

communication between DPI and LEAs, as well as concerns about delivery of services by DPI. The Committee also finds that there are concerns over the internal structure, staffing, and governance of DPI.

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly create a Legislative Special Commission on Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education to study the efficiency and effectiveness of DPI and its programs, and that funds be provided for the operation of the Commission. See attached DRAFT LEGISLATION: 2007-LEz-296[v.5].

The Plant Operation Section of the School Support Services Division of DPI has been on receipt support since 1995 when DPI was downsized. The reliance on receipts has hampered the ability of DPI to hire and retain competent engineers to do the required work. Additionally, the demand on the services has increased, including water, pest, and hazardous chemical management, mold/mildew remediation, interior/exterior air quality, and green building and energy conservation/management.

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly provide funds to the Plant Operation Section of the School Support Services Division of DPI to ensure that local school administrative units have the support they need to achieve efficient, safe and environmentally sound practices. See attached DRAFT LEGISLATION: 2007-LEz-305[v.8].

4. Technology

The General Assembly has provided funding to ensure that the effective use of technology is built into the North Carolina system of public schools for the purpose of preparing a globally competitive workforce and citizenry for the twenty-first century. As the State continues to invest in technology, it is critical to invest in teacher training so that educators will use technology in their classrooms for the benefits it offers to both students and teachers. Connecting all public schools to a statewide network where resources, services and learning options are available will help eliminate barriers to access.

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly increase funding for technology that will keep students engaged with the curriculum and on track for graduation, and for the connectivity initiative.

5. Dropout Prevention

The Committee believes that all students should graduate from high school prepared for work or to pursue further education. The Committee recognizes that North Carolina must lower its high school dropout rate and increase its graduation rate. The Committee believes that strengthening the curriculum so it is more challenging and relevant to students and providing courses that prepare students for career and work options after high school are strategies that have the potential to keep students in school until they graduate.

The Committee recommends that the General Assembly continue to support initiatives aimed at reducing the high school dropout rate and increasing the graduation rate. The Committee also recommends continued funding for the grants that were awarded as a result of the House Initiative on High School Dropout Reform, as well as The Collaborative Project: A 21st Century Initiative of the North Carolina General Assembly, the recommendations of the Joint Legislative Commission on Dropout Prevention and High School Graduation, and the high school reform efforts in place across the State.

6. Students with Disabilities

The Committee recognizes the importance of delivering high quality instructional and support services to students with disabilities and that there are a number of components which are critical in achieving this goal, including teacher education programs. The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina will submit a report to the Committee on May 15, 2008 that will include evidence of the effectiveness of the current teacher education programs in preparing teachers to educate students with disabilities and identification of changes that are needed in the teacher education programs to better prepare teachers to teach students with disabilities. The Committee recommends that this report be heard in detail when the Committee reconvenes in the fall of 2008. At that time the Committee should evaluate whether further action must be taken to ensure that teacher education programs are preparing teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully teach students with disabilities.

The Committee supports the current statutory language in G.S. 115C-107.7 that prohibits local education agencies from assigning a student with disabilities to homebound instruction without a determination by that student's IEP team that the homebound instruction is the least restrictive alternative environment for the student. The Committee recommends that the statute be amended so that the continued appropriateness of the homebound instruction is evaluated monthly by several different stakeholders including the local education agency, the student's parent, and relevant members of the student's IEP team. See attached DRAFT LEGISLATION: 2007-RQz-16[v.4].

The Committee also believes that students with disabilities must be encouraged to participate to the fullest extent possible in the various innovative high school programs available throughout the State. The Committee recommends that the Department of Public Instruction study the current participation rates of students with disabilities in Learn and Earn Early College High Schools, Redesigned High Schools, the North Carolina Virtual Public School, and North Carolina public high schools that are on block schedules and report back to the Committee on its findings and recommendations. See attached DRAFT LEGISLATION: 2007-RQz-18[v.5].

7. Professional Development

The Committee understands the importance of having high quality professional development easily available to teachers throughout the State. Although a number of organizations provide professional development in North Carolina, the Committee believes that technical assistance and professional development delivered by the Department of Public Instruction through regional education service centers could play a

significant role in improving student performance, particularly in rural parts of the State. The Committee recommends that an outside consultant be hired to examine the roles that regional education service centers that are created within the Department of Public Instruction could play in the delivery of professional development. See attached DRAFT LEGISLATION: 2007-RQz-19[v.4].

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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D

BILL DRAFT 2007-SFz-11 [v.7] (03/31)

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)
4/4/2008 11:19:29 AM

Short Title: Brd. Cert. Tchrs. Serve as Full-Time Mentors.

(Public)

Sponsors: .

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO PERMIT NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFIED TEACHERS TO SERVE
AS FULL-TIME MENTORS, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT
LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:
SECTION 1. G.S. 115C-296.2 reads as rewritten:
"§ 115C-296.2. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification.

...
(b) Definitions. – As used in this subsection:

...
(2) A "teacher" is a person who:

a. Either:

1. Is certified to teach in North Carolina; or
2. Holds a certificate or license issued by the State Board of Education that meets the professional license requirement for NBPTS certification;

b. Is a State-paid employee of a North Carolina public school;

c. Is paid on the teacher salary schedule; and

d. ~~Spends at least seventy percent (70%) of his or her work time;~~Either:

1. ~~Spends at least seventy percent (70%) of his or her~~
work time in classroom instruction, if the employee is employed as a teacher. Most of the teacher's remaining time shall be spent in one or more of the following: mentoring teachers, doing demonstration lessons for teachers, writing curricula, developing and leading staff development programs for teachers; ~~or~~

- • •

SECTION 3. This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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D

BILL DRAFT 2007-LEz-296 [v.5] (2/18)

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)
4/4/2008 11:14:40 AM

Short Title: Study/DPI & St. Bd. of Education.

(Public)

Sponsors: .

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT CREATING THE LEGISLATIVE SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE
EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC
INSTRUCTION AND THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND
APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THAT PURPOSE AS RECOMMENDED BY
THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is hereby created the Legislative Special Commission on
Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Department of Public Instruction and the State
Board of Education. The purpose of the Commission is to review the mission, structure,
programs, budgets, accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Department of
Public Instruction and the State Board of Education.

SECTION 2. The Commission shall consist of five members of the House of
Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and five
members of the Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate. The
Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate one representative as cochair,
and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall designate one senator as cochair.
Vacancies on the Commission shall be filled by the same appointing authority as made
the initial appointment.

The appointments shall be made and the Commission shall begin its work
prior to September 1, 2008.

SECTION 3. In performing the legislative review of the Department of
Public Instruction and the State Board of Education, the Commission shall:

- (1) Consider the mission of the Department to support local educational
agencies in their efforts to provide high quality educational services
and foster high student performance and achievement, as set out in the
statutes and in the rules, policies, and practices of the Department.

- (2) Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department of Public Instruction in furthering the missions and goals of the Department, including any proposed revisions. This evaluation shall include (i) the role of the Department of Public Instruction, its administrative structure, organization, accountability, and its statutory powers and duties; (ii) the role of the State Board of Education as the head of the Department of Public Instruction, its composition, organization, independence, representation of local education agencies and the citizens of the State on the State Board of Education, and constitutional and statutory powers and duties; and (iii) the role of the State Superintendent as secretary and chief administrative officer of the State Board, the State Superintendent's selection, and the State Superintendent's constitutional and statutory powers and duties including the election or appointment of the State Superintendent.
- (3) Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the statewide student testing program, the data collection and data management program, the curriculum and instruction program, the financial services program, the school support services program, and any other program within the Department that has an impact on student performance and positive educational outcomes.
- (4) Assess the activities performed in each program, the major benefits provided by the program, the current funding and staffing levels for the program, the rationale for the funding and staffing levels, and the administrative and other overhead costs of the program.
- (5) Determine the appropriate level of funding and staff necessary to accomplish the goals and missions of the Department.

SECTION 4. The Commission, while in the discharge of its official duties, may exercise all powers provided for under G.S. 120-19 and G.S. 120-19.1 through G.S. 120-19.4. The Commission may meet at any time upon the joint call of the cochaIRS. The Commission may meet in the Legislative Building or the Legislative Office Building.

The Legislative Services Commission, through the Legislative Services Officer, shall assign professional staff to assist the Commission in its work. The House of Representatives' and the Senate's Supervisors of Clerks shall assign clerical staff to the Commission, and the expenses relating to the clerical employees shall be borne by the Commission. The Commission may contract for professional, clerical, or consultant services as provided by G.S. 120-32.02. If the Commission hires a consultant, the consultant shall not be a State employee or a person currently under contract with the State to provide services.

All State departments and agencies and local governments and their subdivisions shall furnish the Commission with any information in their possession or available to them.

SECTION 5. The Commission shall report the results of its study and its recommendations to the 2009 General Assembly upon its convening and to the Joint

1 Legislative Education Oversight Committee. The Commission shall terminate upon
2 filing its final report or upon the convening of the 2009 General Assembly, whichever is
3 earlier.

4 **SECTION 6.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the General
5 Assembly the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) for the 2008-2009 fiscal
6 year for the expenses of the Legislative Special Commission on Efficiency and
7 Effectiveness of the Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education.

8 **SECTION 7.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

U

D

BILL DRAFT 2007-LEz-305 [v.8] (2/19)

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)
4/4/2008 11:17:50 AM

Short Title: Funds for Efficient, Green School Facilities.

(Public)

Sponsors: .

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO ENSURE THE EFFICIENT, GREEN
OPERATION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT
LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
Department of Public Instruction the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars
(\$1,500,000) in recurring funds for the 2008-2009 fiscal year to ensure the efficient
operation of the public schools. The Plant Operation Section of the School Support
Division shall use these funds for:

- (1) Staff development for appropriate personnel to ensure effective energy
and environmental management;
- (2) Clean water treatment, waste water treatment, and water management;
- (3) Strategies to address indoor/outdoor air quality;
- (4) The management of hazardous materials; and
- (5) Engineering support in all of these areas to ensure that local school
administrative units have the support they need to achieve efficient,
safe and environmentally sound practices.

The Plant Operation Section shall report annually on May 15 to the Joint Legislative
Education Oversight Committee on services provided and projects completed in the
local school administrative units.

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

U

D

BILL DRAFT 2007-RQz-16 [v.4] (03/14)

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)
4/4/2008 10:58:58 AM

Short Title: IEP Team and Homebound Instruction Changes.

(Public)

Sponsors: .

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW TO ALLOW LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES,
PARENTS AND RELEVANT MEMBERS OF IEP TEAMS TO EVALUATE THE
CONTINUED APPROPRIATENESS OF HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION FOR
DISCIPLINE PURPOSES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, AS
RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION G.S. 115C-107.7(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) If a change of placement occurs under the discipline regulations of IDEA, a local educational agency shall not assign a student to homebound instruction without a determination by the student's IEP team that the homebound instruction is the least restrictive alternative environment for that student. If it is determined that the homebound instruction is the least restrictive alternative environment for the student, the student's IEP team shall meet to determine the nature of the homebound educational services to be provided to the student. In addition, the continued appropriateness of the homebound instruction shall be evaluated monthly by ~~the head of the student's IEP team~~ the local education agency, the parents, and relevant members of the student's IEP team."

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007**

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D

BILL DRAFT 2007-RQz-18 [v.5] (04/02)

**(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)
4/4/2008 11:07:20 AM**

Short Title: Study Particip. of Except. Children.

(Public)

Sponsors: .

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO STUDY THE PARTICIPATION AND DROPOUT RATES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN LEARN AND EARN EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOLS, REDESIGNED HIGH SCHOOLS, THE NORTH CAROLINA VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL, AND NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS THAT HAVE BLOCK SCHEDULING, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The Department of Public Instruction shall analyze the participation of students with disabilities in Learn and Earn Early College High Schools, Redesigned High Schools, the North Carolina Virtual Public School, and North Carolina public high schools that are on block schedules. In conducting its analysis, the Department shall consider enrollment, graduation, and dropout rates for students with disabilities in these different programs. The Department shall report its findings and any recommendations to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by January 15, 2009.

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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D

BILL DRAFT 2007-RQz-19 [v.4] (04/02)

(THIS IS A DRAFT AND IS NOT READY FOR INTRODUCTION)
4/4/2008 11:04:10 AM

Short Title: Study Regional Education Service Centers.

(Public)

Sponsors: .

Referred to:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO HIRE A CONSULTANT TO STUDY THE ROLE THAT REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE CENTERS THAT ARE CREATED WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION COULD PLAY IN THE DELIVERY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGHOUT THE STATE, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee shall contract with a credible independent source, individual, or organization to study the roles that regional education service centers created within the Department of Public Instruction could play in the delivery of professional development throughout the State. The contractor shall not be an employee or independent contractor of any organization that delivers professional development to teachers in North Carolina.

SECTION 2. The study by the contractor shall:

- (1) Examine regional education service center models in other states;
- (2) Provide qualitative and quantitative data on the effectiveness of the models in other states;
- (3) Include input from consultants at the Department of Public Instruction and teachers and administrators from at least 15 local school administrative units that are of different sizes and from different geographic regions of the State; and
- (4) Take no more than four months from initiation to completion.

SECTION 3. The contractor's report shall:

- (1) Adequately reflect the study's methodology, sources of information, purpose and scope, analyses, evaluative assessments, recommendations, and conclusions;

- 1 (2) State any known deficiencies or limitations of the study;
2 (3) Be presented in both a printed form and an electronic version; and
3 (4) Provide recommendations on the roles that regional education service
4 centers created within the Department of Public Instruction could play
5 in the delivery of professional development throughout the State.

6 **SECTION 4.** The contractor shall submit a written progress report every
7 four weeks to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee. The contractor
8 shall complete the report within four months. At the completion of the study, the
9 contractor shall submit a draft of the report document to the Joint Legislative Education
10 Oversight Committee for review. Within 30 days of completing the study, the
11 contractor shall submit a final report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight
12 Committee. The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee may, in its
13 discretion, schedule a formal presentation of the report when it is submitted.

14 **SECTION 5.** There is appropriated one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000)
15 from the General Fund to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee to carry
16 out this study.

17 **SECTION 6.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.
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21



The North Carolina Positive Behavioral Support Initiative

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Background:

- The North Carolina Positive Behavioral Support Initiative began in 2000 as part of the North Carolina State Improvement Program funded through IDEA.
- The primary purposes of the grant were personnel development and systems change.
- Positive Behavioral Support is a way to impact the learning environments in the schools in order to support high student performance and to reduce behavioral problems.
- The North Carolina Positive Behavior Support (PBS) sites are working to integrate their Safe Schools Plans, Character Education efforts and strategies, and discipline efforts in order to make schools caring and safe communities for learning.
- PBS schools can also be host environments for other research based initiatives such as Responsiveness to Instruction and intensive instruction in literacy and mathematics.
- Whole School Positive Behavioral Support is a systematic approach that establishes and reinforces clear behavioral expectations.
- PBS is also an instructional approach that focuses on systematically teaching social behavior using effective instructional methodology.
- It is a team-based system involving the entire school staff using a systems approach.
- The school team looks at the entire school campus and the whole school day.
- The school staff must adopt a common approach to discipline that is proactive, instructional, and outcome-based.
- The school data is used to guide decision making.
- There is an emphasis on continuous, data-based improvement, individualized to each school.
- The goal is to help educate all students, even students with challenging behaviors.
- Systematically teaching and implementing behavioral interventions for the most difficult students is also a key component.

Current Implementation:

- The PBS implementation plan outlines the infrastructure to support the growth and evaluation of Positive Behavioral Support throughout the state.
- The PBS Leadership Team, Behavior Support and Special Programs Section and PBS LEA/Regional Coordinators are the active implementation groups.

- The plan has three parts– Visibility and Political Support, Training, and Evaluation.
- North Carolina hired Dr. Tim Lewis to train teams and trainers in PBS training modules developed by University of Missouri.
- The modules have been revised several times and the training is provided throughout the state.
- In order to build capacity in the state, each new school system identifies one or more people to be a local trainer/coach. The identified people attend the PBS module training with the new schools and later assist experienced trainers.
- 76 PBS Trainers completed the training cycle by May, 2007.
- Additional training and support is provided periodically and during the summer.
- In May, 2007, 81 LEAs had schools that had received PBS module training.
- LEAs with plans to implement in the entire school system - Durham Public Schools, Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools, Gaston County Schools, Pender County Schools, Warren County Schools, Wake County Schools, Nash/Rocky Mount Schools, Brunswick County Schools, Iredell/Statesville Schools
- 548 schools were participating at the end of 2006-07. This is slightly more than 23% of the Public Schools in North Carolina.
- All 5 Youth Development Centers (training schools) have been trained and both schools for the deaf are beginning implementation.
- The Exceptional Children Division has set aside funds to support PBS implementation throughout the state.
- Funds to support PBS training are provided to school systems based on the number of teams to be trained during the school year.
- Six 2/3 time PBS Regional Coordinators are being hosted by LEAs and a Charter School to support LEA trainers and PBS sites.
- The PBS Regional/LEA Coordinators have visited many of the participating schools and having regular meetings with the trainers/coaches in their regions.
- Other funds are targeting additional LEAs that are developing PBS/Reading sites.
- The 2007 North Carolina Legislature allocated funds for a Positive Behavior Support Consultant position at the state level. This consultant began January 14, 2008
- Website – www.ncpublicschools.org/positivebehavior

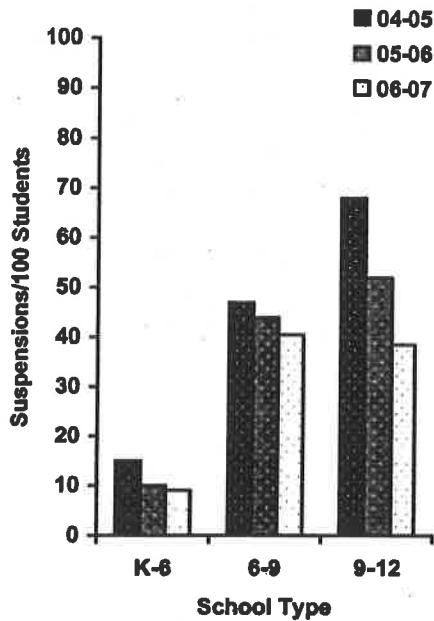
North Carolina PBS Initiative Implementation Data 2007-2008

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

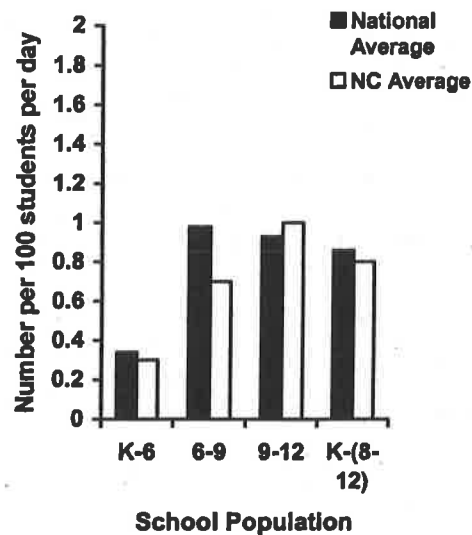
LEAs and Schools Participating in the NC PBS Initiative

| School Year | 00-01 | 01-02 | 02-03 | 03-04 | 04-05 | 05-06 | 06-07 | 07-08 (est.) |
|--------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------|
| # of LEAs | 1 | 5 | 9 | 27 | 50 | 66 | 81 | 98 |
| # of Schools | 1 | 5 | 9 | 27 | 147 | 293 | 548 | 768 |

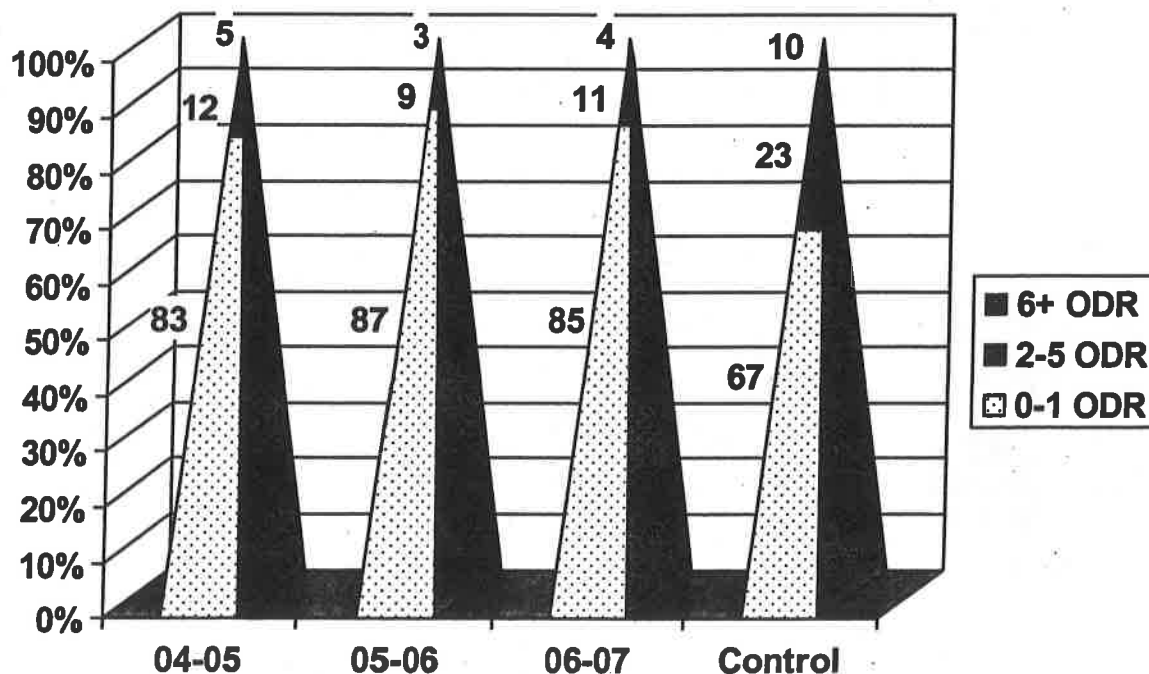
Suspensions across Type of School



Office Discipline Referrals (per 100 Students per Day)



Office Discipline Referral Risk in NC



Data from NC Positive Behavior Support Initiative Implementation Evaluation 2006-2007 & PBS Schools

North Carolina PBS Initiative Implementation Data 2007-2008

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Pine Valley Elementary School – New Hanover County

| Year | Total # Referrals | Administrator Time | Instructional Time |
|---------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2003-04 | 944 | 236 hours = - 36 days | 708 hours = - 109 days |
| 2004-05 | 644 | 161 hours = + 11 days | 483 hours = + 35 days |
| 2005-06 | 480 | 120 hours = + 6 days | 360 hours = + 19 days |
| 2006-07 | 321 | 80 hours = + 6 days | 241 hours = + 18 days |

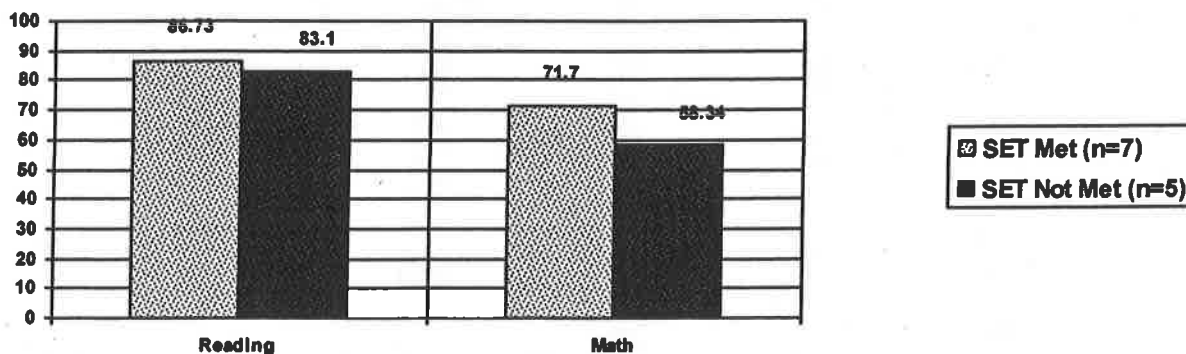
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Implementation Data

- Elementary PBIS schools increased the number of students passing the EOG reading test as they progressed from grades 3 to 5 by 13.9%, compared to 7.7% for similar non-implementing schools.
- Elementary bus behavior decreased by 5.73% between first and fourth quarter for 2006-07.
- West Charlotte High school reduced suspension days by 39% between 05-06 and 06-07.

| <u>Brunson Elementary</u> <u>Winston-Salem/Forsyth Co.</u> | 2004-2005 School Year (Before PBS) | 2005-2006 School Year 1 PBS | 2006-2007 2 PBS | Year |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------|
| Office Referrals | 263 | 156 | 107 | |
| Suspensions | 49 | 41 | 16 | |
| Administrator Time @ 20 min./referral | 5,260 min. (88 hrs) (15 days) | 3,120 min. (52 hrs) (9 days) | 2,100 min. (35 hrs) (6 days) | |
| Instructional Time Missed @ 30 min./referral | 7890 min. (132 hrs) (22 days) | 4680 min. (78 hrs) (13 days) | 3180 min. (53 hrs) (9 days) | |
| Instructional Time Missed @ 6 hrs./suspension | 34,920 min. (582 hrs) (97 days) | 30,240 min. (504 hrs)(84 days) | 6,480 (108 hrs) (18 days) | |

Comparing 05-06(year 1 PBS) and 06-07(year2 PBS)
3 days of administrator time recovered
70 days of instructional time regained!

Third Grade EOG Results in PBS Schools



Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) is a nonprofit organization that supports farmers and rural communities in the mountains of Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians by providing education, mentoring, promotion, web resources, and community and policy development. Our mission is to create and expand regional community-based and integrated food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, economically viable and health-promoting. Our vision is a future food system throughout the mountains of North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians that provides a safe and nutritious food supply for all segments of society; that is produced, marketed and distributed in a manner that enhances human and environmental health; and that adds economic and social value to rural and urban communities.

Howbery the lamb helps students learn about agriculture



Growing Minds links agriculture, classroom

By Emily Jackson
Growing Minds Classroom Connections (GMC) has helped connect students to the world of agriculture through a variety of programs. It provides a safe, secure, and healthy environment for students to learn about agriculture and its importance to our community. GMC has been successful in providing a safe and secure environment for students to learn about agriculture and its importance to our community. GMC has been successful in providing a safe and secure environment for students to learn about agriculture and its importance to our community.



Emily Jackson directs the Growing Minds Farm to School program for the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project. The mission of this program is:

To create regional community-based food systems while connecting children to their agricultural heritage and promoting the wellness and ecological consciousness of young people. We work to cultivate relationships between farms and schools that create dynamic, wellness-focused learning environments for our children.

Emily Jackson serves as the Southeast Regional Lead for six states (KY, TN, NC, SC, GA and FL) for the National Farm to School Network. In April 2007, Emily testified before the Senate Agricultural Committee about farm to school as it applies to the upcoming Farm Bill. Recognized as a national expert on farm to school, Emily has presented at numerous national and regional conferences.

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www.asapconnections.org ♦ www.growing-minds.org ♦ www.AppalachianGrown.org

As a former teacher, Emily has particular insight into the challenges and benefits of working with school systems. In 2006, Emily was chosen as a western North Carolina delegate to Terre Madre, an international gathering in Turin, Italy that focuses on local food and local producers.



What is farm to school?

Farm to school (F2S) is a movement in the United States (38 states and 769 school districts) that connects schools with local farms with the objectives of serving healthy, locally grown meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education opportunities that will last a lifetime, and supporting local small farmers.

The benefits of farm to school programming are numerous:

- Encourages children to develop life-long healthful eating habits.
- Reinforces an appreciation for the importance of farming to our community.
- Instills an appreciation for the cycle of food from seed to table.
- Helps maintain local economies by supporting local farms.
- Strengthens urban/rural linkages.
- Opens new direct marketing opportunities to local school districts.
- Strengthens relationships between farmers and the community.

While there are many benefits, there are many barriers as well. The National Farm to School Network drafted a list of barriers:

Barriers to Starting and Maintaining F2S programs

- Perceived limitations in children's tastes (though we have seen that there is no limitation here – but perceived barriers are just as challenging as real barriers)
- Food Service concerns and interpretations (real and perceived) about health regulations regarding food they serve
- Limitations in what distributors carry and offer. Also distributors less interested in talking to farm to school advocate types and only really listen to their customers – food service directors

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Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

- Lack of respect for school food service profession – a group of people not empowered to make change
- The aggregation and distribution of products from small farms to schools (“the truck won’t come down our dirt road” or “we don’t have enough product for the distributor to come to our farm”)
- Lots of small farms have fixed high end accounts and markets (restaurants/farmers markets/CSA’s) and don’t always see the opportunity with schools (schools make a great second market, and growing contacts)
- Upfront costs to purchase local foods that cost more – but can be balanced in a budget over the long-term. This is not saying that every year food service has to fundraise for \$ to buy local food. It can be incorporated into the budget successfully without extra income. But to take the risk of new foods, there needs to be funds available to try things out.
- Community awareness and support to try new things and back up the school and food service has to be there to start and maintain f2s programs



- Amount for federal reimbursement for meals is very low
- Many school kitchens lack space, equipment, trained staff, refrigerators, freezers, and other needs to “cook” food and not just warm food
- School year is out of sync with growing season – which means that the school cafeteria budgets are also out of sync. It is hard to set up growing contracts that cross over budget years (ex: pay money in April for product delivered in Sept is challenging to justify)
- Though food and farm education is easy to integrate into curriculum, not all teachers willing or interested. “Teaching to the

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tests” and standardized curriculums limit teachers creativity and use of local community for place based lessons.

- Limited access to local processing and the regulations around processed foods is challenging
- Teacher, administrative, and food service staff turnover is always challenging in schools. So unless things are part of the accepted culture and not just the efforts of one superstar, then programs can disappear in a blink of an eye when staff leave.
- Enthusiasm and willingness to do “extra” wanes, programs need to be institutionalized and set as policy within schools, districts, counties, states, etc....



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