A. PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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B. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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

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

the school.

1. School Improvement Team

Each school must have a school improvement team that develops the school improvement plan. The school improvement team must follow all legal requirements for developing and obtaining school approval of the school improvement plan. School improvement teams also must be familiar with state and local board requirements related to managing and using fiscal resources and must comply with these requirements in developing and implementing school improvement plans.

The school improvement team will consist of the principal, representatives of the assistant principals, instructional personnel, instructional support personnel and teacher assistants assigned to the school building, and parents of students attending the school. Each group of school personnel shall elect representatives from their respective group by secret ballot. Parents are to be elected in accordance with G.S. 115C-105.27(a). The school improvement team is encouraged to involve and seek assistance from central office personnel. The school improvement team, especially at the middle and high schools, also is encouraged to seek input from students. The superintendent shall provide guidance to principals to ensure that the principals establish and work together with school improvement teams to develop, review, and amend school improvement plans.

School improvement team meetings will be held at a convenient time to facilitate substantial parent participation. The principal shall ensure that the school improvement team, as a public body, complies with the Open Meetings Law in regard to its meetings. Deliberations on the school safety components of the plan must be in closed session in accordance with G.S. 143-318.11(a)(8).

2. Mandatory Components of the Plan

A school improvement plan must include the following components.

a. The plan must specify the effective instructional practices and methods to be used to improve the academic performance of students identified as at risk of academic failure or at risk of dropping out of school.

b. The plan must take into consideration the minimum annual performance goal established by the State Board and the goals set out in the mission statement for public schools adopted by the State Board.

c. The plan must be, to the greatest extent possible, data driven. The team shall use the Education Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS) or a compatible and comparable system approved by the State Board to analyze student data to identify root causes for problems and determine actions to

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address them and to appropriately place students in courses such as Math I. The plan must contain clear, unambiguous targets, explicit indicators and actual measures, and expeditious time frames for meeting measurement standards.

d. The plan must identify how staff development funds allocated to the school will be used.

e. The plan must provide a duty-free lunch period for every teacher on a daily basis or as otherwise approved by the school improvement team to the maximum extent that (i) the safety and proper supervision of children may allow during regular student contact hours and (ii) insofar as funds are provided for this purpose by the General Assembly.

f. The plan must provide duty-free instructional planning time for every full-time assigned classroom teacher, with the goal of providing an average of at least five hours of planning time per week.

g. The plan must attempt to identify and eliminate unnecessary and redundant reporting requirements for teachers and, to the extent practicable, streamline the school's reporting system and procedures, including requiring forms and reports to be in electronic form when possible and incorporating relevant documents into the student accessible components of the Instructional Improvement System.

h. As part of the school system's efforts to maintain safe and orderly schools, the plan must address safety and discipline concerns. These concerns include any special conditions at the school. The plan should include the components of any positive behavior management or positive behavior support programs that have been adopted at the school and should comply with the requirements of policy 4200, School Safety, and all protocols established by the superintendent or designee under that policy.

i. In accordance with policy 4020, Parental Involvement, the plan must identify the goals and strategies for parents to be involved in their child's education and in the educational program of the school.

j. The plan must include a process by which the school improvement team will review the school improvement plan at least once a year. The annual review process must include (1) a review of student scores on all state- and board-mandated tests and (2) a means for the school improvement team to modify the plan, if necessary, when the school has not met the expected growth score established by the state.

k. The plan must require the principal to notify the superintendent if the school improvement team modifies a board-accepted school improvement plan.

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l. The plan must include strategies for meeting the educational objectives of the board (policy 3000, Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program).

m. The plan must include intervention strategies for students who are not at grade-level proficiency or who are not likely to meet standards of promotion measured by other means (policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability).

3. Optional Components of the Plan

The school improvement plan may include any or all of the following components.

a. The plan may include a request to transfer state funds from one allotment category to another, as permitted by state law. The request must identify the funding allotment categories involved in the transfer and identify how the transfer will facilitate improving student performance.

b. The plan may include a comprehensive conflict resolution plan, as provided in G.S. 115C-81.15, in order to help create a safe school.

~~c. The plan may provide for the use of textbooks that have not been adopted by the State Board (see policy 3200, Selection of Instructional Materials).~~

~~d.~~c. The plan may include innovative efforts to meet local educational goals. The following are examples of innovative efforts identified in board policies that the plan may address:

i. modifying the school calendar (see policy 3300, School Calendar and Time for Learning);

ii. implementing alternative scheduling of classes or other strategies intended to reduce transitional time and limit interference from non-instructional activities (policy 3300);

iii. adding hours of instructional time (policy 3300);

iv. providing additional means for evaluating instructional programs (policy 3160, Evaluation of Instructional Programs);

v. developing and implementing pilot programs (policy 3115, Innovation in Curriculum and Instruction);

vi. expanding the subject areas or objectives of the curriculum (policy 3100, Curriculum Development);

vii. eliminating curricula on subject areas or objectives that are not state-

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required (policy 3100); and

viii. modifying the system-wide instructional and curriculum guides

4. Development and Review of the Plan

School improvement teams should review student performance data from the preceding school year in developing the school improvement plan. Based on the availability of data and when specific school standards are established by the State Board, the superintendent shall establish the date by which school improvement plans must be submitted.

The principal first shall present the proposed school improvement plan to all of the assistant principals, instructional personnel, instructional support personnel, and teacher assistants assigned to the school building for their review and vote by secret ballot. The principal then shall submit the school improvement plan to the superintendent only if the proposed school improvement plan has the approval of a majority of the staff who voted on the plan.

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The superintendent or designee shall review the plans and seek legal review as necessary prior to presenting the plans with written recommendations to the board. If the superintendent intends to recommend that a plan be rejected, the superintendent shall notify the principal of the school and explain the reasons for the decision. The school improvement team may then submit a modified plan, approved by staff vote, to the superintendent. The superintendent should submit all school improvement plans to the board at the earliest possible date.

The board will review the school improvement plans. The review of the school safety components of the plans must be in closed session. The board shall make findings on the safety components of the plan. Neither the safety components of the plans nor the board's findings on the safety components of the plans may be set out in the minutes of the board.

After review of the school improvement plans, the board will accept or reject each school improvement plan. If a plan is rejected, the board will explain the specific reason(s) for the rejection.

Any plan modified by the school improvement team after being rejected by the board must be resubmitted to the school personnel for vote and, upon majority approval, resubmitted to the superintendent for review. The superintendent shall resubmit the modified plan to the board with his or her recommendations as soon as is practical. The board will review the modifications along with any recommendations from the superintendent and accept or reject the plan.

If the board and the school improvement team cannot reach agreement on the plan within 60 days after its initial submission, the board or school may request to use

the dispute resolution process developed by the State Board under G.S. 115C-105.20(b)(5). Alternatively, if use of the dispute resolution process is not requested, the board may develop a school improvement plan for the school.

A school improvement plan may be in effect for no more than two years. The plan must be reviewed at least annually by the school improvement team in accordance with the review process established in the school's plan. If a school does not earn an overall performance grade of at least a C or does not meet its expected growth standard as established by the State Board, the principal must submit to the superintendent and the board a report of the school improvement team. The report must explain the reasons for the standard(s) not being met and describe any modifications that will be made in the school improvement plan. After considering any recommendations of the superintendent, if the board is not satisfied with the response of the school improvement team, the board may suggest modifications to the plan or may vacate those portions of the plan that impede student performance and require the school improvement team to revise the plan.

5. Elimination of Redundant or Unnecessary Reporting Requirements

If, at any time before or after the board approves the school improvement plan, the school improvement team identifies a more expeditious manner of providing information to the board that will eliminate a redundant or unnecessary reporting requirement for teachers at its school, the team may make a written request to the superintendent to eliminate the redundant or unnecessary report. The superintendent shall recommend to the board whether the reporting requirement should be eliminated for that school. If the superintendent does not recommend elimination of the reporting requirement, the school improvement team may request a hearing by the board as provided in policy 2500, Hearings Before the Board.

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6. Compliance with Requirements

Any employee, parent, or other interested party is encouraged to notify the principal of any concerns regarding compliance with this policy or G.S. 115C-105.27. In addition, any employee, parent, or other interested party may submit in writing to the superintendent concerns regarding compliance with this policy or G.S. 115C-105.27. The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to investigate the concern and shall provide a written response upon request.

C. POSTING THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN ONLINE

The school improvement plan, except for its school safety components which are not public record, must be posted on the school's website. The names and positions of the members of the school improvement team, along with the date of each member's election to the team, must also be posted on the website.

D. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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

School administrators must be evaluated by their supervisors on the school-based management process and on the effectiveness of the school improvement plan.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47(38), -81.15, -83.15, -84.2, ~~-98,~~ -105.20, -105.21, -105.25, -105.26, -105.27, -105.32, -105.35, -105.37, -105.41(b), -301.1, -307(g); 143 art. 33C, 16 N.C.A.C. 6G.0304

Other Resources: School Improvement Planning and NCSTAR, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, available at https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/district-schools-support/office-school-improvement/school-improvement-planning-and-ncstar

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