



Tailored Learning:



Defining and Identifying
Personalized Success for
North Carolina's Students

March 23, 2026

SAS Executive Briefing Center
Cary, North Carolina



The Journey to Success Is Not the Same for Every Student

Not every student learns at the same pace or starts their journey in the same place. But, for over a century, we have been thinking about the education system as if it were a flat map we give to our educators and students. Traditionally, this map has one route and one goal: get those students from “Point A” to “Point B” each year.

North Carolina’s teachers work hard every day to follow that map, but when they look up, not every student is starting in the same place. And when that map fails to reflect the true landscape – with its hills and valleys and blind spots – it becomes difficult for both teachers and students to know where they are.

What if there was a way to equip teachers and students with the skills determine where they *truly are* in their educational journey – and provide the tools they need to move forward? Today, we are thinking differently about the roadmaps we give our teachers and students so that they can navigate, together, toward their greatest potential.



2026 North Carolina Education Innovation Lab

March 23, 2026

- 10:00 am **Welcome & Opening Remarks**
Walter McDowell | Board Chair, BEST NC
- 10:05 am **From Conversation to Action: Why Tailored Learning, Why Now?**
Brenda Berg | President & CEO, BEST NC
- 10:25 am **National Perspectives Panel: The Promise — and Practical Reality of Tailored Learning**
Virgel Hammonds | Co-CEO, FullScale
Lisa McIntyre-Hite, Ph.D | Executive Vice-President and COO, Competency-Based Education Network
Moderator: Brenda Berg | BEST NC
- 11:00 am **Building the Foundation for Tailored Learning: Structures, Culture and Policy Alignment**
Kayla Siler | CBE Partnership, Research Triangle Institute
Angela Whitford-Narin | CEO, Second Mile Education Schools
Rachel Wright Junio | Golden Leaf Project Lead, NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI)
Moderator: Rupen Fofaria | Director of Board Operations and Policy, North Carolina State Board of Education
- 11:50 am **Remarks by the Honorable Josh Stein, Governor of North Carolina**
- 12:05 pm **Networking Lunch**
- 12:50 pm **Breakout Sessions: Round 1 (Attendees Choose One Topic)**
EBC 7: Classroom Practice and Instructional Design

INNOVATION LAB 2026 ONLINE HUB:

<https://bestnc.org/ncedlab26>



Find everything you need to engage in today's discussions:

- Meet the Speakers
- Learn More About the Planning Team
- Digital Conference Brief
- Additional Resources
- And More!



Meet the Planning Team



Rachel Candaso

2025 Wellcome Burroughs
Fund North Carolina
Teacher of the Year



Geoff Coltrane

Senior Director of
Government Affairs,
NC DPI



Dr. Jeni Corn

Social Sciences Research
Director, North Carolina
Collaboratory



Jamey Falkenburg

Strategic Initiatives
Group, Apple



Rupen Fofaria

Director of Operations
and Policy, North Carolina
State Board of Education



Dr. Michael Maher

Chief Accountability
Officer, NC DPI



Joel Moore

Director, Education
Commission of the States



Dr. Andrew Smith

Senior Policy Advisor,
North Carolina Senate



Dr. Vanessa Wrenn

Chief Information Officer,
NC DPI

Facilitators:

Jessica Avery

| AVID District Director, Pitt County Schools

Rachel Candaso

| 2025 North Carolina Teacher of the Year,
Pitt County Schools

Matt Daniels

| Assistant Principal at Pactolous Global,
School, Pitt County Schools

EBC 8: Leadership, Systems, and Policy Conditions

Facilitator:

Maureen Stover

| Vice President of Research & Engagement,
BEST NC

EBC 9: Scaling Tailored Learning Across North Carolina

Facilitators:

Dr. Lynn Moody

| President, SparkNC

Rachel Wright Junio

| NC DPI

1:20 pm **Breakout Sessions: Round 2 (Attendees Choose One Topic)**

EBC 7: Classroom Practice and Instructional Design

EBC 8: Enabling Conditions and Next Steps

Facilitator:

Geoff Coltrane

| Senior Director of Government Affairs, NC DPI

EBC 9: Scaling Tailored Learning Across North Carolina

2:15 pm **Measuring What Matters: Assessment & Accountability**

Leah Carper

| Director of Stakeholder Engagement,
Guilford County Schools

Nicholas Munyan-Penney

| Assistant Director of P-12 Policy, Ed Trust

Moderator: Brenda Berg

| BEST NC

2:55 pm **Closing Remarks**

Brenda Berg

| BEST NC



A Note About Social Media: We encourage you to share positive Innovation Lab takeaways using the hashtags **#NCEdLab26** & **#TailoredLearning** while also asking you to keep participant conversations in confidence to create a safe space for dialogue.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM BEST NC:



2026 North Carolina
Education Innovation Lab
Online Hub



2026 North Carolina
Education Innovation Lab
Conference Brief



*Facts & Figures:
Education in
North Carolina*



BEST NC's
Policy Brief
Catalog



Interactive
School Spending
Data Explorer



**A special thanks to BEST NC's members for their generous support,
and to the SAS Institute for hosting these important conversations.**