**NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative**
**Education Learning Team**
Meeting Three Summary Report

The NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Education Learning Team met for the third time on November 16th from 1-4 pm at SAS.

The summary reports and presentations from the Learning Team meetings are online at http://buildthefoundation.org/learning-teams/.

Background on the NC Pathways to Grade-Level Reading Initiative is online at www.buildthefoundation.org/pathways.

**Meeting Three Summary**

Co-Chairs Khari Garvin and Terry Stoops welcomed 19 Learning Team members.

The co-chairs set the context for the meeting by reminding the team members of the top-line goal, the shared Measures of Success Framework, and the goals of the Learning Teams process. They walked through what to expect at each of the four Learning Team meetings and outlined today's activities:
- Prioritize four indicators based on the need and inequity data from Meetings 1 and 2.
- Prioritize indicators based on the connections among the indicators and their impact.
- Recommend four final prioritized indicators and outline the rationale for the decision.

The co-chairs highlighted the Guiding Principles of the Pathways work.

The co-chairs introduced an evolution of the Measures of Success Framework, based on feedback from all three Learning Teams and other stakeholders. This work is iterative, and we are intentionally open to change as we learn more. *The current version of the evolved framework is included as Appendix A in this report.*
- A few indicators outlined an emergent and early literacy developmental trajectory. Those indicators were pulled out of the goals and organized as grade-level reading milestones guiding the framework.
- Key social/economic living conditions – like families living with low income – were pulled out of the goals and placed along the bottom of the framework, to demonstrate that they impact every indicator and should be considered in every design strategy. Pathways Design Teams will be asked to design strategies to reduce the *impact* of these conditions on children and families, and they will consider closely aligned strategies to *reduce* the conditions themselves. Included in the children's living conditions sections were trauma and inequity.
- The remaining indicators were simplified into four goals:
  - Health on Track, Beginning at Birth
  - Supported and Supportive Families & Communities
  - High Quality Birth to Eight Learning Environments
  - Regular Attendance in Early Learning Programs and Schools:  Regular attendance became its own goal because there is strong research showing that it is both influenced by many of the indicators we are considering, and it is in turn very influential on the top-level result of grade-level reading.

The Learning Team engaged in a conversation around the evolved framework. Full notes on the conversation are included as Appendix B in this report and will be considered, along with feedback from the other Learning Teams, and finalized by the end of the last Learning Team meeting on December 8th. Main points included:

- Does Attendance rise to the level of the others? Should it be one of four goal areas as shown in this version of the framework or moved back into the Education goal area?
- Keep it separate, because research shows it's impacted by factors in all the areas and that it's critical for reading proficiency.
- Move it back into Education because doesn't seem like should be on same level as other three. Attendance is a dosage (of education). Other dosages also matter, like dosages of doctor visits, or dosages of families reading to children.
- Maybe move suspensions/expulsions and school climate to Attendance area?

**Prioritizing Based on Need/Equity Exercise:**

Facilitators provided tools that scored and averaged the Need and Equity ratings team members had assigned the indicators at meetings 1 and 2. Team members worked at their tables to choose their top four indicators, based on the Need and Equity data. The following chart shows which indicators the three tables chose:

|  | Inequity and Need |
|---|---|
| School Stability |  |
| Regular School Attendance | XXX |
| Safe & Supportive Schools |  |
| Promotion to Next Grade | XXX |
| Expulsions |  |
| Suspensions |  |
| High Quality Early Care & Education | XXX |
| Summer Learning | XXX |

The full group noted that Regular School Attendance, Promotion to Next Grade, High Quality Early Care & Education, and Summer Learning rose to the top. They discussed the reasons why these were the top choices. Main themes included:

- **Regular School Attendance:** Children cannot learn if they are not present, no matter the reason.
- **Promotion to Next Grade:** Implies success in other areas.
- **High-Quality Early Care & Education:** This is foundational, the basis for what we are talking about.
- **Summer Learning:** connection to Read to Achieve

*Full comments are included in Appendix C of this report.*

**Prioritizing Based on Connections/Impact Exercise:**

Facilitators then provided tools that allowed team members to see the connections among the indicators, as a measure of impact. All of the indicators in the Framework influence, in some way, our top-line result of reading proficiency by third grade. Some indicators are positioned to have potentially more impact, however, because of the connections they have to other indicators. By shifting one very connected indicator, we can influence others, and by shifting this larger group of indicators, we are more likely to have an impact on our top-line result.

Team members worked at their tables to choose their top four indicators, based on the Connections data. The following chart shows which indicators the three tables chose:

|  | Inequity and Need | Connections/Impact |
|---|---|---|
| School Stability |  |  |
| Regular School Attendance | XXX | XXX |
| Safe & Supportive Schools |  | XX |
| Promotion to Next Grade | XXX | XXX |
| Expulsions |  |  |
| Suspensions |  |  |
| High Quality Early Care & Education | XXX | XXX |
| Summer Learning | XXX | X |

The full group noted that Regular School Attendance, Promotion to the Next Grade, and High Quality Early Care & Education rose to the top again. They discussed the reasons behind the top choices. Themes included:

- Many of the same reasons noted above for the three top indicators.
- **Safe and Supportive Schools** chosen because influential on other factors and can impact every child. On the flip side, don't have good data for this one.
- **Summer Learning** was not chosen because lower connectivity to other indicators.
- Overall, percentages of connectivity really drove decisions.

*Full comments are included in Appendix C of this report.*

The group had a final discussion to prioritize their top four indicators, and chose:
- Regular School Attendance
- Promotion to the Next Grade
- High Quality Early Care & Education
- Summer Learning

They then answered as a group the following questions. Main themes noted here.

- *Why is it important to prioritize this set of indicators?*

  Quality Child Care is the beginning.
  Attendance is next.

Then Promotion.
Summer Learning ensures each year is successful.

- *What are your concerns about the indicators?*

    **Safe and Supportive Schools** could be too broad unless there are very specific strategies to address it.  This is an incredibly important strategy for many of the indicators.

    **Summer Learning**: concerns around turning kids off to school if summer learning looks too much like school. Unintended consequences of policy decisions.

    Our choices are not a map for what we need to do.  These are at a very high-level and have little relationship to the classroom. *Note: Yes, these are high-level. The Design Teams will be tasked with narrowing down on strategies for action.*

*Full comments are included in Appendix C of this report.*

**Wrap-Up and Next Steps**

The meeting concluded with a reminder of next steps. The priority indicator decisions will be recorded, and the group discussions will be organized into a rationale for why those indicators were chosen. At the last meeting on December 8th, Education Learning Team members will present their prioritized indicators to the Family and Community and Health Learning Team members. The full group will develop an integrated list of recommended indicators and discuss the root causes identified at Meeting 2.

The final Learning Team meeting will include all three teams, and is scheduled for December 8th from 1-4 pm at Fidelity Investments in Durham.

The PowerPoint presentation for the meeting is available online at http://buildthefoundation.org/learning-teams/ .
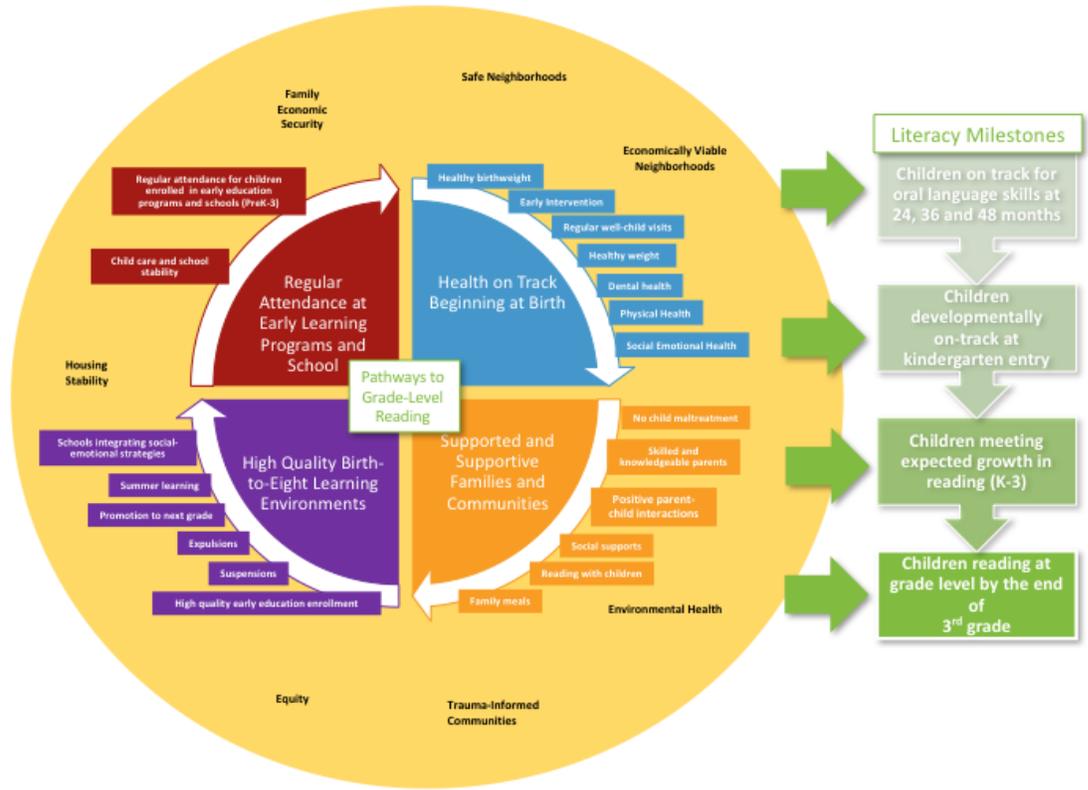
**Appendix A**

**Appendix B: Reactions to Evolved Measures of Success Framework**

Does Attendance rise to the level of the others? Should it be one of four goal areas?

Yes, because:
- Attendance is proximal.
- It's a Campaign for Grade-Level Reading pillar.
- Connects to so many other parts of the framework – attitudes, health, transportation.
- If integrate it into other areas, it de-prioritizes it.
- Research shows it's impacted by factors in all the areas and that it's critical for reading proficiency.

No, because:
- Attendance is a dosage (of education). Other dosages also matter, like dosages of doctor visits, or dosages of families reading to children. Why is this one pulled out like this?
- Doesn't seem like should be on same level as other three goal areas.

Other comments on Attendance:
- There is also a relationship to suspensions/expulsions and school climate. Should these move to Attendance area?
- Chronic absence = 10% of the school days.
- Should Attendance move to yellow area? *(Decided no because Attendance is not a living condition – it is something that Pathways could impact.)*
- Should Attendance be visualized somehow to show that others impact it?

Votes: 8 in support of leaving Attendance as a separate goal area; 8 in support of moving it back into the Education goal area.

Other wording discussions:
- Summer Learning – should read "No loss" or "growth" or something else?
- Summer Learning – should include after school time here? "Extended learning" or "out of school time"?
- Expulsions/Suspensions – should read "reduce" or "minimize"? Something that gets at the disproportionality of suspensions/expulsions by race/ethnicity?
- Schools integrating social-emotional strategies – too specific? This is a proxy indicator for positive school climate, because that is not an indicator that is measured. Could change to "positive school climate."

**Appendix C – Notes from Full Group Discussions on Prioritization Exercises**

**Inequity/Need Prioritization Exercise**

**Regular School Attendance**
- If we impact the things we need to impact, then school attendance should improve.
- Children cannot learn if they are not present, no matter the reason.
- If you move expulsion/suspensions to school attendance, then attendance affects everything else.
- Umbrella term – school attendance is an umbrella for suspension, expulsion, safe supportive school, school stability.

**Promotion to Next Grade**
- Implies success in other areas.
- There is data that shows that *not* promoting is not good.

**High-Quality Child Care Enrollment (early education term needs to be used instead to include PreK)**
- Foundational.
- Basis for what we are talking about.
- Thought for the design team: What we have isn't going to make the difference on reading because children are not with highly qualified professionals.
- Lose sight of the intervention given the limited data available.
- Maybe the better indicator than 4/5 star programs has to do with bachelor-prepared or other indicator of education of teachers.

**Summer Learning**
- Add extended care after school, not just summer.
- Remember the connection to Read to Achieve.

*Why were others not chosen?*

**Expulsions/Suspensions**
- Expulsions and Suspensions wrapped into others, especially on attendance.
- School climate seen as a strategy.
- Safe and supportive schools has the largest opportunity to impact attendance. Should be noted as a critical strategy for Design Teams to consider.

**School Stability**
- Difficult to focus on because it's hard to impact – families move for many reasons.

**Connections/Impact Prioritization Exercise**

**Safe and Supportive Schools – why chosen?**
- More influential on other factors.
- Foundation for other indicators.
- Can impact any child.

**Why Not Chosen?**
- No data available.

**Summer Learning – why not chosen?**
- Percentage of connectivity had an impact. (Summer Learning wasn't highly connected.)
- If you remove suspensions and expulsions, then there is not much difference between summer learning and attendance in terms of connectivity.

**Other Thoughts:**
- Overall, percentages of connectivity really drove decisions.
- What do we want to measure vs. what could get us there?
- Safe and Supportive Schools feels more complex than Attendance; shouldn't be moved there.
- Move expulsions and suspensions under Attendance.

**Final Prioritization Discussion**

*Why is it important to prioritize this set of indicators?*

Quality Child Care is the beginning.
Attendance is next.
Then Promotion.
Summer Learning ensures each year is successful.

*What are your concerns about the indicators?*

**Safe and Supportive Schools** – very broad unless there are very specific strategies to address this – may be too broad. It is considered incredibly important to so many of the indicators. There is a measurement available in teacher surveys – safe schools. This could be a strategy within Attendance.

**Summer Learning** should be community wide – opportunities for all children to participate. What are the unintended consequences of this? Do we turn kids off to school if it looks too much like school? But if school was a place that children wanted to go to, is this a problem?

Our choices are not a map for what we need to do. These are at a very high-level and have little relationship to the classroom. *Note: Yes, these are high-level. The Design Teams will be tasked with narrowing down on strategies for action.*