

# An Overview of North Carolina's ABCs Accountability System

Elementary Schools Only

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Center for Assessment

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# Overview

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- **Consistent tests of reading and math at grades 3-8**
- **Scaled scores aligned across grades (vertical equating)**
- **Performance levels I-IV**
- **Two entirely separate indicators of school performance:**
  - **Performance**
  - **Growth/gain**

# Performance

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- **Status of achievement at end of year**
- **Percentage of scores at Level III or above**
- **Includes all students tested at the school**

# Growth/Gain

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- **Improvement in achievement since previous year**
- **Standard scores**
- **Only students with pre- and post-test scores in school for more than 90 days—therefore, matched scores only**

# Growth/Gain

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- **Scores on pre-test used to compute “Expected Growth” and “Exemplary Growth” standard for your school**
- **Reporting statistic is actual growth minus Expected (or Exemplary) Growth; therefore, a score of 0 means you made your Expected (or Exemplary) Growth**


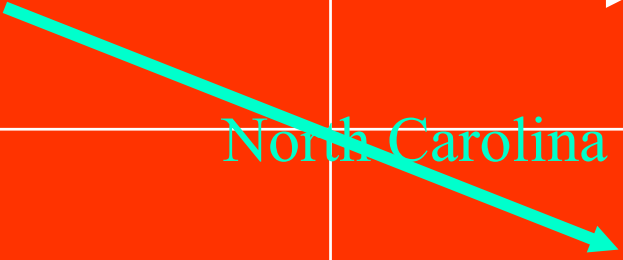

# Comparing North Carolina to Louisiana

	Year 1	Year 2
Grade 3		
Grade 4		

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	Year 1	Year 2
Grade 3	Louisiana →	
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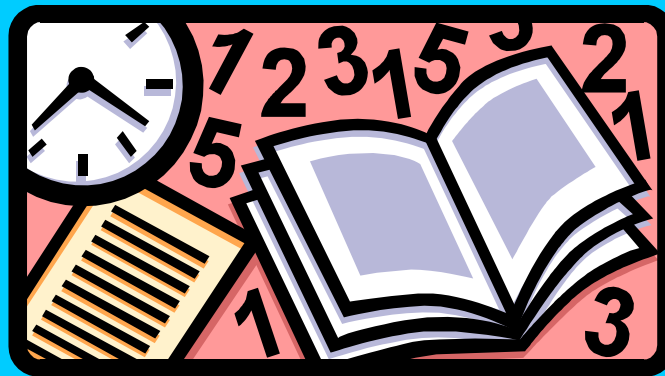
	Year 1	Year 2
Grade 3	Louisiana 	
Grade 4	North Carolina  	

# Low Performing Schools

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- **Performance Composite less than 50  
AND**
- **Growth/Gain Composite less than 0**

# School Improvement: Cases in Systemic Change



Center for Assessment  
Portsmouth, NH

# The Purpose of the Improved Schools Project



To answer these questions:

- How much can an effective school improve in real achievement from one year to the next?
- Are the apparent gains the function of real change?

# Schools Nominated 500+



**Schools Nominated**

**500+**



**Positive Data Located**

**125**

# Schools Nominated

500+



## Positive Data Located

125



## Major intervention Cited

46

# Schools Nominated

500+



## Positive Data Located

125



## Major intervention Cited

46



## Schools Visited

14

# Schools Nominated

500+



Positive Data Located

125



Major intervention Cited

46



Schools Visited

14



Real improvement validated

Center for Assessment

# The Criteria for our Investigation



- ❖ “Exemplary growth” sustained over multiple years
- ❖ Previously low-performing over years
- ❖ High percentage on free/reduced lunch (35%+)
- ❖ High percentage of minorities (40%+)
- ❖ Major intervention verified
- ❖ Systemic change evidenced

# **Special Interest in North Carolina School Improvement plan because...**

- **Data presented a case for significant student performance improvement**
- **Testing at every grade level**
- **Stable test data available over a ten-year period**
- **A unique school assistance plan in place for several years**

# The Assistance Team

- **About 15 teams per year**
- **A team usually composed of 5 or more from outside the district**
- **3-4 teachers, 1-2 administrators**
- **Paid at their own district's rate**
- **Team serves for one year**
- **Goal**
  - **Improve student performance**
  - **Build staff capacity for continuous improvement**

# The Work of the Team

- **conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of all facets of the school,**
- **evaluate teachers and administrators,**
- **collaborate with the school's faculty and staff to revise (as necessary) and assist in implementing the school improvement plan,**
- **make recommendations for continuous improvement as the plan is implemented,**
- **review the school's progress, and**
- **make appropriate reports to the superintendent, local board of education and State Board of Education on the school's progress.**

# Two Highly Improved Schools

## Arlington Elementary School in Gastonia

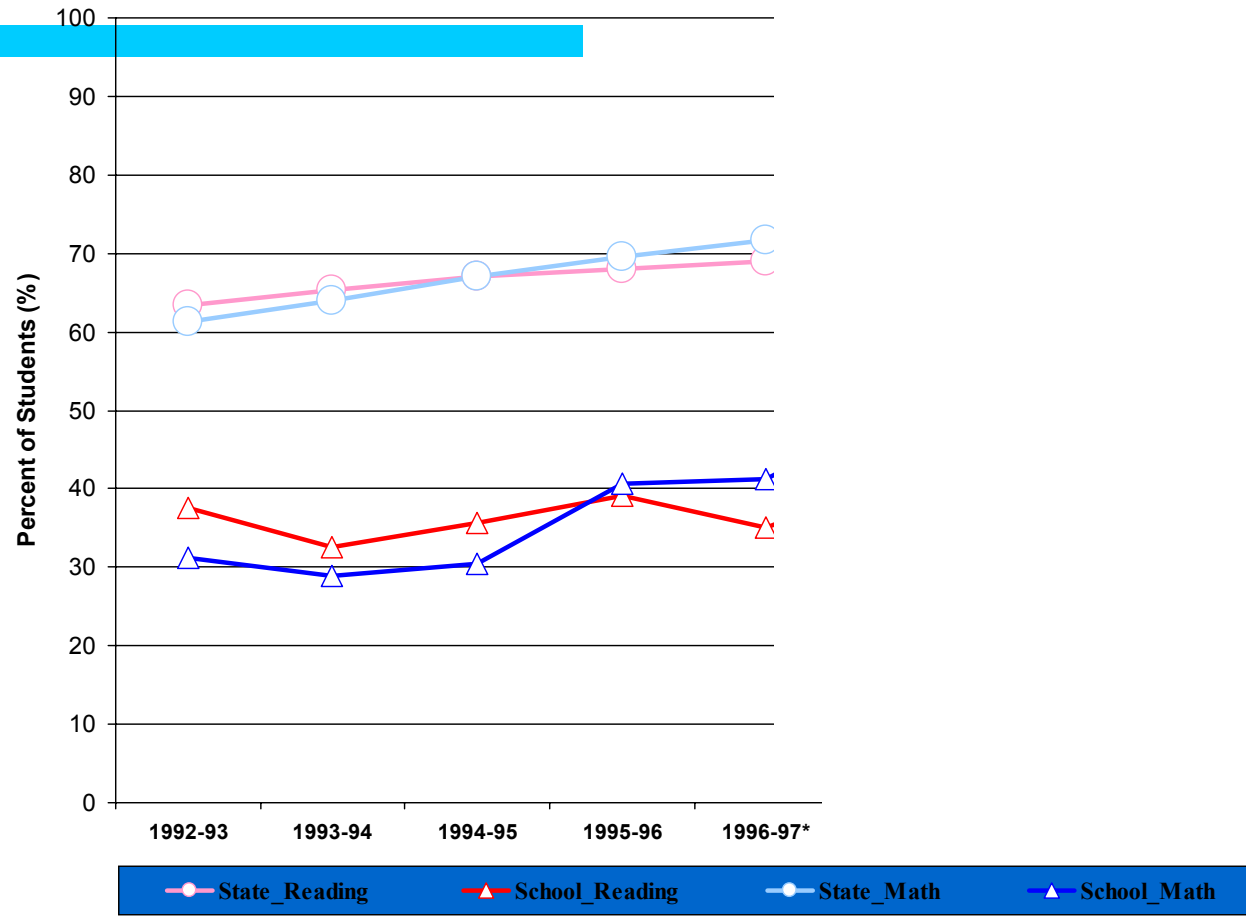
**Enrollment:** 401 students, Pre-K through 5  
55% minority; 90% on free/reduced lunch.

**Community Context:** A recent drop in enrollment by about 75 students largely due to closure of some textile plants in Gastonia. High transience.

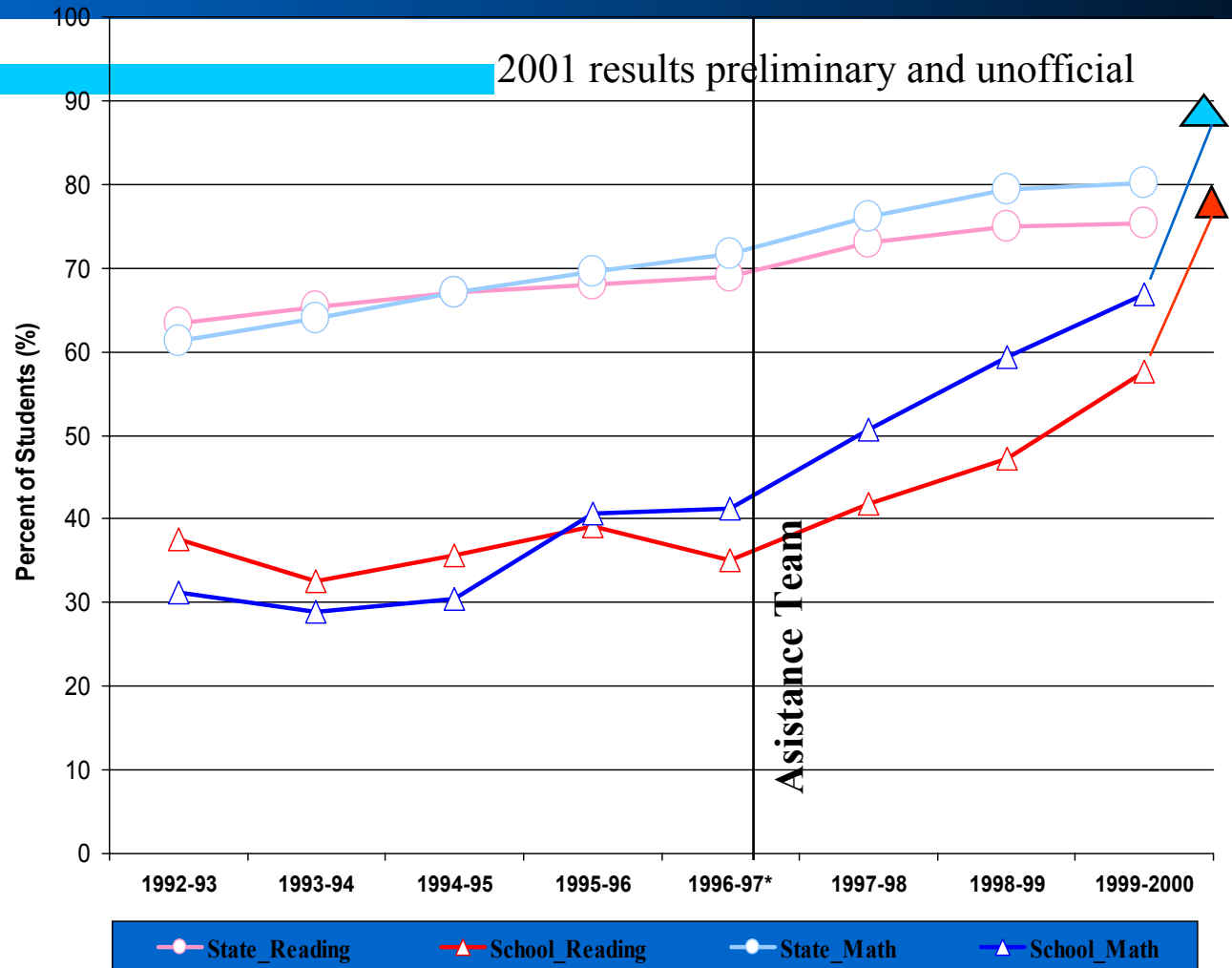
**Special program:** Summer home visit tutoring for students below grade level.

**Status:** “Exemplary Growth.”

# Arlington



# Arlington After Intervention



# Allenbrook Elementary School Charlotte

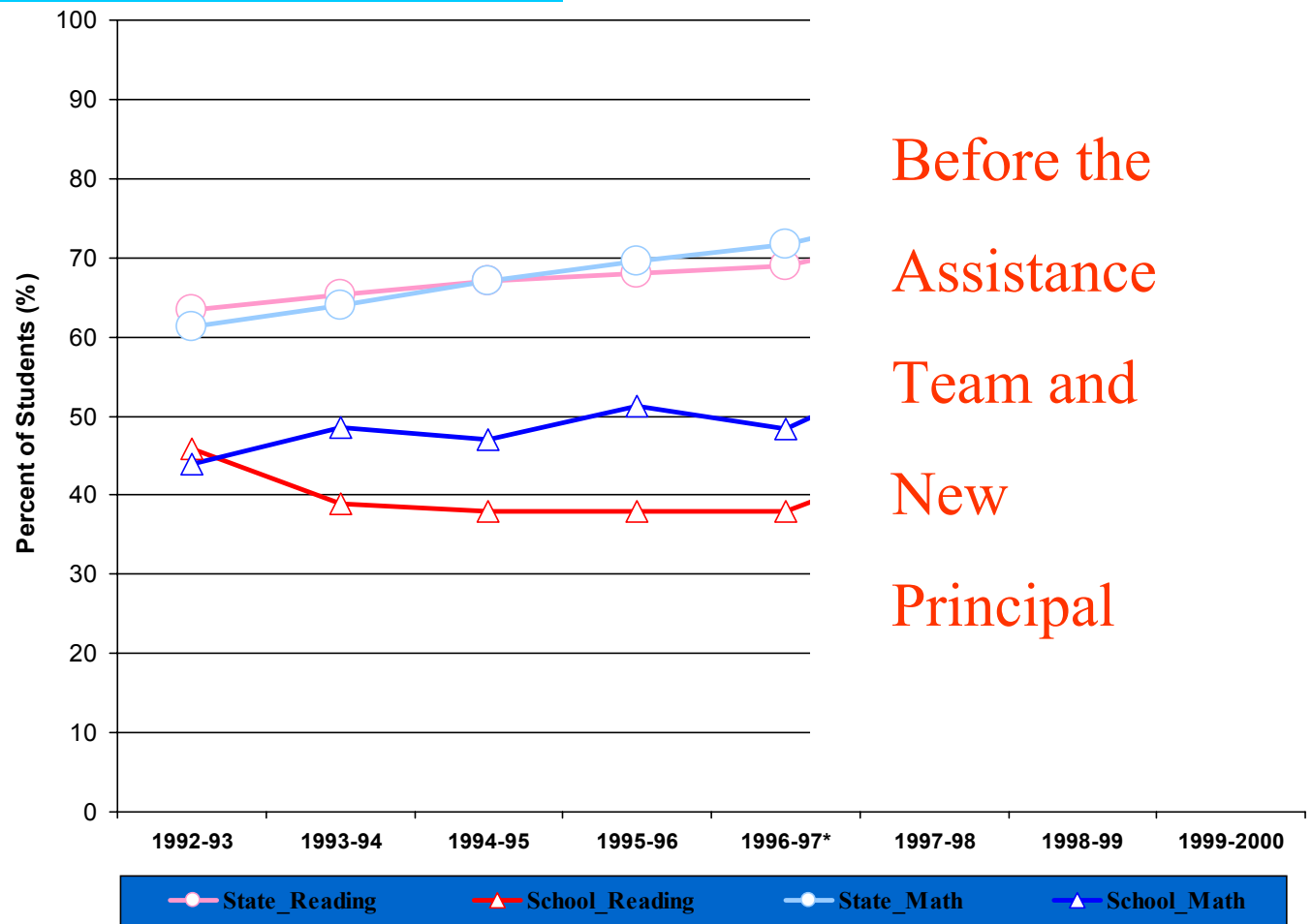
**Enrollment:** 326 students grades K-5; 83% minority, 17% white with African-Americans representing 65% of the total enrollment. 69% of the students are on free/reduced lunch.

**Community context:** Extreme transience. Only 17% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders were there in kindergarten.

**Special program:** Extensive faculty mentoring. No faculty turnover for 2001-2 school year.

**Status:** Exemplary growth.

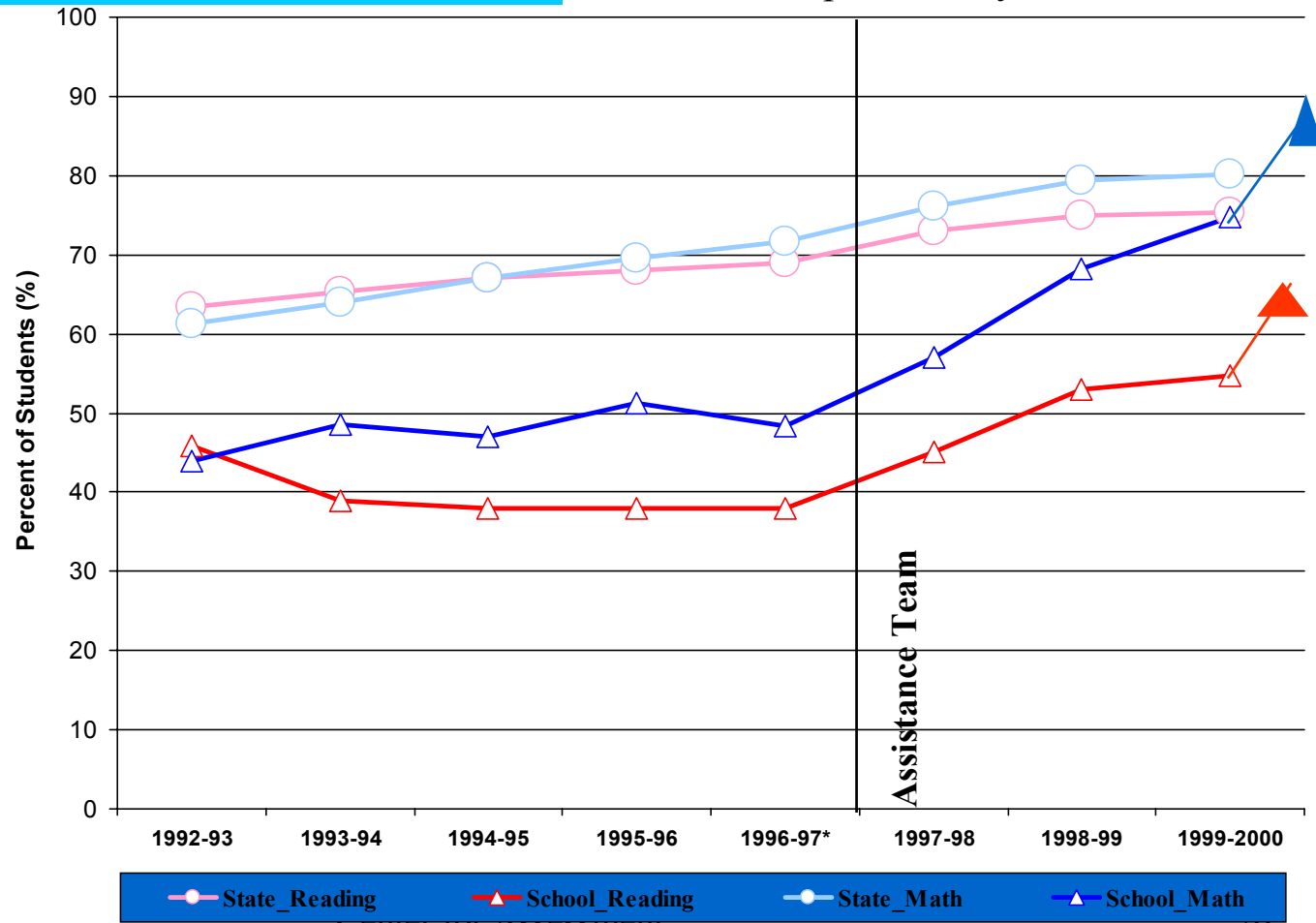
# Allenbrook



Before the  
Assistance  
Team and  
New  
Principal

# Allenbrook after Intervention

2001 results preliminary and unofficial



## **Arlington and Allenbrook: What we observed**

- ✓ **New principal with vision, will, support**
- ✓ **High and consistent expectations of all**
- ✓ **Assistance team of 5 in daily partnership**
- ✓ **Immediate change in physical conditions**
- ✓ **Establishment of uniform policies**
- ✓ **Maximized time on task with:**
  - Efficient schedule with planning blocks**
  - Reduced interruptions with positive routines**
  - Orderly, but engaged classrooms; therefore, minimum disciplinary disruptions**
- ✓ **Class activities explicitly related to standards**
- ✓ **Consistent positive, calm professional tone**

## What factors brought about these positive changes?

- ❑ **A visionary new principal who worked with the assistance team as “my eyes, not my mind”**
- ❑ **Frequent focused observations**
- ❑ **Replacement of teachers who would not or could not contribute to the new program**
- ❑ **Regular use of data on student performance to adjust instruction and assess effectiveness of the program**
- ❑ **An inclusive “can do” atmosphere promoting high expectations as a school community**

## Arlington School Principal

**Q: Where do you see this school in 5 years?**

**A: 90/90** (with 90% poverty achieving 90% on grade level. No school has achieved that)

**Q: What do you expect for scores in 2001?**

**A: I know we'll break 75.**  
(which she demonstrated with ongoing assessment data)

## Allenbrook Principal

**Q: What did you find in '97?**

**A: Chaos and rudeness. There were no covers on books in the library... There was no hope.**

**Q: What do you believe it is realistic to expect?**

**A: I look at change as incremental, but my goal is 100% proficient. The State says 10% a year is 'significant growth', but I won't set a limit in my mind."**

# Can change be rapid and lasting?



“I was a caterpillar;  
now I’m a butterfly.”

--Bonnie



Veteran  
Allenbrook Teacher

# Time on Task

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- **Time**

- **Discipline—active, learning classrooms**
- **Efficiencies in routine**
  - Bathroom breaks, pencil sharpening
  - Assignments on board
- **Efficiencies in scheduling**

- **On Task**

- **State standard for lesson written on board**