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INNOVATOR

News About Secondary School Innovation | newschoolsproject.org

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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.

Postsecondary success true test of readiness



Dr. Scott Ralls
President
N.C. Community College
System

Reports sounding alarms about how America is losing its competitive edge are nothing new. Since the publication of [A Nation at Risk](#) more than 25 years ago, there's been a steady drumbeat of warnings and troubling data about the academic performance of American students. But one recent statistic in a report on education across the developed world should give all Americans pause.

It's this: Young adults in the United States who have recently entered the workforce have completed less education than older workers who are nearing retirement age. In other words, sons and daughters are less likely than their parents to have earned a two- or four-year college degree. That worrisome finding was reported last month by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its latest [Education at a Glance](#), an annual publication of comparable national data from around the world.

While one in three of all postsecondary-educated retirees lives in the United States, the report notes, America's share of recent graduates with similar educational completion is one of every five. To be sure, the United States still claims the highest percentage of workers with postsecondary degrees, but it's the only nation among members of the [G-20](#) - representing the world's largest and developing economies - where incoming workers have attained less education than those retiring. China now ranks second behind the U.S. in the percentage of the world's population that has completed postsecondary education.

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Education pays off

Recent data in a [report](#) from the U.S. Census Bureau last month show the dollar difference educational attainment makes in median annual salaries for full-time workers by degree level earned. Median annual earnings for full-time workers with less than a high school diploma was \$27,470.

Annual Earnings

"Our target groups are underserved, underrepresented [populations]," Principal Rob Matheson told *Education Week*.

The paper reported that about 70 percent of the students are minorities, most of whom are black, half are girls, 43 percent would be the first in their families to attend college and 45 percent are from low-income families.

[Read more ...](#)

FutureReady: New forum for education reform

FUTUREREADY

The North Carolina New Schools Project has launched a new interactive blog as a discussion space for its

stakeholders.

[FutureReady](#), making its debut this week, will focus on issues related to secondary school innovation, scaling education reform and connecting education transformation to economic and workforce development.

NCNSP President Tony Habit was the leadoff blogger with several dispatches last week from Finland, where he was a member of a statewide delegation on a study visit to learn more about that nation's highly successful public schools.

FutureReady provides an opportunity to share first-hand accounts about what's happening in North Carolina's growing number of innovative schools. You'll hear from teachers and principals at NCNSP-affiliated schools, as well as coaches and other partners working with our schools. Blog posts will also provide a space for conversations with you to discuss the impact of our changing economy on our schools.

[Read the blog ...](#)

"They're connected to a bigger school system, a higher education partner and NCNSP, plus they're trying to learn a new way of looking at teaching and learning. So you've got a small school with a principal and five teachers trying to implement a philosophy of education that's influenced by a lot of big organizations."

[Read more ...](#)

More news about secondary school innovation ...

[College completion rates remain stagnant, even as enrollment rates have steadily gained ...](#)

A [report](#) released last week examines college completion rates in 33 states, including North Carolina. The report urges states to focus on graduation - not just enrollment. The New York Times had this [story](#).

[Warren Schools Superintendent Ray Spain writes about reform in a Huffington Post blog ...](#)

Spain, whose rural district is host to both an early college and one of the state's original STEM schools, says new approaches to education are key to ensuring that students graduate with skills for success.

[Columbia Early College students lost little time after the school was swamped by Hurricane Irene ...](#)

Principal Marcia Manning writes that teachers and students at the school in tiny Tyrrell County were back in class even before the school was reopened following flooding that caused extensive damage.