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Logan Named New Associate Superintendent at NCDPI



Robert Logan began July 1 as the Associate Superintendent of Innovation and School Transformation with the NC Department of Public Instruction. This new position leads four

divisions: Consolidated Assistance, Instructional Technology, the Office of Charter Schools and Professional Development. The Innovation and School Transformation area, created in late 2006, oversees all aspects of school assistance, high school turnaround and improvement activities in addition to school technology, charter schools and professional development work.

Logan has served public schools for 30 years, including work as a principal in Nash, Wilson and Burlington City school systems; as an executive director for high school instructional outcomes in Durham Public Schools; as an associate superintendent and superintendent in Lee County; and, for the past five and a half years, as superintendent for Asheville City Schools.

Logan will lead the state's school improvement efforts and implementation of NCLB. In the interview below, he talks about his ideas for doing that.

During your time in Asheville City Schools, the achievement gap between minority and majority children, based on standardized tests results, went from a 44.7 percent gap to a 22.3 percent gap. How was this progress made?

"What caused the gap is very complex and so it takes a comprehensive approach to impact it. There's no one silver bullet in closing the gap.

It takes the effort of everyone. That's what happened in Asheville. There was a great effort on behalf of the entire community, a lot of targeted assistance.

"We have to close the gap the same way we created it – one child at a time. That's how we have to go about it, by diagnostically identifying the learning deficits of the child and prescriptively addressing those deficits."

How do you apply this one-child-at-a-time approach at the state level?

"We have to advocate for the resources to get to the LEAs with the flexibility to use them as needed to address the particulars of their community. Our new assistance model must allow for the customization of assistance based upon capacity of the district and the needs of the schools. We're looking at grouping districts within a region that face similar challenges and offering a way to leverage available services to the them. Also, I feel it's incumbent upon DPI to be the clearinghouse for innovation and creativity."

People often don't think of DPI as innovative or creative. How would you change this?

"That's part of the transformation that's got to take place within the Department. The Department of Public Instruction, in my opinion, should be the source that the superintendents, principals and teachers look to first for innovation, for ideas, for ways to get things done. We should be a clearinghouse of knowledge, of programs, of strategies to help improve not only the learning of one child, but the improvement of an entire school."

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For more information about this newsletter, please contact NC Department of Public Instruction Director of Communications and Information Vanessa Jeter at 919-807-3469 or vjeter@dpi.state.nc.us. Please email your NCLB-related questions you would like answered in the newsletter or on the Web to Charlotte Duren at cduren@dpi.state.nc.us. The NC NCLB News publication will be distributed to superintendents and Title I directors and available to others on the Web at www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb. If you have additional needs for hard copy editions, please contact Vanessa Jeter.

Logan Named New Associate Superintendent at NCDPI *(continued)*

You have the word 'innovation' in your job title. Are you going to take that on?

"I will work ... to move us in this direction. Consider the high quality of standards and educational services for the 1.4 million children in the state ... [and] all of the factors that greatly influence – whether it's technology, personnel, curriculum, assessment. All of these factors must be integrated and all channeled to the center of the transformation that's to take place. So, we have to work to bring it together comprehensively and close the fragmentation.

"The Department is presently working on a new model, a new design for the delivery of school assistance throughout the state. I'm extremely optimistic that this new model contains all of the components and that we'll create a comprehensive approach to school improvement in North Carolina. I'm also of the opinion that our ability to do this, to create this model and successfully implement it statewide, is probably the greatest challenge that the Department has faced since the development of the ABCs.

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"School assistance, recruitment and retention, professional development, exceptional children, student support, finance, the core curriculum in instruction, assessment, career technical education and instructional technology tend to operate in their own environments. This new model needs to integrate all of those efforts into one comprehensive, collaborative approach of school assistance. And it has to be implemented in a manner that each LEA has the flexibility and receives the amount of services dependent upon the status of the LEA."

There are a lot of different criteria used by different state entities and the federal government to identify schools needing improvement the most. What is the red flag for you in looking at schools needing the most improvement?

"I am a huge proponent of improvement, growth [as a way of measuring school success]. Sure, we need to know the

proficiency standards for the purpose of benchmarking. But, we also need to know what kind of improvement growth is taking place in the educational career of a child and of a school. I think we need to look at trend data closely. That needs to be a key component. Nothing should be judged by a snapshot."

How do you think your look at growth in determining school success and the State Board's goal of a globally competitive student compare to the NCLB formula of success, or making AYP?

"I believe NCLB has served one intended purpose well. It has caused us to focus on those children who've been historically underserved. But NCLB looks at snapshot criterion-referenced testing and that focus is too narrow to gauge the development of globally competitive students. Yes, the math skills are necessary, the reading is a must. I'm passionate about reading as a foundation skill that a child must have."

Three of your schools in Asheville didn't make AYP due to reading/language arts scores in 2005-06. At Asheville High, 26.4 percent of African Americans scored proficient in reading/language arts, yet this was a school recording the second-highest SAT scores of any district in the state. (The district's 2006-07 scores hit more target goals, as reported at presstime.) How do you explain this?

"Something has to happen. I feel that we have to make sure that our measurement, our assessment of student performance is aligned. For example, one reason that a lot of schools experience a difference between some of their subgroups' 3-8 performance where it looks pretty good and the 9-12 performance where it takes a dip, is the standard of what's on the proficiency test. It's a different test (with the inclusion of writing at the high school level).

"Right now, due to the changes in the revision of curriculum, the changes of standards of proficiency on assessment and the changes of proficiency by the feds on No Child Left Behind, schools could get a triple whammy in some years. They could have a different curriculum, a higher cut score or standard to be proficient on a test. That's this year (2007-08) in reading. And, the percent of students expected to be proficient according to NCLB target goals could go up. That's this year (2007-08) in reading and math.

"As a principal and as a superintendent who has been through the evolution of the ABCs, I think our ABCs are pretty well thought out and one of the best models. ABCs looks at growth as well as proficiency and that's good. But we need to stop revising the curriculum every five years and changing the tests so frequently. To my knowledge, the SAT's only been recentered one time that I'm aware of in my 52 years. I can't tell you the number of times we are either revising the curriculum or changing the standards. It's difficult enough for us as educators to keep up with it. How do we explain it to the general public and the media? We really need to determine what our

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Logan Named New Associate Superintendent at NCDPI *(continued)*

standards for a quality curriculum are and leave them in place for a period of time. What we're doing now reminds me of ready, fire, aim."

What do you see as the role of state assistance in all of this?

"If the school is not improving, if subgroups within the school are not showing improvement according to trend data, if we don't see realistic, measurable growth in how the students are doing over a period of time, then that school is not serving those children well. That's where our state assistance needs to be. I think it's our responsibility to help the schools identify their areas of deficiency, to help the schools develop a model for improvement, to help the

schools acquire the resources to improve. Then, I think we need to step back and simply monitor and let the schools work to improve.

"True systemic change has to come from within the organization. It can't be downloaded. We're talking about true change, not simply a process where a school gets in School Improvement and then gets out. What this has got to be about is changing the culture of the school so that it becomes a learning community that provides the necessary services for all children to be successful and where all children are successful."

NCDPI Initiates New Framework for School Assistance

The NC Department of Public Instruction is initiating a new framework for providing assistance to schools and districts. As ABCs standards are adjusted upwards and NCLB's incremental target goals increase, demand for assistance is dramatically increasing. The Boston Consulting Group, an international strategy and general management consulting firm, is contracted to obtain feedback and help develop a cohesive, system of assistance that would leverage district and regional resources and customize assistance. Progress made to date includes:

- Consultation with over 300 stakeholders including superintendents, district staff, principals, teachers and community leaders
- Extensive review of NCDPI's existing assistance efforts
- Research on best practices of other states, districts and countries
- Preliminary development of redesigned framework for assistance

KEY FINDINGS TO DATE:

- NCDPI faces internal and external challenges in serving underperforming schools and districts, and in addressing the root causes of underperformance.
- Of the various root causes of low student performance identified by stakeholders, one of the most commonly cited relates to difficulties in attracting, developing and retaining capable professionals in challenged schools and districts.
- NCDPI is only one among many players providing assistance to NC schools and districts; these players and their efforts are largely uncoordinated.
- Other states, districts and countries are developing new and innovative ways to assist underperforming schools at scale, but few models have proven to be consistently effective.

AN EVALUATION OF NCDPI'S CURRENT ASSISTANCE EFFORTS REVEALS A NEED TO SHIFT:

- From a system of multiple state and federal criteria that trigger automatic assistance to a more integrated framework that will help NCDPI to prioritize deployment of resources
- From an exclusive focus on schools to a focus that includes building district capacity to support schools
- From 'one size fits all' to more customized assistance
- From addressing symptoms to targeting root causes
- From providing temporary solutions to creating sustainable, lasting improvements
- From delivering assistance of varying quality to providing assistance that is consistently excellent
- From inconsistent monitoring and evaluation to rigorous assessments of effectiveness

PRODUCTS IN DEVELOPMENT:

- A comprehensive, transparent screening process that will combine NCLB and ABC criteria in order to better prioritize deployment of State resources for assistance
- A more comprehensive and streamlined needs assessment process focused on identifying the root causes of performance issues and key areas for capacity building
- A system of brokering and providing better coordinated services for schools and districts
- A set of services offered by NCDPI that builds on existing strengths and seeks to create more lasting and sustainable changes

For more information, contact Associate Superintendent Robert Logan at 919.807.3435, rlogan@dpi.state.nc.us or visit the Web at www.ncpublicschools.org/assistanceproject.

NC DELEGATION VISITS CAPITOL HILL

State Board of Education (SBE) members and representatives from the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and Governor Easley's office took a bus trip to Washington, D.C., in June to deliver North Carolina's official position on the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to Capitol Hill. The message they carried with them was clear: NCLB, up for renewal in Congress this year, needs improvements if it is to live up to its name.

The delegation met with US representatives including: Sen. Richard Burr, G.K. Butterfield (D-1st), Bob Etheridge (D-2nd), Virginia Foxx (R-5th), Howard Coble (R-6th), Sue Myrick (R-9th), Heath Shuler (D-11th), and Brad Miller (D-13th). US Department of Education Deputy Secretary Raymond Simon as well as staff representatives for Sen. Elizabeth Dole, David Price (D-4th), and Walter Jones, Jr. (R-3rd) met with the group as well.



Sen. Richard Burr and State Board Chairman Howard Lee

Board members and education leaders in North Carolina acknowledge that NCLB has highlighted many important shortcomings in the country's K-12 education, but the law, which accounts for approximately 8 percent of the funds that support North Carolina public schools, has taken on a significance that is out of proportion to the resources it provides. (The complete list of the Board's recommendations is available on NCDPI's Web site at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb>.)

In a white paper, North Carolina education leaders described the law's heavy bureaucratic emphasis, noting it overemphasizes technical provisions, favors short-term approaches instead of sustainable reforms, focuses on teaching credentials rather than teaching quality, and requires monitoring and technical assistance that exceed the resources provided.

The delegation made several recommendations on NCLB's reauthorization addressing state authority and flexibility, accountability determinations/Adequate Yearly Progress, school

choice and supplemental educational services, support for schools and districts/technical assistance, special populations and teacher quality.

During the delegation's presentations, State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee asked North Carolina's Principal of the Year, Craig Hill, and the North Carolina Teachers of the Year, Diana Beasley (2006-07), and James Bell (2007-08) to make remarks specific to their experiences. Hill talked about the staffing issues that principals face under NCLB. The teachers of the year echoed his concerns as they painted vivid portraits of the critical exodus of teachers from the classroom. In addition, Larry Price, former Superintendent of the Year, made comments on the effect of NCLB's high stakes testing and accountability on school district morale.

SBE members of the delegation were: Dr. Howard Lee, chairman; Wayne McDevitt, vice chairman; Dr. Jane Norwood, Melissa Bartlett, Shirley Harris, Tricia Willoughby, members; Rebecca Garland, executive director; Betsy West, assistant executive director; Rita Joyner, legislative director; Larry Price, 2006-07 superintendent advisor; Carr Ipock, local board of education advisor; Craig Hill, Principal of the Year advisor (2007-08); Diana Beasley, Teacher of the Year advisor (2006-07); James Bell, Teacher of the Year advisor (2007-08); Kathy Sullivan, senior policy advisor; and Marvin Pittman, community relations specialist.

NCDPI members of the delegation were: June Atkinson, state superintendent; J.B. Buxton, deputy state superintendent; Philip Price, associate state superintendent; Dr. Lou Fabrizio, director of accountability services; Dr. Mary Watson, director of exceptional children; Dr. Lynn Warren, director of student support services; Dr. Belinda Black, NCLB coordinator; and Jackson Miller, Financial and Business Services research assistant.

Elizabeth Sasser represented the Governor's education office as part of the delegation.



DC delegates and officials include, front row from left: Tricia Willoughby, Howard Coble, Shirley Harris, Melissa Bartlett; second row from left: Wayne McDevitt, Heath Shuler, Howard Lee, June Atkinson, Sue Myrick, Jane Norwood and Brad Miller.

Accountability, Teacher Quality Key in NCLB Reauthorization

At presstime, legislation from two sets of senators had been introduced to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal law. Legislators are struggling to introduce a bill for the law, due for reauthorization in 2007, before Congress adjourns for August recess.

On July 12, Senators Judd Gregg (R-NH) and Richard Burr (R-NC), both members of the Senate's education committee, released their version of a reauthorized NCLB. This version includes much of the existing accountability system with added flexibility and incorporating recommendations made by the US Department of Education (USED), the Education Trust and the Aspen Institute's Commission on NCLB.

The Burr-Gregg bill accelerates access to supplemental educational services so parents can choose between sending their child to another public school or accessing tutorial services in the first year of Title I School Improvement. English language

learners (ELL) would not be counted in schools' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results for two years. (USED's current policy is one year.) In addition, ELL students would be counted in the ELL subgroup for two years after being considered proficient in English, making it easier for schools to make AYP.

On July 18, Senators Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT), Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and Norm Coleman (R-MN) introduced legislation, which included renaming the law to the All Students Can Achieve Act of 2007 (ASCA). The proposal incorporates many of the recommendations of the Commission on NCLB, which endorses the bill, including identifying highly effective teachers by the achievement growth of their students and determining accountability for schools based on the growth of student achievement as reflected in classroom testing and graduation rates, rather than absolute test scores. Also, the bill seeks to encourage high standards and an aligned curriculum throughout the country. States would have the flexibility to

adopt or adapt the American standards or keep their own standards, which the Secretary of Education would compare with the American standards. The bill would give the National Assessment Government Board the job of establishing voluntary national standards.

Both proposals maintain the goal that all children reach grade-level proficiency by 2014 and propose expanding the current growth model program run by the USED to all 50 states.

Both proposals create differentiated consequences/interventions for schools based on how far they are falling short of achievement goals.

Meanwhile, Rep. George Miller, (D-CA), the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, has signaled that he is working on a bipartisan proposal for the House to present.



THE LAW: CHOICE AND WHEN IT'S OFFERED

Note: Finding it difficult to explain NCLB to parents without using terms most don't understand? Access the newly-revised NCLB glossary at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/glossary> where NCLB terms are defined as they are used in North Carolina.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 regarding public school choice:

SEC. 1116. (b)(E)(i) In the case of a school identified for school improvement under this paragraph, the local educational agency shall, not later than the first day of the school year following such identification, provide all students enrolled in the school with the option to transfer to another public school served by the local educational agency, which may include a public charter school, that has not been identified for school improvement under this paragraph, unless such an option is prohibited by State law.

Feb. 6, 2004, non-regulatory draft guidance B-2: When must an LEA make public school choice available to eligible students?

An LEA must make choice available for students not later than the first day of the school year following the school year in which the LEA administered the assessments that resulted in the school being identified as in need of school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring [Section 1116(b)(1)(E)]. If possible, an LEA should notify parents about their available choices well before the beginning of the school year in which those choices will be available.

Feb. 6, 2004, non-regulatory draft guidance B-5: If any LEA does not receive from its SEA, prior to the start of the school year, student achievement results or the list of schools identified for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring, when must it offer public school choice?

The law requires SEAs to ensure that the results of State academic assessments are available to LEAs before the beginning of the school year (that is, before the start of the school year that follows the school year in which the assessments were administered) [Section 1116(a)(2)]. It also requires LEAs to offer choice to eligible students prior to the beginning of the school year. While these provisions of the Act have required some States to adjust their assessment and reporting schedules, all States should now be in a position to make available to LEAs the information needed to offer eligible students the opportunity to change schools before the school year commences. If, however, an LEA does not receive the information in time to offer choice before the beginning of the school year, it must make choices available as quickly as possible, so that parents can exercise choice and students can enter new schools before the school year gets well underway.

Under no circumstances should an LEA wait until the next school year before providing the opportunity to transfer to eligible students. For example, an LEA that receives its listing of schools identified for improvement in the fall might offer choice to students immediately or for the second semester [34 C.F.R. Section 200.32(f)].

Spotlight on James Bell, NC's 2007-08 Teacher of the Year

Watch Chowan Middle School English teacher James Bell work his classroom and you forget there's a whiteboard at the front, because there is no front. He prowls about, sitting on a desk here to banter and explain, leaning over a student group there to stimulate conversation about a reading passage, kneeling beside students to answer questions, drawing thinking maps in the air as he weaves between the desks, even taking a student outside to the hallway for questioning on a behavior issue. North Carolina's 2007-08 Teacher of the Year says, "I'm kind of a round hole in a square peg kind of person and I'm OK with that. I don't do anything halfway – ever."

When asked if he had one card to play using his influence as Teacher of the Year, what it would be, he answers with characteristic gusto, "Well, I want two cards. First of all, we need more men in education. We are still a minority in this profession, which is one reason why we're underpaid. ... I hate to say it, but with more men in the profession, our pay will go up. That's just our society. ... More men will help us in a lot of areas....[role] modeling for these guys. ... There are a lot of things – how to dress professionally, how to treat ladies, that you don't technically teach, but they see every day. I think that goes a long way."

"My other card is new teacher retention. Most importantly, I want to get across to new teachers: Teach. ... We lose too many good teachers. They get frustrated with their resources, parental support, kids who don't seem to care, the fire alarm that goes off in the fourth block every Friday. It's OK. Just stop and teach.

"It doesn't matter if a kid comes in and he's had a bad morning or a bad night. Just teach. If that means taking that child and sitting out in the hallway and solving his individual problem before you go forward, you've taught. ... It's not about the best stuff, it's about teaching. It's not about being the best teacher, it's about teaching. You don't teach curriculum, you don't teach textbooks, you teach kids. ... At the end of the day, you may have to pound your head against the wall. But if you know that you taught, it's OK.

"You're not going to have enough technology in your class. You're not going to have enough books or materials or

manipulatives or parental support or whatever. ... There's always going to be something wrong. But when you came out of college, you knew your literature, you knew your math, you knew your history – whatever it was – you knew it. Now teach it. You don't need all the fancy stuff, just teach."

Welcome to the only lecture you'll hear from James Bell, because that's not his teaching style. Up close and personal, intense, that's his style. He gets involved with his students' personal problems,

academic challenges, athletic successes outside of school – even livestock shows. He sets individual behavior and academic goals with each of his students and rewards them four times a year with treats such as pizza and a movie for meeting those goals.

These are students Bell feels he knows even before he's developed relationships with them. At Chowan Middle, over half of the students are economically disadvantaged. His parents divorced when he was young and he was raised by a mother who was a high school dropout.

Growing up in a Las Vegas slum, he remembers one-present Christmases and lectures from his mom on the importance of education.

"So that keeps me in focus, helps me remember that you don't need bells and whistles to do what you've got to do. Keep your nose to the grindstone. It's the story of the ant that moved the rubber tree plant, he says, referring to a metaphor from a song, "He's Got High Hopes," made famous by Frank Sinatra. A Sinatra song reference seems odd. After all, Bell just asked a student, Figga da deal? (Meaning do you get me or do you understand?). Bell shrugs when questioned, "Sinatra and Elvis songs seem to be part of our mantra in Las Vegas."

Even when he is given a bell or whistle, or say a silver cup with 2007-08 Teacher of the Year inscribed on it, he uses it to collect canned drink tabs for a charity drive.

Being "a kid himself" is the other reason he gives for being able to identify with his students. The 32-year-old father of a new baby girl says that the car he received as Teacher of the Year, a GMC Envoy, is "by far the most mature thing I've ever owned." He coaches football and wrestling, but mostly he enjoys playing the sports.



Will Chesson, one of James Bell's students, introduced Bell at the April event when Bell was named the 2007-08 NC Teacher of the Year.

James Bell, NC's 2007-08 Teacher of the Year (*continued*)

The Tyner school where Bell has worked six of his nine teaching years is a Title I school in corrective action. But he doesn't obsess about his school's attempt to make Adequate Yearly Progress. He just gets very intense about each of his students. He describes "stopping the train" of teaching to talk with a student about a problem. He says that sometimes the solution is as simple as getting them a backpack or more food, sometimes it's more difficult and, "All you can do is cry with them."

Train-stopping is bold talk for eight days before end-of-grade (EOG) testing, when Bell was interviewed for this story. But that's his story and he's sticking to it. "If it's a legitimate problem, I *will* stop the train and we'll get off and we'll sit on the side of the train track and figure out what's going on. If that means the teacher assistant leads the class while I'm working with that student, then that's what it means. He's sure not going to learn anything if he's carrying that baggage."

Speaking of EOGs, he has a few thoughts on the subject. "The pressure's there, but I think it's for the wrong reasons. I think too many people think, 'Oh, they're a good teacher. Look at how their test scores are.' You can be the best teacher in the world and ...you might not get the results that year. That doesn't make you a bad teacher. ... That's what concerns me when they start talking about performance-based pay. That's just ridiculous. There are too many variables."

Lots of variables play keenly in his memories of his first year teaching.

"Every day I'd wonder, 'How am I going to get through this?' I'd have a good day and there'd be a fire alarm or ... some kid would have a knife in his backpack or ... the lesson would fail. Nothing seemed to be going right. But in the end, I want to be able to tell new teachers: Just teach. Even if you've got five minutes or if you have all 45 minutes of your block: Just teach. Don't worry about everything else. Just teach."

SOME OF THE RESOURCES USED SO FAR BY CHOWAN MIDDLE'S PLTs:

[I Read It, But Don't Get It](#), by Cris Tovani

[When Kids Can't Read](#), by Kylene Beers

[Improving Comprehension With Think Aloud Strategies](#), by Jeffrey Wilhelm

[Building Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6-12](#), by Jeff Zwiers

[Words, Words, Words](#), by Janet Allen

[Teaching Reading in the Content Areas](#), by Rachel Billmeyer

[Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4-12](#), by Kelly Gallagher

CHOWAN MIDDLE GROWS THROUGH PLTs

Teacher of the Year James Bell most recently taught at Chowan Middle School, a Title I school in corrective action. He is devoted to the school as is its principal, Tanya Turner. She returned to the school in 2006-07 when it went into corrective action. "I love this school. I had no hesitation in coming back. I knew what I was getting. I knew I was getting a great staff of people who would do anything that you asked them to do for kids," she says.

She says the school's status hasn't been a stigma because anyone who knows about the school, knows about its commitment to excellence and doing right for students.

"I think the most frustrating part is that we're a great school," Turner says. "We're in and out of the classroom every day and we know there's strong instruction going on in this school. It's just trying to figure out what is that one or two things that we need to do or add that we're not doing right now that could make the difference." One thing the school will not do is cut the arts, science or social studies. "We believe in a balanced curriculum ... Maybe if we did do that [cut non-tested course offerings for nonproficient students] then we wouldn't be in corrective action. But we believe that all of those components are important to a well-rounded education for everyone."

This year the school had a coordinator to handle the supplemental educational services program. "That's made a big difference. Any time a student doesn't show, he gets on the telephone and calls the parents," Turner says.

She sees the school's intense focus on student reading comprehension as the school's most positive initiative. Since the spring of 2001, interdisciplinary Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) have met weekly with the purpose of meeting students' instructional needs in reading better. When the program began, the Regional Education Laboratory at SERVE worked to train Chowan Middle teachers. Since then, the school has been featured in a SERVE publication on PLTs, in a NC Middle School Association monograph and in presentations across the state for its PLT work.

"I went into PLT kicking and screaming, now I'm a facilitator of a group," Bell says. "I used to wonder why you couldn't study independently or just go ask someone if you had a question. Now I see."

By the third year, the "just another meeting" perception of the program changed to teachers trusting each other, sharing their lesson failures and asking for help.

"Professional learning teams are the most powerful vehicles for change in the school," says Turner. "We believe that reading literacy skills are the foundation for everything and we believe that everybody in the school is a teacher of reading and everybody in the school is a teacher of writing."

THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability will continue its summer meetings (August 13 and 27) with the goal of presenting recommendations regarding the state's accountability system, including student testing, to the State Board of Education this fall.

The State Board of Education convened the independent Commission comprised of local educators, legislators, college and university testing/accountability experts and business leaders chaired by Dr. Sam Houston, chief executive officer and president of the Science, Math and Technology Center and a former school superintendent.

"North Carolina's accountability system was cutting edge in 1996, but many things have changed since then. We look forward to a robust review of how we measure student and school success," said State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee.

In 1996, North Carolina began a comprehensive school accountability model – the ABCs of Public Education – to set expectations for academic growth and school performance statewide. At the heart of the ABCs are the state's end-of-grade and end-of-course tests given to all students in grades 3-8 and in high school. No Child Left Behind's rigorous demands on high stakes testing systems and prescriptive requirements are often blamed for the current lack of transparency and increasing complexity of the state's assessment system.

The Commission has heard frank comment and discussion on issues related to the state's public schools' assessment program, including: testing requirements in state and federal law and potential modifications; the value of state-developed student tests versus commercially available nationally-normed tests; and potential modifications to the state's high school, middle school and elementary school accountability systems.

The Commission heard Achieve, Inc.'s findings indicating that a more transparent, easily-explained system of accountability is needed at the high school level with new kinds of measures, formative assessments, better measurement of 21st century skills, and indicators that show what students can do. A major concern was the heavily tested content at grades 9 and 10 to the omission of upper grades' content.

Achieve, Inc.'s report recommended that a high school accountability model include a few major components such as the percent graduated in four years, the percent completing a core curriculum, the percent earning a credential, and the percent matriculating into higher education without remediation. Michael Cohen, president of Achieve, told the Commission that to spend \$20 million on testing at the department level to help drive a state education system of \$7.3 billion was a tremendous return on the investment and that more investment could be justified. Achieve, Inc., an outgrowth of the 1996 National Education Summit, serves as a national clearinghouse database of academic standards.

In addition, the Commission has heard from State Superintendent June Atkinson, a standardized test publisher, and several other entities including parents and other stakeholders. Many have raised concerns about the amount of time schools devote to tests as well as anxiety issues related to high stakes testing.

Participating on the committee representing the following areas are: Chairman, Dr. Sam Houston; General Assembly, Sen. A.B. Swindell (Nash), Sen. Vernon Malone (Wake), Sen. Tom Apodaca (Henderson), Rep. Susan Fisher (Buncombe), Rep. Curtis Blackwood (Union), Rep. Rick Glazier (Cumberland), and Rep. Earline Parmon (Forsyth); Local Education Agency Leadership, Dr. Terry Holliday (Superintendent, Iredell-Statesville), Dr. Del Burns (Superintendent, Wake), Dr. Kathi Gibson (Superintendent,

Northampton), Dr. Larry Price (Superintendent, Wilson), Dr. James McCormick (Superintendent, Lee), Dr. Don Martin (Superintendent, Winston-Salem/Forsyth), Cathy Boshamer (Exceptional Children's Director, Gaston), Jeff Gorsuch (Testing Director, Buncombe); Principals, Craig Hill, (Kinston High School, Lenoir), Nancy Bartles (Independence High School, Charlotte-Mecklenburg), Tammy Bellefeuil (Brevard Elementary, Transylvania); Teachers, Brian Whitson (Salisbury High School, Rowan), Marylene Tootle, Counselor (Broad Creek Middle, Carteret), James Kurlito (T.C. Henderson Elementary, Transylvania), John Cardarelli (Jefferson Middle, Winston-Salem/Forsyth); Testing Experts from Colleges and Universities, Dr. Helen Ladd, Duke University, Dr. Terry Ackerman, University of North Carolina at Greensboro; Other Representatives, Andre Peek, IBM, Michael Brader-Araje, TruePilot, J. Keith Brown, Vice President, NC Community College System.

The meetings are open to the public and are held in the State Board meeting room. For those who cannot attend, the meetings are audio streamed. To listen in, please go online to http://www.ncpublicschools.org/sbe_meetings/07sbemedia.html and click on the appropriate audio stream link. For more information, please contact the NCDPI Communications division at 919/807-3450.

NC Proficiency Target Goals

YEAR	GRADES 3-8 (%)		GRADE 10 (%)	
	READING	MATHEMATICS	READING/LANGUAGE ARTS	MATHEMATIC
2005-06	76.7	65.8	35.4	70.8
2006-07	76.7	65.8	35.4	70.8
2007-08	84.4*	77.2	56.9	80.5
2008-09	84.4*	77.2	56.9	80.5
2009-10	84.4*	77.2	56.9	80.5
2010-11	92.2*	88.6	78.4	90.2
2011-12	92.2*	88.6	78.4	90.2
2012-13	92.2*	88.6	78.4	90.2
2013-14	100	100	100	100

Note: Calculations carry full precision until final rounding.

*Subject to change due to new test edition to be administered in 2007-08. Grades 3-8

THRESHOLD SET FOR COHORT GRADUATION RATE

Now that North Carolina is using the more rigorous cohort graduation rate, the new threshold is 80 percent, down from the previous 90 percent. Schools must show progress on the Other Academic Indicator, which is the cohort graduation rate in high schools, in order to make AYP. Any district, school (that graduates seniors) or student group is required to have a four-year cohort graduation rate of 80 percent or an increase of at least 0.1 percentage points from the previous year's graduation rate.

The cohort graduation rate, reported on the NC School Report Cards for the first time in 2006 as required by NCLB, was 68 percent statewide in 2005-06. The cohort graduation rate reflects the percentage of ninth graders who graduated from high school four years later.

For schools that have both elementary/middle grades and high school grades, the Other Academic Indicator is the cohort graduation rate if the school graduates seniors and attendance rate if the school does not. (There are special conditions that may apply when either of the grade spans has fewer than 40 students.) For school districts, both of the Other Academic Indicators are used.

STATE PILOTS SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS

Science assessments for grades 5 and 8 were pilot tested in spring 2007 and will be fully operational in Spring 2008. The assessments test the 2004 NC Standard Course of Study for science in grades 5 and 8 only. Science assessments must be conducted at least once in grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12, to meet NCLB requirements. The NC end-of-course biology test already in place meets NCLB science testing requirements at the high school level. Currently, the science tests at grades 5 and 8 are not required to be included in AYP or ABCs calculations. Biology is included in ABCs calculations.

USED ANNOUNCES 2 PERCENT RULE

Beginning for the 2006-07 school year, the US Department of Education (USED) has ruled that 2 percent of the students at the district level can use modified grade level academic achievement standards and take assessments based on alternate achievement standards and be considered proficient if they score Level III or IV on these assessments.

These students are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but are not students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

For the first time in 2006-07, the NC EXTEND2 (NCEXTEND2) tests were available for the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) courses. NCEXTEND2 is an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards.

Beginning in 2003-04, a 1 percent cap was set on the percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities within a school district who could be held to alternate achievement standards and deemed proficient through alternate assessments.

The percentage caps don't limit the number of students whose scores may be measured against alternate standards, but they do limit the number of Level III and IV scores that may be used to determine AYP. Scores measured against alternative standards that exceed set percentages are considered as nonproficient, unless an exception has been approved. The 1 and 2 percent cap rules interact in such a way that, in some districts, more than 3 percent of students may be counted as proficient measured against alternate standards.

First Semester Timeline for Supplemental Educational Services (SES) Operations

Note: Please visit the Web at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/ses/materials/> for the full year calendar with more details.

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

Send a certified (recommended) letter of intent to approved SES providers verifying who will offer services to your district.

- Develop and send parent notification letters, applications, flyers and provider information to eligible parents. (*Access the Web at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/ses/materials/> for parent notification letters, applications, flyers, etc.*)
- Develop procedures for rank ordering students if the demand for services exceeds funding. Rank order by district to ensure that you are serving the most academically needy.
- Establish a district-wide contract including a per student allocation. (*Access the Web at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/ses/materials/> for a contract template.*)
- Finalize SES enrollment forms that list eligible schools.
- Contact Child Nutrition Program allowing the disclosure of students' lunch status to determine SES eligibility. The SEA has a Memorandum of Understanding with Child Nutrition at the state level. The Memorandum allows only Title I Directors and SES specialists at the LEA level to have access to the lunch status of the students.
- Develop Learning Plan Agreement (LPA) procedures. (*Access the Web at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/ses/materials/> for LPA templates.*)
- Develop a timeline for assessments and Learning Plan Agreements to be complete so that tutoring may begin the first week of November. The timeline should reflect completion dates for the providers, LEAs and schools. ***Tutoring must begin no later than the first week of November, unless special permission is given by Dr. Lynn Warren, director of student support services. Tutoring may begin prior to November.***
- Develop a timeline for reasonable enrollment periods. You may have multiple enrollments.
- Develop a building lease agreement, if applicable.
- Develop a district-wide brochure for SES advertisement.
- Get all forms translated as needed.
- Ask schools to assign an SES site coordinator or contact person.
- Invite providers to attend school open houses or provider fairs.
- Send out media and community notices regarding SES.
- Make arrangements for transportation, if district is providing.
- Send providers contract packets with response due dates.

SEPTEMBER

- Send reminder notices to parents regarding the opportunity to enroll students in SES. ***School/district staff may provide objective assistance to parents in helping them to select an SES provider, if requested. After a provider has been chosen the use of incentives to promote academic achievement and/or attendance is allowable, but may not exceed \$25 per child.***
- Send confirmation letters to parents with tutoring day/time/location, chosen SES provider, LEA and provider/tutor contact information. (Providers may send this information.)
- Establish procedures for parents wanting to change providers.
- Send signed contracts back to providers. ***Contracts include the minimum and maximum numbers providers commit to for each school***

district. See related paragraph at the bottom of this page.

- Facilitate a meeting between providers and principals.
- Send providers their list of verified, eligible students.
- Providers and schools begin working on Learning Plan Agreements.
- Contact your local Child Nutrition contact about snack availability.

OCTOBER

- Providers should receive the school's portion of the students' Learning Plan Agreement.
- Providers should be completing students' pre-assessments and Learning Plan Agreements.
- Parent Nights or some designated time should be scheduled for parents to have the opportunity to have input on the Learning Plan Agreements.

NOVEMBER

- Schools and providers should be working together to ensure that all Learning Plan Agreements are signed within 30 days of the start date of tutoring.
- Students must have a Learning Plan Agreement before tutoring may begin.
- Tutoring may begin without the parent's signature on the Learning Plan Agreement.
- Providers submit invoices following procedures per LEA instructions.
- Providers send all required paperwork to the district's Title I office.
- Monitoring of tutoring may begin.

DECEMBER

- SES instruction and monitoring is ongoing.
- Progress reports are sent home as specified in the contract.
- Work with providers to conduct parent orientation meetings and give parents the opportunity to participate in the development of their child's learning plan.
- District verifies attendance rosters.
- There is ongoing communication among all parties involved in the SES process.

PROVIDER MINIMUMS AND MAXIMUMS 2007-2008

A provider must be able to deliver supplemental educational services to school districts in which the provider has indicated they are willing to provide services. If a state-approved provider withdraws from offering services to students in a school district in which it is approved and in which it has signed either a contract to provide services or a letter of intent and the minimums per site set by the provider have been met, the school district must report the provider to the NC Department of Public Instruction. The provider shall be immediately removed from the state-approved list for the current school year for that school district. Upon the second such withdrawal in any school district, the provider shall be ineligible to provide services in the state for the 2007-2008 academic year.



THE LAW: CHOICE AND PARENT NOTIFICATION

Note: Please visit the Web at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/> for parent notification templates that meet federal requirements.

July 21, 2006, non-regulatory guidance B-6. When the LEA identifies a school for improvement, what information must it provide to parents?

When one of its schools is identified for improvement, the LEA must promptly provide the following information to the parents of each child enrolled in the school:

- An explanation of what the identification means and how the school their child attends compares to other elementary and secondary schools served by the LEA and the SEA in terms of the academic achievement of its students;
- The reason(s) for the school being identified for improvement, such as insufficient participation in assessments or one or more subgroups not meeting academic proficiency targets;
- An explanation of how parents can become involved in addressing the academic issues that led to identification; and,
- An explanation of the parents' option to transfer their child to another school in the LEA that has not been identified for improvement.

The notification must provide parents with enough relevant information to help them decide what school is best for their child and be made well before the beginning of the school year in which this option will be available, so that if parents choose to do so, they have sufficient time to exercise their choice option prior to the beginning of the school year. *At a minimum*, the LEA must inform parents about the academic achievement level of students at the school or schools to which their child may transfer, but it may also choose to include other information, such as a description of special academic programs, facilities, before-or-after school programs, the professional qualifications of teachers in the core academic subjects, or parent involvement opportunities. The

LEA must also explain to parents that it will provide their child with transportation to the schools that the LEA identifies as options, subject to certain cost limitations. §200.37 Additional information on public school choice is available in the Department of Education's *Public School Choice Non-Regulatory Guidance* accessible online at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolchoiceguid.doc>.

July 21, 2006 non-regulatory guidance B-8. What guidelines should SEAs, LEAs, or schools follow when communicating with parents and the public during the school improvement process?

Meaningful parental involvement is one of the cornerstones of the reform initiatives contained in NCLB. Therefore, it is essential that SEAs, LEAs, or schools communicate with parents throughout the school improvement process and welcome them as key partners in addressing the academic issues that led to the school being identified for improvement. Clarity and timeliness of information are essential. The State, LEA, or school must ensure that required information is provided in an understandable and uniform format (including alternative formats upon request), regardless of the method or media used. To the extent practicable, written communication must be in a language parents can understand, with special attention given to parents of migratory and limited English proficient students. If that is not practicable, the information must be provided in oral translations for parents with limited English proficiency.

The SEA, LEA, or school must provide information to parents directly, through regular mail or by e-mail. However, if an SEA does not have access to individual student addresses, it may distribute information through the LEA or school. The same information must also be disseminated through broader means of communication, such as the Internet, the media, and through public agencies serving students and their families.



THE LAW: CHOICE AND STUDENTS NOT YET ATTENDING A SCHOOL

Feb. 6, 2004, non-regulatory draft guidance C-2: Are students who plan to attend, but are not yet “enrolled” in, a school eligible to take advantage of the Title I choice provisions?

The Title I statute requires that choice be made available to all students enrolled in schools identified for improvement (or corrective action or restructuring), but does not define “enrollment.” Therefore, the answer to this question depends on how States and LEAs define that term and how they determine

when a student is officially enrolled in a school. The Department believes, however, that students planning to enter a school for the first time, such as entering kindergartners, or students moving from elementary to middle school, or those who have just moved into the school attendance area served by a Title I school, should generally have the same opportunity to exercise choice as students previously enrolled in a school.

Mapping the Road to Exit School Improvement Institute Part 2

The second sequence of the “Mapping the Road to Exit School Improvement Institute” will be held in three locations across the state in September. (See calendar.)

Participants will learn about successful practices in addressing the continuum of interventions. Strategy-based sessions will focus on parent involvement, reading and math instruction and students with disabilities. Lunch will feature a keynote speaker who is experienced in leading schools and districts in their improvement techniques.

In work sessions, school teams will have an opportunity to review their school improvement plans and to discuss best practices in regard to achievement gaps. Education consultants from the NC Department of Public Instruction will be available for guidance during this session.

A school panel consisting of administrators and teachers will share effective processes and strategies that assisted in moving their schools out of school improvement and answer questions from Institute participants.

The third sequence of the Institute will be in Spring 2008.

NCACE Conference

The October North Carolina Association of Compensatory Educators (NCACE) state conference will focus on student achievement, parent involvement and Title I best practices. Featured speakers include Dr. Paul Slocumb on poverty, Quality Quinn on reading and literacy, and Dr. Joyce Epstein on family and community involvement. Breakout sessions will also support the focus areas. For more information, visit the conference website at: http://www.wilson.k12.nc.us/education/components/docmgr/default.php?sectiondetailid=33375&sc_id=1183992983.

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6307 Mail Service Center :: Raleigh, NC 27699-6307
Telephone 919-807-3435 :: Fax 919-807-3767

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UPCOMING MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

- **New Title I Directors' Workshop**, Clarion Hotel, Raleigh, Aug. 2-3, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Contact Donna Brown at 919-807-3959, dbrown@dpi.state.nc.us or George Hancock at 910-521-5614, ghancock@dpi.state.nc.us.
- **Committee of Practitioners meeting**, NC Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, Aug. 23, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Title I Region 3 meeting**, Davidson County, Aug. 30.
- **Mapping the Road to School Improvement (Part 2)**, Greenville Hilton, Greenville, Sept. 12., 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Contact Yvette Richardson at 919-807-3962, yrichardson@dpi.state.nc.us or Rosemary Smith at 828-756-4342, rsmith@dpi.state.nc.us.
- **Title I Region 2 meeting**, New Hanover County, Sept. 14.
- **Mapping the Road to School Improvement (Part 2)**, McKimmon Center, NC State University, Raleigh, Sept. 17, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Contact Yvette Richardson at 919-807-3962, yrichardson@dpi.state.nc.us or Rosemary Smith at 828-756-4342, rsmith@dpi.state.nc.us.
- **Mapping the Road to School Improvement (Part 2)**, Twin City Quarter Marriott, Winston-Salem, Sept. 18, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Contact Yvette Richardson at 919-807-3962, yrichardson@dpi.state.nc.us or Rosemary Smith at 828-756-4342, rsmith@dpi.state.nc.us.
- **Committee of Practitioners meeting**, NC Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, Sept. 20, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Title I Region 1 meeting**, Martin County, Sept. 28.
- **NC Association of Compensatory Educators Conference (NCACE)**, Embassy Suites, Greensboro, Oct. 24-26. Contact Thomas Evans at 252-399-7700 or thomas.evans@mail.wilson.k12.nc.us.
- **Title I Regional Caucus and Committee of Practitioners meetings (at NCACE)**, Embassy Suites, Greensboro, Oct. 24.
- **Title I Region 2 meeting**, Moore County, Nov. 14.
- **Schoolwide/Targeted Institutes**, East/West locations to be announced, Nov. 27-28. Contact Juanita Morrison at 919-807-3963, jmorrison@dpi.state.nc.us or George Hancock, 910-521-5614, ghancock@dpi.state.nc.us or Rosemary Smith at 828-756-4342, rsmith@dpi.state.nc.us.
- **Committee of Practitioners meeting**, NC Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, Nov. 29, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Title I Region 1 meeting**, Pasquotank County, Dec. 7.
- **Title I Region 4 meeting**, Asheville (WRESA), Dec. 13.
- **Committee of Practitioners meeting**, NC Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, Dec. 20, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Committee of Practitioners meeting**, NC Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, Jan. 24, 2008, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Committee of Practitioners meeting**, NC Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, Feb. 21, 2008, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- **Schoolwide/Targeted Institutes**, East/West locations to be announced, March 6, 2008.

For the monitoring schedule, please access the Web at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/comped/monitoring/200709monitoringschedule.xls>.