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ABCs AND AYP RESULTS, WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM (WCPSS): 2009-10

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ABSTRACT

In 2009-10, 92% of WCPSS schools met Expected or High Growth as measured by the North Carolina ABCs program, a 3.5 percentage point increase from 2008-09. Fifty-four percent of the schools made High Growth and 38% made Expected Growth. All subgroups saw their percentages of students meeting growth increase to above 55% in 2009-10; with the "All Students" group above 60% (the state's definition of High Growth for a school). Slightly more than 90% of WCPSS schools were in the recognition categories Honor Schools of Excellence (5.8%), Schools of Excellence (3.2%), Schools of Distinction (40.6%), or Schools of Progress (40.6%). Yet there was a substantial decrease in the number of schools making AYP (38.4%) compared to 2008-09 (62.8%). The decrease in 2009-10 can partly be explained by the one-year effect of retests that benefitted schools in 2008-09, and the invalidation of tests for high school occupational course of study students by the U.S. Department of Education. There were a much greater proportion of schools that met High Growth among the schools that met AYP (71.7%) than among those that did not meet AYP (43.2%).

BACKGROUND

The North Carolina General Assembly in June 1996 approved the North Carolina State Board of Education's (SBE) accountability plan titled "the ABCs of Public Education". The plan is modified yearly, but continues to focus on strong Accountability, teaching the Basics, and maximum local Control. In 2002-03, the ABCs program was expanded to meet the requirements of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, or NCLB).

The ABCs Accountability Model includes a performance component and a growth component. The performance component is measured by the Performance Composite and addresses the percentage of test scores at or above grade level (Levels III or IV) for all students enrolled in the school on the first day of testing for the following tests:

- End of Grade (EOG)

- End of Course (EOC)
- Alternate assessments (NCEXTEND1 and NCEXTEND2)
- 10th grade Writing
- 5th grade and 8th grade Science EOG

For the first time in 2008-09, students who did not achieve proficiency on the first administration of their EOG tests were administered a retest, giving them the chance to improve their scores. The higher score between the first administration and retest was included in calculations of performance. In 2009-10, EOC retests were also included in performance calculations. Note that retest scores are included in both ABCs and AYP performance calculations. Retests were not used in the ABCs growth computations.

The growth component of the ABCs deals with changes in individual students' scores from one year to the next and includes only students who attended the same school for 140 days or more (70 days or more for a semester EOC) and had scores in the current year as well as the previous year's predictor(s). Growth calculations for a school are based on:

- EOG scores (fourth grade to eighth grade)
- Five EOC scores, since 2007-08 (Algebra I, Biology, Civics and Economics, English 1, and U.S. History)
- Comparison of percentages of students completing College/University Prep or College Tech Prep courses of study (High School)
- Change in the school's dropout rate (High School)

For each school¹, an average growth score is computed by combining the individual growth on the current year's tests for each student. The average growth across all of these indicators has to be greater than or equal to zero for the school to meet the Expected Growth standard. In order to meet the High Growth standard, a school must meet Expected Growth, and also have at least 60% of the students tested in the school meet their individual growth targets.

AYP

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is a series of targets that schools, school districts, and states must meet each year. The ultimate goal is for 100% of students to score proficient in reading and mathematics by 2013-14. Each of the 10 subgroups defined for a school: school as a whole, American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Multiracial, White, economically disadvantaged, in North Carolina defined as students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRL), limited English proficient students (LEP), and students with disabilities (SWD), have to meet specific targets:

- Two participation targets
 - ▶ at least a 95% participation rate in the reading assessment (Reading EOG for grades 3 to 8 and a combination of English 1 EOC and grade 10 writing for high schools)
 - ▶ at least a 95% participation rate in the mathematics assessment (Mathematics EOG for grades 3 to 8 and Algebra 1 EOC for high schools)

¹ Alternative schools follow a different model and were not included in these analyses.

- Two proficiency targets set to increase incrementally every three years
 - ▶ 43.2% in grades 3 to 8 and 38.5% in grade 10 for reading in 2009-10
 - ▶ 77.2% in grades 3 to 8 and 68.4% in grade 10 for mathematics in 2009-10
- The other “academic indicator,” for school as a whole
 - ▶ Schools with 12th graders have to show progress in their graduation rate
 - ▶ All other schools have to show progress in their attendance rate.

All students in membership in the school as of the first day of testing are included in the participation targets. However, only the students who have been in membership in the school for 140 days are included in the proficiency targets.

A school must meet all its targets in order to make AYP. If a school misses even one target, the school fails to make AYP. Whether a school makes AYP influences its eligibility to be designated an Honor School of Excellence (see Table 1). Also, for schools and districts that receive certain federal funding under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, failing to make AYP for two consecutive years in the same subject area (reading or mathematics) results in mandatory interventions such as offering students the option to transfer to other schools, supplementary tutoring for economically disadvantaged students, or even reconstituting the school with new staff in more extreme cases. In WCPSS, only elementary schools receive Title I funds at this time (44 in 2009-10).

Under the ABCs Accountability Model, each school is labeled. In order to be designated with one of the recognition categories (green in Table 1), a school must make at least the Expected Growth standard and have a certain percentage of its student test-scores fall into the Level III or Level IV range (Table 1).

Table 1
Definition of ABCs Labels and Recognitions, 2009-10

PERFORMANCE LEVEL Based on Percent of Students' Scores At or Above Achievement Level III	ACADEMIC GROWTH	
	Schools Making Expected Growth or High Growth	Schools Making Less than Expected Growth
90% to 100%	Met AYP	Honor Schools of Excellence
	AYP Not Met	Schools of Excellence
80% to 89%	No Recognition	
60% to 79%	Schools of Distinction	
50% to 59%	Schools of Progress	
50% to 59%	Priority Schools	
Less than 50%	Priority Schools	Low-Performing

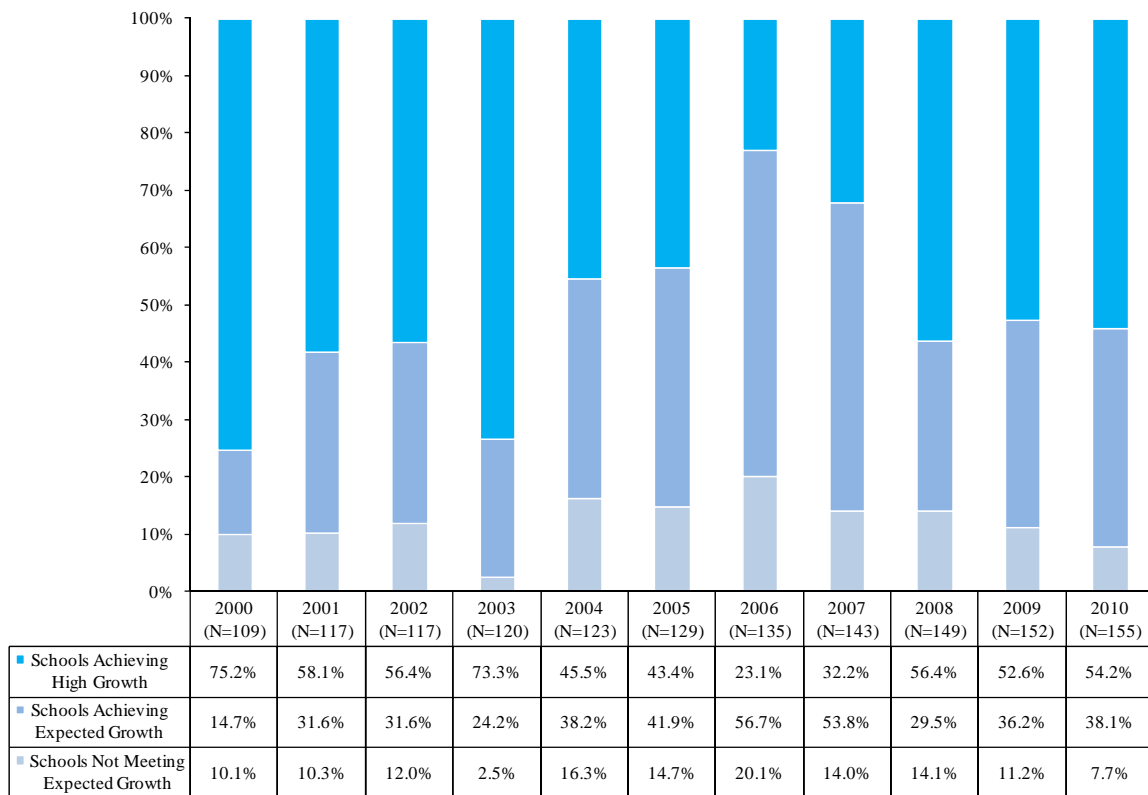
Source: NCDPI ABCs/AYP 2010 Accountability Report Background Packet found at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/abc/2009-10/backgroundpacket.pdf>

WCPSS RESULTS 2009-10

ABCs

Most WCPSS schools have met Expected or High Growth standards every year the ABCs model has been in effect. In 2009-10, 92% of WCPSS schools met Expected or High Growth (Figure 1), a 3.5 percentage point increase from 2008-09. Since a decline in performance in 2005-06, the percentage of WCPSS schools receiving growth recognition has grown by over 12 percentage points. Both the percentage of schools that met Expected or High Growth in 2009-10 compared to 2008-09 increased about two percentage points (54% High Growth and 38% Expected Growth).

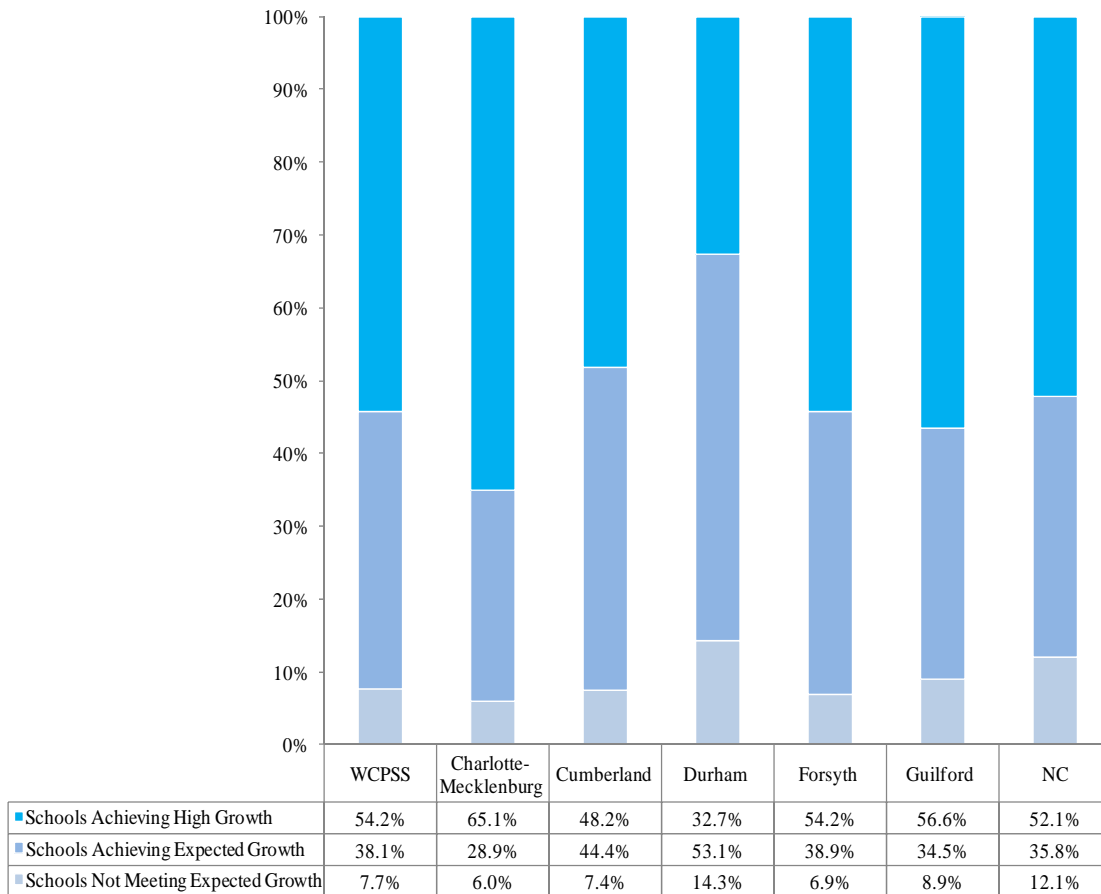
Figure 1
WCPSS ABCs Growth Summary over Time, 2000-2010



Interpretation Example: In 2010, 54.2% of WCPSS schools met High Growth, 38.1% met Expected Growth, and 7.7% did not meet Expected Growth.

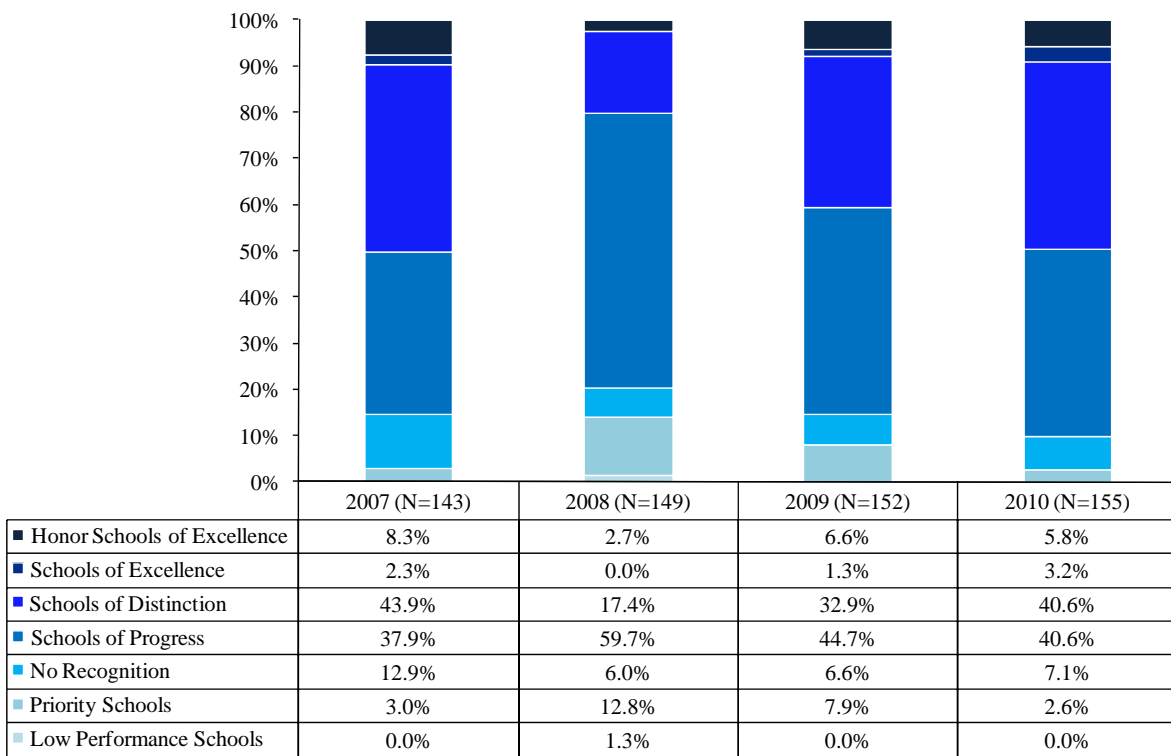
With 92% of schools making Expected or High Growth, WCPSS compared favorably to the state, with 88% of North Carolina schools meeting Expected or High Growth (52% High Growth and 36% Expected Growth). The percentage of schools meeting High Growth in WCPSS was greater than or equal to most large LEAs, except for Charlotte-Mecklenburg (65% High Growth) and Guilford (57% High Growth; Figure 2).

Figure 2
Comparison of WCPSS ABCs 2010 Growth Summary



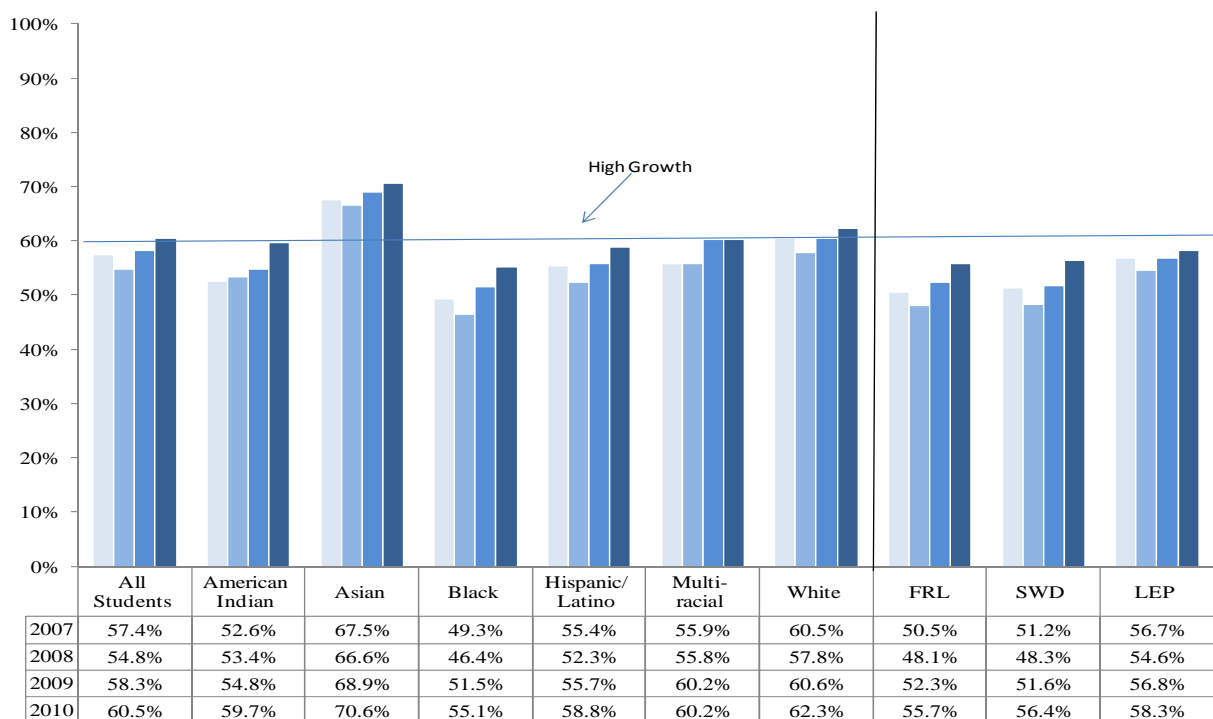
In 2009-10, 81.2% of WCPSS schools were designated as Schools of Distinction or Schools of Progress (40.6% each). The proportion of schools designated as Schools of Distinction increased by 7.7 percentage points while the proportion of schools designated as Schools of Progress decreased by 4.1 percentage points compared to 2008-09. The percentage of schools receiving the highest recognition of Honor Schools of Excellence was 5.8%, a slight decrease from the previous year. WCPSS had a greater proportion of schools in the highest recognition categories than did the state. Slightly more than 90% of WCPSS schools were in the recognition categories Honor Schools of Excellence, Schools of Excellence, Schools of Distinction, or Schools of Progress, while not quite 80% of the schools in the state received recognitions. Overall, both the state and WCPSS had a decrease in the percentage of schools in the Priority Schools category (having less than 60% of students' scores at or above Level III), from 8% to 3% for WCPSS and from 15% to 11% for the state of North Carolina. WCPSS did not have any school categorized as a Low-Performing School (not making expected growth and having less than 50% of students' scores at or above Level III; Figure 3).

Figure 3
Percentages of WCPSS Schools by ABCs Designation, 2006-2010



All subgroups saw their percentages of students meeting growth increase to above 55% in 2009-10; with the “All Students” group above 60% (the state’s definition of High Growth for a school). Asian students have been the most successful in meeting their growth targets in the past four years including the almost 71% who met their growth targets in 2009-10. The rates for White and Multiracial students also topped the state high growth threshold of 60%². The subgroups that made the greatest progress were American Indian students (increasing 4.9 percentage points) and SWD students (increasing 4.8 percentage points; Figure 4).

Figure 4
Percentages of Students Meeting Growth Targets, by Subgroup, 2007-2010



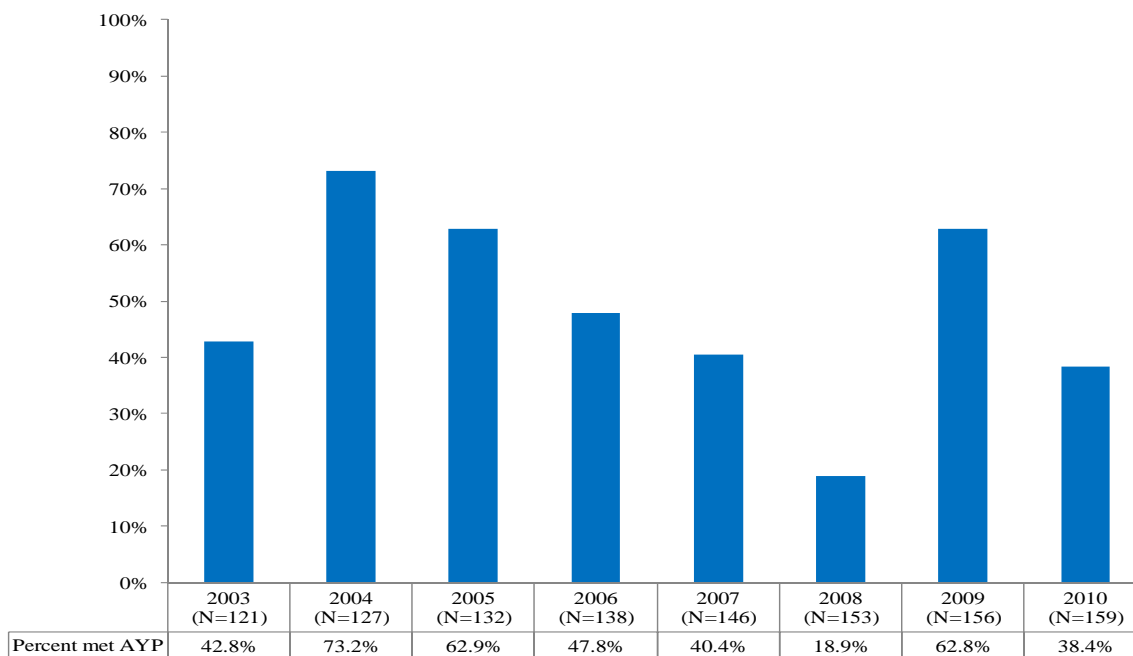
AYP

In 2009-10, 38.4% of WCPSS schools made AYP, a substantial decrease from 2008-09 (62.8%; Figure 5). The percentage of schools making AYP had decreased since 2005-06 as new standards were introduced in both mathematics and reading, but spiked back up in 2008-09, largely because of the first-year use of Reading and Mathematics EOG retest scores. This change increased the percentage of schools that could make AYP by demonstrating improvement in subgroup performance. The decrease in 2009-10 can partly be explained by the one-year effect of retests that benefitted schools in 2008-09, and the invalidation of tests for high school occupational course of study students by the U.S. Department of Education (14 of 23 high schools missed AYP solely because of “percent tested” targets). As described earlier, schools have to meet four targets per available subgroup and the other academic indicator in order to

² Even though the state does not publish High Growth results by subgroups, this report presents results by subgroups because one of WCPSS board goals pertains to subgroups meeting High Growth.

make AYP. This represents a possible maximum number of 41 targets per school, if all subgroups are represented. Fifty-five schools (35%) missed AYP by only one or two targets. Most targets missed were in mathematics. Only 21 WCPSS schools (13%) missed a target in reading with just two elementary schools missing more than one reading target. Seventy-eight (49%) of WCPSS schools missed at least one target in mathematics. The three subgroups that missed the most targets across all schools were FRL (50), SWD (49), and Black/African American (44).

Figure 5
WCPSS Schools Making Adequate Yearly Progress, 2003-2010



In 2009-10, of the 44 Title I elementary schools, 22 made AYP and 22 did not make AYP. Three schools exited School Improvement³ by making AYP for a second consecutive year (Briarcliff, Bugg, and York). Four schools (East Garner, Hilburn, Hodge Road, and Smith) are at the first level of School Improvement sanctions, six schools (Aversboro, Barwell Road, Conn, Creech Road, Lynn Road, and Zebulon) are at the second level, and four schools (Brentwood, Fox Road, Poe, and Wendell) are at the corrective action level. The district as a whole is also in School Improvement for mathematics.

SUMMARY

The North Carolina Accountability program is a combination of state ABCs and federal AYP requirements. In 2009-10, 92% of WCPSS schools met Expected or High Growth as measured by the North Carolina ABCs program, a 3.5 percentage point increase from 2008-09. Fifty-four percent of the schools made High Growth and 38% made Expected Growth. WCPSS compared

³ see: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/nclb/abcayp/faqs/aypfaqs.pdf>

favorably to the state with 88% of North Carolina schools meeting Expected or High Growth (52% High Growth and 36% Expected Growth). All WCPSS subgroups saw their percentages of students meeting growth increase to above 55% in 2009-10; with the “All Students” group above 60% (the state’s definition of High Growth for a school). Slightly more than 90% of WCPSS schools were in the recognition categories Honor Schools of Excellence (5.8%), Schools of Excellence (3.2%), Schools of Distinction (40.6%), or Schools of Progress (40.6%).

Yet there was a substantial decrease in the number of schools making AYP (38.4%) from 2008-09 (62.8%). The decrease in 2009-10 can partly be explained by the one-year effect of retests that benefitted schools in 2008-09, and the invalidation of tests for high school occupational course of study students by the U.S. Department of Education.

The federal NCLB Act of 2001 emphasizes the performance of all subgroups, by using the percentages of students who are above a certain threshold. In contrast, the ABCs growth model emphasizes students’ progress, no matter where they started. In order to illustrate the relationship between the two measures, the combination of whether a school met AYP and achieved at least Expected Growth was studied. As can be seen in Figure 6, the proportion of schools that met Expected or High Growth was 88.5% for the schools that did not meet AYP and 98.4% for the schools that met AYP. There were a much greater proportion of schools that met High Growth among the schools that met AYP (71.7%) than among those that did not meet AYP (43.2%). In conclusion a large number of schools (84) that did not make AYP did meet the ABCs growth standards in 2009-10, and only one school failed to meet its growth standard but still made AYP (Figure 6).

Figure 6
WCPSS Schools: ABCs Growth and Adequate Yearly Progress 2009-10

