

# **NC PreK-12 Literacy and Equity Summit**

## **January 19, 2022 | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM ET**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the **NC PreK-12 Literacy and Equity Summit** is to bring together cross-sector stakeholders to address the question: *How do we leverage North Carolina's investment in PreK-5 literacy to ensure that all students can read and write on grade level beyond grade 5?*

### **Why Does NC Need a PreK-12 Literacy and Equity Summit?**

The ability to read is fundamental to full participation in a democratic society and serves as the basis for ongoing opportunity and success. Literacy is a social practice, and cannot be taught or learned in a vacuum. Learners and educators across NC are living, teaching, and learning in uncertain times. As educators, our collective aim is to address the impact on learning as a result of COVID-19 and pandemic-related traumas, coordinate equitable and more just educational policies and practices, and prepare students to thrive in an ever-changing, interdependent world. Literacy success for all students, especially those who have been historically minoritized and underserved, is at the core of our collective aim.

The NC 2019 NAEP data indicate that our state is lagging behind in terms of 4th and 8th grade reading scores. These scores tend to be even lower for students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch and some students of color. The [Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021](#) puts front and center support for reading excellence, and specifically the science of reading, in NC. This is a significant investment in PreK-5 educators and learners, and we anticipate tangible growth in early literacy as a result of this coordination. We do not, however, have the luxury of stopping here. We must build upon and sustain this momentum by focusing on the post (Pre-)K-5 literacy continuum. Grades 3-4 signal a shift in reading complexity for students, wherein they are expected to “read to learn rather than learn to read.” Reading demands continue to increase as students progress through grade levels. Students must learn to read deeply with more complex texts and read critically with digital texts.

During the **North Carolina PreK-12 Literacy and Equity Summit** cross-sector stakeholders will explore how North Carolina schools and communities can reimagine and retool 6-12 grade literacy instruction to meet the needs of every student, including communities of color, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. Conversations will explicitly address inequities that were magnified and exacerbated during the pandemic, highlight challenges to effective and equitable literacy instruction for 6-12th grade students, and spotlight innovative ways that NC LEAs are engaging students to improve literacy outcomes for later grades. The summit will culminate in a shared vision for literacy learning and an accompanying set of policy recommendations to benefit NC students.

### **Who is the Audience for the Summit?**

Cross-sector stakeholders, including PreK-12 literacy professionals, community and family literacy professionals, media specialists, policymakers, state-agency leaders, higher education literacy researchers, board of education members, experts in mental and cognitive health professionals, non-profit organizations focusing on literacy, representatives from the state library system, and business leaders focusing on literacy.

## What are the Proposed Outcomes of the Summit?

- Create a shared, equity-centered vision among stakeholders that addresses the challenges and opportunities for grades 6-12 literacy outcomes in North Carolina.
- Generate a policy brief with actionable, equity-centered recommendations for improving grades 6-12 literacy outcomes in North Carolina.

## Proposed Timeline

Target and Assemble Partners and Sponsors	September 2021
Planning Phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Conduct landscape analysis</li><li>● Create survey</li><li>● Create agenda for Summit and secure speakers</li></ul>	September - November 2021
Advertise Summit	November - December 2021
Hold Summit	January 19, 2022 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM ET
Develop Policy Brief with Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Acquire Feedback from Stakeholders</li></ul>	January - April 2022
Issue Policy Brief	May 2022

## Partnering Organizations and Planning Committee

Hiller Spires (Chair)

*Executive Director of the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation*

Sarah Bausell

*Research Associate, Friday Institute for Educational Innovation*

Marie Himes

*Research Associate, Friday Institute for Educational Innovation*

Jessica Eagle

*Graduate Assistant, Friday Institute for Educational Innovation*

Mebane Rash

*CEO and Editor in Chief of EducationNC*

Rupen Fofaria

*Equity and Learning Differences Reporter for EducationNC*

Catherine Edmonds

*Deputy Superintendent Office of Equity, NCDPI*

Amy Rhyne

*Director of Office of Early Learning, NCDPI*

Mary Hemphill

*Director of Academic Standards, NCDPI*

Laura Bilbro-Berry

*Executive Director of Educator Preparation and Lab Schools at University of North Carolina System*

Ariel Ford

*Director of Division of Child Development and Early Education at North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services*

Sandy Hong

*Consultant for the Division of Child Development and Early Education at North Carolina  
Department of Health and Human Services*