

Welcome to the Southeastern North Carolina Dropout Prevention Newsletter. We highlight dropout prevention activities and accomplishments in the region, as well as local and national events, resources, funding and research. Please send us your stories, highlights, accomplishments and upcoming events.

Graduation Rates: New High!

Since 2006, the first year the state reported a four-year cohort graduation rate, the percentage of students graduating from high school in four years or less has risen 15.6 percentage points – from 68.3 percent to 83.9 percent.

North Carolina's 2014 graduation rate of 83.9 percent is the highest recorded in the state's history.

The rise in graduation rates has occurred alongside changes that have led to more challenging standards and assessments and increased graduation requirements.

State Superintendent June Atkinson praised educators, students and their families for remaining focused on graduation as a goal. "In today's world, graduating from high school is a minimum requirement for students who hope to be competitive in the workplace. Congratulations to our students for their hard work.

"We will continue to focus efforts on boosting this rate at the state, local and school levels so that every student graduates from high school prepared to succeed," she said.

Students today are required to earn more course credits than prior groups of students were required to earn. Students who entered high school before 2009 had to successfully complete at least 20 credits to qualify for graduation. In addition, students today are expected to complete mathematics through Math III, or the equivalent of Algebra II, as a minimum.

Dropout Prevention Coalition:

4 year Graduation Rates

Dropout Prevention Coalition LEA	2010-11 Graduation Rates %	2011-12 Graduation Rates %	2012-13 Graduation Rates %	2013-14 Graduation Rates %	Amount change past 4 years %
Bladen	74.9	79.8	78.9	76.0	1.1
Brunswick	79.2	83.8	85.7	82.1	2.9
Carteret	83.0	83.5	84.7	87.9	4.9
Columbus	81.6	81.2	84.8	82.7	1.1
Whiteville	78.1	82.7	80.1	76.9	-1.2
Craven	80.9	85.6	86.0	85.5	4.6
Duplin County	69.1	80.8	79.9	78.1	9.0
Jones County	77.0	80.6	81.1	83.1	6.1
Lenoir County	71.9	78.1	77.9	77.3	5.4
New Han.	73.9	80.4	82.4	81.4	7.5
Onslow	81.7	86.5	87.2	89.2	7.5
Pamlico	80.9	87.8	92.9	87.2	6.3
Pender	81.9	86.6	87.2	88.3	6.4
Sampson	73.4	73.6	75.0	80.2	6.8
Clinton City	78.1	81.9	84.1	84.7	6.6
NO.CAROLINA	77.9	80.4	82.5	83.8	5.9

Requirements for high school graduation have been gradually increasing over the past 20 years. Today, graduates must earn at least 22 credits as follows: English (four credits); Mathematics (four credits, through Math III plus a fourth math); Science (three credits); Social Studies (four to include Civics and Economics, World History, American History I: Founding Principles and American History II or AP US History); Health and Physical Education (one credit); six electives (which can include world languages, Career and Technical Education, JROTC, arts or other courses).

"A top priority of the State Board of Education is to ensure that high school diplomas are meaningful and aligned with the skills and knowledge that students need in college and in careers," said Board Chairman Bill Cobey. "It is good news that students are reaching higher standards and graduating in higher numbers as well."

While the minimum number of required course credits is 22 for high school graduates, many students earn more than the minimum. Most high schools operating on a block schedule or modified block schedule offer students the opportunity to earn up to eight course credits per year.

Taken from: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/newsroom/news/2014-15/20140904-01>

Local News

State News

National News

Funding , Announcements

Page 1

Page 2-4

Page 5-6

Page 7

North Carolina Subgroup Graduation Rates

As in past years, graduation rates by subgroups of students varied (see below). Female students posted a higher graduation rate than male students. Asian students had the highest rate and students who are considered limited English proficient had the lowest rate. The variation of graduation rates by subgroup ranges from 51.8 percent to >95 percent, signaling that efforts to address graduation rates need to be specifically targeted to particular student needs.

**4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate – State of North Carolina Results by Subgroup
(2010–11 Entering Ninth Graders for 2014)**

SUBGROUP	2014 DENOMINATOR	2014 NUMERATOR	2014 PERCENT
All Students	109,869	92,106	83.9
Male	55,933	44,874	80.2
Female	53,936	47,232	87.6
American Indian	1,629	1,292	79.3
Asian	2,732	2,497	91.4
Black	30,010	23,933	79.8
Hispanic	12,034	9,304	77.3
Two or More Races	3,819	3,157	82.7
White	59,550	51,838	87.0
Economically Disadvantaged	47,895	37,334	77.9
Limited English Proficient	2,615	1,355	51.8
Students With Disabilities	10,381	6,687	64.4
Academically Gifted	18,219	-	>95

Subgroup information is based on data collected when a student is last seen in the cohort. The table reflects data as of Aug. 28, 2014.

Taken from: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/newsroom/news/2014-15/20140904-01>

Watson College of Education Speaker Series Presents Terrell L. Strayhorn

Access and Excellence: A Balancing Act in Public Education

Terrell L. Strayhorn, Ph.D., is professor of higher education at The Ohio State University, where he also serves as director of the Center for Higher Education Enterprise (and formerly served as director of the Center for Inclusion, Diversity and Academic Success). His research agenda focuses on major policy issues in education: student access and achievement, equity and diversity, impact of college on students and student learning and development.

Strayhorn is the sole author or lead editor of eight books/volumes, most recently *Theoretical Frameworks in College Student Research* (2013), *Living at the Intersections* (2013), *College Students' Sense of Belonging* (2012), and *The Evolving Challenges of Black College Students* (2008). He is Editor of *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, a member of more than a half-dozen editorial boards and is actively involved in professional service and national leadership, e.g., as past-director of research and scholarship for the American College Personnel Association, past-chair of the Council on Ethnic Participation in the Association for the Study of Higher Education and faculty liaison to the Men and Masculinities Knowledge Community in NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

Among his many honors, Strayhorn has been named "one of the most highly visible scholars in his field" by the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* and one of the nation's "Top Emerging Scholars" by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

[Watch Strayhorn's exciting TedTalk at TEDxColumbus, "Inalienable Rights: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Belonging".](#)



Lecture – Monday, Oct. 20, 2014 Free Admission

- 4:15 – 4:45 p.m. – Reception in the McNeill Hall Lobby
- 5 – 6:30 p.m. – Lecture and Q&A in McNeill Lecture Hall (Room 1005)

North Carolina News

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

In the spring of every odd numbered year, NC Healthy Schools implements a statewide Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The NC YRBS helps assess behaviors in youth that impact their health now and in the future. Topics include violence, personal safety, physical activity, nutrition, mental health, tobacco, drugs and alcohol, protective factors and sexual behavior questions (for high school students only).

The following are the statistics that may surprise professionals who work with high school students. Below are a few of the results from student reports on the survey. The sample was 1846 high school students from 32 high schools with a 66% response rate. For the full report go to: <http://www.nchealthyschools.org/data/yrbs/>

- 24.1 percent in a physical fight during the past 12 months
- 7.6 percent in a physical fight at school in the past 12 months
- 15 percent have smoked cigarettes
- 32.2 percent have drank alcohol in the past 30 days
- 40.8 percent have smoked marijuana
- 3.8 percent were offered, sold or given illegal drugs at school in the past 12 months
- 47.3 percent have had sex
- 8.9 percent were forced to have sex
- 15.1 percent have had four or more sexual partners
- 29.3 percent have felt sad or hopeless for more than two weeks at a time during the past 12 months
- 16.7 percent have considered suicide in the past 12 months
- 19.2 percent have been bullied at school in the past 12 months

State and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations use NCYRBS data to set health education and health promotion goals, support curricula or program modification, inform legislation relating to health, and to seek funding

Tutoring Opportunity

- It is that time of year that many students are realizing they may need some extra help with their classwork, or they may need that extra outlet after school. That is where **YOU** come in!
- The WE CARE After School Program will be starting up its second year of community outreach on Oct. 13 and will be holding an information session Monday, Oct. 6 for all new and returning volunteers!
- Come join us and learn how to become involved. We need tutors of every subject and every grade level. *The only requirement is you must care about children and know that you will be changing lives.*

Monday, Oct. 6, 2014 4 p.m. UNCW's Watson Education Building Room 331

Contact Tracy Baird Empsall: wecareafterschool@gmail.com

WE CARE is located at Castle and 10th streets at the St. Ephesus Church. Tutoring is officially 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday but tutors often go early and stay a little later. This is an opportunity for you to gain leadership roles with tutoring students who cannot afford tutoring. If you join us you will get the following: A huge sense of satisfaction, lots of hugs and appreciation, a large banquet from the community at the end of the year, and a glowing letter of accomplishments from a UNCW education professor (Janna Robertson) and a Certificate of Accomplishment. Additionally, you receive more hands-on experience working with diverse students than you may receive in the schools.

More North Carolina News

Matching Students to NC Workforce Needs

Institute for Emerging Issues (IEI) convened 15 community meetings across the state to help local stakeholders better align workforce development programs with the needs of local manufacturers. Economic development officials, community college officers, workforce trainers, and employers forged important new collaborations that promised to strengthen local economies. ([IEI's Manufacturing Toolkit](#) enabled this process, which we summarized in our [Manufacturing Report](#).)

NC Health Insurance for Children

Information on Health insurance for children is available in English and Spanish at:
<http://www.nchealthystart.org/catalog/2013HCNCHCEnvlopStuffer.pdf>

Spotlight on Communities In Schools of Cape Fear!

21st CENTURY GRANT

Pender County Schools in Partnership with Communities in Schools has been awarded a 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant. The 21st CCLC program supports after-school academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low-performing schools to help them meet local and state academic standards in subjects such as reading, mathematics, and science. Communities in Schools will serve up to 200 middle school students in the following schools: Burgaw Middle, Cape Fear Middle, West Pender and Penderlea Elementary grades 3-8. Programs are expected to start Nov. 3. Anticipated outcomes of the program include increased attendance, decreased referrals, increased parental involvement, improved proficiency in reading and STEM related activities.

PROJECT READS

Harvard University begins its third year of a partnership with Communities In Schools of Cape Fear. Project READS (Reading Enhances Achievement During the Summer) was started by James Kim, associate professor, Harvard Graduate School of Education, in response to the noticeable loss of reading comprehension by students over the summer months. Kim started the program while working as a middle school teacher, but in 2010 received a \$12.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation (i3) Program to improve the reading comprehension of children from low-income families.

Kim partnered with Communities In Schools to help implement the program and CIS of Cape Fear was chosen as a partner affiliate. Project READS begins by identifying schools with students who could benefit most from the program. Typically these are schools where over 90 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Nine schools were identified in New Hanover and Pender County. The Iowa Reading Test helps determine the reading level of students at the beginning of the program and the survey helps determine common interests amongst the students so that books can be best matched. After a series of lesson plans with the students and parents to ensure that there is parental support of the program, the students are sent two books every two weeks over the summer. There are prizes and incentives for the students. At the end of the summer program, the Iowa Reading Test is administered again to determine the students reading level at the end of the summer. While data is still being analyzed, so far close to 1,200 students have participated in the program.

National News

The Forum

The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (The Forum) recently released *America's Young Adults: Special Issue, 2014*, a report highlighting a number of key statistics regarding the education and prosperity of our nation's young adults.

- In 2013, 84 percent of young adult women and 81 percent of young adult men had completed at least a high school education. These percentages were up from 79 and 75 percent, respectively, in 1980.
- The overall college enrollment rate for 18- to 24-year-olds increased from 26 percent in 1980 to 41 percent in 2012. Among Hispanics in this age group, college enrollment during this time increased from 22 to 37 percent, the largest increase among all racial and ethnic groups.

To view the full report, please visit <http://childstats.gov/>. The most recent statistical tables, including education statistics, are available [here](#).

Safe Learning Environments

In July, the Justice Center's Council of State Governments, a Washington, D.C., think tank issued the *School Discipline Consensus Report*, which highlighted the best thinking in the field on how to move from punitive-based, zero tolerance policies to more supportive practices for students in schools. "Anyone who wants to make students feel safer in school, improve high school graduation rates and close the achievement gap needs to have a plan to reduce the number of youth who are suspended from school," said Michael Thompson, director of the CSG Justice Center. The report's press release and further information about the Center can be found at <http://csgjusticecenter.org/youth/school-discipline-consensus-report/>, and the full report can be viewed at http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The_School_Discipline_Consensus_Report.pdf



3RD ANNUAL

D.C. VIRGO FUNDRAISER

*Live Music! *D.J. 1-A-B
*Free Appetizers and Spirits!
*Silent Auction!

Saturday, Oct. 25th 7pm-9pm

Asking \$10 Donation at the door

100% of the proceeds go to D.C. Virgo Middle School here in Wilmington, NC for school supplies, uniforms and much needed educational equipment.

Held at the Wilmington Martial Arts & Fitness Center located at 4209 Oleander Dr. Unit 10A. For more information: www.wilmingtonmac.com or (910) 409-3306



Communities in School of Cape Fear Fundraisers!

Come to Panera Bread from 4 to 8 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 23. Visit

<http://www.ciscapefear.org/events/> and print the flyer to bring to the event.

Registration is now open for our New Year's Romp. Details can be found at

<http://www.ciscapefear.org/new-years-romp/>

Stop Holding Us Back by Robert Balfanz

Adapted from: http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/06/07/stop-holding-us-back/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_php=true&_type=blogs&_php=true&_type=blogs&emc=edit_tnt_20140608&nlid=57296521&ntemail0=y&_r=2

[More than three million high school students](#) will receive their diplomas. At more than 80 percent, America's graduation rate is at a record high. [More kids are going to college, too](#). But [one-third](#) of the nation's African-American and Latino young men will not graduate.

In an era when there is virtually no legal work for dropouts, these young men face a bleak future. In fact, according to [new research](#) I conducted with my colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, half of the African-American boys who veer off the path to high school graduation do so in just 660 of more than 12,600 regular and vocational high schools. These 660 schools are typically big high schools that teach only poor kids of color. They are concentrated in 15 states. Many are in major cities, but others are in smaller, decaying industrial cities or in the South, especially in Georgia, Florida and [North Carolina](#).

This seemingly intractable problem is a national tragedy, but there is a solution. In the high schools where most of the young men are derailed, the number of ninth-grade boys who desperately need better schooling and extra support is typically between 50 and 100. Keeping many or even most of those boys on track in each entering ninth-grade class in 660 schools does not seem impossible.

If we know where to focus our efforts, we can put strategies in place that have shown promise, particularly over the last few years. The most treacherous time for young African-American and Latino men is from ages 11 to 21. At the very moment they are the most developmentally vulnerable, the response from schools, and services gets weaker, while the response from the justice system is harsher.

But the secondary schools these students attend are not specifically designed for them. It is not unusual for up to [half the students](#) to miss a month or more of school, and often more students are suspended in a year than graduate. In a [22-school sample](#) that we studied closely, nearly all ninth-grade students were either too old for their grades, had repeated ninth grade, needed special education, were chronically absent or had academic skills at the seventh grade level or below. The norm in this environment is to fail classes and then repeat ninth grade. Either they drop out then or they drop out later. This is a highly predictable, almost mechanical course, which is why we call those schools dropout factories.

We have also learned that most students who eventually drop out can be identified as early as the sixth grade by their attendance, behavior and course performance, according to studies by the [Everyone Graduates Center](#) at Johns Hopkins, where I am the director, and the [University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research](#). Using those indicators, it is possible to identify by the middle of ninth grade virtually everyone who will drop out.

In 2008, my colleagues and I decided to focus on those struggling sixth and ninth graders. To try to provide the supports needed, we developed [Diplomas Now](#), a partnership of three national nonprofits, which works with more than 30,000 students in 40 of the toughest middle and high schools in 14 big cities. To evaluate our progress, [MDRC](#), a social policy research organization, is conducting a randomized field trial. Initial indications are positive. In the 2012-13 school year, the program achieved a 41 percent reduction in chronically absent students, a 70 percent reduction in suspended students, a 69 percent reduction in students failing English and a 52 percent reduction in students failing math.

This is not an anomalous result. A recent [study of public schools in Chicago](#) shows that getting students back on track in the ninth grade leads to higher graduation rates and that African-American males in particular experience the greatest benefits when schools are reorganized to focus on ninth grade.

What do we need to do on a national scale?

- First, high-poverty secondary schools need to be redesigned with the special problems of their students in mind, with a focus on freshman year. In practice, this means starting new schools and transforming existing ones.
- Second, early warning systems need to be instituted so that teachers and other committed adults can step in at the first sign a student is in trouble, whether it's cutting class, mouthing off or floundering in English or math.
- Third, we should employ additional adults to support students who need daily nagging and nurturing to succeed, especially during the key transitional years in sixth and ninth grades.
- We also need the larger community, including local businesses and faith-based organizations, to mentor students by showing them how to set goals, apply to college and acquire workplace skills.

This sounds expensive, but it does not have to be, particularly if we stop wasting money on failed strategies like holding kids back in high school. Asking struggling students to repeat a grade under the same circumstances almost guarantees the same result.

We are already paying a lot [for failure](#). On average, holding a student back costs [\\$11,000](#). The 660 high schools that produce half of African-American male dropouts spend more than \$500 million a year to retain more than 46,000 boys and girls in ninth grade.

There is an unexpected path forward, the outlines of which are in view. We can provide our most vulnerable children with a better chance for adult success. They deserve no less.

Robert Balfanz is a research professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Education and the director of the [Everyone Graduates Center](#).

Funding Sources

An excellent source for funding information is the [Foundation Center](#). Listings of foundations and guidelines for writing grants are available. Sample proposals and common grant applications are also provided. The Foundation Center provides a variety of other resources and materials, including [prospect worksheets](#) that can help you focus on funders whose priorities match those of your project.

Many businesses donate money to the communities in which they are located. You will usually find giving guidelines on corporate websites under headings such as “community” or “corporate citizenship.”

Business grants can be found at: <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/grant-resources/funding-sources>

- [Government grants](#) can be found at UCLA Center's Mental Health in Schools site.
- [Grants Alert](#) – A website dedicated to making life a little easier for those who devote their time to searching for education grants.
- [Grant Station](#) can help your organization make smarter, better-informed fundraising decisions
- [Grant Watch](#) – A free grants listing service that helps teachers find classroom grants for school funding.
- [GrantWrangler](#) – A free grants listing service that helps teachers find classroom grants for school funding.
- [National Service-Learning Clearinghouse Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Youth Today Grants Today](#) – A national source for news, views and important developments in the youth service field from a nonprofit organization.
- [Kids in Need Teacher Grants](#)

More grant information is available at [Dropout Prevention](#) and [Youth Today](#).

Video Worth Watching!

Check out this video on Hometown Hires. We are proud of Wilmington for hiring its own citizens. Often we prevent students from dropping out of school but they still have difficulty finding work. Programs like this one may be the answer: <http://vimeo.com/106291909>

Save the Date!!

Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline: New Approaches to Supporting Student Well-being

Dropout Prevention Coalition Symposium

Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014

1 – 4 p.m.

UNCW Watson College of Education
Room 162

Details coming soon!

Next issue we will focus on interventions for supportive schools! What works regionally for social and emotional support? If you have a program you want showcased let us know.

***October Is Bullying
Prevention Month!***

*Wear orange on Oct. 22
for Unity Day!*

NOTE: Please send any items you would like to see in upcoming newsletters to [Janna Robertson](#). We want to share your news!