

# State Entities Involved in Dropout Prevention/ Intervention\*

## Public Programs

### North Carolina Public Schools ([www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org))

- **State Board of Education** ([www.ncpublicschools.org/state\\_board/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/state_board/)) – Oversees state and federal funds for public education; develops content standards for K-12 education and the standard course of study in core academic areas; establishes policies related to school accountability. The board recently discussed dropout issues in the context of possible changes to the accountability system for public education and in the compulsory attendance age.
- **Department of Public Instruction** ([www.ncpublicschools.org/organization/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/organization/)) - - Implements the state's public school laws and the State Board of Education's policies. DPI's School Safety and Climate Section is responsible for dropout prevention activities. It also provides staffing to the State Advisory Council on Dropouts.
- **State Advisory Council on Dropouts** – An advisory group with representation from public and private entities currently working to develop strategies aimed at lowering the dropout rate in North Carolina. Contact: Marguerite Peebles, section chief, School Safety and Climate, [MPeebles@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:MPeebles@dpi.state.nc.us), 919-807-3940.
- **College Tech Prep** ([http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Tech\\_Prep/](http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Tech_Prep/)) , Learn and Earn (see below, under Governor's Office), and other high school/community college programs – provide students with more motivation to finish high school by providing pathways between high school and college.

### Local school networks:

- **Dropout Prevention Coordinators** – network of locally designated school point people who work within the school system to keep students from dropping out.
- **Alternative Learning Programs** (<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/alp/directory/district/>) – help at risk students overcome challenges related to disruptive behavior and academic failure so they can learn, graduate and become productive members of the community.

### North Carolina Community College System (<http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/>)

- **The Adult High School program** ([http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Basic\\_Skills/adultHighSchool.htm](http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Basic_Skills/adultHighSchool.htm)) – Affords adult high school dropouts the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. This program, available at 45 of the state's 58 community colleges, also provides a credential that enables them to continue their education through college curriculum programs.
- **General Educational Development (GED)** ([http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Basic\\_Skills/ged.htm](http://www.ncccs.cc.nc.us/Basic_Skills/ged.htm)) - Courses to help prepare students for the battery of five tests that comprise the GED are available through all 58 community colleges

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in North Carolina. Although research suggests that those with a high school diploma tend to fare better economically than those with a GED, earning a GED is an important credential to show a student has essentially 'tested out' of high school. It's also important to note that colleges will enroll students who have earned a GED instead of a traditional high school diploma.

## North Carolina General Assembly

- ***Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout Prevention and High School Graduation*** ([http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascrpts/Committees/Committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommittee&sActionDetails=Non-Standing\\_6358](http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/gascrpts/Committees/Committees.asp?sAction=ViewCommittee&sActionDetails=Non-Standing_6358)) – Established to research the dropout problem in North Carolina and develop workable strategies to combat it. This study commission, which is comprised of eight Senate and eight House members, released an interim report in May 2008 and will prepare a final report prior to the 2009 legislative session. The commission also has broader duties that include the evaluation of dropout prevention programs and grants awarded by the Joint Legislative Committee on Dropout Prevention.
- ***Joint Legislative Committee on Dropout Prevention*** – Reviews and awards grant proposals submitted by local education agencies, schools, nonprofits and community-based organizations. Created by the N.C. General Assembly, the committee is comprised of non-legislative appointees who awarded \$7 million in grants last year to 60 local projects across the state.

## Office of the Governor

- ***Learn and Earn*** (<http://www.nclearnandearn.gov/>) – Offers high school students the opportunity to achieve a high school degree and earn an Associate's degree in just five years. This unique program was initiated by Gov. Easley in 2004. Students attend one of 41 high schools across the state located on a college campus or access services through Learn and Earn Online. Learn and Earn schools are designed for those wanting to jump-start their college career or gain high-level job skills without college tuition expenses. The number of Learn and Earn schools in North Carolina is expected to grow to 70 by the fall of 2008, according to the governor's office.
- ***North Carolina Mentoring Partnership*** (<http://www.volunteernc.org/>) – Collaborative effort between the Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service and Communities in Schools of North Carolina. The partnership is the statewide advocacy group for mentoring. Working with schools, churches, local mentoring organizations, volunteer centers, businesses, and other statewide agencies, the partnership helps conduct statewide campaigns, provides technical assistance and training to support mentoring in the state.

## North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development (staffed by North Carolina Department of Commerce)

- ***Workforce Investment Act Youth Program*** – Connects low-income high school dropouts and at-risk youth aged 14-21 with educational and high-growth employment opportunities. Services range from tutoring and alternative school services to occupational skill training,

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internships and employment opportunities. For a listing of service providers in your area, contact your local Workforce Development Board:

<http://old.ncjoblink.com/centers2/centerview.asp?type=w>. *Valuing Education Initiative* – Develops ways to change cultural attitudes toward education in North Carolina that have long contributed to low graduation rates and limited pursuit of college course work. The initiative bases its work on research published by the Commission on Workforce Development in the 2007 publication, *State of the North Carolina Workforce*.

**North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

(<http://www.ncdjjdp.org>) – Administers Support Our Students (SOS) grant funds provided to nonprofits for the implementation of after school programs to reduce juvenile crime; provides educational services for youth in Youth Detention Centers or Youth Development Centers; etc. To see DJJDP services by county, see [http://www.ncdjjdp.org/county\\_services.html](http://www.ncdjjdp.org/county_services.html)

**Nonprofit programs**

**4-H Youth Development** ([www.nc4h.org](http://www.nc4h.org)) – Offers hands-on educational opportunities for children aged 5-19. 4-H is the largest youth education group in the nation, offering clubs, after-school child care, special interest programs, community service opportunities, summer camps, school enrichment, and career exploration. Research suggests that students who participate in 4-H are more likely to complete a college education than students that do not take part in 4-H.

**Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program** ([www.bbbs.org](http://www.bbbs.org)) – Connects at-risk youth ages 6-18 with compatible volunteers who establish important one-on-one relationships that are overseen by a local network of professionals. Mentoring can take place in the community or in schools.

**Boys and Girls Clubs** ([www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)) – Nationwide network of local clubs that work with youth, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to develop positive character traits and important life skills. Two-thirds of those served are minorities, and the organization has a special partnership with some Indian tribes.

**Communities in Schools of North Carolina** ([www.cisnc.org](http://www.cisnc.org)) – Largest community-based organization in the state focused specifically on dropout prevention. Local affiliates engage the community in dropout prevention planning and connect community resources with schools and other sites to help young people learn, stay in school and prepare for life.

**Futures for Kids** ([www.F4K.org](http://www.F4K.org)) – Online career exploration tool for middle school and high school students that helps them understand their career options, the education level necessary for the jobs they're interested in, and what careers are best suited for them based on their interests. The web-based program provides video vignettes of jobs offered by local employers.

**North Carolina Dropout Prevention Association** – The only statewide membership group in the country focused specifically on dropout prevention. The association welcomes with anyone who has an interest in dropout prevention, including businesses and individuals. Contact: John Reimer, President, NCDPA, [john.reimer@caswell.k12.nc.us](mailto:john.reimer@caswell.k12.nc.us) or 336-694-4212.

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**North Carolina Justice Center ([www.ncjustice.org](http://www.ncjustice.org))** – Oversees the grassroots effort NC CARE, or North Carolina Community Advocates for Revitalizing Education ([www.nccare.org](http://www.nccare.org)). NC CARE is made up of parents, educators and community leaders who are working to reform the current school funding system and eliminate the achievement gap that often exists between low-income, minority students and others student groups. NC CARE offers leadership training and informal assistance to parents and communities that wish to get involved in education policy issues.

**North Carolina New Schools Project ([www.newschoolsproject.org](http://www.newschoolsproject.org))** – Works to accelerate the growth and development of innovative secondary schools across the state. Created in 2003 by the governor’s office and state education leaders, and with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the North Carolina New Schools Project has helped establish and revamp more than 100 innovative high schools. These high schools include those that have been redesigned, often around a particular career theme or common method of teaching, as well as Learn and Earn early college high schools. Several of these new and improved schools reported a zero dropout rate for last year.

**Public School Forum of North Carolina ([www.ncforum.org](http://www.ncforum.org))** – Engages in policy research on education issues affecting North Carolina’s public schools. Research from this public policy think tank has paved the way for current initiatives on high school reform and ongoing supplemental funding for low-wealth schools. The Public School Forum also oversees The Collaborative Project, which strengthens public school systems serving low-income students in rural areas,

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In addition to these programs, there has been attention to dropout prevention by various professional teaching/administration associations, as well as organizations involved in early childhood programs and strategies addressing risk factors such as teen pregnancy.

Other organizations in North Carolina that have sponsored recent research or meetings related to dropout prevention or youth issues include the NC Center for Public Policy Research, the James B. Hunt Institute for Educational Leadership and Policy, Center for Child and Family Policy at Duke University and the Southern Growth Policies Board.

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“But What Can I Do?”  
**Dropout Prevention/Intervention Action Items for  
Community and Business Leaders**

Elected officials, economic developers, other public or community leaders

- Hold a media event involving educators, local businesses and other local leaders announcing the area’s graduation rate and explaining the urgency of dropout prevention and intervention with adults who lack a high school diploma.
- Set a goal in your economic development or community strategic plan to increase the high school graduation rate.
- Establish and promote a “dropout prevention week” to raise awareness of the issue and the state and community resources available to help a student at risk of dropping out.
- Establish an information clearinghouse for dropout prevention so parents, educators and concerned community leaders can easily find information and guidance to help keep students from dropping out.
- Work with other partners in your community to develop a strong proposal for a legislative dropout prevention grant.
- Look at legislation or initiatives in other states (e.g., South Carolina’s 2005 “Education and Economic Development Act,” <http://www.che.sc.gov/AcademicAffairs/EEDA/2-ExecutiveSummary.doc>) and see if there are any education/economic development strategies we should adopt in North Carolina.
- Have your chamber of commerce host a breakfast session for local employers to encourage them to offer flexibility in schedules for working parents so they can attend their children’s school events or to mentor or tutor another child.
- Honor high school graduates by listing the names of all local high schools’ graduates in the newspaper. (Smaller communities can also list the names of the graduates’ parents to honor their role.)
- Set up or support a local literacy council for those dropouts with particularly low basic skills.
- Create a ministry in your church focused on encouraging youth to graduate high school and seek more education or training.

- Encourage displaced workers with less than a high school diploma to seek their high school diploma or GED from the community college.
- Include public service announcements on TV and local radio/newspapers about the importance of education, with information on lifetime earnings of graduates vs. dropouts.
- Set up WiFi downtown.
- Write a grant to provide laptops for students.

#### Business owners

- Invite students in for tours, shadowing, and extern and intern opportunities. Offer a summer job opportunity to a teen.
- If you own a business or supervise people and already have students working for you, have a conversation about how it's important that they finish their high school education.
- Make a company donation to a dropout prevention program or a community organization that offers after school or tutoring to at-risk kids.
- Talk to the local high schools and community colleges about the needs of your business and how they can better prepare kids and young adults for work.
- Set up a youth apprenticeship opportunity and obtain a youth apprentice through the N.C. Department of Labor and the local high school.
- Offer time off or at least flexibility with work schedules to your staff as part of your comprehensive benefits to allow them to be more involved in their children's school activities or tutoring/mentoring another child.
- Get more ideas for business investments or involvement in education through the Business Committee for Education: [www.ncbce.org](http://www.ncbce.org) or [www.ncbce.org/uploads/docs/NCBCE\\_Snapshots\\_of\\_Strategic\\_Corporate\\_Investments.pdf](http://www.ncbce.org/uploads/docs/NCBCE_Snapshots_of_Strategic_Corporate_Investments.pdf)
- Apply for incumbent worker training grants through your local workforce development board to sponsor education or training for current workers who lack a high school diploma. <http://www.nccommerce.com/NR/rdonlyres/62988785-C736-4A4C-BE23-38FA80C0CDB7/0/1IncumbentWorkerApplication807.pdf>.

#### For those who are in direct contact with youth

- Expect more. In conversations with students in your community (no matter how disadvantaged or what their parents' education is), assume they will complete high school and go on for more education or training.
- Tell it like it is.
  - Talk to youths about how our changing economy requires workers to change jobs – and how important it is to have an education to be able to switch jobs.

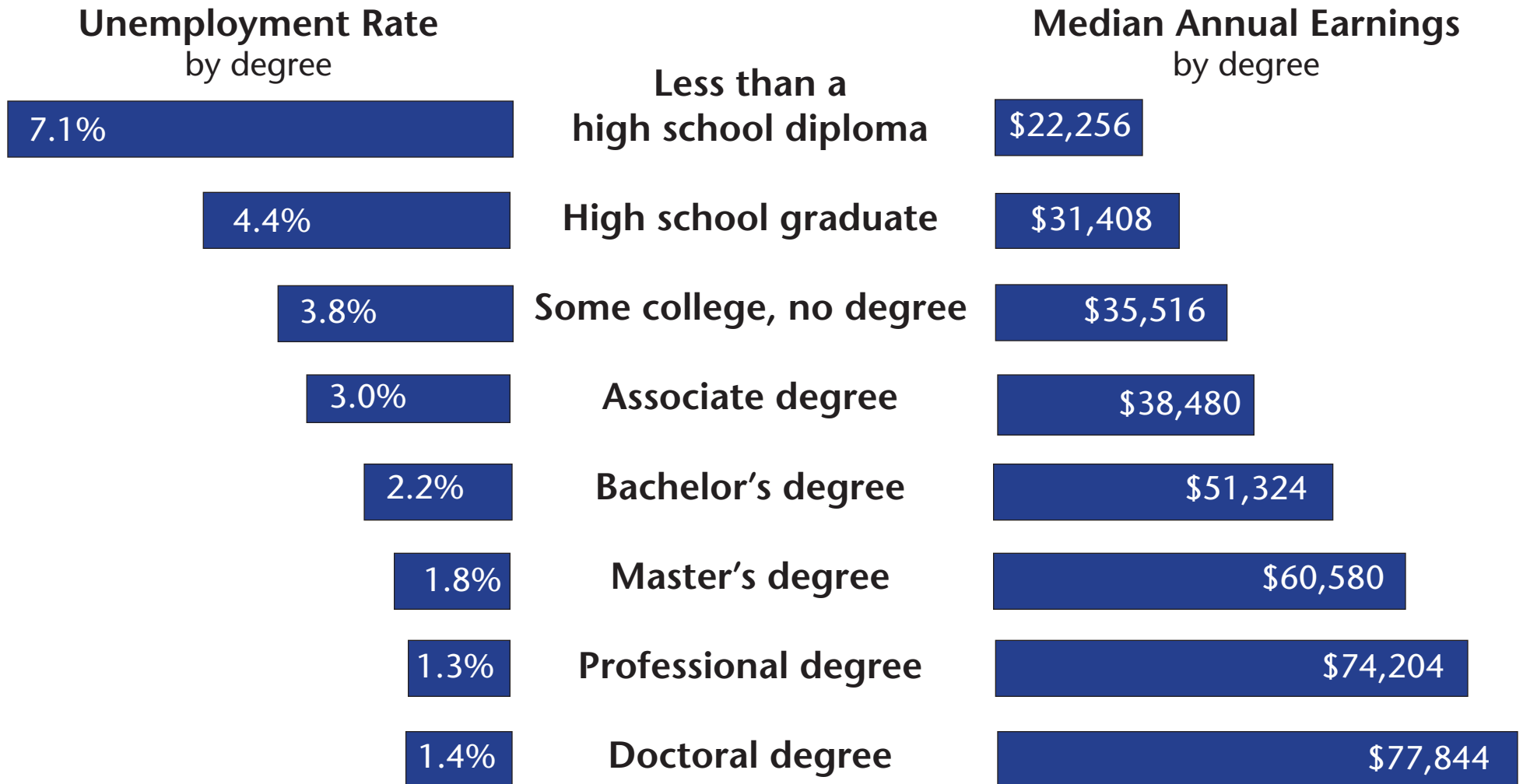
- Give it to them straight about drugs, teen pregnancy, and other risky behavior that can knock kids off track.
- Create service learning opportunities or opportunities for students to mentor younger students.
- Suggest Career Technical Education, dual-enrollment (in a high school and community college), career academy high schools or Learn and Earn for a student who is bored with a traditional school experience.
- Find out what a student or family member's passion is and give a book on that subject. Or find reading materials they love (Harry Potter, comics, etc.) and feed their interest.
- Refer a student to websites that encourage them to dream about their future. Better yet, make this the default website for student computers at home or school or in community settings. Examples:
  - [www.f4k.org](http://www.f4k.org) (Futures for Kids)
  - [www.nccareers.org](http://www.nccareers.org) (Employment Security Commission of NC's career exploration website; includes videos profiling some jobs)
- Get involved in a family member's school activities (field trips, homework assignments or after-school activities).
- Encourage kids to sign up for positive activities, such as 4-H camps or activities.
- If you see bullying, report it to school or local authorities.
- Have a high school dropout talk to middle or high school students about the importance of staying in school.

#### On a personal level

- Be a mentor or tutor.
- Coach a sports team or direct a local acting troupe.
- Volunteer to start an activity at a local school.
- Start or volunteer for an after-school program at your church/other place of worship.
- Make a donation to a dropout prevention organization, your local school, summer activities for teens or a church after-school program.
- Tell parents you know about new public education opportunities, such as early college high schools or theme-based academies related to future work opportunities.
- Talk to your school system if your child or another child in your life is struggling and needs more attention or something different.

- Have your sorority or fraternity mentor high school students and hold fundraisers to benefit schools, youth programs, dropout prevention programs, etc.
- Encourage a youth to volunteer.
- E-mail or call your local school board member, legislator in Raleigh or your member of Congress if there are local, state or federal education proposals that you support or oppose (or which need to be put on their radar screen). [http://www.ncleg.net/GIS/Representation/Who\\_Represents\\_Me/Who\\_Represents\\_Me.html](http://www.ncleg.net/GIS/Representation/Who_Represents_Me/Who_Represents_Me.html). Contact your county commissioners about local education funding issues.
- As a parent or just a concerned citizen, learn how to advocate for local school issues or broader policy issues. (For an example of a leadership training opportunity, see <http://www.ncjustice.org/content/index.php?pid=79>.)

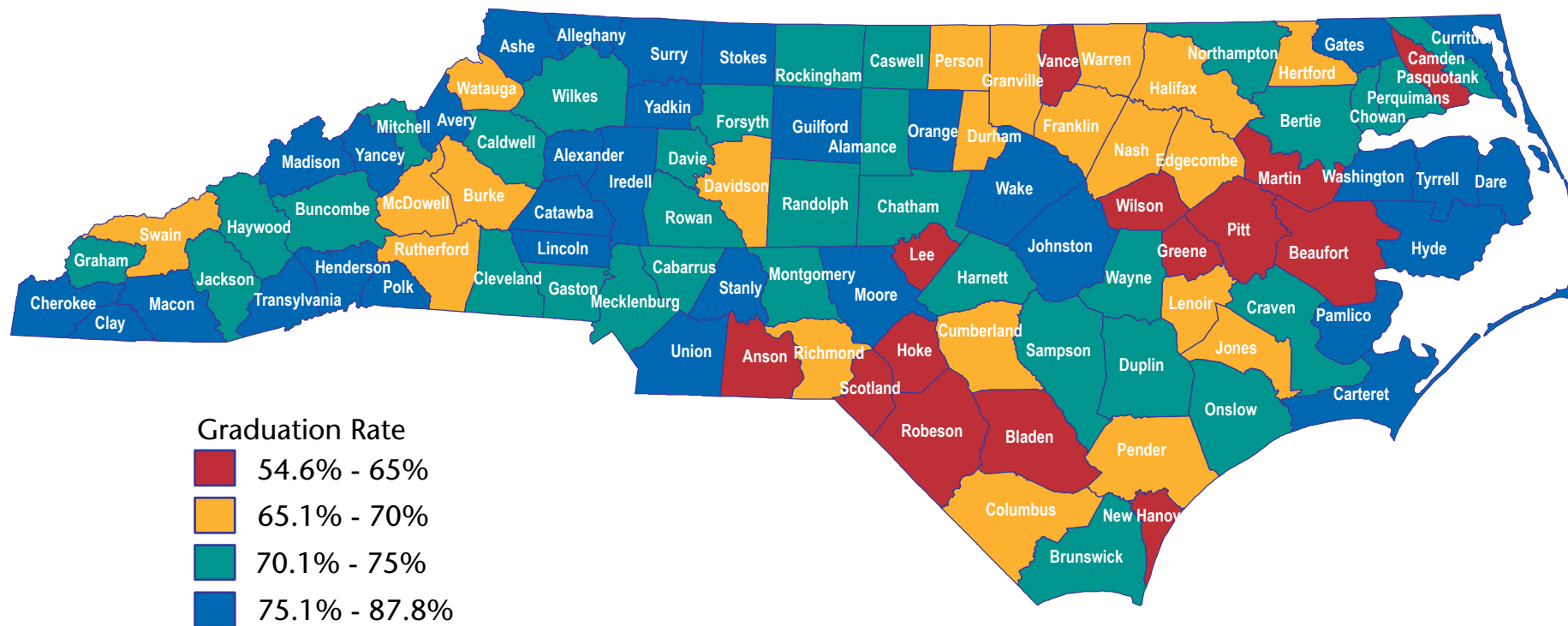
# EDUCATION PAYS



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007

# GRADUATION RATE

## 2007



Graduation rate:  
2003-2004 entering 9th graders graduating in 2006-2007 or earlier

Source: N.C. Public Schools