

FAQ:

North Carolina Portrait of a Graduate

For dissemination to students or parents within schools and districts, or community members who are seeking additional information about the Portrait of a Graduate purpose, process, and next steps.

Q. What is the Portrait of a Graduate?

- The Portrait of a Graduate is a collective vision that articulates the community's aspirations to better define the skills students need for success after high school. It will be developed and informed by North Carolinians across our state.
- This Portrait will include the knowledge, mindsets, and skills that students should possess to succeed in a rapidly changing and complex world and thrive in this 21st century economy.

Q. Why the Portrait of a Graduate for North Carolina?

- Now, more than ever, learning experiences must not only provide for the acquisition of rigorous academic content, but they must also be more intentional about fostering communication, collaboration, creativity, and other durable skills our students need to thrive in this ever-evolving world.
- Our accountability system needs to provide a more comprehensive picture of what student success means. The Portrait, once complete, is intended to serve as a more balanced measure, demonstrating a student's growth and achievement and ensuring their readiness for civic life, career, or college.

Q. Who is involved in creating the Portrait of a Graduate?

- The Portrait of a Graduate design process is regionally led because the state's education system is strengthened when the community is directly engaged in shaping the work.
- More than 1,150 North Carolinians from the mountains to the coast, consisting of educators, students, families, and representatives from local businesses, non-profits, workforce development boards and higher education, make up the four pairings of the regional Portrait Design Teams.
- To build capacity, NCDPI's eight Regional Directors worked directly with local school districts to solicit broad participation and engagement. More than 75% of the participants in the Design Teams were locally recruited.
- NCDPI also enlisted the help of statewide sector partners to ensure that all voices and perspectives are represented, including the NC Community College System, the University of North Carolina System, BestNC, myFutureNC, Communities in Schools, the NC Department of Commerce, the Emerging Issues Institute, and the NC Chamber of Commerce.

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Q. What is the process for creating the Portrait of a Graduate?

- The Portrait of a Graduate Design Teams will convene three times to build a unifying, collective vision for all students and outline competencies students need to succeed and thrive in world.
- Throughout the three meetings, the Portrait Design Team will:
 - Examine how the world has changed and implications for our students.
 - Discuss the competencies students need to thrive today and tomorrow.
 - Identify and contextualize the competencies that should be part of a shared, statewide vision for our students.
 - Discuss how to make our Portrait of a Graduate a reality for every student.
- It is during these discussions that the Portrait Design Teams collectively decide what competencies the Portrait should include and what a globally competitive student should know and be able to do when they graduate from high school.

Q. What if a student is in a district that already has the Portrait of a Graduate?

- The facilitator of the Portrait design process, [Battelle for Kids](#), will coordinate with districts who have an existing Portrait to identify alignment with the statewide Portrait of a Graduate, and understand how the current Portrait is used to guide student learning, metrics, and outcomes.

Q. Once completed, what is the goal of the Portrait of a Graduate?

- The North Carolina statewide Portrait will identify the competencies to prepare students for an ever-changing world that is driven by technology, human interaction, and innovation.
- This Portrait gives school leaders and teachers the ability to design instruction in a way that promotes real-world competencies and job readiness.
- A complimentary goal is to use the Portrait – which features the competencies valued most by North Carolinians – to build a new, more balanced, multi-measured testing and accountability system. This is a different approach than our current testing and accountability system, which uses high stakes testing to determine student performance.
- Ultimately, the Portrait will drive better alignment among future employers, communities, higher education providers and families who depend on our schools to prepare students for the post-secondary plan of their choice.

Q. Once the Portrait is adopted by a school district, what does this mean for students and parents? What does this change for students?

- For most communities in the state, this will be the first time they will truly hear and see the collective hopes, dreams, and aspirations for North Carolina's students expressed in tangible achievable terms.
- Parents and students should expect to see the identified competencies woven into classroom learning experiences beginning in elementary school and cultivated until graduation.
- Parents and students can anticipate assessments that match the requirements of a changing, dynamic world; not relying on end-of-grade and end-of-course testing alone, but rather, complimented by other factors that assess skills like critical thinking, collaboration, and communication that prepare students for the workplace and civic engagement.