No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (2002)

Assessments

- Annual assessments must be aligned to state standards – in reading/language arts, math and science.
- Use achievement on these tests to measure district and school accountability. Unlike ABC's, it does not include a growth component.
- At least 95% of students in each subgroup must participate in the assessment.
- All students in the state must be performing at or above proficient levels in reading and math by the end of the 2013-14 school year.
- By 2005-06, states must test all students annually in grades 3-8 in math and reading or language arts, with reasonable adaptations and accommodations for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL).
- Science assessments must be in place by 2007-08 and administered at least once during each of these grade spans: 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12.
- Students who have attended school for at least 3 years in the US must take reading assessments in English; however, LEAs may make case-by-case decisions about assessing in other languages for up to two additional consecutive years.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

- Each state must adopt a single statewide accountability system for defining AYP for all public school students, including those in charter schools, so that all students improve their performance and achieve a state-defined "proficient" level within 12 years.
- Each state defines AYP, but it must be based primarily on academic indicators, be technically rigorous, and apply to school, district, and state levels of progress.
- Baseline data for AYP comes from 2001-02 school year.
- AYP goals must be set, achievement data collected and disaggregated, and progress tracked for students by each of these subgroups:
    - Economically disadvantaged students
    - Major racial or ethnic group
    - Students with disabilities
    - English Language Learners
- Each subgroup in a school must meet AYP in order for the school to be identified as meeting AYP
- While AYP is based primarily on student achievement in math and reading, states must identify two additional indicators. At high school, graduation rates are required; at elementary level, at least one academic indicator of the state's choosing must be incorporated into the State's AYP definitions. Additional academic indicators may not be used to reduce the number of schools or LEAs identified as not

meeting AYP and may not be used to eliminate schools identified for intervention.

- A recent report (by the Education Trust) asserts there are many factors contributing to the number of schools identified as not making AYP in an individual state. They include:
  - States where low income and minority students are far behind other students will likely identify more schools as not making AYP.
  - States where most students who are not proficient in reading or math, or both, are concentrated in a few larger districts or larger schools will likely identify fewer schools.
  - NCLB requires 95% of all students and all subgroups of students to participate in the annual assessments. In many states, special education and limited-English proficient students have been routinely excluded from testing in the past, which provides an incomplete picture of achievement.
  - Each state sets its own minimum number of students that needs to be tested before a subgroup counts as a special category for accountability purposes (aka "the N size"). If even one subgroup fails to meet AYP, then the school is identified as failing to meet AYP. The higher the N size, the fewer schools will be held accountable for those students. The lower the N size, the more likely for schools to fail to meet AYP. NC's N size is 40; many states have chosen 30.) In NC, if fewer than 40 students from a particular group participate in the state test, then that group is not counted separately for accountability purposes.
  - A number of states only tested students in one or two grades. NC has long tested in grades 3-8. NCLB requires all schools to test all students in grades 3-8 and once in grades 10-12 in at least reading and math by the 2005-2006 school year. NC is already being held accountable for more students than those states that have not been testing as many students.
  - Some states took advantage of more flexibility than NC did – we already had a good system of accountability (the ABC's) and the State Board did not want to lower its standards.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

- States must participate in NAEP every other year in grades 4 and 8 for reading and math, beginning in 2002-03.

Annual Report Cards

- Beginning 2002-03, states that receive Title I funds must prepare and disseminate annual State report cards that include:
  - Aggregated achievement on State assessments in reading and math/language arts
  - Disaggregated achievement by subgroups
  - Percentage of students not tested, disaggregated
  - Information that can be used to compare actual achievement levels with State objectives for each group
  - Most recent two-year trend data in achievement by subject area and grade level in areas where assessments are used
  - Aggregate information on State indicators used to determine AYP
  - Graduation rates for high school students and an elementary school indicator of State's choice
  - Information about performance of LEAs making AYP, plus numbers and names of schools identified for school improvement
  - Teacher qualifications and credentials, including percentage of teachers on emergency credentials and percentage of classes not taught by "highly qualified" teachers, both in aggregate and disaggregated by high-poverty compared to low-poverty schools
- Beginning 2002-03, LEAs must collect and disseminate the following in their annual report cards:
  - Number and percentage of schools identified for school improvement, and how long they've been in that category
  - Achievement data on statewide academic assessments, comparing the LEA and State as a whole

Consequences for Low-Performing Schools

- Schools that fail to meet AYP for two consecutive years must be identified as needing improvement. Technical assistance must be provided and public school choice must be offered to students by the next school year (unless prohibited by State law).
- Schools that fail to meet AYP for three consecutive years must offer low-income students the opportunity to receive instruction from a supplemental services provider of their choice.
- Schools that fail to meet AYP for four consecutive years must take corrective action(s), which include replacing school staff, appointment of an outside advisor for the school, extending the school day or year, or changing school's internal organization.
- Schools that fail to meet AYP for five consecutive years must be restructured. Restructuring includes reopening as a charter school, replacing all or most staff, state takeover of school's operations (if permitted by State law), or other major restructuring of school governance.
- Comparable consequences apply to LEAs that fail to meet AYP.

- State must provide technical assistance to low-performing schools.
- Within three months of the State identifying a LEA as not making AYP for two consecutive years, the LEA must develop a plan that incorporates scientifically based research, is targeted, allocates at least 10% of funding to targeted professional development, and sets its own achievement goals for AYP.
- In FY2002, State must set aside 2% of total funding for Title I, Part A, to fund the requirements of this section, as well as a statewide system of technical assistance and support for LEAs. Of those funds, 95% must go directly to LEAs for schools identified for school improvement, corrective action, and restructuring.
- State must provide LEAs with grants of between $50,000 and $500,000 for each school identified for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring. Funding priority is to be given to LEAs with lowest-achieving schools that demonstrate the greatest need for funding and the strongest commitment to ensuring resources are targeted to help those schools improve.

School Support and Recognition

- State must develop support system for schools using resources from regional centers and laboratories, as well as other technical assistance providers.
- Priority goes to schools subject to corrective action and school improvement policies.
- Support system must include assistance to school support teams, the designation and use of distinguished principals and teachers, and the use of other approaches.
- State also must develop strategies for high-performing schools, such as recognition of schools that either significantly close the achievement gap or exceed AYP for two or more consecutive years, using schools that make the greatest gains as models and sources of support for low-performing schools, and providing financial awards to teachers in schools that make the greatest gains.

January 8, 2004

State of the States

By Ronald A. Skinner & Lisa N. Staresina

In its eighth year, Quality Counts continues to track a wide-ranging set of education policies across the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This year's report captures the significant changes states are making in the areas of testing, accountability, and teacher quality as they strive to meet the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Most of the data used to grade the states come from an *Education Week* policy survey of the 50 states and the District of Columbia conducted in the summer and fall of 2003. In addition, the report draws on state-level data from such organizations as the U.S. Department of Education, the Education Commission of the States, the American Federation of Teachers, and the Center for Education Reform. All data sources and notes are listed. Information on how *Education Week* graded the states is also available.

Student Achievement: Reading scores from the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress show student achievement has remained relatively stable since the test was last given in 2002. The news is better in mathematics, where the percent of 4th and 8th graders performing at least at the proficient level increased nationally. Every state and the District that participated in the 2000 NAEP math assessment had a

significant gain in the percent of 4th graders scoring at or above the "proficient" level in math in 2003. The same was true for 17 states at the 8th grade level.

How We Graded
Sources and Notes

But to date, no state has a majority of its students scoring at or above the proficient level on NAEP reading or math tests. Moreover, some of the top performers overall have some of the largest achievement gaps. In Minnesota, for example, 44 percent of 8th graders scored at or above proficient on the math portion of the exam. But while 49 percent of white students scored that well, only 9 percent of black students and 16 percent of Hispanic students did so.

Graduation rates across the states remain similar to those reported last year, as calculated by Jay P. Greene of the New York City-based Manhattan Institute. North Dakota had the highest graduation rate, with an estimated 89 percent of students receiving standard diplomas, after adjusting for regional migration. Florida and Georgia had the lowest overall graduation rates, at 56 percent.

CHARTS
School and District Report Cards

One new measure included in *Quality Counts 2004* is the "chance for college" indicator. Devised by Tom Mortenson of the Oskaloosa, Iowa-based research group Postsecondary Education Opportunity, it calculates the percent of entering 9th graders who graduate with regular diplomas four years later and go on to enroll in degree-granting programs at two- or four-year colleges.

Standards and Accountability: Many states altered their testing and accountability systems this past year to comply with the No Child Left Behind law, the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. A detailed chart of grade-by-grade testing policies is available.

Forty-nine states and the District of Columbia have school report cards presenting test data to the public. Last year, about half the states provided test data on school report cards by race, ethnicity, poverty, limited English proficiency, or disability. This school year, 46 states and the District provide school-level test data "disaggregated" by at least some subgroups via school report cards or the Web. Twenty-three states also provide disaggregated graduation or dropout rates, up from just one state last year.

This year, *Education Week* also tracked the types of tests states use. Forty-two states use customized or criterion-referenced tests designed to match state standards in at least some grades or subjects. Twenty states and the District of Columbia use norm-referenced, off-the-shelf tests in at

least some grades. (Such tests compare how a state's students perform against a nationally representative sample.) And 12 states use hybrids, such as norm-referenced tests to which the state has added additional questions to explicitly reflect state standards.

Iowa and the District of Columbia rely solely on norm-referenced tests.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, states must now use test results to rate all schools and determine whether the schools are making "adequate yearly progress," or AYP. While 29 states and the District assigned ratings to schools last year, this year all 50 states and the District of Columbia have rating systems in place.

Nationwide, at least 23,812 schools failed to make AYP in 2002-03 and 5,200 were identified as being "in need of improvement" (not making AYP for two years or more). Five states did not have complete data available when this report went to press.

Education Week tracked the number of states providing assistance to low-performing schools. Thirty-six states offer technical or financial help to low-performing schools, not just those receiving Title I funds. Twenty-seven states impose consequences on consistently low-performing or failing schools, regardless of their Title I status.

States use a variety of measures to intervene in such schools. Fourteen can close down low- performing or failing schools. Twenty-two can "reconstitute" them by removing the principals and other staff members. Twelve can convert such schools to charter school status, making them largely independent, up from just four states last year. Twelve offer students in low-performing schools (not just those receiving Title I money) the opportunity to transfer to higher-performing sites. Five states may withhold money from consistently low-performing or failing schools. And nine reserve the right to turn over such schools' management to private organizations.

Sixteen states provide monetary rewards to high-performing or improving schools.

Improving Teacher Quality: After focusing on the "teacher gap" for *Quality Counts 2003*, *Education Week* decided to keep several of the new indicators tracked last year. Some are now included in the grading for this section.

As is true for standards and accountability, some of the policy shifts across states stem from requirements in federal law. Specifically, the No Child Left Behind Act requires that teachers in the core academic subjects be "highly qualified" in each subject they teach by the end of the 2005-06 school year.

That's left states scrambling to ensure their new teachers demonstrate subject-matter competency before they enter the classroom.

The area experiencing the most growth is teacher testing. Thirty-four states and the District of Columbia now require high school teachers to pass subject-knowledge tests to earn their initial licenses, up from 29 states in 2000. At least six more states are either in the process of implementing such tests or say they plan to do so in the near future.

For the first time ever, *Education Week* tracked whether states require all middle school teachers to pass subject-matter tests to earn their licenses. Currently, 21 states require middle school teachers to pass such exams.

Many of the states not receiving credit this year provide K-8 licenses or other elementary certificates that permit at least some middle school teachers to earn licenses after passing a subject-matter test designed for elementary school educators.

While 28 states require all high school teachers to major in the main subjects they plan to teach, only two states require the same of all middle school teachers.

With the proliferation of alternative routes into the teaching profession, *Education Week* also decided to grade states in that area. States receive credit if all of their financed or regulated alternative routes require participants to demonstrate subject-matter knowledge before entering the classroom, either by meeting coursework requirements or by passing a test. Twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia finance or regulate such a route.

Quality Counts now tracks whether the states publish school or district report cards that include specific teacher- qualification data: the numbers or percentages of fully licensed or certified teachers, new teachers, teachers with emergency licenses, out-of-field teachers, and classes taught by teachers who are or are not highly qualified. Forty-one states include at least one of those indicators on their school or district report cards, but only nine have report cards that include at least three of those indicators.

The report also examines measures states have in place to discourage instruction by unqualified teachers. Three states have caps or bans on emergency licenses. Thirteen states have similar limits on out-of-field teaching, or the practice of assigning otherwise-qualified teachers to classes in subject areas for which they are not licensed. Only three states have policies requiring notification of all parents whose children are instructed by out-of- field or uncertified teachers, not just those whose children attend Title I schools.

In addition, 12 states hold their teacher- preparation programs accountable for the performance of their graduates in the classroom, up from five last year. Thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia report that they identify their low-performing teacher education institutions. But only 41 institutions were identified as at-risk or low-performing nationwide in the 2002-03 school year.

School Climate: All 50 states and the District of Columbia participated in the 2003 administration of NAEP, making it possible to grade every state and the District on school climate this year. The NAEP background survey provides data for several of the indicators *Education Week* uses in school climate, such as measures of student engagement, parent involvement, and school safety.

Fourteen states now report that they regularly survey students, parents, or teachers about the conditions in their schools, up from eight states last year.

The inclusion of school climate indicators on school report cards also increased for the 2003-04 school year. Twenty-nine states now include school safety information, up from 27 states last year. Thirteen states include indicators of parent involvement. And 22 states include a measure of class size or pupil-teacher ratios.

Families also have a wider range of public school choices this school year. The Center for Education Reform, a Washington-based research organization that favors charter schools and other forms of school choice, found that charter schools are now legal in 40 states and the District of Columbia. Maryland is the most recent addition to that list.

The Education Commission of the States, a bipartisan policy clearinghouse in Denver, reports that at least 44 states have some kind of open-enrollment policy, up from 32 last year.

Education Week also tracks the annual reporting of "persistently dangerous schools," as required under the No Child Left Behind law. Although states had to develop criteria for identifying such schools by last fall, nationwide only 38 schools in four states made the lists.

Resources: For the first time, in the summer and fall of 2003, *Education Week* surveyed the states about their policies on education finance. With the advice of school finance experts, and the cooperation of finance officials in both state education agencies and revenue departments, eight new columns of information were added to the resources section.

Education Week found that 36 states use earmarked taxes or have lotteries that generate funds specifically for K-12 education. Twelve of those states have both.

Six states try to increase financial equity across districts through what are commonly called "Robin Hood" provisions. Those states have mechanisms to recapture money raised locally in property-wealthy districts and redistribute it to poorer districts. In nine states, the current system of funding has been ruled unconstitutional because of equity concerns.

For resource adequacy, funding for education increased in every state. The national average expenditure per pupil was $7,376 for the 2000-01 school year, a 6.7 percent increase from the prior year. Total taxable resources spent on education increased from 3.5 percent to 3.7 percent.

States saw fewer improvements in resource equity. Most states provide at least half of the total state and local revenue for education and target this aid to property-poor districts, but there are still inequities in most states linked to property wealth.

Only eight states can say that students in property-poor districts, on average, receive more aid than those in more affluent areas do.

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January 8, 2004

North Carolina

Standards and Accountability: North Carolina has clear and specific standards in all subjects at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, except for social studies/history, where standards are clear and specific in high school only.

The state has tests aligned with its standards at all grade spans in English and mathematics, but only at the high school level in science and social studies. The state also relies heavily on multiple-choice tests and uses extended-response questions only on English exams.

North Carolina is perhaps best known for having a strong system of holding schools accountable for results. The state publishes test data on school report cards, uses the data as part of its school rating system, and provides help to schools rated low- performing. It also has consequences, such as private management, for schools that fail to improve. And it provides

North Carolina Report Card

(Click on the table names to see the 50-state tables; click on grades to see the data behind them.)

• **Student Achievement (NAEP 2003)**	
4th graders proficient or above in math	41% *
8th graders proficient or above in math	32% *
4th graders proficient or above in reading	33%
8th graders proficient or above in reading	29%
• **Standards and Accountability**	B
• **Improving Teacher Quality**	B
• **School Climate**	C+
• **Resources: Adequacy**	C
• **Resources: Equity**	C

NOTES: *Indicates a statistically significant increase since the last administration of the exam.

monetary rewards to high-performing or improving schools.

Teacher Quality: North Carolina is one of the top 10 states this year on efforts to improve teacher quality. The state requires middle and high school teachers to pass subject matter and subject-specific-pedagogy tests. But it leaves coursework requirements up to individual teacher-training programs.

VITAL STATISTICS	
2,223	Public schools
85,684	Public school teachers
1,315,363	Pre-K-12 students
$8.2 billion	Annual pre-K-12 expenditures
40%	Minority students
17%	Children in poverty
14.2%	Students with disabilities
4%	English-language learners

(See "Sources.")

The state closely regulates the certificate that alternative-route teachers must obtain. To be issued a ""lateral entry"" license, a candidate must have a major in the subject to be taught or must pass a Praxis II specialty-area exam. All beginning teachers in the state also take part in an initial-licensure program that includes three years of mentoring, two of which the state pays for, as well as an evaluation of the teacher's classroom performance by a team of local experts.

School report cards include such information as the percent of fully licensed teachers and teacher-turnover rates. This year's reports also include information on the percentage of classes taught by ""highly qualified"" teachers.

The state requires similar, annual performance reports for each teacher-preparation program. The reports include passing rates on certification exams for students at each institution. In addition, the institutions must have 95 percent of their graduates successfully convert from an initial to a continuing teaching license. The state also surveys mentors and principals about the performance of program graduates in the field. It uses such information to identify exemplary and low-performing programs, and to hold the programs accountable for the classroom performance of their graduates.

School Climate: North Carolina conducts an annual survey of teachers' working conditions, which makes the state one of only 14 that collect data about school conditions from students, teachers, or parents.

The state is one of a few that still do not have open-enrollment policies. But it gains points for having a charter school law that the Center for Education Reform has rated as moderately strong.

The Tar Heel State's indicators for school size help keep its grade in this category down. The state has a lower percentage

of students attending small schools than do most other states. Another contributing factor is the state's lackluster outcomes in the areas of student absenteeism, tardiness, and classroom misbehavior, as shown by the National Assessment of Educational Progress background survey.

Adequacy: North Carolina spent $6,917 per pupil in the 2000-01 school year, which ranked it 34th out of 50 states and the District of Columbia. The figure was a 5 percent increase from the previous year. Only 13.6 percent of students in the state attend schools in districts that spend at least the national average.

North Carolina ranks 29th out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia on the adequacy index, which measures how many students are in districts spending at or above the national average and how far the rest must travel to reach that benchmark. The state spends 3.1 percent of its total taxable resources on education. Its spending increased at an average annual rate of 1.4 percent from 1991 to 2001, after adjusting for inflation.

Equity: With a state share of total state and local funding that is higher than that of 43 other states, North Carolina seems to be on the path to equitable spending. But the state does not target those funds very heavily toward property-poor districts. North Carolina ranks just 47th out of the 50 states on the wealth-neutrality score, which indicates that inequities in state and local revenue for education are tied substantially to local property wealth.

Even so, the state ranks seventh out of the 50 states on the coefficient of variation, suggesting that the finance inequities across districts are less than in most other states.

◂ PREVIOUS STATE NEXT STATE ▸

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Weldon City Schools

Celebrating 100 Years

Dr. Kathi H. Gibson

Superintendent

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At A Glance:

- **1161 Total School Population**
- **98% Minority**
- **91.80% Free/Reduced Lunches**
- **60% AFDC**
- **87% Graduation Rate**
- **49% Adults With HS Diplomas**
- **16.5% Students With Disabilities (181)**
- **23 AG Students**
- **42.40% Single Parent Homes**

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Topic One

- **4 Schools**
- **Weldon PreK Center (100)**
- **Weldon Elementary School**
- **Weldon Middle School**
- **Weldon High School**

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Weldon Elementary School

- **Serves 414 Students (K-4)**
- **28 Teachers**
- **1 Assistant Principal**

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Weldon Middle School

- Serves 400 students in grades 5-8
- 23 Teachers
- 1 Assistant Principal

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Weldon High School

- 282 Students in Grades 9-12
- 26 Teachers
- 1 Assistant Principal/ Instructional Specialist
- 1 Dean of Discipline

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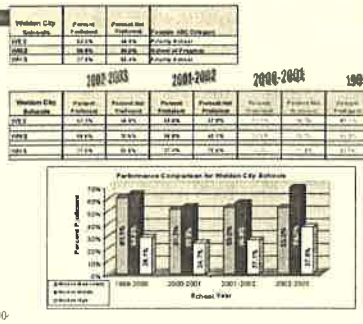
Test Data



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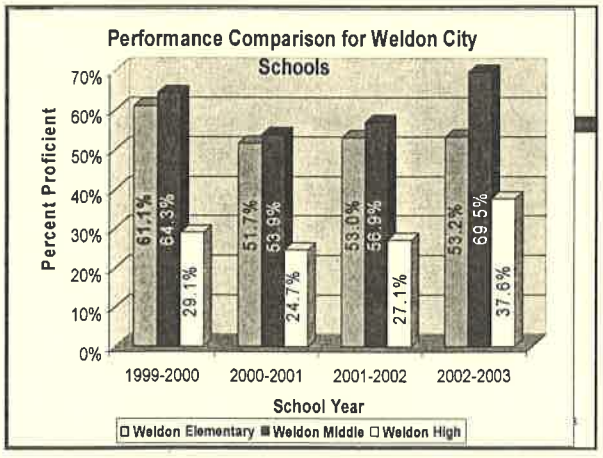

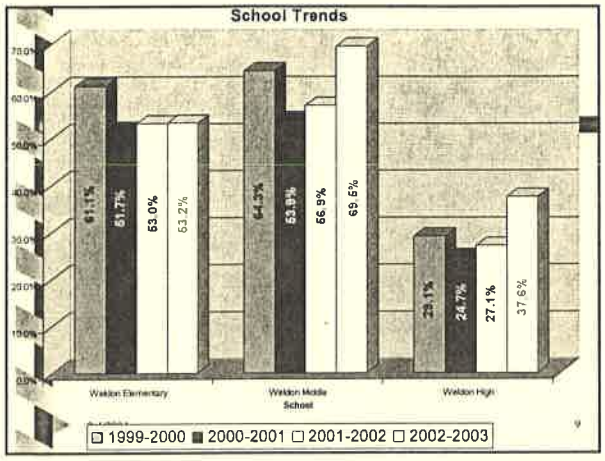

Weldon Elementary 2003 AYP Results and Future Targets

	All	Black	Econ. Disad.	03-04	04-05
Math	64.3%	65.1%	62.9%	74.6%	81%
AYP?	NO	NO	NO		
Reading	43.9%	44.6%	41.5%	68.9%	76.7%
AYP?	NO	NO	NO		

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Weldon Middle 2003 AYP Results and Future Targets

	All	Black	Econ. Disad.	Students w/Disab.	03-04 Target	04-05 Target
Math	71.7 %	71.8 %	70.8%	17.8%	74.6 %	81%
AYP ?	Y (SH)	Y (SH)	Y (SH)	NO		
Rdng.	65.6 %	65.7 %	63.5%	22.2%	68.9 %	76.7%
	Y (SH)	Y (SH)	Y (SH)	NO		

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Weldon High 2003 AYP Results and Future Targets

	All	Black	Econ. Disad.	03-04 Target	04-05 Target
Math	51.7 %	52.6%	51.1 %	54.9 %	66.2 %
AYP?	NO	NO	NO		
Rdng.	38.3 %	40.4%	36.2 %	52%	64%
AYP?	NO	NO	NO		

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Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

- Weldon Elementary (NO)
- Weldon Middle (NO)
- Weldon High School (NO)

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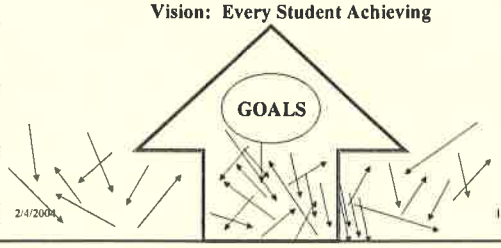
Alignment

Moving to Great!

Disconnected Improvements

Vision: Every Student Achieving



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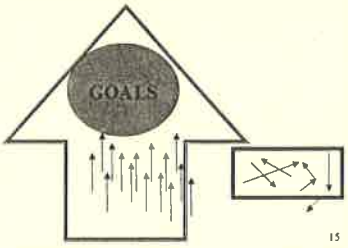
Alignment

Connected Improvements

Vision: Every Student Achieving



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Questions

- Contact the Superintendent
- Glbsonk@weldoncityschools.k12.nc.us

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Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

Continually Low-Performing Schools: 2001-02 through 2002-03

SL 2003-284 Section 7.10 (c)

Addendum to Report #18 in the October 2003-December 2004
DPI Chronological Schedule

State Board of Education

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Chairman
Raleigh

Jane P. Norwood
Vice Chair
Charlotte

Kathy A. Taft
Greenville

Michelle Howard-Vital
Wilmington

Edgar D. Murphy
Durham

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West End

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Wayne McDevitt
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Charlotte

Bev Perdue
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NC Department of Public Instruction

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Continually Low-Performing Schools: 2001-02 through 2002-03

November 2003

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

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The 2001 Session of the North Carolina General Assembly, 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 and Continually Low-Performing 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 legislation is to study the effectiveness of these initiatives in improving student achievement in these schools.

This report details findings to date with respect to Continually Low-Performing (CLP) schools over the past two years[1]. Overall, the number of schools identified as CLP has declined each year, from a high of six in the first year (2001-02) to only one in 2003-04. Although the 2001-02 Cohort of CLPs experienced mixed levels of implementation of the initiatives, as detailed in the December 2002 version of this report, the 2002-03 Cohort of CLPs did achieve the class size reductions called for in the legislation. In general, both cohorts of CLPs have also made significant progress to date on a variety of indicators, including End-of-Course test scores, performance composites, and ABCs status.

While the overall level of student performance remains relatively low in these schools, substantial progress has been made (and continues to be made) in these schools since they have received assistance under the legislative initiatives cited above. Difficulty in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers, however, continues to be an issue for CLP schools. While it is difficult to say whether (or which of) the specified initiatives may have "caused" improved student achievement in the CLPs, these schools have clearly made substantial gains in recent years, to the point where there is only one school that even qualifies as a CLP school for 2003-04.

[1] The annual evaluation of the High-Priority schools initiatives is reported in a separate document.

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.

The first cohort of six Continually Low-Performing schools (CLPs) was identified beginning with the 2001-2002 school year. In each year, all identified CLPs to date have all been high schools (Table 1). Two schools – Northampton High School East and Northampton High School West – have been on the list twice. All other schools have been identified for only one year.

Table 1: Cohorts of Continually Low-Performing Schools, 2001-02 through 2003-04.

2001-02	
LEA	**School**
Halifax	Northwest Halifax High School
Northampton	Northampton High School-East
Northampton	Northampton High School-West
Robeson	Saint Pauls High School
Robeson	South Robeson High School
Warren	Warren County High School
2002-03	
LEA	**School**
Northampton	Northampton High School-West
Weldon City	Weldon High School
Halifax	Southeast Halifax High School
Hertford	Hertford County High School
2003-04	
LEA	**School**
Northampton	Northampton High School-East

The Current Operations and Capital Improvements Appropriations Act of 2001 (i.e., 2001-02 Budget Bill passed by the NC General Assembly) authorized additional funding for these CLPs to improve student achievement. Those funds could be used to reduce class size (i.e., ensure that the number of teachers allotted is no less than 1 per 20 students) and/or to extend teacher contracts by five days in 2001-02. For the 2002-2003 school year, funds could be used to extend teacher contracts for a total of 10 days, including five 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, the six CLPs that year were unable to meet all of the requirements of the initiatives. Therefore, the State allowed the initial cohort of six schools to submit plans to the State Board of Education detailing how those funds would be spent during the 2001-02 school year. Those plans were evaluated and approved by the State Board of Education in 2002.

This report focuses on three specific topics: The extent to which CLPs have been able to reduce class size, a summary of what the schools have been able to accomplish to date based on assistance team feedback, and the available evidence as to whether student achievement has improved for the two cohorts of CLPs since the implementation of the initiatives.

Data collected by NCDPI in 2002-03 indicate that the majority of the CLPs did have student:teacher ratios that were at or below 1:20 in core classes as well as at or below statewide averages. The most recent data available on this issue are detailed in Section I of this report.

Data collected by the voluntary assistance teams assigned to CLPs alludes to some of the continuing challenges to improving instruction in those schools. Although significant progress has been made (e.g. all 4 CLPs in 2002-03 met their ABCs growth targets and therefore are no longer low-performing, etc.), issues related to recruiting and retaining high-quality staff remain problematic in many schools. More detailed information on these topics is contained in Section II of the report.

With respect to student achievement in CLPs, results presented in Section III suggest that they are making good progress overall on various indicators of student achievement. While it is difficult to say whether (or which of) the specified initiatives may have "caused" improved student achievement in CLPs, these schools have clearly made substantial gains in recent years, to the point where there is only one school that even qualifies as a CLP school for 2003-04.

Section I
Student:Teacher Ratio Data for Continually Low-Performing Schools
2002-03 Cohort

STUDENT/TEACHER RATIOS FOR SPECIFIC HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECTS
SCHOOL YEAR 2002-2003

LEA CODE	LEA NAME	SCHOOL CODE	SCHOOL NAME	SUBJECT	STUDENT/ TEACHER RATIO
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	358	SOUTHEAST HIGH	ENGLISH I	16
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	358	SOUTHEAST HIGH	ALGEBRA I	12
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	358	SOUTHEAST HIGH	BIOLOGY	18
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	358	SOUTHEAST HIGH	ELP	16
420	HALIFAX COUNTY	358	SOUTHEAST HIGH	U S HISTORY	18
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	ENGLISH I	20
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	ALGEBRA I	10
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	BIOLOGY	17
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	ELP	14
660	NORTHAMPTON COUNTY	324	NORTHAMPTON HI-WEST	U S HISTORY	14
422	WELDON CITY	324	WELDON HIGH	ENGLISH I	17
422	WELDON CITY	324	WELDON HIGH	ALGEBRA I	10
422	WELDON CITY	324	WELDON HIGH	BIOLOGY	17
422	WELDON CITY	324	WELDON HIGH	ELP	10
422	WELDON CITY	324	WELDON HIGH	U S HISTORY	14
460	HERTFORD COUNTY	320	HERTFORD COUNTY HIGH	ENGLISH I	19
460	HERTFORD COUNTY	320	HERTFORD COUNTY HIGH	ALGEBRA I	22
460	HERTFORD COUNTY	320	HERTFORD COUNTY HIGH	BIOLOGY	24
460	HERTFORD COUNTY	320	HERTFORD COUNTY HIGH	ELP	26
460	HERTFORD COUNTY	320	HERTFORD COUNTY HIGH	U S HISTORY	23

State Averages for 2002-03	**ENGLISH I**	**18**
	ALGEBRA I	**19**
	BIOLOGY	**20**
	ELP	**20**
	U S HISTORY	**19**

Section II
Activities in Continually Low-Performing Schools

During the 2002-03 school year, three (3) continually low-performing schools (CLPs) at Level I and one (1) Level II CLP were identified and assigned mandated State assistance teams. Level I schools are those that have been low-performing two (2) consecutive years or two years of the last three (3) years. Level II schools are those that have been low-performing three (3) consecutive years or three of the last four (4) years. Level I schools were Weldon High School, Southeast Halifax High School and Hertford County High School. The Level II school identified was Northampton County High School – West.

In addition to being served full-time by the State assistance teams through the mandated assistance process, the schools received additional funds set aside by the General Assembly to implement additional interventions that would significantly improve student achievement. These interventions may include, but are not limited to, additional days of employment for teachers and reduced class size.

All of the schools in 2002-03 implemented additional days of employment that were used for professional development for teachers. Some professional development sessions were content-specific and others dealt with school-wide issues. The schools did have difficulty reducing class size because the additional staff required were not available. In fact, many classrooms are currently managed by long-terms substitutes and/or lateral entry teachers.

Other strategies that were supported by additional funds included stipends for teachers who taught in after-school tutorial programs, transportation for student participants, educational incentives for students, professional development activities, instructional support materials, substitute pay and teacher travel to events such as NCDPI's annual Minority and At-Risk Student Conference.

In addition, the CLPs in 2002-03 were provided services beyond those provided to "regular" low-performing schools. These activities were also supported by the additional funds set aside for CLP schools. Quarterly collaborative meetings were required for school improvement teams, school administrators, central office staff and the State assistance teams. The meetings included professional development sessions, problem-solving activities and leadership building activities. The culminating activity for the CLP schools was a two-day instructional institute held in June 2003. Staffs from the CLP schools, central offices and assistance teams were required to attend. The institute focused on brain biology, how students learn, and how the curriculum can be layered to differentiate for individual student needs. Time was also provided for networking, reflecting on the past year and preparing for the upcoming year.

The one CLP Level II school (Northampton West) participated in all of the above activities. In addition, an external review team visited the school on two separate occasions. The committee, composed of LEA educators and DPI staff, reviewed all facets of the school's organization and operation as well as all content areas. The external committee also examined

the work of the school's mandated assistance team. The team then wrote a formal report on their findings and recommendations. The report was shared with the superintendent, the school principal, assistance team, state superintendent and chairman of the State Board of Education. A component of the second visit was to follow up to monitor which of the recommendations from the first report had been fully implemented.

Funding for CLP schools for 2002-03 was as follows:

Southeast Halifax High School	$407,507
Hertford County High School	$615,639
Northampton County High School – West	$238,186
Weldon High School	$224,965

As in 2001-02, each CLP school in 2002-03 was required to submit a budget and have it approved prior to expending any of the CLP funds. Budget amendments also had to be approved by the Division of School Improvement before changes in expenditures could occur.

The State assistance teams were successful in removing all four (4) schools from low-performing status. However, it may prove difficult for these schools to sustain their progress because of the many challenges schools face with recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers. Teacher turnover, the lack of certified teachers, low expectations for teacher and student performance and a larger percentage of marginal teachers, lateral entry teachers and inexperienced teachers are the major challenges. Many of these same factors were also cited in relation to the 2001-02 CLP cohort in the previous installment of this report[2].

[2] This previous report is available online at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/evaluation/legislative/0211_HSP13_Attach.pdf.

Section III
Achievement Results for Continually Low-Performing Schools
2000-01 to 2002-03

In general, the student achievement changes seen in Continually Low-Performing schools during the first two years of the initiative - 2001-02 and 2002-03 - are generally positive. Average performance composites have increased each year for both cohorts of CLPs (Figure 1), as has the ABCs growth status of CLP schools (Table 2). Mean performance composites of CLP schools, although they remain relatively low, have increased each year for both cohorts. In addition, all CLP schools in each cohort have made either expected or high growth under the ABCs during the year they began the initatives. One school (Northampton West) received CLP assistance for two years before they made expected growth, and one other (Northampton East) returned to CLP status in 2002-03 one year after making expected growth. All other CLP schools have achieved and maintained expected or high growth status in the years following being designated as a CLP school (Table 2). With respect to the achievement provisions of the newly-implemented No Child Left Behind Act, however, no CLP school from either cohort met the Adequate Yearly Progress standard in 2002-03. In addition to the figures in this section, additional data on the two cohorts of CLP schools to date are available in Appendix A.

Figure 1: Mean Performance Composites for CLPs by Cohort.

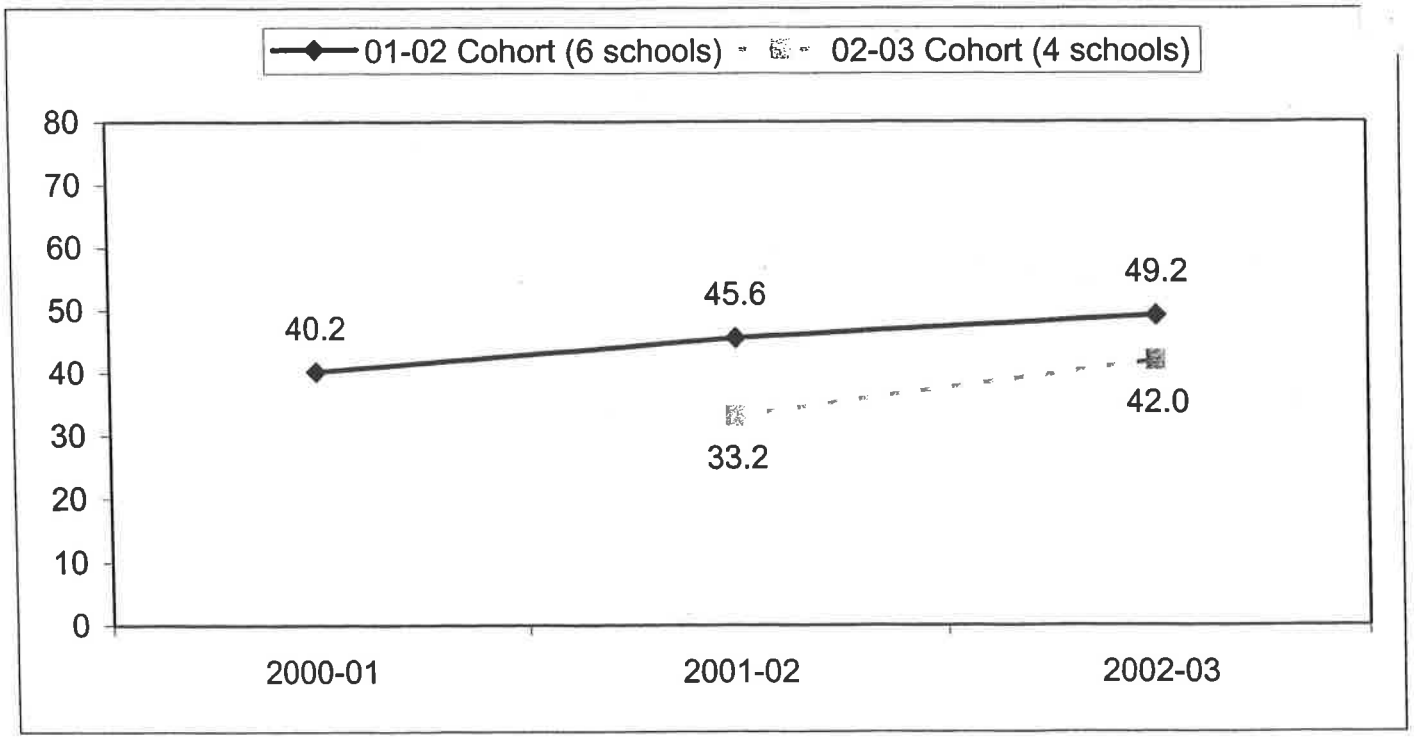

Table 2: ABCs Growth Status of CLPs by Cohort.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03
2001-02 Cohort			
Northwest Halifax High School	LP	Expected	Expected
Northampton High School-East	LP	Expected	LP
Northampton High School-West	LP	LP	Expected
Saint Pauls High School	LP	Expected	High
South Robeson High School	LP	Expected	Expected
Warren County High School	LP	High	High
2002-03 Cohort			
Northampton High School-West	---	LP	Expected
Weldon High School	---	LP	High
Southeast Halifax High School	---	LP	Expected
Hertford County High School	---	LP	Expected

Note: LP = Low Performing.

In addition, average percentages of students scoring at or above grade level on selected End-of-Course tests rose as well. For the 2001-02 Cohort of CLPs, gains in average scale scores over the past two years are evident across all five core subject areas examined, with the largest gains seen in English I. In each case, the gains in the CLPs were larger than the corresponding statewide figures (Table 3).

Table 3: Selected End-of-Course Test Results for CLPs, 2001-02 Cohort.

	Average EOC Scale Scores				
	Algebra I	English I	Biology	ELP	US History
2000-01 *(year prior to CLP designation)*	49.8	48.0	35.0	47.6	28.1
2001-02 *(CLP year)*	51.2	47.4	48.3	44.3	29.7
2002-03 *(1 year post-CLP)*	56.8	67.2	40.8	49.1	32.4
Change, 2000-01 to 2002-03					
CLP 2001-02 Cohort	+7.0	+19.2	+5.8	+1.5	+4.3
State of NC	+1.4	+2.3	-0.1	-0.1	+0.9

For the 2002-03 Cohort, one-year gains were seen in Algebra I, English I and Biology, all of which were larger than the corresponding statewide gains between 2001-02 and 2002-03 (Table 4). In U.S. History and Economic, Legal and Political Systems, however, mean changes in scale scores were below or equal to the corresponding statewide changes. As was true for the 2001-02 Cohort, the largest gains for the 2002-03 Cohort were also in English I.

Table 4: Selected End-of-Course Test Results for CLPs, 2002-03 Cohort.

	Average EOC Scale Scores				
	Algebra I	English I	Biology	ELP	US History
2001-02 *(year prior to CLP designation)*	41.1	41.2	23.7	36.5	22.0
2002-03 *(CLP year)*	51.1	64.4	27.4	36.5	21.4
Change, 2001-02 to 2002-03					
CLP 2002-03 Cohort	+10.0	+23.2	+3.7	0.0	-0.6
State of NC	0.0	+2.0	-1.2	0.0	+1.0

Summary

For a variety of reasons, it is difficult to determine whether the initiatives in Continually Low-Performing schools may have "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 changing cohorts of CLP schools from year to year, and the inability to control for other possible confounding factors are just some of the reasons. The analyses presented here are at best a descriptive look at achievement in these schools since the beginning of the initiatives. However, these results do suggest that Continually Low-Performing schools are making good progress overall. If these trends continue, it is very possible that there will be no longer be any Continually Low-Performing schools under the definition in the legislation, perhaps as soon as the 2004-05 school year.

Appendix A

Selected End-of-Course Achievement Results and Performance Composites for Continually Low-Performing Schools 2000-01 through 2002-03

Table 1A: Performance Composites and End-of-Course Performance for Continually Low-Performing Schools.

2001-02 Cohort

School	Performance Composite			Algebra I Mean Scale Score			English I Mean Scale Score			ELP Mean Scale Score			Biology Mean Scale Score			US History Mean Scale Score		
	00-01	01-02	02-03	00-01	01-02	02-03	00-01	01-02	02-03	00-01	01-02	02-03	00-01	01-02	02-03	00-01	01-02	02-03
Northwest Halifax High School	35.9	40.9	44.4	35.0	28.9	30.8	46.9	39.4	67.8	54.5	49.8	71.2	40.3	60.0	29.2	10.8	16.7	20.7
Northampton High School-East	45.5	49.8	39.6	71.9	53.2	48.3	52.3	55.2	61.2	56.8	65.2	48.4	35.9	56.5	54.0	26.4	30.2	26.0
Northampton High School-West	41.3	39.9	47.8	39.6	31.3	52.5	53.4	51.3	73.2	60.7	42.4	60.0	28.9	27.1	37.6	40.4	34.9	23.7
Saint Pauls High School	42.3	46.6	56.0	49.4	48.1	43.8	49.4	46.2	67.0	39.8	40.7	34.1	44.8	52.9	50.5	37.3	35.0	54.5
South Robeson High School	34.2	47.3	50.3	50.9	83.5	90.5	34.3	42.0	60.8	34.2	26.4	37.4	27.7	49.6	30.7	19.5	18.9	18.3
Warren County High School	42.0	48.9	56.8	51.9	62.1	74.9	51.8	50.2	73.2	39.5	41.4	43.2	32.1	43.5	42.8	34.1	42.2	51.2
Means	40.2	45.6	49.2	49.8	51.2	56.8	48.0	47.4	67.2	47.6	44.3	49.1	35.0	48.3	40.8	28.1	29.7	32.4

2002-03 Cohort

School	Performance Composite		Algebra I Mean Scale Score		English I Mean Scale Score		ELP Mean Scale Score		Biology Mean Scale Score		US History Mean Scale Score	
	01-02	02-03	01-02	02-03	01-02	02-03	01-02	02-03	01-02	02-03	01-02	02-03
Northampton High School-West	39.9	47.8	31.3	52.5	51.3	73.2	42.4	60.0	27.1	37.6	34.9	23.7
Weldon High School	27.1	37.6	56.2	60.4	28.6	61.0	27.7	18.4	13.5	26.0	<5.0	<5.0
Southeast Halifax High School	29.7	35.7	40.5	49.6	40.7	62.4	25.4	23.7	18.4	13.0	12.2	14.1
Hertford County High School	36.2	46.8	36.5	42.0	44.2	60.9	50.5	43.7	35.8	32.9	18.8	26.5
Means	33.2	42.0	41.1	51.1	41.2	64.4	36.5	36.5	23.7	27.4	22.0	21.4