

Policy DSTR-040: Reform for Recurring Low-Performing Schools 

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 05/05/2016 | **Last Revised Date:** 05/21/2020 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 05/21/2020

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Policy Manual

Item	Description
Policy Title	Reform for Recurring Low-Performing Schools
Policy Category	District and School Transformation (DSTR)
Policy ID	DSTR-040
Policy Date	05/21/2020
Previous Policy Dates	05/05/2016, 03/05/2020
Statutory Reference	G.S. 115C-105.37B

Effective May 21, 2020

Due to COVID19 and the resulting testing waiver granted to the State Board of Education by the United States Department of Education to eliminate certain student assessment data for the 2019-2020 school year:

The December 2020 Annual Report will not require any review of 2019-2020 performance data. Reporting will only require reporting on the Restart flexibilities utilized in the 2019-2020 school year. The school defined Flexibility Outcomes may be submitted if available but will not be required.

For approved Restart schools implementing as of the 2019-2020 school year and impacted by COVID19:

1. When monitoring Restart schools for Continued Authorization in the 5th year of the 5- year monitoring cycle in DSTR-040 policy,
 - a. Schools who can demonstrate Academic Gain with only 4 years of data may do so (allowing those who exceed expectations the future abbreviated reporting opportunity.)

- b. School who are not demonstrating Academic Gain with only 4 years of data will be given an extra year of monitoring (extending the 5-year cycle to a 6-year cycle).

A local board of education may request to implement a school improvement model pursuant to G.S. 115C-105.37B as follows:

A. Eligibility

In order to be eligible to apply for a school improvement model, the LEA must demonstrate that the particular school is a recurring low-performing school. A recurring low-performing school is a school that has been low performing for two of the previous three consecutive years.

1. {Effective until September 2016} Recurring Low-Performing Schools are identified based on two definitions of low performing:
 - a. Majority of students performing below grade level and did not meet growth, and
 - b. A performance grade of "D" or "F" and did not exceed growth.
2. {Effective September 2017} Recurring Low-Performing Schools are identified based on one definition of low-performing schools: A performance grade of "D" or "F" and did not exceed growth.

B. School Improvement Model Options:

1. **Transformation Model.** In order to qualify for implementation of the transformation model, the LEA must demonstrate that a school has created a plan for developing and improving teacher and school leader effectiveness; for implementing comprehensive instructional reform strategies; for increasing learning time; for creating community-oriented schools; and for providing operational flexibility and sustain support. The LEA shall submit specific goals for academic achievement and shall submit a budget showing the revenues and expenditures needed to reach the goals.
2. **Restart Model.** The LEA shall submit a detailed plan to outline the goals to be achieved, including how to provide each student with the opportunity for a sound basic education; a statement as to how operating the school with the same exemptions from statutes and rules as a charter school authorized under N.C.G.S. 115C-218 et seq. will facilitate accomplishing these goals; how these exemptions will increase student achievement; whether the LEA will employ an educational management organization and, if so, the name and credentials of that organization; and a budget setting out anticipated revenue and expenditures necessary to achieve the goals.
 - a. A school operated under this subdivision remains under the control of the local board of education, and employees assigned to the school are employees of the local school administrative unit with the protections provided by Part 3 of Article 22 of Chapter 115C.
3. **Turnaround Model.** The LEA shall submit specific grounds supporting the implementation of this model; shall specify the academic goals expected from implementation of this model; shall specify the procedures to be utilized in removing staff; including procedures consistent with Due Process; shall describe with specificity the new governance structure and the budget to be implemented; and shall set forth specific academic achievement expected to be realized from use of this model.
4. **School Closure.**

The LEA will submit the specific grounds recommending closure of a particular school; the procedures it intends to follow in closing the school, including opportunities for public hearings; the procedures for

ensuring a smooth transition for employees and students affected by the closure; how the resources realized from closure will continue to support student achievement; and the specific academic gains expected to be realized by the closure.

C. Annual Report.

An LEA that has been authorized to implement any of the foregoing models shall submit an annual report by December 1 of each year documenting the academic gains realized by the school.

D. Continue Authorization for Model (Restart)

Following the precedent that charter schools are given an initial charter for five years, Restart schools follow a five-year cycle of monitoring process to determine continued authorization in the Restart Model. The review process begins after the 3rd year of the implementation with the Year 3 Annual Report. Schools demonstrating Academic Gain will continue in their authorization in the Restart Model. Academic Gain is defined as the academic progress of a school demonstrated through established performance assessments and the systems that impact student achievement from utilized flexibilities. The components of Academic Gain, as documented in the annual report and accountability data, include the following:

- Recurring Low Performing Designation
- Growth Status
- Achievement Score
- Subgroup Growth Status
- School defined Flexibility Outcomes (See attached Support Document: Restart Continued Authorization Workflow)

At the Review, if a school is no longer Recurring Low Performing and the Growth Status is Meet or Exceeds Growth, the school continues to operate as Restart with only the Flexibility reporting required for the Annual Report unless the Recurring Low Performing designation changes. The monitoring cycle to determine continued authorization follows the below five-year cycle:

- Implementation Year 1
- Implementation Year 2 (Year 1 Annual Report)
- Implementation Year 3 (Year 2 Annual Report)
- Implementation Year 4 (Year 3 Annual Report) / Review Year 1
- Implementation Year 5 (Year 4 Annual Report) / Review Year 2 / Recommendation to SBE to Continue or Reapply for Authorization
- BOY Year 6 (July 1) Continue Authorization or Reapply for Authorization

A school declining in Growth Status and Achievement (negative net change) would be offered support in Year 2 and/or Year 3 and is required to partner with the agency for support in Year 4.

E. Removing Authority for Model.

The SBE may remove the authorization of an approved model, if it finds that:

1. The school has failed to achieve the intended goals outlined by the LEA in its request.
2. The school is operating inconsistently with the request submitted by the LEA.
3. The school demonstrates no evidence of progress in Academic Gain after 4 years of implementation in the model. The LEA must submit a new Restart application with a new plan for improvement. (See attached Support Document: Restart Continued Authorization Workflow)
4. Any other grounds deemed appropriate and necessary by the SBE.

F. Declining Authority for Model.

The SBE may decline to authorize a requested model, if it finds that:

1. The request for implementation does not adequately outline the necessary components and goals necessary for that model.
 2. The request for implementation does not meet statutory requirements. (School must be Recurring Low Performing and requested flexibilities must align with all statutes.)
 3. Any other grounds deemed appropriate and necessary by the SBE.
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Supporting Documents



[Restart Continued Authorization Workflow.pdf](#)

Policy Reference Disclaimer: These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

State References

GS 115C-105.37B

Description

[Reform of continually low-performing schools](#)

Federal References

NCLB

Description

[No Child Left Behind Act of 2001](#)

