

# Next Steps: Districts Designated as Low Performing



**PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA**

State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

NCDPI Webinar Regarding Districts with LP Designation

September 11, 2023

September 18, 2023

# Purpose

- To understand the next steps and timeline as prescribed by state statute
- To understand the resources available and designed to assist districts with completing steps outlined in state statute
- To provide best practices in district improvement planning

# Low Performing Districts Defined

## ***115C-105.39A. Identification of low-performing local school administrative units***

The State Board of Education shall identify low-performing local school administrative units on an annual basis. A low-performing local school administrative unit is a unit in which the majority of the schools in that unit that received a school performance grade and school growth score have been identified as low-performing schools, as provided in G.S. 115C-105.37.

# Low Performing District Plan

***G.S. 115C-105.39A.***

***(b). Plan for Improvement of Low-Performing Schools.*** Once a local school administrative unit has been identified as low-performing under this section, the following actions shall be taken:



# Step 1

The Superintendent shall proceed under **G.S. 115C-105.39**

Within 30 days of the initial identification the superintendent shall take one of the following actions:

- Recommend to the local board the principal be retained in current position\*
- Recommend to the local board the principal be retained in current position and a plan of remediation be developed
- Recommend to the local board the principal be transferred\*, or
- Proceed under G.S. 115C-325.4 to dismiss or demote the principal

*\*Certain Conditions apply*



# Step 2

Within 30 days of the identification of a local school administrative unit as low-performing by the State Board, the superintendent shall submit to the local board of education a preliminary plan for improving both the school performance grade and school growth score of each low-performing school in the unit, including how the superintendent and other central office administrators will work with each low-performing school and monitor the low-performing school's progress and how current local school administrative unit policy should be changed to improve student achievement throughout the local school administrative unit. The plan shall also include specific strategies to improve early childhood learning along with measurable goals.



# State Designation Timeline

Timeline Begins with SBE designation



**Superintendent  
Decision  
§ 115C-105.39**

First 30 days



**Preliminary District  
Improvement Plan to  
Local Board  
§ 115C-105.39A**

- Improvement Strategies
- Monitoring each school's progress
- Policy updates
- Early learning goals

# Recommended District Indicators

- A03** – The district sets district, school, and student subgroup achievement targets
- B01** – The LEA has oriented its culture toward shared responsibility and accountability
- B04** – The LEA has an LEA Support & Improvement Team
- B07** – The district examines existing school improvement strategies being implemented across the district and determines their value, expanding, modifying, and culling as evidence suggests
- C10** – The district develops and supports a comprehensive professional development plan centered around district wide teaching and learning initiatives
- D03** – The district recruits, trains, supports, and places personnel to completely address the problems of schools in need of improvement
- D09** – The district supports a comprehensive assessment structure that includes implementation of common standards-aligned assessments and frameworks for collaboration and data analysis surrounding these common assessments
- E03** – The district establishes two-way communication channels to encourage transparency, feedback loops, and access to information for families and the community



# Parent Notification

## **G.S. 115C-105.39A.**

**(c) Parental Notice of Low-Performing Local School Administrative Unit Status.** – Each local school administrative unit that the State Board identifies as low-performing shall provide written notification to the parents and guardians of all students attending any school in the local school administrative unit within 30 days of the identification that includes the following information:



# Parent notification shall include:

- 1) A statement that the State Board of Education has found that a majority of the schools in the local school administrative unit have earned a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" and have been identified as low-performing schools as defined by G.S. 115C-105.37. The statement shall also include an explanation of the school performance grades and school growth scores.
- 2) The percentage of schools identified as low-performing.
- 3) Information about the preliminary plan developed under subsection (b) of this section and the availability of the final plan on the local school administrative unit's Web site.
- 4) The meeting date for when the preliminary plan will be considered by the local board of education.
- 5) A description of any additional steps the school is taking to improve student performance.
- 6) For notifications sent to parents and guardians of students attending a school that is identified as low-performing under G.S. 115C-105.37, a statement that the State Board of Education has found that the school has earned a school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" and has been identified as a low-performing school as defined by G.S. 115C-105.37. This notification also shall include the overall school performance grade and school growth score the school received and an explanation of the school performance grades and school growth scores."

# Sample Parent Notification

SAMPLE: PARENT LETTER —Low Performing District  
Low Performing School

*(Insert School Address)*

*(Insert Date)*

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Legislation (G.S. §115C-83.15) passed during the 2013 long session of the North Carolina General Assembly provides parents with an additional measure of school performance in the form of School Performance Grades. Beginning with the 2013–14 school year, the annual North Carolina School Report Cards display a letter grade of A, B, C, D, or F for each school in the state.

The School Performance Grades are based 80 percent on our school's achievement score (student proficiency) and 20 percent on students' academic growth. At *(Insert school name here.)*, our achievement score for the 2022-2023 school year is based on how well our students performed on *(Insert appropriate measures here based on your school's grades. Include the following tests as appropriate: Grades 3–8 Mathematics, Grades 3–8 English Language Arts/Reading, Grades 5 and 8 Science, NC Math 1, NC Math 3, English II, and Biology, and additional indicators including English Learner Progress, ACT/ACT WorkKeys, Math Course Rigor, and the 4-Year Cohort Graduation Rate).*

(1)

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that *(Insert school name here.)* has been designated as a low performing school and *(Insert district name here.)* has been designated as a low performing district by the North Carolina State Board of Education. A low performing district is one in which the majority of the schools in the district have been identified as low-performing schools. The State Board of Education has found that *(Insert percentage)* of schools in *(Insert district name)* have been identified as low performing.

(6)

(1)

(2)

# Sample Parent Notification

## SAMPLE: PARENT LETTER —Low Performing District Low Performing School

As defined in G.S. 115C-105.37: “The State Board of Education shall identify low-performing schools on an annual basis. Low-performing schools are those that earn an overall school performance grade of D or F and a school growth score of "met expected growth" or "not met expected growth" as defined by G.S. 115C-83.15.”

*(Insert school name here.)* received a School Performance Grade of *(Insert letter grade of D or F here.)* and a growth designation of *(Insert Met or Did Not Meet here.)* for the 2022–2023 school year. Although we are committed to improving this score, it is important to remember that just as no one single score or grade tells the whole story of a student, neither does it tell you everything about the performance of a school or the opportunities that our school provides. *(List programs that make your school special.)* (6)

One of our top priorities for 2023–2024 is to improve the School Performance Grade in each school. There are a number of key programs we have in place to help improve student performance. These include:

- *(bullet improvement plan here and provide a brief summary of each initiative)* (5)

As a low performing district, we are required to develop an improvement plan that specifically addresses how the district will improve both the school performance grade and school growth score of each low-performing school in the unit, and how the superintendent and other central office administrators will work with each low-performing school and monitor the low-performing school's progress. The preliminary plan will be presented to our local school board at their next meeting, *(Insert date, time and place of the local school board meeting)* where the plan will be presented for approval. The final plan for improvement will be available on our local district website at *(Insert district website.)* (3) (4)

# Sample Parent Notification

Two sample notification letters are available to notify parents:

In a District designated as Low Performing for a:

- School designated Low Performing
- School not designated as Low Performing

A Spanish version of each letter will be available.

# State Designation Timeline

Timeline Begins with SBE designation

First 30 days



**Superintendent  
Decision  
§ 115C-105.39**



**Preliminary District  
Improvement Plan to  
Local Board  
§ 115C-105.39A**

**Parental Notification  
Sample available**

# Step 3

Within 30 days of its receipt of the preliminary plan, the local board shall vote to approve, modify, or reject this plan. Before the local board votes on the plan, it shall make the plan available to the public, including the personnel assigned to each low-performing school and the parents and guardians of the students who are assigned to each low-performing school, and shall allow for written comments.



# State Designation Timeline for Districts or Schools

Timeline Begins with SBE designation

First 30 days

Second 30 days



**Superintendent  
Decision  
§ 115C-105.39**

**Preliminary District  
Improvement Plan to  
Local Board  
§ 115C-105.39A**

**Parental Notification  
Sample available**

**Public Access to  
Preliminary Plan and  
Opportunities for  
Written Feedback**

**Plan Approval by  
Local Board**

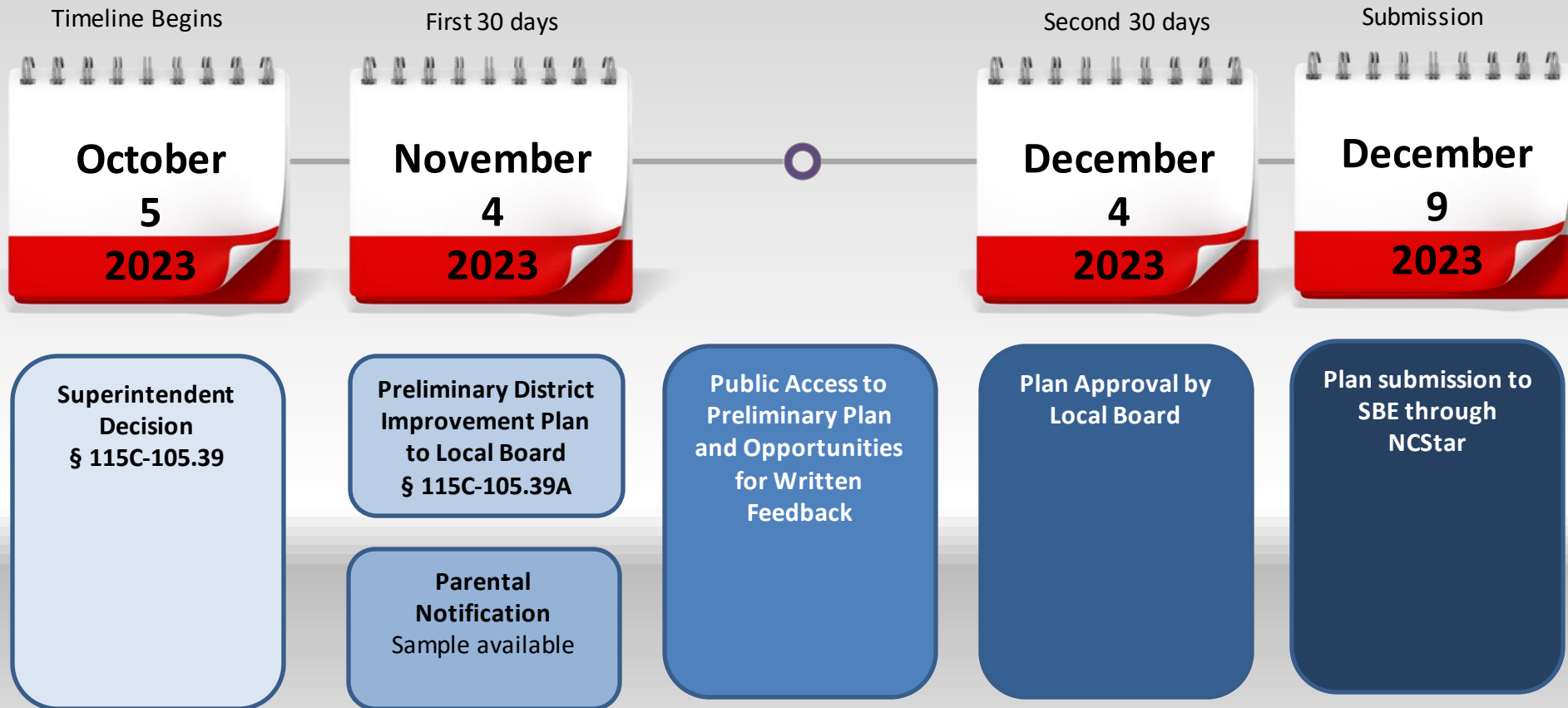


# Step 4

The local board shall submit a final plan to the State Board within five days of the local board's approval of the plan. The State Board shall review the plan expeditiously and, if appropriate, may offer recommendations to modify the plan.



# State Designation Timeline



# Submitting the Plan

- All Low Performing district plans will be submitted through NCStar access
- The following resources should help the school improvement teams with completing the plan
  - Register for training at <https://ncstar.weebly.com/>
  - [Resource Documents in NCStar Weebly](#)



# Submitting the Plan



## Our Direction



Normative Objectives  
(Ongoing)

0

[Update Profile](#)

[Mission/Governance](#) [Select Indicators](#)

## Our Meetings



Leadership Team Meetings  
(Last 90 Days)

2

[Manage Meetings](#)

## Our Plan



Actions Completed  
(Last 90 Days)

2

[Assess, Create, Monitor](#)

## Our Progress



Objectives Met  
(Last 90 Days)

0

[View Reports](#)

[View](#)

[Complete Forms](#) ▼

[Submissions](#) ▼

[Snapshot](#) ▼


To submit, click the submit button for each form or report that is due.  
Click the Submitted and Previous to view these reports.


Report Name	Submit By	Submit	Submitted	Previous
District Improvement Plan (Fall Submission 10/7 - 12/9)	Fall: Oct 7 - Dec 9	<a href="#">submit</a>		





# Submitting the Plan


**NCStar**  
Lighting the Path to Student Success

 North Carolina Department of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

**Our Direction**  
  
Normative Objectives  
(Ongoing)  
**0**  
Update Profile  
Set Direction  
Mission/Goals - Data Review - Select Indicators

**Our Meetings**  
  
Leadership Team Meetings  
(Last 90 Days)  
**2**  
Manage Meetings


**Our Plan**  
  
Actions Completed  
(Last 90 Days)  
**2**  
Assess, Create, Monitor

**Our Progress**  
  
Objectives Met  
(Last 90 Days)  
**0**  
View Reports  
View Feedback

Complete Forms ▾

**Submissions ▾**

To submit, click the submit button for each form or report that is due.  
Click the date of the Submitted and Previous to view these reports.

Report Name	Submit By	Submit	Submitted	Previous
District Improvement Plan (Fall Submission 10/7 - 12/9)	Fall: Oct 7 - Dec 9		 12/9/23	

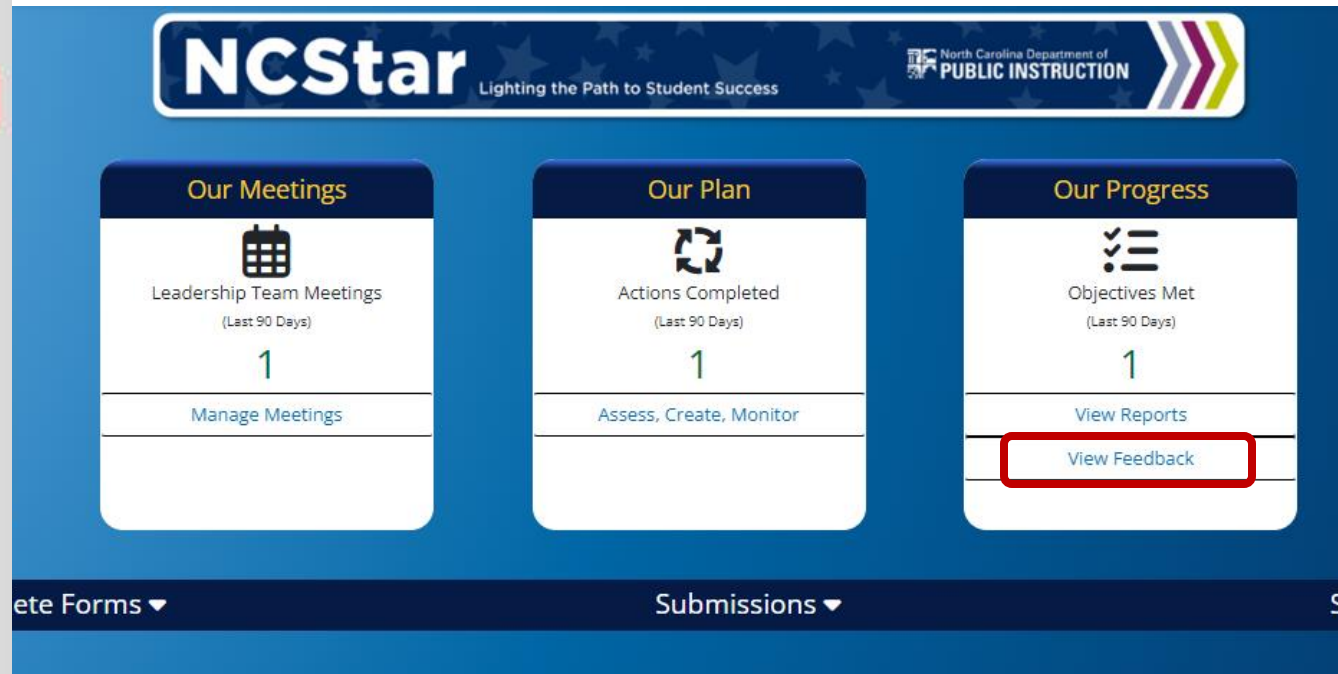
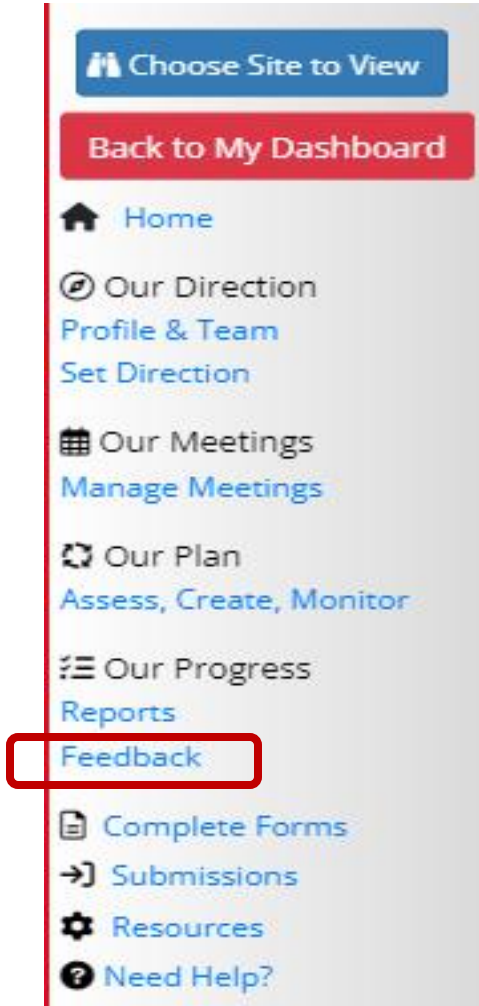


# Reviewing the Plan

Members of the District and Regional Support team will review each plan as they are submitted and provide appropriate recommendations through the NCStar system for consideration.



# Reviewing the Recommendations



1. Using either the Home page or the left Navigation Menu
2. Scroll to **Our Progress**
3. Select View Feedback or **Feedback**

# Reviewing the Recommendations

*How to find the provided Feedback Reports*



1. Select **Feedback**
2. Select Coaching Comments & Reviews
3. **View the Coaching Comments provided monthly on the district plan.**



# Step 5



The local board shall consider any recommendations made by the State Board and, if necessary, amend the plan and vote on approval of any changes to the final plan.

The local board of education shall provide access to the final plan on the local school administrative unit's website and submit the final plan to the State Board of Education who shall also provide access to the plan on the Department of Public Instruction's website.

# Process for Evaluation of Licensed Staff in Low-Performing Schools

## Step 1

- For schools designated as low performing, school administrators shall evaluate, as early in the school year as possible, all licensed employees for the purpose of providing adequate time for the development and implementation of a mandatory improvement plan.
- The evaluation of licensed staff in a low-performing school shall consist of the prior year summative evaluation (where available), all available student-growth data (EVAAS), the staff member's Professional Development Plan (PDP), a pre-observation conference (as defined in Component 4 of this policy), a formal observation (as defined in Component 5 of this policy), and a post-observation conference (as defined in Component 6 of this policy).

# Principal Recommendations

## Step 2

Based on the formal observation and other available evaluation data, the administrator shall assign performance ratings in accordance with Component 7 of this policy. If the licensed staff member is determined to have an area of deficiency (less than “Proficient” on Standards 1-5, then the evaluator shall recommend to the superintendent that:

1. the employee receive a mandatory improvement plan, or
2. the employee be dismissed, demoted, or not be recommended for contract renewal, or
3. the employee be removed immediately for conduct that causes substantial harm to the educational environment, or
4. no recommendation be made (with explanation to superintendent).

# Improvement Plans

## Step 3

- If a mandatory improvement plan is recommended for a licensed staff member, then the PDP may function as the mandatory improvement plan provided it addresses all areas of deficiency surfaced by the evaluation and contains recommendations and specific supports for satisfactorily resolving such deficiencies. A PDP that meets those criteria shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-333(b).
- Licensed staff with no deficiencies in practice documented in their evaluations may return to the appropriate evaluation plan type (Comprehensive, Standard, or Abbreviated) for the remainder of the school year. The evaluation process described above does not meet the requirements of an annual evaluation for licensed staff, but can be used to satisfy one observational requirement for an annual evaluation.
- LEAs that recommend a licensed staff member for dismissal or demotion should consult their local board attorney and follow the procedures outlined in N.C. Gen. Stat. § 115C-333(b)(2a).



# Purpose of a Super Observation

- *Evaluate, as early in the school year as possible, all licensed employees for the purpose of providing adequate time for the development and implementation of a mandatory improvement plan.*
- Must be completed by the principal or AP in the building
- Must observe and evaluate all 5 standards

**The process is to assemble as much historic information about the teacher's practice as is available (from previous-year's evaluations and past student-outcome data), and add current-year data to the mix, by conducting a formal observation.**

Once all this information is amassed, the principal reviews it to determine which of the following conditions exist:

- **Teacher practice is proficient on each of the five standards and no additional/extra support is needed:** These teachers may be placed on an Individual Professional Development Plan (see bullet 4)
- **Teacher is NOT proficient on one or more of the five standards:** These teachers must be placed on a Mandatory Improvement Plan. (see bullet 1)
- **Teacher is NOT proficient and would likely have a negative impact on the educational environment at the school:** These teachers may be dismissed, demoted, or not be recommended for contract renewal, or in the most serious cases, the employee be removed immediately. (See bullets 2 and 3)

Based on the Outcome of the Super Observation Process, the Principal must recommend(for each teacher in his/her school) one of the following:

1. The employee receives a mandatory improvement plan
2. The employee be dismissed, demoted, or not be recommended for contract renewal
3. The employee be removed immediately for conduct that causes substantial harm to the educational environment
4. No recommendation be made (with written explanation to the superintendent)

NOTE: There are no special steps or processes in the NCEES online tool for addressing Super Observations. This data collection and assessment is typically conducted off-line/manually. However, If Principals would like for the observation that they conduct to be the first formal observation of the year, they should transfer observation data into the rubric in the Online tool.



# FAQs:

- Can only be completed by the Principal or AP in the building
- Must *observe* **and** *evaluate* all 5 standards
- There is no special form in NCEES for the Super Observation
- The Super Observation may count as the first NCEES observation
- If a teacher is on the abbreviated cycle, complete a standard observation on pencil paper. If there are no deficiencies the data collected from the S.O. may be entered into the NCEES system. Then you may continue on with the regular observation schedule for the remainder of the year.
- The Super Observation may be announced.



# Low Performing Super Observation Requirements

Super Observation Per State  
Board Policy Eval-004 (Based on  
§115C-333)

Super Observations Teacher  
Evaluations in LP Schools

**Questions?** Reach out to your District HR Director. If the District HR Director has any questions, please contact:

Jennifer Bass  
Educator Standards & Evaluation  
[Jennifer.bass@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Jennifer.bass@dpi.nc.gov)





# Fall 2023 NCStar Training

## Jackson County October 5-6, 2023

Southwestern Community College  
Conrad G. Burrell Building  
463 Webster Road  
Sylva, NC

## Wilkes County November 1-2, 2023

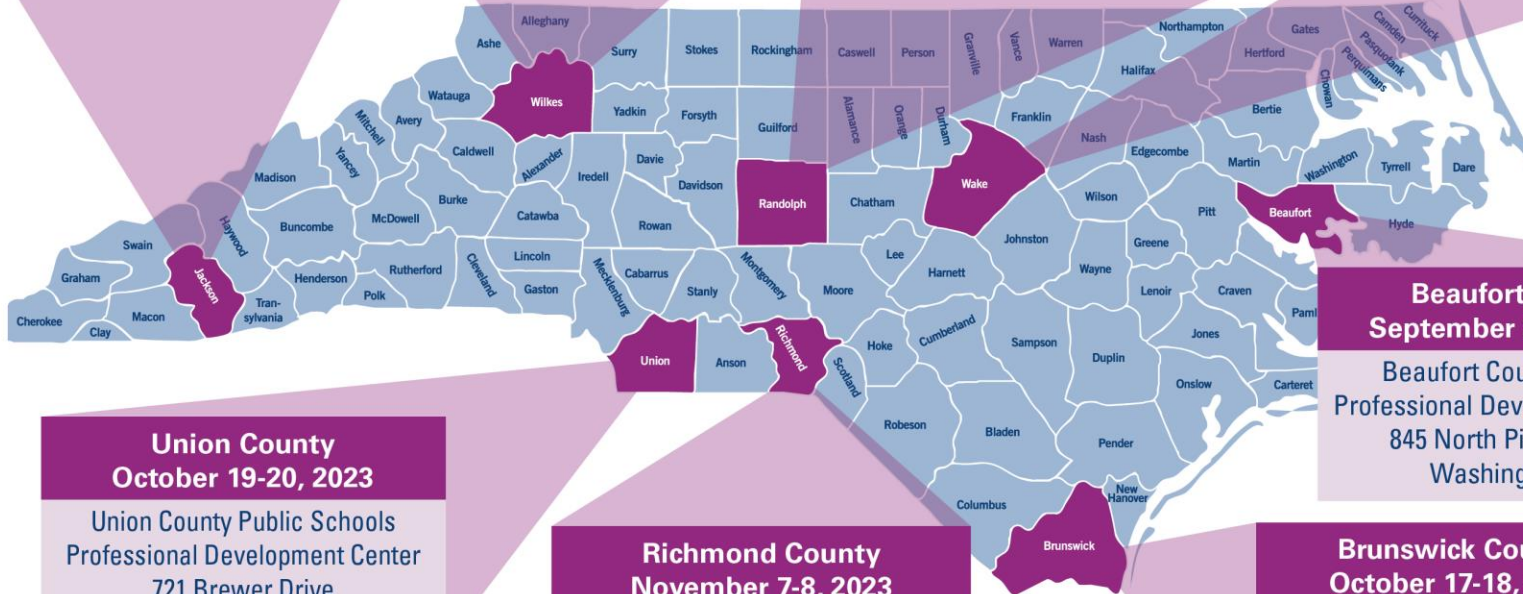
Stone Family Center for the  
Performing Arts  
613 Cherry Street  
North Wilkesboro, NC

## Randolph County September 25-26, 2023

Randolph Community College Continuing  
Education and Industrial Center  
JB & Claire Davis Corporate Training Bldg.  
413 Industrial Park Ave  
Asheboro, NC

## Wake County October 23-24, 2023

Wake Tech Community College  
Southern Campus  
Building L  
9101 Fayetteville Road  
Raleigh, NC



## Union County October 19-20, 2023

Union County Public Schools  
Professional Development Center  
721 Brewer Drive  
Monroe, NC

## Richmond County November 7-8, 2023

Richmond County Community College  
Cole Auditorium  
101 College Drive East  
Hamlet, NC

## Beaufort County September 28-29, 2023

Beaufort County Schools  
Professional Development Center  
845 North Pierce Street  
Washington, NC

## Brunswick County October 17-18, 2023

Brunswick Community College  
Virginia Williamson Event Center  
Odell Williamson Auditorium  
150 College Road NE  
Bolivia, NC

# Restart Model Applications

- If the school is also designated as *Recurring Low Performing*, the district may elect to apply for the Restart Model.
  - “Restart model, in which the State Board of Education would authorize the local board of education to operate the school with the same exemptions from statutes and rules as a charter school authorized under Article 14A of this Chapter. [§ 115C-105.37B](#)”
- The application window opens in October and closes in February.
- More information and the application may be accessed:
  - <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/district-and-regional-support/school-reform-models>
- An *Informational Webinar on the Restart Model* is scheduled for November 6th. Register via <https://bit.ly/ApplyRestart>





# Questions



# Contact Us

## Low Performing Schools/Districts

Dr. Cynthia Martin,  
Director, District & Regional Support  
[Cynthia.Martin@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Martin@dpi.nc.gov)

## NCStar School Improvement Planning

Mr. Alessandro Montanari  
Assistant Director, District & Regional Support  
[Alessandro.Montanari@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Alessandro.Montanari@dpi.nc.gov)

## Educator Evaluations

Dr. Tom Tomberlin  
Director, Educator Recruitment and Support  
[Thomas.Tomberlin@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Thomas.Tomberlin@dpi.nc.gov)





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