Different Abilities, Different Pathways, One Destination

Access to Achievement in North Carolina

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Agenda

→ Timeline

→ What is Access to Achievement

→ State and Local Implementation

→ Course Alignment

→ Early Data

→ Success Stories

→ Plans for the Future

Timeline

Cansler Report

In 2019, the NCCCS engaged Cansler Collaborative Resources, Inc.to review current services and activities offered for individuals with IDD to determine ways to increase enrollment and number of students who secured competitive, sustainable employment after graduation.

Pilot

In January 2022, the General Assembly allocated $500,000 to establish pilots at Catawba Valley and Brunswick community colleges to provide career pathway opportunities to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

IDD Training Program

After a successful 2-year pilot program, lawmakers moved to expand the pilot — allocating nearly $4 million of recurring funds to offer Access to Achievement at 15 community colleges across North Carolina. The expanded programs launched in the spring of 2024.

Access to Achievement

Once funded, the IDD Training program was rebranded as Access to Achievement. The initiative removes barriers by not requiring a diagnosis to receive services. Students are supported through targeted advising and person centered planning that focus on achieving personal goals and earning credentials, certificates, diplomas and degrees in an inclusive environment.

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What is Access to Achievement?

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North Carolina's Pathway to Education and Economic Mobility for People with IDD

Establishing best practices for providing vocational training for individuals with IDD.

Providing financial and benefits counseling.

Developing strategies on integrating assistive technology

Maximizing access, with supports, to credential and degree programs, including micro-credentials that are established by the State Board.

Identifying methods to increase orientation and integration of individuals with IDD into the college community to the greatest extent possible.

Determining a needs assessment, marketing, and evaluation to serve a broad array of individuals with developmental and other similar disabilities or learning challenges to assure adeguge demand for new or existing programs.

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State and Local Implementation

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6 Elements in Action – Local Lens

- Access to Achievement Coordinators at each college
- Breaking Barriers!
- Person-Centered Plans
- Assistive Technology
- Professional Development for staff and faculty
- Business engagement
- Follow up support
- Local Awareness
- Partnerships
    - High schools including Early College and CCP
    - Advocacy groups
    - The missing population

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Best Practices at Work

Inclusive Opportunities

Flyers Career Academy
Sandhills Community
College

Internships

Maintenance Intern
Robeson Community
College

Educating Staff

Developing Strategies
South Piedmont Community
College

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State Level – Providing Infrastructure

Professional Development

In-Person Events
Monthly TA Teams Calls
Developing Moodle Portal

Partnerships

State Agencies
Advocacy Groups
Employers
Secondary Schools

Implementation

Implementation Teams
Site Visits
Monthly Narrative Reports
High Touch Support

Evaluation

Data Collection via
ServiceNow
Outside Evaluation - HEI

Marketing

Branding
Printed Materials
Online Materials
Videos

Fiscal and Future Planning

Managing state budget and supporting management of local budgets

Plans for Expansion

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Course Alignment

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Stackable Credentials

Develop opportunities for students to progress through stackable credentials that are valuable in the workforce through a combination of employment training, industry credentials, continuing education courses, and/or curriculum courses.
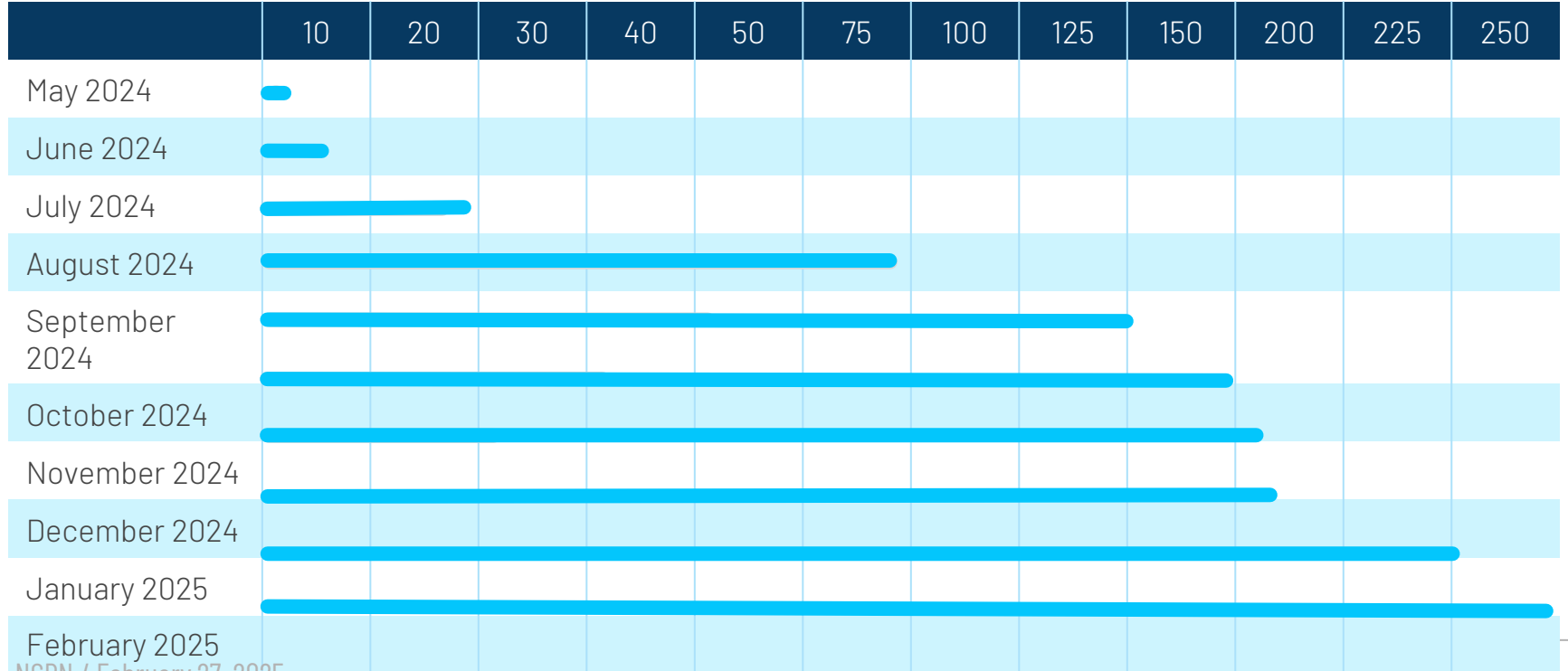
→ IET

→ Industry Credentials

→ CE or CU certificates

→ Diplomas

→ Degrees

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Early Data

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Program Growth
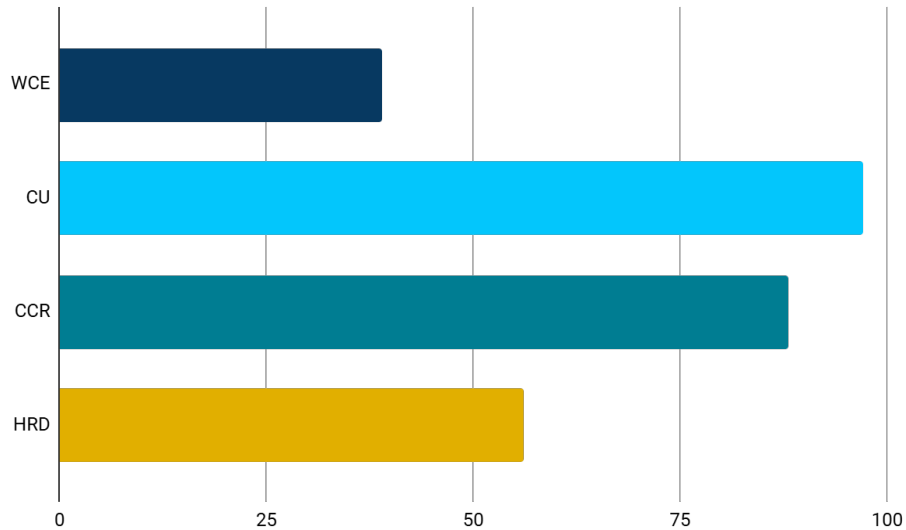
The number of students receiving intensive services through Person-Centered Planning has grown steadily since initial funding in May, 2024.

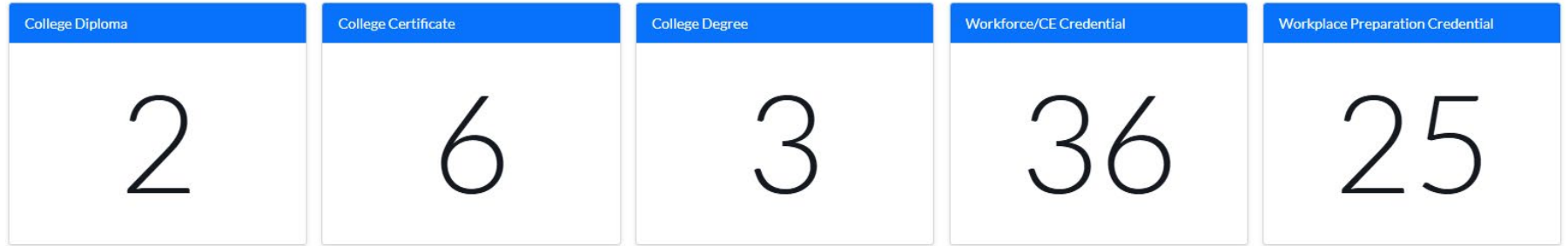|	10	20	30	40	50	75	100	125	150	200	225	250
May 2024												
June 2024												
July 2024												
August 2024												
September 2024												
October 2024												
November 2024												
December 2024												
January 2025												
February 2025												

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Types of Enrollment

Access to Achievement students are enrolled in all areas of the college, with some students enrolled in more than one area.

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Early Outcomes

With only one full academic semester of Access to Achievement fully going across all 15 colleges, early outcomes are promising.

College Diploma	College Certificate	College Degree	Workforce/CE Credential	Workplace Preparation Credential
2	6	3	36	25

Workforce credentials span a wide variety, including OSHA 10, 3M Safety, Real Estate, Kitchen Safety, SMAW Welding and more.

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Michael's Story

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Michael loved to be outdoors and volunteered to cut grass for his neighbors. While in the Adult Education program at Catawba Valley CC, Michael realized that with Access to Achievement, he could do more than volunteer. His decided to take his interest in lawn care deeper and enroll in the Turfgrass program. Michael is proud of his 4.0 average since Spring 2024. He has learned about irrigation, horticulture and landscape maintenance. He finds comfort knowing that he can work and earn a good income with these skills.

"I hope to work for a landscape business and then have my own business. Both the ABE academy and A2A has taught me that I can gain these skills and be independent. My A2A coordinator has even referred me to the small business center for further training".

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Plans for the Future

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Next Steps for Access to Achievement

Expansion
More Colleges

Broader Student Pop

Additional Position

Employer focus

CCP
Serve more students

Broaden opportunities

Help some/Help all

Awareness

On Demand PD
New Coordinators

Refreshers

For all 58 colleges

Quick bites

Economic Development
New Position

Apprenticeships

Employer training

Fill a Gap

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Thank you

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