



The ABCs of Public Education 2012 Accountability Report Background Packet

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

OVERVIEW

It's an exciting time for North Carolina public school educators, students, parents and school communities. Ensuring that all students are academically prepared at each grade level through high school graduation, and then for career, college and life after high school remains the top priority for state leaders and educators. The ABCs of Public Education began the journey. The READY initiative is prepared to take schools and students to the next level of meaningful accountability.

The 2011-12 school year marks the end of North Carolina's first school-level accountability system, the ABCs of Public Education. When the ABCs of Public Education was first implemented in the 1996-97 school year at the 3-8 grade levels, it provided a means to hold schools "A"ccountable for student academic growth over the course of a school year. The accountability model was a way to assure the public of results by reporting the academic growth/gain and proficiency of students. End-of-grade and end-of course tests focused on "B"asic skills – reading, mathematics, writing – all foundational skills students need if they are going to be successful learners. The high school level also included additional measures to gauge success at the post-secondary level. Local "C"ontrol provided districts the flexibility to make management decisions that best met the needs of their students.

Over the program's 16-year history, a number of changes were made to the curriculum and assessments to ensure that the accountability bar remained high for students and that curriculum standards were appropriate.

In 2008, the State Board of Education adopted the *Framework for Change: the Next Generation of Assessments and Accountability*, which in turn led to the development of the READY initiative and a new *Standard Course of Study* that includes Common Core State Standards, assessments and a remodeled accountability model to be operational in public schools in the 2012-13 school year.

On May 31, 2012, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) was notified that the U.S. Department of Education had approved its flexibility waiver request from some of the requirements of *No Child Left Behind* as specified in the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. In its waiver requests, the NCDPI identified how it would ensure public school students would meet College- and Career-Ready expectations for all students, how Title I schools would be held accountable for students' academic proficiency, and how the state would support effective instruction and leadership.

Schools will now be measured against Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) calculated and reported under NCLB, and not the "all or nothing" measure of Adequate Yearly Progress. AMOs also identify specific proficiency targets for each student subgroup as opposed to one proficiency target that all subgroups must meet.

TIMELINE

JUNE 29 – 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.

AUGUST 2 – ABCs/AMOs Accountability Report presented at State Board of Education meeting. ABCs/AMO Accountability Report available online.

AUGUST 3 – SEPTEMBER 4 – Appeals process for ABCs growth, data change requests.

SEPTEMBER 13 – Compliance Commission for Accountability reviews appeals.

OCTOBER 4 – State Board of Education approves final changes to ABCs/AMO.

Under the NCLB waivers, local school districts have discretion over items that once were strict state requirements. These include public school choice and supplemental educational services to qualifying students. The NCDPI will continue to maintain a list of approved supplemental educational service providers as a service to local school districts that choose to continue this program.

The ABCs accountability report will be available online at <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs/> on Aug. 2, 2012.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ABCs PROGRAM FOR THE 2011-12 SCHOOL YEAR

- This year instead of reporting Adequate Yearly Progress, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction will report the number of Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) and the number of those targets met as well as the percentage of targets met by each school/district. High schools will have more targets to meet as Graduation Rate by subgroup has been added to the mix. To meet the criteria for an Honor School of Excellence per the ABCs of Public Education, a school will have to meet all of its designated AMO targets (in addition to having at least 90 percent of its student scores at or above Achievement Level III and making expected growth). AMO proficiency targets by subgroup are available online at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/abc/2011-12/>.
- Based on 2010-11 data, and as part of the ESEA flexibility waiver, Title I schools are subject to be categorized under three designations. Title I schools (approximately one-half of North Carolina's total number of public schools) are those that

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 All AMO Targets	Honor School of Excellence	No Recognition
	Did Not Meet All AMO Targets	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

receive federal Title I funds designated to serve students who are economically disadvantaged. All local school systems have some schools in this category. The three designations are:

- Priority Schools – schools that have been identified as among the lowest-performing schools in the state. The total number of priority schools must be at least 5 percent of the total number of Title I schools in the state (77 in North Carolina).
- Focus Schools – elementary or middle schools that are contributing most to the achievement gap in the state or a high school with a graduation rate less than 60 percent in the current school year and one of the two previous years. The total number of Focus schools must equal at least 10 percent of the Title I schools in the state (130 schools in North Carolina).
- Reward Schools – Title I schools that are the highest-performing schools (all subgroup AMO targets are met) and cannot have significant achievement gaps across subgroups; or a high progress school, which is a Title I school among the 10 percent of Title I schools in the state that are making the most progress in improving the performance of all students over a number of years and exhibit no significant achievement gaps across student subgroups. There are 120 Reward schools in North Carolina.

The Priority and Focus schools will be required to take actions to improve educational services for students. Priority schools will receive more prescriptive interventions to improve performance. Local school districts will have discretion to decide how to intervene in Focus schools. Schools remain on the Priority or Focus lists for three years, and a new list of Priority and Focus schools will be developed in 2015. Reward schools will be identified annually. Reward schools will be eligible for public recognition and to apply for additional funds.

- A list of Priority, Focus and Reward schools is available online at www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/esea/.
- The state budget no longer provides funds for ABCs incentive awards. This is the fourth year that funds have been unavailable for incentive awards.

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 age-appropriate assessments are used to chart students' academic progress and are not included in the ABCs reports.
- End-of-grade assessments in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 (growth [4-8] and performance, and AMO), and science in grades 5 and 8 (performance only).
- NCEXTEND1 and NCEXTEND2 alternate assessments for certain students with disabilities (included in performance composite and AMO only).
- End-of-course assessment results for students taking EOC assessments in K-8 (growth and performance, and AMO).

COMPONENTS OF THE ABCs AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

- Student performance on three mandated end-of-course assessments: English I, Algebra I and Biology.
- NCEXTEND1 alternate assessments for certain students with disabilities included in the 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.
- The 5-year cohort graduation rate (replaced the dropout rate component).

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 the school district's capacity to address the needs of the schools and to provide the support needed to make long-term

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	AMO	AMO 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	Hillside Elementary	PK-06	Yes	Yes	91.8		Exc	Yes	CI	R
555	Parish County	340	Rock HS									
555	Parish County	345	Villages Elementary	OK-05	Yes		5		Dst H	Yes		R
555	Parish County	360	Mount Middle	06-05					Pri			R
555	Parish County		W. I. School	0-12			5					R
555	Parish County	55A	Blueberry Elementary	0-2	Yes	Y	80.5	~	Dst High	Yes		C
888	River County	110	F. Hig.									
888	River County		Progeyway Primary	PK-02	Yes	Yes	~	1	High	Yes		R
888	River County	330	Valley Elementary	03-05	Yes	Yes	76.9	~	Pro High	Yes		R

ABCs STATUS: **Exp**– Expected Growth; **High**– 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

AMO: **UR** – Under Review

AMOCODE: **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

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

Grades served in each school

The ABCs program establishes a growth standard for each school.

Key to reading the status category abbreviations and special conditions.

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

School Type

AMO (Annual Measureable Objectives) is a measure required under the federal No Child Left Behind law.

To make AMO, a school must meet every performance target for each subgroup in the school. For more on AMO, please go to <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/abc/2011-12/>.

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.

improvements. Schools can be included in comprehensive support for reasons other than ABCs performance. These include consistently low performance composites, ongoing status as a Title I School Improvement school, selection as a Race to the Top school, and others.

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.
- AMO Status – Whether the students in the school as a whole and in each identified group met the performance targets set by the state with the goal of reducing the percentage of non-proficient students by one-half within six years.

GROWTH EXPECTATIONS

Under the growth formulas, the individual student is expected to perform as well, or better, on the end-of-grade (EOG) assessments 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 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).

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 charts 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 ample room for students to grow academically each year and should be showing growth annually.

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 does the ABCs model fit with federal requirements?

By incorporating Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) into the ABCs, North Carolina meets the federal requirements under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. The AMO targets are set with the goal of reducing the percentage of non-proficient students by one-half within six years. Under the federal requirements, schools are held accountable for the performance of each subgroup of students within the school. Title I schools with low performance composites may be designated as Priority or Focus schools. Schools identified as Priority or Focus schools will hold those designations for three years (beginning in 2012-13 and ending in 2014-15).

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/accountability/reporting/abcsother>
- TESTING PROGRAM: GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/geninfopoliciesindex>
- NEW GROWTH FORMULAS AND UPDATED ABCs PROCEDURES 2005-06 AND BEYOND – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/growthformulas>
- 2011-12 TESTING CALENDAR – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/testing/calendars/testingcalendar1112.pdf>
- 2008-09 RELEASED TEST FORMS – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/releasedforms>
- INFORMATION ON NORTH CAROLINA'S FLEXIBILITY WAIVER REQUEST – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/esea/>

2012 ABCs INFORMATION CONTACTS

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ABCs Data and Summary Press Release: <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs>

Department of Public Instruction: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org>