



# A Look Inside 33 School Districts



Year

# 2

of the No Child Left Behind Act

Elizabeth Pinkerton  
Caitlin Scott  
Barbara Buell  
Nancy Kober

Center on Education Policy  
Washington, DC  
**FEBRUARY 2004**

CENTER ON  
EDUCATION  
POLICY **CEP**

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

More information about state and local implementation of NCLB can be found in the Center's January 2004 report, *From the Capital to the Classroom: Year 2 of the No Child Left Behind Act*. The full report is posted on the Center's web site at [www.cep-dc.org](http://www.cep-dc.org), and copies can be obtained by contacting the Center on Education Policy by phone (202-822-8065) or by e-mail ([cep-dc@cep-dc.org](mailto:cep-dc@cep-dc.org)). The report from the first year of our study, *From the Capital to the Classroom: State and Federal Efforts to Implement the No Child Left Behind Act*, is also available on our web site or through phone or e-mail orders.

#### **ABOUT THE CENTER ON EDUCATION POLICY**

Based in Washington, D.C. and founded in 1995 by Jack Jennings, the Center on Education Policy is a national independent advocate for public education and more effective public schools. The Center works to help Americans better understand the role of public education in a democracy and the need to improve the academic quality of public schools. We do not represent any special interests. Instead, we help citizens make sense of the conflicting opinions and perceptions about public education and create the conditions that will lead to better public schools.

The Center on Education Policy receives nearly all of its funding from charitable foundations. We are grateful to The Joyce Foundation, The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, The Carnegie Corporation, and The Spencer Foundation for their support of our work on the No Child Left Behind Act. The Atlantic Philanthropies, The George Gund Foundation, and Phi Delta Kappa International also provide the Center with general support funding that assisted us in this endeavor. The statements made and views expressed are solely the responsibility of the Center.

# Table of Contents

Introduction to the Case Studies . . . . . 1

Alabama: Calhoun County School District . . . . . 3

Alaska: Kodiak Island Borough School District . . . . . 7

Arkansas: Fayetteville Public Schools . . . . . 11

California: Escondido Union Elementary School District . . . . . 15

California: Grant Joint Union High School District . . . . . 19

California: Oakland Unified School District . . . . . 25

Colorado: Colorado Springs District 11 . . . . . 29

Colorado: Fort Lupton Weld Re-8 School District . . . . . 33

Florida: Collier County School District . . . . . 37

Idaho: Joint School District #2 – Meridian . . . . . 41

Illinois: Chicago Public Schools . . . . . 45

Kansas: Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools . . . . . 55

Louisiana: St. John the Baptist Parish Public Schools . . . . . 61

Massachusetts: Avon Public School District . . . . . 65

Massachusetts: Boston Public Schools . . . . . 69

Minnesota: Cloquet Independent School District #94 . . . . . 73

Mississippi: Pascagoula School District . . . . . 77

Missouri: Hermitage School District . . . . . 83

Nebraska: Heartland School District . . . . . 87

Nevada: Clark County School District . . . . . 91

New Jersey: Bayonne School District . . . . . 95

New Mexico: Bloomfield School District . . . . . 99

New York: Romulus Central Schools . . . . . 103

North Carolina: Wake County Public School System . . . . . 107

North Dakota: Napoleon School District . . . . . 113

Ohio: Cleveland Municipal School District . . . . . 117

Oregon: Tigard-Tualatin School District . . . . . 125

South Carolina: Berkeley County School District . . . . . 129

Texas: Cuero Independent School District . . . . . 133

Vermont: Marlboro School District . . . . . 137

Vermont: Orleans Central Supervisory Union . . . . . 141

Virginia: Waynesboro School District . . . . . 145

Wisconsin: Sheboygan Area School District . . . . . 149



# Introduction to the Case Studies

## Learning from Case Studies of the No Child Left Behind Act

What have school districts done since January 2003 to raise student achievement, ensure all teachers are highly qualified, provide school choice to children in under-performing schools, and meet the other far-reaching requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)? How do districts perceive the Act? What effects is it having?

To help answer these questions, the Center on Education Policy (CEP) commissioned case studies of local implementation of NCLB in 33 school districts. These districts were selected to be diverse in size and geography and to reflect the approximate distribution of urban, suburban, and rural districts in the nation. Conducted between May and December of 2003, these case studies were one of several research methods used by the Center to inform our multi-year national study of state and local implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. We also surveyed state education agency officials in 47 states and the District of Columbia; conducted a nationally representative survey of 274 school districts; interviewed key officials in the U.S. Department of Education and the Congress; and conducted other kinds of research. Our findings from the second year of this broad study were published in January 2004, in the report entitled *From the Capital to the Classroom: Year 2 of the No Child Left Behind Act*.

Because the full study report includes only a portion of the rich information collected through the case studies, the Center has also published this compendium of case study reports from all 33 school districts. The case study reports presented here describe each district's progress in carrying out NCLB requirements, its challenges with implementation, and its strategies for addressing these challenges. The reports also include data from each district about enrollment and demographics, numbers of teachers and paraprofessionals that are not highly qualified according to NCLB criteria, and numbers of schools identified for school improvement or corrective action under the NCLB accountability requirements.

Our analysis focused on activities undertaken during school year 2002-03, but we also made an effort to include updated information from fall 2003. Decisions and data related to NCLB are continually changing, however—for example, in several states, the lists of schools identified for improvement were still not final or were subject to appeal at the time we completed these case studies. Thus, the information in these case studies could have changed since publication and should not be viewed as the final word on NCLB implementation in 2002-03, but rather as a picture of where these districts stood as of December 2003.



## Case Study Authors and Methods

Elizabeth Pinkerton, a consultant to the Center on Education Policy, conducted 31 of the 33 case studies described in this summary. Consultant Caitlin Scott did the case study of the Cleveland Municipal School District, and consultant Barbara Buell did the case study of the Chicago Public Schools. Nancy Kober, a consultant to the Center, edited the case studies.

To collect information for these case studies, Pinkerton, Scott, and Buell conducted telephone and personal interviews with key contact people in the school districts. Usually the primary contact was the district's coordinator of federal and state programs or Title I director, but contacts also included superintendents, assistant superintendents, assessment personnel, pupil services personnel, principals, directors of curriculum and instruction, and others. In addition to conducting interviews, the consultants did other general research about the districts. The research and interviews were done between May and December 2003.



# Case Studies

## 1. Alabama

### Calhoun County School District

Superintendent of Schools: H. Jacky Sparks  
Contact: Bobby Burns, Deputy Superintendent  
*Students: 9,480, K-12 – rural*

### Key Findings

- The implementation of NCLB requirements is very difficult in a district such as Calhoun County that is facing huge reductions in state and local education funds.
- Because Calhoun County has had experience dealing with the changing demographics of its families, staff members feel prepared to continue making the changes necessary to assure that all students achieve at high academic levels.
- In Calhoun County, as in many other districts, the achievement of elementary students surpasses that of secondary students.

### Background

Calhoun County School District covers a large portion of the northeastern part of Alabama. The district serves nearly 10,000 students from the rural areas surrounding the cities of Oxford, Piedmont, Jacksonville, and Anniston, the Calhoun county seat and center of educational services.

Anniston is also the home of a major chemical storage site—a reminder of the chemical training school once located at the Anniston Army Depot and the other military activities once headquartered at Fort McClellan. The fort was closed in 1999, striking a devastating financial blow to the community and the school district. Not only did the local economy suffer from the loss of several thousand jobs in the military and related industries, but the Calhoun County school district also lost thousands of dollars in federal Impact Aid (a program that reimburses school districts for tax revenues lost due to the presence of federal lands or federal employees, now authorized as Title VIII of NCLB). The Army has built an incinerator in Anniston that began burning chemical weapons in August 2003, a process scheduled to last at least 10 years and one that may have a negative effect on the community.

The loss of the military facilities was just one of several changes affecting the school district in recent years. In 2002, the city of Oxford annexed a portion of Calhoun County, which meant that several hundred Calhoun County students were transferred into the Oxford school district. Teachers had the choice of staying in Calhoun or trans-





ferring to Oxford, and most of them left Calhoun, as did other staff and a principal. District staff had to handle a host of complex logistical issues related to teacher assignments, funding, facilities, and other areas. State and federal funding followed the students to the new district, which meant a loss of funds for Calhoun. Oxford needed a school, though, so Calhoun sold Oxford the school building the students had been attending, which solved Calhoun's problem of a vacant school building.

## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Several Calhoun County schools are continuing to implement a new training program for teachers and other staff that was designed to improve the teaching of reading at all grade levels. Called the *Alabama Reading Initiative*, the program is based on research-validated strategies for teaching reading. Teachers and paraprofessionals were paid \$50 a day to attend programs where they were trained to be trainers, spending two weeks in research, study, and learning. The costs of the program were covered by a combination of state, local, and federal funds, including Title I funds. Several of Calhoun's Title I schools implemented this program as part of their NCLB efforts, and results were quickly apparent in classrooms, as teachers put into place a variety of reading interventions. Fundraisers were held to purchase more books for students, and reading was given the highest priority in the schools. The total emphasis was on assuring that every child was learning to read. One of the Calhoun County's successful graduates, Patty Hobbs, Director of Internal Communications for Secretary of Education Rod Paige, visited the reading program in 2003 and commended the staff for their efforts to improve student achievement.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### FISCAL PROBLEMS

The biggest challenge facing Calhoun County is that in the midst of seriously working to implement NCLB, the district has been faced with state budget cuts. As a result of these cuts, Calhoun County initially took steps to eliminate 123 staff positions for the 2003-04 school year. This would have reduced the teaching staff by 10% and would have made severe reductions in administrator, counselor, paraprofessional, and clerical positions. The turmoil created by this huge number of staffing changes took precedence over what should have been a stimulating and exciting time for making changes needed to improve student performance. However, the state legislature passed a bill that would fund lost teaching units only if the school system replaced the teacher units prior to the beginning of the 2003-04 school year. Calhoun County therefore restored most of the teacher positions it had eliminated, but the cuts remained in place for some support positions, and the central office administrative staff that was cut by 60%. These budget reductions mean that changes to improve the schools will have to be with fewer dollars and fewer staff to support and work with the children who need the most help.

As insurmountable as this fiscal crisis was and continues to be, this is not the first time that Calhoun has been hit with devastating reductions in funds. When the military bases vanished from the county, so too did Calhoun's federal allocations for Impact Aid, which supports districts with large numbers of federally employed parents. Calhoun survived that experience, but in 2003 the district faced a new round of budget cuts and the dismissal of employees, as well as the reality of much heavier cuts for 2004-05.

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

Calhoun County schools met Alabama's criteria for making adequate yearly progress

for 2003, a critical step under the accountability provisions of NCLB. All subgroups of students tracked for accountability purposes made AYP this year, although the subgroup of students with disabilities has been placed on the priority list for future accountability. Although gains are being made in the academic achievement levels of primary and intermediate students, the biggest challenge faced by Calhoun County School District is the performance of middle and high school students. In 2003, secondary schools made AYP, but the district is concerned about the achievement decline in the transition years between 6th and 9th grades. Staff members at all schools are looking at curriculum and professional development to determine what technical assistance is needed to reverse this trend.

Recognizing that secondary schools are more difficult to change in terms of content delivery and learning expectations, the district implemented a new program of Student Advocates for 2002-03. Student Advocates were staff members with some social work background who worked with teachers, students, and parents. The goal of the program was to reduce behavior problems and apathy among secondary students at risk of dropping out of school and replace their negative influences with goal-oriented strategies. The Advocates provided guidance and encouragement to individual students, helping them to develop positive behaviors that would improve learning and to address attendance and discipline issues that affect achievement. Staff members identified students in danger of dropping out and enrolled them in small group instructional settings. This effort was designed to assist students with getting their high school diplomas by helping them develop realistic plans for finishing high school. This program had to be dropped for the 2003-04 school year due to lack of funding.

## Other Implementation Issues

In light of Calhoun County's ample experience in dealing with change, district staff members believe they will find ways to implement the requirements of NCLB, even if it seems very difficult right now. Calhoun found creative solutions to complex problems many times in the past, and staff members are confident they will do so again. District staff point to what they call a local commitment to improve academic achievement for all students as one of the district's strengths. For example, when the agricultural community diminished, the school district found ways to meet the needs of the military families that were moving in. The career tech center developed a program with the Army Depot that includes a two-year training program with on-the-job experience. Students within a 40-mile radius are eligible to attend, and while they get their high school education, they also become skilled in technology and other career-related skills. NCLB brings more change to Calhoun County, but plans are in place to do what needs to be done.

## Data File — Calhoun County School District

**Location:** Northeastern Alabama

**Type:** Rural (Anniston is the county seat)

**Number of Schools:**

- 19 total
- 9 elementary schools (K-3, K-4, K-6)
- 1 elementary/junior high school (K-9)
- 1 middle school (5-7)
- 7 high schools
- 1 career tech center



**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

Total Enrollment: 9,480  
 White: 85%  
 African American: 13%  
 Other: 2%  
 English Language Learners: 5% (9 languages)  
 Students with Disabilities: 14%  
 Low-Income Students: 49% (ranges from 32% to 69% in individual schools)

**Number of Teachers**

Total: 570  
 Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 190 (33%)

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 149  
 Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 143 (96%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 10 elementary

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice only:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0

## 2. Alaska

### Kodiak Island Borough School District

Superintendent: Betty Walters

Contacts: Brian O’Leary, Director of Educational Support Services;  
Marilyn Davidson, Principal

Students: 2,750, K-12 – rural

### Key Findings

- Fluctuations in funding in Alaska have weakened or eliminated programs for districts like Kodiak Island Borough at the very time that districts are trying to comply with the major new demands of NCLB.
- Because of its rural nature, Kodiak has difficulty attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers who are able and willing to adapt to the rigors of life in remote Alaska. With some island schools that serve 20 students of all grade levels with just one teacher and one paraprofessional, the district faces particular challenges in meeting the NCLB requirements for subject matter expertise among high school teachers, but is looking to technology to provide the courses to fill the need.
- Because of high teacher turnover, paraprofessionals are a vital source of continuity and cultural connections for Kodiak students. Meeting the NCLB paraprofessional requirements will require some creative scheduling, because many paraprofessionals must spend the summer hunting, fishing, and cutting wood to prepare their families for the winter and do not have time for training classes.

### Background

Kodiak Island Borough School District serves nearly 3,000 students on Kodiak Island in the Gulf of Alaska. Schools are located both in the town of Kodiak and in native villages situated around the island.

The names of the Kodiak Island Borough schools (Danger Bay, Port Lions, Larsen Bay, Akhiok, Old Harbor, Chiniak, Ouzinkie, East, Main, North Star, Peterson, Kodiak Middle School, and Kodiak High School) provide clues to the history and culture of this unique school district in a very distinctive state.

Although half of Kodiak’s students are White, the rest are mainly Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander, with a few Hispanic, African American, and American Indian students. A total of 371 students (14%) are considered English language learners, and these students claim a variety of primary languages: Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Samoan, Spanish, Tagalog, Aklanon, Cebuano, Chinese, Ilocano, Malay, Pangasinian, Panpango, Visayan and Yupik. The diversity of languages, along with the variety of dialects within a language, provides challenges for Kodiak staff, but instructional services to all students are focused on helping them become proficient in English as quickly and effectively as possible.

Many aspects of schooling that are taken for granted in the Lower 48 states create incredible challenges in Kodiak Island Borough. For example, the district must constantly recruit replacement teachers in the rural village schools because the average stay of a teacher is short, with a turnover of 30-50% each year. Although the allure of experiencing life in Alaska draws some fine teachers, the cultural change is tremendous even



for the adventurous. New teachers must learn to live in simple, subsidized housing, order groceries to last an entire semester, watch out for bear when they go outside, and combat loneliness and isolation. After one or two long, cold winters, most new teachers have usually had enough and head eagerly toward a more familiar type of life, while Kodiak again looks for new teachers.

Because teachers are difficult to retain, paraprofessionals are essential. The district relies on these employees to provide continuity of instruction in the village schools and to maintain cultural and language connections with the students. Yet upgrading the skills and credentials of paraprofessionals presents its own unique challenges: for example, paraprofessionals cannot go to school in the summer because they must use that short time to obtain the deer and fish needed to feed their families during the long, harsh winter. Despite the challenges, the staff members of Kodiak Island Borough seem determined to improve the education of their students and make NCLB work in their district.

## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

Almost three-fourths of Kodiak's paraprofessionals do not meet the NCLB definition of "highly qualified." The Kodiak district is currently developing a program, in partnership with Kodiak College, a branch campus of the University of Alaska, to help Title I paraprofessionals meet the NCLB requirement of two years of college. The program is also designed to provide training to enable paraprofessionals to first obtain an associate's degree and then complete a four-year degree and become teachers. Topics covered in a six-credit course taught in the summer of 2003 by a district staff person included classroom management, children as readers, and how to work with special education children. Fifteen paraprofessionals took the class last summer.

The district recognizes, however, that even with some courses being available through distance learning, completing a teaching degree involves a very long time commitment for paraprofessionals, many of whom have family and community demands on their time. For paraprofessionals who cannot spend their summer taking classes, the district is looking at the option of requiring these staff members to pass an examination that demonstrates knowledge equivalent to two years of college.

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Kodiak is experimenting with distance learning as a means of improving student performance and meeting other NCLB requirements. The district runs a learning center in cooperation with four other school districts that provides cyber courses for the eight village schools. Students with the lowest test scores at these schools (below the 40th percentile in reading, for example) are targeted for enrollment in the cyber school, which gives them extra instruction in reading skills and other areas on top of their regular class work.

One of the Kodiak Island schools did not make AYP in 2002. Throughout 2002-03, the district focused resources and technical assistance on that school, and the school improved enough to make AYP in 2003, so it was not targeted for school improvement in 2003-04. Five other Kodiak schools, however, did not make AYP in 2003. At one school, the percentages of students overall scoring at proficient levels were 81% in language arts and 73% in math, but the subgroups of English language learners and students with disabilities at the school did not meet state benchmarks, so the school fell short of making AYP. In three other schools, the same two subgroups of English language learner and students with disabilities did not make AYP. District officials are concerned that these two groups will continue to have difficulty making AYP. In the case

of English language learners, these students leave the subgroup once they become proficient in English. In the case of students with disabilities, many were referred to special education precisely because they have significant learning or cognitive disabilities that make it difficult for them to master the content likely to appear on state tests.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### FISCAL PROBLEMS

Kodiak Island Borough has had significant budget cuts in the past two years due to declining enrollment. In addition, state budget cuts have forced the reduction and elimination of many programs, such as sixth grade band, at a time when resources are needed to meet all aspects of NCLB. The borough's contribution to local education is at its maximum, and cuts in the state budget have affected resources for the district. Since the state has no state income or sales tax, there are no alternatives to fill the gap other than to reduce spending and seek additional sources of funds, such as applying for grants.

Kodiak has also been affected by economic slumps in the logging, fishing, and salmon canning industries. Many workers have been laid off, exacerbating poverty in the district. Poverty is high throughout the Kodiak area, with some schools enrolling 85% of children from low-income families. The learning needs of students at risk are intensified amid economic chaos. For example, subsistence activities like hunting, fishing, and woodcutting take on even greater importance in tough times, leaving less time for homework and school activities. According to Kodiak staff, economic factors can also have a dramatic effect on young people's dignity, placing them at even greater risk for school failure.

### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

District officials in Kodiak say their greatest challenge is to find and retain teachers who meet the NCLB requirements for being highly qualified. Of the 178 teachers in the district, 74% do not meet these requirements. Not only must these teachers meet these certification requirements, but to be successful in Kodiak, they must also be able to address the diverse cultural and learning needs of students.

In the town schools, many teachers have not met all the NCLB requirements for specific content areas, especially math. Many endorsements are not available at higher education institutions in the state, so in order to acquire majors and/or credentials in content areas, teachers will have to go out of state or utilize distance learning. Meeting the NCLB requirements is even more difficult in the village schools, where enrollments range from 10-60 students and the staff consists of a small number of teachers. Sometimes a village school may have just one teacher and one paraprofessional for all K-12 students. At these schools, it is virtually impossible for one teacher to meet NCLB requirements for all content areas for the high school students. It is also unlikely that the district will find teachers for these schools who have both elementary and secondary certificates in multiple disciplines.

As a solution to the challenge of meeting the NCLB teacher criteria for high school subjects, Kodiak is developing a broadband interactive learning program to provide students with highly qualified teachers in subjects for which their regular teacher does not meet certification. Kodiak has upgraded its computers, and the plan is being implemented in 2003-04. Under the plan, a content-qualified math teacher in one school, for example, will teach a geometry class for her or his students, and at the same time, the lesson will be transmitted to other schools for the students who need the class. The district is in the process of submitting grant applications to fund this program.



## Other Implementation Issues

### SCHOOL CHOICE

The school choice provisions of NCLB would be extremely difficult to carry out in a district like Kodiak. If a Title I village school were required to offer choice, this would not mean busing children to another school, but rather putting the children on an airplane to get to another school. These special circumstances in the rural areas of Alaska have been recognized by the U. S. Department of Education, and schools in the Alaska will be able to offer supplemental services in their first year of school improvement if school choice is not an option.

According to Kodiak district officials, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development works closely with its local districts, and technical assistance is provided on an ongoing basis. The district recognizes the difficulty faced by state officials in providing such services because of the vast distances that exist from district to district. The geography of the state poses immense challenges for people getting together, but communication continues in other forms.

## Data File — Kodiak Island Borough School District

**Location:** Southern Alaska

**Type:** Rural

### Number of Schools:

13 total

7 village schools and 6 town schools (K-10, K-12, K-6, 7-8, 9-12)

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 2,750

White: 47%

Asian/Pacific Islander: 23%

Alaska Native: 21%

Other: 9%

English Language Learners: 14% (16 languages)

Students with Disabilities: 15%

Low-Income Students: 37% (ranging from 0 to 85% at individual schools)

### Number of Teachers

Total: 178

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 74%

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 7

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 5 (71%)

### Number of Title I Schools: 6

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0

## 3. Arkansas

### Fayetteville Public Schools

Superintendent: Dr. Bobby C. New

Contact: Michelle Boles, Federal Programs and Assessment Administrator

Students: 8,164, K-12 – urban

### Key Findings

- Believing that teacher professional development is a key strategy for meeting NCLB's student achievement goals, the Fayetteville School District has hired literacy and math specialists to help teachers use disaggregated achievement data to improve instruction. The district is also assembling teams of teachers to share effective teaching techniques and strategies for eliminating achievement gaps among subgroups of students.
- Although all but one of Fayetteville's schools made adequate yearly progress for 2003, the district is taking active steps to raise student achievement in its high-poverty schools, which have consistently performed lower than its low-poverty schools. For example, the district is analyzing reasons for success in high-poverty schools that do perform well, adopting a computer-based instructional program to help students probe or review key concepts, and training teachers to analyze student assessment data to inform their instruction.

### Background

The city of Fayetteville in northwestern Arkansas is the home of the University of Arkansas. It is also the center of a large-scale poultry industry. This double focus brings families to Fayetteville School District with a diverse range of cultures, languages, and academic needs.

In recent years, the district has seen a large increase in English language learners, who now total 763 students, nearly 10% of the district's enrollment, and who speak 43 different languages. The majority of these students are Spanish speakers—primarily from Mexico, but also from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Central America. Their families were attracted to Fayetteville by the poultry industry. The situation is different for the significant numbers of English language learners who speak other languages, such as Arabic, Cantonese, and Korean. These families have come to Fayetteville because of the university, where their parents are employed or enrolled as students. This dual aspect of Fayetteville's English language learner program presents challenges, but it also provides a cultural enrichment that benefits everyone.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fayetteville district leaders have kept themselves informed about the new NCLB requirements, and they prepared the staff for the changes. District officials held several meetings with teachers during the 2002-03 school year and addressed the definition of highly qualified teachers with the entire district faculty via access television before school opened in 2003-04.





The district emphasizes the importance of involving teachers in academic improvement, especially through teachers analyzing student performance data. The district hired a literacy specialist and a math specialist to work directly with teachers and administrators in 2003-04. These individuals will focus on helping teachers to disaggregate student achievement data and to further align curriculum with state standards and frameworks.

The district plans to provide multiple opportunities throughout the 2003-04 school year for teachers in various content areas to use “vertical teaming” as they examine the alignment of curriculum within a school and across grade levels among feeder schools. Three elementary schools are placed into a vertical team, which will meet at least three times a year to share assessment information and effective teaching techniques. The district will provide substitutes for these teacher teams, so they can work together on strategies to improve students’ specific academic skills in the areas of greatest need. The teams will also develop strategies to eliminate achievement gaps among subgroups of students.

For several years, Fayetteville schools have used a state-approved staff development model called Restructuring Days. For three to five days in the year, teachers come to school without the students to work together on curricular issues and develop effective instructional strategies expected to improve academic achievement. To make this process even more effective, the district has made refinements in the model for 2003-04. Instead of having the same restructuring days for all teachers, each of the district’s 15 schools will have its own restructuring days. This approach will allow the central office curriculum staff to be part of the school teams and to provide teams with the technical assistance they need. The professional development program is supported through a combination of federal funds from NCLB Titles I, II, and III and state and district sources. Peer assistance is encouraged at all schools, and various levels of support, including mentoring, are available for teachers.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Because of its high salary schedule and proximity to the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville does not anticipate difficulties in continuing to find highly qualified teachers in most areas. The exceptions are teachers of special education, math, and science. The district anticipates possible problems meeting the NCLB requirements for content expertise among special education teachers in junior high and high school. These teachers usually teach more than one content area to students with disabilities. Teachers who are fully qualified in special education and also qualified to teach algebra, for example, are difficult to find.

Although teachers qualified in English as a Second Language/English Language Development have been in short supply in the past, the district is now experiencing an increase in that teacher pool. Training for teachers who need to meet the requirements is being provided through NCLB Title II funds. A district committee reviews requests submitted by teachers for assistance in taking and passing the state approved examination and purchasing study books to prepare for the exam.

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

Fayetteville has placed a high priority on improving the academic performance of students in its high-poverty schools. Although the average poverty rate in the district is 31%, four schools have as many as 50% of their students from low-income families. One of these schools has an 87% poverty rate and is the lowest performing school in the district.



In 2003, all but one of the district's schools, including its low-income schools, met state AYP criteria, and none is in school improvement status. District officials are particularly pleased that in Asbell Elementary School, where 58% of the students come from low-income families, 94% of the school's students scored at the proficient or advanced levels on the state's Grade 4 literacy exam for 2003. Only one school scored higher, and that school enrolls only 7% low-income children. On the state's Grade 4 math exam, Asbell topped all the schools in the district, with 92% of its students scoring at the proficient or advanced levels.

But even with this good news, the district recognizes that more needs to be done. As noted by Michelle Boles, Fayetteville's federal programs and assessment administrator, "We certainly are not resting on our accomplishments. We have initiated our own self-imposed school improvement plans with high expectations for *all* students." Closing the achievement gap between low-poverty and high-poverty schools is a major part of this initiative. With few exceptions, the percentage of students achieving at the proficient or advanced levels is consistently lower in high-poverty schools than in low-poverty schools. The district is taking steps to determine the reasons behind the success of the Asbell School and identify factors that can be incorporated into a district model for improving student performance.

The district has undertaken a variety of efforts to raise student achievement in high-poverty schools. One high-poverty school with low achievement is moving forward with a technology-based program that will provide a computer for every student. Instead of traditional classroom desks, students in kindergarten through grade 5 will work at glass-topped computer units. According to district staff, the decision to move ahead with this model was made after considerable research on programs that have good success records for high-poverty students. Fayetteville's technology program will have extensive teacher training to assure the integration of technology into all curriculum areas. If this technology program helps high-poverty schools make the academic gains required by NCLB, Fayetteville plans to expand it to all of the elementary schools.

In addition to providing teachers with opportunities to systematically review student mastery of standards and key concepts related to instruction, the technology-based lessons are expected to benefit students in a variety of ways. They will be able to probe lessons in greater depth and breadth, pursue supplementary learning, review what they did not understand the first time, and correct their misconceptions and misunderstandings. Teachers will have greater opportunities to use student feedback as a guide to future teaching. In addition, families will benefit by being able to use the computers after school.

The Arkansas Department of Education rates school districts according to their academic and/or fiscal need, and accountability is an integral part of statewide efforts to improve public schools for all students. The district is reviewing its AYP status for the six secondary schools that are in alert status. These schools did not make AYP because of their subgroups, especially students with disabilities at three of the schools. Fayetteville has never been on the state failure list. District officials believe that their strong approach to academic improvement and their focusing of district resources on the academic needs of students will keep them moving toward AYP for all students.

#### PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Fayetteville makes extensive use of paraprofessionals in various capacities. The overwhelming majority of the district's paraprofessionals, about 72%, do meet the NCLB requirements. Efforts are taking place to help the remaining paraprofessionals, including those who provide bilingual assistance to students, reach the NCLB requirements. In fact, the district has made a commitment to hold all of its paraprofessionals, not just those in Title I schools, to the same high requirements. The district includes paraprofessionals in all district professional development opportunities. They are provided with



test-prep materials designed to prepare them for the state-adopted paraprofessional test, and they are sent to conferences designed specifically for the student populations with which they work. For example, in the fall of 2003, all paraprofessionals working with migrant children are invited, at district expense, to attend an out-of town, two-day workshop dealing with multicultural education, teaching strategies, and health issues.

## Data File — Fayetteville Public Schools

**Location:** Northwestern Arkansas

**Type:** City of 60,000

**Number of Schools:**

- Total: 15
- 9 elementary schools (K-5)
- 2 middle schools (6-7)
- 2 junior high schools (8-9)
- 2 high schools (10-12)

**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

- Total Enrollment: 8,164
- White 80%
- African American: 9%
- Hispanic: 7%
- Asian: 3%
- American Indian: 1%
- English Language Learners: 10% (major languages include Spanish, Chinese, Arabic)
- Students with Disabilities: 13%
- Low-Income Students: 31% (ranging from 7% to 87% in individual schools)

**Number of Teachers**

- Total: 619
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 61 (10%)

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

- Total: 158
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 45 (28%)

**Number of Title I Schools: 7**

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0

## 4. California

### Escondido Union Elementary School District

Superintendent: Dr. Mike Caston

Contact: Pat Peterson, Coordinator, GATE/Title I

*Students: 19,229, K-8 – suburban*

#### Key Findings

- Escondido Union is accustomed to disaggregating student achievement data for subgroups because California’s state accountability system has required it for several years; however, the subgroups of English language learners and students with disabilities were not previously required.
- For English language learners, a subgroup that did not make adequate yearly progress for 2003 at some elementary and middle schools, the district is looking at disaggregated test data to decide which types of instructional programs have been most effective for these students.
- The Escondido district has made considerable efforts to identify and serve homeless students under Title I. As a result, the district’s 3,450 homeless students and their families have access to a family support center that provides information, resources, and counseling; a half-time coordinator of homeless services; workshops for parents on supporting their children’s education; and extra academic support classes for students.
- Escondido Union is collaborating with a local university to develop courses for middle school teachers who do not meet the NCLB requirements for subject matter expertise.

#### Background

Escondido Union Elementary School District is located in the northern portion of San Diego County and is part of the greater suburban area of the city of San Diego. An elementary school district, Escondido Union serves students in grades K-8, while grades 9-12 are under the Escondido High School District. Each of the two districts is separately governed with its own Board of Education, superintendent, and other governance features. Although most California districts are unified K-12 districts, many regions continue to have this unique system of separate districts, a vestige of a time decades ago when small localities developed their own schools. Unification is usually not a goal for districts that have chosen to continue as separate entities.

Located not far from the Mexican border, Escondido (“hidden valley” in Spanish) is steeped in the Spanish/Mexican heritage of California and is home to a large population of Spanish-speaking families. More than half of Escondido’s students are English language learners, most of whom list Spanish as their primary language.

#### Progress in Implementing NCLB

##### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

California’s accountability system, the Academic Performance Index (API), in place for the past four years, has been incorporated into the state definition for adequate yearly progress under NCLB. Two state funded programs, the Immediate Intervention for Underperforming Schools (IIUSP) and the Public Schools Accountability Act, were designed to help schools that were not achieving according to expectations. One advantage for Escondido



and other districts in the state is the strong level of understanding that exists among district staff, parents, and the community about school reform. Another advantage is that schools have become accustomed to reviewing the academic progress of racial, ethnic, and low-income subgroups because these groups were in the state's previous AYP system.

For the past three years, Escondido received additional state funding to provide a variety of services at three low-performing elementary schools in the district. The schools identified barriers that prevented student learning and made the adjustments that were needed for change. Literacy coaches for English/language arts were hired to provide demonstration lessons and to coach teachers by providing feedback on lessons they observed in classrooms. The coaches facilitated grade-level meetings and assisted teachers in analyzing assessment data to guide instruction. A principal was moved from one school in an attempt to revitalize the reform movement.

Although California has required schools to track progress for specific subgroups in the past, the subgroups of English language learners and students with disabilities are new as result of NCLB. Escondido and other California districts are now following the AYP of students in these two new subgroups.

#### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Finding highly qualified teachers has not been an easy task in Escondido, despite efforts made in this area. The district is working to identify ways that teachers can become fully certified in the content areas they teach. The district's main concern is with middle school teachers who are required to hold single subject credentials because of the departmentalized curriculum in the schools. The state of California is in the process of finalizing its Highly Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) program that will assess the qualifications of existing teachers. Escondido is analyzing the status of all teachers and working with California State University, San Marcos, to develop appropriate programs to assist with credentialing.

To retain teachers, Escondido has taken advantage of California's Beginning Teacher Support and Assistance (BTSA) program, which pairs new teachers with experienced mentor teachers for one or two years. Training sessions are held during the school year, and the mentors receive small stipends for their additional work. In 2002, a total of 106 Escondido teachers participated in the program along with an equal number of mentor teachers.

#### PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Escondido has 123 paraprofessionals in various instructional support positions who are employed in Title I schools and thus required to meet NCLB qualifications. A freeze was placed on new hires at the start of the 2002-03 school year due to state budget cuts, and considerable staff time is now being utilized to identify the status and needs of all paraprofessionals. The district developed and field tested a new proficiency test for paraprofessionals based on the California High School Exit Exam. The skills expected on the high school exit exam are far greater than what was expected in the past on California's proficiency tests for paraprofessionals. Escondido used the exit exam as a base and added more to it. The cut score for passing is greater than what is expected for high school students. This test is now in use, and paraprofessionals are being provided with training to help them pass the test. The plan is to use a combination of performance assessments and the proficiency test to meet NCLB requirements for paraprofessionals who do not have two years of college or an associate's degree.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

#### CHOICE, SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES, AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

One Escondido middle school was targeted for school improvement in school year 2002-03 and was required to offer school choice, but that determination was not made



until late in the year. The district notified parents of their eligibility for choice, and the parents of 180 of the 1,500 eligible students selected a different school in the district for their children to attend. Escondido does not provide busing for students, so students are taking city buses to get to the other schools, a distance of 3-4 miles one way. The cost of transportation for these students is an estimated \$25,000 for 2003-04.

Escondido has two schools in school improvement in school year 2003-04: a middle school for the second year and an elementary school for the first year. The elementary school did not make AYP for the English language learner subgroup. The middle school had three subgroups that did not make AYP: English language learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students. In addition to school choice, the middle school is now required to provide supplemental services. The district will be one of the four approved providers of these services for the middle school and will arrange after-school programs for students. Of the 1,245 students who are eligible for supplemental services, only 143 are participating.

The district is providing technical assistance to the school improvement schools focused on the continuous academic achievement of all students. A district developed "roadmap" provides guidance to teachers about placing students in the appropriate reading level group for the core curriculum materials used by the district. Students will be grouped by reading level for core instruction in reading/language arts, and those in grades 4-8 who score two or more years below grade level will be instructed using the new *High Point* reading curriculum. English language learners in grades K-3 who score two or more years below grade level will receive their reading instruction in specially modified lessons that are aligned to the core materials and were developed by the district.

At the middle school, students who score two or more years below grade level are required to take a math support class in addition to the core math class. A math teacher on special assignment has been hired to provide intense training and coaching for math support teachers and to assist teachers who are working to meet the highly qualified requirements of NCLB.

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

California law requires that districts enroll students who are English language learners in structured programs of English language development, but if parents request bilingual education for their students through a formal request process, districts can provide bilingual programs. English language learners in Escondido are served through a variety of programs, including structured English immersion, two-way bilingual programs (English and Spanish), and parallel language development, which is a maintenance bilingual program. By parental request, Spanish instruction programs are offered to 1,263 children at seven schools. The effect of NCLB on these bilingual programs has yet to be determined because the ELL subgroup was not included in previous accountability measures in California. District staff will be looking at the disaggregated data from the 2003 testing to see if there is any difference in academic achievement based on the type of instruction students received.

English language learners are grouped based on their language proficiency levels for explicit and systematic English language development for a minimum of 30 minutes daily. Teachers use the district-developed English Language Development (ELD) Curriculum Guide and benchmarks aligned to the ELD Content Standards. Grade-level teams establish instructional pacing calendars for math and reading that include formative assessment dates, and teachers work together in grouping the students by their achievement levels for instruction across grade levels.

Additional support for Escondido's bilingual programs is provided by Title III of NCLB. The district was involved in an intensive state compliance and resolution review process known as the *Comite de Padres*. The district was recently released from this requirement because of its successful completion of the resolution agreement related to services for ELL students.

## Other Implementation Issues

### HOMELESS STUDENTS

Escondido enrolls a large number of homeless students—3,450 children whose families live in temporary shelters, or move continually among the homes of relatives or friends, or otherwise lack a permanent residence. The majority of these families are Hispanic and recent immigrants to the U.S. District staff members report that considerable steps have been taken to meet the educational needs of these students, including employing a half-time coordinator of homeless services, a full-time School Liaison, and a full-time case-worker, and developing a center where families can access help and support. Workshops are provided for parents on such topics as helping students succeed with homework, understanding the school district, improving home/school communication, and participating effectively in their children’s education. Families receive information, resources, and counseling about community resources and medical and social services. Students are offered before and after-school services and summer academic support classes.

## Data File — Escondido Union Elementary School District

**Location:** Southern California

**Type:** Suburban – northern San Diego area

**Number of Schools:**

- 19 total
- 12 elementary schools serving grades K-5
- 4 middle schools serving grades 6-8
- 1 K-8
- 1 K-2
- 1 3-5

**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

- Total Enrollment: 19,229
- Hispanic: 53%
- White: 40%
- African American: 3%
- Asian: 2%
- Other: 2%
- English Language Learners: 44% (Spanish is the main primary language, 37 additional languages)
- Students with Disabilities: 10%
- Low-Income Students: 67% (ranging from 11% to 96% for individual schools)

**Number of Teachers**

- Total: 1,190
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 24 (2%)

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

- Total: 123
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 86 (70%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 11 (10 elementary, 1 middle school)

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice only:	1	1
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	1
In corrective action:	0	0

## 5. California

### Grant Joint Union High School District

Superintendent: Dr. Larry Buchanan

Contact: Rick Carder, Director, Categorical Programs

*Students: 12,682, 7-12 – urban*

### Key Findings

- In preparation for NCLB, Grant Joint Union High School District has aligned its curriculum with state standards, trained teachers in how to use student test data to improve instruction, and expanded its remedial, summer, and after-school programs, among other efforts.
- School choice has been difficult to implement in Grant. At the high school level, there was only one available receiving school that was not in school improvement. Most of the district's schools were low-performing, and neighboring districts were unwilling to enter into a cooperative agreement to accept choice transfer students.
- As a district with considerable ethnic and language diversity, high poverty, and large numbers of homeless students, Grant Joint Union is concerned about its ability to meet NCLB requirements for adequate yearly progress.
- Implementing supplemental services has been a complicated and time-consuming process in Grant. The district negotiated with approved providers about the specific services available for students and made information available to parents, among other tasks.

### Background

Grant Joint Union High School District serves changing urban communities that include a large part of the capital city of Sacramento. The name of the district stems from the 1840s when these acres were part of a huge Mexican Land Grant. The district has served grades 7-12 in five comprehensive high schools, five junior high schools, three alternative schools, and one special education school. The elementary children of the area attend four separate elementary districts. Over the years, there has been continuing discussion to create a different structure of governance for the districts. In August 2003, one of Grant's feeder K-6 districts, Del Paso, voted to join Grant in a two-year partnership. This means that Grant is now changing its structure and organization to serve a K-12 population.

The establishment of McClellan Air Force Base during World War II brought thousands of families to the area, the first of many changes, but Grant has continued to be a very ethnically and racially diverse district (64% minority). Poverty has increased over the years, and in 2003, more than half (58%) of the district's students came from low-income families. In two of the district's schools, nearly all students are poor: the poverty rates are 99% in Grant Union High School and 91% in Martin Luther King, Jr., High School.

## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

District staff and teachers at Grant are familiar with the disaggregation of student performance data on the basis of poverty and major ethnic subgroups because of California's previous accountability requirements. The 2003 changes to the state accountability system, consistent with NCLB, included the addition of two new subgroups whose achievement must be tracked: English language learners and students with disabilities. Also consistent with NCLB, the state now requires 95% of students to participate in state testing and requires high schools to show improvements in their graduation rate. Although all subgroups of students made gains in achievement in 2003 compared with their performance in 2002, the district still did not make AYP in 2003 in English/language arts (ELA) or math. As shown in the table below, the specific subgroups that did not make AYP were Hispanic students (math), African-American students (math), students with disabilities (math and ELA), and English language learners (ELA). The district also fell somewhat short in the percentage of students participating in testing.

### Percentage of Students Scoring at Proficient Level or Above on California Standards Test

#### Grant Joint Union High School District

NOTE: To make adequate yearly progress for 2003, California requires 12% of students to score at the proficient levels in English/language arts (ELA) and 12.8% to score at this level in math. NCLB also requires 95% of students to participate in testing in ELA and math.

Scores marked with an asterisk \* shows areas for which students did not make AYP.

STUDENT SUBGROUP	ELA 2002	ELA 2003	MATH 2002	MATH 2003
All students	16.6%	21.9%	11.8%	16.6%
Participation rate	94.7%	93.3%*	94.0%	93.7%*
African-American	10.1%	16.4%	3.7%	8.0%*
American Indian	20.2%	23.4%	15.1%	15.1%
Asian	9.8%	14.8%	13.3%	18.9%
Hispanic	11.2%	17.6%	8.7%	11.2%*
Pacific Islander	14.1%	7.0%	11.9%	24.3%
White	24.0%	30.1%	16.6%	23.0%
Low-income	11.8%	17.4%	9.2%	14.9%
Students with disabilities	6.0%	8.8%*	1.9%	6.9%*
English language learners	2.6%	10.2%*	7.6%	13.3%



District leaders and staff recognize that academic performance needs to be improved. Grant Joint Union has already been subject to the school improvement requirements of NCLB and the similar accountability provisions of prior federal and state law. Five Grant schools were in school improvement status in 2002-03 because they did not make AYP for two consecutive years. Four of these schools are now in their third year of school improvement based on testing from 2003, but one school tested out of school improvement this year.

During its first year of implementing NCLB, Grant Joint Union aligned its curriculum with state content standards in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The district conducted a thorough analysis of student performance data and emphasized the need to differentiate instruction for various groups of students throughout the district. Professional development was focused on helping teachers use student achievement data to improve instruction and develop strategies to teach the state content standards. The district also focused on improving student performance on the state high school exit examination. Remedial instruction was provided for juniors who did not pass the exam as sophomores, and the district established an intensive intervention program in reading/language arts for low-performing students in junior high school. Opportunities were greatly expanded for students to obtain additional assistance in after-school, summer school, and tutoring programs.

## Major Issues in Implementing NCLB

### SCHOOL CHOICE AND SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

Four of the five schools in improvement status in 2002-03 were required to offer school choice. One middle school that was in its second year of improvement exited because of meeting AYP for two years. Grant found it difficult to implement the NCLB choice requirement because most of the schools in the district needed improvement, leaving few transfer opportunities within the district. Letters were sent to the districts bordering Grant asking them if they would be willing to accept inter-district transfers at their schools, but these districts either did not have space for more students or chose not to accept out-of-district transfers. Other factors affecting school choice were the desire of families, especially recent immigrants, to keep their youth close to home in safe and familiar neighborhoods and the resistance of teenagers to move to schools that were away from their friends. Parents basically support their home schools and the districts' school improvement efforts.

In the end, although large numbers of students were eligible for transfer, no students chose that option. Grant therefore moved ahead to offer supplemental services for students. Setting up these services was a time-consuming and complicated process because little information was available about the specific services that providers were offering.

Eleven supplemental providers, from the California Department of Education list of more than 120 approved providers, agreed to participate in the Grant District. The types of services they offered ranged from online instruction to one-on-one home tutoring. Only nine Grant students took advantage of these supplemental services, and most of these students received assistance in reading/language arts. One of the technical clinicians provided help in building phonemic awareness, and the others assisted students with tutoring. The director of categorical programs for the Grant district negotiated directly with the service providers in order to present parents with a clear understanding of what each provider would be able to do for their children.

The district had concerns about some of the tutors who were employed by the providers because they had little or no knowledge of the neighborhoods or cultures of





the families they would be serving or of the high crime reputations of some neighborhoods. Whether a school district would be legally liable if any incidents happened to tutors employed by an outside NCLB supplemental service provider is an issue that has not been put to the test, but Grant officials said they do not want their district to be the test case, so they are taking as many precautions as they can. Another district concern is that NCLB provides no additional funds to cover a district's costs of managing and overseeing school choice and supplemental services. At a time when fiscal resources are stretched to their limits, this created additional responsibilities for the school district. Rick Carder, Grant's director of categorical programs calculated that he and his staff spent more than 300 hours making the choice arrangements for the district and another 500 hours on supplemental services.

Technical assistance to schools throughout the district consisted of professional development, including training to help teachers better understand and use disaggregated student assessment data. An "academic audit" was conducted by the county office of education to help the staff look at the effectiveness of their various programs, their delivery of instructional services, and their use of available resources. The district also provided substantial professional development aimed at improving instructional strategies in the classroom, teaching to standards, using assessment data, and effectively using resources.

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

For the past four years, all English language learners in California are tested annually with the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) to determine their proficiency in English. The English language learner subgroup in California includes those students who meet the federally-approved definition of limited English proficient (LEP) students and those who have been redesignated as fluent in English but have not scored at the proficient level or above for three years on the California Standards Test in English/Language Arts.

Almost one of every four Grant students (23%) are English language learners, a total of 2,976 students in grades 7-12 who speak 69 different languages. This is a significant number of students for secondary schools, especially when poverty and great diversity of languages are also barriers to learning. Learning English can be frustrating for teenagers who cannot read and write in their native language, as is the case for many Grant students. The most common primary languages of the Grant students are Russian, Hmong, and Spanish, three very different cultural groups. Most of the Spanish-speaking students are from Mexico, although some are recent arrivals and others have been in California for a longer time. Hmong students represent the second generation of refugee families who were resettled from Southeast Asia and eventually came to northern California; even though some of these students were born in the U. S., they are not yet fluent in English. Russian-speaking families continue to come to the Sacramento area from the countries of the former Soviet Union. Among all of these linguistic groups, the secondary school students are often the most proficient English speakers in their families.

Although Grant English language learners increased their academic achievement in 2003 and met their target for AYP in math, they continue to face challenges with the English/language arts test.

## Other Implementation Issues

#### SERVICES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH

The Grant district also enrolls large numbers of homeless youth, who live in shelters or temporary housing, bounce around among friends' houses, or live on the streets. Some of

these students live with their parents who are also homeless, but some are on their own. These homeless young people need and receive additional resources to assure that they are not deprived of education. These students are served under the Title I program of NCLB.

NCLB includes several new requirements for serving homeless youth, as follows:

1. Homeless students cannot be segregated. In other words, a school district cannot have a school for homeless children that operates out of a homeless shelter.
2. States and districts must adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided so homeless students can attend their school of origin if that is what parents request.
3. If there is a dispute over which school a homeless student should attend, the student is placed in the school of the parent's choice until the dispute can be resolved.
4. All school districts must designate someone to serve as a local liaison for homeless students.

Grant staff members believe they make every effort they can to find and serve these students. A coordinator for the Homeless Education Program works closely with school sites in finding and identifying students who meet the homeless criteria. Arrangements are made for school supplies, transportation, and connections to available resources. Family reunification is the goal for runaways and consistently transient students, but this goal is not easily achieved.

Most of the funding for the homeless students in Grant Joint Union is covered by the Title I program. Services such as clothing, transportation, school supplies, and assistance with immunizations were provided for 171 homeless students in 2002-03.

District officials are committed to improving the academic achievement of all students in all schools. The district has a long history of active parental involvement with all schools, and this is being expanded to include churches and other local community groups. The superintendent, district staff, and Board of Education members believe they are making a real effort to improve student performance and that NCLB is helping to reinforce this goal.

## Data File — Grant Joint Union High School District

**Location:** Northern California – Sacramento County

**Type:** Urban; borders city of Sacramento

**Number of Schools:**

- 14 total
- 6 middle schools (7-8)
- 4 high schools (9-12)
- 3 alternative schools
- 1 special education school

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 12,682

White: 36%

Hispanic: 21%

African American: 19%

Asian: 13%

Other: 11%

English Language Learners: 23%

Students with Disabilities: 12%

Low-Income Students: 58%, with range in individual schools from 35% to 99%





### Number of Teachers

Total: 657

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 50% (These are middle and high school teachers who teach in their minor area rather than their major; special and alternative school teachers who teach multiple subjects)

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 9

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 9 (100%)

### Number of Title I Schools: 12

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	1	2
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	4	1
In corrective action:	0	4

## 6. California

### Oakland Unified School District

State Administrator: Dr. Randolph Ward

Contact: Wilhelmina Sims, Director, Department of Accountability

Students: 51,613, K-12 – urban

### Key Findings

- Oakland Unified School District had difficulty maintaining fiscal effectiveness and therefore was placed in state receivership in June 2003. Now under the management of a state-appointed administrator, the district is using this opportunity to meet the requirements of NCLB and serve its students and community.
- With 66 Title I schools in need of improvement, the district has implemented a core reading program in elementary schools and an intervention program in secondary schools that is beginning to improve student achievement
- Participation in supplemental education services in 2002-03 varied considerably from site to site, but district officials report that attendance was higher at sites where teachers and site administrators showed a high level of support for the services.

### Background

The Oakland Unified School District has had a varied past as a major port city in a growing area of California, a state that is increasing its population every day. The city borders Berkeley, the home of the University of California, and just across the bay is San Francisco.

In June 2003, the Oakland district was placed in state receivership by the California Legislature, and a special administrator for the district was appointed by the state superintendent of public instruction. The special administrator was given the authority to lead reform efforts designed to bring about improvement in both the fiscal and academic status of the district. Dramatic reductions also were made in the district's funding from the state in 2003 that caused staff to be laid off.

In addition, Oakland must deal with a declining and changing population. For the past five years, enrollment has decreased by about 2,000 students per year, on average. The district's enrollment of 51,613 students in the fall of 2003 is significantly lower than the 70,000 students that attended Oakland public schools in 1998. When fewer students are enrolled, that means fewer dollars in state funding for educational services, which in turn means more adjustments that the district must make to balance its budget.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Oakland Unified has had a long history of involving parents in their children's education. The annual Title I Parent Seminar includes a full day of workshops with a lunchtime speaker and has an attendance of 300 parents and community members. The district has strong, functioning district advisory committees, including one for parents of English language learners. ELLs account for a third of the district's students—more





than 16,000 students who speak many different languages. The advisory committees meet regularly to address specific programmatic issues and review state and federally funded categorical programs.

In addition, all schools have school site councils made up of parents and school staff, and in secondary schools, students are part of these councils. The councils are responsible for preparing and implementing a “single site plan for student achievement” that includes funding for Title I and other categorical programs. The district provides training for the council members, especially the parents, and helps them to monitor the plan and modify its components to better address student needs. A “parenting university,” which consists of workshops for parents on governance and other topics, takes place every two months. Child care is provided to help parents attend training activities.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Six Oakland schools exited from improvement status as a result of their 2003 test scores, but in the 2003-04 school year, 66 schools—more than half the district’s schools—continue to be in various stages of improvement, restructuring, or corrective action. Thirty-two schools are in their first year of improvement and therefore are offering school choice. Eighteen schools are in their second year and offering both choice and supplemental educational services. Sixteen schools are in corrective action because they have not demonstrated enough improvement in the past three years.

In the fall of 2002, when choice first began under NCLB, parents whose children attended the 34 schools in improvement status that year were notified by mail and by other announcements of their school choice opportunities. Even though the Oakland City Transit System provided free bus tickets for the children who needed transportation to another school, only 168 of the 20,000 eligible students transferred to other schools. For the 2003-04 school year, the notification took place in August, but only 39 additional students of the 40,000 students that were eligible transferred, even though this option was available to students in 66 schools.

Supplemental services for students in the 10 schools required to offer this assistance were available from three providers in 2002-03. The district’s federal program director held parent meetings at each of the schools to help parents understand the offerings that were available. At some schools hardly any parents attended, but at others as many as 100 parents came to the meetings.

A total of 500 students out of the 5,279 who were eligible took advantage of the supplemental services opportunities, which focused on after-school instruction and, in some instances, included parent education classes. Student participation varied considerably from site to site, and according to district staff, where there was a high level of support from teachers and site administration, the number of students who attended regularly was considerably higher.

Nearly 10,000 Oakland students are eligible for supplemental services in 2003-04. With a clear need for these students to improve their academic status, the district set mathematics as the priority for extra help, and 14 approved providers are available to offer the services. A “Supplementary Educational Services Faire” was held, and the district prepared an extensive survey of the providers that was sent to parents to help them with their decisions. More than 1,000 students are expected to participate in 2003-04.

## Other Implementation Issues

### FISCAL ISSUES

The fiscal challenges for Oakland Unified are being addressed simultaneously with the full implementation of NCLB. The reduced funds resulted in the layoff of a large number of classified employees in 2003-04. At some sites, combination grade classes were established due to low enrollments, and where schools were overstaffed, teachers were reassigned to other sites. Most certificated and all classified staff experienced pay cuts of 2-4% along with increased co-payments of benefits. Many employees recognize that everyone has to share in the sacrifice to keep the district solvent, and in general, there appears to be a team effort with the employee organizations and the district searching together for solutions to the severe fiscal problems.

The newly appointed state administrator, who is charged with improving Oakland's fiscal and academic status, set a clear direction in his "Core Principles for Success," which are closely aligned with the requirements of NCLB: All students are expected to reach the same standards of achievement; student performance must be improved within established fiscal limits; assessment systems, the curriculum, instructional program, professional development, accountability, and fiscal responsibility must all be linked to student achievement; students need to know that school/district staff cares about them; the community, schools and district support staff must support high performance instruction and student learning in customer-friendly work places; and staff must be provided with the training, knowledge, and motivation to make informed decisions and be held accountable for the results of their work.

With more budget cuts looming in California in the fall of 2003, Oakland Unified's financial situation is likely to be stretched even further. Because of the district's high poverty level of 70%, schools will at least be able to rely on their Title I funds. At school sites, these funds are used for additional staffing, academic interventions, professional development, parent education, additional materials and supplies, and instructional coaching. Direct services funds cover transportation for school choice and supplemental education services.

### COMPLIANCE ISSUES

Oakland has had a long history of noncompliance with its programs for English language learners, and the district has had to change its programs to meet all aspects of the legal requirements. Good progress is being made in this area, according to district staff, and it is expected that this issue will be resolved in 2003-04.

## Data File — Oakland Unified School District

**Location:** Northern California

**Type:** Urban

**Number of Schools:**

- 109 total
- 80 elementary schools K-5
- 15 middle schools, grades 6-8
- 14 high schools, grades 9-12

**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

- Total Enrollment: 51,613, K-12
- African American: 43%
- Hispanic: 32%
- Asian: 15%
- White: 5 %



American Indian: 5 %  
 English Language Learners: 32%  
 Students with Disabilities: 11%  
 Low-Income Students: 70% (ranging from 2% to 100% in individual schools)

**Number of Teachers**

Total: 2,803  
 Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 8.2%

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 400  
 Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 75%

**Number of Title I Schools:** 100 schools – 94 are schoolwide and 6 are targeted assistance

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	24	32
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	10	18
In corrective action	0	16



## 7. Colorado

### Colorado Springs District 11

Superintendent: Dr. Norman F. Ridder

Contact: Dr. Mary Gromko, Director, Title I

*Students: 32,765, K-12 – urban*

### Key Findings

- The Colorado Springs District 11 has a system in place to focus on student improvement and has been able to adjust that system to meet the requirements of NCLB.
- When offered a choice of schools in 2002-03, only 65 of the 4,155 students who were eligible for choice in Colorado Springs transferred to another school. In the 2003-04 school year, 22 of these students continued in their choice schools, and an additional 67 students took advantage of choice, for a total of 89 students using choice this school year.
- The Colorado Springs district took active steps to alert parents about the availability of supplemental services, including making announcements at school football games to assure that parents knew about the options. The district is also an approved provider, offering before- and after-school tutoring, summer school, and family literacy nights. However, only a few students participate.

### Background

The Colorado Springs School District 11 serves the city of Colorado Springs in southeastern Colorado. The city is one of the largest in the state and is a gateway to the Rocky Mountains, with flat prairie land to the east and the mountains to the west. There is a heavy military presence among the families because of the numerous military institutions located in the area, including the Air Force Academy, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), Homeland Security (the national headquarters), Schriever Base (home of the U. S. Space Command), Fort Carson Army Post, and Peterson Air Force Base (home of the 3rd Division).

This urban school district has 64 schools that serve nearly 33,000 students. Although minority students account for 35% of the total enrollment, the degree of diversity varies among schools, as do poverty rates. The highest-poverty elementary school has a poverty rate of 89%, the lowest has a rate of 10%, and the district average rate is 39%.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Colorado Springs District 11 has created a structure to improve the academic achievement of all students by maximizing instructional and learning time. The district plans to attract, develop, and retain a highly skilled and motivated workforce of leaders in order to ensure that students, parents, and the community are involved and working together to improve student achievement. The district and the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs have initiated a professional development school for emerging leaders in-





cluding school principals. The district is also part of a five district Pikes Peak region team participating in a National Science Foundation five-year grant for elementary science that incorporates a principal leadership academy. In this, the fourth year of the grant, five principals from Title I schools have participated in the leadership academy.

District resources are aligned to support the goals for improving academic achievement, and annual evaluations are used to determine the effective and efficient use of the district's assets in meeting the educational requirements. Schoolwide teams focus on growth targets by using a collaborative planning template. These teams run their own data on student performance and develop inservice training focused on the areas of greatest need.

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) has been used to test reading for students from grades 3 through 10 and in math for students from grades 5-9. This will change in 2004 when testing will take place for grades 3-10 in both math and reading. Fifth graders will be the first to be assessed in science in 2005-06. In 2003 the district also used a commercial assessment, Terra Nova, and this was given in reading, language, and math in grades 2-10.

The present reporting system for student assessments in Colorado is being adjusted to meet the requirements of NCLB; for example, the report structure provides a composite score for grades 3, 4, and 5 instead of grade level scores, as NCLB requires. Every elementary school in Colorado Springs District 11 made AYP in 2003, and one Title I schoolwide middle school and one targeted assistance middle school did not make AYP. The changes in testing may require district staff to make some changes in the school system to assure that students continue achieving. However, staff members believe that they have a strong structure and well designed process in place at schools to meet any new challenges.

#### SCHOOL CHOICE AND SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

In school year 2002-03, two schools in Colorado Springs were targeted for their second year of school improvement and had to offer both school choice and supplemental services. The parents of 65 students out of 4,155 students who were eligible chose to move their children to other schools. According to the 2003 CSAP results, 7 of 10 schools tested out of school improvement status, so the district is no longer providing transportation to the choice schools for these students. If the parents wanted to keep their children at the schools they were attending for the 2003-04 school year, they were able to do so but they had to provide their own transportation. Letters were sent to 7,640 parents about their eligibility for choice in 2003-04, and a summer registration was conducted. Parents were able to choose from between three and seven schools that had academic ratings ranging from average to excellent. Once again, most parents did not seek to move their children from their neighborhood schools; 67 students were added to the 22 students who elected to continue at their choice schools from 2002-03, for a total of 89 District 11 students exercising choice in the 2003-04 school year.

The district created multiple opportunities for parents to learn about supplemental services, such as meetings, letters and announcements at parent gatherings, even announcements at football games. In 2003-04 the Colorado Springs District is also an approved provider of supplemental services, offering before- and after-school tutoring. All of the state-approved providers who were selected by parents offered student assistance in after-school settings. Even with this outreach effort to parents, only one student took part in the additional services in 2002-03 and 13 in 2003-04.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

With 1,300 English language learners who speak 40 languages, Colorado Springs schools have used English as a Second Language programs to help students become proficient in English and in content areas. The English language learner subgroup—which is increasing in size and diversity—did not make AYP in 2003.

Students who have not yet mastered English are varied not only in their native languages (although Spanish is the most common), but also in the length of time they have lived in the Colorado Springs area and in the United States. Some families of ELLs are immigrant families, others are migrant, and still others are military—soldiers whose spouses are from other countries. Education levels of parents differ widely, too: some parents of ELLs have never gone to school, and others have multiple college degrees. Recognizing that instruction for these English language learners is not “one size fits all,” the district staff members make efforts to differentiate instruction so that all student needs are met.

## Other Implementation Issues

### QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Guidelines for determining the qualifications of teachers were developed by the state of Colorado in the summer of 2003. These guidelines will help Colorado Springs assess its teacher qualifications, especially those of middle school teachers of content areas. The district has finished reviewing transcripts of new hires and has changed its hiring practices to assure that the new requirements are being met. A major survey of all teacher qualifications was undertaken in the fall of 2003 to determine exactly what is needed for teachers who do not meet NCLB requirements.

Only qualified paraprofessionals are being hired, and plans are in place to purchase a commercial test for the assessment of paraprofessionals who do not have two years of college.

## Data File — Colorado Springs District 11

**Location:** Southeast Colorado – city of 281,000

**Type:** Urban

### Number of Schools:

- 64 total
- 39 elementary schools, K-5
- 9 middle schools, grades 6-8
- 5 high schools, grades 9-12
- 6 alternative high schools, grades 9-12 (to include a digital storefront high school)
- 5 charter schools, including 2 high schools, 1 middle school, 1 K-12 school, and 1 elementary

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 32,765

White: 65%

Hispanic: 20%

African American: 10%

Asian: 3%

American Indian: 2%



English Language Learners: 4% (40 languages)  
Students with Disabilities: 9%  
Low-Income Students: 39% (ranging from 10% to 89% in individual schools)

**Number of Teachers**

Total: 1,968  
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: N/A

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 475  
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: N/A

**Number of Title I Schools:** 17 elementary and 1 middle school, schoolwide; 1 charter middle school, targeted assistance.

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice only:	10	3
Required to offer both supplemental services and choice:	2	0
In corrective action:	0	0

## 8. Colorado

### Fort Lupton Weld Re-8 School District

Superintendent: Stephen Morrison

Contact: Kathi Van Soest, Director, State and Federal Programs

*Students: 2,622, K-12 – rural*

### Key Findings

- Ft. Lupton has made dramatic changes in its basic structure, including reconfiguring schools and grade levels, to improve academic achievement.
- As a small, rural district, Ft. Lupton cannot match the higher salaries of larger districts in the region, which means that highly qualified teachers often transfer to other districts.
- English language learners as a subgroup are relatively low performing in Ft. Lupton, so staff and parents are searching for the best ways to teach English to these students.

### Background

The Fort Lupton Weld Re-8 School District is located about 25 miles from Denver in north central Colorado. Fort Lupton, the main community in Weld County, is a residential center with an agricultural and industrial base. (The Re-8 designation refers to a Colorado reorganization of rural school districts that occurred several years ago.) The district has four schools—two elementary schools, a middle school, and a high school. Its enrollment of 2,622 students includes a high percentage of Hispanic students (56%), most of whom are English language learners. The poverty level for the district is 59%, and student performance is at low levels.

For 2003-04, elementary grades have been reconfigured from schools serving grades PreK-2, 3-4, and 5-8 to two schools serving PreK-5 and one serving grades 6-8. The district staff believes this change will work better to improve academic achievement. The class size is 18:1 at the elementary level and 26:1 at the high school level. Improvements and additions will be made to the schools as the result of a school bond that was passed in 2001.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Of the 52 paraprofessionals in the Ft. Lupton district, only 6 have had two years of college. Nearby universities offer training for paraprofessionals, and even though many employees attended these classes, there was no college credit attached to the courses, so participants did not receive credit toward meeting NCLB qualifications. Plans are in place for Ft. Lupton paraprofessionals to receive training at AIMS Community College, where they will receive credit for the coursework they take. The district staff is also finalizing plans for an assessment to measure whether paraprofessionals have the specific knowledge required by NCLB. The staff is also working on ways to assess paraprofessionals' ability to assist in instruction, also required by law. Paraprofessionals will receive assistance to help them pass this test and meet the NCLB requirements.





## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Of the 180 Ft. Lupton teachers, 70 are on emergency credentials. The district aims to decrease that number by half each year, so that every teacher is fully qualified by 2005, as required by law. Teachers from out of state account for the majority of the credentialing problems, because they need 24 hours of additional coursework to meet Colorado's teacher requirements. Ft. Lupton depends on out of state teachers because there are not enough teachers in the state to meet the demand.

The relatively low pay of the district is a key reason why the district has difficulty keeping highly qualified teachers. In some instances, teachers stay in the district long enough to get fully credentialed, and then they move on to other districts that pay up to \$7,000 more per year. In the past three years, 25% of Ft. Lupton's teachers (about 15 each year) have left the district to take jobs elsewhere.

Some of the district's special education teachers also need additional certification from the state. Furthermore, teachers of English language learners need 18 hours of coursework for certification, if they teach English as a Second Language or bilingual classes. Teachers from Mexico, hired specifically for their skills in teaching English language learners, are another group that does not always meet the NCLB definition of "highly qualified." These teachers have Spanish language skills, and they understand the cultures of the Hispanic students, but they frequently do not meet the state teacher licensure requirements.

Other teachers who have entered alternative licensing programs may have a bachelor's degree in a particular field, but they may lack the state teaching license or have not passed the required test for their content area. Two of the greatest areas of need are teachers of middle and high school math and science. Teachers who teach in two or more content areas are common in small rural high schools, and it is especially difficult for these teachers to meet the qualifications in multiple subjects. Although a teacher may meet the requirements for one content area, it is the second content area (which the teacher often teaches for just one or two periods) for which certification is needed.

Ft. Lupton was able to fill all new positions for 2003-04 with teachers who met NCLB requirements. Some teachers were reassigned as needed; for example, a middle school teacher who lacked content-specific certification but held an elementary certification was reassigned to an elementary class.

The district provides financial support to teachers who need to become fully qualified. Each teacher can receive up to \$2,000 in NCLB Title II funds to complete their certification. Of this amount, \$1,000 is provided up front, and the other \$1,000 is provided when the teacher completes a second year in the district.

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

As noted above, the district's schools were recently reorganized to serve a different set of grade levels. School leaders believe that this new arrangement will make accountability clearer and allow for a smooth transition from one school to the other. In 2003, the two elementary schools were targeted for school improvement. The middle and high school are no longer Title I schools, since the district is using Title I funds at the elementary schools only.

In the 2002-03 school year, all four of the district's schools were in school improvement, which meant that all students in the district were eligible to transfer to another school under the NCLB choice provisions, but there were no eligible schools within the district. The district notified parents at the beginning of the year about school choice and offered to provide transportation for any child to attend a school in a neighboring district. No parents chose to move their children to these schools, which were miles away; they kept their children close to their home in the Ft. Lupton schools.



In 2003-04, the parents of all students in grades 1 through 5 were offered school choice, but again, this meant going to another district because both elementary schools are still in school improvement. Because of the reconfiguration of grade levels for 2003-04, Ft. Lupton has been given a two-year waiver by the state before it has to implement supplemental services.

Most of the technical assistance that the district provided to schools in school improvement in 2002-03 focused on professional development—specifically, teaching teachers and other staff how to do data analysis and use data to enhance instruction. Principals received guidance on improvement strategies and how to prepare their plans to address specific student needs. The school staffs and principals presented their improvement plans to the District Advisory Committee (made up of parents and community members). This group analyzed the data and, based on their analysis, made accreditation recommendations to the Board of Education.

The Ft. Lupton district has also made a considerable investment in preschool education, anticipating that efforts toward early learning and literacy will pay off later, especially for English language learners. By taking advantage of state funding and supplementing those funds with district funds, nearly all four-year-olds in the district receive a year of learning before kindergarten, and special education children have two years. With state funding reduced for 2003-04, however, this program is in jeopardy.

Ft. Lupton staff members are considering ways to close the large gap in academic achievement between Hispanic students, who comprise 56% of the district's enrollment, and White students, who make up 44% of the enrollment. In 2002, the percentage of students scoring at the proficient level or above on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) was 34% for Hispanic students versus 54% for White students at grade 3; 14% versus 51% at grade 7; and 29% versus 65% at grade 10. In math, the comparable percentages for Hispanic and White students were 26% and 52% in grade 3, 8% and 31% in grade 7, and 1% and 18% in grade 10.

Considering that more than half of the district's students are poor and almost half are English language learners, Ft. Lupton staff members recognize that they face a huge challenge in assuring AYP for all students. They believe, however, that they can make a difference. One issue that has not been resolved is how to improve instruction for English language learners. Although the district recognizes that students are not progressing as they should in becoming proficient in English, there is not a consensus about the best way to reach the desired goals. Yet the Ft. Lupton schools must take action in 2003-04 to meet AYP criteria for this subgroup.

## Other Implementation Issues

### SERVICES FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

As part of its response to NCLB, the Ft. Lupton district made an effort to find and provide instructional services for homeless students in its attendance area. Each principal chose a building representative to work with community liaisons, and these representatives trained a group of people in how to search for and identify homeless families. The teams found families living in roadside motels or with relatives or friends. Some families lived on the river in tents and camp trailers. A total of 46 students (White and Hispanic families) were identified, and parents were assisted in obtaining appropriate school services for their children.

## Data File — Ft. Lupton Weld Re-8 School District

**Location:** North Central Colorado; Ft. Lupton's population is 5,200

**Type:** Rural

### Number of Schools:

- 4 total
- 2 elementary schools
- 1 middle school
- 1 high school

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 2,622

Hispanic: 56%

White: 44%

English Language Learners: 45% (1,180 students)

Students with Disabilities: 12%

Low-Income Students: 59%

### Number of Teachers

Total: 180

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 70 (39%)

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 40

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 32 (80%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 2 schools, elementary only

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	4	2
(2 schools removed from Title I and a state waiver due to restructuring efforts.)		
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0



## 9. Florida

### Collier County School District

Superintendent: H. Benjamin Marlin

Contacts: Dr. Kimball Thomas, Director of Federal and State Grants; Barbara Mascari,  
Director of Federal Programs

*Students: 37,109, K-12 – urban and rural*

### Key Findings

- Collier County, as a rapidly growing district faced with ever increasing student enrollment, recognizes that continual improvement of the instructional program is as important as the constant need to build new schools in order to keep roofs over students' heads.
- Keeping highly qualified teachers in the district's high-poverty rural schools, where students face many barriers to learning, is difficult for the Collier County district because teachers often prefer working in the higher-performing and more affluent urban communities.
- Collier County is using its Reading First grant to place reading coaches in Title I schools. These coaches will serve as role models for delivering effective reading instruction and will train teachers in various strategies for raising student achievement in reading.
- Collier County School District has partnered with local community colleges to develop coursework to help paraprofessionals become highly qualified. Some of the district's Spanish-speaking paraprofessionals are unlikely to complete an associate's degree, however, because of family pressures to stay at home in the evening. As an alternative, the school district plans to provide free test preparation and test fees to encourage paraprofessionals to take the state-approved test to demonstrate their competence when the test becomes available in February 2004.

### Background

The Collier County School District is a large countywide system in southern Florida that educates 37,109 students in 35 schools. The district serves diverse communities that stretch from the wealthy beach area of Naples on the Florida Gulf, through the Everglades, and into the high-poverty inland area of Immokalee. Most of the families in Immokalee and in the southern end of the county are very poor, and many are migrants and immigrants. One school in the Everglades is a K-12 school that serves 185 students, primarily from Mexico (Spanish speaking) and Haiti (Haitian Creole speaking). Collier County has the largest number of migrants in the state, a total of 4,968 or about 13% of the district's enrollment.

An hour away from Immokalee is the beach region of Naples, a fast growing community with an annual growth rate of 5-7%. This means new schools, facilities, and educational services for the Collier County School District, as well as continual adjustments to the always-changing newcomer and residential population. In the summer of 2003, the district was building two high schools, a middle school, two intermediate centers, and an elementary school.



## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Each school in Collier County has a plan in place that describes how it will raise academic achievement. Much time has been spent training teachers and support personnel how to analyze data to determine what instructional changes should be made to help all students reach the desired targets. A districtwide database is in place that enables school staff and classroom teachers to access a student's entire history of achievement, including the student's academic strengths and weaknesses. The goal is for teachers to use this information to differentiate instruction according to a student's individual needs.

One of the district goals is to improve the reading skills of students in the early grades so that they will be successful in all content areas as they progress across grade levels. With a new Reading First grant, reading coaches have been placed at school sites to support teachers in various ways. The coaches serve as role models for delivering instruction to students. They also provide staff development and training for teachers in a variety of instructional strategies and help teachers acquire the skills necessary to make teaching and learning more effective. A massive training program is underway to assure that all teachers will be able to bring students to higher achievement in reading.

Collier County has also undertaken an initiative to provide children with a strong base of readiness before they enter formal instruction in kindergarten and the primary grades. Toward this end, Title I schools have pre-kindergarten classes for four-year-olds, funded from Title I and Head Start. Universal pre-kindergarten will be required in Florida in two years.

Because Collier County staff recognizes the need to improve student achievement, the district is working to remove barriers that prevent children from progressing through the grades without the skills they need to be successful.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

High teacher turnover in the district's high-poverty schools may continue to be a challenge for Collier County, because so many teachers want to live in the highly desirable beach area. Schools in the beach area perform at higher levels than others in the district but have fewer vacancies. As a condition of employment, the district requires teachers in all schools to stay in the school for which they were hired for three years.

The district's staff is looking at ways to reduce teacher turnover and ensure greater staff stability in high-poverty, low-performing schools. The greatest areas of need for teachers overall are special education, mathematics, and science. A total of 144 of the 2,400 teachers in Collier County, about 6%, did not meet the NCLB qualification requirements in 2002-03. All new hires for 2003-04, however, met the requirements.

To make the requisite courses available to paraprofessionals, the district has developed a partnership with the community colleges in Immokalee and Naples and is encouraging employees to attend courses at these colleges. Books and tuition for the community college courses are provided at no cost to paraprofessionals through Title I funds, and both school and district staff persuade paraprofessionals to attend the classes. The district estimates, however, that as many as half of its paraprofessionals will not be able to pursue an associate's degree, let alone become teachers. Many of the paraprofessionals are Hispanic and are needed in the schools for their Spanish language skills. In many families, however, women are discouraged from going out at night to take classes, and child care is an issue for those that do.

The district has also selected a state-approved competency test to use for paraprofessionals when it becomes available in February 2004, but any test that is on the state-

approved list can be chosen by an employee or prospective employee. In the fall of 2003-04, the district plans to offer free study skills classes and workbooks to help paraprofessionals pass this test. When currently employed paraprofessionals are ready to take the test, the district will pay the fee.

#### SCHOOL CHOICE

Two schools in the Collier County district did not make AYP in 2002-03 and are required to offer school choice for the 2003-04 school year. Parents were notified by mail about their choices of schools. The letters were in three languages, and announcements were made in the newspapers, on the Spanish language radio station, and on the school system cable TV channel. Announcements were also posted throughout the community. An informational meeting was held at the local high school to answer questions from parents. The parents of 56 students requested transfers for their children to a different school; all were assigned to their first choice school. Four of the students requested to attend the high school in Naples, and transportation is being provided.

School choice will be offered in 2003-04 for students attending the high school and one elementary school in Immokalee. The elementary students can choose from two other elementary schools in Immokalee, but there is only one high school in Immokalee. The nearest choice high schools are 60-90 minutes away in the Naples area.

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The district is aware that it needs to improve the performance of English language learners because state expectations for these students are much greater than in the past. This is likely to be a challenge because the families so often change jobs and residences and the parents often have limited education. Communicating effectively with these diverse families is a related challenge; even though most speak Spanish, dialects and cultures differ, depending on whether the families came to Collier County from Mexico, Haiti, or Cuba.

Recent results from the Florida state high school exit examination indicate that many Collier County Hispanic students lack the skills to reach the passing level on the exam. Even though these students passed their courses and had enough units to graduate, their inability to master the test has kept them away from high school graduation. This has created a new level of high school dropouts and new challenges for the district.

## Other Implementation Issues

District administrators credit parental support, community efforts, and a committed staff as the key elements that will help the district improve the academic performance of all students. Collier County's educational improvement plan includes a process for evaluating new initiatives and a thorough cycle of program evaluation, a practice that will be continued and expanded with the implementation of NCLB.

## Data File — Collier County School District

**Location:** Southern Florida

**Type:** Rural and urban

**Number of Schools:**

- 36 total
- 22 elementary schools (K-5)
- 8 middle schools (6-8)
- 5 high schools (9-12)
- 1 K-12 school





### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 37,109

White: 58%

Hispanic: 34%

African American: 8%

Asian: 1%

American Indian: 0.4%

English Language Learners: 16% (5,862 students representing 40 languages)

Students with Disabilities: 8%

Low-Income Students: 47% (ranging from 7% to 99% in individuals schools)

### Number of Teachers

Total: 2,400

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 144 (6%)

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 255

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 90%

### Number of Title I Schools: 15

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	2
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0

# 10. Idaho

## Joint School District # 2 - Meridian

Superintendent of Schools: Christine Donnell

Contact: Linda Clark, Director of Instruction

*Students: 25,937, K-12 - suburban*

### Key Findings

- An important component of school reform in the Meridian Joint School District #2 is the district's effort to get data to classroom teachers in a form that is easily understood so they can use it to improve student performance.
- Meridian has a strong academic achievement record for its students, and although the performance of low-income students at some schools was lower than that of other students in 2003, they still met the requirements for AYP.
- Three Meridian schools exited school improvement in 2003 because of the districtwide emphasis on raising academic performance in the content areas of reading/language arts and math.

### Background

When people think of Idaho, Boise often is the place that comes to mind. They may be surprised to know that the largest school district in this mountainous and historic state is not that of the state's capital city, but Meridian. The suburban area west of Boise is known as Joint District # 2, and it is also the most rapidly growing school district in the state, with an annual increase of nearly 1,000 students. Meridian now has 25,937 students in grades K-12, and 3,000 are English language learners who speak more than 50 languages. Most of these students are Spanish speakers, including some from families that were migrants, but Meridian has also become home to refugee families from Bosnia and other European countries. Adding to the language diversity are children whose parents, highly skilled in technology, find ready employment in the high tech industries that have replaced the cows that once dotted the countryside. The nationwide slump in the dot-com field has not greatly affected this portion of Idaho, once referred to as the Silicon Valley of the Rocky Mountains.

Once a vast region of 384 square miles of farmland, Meridian is the western suburb of Boise, the capital of Idaho. Joint District # 2 has 36 schools, and there would be more if the district could build them faster. A recent facilities bond passed with an 84% approval rate, an example of the community support for education. Four schools operate on year-round schedules with five tracks; everyone has July off, but on a rotating basis, groups of students attend school for nine weeks and then have three weeks off.

The district has found that the year-round schedule is an excellent way to squeeze more students into a building, because around 20% are "off track" at any given time. Parents, even in this traditional community, support the schedule, but teachers have had to learn how to share classrooms and adjust to not having their traditional summer vacation. The district's collective goal is to be known as much for its high-quality academic program as for its rapid growth.

The choice of calendars is one of several choices that the district provides for parents. District-sponsored charter high schools provide opportunities for students in the information technology and medical arts career pathways. A pilot for full-time gifted placement in grades 2-6 is underway, and the district will open an elementary magnet school for the arts and communication next fall.





## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Issues of teacher quality have not yet surfaced in Meridian because the state of Idaho has not finished defining its requirements for teachers of special education and several other specialty areas. Initially, Idaho has defined currently employed teachers as “highly qualified” if they have state certification. New hires are required to have bachelor’s degrees and state certification and to have passed a state-designed test. Even with its large teacher pool and close proximity to three universities/colleges, Meridian still relies on letters of authorization and consultant specialist designations to fill positions in special education and some specialty fields at the secondary level.

District staff is aware that all teachers in the district must become highly qualified according to NCLB criteria by 2006, and the district plans to provide whatever professional development is needed. According to Dr. Linda Clark, the district is committed to reducing the number of letters of authorization and consultant specialist applications annually until there are none in 2005-06.

The requirements for paraprofessionals have had little impact on this district because Title I funds are used mainly to hire teachers rather than paraprofessionals. All the Title I schools are targeted assistance schools, and there are only two paraprofessionals at the schools that are funded from Title I. One paraprofessional already meets the new requirements, and the other one does not. An extensive training program has been implemented for all paraprofessionals, including those who work with English language learners and in special education classes. The purpose of the training is to improve their ability to assist teachers with instruction.

Professional development efforts in the Meridian district are focused on improving student achievement, continuing a trend that began before NCLB. By providing extensive teacher and principal training, changing staff perceptions of teaching and learning, using research-based materials, differentiating and accelerating instruction, and focusing on individual children from kindergarten through grade 12, the district intends to show that a total district effort pays off in higher student achievement. As described below, the 2002 state testing showed that schools in academic decline can be turned around, and poor and disadvantaged children can reach high expectations if clear goals are set as priorities and if the barriers to reaching them are removed.

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

One of the keys to Meridian’s reform efforts is arranging for the collection of extensive data related to student performance and then making that data understandable and usable for principals and classroom teachers. It sounds easy to do, but there are many pieces to this long-range train of records, information, statistics, and research. Now that the pieces are all in place, the data are available for everyone at all grade levels. A 5th grade teacher in a Meridian school in the fall of 2003, for example, received a class list as is normally done in schools, but this teacher can also access a data warehouse system that shows how each child in the class performed in previous years. The teacher knows the specific areas of that student’s strengths and weaknesses. All students are tested in the opening days of school and within 24 hours, the teacher has those results as well.

A complete profile of the class is available, so that the teacher can focus on the standards and on skills connected to those standards that have not yet been mastered. Teachers do not have to waste valuable teaching time on skills and content that students have already mastered. They are able to create a blueprint for each of the least able students, and they also have the tools they need to challenge the most advanced students in the class. All this is on the desktop computer data management system that is connected to the district student information system. The system works the same for teachers of middle and high school because math, reading, and language data are available. Science and end-of-course assessment data will soon be added.

Meridian's system is not totally in place yet because the student report card is not plugged into the system. Teachers have everything else they need right at their desktop to see not only the academic path already taken by students, but also the direction in which each student needs to head. The goal as stated by Superintendent Christine Donnell of "growth for all and accelerated growth for those behind" brings focus to the district's commitment to help the lowest-achieving students improve while also recognizing that bright students need to be challenged as well. Through intervention, differentiation, and acceleration, the district aims to address the needs of all students.

As district staff look at how their district got to this point in their development of an extensive and long range academic plan, they noted that the educational changes they have undertaken have occurred in the midst of very rapid enrollment growth. The continual opening of newly constructed schools and living every day with overcrowded facilities bring challenges of their own, but the need to add a substantial number of new staff each year has the benefit of bringing in pools of talented teachers who are eager to do their best in their new assignments. Though building needs dominate Meridian's list of what needs attention, district leaders indicate that they place equal value on the instructional needs of its teachers and instructional leadership.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Four of Meridian's Title I schools were in school improvement in 2002-03, and all four schools offered both parental choice and supplemental services. Even though 2,000 students were eligible for transfer, no families chose to change schools for their children, and none selected supplemental services. District staff found that parents were very satisfied with their children's schools because overall performance was high, with 86-94% of the students at the proficient level. There were only three supplemental service providers on the state list, but no families selected the additional help for their students. Meridian district was planning to become a provider. However, in 2003, three of the four schools exited school improvement, and the only school left in that status is expected to exit in 2004 as it only needs another year of achieving AYP in math to make the exit, which staff believes will occur.

Testing in Idaho has taken place at grades 4, 8, and 10, but grades 3 and 7 will be added to the testing cycle in 2004. Whether the addition of these grade levels will make a difference in AYP for Meridian schools remains to be seen. Dr. Linda Clark, the Director of Instruction who is responsible for implementation of curriculum across all grade levels, is pleased with the academic progress of Meridian schools. She credits the gains in proficiency and growth to "changes in curriculum, structures for learning and teacher practices, excellent site level leadership, and an attitude of No Excuses."

NCLB subgroups could become a challenge for Meridian, but most schools do not have enough poor, Hispanic, or English language learner students to disaggregate test scores for these subgroups. High school students with disabilities and low-income students at some schools are the two subgroups that the district is monitoring to make sure that they continue to show academic progress.

### FISCAL PROBLEMS

Once the recipient of funds from the Albertson Foundation that sparked teacher training throughout the state of Idaho, Meridian is now challenged to maintain its improvement course with district funds. Since there are declining educational budgets at the state level, implementing all the requirements of NCLB will be difficult. Staff members are aware of the barriers that may stand in the way of continued progress, such as continued growth, the need for new buildings, and budgets that have stretched the Merid-





ian district to the limits. According to district staff, there are no funds for textbook adoptions in the current budget, and all supply budgets were reduced for the year. A comprehensive high school of 1,800 students and an elementary school of 450 were opened in the fall of 2003, but the net increase in staff for the district was only 11 positions; the rest of the staff resulted from reassignments and adjusting current ratios.

## Other Implementation Issues

### CLASS SIZE REDUCTION

Class sizes in Meridian are large by the standards of most districts and states. The teacher-student ratio in the district's primary classes is 24:1, but from 4th grade on, ratios of 30 or more to one teacher is the norm, and some class ratios go as high as 35:1.

Superintendent Christine Donnell and her team are optimistic that they will be able to resolve the issues related to AYP and school improvement and that they will demonstrate high levels of student achievement at all schools even if their class sizes are relatively high.

## Data File — Joint School District # 2—Meridian

**Location:** Central Idaho

**Type:** Suburban – Boise area

### Number of Schools:

- 36 total
- 25 elementary schools K-5
- 6 middle schools, grades 6-8
- 5 high schools, grades 9-12

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 25,937

White: 93%

Hispanic: 4%

Asian: 2%

Other: 1%

English Language Learners: 10% (major language is Spanish – 51 languages)

Students with Disabilities: 8%

Low-Income Students: 17% (ranging from 8% to 64% in individual schools)

### Number of Teachers

Total: 1,496

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 12 (less than 1%)

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 2

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 1

**Number of Title I Schools:** 5 elementary schools and 1 middle school

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice only:	0	0
Supplemental services and choice:	4	1 (3 schools exited)
In corrective action:	0	0

# 11. Illinois

## Chicago Public Schools

CEO: Arne Duncan

Contacts: Xavier Botana, Dan Bugler, and Philip Hansen

Students: K-12: 438,589 – urban

### Key Findings

- Conflicting and changing information from the U.S. Department of Education and the state of Illinois about the law's interpretation complicated the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act in the Chicago Public Schools during school year 2002-03.
- The implementation of the NCLB school choice provisions in Chicago has been hampered, district officials say, by small numbers of available slots at receiving schools and a short period between the time the state identified the eligible schools and the beginning of the school year.
- The Chicago Public Schools undertook efforts to identify teachers who are highly qualified, but state requirements for teacher certification and licensure sometimes conflict with the NCLB requirements, so there are many teachers who meet the state's standards but are not "highly qualified" according to the federal Act.

### Background

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is one of the largest school districts in the country. Its student population exceeds 438,000—put another way, about 21% percent of all public school students in Illinois attend Chicago public schools. The district's students are representative of the diversity found in the city of Chicago. More than 46 languages are spoken in the district's 602 schools. Student demographics include 50.9% African American, 36.4% Latino, 9.2% White, 3.3% Asian/Pacific Islander and 0.2% Native American. The CPS budget for fiscal year 2003 was over \$3.66 billion. Children from low-income families constitute 85.3% of the student enrollment, and 14.3% are listed as English language learners. In 2002-03, of the district's 46,601 budgeted positions, 42,091 were employed in the schools, 3,055 held citywide positions and 1,455 worked at central office or in one of 24 areas.

Since the mid-1980s, the Chicago school district has undergone a series of reforms that have profoundly affected the status of education in the city and shaped how the system approached implementation of NCLB. In 1989, the city took a far-reaching step toward public accountability by creating local school councils in every school. These councils gave parents and others in the community the opportunity to have a direct and active choice in how their schools would be operated. In 1995, after years of battling with the state legislature for funding, the mayor of Chicago argued that if the legislature was not going to give the city sufficient money to run the schools properly, then the legislature should place control of the school system under the mayor—and it did.

The marriage between the local school council action and the mayor's takeover of the schools has been a rocky one, but it is far from ready for the divorce courts. The district has made progress in school improvement, teacher professionalism, reading scores, curriculum, and choice.





## Progress in Implementing NCLB

In the early months after NCLB was enacted, the CPS legal department carefully reviewed the law and began to put on a series of workshops and seminars. The goal was to actively get the word out about the law—both internally, so that CPS departments would be prepared to do what they had to, and externally so that the community would understand the new law.

Chicago people had no problem with the overall focus of the law: improve professionalism among teachers, offer additional tutoring for struggling students, strengthen accountability, improve reading scores, and create urban schools that work for children. But in the details of implementation, Chicago school officials saw potential difficulties that could slow down reform in a system that had finally begun to show progress through its own efforts.

School officials also had numerous questions about how various provisions of the law would be interpreted. For example, if children were to be given the option of changing schools, would there be enough eligible schools and seats in those schools to take the students? How would costs be absorbed? And what criteria would the state use to designate the schools, and would those criteria stand the test of scrutiny? School leaders worried that implementing the school choice provisions alone would not only tax CPS departments but also make it difficult for them to accomplish the real intent of the law—to give students safer and better schools to attend. Even preliminary reports and analyses from the Illinois State Board of Education were leading many to believe that few Chicago students would really be able to move to another school. There simply weren't enough schools on the school improvement list with empty seats in them to accommodate the students who would be deemed eligible to switch.

CPS officials felt that they did not receive clear answers to their questions about these and other matters from the state and federal levels. The district was anxiously awaiting guidelines from the state and specific information about which schools would have to offer choice and supplemental services.

Shortly after Duncan took office, when action began in earnest on implementation of NCLB, the CEO opted to develop teams from different departments rather than create a new NCLB Department. This allowed the district to build on what it was already doing, rather than viewing NCLB as a new reform that would have to be layered on top of what was already in place.

The reforms occurring in Chicago at the time the law was passed were far more advanced and orderly than reforms in many other cities across the country. With school reform elements already well underway in Chicago, the question became how to implement NCLB without undermining the work already started in public school choice options, teacher improvement and accountability, reading instruction, and other areas.

CPS seemed to be adopting a two-pronged approach to implementation for fall 2002. On one hand, departments that would be most affected by NCLB began to plan for implementation, making every effort to adapt systems that were already in place to meet the demands of NCLB. At the same time, CPS was waiting until the state board developed its own accountability system, prepared the list of schools in need of improvement, and issued more definitive guidelines on a host of other issues before it moved ahead at full speed. CPS strategically made the choice to avoid any public “nay-saying” about the law, even though many school officials had concerns about how its provisions would affect large urban systems.

Chicago already had three schools that Duncan had closed in June 2002 because they had a long history of doing poorly—some for more than 10 years. Plans called for the three schools to be closed for at least a year so that they could be completely restructured, then reopened. Seats for these children had to be found, putting any others who might opt for school choice under NCLB in line behind them.

Duncan had already established several goals for his tenure: improved professionalism and professional development for teachers; more choice for those who wanted it, in the form of magnet schools, charter schools, small schools, and gifted centers; better accountability; and more schools that could serve as centers of the community.

Duncan put together a quality management team to manage NCLB, consisting of members from many CPS departments: Academic Advancement, Research and Accountability, Education, Human Resources, Technology, Communication, Law, Budget, and Finance. Duncan headed the group and other departments were brought in on an as-needed basis. Because of the senior level of those who work on the team, effective decisions could be made promptly and implemented quickly.

During the hectic summer of 2002, it seemed clear to many at CPS that if it relied solely on the state for implementation and guidelines, it would not serve CPS's best interests, so Duncan moved to get approval from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) for the district's implementation plans.

One area of confusion between CPS and the Illinois state board on one hand and USED on the other concerned the rate of students' adequate yearly progress. As discussed in more detail in the section on AYP, CPS officials thought it would be acceptable, under the state's AYP plan, for the district to improve at different rates in different years. But after negotiations between the state of Illinois and USED, the two parties emerged with a policy which assumed that average achievement would grow at a steady annual rate.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### SCHOOL CHOICE

CPS has a history of offering its students public school choice options. About 150,000 students across the district opt out of their neighborhood school to attend magnet schools, charter schools, and gifted centers. CPS considers that to some degree it had already implemented a variation of choice before NCLB was enacted.

Rather than create new NCLB systems, CPS looked around within its own processes and procedures to find something already in place and operating effectively that could be adapted for NCLB purposes. With respect to choice, CPS had a system that was working reasonably well for some of its selective-enrollment schools. Parents would fill out interest and preference forms, mail them by a specific deadline, and then their names would be entered in a lottery. From the lottery—if they had more than one choice—parents could visit the schools and then choose the one they wanted. A similar process, conducted by the same CPS department, was developed for NCLB choice. Parents received notification from CPS, applied by a deadline, and then their names were put in a lottery to be moved to a new school.

Letters to parents about the options to move their children were mailed out in summer 2002. During August of that year, open houses were held at schools that would be receiving students. Parents were required to send their applications for participation in the choice programs by the postmark date of August 15, 2002. They would be notified of student placements through the mail, and letters were sent out on August 23, 2002.

Because CPS had received approval from USED to pilot choice at 48 of its 179 low performing schools, only parents at those schools received letters about submitting an application for either the Paired Choice or the Cluster Choice option. Shortly after the letters went out but before the deadline for applying, two open houses for both pilot programs were held at the receiving schools. Information was provided to parents about their options and the choice process. Of the 26,000-plus families from the 48 low-achieving schools who received notification, only 1,400 parents attended the open house information sessions.





When the August 15, 2002 deadline arrived, CPS had received applications from 2,425 parents who wanted to exercise their choice option. These names were placed in a lottery held a week later for the 1,500 seats CPS had been able to identify in receiving schools. Low-income, low-performing students from the 48 schools identified for school improvement were given preference. The lottery resulted in 1,165 students of the more than 430,000 in the CPS system changing schools under the NCLB choice implementation.

By the end of the 2002-03 academic year, 707 students were still at their new choice schools. About 25%, or 294 students, had returned to their original schools, and 36 students had left the CPS system for other districts. The remaining 128 had moved to other CPS schools.

The small number of students who participated in the first round of choice can be attributed to several factors, district officials said. One clearly was the option granted to CPS by USED to test the plan during the first year rather than offer choice to move all of the students who were eligible. Another factor could be traced to the fact some CPS schools that would have been classified as receiving schools were already at capacity or seriously overcrowded and therefore could not take new students.

CPS staff noted other factors reducing use of the choice option, including the large number of low-performing schools in the system that simply weren't doing well enough themselves to take on students. Consequently, the number of available seats within the system was severely limited. Another issue was the management, logistical, transportation, and financial turmoil likely to arise if school choice had been offered to the more than 26,000 students who were eligible.

CPS officials made what they saw as an additional gesture of good faith regarding choice. For the receiving schools, as well as for all 179 low-performing schools on the state-designated watch list, CPS offered what it called educational enhancements. Parents of students enrolled at low-performing schools who were not eligible for the choice option were sent letters about the educational enhancements their schools would be receiving.

Two types of choice programs were offered during 2002-03:

- Paired choice: 40 schools from the state list of 179, including the bottom 21, were paired with other, better-performing schools with slots available to take students. The receiving schools were within three miles of each other.
- Clustered choice: 8 low-performing schools were clustered with 2 or 3 schools offering specialized curricula, and students could transfer within the cluster. Two pilot programs were created in 48 of the 179 elementary schools not meeting state standards.

Parents could transfer their children to better schools either through Paired Choice or Cluster Choice. The cluster system, which struggled in 2002-03, was dropped for the 2003-04 school year.

In August 2003, more than 270,000 letters went out to CPS parents advising them of their school choice opportunities. Again a lottery was held that included the names of students who returned their forms before the deadline. There were approximately 1,100 seats available. Nineteen thousand applications were received for the lottery, and 1,097 students were offered the opportunity to move under choice for the 2003-04 school year. It was estimated that about half of those who "won" the lottery actually reported to their new schools when classes began in September 2003. The following table shows what has happened to the students who qualified for choice in 2002 and 2003.

CPS was criticized for having made the choice process very complicated, particularly in its letters to parents explaining their rights. CPS staffers responded that NCLB

## What Happened to the CPS Students Who Qualified for and Then Took Advantage of School Choice and Supplemental Services?

	AUGUST 2002	AUGUST 2003
Number of students who were eligible for choice and received letters	26,000+	270,000
Approximate number of seats available in "approved for receiving students" schools	1,500	1,100
Number of students who applied for choice slots	2,425	19,000+
Number of students who were placed in available school slots	1,165	1,097
Number of students who stayed in the new choice school for the year	707	
Number of students who returned to their former schools	294	
Number of students who left their new choice school and went to other CPS schools	128	
Number of student who left and transferred to non CPS schools	36	
Number of schools identified for choice and supplemental services	179 choice only; 25 choice and supplemental services	137 choice only; 231 choice and SES
Number of letters sent out regarding supplemental services	18,000+	133,000
Number of students who applied for supplemental services	1,200	17,000

guidelines were specific as to what the letters could and should say, and that compliance itself complicated the process.

Frustrations with school choice implementation among district officials ran so high that many speculated whether it would be worth implementing in future years. Suggestions for legislative changes, such as putting all the choice dollars into supplemental services, were receiving an attentive ear because many believed it would be a better use of time, money, and manpower. Duncan also went on record as indicating that supplemental services should be undertaken first before the drastic step of moving children.

### SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

The Chicago Public Schools, along with other districts in the state, thought they had an understanding that supplemental services would not be offered until the 2004-05 school year. This came about as a result of a clause in the state's consolidated application to USED. In the state application, Illinois had given this start date, and the application had been approved. Additionally, CPS felt that it could take a little more time to implement the supplemental tutoring because it was already offering many after-school programs that provide additional educational assistance to students.

However, in February 2003, according to CPS staff, USED notified Illinois that its districts had to begin complying with the law by providing supplemental services immediately, despite the clause in the state's approved application. The state hurried to approve more than 20 service suppliers who could begin to provide tutoring services to eligible schools, and CPS worked overtime to put them online so they could be paid.





After the state identified 25 schools (13 elementary and 12 high schools) in Chicago that qualified for supplemental services because they had been identified for school improvement for a second year, CPS was again pressed into creating and implementing, on the fly, a process for parents to request the supplemental tutoring for their children. Service providers were asked to submit information about their programs and to indicate how many students they would be able to handle. Letters were sent out to approximately 18,000 parents advising them of their rights under NCLB. Information from the providers was included, along with a form on which parents could indicate which provider they wanted to use for their children. CPS created a deadline and required that all forms be returned by mail.

Once the parents had made their selections, CPS assigned students to the various providers and set up sites across the district's schools where the tutoring would be held. (Some had off-school sites, and parents were responsible for getting the children to them.) Providers were required to meet with the parents on an individual basis, test the children, and design an achievement plan for each.

Approximately 1,200 parents completed the process and were assigned to supplemental service providers. CPS reported that 800 children actually registered for the tutoring. The program began in late April 2003 and ran for seven weeks.

NCLB calls for the supplemental services to be provided so that test scores improve, but district officials note that because of the confusing signals from the state and federal governments, Chicago children did not receive the services until after testing was completed.

CEO Duncan publicly expressed his support of the concept of tutoring services and hoped that 25,000-30,000 students might be served during the 2003-04 school year. (About 17,000 registered for supplemental services in fall 2003.) Duncan went on record as very much in favor of the additional help, and has spoken about wanting to have tutoring services at all 600 CPS schools. He has stated his belief that supplemental tutoring services should come before school choice and has suggested changing the law to require this. "It just makes sense educationally," he said. "Where we're seeing improvement, we want to invest in the schools – not in more yellow school buses."

#### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

As part of its responsibility to comply with the teacher quality provisions of NCLB, CPS began working in late 2002 to compile the necessary information about teacher qualifications. By January 2003, CPS had established—in partnership with the Chicago Teachers Union and the Chicago Principals and Administrators Association—the Educator Qualification System (EQS) to effectively verify whether teachers were in compliance with the law. The role of EQS was to inventory teacher certification, endorsements, and assignments. It was also charged with developing and implementing the system to inform parents regarding the qualifications of the teachers in their children's schools.

Data for the inventory came from CPS records, Illinois State Board of Education records, principals, and the teachers themselves. The system was put online so the information could be updated at the school level—what subjects teachers were teaching, whether they were teaching in their content area, and if they had the necessary certifications and endorsements. Data was collected for about 26,000 teachers and 5,000 assistant teachers.

The first CPS teacher audit was conducted in January and February 2003. In total, 25,496 teachers, including regularly appointed, long-term substitutes, and citywide special education teachers giving students instructional support, and 5,147 paraprofessionals were audited. Under NCLB, only core teachers teaching in the same classroom for at least 20 consecutive days are determined to be highly qualified or not highly qualified. Core subjects include English, Reading/Language Arts, Math, Science, Foreign Languages, Civics/Government, Economics, Arts, History, and Geography. Special edu-

## State Requirements for Teacher Qualifications vs. NCLB Requirements for 2002–03

STATE of ILLINOIS	NCLB
Teachers need reading endorsement if they are teaching reading more than 50% of the time	Teachers need reading endorsement even if they are only teaching one reading class
Teachers with Type 29 (bilingual) certification can teach all subjects for the 8-year life of the certification	Teachers with Type 29 do not meet standards unless they also passed the basic skills and subject area tests
Special education teachers need grade level certification and special education endorsements for the disabilities with which they work	Special education endorsements are not used to make determinations
Teachers and recent out-of-state graduates with provisional certificates may teach for a full year under these certifications	Provisional certificates do not meet standards
High school teachers and subject-specialists in middle schools need grade level certification and endorsements in subjects taught 3/5 of the time; 2/5 of subjects taught may be off certification	These teachers need an endorsement or a college/university subject major, or must have passed a state subject area test for each subject taught
Teachers enrolled in programs for, or working on, alternative certification are considered by the state and local district to be qualified	These teachers do not meet standards
(Some Chicago public schools have as many as 23-62 foreign languages spoken by students)	Teachers must be fluent in the languages of the children in their classrooms

cation teachers were evaluated using the rules in place then. Parents could request credential information for any teacher teaching their child for at least 20 consecutive days. Not reviewed were day-to-day substitutes, cadre substitutes, and paraprofessionals who did not work directly with students.

A process was developed to advise parents of their rights to know about the educational background and certification of the children's teachers. Initial letters were sent home by school principals informing parents of their right to request information about their child's teacher's credentials. CPS also had to notify parents if their child was not being taught by a highly qualified teacher. CPS does not have records to indicate which children are assigned to each teacher in elementary schools. CPS central office staff and principals worked together to match students to teachers and to stuff and mail the letters. For high schools, CPS does not have records to indicate which students are assigned to which teachers, so central office compiled all of those letters. In total, more than 100,000 letters were sent to parents.

While current teachers have four years under NCLB to become highly qualified according to the law's definition, many wore the stigma of being unqualified because of differences between the NCLB requirements and those of the Illinois state certification/North Central Accrediting Association. Many teachers are considered well above state standards and hold Illinois endorsements, but they are not highly qualified teachers according to the federal law. The chart above delineates the variations between the two.

CPS faced some difficult NCLB implementation issues regarding its districtwide reading initiative and teacher qualifications. When the reading program was begun, almost all teachers were required to teach reading at some time during the day. CPS knew it faced a major challenge. Many core teachers were pressed into the service of teaching reading even if they did not have a reading endorsement. So a series of training programs and workshops were provided to prepare teachers. Training was extensive and consistent. CPS provided considerable training but it was not accompanied by any university or professional development credits, so it did not qualify as training meeting





NCLB specifications. Once again, many teachers found themselves well-trained to handle their reading responsibilities but unqualified according to NCLB requirements.

CPS encountered other implementation problems. In Illinois, teachers were allowed to teach “off endorsement” for up to two-fifths of their daily schedule—a ruling endorsed by both the Illinois State Board of Education and the North Central Accrediting Association. This long-standing Illinois practice was in direct contradiction to NCLB, which insisted that teachers face the immediate label of being not highly qualified if they lacked the proper credential in any content area taught. When the NCLB criteria replaced existing state practices, this created an inordinate number of core content teachers who were publicly labeled as not highly qualified. The NCLB requirements for new hires to be “highly qualified” by the law’s definition posed further difficulty for CPS because the district, like many across the country, was facing a dwindling pool of teacher candidates from which to choose.

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Battles with how to measure adequate yearly progress began early. CPS was clear: it had a new accountability system that created categories of schools that *Exceed*, *Meet*, or *Do Not Exceed* standards.

Elementary schools would be measured on improvement in scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills compared to the citywide average; the schools’ average student improvement in Iowa scores; their improvement on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test compared to the citywide average; and progress on the ISAT compared to the previous year’s scores. High schools would be measured on the Prairie State exam and on dropout rates and on-track-to-graduate rates. The new system would concentrate on all schools instead of just those on probation; would consider many indicators instead of just one; would include rewards for improvement; and would focus on the more important issue of student gains rather than school gains. School officials believed it was much more important to know if its students were making yearly gains.

The system was newly rolled out in fall 2002, and by early accounts a Chicago school could fall in CPS’s Schools of Distinction category (“exceeds standards”) and then find itself on the state watch list created by the NCLB criteria for measuring AYP. This might happen as a result of disaggregating student populations or because of student movement through choice, as the example below illustrates.

### Challenges of Different Evaluation Systems

The experience of one Chicago school, C Elementary School (CES), illustrates the challenges of having a different evaluation system under NCLB than the state or district’s system. The school had shown gains over a several year period and was on the state’s list of improving schools. Under NCLB, however, improvement had to be shown in all disaggregated student groups. Among its English language learner students, CES had percentages that initially failed to show the NCLB-required improvement.

Another factor contributed to the CES dilemma. ELL students move out of the bilingual program and into the general student population when they make significant progress—or in other cases—after three years. This meant that the only students who were left in the ELL pool, disaggregated for NCLB purposes, would always be those who were not proficient.

Adding yet another hurdle for CES was the fact that the Illinois State Board of Education changed its required percent of improvement for ELL students to “allow for statistical margin of error.” CES went off the state’s list of schools not meeting standards and retractions had to be issued.

CPS and many other districts also worried that it would be very difficult to achieve the same annual percentage of academic progress every year. Their experience showed that improvement did not happen in neat increments. There were likely to be years when a steady annual growth of a specific percentage was not a realistic goal, they reasoned.

According to CPS officials, conversations between CPS, state officials, and USED led to what many felt was a reasonable solution. AYP would be flat at first, then rise sharply and sustain itself at that level over a period of time. Initially, USED agreed to this concept, or so Illinois educators thought, and the state proceeded under the assumption that this was an acceptable path. But in June 2003, USED indicated dissatisfaction with the plan because the growth would not occur in equal increments. At the time this case study was completed, USED had indicated its preference for a fixed growth rate per year. CPS and state staffers—along with educators across the country—argue that no growth is ever consistent in all groups over a sustained period of time.

#### RELEASE DATES FOR STATE DATA

Release dates for the state lists of schools that did not make AYP gave CPS short time frames in which it could implement choice. The state released the first list based on preliminary data in July 2002, and CPS had to roll out its choice plan in the same month. This meant, among other issues, identifying schools that could receive students, determining which services would be provided, determining which students would be eligible, contacting those students, and establishing a lottery process because there would not be enough spaces among improving schools.

NCLB required states and districts to use the most recent data to determine school eligibility lists. This meant acquiring the data from 2001-02—data that historically was not available in Illinois until late in the summer. Waiting for the most recent information did not allow much lead-time for implementation to take place in a timely manner. The initial list for CPS in summer 2002 included 179 schools. CPS could have gone down the road another district took: going with the most recent data from the previous year, which would result in a shorter list of poorly performing schools and fewer eligible students and thereby make implementation somewhat easier. However, CPS chose not to do this in an effort to fully comply with NCLB.

While there was frustration about NCLB in many areas, educators were clear on one challenge: receiving information about how they were supposed to implement the law. District staffers were concerned that the U.S. Department of Education gave different answers to the same questions and then was reluctant to put the agreed-upon answer in writing. This posed a problem for the district; if it implemented a policy, it could be told later by USED that what the district did was unacceptable. A lack of firm responses, according to CPS staffers, also led to missed deadlines and to parents, teachers, principals, and others being left hanging as to what was required.

Many CPS departments felt the challenges too. When a new law of such magnitude as NCLB is enacted, it stands to reason the departments in a school system would also be affected. CPS was no exception; some district staffers estimated that as many as 30% of the departments at CPS had to make some adjustments or major changes. A sampling of affected departments follows:

- *Payroll:* Teachers were required to obtain university transcripts in order to aid with determinations of their status as qualified or not. CPS agreed to pay their fees for this service. Checks were processed for \$6.00 each for the teachers who were required to provide transcripts for the Teacher Quality audit.
- *Transportation:* For 2003-04, systems to transport students to their choice schools were developed, only to be scrapped as not feasible. Alternative systems involving



reimbursements and public transportation were created. This in turn drew in Safety and Security, which had to deliver public transportation passes to the schools.

- *Sports Administration:* High school student athletes who opted for choice had to deal with sports eligibility and recruitment issues.

In summary, NCLB has created considerable challenges for the Chicago Public Schools, challenges shared by other large urban districts. Nearly all aspects of the law's requirements become more logistically complex when hundreds of thousands of students, tens of thousands of teachers, and hundreds of schools are involved. Chicago also seems to be working hard to implement NCLB in a way that maintains the momentum of its reforms that were already showing positive results. As state and federal policies become more concrete over time, the district should be better able to respond because at least it knows what is expected.

## Data File — Chicago Public Schools

**Location:** Northern Illinois

**Type:** Urban

**Number of Schools:**

- 602 total
- 470 elementary schools (421 traditional, 35 magnet, 14 special)
- 23 middle schools
- 95 high schools (70 general/technical/academic preparatory, 13 special, 5 magnet, 7 vocational)
- 14 charter schools (9 elementary, 5 secondary)

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

- Total Enrollment: 438,589
- African American: 50.9%
- Hispanic: 36.4%
- White: 9.2%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 3.3%
- Native American: 0.2%
- English Language Learners: 14.3%
- Students with Disabilities: N/A
- Low-Income Students: 85.3%

### Number of Teachers

- Total: approximately 26,000
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 1,900 did not meet NCLB criteria in 2002-03; criteria have changed for 2003-04 so these numbers are not reliable for 03-04.

### Number of Paraprofessionals

- Total: approximately 5,000 Title I paraprofessionals
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: N/A

**Number of Title I Schools:** N/A

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	179	137
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	25	231
In corrective action:		24

## 12. Kansas

### Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools

Superintendent: Dr. Ray Daniels

Contact: Jim Clevenger, Director, Federal Programs

*Students: 20,425, K-12 – urban*

### Key Findings

- Kansas City has an extensive program of professional development and technical assistance, which local administrators believe has helped the district improve student performance and implement the requirements of NCLB.
- Overall student achievement in Kansas City rose in 2003, and three of the 10 schools subject to school improvement in 2002-03 made sufficient academic gains to exit improvement status. District officials attribute this progress to intensive technical assistance and professional development. Among the more effective initiatives are school audit teams that review school goals and make recommendations for targeting all resources to achieve these goals, and site-level teacher leaders who help teachers change their instruction through coaching and mentoring.
- Only a limited number of eligible parents in Kansas City chose to enroll their children in supplemental services. The Kansas City school district was the only approved provider of supplemental services in school year 2002-03, and the number of providers is limited for the current school year. To increase participation in these services, district officials believe that parents and students must recognize how students can benefit from this extra help and must embrace an expanded concept of “school” that includes additional learning hours in various settings.

### Background

The Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools is an urban district that serves 20,425 students, most of them poor and African American. Forty-two schools house students in configurations of grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

In recent years the school district has benefited from the involvement of the Kauffman Foundation, a private foundation, in its professional development program. The Kauffman Foundation initiated this partnership with the public schools with profits from the sale of the Kansas City Royals baseball team. School year 2002-03 marked the district’s third year of funding from the Foundation.

Professional development, supported by the Kauffman Foundation, has been a major goal of the Kansas City Public Schools since before NCLB was enacted. A structured professional development program called Teaching Is Learning provides weekly professional development sessions to all teachers in every school, grade, and subject. Students at all schools are released two hours early on Wednesdays so that teachers and other school staff can participate in this training, which helps them to incorporate standards and benchmarks into their teaching, develop strategies to improve reading and math instruction, and use student assessment data to refine instruction. Staff members who work as instructional coaches help plan these weekly sessions, and coaches also





serve as mentors for their colleagues. The district is also implementing a web-based professional development program, described below.

The district is also using other strategies to raise achievement, such as instituting a computerized data system that tracks educators' efforts to keep parents informed about their children's progress and encouraging teachers to move to the next grade with the same class of students, so the students can stay with the same teacher for two or three years.

## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Kansas City school district is implementing a web-based professional development program that contains the content standards, benchmarks, and other indicators that teachers need for specific grade levels. Plans are in place to create links to high-quality lesson plans, created by teachers, that directly address specific standards and contain scoring rubrics and exemplary activities. Teachers will be able to find the standard and benchmark they need to address, then click on available lesson plans for their grade level. After selecting a lesson plan, they can change it to suit the particular needs of their students and can save the revised plan in their own computer folder for future use.

In 2002-03, the district provided major technical assistance, including professional development, to the 10 schools targeted for school improvement. In 2003, three of these schools made large enough achievement gains for the second consecutive year to exit school improvement. District officials assert that school-level "audit teams" for math and reading have made a substantial impact in all 10 schools. These audit teams, which consist of district teachers and other staff, spent a week at each of the 10 schools reviewing how personnel, facilities, and funds were used and how all of these resources were targeted toward areas of need. They also sought to assure that schoolwide goals were in place and that all efforts were directed toward achieving those goals. The table below shows the kinds of questions the audit teams examined.

### Kansas City School Audit – Technical Assistance for School Improvement Schools

1. Are school goals set?
3. Are they adequate to move the school to AYP achievement?
4. Are the strategies described in the School and Small Learning Community Action Plans sufficient to improve student achievement to a level that achieves AYP?
5. Is the staff development plan sufficient to support the staff in learning and implementing the strategies?
6. Are the resources (instructional materials, money, personnel, space, time) aligned to maximize the effectiveness of the action plans?
7. Is Principal Leadership and practice effectively supporting and expecting the implementation of the plan?
8. Is Instructional Coach leadership and practice effectively supporting and expecting the implementation of the plan?
9. What is the current implementation level of action plan?
10. Recommendations

The audit teams often made very specific recommendations about ways to improve school plans, such as recommending particular instructional strategies in reading.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Although in the past, Kansas City schools have not performed as well academically as the district's leaders and the community have desired, solid achievement gains were made in 2003. Academic achievement increased at most schools and in most content areas, and there was a substantial increase in the number of students who scored at the proficient level, including those in the designated subgroups. District staff members believe that their investment in professional development is beginning to pay off, and it was very encouraging to staff that three schools moved out of school improvement.

All 10 schools in school improvement in 2002-03 made AYP in reading, and seven made AYP in math. Three schools came off school improvement for reading and math, and two schools came off in reading only. Of the seven schools remaining in school improvement, all made achievement gains in 2003, but they will need to sustain these gains for another year to exit school improvement. Four of these schools made AYP in both reading and math, two made AYP in reading, and one made AYP in math. Four schools could come off improvement in reading and math in 2004 if they make AYP in reading and math again. Three schools could come off school improvement in reading if they make AYP in reading again. More importantly, no new schools entered school improvement.

The 2003 assessments show a substantial increase in the number of students achieving at the proficient or above levels across the district on the state tests for grades 4, 7, and 10 in math and grades 5, 8, and 11 in reading. At the district level, all subgroups met the AYP requirements in reading, but four of nine subgroups (low-income, English language learner, African American, and Asian/Pacific Islander students) did not make AYP in math.

The percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level in reading in grades 5, 8, and 11 combined increased substantially from 31% in 2001, to 33% in 2002, to 48% in 2003. The percentage of students in these same grades who scored at unsatisfactory levels declined from 39% to 21% between 2001 and 2003. The share of students scoring at the proficient level in math, although not as dramatic as reading, increased from 21% to 29% during this same period, while the percentage scoring at the unsatisfactory level declined from 53% to 44%.

One of the schools in improvement status scored among the highest in the district in 2003, with 70% of its students scoring at or above the proficient level in reading and 69% in math. This high-poverty school seems to be on its way to becoming a high performing school.

Five of the Kansas City schools were targeted for corrective action in 2002-03, a serious phase of the NCLB sanctions for schools that consistently fail to make AYP. Because these schools made exceptional achievement gains in 2003, however, they will continue to implement their improvement plans in 2003-04 and will not be subject to harsher sanctions, such as reorganization or staff replacement. The district intends to continue providing technical assistance to these schools, anticipating that another year or two of achievement gains will enable all five schools to exit improvement status. One school is in restructuring status, but the state has agreed to accept the reform efforts being done at the school for 2003-04.



#### SCHOOL CHOICE AND SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

Kansas City was required to offer school choice in 10 schools in 2002-03, including three schools that had to offer supplemental services, as well. In 2003-04, seven schools must continue to offer choice and supplemental services.

In 2002-03, only a small number of parents took advantage of the opportunity to move their children to a different school—just 127 students transferred schools, out of 4,500 eligible. Almost half of the requests to transfer (56) were from one school. Although parents were notified about their options in a variety of ways, most were reluctant to move their children from their neighborhood schools. For 2003-04 only 59 students transferred to another school. The school that had the most requests for transfers in 2002-03 is no longer in school improvement, and parents were not interested in transferring their children from schools that are improving in performance.

Similarly, only 283 students participated in supplemental services in 2002-03. In 2002-03, the school district was the only approved provider, and school officials believe the district can serve students more efficiently than many other providers. Service providers continue to be limited. One of the providers wanted to charge the parents for part of the costs of services because their typical fee was more than the district could pay, but the district would not allow that to occur. In 2003-04, there are 422 students from seven schools enrolled in supplemental services. The majority of parents chose the district as the provider.

Most supplemental services are delivered after the regular school day. To increase students' participation in these services, district officials believe that parents and students will have to change their concept of "school" to encompass a longer learning day in a variety of settings and to understand how students can benefit from the additional services.

#### QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Of the 1,600 teachers in the Kansas City district, only 40 do not meet NCLB qualifications. The district participates in a state-approved program that allows people who are seeking second careers in education to be assigned to schools through an alternative endorsement program for new teachers. The teachers who do not meet NCLB requirements teach in hard-to-fill content areas for which they do not have a state endorsement.

The state of Kansas has determined that for an experienced teacher to be considered highly qualified according to NCLB, he or she must have a bachelor's degree, must hold a state license in the area in which he or she teaches, and must have achieved one of the following: passed a rigorous content assessment, hold a college major in the content area being taught, have 30 credit hours in the content area being taught, or earn 100 points on a state-developed rubric. The state rubric, piloted last spring, awards points for teaching experience in the content area, credit hours in the content area, service to the profession, awards and honors earned in the content area, and published articles in the content area. It is anticipated that all teachers who need to complete the rubric will do so in 2003-04. However, middle school teachers who have little teaching experience and lack a strong background in the content area they are teaching may have difficulty earning 100 points on the rubric.

The Kansas City school district also employs 93 paraprofessionals who work in Title I schools. Of these, 82 (88%) do not meet NCLB requirements. In accordance with the NCLB criteria, Kansas will require paraprofessionals to have an associate's degree, have 48 hours (two years) of college credit, or achieve a passing score on the paraprofessional assessment. For those who want to take the approved test, the district is providing support and assistance. In the summer of 2003, a total of 40 paraprofessionals took the pre-test, and those who did well will now take the assessment. NCLB Title II funds are being used to purchase study guides and 100 on-line testing licenses. Study sessions are offered on topics covered on the test.

New hires are required to have two years of college, and the district is encouraging paraprofessionals to take additional college coursework.

## Other Implementation Issues

Kansas City uses funding from the Kauffman Foundation to support district students who want to pursue a college education. In a district where 75% of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch, this scholarship program is indeed a top prize for academic excellence. Support is provided in both the middle school and high school to assure that students will be successful in college, and their college costs are paid by the Foundation.

The 2003–04 school year was the first year of implementation for this program called “Kauffman Scholars.” The program began with 72 7th grade students from nine middle schools. Kauffman will help support these students academically through high school and then academically and financially through college. The plan is to pick up new students from the 7th grade each year. The Kauffman Foundation runs the program and works with the students, and even though they may hire district staff for academic support, no district funds are used in the program.

Ten to fifteen years ago, the Foundation had a similar program called “Project Choice that was started by the late owner of the Kansas City Royals, Ewing Kauffman. Twenty low-income students were randomly chosen from each school and offered all expenses paid for college if they stayed off drugs and did not become parents. This program ended after five years, but even though the dropout rate was high, there were more students from low-income families that went on to college and received degrees than from similar groups of students in the same schools.

## Data File — Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools

**Location:** Eastern Kansas

**Type:** Urban, city of 149,767

**Number of Schools:**

- 42 total
- 28 elementary schools (K-5)
- 8 middle schools (6-8)
- 1 school serving grades 8-12
- 5 high schools (9-12)

**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

Total Enrollment: 20,425

African American: 50%

Hispanic: 25%

White: 21%

Asian: 3.5%

Other: 0.5%

English Language Learners: 13%, mostly Spanish speaking

Students with Disabilities: 13%

Low-Income Students: 75%, ranging from 46% to 100% in individual schools

**Number of Teachers**

Total: 1,600

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 40 (2.5%)



**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 93

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 82 (88%)

**Number of Title I Schools: 26**

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	10	7
In corrective action:	5	5



# 13. Louisiana

## St. John the Baptist Parish Public Schools

Superintendent: Michael Coburn

Contact: Annette Jennings, Title I Curriculum Coordinator

Students: 5,589, K-12 - suburban

### Key Findings

- St. John the Baptist Parish Public Schools hopes to get double mileage from encouraging paraprofessionals to enroll in college coursework instead of passing a test, because that will enable them to assist classroom teachers more effectively and may also lead to their becoming teachers.
- Recognizing that a high-poverty district must use different ways to actively involve students in learning and must accommodate individual differences to increase the literacy rate, St. John has embarked on a new three-year districtwide plan that starts in kindergarten to improve literacy.

### Background

With the Mississippi River running through the parish, St. John the Baptist Parish in Louisiana serves in some ways as a gateway to New Orleans. St. John is a suburban school parish, separate from but connected geographically, historically, and culturally to the city of New Orleans. Lest one be fooled by the name, St. John is a public school district.

St. John began its existence in the early 1720s as the second permanent settlement in the Mississippi River region. A group of Germans settled on the west bank of the river, which became known as the “German Coast.” The towns of Lucy, Edgard, and Wallace on the west bank and Garyville, Mt. Airy, Reserve, and LaPlace on the east bank make up the attendance area of the St. John the Baptist Parish Public Schools. The region still celebrates its long-ago creation of andouille, the spicy Cajun pork sausage, with a festival every fall.

More than half of the children who live in the parish attend parochial school. The public school student population is 71% African American, 27% Caucasian, 1% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. A total of 5,589 students attend the 11 schools, nine of which are K-8 and two of which are high schools. Many families whose children attend the public schools are poor, and the poverty levels in the district’s schools range from 61% to 100%. Because of these high levels of poverty, all the schools receive Title I funds.

In the fall of 2003, a school board member from St. John the Baptist Parish proposed that elected school board members be held to high measures of accountability just as everyone else in the district was. In particular, he suggested that that monthly pay of board members should be withheld if schools in the district were failing. This was felt by some to be a way to publicize the discrepancy between the accountability expectations of teachers and principals compared to that of elected officials. According to a district staff member, there was little attention given to the statement in local papers although it received some attention nationally.





## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Louisiana has begun to provide training for principals, teachers, and support personnel to better prepare them to develop and improve their school improvement plans and meet the requirements of NCLB. The St. John district has also been approved by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to offer a teacher preparation program for certification in special education. Currently, the district offers a Practitioner Teacher Program, which is a fast-track teacher certification program of 270 hours of instruction. To date, this program has focused on preparing teachers for students in grades 3 through 8. School placements of teachers in the Practitioner program vary each year depending on the need for teachers with appropriate certification. It is the intent of St. John's to use this program to assist special education teachers in reaching full certification.

A balanced literacy program with a phonics base has been implemented in St. John's schools, and teachers have been trained to use standards-based instruction and specific strategies to motivate students who are not achieving as they should. Teachers are also trained to use technology so they can become proficient in using a prescriptive/diagnostic approach to individual student needs in math, writing, and reading. All teachers are required to attend this training—either in the summer of 2003, when they were paid to attend, or during the fall, when they were given release time from classroom duties. Each teacher is provided with three non-teaching days during the year. During these times, teachers work in study groups with specialists and coaches as part of teams to improve day-to-day instruction.

St. John has also put in place paraprofessional training and is using Title I funds to pay tuition to a two-year college as an incentive for paraprofessionals to start working on a degree. St. John plans to encourage its paraprofessionals to take the coursework, not only as a way to develop future teachers, but also to better prepare paraprofessionals to assist teachers with instructing students, whether in the computer lab, a special education classroom, or the simulated “supermarket” created in the classroom to help students apply math skills. Thirty-two paraprofessionals were enrolled in the college courses offered by River Parishes Community College in 2003.

### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Recognizing that past efforts with parent involvement did not produce the results that were needed, St. John adopted a different way of delivering services to parents. Each school received a specific budget for parent involvement activities, and a variety of new programs were designed and carried out. For example, some schools created Breakfast Clubs as a way to encourage parents to start off the school day with their children. More than 300 parents attended a Saturday “Parent Reading Extravaganza” for families. The district implemented a full program of parent literacy that used special software designed for adults. And one school developed a partnership with a local baseball team; team members visited classes, classrooms featured “literacy dugouts,” and families attended the baseball games free of charge as part of the partnership.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

St. John Parish faces many challenges in improving the academic performance of its students. Many high-poverty schools do reach high levels of achievement, but it takes a great effort to eliminate the many barriers that interfere with student learning. It also takes much effort to create the conditions where learning for all will flourish. Several St. John schools were in school improvement under the previous state system of accountability. In the 2002 testing cycle, some schools were able to meet the state targets

and exit school improvement as a result of the district efforts to improve instruction in both math and reading.

Based on test data from 2003, which the district did not get until the fall of 2003, six of St. John's schools did not meet their growth targets or had a decline in academic performance. At least two schools missed their growth targets by tiny percentages, and the status of some schools is still under appeal to the state. One school missed its target by a tiny fraction. According to district staff, there is a wide variance between the computation that was done by the district and that computed by the State Department of Education. The school that was in Corrective Action grew by 19.6 points, which resulted in a high growth label, and the subgroups also met the standard. The State labels schools in various phases of School Improvement (Phase I, II, etc.) rather than using the term "Corrective Action."

Schools that improved did so because of a variety of factors such as the new math program that utilized a balanced program of instruction with hands-on activities. Participation in the Southeastern University Writing Project for English Language Arts was high in the schools that showed improvement. Other factors included revised lesson plan formats with weekly checks, principals being in the classrooms regularly, and written indicators of teacher performance with corrective information when necessary.

One group likely to require additional attention in St. John is the large number of children who are identified for special education. Since this group makes up 18% of the enrollment and is counted in determining whether schools make AYP, the parish will be taking a close look at how students are identified for special education and how their instructional needs are being met.

St. John has strongly emphasized the improvement of student achievement in reading. The district adopted "Reading Renaissance," a 3-year plan to improve literacy in K-8. Plans also include Accelerated Math and Writing along with Reading. The total Renaissance model is being implemented in stages, beginning with reading, and math is just beginning.

Michael Coburn, the superintendent, challenged St. John students to read more than a quarter of a million books in the school year. One of the schools that bought into the program wholeheartedly was the Garyville-Mt. Airy School, a school that declined slightly in 2003 and thus did not meet its growth target. Prior to the start of the school year, staff members participated in numerous professional development opportunities. Every teacher was provided with 50 new titles of books for the classroom library, and the district provided all libraries in the parish with thousands of new books. All K-8 students at Garyville-Mt. Airy take part in reading activities for one hour every morning. The staff and students have become more involved in reading than ever before, and reading is being integrated into their lives, according to the principal, Patricia Triche. Students at the school read more than 13,000 books in the first nine-week period of this school year. In addition, the school offers many other programs to boost student achievement, including Cornerstone/Skills Bank, Aztec Learning System, Accelerated Math, Accelerated Reading, Accelerated Vocabulary, Surpass, and Ed Connect, in addition to programs correlated with the district's textbook series.

Providing school choice to students in St. John Parish will mean transporting students for miles across the parish, but a choice policy is not yet in place. Providing supplemental services in the future will mean changing parent's views and expectations of schools so that they will follow up on the additional instructional opportunities available for students who are not achieving.

#### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

In 2002, 95% of the St. John regular education teachers were certified, and 70% of the teachers assigned to teach students with disabilities were certified for their teaching assignments. This was a significant increase from the previous year, when 82% of the district's regular St. John teachers and only 44% of its special education teachers were certified. The





goal for 2003 is to have 100% of the regular education teachers and 80% of the special education teachers certified. In order to do this, St. John has established a number of incentives, including offering financial assistance for tuition and test-taking and offering the aforementioned Practitioner Teacher Program. In addition, the parish plans to actively recruit highly qualified teachers and encourage the reassignment of effective teachers to address the needs of at-risk students. Through this multi-faceted plan, St. John Parish intends to resolve its obstacles to having highly qualified teachers for all students in all schools.

## Other Implementation Issues

### PRESCHOOL READINESS FOR KINDERGARTEN

St. John's also works with parents on preparing children for kindergarten through readiness activities. There is a child care center on each side of the river, and several preschool programs are in operation, including Head Start (federally funded), Starting Points (state funded), and Model Early (state funded). Parents receive transition packets so that they are better able to help their children adjust to kindergarten when they finish preschool. The preschool programs are connected to kindergarten programs in the schools, and staff workshops are focused on readiness for learning.

## Data File — St. John the Baptist Parish Public Schools

**Location:** Southern Louisiana

**Type:** Suburban – New Orleans area

### Number of Schools:

- 11 total
- 9 elementary schools K-8
- 2 high schools, grades 9-12

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 5,589

African American: 71%

White: 27%

Hispanic: 1%

Asian: 1%

English Language Learners: 2%

Students with Disabilities: 18%

Low-Income Students: 78% (ranging from 61% to 100% in individual schools)

### Number of Teachers

Total: 373

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 5% - Does not include special education teachers

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 84

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 71 (85%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** all 11 schools

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer only school choice:	0	6
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	1 (exited)	0

# 14. Massachusetts

## Avon Public School District

Superintendent: Margaret Frieswyk

Contact: Paul Zinni, Director, Pupil Services

Students: 730, K-12 - suburban

### Key Findings

- State and local budget cuts have affected education in the small Avon school district. With these fiscal problems occurring at the same time that the new federal requirements are taking effect, the district faces a considerable challenge in meeting all the NCLB demands.
- As a result of Massachusetts' open enrollment policy, Avon receives a large number of transfer students from other districts, a trend that could intensify with the NCLB choice requirements. Choice has benefited Avon, because the transfer students have made up for the district's declining enrollments.

### Background

The Avon Public School District is a small district that serves a suburban, mostly blue-collar population. Named for the Avon River in England (Stratford-upon-Avon), the town seal has a bust of Shakespeare prominently displayed on it. The district is located in Norfolk County, 20 miles south of Boston, and consists of two school buildings that house a total of 730 students. One building is the elementary school, with 300 students in grades Pre-kindergarten through 6. The other is the secondary school, where 7th and 8th graders are housed on one floor and 9th through 12th graders on another. Each school has its own principal, and the district has two administrators—the superintendent and the director of pupil services.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Avon students have done well on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), which took effect across the state as a graduation requirement for the class of 2003. Avon is one of only nine communities in the state where all students who had met the district's graduation requirements, including those with special needs, also earned a passing score on the test. Both of Avon's schools also have good performance records on the state's accountability system; they surpass the state averages in reading/language arts and mathematics and exceed the state's AYP expectations.

To help ensure student success, Avon has attempted to keep class size at all grade levels to a maximum of 22, although there is some fluctuation in these numbers. Because of budget cuts, 1st grade started the 2003-04 year with two teachers, when one teacher retired and was not replaced. This decision was made even though there were 39 students anticipated for that grade level. The 1st grade classes were at or under 22 at the start of the school year, but additional enrollments brought that number to 24. The inclusion classroom already had a full-time aide and the support of the special education teacher. This was not the case in the other 1st grade classroom; therefore, a teaching assistant, who is also certified as an elementary teacher, was hired to work in the non-inclusion classroom to accommodate the larger number of students.





## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Avon has a major program of professional development that district officials say helps teachers understand and use data as they make decisions about curriculum and instruction. Funded from NCLB and district funds, the program also helps teachers use their newly acquired expertise to improve student instruction in writing and mathematics. This is one of the ways that district teachers combine content and curriculum to improve overall student performance. The district's limits on class size also allow teachers to differentiate instruction across the curriculum and across the grades.

Although poverty is not extensive in Avon, the elementary school receives a small amount of Title I funds, as well as funding from other NCLB programs. Avon has also had a major professional development effort supported with funds from Titles I and II of NCLB and the district's general funds. Recently, the district chose to be part of the first cohort of Massachusetts schools to participate in a coordination of NCLB funds. The application was time-consuming, especially for such a small district with only two district administrators, but school officials believe the added flexibility in the use of funds will work to their advantage.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### QUALIFICATIONS OF PARAPROFESSIONALS

Although all Avon teachers meet NCLB requirements for complete certification, this is not the case for paraprofessionals, most of whom do not have two years of college. Massachusetts has chosen two assessments for determining the competency of paraprofessionals, and Avon will make them both available to paraprofessionals. As an alternative to an assessment, Avon staff members are working with a local special education collaborative and with Bridgewater State College to design a two-year course to help paraprofessionals meet the NCLB requirements. In spring 2003, ten paraprofessionals from Avon and neighboring districts took their first class as part of this program. The district is also providing classes to help paraprofessionals succeed on competency tests, focusing on such areas as improving test-taking skills and mastering some of the more difficult content of the exams, such as higher-level mathematics.

## Other Implementation Issues

### FISCAL PROBLEMS

A major problem Avon faces is the dramatic reduction in state funding for education programs. In 2003-04, the district will have to make programmatic reductions as a result of a decision by the Avon town board to cut the district budget by 10%. The district has adjusted its plans and made some changes in staffing and programs. Avon's schools all have site-level decision-making groups that consist of parents and school staff members. These groups will make decisions related to this lower level of funding—decisions that may affect the opportunities available for students.

### SCHOOL CHOICE

About half of the students who attend Avon High School live outside the Avon district but have transferred into the school under the state's open enrollment policy. Avon is fairly close to several school districts in the greater Boston area, and many of the transfer students commute to Avon High School on public transportation. Some students transfer because of the greater opportunities to excel in athletics in a small high school, but others go to Avon because of the small class sizes and attention to academics. It is not unusual for these students to stay in Avon for their entire high school career. Choice

students are also accepted at the elementary school. The cap on class size helps the district determine which grade levels have room for more students. Avon eagerly welcomes the high school transfer students, because without them, enrollments would likely be too low to justify keeping the high school open. Many of the high school transfer students are minority students, which brings diversity to the district.

## Data File — Avon Public School District

**Location:** Norfolk County, south of Boston

**Type:** Suburban

**Number of Schools:**

- 2 total
- 1 elementary school (PreK-6)
- 1 middle/high school (7-8 and 9-12)

**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

Total Enrollment: 730, plus 14 out-of-district special needs students

White: 82%

African American: 14%

Hispanic: 3%

Asian: 1%

English Language Learners: 2 students

Students with Disabilities: 14%

Low-Income Students: 16% (13% at elementary school, 19% at secondary school)

**Number of Teachers**

Total: 78

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 14

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 10 (71%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 1 elementary

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0





# 15. Massachusetts

## Boston Public Schools

Superintendent: Dr. Thomas Payzant

Contact: Charlotte Harris, Development Director

Students: 62,400, K-12 - urban

### Key Findings

- The Boston Public Schools have lost more in state and local funds due to the state's fiscal crisis than they have gained in federal funds for NCLB, and these cuts have led to layoffs of 600 teachers and notable increases in class size. The cuts have not affected the district's implementation of NCLB requirements, however, according to district officials.
- With a student enrollment that is 85% minority, 77% low income, 18% special needs, and 15% English language learners, Boston faces challenges in meeting the adequate yearly progress requirements of NCLB.
- In 2003, one Boston school that had been positively recognized for its reading progress under a local recognition program did not make adequate yearly progress in math under the state's NCLB criteria. This situation was confusing to the public and, in the view of district officials, highlighted the weaknesses and misleading aspects of the NCLB accountability requirements, which judge schools based on a less complete picture than the local criteria.
- The Boston Public school district became a state-approved provider of supplemental educational services for its students so that it can assure that its students receive high-quality services that are closely related to their specific needs.

### Background

Boston, Massachusetts, can rightfully claim to have the oldest school in the nation—Boston Latin, a name familiar to many people. This school has been in existence since 1645 and is still in operation. What people may not know about Boston, however, is that although one foot is firmly rooted in the past, district leaders believe the other foot is planted just as firmly in the future. The Boston school district is implementing districtwide reform aimed at higher academic achievement for all students.

With an enrollment of 62,400 students in 153 schools, this urban district faces many of the same academic challenges as other large city school districts. Boston has a high poverty level—77% overall—but in some schools, the poverty rate is as high as 99%. The district serves large numbers of English language learners, who comprise 15% of the school population and speak 80 different languages. Until the current school year, the district taught in 9 languages; following a change in state law, the district now enrolls English language learners in structured English immersion classes. Minority students, mainly Hispanic and African American, make up 85% of the enrollment, and there are high numbers of students with disabilities, 18% of students.

School reform started in Boston well before NCLB. Many of the district's reforms, such as professional development, predominantly through coaching, fit with the requirements of the new federal law. On the district's website, Superintendent Thomas Payzant emphasizes the goal of ensuring that all of the district's schools are schools of excellence, adding that "all of us associated with Boston Public schools are enthusiastic about our progress and are aware that much work remains to be done."





Superintendent Payzant is very familiar with federal law because he served as Assistant Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education in the U. S. Department of Education when Congress enacted the Improving America's School Act, the predecessor to NCLB. It is no surprise then, that the Boston Public Schools are well into the implementation of NCLB and that many of the reform measures required by the new law are already being put into practice.

## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS AND SCHOOL CHOICE

The academic improvement plan for Boston Public Schools includes high expectations for proficiency in reading, writing, and math, although many students have not yet reached the expected levels of performance. Before NCLB, the district's goal was to move everyone out of academic failure using a continuous progress model. As a result of NCLB, the new goal is to have all students reach proficiency using a quantified benchmark model imposed by the state. The change in methods of calculation has produced some improvement in the number and percentages of students passing the state's tests—in other words, the percentage reaching proficiency. Nevertheless, in 2002, 18 schools were identified for school improvement for the first time, and 25 were in school improvement for two years or more. Relatively few Boston parents took advantage of the opportunity to send their children to another school. From the 44 schools where 18,768 students were eligible for school choice, only 45 students transferred to another school. District officials felt this was largely because of parents' commitment to their current schools, but also because a zone and citywide choice program has been in place in Boston since 1987, so parents had already had a chance to choose their children's school. Overall, according to district staff, very few parents indicate dissatisfaction with their children's schools.

A total of 1,200 students participated in supplemental services in 2002-03, out of the 10,577 that were eligible; parents seemed more willing to accept those services than to send their children to other schools. The Boston Public Schools was one of the providers approved by the state and was the provider most often selected by parents. Students received the additional services in before- and after-school programs organized and taught by site coordinators and regular daytime teachers recruited throughout the district.

Boston closed two school improvement schools in 2003-04, lowering the number to 42 schools in need of improvement. Of these, however, 25 schools entered a second year in need of improvement and, in the third year of NCLB, 12 schools have been identified for corrective action. The number of students who transferred to another school increased to 70, and 5,139 of the 15,572 eligible students are participating in supplemental services.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

One of the challenges facing the Boston district is continued achievement gains for the 15% of the district's students who are still learning English. The Boston schools serve a changing population of language minority families, and the number of English language learners has increased significantly in the past few years. Boston students speak more than 80 languages, with Spanish being the most common language.

A 2002 change in Massachusetts state law, effective as of school year 2002-03, required school districts to teach English to English language learners using structured immersion programs or mainstream classrooms, rather than transitional bilingual classes, with very few exceptions. Severely limiting bilingual instruction could affect whether ELLs make ade-

quate yearly progress when they are counted as a subgroup for NCLB. District staff also notes that the change will affect instruction for regular education students because teachers will have to meet the needs of both the regular and ELL students in the same classes.

#### FISCAL PROBLEMS

Revenue shortfalls at the state level caused reductions in state funding for 2003-04 that resulted in notification of possible layoff to 1,200 teachers in the Boston City Schools, and 600 teachers were laid off. Underfunded in relation to suburban districts before the recent recession, the city's schools are falling further behind now, according to district staff. Class sizes have increased slightly, especially at the secondary level, undoing the work of many years to bring class size down from 33 pupils per teacher to 28 at the secondary level and from 25 to 22 and 20 at the elementary and primary levels. Planned adoptions and replacements of texts have been delayed, instructional materials are in short supply, and student support services and extracurricular activities have been reduced. The state anticipates another cutback for school year 2004-05. These state and local cutbacks have far exceeded the increases in federal revenue from NCLB.

Moreover, the additional responsibilities of carrying out the requirements of NCLB have greatly increased the workload of existing staff, both at the district level and at school sites. Principals have to learn the new terminology and accountability system and teach it to their staffs, and they also must adhere to NCLB requirements for parental notifications and supplemental services programs.

## Other Implementation Issues

#### PRESCHOOL READINESS FOR KINDERGARTEN

Boston's early learning reform movement begins in pre-kindergarten: approximately 70% of the children in the city attend some form of organized preschool education prior to kindergarten. Head Start serves 1,100 four-year-olds, and the state funds a contracted services preschool program for approximately 1,200 students. The school district is the lead agent for the state program, and wide scale efforts are taking place to improve the coordination of the various funding sources that deal with children from birth to age 8. Full-day kindergarten is already in place in elementary schools throughout the district. The district will begin NCLB outreach to preschools in its 86 elementary schools, all of which are Title I schoolwide project schools in 2003-04.

#### QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Massachusetts teacher certification requirements have allowed secondary school teachers to teach outside of their certificate area for 20% of their regularly assigned time. As a result of this provision and a shortage of certified special needs and math and science teachers, 12.5% of Boston's teachers do not meet the NCLB requirements for highly qualified teachers. The district is implementing a data collection system to monitor and report progress toward meeting NCLB requirements and is training principals to use the evaluation tool required by NCLB (the Massachusetts High Objective Uniform Standards of Evaluation – MAHOUSE) to move its teachers into full compliance.

The district has never made extensive use of paraprofessionals other than in its special needs education program, so although the district must implement a testing and training program for its 221 instructional paraprofessionals, the problem is less acute among this group of employees.

#### CONFLICTING INFORMATION ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

One of the practices in the Boston district has been to identify schools that have made good progress for two years, a label that is referred to as "Effective-Practices." However,





one school that received this recognition for its reading progress did not make adequate yearly progress in 2003 because of its math performance. This sends a confusing message to the public. Boston staff members have expressed their concern about this confusing message and its effect on students, staff, parents and the community.

Charlotte Harris, Boston's Development Director, had this to say about this issue: "The school principal honed right in on a huge NCLB problem. The state is labeling schools as failures based on test scores from very few grades within the school. The district and its partners, in this case the Boston Plan for Excellence, have a more thoughtful and complete method for evaluating and labeling schools and the principal is right, the public is confused by the discrepant labels. The misleading labeling system established by NCLB is one of its worst aspects, aside from underfunding, and one likely to be changed on reauthorization."

## Data File — Boston Public Schools

**Location:** Massachusetts, city of 575,000

**Type:** Urban

### Number of Schools:

153	total
6	PreK-1
67	elementary schools, K-5
10	grades, K-8
19	middle schools, grades 6-9
25	high school, grades 9-12
3	high schools, grades 7-12
12	special schools and programs
11	affiliated alternative schools, 2 middle and 9 high schools

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 62,400

African American: 48%

Hispanic: 28%

White: 15%

Asian: 9%

English Language Learners: 15% (80 languages)

Students with Disabilities: 18%

Low-Income Students: 77% (ranging from 29% to 99% in individual schools)

### Number of Teachers

Total: 4,789

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 576 (12%)

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 221

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: (only special education)

### Number of Title I Schools: 132

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer only school choice:	18	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	25	42 (closed two schools)
In corrective action:	0	12

# 16. Minnesota

## Cloquet Independent School District # 94

Superintendent: John Langenbrunner

Contact: Randy Thudin, Principal

Students: 2,278, K-12 – rural

### Key Findings

- Cloquet, a rural district with high average levels of academic attainment, has made considerable progress in closing the achievement gap between its White and American Indian students. Not only has the district made a strong overall commitment to school reform, but it also has focused professional development on meeting the needs of American Indian students and has encouraged staff to reach out to parents of students who were not performing well.
- The district has no schools in school improvement, and attributes its academic success to such efforts as staff development in reading instruction and an extended day learning program (funded through a grant from the NCLB 21st Century After School Learning program) which provides homework help and enrichment for four afternoons a week.
- Although Cloquet has no schools required to offer choice, district officials feel their experience with choice under Minnesota’s state choice policy will make it easier for them to comply with this requirement.

### Background

Located in Minnesota’s north country, not far from Lake Superior, Cloquet is a small city of 10,885 with roots going back to the French fur-trading era. Cloquet Independent School District # 94 enrolls a total of 2,351 K-12 students. The city of Cloquet also has in its midst a sovereign Indian nation, the Ojibwa Reservation. An independent unit of governance, the reservation operates its own school for families of the Ojibwa nation. The reservation school enrolls 230 students, but half of the Ojibwa children attend Cloquet’s schools.

Cloquet’s Title I program serves about one third of the district’s elementary students and 9% of its middle school students. Like many districts, Cloquet focuses its Title I funds on the lower grade levels to give children an adequate foundation in basic skills. All of the district’s Title I programs are targeted assistance programs because the poverty level in the poorest schools (35%) falls below the 40% threshold for operating a schoolwide program.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Overall, students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in Cloquet perform quite well compared with other students in the state, and the district has no schools in school improvement. All of Cloquet’s teachers also meet the state criteria for being highly qualified. District officials feel that what they are doing to implement NCLB greatly exceeds what is expected by the state—even with new regulations that have been put into place.





Several factors play a part in Cloquet's academic stability. First, district leaders have known about the anticipated changes to Title I and other federal education programs since amendments to Title I were being considered by the U.S. Congress. Second, Cloquet, a paper mill town, has not suffered unduly from the economic downturn that has hurt much of northern Minnesota, and despite some struggles, the local economy is holding its own.

Third, the district has undertaken several efforts to improve academic achievement. Cloquet has implemented a districtwide curriculum and set districtwide goals, such as improving the graduation rate, implementing a school performance database, instituting a new science curriculum in grades 3-6, strengthening special education support, and improving elementary mathematics. District goals for staff development emphasize continued improvement in reading fluency and comprehension, the use of data for making decisions, and the use of state scoring criteria for grading student work. Cloquet staff also point to the district's extended day learning program, held in both of its elementary schools, as a contributor to high performance. This program provides homework assistance and enrichment to many as 200 children for two or three extra hours, four afternoons each week. The program is funded from the 21st Century After School Learning program that is now part of NCLB.

Finally, the district has a strong level of parent and community involvement, according to district officials, including a process of shared decision-making with advisory committees consisting of diverse community representatives.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR ETHNIC SUBGROUPS

Cloquet staff was concerned about how to address the academic needs of its American Indian students. These students lagged behind other children in the district, and staff feared this gap could become an issue with the NCLB requirement to track AYP for specific ethnic subgroups. The district focused professional development on meeting the needs of these students and reaching out to the parents of students who were not performing well.

The results of 2003 testing showed a significant improvement in the academic performance of American Indian students, as displayed in the table on the next page. In 2000, American Indian students scored 19% lower than the districtwide average for all students in reading. In 2001, this subgroup scored 26% lower, and in 2002, it scored 24% lower. In 2003, however, the achievement gap for American Indians was narrowed to a difference of only 8%. In 2002, 80% of all students scored at the proficient level in reading, compared with 56% of American Indian students. In 2003, the comparable figures were 89% proficient for all students and 81% for American Indian students

The average math scores for American Indians showed even more improvement. This subgroup scored 27% lower than the district average in math in 2000, 25% lower in 2001, and 33% lower in 2002. In 2003, the average math scores for American Indian students improved significantly, lowering the gap to eleven percentage points.

### QUALIFICATIONS OF PARAPROFESSIONALS

Most of the paraprofessionals who work in Cloquet's Title I schools do not meet the NCLB requirements because they do not have two years of college education. Although a state test is being planned, the Cloquet district is also working with Fond Du Lac Community College to develop 48 units of college courses for paraprofessionals, the equivalent of two years of college.

## Average State 2003 Test Results for Students in Cloquet Independent School District #94

### READING

	% PROFICIENT ALL STUDENTS	% PROFICIENT AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS	ACHIEVEMENT GAP
2002	80%	56%	24%
2003	89%	81%	8%

### MATH

	% PROFICIENT ALL STUDENTS	% PROFICIENT AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS	ACHIEVEMENT GAP
2002	71%	38%	33%
2003	80%	69%	11%

## Other Implementation Issues

### SCHOOL CHOICE

Cloquet does not have any schools that are required to offer choice because of NCLB, but the district is not concerned about implementing choice if this should happen because Minnesota parents already have the right to choose schools for their children under a statewide policy enacted in 1992. Parents have the flexibility to send their children to any school in their local area or any school in the state, and many take advantage of that opportunity. Cloquet has had much experience with transfers into and out of the district, including children from the Ojibwa Reservation whose families choose to send them to Cloquet schools. In 2002-03, a total of 140 children transferred out of the Cloquet district, and 190 transferred in from neighboring districts—a net gain of 50 students for Cloquet.

## Data File — Cloquet Independent School District #94

Location: Northern, Minnesota

Type: Rural

### Number of Schools:

- 4 total
- 2 elementary schools (K-5)
- 1 middle school
- 1 high school

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 2,278

White: 85%

American Indian: 15%

English Language Learners: 4 students

Students with Disabilities: 11%

Low-Income Students: 31%, ranging from 25% to 35% in individual schools



**Number of Teachers**

Total: 174

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 12 Title I

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 10 (83%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 3 (2 elementary, 1 middle)

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-2003	2003-2004
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0



# 17. Mississippi

## Pascagoula School District

Superintendent: Dr. Hank Bounds

Contact: Dr. Susan McLaurin

*Students: 7,480, K-12 – suburban*

### Key Findings

- To prepare for the higher expectations of NCLB, the Pascagoula School District has made significant changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment at all grade levels—for example, encouraging principals and teachers to make instructional decisions based on analyses of test data and giving teachers additional support from district curriculum specialists.
- To help raise achievement, the local school board has dedicated additional funds to reduce class size in grades K-3 and to mount extended day and extended year programs for students who scored at the minimal or basic levels on state tests.
- Pascagoula has learned to make overnight shifts in services for English language learners because local shipyards and other industries bring large numbers of families from various countries for short periods of employment; the children from these families attend local schools and learn English while they are in the U.S.
- To help prepare its Title I paraprofessionals for the competency tests they must take under NCLB in lieu of earning a degree, the district uses Title I funds to pay for tutors, who provide intensive instruction for paraprofessionals who plan to take the tests. The classes take place three afternoons each week for two months prior to the test administration.

### Background

The Pascagoula School District is considered a suburban district because it serves the growing populations of two cities along the gulf coast: Biloxi, Mississippi, to the west and Mobile, Alabama, to the east. Although the economic situation in the area is better than in many parts of Mississippi, the district's poverty level averages 61%, with a range in individual schools from 42% to 83%. Most of the families are blue collar, and many work for two major industries—the shipbuilding giant Northrop Grumman and Chevron—and there is also a naval station in Pascagoula.

In addition to Northrop Grumman, the area also supports several smaller shipbuilding companies that frequently build ships for other countries and often bring in workers from those countries. This arrangement results in unexpected increases in students who need to learn English. During the past ten years, the school district has welcomed students from Korea, Norway, and Venezuela. Typically, the district's population of English language learners did not exceed 25 students and was fairly stable. Three years ago, however, Pascagoula experienced its first surprise increase in English language learners when, the week after school started, Spanish-speaking children began to enroll, until the total of English language learners eventually reached 110 students that year. This increase has continued, with students coming from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, and other Latin American countries. Many families come to the area because of the availability of work in the shipyard and other local industries. In 2003-04, the enrollment includes 203 English language learners in the Pascagoula schools.



## Progress in Implementing NCLB

According to district officials, the staff members of the Pascagoula School District have a good understanding of NCLB requirements, largely because numerous professional development sessions and parent meetings were scheduled on the Act. The superintendent presented NCLB sessions at civic club meetings, churches, and school board meetings, and the district developed an informational brochure about NCLB for parents and community members. An article about NCLB appears in the district newsletter each quarter, and the superintendent has met with the education reporters from the two local newspapers to explain state and federal accountability.

### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

In midsummer of 2003, the Mississippi state department of education notified Pascagoula School District about the district teachers who did not meet the NCLB definition of “highly qualified.” The list, according to district officials, contained numerous errors, but even after several phone calls to the office of licensure, the district was still without an updated list in late fall. The department of education also posted school and district report cards on its website. Along with state accreditation ratings, the report cards listed detailed AYP information, graduation rates, and teacher quality percentages. This information, however, was posted without the revisions, corrections, or clarification from local school districts. This is an example of the complexity that states and districts face in assembling accurate data about teacher qualifications and other issues.

According to the district report card on the state department of education website, 97.6% of the 360 core academic teachers in the Pascagoula School District are highly qualified. The number who are not is small (13 of 600 total teachers), and these appear to be special education and middle school teachers who teach in content areas but hold elementary licenses.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

As with the district teaching staff, the number of paraprofessionals in Pascagoula who do not meet NCLB requirements is low. Of the 180 employees, only 32 do not meet the requirements, and most of these are either pursuing an associate’s degree or planning to take the Work Keys tests. The Mississippi Department of Education adopted the ACT Work Keys tests in Reading for Information, Math Applications, and Writing to assess the competency of paraprofessionals. Title I funds are used to pay for tutors who provide intensive instruction for the paraprofessionals who plan to take the tests. The classes are provided three afternoons each week for two months prior to test administration, which takes place four times a year. However, there are paraprofessionals who are nearing retirement, and although they are highly effective employees, according to district staff, they were not interested in taking college classes and they were terrified of taking a test. Their experience and expertise was needed, so staff decided to help them with intensive tutoring provided by teachers. Both test-taking skills and higher levels of math and writing skills were addressed. This strategy has worked well, and it has given the paraprofessionals the confidence they need to proceed with meeting the requirements.

### IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

In anticipation of the requirements of NCLB, the Pascagoula district has focused on improving student achievement for the past two years. In 2002-03, the district began the “Superior Expect It!” campaign. The Mississippi state accreditation system rates schools at levels of performance from 5 to 1: superior, exemplary, successful, underperforming, and low-performing, and all schools are expected to become superior schools. The pressure is on everyone to make sure that all students succeed, and with

this academic focus on every learner, the results are beginning to look good in Pascagoula. Five of the schools are rated at Level 5 which is the superior rating, six are rated at Level 4, and five are at Level 3. Each of the schools studies the assessment data; school staff members develop a plan to improve student achievement on a child-by-child basis, and address any deficits with specific subgroups. The instructional decisions of both teachers and principals are becoming more data-driven.

Teachers concentrate on student mastery of the state curriculum and standards, and principals monitor classroom instruction in regard to content and teaching strategies. The four district curriculum specialists conduct “walk-through” visits in classrooms, and the observations are discussed with teachers and principals. Recommendations are made for professional development activities for teachers who are having a difficult time with content or teaching techniques. Follow-up visits are held as necessary, and the curriculum specialists also conduct quarterly grade or subject area meetings so that teachers can discuss their challenges and successes.

The Pascagoula school board recently dedicated \$500,000 for extended day and extended year programs at schools. Students who scored at the minimal or basic levels on the Mississippi curriculum tests or the subject area tests required for graduation have been placed in after-school tutoring programs and recommended for the extended year program.

Class sizes in grades K-1 have been reduced, and district monies have been set aside to build additional classrooms to reduce class sizes in grades 2 and 3. The district goal is to have a pupil-teacher ratio of 15:1 in all classes in grades K-3 within three years.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Although all Pascagoula schools made AYP for 2003-04, three schools did not show academic growth for the state accreditation model, but the state dropped this indicator as a measure of AYP because of data collection problems at the state level. Instead, attendance was used as the other AYP indicator. All subgroups made AYP also, but special education students were tested at their instructional level rather than their grade level. District staff is aware that when the special education students are tested on grade level and ELLs are tested using the same instrument as English-speaking students, it is very likely that AYP targets will not be met for those two subgroups. Special education students and ELL students are not achieving at the same rate as their peers, and this is an area that will receive a new focus.

Pascagoula’s 203 English language learners speak a variety of languages. Some 67% speak Spanish, and 20% speak Vietnamese. Other languages include Thai, Bulgarian, Gujarati, Romanian, Tagalog, Cantonese, Navajo, and German. All these students must be tested in English with appropriate accommodations. However, the logistics of providing certified test administrators and proctors for students at all 18 school sites, testing within the timelines, and requiring that even beginners in English take a test in English are expected to be very difficult, according to Dr. Susan McLaurin. And as soon as ELL students become proficient, they are moved out of the ELL subgroup, so growth will never be seen.

The challenge of teaching English language learners in Pascagoula is two-fold: helping the students attain English proficiency while assisting them to maintain age-appropriate subject area skills. Pascagoula staff members believe that they do a good job in teaching English, but they have concerns about assuring that all ELL students are on grade level in content areas. Two English teachers were hired to work with secondary ELL students, and three tutors were hired to work with elementary ELL students. Each new ELL student is tested for English proficiency and a schedule for individual or small group sessions is arranged. Teachers and tutors work closely with regular classroom teachers to address the specific learning needs of ELL students, but there is recognition from staff that more needs to be done for all students to be successful.





The situation for special education students is similar, McLaurin noted. These students are taught on an educationally appropriate level, but now they must be tested on grade level, which adds more stress to the testing stress for students, parents, and teachers. Furthermore, teachers know that some of their students with disabilities are unlikely to meet the expectations of the assessments.

In order to overcome these challenges, Pascagoula staff members are working with the ELL and special education students to make sure they master the state curriculum. They are also providing information sessions for parents and the community about these issues.

## Other Implementation Issues

### SCIENTIFICALLY BASED PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES

Pascagoula School District recognizes that NCLB calls on districts to use programs and curricula that are based on scientific research and documented as being effective in raising student achievement. Examples of programs that are extensively used in the district are Accelerated Reading, Math, and Writing. District staff members looked at the results of these programs in other schools as well evidence from the program vendor before they made their decisions. Their own frequent assessment of student progress as they tried out the programs indicated that the programs should bring them the results they want.

### FISCAL ISSUES

The costs of education have gone up in Pascagoula in recent years. Staff received pay increases in 2003, and the cost of most products—including instructional supplies, equipment, textbooks, and furniture—also rose. The costs of construction of new schools and maintenance of existing facilities also increased significantly. Without additional funds for NCLB, Pascagoula staff does not know how the district will maintain its present programs and fully implement both NCLB and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. There is so much to do, and very few funds to support what must be done to ensure that all students are performing proficiently by 2014.

## Data File — Pascagoula School District

**Location:** Mississippi coast, east of Biloxi

**Type:** Suburban

### Number of Schools:

- 19 schools
- 11 elementary, K-5
- 3 middle schools, 6-8
- 2 high schools, 9-12
- 1 alternative school, 1-12
- 1 exceptional school (students from entire county attend)
- 1 Applied Technology Center

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

- Total Enrollment: 7,480
- White: 51%
- Black: 44%
- Hispanic: 3%
- Other: 2%
- English Language Learners: 2.7%
- Students with Disabilities: 15%
- Low-Income Students: 61% (range is 42% to 83%)

**Number of Teachers**

Total: 600

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 2%

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 180

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 18%

**Number of Title I Schools:** All – elementary and middle schools are schoolwide;  
high schools are targeted assistance

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2003-03	2003-04
Required to offer only school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0



# 18. Missouri

## Hermitage School District

Superintendent: Shelly Aubuchon

Contact: Shelly Aubuchon

*Students: 320, K-12 – rural*

### Key Findings

- District officials in Hermitage, a small, rural school district, are finding that the requirements of NCLB are consistent with the district's previous goals for improving student achievement.
- Despite the district's 71% poverty rate, Hermitage test scores exceed state averages in reading and math. District officials attribute this successful performance to the district's small school settings, which make it easier for teachers to work as a team; its accountability plan; its summer academic enrichment program; and its strong parent involvement efforts.

### Background

The Hermitage School District is located in Hickory County, Missouri, in the south central part of the state. Hermitage is one of four small, rural school districts in the county. Although the county was once an agricultural area, most families in the Hermitage district commute to nearby towns for employment, and some raise cattle as a part-time occupation.

To serve its enrollment of 320 K-12 students, Hermitage has two schools: an elementary school serving grades K-6, and a secondary school that includes a middle school for grades 7-8 and a high school for grades 9-12. Most of the families in the district are low income; 71% of the students are eligible for free or reduced price lunches.

Despite its poverty level, Hermitage is one of the higher performing school districts in the state, with student scores that consistently exceed state averages. Staff members credit the smallness of the elementary school, which is a Title I school, as a factor in its achievement success. With one class at each grade level, everyone in the school knows all the students, and the staff members work well as a team.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

In 2003 state test results, Hermitage continues to exceed state averages in both reading and math. The district has no English language learners, and students with disabilities are not considered a subgroup for NCLB accountability purposes because the number is smaller than the state's minimum size for a subgroup.

The following table shows the percentage of elementary students who scored at the proficient or advanced levels on state tests in reading and math, compared to state averages.

Hermitage officials credit these high performance levels to the district's accountability plan and its emphasis on teachers. For 2003-04, Hermitage has made a major change in the grade level structure of its schools. The 6th graders, considered part of the middle school in previous years, are now included in the elementary school, which





## 2003 Scores on State Tests for Hermitage Students and All Students in the State

Student group	Reading, Grade 3	Math, Grade 4
Hermitage students	79%	72%
State average	34%	37%

means they will be taught in self-contained classes rather than in the departmentalized structure of the middle school.

In 2003, the district offered a summer camp for students in all grades to provide academic enrichment for those who were falling behind in particular areas. The program was funded through the NCLB 21st Century Community Learning Program.

The staff also considers the district's preschool program for three- and four-year-olds to be important to student success. The program for four-year-olds is funded by the state of Missouri, and the program for three-year-olds is funded by the federal Even Start program, now a part of NCLB. These preschool programs, attended by about half of the children of those ages, are closely connected to the district kindergarten program.

Parent involvement continues to be a major goal for Hermitage, from preschool through high school. Teachers make frequent calls to parents, not just to report problems but also to report positive growth and work with parents on interventions that will lead to academic improvement. Parents are invited to participate in learning activities, such as the Family Fun Nights scheduled every month or so.

Although the Hermitage School District has done well thus far in meeting the goals of NCLB, staff is aware that the district's status could change in the future. If some of the highly qualified teachers were to leave, for example, it might be difficult to find replacements that are as well qualified.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

At the start of the 2003-04 school year, Hermitage reported no problems with continuing its full implementation of NCLB. Future concerns may arise in relation to teacher qualifications, but if this occurs, the superintendent plans to assist any teachers with taking the state-approved test for complete certification. The test is given periodically in a neighboring county, and the district will provide whatever support teachers need, including reimbursements for mileage to and from the test-taking site.

## Other Implementation Issues

### STUDENT ENRICHMENT

Hermitage School District uses some of its 21st Century funds to provide enrichment activities for students. One such program is a travel club called the Voyagers. Students from kindergarten through 12th grade take part in Saturday educational adventures that involve travel away from home. Trips will be made this year to the Kansas City Science Center, the Truman Library, Fort Scott, and the Steamboat Museum, as well as to a college football game and a rodeo.

## Data File — Hermitage School District

**Location:** South Central Missouri

**Type:** Rural

**Number of Schools:**

- 2 total
- 1 elementary school (K-6)
- 1 secondary school (7-12)

**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

Total Enrollment: 320  
White: 98%  
Other: 2%  
English Language Learners: None  
Students with Disabilities: 8%  
Low-Income Students: 71%

**Number of Teachers**

Total: 32  
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 1  
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

**Number of Title I Schools:** 1 elementary school

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0





# 19. Nebraska

## Heartland School District

Superintendent: Dr. Norm Yoder

Contact: Dr. Norm Yoder

*Students: 350, K-12 – rural*

### Key Findings

- Students with disabilities in Heartland met the state targets for adequate yearly progress in mathematics in grades 4 and 8, with large percentages of students scoring at proficient levels, a situation that district staff attributes to the wide range of skill level among the students.
- All of Heartland's 42 teachers and five paraprofessionals meet the requirements of NCLB.
- District leaders have always worn several hats in small districts like Heartland, but with the enactment of NCLB, meeting the law's accountability requirements has become a large responsibility for the superintendent.

### Background

The Heartland School District in rural, southeastern Nebraska has existed for only five years. The district was created when two small districts, Henderson and Bradshaw, merged because their enrollments were declining. Consolidation was looked on as the most effective way to better utilize their combined resources.

In the new Heartland district, however, enrollments have continued to decline each year. This is partly due to lower birth rates but also because families have moved out of the area in search of more stable employment. Although the area has some of the best farmland in the state, widespread irrigation of corn and bean fields has reduced the need for farm workers.

Some families commute daily to their jobs in Grand Island and Lincoln, but for the school district to survive, the community must attract more jobs and residents—and soon. To this end, local leaders are seeking to boost tourism by actively preserving and promoting the rural heritage of the area.

If that plan works, the school district will survive. The district's fallback plan is to invite neighboring districts to join forces and consolidate further. Discussions have been initiated with two neighboring districts, but a third district does not appear to be interested. With the high accountability and administrative demands of NCLB, such a consolidation could work to the benefit of everyone. The only downside is the loss of identity that some districts fear. Other local leaders believe, however, that if advocates of consolidation emphasize the potential benefits for students and their education, the negative aspects will be minimized. In the past, state funds were available to assist with consolidation, and this type of funding, if it becomes available, could facilitate the process in the future.

The town of Henderson, where the Heartland district is headquartered, is home to a large Mennonite community with a strong religious culture; this community has existed since 1874, when it was founded by immigrants from Russia. All the Mennonite students attend the Heartland public school.





## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Academic performance of Heartland students is quite good, with district students scoring among the highest in the state on 2003 assessments. For NCLB purposes, the district administers tests in grades 4, 8 and 11. These include locally developed tests in reading and math and a state test in writing. Even the subgroup of students with disabilities performed quite well in 2003 at the elementary level.

On the 4th grade math test, 89% of students overall reached the proficient level, and AYP was met in all areas. District staff members were also pleased that 67% of students with disabilities scored at the proficient level. In 8th grade math, the percentages of students scoring at the proficient level were 84% for all students and 100% for the disabled subgroup. District officials are encouraged to see that the disabled subgroup, which represents 20% of the district's enrollment, can meet the expected achievement levels. The small numbers of students as well as the wide range of disabilities and the variance in intellectual and learning capacity in the grade levels contribute to these results.

At the 11th grade level, the picture was different. Although 80% of all students at this grade scored at the proficient level in math, only 25% of disabled students achieved a proficient score.

On the reading and writing tests, both the 4th and 8th grade students scored at the 90% level, which the state of Nebraska considers to be exemplary.

The Heartland district has only two subgroups to consider for AYP, low-income students and students with disabilities. The state requires subgroups to number at least 40 to be counted for AYP.

Some Heartland educators have expressed concern that the amount of testing required for NCLB takes away from teaching time. Teachers report that they do not have enough time to teach important concepts because so much has to be covered in each time period.

The town of Henderson is the site of a large group home for young people who are wards of the court. These students, who come mostly from large Nebraska cities and towns, are welcomed in the Heartland district. The academic performance of these students improves in the small school setting, and there is no danger that they will become school dropouts because the students are under court order to attend school as part of the state's procedures for juvenile placements in the group home.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

The Heartland teaching staff is quite stable, and turnover is relatively low—in fact, the district has not had to hire any elementary teachers during its five-year existence. Most of the teachers live within 25 miles of the school and are active members of their communities.

The district received considerable recognition in 2003 when one of its 4th grade teachers was named Nebraska's Teacher of the Year. More than half the district's 42 teachers have master's degrees, and all of the teachers meet NCLB requirements. These high standards for teacher quality may be difficult to maintain, however, if enrollment continues to decline and it becomes more difficult to fill vacancies created from retirements or layoffs. Distance learning is already in place for students who want to take calculus, so this may be a way to cover areas of small interest that require a high level of teacher specialization.

## Other Implementation Issues

District leaders wear several hats in districts like Heartland, and the implementation of state and federal legal requirements is a big responsibility. In a small district the superintendent is often the sole manager/leader of facilities, finance, and instruction, and now with the enactment of NCLB, the superintendent of a small rural district has new accountability requirements for student achievement. These responsibilities can be very time consuming, but with assistance from principals and a part-time person who works with curriculum, the superintendent of Heartland finds that NCLB jobs get done. He stated, however, that “the time factor is way out of proportion to the value to students and the district.”

## Data File — Heartland School District

**Location:** Southeastern Nebraska

**Type:** Rural

**Number of Schools:**

1 school - elementary division and secondary division

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 350, K-12

White: 99%

Other: 1%

English Language Learners: 0

Students with Disabilities: 20%

Low-Income Students: 30%

### Number of Teachers

Total: 42

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 5

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

**Number of Title I Schools:** 1 school - targeted assistance

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0





## 20. Nevada

### Clark County School District

Superintendent: Dr. Carlos Garcia

Contact: Dr. Susan Wright, Title I Director

*Students: 268,357, K-12 – urban*

### Key Findings

- Clark County School District is refocusing its efforts on teacher training and retention to meet the requirements of NCLB at the same time it is meeting the huge range of needs of its increasingly diverse student population and continually building new schools to house a population that increases by as many as 10,000 students a year.
- This district has found that an extensive prekindergarten program that is funded with Title I and closely connected to kindergarten and primary programs improves children's readiness for learning.
- More than 200 paraprofessionals in Clark County have passed the Praxis test as a way of meeting NCLB requirements, due to a massive district effort to support and assist them in this endeavor.

### Background

The Clark County School District covers a large portion of the state of Nevada, including the city of Las Vegas. The area's population exceeds 1 million and includes more than half the inhabitants of Nevada. Clustered around rapidly growing Las Vegas, the school district is growing at the amazing rate of 6,000 to 10,000 additional students per year. This growth means a never-ending program of school construction, with new schools opening every month of the year.

Many of the district's 283 schools are on multi-track, year-round schedules to expand their capacity. To make the most of classroom space, some schools have five groups of students with staggered schedules and different vacation times during the year. When one group of students returns to school from vacation, they use the classrooms of the group that went on vacation.

The school district is divided into five regions, two of which cover the highest poverty areas of Clark County. The poverty rates at district schools range from 90% to zero. Regardless of poverty, Superintendent Carlos Garcia has the same high expectations for all the schools. The district has instituted a plan it calls A+ in Action to reduce achievement gaps by improving curriculum and instruction and strengthening school-home relations.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### PARAPROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The 52 Title I schools in Clark County, which include both schoolwide and targeted assistance programs, employ 432 paraprofessionals in various job descriptions, such as teacher family aides, instructional assistants, library aides, physical education aides, and special program aides (special education). More than half of these paraprofessionals meet the NCLB requirements. Many have two years of college or an associate's degree,





and many more have passed the paraprofessional test chosen by the state of Nevada (the Praxis exam). Others are preparing to take the test. The district pays for the cost of taking the test, but employees who do not pass will have to pay for further test taking sessions. For those paraprofessionals who choose to take classes at the local community college, the district pays the cost of tuition and books. Some of the paraprofessionals intend to become teachers, and the district wants to support them in that endeavor.

#### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

The Clark County School District employs 14,592 teachers, of which 995—less than 7%—do not meet the NCLB requirements for being highly qualified. The main concern is with teachers of math and science in middle and high schools.

Professional development decisions are made by individual schools. Schools frequently select their areas of training, and the district provides technical assistance as needed.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Most of Clark County's 52 Title I schools are having difficulty with meeting the requirements for adequate yearly progress. Four schools are in the second year of school improvement and 14 are in their first year. The other 30, although they have made progress, did not meet AYP in 2003 – most often because the English language learner subgroup or the students with disabilities subgroup did not achieve AYP.

Clark County students speak 57 different languages, but most of the district's English language learners are Spanish-speaking. Many of these students are in bilingual programs in the early grades, but after 2nd grade, they are transitioned to English instruction, with the goal of bringing them to English proficiency and raising achievement in reading, writing, math, and science. A new proficiency test is being developed by the state to replace the present language assessments in order to provide a measure of subject area proficiency as required by NCLB. About one-fourth of the elementary schools have bilingual programs in the primary grades, a situation that may change in the future as the achievement of ELL students is reviewed.

Each Title I school has a team that is reviewing where are they now, where they have to go, and how are they going to get there. The district is working with the Nevada state education department and the Pulliam group in this task. District officials believe that effective leadership at school sites, including the principal and support personnel, is critical in bringing about high achievement. The goal is for principals and teachers to understand the importance of using programs and structured curriculum that are grounded in strong research and to focus their resources, fiscal and other, in a coordinated effort to improve student achievement.

The district is looking closely at each school and working with the team to improve the academic achievement of students with each region responsible for the improvement. They are looking at the use of scientific researched-based programs that have been proven to raise student achievement.

#### CHOICE AND SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

School choice was offered in the 2002-03 school year at the four schools that were identified, and parents were notified prior to the beginning of school that their students could attend another school. A total of 130 of 6,000 students transferred. For the 2003-04 year, the district did not have the information from the state department regarding schools that did not make AYP. There were problems with the testing company, and the first set of test scores were determined to be invalid, which meant that an-

other run had to be made. This put the district behind schedule on parent notification. Schools were identified in September of 2003, and the parents at the 14 schools were notified of their choice options. Staff members do not expect to see many requests for transfer because of their experience in 2002-03 when most parents chose to keep their children in their neighborhoods.

In 2003-04, four elementary schools are in their second year of school improvement and are offering supplemental services. Most of the providers in the area provide online tutoring and instruction via the Internet, but the Clark County School District has also been approved as a provider. The district will offer a Saturday program for elementary students.

## Other Implementation Issues

### PRESCHOOL READINESS FOR KINDERGARTEN

Title I funds are used to support 47 preschool programs for Clark County youngsters. Four-year-olds are served at 24 elementary schools, and 12 of these schools also have programs for three-year-olds. Preschool teachers are required to have four-year degrees and an early childhood endorsement. Jump Start, a state funded nonprofit program, also provides support for preschool. In addition, there is an active Head Start program in the county. This combination of programs has been in operation in Clark County for many years and has taken on new importance as an NCLB-supported early intervention program through Title I. The preschool program helps many non-English-speaking preschoolers to enter kindergarten with a strong base of verbal English proficiency.

## Data File — Clark County Schools

**Location:** Southern Nevada – includes city of Las Vegas

**Type:** Urban

### Number of Schools:

283	total
179	elementary schools K-5
46	middle schools, grades 6-8
35	high schools, grades 9-12
23	alternative schools
6	special schools

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 268,357

White: 43.7%

Hispanic: 33.4%

African American: 14.2%

Asian: 7.9%

American Indian: 0.8%

English Language Learners: 16% - 57 languages, Spanish is largest language

Students with Disabilities: 11%

Low-Income Students: 36% (ranging from 0 to 90% in individual schools)

### Number of Teachers

Total: 14,592

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 6.8%



**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 432

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 50%

**Number of Title I Schools:** 52 schools – 43 are schoolwide

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice only:	4	14
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	4
In corrective action:	0	0



## 21. New Jersey

### Bayonne School District

Superintendent: Dr. Patricia L. McGeehan

Contact: Dr. Ellen M. O'Connor, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum/Instruction

Students: 8,400, Pre-K-12 – urban

### Key Findings

- Bayonne has no concerns about meeting NCLB requirements for paraprofessionals because the district does not hire Title I paraprofessionals, as most districts do. Instead, Bayonne has used Title I funds to hire additional teachers, who work in teaching teams to help targeted students.
- Out of 2,200 students who were eligible for school choice in 2002-03, only 50 students actually changed to another school. District staff members see this as an indication that parents in this neighborhood-oriented city prefer their neighborhood schools and want their children to stay close to home.
- The Bayonne school district was the only approved provider of supplemental services within the district's boundaries for students in the three schools eligible for these services in 2002-03. The district offered these services through an after-school program at a public school.

### Background

The Bayonne school district serves Bayonne, New Jersey, a city of 62,000 that covers a peninsula at the southern end of Hudson County. Because the city encompasses an area just three miles long and one mile wide, it has many features of a smaller town, even though it is entirely urban. The school system includes 11 schools serving grades PreK through 8 and one high school. The Bayonne schools also offer a half-day pre-school program for four-year-olds and a full-day kindergarten, which parents and district staff believe are crucial to developing literacy.

The city residents are primarily blue-collar, middle-class families. About 12% of the students are English language learners from 28 different language groups. Spanish-speaking families are the largest group, but the diversity in the city is changing with increasing numbers of Polish and Arabic speakers.

Bayonne was recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education as one of the top 25 technologically advanced districts in the state.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

All of Bayonne's 642 teachers meet the state requirements for being highly qualified under NCLB. Title I funds are used to hire additional teachers who assist in regular classrooms by providing additional instruction to selected students. These teachers also meet the qualifications. The district does not use any Title I funds for paraprofessionals, so it has no reason to be concerned about NCLB requirements for paraprofessionals.





#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Bayonne district has taken steps to improve the skills of its teachers through after-school professional development academies. These are five-week programs of two-hour weekly classes, which are taught by district teachers and address such areas as technology, mathematics, differentiated instruction, multiple intelligences, and Spanish language. About 200 teachers participate in this training each year. Titles II and V of NCLB are used to support the program. District officials attribute Bayonne's recent improvements in math performance to the effectiveness of its professional development.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

#### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

New Jersey is changing its testing program, which had tested only grades 3, 4, and 8, to conform to the NCLB requirements to test more grades in 2003-04. The state will target schools for improvement based on the performance of subgroups as well. Bayonne school leaders recognize that the district may need to devote more attention to its special education and English language learner subgroups.

Bayonne had four schools in school improvement in 2002-03, because the schools did not meet the New Jersey expectations for AYP. One of the schools improved enough to exit school improvement status in 2003, leaving three schools in this category for 2003-04. In the three remaining schools, the 8th grade math scores rose between 20% and 25%, a gain that district officials attribute to the district's curricular and instructional changes.

Technical assistance focused on enhancing professional development for teachers in the four schools, especially through the after-school academies. The instructional support provided to teachers by the Title I team was also part of the technical assistance, as was a large-scale summer school program with a major focus on literacy for parents that took place in 2003.

#### SCHOOL CHOICE AND SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

Four Bayonne schools were required to offer school choice for school year 2002-03, but few parents took advantage of this option. About 2,200 students were eligible to change schools. Although parents were notified by mail of their options, only 56 families applied for transfer, and only 50 students actually changed to another school. District staff members see this as an indication that parents in this closely knit, neighborhood-oriented city prefer their neighborhood schools and want their children to stay close to home. The district does not expect many more students to transfer in 2003-04. Because the transfer schools were within walking distance, no costs were needed for transportation.

One of the four schools is no longer in school improvement, so in 2003-04, only three schools are required to offer choice and supplemental services for students. The Bayonne School District was the only provider of supplemental services within district boundaries at the three schools where these additional services are required, and this was a major factor in parents choosing the district as the provider. The targeted students attended an after-school program designed and implemented by the district.

## Other Implementation Issues

About 19% of Bayonne students have been identified as having disabilities, which district officials recognize is a much larger percentage than most districts. In light of the NCLB requirements for subgroup performance, the district is examining the consis-

tency of its procedures for identifying students for special education. Staff members believe the district has good programs for children with disabilities, and this may be attracting families with special needs children to live in the district.

## Data File — Bayonne School District

**Location:** Northern New Jersey

**Type:** Urban; city of 62,000

**Number of Schools:**

- 12 total
- 11 elementary schools (PreK-8)
- 1 high school

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total: 8,400  
 White: 60%  
 Hispanic: 30%  
 African American: 8%  
 Other: 2%  
 English Language Learners: 12% (28 languages)  
 Students with Disabilities: 19%  
 Low-Income Students: 31%

### Number of Teachers

Total: 642  
 Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 0  
 Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

**Number of Title I Schools:** 9 elementary schools

### Number of Schools in Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-2003	2003-2004
Required to offer school choice:	4	3
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	3
In corrective action:	0	0





## 22. New Mexico

### Bloomfield School District

Superintendent: Dr. Harry Hayes

Contact: Lena Natoni, Director of Federal Programs

Students: 3,190, K-12 (including PreK) – rural

### Key Findings

- The Bloomfield School District has supported professional development in technology for the last ten years. As a result, teachers and students have “state of the art” equipment and software for instruction in classroom labs. Teachers have access to student assessment data through electronic student files to develop data-driven instruction, and in this way can assist students who need to improve their skills.
- Approximately 60% of students entering kindergarten have participated in at least one year of preschool experience through combined funding from Head Start, Title I, and district funds. The district is committed to providing early intervention services for economically disadvantaged students and English language learners to prepare them to read in first grade.
- The Bloomfield School District has witnessed a steady decline in student population over the last five years. This decline has also been observed in many neighboring school districts as well as in the state. The district is in the process of reorganizing the grade level structure of the schools and closing one school to continue to operate efficiently and to better serve the academic needs of students.
- The achievement of secondary school students is a particular concern in the Bloomfield district, but gains are being seen as a result of a sustained focus on individual student intervention and remediation and increased teacher proficiency in instruction (especially reading, writing, and math).
- The district continues to assist teachers and paraprofessional in meeting the NCLB requirement to become “highly qualified.” Approximately 10% of the district’s teachers and 84% of the paraprofessionals are not highly qualified according to the NCLB criteria.

### Background

Surrounded by mountain ranges, the Bloomfield School District is located in the “Four Corners” region of the Southwest, where New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona meet at a common point. The school district covers a huge geographical area of 1,500 square miles, which entails a great amount of transportation to get students to and from school. To help with transportation, parents are paid to pick up groups of children along “feeder routes” and bring them to major bus stops.

All Bloomfield schools are close in proximity with the exception of one elementary school. The expansion of technology in the district, however, has significantly reduced problems associated with distance.

Bloomfield’s student population is ethnically diverse, with White, Hispanic, and Native American (mostly Navajo) students each comprising roughly one-third of the district’s enrollment. The residents of the Bloomfield community share many common values, including a desire for excellence in education. District officials are concerned



about the dropout rate and the lack of long-range prospects for students who do not graduate from high school. They are looking at ways to keep students in school by offering classes that can help them, especially in the summer, and courses that can be accessed online. They are also concerned about the district's declining enrollment, a trend that has continued for several years and is attributable in part to economic factors and fewer jobs in the oil, gas, and mining industries. Increasingly, the people moving into the Bloomfield district are families without children.

## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Bloomfield School District has undertaken a multi-year professional development effort for teachers and other staff that fits well with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Title II funds have been used to provide extended professional development for teachers and support staff in writing, brain development, language development, ESL, and reading and math intervention strategies, as well as in the widespread use of technology. Some of the training has taken place on non-student days built into teachers' contracts and in the summer, and the teachers receive college credit for their training. Substitutes are provided for teachers who attend training sessions during the regular school day.

Bloomfield teachers of all grade levels are well versed in technology and have equipment and software in their classrooms. This investment by the district benefits students in many ways, from improving their writing skills to enabling them to gather information and do research for classroom projects.

The district makes extensive use of mentoring to assist the 20 to 30 new teachers hired each year. New teachers are paired with experienced teachers, who assist them with curriculum, instruction, and assessment and help them adjust to the professional demands of their new teaching assignment. Focus groups provide opportunities for teachers to share successful techniques and lessons.

Staff development in Bloomfield includes training for administrators, many of whom have come from the Bloomfield teaching ranks. This professional development now includes leadership training for principals so they can assist teachers in improving academic achievement.

Currently, about 10% of teachers of the district's teachers and 84% of the district's paraprofessionals do not meet the NCLB requirements for qualifications. The district is reimbursing teachers and paraprofessionals for the costs of coursework needed to meet NCLB requirements. Classes are offered in the district and at the nearby community college. This reimbursement applies to all staff hired before NCLB went into effect. New staff members must meet NCLB requirements as a condition of hire.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ACCOUNTABILITY

Various aspects of NCLB accountability are presenting problems for Bloomfield schools, including the state's change from a norm-referenced test to a standards-based test. District staff members are concerned about the state's rating of schools, and they feel that directions from the state and federal level have not been as clear as they would have liked. One example is the situation regarding students with disabilities, one of the Bloomfield subgroups that did not meet AYP.

Some staff members believe that test bias continues to be an issue for their students in this remote and rugged part of the country. An example one district person cited



was the use of the term “boat” in one of the tests. Students in this dry land of northern New Mexico know a boat only as something pulled behind a car or truck heading somewhere else and may not understand a boat’s connection with water. Another example cited involves the term “subway”—which these rural students would more likely think of as a place to eat a sandwich than a city transit system.

District officials are concerned about how they will be able to bring all students to the expected levels of achievement. All of the district’s schools had difficulty meeting AYP targets in 2003 for the students with disabilities and ELL subgroups. None of the Bloomfield schools is currently in school improvement, but district officials recognize that in order for the schools to stay out of school improvement, changes have to be made. Two elementary schools are on probationary status in 2003-04, and therefore will need to meet AYP in 2004. If one of the schools enters school improvement next year, the district will have great difficulty offering school choice because there will be only one school per grade span, except for the elementary school that is in a remote area. Neighboring districts are too far away, so supplemental services would have to be provided. However, with so many students being bussed many miles to their homes, this, too, would present many challenges for the district.

To better meet the needs of students and raise achievement, the Bloomfield district is undertaking a major reorganization and consolidation of its schools and grade spans for next school year. The district’s 6th graders will become part of the elementary structure, and 9th graders will join the high school. Grades PreK and kindergarten will be housed at one site, grades 1-3 at another, grades 4-6 at a third site, and all 7th and 8th graders will be at fourth site. One school will be closed, one remote school will serve grades K-6, and the high school will serve all students in grades 9-12. Although these are not easy changes to make in a culturally and geographically diverse school district, the Bloomfield staff is committed to doing this to improve student achievement.

## Other Implementation Issues

### EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

The Bloomfield School District recognizes that early intervention, through a well-rounded preschool program, greatly benefits disadvantaged children, and the district provides programs for both three- and four-year-olds. Some programs are funded by Head Start, others by Title I, and others by combined funds, including programs for children with disabilities. In addition, the district has recently changed its kindergarten program to a full day rather than half day.

## Data File — Bloomfield Public Schools

**Location:** Northwest New Mexico

**Type:** Rural – 1,500 square miles

**Number of Schools:** (The numbers and grade configurations of schools will change for 2004-05.)

- 8 total:
- 1 Early Childhood Center – PreK - 2
- 1 elementary - K, 1, 2
- 1 elementary - 3, 4, 5
- 1 elementary - PreK-7
- 1 middle school – 6, 7
- 1 junior high school - 8, 9
- 1 high school – 10-12
- 1 alternative school – 8-12



### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 3,190 - PreK-12  
 White: 35%  
 Hispanic: 31%  
 American Indian: 34%  
 English Language Learners: 23%  
 Students with Disabilities: 23%  
 Low-Income Students: 61% (ranging from 39% to 79% in individual schools)

### Number of Teachers

Total: 262  
 Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 10%

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 67  
 Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 84%

**Number of Title I Schools:** 4 schools – all are schoolwide

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0

## 23. New York

### Romulus Central Schools

Superintendent: Casey Barduhn

Contact: Casey Barduhn

Students: 580, Pre-K-12 – rural

### Key Findings

- The Romulus Central School District has been able to maintain good achievement levels for students because the teaching staff remains quite stable from year to year, and retired teachers return to the district to mentor the new teachers.
- Because students in Romulus are bussed long distances to and from school, opportunities are limited for providing students who need extra help with additional instruction before or after the regular school day or on weekends.
- The New York state requirement for teachers to obtain a master's degree within five years of entering the classroom has helped to create a well-qualified cadre of teachers in Romulus who all meet the NCLB teacher requirements.

### Background

The Romulus Central School District, located in upstate New York, serves what is basically a “bedroom community” for families whose breadwinners commute to work in Rochester and Syracuse. Affordable living in attractive locations, such as the area’s 20 miles of desirable lake frontage, balances out the disadvantages of a daily commute that can become especially difficult during the long winter months. Between the area’s two major lakes lies farmland, including several vineyards, and a large Mennonite-Amish community that has its own schools. The student population is scattered across 150 square miles, and with just one school building, many students have long bus rides.

The school building is divided into two divisions—one for elementary that includes an extensive preschool, and the other for secondary, grades 7-12. Each division has its own principal.

The Romulus district experienced significant change in the late 1990s when the Army depot that had been a part of the community for many years closed, and many families had to relocate. The school district lost 30% of its enrollment, more than 250 students in all, and also lost some state and federal funds, including a significant amount of federal Impact Aid funds for districts that serve children of federal employees.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

All teachers in the Romulus schools presently meet the NCLB criteria for being highly qualified because the state of New York requires teachers to obtain master’s degrees within five years from when they begin teaching. As a result, teachers who are new to the profession are working toward their final certification. The teaching staffs in both the elementary and secondary divisions are fairly stable, and teachers with more than 30 years of service are not uncommon.

The district has taken steps to not only recruit well-qualified teachers for any vacancies that arise, but also retain them. Romulus has established an extensive mentor-





ing program that taps the expertise of retired teachers by matching them in mentor relationships with new teachers. The retirees are paid stipends for their work, and district staff members consider their work to be invaluable. Turnover is not high, but the district hired six teachers for 2003-04, and each was assigned to an experienced mentor. Mentoring continues for more than one year. This pairing is working very well, according to Superintendent Casey Barduhn, who initiated the program along with the administrative team.

The district has a three-pronged approach to professional development for its teachers. First, the district pays for a portion of the coursework toward the required master's degree for its teachers. Second, teachers receive extensive training in test analysis and the use of assessment data to connect instruction to specific student needs. This training is carried out through the regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), which serves 25 districts. Third, in-house "experts," teachers with expertise in various areas, such as reading, math, technology, and differentiation of instruction, are utilized to work with their peers in meeting the academic needs of students.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Based on previous measures of student achievement, Romulus students perform at high levels compared to other districts in the region and the state. The passing rate is very high on the Regents test, which is subject-specific and required for high school graduation, and the district dropout rate is low. There is not much transience in the student population, and most students stay in the district for their entire education. Class size is about 20:1, and teachers know all the students. To smooth the transition from one grade level to the next, teachers work together to make sure that students meet the expectations for all content areas.

Romulus did make AYP in 2003, and there are many indications, according to the superintendent, that this good academic progress will continue. With a strong structure and effective instructional efforts in place, one may wonder why district staff has concerns about NCLB accountability requirements, but a number of issues could cause AYP problems for Romulus. First, New York currently tests students only in grades 4 and 8. When the state implements tests for grades 3-8, plus a high school test, and applies additional measures of school performance, the list of schools or districts that do not make AYP may look different than it does now.

Second, the subgroup requirements could cause problems for AYP in the future. Although the district has no ethnic subgroups of any size and no English language learners, it will still be responsible for making AYP for two subgroups: low-income students (25% of the district's enrollment) and students with disabilities (11% of enrollment). If the elementary and secondary school divisions are counted separately for AYP purposes, the subgroups may not be large enough to count, but in total, the subgroups will count for district AYP.

Third, a concern may surface about student achievement in mathematics. The district is examining the connection between the state math assessments and standards and the district math curriculum. The integrated math curriculum that the district uses through 8th grade is under review to make sure that it prepares students to reach higher expectations for achievement in math.

## Other Implementation Issues

The other challenge for NCLB implementation, according to the superintendent, is how to fit extra academic assistance into a student's schedule without forcing that student out of other classes or elective courses, such as art or music.

The 580 Romulus students live within a geographic area that covers 150 square miles, and most of the students are bussed to school. Because of the complex bussing schedules, most students do not have opportunities to stay after school for extra instructional assistance. Nor can the students come to school before the start of the regular school day or attend Saturday sessions. Students who do stay after school for help and/or tutoring are limited to those times when bus runs are available. If more after-school time is needed, funding for transportation as well as teacher help will be an issue.

## Data File — Romulus School District

**Location:** North Central New York

**Type:** Rural

**Number of Schools:**

1 school with two divisions: elementary, PreK-6; secondary, 7-12

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 580

White: 97%

Other: 3%

English Language Learners: 0

Students with Disabilities: 11%

Low-Income Students: 25%

### Number of Teachers

Total: 50

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 5

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

**Number of Title I Schools:** 1 school

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer only school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0





## 24. North Carolina

### Wake County Public School System

Superintendent: Bill McNeal

Contact: Karen Banks, Assistant Superintendent for Evaluation and Research

*Students: 108,400, K-12 - urban, suburban, and rural*

### Key Findings

- Wake County began its efforts to improve the academic achievement of all students more than a decade ago. Then, in 1998, the district set a goal of having 95% of its elementary and middle school students become proficient in reading and math by 2003; this goal fits nicely with the new expectations of NCLB, and a new goal applies the same standard to the high schools.
- A “no excuses” policy for Wake County has helped make the achievement of students in high-poverty schools comparable to that of students in other schools, particularly in the elementary grades.
- Students with disabilities and English language learners are the two subgroups in Wake County that did not make AYP in 2003, and the district is examining how to better address the needs of these students.
- The district believes the state criteria for determining which teachers are highly qualified are overly strict in requiring resource teachers, such as art teachers that serve many classrooms, to meet the same requirements as classroom teachers.

### Background

The Wake County Public School System came into existence in the early 1970s. As the urban families of the area surrounding the city of Raleigh began to move to the suburbs, several downtown schools were closed. To better address the educational and economic challenges that the region faced, the city and county school systems were merged—a move not widely supported at the time. Thirty years later, the Wake County Public School System enrolls more than 108,000 students—making it one of the nation’s largest school districts—and covers a geographical area of 850 square miles that includes urban, rural and suburban regions. The district staff is committed to enhancing the system’s tradition of superior performance by continually working to improve student performance and eliminate achievement gaps and by benchmarking its performance against not only other districts in the state but also districts across the nation.

Today Wake County is highly diverse in terms of population density, ethnicity, geography, culture, family income, and employment. More than 80 languages are spoken by the students who attend the schools. The school system continues to grow, with an increase of 4,000 students this year. Families come to Wake County because it is a vital growth area where jobs of all kinds are available, including jobs in the construction industry building new schools, highways, and businesses. With an urban core, as well as suburban and rural areas, Wake County Public School System is likely to continue growing because of its appeal to a wide range of families.





## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### ACCOUNTABILITY

In 1990, the Wake County School System began a large-scale effort to improve the academic performance of all students. Prior to 1990, the district had implemented other improvements, such as magnet schools to provide more options for students and multi-track year-round schedules at some schools to allow for more efficient use of facilities for the growing district. Families and teachers at these schools are there by choice, and they are very loyal to this type of calendar.

The school system began focusing on improving the academic achievement of various groups of students, disaggregating data whenever possible. The district established procedures to follow the academic progress of minority students to assure they had equality in opportunity, and made efforts to reduce achievement gaps among groups of students.

The district also reviewed and expanded its programs for the increasing numbers of students who were coming to the district from other countries and needed English language instruction. Programs for the instruction of students with disabilities were also reviewed and modified, where necessary, to meet the changing needs of the students and to serve more of these students in their “base” schools and in mainstream settings whenever possible.

The Board of Education supported preschool programs in some instances, and instituted full-day kindergarten programs to help young children, especially those from low-income families, get a good start in school. Pre-kindergarten programs have recently expanded in the district, helped by funding increases in Title I.

The general approach of the district was to focus on the continuous improvement of the entire educational system. The district staff also took steps to educate the community—including parents, educators, business leaders, churches, and cultural groups—about the importance of having a high-quality educational system to attract businesses and residents to the area.

A key feature of the reforms was a district-wide accountability system, established in 1990, which used multiple indicators to measure student progress. In 1998, the district set a goal of having 95% of its students, including those in the high-poverty schools, become proficient in reading, writing, and mathematics by 2003. To accomplish this, the district looked closely at the factors that created optimal learning conditions for children and sought to align all staff, funding, and other resources toward reaching the goal.

Looking back, staff members are amazed that they had such an ambitious goal long before the No Child Left Behind Act was written. The changes did not happen without controversy, but the direction was set and key leaders continued the focus. Alignment became the key practice as schools worked to change their practices. They eliminated programs and strategies that were not showing gains and replaced them with effective interventions. A huge change in school culture and attitudes began to occur, with elementary schools taking the lead, and is still taking place now to meet the demands of NCLB.

In this district with poverty levels as high as 65% in some schools, Wake County schools met the state’s AYP requirements for overall student performance and had no schools in school improvement. But the district is concerned because two subgroups—students with disabilities and English language learners—did not meet AYP at all schools in the 2003 testing cycle. The district is also concerned about performance at the secondary level, which is a target for improvement in 2003-04, with a goal of 95% proficiency for high school students by 2008.

### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Most teachers in Wake County Title I schools and other schools meet the NCLB highly qualified requirements. High schools have some trouble finding foreign language teachers,

and special education teachers are always needed, but the district has had more success recruiting than most other districts in the state. The district began to improve its level of teacher support several years ago in an effort to create the system as a good place for people to work. Salaries are competitive, and this has enabled the staff to focus on hiring teachers that have the qualifications that are needed. A record-setting 189 teachers from the Wake County Public School System earned certification from the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards in 2003. This brought Wake County's total to 665 teachers, one of the largest numbers of teachers in the nation who have earned National Board certification.

However, the method used in North Carolina to determine whether teachers are highly qualified according to the NCLB definition shows that only 77% of the classes in Wake County are taught by fully certified teachers. Karen Banks, the district's assistant superintendent, explains it like this: "In an elementary school with 40 classrooms and one art teacher without full certification touching 20 of those classrooms, it counts that 20 of the 40 classrooms are not being taught by a highly qualified teacher. It's the same issue with two-person teams at middle schools."

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

With the new requirements for subgroup performance, Wake County is reviewing the progress of two groups—English language learners and students with disabilities. A total of 19 Title I schools did not meet AYP targets in 2003, typically because of the performance of one or both of these groups. Some district officials are concerned that the schools may miss the mark again in 2004, which will result in their being identified for improvement and having to offer school choice. A huge amount of bussing already takes place in the Wake County Public School System to transport students to magnet and year-round schools, and the district is concerned that adding other choice options could disrupt the demographic balance in the schools. In addition, complaints are surfacing at the school level about serving special education students. In spite of decisions to serve special education students in their home or "base" school whenever possible, some students are grouped in self-contained classes that better meet their needs, and district officials fear that because of their low average achievement these students will be increasingly unwelcome in schools that used to welcome them with open arms.

As for English language learners, district officials are concerned that this subgroup will never make AYP because of the nature of the group. Students leave the subgroup as soon as they become proficient, so their improvement does not show up in the group. A similar concern exists for the subgroup of disabled students, which includes students with a wide range of needs, from those with mental retardation or other cognitive disabilities, to gifted students with physical disabilities, to students with emotional problems. Wake County has a large percentage of students in this subgroup (18% at grade levels tested for AYP), and district officials are reviewing programs, strategies, inclusion practices, and the academic progress of disabled students to see where changes need to be made.

Many county schools are overcrowded, and district officials are concerned about how the large numbers affect the quality of education. At many schools, students go to lunch at 10:00 a.m. because the school serves several hundred more students than the building's capacity. Some schools added as many as 14 additional mobile classrooms to house the overload of students. The district is concerned about how this situation affects student achievement and how it could be further complicated by the NCLB school choice requirements.





## ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

Efforts to improve the achievement of elementary and middle school students have paid off for the Wake County Public School System, but the focus is now turning to the high schools because they have not shown the same improvements and have received few additional resources in recent years. Although end-of-course exams have been in place for some time, overall academic achievement at high schools does not meet the 95% goal the district recently set for itself at high schools. Several strategies to boost achievement are being examined, including establishing alternative settings and small learning communities, adding more counselors (especially at the 9th grade), studying the dropout situation, and improving the data analysis system and teacher use of assessment data.

## Other Implementation Issues

The Wake County school system has used a research-based model to consistently examine student achievement results from its educational programs and activities. Staff members report no hesitation in eliminating programs, even if they are popular and well liked, if they do not produce the results that are needed. The district frequently implements new programs on a pilot basis or conducts a rigorous evaluation of programs. For example, when a commercially produced summer school program proved no better at improving achievement than the preceding program, it was dropped.

## Data File — Wake County Public School System

**Location:** North Carolina, including the state capital of Raleigh

**Type:** Urban, suburban, and rural

### Number of Schools:

126	total
80	elementary, K-5
28	middle schools, 7-8
18	high schools, 9-12

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 108,400

White: 60%

African American: 27%

Hispanic: 6%

Asian: 4%

Other: 3%

English Language Learners: 3.5% (Spanish, Hmong, and 70 other languages)

Students with Disabilities: 18%

Low-Income Students: 30% (range is from 4% to 65% in individual schools)

**Number of Teachers**

Total: 6,370

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 77%, using the state's criteria

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 0

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: N/A

**Number of Title I Schools:** 40 – all elementary

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0





## 25. North Dakota

### Napoleon School District

Superintendent: Jon Starkey

Contact: Jon Starkey

*Students: K-12, 236 – rural*

### Key Findings

- Napoleon School District has high levels of academic achievement in the elementary grades, but this achievement level tends to decline in the secondary grades.
- District officials have concerns about the clarity of directions they have received about NCLB from the state department of education on such issues as how proficiency levels are determined, the provision of assistance and direction to districts, and the development of effective curriculum. This has made it difficult for the small district to move ahead smoothly with implementation of the law.
- Educators in Napoleon are concerned about a switch in the state's testing policies whereby students are tested in the fall instead of the spring—a test schedule that educators fear will not assess how well students have learned the standards for a particular grade as effectively as spring testing would.

### Background

The Napoleon School District is a small K-12 district located in south central North Dakota between Bismarck, the state capital, and Jamestown. Although a major highway passes through Napoleon, the town and surrounding area have an agricultural focus that has remained quite stable. The children enrolled in the schools are from families that own farms or ranches and families that work for landowners or agribusinesses in the community. Grain and cattle are the major products, and some work is seasonal. Some residents commute to Bismarck or Jamestown for employment.

Napoleon is a closely knit community. Many local people leave the area to find jobs in the city or out of state, but often they return in later years to make their permanent home in the area. One such individual is Superintendent of Schools Jon Starkey, a graduate of local schools who returned to become involved in education in Napoleon.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The state of North Dakota is changing its assessment system, and as a result, there has been confusion in the Napoleon School District over what some local officials perceive to be a piecemeal system. In school year 2001-02, the North Dakota test for 12th graders was given in spring 2002, near the end of the senior year. Then beginning in 2002-03, the test was moved to the fall of 2002. The test was also administered to this year's senior class in the fall of 2003. However, in the fall of 2004, seniors will no longer be tested, but a test is being developed to give to 11th grade students. Beginning in the fall of 2004, all state assessments at grade levels 3-11 will be given in the fall of the year, and these will be used to determine AYP. This change has caused quite a stir in the educational community, according to district staff, because the tests are designed to measure grade level exit standards instead of entrance expectations. Many staff members also





believe that the tests are not as closely aligned to state and district standards as they should be. The state has issued an RFP for the next round of assessments, as the current contract year expires this year. District officials report that there is consternation regarding the lack of input from various educational organizations in the development of the proposal.

The academic achievement of Napoleon elementary students is strong, but district educators are concerned about achievement declines in the later grades. For the first time, subgroup reporting was done in 2003, but the district has only one subgroup, that of low-income students, and this subgroup met AYP expectations. The district has just nine students with disabilities—not enough to count as a subgroup.

#### STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Napoleon School District began looking at the professional development needs of its teachers several years ago and prior to NCLB, by examining teacher credentials and determining how many hours of coursework teachers had in the teaching of reading and other core subjects. According to district staff, most elementary teachers had two or three courses in reading and mathematics during their undergraduate preparation, not enough to prepare them to diagnose and remediate the problems of students who have difficulties in those subjects. Teachers were somewhat like general practitioners (to borrow a medical analogy) because they lacked the specialized mastery of core subject matter.

In recent years, the district has emphasized professional development. All of the elementary staff have taken numerous college courses, attended a variety of workshops, and received ongoing training to improve their knowledge and skills in reading, math, and other core areas. In addition, the elementary school has provided training for a Reading Recovery teacher to help improve the literacy skills of lower elementary students. The district has also expanded Title I services in reading and math to meet the needs of higher-aged students through the 8th grade.

Junior and senior high school teachers face similar problems in their undergraduate preparation. The district has been trying to move toward addressing more sophisticated issues in staff development, but it has faced challenges, primarily related to money and time. State regulations make it difficult to provide staff development during the school year, so most training happens during the summer or before or after school. The costs of college course work and in-service training for teachers quickly add up, and a small district has little, if any, flexibility in its budget to provide such resources. State funds are very limited, and federal funds from Title II of NCLB are stretched thinly, but the district is still making an effort to improve professional development.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

#### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Only three teachers in Napoleon do not meet the requirements of NCLB, and the major issue for them appears to be what is commonly referred to as a “composite degree.” For example, a teacher might have a joint college degree in history and geography, but because such a degree lacks a major subject focus, it does not meet the NCLB definition of “highly qualified.” This situation is currently being reviewed by state and university officials to see what needs to be done to help such teachers meet the requirements of NCLB.

Districts in North Dakota can use a portfolio system to determine the “highly qualified” status of existing teachers, and the Napoleon district is encouraging veteran teachers to explore the portfolio option. This system of determining teacher qualifications will only be available to teachers who have taught successfully for a long time and are not likely to go back to school to meet the requirements.

The teaching staff in Napoleon is quite stable, with only one vacancy in the past year, and that was because a teacher moved out of state. One of the goals of the Napoleon district is to “grow its own” teachers, and to this end, efforts are made to encourage young people to come back to the community after they receive their education. The big problem is trying to match salaries of other states and larger cities to attract local talent back to the community.

## Other Implementation Issues

### PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Napoleon School District is undertaking efforts to help teachers, parents, community members, and the Board of Education understand the requirements of NCLB. The goal, according to the superintendent, is to be proactive and find out what needs to be done, and then move to make it happen. More funding would solve a lot of problems, as it would be used to provide specialists in math, literacy, and reading who would train teachers and work with students. Since that is not a likely possibility, the district will need to find other avenues to continue meeting the goals of high academic achievement for all students.

## Data File — Napoleon School District

**Location:** South Central North Dakota

**Type:** Rural

**Number of Schools:**

1 school with three divisions – elementary, junior high, and high school

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 236

White: 98%

Other: 2%

English Language Learners: 0

Students with Disabilities: 4%

Low-Income Students: 33%

### Number of Teachers

Total: 30

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 10% (3 teachers)

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 0

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: N/A

**Number of Title I Schools:** 1 school – targeted assistance

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0





## 26. Ohio

### Cleveland Municipal School District

Chief Executive Officer: Barbara Byrd-Bennett

Contacts: Myrna Elliot-Lewis, Chief Academic Officer; Carol Hauser, Executive Director of Employee Services; Erbert Johnson, Chief Financial Officer; Peter Robertson, Chief Information Officer; Nina Turner, Director of Government Affairs; Theresa Yeldell, Executive Director of Family and Community Engagement

*Students: 69,534, K-12 – urban*

### Key Findings

- In general, implementation of NCLB in the Cleveland Municipal School District has been hampered by a lack of consistent and timely information about the requirements of NCLB from both the state and the U.S. departments of education.
- Because Cleveland is an urban, high-minority, high-poverty district, it must pass all 82 benchmarks every year to meet state criteria for adequate yearly progress—far more than its suburban counterparts. District officials say this may put the district at a disadvantage within the state’s accountability system.
- At present, few Cleveland students have taken advantage of school choice under NCLB. However, parents have had little time to make decisions about choice, because in both 2002 and 2003, the state did not release the final list of schools in need of improvement until August. If the number of students transferring schools increases in the future, the NCLB school choice provisions may conflict with the district’s efforts to return to neighborhood schools after extensive bussing for desegregation and may disrupt the district’s new facilities plans, which are based on neighborhood demographics.
- Although the district officials say they want students to use supplemental services, very few students have taken advantage of these opportunities. Connecting parents to providers and arranging logistics have proved to be barriers to using supplemental services to date.

### Background

Cleveland is a city of about 480,000 people, located on Lake Erie. The population is 51% African American, 42% white, and 7% Latino. The median household income is \$26,000. Public schools are majority African American (70.6%) and overwhelming low-income (98.8%). Cleveland has a shrinking population with many middle-class residents of all races moving to the suburbs.

Like many large city school districts, Cleveland has made major efforts to reform its schools. Since the mayoral appointed Chief Executive Office took office in the fall of 1998, the district has focused on improving academic achievement, starting with literacy at the elementary school level. A newly appointed administrator will oversee high school reforms, including a move to small learning communities within the district’s large comprehensive high schools.

Based on Ohio’s system for rating district quality, recent reforms appear to be paying off. Under the state’s pre-NCLB accountability system, the state issued report cards that rated districts and schools on the basis of test scores, graduation rates, and student attendance. Schools and districts were grouped into five performance categories based





on the number of state targets met, and those with ratings below “effective” had to create formal plans to improve by a specified time, although no sanctions were clearly defined for schools that failed to improve. From the time the state began rating districts in 1996 until 2002, the Cleveland district was in “academic emergency,” the state’s lowest category. In 2003, increases in test scores and student attendance pulled Cleveland up into the “academic watch” category.

Citizens of Cleveland appear to support the school system. In May 2001, Clevelanders approved a \$335 million capital bond issue to build new schools. In November 2003, Clevelanders voted to keep the schools under the mayoral appointed board and Chief Executive Officer. Although the state offers students in the city of Cleveland vouchers to attend local private schools, a limited percentage of parents use these. According to a report by the non-profit Policy Matters Ohio, about 4,000 Clevelanders—or some 6% of the district’s enrollment—use vouchers, and of these the majority never attended a Cleveland public school, but instead were always in private schools or started using vouchers in kindergarten.

## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### EVOLVING INFORMATION

In general, district officials in Cleveland applaud the spirit of NCLB and agree that schools should be held accountable and should work toward improvement. However, the implementation has been rocky due to unclear, changeable, and/or late information from the state and federal governments. Erbert Johnson, the district’s chief financial officer, summed up district thinking when he said, “The biggest challenge is the fact that the law is evolving. The advantage is that we have the opportunity to create the best solutions to the challenges.”

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ACCOUNTABILITY AND ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

As a district, Cleveland improved its academic performance in 2003. Passing 6 of the 22 state indicators used for accountability, Cleveland moved out of the “academic emergency” category for the first time since report cards were given. However, the district did not make AYP, due to low participation by Asian students, Hispanic students, and English language learners.

Cleveland’s chief information officer, Peter Robertson, said that larger, urban districts are at a disadvantage with the state’s new accountability system, developed to comply with NCLB. To determine whether each major subgroup in a school or district has made AYP, Ohio looks at a grade-level-weighted average of students in the school or district taking the tests. This calculation is compared to state averages and to a state trajectory of the improvement needed to bring the state to 100% proficient by 2014. Robertson noted that because AYP is based on state averages, districts like Cleveland that have performed poorly in the past are coming from behind now.

In addition, many suburban and rural districts have fewer subgroups of students who must be counted for AYP. “The only schools that are going to have trouble are schools with high diversity and high poverty,” Robertson said. He explained that under the state’s AYP criteria, the Cleveland district and most of its schools must make AYP on 82 different benchmarks each year—taking into account all the subgroups, grade levels, and progress indicators counted—while many suburban schools must meet only a few AYP benchmarks. All 82 must be passed each year if Cleveland is to make AYP.

Although Ohio disaggregated data from the Ohio Proficiency Test (OPT) by race for the past two years, 2003 was the first time the state included test results for English



language learners and students with disabilities. Previously, the majority of these students had been exempt from the OPT. For the state of Ohio as a whole, English language learners did not pass any AYP goals, except attendance; students with disabilities did not pass math or reading; and neither white nor black students passed math.

The subgroups of English language learners and students with disabilities also posed particular challenges for the Cleveland school district in 2002-03. Robertson said that the district originally thought that ELL students could take an alternative assessment, so many teachers and principals went ahead and tested these students using an alternative assessment. “Our people were convinced they were doing the right thing,” he said.

However, in February 2003, the state notified the district that all ELL students must take the OPT, regardless of their language proficiency. Many of these students, especially those who spoke very little English, were not given the OPT, because teachers and principals falsely assumed that these students had already met the requirement by taking the alternative assessment. Robertson said he hopes this problem will not occur again, because by 2003-04 the state plans to make available an official alternative assessment for ELL students.

More students with disabilities also took the OPT this year. In many cases, however, their testing turned out to be unnecessary, according to Robertson. In March, the district understood that it was to test the majority of special education students. Obviously, Robertson said, “We can’t just say, ‘We’re going to test all kids,’” noting that this subgroup includes a number of autistic and/or non-verbal students who attend Cleveland schools. However, the district tested as many special education students as possible using the OPT.

Then in July, after school was out, Robertson said the state removed the requirement that the majority of special education students must take the OPT; instead, these students could “pass” if they met the goals of their Individual Education Programs (IEPs). When students who met the goals of their IEPs were included, Cleveland actually did better on 10 of the state’s 22 indicators of improvement.

Despite its rough edges, Robertson called the state’s new accountability system “much more nuanced” but added that it is also more complicated. He also observed that the system “still hasn’t changed the fundamental approach from pass rates to ‘value added’ or improvement.” The notion of creating a value-added approach to school improvement—which takes into account how much progress a school has made, regardless of where it stands in terms of raw averages—is under consideration by the Ohio Department of Education and would be a more accurate measure of Cleveland schools, Robertson said.

Although Robertson favors assessment and accountability, he said he worries that with NCLB mandates, Ohio will be “dismantling urban schools just about the time suburbs wake up and say, ‘Wait, we don’t like this.’” At the end of the 2001-02 school year, Ohio initially identified about 900 schools as in need of improvement under NCLB, but eventually the label only stuck with 212 schools. The majority that came off the list were suburban schools, he said.

Based on 2003 performance, 27 individual Cleveland schools have been identified for school improvement or corrective action for school year 2003-04. Twelve are in year one of improvement and will offer choice. Six are in year two and will offer choice and supplemental services. Nine are in year three and will craft a specific improvement plan, in addition to offering choice and supplemental services.

#### CHOICE

Not many parents took advantage of school choice in 2002-03. Of the approximately 1,200 students eligible for choice, the parents of only 38 applied for choice transfers, according to Nina Turner, the district’s director of government affairs. Of those who



applied, only 27 students actually transferred schools. For 2003-04, only 44 students applied to transfer. Turner attributed this lack of interest in transferring to two possible causes: “Maybe parents weren’t aware [of choice]. Or maybe they wanted to stay in the schools they were familiar with.” She said she believes from talking to parents that the second reason is more probable.

Of school choice under NCLB, Robertson said, “In theory it’s a good thing,” but in practice it’s not. Theresa Yeldell, the district’s executive director of family and community engagement, agreed, explaining that after years of bussing for desegregation purposes, the district is now moving to neighborhood schools, a philosophy that parents support. Yeldell observed that parents may not support choice because they know “it takes a long time for a child to feel comfortable in a new school.”

Yeldell also said that because the state announced its list of schools in need of improvement in late August 2002, parents didn’t really have much time to consider choice. For parents using choice this year, the district will provide transportation and a choice of two schools with similar grade configurations that are not among the schools identified for school improvement.

However, late notification continues to be a variable this year. Ohio finalized its list of schools in need of improvement in August 2003. So, most parents received their notification of choice by mail only a week or so before school started. However, this year Cleveland bypassed the need for a separate mailing by including information about choice and supplemental services in the district’s “school profile,” a fact sheet about each school sent to parents annually.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

Supplemental services were also underutilized in 2002-03. Turner reported that only 104 students received supplemental services. District officials would like to see more eligible students take advantage of supplemental services. “This year we are being much more aggressive about promoting [supplemental services],” Turner said.

However, as with choice, communicating opportunities to parents is difficult, according to Yeldell, and the logistics are not always easy for parents to arrange. “It’s hard for the average parent to understand,” she said, noting that using supplemental service often means bringing your child to school early or having the child stay late.

In addition, Yeldell said the state’s list of organizations authorized to provide supplemental services is not consistent. “That list of providers changes every single day. You get it out, and the very next day there are new providers.” Yeldell also said she worries about the quality of some of the supplemental service providers.

The Cleveland district is itself an authorized provider of supplemental services, and the services it offers are well known to Yeldell. But she said she doesn’t always get enough information about other providers, explaining that when she has asked these providers for information, some contacted her, some just sent brochures, and some didn’t respond. Once she received information about providers, she found that “some had no sites in Cleveland.” Also, she said, “One program was so loosely configured that it had a fly-by-night feeling to it.” In another instance, parents chose a provider, but then the provider decided not to serve Cleveland because not enough students were interested.

Yeldell expressed concern that parents will blame the district if things go wrong with outside providers. To date, however, the providers that signed a formal contract to provide services to Cleveland all honored their contracts, according to chief academic officer Myrna Elliot-Lewis.

#### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Ohio’s definition of highly qualified teachers essentially matches the federal definition. As of fall 2003, however, state officials reported that they only have data available to

determine whether about 80% of Ohio teachers are “highly qualified” under NCLB. The status of the remaining 20% is unknown. Ohio has only collected the necessary information about teachers consistently since it changed its teacher licensure requirements in 1998; therefore, many veteran teachers may or may not have met these higher standards. In particular, the state has little information about the content area course work of middle school teachers.

Cleveland’s information about highly qualified teachers is no different from the state’s, because the district had not been previously required to collect the information needed for NCLB. The district is aware, however, that out of its total force of about 5,000 teachers, 192 were teaching out-of-field at the beginning of the 2003-04 school year, according to Carol Hauser, executive director of employee services. Another 104 classrooms were headed by substitutes at the beginning of the year.

Despite the difficulties with collecting data, Hauser said she is in favor of the highly qualified teacher requirement of NCLB. “I certainly support high standards for teachers,” she said, adding that, “it’s possible that this will assist teachers in their quest to be seen as professionals.” However, Hauser explained that in hiring decisions, she considers more than just the requirements of NCLB: “Having a certificate doesn’t necessarily mean that you’ll do an excellent job in the classroom.” She also looks at past experience and teaching performance.

The greatest challenge the district faces with the NCLB requirements is in special education—a challenge that Hauser said may not be solvable “without growing our own, and growing our own is going to take money.” The district currently has a partnership with Cleveland State University to prepare and provide alternative certification for special education teachers, many of whom start working for the district as substitutes or teaching assistants.

The district is also taking steps to collect more information about veteran teachers. The state disseminated a state-created rubric to determine the qualifications of some veteran and uncertified teachers. Hauser said Cleveland principals started using this rubric with their staff in November 2003.

#### HIGHLY QUALIFIED PARAPROFESSIONALS

Under NCLB, paraprofessionals who are paid through Title I funds must be “highly qualified.” In keeping with the federal requirements, Ohio has defined highly qualified as passing a standardized test, having two years of college, or holding an associate’s degree. Of the roughly 800 paraprofessionals in the district, about 130 are funded through Title I. Of these, 102 are “community aides” who work with parents and families and are therefore exempt from the NCLB mandate. This leaves about 28 positions that must be filled by highly qualified paraprofessionals.

Cleveland has long been involved in helping paraprofessionals increase their job skills and further their education. Since 1991, the district has had a partnership with Cuyahoga Community College to help paraprofessionals continue their education and/or earn associate’s degrees.

Currently, 64 of Cleveland’s 800 paraprofessionals have associate’s degrees, and this summer at least 55 passed a standardized test to certify their qualifications, another option under NCLB. The problem, Hauser said, is not finding highly qualified paraprofessionals, but making sure the paraprofessionals the district currently has are in the right positions. Ultimately, however, all paraprofessionals should be highly qualified so that the district can be flexible in assigning positions, in the view of Paula R. Buckner-Lilly, who coordinates training of paraprofessionals under Hauser.

While Hauser doesn’t anticipate that filling Title I paraprofessional positions with highly qualified people will be a problem for Cleveland, she does think it may have larger repercussions. “Generally people who go through associate’s degrees do not want a job that pays as little as a paraprofessional,” she said. “It’s going to force districts to look at pay scales.”





## BUDGET CUTS AND FUNDING ISSUES

NCLB is being implemented at a time when the state is experiencing budget difficulties. For fiscal years 2003-05, the state has allocated \$14.5 billion for education, a 5% increase over the previous biennium budget. But this is several million dollars less than what the Ohio Department of Education said was needed for Ohio's schools. Some districts will face actual budget cuts. Cleveland, for example, will have \$33 million less to spend over the next two years. State budget troubles have already affected the implementation of NCLB. For instance, 2003 was the first year state report cards were not mailed to all parents and are instead only available online.

While several district officials questioned whether NCLB had adequate funding, chief financial officer Erbert Johnson said he is focused not on a lack of money, but on the need to rearrange existing money. NCLB, he said, provides, "More guidance for directing resources more intensely... targeting schools specifically based on test scores."

"Schools have always had test scores," Johnson explained, but what's new is "the formalization of a school's status" and the rearrangement of funds accordingly. When asked how much NCLB costs Cleveland, he said that if he ran a widget factory, he could answer the question more clearly. As it is, he said it's very difficult to account for all the human time used to implement NCLB and help students learn. He also said that knowing the price tag ultimately isn't worth the trouble right now. "I wouldn't want to take the time to figure it out," he said, "unless someone were going to reimburse me."

Johnson noted that theoretically, the biggest funding change made by NCLB is its requirement that districts set aside 20% of their Title I allocations to carry out choice and supplemental services. This change did not, however, come to fruition last year, because few students took advantage of choice and supplemental services. Fortunately, Johnson said, the federal government has allowed districts to carry over Title I funds for choice and supplemental services this year.

Johnson said he welcomed the NCLB provisions that gave districts more flexibility in using federal funds. Although the rules for Title I are more rigid under NCLB, in Johnson's view, funding under the law's other titles, such as Title II, has become more flexible. "You can use the others towards your big plans of reaching AYP," he explained.

Despite his optimism about the funding available for NCLB, Johnson cautioned that the district must take care to implement NCLB in ways that are consistent with other district initiatives. In particular, he says the district has a \$1.5 billion initiative to refurbish neighborhood school facilities. The initiative, he said, is based on "the demographics of where people live" and is designed to make all schools better and more responsive to their surrounding communities. If not implemented carefully, school choice under NCLB could undermine this district initiative, in Johnson's view.

## Other Implementation Issues

### READING FIRST

In July 2003, Cleveland was awarded a grant under NCLB's Reading First program. Awards were made on the basis of application and student poverty. In Cleveland, 20 schools will receive funding.

Cleveland will use the funding in a variety of ways. As an initial step, the schools will upgrade their reading series to Harcourt Trophies from Harcourt Signatures, said chief academic officer Myrna Elliot-Lewis. The 20 schools will also share five data analysis coaches, who will help them use data such as test scores and classroom work to make instructional decisions. The Reading First schools will also have a 90-minute literacy block, so that students can focus in depth on reading. Funds will also be used to

hire a central office administrator to coordinate the activities at the 20 schools.

What will happen at Reading First schools “isn’t so terribly different from what goes on at other elementary schools,” said Elliot-Lewis, except that the work will be more intense and will involve more time and more staff.

## Data File — Cleveland Municipal School District

**Location:** Northern Ohio

**Type:** Urban, city of 480,000

**Number of Schools:**

- 125 total
- 63 elementary schools (K-5)
- 23 elementary schools (K-8)
- 16 middle schools
- 3 alternative middle schools
- 15 high schools
- 5 alternative high schools

**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

- Total Enrollment: 69,534
- African American: 70.6%
- White: 18.3%
- Hispanic: 9.1%
- Multi-Racial: 1.0%
- Asian: 0.7%
- American Indian: 0.3%
- English Language Learners: 4.2%
- Students with Disabilities: 14.8%
- Low-Income Students: 98.8%

**Number of Teachers**

- Total: 5,064
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: N/A

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

- Total: 23
- Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 17 (74%)

**Number of Title I Schools: 110**

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	8	12
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	7	6
In corrective action:	6	9





## 27. Oregon

### Tigard-Tualatin School District

Superintendent: Dr. Steve Lowder

Contact: Susan Carlile, Director, Curriculum and Instruction

Students: 11,826, K-12 – suburban

### Key Findings

- Students in Tigard-Tualatin consistently show high performance levels on state tests, but elementary students do better than secondary students. To address this disparity, the district is implementing smaller, more personalized learning communities in the high schools, intensifying math instruction and reading across all curriculum areas, as well as offering after-school classes to help students meet state standards.
- The Tigard-Tualatin district was beginning to implement NCLB when it had to deal with dramatic budget cuts by the state of Oregon. The district had to shorten the school year, increase class size, lay off 40 teachers, and cut back on other services—all of which are likely to create challenges for the district in meeting NCLB academic goals.

### Background

A pioneer named Wilson Tigard built a log school in what was known as the Oregon Territory in 1853. The little school stood at what is now Main Street in the town of Tigard, Oregon. Several years later, the residents of the neighboring town of Tualatin built their own school. From these two country schools, symbols of the western frontier spirit, a school district grew—and is still growing—that combines the names of the two places, the Tigard-Tualatin School District.

With a student enrollment of 11,826, Tigard-Tualatin has been growing for the past 20 years as part of the suburban fringe of the city of Portland. Members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition of 1803, the trip that is now celebrating its bicentennial, came through this region on their way to the Pacific Ocean. Portland and its surrounding area have been growing ever since, and two centuries later, the growth continues.

The Tigard-Tualatin School District serves three distinct populations: highly educated, high-income families who live in expensive hillside homes, middle class families, and low-income families, many of whom do not speak English and who work in the food service and the nursery industry. This disparity in family income is reflected in the range of poverty in the district schools. One of the nine elementary schools has a 52% poverty rate, while another counts only 8% of its children as poor. This poses a potential problem for the district when all the NCLB requirements come into play.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Tigard-Tualatin School District has made a major investment in literacy and reading in the early grades, in an effort to assure adequate yearly progress for all children at all grade levels and all schools. With a grant from the U. S. Department of Education and the University of Oregon, the district is putting in place a long-range training program for all elementary teachers that focuses on literacy skill identification and individual-





ized interventions for students below grade level. Major areas of focus include teaching teachers how to use the student assessment/instruction data base, aligning curriculum with assessments and instruction across grade levels, and tracking the progress of low-achieving students through the grade levels.

Consistent with NCLB goals, Oregon's plan for NCLB calls on schools to make steady progress each year until 100% of students meet the state proficiency targets by 2014. A major focus of the district is on preventing reading problems for children through early intervention and close teacher monitoring of student progress. The goal is for teachers to quickly correct any deficits children have so they will be able to catch up with their peers. Assessment teams in the Tigard-Tualatin district provide intensive progress checks for all students three times a year, in the fall, mid-winter, and spring. These teams, led by an early literacy specialist, analyze the assessment data and make recommendations for immediate interventions that classroom teachers can provide in the classroom or an after-school setting.

On state tests for reading/language arts and mathematics, Tigard-Tualatin students have performed very well, particularly at the elementary level. Academic achievement generally exceeds state averages, although the performance of elementary students is consistently stronger than that of secondary students. In the 2003 test administration, 88% of the district's 3rd grade students met or exceeded state performance targets in reading/language arts and 85% did so in math. Among the district's 10th grade students, only 64% met the targets in English/language arts and only 62% did so in math.

All Title I schools in the district met AYP in the 2003 test administration. However, both of the district's high schools and two of the middle schools did not meet AYP, but these are not Title I schools.

#### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Teachers in Tigard-Tualatin meet Oregon's NCLB expectations for teachers. The Title I schools that serve the poorest children have additional teachers that assist with reading and mathematics, and the teachers and principals at these schools are just as highly qualified as those at the schools serving higher-income families. The district has had no difficulty finding qualified teachers, but recent budget cuts have necessitated reductions in the entire teaching staff.

With regard to the NCLB requirements for highly qualified teachers, there are five teachers in the district's Title I elementary schools that do not currently meet the requirements. These teachers have transitional licenses and are working towards being "highly qualified." In addition, 71 of the district's middle school teachers do not meet the requirements because they have a general endorsement, not specific subject-matter certification. District officials are working with these teachers as well to ensure that they are highly qualified by the end of the 2005-06 school year as required under NCLB.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

#### FISCAL PROBLEMS

Just as Oregon was starting to implement NCLB, along came devastating state budget cuts for schools in the spring of 2003. Newspaper headlines across the nation trumpeted one of the solutions to the financial crisis that faced public schools in Oregon—reducing the number of school days in the year. Some districts did cut days from the 2002-03 school year. Tigard-Tualatin cut five days in 2002-03, and the district also increased class size in all classrooms by as many as five students, from 20 to 25 at the elementary level and from 25 to 29 at the secondary level. To make these reductions, the district laid off 40 teachers. Many excellent teachers were lost to the district, including veteran teachers who retired in the face of changes to their retirement system, and more

recent hires who had limited teaching experience. The impact of these fiscal moves will be seen in the next school year.

Reductions were also made in other budgets, from professional development to textbooks and supplies. In light of the known and the not-yet-known decreases in district budgets, Tigard-Tualatin is likely to face challenges in continuing to meet NCLB academic goals. The present state of affairs requires school and district personnel to do far more with fewer dollars. Whether this is possible remains to be seen.

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR SUBGROUPS

The state of Oregon had previously tested students in grades 3, 5 and 8 only, with no separate reporting of subgroup performance. Under the previous state method, Tigard-Tualatin students performed better than the state average. On the widely distributed state reporting system, five of the nine elementary schools in the district are shown as having “strong student performance.” The other four have “satisfactory student performance.” The two middle schools are rated as having strong student performance, but the third middle school, the one with the highest poverty, has only satisfactory student performance. The same pattern is apparent in the two high schools—the higher-poverty school is rated as satisfactory, and the other one is rated as strong.

With test scores in Oregon now disaggregated by poverty and racial-ethnic groups, this high achieving district has seen great differences among the achievement of poor children, students with disabilities, English language learners, and some racial/ethnic groups. English Language Learners and students with disabilities were the subgroups that failed to make adequate yearly progress in the two middle schools and two high schools. The district’s enrollment of English language learners numbers slightly over 1,400, and their primary languages are Spanish (1,097 speak Spanish), Marshallese, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Japanese.

## Other Implementation Issues

#### ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

To help secondary students meet NCLB’s rigorous academic requirements, the Tigard-Tualatin district is planning to create “small learning communities” in its secondary schools. This program is aimed at making the schools more personal for 9th grade students with “houses,” mentoring programs, quick responses to behavior issues, and on-going monitoring of academic progress.

## Data File — Tigard-Tualatin School District

**Location:** Northwestern Oregon

**Type:** Suburban – Portland area

**Number of Schools:**

- 15 total
- 9 elementary schools, K-5
- 3 middle schools, grades 6-8
- 2 high schools, grades 9-12
- 1 alternative school, grades 9 – 12

**Student Enrollment and Demographics**

Total enrollment: 11,826

White: 78%

Hispanic: 12%

Asian: 7%

African American: 2%



American Indian: 1%  
English Language Learners: 12%  
Students with Disabilities: N/A  
Low-Income Students: N/A

**Number of Teachers**

Total: 648  
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 12% (5 elementary school teachers in Title I schools; 71 middle school teachers)

**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 39  
Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 31% (12)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 5 elementary

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer only school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0



## 28. South Carolina

### Berkeley County School District

Superintendent: Dr. J. Chester Floyd

Contact: Sheldon Etheridge, Executive Director, Federal Programs

*Students: 26,375, K-12 – rural and urban*

### Key Findings

- Berkeley County School District is finding that its well-structured and extensive training programs for teachers and paraprofessionals meets and surpasses many of the requirements of NCLB. As part of this effort, the district covers many of the costs of obtaining advanced degrees and National Board certification for its Title I teachers, and teachers who become nationally certified are given a \$5,000 annual stipend if they teach in a Title I school.
- Berkeley County may have difficulty meeting the NCLB qualifications requirements for its middle school and special education teachers. In addition, many of the district's primary grade teachers (grades 1-3) have not yet met a state requirement to have certain coursework in early childhood education.

### Background

Berkeley County covers a large area of 1,229 square miles in south central South Carolina. Students often live a long distance from their schools, and more than half of the district's 26,375 students ride buses to school. There are lakes and a national forest within the county, and these create vast differences among the localities of the schools. The town of Moncks Corner, the county seat for Berkeley County, is in the central part of the school district. Thirty-four schools are under the governance of the district, and they represent a wide variety of both rural and urban settings, ethnicity, and economic status. Stratford High School, for example, serves 2,600 students in grades 9-12 in an urban area and has a poverty rate of 20%, while Cross High School serves only 484 students in grades 7-12 in a rural area and has a poverty rate of 80%.

The districtwide percentage of English language learners is relatively low, 2% or 526 students, but these students speak 47 different languages, with Spanish, Vietnamese, and Pacific Islander languages as the main ones. The diversity in languages is unusual, given the relatively small number of students. Charleston Navy Base, which draws families with a variety of language backgrounds, lies within Berkeley County. Three schools are located on the base.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Berkeley County has embarked on an extensive program of professional development with three purposes: 1) to improve the instructional skills of teachers and paraprofessionals; 2) to assist teachers and paraprofessionals in meeting NCLB requirements; and 3) to provide incentives for teachers to keep them teaching at the highest-poverty schools in the district. Using a variety of district, state, and federal funds, the training program reached more than 60 teachers in 2002-03 and was so successful that district staff members were invited to share information about the program with other districts, including





some in other states. Berkeley County staff have identified ten leadership components that result in program accountability and that form the foundation of the district's professional development program for teachers and paraprofessionals at Title I schools.

In addition to improving general teaching skills related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment, Berkeley teachers who teach in Title I schools are encouraged and assisted in obtaining advanced degrees and National Board Certification. Tuition costs, textbooks, supplies, mileage reimbursements, and testing fees are covered. A teacher who is nationally certified is provided a yearly stipend of \$5,000 as a further incentive for teaching in a rural Title I school.

Paraprofessionals receive similar reimbursements to help them obtain the two years of college required by NCLB.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

Berkeley County has launched an extensive program of professional development that is reaching many teachers, but the state requirements for highly qualified teachers may be difficult to meet for three groups of teachers: primary teachers, special education teachers at middle and high school, and middle school teachers in content areas.

NCLB requires elementary school teachers to have a substantial base of literacy and the ability to teach reading, writing, and mathematics, but an issue that seems to be unique to South Carolina is a state requirement for teachers of five-year-old kindergarteners to hold early childhood certification. District staff members expect this to change to a requirement for early childhood certification for teachers in grade 1 as well. Questions arise as to whether this will have much effect on the ability of these teachers to provide effective basic skills and literacy instruction for students.

Special education teachers at the middle and high school levels comprise another group that is expected to have difficulty meeting NCLB standards. These teachers are often responsible for more than one content area.

Middle school teachers are also a concern because of the content mastery requirement. District leaders believe that students in the 5th and 6th grades in the middle school might benefit more from teachers who have elementary training rather than specific content expertise.

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Under the South Carolina AYP model, a school must meet as many as 28 separate measures, including testing participation rates and subgroup performance, in order to make AYP. Of the 610 objectives required of Berkeley County's 34 schools, 479 were met in 2003 for a district determined compliance rate of 78.5%. Six schools (17.6%) met every standard measured at their site.

Three of the district schools are in the first year of school improvement, and one is in the second year. A total of 28 schools did not make AYP in 2003, but for most schools, the reason they did not make AYP was because of the students with disabilities subgroup. Secondary school performance was lower than that of the other schools; only one of six high schools made AYP.

### SCHOOL CHOICE AND SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES

In 2003-04 three schools are offering choice with 2,456 students eligible for transfer. However, only 112 students elected to go to another school. District officials are finding that parents want to keep their children in their home school.

At the school where students could participate in supplemental education services in 2003-04, 209 students were determined to be eligible. No students chose to partici-

pate in programs provided by outside providers because of the distances involved. Berkeley County was also a provider, and students do attend the comprehensive after-school program that also provides transportation for them.

## Other Implementation Issues

### FISCAL ISSUES

State and district budget cuts are creating problems for Berkeley County, and staff members anticipate that negative effects on programs will increase. The district absorbed a 12.6% cut in state funds in 2002-03 (nearly \$6 million) and another 4.7% cut in October of 2003. Expectations have been set for another 10% in January of 2004. A total of 147 teachers were laid off, but with special funds from federal and state sources, many of these were rehired.

A major issue in the district is the cost of new facilities because of the immense growth in the county. Berkeley County is involved in a progressive \$165 million building program, but enrollment continues to exceed expectations and is projected to double within ten years. If more schools are required to offer school choice because they did not make adequate yearly progress, capacity will be a great concern in the district.

## Data File — Berkeley County School District

**Location:** South central part of South Carolina; county has population of 128,776

**Type:** Rural and urban

### Number of Schools:

- 34 total
- 21 elementary schools, K-4
- 8 middle schools, grades 5-8
- 5 high schools, grades 9-12

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 26,375

White 59%

African American: 36%

Other: 5%

English Language Learners: 2%

Students with Disabilities: 23%

Low-Income Students: 52% (ranging from 20% to 98% in individual schools)

### Number of Teachers

Total: 1,707

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 185 (11%)

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 312

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 125 (40%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 27 – all schoolwide

### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer only school choice:	1	3
Required to offer both supplemental services and choice:	0	1
In corrective action:	0	0





## 29. Texas

### Cuero Independent School District

Superintendent: Dr. John Hall

Contact: Debra Baros, Assistant Superintendent

Students: 1,993, K-12 – rural

### Key Findings

- The academic achievement of Cuero students, including its racial/ethnic and low-income subgroups, exceeds the state average in almost every subject and all grades. In some subjects and grades, 100% of African American, Hispanic, and low-income subgroups achieved at the proficient levels on state tests. As factors underlying this success, Cuero staff point to the district's extensive professional development, its strong emphasis on reading and math, and its policy of scheduling all third grade students and their parents for in-depth conferences with a counselor to make sure every child is progressing on track and appropriately challenged.
- Cuero, a rural district, faces special challenges with NCLB because it is miles away from neighboring towns and cannot share resources and training.
- Cuero provides specialized services for students with disabilities from neighboring districts. Because some of special education students have significant disabilities that make it difficult for them to master the content likely to appear on state tests, the district may have difficulty making AYP for this subgroup.

### Background

Cuero schools celebrated their 110th birthday in 2003. In 1893, the small city passed a school tax, a woman named Sarah French donated land for the school, and the John C. French School, one of the first educational institutions in south Texas, was established for children in grades 1-10. The school is still in existence, serving grades Pre-K through 1. The Cuero Independent School District also has a school for grades 2-5, a junior high, and a high school—four schools altogether.

The Guadalupe River that flows through Cuero provides a refreshing coolness to the region, but it can also bring disaster, as it did in 1998 when a devastating flood damaged the special education campus. A recent bond election is allowing the district to construct a new junior high school and high school to replace aged buildings.

Ranching is a major business in the area. A cotton mill is also a major employer, but three large wood-product manufacturers closed their doors recently due to bankruptcy. The poverty rate in the Cuero district averages 55%, with higher rates at some schools. Many children have academic needs, and the student transiency rate is 18.5%. Cuero families move frequently due to lack of employment, changes in the cattle industry, and a static business climate. Nearly half of the district's students are Hispanic and African American, and there are small numbers of American Indian and Asian students as well. About 1% of the students are English language learners, and 245 students, or about 12% of the district's enrollment, have disabilities, a percentage higher than most districts. Cuero is part of a cooperative special district so it provides services for students with disabilities from other neighboring districts.

District staff members believe that the local communities will continue to change in coming years. Retirees are settling on ranches, and telecommuters are coming to live in Cuero's open spaces along the Highway 35 corridor.



## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

The overall academic performance of Cuero students on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exceeded the state average in 2003, as shown in the following table.

Percentage of Students Scoring at Proficient Levels on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Subject	Grades Tested	State average % proficient	Cuero ISD % proficient
Reading	3-9	84.6%	89.7%
Math	3-11	76.2	84.2
Writing	4 & 7	84.9	89.7
English	10 & 11	70.1	80.0
Science	5, 10, 11	70.4	80.4
Social Studies	8, 10, 11	89.4	97.9

Most reassuring to district staff was the achievement of student subgroups, which also performed at high levels. Few significant achievement gaps exist among the major subgroups. Of particular note is the performance of African American students, who scored exceptionally high on the assessment. In math (grades 3 and 4), writing (grade 4), and social studies (grades 8, 10 and 11), 100% of African American students reached proficiency. Hispanic students reached the 100% level in math for grade 3 and social studies for grade 11. White students reached 100% in social studies for grade 10, and 10th grade students who were considered to be economically disadvantaged reached 100% in social studies-grade 10.

The district is consistently rated at a high level—an achievement that district staff attributes to extensive, structured professional development for teachers and staff. The district also strongly emphasizes reading and math across the grades. The curriculum is aligned to state standards and the state accountability system. In addition, all students in grades 1, 3, and 5, as well as grades 8 through 12, are scheduled for in-depth conferences with a counselor and their parents to make sure that academic learning is on track and that every student is appropriately challenged. If needed, a plan is designed to help the student “catch up” in any weak areas. Teachers and counselors focus on improvement goals and needed follow-up for every student.

The district also operates a preschool program, funded partly through Title I, which includes early literacy learning and an extensive Even Start program. Activities for parents include training in how to help their children learn. A tutoring bus filled with laptop computers serves parents and children who live in low-income housing areas in distant neighborhoods.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All but seven teachers meet the state’s criteria for being highly qualified, as required by NCLB. Of these, three are teachers of special education, one is at a Title I schoolwide school, and the others are secondary teachers. Most of them are working on internship or certification.

According to district officials, staff development in Cuero is extensive and reaches across all grade levels. Teacher training includes topics such as curricular mapping, brain-based learning, report card alignment with standards, and strategies for working



with parents on the Parent Compact and conferences. Teachers receive \$325 per year to improve their skills by taking classes at the regional center or elsewhere. Annual teacher evaluations help to identify the specific training teachers need to improve their knowledge of curriculum and delivery of instruction to students. Although special education teachers meet Texas expectations at this time, some may need to upgrade their credentials in the specific content areas they teach.

Cuero also has a “mini-master’s” program, whereby the district pays one-third of a teacher’s tuition for additional coursework. The University of Houston, Victoria, pays a third, and the teacher pays the remaining third. This gives teachers an incentive to grow professionally and become better teachers, which is a good investment for the district.

Plans are in place to provide training for all the instructional paraprofessionals. A Para Academy, scheduled for the summer of 2003, was designed to improve reading, math, and writing skills, so that paraprofessionals can assist teachers more effectively in those areas. The goal is for each paraprofessional to participate in 100 hours of training over time. Although college credit is not provided, the training will help paraprofessionals do well on the competency assessment that offers an alternative way of meeting NCLB requirements. Arrangements are being made with the University of Houston, Victoria, to offer a six-hour writing course for credit.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Cuero Independent School District expects to face a challenge raising the academic performance of students with disabilities to meet AYP criteria. The number of these students in the district is high, because Cuero provides special education services for children in neighboring districts. The 213 Cuero children with disabilities make up about 12% of the district’s enrollment, but another 78 students with disabilities from other districts are enrolled in Cuero schools under cooperative district agreements. Some of these students have been referred to special education precisely because they have significant learning or other disabilities that make it difficult for them to master material on their grade level.

In the 2003 test results, Cuero exceeded AYP expectations for this subgroup: 60% of these students met the performance criteria in Reading-Language Arts, while the state average was 47%. Due to one missing student, however, the subgroup did not meet the NCLB requirements that 95% participate in testing; the actual participation rate was 94.4%. The state does not allow for makeup tests, so in the future, Cuero must make sure that all students are present for testing. In math 46% of Cuero’s disabled students met the state AYP benchmark, compared with a state average of 33%, and the participation rate of 95% was met.

District staff members recognize that some special education students may need additional attention in the future, but because many of these children are bussed long distances to school, it is difficult for them to attend additional classes after school. Some students live as far as 50 miles away from their school, which is a long bus ride twice a day. The curriculum for students with disabilities must be continually aligned with standards to assure that learning goes beyond test-taking. Alternative assessments are given in grades 3-8 for students who qualify, and high school students have a district improvement process that reviews their abilities and achievement.

## Other Implementation Issues

### READINESS FOR KINDERGARTEN AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents in Cuero are involved with early literacy learning when their children enter preschool, and this involvement continues through the grades. The district’s preschool





program is funded partly through Title I. A home visitor program supplements the instruction, and parents learn how to be their child's teacher. An extensive Even Start program focuses on cognitive development from birth to age three.

Parents continue to have access to a wide range of parent involvement activities as their children move through the grades. Training is available in such topics as general parenting, nutrition, how to help children learn, and even money management. A tutoring bus filled with laptop computers takes school instruction into hard to reach neighborhoods with low-income housing. Parents and their children learn together in this technological version of school.

#### SCHOOL CHOICE

If school choice were to become necessary for Cuero, it would be very difficult for this rural district to implement it, because it has only one school for each grade-level configuration. It is unlikely that arrangements could be made with neighboring districts because they are so far away, so the district would have to provide supplemental services instead of choice. Encouraging children to participate in supplemental services could also be a problem because so many live long distances from their schools.

## Data File — Cuero Independent School District

**Location:** Southeastern Texas

**Type:** Small city of 6,700

#### Number of Schools:

- 4 total
- 1 PreK-1
- 1 elementary school (2-5)
- 1 junior high (6-8)
- 1 high school (9-12)

#### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 1,993

White: 52%

Hispanic: 35%

African American: 13%

English Language Learners: 1%

Students with Disabilities: 12%

Low-Income Students: 55%

#### Number of Teachers

Total: 150

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 7 (5%)

#### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 25

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 92%

**Number of Title I Schools:** 2 elementary schools

#### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0

## 30. Vermont

### Marlboro School District

School Board Member: Lauren Poster

Contacts: Francie Marbury, Principal; Lauren Poster, Board Member; Cheryl Ruth, Superintendent, Windham Central Supervisory Union.

*Students: 78 in K-8, 47 in grades 9-12, 9 in early education program – rural*

### Key Findings

- Because of dramatic reductions in local school funds brought about by recent tax adjustments and a declining enrollment, Marlboro is facing a difficult fiscal situation that is likely to result in program and/or staffing cuts. These budget issues are taking place as the district is implementing the new requirements of NCLB.
- Even though some of the NCLB requirements do not affect Marlboro because the school/district does not receive Title I funds, the members of the local school board are opposed to the new testing requirements because they believe that the additional time needed to test will decrease instructional time. The school board members are also concerned about the cost of the tests, the loss of local control, and the requirement for 100% achievement by 2014 that they believe set up schools and students for failure.

### Background

Marlboro School District is an independent, one-school district in rural Vermont. The district serves 78 students in kindergarten through grade 8. The district also pays tuition for 47 high school students to attend the school of their choice in neighboring districts. Students can also attend private schools with their tuition funds if that is their choice. The state average for high-school tuition is available to families to take to any accredited high school, provided it isn't a religious school. For the surrounding public schools, including the nearby Brattleboro district, the tuition for that school is paid in full, whether it is higher or lower than the state average. Most of Marlboro's high school students go to Brattleboro for high school, and Marlboro provides the bus that takes them there. Marlboro also has an early education collaborative that supports preschool education in the town and is funded through a state block grant.

The Marlboro district is governed by a locally elected school board of three members and managed by the superintendent of the Windham Central Supervisory Union (WCSU). The supervisory union covers 365 square miles and serves ten towns with a total of nine schools—seven elementary, one middle school, and one high school. The total student population for the supervisory union is approximately 1,100 students. The supervisory union provides consolidated services and management assistance to all districts, funded through local tax assessments. Independent school districts, such as Marlboro, can contract for additional services. Under this arrangement, the school district pays an assessment to the WCSU for services like special education and management assistance and contracts for additional services like curriculum and technology. The districts vary, with some having poverty levels as high as 62% and others as low as 31%, as in Marlboro's case. Because so many districts do not offer the federal school lunch program, the supervisory union uses Medicaid eligibility as the determiner of poverty.

Some Vermont educators have indicated strong opposition to NCLB. Marlboro leaders do not support the law's additional testing requirements and are finding these





changes difficult to implement, especially because they are occurring at the same time the district is experiencing a decline in its financial situation. The school enrollment is decreasing as the number of families with school-age children is dwindling and the number of retirees purchasing second homes is going up.

## Progress in Implementing NCLB

### ACCOUNTABILITY

The principal, staff, and board members of Marlboro believe that the district's well established accountability system has served its students well. The district has invested much time and energy in implementing a state math and writing portfolio assessment, which these officials believe is instructionally sound. Students in grades 4 and 8 take the new state standard-based tests in math and reading. In addition, all 2nd graders take a developmental reading assessment, and 5th graders take a state science assessment. These indicators have provided valuable feedback to staff about student skills and capabilities.

It is not yet clear how the testing issue will play out. Although most districts in the Windham Central Supervisory Union test at all grade levels, Marlboro has not yet made all the grade-level testing changes. The academic performance of students throughout Windham is high related to others in the state, and according to the superintendent of the Union, Marlboro students typically score in the upper ranges of union students. No schools in the supervisory union are in school improvement.

According to David Ahern, a member of the Marlboro school board, one of the community concerns with NCLB is the erosion of local control:

*The idea that one test, one text fits all goes against Vermont's basic nature. The tests and penalties wielded from above (Washington) would be unresponsive and out of touch with the special issues of a small school. For example, how do you get an accurate test sample from a class of eight 4th graders with two or three special needs children in the room? The curriculum needs to fit the special circumstances that each small school has to adapt to. This can be served best by local decision makers.*

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

All seven of Marlboro's teachers meet the requirements of licensure in Vermont, but the district was unable to find a certified ELL teacher for the school. District officials are concerned about how they will be able to meet the NCLB qualifications for teachers who provide English language instruction to the few English language learners in the school. The number of ELL students is small (four students), and they are at various grade levels, which makes it difficult to assure that the teachers of all these students meet the requirements.

## Other Implementation Issues

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

Even though the Marlboro school does not receive Title I funds, the school must still comply with the testing and AYP provisions of NCLB—although it will not be held to the same requirements and sanctions as Title I schools. The principal credits the strong achievement levels of the students to good teaching and learning. The staff does not spend time teaching students how to take tests, which Marlboro educators and the school board believe should not be the focus of classroom time.

Now, however, with the requirements of NCLB, a state test is being developed, and district officials are concerned about how this will fit with Marlboro's present assessments. With the expansion of testing to more grade levels, the district is concerned about the time that will have to be spent administering the tests to more students. The cost of scoring the written portions of the test is also being discussed and reviewed, especially at this time when budget cuts are imminent.

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Although there are only four English language learners in the school, the needs of these students are very different. They vary in their countries of origin, the languages they speak, their cultural background, the time they have been in the U.S., and their grade levels, which range from grades 1 to 7. Some assistance is available for these students through tutors, but essentially, instruction is provided through an inclusion model.

An inclusion model is also used for students with disabilities, a larger group than ELLs, consisting of 11 students (15% of the enrollment). It is not clear yet whether this group is large enough to constitute a subgroup under the state system. The students in this group also have very diverse needs, in terms of the type of their disability, intellectual capacity, need for individualized instruction, and age. For these reasons, district staff is finding it very difficult to have the same expectations for all the students.

## Data File — Marlboro School District

**Location:** Southeastern Vermont

**Type:** Rural

**Number of Schools:**

1 K-8 school

#### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 78 (K-8)

White: 92%

Other: 8%

English Language Learners: 4 students (5%)

Students with Disabilities: 15%

Low-Income Students: 31%

#### Number of Teachers

Total: 7

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

#### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: N/A

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: N/A

**Number of Title I Schools:** None

#### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0





# 31. Vermont

## Orleans Central Supervisory Union

Superintendent: Dr. Ron Paquette

Contact: Dr. Ron Paquette

*Students: 1,217, Pre-K-12– rural*

### Key Findings

- New federal requirements without the additional funding to meet those requirements pose great challenges for the small rural districts of Vermont, which are stretching every local dollar as far as they can just to meet daily needs.
- Keeping highly qualified teachers is a continuous issue in the Orleans district, partly because of its small size and remote location but also because it cannot match the salaries of large cities and towns.

### Background

Located in an area often referred to as the Northeast Kingdom, the Orleans Central Supervisory Union serves students in the farthest reaches of the state of Vermont, only 13 miles from Canada. This remoteness brings blessings as well as challenges; people come to the region because of the quiet and beauty of the environment, but sometimes move away because of the lack of employment.

Trout fishing in April and deer hunting in the fall are almost two additional seasons in Orleans and its sister communities, and in the fall months, tourists come in large numbers in search of the best in fall colors. But logging is on the decline, and the health of the paper industry fluctuates, resulting in an unstable job situation. The Ethan Allen furniture company, a major employer in Orleans, recently reduced its work force, causing a major impact on the area and its schools.

Unlike states with countywide or unified school districts, Vermont's educational structure is based on confederations and supervisory unions. Orleans Central Supervisory Union has seven towns within its jurisdiction, and the members of the governing board are drawn from these units. This results in a 34-member board for Orleans Central Supervisory Union and seven separate school district boards. One town has chosen to be a "no school" town, and its residents pay tuition to the towns where its students attend school. Choice has been such a strong and consistent component of education in this part of Vermont that students can even choose to use their tuition subsidy to attend a school in Canada if they wish.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The Orleans district has plans in place to assist the 28 teachers in the district who do not meet the NCLB requirements of "highly qualified." These teachers all have college degrees but are presently on waiver certification because of their assignment to classes such as special education. The Praxis test is being used to address their licensing needs, and the district has established a formal relationship with the Northeast Kingdom Collaborative for Professional Development based at Lyndon State College.

A sizable amount of funds has been set aside from Title I to provide adequate professional development for teachers in several areas. Literacy and reading in all content





areas is one focus, and others are writing conventions, math, and science. New teachers work with collaborative teachers who are assigned to help them with direct instruction at various grade levels.

Paraprofessionals are also included in the staff development. They are encouraged to submit portfolios for assessment or take the state-recognized test if they do not have two years of college. Many are native to the area, and they provide a necessary link to the community.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### RETENTION OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

The tranquil beauty of the Orleans region makes this a desirable place for young teachers. There are two ski areas for winter and many lakes for the summer, and even though teacher salaries are low, the cost of living is also very affordable. Teaching conditions are good, with an average class size in the supervisory union of 12:1. All this considered, however, the Orleans superintendent must continually recruit for teachers—not only because it is difficult to find teachers, but also because the district has difficulty keeping the teachers it does recruit. The isolation and long distances from urban areas can quickly change a new teacher's attitude from one of delight in country living to one of boredom and longing for city life (and a higher urban paycheck).

There are no easy answers to this dilemma, which seems to be prevalent in remote regions that lack basic economic development resources.

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

All the required grade levels in Vermont schools will be assessed in 2005, but at the present time, testing only occurs in grades 2, 4, 8, and 10 in reading/language arts and math, and in grades 7 and 9 in science and social studies.

Students in the Orleans Supervisory Union schools have done well on state testing, but district officials have concerns about the appropriateness of testing students with disabilities using grade-level tests. Autistic students, for example, are educated in regular classrooms where possible, but have special needs very different from those of the other students in the room. Yet as district officials understand NCLB requirements, the achievement of autistic students cannot be assessed with alternative assessments, and this is a concern to Orleans staff.

The Orleans union staff is concerned about the achievement of the large number of students at risk, and with a decline in state and local funds due to the decrease in overall student enrollment, options to help these students are limited. Higher student teacher ratios are anticipated, according to district staff, and there are concerns that the enrollment decline will continue because the population of the region is changing and there are fewer families with children.

In 2002 and 2003, Orleans students made good academic gains, but 2004 may show different results, especially with the subgroup of students with disabilities. If so, school administrators state that they are prepared to follow through with whatever needs to be done to improve achievement.

### FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND FUNDING

As a supervisory union made up of seven small schools, Orleans is particularly sensitive to the burden of additional federal requirements without the funding that is needed to implement NCLB. Local dollars are already being stretched just to meet daily needs, and the NCLB requirements come at a time when the supervisory union faces declining revenues from state and local sources. This leaves the small schools in the union with a fiscal dilemma; they have many needs but no extra money to fix their problems.

Additional teacher training, for example, might be needed or new curricula and student tutoring, but there is no flexibility in a bare bones budget to move in those directions. Unfunded mandates, which NCLB could become, put more cost burden on the local communities that cannot raise additional funding, even for the laudable goal of raising student performance and teacher qualifications.

Although some districts in Vermont have indicated that they will decline federal funding from NCLB because of their dislike for the requirements that are part of the federal law, the Orleans Supervisory Union has not chosen that option. Nor is it likely that the union will do so in the future, according to Orleans superintendent Ron Paquette.

## Other Implementation Issues

### FAMILY AND PRESCHOOL SERVICES

Through the Rural Economic Action Partnership (REAP) and the Northeast Kingdom Enterprise Collaborative, Orleans Central Supervisory Union No. 34 is developing what it hopes will be a model child care and family center, intended to provide “wrap around” services in one building. The Central Orleans Family Education Center (COFEC) will bring together, under one roof, school and community groups that provide early childhood education, child care, family literacy initiatives, adolescent career development, adult education, wellness, and family support services.

Currently, the district serves 35 children in its preschool program that helps prepare them for kindergarten. The COFEC project, when completed, will serve 90 preschool children.

Funded from state legislation, private foundation grants, and federal programs, and supported by community partners, the center includes programs such as 21st Century Learning Centers, Success by Six, Northeast Kingdom Even Start/Head Start Program, IBM, and USDA, Rural Development. According to school Superintendent Ron Paquette, the project is not expected to entail any tax increases in the local communities served by the Orleans Central Supervisory Unit. By combining resources, the project will maximize the benefits for students through efforts to address out-of-school factors that impinge on achievement.

## Data File — Orleans Central Supervisory Unit

**Location:** Northern Vermont, 13 miles from Canadian border

**Type:** Rural

**Number of Schools:**

- 1 pre-K
- 7 elementary, K-8
- 1 high school, 7-12

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 1,217

White: 96%

Other: 4%

English Language Learners: 0

Students with Disabilities: 15%

Low-Income Students: 65% – range is from 40% to 82%

### Number of Teachers

Total: 144

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 28 (19%)



**Number of Paraprofessionals**

Total: 140 (60 of these are special education)

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 42 (30%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 9 schools

**Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer only school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0



## 32. Virginia

### Waynesboro School District

Superintendent: Dr. T. Lowell Lemons

Contact: Betsy Mierzwa, Coordinator, Federal Programs and Testing

Students: 2,980 - rural

### Key Findings

- By emphasizing early learning and readiness for school, Waynesboro expects to assure that all students in all subgroups and content areas will achieve AYP. However, when students of all grade levels are tested and the AYP of subgroups is included, there could be a difference in the performance.
- District staff members believe that the combination of preschools connected to primary grades and a full day kindergarten are significant success factors for the ongoing achievement of Waynesboro students.

### Background

The Waynesboro Public School District stands somewhat near the crossroads of two major interstates that cut across the state of Virginia; the district is located on Interstate 64 and is about ten miles from Interstate 81. Although a fast-paced world surrounds it, the area stays rural in nature and true to its roots that go back to the beginning of the American nation. The district is small, with only a high school, middle school and four elementary schools to serve a student population of less than 3,000. But in many respects, this smallness has helped Waynesboro make good progress toward meeting the academic requirements for the state of Virginia.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS

School Improvement Teams are a Waynesboro innovation designed to focus on helping every child learn. An individual student becomes the focus of a child study team when the student enters the first level of risk. This could be because of academic, behavior, or attendance problems. The team identifies reasons for the problem and possible solutions and interventions. Next the team sets up counseling and parent involvement and makes arrangements for tutoring and academic assistance for the student. The student's progress is monitored on a regular basis until the student is no longer at risk.

In the past, Waynesboro has emphasized the two content areas of history and science at all grade levels, and these have been identified by staff as achievement strengths, especially in the secondary schools. However, district staff has recognized the need for higher math achievement in the middle and high school to meet NCLB academic goals. The district has assigned a full-time staff person to oversee an intensive program of algebra readiness in the middle school; the program includes staff training and on-line assessments for students.

The district is also undertaking extensive teacher training to improve reading and writing instruction across the grades. As part of a renewed emphasis on reading through grade 5, the district has developed a schoolwide reading project that includes literacy benchmarks at all grade levels and helps make teachers aware of reading practices that





get results. Reading specialists observe teachers in classrooms and help them to implement effective practices. The specialists also share their observation indicators with staff, so that everyone is working together to raise student achievement. With the addition of disaggregated student assessment data, teachers will be able to focus their efforts on specific areas of need at various grade levels and for certain groups of students.

Title I funds are used to support a math teacher at the middle school and three full-time reading specialists in the Title I schoolwide schools.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR SUBGROUPS

At the present time, the state of Virginia tests students in grades 3, 5 and 8 and administers end-of-course tests in high school. Under the current test system, Waynesboro students appear to be progressing sufficiently from grade to grade. The testing of students in three more grades (4, 6, and 7) could make a major difference in determining adequate yearly progress of all students.

Looking at AYP by subgroups may bring out some differences that were not previously apparent. The Title I schools will see their poor students noted as subgroups, and some schools may also have enough English language learners to constitute a subgroup. Since most of the English language learners are speakers of Spanish, a subgroup of Hispanic students may also be counted toward AYP. These changes to how AYP is calculated could make big differences in the determination of the academic progress of Waynesboro students.

Preliminary 2003 data shows that all four elementary schools have met AYP requirements. However, the middle and high school, as well as the district as a whole, did not meet AYP for all subgroups. At this point, however, the district has no schools in school improvement.

## Other Implementation Issues

### PRESCHOOL READINESS FOR KINDERGARTEN

Waynesboro Public Schools pay a lot of attention to the early readiness of children for learning. Preschool programs have been part of the district focus since 1978, and the district has taken several other steps to help ensure that children become capable and competent readers by the end of the primary grades. One such step is the requirement that preschool teachers be highly trained and extremely well qualified. Preschool teachers in Waynesboro have college degrees, unlike many preschool teachers elsewhere who are only required to have two years of college. Because they have these qualifications, preschool teachers are paid on the same salary schedule as other teachers in Waynesboro, and this, too, assures a high quality of instruction in the pre-kindergarten years. In its preschool instruction, the district also emphasizes phonological awareness and readiness for formal reading, again not the typical fare for preschool programs.

All children who turn four before September 30 are invited to enroll in the preschool program. Assessment screenings determine which children have the greatest needs, in terms of academic readiness and social and emotional development. Children are placed in the program based on these needs. About half of entering kindergartners participated in this preschool program, which is supported with district and Title I funds.

Kindergarten in Waynesboro is a full-day program, designed to prepare children for the acquisition of reading and other skills in grade 1. District staff members strongly support this combination of a full-day kindergarten with preschool in the preceding

year. They believe that this contributes significantly to the strong learning base of Waynesboro students that leads to their ongoing academic success.

#### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In addition to parents coming to school, the school comes to the parents in the Waynesboro district through a new program to improve parent involvement and prepare children for academic success. Under this program, a Parent Resource Van makes regular visits to various neighborhoods and apartment complexes two to three times a week in the afternoons and evenings. Parent resources, such as books, instructional materials, and handy homework hints, are distributed to parents to use in the van or check out. Monthly meetings are also held to provide parents with specific information on how they can help their children succeed in school. These meetings are held at different times of day to better meet family needs. When the Virginia lieutenant governor came to Waynesboro to speak at the district's high school graduation in spring 2002, he took a ride on the van to dramatize the importance of reaching out to parents.

## Data File — Waynesboro School District

**Location:** Central Virginia in the Shenandoah Valley

**Type:** Rural

#### Number of Schools:

- 7 total
- 4 elementary schools K-5
- 2 middle schools, grades 6-8
- 1 high school, grades 9-12

#### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 2,980

White: 82%

African American: 14%

Other: 4 %

English Language Learners: 3%

Students with Disabilities: 11%

Low-Income Students: 39% (ranging from 19% to 69% in individual schools)

#### Number of Teachers

Total: 130

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

#### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 21

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 13 (62%)

#### Number of Title I Schools:

2 elementary and 1 middle

#### Number of Schools in School Improvement or Corrective Action

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0





## 33. Wisconsin

### Sheboygan Area School District

Co-superintendents: Jeanne Bitkers, Joseph Sheehan

Contact: John A. Pfaff, Principal and Federal Programs Coordinator

Students: 10,315, K-12 – urban

### Key Findings

- The Sheboygan Area School District disseminated information and held community meetings to prepare its staff and the community for NCLB changes. As a result, staff members feel confident about the district's ability to bring all students to expected levels of academic performance.
- Sheboygan has relatively high achievement for most students but is still aware it may have difficulty making adequate yearly progress for all subgroups.

### Background

Located halfway between Wisconsin's largest city, Milwaukee, and the state's most famous city, Green Bay, the Sheboygan Area School District has had much experience with educational change. The district enrolls 10,315 students in grades K-12, as well as 480 four-year-olds in an early childhood program. The city of Sheboygan (population 50,000) has seen many changes in past years, particularly in the growth of its English language learner population. These students speak 20 different languages and represent many cultures. The two main languages are Spanish and Hmong.

District officials believe they adjust quickly to change, whether the change is due to the changing diversity, demographics and cultures of local residents or the new state and federal requirements associated with NCLB. For the past two decades, district staff members have dealt with ethnic and racial changes within the educational community. They continue to hold all students to high expectations for academic achievement.

### Progress in Implementing NCLB

#### PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Sheboygan Area School District took active steps to prepare its staff and the community for implementation of NCLB. The district sends a brochure to parents of children enrolled in its schools that clearly spells out the student learning expectations. Signed by the district co-superintendents, Jeanne Bitkers and Joseph Sheehan, the brochure tells parents that the Sheboygan Area School District will continue to make sure that "no child is left behind." The brochure explains to parents the main elements of NCLB, including more choices for parents; more opportunities for the state and local school districts to decide how to use federal money for schools; more testing for students to make sure schools are doing a good job; and additional requirements affecting the qualifications of school staff. To reach families who speak languages other than English, the brochure lists names and phone numbers of key personnel for each of the main languages. The district also annually provides parents with a brochure that explains the standards for each elementary grade level, with versions in Spanish, Hmong, Albanian, Bosnian, and other languages. Similar information is being developed for middle and high school courses.





Parent and community involvement continues to be at the core of Sheboygan's educational efforts. The district held five NCLB community information sessions during the 2002-03 school year, one at each school site. These sessions were intended to give parents, students, and community members opportunities to express their thoughts and concerns about the new requirements to a distinguished listening panel made up of members of the state legislature. Participants at these sessions raised concerns about the new testing requirements for all grade levels, especially the testing of students with disabilities and English language learners, and about the challenge of bringing all students to proficiency by 2013. Participants also discussed the price tag of meeting the additional testing requirements and other demands and wondered whether the district would have to create more classrooms for students who transfer from one school to the law's choice provisions. Although none of the district schools face school improvement in 2003-04, the district recognizes that choice and supplemental service requirements could become a reality in future years, especially if English language learners and students with disabilities do not make adequate yearly progress. The Sheboygan Press also ran a series of four articles about NCLB.

## Major Issues of Implementing NCLB

### ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Testing at grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 is new for Sheboygan, since previously the state tested only in grades 4, 8, and 10. The requirements to make AYP for each major subgroup have posed new challenges, especially for English language learners. The district understands it must mount specific efforts to address the academic needs of subgroups that are not meeting grade-level expectations. However, school choice should not be a problem to implement because Wisconsin already allows parents to choose the school their child will attend.

NCLB sets high expectations for students who are learning English. The district has a program funded under NCLB Title III specifically designed to assist English language learners at two sites, an elementary school and a middle school. Testing procedures are in place to determine both the English proficiency and the academic achievement of all language minority students.

Sheboygan's ELL population continues to increase; 19% of the district's students, or about 2,000 children, are not yet proficient in English. The diversity of this group is dramatic and reflects the changing demographics of the city. This population includes children of Spanish-speaking families who were migrant in the 1970s but later settled into jobs in small industry; children of Hmong refugee families from Southeast Asia, brought to the Midwest by local churches; and families from Bosnia, Albania, and other countries.

Students in Sheboygan speak 20 different languages, and most of the programs for English language learners are of the English immersion type. According to Wisconsin state law, parents must be offered the opportunity to have their children enrolled in a bilingual program, but Sheboygan parents overwhelmingly opt for immersion. The district continues to increase its level of support and resources to schools that have large numbers of English language learners. This support includes after-school programs funded by the district and Title I and additional assistance for English language learners from Title III of NCLB. Sheboygan's English language learners outperform ELL students in comparable districts.

### QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Meeting the NCLB provisions for teacher qualifications may pose a challenge for the Sheboygan Area School District. Although elementary teachers meet the state require-

ments, two groups of teachers that may need additional coursework or credentials are some teachers in specific content areas at the middle school level and special education teachers. In both cases, these positions are hard to fill because of a general shortage of qualified teachers who meet state certification. Plans are in place for additional staff development and recruitment.

Sheboygan is also focusing on the testing and training of paraprofessionals. The district has developed and implemented its own training and testing program to assure that these employees meet NCLB requirements. Of the 47 paraprofessionals in the district, 23 work at Title I schools, and none of them have two years of college. New hires are expected to have two years of college.

## Other Implementation Issues

Sheboygan's support for equal opportunities for all students includes a widespread pre-kindergarten program that reaches 600 three- and four-year-olds in the district, many of whom are English language learners. The Early Learning Center (ELC) helps prepare children for kindergarten with readiness for learning, literacy, and appropriate child development practices. The children attend half-day sessions four days a week, and the program is supplemented by home visits. Because of current and potential budget cuts, the future of this program is in jeopardy. Finding funds to sustain the ELC programs will be a challenge.

## Data File — Sheboygan Area School District

**Location:** Southern Wisconsin on Lake Michigan

**Type:** City of 50,000

**Number of Schools:**

- 17 total
- 12 elementary schools (K-5)
- 3 middle schools (6-8)
- 2 high schools (9-12)

### Student Enrollment and Demographics

Total Enrollment: 10,315

White: 71%

Asian: 17%

Hispanic: 10%

Other: 2%

English Language Learners: 19%

Students with Disabilities: 16%

Low-Income Students: 27%, ranging from 6% to 71% in individual schools

### Number of Teachers

Total: 764

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 0

### Number of Paraprofessionals

Total: 23

Not Meeting NCLB Qualification Requirements: 23 (100%)

**Number of Title I Schools:** 6



**Number of Schools in School Improvement and Corrective Action**

	2002-03	2003-04
Required to offer school choice:	0	0
Required to offer supplemental services and choice:	0	0
In corrective action:	0	0

