

# **A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education Volume I: 1998 -1999 Growth and Performance of Public Schools in North Carolina**

## **Executive Summary**

*(Revised to reflect State Board of Education actions through October 7, 1999)*

### **Background**

The State Board of Education developed the ABCs of Public Education in response to the School-Based Management and Accountability Program (SB 1139) enacted by the General Assembly in June 1996. The ABCs focuses on strong accountability with an emphasis on high educational standards; teaching the basics; and maximum local control. An accountability model for elementary and middle schools was implemented in 1996-97. The high school accountability model was developed during 1996-97, and was implemented for the first time in 1997-98. This report gives the results of the 1998-99 implementation of the ABCs in all public schools of North Carolina.

The ABCs Accountability Model for all schools establishes growth/gain standards for each elementary, middle, and high school in the state. Schools that attain specified levels of growth/gain are eligible for incentive awards or other recognition (including Schools of Excellence, Schools of Distinction or 25 Most Improved K-8 Schools, 10 Most Improved High Schools in Academic Growth/Gain). Schools where growth/gain *and* performance fall below specified levels are designated as low-performing. Outcomes are based on end-of-grade (EOG) and end-of-course (EOC) test results, and selected other components. To be eligible for incentive awards, schools also must not have excessive exemptions and must test at least 98% of their eligible students in K-8, and at least 95% of students enrolled in specific courses or grades in high school.

### **Participating schools**

In 1998-99, every school that contained one or more of the grades 3-12 and that collected the appropriate data participated in the ABCs. Appropriate data for K-8 included testing results in reading, mathematics, and writing. Appropriate data for computing gain in high schools included selected EOC results, percent of completers of College Prep/College Tech Prep courses of study, and the competency passing rate. For computing growth in high schools, appropriate data were results of the North Carolina High School Comprehensive Test in reading and mathematics. K-2 schools sending more than half of their students to a single receiving school were eligible for incentive awards if the receiving school earned an incentive award based on making its growth standard. Alternative schools and special schools without sufficient data were eligible for prorated incentive awards if one or more of the schools they served earned incentive awards.

## Analyses

The status of schools was determined based on the values of three composite scores computed for expected growth/gain, exemplary growth/gain and performance, respectively. These composite scores may consist of many components, depending on the grade span and curriculum of the school, as follows.

Growth components are computed for K-8 and grade 10 reading and mathematics based on three factors: statewide average growth, the previous performance of students in the school, and a statistical adjustment which is needed whenever test scores of the same students are compared from one year to the next. Exemplary growth factors in an additional ten percent above the statewide average growth. Growth components are based on two years of data for reading and mathematics.

Gain components are computed for EOC indexes, writing at grades 4 and 7, competency, and college prep/college tech prep courses of study. These components are based on change, or gain in the current year over a two-year baseline for EOC, writing, and college prep/college tech prep, and gain from grade 8 to grade 10 in the competency passing rate. Exemplary gain is computed for EOC indexes only, and requires that a school improve by a specific amount over and above expected.

Growth and gain components are combined into the overall expected growth/gain composite and the exemplary growth/gain composite.

The performance composite is based on the percentage of students scoring at or above grade level, or in Achievement Levels III or IV in reading, mathematics and writing in grades K-8, and specific courses and grades in high schools. Student test scores in Algebra I and II, Biology, Chemistry, English I and II, ELPS, Geometry, Physical Science, Physics, U.S. History, and the High School Comprehensive Test are included in the high school performance composite. The Algebra I scores of ninth graders who took Algebra I prior to ninth grade are included in the high school's performance composite. (*See Technical Notes in the Appendix for an explanation of how scores are handled in senior high schools.*)

The ABCs results published here were produced on a Compaq Computer, Model 6450X/9100/CD, Pentium II processor with 128 MB RAM running under Windows 98 (Full Version). Additional detail and technical information about ABCs analyses are provided in the Appendix.

## **Definition of Awards and Recognition Categories**

Schools were classified into several categories for the purpose of awarding incentives and recognition. The award or recognition a school receives is determined in most cases by the school's attainment as reflected in the growth/gain composites (expected and exemplary) and the performance composite. (Exceptions are explained in Special Conditions in the Appendix.) The categories are defined as follows.

### *Schools of Excellence*

A School of Excellence is a school that made expected growth/gain *and* had at least 90 percent of its students performing at or above grade level (i.e., in Achievement Levels III or IV). Such schools will be recognized at a statewide event sponsored by the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction in fall 1999. They will receive a dated banner to hang in the school and a certificate. In addition, they will receive whatever incentive award they earn as having made expected or exemplary growth/gain.

### *Schools of Distinction*

A School of Distinction is a school that had at least 80 percent of its students performing at or above grade level (i.e., in Achievement Levels III or IV) irrespective of growth or gain (but does not qualify as a School of Excellence). Schools of Distinction will receive a plaque and a certificate.

### *25/10 Most Improved Schools in Academic Growth/Gain*

The 25 Most Improved K-8 schools are those that attained the State's 25 highest values on the exemplary growth composite. The 10 Most Improved High Schools attained the State's 10 highest values on the exemplary growth/gain composite. Any school with a combination of grades which includes grade 9 or higher was eligible for the high school recognition rather than the K-8 list. These schools will be recognized at the statewide event in fall 1999. In addition, they will receive a dated banner to hang in the school, a certificate and financial awards.

### *Schools Making Exemplary Growth/Gain*

These schools attained their exemplary growth/gain standard. They will receive a certificate and financial awards. Incentive awards for making exemplary growth/gain are \$1500 per person for certified staff and \$500 per person for teacher assistants.

### *Schools Making Expected Growth/Gain*

These schools attained their expected growth/gain standard (but not their exemplary growth/gain standard). They will receive a certificate of recognition and financial awards. Incentive awards for making expected growth/gain are \$750 per person for certified staff and \$375 per person for teacher assistants.

### *Schools with No Recognition*

These schools did not make their expected growth/gain standards; *but* they have at least half their students scoring at or above grade level (i.e., in Achievement Levels III or IV) as measured by the performance composite.

### *Low-Performing Schools*

Low-Performing Schools are those that fail to meet their expected growth/gain standard **and** have significantly less than 50% of their students performing at or above grade level (i.e., in Achievement Levels III or IV).

In addition to the growth/gain and performance standards, there are testing requirements that all schools must meet. K-8 schools must test at least 98% of their eligible students. (Students who are individually exempted from testing in accordance with guidelines for North Carolina testing programs are not considered "eligible.") High schools must test at least 95% of all students enrolled in courses/grades for which EOC tests or the NCHSCT are given respectively. Also, schools must not have excessive exemptions.

In this report, schools that violate testing requirements are assigned a violation status and cannot receive another ABCs status, except low-performing. The low-performing schools that violate testing requirements are assigned the low-performing status in addition to the violation status.

Schools that violate any of the testing requirements are not eligible for financial awards. In addition, schools that violate testing requirements for two consecutive years may be designated as low-performing by the State Board of Education.

## **Presentation of Results**

The results are presented in A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education Volume I: 1998-1999 Growth and Performance of Public Schools in North Carolina. The first section of this report, Growth/gain and Performance of Schools presents the growth/gain and performance of all non-alternative schools in North Carolina participating in the ABCs. Other sections, Schools of Excellence, Schools of Distinction, 25 Most Improved K-8 Schools, 10 Most Improved High Schools, Schools Making Exemplary Growth/Gain, Schools Making Expected Growth/Gain, and Low-Performing Schools, follow. Charter Schools with sufficient data to participate in the ABCs appear in the previous sections where appropriate and are also included in a separate section, Charter Schools, for easy reference. Alternative schools appear *only* in a section designated Alternative Schools. Schools that were unable to submit complete data before the processing deadlines are included in a section called Schools with Unresolved Data Issues. Each section, with the exception of Low-Performing Schools, and Schools with Unresolved Data Issues, includes a status column indicating each school's ABCs status or failure to meet testing requirements of

the ABCs. North Carolina public schools that are not included in the ABCs because of insufficient data are listed in the final section, Schools Not Included.

In 1998-99, ABCs data from all public schools were analyzed under a comprehensive ABCs model, unlike 1997-98, when the results were analyzed separately, under K-8 and high school models. Under the separate models, a school with grades spanning the elementary/middle and high school appeared in both K-8 and high school portions of the report, and statistical summaries included duplication. Results presented in this report may be different from those reported in 1997-98, in part due to the elimination of such duplication.

The Appendix includes Special Conditions, an explanation of footnotes used in the report; Technical Notes, a summary of standard conventions used in the ABCs analyses; and Constants and Parameters, a table of the values for use in the ABCs growth formula and the gain model.

**Note: Results presented in the statistical summary which follows are not comparable to results presented in *A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education Growth and Performance of North Carolina Schools, 1997-98, Volume I*.**

### Statistical Summary of Results

In 1998-99, 1985 public schools were assigned an ABCs status. These included traditional public schools spanning combinations of grades K-12; Charter Schools; alternative/special schools with sufficient data; and, certain K-2 schools (those that fed more than 50% of their students into a single receiving school in 1998-99). Alternative/special schools with insufficient data participated in the ABCs for awards based on their feeder patterns (see Appendix), but were not assigned an ABCs status.

ABCs Results for All Schools				
Award or Recognition Category	Number of Schools			%
	K-12	Alt.	Total	
Schools Making Exemplary Growth/Gain	1154	2	1156	58.2
Schools Making Expected (not Exemplary) Growth/Gain	454	2	456	23.0
Schools with No Recognition	354	4	358	18.0
Low-performing Schools	13		13	0.7
Schools that Violated Testing Requirements	2		2	0.1
<b>Total ABCs Schools</b>	<b>1977</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1985</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In addition, the following numbers of schools received special recognition.  
 (These categories may overlap categories in the above table.)

All Schools Receiving Other Recognition		
Category	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Schools of Excellence	50	2.5
Schools of Distinction	408	20.6
25 Most Improved K-8 Schools	26*	1.3
10 Most Improved High Schools	10	0.5

\*Due to ties.

Overall, 81.2% of the public schools made either expected or exemplary growth/gain standards under the 1998-99 ABCs Accountability model.

