



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

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Pilot Dropout Prevention/Recovery
Charter School

SL2014-104 (HB884), Section 7

Date Due: April 15, 2016

Report # 45

DPI Chronological Schedule, 2015-2016

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SBE VISION: Every public school student will graduate ready for post-secondary education and work, prepared to be a globally engaged and productive citizen.

SBE MISSION: The State Board of Education has the constitutional authority to lead and uphold the system of public education in North Carolina.

WILLIAM COBEY

Chair :: Chapel Hill

BECKY TAYLOR

Greenville

WAYNE MCDEVITT

Asheville

A.L. COLLINS

Vice Chair :: Kernersville

REGINALD KENAN

Rose Hill

ERIC DAVIS

Charlotte

DAN FOREST

Lieutenant Governor :: Raleigh

KEVIN D. HOWELL

Raleigh

PATRICIA N. WILLOUGHBY

Raleigh

JANET COWELL

State Treasurer :: Raleigh

GREG ALCORN

Salisbury

JUNE ST. CLAIR ATKINSON

Secretary to the Board :: Raleigh

OLIVIA OXENDINE

Lumberton

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., State Superintendent

301 N. Wilmington Street :: Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825

In compliance with federal law, the NC Department of Public Instruction administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to:

Dr. Rebecca Garland, Deputy State Superintendent

6368 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6368 :: Telephone: (919) 807-3200 :: Fax: (919) 807-3388

Visit us on the Web :: www.ncpublicschools.org

M0415

Report to JLEOC on
Pilot Dropout Prevention and Recovery Charter School
April 15, 2015

Background

North Carolina Session Law 2014-104 (House Bill 884) provided for each of the following actions:¹

Two-year Dropout Prevention and Recovery Pilot Program (Charter School)

“SECTION 2. The State Board of Education shall establish a two-year Dropout Prevention and Recovery Pilot Program (Pilot Program). The State Board of Education shall select one charter school that has been approved by the State Board under G.S. 115C-238.29D to provide the educational services and programming for the Pilot Program. The purpose of the Pilot Program is to reengage students and increase the graduation rates in North Carolina through an educational program that provides flexible scheduling and a blended learning environment with individualized and self-paced learning options.

SECTION 4. The charter school participating in the Pilot Program shall develop and implement an alternative accountability model that meets the guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education for alternative learning programs under G.S. 115C-12(24).

SECTION 5. For the charter school participating in the Pilot Program, the allotments and adjustments shall be made as provided in G.S. 115C-238.29H and shall be adjusted on the basis of the average daily membership in the fifth month of the school year.”

Report

“SECTION 7. The State Board of Education shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by March 15, 2016, on the outcomes of the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Pilot Program, including (i) the number of students who dropped out of high school, enrolled in the program, and completed a high school diploma; (ii) the results of the alternative accountability model; and (iii) the impact on the ADM Contingency Reserve. The report shall also include any recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Pilot Program funding and accountability models.”

On September 4, 2014, the State Board of Education (State Board) approved Commonwealth High School (Commonwealth) in Charlotte, NC, to be the school participating in the Pilot Program (pilot school). Although the State Board has subsequently approved two additional Dropout Prevention and Recovery Charter Schools

¹ The full legislation, which also included sections regarding eligibility for the program, is contained in Appendix A of this report.

that are “replications” of Commonwealth (Stewart Creek, opened in 2015-16, and Central Wake, approved to open in 2016-17; both operated by the same education management organization, Accelerated Learning Solutions, Inc.), only Commonwealth was approved as the pilot school directed in the legislation above.

The following sections provide the legislatively required information describing the pilot - that is, Commonwealth’s - implementation in the 2014-15 school year.

Student Accounting

“The State Board of Education shall submit a report . . . on . . . (i) the number of students who dropped out of high school, enrolled in the program, and completed a high school diploma”

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) cannot validate the data submitted by Commonwealth through the standard statewide student accounting system for the 2014-15 school year. The data that the school entered and certified as accurate for standard student accounting data collection (i.e., as submitted by all other NC charter schools and school districts) revealed significant inconsistencies that could not be explained initially by the Commonwealth administration. The inconsistencies suggested that the school improperly coded student enrollment, attendance, and withdrawals from the school.

NCDPI has audited the Commonwealth student data, has conducted site visits, and has met with Commonwealth staff in efforts to determine the reason(s) for the invalid student data and to reconstruct, if possible, the actual student enrollment, attendance, and withdrawal figures for the 2014-15 school year. The Commonwealth administration has conducted an internal audit and identified both reasons for the inaccurate data and a plan to remedy the internal control problems that led to the inaccurate data. The school also has assembled data from an internal student accounting system to ensure that students will have 2014-15 data for their records going forward. Since this data cannot be validated as Uniform Education Reporting System (UERS²)-compliant, however, it cannot be considered valid or relied upon for purposes of State reporting. Therefore, this report uses information that should be considered “best available...for purposes of discussion.”

According to data submitted by Commonwealth through the standard Statewide student accounting system for the 2014-15 school year, 455 students (including 90 in grade 12) were enrolled for part of the school year; 257 of those students were still enrolled at the end of the year (i.e., 198 students - 44% - enrolled, then withdrew).

Seventeen (17) students were identified as having graduated from the school. The 17 graduates were characterized as follows:

- All 17 students enrolled in Commonwealth in grade 12

² As defined in G.S. 115C-12(18).

- Fourteen (14) of the 17 had been enrolled in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) high schools previously during the 2014-15 school year; based on the student accounting data available at this time, it appears that nine (9) of the 14 transferred to Commonwealth, while four (4) of the 14 had been withdrawn from CMS for at least one month before enrolling at Commonwealth, and one (1) of the 14 had been enrolled in both CMS and Kennedy charter prior to enrolling at Commonwealth
- One (1) of the 17 had been enrolled previously at Crossroads Charter High School (in Mecklenburg County) and appears to have been withdrawn for at least one month before enrolling at Commonwealth
- Two (2) of the 17 did not have data indicating that they had previously been enrolled in a NC public school (traditional or charter); these students thus appear to have been either in private or home school or out of state prior to enrollment in Commonwealth.

To summarize, based on Commonwealth's reported 2014-15 grade 12 student enrollment of 90, 17 (19%) of those students graduated, 44 (49%) left Commonwealth, and 29 (32%) remained in grade 12 at Commonwealth.

Student Outcomes

"The State Board of Education shall submit a report . . . on . . . (ii) the results of the alternative accountability model."

As directed in legislation, Commonwealth developed and implemented an alternative accountability model that meets the guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education for alternative learning programs. Based on this model, the school achieved a rating of "Highly Effective."

Per SBE Policy GCS-C-038, approved in December 2014, schools that are designated as "alternative schools" may select from among four options for their alternative school accountability plan.³ Commonwealth High School chose "Option D," which allows an alternative school to submit its own accountability plan as long as that plan includes measures of student proficiency and growth. At its March 2015 meeting, the State Board approved Commonwealth's plan for the 2014-15 school year, which included the following components:

1. Student Proficiency: Combined percent of students meeting grade level standard on Math I and English II State End-of-Course (EOC) assessments
 - a. Target: 10 percentage points higher than average of all NC alternative education schools
2. Student Growth: Percent of students demonstrating growth on *Reading Plus* reading and math short cycle assessments (not State assessments)

³ See Appendix B: State Board of Education Policy GCS-C-038

- a. Target: 80% in both reading and math
- 3. Increase credit earning rate
 - a. Target: increase credit earning rate by 10 percentage points over rate from prior school experience
- 4. Improve Grade Point Average (GPA)
 - a. Target: increase by 10 percentage points the percent of students with a GPA of 2.0 or greater
- 5. Satisfaction
 - a. Target: 70% of students respond as satisfied or very satisfied when asked to rate satisfaction with school

Based on these indicators, in lieu of a School Performance Grade, Commonwealth would earn points for each of the five areas. The ratio (expressed as a percentage) of total points earned to target points available would then be judged against the following standard: (1) Emerging: 64.99 % or lower, (2) Effective: 65–84.99 %, or (3) Highly Effective: 85% or higher.

At the end of the 2014-15 school year, Commonwealth reported to the State Board that it had achieved 429 total points, or 53 above its target total of 376 points, translating to an overall percentage of 114% ($429/376 = 1.14$). This performance earned the school an overall rating of “Highly Effective.”⁴ The State Board voted to accept these results at its September 2015 meeting.

Funding

“The State Board of Education shall submit a report . . . on . . . (iii) the impact on the ADM [Average Daily Membership] Contingency Reserve.”

The opening and operation of Commonwealth High School had no impact on the ADM Contingency Reserve, as all State funds for Commonwealth were pulled from the allotment for CMS. In the year that a charter school opens, State allotments to the charter school are generated by pulling back funding from the allotment to the school district in which the charter school is located.

Recommendations for Funding and Accountability Models

“The report shall also include any recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Pilot Program funding and accountability models.”

Funding Model

Background

State Board policy TCS-M-003 establishes the State Allotment Policy Manual, which contains detailed rules and procedures by which the State funds traditional and charter

⁴ For detailed Accountability Results by category for Commonwealth please see Appendix D.

schools. Prior to the Commonwealth pilot, all charter schools were funded based on their average daily membership (ADM) for the first 20 instructional days (“month 1”) of the school year. Per the legislation establishing the Commonwealth pilot, the State Board was directed to modify how the school would be allotted funds such that the State would fund the school based on month 5, rather than month 1, ADM.

In September 2015, in response to requests from Accelerated Learning Solutions, Inc. (ALS) to apply the unique Commonwealth funding model to Stewart Creek (ALS’s second dropout prevention and recovery school in NC) the State Board also modified the section of the Allotment Policy Manual pertaining to allotments for charter schools to include month 5 funding as an option for any dropout prevention and recovery charter school. This modification recognizes that in the Commonwealth/Stewart Creek model, most of the students enroll in the school after attending another high school, and then are referred by the school district to attend Commonwealth or Stewart Creek; therefore, month 5, rather than month 1 of the school year is more likely to represent the dropout prevention and recovery charter schools’ high point in terms of student population.

As a result of the State Board approved change to the Allotment Policy Manual, any charter schools that are approved with “a sole mission to provide a dropout prevention and recovery program to high school students in grades 9 through 12” may now request the State Board fund the school based on month 5, rather than month 1, ADM. To qualify for this designation and funding model, a school must have specialized programs to encourage students who have dropped out of school to re-enroll in school, and to provide an alternative for students who are at risk of dropping out of a traditional high school. The NCDPI Office of Charter Schools anticipates that, in addition to Stewart Creek and Central Wake charter schools, which are currently applying for this alternative funding model, any subsequent “replication” of Commonwealth will apply for and be approved to be funded based on month 5 ADM.

Commonwealth’s funding model also already differs from other schools’ in another meaningful way: the school holds two four-hour “sessions” per day - morning and afternoon - and students are assigned to attend only one session each per day. The school therefore serves two groups of students – morning and afternoon – with each full-time staff person. In essence then, Commonwealth’s half-time service model (whereby two separately-funded student groups receive up to four hours each per day from a full-time staff), is funded as if it were a full-time program (i.e., in which each student would attend for 6-8 hours per day).

Finally, this report has already noted that the Commonwealth student data for 2014-15 cannot be validated by the State; therefore, there is no valid attendance data upon which to draw conclusions (i.e., the data reported in the State system showed 100% attendance). Based on NCDPI observation during site visits and conversation with the Commonwealth administration, however, it is estimated that approximately 40-60% of students in ADM actually attend each day, with the maximum session attendance never going above 60%.

Recommendations

1. Consider creating an alternative mechanism for funding dropout prevention and recovery charter schools. In light of the pattern of student enrollment at

Commonwealth, whereby students typically are enrolled in a school district (typically CMS) and then later enroll at Commonwealth, the State should be aware that, after the initial year for the charter school, the State will double-fund each student who moves in a given school year. As noted above, in Commonwealth's initial year, funding for its students was pulled back from the CMS allotment (as is standard practice for funding any charter school in its initial year); however, in each subsequent year, funding will be built into both the CMS and Commonwealth allotments (again, as is standard practice), thereby providing funding twice for any student who enrolls in CMS, but then moves to Commonwealth. Given this scenario, the State may wish to consider an alternative to the current funding model for any dropout prevention and recovery charter school.

2. Consider funding at less than 100% of dollars per student. Since the State is, for each student, essentially paying a full-day rate, but receiving a half day of service, the State should consider funding Commonwealth at some per student amount that is less than the full CMS "average dollars per ADM." If one assumes that the average funding for a student in ADM in CMS is sufficient to provide for a full-day educational program for that student, then that dollar amount is more than is needed to fund a half-day educational program.
3. Consider funding at less than 100% of ADM. In light of Commonwealth's reported daily attendance rate of approximately 50-60% of enrollment, the State should consider funding Commonwealth based on some ADM figure that is less than 100% of reported ADM. This funding approach would be more cost-effective for the State and would still ensure that the school would have sufficient resources to provide its educational program to students on any given day. For example, funding at 75% of month 5 ADM would enable the school to hire sufficient staff to serve the roughly 50-60% of students who attend on a given day.

Accountability Model

Background

Commonwealth's SBE-approved accountability model is provided for in SBE policy GCS-Q-001 (see Appendix C), which enables charter schools to be certified as being alternative learning programs ("alternative schools") which, as provided for in GCS-C-038 (see Appendix B), can be measured using an alternative accountability model.

Since Commonwealth is designed specifically to serve dropouts and students at risk of dropping out, it is worth noting that students who are "referred" out of a school system to a charter school no longer count toward that school system's accountability statistics, and if they are coded properly as transferring to a charter school, also do not count as dropouts from the referring school system.

Recommendation

Given that Commonwealth states that, by design, most of its students come to the school as "referrals from CMS," the State may wish to explore whether this arrangement provides an appropriate level of accountability for ensuring that these students receive a

sound basic education. Specifically, to better understand the academic accountability implications of alternative charter schools, the State may wish to study further, over several years, the trends in student referral, performance, and graduation, paying particular attention to a comparison between alternative schools that are operated by school districts and those that are independent public charter schools.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA SESSION 2013
SESSION LAW 2014-104
HOUSE BILL 884**

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A DROPOUT PREVENTION AND RECOVERY PILOT PROGRAM WITH A CHARTER SCHOOL AND TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO REPORT ON UTILIZATION OF PERSONNEL CONTRACTS.
The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. S.L. 2011-259 is repealed.

SECTION 2. The State Board of Education shall establish a two-year Dropout Prevention and Recovery Pilot Program (Pilot Program). The State Board of Education shall select one charter school that has been approved by the State Board under G.S. 115C-238.29D to provide the educational services and programming for the Pilot Program. The purpose of the Pilot Program is to reengage students and increase the graduation rates in North Carolina through an educational program that provides flexible scheduling and a blended learning environment with individualized and self-paced learning options.

SECTION 3. To be eligible to participate in the Pilot Program, the charter school's enrollment shall only include high school students who have (i) dropped out of high school or (ii) transferred from their high school to the charter school. For the purposes of this act, high school shall include ninth through twelfth grades. Transfer decisions shall be made by the student who is 18 years of age or older or the student's parents or guardians. The charter school, its affiliated charter management organization, or its education management organization must be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools as an indicator of quality instructional programming. All teachers employed by the charter school participating in the Pilot Program shall be licensed teachers under G.S. 115C-296.

SECTION 4. The charter school participating in the Pilot Program shall develop and implement an alternative accountability model that meets the guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education for alternative learning programs under G.S. 115C-12(24).

SECTION 5. For the charter school participating in the Pilot Program, the allotments and adjustments shall be made as provided in G.S. 115C-238.29H and shall be adjusted on the basis of the average daily membership in the fifth month of the school year.

SECTION 6. Existing charter schools meeting the criteria as provided in this act may apply to participate in the Pilot Program no later than August 31, 2014. The State Board of Education shall select by September 30, 2014, the participant for the Pilot Program for the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years.

SECTION 7. The State Board of Education shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by March 15, 2016, on the outcomes of the Dropout Prevention and Recovery Pilot Program, including (i) the number of students who dropped out of high school, enrolled in the program, and completed a high school diploma, (ii) the results of the alternative accountability model, and (iii) the impact on the ADM Contingency Reserve. The report shall also include any recommendations to enhance the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Pilot Program funding and accountability models.

SECTION 8. The Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee shall report to the 2016 Regular Session of the 2015 General Assembly on necessary legislation to transition the Pilot Program into alternative charter schools serving high school students who have dropped out of high school.

SECTION 8.5. The State Board of Education and the Charter Schools Advisory Board shall jointly report by December 15, 2014, to the General Assembly on the utilization of contracts for personnel services by local boards of education and charter school boards of directors. The report shall indicate both the purposes and the extent of such contracts prevalent in each local school administrative district and charter schools statewide.

SECTION 9. This act is effective when it becomes law. The Pilot Program shall begin with the 2014-2015 school year and shall conclude at the end of the 2015-2016 school year.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 31st day of July, 2014.

s/ Tom Apodaca
Presiding Officer of the Senate

s/ Thom Tillis
Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives

s/ Pat McCrory
Governor

Approved 5:05 p.m. this 6th day of August, 2014

This policy establishes the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI) procedures for alternative schools' participation in the State's Alternative Schools' Accountability Model and shall apply to all alternative schools, including charter schools approved to use the alternative accountability model, that have an NCDPI-assigned local education agency (LEA)/school code. Accountability indicators and results for students who attend programs or classes in a facility that does not have an LEA/school code shall be reported to and included in the students' base school's accountability results. These schools must report Annual Measureable Objectives as required by federal law.

- I. At the beginning of each school year, local public school and charter school boards shall determine the option, as defined in Section II of this policy that each alternative school under their jurisdiction will follow for participation in the Alternative Schools' Accountability Model. The local board's participation decision must be reported to the NCDPI's Director of Accountability Services by August 1 of each school year.
- II. There are four ways to participate in the Alternative Schools' Accountability Model:
 - A. Option A. Alternative schools can participate in School Performance Grades as defined by G.S. §115C- 83.15, or
 - B. Option B. Alternative schools can return data/results back to students' home schools and receive no designations (approved charter schools are excluded from this choice), or
 - C. Option C. Alternative schools can participate in the Alternative Schools' Progress Model.
 1. Schools electing to participate in the Alternative Schools' Progress Model will be evaluated as follows:
 - a. Components used in the overall school score:
 - (1) 20% Student Persistence
 - (a) Student Persistence is defined as the percent of alternative students who remain enrolled in any North Carolina public school through the end of the school year.
 - (2) 20% School Achievement
 - (a) The School Achievement component uses the following indicators:
 - (1) End-of-Grade (EOG) English Language Arts/Reading and Mathematics Assessments at Grades 3–8
 - (2) EOG Science Assessments at Grades 5 and 8
 - (3) End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments in Biology, Math I, and English II
 - (4) The ACT
 - (5) ACT WorkKeys
 - (6) 4-Year Graduation Rate
 - (7) 5-Year Graduation Rate
 - (8) Math Course Rigor

- (b) Three (3) years of data will be used for calculating school achievement.
 - (3) 60% Growth
 - (a) Growth will be calculated using an alternative growth model developed in conjunction with EVAAS.
 - b. A change rating will be assigned to schools comparing their previous year to the current year. For 2014–15 (the baseline year), all schools will receive the same rating.
 - (1) Progressing
 - (a) Progressing indicates a change in the school from the previous year by at least +3 points.
 - (2) Maintaining
 - (a) Maintaining indicates a change in the school from the previous year by -2.9 to +2.9 points.
 - (3) Declining
 - (a) Declining indicates a change in the school from the previous year by at least -3 points.
 - D. Option D. The alternative school may propose its own alternative accountability model for approval by the State Board of Education (SBE).
 - 1. The proposed model must include criteria for achievement and growth.
 - 2. A request for Option D must be submitted annually to the SBE for approval at its October meeting.
 - 3. For the 2014–15 school year only, all requests for approval of Option D must be submitted to the SBE by February 1 for decision in March.
- III. Schools that are identified as Developmental Day Centers (as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services) and schools which are providing special education and related services in public separate settings to students with disabilities who are significantly cognitively delayed, have multiple handicapping conditions, and may also have significant behavioral or sensory integration needs shall participate in accountability by
- (1) administering the appropriate assessment to all eligible students,
 - (2) reporting Annual Measurable Objectives for all student subgroups, and
 - (3) participating in either Option B, Option C, or Option D as defined in Section II of this policy.
- These schools are not required to report a School Performance Grade. To participate in this model, schools who meet the criteria in this section will be reviewed and affirmed by the Exceptional Children's Division and the Accountability Services Division.

The 1985 General Assembly established the state dropout prevention fund as a part of the Basic Education Program. The intent of the General Assembly is to increase the number and range of services to at-risk students. It is the policy of the State Board of Education that dropout prevention and students at risk services be a part of the educational program of every local education agency (LEA). The Board has established the goal of reducing the dropout rate in North Carolina. To facilitate the accomplishment of this goal, the State Board of Education has adopted a performance indicator in guidelines for implementation of the School Improvement and Accountability Act and a standard in state accreditation which requires all local education agencies to set a goal for the reduction of their dropout rates.

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Dropout - Any student who leaves school for any reason before graduation or completion of a program of studies without transferring to another elementary or secondary school.
- B. Student at risk - A student at risk is a young person who because of a wide range of individual, personal, financial, familial, social, behavioral or academic circumstances may experience school failure or other unwanted outcomes unless interventions occur to reduce the risk factors. Circumstances which often place students at risk may include, but are not limited to: not meeting state/local proficiency standards, grade retention; unidentified or inadequately addressed learning needs, alienation from school life; unchallenging curricula and/or instruction, tardiness and or poor school attendance; negative peer influence; unmanageable behavior; substance abuse and other health risk behaviors, abuse and neglect; inadequate parental/family and/or school support; and limited English proficiency.
- C. Alternative Learning Programs – Alternative Learning Programs are defined as services for students at risk of truancy, academic failure, behavior problems, and/or dropping out of school. These services should be designed to better meet the needs of students who have not been successful in the regular public school setting. Alternative learning programs serve students at any level who
 - are suspended and/or expelled,
 - are at risk of participation in juvenile crime,
 - have dropped out and desire to return to school,
 - have a history of truancy,
 - are returning from juvenile justice settings or psychiatric hospitals, or
 - have learning styles that are better served in an alternative setting.

Alternative learning programs provide individualized programs outside of a standard classroom setting in a caring atmosphere in which students learn the skills necessary to redirect their lives.

An alternative learning program must

- provide the primary instruction for selected at-risk students
- enroll students for a designated period of time, usually a minimum of one academic grading period,
- offer course credit or grade-level promotion credit in core academic areas and
- provide transition support to and from/between the school of origin and alternative learning program.

Alternative learning programs may also

- address behavioral or emotional problems that interfere with adjustment to or benefiting from the regular education classroom,
- provide smaller classes and/or student/teacher ratios,
- provide instruction beyond regular school hours,
- provide flexible scheduling, and/or
- assist students in meeting graduation requirements other than course credits.

Alternative learning programs for at-risk students typically serve students in an alternative school or alternative program within the regular school.

- D. Alternative School - An Alternative School is one option for an alternative learning program. It serves at-risk students and has an organizational designation based on the DPI assignment of an official school code. An alternative school is different from a regular public school and provides choices of routes to completion of school. For the majority of students, the goal is to return to the regular public school. Alternative schools may vary from other schools in such areas as teaching methods, hours, curriculum, or sites, and they are intended to meet particular learning needs.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

- A. Funds may be used to support programs and services to at-risk students in all grades, pre-kindergarten through grade twelve.
- B. Each school system and school shall develop and maintain identifiable and targeted dropout prevention and students at risk program to meet the needs of students at risk of school failure. The program shall be goal oriented and shall include specific strategies to improve student achievement and keep students in school. Plans shall be maintained at the

LEA and be available for review by Department of Public Instruction staff. Individual schools with dropout rates above the annual state average and/or those that have not steadily reduced their dropout rates annually shall develop a dropout prevention plan based on best practices and shall incorporate these strategies into their School Improvement Plan.

- C. LEAs are encouraged to develop a personal education plan for each identified student at risk.
- D. Funds may be used to employ full-time or part-time personnel.
- E. Funds may be used to compensate substitute teachers.
- F. All personnel must hold State Board of Education certification appropriate for the teaching or student services position held. Personnel in in-school suspension programs may in some instances be non-certified, as determined by program needs on a case-by-case basis. However, in instances where these personnel are not certified, they should minimally have the same training as required for teacher assistants. In-school suspension programs should include both an instructional focus and behavior modification strategies.
- G. Funds may be used for administrative costs to support the salary, travel, and supplies of a full- or part-time coordinator (supervisor or director).
- H. Funds may be used for instructional materials, supplies, travel, and equipment for dropout prevention and students at risk staff and programs.
- I. All work of staff employed through dropout prevention funds must directly benefit students at risk of dropping out. Dropout prevention and students at risk staff may, however, share proportionately in routine duties carried out by all staff of a school.
- J. State dropout prevention and students at risk funds may not supplant dropout prevention programs funded from other state and federal sources (except Job Training Partnership Act funds).
- K. All Average Daily Membership positions that are generated by dropout prevention programs, such as extended school day and alternative schools, should remain within those programs to provide additional services to at-risk youths.
- L. Funds may be used for dropout prevention programs throughout the twelve months of the fiscal year but may not be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

- M. Each LEA shall submit data requested by the Department of Public Instruction.

III. PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Each LEA is expected to implement the following guidelines for dropout prevention. The program's impact can be evaluated by the indicators listed.

- A. Reduce the dropout rate of the school system.
Indicator:
 - 1. A decrease in the number of dropouts as set forth in the Lea's accountability plan.
- B. Provide an alternative to out-of-school suspension by creating a learning and therapeutic environment within the school for students with problems which would normally lead to out-of-school suspension.
Indicator:
 - 1. A reduction in the number of out-of-school suspensions from the previous school year.
 - 2. A reduction in the number of in-school suspensions from the previous school year.
- C. Develop and adopt by the local board of education a system-wide discipline policy incorporating a continuum of approaches to be used in addressing behavior problems.
Indicator:
 - 1. A reduction in the number of incidents and referrals to the principal's office for behavior problems from the previous school year.
 - 2. Completed copy of the adopted discipline policy.
- D. Implement a system, using teachers, counselors, or other appropriate personnel, for early identification of at-risk students, grades K-12, with an emphasis on the early grades, K-3.
Indicator:
 - 1. Development and adoption of a system for the identification of at-risk students, kindergarten through grade twelve.
 - 2. Development and maintenance of a profile of each at-risk student. The profile should include grades, truancy (attendance record), number of retentions, and discipline problems.
- E. Develop and enhance programs and services to identify, assess, and resolve difficulties which may interfere with a student's attendance.
Indicator:
 - 1. A reduction in unlawful absences from the previous school year.

- F. Establish linkages with community agencies for program support and coordination.
Indicator:
1. 1. Development and adoption of written cooperative agreements with at least two community agencies serving at-risk students.
 2. 2. Collection of data on the number of referrals of individual students to community agencies (results to be submitted to state agency).

IV. PROGRAM OPTIONS

A wide range of programs for dropout prevention and students at risk is needed within every school system and community to complement the quality educational programs available to all students. Listed below are the types of programs which may be funded through state dropout prevention and students at risk funds. Within these general options, the specific programs to be implemented will be determined by each local school system based on an assessment of needs and local priorities. Local programs may include components of one or more of these options, but every school system is encouraged to develop programs which can most effectively meet local needs.

- A. Early Identification and Intervention Programs:
Early identification and intervention programs seek to recognize students who may face problems and prevent or ameliorate those problems before they become severe.
- B. Counseling for At-Risk Students:
Counseling for at-risk students focuses the skills of counselors on preventing and alleviating the problems facing students which can lead to dropping out. Counselors identify at-risk students and follow up to assure that needed services are provided.
- C. Behavior Improvement Programs:
Behavior improvement programs seek to improve discipline in the schools through a variety of approaches, with the ultimate goal of greater self-discipline. The emphasis is on increasing the ability of teachers to handle discipline within their own classrooms. In-school suspension programs are one alternative for students whose behavior is extremely disruptive and could result in suspension or expulsion. The programs focus on reduction of disruptive behavior and provide classroom instruction as well as counseling in a therapeutic setting.
- D. Academic Enhancement Programs:
Academic enhancement programs are designed to accelerate the learning of students who are falling behind their peers in academic achievement.

Through remediation, accelerated learning, continuous progress learning, and other enhancements, the goal is to increase achievement while keeping these at-risk students a part of the overall educational program in the schools.

E. Work-Related Programs:

Work-related programs identify potential dropouts and offer counseling, remediation, career guidance, and job preparation services designed to meet their individual needs. These services are intended to assist at-risk students in moving from school to the work environment and to provide them with skills necessary to compete in today's society.

F. Services for At-Risk Students:

Services for at-risk students are designed to meet particular local needs and priorities. The basic requirement of each service is that its primary goal is to encourage achievement and keep students in school. Among the types of services that may be funded are attendance improvement programs and other programs that serve groups of at-risk students, such as the handicapped, juvenile and youthful offenders, substance abusers, pregnant students, or adolescent parents, such as school social work, school psychology services, or school nursing, to at-risk students. Services such as after-school care and enrichment, public/private partnerships, mentoring, support clubs, summer activities, peer helpers, outdoor experiences, student advocacy, and parental involvement are encouraged (to the extent that they may be funded under other guidelines set forth herein).

V. APPLICATION TO CHARTER SCHOOLS

A charter school may apply to the State Board of Education for designation as an alternative school if it designates in the charter that the school will serve as an alternative school as defined in Section I-C of this policy.

Charter Schools designated as alternative schools are subject to application procedures and on-site monitoring by the Charter Schools office and/or the Division of Accountability Services as specified by the State Board of Education.

In all respects, programs will be consistent with Chapter 147, Article 3C of the General Statutes (Senate Bill 1260).

Commonwealth Charter High School Accountability Plan Appendix D

“Option D” Accountability Results for Commonwealth Dropout Prevention and Recovery Charter HS: 2014-15

School Rating: Highly Effective

Approved Measure for 2014-15 (CATEGORY: and description)	Location of Calculation Details	Target Performance Points	Actual Performance Points
ACHIEVEMENT: Combined percent of students who Meet (Grade Level) Standard on math and English Language Arts End of Course exams will be higher than the percent of students Meeting (Grade Level) Standard at other alternative education schools.	Please see Attachment A1 for Target calculations. Attachment A2 provides information on Actual Performance.	24 Average percent for all NC alt ed schools in 2013-14 was 14%. Target is $14 + 10 = 24$	60 60% of Commonwealth students completing the English and Math EOCs Met NCDPI Standard
READING GROWTH: Percent of students attending for one semester or longer who demonstrate reading growth on the <i>ReadingPlus</i> short cycle assessment instrument will be satisfactory.	Please see Attachment B for Actual Performance calculations.	80	86
MATH GROWTH: Percent of students attending for one semester or longer who demonstrate math growth on the GAIN short cycle assessment instrument will be satisfactory.	Please see Attachment C for Actual Performance calculations.	80	81
INCREASED HS CREDIT EARNING RATE: Per semester credit earning rate for students attending for one semester or longer will be higher when compared to the per semester credit earning rate upon entry to the school. (Prior credit earning rate per semester will be set to a 100% baseline.)	Please see Attachment D for calculations of prior credits earned and Actual Performance.	100 Students earned an avg of 1.79 credits per semester at their prior school. This is set to a baseline of 100.	112 Students earned 2.00 credits per semester after attending Commonwealth for 1+ semesters. $(2.00 \text{ divided by } 1.79 = 112\%)$
IMPROVED GPA: Percent of students attending for one semester or longer who achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.0+ will be higher when compared to the percent of these students who entered the school with a GPA of 2.0+.	Please see Attachment E for calculations of prior Grade Point Averages and Actual Performance.	22 Percent of students with a prior GPA of 2.0+ was 12%. Target is $12 + 10 = 22$	18* Percent of students with a cumulative GPA of 2.0+ after attending 1+ semesters
SATISFACTION: Percent of students responding "very satisfied" or "satisfied" when asked to rate their "satisfaction with the school" will be satisfactory.	Please see Attachment F for Actual Performance calculations.	70	72
TOTAL POINTS		376	429

*The average student enrolled with a GPA of 1.05 and, after attending for 1-2 semesters, improved her/his cumulative GPA to 1.34.

Calculation of Final Score and Rating:

The school's total Actual Points (429) are divided by the total Target Points (376) for an overall score of 114%. (429 divided by 376 = 114%.) Using the approved rating bands, the school's overall rating is, "Highly Effective."