



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

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To: High School Principals

From: Wandra C. Polk

## HONORS COURSE REVIEW PROCESS / SECONDARY DIVISION'S MONTHLY UPDATE

The State Board of Education approved honors course curriculum, instruction and assessment standards at its November 2004 meeting. This division developed an ***Honors Course Implementation Guide*** that was sent to all high school principals and is currently available on our website using the following URL: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/honorsguide>.

We invite feedback on the attached information that outlines the honors course review process that will begin with the 2007-08 school year. **No course information is requested for this school year.**

Please share the attached information with your honors course teachers. This school year has been reserved to get feedback and suggestions for improving the review process. Feedback regarding the proposed process should be sent to the following email address: [graduationproject@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:graduationproject@dpi.state.nc.us). We will accept feedback until April 30, 2007.

If you have questions, please contact the following division staff:

Everly Broadway	<a href="mailto:ebroadway@dpi.state.nc.us">ebroadway@dpi.state.nc.us</a>	Mathematics and Science
Valorie Hargett	<a href="mailto:vhargett@dpi.state.nc.us">vhargett@dpi.state.nc.us</a>	English Language Arts & Social Studies
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Wandra Polk	<a href="mailto:wpolk@dpi.state.nc.us">wpolk@dpi.state.nc.us</a>	General Questions

c: LEA Superintendents  
Central Office Contacts  
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Rebecca Payne  
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### DIVISION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

## Honors Course Review 2007-08

North Carolina Honors Course Review recognizes the efforts of dedicated teachers and school administrators to expand challenging honors course opportunities for their students while maintaining high academic standards. Research supports that the most accurate predictor of a student's success in post secondary education is the rigor of his/her high school program.

North Carolina honor courses should be designed to align with the honors curriculum, instruction and assessment standards that have been approved by the NC State Board of Education. The State Board of Education adopted the honors course standards to provide a consistent guide for the development and implementation of rigorous honors courses across the state.

The Honors Course Review will provide feedback to the State Board of Education and schools on the consistency of Honors Course Standards' implementation across the state. The Review

1. Provides teachers and administrators with clear guidelines on curriculum and resource requirements that must be in place for honors courses;
2. Encourages consistency in quality of honors courses across the state; and
3. Helps colleges and universities better interpret the secondary school honors courses on students' transcripts

We welcome your feedback after you read the Honors Course Review protocol that will begin with the 2007-08 academic year. School selection will be based on a stratified random sample. High Schools selected in the random sample will be requested to send in specific information on all honors courses that are offered starting with the 2006-07 school year in a designated content area.

The following timeline will be followed:

- School year 2006-07
  - Draft Honors Course Review information circulated to raise awareness of process and solicit feedback.
- May 2007
  - Final version of Honors Course Review Form for the 2007-08 school year sent to high schools and posted on DPI website.
- September 2007
  - Randomly selected high schools notified.
- December 2007
  - Honors Course Review Form with supporting documentation returned to DPI.
- January-March 2008
  - Review of materials
- April-May 2008
  - Feedback provided to selected schools
- Summer 2008
  - Summary of findings for year one review provided to the State Board of Education

Assistance: Please contact the following division staff with specific questions regarding honors course or honors course review process for their content area:

Everly Broadway  
Valorie Hargett  
Fran Hoch  
Rebecca Payne  
Wandra Polk

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Mathematics and Science  
English Language Arts & Social Studies  
Arts Education  
Career and Technical Education  
General Questions

**North Carolina Honors Course Review 2007-08**  
[Only sent to schools identified by random sample]

Introduction: Your school has been randomly selected to participate in a sample of honors courses offered for school year 2006-07 and 2007-08. An honors course should differ significantly from the usual high school course with respect to the resource materials used and the range and depth of topics covered. All students who are willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum should be considered for admission to honors courses. Schools should make every effort to ensure that their honors courses reflect the diversity of their student population.

**Instructions:**

- Initial each item in the “Requirements” section indicating that the course fulfills these expectations.
- Attach a course description, syllabus, sample assignment and sample assessments to this form.

**Requirements (Initial each item)**

**I. Curriculum Standards- show evidence of application of 21<sup>st</sup> Century content and context**

\_\_\_\_\_ The course has a curriculum guide that clearly and concisely includes the following:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Honors Teacher

Principal or Dept. Head

- A course description: Clearly distinguishes the honors course from its regular counterpart.
- Goals and objectives
- Concepts (generalizations/essential questions)
- Issues particular to the course
- Expectations of performance
- Assignments- a representative assignment should be attached to this form
- Time tables and deadlines
- Pacing guides
- Assessments- representative samples of formative and summative assessments should be attached to this form.
- Rubrics- Rubric example should be attached.
- A basis for grading, and
- Instructional materials, equipment, and/or technology reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century information and communication technology. There is evidence of the interest, attitude and ability of students to appropriately use digital technology and communication tools to access, manage, integrate and evaluate information, construct new knowledge, and communicate with others.

**For Informational Purposes Only**  
**DO NOT COMPLETE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Dept. Head      There is evidence throughout the curriculum guide that the course builds upon, exceeds, and emphasizes a focus or a model and is specifically developed as an honors course that is more rigorous, sophisticated and/or accelerated than a standard course.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Dept. Head      There is evidence throughout the curriculum guide that student learning goes beyond the skills of recognition, fact gathering and recall. There is evidence that relevant, real-world examples are used to make content relevant to students' lives.

## **II. Instruction/Delivery Standards**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Dept. Head      There is evidence through the curriculum guide and demonstrated through teacher instruction/facilitation that the taught curriculum and the chosen methodology are aligned with the written and assessed curriculum.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Dept. Head      There is evidence through the curriculum guide and demonstrated through teacher instruction/facilitation that independent study is required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Dept. Head      There is evidence through the curriculum guide and demonstrated through teacher instruction/facilitation that self-directed, advanced student research and learning are required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Dept. Head      There is observable evidence throughout the curriculum plan and demonstrated through instructional approaches that technology is integrated within the honors course curriculum and students are required to utilize appropriate technology to support their learning.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Dept. Head      There is evidence throughout the curriculum plan and reflected through instructional approaches that the instruction provides multiple opportunities for students to interact with each other.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Dept. Head      There is evidence in the curriculum guide and demonstrated through instruction that higher level critical and creative thinking skills such as interpretation, analysis, constructive criticism and knowledge utilization (decision making, problem solving, investigation, logical thought) and knowledge creation are required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Honors Teacher      \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Dept. Head      There is evidence in the curriculum guide and demonstrated through instruction that the teacher addresses instructional diversity (interests, cultures, learning styles, multiple intelligences, and readiness).

### III. Assessment

_____	_____	There is evidence throughout curriculum guide and is reflected through instruction and student work, numerous opportunities for students to demonstrate goals, objectives and concepts through performances, presentations, demonstrations, applications, processes or products with rubrics for each in evidence.
Honors Teacher	Principal or Dept. Head	
_____	_____	There is evidence in curriculum guide and is reflected through instructional approaches that multiple and on-going forms of assessment are used to include open-ended questions, original interpretations, authentic products, analytical writing, etc.
Honors Teacher	Principal or Dept. Head	
_____	_____	There is evidence in the curriculum guide and is reflected in practice that on-going assessment is used to assess students in order to obtain feedback, for planning, to guide and reshape instruction, to allow students to gauge their progress or determine individual needs, and for grading purposes.
Honors Teacher	Principal or Dept. Head	
		There is evidence in the curriculum guide and is reflected through teacher assignments and assessments that some assessment is only used for student self evaluation and opportunities are provided for students, without penalty, to use the assessment to adjust or improve final assessments or products.