

NORTH
CAROLINA
NEW
SCHOOLS

INNOVATOR

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Welcome to INNOVATOR, an update on school and district transformation from North Carolina New Schools. Our newsletter aims to inform practitioners, policy makers, and friends of public education on innovation, workforce development, research and success stories from schools, districts and regions across the state. Please [contact us](#) to provide feedback and suggest ideas.

Early college grads gain record degrees



North Carolina's growing number of early college high schools reached a new milestone this spring, with more than half the 2,000-plus graduates in the class of 2013 earning an associate degree or two years of college credit in addition to a high school diploma.

At a time of intensifying focus on the readiness of high school students for college and the workforce, North Carolina's early colleges are proving an effective model for helping students gain the kinds of skills

needed for success in the increasingly competitive economy of the 21st century. Preliminary data shows the schools had a combined graduation rate of more than 95 percent, with more than eight of every 10 graduates earning at least a year of college credit.

The number of early college graduates has grown steadily since 2009, when fewer than 300 were the first to complete the innovative schools. The total number of graduates from some 70 state-supported early colleges with a graduating class this year is expected to exceed 2,000. The proportion of graduates earning associate degrees or two years of credit has also grown - from about 47 percent in 2010 to 52 percent this year, according to data provided by the schools.

"These results are a credit to the strong collaboration among public schools, higher education and leaders in government and business that's beginning to forge the seamless education system that North Carolina needs to create new opportunities for students and a workforce that's second to none," said Tony



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Meet an Innovator



Habit, president of NC New Schools. "Like other gains in education in North Carolina, this kind of success is the result of strong and consistent political leadership by members of both parties."

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Bill aims to expand school innovation

The state House has given unanimous approval to a bill that would create an education and workforce innovation program intended to support local and regional initiatives that focus on strong student preparation through active partnerships among schools, higher education and businesses.

House Speaker Thom Tillis said he backed the bill during a news conference earlier this month where he drew attention to North Carolina's education innovation efforts. He was joined by business leaders, legislators and educators from across the state.

Tillis said that the proposed legislation -- which would create a fund to provide incentives for investing in educational innovation -- would identify best practices and expand their reach across the state. Joining Tillis to discuss the bill were its key sponsor, Rep. Linda Johnson, a Republican from Cabarrus County, and co-sponsors Rep. Craig Horn of Union County and Rep. James Langdon, Jr., of Johnston County, both Republicans, and Rep. Joe Tolson, a Democrat representing Edgecombe and Martin counties.

Tillis also recognized a number of current initiatives, which he characterized as "extraordinary examples of excellence across the state."

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NC hosts national early college meeting

More than 500 early college leaders, administrators and higher education partners will meet Oct. 29-30 in the Triangle for a national conference on early college high schools, which allow students to earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree or as much as two years of college credit.

The growing early college movement now includes an estimated 400 schools nationwide, with 76 in North Carolina alone. Tens of thousands of early college students are completing college coursework in high school, saving time and money toward earning college credentials - particularly minority and low-income youth.

[Watch the video here.](#)

Brittany Devasure, a new graduate of **Early College of Forsyth**, won a \$5,000 scholarship this month for a simple, minute-long [video](#) that captures the dangers of distracted driving with an inventive blend of whimsy and humor.

Her video took first prize among high school entries in Project Yellow Light, a national scholarship competition for high school and college students aimed at encouraging peers to practice safe driving habits. The video was distributed by the Ad Council as a public service announcement for broadcast this month by more than 1,600 TV stations nationwide.

Devasure discovered a love for video with support from her teachers at Early College of Forsyth who gave students the choice of writing papers or producing videos for class assignments.

Devasure created her winning entry in just three hours one night with help from a friend, who appears in the video. According to competition rules, entrants could not use footage of a person actually driving a car while filming. Devasure got creative and used a chalk board wall in her friend's living room as the backdrop for her video.

"I used a stop-motion technique, which is my favorite," Devasure said. "I took 675 pictures to produce the video. My friend and I kept thinking of things to add as we went along. She got really tired

Co-hosted by NC New Schools and Boston-based Jobs for the Future, the conference will explore the policies and practices required to consistently graduate fragile learners and first-generation college goers fully prepared for success beyond high school. Through case studies, research, and effective early college designs and supports, participants will explore the development of the early college movement across the country including second-generation models connected deeply to workforce and economic needs.

All educators, administrators, policymakers, and thought leaders are invited to learn how early college designs can prepare students for college and careers through proven instructional strategies, emerging technology, and partnerships with colleges and employers.

Register by June 30 to pay our "early bird" rate. Want to present? North Carolina New Schools and conference co-host Jobs for the Future invite proposals for compelling presentations showcasing best practices, emerging technology, innovative ideas, and exemplars of early college high schools. Send us your ideas!

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Teachers, engineers share know-how

Two small-town high school teachers walk into a conference on international automation and power.

No, it's not the beginning of a strange joke. It's actually the set-up for an exciting opportunity to link STEM learning in the classroom to the latest career business opportunities in North Carolina.

Science teacher George Bischoff and English teacher Brittani Mallard, both from Duplin Early College High School, were selected as ABB teacher externs this spring. A global leader in power and automation technologies, Zurich-based ABB - with North American corporate headquarters in Cary - is the largest supplier of industrial motors and drives, generators to the wind industry, and power grids worldwide. As a member of the NC New Schools Energy & Sustainability Industry Innovation Council, ABB offered this externship as part of the council's focus on deepening connections between industry and education through meaningful work-based experiences for teachers and students.

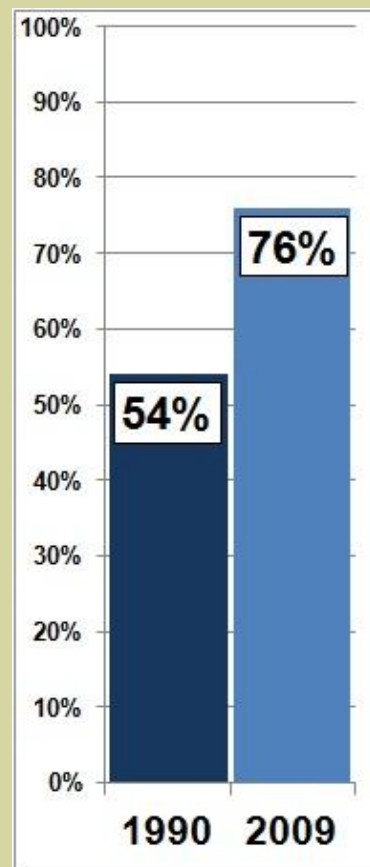
In March, Bischoff and Mallard attended the ABB Automation & Power World Conference in Orlando, Fla. On a mission of true collaboration between education and business, they went to learn from the engineers and the engineers from them. While observing presenters at the conference in order to help

because for continuity, she couldn't move when I was setting up a new shot. I had to edit the video overnight and add music before submitting my video by the deadline the next day."

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Data snapshot

Nationally, the percentage of high school graduates taking Algebra II/trigonometry has grown over the last two decades -- a gain for college readiness.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, [The Condition of Education](#), 2013

engineers refine their training sessions for the 2014 conference, the two teachers were also able to make connections with industry experts that will influence their own classrooms back in Duplin County.

"ABB wants to help their presenters be more engaging and effective," says Mallard. "They're engineers, not teachers, so they're looking to see how they can make the conferences better. But they're also trying to interact with the local community and find ways to get kids of all ages interested in engineering as a career."

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More news from New Schools ...

[Gallup poll:](#) Students want 21st century skills, but schools often aren't teaching them.
Education Week reports on a poll that shows too few students learn skills needed for work.

["Why do I teach?"](#) A Notre Dame professor writes in this New York Times column about the tension between teaching to inspire excitement for learning and teaching to help students get jobs.