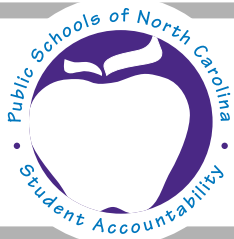


making *the* GRADE

For the future of our state, our workplaces and our communities, everyone must take responsibility for raising standards so all children are achieving at or above grade level in North Carolina's public schools.



**North Carolina
Newspapers in Education**

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making the GRADE



Overview

The Student Accountability Standards raise achievement levels for all students in North Carolina's public schools. They identify resources and provide help in meeting the needs of every student to reach grade level before being promoted to the next grade.

The Standards were developed after months of intense discussion, special meetings, and public input sessions and several years of preparation for high standards. The State Board of Education unanimously approved the new statewide standards on April 1, 1999. Phillip J. Kirk Jr., chairman of the State Board of Education, says, "The decision to end social promotion is in response to the desires of parents who want their children to do better in school, to the concerns of educators who want students to be more responsible for learning, to community expectations for better prepared graduates and to the commitment to be First in America in education."

This new policy represents the first time that North Carolina has set statewide student accountability standards for elementary, middle and high school students.

The new policy is expected to more quickly identify students

who need help to reach grade level and to provide intervention for these students so they are prepared for the next level of schooling. State Superintendent Michael E. Ward wants everyone to realize, "This is an assistance and intervention policy, NOT a retention policy. We are no longer doing business as usual in education. Our students deserve to receive the best education possible, just as we expect them to achieve their best."

Proficiency levels or Gateways are now set for students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 12. Although students must meet certain requirements to pass through the four gateways, the standards are tailored to raising student achievement across all levels in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Students struggling to reach grade-level proficiency will be identified earlier in the school year and will have more opportunities and time to receive the help they need to meet the new benchmarks.

No child will be left out. The new Student Accountability Standards will raise the levels of achievement for all of North Carolina's children.

"This is an assistance and intervention policy, NOT a retention policy. We are no longer doing business as usual in education. Our students deserve to receive the best education possible, just as we expect them to achieve their best."

~ MIKE WARD
State Superintendent

Student Accountability Standards

The Student Accountability Standards are expectations for student achievement in all North Carolina public schools. There are two elementary standards, one middle school standard and one high school standard. They are broken down into Gateways

~ THE GATEWAYS ~

Gateway 1 – Grade 3

- ✓ Meet local promotion requirements.
- ✓ Demonstrate grade-level proficiency by scoring at Level III or above on state end-of-grade tests in reading and math.

Gateway 3 – Grade 8

- ✓ Meet local promotion requirements.
- ✓ Score at Level III or above on state end-of-grade tests in reading and math.
- ✓ Score at or above proficiency level 2.5 on the grade 7 writing assessment. (Students who do not have this score will be given intervention and assistance to develop their writing skills.)

Gateway 2 – Grade 5

- ✓ Meet local promotion requirements.
- ✓ Score at Level III or above on state end-of-grade tests in reading and math.
- ✓ Score at or above proficiency level 2.5 on the grade 4 writing assessment. (Students who do not have this score will be given intervention and assistance to develop their writing skills.)

Gateway 4 – High School

- ✓ Meet existing local and state graduation requirements.
- ✓ A passing score on an exit exam of essential skills. Students will take this exam in the spring of 11th grade. (Effective class of 2005).
- ✓ A passing score on the computer skills test (effective with class of 2001).

WHEN WILL THE STANDARDS AFFECT MY CHILD?

If your child is in the following grade in the 1999-2000 school year:	The standards will apply when he or she enters grade:	That means school year:	See the Gateways above for details
K	3	2002-2003	1
1	3	2001-2002	1
2	5	2002-2003	2
3	5	2001-2002	2
4	5	2000-2001	2
5	8	2002-2003	3
6	8	2001-2002	3
7	12	2004-2005	4
8	12	2003-2004	4
9	*not affected by policy	*not affected by policy	*not affected by policy
10	*not affected by policy	*not affected by policy	*not affected by policy
11	*not affected by policy	*not affected by policy	*not affected by policy
12	not affected by policy	not affected by policy	not affected by policy

*Students entering grades 10 & 11 in the 1999-2000 school year are required to achieve a passing score on the Computer Skills test, first administered in 8th grade, before graduating.

INTERVENTION, the key component

The Student Accountability Standards will only be effective if they are implemented with the best interest of students at heart.

Schools must continue to seek ways to improve the academic performance of all students and that may require intervention.

All students must get daily instruction in the Standard Course of Study, the curriculum that outlines what students should know and be able to do. When it comes to extra help, intervention strategies may vary depending on individual student needs.

Intervention strategies can range from before and/or after school programs, summer school, Saturday school, extended school year, intersession classes, individual tutoring and other ways to give students more time on task. ©

FOR MORE INFORMATION: If you have more questions or are looking for more information on the Student Accountability Standards, write to Public Schools of North Carolina, Division of Communications and Information, 301 N. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-2825, or visit the InfoWeb at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org>. You can also call 1-800-431-7373 or 919-807-3300.

Grade-Level NEWSPAPER ACTIVITIES *to help students meet the standards*

(These activities are tied to goals in the Standard Course of Study, the curriculum that is taught in North Carolina's public schools. The activities are useful to parents as well as teachers.)

~ PK-2ND ~

- Predict what a story is about based on its headline and picture.
- See how many people at work you can find in your newspaper. Don't forget to check the comics.
- Find and cut out pictures of families. Tell your classmates what the families are doing in these pictures.
- Using grocery ads, circle prices of food products over \$1.00 in red and under \$1.00 in blue.
- Find different shapes in the newspaper: circle, triangle, square and rectangle. Which seems easiest to find?
- Describe what you see a leader doing in an action photo. Be sure to identify the leader and his title and explain if this is something that other leaders would be likely to do.
- See if you can find: a smiling face, someone you recognize, something interesting for sale, a car, an athlete, and a map.

~ 3RD-5TH ~

- Describe what you see and think of when you look at a newspaper photo. Predict what happened before and after a photo in the newspaper.
- Using information from the sports section, graph the number of wins and losses of teams in a favorite league or sport. Based on past performance, predict which sports teams will win scheduled games.
- Using the weather report in the newspaper, find the difference between the high and low predicted in your community for a certain day.
- Look for symbols in the newspaper (ex. flag, eagle, etc. to represent the USA). Make a poster with these symbols. Under each symbol, explain what it represents. Choose one to write about.
- Find an article on the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse or another historic place in our state. In your own words, write a summary of this article. Why is this important to North Carolina?
- Locate an article about a Latin or South American country. Determine whether this article focuses on politics, economics, or another topic. In a letter to a friend, discuss the main points of the article and tell how it could affect you and your family or other families living in your area.
- Double a tasty recipe that you find in the newspaper.

~ 6TH-8TH ~

- On the editorial page, identify language that influences beliefs or causes reactions. Choose one of the editorials and list three facts and three opinions given. Also look in ads for words and phrases that influence shoppers. Then choose an item you would like to have and design your own ad to sell the product, being sure to use persuasive language.
- Find ads for three computers you would like to own. What is the average cost of the computers? Choose one you think you could afford. Look at ads and find

an advertised interest rate. Using that rate, calculate the total you would pay for the computer if you paid for it over one or two years. What would your monthly payment be for each plan? Shop for other items in the newspaper that would require you to borrow money for a period of time and figure the monthly payments.

- Keep track of high and low temperatures and the amount of rainfall in your area over a two-week period. In an almanac or other resource book, look at past weather trends for your area. Does it appear that weather could be changing in your area? How can you explain differences in the weather from one year to the next? Can you tell whether climate is changing by looking at weather for only a year or two?
- Use the entertainment section of the newspaper to list various forms of entertainment (movies, plays, concerts, etc.) available in your area. List the occupations associated with at least one of these entertainment industries on your list. Can you find any of these jobs advertised in the "Help Wanted" section of the Classifieds?
- Find a factual account of bad news. How might the results have changed if someone had behaved differently?
- In the news, identify an event that occurred in Asia or Europe that could affect NC citizens, businesses, or the economy. How could it affect NC? Are there any events in the news here that could affect Asia or Europe?
- Based on a photo, answer the questions: What is happening? When did it happen? Where did it happen? Who did it? Answer the same questions using the cutline (the explanatory information below the photo) and a news story.
- Select one NC political leader (local or state) in the news today. Why is he or she in the news? Look for more information about the leader in future newspapers.
- Shop classified ads and then retail ads for items to furnish your room. Keep track of costs and compare purchases. If limited to \$750, what would you choose?

~ 9TH-12TH ~

- Read a news story, then draft, revise, and produce a final document as a letter to the editor.
- Find examples of literary devices (metaphor, simile, allusion) in the sports pages. Write a similar description using a different metaphor.
- Find four different occupations in the newspaper. How many positions are available for each occupation? Make a bar graph to indicate the number of positions advertised for each occupation. What can you conclude?
- Use the review of a particular movie, play, or concert as a model, and write your own critique of that art form. How is your critique or review similar to or different from the newspaper critic's opinion?
- Read articles on population growth, the environment, and resource depletion. List problems in your community. How are they related? What are some possible solutions?
- Check football scores in the newspaper. If team "S" scores 21 points, how could they have gotten this score? Write algebraic equations that show all of the ways football teams could have earned their points ($x=6$ points for touchdowns; $y=3$ points for field goals; $z=2$ points for a safety or 2-point conversion; $a=1$ point for an extra point).

- Collect articles from newspapers and magazines that would support or refute a direct relationship between poverty and crime. What kind of relationship do you think exists between poverty and crime?
- Look for examples of products, jobs, or services today that would not have existed in 1900. How would life have been different without these? Can you predict jobs, products, or services today that will be obsolete in 2100?
- State your opinion about a topic that concerns you. Read as much as you can about it in your newspaper. Then produce an editorial cartoon about that topic. Find other editorial cartoons on the same topic.
- Collect all stories that appear in the newspaper on one selected problem. Identify the problem, cause(s), effect(s), solution(s), and obstacle(s) to the solution. Then write a paper based on the outline. Be sure to include footnotes.



helping your child ACHIEVE

How can more parents get involved in their child's education? Here are a few suggestions:

- ☆ Work with the school to plan a rigorous academic program for your child and discuss with your child the importance of working hard to get the most out of school;
- ☆ Sign a contract with the teacher and your child that defines responsibilities and expectations for helping children meet academic standards;
- ☆ Talk with your child's teacher about the curriculum, the Standard Course of Study, for your child's grade;
- ☆ Monitor your child's progress and supervise the completion of homework;
- ☆ Read at home together with your child and encourage children to read at least 30 minutes a day;
- ☆ Pledge to attend back-to-school events and teacher conferences, and volunteer for at least one event per semester to support the school;
- ☆ Participate in school decisions by attending meetings and serving on advisory councils, particularly the school improvement team; and
- ☆ Maintain and communicate high expectations for your child in both academics and behavior. ☺

TIPS

for parents to help children read



You can change the life of a child by reading to him or her daily, by serving as a tutor in your community to another child or by joining together with other members of your community and starting a community reading program. Here are simple things you can do to help children become better readers:

- Read with your children every day for 30 minutes.
- Talk with infants and young children to develop their language skills before they learn to read.
- Encourage children to read on their own, outside of school, to enhance their in-school performance.
- Set a good example for your children by reading newspapers, magazines and books.
- Show that reading is necessary to complete daily tasks. Read aloud the highway signs, recipes, the backs of cereal boxes, employment forms, and other things that you use.
- Read and write with your children in your native language.
- Restrict the amount and kind of TV your children watch, encourage viewing of educational programs.
- Make sure your children have a library card and use it.
- Set up a reading area in your home. Stack boxes on their sides or provide a large basket to hold your child's books.
- Keep track of your children's progress in school.
- Have books on tape in your home for children with developmental disabilities.
- Give your children writing materials.

- Encourage small compositions. Have your child write a postcard to a family member, a pen pal, or a far-away friend.
- Encourage pre-teens and teenagers to write in journals and diaries. Provide the blank book that they will need.
- Help start a community reading program.

For more activities to do with children and suggestions for starting a reading program, check the U.S Department of Education web site: <http://www.ed.gov>. Click on "America Reads Challenge" where you'll find a variety of information available online. These parent tips were drawn from this site and from Ann Fearington's "A Parent's Guide to Your Child's Reading Success."



ANSWERS

to frequently asked questions

Q What do the standards mean to my child?

A The Student Accountability Standards mean your child will take on more responsibility for his or her own education and will be provided with a more realistic assessment of his or her skills. Your child will be better prepared to be successful at the next level and should be a more competitive graduate of our public schools.

Q What happens to students who do not meet the standards?

A A key component of the Student Accountability Standards is intervention, getting help to students who are not at grade level. After intervention, students will have re-testing opportunities. If students are still not working at grade level, they may be retained if the principal determines that is the best course of action. There will be a review process in place locally.

Q These standards are based on performance in reading, writing and mathematics. Does this mean other subjects are not important?

A The General Assembly and the State Board of Education are concerned about the number of students who are not at grade level in basic skills of reading and mathematics. This number has decreased because of the ABCs focus, but there are still too many students who are not achieving at an acceptable level. Reading and mathematics are core, foundation skills on which other learning is based. That is why these standards are directed at reading and mathematics in grades 3, 5 and 8 (and writing at grades 5 and 8) and graduation standards are based on broader subjects on which students need to be proficient.

