



July 19, 2012

During the 2011-12 school year, the United States Department of Education (USED) invited each State educational agency (SEA) to request flexibility on behalf of itself, its local educational agencies, and schools, in order to better focus on improving student learning and increasing the quality of instruction. Last month, the North Carolina Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Request was approved by USED.

This opportunity will provide educators and State and local leaders with flexibility regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. Additionally, states are required to identify three specific categories of schools (Priority, Focus, and Reward) under methodologies approved within the Flexibility Request.

I am writing to let you know that Turning Point Academy has been identified as a Priority School by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Priority Schools are identified as a result of the achievement level of the “all students” group in terms of proficiency (reading/math) over a number of years or, for secondary schools, having a graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years.

Priority Schools are required to implement interventions aligned with the following ESEA “Turnaround Principles”:

- Strong leadership
- Effective teachers and improved instruction
- Expanded learning time
- Strengthened instructional program
- Use of data
- School safety and discipline
- Family and community engagement

We continue to strive for improvements in student achievement. Our students do not graduate from Turning Point Academy; however, we strive to support their growth so that they may return and graduate from their home school. The vision for Turning Point Academy is to be a redirection program designed to meet the educational needs of at-risk students through therapeutic intervention services, behavior and academic interventions, and prevention opportunities.

We have set the following goals for Turning Point Academy this year:

- For high school, 82.5% of students proficient in algebra I and 86% of students proficient in EOC English
- For middle school, 83.7% of students proficient in EOG math and 73% of students proficient EOG reading
- Average daily attendance will increase to 85%.

Our students need to experience higher achievement levels, but it will require hard work on the part of staff, students and families. Here are some strategies Turning Point Academy will be implementing:

- Utilizing in-school math and English tutors for specialized instruction with both middle and high school students
- Utilizing a technology facilitator to facilitate and enhance the use of instructional technology by all teachers

Parent involvement is at the heart of our school improvement efforts. Here are some ways you can help:

- Make sure that both you and your student are aware of academic expectations set for your student this school year. A list of learning objectives in student-friendly language is available from your student's teacher(s).
- Call Angela Millender (high school) or Eric Edwards (middle school) if you have questions or concerns about your student or to set up an appointment to meet with a school staff member who will be working with your student.
- Make sure that your student is prepared and attends school each day.
- Monitor your student's homework.
- Monitor and limit the amount of time your student spends watching television and playing video games.
- Monitor the progress your student is making and attend meetings with your student's teacher(s).
- Volunteer.
- Participate in monthly parent workshops and activities.

Sounds like a lot, doesn't it? Preparing our students so that they can succeed against 21st century demands isn't easy. But it is essential. Here are some resources available to help:

- Turning Point Academy parent advocate, Sonja Berry (980) 343-5231
- High school guidance counselor, Angela Millender (980) 343-5231
- Middle school guidance counselor, Eric Edwards (980) 343-5231
- Graduation requirements: www.ncpublicschools.org/gradrequirements/
- K-12 standards in academic subjects: www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/
- State student achievement test results: www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/
- N.C. School Report Cards: www.ncreportcards.org/

We're excited about this school year and are working to make it a success for your student. Already, we have:

- Recruited four tutors, two HS and MS English tutors and two HS and MS math tutors
- Recruited a math facilitator to strengthen our math teaching core
- Recruited a technology facilitator to support our computer labs and all instructional technology
- Planned the purchase of additional Promethean boards (interactive white boards) so that all core classes have a Promethean board in the classroom.

We look forward to seeing your student on August 27 at 9:15 am for the first day of school.

Sincerely,

Valoria Burch
Principal