aligned compensation models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See State Board Report 	
I.H.iii.1 - Provide grants to additional districts to implement an advanced teaching roles initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See State Board Report 	
<i>I. Develop a system to ensure that all North Carolina teachers have the opportunity they need for continued professional learning to improve and update their knowledge and practices.</i>		
I.I.ii.1 - Implement Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See State Board Report 	
I.I.iii.1 / III.C.iii.1 - Increase capacity for schools and districts to provide personalized, job-embedded, collaborative professional learning opportunities and to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to report 	Dependent on new funding

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
build the capacity to implement, support, improve, and evaluate these activities.		
<i>J. Increase teacher compensation and enable low wealth districts to offer salaries and other compensation to make them competitive with more advantaged districts.</i>		
I.J.ii.1 / III.E.ii.1 - Conduct a North Carolina-specific wage comparability study to determine competitive pay for educators in comparison to professions that require similar education and credentials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
I.J.ii.2 - In accordance with the study described above, increase salaries for teachers and instructional support staff by 5 percent in FY 2021 and incrementally after that based on study findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
<i>K. Low wealth districts and high poverty schools will provide incentives for the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers.</i>		
I.K.ii.1 - Provide funds for the cost of National Board certification for up to 1,000 teachers annually with priority to educators in high needs and low performing schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
I.K.ii.2 - Establish a district-level grant program focused on the implementation of multi-year recruitment bonuses and other compensation options for certified teachers who commit to teach in a low wealth or high needs district or school for multiple years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding

II. A Qualified and Well-Prepared Principal in Every School

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
<p><i>A. Update the State’s school administrator preparation and principal licensure requirements to align program approval standards with effectiveness practices.</i></p>		
<p>II.A.ii.1 - Update the State’s school administrator preparation standards and principal licensure requirements to align with the National Education Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See State Board Report 	
<p>II.A.ii.2 - Complete expansion of the Transforming Principal Preparation Program (TP3) to three additional postsecondary institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the spring of 2020, the newly merged NC Principal Fellows Program / Transforming Principal Preparation Program (TP3) Commission selected three new sites to host TP3 partnerships, bringing the total number of partnerships to 8 across the state. The following universities are now serving principal candidates through the merged program: East Carolina University, High Point University, North Carolina Central University (through Central Carolina Regional Education Service Alliance), North Carolina State University, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, University of North Carolina at Pembroke (through Sandhills Regional Education Consortium), and Western Carolina University. 	
<p><i>B. Continue to expand access to high quality principal preparation programs to all North Carolina school districts.</i></p>		
<p>II.B.ii.1 - Every North Carolina school district will have a partnership with at least one school administrator preparation program that meets the NELP standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to report 	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
and provides full-time, year-long internships.		
II.B.iii.1 - The North Carolina Principal Fellows Program will prepare 300 new principals annually.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
II.B.iii.2 - The North Carolina Principal Fellows Program and North Carolina school administrator preparation programs will recruit and prepare candidates that better match the diversity of the State's student population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	
<i>C. Expand professional learning opportunities for current principals and assistant principals.</i>		
II.C.ii.1 - Develop a plan for the creation of a School Leadership Academy to provide initial and ongoing support to the State's district and school leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
II.C.iii.1 - In accordance with the plan, provide resources and support for the implementation of the School Leadership Academy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
II.C.ii.2 - Increase capacity for districts to expand professional learning opportunities for district and school administrators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
<i>D. Revise the principal and assistant principal salary structures and improve working conditions to make positions in high need schools and districts more attractive to well-qualified educators.</i>		
II.D.ii.1 - Incrementally increase principal and assistant principal pay consistent with teacher salary increases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
II.D.ii.2 - Develop a plan for a state grant program to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of incentive programs to encourage well-qualified school leaders to work in high need schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
II.D.iii.1 - Implement state grant program (described above) to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of incentive programs to encourage well-qualified school leaders to work in high need schools.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
II.D.ii.3 - Provide district leaders and principals with more autonomy to allocate resources, including autonomy to make decisions on funding and personnel assignments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on legislative action

III. A Finance System that Provides Adequate, Equitable, and Efficient Resources

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
<i>A. Increase Local Education Agency (LEA) budgetary flexibility by lifting restrictions on a number of critical allotments through the ABC transfer system.</i>		
III.A.ii.1 - Allow transfers to or from most allotment categories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on legislative action
<i>B. Revise the state's school funding formula so that current and additional funding is distributed to students with the greatest need.</i>		
III.B.ii.1 - Remove children with disabilities funding cap and increase supplemental funding to provide funding for students with disabilities equivalent to 2.3 times the cost of an average student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
III.B.iii.1 - Revise children with disabilities formula to differentiate per-student funding based on level of required student support.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
III.B.ii.2 - Combine the DSSF and at-risk allotments and increase funding such that the combined allotment provides an equivalent supplemental weight of 0.4 on behalf of all economically-disadvantaged students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
III.B.ii.3 - Increase low wealth funding to provide eligible counties supplemental funding equal to 110% of the statewide local revenue per student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
III.B.ii.4 - Eliminate the limited English proficiency funding cap, simplify formula, and increase funding to provide per-student support equivalent to a weight of 0.5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
III.B.iv.1 - Fund a study to determine how to phase-in a weighted student funding formula that retains position allotments.	To be initiated in FY 2027	
<i>C. Increase the investment in overall spending for public education incrementally over the next eight years to provide a sound basic education.</i>		
III.C.ii.1 - Complete the final two years of funding of the enhancement teacher allotment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These allotments were allocated to school districts for the 2021-2022 school year per G.S. 115C-301(c2). 	
III.C.iii.1 - Increase professional development funding to provide districts with adequate funding for professional development and mentoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
III.C.iii.2 / VI.F.iii.3 - Simplify teacher assistant formula and increase funding until funding will provide approximately one teacher assistant for every 27 K-3 students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
III.C.iv.1 - Increase funding for non-instructional support to reverse budget cuts that have hampered districts' abilities to provide all students with a sound basic education.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
III.C.iv.2 - Increase funding for classroom supplies until combined funding for supplies and textbooks equals \$150 per student.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
III.C.iv.3 - Increase funding for textbooks until combined funding	To be initiated in FY 2024	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
for supplies and textbooks equals \$150 per student.		
III.C.iv.4 - Increase allotted assistant principal months of employment to provide one month of employment for every 80 students.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
III.C.iv.5 - Increase funding for central office staff to ensure sufficient funding to implement the reforms necessary to provide all students with a sound basic education.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
III.C.iv.6 - Issue a \$2 billion bond to support school capital needs.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
<i>D. Scale up flexible funding for SISP to meet the academic, physical, and mental health needs of students and to ensure that schools are safe and supportive learning environments.</i>		
III.D.ii.1 / VI.F.iii.4 - Provide funding for SISP to meet national guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
<i>E. Increase educator compensation to make it competitive with educator compensation in other states in the region and with other career options that require similar levels of preparation, certification, and levels of experience.</i>		
III.E.ii.1 / I.J.ii.1 - Conduct a North Carolina-specific wage comparability study to determine competitive pay for educators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
III.E.ii.2 - Increase salaries for teachers and instructional support staff by 5 percent in FY 2022 and incrementally after that based on study findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
III.E.ii.3 - Increase principal and assistant principal pay consistent with teacher salary increases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
<i>F. Modify the school finance system to ensure future stability in funding for public education, including predictable, anticipated funding levels that acknowledge external cost factors.</i>		
III.F.ii.1 - Establish mechanism for continually updating state funding amounts.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
III.F.ii.2 - Simplify position allotments by combining the enhancement teacher and classroom teacher allotments.	To be initiated in FY 2024	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
III.F.ii.3 - Revise charter school funding so that funding is directly appropriated to each charter school.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
III.F.ii.4 - Combine all dollar allotments that are distributed on a per-ADM basis into a single allotment.	To be initiated in FY 2024	

IV. An Assessment and Accountability System that Reliably Assesses Multiple Measures of Student Performance

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
<i>A. Establish a more instructionally-focused and student-centered assessment system.</i>		
IV.A.ii.1 - Expand the use of NC Check-Ins in grades 3-8 to additional school districts and schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
IV.A.ii.2 / VI.F.ii.2 - Better align the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) with birth through third grade and rename the KEA the Early Learning Inventory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
<i>B. Clarify alignment between the assessment system and the State's theory of action.</i>		
IV.B.ii.1 - Launch the Innovative Assessment Demonstration pilot approved by the US Department of Education beginning in 16 districts and charters to improve and personalize formative assessment and to evaluate the feasibility of utilizing through-grade results to provide summative assessment results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
<i>C. Improve coherence among curriculum, instruction, and assessment.</i>		
IV.C.ii.1 - Evaluate the curricular materials selected by school districts and report on the degree of alignment with State-adopted content standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
<i>D. Amend the current accountability system to include measures of progress toward providing all students with access to a sound basic education.</i>		

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
IV.D.ii.1 - Adopt a coherent and singular definition of proficiency, aligning grade level expectations and college- and career-ready expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
IV.D.iii.1 - Revise the NC General Statutes and the State’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan to adjust the weighting between student proficiency and student growth in the State’s School Performance Grades.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
IV.D.iii.2 - Include in the State’s accountability system additional measures of progress toward meeting the Leandro tenets.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
IV.D.iii.3 - Implement a system for evaluating instructional quality, rigor, and equity at the school-level to provide feedback and support to schools and districts.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
<i>E. Use the data provided in the North Carolina Dashboard and School Report Cards to identify appropriated evidence-based interventions and supports.</i>		
IV.E.ii.1 - Develop and implement a plan for including on annual school report cards school-level information on the race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other demographic information on all students, staff, students identified for exceptional children services, students participating in advanced learning opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
IV.E.ii.2 - Provide training and support on the use of data from the NC Dashboard, the accountability system, and school and district data to guide planning, budget, instructional decisions, and improvement efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
IV.E.ii.3 - Amend the NC Dashboard to provide data on State, district, and school performance and growth on a comprehensive set of measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
that indicate progress toward meeting the Leandro requirements and is inclusive of the reporting requirements under ESSA.		

V. An Assistance and Turnaround Function that Provides Necessary Support to Low-Performing Schools and Districts

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
<i>A. Develop the State’s capacity to fully support the improvement of its lowest performing schools and districts.</i>		
V.A.ii.1 - Implement the NC State Board of Education's regional support model to support the improvement of low performing and high poverty schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See State Board Report 	
V.A.ii.2 - Develop the NC State Board of Education’s District and Regional Support model to provide direct and comprehensive assistance for the improvement of low performing and high poverty schools and districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See State Board Report 	
V.A.iii.1 - Implement the NC State Board of Education’s District and Regional Support model to provide direct and comprehensive assistance for the improvement of low performing and high poverty schools and districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See State Board Report 	
<i>B. Provide statewide and/or regional support to help schools and districts select high quality standards-aligned, culturally-responsive core curriculum resources and to prepare teachers to use those resources effectively.</i>		
V.B.ii.1 - Review, update, and strengthen the state-level process for reviewing and adopting core curriculum resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See State Board Report 	
<i>C. Provide resources, opportunities, and supports for low performing and high poverty schools to address out of school barriers to learning using a community schools or other evidence-based approach.</i>		

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
V.C.ii.1 - Provide resources and support to high poverty schools to adopt a community schools or other evidence-based model to address out of school barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
V.C.ii.2 - Develop a plan to maximize the use of the federal CEP funding and provide state funding to ensure all schools and districts can offer free meals to all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
V.C.iii.1 - Provide funding to cover the reduced-price lunch co-pays for all students who qualify for reduced-price meals so that those students would receive free lunches.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
V.C.iv.1 - Implement plan to maximize the use of the federal CEP funding and provide state funding to ensure all schools and districts can offer free meals to all students.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
<i>D. Extend the supports already available to schools to help them further implement a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, a school improvement plan, and NC Check-Ins approaches.</i>		
V.D.ii.1 - Provide support to schools and districts to implement evidence-based approaches to instructional improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	

VI. A System of Early Education that Provides Access to High-Quality Prekindergarten and Other Early Childhood Learning Opportunities

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
<i>A. Expand the NC Pre-K program to make high-quality, full year services available to all eligible four-year-old children and enroll at least 75 percent of eligible four-year-old children in each county.</i>		
VI.A.ii.1 - Expand NC Pre-K through incremental rate and slot increases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
VI.A.ii.2 - Continue an ongoing annual evaluation of NC Pre-K program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation is currently funded and ongoing. 	
VI.A.iii.1 - Implement strategies to ensure equity of access for NC Pre-K program.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.A.iii.2 - Conduct a feasibility study for new funding model for NC Pre-K program.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.A.iii.3 - Conduct a transportation study for NC Pre-K program.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.A.iv.1 - Increase state-level staffing for NC Pre-K program.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
VI.A.v.1 - Provide transportation for all NC Pre-K enrollees.	To be initiated in FY 2025	
VI.A.vi.1 - Implement policy for teacher licensure and pay for NC Pre-K program.	To be initiated in FY 2027	
<i>B. Increase high-quality early learning opportunities for children from birth.</i>		
VI.B.ii.1 - Implement a feasibility study for a state model for early learning programs for eligible children birth through age three.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study is funded with federal grant funds. The Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC DHHS, is developing and planning to issue a Request for Proposals for the study later this year. 	
VI.B.v.1 - Conduct a pilot of the state model for early learning programs for eligible children birth through age three.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
VI.B.v.2 - Conduct an evaluation of the pilot.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
VI.B.ii.2 – Implement a child care subsidy study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study is funded with federal grant funds. The Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC DHHS, released a Request for Proposals due in June 2021 for a contractor to conduct an analysis of alternative funding models for 	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
	subsidized child care, to include a review of market rate surveys, cost-based methodologies and hybrid models.	
VI.B.iv.1 - Implement child care subsidy improvements and increase funding.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.B.iii.1 - Implement a pilot of Family Connects universal home visiting model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pilot is funded with federal grant funds through December 2022. • The Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC DHHS, has contracted with the NC Partnership for Children (Smart Start) to lead the pilot, which launched in March 2021. • Eight counties are implementing the program to reach 4590 birthing families in the first year. The eight counties are: Cumberland, Hoke, Robeson, Watauga, Ashe, Avery, Henderson and Polk. • The NC Partnership for Children (Smart Start) and Family Connects International are working on strategies for sustainability and scale. 	
VI.B.v.3 - Expand the Family Connects universal home visiting model	To be initiated in FY 2024	
<i>C. Expand and improve access to individualized early intervention services and supports to families with eligible children birth to age three and include at-risk children in North Carolina's definition of eligibility for the Part C Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (NC Infant Toddler Program).</i>		
VI.C.ii.1 - Provide funding for staffing, interpreter services, a centralized provider network system, professional development, and addressing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to report 	Dependent on new funding

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
salary inequities for the NC Infant Toddler Program.		
VI.C.ii.2 - Conduct a cost study for expanding eligibility for the NC Infant Toddler Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VI.C.ii.3 - Conduct infrastructure readiness assessment for expanding eligibility for the NC Infant Toddler Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VI.C.iii.1 - Solicit stakeholder feedback for expanding enrollment for the NC Infant Toddler Program.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.C.iii.2 - Work with the US DOE to change eligibility criteria for the NC Infant Toddler Program.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.C.ii.4 - Provide professional development for early intervention staff and providers in the NC Infant Toddler Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VI.C.iv.1 - Scale up early intervention services for children birth to age three who meet expanded eligibility criteria estimating an additional 10,000 children per year.	To be initiated in FY 2025	
<i>D. Incrementally scale up the Smart Start program to increase quality, access, and support for all children birth to age five and families, especially those in under resourced communities.</i>		
VI.D.ii.1 - Incrementally increase funding annually for Smart Start.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VI.D.ii.2 - Revise Smart Start's county needs formula.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The NC Partnership for Children (Smart Start) contracted with WestEd to conduct a study. WestEd recently completed its review of the Smart Start needs formula and presented findings to NCPC in June 2021. NCPC is currently reviewing the recommendations and planning for implementation 	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
	of any revisions to the formula.	
VI.D.ii.3 - Recommend readjustments to local planning and funding requirements for Smart Start.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	
VI.D.ii.4 - Continue an ongoing annual evaluation of Smart Start.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart Start evaluation is funded with state appropriations and produces annual outputs and outcomes reports and population level data reports that align with funding priorities. Includes analysis of primary and secondary data reports to support local partnerships in determining local investments to meet specific county needs. 	
<i>E. Increase the volume and quality of the early childhood educator pipeline.</i>		
VI.E.ii.1 - Expand participation statewide in Child Care WAGE\$ salary supplements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VI.E.ii.2 - Promote the NC Model Salary Scale for Early Education Teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC DHHS, is collaborating with partner organizations on strategies for promoting the model salary scale as a resource for child care providers, such as training and toolkits. The Division used the model salary scale as a resource document for the NC Pre-K Summer Learning Program and will also use it as a guide with the child care stabilization grants that will be provided with federal ARP funds. 	
VI.E.ii.3 - Develop state plan for progress on early childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
teacher education, salary and benefits.		
VI.E.iii.1 - Develop plan for an early childhood teacher preparation program that provides community college tuition.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.E.ii.4 - Implement recruitment strategies and professional development for early childhood teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal COVID relief funding will help provide short-term recruitment and retention strategies and professional development. 	Dependent on new funding
<i>F. Ensure quality transitions and alignment from early childhood programs to K-3 classrooms and strengthen elementary schools' readiness to support children to achieve early grade success.</i>		
VI.F.ii.1 - Implement a Pre-K to K Transitions pilot program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pilot is funded with federal grant funds and the pilot is underway. • The Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC DHHS, and the NC Department of Public Instruction have a working partnership in place to manage this project. The project has a Leadership Team and Transition Coordinator staff position. • Implementation of a state electronic data sharing platform is underway that allows the sharing of child assessment data. Required data sharing agreements are under development. See State Board report for additional information. • Activities include convenings, training and technical assistance with selected local Pre-K and K teachers and administrators. • The Birth through 3rd Grade (B-3) Interagency Council, established by the NC 	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
	General Assembly in 2017, has identified Pre-K to K Transitions as a priority area and has a work group that is helping guide progress.	
VI.F.v.1 - Incrementally scale up the Pre-K to K Transitions program to all districts.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
VI.F.v.2 - Establish requirements for Pre-K to K transition plan for each child.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
VI.F.v.3 - Provide support for local professional development on Pre-K to K transition planning.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
VI.F.v.4 - Provide technical assistance for local collaborative family engagement plans for birth through third grade.	To be initiated in FY 2024	
VI.F.ii.2 / IV.A.ii.2 - Align the NC Early Learning Inventory within birth through third grade learning standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
VI.F.iii.1 - Develop implementation fidelity measure for the NC Early Learning Inventory and evaluate effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
VI.F.iv.1 - Replace the Kindergarten diagnostic with extended version of NC Early Learning Inventory.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.F.iii.2 - Provide support for professional development in implementing the NC Early Learning Inventory as intended.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
VI.F.iv.2 - Review the NC Early Learning Inventory and Read to Achieve legislation/policies to establish an aligned formative and summative assessment continuum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
VI.F.iv.3 - Establish an Early Childhood Education Expert Advisory Team to identify target	To be initiated in FY 2023	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
districts/schools for multi-tiered support.		
VI.F.iv.4 - Implement targeted professional development plans for each identified district/school.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.F.iii.3 / III.C.iii.2 - Incrementally increase funding for teacher assistants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VI.F.iv.5 - Require that prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms have full-time teacher assistants.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VI.F.iii.4 / III.D.ii.1 - Incrementally increase funding for school counselors, nurses, social workers and psychologists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
<i>G. Facilitate reliable access to high-quality data supporting early childhood education.</i>		
VI.G.ii.1 - Implement a real-time early childhood workforce data system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC DHHS, and partner organizations have surveyed child care providers to determine needs and gaps the data system could provide. Preliminary specifications for the data system have been developed. 	Dependent on new funding
VI.G.ii.2 - Expand and improve the NC Early Childhood Integrated Data System and connect to the NC Longitudinal Data System.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This work is currently funded with federal grant funds. NC DHHS has hired an NC ECIDS Project Manager and NC ECIDS Software Developer to manage system enhancements. Executed a MOU with the NC Department of Information Technology to support system modernization, integration of new data and incorporation of early childhood data into the NC Education Longitudinal Data System. 	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User testing and validation of 7 early childhood program reports are underway, with the reports scheduled for public availability by December 2021, and functionality for users to select specific data sources by Spring 2022. 	
VI.G.ii.3 - Provide technical assistance to build local capacity to use quality early childhood data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This work is funded with federal grant funds. The Division of Child Development and Early Education, NC DHHS, released a Request for Proposals due in June 2021 for a contractor to provide technical assistance to local cross-sector Human Services leadership teams to train communities about best practices for using and interpreting quality data, as well as support 30 communities to develop strategic plans based on available data. 	
VI.G.iii.1 - Implement a real-time data collection and sharing process to identify children eligible for early childhood programs.	To be initiated in FY 2024	

VII. Alignment of High School to Postsecondary and Career Expectations for All Students

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
<i>A. Strengthen alignment between career pathways and workforce demands.</i>		
VII.A.ii.1 -Develop an updated and consistent definition of Career and College Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
VII.A.ii.2 -Develop model career pathways that align high school Career Technical Education (CTE) courses with workforce demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
VII.A.ii.3 - Provide funding for an independent alignment study of all NC dual credit courses and basic graduation requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VII.A.iii.1 -Develop State Board of Education policy and guidance for a course review and approval process for all dual enrollment courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
VII.A.ii.4 -Ensure students graduate prepared for college-level coursework at the NC Community Colleges through the Career and College Ready Graduate program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
<i>B. Ensure all high school students have the option to complete high school courses leading to college credit, an associate degree, or a career-ready credential.</i>		
VII.B.iv.1 -Provide funds to examine barriers and supports impacting all students' ability to complete dual enrollment courses.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
VII.B.v.1 - Expand funds to remove barriers to economically disadvantaged students' participation in dual enrollment courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See State Board Report 	
VII.B.iii.1 -Revise the funding approach for NCVPS to remove barriers that prevent students in low-wealth districts from participating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VII.B.iii.2 -Expand funds for credentials and certifications for Career and Technical Education students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VII.B.iii.3 -Adopt the necessary policies to allow school calendar flexibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on legislative action

Action Item	Actions Taken	Risks to Implementation
VII.B.ii.1 -Provide recurring funding for Cooperative Innovative High Schools approved to open from 2018-2021.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senate Bill 816 (SL 2020-64), signed into law by Governor Cooper on July 1, 2020, provided \$1,880,000 in non-recurring state funding for the eight cooperative innovative high schools approved by the State Board but that had not yet received supplemental funding. 	Further action dependent on new recurring funding
VII.B.iv.2 -Provide recurring funding for up to 3 additional Cooperative Innovative High Schools annually.	To be initiated in FY 2023	
<i>C. Strengthen college and career advising for high school students.</i>		
VII.C.ii.1 -Provide support to the NC Community College System (NCCCS) Career Coaches program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With recurring state funding allocated by the General Assembly in 2019, the NC Community College System approved applications from local community colleges to add 26 career coaches across 16 community colleges, bringing the total number of career coaches serving students in public schools to 843 in 35 community colleges for the 2020-21 school year. Those coaches are serving 143 high schools across 58 school districts. 	
VII.C.iii.1 - Provide matching funds to the College Advising Corps to expand the placement of college advisers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding
VII.C.iii.2 -Provide funds for a Career and Postsecondary Planning Director at NCDPI and Career Development Coordinators in grades 6-12 across state.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No action to report 	Dependent on new funding