

Evaluation of High-Priority Schools

Interim Report

November 2002



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education/Department of Public Instruction
Office of Curriculum and School Reform Services
Division of School Improvement

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Executive Summary

The 2001 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly has, in SB 1005, Sec. 29.6(d) (Session Law 2001-424), directed the State Board of Education to conduct an evaluation of the initiatives being implemented in High-Priority (HP) and Continually Low-Performing (CLP) public schools across the state, as specified in SB 1005, Sec. 29.1 (Session Law 2001-424). The specific initiatives to be evaluated are focused on class size reduction and extension of teacher contracts. The overall purpose of the evaluation is to study the effectiveness of these initiatives in improving student achievement in these schools. This report is an interim evaluation report, with the final report due to be completed by December 1, 2003.

High Priority Schools Initiatives

North Carolina G.S. 115C-12, Section 29.1 defines a High Priority school as a school in which

- over eighty percent (80%) of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, **and**
- no more than fifty-five percent (55%) of the students are performing at or above grade level.

Using data from the 1999-2000 school year, 36 High Priority schools were identified across the state and were therefore subject to the provisions of these initiatives.

This same legislation authorizes additional funding to provide these High Priority schools with tools to improve student achievement. Specifically, it states that funds must be used to reduce class size in kindergarten through third grades to no more than 15 students. For the 2001-2002 school year, funds must also be used to pay any teachers who elect to extend their contracts by five (5) days for staff development, including staff development on methods to individualize instruction in smaller classes. For the 2002-2003 school year, funds must be used to extend all teachers' contracts for a total of 10 days, including five (5) additional days of instruction with related costs for other than teachers' salaries. Also, funds must be used to provide one additional instructional support position at each High Priority school for the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 school years.

However, due to the late status of state budget approval for fiscal 2001-2002, the State may grant a waiver to a High Priority school for the class size reduction initiative. Of the 36 High Priority schools, 17 applied for and were granted this waiver for the 2001-2002 school year, with the state then withdrawing the additional teacher positions allotted to the LEA for those schools and reinstating the regular allotment for teacher assistants for the school as per the legislation.

Continually Low-Performing Schools Initiatives

North Carolina G.S. 115C-105.37A defines a Continually Low-Performing school as a school that has

- received State-mandated assistance due to low student achievement, **and**
- has been designated by the State Board of Education as Low-Performing based on results from the state's testing and accountability program for at least 2 of 3 consecutive years.

For the 2001-2002 school year, there were 6 Continually Low-Performing schools, all of which were high schools.

This same legislation authorizes additional funding for these Continually Low-Performing schools with tools to improve student achievement. The statute requires that the funds be used to reduce class size to 1:20 and to extend the teacher contract by five (5) days. For the 2002-2003 school year, funds must be used to extend teachers' contracts for a total of 10 days, including five (5) days of additional instruction with related costs for other than teachers' salaries. There is some flexibility in the ways remaining funds are used. Tutors, instructional resource materials, substitute pay and travel (according to state guidelines) are options for remaining funds.

However, due to the late status of state budget approval for fiscal 2001-02, many of the Continually Low-Performing schools were unable to meet all of the requirements of the initiatives. Therefore, the State allowed these six schools to submit plans to the State Board of Education detailing how those funds would be spent during the 2001-02 school year.

Evaluation Findings to Date

This interim report focuses on three specific topics: The extent to which schools have implemented the class size reduction components of the law, a summary of what the schools have been able to accomplish to date based on assistance team feedback and the plans submitted by the Continually Low-Performing schools, and the available evidence as to whether student achievement has improved during the first year of the implementation of the initiatives.

Data collected by NCDPI and submitted to the State Board of Education throughout the past year indicate that the majority of the classrooms in the High Priority schools that did not request a waiver from the class size reduction mandate are meeting the standard set forth in the legislation. Seventeen schools requested and received a waiver in 2001-02; however, only one school is planning to pursue another waiver for 2002-03. Information has also been collected as to the extenuating circumstances faced by some schools that are unable to meet the mandate. The most recent data available on these issues are detailed in Section I and Appendix B of this report.

Data collected by the voluntary assistance teams assigned to 21 of the High Priority schools alludes to some of the continuing challenges to improving instruction in those schools. Although significant progress has been made, issues related to instructional delivery and monitoring, staff recruitment and retention, and parent involvement remain problematic in many schools. Plans submitted by Continually Low-Performing schools indicated a mixture of staff development, tutoring, and other activities proposed by the schools to improve student achievement. More detailed information on these topics is contained in Section II of the report.

With respect to student achievement in High Priority and Continually Low-Performing schools, results presented in Section III suggest that both and Continually Low-Performing schools are making good progress overall, with results more consistent for High Priority schools so far. With respect to the class size reduction initiative specifically, smaller class sizes may be partially responsible for those improvements, at least in the High Priority schools. Achievement results at this point are very preliminary, however. More sophisticated analytical techniques to be employed by an outside contractor selected to continue the study in 2002-03, along with the availability of a second year of data in the Fall of 2003, will provide more precise information as to the effectiveness of the legislative initiatives in High Priority and Continually Low-Performing schools.

Section I
Grades K-3 Class Size Data for High Priority and
Continually Low-Performing Schools
2001-02

**STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS BY SCHOOL AND GRADE
(FOR TYPICAL CLASSES IN GRADES KI - 03)
HIGH PRIORITY SCHOOLS
SCHOOL YEAR 2001 - 2002**

<u>LEA/ CHARTER SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>LEA NAME</u>	<u>SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>SCHOOL NAME</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>STUDENT/ TEACHER RATIO</u>
040	ANSON COUNTY	311	WADESBORO PRIMARY	KI	21
040	ANSON COUNTY	311	WADESBORO PRIMARY	01	23
040	ANSON COUNTY	311	WADESBORO PRIMARY	02	21
040	ANSON COUNTY	311	WADESBORO PRIMARY	03	20
080	BERTIE COUNTY	348	AULANDER ELEMENTARY	KI	11
080	BERTIE COUNTY	348	AULANDER ELEMENTARY	01	15
080	BERTIE COUNTY	348	AULANDER ELEMENTARY	02	14
080	BERTIE COUNTY	348	AULANDER ELEMENTARY	03	14
080	BERTIE COUNTY	362	WINDSOR ELEMENTARY	KI	19
080	BERTIE COUNTY	362	WINDSOR ELEMENTARY	01	21
080	BERTIE COUNTY	362	WINDSOR ELEMENTARY	02	19
080	BERTIE COUNTY	362	WINDSOR ELEMENTARY	03	22
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	316	LILLIAN BLACK ELEM	KI	17
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	316	LILLIAN BLACK ELEM	01	18
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	316	LILLIAN BLACK ELEM	02	25
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	316	LILLIAN BLACK ELEM	03	13
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	405	PAULINE JONES ELEM	KI	27
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	405	PAULINE JONES ELEM	01	16
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	405	PAULINE JONES ELEM	02	14
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	405	PAULINE JONES ELEM	03	19
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	444	TERESA BERRIEN ELEM	KI	20
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	444	TERESA BERRIEN ELEM	01	21
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	444	TERESA BERRIEN ELEM	02	17
260	CUMBERLAND COUNTY	444	TERESA BERRIEN ELEM	03	17
320	DURHAM COUNTY	310	EASTWAY ELEM	KI	25
320	DURHAM COUNTY	310	EASTWAY ELEM	01	19
320	DURHAM COUNTY	310	EASTWAY ELEM	02	15
320	DURHAM COUNTY	310	EASTWAY ELEM	03	16
320	DURHAM COUNTY	339	LAKWOOD ELEMENTARY	KI	14
320	DURHAM COUNTY	339	LAKWOOD ELEMENTARY	01	20
320	DURHAM COUNTY	339	LAKWOOD ELEMENTARY	02	16

<u>LEA/ CHARTER SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>LEA NAME</u>	<u>SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>SCHOOL NAME</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>STUDENT/ TEACHER RATIO</u>
320	DURHAM COUNTY	339	LAKWOOD ELEMENTARY	03	16
320	DURHAM COUNTY	347	GEORGE WATTS ELEM	KI	17
320	DURHAM COUNTY	347	GEORGE WATTS ELEM	01	18
320	DURHAM COUNTY	347	GEORGE WATTS ELEM	02	17
320	DURHAM COUNTY	347	GEORGE WATTS ELEM	03	16
320	DURHAM COUNTY	388	W G PEARSON ELEM	KI	18
320	DURHAM COUNTY	388	W G PEARSON ELEM	01	14
320	DURHAM COUNTY	388	W G PEARSON ELEM	02	14
320	DURHAM COUNTY	388	W G PEARSON ELEM	03	13
330	EDGEcombe COUNTY	336	ROBERSON ELEMENTARY	KI	15
330	EDGEcombe COUNTY	336	ROBERSON ELEMENTARY	01	15
330	EDGEcombe COUNTY	336	ROBERSON ELEMENTARY	02	22
330	EDGEcombe COUNTY	336	ROBERSON ELEMENTARY	03	15
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	308	ASHLEY ELEMENTARY	KI	13
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	308	ASHLEY ELEMENTARY	01	14
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	308	ASHLEY ELEMENTARY	02	17
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	308	ASHLEY ELEMENTARY	03	17
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	351	COOK ELEMENTARY	KI	17
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	351	COOK ELEMENTARY	01	15
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	351	COOK ELEMENTARY	02	14
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	351	COOK ELEMENTARY	03	15
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	376	FOREST PARK ELEM	KI	17
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	376	FOREST PARK ELEM	01	17
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	376	FOREST PARK ELEM	02	15
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	376	FOREST PARK ELEM	03	20
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	424	KIMBERLEY PARK ELEM	KI	16
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	424	KIMBERLEY PARK ELEM	01	13
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	424	KIMBERLEY PARK ELEM	02	18
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	424	KIMBERLEY PARK ELEM	03	17
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	462	NORTH HILLS ELEM	KI	15
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	462	NORTH HILLS ELEM	01	16
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	462	NORTH HILLS ELEM	02	17
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	462	NORTH HILLS ELEM	03	18
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	490	PETREE ELEMENTARY	KI	19
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	490	PETREE ELEMENTARY	01	18

<u>LEA/ CHARTER SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>LEA NAME</u>	<u>SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>SCHOOL NAME</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>STUDENT/ TEACHER RATIO</u>
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	490	PETREE ELEMENTARY	02	14
340	FORSYTH COUNTY	490	PETREE ELEMENTARY	03	14
360	GASTON COUNTY	484	RHYNE ELEMENTARY	KI	22
360	GASTON COUNTY	484	RHYNE ELEMENTARY	01	18
360	GASTON COUNTY	484	RHYNE ELEMENTARY	02	17
360	GASTON COUNTY	484	RHYNE ELEMENTARY	03	16
360	GASTON COUNTY	520	WOODHILL ELEMENTARY	KI	15
360	GASTON COUNTY	520	WOODHILL ELEMENTARY	01	13
360	GASTON COUNTY	520	WOODHILL ELEMENTARY	02	15
360	GASTON COUNTY	520	WOODHILL ELEMENTARY	03	16
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	364	FAIRVIEW ELEMENTARY	KI	15
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	364	FAIRVIEW ELEMENTARY	01	16
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	364	FAIRVIEW ELEMENTARY	02	13
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	364	FAIRVIEW ELEMENTARY	03	16
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	403	W M HAMPTON ELEM	KI	12
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	403	W M HAMPTON ELEM	01	13
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	403	W M HAMPTON ELEM	02	15
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	403	W M HAMPTON ELEM	03	16
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	514	CLARA J PECK ELEM	KI	14
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	514	CLARA J PECK ELEM	01	15
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	514	CLARA J PECK ELEM	02	13
410	GUILFORD COUNTY	514	CLARA J PECK ELEM	03	15
460	HERTFORD COUNTY	332	RIVERVIEW ELEMENTARY	KI	17
460	HERTFORD COUNTY	332	RIVERVIEW ELEMENTARY	01	18
460	HERTFORD COUNTY	332	RIVERVIEW ELEMENTARY	02	19
460	HERTFORD COUNTY	332	RIVERVIEW ELEMENTARY	03	25
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY 527		SHAMROCK GARDENS EL	KI	18
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY 527		SHAMROCK GARDENS EL	01	17
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY 527		SHAMROCK GARDENS EL	02	19
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY 527		SHAMROCK GARDENS EL	03	22
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY 553		THOMASBORO ELEM	KI	18
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY 553		THOMASBORO ELEM	01	15
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY 553		THOMASBORO ELEM	02	15
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY 553		THOMASBORO ELEM	03	15

<u>LEA/ CHARTER SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>LEA NAME</u>	<u>SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>SCHOOL NAME</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>STUDENT/ TEACHER RATIO</u>
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY	577	WESTERLY HILLS ELEM	KI	19
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY	577	WESTERLY HILLS ELEM	01	17
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY	577	WESTERLY HILLS ELEM	02	19
600	MECKLENBURG COUNTY	577	WESTERLY HILLS ELEM	03	18
640	NASH-ROCKY MOUNT	331	JAMES C BRASWELL EL	KI	12
640	NASH-ROCKY MOUNT	331	JAMES C BRASWELL EL	01	17
640	NASH-ROCKY MOUNT	331	JAMES C BRASWELL EL	02	19
640	NASH-ROCKY MOUNT	331	JAMES C BRASWELL EL	03	12
640	NASH-ROCKY MOUNT	354	O R POPE ELEMENTARY	KI	21
640	NASH-ROCKY MOUNT	354	O R POPE ELEMENTARY	01	20
640	NASH-ROCKY MOUNT	354	O R POPE ELEMENTARY	02	25
640	NASH-ROCKY MOUNT	354	O R POPE ELEMENTARY	03	20
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	364	RICH SQUARE-CREECY	KI	17
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	364	RICH SQUARE-CREECY	01	18
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	364	RICH SQUARE-CREECY	02	17
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	364	RICH SQUARE-CREECY	03	17
780	ROBESON COUNTY	418	WEST LUMBERTON ELEM	KI	23
780	ROBESON COUNTY	418	WEST LUMBERTON ELEM	01	17
780	ROBESON COUNTY	418	WEST LUMBERTON ELEM	02	14
780	ROBESON COUNTY	418	WEST LUMBERTON ELEM	03	24
900	UNION COUNTY	306	EAST ELEMENTARY	KI	18
900	UNION COUNTY	306	EAST ELEMENTARY	01	19
900	UNION COUNTY	306	EAST ELEMENTARY	02	21
900	UNION COUNTY	306	EAST ELEMENTARY	03	19
900	UNION COUNTY	370	WALTER BICKETT ELEM	KI	16
900	UNION COUNTY	370	WALTER BICKETT ELEM	01	18
900	UNION COUNTY	370	WALTER BICKETT ELEM	02	21
900	UNION COUNTY	370	WALTER BICKETT ELEM	03	17
910	VANCE COUNTY	312	CLARK STREET ELEM	KI	20
910	VANCE COUNTY	312	CLARK STREET ELEM	01	20
910	VANCE COUNTY	312	CLARK STREET ELEM	02	20
910	VANCE COUNTY	312	CLARK STREET ELEM	03	20
910	VANCE COUNTY	340	NEW HOPE ELEMENTARY	KI	23
910	VANCE COUNTY	340	NEW HOPE ELEMENTARY	01	24
910	VANCE COUNTY	340	NEW HOPE ELEMENTARY	02	19
910	VANCE COUNTY	340	NEW HOPE ELEMENTARY	03	18

<u>LEA/ CHARTER SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>LEA NAME</u>	<u>SCHOOL CODE</u>	<u>SCHOOL NAME</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>STUDENT/ TEACHER RATIO</u>
910	VANCE COUNTY	356	PINKSTON STREET ELEM	KI	18
910	VANCE COUNTY	356	PINKSTON STREET ELEM	01	17
910	VANCE COUNTY	356	PINKSTON STREET ELEM	02	20
910	VANCE COUNTY	356	PINKSTON STREET ELEM	03	16
960	WAYNE COUNTY	318	CARVER HEIGHTS	KI	18
960	WAYNE COUNTY	318	CARVER HEIGHTS	01	17
960	WAYNE COUNTY	318	CARVER HEIGHTS	02	16
960	WAYNE COUNTY	318	CARVER HEIGHTS	03	19

**STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS FOR SPECIFIC HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECTS
BY SCHOOL AND SUBJECT
CONTINUALLY LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS
SCHOOL YEAR 2001-2002**

LEA/ CHARTER SCHOOL CODE	LEA NAME	SCHOOL CODE	SCHOOL NAME	SUBJECT CODE	SUBJECT TITLE	STUDENT/ TEACHER RATIO*
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	346	NORTHWEST HIGH	1021	ENGLISH I	21
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	346	NORTHWEST HIGH	2023	ALGEBRA I	16
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	346	NORTHWEST HIGH	3020	BIOLOGY	20
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	346	NORTHWEST HIGH	4005	ELP	20
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	346	NORTHWEST HIGH	4021	U S HISTORY	24
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	1021	ENGLISH I	25
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	2023	ALGEBRA I	24
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	3020	BIOLOGY	14
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	4005	ELP	27
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	4021	U S HISTORY	18
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	336	NORTHAMPTON HI-EAST	1021	ENGLISH I	23
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	336	NORTHAMPTON HI-EAST	2023	ALGEBRA I	20
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	336	NORTHAMPTON HI-EAST	3020	BIOLOGY	22
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	336	NORTHAMPTON HI-EAST	4005	ELP	23
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	336	NORTHAMPTON HI-EAST	4021	U S HISTORY	24
780	ROBESON COUNTY	401	SAINT PAULS HIGH	1021	ENGLISH I	21
780	ROBESON COUNTY	401	SAINT PAULS HIGH	2023	ALGEBRA I	29
780	ROBESON COUNTY	401	SAINT PAULS HIGH	3020	BIOLOGY	23
780	ROBESON COUNTY	401	SAINT PAULS HIGH	4005	ELP	21
780	ROBESON COUNTY	401	SAINT PAULS HIGH	4021	U S HISTORY	20
780	ROBESON COUNTY	402	SOUTH ROBESON HIGH	1021	ENGLISH I	23
780	ROBESON COUNTY	402	SOUTH ROBESON HIGH	2023	ALGEBRA I	17
780	ROBESON COUNTY	402	SOUTH ROBESON HIGH	3020	BIOLOGY	26
780	ROBESON COUNTY	402	SOUTH ROBESON HIGH	4005	ELP	24
780	ROBESON COUNTY	402	SOUTH ROBESON HIGH	4021	U S HISTORY	23
930	WARREN COUNTY	352	WARREN COUNTY HIGH	1021	ENGLISH I	18
930	WARREN COUNTY	352	WARREN COUNTY HIGH	2023	ALGEBRA I	23
930	WARREN COUNTY	352	WARREN COUNTY HIGH	3020	BIOLOGY	19
930	WARREN COUNTY	352	WARREN COUNTY HIGH	4005	ELP	22
930	WARREN COUNTY	352	WARREN COUNTY HIGH	4021	U S HISTORY	15

Section II
Activities in High Priority and Continually Low-Performing Schools

High Priority Schools

During the 2001-2002 school year, each of the 36 High Priority schools was offered voluntary assistance beginning January 2002. Twenty-one of the 36 schools accepted and were served by one member or several members of the State Assistance Teams with expertise in K-8 education¹. Because entry into the schools occurred during the second semester, the Team member(s) worked closely with the principal to identify school needs and begin delivering services. The services included, but were not limited to: team teaching, demonstration lessons, curriculum alignment, assessing student progress and classroom management. It is important to note that the Team member(s) varied their strategies and areas of focus depending on the needs of the schools.

At the end of the school year, each Team member reported on challenges found in the school upon entry, services provided, challenges remaining and recommendations for summer activities in the schools to continue improvement. Based on an analysis of the annual reports submitted, a number of common needs were identified in the High Priority schools. These are reported according to frequency of inclusion in the reports as an identified need, and are listed in order of highest to lowest frequency. Please note that these concerns exist in schools other than those identified as High Priority. However, this analysis focused only on High Priority schools.

- There is a great need for continued work with schools to implement best practices in the classrooms. While progress is being made, teachers need additional assistance with using manipulatives to help students master concepts defined in the curriculum. A second area of need is differentiating instruction. Many teachers teach to the “whole group” without allowing for individual student learning styles differences or prior knowledge of the students.
- Teacher recruitment and retention continues to be a problem in high priority schools. It is difficult to find and employ certified, high quality teachers in many high priority schools. In addition, there is a high turnover rate. As a result, when progress is made during a given year, the schools frequently have to “start all over: the next year because of a large percentage of new teachers, most of whom are inexperienced. These schools often times find themselves hiring long-term substitute teachers who are not necessarily certified in order to have an adult in the classrooms with the students.
- Instructional leaders must monitor classroom instruction frequently and regularly. This allows him/her to identify areas of focus for professional development for individual teachers as well as areas for a school wide focus. Monitoring also serves to identify materials and resources that are needed to improve instruction as well as to monitor time on task and classroom management. The administrators need to be highly visible to faculty and students to demonstrate awareness of what is happening in the schools and the progress is being made. This offers numerous opportunities to offer words of encouragement and praise to both faculty and students.

¹ The Team members worked with the high schools in mandated assistance during first semester of 2001-2002.

- Improved parent involvement is frequently cited as a need in high priority schools. Schools need to plan an outreach program for parents and help them become more involved in their child's education while becoming more proficient in helping them with schoolwork at home. A collaborative relationship between the parents, students and faculty will result in higher student achievement.
- Faculty and staff in the high priority schools need to enhance their skills in analyzing data and using the results to inform instruction. The analysis process leads to the identification of school-based goals and provides focus for professional development in such areas of instruction, curriculum, assessment and classroom management.
- Faculty and staff in high priority schools need assistance in classroom management and discipline. If teachers and administrators receive assistance in establishing orderly classroom management procedures, fewer discipline problems will occur. However, professional development and assistance in developing and implementing a consistent school-wide discipline policy would be beneficial.
- An additional consistent need identified was increased use of technology (hardware and software) and related professional development. This is critical to enable teachers to use technology effectively in supporting classroom instruction. In many cases the available technology was limited and/or used only for special projects.
- Finally, high priority schools did not always set high expectations for teacher performance or student achievement and the support to reach those expectations. It is important for the school to establish a culture in the school that offers a balance between the rewards for effort and for ability. A critical activity of high priority schools is setting goals for each child that s/he can achieve with high effort, and reward attainment.

Continually Low-Performing Schools

During the 2001-2002, six continually low-performing schools (CLPS) were identified and were assigned assistance teams as required by statute. The schools identified were (1) Northwest High School of Halifax County, (2) Northampton High –East and (3) Northampton High -West of Northampton County, (4) Saint Paul's High School and (5) South Robeson High School of Robeson County and (6) Warren County High School of Warren County. In addition to being served by the assistance teams, these schools received additional funds set aside by the General Assembly to reduce class size and to extend teacher contracts by five (5) days. All of the schools were able to implement the extended days of employment and used this additional time for professional development. Some of the sessions were content specific and others dealt with school wide issues. The schools did have difficulty implementing the reduction in class size as required. Certified teachers simply were not available. In fact, many of the classrooms were manned by long-term substitutes.

Other strategies that were supported by the funds provided by the General Assembly included stipends for teachers who taught in the after school tutorial programs and transportation

for student participants, educational incentives for students, professional development activities, instructional support materials, substitute pay and teacher travel.

The continually low-performing schools are provided some additional services beyond what regular low-performing schools receive. These activities were also supported by the additional funds set aside for these schools. Quarterly Collaborative Meetings were held in which the school improvement team, the school administrative staff, the central office staff and the Assistance Teams had to participate. These meetings included professional development sessions, problem solving activities and leadership building activities. The culminating activity for the continually low-performing schools was the two-day Instructional Institute held in June 2002. The staffs from all of the schools, central office staffs, and Assistance teams serving these schools attended the Institute. The institute focused on best practices for the content areas and motivational activities. There was time for networking, reflecting on the past year and preparing for the next year.

The Assistance Teams were successful in bringing five of the six schools off of the low-performing list. It may be difficult for these schools to sustain their progress because of the many challenges schools in the northeastern face. Teacher turnover, the lack of certified teachers, low expectations for student and teacher performance and a larger percentage of marginal teachers, lateral entries and inexperienced teachers are the major challenges.

Section III
School-level Achievement Gains in High-Priority and
Continually Low-Performing Schools
2000-01 to 2001-02

Overall Results

In general, the student achievement changes seen in High Priority and Continually Low-Performing schools between 2000-01 and 2001-02 are positive. Average performance composites increased in both types of schools (Figure 1), average percentages of students scoring at or above grade level on end-of-grade tests rose as well (Figure 2). The results for end-of-course tests in Continually Low-Performing schools are less consistent, with large gains seen in Biology, smaller gains in Algebra I and U. S. History, and no change or even slight decreases in performance in English I and Economic, Legal and Political Systems (Table 1). There was also some variation among the individual Continually Low-Performing schools in this respect (Appendix A, Table 1A).

Figure 1: Performance Composites for High Priority and Continually Low-Performing Schools, 2000-01 and 2001-02

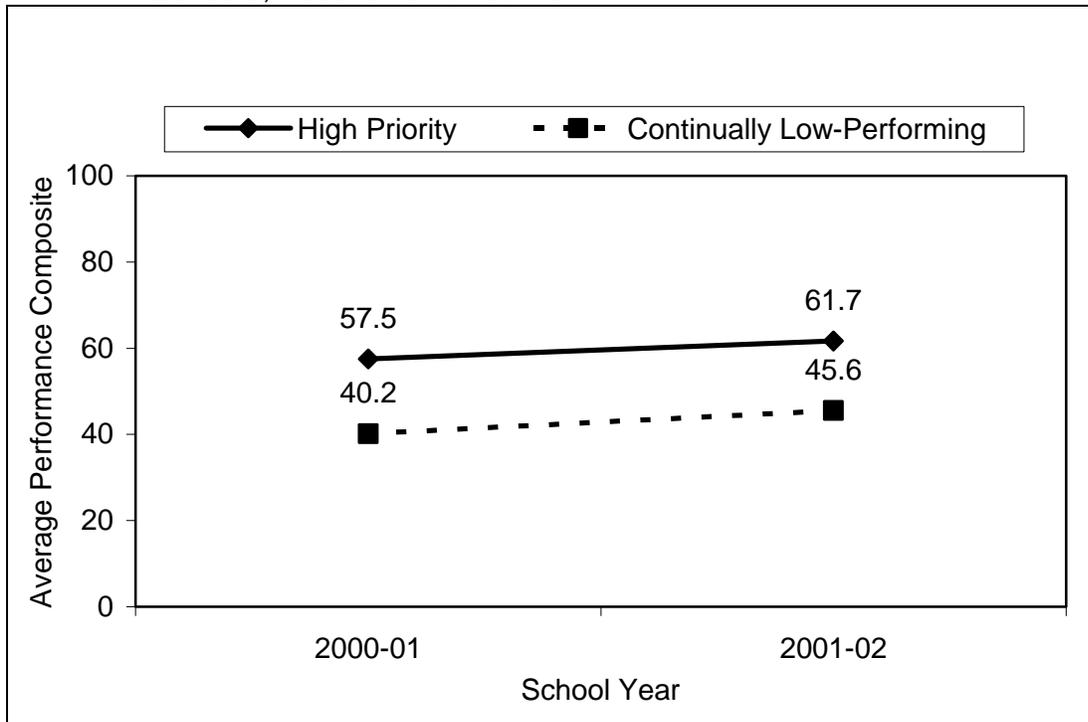


Figure 2: Third Grade End-of-Grade Test Results for High Priority Schools, 2000-01 and 2001-02

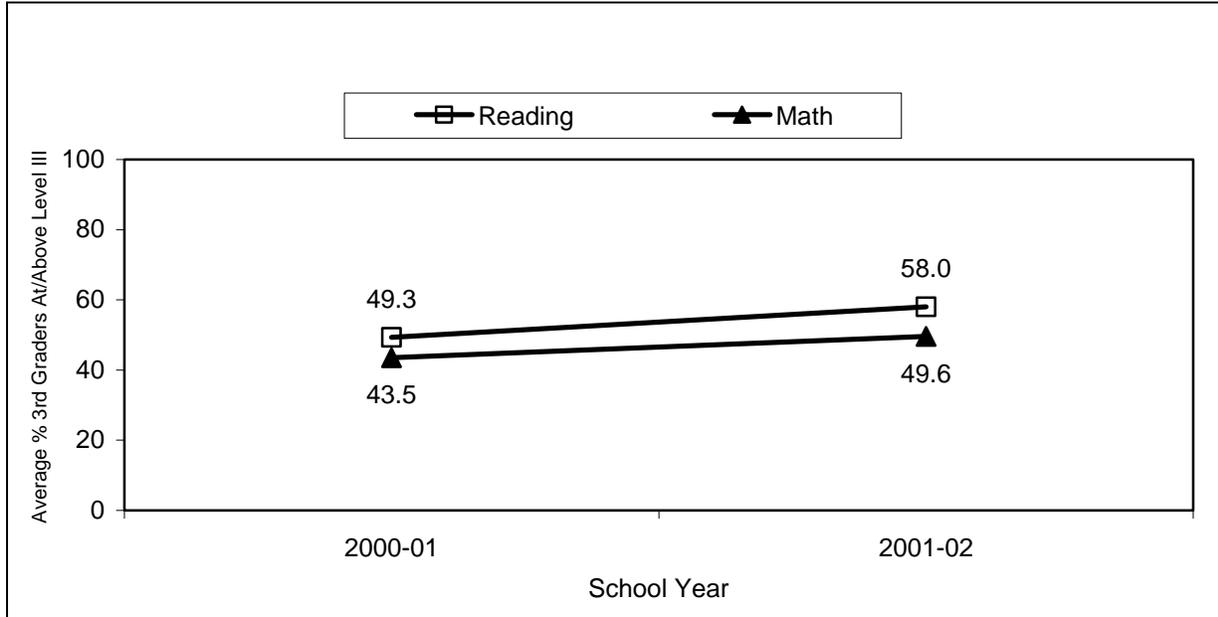


Table 1: Selected End-of-Course Test Results for Continually Low-Performing Schools, 2000-01 and 2001-02

	<u>Algebra I</u>	<u>English I</u>	<u>Biology</u>	<u>ELP</u>	<u>US History</u>
2000-01	49.8	48.0	35.0	47.6	28.1
2001-02	51.2	47.4	48.3	44.3	29.7

Results as a Function of Waiver Status and Technical Assistance Status

Since some High Priority schools were granted waivers from the class size reduction initiative in the legislation, and also because not all schools received voluntary technical assistance, it is possible to examine the possible relationships between these particular efforts and achievement in more detail. Overall, both the absence of a waiver as well as the acceptance of voluntary technical assistance from NCDPI were associated with larger gains in student achievement in the 36 High Priority schools in 2001-02, with the non-waiver schools that also received technical assistance being the highest-performing group of schools. The overall results are detailed in Tables 2-4 and Figure 3 below.

Class Size Reduction Waivers and Achievement

High Priority schools that did not receive a class size reduction waiver in 2001-02 saw increases in their performance composites of 4.5 on average, while schools that obtained waivers

(i.e., schools that were not required to conform to the class size reduction regulations in the law) had an average increase of only 1.7 points (Table 2). Similar patters were seen for 3rd grade end-of-grade test scores in both reading and mathematics (Table 3).

Voluntary Technical Assistance and Achievement

High Priority schools that received voluntary technical assistance from NCDPI in 2001-02 had an average performance composite increase of 5.1 points, while schools that did not receive assistance had an average increase of only 2.7 points (Table 2). Similar patters were seen for 3rd grade end-of-grade test scores in both reading and mathematics (Table 4).

Combination of Waiver Status and Voluntary Technical Assistance and Achievement

High Priority schools that chose to accept the class size reduction mandate in the law and who also received voluntary technical assistance from NCDPI in 2001-02 had an average performance composite increase of 5.9 points (Table 2). Schools that only implemented one component or the other saw slightly lower gains, while schools that were waived from the class size reduction mandate and also did not receive assistance had the lowest gains (2.3). Again, similar patters were seen for 3rd grade end-of-grade test scores in both reading and mathematics (Table 4).

Table 2: Average Change in HP School Performance Composites, 2000-01 to 2001-02

	No TA	TA	<i>Waiver Averages</i>
No Waiver	3.0 <i>(9 schools)</i>	5.9 <i>(10 schools)</i>	4.5
Waiver	2.3 <i>(6 schools)</i>	4.4 <i>(11 schools)</i>	1.7
<i>TA Averages</i>	2.7	5.1	

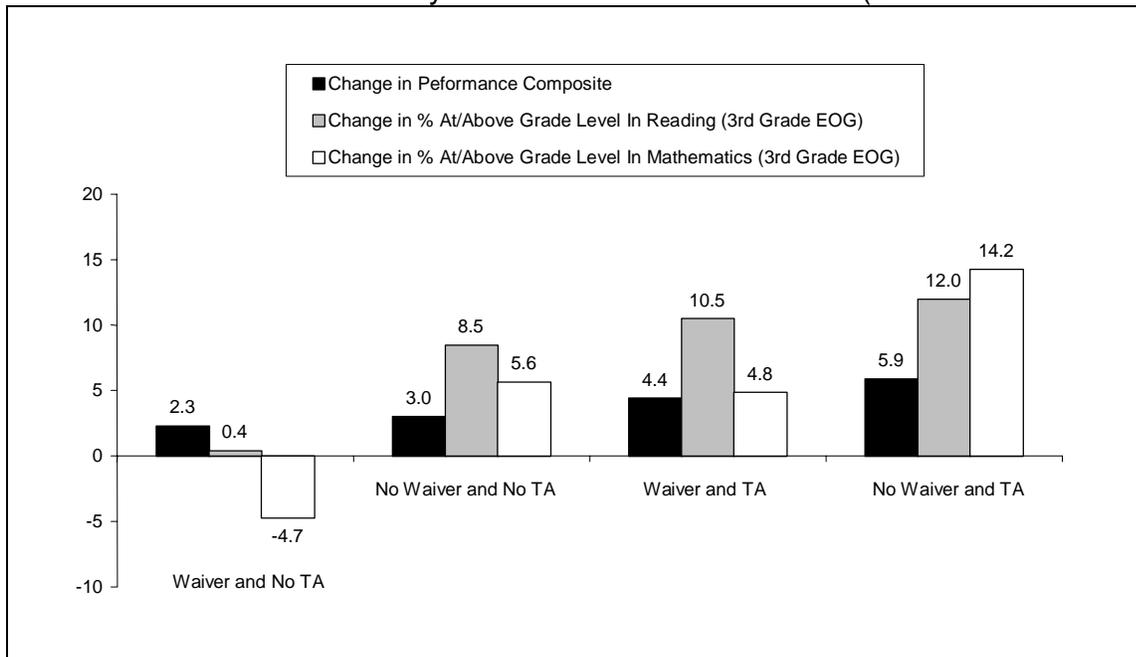
Table 3: Average Change in Percentages of 3rd Graders Scoring at or above Level III in Reading, 2000-01 to 2001-02

	No TA	TA	<i>Waiver Averages</i>
No Waiver	8.5	12.0	10.3
Waiver	0.4	10.5	6.9
<i>TA Averages</i>	5.2	11.2	

Table 4: Average Change in Percentages of 3rd Graders Scoring at or above Level III in Mathematics, 2000-01 to 2001-02

	No TA	TA	<i>Waiver Averages</i>
No Waiver	5.6	14.2	10.2
Waiver	-4.7	4.8	1.5
<i>TA Averages</i>	1.5	9.3	

Figure 3: Student Achievement Changes as a Function of Class Size Reduction Waiver Status and Voluntary Technical Assistance Status (2000-01 to 2001-02)



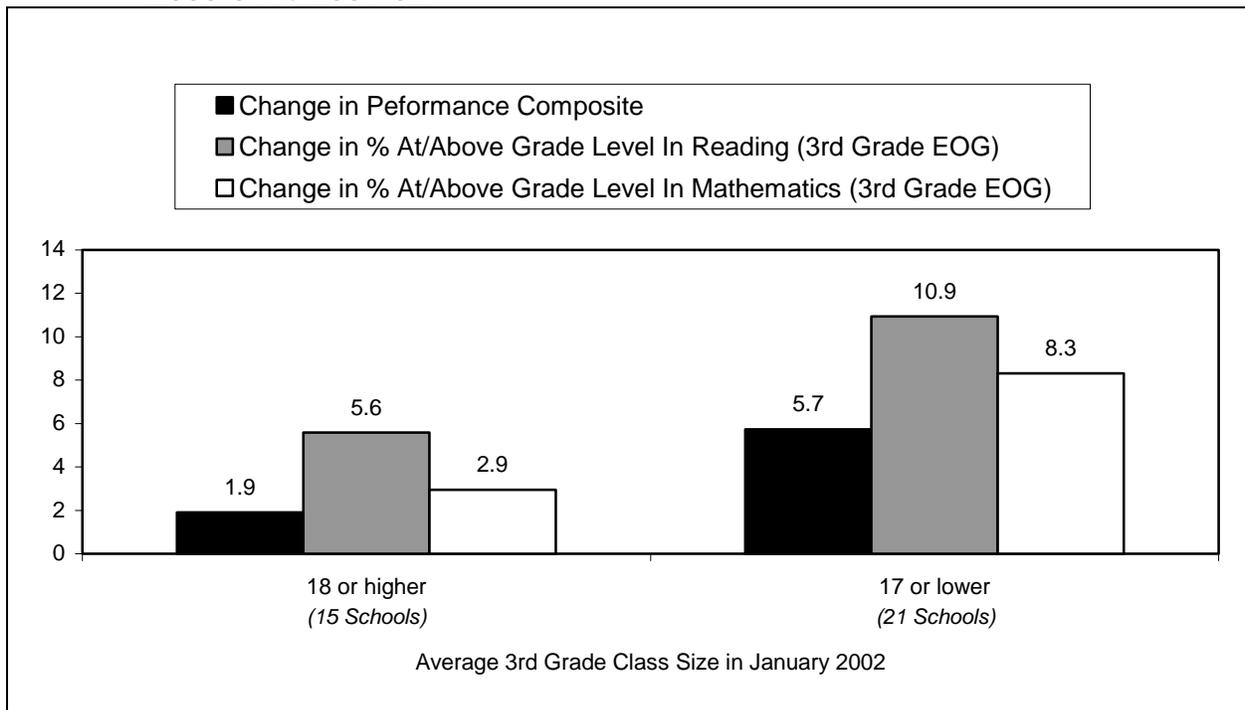
Given the results presented above, it appears that schools that did not receive class size reduction waivers demonstrated larger achievement gains than schools who opted not to conform to the class size limit.

However, as shown in Section I of this report, some schools that did not receive waivers were unable to get class sizes below the limit. In addition, some of the schools that requested waivers appeared to have relatively small classes anyway. Therefore, examining how waiver schools performed in comparison to non-waiver schools is an inexact test of whether the High Priority schools with smaller classes actually demonstrated better student achievement gains.

Relationship Between 3rd Grade Class Size and Achievement²

The assumption of class size reduction initiatives is that smaller classes will result in higher student achievement. The veracity of this claim has been borne out in many studies over the past few decades. Figure 4 below compares student achievement gains in the schools that reduced average class size to 17 or lower in grade 3 to gains for schools that had average class sizes of 18 or above, regardless of waiver status. With respect to performance composites and end-of-grade gains, schools with average 3rd grade class sizes of 17 or below outperformed schools with larger average 3rd grade class sizes.

Figure 4: Student Achievement Changes as a Function of 3rd Grade Class Size, 2000-01 to 2001-02



Summary

For a variety of reasons, it is difficult at this point to determine whether the initiatives in High Priority and Continually Low-Performing schools have necessarily “caused” higher achievement gains at this point, or which of those initiatives may be having more or less of an impact. The short period of time that has elapsed since implementation, the fact that school-level gains are based on test scores different groups of students from one year to the next, the role that the extension of teacher contracts may have played, and the inability to control for other possible

² 3rd grade class size is used for these analyses instead of K-3 class size since end-of-grade tests are only given to 3rd graders. Therefore, class size reductions in grades K-2 are not likely to have effects on end-of-grade scores until later years.

confounding factors are just some of the reasons why the results are not conclusive at this point. The analyses presented here are at best a descriptive look at achievement in these schools over the past two years.

However, these preliminary results do suggest that High Priority and Continually Low-Performing schools are making good progress overall, and that smaller class sizes may be partially responsible for those improvements, at least in the High Priority schools. More sophisticated analytical techniques to be employed during the next year of the study, along with the availability of a second year of data in the Fall of 2003, will provide more precise information as to the effectiveness of the legislative initiatives in High Priority and Continually Low-Performing schools.

Appendix A

Selected End-of-Course Achievement Results and Performance Composites for Continually Low-Performing Schools 2000-01 and 2001-02

Table 1A: End-of-Course Performance of Continually Low-Performing Schools, 2000-01 to 2001-02

LEA	School	ABCs Performance Composite 2000-01	ABCs Performance Composite 2001-02	Algebra I 2000-01	Algebra I 2001-02	English I 2000-01	English I 2001-02	ELP 2000-01	ELP 2001-02	Biology 2000-01	Biology 2001-02	US History 2000-01	US History 2001-02
Halifax	Northwest Halifax High School	35.9	40.9	35.0	28.9	46.9	39.4	54.5	49.8	40.3	60.0	10.8	16.7
Northampton	Northampton High School-East	45.5	49.8	71.9	53.2	52.3	55.2	56.8	65.2	35.9	56.5	26.4	30.2
Northampton	Northampton High School-West	41.3	39.9	39.6	31.3	53.4	51.3	60.7	42.4	28.9	27.1	40.4	34.9
Robeson	Saint Paul's High School	42.3	46.6	49.4	48.1	49.4	46.2	39.8	40.7	44.8	52.9	37.3	35.0
Robeson	South Robeson High School	34.2	47.3	50.9	83.5	34.3	42.0	34.2	26.4	27.7	49.6	19.5	18.9
Warren	Warren County High School	42.0	48.9	51.9	62.1	51.8	50.2	39.5	41.4	32.1	43.5	34.1	42.2
Averages		40.2	45.6	49.8	51.2	48.0	47.4	47.6	44.3	35.0	48.3	28.1	29.7

Appendix B

Detailed Class Size Data for High Priority Schools, October 2003

Class Size Compliance for High Priority Schools 2002-03
Typical Classes K-3
Oct-02

LEA/School	Kindergarten students per class	First Grade students per class	Second Grade students per class	Third Grade students per class	Total Classes	Classes Over 16	Notes
Anson							
Wadesboro Primary	18,19,20,21,21,22,22	17,17,18,19,19,20,20,21	15,15,16,16,16,17,17	20,20,20,20,20,20,21	29	24	(a)
(a) LEA has indicated plans to seek class size waiver.							
Bertie							
Aulander Elementary	13,13	13,13	15,15	16,17	8	1	
Windsor Elementary	16,16,16,16,16	16,16,16,16	16,16,16,16,16	16,16,16,16	18	0	(b)
(b) Anticipated class organization as of October 18, 2002.							
Cumberland							
Lillian Black Elem.	14,17,17	14,17,19	14,14,15	14,15,15	12	4	(c)
Pauline Jones Elem.	13,14,15	12,14,14	17,17	15,15,16	11	2	(c)
T.C Berrien Elem.	16,16,16	14,15	19,21	14,16	9	2	(c)
(c) Each school provided three additional teachers as a high priority school. LEA indicates current resources insufficient to further increase teacher allotment. Local procedures are to avoid creating combination classes. LEA indicates students are now well-established with highly qualified teachers and provided additional support from teachers through Title I and remediation funds. LEA continues to closely monitor class size at school.							

Class Size Compliance for High Priority Schools 2002-03

Typical Classes K-3

Oct-02

LEA/School	Kindergarten students per class	First Grade students per class	Second Grade students per class	Third Grade students per class	Total Classes	Classes Over 16	Notes
Durham							
Eastway Elem.	11,11,11,12,15,15	13,14,14,15,15,16	12,13,13,14,14,15	13,13,14,15,15,16	24	0	
Lakewood Elem.	11,16,16,	15,16	12,14,15	13,14,16	11	0	
Geroge Watts Elem.	14,14,14,14	16,16,16	15,15,16	12,13,14,15	14	0	
W.G. Pearson Elem.	14,15,15,15	14,14,14,15	14,14,15	15,15,15,15	15	0	
Edgecombe							
Roberson Elementary	10,10	14,14	14,15	16,16	8	0	
Forsyth							
Ashley Elem.	13,17,18,19,20	11,12,13,13,15,	12,13,13,15,15	17,17,17,17	19	8	(d)
Cook Elem.	18,18,18	15,15,16	13,14,14,15	15,16,16	13	3	(e)
Forest Park Elem.	18,18,18,19,20	15,15,15,16,16,16,17	13,13,14,15,15	12,12,12,13,13,14,14	24	6	(f)
Kimberly Park Elem.	13,14	14,17	9,13	17,17	8	3	(g)
North Hills Elem.	14,16,16,16,17,17	12,12,13,13	14,14,15,16,16	14,14,14,16	19	2	(h)
Petree Elem.	14,14,15,15	13,13,14,14,14	11,12,12,13,14	15,16,16,16	18	0	
<p>(d) Ashley Elem. Additional teacher has been allotted for third grade and additional .5 teacher for kindergarten to assist in core academic courses. All kindergarten classes have full-time teacher assistants provided with other resources.</p> <p>(e) Cook Elem. A half-time teacher has been hired to work with kindergarten to address overage. Teacher assistants assigned as follows: one per class in kindergarten, one per three classes in first grade, and one per four classes in second grade.</p> <p>(f) Forest Park Elem. Additional teacher has been allotted for kindergarten. LEA has provided a teacher assistant for each kindergarten class.</p> <p>(g) Kimberly Park Elem. Title 1 teachers are teamed with first and third grade teachers for core academic subjects.</p> <p>(h) North Hills Elem. The K-1 class (14 students) will collapse to bring kindergarten classes into compliance. Kindergarten assistants are assigned to classes using other resources.</p>							

Class Size Compliance for High Priority Schools 2002-03
Typical Classes K-3
Oct-02

LEA/School	Kindergarten students per class	First Grade students per class	Second Grade students per class	Third Grade students per class	Total Classes	Classes Over 16	Notes
Gaston							
Rhyne Elementary	14,14,15,15	15,15,15,15,15	14,15,15	15,15,15,15,16	17	0	
Woodhill Elementary	14,14,14	15,16,16	15,15,16	14,14,14,15,16	14	0	
Guilford							
Fairview Elem.	16,16,17,17,17	13,14,15,15,15,17	13,13,13,13,15,15	14,15,15,15,15,16	23	4	
Hampton Elem.	16,16,16	16,17,17,17	11,12,13,14,14	13,14,15	15	3	
Peck Elem.	11,11,11,12	11,15,16,16,16	15,16,17,18	17,18,18	16	5	
Hertford							
Riverview Elem.	14,15,15,15,16	13,15,15,15,15,15	14,14,15,15,16,16	13,14,14,15,15,16,16	24	0	

Class Size Compliance for High Priority Schools 2002-03

Typical Classes K-3

Oct-02

LEA/School	Kindergarten students per class	First Grade students per class	Second Grade students per class	Third Grade students per class	Total Classes	Classes Over 16	Notes
Mecklenburg							
Shamrock Gardens	18,19,19,20,20	17,17,18,19,19	14,14,19,19	18,20,21,21,21	19	17	(j)
Thomasboro Elem.	20,20,21	17,19,19	11,12,13,16	16,16,17,17	14	8	(k)
Westerly Hills Elem.	12,14,15	16,16,16,16	12,14,15,15	15,15,15,15	15	0	
(j) "Per the conversation in fall 2001 with Hank Hurd, Jennifer Bennett, Eric J. Smith, James L. Pughsley, and Barbara Jenkins, literacy teachers have been utilized to reduce class size where space for additional self-contained classrooms is unavailable. With the additional positions, the overall class size for K-3 is 16." (three literacy teachers) (k) "Per the conversation in fall 2001 with Hank Hurd, Jennifer Bennett, Eric J. Smith, James L. Pughsley, and Barbara Jenkins, literacy teachers have been utilized to reduce class size where space for additional self-contained classrooms is unavailable. With the additional positions, the overall class size for K-3 is 12.3." (five literacy teachers)							
Nash-Rocky Mount							
Braswell Elem.	13,15	12,15	14,15	16,16	8	0	
Pope Elem.	14,14,14,15,16	15,16,16,16,16,16,	15,15,16,16	14,14,14,14,15	20	0	
Northampton							
Rich Square-Creecy	15,17,18	17,17,18	19,19,19	13,15,17,20	13	10	
Robeson							
West Lumberton	13,16	14,14	13,13	14,14	8	0	(l)
(l) Class sizes are shown as anticipated after the filling of a vacant third grade position and the reassignment of two teachers to West Lumberton. Mobile units need to be moved to the campus.							

Class Size Compliance for High Priority Schools 2002-03
Typical Classes K-3
Oct-02

LEA/School	Kindergarten students per class	First Grade students per class	Second Grade students per class	Third Grade students per class	Total Classes	Classes Over 16	Notes
Union							
East Elementary	15,15,15,15,15,16,16,16	14,14,14,15,15,15,15,15,15	14,14,16,16,16,16,16,16	15,15,15,15,15,16,16,16	33	0	
Walter Bickett Elem.	14,15,15,15,15,15,16	13,13,13,14,15,15,16	13,13,13,13,13,14	11,12,12,13,13,14,15,15	29	0	
Vance							
Clark Street Elem.	12,13,13	12,15,15	12,12,12	15,15,15	12	0	
New Hope Elem.	15,15	16,16,17	14,14,14	16,17	10	2	(m)
Pinkston Street Elem.	14,14,15,15,15	12,13,13,13,14	15,15,15,15	16,16,17	17	1	(n)
(m) One student overage in third grade and first grade to avoid combination classes.							
(n) Third grade class over by one student to avoid combination classes.							
Wayne							
Carver Heights Elem.	12,13,13,13,14,14	11,13,13,14,14,15,16	14,14,15,15,15,16	14,15,15,16,16,16	25	0	