



## NC Businesses Investing in Education

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Aligning the needs of our business community with the goals of North Carolina's education systems is essential as we look to close the skills gap and fill our talent pipeline. As job creators play an active role in providing career-training opportunities in education, producing a globally competitive workforce in North Carolina comes closer to fruition.

Last month, two North Carolina businesses exhibited just how effectively that alignment can be executed. In partnership with Rockingham Community College, Duke Energy launched the [TRAILS \(Trail Recreation and Adventure Institute for Leadership and Services\)](#) program – a continuing education program at the community college that is tracked to become an associate's degree program in three years. The first community college program of its kind, this program will provide students with the tangible skills needed to successfully meet the growing workforce needs in outdoor recreation, outdoor education, or therapeutic recreation. Additionally, Fidelity and the North Carolina Council on Economic Education teamed up once again to host a professional development seminar on personal finance for more than 40 educators in Wake County. In North Carolina curriculum, teaching personal finance is required but many teachers express apprehension in teaching the subject matter due to their own financial management acumen. This program, which Fidelity has hosted before, seeks to equip educators with tools and best practices to confidently present personal finance concepts in their classrooms and in turn, better prepare students for their future.

Both of these ventures are prime examples of how our business community and education systems can partner together to produce a globally competitive workforce. The competition to secure the best talent is only growing steeper and it is critical that we support initiatives that secure North Carolina's position as a top-ten state for workforce readiness. This is especially true as the growing skills gap continues to be one of the greatest challenges stifling businesses across the state. It's encouraging to see these two businesses work with our state's education systems to provide students with the resources necessary to compete in the modern economy.

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