

ABCs/AYP 2009 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 and was a major step forward in improving schools, providing the state's first school-level accountability system and generating information that has allowed North Carolina to better target school improvement efforts.

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 should be avoided.

In 2008, the State Board of Education adopted the "Framework for Change: the Next Generation of Assessments and Accountability." The Framework for Change has already brought changes to the scope of the state's curriculum and assessment systems. These transformations will come about through the Department's Accountability and Curriculum Reform Effort (ACRE), which will result in new curriculum standards, new tests and a new accountability model for the state's public schools within the next five years.

No Child Left Behind, the federal education law, remains 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 timely access to as many North Carolinians as possible. The report is available online at <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs/>.

Timeline

June 30 – Local school systems must submit test data to the NCDPI. (Note: These data are preliminary.)

July – The NCDPI verifies test data with local school systems and develops report.

July 21 – Preliminary AYP results are released by local school systems for their respective schools.

Aug. 6 – ABCs/AYP Accountability Report presented at State Board of Education meeting. ABCs/AYP Accountability Report available online.

Aug. 6-Sept. 5 – Appeals process for ABCs growth, data change requests.

Sept. 17 – Compliance Commission for Accountability reviews appeals.

Oct. 1 – State Board of Education approves final changes to ABCs/AYP.

Highlights of the ABCs Program for the 2008-09 School Year

- State Board members approved a new policy to include students' first retest results in grades 3 through 8 in the calculation of ABCs performance composites and for AYP effective with the 2008-09 school year. All students who score Achievement Level II on the first administration of the EOG assessments must be retested, and parents of students who score Achievement Level I on the first administration must be notified that they may request that their children be retested. The use of retest results means that school districts can no longer use the confidence interval to exclude students from retesting.
- Because the U.S. Department of Education's decision to uphold its initial ruling denying the NCDPI the use of its Occupational Course of Study (OCS) NCEXTEND2 assessments for AYP determinations, these assessments' results will be used for ABCs purposes only. As a result,

some high schools may not make AYP because the exclusion of the OCS NCEXTEND2 test-takers will cause the schools' participation rates to fall below 95 percent.

- The current proposed state budget does not provide for ABCs incentive awards to be given in 2009 due to the state's budget crisis.
- Writing has been removed from the ABCs performance composite at the fourth and seventh grade levels. Writing is still emphasized locally during the school year at those grade levels through the North Carolina Writing Instruction System.
- Science results from grades 5 and 8 end-of-grade tests are included in the calculations of the ABCs performance composites.

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), and science in grades 5 and 8 (performance only).
- NCEXTEND1, NCEXTEND2 and NCCLAS (NC Checklist of Academic Standards) alternate assessments for certain students with disabilities included in performance composite and AYP only.
- Computer Skills Test 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 10 mandated end-of-course tests: Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology, English I, Geometry, US History, Civics and Economics, Chemistry, Physical Science and Physics.
- NCEXTEND1 and NCCLAS (NC Checklist of Academic Standards) alternate assessments for certain students with disabilities included in performance composite and AYP only. OCS NCEXTEND2 alternate assessments for certain students with disabilities included in the performance composite 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.

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.

As low-performing schools, they are eligible to receive assistance from the NCDPI's District and School Transformation Division. Selection of schools receiving comprehensive support is based on a variety of factors, including their school district's capacity to address the needs of the schools and to provide the support needed to make long-term improvements. Schools can be included in comprehensive support for reasons other than ABCs performance. These include consistently low performance composites, status as a Title I School Improvement school for several years, and others.

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

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.

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 economically 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.ncpublicschools.org/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 editions 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 linking 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 resulted in the development of new formulas that were 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.

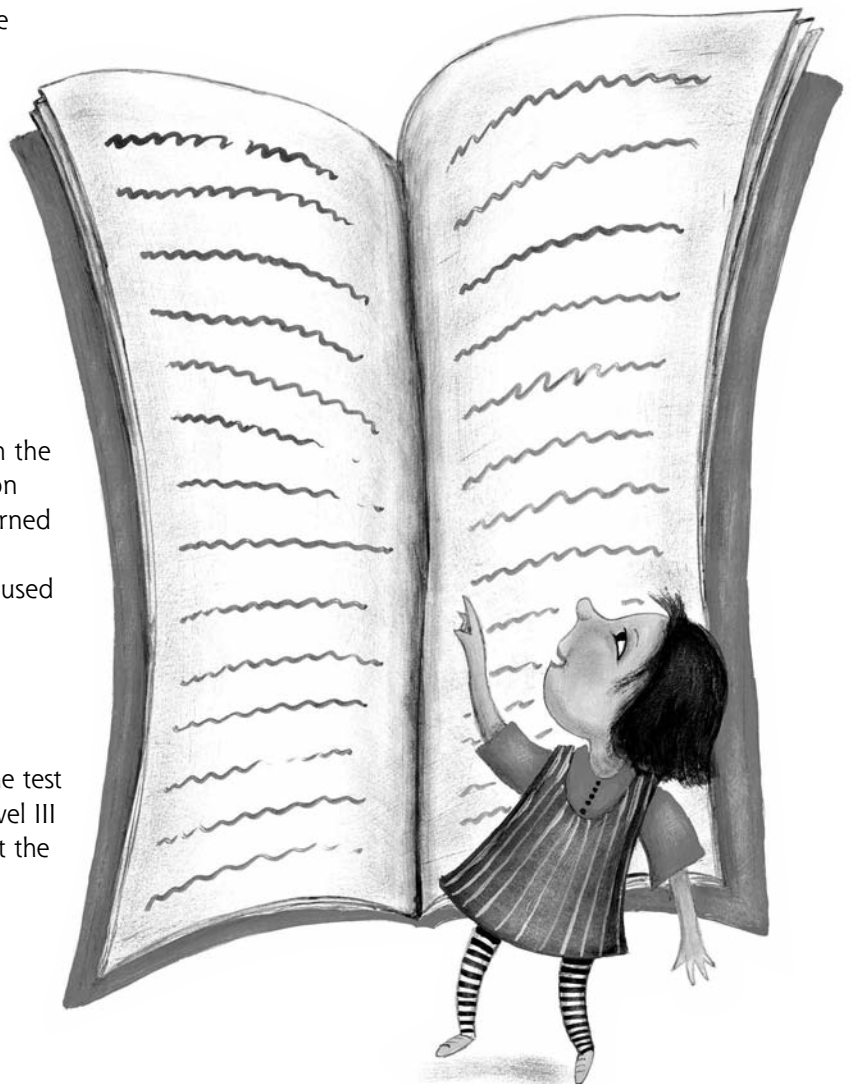
Understanding the Three Accountability Measures

- 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 growth 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 is determined by placing students' scores on the c-scale (the "change scale" to which a student's developmental scale score is converted). Growth is calculated as academic change from a baseline 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
2008–09 Growth and Performance of North Carolina Schools
Growth and Performance of Schools

LEA Code	System	School Code	School	Grade Span	Met Expected	Met High	Perf. Comp.	Spec. Cond.	ABCs Status	AYP	AYP Code	Type
110	Leigh County	210	Rollins Elementary									
110	Leigh County	215	Roane Elementary	OK-06	Yes	No	74.5	~	Pro Exp	Yes		R
110	Leigh County	220	Hilldale Elementary	PK-06	Yes	Yes	91.8		Exc Hgh	Yes	CI	R
555	Parish County	340	Rock HS									
555	Parish County	345	Villages Elementary	OK-05	Yes	es	98	~	Hgh	Yes		R
555	Parish County	360	Mountain Middle	06-05			58		Pri	No		R
555	Parish County	370	Piney High School				62.6	~	NR	No		R
555	Parish County	55A	Blue Academy	OK-	s	Yes	80.5	~	Dst Hgh	Yes		C
888	River County		High									
888	River County	320	Forest Primary	PK-02	Yes	Yes	~	1	Hgh	Yes		R
888	River County	330	Leley Elementary	03-05	Yes	Yes	76.9	~	Pro Hgh	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

Key to reading the status category abbreviations and special conditions.

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.

Grades served in each school

The ABCs program establishes a growth standard for each school.

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.

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 by year are set by the State Board of Education 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, the highest school recognition category under the ABCs, 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.

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 at 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 in the Achievement Level IV range.



How do the Student Accountability Standards fit into the ABCs?

Student Accountability Standards for students rely on many of the same tests used to determine a school's ABCs status. 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 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 added 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 standard will move our state and the nation toward the elimination of achievement gaps. The AYP designation does not affect ABCs incentive awards. Under federal requirements however, Title I schools face sanctions if they do not make AYP for two or more consecutive years in the same content area.

How will ACRE affect the ABCs Accountability Program?

ACRE is totally reshaping what students will be taught, how they will be assessed to make sure they understand what they are taught, and how schools will be held accountable for what students learn. Within the next five years, the state's public schools will have new curriculum standards, new tests and a new accountability model. Current efforts are focused on defining the skills, understandings and learning experiences that a student must master to move on to the next grade level – better known as *Essential Standards*. Draft *Essential Standards* in the curriculum areas of K-12 Mathematics, K-12 Science, English 10, K-12 Information and Technology Skills, and the Occupational Course of Study are currently under review with the remaining subject areas just getting underway. Also underway is the development of a new comprehensive assessment model aligned with these *Essential Standards*. These tests will be more real world, less dependent on bubble sheets, transparent to teachers and the public, and increasingly computer-based. The NCDPI also is developing an accountability system that serves the needs of the public to know how schools are doing and that schools are accountable for improving student performance.

More Background On the Web

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

- Evolution of the ABCs
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/abc/2007-08/abcevolution.pdf>
- Testing Program: General Information, Policies and Procedures
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/>
- New Growth Formulas and Updated ABCs Procedures 2005-06 and Beyond
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/growthformulas>
- New Growth Formulas and Determination for Computing Growth
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/growth/theabcsmodefor2005.pdf>
- 2008-09 Testing Calendar
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/testing/calendars/testingcalendar0809b.pdf>
- Information on the "No Child Left Behind" federal legislation and Adequate Yearly Progress
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb>



2009 ABCs Information Contacts

ABCs Requirements/Basis for Status

Division of Accountability Services | 919.807.3770
Lou Fabrizio, Director of Accountability Policy and Communications
Gary Williamson, Director of Accountability Operations

Assistance to Low-Performing Schools

Academic Services and Instructional Support
District and School Transformation | 919.807.4006
Pat Ashley, Director

Communications and General Information

Division of Communications and Information | 919.807.3450
Vanessa Jeter, Director

ABCs Data and Summary Press Release

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

Department of Public Instruction's Web Address

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org>