



*from* the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee  
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## **News – for Immediate Release – April 8, 2014**

*Editor's Note: The 2020 Vision release occurred at Tuesday, April 8 at 4 PM in the Statehouse Auditorium. The release was followed by a viewing of "When the Bough Breaks", a documentary on literacy produced and directed by Bud Ferillo.*

## **SC not ready for success in a global economy**

***SC students making incremental progress toward 2020 Vision goals but many students not prepared for success in college and careers***

**Columbia** – The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) today presented its annual report on the state's effort to ensure every student receives a high-quality education that will prepare them for future success. The report shows that on measures of reading proficiency, on-time graduation, postsecondary success, and schools rated *At Risk*, South Carolina schools and students have made progress but the rate of improvement will not prepare all students to be successful for the global economy.

Barbara Hairfield, Chair of the EOC's Public Awareness Subcommittee, presented South Carolina's progress and rankings on national and state measures. She pointed out the progress SC's schools and students are making in some areas. However, the jobs of 2020 in South Carolina and beyond will require graduates who are problem-solvers and entrepreneurs.

"Currently, 41 percent of students attending two-year colleges need remediation in English and Math," stated Hairfield. "Students are not prepared for success in postsecondary education or for the future careers because they often lack the reading and math skills to succeed in postsecondary education and careers."

The 2020 Vision, established by the EOC in 2009, states that "by the year 2020, all students in South Carolina will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete successfully in the global economy, participate in a democratic society, and contribute positively as members of families and communities." Progress toward the 2020 Vision is measured using four key education indicators: student reading proficiency, on-time graduation rates, postsecondary success of students, and schools rated *At Risk*, the lowest rating in the state accountability system.

### **Reading proficiency**

A strong foundation in reading is one of the highest predictors of individual success. The 2020 Vision targets 95 percent of students scoring on grade level at grades 3 and 8 on Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) Reading and 95 percent scoring *Basic and above* on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) at grades 4 and 8.

- On the 2013 NAEP reading assessment, **only 60 percent of SC 4th graders scored *Basic and Above*** down from 61 percent in 2011.

- **Only 73 percent of SC 8th graders scored *Basic and Above* in 2013, up from 72 percent in 2011.**
- **2013 PASS results show only 83 percent of 3rd graders and 67 percent of 8th graders reading on grade level.**

“The EOC continues to be committed to bringing about systemic reform so that students who struggle to read have the resources they need,” stated Hairfield. Teachers need to be better prepared to help diagnose and intervene when young people have problems.”

Following the release of the 2020 Vision, Hairfield introduced the premiere of a documentary, “When the Bough Breaks”, which addresses the state of literacy in South Carolina. The documentary reports on the continuum of literacy in the life of a child and the consequences of not placing a focus on the language development and reading skills of children. The documentary is produced and directed by Bud Ferillo.

Hairfield pointed out recent legislative efforts that have sought to better prepare teachers and provide supports and interventions for students so they aren’t leaving the K-12 system frustrated and ill-prepared.

### **On-time graduation and career and college readiness**

As part of the 2020 Vision, the EOC established a goal that 88.3 percent of students graduate from high school on time. Currently, 77.5 percent of students achieve the goal of graduating within four years, up from 74.9 percent last year.

“We are having more success graduating students within four years,” said Hairfield. “Although the progress we are making needs to be commended, we need to ask ourselves if we are educating and preparing students with the skills to be successful in a global economy. By 2020, 65 percent of all jobs will require post-secondary education, training, and/or industry certification.”

Additionally, 67 percent of high school completers in South Carolina are enrolling in two- or four-year colleges, up from 66 percent in 2011.

Hairfield added that while these numbers are encouraging, we are falling short of meeting the goal of 85 percent by 2020. She added that options such as dual enrollment could help students by allowing them to begin postsecondary coursework before leaving high school.

### **Underperforming schools**

The 2020 Vision addresses underperforming schools by stating that no schools will be rated *At Risk* by 2020. While acknowledging success in the decline of the number of schools receiving the lowest ranking in the state school accountability system, Hairfield urged a transformation within these schools, many of which have been underperforming for years.

“It is encouraging that we are seeing a decline in the number of schools rated *At Risk*,” stated Hairfield. However, 47 schools still remain in that category. More importantly, nine percent of students in the system attend a school rated either *At Risk* or *Below Average*. We must take a look at leadership and commitment to students in these schools and communities; something transformative must occur to turn these schools around. Recruiting and retaining highly effective administrators and teachers in these schools should be paramount.”

### **Commitment to students**

An educator, Hairfield reminded everyone of the overall goal of the system – to help young people succeed in school and beyond. She asked for a renewed commitment to the 2020 Vision and preparing students for what comes after they leave high school.

“We owe it to students to prepare them for the world and the careers of their dreams,” said Hairfield. “We can achieve these goals, but it will take hard work and the willingness to change the system.”

*The SC Education Oversight Committee is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected leaders. Created in 1998, the committee is dedicated to reporting facts, measuring change, and promoting progress within South Carolina’s education system.*

A pdf copy of “Are SC Students Prepared for 2020?: A Progress Report on the 2020 Vision” is available online at [www.eoc.sc.gov](http://www.eoc.sc.gov).

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