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**The GPS Approach to a Career-Ready North Carolina:  
*How our state must ‘recalculate’ before it is too late***

**1. CHANGING AND SHIFTING THE EDUCATIONAL CULTURE**

*Career and Technical Education – “The best kept secret in North Carolina”*

- **POLICY GOAL: Make Career and Technical Education a widely-accepted, valuable part of the overall high school experience in North Carolina and utilize it as a change agent in education and as an important workforce and economic development tool.**
  - **Require local school systems to offer CTE Concentrations as part of the state's graduation requirements (Concentration: 4 credits in a CTE Pathway at least one of which is at the completer level).**
  - **Implement the North Carolina Career and Technical Education Strategic Plan. (See appendices.)**
  - **Implement the corresponding plan to market CTE to students, parents, educators and members of the business community with a focus on quality, high expectations, innovation, dignity of all occupations and lifelong learning. (See appendices.)**

*Entrepreneurship – We can grow our own!*

- **POLICY GOAL: Make the state’s high schools innovation ‘hot spots’ for developing student interest in entrepreneurship and accelerating students’ career interests.**
  - **Increase the number of high schools offering and promoting entrepreneurship and other business development courses to students.**
  - **Utilize the 58 Small Business Centers hosted at community colleges so more secondary and postsecondary students are aware of these valuable resources.**
  - **Provide professional development to educators to help them infuse the value of creativity and innovation in all grades and courses.**

*Changing School Culture as We Know It*

- **POLICY GOAL: Transform the culture of education in North Carolina so every school produces both academically-skilled and career-ready students prepared to meet global standards.**
  - **Re-vamp traditional time structures of public schools to reflect research findings from innovative practices in other states and countries (i.e. school calendars, summer school, combination of virtual and face-to-face learning, 5-year programs, etc.).**
  - **Examine a new system for funding to reward the schools that are succeeding and give local school districts flexibility to spend money on innovation and research-based school improvement efforts.**

- Identify best practices of innovation in high school re-design and bring them to scale.
- Create a systemic shift in secondary and postsecondary education sectors to make early and middle college (5-year) programs, Learn and Earn, Learn and Earn Online, dual enrollment/Huskins, etc., available to all high school students.
- Recognize Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education (STEM) as critical to the economic growth in our state by establishing STEM initiatives in each of the seven economic development regions.
- Consider SREB's "10 Key Principles for New State School Accountability" as career-ready measures.

## 2. CONNECTING K-12 CLASSROOMS to CAREERS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

### *Career Planning*

- **POLICY GOAL: Provide high school students resources they need to make both wise academic and career choices to achieve their future goals.**
  - Require every high school student to have a career plan (personalized graduation plan) in which they declare a concentration of four credits in a career cluster or concentration area.
  - Define "Career-Ready" by including the skills that employers demand in essential standards, assessments and the ABCs accountability model. Require validation of high school diplomas through the Career Readiness Certificate, industry-recognized certifications and/or the Community College Placement Test, in addition to AP exams, the SAT or ACT.
  - Train EVERY high school teacher and school counselor to provide career development assistance to students and provide this professional development as a part of the licensure process or continuing credits.

### *Business Engagement and Support*

- **POLICY GOAL: Build a multi-level network connecting businesses, students, parents and educators in a unified effort to prepare students to meet global achievement standards.**

#### **Local level:**

- Encourage local school superintendents and school boards to create and maintain Career-Ready Advisory Councils or Roundtables.

#### **Regional level:**

- Create and maintain business-education advocacy groups that are aligned to the seven economic development regions to address Career-Ready issues on a regional level.

#### **State level:**

- Use the Lieutenant Governor's JOBS Commission and/or reformulate the Governor's Management Council to engage CEOs and key business leaders to address education issues.

- **Work with the NC Chamber and the North Carolina Business Committee for Education to increase business experience and knowledge among educators.**

### **3. COLLABORATING FOR WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### *Workforce and Economic Development – Governance*

- **POLICY GOAL: Bring state and local leaders in education and economic development together to determine how to best support and grow North Carolina's economy.**
  - **Expand the Education Cabinet to include the Secretary of Commerce, representatives from the seven economic development regions and the Lieutenant Governor and task the Cabinet with developing a statewide plan for aligning workforce education and economic development.**
  - **Support the implementation of a longitudinal student record data system to identify and track students through every level of education and into the labor market (CEDARS) and share these research findings with education and business leaders as well as economic developers.**
  - **Use the 16 career clusters identified by the U.S. Department of Education as an organizing foundation to link education to the economic development vision plans.**