

A. PRINCIPLES

Principals, assistant principals, teachers, and other instructional staff at each school are responsible for designing and implementing strategies to reach the educational goals of the board. Input from the school community, including parents, students, and representatives from businesses and other agencies, is critical in developing an educational program that will meet the needs of the students and the community.

The board affirms the General Assembly's belief that all children can learn and that the mission of public schools is to challenge, with high expectations, each child to learn, achieve, and fulfill his or her potential.

Accordingly, the board has established in its policies its vision, standards, and means of accountability for the educational program. The superintendent shall provide guidance and establish any other standards necessary for effective implementation of the board's policies. Principals shall lead each school in implementing the policies. The school improvement plan is one tool that school administrators should use to draw upon the creativity and innovation of the staff and the community. This plan should identify the school's efforts to improve student performance and reach the educational goals of the board.

B. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Each school must develop a school improvement plan that considers the goals set out in the mission statement for the public schools adopted by the State Board of Education ("State Board") and the annual performance goals for that school as established by the State Board under G.S. § 115C-105.35. In developing their school improvement plans, all schools should ensure, to the extent possible, that sufficient resources and curricula are directed toward meeting the goal of having all students performing at grade level or higher in the basic subject and skill areas identified by the State Board.

The board also expects schools to be guided by the educational goals of the board. The board encourages schools to consider innovative means of educating students to meet educational goals. Many board policies provide an opportunity for a school to incorporate innovative ideas into its school improvement plan; however, if a school would like to try an innovative method that requires deviation from board policy, the school may submit a request to the board for a waiver of the board policy. (See also policy 2400, Board Policies.) Any waiver request must identify the particular board policy that inhibits the school's ability to improve student performance, set out with specificity the circumstances under which the waiver may be used, and explain how the requested waiver will permit the school to improve student performance. The board will consider such requests to the extent the waiver is permissible by law and likely to result in improved student performance at the school.

I. School Improvement Team (SIT)

Each school shall have a SIT composed of the following members:

- The school improvement team must follow all legal requirements for developing and obtaining school approval of the school improvement plan. School improvement teams also must be familiar with state and local board requirements related to managing and using fiscal resources and must comply with these requirements in developing and implementing school improvement plans.
- The principal shall be a member of the SIT. A Chairperson shall be elected to serve as facilitator.
- The SIT shall include representatives of the assistant principals, instructional personnel, instructional support personnel, and teacher assistants assigned to the school building.
- School personnel shall be elected by their respective groups using secret ballot.
- A minimum of two (2) parents are to be elected in accordance with G.S. 115C-105.27. Parents serving on school improvement teams shall reflect the racial and socioeconomic composition of the students enrolled in that school and shall not be members of the building-level staff.
- The school improvement team is encouraged to involve and seek assistance from central office personnel.
- For high schools only, a minimum of two (2) students are to be selected by the school's student government and/or appointed by the school principal. Students serving on a school improvement team shall reflect the racial and socioeconomic composition of the student body.
- The superintendent shall provide guidance to principals to ensure that the principals establish and work together with school improvement teams to develop, review, and amend school improvement plans.

II. School Improvement Plan (SIP)

The following components must be included in the SIP:

- The plan must identify how staff development funds allocated to the schools will be used to further the goals of the SIP.
- The plan must address school safety, healthy students, and discipline concerns.
- The plan must include effective instructional practices and methods to be used to improve

the academic performance of students identified as at risk of academic failure or at risk of dropping out of school.

- The plan must identify how the school will provide a duty-free lunch period for every teacher on a daily basis or as otherwise approved by the SIT.
- The plan must identify how the school will provide a duty-free instructional planning for every teacher, with the goal of providing an average of at least five hours of planning time per week.
- The plan must address Buncombe County Schools Strategic Plan Priorities, NC State Board of Education goals, and national protocol standards for accreditation.
- The plan shall be, to the greatest extent possible, data driven. SITs shall use the Education Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS), or a compatible and comparable system approved by the State Board to analyze student data to identify root causes for problems and to determine actions to address them.
- The plan shall contain clear, unambiguous targets, explicit indicators and actual measures, and expeditious time frames for meeting the measurement standards.
- The plan attempts to eliminate unnecessary and redundant reporting requirements for teachers and, to the extent practicable, streamline the school's reporting system and procedures, including requiring forms and reports to be in electronic form when possible and incorporation relevant documents into the student accessible components of the Instructional Improvement System.
- The plan must identify schools designated as Low Performing and any additional designations as identified by the Department of Public Instruction. The plan must identify the interventions the school will implement to address all students' academic needs. Such interventions must include strategies to address the needs of all children, particularly the lowest-achieving, and how those needs will be met in a timely and effective manner.

III. Optional Components of the Plan

- The plan may provide for the use of textbooks that have not been adopted by the State Board (see policy 3200, Selection of Instructional Materials).
- The plan may include innovative efforts to meet local educational goals. The following are examples of innovative efforts identified in board policies that the plan may address:
 - a. adding hours of instructional time (policy 3300);
 - b. developing and implementing pilot programs (policy 3110, Innovation in Curriculum and Instruction)

III. Responsibilities of the School Improvement Team

- Develop a SIP that shall be in effect for no more than two years; however, the SIT may amend the plan as often as necessary. The format and time of submission of such plans and updates shall be determined by the Superintendent.
- Present the SIP to the staff for review and vote by secret ballot.
- Conduct surveys as necessary to collect and provide additional feedback.
- Appoint committees as necessary to implement the SIP.
- Post the current SIP on the school web page.
- Comply with the Open Meetings Law in accordance with G.S. 143-318.0.
- Create and adopt governing bylaws.

IV. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The superintendent shall develop a process by which schools can learn from other schools' improvement plans. The superintendent and the schools are encouraged to use staff development resources to provide training to staff on the development, implementation, and evaluation of school improvement plans.

Legal References: U.S. Department of Education approval of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request (May 29, 2012); G.S. 115C-47(38), -81.15, -84.2, -98, -105.20, -105.21, -105.25, -105.26, -105.27, -105.32, -105.35, -105.37, 105.41(B), -301.1, -307(g); 143 art. 33C.

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 1310/4002), School Safety (policy 1510/4200/7270), Compliance with the Open Meetings Law (policy 2320), Hearings Before the Board (policy 2500), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Curriculum Development (policy 3100), Innovation in Curriculum and Instruction (policy 3110), Lesson Planning (policy 3120), Evaluation of Instructional Programs (policy 3140), School Calendar and Time for Learning (policy 3300), Students at Risk of Academic Failure (policy 3405), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420)

Replaces Board Policy 605

History of Policy 605

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