



# **Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center**

*“Building Better Futures for Virginia’s Children”*

**PEATC** is Virginia’s parent information and resource center promoting research-based parent involvement practices and strengthening partnerships between parents, schools and communities. This fact sheet is to help parents and others understand School Report Cards and Accountability as it pertains to NCLB.

## **School Report Card**

Frequently asked Questions and Answers

1) ***What is a School Report Card?***

The School Report Card gives parents and the public a snap-shot of student performance and teacher quality in their local schools. It also gives information about how students performed on the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests.

2) ***Why do schools need report cards?***

The Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires states and school districts to collect information about how well their students are doing and to share this information with the public. In order to qualify for federal NCLB funding, schools must report on how their student test scores are improving. The federal government calls this accountability requirement Adequate Yearly Progress or “AYP”.

3) ***What is in the School Report Card?***

Reports on each school, also known as the local report card, are a part of a school division’s annual report card. School divisions must prepare and share annual local report cards that include information on how students in the division, and in each school, performed on the SOL tests. The report cards must state student performance in terms of three levels: basic, proficient and advanced. Achievement data is listed by different subgroups: race, ethnicity, gender, English language proficiency, migrant status, disability status and low-income status. The report cards also must tell which schools have been identified as *needing improvement, corrective action or restructuring*.

4) ***How can I find the report card for my local school district and my child’s school?***

Local divisions must make these local report cards available to the parents of students quickly (by no later than the beginning of the school year.) The law requires that the information is in an “understandable and uniform format, and to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents can understand.” States and districts also may pass out this information to the media for publicizing; post it on the Internet; or provide it to other public agencies for distribution. The Commonwealth of Virginia has all school report cards available for view, or for download, online at: <https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/>

5) ***What is “adequate yearly progress” (AYP)?***

NCLB requires each local division and Title I school to make adequate yearly progress toward a goal of leaving no child behind by the year 2014. Each year, the percentage of students that need



to pass the SOL tests is set at a higher level. To make AYP, each subgroup must pass the required SOL tests at the minimum level of improvement set by the state.

6) *Is “adequate yearly progress” based only on academic performance?*

No. In addition to meeting academic goals in reading and mathematics, schools and divisions also must meet two other requirements each year if they are to make AYP. At least 95% of all students must participate in SOL tests each year. Low rates of test participation can result in a school or district not making AYP. Schools and districts also can be designated as not making AYP if their students' attendance rates are less than 92%, or if too few high school students graduate.

7) *What does it mean if my school has been “identified for improvement”?*

In accordance with NCLB, all public schools in the United States are required to ensure that all students are proficient in reading and mathematics by the end of the 2013-2014 school year. AYP determinations are issued yearly to monitor the interim progress of all students toward attainment of those performance goals. School and division AYP determinations are based on the performance of students in the entire school and for student sub-groups for both English language arts and mathematics. Schools identified for improvement are those that have not made AYP for two or three years in a row in either mathematics or reading for all students or for all students in a recognized subgroup.

8) *What if a school does not improve?*

When a Title I school fails to improve, NCLB lays out an action plan and timetable for steps to be taken as follows:

- **Second Year-** A Title I school that has failed to meet AYP for two consecutive school years will be identified as *needing improvement*. School officials will develop a two-year plan to turn around the school. The School must offer parents the option of transferring their child to another school that has made AYP.
- **Third Year-** If the school fails to meet AYP in the third year, the school remains in *needing improvement* status. In addition to offering *school choice* the school must provide *supplemental educational services* (SES), such as tutoring or remedial classes, to low-income families.
- **Fourth Year-** If the school fails to meet AYP for four years, the district must implement certain *corrective actions* to improve the school, such as replacing certain staff or fully implementing a new curriculum.
- **Fifth Year-** If the school fails to meet AYP for a fifth year, the school district must initiate plans for restructuring the school. This may include reopening the school as a charter school, replacing all or most of the school staff or turning over school operations either to the state or to a private company with a demonstrated record of effectiveness.

For school year '07-'08 Newport News, Hampton City, Fauquier, Fairfax, Henrico, Henry and Greene counties all have been granted the flexibility of introducing SES in the first year of a school improvement plan instead of offering school choice, with the second year of the plan offering SES plus school choice.



9) ***What can I do if my school has been “identified for improvement”?***

Find out more about the specifics of why your child’s school did not meet AYP. The weakness may be for a subgroup to which your child belongs. Consider the quality of your child’s school and the teachers. Find out what’s being done to turn your child’s school around. Finally, you also may want to look into the *school choice* option or, in the third year, the *supplemental educational services* option. You can contact your school officials to find out what programs are available for your child.

10) ***What can I do to help my child’s school succeed and meet the accountability requirements?***

NCLB supports parent involvement because research demonstrates the positive effect that parent involvement has on their children’s education. In the event a school is identified as *needing improvement, corrective action, or restructuring*, the law requires the local education agency to notify parents accordingly, and to explain to them how they can become involved in school improvement efforts. Parents may help their child’s school in a number of ways, including: Attending parent-teacher meetings to address academic problems at the school; volunteering and encouraging other parents to get involved. NCLB laws give parents the flexibility to talk with their school board members, principals and other state and local education leaders about which programs they think will help their students the most.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Parent/Home Involvement in Schools, Quick-Find Online Clearinghouse:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm>

US Department of Education Publications for Parents:

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/landing.jhtml?src=pn>