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Abstract

In 2018, the NC General Assembly worked with the State Superintendent of the NC Department of Public Instruction to offer a new School Safety Grants Program for the 2018-2019 academic year, with the goal of improving safety in public schools. The awards were intended to build partnerships in communities through providing evidence-based and evidence informed crisis services and training to help students develop healthy responses to trauma and stress. As a result of receiving \$117,000 in funding through Training to Increase School Safety grant, the UNCP departments of social work and counseling have developed and implemented a comprehensive school safety training program targeting key personnel within regional school district partners. An overview of the training program, along with outcomes from trainings and workshops conducted, will be provided.

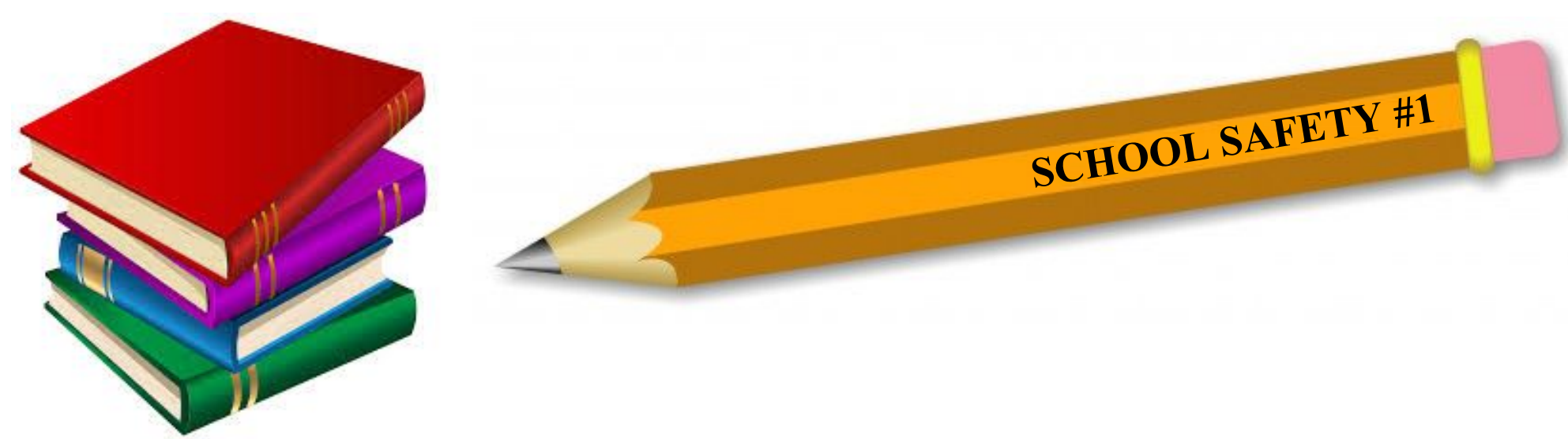
Needs Assessment

The culturally-rich region surrounding The University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP) is prime for producing strong positive outcomes leveraged by existing UNCP/K-12 partnerships and strengthened by evidence-based models that increase school safety. Demographics from Bladen, Columbus, Robeson, and Scotland Counties, along with Whiteville City, reflect an enduring trend of income-related statistics, demonstrating resource insecurity and vulnerability faced by students. While North Carolina (NC) has a poverty rate of 15.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017) and unemployment rate of 4.1% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018), each of the areas targeted in this proposal struggle with poverty rates ranging from 24.6-36.8% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017) and unemployment rates ranging from 5.0% (Whiteville City) to the highest in the state at 8.0% (Scotland) (North Carolina Department of Commerce, 2018).

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) indicates a growing need for mental health prevention and intervention in NC middle and high schools (Center for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018). Data from the 2013 and 2017 surveys demonstrate an increasing number of middle school students who experience bullying (1380 to 2477), have seriously thought about killing themselves (1392 to 2478), and have tried to kill themselves (1392 to 2483). Similarly, the 2013 to 2017 high school data demonstrates large increases in numbers of students who experience bullying (1831 to 3108), seriously consider attempting suicide (1824 to 3109), or have attempted suicide that resulted in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse (1825 to 2649; CDC).

Data from NC's Department of Public Instruction (DPI; 2017) further demonstrates need in our targeted region. Reported school crime rates per 100 students, consisting of violent crimes such as assault, rape, and possession of a weapon or controlled substances, indicates that Scotland (.28) had a higher crime rate for elementary school students than the state (.22) and over twice (2.06) the state (.79) crime level in middle schools. Robeson (1.65) exceeded the state rate (1.21) at the high school level. Moreover, the 2016-2017 Consolidated Data Report (DPI, 2018) shows that Robeson County reported one of the highest short-term high school suspension rates in the state, while Bladen (17.47), Robeson (34.00), Scotland (1951), and Whiteville City (18.29) each had overall short-term suspension rates that far exceed the state rate (13.70). Finally, the need for mental health services and school supports is further evidenced by the fact that NC students with disabilities in the categories of serious emotional disability, specific learning disability, and other health impaired (all of which include students with behavioral health disabilities) experience higher rates of short term suspensions and placement in alternative settings than students identified as having disabilities in any other category of exceptionality (DPI, 2018). At 17% and 18.9%, Robeson and Scotland surpass the state average of 13.3% of students with disabilities (DPI, 2017).

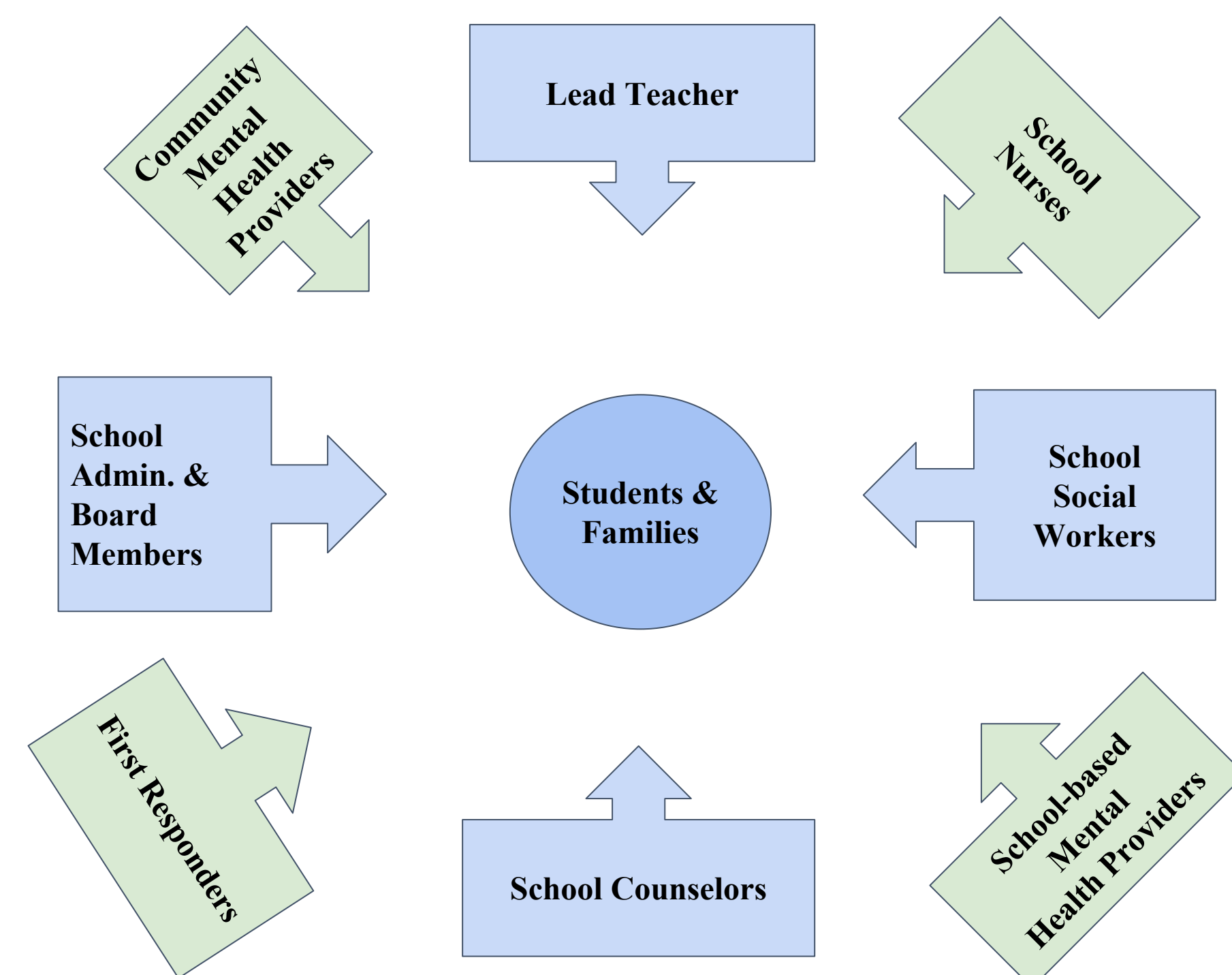
The above data demonstrates the need for prevention and intervention efforts that will address factors related to systemic trauma and school violence. According to the National Education Association (2016), approximately 50-80% of students living in poverty have been traumatized. Further, previous research notes the positive correlation between elevated community poverty rates and school violence exposure (Carlson, 2006) and exposure to school violence and lower socioeconomic status (Jansen et al., 2012). As a result, school safety and crisis intervention trainings have the potential to transform students' sense of safety, facilitate healthy coping mechanisms in response to trauma, increase capacity to manage stress, and promote access to wellness for students and their surrounding communities.



School District Partners



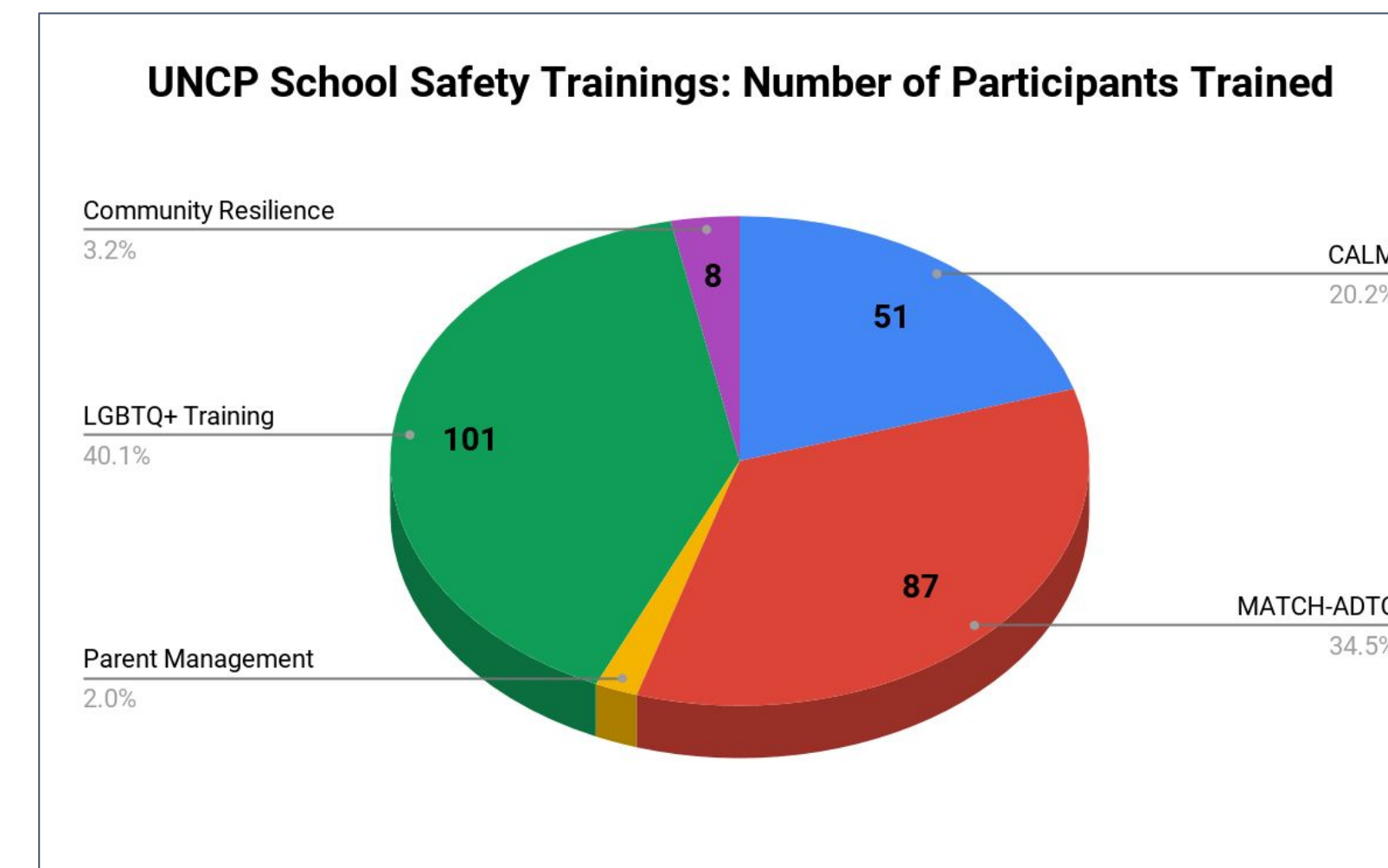
Key Personnel



Training Programs

Counseling Access to Lethal Means (CALM)	➤ Helps providers implement counseling strategies with clients at risk for suicide and their families to reduce access to lethal means.
Modular Approach to Therapy for Children with Anxiety, Depression, Trauma, or Conduct Problems (MATCH-ADTC)	➤ Covers psychoeducation and practical interventions for addressing mood disorders, trauma, and/or behavior problems in youth.
Parent Management/Parent-child Interaction Therapy	➤ Aims to significantly improve internalized and externalized youth behaviors.
Community Resiliency Model (CRM)	➤ Educates school professionals in the biology of traumatic stress reactions, resiliency, and ways to reduce distress, anxiety, depression, and anger.
Advocacy & Counseling Practices with LGBTQ+ Youth	➤ Provides advocacy and counseling practices designed to meet the unique needs of LGBTQ+ youth
School Health Assessment & Performance Evaluation System (SHAPE)	➤ Allows schools to self-assess school mental health resources, develop a team-based strategic planning guide, and obtain free school mental health screenings and assessments.

Training Outcomes



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK		
Training	Evaluation Instrument	Outcome
CALM (n=21)	The CALM 4T Evaluation was used to measure knowledge of CALM techniques and confidence in ability to talk about reducing access to lethal means. Response categories were 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neither Agree Nor Disagree, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree	Average Score on CALM 4T Evaluation =1.3 (SD=.02) 62% stated they planned on training staff using CALM 33% stated that they would use CALM when counseling students/families
LGBTQ+ Liberatory and Affirming Practices (n=39)	Training Satisfaction Surveys with following response categories were used: 1=Excellent, 2=Very Good, 3=Good, 4=Fair, 5=Poor	Average score on training satisfaction survey=1.1 (SD=.04)
LGBTQ+ Advocacy Training (n=11)	Training Satisfaction Surveys with following response categories were used: 1=Excellent, 2=Very Good, 3=Good, 4=Fair, 5=Poor	Average score on training satisfaction survey=1.0 (SD=.01)

Sustainability

The following sustainability efforts ensure continuous impact beyond the funding period:

- UNCP's Comprehensive School Safety Training Program will become a package of trainings to offer all NC school districts, with in person and online availability. Current partners and all UNCP social work, school counseling, and mental health program students will have access to online materials immediately.
- Faculty will provide ongoing training and consultation to school districts and community partners as part of the UNCP mission to provide service to the surrounding region.
- The CALM, CRM, and MATCH-ADTC workshops will be integrated into social work and counseling curricula to promote ongoing student internships with partnering districts.
- Faculty will provide presentations at regional and state conferences targeting school social workers, school counselors, licensed clinical providers, and other educators.
- An annual UNCP College of Health Sciences Interdisciplinary Symposium will include School Safety and Mental Health breakout sessions.
- Faculty will engage in ongoing data collection for long-term evaluation purposes to inform districts' ongoing training efforts and disseminate to state-level decision makers.

Conclusion

UNCP's School Safety Training Program has had a positive impact on addressing issues of school safety with student support professionals in NC's southeastern region. Through increased partnerships and trainings with nearby school systems, the program has educated school personnel and mental health professionals about the importance of safety training and provided professionals with skills that will promote positive outcomes within homes, schools and communities. Data from recent evaluations indicates high satisfaction in training and enthusiasm to implement further training with colleagues, students and families. Through this program, 22 CALM participants and 7 CRM participants have become "trainers" and can continue to train others in these nationally-recognized practice models. Moving forward, it is expected that the program will continue to expand training and consultation offerings within both the current partnering school districts and additional NC school districts.

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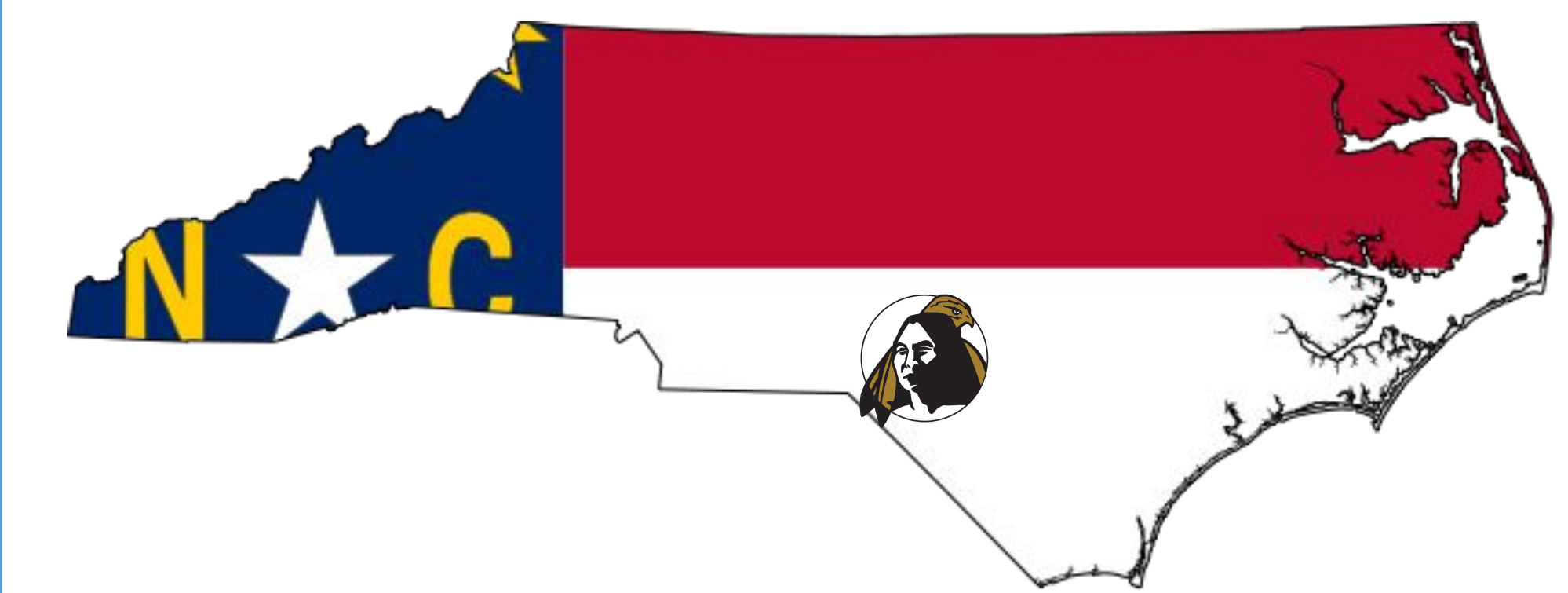
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