

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND NORTH CAROLINA

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is a federal law affecting your school and every public K-12 school in the country. Key requirements of the law are: closing achievement gaps, holding schools accountable for all students and having a "Highly Qualified" teacher in every classroom. The law's impact is slightly different for families depending on your school's success in meeting NCLB target goals and ABCs growth expectations, your child's success in meeting goals and expectations, and whether or not your school receives Title I funds.

High standards are new for many states, but North Carolina has had a top-rated testing and accountability program for years. The State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction are blending the ABCs program with NCLB, so that there is one accountability model.

What can parents do to help?

Look at your child's performance and be sure you understand where your child stands in reading and mathematics. Talk with your child's teacher(s) and principal to find out how you and your school can work together to improve your child's performance. Be aware of your school's performance under NCLB and the ABCs. Communicate your school's successes to your community and look for ways to support your school in challenging areas.

Educators cannot improve schools alone. In North Carolina, we'll reach these high standards as a partnership with parents, local districts and communities. For more information on **No Child Left Behind** in North Carolina, check the Web at www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb.



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

Information for Parents



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QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

Will there be new tests and how will the test results be used?

Reading and mathematics end-of-grade tests for Grades 3-8, already in place through the ABCs, will be used to assess student progress. National Assessment of Educational Progress sample testing in Grades 4 and 8 every other year will continue. In addition, there will be science testing in Grades 5 and 8 beginning in 2007-08.

NCLB requires that students in high school be tested at least once in reading and mathematics, so North Carolina is reinstating the Comprehensive Tests of Reading and Mathematics for Grade 10.

All students, including Limited English Proficient Students and Students With Disabilities, are expected to participate in the testing program.

The ABCs and NCLB reports may seem to give conflicting information about your school's performance. Schools can do well in the ABCs and fail to meet standards for NCLB's Adequate Yearly Progress because of the different ways the models look at test results.

The ABCs sets performance standards for the school as a whole and growth standards for individual students. These standards are compiled to determine a school's growth status and resulting designation such as School of Excellence and High Growth. Schools have an additional challenge under NCLB. All student groups in a school and the school as a whole must meet target goals for the school to make Adequate Yearly Progress. Forty or more students across the tested grades in a school in the following categories make up student groups: 1) White; 2) Black; 3) Hispanic; 4) Native American; 5) Asian/Pacific Islander; 6) Multiracial; 7) Economically Disadvantaged Students; 8) Limited English Proficient Students; and 9) Students With Disabilities. If just one student group in a school does not meet the target goal, in either reading or mathematics, then the school does not make Adequate Yearly Progress.

Target goals are designed to measure progress toward NCLB's ultimate goal of all students (100 percent) performing at grade level in reading and mathematics by 2013-14.

What if your child already performs at grade level?

The ABCs model holds schools accountable for the growth of each student, including those who have reached Achievement Level III and are considered at grade level or proficient. Students performing at Achievement Level IV, the highest of the four achievement levels in the ABCs, can continue to grow academically within that range and are expected to do so as part of their school's growth calculations.

What if your child is not performing at grade level?

NCLB's accountability process will help teachers and administrators at your school recognize the help your child needs. A school's average score will not mask the needs of more struggling students.

How will you know where your child stands in meeting grade level proficiency standards?

Your school is required by law to keep you informed of your child's achievement level. Also, your school must share school- and district-wide testing results with you. The new N.C. School Report Cards include important information about the performance, class size and teacher quality of each public school in North Carolina at www.ncreportcards.org.

What does it mean if your school does not make Adequate Yearly Progress?

It means that one or more of the student groups is having trouble meeting learning expectations and that your school is trying to find the right support to offer those students.

What happens to schools that do not make Adequate Yearly Progress?

Title I schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years in the same subject (reading or mathematics) are identified for Title I School Improvement and must provide students reasonable transfer options to another of the district's public schools not in School Improvement at the district's transportation expense. After three consecutive years of not making AYP, Title I schools must continue the transfer option and offer tutoring services to economically disadvantaged students not performing at grade level through a provider contracted by the state. Sanctions become increasingly severe each year a Title I School Improvement school does not make AYP. Non-Title I schools that do not make AYP do not face sanctions, but must amend their School Improvement Plans to indicate how they will improve.

What is 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. About half the public schools in our state receive Title I funding.

How are teachers affected by the federal law?

NCLB sets requirements for teachers to be "Highly Qualified" and all core subject area teachers must meet these requirements by June 30, 2006. Under NCLB, "Highly Qualified" teachers must be fully state licensed and demonstrate subject area knowledge for each of the core subject areas they teach.

New standards also apply to about 15,000 teacher assistants in our state working in Title I schools. They must have a high school degree, plus an associate's degree or two years of higher education, or a formal assessment of their abilities. Many school districts are applying Title I requirements to all of their teacher assistant positions.