

**FOR POSTING DRAFT: PUBLIC EDUCATION  
(4/17/08)**

**UNC Tomorrow Report: Our Children and Their Future:  
Improving Public Education**

***Major Finding: UNC should be more actively involved in solving North Carolina's public education challenges.***

UNC at Chapel Hill has a deep history of involvement with North Carolina's public schools. Its nationally ranked School of Education programs are highly rated by North Carolina superintendents and principals. In addition to outstanding faculty scholarship and public engagement, its nine outreach centers provide high-demand services to every region of the state. Many other campus units and faculty contribute considerable engagement activity to our public schools as well, often in collaboration with the School of Education. In the following six sections, we first present the Public Education Collaborative Pilot, a bold collaborative modeled after the Area Health Education Center, and then we provide examples of activities that UNC-Chapel Hill could provide, either integrated into the Collaborative or as stand-alone programs.

***SECTION 1: The Public Education Collaborative Pilot***

***4.3.1 UNC should improve the quantity, quality, and geographic distribution of public school teachers.***

***4.3.2 UNC should help address the shortage of science and math teachers, especially in rural areas***

***4.3.3 UNC should strengthen efforts, in cooperation with the North Carolina State Board of Community Colleges and the Community College System, the North Carolina State Board of Education, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, to enhance the teaching skills of public school faculty and the leadership skills of public school administrators.***

***4.3.4 UNC should leverage its expertise, and increase collaborations with the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction, to lower our state's dropout rate and improve academic achievement in all public schools in North Carolina, especially those that are high-priority and low-performing.***

***4.3.5 UNC should strengthen partnerships with the State Board of Education, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the North Carolina Community College System, and our state's Independent Colleges and Universities to develop a seamless educational continuum from pre-K through higher education ("Birth-20").***

New Program: In response to the UNC Tomorrow report recommendations, we propose a pilot school-strengthening program, the Public Education Collaborative, in the northeast region of North Carolina that will establish for the first time a comprehensive, multi-institutional, systemic effort to address major public education challenges. Many of the challenges facing public education are complex. Teachers and students are situated within a system of interlocking forces--the school system itself, communities and their values and beliefs, changing economies, and health environs--that significantly impact student learning, motivation to learn, and aspirations. In many areas of the state the interlocking forces combine synergistically, and highly positive student outcomes are actualized. But in others, especially in the most socioeconomically disadvantaged settings and ones with aging populations and significant out-migration of talented youth, the synergies may constrain student potential. Attempts to improve education are all too often short-term, fragmented, and isolated. Successfully addressing

educational challenges requires structural alignments and collaboration, much as was the case when the North Carolina Area Health Education Center Program (NC AHEC) was formed in response to concerns about the inadequacy of rural health care and workforce shortages in poorer areas of the state.

The **mission** of the Public Education Collaborative is to address the state's major public education challenges through an intensive and extensive collaborative involving multiple constituencies, boards, and organizations. The Collaborative has five core goals: 1) enhance the quantity and quality of initially-licensed public school teachers, with a special focus upon science, mathematics, special education, and middle grades teachers (**4.3.1, 4.3.2**); 2) enhance the quality of public school instruction through teacher development and retention (**4.3.3**); 3) enhance the leadership abilities of public school administrators(**4.3.3**); 4) address the drop-out rate and achievement gap (**4.3.4**); and 5) develop a seamless educational pre-kindergarten through higher-education continuum (**4.3.5**).

We propose an **eventual hub based at UNC-Chapel Hill** with regional affiliates working with local communities. Our **current proposal is to establish a northeast pilot hub** in the form of a Council of constituents, led by UNC at Chapel Hill. Potential **Public Education Collaborative Council** constituents include representatives from at least the following: local communities, school districts, local government officials, health officials, senior student government, local business leaders, Elizabeth City State University, East Carolina University, UNC-Chapel Hill, one or more community colleges in the area, the State Board of Education, the Department of Public Instruction, and the James B. Hunt Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy. We also propose a **community-of-practice working model for the council**. In a community-of-practice model, a group of professionals and stakeholders collaborate to pursue a shared learning enterprise. All stakeholders work together to identify needs, challenges, and problems, along with responses and solutions. Responses to local needs and challenges are forged collectively and are situation specific.

**UNC-Chapel Hill is uniquely poised to lead** the Public Education Collaborative. A Carnegie-designated “community-engaged university” and a research-extensive university, UNC-Chapel Hill is dedicated to building and strengthening relationships with North Carolina communities. UNC-Chapel Hill has: an existing orientation towards engagement (e.g., the Research Triangle School Partnership); ability to leverage stellar faculty to bring interdisciplinary expertise to bear; a nationally ranked School of Education; pioneering educational outreach centers (e.g., the Leadership Center for Mathematics and Science Teachers to support national board certification, the Center for Mathematics and Science Education, LEARN NC); programs and faculty focused upon rural and poverty education (e.g., the Center on Poverty, Work, and Opportunity, and the National Research Center for Rural Education Support ); and programs aimed at reducing educational disparities (e.g., Carolina Covenant, Carolina Advising Corps, Upward Bound).

### ***SECTION 2: Public Education Collaborative Program Goal 1: Improve quantity and quality of teachers (4.3.1, 4.3.2)***

**New Program:** Establish a “home-grown” UNC Teaching Academy designed to create Teacher Scholars who lead innovation in high school science and mathematics teaching in the northeast region. Teacher Scholars would enter the Master of Arts in Teaching program (MAT) and attend a set of Academy seminars and experiences. To receive a Scholar Teacher award, young people who graduate from the program must promise to return to teach in their home region for at least five years after graduation.

***SECTION 3: Public Education Collaborative Program Goal 2: Address teacher development and retention (4.3.3)***

New Program: Offer the UNC-Chapel Hill Master's for Experienced Teachers Program Online. The Master's for Experienced Teachers program is a major effort aimed at teacher retention. Teachers re-energize and refresh their work by learning about new teaching specialties and by enhancing and enriching understandings about their current specialties. It is a very popular program in which several specializations have been offered, ranging from science to literacy to special education and more. We propose to expand the program to online delivery and to offer requested specializations necessary for the region.

***SECTION 4: Public Education Collaborative Program Goal 3: Enhance leadership abilities of public school administrators (4.3.3)***

New Program: The UNC-Chapel Hill School of Education Educational Leadership program is ranked tenth in the nation. We propose to expand the add-on principal licensure and MSA programs to offer online delivery as needed in the region.

***SECTION 5: Public Education Collaborative Program Goal 4: Address the drop-out rate and achievement gap (4.3.4)***

New Program: Expand CareerStart. The Career Start program has been designed by faculty in the Schools of Social Work and Education. The goal of CareerStart is to help middle school teachers better engage students, especially those at high risk of school failure, to stay in school and consider career options. CareerStart lessons are designed to increase the relevance of the middle school curriculum through illustrations of jobs and careers. Written by experienced teachers, the mini-lessons integrate practical, relevant, real world illustrations that help students make a connection between the course content (e.g., North Carolina Standard Course of Study) and its application to future job and career options. CareerStart lessons draw on a range of jobs, from those that require technical training to those that require postgraduate degrees. The program has been successful in several North Carolina counties, including the Winston-Salem/Forsyth school district, where an extensive, experimental evaluation has been ongoing.

***SECTION 6: Public Education Collaborative Program Goal 5: Develop a seamless educational pre-kindergarten through higher-education continuum (4.3.5)***

New Program: Develop an admissions track from the community college to Schools/Colleges of Education. Create a different delivery system to bring a cadre of teachers into the university system from the community colleges. (The UNC-CH School of Pharmacy is already implementing a similar program working with Elizabeth City State University.)