



# NCLB NEWS

FEBRUARY 2008

New Support Efforts Begin  
Across State . . . . . 1-3

*Guthrie Begins Work With  
Redesign Project* . . . . . 3

Transformation Districts Pilot  
Framework . . . . . 4-5

NCLB May Change Through  
Administration Measures in 2008 . . . . . 6

NCDPI Plans Reform Model  
Presentations . . . . . 6

Spellings Introduces New Resource . . . . . 7

Blue Ribbon Commission  
Makes Recommendations . . . . . 7

NC Growth Model Helps  
Some Schools . . . . . 8

Two NC Schools Receive National  
Title I Recognition . . . . . 9-10

NCDPI Launches Customer-Service  
Approach to Conferences and Events . . . 11

WUNC Radio Documentary  
Addresses NCLB . . . . . 11

Research Division Produces  
High School Reform Report . . . . . 11

EVAAS Launches Web Site . . . . . 12

*Upcoming Meetings  
and Conferences* . . . . . 12

## New Support Efforts Begin Across State NCDPI Aligns With New Framework

Educators are taking a new approach to supporting schools and districts across the state through NCDPI's new Framework for Comprehensive Support for Districts and Schools. The agency is studying key focus areas through March 2008 to determine structure and staffing changes that best support the Framework.

The new Framework reflects a renewed commitment to be a more service-focused agency providing support to all districts and schools, while still delivering more intensive support to the lowest-performing districts and schools. Developed over the past year, in collaboration with the Boston Consulting Group with funding by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Framework is a more proactive, coordinated and comprehensive approach designed to drive sustainable improvements as the agency partners with and delivers support services to schools and districts. The Framework was designed in consultation with over 700 stakeholders including superintendents, district staff, principals, teachers, and community leaders.

The Framework was developed to:

- improve student achievement and enable all students to graduate from high school 21st century future-ready;
- increase district capacity so that positive change will be more systemic and lasting;
- respond to the needs of an increasing number of schools and districts that are being identified as underperforming based on state and federal criteria;
- establish a stronger customer-service orientation at NCDPI;

- respond to the fact that state resources are limited and must be placed strategically; and
- respond to the NC General Assembly's mandate to create a framework for consolidated and comprehensive support for districts and schools.

Demand for state assistance has steadily been outpacing NCDPI's ability to serve. Since 2004-05, the number of public schools with performance composite scores below 50 percent proficiency has more than doubled, and the number of schools in Title I School Improvement has grown 60 percent. In 2006-07, less than half (45 percent or 1,052 schools) of 2,350 schools made AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). Almost one-fifth of the state's schools, 458, are in Title I School Improvement and over half of the state's LEAs are in District Improvement.

### Agency Determines Core Work

The agency is analyzing key centers of focus to determine the core work and the human resources necessary to support that work. Task analysis will define the core functions and ensure that the agency's positioned to support the new Framework.

"Nothing is sacred. We're looking at every task," says Robert Logan, associate superintendent of innovation and school transformation. "This is not just rearranging the chairs on the deck. We want to get necessary services to children to help them perform better."

*continued on page 2*

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For more information about this newsletter, please contact NC Department of Public Instruction Director of Communications and Information Vanessa Jeter at 919-807-3469 or [vjeter@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:vjeter@dpi.state.nc.us). Please email your NCLB-related questions you would like answered in the newsletter or on the Web to Charlotte Duren at [cduren@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:cduren@dpi.state.nc.us). The NC NCLB News publication will be distributed to superintendents and Title I directors and available to others on the Web at [www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb). If you have additional needs for hard copy editions, please contact Vanessa Jeter.

## New Support Efforts Begin Across State (continued)

### NCDPI Supports Districts

NCDPI will provide some support, such as assessment tools and associated professional development, to all districts. The agency will provide more in-depth, customized support resources based on district capacity. LEAs most in need will be designated as transformation districts and will receive more intensive support. Similarly, schools most in need will be designated as transformation schools and will receive extensive support services.

In 2007-08, about 10 NCDPI staff members and 60 contracted leadership coaches will serve 135 schools (75 high schools, 40 middle schools and 20 elementary schools) in 27 districts. In addition, NCDPI is piloting one element of the new Framework with two transformation districts – Columbus County and Lexington City. (See related story on page 4.) Schools and districts were selected through a screening process combining state and federal criteria.

The first implementation phase of the Framework will be in 2008-09 and each year refinements will be made along with continued monitoring and planning and increased staffing. The program will be implemented to full scale and reach for the 2011-12 school year. Although there are some interim positions under different titles, regional support leads, district transformation coaches, school transformation coaches and instructional coaches will work in contracted and staff positions to implement the Framework. (See Framework Staff table on page 3.)

Participating schools develop school action plans, similar to school improvement plans only more intense, in response to challenges that are identified through a rigorous, supported self-assessment process. The supported self-assessment process focuses on five LEA and school fundamentals: instructional excellence and alignment, leadership capacity, professional capacity, planning and operational effectiveness, and family and community support. The assessments might examine data as shown in the table below, leading to the resulting questions and goal setting.

Focus area	Data/monitoring results	Potential questions addressed	Potential goals set	Potential strategies employed
<b>Instructional excellence and alignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student achievement by subgroup</li> <li>• Achievement gap</li> <li>• Student attendance</li> <li>• Graduation rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What subgroups are lagging the most and in what subjects? Why?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the student attendance rate for at-risk subgroup populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional Coach assists in role development and scheduling for school counselor(s).</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal background and experience</li> <li>• School climate/environment</li> <li>• Instructional planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is principal experienced in schools?</li> <li>• Has leadership created a healthy environment for students/teachers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase capacity of the building level principal by addressing the inexperience of assistant principals and teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional Coach develops appropriate training for school leaders, including teacher leaders.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher quality and experience</li> <li>• Curriculum/instructional alignment</li> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Level of coaching and support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do instructional methods align and adhere to curriculum?</li> <li>• Is enough time spent on learning?</li> <li>• Are teachers sufficiently supported?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase collaborative planning time for teachers and address the purpose of this time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Transformation Coach assists in developing Professional Learning Communities and master schedule.</li> </ul>
<b>Planning and operational effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budgeting and resource allocation</li> <li>• Personnel</li> <li>• Student Support services</li> <li>• Physical infrastructure</li> <li>• Technology &amp; data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the budget appropriately allotted?</li> <li>• Where are staff shortages?</li> <li>• Is the building adequately equipped?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a structure to analyze the coordination of funding sources relative to program objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Transformation Coach assists in developing the comprehensive needs assessment to include outcome, demographic, and process data.</li> </ul>
<b>Family and community support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental/community involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How/where are parents involved?</li> <li>• Are community partnerships coordinated at the school level?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased coordination of services across community partnerships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Support Lead identifies and assists in training community partnerships coordinator.</li> </ul>

*continued on page 3*

## New Support Efforts Begin Across State (continued)

### FRAMEWORK STAFF

<b>Regional support lead</b>	Leads the regional support team in serving districts and schools without dedicated coaches (non-transformation districts and schools) to coordinate support services including professional development. Coordinates regional support delivery and facilitates communication across all field-based personnel. Builds capacity to implement and sustain reform and innovation to ensure that schools successfully educate all students. Coaches superintendents and district leaders in using the needs assessment to develop a three-year school improvement plan. Supervises regional support teams in locating and securing targeted assistance.
<b>District transformation coach</b>	Facilitates planning and coordinates coaching and service delivery, including professional development, for a transformation district. Has access to a pool of experts/support as needed. Provides guidance/support to school coaches and information to regional support leads and NCDPI. Works to build capacity in a district to implement and sustain reform and innovation to ensure that schools successfully educate all students. Provides on-site support for superintendents and other central office leaders and guiding district leadership in developing a three-year district improvement plan focused on advancing student outcomes.
<b>School transformation coach</b>	Facilitates planning process and coordinates coaching and service delivery for a transformation school. Has access to a pool of experts/support as needed. Provides information/updates to the district transformation coach and others.
<b>Instructional coach</b>	Offers on-site support to help guide school leadership in developing school improvement plans in identified schools that are not transformation schools. Provides on-site support for classroom teachers, principals and school planning team. Plans, implements and attends necessary professional development.

#### Questions?

Call or email Associate Superintendent of Innovation and School Transformation Robert Logan at [rlogan@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:rlogan@dpi.state.nc.us), 919.807.3435 or State Assistance Director Pat Ashley at [pashley@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:pashley@dpi.state.nc.us), 919.807.4006

### GUTHRIE BEGINS WORK WITH REDESIGN PROJECT



Carolyn Guthrie, project manager for the assistance redesign project, began work at NCDPI in January 2008. She is working to ensure plans are fully developed and implemented for the new Framework for Comprehensive Support.

Most recently, she worked in Wake County Public Schools as a special assistant to an area superintendent serving 26 elementary schools. She was involved in developing school improvement plans from needs assessments. A former elementary school teacher, she's also worked as a magnet school coordinator and as an instructional resource teacher.

Call or email Carolyn Guthrie at [cguthrie@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:cguthrie@dpi.state.nc.us) or 919.807.3762.

# TRANSFORMATION DISTRICTS PILOT FRAMEWORK

## Columbus County and Lexington City school districts are partnering with NCDPI in a pilot to develop a Framework for Comprehensive Support for Districts.

The pilot districts' superintendents, Dr. Dan Strickland, of Columbus County, and Dr. Becky Bloxam, of Lexington City, know their communities inside and out. They grew up in their school systems, raised children in their school systems and have served 20 years each in their respective central office administrations and many years before that in their districts' schools. No one can tell them a thing about their schools and the children who attend them. Or can they?

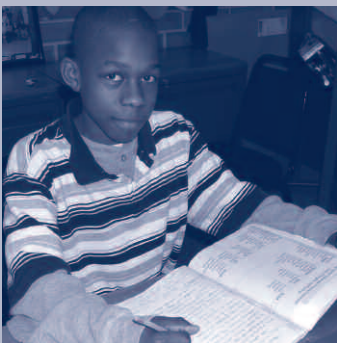
"We welcome another set of eyes in this process," says Dr. Strickland, who believes his district benefited from last year's LEAAP (LEA assistance program) team. "It'll bring a focus as to what we can do in Columbus County and help us in coming together even more. Hopefully, we're on the right track. Outside eyes can see things differently, though, things we might be taking for granted. Plus, additional resources – human and financial – are most welcome."

Columbus and Lexington schools as well as the districts as a whole are undergoing needs assessments with a focus on understanding root causes of the needs. Each of the districts has a district transformation coach and access to school leadership coaches and discipline-specific instructional coaches.

"I'm excited about this needs assessment," says Dr. Bloxam. "We're so involved in the day-to-day operations of a very complex organization. The opportunity to have a needs assessment that can show us what really is going on and what really is needed is wonderful. We hope that, between the needs assessments and MAPS [Measurement of Academic Progress] diagnostic information for each student, we can have as detailed a plan as possible in place for next year on how to go about remedying the deficits."

Both districts are using data analysis to determine where help is needed most. Columbus uses EduTest, a 3-12 Web-based diagnostic reporting program, and the SAS® EVAASTM program, a K-12 Web-based diagnostic reporting program. (See related story on page 12 and in the February 2007 edition of the NC NCLB News at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/news/>.) Next fall, all Lexington and Columbus students will take the MAPS test to identify each child's skill gaps.

Columbus and Lexington have employed the obvious first guesses to address student achievement challenges. Teachers in both districts are used to opening their classroom doors often for observation. Both districts have been through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation process and have participated in the state assistance program for schools and various grants. Lexington Middle is participating in the North Carolina Schools to Watch® program which involves a self-study and classroom observations. West Columbus High was identified



*Personal engagement is an important key to student achievement as reflected in the writing done by sixth grade Lexington Middle School student Marcus Culbertson in his "Writer's Workshop"® class (excerpt*

*right). Marcus is beginning to see himself as a writer, although basketball remains his primary interest.*

**"It was a cold breezy day one snowy Christmas. There was fog on the glass of my window leaving only pale snow visible. Inside the warm room, I could hear the wind blowing inside my room from a little crack in the window that only the smallest of insects could get through. I thought to myself, what a wonderful day.**

**I could hear small sounds of clinking and clanking coming from the living room. I slowly crept down the steps toward where I thought the noise was coming from. To my amazing surprise, on the middle of the living room floor was a small powerwheels car. I bolted up with a scream and wailed, 'Oh snap!, When did I get this?' ...."**

as a turnaround school for 2005-06. Lexington High and East Columbus High, identified as turnaround high schools for 2006-07, have implemented reform models. Columbus schools have been aligning their school improvement plans with the strategic district improvement plan, developed over two years.

The road to progress has had its share of bumps in both districts. Columbus closed an elementary school this year that was in the restructuring phase with no sign of exiting school improvement and enrollment projected to fall below 100 students. Lexington High held the lowest four-year cohort graduation rate (43.7 percent) in the state in 2006. (The state's four-year cohort rate that year was 68.3 percent.)

Both districts have turned the corner toward success. Although the district missed making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2007, Columbus increased student achievement in reading and math in grades 3-8 for all measurable student groups and received national recognition for Southeastern Early College High School. Lexington High improved its graduation rate to 62.1 percent in 2007, an 18.4-point improvement in one year.

But both districts, located in communities that have seen hard times, still need more success and more help. Columbus County has a poverty rate of 21.1 percent. In Davidson County, over 6,000 furniture-related jobs have left in the past few years. Parents are working two and three jobs and their high school children are joining the work force to help out in greater numbers than ever

before. Recruiting and retaining staff remains a challenge. Fourteen of 18 principalships in Columbus are held by principals with three or less years of experience. When she started five years ago, Lexington Middle School Principal Patti Kroh had 41 teacher vacancies to fill. Lexington High students were in such disbelief that their principal planned to return to his job after the winter holiday, that he had to begin making statements to the fact over intercom announcements.

Teachers and administrators in both districts believe that relationships have to come before the rigor and relevance for their students. "You can't get to the rigor and the relevance without the relationship piece for most economically disadvantaged students," says Dr. Bloxam. "They have to have a personal connection before they can get to the academic work."

In addition to developing student relationships, both districts have plenty of ideas about where they need to go next. They know they need more focus on assessment as a daily activity that's done both formally and informally, more time and organization to create professional learning communities among teachers, more parent involvement, more student engagement, more focus on essential skills from the NC Standard Course of Study rather than just covering all the material, and more professional development. Sound like a lot? That's where both districts see the district pilot program as helping – doing all they know they need to do with a sense of focus.



*Lexington Middle School Algebra teacher Sylvester Hairston shows eighth grader Marcus Johnson how geotracking works. Marcus is in the geotracking club, one of the new student clubs the school is launching with community links that will meet during school hours. Hairston learned about*

*how to use geotracking in the classroom through an NC State Science House program. Making real world connections is key to success for the school. "We were looking for a way – we're so serious about school and we're so very structured and organized about every minute and how we spend it that we wanted students to see themselves here more and to have something really motivating," says Principal Patti Kroh.*



*District Transformation Coach Dr. Sherry Broome (center) and Ann Osburn, professional development coordinator for middle schools, work with South Columbus High Principal Dale Norris in considering the school's needs assessment.*

*The team looks for what is going right as much as what is challenging a school. Consultants look to pull regional resources working from the theory that solutions to somebody's problem are found in every school.*

# NCLB May Change Through Administrative Measures in 2008

Jan. 8, 2008 was the sixth anniversary of the signing of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and it received considerable attention in Washington. With 2008 reauthorization appearing unlikely, US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings vowed to take administrative steps to make changes in the law's implementation. In a press interview aboard Air Force One on Jan. 7 (The entire interview is available online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/01/20080107.html>), Sec. Spellings said that if Congress didn't act this year, "...I'll take administrative steps at the Department, as I have in the last three years, to start to work on some of these matters. I've said a couple weeks ago that this nine-state growth model pilot can now be expanded nationally.... We cannot wait around and just say, well, as we march towards 2014, that inertia in the Congress is adequate. It's not."

In addition to expanding the growth model program (See related story on page 8.) that gives schools credit for individual student's year-to-year academic improvements, Sec. Spellings indicated an interest in pursuing the possibility of allowing different consequences for chronically underperforming schools and those in which just a few students don't improve, more student access to free tutoring, and requiring states to use an accurate definition of high school graduation rates that's consistent across all states. (See related story on page 6 of the Nov. 2007 edition of the NC NCLB News online at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/news/>.)

Later that day, as reported in the Jan. 8, Washington Post (The entire story is online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/07/AR2008010701823.html>), President Bush urged the Democratic-led Congress to revive a stalled effort to reauthorize NCLB, but he pledged to veto any bill that weakens its accountability measures. That sort of rhetoric is indicative of the deep divisions that exist over the legislation, now reflected in the presidential debates.

NCLB's emphasis on student testing, federal mandates on how states run their schools, the "all or nothing" approach to identifying – and sanctioning – schools not meeting testing goals, and the law as an "unfunded mandate" are all common criticisms. (A recent federal appeals court revived the National Education Association's challenge that the law is underfunded. The entire story is online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/07/AR2008010701319.html?sub=new>.)

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), published an editorial in the Washington Post's Jan. 7 edition indicating that he plans to introduce a bill in the spring to revise NCLB. Sen. Kennedy, who helped engineer the law's passage, identified some top priorities in "fixing" NCLB including the use of multiple measures to determine the status of schools, dealing with the "drop out crisis," parental involvement, better teacher training and mentoring and adequate funding for school reform. (Sen. Kennedy's editorial is available online at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/06/AR2008010601828.html>.)

NCLB is the first federal effort to hold all public K-12 schools accountable for the performance of their students. The law was due for reauthorization in 2007, but Congress has not advanced beyond holding hearings and discussion drafts. The effort is slated to resume in 2008, although some observers predict Congress won't complete its work until after the next president takes office. The act is set for reauthorization every six years to give Congress the opportunity to take note on how it's working and to make needed improvements. If the law is not reauthorized, it will remain in effect as is. It doesn't expire if it's not reauthorized.

## NCDPI HOSTS EVENT TO ASSIST SCHOOLS IN CHOOSING A REFORM MODEL

Thirty-five identified turnaround high schools must select a whole school reform model no later than May 30, 2008 for implementation in 2008-09. NCDPI will host a meeting Friday, March 7 for the principals of identified high schools (Cohort 3 and STEM high schools) along with their three-member teams and superintendents. At the meeting, to be held at the Holiday Inn Brownstone Hotel in downtown Raleigh from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., representatives from four nationally-recognized reform models will make presentations.

Representatives from America's Choice, Edison Schools, NC New Schools Project and Talent Development will make presentations. These models clearly align with North Carolina's high school reform model requirements as do many other national models and alternate models districts themselves might develop. A work session for districts on steps to follow when developing their own models as well as contact information for other models will be presented at the March 7 event in addition to the reform model

presentations. Letters and response forms regarding the March 7 event have been mailed to identified districts and schools. NCDPI research on the four reform models being presented and a list of other reform model possibilities will be sent to the identified districts and schools.

Schools are expected to sign contracts with their reform vendor and to notify NCDPI of their vendor choice no later than Friday, May 30. Districts developing their own models must have those models approved by NCDPI by May 30 as well. Spring and summer professional development is integral to all reforms prior to implementation. For this reason, school and districts are urged to commit to a reform model in advance of the May 30 deadline.

For more information about the March 7 event, the May 30 deadline, or high school reform models, contact State Assistance Director Pat Ashley at [pashley@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:pashley@dpi.state.nc.us).

## Spellings Introduces New Resource

US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings introduced a new resource she is calling the national dashboard. This new tool provides state-by-state reports on student achievement. Below are some highlights from North Carolina's "map," available online at <http://www.ed.gov/nclb/accountability/results/progress/northcarolina.pdf>.

A significantly higher percentage of schools nationwide make Adequate Yearly Progress and stay out of school improvement status as compared with North Carolina, according to the site. This may be because of different accountability standards in North Carolina. Quoted sources for the information were the Consolidated State Performance Report, 2006-07 and the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data, 2005-06.

	# of Eligible NC Students	# of Eligible NC Students Participating	% of Eligible Students Participating Nationally
Tutoring (SES)	71,035	9,790 (13.8%)	529,627 (14.5%)
Choice	102,333	3,228 (3.2%)	119,988 (2.2%)

	North Carolina	United States
Number of Schools	2,348	98,905
Schools Making Adequate Yearly Progress	1,030 (44.8%)*	64,546 (70%)*
Schools in Need of Improvement	449 (19.1%)*	10,676 (10.8%)*
Schools in Restructuring	49	2,302

\* Percentage applied by NCDPI.

### 2008-09 SES APPLICATION FOR POTENTIAL PROVIDERS

Potential SES providers for 2008-09 must complete and submit an application to the NC Department of Public Instruction between Dec. 14, 2007 and Feb. 7, 2008 in order to be considered. Other deadline and submission requirements are outlined in the application online at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/ses/providers/>. Providers for 2008-09 will be approved by the State Board of Education and notified in May 2008.

## Blue Ribbon Commission Makes Recommendations

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Accountability and Testing Commission, formed in May 2007 to review the state's testing and accountability system, presented its recommendations to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education on Jan. 9. Commission recommendations were referred to Board committees for further study. Some recommendations may be acted on relatively quickly; others may require consideration in the "long session" of the state legislature, next scheduled for January 2009.

The Commission's 27 recommendations fell into two broad categories: developing a vision for a 21st century testing and accountability system and adjustments needed to the current system. The Commission, chaired by Dr. Sam Houston, found that the current testing program and accountability system does not reflect 21st century skill student expectations. In addition to recommending that the state develop an accountability system that does reflect 21st century student expectations, recommendations included:

- testing only reading and mathematics in grades 3-8;
- using graduation rates, a college readiness measure, and only those end-of-course exam results required for high school graduation (Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Biology, English I, US History, Civics and Economics but not Chemistry, Physical Science and Physics) to hold high schools accountable for performance;
- providing teachers with more diagnostic information about students;
- defining power standards, prioritized standards derived from a systematic and balanced approach within the NC Standard Course of Study;
- eliminating the 8th grade Computer Skills Test; and
- removing the 4th, 7th, and 10th grade writing results from the ABCs.

The complete report is online at [http://www.ncpublicschools.org/sbe\\_meetings/0801/accountabilityfinalreport.pdf](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/sbe_meetings/0801/accountabilityfinalreport.pdf).

# NC Growth Model Helps Some Schools

Many policymakers, educators and researchers believe that NCLB should be rewritten so that accountability decisions are made not only through a model that tracks the test scores of one year's group of students against the previous year's, but through growth models that track individual students' progress. This practice would address many critics' concerns that under NCLB there are too many ways for a school to fail, even when it's moving in the right direction. Most agree growth models provide a more accurate picture of whether a school is succeeding in helping its students.

Disagreement enters about how that might be done. Some say that the current model, which judges schools on the number of their students deemed proficient, should be scrapped entirely. Not all states have the data systems needed to analyze individual students' gains and others say that even when such data systems exist, it leads to the "black box" of complicated formulas in a time when the public is demanding transparency.

How is growth determined and how much growth is enough? Whatever growth model is approved, the US Department of Education (USED) seems to be sticking to its goal that students need to be proficient by the end of the 2014. Any growth trajectory in a growth model must take this goal into account. Often, that's too steep to help a school.

North Carolina was among the first states to sign up for a growth-based accountability model when the USED announced its pilot program. Beginning in 2005-06, the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations include a way that schools and districts can be credited for academic growth shown by a student group not initially meeting its proficiency target goal.

In North Carolina, an AYP growth standard is applied to student groups not initially meeting target goals even after applying safe harbor and the confidence interval. Nonproficient students who are on track toward meeting the proficiency standards within four years of entering a tested grade in the state, or by the end of 10th grade, can be counted as proficient. The AYP growth standard outlines predetermined incremental progress that students must demonstrate in order to be counted as "on track" and, therefore, proficient. If the percentage of nonproficient students on the path to proficiency combined with the percentage of proficient students meets the proficiency target goal, the group is considered to have met its target goal.

Twelve NC schools benefited from the growth model in 2007. Below is a chart of schools that made AYP using the growth model in 2007.

## NC SCHOOLS THAT MADE AYP IN 2007 USING THE GROWTH MODEL

	School	Grades	# Students	# Targets met	Met w/ Growth		Met w/ CI		Met w/ SH	
					Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math
Beaufort County	John C Tayloe Elem	2-3	249	19		B		ED		
Buncombe County	Candler Elem	PK-5	308	13		ED				
Craven County	Ben D Quinn Elem	PK-5	222	17		B		ED		
Cumberland County	Ponderosa Elem	PK-5	211	13		AS				B, ED
Durham County	Eastway Elem	K-5	202	21		B			AS, B, H, ED, LEP	AS, ED, LEP
Henderson County	Upward Elem	K-5	277	19		ED	H, ED	AS, H		
Mecklenburg County	First Ward Elem	K-5	255	15		AS, B				ED
Mecklenburg County	Univ Pk Creative Arts	K-5	258	13		B		AS		ED
Richmond County	Richmond Primary	PK-3	126	17		B	B, ED			ED
Wake County	Lead Mine Elem	K-5	278	19		ED				B
Wake County	Lockhart Elem	K-5	381	23		SWD				
Wake County	Pleasant Union Elem	K-5	346	21		ED	ED	B		

**NOTES:**

AS = All Students  
B = Black

CI = Confidence Interval  
ED = Economically Disadvantaged

H = Hispanic  
LEP = Limited English Proficiency

SH = Safe Harbor  
SWD = Students With Disabilities



## Two NC Schools Receive National Title I Recognition

Morehead City Primary (Carteret County Schools) and Longview Elementary (Hickory City Schools) were recently recognized as Title I Distinguished Schools for 2008. Morehead City Primary was nominated for Category 1 – Exceptional Student Performance for two or more consecutive years, and Longview Elementary was nominated for Category 2 – Closing the Achievement Gap between groups of students.

“Morehead City Primary and Longview Elementary are to be congratulated for not only improving student performance but also for citizenship and character of their students,” said NCDPI Student Support Services Director Lynn Warren. “As North Carolina Title I Distinguished Schools, they represent the strong efforts of educators to promote student success.”

Morehead City Primary, serving a diverse population of about 700 PK-3 students, differentiates instruction through literacy circles, math stations, small groups, and one-on-one tutorials. Title 1 services are fully integrated throughout the school to support at-risk learners.

The school’s instructional cycle is driven by assessment using teacher monitoring, common grade-level assessments and components of the North Carolina annual testing program. Regular classroom teachers, Title 1 specialists, special educators, and English as a Second Language staff offer instruction in a variety of settings designed to best match student needs. Technology is a key resource allowing instruction to be fine tuned to each child’s needs.



*A coast guard volunteer works with a Morehead City Primary (Carteret County Schools) student in reading.*

“I believe our success is due to our intentional focus on the instructional cycle, a cycle that is driven first by the staff’s knowledge of the Standard Course of Study, second by ongoing

assessment, and third by knowing how to differentiate instruction based on that assessment,” says Morehead City Primary Principal Renne Newman.

Over the past 10 years, staff development has focused on curriculum and collaboration. Instructional teams collaborate with a constant focus on the school’s mission: to meet the needs of each child by providing motivation, knowledge and basic life skills. Professional learning communities, school teams that meet on a regular basis to learn, plan lessons and problem solve to improve their daily work, allow Morehead City Primary teachers to collaborate in developing thematic units and differentiated learning techniques.

Staff members have been trained in Balanced Literacy, a reading approach utilizing multiple strategies, and Empowering Writers, an innovative approach to teaching narrative, expository (informative), and persuasive writing. Other staff training has been in math, instructional technology, multisensory techniques, and Dimensions of Learning, an instructional framework of essential academic elements. About 100 of the school’s 700 students speak English as a second language (ESL) and many of the school’s teachers have volunteered to take Spanish classes at the local community college to augment the services of the school’s ESL teacher.

Community partnerships are key to Morehead City Primary’s success. The United Methodist Church adopted the school and provides reading tutors and student outreach help. Coast Guard personnel stationed in the community tutor struggling learners. Students from a neighboring high school serve as after-school study buddies and mentors. In addition, Morehead City Primary works collaboratively with both Carteret Community College and East Carolina University in hosting pre-service teachers as interns.

The school’s philosophy for excellent instruction in a nourishing environment is reflected in its annual Hurray for Diffendoofer Day. The day, named after the Dr. Seuss book which served as its inspiration, showcases the school’s “celebration approach to teaching and learning,” Newman says.

“We’ve taught you that the earth is round. That red and white make pink. And something else that matters more, we’ve taught you how to think.”

*From Hooray for Diffendoofer Day  
by Dr. Seuss, Jack Prelutsky  
and Lane Smith*

*continued on page 10*

## Two NC Schools Receive National Title I Recognition (continued)

Longview Elementary serves a diverse population of about 380 PK-5 students, 95 percent of whom are economically disadvantaged. The school utilizes a Balanced Literacy program with leveled books, a basal series, guided reading, and a focus on phonics. Remediation is provided throughout the school year, during school and after school, through certified teachers, college students and volunteers.

Students attend a mentoring program, staffed by about 100 volunteers, designed to improve their reading skills. Students attend four days a week to work on vocabulary, read to their mentor, and complete written assignments targeted at identified skills for each child.

“A positive thing about having such a diverse school and such a high population of economically disadvantaged students is that the teachers’ mindset is just on helping each student improve,” says Principal John Black. “We don’t have a specific canned program that we focus on. We take an eclectic approach, focusing on each and every child. That’s basically what we do and it seems to work.”

In addition to the mentoring reading program, community partnerships include Centro Latino, United Hmong Association, City of Refuge, churches, and Lenoir-Rhyne College. One key partnership, Project HEART (Hilltop: Education and Resources Together), helps economically disadvantaged students and their families living in Hilltop Apartments get the support they need through various agencies and the school. Agencies represented on the HEART board are Partners for Education, Juvenile Services, Department of Social Services, Longview Police, Cooperative Extension Services, Health Department and Longview Elementary. A variety of family nights held throughout the year at various community sites increase parent involvement and introduce them to community agencies.

Pre-school screening indicates that 85 percent of the school’s 5-year-olds are at risk. Led by the kindergarten staff, Longview’s Bridge to Tomorrow program gives students a positive start to their education by providing a two-week summer program. The Bridge program, offered at no cost to families, orients students to the school, provides information to parents regarding the education of their children, exposes children to daily routines, and provides time for teachers to get to know some of their students before school starts.

Principal Black cites community outreach to the school and vice versa as key to the school’s success. An after-school tutoring program and thriving thrift shop are two huge school successes. Community volunteers operate the school’s store, located in a



*Students play on new playground equipment purchased through the Thrifty Lion, Longview Elementary’s (Hickory City Schools) school store.*

former maintenance building, where clothing, toys and furniture items are donated and sold. This initiative, started only two years ago, brings thousands of dollars into the PTA budget each year. Proceeds go directly to funding students’ and teachers’ needs including field trips and new playground equipment. Parents get coupons to spend at the store for participation in school events and supporting their students and classrooms.

Other schools receiving recognition at the state level for 2008 for high student performance were: Bethel Elementary (Watauga County Schools); Chocowinity Primary (Beaufort County Schools); District 7 Elementary (Cumberland County Schools); East Elementary (Cleveland County Schools); Laurel Elementary (Madison County Schools); Mel and Zora Rashkis Elementary (Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools); Sunny View Elementary (Polk County Schools); and Willow Springs Elementary (Johnston County Schools).

Title I schools recognized for closing the gap at the state level for 2008 were: Cape Fear Elementary (Pender County Schools); and Lyle Creek Elementary (Newton-Conover City Schools).

The Title I Distinguished Schools Recognition Program showcases top schools that are organizing successful academic programs for the state’s neediest students. Nominees were pre-selected at the state level with one candidate being selected from each region for each category. For Category 1 (High Student Performance), selection criteria included composite scores for three consecutive years, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status, and a poverty percentage of 40 or greater. For Category 2 (Closing the Achievement Gap), selection criteria was based on schools with the most student subgroups where all subgroups made AYP and showed the most progress in significantly closing the achievement gap.

# NCDPI Launches Customer-Service Approach to Conferences and Events



NCDPI conducts and/or sponsors more than 40 conference-like events, forums, and/or institutes in any given year. Robert Logan, associate superintendent of innovation and school

transformation, is looking for ways to continue this work more strategically. Toward that end, a survey was sent to LEAs in December. NCDPI services will continue as planned for 2007-08, however, your input will alter the services for 2008-09. Below are key elements of the survey with feedback received so far in bulleted italics. Agree or disagree? Send your viewpoint to Dr. Belinda Black at [dblack@dpi.state.nc.us](mailto:dblack@dpi.state.nc.us) or 919.807.3827 by March 31 to help NCDPI deliver 2008-09 conferences and events according to customer preferences.

## **Consolidation and deletion of conferences (based upon purpose, time of year, and targeted audience)**

- If conferences or workshops are repeats of previous ones, please indicate on the descriptor or registration form.
- Make an effort to combine more topics at one location to lessen time away from student instruction.
- Include updates at conferences, i.e., NCDPI dropout updates at dropout conference.
- Begin in mid-September and end by April 30.
- Coordinate dates with all NCDPI departments to allow for greater attendance.
- Schedule major update dates at the beginning of the year.

## **Increased coordination of NCDPI conferences with other entities' conferences, meetings, etc. (For example, greater coordination between NCDPI and RESAs to provide professional development activities, and/or collaboration**

## **between NCDPI and professional organizations to sponsor annual meetings or professional events)**

- Increased coordination of NCDPI conferences with other entities' is an excellent idea. For example, language arts consultants could be at the NC Reading Association conference to present.
- It would be beneficial to receive the professional development through our local RESAs by NCDPI staff! For example, the textbook caravan goes to every region with the publishers and the textbook personnel meet with the textbook coordinators.

## **Possibility of annual designated days for NCDPI-sponsored conferences**

- Annual designated days for NCDPI-sponsored conferences is an outstanding idea. This way we could put those dates on our calendar and be set for the year.

## **Possibility of increased use of "virtual" professional development**

- It would be helpful if meetings that are not really interactive be presented in a virtual manner.
- I encourage NCDPI to conduct all informational meetings using teleconference and web-based documents.

## **Greater need for professional development follow-up in LEAs**

- There is a greater need for professional development follow-up in LEAs because professional development needs to be on-going and on site!
- Provide more regional staff development to cut down on travel.
- Provide more NCDPI-sponsored workshops and staff development by consultants in each district.

## Research Division Produces High School Reform Report

The Fiscal Research Division, a staff agency of the NC General Assembly, published a report on NC high school reform in Dec. 2007, available online at [http://www.ncleg.net/fiscalresearch/topics\\_of\\_interest/topics.shtml](http://www.ncleg.net/fiscalresearch/topics_of_interest/topics.shtml). Below is an excerpt:

### **"Of 115 LEAs, 90 will have some form of high school reform in the 2007-08 school year. ...**

- 38 LEAs have at least one bricks and mortar Learn and Earn Early College High School in their district;
- 75 LEAs have expressed their intent to participate in the Learn and Earn Online program;
- 15 LEAs have at least one Redesigned High School in their district; and
- 22 LEAs have at least one Turnaround High School in their district."

## WUNC Radio Documentary Addresses NCLB

American RadioWorks, the documentary unit of American Public Media, in association with North Carolina Public Radio-WUNC, produced a documentary about the No Child Left Behind federal law and how it played out over two years at Western Guilford High School in Guilford County. To hear or read the transcripts of "Put to the Test: How Standardized Testing is Changing Education," visit <http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/testing/online>.

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## EVAAS Launches Web Site

Educators and central office staff can download resource material and log into the Education Value-Added Assessment System (SAS® EVAAS™) through the recently launched EVAAS Web site. EVAAS for K-12 is a Web-based, customized software system now available to all NC school districts. EVAAS produces reports using student test data to measure student academic progress over time and examine opportunities for growth. The reports can help central office staff, administrators and educators predict student success, show the effects of schooling at particular schools or reveal patterns in subgroup performance. The reports produced by EVAAS can help to identify which students are at risk for under-achievement. The ability to identify students who are at risk before they test allows schools to develop customized programs for these students to accelerate their academic growth. To read more about EVAAS or to view the resource guide, please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/evaas/guide>.



## UPCOMING MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

- **Title I Directors' Regional Meeting Dates:**  
February 7 - Region 6 & 8 in Asheville  
February 7 - Region 5 & 7 in Caldwell County
- **2008–09 Title I Application Review Meetings:**  
March 12 in Scotland County  
March 18 in Johnston County  
April 3 in Catawba County  
April 4 @ Kennedy Charter School in Charlotte  
(Charter Application) for Western Regions (East - TBA)

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