

**EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**Agenda  
Monday, April 9, 2012  
1:00 p.m.  
433 Blatt Building**

- |      |  |                |  |
|------|--|----------------|--|
| I.   | Welcome and Introductions  | Mr. Robinson   |  |
| II.  | Approval of the Minutes of February 13, 2012   | Mr. Robinson   |  |
| III. | Key Constituency<br>Communities In Schools   |                |  |
|      | Jane Riley-Gambrell<br>Executive Director, The Charleston Area   |                |  |
|      | Terry Linder<br>Executive Director, The Midlands   |                |  |
|      | Susie Smith<br>Executive Director, Greenville  |                | Neil C. Robinson, Jr.<br>CHAIR<br>Barbara B. Hairfield<br>VICE CHAIR   |
| IV.  | Subcommittee Reports   |                | Terry S. Brown   |
| A.   | Academic Standards and Assessments<br>Action: Calculation of Growth Ratings for Elementary<br>Middle Schools   | Dr. Merck      | Dennis Drew<br>Mike Fair<br>Nikki Haley  |
| B.   | EIA and Improvement Mechanisms<br>Action: Innovation Initiative Project<br>Action: 2010-11 Teacher Loan Program Report<br>Action: 2011 Parent Survey Report<br>Information: Fiscal Year 2012-13 General Appropriation Bill | Mr. Drew       | R. Wesley Hayes, Jr.<br>Alex Martin<br>Daniel B. Merck<br>Joseph H. Neal<br>Andrew S. Patrick<br>J. Roland Smith |
| C.   | Public Awareness   | Mrs. Hairfield | Ann Marie Taylor<br>John Warner  |
| V.   | Adjournment  | Mr. Robinson   | David Whittemore<br>Mick Zais  |

**SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the Meeting**  
**February 13, 2012**

Members Present: Mr. Robinson, Mrs. Hairfield, Mr. Brown; Mr. Drew, Senator Fair, Senator Hayes, Mr. Martin, Dr. Merck, Mrs. Taylor; Mr. Whittemore and Dr. Zais

- I. Welcome and Introductions: Mr. Robinson welcomed members and guests to the meeting.
- II. Approval of the Minutes of December 12, 2011: The minutes of December 12, 2011 were approved as distributed.
- III. Key Constituencies:

Mrs. Betty Bagley, Superintendent of Anderson School District 5, and instructional leaders from her district provided an overview of the district's choice programs and actions taken to date to prepare for implementation of the Common Core State Standards in the curriculum and teaching. Participating in the presentation were Tripp Dukes, Assistant Superintendent of instruction; Amy Hawkins, Director of Middle and Secondary Education; and Cindy Martin, Director of Early Childhood and Elementary Education. Mrs. Bagley first described the choice options available to students in Anderson 5. Each school in the district has a professional development theme that serves as the vehicle to deliver curriculum. The district is operating with a curriculum blue print and a timeline for implementation of Common Core that begin in the fall of 2010 when district staff began to study the new state standards. Between January and March 2011, the district provided initial professional development for teachers. In March 2011 the district developed a plan for infusing the new standards into all curricula because of the emphasis on instructional text. In the summer of 2011, the district provided additional professional development in English language arts and mathematics and professional development focused on literacy in science and social studies. The professional development included principals and administrators. The professional development continued in the fall of 2011. Today the district is also examining information provided by other states to assist the district in "cross-walking" the prior ELA and mathematics standards with the new state standards to prepare for the bridge year, 2013-14.

The specific timeline adopted by Anderson 5 for implementation is as follows. For the current school year, 2011-12, Anderson 5 implemented the new standards in kindergarten, grade 3, and grades 6, 7 and 8. In 2012-13 the district will implement the standards in grades 1 and 4. In school year 2013-14, the standards will be implemented in grades 2 and 5. Questions still remain concerning the development of a fourth math class that must be operational by 2014-15, the first year of full implementation statewide.

Mr. Drew asked how transportation was handled with the choice options. Senator Fair asked for clarification between changes in the writing standards from an emphasis on narrative to persuasive writing. Mrs. Taylor emphasized the need for more collaboration across districts and more leadership at the state level in assisting districts with transition to the new standards. When asked about the costs that Anderson 5 has absorbed with the writing of curriculum, Mrs. Bagley estimated that since 2001 the district has expended approximately \$2.0 million. Dr. Zais applauded the entrepreneurship of

Anderson 5 and the choice program options as demonstrating innovation and transformation from the bottom up. Both Mrs. Hairfield and Mr. Martin asked questions about the inability of smaller districts without the infrastructure or human capital to provide their teachers with such professional development and curriculum options. Mrs. Bagley stated that the door is always open to other districts for support.

#### IV. Subcommittee Reports

The committee then turned to the Subcommittee reports.

- A. Academic Standards and Assessments: Dr. Merck noted that the cyclical review of the science standards is underway with the EOC staff in the process of forming three panels to review the standards. He also noted that the information report regarding the growth indices will be the basis for having simulations performed to determine if the criteria for determining the growth ratings should be amended for the 2012 school and district report cards.
- B. EIA and Improvement Mechanisms: Mr. Drew called upon Mrs. Barton to give an update on the Fiscal Year 2012-13 EIA budget. Mrs. Barton notified the committee that many of the EOC's recommendations were included in Governor Haley's Executive Budget. She also communicated that the full Ways and Means Committee will complete its deliberations on the budget during the week of February 20.
- C. Public Awareness: Mrs. Hairfield reported that the subcommittee will pursue a public awareness campaign with the Clare Morris Agency to assist staff in promoting the 2020 Vision and in engaging stakeholders in actions to meet the goals of the 2020 Vision. Such action includes the new page on the EOC website designed with resources to help parents, educators and community/business leaders.

Having no other business, the EOC adjourned.

# EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

## SUBCOMMITTEE: Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee

DATE: April 9, 2012

### REPORT/RECOMMENDATION

Calculation of the Growth Index and Growth Rating for Elementary and Middle Schools for the Annual State Report Card

### PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

Sections 59-6-100 and 59-6-110 require the EOC to monitor the development and implementation of the Education Accountability Act.

Section 59-18-900 also require the EOC to “determine the criteria for and establish five academic performance ratings of excellent, good, average, below average, and school/district at-risk” for the ratings of absolute and growth performance.

### CRITICAL FACTS

The current value table was adopted in 2009 when PASS replaced PACT as the statewide assessment. . At the time the value table was created, two years of PASS data were not available to explore growth indices that could be created. Having now three years of PASS data, the EOC staff wanted to determine if, in fact, the absolute rating and the growth rating were distinctive measurements, one of absolute performance and one of growth. According to Section 59-18-120 (8), “growth means the rating a school will receive based on longitudinally matched student data comparing current performance to the previous year’s for the purpose of determining student academic growth.” Absolute performance” means the rating a school will receive based on the percentage of students meeting standard on the state’s standards based assessment. Absolute measures provide summary information about the achievement levels of students within a school or district with respect to academic standards. Growth measures provide summary information regarding the progress students make throughout an academic year.

### TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

January 23, 2012 – ASA Subcommittee received information on the relationship between the absolute rating and the growth rating for elementary and middle schools

February 13, 2012 – Full EOC received as information the report on the relationship between the absolute rating and the growth rating

March 19, 2012 ASA Subcommittee reviewed three alternative value tables to replace the current value table along with public comments from school district officials and teachers. The Subcommittee is proposing to replace the current value table.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

**Cost:** No fiscal impact to EOC

### ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

### ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

## Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee Recommendation

### Growth Rating Calculation for Schools Enrolling Students in Grades Three through Eight

The EOC staff provided to the EOC and to the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee the following:

1. A report documenting that the current calculation of the growth index is highly correlated with the absolute index of elementary and middle schools. In essence, the absolute rating and the growth rating are not independent measures. By law, Section 59-18-120 (8), "growth means the rating a school will receive based on longitudinally matched student data comparing current performance to the previous year's for the purpose of determining student academic growth." Section 59-18-120 (7) states that the absolute performance means the rating a school will receive based on the percentage of students meeting standard on the state's standards based assessment.

2. The Subcommittee reviewed alternative value tables to use in the calculation of the growth index. From 2002 through 2008 growth indices were obtained by taking the difference between the current year's absolute index and the previous year's absolute index. Beginning in 2009 growth indices were obtained using a value table method, in which individual students are awarded points based on their achievement level in the current and previous year. The value table methodology was suggested by an EOC National Advisory Committee. In a simple visual presentation, a value table presents the rewards that are awarded to students based on their academic performance at an initial point in time and their performance at a second point in time. The current value table is below. At the time this value table was created, two years of PASS data were not available to explore growth indices that could be created.

Current Value Table

Year One (Pre-test)	Year Two (Post-test)				
	Not Met 1	Not Met 2	Met	Exemplary 4	Exemplary 5
Exemplary 5	40	60	80	90	100
Exemplary 4	50	70	90	100	110
Met	60	80	100	110	120
Not Met 2	70	90	110	120	130
Not Met 1	80	100	120	130	140

Based on its consideration of the alternative models and the simulations of their outcomes along with public input, the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee adopted the following recommendations for the revision of the Growth Rating calculation for elementary and middle schools beginning with the release of the 2013 report card:

1. Adopt the Following Alternative Value Table

Students scoring Not Met 1 or Not Met 2 receive 20 additional points for increasing their achievement by one level rather than 10 points as in alternative 2. Further increases in achievement are rewarded by an additional 10 points.

Recommended Alternative Value Table

Year One (Pre-test)	Year Two (Post-test)				
	Not Met 1	Not Met 2	Met	Exemplary 4	Exemplary 5
Exemplary 5	60	70	80	90	100
Exemplary 4	70	80	90	100	110
Met	80	90	100	110	120
Not Met 2	90	100	120	130	140
Not Met 1	100	120	130	140	150

2. An index, a number, is used to determine whether a school's growth rating is Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average or At-Risk. The Subcommittee recommended that, upon adopting the alternative value table, the indices would be established so that the distribution of report card ratings for 2013 would reflect the 2010 distribution of growth ratings for elementary and middle schools.

Growth Rating	Range of Indices
Excellent	103.07 and higher
Good	101.65 to 103.06
Average	99.88 to 101.64
Below Average	99.26 to 99.87
At Risk	99.25 and lower

Estimated Percentage of Schools with Growth Rate of:

	Elementary & Middle		Elementary		Middle	
	2010	Alternative	2010	Alternative	2010	Alternative
Excellent	10.48	10.81	13.25	12.26	10.33	7.77
Good	29.42	29.26	31.34	27.42	25.67	33.11
Average	46.42	46.40	43.94	43.87	48.33	51.69
Below Average	8.33	8.30	8.72	10.00	9.67	4.73
At Risk	5.29	5.24	2.75	6.45	6.00	2.70

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Members, Education Oversight Committee

**FROM:** EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee

**DATE:** March 21, 2012

At its March 19, 2012 meeting, the members of the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee unanimously approved the following proposal that is hereby submitted to the full EOC for its approval.

**The Education Oversight committee will undertake a project to explore innovative ways to transform the assessment and delivery of public education in South Carolina that will increase student academic achievement.**

Statutory Authority:

SECTION 59-6-110. Duties of Accountability Division.

The division must examine the public education system to ensure that the system and its components and the EIA programs are functioning for the enhancement of student learning. The division will recommend the repeal or modification of statutes, policies, and rules that deter school improvement. The division must provide annually its findings and recommendations in a report to the Education Oversight Committee no later than February first. The division is to conduct in-depth studies on implementation, efficiency, and the effectiveness of academic improvement efforts and:

- (1) monitor and evaluate the implementation of the state standards and assessment;
- (2) oversee the development, establishment, implementation, and maintenance of the accountability system;
- (3) monitor and evaluate the functioning of the public education system and its components, programs, policies, and practices and report annually its findings and recommendations in a report to the commission no later than February first of each year; and
- (4) perform other studies and reviews as required by law.

Neil C. Robinson, Jr.  
CHAIR

Barbara B. Hairfield  
VICE CHAIR

Terry S. Brown

Dennis Drew

Mike Fair

Nikki Haley

R. Wesley Hayes, Jr.

Alex Martin

Daniel B. Merck

Joseph H. Neal

Andrew S. Patrick

J. Roland Smith

Ann Marie Taylor

John Warner

David Whittemore

Mick Zais

Melanie D. Barton  
INTERIM EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

The responsibilities of the division do not include fiscal audit functions or funding recommendations except as they relate to accountability. It is not a function of this division to draft legislation and neither the director nor any other employee of the division shall urge or oppose any legislation. In the performance of its duties and responsibilities, the division and staff members are subject to the statutory provisions and penalties regarding confidentiality of records as they apply to students, schools, school districts, the Department of Education, and the Board of Education.

Timeline/Background:

October 2011 – EOC received information from the former chair of the State Board of Education, Dr. Gerrita Postlewait on the Board's Statement of Purpose, *Encouraging Innovative Practice in SC Public Schools*. The State Board adopted a policy to encourage and recognize districts and schools that are moving to a new "learning paradigm, shaping a new learning-centric, personalized system of education so that each individual – from early childhood through adolescence – is prepared for life, work, and citizenship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

November 2011 – EOC publishes *A Review of South Carolina's K-12 Public Education Laws, Regulations, and Policies for Innovation and Flexibility*.

December 2011 – EOC adopts innovation as one of its legislative agenda priorities, supporting the State Board of Education's policy on innovation and offering to assist in the implementation of the program, serving on the Steering Committee.

January 2012 – Steering Team formed to determine approach to systemic change that would transform South Carolina's education. To date, included on the Steering Team are:

- Melanie Barton – EOC
- Dr. David Blackmon – Former Education Professor at Coker College and incoming Chair of State Board of Education
- Mike Brenan – President, BB&T of South Carolina and member of State Board of Education and incoming Chairman of SC Chamber of Commerce
- Trip DuBard- SC Future Minds
- Dr. Don Gordon – Executive Director, The Riley Institute at Furman University
- Don Herriott – Director of Innovista Partnerships and member of SC Board of Economic Advisors
- Dr. Penny Fisher – Superintendent, Greenville County Schools
- Dr. Gerrita Postlewait – Former Chair, State Board of Education
- Jim Reynolds – Chairman, SC Chamber of Commerce and CEO, Total Comfort Systems
- Chad Walldorf – Co-founder, Sticky Fingers Restaurant Group and Chair of SC Board of Economic Advisors
- Dr. Karen Woodward – Superintendent, Lexington School District One
- Dr. Mick Zais or his designee – State Superintendent of Education

February 13, 2012 – EOC releases *A Wake-Up Call for South Carolina*, documenting lack of progress made toward the 2020 Vision.

May 2-3, 2012 – Individuals from departments of education from Kentucky, Maine, New Hampshire and Wisconsin have been asked to come to Columbia and present information on their state's innovation initiatives.

June 11, 2012 – National experts, who work outside traditional public education, will address the EOC during its regularly scheduled meeting.

Cost:

To date, there is no cost estimate. If approved, the EOC staff will provide additional on-going updates to the EOC and projected cost estimates.

**EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE: EIA and Improvement Mechanisms**

**DATE: April 9, 2012**

**INFORMATION**

**Annual Report on the South Carolina Teacher Loan Program, 2010-2011**

**PURPOSE/AUTHORITY**

The Teacher Quality Act of 2000 provides that the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee “shall review the [SC Teacher] loan program annually and report to the General Assembly (Section 59-26-20 (j), SC Code of Laws of 1976, as amended.) This report is the annual report on the SC Teacher Loan Program covering the year 2010-2011.

**CRITICAL FACTS**

**TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS**

Study began in December 2011 and completed in February 2012

**ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC**

**Cost:** No fiscal impact beyond current appropriations

**Fund/Source:**

**ACTION REQUEST**

**For approval**

**For information**

**Approved**

**ACTION TAKEN**

**Amended**

**Not Approved**

**Action deferred (explain)**

2010-11

# THE SOUTH CAROLINA TEACHER LOAN PROGRAM

Annual Review



**SC EDUCATION  
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

PO Box 11867 | 227 Blatt Building | Columbia SC 29211 | [WWW.SCEOC.ORG](http://WWW.SCEOC.ORG)

## **Annual Report on the South Carolina Teacher Loan Program**

The Teacher Quality Act of 2000 directed the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to conduct an annual review of the South Carolina Teacher Loan Program and to report its findings and recommendations to South Carolina General Assembly. Pursuant to Section 59-26-20(j) of the South Carolina Code of Laws, the annual report documenting the program in Fiscal Year 2010-11 follows. Reports from prior years can be found on the EOC website at [www.eoc.sc.gov](http://www.eoc.sc.gov).

**April 9, 2012**



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) staff expresses its appreciation to the following individuals who provided data and data analysis for this report. First, Mim Armour and Camille Brown at the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education were instrumental in merging files from the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, the Professional Certified Staff (PCS) data file from the South Carolina Department of Education and scholarship data files from the Commission. The EOC thanks Linda Wargel of the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation and Marta Burgin and Falicia Harvey of the South Carolina Department of Education for their timely provision of data. The EOC is also grateful for data on South Carolina's teaching workforce and on hiring trends over time provided by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement at Winthrop University.

## **Section I**

### **Overview of the South Carolina Teacher Loan Program**

The South Carolina Teacher Loan Program was established through action of the South Carolina General Assembly with the passage of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984. According to Section 59-26-20(j),

the Commission on Higher Education, in consultation with the State Department of Education and the staff of the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, shall develop a loan program whereby talented and qualified state residents may be provided loans to attend public or private colleges and universities for the sole purpose and intent of becoming certified teachers employed in the State in areas of critical need. Areas of critical need shall include both geographic areas and areas of teacher certification and must be defined annually for that purpose by the State Board of Education.

The intent of the program was to encourage prospective college students from South Carolina to remain in the state to become teachers by offering loans that could be cancelled (or forgiven) if the recipient taught in a critical needs area. The program was one of a number of incentive programs included in the original EIA legislation. Beginning with an initial EIA appropriation of \$1.5 million, the annual appropriation for the Teacher Loan Program has varied from \$1.2 to \$5.4 million since inception. In Fiscal Years 2010-11 and 2011-12 the General Assembly appropriated \$4,000,722 in EIA revenues for the program. Historically, the program has been funded with EIA revenues. The South Carolina Student Loan Corporation (SCSL) administers the program for the state of South Carolina.

#### **Eligibility**

According to regulations promulgated by the Commission on Higher Education (R. 62-120) and communicated by the SCSL, eligible applicants for the South Carolina Teacher Loan program must meet the following criteria:

- Be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States;
- Be a resident of South Carolina as defined by state laws that determine residency for tuition and fee purposes at public colleges and universities in the state;
- Be enrolled in good standing and making satisfactory academic progress at an accredited public or private college or university on at least a half-time basis;
- Be enrolled in a program of teacher education or have expressed intent to enroll in such a program;
- For freshman applicants, be ranked the top 40 percent of their high school graduating class and have an SAT or ACT score equal to or greater than the South Carolina average for the year of high school graduation;
- For enrolled undergraduate students, have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale and must have taken and passed the Praxis I Exam. Students with an SAT score of 1100 or greater (1650 or greater for exams taken on or after March 1, 2005 when the Writing Section was added to the SAT) or an ACT score of 24 or greater are exempt from the Praxis I requirement;
- For entering graduate students, have an undergraduate cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale;

- For enrolled graduate students who have completed at least one term, have a grade point average of 3.5 or better on a 4.0 scale; and
- For all graduate students, must be seeking initial certification in a critical subject area if previously certified to teach.

Students must reapply every year to the program with priority given to borrowers who are renewing their loans. There is no expedited process for existing loan recipients. Furthermore, according to SCSL, changes in federal laws regarding student loans have not impacted the administration of the South Carolina Teacher Loan program.

### **Loan Amounts and Forgiveness**

College freshmen and sophomores may receive loans for up to \$2,500 per year, while juniors, seniors, and graduate students may borrow up to \$5,000 per year. The cumulative maximum amount is \$20,000. The loan can be used for any purpose at the discretion of the recipient; it is not designated for tuition, room, board, books, etc. Loans may not exceed the cost of attendance as determined by the college Financial Aid Office.

Under current guidelines, teacher loans may be cancelled at the rate of 20 percent annually or \$3,000, whichever is greater, for each full year of teaching in a critical subject **or** a critical geographic area within the state. Should both criteria be met, teaching in a critical subject **and** in a critical geographic area simultaneously, the loan may be cancelled at an annual rate of 33 1/3 percent or \$5,000, whichever amount is greater for each full year of teaching. As stated on the application, “the subject areas deemed critical at the time of application will be honored for forgiveness when teaching begins; critical geographic areas must be deemed critical at the time of employment.” The State Board of Education annually reviews potential need areas and makes designations; therefore, areas of critical need may change from year to year.

If the loan recipient fails to teach in an area of critical need, either subject or geographic area, the recipient must repay the full amount borrowed plus accrued interest. The interest rate for the Teacher Loan Program is the maximum interest rate on the Federal Stafford Loan plus 2 percent. The current rate on the Federal Stafford Loan is 6.8 percent.

After a borrower has signed a contract to teach in a critical need area or areas, the teacher submits a completed “SC Teachers Loan Forgiveness” (Form 9250) to SCSL. After receipt and approval of the form, payments are deferred for the school year. Prior to the end of the school year, the borrower is mailed instructions for completing the “SC Teachers Loan and Governor’s Teaching Scholarship Confirmation Form” (Form 9260). If the borrower fails to complete the form, the borrower is mailed another 9260 form with instructions to complete the form by August 1. If the form has not been received by August 1, another form 9260 with instructions is mailed. Upon receiving and reviewing the completed form, SCSL calculates the forgiveness benefit and applies it to the outstanding balance of the respective loan. Both Forms 9250 and 9260 include sections that must be completed and certified by the district personnel officer or the school district superintendent. The forms are also available on SCSL’s website.

### **Funding of the Teacher Loan Program**

With funds from the Education Improvement Act Trust Fund, the General Assembly has appropriated monies to support the loan program in the amounts shown in Table 1. Data in the table also include the administrative costs of the program and the amount of funds utilized from

repayments. Administrative costs have declined annually since 2004-05. In 2009-10 5.2 percent of all funds expended for the program were spent on administration.

**Table 1**  
**SC Teacher Loan Program: Revenues and Loans Over Time**

Year	Appropriation	Legislatively Mandated Transfers or Reductions	Revolving Funds from Repayments	Total Dollars Available	Administrative Costs	Percent of Total Dollars Spent on Administration	Amount Loaned
1984-85	1,500,000	0	0	1,500,000	124,033	8.3	300,000
1985-86	1,250,000	0	0	1,250,000	71,214	5.7	1,008,115
1986-87	1,943,059	75,000 <sup>1</sup>	0	1,943,059	84,376	4.3	1,776,234
1987-88	2,225,000	75,000 <sup>1</sup>	100,000	2,325,000	98,976	4.3	2,277,402
1988-89	2,925,000	75,000 <sup>1</sup>	350,000	3,275,000	126,941	3.9	2,889,955
1989-90	3,300,000	0	300,000	3,600,000	154,927	4.3	3,284,632
1990-91	4,600,000	1,000,000 <sup>2</sup>	300,000	4,900,000	210,741	4.3	3,978,476
1991-92	4,600,000	1,000,000 <sup>2</sup>	900,000	5,500,000	217,981	4.0	4,350,908
1992-93	4,775,000	1,175,000 <sup>2</sup>	1,350,000	6,125,000	248,703	4.1	4,628,259
1993-94	4,775,000	1,175,000 <sup>2</sup>	1,350,000	6,125,000	254,398	4.2	4,805,391
1994-95	5,016,250	1,233,750 <sup>2</sup>	1,135,000	6,151,250	272,260	4.4	4,761,397
1995-96	3,016,250	0	1,885,000	4,901,000	219,058	4.5	3,999,053
1996-97	3,016,250	0	1,108,500	4,124,500	222,557	5.4	3,936,538
1997-98	3,016,250	0	2,067,000	5,083,000	248,704	4.9	4,393,679
1998-99	3,016,250	1,000,000 <sup>3</sup>	2,565,000	4,581,250	295,790	6.5	4,423,446
1999-2000	3,016,250	1,000,000 <sup>3</sup>	2,550,000	4,566,250	272,115	5.0	4,240,693
2000-2001	3,916,250	0	3,000,000	6,916,250	279,800	4.1	5,556,854
2001-2002	3,016,250	145,216*	3,265,000	6,136,034	321,058	5.2	5,815,382
2002-2003	2,863,826	144,471*	2,950,000	5,669,355	346,601	6.1	5,332,946
2003-2004	3,016,250	129,980*	2,953,266	5,863,826	362,600	6.2	5,476,936
2004-2005	3,209,270	0	1,821,610	5,030,880	392,375	7.8	4,638,505
2005-2006	5,367,044	0	354,175	5,721,219	402,300	7.0	5,318,915
2006-2007	5,367,044	0	939,900	6,306,944	437,885	6.9	5,869,059
2007-2008	5,367,044	81,325*	1,801,962	7,087,681	415,216	5.9	6,672,465
2008-2009	5,054,521	841,460*	3,500,000	7,713,061	413,739	5.4	7,299,322
2009-2010	4,000,722	0	3,000,000	7,000,722	360,619	5.2	6,640,103
2010-2011	4,000,722	0	1,000,000	5,000,722	345,757	6.9	4,654,965
2011-2012	4,000,722						

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 1995-2011.*

\*Mid-year budget cuts. <sup>1</sup>Transferred to SC State for Minority Recruitment.

<sup>2</sup>Transferred to Governor's Teaching Scholarship Program. <sup>3</sup>Transferred to SDE for Technology and GT Identification

In Fiscal Year 2010-11 the General Assembly appropriated \$4,000,722 in EIA revenues to the Teacher Loan Program, the same level of funding as in Fiscal Year 2009-10. To supplement the number of loans made, SCSL used approximately \$1,000,000 in revolving funds to pay for loans in 2010-11. The Revolving Fund includes monies collected by SCSL from individuals who do not qualify for cancellation. At the end of Fiscal Year 2008-09 the Revolving Fund had balance of \$7,504,489. At the end of Fiscal Year 2009-10, the balance was \$7,419,849, and at the end of Fiscal Year 2010-11, it was \$8,405,304. The total amount of monies loaned in 2010-11 was \$4,654,965. The average loan amount was \$4,182.

## Critical Need Identification

In the Education Improvement Act, the General Assembly assigned the responsibility of defining the critical need areas to the State Board of Education (SBE): “Areas of critical need shall include both rural areas and areas of teacher certification and shall be defined annually for that purpose by the State Board of Education.” Beginning in the fall of 1984, the SBE has defined the certification and geographic areas considered critical and subsequently those teaching assignments eligible for cancellation. Only two subject areas – mathematics and science - were designated critical during the early years of the programs, but teacher shortages expanded the number of certification areas.

To determine the subject areas, the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA) conducts a Supply and Demand Survey of all 85 regular school districts, the South Carolina Public Charter School District, Palmetto Unified, the Department of Juvenile Justice, and the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind. CERRA publishes an annual report documenting the number of: teacher positions, teachers hired; teachers leaving; and vacant teacher positions. The survey results are provided to the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). SCDE then determines the number of teaching positions available in the school year that were vacant or filled with candidates not fully certified in the particular subject area. Table 2 documents the critical need subject areas since 2009-10 as approved by the State Board of Education. Subject areas in bold type were added as critical need subject areas.

For 2009-10 eliminated from the list of critical need subject areas was Early Childhood Education and added was Health. However, in 2010-11, Health was eliminated from the list and no new areas added. In Fiscal Year 2011-12, Physical Education, Art and Music were eliminated from the list and added were Dance and Health.

**Table 2**  
**Critical Need Subject Areas**

(Ranked in Order of Greatest Number of Positions Vacant or Filled by not Fully Certified Candidates)

	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>
1	Business Education	Business Education	Agriculture
2	Family/Consumer Science	Speech and Drama, Theater	Media Specialist
3	Media Specialist	Industrial Technology	Business Education
4	Speech and Drama, Theater	Media Specialist	Dance
5	Agriculture	Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Science)	Health
6	Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Science)	Mathematics	Family/Consumer Science
7	Dance	Family/Consumer Science	Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Science)
8	Foreign Languages (French, Spanish, Latin, and German)	Foreign Languages (French, Spanish, Latin, and German)	Speech and Drama, Theater
9	Speech Language Therapist	All Middle-level areas	Middle-Level areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies)
10	Industrial Technology	English	English
11	English	Agriculture	Industrial Technology
12	All Middle-level Areas	Special Education – All Areas	Special Education-All Areas
13	Special Education – All Areas	Speech Language Therapist	Mathematics
14	Physical Education	Art	Foreign Language
15	Art	Physical Education	Speech Language Therapist

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
16	Health	Music	
17	Mathematics		
18	Music		

Table 3 below summarizes the total number of vacant positions for the past four years as well as the total number of allocated teacher positions as documented by CERRA in its annual Teacher/Administrator Supply and Demand Survey.<sup>1</sup> The number of vacant positions continues to decline while the number of teacher positions declined by approximately 650 positions in 2010-11 over the prior school year.

**Table 3**  
**Teacher and Supporting Staff Positions**

	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
Number of Vacant Teacher Positions	296.6	203.75	189.75	170.8
Total Number of Allocated Teacher Positions	52,420.76	50,889.69	48,744.71	48,094.85

*Source: CERRA*

The criteria used in designating critical geographic schools have evolved over time. The State Board of Education has considered multiple factors, including degree of wealth, distance from shopping and entertainment centers, and faculty turnover. For the 2000-01 school year, the SBE adopted the criteria established for the federally funded Perkins Loan Program as the criteria for determining critical need schools. The Perkins Loan Program used student participation rates in the Federal free and reduced-price lunch program to determine schools eligible for loan forgiveness and included special schools, alternative schools, and correctional centers. Section 59-26-20(j) was amended in 2006 to redefine geographic critical need schools to be: (1) schools with an absolute rating of Below Average or At Risk/Unsatisfactory; (2) schools with an average teacher turnover rate for the past three years of 20 percent or higher; and (3) schools with a poverty index of 70 percent or higher. Table 4 documents the number of geographic critical need schools in South Carolina since 2008-09.

**Table 4**  
**Critical Geographic Need Schools**

Year	Total Schools	Type of School					Qualification		
		Career Centers	Primary Schools	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Absolute Rating	Teacher Turnover	Poverty Index
2008-09	754	3	26	402	200	111	470	266	629
2009-10	751	6	30	429	184	102	255	284	684
2010-11	785	3	29	420	209	106	476	286	669

*Source: South Carolina Department of Education*

Note: Some schools may be designated in more than one category (i.e., middle and high).

<sup>1</sup> Annual Teacher/Administrator Supply & Demand Surveys. Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement, < <http://cerra.org/research/SupplyAndDemand>>.

In 2010-11 there were 785 schools that were classified as critical geographic need schools. There were a total of 1,243 schools in the state in 2010-11. <sup>2</sup> Consequently, almost two-thirds (63 percent) of all schools were critical geographic need schools. It should be further noted that 63 percent of all primary, elementary, and middle schools in the state in 2010-11 had a poverty index of 70 percent or higher based on the 2011 school report cards. As the poverty index of schools increases, the number of schools classified as critical geographic need schools will increase, resulting in less focus of the program on schools most in need.

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<sup>2</sup> Includes all local public charter schools, the South Carolina Public Charter School District, Felton Lab, John de la Howe School, Palmetto Unified, Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, School for the Deaf and Blind, Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, and the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. Source: South Carolina Department of Education, School List Portal. <<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Accountability/Data-Management-and-Analysis/SchoolListPortal.html>>.

## Section II Applications to the Teacher Loan Program

During the first ten years of the Teacher Loan Program, 11,387 individuals received a loan through the Teacher Loan Program. Specific demographic information is not available for these recipients, but information on applicants since 1994-95 is available. Since 1994-95, the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation has received and processed 31,660 applications for the Teacher Loan Program (Table 5). The number of applicants is a duplicated count as one applicant could have applied for loans in multiple years. Of the 31,660 applications, 68 percent were approved; 26 percent were denied, and 6 percent were cancelled by the applicant. Applications generally were denied for several reasons. Since 1994-95, 41 percent of all denials were due to the failure of the applicant to meet the academic grade point criteria. Inadequate funds accounted for another 28 percent of all denials.

**Table 5  
Status of Applicants**

Year	Total Applied*	Approved	Cancelled	Denied	Reason for Denial				
					Academic Reason	Credit Problem	Inadequate Funds	No EEE Praxis	Other**
1994-95	2,242	1,416	176	650	241	48	240	69	52
1995-96	2,024	986	176	862	229	8	490	115	20
1996-97	1,446	982	118	346	262	5		51	28
1997-98	1,545	1,117	119	309	201	3		63	42
1998-99	1,569	1,138	128	303	182	10		54	57
1999-00	1,532	1,121	85	326	206	6		69	45
2000-01	2,028	1,495	112	421	244	16		86	75
2001-02	2,297	1,536	106	655	312	8	157	122	56
2002-03	2,004	1,332	110	562	219	3	126	139	75
2003-04	1,948	1,345	118	485	189	1	104	125	66
2004-05	1,735	1,101	93	541	148	1	267	65	60
2005-06	1,902	1,299	154	449	145	2	111	102	89
2006-07	2,033	1,466	150	417	206	3	37	78	93
2007-08	2,451	1,711	169	571	249	10	114	122	76
2008-09	2,676	1,888	126	662	263	10	193	118	78
2009-10	2,228	1,555	92	581	147	13	300	75	46
2010-11	1,717	<b>1,114</b>	97	506	89	4	308	72	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33,377</b>	<b>22,602</b>	<b>2,129</b>	<b>8,646</b>	<b>3,532</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>2,447</b>	<b>1,525</b>	<b>991</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>68%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>26%</b>					

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 1995-2011*

\*This is a duplicated count of individuals because the same individuals may apply for loans in multiple years.

\*\*\*Other" reasons include (1) not a SC resident, (2) enrollment less than half time, (3) ineligible critical area, (4) not seeking initial certification, (5) received the maximum annual and/or cumulative loan and (6) application in process.

Note: For FY2010-11 of the 308 applications denied due to inadequate funds, 21 were applications to the Career Changers program.

In 2010-11 the total number of applications to the Teacher Loan Program declined by 23 percent over the prior year. Comparing the number of applications from 2008-09 to 2010-11, there has been an overall 56 percent decline. There are no data to explain the reduction. One possible explanation is that students continue to reevaluate their career paths against the changing economic uncertainties.

Of the 506 applications denied in 2010-11, approximately 60 percent were due to insufficient funding. SCSL estimates that an additional \$1,288,056 would have been needed to fund all eligible applications in 2010-11. Consequently, the number of applications approved was also down by 441 from the prior year.

### **Description of Applicants**

In 2003, the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee of the Education Oversight Committee requested that staff develop goals and objectives for the Teacher Loan Program. An advisory committee was formed with representatives from CERRA, SCSL, the Division of Educator Quality and Leadership at the State Department of Education, and the Commission on Higher Education. After review of the data, the advisory committee recommended the following three goals and objectives for the Teacher Loan Program (TLP) in 2004.

- The percentage of African American applicants and recipients of the TLP should mirror the percentage of African Americans in the South Carolina teaching force.
- The percentage of male applicants and recipients of the TLP should mirror the percentage of males in the South Carolina teaching force.
- Eighty percent of the individuals receiving loans each year under the TLP should enter the South Carolina teaching force.

Historically, applicants for the program have been overwhelmingly white and/or female (Tables 6 and 7). This trend continued in 2010-11 with 77 percent of all applicants female and 80 percent white. In 2010-11 18.1 percent of all public school teachers in South Carolina were male and 81.2 percent female.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, by gender, applicants to the South Carolina Teacher Loan Program reflect the gender of the existing South Carolina public school teaching force.

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<sup>3</sup> “Quick Facts – Education in South Carolina for 2010-11.” South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Data Management and Analysis, Emailed to EOC on February 29, 2012.

**Table 6**  
**Distribution of Applicants to the Teacher Loan Program by Gender**

Year	# Applications	Male	%	Female	%	Unknown	%
1994-95	2,242	246	11.0%	1,476	65.8%	520	23.2%
1995-96	2,024	305	15.1%	1,692	83.6%	27	1.3%
1996-97	1,446	195	13.5%	1,189	82.2%	62	4.3%
1997-98	1,545	247	16.0%	1,241	80.3%	57	3.7%
1998-99	1,569	261	16.6%	1,267	80.8%	41	2.6%
1999-00	1,532	263	17.2%	1,212	79.1%	57	3.7%
2000-01	2,028	299	14.7%	1,628	80.3%	101	5.0%
2001-02	2,297	288	12.5%	1,769	77.0%	240	10.4%
2002-03	2,004	246	12.3%	1,599	79.8%	159	7.9%
2003-04	1,948	253	13.0%	1,480	76.0%	215	11.0%
2004-05	1,735	261	15.0%	1,413	81.4%	61	3.5%
2005-06	1,902	282	14.8%	1,305	68.6%	315	16.6%
2006-07	2,033	328	16.1%	1,482	72.9%	223	11.0%
2007-08	2,451	410	16.7%	1,845	75.3%	196	8.0%
2008-09	2,676	483	18.0%	2,102	78.6%	91	3.4%
2009-10	2,228	418	18.8%	1,763	79.1%	47	2.1%
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>1,717</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>18.4%</b>	<b>1,324</b>	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>33,377</b>	<b>5,101</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>25,787</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>2,728</b>	<b>8%</b>

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 1995-2011.*

In the 1990s several states, including members of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), implemented policies to attract and retain minorities into the teaching force. South Carolina specifically implemented minority teacher recruitment programs at Benedict College and South Carolina State University. Currently, only the South Carolina Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers (SC-PRRMT) at South Carolina State University remains in operation. The General Assembly in 2011-12 appropriated by proviso \$339,482 in EIA revenues to the program. SC-PRRMT promotes “teaching as a career choice by publicizing the many career opportunities and benefits in the field of education in the State of South Carolina. The mission of the Program is to increase the pool of teachers in the State by making education accessible to non-traditional students (teacher assistants, career path changers, and technical college transfer students) and by providing an academic support system to help students meet entry, retention, and exit program requirements.”<sup>4</sup> The program “also administers an EIA Forgivable Loan Program and participates in state, regional, and national teacher recruitment initiatives.”<sup>5</sup>

Over time, 15 percent of all applicants to the Teacher Loan program have been African American (Table 7). The percentage of African Americans applying to the program has declined

<sup>4</sup> 2011-12 EIA Program Report as provided to the EOC by the South Carolina Program for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers, October 2011  
<<http://www.eoc.sc.gov/Reports%20%20Publications/Budget%20Survey/2011/070002%20-%20Recruitment%20and%20Retention%20for%20Minority%20-%20SC%20State%20University%2009-30-11rek.pdf>>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

from 17 percent in 2008-09 to 13 percent in 2010-11. For comparison purposes, 14.9 percent of teachers employed in public schools in 2010-11 were African American.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 7**  
**Distribution of Applicants to the Teacher Loan Program by Race/Ethnicity.**

Year	# Applications	Ethnicity							
		African American		Other		White		Unknown	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1994-95	2,242	210	9	20	1	1,580	70	432	19
1995-96	2,024	271	13	31	2	1,664	82	58	3
1996-97	1,446	236	16	14	1	1,115	77	81	6
1997-98	1,545	258	17	12	1	1,195	77	80	5
1998-99	1,569	301	19	9	1	1,193	76	66	4
1999-00	1,532	278	18	14	1	1,164	76	76	5
2000-01	2,028	310	15	25	1	1,555	77	138	7
2001-02	2,297	361	16	15	1	1,630	71	291	13
2002-03	2,004	280	14	14	1	1,506	75	204	10
2003-04	1,948	252	13	13	<1	1,426	73	257	13
2004-05	1,735	263	15	17	1	1,357	78	98	6
2005-06	1,902	267	14	28	1	1,416	74	191	10
2006-07	2,033	356	17	20	1	1,495	74	162	8
2007-08	2,451	401	16	37	1	1,823	74	190	8
2008-09	2,676	453	17	54	2	2,059	77	110	4
2009-10	2,228	317	14	38	2	1,802	81	71	3
2010-11	1,717	228	13	35	2	1,373	80	81	5
TOTAL	33,377	5,042	15	396	1	25,353	76	2,586	8%

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 1995-2011.*

One approach to increase the supply of highly qualified teachers is school-to-college partnerships that introduce students early on to teaching as a career. In South Carolina the Teacher Cadet Program, which is coordinated by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) at Winthrop University, has impacted the applicant pool. As reported by CERRA, the mission of the Teacher Cadet Program "is to encourage academically talented or capable students who possess exemplary interpersonal and leadership skills to consider teaching as a career. An important secondary goal of the program is to provide these talented future community leaders with insights about teaching and school so that they will be civic advocates of education." Teacher Cadets must have at least a 3.0 average in a college preparatory curriculum, be recommended in writing by five teachers, and submit an essay on why they want to participate in the class. In 2010-11, 39 percent of all applicants to the Teacher Loan Program were participants in the Teacher Cadet Program (Table 8). Since 1994-95, approximately one-third all applicants have participated in the Teacher Cadet Program.

<sup>6</sup> "Quick Facts – Education in South Carolina for 2010-11." South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Data Management and Analysis, Emailed to EOC on February 29, 2012.

**Table 8**  
**Distribution of Applicants to the Teacher Loan Program by Teacher Cadet Program**

Year	Number Applications	Teacher Cadets	%	Not Teacher Cadets	%	UNKNOWN	%
1994-95	2,242	761	34	1,348	60	133	6
1995-96	2,024	751	37	1,203	59	70	3
1996-97	1,446	537	37	864	60	45	3
1997-98	1,545	545	35	946	61	54	4
1998-99	1,569	577	37	939	60	53	3
1999-00	1,532	560	37	896	58	76	5
2000-01	2,028	685	34	1,245	61	98	5
2001-02	2,297	773	34	1,369	60	155	7
2002-03	2,004	727	36	1,209	60	68	3
2003-04	1,948	669	34	1,186	61	93	5
2004-05	1,735	567	33	1,051	60	117	7
2005-06	1,902	580	31	1,006	53	316	17
2006-07	2,033	695	34	1,269	62	69	3
2007-08	2,451	792	32	1,523	62	136	6
2008-09	2,676	819	31	1,670	62	187	7
2009-10	2,228	811	36	1,352	61	65	3
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>1,717</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>2</b>
TOTAL	33,377	11,511	34	20,100	60	1,766	5

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 1995-2011*

Overwhelmingly, applicants to the Teacher Loan Program are undergraduates. Table 9 showcases the number of applicants by academic level. While historically only 18 percent of program applicants are freshmen, consistently 59 percent are continuing undergraduates. In 2011-12 two-thirds of all applicants were continuing undergraduates. Students may be more willing to commit to a professional program after their initial year of post-secondary education. Anecdotal information provided by financial aid counselors about potential graduate student loan applicants identified a hesitancy to participate in the program because they were uncertain about where they might be living after completing their degrees.

**Table 9**  
**Distribution of Applicants to the Teacher Loan Program by Academic Level**

Year	Number Applied	Academic Level Status									
		Freshman		Continuing Undergrad		1 <sup>st</sup> Semester Graduate		Continuing Graduate		Unknown	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1994-95	2,242	491	22	1,403	60	76	3	171	8	101	5
1995-96	2,024	435	21	1,280	60	92	4	155	8	62	3
1996-97	1,446	261	18	897	60	73	10	164	11	51	4
1997-98	1,545	272	18	876	60	138	10	202	13	57	4
1998-99	1,569	295	19	856	60	146	10	224	14	48	3
1999-00	1,532	331	22	863	60	135	10	196	13	7	<1
2000-01	2,028	440	22	1,087	50	194	10	300	15	7	1
2001-02	2,297	545	24	1,241	54	215	9	291	13	5	<1
2002-03	2,004	336	17	1,183	59	205	10	277	14	3	<1
2003-04	1,948	298	15	1,177	60	194	10	263	14	16	<1
2004-05	1,735	232	13	1,068	62	162	9	256	15	17	1
2005-06	1,902	281	15	1,083	57	231	12	248	13	59	3
2006-07	2,033	363	18	1,157	57	209	10	251	12	53	3
2007-08	2,451	445	18	1,471	60	186	8	233	9	116	5
2008-09	2,676	428	16	1,534	57	265	10	278	10	171	6
2009-10	2,228	404	18	1,370	61	204	9	207	9	43	2
2010-11	1,717	230	13	1,136	66	140	8	195	11	16	1
TOTAL	33,377	6,087	18	19,682	59	2,865	9	3,911	12	832	2

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 1995-2011.*

### Section III Recipients of a South Carolina Teacher Loan

To reiterate, over time, approximately two-thirds of all applicants to the Teacher Loan Program have qualified and received a South Carolina Teacher Loan. In 2010-11, of the 1,717 applications received, 1,114 individuals or 65 percent of all applicants received a Teacher Loan. According to the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, the average loan amount in 2010-11 was \$4,182.

Table 10 documents the distribution of loan recipients over time by academic level. In 2010-11 83 percent of all Teacher Loan Program recipients were undergraduate students as compared to 84 percent in 2009-10. Looking at the undergraduate recipients, 69 percent were juniors or seniors. Across years the data show that there is an annual decline in loan recipients between freshman and sophomore years. There are several possible reasons for the decline: (1) individuals may decide that they do not want to become teachers; (2) some students may leave college after freshman year; and (3) some individuals may no longer meet the qualifications to receive the loans. There are two primary reasons sophomores may no longer qualify for the loan: their GPA is below a 2.5 and/or they have not passed the Praxis I test required for entrance into an education program. No data exist on how many of the applicants were rejected for not having passed or how many had simply not taken the exam. Either way, the applicant would not qualify for additional TLP loans until the Praxis I was passed.

**Table 10  
Distribution of Recipients of the Teacher Loan Program by Academic Level Status**

	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	5 <sup>th</sup> Year Undergrads	1 <sup>st</sup> year Graduates	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year Graduates	3+ Year Graduates
1994-95	268	143	290	381	37	64	41	12
1995-96	8	108	246	395	34	91	45	3
1996-97	137	71	228	359	31	70	67	18
1997-98	173	105	225	338	37	165	45	22
1998-99	292	107	228	330	34	168	67	8
1999-00	225	93	205	324	36	143	88	7
2000-01	291	145	278	376	48	231	104	19
2001-02	318	166	306	400	35	208	82	8
2002-03	183	143	274	396	31	218	72	13
2003-04	168	114	317	386	55	187	86	26
2004-05	121	69	248	392	50	118	82	20
2005-06	185	89	230	419	67	203	85	21
2006-07	221	148	267	441	61	212	92	15
2007-08	344	195	345	469	61	207	80	8
2008-09	328	225	426	459	59	284	85	22
2009-10	286	165	362	452	48	157	76	9
<b>2010-11</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>23</b>
TOTAL	3,674	2,206	4,729	6,696	767	2,833	1,259	254

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 1995-2011*

Table 11 compares the academic status of applicants to actual recipients in 2010-11.

**Table 11**  
**Comparisons by Academic Level of Applicants and Recipients, 2009-10**

	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Applicants	1,366 (80%)	335 (20%)	16 (1%)	1,717
Recipients	922 (83%)	192 (17%)		1,114

Teacher Loan recipients attended forty-one universities and colleges in 2009-10 of which 30 or 73 percent were South Carolina institutions with a physical campus. For comparison purposes, the Commission on Higher Education reports that there are 59 campuses of higher learning in South Carolina: 13 public senior institutions; 4 public two-year regional campuses in the USC system; 16 public technical colleges; 24 independent or private senior institutions; and 2 independent two-year- colleges.<sup>7</sup> Table 12 documents the number of Teacher Loan recipients attending South Carolina public and private institutions. The “Other” category includes: (1) out-of-state colleges and universities; (2) branches of out-of-state degree-granting institutions operating in South Carolina; and (3) online institutions.

**Table 12**  
**Teacher Loan Recipients by Institution of Higher Education, 2010-11**

	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Number Recipients</b>
1	Anderson University	68
2	Cambridge College	1
3	Chapman University-Irvine	1
4	Charleston Southern University	9
5	The Citadel	12
6	Clemson University	119
7	Coastal Carolina University	30
8	Coker College	22
9	College of Charleston	91
10	Columbia College	31
11	Converse College	55
12	Erskine College	5
13	Francis Marion University	46
14	Furman University	20
15	Lander University	47
16	Limestone College	10
17	Newberry College	31
18	North Greenville University	12
19	Presbyterian College	12
20	Randolph-Macon College, Ashland	1
21	SC State University	9
22	Southern Wesleyan University	28
23	University of Phoenix	1
24	USC-Aiken	30
25	USC-Beaufort	1
26	USC-Upstate	62

<sup>7</sup> Commission on Higher Education. <[http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/Coll\\_Univ.htm](http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/Coll_Univ.htm)>.

	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Number Recipients</b>
27	USC-Columbia	221
28	University of West Alabama	1
29	Western Carolina University	1
30	Western Governors University	1
31	Winthrop University	136
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>1,114</b>

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 2011*

The number of loan recipients at historically African-American institutions continues to decline. According to the Commission on Higher Education and SCSL, in 2010-11 there were a total of 9 teacher loans to students attending South Carolina State University. No other historically African-American institution had any students receiving teacher loans in 2010-11 (Table 13).

**Table 13**  
**Teacher Loans to Historically African American Institutions**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2007-08</b>
Benedict College	0	2	6	14
Claflin University	0	1	7	2
Morris College	0	0	0	2
S.C. State University	9	9	22	24
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>42</b>

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 2011*

Recipients of the Teacher Loan Program also receive other state scholarships provided by the General Assembly to assist students in attending institutions of higher learning in South Carolina. The other scholarship programs include the Palmetto Fellows Program, the Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarships, and the Hope Scholarships. The Palmetto Fellows Program, LIFE Scholarships, and Hope Scholarships award scholarships to students based on academic achievement, but are not directed to teacher recruitment. In 1999 the General Assembly created the Teaching Fellows Program to recruit up to 200 high achieving high school seniors each year into teaching. Students who receive a Teaching Fellows award go through a rigorous selection process, which includes an online application (scholastic profiles, school and community involvement, references, and an interest paragraph), an interview and presentation in front of a team of three educators, and a scored written response. Teaching Fellows are awarded up to \$6,000 per year to attend one of eleven Teaching Fellows Institutions in the state of South Carolina as long as they continue to meet criteria for participation. Teaching Fellows must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.75, attend regular Teaching Fellows meetings on their campus, engage in service learning activities, and participate in advanced professional development. Recipients agree to teach in South Carolina at least one year for each year they receive an award, and they sign a promissory note that requires payment of the scholarship should they decide not to teach. In addition to being an award instead of a loan, the Teaching Fellows Program differs from the Teacher Loan Program in that recipients are not required to commit to teaching in a critical need subject or geographic area to receive the award.

Working with the Commission on Higher Education, the South Carolina Student Loan, and the South Carolina Department of Education, specific data files from the three organizations were merged and cross-referenced to determine how the scholarship programs interact with the Teacher Loan Program. Table 14 shows over the last thirteen years the number of Teacher Loan recipients who also participated in the Hope, LIFE, or Palmetto Fellows programs and who were later employed by public schools. The merged data found a total of 2,335 recipients of LIFE, Palmetto Fellows and Hope Scholarships employed in public schools in South Carolina in 2010-11 who were also Teacher Loan recipients. The data show consistent annual increases, evidence that more high achieving students are choosing to enter the field of education and teach in public schools in South Carolina.

**Table 14**  
**Loan Recipients serving in South Carolina schools and having received LIFE, Palmetto, Fellows and Hope Scholarships**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>LIFE</b>	<b>Palmetto Fellows</b>	<b>Hope</b>	<b>Total</b>
1998-1999	11	*		11
1999-2000	93	*		93
2000-2001	227	*		227
2001-2002	370	*		370
2002-2003	533	2	**	535
2003-2004	701	10	0	711
2004-2005	898	27	0	925
2005-2006	1,069	39	0	1,108
2006-2007	1,306	59	5	1,370
2007-2008	1,552	72	26	1,650
2008-2009	1,775	93	49	1,917
2009-2010	1,932	116	67	2,115
<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2,097</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>2,335</b>

*Source: Commission on Higher Education, 2011*

\*Data Not Available

\*\*Hope Scholarship established in 2002-03.

Policymakers have also questioned how the state's scholarship programs generally impact the number of students pursuing a teaching career in the state. Table 15 shows the total number of scholarship recipients each year. It is a duplicated count across years.

**Table 15**  
**Total Number of Scholarship Recipients for the Fall Terms**

Year	LIFE	Palmetto Fellows	Hope
1998	14,618	**	
1999	16,374	**	
2000	16,560	**	
2001	19,469	2,606	
2002	23,330	2,915	2,085 *
2003	25,450	3,358	2,324
2004	27,105	3,663	2,343
2005	27,832	4,316	2,449
2006	28,362	4,755	2,408
2007	29,140	5,148	2,615
2008	29,943	5,516	2,590
2009	31,607	5,894	2,716
<b>2010</b>	<b>32,125</b>	<b>6,122</b>	<b>2,844</b>

*Source: Commission on Higher Education, 2011.*

\* Program started in the 2002-03 academic year.

\*\* Program was in existence but data were not available.

Of these individuals receiving scholarships in the fall of 2010, the following had declared education as their intended major (Table 16).

**Table 16**  
**Comparison of Scholarship Recipients and Education Majors, Fall 2009**

Scholarship	# of Education Majors	# of Scholarships	Percent
Hope	360	2,844	12.7%
LIFE	3,543	32,125	11.0%
Palmetto	412	6,122	6.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,315</b>	<b>41,091</b>	<b>10.5%</b>

In the first year of the LIFE Scholarships 7.2 percent of the scholarship recipients declared as education majors (Table 17). In the fall of 2010, 11.0 percent of LIFE scholarship recipients had declared education as their major. Overall, in the fall of 2010, 10.5 percent of all Hope, LIFE, and Palmetto Fellows scholarship recipients had declared education as a major. The trends show consistency across the most recent years.

**Table 17**  
**Percent of Students that Received Scholarships for each Fall Term**  
**and had Declared an Education Major**

<b>Fall</b>	<b>LIFE</b>	<b>Palmetto Fellows</b>	<b>Hope</b>	<b>Total</b>
1998	7.2	**	*	7.2
1999	7.7	**	*	7.7
2000	7.4	**	*	7.4
2001	11.0	5.9	*	10.4
2002	11.4	6.1	14.3	11.1
2003	12.1	7.0	13.9	11.7
2004	12.1	6.3	13.2	11.5
2005	12.2	7.1	15.1	11.7
2006	11.7	7.1	14.7	11.3
2007	11.3	6.8	14.6	10.9
2008	11.0	6.4	13.1	10.4
2009	11.1	6.5	14.4	10.6
<b>2010</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>10.5</b>

*Source: Commission on Higher Education, 2011.*

\* Program started in the 2002-03 academic year.

\*\* Program was in existence but data were not available.

Finally, over time, average SAT scores of loan recipients have increased. In 1998-99 the mean SAT score for Teacher Loan recipients was 961.1. In 2010-11 the mean score for Teacher Loan recipients increased by 15 points (Table 18). If a student took the test more than once, the most recent score is used. In 2010-11 the average SAT score of 1,107 was well above the national SAT average of 1,011 for critical reading and mathematics.

**Table 18**  
**Mean SAT Scores<sup>8</sup>**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Teacher Loan Program Recipients</b>	<b>SC</b>
1998-1999	961.1	951
1999-2000	960.9	954
2000-2001	971.3	966
2001-2002	997.9	974
2002-2003	1,024.1	981
2003-2004	1,056.9	989
2004-2005	1,069.6	986
2005-2006	1,076.7	993
2006-2007	1,076.8	986
2007-2008	1,081.2	984
2008-2009	1,095.6	985
2009-2010	1,091.4	982
2010-2011	1,107.0	979

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 2011 and College Board.*

### **Repayment or Cancellation Status**

South Carolina Student Loan (SCSL) reports that as of June 30, 2011, 15,593 borrowers were in a repayment or cancellation status. Of these 2,399 borrowers have never been eligible for cancellation and are repaying their loans.”<sup>9</sup> The following table is a comprehensive list of the status of all borrowers:

<sup>8</sup> The composite score is the sum of the average Verbal and Math Score (1998-2005) and the Critical Reading score average and the Mathematics score average (2006-2011).

<sup>9</sup> 2011-12 EIA Program Report as provided to the EOC by the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, October 2011.

<<http://www.eoc.sc.gov/Reports%20%20Publications/Budget%20Survey/2011/080001%20SC%20Student%20Loan%20Program%2009-29-11rek.pdf>>.

**Table 19**  
**Borrowers as of June 30, 2011**

<b>Number Borrowers</b>	<b>% of Borrowers</b>	<b>Status</b>
2,399	15%	Never eligible for cancellation and are repaying loan
392	3%	Previously taught but not currently teaching
1,407	9%	Teaching and having loans cancelled
5,562	36%	Repaying the loan or a portion of the loan;
183	1%	Loan discharged due to death, disability or bankruptcy
82	1%	In Default
<u>5,081</u>	33%	Loans cancelled by fulfilling teaching requirement
15,593		

*Source: South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, 2011*

**Teacher Loan Program Recipients Employed in Public Schools of South Carolina**

What information exists about the current employees of public schools in South Carolina who had received a Teacher Loan? Data files from SCSL and South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) were merged. There were 6,524 Teacher Loan recipients employed by public schools in 2010-11 up 258 or 4 percent over the prior school year. Like the applicants, the Teacher Loan recipients who were employed in South Carolina's public schools were overwhelmingly white and female (Table 20).

**Table 20**  
**Loan Recipients in South Carolina Schools by Gender and Ethnicity, 2010-11**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	788	12.1
Female	5,684	87.1
Unknown	52	0.8
<b>Total</b>	6,524	

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
African American	866	13.3
White	5,444	83.4
Asian	16	0.2
Hispanic	42	0.6
American Indian	4	0.1
Unknown	152	2.3
<b>Total</b>	6,524	

These, 6,524 individuals served in a variety of positions in 2010-11 (Table 21).

**Table 21**  
**Loan Recipients Employed in SC Public Schools as of 2010-11 by Position**

Position Code	Description	Number	Position Code	Description	Number
1	Principal	76	48	Assistant Superintendent, Noninstruction	1
2	Assistant Principal, Co-principal	152	50	District Superintendent	1
3	Special Education (Itinerant)	16	53	Director, Instruction	1
4	Prekindergarten (Child Development)	116	54	Supervisor, Elementary Education	2
5	Kindergarten	258	56	Supervisor, Adult Education	0
6	Special Education (Self-Contained)	356	58	Director, Special Services	4
7	Special Education (Resource)	429	72	Coordinator, Mathematics	0
8	Classroom Teacher	4298	74	Coordinator, Science	1
9	Retired Teacher	10	75	Educational Evaluator	0
10	Library Media Specialist	256	76	Coordinator, Social Studies	1
11	Guidance Counselor	151	78	Coordinator, Special Education	15
12	Other Professional Instruction-Oriented	84	80	Supervisor, District Library Media Services	1
13	Director Career & Technology Education	1	82	Coordinator, Early Childhood Education	0
15	Coordinator, Job Placement	3	83	Coordinator, Parenting/Family Literacy	2
16	Director, Adult Education	3	84	Coordinator, Elementary Education	1
17	Speech Therapist	140	85	Psychologist	11
19	Temporary Instruction-Oriented Personnel	7	86	Support Personnel	1
23	Career Specialist	5	89	Title I Instructional Paraprofessional	5
27	Technology/IT Personnel	5	91	Child Development Aide	1
28	Director, Personnel	5	92	Kindergarten Aide	3
29	Other Personnel Positions	2	93	Special Education Aide	8
33	Director, Technology	2	94	Instructional Aide	3
35	Coordinator, Federal Projects	4	97	Instructional Coach	45
43	Other Professional Non-Instructional Staff	22	98	Adult Education Teacher	3
44	Teacher Specialist	2	99	Other District Office Staff	10
47	Director, Athletics	1		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,524</b>

Analyzing the data in another way, approximately two-thirds of the recipient graduates were employed in public schools as regular classroom teachers, another 12 percent were working in special education classrooms, and another 6 percent in four-year-old child development and kindergarten classes (Table 22). Approximately 8 percent were employed in other positions, working in public schools in typically administrative rather than direct instructional capacities.

**Table 22**  
**Loan Recipients Employed in Public Schools By Various Functions, 2010-11**

<b>Position Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b># Positions</b>	<b>Percent</b>
04	Prekindergarten	116	2%
05	Kindergarten	258	4%
03, 06, 07	Special Education	801	12%
08	Classroom Teachers	4,298	66%
10	Library Media Specialist	256	4%
11	Guidance Counselor	151	2%
17	Speech Therapist	140	2%
All Others	Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors, Coordinators, etc.	504	8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6,524</b>	

Table 23 documents the primary area of certification of all Teacher Loan recipients who were employed in public schools in 2010-11.

**Table 23**  
**Loan Recipients Employed in SC Public Schools in 2010-11 by Primary Certification Area**

Code	Certification Subject	Number Certified	Code	Certification Subject	Number Certified
01	Elementary	2919	30	Agriculture	6
02	Sp/Ed - Generic Special Ed	140	32	Distributive Education	1
03	Speech Language Therapist	134	35	Family & Consumer Science	12
04	English	355	40	Commerce	1
05	French	31	46	Data/Information Processing	1
06	Latin	1	47	Business Education	43
07	Spanish	80	49	Advanced Fine Arts	1
08	German	3	4B	Business & Marketing Technology	27
10	Mathematics	424	50	Art	120
11	General Mathematics	4	51	Music Education – Choral	48
12	Science	135	53	Music Education – Voice	2
13	General Science	15	54	Music Education – Instrumental	55
14	Biology	41	57	Speech & Drama	2
15	Chemistry	13	58	Dance	7
16	Physics	1	5A	English for Speakers of Other Languages	3
1A	Middle School Language Arts	2	5C	Theater	6
1B	Middle School Mathematics	2	60	Media Specialist	85
1C	Middle School Science	1	63	Driver Training	7
1D	Middle School Social Studies	5	64	Health	1
1E	Middle Level Language Arts	65	67	Physical Education	70
1F	Middle Level Mathematics	50	70	Superintendent	2
1G	Middle Level Science	15	71	Elementary Principal	26
1H	Middle Level Social Studies	59	72	Secondary Principal	4
20	Social Studies	152	80	Reading Teacher	7
21	History	8	81	Reading Consultant	1
26	Psychology	2	84	School Psychologist II	4
29	Industrial Technology Education	8	85	Early Childhood Education	773
2A	Sp/Ed - Educable Mentally Disabled	97	86	Guidance – Elementary	56
2B	Sp/Ed - Visual Impairment	4	89	Guidance – Secondary	12
2C	Sp/Ed - Trainable Mentally Disabled	3	AC	Health Science Technology	2
2D	Sp/Ed – Deafness & Hearing Impaired	3	AV	Electricity	2
2E	Sp/Ed - Emotional Disabilities	88	BF	Small Engine Repair	1
2G	Sp/Ed - Learning Disabilities	171	DB	Protective Services	1
2H	Sp/Ed - Mental Disabilities	33		Unknown/Not Reported	8
2I	Sp/Ed – Multicategorical	61		School Psychologist III	1
2J	Sp/Ed - Severe Disabilities	1		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6524</b>

### Other Teacher Loan Programs

Appropriations from the General Fund also support two other teacher loan programs – Career Changers and PACE (Program for Alternative Certification for Educators). The Career Changers Program was designed to recruit individuals with undergraduate degrees in areas other than teaching who have been working for at least three years. Participants in the Career Changers Program must be at least half-time students and are eligible to borrow up to \$15,000 per year and up to an aggregate maximum of \$60,000.

PACE, originally named the Critical Needs Certification Program, places qualified applicants in South Carolina classrooms as teachers; the participants possess an undergraduate degree or equivalent in the content area in which they are teaching, but lack the courses needed for certification. PACE participants teach full-time and take courses toward certification while employed. They are eligible for up to \$750 per year for up to four years to help defray educational costs.

Reductions in General Fund revenues have resulted in reductions to these loan programs. In Fiscal Years 2010-11 and 2011-12 the General Assembly appropriated \$1,065,125 for these programs.

Analyzing the number of loan recipients who were also employed in public schools in 2010-11, Tables 24 and 25 provide the following information. Among the 1,209 individuals who were in the PACE program and who were employed in public schools in 2010-11, a higher percentage were male, 27.7 percent, as compared to 12.1 percent of the individuals who received a Teacher Loan Program and were employed in public schools in 2010-11. Similarly, 37.6 percent of the 1,209 individuals employed in public schools in 2010-11 who were PACE participants were African American as compared to 13.3 percent of the 6,524 individuals employed in public schools in 2010-11 who were Teacher Loan Program recipients.

**Table 24**  
**Loan Recipients in South Carolina Schools by Gender, 2010-11**

Gender	Career Changers	PACE	Teacher Loan Program	TOTAL
Female	330 (81.3%)	864 (71.5%)	5,684 (87.1%)	6,878
Male	69 (17.0%)	335 (27.7%)	788 (12.1%)	1,192
Unknown	7	10	52	69
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>6,524</b>	<b>8,139</b>

**Table 25**  
**Loan Recipients in South Carolina Schools by Gender, 2010-11**

Race	Career Changers	PACE Program Critical Needs	Teacher Loan Program	TOTAL
African American	74 (18.2%)	454 (37.6%)	866 (13.3%)	1,394
American Indian	1 (0.2%)	4 (0.3%)	4 (0.1%)	9
Asian	0 (0.0%)	7 (0.6%)	16 (0.2%)	23
White	316 (77.8%)	695 (57.5%)	5,444 (83.4%)	6,455
Hispanic	3 (0.7%)	25 (2.1%)	42 (0.6%)	70
Unknown/Not Supplied	12 (3.0%)	2 (2.0%)	152 (2.3%)	188
<b>Total</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>1,209</b>	<b>6,524</b>	<b>8,139</b>

## Section IV Teacher Supply and Demand

### Teacher Supply and Demand

Annually since 2001 the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) at Winthrop University has conducted a Teacher/Administrator Supply and Demand Survey. CERRA surveys each school district as well as the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind, the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Palmetto Unified School District and the South Carolina Public Charter School District to determine the number of authorized and filled teaching positions. The results of the latest survey were released in December 2011.<sup>10</sup> Table 26 documents the total number of teachers hired and leaving school districts since 2001 as documented by CERRA.

**Table 26  
Teachers Hired and Leaving, 2001-2011<sup>11</sup>**

Year	Teachers Hired	Teachers Leaving
2001	6,553.50	5,049.50
2002	5,581.70	5,333.00
2003	4,828.75	4,808.00
2004	6,486.75	5,222.00
2005	7,444.80	5,630.00
2006	8,101.00	6,354.00
2007	8,416.70	6,530.00
2008	7,159.20	5,746.00
2009	3,619.30	4,652.50
2010	3,514.59	4,612.80
2011	4,588.40	4,287.35

*Source: CERRA*

“The total number of teachers hired in South Carolina’s public school districts and special schools this year was 4,588.40. This reflects a 31% increase of 1,074 teachers compared to last school year when our state saw the lowest number of teachers hired since 2001, the first year of the Supply and Demand Survey....Similar to last school year, thirty-five percent (1,452.25) of all teachers hired this year were new graduates from teacher education programs in the state.... One-quarter (1,022.25) of the reported hires transferred from one South Carolina district to another. Teachers who transferred from another state made up 16% of all hires, a slight increase compared to last year’s 14% of hires represented by out-of state teachers.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> “Fall 2011 Teacher/Administrator Supply & Demand Survey,” December 2011, Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement,

<[http://cerra.org/export/sites/default/research/SupplyAndDemand/2011\\_Supply\\_x\\_Demand.pdf](http://cerra.org/export/sites/default/research/SupplyAndDemand/2011_Supply_x_Demand.pdf)>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.3.



## **Section V**

### **Summary of Findings and Recommendations**

#### **Findings from Previous Reports Confirmed**

- The Teacher Loan Program continues to fulfill the statutory mission to attract individuals into the teaching profession and into areas of critical need as measured by the annual increase in applications and in the number of Teacher Loan Program recipients teaching in public schools in South Carolina.
- The average SAT score of Teacher Loan recipients continues to increase.
- Approximately 10 percent of all Hope, Life and Palmetto Fellows Scholarships were awarded to students who had declared education as a major.
- Over time, one-third of all Teacher Loan recipients had their loans cancelled by fulfilling the teaching requirement with another 9 percent in the process of teaching and having their loans cancelled. The default rate has been consistently one percent of all loans made.
- Consistently, 300 applicants are annually denied a loan due to insufficient EIA funding.

#### **New Findings from the 2010-11 Report**

- The number of applicants to the Teacher Loan Program continues to decline by 23 percent in 2010-11.
- Of the 1,717 applicants to the program, 1,114 loans were approved totaling \$4,654,965. The number of approved applications was an 28 percent reduction from the prior year. The average amount of a Teacher Loan in 2010-11 was \$4,182.
- In 2010-11 the Teacher Loan Program was funded with \$4,000,722 in EIA revenues and \$1,000,000 in Revolving Loan Funds. An additional \$1,288,056 would have been needed to fund all eligible applications in 2010-11.
- The State Board of Education identified 15 critical need subject areas and 785 critical geographic need schools in 2010-11.
- The percentage of African-American applicants in 2010-11 declined to 13 percent which is less than the percentage of African-American teachers in the public schools, 15.1 percent.
- The number of Teacher Loan Program recipients at historically African-American institutions fell in 2010-11 to a total of 9.
- In the 2010-11 school year there were 6,524 individuals employed by public schools in the state who had received a South Carolina Teacher Loan.
- In the 2010-11 school year there were another 1,615 individuals employed by public schools in the state who participated either in the Career Changers (406) or PACE program (1,209).
- Among the 1,209 individuals who were in the PACE program and who were employed in public schools in 2010-11, a higher percentage were male, 27.7 percent, as compared to 12.1 percent of the individuals who received a Teacher Loan Program and were employed in public schools in 2010-11. Similarly, 37.6 percent of the 1,209 individuals employed in public schools in 2010-11 who were PACE participants were African American as compared to 13.3 percent of the 6,524 individuals employed in public schools in 2010-11 who were Teacher Loan Program recipients.

**Recommendations:**

- The statutory definition of critical geographic area should be amended to include schools with a poverty index of 80 percent or greater, rather than 70 percent or greater.
- The EOC should consider including in its EIA budget recommendations for Fiscal Year 2013-14 an increase in the EIA appropriation for the Teacher Loan Program in order to provide funding for individuals who qualify for the program but are denied the loan due to insufficient funds.
- A policy board of governance should be established, or an existing state agency should be identified as the central authority of the program, with the responsibility to set goals, allocate available funding, facilitate communication among the cooperating agencies, and advocate for the loan participants and effectively market the Teacher Loan Program.

## Appendix

### **SECTION 59-26-20.** Duties of State Board of Education and Commission on Higher Education.

The State Board of Education, through the State Department of Education, and the Commission on Higher Education shall:

(a) develop and implement a plan for the continuous evaluation and upgrading of standards for program approval of undergraduate and graduate education training programs of colleges and universities in this State;

(b) adopt policies and procedures which result in visiting teams with a balanced composition of teachers, administrators, and higher education faculties;

(c) establish program approval procedures which shall assure that all members of visiting teams which review and approve undergraduate and graduate education programs have attended training programs in program approval procedures within two years prior to service on such teams;

(d) render advice and aid to departments and colleges of education concerning their curricula, program approval standards, and results on the examinations provided for in this chapter;

(e) adopt program approval standards so that all colleges and universities in this State that offer undergraduate degrees in education shall require that students successfully complete the basic skills examination that is developed in compliance with this chapter before final admittance into the undergraduate teacher education program. These program approval standards shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) A student initially may take the basic skills examination during his first or second year in college.

(2) Students may be allowed to take the examination no more than four times.

(3) If a student has not passed the examination, he may not be conditionally admitted to a teacher education program after December 1, 1996. After December 1, 1996, any person who has failed to achieve a passing score on all sections of the examination after two attempts may retake for a third time any test section not passed in the manner allowed by this section. The person shall first complete a remedial or developmental course from a post-secondary institution in the subject area of any test section not passed and provide satisfactory evidence of completion of this required remedial or developmental course to the State Superintendent of Education. A third administration of the examination then may be given to this person. If the person fails to pass the examination after the third attempt, after a period of three years, he may take the examination or any sections not passed for a fourth time under the same terms and conditions provided by this section of persons desiring to take the examination for a third time. Provided, that in addition to the above approval standards, beginning in 1984-85, additional and upgraded approval standards must be developed, in consultation with the Commission on Higher Education, and promulgated by the State Board of Education for these teacher education programs.

(f) administer the basic skills examination provided for in this section three times a year;

(g) report the results of the examination to the colleges, universities, and student in such form that he will be provided specific information about his strengths and weaknesses and given consultation to assist in improving his performance;

(h) adopt program approval standards so that all colleges and universities in this State that offer undergraduate degrees in education shall require that students pursuing courses leading to teacher certification successfully complete one semester of student teaching and other field experiences and teacher development techniques directly related to practical classroom situations;

(i) adopt program approval standards whereby each student teacher must be evaluated and assisted by a representative or representatives of the college or university in which the student teacher is enrolled. Evaluation and assistance processes shall be locally developed or selected by colleges or universities in accordance with State Board of Education regulations. Processes shall evaluate and assist student teachers based on the criteria for teaching effectiveness developed in accordance with this chapter. All

college and university representatives who are involved in the evaluation and assistance process shall receive appropriate training as defined by State Board of Education regulations. The college or university in which the student teacher is enrolled shall make available assistance, training, and counseling to the student teacher to overcome any identified deficiencies;

**(j) the Commission on Higher Education, in consultation with the State Department of Education and the staff of the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, shall develop a loan program in which talented and qualified state residents may be provided loans to attend public or private colleges and universities for the sole purpose and intent of becoming certified teachers employed in the State in areas of critical need. Areas of critical need shall include both geographic areas and areas of teacher certification and must be defined annually for that purpose by the State Board of Education. The definitions used in the federal Perkins Loan Program shall serve as the basis for defining “critical geographical areas”, which shall include special schools, alternative schools, and correctional centers as identified by the State Board of Education. The recipient of a loan is entitled to have up to one hundred percent of the amount of the loan plus the interest canceled if he becomes certified and teaches in an area of critical need. Should the area of critical need in which the loan recipient is teaching be reclassified during the time of cancellation, the cancellation shall continue as though the critical need area had not changed. Additionally, beginning with the 2000-2001 school year, a teacher with a teacher loan through the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation shall qualify, if the teacher is teaching in an area newly designated as a critical needs area (geographic or subject, or both). Previous loan payments will not be reimbursed. The Department of Education and the local school district are responsible for annual distribution of the critical needs list. It is the responsibility of the teacher to request loan cancellation through service in a critical needs area to the Student Loan Corporation by November first.**

**Beginning July 1, 2000, the loan must be canceled at the rate of twenty percent or three thousand dollars, whichever is greater, of the total principal amount of the loan plus interest on the unpaid balance for each complete year of teaching service in either an academic critical need area or in a geographic need area. The loan must be canceled at the rate of thirty-three and one-third percent, or five thousand dollars, whichever is greater, of the total principal amount of the loan plus interest on the unpaid balance for each complete year of teaching service in both an academic critical need area and a geographic need area. Beginning July 1, 2000, all loan recipients teaching in the public schools of South Carolina but not in an academic or geographic critical need area are to be charged an interest rate below that charged to loan recipients who do not teach in South Carolina.**

**Additional loans to assist with college and living expenses must be made available for talented and qualified state residents attending public or private colleges and universities in this State for the sole purpose and intent of changing careers in order to become certified teachers employed in the State in areas of critical need. These loan funds also may be used for the cost of participation in the critical needs certification program pursuant to Section 59-26-30(A)(8). Such loans must be cancelled under the same conditions and at the same rates as other critical need loans.**

**In case of failure to make a scheduled repayment of an installment, failure to apply for cancellation of deferment of the loan on time, or noncompliance by a borrower with the intent of the loan, the entire unpaid indebtedness including accrued interest, at the option of the commission, shall become immediately due and payable. The recipient shall execute the necessary legal documents to reflect his obligation and the terms and conditions of the loan. The loan program, if implemented, pursuant to the South Carolina Education Improvement Act, is to be administered by the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation. Funds generated from repayments to the loan program must be retained in a separate account and utilized as a revolving account for the purpose that the funds were originally appropriated. Appropriations for loans and administrative costs incurred by the corporation are to be provided in annual amounts, recommended by the Commission on Higher Education, to the State Treasurer for use by the corporation. The Education Oversight Committee shall review the loan program annually and report to the General Assembly.**

**Notwithstanding another provision of this item:**

**(1) For a student seeking loan forgiveness pursuant to the Teacher Loan Program after July 1, 2004, “critical geographic area” is defined as a school that:**

**(a) has an absolute rating of below average or unsatisfactory;**

**(b) has an average teacher turnover rate for the past three years that is twenty percent or higher;**  
or

**(c) meets the poverty index criteria at the seventy percent level or higher.**

**(2) After July 1, 2004, a student shall have his loan forgiven based on those schools or districts designated as critical geographic areas at the time of employment.**

**(3) The definition of critical geographic area must not change for a student who has a loan, or who is in the process of having a loan forgiven before July 1, 2004.**

(k) for special education in the area of vision, adopt program approval standards for initial certification and amend the approved program of specific course requirements for adding certification so that students receive appropriate training and can demonstrate competence in reading and writing braille;

(l) adopt program approval standards so that students who are pursuing a program in a college or university in this State which leads to certification as instructional or administrative personnel shall complete successfully training and teacher development experiences in teaching higher order thinking skills;

(m) adopt program approval standards so that programs in a college or university in this State which lead to certification as administrative personnel must include training in methods of making school improvement councils an active and effective force in improving schools;

(n) the Commission on Higher Education in consultation with the State Department of Education and the staff of the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation, shall develop a Governor’s Teaching Scholarship Loan Program to provide talented and qualified state residents loans not to exceed five thousand dollars a year to attend public or private colleges and universities for the purpose of becoming certified teachers employed in the public schools of this State. The recipient of a loan is entitled to have up to one hundred percent of the amount of the loan plus the interest on the loan canceled if he becomes certified and teaches in the public schools of this State for at least five years. The loan is canceled at the rate of twenty percent of the total principal amount of the loan plus interest on the unpaid balance for each complete year of teaching service in a public school. However, beginning July 1, 1990, the loan is canceled at the rate of thirty-three and one-third percent of the total principal amount of the loan plus interest on the unpaid balance for each complete year of teaching service in both an academic critical need area and a geographic need area as defined annually by the State Board of Education. In case of failure to make a scheduled repayment of any installment, failure to apply for cancellation or deferment of the loan on time, or noncompliance by a borrower with the purpose of the loan, the entire unpaid indebtedness plus interest is, at the option of the commission, immediately due and payable. The recipient shall execute the necessary legal documents to reflect his obligation and the terms and conditions of the loan. The loan program must be administered by the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation. Funds generated from repayments to the loan program must be retained in a separate account and utilized as a revolving account for the purpose of making additional loans. Appropriations for loans and administrative costs must come from the Education Improvement Act of 1984 Fund, on the recommendation of the Commission on Higher Education to the State Treasurer, for use by the corporation. The Education Oversight Committee shall review this scholarship loan program annually and report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly. For purposes of this item, a ‘talented and qualified state resident’ includes freshmen students who graduate in the top ten percentile of their high school class, or who receive a combined verbal plus mathematics Scholastic Aptitude Test score of at least eleven hundred and enrolled students who have completed one year (two semesters or the equivalent) of collegiate work and who have earned a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale. To remain eligible for the loan while in college, the student must maintain at least a 3.0 grade point average on a 4.0 scale.

**The Education Oversight Committee does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or handicap in its practices relating to employment or establishment and administration of its programs and initiatives. Inquiries regarding employment, programs and initiatives of the Committee should be directed to the Executive Director 803.734.6148.**

**EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**Subcommittee: EIA and Improvement Mechanisms**

**Date: April 9, 2012**

**INFORMATION**

**Results of the 2011 Parent Survey**

**PURPOSE/AUTHORITY**

Section 59-28-190 of the Parental Involvement in Their Children’s Education Act requires the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to “survey parents to determine if state and local efforts are effective in increasing parental involvement.” In addition Section 59-18-900 of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) requires that the annual school report cards include “evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students” as performance indicators to evaluate schools. The tool that has been adopted by the EOC and administered by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to meet these statutory requirements is the annual parent survey.

**CRITICAL FACTS**

The parent survey was commissioned by the EOC and designed by the Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina in 2001. The survey is designed to determine parent perceptions of their child's school and to evaluate the effectiveness of state and local parental involvement programs. Since 2002 the South Carolina Department of Education has annually administered the survey, and the EOC has provided an annual review of the survey results. The attached report reflects the results of the 2011 administration of the parent survey.

**TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS**

Study began in January 2012 and completed in February 2012

**ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC**

**Cost:** No fiscal impact beyond current appropriations

**Fund/Source:**

**ACTION REQUEST**

**For approval**

**For information**

**Approved**

**ACTION TAKEN**

**Amended**

**Not Approved**

**Action deferred (explain)**

2012

# Results of the 2011 Parent Survey



**SC EDUCATION  
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**



PO Box 11867 | 227 Blatt Building | Columbia SC 29211 | [WWW.SCEOC.ORG](http://WWW.SCEOC.ORG)

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## **Acknowledgements**

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) acknowledges the ongoing assistance of Cynthia Hearn of the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) in providing data files, timely updates and important information on the annual administration of the parent survey. The EOC also appreciates the parents who took the time to complete and return the annual parent survey, because their perspective is critical in evaluating public schools. And, the EOC is also grateful for principals and administrators who encouraged parental participation in the survey and who oversaw the administration of the survey.

## **Executive Summary**

The parent survey was designed in 2001 to meet the requirements of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) and the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act. Section 59-18-900 of the EAA requires that the annual school report card include "evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students" as performance indicators to evaluate schools. In addition Section 59-28-190 of the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act requires the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to "survey parents to determine if state and local efforts are effective in increasing parental involvement." The tool that has been adopted by the EOC and administered by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to meet these statutory requirements is the annual parent survey.

Since 2002 the SCDE has administered the parent survey to a sample of parents whose children attended public schools in South Carolina. The parents of students in the highest grade at all elementary, middle and high schools are surveyed. In high schools and career centers, parents of all 11<sup>th</sup> graders are surveyed. In schools with a grade configuration that spans multiple levels, parents of children in multiple grades are surveyed. For example, in a school with a grade span of grades 6 through 10, parents of children in grades 8 and 10 are surveyed. For parents in schools with a grade span of K-12, parents of children in grades 5, 8 and 11 are surveyed. Parents in schools containing grades 2 or lower (K-1, K-2, and 1-2 configurations) are not surveyed. Annually, the EOC has analyzed the results of the parent survey and issued reports. The reports are online at [www.eoc.sc.gov](http://www.eoc.sc.gov).

In 2011 the number of parent surveys completed and returned totaled 73,755, a 6.2 percent increase in the number of surveys completed and returned in the prior school year. More parent surveys were returned in 2011 than in any other year since the survey was first administered. Based upon the number of total surveys distributed, approximately 40 percent of all parent surveys that were mailed to schools were completed and returned. This methodology of calculating a response rate underestimates the statewide response rate because schools requested more parent surveys than the total number of parents at each eligible to participate in the survey. Schools requested and received extra copies of the parent survey for parents who enrolled children the second semester or who lost their original form. Based upon the average daily membership of students in grades 5, 8 and 11, approximately 47 percent of parents completed and returned surveys in 2011. This method underestimates the

sample size. The parents of some 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are also eligible to complete the survey due to the unique grade configurations of the schools. Therefore, using two methods of calculating a response rate, one method that underestimated and one that overestimated the total number of parents eligible to take the survey, the response rate to the 2011 parent survey was between 40 and 47 percent, each of which by industry standards is considered average.

In 2011 there was one significant change in the administration of the parent survey. In 2011 there were no parent surveys printed in Spanish made available to parents as compared to 9,759 that were distributed in 2010. In 2011 the percentage of parents who completed the survey and who identified themselves as Hispanic was 4.6 percent as compared to 5.0 percent in 2010.

An analysis of the respondents to the 2011 parent survey concludes that the survey responses typically over represented the perceptions of parents who had children in elementary schools and underrepresented the perceptions of parents who had children in high school. Furthermore, the respondents typically have obtained higher educational achievements and have greater median household incomes than the general population of South Carolina.

As in prior years, the “typical” parent responding to the survey was a white female having attended or graduated from college and having a household income of greater than \$35,000. The respondents typically had obtained higher educational achievements and greater median household incomes than the general population of South Carolina. Typically, parents of elementary school students were overrepresented in the survey responses while parents of high school students were underrepresented. Furthermore, when compared to the enrollment of students in public schools, parents of African American students were underrepresented in the responses.

The results of the 2011 parent survey demonstrate that, despite a significant increase in the number of parents responding, parent satisfaction levels with the three characteristics measured - the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child’s school—were consistent with the prior year’s results. Significant changes are estimated as an annual increase or decrease of three or more percent. Satisfaction is defined as the percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the learning environment, home and school relations, and social and physical environment of their child’s school.

**Percentage of Parents Satisfied with:**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Increase/Decrease</b>
Learning Environment	<b>84.3</b>	85.9	<b>-1.6</b>
Home and School Relations	<b>80.2</b>	81.9	<b>-1.7</b>
Social and Physical Environment	<b>82.4</b>	83.2	<b>-0.8</b>

Comparing the 2011 parent survey results with the mean satisfaction levels of the three prior year survey results, across all three characteristics, parent satisfaction in 2011 was also consistent with the mean or average of the parent survey results from 2009 through 2010.

**Percentage of Parents Satisfied With:**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Mean 2008-2010</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Learning Environment	<b>84.3</b>	84.6	<b>-0.3</b>
Home and School Relations	<b>80.2</b>	80.4	<b>0.2</b>
Social and Physical Environment	<b>82.4</b>	81.5	<b>0.9</b>

Parental satisfaction, the percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing, declined as the absolute rating of the school declined. The largest difference in parental satisfaction between the highest and lowest performing schools was in parent perception of the social and physical environment of their child's school, followed closely by the learning environment.

**Percentage of Parents whose Child Attends an Excellent or At-Risk School, Satisfied with:**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>At-Risk</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Learning Environment	<b>89.9</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>14.9</b>
Home and School Relations	<b>85.1</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>8.2</b>
Social and Physical Environment	<b>88.4</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>17.3</b>

Regarding parental involvement, parents who responded to the 2011 annual survey reported comparable levels of parental involvement to other years and identified work schedules as their greatest obstacle to involvement.

**Parents Report Obstacles to Parental Involvement in 2011**

Work Schedule	54.4%
Lack of timely notification of volunteer opportunities	24.6%
School does not encourage involvement	16.2%
Lack of child or adult care services	14.5%
Family and health problems	14.3%
Transportation	11.5%
Involvement not appreciated	11.4%

Based upon additional analysis conducted at the state level by the South Carolina Educational Policy Center at the University of South Carolina and national research conducted through the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET), the staff proposes to the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee the following recommendations:

1. The survey questions on the Parent Survey have not been updated since 2001. The staff recommends that the Parent, Teacher and Student Surveys be reviewed to determine how the survey items could be better aligned among all three surveys. Such a review should also take into account the study provided by the South Carolina Educational Policy Center and the initial results of the MET Project. Since the original items on the Parent Survey were designed by the EOC, the EOC staff would work with the South Carolina Department of Education on this initiative.
2. The EOC staff should work with school districts to determine effective strategies for increasing the number of parents who participate in the survey, especially parents of Hispanic or African-American students who are currently underrepresented in the survey results.

## PART ONE

### Results of Prior Parent Surveys

Annually, the EOC issues a report documenting the results of the parent survey. The annual report focuses on two specific areas: (1) parent perceptions or satisfaction levels with public schools; and (2) parental involvement activities as self-reported by parents. Copies of prior reports can be downloaded at <http://www.eoc.sc.gov>.

In 2010 the number of parent surveys completed and returned totaled 69,474, a 3.7 percent increase in the number of surveys completed and returned in the prior school year. Between 36 and 47 percent of parents completed and returned the survey. The variation can be explained accordingly. Based upon the number of total surveys actually mailed to the schools, approximately 36 percent of all parent surveys were completed and returned. This methodology of calculating a response rate underestimates the statewide response rate because schools requested more parent surveys than the total number of parents at each eligible to participate in the survey. Schools requested and received extra copies of the parent survey for parents who enrolled children the second semester or who lost their original form. However, based upon the average daily membership of students in grades 5, 8 and 11, approximately 47 percent of parents completed and returned surveys in 2010. This method underestimates the total number of eligible parents surveyed. The parents of some 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are also eligible to complete the survey due to the unique grade configurations of the schools.

As in prior years, the “typical” parent responding to the survey was a white female having attended or graduated from college and having a household income of greater than \$35,000. The respondents typically had obtained higher educational achievements and greater median household incomes than the general population of South Carolina. Typically, parents of elementary school students were overrepresented in the survey responses while parents of high school students were underrepresented. Furthermore, when compared to the enrollment of students in public schools, parents of African American students did not complete and return the survey and were therefore underrepresented in the responses.

The results of the 2010 parent survey demonstrate that, despite a significant increase in the number of parents responding, parent satisfaction levels with the three characteristics measured - the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child’s school—were consistent with the prior year’s results. Significant changes are estimated as an annual increase or decrease of three or more percent. Satisfaction is defined as the percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the learning environment, home and school relations, and social and physical environment of their child’s school.

<b>Percentage of Parents Satisfied With:</b>			
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
Learning Environment	<b>85.9</b>	85.5	0.4
Home and School Relations	<b>81.9</b>	81.4	0.5
Social and Physical Environment	<b>83.2</b>	82.7	0.5

However, comparing the 2010 parent survey results with the mean satisfaction levels of the three prior year survey results, across all three characteristics, parent satisfaction in 2010 exceeded the mean or average of the parent survey results from 2007 through 2009.

<b>Percentage of Parents Satisfied With:</b>			
<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Mean 2007-2009</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Learning Environment	<b>85.9</b>	83.3	2.6
Home and School Relations	<b>81.9</b>	79.0	2.9
Social and Physical Environment	<b>83.2</b>	80.1	<b>3.1</b>

Regarding parental involvement, parents who responded to the 2010 annual survey reported comparable levels of parental involvement to other years and identified work schedules as their greatest obstacle to involvement.

<b>Parents Report Obstacles to Parental Involvement in 2010</b>	
Work Schedule	55.1%
Lack of timely notification of volunteer opportunities	25.3%
School does not encourage involvement	17.4%
Lack of child or adult care services	15.1%
Family and health problems	14.3%
Involvement not appreciated	12.0%
Transportation	11.8%

The 2007 parent survey report was a detailed analysis that included the following components: (1) tabulation and analysis of parent survey responses by school type and rating; (2) a review of the research literature on parental involvement in public schools, including the benefits of parental involvement on students, parents and schools; and (3) an in-depth analysis comparing the results of the parent and teacher surveys administered in 2007. The parent and teacher surveys measure satisfaction with the same three constructs, the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of schools. A third component of the 2007 triennial evaluation included reliability, correlation and multiple regression analyses to compare the teacher and parent survey responses to determine the degree to which parent and teacher satisfaction variables correlated with the absolute index of the school and the statistical predictions between the parent and teacher satisfaction variables and the school absolute index. The data analysis confirmed that the questions on both the parent and teacher surveys consistently and reliably measured parent and teacher satisfaction with each construct (learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment), but the questions were significantly stronger in the teacher survey. The correlation analysis suggests that parents who have children in schools with higher absolute school indices and teachers employed in schools with higher absolute school indices tend to be more satisfied with the learning environment, home and school relations, and the social and physical environment than those involved with schools earning lower indices.

The multiple regression analysis provided contrasting information.

- For parents, all three indicators were significant predictors of an elementary, middle or high school's absolute index when analyzed separately to control for multicollinearity. However, parent satisfaction of the social and physical environment was the **strongest predictor** of the absolute school index.
- Parent satisfaction with all three indicators explained 49 percent of the variance in the absolute index of elementary schools, 57 percent in middle, and 30 percent in high schools.
- For teachers, the social and physical environment was **not** a predictor of a school's absolute index. Instead, teacher satisfaction with home and school relations was a predictor of a middle and high school's absolute index while teacher satisfaction with the learning environment and home and school relations was a predictor of an elementary school's absolute index.
- Furthermore, teacher satisfaction with home and school relations was the **strongest indicator** of the absolute school index for all three school levels.

Based on the results of the 2007 parent survey, the EOC recommended that:

- Funding should be provided to the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to implement the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act;
- Technical assistance to underperforming schools should include designing strategies to address weaknesses in the learning environment, home and school relations, social and physical environment as revealed on the teacher and parent surveys;
- SCDE should provide results of the parent survey as well as teacher and student surveys directly to each school district superintendent, school principal and school improvement council chair; and
- Principals and school improvement councils should identify strengths and weaknesses in their schools and implement policies to improve parental involvement by all parents and address issues of concern to teachers, parents and students.

The results of the 2011 parent survey are documented in this report.



## PART TWO

### Administration of the 2011 Parent Survey

The design and sampling methodology for the parent survey were established in 2001. The EOC contracted with the Institute of Families in Society at the University of South Carolina to design the survey and to recommend a medium for distributing the survey. To maintain complete anonymity and to maximize the return rate, the Institute recommended that the survey be mailed to a sample of parents along with a postage paid, return envelope. While the sampling methodology proposed by the Institute was implemented, the parent survey has never been mailed to parents due to budgetary restrictions. Instead, schools have been given the responsibility for distributing and collecting the forms. Generally, schools send the surveys home with students. Some schools have held parent meetings or special meetings at school during which the surveys were distributed.

Rather than surveying all parents of public school students, the parents of students in the highest grade at all elementary, middle and high schools are surveyed. In high schools and career centers, parents of all 11<sup>th</sup> graders are surveyed. In schools with a grade configuration that spans multiple levels, parents of children in multiple grades are surveyed. For example, in a school with a grade span of grades 6 through 10, parents of children in grades 8 and 10 are surveyed. For parents in schools with a grade span of K-12, parents of children in grades 5, 8 and 11 are surveyed. Parents in schools containing grades 2 or lower, which include primary schools, child development schools and schools with configurations like K, K-1, and K-2 are not surveyed. The parent survey is typically administered during the second semester of each school year. Appendix A provides the instructions used by schools in 2010 to administer the parent as well as student and teacher surveys.

Compared to the prior years, in 2011 there was one significant change in the administration of the parent survey. In 2011 there were no parent surveys printed in Spanish. All other administrative and shipping procedures remained the same. A copy of the 2011 survey is in the appendix. The 2011 administration of the parent survey occurred over the following time period and involved the following actions.

February 28, 2011	All schools received survey forms.
March 18, 2011	Date for parent survey forms returned to school.
March 25, 2011	Last day for schools to mail completed forms to contractor.

A school survey coordinator, a staff person designated by the school principal, distributed and collected the parent surveys at each school according to instructions provided by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). According to SCDE, an independent contractor hired by the agency to mail to each school the following:

- ✓ An administrative envelope containing;
  1. A letter to the principal from the Education Oversight Committee (EOC),
  2. Two sets of instructions for administering the surveys,
  3. A page of shipping instructions, and
  4. One pre-addressed, bar-coded UPS shipping label (used to return completed surveys to contractor, freight prepaid).

- ✓ Parent survey envelopes. Each envelope contains a letter from the State Superintendent of Education and a parent survey form.
- ✓ Student survey forms.<sup>1</sup>

The name of each school was printed on the survey forms to assist parents who were completing surveys for multiple schools. Schools were also advised to “distribute the parent surveys as soon as possible” after delivery. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2007-08, SCDE entered into a five-year contract with a vendor to print, ship, process and scan the parent survey with the annual costs the same each year.<sup>2</sup> The annual costs of printing, shipping, processing and scanning the parent surveys are approximately \$54,000.

Each school’s designated survey coordinator then distributed envelopes containing the parent survey and letter from the state Superintendent of Education to each classroom teacher within the designated grade being surveyed. Teachers gave each student an envelope and instructions to take the envelope home for their parents to complete and then return the completed survey to school in the sealed envelope. The envelopes were designed to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of all parents. Parents were given the option of mailing the completed survey directly to SCDE with parents incurring the cost of the mailing or of returning the survey to the school. The school survey coordinator was expressly advised that mailing of the envelopes directly to the parents was allowed with all costs to be borne by the school. Information did not exist to document if any schools mailed the parent surveys to parents.

As in the prior year, the 2011 instructions contained the following special note that cautions schools against implementing policies that would create disincentives for parents who opt to mail in their survey responses:

**SPECIAL NOTE:** We appreciate that schools work diligently each year to encourage parents to complete and return the parent surveys. Some schools offer incentives such as ice cream treats or extra recess time to individual students or classes where all students have returned completed parent surveys. Each year parents call the Department to inform us that their child is upset that he/she cannot return the parent survey form to school and receive the special incentive because the parent wants to mail the survey form to the Department. Parents have the option to mail in the survey form, so we would encourage you to not penalize students whose parents’ mail in their completed survey form.<sup>3</sup>

Upon receiving the completed parent surveys, the school survey coordinator then mailed the forms to the independent contractor for scanning and preparation of the data files. Individual school results were tabulated by SCDE. The overall parent satisfaction scores of three questions relating to the school’s overall learning environment, home and school relations, and social and physical environment were printed on the 2011 annual school report cards. For each school, SCDE aggregated the responses to all survey questions and provided the data files to the district office.

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<sup>1</sup> “Administration of the 2011 Report Card Surveys,” South Carolina Department of Education.

<sup>2</sup> Cynthia Hearn, e-mail message to Melanie Barton, February 4, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> “Administration of the 2011 Report Card Surveys,” South Carolina Department of Education.

As in prior years, the 2011 parent survey contained a total of fifty-four questions. Forty-six questions were designed to elicit information on parental perceptions and parental involvement patterns. For the first twenty-one questions, parents were asked to respond to individual statements using one of the following responses: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree or Don't Know. These twenty-one questions focused on three key components: learning environment, home and school relations, and the physical and social environment of their child's school. These components and individual activities reflect the framework devised by Dr. Joyce Epstein of the National Network of Partnership Schools.

The remaining questions on the survey addressed parental involvement activities and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. Parents were asked about their participation in various parental involvement activities both in and outside of the school. Parents were also asked to determine from a list of responses potential barriers to their involvement in their child's education. Finally, parents were asked to provide specific information about themselves, their child, and their household. Parents were asked four questions about their child: their child's grade in school, gender, race/ethnicity, and grades on his or her last report card. Four questions sought information about the parent: his or her gender, race/ethnicity, highest level of education and total yearly household income.



## PART THREE

### Respondents of the 2011 Parent Survey

The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) in 2011 issued the seventh edition of *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys*. The AAPOR notes that there are mixed mode surveys that “can consist of surveys in which there are separate samples which are conducted with different modes, a unified sample in which multiple modes are used for individual cases (e.g. in address-based samples employing both in-person and postal approaches to obtain responses), or a combination of both. . . . However, for calculating outcome rates many of the detailed, mode-specific disposition codes are irrelevant. They can be collapsed into the major categories used in the outcome formulas used in *Standard Definitions*.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, as in prior years, the response rate for the parent survey is calculated accordingly:

Response Rate 4 =

$$\frac{\text{Complete surveys} + \text{Partial Surveys}}{(\text{Completed} + \text{Partial Surveys Returned}) + (\text{Non-Returned Surveys}) + (\text{Estimate of proportion surveys of unknown eligibility that are eligible})}$$

According to Instructional Assessment Resources at the University of Texas, acceptable response rates vary by the method of distribution:

Mail: 50% adequate, 60% good, 70% very good

Phone: 80% good

Email: 40% average, 50% good, 60% very good

Online: 30% average

Classroom paper: > 50% = good

Face-to-face: 80-85% good<sup>5</sup>

Distribution of the South Carolina parent survey does not fall within any of the above media for distribution. Consequently, two methods were developed to analyze the response rate for the 2011 parent survey to determine the percentage of eligible parents who completed and returned a parent survey.

One method is to compare the number of surveys mailed to schools with the number of completed surveys returned. According to SCDE, a total of 183,764 parent surveys were mailed to 1,145 schools for distribution. The schools included elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, career centers, charter schools, and schools in the South Carolina Public Charter School District as well as the following special schools:

- Felton Laboratory School,
- John de la Howe School,

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<sup>4</sup> The American Association for Public Opinion Research. 2011. *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. AAPOR., p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Instructional Assessment Resources. University of Texas at Austin, 21 September 2011. <<http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/gather/method/survey-Response.php>>.

- Wil Lou Gray School,
- School for the Deaf and the Blind,
- Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics, and
- Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities

Schools containing grades 2 or lower were not included in the survey. This first method inflates the sample size because schools requested and received extra copies of the parent survey for parents who enrolled children in the second semester or who lost their original form.

A second method is to estimate the unknown eligibility of surveys by using the statewide 135-day average daily membership of all students in grades 5, 8 and 11 in school year 2010-11 as the sample size. On the 45<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup> and 135<sup>th</sup> days of school, school districts report each student by grade and by a pupil classification system prescribed in the Education Finance Act. In school year 2010-11 the 135-day average daily membership for grades 5, 8 and 11 rounded to the nearest student totaled 156,179.<sup>6</sup> This method underestimates the number of parents surveyed. The parents of some 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students also complete the survey because some schools have a grade configuration that spans multiple levels or these schools represent the highest grade level in the school.

As reflected in Table 1, the total number of parent surveys returned in 2011 increased by 6.2 percent or 4,281 over the number returned in the prior year. More parent surveys were returned in 2011 than in any other year since the survey was administered.

**Table 1**  
**Total Number of Parent Surveys Returned**

<b>2011</b>	<b>73,755</b>
2010	69,474
2009	67,014
2008	68,761
2007	64,596
2006	69,495
2005	66,895
2004	66,283
2003	64,732
2002	55,864

Using the two methods of determining response rates and the total number of parent surveys returned, two response rates were calculated in Table 2. Between 40 and 47 percent of all eligible parents surveyed responded to the 2011 parent survey. In the prior year, 2010, using the same two methodologies, the response rate was between 36 and

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<sup>6</sup> “SC 135-Day Average Daily Membership by Grade, by District, 2010-2011,” South Carolina Department of Education. <<http://ed.sc.gov/data/other-data/AverageDailyMembershipandAttendance.cfm>>.

47 percent.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, approximately, four out of every ten eligible parents responded to the parent survey in 2011. Compared to IAR’s definitions of acceptable response rates for email and online surveys, the response rate to the 2011 parent survey should be considered average. According to IAR, “generally, the better your respondents know you, the better your response rate. Respondents who you know by name or have regular contact with will be more likely to respond to your survey than respondents you do not know.”

**Table 2  
Determining the Response Rate**

	Sample Size	Surveys Returned	Response Rate
Method 1: Surveys Distributed	183,764	73,755	40.1%
Method 2: ADM of 5, 8 and 11 <sup>th</sup> grades	156,179	73,755	47.2%

The following research questions were posed:

- What were the characteristics of the respondents of the 2011 parent survey, and how do the respondents compare to parents of all public school children?
- Did the decision by the South Carolina Department of Education not to provide parent surveys written in Spanish reduce the proportion of the Hispanic parents who filled out the surveys?

Parents completing the survey were asked four questions about their child:

1. What grade is your child in? (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>)
2. What is your child’s gender?
3. What is your child’s race/ethnicity?
4. What grades did your child receive on his/her last report card?

Parents were asked another set of four questions about themselves and their family:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your race/ethnic group?
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - Attended elementary/high school
  - Completed high school/GED
  - Earned Associate Degree
  - Attended college/training program
  - Earned college degree
  - Postgraduate study/and/or degree

<sup>7</sup> “Results and Analyses of the 2009 Parent Survey.” Education Oversight Committee. April 19, 2010. <<http://eoc.sc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/005CF7BA-A43F-421B-AB04-72B8B8B6E4A3/34870/2009ParentSurvey2009.pdf>>”

4. What is your family's total yearly household income?

- Less than \$15,000
- \$15,000 - \$24,999
- \$25,000 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$54,999
- \$55,000 - \$75,000
- More than \$75,000

Responses to these eight questions revealed the following about the parents who completed the 2011 parent survey. As in prior years, the "typical" parent responding to the survey was a white female having attended or graduated from college. A majority of the respondents reported earning over \$35,000.

In 2011 the percentage of parents who completed the survey who identified themselves as Hispanic was 4.8 percent as compared to 5.0 percent in 2010.

**Table 3**  
**Respondents to the 2011 Parent Survey**  
**(n=73,755)**

<b>Gender</b>	
Male	<b>14.2%</b>
Female	<b>84.2%</b>
<b>Race</b>	
African-American	<b>32.1%</b>
Caucasian/white	<b>57.0%</b>
Hispanic	<b>4.6%</b>
All Other	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>Education</b>	
Attended elementary/high school	<b>10.9%</b>
Completed high school/GED	<b>22.8%</b>
Earned Associate Degree	<b>10.1%</b>
Attended college/training program	<b>21.5%</b>
Earned college degree	<b>19.4%</b>
Postgraduate study/and/or degree	<b>11.1%</b>
<b>Household Income</b>	
Less than \$15,000	<b>13.2%</b>
\$15,000 to \$24,999	<b>13.3%</b>
\$25,000 - \$34,999	<b>13.2%</b>
\$35,000 - \$54,999	<b>15.8%</b>
\$55,000 - \$75,000	<b>13.5%</b>
More than \$75,000	<b>23.3%</b>
<b>Their Child Enrolled in:</b>	
Grades 3-5	<b>43.9%</b>
Grades 6-8	<b>37.4%</b>
Grades 9-11	<b>16.1%</b>
<b>Their Child's Gender:</b>	
Male	<b>44.5%</b>
Female	<b>53.8%</b>
<b>Their Child's Ethnicity:</b>	
African-American	<b>33.4%</b>
Caucasian/White	<b>56.6%</b>
Hispanic	<b>4.8%</b>
All Other	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>Their Child's Grades:</b>	
All or mostly A's and B's	<b>58.4%</b>
All or mostly B's and C's	<b>27.4%</b>
All or mostly C's and D's	<b>8.9%</b>
All or mostly D's and F's	<b>1.8%</b>

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because some questions were not answered.

To determine if the survey responses were representative of elementary, middle and high school parents, the following analysis was done. First, 62,779 parents who returned the 2011 survey indicated that their child was in 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, or 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Defining grade 5 as elementary schools, grade 8 as middle school and grade 11, high school, approximately 45 percent of parents who completed the survey were elementary school parents, 36 percent, middle school and 18 percent, high school (Table 4). As compared to the prior year, the percentage of surveys reflecting the perceptions of elementary and middle school parents remained relatively unchanged; however, the percentage of parents of high school students declined from 20 to 18 percent.

As a point of reference, 36 percent of the 135-day average daily membership in 2010-11 was attributed to students in grade 5, 34 percent to students in grade 8 and 30 percent to students in grade 11 (Table 3). The 2011 survey responses over represent the perceptions of parents in elementary schools and under represent the perceptions of parents who have children in high school.

**Table 4**  
**Parental Respondents by Child's Grade**

Child Enrolled in:	Surveys Returned	% of All Surveys		2010-11 135-day Average Daily Membership (ADM)	% of ADM (Grades 5, 8, & 11)
Grade 5	28,467	45%		55,842	35.8%
Grade 8	22,738	36%		52,929	33.9%
Grade 11	11,574	18%		47,408	30.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62,779</b>			<b>156,179</b>	

When asked about their child's race or ethnicity, 57 percent of the parents responded that their child's ethnicity was white, 33 percent African American and 5 percent Hispanic. Compared to the ethnicity of children in the public schools of South Carolina in 2009-10, parents whose children are African American were underrepresented by at least 5.0% in the results (Table 5).

**Table 5**  
**Ethnicity of Children**

	2011 Parent Survey	Student Enrollment All Public Schools 2009-10 <sup>8</sup>	Difference
White	56.6%	53.7%	2.9%
African American	33.4%	38.4%	-5.0%
Hispanic	4.8%	5.8%	-1.0%
Other	3.0%	2.1%	0.9%

Note: "Other" includes American Indian/Alaskan and Asian/Pacific Islander.

With respect to educational attainment, 30.5 percent of parents who responded to the survey in 2011 had earned a bachelor or postgraduate degree. For comparison purposes, the United States Census Bureau projected that 24.3 percent of persons 25

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD) < "State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey," 2009-10, v.1b.

years old and over in South Carolina had earned a bachelor's degree or higher in 2009.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the annual household income of the respondents, in 2011 52.6 percent of the parents who completed the survey reported having an annual household income in excess of \$35,000. For comparison purposes, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median household income in South Carolina in 2010 was \$45,669.<sup>10</sup>

## **Conclusions**

- The total number of parent surveys completed and returned in 2011 was 73,755, a 6.2 percent or 4,281 over the number returned in the prior year. More parent surveys were returned in 2011 than in any other year since the survey was administered.
- Using two methods of calculating a response rate, one method that underestimated and one that overestimated the total number of parents eligible to take the survey, the response rate to the 2011 parent survey was either 40 or 47 percent, each of which by industry standards is considered average.
- An analysis of the respondents to the 2011 parent survey concludes that the survey responses typically over represented the perceptions of parents in elementary schools and underrepresented the perceptions of parents who have children in high school. Furthermore, the respondents typically have obtained higher educational achievements and have greater median household incomes than the general population of South Carolina.

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012, "Educational Attainment by State: 1990 to 2009," <<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0233.pdf>>.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Median Household Income by State." <<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/data/statemedian/>>.



## **PART FOUR**

### **Results of the 2011 Parent Survey**

The parent survey was designed to determine: (1) parent perceptions or satisfaction with their child's public school and (2) parental involvement efforts in public schools. The following is an analysis that documents the actual parent responses to questions focusing on parental satisfaction and parental involvement.

#### **Parent Perceptions of Their Child's School**

The information below summarizes the results of the 2011 parent survey. The percentages do not add to 100 percent because invalid or incomplete responses are not reflected. At the school level, responses to these questions can reveal the strengths and weaknesses of parental involvement initiatives at the individual school site. Statewide, the data provide policymakers information on the overall effectiveness of policies and programs in promoting parental involvement. The following analysis focuses on parent perceptions or satisfaction with the learning environment, home-school relations, and the social and physical environment of their children's schools. With a 6.2 percent increase in the number of parents responding to the survey, any significant change in the positive or negative perception of parents would reveal a shift in public opinion. "Significant change" is defined as a change of three percent or more in satisfaction.

#### **A. Learning Environment**

Five questions in the parent survey ask parents to reflect upon the learning environment of their child's school. Questions 1 through 4 are designed to elicit parental agreement with specific aspects of the learning environment at their child's school, focusing on homework, expectations, and academic assistance. Question 5 offers parents the opportunity to report on their overall satisfaction with the learning environment at their child's school. For each school, the aggregate parental responses to question 5 are included on the annual school report card if a sufficient number of parents complete the survey.

Table 6 summarizes the total responses to these five questions for all parents who completed the 2011 parent survey. The data reflect the percentage of parents responding out of the total number of parents surveys completed, 73,755. Overall, 84.3 percent of parents responded that they were satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school. Across the five questions, the percentage of parents who disagreed or strongly disagreed was highest for questions 4 and 5. Approximately, one in five parents either did not believe or did not know if their child received extra help when needed.

**Table 6**  
**Percentage of Parents in 2011 Responding:**

<b>Learning Environment Questions</b>	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Disagree or Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	<b>86.7</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>2.3</b>
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	<b>88.9</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	<b>88.7</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>3.1</b>
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	<b>78.7</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>6.7</b>
<b>5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>

Table 7 compares the percentage of parents who responded that they agreed or strongly agreed to these questions each year from 2008 through 2011. Parents who completed the survey in 2011 were overwhelmingly positive about the overall learning environment of their child's school. The level of parental satisfaction in 2011 was slightly less across all questions; however, no change was greater than three percent or more. Again, consistently over time, parental response to Question 4, "my child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it," has elicited the lowest percentage of parents responding that they agreed or strongly agreed.

**Table 7**  
**2004-2011**  
**Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree to:**

<b>Learning Environment Questions</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	<b>86.7</b>	89.0	89.9	86.9
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	<b>88.9</b>	90.3	90.9	88.3
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	<b>88.7</b>	90.4	90.9	88.2
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	<b>78.7</b>	79.8	79.7	77.7
<b>5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school</b>	<b>84.3</b>	85.9	85.5	82.3

To determine if there are any significant changes in parent perception of the learning environment of their child's school over recent years, an analysis was done to compare the 2011 results with the average or mean results of the prior three years. Table 8 documents the percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement regarding the learning environment of their child's school in 2011 compared to the average percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement in years 2008 through 2010. Despite having more parents responding, parent satisfaction with the learning environment of their child's schools was consistent with the parent satisfaction levels of the three prior years.

**Table 8**  
**Comparing 2010 Results with Three-Year Average**  
**(Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree)**

<b>Learning Environment Questions</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Mean % (2008-2010)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	<b>86.7</b>	88.6	-1.9
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	<b>88.9</b>	89.8	-0.9
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	<b>88.7</b>	89.8	-1.1
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	<b>78.7</b>	79.1	-0.4
<b>5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school</b>	<b>84.3</b>	84.6	-0.3

Comparing parental responses to Question 5 with the 2011 absolute rating of their child's school, Table 9 documents that a higher percentage parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the overall learning environment at their child's school. Parental satisfaction declines as the absolute rating of the school declines. Comparing parents whose child attended a school with an Excellent rating versus parents whose child attended a school with an At-Risk rating, there was an approximate 15 percent difference in parent satisfaction with the learning environment.

**Table 9**  
**I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.**  
**(Percentage of parents by Absolute Rating of Child's School)**

<b>2011 Absolute Rating</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>
Excellent	46.3	43.6	89.9
Good	51.5	36.4	87.9
Average	52.4	32.2	84.6
Below Average	51.2	30.1	81.3
At Risk	50.3	24.7	75.0

Then, analyzing the responses across elementary, middle and high schools based again on absolute ratings, the data reveal that parent satisfaction with the learning environment of their child's school tends to be greatest for parents whose children are enrolled in elementary schools and typically declines for parents whose children are enrolled in middle or high schools, even across absolute ratings (Table 10). The only exception is for parents whose children attend schools with an At-Risk rating. Parents whose children attend middle schools with an At-Risk rating were more satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school than were parents whose children attended elementary or high schools with an At-Risk rating.

**Table 10**  
**I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.**  
**(Percentage of parents by Absolute Rating of Child's Elementary, Middle or High School)**

2011 Absolute Rating	Type	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree or Strongly Agree
Excellent	Elementary	41.1	51.0	92.1
	Middle	49.6	39.0	88.6
	High	53.6	31.9	85.5
Good	Elementary	47.7	42.9	90.6
	Middle	54.5	31.0	85.5
	High	56.3	26.2	82.5
Average	Elementary	48.8	38.6	87.4
	Middle	56.2	25.9	82.1
	High	55.5	24.3	79.8
Below Average	Elementary	48.4	35.6	84.0
	Middle	55.0	25.9	80.9
	High	49.1	23.4	72.5
At Risk	Elementary	46.7	26.8	73.5
	Middle	52.5	23.7	76.2
	High	50.7	23.1	73.8

### **B. Home and School Relations**

The next eleven questions on the parent survey determine parent perception of home and school relations by focusing on the relationship between the parent and their child's teacher and between the parent and the school. Question 11 offers parents the opportunity to report on their overall satisfaction with home and school relations at their child's school. For each school, the aggregate parental responses to question 11 are included on the annual school report card.

Table 11 summarizes the total responses to these eleven questions for all parents who completed the 2011 parent survey. Overall, 80.2 percent of parents were satisfied with home and school relations at their child's school. An examination of questions 1 through 10, which ask parents more specific questions about their personal experiences at their child's school, found the following.

- Parents overwhelmingly agreed that the principal at their child's school was available and welcoming.
- Over three-fourths of the parents agreed that their child's school returned phone calls or e-mails promptly, provided information about what their child should be learning, and scheduled activities at times that parents could attend.

- Over forty percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their child's teachers contacted them to say good things about their child or invited the parents to visit the classroom during the school day.
- One third of the parents disagreed that their child's teachers told them how to help their child learn.
- One-fourth of parents disagreed or strongly disagreed that their child's school included parents in decision-making.
- One-half of all parents responded that they did not believe or did not know if the school considered changes based on parental input.
- Nearly one in three parents did not believe or did not know if students were treated fairly at their child's school.

**Table 11**  
**Percentage of Parents in 2011 Responding:**

<b>Home and School Relations Questions</b>	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Disagree or Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child	<b>54.5</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>1.9</b>
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	<b>62.4</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>2.2</b>
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	<b>52.0</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>4.3</b>
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	<b>77.7</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>5.9</b>
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	<b>66.7</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	<b>75.6</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	<b>49.2</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>22.9</b>
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	<b>76.9</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	<b>67.3</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>13.1</b>
10. My principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	<b>80.1</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>7.7</b>
<b>11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school</b>	<b>80.2</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>3.4</b>

Approximately 80 percent of all parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the overall home and school relations at their child's school. As

documented by Table 12, the trend is that parental satisfaction with home and school relations has increased since 2008.

**Table 12**  
**2004-2011**

**Home and School Relations**

**Question 11: I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.**

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Agree or Strongly Agree	<b>80.2%</b>	81.9%	81.4%	77.8%	77.9%	76.6%	67.8%	66.9%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	<b>13.9%</b>	14.3%	14.9%	16.0%	17.1%	16.6%	17.7%	18.2%

Analyzing parental satisfaction trends over the recent years, Table 13 documents parental satisfaction with all eleven questions regarding home and school relations since 2008.

**Table 13**  
**2008-2011**

**Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree to:**

<b>Home and School Relations Questions</b>	<b>2011</b>	2010	2009	2008
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	<b>54.5</b>	52.2	57.2	53.8
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	<b>62.4</b>	64.1	64.4	62.2
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	<b>52.0</b>	53.7	54.8	53.2
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	<b>77.7</b>	79.5	79.3	75.0
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	<b>66.7</b>	67.8	67.9	65.1
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	<b>75.6</b>	78.3	78.3	75.4
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	<b>49.2</b>	50.1	50.5	47.8
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	<b>76.9</b>	78.9	78.8	75.5
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	<b>67.3</b>	67.5	67.4	63.4
10. My principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	<b>80.1</b>	81.4	80.8	77.3
<b>11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school</b>	<b>80.2</b>	81.9	81.4	77.8

An additional analysis was done comparing the mean or average percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed to each statement between 2008 and 2010 with the percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed in 2011. Table 14 documents the percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement regarding home and school relations at their child's school in 2011 compared to the average percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement in years 2008 through 2010. Again, using a three percent change as "significant," there was no significant increase or decrease in parental responses to any of these questions.

**Table 14**  
**Comparing 2010 Results with Three-Year Average**  
**(Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree)**

<b>Home and School Relations Questions</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Mean %</b>	<b>Difference</b>
		<b>(2008-2010)</b>	
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	<b>54.5</b>	54.4	0.1
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	<b>62.4</b>	63.6	-1.2
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	<b>52.0</b>	53.9	-1.9
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	<b>77.7</b>	77.9	-0.2
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	<b>66.7</b>	66.9	-0.2
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	<b>75.6</b>	77.3	-1.7
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	<b>49.2</b>	49.5	-0.3
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	<b>76.9</b>	77.7	-0.8
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	<b>67.3</b>	66.1	1.2
10. My principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	<b>80.1</b>	79.8	0.3
<b>11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school</b>	<b>80.2</b>	80.4	-0.2

Comparing parental responses to Question 11 with the 2011 absolute rating of their child's school, Table 15 documents that a higher percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent strongly agreed that they were satisfied with home and school relations. Again, parental satisfaction declines as the absolute rating of the school declines. However, the difference between the percentage of parents whose children attended an Excellent Schools and the percentage of parents whose children attended an At-Risk school and who agreed or strongly agreed with Question 11 was 8.2 percent as compared to 14.9 percent regarding the learning environment of their child's school.

**Table 15**  
**I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.**  
**(Percentage of parents by Absolute Rating of Child's School)**

<b>2011 Absolute Rating</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>
Excellent	53.1	32.0	85.1
Good	56.1	26.5	82.6
Average	55.9	24.4	80.3
Below Average	54.3	25.0	79.3
At Risk	54.8	22.1	76.9

Then, analyzing the responses across elementary, middle and high schools based again on absolute ratings, the data reveal that parent satisfaction with the learning environment of their child's school tends to be greatest for parents whose children are enrolled in elementary schools and typically declines for parents whose children are enrolled in middle or high schools, even across absolute ratings (Table 16).

**Table 16**  
**I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.**  
**(Percentage of parents by Absolute Rating of Child's Elementary, Middle or High School)**

2011 Absolute Rating	Type	Agree	Strongly Agree	Agree or Strongly Agree
Excellent	Elementary	49.3	39.5	88.8
	Middle	57.4	25.7	83.1
	High	56.8	21.8	78.6
Good	Elementary	53.0	33.7	86.7
	Middle	58.6	19.8	78.4
	High	60.0	17.9	77.9
Average	Elementary	54.8	29.8	84.6
	Middle	57.2	19.0	76.2
	High	56.3	18.4	74.7
Below Average	Elementary	54.3	28.7	83.0
	Middle	55.4	22.5	77.9
	High	51.0	19.8	70.8
At Risk	Elementary	54.5	22.9	77.4
	Middle	54.7	22.5	77.2
	High	54.1	19.8	73.9

**C. Social and Physical Environment**

The next five questions on the parent survey focus on the social and physical environment of schools. These questions are designed to elicit parent perceptions of the cleanliness, safety, and climate of their child's school. Question 5 asks parents to report on their overall satisfaction with the social and physical environment of their child's schools. For each school, the aggregate parental responses to question 5 are included on the annual school report card.

Table 17 summarizes the total responses to these five questions for all parents who completed the 2011 parent survey. Nine in ten parents agreed or strongly agreed that their child's school was kept neat and clean and that their child felt safe at school. On the other hand, over 47 percent of parents either did not believe or did not know that students at their child's school were well behaved. And, 16.4 percent of parents did not know or did not believe that their child's teachers cared about their child as an individual.

**Table 17**  
**Percentage of Parents in 2011 Responding:**

<b>Social and Physical Environment Questions</b>	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Disagree or Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	<b>90.0</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>2.6</b>
2. My child feels safe at school.	<b>89.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>1.9</b>
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	<b>81.1</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>7.6</b>
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	<b>61.2</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>13.0</b>
<b>5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.</b>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>

Table 18 compares the 2011 results of the South Carolina parent survey with the results of parent surveys administered since 2004. The data document that parental responses to the five questions regarding the social and physical environment of their child's school are consistent with the prior year's results. Over time, however, parent satisfaction with the social and physical environment of their child's schools as reflected in the responses to these five questions has increased.

**Table 18**  
**2008- 2011**  
**Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree to:**

<b>Social and Physical Environment Questions</b>	<b>2011</b>	2010	2009	2008
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	<b>90.0</b>	91.0	90.7	87.9
2. My child feels safe at school.	<b>89.7</b>	90.5	90.1	86.3
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	<b>81.1</b>	82.1	82.2	79.0
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	<b>61.2</b>	62.4	61.4	56.6
<b>5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school</b>	<b>82.4</b>	83.2	82.7	78.6

A final analysis was conducted to gauge parent satisfaction with the social and physical environment of their child's school in 2011 with the results of surveys completed during the prior three years. Table 19 documents the percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement regarding the social and physical environment at their child's school in 2011 compared to the average percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement in years 2008 through 2010. Again, there were no significant increases or decreases when comparing parental responses in 2011 with the average of the three prior years.

**Table 19**  
**Comparing 2011 Results with Three-Year Average**  
**(Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree)**

<b>Social and Physical Environment Questions</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Mean % (2008-2010)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	<b>90.0</b>	89.9	0.1
2. My child feels safe at school.	<b>89.7</b>	89.0	0.7
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	<b>81.1</b>	81.1	0.0
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	<b>61.2</b>	60.1	1.1
<b>5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.</b>	<b>82.4</b>	81.5	0.9

Comparing parental responses to Question 5 with the 2011 absolute rating of their child's school, Table 20 documents that a higher percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an Excellent rating strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the social and physical environment at their child's school. Again, parental satisfaction declines as the absolute rating of the school declines. However, the difference between the percentage of parents whose children attended an Excellent Schools and the percentage of parents whose children attended an At-Risk school and who agreed or strongly agreed with Question 11 was 17.3 percent as compared to 14.9 percent regarding the learning environment of their child's school and 8.2 percent regarding the home and school relations.

**Table 20**  
**I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.**  
**(Percentage of parents by Absolute Rating of Child's School)**

<b>2011 Absolute Rating</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>
Excellent	54.7	33.7	88.4
Good	58.8	27.1	85.9
Average	58.7	22.8	81.5
Below Average	58.6	19.8	78.4
At Risk	54.0	17.1	71.1

Then, analyzing the responses across elementary, middle and high schools based again on absolute ratings, the data reveal that parent satisfaction with the learning environment of their child's school tends to be greatest for parents whose children are enrolled in elementary schools and typically declines for parents whose children are enrolled in middle or high schools, even across absolute ratings. Table 21 documents the large differences between parent satisfaction between schools with an Excellent or Good absolute rating and schools with an At-Risk rating.

**Table 21**  
**I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.**  
**(Percentage of parents by Absolute Rating of Child's Elementary, Middle or High School)**

<b>2011 Absolute Rating</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree or Strongly Agree</b>
Excellent	Elementary	49.3	43.0	92.3
	Middle	59.4	26.3	85.7
	High	61.3	20.5	81.8
Good	Elementary	55.8	34.8	90.6
	Middle	62.2	20.4	82.6
	High	59.7	16.8	76.5
Average	Elementary	57.7	29.1	86.8
	Middle	60.1	17.1	77.2
	High	58.3	14.2	72.5
Below Average	Elementary	58.8	24.1	82.9
	Middle	60.4	16.4	76.8
	High	51.2	15.6	66.8
At Risk	Elementary	53.5	17.4	70.9
	Middle	53.8	17.2	71.0
	High	53.3	16.3	69.6

### **Parental Involvement**

According to the National Network of Partnership Schools, founded and directed by Dr. Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University, there are six types of successful partnerships between the school, family and community:<sup>11</sup>

- Type 1. Parenting – Assist families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to support children as students. Also, assist schools to better understand families.
- Type 2. Communicating – Conduct effective communications from school-to-home and home-to-school about school programs and student progress.
- Type 3. Volunteering – Organize volunteers and audiences to support the school and students. Provide volunteer opportunities in various locations and at various times.
- Type 4. Learning at Home – Involve families with their children on homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.

<sup>11</sup> Epstein, et. al. 2002. *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.  
 <[http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/nmps\\_model/school/sixtypes.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/nmps_model/school/sixtypes.htm)>.

- Type 5. Decision Making – Include families as participants in school decisions, and develop parent leaders and representatives.
- Type 6. Collaborating with the family – Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school, and provide services to the community.

In addition to determining parent satisfaction with their child’s school, the annual survey of parents in South Carolina includes questions designed to elicit information on the level of parental involvement in schools. The questions focus on the first five types of parental involvement. It should be reiterated that parents self-report their involvement.

First, parents were asked to specifically respond to eight questions relating to their involvement in their child’s school. These questions focus on the following types of parental involvement: parenting, volunteering and decision making. Parents were asked specifically to respond to these eight questions in one of four ways:

- I do this
- I don’t do this but would like to
- I don’t do this and I don’t care to
- The school does not offer this activity/event.

The responses are reflected in Table 22 with the fourth column highlighting the percentage of parents who expressed an interest in becoming involved in these school activities. These parents want to be involved but either have personal barriers preventing their involvement or face obstacles at the school level. At the school level, parents responding “I don’t do this but would like to” are the parents for whom school initiatives to improve parental involvement should be focused.

**Table 22**  
**Percentage of Parents in 2011 Responding:**

	n =	“I do this”	“I don’t do but would like to”	“I don’t do & I don’t care to:	“The school does not offer this activity/event”
Attend Open Houses or parent-teacher conferences	(72,032)	79.8	<b>16.3</b>	3.2	0.8
Attend student programs or performances	(72,086)	79.7	<b>16.1</b>	3.0	1.2
Volunteer for the school	(71,202)	37.4	<b>39.0</b>	20.6	3.0
Go on trip with my child’s school	(71,293)	35.1	<b>43.9</b>	15.1	5.9
Participate in School Improvement Council Meetings	(70,568)	13.1	<b>47.7</b>	33.9	5.3
Participate in Parent-teacher Student Organizations	(71,263)	33.2	<b>37.1</b>	27.1	2.6
Participate in school committees	(71,065)	17.4	<b>39.5</b>	34.8	7.0
Attend parent workshops	(71,483)	26.2	<b>40.5</b>	18.8	14.4

Based on the responses in Table 16 and the six types of involvement, there are significant opportunities for improving parental involvement in South Carolina’s public schools. First, fewer parents report being involved in the School Improvement Council, Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations and school committees than in any other activity. Decision making, including parents and families in school decisions, and developing parent leaders and representatives are areas for growth. Moreover, these parents report wanting to be involved in these decision making committees and organizations. Regarding volunteering, three-fourths of the parents attended open houses, parent-teacher conferences or student programs, all activities that support children as students. However, one-fourth reported attending parent workshop. Another 14 percent contend that such workshops are not provided at their child’s school. Approximately 37 percent of the parents responded that they volunteered while 39 percent of parents who did not volunteer wanted to volunteer.

Parents were asked five questions about their involvement with their child’s education, both at the school site and at home. These questions are directed at learning at home, parents involved with their children’s homework and other activities and decisions. Parents could respond in one of three ways:

- I do this
- I don’t do this but would like to
- I don’t do this and I don’t care to

Table 23 summarizes parental responses to these five questions.

**Table 23**  
**Percentage of Parents in 2011 Responding:**

	n=	“I do this”	“I don’t do but would like to”	“I don’t do & I don’t care to”
Visit my child’s classroom during the school day	(71,698)	32.8	52.1	15.1
Contact my child’s teachers about my child’s school work.	(72,088)	76.7	19.0	4.3
Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet	(72,127)	85.5	8.7	5.9
Make sure my child does his/her homework	(72,596)	95.2	3.5	1.3
Help my child with homework when he/she needs it.	(72,623)	94.1	4.7	1.2

Clearly, parents overwhelmingly report being involved in activities and decisions to support their child’s learning. At least 94 percent of parents reported helping their child with his or her homework while 86 percent report limiting television and other distractions at home. Approximately one-third of parents responded that they visited their child’s classroom during the day while a majority wanted to become involved in this way.

There are obstacles that impede parental involvement in schools. These obstacles may include lack of transportation, family responsibilities, and work schedules. Schools may not encourage or facilitate parental involvement at the school level. The annual parent survey asks parents to respond “true” or “false” to seven questions on factors that impact their involvement. The results for 2011 as well as the results from 2004 are included in

Table 24. At the individual school, the responses to these questions may assist principals and teachers in scheduling parental involvement activities or even parent-teacher conferences at times and places convenient for both parents and teachers.

**Table 24**  
**2004-2011 Percentage of Parents Replying "True" to these questions**

	<b>2011</b>	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Lack of transportation reduces my involvement	<b>11.5</b>	11.8	11.7	11.6	11.8	12.9	12.3	12.5
Family health problems reduce my involvement.	<b>14.3</b>	14.3	14.7	14.9	15.0	15.5	15.4	14.9
Lack of available care for my children or other family members reduces my involvement.	<b>14.5</b>	15.1	15.4	15.2	15.4	16.1	15.9	15.5
My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved.	<b>54.4</b>	55.1	55.6	56.2	55.4	55.6	55.5	56.2
The school does not encourage my involvement.	<b>16.2</b>	17.4	17.6	18.0	19.6	19.8	20.0	20.4
Information about how to be involved either comes too late or not at all.	<b>24.6</b>	25.3	25.7	26.8	27.3	28.2	28.3	29.1
I don't feel like it is appreciated when I try to be involved.	<b>11.4</b>	12.0	12.1	12.8	13.6	14.0	14.1	14.1

Finally, parents were also asked several questions about their child's school and its efforts at increasing parental involvement. Across these questions, two-thirds of parents consistently rated the efforts of their child's school at parental involvement efforts as good or very good (Table 25). Approximately one-fourth rated the school's efforts as "okay."

**Table 25**  
**2009 – 2011**  
**Percentage of Parents who responded:**

<b>Question:</b>	<b>Very Good or Good</b>			<b>Bad or Very Bad</b>			<b>Okay</b>		
	<b>2011</b>	2010	2009	<b>2011</b>	2010	2009	<b>2011</b>	2010	<b>2009</b>
School's overall friendliness.	<b>80.4</b>	79.6	78.8	<b>2.4</b>	2.4	2.4	<b>17.2</b>	17.8	18.8
School's interest in parents' ideas and opinions.	<b>63.0</b>	61.4	61.7	<b>7.6</b>	7.9	7.8	<b>29.5</b>	30.5	30.6
School's effort to get important information from parents.	<b>67.8</b>	66.8	66.0	<b>7.5</b>	7.8	7.9	<b>24.7</b>	25.2	26.1
The school's efforts to give important information to parents.	<b>73.3</b>	72.7	71.7	<b>6.2</b>	6.3	6.5	<b>20.5</b>	20.9	21.8
How the school is doing overall.	<b>76.4</b>	75.1	74.3	<b>3.4</b>	3.5	3.7	<b>20.2</b>	21.3	22.0

**Conclusions:**

- Despite a 6.2 percent increase in the number of parents responding to the annual parent survey, the results of the 2011 parent survey demonstrate that parental satisfaction with their child’s public schools was at comparable levels to the prior year’s survey results

**Percentage of Parents Satisfied with:**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>% Increase/Decrease</b>
Learning Environment	<b>84.3</b>	85.9	<b>-1.6</b>
Home and School Relations	<b>80.2</b>	81.9	<b>-1.7</b>
Social and Physical Environment	<b>82.4</b>	83.2	<b>-0.8</b>

- When comparing parent satisfaction in 2011 with parent satisfaction over the most recent three-year period, there were no significant increases or decreases in parent satisfaction levels.

**Percentage of Parents Satisfied With:**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Mean 2008-2010</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Learning Environment	<b>84.3</b>	84.6	<b>-0.3</b>
Home and School Relations	<b>80.2</b>	80.4	<b>0.2</b>
Social and Physical Environment	<b>82.4</b>	81.5	<b>0.9</b>

- Parental satisfaction, the percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing, declines as the absolute rating of the school declines. The largest difference in parental satisfaction between the highest and lowest performing schools is in parent perception of the social and physical environment of their child’s school, followed closely by the learning environment.

**Percentage of Parents whose Child Attends an Excellent or At-Risk School, Satisfied with:**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Excellent Schools</b>	<b>At-Risk Schools</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Learning Environment	<b>89.9</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>15.0</b>
Home and School Relations	<b>85.1</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>8.2</b>
Social and Physical Environment	<b>88.4</b>	<b>71.1</b>	<b>17.3</b>

- Parents who responded to the 2011 annual survey reported comparable levels of parental involvement as in other years and identified work schedules as their greatest obstacle to involvement.
- As in prior years, the inclusion of parents in school decisions and the development of parent leaders and representatives fall below the ideal. Opportunities for improving communication between parents and teachers also continue to exist.



## **PART FIVE Additional Analysis**

### **South Carolina Educational Policy Center**

Since 2010 the South Carolina Educational Policy Center (SCEPC) at the University of South Carolina has produced four-year school climate profiles for the Palmetto Priority schools in collaboration with the EOC and the SCDE. The SCEPC has also created climate profiles for selected Title I Corrective Action Schools in 2012. These profiles are based upon the results of the teacher, parent and student surveys. The profiles are used by the South Carolina Department of Education and the underperforming schools as diagnostic tools to technical assistance interventions. Due to non-responses on the parent survey in 2011, only 53% of all actual responses were used to create the parent factor scores for the school climate profiles. The Center treated “Don’t Know” responses “as if the parent had no knowledge of the issues asked.”

Using best practices in the design and use of Likert scales, the Center analyzed the distribution of “Don’t Know” responses from the 2011 administration of the parent survey. Appendix C is the complete report that concluded with the following recommendations for amending the parent survey:

1. Ensure the statements avoid asking opinions about broad generalities – Keep the focus on personal referent points and personal experiences among the parent, student, and school.
2. Expand the scale to five points with the addition of a neutral midpoint labeled “Neither Disagree Nor Agree” and change “Don’t Know” to “Not Enough Information to Answer” or “Not Enough Information to Have an Opinion.”
3. Re-align items on the Parent Survey to match items on the Teacher Survey and Student Survey.

### **Student Perceptions and the MET Project**

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded a two-year project, Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) “to rigorously develop and test multiple measures of teacher effectiveness.”<sup>12</sup> Part of the analysis is to build upon existing research documenting that students’ perceptions of the teaching they experience are good predictors of student academic achievement. As part of the MET Project, students will be administered the Tripod Project survey, developed by Cambridge Education and Dr. Ronald F. Ferguson of Harvard University. The survey focuses on the following “Seven Cs.”

**Caring** about students (Encouragement and Support)

Example: “The teacher in this class encourages me to do my best.”

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<sup>12</sup> “Student Perceptions and the MET Project,” Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, September 2010. [http://metproject.org/downloads/Student\\_Perceptions\\_092110.pdf](http://metproject.org/downloads/Student_Perceptions_092110.pdf).

**Captivating** students (Learning seems interesting and relevant)  
Example: “This class keeps my attention – I don’t get bored.”

**Conferring** with students (Students Sense their ideas are respected)  
Example: “My teacher gives us time to explain our ideas.”

**Controlling** behavior (Culture of Cooperation and Peer Support)  
Example: “Our class stays busy and doesn’t waste time.”

**Clarifying** lessons (Success seems feasible)  
Example: “When I am confused, my teacher knows how to help me understand.”

**Challenging** students (Press for Effort, Perseverance and Rigor)  
Example: “My teacher wants us to use our thinking skills, not just memorize things.”

**Consolidating** knowledge (Ideas get connected and integrated)  
Example: “My teacher takes the time to summarize what we learn each day.”

The Gates Foundation published the initial findings from the MET project. Regarding student perceptions, researchers have found:

Student perceptions of a given teachers’ strengths and weakness are consistent across the different groups of students they teach. Moreover, students seem to know effective teaching when they perceive it: student perceptions in one class are related to the achievement gains in other classes taught by the same teacher. Most important are students’ perception of a teacher’s ability to control a classroom and to challenge students with rigorous work.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Learning about Teaching -- Initial Findings from the Measures of Effective Teaching Project*, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, [http://metproject.org/downloads/Preliminary\\_Findings-Research\\_Paper.pdf](http://metproject.org/downloads/Preliminary_Findings-Research_Paper.pdf)

## **PART SIX**

### **Recommendations**

1. The survey questions on the Parent Survey have not been updated since 2001. The staff recommends that the Parent, Teacher and Student Surveys be reviewed to determine how the survey items could be better aligned among all three surveys. Such a review should also take into account the study provided by the South Carolina Educational Policy Center and the initial results of the MET Project. Since the original items on the Parent Survey were designed by the EOC, the EOC staff would work with the South Carolina Department of Education on this initiative.

2. The EOC staff should work with school districts to determine effective strategies for increasing the number of parents who participate in the survey, especially parents of Hispanic or African-American students who are currently underrepresented in the survey results.



# APPENDIX



## Appendix A

The Education Accountability Act of 1998 specifies that “school report cards should include information in such areas as...evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students.” To obtain these evaluations, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) has constructed student, teacher, and parent surveys that are designed to measure perceptions of three factors: home and school relations, the school’s learning environment, and the school’s social and physical environment. The purpose of these teacher, parent, and student surveys is to obtain information related to the perceptions of these groups about your school. Results will provide valuable information to principals, teachers, parents, School Improvement Councils, and community groups in their efforts to identify areas for improvement. Results will also appear on the annual school report cards.

### SCHEDULE

**Teacher Surveys** – on [www.ed.sc.gov](http://www.ed.sc.gov) website

- February 16, 2011 – Teacher Survey portal opens.
- March 18, 2011 – Teacher Survey portal closes.

**Student & High School Student Surveys** – paper forms

- February 28, 2011 – All schools should receive survey forms by this date.
- March 25, 2011 – Last day for schools to ship completed survey forms to contractor.

**Parent Surveys** – paper forms

- February 28, 2011 – All schools should receive survey forms by this date.
- March 18, 2011 – Date for parent survey forms to be returned to the school.  
  
This is the due date in the letter to parents.
- March 25, 2011 – Last day for schools to ship completed survey forms to contractor.

### CONTACTS

If your student or parent survey forms are damaged in shipment please contact Mike Pulaski with Columbia Business Forms. His email address is [mpulaski@mindspring.com](mailto:mpulaski@mindspring.com).

If you have questions about administration procedures for any survey, please contact Cynthia Hearn at [chearn@ed.sc.gov](mailto:chearn@ed.sc.gov) or 803-734-8269.

## **INDEX**

This booklet is divided into sections by the different tasks required for the administration of surveys.

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## **ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011 REPORT CARD SURVEYS**

### **CHANGES THIS YEAR**

STUDENT & PARENT SURVEYS – the Parent Survey printed in Spanish is not available this year.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- ✓ Useful survey results are dependent upon candid responses. The survey administration must encourage candid responses by protecting the anonymity of the respondents and by communicating to respondents that the information is important and will be used for improvement purposes. A letter from the State Superintendent of Education enclosed with the parent survey explains the survey and its purpose.
- ✓ No names or other identifying information should appear on the survey forms or the envelopes containing the parent survey forms. Every effort should be made to ensure that responses to the surveys remain anonymous.
- ✓ While principals should be aware of survey procedures and due dates, they should not be involved in handling completed survey forms. School staff are not allowed to review completed surveys.
- ✓ School principals must designate a staff person to serve as the school's survey coordinator. This person will be responsible for overseeing the distribution of surveys to students and parents and packaging completed surveys for return to contractor. The school survey coordinator also will keep teachers informed of the web-based teacher survey procedures and due dates and report any problems to the Department of Education.
- ✓ Guidelines established by the Education Oversight Committee determine the grade level(s) to be surveyed in each school. All students in the highest grade at elementary and middle schools should complete a student survey. Their parents should receive the parent survey form. For high schools and career centers the surveys should be administered to all 11<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents. Appendix A on page 7 lists the grade level(s) to be surveyed as determined by the grade span of the school.
- ✓ Sampling is not allowed. All students in the designated grade and their parents should receive a survey. You do not need to have students complete a survey if they are absent on the day of administration or if they would have difficulty reading and responding to the items. However, these students should be given a parent survey to take home.
- ✓ Special education students are to be included and should be provided the same accommodations used for testing.
- ✓ Student and parent surveys should not be administered to children in grades two and below or their parents. For schools that contain only grades two and below, only the teacher survey will be conducted.
- ✓ These survey forms cannot be copied. The scanning equipment can not scan photocopies.
- ✓ Retain the container in which you received the survey forms. That same container can be used to return the survey forms to the contractor.

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011  
REPORT CARD SURVEYS**

**RECEIPT AND DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS**

- Check the materials received in your shipment to ensure that you have received the following items:
  - ✓ An administrative envelope containing;
    5. A letter to the principal from the Education Oversight Committee (EOC),
    6. Two sets of instructions for administering the surveys,
    7. A page of shipping instructions, and
    8. One pre-addressed, bar-coded UPS shipping label (used to return completed surveys to contractor, freight prepaid).
  - ✓ Parent survey envelopes. Each envelope contains a letter from the State Superintendent of Education and a parent survey form.
  - ✓ Student survey forms.
- The number of survey forms allocated to your school is based on numbers provided by your district office. The shipping list located on the report card portal website (<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/Accountability/Data-Management-and-Analysis/ReportCardPortal.html>) provides the number of survey forms ordered for your school. If your shipment is correct, please do not request additional surveys. The contractor does not print extras. Contact Mike Pulaski if you received fewer surveys than ordered.
- Check a few student and parent survey forms to make sure that your school name is on the form. If you have received survey forms for another school, please contact Mike Pulaski.
- Keep the box in which the survey forms were delivered to use for the return shipment.
- Give the letter from the EOC to your principal.
- Determine the number of student and parent survey forms you will need for each class at the designated grade level(s). Count the surveys into classroom stacks and distribute.

**SURVEY GUIDELINES**

**Student & High School Student Surveys**

- Student surveys should be administered in classroom settings.
- Each survey item has four response choices. Respondents must decide whether they agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or disagree with each statement. Students will mark their responses by darkening bubbles on the survey form. If they do not have knowledge relative to the statement, students should be instructed to skip the item and go on to the next one.

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011  
REPORT CARD SURVEYS**

- Teachers should not read the survey items to the students, but they may answer student questions about the survey items. Teachers may read items to special education students with an oral administration testing accommodation. On the last page of these instructions is the script for teachers to use to explain the survey to students.
- It is important that the surveys not be folded, torn, stapled, or damaged in any way. Please have the students use pencils. A number 2 pencil is not required.

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

### Parent Surveys

- Schools will distribute envelopes containing parent surveys to students in the appropriate grade(s). Students should take the envelope home for their parents to complete the survey inside and then return the envelope to the school. Envelopes are used to maintain confidentiality.
- No names or other identifying information should appear on the survey forms or the envelopes containing the survey form. Every effort should be made to ensure that responses to the surveys remain anonymous.
- The parent survey should be administered to the parents of the same children participating in the student survey.
- Parents with children in the highest grade at two different schools will receive two survey forms to complete. The name of the school appears on the survey form to help avoid confusion for the parents.
- Parent surveys will not be administered to parents of children in grades two and below. For schools that contain only grades two and below, only the teacher survey will be conducted.
- The parent survey forms are identical for all grade levels. If you are surveying parents for more than one grade level, the correct number of survey forms for all grade levels will be in your shipment.
- Each survey contains fifty-four questions and should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The letter enclosed with the survey form tells parents that they are being asked for their opinions about their child's school. Parents are asked to think about the entire year rather than a specific event or something that happened only once or twice. They are asked to provide honest responses that can help to improve the school.
- Parents should mark their responses by darkening bubbles on the survey. Although the scanning equipment can read pen marks, it is still a good idea to use a pencil should the parent need to change an answer. It is also important that the surveys not be folded, torn, stapled, or damaged in any way.
- Parents have the option of mailing their completed survey form to the Department of Education. The mailing address is provided in the letter to parents from the State Superintendent of Education.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** We appreciate that schools work diligently each year to encourage parents to complete and return the parent surveys. Some schools offer incentives such as ice cream treats or extra recess time to individual students or classes where all students have returned completed parent surveys. Each year parents call the Department to inform us that their child is upset that he/she cannot return the parent survey form to school and receive the special incentive because the parent wants to mail the survey form to the Department. Parents have the option to mail in the survey form, so we would encourage you to not penalize students whose parents' mail in their completed survey form.

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

### ADMINISTRATION OF SURVEYS

#### Student & High School Student Surveys

- Choose a day within the time period to administer the survey to the students. The survey should be administered to students at the same time (homeroom or advisory period for example).
- Copy the teacher instructions from the last page of these administration procedures and provide a copy of the instructions with the survey forms. Make sure the classroom teachers administering the student surveys are familiar with the administration instructions for your school.
- On the day the survey is to be administered, distribute materials to each classroom teacher within the designated grade(s).
- Make sure you are available to respond to any problems that may arise during administration of the surveys.

#### Parent Survey

- Distribute the parent surveys **as soon as possible** after they are received at the school. This should allow sufficient time for parents to complete and return the survey prior to the March 18 due date.
- Distribute the envelopes containing the parent survey form and letter to each classroom teacher within the designated grade(s). Have the teachers distribute the envelopes to students. Teachers should ask students to take the envelopes home for their parents to complete the surveys. Students should be instructed not to remove the survey form or letter from the envelope. Students should bring the envelopes containing the completed surveys back to school as soon as possible.
- If your budget allows, survey forms may be mailed to students' homes.
- Make sure you are available to respond to any problems that may arise during administration of the surveys.
- As the due date for returning the parent survey approaches, you may want to send home a note or use your automated phone system to remind parents of the due date.

#### Teacher Survey

- The teacher survey is conducted online over the internet. The survey can be accessed from the State Department of Education website at [www.ed.sc.gov](http://www.ed.sc.gov).

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011  
REPORT CARD SURVEYS**

- Teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, and speech therapists at the school should complete the teacher survey. Part-time teachers may complete a survey form if they are on campus at least half of each school day or week.
- The survey may be completed using any computer with internet access. Teachers may use their home computers.
- There is no way to determine which teachers have completed the survey, but the internet site keeps track of how many survey forms have been completed for each school. A teacher survey reporting tool may be accessed from the first page of the teacher survey which will allow you to see how many surveys have been completed for your school.
- Problems with your school's internet access should be directed to your district technology coordinator.

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

### PREPARING SURVEYS FOR SHIPMENT

#### Student & High School Student Surveys

- Place all surveys flat, face up, and turned the same way. Return all completed survey forms, even those that may be damaged. No changes or edits may be made to student responses. School personnel should not be allowed to review student responses.
- Carefully paper-band the completed forms with one strong paper band. Do not use rubber bands as they tear the forms. Two or three wraps with adding machine paper fastened with masking tape makes a strong band.
- Unused survey forms should be placed on top of the bound materials to be returned.

#### Parent Survey

- All parent surveys should be returned in their individual envelopes. Envelopes should be returned flat, face up, and all turned the same way.
- All parent surveys returned without the envelope should be placed on top of the envelopes. Place the survey forms flat, face up, and turned the same way. Return all completed survey forms, even those that may be damaged. No changes or edits may be made to parent responses. School personnel should not be allowed to review parent responses.
- Carefully paper-band the completed survey forms with one strong paper band. Do not use rubber bands as they tear the forms. Two or three wraps with adding machine paper fastened with masking tape makes a strong band.
- Unused survey forms should be placed on top of the bound materials to be returned.

### SHIPPING THE COMPLETED SURVEYS

- Please return all of your school's completed student and parent survey forms at the same time. Package both types of surveys in the same sturdy box. Use crumpled paper, cardboard, or Styrofoam beads to fill the voids in the shipping carton to help keep surveys from being damaged during transit. You may want to use the box in which the survey forms were delivered for the return shipment.
- Attach the pre-addressed, bar-coded UPS return shipping label to your package. (NOTE: If you are re-using the original delivery box be sure to remove or cover up the old label.) Give the package to your UPS driver the next time a delivery is made to your school. You can also drop off the package at any UPS store or drop box as well as select Office Depot and Staples locations. **Scheduling a special pick up from your school will cost you extra.**

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011  
REPORT CARD SURVEYS**

- The pre-addressed, bar-coded UPS return shipping label was included in the administrative envelope along with these instructions. If the return UPS shipping label is missing, please contact Mike Pulaski with Columbia Business Forms. His email address is [mpulaski@mindspring.com](mailto:mpulaski@mindspring.com).
- All surveys must be shipped on or before **Friday, March 25, 2011**.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011  
REPORT CARD SURVEYS

**Appendix A—Student and Parent Survey Participants**

School's Grade Span	Grade Level of Students and Parents to be Surveyed		School's Grade Span	Grade Level of Students and Parents to be Surveyed
K-1, K-2, 1-2	none		4-9	5 & 9
K-3	3		5-9	9
1-3	3		6-9	9
2-3	3		7-9	9
K-4	4		8-9	9
1-4	4		K-10	5, 8, & 10
2-4	4		1-10	5, 8, & 10
3-4	4		2-10	5, 8, & 10
K-5	5		3-10	5, 8, & 10
1-5	5		4-10	5, 8, & 10
2-5	5		5-10	8 & 10
3-5	5		6-10	8 & 10
4-5	5		7-10	8 & 10
K-6	6		8-10	10
1-6	6		9-10	10
2-6	6		K-11	5, 8, & 11
3-6	6		1-11	5, 8, & 11
4-6	6		2-11	5, 8, & 11
5-6	6		3-11	5, 8, & 11
K-7	5 & 7		4-11	5, 8, & 11
1-7	5 & 7		5-11	8 & 11
2-7	5 & 7		6-11	8 & 11
3-7	5 & 7		7-11	8 & 11
4-7	5 & 7		8-11	11
5-7	7		9-11	11
6-7	7		10-11	11
K-8	5 & 8		K-12	5, 8, & 11
1-8	5 & 8		1-12	5, 8, & 11
2-8	5 & 8		2-12	5, 8, & 11
3-8	5 & 8		3-12	5, 8, & 11
4-8	5 & 8		4-12	5, 8, & 11
5-8	8		5-12	8 & 11
6-8	8		6-12	8 & 11
7-8	8		7-12	8 & 11
K-9	5 & 9		8-12	11
1-9	5 & 9		9-12	11
2-9	5 & 9		10-12	11
3-9	5 & 9		11-12	11

## TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENT SURVEY

Surveys should be administered in a classroom setting. One student should be designated in each classroom to collect the student surveys and to bring them to the school survey coordinator. To ensure confidentiality, classroom/homeroom teachers should not collect completed surveys. Classroom teachers and school administrators are not to review completed student surveys.

Pass out surveys and pencils.

The teacher should read the following script.

**Today you are being asked your opinions about our school. There are no right or wrong answers. When you read each item, think about the entire year rather than a specific event or something that happened once or twice. Please provide honest and true answers so that we can change and improve our school. Do not talk to other students, but you can ask me a question if you do not understand a statement. Do NOT write your name on the survey. Do not fold or bend the sheet.**

**First, read the instructions at the top of the form and mark your grade. Make sure you have a pencil. Do not use a pen. You will read each statement, and mark your response on your survey sheet. Darken the ovals completely with your pencil. Erase any stray marks or changes. Remember to continue on the back of the sheet.**

**There are four choices for each sentence. Decide whether you agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or disagree with each sentence. Do your best to decide. If you do not know anything about the subject, you can skip the sentence and go on to the next one.**

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2011  
REPORT CARD SURVEYS**

**When you have completed the survey, check to see that you have marked only one response to each sentence and that you have marked your correct grade. Then, place your survey on your desk. (The designated student) will collect the forms.**

Have the student designated to collect surveys do so. Then, have the student take the completed surveys to the school survey coordinator.

Thank You

## APPENDIX B

# South Carolina Parent Survey

Parents in South Carolina who have children in selected grades are being asked to complete this survey. This survey asks you how you feel about your child's school. Since this survey will be used to help make your child's school a better place, it is very important to tell us exactly what you think. Your answers will be kept private. The school will get a summary of the survey results.

### MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Make solid marks that fill the circle completely.
- Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
- Make no stray marks on this form.
- Correct Mark:  Incorrect Marks:

Please mark how <b>much</b> you agree or <b>disagree</b> with each of the following statements about the Learning Environment at your child's school.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Home and School Relations.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My child's school returns my phone calls ore-mails promptly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. The principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Social and Physical Environment at your child's school.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. My child feels safe at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Students at my child's school are well-behaved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please tell us if you do the following.	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to	The school does not offer this activity/event	
1. Attend Open Houses or parent-teacher conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2. Attend student programs or performances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3. Volunteer for the school (bake cookies, help in office, help with school fund raising, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4. Go on trips with my child's school (out of town band contest, field trip to the museum, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
5. Participate in School Improvement Council meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
6. Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations (PTA, PTO, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
7. Participate in school committees (textbook committee, spring carnival committee, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
8. Attend parent workshops (how to help my child with school work, how to talk to my child about drugs, effective discipline, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Please tell us if you do the following.	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to		
1. Visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
2. Contact my child's teachers about my child's school work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
3. Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
4. Make sure my child does his/her homework.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		
5. Help my child with homework when he/she needs it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		

Go on to next page. |

## APPENDIX B

Please mark if each of the following is TRUE or FALSE.	TRUE	FALSE			
1. Lack of transportation reduces my involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
2. Family health problems reduce my involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
3. Lack of available care for my children or other family members reduces my involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
4. My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
5. The school does not encourage my involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
6. Information about how to be involved either comes too late or not at all.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			
7. I don't feel like it is appreciated when I try to be involved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>			

Please rate your school on...	Very good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very bad
1. The school's overall friendliness.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. The school's interest in parents' ideas and opinions.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. The school's efforts to <b>get</b> important information <b>from</b> parents.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. The school's efforts to <b>give</b> important information <b>to</b> parents.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. How the school is doing overall.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please answer the following questions about your child who attends the school identified at the bottom of this page.

1. What grade is your child in?     3rd    4th    5th    6th    7th    8th    9th    10th    11th
2. What is your child's gender?     Male    Female
3. What is your child's race/ethnicity?
 

<input type="radio"/> African -American/Black	<input type="radio"/> Hispanic	<input type="radio"/> Asian American/Pacific Islander
<input type="radio"/> Caucasian/white	<input type="radio"/> Native American	<input type="radio"/> Other
4. What grades did your child receive on his/her last report card?
 

<input type="radio"/> All or mostly A's and B's	<input type="radio"/> All or mostly C's and D's
<input type="radio"/> All or mostly B's and C's	<input type="radio"/> All or mostly D's and F's

Please answer the following questions about yourself. We are asking these questions because we want to be sure that schools are involving all parents. For each question, please mark only one answer. Your answers will be kept private.

1. What is your gender?     Male    Female
2. What is your race/ethnic group?
 

<input type="radio"/> African -American/Black	<input type="radio"/> Hispanic	<input type="radio"/> Asian American/Pacific Islander
<input type="radio"/> Caucasian/white	<input type="radio"/> Native American	<input type="radio"/> Other
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 

<input type="radio"/> Attended elementary/high school	<input type="radio"/> Earned Associate Degree	<input type="radio"/> Earned college degree
<input type="radio"/> Completed high school/GED	<input type="radio"/> Attended college/training program	<input type="radio"/> Postgraduate study and/or degree
4. What is your family's total yearly household income?
 

<input type="radio"/> Less than \$15,000	<input type="radio"/> \$25,000- \$34,999	<input type="radio"/> \$55,000-\$75,000
<input type="radio"/> \$15,000-\$24,999	<input type="radio"/> \$35,000-\$54,999	<input type="radio"/> More than \$75,000

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

<p>DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0;">3205044</p>
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APPENDIX C



**South Carolina Educational Policy Center  
College of Education, University of South Carolina**

**Don't Know Why:  
Investigating Non-Responses on the Parent Survey\***

Diana Mindrilă Mihaela Ene  
Elizabeth Leighton Sally  
Huguley Tomonori Ishikawa  
Christine DiStefano, Ph.D. Diane M.  
Monrad, Ph.D.

February 2012

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\* For inquiries, please contact: Diane Monrad, Director, South Carolina Educational Policy Center, 803-777-8244, [dmonrad@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:dmonrad@mailbox.sc.edu).

In 2011, a total sample of 71,909 parents responded to the Parent Survey. However, due to non-responses, we could only use 38,170 (53%) of the responses to create the parent factor scores for the four-year school climate profiles. There are two types of parent non-responses. A parent could:

1. Leave an item blank, or
2. Mark "Don't Know" (DK), one of the provided response options.

In our factor analysis, we included parents who left fewer than 25% of the items blank in a section of the survey, but we treated DK responses as if the parent had no knowledge of the issue asked. So, we did not include the responses of parents who provided even one DK response. We examined the incidence of DK responses and ascertained the removal of parents with DK responses did not change the demographic characteristics of the parent group included in the factor analytic studies.

Given an opportunity to revise the Parent Survey, we offer recommendations for redesigning the Parent Survey in keeping with best practices from current research in survey design and useful statistical analyses, such as factor analyses and structural equation modeling.

### **Treating Don't Knows and Blanks Differently**

We used Likert scale items in the factor analyses. The Parent Survey includes 21 Likert items, where parents are asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with a positively-worded statement about the climate at their child's school by choosing a position on a four-point scale: "Strongly Disagree" (SD), "Disagree" (D), "Agree" (A), or "Strongly Agree" (SA). In addition, these items contain a "Don't Know" (DK) option. The percentage of parents agreeing with three summary statements appears on their school's report card every year.

Many of the surveys were incomplete, limiting their usefulness in further detailed statistical analyses of the results. A parent can provide an uninformative response to a Likert scale item on the Parent Survey in one of two ways. A parent could simply skip the item without any physical mark, leaving it blank. We classified this non-response as "missing" data. Or, a parent could mark the column "Don't Know" for the item. We classified this non-response in a distinct category of its own, calling it a DK response.

We treated DK responses differently from blanks in our analysis. We treat DKs as non-responses indicating a deliberate unwillingness to respond due to a lack of knowledge about the issue raised in the statement. In contrast, we did not construe blanks with knowing the intent of the respondent. Thus, for a limited number of blank responses (up to 25% of the items in a section of the survey), we imputed responses with the section mean. That is, for any individual parent, we filled in small amounts of missing data with the average of his/her answers for items appearing in the same section of the survey.

We chose not to impute DK responses because of the parent's active decision to select the option that indicated he/she did not have enough knowledge of the situation to answer the question. In keeping with standard best practice in factor analyses, we "listwise deleted" such observations. That is, if a parent answered DK to even one question, we did not use any of that parent's responses in the factor analysis. However, we included every informative response in the item-level analyses, such as item scale responses (tables of the percentage of responses for each response option on the Likert scale by school) and item agreement percentage boxplots (charts comparing the percentage of those parents agreeing with each item by school).

Other school climate surveys—the Teacher Survey and the Student Survey—do not include a DK response option. Therefore, respondents to those surveys could only have missing data by leaving an item blank. For these cases, we imputed missing item level data, thus helping to retain larger sample sizes to use in analyses. We used the same rules to impute missing data in all three surveys. We only imputed small amounts of missing data (if missing values comprised less than 25% of data per survey section) and used the same algorithm (imputing missing data with the mean of the individual's other responses in the same survey section).

**Devising a Methodology to Investigate Don't Knows**

Figure 1 illustrates the steps we took and the decisions we made to investigate the issue of “Don't Know” responses. We devised a logic model to examine the distribution of DK responses and determine their impact on our factor analysis and assess the sufficiency of samples for analysis and reporting. We also looked for evidence of any changes in the demographic characteristics of the parents in the total sample versus the analyzed sample. Finally, we considered alternative procedures in keeping with best practices in data management and analysis.

Table 1 provides the 2007-2011 distribution of DK responses for all the Likert scale items on the Parent Survey which we used in factor analysis. The items with the highest percentages of DK responses across years were:

- PHSR7** “My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.”
- PHSR9** “My child's school treats all students fairly.”
- PSPE4** “Students at my child's school are well behaved.”

The DK response percentages were remarkably consistent across years and indicated that:

1. Parents are simply not aware of the extent to which teachers and administrators take their input into account in the decision making process.
2. Parents do not have enough information on how children other than their own behave and/or are treated in the school setting to provide a response to these survey items.

Table 2 provides the number of observations removed at each stage of the data cleaning process and the final number of observations at each step for the 2011 data. As shown, we removed approximately 44% of the parent surveys due to DK responses.

Table 2. Observations Removed at Every Step of the Data Cleaning Process for the 2011 Parent Survey

Data Cleaning Steps	1	2		3		4	
	Original SCDE Data Set (“Total Sample”)	Remove “Don't Know” (DK) Responses		Remove Duplicates		Impute Missing Data for Factor Analysis (“Analyzed Sample”)	
		Removed	Kept	Removed	Kept	Removed	Kept
Number	71909	-31574	40335	0	40335	-2165	38170
Percentage	100%	-44%	56%	0%	56%	-3%	53%

Appendix A contains information on the number of observations at each stage of the data cleaning process across the years 2007-2011. The percentage of parent surveys removed due to DK responses showed little variation across years.

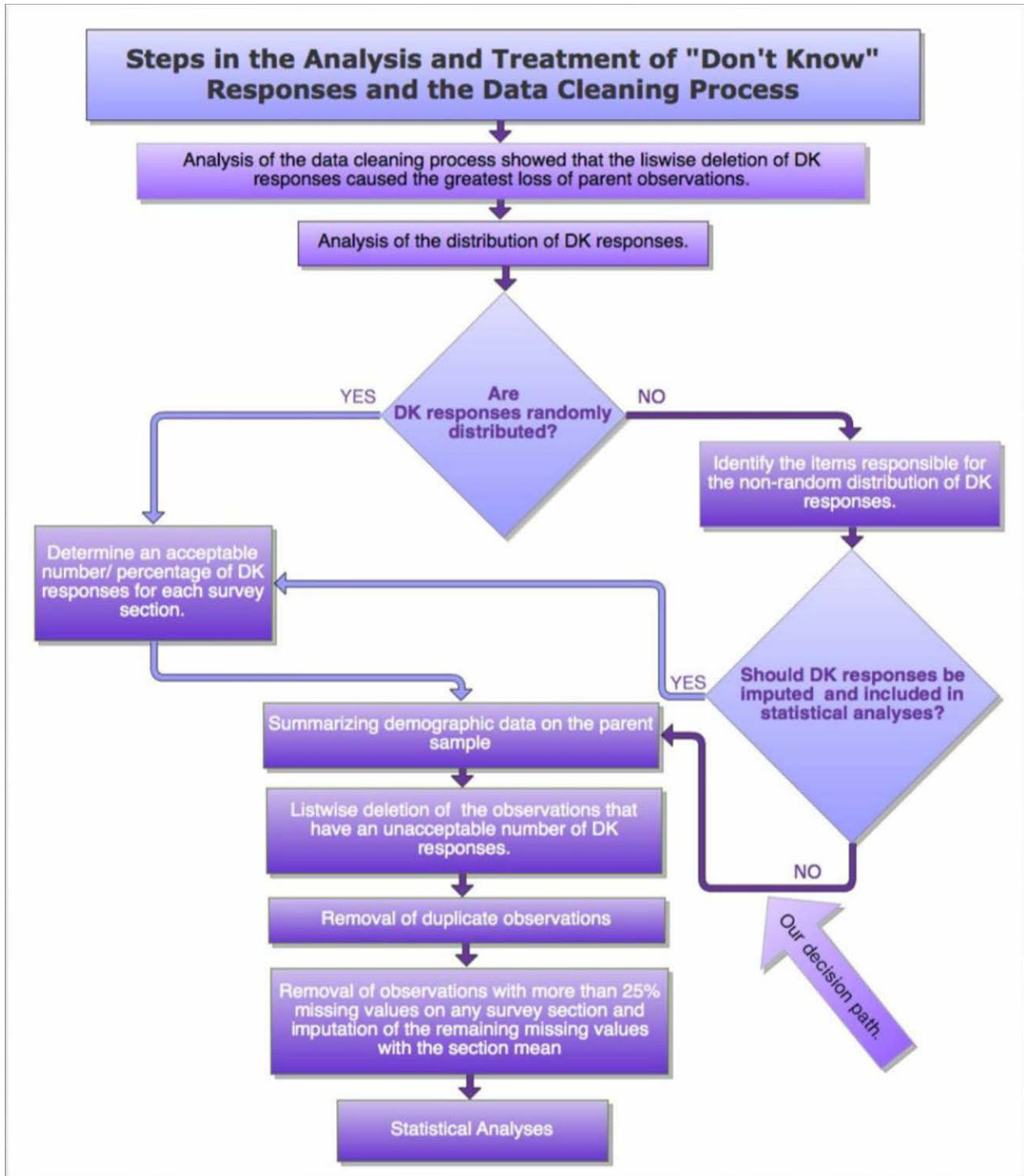


Figure 1. Logic Model for Steps Taken in the Analysis and Treatment of "Don't Know" Responses and the Data Cleaning Process

Table 1. Distribution of "Don't Know" Responses for Likert Scale Items on the Parent Survey

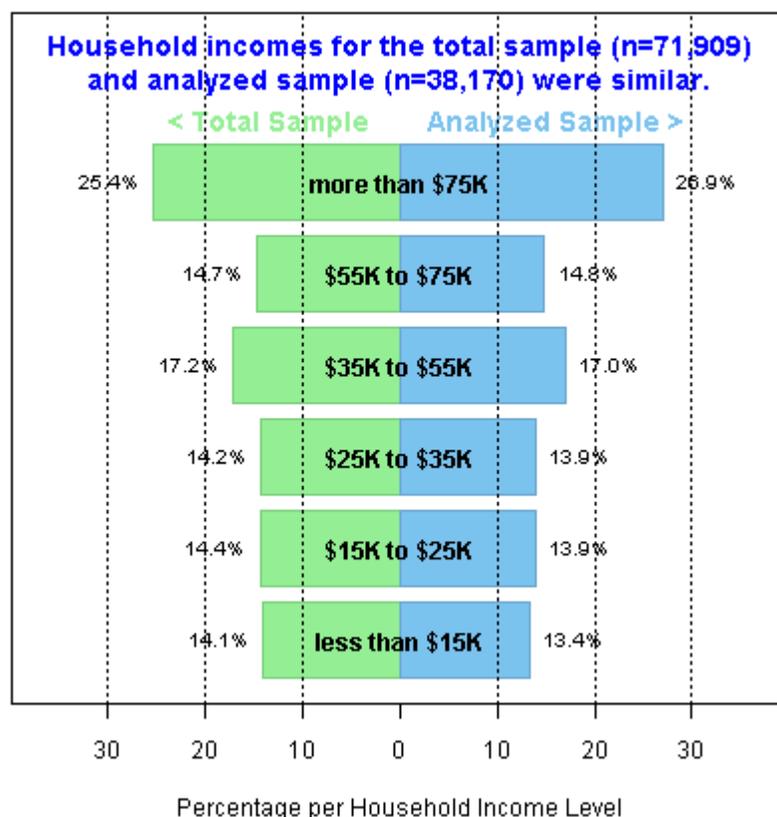
Parent Survey Section Item Text		Percentage Don't Know by Year				
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Learning Environment</b>						
PLE1	My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%	2.3%
PLE2	My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	2.7%	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	2.1%
PLE3	My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	3.7%	3.4%	3.2%	3.2%	3.1%
PLE4	My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	7.4%	7.0%	7.3%	7.2%	6.8%
PLE5	I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.	2.2%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%	1.7%
<b>Home-School Relationship</b>						
PHSR1	My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%
PHSR2	My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	2.3%	2.2%	2.3%	2.2%	2.2%
PHSR3	My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classroom during the school day.	4.1%	3.9%	4.3%	4.3%	4.4%
PHSR4	My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	7.7%	7.0%	6.5%	6.3%	5.9%
PHSR5	My child's school includes me in decision-making.	6.4%	6.0%	6.2%	6.2%	6.1%
PHSR6	My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	2.2%	2.0%	2.2%	2.0%	2.1%
PHSR7	<b>My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.</b>	<b>22.1%</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>23.1%</b>
PHSR8	My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	4.7%	4.4%	4.2%	4.1%	4.0%
PHSR9	<b>My child's school treats all students fairly.</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>
PHSR10	The principal at my school is available and welcoming.	8.9%	8.8%	8.5%	8.1%	7.8%
PHSR11	I am satisfied with the home-school relations at my child's school.	4.1%	3.7%	3.6%	3.5%	3.4%
<b>Physical Environment</b>						
PSPE1	My child's school is kept neat and clean.					
PSPE2	My child feels safe at school.					
PSPE3	My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.					
PSPE4	<b>Students at my child's school are well behaved.</b>					
PSPE5	I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.					

### Comparing the Demographic Characteristics of the Total Sample and the Analyzed Sample

We were compelled to listwise delete DK responses to keep with best practices for factor analysis. To ensure this process did not change the sample structure, we assessed its impact by examining the demographic characteristics (household income, educational attainment, race, and gender) of the parents in the total sample compared to those remaining in the analyzed sample.

Figure 2 illustrates the 2011 distribution of parent income in the total sample and the analyzed sample. The income range categories on the back-to-back bar chart represent the survey response choices offered to parents to self-report their household income. The pattern is a mirror image showing that the analyzed sample has a distribution of household income which is very similar to the total sample. Thus, we concluded that the removal of observations with DK responses did not significantly bias the sample of parents analyzed in terms of household income.

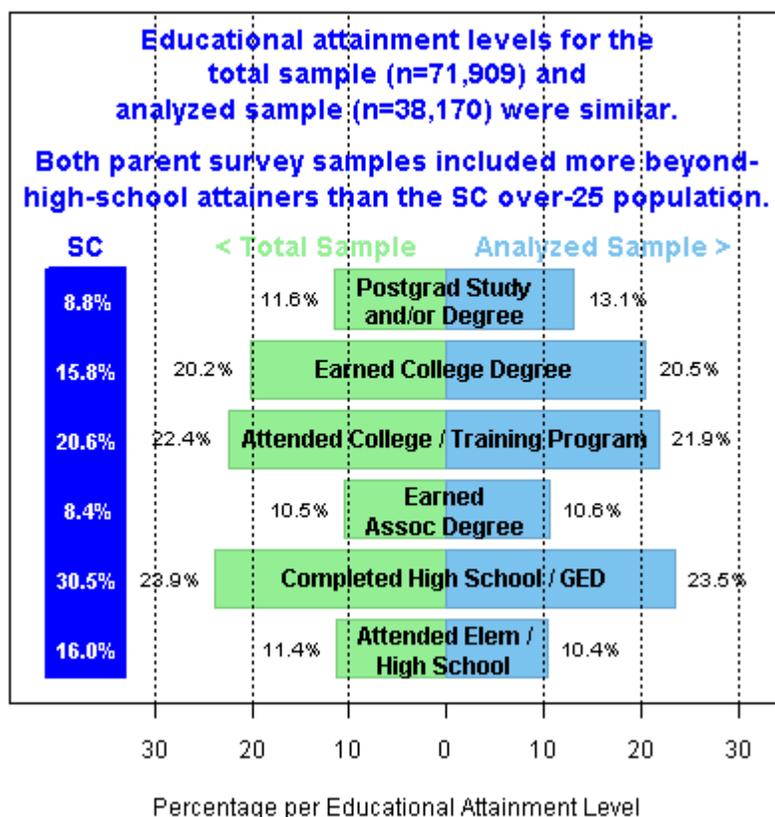
**Figure 2: 2011 Parent Survey, Distribution of Household Income, Total Sample versus Analyzed Sample**



Appendix B contains a table listing the distributions of household income in the total sample versus the analyzed sample across the years 2007-2011. The similarities for 2011 are consistent across all prior years 2007-2010.

Figure 3 provides the 2011 distribution of parent educational attainment in the total sample and the analyzed sample. The categories for highest educational level attained on the back-to-back bar chart represent the survey response choices offered to parents to self-report their educational attainment. The percentage of parents at each educational attainment level is very similar between the total sample and the factor analyzed sample. Thus, we concluded that the removal of DK responses did not introduce any biases favoring any particular group in terms of educational attainment. Analyses of the 2007-2011 samples in Appendix C show that this total-sample versus analyzed-sample similarity is consistent across years.

**Figure 3: 2011 Parent Survey, Educational Attainment  
Total Sample versus Analyzed Sample**



Appendix D contains a complete set of the remaining self-reported 2011 Parent Survey demographic characteristics for the total sample and analyzed sample. The characteristics include information related to parents' gender and ethnicity, as well as students' gender, ethnicity, grade level, and grades. We did not find any major discrepancies between the samples, indicating the loss of parent surveys due to listwise deletion of DK responses did not alter the type of respondents included in the analysis.

## Best Practices for Survey Redesign

If an opportunity is forthcoming to revise the Parent Survey, we suggest making the following changes in order to keep pace with current research on the best way to construct Likert scale items for detailed statistical analyses including techniques such as factor analysis and structural equation modeling.

1. **Ensure the statements avoid asking opinions about broad generalities.** Keep the focus on personal referent points and personal experiences among the parent, student, and school. For example, we would recommend changing the wording on the items with the most frequent occurrence of DK responses.
  - o PHSR7 could be changed from "The school considers changes based on what parents say" to "Teachers/administrators would ask for suggestions on how to improve the school."
  - o PHSR9 could be changed from "My child's school treats all students fairly" to "The school treats my child fairly."
  - o PSPE4 could be changed from "Students at my child's school are well behaved" to "The school takes measures to ensure my child is well-behaved."
2. **Expand the scale to five points with the addition of a neutral midpoint labeled "Neither Disagree Nor Agree" and change "Don't Know" to "Not Enough Information to Answer" or "Not Enough Information to Have an Opinion."** Keep its position at the end to the right of "Strongly Agree."

Keeping the DK response option in this context would ensure it is not used as a neutral midpoint, and that it exposes areas of ineffective communication between the school and parents. This could be particularly useful information for school improvement purposes.

3. **Re-align items on the Parent Survey to match items on the Teacher Survey and Student Survey.** This change would facilitate the investigation of the same issue from the viewpoint of all three stakeholders.

## Conclusions

The number of parents responding to the climate survey was much higher than the sample of parents we could use in our analyses. The parent sample we used in our analysis was greatly reduced because parents were given the option to select "Don't Know" (DK) as a response. We did not impute data to replace a DK response because this would project a response where parents said they did not have knowledge of the situation. Investigating the items with a high percentage of DK responses suggests these items use vague or complex wording or relate to school-based issues where parents may not have adequate personal knowledge.

If an opportunity to revise the Parent Survey presents itself, we suggest a review of items for clarity and rewording items where needed. For technical reasons, we also suggest adding a neutral midpoint response and rewording the DK response to make clear that the parent does not have sufficient information to respond. Alternatively, because the information collected with the school climate survey deals with parent perceptions, we suggest reviewing the Likert response scale to see if a DK option is even necessary.

**Appendix A**  
**Observations Removed at Every Step of the Data Cleaning Process (2007-2011)**

Data Cleaning Step	Obs	Year				
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>1 Original SCDE Data Set ("Total Sample")</b>		<b>64896</b>	<b>68764</b>	<b>67925</b>	<b>69474</b>	<b>71909</b>
1a Remove Duplicates (Used for Item-Level Analysis)	Removed	NA	NA	15	0	0
	Kept	NA	NA	67910	69474	71909
<b>2 Remove "Don't Know" Responses</b>	Removed	30132	31116	30438	31185	31574
	Kept	34764	37648	37472	38289	40335
<b>3 Remove Duplicates</b>	Removed	0	88	15	0	0
	Kept	34764	37560	37457	38289	40335
<b>4 Impute Missing Data for Factor Analysis ("Analyzed Sample")</b>	Removed	504	1676	1601	1402	2165
	Kept	<b>34260</b>	<b>35884</b>	<b>35856</b>	<b>36887</b>	<b>38170</b>
	Kept	52.8%	52.2%	52.8%	53.1%	53.1%

**Appendix B**  
**2007-2011 Distribution of Household Income**

**Table B1. Distribution of Parent Income in the Total Sample**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Less Than \$15K</b>	13.2%	12.9%	13.5%	14.2%	14.1%
<b>\$15K-\$25K</b>	14.1%	13.7%	14.1%	14.6%	14.4%
<b>\$25K-\$35K</b>	14.3%	14.3%	14.1%	13.9%	14.2%
<b>\$35K-\$55K</b>	18.3%	17.8%	17.4%	17.3%	17.2%
<b>\$55K-\$75K</b>	15.7%	15.6%	15.4%	14.8%	14.7%
<b>More Than \$75K</b>	24.4%	25.7%	25.4%	25.3%	25.4%

**Table B2. Distribution of Parent Income in the Analyzed Sample**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Less Than \$15K</b>	12.2%	11.9%	12.9%	13.2%	13.4%
<b>\$15K-\$25K</b>	13.5%	13.0%	13.4%	13.9%	13.9%
<b>\$25K-\$35K</b>	14.1%	13.9%	13.6%	13.5%	13.9%
<b>\$35K-\$55K</b>	18.3%	18.1%	17.7%	17.1%	17.0%
<b>\$55K-\$75K</b>	16.2%	16.0%	15.6%	15.3%	14.9%
<b>More Than \$75K</b>	25.7%	27.0%	26.9%	27.1%	27.0%

**Appendix C**  
**2007-2011 Distribution of Parent Educational Level**

**Table C1. Distribution of Parent Educational Level in the Total Sample**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Attended Elementary/High School</b>	13.0%	12.7%	12.1%	11.6%	11.4%
<b>Completed High School/ GED</b>	25.8%	25.7%	25.5%	24.9%	23.9%
<b>Earned Associate Degree</b>	9.5%	9.6%	9.8%	10.4%	10.5%
<b>Attended College/Training Program</b>	23.2%	22.7%	22.8%	22.4%	22.5%
<b>Earned College Degree</b>	18.3%	19.0%	19.3%	19.4%	20.2%
<b>Postgraduate Study and/or Degree</b>	10.3%	10.4%	10.6%	11.3%	11.6%

**Table C2. Distribution of Parent Educational Level in the Analyzed Sample**

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Attended Elementary/High School</b>	11.9%	11.7%	11.4%	10.6%	10.4%
<b>Completed High School/ GED</b>	24.9%	24.6%	24.4%	24.1%	23.5%
<b>Earned Associate Degree</b>	9.6%	9.8%	9.8%	10.4%	10.6%
<b>Attended College/Training Program</b>	23.0%	22.4%	22.7%	21.9%	21.9%
<b>Earned College Degree</b>	18.9%	19.9%	19.9%	20.1%	20.5%
<b>Postgraduate Study and/or Degree</b>	11.7%	11.8%	11.9%	13.0%	13.1%

**Appendix D**  
**Other Demographic Indicators (2011)**

**Table D1. 2011 Distribution of Parent Gender by Ethnicity for Total Dataset**

	<b>African- American</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Asian- American / Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Male</b>	3.5%	8.8%	1.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.4%	14.5%
<b>Female</b>	28.7%	50.2%	3.6%	0.4%	1.2%	1.4%	85.5%
<b>Total</b>	32.2%	59.0%	4.8%	0.5%	1.7%	1.9%	100.0%

**Table D2. 2011 Distribution of Parent Gender by Ethnicity for Analyzed Dataset**

	<b>African- American</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Asian- American / Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Male</b>	3.3%	8.9%	1.0%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	14.1%
<b>Female</b>	26.9%	53.3%	3.1%	0.4%	1.1%	1.2%	85.9%
<b>Total</b>	30.2%	62.2%	4.1%	0.5%	1.5%	1.6%	100.0%

**Table D3. 2011 Distribution of Child's Gender by Ethnicity for Total Dataset**

	<b>African- American</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Asian- American / Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Male</b>	14.1%	26.8%	2.1%	0.2%	0.8%	1.3%	45.3%
<b>Female</b>	18.6%	30.4%	2.7%	0.3%	1.0%	1.7%	54.7%
<b>Total</b>	32.7%	57.2%	4.9%	0.5%	1.8%	3.0%	100.0%

**Table D4. 2011 Distribution of Child's Gender by Ethnicity for Analyzed Dataset**

	<b>African- American</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Native American</b>	<b>Asian- American / Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Male</b>	13.3%	28.5%	1.8%	0.2%	0.7%	1.2%	45.7%
<b>Female</b>	17.5%	31.9%	2.3%	0.3%	0.8%	1.6%	54.3%
<b>Total</b>	30.8%	60.3%	4.1%	0.5%	1.5%	2.7%	100.0%

**Table D5. 2011 Distribution of Child's Grades by Grade Level  
for Total Dataset**

	<b>As and Bs</b>	<b>Bs and Cs</b>	<b>Cs and Ds</b>	<b>Ds and Fs</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>3rd Grade</b>	1.6%	0.6%	0.2%	0.1%	2.4%
<b>4th Grade</b>	2.2%	0.7%	0.2%	0.0%	3.2%
<b>5th Grade</b>	25.2%	10.1%	3.2%	0.7%	39.2%
<b>6th Grade</b>	3.5%	1.7%	0.5%	0.1%	5.9%
<b>7th Grade</b>	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.8%
<b>8th Grade</b>	17.3%	9.2%	3.3%	0.7%	30.5%
<b>9th Grade</b>	0.8%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	1.4%
<b>10th Grade</b>	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.4%
<b>11th Grade</b>	9.3%	5.3%	1.4%	0.2%	16.3%
<b>Total</b>	60.7%	28.3%	9.1%	1.9%	100.0%

**Table D6. Distribution of Child's Grades by Grade Level  
for Analyzed Dataset**

	<b>As and Bs</b>	<b>Bs and Cs</b>	<b>Cs and Ds</b>	<b>Ds and Fs</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>3rd Grade</b>	1.7%	0.6%	0.2%	0.1%	2.4%
<b>4th Grade</b>	2.4%	0.7%	0.2%	0.1%	3.4%
<b>5th Grade</b>	27.2%	10.5%	3.2%	0.7%	41.5%
<b>6th Grade</b>	3.6%	1.7%	0.5%	0.1%	5.9%
<b>7th Grade</b>	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.7%
<b>8th Grade</b>	16.3%	8.7%	2.9%	0.6%	28.4%
<b>9th Grade</b>	0.7%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	1.3%
<b>10th Grade</b>	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%
<b>11th Grade</b>	9.0%	5.2%	1.4%	0.2%	15.8%
<b>Total</b>	61.5%	28.1%	8.7%	1.7%	100.0%

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**FYI**

## EDUCATION WEEK

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### Accelerating INNOVATION >

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## Innovation Offices Pop Up in State Education Agencies

By Sean Cavanagh

David Cook's job is to look for new ideas in education—and to nurture them.

Mr. Cook directs Kentucky's Division of Innovation and Partner Engagement, one of a number of new offices within state departments of education designed to spawn innovations in school policy. Those new approaches focus on turning around low-performing schools, improving teacher quality, expanding online learning, and other policy goals, many of which transcend the assigned duties of any single office or division within existing state agencies.

Supporters of the offices see them as vehicles to lead education agencies beyond their traditional focus on service and compliance toward working as laboratories for ideas and the sharing of information across districts.

"The fun of my job is that I get to deal with a lot of new things in an incubator and try to grow them—possibly grow them across the state," Mr. Cook explained. His message to districts is "tell us what you want to do," he said, "and let us help you do it."

Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, and Oregon have offices to promote innovation, though they have different titles and duties, and other states are considering creating them. Chris Minnich, the senior membership director for the **Council of Chief State School Officers**, in Washington, predicts more states will add school innovation offices in the next few years, as they grapple with new approaches to delivering education and turning around struggling schools.

"You give people the space and the permission to do something different, and then try to scale up after that," Mr. Minnich said. "This is changing the way we do business, and that's hard."

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### Accelerating Innovation

**The Pace of Educational Change Quickens**

**Startups Seek to Master the Education Market**

**Houston Schools Take a Page From Best Charters**

**Studies Find Charters Vary in Quality, Creativity**

In Kentucky, Mr. Cook's office, which was created in 2010, has been asked to help districts come up with fixes to problems that have bedeviled them for years. One example is its work on what he dubs "the snowbound pilot."

For years, school districts in the eastern, Appalachian part of Kentucky have been routinely forced to cancel three to four weeks of school per year because of heavy snows, which choke roadways that wind through the mountainous region or wash them out. Those disruptions have made it difficult if not impossible for many students to make it to class, setting them back academically.

Three districts—the Letcher, Owsley, and Powell county school systems—proposed a series of solutions, and Mr. Cook's office helped implement them. The districts arranged new online education options, so that teachers could provide more assignments to students if they couldn't make it to school. For students who don't have Internet access—a common problem in the region—the districts arranged to keep more of their buildings open during bad weather so that the students who could reach them could work there. And the districts arranged to have more take-home lessons for students, in advance of bad weather.

At the request of state Commissioner of Education **Terry Holliday**, state legislators changed a law to give the districts greater flexibility to educate students through alternate means, including virtual lessons. Six additional districts joined the pilot program in the 2011-2012 year.

### Testing New Ideas

Mr. Cook's division was created at the direction of the state commissioner as part of a reorganization of the Kentucky Department of Education. The office currently has 12 employees. In addition to the rural schools project, its other efforts include overseeing a pilot program to give schools more flexibility in how they award academic credit, beyond simply counting "seat-time" in school, and another project to restructure high schools and give students more academic options, such as taking college classes early.

Will those efforts go statewide? Mr. Cook said it's too early to say. State officials will need a few years to evaluate what's worked and what hasn't.

In Louisiana, the Department of Education's **office of innovation** was originally proposed in the state's Race to the Top application, and it went forward even though the state didn't win the federal competition. So far the office, which has a yearly budget of \$20 million after absorbing some other divisions' duties, has focused on issues such as improving low-performing schools; recruiting and retaining qualified teachers and other employees; and implementing a state system for evaluating teachers and administrators, among other duties.

**Variety of Models Fuels Hybrid Charter Growth**

**Companies Target Hybrid-Charter Market**

**States Loosening 'Seat Time' Requirements**

**Innovation Offices Pop Up in State Education Agencies**

**Feds Aim to Spark Fresh Thinking on Schooling**

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**Chat: Learning to Identify and Understand K-12 Innovation**

One of its projects, the "Trailblazer Initiative," gives a group of more than 30 districts access to specialized state support and resources and tools to collaborate with one another. The office also oversees an "educator pipeline," or service to help Louisiana districts attract teaching talent, particularly to rural areas and in high-need subjects.

There has been a strong demand for the range of services the state is offering, said Gayle Sloan, a district support officer for the office. But it has also faced challenges, she said, such as trying to coordinate services for districts that require various divisions of the Louisiana Education Department to work together.

"We have a lot of spokes in the wheel that are used to operating independently of each other," Ms. Sloan said.

Of course, policies branded as "innovation" in some states may be regarded by critics as misguided or ineffective, acknowledged Mr. Minnich, of the CCSSO. But state officials today are eager to experiment, particularly as they attempt to make use of new ideas in standards, testing, teacher training, online education, and other areas.

"The challenge is to get this innovation to become mainstream," he said. An overriding goal, he said, is for state agencies to pursue breakthroughs in all the work they do, so that someday, "these offices of innovation won't be needed anymore."

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## EDUCATION WEEK

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### Waiver Hopefuls Put Through Paces by Review Process

By Michele McNeil

Before awarding **waivers** from core tenets of the No Child Left Behind Act to 11 states, the U.S. Department of Education ordered changes to address a significant weakness in most states' proposals: how they would hold schools accountable for groups of students deemed academically at risk, particularly those in special education or learning English.

The feedback from peer reviewers and the department, now available to the public, provides a road map for states hoping to win waivers in later rounds, and a warning that the department's promise of flexibility is not unlimited.

"Obviously, we're very, very hopeful with what all these states will do," U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan told reporters in a conference call announcing the waivers. "But if [at] any point we think states aren't living up to their commitments or are somehow acting in bad faith, we obviously retain the right to revoke a waiver."

Of the 11 applications submitted in November as part of the first round of judging, seven received full approval Feb. 9, and three won conditional approval, pending additional legislative or policy changes. New Mexico's application, considered the weakest by the department, was approved Feb. 15.

At least 20 states are expected to apply for waivers by the next deadline, Feb. 28. A third deadline has been set for Sept. 6.

Last year, amid congressional inaction on reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, whose current version is the decade-old NCLB law, President Barack Obama announced plans to award waivers to states that agreed to adopt priorities his administration favors—such as adopting common academic standards and tying teacher evaluations to student performance.

In exchange, states would get freedom to design their own accountability systems and ignore the

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#### Getting the Nod

The U.S. Department of Education approved 8 states for waivers under the No Child Left Behind Act through the 2013-14 school year, but not before requiring changes to their original proposals. In addition, three states were awarded conditional waivers that will expire at the end of the 2012-13 school year if certain requirements aren't met.

NCLB goal that all students be proficient in reading and math by 2014.

Three states had special conditions put on their waivers: Oklahoma and Georgia both need to make their new grading systems final, and Florida needs to change its accountability system so that all students with disabilities and English-language learners are included.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF NEW ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM	
STATE	
<b>COLORADO FULL WAIVER</b>	Based on growth and proficiency; requires all schools and districts to complete improvement plans; factors in writing and science in addition to reading and math; retains business incentives for schools.
SOURCES: U.S. Department of Education; State Applications	

If those states don't comply with the conditions, their waivers will expire at the end of the next school year.

The other states—Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Tennessee—won full waivers good through the 2013-14 school year.

Despite great promises of flexibility, the department didn't live up to all the talk, critics say.

"My main beef is their rhetoric—that it's a new day. I don't think the flexibility goes far enough to fix the flaws of NCLB," said Michael J. Petrilli, the executive vice president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a Washington think tank, and a former U.S. Department of Education official under President George W. Bush.

### **Weaknesses Flagged**

Besides flaws in states' plans to target subgroups such as special education students and English-learners, peer reviewers advising the Education Department found other problems in the initial applications, including:

- A lack of consultation with stakeholders in creating the waiver proposals;
- New grading systems that were too complex to be understood by parents and educators and that didn't give enough weight to graduation rates;
- Significant weaknesses in using annual achievement targets to drive incentives and interventions for schools that are not in the lowest-performing category; and
- Vague plans for developing and implementing new evaluation systems for teachers and principals.

Those concerns were at the heart of changes states had to make to win the department's approval.

New Mexico, for example, committed to improve public input by convening a task force of teachers, parents, and other stakeholders as it develops its new teacher- and principal-evaluation system.

And, said Hanna Skandera, New Mexico's secretary of education-designate, federal officials wanted proof of a "plan of intervention for schools that have large achievement gaps."

Florida had to change its plan so that even high schools that earn grades of A, B, and C would be targeted for interventions if they have low graduation rates.

Indiana had wanted to use only its new "super-subgroup"—a combination of smaller, traditional subgroups of at-risk students—in its accountability system, but had to return to setting annual achievement goals for those smaller subgroups, too.

Though he doesn't go as far as the critics, Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett, an elected Republican, did say the flexibility perhaps wasn't as great as states had hoped.

"I think forces beyond the control of the department created a system where maybe what the department conveyed to states would be the level of flexibility, and where it ended, were a little different," he said.

Regardless, he sees these waivers as big victories for states that have operated under the NCLB law, and their own individual accountability systems.

"We have had this two-accountability system for so long that the ability to move to one accountability system in and of itself was huge," he said.

### **Sensitive Subgroups**

States seemed to have their biggest problems articulating how they would make sure students in special education and English-learners have access to rigorous coursework that will prepare them for common academic standards and how their teachers will get the professional development they need. In addition, states didn't have good plans for how to build evaluation systems to incorporate the teachers working with those students.

But it may be too early to tell if the changes states made will satisfy those concerns.

"Students with disabilities will be highly impacted because they will be in all schools, and they may have few numbers so they don't carry much weight," said Laura Kaloi, the public-policy director for the National Center for Learning Disabilities, based in New York City. "The most critical question going forward is how the department will monitor this."

A spokesman for the Education Department said officials weren't ready yet to talk about how they planned to hold states to their waiver promises.

The weaknesses in states' plans to improve achievement for students with disabilities and English-learners was emblematic of a much more fundamental issue that states—and the department—struggled to address: how to keep the focus in new accountability systems on subgroups of at-risk students, which many agree is something that No Child Left Behind has done well.

Most of the 11 states are shifting the emphasis away from small, distinct groups of students considered at academic risk—such as members of racial or ethnic minorities or English-learners—into larger super-subgroups like the one Indiana is using.

The NCLB law's treatment of subgroups certainly has had its flaws, many advocates agree. A single failing subgroup could trigger sometimes-severe sanctions for an otherwise high-performing school. And often, subgroups were too small to be factored into accountability systems, meaning some schools weren't held accountable at all for groups at risk.

"In order to upgrade accountability, we needed to do some combining to make sure students weren't getting lost, but the department pushed back pretty hard," said Chris Minnich, the senior membership director for the Council of Chief State School Officers, who added that states improved their plans to report on and pay attention to those groups.

For example, Kentucky held just 21 percent of schools accountable under the NCLB law for their minority students because the rest had too few such students for them to qualify as a subgroup. Under the state's new system, 99 percent of schools will be held accountable for minority students.

### **'Get-Out-of-Jail Card'**

But civil rights and other advocacy groups don't want this progress to come at the expense of specific groups of students that may struggle but whose low performance may be obscured because they are a part of a larger group.

"You could move one subgroup and leave the rest behind and get yourself a get-out-of-jail-free card," said Amy Wilkins, the vice president for government affairs and communications at the Education Trust, a Washington-based advocacy organization.

The Education Department clearly tried to protect subgroups. In the next round of applications, it added a requirement that makes clear states must report on the performance of individual student subgroups also specified under the No Child Left Behind Act.

"We fully believe that these states' accountability plans will reach more children [and] will get more resources to the children most at risk," Secretary Duncan said.

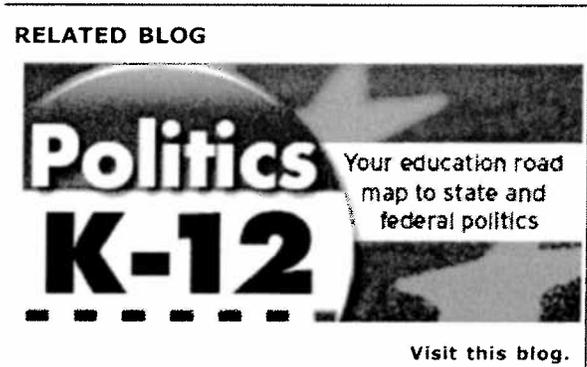
But whether that will actually happen is unclear, as merely reporting data is different from requiring interventions, which is a central element of the NCLB law.

An Education Trust analysis, for example, points out that Indiana's subgroup performance, though it will be reported, doesn't factor into its A-to-F grading system. And while Oklahoma schools will earn a "plus" or "minus" grade based on subgroup performance, those designations don't control how the state identifies struggling schools.

States that need more time to develop their waiver proposals can ask the federal department for a one-year freeze in their annual achievement targets to keep the list of schools not making adequate yearly progress from growing. AYP is the law's key mechanism for tracking schools' performance.

But even that temporary flexibility comes with strings: States must agree to adopt college- and career-readiness standards, provide student-growth data to reading and math teachers, and report achievement and graduation gaps for each NCLB subgroup.

New Hampshire and Maine are among the states planning to take advantage of the offer. In a joint Feb. 13 letter to Secretary Duncan, education commissioners from the two states said they needed more time to figure out how to make the department's waiver requirements work in



their rural states—namely, the requirements around intervening in low-performing schools and evaluating teachers based on performance.

Maine's Stephen Bowen and New Hampshire's Virginia Barry wrote: "Rushing to create and implement a plan ... will result in a less thoughtful system that ill serves the students in our states."

*Assistant Editor Sean Cavanagh and Staff Writer Alyson Klein contributed to this article.*

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STATE	HIGHLIGHTS OF NEW ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM	CHANGES FROM APPLICATION
<b>COLORADO</b> FULL WAIVER	Based on growth and proficiency; requires all schools and districts to complete improvement plans; factors in writing and science in addition to reading and math; retains tutoring and choice for lowest-performing schools.	Added more detail to its plan to incorporate students with disabilities and English-language learners into more rigorous common-standards coursework; school improvement strategies must be based on research; schools with lagging subgroups (minorities, ELLs, students with disabilities) must focus on students furthest behind; state will identify targeted supports for schools with subgroups that miss achievement targets.
<b>FLORIDA</b> CONDITIONAL WAIVER	Uses an A-F grading system; factors in writing and science in addition to reading and math; emphasizes bottom 25 percent of students in one "super-subgroup."	Interventions will be required even in A, B, or C schools with low graduation rates; state must target interventions for any school—even if it's not a low-performing "focus" or "priority" school—in which a subgroup misses achievement targets two years in a row.
<b>GEORGIA</b> CONDITIONAL WAIVER	Uses a performance index based on growth, achievement, and gap closing; issues red and yellow flags for poor subgroup performance; factors in science, social studies and writing in addition to reading and math; requires small percentage of Title I funds to be set aside for extended learning time in lowest-performing schools.	Identified additional Title I schools with low subgroup performance or graduation rates, or in a particular content area, as "alert" schools that will require targeted school improvement plans; state will conduct performance reviews in bottom 5 percent of its districts.
<b>INDIANA</b> FULL WAIVER	Uses an A-F grading system based on growth and achievement; emphasizes bottom 25 percent of students in super-subgroup.	Added more detail to its plan to incorporate students with disabilities and ELLs into more rigorous common-standards coursework; will keep traditional NCLB subgroups as well as super-subgroups in its accountability system; will require schools to implement interventions for struggling subgroups; toughened the criteria for schools to exit priority and focus school status.
<b>KENTUCKY</b> FULL WAIVER	Uses a rating system based on achievement, gap closing, and program reviews in nontested subjects, with plans to incorporate a school's percentage of effective teachers and principals in later years; factors in science, social studies, and writing in addition to reading and math; emphasizes larger "student gap" subgroup.	Added more detail to its plan to incorporate students with disabilities and ELLs into more rigorous common-standards coursework; will require all high schools to meet graduation rate targets; strengthened exit criteria for focus schools that are identified because of subgroup performance.
<b>MASSACHUSETTS</b> FULL WAIVER	Uses five-level grading scale based on gap closing and achievement; factors in science in addition to reading and math; creates new super-subgroup of ELLs, students with disabilities, and low-income students.	Lowered the number of students necessary to be included in subgroup performance (called "n size") to 30 from 40; will require performance targets and interventions for individual subgroups.
<b>MINNESOTA</b> FULL WAIVER	Uses rating system based on student growth, gap closing, and achievement; sets 85 percent graduation-rate target for all high schools.	Added more detail to its plan to incorporate students with disabilities and ELLs into more rigorous common-standards coursework; strengthened accountability for graduation rates; schools can no longer make adequate yearly progress using "safe harbor" provision under NCLB law; revised achievement targets so students are on track to proficiency within four years.
<b>NEW JERSEY</b> FULL WAIVER	Uses school report cards with metrics on student growth, gaps, and achievement; relies on seven new regional achievement centers to create customized interventions for schools.	Added more detail to its plan to incorporate students with disabilities and ELLs into more-rigorous common-standards coursework; will identify schools and require improvement plans if subgroups fail to meet targets; will report graduation rates for each subgroup; will develop guidelines for teacher and principal evaluations and implement the system in fall 2012.
<b>NEW MEXICO</b> FULL WAIVER	Uses an A-F grading system based primarily on achievement, student and school growth, and in small part on attendance and a school's "opportunity to learn" survey on teaching; emphasizes bottom 25 percent of students in one super-subgroup.	Strengthened subgroup accountability by using its authority to review district budgets and programs to ensure resources and strategies are directed to struggling students; will identify a new group of "strategic" schools, which are schools with the largest gaps between school's bottom quartile and the top three quartiles statewide; will not rely on student demographic data as part of its student-growth model.
<b>OKLAHOMA</b> CONDITIONAL WAIVER	Uses an A-F grading scale based on achievement and gap closing; uses a report card to highlight performance of subgroups; factors in science in addition to math and reading.	Added more detail to its plan to incorporate students with disabilities and ELLs into more rigorous common standards coursework; included tentative timeline for piloting teacher and principal evaluation system during the 2012-13 school year; created differentiated and specific interventions for all schools in bottom 25 percent.
<b>TENNESSEE</b> FULL WAIVER	Uses A-F grades based on achievement and gap closing; uses a report card to highlight performance of subgroups; factors in science as well as math and reading.	Added more detail to its plan to incorporate ELLs into more rigorous common-standards coursework; will require schools to take more-aggressive action for poor subgroup performance; added graduation targets for subgroups.

## EDUCATION WEEK

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### **Enter the Innovation Officer: Districts Design New Jobs**

#### **Focus of work often on securing grants**

**By Jason Tomassini**

On the long list of education buzzwords—paradigm, experiential, accountability—"innovation" can be just as vague and all-encompassing as any other.

But it is a buzzword for a reason. New forms of educational technology, the growth of nontraditional schools, and new public and private funding sources are among the trends influencing and potentially even redefining K-12 education. All are broadly categorized as "innovation."

Enter the "innovation officer," a job title that is cropping up in school districts and state education departments nationwide. Often a top administrative position filled by a candidate from the corporate world, charter school management, or a district office, the innovation officer (or a variant on that title) might oversee a "portfolio" of schools, lead the integration of new technology into the classroom, and redistribute central-office services.

Data on how many of those jobs exist are difficult to come by, but many identified by *Education Week* began in the past five years, with the more recent ones loosely coinciding with the Obama administration's Race to the Top and Investing in Innovation, or i3, competitions.

That shouldn't be a surprise, said Daniel A.

Domenech, the executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, based in Alexandria, Va. During President George W. Bush's administration, districts developed administrative positions around "assessment and accountability," to garner favor and funds under the federal No Child Left Behind Act and its test-centered mandates, Mr. Domenech said.

#### **How Much Substance?**

Now, the Obama administration has awarded more than \$4 billion so far in Race to the Top grants, which reward initiatives like school turnarounds, charter schools, and technology-based reform. **School Improvement Grants** offer \$3.5 billion in federal aid to districts that agree to aggressive overhauls of their worst-performing schools. This year, the **i3 fund** awards \$150 million in competitive grants for innovative practices proven to boost student achievement.

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Again, districts are responding, Mr. Domenech said, but will the administration's leverage really have an impact?

"They are just basically re-cooking or re-warming the old school," Mr. Domenech said. He added: "In the majority of cases, it's just a new title."

The U.S. Department of Education's top innovation official, however, disagreed.

"I don't think people are jumping in [to create the innovation officer positions] just because it's trendy," said James H. Shelton, the assistant deputy secretary for innovation and improvement. "I think districts are both seeing the upside of the opportunity and feeling the necessity that the pace of change should pick up dramatically."

### **Attracting Money**

Innovation officers interviewed by *Education Week* did acknowledge a focus on procuring and managing state, federal, and private grants.

"That is what I do. All of it goes towards that," said Michael Hagen, the associate superintendent of innovative services for the St. Louis public school system, which enrolls 25,000 students.

Most of the time, Mr. Hagen's office, which manages federal School Improvement Grants the district received in 2010 to turn around 11 low-performing schools, must come up with an initiative, prove its worth and practicality, and then seek funding for it, he said.

"We're not going to write a grant with grandiose ideas," he said. "We are only going to put in there what we can do."

There's a similar approach in a much-smaller district, the 8,500-student Missoula County schools in Montana. As budgets are squeezed, Matthew Clausen, the director of creativity, innovation, and technology, seeks district funds, federal grants, and private money to support initiatives.

"The kind of things we are trying to do—our state budgets don't think about those things," said Mr. Clausen, who was hired in October as the first person to hold the position. "Grant funding is one of the ways to get the resources, so we can show they are successful and work them into state funding."

An undisclosed private foundation is supporting a pilot 1-to-1 iPad program for 120 elementary school students in Missoula, based on a similar Oregon initiative that is credited with helping to raise test scores.

Missoula's initiative illustrates Mr. Clausen's focus on technology. Before holding his current job, Mr. Clausen served in various district positions responsible for integrating technology into the classroom. It's a priority shared by innovation officers in smaller districts that don't have portfolios of schools or large federal support.

In Pennsylvania's 2,500-student South Fayette Township district, near Pittsburgh, Aileen Owens, the district's first director of technology and innovation, is focusing mostly on classroom

technology and on the STEAM subjects: science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Her goal is to train a new generation of software engineers and computer programmers.

A new computer-programming course enrolls 160 students in grades 5-7 this year, and 26 South Fayette high school students are enrolled in an after-school program that develops applications for Google's Android operating system.

While money for the programs is hard to come by—using free software and sharing costs with neighboring school districts are common—Ms. Owens prefers her small district. There, innovation can be nimble, as it should be, she said.

"When you need to be innovative, you need to grapple with things quickly and move," said Ms. Owens, who was hired in July. "You don't want to wait a year to implement something."

### **Sharing What Works**

In some large urban districts, new positions have formed to marry two new trends in education, "innovation" and school "portfolios."

Alyssa Whitehead-Bust, the chief of innovation and reform for the Denver public schools, oversees a portfolio of about 35 charter schools and 20 "innovation schools," which together enroll 18,000 of the district's 80,000 students.

In most cases, including in Colorado, innovation schools are not subject to certain state regulations and collective bargaining provisions, but are still operated by the school district. Some states and districts, most notably New York City, have taken the concept a step further and created "innovation zones," coordinated groups of schools within a district that pilot new programs and rigorously research them.

But rather than promote such schools as better alternatives to traditional schools, Ms. Whitehead-Bust aims to take what works in her portfolio schools—extended school days, for example—and scale it districtwide. The relationship works in reverse, too: A new initiative will allow charter schools to opt in to central-office services such as security, professional development, and English-language instruction, she said.

"It's a tighter, more congruent system, where schools get what they pay for and pay for what they get," said Ms. Whitehead-Bust, who was hired less than a year ago after working as an education consultant and founder of a charter school in Denver.

"It's less about managing our portfolio of autonomous schools and more about creating district systems," she said.

### **Innovation Stakeholders**

Christine Fowler-Mack, the chief of new and innovative schools and programs for the 42,000-student Cleveland district, oversees seven charter schools either operated or sponsored by the district. That puts her on the front lines of a **larger effort** by Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson to reverse plummeting student enrollment, establish new charter schools, and overhaul rules on teacher compensation and tenure.

But as positive as "innovation" sounds, the plan in Cleveland has been criticized. The Cleveland Teachers Union accused Mr. Jackson and the school district of excluding the union from the new plan.

"The notion of innovative schools isn't at odds with us; it's the troubling track the district is often taking to shut out the union when it comes to reform that's related to innovation," said David Quolke, the president of the union, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers.

Both Mr. Quolke and Ms. Fowler-Mack highlighted successful innovation initiatives stemming from district-union collaboration, such as the 13 separate contracts agreed upon for Cleveland's innovation schools. But Mr. Quolke also noted that Mayor Jackson and the district consulted with Cleveland's business community when creating the new plan, highlighting what the union leader sees as the tendency for innovation to favor the private sector over teachers.

Indeed, for many innovation officers, building relationships with businesses is a large part of the job, a dynamic that can rankle parents and unions.

The Denver district, for example, will use an \$800,000 donation from the Dell Foundation to train school leaders at charter schools to prepare them for jobs as principals at district-run schools.

St. Louis is looking to the private sector to support new charter schools, including one that will incorporate literature into all the curriculum and another dedicated to environmental sustainability.

"There's no way to do this without the private sector," Mr. Hagen, the St. Louis associate superintendent of innovative services, said.

As federal policy and, perhaps, the presidential administration change, so could these new positions.

The comprehensive, all-encompassing nature of "innovation" in education, allowing for an agile approach but a great deal of uncertainty, appears to also apply to the daily work of its district-level stewards.

As Mr. Clausen said: "It's certainly been a challenge to know what I'm doing every day. There's limitless potential."

*Assistant Editor Michele McNeil contributed to this article.*

*Coverage of the education industry and K-12 innovation is supported in part by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.*

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## EDUCATION WEEK

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## Variety of Models Fuels Hybrid Charter Growth

By Ian Quillen

In innovation-friendly pockets across the country, the number of hybrid charter schools—those that blend online and face-to-face instruction—has been growing over the past five years.

But now, the educational model seems to have shifted into overdrive.

Major philanthropies—most notably, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation—have launched funding initiatives directed specifically at hybrid school models, which because of their unorthodox ways of allocating resources often are able to operate best as charter schools. (The Gates Foundation also provides grant support for *Education Week's* coverage of the education industry and K-12 innovation.)

Some observers of the field believe financial stresses have not only caused more charter school founders to embrace a hybrid model in hopes of saving money on teachers, facilities, and content, but have also led some already-existing charters to attempt the transformation from brick-and-mortar to hybrid schools.

And while full-time virtual learning has drawn increased scrutiny from the news media, policymakers, and the general public, hybrid models may be fairly insulated from such negative sentiment.

"My feeling is that full-time virtual schooling is taking far more heat than the blended [model] is," said Michael Horn, the co-founder and executive director of the Mountain View, Calif.-based Innosight Institute's education practice and the co-author of *Disrupting Class: How Disruptive Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns*, perhaps the most influential work among K-12 online and blended-learning advocates.

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### Accelerating Innovation

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Mr. Horn added that charter operators may be the most equipped to handle the pressure of being under the microscope.

"They're sort of used to taking heat," he said. "I don't think that pressure is going to make them care too much if results really do follow."

### 'Hybrid' Research Needed

While there is growing research to suggest that, in general, a blended educational approach can be at least as effective for some students as a traditional face-to-face strategy, very little of it specifically targets the effectiveness of hybrid charter schools. Often, these schools are lumped in with brick-and-mortar charter schools, as they were in a recent study by the National Education Policy Center, at the University of Colorado at Boulder, that finds lagging achievement in privately run, fully online charter schools.

Perhaps for that reason, much of the private investment in hybrid charters appears to be geared toward understanding more about the burgeoning field.

With a portion of the third wave of its **Next Generation Learning Challenges**, competitively awarded grants, the Gates Foundation is aiming to fund models that successfully combine aspects of brick-and-mortar and online instruction to help students in grades 6-12 move toward college readiness.

All winners must demonstrate to the foundation's satisfaction "that their instructional models incorporate technology to personalize students' learning experiences, and their business models can support sustainable expansion or adoption plans," according to a Gates Foundation press release.

In February, the foundation awarded five \$150,000 grants—each carrying the possibility of up to \$300,000 more in additional matching funding—to hybrid charter school projects in East San Jose, Oakland, and Los Angeles, Calif.; Chicago; and Newark, N.J. The foundation expects to award additional grants to projects both at the secondary and postsecondary levels in May and September.

Other philanthropies are joining the hybrid charter cause, such as the **Michael & Susan Dell Foundation** of Austin, Texas, which has awarded hybrid charter schools five \$200,000 grants geared toward creating case studies to explain each schools' educational methods and results over a one-year period.

"It's deliberately short," explained Cheryl Niehaus, the manager of the Dell Foundation's personalized-learning portfolio. She said district-run models were also eligible for the grants, but charter school models appeared a better fit for the project. "Because it is such a new field and is moving so quickly, we wanted to return information sooner rather than later," she said.

#### Variety of Models Fuels Hybrid Charter Growth

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Officials with the Dell Foundation declined to name which schools were receiving the grants, but will announce them later this spring as case studies are released. They also said all the recipients, while possessing substantial structural differences, would be classified as "rotation models" of blended learning, a term coined by a white paper from Mr. Horn's Innosight Institute to describe an approach in which students spend significant time in online and face-to-face instruction in each of their courses.

Ms. Niehaus said the studies are meant to yield information, not judgment.

"We are not looking to compare effectiveness of one [of the five schools] to the next for a whole variety of reasons," Ms. Niehaus said. "These five grants with research evaluation, as much as we hope and intend for them to be used publicly, we're also looking to information generated to inform how decisions on blended learning might play in our portfolio later down the line."

And it's a knowledge base that may be urgently needed in a hybrid charter school landscape that many believe is expanding for reasons beyond increasing education quality.

Mr. Horn, who has a firsthand glimpse at charter schools in California, where education budgets are bleaker than those of most other states, said every charter management organization in the state is making progress toward either starting a blended wing of its operation or transforming a brick-and-mortar model into a blended model. In many cases, he said, those schools are hoping to be able to cut back on costs, whether it's by using smaller facilities in a model where students attend class every other day and work remotely on the other days, or by increasing pupil-teacher ratios.

That pressure may also be reflected in a flurry of similar developments in Arizona, Michigan, and other states with exceptionally tight education budgets, and could potentially hinder the movement's long-term future if it leads to poorly performing schools.

"Some blended-learning models are great and some are pretty bad," Mr. Horn said. "I think you needed a bunch of proof points in the marketplace to really get people excited about it."

Policymakers' increasing awareness of hybrid school models also appears to be contributing to growth of the model, especially in states where policy allows any district or charter school to offer its own online courses.

But policies that are overly prescriptive in terms of how districts and charter schools can choose to change their models and incorporate elements of virtual learning may actually be defeating the purpose, warned Alex Hernandez, a partner and vice president with the Broomfield, Colo.-based Charter School Growth Fund, a nonprofit venture-capital fund that invests in promising charter school models.

"Policy can create the conditions for innovation, but not lead the innovation," said Mr. Hernandez, who also blogs regularly on the Innosight Institute's website. "We need to be careful not to harm innovation by defining it and harnessing it."

And as hybrid-charter proponents gain visibility, their early pioneers are at times worried about sending the wrong message to followers both at charter schools and district-run schools, even though publicity is needed to keep the movement going.

For example, John Glover is launching a new charter management organization called **Alpha Public Schools** in the 13,000-student Alum Rock school district in San Jose, Calif., partly in reaction to the positive response that **Rocketship Education**, a Palo Alto-based charter management organization, has gotten to the five K-5 hybrid charter schools it started in the area. (Mr. Glover is also doing so with assistance from one of the five grants bestowed so far in the third wave of the Gates Foundation's Next Generation Learning Challenges program.)

With the first three of Rocketship Education's schools ranking in the top 10 among schools serving low-income students in Santa Clara County, as measured by California's Academic Performance Index, the county board of education in December approved a request to expand the model to 20 additional schools. And Mr. Glover, who for the past six years served as a teacher, executive director, and chief operating officer at the largely unplugged American Indian Model School in Oakland, Calif., is launching the Alpha Middle School next fall partly to be a destination for children and parents who want a middle school experience similar to Rocketship's elementary offering.

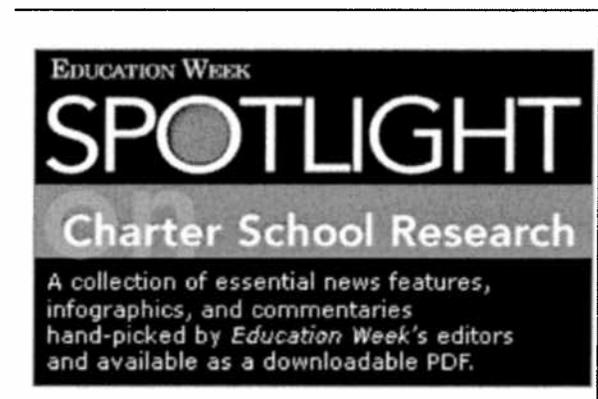
But Mr. Glover sees more similarities between the yet-to-open Alpha Middle School and the American Indian Model School than between other efforts at copying Rocketship's success with hybrid schooling. For example, he says, Alpha Middle School will follow the American Indian Model School's convention of assigning the same teacher to a middle school student for all core academic subjects in an effort to encourage deeper student-teacher relationships. Both are also committed to an extended school year, an extended school day for struggling students, and an expectation that graduates will be prepared to succeed not only in high school, but also in college.

Having come from a school that he says accomplished that mission while purposefully keeping technology out of the classroom, Mr. Glover warns colleagues at other hybrid charter schools not to focus too heavily on technology and too lightly on school culture.

"It's one of my big worries, and it's a worry shared by a lot of people doing this well," said Mr. Glover, who plans to receive 120 6th graders at Alpha Middle School next fall and eventually expand to 340 students in grades 6-8.

"If you go into any blended-learning program and you take every computer out of there, they might have to make some adjustments, but every single school that is successful as a blended model would be a success as a traditional model," he continued. But, he said, "I think there's a real concern folks are going to see success of certain organizations doing blended learning and say, 'This is great, we need to get some computers and some iPads' " without thinking more deeply about their educational approach.

*Coverage of the education industry and K-12 innovation is supported in part by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.*



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## EDUCATION WEEK

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## States Loosening 'Seat Time' Requirements

**A growing number of states are starting to award academic credit based on what students know—not how much time they spend learning it**

By Sean Cavanagh

States have established an array of policies in recent years to free schools from having to award academic credits based on "seat time," with the goal of making it easier for struggling students to catch up, exceptional students to race ahead, and students facing geographic and scheduling barriers to take the courses they need.

Thirty-six states have adopted policies that allow districts or schools to provide credits based on students' proving proficiency in a subject, rather than the time they physically spend in a traditional classroom setting, **according to the National Governors Association**. One state, New Hampshire, has required high schools to assign credits based on competency, rather than seat time, while others have encouraged schools to do that or allowed them to apply for waivers from state policy to do so.

In addition to their desire to increase academic opportunities for students, state policymakers are eager to boost high school graduation rates by re-engaging struggling teenagers through online or alternative courses, and potentially putting them on the path to a two- or four-year college degree or career certification.

Merely "having a seat in a class doesn't guarantee you anything," said Jason Glass, the director of the Iowa Department of Education. He and Iowa's Republican governor, Terry Branstad, are asking state lawmakers to **create a system** that allows students to prove their ability in different subjects in a variety of ways—such as through tests, demonstrations of skills, and the completion of projects.

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"Right now," Mr. Glass said, "we allow kids to move on by demonstrating very minimal competencies in these courses." The concept is "still sort of cutting edge," he added, "but we want Iowa experimenting with it."

Others, however, wonder whether advocates of moving away from seat time are more interested in trying to boost graduation rates through online and other means than in keeping an eye on the instructional quality of those courses.

"A teacher inspires students. A laptop can't do that," said Rita M. Solnet, a member of **Parents Across America**, an organization that is critical of efforts to shift educational services away from the public to the private sector. She suggested that lawmakers in her state, Florida, and elsewhere are among those putting more focus on improving graduation rates than on maintaining the academic quality of the new online learning programs they are creating.

Florida has an extensive virtual education program through the Florida Virtual School, the country's largest state-sponsored virtual school, and this year, the Republican-controlled legislature has been considering a measure that would require that students assigned to teachers with a continually low performance rating be told of virtual education options.

The risk in the push for such programs is that public officials, in an effort to improve graduation rates, will allow online providers to present easy material to students so they can "breeze right through it," Ms. Solnet said.

### **Beyond Carnegie Units**

For roughly a century, the standard method for awarding American students academic credit was through Carnegie units, a measure based on student time spent in school. The goal of that measurement was to standardize the amount of instruction students received and were credited for across subjects, for college admission and other purposes.

But over time, critics have said that model has become increasingly obsolete, in that it doesn't help students who aren't being served well by traditional classrooms and doesn't account for the ways in which advances in technology and alternative instructional methods can help students.

Perhaps no state has gone as far as New Hampshire in moving away from seat-time requirements. In 2005, it became the first state to do away with the Carnegie unit, according to the **International**

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### **Where Credit Is 'Do'**

States have taken a variety of approaches in shifting away from awarding credits based on "seat time" to accepting mastery- or proficiency-based credits:

- New Hampshire eliminated the Carnegie unit in 2005, and it gave schools until the 2008-09 school year to award academic credits based on mastery, not seat time. Some districts have yet to make the change. The state's policy was designed to

**Association of K-12 Online Learning**, or INACOL, a Vienna, Va.-based group that supports expanding online education options.

The state gave districts until the 2008-09 academic year to award students credits based on their mastery of course-level competencies, though some districts have yet to make the change. ("**N.H. Schools Embrace Competency-Based Learning**," Feb. 8, 2012.)

New Hampshire does not have state definitions for discipline-specific competencies, but rather gives school districts the right to define them, a level of flexibility local officials have argued is a matter of local control, said Paul K. Leather, the state's deputy commissioner of education.

The state has offered guidance to districts through a "competency validation rubric" and model competencies.

Students across the state are obtaining competency-based credits through online courses and extended-learning programs, generally defined as out-of-school options that could include apprenticeships, independent study, or community service.

So far, more students are using competency-based options for elective courses, rather than core academic subjects, Mr. Leather said.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Education encourages "promising practices" among states and districts, in which schools make the most of student learning time and ensure that students' mastery of academic content is a major focus, noted Elizabeth Utrup, a spokeswoman for the agency, in an email.

Department officials believe those strategies can improve schools' flexibility and productivity, she said.

Yet even as states roll out new policies designed to move away from seat-time requirements, they face major questions about how to integrate new education options within their current systems.

For instance, many states do not have clearly defined policies on whether public colleges and universities should accept credits awarded for mastery of a subject, rather than seat time, explained Stephanie Shipton, an education policy analyst at the Washington-based NGA.

### **Credit for College**

expand student-learning opportunities through online and other means, and reduce dropouts.

- Michigan in 2007 created a policy to grant waivers from seat-time requirements to districts on a case-by-case basis. More than 200 schools have requested some sort of waiver over the past year, and about 5,500 students are making use of that flexibility, most of them through a blended-learning approach, combining in-person and online instruction.

- Oregon since 2003 has allowed districts and schools to use proficiency-based approaches for awarding credit to students. From 2004 to 2006, the state piloted that policy in seven school districts; in 2009, state policy was expanded to require that all in-class work be tied explicitly to demonstrated proficiency or mastery of academic standards.

- Oklahoma requires schools to allow students, upon request, to earn credits toward graduation in core academic subjects based on demonstrations of mastery through tests, state officials say. Students must score grades of 90 percent or higher on those tests to receive credit.

SOURCES: International Association for K-12 Online Learning; National Governors Association; Education Week

Some states could soon move to clarify those policies. Over the next few years, Colorado officials will be revising college admissions policy, and are likely to consider accepting credits acquired through students' demonstration of mastery, including those obtained through web-based portfolios of work, according to officials at the state Department of Higher Education.

State policies also vary greatly in how they attempt to regulate the awarding of credits to students other than by seat time, said Jennifer Dounay Zinth, a senior policy analyst at the **Education Commission of the States**, a research and policy organization in Denver.

Some states audit online programs and other alternative education options; some require that online or out-of-school courses adhere to state academic standards; some mandate end-of-course exams for students; and some attempt to regulate them by setting requirements for teacher qualifications, Ms. Dounay Zinth said.

Gary Miron, a professor of education at Western Michigan University, in Kalamazoo, sees the shift away from seat time as part of a broader movement in U.S. education to rework traditional school schedules to increase student achievement—such as through lengthening the school day or school year.

But he also said it represents another shift, too: a move away from "regulatory accountability" of schools, toward more "performance-based" or "market" accountability. Under the latter form of accountability, advocates of nontraditional options say they should be judged on their ability to produce results for students, and by how attractive those options are for parents.

State policymakers would be wise to move more slowly in promoting alternatives to traditional classroom instruction, given their uneven record, he argued. Mr. Miron released a report this year that found that a much smaller percentage of schools managed by for-profit virtual education providers—27 percent—made "adequate yearly progress" under the federal No Child Left Behind Act than was the case among schools managed by nonprofit and for-profit organizations, overall.

"I'm cautious about the speed of implementation, before we've taken the time to figure all of these things out, and test all of these things out," Mr. Miron said.

Some states are giving districts the flexibility to come up with alternatives to seat-time requirements.

Michigan is among them. In 2007, the state created a policy to grant waivers from seat-time requirements to districts on a case-by-case basis.

### **Luring Dropouts Back**

Over the past year, more than 200 schools have requested some sort of waiver, and about 5,500 students are making use of that flexibility, said Barbara Fardell, the manager of educational technology for the Michigan Department of Education.

The majority of those participants are doing some form of blended learning, combining traditional instruction in public schools with online learning or other alternative forms of instruction, Ms. Fardell said.

Many of the schools are attempting to lure dropouts back to school—who have obtained relatively few credits in traditional high school settings, she said. For those students, "it's hard to come back," the Michigan official said. "They feel there's a stigma."

"I won't say that an online environment is the best way for all students to learn best," Ms. Fardell added, "but it's definitely the better option for some of them."

One agency making use of that flexibility is the **Oakland Schools**, a regional service agency outside Detroit that oversees the participation of students from 17 school districts in **Widening Advancements for Youth**. WAY, as the program is known, is a nonprofit program based in Belleville, Mich. It uses primarily online lessons, combined with in-person instruction, and mentoring, tailored to individual student needs.

The Oakland Schools began accepting students into the program in September; enrollment is 160 and growing.

Students are assigned mentors and are given access to a network of adult support, including teachers who provide help at in-person laboratories the students are expected to attend, as well as educators who provide online support 24 hours a day, WAY officials said. Students work on "projects" in different subjects in which they lack credit, and work toward meeting state content expectations in those subjects, and Oakland Schools then recommends whether or not students' home districts should award them academic credit, said Michael Yocum, the executive director of learning services for the Oakland schools.

The program is winning over "school-phobic" students, who do not feel comfortable in traditional classroom settings, said Mr. Yocum.

"We try to shape the projects around what will motivate them," Mr. Yocum said. "It's an attempt to reinvigorate them, and get them to look at academic work differently."

One student who says her perspective has shifted is Rebecca Poniewierski, 15, from Auburn Hills, Mich.

Before joining the program, she had accumulated only a handful of academic credits, acquired at an area high school.

Now she's trying to rebuild her academic career in subjects like chemistry, U.S. history, and algebra. Much of her work is done online, but she makes regular visits to a laboratory to meet her teachers in person in various subjects, and she can ask for online help at all hours of the day.

Ms. Poniewierski admits she had doubts whether the online-heavy program would work for her. She worried she would procrastinate too much—and she confesses to spending too much time on Facebook, though she says "that just makes me work longer."

"I'm a totally different person now that I'm out of [my] school," she said. "So far, I'm catching up easily. If I don't understand, and I want to talk to a teacher or mentor, I can talk to them."

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