

Land of Sky P20 Council

Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties

Collaborative Case Study

“In a two-year period, we hired an executive director for the Council, established a leadership team that meets regularly, and built a cache of funding resources to sustain its work.”

“We took an important step toward sustainability by hiring an executive director and recruiting a governing council to steer the LEAC.”

What is the Land of Sky P20 Council?

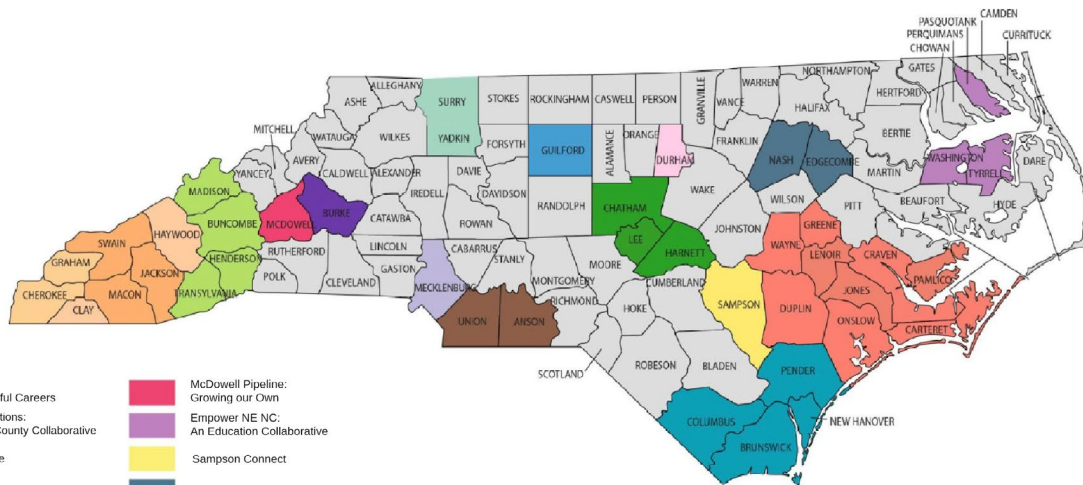
The P20 Council (Council) is a myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaborative (LEAC) working in Henderson, Buncombe, Madison, and Transylvania counties to coordinate the educational and workforce resources across the Land of Sky Council of Governments region. The Council has spent the past two years assessing available resources and tracking progress through data. The collaborative has engaged regional school systems, community organizations, community colleges, and employers to identify measures that will make progress on items ranging from boosting completion rates for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to redesigning credential offerings.





Relationships and Connections: Primary Partners

myFutureNC Local Educational Collaboratives



- Our Future Cape Fear: A Roadmap to Meaningful Careers
- Central Carolina Connections: Chatham, Harnett, Lee County Collaborative
- Queen City Collaborative
- OurFutureE3NC Educate, Equip, Excel
- GuilfordJobs2030
- AchieveHIGHTS!
- Land of Sky Education & Workforce Collaborative
- Durham Opportunity Collaborative
- McDowell Pipeline: Growing our Own
- Empower NE NC: An Education Collaborative
- Sampson Connect
- #workHERE
- Surry-Yadkin_IMPACT
- Our Future in UNISON
- Work in Burke

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

Prepares students to meet the workforce demands of the region by providing credentialing and coursework opportunities.

Asheville City Schools

Works to decrease dropout rates and increase post-secondary placement rates among students by providing programming and opportunities.

Buncombe County Schools

Works to decrease dropout rates and increase post-secondary placement rates among students by providing programming and opportunities.

UNC Asheville

Collaborates with partner organizations to recruit and retain a diverse student body.





Practices and Outcomes

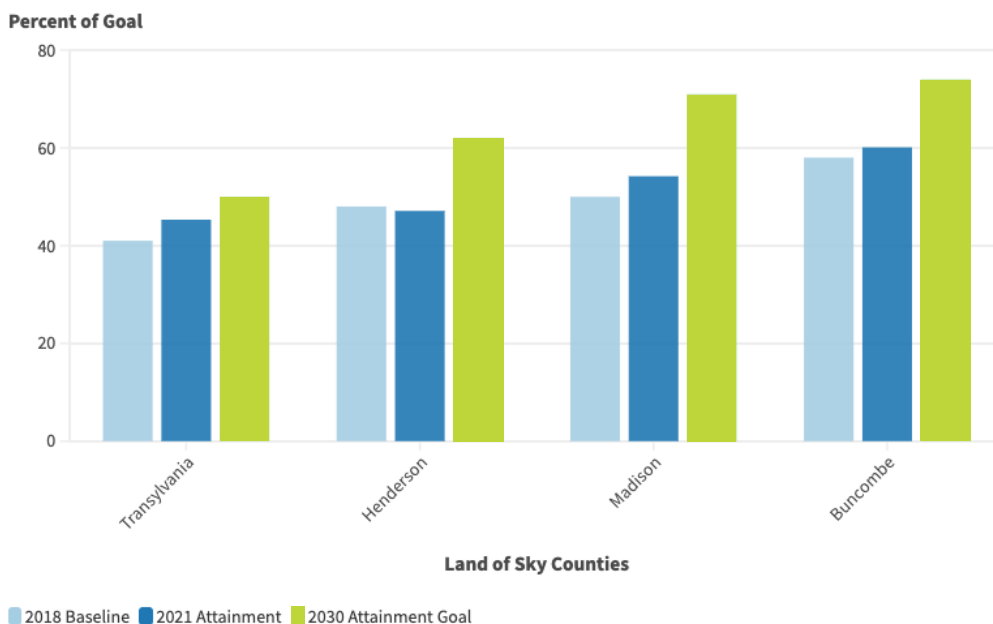
The Land of Sky P20 Council used its time as a LEAC to gather information from partners, local government officials, chamber of commerce leaders, and institutions of higher education in the region to conduct asset mapping, track initiatives spearheaded by the multiple groups, identify gaps in the work, and make policy recommendations.

Through their information-gathering phase, specific focus areas emerged: Pre-K enrollment, alignment of Career and Technical Education (CTE) career pathways, dual enrollment opportunities, work-based learning, high school graduation rates, college retention and completion rates, and broader educational and workforce alignment.

To tackle these focus areas, the Council established five working groups: Communications and Connections, Credentials of Value, Pathways to Enrollment through FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), Policy and Regulations, and Benchmarking (Data/Metrics). Each team is tasked with tackling a specific issue within the context of larger systemic barriers in the region. The working group structure has been successful, allowing the collaborative to engage many partners without slowing the work or decreasing the quality of the conversations.

In a two-year period, the group hired an executive director for the Council, established a leadership team that meets regularly, and built a cache of funding resources to sustain its work. In addition, the LEAC has established a system for assessing unfilled jobs in the region (and the credentialing requirements needed to fill them) and created a resource guide for all stakeholders and a website to enhance information sharing.

myFutureNC Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives Measuring Progress





Policies and Other Barriers

Each of the four counties in the region is unique, making it challenging to coordinate among all partners in a way that drives the entire region forward. As a result, the group has continued approaching the collaborative's work with county-specific goals and completion requirements that fit into the larger regional goals.

To reach its overall local attainment goal, the Council has determined the region must enroll more eligible 4-year-olds in Pre-K, increase the number of ninth graders graduating from high school in four years, and increase credential-workforce alignment in health sciences, transportation, distribution, and logistics. Sustainable funding is needed to continue and expand the work to address these goals.



Resource Flows and Sustainability

The Land of Sky P20 Council took an important step toward sustainability by hiring an executive director and recruiting a governing council to steer the LEAC. The collaborative has operationalized the region's broad needs and goals through actionable working groups with measurable goals.

All four counties aim to improve alignment for postsecondary degrees with labor force needs in health sciences (all levels), transportation, distribution, logistics (below bachelor's degree), and finance (bachelor's degree). Additional county-specific goals are outlined below:

Buncombe County

- 360 more eligible 4-year-olds to enroll in NC Pre-K program
- 97 more 9th graders to graduate within four years

Henderson County

- 125 more eligible 4-year-olds to enroll in NC Pre-K program
- 29 more 9th graders to graduate within four years

Madison County

- 22 more eligible 4-year-olds to enroll in the NC Pre-K program
- 7 more 9th graders to graduate within four years

Transylvania County

- NC Pre-K Enrollment Goal Met!
- 31 more 9th graders to graduate within four years





Mental Models and Power Dynamics

This LEAC has led the way in using data to drive decision-making and support storytelling. While storytelling is certainly not new to the region, the use of hard numbers is a shift in how the stakeholders in this collaborative convey their success. In addition, the four counties covered are very diverse. The LEAC has intentionally ensured that each county is treated as an equal partner as it works across and within them to raise educational attainment.

