



# NC ACCESS

## Annual Report

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## Executive Summary

The North Carolina Office of Charter Schools is currently in year three of the North Carolina Advancing Charter Collaboration and Excellence for Student Success (NC ACCESS) to: 1) Increase the number of educationally disadvantaged (ED) students attending high-quality charter schools and expand the number of high-quality charter schools available to educationally disadvantaged students; 2) Develop a cohort of 120 charter school leaders who can develop and demonstrate best practices in serving educationally disadvantaged students; and 3) Broadly disseminate best practices in serving educationally disadvantaged students and foster collaboration in the charter school community and between charter schools and traditional public schools. The following executive summary provides an overview of this year's findings.

### **Objective 1: Increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students attending high-quality charter schools and expand the number of high-quality charter schools available to educationally disadvantaged students.**

The NC ACCESS subgrantees have met or are approaching meeting four of eight performance goals focused on expanding the number of charter schools that serve an increased number of ED students. While all subgrants ( $n=60$ ) were awarded to applicants that met or exceeded the minimum consideration score of 80 on the NC ACCESS rubric, **most schools did not meet their annual enrollment projections as outlined in their original application.** Open-ended survey responses and interviews indicated a number of reasons for lower than projected participation including the continued recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, difficulty implementing marketing and recruitment strategies, and for cohort III schools, annual enrollments were held prior to participating in the program. While projections were lower than anticipated, the number of schools serving at least 51% ED students is approaching the goal of 40%. While all program plans have been submitted to the program, a content analysis of the plans revealed that not all were comprehensive. These performance goals were partially met. See the table below for specific performance goal outcomes.

**Table 1. Performance Goal 1 Progress**

Performance Goal	Target	NC ACCESS progress	Goal Met
1a) Award high-quality NC charter schools	60 schools	60 awarded	Yes
1b) Subgrant applicants will meet minimum consideration score on rubric	75% score at least 80 points	87% of subgrantees scored 80 or above on their application	Yes
1c) Meet annual enrollment projections	75%	Enrollment projections: 16% met enrollment projects for total students; 31% met enrollment projections for ED students  35% were within 10% margin of reaching enrollment projections for total students: 31% ED students	No
1c) Subgrantees will serve at least 51% ED students	40%	35% of schools serve 51% or more ED students  20% of schools are within 10% margin	Approaching
1d) Develop and implement CSAB and SBE approved weighted lottery	100%	100% Submitted plan 77.3% Submitted comprehensive plan 75% implemented plan	No
1e) Provide transportation plan	100%	100% Submitted plan	Yes
1e) Provide comprehensive school lunch plan	100%	100% Submitted plan 67% Comprehensive	No

1f) Maintain high-quality status	90%	Unknown Data not available	NA
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**Objective 2: Develop and Implement a Fellows Institute for one hundred twenty charter school leaders who can develop and demonstrate best practices in serving ED students.**

The program met its goal of increasing Fellows' confidence in developing and implementing best practices for serving and supporting ED students with fellows specifically feeling greater preparedness (98%) and confidence (95%) to support ED students (98%), that they are able to close proficiency gaps and remove barriers for ED students (91%), have greater ability to share best practices (89%), and are confident in their ability to recruit and retain ED students (84%). No state-level student performance data were available for 2019-20 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Average proficiency rates are included below and will be used to compare NC ACCESS student performance in the 2022-23 school year. It should be noted that when comparing NC ACCESS schools to state averages, student proficiency was higher in Language Arts for all students (+3%) and statistically significantly higher for ED students (+8%). Proficiency rates were slightly lower in Math for all students (-3%) and ED students (-1%).

**Table 2. Performance Goal 2 Progress**

Performance Goal	Target	NC ACCESS progress	Goal Met
2a) Fellows report greater confidence in developing and implementing best practices	90%	95%	Yes
2b) Disseminate best practices in serving ED students	80%	89%	Yes
2c) Percent of ED students performing at grade level proficiency in math	Increase	22%	No state data available for comparison
2c) Percent of ED students performing at grade level proficiency in language arts	Increase	33%	No state data available for comparison
2d) Percent of total students	Increase	37%	No state data

performing at grade level proficiency in math			available for comparison
2d) Percent of total students performing at grade level proficiency in language arts	Increase	46%	No state data available for comparison

**Objective 3: Develop a dedicated website that will serve as a repository for the NC ACCESS Fellows School Leader Portfolios.**

NC ACCESS subgrantees have shared a total of 53 best practices for supporting ED students on the NC ACCESS website; 41 (77%) were shared during the 2021-22 school year. The total number of visitors to the NC ACCESS website has seen an increase this year (+10%), while the total number of views of resources has shown a decline (-8%). Best Practices (659 views), Professional Development (650 views), and the Subgrant Program (415 views) were the most frequently accessed resources with a total of 2,997 views of the most popular resources.

**Table 3. Performance Goal 3 Progress**

Performance Goal	Target	NC ACCESS progress	Goal Met
3a) Increase number of best strategies resources on website	+20 annually	53 currently; 41 added since 7/1/21	Yes
3b) Number of visits to resources section of NC ACCESS website	Increase	Total visits: 8% decrease from prior year Total Unique Viewers: 10% increase from prior year	Approaching

Overall, the NC ACCESS program has met or is approaching its target for all eight of its performance goals; five goals were not able to be assessed or compared to prior years, and three goals were not met. The NC ACCESS program should continue to monitor all cohorts in the coming year to ensure they are meeting their targets and able to adequately recruit, support, and retain ED students in their area as well as continue to participate in the Fellowship program as appropriate and share best practices in a variety of ways. As the program approaches the final year of the grant, it should also consider ways to support schools to sustain their efforts to support ED



students once the grant has ended and identify successful strategies and supports that may be useful to scale to other schools, districts, or states.

## Introduction

The North Carolina Office of Charter Schools is currently in year three of implementation of the North Carolina Advancing Charter Collaboration and Excellence for Student Success (NC ACCESS) Program through a \$36.6 million Public Charter Schools Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education to:

- Increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students attending high-quality charter schools and expand the number of high-quality charter schools available to educationally disadvantaged students.
- Cultivate a cohort of 120 charter school leaders who can develop and demonstrate best practices in serving educationally disadvantaged students
- Broadly disseminate best practices in serving educationally disadvantaged students and foster collaboration in the charter school community and between charter schools and traditional public schools.

The Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at NC State University is providing evaluation services to gauge the program's success with meeting the performance goals outlined within the grant, as well as to answer research questions developed in collaboration with NC ACCESS and the NC Office of Charter Schools.

## Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions are guided by the objectives and performance measures developed by the Office of Charter Schools. Specifically, the evaluation has two overarching evaluation questions related to the implementation and impact of the program. Evaluation Question 1 (EQ1) is intended to glean formative feedback from this evaluation to inform any needed adjustments to the programmatic components in years two through five, including the NC ACCESS Fellowship Program. Evaluation Question 2 (EQ2) assesses the effectiveness of the implementation of subgrants as it relates to the goals of the individual schools and overall program.

### **Q1. Impact: To what extent has NC ACCESS met performance targets for each program objective?**

- a. Has NC ACCESS expanded the number of high-quality charter schools in North Carolina serving economically disadvantaged students annually?
- b. Has NC ACCESS increased the proportion of economically disadvantaged students served by charter schools in North Carolina?
- c. To what extent has the NC ACCESS Program removed barriers and closed academic proficiency gaps for educationally disadvantaged students?

- d. To what extent do NC ACCESS fellows feel more prepared and confident to develop and implement strategies for improving educational outcomes for all students?
- e. To what extent has NC ACCESS increased the number of best strategies (e.g. portfolio entries and resources) available to school leaders and researchers?

**Q2. Implementation: How can NC ACCESS improve program design and processes to better align with and address program goals and objectives?**

- a. How efficient and effective are overall program processes and components as perceived by program stakeholders (e.g. subgrantees, fellows, and program staff)?
- b. What resources and supports (e.g. technical assistance, website) are most useful to NC ACCESS Fellows for meeting the goals of the program?

**Performance Goals**

The NC ACCESS Program’s objectives and performance measures outlined below were designed to be ambitious, targeted, and relevant to meeting the transformational nature of the Program’s goals. The objectives create measurable targets to ensure long-lasting, positive effects of the NC ACCESS Program. The current status of each performance measure is also outlined below. Annually, progress towards the Program’s goals and objectives is reported to the U.S. Department of Education.

**Objective One**

The NC ACCESS Program will increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students attending high-quality charter schools and expand the number of high-quality charter schools available to educationally disadvantaged students.

**Performance Measure 1a**

The NC ACCESS Program will award subgrants and provide support to sixty (60) high-quality NC charter schools serving increased educationally disadvantaged student populations.

**Performance Measure 1b**

Annually, at least seventy-five percent (75%) of subgrant applicants will meet the minimum consideration score of at least eighty (80) points when reviewed using the State Board-approved application rubric.

**Performance Measure 1c**

Annually, at least seventy-five percent (75%) of approved subgrantee charter schools will meet their annual enrollment projections for overall students and educationally disadvantaged students as presented in their NC ACCESS subgrant application. Ultimately, forty percent (40%) of approved subgrantees will serve at least fifty-one percent (51%) educationally disadvantaged students.

**Performance Measure 1d**

Annually, one hundred percent (100%) of the NC ACCESS subgrantees will develop and implement a Charter School Advisory Board (CSAB) and State Board of Education (SBE) approved weighted lottery as a tool to support the increased enrollment of educationally disadvantaged students.

**Performance Measure 1e**

Annually, one hundred percent (100%) of the NC ACCESS subgrantees will provide a plan for transportation and a comprehensive school lunch program to eliminate barriers for enrollment of educationally disadvantaged students as a means of increasing the number of educationally disadvantaged students served.

**Performance Measure 1f**

Annually, at least ninety percent (90%) of the NC ACCESS subgrantees will maintain "high-quality" status as defined by the NC ACCESS Program. Using state accountability data, subgrantees will maintain an "A" or "B" School Performance Grade (SPG) or a "C" SPG and meet or exceed growth.

**Objective Two**

The NC ACCESS Program will develop and implement a Fellowship Institute for one hundred twenty (120) charter school leaders who can develop and demonstrate best practices in serving educationally disadvantaged students.

**Performance Measure 2a**

Annually, ninety percent (90%) of the current NC ACCESS Fellows who attend the one-year required Fellowship Institute will report a greater confidence in developing

and implementing best practices to effectively serve educationally disadvantaged students as measured by surveys and Fellowship evaluations.

**Performance Measure 2b**

Annually, eighty percent (80%) of the current NC ACCESS Fellows who attend the one-year required Fellowship Institute will disseminate best practices in serving educationally disadvantaged students in the charter school community as measured by the completion of at least one (1) dissemination activity, such as developing a portfolio of strategies of best practices, or sharing lessons learned in presentations at local, state, or national conferences or workshops.

**Performance Measure 2c**

The percentage of economically disadvantaged students in subgrant schools who perform at grade level proficiency (score a level 3 or higher) on the following state assessments: Math (grades 4 and 8) and Reading (grades 4 and 8). The economically disadvantaged subgroup will serve as a proxy for educationally disadvantaged students.

**Performance Measure 2d**

The percentage of students in subgrant schools who perform at grade level proficiency (score a level 3 or higher) on the following state assessments: Math (grades 4 and 8) and Reading (grades 4 and 8). The economically disadvantaged subgroup will serve as a proxy for educationally disadvantaged students.

**Objective Three**

The NC ACCESS Program will develop a dedicated website that will serve as a repository for the NC ACCESS Fellows School Leader Portfolios. New resources and portfolios will be added to the website each year, which will result in a robust online portal through which aspiring and current school leaders can find resources to help develop the quality of their school's programs and services, especially as it relates to serving educationally disadvantaged students.

**Performance Measure 3a**

Annually, the NC ACCESS Program will increase the number of best practices and strategy resources for school leaders (current and aspiring), researchers, and all

school models (charter, traditional public schools, and private) by twenty (20) artifacts, as measured by the number of portfolios entries added to the NC ACCESS website each year. (Project Years 3-5)

### Performance Measure 3b

The number of unique monthly visits to the resources section of the NC ACCESS Fellowship Program website (created through the CSP grant) and number of School Leader Portfolio downloads.

## Progress Towards Meeting Performance Goals

The development and implementation of each target performance goal outlined by the NC ACCESS program was monitored in the fall of 2021 and spring of 2022 with the objective of gathering formative information that can be used for targeted support for each school to ensure they are developing and implementing necessary program plans to assist in better recruiting, serving, and retaining Educationally Disadvantaged (ED) students. Researchers examined school submissions ( $N=60$ ) and survey data ( $n=55$ ) to determine the program's and individual schools' progress towards meeting the following criteria:

### Increasing the Number of High-Quality Charter Schools Serving Educationally Disadvantaged Students

#### Subgrants Awarded

NC ACCESS has awarded sixty subgrants to charter schools in order to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students being served. Of the 60 schools currently participating in the NC ACCESS program, 13 fell under the *Planning and Implementation* category (22%), 19 under *Implementation Only* (33%), 27 under *Expansion* (43%), and 1 under *Replication* (2%). Two additional schools will be added to the *Replication* category in fall 2022.

***Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no school quality data were available for the 2019-20 or 2020-21 school years, and as such, researchers are unable to report on this performance measure as gauged by the NC School Report Card performance grade and academic growth history. This data should be available for the upcoming 2021-22 school year and will be reported in the 2022-23 annual report.***

**Table 4. NC ACCESS Subgrants by Category**

<b>Subgrants by Category</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>Total</b>
Planning and Implementation	3	6	4	0	<b>13</b>
Implementation Only	4	9	6	0	<b>19</b>
Expansion	2	17	8	0	<b>27</b>
Replication	NA	NA	1	2	<b>3</b>
<b>Total Subgrantees</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>62</b>

Note. This chart shows the original number of schools enrolled in NC ACCESS.

### **Awarded Applicants**

NC ACCESS received eighty-four submissions from sixty-seven charter schools between 2019-2021 with 95% of applicants receiving a grant over a four-year period and an average 73% of total grant submissions being awarded funding. It should be noted that several schools have been granted extensions ( $n=2$ ) or removed from the program entirely ( $n=2$ ). One school's charter (Torchlight Academy) is being revoked for the following year (2022-2023). Two schools (Oak Charter and Huntersville Charter) are being given an extension, and a fourth (Davis Academy at Chadbourn) has been removed from the program. ***With two new schools being added in fall 2022, the program should still meet its goal of supporting sixty high-quality schools.***

When looking at the consideration scores for each applicant, fifty-eight schools (87%) earned a minimum score of 80 or above. Of the schools who scored an 80 or above, 12.1% were Cohort I schools, 51.7% of schools were from Cohort II, and the remaining 36.2% of schools were from Cohort III. ***NC ACCESS has met the Performance Goal of 75% or more of applicants that met the minimum consideration score of at least 80 points using the State Board-approved application rubric.***

## Increased the Number of Educationally Disadvantaged Students Served by Charter Schools

### Enrollment Projections Goal Not Met

Nine schools were not open for the 2021-22 school year. For those that were open, 16% ( $n=8$ ) met their overall enrollment projections, and 31% ( $n=16$ ) met or exceeded their enrollment projections for ED students. Thirty-five percent of open schools were within a 10% margin of meeting overall enrollment goals, and 31% ( $n=16$ ) were within a 10% window of meeting their ED enrollment goal as well. Cohort I had the highest number of schools that met projected ED enrollment numbers (44%) while Cohort II had the lowest (25%). (See Appendix A for results by school). Several factors were identified as limiting schools' ability to recruit and retain their target number of students. The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the key factors along with difficulties in marketing to families. It should also be noted that open enrollment had already occurred before Cohort III schools were enrolled in the program. ***The annual performance goal of 75% of schools meeting their target enrollment numbers was not met. The program should continue to monitor schools in the fall of 2022 to determine if more were able to meet their projected ED enrollment numbers.***

**Table 5. Percent of Open Schools that Approached or Met Enrollment Goals**

	Reached Total Enrollment Goal	Within 10% of Meeting Total Projections	Reached ED Enrollment Projections	Within 10% of Meeting ED Projections
Cohort I	33%	0%	44%	11%
Cohort II	14%	18%	25%	39%
Cohort III	7%	71%	38%	31%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>31%</b>

Note. Results reflect enrollment numbers from May 2022.

### Total Enrollment Over 50% ED Students

Of the 51 schools that were open, 18 (35%) have reached the target of 51% or greater ED enrollment. Ten schools (20%) are within a 10% margin of reaching that goal and five schools (10%) are within a 15% margin. (See Appendix A for results by school). ***The program is making progress towards its ultimate goal of 40% of NC ACCESS schools serving 51% or more ED students and should be reviewed again in the fall of 2022.***



**Table 6. Percent of Open Schools that Approached or Met ED Enrollment Goals**

	>50% ED Enrollment	40-50% ED Enrollment
Cohort I	44%	22%
Cohort II	32%	7%
Cohort III	38%	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>20%</b>

Note. Results reflect enrollment numbers from May 2022.

State enrollment data indicate that NC ACCESS charter schools served nearly 30,000 students in the 2021-22 school year with 12,716 (43%) identified as educationally disadvantaged. Economically disadvantaged students make up the majority of ED students (78%), followed by students with disabilities (23%) and English language learners (13%). Other categories of ED students (e.g., homeless, migrant, immigrant) made up less than 5% of the total enrollment of ED students.

**Table 7. NC ACCESS Schools' Enrollment of Educationally Disadvantaged Students in 2021-22**

ED Category	Total Number of ED Students	Percent of ED Population	Percent of Total Population
Economically Disadvantaged	9,515	78%	32%
Students with Disabilities	2,796	23%	9%
English Language Learners	1,523	13%	5%
Immigrant	267	2%	<1%
Migrant	2	<1%	<1%
Homeless or Unaccompanied Youth	44	<1%	<1%
<b>Total ED Students</b>	<b>12,716</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43%</b>

*Note.* As students may fit into multiple categories, schools were asked to indicate the total number of individual students that fit into one or more ED categories. The “Percent of ED population” indicated the percentage of ED students that fit into one or more categories compared to other categories of ED students. The “Percent of total population” compares each category to the total number of students at each school.

I believe we are making steady progress [towards enrollment projections] as demonstrated by our current ED enrollment of 24%.

While economically disadvantaged students make up the majority (79%) of ED students attending schools participating in the NC ACCESS program, some schools indicated that they would be working on strategies to recruit and retain more diverse groups of ED students (See Appendix A for enrollment targets by school).

### **Progress Developing and Implementing Program Plans**

#### ***Submissions: Transportation and School Lunch***

The Friday Institute team reviewed the submitted marketing, transportation, school lunch, weighted lottery, professional development, and school discipline and climate plans along with school leaders’ survey answers. Content analysis was utilized when reviewing the plans in order to assess comprehensiveness in addressing the needs of educationally disadvantaged students. Please see Appendix D for full summaries of plan components, strengths, and areas for growth.

On the Epicenter document tracking platform, all of the participating schools ( $n=60$ , 100%) submitted their transportation plans. Just over half ( $n=31$ , 51.7%) submitted comprehensive plans that included specific plans for purchasing new buses (e.g., budget, number of new vehicles), increasing the number of bus stops, and information pertaining to extracurricular activities and providing transportation for students with disabilities. The remaining submitted plans (46.7%) which were lacking some key information; they contained information regarding expanding their fleet or contracting with a local transportation agency, but lacked specificity in their plans to make transportation more equitable for educationally disadvantaged students, information about extracurriculars, late pick-up and drop off, or providing transportation for students with disabilities. One school (Wake Preparatory Academy) requested to extend their submission until May 2022. As of this report, a new transportation plan from that school has not been submitted to the Epicenter document tracking platform

for review. **The NC ACCESS program met its goal of 100% of schools providing a plan for transportation.**

Being able to keep buses on the road was huge, because our families really depend on that.

On the Epicenter document tracking platform, 90% of the charter schools submitted their school lunch plans for review ( $n=54$ ). However, all schools included plans for expanding their lunch programs in their applications ( $n=60$ ). Within their applications, just over one-third (35%) included somewhat comprehensive lunch plans. These plans lacked some specificity about identifying students for free/reduced lunch pricing and lacked potentially equitable options for those who do not have lunch for the day (e.g., cold lunch, snack pantry only). About one third (31.7%) of the applications included comprehensive lunch plans. Schools that stated they provide free lunch to all students through Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) were included in the comprehensive category. The last third (33.3%) of applications did not include comprehensive lunch plans as they lacked overall specificity in how they were going to expand their school lunch programs. **The NC ACCESS Program did not meet its goal of 100% of subgrantees submitting comprehensive school lunch program plans.**

#### ***Submissions: Weighted Lottery***

All schools submitted a document about their weighted lottery processes onto the Epicenter document tracking platform. Of the submissions, 95% of participating charter schools ( $n=57$ ) submitted Weighted Lottery plans. Oak Charter Academy, Summit Creek, and KIPP Gaston submitted documents stating they are working on amending their charter application to include a weighted lottery practice. Of the remaining submitted plans, 44 (73.3%) of the schools submitted comprehensive plans that included information about weighting, acceptance procedures, and priority students. The final fifth of schools ( $n=13$ , 21.7%) submitted weighted lottery plans that were not comprehensive in nature. Those plans lacked specificity either about acceptance policies, the target percentage of educationally disadvantaged students, or procedures for implementing the weighted lottery.

#### ***Submissions: School Climate and Discipline***

All schools submitted a document to Epicenter reflecting their School Climate and Discipline plans. Over half ( $n=38$ , 63.3%) of submitted plans were deemed comprehensive and included information regarding the school's approach to school

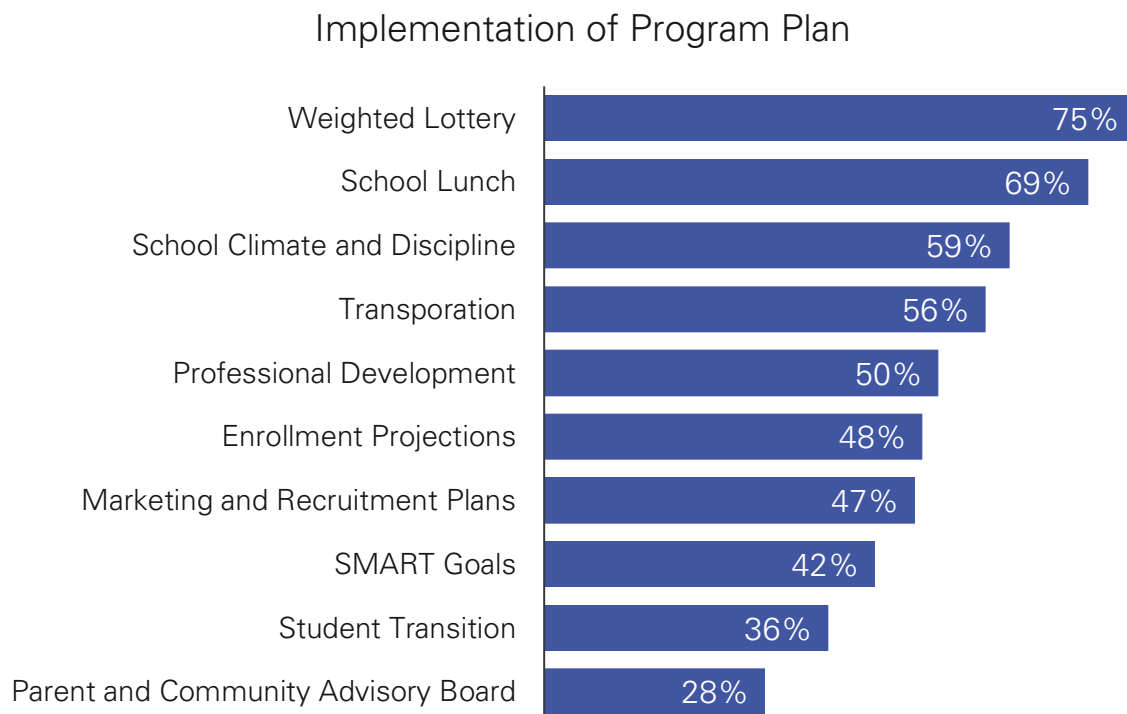
climate (e.g., positive school climate, restorative justice), school discipline matrix, and efforts to improve practices through professional development. The remaining submitted plans ( $n=22$ , 36.7%) which lacked specificity in some areas or did not appear to reflect best practices in promoting positive school climate or equitable discipline practices. For example, the School of the Arts for Boys Academy only included discipline procedures for exceptional children; there were no climate and discipline procedures included for students not designated as exceptional.

We're not just saying that relationships are important, but we're structurally supporting that in how we allocate our time and how we allocate our resources.

### *Implementation*

In the spring survey, schools were asked to identify their progress towards full implementation of each program plan required for participation in the NC ACCESS program. These results were cross-referenced with data collected during interviews and school monitoring visits where available. The total number for each subgroup varies. Weighted lotteries continued to make up the most frequently fully implemented plans ( $n=41$ ; 75% of respondents) followed by the full implementation of school lunch plans ( $n=38$ ; 69%), school climate and discipline plans ( $n=32$ ; 59%), school transportation plans ( $n=31$ ; 56%), professional development (50%), enrollment projections ( $n=23$ ; 48%), marketing and recruitment plans ( $n=26$ ; 47%), SMART Goals ( $n=22$ ; 42%), student transition ( $n=19$ ; 36%), and parent and community advisory boards ( $n=15$ ; 28%). Several schools discussed difficulties implementing program plans due to COVID, staffing issues, and resource shortages (See Appendix B and C for implementation results by school). ***The NC ACCESS program met its goal for the development of a weighted lottery but did not meet its goal of 100% of schools implementing a weighted lottery during the 2021-22 school year which will apply to the 2022-23 school year.***

**Figure 1. Percentage of Schools Implementing Key Program Plans**



School staff highlighted challenges with implementation in both responses to the fall and winter surveys, as well as in interviews with evaluators. Below are some of the highlighted challenges to implementation, including difficulties due to COVID, staffing, and marketing efforts.

General operations during COVID-19 have delayed otherwise enthusiastic progress.

Adequate staffing is a huge challenge-recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff for the level of needs we address.

You can't serve the needs of your EDS population without being fully staffed in your ED department. But there aren't enough EC teachers out there.

We are continuing to advertise to look for bus drivers. We have offered to pay for any staff to be trained to be bus drivers and get licensed. No staff has agreed at this time. We have contracted with

a consultant to assist with recruitment and engaged with a bus shop that will contract to do upkeep and inspections on the two buses the school owns. There has been a shortage of bus drivers and bus shops have told us they have a shortage of mechanics. We have one CMS driver, who has agreed to drive on weekends for school field trips. We are continuing to fill these gaps. In the meantime, we have offered to pay staff and approved volunteers reimbursement for transporting students in need.

So we just have this extra layer of challenge in identifying and bringing these [both ED and gifted] kids into our school.

To date, seventeen schools (31%) have indicated they are either fully or partially implementing all ten program plans; one school reports fully implementing all of them. Nine schools indicated that they were not open during the 2020-21 school year, and four indicated that they only opened this year. Full implementation of program plans is not expected among these schools at this time, but partial implementation of all plans is expected among schools that have been open for at least one academic year or more. Researchers will continue to monitor school progress towards partial and full implementation of program plans throughout this year (and the next).

**Table 8. NC ACCESS Charter Schools' Progress Towards Implementation of Program Plans**

Plans	Fully	Partially	Later this Year	Not this Year	No Plan Developed
Weighted Lottery	41	2	7	4*	1
School Lunch	38	9	4	4*	0
School Climate and Discipline	32	15	3	2*	2
School Transportation	31	10	5	5*	3
Professional Development	27	22	3	1*	1
Enrollment	23	17	2	3*	3

Projections					
Marketing and Recruitment	26	24	4	1	0
SMART Goals	22	25	4	1*	1
Student Transition	19	12	7	7*	8
Parent and Community Advisory	15	23	6	4*	6

\*One school that will not be implementing 9/10 program plans this year was not open during the 2021-22 school year. They did indicate they had partially implemented a marketing and recruitment plan.

Schools indicated that sharing information about the development of plans, budgeting, and implementation was very useful and they appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with other schools in the program. Many requested additional opportunities to collaborate with other NC ACCESS school leaders. School leaders reported wanting more informal opportunities for collaboration with other NC ACCESS schools, as illustrated by these quotes:

- I do wonder about the strategic pairing of folks being like, “Hey you’ve self-identified this as a strength; talk to this person and offer some ideas,” and vice versa.
- I almost wish I had a 9-1-1 for another charter school.
- If a school would host, maybe like a lunch or something, I think that would make it a lot less formal where your administrators would be able to just have conversations with one another.

While fellows found the workshops and seminars to be impactful, a theme that emerged within surveys and interviews was the lack of time for school leaders to implement the practices they are learning in the workshops in their schools. Several requested more time for both formal and informal engagement with each other related to the development and implementation of these plans. As indicated by

interested schools on the survey, this could provide an opportunity for school leaders to present innovative implementation ideas or attend workshops on best practices.

The seminars were excellent. I would have gained much from setting aside 1-2 days to incorporate one of the practices into my school's improvement plan and presenting it to the team.

### Removed Barriers and Closed Academic Proficiency Gaps for ED Students

Student achievement data for the 2020-21 school year were available for 42 of the 51 open NC ACCESS schools that had student performance data available for the 2020-21 school year. Results indicate that on average, 37% of students attending NC ACCESS schools met proficiency standards in Mathematics and 49% in Language Arts. Student proficiency is defined as the percent of students per school that scored a level 3 or higher on the state assessments. See Appendix E for school-level proficiency results.

NC School Reports Cards do not share information by total educationally disadvantaged students; therefore, we are reporting by ED subcategories. For reporting purposes, economically disadvantaged students will be used as a proxy for ED, as this group makes up, by far, the largest population of ED students. When looking at economically disadvantaged students, 22% on average met proficiency standards in Mathematics; 37% in Language Arts.

We also looked at other subcategories included in the definition of ED students. When looking at English language learners, 21% on average met proficiency standards in Language Arts and Math. Seventeen percent of students with disabilities met proficiency standards in Math; 20% in Language Arts. Additionally, we examined student populations that are not included within the ED definition but continue to be marginalized. On average 37% of Hispanic students met proficiency standards in Math; 46% in Language Arts. Twenty-two percent of Black students met proficiency standards in Math; 35% in Language Arts.

We were also interested in examining how the NC ACCESS charter schools compared to the average proficiency scores across all schools in North Carolina. One-tailed *t*-tests were used to compare NC ACCESS schools to state averages by subject and subcategory. When looking at overall results, students in NC ACCESS scored slightly lower on average in Math -2% and 4% higher in Language Arts. When looking across ED subcategories, economically disadvantaged students also had slightly lower average



math proficiency rates than the state (-1%) but scored statistically significantly higher in Language Arts (+9%). Students with disabilities (+6%) and English language learners (+10%) also scored statistically significantly higher in Language Arts. When looking at additional subcategories, we see that Hispanic students scored statistically significantly higher than NC in both Math (+8%) and Language Arts (+14%). This subgroup also had the highest percentage difference compared to the state average when looking across subcategories. Black students also met Language Arts proficiency standards at a statistically significantly higher level (+6%). ***Because no state student performance data were available for the 2019-20 school year, we are not able to ascertain if schools showed improvements in their overall and ED student performance as measured by end-of-grade standardized assessments.***

**Table 9. 2020-21 Average Academic Proficiency Results in Math and Language Arts**

	Math (NC ACCESS)	Math (State)	Diff	Language Arts (NC ACCESS)	Language Arts (State)	Diff
All Students	37%	40%	<b>-3%</b>	49%	46%	<b>+3%</b>
Black	22%	19%	<b>+3%</b>	35%***	29%	<b>+6%</b>
Hispanic	37%*	29%	<b>+8%</b>	46%***	33%	<b>+13%</b>
Students with Disabilities	17%	13%	<b>+4%</b>	20%*	14%	<b>+6%</b>
English Language Learners	21%	16%	<b>+5%</b>	21%**	12%	<b>+9%</b>
Economically Disadvantaged	22%	23%	<b>-1%</b>	37%**	29%	<b>+8%</b>

\* Statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )

\*\*Statistically significant ( $p < .01$ )

\*\*\*Statistically significant ( $p < .001$ )

*Note.* The chart above shows the average proficiency rate of NC ACCESS students across schools by subcategory. These results are compared to the average proficiency at the state level. Black and Hispanic students are not counted as educationally disadvantaged as defined by the state of North Carolina but are included in this table as a reference.

Some schools have focused heavily on efforts to support ED students during both formal and informal learning times. It may be useful for these schools to share best practices for additional resources outside of their program plans such as providing tutoring and summer support for students.

We've been focusing more on thinking about the instructional pieces and those areas that we need to improve upon in the actual serving of those students.

We do progress monitoring for targeted students, and every month we do progress monitoring for the entire class to make sure that we're still pushing the high achievers as well.

We're offering five weeks of fully funded summer schools. So for some of those kids who've just missed too much time, we'll be able to provide that credit recovery option for them in the summer.

When looking at the number of schools with 50% or more of students meeting proficiency standards in Math and Language Arts, we see that 10 schools (24%) had 50% or more students meeting standards in Math; 19 (45% in Language Arts). When looking across ED categories, one school (3%) had more than 50% of economically disadvantaged students meeting Math proficiency standards; 10 (29%) in Language Arts. Three schools had more than 50% of English language learners meeting Math proficiency standards; none in Language Arts. Only one school (3%) had 50% or more students with disabilities meeting standards in Math and Language Arts. Looking at additional demographics reveals that seven schools (24%) had more than 50% of Hispanic students meeting standards in Math; 14 (48%) in Language Arts. One school (3%) had 50% or more Black students meeting standards in Math; 6 (19%) in Language Arts.

**Table 10. 2020-21 NC ACCESS Schools with 50% or More Students Meeting Proficiency Standards**

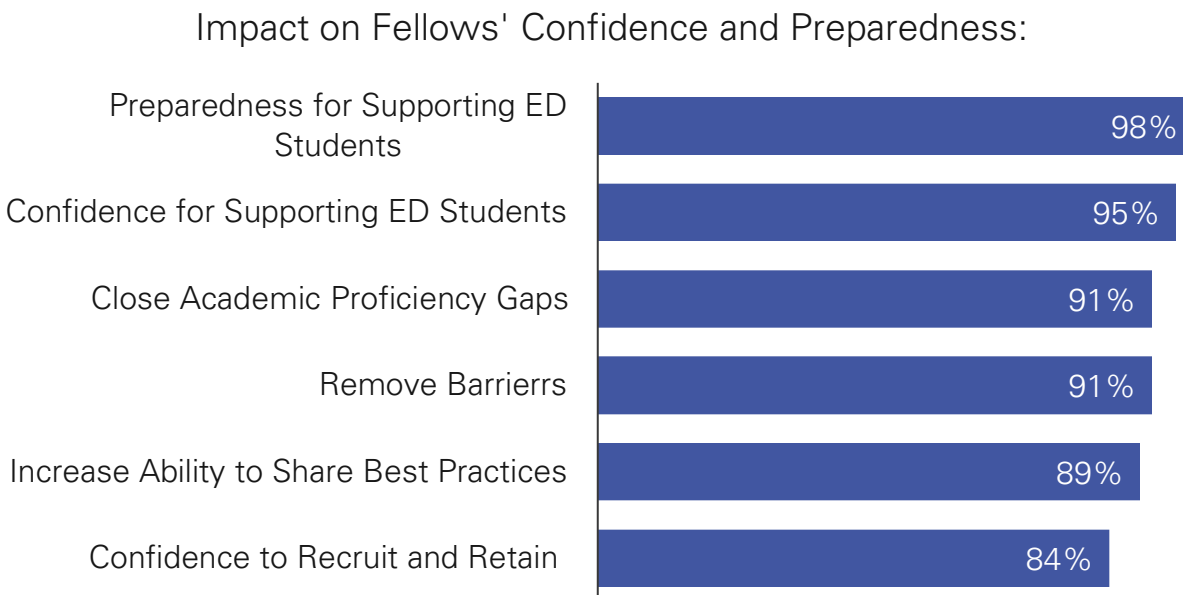
	Math (Number of Schools)	Math (Percent of Schools)	Language Arts (Number of Schools)	Language Arts (Percent of Schools)
All Students	10	24%	19	45%
Black	1	3%	6	19%
Hispanic	7	24%	14	48%
Students with Disabilities	1	3%	1	3%
English Language Learners	3	18%	0	0%
Economically Disadvantaged	1	3%	10	29%

*Note.* This table shows the number and percent of schools that reported at least 50% of their students met proficiency standards for the 2020-21 school year. It should be noted that not all schools had results for each subcategory listed and percentages were calculated based on the actual number of schools that had data available for each subcategory.

### **Empowered Fellows to Feel Prepared and Confident to Serve ED Students**

Survey responses indicate that all (100%) NC ACCESS Fellows feel more confident developing and implementing one or more best practices to serve ED students. Specifically, participation has increased participants' confidence to recruit and retain ED students (84%), remove barriers for ED students (91%), close academic proficiency gaps (91%), and provide additional support beyond program requirements (75%). Additionally, the program has increased their preparedness for supporting ED students (98%), confidence in supporting ED students (98%), knowledge and best practices for supporting ED students (95%), and their ability to share best practices with other schools/school leaders (89%). **The NC ACCESS program has met its annual goal of 80% or more Fellows who attend the Fellowship Institute will report a greater confidence in developing and implementing best practices to effectively serve educationally disadvantaged students.**

**Figure 2. Percentage of Impact on Fellows' Confidence and Preparedness**



Actually having some resources behind it to where, you know, it's just more empowering in terms of being able to buy this curriculum, train these teachers, and bring in coaches so that we're actually launching with fidelity.

[Teachers] are feeling more empowered to be able to meet the needs in their classrooms, I think just by pure numbers [of having additional staff in classrooms].

Our foundational skills programs, particularly in our primary schools, have gained a lot of traction.

In open-ended responses, school leaders discussed a number of ways that participation in the NC ACCESS program has empowered them to better serve ED students. One school noted that the first session where the discussions focused on building positive culture and relationships helped their school and its leaders shift their focus in order to better serve all of their students. In interviews with evaluators from the Friday Institute, this sentiment was echoed. School leaders appreciated the content of workshops and discussions. The sessions related to trauma-informed practice were noted as particularly valuable to one of the school representatives.

The first session with [the presenter] on culture and relationships was very impactful. It has energized me to go back to my school and begin focusing on positive relationships and our school culture.

Other schools echoed similar sentiments. They frequently noted how attending the NC ACCESS workshops, collaborating with other schools, and attending additional training on how best to support ED students not only provided them with ideas for implementation at their schools, but it also transformed how they think about supporting ED students.

It reinforced a lot of the things that we were already thinking about, but also gave us some other concrete tools and directions to explore in terms of *how* we do that.

The desire for greater opportunities to collaborate with other NC ACCESS Fellows winds through a great deal of the responses from charter schools. During 2020-21 all workshops were held virtually. While the virtual offerings are still very impactful, most schools indicate that they would be better able to network and collaborate with other schools if they could meet in person.

The presenters were mostly engaging despite being remote. I enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with other school leaders in my area and others.

### **Increased Best Strategies Available to School Leaders**

Of the 56 schools that either responded to one of the two surveys collected during the 2021-22 school year or have best practices published on the NC ACCESS website, 52 (93%) have disseminated best practices in at least one way; forty (71%) have disseminated best practices in multiple ways. This includes, but is not limited to, sharing information directly with other public or charter schools, at a conference, on the NC ACCESS website, or as professional development. Providing professional development for teachers and school leaders was the most frequent dissemination

activity ( $n=155$ ), followed by sharing best practices with other public or charter schools ( $n=100$ ), on the NC ACCESS website ( $n=67$ ), and presenting at state and local conferences ( $n=49$ ). A total of 398 sharing events occurred during the 2021-22 school year.

When looking specifically at the number of best practices shared with the public, we found 67 best strategies have been shared on the NC ACCESS website from 40 schools as of July 2022. Additional strategies will be added in the fall of 2022. ***During the 2021-22 school year, NC ACCESS subgrantees shared an additional 55 best practices on the website, meeting the program’s goal of increasing the number of strategies and resources available by 20 each year.***

I love being a part of the NC ACCESS fellowship and sharing ideas with like-minded colleagues across the state.

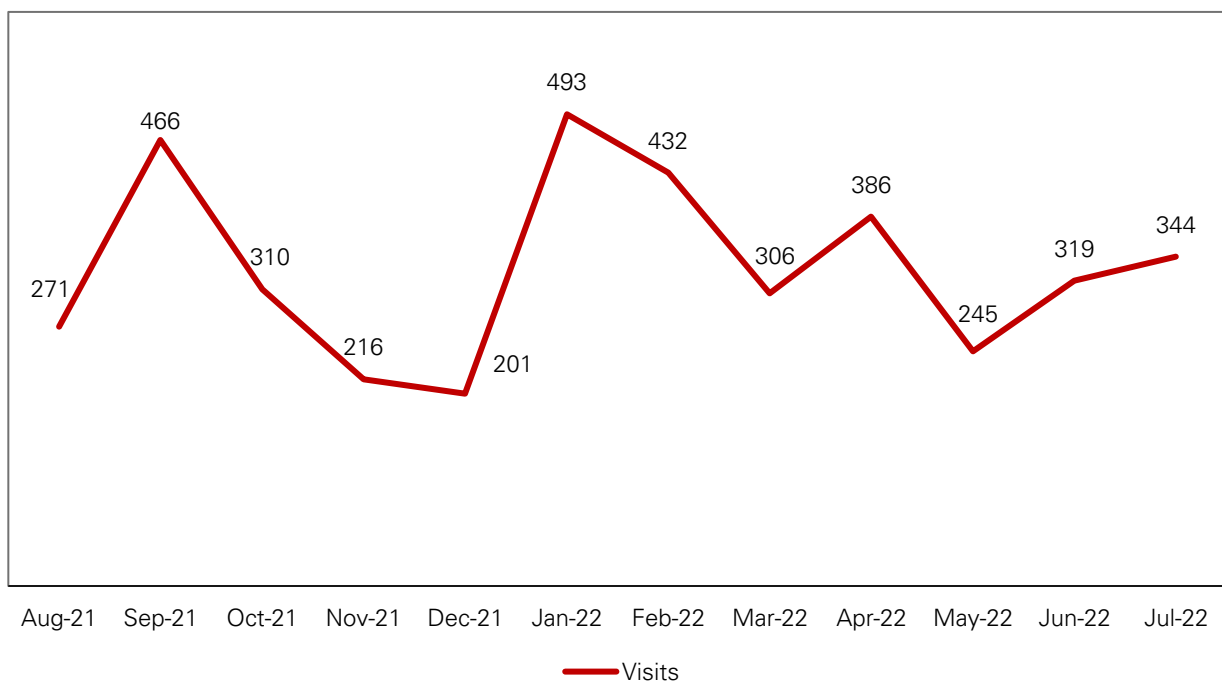
**Table 11. Best Strategies Shared by NC ACCESS Schools**

	Number of Schools	Number of Instances
Provided PD	32	155
Shared with Other Schools	29	100
Best Practices on NC ACCESS website	40	67
Presented at Conferences	15	49
Other Activities	15	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>398</b>

### Increased Traffic to NC ACCESS Website

The NC ACCESS website is the central hub for participating charter schools and stakeholders to utilize for information about the program and resources. Stakeholders from NCDPI provided the evaluators with access to the website analytics for inclusion in the annual report. Since August 2021, the NC ACCESS website has had 4K visits (an 8% decrease year over year), with 3.1K unique visitors (10% increase year over year). The months with the most visits to the site were September (466 visits) and January (493). Please see the figure below for the number of visits per month (August 2021 - July 2022). **The NC ACCESS Program is approaching its goal of increasing the number of visits to the resource section of the NC ACCESS website annually.**

**Figure 3. Number of visits to NC ACCESS Site by Month (August 2021-July 2022)**



The individual pages that received the most time spent on them included: the *Meet the Fellows*, *Literacy in Empathy* (Best Practices and Strategies), *Weighted Lottery* (Best Practices and Strategies), and *Creating a Peaceful School* (Best Practices and Strategies). Please see the table below for the top ten individual pages where users spent the most time.

**Table 12. NC ACCESS Web Pages with Most Average Time Spent per User**

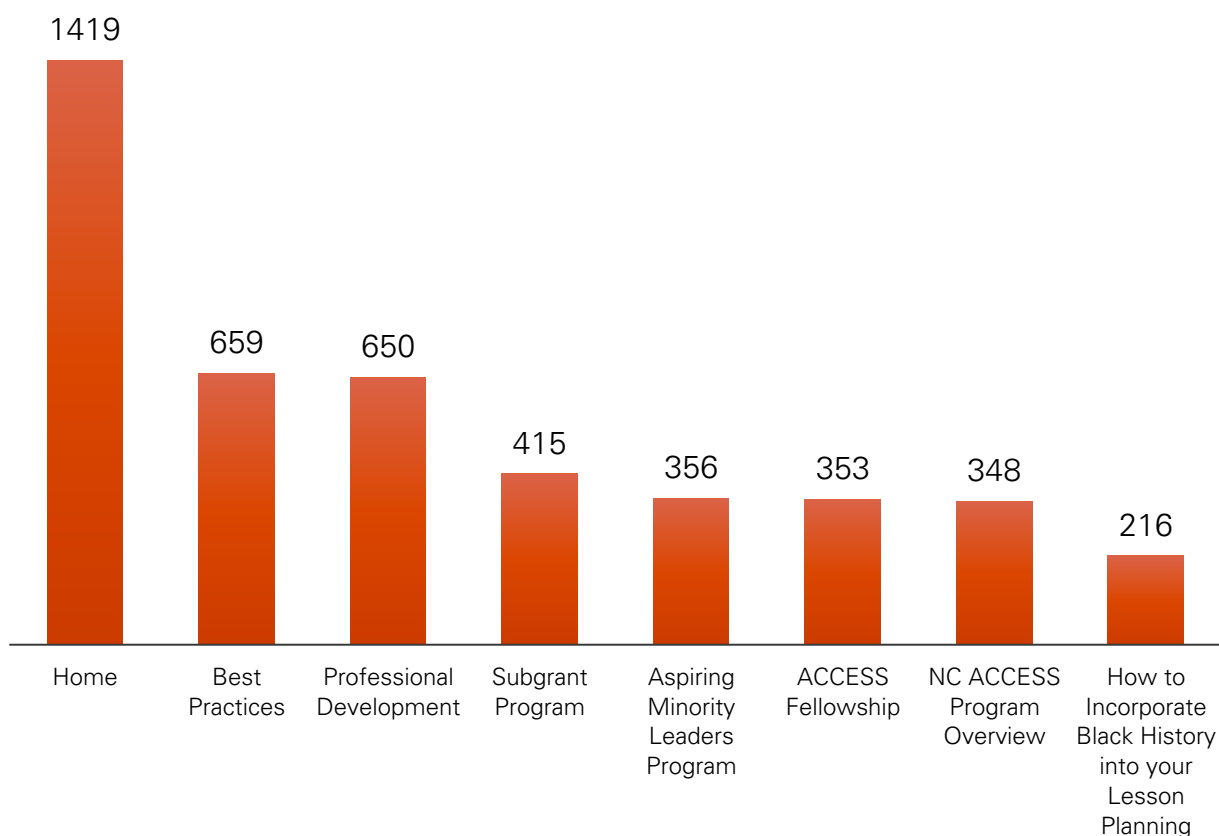
Category	Article Title	Time on Page
Meet the Fellows	Meet the Fellows	00:11:18
Best Practices and Strategies	Literacy in Empathy	00:09:08
	Weighted Lottery	00:08:36
	Creating a Peaceful School	00:08:31
	Socially Distanced Collaboration	00:07:56
	COVID Pivots	00:07:40
	Playground for Learning	00:07:36
	Best Practices and Strategies	00:07:06
	Professional Development	Encouraging STEM Education
Annual Review	Annual Review	00:07:03

The average site user spent about 2 minutes (111 seconds) on the NC ACCESS website. The pages with the most views included *Professional Development*, the NC ACCESS home page, *Subgrantees*, *Best Practices*, and *Apply for Funding*.

When looking at specific resources that were accessed this year, we see that *Best Practices* was the most commonly accessed (659); followed by *Professional Development* (650); information about the *Subgrant Program* (415), *Aspiring Minority Leaders* (356), the *NC ACCESS Fellowships* (353), and the *NC ACCESS Program* (348); and *How to Incorporate Black History into your Lesson Planning* (216). This brings the total views of the most popular pages to 2,997.



**Figure 4. Top NC ACCESS Website Pages, by unique hits, from August 2021-July 2022**



### Challenges to Implementation

Several barriers to fully implementing programs as planned were identified in open-ended responses provided by schools and in interviews with Cohort III schools.

#### Staffing

One large problem for many schools was the shortage of resources and trained staff available. For example, several schools mentioned difficulties in obtaining buses even though they have already been paid for. Many others have mentioned difficulties in hiring support staff such as bus drivers or highly qualified staff. These problems are not solely affecting NC ACCESS schools, this problem is pervasive across schools in the state and nationwide.

We are facing significant barriers to progress on a systemic level. I've listed here for the team's awareness and am only asking for

understanding and patience from our ACCESS program. (1) Cooperation with the Department of Transportation has delayed our expansion progress by one year. (2) Supply chain delays have negatively impacted the delivery of our new bus, which was paid for in the spring of 2021 and is not projected to be here until January of 2022, further delaying our transportation planning. (3) Negative press (Washington Post) has hindered our local efforts to build community partnerships. (4) General operations during COVID-19 have delayed otherwise enthusiastic progress.

### Wraparound Services

Similarly, other schools have noted that they need resources for more than just buses and teachers; they need increased mental health care, community support, and wrap-around services as well. While not a requirement of the grant, many schools have expressed the need for these services to fully support their ED student population. It would be useful to include suggestions, training, and resources for schools related to providing wraparound services in the coming year.

I could have hired ten [behavior specialists] and it would still feel short ... We've partnered to bring in mental health therapists who're available on-site and can refer students as well, because those gaps are all over the place. I think people think of the gaps as academic, and that's true, but a lot of the time the academic gaps are coming about because kids, they're missing class time, they're missing class time for a whole host of issues ... I think people who are not in school settings have really very little idea of how deep the harm of the pandemic has gone.

We (and all schools) need so much! We need access to more mental health funding, more school health services, access to strong community partners who can help with tutoring and enrichment activities. Kids are coming back from such a high level of trauma that it is really overwhelming for our staff and many of our students and families this year. We're seeing much higher levels of mental health [issues], behavior challenges, suicide ideation-this isn't exclusively among educationally disadvantaged students, of course, but they are disproportionately impacted.

### Limited Funding

While they are grateful for the funds provided by NC ACCESS, some schools noted that limited funding overall for schools inhibits their ability to fully implement their program plans and serve ED students. This is not something that the NC ACCESS Program can control but should be taken into consideration when discussing the sustainability of the program past the grant period.

The state needs to fund teachers better ... If North Carolina doesn't truly get serious about the pipeline and compensation for teachers, there's no possible way we can keep patching it together.

We also need leaders above us to recognize that schools are seriously underfunded and under-supported in this work. Teacher salaries, school leader salaries, and overall funding for schools must be prioritized if we are all to be able to continue this urgent work.

On the more technical end, there's been some challenges with figuring out what qualifies for the funding, but frankly we're going to keep doing what we're doing regardless of the funding.

### Marketing and Outreach

Each charter school is unique and must ensure that their outreach and marketing efforts are reaching ED populations. These barriers may involve geography (i.e., rural communities may have a difficult time recruiting families), negative perceptions in the community, or struggles to recruit specific subgroups of students that are also considered ED. It would be useful to share specific strategies for addressing these issues during monthly workshops. Interviews with Cohort III schools revealed that school administrators would like to use other NC ACCESS schools as a resource, and desire more informal opportunities for communication.

We need to determine additional ways to reach the parents of highly gifted students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. Parents may not know about giftedness in children, and we hope to attract more students by educating parents on the unique needs of gifted children.

## Suggestions for Improvement to Meet Program Objectives

### Sharing Best Practices

There were several suggestions for improvement that were mentioned in open-ended comments and interviews. While several themes have emerged, the desire for more opportunities to network with other schools that can support the current and previous cohorts of NC ACCESS schools to fully implement their plans is at the forefront. Many schools have expressed a desire for more information about how to effectively implement their plans and would like more support from the program and other schools. By connecting more schools and helping them to engage in supporting each other, the program may be able to better sustain their efforts past the grant period.

We have just started our journey. So far, the funds have been the most impactful. We have participated in two professional development meetings and while the information is interesting and potentially useful, more suggestions of direct practical implementation of the information would be helpful.

### Best Practices Repository

Throughout interviews with participating charter schools, it was noted that administrators and staff would like more informal opportunities to communicate with one another for best practices and support. Creating a forum on the NC ACCESS website within the best practices repository may encourage charter school administrators to highlight questions and provide resources to one another. Alternatively, a separate modality for encouraging communication and resource-sharing could be facilitated through Slack, Discord, or another instant messaging platform where participating NC ACCESS schools can pose questions and receive responses and resources in real-time. These avenues for connection and sharing may also contribute to greater sustainability.

It would be helpful if members of the cohort shared their resources. We found Media Integration through speaking with [leader's name] at Leaders Build Leaders. LBL provides leadership training to our BOD, the school leader, and our teachers; this training is paid for through the grant. After meeting the owner, I learned that Media Integrations also works with [two other NC

ACCESS schools]. If we had a database for these resources, we could help one another even more. I could drop in the database the company I buy used buses from, etc.

The following quote further emphasizes the schools' desire for an accessible database of resources to support educationally disadvantaged students.

It would be helpful to have some sort of repository of strategies and ideas from the previous cohort(s) to have access to generate ideas or replicate. Continuing to seek ways to support ED students with after-school transportation to keep them engaged in school activities [is important].

### Travel

Logistics was also brought up by one school. While all sessions are currently remote, being from a western part of the state makes it difficult to attend in-person trainings in Raleigh when in-person trainings are held the fall of 2022, and they have requested that future trainings be held at different locations across the state. Also, in light of the continued COVID-19 surges the US is experiencing, it is suggested that a virtual option be provided for in-person events.

I would like to participate in all of those conversations and sharing best practices. I have yet to use it to its full potential because we've been so short staffed and I'm always filling in holes.

Being from the westernmost part of the state, the thought of traveling 6 hours to a training and 6 hours back almost once a month is a daunting task. I think it would be great to move these trainings around the state throughout the year so that participants can see other regions of the state throughout this program.

### Extended Access

For several schools, leadership has changed since becoming an NC ACCESS school or school leaders were not able to make it to every workshop. Others noted that they would like to have access to materials and resources from the workshops to review in

the future. It is suggested that the program provide extended opportunities for NC ACCESS school leaders to engage with materials whether in additional synchronous workshops extending into Year 4 or by providing access to asynchronous materials that were shared.

**Fellowship was impactful, it would have been great if we could have the opportunity to make up what we missed. We did get some last-minute invites, but we did not have enough notice.**

### **Funding Support**

While some schools discussed funding constraints, others would appreciate funding-related advice from NC ACCESS and other school leaders. This may include suggested vendors, approaches, strategies, logistics, or ideas for sustainability once the funding has ended.

**Opportunities to hear what other schools are doing with their funding is a huge help. The changes made in uploading financial reimbursements is a huge help!**

### **Leadership-Oriented Presenters**

While most Fellows had only positive comments related to the workshops, some commented that they seemed to be geared more towards educators rather than school leaders. They would like to see more presenters focus on strategies directly related to their roles within their respective schools.

**The mandatory first year of training can be improved by selecting a more appropriate list of guest presenters. In my opinion, the presenters for training were inappropriate because it seems their target audience were classroom teachers rather than school leaders, e.g., principals.**

Relatedly, some schools felt that some presentations were geared more towards a traditional public-school audience and did not necessarily apply to the charter school community. It is recommended that presentations focus more directly on how charters can more effectively implement plans to recruit, support, and retain ED students.

The transportation presentation in the first session would have been much more useful if it had been tailored to the needs of charter schools. The rest of the sessions so far have been useful.

## Conclusion

In sum, the NC ACCESS program has thus far enabled charter schools across the state to reimagine how to support educationally disadvantaged students. Through the funds and resources, many schools have designed comprehensive plans for recruiting, retaining, and providing equitable educational opportunities. Over half of open schools (51%) met or are approaching their enrollment goals for the 2021-22 school year. Eighty percent ( $n=41$ ) of participating charter schools have developed and fully implemented at least two key program plans. Almost all ( $n=52$ ) participating schools have developed and are fully or partially implemented at least one key program plan (this includes those that were planning to open in Fall 2022).

Participating schools should utilize the opportunity to grow in developing and implementing their secondary program plans, as well as improving student proficiency data. School leaders found the resources provided by NC ACCESS beneficial and desired increased access to these, and additional, resources. School leaders also highlighted their desire for opportunities across the state, funding support, and more targeted workshops and resources. In the coming year, NC ACCESS participants would benefit from continued and tailored support from both the program and each other and find ways to provide more in-person networking and training opportunities.

## Appendix A: Enrollment Targets by NC ACCESS School

School	Opening Date	Total Enrolment	Enrollment ED	ED Enrollment Projections	Enrollment Goal Met
Achievement Charter Academy	7/1/2020	149	40%	45%	Within 5% Window
Alamance Community School	7/1/2020	414	16%	37%	No
Alpha Academy	6/27/2020	891	37%	53%	Within 20% Window
American Leadership Academy	Not Open				
American Renaissance School	6/30/1999	626	44%	53%	Within 10% Window
Apprentice Academy High School of North Carolina	07/01/2019	228	38%	48%	Within 10% Window
ArtSpace Charter School	6/30/2001	381	49%	53%	Within 10% Window
Asheville PEAK Academy	7/1/2021	74	54%	75%	Within 20% Window
Bonnie Cone Classical Academy	7/1/2019	775	14%	30%	Within 20% Window
Bonnie Cone Leadership Academy	Not Open				
Bradford Preparatory School	7/1/2014	1490	23%	33%	Within 10% Window
Cardinal Charter Academy at Wendell Falls	7/1/2020	591	38%	16%	Yes
Carolina Charter Academy	7/1/2019	623	26%	16%	Yes
Community Public Charter	7/1/2019	471	45%	35%	Yes



Community School of Davidson	7/1/2004	1456	21%	22%	Within 1% Window
Davis Academy Chadbourn	Not Open				
Dogwood Classical Academy	Not Open				
Doral Academy of North Carolina	7/1/2021	203	32%	50%	Within 20% Window
East Voyager Academy of Charlotte	7/1/2018	164	23%	44%	Within 20% Window
Faith Academy	7/1/2021	473	23%	40%	Within 20% Window
Guilford Preparatory Academy	6/30/2001	470	56%	75%	Within 20% Window
Hobgood Charter School	7/1/2019	327	32%	70%	No
IC Imagine	7/1/2014	331	17%	39%	No
KIPP Gaston College Preparatory	6/30/2001	1287	72%	0.77%	Within 5% Window
Lake Lure Classical Academy	7/1/2010	467	43%	34%	Yes
Lakeside Charter Academy	7/1/2014	202	27%	40%	Within 20% Window
Lincoln Charter School	6/30/1998	2152	23%	24%	Within 1% Window
Maureen Joy Charter School	6/30/1997	594	71%	88%	Within 20% Window
Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy	6/3/2000	393	5%	8%	Within 5% Window
MINA Charter School of Lee County	7/1/2020	336	76%	85%	Within 10% Window
Monroe Charter Academy	7/1/2019	105	21%	62%	No

Movement School Eastland	7/1/2020	282	64%	0.6%	Yes
Next Generation	7/1/2018	314	83%	90%	Within 10% Window
Oak Charter Academy	Not Open				
Old Main Stream	7/1/2021	200	41%	Accurate Data Not Available	
Pocosin Innovative Charter	7/1/2019	213	39%	45%	Within 10% Window
Quality Education Academy	6/30/1997	590	74%	67%	Yes
Queen City STEM School	7/1/2015	708	56%	35%	Yes
Ridgeview Charter School	7/1/2019	225	73%	85%	Within 20% Window
Sallie B Howard School for the Arts and Education	6/30/1997	1034	60%	80%	Within 20% Window
School of the Arts for Boys	Not Open				
Southwest Charlotte STEM Academy	7/1/2019	716	40%	35%	Yes
Sugar Creek Charter	6/28/1999	1516	74%	94%	Within 20% Window
Summit Creek Academy	7/1/2021	425	64%	65%	Within 1% Window
Telra Institute	7/1/2021	245	93%	13%	Yes
The Arts Based School	6/30/2002	502	25%	24%	Yes
The Expedition School	7/1/2014	353	13%	18%	Within 5% Window
The Exploris School	6/30/1997	439	39%	29%	Yes
The Franklin School of Innovation	7/1/2014	641	15%	54%	No
The Learning Center	6/30/1997	190	46%	45%	Yes

The Math and Science Academy of Apex	Not Open				
Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy	6/30/1999	1288	23%	23%	Yes
Tillery Charter Academy	7/1/2019	129	16%	40%	No
Torchlight Academy	6/30/1999	556	99%	0.55%	Yes
Triad Math and Science Academy	7/1/2012	1254	50%	0.52%	Within 5% Window
Two Rivers Community School	7/2/2005	157	51%	37%	Yes
Wake Preparatory Academy	7/1/2022				
Wilmington School of the Arts	7/1/2020	160	56%	51%	Yes
Wilson Preparatory Academy	7/1/2014	825	44%	45%	Within 1% Window

## Appendix B: Implementation of Key Program Plans

School	Opening Date	Marketing and Recruitment	School Lunch	Transportation	Weighted Lottery
Achievement Charter Academy	7/1/2020	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Alamance Community School	7/1/2020	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Alpha Academy	6/27/2020	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
American Leadership Academy	Not Open	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
American Renaissance School	6/30/1999	Developed and partially implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Apprentice Academy High School of North Carolina	07/01/2019	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
ArtSpace Charter School	6/30/2001	Developed and fully implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year
Asheville PEAK Academy	7/1/2021	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Bonnie Cone Classical Academy	7/1/2019	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Bonnie Cone Leadership Academy	Not Open	No Data Available			
Bradford Preparatory School	7/1/2014	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Cardinal Charter Academy at Wendell Falls	7/1/2020	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented

Carolina Charter Academy	7/1/2019	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Community Public Charter	7/1/2019	Developed and fully implemented	Developed, but needs revisions	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Community School of Davidson	7/1/2004	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Davis Academy at Chadbourn	Not Open	No Data Available			
Dogwood Classical Academy	Not Open	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year
Doral Academy of North Carolina	7/1/2021	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented
East Voyager Academy of Charlotte	7/1/2018	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year
Faith Academy	7/1/2021	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Guilford Preparatory Academy	6/30/2001	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Not yet developed	Developed but will not be implemented this year
Hobgood Charter School	7/1/2019	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
IC Imagine	7/1/2014	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
KIPP Gaston College Preparatory	6/30/2001	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Not yet developed
Lake Lure Classical Academy	7/1/2010	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Lakeside Charter Academy	7/1/2014	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented

Lincoln Charter School	6/30/1998	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Maureen Joy Charter School	6/30/1997	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy	6/3/2000	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
MINA Charter School	7/1/2020	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Monroe Charter Academy	7/1/2019	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Movement School Eastland	7/1/2020	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Next Generation Academy	Fall 2021	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Oak Charter Academy	Not Open	No Data Available			
Old Main Stream	7/1/2021	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Pocosin Innovative Charter	7/1/2019	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Quality Education Academy	6/30/1997	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented
Queen City STEM School	7/1/2015	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Ridgeview Charter School	7/1/2019	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Sallie B Howard School for the Arts and Education	6/30/1997	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and fully implemented

School of the Arts for Boys	Not Open	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Southwest Charlotte STEM Academy	7/1/2019	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Sugar Creek Charter	6/28/1999	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Summit Creek Academy	7/1/2021	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Not yet developed	Developed and fully implemented
Telra Institute	7/1/2021	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
The Arts Based School	6/30/2002	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed and fully implemented
The Expedition School	7/1/2014	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and fully implemented
The Exploris School	6/30/1997	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed but not yet implemented	Developed and fully implemented
The Franklin School of Innovation	7/1/2014	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
The Learning Center	6/30/1997	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed and fully implemented
The Math and Science Academy of Apex	Not Open	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy	6/30/1999	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Tillery Charter Academy	7/1/2019	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Torchlight Academy	6/30/1999	No Data Available			

Triangle Math and Science Academy	7/1/2012	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Two Rivers Community School	7/2/2005	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed	Developed and fully implemented
Wake Preparatory Academy	7/1/2022	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and fully implemented
Wilmington School of the Arts	7/1/2020	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Wilson Preparatory Academy	7/1/2014	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented



## Appendix C: Implementation of Secondary Program Plans

School	SMART Goals	Climate and Discipline	Parent and Community Advisory Council	Professional Development	Student Transition
Achievement Charter Academy	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Alamance Community School	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Not yet developed
Alpha Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
American Leadership Academy	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented
American Renaissance School	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed
Apprentice Academy High School of North Carolina	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
ArtSpace Charter School	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Not yet developed
Asheville PEAK Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Bonnie Cone Classical Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Bonnie Cone Leadership Academy	No Data Available				
Bradford Preparatory School	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented

Cardinal Charter Academy at Wendell Falls	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Carolina Charter Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year
Community Public Charter	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented
Community School of Davidson	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Davis Academy at Chadbourn	No Data Available				
Dogwood Classical Academy	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed but will not be implemented this year
Doral Academy of North Carolina	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented
East Voyager Academy of Charlotte	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year
Faith Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Guilford Preparatory Academy	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed
Hobgood Charter School	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
IC Imagine	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented
KIPP Gaston College Preparatory	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented

Lake Lure Classical Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented
Lakeside Charter Academy	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented
Lincoln Charter School	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented
Maureen Joy Charter School	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented
Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year
MINA Charter School	Developed and partially implemented	Partially developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Monroe Charter Academy	No Data Available				
Movement School Eastland	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Next Generation Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented
Oak Charter Academy	No Data Available				
Old Main Stream	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Pocosin Innovative Charter	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed	Not yet developed	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed
Quality Education Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Queen City STEM School	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented

Ridgeview Charter School	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Not yet developed
Sallie B Howard School for the Arts and Education	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
School of the Arts for Boys	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Southwest Charlotte STEM Academy	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Sugar Creek Charter	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Summit Creek Academy	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Telra Institute	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year
The Arts Based School	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year	Developed and fully implemented	Developed but will not be implemented this year
The Expedition School	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Not yet developed
The Exploris School	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented
The Franklin School of Innovation	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Not yet developed
The Learning Center	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
The Math and Science Academy of Apex	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented

Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Not yet developed		Developed but will not be implemented this year
Tillery Charter Academy	Not yet developed	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Torchlight Academy	No Data Available				
Triangle Math and Science Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Two Rivers Community School	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented
Wake Preparatory Academy	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year	Developed and implementation will begin this year
Wilmington School of the Arts	No Data Available	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	No data available
Wilson Preparatory Academy	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and partially implemented	Developed and fully implemented	Developed and fully implemented

## Appendix D: Review of Program Plans

### Description of EpiCenter

The PEER Group at the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation reviewed the participating charter schools' plans in EpiCenter to assess key features of the plans and note schools which either had not submitted plans or whose plans contained limited information. EpiCenter is a web-based platform the NC ACCESS program utilizes to track the participating charter schools' applications, plans, and procedures. Participating charter schools were expected to submit plans to address the needs of educationally disadvantaged students in the following areas: weighted lotteries, marketing and recruitment, school lunch, transportation, school climate and discipline, and professional development.

### Summary of Weighted Lottery Plan Components

To increase the number of educationally disadvantaged (ED) students attending charter schools across North Carolina, participating charter schools were expected to develop and implement weighted lotteries. By implementing a weighted lottery process, students from educationally disadvantaged populations (e.g., economically disadvantaged, English Language Learners) have an increased likelihood of being accepted to a charter school, should the number of applications exceed the number of available seats for a given grade or the school population overall.

**Lottery types.** Of the submitted plans for weighted lotteries, 15 schools indicated they would hold an initial lottery for ED students prior to the general lottery. All schools reported in their plans that any ED student not accepted through the initial lottery would be added to the second lottery pool. Twenty-one schools reported they would hold one lottery for all applicants and add additional weight to ED applicants. The weighting ranged from 1.00 to 4.00, depending on the percentage needed. Most schools that reported adding weight to ED applicants indicated they would double the number of "tickets" or chances each ED applicant receives. Bonnie Cone Leadership Academy, Bradford Prep, and Guilford Prep did not specify added weight in their lottery plans. Instead, their plans stated ED students would be weighted "most heavily," or the added weight would be determined by the Head of School.

**Reserved seats for ED students.** Fourteen schools mentioned what percentage of lottery seats would be available for ED students. Seat availability ranged from 15% of available seats to 72% of available seats by year 5. Eight schools indicated between 40% and 60% of available lottery seats would be reserved for ED students. The remaining five schools indicated 35% or fewer available seats would be reserved for ED students. Tillery Charter Academy reported "the expected number of ED students plus up to 15% of total seats will be reserved."

**ED percentage targets.** Schools were encouraged to report the goal percentage of ED students as part of their participation in NC ACCESS. Of those who submitted target percentages, ED population percentages ranged from 15% to 82%. Lincoln Charter School

reported they would like to increase their ED population in their school by 2.5% but did not provide their original ED population percentage.

**Priority students.** Almost all the submitted weighted lottery plans included a section regarding which students were labeled as “priority” students for admittance. Educationally or economically disadvantaged students were labeled as priority students in 19 of the 60 weighted lottery plans. Children of full-time employees and board members, siblings of enrolled students, waitlisted siblings, and students from other charter schools or who left and wish to return within two years were also listed as priority students.

**Siblings.** The weighted lottery plans included how the school would account for siblings in the lottery process. Thirty-two schools reported that all siblings (multiple birth siblings or otherwise) would be “bundled” under one lottery number. Two schools stated families would be given the option to bundle siblings. One school noted the board will annually decide whether siblings would be allowed to bundle. The remaining schools reported that multiple birth siblings would be bundled under one registration, but all remaining siblings would have individual lottery numbers. In all instances where siblings were bundled under one registration, if the lottery number was picked, all siblings would be admitted, pending space availability.

**Communication with families.** The submitted weighted lottery plans included information about whether students were required to re-enroll, timelines for families to complete paperwork, and communication about lottery results. Sixteen schools specifically noted currently enrolled students were not required to re-enroll. Of these schools, most plans required students or families to complete an “intent to return” form at the same time as the open enrollment period. The timelines for families to accept seats and return enrollment paperwork varied by when the student was accepted, with most schools allotting a maximum of 30 calendar days to return required paperwork. The shortest timeline, regardless of acceptance date, was 48 hours. Most schools noted in their weighted lottery plans that lottery results would be posted to their website within five business days, and parents of accepted students would be contacted via email or phone. One school stated parents would be contacted within 24 hours of the lottery results.

**Right to refuse.** About one third ( $n=21$ ) schools included “right to refuse” statements within their weighted lottery procedures. The right to refuse statement included that the school held the right to refuse a student if the student is under a suspension or expulsion from a different school, if a parent willingly submitted false information as part of the application process, or if the student does not attend the first few days of school, without initial contact from parent or response from parent after reasonable attempts to make contact from school.

### **Summary of School Discipline Plan Components**

To ensure equitable discipline strategies and encourage the development of a positive school climate, participating charter schools were required to submit School Climate and Discipline

plans to EpiCenter. School climate and discipline plans were flagged if they contained limited information regarding key features further summarized below. The submitted school climate and discipline plans included information about the types of offenses, offense mediation, behavioral support, professional development to promote effective classroom management and offense mediation, and school policies on suspension, exclusion, and expulsion.

**School culture.** Most of the submitted school climate and discipline plans included information about anticipated school culture and the climate the charter school administrations hoped to build in their schools. The overall themes reflected in the school discipline plans reflected accountability, academic excellence, personal responsibility, a love for learning, and fostering a safe environment. Many submitted plans included acronyms for behavioral expectations (e.g., SOAR – Safety, Organization, Accountability, Respect). Participating charter schools reported in their discipline plans they would build school culture through classroom meetings, weekly whole-school meetings, and recognizing students and staff that exemplify school values. Some school discipline plans indicated that students would work with teachers to create classroom rules and expectations. A small number of school discipline plans noted that teachers must submit classroom management plans prior to the start of the school year to the head of the school for approval.

**Systems of support.** Nine schools reported utilizing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for managing behavior across the school. Twelve school discipline plans reported utilizing the Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) framework. School discipline and climate plans stated they were incorporating PBIS through monthly PBIS team meetings, providing training on PBIS, and modeling appropriate behaviors to students.

**Offenses and offense mediation.** Within the school discipline and climate plans, some schools provided examples of school rule violations and managing school rule offenses and misbehaviors. Five schools included a matrix or list of school code violations and the disciplinary response. Offense mediation strategies included: parental involvement, detention, restorative practices, data tracking, choice theory, logical consequences, teacher conferences, and students reflecting on their behavior. Most schools reported utilizing positive discipline and behavior management strategies. Two schools specifically noted that students will not be denied lunch as a form of punishment. It is important to note that Wilson Prep's school climate and discipline plan included only punitive and reactionary approaches to student behavior. It should also be noted that The Learning Center stated that repeated dress code violations can escalate to a reportable offense (i.e., meeting with the Head of School and MTSS Committee).

**Suspension, exclusion, and expulsion.** About one-third ( $n=22$ ) of the plans mentioned suspensions in their school climate and discipline plans. These mentions often differentiated between short- and long-term suspensions. For the schools whose main disciplinary practices included restorative justice, suspended students would be required to meet with the social justice committee before returning to school to determine the necessary steps to re-enter the



learning community. One school reported they have a no-suspension policy within their school. Metrolina Scholars Academy indicated in their school climate and discipline plan that suspensions in grades K-2 have been eliminated entirely, and suspensions in grades 3-8 have decreased by 200%.

Four schools mentioned exclusion policies for repeated school rule violations in their school discipline plans. Fourteen schools included expulsion policies for repeated school rule violations or violent offenses. Of these schools, some schools stated only students aged 14 and above can be expelled. In all cases, the principal holds the power to recommend suspension, exclusion, or expulsion.

**Professional development.** Many of the school discipline and climate plans included an emphasis on collecting data to inform professional development. Data would be collected from office discipline referrals and observed student behaviors as well as from results from the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey. Some topics mentioned in the school discipline plans for professional development included: Restorative Justice, Teaching with Love and Logic, Learning for Living, Conscious Discipline, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), cultural competence training, classroom management, and supporting LGBTQIA+ students.

### **Summary of School Lunch Plan Components**

To ensure equitable lunch and student feeding practices, participating charter schools were required to submit School Lunch plans to EpiCenter. School Lunch plans were flagged if they contained limited information regarding key features further summarized below. The submitted school lunch plans included information about lunch options, cost of lunch, free and reduced lunch eligibility, participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and facilities available at the schools.

**Lunch options.** Most of the schools who submitted school lunch plans reported that students have the option to purchase lunch or bring lunch from home ( $n=18$ ). Of the schools who reported lunch is available for purchase, most reported they are moving towards a cashless system to keep free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) eligible students anonymous. Four schools reported the majority of their students opt to bring lunch from home. Most of the submitted lunch plans stated that a calendar of meals would be available in advance online for parents to choose which days they would like to purchase lunch for their child. Parents have the ability to add funds to their child's account online.

Two schools reported giving families eligible for FRL the option to either purchase lunch at the reduced cost or offer grocery store gift cards to families instead.

Nine schools reported in their school lunch plans that all students receive free breakfast and lunch. Most of these schools indicated they are able to provide free meals to their students through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). A few of the schools that provide free meals

to students stated they have accounted for the cost of meals in their operating budget and do not apply for reimbursement through CEP.

Eighteen school lunch plans stated no child will ever be denied a meal or go without food. Some schools reported they keep a pantry of snacks and healthy snack options for children who are without food. Other participating charter schools mentioned students will be provided a full hot lunch if they are without food. A few schools reported providing students without food a cold lunch option.

**National School Lunch Program (NSLP).** The NSLP was mentioned in 26 of the submitted school lunch plans. Three schools mentioned they do not participate in the NSLP. The remaining 23 participating charter schools reported they are either participating in NSLP, have applied to participate in NSLP, or are not participating in NSLP but are providing meals in compliance with standards outlined in NSLP.

**Free and reduced-price lunch eligibility.** Over half ( $n=33$ ) of the participating charter schools included information regarding eligibility for FRL or estimates of their student population that will qualify for FRL. Most schools reported all families will complete forms at the outset of the school year to determine eligibility status. These forms may require families to submit tax forms or indicate whether they are already receiving food assistance (e.g., SNAP). Most of the school lunch plans indicated they will use federal income standards in determining eligibility for FRL.

To cover the cost of FRL, most schools reported either using lunch profits from non-FRL students, accounting for FRL in the school's operating budget, or expecting reimbursement from the government for FRL.

One school stated that families can request a waiver for lunch fees. Wake Prep stated in their school lunch plan, "If a specific family truly cannot afford lunches, they may request a waiver from lunch fees from the Lead Administrator." This process of requesting a waiver may be prohibitive for some families, and this sort of lunch policy may inadvertently put additional financial strain on families.

**Kitchen facilities.** Most schools reported they do not have a full kitchen on school premises, and contract with a local vendor to either deliver meals to a warming facility on campus or contract with a local restaurant to bring fully prepared meals to the school. A few schools mentioned they are in the process of building larger kitchen facilities or a full cafeteria to accommodate preparing and serving lunch on campus. Three schools stated in their school lunch plans that they do not offer lunch or have the ability to offer lunch.

## Summary of Transportation Plan Components

To ensure accessible and equitable transportation for students, participating charter schools were required to submit Transportation plans to EpiCenter. Transportation plans were flagged if they contained limited information regarding key features further summarized below. The submitted transportation plans included information about contracted transportation vendors, bus stops, and plans to expand transportation throughout the grant.

**Bus stops.** Most submitted transportation plans indicated the schools have cluster bus stops around the local community. Parents are responsible for bringing their children to the bus stops in the morning and picking them up in the afternoon. The participating charter schools reported in their transportation plans that they hope to increase the number of cluster bus stops throughout the life of the NC ACCESS grant. Two schools stated in their transportation plans that they provide public transportation bus passes or bus tokens for children to use to get to school. One school mentioned providing gas cards to ED families around the holidays and as requested.

**Vehicles.** Eleven participating charter schools reported they currently own buses or plan to purchase at least one bus throughout the life of the grant to transport students. Seven charter schools stated in their transportation plans that they contract with an outside agency or local school district to provide bus transportation.

**Carpooling and transportation utilization.** Only two of the submitted transportation plans included projections of the percentage of students that will use school-provided transportation. These percentages ranged from 50 – 70% of the school’s student population. Six of the transportation plans reported the school encourages or facilitates carpooling opportunities between families.

Four transportation plans stated that families will have to register to utilize school-provided transportation. Of the schools who reported having limited availability and seating on buses, five of them stated that ED students would have priority for transportation utilization.

It is important to highlight that Asheville PEAK Academy stated in their transportation plan that parents will be charged a \$10 fee for every additional 30 minutes a child is under the school’s supervision. For ED families with unreliable transportation or rely on public transportation, this could quickly become a cost-prohibitive expense and burden for families.

## Summary of Professional Development Plan Components

To ensure teachers are receiving appropriate and comprehensive professional development (PD) to best serve ED students, participating charter schools were required to submit Professional Development plans to EpiCenter. Professional Development plans were flagged if they contained limited information regarding key features further summarized below. The submitted professional development plans included information about mentoring experiences,

types of professional development, and the amount of time committed to providing professional development to staff.

**Mentoring opportunities.** Some of the participating charter schools reported they would provide mentoring opportunities for teachers. Six professional development plans indicated they would offer mentoring opportunities for new teachers and opportunities for high-performing teachers to become mentors. An additional three schools stated in their plans that new teachers would participate in the North Carolina Beginning Teachers Support Program, which has mentoring, and supervision opportunities built into the program.

**Time commitment for PD.** Most of the submitted plans included the number of hours or days staff would have allotted to complete professional development. Some of the schools stated in their PD plans that staff would have a minimum of 45 minutes per week to participate in professional development opportunities. A few of the PD plans mentioned that teachers would have time in the instructional day to dedicate to planning, organization, and gathering feedback. Most of the submitted PD plans included days dedicated to PD prior to the start of the school year over the summer. It was specifically noted in the plans that professional development would not be scheduled during instructional time for teachers. The average number of reported PD days fell in the 10–14-day range, with the maximum number of PD days reported at 17.

Three of the participating charter schools reported that they are encouraging staff to participate in the Kenan Fellows program. Teachers who participate in the Kenan Fellows program receive an additional 80 hours of PD. Kenan Fellows can then help their schools develop curricula and PD opportunities for other staff.

**Professional development topics and opportunities.** The submitted PD plans included a variety of modalities for staff to participate in PD. Some of the types of PD mentioned in the submitted plans included: feedback sessions, online webinars, in-person training, on-site trainers, participation in fellowships, mentoring, and opportunities provided through NC ACCESS.

Four of the submitted PD plans reported using the School Improvement Plans to inform professional development opportunities. Some of the highlighted topics across the submitted PD plans included: classroom management, subject-specific training, differentiation for Exceptional Children, restorative justice, Core Knowledge, assessments, remote learning, social-emotional learning, and supporting English Language Learners and ED students.

Additionally, two submitted PD plans included information about offering performance-based compensation based on the NHA evaluation tool.

## Summary of Marketing Plan Components

To ensure participating charter schools are recruiting a diverse student and staff population, charter schools were required to submit Marketing plans to EpiCenter. Marketing plans were flagged if they contained limited information regarding key features further summarized below. The submitted marketing plans included information about marketing strategies, marketing materials, and dedicated marketing staff.

**Marketing strategies.** All of the submitted marketing plans included information on both traditional and social media marketing strategies. Some of the most commonly mentioned marketing strategies included: radio ads, TV ads, billboards, direct mailers, and social media advertising on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Most marketing plans included information about including a call to action or directing traffic to the school's website. There was a noted emphasis on social media marketing, especially with limited ability to conduct in-person events due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another major marketing strategy included in most of the submitted marketing plans was engagement in the local community. Almost all the submitted marketing plans included information about events to attract parents and provide information about the school. Some of the strategies for engaging in the local community included: outreach and presence at local events; communicating with local chambers of commerce; communicating with pediatricians, daycares, and libraries; holding in-person and virtual tours and information meetings for parents. Many of the schools noted in their marketing plans that in-person and virtual tours and information meetings could be held at community centers and in the evening to better cater to family availability.

**Marketing materials.** Many of the marketing plans included materials such as fliers, brochures, and yard signs. Most of the submitted marketing plans included information about having paper application materials while participating in community events. Over half of the submitted plans reported providing marketing materials and enrollment materials in multiple languages. The most commonly reported second language to provide materials in was Spanish. Additionally, some of the participating charter schools stated they would have multilingual representatives at events and available for school tours. Three schools reported their website can be translated into different languages.

**Marketing staff.** Over one-third ( $n=23$ ) of the submitted marketing plans included having dedicated staff, either full- or part-time, committed to marketing efforts. These marketing plans included either hiring an outside marketing consultant, hiring a part-time or full-time marketing manager, or creating a new position to strengthen the recruitment and retention of families for the school. In 16 of the submitted marketing plans, the consulting firm or dedicated marketing staff is responsible for conducting market research (e.g., focus groups or surveys with parents), evaluating marketing strategies, and implementing changes for more effective marketing efforts.

## Appendix E: Student Proficiency (2020-21 School Year)

School	Opening Date	Math (All Students)	Math (ED Students)	English (All Students)	English (ED Students)
Achievement Charter Academy	7/1/2020	35%	NA	46%	NA
Alamance Community School	7/1/2020	11%	7%	35%	27%
Alpha Academy	6/27/2020	43%	34%	52%	42%
American Leadership Academy	Not Open				
American Renaissance School	6/30/1999	36%	19%	53%	34%
Apprentice Academy High School of North Carolina	07/01/2019	22%	<5%	39%	
ArtSpace Charter School	6/30/2001	36%	25%	65%	49%
Asheville PEAK Academy	7/1/2021				
Bonnie Cone Classical Academy	7/1/2019	50%	38%	52%	46%
Bonnie Cone Leadership Academy	Not Open				
Bradford Preparatory School	7/1/2014	60%	43%	69%	60%
Cardinal Charter Academy at Wendell Falls	7/1/2020	41%	23%	58%	39%
Carolina Charter Academy	7/1/2019	37%	11%	53%	38%
Community Public Charter	7/1/2019	43%	33%	49%	47%

Community School of Davidson	7/1/2004	74%	35%	76%	53%
Davis Academy Chadbourn	Not Open	No Data Available			
Dogwood Classical Academy	Not Open	No Data Available			
Doral Academy of North Carolina	7/1/2021	No Data Available			
East Voyager Academy of Charlotte	7/1/2018	24%		48%	
Faith Academy	7/1/2021	No Data Available			
Guilford Preparatory Academy	6/30/2001	16%	18%	25%	20%
Hobgood Charter School	7/1/2019	48%	31%	54%	52%
IC Imagine	7/1/2014	45%	19%	57%	36%
KIPP Gaston College Preparatory	Fall 2021	12%	9%	27%	24%
Lake Lure Classical Academy	7/1/2010	42%	26%	58%	50%
Lakeside Charter Academy	7/1/2014	31%	15%	36%	18%
Lincoln Charter School	6/30/1998	63%	43%	69%	54%
Maureen Joy Charter School	6/30/1997	14%	12%	27%	24%
Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy	6/3/2000	>95%		>95%	
MINA Charter School of Lee County	7/1/2020	18%	11%	32%	24%
Monroe Charter Academy	7/1/2019	<5%	<5%	<5%	<5%
Movement School Eastland	7/1/2020	No Data Available			
Next Generation	7/1/2018	10%	5%	20%	18%
Oak Charter Academy	Not Open	No Data Available			
Old Main Stream	7/1/2021	No Data Available			

Pocosin Innovative Charter	7/1/2019	41%	36%	40%	39%
Quality Education Academy	6/30/1997	17%	14%	27%	24%
Queen City STEM School	7/1/2015	37%	12%	44%	24%
Ridgeview Charter School	7/1/2019	9%	7%	21%	18%
Sallie B Howard School for the Arts and Education	6/30/1997	35%	26%	49%	40%
School of the Arts for Boys	Not Open				
Southwest Charlotte STEM Academy	7/1/2019	28%	14%	46%	36%
Sugar Creek Charter	6/28/1999	26%	24%	42%	40%
Summit Creek Academy	7/1/2021				
Telra Institute	7/1/2021				
The Arts Based School	6/30/2002	52%	31%	66%	53%
The Expedition School	7/1/2014	81%		85%	
The Exploris School	6/30/1997	52%	25%	72%	50%
The Franklin School of Innovation	7/1/2014	39%	22%	59%	52%
The Learning Center	6/30/1997	25%	12%	49%	35%
The Math and Science Academy of Apex	Not Open				
Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy	6/30/1999	78%	61%	74%	64%
Tillery Charter Academy	7/1/2019	7%		21%	
Torchlight Academy	6/30/1999	16%	12%	31%	31%
Triad Math and Science Academy	7/1/2012	28%	20%	46%	35%
Two Rivers Community School	7/2/2005	53%		64%	



Wake Preparatory Academy	7/1/2022	[Grey bar]			
Wilmington School of the Arts	7/1/2020	16%	13%	24%	15%
Wilson Preparatory Academy	7/1/2014	31%	18%	45%	31%

## Appendix F: Dissemination Activities

School	Shared Lessons Learned With Charter/ Public School	Provided PD Focused on Serving ED Students	Conference Presentation	Other	NC ACCESS Website
Achievement Charter Academy	✓	✓			✓
Alamance Community School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alpha Academy	✓	✓		✓ Round Table	
American Leadership Academy (Johnston)					
American Renaissance School	✓	✓			✓
Apprentice Academy High School of NC					✓
ArtSpace Charter School	✓	✓	✓	✓ Social Media	✓
Asheville PEAK Academy	✓	✓			✓
Bonnie Cone Classical Academy	✓	✓			✓
Bradford Preparatory School	✓	✓			✓
Cardinal Charter Academy @ Wendell Falls	✓				✓
Carolina Charter Academy	✓			✓ Data Analysis	
Community Public Charter					✓
Community School of Davidson	✓	✓		✓ Parent Panel	✓

				Discussion	
Dogwood Classical Academy					
Doral Academy of NC	✓				✓
East Voyager Academy of Charlotte	✓	✓			✓
Faith Academy		✓	✓	✓ Instruction Day	✓
Guilford Preparatory Academy		✓	✓		✓
Hobgood Charter School	✓	✓		✓ Shared with Outside Groups	✓
IC Imagine		✓			✓
KIPP Gaston College Preparatory		✓			✓
Lake Lure Classical Academy	✓	✓			✓
Lakeside Charter Academy	✓	✓			✓
Lincoln Charter School	✓	✓			✓
Maureen Joy Charter School	✓				
MINA Charter School	✓				✓
Monroe Charter Academy	✓	✓	✓		✓
Metrolina Regional Scholars Academy	✓				
Movement School Eastland					✓
Next Generation Academy		✓	✓	✓ SEL Focus	✓
Old Main STREAM			✓	✓ SEL Focus	
Pocosin Innovative Charter					✓

Quality Education Academy					✓
Queen City STEM School	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ridgeview Charter School		✓	✓		✓
Sallie B Howard School for Arts and Education	✓				✓
School of the Arts for Boys Academy				✓ Social Media	
Southwest Charlotte STEM Academy	✓				
Sugar Creek	✓	✓			✓
Summit Creek Academy	✓	✓		✓ NC ACCESS Fellows	✓
Telra Institute		✓	✓	✓	✓
The Arts Based School		✓		✓ NC ACCESS Fellows	
The Expedition School	✓	✓		✓ Other NC ACCESS Fellow	✓
The Exploris School		✓	✓	✓ Networking	✓
The Franklin School of Innovation		✓	✓		✓
The Learning Center	✓	✓	✓		
Tillery Charter Academy					✓
Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy					
Triad Math and Science Academy					✓
Two Rivers Community School					
Wake Preparatory Academy	✓	✓	✓		

Wilmington School of the Arts					✓
Wilson Preparatory Academy		✓	✓		✓
<b>Total Schools</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Total Reported Events</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>67</b>

*Note.* 52/56 (93%) of schools where data were able to be collected have shared at least one best practice; 71% of schools that have shared best practices have done so in more than one way.

## Appendix G: NC ACCESS School Spotlights

The evaluators from the Friday Institute conducted interviews with schools from Cohort III to further understand their process for designing and implementing key plans outlined in their NC ACCESS applications. Six of the Cohort III schools were identified for interviews; five of the schools participated in the interview process. The five schools that participated in the interviews were: Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy, KIPP Gaston, Metrolina Scholars Academy, Doral Academy, and The Franklin School of Innovation. Throughout the interviews, some of the schools were implementing incredible efforts to reduce the barrier to quality charter school education for educationally disadvantaged youth.

### School Climate Initiatives

#### Doral Academy

During the interview, the representatives from Doral Academy highlighted how important having a positive school climate is to them and their students. They reported that they make an effort to celebrate both small and large student achievements regularly. They noted they also regularly celebrate staff in the school. Doral Academy creates a welcoming school climate through greeting each student when they enter and leave the building. Doral Academy promotes school-wide efforts through their Cardinal Jack challenges. Each month, their mascot, Cardinal Jack, goes on an adventure and the students need to design and create a tool to help him. The lower grades complete the task as a whole group, while the older students work individually. The representatives from Doral Academy noted how much the students enjoy the challenge, and they highlight the student creations during student assemblies and morning announcements.

#### Franklin School of Innovation

The representative from the Franklin School of Innovation (FSI) highlighted in the interview the critical processes they take to ensure a welcoming and positive school climate. The staff at Franklin School of Innovation take the time to welcome students every day, and regularly assess their policies and practices. Additionally, the Franklin School of Innovation has worked to create a safer space for LGBTQ+ students through professional development for staff and an LGBTQ+ affinity group for students.

### Equity-Focused Initiatives

#### Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy

Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy (TJCA) has implemented multiple efforts to bring more equity to their school as a result of the funds provided through the NC ACCESS program. Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy was able to purchase new instruments for students to use in their classes. Additionally, they have increased the number of laptops purchased for students to use; all students in the upper grades have their own laptop to use for schoolwork

and assignments. Students at TJCA wear uniforms, and staff have made access to uniforms more equitable by providing uniform vouchers, having a uniform bank at the grammar school for students who have dirty uniforms or uniforms that no longer fit them, and giving economically disadvantaged students first choice to the uniform bank and gently used uniforms. TJCA provides free lunch to all students regardless of economic status; they have highlighted concerns with sustaining their free lunch program, although they stated this is an initiative they plan to keep. Finally, TJCA prides itself on its field trips, they provide interactive and experiential field trip opportunities. They have ensured that all students have the ability to attend field trips, regardless of economic status.

### **Franklin School of Innovation**

In addition to their emphasis on school culture, the Franklin School of Innovation has previously focused on equity in their school and continues to make equity a primary focus as part of the NC ACCESS program. The Franklin School of Innovation has provided professional development for staff on how to be anti-racist. FSI has hired a consultant who is prominent in Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities to help them market and recruit both students and staff. The representative from FSI reported they have an overrepresentation of LGBTQ+ students in their student population as a result of their efforts to make an inclusive school community, and have expanded their focus to be a more inclusive school for BIPOC students through creating a BIPOC affinity group. In terms of equity in educational resources, FSI has hired more support staff to have another person in each of the classrooms to ensure each student receives the academic support they need.

### **KIPP Gaston**

KIPP Gaston noted in their interview with evaluators from the Friday Institute that they serve many economically disadvantaged students. In that, they noted the importance of providing free transportation and lunch to all students. KIPP Gaston was providing free transportation and lunch to all students prior to the NC ACCESS grant, and reported they would be happy to serve as a resource for other schools in the program looking to expand in those areas. As a part of their efforts to improve equity and access to quality education, the representatives from KIPP Gaston noted their biggest shift has been in their curriculum resources; KIPP Gaston is implementing new curricula and programs to support students to meet them where they are. Furthermore, they are holding weekly data meetings and placing a larger emphasis on data collection efforts. They noted their next priority area will be to examine their discipline practices and school climate. KIPP Gaston is in the process of re-evaluating their school climate, behavior, and discipline strategies to make them more equitable, with a greater focus on assessing available data.

## **Parent Engagement Initiatives**

### **Doral Academy**

In the interview with evaluators, Doral Academy highlighted their passionate and engaged parent community. The representatives noted their parents are active in community events.

The parents of Doral Academy students have organized a carpool to ensure all students are able to get to and from school safely. One of their parents has volunteered to serve as a crossing and traffic guard during pick-up and drop-off times. Doral Academy's parent association is called the Cardinals In Action (CIA), where parents volunteer their time to help with school events and put together highlights for school communications with the community.





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