

NORTH CAROLINA
No Child
LEFT BEHIND

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND:
A North Carolina Parent's Perspective



Public Schools of North Carolina
Department of Public Instruction

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The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 renewed and renamed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. NCLB made significant changes that impact every public elementary and secondary school in the country. The state's ABCs of Public Education program, begun in 1996, focused on the same academic standard-setting and accountability initiatives found in the NCLB legislation. But many changes brought by NCLB are new for the state. Here's a look at what's new and what's not.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

NCLB required states to adopt academic standards for students, but North Carolina had already done so years before. Academic standards are public statements about what all students should know and be able to do. North Carolina's standards for the major academic subjects in each grade, known as the NC Standard Course of Study, are posted on the Web at www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/ncscos. Below is an example of fifth grade math goals. You can get a copy of the goals for your child's grade level from your child's school or by accessing the Web.

COMPETENCY GOAL 2:

The learner will recognize and use standard units of metric and customary measurement.

OBJECTIVES

- 2.01 Estimate the measure of an object in one system given the measure of that object in another system.
- 2.02 Identify, estimate, and measure the angles of plane figures using appropriate tools.

ASSESSMENTS

NCLB established testing requirements so that parents, students and educators could find out if students were making progress toward meeting the academic standards. All schools must measure student achievement in reading/language arts and math in grades 3-8 each year and at least once during the high school years. Algebra I and a combination of the English I end-of-course assessments and the Grade 10 writing assessments determine AYP in math and reading/language arts at the high school level. Once again, this didn't really mean anything new for North Carolina. The ABCs established annual end-of-grade and end-of-course testing years before.

In addition, science assessments must be conducted at least once in grades 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12, to meet NCLB requirements. In North Carolina, students in grades 5 and 8 are assessed in science. The NC end-of-course biology test meets NCLB science testing requirements at the high school level.

Test results are reported in terms of Level IV, advanced; Level III, proficient; Level II, basic; and Level I, below basic. Levels III and IV are passing.

So far in our look at NCLB, it might seem as if not much has changed in North Carolina. But that's not so. Schools, districts and the state now report student achievement in a new way.

PUBLIC REPORTING

Under NCLB, schools must issue a "report card" for each school. North Carolina was already doing that, but NCLB required the information on the report card to be more detailed. Here is the kind of information you've always been able to access in NC's school report cards on the Web at www.ncreportcards.org/src/.

NCLB requires much more reporting information on specific groups of students as you can see below. With this reporting, the academic achievement of students as a whole at a school can't mask the underachievement of certain groups of students, often called the "achievement gap."

Of course, parents are usually most interested in the achievement level of their child. Your school is required by law to keep you informed of your child's achievement level.

| Performance of Students in Each Grade on the ABCs End-of-Grade Tests | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | Grade 3 | | Grade 4 | | Grade 5 | | Grade 6 | | OVERALL | |
| | Reading | Math | Reading | Math | Reading | Math | Reading | Math | Reading | Math |
| Our School | 83.1 | 73.2 | 81.2 | 63.5 | 89.9 | 62.9 | N/A | N/A | 84.6 | 65.9 |
| # of Tests Taken | 71 | 71 | 85 | 85 | 89 | 89 | 1 | 1 | 246 | 246 |
| District | 77.5 | 69.0 | 80.9 | 64.1 | 84.7 | 61.0 | 79.4 | 63.0 | 81.9 | 64.2 |
| State | 82.9 | 67.8 | 83.4 | 65.0 | 88.4 | 63.1 | 81.5 | 61.9 | 84.9 | 63.4 |

| Percentage of Students At or Above Level III (Grade Level) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------|--------|-------|-------|----------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|------|--------|--------|------------------|----------------------------|
| | All | Male | Female | White | Black | Hispanic | Amer. Indian | Asian/Pacific Islander | Multi-Racial | E.D. | N.E.D. | L.E.P. | Migrant Students | Students with Disabilities |
| | Our School | 84.6 | 82.9 | 86.3 | 88.1 | 74.3 | 72.7 | N/A | N/A | 77.8 | 72.2 | 89.7 | 69.2 | N/A |
| District | 81.9 | 78.7 | 85.2 | 87.8 | 74.3 | 69.7 | 81.8 | 90.1 | 86.0 | 71.9 | 89.8 | 59.3 | 52.9 | 47.3 |
| State | 84.9 | 82.0 | 88.0 | 91.4 | 75.3 | 73.9 | 76.7 | 90.7 | 87.8 | 76.2 | 92.6 | 61.0 | 58.1 | 56.2 |

- E.D. = Economically Disadvantaged Students
- N.E.D. = Not Economically Disadvantaged Students
- L.E.P. = Limited English Proficient Students

ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP)

Along with the new reporting system, came a new way of defining school, district and state success. NCLB's major goal is for all public school children to perform at grade level in reading and math by the end of the 2013-14 school year. NCLB's accountability requirements are designed to tell whether schools, districts, and states are making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) toward meeting that goal.

You may hear that your school "made AYP" or "didn't make AYP." AYP is a calculation measuring the yearly progress toward achieving grade-level performance in math and reading for each student group in a school, district or state. If just one student group at a school does not meet a target goal, then the school does not make AYP for that year.

You can find out if your school made AYP by asking the principal or by looking on the Web at <http://ayp.ncpublicschools.org/> and selecting "school detail" under type of report or select your school's report at www.ncreportcards.org/src/, then select "High Student Performance" and scroll down until you see "Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Results."

Another way you might find out your school's AYP status is if your school receives Title I funding. If so, and it doesn't make AYP in the same subject for two years in a row, then the school must send you a letter informing you of that fact and your options.

NCLB has its greatest impact in Title I schools. About 45 percent of the schools in our state are Title I schools – hundreds of elementary schools, over a hundred middle schools and less than a dozen high schools in any given year. You can find out if your school is a Title I school by asking your principal or by going to www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/title1/schools/ for listings of Title I schools.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED

The Highly Qualified requirement found in NCLB applies to all teachers - in Title I and non-Title I public schools - who teach in core academic subject areas. Highly Qualified teachers are fully certified and/or licensed by the state; hold at least a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution; and demonstrate competence in each core academic subject area in which they teach.

North Carolina's school report cards report Highly Qualified information about your school with district and state comparisons under the "Quality Teachers" tab.

Here's one more way NCLB might affect you even if your child doesn't attend a Title I school: District Improvement. You may have gotten a letter from your school district announcing that it is in Title I District Improvement. Even though less than half of North Carolina's schools receive Title I funding, all of North Carolina's school districts do. Like schools, if districts consistently don't meet target goals, they go into Title I Improvement and face sanctions. Detailed district AYP reports are on the Web at <http://ayp.ncpublicschools.org/nclb>. A current listing of District Improvement districts can be accessed on the Web at www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/nclb/district/.

If your child attends a Title I school, you may be interested in reading "No Child Left Behind: For North Carolina Parents with Students Attending Title I Schools" available on the Web at www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/parents/ or by calling 919.807.3450 for a printed copy.



TERMS MENTIONED IN THIS PUBLICATION

The ABCs of Public Education is North Carolina's major school reform effort focusing on local school accountability, an emphasis on student mastery of basic skills, and as much local board and local educator control as possible.

Academic (achievement) standards are set by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSOS) outlining what all students should know and be able to do for each grade level and academic subject. It defines the minimum standards for school systems to follow and to communicate to the public.

Accountability is the system in which the state sets academic standards for what students should know and learn at each grade level. Accountability includes conducting student assessments to find out if students are making progress toward meeting the academic standards and reporting those assessment results to the public.

Assessment is another word for test. The term assessment is sometimes used to encompass not only standard tests, but state-designed alternate assessments by which some students with disabilities are assessed.

Core academic subjects are English, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, social studies, economics, arts, history, geography, and kindergarten through Grade 6 (K-6). Under NCLB, only teachers meeting Highly Qualified criteria can teach these subjects.

Corrective action is a significant intervention in a Title I school after it has not made Adequate Yearly Progress in the same subject (reading/language arts or mathematics) for four years. Corrective action is an intervention for districts at a certain level of Title I District Improvement as well.

District Improvement is the status a district enters by not meeting target goals in the same subject (reading/language arts or math) in each of three grade spans (3-5, 6-8, and high school) for two years in a row. All school districts in North Carolina receive Title I funding and are subject to being placed in Title I District Improvement.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act is the principal federal law affecting K-12 education. When the ESEA of 1965 was reauthorized and amended in 2001, it was renamed the No Child Left Behind Act. The 2001 reauthorization represented significant changes in the law that affect all public elementary and secondary schools in the country.

Highly Qualified is an NCLB-defined teacher requirement which, in North Carolina, is a teacher who has obtained full state teacher certification or has passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state; holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and has demonstrated subject area competence.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 is the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The reauthorized law added strict new accountability changes and mandated that every child be taught by a Highly Qualified teacher. The law emphasizes new standards for teachers and new consequences for Title I schools that do not meet student achievement standards for two or more consecutive years. The law's major goal is for every school to be at 100 percent proficiency by 2013-14 as measured by state tests.

North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCOS) provides a guideline of what all students should know and be able to do for each grade level and academic subject. It defines the minimum standards for school systems to follow and to communicate to the public. State accountability measures are derived from the state curriculum.

Proficient/Proficiency are terms referring to student work that meets the achievement standard set by North Carolina for that grade level.

Restructuring is the sanction level applied to a Title I school. After five years of not making Adequate Yearly Progress, the school must plan for restructuring. After six years of not making Adequate Yearly Progress, the school must implement the plan for restructuring.

Sanctions is the term often used to describe the consequences for Title I schools in various levels of Title I School Improvement. The more years a school does not meet its Adequate Yearly Progress target goals in the same subject (reading/language arts and/or math), the more severe sanctions become.

School choice refers to the sanction applied to Title I schools not meeting state proficiency target goals for Adequate Yearly Progress in the same subject (reading/ language arts or mathematics) for two or more years. Those schools must offer parents the option of transferring their children to another public school designated by the district, as required by NCLB.

School Improvement is the status a Title I school enters after not making Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years in the same subject (reading/language arts or mathematics). A Title I school exits Improvement after two consecutive years of making Adequate Yearly Progress in the subject that identified it for Improvement (reading/ language arts and/or math). It is possible for a school to exit Improvement for one subject, while entering into or remaining in Improvement based on the other subject.

Supplemental Educational Services (SES) are extra academic services, such as tutoring, offered outside of regular school hours free of cost to economically disadvantaged students regardless of their academic performance. Schools begin offering SES the first year of Title I School Improvement, if their district is participating in the SES pilot program, and in the second year of Title I School Improvement otherwise. Once offered, the school must continue to offer SES until it exits Title I School Improvement. Services are designed to increase academic achievement, especially in reading, language arts and mathematics. Service providers must be approved by the NC State Board of Education.

Target goals are what determine whether a school or district makes Adequate Yearly Progress. For a school to make Adequate Yearly Progress, each student group in the tested grades must meet proficiency targets in reading/language arts and math and each student group must have at least a 95 percent participation rate in the assessments for both subjects. This represents four targets (proficiency and participation in reading/language arts and math assessments) for each student group. In addition, the school as a whole must show progress on the Other Academic Indicator (attendance rate or the cohort graduation rate).

Title I is the largest federal education funding program for schools. It provides funding for high poverty schools to help students who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind. Many of NCLB's requirements – Adequate Yearly Progress, Highly Qualified teacher standards, accountability, sanctions for schools designated for improvement, achievement standards and assessments, annual state report cards, professional development and parent involvement – are outlined in Title I. Title I used to be called Chapter One.

WEB SITES

NCLB in North Carolina: www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/

Your school's performance:

The ABCs of Public Education: <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs/>

NC School Report Card: www.ncreportcards.org/src/

AYP status: <http://ayp.ncpublicschools.org/>

North Carolina's Standard Course of Study (the state's curriculum):

www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/ncscos

North Carolina's Testing Program: www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/

Title I School Listings: www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/title/schools/

US Department of Education's NCLB Web site: www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml

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