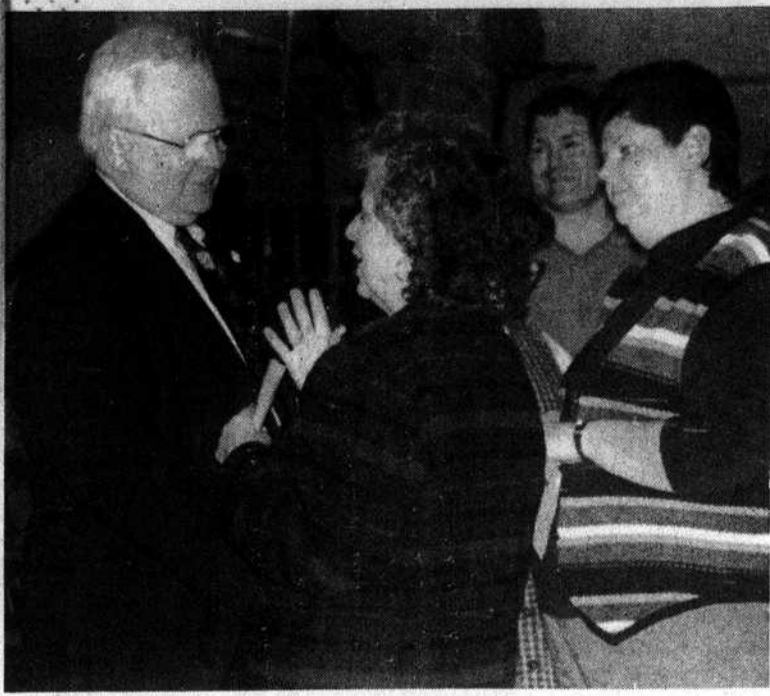


# Statewide student promotion standards are recommended



The final piece of the state's ABCs accountability program is about to be put in place as the State Board of Education considers statewide student promotion standards affecting both primary and secondary students. The Board is slated to finalize a student promotion standards policy recommended by the Committee on Standards and Accountability in March.

Beginning in 2000-01 under a proposal the State Board is considering third, fifth, and eighth graders would have to meet the following standards in order to be promoted to the next grade level:

- Third grade students must have a Level III proficiency on the End-of-Grade Tests in mathematics and reading.
- Fifth grade students must have a Level III proficiency on the End-of-Grade Tests in mathematics, reading, and writing.
- Eighth grade students must have a Level III proficiency on the End-of-Grade Tests in mathematics, reading, and writing.

The committee recommended that students in the fifth and eighth grades, who did not achieve a proficiency level of 2.5 or better on the writing test taken in the fourth and seventh grades, receive appropriate intervention and a

follow-up writing assessment.

The recommended benchmarks in grades three, five, and eight does not preclude an individual school's responsibility to consider each student's academic progress at each level, K-8, and provide appropriate intervention when necessary.

For high school students, the Board is considering a recommendation from the Committee on Standards and Accountability that students complete the following in order to graduate:

- meeting existing standard of local and state course requirements (current requirement);
- grade level proficiency on a new "essential skills" test, the Comprehensive Test of Reading and Mathematics;
- complete a senior project;
- take a newly developed exit exam or choose from several exit exam options such as the SAT/ACT (for college bound students), community college placement tests, ASVAB (for students entering the military), Work Keys (for students entering directly into the workforce), vendor generated exam that measures next level readiness;
- compile a portfolio that would demonstrate a level of proficiency in the following six competency areas: communication, numbers/data usage, problem solving, information processing, teamwork, and technology use.

In comments made to the State Board, State Superintendent Mike Ward reiterated that student promotion standards are not about "creating barriers but opportunities." He also wanted to make sure that whatever plan is accepted be supported with resources such as money, time, professional development, intervention/remediation, etc., because adoption of new standards without the necessary resources is "adopting another barrier."

State Board of Education Chairman Phil Kirk agreed that intervention needed to be occurring now.

Kirk said that additional resources would be needed but shouldn't preclude schools from looking at existing dollars to determine if there are better ways to spend intervention dollars such as Saturday academies, after-school tutoring, etc.



State Board of Education Chairman Phil Kirk talks with Principal Mary Nixon and John A. Holmes Teacher of the Year, Ed Thornton, following a round table discussion with educators and parents on February 11.

# Schools develop improvement plans

The move by the State Board of Education to adopt statewide promotion standards has spurred the need for school systems across North Carolina to begin reviewing current policies and developing new ones for what will constitute passing or failing a grade or course. Furthermore, school systems must have in place focused intervention strategies and programs specifically designed to improve student performance to grade level proficiency.

School faculties, staff, and parents are currently working on developing school improvement plans that would carry the school system into the year 2002. In anticipation of the adoption of the proposed statewide promotion standards, Superintendent Dr. Allan Smith has instructed school improvement teams to carefully analyze and assess current strategies and programs to determine the most successful methods for improving student achievement.

"In this next fiscal year, we are not anticipating much, if any, additional money from the state for new initiatives," said Smith. "So looking ahead to the State Board of Education's adoption of promotions standards, our schools are taking a hard look at programs and services currently in place and determining what needs to be maintained, and what needs to be revised or

redirected to meet the needs of ensuring student success," he said.

Once the state board adopts the draft proposal for promotion standards, each local board of education will be responsible for developing systemwide procedures for determining promotion under the state's new guidelines. Under the proposed plan, local procedures must include (at a minimum) the following:

- local promotion standards at grades 3,5,8 and high school graduation;
- adherence to state graduation requirements;

**"We are not anticipating much, if any, additional money from the state for new initiatives"**

- Allan Smith

- limits as to the number of times students may be retained in grade spans of K-3, 4-6, and 7-8;
- notification and involvement of parents;
- opportunities for retesting at least two times;
- intervention plans, strategies and opportunities;
- appeals process for students having passing grades and meeting local promotion standards, but not scoring at a Level III or above on reading and mathematics tests;
- membership on appeals committee;
- role of teacher in presenting documentation of students' work.

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The Edenton-Chowan School System will use the upcoming school year to develop local promotion standards. Under the proposed state plan, statewide standards will not begin until the year 2000-01.



## Public input sessions to receive comment on draft standards

To ensure that as many citizens as possible have the opportunity to comment on the draft student promotion standards, the following public input sessions have been scheduled. All sessions will be held from 6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. Speakers need to sign up beforehand by contacting Linda Edwards at (919) 715-1299.

Wednesday, Feb. 24 - Martin Community College Auditorium, Bldg. #2 - Kehukee Park Rd., Williamston

# Edenton-Chowan Schools March calendar of events

- |     |  |    |   |   |   |
|-----|--|----|---|---|---|
| 1   | Board of Education Meeting, Chowan Co. Office Bldg., 7:30 p.m.<br>Early Release Day 1:30 p.m.<br>John A. Holmes Parent Conference 2 - 6 p.m.   | 13 | Driver's Education Proficiency Exam, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., John A. Holmes Cafeteria  | JAH Softball at Manteo<br>JAH Varsity Baseball at Manteo<br>JAH JV Baseball - Manteo at Home<br>JAH Tennis at Currituck<br>JAH Track - Camden at Home |   |
| 1-5 | D.F. Walker School Book Fair   | 15 | Parent Conference Day Traditional K-8   | 24  | White Oak Kindergarten Registration<br>JAH Tennis at Manteo<br>CMS Baseball/Softball at Southwestern  |
| 2   | State Writing Test Administered Grade 4<br>Meet the Aces, 5:30 p.m., John A. Holmes  | 16 | JAH Softball - Williamston at Home<br>JAH Varsity Baseball - Williamston at Home<br>JAH JV Baseball at Williamston<br>JAH Tennis at Gates County<br>CMS Baseball/Softball at Hertford Co. 1 | 25  | D.F. Walker Kindergarten Registration<br>JAH Track - Currituck, Williamston at Home                   |
| 4   | White Oak School Parent/Student End-of-Grade Awareness Session, Grades 3-5, 7 p.m.<br>John A. Holmes High School Study Skills Workshop for students 3:15-4:15 p.m.<br>D.F. Walker School Parent Night at Book Fair, 5-8 p.m. | 17 | John A. Holmes Athletic Physicals 8 a.m. - 11 a.m.<br>JAH Tennis - Tarboro at Home<br>JAH Track - Camden, Perquimans at Home<br>CMS Baseball/Softball at Hertford Co. 2                     | 26  | D.F. Walker Kindergarten Registration   |
| 5-7 | Art Honor Society Trip to New York, NY   | 19 | JAH Softball at Perquimans<br>JAH Varsity Baseball at Perquimans<br>JAH JV Baseball - Perquimans at Home  | 29  | JAH Golf at Northside<br>CMS Baseball/Softball - Robersonville at Home                                |
| 8   | Teacher Workday Traditional K-8<br>Teacher Workday H.S.  | 21 | Youth & The Arts Program, Swain Auditorium 3 p.m.   | 30  | JAH Softball at Currituck<br>JAH Varsity Baseball at Currituck<br>JAH JV Baseball - Currituck at Home |
| 9   | JAH Varsity Baseball - Northeastern at Home<br>JAH JV Baseball at Northeastern<br>JAH Tennis - Gates County at Home  | 22 | Driver's Education classes begin - end May 5<br>JAH Golf - Currituck, Manteo, Northside<br>CMS Baseball/Softball - C.G. White at Home   | 31  | CMS Baseball/Softball - Williamston at Home   |
| 10  | JAH Tennis - Northeastern at Home  | 23 | White Oak Kindergarten Registration   |   |   |
| 11  | John A. Holmes High School Study Skills Workshop for students 3:15 - 4:15 p.m.   |    |   |   |   |

