

# **Excellence in Academics:**

## *The North Carolina Plan*

**Planning a New Learning Environment for  
North Carolina K-12 Schools**

**North Carolina Education Coalition**

Today:

COMMON CORE MATH:  
Where 5 lines and 4  
dots equals....

Write the numbers.

3. | | | | | ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
○

4. | | | | | | | | | ○ ○

...something.



**ROTTENeCARDS** USER CARD



# The North Carolina Plan

- A five-year plan with its primary goal to replace Common Core with a set of standards that places an emphasis on critical thinking across the curriculum
- Standards were to be the “best of the best” and chosen from the highest rated sets, both in the U.S. and overseas; MN, MA, TX, CA, SI, SK, and others
- More than three thousand pages of standards and accompanying information was reviewed
- Maximum effort was made to ensure that strands were consistent and continuous



# The North Carolina Plan

- Once the standards were selected, a second walk-through was done to ensure critical thinking was emphasized, utilizing a full set of Critical Thinking Competency Standards
- Example lessons were generated to illustrate the difference between a typical lesson and one remodeled using critical thinking
- ELA and Mathematics both received a lot of attention during the walk-through; our standards are clear and simple, vocabulary is easy to understand for teachers, parents, etc.

# The North Carolina Plan

- Math standards use the MN framework that Jim Milgram said were the only state standards that satisfied all of the criteria for “college readiness”
- Teachers complained that they didn’t understand the CC standards; that will not be a problem with ours
- After interviewing many teachers and early childhood experts, some standards have been moved to other grade levels for developmental appropriateness; topics left out of CC have been added at age appropriate levels



# The North Carolina Plan

*Our recommendation is for an immediate (2015-2016 school year) return to the traditional high school math sequence of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-calculus, Calculus to prevent further damage to the education of current high school students. Teachers are asking for this.*

*Those students who have completed one or more levels of Math I, Math II, and Math III will need assistance in remediation, but further delay would result in creating difficulties for even more students, requiring even more remediation for even more students.*

*Teachers already know how to teach those traditional classes and do not need further training, just a return to what they were doing. Textbooks already exist in the schools. If they have been prematurely discarded for some reason, sufficient material is available online until they can be replaced.*

# The North Carolina Plan

Common Core's ELA standards are NOT rigorous, internationally benchmarked, nor is there any research to support Common Core's stress on writing instead of reading. Also, there is NO research to support Common Core's stress on informational reading instead of literary study in the English class.

Common Core's ELA standards are actually content- and culture-free skills. It is not clear that *poetry* as a genre can be well addressed by English teachers in a Common Core-oriented classroom. Nor can they easily choose to do so in the reduced amount of time that English teachers are to spend on literary texts during an academic year.

*Sandra Stotsky: The Fate of Poetry in a Common Core-based Curriculum; paper presented at the ALSCW Conference. April 2014.*

# The North Carolina Plan

## Common Core

- Contains learning gaps
- Foundational skills are often missing
- Inappropriate spacing (introduces new concepts too fast)
- Little memorization (Bloom's taxonomy)
- Leads too often to a given answer or specified agenda
- Too much informational text; not enough balance

## North Carolina Plan

- Few, if any, learning gaps
- Includes foundational skills
- Uses appropriate spacing
- More memorization-phonics, genres, spelling, parts of speech, etc.
- Teaches critical thinking skills
- More balanced; fiction and non-fiction material at appropriate levels

# The North Carolina Plan

## Grades 6-12 Literary Study in the ELA Classroom - CC

Nonfiction or informational reading has been weighted more than imaginative literature in ELA at all grade levels – with ten standards for the former and nine for the latter at each grade level; this proportion presents a drastic decline in literary study.

## Grades 6-12 Literary Study in the ELA Classroom - NCP

There are more standards for literary study than for non-literary study throughout the grades; *this helps to balance the fact that elementary teachers usually teach reading in all content areas as well as in the ELA classes so that informational reading is already taught more than literary reading in K-6*

# The North Carolina Plan

Honestly, our Literature is a reflection of our culture and its values, we suggest:

- an increase in classical American literature reflecting Judeo-Christian values on which the country was founded, rather than highly sexualized contemporary texts that aren't even written in a literary manner.

- a more positive treatment of historical US documents as literature, along with their background.

- a return to teaching context of all literature and whole literary works, instead of excerpts with no context.

- American literature as a celebration of our country's values

- emphasis on free speech and thought

# The North Carolina Plan

## An example of a remodeled lesson-

### **First Grade: Remodeled lesson plan with Critical Thinking- “Corduroy”**

#### ***Objectives of the Remodeled Lesson (K-1)***

#### **The Students Will:**

- compare perspectives of a mother and daughter in a story
- explore the thoughts underlying the feelings regarding what makes things valuable
- generate and assess solutions
- clarify values and develop criteria to evaluate toys

A Teddy bear named Corduroy sits on a shelf at a large department store. A little girl sees him and wants to buy him, but her mother says no because they are out of time and the teddy bear is missing a button. After the store closes, the bear searches for his button because he wants to be bought by the child. He looks all over the store and finally ends up in the bed department where he sees a button on a mattress and tries to pull it off. He falls off the mattress, knocks over a lamp and the night guard finds him and returns him to the toy department. The child returns, buys him, sews on the button and Corduroy happily joins her family.

Students are asked questions like the following: Who is Corduroy? Where is he? How did he get his name? Does anyone know what the material called corduroy looks and feels like? (Pass around a piece of corduroy.) Why did Corduroy go out into the store? Why was it important to find his button? Where was he when he tried to pull one up? Why couldn't he get it? How did the story end?

#### **Critique**

The original lesson focused on a lot of factual recall and a narrow line of questioning. No other point of view was suggested, nor was there any personal tie-in.

#### ***Strategies Used to Remodel***

- S-25 reasoning dialogically: comparing perspectives, interpretations, or theories
- S-19 generating or assessing solutions
- S-15 developing criteria for evaluation: clarifying values and standards
- S-4 exploring thoughts underlying feelings and feelings underlying thoughts
- S-26 reasoning dialectically: evaluating perspectives, interpretations, or theories

To lay the foundation for exploring thoughts underlying feelings and comparing perspectives in the story, the teacher could first set up a role play in which several children are wearing pictures of toys while a mother and child walk past shopping for the best toy. After a few minutes, stop and ask the toys how they felt, then ask the child how he or she was choosing, then ask the mother how she was choosing. Read the story aloud and ask the following questions to encourage students to explore the story's ~~meaning and assess Corduroy's solution:~~

# The North Carolina Plan

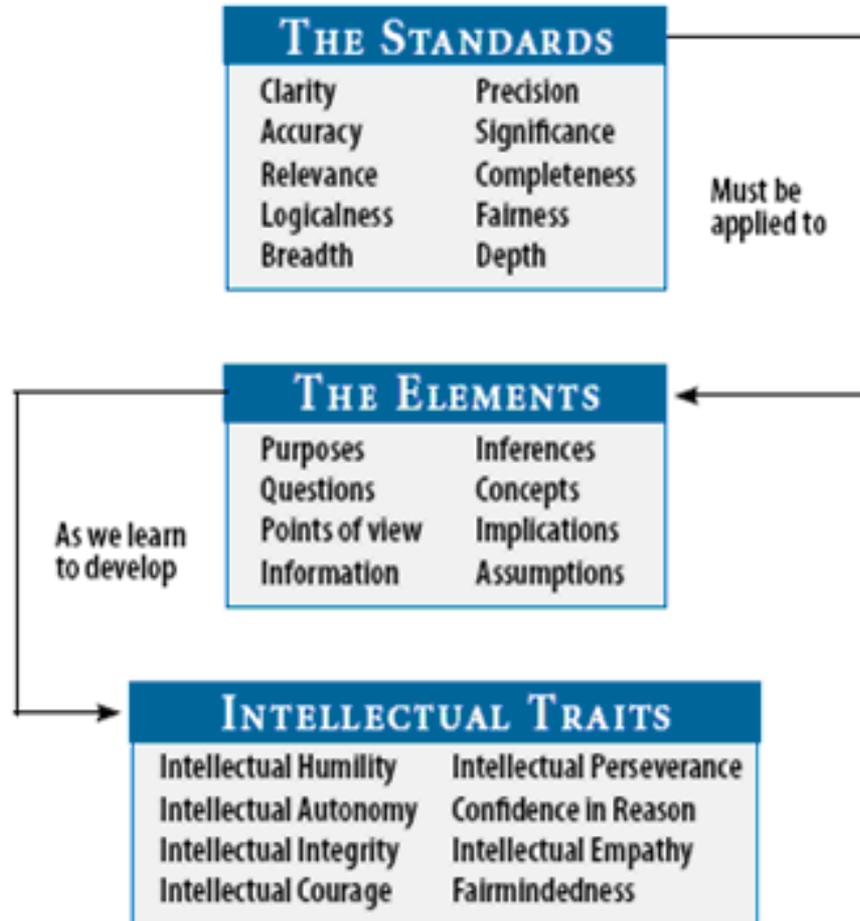
- The critical thinking that we use is the Paulian methodology created and developed by Dr. Richard Paul, Foundation for Critical Thinking
- His scaffolding: “critical thinking is thinking about your thinking while you’re thinking in order to make your thinking better,” or briefly put, “it is self-improvement (in thinking) through standards (that assess thinking).”
- His efforts to improve critical thinking and reasoning skills span over 35 years
- Dr. Paul facilitated the Greensboro Plan

# The North Carolina Plan



# The North Carolina Plan

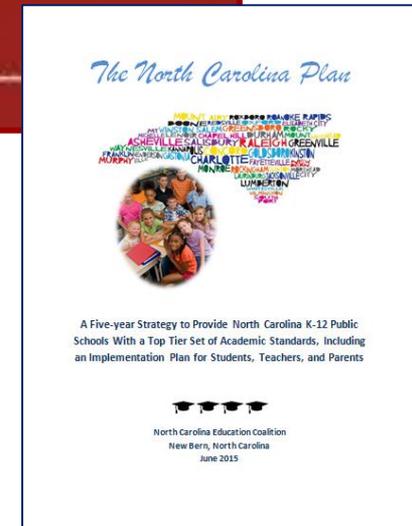
Critical thinkers routinely apply the intellectual standards to the elements of reasoning in order to develop intellectual traits.



# The North Carolina Plan

- The Greensboro Plan has been duplicated in several school districts around the country
- These schools have shown marked improvements in testing and classroom activities
- Schools have a disparity in demographics and household income levels

The Greensboro Plan:  
Infusing  
Reasoning & Writing  
into the  
K-12 Curriculum



# The North Carolina Plan

- The Effect of Richard Paul's Universal Elements and Standards of Reasoning on Twelfth Grade Composition by J. Stephen Scanlan, San Diego. 1998.
- Substantive Critical Thinking as Developed by the Foundation for Critical Thinking Proves Effective in Raising SAT and ACT Test Scores by Dr. John Cook, Principal, Westside High School, 2001-2006
- Teaching Critical Thinking Skills to Fourth Grade Students Identified as Gifted and Talented by Debra Connerly, Graceland University. 1998.

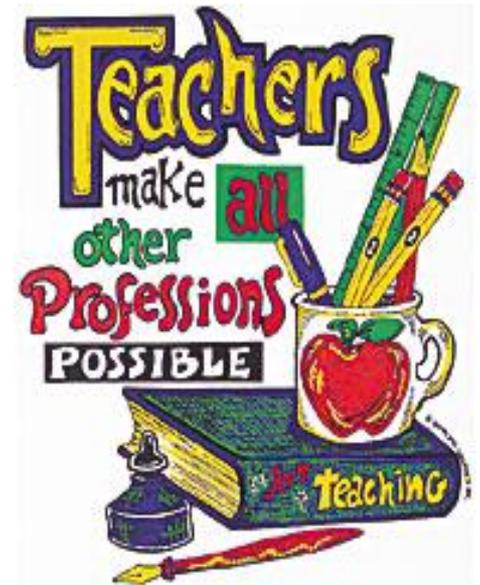
# The North Carolina Plan

- The Foundation for Critical Thinking was founded in 1990 to support the work of the Center for Critical Thinking, founded in 1980 by Dr. Paul. Both are located at Sonoma State University in California
- The Center for Critical Thinking conducts advanced research and disseminates information on critical thinking. It has worked with the College Board, the National Education Association, the U.S. Department of Education as well as numerous colleges, universities, and school districts



# The North Carolina Plan

- The Greensboro Plan also concentrated on the teachers, training them to be critical thinkers in order to teach critical thinking - an important aspect; in fact, it was called “long term staff development”
- Studies have shown that, while most teachers think they are able to teach it, the majority are not capable of doing it effectively



# The North Carolina Plan

- Critical thinking insertion into the framework will adhere to the “Critical Thinking Competency Standards” published by the Foundation for Critical Thinking
- As was the case for the Greensboro Plan, teachers will receive initial and follow-on training to become proficient in teaching critical thinking, with the goal of becoming certified
- The Foundation for Critical Thinking offers online workshops and courses to augment any training sessions held on-site (please see TTP)

# The North Carolina Plan

- Because the North Carolina Plan includes several implementation actions, it is ahead of other alternatives that only address standards
- While implementation has traditionally been left to the LEA's, we believe that some guidance is helpful, if not necessary, in order to facilitate better implementation across the state
- Hence, a suggested training plan (TTP) and some suggestions for a budget that saves the taxpayers money

# The North Carolina Plan

- As the initial action in our Teacher Training Plan (TTP), we will hire 240 teachers to act as Facilitators (year 1); 120 will be Math-oriented, the other 120 will be ELA
- Facilitators will attend a class taught by the FCT for their certification to teach critical thinking
- Upon certification, Facilitators will serve the school districts across the state (115 districts); 1 Math and 1 ELA for each district plus extras for special assignment



# The North Carolina Plan

- Facilitators would help teach their district's faculty members to spread the expertise and mentor teachers struggling with critical thinking teaching skills
- As they were the primary trainers for the Greensboro Plan, The Foundation for Critical Thinking has offered to partner with our team and help with resources for the implementation
- The Foundation has recently upgraded their distance training facility to a state-of-the-art wide band network for streaming video and using video conferencing for training



# The North Carolina Plan

- Since North Carolina has invested heavily in infrastructure, the NCREN and associated backbone will be used to foster initial and follow-on training in-state
- Training costs would be better managed through the use of distance learning and on-site workshops by the Facilitators
- Between salaries for the new hires, costs for the certification classes for the Facilitators, as well as per diem for teachers attending workshops, this plan will spend ~ \$26.6M the first year and perhaps as high as ~ \$36M



# The North Carolina Plan

- Speaking of cost-
- The North Carolina Plan is a grass roots effort and will not require any acquisition costs (we're free!)
- But other areas include new technology, assessments, and materials
- Technology is an easy one; our plan keeps much of the same projected expenditures as does DPI (\$173.14M over five years), except that we would utilize the vendors more effectively and not limit them to a certain few



# The North Carolina Plan

- Materials are another area where money could be more effectively spent
- Many textbooks are now available via the Internet or as eBooks with licensing that allows reproduction of the material; majority of these cost much less than standard textbooks
- An example is the Critical Thinking Company whose textbooks can be obtained in eBook form which then allows for either a specific number of computers to be used, or network licensing to be obtained

# The North Carolina Plan

There are a myriad of free eBooks, software, and materials for teachers available via the web; we will be providing a repository of teachers' aids and tools as well



# The North Carolina Plan

- Assessments have received a lot of attention due to the frequency and data mining associated with them
- SBAC claims that it costs \$19.81 per test per student for testing grades 3-8 and 11 for over 786k students; over 5 years this amounts to \$77.873M
- Our plan returns assessment to NC State who was in charge of assessments prior to the SBAC; their estimate is \$10.03 per student or \$39.428M over five years with fewer tests and less data mining

# The North Carolina Plan

- According to Pioneer Institute, DPI projected that it would spend \$458.5M over a five-year period to maintain Common Core
- The breakdown was: \$173.14M new technology, \$149.14M for professional dev., \$77.855M for assessments, and \$62.57M for materials
- For the North Carolina Plan, it breaks down to: \$174M new technology, \$132.25M professional dev., \$39.428M assessments, and \$45M for materials – total \$390.678M; a savings of \$67.822M

# What does all of this mean?

- The North Carolina Plan includes standards that are clear, challenging, and based on critical thinking competencies; they adhere to the best of who we are, advocating free speech and the liberties of our country
- Standards that are the “best of the best”
- An implementation methodology that will enable local school districts to implement the standards with teacher participation and less confusion
- A plan that will engage teachers in developing their curriculum for a comprehensive critical thinking-based learning environment

# What does all of this mean?

- The North Carolina Plan invites parents to once again become engaged with their children; instead of not understanding their children's homework and feeling disassociated
- A five-year plan that will enable teachers to work toward proficiency in critical thinking competencies as well as their own subject (this is NOT the same as overall teacher proficiency)
- And, a significant savings to the taxpayers of approximately \$68M

# Our Partners and Advisors

- Partners



- Advisors

**Dr. Sandra Stotsky, ELA Standards and Curriculum**

**Dr. James Milgram, Math Standards and Curriculum**

**Ms. Judy Kidd, Head, Classroom Teachers Association, NC**

**Mrs. Kim Fink, Legislative Affairs, Common Core**

- Other Contributors

**Administration Staff, Guilford County Schools, NC**

**Numerous supporters, teachers, and interviewees**



# Summary

Our students deserve a critical thinking-based and challenging set of standards with an accompanying set of learning objectives and a teacher-developed curriculum

Our teachers deserve better initial and follow-on training and preparation for teaching our children how to learn and be better prepared for life's many experiences

Parents deserve a real say in determining how their children are educated. They cannot and should not be separated from their children's homework and classroom activities by a set of standards that is confusing and illogical

The North Carolina Plan is based on successful, challenging, and proven standards and competencies that will provide North Carolina K-12 students with a top-notch educational path to their futures. It involves students, teachers, and parents in the process. The key is that our students should not have to suffer from a dumbed-down, everyone-is-mediocre path that cripples our students as they prepare for life

# Our Goal

Our goal is the best education system in the world, where children love learning, teachers love teaching, and parents aren't having more trouble with their first grader's homework than they did with their own. Right here in North Carolina.

## Final food for thought:

*What if doctors created a new vaccine that doesn't work, is harmful, even very harmful to some, but the government is going to continue to give it to your children without your permission because we've spent so much money on it and have so much of it.*

How would you feel about that?

**Less of this!!!**



**More of this!!!**



# Questions?



**Thank you!**

**North Carolina Education Coalition**

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# *The North Carolina Plan*

[www.northcarolinaplan.com](http://www.northcarolinaplan.com)

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