

Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction
Division of Communications and Information



News

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2006-07 ABCs Results Show More Schools Making Strong Academic Growth

A total of 71.8 percent of North Carolina's public schools made expected or high growth in the 2006-07 school year, up 17.5 percentage points over the 54.3 percent that made growth targets in the 2005-06 school year, according to the 2006-07 ABCs of Public Education accountability report approved by the State Board of Education today.

"We are very pleased to see significantly more schools making academic growth this year," said State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee. "One of the hallmarks of North Carolina's ABCs model is that we expect vigorous academic growth from all students – including those who have already reached proficiency."

State Superintendent June Atkinson highlighted the cohort graduation rate – a measure that moved up in 2007. "In 2007, 69.4 percent of the students who entered ninth grade in the fall of 2003 graduated from high school in four years or less," Atkinson said. "That's better than the 2006 rate of 68.3 percent. High school graduation is a starting point for success in life today. I want everyone who teaches students in North Carolina – whether you teach third grade, seventh grade or ninth grade – to see yourself as a graduation coach. That is what it will take to move our graduation rate as close to 100 percent as possible."

The ABCs accountability model measures school achievement in three ways: the percent of students' test scores at or above the proficient level (performance composite), academic growth (High Growth or Expected Growth) and Adequate Yearly Progress (required by federal law). The growth measure provides the basis for awarding incentive awards, but each measure is an important indicator of schools' success over time.

As part of the State Board of Education's ongoing efforts to align academic standards with 21st century skills, several new assessments and new standards were implemented at the high school level in 2006-07 in Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and English I. The high school performance information presented today is based on these new, more rigorous standards. This is similar to the 2005-06 school year when mathematics standards were raised for grades 3-8.

School designations

Schools earn designations based on whether they met growth expectations, AYP and the percentage of students' scores at or above proficiency (grade level). Honor Schools of Excellence and Schools of Excellence receive special banners to display their

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school status from the NC Department of Public Instruction and State Board of Education. Thirty-one schools did not have an ABCs status because they are special schools, and 90 schools are alternative schools with different progress measures designed especially for them. A total of 2,407 schools were evaluated under the ABCs.

ABCs Designation	Requirements	Number	Percentage
Honor Schools of Excellence	Expected or high growth; AYP; 90% or more of student test scores at or above proficient	83	3.45%
Schools of Excellence	Expected or high growth; 90% or more scores at or above proficient	8	00.33%
Schools of Distinction	Expected or high growth; 80-89.9% at or above proficient	462	19.19%
Schools of Progress	Expected growth or high growth; 60-79.9% at or above proficient	925	38.43%
No Recognition Schools	Neither expected or high growth met, 60% at or above proficient	419	17.41%
Priority Schools	50-59% at or above proficient regardless of growth; and schools with less than 50% proficient and making expected or high growth	354	14.71%
Low Performing	Less than 50% proficient; below expected growth	45	1.87%

Incentive awards

The ABCs program provides incentive awards to teachers, principals and other certified school-based staff, in addition to teacher assistants. In all schools that attain the High Growth standard, certified staff members each receive up to \$1,500 incentive awards and teacher assistants receive up to \$500. In schools attaining Expected Growth, certified staff members each receive up to \$750 and teacher assistants receive up to \$375. This year, funds for incentive awards will be released to local school districts today. Awards are expected to total approximately \$103 million.

School assistance

The NCDPI and SBE are redesigning the way the state provides assistance to all schools and districts, including those schools and districts identified as low-performing under the ABCs. In 2007-08, the Board will provide the schools and districts identified as being most in need with a variety of services, designed to support significant, sustainable improvements in student performance. These services will include: supported self-

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assessment of needs, instructional coaches and professional development for teachers, training and support for school and district leadership, and the coordination of existing state and federal programs that target resources to underperforming schools.

Cohort graduation rates

In February, NCDPI released the first four-year cohort graduation rate for the graduating class of 2006 that showed the percent of students who entered ninth grade in 2002-03 and graduated with their class four years later or sooner (68.3 percent). For the graduating class of 2007, the four-year cohort rate for the ninth graders who entered high school in fall 2003 was 69.4 percent.

This year, NCDPI also released a five-year cohort rate for the 2002-03 ninth graders. The five-year rate was 70.3 percent.

AYP targets

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind education law requires every state to set annual targets toward reaching proficiency in reading and mathematics. These targets are shown as percentages of students who score proficient or better on state tests. Every state sets annual targets with the ultimate required goal of 100 percent student proficiency in 2013-14. The AYP measure for a school requires every student group in the school to reach the target. If a school misses even one target, the school does not make AYP.

In 2007, 44.7 percent of all schools met AYP. However, 62.1 percent (1,440) of all North Carolina public schools met at least 90 percent of their AYP targets. Another 19.2 percent (445 schools) met 80-89.9 percent of their AYP targets.

For more on this, please visit the NCDPI Web site,
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb>.

ABCs background information

The annual report, in its 11th year, provides a comprehensive picture of school performance. In addition to reporting academic growth rates for each public school, the ABCs report includes:

- which schools made Adequate Yearly Progress, a measure required by federal education law No Child Left Behind;
- the number of schools that met specific ranges of AYP targets;
- the four-year cohort graduation rate (reported for the second year in 2007);
- the first five-year cohort graduation rate;
- the performance composites for each school (the percentage of students' test scores that were at the proficient level or better);
- the performance category designated for each school.

The full report may be viewed online at <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs>.

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For more information about the 2006-07 ABCs/AYP report, please contact the NC Department of Public Instruction's Communications division at 919/807-3450 or go online to <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs>.