



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Catherine Truitt, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

WWW.DPI.NC.GOV

Dear Educators,

For those of you who I haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Catherine Truitt, and I have the honor of serving as your state superintendent.

Since stepping into this role last January, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has worked collaboratively with many key partners. We laid the framework to ensure we were helping students recover from unfinished learning, and we collectively identified our "North Star" – which is the idea that our focus is, and will always be, on students.

Guided by our North Star, the team came together last year to map out a framework for the months ahead. An idea was born: [Operation Polaris](#). Operation Polaris became the agency's 4-year strategic vision, outlining how North Carolina public schools would overcome the difficulties of the pandemic while working to tackle many of the long-standing challenges facing North Carolina public education. Integral to this plan is our focus on the human capital pipeline, with a goal of "retaining high quality teachers, administrators and support personnel for every student in North Carolina."

We know that every student's path begins with a teacher. It begins with *you*. Throughout your career, you have continued to put students first both inside and out of the classroom. Students are shaped by your work, your words, and your passion every single day as you prepare them for their future. We know that teaching conditions directly impact student learning conditions.

This is why I want to encourage you to complete the 2022 Teacher Working Conditions survey. We want every teacher and licensed, school-based educator to have the opportunity to complete it. This *anonymous* statewide survey assesses teaching conditions at the school, district and state level. It has been a part of the education landscape in North Carolina since 2002, and it has been an important way to acquire feedback from those who are on the frontlines.

Your individual access code (listed in the box below) ensures your anonymity and that your responses are attributed to your school. This access code can be used only one time. It cannot be used to identify you. The survey window runs from March 1st to March 31st at [www.NCTWCS.org](http://www.NCTWCS.org). The survey will take about 20 minutes.

[Your Voice Matters](#). Complete the NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey at [www.nctwcs.org](http://www.nctwcs.org).

**Your Anonymous Access code is:**



I join everyone here at DPI in thanking you for your service to public education in North Carolina as you shape the future of our state. I look forward your responses and to all we can accomplish in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Truitt".

Catherine Truitt  
CT/mlg

## OFFICE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA SUPERINTENDENT

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## **2021 Reflections and Next Steps in 2022**

Beginning with the **Office of Learning Recovery and Acceleration (OLR)**: This newly created office was launched in 2021 to address the impact of lost instructional time and to provide hands-on support to districts. The office developed, implemented, and evaluated state and district-run interventions, while providing real-time feedback to districts in need. The OLR will have a full slate of research and development activities and will also release the first comprehensive evaluation of "lost instructional time," deliver summer learning programs, and partner with researchers to evaluate the impact of recovery programming.

The **District and Regional Support (DRS)**: Through this office, regional directors and district leadership coaches worked with the Office of Learning Recovery and Federal Programs to directly assist districts in completing applications for ESSER II and ESSER III funds. District and Regional Support will expand its work to include new supports for district central offices and instructional support at the classroom level. The NC Instructional Leadership Academy will be expanded to provide opportunities for assistant principals in its pilot district, and a plan will be developed to provide leadership-development opportunities for all principals and assistant principals in intensive-support districts.

*Importantly, Operation Polaris was designed to address more than just the effects of COVID—it was also created to identify other long-standing challenges facing the education system. This is why there are four other priorities outlined: Literacy, Human Capital, Accountability and Testing, and Student Support Services. If we are going to improve outcomes in public education, we must consider these four areas as each impacts our North Star. In 2021, important work began within each of these four priorities, and there is more on the horizon.*

**Literacy.** Over the past year the Literacy Workgroup has laid a framework so that all pre-k through fifth grade teachers will be trained in the Science of Reading by Spring 2025 with the assignment of all NC school districts to three final cohorts to undergo training. The Workgroup continues to work closely with the UNC System to align Science of Reading efforts with its educator preparation programs.

**Human Capital.** Work is underway to identify recommendations for changes in statute related to principal licensure requirements. In addition, a partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers has been established to help ensure that all students, especially those with special needs, are appropriately served by well-trained principals.

**Accountability and Testing.** Educators know that measuring school quality solely based on achievement and growth is not an accurate reflection of the myriad ways schools serve students. Unveiling the [Portrait of a Graduate](#) in November, the Workgroup identified a partner to facilitate this work that will kick off in 2022, laying the groundwork for a new accountability system.

**Student Support Services.** The pandemic revealed the multiple ways schools service students' non-academic needs, including providing nutrition, transportation, school safety, and broadband. The development of the Student Services Deliverables Template has been a major component of defining and aligning the work for each area and identifying work already underway.

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