NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Career and College-Ready Graduate Program (Program Outcomes)

S.L. 2015-241, Section 10.13, as amended by S.L. 2016-94, Section 10.5 and S.L. 2018-5, Section 9.4

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Date Due: October 15, 2024

Submitted by the State Board of Education, in conjunction with the State Board of Community Colleges

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Report to the NC General Assembly:
Career and College Ready Graduates (CCRG) Program
S.L. 2015-241, Section 10.13, as amended by S.L. 2016-94 and S.L. 2018-5

Executive Summary
Report on Career and College-Ready Graduate Program (Program Outcomes)
S.L. 2015-241, Section 10.13, as amended by S.L. 2016-94, Section 10.5 and S.L. 2018-5, Section 9.4

CONTEXT

S.L. 2015-241, Section 10.13 amended by S.L. 2016-94, Section 10.5 and S.L. 2018-5, Section 9.4, Career and College Ready Graduates (CCRG), requires the State Board of Community Colleges (SBCC), in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE), to develop a program that introduces the college developmental mathematics and developmental reading and English curriculums in the high school senior year and provides opportunities for college remediation for students prior to high school graduation. This program is the Career and College Ready Graduates (CCRG) Program. The fully implemented CCRG model is a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) that includes training, technical assistance, professional development, and the NROC/EdReady platform for North Carolina's public Local Education Agencies (LEAs). This executive summary depicts the 2023-2024 CCRG tier test completions, as well as key findings from the optional statewide student and staff survey, regional focus groups, and other data sources to inform on the progress of the CCRG program.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES

In order to receive credit to enter North Carolina's community colleges remediation-free, students must complete the math and/or English Tier Tests with an 80 or higher. Below indicates the pass rate for CCRG English and CCRG math:

- English Tier Test Completions:
    - Among students who took the English CCRG content, 1,407 of students passed the English I tier tests and 590 passed the English 2 tier tests.
    - That equates to a 24% pass rate for English 1 and 18% pass rate for English 2.
    - For English 1, that is a 14% increase and for English 2, that is a 13% increase from the previous academic year (2022-2023).
- Math Tier Test Completions:
    - Among students who took the math CCRG content, 5,412 of students passed the Math 1 Tier Tests, 4,286 passed the Math 2 Tier Tests, and 3,560 passed the Math 3 Tier Tests.
    - That equates to 89% pass rate for Math 1, an 86% pass rate for Math 2, and an 89% pass rate for Math 3.
    - For each of the tier tests—Math 1, Math 2, and Math 3—that is a 3% increase from the previous academic year (2022-2023).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a list of recommendations for continuous improvement of the CCRG program:

- Continued collaboration between NCDPI and NCCCS.
- A review of eligibility criteria to increase access and equity based on the needs of students.
- Continued funding to support the CCRG implementation.
- Continue communication with constituents for strong implementation.
- Continue consideration of how CCRG English can be implemented more effectively.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the multiple data sources for that contributed to this report, the following conclusions emerged:

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- The NCDPI and NCCCS staff will work collaboratively to ensure greater communication to LEAs about the intent and benefits of CCRG to ensure greater access and opportunity to all subgroups.
- The NCDPI and NCCCS continue to provide professional development and technical assistance throughout the fall/spring of the 2024-2025 academic year.
- The NCDPI and NCCCS will determine ways to deliver CCRG content in a secure avenue that ensures academic integrity.
- The NCDPI and NCCCS will work to initiate CCRG course realignment and eligibility with post-secondary pathways.
- The NCDPI and NCCCS will work collaboratively to review CCRG eligibility criteria. Review CCRG eligibility as a part of the curriculum realignment.
- The NCDPI and NCCCS will work collaboratively to determine changes to the CCRG curriculum to make data-informed improvements that result in increased student outcomes in CCRG math and English.

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Full Report
Report on Career and College-Ready Graduate Program (Program Outcomes)
S.L. 2015-241, Section 10.13, as amended by S.L. 2016-94, Section 10.5 and S.L. 2018-5, Section 9.4

BACKGROUND OF CAREER AND COLLEGE READY GRADUATES (CCRG) PROGRAM

Session Law 2018-5, Section 9.4 requires that the SBCC and the SBE report annually to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on the progress of implementation. This report encompasses several critical components to provide a comprehensive overview of the initiative's impact.

Firstly, the report will include detailed remediation results in both mathematics and English for 12th-grade students participating in the College and Career Readiness Graduates (CCRG) program during the 2023–2024 school year. This will allow for a clear understanding of the CCRG program's effectiveness in preparing students for post-secondary education.

Additionally, the report will integrate focus group data collected throughout the 2023–2024 school year. This qualitative data will offer insights into the experiences and perceptions of the students and educators involved in the CCRG program, highlighting areas of success and opportunities for improvement.

This report also features a comprehensive analysis of the CCRG Staff Survey and CCRG Student Survey results. The CCRG Staff Survey had approximately 200 respondents. The CCRG Student Survey had approximately 400 respondents.

Furthermore, the report includes information on the support provided by CCRG to school districts, such as professional development, office hours, webinars, a professional learning community, and CCRG Canvas Course. CCRG Canvas Course analytics are also presented to illustrate the frequency of use of this support tool.

Finally, this report offers recommendations to improve CCRG and to continue its support across North Carolina’s public schools. This annual report presents a comprehensive evaluation of the CCRG program's outcomes and demonstrates the program’s effectiveness.

CCRG Program Overview

S.L. 2015-241, Section 10.13 amended by S.L. 2016-94, Section 10.5 and S.L. 2018-5, Section 9.4, Career and College Ready Graduates (CCRG), requires the State Board of Community Colleges (SBCC), in consultation with the State Board of Education (SBE), to develop a program that introduces the college developmental mathematics and developmental reading and English curriculums in the high school senior year and provides opportunities for college remediation for students prior to high school graduation. The fully implemented CCRG model is a partnership between NCDPI and NCCCS that includes training, technical assistance, professional development, and the NROC/EdReady platform. Initial implementation of the model began in the 2016-2017 academic year with pilots. Partial implementation occurred despite financial and COVID-19 Pandemic challenges from 2020 through 2022. In November 2021, the 2022-2023 budget was passed with funding for CCRG, and the NCDPI immediately began the process to contract with the vendor, The NROC Project/EdReady, herein referred to as NROC/EdReady. The 2022-2023 contract was in place as of July 2022 for Year 1 of full implementation, and the NCDPI renewed the contract in July 2023 for Year 2 and in July 2024 for Year 3 of full implementation.

Through various communication efforts, namely an email series to Curriculum Leaders and CCRG Leads to inform, professional development opportunities and conferences, office hours, and updated CCRG support documents and the CCRG Canvas Resource Course, all LEAs were informed of the implementation of CCRG during the full implementation academic years. As with the previous year’s implementation, high schools were required to use the curriculum approved by the SBCC, in consultation with the SBE. **Appendix A: CCRG Eligibility and Exemptions** outlines the criteria for students to take CCRG. Professional development was prepared and delivered by the professional development sub-

committee of the Career and College Ready Graduate Alignment Partnership (CCRGAP) committee, which consists of the NCDPI and NCCCS. In addition, throughout implementation, the CCRGAP worked collaboratively to develop and carry out the CCRG Evaluation Plan detailed in greater depth below.

CCRG Program Purpose

The CCRGAP collaborated to offer statewide support and achieve the overall objective of ensuring North Carolina high school seniors successfully graduated from public high schools as career and college ready graduates. Therefore, the CCRGAP engaged in developing additional strategies to target specific academic deficiencies, which are outlined in the CCRG Evaluation Plan below.

CCRG Program Evaluation Plan

Several major questions guide the full evaluation plan for CCRG and are aligned to the program's logic model. Figure 1 depicts the CCRG Logic Model; Table 1 depicts the evaluation questions, strategies, outcomes, and data sources. The evaluation plan for the second year of CCRG, academic year 2023-2024, continued focused on program implementation. Specifically, the CCRGAP committee focused on measuring the success of implementing the six strategies identified in the CCRG logic model. Later years will continue to evaluate fidelity of implementation and further examine learning outcomes for students. In 2024-2025, we continue to evaluate the CCRG program's implementation. If CCRG implementation changes in subsequent years, the CCRG Logic Model will reflect those changes; however, for this year's implementation, there were no changes to implementation or the CCRG Logic Model Strategies, Immediate Outcomes, Intermediate Outcomes, Long-Term Outcomes, and Ultimate Goals.

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Figure 1. CCRG Logic Model

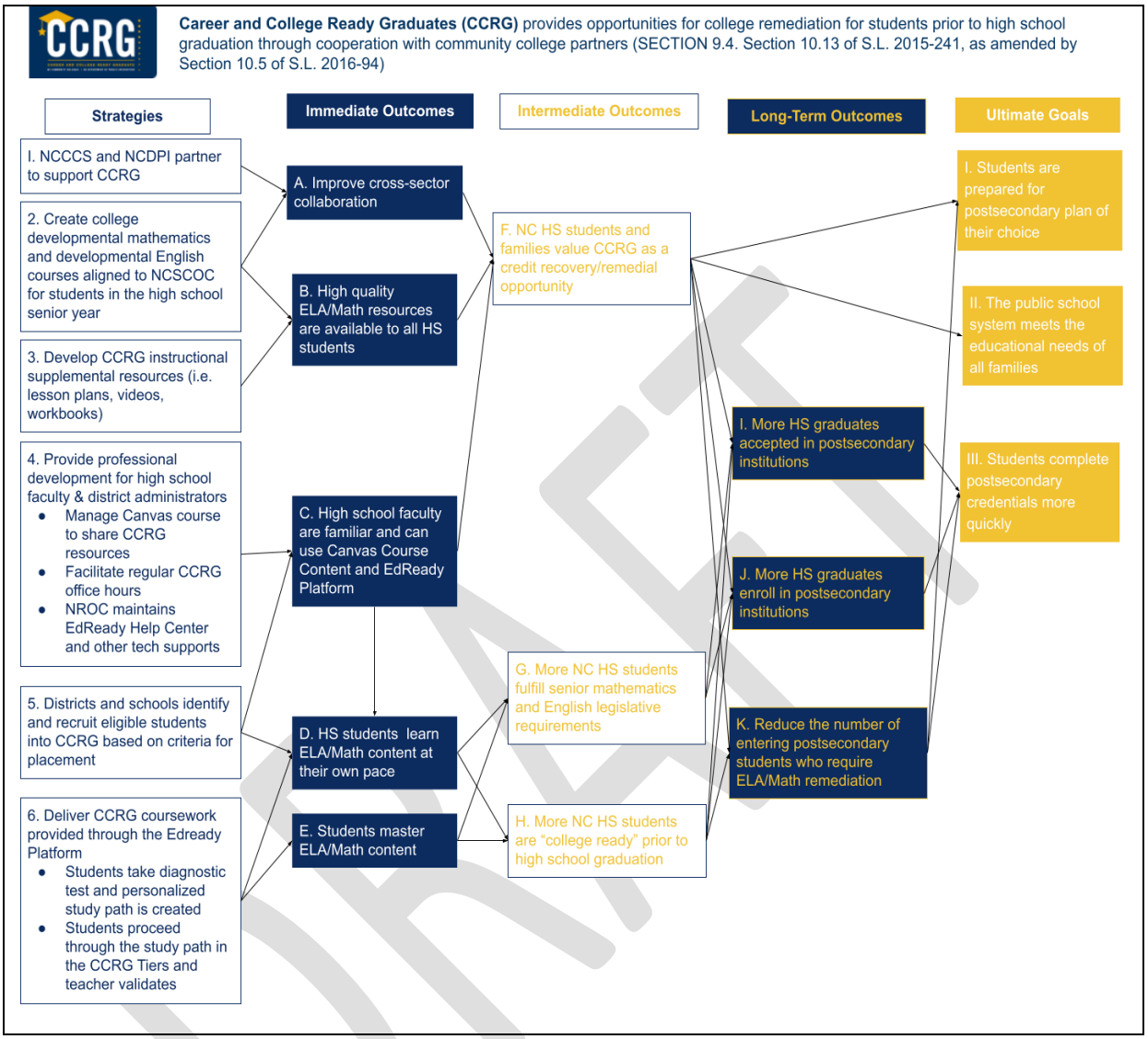

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Table 1. Summary Table of Evaluation Questions and Data Sources

Evaluation Questions	Strategy	Outcomes	Data Sources
To what extent was CCRG a successful cross-sector partnership between the North Carolina Community College System and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction?	1. NCCCS and NCDPI partner to support CCRG	A. Improve cross-sector collaboration	CCRG Staff and Student Survey
What resources and tools were available and helpful throughout the CCRG implementation process?	2. Develop college developmental mathematics and developmental English courses/curricula for students in the high school senior year 3. Develop CCRG instructional supplemental resources (i.e., lesson plans, videos, workbooks)	B. High quality ELA/Math resources are available to all HS students	CCRG Staff and Student Survey Canvas Resource Course Analytics
What was the quality of support provided by the NCDPI and NCCCS as it pertains to professional development, technical assistance, office hours, and other applicable outreach efforts?	4. Provide professional development for high school faculty & district administrators	C. High school faculty are familiar and can use Canvas Course Content and EdReady Platform	CCRG Staff Survey
What types of criteria were used by districts to determine eligibility for CCRG? How did districts inform students and families of this opportunity?	5. Districts and schools identify and recruit eligible students into CCRG based on criteria for placement	B. High quality ELA/Math resources are available to all HS students	CCRG Staff and Student Survey
How many students enrolled and accessed CCRG courses? What are participation rates by student group, school and district characteristics?	5. Districts and schools identify and recruit eligible students into CCRG based on criteria for placement	D. HS students learn ELA/Math content at their own pace	NROC/EdReady Platform Analytics
How many students successfully completed CCRG coursework?	6. Deliver CCRG coursework provided through the EdReady Platform	E. Students master ELA/Math content	Ed Ready Platform Analytics

CCRG PROGRAM SUPPORT

To ensure smooth and effective implementation, monthly check-in meetings were held between NCDPI, NCCCS, and NROC/EdReady. These meetings focused on facilitating procurement progress, professional development, and other support efforts.

The CCRG Program Administrator plays a crucial role in overseeing the implementation of the program by facilitating ongoing communication between NCDPI, NCCCS, and NROC/EdReady. Regular updates are shared through various channels to keep stakeholders informed and engaged. These include the following:

- **CAO Newsletters**: These newsletters provided detailed updates on CCRG activities, developments, and upcoming events.
- **Emails**: Direct communication via email ensured timely updates and responses to any inquiries from stakeholders. An email series with short videos and links to important resources continued from the previous school year.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Documents**: These documents were frequently updated to address common questions and concerns from Local Education Agencies (LEAs), which ensured they understood the CCRG implementation process.
- **Feedback from the Field**: Continuous feedback was gathered from members in the field to improve the implementation process and address any challenges that arise.
- **Weekly Office Hours**: These sessions, totaling more than 100 hours, provided a dedicated time for stakeholders to ask questions, seek clarifications, and receive support from the CCRG team.
- **Professional Development**: The Program Administrator, an English teacher, and an NROC representative presented at the 2023 AIM Conference. They shared updates on CCRG and strategies to improve English scores.
- **Professional Learning Communities and Communication:** As a new communication strategy, two professional learning community (PLC) opportunities were introduced for CCRG administrators, math, and English teachers, as most districts have one CCRG administrator and having a network of other CCRG administrators aided in planning and pivoting, as needed, throughout the 2023-2024 implementation.

CCRG PROGRAM EVALUATION RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

To provide a comprehensive review of the 2023-2024 program implementation, this portion of the report will include several components:

Part I: CCRG Tier Test Completion Data
Part II: Results and Key Findings:
    a. CCRG Focus Groups
    b. CCRG Student Survey
    c. CCRG Staff Survey
Part III: CCRG Canvas Course Analytics

PART I: CCRG TIER TEST COMPLETION DATA

To enter a North Carolina Community College remediation-free, high school students must complete the math and/or English modules, depending on their needs in one or both content areas. The module content is determined by the students' initial diagnostic test, which identifies their study path. Additionally, students must complete the Tier Tests associated with math and English with a score of 80 or higher.

The CCRG (Career & College Ready Graduate) content for mathematics involves mastery-based modules through the NROC/EdREADY platform. These modules can be taught as an independent mathematics course, integrated into another existing mathematics course, or offered during an intervention timeframe. The standalone CCRG Math course earns a fourth mathematics credit towards

graduation requirements; however, the CCRG content does not satisfy a fourth-level mathematics course and does not meet UNC System minimum course requirements for admission.

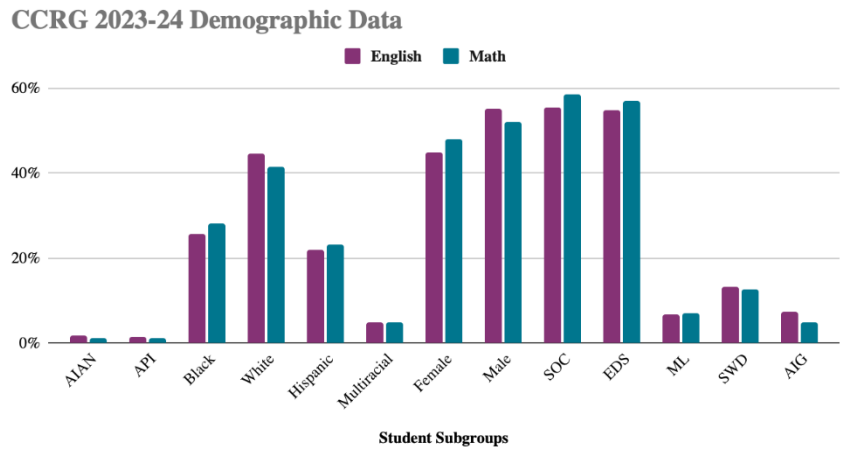
The CCRG content for English Language Arts (ELA) is integrated into English IV, with specific guidance to identify students who are receiving this content.

Of the 115 LEAs, 17,083 students completed math and English Tier Tests during the 2023-2024 school year. In 2023, the completion rate for English Tier 1 was 10%, which increased to 24% in 2024. For English Tier 2, with at least one student passing, the completion rate was 7% in 2023 and rose to 18% in 2024.

In math, Tier 1 remained consistently high, with an 86% completion rate for both 2023 and 89% for 2024. For math Tier 2, the percentage of students passing at least one Tier Test increased from 83% in 2023 to 86% in 2024. Finally, for math Tier 3, the completion rate improved from 86% in 2023 to 89% in 2024. Important to note is that within NROC/EdReady, graduation date is self-reported by students.

Regarding CCRG student participation, student demographics were also reviewed. **Figure 2** provides a data visualization of student subgroups based on student enrollment in CCRG for the 2023-2024 academic year. Demographic data of students' Tier Test completions—or success rates—was not provided. Figure 2 depicts that a greater portion of CCRG participants is male as compared to students not participating in CCRG. Additionally, a CCRG student is more likely to be male than female, and a greater portion of CCRG participants are from the Economically Disadvantaged Students (EDS) background. Further, more than 50% of CCRG students, with 55% in English and 58% in math, are identified as Students of Color (SOC), which encompasses all non-white subgroups. However, this data does not imply that the greater portion of CCRG students is male, EDS and SOC. Multilingual (ML) and Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) students equate for less than 8% of the CCRG student participant population.

Figure 2. CCRG Student Demographic Data



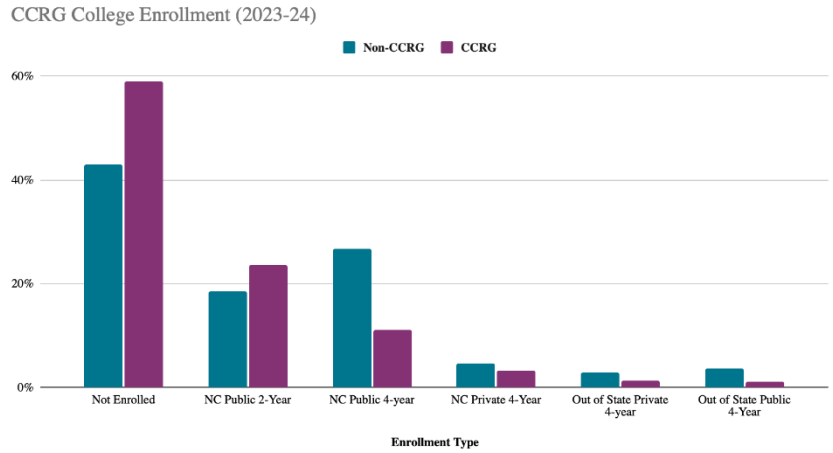
National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) 2023 - 2024 Data

The primary purpose of the CCRG program is to ensure students have the opportunity to attend a NC Community College remediation free. To determine CCRG's effectiveness, recent National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data was reviewed. The data showed that the majority of CCRG students (59%) do not enroll in any college, while also revealing a trend that indicates CCRG students are 16 percentage points less likely to enroll in any higher education as compared to non-CCRG students. As depicted in **Figure 3**, data also revealed showed that of those CCRG students in college, NC 2-year public institutions were the most popular choice, accounting for 24% of enrollment. This data also revealed CCRG students were 5 percentage points more likely to attend community college compared to non-CCRG students. In terms of 4-year institutions, CCRG students enrolled mainly in in-state public colleges

(11%). However, CCRG students were much less likely to enroll in these 4-year institutions when compared to non-CCRG students, with trends indicating that CCRG students were 16 percentage points less likely to enroll in public NC colleges compared to non-CCRG students. Lastly, NSC data showed that CCRG enrollment in out-of-state college institutions remained low, at less than 3%.

Use of the NSC data to evaluate the CCRG program is a new endeavor and thus will improve our understanding of the impact of the program over time.

Figure 3. CCRG College Enrollment (2023 – 2024)



CCRG English Content and Tier Test Workflow

English Language Arts

The CCRG English content has been developed to align with the ELA Standard Course of Study as well as NCCCS student outcomes.

- The CCRG content for English Language Arts will be integrated into English IV with specific program enrollment guidance to indicate students who are receiving this content.
- For CCRG content guidance, refer to the NCCCS.
- For CCRG implementation guidance, refer to the NCDPI.

Within each Tier:
Students will begin in the Main Module / primary study path and then will move on to a Tier Test when they are ready. Students that perform well on the Tier Test will be ready to move on to the following Tier, while others will need to work in the Test study path and take an additional Tier Test.

English Score Thresholds:

- Students need to earn a score of 90 in the Main Module / primary study path
- Students need to earn a score of at least 80 on a Tier Test (diagnostic test for a "Test" study path) to earn the right to move on to the next Tier

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Current Step	Score Needed		
Type	On Initial Diagnostic	On Study Path	Next Step
Main Module	90		The Test for this tier
Test for this Tier	80	90	• If the student earns at least an 80 on the diagnostic (Tier Test), student is ready for the next tier's Main Module • Otherwise the student must work in the generated study path: will need to earn a score of 90 to earn the right to take an additional Test attempt

Tier Test Attempts:
The CCRG English approach has a *maximum of 5 Tier Test attempts* available for students to complete: there are 5 attempts for Tier 1 and Tier 2. Students will **not** be able to test more than what is available in EdReady, so it is critical that they are only given access to each Test attempt when they have completed the work to learn the items, they did not previously get correct on the last attempt.

IMPORTANT: Tier Test scores in EdReady are the only details shared with North Carolina Community Colleges and are used to give students credit for completing the CCRG-equivalent courses at the college-level.

2023-2024 Tier Test Attempts and Completions – English
Among students who took the English CCRG content, 1,407 of students passed the English I tier tests and 590 passed the English 2 tier tests. That equates to a 24% pass rate for English 1 and 18% pass rate for English 2. For English 1, that is a 7% increase and for English 2, that is an 8% increase from the previous academic year (2022-2023). **Table 2** indicates the number of passed tests, these are not attempts, but unique students. For example, there were 5,761 unique students in English Tier 1. Passed more accurately refers to the number of students with at least one passed tier test in that tier. “Percent pass rate” is better referred to as the percent of students with at least one passing tier test in that tier.

Table 2. English Tier Test Completions

2023-2024 English Tier Test Completions			
	Passed	**Attempts**	**Percent Pass Rate**
English 1	1407	5761	24%
English 2	590	3312	18%

CCRG Math Content and Tier Test Workflow

Mathematics

The CCRG content for mathematics involves mastery-based modules through the chosen NROC/EdReady platform.

- The CCRG mathematics units may be integrated into another existing mathematics course or offered during an intervention time frame. The CCRG mathematics units may also be delivered through a stand-alone course during their senior year.
- The CCRG mathematics content does not satisfy a fourth level mathematics course and does not meet UNC System Minimum Course Requirements for admission because it does not build on Math 3.
- The standalone CCRG Math course will earn a fourth mathematics credit towards high school graduation requirements.

Within each Tier:
Students will begin in the Main Module/ primary study path and then will move on to a Tier Test when they are ready. Students that perform well on the Tier Test will be ready to move on to the following Tier, while others will need to work in the Test study path and take an additional Tier Test.

Math Score Thresholds:

- Students need to earn a score of 100 in the Main Module/primary study path
- Students need to earn a score of at least 80 on a Tier Test (diagnostic test for a "Test" study path) to earn the right to move on to the next Tier

Current Step	Score Needed		
Type	On Initial Diagnostic	On Study Path	Next Step
Main Module	100		The Test for this tier
Test for this Tier *attempts 1-3*	80	100	• If the student earns at least an 80 on the diagnostic (Tier Test), student is ready for the next tier's Main Module • Otherwise the student must work in the generated study path: will need to earn a score of 100 to earn the right to take an additional Test attempt
Test for this Tier *attempts 4-5*	80	N/A	• If the student earns at least an 80 on the diagnostic (Tier Test), is ready for the next tier's Main Module • Otherwise, student must show mastery outside of EdReady. Should be given access to the next Tier Test when ready.

Tier Test Attempts:
The CCRG Math approach has a *maximum of 5 Tier Test attempts* available for students to complete. Students will **not** be able to test more than 5 times, so it is critical that they are only given access to each Test attempt when they have completed the work to learn the items they did not previously get correct on the last attempt.

> **NOTE:** the first, second, and third attempts will all generate a study path, allowing the student to study the items they did not get correct on the Tier Test. The fourth and fifth attempts DO NOT generate a study path, so their instructor should provide additional intervention. The previous study paths (main module and all previous Tier Tests) will remain available for the student to review.
>
> **IMPORTANT:** Tier Test scores in EdReady are the only details shared with North Carolina Community Colleges and are used to give students credit for completing the CCRG-equivalent courses at the college-level.

2023-2024 Tier Test Attempts and Completions – Math

As with the previous academic year, during the 2023-2024 academic year, students taking CCRG math had greater success in passing the math Tier Tests as compared to English. Among students who took the math CCRG content, 5,412 of students passed the Math 1 Tier Tests, 4,286 passed the Math 2 Tier Tests, and 3,560 passed the Math 3 Tier Tests. That equates to 89% pass rate for Math 1, an 86% pass rate for Math 2, and an 89% pass rate for Math 3. For each of the tier tests—Math 1, Math 2, and Math 3—that is a 3% increase from the previous academic year (2022-2023). **Table 3** indicates the number of passed Tests, these are not attempts, but unique students. For example, there were 6,114 unique students in Math Tier 1. "Passed" more accurately refers to the number of students with at least one

passed tier test in that tier. "Percent pass rate" is better referred to as the percent of students with at least one passing tier test in that tier.

Table 3. Math Tier Test Completions

2023-2024 Math Tier Test Completions			
	Passed	**Attempts**	**Percent Pass Rate**
Math 1	5412	6114	89%
Math 2	4286	4974	86%
Math 3	3560	3998	89%

PART II: RESULTS AND KEY FINDINGS

PART II A: CCRG FOCUS GROUPS

Conceptualization of the Research
In October 2023, the full 2022-2023 report was submitted to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (JLEOC) with some areas of growth in English. Overall, students excelled with over 80% pass rate in Tiers 1, 2 and 3. However, in English our students did not exceed 11% pass rate on English I and English II Tiers. As a result, the CCRG Program Administrator conducted statewide focus group meetings to obtain feedback from superintendents, chief academic officers (CAOs), CCRG district leads, math and English teachers and other relevant stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of the program's implementation. The focus groups served as one of the primary data points for the 2023-2024 report.

Development of Interview Questions
The focus group script and interview questions (can be found in **Appendix I**) were developed through a collaborative review process with the NCDPI Office of Research and Evaluation to ensure the CCRGAP committee effectively provided valuable data. Several iterations of the questions were drafted before the final selection of the six evaluation questions were determined. A Systems Theory[1] approach was done to gather information from participants that would allow the data to provide information from the micro to macro level.

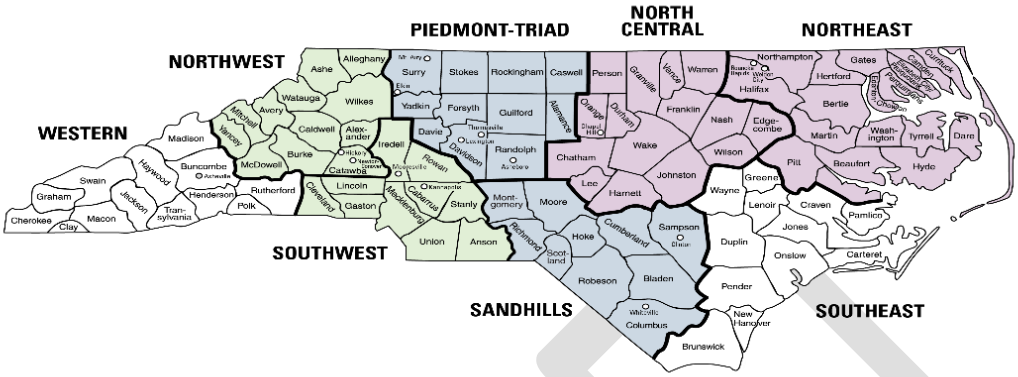
Selection of Focus Group Participants
Seven focus groups were conducted across North Carolina in the 2023-2024 school year. Participants were selected and received an email inviting them to participate in the optional focus group discussions. These focus groups included math and English teachers, as well as CCRG Leads, participating virtually. Invitations to participate were extended to individuals throughout all eight regions. Focus Group conversations occurred based on the geographical location of the respective State Board of Education Districts, or regions. Participants in six regions representing the horizontal (northern and southern) parts of the state, two regions each, participated in virtual sessions. Additionally, two in-person vertical (eastern and western) regional sessions were held after a full day of observations, with members from the entire LEA district team present. The team was composed of teachers, counselors, and administrators. Lastly, two one-on-one focus groups were conducted in person with the presence of school counselors and an administrator. Below is a breakdown of how regions were combined:

- Sandhills and Piedmont
- Northwest and Southwest
- Northeast and Southeast

[1]Systems Theory – a way of looking at things where we study an entire picture, not just the separate pieces. It helps us understand how various parts work together to make up a bigger system. In research, you receive input from several different individuals to receive a collective picture (Lou-Barton & Davis, 2019).

- Western, *represented by Buncombe County Schools*
- North Central, *represented by Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools*
- Southwest, *represented by Union County Public Schools*
- Southeast, *represented by Brunswick County Schools*

Figure 4. CCRG focus group mapping



The CCRGAP team chose to divide focus groups by regions and roles to capture a broad range of viewpoints. Pairing the northern and southern regions together, as well as the western and eastern regions together helped the CCRGAP team identify potential differences in perspectives throughout North Carolina's 8 SBE Districts. During the focus group sessions, participants shared their roles, provided feedback on the CCRG implementation from their perspectives, and shared other lessons learned and areas for growth to inform the CCRGAP team. Following the focus group sessions, the CCRG Program Administrator worked with other members of the CCRGAP team to analyze the responses, drawing comparisons across the regions. The following information provides greater detail about the Data Gathering and Management, Collaboration and Tools, and Analysis and Interpretation.

Data Gathering and Management
The thematic methodological approach to analyzing the data consists of transcribing the data to determine the findings. The CCRG Program Administrator served as the principal investigator, actively participating in each data collection focus group session. Data management involved cleaning up transcripts, color coding the data, creating a codebook, comparing results, and composing various documents for thorough analysis.

Collaboration and Tools
To interpret and analyze the data, the CCRG Program Administrator collaborated with the NCDPI's Research Analyst, who shared input on the survey question creation, data preparation for coding, (Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software CAQDAS) management and data interpretation strategies. The analysis and interpretation strategy involved examining precoding documents and identifying the coding scheme, color coding the data received, creating a codebook, consulting with our quantitative data analysis experts at NCDPI and an Atlas.ti consultant to ensure the analyzation process was done accurately.

Analysis and Interpretation
Atlas.ti was the primary source of data (management (CAQDAS) tool used to assist with organizing and supporting the overall development of the themes associated with these focus groups) interpretation used to assist in the analyzation process. Intentional Artificial Intelligence (AI) coding was used to support the coding process. The AI summary codes aligned with the researcher's interpretation. More than 200 codes were created and then grouped into six main categories. The categories are as follows:

1. Additional Support Recommendations
2. CCRG English Redesign
3. Experience Feedback

4. Implementation Success
5. Parent Communication Support
6. Target Population and GPA Criteria

Additional Support Recommendations

Additional Resources

The analysis revealed a recommendation for additional resources and support from various educational entities like the NCDPI, NCCCS, and NROC Project/EdReady for a district or school's CCRG implementation. The common theme shared amongst respondents for additional resources were the following:

- Encouraging students to understand the benefits of CCRG
- Timing the program introduction
- Providing more resources for English IV
- Feedback mechanisms for students
- Communication with parents about CCRG

One respondent from the Western Region expressed: “Needing more immediate feedback as to what students got wrong. [The] study path needs to share immediate feedback” (Staff, 2024).

Positive Support Structures and Communication

Data also underscored encouraging students to understand the benefits of CCRG, timing the program introduction, lack of resources for English IV, feedback mechanisms for students, and communication with parents about CCRG. The data emphasized the need for resources that can engage students and parents effectively in the CCRG process and notes the positive impact of existing support structures. This theme was common in a majority of the SBE regions. Two respondents noted: “Communication needs to happen [during the] freshman and sophomore years about CCRG. This is going to be what happens if your GPA falls or you earn a certain score on ACT” (Staff, 2024). “Provide students with advance warnings of CCRG” (Staff, 2024).

Academic Integrity and Motivation

Some challenges educators identified consist of the following:

- Students maintaining academic integrity online because they are using apps to assist with answering the math questions.
- Staff lacking guidance on implementation and communication with parents about the program.
- Staff motivating students who are not college-bound to complete all Tiers.

Key staff insights included the following:

- “Restructure CCRG to include merging English and math courses and utilizing specialist teachers to support students effectively.” (Staff, 2024)
- A respondent from the Southwest shared this quick story, “A student went on a college visit in the Spring of 2022. She currently attends Cape Fear Community College. Her experience did not become real until the student started talking to the college that she expressed appreciation for CCRG.” (Staff, 2024)
- “There is a disconnect with a subset of students who do not value the notion of remediation courses regardless of the opportunities for cost and time savings.” (Staff, 2024)

Essentially, as the key insights and identified challenges identified above indicate, focus group participants were able to articulate some real experiences and attitudes regarding the 2023-2024 CCRG implementation.

CCRG English Redesign

During the focus group discussions, respondents provided feedback regarding the previous year’s English results. As a result, the following recommendations for redesigning CCRG English were provided:

1. Consider creating a course code for CCRG in English IV to make it clear on transcripts.
2. Provide advanced CCRG warning to sophomore or junior students.
3. Implement more flexible scheduling to accommodate CCRG in English classes.
4. Offer CCRG as an elective credit, pairing math and English CCRG in one class.
5. Engage seniors by offering incentives like senior leave for completing CCRG.

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6. Organize students taking CCRG in clusters to ensure consistent instruction.
7. Encourage independent work time and motivation for CCRG tasks.
8. Provide clear explanations to students about CCRG placement and expectations.
9. Implement academic conversations and peer work to enhance learning in CCRG.

In addition, some noteworthy findings/suggestions are provided below:

- "There is a misplacement of students in CCRG when we base it solely on GPA and test scores" (Staff, Southeast, 2024).
- "Provide more flex time so students can work on it independently. Have students intentionally scheduled so a teacher can have CCRG students clustered in the same class instead a bunch of one offs" (Staff, North Central, 2024).

Experience Feedback

The data suggest a need for improved communication with parents regarding CCRG and implementing more protected supplemental materials for students to ensure students are working through the academic instruction with academic integrity. Suggestions include introducing CCRG information to students earlier in their high school years, providing resources to teachers, and integrating CCRG into the curriculum. A call for better communication efforts with parents and a focus on motivating students to engage with the material also emerged as common sentiments.

Areas for Growth to Support Staff

Respondents expressed gratitude for the support that the NCDPI and NCCCS provided thus far in CCRG implementation; however, the respondents continued to express an ongoing need for the following:

- Teacher training
- Effective communication within districts
- Enhancing student engagement

Implementation Success

Implementation Challenges and Recommendations

The series of CCRG Virtual Focus Group discussions exposed some implementation challenges of the program across different regions. The data collected provided insight into the perspectives of these topics using the regional sample for this phase of data collection. A significant issue was the lack of awareness among educators regarding the CCRG English implementation. This lack of awareness highlights the need for better dissemination of CCRG information, training for educators to implement the program effectively, teacher buy-in, and effective communication. Proposed solutions included additional training and networking opportunities to address challenges. Respondents also highlighted the importance of ongoing support and collaboration among educators.

Effectiveness and Successes of CCRG Implementation

Participants identified these areas as effective components for CCRG implementation.:

- Implementation in Alternative High School: CCRG seems to be working effectively in the alternative high school setting. Small classes allow attentive teachers to monitor students' progress closely and provide support when needed.
- Personalize Approach: Teachers are actively involved in helping students to monitor the data.
- Designated Time: Consistent and dedicated CCRG days help maintain student engagement. The incentive of arriving at school late or leaving early is a great incentive that helps students to get through the Tiers efficiently.

Implementation Success

The feedback from various focus group sessions regarding the use of CCRG in different regions highlighted what worked well and what barriers were faced. Some of the key points mentioned include scheduling challenges, the effectiveness of targeted groups, lack of communication with parents, the need for teacher buy-in, and the implementation of CCRG in different districts. Suggestions were made for better communication with students and parents, providing more resources and support, and addressing motivational issues among students. Additionally, concerns were raised about the placement

of students in CCRG based solely on GPA and test scores, the need for more proactive planning with students about their future goals and improving the reporting and feedback process within the program. One staff member even noted: “Allow students to opt into CCRG. Don’t want kids to see this as a punishment” (Staff, 2024).

Parent Communication Support

Protected Supplemental Materials

Protected supplemental materials that are not online should be available for students. Staff within the focus groups across several regions explained that this will help combat students utilizing web-based resources to search for the answers or have the answers solved automatically, such as through Google Homework Help.

Early Communication

Early communication in freshman and sophomore years about CCRG guidelines is essential, including meeting CCRG eligibility criteria for GPA drops or certain ACT scores. Suggestions for additional support include peer work, academic discussions, scheduling regular sessions, motivating students to work at home, and pairing Math and English CCRG in one elective class.

Target Population and GPA Criteria

The CCRG program in this area targets students who are credit deficient, especially those with unweighted GPAs in the range of 2.2-2.7. Feedback suggests that students at the upper range of the GPA finish math requirements faster, while those with lower GPAs struggle. English IV students may lack motivation compared to math students in the program. To improve CCRG participation, it is suggested to base eligibility on English or Math GPAs separately and provide advanced notification of the program. Challenges include scheduling difficulties and motivating students, particularly those aiming for university rather than community college. There is a need to inform students about CCRG earlier, in sophomore or junior year, and consider offering a combined Math and English elective class. Teachers caution against overemphasizing the program and highlight a higher percentage of students with exceptionalities benefiting. Ongoing evaluation and support through small class sizes and consistent teacher involvement have shown success in an alternative high school setting. “Systematically come up with a way to have conversations with students about future plans/goals. Ten-minute conversations with a school counselor is not enough” (Staff, 2024).

CCRG Focus Groups Conclusions

Overall, the focus groups underscored the importance of continuous evaluation, targeted support, and fostering collaboration to enhance CCRG implementation across North Carolina. The focus groups provided a valuable platform in hearing directly from those involved in the field, offering firsthand insights and real-world examples of CCRG in action. This direct feedback is instrumental in sharing future strategies and ensuring the program’s success.

PART II: RESULTS AND KEY FINDINGS

B: CCRG STUDENT SURVEY

To gather insights into student perceptions of the CCRG program, an optional statewide survey was distributed across various school districts. This survey, consisting of 15 questions, was designed to provide partner organizations with a comprehensive understanding of how students view the CCRG program. For reference, the complete list of student survey questions is available in **Appendix E**.

The survey's optional nature allowed students to skip questions, leading to varying response rates for each question. Despite this, nearly 400 students responded to all questions on the survey, demonstrating engagement (detailed data can be found in **Appendix B**).

The survey results are categorized into three main areas to facilitate analysis and understanding:

1. **Perceptions of Time**: This category examines how students feel about the time commitment required by the CCRG program. Questions in this section address whether students feel the program is

manageable alongside their other commitment, if the session allowed them to work at their own pace, and how they perceive the program's overall scheduling.

2. **Perceptions of Content**: This section focuses on students' views regarding the material covered in the CCRG program. It includes questions about the relevance and difficulty of the content, how engaging and useful students find the lessons, and whether they feel the content helps them achieve their educational goals.

3. **Perceptions of Impact**: This category explores students' perceptions of the CCRG program's effectiveness and its impact on their academic and personal development. Questions here include whether students feel more prepared for future academic challenges and if they have noticed improvements in their skills and knowledge.

To provide a clear and concise summary of the responses, student feedback is consolidated into three groups:

- **Strongly Agree/Agree**: This group includes students who concur and affirm the statements provided in the survey.
- **Neutral**: This group includes students who neither agree nor disagree with the statements, indicating a moderate or undecided view.
- **Disagree/Strongly Disagree**: This group includes students who do not agree and do not affirm the statements provided in the survey.

The analysis of these responses helps identify strengths and areas for improvement within the CCRG program, ensuring that it continues to meet students' needs effectively.

Student Perceptions of Learning about CCRG

Student perceptions of the CCRG (EdReady) program reveal a complex mix of awareness, mandatory participation, and varied sentiments regarding its value and impact. The feedback indicates that while the program aims to provide educational benefits, its implementation and communication strategies may need improvement to better align with student needs and expectations.

Many student respondents reported learning about the CCRG program from their teachers or school counselors. Specifically, 40% of students indicated that their teachers or counselors informed them about the program. Responses such as "My teacher told me that I had to do it" (Student, 2024) and "My school guidance counselor" (Student, 2024) highlight the crucial role that educators and school staff play in disseminating information about educational opportunities. However, the way this information is conveyed, and the context provided about the program's benefits seem to be areas needing attention.

One of the most prominent themes in the survey feedback is the mandatory nature of participation. Approximately 25% of students expressed that they were “required” or “forced” to participate in the CCRG program. Phrases like "I was forced to" (Student, 2024), "It was required to do in my math 4 class" (Student, 2024), and "My teacher made me do it" (Student, 2024) exemplify these sentiments. This compulsory aspect has contributed to a pervasive sense of resentment amongst students. About a quarter of CCRG student participants felt that they had little choice in the matter.

Negative sentiment towards the CCRG program was articulated by 20% of the students, who described the program as tedious, pointless, and a waste of time. Students expressed strong opinions such as "This is not an 'opportunity' that I would want to take advantage of" (Student, 2024), "It takes the fun out of English" (Student, 2024), and "It's pointless" (Student, 2024). These students questioned the program's effectiveness and relevance to their academic goals, expressing frustration with the program's perceived lack of tangible benefits. This negative perception of approximately 2 out of every 10 CCRG students mirrors the staff’s perceptions of English needing a redesign.

A small portion of student respondents, specifically 5%, reported that they were automatically enrolled in the CCRG program without prior knowledge or consent. Statements such as, "I was automictically signed up" (Student, 2024), and "I learned about it when it was added to my schedule for my classes" (Student, 2024), reflect this automatic enrollment, conveying the students' frustration and sense of disempowerment.

On the other hand, an even smaller portion of students, about 2.5%, had positive experiences with the CCRG program. These students acknowledged that the program was helpful and beneficial, often citing encouragement from their counselors or teachers as a motivating factor. For instance, one student noted, "I was told about it by my math teacher and everyone else was told as well and it's a very helpful program" (Student, 2024), indicating that with the right support and framing, the program can be perceived favorably.

Finally, 2.5% of the responses were either miscellaneous or indicated that students had no prior knowledge of the program. This suggests there are still gaps in awareness and understanding of the CCRG program among some students.

In conclusion, the analysis of student perceptions of the CCRG (EdReady) program reveals significant challenges in its current implementation for a small portion of students. The majority of student respondents seemed indifferent regarding positive or negative experiences with the CCRG program. While educators and counselors play a vital role in informing students about the program, the mandatory nature of participation and lack of clear communication about its benefits contributed to the negative experiences; meanwhile, other students found the program to be helpful, depending on their individual needs with the program.

Student Perceptions of Time

When asked about time as a variable to student success, 69% of students either strongly agreed or agreed that the CCRG content allowed them to work at their own pace, while only 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Additionally, 54% of students strongly agreed or agreed that CCRG would save them time in college, marking a 15-point increase from last year.

Regarding time as a factor in student success within the NROC/EdReady content, 62% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they had enough time to complete classwork and the Tier Tests required for CCRG credit in each course. Furthermore, 53% of students strongly agreed or agreed that they received a quick response when they had questions about CCRG content. These figures show an increase from the previous year.

Despite more students believing that CCRG saved them time in college, 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This piece of data is significant because one of CCRG's purposes is to save student's time. Most schools place students in what are called remedial courses in math or English – a process that is a financial drain on not only students, but also colleges and taxpayers, costing up to an estimated $7 billion a year (Butrymowicz, 2017). Community colleges educate nearly half of all undergraduates, and about two-thirds of community college students take at least one developmental course (Chen & Simone, 2016; Ganga et al., 2018). High school remediation programs aim to save students both time and money by allowing them to complete college entrance requirements in high school rather than at the community college (Ran & Lin, 2022; Scott-Clayton, 2012).

Student Perceptions of the CCRG Content

To assess the effectiveness of the math and English curricula, students were surveyed regarding their experiences with the CCRG content. The aim was to understand its impact on their readiness for college, the military, and the workforce. According to the data, 58% of participants reported learning new content. Additionally, over 30% of students either strongly agreed or agreed that the CCRG materials prepared them for success on the military entrance/ASVAB test. Educators have also noted diverse applications of

the material beyond CCRG preparation, contributing to increased usage across different educational contexts.

Student Perceptions of the CCRG Impact

Student respondents highlighted various impacts, particularly on saving time and money as they progress through post-secondary education. Regarding financial savings, a significant 52% of students strongly agreed or agreed that CCRG would save them money in college. Conversely, 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, while 22% remained neutral.

In terms of time savings, students emphasized the value of investing effort in the course content to expedite their progress and potentially avoid remedial coursework at the community college level upon graduation. One student emphasized this point, stating, "Work diligently and stay focused. The coursework isn't overly difficult and completing it promptly can save considerable time" (Student, 2024).

Student Recommendations for CCRG

As the primary users of CCRG and the EdReady/NROC platform, students were asked to provide feedback on their biggest challenges with the CCRG courses this year. The most frequent theme was related to the Tier Tests associated with course completions. Many students expressed concerns about various topics. The following categories summarize the key concerns and suggestions from the students, offering a vivid snapshot of their experiences and recommendations for programmatic improvements:

Reduce Workload and Stress:

- "Don't give so much work at once." (Student, 2024)
- "Give more time with less work. We have plenty of homework as is." (Student, 2024)
- "Get rid of it because it isn't helpful at all." (Student, 2024)

Improve Teaching and Support:

- "Make sure you have a good teacher to help you when you have questions." (Student, 2024)
- "Have more teacher hands-on help." (Student, 2024)
- "If y'all teach us something, have a certified teacher up here to help us. I learned nothing because I've learned this already." (Student, 2024)

Focus and Time Management:

- "Focus on your work and complete assignments on time." (Student, 2024)
- "Just do it and ask for help if there is someone willing to help you." (Student, 2024)
- "Don't rush or procrastinate." (Student, 2024)

Technical and Logistical Improvements:

- "Make the website less confusing with the tiers and practice tests." (Student, 2024)
- "Make it easier to access things and give a little more direction on how to go through the work." (Student, 2024)
- "Only have us do Canvas and Tier Test." (Student, 2024)

Relevance and Content Quality:

- "Material that we might actually retain." (Student, 2024)
- "I think CCRG is stupid. Put children in a classroom with a teacher who can personally help rather than have a computer teach us." (Student, 2024)
- "Make it better to understand." (Student, 2024)

Practical Advice:

- "Try your best and don't be afraid to ask questions." (Student, 2024)
- "The crucial recommendations I have to help make more students successful in CCRG will be paying great focus, speaking up when you need help in a certain topic, feeling confident based on the course, having a negative mindset will not help you lead to your desired goal, keep support around, & try your best." (Student, 2024)
- "Stay focused on your work and complete assignments on time." (Student, 2024)

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These insights provide valuable guidance on how to improve the CCRG program, making it more effective and supportive for student learning and achievement.

PART II: RESULTS AND KEY FINDINGS

C: CCRG STAFF SURVEY

To gauge perceptions of CCRG among staff participating in the program, an optional statewide survey was distributed across school districts. The survey comprised 24 Likert scale questions designed to provide the partnering organizations with a better understanding of staff members' views on the CCRG 2023-2024 academic year implementation (see **Appendix F**). The survey respondents included teachers, CCRG leads, and other district staff involved in CCRG implementation. Each question had a varying response rate, as responses were encouraged but not mandatory. The staff response rate ranged between 160 and 200 for individual questions.

Appendix C contains graphs of the survey data, categorized into Perceptions of Support, Perceptions of Resources, and Outcomes. Staff responses are grouped into three categories: strongly agree/agree, neutral, and disagree/strongly disagree. Additionally, **Appendix D** provides data on 'not applicable' and 'do not know' responses, highlighting the significant number of staff who either did not know the answer or found a particular question irrelevant to their role. This information will aid the partner organizations in developing their CCRG communication strategy for the 2024-2025 academic year and ongoing support.

Staff Perceptions of CCRG Support

The CCRG program, a funded initiative as guided by SL 2021-180 (SB 105), offers districts various forms of support, including professional development, help desk assistance, webinars, office hours, and more. According to the survey, over 70% of staff respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they knew who to contact if they had questions about CCRG and that they received timely responses when help was needed. These responses represented two of the highest satisfaction percentages in the entire survey.

Other forms of support, such as office hours, the help desk, and webinars, received strongly agree/agree ratings ranging from 26% to 39%. Despite these ratings, more staff respondents expressed positive opinions about the support offered than those who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

However, only 26% of staff respondents agreed that the professional development provided to PSUs was helpful. Feedback gathered in the field and during the AIM conference presentation and focus group discussions highlighted a significant demand for face-to-face professional development opportunities. Strengthening professional development is essential to ensure that participants find the information provided useful and beneficial and for implementation. This is a critical area for improvement to enhance overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the CCRG program.

Eligibility Criteria and Identifying Students

To ensure that students were aware of the CCRG program for the 2023-2024 academic year, district and school staff adhered to the NCCCS eligibility requirements to identify and inform students of this opportunity. Detailed CCRG eligibility criteria are available in **Appendix A: CCRG Eligibility and Exemptions.** The CCRGAP committee collaborated to provide essential talking points for district leaders and teachers to use in their communications with students.

When asked to describe the criteria used by their districts to determine CCRG eligibility, most staff indicated that they followed the state guidelines. One staff member noted, "We used the criteria determined by the state. By legislation, high school students will be identified in their junior year as eligible for CCRG courses. Students whose unweighted GPA is between 2.2 and 2.799 will be required to register for CCRG Math and English courses unless they meet one of the exemptions listed below. Students with an unweighted GPA below 2.2 or above 2.8 are also allowed to participate" (Staff, 2024).

Another staff member shared, "We allowed all seniors the opportunity to use this course. It was integrated into the Math 4 course" (Staff, 2024).

In summary, of the nearly 200 respondents to this question, more than 50% cited GPA and ACT scores as the primary criteria for determining CCRG eligibility.

Respondents were also asked about their approach to informing students and families who met the CCRG eligibility criteria. The survey responses indicated that public school units (PSUs) varied in their approaches. One respondent stated, "Counselors notified students of the Math and English CCRG courses when they completed registration during the spring of their junior year" (Staff, 2024). Another respondent detailed their district's communication efforts: "We first notified all parents in the provided letter and made a call home to ensure they received the information. We pulled all students individually at the school level and counseled them on the benefits of CCRG. We then had them enroll with the assistant principal of their school. All eligible students…were enrolled, even though we knew we could not force them to participate. We did all we could to encourage active participation" (Staff, 2024).

Most respondents indicated that their districts sent letters or emails to inform students and families. However, several staff members were unsure how student participants were informed about the CCRG opportunity. One staff member responded, "I'm guessing they didn't because I wasn't even informed about it" (Staff, 2024).

Staff Perceptions of CCRG Resources

Staff had access to various resources to support the CCRG 2023-2024 academic year implementation. To ensure adequate support, staff were asked about the various resources. Responses varied based on knowledge that the resources exist, staff respondents need, etc. In the questions about English and math resources, staff respondents rated not applicable and do not know higher than in other areas on the 7-point Likert scale. Over 10% of staff strongly agreed or agreed that the CCRG English workbooks for students were useful; whereas 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed that the CCRG English workbooks for students were useful. However, over 20% respondents responded, found the English Teacher Handbooks useful. Similar to English, staff respondents felt that the Canvas Resources Teacher Handbooks for Math were also helpful.

Another instructional supplemental resource available to staff was the Canvas Resource Course. When asked the perceptions of this resource to support in CCRG implementation, staff respondents shared the Canvas course materials were some of the materials they used throughout the school year. Other respondents asserted that this was the main resource they relied upon or that it was utilized in addition to district-created resources. Resources received lower than expected results this year. So many factors are in consideration as to why this occurred. Staff turnover, professional development occurred earlier and distribution of Canvas resources differed. Several staff respondents conveyed they did not know of resources. Here is one respondent's response, "I am unaware of any supplemental resources developed to support CCRG" (CCRG Staff, 2024).

Although the CCRGAP committee collaboratively provided many resources and training opportunities, the committee seeks continuous improvement and to provide adequate, useful resources; therefore, staff were also asked to provide any additional supports they felt that the CCRGAP partners could provide to help with next year's implementation. Over 100 staff respondents shared feedback, and the following are representative of the key findings:

- "I am unsure of the role the Community College system actually plays in this program. Perhaps representatives from our local community college speaking to our students regarding this program would be beneficial." (Instructor, 2024)
- "This is not productive and cuts into the Eng 4 curriculum WAY too much. Scatter it throughout the English courses instead of forcing seniors to do it all." (Instructor, 2024)
- "We desperately need more training. We need training on the platform, the resources available and anything else to make this a successful opportunity for our students." (Instructor, 2024)

- “They could make CCRG its own course rather than implementing it through Math IV and English IV. In math, the material of CCRG is very different than Math IV, so it does not make sense to have it be taught within the Math IV curriculum. It should be a separate class all together.” (Anonymous, 2024)
- “I think there was plenty of support. I just want to mention that this whole program seems completely unnecessary as a requirement for students. They should be offered, not forced, to take CCRG.” (Instructor, 2024)
- “The teacher handbooks appear to be very helpful. Maybe add some possible talking points teachers can use with their students to help create buy-in as to why students should aim to work in the platform, especially for kids who fall in the GPA range but do not plan to attend community college. Some teachers did a great job "selling" it but most do not and then have students who disengage from working the in the platform.” (Instructor, 2024)

Staff Perceptions of CCRG Outcomes

Staff respondents shared the challenges in meeting the needs of all families regarding CCRG this academic year. Some of the common challenges shared have been getting students motivated and bought into the program. Over 20% of respondents shared motivating students was difficult. One respondent said, “Our challenges are all around all the opportunities our students have who do not plan on attending college. Our students who are enrolled in welding, cosmetology, HVAC, electrical, etc. will be going to work straight out of high school. They are apprentices and interns serving now as juniors and seniors, so they have jobs lined up. It was a challenge to convince them to take on additional work within the school day/class periods” (Instructor, 2024). Other challenges respondents shared were time, scheduling conflicts, and students’ internet access at home.

As staff prepare for Fall 2024, many respondents were able to share lessons learned this year’s implementation and the previous year’s implementation. Overall, LEA staff feel better accustomed to implementing CCRG and have improved information-sharing about the program with students and school-based scheduling and implementation; however, the CCRGAP committee must reconsider the English course programming and ways to increase training and technical assistance.

PART III: CANVAS RESOURCE COURSE ANALYTICS

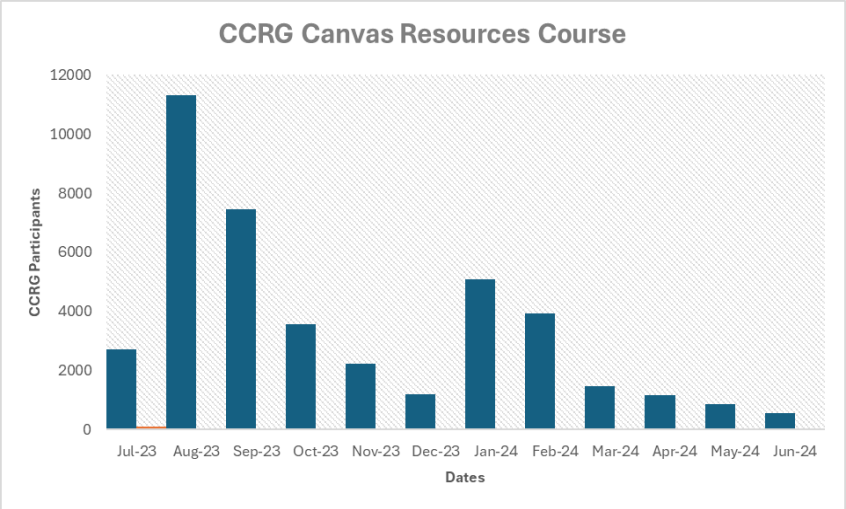
The CCRG Canvas Resources Course was developed as part of the 2020-2021 academic year professional development for staff and the information is still be utilized today. Canvas is a learning management system (LMS) by Instructure. Training materials are added to the course on an ongoing basis, and the course remains available for LEA personnel. Currently, the course is being reviewed and updated by an e-Learning specialist to enhance its usability.

Staff participants log into the Canvas platform to utilize the program resources, which include English and math manuals and review materials for both students and educators. During the 2023-2024 academic year, the course saw several dozen discussions and engaged over 2000 active students throughout the state.

Figure 5 illustrates a notable increase in staff activity between August and September 2023 and again between January and February 2024. This pattern demonstrates a heightened use of the CCRG Canvas Resources Course at the beginning of each semester. The trend suggests that educators increasingly turn to professional development and training resources at these times, likely to better prepare for the influx of students starting their coursework with the CCRG program through NROC/EdReady.

This reliance on the CCRG Canvas Resources Course at the start of each academic term indicates that educators are actively seeking to enhance their teaching strategies and familiarize themselves with the latest updates and resources provided by CCRG. Such preparation is crucial as it ensures that they are well-equipped to support their students effectively from the outset. Consequently, the increased activity underscores the importance of ongoing professional development and the valuable role of training resources in maintaining high educational standards and improving student outcomes.

Figure 5. CCRG Canvas Resources Course Participation Rates by Month



CCRG FUTURE PLANS

CCRG professional development and support were planned and provided for Summer 2024 and continue through Fall 2024. In addition, the CCRGAP committee has professional development planned for the Spring 2025 term. The NCCCS will continue its active partnership with the NCDPI during the 2024 – 2025 school year with the recent addition of the State Director of College Ready Graduates and Developmental Education. This key representative from the NCCCS will act as a thought partner with NCDPI's CCRG Program Administrator and assist in providing webinars and support materials to help LEA Administrators and teachers navigate CCRG implementation each semester. Additionally, the CCRG Program Administrator and new State Director of College Ready Graduates and Developmental Education will collaborate with other key NCCCS and NCDPI leaders to determine the best direction and future of the CCRG program.

Looking ahead to Fall 2025 and beyond, the NC Community College System will be implementing the realigned developmental education to provide a more seamless transition for high school students into higher education and/or the workforce. This realigned curriculum will allow CCRG students to access coursework through community colleges. The CCRG courses will follow the chosen Developmental Education model for the high schools' local community college. These strategic initiatives aim to enhance the effectiveness of the CCRG program, ensuring that more students are prepared for college and career success as they transition from high school to higher education institutions. The continued collaboration between NCCCS and NCDPI will be pivotal in achieving these goals and setting a clear direction for the future of college readiness in North Carolina.

Collaboration and Support:

The NCDPI and NCCCS partnered with the vendor, The NROC Project/EdReady in various ways:

- Communicating with LEAs
- Providing timely and ongoing updates
- Facilitating CCRG Office Hours

NCDPI and NCCCS collaborated with NROC/EdReady to ensure continued platform access, appropriate data sharing, and contractual progress into the subsequent (2024-2025) academic year.

CCRG RECOMMENDATIONS

Utilizing the available quantitative and qualitative data, including student and staff feedback detailed in the Student Perceptions of CCRG and Staff Perceptions of CCRG sections below, the NCDPI and NCCCS make the following recommendations:

1. Continued Support of the Overall Program

2. Continued Reassessment of the Overall Program:
   - Focus Area: English curriculum implementation to continue improvements.
   - Rationale: Tier Test data indicates a much higher pass rate in math than in English. However, improvements have been made. Continuing in the right trajectory and determining ways to improve results faster.
   - Current Limitation: English can only be implemented as part of the English IV curriculum.

3. CCRG Math and English Implementation:
   - Recommendation: Continue considering how CCRG English can be implemented more effectively.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the multiple data sources and challenges for sustainability, the following conclusions emerged:

- The NCDPI and NCCCS staff will work collaboratively to ensure greater communication to LEAs about the intent and benefits of CCRG to ensure greater access and opportunity to all subgroups.
  - The NCCCS is in a transition year as they continue to evaluate their developmental and supplemental education practices and policies. This period of transition involves a thorough review of current practices to identify what has been effective and what needs improvement. The goal is to refine these practices to better serve students and ensure that they are adequately prepared for the demands of college-level work. As the NCCCS engages in this transition period, the NCDPI remains extensively collaborative and involved.
- The NCDPI and NCCCS continue to provide professional development and technical assistance throughout the fall/spring of the 2024-2025 academic year.
  - Given the turnover across LEAs, NCDPI and NCCCS staff recognize ongoing support is essential to the CCRG program's success.
  - Despite any potential changes after the upcoming transition period, CCRG legislation remains in place and CCRG for the 2024-2025 academic year is not optional.
- The NCDPI and NCCCS will explore ways to deliver CCRG content in a secure avenue that ensures academic integrity.
  - Focus group participants shared that this would help combat students utilizing web-based resources to search for the answers.
- The NCDPI and NCCCS will determine potential CCRG course realignment with post-secondary pathways:
  - Colleges have been provided flexibility in serving students based on local needs. Benchmarks for remediation remain in place, and CCRG Tier Test scores will be accepted at colleges for placement into college-level courses. This means that while colleges can tailor their support services to better fit their students, they must still adhere to certain standardized criteria to ensure consistency and quality in student readiness for college coursework.
  - Together, the NCCCS and NCDPI are evaluating and determining what will be most beneficial as they review the past two years of data. This data-driven approach allows them to make informed decisions about the future of the CCRG program. By analyzing the outcomes of students who have participated in the program, they can identify trends, strengths, and areas for improvement. This continuous evaluation process is essential for adapting the program to meet the evolving needs of students and ensuring its long-term sustainability and effectiveness.

- The NCDPI and NCCCS will work collaboratively to review CCRG eligibility criteria. Review CCRG eligibility as a part of the curriculum realignment.

- The NCDPI and NCCCS are working collaboratively to determine changes to the CCRG curricular options to make data-informed improvements.
    - The System Office will continue to work collaboratively with NCDPI to ensure that students receiving CCRG content and passing the assessments provided through CCRG enter college without the need for further remediation. This collaboration is crucial as it aims to create a seamless pathway from high school to college, reducing the need for additional preparatory courses that can delay students' progress and increase their educational costs.

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Appendix A

CCRG Eligibility and Exemptions

CCRG Student English Eligibility and Exemptions

Any NC high school student who has an unweighted GPA (UGPA) between 2.2 and 2.799 as a high school junior after the completion of the first semester or second semester is required to take English with the CCRG content in the senior year of high school.

Students with an unweighted GPA below 2.2 may opt into CCRG English.

If students meet any one of the following criteria in English, they will be exempt from the CCRG English content.
CCRG English Exemptions

- Cumulative high school UGPA- 2.8 or higher
- PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT 2015 and future - 26 or a composite score of 460 for evidenced-based
  reading and writing
- SAT ERW- 480 or higher
- Pre-ACT English- 18 or higher
- Pre-ACT Reading- 22 or higher
- ACT English- 18 or higher
- ACT Reading- 22 or higher
- AP Language & Composition- 3 or higher
- AP Literature & Composition- 3 or higher
- IB English A- 4 or higher
- AS Level English Language- grade C or higher
- A Level English Language- grade C or higher
- AS Level Language and Literature in English- grade C or higher
- For CCP/CIHS students*: College GPA 2.8+ and 6+ UGETC credits earned with a grade of C or higher
- For CCP/CIHS students*: Completion of ENG 111 or ENG 110 with a grade of C or higher
- RISE Placement Test English - 70 or higher on Tier 1 and Tier 2

*CIHS students are those attending early colleges, middle colleges, or other cooperative innovative high schools.

The Military Interstate Children's Compact guidelines will apply as appropriate for most beneficial placement for military-connected students.

CCRG Student Math Eligibility and Exemptions

Any NC high school student who has an unweighted GPA (UGPA) between 2.2 and 2.799 as a high school junior after the completion of the first semester or second semester is required to take CCRG math content in the senior year of high school.

Students with an unweighted GPA below 2.2 may opt into CCRG math.

If students meet any one of the following criteria in math, they will be exempt from the CCRG math content.
CCRG Math Exemptions

- Cumulative high school UGPA- 2.8 or higher

- PSAT 10 and PSAT/NMSQT 2015 and future - score of 24.5 or 510 in mathematics
- SAT Math- 530 or higher
- Pre-ACT Math- 22 or higher
- ACT Math- 22 or higher
- Math 3 EOC- 4 or 5
- AP Calculus AB- 3 or higher
- AP Calculus BC- 3 or higher
- IB Math (Higher Level) - 4 or higher
- IB Advanced Math (Higher Level)- 4 or higher
- IB Mathematical Studies (Standard Level)- 4 or higher
- Cambridge International Exam: AS Level Math- grade C or higher
- Cambridge International Exam: A Level Math- grade C or higher
- Cambridge International Exam: A Level Mathematics-Further- grade C or higher
- For CCP/CIHS students*: College GPA 2.8+ and 6+ UGETC credits earned with a grade of C or higher
- For CCP/CIHS students*: Completion of MAT 110, MAT 121, MAT 143, MAT 152, or MAT 171 with a grade of C or higher
- RISE Placement Test Math - 70 or higher on Tier 1 and Tier 2, and Tier 3

*CIHS students are those attending early colleges, middle colleges, or other cooperative innovative high schools.

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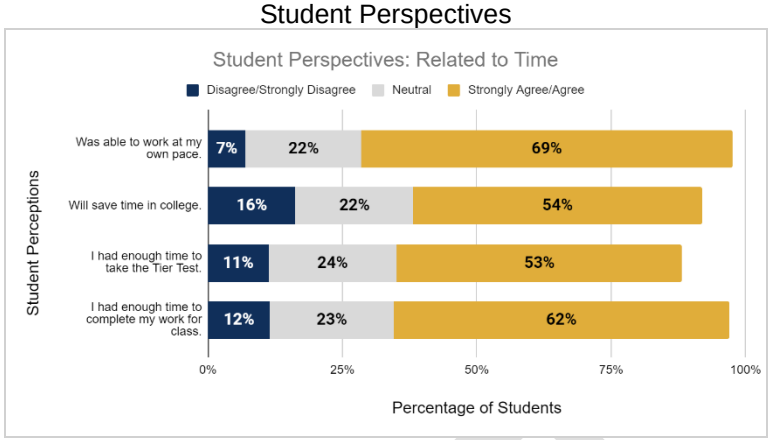
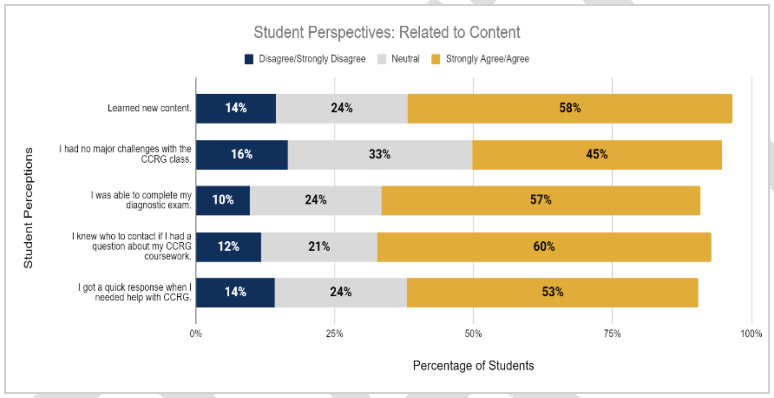
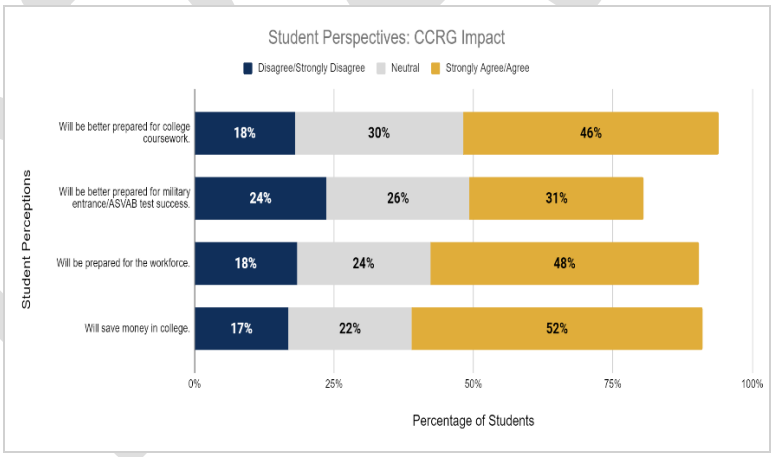
Appendix B

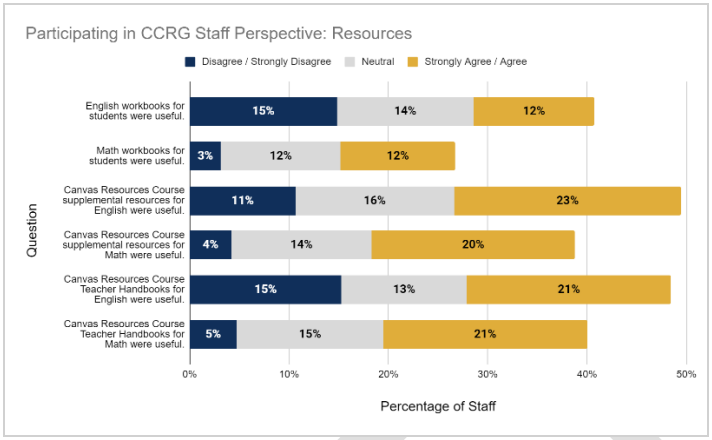
Student Perspectives

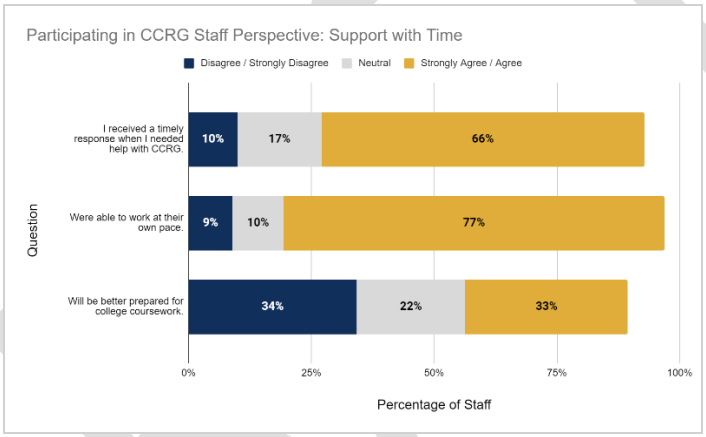


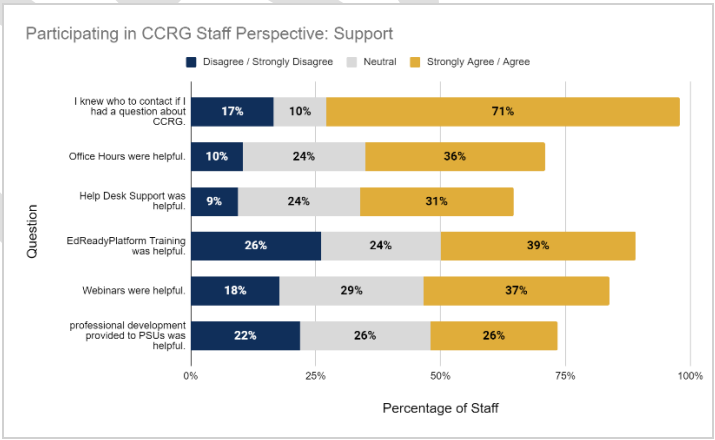


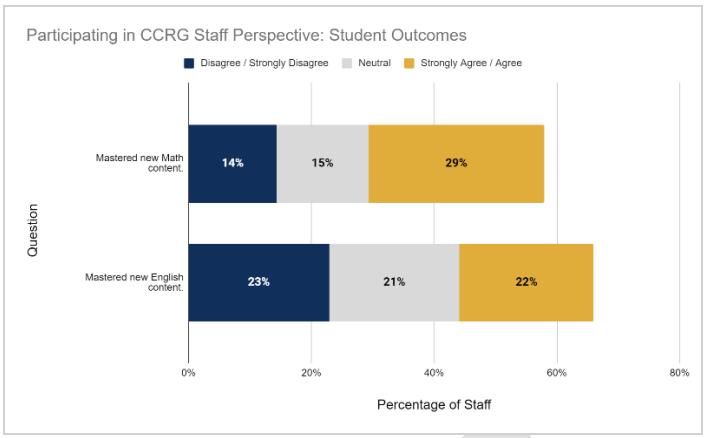


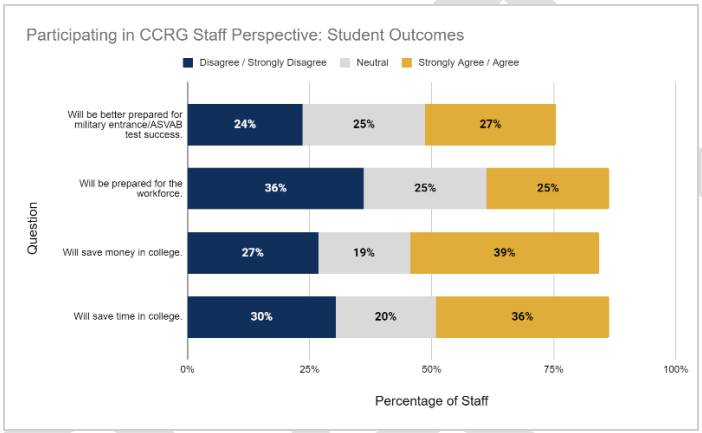
Appendix C
Staff Perspectives

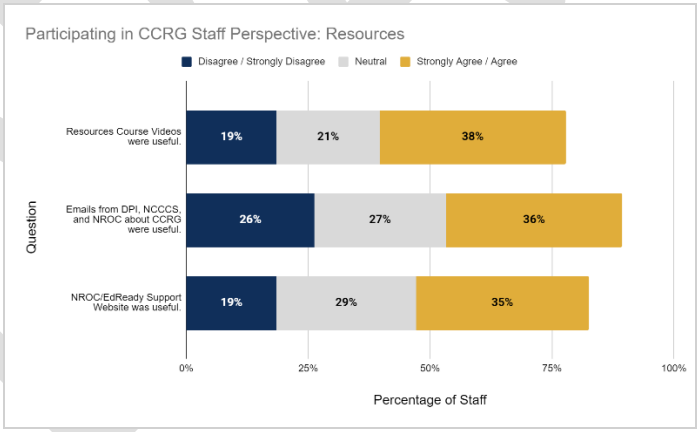






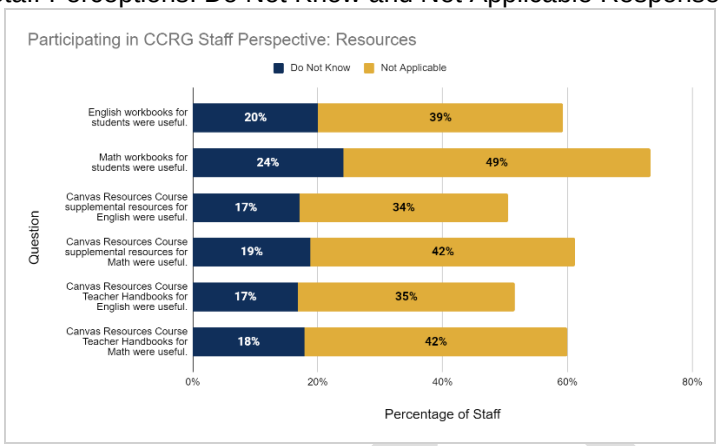

Participating in CCRG Staff Perspective: Student Outcomes
Disagree / Strongly Disagree
Neutral
Strongly Agree / Agree
Question
Mastered new Math content.
14%
15%
29%
Mastered new English content.
23%
21%
22%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
Percentage of Staff

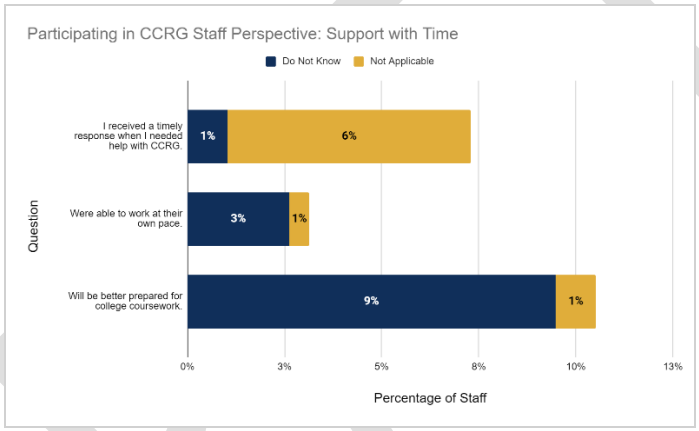

Participating in CCRG Staff Perspective: Student Outcomes
Disagree / Strongly Disagree
Neutral
Strongly Agree / Agree
Question
Will be better prepared for military entrance/ASVAB test success.
24%
25%
27%
Will be prepared for the workforce.
36%
25%
25%
Will save money in college.
27%
19%
39%
Will save time in college.
30%
20%
36%
0%
25%
50%
75%
100%
Percentage of Staff

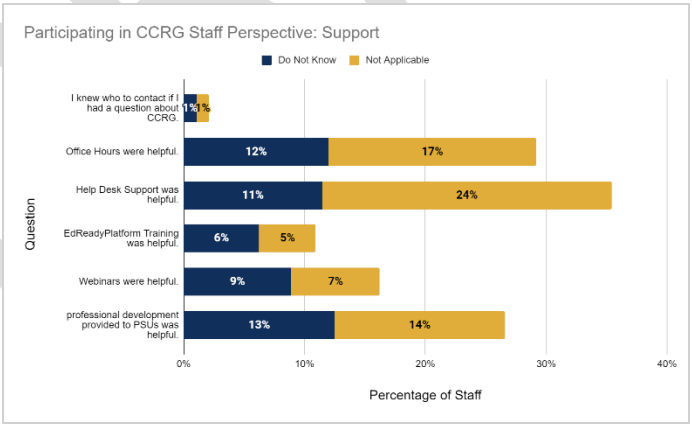

Participating in CCRG Staff Perspective: Resources
Disagree / Strongly Disagree
Neutral
Strongly Agree / Agree
Question
Resources Course Videos were useful.
19%
21%
38%
Emails from DPI, NCCCS, and NROC about CCRG were useful.
26%
27%
36%
NROC/EdReady Support Website was useful.
19%
29%
35%
0%
25%
50%
75%
100%
Percentage of Staff

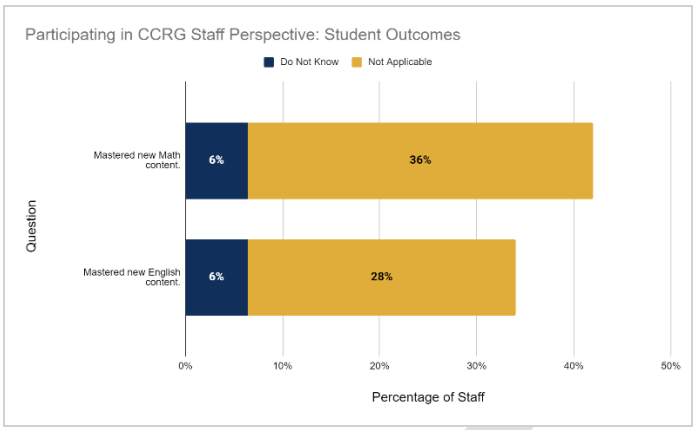
Appendix D

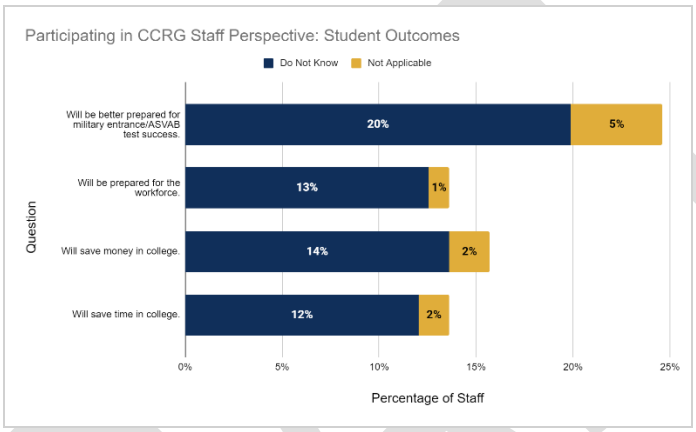
Staff Perceptions: Do Not Know and Not Applicable Responses

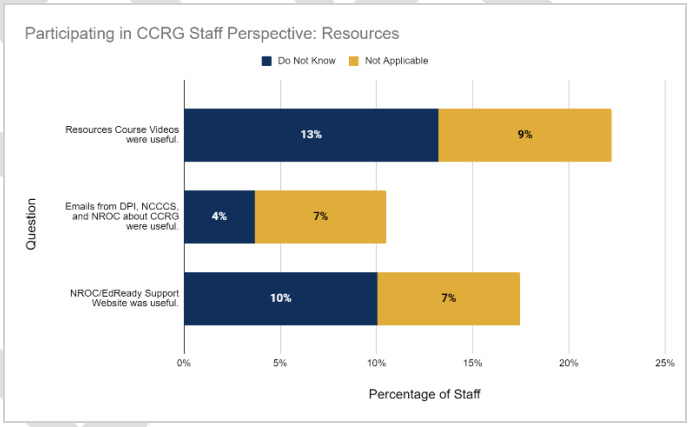







Participating in CCRG Staff Perspective: Student Outcomes
Do Not Know
Not Applicable
Question
Mastered new Math content.
6%
36%
Mastered new English content.
6%
28%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
Percentage of Staff


Participating in CCRG Staff Perspective: Student Outcomes
Do Not Know
Not Applicable
Question
Will be better prepared for military entrance/ASVAB test success.
20%
5%
Will be prepared for the workforce.
13%
1%
Will save money in college.
14%
2%
Will save time in college.
12%
2%
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
Percentage of Staff


Participating in CCRG Staff Perspective: Resources
Do Not Know
Not Applicable
Question
Resources Course Videos were useful.
13%
9%
Emails from DPI, NCCCS, and NROC about CCRG were useful.
4%
7%
NROC/EdReady Support Website was useful.
10%
7%
0%
5%
10%
15%
20%
25%
Percentage of Staff

Appendix E

Student Survey Questions

Select the name of your School District or Charter School.

▼ A.C.E. Academy - 13C (1) ... Other (335)

Which CCRG class did you take?

- English - Fall 2023 - Spring 2024
- Math - Fall 2023 - Spring 2024
- Both English and Math - Fall 2023 - Spring 2024

To what degree to do you agree with the following statements about the Career and College Ready Graduates (CCRG) Program for the 2023-2024 school year:

Item Response Options
SA – Strongly Agree
A – Agree
N – Neither Agree or Disagree
D – Disagree
SD – Strongly Disagree
DNK – Do Not Know
NA – Not Applicable

Student Outcomes

As a result of participating in CCRG, I…

1. Was able to work at my own pace.
2. learned new content.
3. Will be better prepared for college coursework
4. Will be better prepared for military entrance/ASVAB test success
5. Will be prepared for the workforce
6. Will save money in college
7. Will save time in college

Course Logistics

8. I had no major challenges with the CCRG class.
9. I was able to complete my diagnostic exam.
10. I had enough time to take the Tier Test.
11. I had enough time to complete my work for class.
12. I knew who to contact if I had a question about my CCRG coursework
13. I got a quick response when I needed help with CCRG.

Open-Ended

14. How did you find out your school was offering a CCRG course?
15. What qualified you to take the CCRG course?
16. What recommendations do you have to help make students more successful in CCRG?
17. How did you learn about CCRG EdReady and that you were qualified to take advantage of this opportunity?
18. What were your biggest challenges in your CCRG course this year?

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Appendix F

Staff Survey Questions

Select the name of your School District or Charter School.

▼ A.C.E. Academy - 13C (1) ... Other (335)

What is your role?

Which CCRG class did you implement/teach?

- English - Fall 2023 - Spring 2024
- Math - Fall 2023 - Spring 2024
- Both English and Math - Fall 2023 - Spring 2024

To what degree to do you agree with the following statements about the Career and College Ready Graduates (CCRG) Program for the 2023-2024 school year:

Item Response Options
SA – Strongly Agree
A – Agree
N – Neither Agree or Disagree
D – Disagree
SD – Strongly Disagree
DNK – Do Not Know
NA – Not Applicable

Partnership

1. The leading organizations (North Carolina Community College System, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and The NROC Project/EdReady) collectively supported implementation of CCRG.

Supports

2. I knew who to contact if I had a question about CCRG.
3. I received a timely response when I needed help with CCRG.
4. CCRG Office Hours were helpful.
5. CCRG Help Desk Support was helpful.
6. CCRG Platform Training was helpful.
7. CCRG Webinars were helpful.
8. Local/PSU-provided CCRG professional development was helpful.

Resources

9. CCRG English workbooks for students were useful.
10. CCRG Math workbooks for students were useful.
11. CCRG Resources Course supplemental resources for English (documents, handouts, printables) were useful.
12. CCRG Resources Course supplemental resources for Math (documents, handouts, printables) were useful.
13. CCRG Resources Course Teacher handbooks for English were useful.
14. CCRG Resources Course Teacher handbooks for Math were useful.
15. CCRG Resources Course Train-the-Trainer presentation slides were useful.
16. CCRG Resources Course Videos were useful.
17. Emails from DPI, NCCCS, and NROC to the CCRG PSU Administrator were useful.
18. NROC/EdReady Support Website was useful.

Student Outcomes

As a result of participating in CCRG, our students

19. Were able to work at their own pace.
20. Mastered new math content.
21. Mastered new English content.
22. Will be better prepared for college coursework
23. Will be better prepared for military entrance/ASVAB test success
24. Will be prepared for the workforce
25. Will save money in college

DRAFT

26. Will save time in college

Open-Ended

27. Describe the criteria used by your districts to determine eligibility for CCRG.
28. How did your district inform students and families of this opportunity?
29. Describe types of instructional supplemental resources that were developed to support your district or charter's CCRG teachers and students.
30. What were your challenges in meeting the needs of all families as it pertains to CCRG this academic year?
31. Looking ahead to Fall 2024, what lessons learned from this 2023-2024 academic year will inform how you implement the CCRG Program?

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Appendix G

Sample Parent Letter

Greetings Parents,

We are writing to inform parents and guardians that the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is conducting an optional survey of all the College and Career Ready Graduate (CCRG) participants. CCRG is a program that introduces the college developmental math, reading, and English curriculum prior to high school graduation. High school seniors who are not career and college ready by the end of their junior year will have opportunities for college remediation prior to high school graduation through cooperation with community college partners through the CCRG program.

Survey participation is completely voluntary. We are asking that our seniors who are participating in CCRG through the EdReady platform complete a short survey. ***The survey is not a requirement***. The purpose of the optional survey is to gather information from students that participated in the CCRG Program during the 2023 – 2024 school year. Students are allowed to exit the survey at any time. Survey responses will be collected anonymously, and survey results will remain confidential.

We remain committed to improving our services. As a result, student survey responses will help us learn more about their experiences and determine ways to make improvements and increase effectiveness.

Again, your student participation is completely voluntary and will be used to improve the CCRG Program.

Sincerely,

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Appendix H

Focus Group Direct Quotes

Focus Group Direct Quotes from Participants

Administrator / CCRG Lead
"Math tends to be more successful than English. When everyone is on their own pathway in English it makes it challenging for teachers to do consistent instruction. The passages are long. Kids are not moving fast. The students feel defeated and the teachers feel like it is pulling teeth."
"Biggest thing is getting teacher buy-in is a barrier. Not tested. Asking them to integrate is a challenge."
"Shared a testimonial email from a student that expressed appreciation for CCRG. Student that went on a college visit in the Spring of 2022. She attends Cape Fear Community College. Not real until student talking to the college. It helps when students come back to share."
"Completion certificate recommended for students to take with them along with their transcript to the community college."
"Institutional knowledge base is gone due to change in leadership."

Teacher
"I do not mind implementing anything. English IV is left alone and often forgotten about. There is nothing for English IV in the statewide test bank."
"They need to be told sophomore or junior year what CCRG looks like."
"Pair students with Math and English CCRG in one class. Offer it as an elective credit. Call it CCRG. Solve staffing and transcript issues."
"Most students are there because they didn't apply themselves, not because they don't know the math."

School Counselor
"Alternative high school it's working well. Small classes and teachers are always pushing kids and monitoring the data. Come to the school with a low gpa. Based on team meeting students can stay at the school or go to the base school."
"Send a letter from the district to parents. Parents call and adds the information to the spreadsheet."

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Appendix I

Focus Group Script / Questions

Welcome & Thank You…no limits for the discussion (my only stipulation is to ensure that I stay on time because I value the work you do with our students).
I have approximately 6 questions with hopes of taking no longer than 30 minutes. If you have input that was not conveyed or captured, and you would like to stick around after we are done feel free.
The Purpose & Goal of the Focus Group Discussion is to hear about CCRG from those in the field. You are doing the work and your insight is invaluable.

1. Tell us about how you used CCRG in your district - what worked well? What were barriers?
2. How would you recommend redesigning CCRG English?
3. From your perspective, who is the most critical target population for CCRG? Do you have any feedback on the unweighted GPA of 2.2-2.7 and eligibility criteria for senior students.
4. What additional resources and/or support would you recommend from NCDPI, the Community College System, or The NROC Project/EdReady for your district or school's CCRG implementation?
5. Describe how you communicate with parents about CCRG? How can we help support those communication efforts?
6. Do you have anything else you wish to share regarding your experience with CCRG?

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