

You Decide: What is the State of Our State's Education?

By Dr. Mike Walden, North Carolina Cooperative Extension: The kinds of jobs needed in the economy have dramatically changed in the last century. One hundred years ago most North Carolinians worked on the farm. Knowledge about farming was passed from generation to generation with little need for "book-learning." The stamina and strength to endure back-breaking work day after day were the main requirements for success. The dawn of the manufacturing age and the growth of a city made educational fundamentals, like reading and math, important for more jobs. As a result, more educational attended formal schools, and initially eighth-grade, and then high-school, graduation rates soared.

In recent decades the nature of work has changed again. Machines and technology are doing more of the work on the farms and in the factories. They are even starting to replace humans in service jobs where routine tasks can be programmed. What is now highly valued in the job market are individuals with skills to do what machines and technology cannot (yet) do – respond to unpredictable situations, make decisions requiring analysis of data and information, and manage people and resources in complex settings. These are termed analytical and managerial skills.

In North Carolina, it is estimated close to 40 percent of all jobs require these skills, double the percentage from four decades ago. There are forecasts that more than 60 percent of all jobs will employ individuals with analytical and managerial skills by mid-century. And what's the link to education? Developing analytical and managerial skills in individuals usually requires higher levels of education – that is, more than high school. But, of course, to reach college a student has to do well in K-12 grades. So the need to ramp up our analytical and managerial skill base is a challenge for the entire educational system.

There have been recent encouraging signs. Just since 2000, the percentage of adults in our state with a bachelor's degree or higher has increased six percentage points, almost a percentage point faster than in the nation. Half of the gains were for advanced degrees (master's degrees and higher). The state's scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress – considered the "gold standard" for measuring performance in elementary schools – have continued to rise, although the rate of improvement slowed in the last decade. And, the number of high-school dropouts in the state is down more than 50 percent in the last decade.

Still, there are concerns. In almost one-third of North Carolina's counties, less than 15 percent of the adults have a college degree and more than 8 percent of the adults do not have a high school degree. In the state's public universities, nearly one-third of students don't complete a degree within six years, and for the state's universities colleges, just shy of 60 percent of students don't finish within six years. Although North Carolina is included among the states with low public college and university tuition and fees rates, these costs have been rising – even after adjusting for inflation and financial aid – for more than a decade.

So what can we do? At the K-12 level, there is a continuous search for the best methods and programs to improve student performance. While this debate has been ongoing for decades, today we can benefit from new research linking teaching techniques to the ultimate labor-market earnings of students. This allows educators and policy-makers to compare, for example, the relative benefits of putting resources into pre-K programs, reduced class sizes or teacher training. These studies can be monitored and analyzed for guidance on how best to spend educational dollars.

There's also an emerging recognition that while many promising occupations require a four-year college degree, there are others requiring much less. Training for some of these occupations can begin at the high-school level in collaboration with the closest community college. Several school systems in North Carolina have already implemented this idea.

At the college and university level, more teaching in the future will likely be done utilizing technology. The teaching technology of the future will be specific, adaptive and responsive to the individual, thereby allowing students to proceed at their own pace to a degree. Greater use of technology could also help contain college costs by increasing the efficiencies of faculties and facilities.

Because teaching methods will be undergoing change with some inevitable missteps along the way – there may be a move for standardized national competency tests for many college majors. As is already done for lawyers and accountants, these tests would certify a mastery of knowledge by the student and would communicate that competency to potential employers.

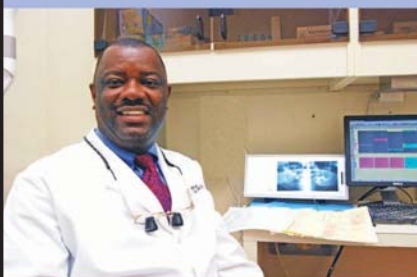
Finally, our future higher education system will have to make it easier for older individuals to change careers. Many futurists think both the downsizing of existing occupations and the creation of new ones will accelerate in the years ahead. If true, then more working adults – many of whom with families to support – will have to quickly retrain and re-skill themselves. To help them, as well as our state economy, we will have to make the transition and training available and easy.

Education has been at the core of our economy for 100 years, and its importance will likely accelerate in the next 100 years. For our economy to adapt and improve, education will have to do so first. You decide how!

Dr. Mike Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor and North Carolina Cooperative Extension economist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics of North Carolina State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He teaches and writes on personal finance, economic outlook and public policy.

U. Phillip Igbinalolor DMD & Associates P.A.

Cosmetic & General Dentistry for the Entire Family



We Accept NC Medicaid and NC Health Choice • New patients are accepted

Fellow Academy of General Dentistry • Dental Implant Restoration
Preventative & Periodontal Cleanings • Protective Sealants • Porcelain Crowns / Bridges
Tooth Colored Fillings • Bleaching / Whitening • Digital X-rays
Simple & Surgical Extractions • Root Canals • Full & Partial Dentures • Denture Repair

CHARLOTTE

704-494-8484

2416 West Sugar Creek Road • University • Derita Area

www.upidental.com
uphill@upidental.com
Se Habla Español

MONROE

704-238-8727

701 E. Roosevelt Blvd • Building 800-B • Opposite Union Regional Hospital

Anson County Tax Collector ANSON COUNTY PROPERTY TAX BILLS



**Anson County property tax notices
for Levy Year 2015 have been mailed.
THESE TAXES ARE DUE IMMEDIATELY**

You may send payment to:

**Anson County Tax Collector
101 South Greene Street
Wadesboro, NC 28170**

Or you may visit our office and pay with cash, check, money order or plastic card. The Tax Collector office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please call 704-994-3218 for payment information.

Feel free to break tax payments into partial payments that better fit your personal budget, but please be sure to complete payment by January 5, 2016. We hope you can use this extra time for budgeting tax payments over the coming months.

Interest on outstanding taxes will begin January 6, 2016.

Please settle taxes in a timely manner and avoid costly interest and advertising fees. Thank you.

**ANSON COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR • 101 South Greene Street
Wadesboro, NC 28170 • 704-994-3218**

HOPTOBERFEST

Craft Beer & Wine Festival
Featuring Wing Contest

**OCTOBER 10
4pm - 7pm**

\$30

Until September 25th

\$35

September 26 thru October 10th

\$10

Designated Driver



**FEATURING
North Carolina Breweries
Local Wineries
Music by Tim Clark Band
Wing Contest
Free Parking**

Event Location:

36 Richmond Plaza Shopping Center Rockingham, NC

Tickets available at www.richmondcountychamber.com or 910.895.9058

Presented by

RICHMOND COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Day Shankle
Home Sales

SALE

Remaining Inventory Reduced!
Making Room for New 2016 Models!
Interest Rates As Low As 3.875%

1570 E. US 74 Hwy. • Hamlet, NC • 910-582-5066 • www.modular-home-nc.com
Hours: Mon-Thurs 8-7 • Fri 8-5 • Sat 8:30-1
Licensed in North Carolina & South Carolina

**RED HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
WEEKDAY CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

Registering Now for 2015-16 School Year

OPEN HOUSE • AUGUST 20 • 6-7pm

Serving children ages 1 year to pre-K
Tuesday through Thursday • 8:30am-12 noon

Visit www.redhillbaptist.org for more information or to obtain a registration form
You may also contact Stephanie Maner at 704-826-6289 or smaner@redhillbaptist.org

RED HILL BAPTIST CHURCH • POLKTON