



# NCLB NEWS

FEBRUARY 2009

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## NCDPI Develops Statewide System of Support

The NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has developed a Statewide System of Support (SSOS) to help struggling schools and districts improve student achievement. By combining the efforts and services of the Program Monitoring and Support Division (formerly called the Compensatory Education Section) and the District and School Transformation Division, SSOS is supporting 165 schools and six school districts in 2008-09. (More on the reorganized Program Monitoring and Support Division is available in the Nov. 2008 edition of *NC NCLB News*.)

Schools identified for support include low-performing schools (schools with performance composites below 50 percent and not meeting ABCs expected growth expectations), middle and high schools with performance composites below 60 percent, and schools in corrective action or a higher-level sanction under NCLB.

Districts selected for support are those identified as having high need and limited internal capacity to assist school improvement (Halifax, Hertford, Bertie, Richmond, Columbus and Lexington) and districts identified for corrective action under NCLB.

Measurable goals and objectives for schools receiving assistance include:

- An increase in the percentage of NCLB targets met
- Progress in making growth
- An increase in the percentage of students scoring at achievement Level III and IV (proficiency)

Other support objectives are:

- Assisting the school in making data-driven decisions to improve student achievement

- Increasing the school's capacity to achieve student academic growth over time for all student subgroups
- Enhancing the staff's knowledge and delivery of best practices
- Building the skills of teachers and administrators

These objectives are met using a variety of services including regional roundtables' comprehensive support, professional development and coaching for leadership teams, instructional coaching, comprehensive needs assessments, school improvement planning, and reform/redesign model implementation. The regional roundtables, comprised of cross-functional NCDPI consultants working with schools and districts, meet monthly to coordinate resources such as professional development, to develop support strategies, and to monitor progress.

NCDPI also has helped to train and place 200 literacy coaches in middle schools across the state.

The SSOS is a support model that meets the state assistance referenced in G.S. 115C-12(25) and also meets the federal No Child Left Behind mandate for support. Unlike the assistance teams that served 106 low-performing schools from 1997 to 2007, the SSOS supports schools for three years, focuses on professional development provided directly to teachers, principals, and central office staff, and includes central office staff in the planning process for the schools they serve. The new model began in 2007 as the Framework for Comprehensive Support for Districts and Schools. (A related feature is available in the Feb. 2008 edition of *NC NCLB News*.)

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For more information about this newsletter or to obtain more copies, please contact NC Department of Public Instruction Director of Communications and Information Vanessa Jeter at 919.807.3469 or [vjeter@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:vjeter@dpi.state.nc.us). For story ideas or questions you would like to see answered in the newsletter, please contact NCLB Information Specialist Charlotte Duren at 919.218.9239 or [cduren@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:cduren@dpi.state.nc.us). The *NC NCLB News* is distributed to superintendents, Title I directors and public information officers and posted on the Web quarterly.

## 'Turnaround' High Schools Show Improvements

Analyses of 2007-08 school year data show that 54 (82 percent) of the 66 high schools that received resources, training and support from the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) as a part of the Governor's High School Turnaround Initiative increased their performance composite scores. (Please see the related chart for data on the 54 schools.) Fifty-two of the schools also reported an increase in graduation rates. Data from the turnaround high schools was released at the January meeting of the NC State Board of Education (SBE).

The High School Turnaround Initiative began in 2005 when the SBE and NCDPI began to assist high schools with below-60 percent student proficiency performance composites. With support from the General Assembly and a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 35 high schools began receiving assistance in 2006-07 as a part of a three-year cycle. The next year, the program expanded to 31 additional high schools, as well as 57 middle and elementary schools.

Turnaround high schools are required to develop a framework for immediate action and choose or create a model of school reform or redesign such as the high school models developed by the NC New Schools Project. In addition, NCDPI provides professional development to school leadership teams and central office staff; leadership coaching for principals; instructional coaching for teachers; and guidance in planning and implementing a school improvement plan.

NCDPI staff have partnered with the UNC Center for School Leadership Development and the Kenan-Flagler School of Business, the North Carolina Middle School Association, and other groups to provide assessment visits, local guidance and professional development for school districts and high schools as a part of the Turnaround Initiative.



LEA	Schools	Change in Composite	Performance Composite 2007-08	Performance Composite 2006-07
Brunswick	North Brunswick High	17.6	66.9	49.3
Guilford	Academy at High Point Central	17.2	32.7	15.5
Mecklenburg	West Charlotte High	14.9	61.0	46.1
Columbus	West Columbus High	14.6	64.6	50.0
Columbus	East Columbus High	14.3	57.3	43.0
Perquimans	Perquimans County High	14.1	71.9	57.8
Richmond	Richmond Senior High	13.9	63.9	50.1
Bladen	East Bladen High	13.7	54.9	41.2
Alamance	Alamance-Burlington Middle College	13.6	37.4	23.8
Lexington City	Lexington Senior High	13.1	53.3	40.2
Guilford	Middle College Bennett	12.6	53.3	40.7
Alamance	Hugh M Cummings High	11.5	54.9	43.4
Robeson	South Robeson High	11.5	59.6	48.1
Gaston	North Gaston High	10.5	66.3	55.8
Franklin	Louisburg High	10.3	62.9	52.6
Hertford	Hertford County High	10.3	45.7	35.4
Hoke	Hoke County High	10.1	56.5	46.4
Wayne	Goldsboro High	9.7	52.6	42.9
Vance	Northern Vance High	9.4	56.5	47.1
Pasquotank	Pasquotank County High	9.3	59.3	50.0
Mecklenburg	E E Waddell High	9.1	57.3	48.2
Martin	Roanoke High	9.0	57.3	48.3
Rockingham	Reidsville High	8.7	55.9	47.2
Robeson	Purnell Swett High	8.6	58.6	50.0
Forsyth	Parkland High	8.2	50.8	42.6
Duplin	James Kenan High	8.1	46.6	38.5
Vance	Southern Vance High	8.1	51.3	43.2
Wilson	Beddingfield High	7.9	58.0	50.1
Cumberland	Douglas Byrd High	7.5	47.9	40.4
Franklin	Bunn High	7.3	64.9	57.6
Robeson	Red Springs High	7.0	49.4	42.4
Guilford	Middle College NC A&T	7.1	41.6	34.5
Guilford	Dudley High	6.8	51.3	44.5
Cumberland	Gray's Creek High School	6.6	63.2	56.6
Bladen	West Bladen High	6.5	55.0	48.5
Mecklenburg	Harding University High	6.5	68.7	62.2
Caswell	Bartlett Yancey High	6.5	54.9	48.4
Jones	Jones Senior High	6.2	64.0	57.8
Mecklenburg	West Mecklenburg High	6.1	58.3	52.2
Rowan	North Rowan High	5.8	57.4	51.6
Northampton	Northampton High-East	5.8	50.0	44.2
Franklin	Franklinton High	5.0	66.4	61.4
Harnett	Overhills High School	4.6	60.9	56.3
Guilford	Ben L Smith High	4.2	39.7	35.5
Washington	Plymouth High	3.7	45.9	42.2
Gaston	Bessemer City High	3.6	50.5	46.9
Halifax	Northwest Halifax High	3.5	34.3	30.9
Cumberland	Westover High	2.9	45.2	42.3
Guilford	Northeast Guilford High	1.5	45.0	43.5
Mecklenburg	Phillip O Berry Academy	1.2	58.6	57.4
Cumberland	Pine Forest High	1.1	52.1	51.0
Cumberland	E E Smith High	0.6	50.0	49.4
Weldon City	Weldon High	0.3	42.4	42.1
Gaston	Hunter Huss High	0.1	46.1	46.0

# NC Schools, Districts Show Need for New Levels of Support

The Statewide System of Support (SSOS) is designed to help struggling schools and districts improve student achievement, an increasing challenge as standards are raised and sanctions for Title I School Improvement schools deepen.

The state's 2008 increase in reading standards came on the heels of increased math standards in 2006. "The 2008 achievement information looks similar to the results of the first year of the ABCs in 1996-97," says State Superintendent June Atkinson. "Back then, we knew that our teachers and students would rise to that challenge and they did. That is why we know that they will rise to the challenges presented by the new standards that are in place today. What is important in North Carolina is that we have new goals and new levels of support to help our schools move students forward."

"We believe that raising standards is the right thing to do on behalf of North Carolina students," says State Board of Education Chairman Howard Lee. "We know that our students need to learn at higher levels in order to be successful, particularly in today's workplace. To expect basic competency or less is not responsible."

For 2008, 52.6 percent of students scored at or above the proficient level on both reading and math assessments in grades 3-8. Reading performance ranged from 52.5 percent proficient at the 7th grade to 60.9 percent proficient for 4th and 6th grades. Math performance ranged from 68.6 percent proficient at the 7th grade to 74.8 percent proficient for the 3rd grade.

The percentage of schools identified as low performing or priority has more than doubled in the past two years, demonstrating the

need for school support to raise student achievement. In the ABCs categories of school designations, priority schools and low-performing schools are the two bottom achieving categories, which now make up a third of the state's schools. Priority schools are schools with less than 50 percent of their students' test scores at the proficient level or better and making expected or high growth. Priority schools are identified also if they have between 50 and 59 percent of their students' test scores at the proficient level or better regardless of growth. Low-performing schools are identified if they do not make expected growth and have less than 50 percent of student scores at the proficient level or better.

In 2008, 69 percent (1,664 schools) did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), up from 55 percent the previous year. Over one fifth of the state's schools, 551 schools, entered into or continued in Title I School Improvement. For the first time, seven of the state's schools entered Year 6 of sanctions, the restructuring phase.

Sixty-two districts are in Title I District Improvement. (This number was incorrectly reported as 102 in the Nov. 2008 edition of *NC NCLB News*.) None of the state's 115 districts made AYP. Of the 62 districts in Improvement, 40 are in corrective action. Districts that do not make all targets in any one of the three grade spans in the same subject that identified them for Improvement for two additional years after entering Improvement go into corrective action. Staff from districts in corrective action will receive self assessment training in using the Cambridge Assessment model in Summer 2009.

	Priority schools (number/percentage)	Low-performing schools (number/percentage)	Total schools (number/percentage) from these two categories
2007-08	701 schools/29%	101 schools/4.2%	802 schools/33.2%
2006-07	354 schools/14.7%	45 schools/1.87%	399 schools/16.57%
2005-06	346 schools/14.6%	0	346 schools/14.6%

## RETEST RESULTS WILL BE ALLOWED

At its January 2009 meeting, the NC State Board of Education (SBE) approved using the first retest results in the calculation of performance composites of the ABCs and (pending US Department of Education approval) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in grades 3 through 8 for the 2008-09 school year and adding first retest results for all 10 end-of-course assessments in the 2009-10 school year.

Board members, in approving this change, noted that they hoped that including retest results would be less critical in the future as the results of the Accountability and Curriculum Reform Efforts (ACRE) project are implemented. (More information on the ACRE project is available in the Nov. 2008 edition of *NC NCLB News*.) As part of the ACRE project, the New Accountability Committee convened in December 2008 and began its discussions of options in the design for a new state accountability system for public schools. A proposal will be presented to the SBE in September.)

All students who do not score Achievement Level III (proficient) or higher on the initial test administration may retake the test. The NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) will use the higher of the two scores from the student in making the determinations. The use of the standard error of measurement to exclude students from being retested has been eliminated by the SBE and the scores from the schools and districts must be submitted to NCDPI by July 1.



# NCDPI Develops Guide to Help in School Improvement Planning

Both Title I schools and non-Title I schools must develop school improvement plans after not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the same subject (math or reading/language arts) for two years in a row. That means that this year alone, there are over 1,500 schools developing or revising school improvement plans. Now there's a resource to help with that process.

The *North Carolina School Improvement Planning Implementation Guide*, available electronically in the near future, presents the legal foundations of school and district improvement planning in North Carolina, introduces guiding principles and an aligned planning model for schools recommended by the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), and provides an online school improvement plan template.

This *Guide* resulted from feedback offered by several school districts across North Carolina that identified problems with the school improvement planning process, such as a lack of guidance from NCDPI, the volume of planning necessary at the school and district level, and the frequent duplication of effort.

To address these problems, the LEA/Central Office Council, led by Council Director Rob Hines, began work in May 2008 on the *Guide* and an associated template. As a cross-functional body made up of internal NCDPI staff, the LEA Council operates as an internal consultancy and think tank charged with addressing issues concerning school districts. (The three-council system [Pre-K/Elementary, Middle/High School and LEA] was an important change in the agency's reorganization begun in 2007 to enable greater alignment and increased services to districts and schools. More information is in the Nov. 2008 edition of *NC NCLB News*.) LEA Council personnel met with many district, school, and NCDPI representatives to understand current practices and to glean recommendations for a comprehensive approach to school improvement planning.

Originally focused on plan consolidation, the LEA Council reviewed an array of improvement plans from schools across the state, and found a wide disparity in plan format and content. Plan content varied from a short, focused set of goals and strategies to dozens and dozens of pages listing an assortment of programs selected for reasons unclear.

As a student- and school-focused service organization, the LEA Council expanded its view to include not only plan consolidation, but also a review of current school improvement planning best practices. The resulting *Guide* recommends a four-phase Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) school improvement planning model (alternatively known as a Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle, a Deming cycle, or a Shewhart, cycle). This approach allows school personnel to develop plans based on data analysis (Plan), to implement solutions (Do), to understand the results or impact (Check), and to make adjustments based upon the outcomes of the strategy implementation (Act).

"We're by no means mandating one particular plan or approach or model," says Hines. "We simply wanted to provide a mechanism that would help schools and districts interested in re-focusing their planning efforts. This *Guide* and model can help a school

community understand its school's "big picture" and put that understanding to effective use in identifying goals and strategies that will improve overall student and school performance. This *Guide* is a work in progress and we welcome comments and improvement suggestions."

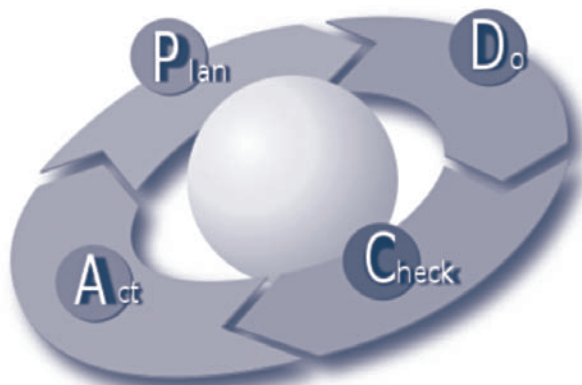


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To understand the school, NCDPI recommends using the NCDPI District and School Transformation Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA). This procedure, based upon the Cambridge Assessment model, includes self assessment, data analysis, and instructional review. The model's primary strengths are the objectivity provided by reviewers not directly connected to the school, the focus on student learning rather than on the mechanics of how teachers are teaching, and the cause-and-effect style used to document the school environment.

More information about the Cambridge Assessment model is available on the Web at [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/ca/](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/ca/). Additional material on North Carolina's customized model of the Cambridge Assessment is in the *Guide's* appendix.

## USED CONDUCTS PEER REVIEW

The US Department of Education (USED) is conducting a peer review of the following NC assessments during the 2008-09 school year:

- End-of-grade (EOG) Reading grades 3-8;
- EOG Science grades 5, 8;
- End-of-course Biology;
- NCEXTEND2 Reading and Math grades 3-8, Science grades 5, 8;
- NCEXTEND2 Occupational Course of Study (OCS) Occupational Math, Occupational English I, Life Skills Science, and Writing grade 10; and
- NCEXTEND1 Reading and Math grades 3-8, 10, and Science grades 5, 8, 10.

Some changes in the assessments or how data from these assessments can be used for school accountability under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) may result from the peer review findings.

# Districts Must Meet State and Federal Requirements

In January 2009 after the NC State Board of Education approved North Carolina Title I District Improvement designations, State Superintendent June Atkinson sent an email to 102 of the state's superintendents to remind them about state and federal requirements as a result of school and district performance. The email reminders outlined what is necessary for schools and districts to remain in compliance regarding school improvement planning, district improvement planning and professional development, parent notifications, and steps for low-performing schools. A separate letter to local board chairpersons (with a copy to superintendents) was sent to districts with a certain number of low-performing schools that must file a copy of the local

superintendent's annual evaluation at the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). Deadlines referred to in the reminders are:

- Feb. 3: Due date for districts in Title I District Improvement to send parent notifications; and
- April 15: Due date for districts to submit District Improvement plans (if applicable), low-performing school improvement plans, and improvement plans for non-Title I schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years in the same subject. (Title I directors received information from NCDPI's Title I office regarding planning for Title I schools.)

## Districts in Improvement Must Send Parent Notifications

Here are some questions and answers, also available on the Web at [www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/district/faqs/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/district/faqs/), regarding parent notification for districts in Improvement. Fact sheets to help in communicating with parents are available at [www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/district/facts/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/district/facts/).

**Do the parent notification letters have to be mailed?** No. The letters do not have to be mailed via the US Postal Service. Districts must document how they communicated their Improvement status to parents and have that documentation available when monitored.

**When is the deadline for mailing or otherwise distributing the parent notification letters?** Letters must be sent/mailed no later than Feb. 3, 2009.

**Will LEAs be reimbursed for postage and copying?** Yes. To obtain reimbursement, a district must keep its receipts for postage and printing, and itemize these expenditures on a confirmation form that is printed on LEA letterhead and submitted to Donna Brown, Program Monitoring, NCDPI, 6351 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6351 or faxed at 919-807-3968. Receipts should be mailed by Feb. 27, 2009.

**Will LEAs be reimbursed for labor if they use a mailing service?** No. NCDPI will reimburse LEAs' postage and printing costs, but not handling or labor charges associated with the mailings.

**Should the letter be printed on the LEA's letterhead or the NCDPI's letterhead?** The state agency has the responsibility for notifying the students in an LEA that enters District Improvement. Please use the letter on state agency letterhead emailed to the superintendent of each district in Title I District Improvement from Rebecca Garland, academic chief officer and associate superintendent, NCDPI.

**Can LEAs change the letter that was sent to the superintendent?** As written, the Jan. 13, 2009, letter emailed to each superintendent in Title I District Improvement meets specific legal requirements under NCLB [section 1116(a)(6)]. Therefore, please do not change the content except to customize the letter by completing the highlighted areas with the correct information and by adding the signature of the LEA's superintendent.

**What if the LEA broadcasts on the local cable network? Isn't that enough?** No. It may be a good way to disseminate the information in addition to the mailing, but it is not enough in and of itself.

**Must the district send the letter to every student, or just those in Title I programs or schools?** The letters must be sent to the parents of all students served by the district.

**What if there are siblings within a family? Do we have to send a letter for each child?** It is reasonable to send only one letter per family in the instances where several siblings have the same mailing address.

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON

The 1003(g) School Improvement (PRC 117) funds will be available soon for 76 schools that qualify for 2008-09. Schools are identified as those with the greatest need and strongest commitment to improvement. The greatest need is defined as those schools in corrective action or deeper sanction. The strongest commitment is determined by schools that make progress toward exiting Title I Improvement or increase the percentage of targets met from the previous year. Once school allocations are determined, districts will be notified and provided with the application.

Three schools that received the funds for 2007-08 exited Improvement status altogether. They are: Bethel Elementary, Pitt

County Schools; China Grove Elementary, Rowan-Salisbury Schools; and Carver Elementary, Wayne County Public Schools.

Further clarification from the US Department of Education verifies that an LEA may carry over unused section 1003(g) funds from a school that is no longer in Improvement and use them for school improvement activities in Title I schools that are in Improvement. However, if the LEA has no other schools in Improvement, then the unused funds must go back to the State and the LEA cannot carry over those funds. The unused funds that came back to the State from the LEA would then be available to reallocate to other LEAs in accordance with section 1003(d).

# USED Issues New Title I Regulations

The US Department of Education (USED) issued new final regulations for Title I under NCLB on Oct. 29, 2008. Some of the changes impacting accountability, communication, and sanction implementation are outlined below and on page 7. The new Title I regulations are available on the Web at [www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/reg/title1/fedregister.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/reg/title1/fedregister.html).

## ACCOUNTABILITY

### Minimum Subgroup Size and Inclusion of Students in Accountability

Each state must explain in its Title I Accountability Workbook how its minimum student subgroup size (North Carolina's is 40, although there is a wide range across the country.) and other components of its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) definition (e.g., confidence intervals, performance indexes, definition of "full academic year") interact to provide statistically reliable information while ensuring the maximum inclusion of all students and student subgroups in AYP determinations. (North Carolina's current and past Workbooks are available on the Web at [www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/federal/consolidated/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/federal/consolidated/).)

### NCLB Graduation Rates

States must use a four-year adjusted cohort high school graduation rate starting in 2010-11. New graduation rate goals for reporting and calculating AYP may be set. Non-regulatory guidance pertaining to the new graduation rate regulations is available on the Web at [www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/hsgrguidance.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/hsgrguidance.pdf).

## COMMUNICATION

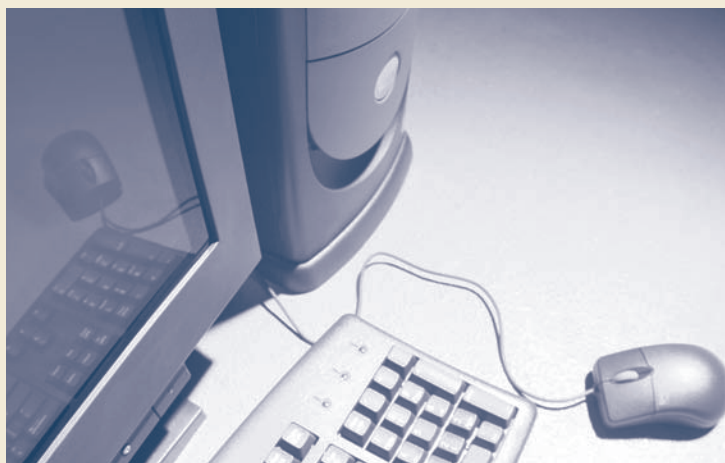
### School Choice Notification

Districts must notify parents of their option to transfer their child and their available school choices no later than 14 days before the start of the school year.

### Posting Information About Choice, SES on District Web Sites

Districts must prominently display on their Web sites:

- The number of students who were eligible for and who participated in choice and Supplementary Educational



Services (SES) (starting with data from 2007-08 and for each subsequent year)

- A list of the choice schools for the current school year
- A list of SES providers approved to serve the district and the locations where services are provided for the current school year

### Posting Information About Choice, SES on the State Web Site

States must post on their Web site:

- The amount of funds each district must spend on choice-related transportation, SES, and parent outreach
- The maximum per-pupil amount available for SES

### Including NAEP Data on State and District Report Cards

States and districts must report the most recent state-level National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results on reading and math tests and the participation rates for limited English proficient and students with disabilities on the same public report card they use to report state assessments. For state report cards, the data must be disaggregated by each student subgroup.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF SANCTIONS

Non-regulatory guidance, including new questions and answers pertaining to recently-released public school choice and SES provisions, is available on the Web at [www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/](http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/)



## USED Issues New Title I Regulations CONTINUED

guid/schoolchoiceguid.doc/ and [www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/suppsvcsguid.doc](http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/suppsvcsguid.doc). In addition, the USED has developed a guidebook, *Giving Parents Options: Strategies for Informing Parents and Implementing Public School Choice and SES Under No Child Left Behind*, available at [www.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/options/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/admins/comm/choice/options/index.html). Key regulations impacting sanctions, in addition to those outlined above under “Communication,” are listed below.

### State Responsibilities for SES

States must make certain considerations, outlined in detail by the USED, regarding the processes of SES provider approval, renewal, withdrawal, and monitoring for effectiveness.

States must indicate on their SES providers list those providers who are able to serve limited English proficient students and students with disabilities. State must develop, implement, and publicly report the standards and techniques used to monitor how districts implement the SES requirements.

### Costs for Parent Outreach for Choice and SES

Districts are allowed to count the costs of providing targeted parent outreach and assistance toward meeting the obligation of spending an amount equal to 20 percent of the district’s Title I, Part A funding on choice-related transportation and SES. The actual amount that may be counted is capped at 1 percent of the 20 percent obligation.

### Maximizing Funds for School Choice and SES

Unspent choice and SES funds may be reallocated for other purposes *after* a district supplies satisfactory evidence to the state that it has demonstrated success in: 1) partnering with community-based organizations to inform students and parents of their

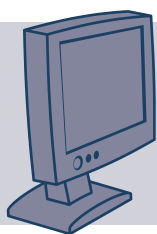
choice and SES options; 2) ensuring students and their parents have had a genuine opportunity to sign up for school transfers or to obtain SES through a variety of measures as outlined by the USED including providing a minimum of two enrollment periods, at separate points during the school year, for eligible students to sign up to receive SES); and 3) ensuring that providers are given access to school facilities on the same terms as other outside groups.

### Restructuring

School restructuring must include a significant change in the governance of a school. Interventions implemented as part of a school’s restructuring plan must be significantly more rigorous and comprehensive than the corrective actions that the school implemented after it was identified as in need of improvement, unless the school has begun to implement one of the restructuring options as a corrective action.

- Districts must implement interventions that address the reasons why a school is in the restructuring phase.
- The restructuring option of replacing all or most of the school staff may include replacing the principal; however, replacing the principal alone is not sufficient to constitute restructuring.
- The “other” option to restructure a school’s governance may include replacing the principal so long as this change is part of a broader reform effort.

*Note: There may be legislation passed allowing the new administration to dispute “last minute” regulations set by an outgoing administration. If passed, such legislation could have an impact on the recent rules and interpretations of Titles I and III. More information on the stance and particulars of the regulations will be reported in the next edition of NC NCLB News.*



## PROGRAM MONITORING WEB SITE MOVES

Please note that the url for the Program Monitoring Section Web site is now [www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/). The site can be accessed also via the NCDPI home page at [www.ncpublicschools.org/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/). Use the “Program Areas” drop-down menu to access the Program Monitoring link.

## SBE Requests Accountability Amendments

In January, the NC State Board of Education (SBE) requested the US Department of Education’s approval for the following amendments to the Accountability Workbook for 2008-09:

**Students with Disabilities Who Exit the Program** – The SBE wants to apply the same process to students with disabilities who are no longer classified as such for the last two years that is used for incorporating students who are no longer limited English proficient students in the calculations for determining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The inclusion of these students in the AYP calculations will occur only in those instances where the school or district already has an existing subgroup that has not made AYP.

**Retesting Results in Grades 3-8** – Please see related story, “Retest Results Will Be Allowed,” on page 3.

**Redundancy in End-of-Course (EOC) and End-of-Grade (EOG) Testing** – Allowing EOC scores to count as EOG scores in the middle grades would eliminate the need for students to be tested with two different tests in the same grade level within the same content area. For example, students in the 8th grade who take Algebra I would take the Algebra I EOC assessment and not have to take the 8th grade math EOG. Once these students are in the 10th grade, their Geometry or Algebra II EOC score would count as the high school math indicator for determining AYP. This prevents the same test score from being used in two grade levels (i.e., Algebra I counting in the 8th grade and then as a banked score when the student is in the 10th grade).

# PIRC Offers Resources for Spanish-Speaking Families

To enable Spanish-speaking families to better support the academic achievement of their children, the Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) has developed free resources for districts and schools to use at open houses, workshops, or for school's parent resource centers. Parent materials on teaching children to read and NCLB-related issues are available in Spanish.

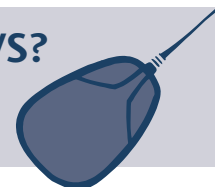
In addition, PIRC has developed a series of approximately one-hour workshops for Spanish-speaking families. Workshops include: No Child Left Behind, Helping Your Child Become a Good Reader, Effective School Partnerships, Parent/Teacher Conferences, Involving Dads, Discipline, Middle Mania, Cultural Diversity, Self Esteem, EOG

Testing, Violence Prevention, How to Succeed in School, Summer Activities, and Parent Involvement.

Booklets, handouts, and materials can be ordered by emailing Paula Hutchison at [phutchison@ecacmail.org](mailto:phutchison@ecacmail.org). Workshops can be scheduled by Hutchison at 1.800.962.6817 extension 22. More information about these resources and services is available on the Web at [www.ecac-parentcenter.org/education/pirc.htm](http://www.ecac-parentcenter.org/education/pirc.htm).

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## USED GUIDANCE AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Title I School Improvement schools must revise their school improvement plans each year they remain in Improvement. In addition, according to North Carolina state statute G.S. §115C-105.37, districts must submit plans for addressing the needs of each of their low-performing schools. Below is an excerpt of some of the guidelines for school improvement planning as found in the document, LEA and School Improvement Non-Regulatory Guidance, July 21, 2006, available on the Web at [www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolimprovementguid.pdf](http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolimprovementguid.pdf). Some of the North Carolina state statutes specifying legal requirements for school improvement planning are noted next to related federal regulations.

**C-1. What must the school do when it is identified for improvement?** The process of school improvement begins with the school developing a required two-year plan that addresses the academic issues that caused it to be identified for school improvement. The school may develop a new plan or revise an existing one, but in either case it must be completed no later than three months after the school has been identified. §200.41

**C-2. What is the purpose of the school improvement plan?** The purpose of the school improvement plan is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school, so that greater numbers of students achieve proficiency in the core academic subjects of reading and mathematics. The school improvement plan provides a framework for analyzing problems, identifying underlying causes, and addressing instructional issues in a school that has not made sufficient progress in student achievement.

**C-3. What topics must the plan address? [G.S. §115C-105.27] [G.S. §115C-105.35]** Together, the components of the school improvement plan should embody a design that is comprehensive, highly structured, specific, and focused primarily on the school's instructional program. Specifically, the plan must:

- Incorporate strategies based on scientifically-based research that will strengthen the core academic subjects in the school and address the specific academic issues that caused the school to be identified for school improvement;
- Adopt policies and practices concerning the school's core academic subjects that have the greatest likelihood of ensuring that all groups of students specified in section 1111 (b)(2)(C)(v) and enrolled in the school will meet the State's proficiency level of achievement;
- Directly address the academic achievement problem that caused the school to be identified for school improvement;
- Establish specific, annual, measurable objectives for continuous and substantial progress by each group of students specified in section 1111 (b)(2)(C)(v) and enrolled in the school;
- Specify the implementation responsibilities of the school, the LEA, and the SEA serving the school under the plan;
- Include strategies to promote effective parental involvement in the school;
- Incorporate, as appropriate, activities before school, after school, during the summer, and during the extension of the school year;
- Incorporate strategies to promote high quality professional development; and,
- Incorporate a teacher mentoring program. §1116(b)(3)(A); §200.41

**C-8. Why must the plan address professional development?** The academic success of students correlates highly with the qualifications and skills of their teachers. Although by the end of the 2005-06 school year all teachers must be highly qualified, ongoing professional development is crucial to ensure their continuous improvement in the instructional skills needed to help all students meet or exceed proficiency targets on State academic assessments.

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