



Parent's Guide to Student Achievement (PGSA)

Based on Parents' Bill of Rights - SB 49; Session Law 2023-106

The objective of the McDowell County Schools is to offer parents and guardians access to information regarding student achievement via the district's Parent's Guide to Student Achievement (PGSA). Should you wish to obtain paper copies of this document and its contents, you can make a request through your child's respective school.

How can my child be promoted to the next grade level?	<p>The following are the relevant State and local requirements for a child to be promoted to the next grade level. The relevant part of this link is found in Part 1A (pp. 15-28) regarding retention, promotion, alternatives to show reading proficiency, etc. Grade Level Promotion</p> <p>Information about the McDowell County School Board of Education's promotion and retention procedures is available here. Information about the Board's graduation requirements is available here.</p>
What is my child learning at school? How can a parent review these materials?	<p>In North Carolina, every school follows a uniform Standard Course of Study established by the State Board of Education. These guidelines outline the knowledge and skills that students are expected to grasp by the conclusion of each grade or course.</p> <p>The NCDPI Office of Academic Standards website contains the standards for various subjects, such as Arts Education, Career Technical Education, Computer Science, English Language Arts, English Language Development, Student Success Standards, Healthful Living, Information and Technology, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and World Language. Local districts, schools, and teachers have the autonomy to decide the instructional methods for these standards, including curriculum, supplementary materials, books, and other resources.</p> <p>McDowell County Schools 2025- 2026 Literacy Intervention Plan</p>

	<p>Instructional Materials Contact your school principal to inquire about examining or buying textbooks and additional teaching materials.</p> <p>In certain instances, principals might be able to furnish parents with physical or digital versions of specific supplementary instructional materials for examination at home. However, for most copyrighted materials, access for inspection may be limited to in-person viewing. Typically, requests to inspect school library materials will be accommodated by notifying parents of designated hours for browsing the library collection. You can find each school's library catalog online at Destiny Discover.</p> <p>Career and Technical Education (CTE) McDowell County Schools provides Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses, enabling students to explore careers and obtain credentials. This link includes information on CTE Career Clusters, Pathways, Course Details, Credentials, and Course Standards.</p> <p>Please visit the McDowell County Schools Career & Technical Education for additional details on the MCS CTE Program.</p>
<p>How will a parent learn about my child's progress in school or with a class?</p>	<p>The McDowell County School System communicates students' progress through various channels, including quarterly report cards, progress reports, and feedback on assignments/tests, including conduct evaluations. Information regarding assessments and the evaluation of student progress in McDowell County Schools is available through the following links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of Student Progress • Students At-Risk of Academic Failure • Testing and Assessment Program <p>Local Assessments: Quarterly report cards detailing grades and attendance are distributed, with specific quarter-end dates outlined in the school calendar. Parents can access attendance, grades, and testing information through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal using their login credentials. For assistance with Infinite Campus access, parents can contact the school data manager.</p> <p>State Assessments:</p>

	<p>Individual Student Reports for end-of-grade/course tests and state assessments (English language proficiency assessment) are accessible in Infinite Campus.</p> <p>In North Carolina, students undergo end-of-grade assessments in reading and math in grades 3-8, with science assessments in grades 5 and 8. High school students take end-of-course assessments in English II, Biology, NC Math 1, and NC Math 3. Grade 10 students take the Pre-ACT, grade 11 students take the ACT, and grade 12 CTE Concentrators take ACT WorkKeys, with results shared by ACT.</p> <p>For kindergarten through third-grade students experiencing reading difficulties, an Individual Reading Plan (IRP) is developed, featuring specific home-use strategies. The plans are shared through North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)-selected mCLASS DIBELS® 8th Edition, a literacy assessment aligned with the Science of Reading. mCLASS results are included with the report card three times a year, corresponding with the first, second, and fourth marking periods.</p>
What are the qualifications of my child's teachers?	<p>NCDPI Licensure Verification: Parents may look up your child's teacher licensure status at this website link to the licensure website.</p> <p>Please contact the Office of Human Resources at 828-652-4535 with any questions you may have regarding an educator's licensure status.</p>
What are the requirements for school enrollment? What are the immunizations needed or recommended for children?	<p>The requirements on enrollment in and eligibility to attend a McDowell County School can be located at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eligibility for school enrollment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State admission requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ GS_115C-364.pdf (ncleg.gov) ● MCS policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Age Requirements for Initial Entry ○ Domicile or Residence Requirement

- [School Assignment](#)
- [Discretionary Admission](#)
- [Tuition for Discretionary Admissions](#)
- [Behavior Standards for Transfer Students](#)
- [Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- Health requirements for school enrollment
 - [Immunization and Health Assessment](#)

Parents and Guardians can enroll students at the following link

- [MCS registration](#)

The following are statutory school entry requirements, this includes required immunizations:

- Immunization records: [GS_130A-155.pdf](#) (ncleg.gov)
- Immunization requirements: [GS_130A-152.pdf](#) (ncleg.gov) (*this law was amended but is not reflected on the current GA page; see [SL2023-134.pdf](#) (ncleg.gov), Section 5.8(e) on page 64")

Information on required health assessments and immunizations for students are available through the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS).

[NCDHHS Immunizations Resource](#)

- [CDC immunization schedule recommendations](#)

	<p>NC DHHS Recommended Immunization Schedules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten Entry Vaccine Requirements • Seventh Grade Entry Vaccine Requirements • Twelfth Grade Entry Vaccine Requirements
<p>How can a parent help their child learn and make progress?</p>	<p>Active involvement in your child's education is crucial for their learning journey. Regularly ask your child about their school day, discussing the topics and assignments they are currently working on.</p> <p>Connect with their teachers to gain insights into your child's progress and inquire about ways to support their learning. Attend various school events to stay connected and learn more about how to assist your child.</p> <p>If possible, create a dedicated home space for homework and studying, and encourage a reading culture by modeling reading behavior. Discuss your child's progress and efforts, being an engaged participant in their education. Maintain open communication with your child's teacher and keep a diverse range of books at home to encourage reading at different levels.</p> <p>Utilize local resources such as homework assistance and refer to parent guides for academic standards. These guides provide information to help parents understand the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and offer practical strategies for implementation at home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Parent Guides • ELD Parent Guide • Math Parent Guides: K-5, 6-8 • Social Studies Parent Guides K-8, 9-12 • Science Parent Guide K-8 • External Implementation Guide - Office of Academic Standards <p>Explore reading and literacy support resources, including the mCLASS® Home Connect -</p>

	<p>Parent Resources, which offers materials for families to practice crucial literacy skills. Home activities, printables, and games to support reading and literacy are also available at North Carolina's Digital Children's Reading Initiative (DCRI). These activities include the following topics, Pre-K-Grade 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Phonemic awareness (2) Phonics (3) Vocabulary (4) Fluency (5) Comprehension (6) Oral language <p>Printable activities will be made available for students who do not have digital access at home and may be provided to all students as a supplement to digital resources. For paper copies, please contact the school principal for DCRI Printables.</p>
<p>How can a parent help their child develop citizenship, social skills, and respect for others?</p>	<p>McDowell County Schools embeds Portrait of a Graduate skills in the classroom and school setting. These durable skills were developed by NCDPI and will support a child's understanding of citizenship, social skills, and respect for others.</p> <p>Grade-level specific resources, including developmentally appropriate milestones, can be found in the following resource repository: NC Portrait of a Graduate - Durable Skills.</p>
<p>How can a parent strengthen communication with the school/teacher?</p>	<p><i>McDowell County Schools</i> uses the following platforms for communication between home/school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Infinite Campus Messenger</i> ○ <i>Class Dojo</i> ○ <i>School Social Media</i> ○ <i>School and District Websites</i> ○ Automated Phone and Text Messaging Policy <p>Parents can view students' grades in Infinite Campus.</p> <p>Parents can access a guide to Canvas LMS here.</p> <p>The following are NCDPI developed parent guides that provide suggestions for building</p>

	<p>strong relationships with your child's teacher and supporting communication between home and school.</p> <p>McDowell County Schools has established a policy promoting effective communication between schools and parents, outlined in the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Schools.</p> <p>Building Strong Relationships with Your Child's Teacher (NC Rethink Education Program) How You Can Use Questions to Support Your Child's Learning (NC Rethink Education Program)</p> <p>Additional general parent guides and parent resource webinar recordings can be found at the following website.</p>
What services are available for parents and their children?	<p>Family Literacy Services: Literacy at Home: The Digital Children's Reading Initiative, developed by NCDPI, presents literacy activities tailored to each grade level, spanning from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. Mentoring: Mentoring services are accessible at specific schools. Parents can get in touch with their child's school to learn more about these services.</p> <p>Tutoring: NCVPS EdVantage Tutoring offers virtual statewide wraparound support to middle and high school students in NC public schools. Tutoring is available in Math, Science, and ELA and is offered via a personalized partnership with district/school leadership to best meet the needs of selected students each semester.</p>
What are opportunities for parents to participate in school?	<p>McDowell County Schools offers avenues for parents to actively participate in their child's education. This involvement is outlined in the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Policy for Title I Schools.</p> <p>For information on existing parent and family engagement opportunities under Title I, please reach out to your child's school and explore the information on MCS Volunteer webpage.</p>

<p>What are the rigorous academic programs available to my child? How can I learn more about them?</p>	<p>McDowell County Schools offers a variety of options for students to pursue their interests and skills at their academic level.</p> <p>Career and Technical Education (CTE): NC has made a significant investment in developing students and programs to meet the needs of the future workforce. Through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, Public Schools offer opportunities for students to develop career awareness in 5th grade, explore careers in grades 6-8, and experience leadership, career development, and career-aligned content in grades 9-12.</p> <p>In McDowell County Schools, students can explore these career pathways from grades 6-8:</p> <p>Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, Architecture & Construction Arts, A/V Technology & Communications, Business Management & Administration Education and Training Finance Health Science, Hospitality & Tourism, Human Services Information Technology Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security Manufacturing Marketing Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Transportation Distribution & Logistics</p> <p>In McDowell County Schools, students are able to experience leadership, career development, and career-aligned content from grades 9-12:</p> <p>Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Architecture & Construction Arts, A/V Technology & Communications Business Management & Administration</p>
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Education & Training
Finance
Health Science
Hospitality & Tourism
Human Services
Information Technology
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security
Manufacturing
Marketing
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
Transportation Distribution & Logistics

For more information on CTE in NC, and to learn about Career Clusters, Pathways, and Course Information, Standards, and applicable Credentials, please visit: [Course Management System](#).

Career Development Plan for Students

A Career Development Plan (CDP) helps students focus on and shape their career goals. It starts in middle school and grows with them through high school. Each year, students review and update their CDP to keep it valid. A CDP is helpful because it gives students a clear plan and helps them make informed choices about their future. For additional information, click [here](#).

In our district, there are the following programs available that are more rigorous and challenging than the standard content for students:

Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted (AIG):

In NC, school districts must identify and serve academically or intellectually gifted (AIG) K-12 students. These are students who are performing or have the potential of performing at high levels of accomplishment in intellectual and/or specific academic areas, such as reading and/or math, compared with other students of their age or in their grade level, experience, or environment.

The McDowell County Schools Local AIG Plan outlines specific opportunities for differentiated, rigorous instruction and accelerated programs. You can find the plan by clicking [here](#).

McDowell County Schools has developed an [AIG program brochure](#) to help parents better understand the AIG program. This describes how students will be identified and served across grades K-12. Click [here](#) for additional parent information.

In McDowell County Schools, students are often provided the following services:
(*adapt as needed*)

- Differentiated curriculum and instruction with flexible student groups;
- Accelerated opportunities (subject and/or grade acceleration, credit by demonstrated mastery (CDM), AP, and dual enrollment courses;
- Enrichment experiences, which may be during the school day or beyond, and maybe within the regular calendar year or may include summer opportunities; and
- Other opportunities for extension of the content standard.

AIG personnel may provide AIG students services or within the regular classroom by teachers trained to meet the needs of gifted students.

Contact the district AIG Coordinator with questions, *Michelle Baker*, at michelle.baker@mcdowell.k12.nc.us.

Honors Level Courses:

In McDowell County Schools, students have access to a variety of honors-level courses in high school. These courses are available in the course catalog located at your child's school.

Honors-level courses typically have a faster pace than standard-level courses. They offer additional rigor, complexity, and creativity than standard-level courses.

Career and College Promise (CCP):

McDowell County Schools partners with McDowell Technical Community College to offer dual enrollment opportunities through the CCP program. If your high school student qualifies, students may earn high school credit by completing community college coursework.

CCP courses may be taken in the College Transfer or Career and Technical Education pathway. These courses count for both high school and college credit. Tuition is free for families.

To learn more about this program, contact the school counselor or principal. Additional information is available on the [NCDPI CCP website](#).

CIHS/Early College:

McDowell County Schools also partners with McDowell Technical Community College to offer McDowell Academy for Innovation and McDowell Early College.

McDowell Academy for Innovation and McDowell Early College are choice schools for students and families. It is an opportunity for the students to earn both a high school diploma and an associate's degree and/or CTE credentials at the same time. Students can stay for an additional fifth year to complete their credentials before graduating from high school.

Visit [McDowell Academy for Innovation](#) and/or [McDowell Early College](#) for more information.

Additional information is available on the [NCDPI CIHS Website](#)

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses:

Advanced Placement (AP) is a program developed by the College Board to offer college-level curricula and examinations to high school students.

In NC, 40 Advanced Placement courses are offered in public high schools. McDowell High School offers 13 AP courses.

As stated in [State Board policy](#), several AP courses satisfy NC students' graduation requirements.

AP exams are free for NC public high school students enrolled in these courses. *If a student registers for an exam late, there will be a late fee.*

Colleges and universities may likely offer college credit for these courses if your child scores a 3 or above on the exam. All of the colleges in the UNC System offer credit.

Please see the high school school counselor for additional information.

	<p>More information is available on the NCDPI AP website.</p> <p>More information is available on the NCDPI Advanced Coursework website.</p> <p>NCVPS: North Carolina Virtual Public School (NCVPS) is NC's state supplemental program and leader in online education, providing inclusive learning opportunities for students across the state. Founded in 2007 with a strong commitment to ensuring quality education for all students, regardless of location, NCVPS has over 16 years of experience serving diverse learners.</p> <p>Students may enroll in NCVPS courses for a variety of reasons. Work with your school counselor if you are interested in taking NCVPS courses.</p> <p>Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM): McDowell County Schools offers opportunities for students to earn credit for a high school course without enrolling in the course. All high school courses, with a few exceptions noted by the state, are available for students to try CDM. There are two phases of assessments that a student must go through to earn credit for the course.</p> <p>Contact your <i>AIG Specialist</i> or school counselor for more information.</p> <p>Governor's School: Each summer, NC Governor's School offers a unique opportunity for high-achieving rising juniors and seniors to learn with their peers from across the state in a 4-week residential program at two college campus sites.</p> <p>For more information on eligibility and the application process, contact <i>your AIG Specialist</i> or visit the Governor's School website, www.ncgovschool.org.</p>
<p>What school choices are available for my child?</p>	<p>Students in public school districts are assigned to certain schools based on a local assignment plan approved by the Local Board of Education.</p>

- [School Assignment](#)

McDowell County Schools offers these additional school choice options for students/families:

- Eastfield Global Magnet School
- Foothills Community School
- McDowell Academy for Innovation
- McDowell Early College

There are other options for families to choose for their education:

McDowell Connect (Grades 7-12):

McDowell County Schools will partner with families wishing to homeschool by providing (a minimum of 2) educational courses at no cost to families. For more information, contact Adam Wiseman at adam.wiseman@mcdowell.k12.nc.us.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are public schools of choice that are authorized by the State Board of Education and operated by independent non-profit boards of directors. State and local tax dollars are the primary funding sources for charter schools, which have open enrollment and cannot discriminate in admissions, associate with any religion or religious group, or charge tuition. Charter schools operate with freedom from many of the regulations that govern district schools, but charter schools are held accountable through the State assessment and accountability system.

If you are interested in NC charter schools, visit [NC charter school](#) for information, resources, and contacts.

Nonpublic Education and Scholarship Grants

Nonpublic education is overseen by the [NC Department of Administration](#).

For a list of private schools, visit this [NC Private Schools](#).

For information on how to start a homeschool, visit [Homeschool Information](#).

	Scholarship grant programs/voucher information is available via the NC State Education Assistance Authority .
What rights do students with disabilities have based on the law?	<p>For students suspected of or identified with a disability by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the following links provide important information regarding the procedural safeguards available to ensure a free, appropriate public education.</p> <p> Parent Rights Handbook Parent Rights Handbook (Spanish) IDEA Dispute Resolution Special Education Surrogate Parents Project Child Find </p> <p>Parents of children aged two years old or younger who may be in need of special education services should contact the Children's Development Services Agency at (828) 433-517; for PreK-12: 828-652-6580</p> <p>Parents of children aged three or older who are not yet eligible to enter kindergarten should call the MCS Exceptional Children's Office at 828-652-6580 or access more information here.</p> <p>Parents of children in kindergarten through 12th grade should contact their child's school.</p>
What is the contact information for the schools and district office?	<p>Parents and guardians can contact McDowell County Schools at 828-652-4535.</p> <p> MCS School Websites MCS Directory </p>
What are some resources to support my child's health and well-being? What immunizations are required, and when should they be scheduled?	<p>Information on required health assessments and immunizations for students is available through the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS)</p> <p> Immunizations Health Assessment Annual Health Assessment and Immunization Compliance Reporting </p>

Influenza is a virus spread from an infected person to the nose or throat of another. Influenza can cause fever, sore throat, chills, coughs, headache, and muscle aches. A yearly vaccination is available.

Meningococcal disease is a serious illness caused by bacteria. It is an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings that can cause blood infections. The vaccine is required for individuals entering 7th grade or by the age of 12.

For more information on these and other vaccines, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/vaccines-diseases.html>

Short-Term Counseling Services

Every MCS student has access to small group or individual counseling services to address issues impacting students in the school environment. Contact your school's counselor or social worker to inquire about short-term services provided by one of these specialized instruction support staff members.

School-Based Mental Health Services

To address student mental health and well-being, the School-Based Mental Health program offers evidenced-based mental health services to students. The program is a collaboration between MCS and local mental health agencies. These services seek to improve students' emotional well-being and enhance their ability to access and benefit from instruction.

Click [here](#) for additional partnering provider information.

Click [here](#) for a list of providers by school.

Service Fees

Mental health agencies provide outpatient therapy and bill the student's insurance for all services rendered. Providers will verify insurance benefits and review all projected fees with the guardian before any services occur.