



ABCs 2007 Accountability Report Background Packet

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

Overview

The ABCs of Public Education began in the 1996-97 school year as North Carolina's primary school improvement program. The program has three primary goals: strengthen local school accountability, emphasize mastery of basic subjects and provide as much local decision-making as possible. The ABCs was a major step forward in improving schools, providing the state's first school-level accountability system and generated information that has allowed North Carolina to better target school improvement efforts. The ABCs model was one of the first in the nation to focus attention on the academic growth of students from year-to-year.

In 2006, significant changes were made in the ABCs program with the implementation of new growth formulas for the first time in 10 years. While the model continues North Carolina's long-standing focus on the annual growth of students and on the reporting of each school's performance composite, the current ABCs formulas are different enough from the original ones that comparisons between the performance of schools from 2006 forward and prior years may be problematic.

No Child Left Behind, the federal education law, continues to be an important component of accountability for North Carolina schools. The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measure is included in the ABCs report, just as it has been since the law went into effect in 2002. AYP requires schools to focus on the proficiency of groups of students within each school with a goal of closing achievement gaps and

bringing proficiency rates to 100 percent for every student group by 2013-14.

The ABCs accountability report is Web-based to provide convenient and inexpensive access to as many North Carolinians as possible. The address for this report is <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs/>.

Timeline

July 13

Local school systems are required to submit test data to DPI. (Note: These data are preliminary.)

July 13 - August 2

Analysis completed on operational data and cut scores set for certain assessments.

By August 17

Preliminary AYP results for all students are released by local school systems for their respective schools.

July 13 - September 6

DPI verifies test data with local school systems, analyzes data and prepares report.

September 6

ABCs Accountability Report presented at State Board of Education meeting. ABCs Accountability Report Web site goes live.

Highlights of the ABCs Program in 2007

- The formulas for calculating growth are in their second year in 2007. These formulas were changed in 2006 to:
 - use two years of prior student performance data in reading and mathematics to predict performance in the current year;
 - re-establish the baseline for academic change scale when new tests are introduced;
 - separate change scores for reading and mathematics; and
 - provide student, classroom and school-level data.
- There are several new assessments in place in 2007. These are Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, English I, (to reflect revisions in the North Carolina curriculum in these four subjects) and NC EXTEND1 and NC EXTEND2 (for some students with disabilities). Whenever new assessments first appear, it is not unusual for first-year performance by students to be lower, overall, than performance on the earlier version of the assessment because the new assessments and curriculum revision may be less familiar to teachers and students. Nationally normed tests, for example, go through similar cycles of revision and scores drop with a new version of a test and rise upward until the test undergoes another revision cycle.
- Third grade mathematics results are included in growth calculations again this year because the third grade mathematics pre-test was in place for the 2006-07 school year. It was not available in 2005-06.

- The four-year cohort graduation rate is included in the ABCs model for high schools. This is the first year it is included in the ABCs model and represents the second year that North Carolina has calculated a four-year cohort graduation rate. This new rate is the result of tracking ninth graders each year to see how many of them graduate four years later.
- Results of the 4th, 7th and 10th grade writing assessments will be included in the performance composite for each school. Writing returned to the performance composite in 2006 after not being included for several years.
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) includes:
 - a 1 percent and 2 percent cap on the number of students using alternate assessments that may be designated proficient;
 - a growth model may be applied to schools that do not initially make AYP. If data suggest that students are on trajectory to reach proficiency within four years after initial testing in North Carolina, they may be counted as having made AYP; and
 - the percentage of students in each group who meet proficiency targets under NCLB.

Components of the ABCs at the K-8 Level

- Statewide accountability testing is done in grades 3-8 only. For students in grades K-2, special assessments are used to chart students' academic progress and are not included in the ABCs reports.
- End-of-grade tests in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 (growth and performance).
- NC EXTEND1, NC EXTEND2 and NCCLAS (NC Checklist of Academic Standards) alternate assessments for certain students with disabilities included in performance composite and AYP only.
- Writing assessments, grades 4 and 7, in performance composite only.

- Computer Skills Tests at grade 8 in performance composite only.
- End-of-course test results for students taking EOC tests in K-8 (growth and performance).

Components of the ABCs at the High School Level

- Student performance on seven mandated end-of-course tests: Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology, English I, Geometry, US History and Civics, and Economics. (Chemistry, Physical Science and Physics were statewide field tests and therefore not included in the ABCs.)
- NC EXTEND1, NC EXTEND2 and NCCLAS (NC Checklist of Academic Standards) alternate assessments for certain students with disabilities included in performance composite and AYP only.
- Growth is calculated using previous related assessments.
- Current year-to-baseline (average of two previous years) comparison of percentages of students completing College/ University Prep or College Tech Prep courses of study.
- ABCs dropout rate (current year versus two-year baseline) weighted by 1/4 average daily membership.
- Gain in passing rate on high school competency tests from the end of 8th grade to the end of 10th grade.

Incentive Awards

- In all schools that attain the High Growth standards, certified staff members each receive up to \$1,500 incentive awards and teacher assistants receive up to \$500.
- In all schools attaining the Expected Growth standard (but less than High Growth), certified staff members each receive up to \$750 and teacher assistants receive up to \$375.

School Status Labels and Recognitions

Performance Level Based on Percent of Students' Scores at or above Achievement Level III	Academic Growth	
	Schools Making Expected Growth or High Growth	Schools Making Less than Expected Growth
90% to 100%	Met AYP	Honor School of Excellence
	AYP Not Met	School of Excellence
80% to 89%	School of Distinction	
60% to 79%	School of Progress	
50% to 59%	Priority School	
Less than 50%	Priority School	Low Performing

Assistance

Schools that do not meet the expected growth standard and that have a performance composite of less than 50 percent are identified as “low performing” under the ABCs model. The State Board of Education will ensure that these and other under-performing schools will receive customized support designed to help them improve their performance. At the time that this background document was prepared, the NC Department of Public Instruction was conducting a comprehensive review of the mechanisms through which it provides assistance to schools and districts.

This fall, the NCDPI will make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding a redesigned framework for helping all schools and districts, especially those lowest performing, to improve their performance.

Low-performing schools must notify students’ parents in writing about the schools’ low-performing status.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Awards and Sanctions

The ABCs program includes reporting the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of schools under the No Child Left Behind law, but ABCs financial rewards are not affected by a school’s AYP status.

Title I schools (approximately one-half of North Carolina’s total number of public schools) are those that receive federal Title I funds designated to serve students who are educationally disadvantaged. All local school systems have some schools in this category. Title I schools that do not make Adequate Yearly Progress for two or more consecutive years in the same subject face sanctions under the federal law. These sanctions include offering public school choice, providing supplemental educational services at no cost to qualifying students and other measures. For more information on NCLB sanctions for Title I schools, please go online to <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/nclb/>.

The ABCs Formulas – A Short History

In the years following the initial development of the ABCs model in 1996, many things changed in North Carolina public schools and in the national expectations for school accountability. In 1996-97, the first year of implementation of the ABCs, the formula for calculating growth was based primarily on the statewide average growth in the years prior to 1996. In addition, since the ABCs model began, the English language arts and mathematics curricula have been revised. These revisions necessitated the implementation of new versions of the reading and mathematics assessments. With each change to the curricula and assessments and with the passage of time, the original ABCs formulas were used after equating test editions to allow year-to-year comparisons.

In the 2004 legislative session, the General Assembly directed an evaluation of the ABCs accountability system. This evaluation has resulted in the development of new formulas that are based on more recent growth rates and on the lessons learned from a

decade of experience with the ABCs accountability model. These new formulas were used for the first time in the 2005-06 school year and for the second time in 2006-07.

Features of the Growth Formulas

- Whenever possible the growth formulas (developed in 2006) use two years of actual student performance in the same subject to predict student performance. (The original formula only used one year.)
- Based on eight years of data on student performance (The original formula used three years of history.)
- Expected growth is based on the expectation that a student will perform similarly from year-to-year.
- Provide information on student growth (not just school-level data).
- Use a change scale which allows comparison of students across test editions (instead of converting to an early 1990s scale).
- Schools cannot meet the High Growth standard without at least 60 percent of their students achieving the expected growth standard. (Under the original formulas, a school could be rewarded based on the outstanding performance of only a few students.)
- The dropout rate continues to be included for the high school model along with other components.

Understanding the Three Accountability Measures

- Performance Composite – The percentage of the test scores in the school at or above Achievement Level III (how well the students in the school did against the set standard of proficiency).
- Growth – An indication of the rate at which students in the school learned over the past year. The standard is equivalent to a year’s worth of growth for a year of instruction.
- AYP Status – Whether the students in the school as a whole and in each identified group met the performance standards set by each state following federal guidelines with the long-term goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2013-14.

Growth Expectations

Under the new formulas, the individual student is expected to perform as well, or better, on the end-of-grade (EOG) assessment for the current year as she or he did, on average, during the previous two years. This expectation will be determined by placing students’ scores on the c-scale (the change scale to which a student’s developmental scale score is converted). As an indicator of growth, the new model is based on academic change. The academic change is based on an average of the previous two years’ assessments. If only one year’s EOG test data are available, the expectation for change will be based on one previous assessment. Like the original formulas, the new formulas factor in an adjustment for regression to the mean (a student who performs above or below the mean score on one EOG will likely score closer to the mean on a subsequent EOG).

Report Format – What You’ll See on the Web

The ABCs of Public Education
2006–07 Growth and Performance of North Carolina Schools
Growth and Performance of Schools

System Code	Districts/School(s)	Grade Span	Met Expected	Met High	Change Ratio	Performance Composite	Special Conditions	ABCs Status	Average Growth	AYP	AYP Code	Type
110	Leigh County											
210	Roane Elem	0K-06	Yes	No	1.50	74.5	~	Pro Exp	0.00	Yes		R
220	Hilldale Elem	PK-06	Yes	Yes	1.50	91.8	~	Exc	0.10	Yes	CI	R
555	Parish County											
345	Villages Elem	0K-05	Yes	Yes	1.50	~	~	Dst	0.60	Yes		R
360	Mountain Mid	06-05	Yes	No	0.50	52.0	~	Pri	-0.50	No		R
370	Piney HS	09-12	No	No	0.00	62.0	~	NR	-1.00	No		R
55A	Blue Acad	0K-12	Yes	Yes	2.00	0.5	~	Dst Hgh	1.00	Yes		C
888	River County											
320	Ridge Pri	PK-03	Yes	Yes	1.70	~	1	Hgh	0.60	Yes		R
330	Valley	03	Yes	Yes	1.60	76.9	~	Pro Hgh	0.10	Yes		R

ABCs STATUS: **Exp**– Expected Growth; **Hgh**– High Growth; **HE** – Honor School of Excellence; **Exc**– School of Excellence; **Dst**– School of Distinction; **Pro**–School of Progress; **Pri**– Priority School; **LP**– Low-Performing; **NR**– No Recognition; **95R**– Less than 95% tested; **NS**– No Status

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: **1**– K-2 Feeder; **2**– Senior High (Gr 9-12); **3**– Senior High (Gr 10-12); **9**– School did not meet data requirements; * Confidence Interval Applied; ~ No Special Conditions; @ Charter School evaluated as alternative

AYP CODE: **CI** – Confidence Interval applied; **SH** – Safe Harbor; **TAS** – Targeted Assistance School; **FE** – Feeder School; **SE** – Special Evaluation; **95A** – Participation Rate Averaging; **O1** – Option 1 USED

AYP: **UR** – Under Review

TYPE: **R** – Regular; **C** – Charter; **A** – Alternative

The AYP Code indicates special NCLB rules that were applied in determining school performance.

School Type
AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) is a measure required under the federal No Child Left Behind law. To make AYP, a school must meet every performance target for each subgroup in the school. For more on AYP, please go to www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb

School name

Key to reading the status category abbreviations and special conditions.

Grades served in each school

The ABCs program establishes a growth standard for each school.

The ratio of student scores that meet the individual growth standard to those that do not. The minimum for high growth is 1.50.

The performance composite indicates what percentage of students' scores in each school are at or above grade level (Achievement Level III). Schools are recognized for the percentage of students performing at this proficiency level and whether they made their growth goals.

The average of individual growth for the school. Minimum expected growth is 0.00.

This column refers to the type of designation a specific school has earned by virtue of its growth and performance composite. The key to these abbreviations is at the bottom of each Web page.

Occasionally, a school will have special conditions that need to be noted in the ABCs report. These special conditions may include unusual grade configurations such as K-2 or 10-12, insufficient data because of small numbers of students tested or other information pertinent to the ABCs report. The key to the special conditions is at the bottom of each Web page.

Frequently Asked Questions

What measure is most important for parents to know – growth or performance?

Both measures are important in evaluating student achievement in a school. The percentage of students' scores at grade level/proficiency or above is one important way to view the overall achievement of a school. At the same time, the growth measure also is important. Growth measures the change in academic achievement for students in the current year. Even a school with 90 percent or more of its students' scores at grade level has room for students to grow academically each year and should be showing growth annually.

How can a school be high performing under the ABCs and not make AYP?

The ABCs model measures growth over time and also determines the performance composite for the school as a whole. AYP measures school performance differently. To meet AYP, a school must meet target goals for each subgroup of students that numbers 40 or more. Target goals are set annually by the state for reading and mathematics at grades 3-8 and 10, and for attendance rates or graduation rates as well. AYP is an all-or-nothing model. If a school misses one target, it does not make AYP. For example, although a school could have High Growth and a performance composite over 90 percent, it could fall short on one subgroup's performance and miss making AYP. Honor Schools of Excellence are those schools that meet or exceed growth goals, have 90 percent or more of their students' scores at or above grade level and make AYP.

What happens to low-performing schools?

In accordance with state law, the State Board of Education may devote significant state resources to assist the lowest performing schools. At the time that this background document was prepared, the Department of Public Instruction was conducting a comprehensive review of the mechanisms through which it provides assistance to under-performing schools and districts. This fall, the Department will make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding a redesigned framework for helping all schools and districts, especially those lowest performing, to improve their

performance. The framework will take into account both state and federal standards for measuring performance.

How can high-performing schools still meet their growth goals year after year?

While it may seem more difficult for schools with a high percentage of students' scores at or above grade level to continue meeting growth expectations, it is possible for them to do so. Even if all students in a school scored at or above grade level last year, those same students are challenged by new material this year (in the next grade level). The growth measure inherently provides opportunity for students to demonstrate growth as they learn new material. Also, a school often has a high percentage of students scoring at Achievement Level III or above (considered proficient), but this performance still leaves opportunity for the students to move up in the Achievement Level III range or into the Achievement Level IV range.

How do the Student Accountability Standards fit into the ABCs?

Student Accountability Standards for students rely on some of the same tests used to determine schools' ABCs statuses. The end-of-grade tests are used both to determine school status and also to help determine whether students are ready to be promoted to the next grade level from grades 3, 5 and 8. Students at these three gateway grades are not permitted to be "automatically" promoted by their principal if they do not reach Achievement Level III or better on the end-of-grade tests.

How does the ABCs model fit with federal requirements?

By incorporating AYP into the ABCs, North Carolina is adding an important gap-closing component. Under the federal requirements, schools are held accountable for the performance of each subgroup of students within the school. This is a new standard that will move our state and the nation toward the elimination of achievement gaps. The AYP designation does not affect ABCs incentive awards.

Title I schools, under federal requirements, can face sanctions if they do not make AYP for two consecutive years because of problems in the same content area.



More Background On the Web

The Department of Public Instruction's Web site includes a great deal of background information about the ABCs.

- New Growth Formulas and Updated ABCs Procedures 2005-06 and Beyond
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/growthformulas>
- 2006-07 Testing Program: General Information, Policies and Procedures
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/>
- 2006-07 Testing Calendar
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/calendars/0607>
- New Growth Formulas and Determination for Computing Growth
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/growth/theabcsmodelfor2005.pdf>
- Evolution of the ABCs
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/abc/2004-05/abcevolution.pdf>
- Hot Topics: New ABCs Growth Formulas Movie Clip
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/newsroom/topics>

Additional information on Student Accountability Standards is available at www.ncpublicschools.org/promotionstandards/

Information on the "No Child Left Behind" federal legislation and Adequate Yearly Progress is available at www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb



2007 ABCs Information Contacts

ABCs Requirements/Basis for Status

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ABCs Data and Summary Press Release

<http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs>

Department of Public Instruction's Web Address

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org>