

**North Carolina Education News**  
**October 2007**  
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## **2007-08 ABCS Results Show More Schools Making Strong Academic Growth**

A total of 71.8 percent of North Carolina's public schools made expected or high growth in the 2007-08 school year, up 17.5 percentage points over the 54.3 percent that made growth targets in the 2005-06 school year, according to the 2007-08 ABCs of Public Education accountability report.

The ABCs accountability model measures school achievement in three ways: the percent of students' test scores at or above the proficient level (performance composite), academic growth (High Growth or Expected Growth) and Adequate Yearly Progress (required by federal law). The growth measure provides the basis for awarding incentive awards, but each measure is an important indicator of schools' success over time.

As part of the State Board of Education's ongoing efforts to align academic standards with 21st century skills, several new assessments and new standards were implemented at the high school level in 2007-08 in Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and English I. The high school performance information presented today is based on these new, more rigorous standards. This is similar to the 2005-06 school year when mathematics standards were raised for grades 3-8.

### **School designations**

Schools earn designations based on whether they met growth expectations, AYP and the percentage of students' scores at or above proficiency (grade level). Honor Schools of Excellence and Schools of Excellence receive special banners to display their MORE ABCs school status from the NC Department of Public Instruction and State Board of Education. Thirty-one schools did not have an ABCs status because they are special schools, and 90 schools are alternative schools with different progress measures designed especially for them. A total of 2,407 schools were evaluated under the ABCs.

ABCs DESIGNATION	REQUIREMENTS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Honor Schools of Excellence	Expected or high growth; AYP; 90% or more of student test scores at or above proficient	83	3.45%
Schools of Excellence	Expected or high growth; 90% or more scores at or above proficient	8	00.33%
Schools of Distinction	Expected or high growth; 80-89.9% at or above proficient	462	19.19%
Schools of Progress	Expected growth or high growth; 60-79.9% at or above proficient	925	38.43%
No Recognition Schools	Neither expected or high growth met, 60% at or above proficient	419	17.41%
Priority Schools	50-59% at or above proficient regardless of growth; and schools with less than 50% proficient and making expected or high growth	354	14.71%
Low Performing	Less than 50% proficient; below expected growth	45	1.87%

### Incentive awards

The ABCs program provides incentive awards to teachers, principals and other certified school-based staff, in addition to teacher assistants. In all schools that attain the High Growth standard, certified staff members each receive up to \$1,500 incentive awards and teacher assistants receive up to \$500. In schools attaining Expected Growth, certified staff members each receive up to \$750 and teacher assistants receive up to \$375. This year, funds for incentive awards will be released to local school districts today. Awards are expected to total approximately \$103 million.

### School assistance

The NCDPI and SBE are redesigning the way the state provides assistance to all schools and districts, including those schools and districts identified as low-performing under the ABCs. In 2007-08, the Board will provide the schools and districts identified as being most in need with a variety of services, designed to support significant, sustainable improvements in student performance. These services will include: supported self- assessment of needs, instructional coaches and professional development for teachers, training and support for school and district leadership, and the coordination of existing state and federal programs that target

resources to underperforming schools.

### **Cohort graduation rates**

In February, NCDPI released the first four-year cohort graduation rate for the graduating class of 2006 that showed the percent of students who entered ninth grade in 2002-03 and graduated with their class four years later or sooner (68.3 percent). For the graduating class of 2007, the four-year cohort rate for the ninth graders who entered high school in fall 2003 was 69.4 percent. This year, NCDPI also released a five-year cohort rate for the 2002-03 ninth graders. The five-year rate was 70.3 percent.

### **AYP targets**

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind education law requires every state to set annual targets toward reaching proficiency in reading and mathematics. These targets are shown as percentages of students who score proficient or better on state tests. Every state sets annual targets with the ultimate required goal of 100 percent student proficiency in 2013-14. The AYP measure for a school requires every student group in the school to reach the target. If a school misses even one target, the school does not make AYP

In 2007, 44.7 percent of all schools met AYP. However, 62.1 percent (1,440) of all North Carolina public schools met at least 90 percent of their AYP targets. Another 19.2 percent (445 schools) met 80-89.9 percent of their AYP targets. For more on this, please visit the NCDPI Web site, <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb>.

### **ABCs background information**

The annual report, in its 11th year, provides a comprehensive picture of school performance. In addition to reporting academic growth rates for each public school, the ABCs report includes:

- which schools made Adequate Yearly Progress, a measure required by federal education law No Child Left Behind;
- the number of schools that met specific ranges of AYP targets;
- the four-year cohort graduation rate (reported for the second year in 2007);
- the first five-year cohort graduation rate;
- the performance composites for each school (the percentage of students' test scores that were at the proficient level or better);
- the performance category designated for each school.

## Almost Half of States Fail Academic Standards Test

### *Weak expectations drive calls for national testing*

Five years after No Child Left Behind made standards-based education reform the law of the land, a new study finds that the subject-by-subject state standards that undergird this reform strategy remain inadequate in most jurisdictions. *The State of State Standards 2006*, the first full review of such standards since 2000, confers an average grade of "C-minus"-the same as six years earlier-even though most states revised their standards during that period.

- Twenty-six states earned a "D" or an "F" grade overall, including Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Oregon.
- Eleven performed worse than in 2000, including Wisconsin, Florida, Ohio, and Utah.
- Nine states earned honors grades in all subjects, led by Massachusetts, California, and New York.
- 

Nine improved their grade by one letter or more, including Indiana, Georgia, and Virginia.

Here is the report for **North Carolina**

**Overall Grade: C-**

English: B

Math: C

Science: B

U.S. History: F

World History: F

More Details:

<http://www.edexcellence.net/foundation/publication/publication.cfm?id=358&pubsubid=1354#1354>

## **College Enrollment Patterns**

The College Board, in partnership with National Student Clearinghouse, is now able to track college-enrollment patterns of SAT takers at the state and national level.

Available for the first time this year is the percentage of 2006 college-bound seniors from public schools enrolled in college and the percentage that chose to enroll in-state or out-of-state. Information on enrollment by race/ethnicity and type of institution attended (two year, four year, public, private) is also available. The College Board will be able to follow each class of SAT takers so that in future years, additional information, including the percentage of students successfully completing each year of college, as well as graduation rates, will be available.

Here is the report for **North Carolina**

**[http://www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/about/news\\_info/cbsenior/yr2007/attendance/NC.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2007/attendance/NC.pdf)**

## **NC SAT Participation Increases; Performance Mirrors the Nation in 2007**

*SAT and Advanced Placement Results Demonstrate NC Students Preparing for Further Education*

North Carolina's performance on the SAT dropped in 2007, mirroring the nation's overall change in performance on the college entrance exam. Although North Carolina's average score slipped, the state's participation rate increased to 71 percent of seniors and is now 11th in the nation.

Despite the drop in scores for this year, College Board officials called North Carolina's long-term trends on the SAT a "bellwether for the South" because the state has managed to increase scores over time while substantially increasing the percentage of students taking the test, especially among student groups that have not tended to attend college in past years.

The new core high school graduation requirements go into effect with the ninth

graders entering high school for the first time in 2009-10 and are designed to help students better prepare for educational opportunities beyond high school.

Gov. Mike Easley, the North Carolina General Assembly and the State Board of Education have worked hard to bring more college-level courses to high school students who are ready for more challenging work. Learn and Earn, Learn and Earn Online, early and middle college programs, as well as Advanced Placement coursework, give students the chance to earn college credit or placement while still in high school. The goal is for students of any economic means to be able to complete education beyond the high school level so that they are better prepared for life in the 21st century.

North Carolina's math score on the SAT dropped four points from 2006 (from 513 last year to 509 in 2007). The critical reading score stayed the same, 495. The average writing score was 485, a three-point drop from 2006 when the writing test was first included in the SAT.

Scores nationwide dropped for a second consecutive year. The national average score on math dropped by three points to 515 while the critical reading score dropped by one point to 502. The national writing score for 2007 is 494, a three-point decrease over 2006.

North Carolina's average combined score (critical reading and math) is 1,004 and is 13 points below the national average of 1,017. Among the 22 states where more than 50 percent of students take the SAT, North Carolina has gained 26 points over the past 10 years. Only 12 of those states made gains over the past decade. Ten of the SAT states lost points during that time.

Among the Southeastern states, North Carolina continued to have an average score that is higher than the Southeast mean score of 999. In 2007, North Carolina's average score is five points higher than the region. The Southeast region score includes scores from Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

The SAT is one of the major college entrance requirements for high school students and is the entrance exam most often taken in North Carolina. Test-taking patterns in the state show a more diverse group of students are planning to go to college. The number of American Indian students taking the test increased by 5.6 percent compared to last year; Asian students increased by 15.6 percent; White students increased by 2.8 percent; and Black students increased their test-taking number by 7.4 percent. Hispanic students showed a large percentage increase in test taking, up by 21.8 percent.

American Indian and Hispanic students were the only racial groups to increase their average SAT scores, up by 9 points and one point respectively.

In addition to the SAT results, the College Board today also released information about Advanced Placement (AP) course-taking and performance nationally and by state. Although racial minority students still make up a small percentage of the students taking AP courses overall, their numbers grew in 2007 in North Carolina. White students were 32,754 of the 43,152 students who took an AP exam, but Hispanic students increased their participation by 9.9 percent, and their number of passing scores on the AP exams increased also by 16.6 percent. The number of American Indian students taking AP exams remained the same as in 2006, but they increased the number of exams they took and their passing scores went up by 44.4 percent. The number of Asian students taking AP tests increased by 10.9 percent, and the number of passing scores increased by 20 percent. The number of Black students taking the AP exams decreased by 2.1 percent, but the number of passing scores went up by 16.2 percent.

**A total of 43,152 students took a total of 81,151 AP tests. Access to Advanced Placement courses and exams is an important indicator of future college success. Students who take these college-level courses are more likely to complete a bachelor's degree in four years or less, according to The College Board's research.**

### **SAT Scores**

Here is the report for [North Carolina](#)

[http://www.collegeboard.com/prod\\_downloads/about/news\\_info/cbsenior/yr2007/NC\\_07.pdf](http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2007/NC_07.pdf)

## **NC NAEP Scores Show State at or Above Nation in Reading and Math**

The 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, showed North Carolina fourth and eighth graders' performance on par with or better than the nation's performance in reading and mathematics, according to information released today by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). North Carolina is the state with the most gains in NAEP math

scores since 1990.

Today's report included national and state-level information. Local information is unavailable because the NAEP is given to a sample of students representing the state overall. Comparisons between North Carolina students and the nation are made using public school scores only.

When comparing scores on the mathematics assessment, North Carolina scored higher than the national average at both measured grades. For fourth grade, the average scale score in North Carolina was 242, versus 239 for the nation. For eighth grade, North Carolina scored 284, versus 280 for the nation. NCEs analysts rated North Carolina's mathematics scores as significantly higher than the nation's in fourth and eighth grades.

Only eight states had a higher percentage of students performing at the Basic level or better than North Carolina did in fourth grade math. For eighth grade math, North Carolina's performance showed 15 states and the Department of Defense schools posting more students at the Basic level or better.

In reading, North Carolina's score was 218 in fourth grade, compared to the national average of 220. Eighth grade reading scores were 259 for North Carolina and 261 for the nation. NCEs did not consider North Carolina's average reading score for either grade to be significantly different from that of the nation.

North Carolina has been working on improving reading instruction in several ways. Reading First has provided intensive assistance in approximately 100 elementary schools with low reading achievement. In addition, under an initiative of Gov. Mike Easley, 200 middle school literacy coaches are being deployed to help teachers reach students who are having reading difficulties before they make the transition to high school. The More at Four pre-kindergarten program for at-risk 4-year-olds is providing crucial early preparation to help more students succeed in school.

NAEP measures student performance and categorizes performance for the nation and each state. NAEP results are reported in two ways – as average scale scores and as the percentage of students scoring Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced. These four categories of performance indicate the level of student mastery. In general, NAEP results of Basic or above are similar to the grade level proficiency standard measured on North Carolina's end-of-grade tests in grades 3-8. The accompanying charts show North Carolina's performance against other states in terms of scale scores and achievement levels over time.

The performance levels of Below Basic through Advanced are set by the National Assessment Governing Board and are considered very rigorous. North Carolina has participated in the NAEP since it began although state participation was not required prior to 2002. Today's report includes performance information for all states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Department of Defense.

The NAEP assesses mathematics in five content areas: number properties and operations; measurement; geometry; data analysis and probability; and algebra. The NAEP measures reading in three contexts: reading for literary experience, to gain information and to perform a task. The scale for the test is 0-500 in both subjects.

The 2007 NAEP was given in North Carolina to fourth graders in 170 schools. A total of 5,500 students took the fourth grade reading assessment, and 5,600 students took the fourth grade math assessment. For eighth grade, 152 North Carolina schools participated. A total of 4,200 eighth graders took the reading assessment; 4,000 took the math.

NC Snapshots:

Reading 2007 North Carolina Grade 8 Public Schools (pdf, 325kb)

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/newsroom/news/2007-08/20070925/red2007nc8.pdf>

Reading 2007 North Carolina Grade 4 Public Schools (pdf, 340kb)

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/newsroom/news/2007-08/20070925/red2007nc4.pdf>

Mathematics 2007 North Carolina Grade 8 Public Schools (pdf, 359kb)

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/newsroom/news/2007-08/20070925/mat2007nc8.pdf>

Mathematics 2007 North Carolina Grade 4 Public Schools (pdf, 335kb)

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/newsroom/news/2007-08/20070925/mat2007nc4.pdf>

Nation Comparison (pdf, 233kb)

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/newsroom/news/2007-08/20070925/nationcomparison.pdf>

Achievement Levels (pdf, 276kb)

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/newsroom/news/2007-08/20070925/achievementlevels.pdf>

NAEP vs NCEOG (pdf, 73kb)

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/newsroom/news/2007-08/20070925/naepvsnceog.pdf>