

North Carolina Education News
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North Carolina Gets Low Marks For Teacher Policies in NEW Report—Labeled ‘In Need of Significant Improvement’

The National Council on Teacher Quality 50-state encyclopedia on states' teacher policies, concludes that many North Carolina's policies are counterproductive to the nation's teacher quality goals.

The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is the first project of its kind to provide a 360-degree detailed analysis of how states are hurting or helping teacher quality--and what they can do to fix broken and anachronistic policies.

While North Carolina did better than most states, its overall performance shows how much work is still ahead. In the six areas of teacher policy assessed—ranging from teacher admissions standards, licensure to compensation reform, the state earned three “C” grades and three “D” grades.

Among the findings: • North Carolina's “alternate route” for helping knowledgeable, talented college graduates enter the teaching profession is both burdensome and unsupportive of a new teacher's needs.

- The state allows some teachers to teach for multiple years without passing the state licensing tests.
- North Carolina neglects the preparation of special education teachers, failing to ensure that these teachers are prepared to teach students with disabilities.

Despite the bleak overall findings, there are several bright spots. North Carolina requires that ed schools only accept teacher candidates who have passed a basic skills test, a minimal standard that many states do not observe. Also, the state does a better job collecting and reporting data that should help districts to remedy the inequitable distribution of teachers.

To download copies of the North Carolina report, which includes national comparisons:

http://www.nctq.org/stpy/reports/stpy_northcarolina.pdf

ACT High School Profile Report The Graduating Class of 2007 - North Carolina

The ACT High School Profile Report for each state provides information about the performance of 2007 graduating seniors who took the ACT as sophomores, juniors, or seniors. The reports focus on performance, access, course selection, course rigor, college readiness, awareness, and articulation.

To see the report:

<http://www.act.org/news/data/07/pdf/states/Northcarolina.pdf>

North Carolina Act Scores Increased In 2007

North Carolina students increased their performance on the ACT college admissions exam in 2007, scoring just two-tenths of a point lower than the national average, according to results released by the ACT today. ACT test scores are among the factors that colleges and universities use in their admissions process.

North Carolina's average composite score increased by .5 points from 2006 to 2007 and totaled 21 points. The national average composite rose by .1 to 21.2 points. A change of .3 points is considered significant by the ACT. The ACT is scored on a scale of 1 to 36, with 36 being the highest possible score.

While most North Carolina high school students take the SAT college entrance exam, the ACT is growing in popularity. A record number (12,202) of North Carolina graduates took the test. This represents 16 percent of the state's public and private school graduates. The SAT, in contrast, attracted 71 percent of North Carolina graduates in 2006. Nationally, 1.3 million public and private school students took the ACT, which represented 42 percent of all graduations in the nation.

The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement test consisting of four separate exams in English, reading, mathematics and science, in addition to an optional writing test.

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An increasing number of students taking the ACT indicated that they had completed or exceeded the minimum core coursework that ACT recommends for college preparation. This year, 55 percent of students indicated that they had met or exceeded the minimum for college preparation, up from 52 percent in 2006. Students who complete the minimum coursework generally score higher on the ACT and earn better college grades.

ACT defines the core college-preparatory curriculum as four or more years of English and three or more years each of mathematics (algebra and above), social studies, and natural sciences. Nationally, seniors in the Class of 2007 who took the core curriculum or more earned an average composite score of 22.0. For North Carolina students, the average was 21.8.

Students who took less than the core courses typically score two-three points lower overall.

Scores on the ACT vary by race/ethnicity as well as by level of academic preparation. North Carolina's African American students had a composite score of 18.0 (17.7 nationally) for students who took at least the core curriculum and 15.7 (16.1 nationally) for those who did not. American Indians in North Carolina who took the core curriculum or more scored 19.7 (20.3 nationally) while American Indians who did not take the core scored 16.9 (17.6 nationally). White students in North Carolina who took at least the core scored 22.9 (23.0 nationally); white students with less than the core curriculum scored 21.3 (20.7 nationally). Hispanic students with the core curriculum or more scored 20.8 (19.5 nationally) while those with less than the core curriculum scored 19 (17.7 nationally). Asian American/Pacific Islander students taking the core or more scored 23.5 in North Carolina (23.1 nationally) versus 20.9 for students with less than the core (21.4 nationally).

North Carolina Wins \$6.0 Million in Grant for Longitudinal Data System

Improved data systems will help better track student achievement and enhance learning

The U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences has awarded a total of \$62.2 million in grants to 13 state education departments for the design and implementation of statewide longitudinal data systems.

Intended to help the states generate and use accurate and timely data to meet reporting requirements, support decision-making, and aid education research, the grants range from \$3.2 million to \$6 million and extend for three years.

These systems are intended to enhance the ability of states to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data.

In line with the goals of *No Child Left Behind* to use scientifically-based research data to improve education, the data systems developed with funds from these grants will help states, districts, schools, and teachers make data-driven decisions to improve student learning, as well as facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps.

The grantees will be expected to submit annual and final reports on the status of the development and the implementation of these systems.

Awardees of the data system grants, and their three-year totals, include North Carolina, \$6.0 million.

Wayne County Public Schools in North Carolina Will Implement Web-based Assessment Solution

Scantron's Achievement Series testing platform has been selected by Wayne County Public Schools in North Carolina to provide standards-based formative assessment for third through eighth grade students.

Achievement Series is a content-neutral, highly flexible testing platform that gives educators the ability to score and analyze tests in real time, diagnose student needs, and make informed instructional decisions to improve student achievement. Wayne County Public Schools will use Achievement Series to administer quarterly district benchmark assessments in reading, math and science.

“Previously, our quarterly benchmark assessments were done manually. It was difficult to aggregate and disaggregate data at the district level and then get that data back out to the schools in a timely, easy to understand format,” said Sandra McCullen, associate superintendent for Wayne County Public Schools. “Achievement Series will give us access to the timely data we need to assess student performance, adjust instruction, and ultimately improve student achievement.”

Wake County (Raleigh) Public Schools, North Carolina Studied In A NEW REPORT From The Century Foundation

Communities that are committed to fostering diversity in public schools were dealt a serious blow today when, in an historic ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court restricted the ability of school districts to use race as a factor in school assignment plans. Districts should not give up on integration, however, says Richard D. Kahlenberg, senior fellow at The Century Foundation. “A growing number of school districts across the country have begun to use students’ socioeconomic status as a factor in school integration plans,” he says, “and preliminary evidence suggests such plans can raise academic achievement and produce racially diverse schools in a manner that is legally bullet-proof.”

He examines twelve such school systems and finds that when socioeconomic school integration plans are well implemented, they can boost academic achievement and also provide students with a racially integrated schooling environment. ***Rescuing Brown v. Board of Education: Profiles of Twelve School Districts Pursuing Socioeconomic School Integration*** features detailed studies of three leading districts with the longest standing and most comprehensive socioeconomic integration policies—Wake County (Raleigh), North Carolina; La Crosse, Wisconsin;

and Cambridge, Massachusetts. It also includes profiles of nine additional communities that are using socioeconomic status as a factor in assignment— Berkeley, California; Brandywine, Delaware; Charlotte- Mecklenburg, North Carolina, Manatee County, Florida; McKinney, Texas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Omaha, Nebraska; Rochester, New York; and San Francisco, California. In addition, the report looks at school districts that may move toward socioeconomic integration. These include districts already discussing that possibility (including Burlington, Vermont; and Pasadena, California) as well as districts now employing race as a criterion which may shift toward socioeconomic status (including Louisville, Kentucky; Seattle, Washington; Lynn, Massachusetts; and others).

“*Brown v. Board of Education* stood for racial integration of schools and equal educational opportunity,” says Kahlenberg. “School districts that are promoting socioeconomic integration are vigorously pursuing both goals. Given the Supreme Court’s decision, socioeconomic integration moves to the cutting edge of equitable school reform.” The report notes that today, most districts seek to achieve socioeconomic integration through public school choice and magnet schools rather than compulsory busing.

Rescuing Brown v. Board of Education: Profiles of Twelve School Districts Pursuing Socioeconomic School Integration :

<http://www.tcf.org/publications/education/districtprofiles.pdf>

HP Award to Boone School

HP is awarding more than \$1.2 million in HP equipment, cash and professional development to teams of teachers at 15 K-12 public schools. Watauga High School will receive 11 HP Tablet PCs, 10 HP digital cameras, 10 all-in-one printers, 10 digital projectors and stipends for the 15 teachers involved in the technology integration work.

The award additionally includes a professional development program for educators funded by HP and provided by the International Society for Technology in Education. Each school will receive training and mentoring as they implement their projects.

The value of the grant award for each school is more than \$81,000.