



# At a Glance

## Increasing Rigor In SC Performance Expectations March 15, 2007

### Background of SC Performance Expectations

By the year 2010. South Carolina's student achievement will be ranked in the top half of states nationally. To achieve this we must become one of the five fastest improving systems in the country.

- The Education Accountability Act of 1998 calls for an accountability system to “push schools and students toward higher performance. . . the standards must be reflective of the highest level of academic skills with the rigor necessary to improve the curriculum and instruction in South Carolina’s schools so that students are encouraged to learn at unprecedented levels and must be reflective of the highest level of academic skills at each grade level;”
- The General Assembly specifies that schools are to be rated on performance on the state standards-based assessments and the school or district performance was to be reported using these terms: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average and Unsatisfactory. Numerical values ranging from 1.0 to 5.0 are associated the ratings terms
- Through a series of public focus groups in 1999 and 2000, the EOC verified the intent that the term average meant *national average*;
- Performance levels on state assessments were gauged against performance on national assessments (e.g., NAEP and college admissions tests) to interpolate “national average;”
- After concurring with educators and the public, the EOC agreed to stagger increases in the values associated with each school or district rating term over seven years, beginning in 2004.

### Increasing Expectations and Performance

As state standards-based assessments were developed and implemented the tests included in a school or district’s rating changed. Elementary and middle schools have been impacted by the addition of science and social studies and the high schools have been impacted, first by the change from the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) to the High School Assessment Program (HSAP) and second, by the use of end-of-course assessments and graduation rate. The chart below details the changes in expectations, actual performance and the criteria used.

FISCAL YEAR	RANGE FOR AVERAGE RATING	ACTUAL STATE-WIDE INDEX	CRITERIA	
			Elementary – Middle	High Schools
2000	-----	2.71	PACT ELA & Math	Not applicable
2001	2.6-2.9	2.89	PACT ELA & Math	BSAP, LIFE Scholarships
2002	2.6-2.9	2.93	PACT ELA & Math	BSAP, LIFE Scholarships
2003	2.6-2.9	2.96	PACT ELA & Math	BSAP, LIFE Scholarships & graduation rate
2004	2.7-3.0	3.08	PACT ELA & Math	HSAP, LIFE Scholarships & graduation rate
2005	2.8-3.1	3.09	PACT ELA & Math Science and Social Studies	HSAP, LIFE scholarships & graduation rate
2006	2.9-3.2	3.05	PACT ELA & Math Science and Social Studies	HSAP, LIFE scholarships & graduation rate
2007	3.0-3.3		PACT ELA & Math Science and Social Studies	HSAP, end-of-course tests & graduation rate
2008	3.1-3.4		PACT ELA & Math Science and Social Studies	HSAP, end-of-course tests & graduation rate
2009	3.2-3.5		PACT ELA & Math Science and Social Studies	HSAP, end-of-course tests & graduation rate

### Support for Improvements in Performance

Performance doesn't improve just because legislation is enacted. Performance improves with focus, assistance, professional development and the use of new strategies to address the needs of young people. Over the last seven years the General Assembly has invested in its accountability system and school improvements through the following major appropriations and actions:

Fiscal Year	Selected Appropriations		Other Actions (initial change year noted)
2000	EAA	\$ 35.5 million	Instructional materials funding increased Parent Involvement in Their Children's Education Act passes National Board incentive begins
2001	EAA	63.2 million	LIFE Scholarship program begins (! percent mid-year reduction imposed)
2002	EAA	105 million	EOC honors "closing the gap" schools Red Carpet Schools gives first awards (6.52 percent mid-year reduction imposed)
2003	EAA Lottery	116 million 32 million	Districts granted flexibility among funds. (8.73 percent mid-year reduction imposed)
2004	EAA Lottery	114 million 40 million	Teacher supply materials funded SC receives Reading First grant (1 percent mid-year reduction imposed)
2005	EAA Lottery	118 million 48.5 million	Social Studies standards revised Educ & Econ Development Act becomes law
2006	EAA Lottery	123 million 48.5 million	Act 254 changes testing program Science standards revised EFA reductions restored
2007	EAA Lottery EEDA CDEPP	139.3 million 48.5 million 15.8 million 23 million	ELA & Math standards revised SC receives Teacher Incentive Grant Virtual school piloted 4K program piloted

#### Final Thoughts

- In 2006 40.2 percent of South Carolina's students attended schools rated Excellent or Good; 9.5 percent attended schools rated Unsatisfactory
- In 2006, elementary and middle schools exhibited flat or declining performance in each of the content areas measured on PACT. High schools performance declined on three of four criteria.
- SC's target for national performance can be accomplished; it allows for realistic ranges of student performance. A middle school with performance equally distributed among the four levels of student performance (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) would be rated Average in 2009. A school with 25 percent of students scoring below basic, 12.5 percent of students scoring advanced and other students divided between basic and proficient, would earn an Average rating in 2009.

**And ultimately, SC's teachers, students and families should be thanked for the progress the state is accomplishing.**

**For additional information, contact the EOC at (803) 734-6148.  
Analyses of student performance over time and reviews of ratings can be found online at  
[www.sceoc.org](http://www.sceoc.org)**