

A. PRINCIPLES

Principals, assistant principals, teachers, and other instructional staff at each school are responsible for designing and implementing strategies to reach the educational goals of the [Transylvania County Board of Education](#) (the “board”). Input from the school community, including parents, students, and representatives from businesses and other agencies, is critical in developing an educational program that will meet the needs of the students and the community.

The board affirms the General Assembly’s belief that all children can learn and that the mission of public schools is to challenge, with high expectations, each child to learn, achieve, and fulfill his or her potential.

Accordingly, the board has established in its policies its vision, standards, and means of accountability for the educational program. The superintendent shall provide guidance and establish any other standards necessary for effective implementation of the board’s policies. Principals shall lead each school in implementing the policies. The school improvement plan is one tool that school administrators should use to draw upon the creativity and innovation of the staff and the community. This plan, in its two parts, should identify the school’s efforts to improve student performance and reach the educational goals of the board.

B. PART ONE OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: STATE PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The board endorses the principles set forth by the State Board of Education that all children need to master basic skills and knowledge and build upon this foundation for lifelong learning. Therefore, in developing their school improvement plans, all schools should ensure, to the extent possible, that sufficient resources and curricula are directed toward meeting the goal of having all students performing at grade level or higher in the basic subject and skill areas identified by the State Board.

1. School Improvement Team

Each school must have a school improvement team that develops the school improvement plan. The school improvement team will consist of the principal, representatives of the assistant principals, instructional personnel, instructional support personnel and teacher assistants assigned to the school building, and parents of students attending the school. Each group of school personnel shall elect representatives from their respective group by secret ballot. Parents are to be elected in accordance with G.S. 115C-105.27(a). The school improvement team is encouraged to involve and seek assistance from central office personnel. The school improvement team, especially at the middle and high schools, also is encouraged to seek input from students. The superintendent shall provide

45 guidance to principals to ensure that the principals establish and work together
46 with school improvement teams to develop, review, and amend school
47 improvement plans.
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49 The school improvement team shall follow all legal requirements in developing
50 and obtaining school approval of the school improvement plan. School
51 improvement team meetings will be held at a convenient time to facilitate
52 substantial parent participation. The principal shall ensure that the school
53 improvement team, as a public body, complies with the Open Meetings Law in
54 regard to its meetings. Deliberations on the school safety components of the plan
55 must be in closed session in accordance with G.S. 143-318.11(a)(8).
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57 **2. Mandatory Components of the State Plan**

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59 A school improvement plan must include the following components.
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- 61 a. The plan must specify the effective instructional practices and methods to
62 be used to improve the academic performance of students identified as at
63 risk of academic failure or at risk of dropping out of school.
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- 65 b. The plan must take into consideration the minimum annual performance
66 goal established by the State Board and the goals set out in the mission
67 statement for public schools adopted by the State Board of Education.
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- 69 c. The plan must be, to the greatest extent possible, data driven. The team
70 shall use the Education Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS) or a
71 compatible and comparable system approved by the State Board of
72 Education to analyze student data to identify root causes for problems and
73 determine actions to address them and to appropriately place students in
74 courses such as Math I. The plan must contain clear, unambiguous
75 targets, explicit indicators and actual measures, and expeditious time
76 frames for meeting measurement standards.
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- 78 d. The plan must identify how staff development funds allocated to the
79 school will be used.
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- 81 e. The plan must provide a duty-free lunch period for every teacher on a
82 daily basis or as otherwise approved by the school improvement team.
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- 84 f. The plan must provide duty-free instructional planning time for every full-
85 time assigned classroom teacher, with the goal of providing an average of
86 at least five hours of planning time per week.
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- 88 g. The plan must attempt to identify and eliminate unnecessary and

89 redundant reporting requirements for teachers and, to the extent
90 practicable, streamline the school's reporting system and procedures,
91 including requiring forms and reports to be in electronic form when
92 possible and incorporating relevant documents into the student accessible
93 components of the Instructional Improvement System.

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95 h. As part of the school system's efforts to maintain safe and orderly schools,
96 the plan must address safety and discipline concerns. These concerns
97 include any special conditions at the school. The plan should include the
98 components of any positive behavior management or positive behavior
99 support programs that have been adopted at the school and should comply
100 with the requirements of policy 1510/4200/7270, School Safety, and all
101 protocols established by the superintendent or designee under that policy.

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103 i. For schools identified by the Department of Public Instruction as Focus or
104 Priority schools, the plan must identify the interventions the school will
105 implement to address students' academic needs. Such interventions must
106 include strategies to address the needs of all children, particularly the
107 lowest-achieving, and how those needs will be met in a timely and
108 effective manner. If the school is identified as a Focus school as a result
109 of not meeting participation rates in the state assessment program, the plan
110 must include interventions to improve participation.

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112 j. In accordance with policy 1310/4002, Parental Involvement, the plan must
113 identify the goals and strategies for parents to be involved in their child's
114 education and in the educational program of the school.

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116 k. The plan must include a process by which the school improvement team
117 will review the school improvement plan at least once a year. The annual
118 review process must include (1) a review of student scores on all state-
119 and board-mandated tests and (2) a means for the school improvement
120 team to modify the plan, if necessary, when the school has not met the
121 expected growth score established by the state.

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123 l. The plan must require the principal to notify the superintendent if the
124 school improvement team modifies a board-accepted school improvement
125 plan.

126 3. Optional Components of the State Plan

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128 Part One of the school improvement plan may include any or all of the following
129 components.

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131 a. The plan may include a request to transfer state funds from one allotment
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133 category to another, as permitted by state law. The request must identify
134 the funding allotment categories involved in the transfer and identify how
135 the transfer will facilitate improving student performance.
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- 137 b. The plan may include a comprehensive conflict resolution plan, as
138 provided in G.S. 115C-81(a4), in order to help create a safe school.
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- 140 c. The plan may provide for the use of textbooks that have not been adopted
141 by the State Board.
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143 **4. Development and Review of the Plan**

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145 School improvement teams should review student performance data from the
146 preceding school year in developing the school improvement plan. Based on the
147 availability of data and when specific school standards are established by the State
148 Board, the superintendent shall establish the date by which school improvement
149 plans must be submitted.
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151 The principal first shall present the proposed school improvement plan to all of
152 the assistant principals, instructional personnel, instructional support personnel,
153 and teacher assistants assigned to the school building for their review and vote by
154 secret ballot. The principal then shall submit the school improvement plan to the
155 superintendent only if the proposed school improvement plan has the approval of
156 a majority of the staff who voted on the plan.
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158 The superintendent or designee shall review the plans and seek legal review as
159 necessary prior to presenting the plans with written recommendations to the
160 board. If the superintendent intends to recommend that a plan be rejected, the
161 superintendent shall notify the principal of the school and explain the reasons for
162 the decision. The school improvement team may then submit a modified plan,
163 approved by staff vote, to the superintendent. The superintendent should submit
164 all school improvement plans to the board at the earliest possible date.
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166 The board will review the school improvement plans. The review of the school
167 safety components of the plans must be in closed session. The board shall make
168 findings on the safety components of the plan. Neither the safety components of
169 the plans nor the board's findings on the safety components of the plans may be
170 set out in the minutes of the board.
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172 After review of the school improvement plans, the board will accept or reject each
173 school improvement plan. If a plan is rejected, the board will explain the specific
174 reason(s) for the rejection.
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176 Any plan modified by the school improvement team after being rejected by the
177 board must be resubmitted to the school personnel for vote and, upon majority
178 approval, resubmitted to the superintendent for review. The superintendent shall
179 resubmit the modified plan to the board with his or her recommendations as soon
180 as is practical. The board will review the modifications along with any
181 recommendations from the superintendent and accept or reject the plan.
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183 If the board and the school improvement team cannot reach agreement on the plan
184 within 60 days after its initial submission, the board or school may request to use
185 the dispute resolution process developed by the State Board under G.S. 115C-
186 105.20(b)(5). Alternatively, if use of the dispute resolution process is not
187 requested, the board may develop a school improvement plan for the school.
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189 A school improvement plan may be in effect for no more than two years. The
190 plan must be reviewed at least annually by the school improvement team in
191 accordance with the review process established in the school's plan. If a school
192 does not meet its expected growth standard as established by the State Board or if
193 more than 25% of the students performed below grade level, the principal must
194 submit to the superintendent and the board a report of the school improvement
195 team. The report must explain the reasons for the standard(s) not being met and
196 describe any modifications that will be made in the school improvement plan.
197 After considering any recommendations of the superintendent, if the board is not
198 satisfied with the response of the school improvement team, the board may
199 suggest modifications to the plan or may vacate those portions of the plan that
200 impede student performance and require the school improvement team to revise
201 the plan.
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203 **5. Elimination of Redundant or Unnecessary Reporting Requirements**

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205 If, at any time before or after the board approves the school improvement plan,
206 the school improvement team identifies a more expeditious manner of providing
207 information to the board that will eliminate a redundant or unnecessary reporting
208 requirement for teachers at its school, the team may make a written request to the
209 superintendent to eliminate the redundant or unnecessary report. The
210 superintendent shall recommend to the board whether the reporting requirement
211 should be eliminated for that school. If the superintendent does not recommend
212 elimination of the reporting requirement, the school improvement team may
213 request a hearing by the board as provided in policy 2500, Hearings Before the
214 Board.
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216 **6. Compliance with Requirements**

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218 Any employee, parent, or other interested party is encouraged to notify the
219 principal of any concerns regarding compliance with this policy or G.S. 115C-

220 105.27. In addition, any employee, parent, or other interested party may submit in
221 writing to the superintendent concerns regarding compliance with this policy or
222 G.S. 115C-105.27. The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to
223 investigate the concern and shall provide a written response upon request.
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225 **C. PART TWO OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: LOCAL EDUCATION REFORM**
226 **INITIATIVES**

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228 In addition to the basics emphasized in the state testing program, the board expects
229 schools to be guided by the educational goals of the board. The board encourages the
230 schools to consider innovative means of educating students to meet these educational
231 goals. The board has established a vision, standards, and means of accountability in its
232 educational policies to provide guidance to the schools. Many of these policies provide
233 an opportunity for schools to develop innovative plans as a part of their school
234 improvement plan. Part Two of the school improvement plan should reflect the school's
235 efforts to meet the educational goals of the board.
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237 **1. Mandatory Components of the Local Plan**

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239 Part Two of the school improvement plan must include the following:
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- 241 a. strategies for meeting the educational objectives of the board (policy 3000,
242 Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program); and
243
244 b. intervention strategies for students who are not at grade-level proficiency
245 or who are not likely to meet standards of promotion measured by other
246 means (policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability).
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248 **2. Optional Components of the Local Plan**

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250 The board strongly encourages school employees to be innovative in their efforts
251 to meet local educational goals. Although not limited to these options, the board
252 has encouraged innovation specifically through its policies on the following
253 issues:
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- 255 a. modifying the school calendar (see policy 3300, School Calendar and
256 Time for Learning);
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258 b. implementing alternative scheduling of classes or other strategies intended
259 to reduce transitional time and limit interference from non-instructional
260 activities (policy 3300);
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262 c. adding hours of instructional time (policy 3300);
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- 264 d. providing additional means for evaluating instructional programs (policy
265 3140, Evaluation of Instructional Programs);
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267 e. developing and implementing pilot programs (policy 3110, Innovation in
268 Curriculum and Instruction);
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270 f. expanding the subject areas or objectives of the curriculum (policy 3100,
271 Curriculum Development); and
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273 g. eliminating curricula on subject areas or objectives that are not state-
274 required (policy 3100).
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276 A school also may submit a request to the board for a waiver of board policies.
277 Any waiver request must identify the particular board policy that inhibits the
278 school's ability to improve student performance, set out with specificity the
279 circumstances under which the waiver may be used, and explain how the
280 requested waiver will permit the school to improve student performance.
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282 3. Process

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284 Part Two of the plan should be submitted at the same time as Part One of the plan.
285 However, a school improvement team may submit a request to the superintendent
286 for an additional month to complete Part Two of the plan. The superintendent
287 may approve the request if the school is working in good faith to complete the
288 plan.
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290 The board will act on the plan at the first meeting in which it is presented, unless
291 further time for review is necessary. The board may accept the plan, with or
292 without modifications, or reject the plan and provide an explanation of
293 deficiencies of the plan. If modifications are required for board approval, the
294 board may either make the modifications or request that the school improvement
295 team make the modifications and resubmit the plan.
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297 If a school improvement team is not satisfied with any modifications made by the
298 board, it may submit to the board alternative modifications for consideration.
299 Until the board acts on the school improvement team's alternative modifications,
300 the modifications made by the board will be in effect.
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302 Part Two of the plan may be in effect for no more than two years. The board
303 encourages the school to evaluate the plan continually. At any time during the
304 two-year period, a school improvement team may submit an expanded or
305 modified school improvement plan for board consideration. Furthermore, at any
306 time during the two-year period, the superintendent and the board may review the
307 plan and the board may take any actions provided in this subsection.

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D. POSTING THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN ONLINE

The school improvement plan, except for its school safety components which are not public record, must be posted on the school’s website. The names and positions of the members of the school improvement team, along with the date of each member’s election to the team, must also be posted on the website.

E. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The superintendent shall develop a process by which schools can learn from other schools’ improvement plans. The superintendent and the schools are encouraged to use staff development resources to provide training to staff on the development, implementation, and evaluation of school improvement plans.

School administrators must be evaluated by their supervisors on the school-based management process as required by board policy and state law and on the effectiveness of the school improvement plan.

Legal References: U.S. Department of Education approval of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request (May 29, 2012); G.S. 115C-47(38), -81, -84.2, -98, -105.20, -105.21, -105.25, -105.26, -105.27, -105.32, -105.35, -105.37, -105.41(b), -301.1, -307(g); 143 art. 33C

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy 1310/4002), School Safety (policy 1510/4200/7270), Compliance with the Open Meetings Law (policy 2320), Hearings Before the Board (policy 2500), Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Curriculum Development (policy 3100), Innovation in Curriculum and Instruction (policy 3110), Lesson Planning (policy 3120), Evaluation of Instructional Programs (policy 3140), School Calendar and Time for Learning (policy 3300), [Students at Risk of Academic Failure \(policy 3405\)](#), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420)

Adopted: