

August 2, 2011

Welcome to INNOVATOR, an update on secondary school change from the North Carolina New Schools Project. Our newsletter is designed to inform practitioners, policymakers, and friends of public education on innovation, research and success stories from secondary schools. Feel free to [contact us](#), provide feedback and suggest article ideas.

Learning Labs offer key lessons in innovation



Students at Caldwell Early College study their environment

Beginning next month, four schools affiliated with the North Carolina New Schools Project will start offering study visits to showcase the kind of teaching and learning that ensures all students graduate ready for college, careers and life.

As part of the Learning Laboratory Initiative (LLI), Caldwell Early College High School, Cumberland County's Cross Creek Early College High School, Durham's Hillside New Tech High School and Wayne School of Engineering have demonstrated success in improving student achievement, eliminating dropouts and increasing the job satisfaction of teachers. School-based teams of North Carolina teachers, administrators and others are invited to visit classrooms at these four schools, network with peers, and experience a powerful and unique school culture where all adults collaborate to support, deepen and extend student learning, across their schools and into their communities.

"These study visits will give educators a way to see successful innovative schools in action," said Dana Diesel Wallace, NCNSP's vice president for school development. "Our goal is for visiting educators to return to their own schools with a better understanding and ability to create cultures of high academic achievement gained by proven, innovative approaches."

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Higher education higher pay

State-by-state data compiled by the Alliance for Excellent Education shows that in North Carolina, cutting the state's dropout rate by half would mean **\$292 million** in earnings for new graduates.

Pay differences above average yearly income for high school dropouts in North Carolina

STEM job growth outpaces others, report says



A recent report from the U.S. Department of Commerce helps underscore the importance of ensuring that students graduating from high school are well prepared for jobs in fields related to science, technology, engineering and math -- STEM in shorthand. The report, [STEM: Good Jobs Now and for the Future](#), says that during the past 10 years, growth in STEM jobs was three times as fast as growth in non-STEM jobs.

Future job growth will follow a similar trend, the report projects, with a 17 percent growth estimated for STEM jobs from 2008 to 2018 compared to 9.8 percent for non-STEM jobs.

The report also notes that while STEM workers have not been immune from joblessness during the recession, they have tended to fare better than many workers, in part because of higher educational attainment. The unemployment rate from STEM workers increased to 5.5 percent in 2009 before declining slightly to 5.3 percent in 2010. By comparison, the unemployment rate for non-STEM workers reached 9.5 percent in 2009 and continued to edge higher to nearly 10 percent in 2010.

Not surprisingly, STEM workers tend to earn more, the report shows. STEM workers with a bachelor's degree, for example, earned an average of nearly 27 percent more than those in non-STEM jobs.

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NCNSP schools get high marks from students

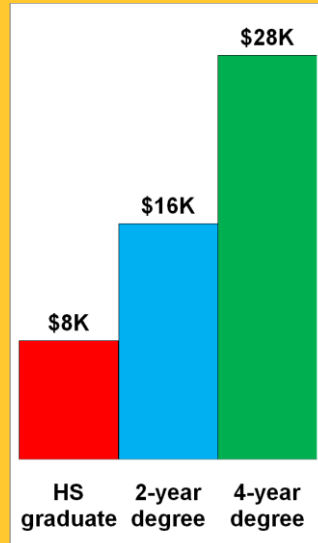


A survey this year of more than 71,000 students in 164 high schools across the country found that those in North Carolina's innovative high schools hold more favorable opinions than their peers elsewhere on a number of key concerns for students.

On most measures in the survey, called YouthTruth, the median North Carolina innovative school showed more positive responses than the median for all schools that participated. In all, 18 schools that are partners with the North Carolina New Schools Project participated in the survey, with responses from 2,620 students attending those schools.

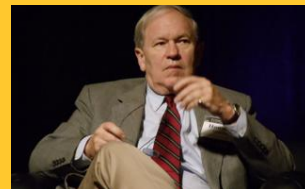
Schools in 18 states and 21 districts or networks such as NCNSP participated in the survey.

The median responses of the 18 NCNSP schools landed near the 75th



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Summer Institute 2011, replayed



Visit our [YouTube](#) channel to see video from Summer Institute 2011. Hear Tim King speak about how Urban Prep Academy students are college-bound; learn from the panel discussion about how Guilford County demands excellence; listen to students talk about how attending an NCNSP-affiliated school changed their plans for the future; and watch Judge Howard Manning Jr. and former Chief Justice Burley Mitchell explain the significance of the Leandro case. You can also check out the snapshot interviews

percentile for all 164 schools (slightly above or slightly below) on areas that North Carolina's innovative high schools are designed to improve for students, such as school culture and academic rigor.

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with conference participants speaking about their experiences during the three-day conference.

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