



NC PreK-12 Literacy and Equity Summit **January 19th, 2022 | 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM**

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 transform our shared aspiration—that all NC students read on grade level—into action?*

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 resulting from COVID-19 and pandemic-related traumas, to coordinate equitable and more just educational policies and practices, and to prepare students to thrive in an ever-changing, interdependent world. Literacy success for each and every student 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 have the luxury of stopping here. We must build upon and sustain this momentum by focusing on the post PreK-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.” Students must learn to read deeply with more complex texts and read critically with digital texts. Reading demands continue to increase as students progress through grade levels.

During the **NC PreK-12 Literacy and Equity Summit**, cross-sector stakeholders will build on existing statewide PreK-5 literacy policy and initiatives to explore how North Carolina schools and communities can reimagine literacy instruction to meet the needs of every student, particularly those from historically minoritized communities, including communities of color, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners. Conversations will explicitly address inequities that were magnified and exacerbated during the pandemic and spotlight innovative ways that NC LEAs are engaging learners to improve literacy outcomes for students. The

summit will culminate in a shared vision for literacy learning and an according 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, policymakers, state-agency leaders, higher education literacy researchers, board of education members, 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 vision among stakeholders for students beyond grade 5, that builds upon recent investments in reading instruction for early grades.
- Generate a policy brief with recommendations for literacy achievement beyond grade 5

Partnering Organizations and Planning Committee

Hiller Spires (Chair)

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