



ABCs of Public Education

The ABCs of Public Education began in the 1996-97 school year as North Carolina's primary school improvement program. It was a major step forward in improving schools, providing the state's first school-level accountability system, and generating information that has allowed North Carolina to better target school improvement efforts. The model focuses on schools meeting growth expectations for student achievement as well as the overall percentage of students who scored at or above grade level. The model uses End-of-Grade tests in grades 3-8 in reading and mathematics to measure growth at the elementary and middle school levels. End-of-Course tests measure growth at the middle and high school level, where appropriate. Schools receive recognition based on the percentage of students' scores at or above grade level and if the school meets growth standards set by the state.

Achievement Gap

Differences in academic performance among groups are often identified racially, ethnically, and by income levels. In the United States, white students tend to outperform children of color; and wealthier students often do better than poorer ones.

Achievement Levels

Student achievement on North Carolina's End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests is reported by achievement level. There are four achievement levels:

- Level I: Students performing at this level do not have sufficient mastery of knowledge and skills in this grade level or subject area to be successful at the next grade level or at a more advanced level in this subject area.
- Level II: Students performing at this level demonstrate inconsistent mastery of knowledge and skills in this grade level or subject area and are minimally prepared to be successful at the next grade level or at a more advanced level in this subject area.
- Level III: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of this subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level (EOG) or for a more advanced level in this subject area (EOC).
- Level IV: Students performing at this level consistently perform in a superior manner clearly beyond that required to be proficient in this grade level or subject matter and are very well prepared for the next grade level or for a more advanced level in the subject area.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

AYP measures the yearly progress of different groups of students at the school, district, and state levels against yearly target goals in reading/language arts and mathematics. All public schools, in North Carolina and throughout the country, must measure and report Adequate Yearly Progress as outlined in No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Adequate Yearly Progress is the minimum level of progress in reading/language arts and mathematics proficiency made by students in a year. If a school misses one target goal, it does not make Adequate Yearly Progress. Title I schools and districts are especially affected if they do not make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Advanced Placement (AP)

The AP program enables high school students to complete college-level courses for college placement and/or credit.

Average Daily Membership (ADM)

The number of days a student is in membership at a school divided by the number of days in a school month or school year.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are independent public schools designed and operated by educators, parents, community leaders, educational entrepreneurs, and others who operate outside of the traditional system of public schools. They are sponsored by designated local or state educational organizations, which monitor their quality and effectiveness.



Composite Scores

In the ABCs of Public Education, a school's growth and performance are summarized using composite scores. There are three composites used in the ABCs: expected growth, high growth and the performance composites. Growth composites summarize a school's growth over all grade levels and subjects included in the accountability model. Growth composites indicate whether a school makes expected and high growth. The performance composite summarizes the performance of students in the school, for example, what percent are performing at or above grade level (Achievement Level III) in subjects and courses included in the accountability model. Both the performance composite and the growth composites are considered when determining which schools may need special assistance.

Disaggregated Data

To disaggregate means to separate a whole into its parts. In education, this term means that test results are sorted by groups of students who are economically disadvantaged; are from racial and ethnic minority groups; have disabilities; or have limited English fluency. This practice allows parents and teachers to see more than just the average score for their child's school. Instead, parents and teachers can see how each student group is performing.

End-of-Course (EOC) Tests

EOC tests are designed to assess the competencies defined by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for each of the following courses: English I; Algebra I and II; Geometry (to be eliminated in the 2010-11 school year); Biology; Chemistry; Physical Science; Physics; Civics and Economics; and US History. Tests are taken during the last 10 days of school or the equivalent for alternative schedules.

End-of-Grade (EOG) Tests

North Carolina's state-developed standardized tests for grades 3-8 are given in the final three weeks of the school year and are linked to the Standard Course of Study for each grade level. These tests measure student learning in reading/language arts and mathematics.

Expected Growth

Under the ABCs of Public Education, North Carolina identifies expected growth as the amount of academic growth that would reasonably be expected by a school over a year's worth of time. This amount may be different for different schools and is based on the school's previous performance; statewide average growth; and a statistical adjustment which is needed whenever one compares test scores of students from one year to the next.

Grade level, Achievement Level III and Proficiency Level

Each of these terms refers to student work that meets the achievement standard set by North Carolina. Students scoring at Achievement Level III or Achievement Level IV are considered to be performing at grade level and to be well prepared to meet the demands of the next grade level. At the high school level, the term proficiency level is more frequently used and refers to students scoring at Level III or Level IV on End-of-Course tests.

High Growth

Under the ABCs of Public Education, North Carolina sets growth standards for student achievement in each school. High growth means that a school made expected growth and at least 60% of the students achieved their growth expectations.

High Poverty School

The designation for a high poverty school is based on the percentage of students defined as Economically Disadvantaged. Economically Disadvantaged students were identified for 2009-10 AYP calculations in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement between the Child Nutrition Services Section and the Division of Accountability Services dated November 30, 2009.



Highly Qualified Teacher

A Highly Qualified teacher is defined as one who has obtained full state teacher certification or has passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state; holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and has demonstrated subject area competence in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches.

Local Education Agency (LEA)

Synonymous with local school district and indicating that a public board of education or other public authority maintains administrative control of the public schools in a city or county township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state.

Limited English Proficient (LEP)

Limited English Proficient refers to students for whom English is a second language and are not at grade level in reading and writing English.

Limited English Proficiency

Limited English proficiency is a test of English language skills given to all LEP students to ascertain the student's readiness to take the state assessment tests in English.

Low Poverty School

The designation for a low poverty school is based on the percentage of students defined as Economically Disadvantaged. Economically Disadvantaged students were identified for 2009-10 AYP calculations in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement between the Child Nutrition Services Section and the Division of Accountability Services dated November 30, 2009.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

NCLB is the more recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA of 1965) and represents a sweeping change in the federal government's role in local public education. NCLB has a variety of goals, but the most dominant ones are for every school to be at 100 percent proficiency by 2013-14 as measured by student achievement on state tests, and for every child to be taught by a Highly Qualified teacher. The law emphasizes new standards for teachers and new consequences for Title I schools that do not meet student achievement standards for two or more consecutive years. For more information on NCLB, please go to <http://www.ncpublicschools/nclb/>.

Principal's Monthly Report (PMR)

This is a record of data about student enrollment, transfers, membership, and attendance.

Proficiency

Proficiency is mastery or the ability to do something at grade level.

SAT

The SAT, which is often taken by high school juniors and seniors as a precursor to college/university admission, assesses a student's verbal, mathematical, and writing skills.

Schools of Distinction

Under the ABCs of Public Education, Schools of Distinction have 80-89 percent of students' scores at or above Achievement Level III and made expected or high growth.

Schools of Excellence

Under the ABCs of Public Education, Schools of Excellence have 90-100 percent of students' scores at or above Achievement Level III and made expected or high growth.

Schools of Progress

Under the ABCs of Public Education, Schools of Progress have 60-79 percent of students' scores at or above Achievement Level III and made expected or high growth.



Target Goals

Each student group at a school, district, or the state level must meet or exceed the proficiency target goals outlined in the chart below on the designated assessments in order for the school, district, or state to make AYP. For instance, in 2008-09, at least 77.2 percent of economically disadvantaged students at an elementary school must score at Level III or IV on the End-of-Grade mathematics assessment or its alternate in order to make AYP. Through the use of safe harbor, the confidence interval or the AYP growth standard, a school still might be able to make AYP even if it misses its proficiency target goals.

| YEAR | GRADES 3-8 (%) | | GRADE 10 (%) | |
|---------|----------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| | READING | MATHEMATICS | READING/ LANGUAGE ARTS | MATHEMATICS |
| 2010-11 | 71.6 | 88.6 | 69.3 | 84.2 |
| 2011-12 | 71.6 | 88.6 | 69.3 | 84.2 |
| 2012-13 | 71.6 | 88.6 | 69.3 | 84.2 |
| 2013-14 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Title I

Title I provides federal funding for schools to help students who are behind academically or at risk of falling behind. Funding is based on the number of low-income children in a school, generally those eligible for the free lunch program. Title I is intended to supplement, not replace, state and district funds. Schools receiving Title I monies are supposed to involve parents in deciding how these funds are spent and in reviewing progress.