

Section 5

Explanatory Notes

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- **Academically or Intellectually Gifted Students.** Students who perform or show the potential to perform at substantially high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. Classification as academically or intellectually gifted is determined by the School-Based Committee and the Administrative Placement Committee. Academically or intellectually gifted students are identified according to a plan approved by their local board of education.
- **Achievement Levels.** Elementary and Middle School Grades (K-8) and High School Courses. See "Understanding End-of-Grade Testing: Achievement Levels", Assessment Brief, Vol. 3, No. 5, Spring 1997 and "Understanding End-of-Course Testing: Scores and Standards", Assessment Brief, Vol. 2, No. 1, Fall 1995.

Achievement levels are one way that scores on the North Carolina end-of-grade tests in reading and mathematics are reported for elementary and middle schools. The achievement levels range from I-IV and give common meaning to various levels of competence in each subject area.

Based on their performance on the North Carolina end-of-grade tests:

Students performing at **Level I** typically have not sufficiently mastered the knowledge and skills in the subject area necessary to be successful at the next grade level;

Students performing at **Level II** typically demonstrate inconsistent mastery of knowledge and skills that are fundamental in a subject area and that are minimally sufficient to be successful at the next grade level;

Students performing at **Level III** typically demonstrate consistent mastery of grade level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level;

Students performing at **Level IV** typically perform consistently in a superior manner that is beyond that required to be proficient at grade level work.

The performance standards for high school students make it possible to compare student and group performance in each core course. The achievement levels range from I-IV. Based on their performance on the North Carolina end-of-course tests:

Students performing at **Level 1** have not typically demonstrated sufficient mastery of knowledge and skills of the course necessary to be successful at a more advanced level in the content area.

Students performing at **Level II** typically demonstrate inconsistent mastery of knowledge and skills of the course and are minimally prepared to be successful at a more advanced level in the content area.

Students performing at **Level III** typically demonstrate consistent mastery of course subject matter and skills and are well prepared for a more advanced level in the content area.

Students performing at **Level IV** typically and consistently perform in a superior manner, clearly beyond that required to be proficient in the course subject matter and skills of the course, and are well prepared for a more advanced level in the content area.

Achievement Levels for Grade 4 Writing were set by the State Board of Education.

Level I:	0 - 1.0 points	Level II:	1.5 - 2.0 points
Level III:	2.5 - 3.0 points	Level IV:	3.5 - 4.0 points

The percent of students in each achievement level in each school is used to calculate the writing index which is part of the growth composite.

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- **Average Daily Attendance.** The total number of days of attendance (the days students are present when school is in session) for all students divided by the total number of school days in a given period.
- **Average Daily Membership.** The sum of the number of days in membership (total number of days within a given term or school year that a student's name is on the current roll of a school or class) for all students divided by the number of school days in the term or school year.
- **Average (Mean) Score.** The mean (or average) of a group of scores is calculated by dividing the sum of the scores by the number of scores.
- **Developmental Scale Score.** The number of test questions students answer correctly are converted to developmental scale scores for the North Carolina end-of-grade reading and mathematics tests. The developmental scale scores for reading comprehension and mathematics range from approximately 98 to 208 and yield "rulers" to measure growth in these subjects across time for the same group (cohort) of students. Although the reading and mathematics developmental scales have similar ranges, they should not be compared to each other because students grow at different rates in reading and mathematics.
- **Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch.** Percent of students eligible to receive "Free or Reduced Lunch" according to guidelines for the federally funded National School Lunch Act which uses income, number of persons in the household, and participation in other subsidized programs to determine eligibility.
- **End-of Course Index.** The scale scores for the North Carolina end-of-course tests are divided into achievement levels I-IV. The percentages of students who score in each achievement level are used to summarize a school's performance in the ABCs Program. The Index ranges from 0 to 100. It is not a percent but rather a weighted average of the percentages of students who score in the top three achievement levels (Levels II-IV) of the tests in the five core subjects. The

Index for each course is computed for the most recent year using data for all students. The greater the Index, the greater the percent of students in the upper achievement levels in a particular school and subject.

- **Grade Level Performance.** Established by the North Carolina State Board of Education as Achievement Level III for elementary and middle school grades and high school core courses. Students performing at or above Achievement Level III are designated as performing at or above Grade level.
- **Growth and Performance Standards.** See "Setting Annual Growth Standards: The Formula", Accountability Brief, Vol. 1, No 1, September 1996.

Expected growth for a school is determined using a growth formula which incorporates students' previous performance, the state's average rate of growth and a statistical adjustment for regression to the mean. This formula is used to set expected and exemplary growth levels on the North Carolina end-of-grade tests in reading and mathematics. The growth standards are benchmarks determined annually to measure a school's progress toward increasing students' academic performance.

Expected Growth. The amount of growth students in a school are expected to achieve during one school year and is determined using the growth formula.

Expected Growth Composite. Developed by combining the expected growth standards for reading, writing, and mathematics into a single number that represents the performance of students in a particular school. The adjusted differences between actual growth and expected growth are summed for each grade level (reading, writing at grade 4, and mathematics). If the sum is equal to or greater than zero, the expected growth standard is met.

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Exemplary Growth. Determined by using the growth formula with an additional ten percent added to the state's average rate of growth.

Exemplary Growth Composite. Developed by combining the exemplary growth standards for reading, writing, and mathematics into a single number that represents the student performance in a particular school. The adjusted differences between actual growth and exemplary growth are summed for each grade level and subject. If the sum is equal to or greater than zero, the exemplary growth standard is met.

Performance Composite. The percent of students in a school who are performing at or above grade level (Level III) for grade / subject areas. The number of students in Levels III and IV are summed (across grades and subjects) and divided by the number of valid scores. This number is multiplied by 100 to convert to a percentage.

- **Minimum N Counts (Number of students)**. Generally, summary statistics are not reported for groups of students less than 5 to avoid identifying individual students and to reduce sampling errors.
- **N Counts (Number of students)**. Shows either the number of students with valid scores (e.g., performance composite) or the number of students who are in membership the required number of days for the ABCs growth model (106 days for a regular school year or 56 days for a semester or block schedule).
- **Per Pupil Expenditure (Local)**. Total local expenditures divided by final average daily membership.
- **Scale Score**. The number of test questions students answer correctly are converted to scale scores for the North Carolina end-of-course tests. Scale scores measure subject-specific achievement and are standardized across

revised tests in Algebra I, English I, Economic, Legal and Political Systems, Biology, and U. S. History. Unlike developmental scale scores which measure individual student growth in grades 3-8, scale scores measure the performance of all high school students in successive years.

- **Scholastic Assessment Test I (SAT I)**. A test designed to measure verbal and mathematical reasoning skills related to academic performance in college. SAT I verbal and mathematics scores range from 200 to 800. Scores of public high school seniors who took the SAT I any time during their high school years through March 1997 are reported for the State, each school system, and each high school. Participation in the SAT I is computed as the total number of senior students who took the test divided by the 12th grade average daily membership (seventh month).
- **Status Categories**.

Top 25 in Academic Growth—The 25 schools in the State with the greatest amount of growth for the year for reading, writing, and mathematics (grades 3-8).

School Met Exemplary Growth according to the ABCs growth standard.

School Met Expected Growth according to the ABCs growth standard.

School of Excellence—A school with 90.0 percent or more of its students performing at or above grade level. The school also met its expected growth standard.

School of Distinction—A school with 80.0 percent or more of its students performing at or above grade level.

Low Performing School—A school that failed to meet the minimum growth standard as defined by the State Board of Education and a majority of its

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students are performing below grade level. The State Board may also designate a school as low-performing for failing to comply with testing requirements for two years or more.

No Recognition in the above Status Categories—A school that has more than 50 percent of its students performing at or above grade level but is not eligible for recognition or designation in any of the above categories.

- **Students with Disabilities.** Includes students with permanent or temporary mental, physical, or emotional disabilities. These students may need special education services and will probably not be able to have all their educational needs met in a regular classroom without special education or related services. Students with disabilities have an Individual Education Program (IEP) and are eligible to receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These students may be exempted from testing on a case-by-case basis if they meet certain criteria outlined in the State testing guidelines.
- **Teacher Supplement (Local).** Local funding in addition to the mandated state salary for a teacher's experience level and teaching experience. The average local supplement for a school system reflects the sum of all additional local salary funding paid to teachers in that school system divided by the number of teachers receiving that additional salary.

Data Sources

Attendance. Average daily attendance (ADA) / Average daily membership. Financial and Personnel Services, School Business Division, Statistical Research Section, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Average Teacher Supplement (Local). Financial and Personnel Services, School Business Division, Statistical Research Section, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Per Student Expenditure (Local). Financial and Personnel Services, School Business Division, Statistical Research Section, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Percent Ethnic and Gender. Financial and Personnel Services, School Business Division, Statistical Research Section, S100 Survey, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Percent Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch. Financial and Personnel Services, School Support Division, Child Nutrition Services Section, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

Percent Students with Disabilities and Academically or Intellectually Gifted Students.

Instructional and Accountability Services, Exceptional Children Division. These counts were divided by the final daily membership to compute the percent of Students with Disabilities and percent Academically Gifted. They include children with disabilities who are three and four years of age.

Scholastic Assessment Test I (SAT I) Results and Percent Tested. The College Board. Percent tested is the number of seniors taking the SAT I divided by the average daily membership (seventh month).

Student Membership. Financial and Personnel Services, School Business Division, Statistical Research Section, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.