

PORTRAIT of a GRADUATE



Frequently Asked Questions

For dissemination to students or parents within schools and districts, or community members who are seeking additional information about the Portrait of a Graduate purpose, process, and next steps.

Q. What is the Portrait of a Graduate?

- The Portrait of a Graduate is a collective vision that articulates North Carolina’s aspirations to better define the skills students need for success after high school. It was developed and informed by more than 1,150 North Carolinians across our state.
- This Portrait includes the knowledge, mindsets, and skills that students should possess to succeed in a rapidly changing and complex world.

Q. Why create a Portrait of a Graduate for North Carolina?

- Now, more than ever, learning experiences must not only provide for the acquisition of rigorous academic content, but they must also be more intentional about fostering communication, collaboration, adaptability, and other durable skills our students need to thrive.
- Our accountability system needs to provide a more comprehensive picture of what student success means. The Portrait will help do this by serving as a more balanced measure, demonstrating a student’s growth and achievement and ensuring their readiness for civic life, career, or college.

Q. Who was involved in creating the Portrait of a Graduate?

- The Portrait of a Graduate design process was regionally led because the state’s education system is strengthened when the community is directly engaged in shaping the work.
- More than 1,150 North Carolinians from the mountains to the coast, consisting of educators, students, families, and representatives from local businesses, non-profits, workforce development boards and higher education, made up the four regional Portrait Design Teams.
- To build capacity, NCDPI’s eight Regional Directors worked directly with local school districts to solicit broad participation and engagement. More than 75 percent of the participants in the Design Teams were locally recruited.
- NCDPI also enlisted the help of statewide sector partners to ensure that all voices and perspectives are represented, including the NC Community College System, the University of North Carolina System, Independent Colleges and Universities, BestNC, myFutureNC, Communities in Schools, the NC Department of Commerce, workforce development boards, the Emerging Issues Institute, and the NC Chamber of Commerce.

Q. What was the process for creating the Portrait of a Graduate?

- The Portrait of a Graduate Design Teams convened three times to build a unifying, collective vision for all students and outline competencies students need to succeed and thrive in world.
- Throughout the three meetings, the Portrait Design Teams:
 - *Examined how the world has changed and its implications on our students.*
 - *Discussed the competencies students need to thrive today and tomorrow.*
 - *Identified and contextualized the competencies that should be part of a shared, statewide vision for our students.*
 - *Discussed how to make our Portrait of a Graduate a reality for every student.*
- It is during these discussions that the Portrait Design Teams collectively decided what competencies the Portrait should include and what a globally competitive student should know and be able to do when they graduate from high school.

Q. What is the goal of the Portrait of a Graduate?

- The North Carolina statewide Portrait identifies the competencies to prepare students for an ever-changing world that is driven by technology, human interaction, and innovation.
- This Portrait gives school leaders and teachers the framework to design instruction in a way that promotes real-world competencies and job readiness.
- A complementary goal is to use the Portrait – which features the competencies valued most by North Carolinians – to anchor a new, more balanced, multi-measured testing and accountability system. This is a different approach than our current testing and accountability system, which uses high stakes testing to determine student and school performance.
- Ultimately, the Portrait drives better alignment among future employers, communities, higher education providers, and families who depend on our schools to prepare students for the post-secondary plan of their choice.

Q. Once the Portrait is adopted by a school district, what does this mean for students and parents? What does this change for students?

- For most communities in the state, this will be the first time they truly hear and see the collective hopes, dreams, and aspirations for North Carolina’s students expressed in tangible achievable terms.
- Parents and students should expect to see the identified competencies woven into classroom learning experiences beginning in elementary school and cultivated until graduation.
- Parents and students can anticipate assessments that match the requirements of a changing, dynamic world; not relying on end-of-grade and end-of-course testing alone, but rather, complemented by other factors that assess skills like adaptability, collaboration, and communication that prepare students for the workplace and civic engagement.