

Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee

Recommendations

Regarding the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program

Recommendation 1: The criteria used to evaluate Palmetto Gold and Silver Award winners based on the release of the 2012 state report cards should be amended accordingly. Regarding schools with steady growth, only schools that have a growth rating of Good or better for two consecutive years would receive a Palmetto Silver award. Schools that have a growth index of Average or better for three years would not be eligible for a Palmetto Silver Award.

Since March of 2012 the staff of the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education, has reviewed the criteria for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program. On May 21, 2012 the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee also considered three alternatives for amending the criteria, which are in the attached report, as well as input from instructional leaders and superintendents in the state. The Subcommittee delayed any action on changes until this fall.

The number of schools qualifying for the program has increased substantially. In 2011-12 there were 852 schools or 72 percent of all schools that received a Palmetto Gold or Silver award as compared to 551 in 2010-11 and 403 in 2009-10. Upon analyzing the program's criteria and the eligibility of schools, it was determined that the reason for the dramatic increase was due to one predominant factor: schools qualifying due to steady growth, having obtained an Average or better growth rating for three consecutive years. There were 312 schools who received a Palmetto Silver Award in 2011-12 for the sole reason that they had "steady" growth of Average or better for three years along with an absolute rating of Below Average or better. Only one school earned a Palmetto Silver for having "steady" growth of Good or better for two years without having significant academic performance or for closing the achievement gap.

Schools that Received Palmetto Silver Award in 2011-12
ONLY for "Steady" Growth

School Type	Three Years of Average Growth or Better
Elementary	223
Middle	89
High	0
TOTAL:	312

Recommendation 2: The Accountability Division of the EOC will analyze the results of the 2012 state report cards and propose alternative criteria for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award Program to the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee for the 2013 state report card release. Significant changes to the Palmetto Gold and Silver criteria should be consistent with the implementation of the new value table and indices for determining growth ratings for the 2013 state report card ratings.

The EOC received a report in February 2012 that analyzed the growth indices used to assign growth ratings under the state accountability system. The analysis concluded that an unintended consequence of the current value table was to increase the correlation or dependency of the absolute and growth indices. Both absolute and growth indices were also related to socio-economic status as measured by the poverty index. When both measures are related to the poverty status of the school or district, they are no longer providing separate information regarding the educational status and progress of schools or districts. Based on its consideration of the alternative models and the simulations of their outcomes along with public input, the EOC adopted an alternative value table and indices for determining growth ratings for state report card ratings in 2013.