



# IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024

## Our Why

We believe that **ALL** students deserve an equitable and meaningful education in a local public school that provides them a pathway to the workforce and prepares them for life.

## Students need the following to succeed:

- A well-qualified teacher in **EVERY CLASSROOM**
- Educators trained to meet current student **MENTAL HEALTH** needs
- Academic outcomes, that when disaggregated, are **EQUITABLE** across student demographics
- Access to high quality, **AFTER SCHOOL** programming, including career connections
- Research backed, evidence-based **POLICY** changes to allow students to meet their potential



Policy Team  
and Experts

Page 2



Dudley Flood Center  
for Educational  
Equity and  
Opportunity

Page 3



North Carolina  
Center for  
Afterschool  
Programs

Page 4



North Carolina  
Center for Resilience  
and Learning

Page 5

Policy recommendations are prioritized to ensure that each child has access to a high-quality education.

## Inform and Engage

More NC community members need access to accurate and timely education information to make decisions that are best for student success. This year, thanks to our funders:

### Consensus Building

- More than 400 attendees heard directly from candidates for Governor, NC General Assembly, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction on the most pressing education issues impacting students at our annual Eggs and Issues breakfast.
- Stakeholders across the state developed a deeper understanding of, and support for, public education through participation in Forum presentations and outreach events.
- Over 100 business leaders, education organizations, local education foundations discussed and collaborated on pressing education issues to advance shared policy goals.

### Education Policy Fellowship

- Led the long-standing NC Education Policy Fellowship, a nationally-recognized fellowship that engages a diverse and collaborative community of strategic leaders to promote equitable education policy.
- Cohort included 66 fellows (36% educators and administrators) with fellows across the state.
- 2024 alumni continued ongoing conversations with policymakers throughout the short session.

## Policy and Analysis

NC communities and policy makers are armed with relevant, up-to-date data to make informed education policy decisions in their community through our reports.

### Community Based Reports

- District leaders used our local school Finance Study to successfully advocate for increased local spending on education. This is a local spending report of state, local and federal spending by school district to examine the capacity and actual effort of counties to support their local public schools.
- **Roadmap of Need** - this is a county-level data and rankings on 20 indicators of wellness across five domains: economic development, physical health, mental health and safety, education inputs, and education outcomes.

### Influence

- Inform and advance education policies to improve opportunities and outcomes for students across the state through the publication of policy recommendations and research in our biennial **Top Education Issues** report and regular engagement with state lawmakers.
- Authored and published 32 articles, appeared in 15 media appearances and mentioned 35 times in the media to push for fully funded schools and *policy changes to support students*.
- Wrote policy briefs on the impact of school vouchers and rebuilding the educator pipeline.





Students of color in NC have limited opportunity and access to equitable educational experiences as evidenced in cohort graduation rates to college and career readiness metrics.

## Educational Opportunity & Access

Using research and data to inform changes in policy and practice is foundational to promoting educational equity for every student.

- Our Equity Profiles Dashboard details information on focus areas to achieve equity in education across NC public school districts.

### Coalition, Convening & Capacity Building

Diverse groups across the state engaged in collective action to create opportunities for systemic change to eradicate educational inequities.

- Writing a policy brief with a cross-regional partnership for release in 2024.
- Engaging groups to create an understanding of the public education system for Black and Brown children in North Carolina and how it compares to the national public education system.
- Increasing relationships and opportunities focused on delivering high-quality professional development on educational equity for teaching candidates and beginning teachers.

*We will continue to push for action toward diversifying the educator workforce. We will continue advocacy efforts and continue to establish accountability because every child deserves a diverse educator workforce.*

–Dr. Deanna Townsend-Smith

## Recruiting and Retaining A Diverse Educator Workforce

- Accepted leadership of the Governor Cooper initiated DRIVE (*Developing a Representative and Inclusive Vision for Education*) Task Force to recruit, prepare, support, and retain racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse educators.

*A diverse educator workforce is beneficial to all students, but especially students of color. (Faglio, 2017)*

### Teacher Retention

- Hosted two new cohorts of the Eastern *Rural Teacher Leader Network*. As a result, 64 rural educators across 7 districts have developed an equity and trauma-informed lens to guide their advocacy efforts, strengthen their leadership skills, and build the capacity of other educators.

*Eighty of North Carolina's 100 counties are classified as rural, and our rural public schools serve 36% of students across North Carolina. Geography and resources for our rural educators too often serve as barriers to community building and professional learning opportunities.*

For every one student in NC afterschool programs, there are three students on the waitlist.

## Quality and Access

- **Influenced a \$15 Million Investment** in afterschool programs in western NC removing barriers for families such as cost and transportation.
- **Built Collaboration** based on an NCAAP analysis for the first Regional Afterschool Collaborative, WNC After 3PM. Almost 100 out-of-school (OST) providers in Western NC participated in learning, collaboration and workshops (such as “Using Data and Evaluation for Impact”) designed to improve program quality. [WNC After 3PM Collaborative](#)
- **Hosted a Lights on Afterschool Event** at the Governor’s Executive Residence bringing together more than 100 policymakers, philanthropic organizations, afterschool leaders, and youth to celebrate the impact that afterschool and summer programs have on lives and communities. [Lights On Afterschool](#) and NC CAP’s [Afterschool Advocacy](#)
- **Convened the NC CAP hosted 19th annual Synergy Conference**, where nearly 250 afterschool and expanded learning professionals came together for shared learning and peer networking on research-based practices, effective programs, and public policies that impact students’ success in school and life. [Synergy](#)
- **Informed regional convenings of stakeholders** around NC to support use of data in afterschool planning and advocacy to guide their programmatic decision-making. [The Roadmap of Need](#)
- **Supported more than 200 afterschool providers** with professional development to improve program quality.

## Career Connections and STEM

Learn more about NC CAP’s [STEM Hub](#)

- **Connected three pilot sites** from Western and Eastern NC with Jobs for the Future to make STEM Career Connections in Afterschool. Supports integration of career exploration into OST time programming.
- **Coached along with Afterschool Coaching for Reflective Educators in STEM (ACRES)**, 20 afterschool educators on how to facilitate STEM learning.
- **Expanded our stipended STEM Intensive cohort** for 11 additional afterschool providers recruited from under-resourced areas in NC.
- **Connected families to our STEM Asset (ex. field trips, mentors) Mapping Database** on our website spotlighting more than 400 STEM resources in NC.
- **Expanded budget-friendly, rigorous, and easily adaptable STEM Lessons** in our STEM Hub. Also translated to Spanish.
- NC CAP launched the NC Flight Crew, a program for students with underrepresented identities in STEM fields to engage in STEM learning, career exploration, and leadership. [NC Flight Crew](#)

*Our group decided to start getting together more frequently..... and formed the ‘Resiliency Coalition’ - to support the holistic health and growth for the youth of Rutherford County.*

–John Miller, Blue Ridge Hope





Students who attend trauma-informed schools experience fewer instances of discipline, higher attendance, and increased academic outcomes.

## Student Mental Health

Our Resilience & Learning (R&L) team partnered with 16 districts and 43 schools to engage staff to improve student outcomes by creating trauma-informed learning environments and implementing student and educator resilience strategies.

### Results Include

- On average across all years since 2018, 80% of surveyed staff agreed or strongly agreed that Center training and coaching increased their knowledge about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), stress, and trauma and about ways to build resilience for themselves and their students.
- Discipline data samples from two of our partner schools show a decrease in out-of-school suspensions and in-school suspensions from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025 after one year of full model implementation by -37.9% for one school and -29% for another school.

### Expanding Success

- Published [5 Key Findings with Action Steps to Improve the Well-Being of NC's children](#) so more communities can improve student outcomes.
- Led a task force of educator preparation faculty across the state and published the [Educator Preparation Programs Landscape Analysis on the use of Trauma-Informed Content & Practices in North Carolina](#)

### Policy Recommendations

- Advocacy for more student support staff (school counselors, nurses, and social workers), and stronger funding and training for SEL and trauma-informed practices for educators.

## Program Expansion

More students in NC have access to trauma-informed schools with the skills to serve student mental health needs and improve student outcomes.

### School Sustainability

- Partnered with 79 schools through our full model since 2017 and we aim to connect formally with as many of those as we are able to (once a quarter) to support sustainability. Support of schools that completed our full model with two years of coaching are now considered "sustainability schools."

### District-Level Program

- Piloted a District Resilience Team to create more systems change and/or new policies that would trickle down to individual schools supporting the sustainability of trauma-informed work in the long-term.

### Expanded Evaluation

- Began data analysis to assess the impact of R&L efforts in schools by comparing the outcomes with schools that did not have access to the R&L Resilience Team model.

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*When asked what a trauma-informed learning environment looks like, one trained staff member said "A trusting environment, student teacher relationship and teacher-teacher relationships are strong."*

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