

Transformational Scholarships Program

Scholar Profiles

Class of 2026

Inaugural Cohort

College of Education

NC State University

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Jaden Aldridge



Jaden Aldridge, of **Pitt County**, will graduate from J.H. Rose High School, where she played volleyball and soccer, was on the Student Government Association (SGA), and was on the Dream Team and Link Crew. She has developed care for young children through babysitting and working at a daycare.

At NC State, Jaden will major in **Elementary Education**. Her long-term career goal is to teach elementary school in her hometown.

Favorite Quote

"Broken crayons still color."

Kensley Blanchard



Kensley Blanchard, of **Duplin County**, will graduate from Harrells Christian Academy, where she has served as the 11th-grade marshall, was her school's National Beta Club president during her senior year, vice president during her junior year, and secretary during her sophomore year. She has also served as the president of the Spanish Honors Society, an SGA senior representative, and was named Miss HCA in the 2021-22 academic year. Kensley has also been on the JV and Varsity volleyball teams as well as the Environmental Science Club.

At NC State, Kensley will major in **Elementary Education**. Her long-term career goal is to return back to her home area and teach elementary school.

Favorite Quote

"Anything is possible with sunshine and a little pink!"

- Lilly Pulitzer

Laura Bostic



Laura Bostic, of **Duplin County**, will graduate from East Duplin High School, where she has been first in her class. She was also a final four candidate for Mrs. East Duplin at EDHS. Additionally, Laura has been involved in cross country, winter, and spring track, soccer, and competitive dancing. She was involved in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and with the Duplin Agribusiness Academy, and served as secretary and current president of Future Farmers of America, and class secretary of the National Beta Club in grades 9-12.

At NC State, Laura will major in **Mathematics Education**. Her long-term career goal is to be a high school math teacher as well as a track coach and dance teacher.

Favorite Quote

"I thank God that I wasn't born perfect."

- Bob Fosse

Megyn Brandt



Megyn Brandt, of **Onslow County**, will graduate from Dixon High School, where she was on the Principal's List for all four years and was in the National Honors Society. Megyn participated in varsity/competitive cheerleading and was on Dixon High's junior varsity and varsity softball teams. She served as her school's National Beta Club secretary, student body secretary, and Key Club treasurer. She was also a Dixon Youth League volunteer, an Adopt A Highway volunteer and a member of the Interact Club and Future Teachers of America.

At NC State, Megyn will major in **Mathematics Education**. Her long-term career goal is to become a sixth-grade math teacher and educate the beautiful young minds of children.

Favorite Quote

"Do it for yourself, because nobody is going to do it for you."

Mary Bryant



Mary Bryant, of **Nash County**, will be graduating from Rocky Mount Academy where she has been involved in a variety of sports, including varsity volleyball. She was also an Exceptional Children's intern, served on the Student Government Association, was an RMA Summer Camp Counselor, and took a service trip to Costa Rica.

At NC State, Mary will be majoring in **Elementary Education**. Her long-term career goal is to become a transformational teacher who serves as a role model for students and others in the community.

Definition of Transformational Teaching

“A transformational teacher leader is someone who uses their skills to help students become successful in their endeavors, as well as becoming successful members of society”.

Calise Coleman



Calise Coleman, of **Harnett County**, will graduate from Western Harnett High School, where she was a part of the National Beta Club, National Technical Honors Society, and Student Government. She also participated in the step team and peer tutoring.

At NC State, Calise will major in **Mathematics Education**. Her long-term career goal is to join school administration.

Favorite Quote

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”

- Albert Einstein

Jaelynn Combs



Jaelynn Combs, of **Pitt County**, will graduate from Innovation Early College High School, where she was on the honor roll and president of both the National Honors Society and Principal List Mentor Club. She was also on the Yearbook Club and Prom Committee.

At NC State, Jaelynn will major in **Elementary Education**. Her long-term career goal is to be a first-grade teacher.

Definition of Transformational Teaching

“A transformational teacher encourages students to self-advocate, change negative thoughts into positive ones, and change our way of thinking about different topics”.

Madalyn Craig



Madalyn Craig, of **Wayne County**, will graduate from Rosewood High School, where she was a junior marshal, Art Club president, historian of the National Honor Society, and top five in the Wayne County Fair Science Competition. She has also been involved in varsity volleyball, varsity swimming, the National Honor Society, the Visual Arts Honors Society, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She also has served as a varsity baseball manager, tutor, and teacher assistant.

At NC State, Madalyn will major in **Mathematics Education**. Her long-term career goal is to become a successful teacher who can lead kids to their fullest potential and teach them how to be successful in life.

Favorite Quote

“Be yourself and people will like you.”

- Jeff Kinney

Alana Edwards



Alana Edwards, of **Pitt County**, will graduate from South Central High School, where she was involved in the National Honor Society, Science Honor Society, and French Honor Society, and was a Junior Marshal.

At NC State, Alana will major in **Elementary Education**. Her long-term career goal is to be an elementary teacher.

Favorite Quote

“We must not allow other people's limited perceptions to define us.”

Jahzar Fields



Jahzar Fields, of **New Hanover County**, will graduate cum laude from Wilmington Early College High School. He is a school leader and has been involved as a high school ambassador, was in Future Business Leaders of America, and served on the Superintendent Student Advisory Board.

At NC State, Jahzar will major in **English Language Arts and Social Studies Education**. His long-term career goals include becoming a high school principal and a superintendent and joining the local school board.

Favorite Quote

“Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble”

- John Lewis

Meghan Larson



Meghan Larson, of **Robeson County**, will graduate from Fairmont High School, where she was an N.C. Scholar and the class president, and was involved in the National Technical Honors Society, National Honors Society, National Beta Club, National Arts Honors Society, and student government. She was also on the competitive dance team, marching band, and choir, and was a summer camp counselor

At NC State, Meghan will major in **Science Education**. Her long-term career goal is to earn a Master of School Administration and become a principal.

Favorite Quote

“It's everybody's duty to give the world a reason to dance.”

- Kid President

Catherine Lee



Catherine Lee, of **Onslow County**, will graduate from Jacksonville High School, where she was editor-in-chief of the school's yearbook "The Cardinal," the student body president, a junior marshal, No. 4 of her class, and a member of the National Honor Society her junior and senior years. She was also nominated as Student Volunteer of the Year because of her service with the American Red Cross, and she serves as Miss Onslow County 2020-2021 and earned the Current Overall Supreme Princess of Eastern Carolina. She has also studied dance and has walked in a New York Fashion Week show.

At NC State, she will major in **Elementary Education**. Her long-term career goal is to return to Eastern North Carolina to teach at a local elementary school. She wants to develop lifelong relationships with students and teach them skills that will continue to benefit them even after they leave her classroom.

Favorite Quote

"The Lord will fight for you, you need only to be still."

- Exodus 14:14

Grace Liu



Grace Liu, of **Pitt County**, will be graduating from The Oakwood School, where she was involved in the Future Teachers of North Carolina summer program, completed an internship with Lower School Teachers, and participated in The Oakwood School Extended Day, as well as the Greenville Town Common Tar River Splash for Trash. She was also a member of the Student Government Association and the Community Service Club

At NC State, Grace will be majoring in **Elementary Education**. Her long-term career goal is to be an elementary school teacher who impacts students from a young age.

Definition of Transformational Teaching

“A transformative teacher is a teacher who does more than teaching from the textbook. Teachers who can modify their material and turn boring lessons into fun and engaging classes are transformative because it helps create engagement with students”.

Madison Pullium



Madison Pullium, of **Johnston County**, will graduate from Corinth Holders High School, where she was a National Honor Society member and Academic All-Conference selection, and on the Principal's List for three years. She was also a Student Council executive, varsity volleyball team member, captain, Circle of Friends member, National Honor Society member, and Student Section leader.

At NC State, she will major in **Mathematics Education**. Her long-term career goal is to teach middle school math and coach at either the school or in the community.

Favorite Quote

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

- Maya Angelou

Rylee Sherwood



Rylee Sherwood, of **New Hanover County**, will graduate from Isaac Bear Early College High School, where she was a National Honor Society member and involved in the Future Teacher Career Academy, Black Student Union, Women Empowerment Through Education, Affinity For Justice, Student Government Association, and Model UN.

At NC State, Rylee will major in **Elementary Education**. Her long-term career goal is to become an art therapist for children or a professor.

Favorite Quote

“Stay Gold”

Xaria Woodard



Xaria Woodard, of **Wilson County**, will graduate from Wilson Preparatory Academy, where she was a member of the National Honors Society. She earned the DAR Good Citizen Award and was involved in the band, chorus, and chess club.

Xaria will major in **Science Education**. Her long-term career goal is to become a high school teacher.

Favorite Quote

“Not all those who wander are lost.”

- J.R.R Tolkien