

MACON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM
Dan Brigman, Superintendent of Schools
September 10, 2007

Each day in Macon County, we have the gift of traveling to work or play with the world's most spectacular scenery surrounding each of us. The beauty of the landscape in this great area is only one reason to live and work in Macon County North Carolina. My family and I have strengthened our appreciation for the many blessings of calling Macon County and Western North Carolina home once again.

Since our return to the area almost one year ago, I have taken the time to visit many classrooms throughout the district and observe staff and administrators attending to the state curriculum and other daily demands within each facility. The Macon County School System is very fortunate to have a quality team of professionals in each school and department to serve our children and prepare students for the ever-changing world we live in.

Each county and school system has its own unique challenges. For Macon County, we are continuing to address increasing academic standards, steady growth, and space restrictions within each facility. Academically, we are continuing to provide adequate educational services to each student with limited resources. The Macon County School System has consistently performed at or around the state average on all performance indicators and assessments. We are proud of our historical accomplishments and meeting both federal and state accountability models year after year; however, under the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation, our school system did not make adequately yearly progress (AYP) in one or more areas during the 2006-07 academic year.

Under the federal accountability model, two of our schools, Macon Middle School and East Franklin Elementary School did not make AYP and have now entered year two of school improvement. In 2006-07, Macon Middle School achieved 15 out of 21 target areas with performance among the following academic cells and subgroups not meeting annual goals:

- Reading – Hispanic students,
- Reading - Students with Disabilities - (EC)
- Mathematics - All Students
- Mathematics - Hispanic students
- Mathematics – White Students
- Mathematics - Economically Disadvantaged (students receiving free or reduced lunch) students.

East Franklin achieved 12 out of 13 of their targeted areas under the federal accountability model. The target area for improvement is mathematics among economically disadvantaged students is:

- Mathematics - Economically Disadvantaged (students receiving free or reduced lunch) students.

No Child Left Behind is an all or none accountability model. As required by federal law, school choice must be offered when schools fail to meet ALL annual target goals for two consecutive years. At these two schools, we have expedited parent notification of these results as required by federal law. In addition to the results, parents and guardians are also informed about school choice requirements and options for school choice in Macon County. For students at East Franklin Elementary School, school choice has been expedited for attendance at Cowee Elementary School or Iotla Elementary School. Students who attend Macon Middle School may choose to attend Nantahala School as we satisfy this federal requirement. The staff and administration at East Franklin Elementary School have established goals and strategies for the area of improvement identified under NCLB. Macon Middle School is also striving for continuous improvement with focused interventions to address all areas of performance that did not make the federal accountability standards. For more details about the *No Child Left Behind* legislation, please review the following website: www.nochildleftbehind.gov.

Improving student performance is one of our district's primary goals for the current academic year. The State Board of Education (SBE) met September 4-6, 2007 at the Education Building in Raleigh and approved the 2006-07 performance results on state and federal accountability models for the state and each district. North Carolina public schools showed improvement in the 2006-07 school year, according to the ABCs report approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) Thursday. Nearly 72 percent of schools showed expected or high growth, a 17.5 percent increase from the previous year's numbers. Also reported was an increase in students graduating from N.C. high schools in four years, with 69.4 percent in 2007, up from 68.3 percent the prior year. Macon County successfully met our graduation requirements for 2006-07 with an overall gain of nearly ten percent in the new Cohort Graduation Rate calculations. Our Cohort Graduation rate for 2006-07 was 76%.

The annual report reflected a decrease in the percentage of schools that met requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind law. In 2006-07, 44.7 percent of North Carolina schools met federal standards, down from 45.2 percent the prior year. Schools are evaluated on the performance of students in various subgroups based on race, ethnicity, income and disability. For a school to pass, all subgroups must meet its targeted goals. Across the state 91 schools received the designation of *School of Excellence* compared with 69 in 2005-06. This recognition is earned by schools where at least 90 percent of the scores are passing and students meet expectations for academic growth. Schools where at least 80 percent of the scores are passing and students meet growth expectations are designated as *Schools of Distinction*; the number of which also rose statewide from 305 to 462.

Under the North Carolina ABCs, one school in Macon County exceeded expectations and made *high growth*. We commend the staff, students, parents, and administration at Highlands School for these outstanding achievements. The following seven schools met expected growth and include Cartoogechaye Elementary School, Cowee Elementary School; Cullasaja Elementary School, Franklin High School, Iotla Elementary School, and Nantahala School. Each of these schools is to be commended for their efforts and for meeting expected state performance standards for the NC ABCs accountability model. Two of our schools, East Franklin Elementary School, South Macon Elementary School, Macon Early College, and Macon Middle School did not meet expected growth and have

developed action plans to address the areas of improvement within these schools. For more information regarding our district and each school's performance on the North Carolina ABCs accountability model, please visit www.ncpublicschools.org. Final results for the 2006-07 academic year have not been posted and will be added to the web site once the state finalizes all results sometime after October 15, 2007.