

**Second Annual Performance Report
for
The North Carolina State Improvement Grant:
Improving North Carolina's System of Education for Exceptional Children
Grant Award # H323A000012
May 31, 2002**

I. See Cover Sheet

II. Executive Summary

The purpose of the North Carolina State Improvement Project is to establish and implement, in alignment with the comprehensive system of personnel development, program support services to significantly improve the performance and success of students with disabilities in North Carolina. Below, a summary of the progress of the project's progress toward attainment of the four major goals of the project is provided.

1. Improve Basic Skills Performance for Students with Disabilities

Significant progress in Goal 1, as measured by progress toward attaining the objectives associated with this goal, has been made. During this first year of the project ten Best Practice Centers were established and extensive "research to practice" training was conducted. Data has been collected that demonstrates significant progress in the development of model instructional procedures and expertise across the Centers. During the second year of the project the staff of the centers have focused on developing their capacity to provide teachers and leadership personnel training and demonstrations of the model instructional approaches. The purpose of these efforts is to increase the adoption of the model instructional approaches throughout the school districts in North Carolina. The preliminary results of these efforts indicate that the performance of students with disabilities served by most of model Best Practice Centers is improving at a faster rate than student performance in Centers' school district and in the state

2. Increase The Percentage of Qualified Teachers of Students with Disabilities

Progress in establishing strategies to address this goal is continuing in the three areas reported on last year; (a) a web based statewide teacher recruitment program has been established in coordination with the National Clearing House and the Division of Human Resources in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; (b) NC SIP has taken a lead role in restructuring the teacher licensing and teacher education system in special education that focuses on outcomes (teacher knowledge and skills) rather than inputs (course requirements, specific processes of instruction). The restructured system is expected to be initiated during the third year of the project; and (c) expansion and improvement of a statewide, higher education partnership providing e-Learning courses and resources to support individuals working toward licensure in special education.

3. Increase Graduation Rates and Decrease Drop-Out Rates of Students with Disabilities

Although this is a separate goal area, the strategies implemented under goals 1 and 2 are also the strategies that will impact on Goal 3. Improvement of student achievement and

the quality of teacher instruction leads to higher performance and motivation to stay in school. Drop out data collected in the school systems in which the Best practice Centers are located shows a 14.4% decrease in numbers of students with disabilities dropping out of school.

4. Improve Parent Satisfaction and Support School Services.

The NC SIP Parent Center is a component of the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center for North Carolina. The Parent Center staff in partnership with the NC SIP staff and the Best Practice Centers has undertaken a number of major activities this year. The purpose of these activities has been to improve the skills and abilities of the Best Practice Center staff in conducting parent involvement activities that lead to a high level of trust and involvement of parents in the school activities in a meaningful manner. These activities included the provision of technical assistance, planning and conducting workshops, and developing and compiling parent resource materials to be used by the Centers and to be distributed to parents across the state. The project is still in the process of developing a comprehensive data collection system for collecting parent satisfaction and participation data.

III. Project Status

This report will report on the progress of the project through April 30, 2002. The first year reported progress is followed by an update on the progress during second year of the project. Each of the project's goals and the objective associated with the goal are presented followed by (a) strategies associated with each project objective, as presented in the approved plan; (b) a discussion of the project activities; (c) accomplishments and outcomes associated with the objective; and (d) a statement indicating the extent to which the objective has been attained.

Goal 1: Improve Basic Skills Performance of Students with Disabilities

Objective 1.1: Improve teacher's instructional skills in reading, writing, and mathematics through the use of intensive and explicit multi-sensory teaching strategies.

Objective 1.1 – Project Strategies in Approved Application

First Year Strategies

Strategy 1. Establish Demonstration and Training Centers and provide orientation training for centers' staff. Center planning and selection of specific instructional programs reflecting best practices as indicated by research

Strategy 2. Train Best Practice Centers' Staff

Strategy 3. Develop and Identify Staff Training Materials and Resources

Strategy 4. Pilot Training Procedures, Resources, and Materials With Best Practice Centers' Teachers

Second Year Strategies

Strategy 5. Training of LEA trainers and teacher education faculties.

Strategy 6. Training of pre-service special education teachers in university training programs.

Strategy 7. Training of special education teachers through LEA staff development programs.

Strategy 8. Evaluate effectiveness of Objective 1.1 strategies and activities.

Objective 1.1 - Description of Project Activities

(1) Overview and First Year Activities

During the fall of 2000, NC SIP established a network of ten Best Practices Centers located strategically across the state of North Carolina. The Centers were established with two primary purposes:

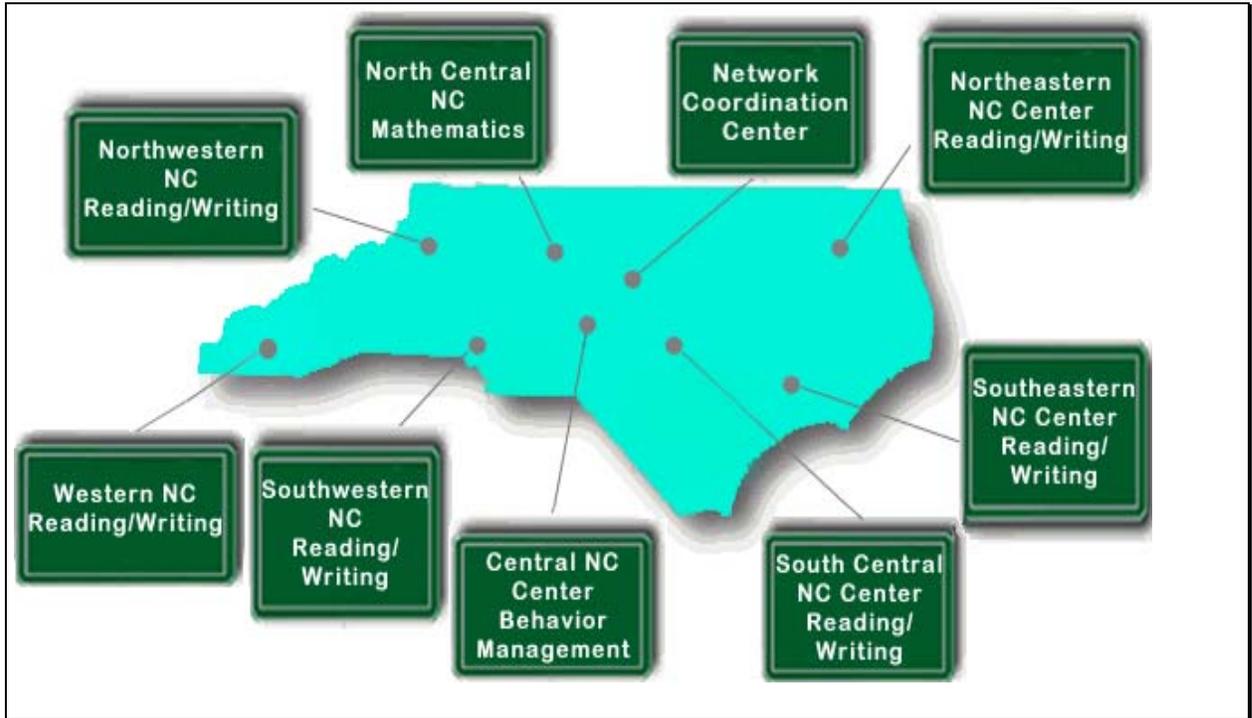
- a. To provide a teaching and learning demonstration model for the delivery of selected best practices--based on research in the field--within the context of public school instructional programs. This model will be used to demonstrate the daily operation of best practices in improving basic skills performance of students with disabilities.
- b. To develop teacher preparation procedures, resources, and materials (i) for teaching reading, writing, and mathematics and (ii) for the use of positive behavioral supports in classrooms.

During the development of the application and plan for the state improvement grant, the Department of Public Instruction sent out a request to all school districts in North Carolina, inviting the submission of a plan to host a Best Practice Center. As a result, eight Best Practice Centers have been established to focus on improving teaching of reading and writing, one Center for improving teaching of mathematics and one center for improving the use of positive behavioral supports in classrooms. It should be noted that two Best Practice Centers have been established within the Western North Carolina region are referred to together as the Western North Carolina Best Practice Center.

The criteria for selection of the Centers included: (1) evidence that the school district has demonstrated the potential to implement an effective Best Practice Center in the area of reading and writing, mathematics, or use of positive behavioral supports, (2) evidence that the district has a basic understanding of the research and best practices reported in the literature, (3) evidence that the district has the ability to provide an effective demonstration and training center, and (4) location of the district to assure a comprehensive and regional approach to provide demonstration and training across the state. The names and location of the Centers are shown on the map below.

As a result of the selection process, ten school districts were chosen to host North Carolina State Improvement Project Best Practice Centers. The names and location of the Centers are shown on the following map (Two Centers have been established in Western North Carolina).

The Best Practices Teacher Preparation Network of Centers



The summary table on the next page shows the location of the center, its focus, and the agencies involved in the implementation of each center. A more detailed description of each center can be found in Appendix A.

Summary of the Best Practices Teacher Preparation Centers

Center Location	Focus of Center	Lead Agencies
Northeastern NC Northampton County Schools	Reading and Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit code-based reading instructio • Reading Comprehension Strategies • Writing Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northampton County Schools • Elizabeth City State University • East Carolina University
Eastern NC Onslow County Schools	Reading and Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit code-based reading instructio • Language! Program • Reading Comprehension Strategies • Writing Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onslow County Schools • UNC Wilmington
South Central NC Cumberland County Schools	Reading and Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit code-based reading instructio • Reading Comprehension Strategies • Writing Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumberland County Schools • Fayetteville State Univ. • Pembroke State Universit
Central NC Durham Public Sch	Positive Behavioral Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional Assessment • Behavioral Support Planning • Intervention Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durham Public Schools • North Carolina Central University
North Central NC Wake County Scho	Reading and Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit code-based reading instruction • SRA Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading • Reading Comprehension Strategies • Writing Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wake County Schools • NC State University • UNC - Chapel Hill
South Central NC Montgomery County Schools	Reading and Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit code-based reading instructio • LIPS Reading Program • Reading Comprehension Strategies • Writing Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montgomery County Schools • NC A & T University • UNC-Charlotte
West Central NC Rockingham Count Schools	Mathematics Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-Sensory • Explicit - Direct Instruction • Hands-on Experienced-Based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rockingham County Schools • UNC at Greensboro
Western NC Transylvania County Schools and Haywood County Schools	Reading and Writing Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit code-based reading instruction • Reading Comprehension Strategies • Writing Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transylvania and Haywood County Schoo • Western Carolina University
Northwestern NC Watauga County Schools	Reading and Writing Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit code-based reading instructio • Wilson Reading System • Reading Comprehension Strategies • Writing Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watauga County Schools • Appalachian State University

During the first ten months of operation of the North Carolina State Improvement Project, contracts were negotiated with each of the ten school districts. Center Coordinators were identified, the location of the Center's offices and classrooms were identified, the Center's purposes and goals were established, the students to be served by the center were identified, the instructional model to be developed was identified and described, and the personnel responsible for training and demonstration for the Center were identified.

One strategy that was added to the plans for improving instruction for students with disabilities has been the identification and establishment of additional Best Practice Centers. Using state and other federal funds, eight additional Best Practice Centers will be added to the Network focusing on early reading instruction (phonemic awareness). Second year plans include orientation and training for these projects in the instructional principles with a major emphasis on teaching phonemic awareness to young children with disabilities. These Centers will focus primarily on early childhood intervention and prevention of reading difficulties and are located in the following school districts: Asheville City, Brunswick County, Cabarrus County, Catawba County, Edgecombe County, Granville County, Hickory City and Wake County school districts.

In addition to the establishing the early childhood Best Practice Centers, the Exceptional Children Division has also decided to fund four more Positive Behavioral Support Regional Centers. The Durham Public Schools was selected as the site for the State Improvement Project Center devoted to demonstration and staff development to foster the use of positive behavioral supports in schools across the state. The additional Best Practice Centers have been established in the Gaston County Public Schools, Watauga County Public Schools, Brunswick County Public Schools and Roanoke Rapids City Schools. These centers will work closely with the Durham Center to establish a statewide network of demonstration and staff development centers focusing specifically of the use of positive behavioral supports. These programs have just begun their efforts to identify research based positive interventions and to develop the demonstration programs.

As discussed above, Durham Public Schools was selected as the site for the State Improvement Project Center devoted to demonstration and staff development to foster the use of positive behavioral supports in schools across the state. These additional Best Practice Centers have been established in the Gaston County Public Schools, Watauga County Public Schools, Brunswick County Public Schools and Roanoke Rapids City Schools. These Centers will work closely with the Durham Center to establish a statewide network of demonstration and staff development centers focusing specifically of the use of positive behavioral supports. These programs have just begun their efforts to identify research based positive interventions and to develop the demonstration programs.

Gaston County's goals for the Behavioral Support Center Network are two-fold. The first goal is to serve the students of the county in the most successful and innovative ways possible. This is being achieved by refining the programs at Warlick Alternative School. These expanded services include transitional services for returning to their home schools, on site mental health counseling, and the Gaston Alternatives Program. The Gaston Alternatives Program will serve as an afternoon high school program and day reporting program for suspended students and will offer the occupational course of study classes and

work program components. The second goal is to provide hands on training on effective behavior management skills, social skills, and concepts such as character education, peer mediation, and class meetings to a wide range of teachers and school staff, both in and outside of Gaston County. This goal will be met in conjunction with outreach services provided by University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Watauga County Public Schools, in conjunction with Appalachian State University, has begun implementing several of the Positive Behavioral Support Center goals that have been established for the State Improvement Grant. A screening procedure to identify emergent risk factors in children has been developed and implemented. They have also developed and implemented a school-wide social skills curriculum, “The Missing Curriculum: Teaching Social Competencies in the Classroom”.

Watauga County’s efforts include the use of inter-agency and parental participation in educational/behavioral planning for students with special behavioral or emotional needs. In addition they are coordinating programs to more efficiently disseminate in-service training to the county’s teachers, parents, and ASU students.

Brunswick County Public Schools plans to implement programs that support the belief that well trained teachers who are provided staff development, support, and exposure to best practices for behavior modification will produce the desired outcomes in a student population. They have established a collaboration with the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, which will allow for development of comprehensive pre-service training. A major objective of the center is to develop and implement a follow-up component to ensure theory has been transformed into practice.

Roanoke Rapids City School district is actively involved with a System of Care Community Collaborative. The coordinator currently transfers information and participates in every intake meeting with parents of students in the county’s Akers Alternative Learning Program. The Learning program provides intensive behavioral management alternative classrooms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The Behavioral Support Center will address the ever-growing need for information, support, and training for regular and special education school-based staff. Ultimately, the Center will assist with assessments and interventions aimed at reducing referrals to Akers.

The University of North Carolina Network Coordination Center

As proposed in the SIG application, a Network Coordination Center was established at the University of North Carolina during the first year of the project. An office for the UNC Network Coordination Center has been established in Chapel Hill at the University of North Carolina General Administration office complex, and David Lillie has been hired to coordinate the center’s activities. The center has contracted with two reading specialists, Dr. Rebecca Felton and Ms. Linda Miller to provide training and technical assistance for the eight Best Practice Centers focusing on improving teaching of reading. During the first year, the Network Coordination Center has developed a plan for staff development, has conducted a series of five sequential staff development workshops, and has implemented a system of needs assessment and evaluation strategies with the Centers.

The Network Coordination Center has also worked with the Center for Evaluation, Assessment, and Policy Connections (EVAP) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to establish a preliminary set of evaluation plans and procedures for the Best Practice Centers. A contract has been negotiated and agreed upon with EVAP to assist with evaluation activities for the State Improvement Project and will be executed before the end of the first year activities.

IMPROVING READING AND WRITING INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT PROGRESS

During the first year of the NC SIP, the eight Centers focusing on improving reading and writing instruction have participated in a year long staff development program designed to expand each staff member's basic foundation of knowledge and skills in reading instruction, gleaned from the extensive research literature on teaching students with severe reading difficulties to read. A primary goal of the staff development program was to provide the centers' staff with the information and knowledge needed to select a specific set of reading instructional approaches which incorporate the instructional principles supported by research on teaching students with severe reading difficulties who are also identified as having a disability.

A series of five workshops were provided for the Best Practice Centers Staff. The purpose of the workshops was to provide comprehensive training representing on a research to practice continuum. Reading instruction research, primarily funded by the OSEPs and the Institute of Mental Health, was identified and the instructional principles derived from these research efforts were summarized. These principles were then used as a basis of translating the research finding into classroom instructional strategies and procedures that were presented in detail. To assure development of instructional skills, all participants were required to complete "workshop assignments" in their Center's classrooms with their students. Staff from each of the eight Best Practice Centers focusing on improving reading and writing participated in the series of five workshops with a total of approximately 35 participants attending each of the workshops. Agendas for each of the workshops can be found in Appendix B.

The staff development content and procedures have been built on two primary considerations:

1. The reading and writing performance of students with disabilities enrolled in the regular curriculum is dismal. In North Carolina, students with disabilities participating in the state's accountability testing program score at less than one-half the reading level of the total population of students taking the tests. In this high-stakes testing atmosphere the consequences of this low, and unacceptable, level of performance are striking. Students not performing at or above grade level may be: (a) held back at grade level, (b) denied a diploma, or perhaps worse, (c) a shift from a diploma curriculum track to a non-diploma curriculum track.
2. There is clear research evidence that the vast majority of students with disabilities can learn to read on grade level IF appropriate, research validated instruction and learning techniques are effectively employed.

The NC SIP divided teacher training leading instruction into two phases: (1) Reading Instruction Foundation Training, and (2) Training in the Use of a Specific Proven and Tested Teaching Procedures and Materials Model or Approach. Staff members, including leadership staff, of all eight of the reading and writing centers have completed Phase 1 training as of the writing of this report. Several, but not all, of the eight reading and writing center staff have participated in Phase 2 training.

Phase 1. Reading Instruction Foundation Training

The NC SIP staff development resource program adopted a staff development program, *Teaching Students with Persistent Reading Problems*. Rebecca Felton and David Lillie have developed the content and media in this program in partnership with the Guilford County, North Carolina Schools. The staff development program has been designed to introduce teachers to the knowledge, skills and procedures needed to provide effective instruction for students with persistent reading difficulties. An extensive body of instructional research involving students with reading difficulties supports the teaching principles, techniques and strategies presented in the program.

The program provides teachers with a solid foundation of knowledge and skills needed to deliver effective instruction for students, who, after several years of instruction and learning experiences in reading, still have difficulty reading fluently and are significantly behind their age peers. The program consists of twelve units and provides a solid foundation on which to build an effective reading instruction program.

The content and teaching techniques presented in the program are derived directly from the extensive research-based literature available on teaching students with severe reading difficulties. The program reflects the findings of two recent National reports addressing the instructional needs of students with reading problems, *Teaching Children to Read*, a report of the National Reading Panel, and *Preventing Reading Problems of Young Children*, a report sponsored by the National Reading Council of the National Academy of Sciences.

Teaching Students with Persistent Reading Problems, is designed to be used as a self-directed learning program and a primary training resource in support of staff development programs for practicing teachers or as a supplemental program for pre-service teacher education courses. It provides a prerequisite solid foundation of knowledge and skills to begin using research-proven teaching strategies and to make long-range decisions about the use of instructional procedures and materials. The staff development program, *Teaching Students with Persistent Reading Problems*, is organized into twelve units as listed below.

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Learning to Read, A National Problem
- 3 The Major Principles of Reading Instruction
- 4 The Structure of Language - What Teachers Need to Know
- 5 Assessment of Basic Reading Skills
- 6 Teaching Phonemic Awareness
- 7 Teaching Letter-Sound Associations
- 8 Teaching Word Identification: Decoding and Sight Words

- 9 Teaching Spelling
- 10 Developing Automaticity and Fluency
- 11 Teaching Reading Comprehension
- 12 Selecting and Implementing an Effective Reading Program

Content from all the units, except Teaching Reading Comprehension, was addressed across the five staff development workshops provided by NC SIP for the teaching and training staff of the reading and writing centers. Staff in teaching reading comprehension will occur during the second year of the project.

Unit 2 presents an overview of the increasing scope of the reading problem in the United States. The research literature indicates that a significant percentage of students with reading difficulties are identified as having a learning disability and/or dyslexia. Units 3 and 4 focus on basic principles to guide instruction and what teachers need to know about the structure of the English language in order to deliver effective instruction in reading. Students' current reading abilities must be assessed to plan effective instruction. In Unit 5 information is provided about reading skills assessment and teachers will be asked to practice using assessment tools that are necessary for planning instruction.

In Units 6 through 8, an overview of explicit instructional techniques will be provided for teaching phonemic awareness, letter-sound associations, and word identification. Unit 9 addresses teaching spelling and presents several learning strategies that have been demonstrated to improve spelling abilities.

The ultimate goal of word identification and decoding instruction is the immediate, facile translation of a printed word into its spoken equivalent (Suzanne Carreker, Teaching Reading in Birsh, J.R., Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills, 1999, Baltimore: Brookes Publishing). To this end, Unit 10 presents teaching and learning techniques for developing automaticity and fluency. Fluent and automatic word identification permits the student to concentrate on the comprehension of what is being read, which is addressed in Unit 11.

The final instructional unit addresses the selection and implementation of a comprehensive reading program, which incorporates the features discussed throughout this program. In addition to the basic foundation knowledge and skill developed using this program, all teachers (including learning disability, reading and language specialists) who work with students with persistent reading difficulties should have the background knowledge and skills to effectively use one or more carefully selected sets of procedures and materials. However, it is not the intent of this program to teach how to effectively use a specific set of materials or procedures. Currently, there are a number of well-designed, comprehensive programs that focus on procedures and materials for teaching students with reading problems that incorporate the instructional principles derived from the research-based literature. In Unit 12, information about four specific reading programs is provided for the staff development participants' consideration:

- The Hill Methodology
- Language!
- SRA Corrective Reading
- The Wilson Reading System

These programs have been included based on the following criteria:

1. Designed to Teach Reading to Students with Persistent Reading Problems

Each of these approaches has been specifically designed to facilitate substantial growth in reading skills of students who, after one or more years of reading instruction, are significantly behind their classmates in reading abilities.

2. Evidence of Effectiveness

Each of these approaches has reported evaluation information supporting the use of the model. There is a great deal of variation, however, across the models in the amount and type of evaluation information reported.

3. Use Over Time

Each of these programs has been used successfully in a variety of settings and over a number of years.

It is important to note that these four programs are presented as examples of programs that meet the above criteria and do not comprise the only programs available that may meet these criteria. In addition to specific information on materials and approaches, the final unit will also provide information and guidance concerning effective implementation of reading instruction within schools and systems. Topics include:

- Student Selection and Effective Grouping for Instruction
- Teacher Training
- Allocation of Sufficient Instructional Time
- On-going Instructional Support for Teachers
- Continuity of Instruction Across Grades and Schools
- Administrative Support Necessary for Success

Second Year Activities

As indicated earlier, in addition to the continuation of several of the program strategies planned for the first year activities, the project plan identified four new strategies to be used starting during the second year. These strategies included:

- Training of Trainers in Research-Validated Reading Instruction and continuation of training of teachers in Best Practice Centers
- Implementation of Evaluation Systems for Measuring Quality of Teacher Implementation of Instruction and Student Progress
- Restructuring Teacher Education and Faculty Training.

By the end of the first year, the ten Best Practice (Research to Practice) Centers were established; the Centers' instructional staff was provided foundation training, instructional models identified and students were instructed using the various instructional models.

During the second year of the project, using the results of the evaluation of the progress of the Best Practice Centers conducted at the end of the first academic year of the operation of

the centers, the UNC Network Coordination Center continued to provide training, technical assistance and resources to improve the functioning of the centers. These efforts included a combination of on-site technical assistance provided through the year, two network-wide staff development sessions-one in the Fall and one in the Spring, and continuous delivery of technical assistance and resources through electronic communications. The following activities were conducted.

1. Training of Trainers in Research-Validated Reading Instruction

As indicated in the project plan, the reading centers' staff that received Research to Practice Foundation Training during the first year of the project received additional training during the second year of the project to become trainers and train special education and regular education teachers in each of their school districts.

The Training To Train training involved two strategies. An initial training to train workshop was held in July of 2001. Staff from six of the eight reading centers participated. The agenda for this workshop can be found in the box below

Best Practices
Training to Train Workshop:
Foundations for Teaching Students
With Persistent Reading Problems

The North Carolina State Improvement Project
 Four Seasons Conference Center
 Greensboro, North Carolina
 July 24, 2001

1:00 pm	• NC SIP Update, Plans and Announcements	Fred Baars
1:10 pm	• Workshop Purpose and Agenda	David Lillie
	• Using the CD ROM Resource: Teaching Students with Persistent Reading Problems	Rebecca Felton
	- Contents	
	- How to Use (review Draft Trainers Manual)	
	• Developing Your Plan for Training	
	- Who should Participate?	
	- When should you hold workshop?	
	- How should the workshop be conducted?	
	- Presentation of tentative plans	
2:10pm	• Desired Teacher Competencies as a Result of Training	Laura Snyder
	• What Trainers Need to Know	Rebecca Felton
2:30 pm	• Structure of Language Training Feedback	Linda Miller
3:00 pm	• Systems Change Goals	Rebecca Felton
3:30	• Adjourn	

In reviewing the results of the readiness reviews for each center conducted at the end of year one, it was clear that several centers needed additional training and technical assistance before they themselves became trainers. Accordingly, reading specialists, Rebecca Felton and Linda Miller continued to provide on-site training and assistance for those centers that had continuing needs in getting ready to provide training in their districts. With the

additional training six of the eight reading centers initiated their own training during the second year. In the box below an example of the training conducted by one of the centers during the year is provided. The evaluation results for these workshops can be found in the next section of this report on Objective 1.1 Accomplishments and Outcomes.

***Example Agendas for
Foundations Training***
January 10, 2002

Introductions: “ What kids don’t know can hurt them. ”	Stamey Carter
Stages of Development of Phonemic Awareness	Vickie Norris
Small group demonstration of games from <u>Phonemic Awareness in Young Children</u>	
Principles of Instruction	Stamey Carter
Teaching Methods:	
Beginning Sound Picture Sorting	Stamey Carter
Teaching Motor Movements of Sounds-LIPS	Stamey Carter
Teaching Syllable Segmentation & Blending	Becky Felton
Teaching “Say It and Move It”	Becky Felton
Manipulating Sounds within Words (LIPS)	Vickie Norris
Finger Tapping	Stamey Carter
Onset and Rhyme	Stamey Carter
Learning Tasks:	
1. Complete IRI	
2. Preview Unit 7 on the CD	

Foundations Training
February 22, 2002

3:30-4:00	Sharing experiences; Individual Reading Inventories-Vickie
4:00-5:00	Assessment Interpretation-Stamey
5:00-	Dinner served
5:15-5:30	Background on alphabetic learning-Stamey
5:30-6:00	Demonstration teaching of new letter-Vickie
6:00-6:30	Practicing letter-sound drills-Vickie

- Learning Tasks:
1. Practice alphabetic sounds with children
 2. Practice Visual and Auditory drills

Foundations Training
March 13, 2002

3:30-4:15 Stamey IRI Feedback: Make-a-Word; Word Chains

Instructions for word chains:

1. Use only short vowels & any consonants including digraphs (ch, sh, th, wh)
2. Write a 12 word chain changing one sound at a time
3. Make changes to beginning, middle & end of words

***Teachers practice Make-a-word activity---*see handout
 “Teacher” makes 6 words
 “Student” makes 6 words**

4:15-4:30	Stamey <u>Discovering two Syllable Types</u>
4:40-4:40	Break
4:40-5:15	Vickie <u>Syllable Types</u> • Silent-e R-controlled
5:15-5:30	Stamey <u>Leap Word Study</u>

Assignments:

1. Do a Make-a-Word activity with a student, group or class. Bring the list to the next class. Make any comments you discovered with this activity
2. Write a word chain that fits your current spelling (needs to be a phonic pattern list.) Remember to have students tap sounds
3. Read and view Unit 9 & 10 on CD
4. Read National Reading Panel---Phonics Section

Foundations Training

April 11, 2002

3:30-3:50	Chain Reaction: teacher demonstrations and feedback
3:50-4:15	Teaching Spelling-Stamey
4:15-5:00	Spelling Activity in small groups
5:00-5:30	Fluency-Vickie

Learning Tasks:

1. Bring student assessment tasks to class to turn in
2. Develop a discovery lesson for a spelling pattern or rule appropriate for the student you tested
3. Determine a baseline word and /or text reading rate for a student with fluency problems. Describe the procedure used and the results for the student. Write an instructional objective to address this student's needs and describe a plan for this student.

Foundations Training

May 08, 2002

3:30-4:00	Teachers share fluency exercises and results
4:00-4:50	Reading vocabulary and comprehension-Stamey
4:50-5:00	Sundaes
5:00-5:30	Foundations exam and course evaluation

2. Implementation of Evaluation Systems for Measuring Quality of Teacher Implementation of Instruction and Student Progress

During the second year of the project a major emphasis was placed on the implementation of a comprehensive data collection process with specific attention given to the evaluation of the quality of teacher instruction and the progress of students. To this end, a set of NC SIP Evaluation Procedures were developed and presented to the center staff at the fall, 2001 network meeting. For each student enrolled in a best practice center's instructional program, the data system includes student demographics, instructional settings, teacher fidelity in implementing the selected instructional model, Woodcock Johnson Psycho-educational Battery (reading subtests) fall and spring scores, and North Carolina End-of-Grade Scores. A more detailed description of the data that are being collected is presented in the appendix.

Data from all the centers will be aggregated during the summer of 2001-2002 and presented in the third year report. At this time the student demographic data are available from the centers and are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Student Evaluation Data
Best Practice Reading Centers
2001-2002

<u>CENTER</u>	SLD	BED	EMD	OHI	Other	Ethnicity	Gender	Total # of Students
Cumberland	16	0	0	5	0	5-Black 15-White 1-Hispanic	15-M 6-F	21
Haywood	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Montgomery	48	1	3	1	6			59
Northampton	11		2		2	15-Black	13-M 2-F	15
Onslow	12	1	1	3	0	**	**	17
Transylvania	31	0	2	0	2	2-Black 33-White	24-M 11-F	35
Wake	21	0	10	3	6	27-Black 12-White 1-Hispanic	24-M 16-F	40
Watauga	11	0	0	3	0	13-White 1-Black	9-M 5-F	14
Totals	150	2	18	15	16	50-Black 73-White 2-Hispanic	85-M 40-F	201

** No data reported

To assure that teachers provide effective instruction using research-validated instructional strategies and procedures, the project has emphasized the evaluation of model delivery fidelity. The model teachers in each of the eight Best Practice Reading Centers were evaluated, on average, at least once a month using structured classroom observations. Observation protocols were developed for each of the model reading instruction programs used by the centers; SRA Corrective Reading Language!, Wilson Reading System, and LiPS/Language! Each center identified a staff member who conducted the observations. A preliminary analysis of the fidelity observations using the data available at this time, indicate a high average percentage of agreement reliability. A full report of the results of the teacher fidelity observations for the second year will be reported in the Third Annual Report. The teacher fidelity observations will be repeated again during the last two years of the project. The project has stressed the need for the use of the fidelity observations with the belief that without a high level of teacher implementation fidelity the most effective instructional models, as demonstrated by controlled research studies, will fail to be effective in widespread implementation in public schools.

3. Restructuring Teacher Education and Faculty Training.

A variety of the NC SIP activities during the second year focused on restructuring teacher education. The major goal of these efforts is to assure that the teacher education programs

are including course work and requirements, which reflect the research-validated instructional strategies and procedures advocated by the NC SIP project in the course work and training of special educators. Several strategies were used during the second year of the project to change the structure and content of teacher education programs and to align the programs with the goals of NC SIP. These included (a) orientation and training of special education teacher education faculty across the state, (b) developing online coursework for use by all teacher education programs in the State, and (c) coordination of a NC DPI effort to restructure teacher licensing in North Carolina. Each of these is discussed below. The description of the restructuring activities applies to three of the NC SIP Objectives 1.1, 2.1, and 2.3 and can be found on page 49 under the discussion of activities conducted for Objective 2.1

4. Staff Development in Participating LEAs

Six of the eight Best Practice Centers conducted training within their school districts with the goal of providing effective, research-validated instruction for all students in the district with disabilities who are enrolled in the standard curriculum. As indicated in the discussion of the training to train activities presented above, the centers duplicated the research to practice training content and procedures provided for all center staff during the first year of the project. As can be seen below, during the 2001-2002 academic year 94 additional teachers received the comprehensive research to practice training.

Table 2
Teachers Receiving Foundations Training
2001-2002

Central NC Reading/Writing Center (Cumberland)	21
Western NC Reading/Writing Center (Haywood)	15
Southeastern NC Reading/Writing Center (Onslow)	23
Northwestern NC Reading/Writing Center (Watauga)	23
North Central NC Reading/Writing Center (Wake)	12
Total	94

Beginning during the third year of the project, the Research to Practice Foundation Training will be provided in additional school systems and will be made available to all teacher education programs in North Carolina in the form of an online course with technical assistance from NC SIP.

IMPROVING MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT PROGRESS

First Year Activities

The Best Practice Center for improving the teaching of mathematics for students with disabilities was established in the Rockingham County Schools in the North Central Region of North Carolina in the fall of 2000. In North Carolina all students must pass a course in Algebra to qualify for graduation. Without appropriate instruction, this policy could have a very negative effect on students with disabilities--leading to larger numbers of dropouts and fewer numbers of students with disabilities graduating with a diploma. In response to a major need to improve the quality of teaching Algebra, the Center has focused its activities at the middle school level. A more specific description of the program can be found in Appendix A.

During the summer of the first year of the project, Algebraic Thinking Level I Training took place in two five-day sessions. Eighteen teachers participated in the first five-day workshop and nineteen teachers participated in the second five-day workshop. The teachers represented four high schools, three middle schools, and the Score Alternative Center in the county. The content and materials for the program was selected based on the instructional principles gleaned from classroom instructional studies with students with disabilities. The focus of the training was to assist teachers in developing and understanding a multi-sensory methodology for teaching Algebra to exceptional learners. The Algebraic Thinking program has been developed by Dr. Brian Enright, a special educator recognized nationally for his work in the development of instructional strategies and materials that are multi-sensory in nature and that have found to be very effective for teaching students with disabilities.

Algebraic Thinking is a three part series of instructional strategies and materials that is designed to be used with average and below average students in middle school, or with students experiencing math difficulties in high school. The program is fundamentally different based on its' methodology. The program leads students through three levels of understanding mathematics, from the concrete level where students build understanding of the concepts through manipulative based activities, to the pictorial level where students extend that understanding through visual understanding, to the procedural level where students learn to apply the skills in a problem solving setting. Therefore, a central feature of the program that develops across the three years is a problem solving process known as SOLVE. The program incorporates all of the essential knowledge of algebra and builds that knowledge through these three levels of understanding. Each lesson is constructed to lead the student through experiences that result in the student understanding and then using the skills in a meaningful way. In addition, a lesser noticed but important feature of Algebraic Thinking is the use of games and a variety of interesting activities instead of boring repetition to get and keep the students' interest.

Demonstration and training classrooms have been established at three high schools and one middle school. Preliminary use of the Algebraic Thinking materials has taken place during the 2000-2001 school year. At the time of writing of this report, anecdotal records from the project indicate significantly higher passing rates of students enrolled in the project classes. An outline of training conducted in the series of workshop is presented here.

Workshop Agenda	
Algebraic Thinking Level I Training	Overview of Project Three Stages of Learning Mathematics: Concrete-Pictorial-
Abstract	SOLVE: A Five Step Approach to Problem Solving Building an Understanding of a Use of Fractions Building an Understanding of a Use of Integers -Building an Understanding of a Use of Order of
Operations	Building an Understanding of a Use of Functions Building an Understanding of a Use of Equations Building an Understanding of a Use of Inequalities

All participants observed demonstrations of actual methodology used to teach students the above concepts. Participants then worked in collaborative pairs and practiced those methodologies in a supervised setting. Each participant also reviewed all materials that they would be piloting the following year and received these materials for implementation. The numbers, types and levels of the teachers receiving staff development by the Best Practice Center are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3
Teaching Thinking
Workshop Attendance**

First Workshop (July 18- 21)	EC Teachers	Algebra Teachers
High School	4	10
Middle School	1	3
Second Workshop (July 24-27)		
High School	2	14
Middle School	1	2
Totals	8	29

Second Year Activities

During the second year of the project the mathematics best practice center was involved in a variety of activities in working toward the project’s goals in improving teachers mathematics instructional skills and the performance in mathematics of students with disabilities. The

activities involved staff training, classroom implementation of the Algebraic Thinking instructional model, data collection and evaluation, train and supervise student teachers from partnership IHEs, partnership activities with parent programs, outreach and training with other LEAs.

Staff Training

Four staff training workshops in the Algebraic Thinking Instructional Model were planned and conducted during the year. Table 4 below presents the dates, type of training and number of participants in the training

Table 4
Algebraic Thinking Model Training
2001-2002

Dates of Training	Training Content	Number of Participants
June 18-24, 2001	Algebraic Thinking – Level 1	9
July 9 – 12, 2001	Algebraic Thinking – Level 1	12
May 28 – 31, 2002	Algebraic Thinking – Level 2	6
May 29- June 3, 2002	Algebraic Thinking – Level 1	15

Forty-two teachers were provided training in the Algebraic Thinking model during the second year of the project. As the project moves into the third year training in both level 1 and level 2 is planned.

Implementation of Instructional Model

The Algebraic Thinking model continued to be implemented in four schools during the second year of the project. These schools included Rockingham High School, Reidsville High School, McMichael High School, and Reidsville Middle Schools. Implementation included daily use of the model in the four schools. In response to implementation teacher's feedback, revisions in the model and the implementation process were made to improve the efficiency of the implementation. A "pacing guide" was developed to provide teachers a common process for planning the use of the instructional procedures and materials in the classrooms. In addition, guidelines were developed to correlate the content and skills addressed in the model instruction with the North Carolina Algebra curriculum standards.

Data Collection and Evaluation

In partnership with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the mathematics center developed and implemented a comprehensive data collection system to examine the impact of the Algebraic Thinking instructional program on students with disabilities as well as students who have the potential to be identified as having a disability. Data has been collected in the following fields: Teacher, Class, Period, Course, Student ID, Grade, Gender, Ethnicity, Exceptionality, Final Grade, Probe Score, and End-of-Course SS. The End-of-Grade data for the end of the 2001-2002 academic year is not yet available. These data will be analyzed and reported in next year's report.

Training and Supervision of Student Teachers

Several student teachers from UNC-G completed internships in classrooms where the Algebraic Thinking model is used. To formalize the mathematics internship, University of North Carolina at Greensboro faculty and the NC SIP staff in the mathematics centers have developed a plan to provide supervision and training for UNC-G student teachers. The internships will be initiated in the fall, 2002.

Parent Program Activities

With the assistance of the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center, the mathematics center developed a series of math/algebra suggestions to be published in their newsletter and handouts for parents participating in the program. The project staff has also developed a script for a videotape of implementation of segments of the Algebraic Thinking instruction. The tape will be used to assist parents in developing an understanding of the instruction procedures in the program.

Outreach to Additional School Systems

To begin outreach activities, the mathematics center developed a poster program presentation that was presented at the North Carolina State Directors of special education meeting in February. In addition the center and the NC SIP state level staff have planned additional teacher training in the use of the Algebraic Thinking instruction for teachers from other systems across the state. The training will take place during the summer of 2002.

IMPROVING STUDENT BEHAVIOR: POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

(Note: Although the NC SIP Objective 1.1 focuses on improving teachers reading, writing and mathematics instructional skills, the projects efforts in improving student behavior through the implementation of research-based positive behavioral supports are reported under this objective because of the relationship between improvement of student behavior and student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.

First Year Activities

During the first year of the NC SIP, a Best Practice Center was established in the Durham Public Schools. As can be seen the Center's description in Appendix A, the Center's leadership staff, training staff, and teaching staff have been identified. In the Fall 2000, the Center got off to a somewhat slow start. The two staff members hired to provide leadership for the Positive Behavior Support Center (PBSC) were already Durham Public Schools employees at the time of the establishment of the center and had to be freed from their previous duties before beginning their new roles. The project has secured additional funding so that the two leadership staff positions (program manager and teacher-trainer) could be increased to full-time. This also freed up some funds from money that had been budgeted for salaries. These funds have been reallocated to provide stipends to teachers and other staff who will be involved in the project to receive training over the summer months.

The Best Practice Center has established offices and classrooms in the Oak Grove Elementary School. Oak Grove Elementary currently uses positive behavior supports and has gained the support of school administration and the school's site-based decision-making team. Varying levels of services are now available at Oak Grove Elementary. Support services target all children in the school, not just those with serious difficulties. Services are at the primary level (whole school), secondary level (at risk and exhibiting difficulties), and tertiary level (highly involved with multiple or services). Primary services are delivered to staff in the form of consultation. Secondary services are delivered to parents in the form of workshops and linkage to other community services, and to students in the form of direct services. Tertiary services are delivered to students, parents, and staff in the form of team consultation and assistance with planning for movement along the continuum.

During the first project year to date, monthly training sessions have been provided for all Exceptional Children's Facilitators in Functional Behavior Assessment and creating Behavior Intervention Plans. In addition, training has been provided in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention for the Best Practice Center staff as well as other staff in the Durham Public Schools. Monthly meetings have been held for the Outreach/Resource teachers for students with Behavioral/Emotional Disabilities and dates have been established for summer training dates for host-school site. As indicated earlier, selected teachers will be paid stipends and will work over the summer to strengthen and codify the school-wide behavior management system. Experienced teachers will then be paired with new teachers to insure continuation of social skills training at a high level among K-2 classes.

Summer training will include; developing functional behavior assessment and behavior intervention plans, instruction of social skills, leading anger management groups, leading peer mediation groups, instituting a school-wide discipline plan, leading classroom meetings, training in non-violent crisis intervention, and training children in problem solving techniques.

Finally, School Guidance Counselors at the host site have been relieved of their duties as testing coordinators, and will focus more of their time in the next year on providing pro-active support to the PBS program by leading support groups and anger management groups for Oak Grove students. Training in leading these groups will be provided over the summer through the Office of Student Support Services.

Second Year Activities

The implementation of the Positive Behavioral Supports Center has continued during the second year of the project. Oak Grove has implemented school-wide recognition of positive behavior in traditional trouble spots such as halls and cafeterias. In addition, a whole array of new support services have been implemented including anger management and social skills instruction. Services are also provided to the school teaching staff in the form of consultation. Children who are at risk and exhibiting difficulties are provided additional support services and linkage to community services. Team consultation and assistance has been made available for children who are highly involved with multiple or restrictive services.

The Behavioral Support Section of the Exceptional Children Division has integrated its program activities with the North Carolina State Improvement Project goals and strategies and has been providing support and technical assistance to the five Regional Positive Behavioral Support Centers as they begin developing their demonstration and training programs. Behavioral Support Regional Consultants have been identified and have individually met with the school systems in their regions to provide technical assistance for the development of the PBS programs. In addition, there have been five meetings of staff from all five sites hosted by NC SIP Center in the Durham Public Schools. Representatives of the centers, ECAC, personnel from local universities, and the regional consultants participated. The five centers have shared their philosophies, current plans, and programs that work. The group spent some time brainstorming about how to collect data, to provide pre-service and continuing training, to involve parents and to stay connected with each other. Information was provided about the Elementary and Middle School Technical Assistance Center and the research information that they might provide. The programs have repeatedly gotten ideas and information from each other.

Lucille Eber presented a two-day Positive Behavioral Supports workshop for the five schools and five additional schools from Durham and Cleveland County on February 5 and 6, 2002. This workshop was jointly sponsored by Cleveland County Schools, the Healthy Students/Safe Schools Federal Grant Project and the Department of Public Instruction. The schools which participated left the workshop energized and with tools and plans for improving their programs.

The second year of the project has also focused on the continuing development and implementation of the Positive Behaviors Supports system of satellite centers which are regionally located in Gaston County Public Schools, Watauga County Public Schools, Brunswick County Public Schools and Roanoke Rapids City Schools are the four additional Regional Positive Behavioral Support Center sites. These programs are in different stages of the development of the demonstration programs as discussed below.

Gaston County Schools goals for the Behavioral Support Center are two fold. The first goal is to serve the students of the county in the most successful and innovative ways possible. This is being achieved by refining the programs at Warlick Alternative School. These expanded services include transitional services for returning to their home schools, on site mental health counseling, and the Gaston Alternatives Program. The Gaston Alternatives Program will serve as an afternoon high school program and day reporting program for suspended students and will offer the occupational course of study classes and work program components. The second goal is to provide hands on training on effective behavior management skills, social skills, and concepts such as character education, peer mediation, and class meetings to a wide range of teachers and school staff, both in and outside of Gaston County. This goal will be met in conjunction with outreach services provided by University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Watauga County Public Schools, in conjunction with Appalachian State University, has begun implementing several of the Positive Behavioral Support Center's goals. They have been using a screening procedure to identify emergent risk factors in children. They have also developed and implemented a school-wide social skills curriculum, "The Missing Curriculum: Teaching Social Competencies in the Classroom." Green Valley

School is the focus of the grant and is developing a school wide Character Education Program. Watauga County's goals include inter-agency and parental participation in educational/behavioral planning for students with special behavioral or emotional needs. In addition they are coordinating programs to more efficiently disseminate in-service training to the county's teachers, parents, and ASU students.

Brunswick County Public Schools has identified Supply Elementary School as the site for their Positive Behavioral Support Regional Center. Supply has implemented several school wide systems to reward students for appropriate behavior. Individual classrooms have emphasized positive interactions in addition to corrective interactions. School rules and procedures were taught in a uniform manner to all students at the beginning of the school year. In addition, extra support is provided for students who need additional help. This support provides mentoring by school staff that focuses on extra academic help and social skill instruction. Collaboration with the University of North Carolina at Wilmington has allowed for easy development of training and support for staff. Supply Elementary School has reported a 50% reduction in suspensions for this school year.

Roanoke Rapids City Schools is actively involved with a System of Care Community Collaborative. The coordinator currently disseminates information and participates in every in-take meeting with parents of students in the county's Akers Alternative Learning Program. The Learning program provides intensive behavioral management alternative classrooms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The Behavioral Support Center will address the ever-growing need for information, support, and training for regular and special education school-based staff. Ultimately, the Center will assist with assessments and interventions aimed at reducing referrals to Akers.

During the spring of 2002, five additional Positive Behavioral Support Program sites have been selected. These sites are McClintock Middle School in the Charlotte/Mecklenburg School System, Southwood Elementary School in the Davidson County School System, Phillips School in the Edgecombe County School System, Williamston Middle School in the Martin County School System, and Burgaw Elementary School in the Pender County School System. Contracts are being developed for these sites and will be in effect July 1, 2002. Training for a core team consisting of the school principal, a central office administrator, and one additional person will be held June 18 and 19 in Durham coordinated by the NC SIP PBS Best Practice Center. Existing centers will help with the training of the new programs.

Objective 1.1- Accomplishments and Outcomes During the First Two Years

TEACHING READING AND WRITING

Four related evaluation strategies were employed to determine the impact and outcomes of the staff development efforts on the knowledge and skills of the participants and on the developmental progress of the centers; (1) Participants perceptions of the effectiveness of the training, (2) Before and after training self-evaluations, (3) Evaluation of participants classroom work products and assignments, and (4) an evaluation of each Center's readiness to provide staff development in their region of North Carolina. Each of these are discussed briefly below.

The UNC Network Coordination Center with the assistance of the project evaluator, developed a rating scale to be used by participants entitled, *SIP Staff Development Evaluation*. The instrument, which can be found in Appendix C, was used to measure the training participants perceptions of the effectiveness of the training they received. Table 5 presents the average participant ratings across the eight items rated using the form.

Table 5
Review and Summary of SIP Staff Development Evaluations
2001

Using a four point rating scale (4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Agree) the average ratings across the eight items ranged from 3.3 to 3.6.

<u>STATEMENT</u>	TOTAL SCORE	AVERAGE SCORE
1) The principles of instruction for students with disabilities derived from research on reading.	83	3.6
2) How to use research-based principles of reading instruction in planning reading programs for students	80	3.5
3) The structure of the English language	78	3.4
4) How to effectively teach English language structure to students with disabilities	75	3.3
5) The necessary components to assess individual students' reading abilities	81	3.5
6) How to use this information in developing and conducting individual assessments.	77	3.3
7) Strategies for teaching phonemic awareness	79	3.4
8) How to effectively teach students who need phonemic awareness.	79	3.4

When asked what was most useful, the most common response was that the review of the reading programs, and instruction, were the most helpful aspects of the training. Many also felt that learning how to properly assess the students was of great benefit. A few also cited the CD ROM as quite useful, as well as hearing from other Centers and participants directly about their programs and how they have set about to achieve their goals.

Few participants had questions, or areas that needed clarification. A majority of those that did, however, seemed to be most concerned with what the expectations of the program are for both teachers and students. They wanted a more clearly defined set of goals and expectations, particularly as required by the SIG. Overall, the reviews were quite positive and constructive in nature.

A second form, entitled, *NC SIP Teacher Performance Profile*, (found in Appendix C), was designed to measure the training participants perceptions of their competency level across 14 performance competencies. The performance competencies reflect the desired outcomes for teachers who participated in the *Research to Practice Foundations for Teaching Reading to Students with Persistent Reading Problems* training content and procedures previously developed by Dr. Rebecca Felton and Dr. David Lillie in partnership with the Guilford County

Schools. Twenty-one participants representing staff from seven of the eight Best Practice Centers independently completed the before and after training self-evaluations at the end of the series of five workshops. Staff members from the eighth center were unable to attend the last workshop because of classroom schedule conflicts and their self-evaluation will be retrieved during the last two weeks in May.

The *NC SIP Teacher Performance Profile* was also used by the projects reading specialists, Dr. Rebecca Felton and Ms. Linda Miller to evaluate the quality of the participants work assignments. The training tasks participants were required to complete are included in the *Research to Practice Foundations for Teaching Reading to Students with Persistent Reading Problems* training program. The tasks were assigned at the end of each unit in the training program and were designed to provide follow through practice of the desired skills imbedded in the program competencies. Most of the tasks included interactions with identified students with severe reading problems. The series of required tasks can be found in Chart 1.

Table 6
Review and Summary of Evaluation of Reading Foundations Training
Example: Watauga County

Using a five point rating scale range (5 = Very Helpful to 1 = Not Helpful)

<u>MAJOR TOPICS</u>	<u>Total Score</u>	<u>Average Score</u>
1. Introduction: Learning to Read a National problem, Major Principles of Reading Instruction	63	3.3
2. Structure of Language	76	4
3. Assessment of Basic Reading Skills	90	4.3
4. Phonemic Awareness	91	4.3
5. Teaching Lettters-Sound Associations	85	4.5
6. Teaching Word Identification	74	4.1
7. Teaching Spelling	91	4.3
8. Developing Automaticity and Fluency	84	4.2
9. Vocabulary and Comprehension	72	3.8
<u>LEARNING TASKS</u>		
10. Reading National Reading Panel report	47	2.3
11. Basic Reading Skills Assessment (phoneme awareness, letter-sounds, word identification, etc.)	88	4.2
12. Informal Reading Inventory (passages)	89	4.0
13. Phonemic Awareness Activity and Write-up	83	4.1
14. Make-a-Word Activity	84	4
<u>CD: TEACHING STUDENTS WITH PERSISTENT READING PROBLEMS</u>		
15. The text of the CD	76	3.6
16. The video clips on the CD	69	3.6
17. Additional materials to print out	84	4.2
<u>OVERALL COURSE</u>		
18. In class presentations	86	4.3
19. In class group activities	96	4.6
20. Content of Course in General	91	4.3

Table 7 below, presents a summary of the participants before and after training self-evaluation ratings across each of the competencies addressed in the training. The results of the evaluations of the quality of the participants work assignment products, as a proxy for observed behaviors, are also included in the Table 7.

A six point rating scale was used in the performance profile on a continuum from Novice, Intermediate and Expert with 1 representing the least competent (Novice) and 6 the most competent (Expert). As can be seen in Table 7, participants' perceptions of their knowledge and skill competencies in teaching students with disabilities to read using principles derived from research findings improved across all ten competencies. The highest self-ratings gains from before training to after training were reported for competencies 1 (2.05 gain); 5 (1.8 gain); and 3 (1.7 gain). The lowest self-rating gains were reported for competencies 9 (.74 gain); 5 (1.25 gain); and 7 (1.32 gain)

Table 7
Evaluation of the Impact of the Series of NC SIP Workshops
On Participants Competencies in Teaching Reading

Workshop Series Target Competencies	Before Self Rating	After Self Rating	Task Performance Rating*
1. Summarize the instructional content and principles supported by the reading research on students with persistent reading problems including students identified as dyslexic.	2.45	4.5	5.1
2. Demonstrate a basic level of understanding of the structure of the English language.	2.95	4.55	3.6
3. Conduct an effective reading skills assessment for individual students with serious reading problems.	3.2	4.9	**
4. Demonstrate effective ability to plan, using assessment results, and teach phonemic awareness to a group of students.	3.35	4.75	**
5. Demonstrate effective ability to plan (using assessment results) to teach Letter-Sound Association skills to a student, and/or group of students.	2.95	4.75	**
5a. Demonstrate effective ability to teach Letter-Sound Association skills to a student, and/or group of students.	3.55	4.8	**
6. Demonstrate effective ability to plan (using assessment results) to teach Word Identification skills to a student and/or group of students.	3.25	4.6	**
6a. Demonstrate effective ability to teach Word Identification skills to a student and/or a group of students	3.25	4.65	**

7. Demonstrate effective ability to plan (using assessment results) to teach spelling to a student and/or group of students	3.1	4.42	**
7a. Demonstrate effective ability to teach spelling to a student and/or group of students.	3.05	4.42	**
8. Demonstrate effective ability to plan (using assessment results) to teach Automaticity and Fluency skills to a student and/or group of students.	2.98	4.34	**
8a. Demonstrate effective ability to teach Automaticity and Fluency skills to a student and/or a group of students.	3.0	4.34	**
9. Demonstrate effective ability to plan (using assessment results) and teach Reading Comprehension skills to a student, and/or group of students.	3.52	4.26	**
10. Demonstrate ability to provide classroom instruction using an identified, research supported, reading program with fidelity to the instructional principles and procedures of the program.	3.36	4.72	***

* Average rating of the quality of the participants workshop assignment products

** Data will not be available until assignment is completed and evaluated.

*** To be measured in the Fall, 2001 using classroom observations

A more objective rating of the participants teaching of reading abilities was conducted through a structured review of the products developed in response to the training assignments. The assignments, displayed in Chart 1, were designed to provide the review team with information, products and artifacts, which are representative of the application of knowledge and skills developed as a result of the training.

Chart 1 **Workshop Learning Tasks: Teaching Reading**

Workshop #1 Learning Tasks (Tasks Correlated with Performance Competency 1 and 2)

1. Obtain and read the Summary Report of the National Reading Panel. Summarize the findings in the areas of Phonemic Awareness Instruction, Phonics Instruction, Fluency and Comprehension.
2. Present your summary of the National Reading Panel's report to your school faculty.
3. Take the Knowledge of Language Structure Pre Test. (Administered during the Workshop)
4. Administer the teacher assessment instrument, Knowledge of Language Structure, to the teachers in your school. This can be done during a faculty meeting but be sure the teachers work independently and do not provide them any help with the answers. Gather and keep the assessments, which will be used as baseline data for further school level planning.
5. Read Chapter 2 "Development of Oral Language and Its Relationship to Literacy" by LH Soifer in *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills* (J. Birsh, Editor).

Workshop # 2 Learning Tasks (Tasks Correlated with Performance Competency 10)

1. Reading Program Evaluation

As you investigate various reading programs for adoption in your school district, use the following guidelines and then report on each area. If the program you choose does not address all areas, please include a statement of how you will include instruction in the missing components. Overall, does the program meet the broad NICHD recommendations, as summarized in “A Synthesis of Research on Reading from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development”, Bonnie Grossen (1997).

Recommendations from the NICHD Study on “How to Teach Reading”

- Begin teaching phonemic awareness at an early age (kindergarten.)
- Teach each sound-spelling correspondence explicitly.
- Teach frequent, highly regular sound-spelling relationships systematically.
- Show children exactly how to sound out words.
- Use connected, decodable text for children to practice the sound-spelling relationships children learn.
- Use interesting stories that are read to children to develop language comprehension.
- Balance, but don’t mix. Children shouldn’t be asked to read stories that contain patterns that they have not yet been explicitly taught, but at the same time they need to have other material containing the more complex language read to them, so that they continue their vocabulary development and language development.

Chart 1 Workshop Learning Tasks: Teaching Reading Continued

2. Is the program a **Multisensory** one? According to Moats: “The term **Multisensory** Structured Language Teaching refers to systematic, sequential, explicit teaching of language structure at all level-phonetics, phonology, sound symbol relationships, syllabication, the organization of English orthography, and the meaningful parts of words. It includes as well the teaching of sentence structure, paragraph and text structure and reading comprehension processes. **Multisensory** means with all senses and modalities-reading, writing, listening and speaking.”
3. A comprehensive reading program should have the following components – A) Be based on good research. (Cite) Has the program been included in clinical or research studies? (Please cite), B) Include training in phonological/phonemic awareness (Cite scope and sequence), C) Teach decoding word attack. Sequentially and systematically (Cite scope and sequence), morphology, sight-words-How are these taught? What is the sequence? Are there decodable texts? How many? What time frame instructional sequence do they span? D) Teach spelling – What is the scope and sequence? How is the instruction integrated with the decoding E) Include fluency training – What are the fluency activities? F) Vocabulary Development – What are the vocabulary teaching strategies? Are figurative and idiomatic expressions taught? G) Reading Comprehension – What types of text structure are taught, and in what sequence? H) Writing Composition – How and when is written language started? How is it integrated with the systematic decoding?
4. Additional Questions - 1) Is training and/or mentorship required or recommended for the program? Describe the training, i.e. how many days, cost, follow-up. 2) Is there software? If so, what is covered and how is it integrated with the program? 3) Does the program contain placement tests? If so, what are they, and how are there benchmark assessments to use at various points in the program? If so, what are they? What are the recommendations

if a child has completed a sequence, but not mastered it? 5) Costs: per teacher and per student as well as training costs and any required/suggested follow-up.

Workshop #3 Learning Tasks (Tasks Correlated with Performance Competency 4)

1. Review Units 1-6 of the CD ROM (*Teaching Students with Persistent Reading Problems*, Staff Development CD ROM, Guilford County Schools)
2. Using the phonemic awareness portions of student assessment completed for Workshop #2, write at least one IEP goal and at least two objectives for your student in the area of phonemic awareness. Write an instructional plan for achieving this goal and the objectives (the plan should be comprehensive rather than a single lesson for a single day). Include instructional activities and materials. You should use the information in the CD-ROM to help you with this assignment.

Workshop # 4 Learning Tasks (Tasks Correlated with Performance Competency 5, 5a, 6, 6a, and 7a)

1. Using the letter-sound association, word identification, and spelling portions of the student assessment completed for workshop # 2, write at least one IEP goal and two objectives for your student in each of these areas. Write an instructional plan for achieving these goals and objectives. Note: Any individual who wishes to be a Foundation level trainer in your district must complete the task assignments in order to be considered. (Timeline: Complete and bring this and all assessment protocols with you to workshop # 5.
2. Be prepared to discuss your center's plans for the Best Practices Demonstration Center (including staff development, parent involvement, Foundation level trainers, center location and staffing, service delivery to students).

Chart 1 Workshop Learning Tasks: Teaching Reading Continued

Workshop # 5 Learning Tasks (Tasks Correlated with Performance Competency 8 and 8a)

Part 1: Using information on spelling from your student assessment (along with information from other sources such as analyses of the student's writing or classroom spelling tests), write at least one IEP goal and objectives for spelling. Describe your educational plan for achieving this goal and objectives.

Part 2: Do a fluency assessment of oral text reading for a student of your choice (this may be the student you have used for the earlier assessment or a different student). The text should be at the student's instructional or independent reading level.

Include the following information:

1. Description of the student (if different from the one used for other assessment);
 2. Description of the text used including the number of words and the level of the text (e.g., if decodable text, give level such as 2.1 WRS or J&J Reader 18; if non-decodable, give approximate grade level);
 3. Qualitative description of the student's oral reading (e.g., too fast, slow, fluent, choppy, read with expression, correct attention to punctuation, reread words or phrases, self corrects using context, sounds out words, etc.);
 4. Quantitative description of student's oral reading including: words per minute, % errors, # self-corrections, types of errors (guessing based on partial letter cues, decoding but doesn't know letter-sound associations, wild guesses).
-

Readiness and Developmental Reviews

In addition to the evaluation of the competencies of staff members of each Best Practice Center, the project was interested in determining the extent to which each of the Centers were ready to go on to the next stage in the project's training and demonstration efforts. To conduct an end of year site visit review for each of the Best Practice Centers, the *NC SIP Best Practice Center Readiness Review Form* was developed by the project staff with assistance with the project evaluator. The purpose of this form, which can be found in Appendix C, was to evaluate and review the readiness status of the NC SIP Best Practices Centers for teaching students with disabilities as well as to train others to effectively teach basic skills to students with disabilities. A second purpose was to determine the additional needs a Center might have for training and technical assistance before they are ready to provide demonstration and training activities.

The review form addressed five areas of readiness to train and demonstrate; (A) Clarity and Integrity of Model, (B) Clarity and Appropriateness of the Model's Service Delivery Procedures, (C) Administration and Management, (D) Staff Readiness to Teach, and Train. The readiness review process was conducted at the end of the first year of the project and again at the end of the second year. The site visit review team was comprised of two members; one from the NC SIP leadership staff (Fred Baars or David Lillie) and the other member was one of the project's reading instruction specialists (Rebecca Felton or Linda Miller). As part of the review process the review team reviewed and evaluated materials prepared by the center, which included a revised and updated Project Description for the Center and an updated Project Plan for the Center. In addition, the review procedures included the results of the evaluation of the training task assignments completed by Center's teaching and training staff and structured observations of instruction in the Center's classrooms designated to be demonstration classrooms.

During the site visit, a meeting was held with a selected group of Center staff to review and discuss each of the rating form statements in terms of the Center's readiness status. At the end of the discussion the review team and the Center staff, using the Readiness Rating Scale, rated the item being discussed. If there is disagreement about the rating a discussion follows to reconcile any differences in item ratings. The following rating scale was used; 1 = No, the Center has not accomplished the readiness task; 2 = The Center has accomplished the readiness task to some extent but many inconsistencies and/or lack of clarity; 3 = Yes, the Center has accomplished the readiness task with some Exceptions; 4 = Yes, the Center has clearly accomplished the readiness task.

Table 8 presents the average readiness review ratings across the Best Practice Centers for the end of first year and end of second year readiness reviews. As can be seen, on the average, the centers' readiness status improved from the end of the project's first year to the end of the project's second year. By the end of the second year the average range of readiness across the centers was rated as having accomplished all the readiness task with some exceptions (3.0) or higher.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the site visits will be the needs assessment aspect of the process. As a part of the rating discussion, the review team and the center staff discuss what actions need to be taken, and what types of assistance were needed, to improve the readiness

rating. Using this information an improvement plan was discussed with each Center for the areas, which demonstrated a need for improvement.

Table 8

**NC Sip Best Practice Center Reading Readiness Review Form
Average Ratings Across Best Practice Centers
August 1, 2001 – May 31st, 2002**

Readiness Milestones	Average Readiness Rating *	
A. CLARITY AND INTEGRITY OF MODEL	01	02
1. The Center’s model is clearly described in writing in terms of explicit Instructional procedures and materials	2.5	3.4
2. The models components, instructional procedures and materials are clearly observed and are used appropriately in the Center’s classrooms that were observed.	3.3	3.6
3. All Center staff can clearly articulate the essential features and instructional procedures of the model.	3.25	3.6
B. CLARITY AND APPROPRIATENESS OF MODEL’S SERVICE DELIVERY PROCEDURES		
1. The Center’s five-year plan includes a comprehensive model with training and demonstration across grade levels.	2.0	3.5
2. Placement of students in instructional programs is based on assessments designed to indicate student competencies in basic word identification skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, spelling, naming/retrieval skill) may be evaluated necessary.	2.5	3.6
3. Time engaged in specific model reading and writing instructional procedures exceed four hours per week for each participating system.	2.5	3.4
4. Individual and high intensity instruction is provided to individual students when indicated by teacher assessment and student response to instruction.	2.5	3.6
5. Small group instruction (ideal – no more than 3 to 4 students in an instructional group) is the primary instruction delivery system for the model	3.0	3.5
C. ADMINISTRATIVE AND MANAGEMENT		
1. The Center’s purpose, goals and procedures have been clearly articulated and are supported by school administrators and leadership personnel and by parents.	2.8	3.4
2. Responsibilities of the Center Director or Coordinator are clearly specific and supported by the school administrators and school leadership personnel.	2.75	3.6
3. A continuous system of training and classroom support, and supervision for the Center staff has been planned and is operational.	3.5	3.7
4. The Center has developed a working partnership with one or more teacher education programs, including a partnership plan.	2.0	2.4

D. STAFF READINESS TO TEACH/TRAIN		
1. The Center's teaching staff demonstrate the competencies necessary to effectively teach students with persistent reading problems as demonstrated by participation in the <i>Research to Practice Foundations for Teaching Reading to Students with Persistent Reading Problems</i> and by the quality and scope of the workshop Task assignment products.	**	3.3
2. The Center's teaching staff demonstrate the abilities to provide instruction using explicit instructional procedures and materials outlined in the model selected.	3.6	3.6
3. The Center's teaching staff demonstrates an understanding of the structure of the English language necessary to provide effective reading instruction. (As demonstrated by the Structure of the English Language Posttest).	2.3	2.9

* Average Readiness Status rating across the Best Practice Centers using the following rating scale: 1 = No; 2 = To Some Extent but many inconsistencies and/or lack of clarity;

3 = Yes, with some Exceptions; 4 = Yes

** Rating not completed until end of 2002

As the centers developed the expertise to become ready to provide effective instruction, demonstration and training, the Readiness Review Form was revised to provide a measure of Center's progress in developing and operating a high quality Best Practice Center in the area of instruction, demonstration and training. This review was conducted for the first time in the spring, 2002 during the same site visit that the readiness ratings were conducted. This review was developed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of each center's program planning, implementation and evaluation. The results of this review are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

**NC SIP Best Practice Center Developmental Review
Average Ratings Across Best Practice Centers
May 2002**

DEVELOPMENTAL MILSTONE	Rating
A. Implementation Of Center's Model Instruction	
1. The Center's model is clearly described in writing in terms of explicit instructional procedures and materials; student assessment-instructional procedures; instructional grouping and settings; and required hours per week of model instruction.	3.6
2. The model's components, instructional procedures and materials are implemented appropriately in all the designated model classrooms.	3.5
3. The Center's five-year plan is clearly stated in terms of goals and objectives, numbers and levels of students to be served, project staff, staff development and a comprehensive model with training and demonstration across grade levels.	3.6
B. Research To Practice Foundation Training	
1. In partnership with the NCSIP UNC Network Coordination Center, the	3.4

Center has an explicit plan for providing Research to Practice Foundation Training to new center staff and outreach staff.	
2. The Center has developed and implemented a continuing teacher evaluation system for all designated model teaching staff. The evaluation system includes the use of structured observations and a portfolio of teacher products and artifacts, which demonstrate, targeted Research to Practice Foundation skills and knowledge.	3.3
C. Model Implementation Training	
1. The Center has developed an explicit plan for developing the skills and knowledge to effectively implement the Center’s instructional model for all Center instructional staff.	3.6
2. The Center has developed and implemented a continuing teacher evaluation system for all designated model teaching staff. The evaluation system includes the use of structured observations portfolio of teacher products and artifacts, which demonstrate fidelity of implementation of the model instruction.	3.4
D. Student Progress Evaluation	
1. The Center has developed explicit procedures for gathering the required EOG data and has entered the data in the NCSIP data format.	3.8
2. The Center has developed explicit procedures for gathering the required classroom observation fidelity data daily instructional data to date and has entered the data into the NCSIP data format.	3.5
3. The Center has developed a process for gathering the required Woodcock-Johnson sub-test data, and has entered the data to date into the NCSIP data format.	3.7
4. Using the student assessment system component of the model, the Center has developed explicit procedures for gathering, charting and reporting continuous progress data across all students in the program.	3.7
E. Outreach Program	
1. The Center’s Outreach Plan is clearly described in writing, including outreach targets, goals, objectives, and activities related to awareness and orientation, classroom demonstration, staff development, program effectiveness information, and technical assistance.	2.9
2. The Center has implemented the Outreach Program including orientation, classroom demonstration, staff development, program effectiveness, and technical assistance.	2.5
F. Parent Program	
1. The Center’s program plan for parent involvement is clearly described in writing and includes program orientation, the understanding of the model instruction procedures, follow-through home activities, and parent involvement in the Center-decision making structure.	2.7
2. The Center has implemented the parent program including program orientation, understanding of model instruction procedures, follow-through home activities, and parent involvement in Center decision-making structure.	2.3

G. Collaboration With Teacher Education Programs	
1. The Center’s teacher education programs collaboration plan is clearly described in writing and includes participation in on-campus instructional efforts, on site demonstrations for faculty and students, joint involvement in Teacher Education Program’s activities.	2.4
2. The Center has implemented collaboration activities with Teacher Education Programs involving a variety of activities as planned.	2.6

As can be seen in Table 9 the developmental ratings of the centers, on the average, are quite high. Highest ratings of program development level were in the areas of Implementation Of Center’s Model Instruction, Research To Practice Foundation Training, Model Implementation Training, and Student Progress Evaluation. The lowest ratings were assigned in the program areas of Parent Program, and Collaboration With Teacher Education Programs. This information will be used by the project to provide technical assistance to the individual centers in the areas with lower ratings.

Finally, as mentioned previously, an “unplanned” accomplishment and outcome has been the expansion of the Best Practice Center Network with State funds. As a result of the activities of the North Carolina State Improvement Project during this first year, eight additional projects will be added to the Best Practice Center Network. Second year plans include orientation and training for these projects in the research to practice instructional principles with a major emphasis on teaching phonemic awareness to young children with disabilities and other disadvantages. These centers will focus primarily on early childhood intervention and prevention of reading difficulties.

Accomplishments and Outcomes in Improving Mathematics Instruction

The response of the teachers attending the staff development workshops, as illustrated in Table 10, was extremely supportive and positive toward the workshops.

**Table 10
Participants Perceptions of Quality and Usefulness of
the Algebraic Thinking Workshops**

		5	4	3	2	1 *
1.	Materials, supplies, and equipment were ready at the beginning of the training activity.	37	0	0	0	0
2.	The objectives for the training were clearly explained and met.	37	0	0	0	0
3.	The Content of the workshop reflected careful planning and organization.	37	0	0	0	0
4.	The presenter(s) was/were well prepared.	37	0	0	0	0
5.	The presenter(s) provided for a variety of learning styles.	37	0	0	0	0
6.	The presenter(s) modeled effective use of time.	35	2	0	0	0
7.	Provisions were made to actively involve participants in the learning process.	37	0	0	0	0

8.	Adequate time was allowed for participants to reflect on and relate material to their experiences and needs.	37	0	0	0	0
9.	Questions and concerns were handled appropriately.	37	0	0	0	0
10.	Visual aids and handouts were useful and understandable.	37	0	0	0	0
11.	Adequate provisions were made for participant comfort.	37	0	0	0	0
12.	Overall, this workshop was a successful training experience for me.	37	0	0	0	0

* 5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree Somewhat; 3 = Uncertain/ No Opinion;
 2 = Strongly Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree

In addition to the workshop ratings, anecdotal observations demonstrated that all teachers attending the workshops were able to demonstrate skills teaching the main concepts included in the workshops. Periodic follow-up observations and conferences were held throughout the academic school year (2000-2001) and individual meetings were scheduled with the reading specialist, Brian Enright, to identify any needs of the participants during the year.

An affiliation with UNC Greensboro was developed to facilitate data collection. The development of a data collection and reporting system is underway in coordination with the UNC Network Coordination Center. This system will be finalized during the summer of 2001 and applied to all sites on a regular basis during the 2001-2002 school year.

Accomplishments and Outcomes for the Positive Behavioral Support Component

In summary, major accomplishments and outcomes include:

- Secured funding necessary to increase the leadership positions to full-time by working with the Office of Student Support Services. Used “regular education” money for this purpose, thus expanding the program beyond Exceptional Children’s Programs (ECP) and into the life of the school as a whole. State Improvement Grant (SIP) money is now matched by one local dollar for every two dollars of SIP money
- Located the program at Oak Grove Elementary School after working with the administration, the school climate committee, and the site-based decision-making committee. Oak Grove School is providing classroom space, office space, and support staff to the program. Oak Grove has been involved in modeling programs for other schools within Durham Public Schools both due to its hosting a specialized program for seriously involved BED students (the Community Outreach for Program for Education – COE program) and because it uses both a school-wide social skills training program and a school-wide pro-active behavior management plan.
- Hired a full-time program manager (Allen Murray) and a full-time teacher-trainer (Cynthia Wilson) to serve as lead staff to the program. Currently working with North Carolina Central University to serve as a placement site for a graduate assistant in their graduate special education program.
- Held an all-staff celebration at Oak Grove to “kick-off” the PBSC for staff members. Two Assistant superintendents from DPS were in attendance.

- Arranged for both full-time staff members of PBS Center to attend the following: the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Summer Institute offered by the Behavior Support Section, the state-wide Council for Exceptional Children conference, the North Carolina Council for Children with Behavior Disorders Conference in September, and the National Council for Children with Behavior Disorders Conference in October. Collaborative work between the PBS Center and the ECAC has already begun.
- Two staff members (in addition to two who are already trained) are registered for the Training of Trainers offered by the Crisis Prevention Institute in July.
- Funds have been allocated for stipends, and senior staff members from the Exceptional Children's Program and Student Support Services have been identified to work during the summer, creating training packets in the areas referenced above. Technical assistance will be sought through contract funds to have training packets organized into a standard format and to have a system-wide Positive Behavior Support manual created.

The following data have been collected during the second year of the project to demonstrate the specific effects of the program activities at Oak Grove Elementary School where the PBS Best Practice Center is located.

Suspensions

While suspensions are never as high in elementary schools as they are in secondary schools, a school as large as Oak Grove does have a significant number of disciplinary infractions that result in suspension each year. Information from the Student Information Management System (SIMS) is used to track suspension data for Durham Public Schools. During the 2000-01 school year, before the beginning of the PBS grant activities at Oak Grove, SIMS data show that 109 students were suspended from school at Oak Grove, for a total of 149 days. During the 2001-02 school year there were 51 students suspended for a total of 109 days. This is a decrease of approximately 50% in both the number of students suspended and the total number of days of suspension served from one year to the next.

Discipline Referrals

There are only two staff members at Oak Grove that have the authority to issue suspensions to students, the principal and the assistant principal. Thus, any decrease in suspensions could be due to a change in the behavior or discipline policy of those two administrators. For this reason, the number of discipline referrals written by individual teachers was also tracked. While this data will be disaggregated in a number of ways after the completion of the school year, a rough count of discipline referral data is now available. During the 2000-01 school year, there were 993 individual discipline referrals written by Oak Grove teachers that resulted in an office referral. During the 2001-02 school year this number dropped to 702, a decrease of approximately 30%. While this does not mirror the decrease in suspensions, it is a significant decrease from one year to the next, and shows that the decrease in suspensions was due to an actual decrease in serious discipline problems, not to a different approach on the part of administrators.

Exceptional Children Headcount

During the 2000-01 school year the Exceptional Children headcount (April 1, 2001) at Oak Grove Elementary was 127 students (out of a total student population of 974), or 13.7% of the school's total student body. Of these 127 students 18 were classified as BED (14% of the headcount). During the 2001-02 school year the ECP headcount (April 1, 2002) was 106 students (out of a total student population of 955), or 11% of the school's total student body. Of these 106 students 12 were classified as BED (11% of the headcount). The overall figures for Durham Public Schools show that during the 2001-02 school year the system as a whole operated with 13.6% of its student body identified as exceptional students, with 9.5 % of the ECP headcount being classified as BED. During the year that Oak Grove participated as a Positive Behavior Intervention Center its ECP headcount dropped to below the average for the system, and its percentage of BED students dropped from above the average for the system to being on line with the system as a whole.

Attendance

Attendance is often seen as a key indicator of school climate. During the 2000-01 school year, before the beginning of the State Improvement Project PBS grant activities at Oak Grove, the school already had an average daily attendance of 95.1%, a rate considered strong for an elementary school. During the 2001-02 school year attendance rose to 96.7%, an increase of 1.6%. In a school of over 950 students this level of increase in attendance is both statistically and practically significant, being an average of approximately two instructional days per student per year, or over 2700 student instructional days for the school as a whole. The PBS program did not conduct any attendance specific activities (recognition or incentives for attendance, etc.), so any increase in attendance at Oak Grove is most likely attributable to general issues of school climate.

Referrals to the Student Assistance Program

A referral to the Student Assistance Program (SAP) is the beginning point for a classroom teacher seeking assistance for a student displaying academic, behavioral, or developmental difficulties. During the 2000-01 school year there were 59 referrals to the SAP program, with 7 of these referrals being primarily for behavioral concerns. During the 2001-02 school year this number increased dramatically, rising to 84 referrals, with 11 being for behavioral concerns. (All of these data are as of the completion of the third quarter or the school years in review. End of year data is not yet available as of the writing of this report.) While at first reading it appears that these data point to an increase in student difficulties, a further review may paint a different picture.

During the first year of the PBS program a large menu of interventions was offered to students who were at-risk for either academic or behavioral concerns. These possible interventions were well publicized to the faculty of the school, and this may be an explanation for the increase in SAP referrals. From a behavioral perspective a number of small support groups for students were offered this year, including groups for students experiencing a death or loss in their family, a separation or divorce in the family, a group for newly arriving students, social skills groups offered at all grade levels, and a specialized psycho-educational group for students with serious anger management issues.

Academically, small group tutoring and remediation were offered to students at-risk of retention, and the school became a school-wide Title I school for the first time. Thus, the increase in SAP referrals may be due to individual teachers seeing more opportunities for their students to receive assistance from the SAP program.

While SAP referrals increased from 2000-01 to 2001-02, the number of cases that were closed due to significant improvement doubled. In addition, the number of SAP referrals that went on to the ECP referral process actually decreased. This data, combined with the data on suspensions and discipline referrals, speaks to the increase in SAP referrals being due more to an increased use of resources than due to an increase in problematic behavior.

Student Achievement

Perhaps the most striking support for the contribution of the efforts of the PBS Center can be seen in the area of student achievement in basic skills. It is the assumption of the NC SIP that improvement in student achievement is highly correlated with improvement in student behavior. Better attendance, increased time-on-task, and fewer discipline referrals and suspensions should all be related to higher academic performance. Figure 1 and Figure 2 on the next page compare the percentage of BED students (Behavior and/or Emotional Disability) that are performing at or above grade level on the End of Grade Reading and Mathematics. As can be seen the BED students at Oak Grove Elementary are doing much better than, BED students in the Durham County Schools as well as across the entire state. These types of data will be collected each year to report the relationship between the implementation of Positive Behavioral Supports and student achievement.

Figure 1

**End-Of-Grade Math Level of B.E.D. Students
2000-2001
% At or Above Grade Level
Durham Public Schools**

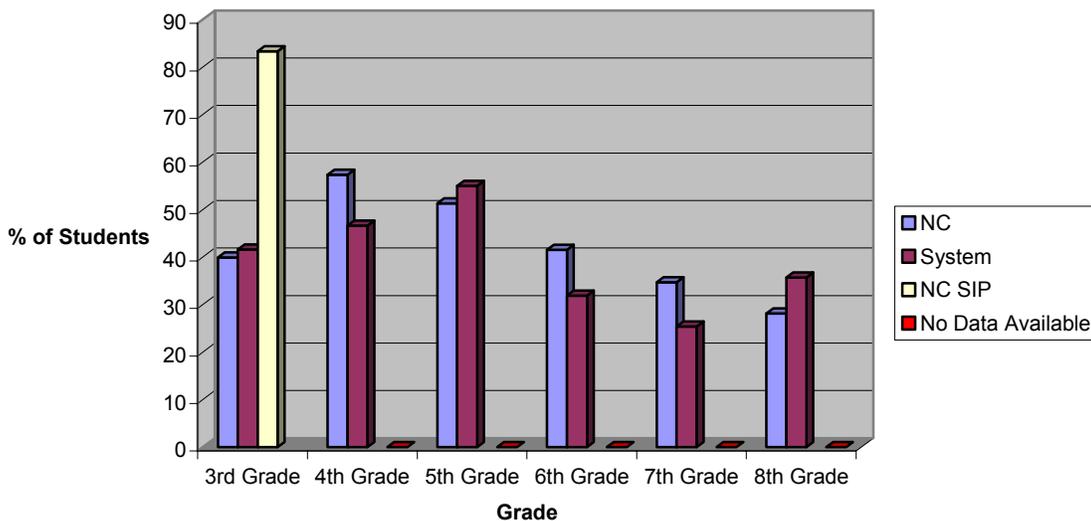
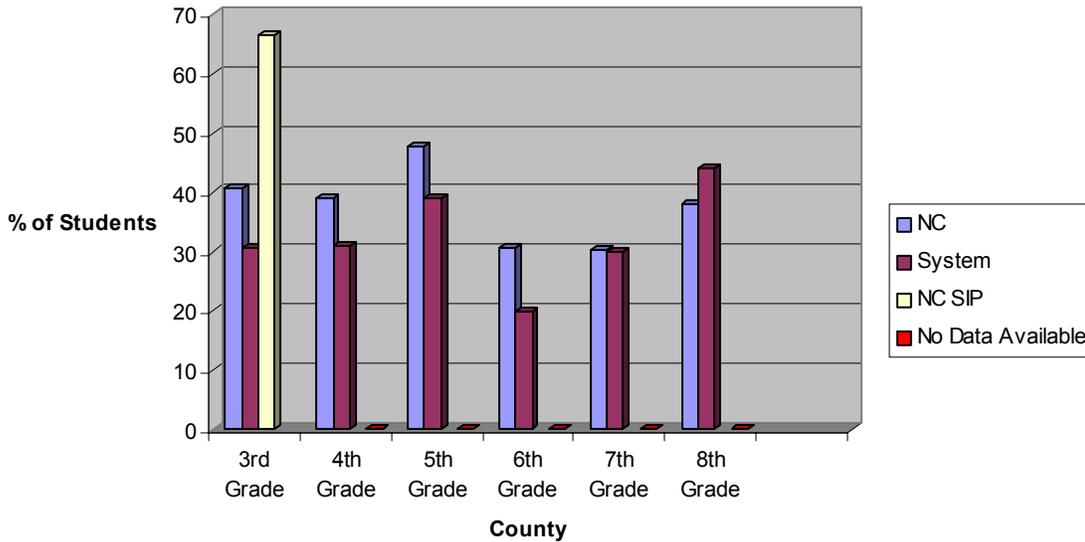


Figure 2

**End-of-Grade Reading Level of B.E.D. Students
2000-2001
% of Students At or Above Grade Level
Durham Public Schools**



Extent to Which Objective 1.1 Was Attained

During the first two years, the North Carolina State Improvement Project has made significant progress in establishing a network of Best Practices Centers for the purpose of providing training and demonstration to special education teaching staff across North Carolina. Ten Centers were established during the first year of the project and staff training was provided.

During the second year, the NC SIP project emphasized the continuing development of the research to practice Best Practice Centers, implemented a “training of trainers” approach to the training of teachers, implemented an evaluation system for measuring teacher instruction quality and student progress, and provided research to practice orientation for teacher education faculty and initiated a process for restructuring teacher education.

Evidence that the NC SIP project is continuing to meet Objective 1.1 can be seen in the outcomes presented above which are summarized below:

- The technical assistance and training provided by NCSIP during the second year of the project has continued to improved the functioning of the centers and the quality of teacher instruction as evidenced by the readiness and developmental review ratings reported.

- Training of trainers was conducted for the staff of the Best Practice Centers and seven of the centers conducted training for special education teachers in their schools respective school districts.
- A system for evaluation of teacher instructional quality and student progress was implemented and data were collected across the Best Practice Centers. The analysis of these data will be conducted during the summer of 2002 and will be presented in the next annual report.
- Several strategies were implemented to change the structure and content of teacher education programs and to align the programs with the goals of NC SIP. These included (a) orientation and training of special education teacher education faculty across the state, (b) developing online coursework for use by all teacher education programs in the State, and (c) coordination of a NC DPI effort to restructure teacher licensing in North Carolina. It is anticipated that these efforts will lead to major changes in the quality and quantity of special education teachers and will significantly impact the improvement of basic skills performance of students with disabilities.

Objective 1.2: Improve the knowledge of leadership personnel of needed service delivery strategies to support the use of research-proven best practices

First Year Strategies

Objective 1.2 - First Year Project Strategies in Approved Application

Strategy 1. Develop and/or identify best practices training content for school leadership personnel.

Strategy 2. Develop and/or identify training materials for leadership personnel, including videos, Web/CD video clips, UK On-line Academy training, and portfolio projects for restructuring school instructional settings.

Strategy 3. Pilot the use of the training procedures, resources, and materials with leadership personnel located in the schools and center's host LEAs.

Strategy 4. Training of trainers and school leadership faculties.

Second Year Strategies

Strategy 5. University School Leadership faculties provide courses and training modules to students in university leadership training programs.

Strategy 6. In collaboration with the UNC Center for School Leadership Development, provide training modules for leadership personnel.

Strategy 7. Evaluate effectiveness of Objective 1.2 strategies and activities.

Objective 1.2 - Description of Project Activities

First Year Project Activities

The project believes that leadership personnel need to be knowledgeable about research findings, principles of instruction derived from the research findings, and the skill and knowledge teachers must have to effectively teach students with persistent reading difficulties to read. Accordingly, the Best Practice Centers Coordinators and some of the districts Special Education Administrators participated in the training provided for Center teachers and teacher

trainers. The content of the *Research to Practice Foundations for Teaching Reading to Students with Persistent Reading Problems* training program has been developed for the areas of improving teaching of reading and writing and for teaching mathematics. These training procedures and activities as well as the training content have been described above. The project is in the process of modifying the content and procedures developed for teaching and training staff to be used in the leadership-training program to be conducted during the coming months.

Second Year Project Activities

Three sets of activities were conducted during the second year of the project designed to increase the interest and knowledge of leadership personnel to promote the use of research-based instructional strategies and procedures. These efforts included (a) an orientation and training workshop, (b) inclusion of research-based instructional content in the year long Exceptional Children's Directors of leadership personnel preparation program conducted by the Exceptional Children Division, and (c) the development and distribution information about the NC SIP research to practice Best Practice Centers including preliminary information and data documenting the effectiveness of the center's efforts.

- a. A comprehensive workshop session on the Research to Practice models being used in the NC SIP project were planned and conducted at the annual Exceptional Children program Directors Institute held in Greensboro, North Carolina on March 11, 12, and 13, 2002. The two-hour orientation workshop was presented on three different occasions during the Institute and virtually all the directors, and staff present at the Institute attended one of the sessions. Dr. Rebecca Felton, a nationally known reading specialist and researcher, opened each session with a presentation on What Research Tells us about Reading Programs for Students with Disabilities. A copy of the slides used in this presentation can be found in Appendix D and entitled, Research to Practice: New Research Implications for Instruction. Dr. Felton's presentation was followed by presentations by three of the NC SIP Best Practice centers; the Eastern North Carolina Best Practice Center in the Onslow County Schools, the North Central Best Practice Center in the Wake County Schools, and the North Western Best Practice Center in the Watauga County Schools. The session ended with an invitation from Fred Baars and David Lillie to the Directors to participate in the North Carolina State Improvement Project and apply for a "satellite center" status.
- b. During the 2001-2002 academic year, forty exceptional children administrators completed the 135 hour Exceptional Children's Leadership Institute training program. A second cohort of forty-four new participants was initiated in November and will be conducted across a two-year period. One aspect of the Leadership Institute program focuses on planning and improving curriculum and instruction in exceptional children's programs. Information and training on research-based practices in reading instruction, mathematics instruction, and the use of positive behavioral supports was provided. Information of the directors' institute and the curriculum content can be found in Appendix D.
- c. Information and data have been made available to leadership personnel to acquaint them with the research to practice instruction. Summaries of the Best Practice Center models of instruction and preliminary information about the effectiveness of instructional programs for students with disabilities that include explicit instruction and multi-sensory instruction have been made available to leadership personnel across the state. As the project continues, these

dissemination efforts will be expanded and specific groups of leadership personnel will be targeted.

Objective 1.2 - Accomplishments and Outcomes During the First Two Years

To summarize major accomplishments:

- Research to Practice content and training procedures have been developed and the project is in the process of revising the workshops conducted for teachers to provide a major training module for leadership staff, including principles, in this content area for the second year of the project.
- Leadership training follow-up procedures have been developed including annual summer workshops and mentoring for new leadership personnel.
- Workshop sessions designed for leadership personnel have been conducted
- Research-validated instructional procedures for developing basic skills of students with disabilities have been included in leadership workshops and made available to leadership personnel.

Extent to Which Objective 1.2 Was Attained

This objective has been partially met. The best practices training content has been developed and training procedures have been conducted for leadership personnel. During the second year of the project, the research to practices training content for leadership personnel has been developed and delivered using several strategies as described above. However, follow through activities to assure that this new knowledge is used to improve programs have just begun. Data and information measuring the extent to which leadership personnel have used this information will be collected beginning in the third year of the project.

Objective 1.3: Increase the percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in the standard curriculum who are performing at or above grade level on the statewide end-of-grade ABC testing from the current levels of 30-40% to a level of at least 80% of the performance level of non-identified students in basic skill areas of reading, writing, and mathematics

Objective 1.3 - First Year Project Strategies Planned in Approved Application

First Year Strategies

Strategy 1. In collaboration with the Accountability and Testing Division of the Department of Public Instruction, establish a system of standards and accountability for improving the education of students with disabilities.

Strategy 2. Disseminate standards for programs for students with disabilities and conduct a campaign to raise performance expectations of teachers, school leadership, parents, and students with disabilities.

Strategy 3. Train LEA staff development teams in the use of the revised Special Needs, Special Teaching staff development resources and materials, and set up a master schedule of statewide staff development.

Second Year Strategies

Strategy 4. Provide in-service training programs for regular class teachers for teaching students with disabilities included in regular classes.

Strategy 5. Conduct orientation and training for teacher education faculty in non special education fields in the use of the Special Needs, Special Teaching training resources and materials for use with undergraduate teacher education majors during their junior and senior year internships in schools.

Strategy 6. Train pre-service non-special education teachers using Special Needs, Special Teaching Case Study training program.

Strategy 7. As a component of the States ABC+ Accountability System, provide feedback to LEAs on their progress in meeting the State's accountability standards for programs for students with disabilities.

Objective 1.3 - Description of Project Activities

Almost all of the objectives established for the NC SIP project contribute to attainment of this overall objective to improve the academic performance of students with disabilities. The information presented in this section will primarily focus on the data collection process and data analyses to determine the extent to which Objective 1.3 has been met to date.

First Year Activities

This objective and related activities represent an extremely important aspect of the NC SIP project because of its relationship to a major education initiative by the North Carolina State Board of Education referred to as "Closing the Gap." Closing the academic achievement gap that exists between at-risk students has been given top priority by the State Board of Education. The emphasis in this initiative has been primarily on closing the achievement gap between white and minority (African American, Hispanic and Native American) students. NC SIPs goal is to raise the profile of students with disabilities as at-risk students who must be included and accounted for in the initiative. North Carolina is working to close the gap by requiring local school systems to develop annual plans for closing the gap, increase funding, develop resource centers and pilot programs, encourage community/school collaboration, and implementing other initiatives to ensure that the achievement gap closes. As the NC SIP project develops and gains momentum, the plan is to integrate the project's efforts for students with disabilities with the Closing the Gap initiative.

In order to attain the growth in achievement for students with disabilities identified in Objective 1.3, a comprehensive system of collecting, analyzing and reporting achievement data for students with disabilities was developed. To this end the project is collaborated with the Accountability and Testing Division of the Department of Public Instruction to establish a system of standards and accountability for improving the education of students with disabilities. Fred Baars, NC SIP Project Director and David Lillie, Director of the UNC Network Coordination Center, a unit of the NC SIP program, have met twice during the first year of the project with personnel from the Accountability and Testing Division of the Department of Public Instruction. Tentative agreements and plans were developed to assist the project with the identification, collection and analysis of annual End-of-Grade performance in reading, writing and mathematics data across all areas of disabilities by school district and by school building.

In addition, the Accountability and Testing Division agreed to assist the project with the identification, collection and analysis of dropout, suspension, expulsion and attendance data across all areas of disabilities by school district and by school building.

To enforce the legal requirements established in the reauthorization of IDEA and to raise performance expectations for students with disabilities, the North Carolina State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction disseminated standards and accountability policies on March 29, 2001 to all LEA Superintendents, LEA Test Coordinators, and LEA Directors of Special Education Programs. The accountability standards for students with disabilities enrolled in the North Carolina Standard Course of Studies curriculum are the same as for all students. The new policies also end the practice of exemptions for students with disabilities, establishes procedures for use of testing modifications and alternative testing procedures, and the policies governing the use of End-of-Grade and End-of-Course Tests in promotions and retention decisions for students with disabilities.

Second Year Activities

In addition to continuing the first year activities, during the second year of the project, emphasis has been placed on the development of a data collection system to report project, school system and statewide achievement progress of students with disabilities, second year activities focused on collecting analyzing and reporting the status of the achievement of students with disabilities. To this end, End-of-Grade data were collected to illustrate the achievement status of students with disabilities in each of the NC SIP Best Practice Centers' schools as compared to the school system in which each of the Best Practice Centers are located and the statewide achievement performance for students with disabilities. These data are presented and discussed in the next section.

Objective 1.3 - Accomplishments and Outcomes During the First Two Years

During the first year of the project, using data collected and tabulated by the Accountability and Testing Division, End- of-Grade performance data (May 2000) for the ten school districts operating the project's Best Practice Centers were desegregated. Performance of students identified as having a Specific Learning Disabilities is reported for the ten school districts operating the projects Best Practice Centers. The data is presented in Table 11. The procedures developed to retrieve the data in Table 11 will be used to collect and display performance data across four of the largest categories of students with disabilities primarily served in the standard curriculum) SLD, BED, OHI and EMD. By far the largest category of students with disabilities receiving services in the standard course of studies is SLD which is reported in Table 11.

Table 11
Reading And Mathematics End-Of-Grade Scores of Learning Disabilities Students In Best Practice Centers Districts Compared To All Students And All SLD Students In North Carolina
MAY, 2000

SCORES	3 rd Grade Reading	5 th Grade Reading	8 th Grade Reading	3 rd Grade Math	5 th Grade Math	8 th Grade Math
All NC Students	74.4	79.1	82.5	71.8	82.9	80.6
All LD Students	37.6	44.8	48.9	48.6	58.7	52.1
Cumberland County	27	31.6	43.4	48.6	51.6	42.3
Durham County	37.7	38	60.3	43.8	58.5	51.6
Haywood County	29.5	60.4	40.5	55.4	71.7	66.7
Montgomery County	11.4	39.4	26.3	36.8	47.1	31.6
Onslow County	47.1	46.9	48	58.8	59	43.1
Northampton County	53.8	64.7	72.7	64.3	70.8	40
Rockingham County	35.3	40.3	55.6	51.9	64.8	65.5
Transylvania County	50	50	66.7	50	88.9	90.5
Wake County	55.3	63	60.1	58.4	70.8	56.8
Watauga County	46.2	55.6	69.7	62.5	54.1	74.3

As can be seen in Table 11, at the beginning of the project, students with learning disabilities in the districts hosting the Best Practice Centers were significantly below the percentages for the total student population performing at or above grade level in North Carolina. In reading achievement students with learning disabilities perform at one half the performance level of the total student population at grade three and approximately 40% lower at grade eight. Four of the ten school districts in which the Best Practice Centers are located were below the reading statewide average for LD student at the third, fifth and eighth grade levels. Although math achievement is somewhat better overall, the achievement gap in math is also very significant.

During the summer of 2001 the project completed the collection of the baseline data across the categories of students with disabilities enrolled in the standard curriculum. These results are illustrated in Figures 3-5. These figures compare percentage of students at or above grade level as measured by the End-of-Grade reading tests in the spring of 2001. Comparisons are made across all North Carolina students, all North Carolina students with Learning Disabilities, all Learning Disabilities students in the district where the NC SIP Center are located, and all Learning Disabilities students in the Best Practice Center Schools.

Figure 3

**End-Of-Grade Reading Scores of Learning Disabilities Students
2000-2001
% of Students At or Above Grade Level
3rd Grade**

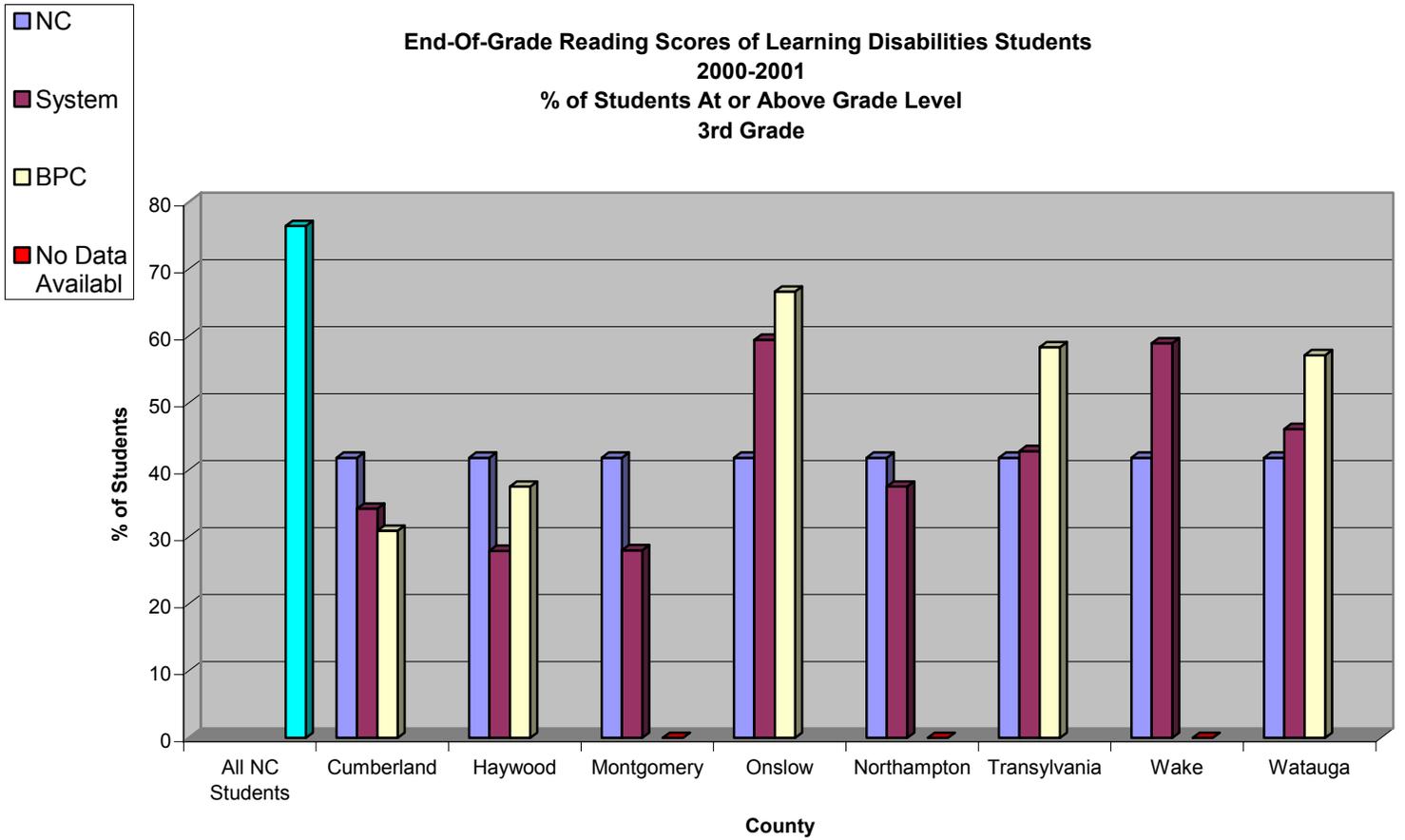


Figure 4

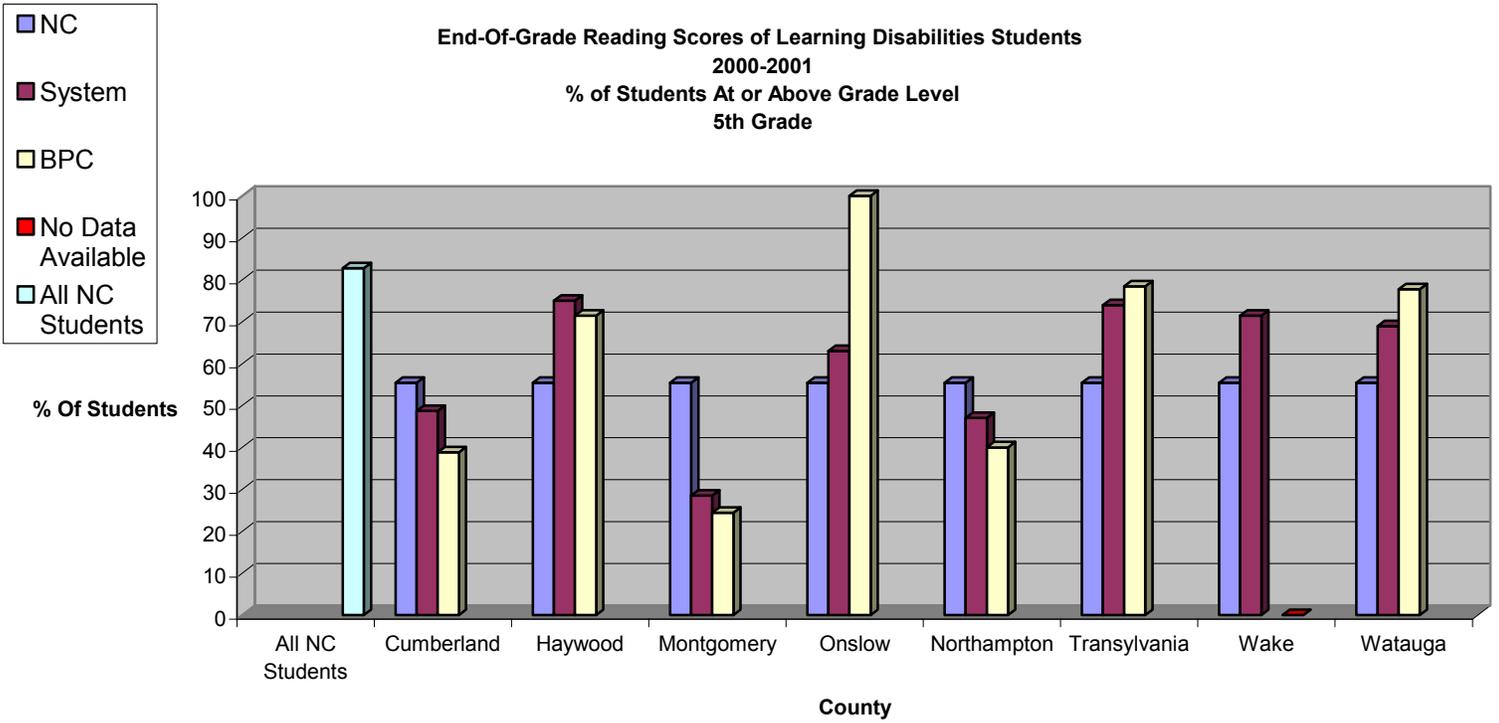
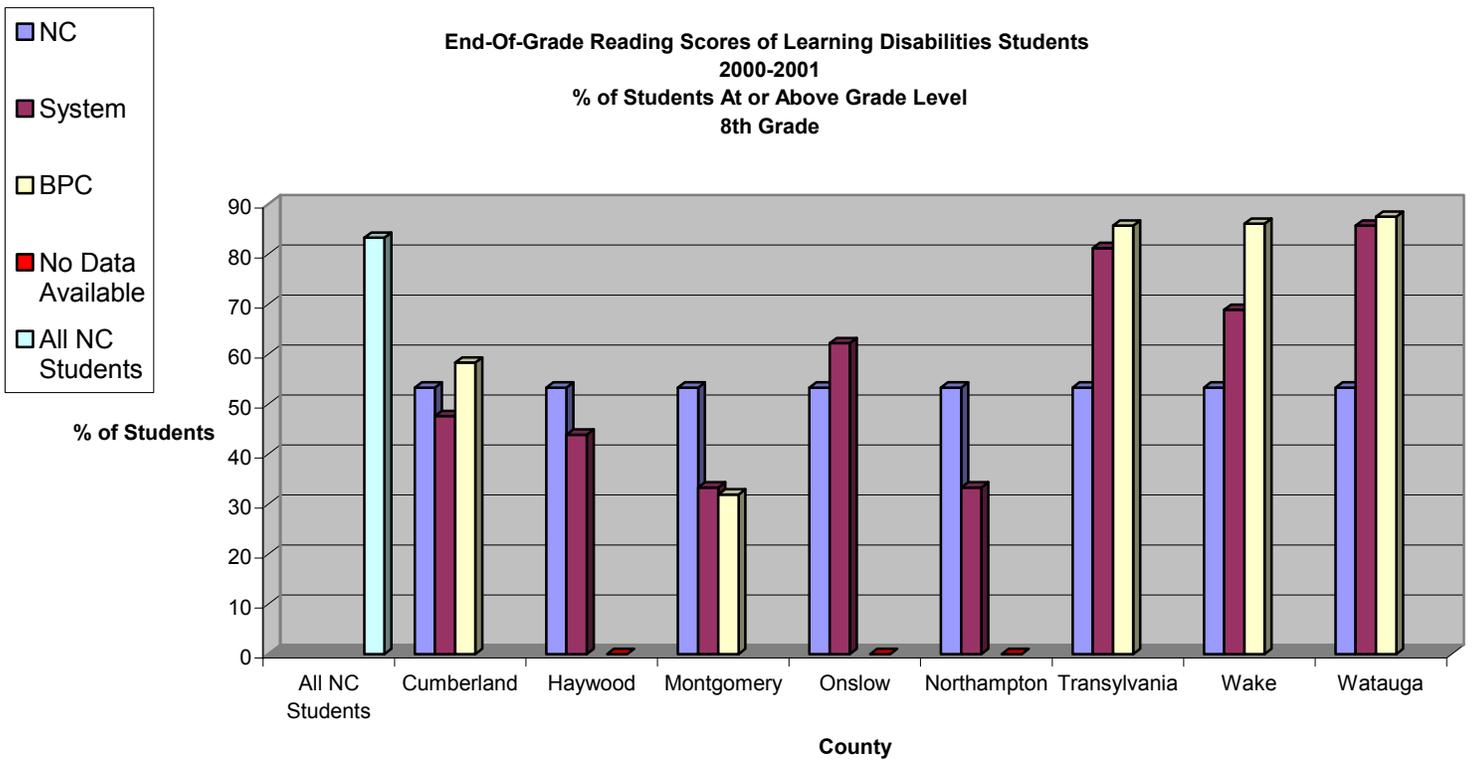


Figure 5



When comparing the first and second year reading performance data in Table 11 with the second year reading performance in Figures 3, 4 & 5:

- At the 3rd Grade level five of the eight school systems have higher percentage of learning disability students reading at grade level,
- At the 5th Grade level six of the eight school systems have a higher percentage of learning disability students reading at grade level.
- At the 8th Grade level seven of the eight school systems have a higher percentage of learning disability students reading at grade level.

When comparing the reading performance of learning disability students in Best Practice Centers schools, school systems in which center schools are located, and the statewide performance: (see Figures 3, 4, &5)

- Four of the five center schools serving 3rd grade students have a higher percentage of learning disability students reading at grade level than the host school system and three of the five center schools have a higher percentage of learning disability students reading at grade level than the statewide performance.
- Three of the seven center schools serving 5th grade students have a higher percentage of learning disability students reading at grade level then the host school system as well as a higher percentage of grade level performance than the statewide performance.
- Four of the five center schools serving 8th grade students have a higher percentage of learning disability students reading at grade level then the host school system as well a higher percentage of grade level performance than the statewide performance.

Extent to Which Objective 1.3 Was Attained

The project is making good progress toward meeting this objective. At the level of the Best Practice Center schools, students enrolled in three of the centers are, on the average, out performing total school population-which includes non-identified students. A major task for the project, however, will be to general these results to the entire state over the next three years. At the end of next year, with additional data and ability to analyze trends reflected by the data, NC SIP should be able to make a more informed statement about the extent to which this objective is being accomplished.

Goal 2: Increase Percentage of Qualified Special Teachers, Regular Class Teachers and School Leadership Personnel Providing Instructional Programs

Objective 2.1: Decrease to 5% the percentage of special education teachers teaching without appropriate certification.

First Year Strategies

Strategy 5. Develop a portfolio teacher evaluation system of classroom artifacts and products of teachers to evaluate level of teacher competency.

Second Year Strategies

Strategy 1. Recruitment Campaign targeting (a) Psychology and Human Development majors, (b) experienced regular class teachers, and (c) trained special teachers in other U.S. States and Canada.

Strategy 2. Expand the current distance education pilot program leading to certification in special education areas to all UNC campuses with special education certification programs.

Strategy 3. Collaborate with the LEAs to establish and implement a process for identifying and enrolling ALL practicing teachers of students with disabilities who are teaching out of field, into experienced-based teacher education programs sanctioned by the State and CEC.

Strategy 4. Use program activities for objective 1.3 to impact on objective 2.1

Strategy 6. Implement the use of the portfolio teacher evaluation system.

Strategy 8. Evaluate effectiveness of Goal 2 strategies and activities.

Objective 2.1 - Description of Project Activities

First and Second Year Activities

As indicated in last year's report, the activities conducted for Objective 2.3 also contribute substantially to the attainment of this objective. Below the first year activities are recapped and the second year activities are presented

First Year Activities

Evaluation of Teacher Competencies

Under this objective the program plan includes the development of a portfolio teacher evaluation system of classroom artifacts and products (Strategy 5 above). This strategy has also been employed in pursuit of Objective 1.1 and these activities have been discussed earlier in this report. Chart 1 on page 27 presents the classroom artifacts. This strategy has also been employed in pursuit of Objective 1.1 and these have been discussed earlier in this report. Chart 1 beginning on page 27 lists the portfolio assignments, which will produce many of the classroom artifacts that will be included in the portfolio evaluation system.

Teacher Stipends for Training

Although most of the program strategies included in the approved application for Objective 2.1 are not scheduled to begin until the second year of the project, several activities conducted by the Exceptional Children Division in the NCDPI are integrated with the State Improvement goals and plans in this area. These activities are discussed below.

Each of the thirty-four institutions of higher education with special education programs were invited to list their Summer Courses for special education. Tuition applications were sent to all special education teachers and posted on our web site. Up to \$115 / semester hour will be

reimbursed for teachers taking courses to meet their provisional license requirements if they are employed during the fall and pass the courses.

As of May 1, 2001 North Carolina Public Schools employed 3,636 special education teachers on a provisional license. The NC SIP has allocated \$83,000 of State Improvement Grant funds to provide tuition assistance. This will purchase 240 three-semester hour courses. These funds will be matched with IDEA Part B funds to permit the Exceptional Children Division to award 480 courses to teachers and speech language pathologists on provisional license who are under contract with a school system for Fall 2001. Eighteen Summer Institutes will make training available to approximately 900 teachers. These training activities are focused on advanced in-service training needs and require participants to complete a follow-up evaluation during the fall to determine their implementation of the new skills.

Recruitment

The State Improvement Grant staff convened a group of stakeholders including teachers, local school systems, North Carolina Association of Educators, parents, university staff, State Education Agency Staff in Licensure and Exceptional Children Education, the National Clearing House for Professions in Special Education and Mid-South Regional Resource Center; the outcomes of this effort are:

A working draft presently called "Proposed Legislative Initiatives to Improve the Quality of the Education Received by Students with Special Needs" was developed. This draft proposed a long-range plan to address the supply and retention of qualified personnel serving exceptional children. A bill was introduced into legislature for differentiated pay for special education teachers. This action opens the door for change during the next year.

A summary document was drafted to present a focus on four initiatives. The state has announced a freeze on new expenditures due to a major state budget deficit. This material has been shared with the Mid-South states and will help direct the efforts in this region. Support efforts to expand the NC Teacher Cadet Program through NC Association of Educators will receive State Support to attract high school students to a career in special education.

Second Year Activities

Several types of activities have been undertaken during the second year of the project in pursuit of improving the quality of teachers and reducing the percentage of teachers of students with disabilities who are teaching without appropriate certification. These will be discussed below under the headings of Recruitment, Training Stipends, and Restructuring Special Education Teacher Licensing

Recruitment

As indicated earlier, NC SIP has worked closely with the CEC National Clearinghouse in establishing a formal recruitment system for teachers of students with disabilities. During the first year of the project joint planning was undertaken to establish a recruitment process in North Carolina. Accordingly, a North Carolina website was established that includes recruitment of teachers in all areas of education. The new Teach4NC Web site

(<http://www.teach4NC.org>) offers complete and essential information for teaching candidates – whether they are from non-teaching or traditional teaching backgrounds. In addition, the new Web site for the Center for Recruitment and Retention (<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/recruit/>) allows direct contact with field-based Recruitment Specialists. The Employment and Licensure Web site (<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/employment/html>) has been totally redesigned to provide employment information and resources for all other school and central office personnel. All sites link to the new Human Resource Management (HRMS) online application and vacancy system. Continued to work with National Clearing House and have developed links from the NC SIP website to the Clearing House website

Training Stipends

During the second year of the project NC SIP was able to reimburse tuition for 164 teachers, amounting to 819 semester hours, taking course work at the various state universities. The teachers funded needed additional course work to qualify for the teaching positions in which they were currently employed.

Restructuring Special Education Teacher Licensing

The discussion here describes the activities undertaken during the second year of the project that applies to Objectives 1.1 (improving the quality of special education teachers) and Objective 2.3 (increasing the number of qualified teachers in special education.). The major goal of the restructuring effort is to assure that the teacher education programs are including course work and requirements, which reflect the research-validated instructional strategies and procedures advocated by the NC SIP project in the course work and training of special educators. Several strategies were used during the second year of the project to change the structure and content of teacher education programs and to align the programs with the goals of NC SIP. These included (a) orientation and training of special education teacher education faculty across the state, (b) developing online coursework for use by all teacher education programs in the State, and (c) coordination of a NC DPI effort to restructure teacher licensing in North Carolina. Each of these is discussed below.

(a) Orientation and Training of Special Education Faculty

Using the structure provided by the Cooperative Planning Consortium in Special Education, which is a planning partnership responsible to the President of the University of North Carolina, faculty from across the University system were brought together to provide orientation and training design to bring about changes in teacher education coursework and structures. Two sessions were held during the year with approximately 70% of the special education teacher education programs in North Carolina represented.

(b) Online Coursework

The online coursework component of the NC SIP has continued to be active during the second year of the project. The advisory group, made up of representatives from five of the UNC campuses, met early in the year and developed a work plan for the year. As a result, the project (a) worked with the various UNC campuses to increase enrollments, (b)

established IDs and Passwords for the students enrolled in online courses for the fall and spring semesters, (c) participated in the licensing restructuring planning, (d) provided assistance for students enrolled in online courses in accessing and navigating the courses. In addition, faculty from seven of the UNC campuses participated in Blackboard Authoring workshop sponsored by the UNC and coordinated by the NC SIP project.

As a result of the online course offering efforts, in the fall, 2001 semester 123 participants completed online coursework across the five courses authored. In the spring, 2002 semester, 146 students participants completed online courses. The courses offered can be used to qualify participants for add-on certification in SLD and/or BED.

As the project moves into the third year, the online courses will need to be revised to reflect the restructured license standards which calls for a major review and revision of the online course offerings.

(c) Restructuring Special Education Licenses

The project activities involving the planning for the development of a restructured special education licensing system applies to several of the NC SIP Objectives including Objective 1.1 Improving Teachers' instructional skills; During the second year of the project, NC SIP, in coordination with the Human Resources and Licensing Division of the Department of Public Instruction initiated a major effort to restructure the special education teacher licensing system in North Carolina. It was clear early in the project that the issues of teacher quality and quantity were not going to be solved with a basic restructuring the established system of training and certifying teachers. The rationale for this effort included:

1. The need for special education teacher licenses to be redesigned to emphasize the instructional and educational services that individual students are receiving.
2. To assure (a) the academic, behavioral and/or developmental progress of students with disabilities, (b) access to and maintenance in the standard and/or an adapted curriculum and, (c) equal participation in North Carolina's ABCs of Public Education accountability program.
3. The need to improve access to licensing by reducing overlap and by clarifying license requirements and their relationship to teaching assignments.
4. The need to correlate license standards with the new Core Standards For Teachers developed by the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission and adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education.
5. The need to align North Carolina's standards with the new CEC Standards.
6. The need to reflect the 1997 IDEA emphasis on access to the general curriculum in the licensing standards.
7. The need to align the teaching standards with the education accountability systems initiated in North Carolina and reflected in the new ESEA, and

8. The need to shift from an emphasis on input to an emphasis on outcomes in teacher training.

Following the rationale and needs listed above, NC SIP assisted the Human Resources Division in planning a restructured licensing system. NC SIP participated in, and provided leadership for the licensing planning which included the coordination of communications among the licensing planning committee members-which included two NC SIP staff members and four representatives of the NC SIP Best Practices Centers. These coordination efforts involved establishing an interactive web site which was available only to the committee members and allowed committee members to present drafts of standards and indicators for review and input of all committee members. In addition NC SIP coordinated correspondence, and development of documents related to the planning.

The existing licensing system primarily reflected an identification category approach (e.g., BED, MD, SLD) to initial licensing in Special Education. As a result of the planning efforts the following recommendations were developed and presented to the Human Resources Division in the Department of Public Instruction:

Accordingly, the restructured license plan recommends the establishment of two initial entry-level licenses and four advanced licenses as follows:

1. Special Education: General Curriculum (Initial Entry License)

This license is based on the CEC Common Core Standards and the CEC Individualized General Curriculum Referenced Standards. In addition the standards for this license are aligned with the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards, which are cross-referenced with INTASC standards for beginning teachers. This license replaces the initial teaching licenses in the categorical areas of SLD, MD, BED, and CC.

2. Special Education: Adapted Curriculum (Initial Entry License)

This license is based on the CEC Common Core Standards and the CEC Individualized Independence Curriculum Referenced Standards. In addition the standards for this license are aligned with the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards which are cross-referenced with INTASC standards for beginning teachers. This license will replace the initial licenses in the categorical areas of MD and S/PMD

3. Behavioral-Emotionally Disabled (Advanced License)

Teachers can add a specialized license in teaching Behavioral-Emotionally Disabled (BED) students to the Special Education: General Curriculum initial license. The CEC content standards for the specialty area of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders are aligned with the standards for this license.

4. Mental Disability (Advanced License)

Teachers can add a specialized license in teaching Mentally Disabled (MD) to the Special Education: General Curriculum initial license or the Special Education: Adapted Curriculum initial license. The CEC content standards for the specialty area of Mentally Retarded are aligned with the standards for this license.

5. Specific Learning Disabilities (Advanced License)

Teachers can add a specialized license in teaching students with Specific Learning Disabilities to the Special Education: General Curriculum initial license. The CEC content standards for the specialty areas of Specific Learning Disabilities are aligned with the standards for this license.

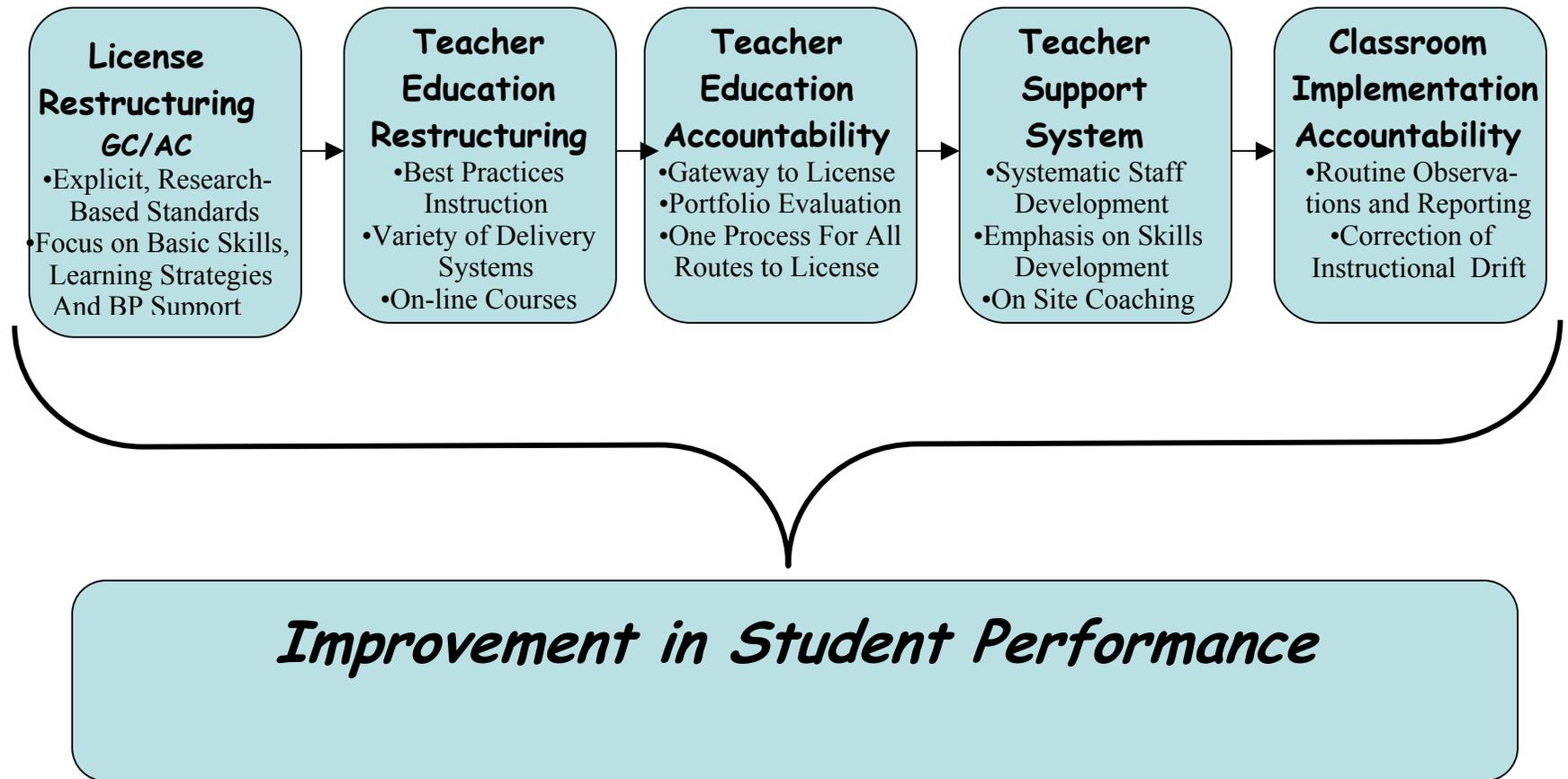
6. Severe/Profound Mental Disability (Advanced License)

Teachers can add a specialized license in teaching Severely-Profoundly Mentally Disabled (S/P MD) to the Special Education: Adapted Curriculum license. The CEC content standards for the specialty areas of Mentally Retarded are aligned with the standards for this license.

Eventually, it is the goal of NC SIP to operationalize a total system of teacher standards, accountability, implementation and evaluation as illustrated in Figure 6 on the next page.

Figure 6

**North Carolina Restructuring Initiative in Special Education
in collaboration with the North Carolina State Improvement Program
and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
(Proposed Licensing System)**



Objective 2.1 - Accomplishments and Outcomes During the First Two Years

The following accomplishments and outcomes have occurred during the first two years of the project.

- A restructured system of licensing for special education teachers has been developed and is in the process of being implemented. One result of the restructured license system is that the ease of access to the licensing system and course work will be improved.
- Data indicating the numbers and percentages of teachers who are teaching with appropriate training and competencies have been collected and organized to enable the tracking of the progress in reducing the percentage of teachers who are not qualified to teach students with disabilities.
- State Improvement Project funds have been used for support of training stipends for teachers who are teaching out of field in special education.
- In partnership with the National Clearing House for Profession in Special Education, the Mid-South Regional Resource Center, and the NCDPI Division of Human Resources a system to facilitate recruitment of teachers has been established including a web support system.
- A statewide, comprehensive e-Learning system has been established with course and resources available for use by all teacher education programs in the state. During the first two years of the project over 400 course enrollments have taken place.

Table 12 presents the special education teacher licensure data for the 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 school years. As can be seen in 2000-2001 as well as 2001-2002 school years, when a duplicate count is examined (many special education teachers hold more than one certificate) there were 13.9% of special education teachers teaching out of field across the licensure areas in special education. However, when considering a non-duplicated count, the percentage of teachers teaching out of field in 2001-2002 was 19.5%, compared to 26.6% in the previous year. These data indicate a reduction of teachers teaching out of field of 7.1%. The good news is that compared to the first year of the project, the percentage of special education teachers teaching out of field at the end of the second year of the project has dropped seven percentage points. Although a cause and effect relationship cannot be demonstrated, these results do demonstrate progress toward the objective of reducing the number of special education teachers teaching out of field.

Table 12
Number and Percentage of Exceptional Children Teachers
Holding Provisional and Full Licenses
2000-2001—2001-2002

Area of License	Provisional License *		Full License		Total		Percent Provisional	
	01	02	01	02	01	02	01	02
Cross Category	546	556	1632	1634	2178	2190	26	25.4
Severe Profound	60	69	353	359	413	428	15	16.1
Mentally Disabled	602	609	5683	5508	6285	6117	9.6	10
Speech & Language	115	80	1373	1435	1488	1515	7.7	5.3
Visually Impaired	6	13	106	102	112	115	5.4	11.3
Behav. Emo. Disabled	584	531	2446	2433	3030	2964	19	17.9
Spec. Learn. Disability	1003	1059	5918	5856	6921	6915	14	15.3
Hearing Impaired	33	29	574	578	607	607	5.4	4.8
Directors Exc.Children	15	9	312	304	327	313	4.6	2.9
Duplicated Count Total	2964	2955	18397	18209	21361	21164	13.9	13.9
Non Duplicated Count Total	2973	2657	8195	10,996	11,168	13,653	26.6	19.5

* Do not meet requirements for full license

Extent to Which Objective 2.1 Was Attained

The assumption the project is using in pursuit of this objective is that full certification in a special education specialty area indicates that the teacher is qualified to teach students in that particular disability area. Of course this assumption is not always true and so other strategies to improve quality of teaching have also been discussed. However, there has been a reduction of the percentage of teachers teaching out of field—from 26.6 % to 19.5 % at the end of the first two years of the NC SIP project. There are several plausible interpretations of these data. First, it is not likely that there will be a relationship between the NC SIP activities and a reduction of the number of teachers teaching out of field because of the limited scope of the project. Another interpretation is that the project's impact will not be seen for several years—particularly since the primary strategy of the project for attaining this objective is the restructuring of the special education licensing system which will not be fully implemented until the fourth year of the project. At this point, however, using the data available, definite progress has made toward attainment of this objective.

Objective 2.2: Decrease to 10% the percentage of special education administrators working without appropriate certification.

Objective 2.2 – Strategies

First Year and Second Year Strategies

Strategy 1. Revise Best Practices training materials developed for Goal 1 to use in training Special Education Program Directors in Best Practices curriculum approaches.

Strategy 2. Schedule and conduct series of training observations at the Best Practices Centers for Special Education Program Directors.

Strategy 3. Develop a series of portfolio products to be produced by Special Education Program Directors to demonstrate leadership competencies.

Strategy 4. Implement the development of portfolio products by Special Education Program Directors to demonstrate leadership competencies.

Strategy 5. Evaluate effectiveness of Objective 2.2 strategies and activities

Objective 2.2 - Project Activities

First and Second Year Activities

The project activities devoted to pursuit of this objective overlap with the project activities discussed for Objective 1.2. As described earlier, North Carolina needs approximately twenty new Exceptional Children Program Directors each year due to retirement and changes in jobs. The role of ECPDs is very demanding and varies greatly from small school systems to large systems. Their duties vary greatly in the amount of direct supervision, programming and administrative support they provide. Experienced directors developed the training based on their needs. Eight personnel development modules were developed based on 135 contact hours of two and a half-day blocks of time. The training cycle takes two years to complete with homework assignments between training activities. Forty participants enrolled at the beginning of the cycle and thirty-five completed the training and passed the required PRAXIS exam and were licensed as Exceptional Children Program Directors. The participant's evaluation rated the training as most effective, timely, meeting their real job requirements as well as allowing for individual needs. A bonus for this type of training was the strong peer relationships that developed that will enable these professionals to develop collaborative relationships. Three of these graduates have already taken on state leadership roles with the Council for Exceptional Children. On the job follow-up is provided by the state's six regional consultants for exceptional children.

One of the major changes to the Exceptional Children Personnel Development System is the implementation of follow-up procedures for all training activities. The Best Practices Centers in Reading, Mathematics, and Positive Behavior Supports require participants to develop a follow-up contract to assist in assuring appropriate implementation of new skills. Training for Exceptional Children Program Directors has both mentors and six regional consultants to provide follow-up on each training module. The summer institutes for teachers usually have follow-up surveys concerning the implementation of the new skills. Direct in-class follow-up is provided for programs like the interpreters training or the use of the new Woodcock-Johnson III Achievement Test.

Objective 2.2 - Accomplishments and Outcomes

In summarizing the Objective accomplishments and outcomes:

- Eight personnel development modules were developed based on 135 contact hours of two and half-day blocks of time.
- Leadership training has been completed for forty Exceptional Children Program Directors during the first two years of the project. Thirty-eight new Exceptional Children Directors are currently in a two-year training program, which will be completed during the next year.
- Leadership training follow-up procedures have been developed including annual summer workshops and mentoring for new leadership personnel.
- The NC SIP project provided a two-hour orientation and training session for all EC Directors in the state, which focused on the identification of research-validated practices and the implementation of reading programs that reflect the principles established by the research.
- The percentage of Exceptional Children Directors has decreased to 2.8%

Extent to Which Objective 2.2 Was Attained

This objective has been met. As indicated above, as a result of the leadership-training program for Exceptional Children Program Directors only 2.5% of the directors at this time are not appropriately certified. The NC SIP project will focus on increasing the directors' knowledge and understanding of research-validated instructional practices for students with disabilities and using the principles emerging from the research results to guide their curriculum and instruction decision-making.

Objective 2.3: Increase the number of new teachers entering the field of Special Education in North Carolina through initial entry and/or lateral entry.

Objective 2.3 - Strategies

First and Second Year Strategies

Strategy 1. Establish a recruitment campaign targeting college graduates with undergraduate majors in fields associated with special needs individuals, such as Psychology and Human Resources Development.

Strategy 2. Create widespread access to, and improve quality of, coursework leading to certification in a variety of areas of teaching students with disabilities.

Strategy 3. Establish incentives for retaining experienced teachers of students with disabilities in cooperation with the NCDPI and the Excellent Schools Act.

Strategy 4. Evaluate effectiveness of Goal 2 strategies and activities

Objective 2.3 - Project Activities

First and Second Year Activities

The strategies and activities conducted during the first and second years of the project to attain Objective 2.3 overlap extensively with those strategies and activities presented for Objective 2.1 and they will not be repeated here

As indicated in the discussion of activities for Objective 2.1, several types of activities have been undertaken during the second year of the project in pursuit of improving the quality of teachers and increasing the numbers of teachers entering the field. In addition to the activities discussed under Objective 2.1, improving recruitment, providing training stipends, and restructuring the special education teacher licensing system, the project has also expanded and improved the access to coursework via a comprehensive system of e-Learning opportunities.

Over the last three years, North Carolina has continued to develop a statewide distance education program leading to add-on certification in special education. Initially these efforts were been supported by two personnel preparation grants from OSEPs, one at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the other at Elizabeth City State University. These programs have established a partnership network of nine teacher education programs in the UNC system of higher education. The NC SIP project staff worked with the UNC General Administration to provide the resources and infrastructure to continue the work begun by the OSEP Personnel Preparation projects. UNC General Administration contracted with a private firm to establish a statewide infrastructure of an inter-institutional, comprehensive e-Learning environment to serve several areas of professional education. An expanded special education distance education certification system has been established as a major component of this effort. The infrastructure being provided through UNC-GA includes a comprehensive internet course authoring system, faculty author training, maintenance of a URL and server dedicated to the program, and a 24 hours, seven days a week on-line and telephone help system for students and faculty.

During the second year of the project five courses have been provided online. Students enrolled in five different universities accessed the course. As a result, there were 484 student course enrollments during the first two years of the project resulting in 1,452 credit hours earned toward licenses and degrees in special education through the NC SIP online courses.

Next year the NC SIP project will be working closely with the Kansas University Online Academy to include the courses they have developed in reading and behavior management in the North Carolina offerings. NC SIP has also been involved in planning activities leading to the use of the new Online Academy's programs for staff development for practicing educators.

Objective 2.3 - Accomplishments and Outcomes

To summarize the objective's accomplishments and outcomes:

- A restructured system of licensing for special education teachers has been developed and is in the process of being implemented. One result of the restructured license system is that the ease of access to the licensing system and course work will be improved.
- A statewide system for recruitment of teachers in special education has been established in partnership with the National Clearinghouse for Special Education and the Division of Human Resources in the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.
- A comprehensive infrastructure has been established to enable the continuation and expansion of the e-Learning access to professional preparation courses and resources.
- The online course component of the project produced 248 student enrollments during the 2000-2001 school year and 236 student enrollments during the 2001-2002 academic year.

- A planning team has been established and has initiated work on the redesign of competencies and course requirements for certification in special education licensure areas. The task of the planning team is to align these requirements with the efforts of the North Carolina State Improvement Grant program.

Extent to Which Objective 2.3 Was Attained

As described above, the foundation for accomplishing this objective has been developed during the first two years of the project. To measure the extent to which this objective has been met over the next three years of the project, the number and percentage of special education teachers teaching without an appropriate license for their assignment will be tracked statewide. Data have been collected indicating the current number and percentage of teachers in special education who are teaching out of field and can be found on page 57 in Table 12. Although progress is being made in the implementation of strategies to address Objective 2.3, this objective has not been attained to date.

Goal 3: Increase Graduation Rates and Decrease Drop Out Rates
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Objective 3.1 : Increase teacher competencies in the use of positive behavioral supports.

Objective 3.1 - First Year Project Strategies in Approved Application

Strategy 1. Establish the Center for Positive Behavioral Supports and provide orientation training for Centers’ staff. Center planning and selection of specific instructional programs reflecting best practices as indicated by research.

Strategy 2. Train staff of Centers and Staff Development team in host LEA.

Strategy 3. Develop and/or identify training materials, including demonstration videos, web-based/CD ROM video clips, Course Outlines and Syllabi, UK’s On-line Academy training, experience-anchored tasks, and portfolio project assignments to be constructed by teachers and personnel to demonstrate competencies in effectively using positive behavioral supports.

Strategy 4. Pilot the use of the training procedures, resources, and materials with teachers in the LEA hosting the Center.

Second Year Strategies

Strategy 5. Training of LEA trainers and teacher education faculties.

Strategy 6. Training of pre-service special education teachers in university training programs.

Strategy 7. Training of special education teachers through LEA staff development programs.

Strategy 8. Evaluate effectiveness of Objective 3.1 strategies and activities.

Objective 3.1 - Project Activities

The project activities devoted to attainment of this objective were described earlier under Objective 1.1 in the section discussing the establishment of the Best Practice Center for Increasing Use Of Positive Behavioral Supports (p.21). However, a data collection system to follow the progress and accomplishment of this objective is still under development and will be operational beginning in year three of the project.

Objective 3.1 - Accomplishments and Outcomes

The project accomplishments and outcomes for this objective were described earlier under Objective 1.1 in the section discussing the accomplishments and outcomes for the Positive Behavioral Support Center (p.20).

Extent to Which Objective 3.1 Was Attained

The foundation for attainment of Objective 3.1 has been established during this two years of the project. The Best Practice Center for the Use of Positive Behavioral Supports is active and training of the staff is underway. A data collection system to track the progress toward this objective will be initiated in the third year of the project.

Objective 3.2: Decrease the drop-out rate of students with disabilities from the current rate of approximately 50% of students with disabilities exiting schools to a rate no larger than 25% of students with disabilities exiting schools.

Objective 3.3: Increase the graduation rate of students with disabilities from the current rate of approximately 48% of students with disabilities exiting schools to a rate at least 75% of students exiting schools across the five years of the project.

Objectives 3.2 and 3.3. - First Year Project Strategies in Approved Application

First and Second Year Strategies

Strategy 1. Activities conducted to attain Objective 1.1 will also be used to attain Objectives 3.1 and 3.2. Students demonstrating grade level academic performance are more likely to graduate and less likely to drop out of school.

Strategy 2. Activities conducted to attain Objective 1.2 will also be used to attain Objectives 3.1 and 3.2. The improved quality of teachers and higher teacher expectations will impact positively on students' interest and ability to stay in school and to graduate.

Strategy 3. Activities conducted to attain Objective 1.3 will also be used to attain Objectives 3.1 and 3.2. The improvement in leadership personnel knowledge of special needs students and effective curriculum approaches will impact positively on students' interest and ability to stay in school and to graduate.

Strategy 4. Evaluate effectiveness of Goal 3 strategies and activities.

Objectives 3.2 and 3.3 – Project Activities

As indicated in the approved application, the strategies used to attain Objectives 3.2 and 3.3 are identical to the strategies used to address Objectives 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. The quality of instruction, and leadership and the ability of students to meet success will impact significantly on the percentage of students completing school. Rather than duplicating the discussion of project activities undertaken during the first project year, the reviewer is referred to the section of this report that begins on page 2.

Objectives 3.2 and 3.3 – Accomplishments and Outcomes

The reviewer is referred to pages 3-49 for a discussion of the accomplishments and outcomes in working toward the attainment of Objectives 3.2 and 3.3.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction currently collects data on student dropouts and graduation across all school systems. Table 12 below shows the number of students who dropped out of school in the ten school districts where the project has located Best Practice Centers during the first two years of the project. The data also show the number of students who moved out of a district, for who there is no record of continuing in another system. If students subsequently enroll in another school district the data system would pick them up so these students are considered drop out.

As can be seen in Table 13 there has been a substantial reduction in the number of students with disabilities who dropped out of the school systems in which the NC SIP projects are located. In 1999-2000 school year 723 students dropped out across the NC SIP school systems. In 2000-2001 school year 619 student dropped out, a reduction of 104 students or a 14.4 % decrease in the number of students dropping out of school. This reduction in the number of students who dropped out of school can not be linked to the project activities in a cause and effect relationship using these data. However, these data do represent movement toward accomplishment of the NC SIP objective.

Table 13
Exceptional Children Student Drop Outs
North Carolina
1999-2000—2000-2001

COUNTY	Moved-Did not Continue		Dropped out		Total	
	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01	99-00	00-01
Cumberland	18	1	149	157	167	158
Durham	12	1	90	25	102	26
Montgomery	N/A	1	10	23	10	24
Northampton	15	10	21	13	36	23
Onslow	13	7	52	65	67	72
Rockingham	6	0	48	48	54	54
Transylvania	1	3	14	13	15	16
Wake	109	119	153	114	262	233
Watauga	N/A	0	10	13	10	13
Total	174	142	547	471	723	619

Extent to Which Objectives 3.2 and 3.3 Were Attained

Objectives 3.2 and 3.3 are long term objectives for the project and clear evidence of the extent to which these objective have been attained will not be available until later in the project. Program structures and procedures to enable the attainment of these objectives have been

developed during the first two years of the project. The assumption underlying the activities devoted to this objective is that widespread improvement in instruction in basic skill areas and the widespread use of positive behavioral supports will have an impact on the graduation and drop out rates of students with disabilities enrolled in the standard curriculum in the State's public schools. Evidence has been presented that there is has been substantial progress toward accomplishment of these objectives in the school systems in which the NC SIP has established model improvement sites.

Objective 3.4: Decrease the yearly rates of suspension, expulsion, and absence by 5% per year in years two through five of the project.

Objective 3.5: Establish a uniform method across school districts to develop a reliable, valid, and timely system of collection of suspension, expulsion, and absence data.

Objective 3.4 - Project Strategies in Approved Application

Strategy 1. Establish a uniform method, across school districts, to develop a reliable, valid, and timely system for the collection of suspension, expulsion, and absence data to establish a baseline and yearly benchmarks.

Strategy 2. Establish standards and an accountability system for suspensions, expulsions, and absences, and provide rewards to systems meeting the standards.

Second Year Strategies

Strategy 3. Use program activities for objective 3.1 (see above) to impact on objective 3.4.

Strategy 4. Evaluate effectiveness of Objective 3.4 strategies and activities.

Objective 3.5 - Project Strategies in Approved Application

Strategy 1. Review current database and data collection procedures.

Strategy 2. Design data collection approach, instruments, and procedures.

Strategy 3. Pilot the revised data collection process.

Strategy 4. Train LEA personnel in the use of the data collection procedures.

Second Year Strategies

Strategy 5 Implement, across school districts, the revised data collection system.

Objective 3.4 and 3.5 - Project Activities

The project's strategies for Objectives 3.4 and 3.5 are similar and overlapping and therefore these two objectives are grouped together for reporting purposes. As indicated in the approved application, the strategies used to attain Objectives 3.4 are identical to the strategies used to address Objectives 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3. Rather than duplicating the discussion of project activities undertaken during the first project year, the reviewer is referred to the section of the report that begins on page 2.

Strategies 1 and 2 associated with this objective relate to the development of an evaluation and accountability system to measure and report progress made statewide and in the Best Practice Centers' school districts on the reduction of the yearly rates of suspensions, expulsions, and absences.

Currently the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction collects data on expulsions, suspensions and absences as a component of the ABC Accountability program. However, this data is not desegregated by disabilities or disabilities categories. In order to determine the extent to which these objectives are being met, a comprehensive system of collecting, analyzing and reporting this data for students with disabilities must be developed. To establish reliable and valid data in these areas, the project staff is collaborating with the Accountability and Testing Division of the Department of Public Instruction. Project staff have met twice with personnel from the Accountability and Testing Division of the Department of Public Instruction and discussed the need and feasibility of developing such a system of data analysis and reporting system. Tentative agreements and plans call for the Accountability and Testing Division to assist the project with this effort. As a result, the Accountability and Testing Division has agreed to assist the project with the identification, collection and analysis of drop-out, suspension, expulsion and attendance data across all areas of disabilities by school district and by school building.

During the second year of the project a data collection system was established and piloted by the Positive Behavioral Support Best Practice Center in the Durham Public Schools. Data has been collected to provide feedback on the effectiveness of the school wide positive behavioral support model developed and implemented at the Oak Grove Elementary School in Durham. These data are reported on page 36 and include end of year data on (a) number of suspensions, (b) discipline referrals, (c) number of Exceptional children being served across categories, (d) attendance, (e) Referrals to the Student Assistance Program, and (f) student achievement. These data will be collected annually in each of the NC SIP schools and will be compared to similar data in non-project schools.

Objectives 3.4 and 3.5 - Accomplishments and Outcomes

- As presented above a system of data collection in the areas has been implemented and piloted in one of the Best Practice Centers.

Extent to Which Objectives 3.4 and 3.5 Were Attained

Definite progress has been made in establishing a data collection and analysis system to measure the reduction of inappropriate behavior in the project schools. A data collection system has been field tested in one system successfully. The project plans to implement the system in all of the NC SIP school systems during the third year of the project

Goal 4: Improve Parent Satisfaction with, and Support of, School Services

Note: During the first year of the NC SIP, the activities conducted to address the objectives have extensively integrated and these two objectives will be addressed together in the description.

Objective 4.1: Increase parent involvement with their own children/students, teachers, and school system.

Objective 4.2: Increase parent inclusion in program planning, implementation, and evaluation to 100% inclusion in all partnership decision-making events.

Objective 4.1 - First Year Project Strategies in Approved Application

Strategy 1. Plan and develop parent support and training materials including video, sound, graphics, and printed materials on the following topics (a) Using positive behavioral supports in the home, (b) Using collaboration in improving reading, writing, and mathematics abilities of students, (c) Establishing and maintaining high expectations, and (d) Understanding the schools' expectations and progress reports.

Strategy 2. Conduct pilot parent training on above topics with parents in LEAs hosting the Best Practices Centers.

Second Year Strategies

Strategy 3. Train selected members of local community parent groups to become trainers of parents for the State Improvement Partnership parent support and training programs.

Strategy 4. Conduct Parent training workshops across the state on the use of positive behavioral supports.

Strategy 5. Evaluate the effectiveness of Objective 4.1 strategies and activities.

Objective 4.2 – First and Second Year Project Strategies in Approved Application

Strategy 1. Best Practices Centers will develop procedures for assuring parent participation on the demonstration site teams, including establishment of a Parent-Center Advisory Committee and participation of school-based improvement teams.

Strategy 2. Plan and develop a Leadership Workshop for parents in Best Practice Centers schools and school districts to provide leadership training for parents in other school districts. Leadership Training topics will include (a) Skills for participation on school advisory committees, (b) Personal skills for establishing trust and clear communications, and (c) Decision-making for improving results for students with disabilities.

Strategy 3. Train parents for parent training using training programs developed.

Strategy 4. Conduct training using regional workshops and community-based workshop provided by parent trainers.

Strategy 5. Evaluate effectiveness of Objective 4.2 strategies and activities.

Objective 4.1 and Objective 4.2 - Project Activities

First and Second Year Activities

During the first year of the project, a Parent Collaboration, Training & Support Center was established. The Center offices are located in Davidson, North Carolina as a unit of the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center (ECAC). The NC SIP Parent Center works in collaboration with the ARC of North Carolina, the Learning Disabilities Association of North Carolina and the NC Department of Public Instruction. A coordinator for the NC SIP Parent Center was hired. During this first year of the project the Parent Center was involved in planning, site visits to the Best Practice Centers, and the development and field-testing of training materials, which are coordinated with the goals and content of the NC SIP program.

Parent Involvement: Mathematics Best Practice Center

In coordination with the mathematics Best Practice Center in Rockingham County Schools the SIP Parent Center staff have conducted planning meetings with the Center staff. During the first year of the project plans were developed for the production of an informational video about the best practices in algebra instruction for students with disabilities. During the second year of the project the mathematics center staff and the parent center staff have been working together to develop the mathematics parent information resource packet. The Mathematics Center staff developed the video and script and the Parent Center coordinated the shooting of the video. The packet will include informational handouts, and will serve as an introductory presentation for parents and families. These materials have been under production during the second year. It is anticipated that the packet, including the video will be ready use and distribution in the fall, 2002

In addition, the parent center has planned a process for assessing parent experiences with and understanding of, mathematics, including algebra instruction, in order to be able to determine the nature and extent of mathematics and algebra information that families may need.

Parent Involvement: Positive Behavior Supports Best Practice Center

The Parent Center has conducted a variety of activities to assist the Positive Behavior Supports Best Practice Center in involving parents in the center and the satellite centers. An information packet for parents and families has been completed. Also a training curriculum and overheads for a two-hour introductory workshop for families on positive behavior supports has been developed and field-tested. The workshop emphasis is on the principles of PBS, the necessary components of an effective individualized intervention plan, and applicability to a various home and school environments. In addition, Parent Center staff have met with staff of the PBS Center and have initiated work on the development of training of trainers to work with parents and families on the use of positive behavioral supports.

The parent Center conducted two regional “Train the Trainers” workshops on the topic of parent involvement in the use of positive behavior supports. These workshops were developed at the request of the satellite sites to improve their work with parents on positive behavioral supports.

The Exceptional Children’s Assistance Center has made available their previously developed packet of parent support materials entitled *Positive Behavior Support*, to all of the Positive Behavior Support Satellite Centers and to the staff of the Positive Behavior Supports Best Practice Center. These materials have been helpful in the NC SIP work in working with parents.

Parent Involvement: Reading and Writing Best Practice Centers

The Parent Center staff has also been involved in program activities with the network of eight Best Practice Centers focusing on improving reading and writing instruction. These activities have included (a) participation in the series of foundation training meetings described earlier, (b) conducting a survey of the Best Practice Centers’ staff to obtain their perspectives about the

kind of information about reading instruction content and procedures that should be provided through a variety of strategies including parent and family volunteers; parent and family information sessions, the ECAC News Line; and on-line chat sessions.

During the second year of the project the parent center conducted a workshop entitled, Literacy and Helping Your Child Learn to Read for the Northeast Reading and Writing Best Practice Center in Northampton County. Even though that workshop was not well attended, it provided extremely useful evaluation information on both content and family recruitment strategies. This workshop will be revised and the Parent Center staff will assist each of the Reading and Writing Best Practice Centers in the planning and implementation of workshops for parents in each of the centers.

In addition, the Parent Center has assisted the Learning Disabilities Association of North Carolina and ARC of North Carolina with the expenses of bringing in a nationally wide speaker (i.e., Dr. Joseph Torgesen) to speak with parents at their statewide conferences.

Literacy Information Packet

The information packet on Literacy was compiled during the first year of the project in collaboration with the Learning Disabilities Association of NC. The packet includes a variety of informative information that should be useful to parents. A list of the materials in the Literacy Information Packet can be found in the appendix. The materials have been distributed to the Best Practice Centers and have been made available to parents across the state. Approximately 500 packets have been distributed. The *Literacy for All* packet is also available on-line from ECAC web-site.

Based on a request from NCDPI staff, another publication from the packet, *Beginning Reading Instruction: Practical Ideas for Families*, is being provided to each preschool coordinator in the state. This is also available in Spanish.

Parent Involvement: Statewide Activities in Support of the NC SIP Goals

The statewide activities in support of the NC SP goals conducted by the Parent Center during the first two years of the project include:

- The Parent Center has publicized the availability of the support materials in Mathematics, Positive Behavioral Supports and Literacy in the ECAC News Line. The ECAC newsletter.
- An article announcing the project and articles on behavior and reading were included in the Spring 2001, Fall 2001, and Winter 2002 newsletters (see appendix). Over 2,000 additional copies have been distributed at workshops, conferences, and in information packets. The newsletter is also featured on the front page of the ECAC web-site, which, as mentioned earlier, receives approximately 4,100 hits per week. relationship to IEP goals when interacting with ECAC staff during telephone calls and workshops.
- On September 8, 200 1, project staff conducted a training session at the NC ARC conference for approximately 50 family members and educators. The session was entitled "Literacy is For All Students -and We are Not Kidding!"

Even though this was actually completed a week into Year 2, we considered it a Year 1 activity.

- The development and advertisement of the behavior and reading sections of ECAC Lending Library. The library is heavily used by both North Carolina parents and teachers because it can be accessed at no charge through the toll free number and books or videos are mailed with a return mailer included. The library can also be accessed through the web site.

Objectives 4.1 and 4.2 - Accomplishments and Outcomes

The major outcomes in pursuit of the these objectives include:

- A contract was negotiated with the Exceptional Children Assistance Center, a statewide parent support system, to establish a NC SIP Parent Collaboration, Training & Support Center.
- The Center's office was set up, staff hired and planning and activities have been initiated.
- Center staff has participated in the series of Best Practice Reading and Writing Workshops
- Center staff has participated in the series of meetings of the Positive Behavior Support Best Practice Center and satellite centers.
- A Positive Behavior Support information packet has been distributed widely to parents and teaching staff.
- A parent involvement packet for Understanding Algebra has been cooperatively developed with the staff of the Mathematics Best Practice Center.
- A Literacy Information Packet has been developed in cooperation with the Learning Disabilities Association of North Carolina and has been distributed widely.
- The Best Practice Centers have been assisted in the development and delivery of parent involvement meetings for parents.
- The Parent Center has assisted the Learning Disabilities Association of North Carolina and the ARC of North Carolina in the expenses for providing nationally recognized speakers at their state level conferences of parents.
- Statewide information and resources provided by ECAC have supported the NC SIP goals in parent involvement.

Extent to Which Objectives 4.1 and 4.2 Were Attained

A number of major activities have been conducted to work toward attainment of objectives specifying an increase in parent involvement with their child's educational program and it is assumed that progress is being made in accomplishing these objectives. However, the project has been delayed in implementing an evaluation system to measure the extent to which these objectives have been met. This issue is addressed by Objective 4.3 below.

Objective 4.3: Establish reliable and valid procedures for the collection of parent satisfaction data, and use this data to establish a baseline of benchmarks by the end of the first year of the project.

Objective 4.3 - First Year Project Strategies in Approved Application

Strategy 2. Design data collection approach, instruments, and procedures.

Strategy 3. Pilot the revised data collection process.

Strategy 4. Train LEA personnel in use of the data collection procedures.

Second Year Strategies

Strategy 5. Implement the revised data collection system across school systems.

Strategy 6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Objective 4.3 new data collection procedures.

Objective 4.3 - Project Activities

NC SIP staff has met with the project’s evaluation consultant and has begun planning formal data collection and evaluation procedures to measure the extent that parents of students in the projects are satisfied with project, understand the purpose and the nature of the instruction their child is receiving and the extent to which are satisfied with their ability to provide input to their child educational program.

Chart 2

Evaluation Questions	Data Collection Procedures
4.1: How has parent inclusion increased in program planning, implementation, and evaluation so that parents are represented in all partnership decision-making events?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of program and school documents to collect incidences of parent involvement. • Annual parent surveys • Analysis of parent focus groups discussion to be conducted by Best Practice Center staff at least once per year.
4.2: To what extent has the number of official complaints, administrative hearings and lawsuits initiated by parents been reduced by 10% each year of the project through collaborative parent training and involvement in all regions of the state?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review and tabulation of state and school district records indicating frequency of parent complaints, administrative hearings and lawsuits.
4.3: To what degree has the project, as part of the project evaluation and accountability program, during the first year established reliable and valid procedures for the collection of statewide parent satisfaction data to establish a baseline?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and Analysis of the project’s evaluation procedures and data by independent evaluation consultants
4.4: In years two through five, how has the project measurably increased the level of parent satisfaction with educational services for students with disabilities each subsequent year of the project?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparisons of parent involvement implementation activities with satisfaction data collected yearly.

The Department of Public Instruction now compiles Numbers of official complaints, administrative hearings and lawsuit at the school district level as well as statewide. This data will be reviewed for accuracy and comprehensives to determine if the data collection procedures

need to be expanded or revised. This data will be reported yearly by the North Carolina State Improvement Project to LEAs, parent groups and other interested parties to determine the extent of change.

Accomplishments and Outcomes

- Documentation data has been collected and formal evaluation activities are scheduled to begin in the third year of the project.

Extent to Which Objective 4.3 Was Attained

Progress toward attainment of this objective has been slow during the first two years of the project. A heavy investment of time and resources into the establishment of the Best Practice Centers Network and addressing the other objective in the project plan has prevented the project from moving ahead on this objective as much as planned. In the coming year priority will be given to program activities in pursuit of this objective.

**NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
May 31, 2002**

**NC SIG PROJECT BUDGET
PROGRAM YEAR 2000-2001 -\$1,210,000
PROGRAM YEAR 2001-2002 - \$1,210,000
PROGRAM TOTAL - \$2,420,000**

	BUDGET CATEGORIES	ANNUAL APPROVED	YTD EXPENDED	YTD BALANCE
A.	Personnel	0	0	0
B.	Fringe	0	0	0
C.	Travel	3,000	478	5,522
D.	Equipment	0	0	0
E.	Supplies	5,000	2,093	7,907
F.	Contractual	1,034,128	943,300	455,506
G.	Construction	0	0	0
H.	Other	126,500	69,630	51,250
I.	Total Direct Costs (Line A-H)	1,168,628	1,866,349	512,278
J.	Indirect Costs	41,372	40,344	1,028
K.	Training Stipends	0	0	0
L.	Total Expenditures (Lines A-K)	1,210,000	1,906,693	513,307

Balance of funds committed to tuition for teachers taking courses to meet license requirements in Special Education, Summer Institutes and Leadership Training

APPENDIX A

BEST PRACTICE CENTERS PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

APPENDIX B

**RESEARCH TO PRACTICE WORKSHOP AGENDAS
NETWORK MEETING AGENDAS**

APPENDIX C
EVALUATION DATA COLLECTION FORMS

APPENDIX D
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

APPENDIX E

PARENT INVOLVEMENT RESOURCE MATERIALS