



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Annual Report on the Implementation and
Progress of the North Carolina Innovative
School District

G.S. 115C-75.6(d)

Date Due: January 15, 2022
Report # 5

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Background:

Pursuant to G.S. 115C-75.6(d), by January 15 annually, the State Board of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Innovative School District (ISD) Superintendent shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on all aspects of operation of the ISD, including the selection of innovative schools and their progress. With the intent of improving chronically low-performing elementary schools across the state, the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) enacted legislation in 2016 to establish a new non-geographic school district—the Achievement School District (ASD). In 2017, the NCGA provided additional guidance and renamed the ASD as the North Carolina Innovative School District.

School Selections:

2017-2018	Southside-Ashpole Elementary School in Robeson County was selected for inclusion in the Innovative School District.
2018-2019	No additional schools were selected for 2019-2020.
2019-2020	No additional schools were selected for 2020-2021.
2020-2021	A repeal of the ISD has been included in the budget bill. No additional schools are currently slated for placement in the Innovative School District, and planning is underway for transition of Southside-Ashpole Elementary back to The Public Schools of Robeson County (PSRC).

Operations and Transition Planning:

Pursuant to G.S. 115C-75.8(b1) and 75.9(a), The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction is operating as the temporary ISO, and work is already underway to develop the plan (e.g., timeline, critical tasks, benchmarks, “persons responsible,” etc.) required under G.S. 115-C-75.12(a)(5) to return the school to the local school administrative unit. A very strong partnership with Public Schools of Robeson County is critical. As such, quarterly meetings with leadership from PSRC and ISD are occurring. The Superintendent of PSRC, the ISD Superintendent, and the Associate State Superintendent for Agency Schools also engage and plan more frequently. PSRC continues to provide transportation, child nutrition services, technology and maintenance support.

Teaching and Learning:

Southside-Ashpole Elementary School, like many other schools across the state and beyond, transitioned to remote learning for much of 2020. Face-to-face instruction resumed March 1, 2021. During the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, schoolwide academic growth and school performance grades were not calculated or reported due to COVID-19. Turnover and vacancies have been challenging (due in part to COVID-19 and current and former employees' concern about uncertainty related to the ISD's future), and hiring has been a major priority. As of October 2021, all teaching positions and teacher/instructional assistant positions have been filled. With respect to teaching and learning, the following are the current areas of focus (in no particular order):

- Literacy (LETRS Training)
- Master scheduling (to provide more targeted instructional time)
- Curriculum alignment, lesson planning, and formative assessments (hiring of literacy coach, instructional leadership consultant, and effective implementation of professional learning teams)
- Coaching and professional development provided by the new Innovative Partnership Grant partner (Ed Direction)
- New Teacher Support Program (The University of North Carolina at Pembroke)
- Ongoing professional development to improve teaching and learning:
 - The Effective Teacher
 - mClass
 - Using pacing guides and resources for improving instruction
 - Assessments (small group instruction, lesson planning, differentiated Instruction, & data)