

# NORTH CAROLINA BUSINESS SUMMIT ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

**NOVEMBER 8, 2023**

## Purpose

To bring together, educate, and motivate business leaders across NC that care about the future of public education and are interested in working with education leaders and policymakers to take tangible action to improve student outcomes.

## Location

[Sheraton Imperial Hotel Raleigh Durham Airport at RTP](#), 4700 Emperor Blvd, Durham, NC 27703

## Agenda

Time	Description
9:00 - 10:00	Networking Breakfast (Optional)
10:00 - 11:30	<p><b>Morning Plenary</b></p> <p>How are NC's public schools funded, what investments do we make with that money, and what outcomes are we achieving as a result?</p> <p><b>Welcome Address</b>  <a href="#">Tom Oxholm</a>, Executive Vice President, Wake Stone Corporation</p> <p><b>Reality Check: A Fact-Based Discussion of Key Issues:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student Performance and Population Trends</li> <li>2. Educators and Leaders</li> <li>3. School Funding and Fiscal Health</li> </ol> <p><b>Speakers</b>  <a href="#">Mary-Ann Wolf, PhD</a>, President and Executive Director, Public School Forum of NC  <a href="#">Nathan Dollar, PhD</a>, Director, Carolina Demography at UNC  <a href="#">Mebane Rash, JD</a>, CEO, EdNC            Anthony Jackson, EdD, Superintendent, Chatham County Schools            Scott Elliott, EdD, Retired Superintendent, Watauga County Schools</p> <p><b>Table Discussions</b>            Participants will engage in discussions with one another. Each table will have a facilitator who will assist in guiding the discussion and taking notes.</p>
11:30 - 11:40	Transition

11:40 - 12:30

## Breakout Groups: Round 1

1. **Building the Teacher Pipeline:** Teacher turnover and a weak pipeline are leading to a significant number of teacher vacancies (there were over 5,000 at the start of this school year). While demand for new teachers is high, our schools of education are producing far fewer graduates than they once did. What will it take for our public schools to recruit and retain a diverse, well-prepared workforce?

This session will feature data on the pipeline for educators, first-hand accounts about the realities of working in schools, and a discussion of promising practices to recruit, retain, and diversify the education workforce both locally and nationally.

**Room: Imperial 6/7**

### Speakers

[Jennie Bryan](#), Teacher, Brunswick County Public Schools

[Anthony Graham, PhD](#), Interim Chancellor, Winston Salem State University

[Matt Bristow-Smith](#), Principal, Edgecombe Early College High School

2. **Productive Ways for Business Leaders to Engage on Education Issues:** Business leaders have a vested interest in ensuring that our state has a strong education system. However, education is a complex enterprise to navigate. How can business leaders effectively engage on issues that matter to them?

This session will feature examples of business leaders engaging productively to support public education in NC and elsewhere. It will offer practical advice on how business leaders can play a meaningful role in shaping the future of public education.

**Room: Imperial 1/2**

### Speakers

[JB Buxton](#), President, Durham Tech

Mary Mack, CEO of Consumer and Small Business Banking, Wells Fargo

[Kim Morrison, PhD](#), Superintendent, Mt. Airy City Schools

3. **What Will It Take to Crack the Nut? Ensuring All Students Learn to Read by Third Grade:** Reading is a cornerstone skill that all children should master by third grade. Yet in NC, 68% of 4th graders are not reading proficiently according to the latest NAEP assessment. The long-term ramifications of this are severe and far-reaching. As the “science of reading” gains momentum nationally, and in NC, the journey toward effective implementation is just beginning. We still have much to learn about what it will take to finally “crack the nut” to ensure all students learn to read proficiently in elementary school and continue strengthening those reading skills through high school graduation.

This session offers a deep dive into NC's historical performance on reading benchmarks compared to other states. It will also explore the “science of

	<p>reading” training efforts and will share emerging insights from initial implementations in NC and beyond. Lastly, the session will discuss strategies to position our state as a national leader in reading instruction.</p> <p><b>Room: Empire ABC</b></p> <p><b>Speakers</b>  <a href="#">Susan Gates, JD</a>, Special Advisor, SAS        Jamie King, EdD, Superintendent, Samson County Public Schools        Nicole Peterson, Director of PK-8 Education, Samson County Public Schools  <a href="#">Amy Rhyne</a>, Director, Office of Early Learning, NC DPI</p>
12:30 - 1:30	<p><b>Lunch Plenary</b></p> <p><b>Table Discussions:</b> This whole-group session will start with a plated lunch &amp; table discussions.</p> <p><b>Keynote</b>  <a href="#">Jim Peyser</a>, Former Secretary of Education in Massachusetts from 2015 to 2023</p>
1:30 - 1:40	Transition
1:40 -2:30	<p><b>Breakout Groups: Round 2</b></p> <p>This is the second of two breakout sessions for the day. This will follow the same format as the first round of breakouts earlier in the day.</p> <p>Sessions options for this round include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>Building the Leadership Pipeline:</b> Many of the same challenges that impact our teacher pipeline also play out for school and district leadership as well. Key leaders are retiring or resigning at a faster clip than districts can adequately prepare their replacements. This year alone, 30 of 115 (or 26%) of school districts experienced a superintendent departure. Business leaders can attest: such high turnover is detrimental to an organization's culture, climate, and overall performance.</li> </ol> <p>This session will feature data on the pipeline for school and district leadership, first-hand accounts about the realities of working in these settings, and a discussion of promising practices to recruit, retain, and diversify education leadership both locally and nationally.</p> <p><b>Room: Imperial 6/7</b></p> <p><b>Speakers</b>  <a href="#">Shirley Prince, EdD</a>, Executive Director, NC Principals and Assistant Principals Association  <a href="#">Valerie Truesdale, PhD</a>, Senior Assistant Executive Director, AASA: The Superintendents Association</p>

	<p>5. <b>The Future of High School:</b> A 2020 study by McRel International, titled 'The Silent Epidemic,' revealed that 40-60% of U.S. high school students are “chronically disengaged.” This disengagement carries severe long-term ramifications. While dropping out of school is an extreme outcome, most disengaged students remain in school but lack direction, failing to link their academics with future aspirations. Consequently, they often graduate aimless, facing a heightened risk of prolonged disengagement, underemployment, or other adverse outcomes.</p> <p>This session will explore promising strategies to redesign the high school experience, aiming to engage students and equip them with the skills and knowledge to realize their aspirations. It will spotlight innovative approaches gaining momentum in NC and beyond, and discuss the crucial support that the business community has provided in these initiatives.</p> <p><b>Room: Imperial 1/2</b></p> <p><b>Speakers</b>  <a href="#">Elena Ashburn, EdD</a>, Area Superintendent, Wake County Public Schools  <a href="#">Joe Ableidinger</a>, Executive Director, SparkNC  <a href="#">Jessica Swencki</a>, Deputy Director, myFutureNC</p> <p>6. <b>Reducing Complexity, Increasing Transparency in School Finance:</b> NC's outdated and intricate financial management system poses significant challenges for educational districts across the state. Large districts grapple with the complexity as they manage annual budgets that can exceed \$2B, while smaller ones have to navigate these systems without even a single finance officer. This inhibits district leaders from effectively overseeing operations and leaves the public in the dark about how their tax dollars are utilized.</p> <p>This session will highlight the shortcomings in NC's current financial and record-keeping systems and will delve into the inefficiencies plaguing various funding approaches. Finally, it will explore viable solutions that could streamline these processes for improved transparency and management.</p> <p><b>Room: Empire ABC</b></p> <p><b>Speakers</b>  <a href="#">Tom Oxholm</a>, Executive Vice President, Wake Stone Corporation  <a href="#">Jim Merrill, EdD</a>, Interim Superintendent, Orange County Public Schools      Mark Winters, Former Chief Finance Officer, Wake County Public Schools  <a href="#">Aaron Beaulieu</a>, Former COO &amp; CFO, Durham County Public Schools</p>
2:30 - 2:40	Transition
2:40 - 3:15	<p><b>Closing Plenary</b></p> <p>This whole-group session will start with table reflections on the day.</p> <p><b>Call to Action</b>  <a href="#">Charles Bowman, JD</a>, Bank of America, Retired</p>

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