



NORTH CAROLINA  
EDUCATION  
INNOVATION  
**LAB**

The  
**EDUCATOR  
INNOVATION PLAN**

---

**A DECADE** 2015-2025 **:::::** **A LIFETIME**  
**OF INNOVATION :::::** **OF IMPACT**

**February 10, 2025**

# The Decade of Innovation

---

*Brenda Berg, President & CEO, BEST NC*



# Today's Lab – Reflect, Celebrate, and Look Forward!

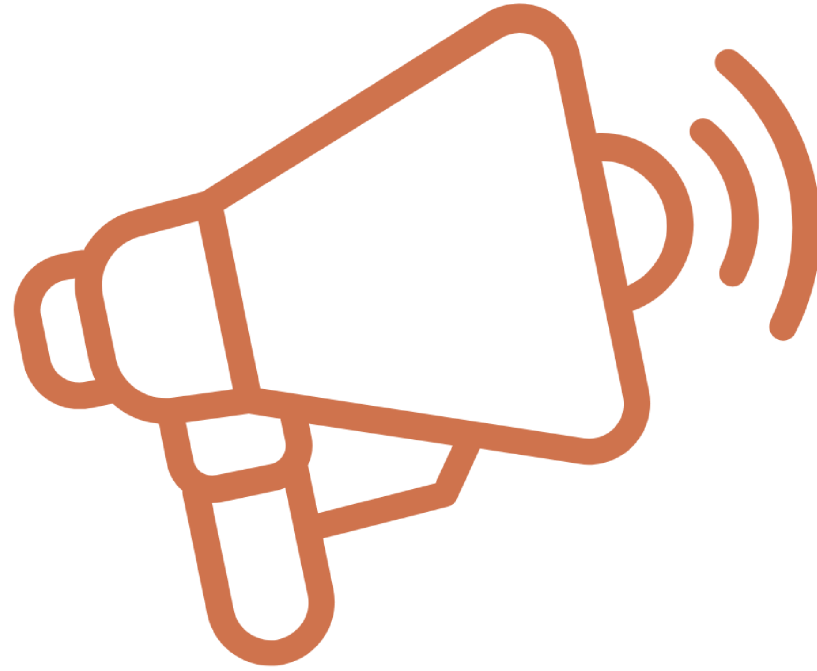


**A DECADE** 2015-2025

**OF INNOVATION,**

• • • • • : **A LIFETIME**  
• • • • • : **OF IMPACT**





# Education Innovation Lab

## A Call to Action





# excellence **nce**



Support Students

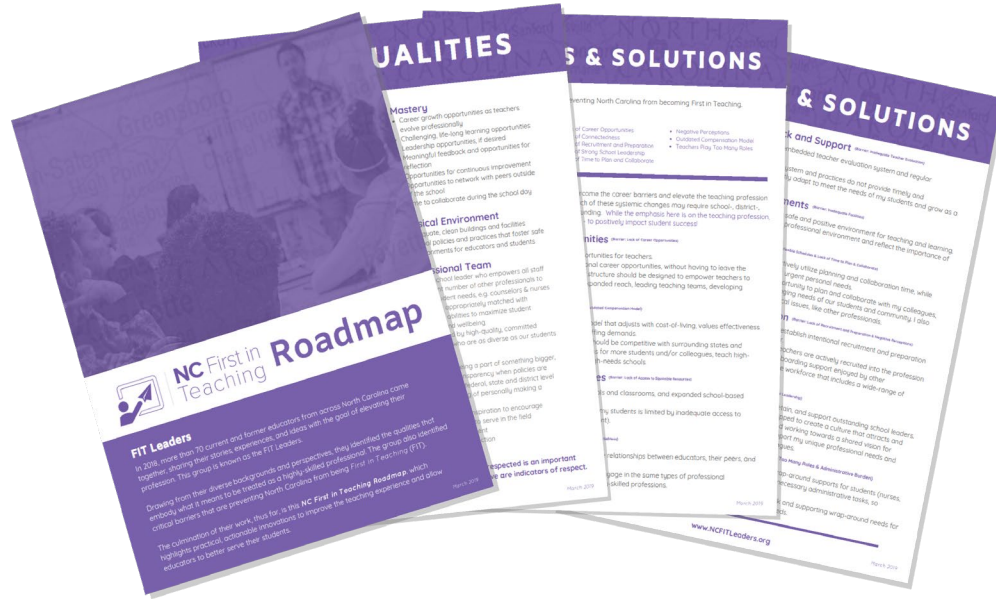


Elevate Educators



Raise Expectations





# First in Teaching Roadmap

1. Career Advancement Opportunities
2. Competitive Compensation
3. Equitable & Accessible Resources
4. Increased Connectedness
5. Productive Teacher Feedback & Support
6. Professional Learning Environments
7. Professional Work Schedule
8. Rigorous Recruitment & Preparation
9. Strong School Leadership
10. Support for the Whole Child



# STRIDE: Getting Stuff Done

## NC STRIDE

### AN ACTION PLAN FOR TEACHER RECRUITMENT IN NORTH CAROLINA

### Action Plan Overview

It is widely confirmed – that teachers have the greatest impact on student learning. The critical importance of teachers, school districts have reported increasing vacancies in subject areas like math, science, and special education. Similarly, data show that students' access to effective educators is less likely to have a highly effective teacher than their more affluent peers. The recruitment and completion of North Carolina educator preparation programs is important to the future of our state's education system.

NC STRIDE is a robust teacher recruitment efforts but has lacked a comprehensive quality teaching candidates for our state's hardest-to-staff subject areas. NC STRIDE is a recruitment planning team in early 2020 with representatives from hundreds of experts, including educators, researchers, and policymakers. NC STRIDE is a teacher recruitment landscape in North Carolina and develop with a coordinated and impactful teacher recruitment strategy. We will use this plan to reflect our objectives and motives.

**NC STRIDE**  
is in progress toward an aim.  
to increase Strategic Teacher Recruitment  
Quality, Diversity & Excellence

to forecast employment needs and planning of  
to recruit teachers to meet these needs.  
to align to the demographic makeup of our students.  
to cultivate excellence in every student.

to be able to create a roadmap for action if you do not know where  
to recruit in terms of the outcomes we want for students:  
"to create a better school and life because they have access to  
quality education throughout their K-12 experience."

to present you will find data and evidence in support of the need to  
recruit. You will also see that we are sorely lacking in adequate and timely data  
to understand the recruitment needs of the various regions and communities.

to know that change does not happen in isolation. That's why our Theory of  
Change connects to efforts to improve the experience of educators, as  
well as to efforts to improve the experience of students. NC STRIDE  
also illustrates how this Action Plan aligns with the work  
being done in other areas. The Actions are organized by relevant  
stakeholders.

### Teacher Vacancies

The 1,646 teaching vacancies that were officially reported during the 2019-20 school year (using 15 students per teacher). While this is an alarming number – and concerning that any 9th grader in a classroom is not being taught by a licensed teacher – these data also indicate just a 1.7% vacancy rate statewide. This is not comparable to the standards of other industries. And yet, students and administrators report that the number of teaching vacancies across the state, particularly in certain subject areas, is a significant concern. This conflict of interest/administrator experience highlights an important question – are our vacancy data as accurate and specific as we need it to be in order to focus programs, policies, and resources on the schools and subjects, and to tailor recruitment efforts based on the needs of the state?

Source: 2020 State of the Teaching Profession Report

#### Workforce vs K-12 Student Population, by Race/Ethnicity (2020)

Race/Ethnicity	NC Teaching Workforce (%)	NC K-12 Student Population (%)
Female	80%	50%
Black	17%	18%
Hispanic	5%	3%
White	66%	79%
All Other Races	11%	10%

Source: NC DPI (Data Request)

#### Teacher Preparation Programs, by Race/Ethnicity (2015 to 2020)

Race/Ethnicity	2015	2020
Hispanic	227	169
Other	492	492
White	4,093	3,136

Source: NC DPI (Data Request)

Enrollment Grew (Yellow), Enrollment Declined (Grey)

Teacher preparation is changing, albeit slowly. EPPs have seen increases in Black and Hispanic students.

### Theory of Action

The NC STRIDE Working Group committed itself to the core tenants listed below. These tenants are the Theory of Action as they helped frame and define our work and recommendations. In the Theory of Action below, each of these ideas is a powerful lever that, if pulled, can help us achieve our goals of increasing teacher vacancies and ensuring each student has access to an effective educator.

- Start Early:** In addition to candidates who already show interest, we believe we can generate new interest in teaching by starting early (e.g., secondary school), allowing more opportunities for entry into the profession.
- Coordination is Critical:** The state is filled with direct and indirect recruitment efforts that are not aligned. Coordination will be a key to success.
- Implementation:** This list of recommendations won't move forward without an intentional, long-term effort that includes communications, metrics, and continuous improvement.



# NC STRIDE's Five Key Strategies

## Teacher Recruitment Entity

- The recruitment efforts of 54 EPPs, 115 LEAs, Charter Schools, and the TeachNC initiative are largely disconnected.
- Establish an entity, situated and staffed at DPI with a statewide advisory board, that can also collect and report data and best practices.

## Teacher Pipeline Data

- Current teacher vacancy and supply data are very limited, making it difficult to recommend policies or programs that will effectively address specific staffing needs.
- Implement consistent vacancy and applicant tracking systems that will accurately identify the most critical needs in the teacher supply pipeline.

## Fill Critical Vacancies

- Districts report persistent vacancies in secondary math and science, which are critical skills for college and career readiness.
- Consider sustained compensation for high skill/high demand careers, like the military does with their critical positions.

## Reimagine Licensure

- The current licensure system creates entry barriers and is not aligned with professional priorities.
- Reimagine the licensure and professional pathway system based on teacher effectiveness, embedded professional development, and paid career opportunities for effective teachers.

## Paid Teacher Apprenticeship

- While pre-service experience is critical for success, it is a financial barrier.
- Offer a paid experience for candidates before becoming the teacher of record (EPP student teacher and residency paths, etc.). Consider compensation for effective teachers and mentors.







# State of the State (and Nation)



# Why Education?

## North Carolina Student Proficiency, NAEP (2024)

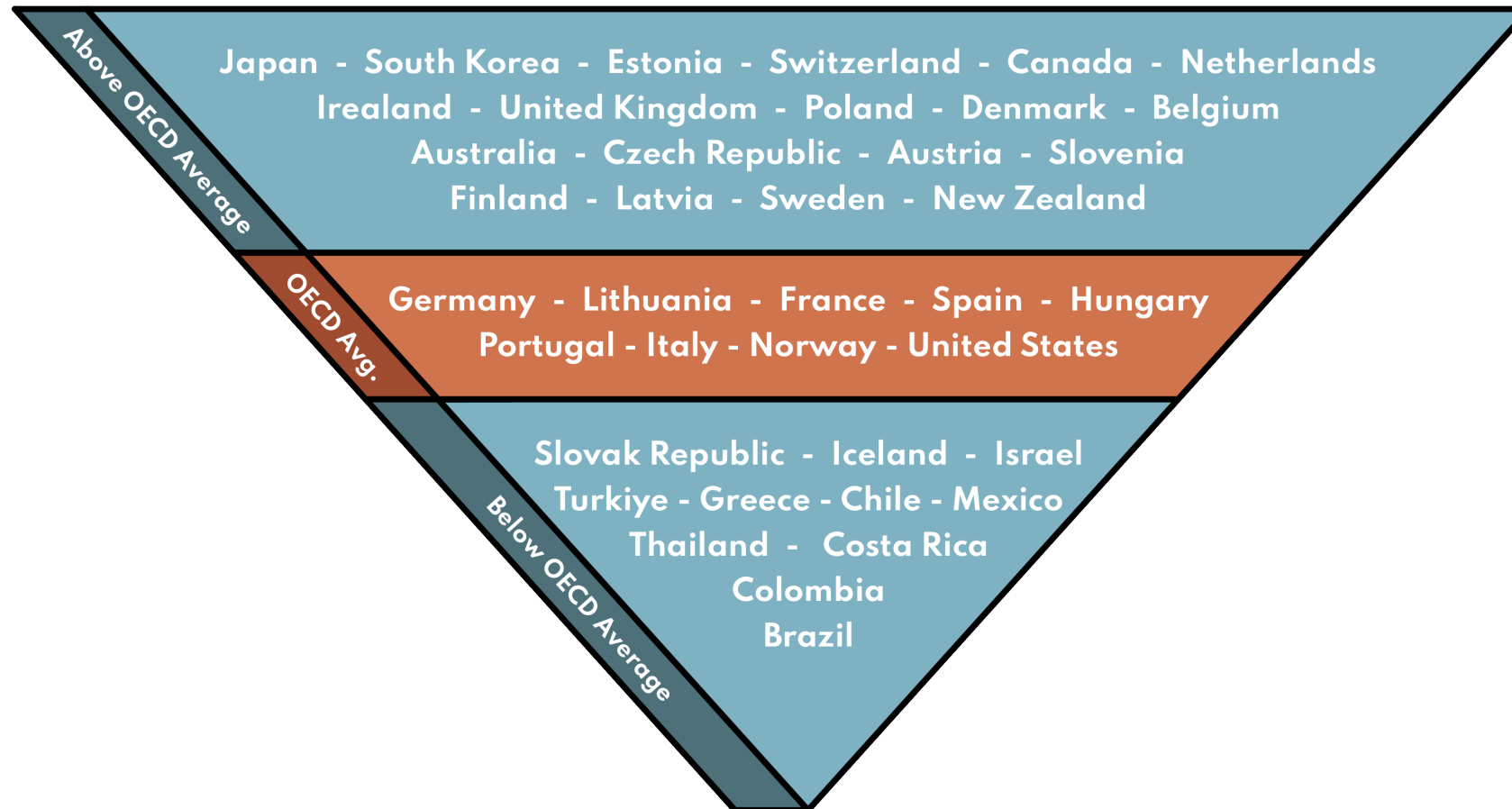
Subject Area	Grade	% of Students at or Above Proficient*		
		North Carolina	Natl. Public Average	Highest Proficiency Rate
Reading	4th Grade	30%	30%	40% (MA)
	8th Grade	27%	29%	40% (MA)
Math	4th Grade	41%	39%	51% (MA)
	8th Grade	31%	27%	37% (MA & WI)



# Why Education?

The United States is 28<sup>th</sup> out of 39 OECD Countries in math.

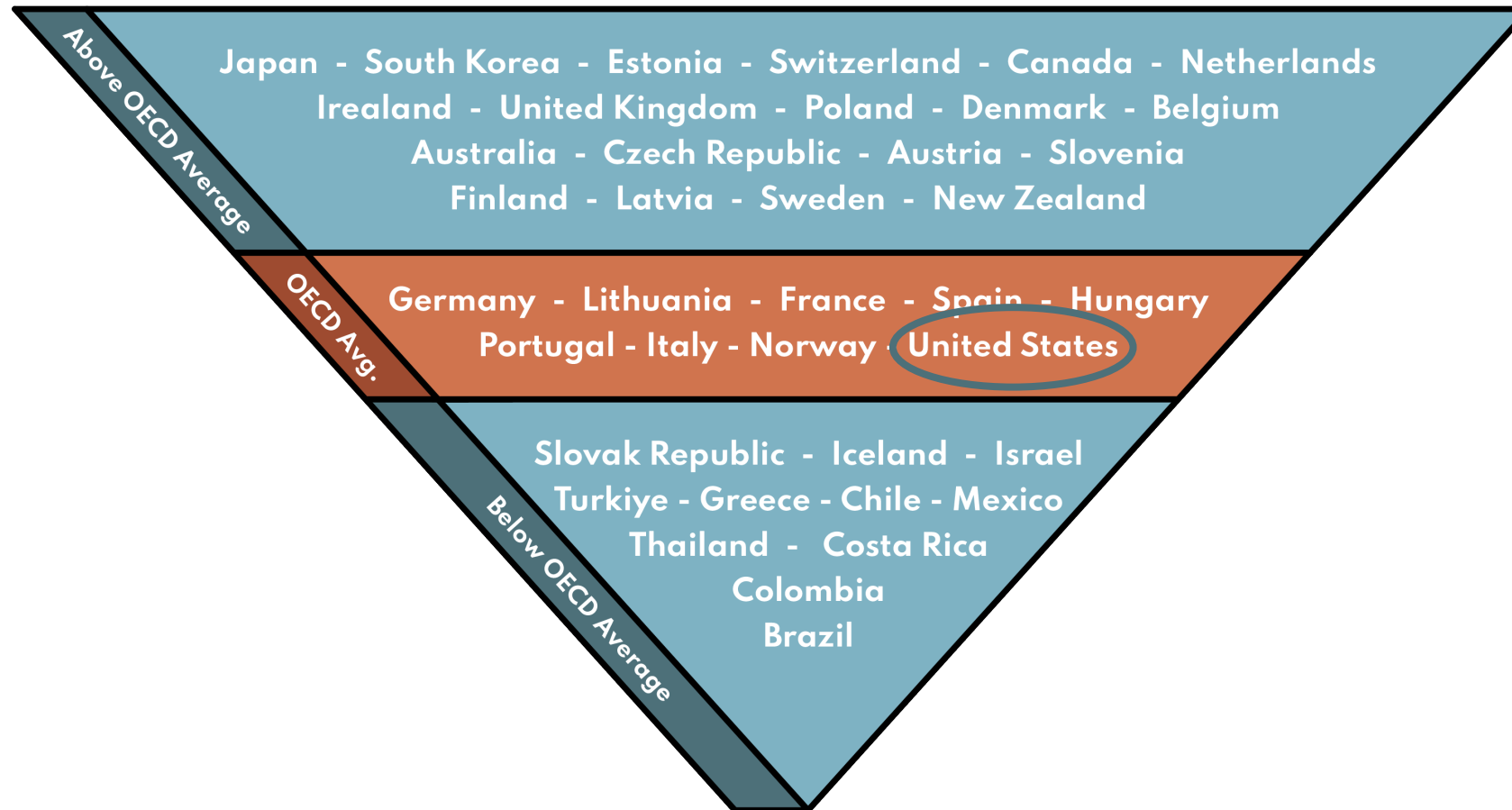
## PISA OECD Country Rankings for Math (2023)



# Why Education?

The United States is 28<sup>th</sup> out of 39 OECD Countries in math.

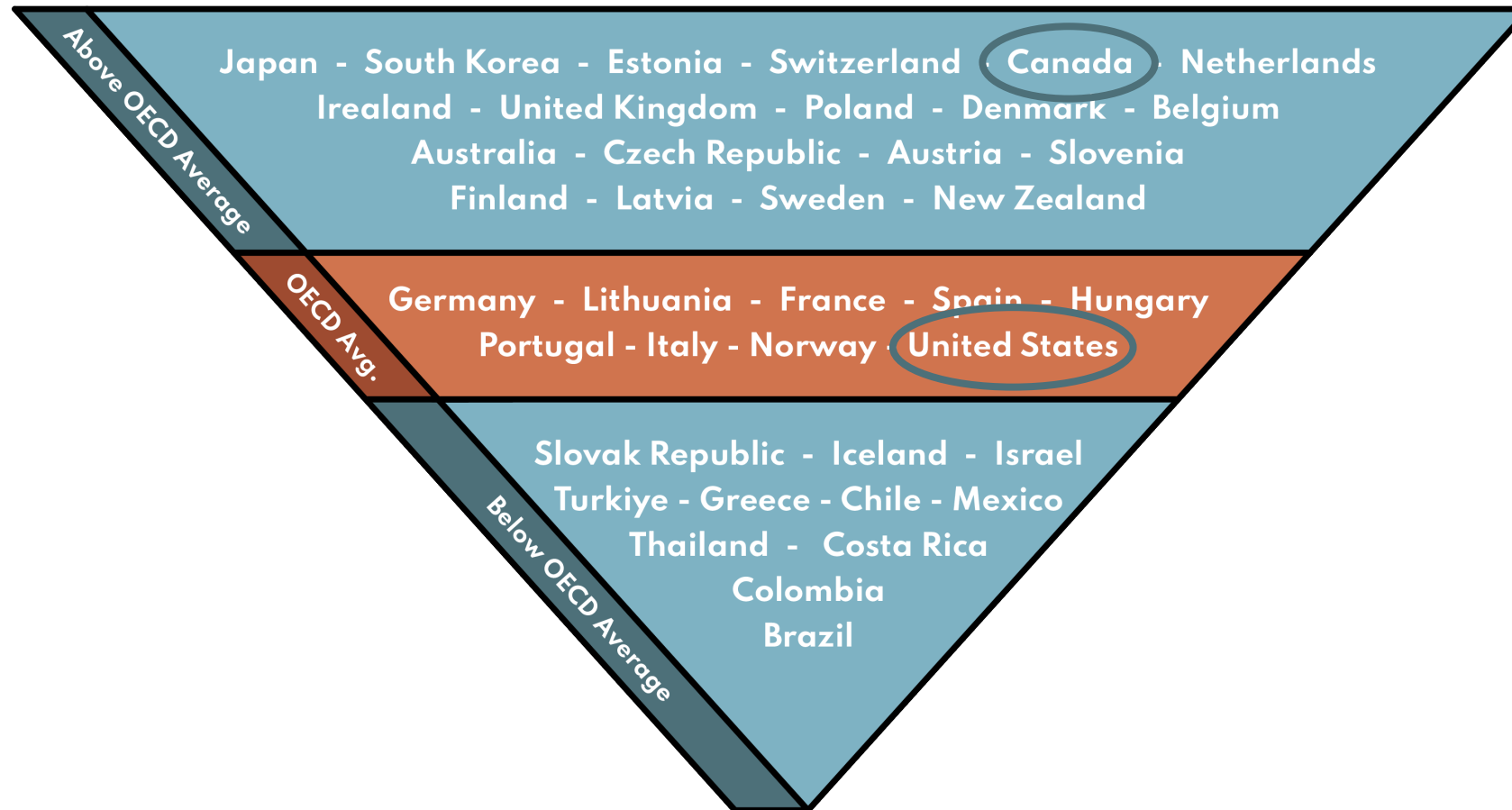
## PISA OECD Country Rankings for Math (2023)



# Why Education?

The United States is 28<sup>th</sup> out of 39 OECD Countries in math.

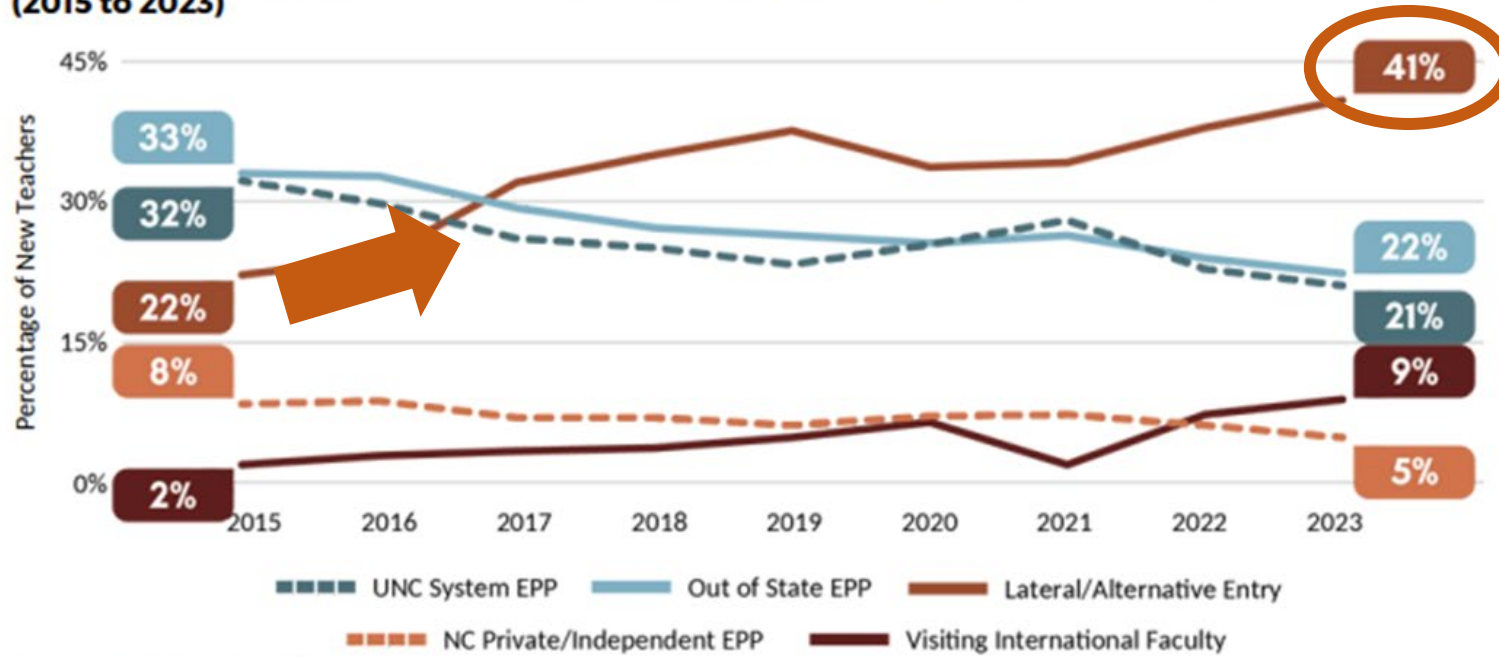
## PISA OECD Country Rankings for Math (2023)



# North Carolina's Growing Crisis

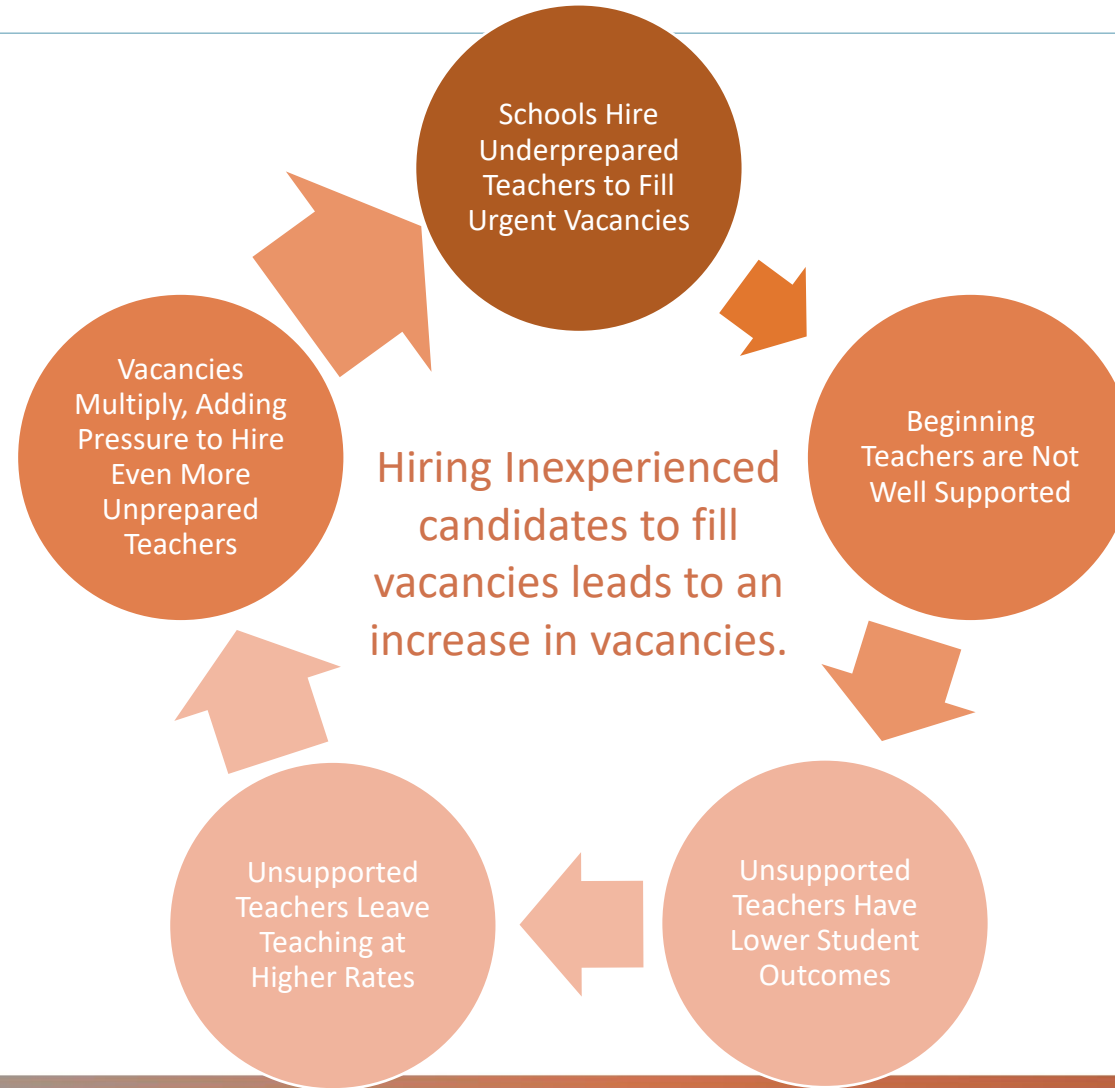
41% of new teachers entered with no formal training or classroom experience, leading to lower preparedness and effectiveness.

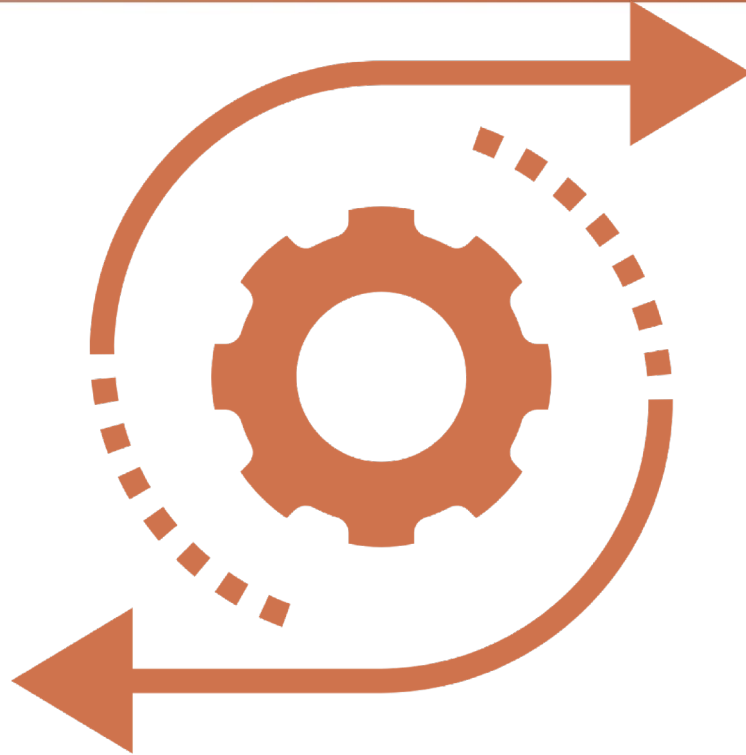
**EX I.2 - Distribution of Preparation Routes for Newly Hired K-12 Public School Teachers (2015 to 2023)**



Source: NC DPI (Data Request)

# The Vicious Cycle of Teacher Turnover





# Educator Innovation Theory of Change





**The best schools do one thing:  
Invest in good people. Period. Full stop.**



# The EDUCATOR INNOVATION PLAN



# The System is Flawed, by Design

---

## *Classrooms were designed around a “factory” approach:*

- ✓ Everyone in the building reports to the principal (50+ reports!).
- ✓ Principals opt-in to leadership roles and fund their own leadership development.
- ✓ The teaching profession was built on the old reality that women – 100 years ago – had fewer career options and recruitment wasn’t an issue.
- ✓ One teacher, one classroom model stifles collaboration and mentorship opportunities, treating teachers (and students) like one-size-fits-all widgets.
- ✓ Compensation strategies prioritize equal pay for all teachers without addressing student access to effective educators.

# The Educator Innovation Plan

Systems' Change: Investing in Good People.



The New NC Principal  
Fellows Program



TeachNC



Teacher  
Pay



Advanced  
Teaching Roles



Principal  
Pay



Teacher  
Apprenticeship



**600+**

Principals Prepared by  
the New North Carolina  
Principal Fellows Program



**54,000+**

Eligible Students Placed  
in an Advanced Math  
Course in 2023 Alone



**225,000+**

Students with Increased Access  
to Effective Educators Thanks to  
Advanced Teaching Roles (ATR)



**400+**

Schools Using ATR  
to Reimagine Their  
Organizational Structures



**9,000+**

Teaching Candidates  
Recruited Through  
TeachNC



**2X MORE**

Teachers in ATR Positions  
(2,700) Compared to Just  
2 Years Ago

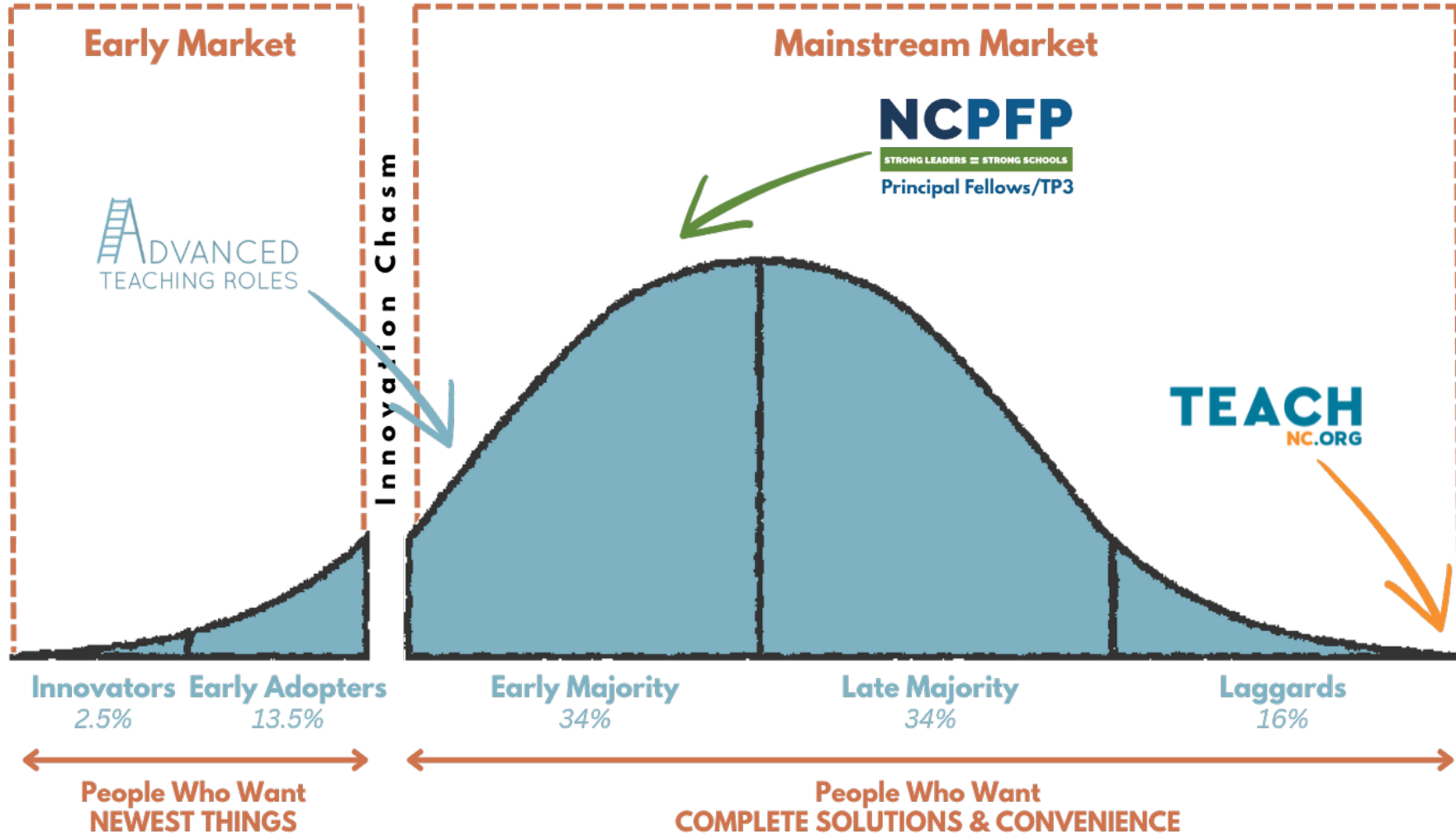


# Many More Innovations in North Carolina!

- ✓ NC Teaching Fellows
- ✓ Teaching as a Profession (High School CTE Course)
- ✓ District Initiatives:
  - Local Grow Your Own Efforts
  - Recruitment Bonuses for Hard to Staff Schools & Subjects
- ✓ SparkNC
- ✓ Career & College Promise
- ✓ And so much more!



# The Innovation Adoption Curve



# Innovation Lab Norms

**Be present.** We will minimize distractions and stay focused on meeting Innovation Lab goals.

**Participate.** We will fully engage with Innovation Lab content and activities, especially the breakout sessions and surveys.

**Support productive collaboration.** We will use a “Yes, and...” mindset to build on each other’s ideas and to address challenges as they arise.

**Share airtime equitably.** We will listen actively and invite the contribution of all members.

**Ensure a Safe Space.** We welcome new ideas, even those that may make us uncomfortable. We will not share or post on social media any participant statements or questions.

**Have grace.** We will be professional and supportive of each other in our work together.





# A Note about Social Media

We encourage you to share positive Innovation Lab learnings and takeaways using the hashtags below, while also asking you to keep participant conversations in confidence to create a safe space for dialogue.

**#NCEdLab2025**

**#EducatorInnov**

**#ElevateEducators**



# Afternoon Breakout Sessions

---

**EBC 7: Filling Vacancies Through Apprenticeship**

**EBC 8: Accelerating Teacher Pay Through Teacher Effectiveness**

**EBC 9: Reimagining the Pipeline to the Principalship**

