



Preparing Students for the World: Final Report of the State Board of Education's Task Force on Global Education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2011, the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) formed a *Task Force on Global Education* to assess the state's effort to produce "globally competitive" graduates ready to live, work, and contribute in an interconnected world. The Task Force received testimony for the better part of a year from international, national, state, and local experts on global education and competitiveness and recommendations from leaders in business and industry, higher education, the public schools, national, state, and international organizations, and the military.

Better prepared, but Globally Competitive?

North Carolina stands in the midst of an aggressive improvement agenda with new standards and assessments coming on line; a new teacher evaluation system that incorporates student achievement; 118 schools receiving significant turnaround assistance; new data and instructional improvement systems in implementation; new school models in the areas of early college and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics); and new virtual and blended learning approaches. However, the Task Force noted that its mission is not just to move more students across the finish line, an objective all these reforms support, but to get them across that line competitive in an increasingly globalized economy and world. To that end, the Task Force wrestled with two significant questions:

1. While our graduates may be better prepared than in the past, are they adequately prepared for today's world?
2. What distinguishes North Carolina's graduates from other states in the United States?

“ Students in North Carolina are no longer preparing for future jobs in North Carolina. They are preparing to work and compete in a global workplace. The impact of cultural sensitivities and the capability to collaborate in a diverse international setting (even if still working from North Carolina) cannot be understated. Our State Board of Education in North Carolina is rightfully focusing on these skill areas, as they will become even bigger factors and differentiators in determining the future success of our students.”

– Joseph Lingle, Head, Global Program Integration,
Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics

Task Force Findings

From the testimony and recommendations it received, the Task Force noted six major findings:

- 1. We aren't preparing students for a global tomorrow; North Carolina is global *today*.** North Carolina's economy is globally connected in every important respect – from economic investment and employment to trade – and these economic changes are occurring as North Carolina boasts a population that is becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse than before.
- 2. Pilot programs won't cut it. Preparing globally competent graduates requires a comprehensive approach.** North Carolina has a number of strong organizations and significant local education agency (LEAs) initiatives in place focused on global education. But, we do not have a coordinated and comprehensive strategy. The challenge is not to replace what is being done but to understand and build on current strengths in a strategic, coordinated manner.
- 3. To prepare our students for the world, we need to prepare their teachers.** Making global education a priority means making teacher preparation and development a priority. While the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*, comprised of new *Common Core* and *North Carolina Essential Standards*, will make our students more competitive, they will not by themselves make them more globally aware.
- 4. North Carolina was once a leader in language learning. It's time to return to the pole position.** Between 1994 and 2004, K-12 World Language enrollment decreased 23%. Enrollment has slowly improved since 2004, but is still down 15% versus mid-1990s levels. The reality is that as North Carolina has become more international, our world language effort has declined. In order to maintain and increase our competitive advantage, North Carolina public schools must graduate students with advanced cultural and language skills.
- 5. Schools need peers and partners to move this agenda.** Building networks of schools, districts, higher education, third-party providers, and the business and governmental communities is a critical step to ensuring strong practice and innovative ideas go beyond the schools and communities in which they originate and make an impact on students across North Carolina.
- 6. If it's not sustainable, it's not a strategy.** Effective programs that are not affordable over the long run ultimately will not serve North Carolina students and society. Our state needs scalable approaches with ongoing support. Consistent communication about the competitive advantage and opportunities that a globally-informed education will offer to individuals, communities, and our state is critical.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

North Carolina should make five commitments and take supporting action to ensure every public school student graduates fully prepared for the world in which he or she will live, work, and contribute.

Commitment 1: *Robust and Cutting-edge Teacher Support and Tools*

- 1.1 Develop content for embedding global themes and problem-based learning throughout the curriculum.
- 1.2 Implement an SBE-recognized badging process for teacher global professional development.
- 1.3 Require teacher preparation institutions to prepare teacher candidates to use global content.

Commitment 2: *Leading-edge Language Instruction*

- 2.1 Institute a plan for statewide access to dual language/immersion opportunities beginning in elementary school and continuing through high school.
- 2.2 Partner with institutions of higher education (IHEs) to establish plans to increase the supply of competent K-12 World Language teachers.
- 2.3 Refocus traditional high school credit World Language courses to include a greater emphasis on the study of global and international affairs and the economies, societies and cultures of other nations and on survival language skills.

Commitment 3: *New School Models*

- 3.1 Develop new school models focused on international education that would include, but not be limited to, an internationally-themed residential high school, preferences for international themes in the charter school approval process, transformation models for low-performing schools, virtual schools-within-a-school and, regional dual language/immersion schools.
- 3.2 Partner with non-governmental partners to assist school districts with implementation.

Commitment 4: *District Networking and Recognition*

- 4.1 Expand the *North Carolina Global Schools Network* to support district implementation of global content, teacher development, cutting-edge language instruction, and new school models.
- 4.2 Institute a Global-Ready designation for schools and districts that provides a process and incentives for K-12 second language opportunities for all students; pathways for teachers to achieve SBE-recognized badging; and career-ready employer requirements, among others.
- 4.3 Task an entity to collect and communicate lessons learned on international education.

Commitment 5: *Strategic International Relationships*

- 5.1 Where appropriate, work with the North Carolina Department of Commerce, business and other external partners to:
 - Renew existing and explore new Memoranda of Understanding with international partners; and,
 - Identify other priority nations for international relationships.
 - Name partner countries that serve as the priority source of information about skill requirements and K-12 curriculum and teacher professional development, as well as priority focus for educator exchanges and visits

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