



**SC EDUCATION  
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

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**AGENDA**

**Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee**

**Monday, September 17, 2012**

**2:30 p.m.  
201 Blatt Building**

- |      |   |                             |
|------|---|-----------------------------|
| I.   | Welcome and Introductions   | Dr. Merck                   |
| II.  | Approval of the Minutes of May 21, 2012   | Dr. Merck                   |
| III. | Palmetto Gold and Silver Award Criteria<br>A. Review and Options for Amending Criteria<br>B. Action: Approval of Changes for 2012 | Mrs. Barton<br>Subcommittee |
| IV.  | Process for Cyclical Review of Accountability System  | Mrs. Barton                 |
| V.   | Research Methodology for Virtual Course Study   | Dr. Andrews                 |
| VI.  | Adjournment   | Dr. Merck                   |

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE  
Subcommittee on Academic Standards and Assessments**

**Minutes of the Meeting  
May 21, 2012  
10:00 AM, Room 201 Blatt Building**

Subcommittee Members Present: Dr. Danny Merck (chair), Sen. Fair, and Sen. Hayes  
EOC Staff Present: Kevin Andrews, Ms. Melanie Barton and Hope Johnson-Jones  
SCDE Staff Present: Mr. J.W. Ragley and Ms. Charmeka Bosket

Welcome and Introductions

Dr. Merck welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

Recommendations for Changes to the Science Standards

Ms. Barton reminded the Subcommittee that pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A) of the EAA, the EOC and the State Board of Education are responsible for reviewing South Carolina's standards and assessments to ensure that high expectations for teacher and learning are maintained. In keeping with the statute and the *Procedures for the Cyclical Review of Current South Carolina K-12 Academic Standards and for the Development of New Academic Standards*, the first stage has been completed. This stage includes the review of the content standards, coordinated by the EOC for three groups and by the SCDE for in-state educators. In December and January the EOC staff enlisted the names of individuals to serve on three panels: (1) a national expert team; (2) a business and community team composed of parents, business and community leaders; and (3) teachers of students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency.

Ms. Barton then recognized Kay Gossett who summarized the recommendations of each panel and overall recommendations common to all three panels. Ms. Gossett began by documenting that South Carolina's science standards have been nationally recognized. The Fordham Foundation recently reviewed all states' science standards gave South Carolina an A-. Ms. Gossett then referred the subcommittee to the most recent PASS science scores. Between 28.3 and 39.2 percent of students in grades 3 through 8 scored "Not Met" on PASS science in 2011. The three panels also recognized that student achievement in science and technology are not at levels needed to prepare students for careers and college. Therefore, the panels focused their recommendations on how the existing science standards, which have good content, can be amended to improve the teaching and learning of science and to reflect the most recent research in how students learn. The overall goal of the recommendations of the panelists was to decrease the scale of standards and indicators and allow depth of content to be the focus, not the breadth. Standards using "recall, summarize, know, etc..." should be removed and combine these ideas to formulate higher level standards.

Sen. Fair asked why the state was initiating a review of the science standards, given the Fordham Foundation's high marks for our science standards. Staff responded that the seven-year cyclical review of standards as required by law is the impetus for the review. Sen. Fair also asked for clarification from the South Carolina Department of Education if the recommendations of the panels will allow the agency to proceed forward with its review and revision of the standards. Ms. Charmeka Bosket, Deputy Superintendent of Policy and Research at the South

Carolina Department of Education, responded that the review will assist the agency as it begins writing the new South Carolina science standards. With all members reserving their rights, the subcommittee voted unanimously to recommend that the full EOC approve the report, which will then be formally provided to the South Carolina State Board of Education and the South Carolina Department of Education.

#### Innovation Initiative

Dr. Gerrita Postlewait updated the Subcommittee on the background, goal and strategy of the South Carolina Education Innovation Initiative. Dr. Postlewait described the formation of a Steering Committee, the development of a broad-based group of stakeholders to support the initiative, and the results of a May symposium on innovation. To date, two distinct objectives of the initiative exist: (1) creation of an Innovation Network; and (2) implementation of an Education Incubator. The Innovation Network would comprise several schools and districts in the state that develop, implement, evaluate and share innovative practices and policies. The Education Incubator would comprise three to five schools focusing on career, college and civic readiness by changing the existing K-12 delivery model, including changes to assessment, learning, and accountability approaches, requiring quick correction cycles and scaling success. Dr. Postlewait noted that non-traditional K-12 innovation initiatives will also present to the EOC at its June meeting. The EOC will likely have a role in implementing the Incubator pursuant to a proviso in the 2012-13 General Appropriation Bill.

#### Palmetto Gold and Silver Criteria

Ms. Barton summarized the data and information provided to the subcommittee members on various models for amending the Palmetto Gold and Silver Criteria. Due to the late hour she recommended that the subcommittee defer any action on the criteria until its next meeting.

#### Longitudinal Analysis of Three Years of PASS

Dr. Andrews provided a summary of important issues revealed in studying three years of PASS data. Six student cohorts were studied, with each cohort defined by their grade in the first year of PASS testing (grades 3 through 6). The rate at which students were retained was consistent across grades and relatively low (from 0.5 to 1.3 percent of students). Students retained scored higher on PASS for the second year at the same grade level, but retained students did not score higher at the next grade level as compared to students who had similar initial PASS scores but were not retained. Based on the data analyzed, retention did not appear to be an effective strategy.

Overall patterns of student achievement as measured by the percentage of students scoring Met or Exemplary were presented for Mathematics and Reading. Differences were not found by gender for Mathematics; however, differences were present for Reading. Large differences were found among students by the student's lunch status. Full-pay students scored highest, followed by students receiving reduced lunch rates, with students receiving free lunch scoring lowest. Analyses also showed this same pattern was present when considering the gains students make from one year to another. These patterns were consistent across cohorts and subject areas.

There being no further business, the Subcommittee adjourned.

## Proposed Changes to the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program

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

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

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

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

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

Based upon these two issues, the EOC staff recommends to the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee the following:

1. The criteria used to evaluate Palmetto Gold and Silver Award winners based on the release of the **2012** state report cards should be amended accordingly. Regarding schools with steady growth, only schools that have a growth rating of Good or better for two consecutive years would receive a Palmetto Silver award. Schools that have a growth index of Average or better for three years would not be eligible for a Palmetto Silver Award.
2. The Accountability Division of the EOC will analyze the results of the 2012 state report cards and propose alternative criteria for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award Program to the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee for the **2013** state report card release. Significant changes to the Palmetto Gold and Silver criteria should be consistent with the implementation of the new value table and indices for determining growth ratings for the **2013** state report card ratings.

## EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

### Subcommittee: Academic Standards and Assessments

Date: September 17, 2012

#### INFORMATION/RECOMMENDATION

Revising Palmetto Gold and Silver Award Program

#### PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards is from the EAA, as amended in 2008 (Act 282 of 2008):

Section 59-18-1100. The State Board of Education, working with the division and the Department of Education, must establish the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program to recognize and reward schools for academic achievement and for closing the achievement gap. Awards will be established for schools attaining high levels of absolute performance, for schools attaining high rates of growth, and for schools making substantial progress in closing the achievement gap between disaggregated groups. The award program must base improved performance on longitudinally matched student data and may include such additional criteria as:

- (1) student attendance;
- (2) teacher attendance;
- (3) graduation rates; and

(4) other factors promoting or maintaining high levels of achievement and performance. Schools shall be rewarded according to specific criteria established by the division. In defining eligibility for a reward for high levels of performance, student performance should exceed expected levels of improvement. The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations to ensure districts of the State utilize these funds to improve or maintain exceptional performance according to their school's plans established in Section 59-139-10. Funds may be utilized for professional development support.

Special schools for the academically talented are not eligible to receive an award pursuant to the provisions of this section unless they have demonstrated improvement and high absolute achievement for three years immediately preceding.

#### CRITICAL FACTS

The last time that the EOC recommended revisions to the criteria for the Palmetto Gold and Silver program was December of 2008. The EAA had just been amended during the prior legislative session to add closing the achievement gap between historically lower- and higher-achieving demographic groups of students as a criterion for receiving a Palmetto Gold or Silver award.

#### TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

March 20, 2012 – Staff from the Accountability Division and the Department of Education met to review the 2011 Palmetto Gold and Silver award winners

April and May, 2012 - Staff from the Division developed options for amending the criteria. Staff from the Department of Education ran simulations. The results are in the attached report.

May 21, 2012 - ASA Subcommittee met to discuss report. No action was taken.

#### ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

**Cost:** Absorbed in EOC operating budget

**Fund/Source:**

#### ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

#### ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

2012

# PALMETTO GOLD AND SILVER AWARD

Review and Options for Amending Criteria



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## **PALMETTO GOLD AND SILVER AWARDS CRITERIA**

### **Introduction**

The Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program was established by the Education Accountability Act (EAA) of 1998. Beginning in 2002-03 the EOC also recognized schools that closed the achievement gaps between historically lower- and higher-achieving demographic students. When the EAA was amended in 2008, the General Assembly included in the definition of the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program the recognition of schools that closed the gaps in achievement between historically lower- and higher-achieving demographic groups of students.

The current statutory authority for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards is below:

Section 59-18-1100. The State Board of Education, working with the division and the Department of Education, must establish the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program to recognize and reward schools for academic achievement and for closing the achievement gap. Awards will be established for schools attaining high levels of absolute performance, for schools attaining high rates of growth, and for schools making substantial progress in closing the achievement gap between disaggregated groups. The award program must base improved performance on longitudinally matched student data and may include such additional criteria as:

- (1) student attendance;
- (2) teacher attendance;
- (3) graduation rates; and
- (4) other factors promoting or maintaining high levels of achievement and performance. Schools shall be rewarded according to specific criteria established by the division. In defining eligibility for a reward for high levels of performance, student performance should exceed expected levels of improvement. The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations to ensure districts of the State utilize these funds to improve or maintain exceptional performance according to their school's plans established in Section 59-139-10. Funds may be utilized for professional development support.

Special schools for the academically talented are not eligible to receive an award pursuant to the provisions of this section unless they have demonstrated improvement and high absolute achievement for three years immediately preceding.

The law requires the State Board of Education, working with the Division of Accountability within the EOC and the Department of Education, to establish the criteria for the program. The law expressly also states that schools will be awarded for academic achievement and for closing the achievement gap with awards established for schools:

1. Attaining high levels of absolute performance and high rates of growth (general performance); and
2. Making substantial progress in closing the achievement gap.

In 2008 the EOC revised the criteria for the program accordingly. Schools meeting the criteria for general performance may receive a Palmetto Gold or Silver Award for general performance based on the criteria in use since the inception of the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award program. However, schools meeting the criteria for closing the gap may receive a Palmetto Gold or Silver

Award for closing the achievement gap. The EOC in 2008 projected that approximately 356 schools would receive awards based on the new criteria.

**Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards for General Performance Criteria**

The criteria used to recognize Palmetto Gold and Silver awards for annual ratings in 2009 through 2011 were as follows:

- ❑ A school with an Excellent rating in Absolute performance received a Gold Award for high levels of academic performance as long as its Growth Rating was equal to or above Average.
- ❑ A school with an Excellent rating in growth received a Gold Award for high levels of growth as long as its absolute performance rating was above At Risk.
- ❑ A school with a Good rating in growth received a Silver Award for good growth results as long as its absolute performance rating was above At Risk.

In addition schools qualified for a Silver Award for steady growth over at least two consecutive years:

- ❑ Growth index of Good or better for two years
- ❑ Growth index of Average or better for three years

**Table 1  
Gold and Silver Awards Criteria**

<b>Absolute Performance Rating</b>	<b>Growth Rating</b>	<b>Award Designation</b>	<b>Steady Growth</b>
Excellent	Excellent	Gold	
Excellent	Good	Gold	
Excellent	Average	Gold	
Good	Excellent	Gold	
Good	Good	Silver	
Average	Excellent	Gold	
Average	Good	Silver	
Below Average	Excellent	Gold	
Below Average	Good	Silver	
		Silver	Good or better Growth for <b>2</b> Years
		Silver	Average or better Growth Rating for <b>3</b> years

**Palmetto Gold and Silver Award for Closing the Achievement Gap**

An elementary or middle school earns a Silver award if the end of year performance in English language arts (ELA) or mathematics or growth in achievement by at least one historically underachieving group meets or exceeds the performance of historically high achieving students. A high school that has a growth in the graduation rate by at least one historically underachieving group meets or exceeds the annual growth rate needed to meet the state high school graduation rate goal of 88.3% by 2014 may earn a Silver award.

An elementary or middle school earns a Gold award if the end of year performance in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics by at least one historically underachieving group

meets or exceeds the performance of historically high achieving students. A high school earns a Gold award if the graduation rate of at least one historically underachieving group of students meets or exceeds the statewide graduation rate of historically high achieving students.

### **Results and Questions**

Table 2 and 3 document the number of schools that received a Gold or Silver Award or EOC Closing the Gap Award since 2001 by category.

The number of schools qualifying for Palmetto Gold and Silver in 2011-12 as compared to the number of schools qualifying in 2008-09 has doubled. In 2011-12 approximately 72 percent of all schools qualified for the award. There were 1,180 school report cards issued in 2011. The primary reason for the increase was due to the “steady growth” criteria. Schools that had a Good or better Growth rating for two years or schools and schools that had an Average or better Growth for three years qualified as Silver Award winners. Is the increase also due to more schools having an absolute rating of Below Average yet Excellent growth ratings? In 2011-12 there were three schools that were a Palmetto Gold award winner in 2011 for having a growth rating of Excellent and an Absolute rating of Below Average. Finally, the number of schools qualifying for Closing the Gap is relatively consistent over time. In 2011-12 39 of the 852 schools received an award solely due to meeting the Closing the Gap criteria.

The Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee must determine the following:

1. Since the number of schools qualifying for the Closing the Gap award seem to be relatively consistent over time, should the criteria for determining the general performance of the award be amended? And, if so, how should the criteria be changed?
2. When should any revisions to the criteria be implemented? Should the criteria apply for the next release of the school and district report cards?
3. In the 2012-13 General Appropriation Bill as passed by the House, the EIA line item appropriation for Palmetto Gold and Silver was eliminated. In fact, due to budget restraints, the appropriation for the program has been suspended for the past three years. If no funds are appropriated for the Palmetto Gold and Silver award winners for monetary compensation, how can the recognition program continue to be publicized and evidence of the improvement strategies and programs that led to the student academic gains of the award winners duplicated throughout the state, and at what cost?

To assist the Subcommittee in its deliberations, the Accountability Division, in consultation with the South Carolina Department of Education, is providing the following three alternative models and simulations. All simulations were provided by Dr. Ling Gao, Education Associate, at the South Carolina Department of Education.

**Table 2  
Schools Receiving Palmetto Gold or Silver Award / EOC Closing the Gap Award**

Year	Award Category	Number of Schools Receiving Gold Award	Number of Schools Receiving Silver Award	Total Number of Schools Receiving Award	Total Number of Schools Being Recognized for General Performance and /or for Closing the Achievement Gap	Number of Elementary and Middle Schools Receiving EOC Award for Closing the Achievement Gap
2001-02	General Performance	198	100	298	NA	NA
2002-03	General Performance	198	92	290	NA	87
2003-04	General Performance	229	77	306	NA	107
2004-05	General Performance	285	135	418	NA	132
2005-06	General Performance	187	125	312	NA	138
2006-07	General Performance	163	147	310	NA	135
2007-08	General Performance	114	126	240	NA	141
2008-09	General Performance	162	149	311	403	NA
	Closing Achievement Gap	79	163	242		NA
2009-10 *	General Performance	211	129	340	403	NA
	Closing Achievement Gap	66	150	216		NA
2010-11**	General Performance	297	200	497	551	NA
	Closing Achievement Gap	55	243	298		NA
2011-12***	General Performance	339	476	812	852	NA
	Achievement Gap	76	165	241		NA

\* Based on 2009 report card release

\*\* Based on 2010 report card release

\*\*\* Based on 2011 report card release

**Table 3**

**Distribution of Award Levels for General Performance and/or for Closing the Achievement Gap, 2009-2010, 2010-11 and 2011-12**

Award for		Number of Schools (%)		
General Performance	Closing the Achievement Gap	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Gold	Silver	59 (14.6)	135 (26.1)	99 (11.6)
Silver	Gold	8 (2.0)	8 (1.6)	7 (0.8)
Silver	Silver	48 (11.9)	64 (12.4)	43 (5.0)
Gold	None	114 (28.3)	93 (18.1)	186 (21.8)
Silver	None	73 (18.1)	126 (24.4)	426 (50.0)
None	Gold	20 (5.0)	19 (3.7)	16 (1.9)
None	Silver	43 (10.7)	31 (6.0)	23 (2.7)
<b>Total School Awards by the Program</b>		<b>403</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>852</b>

## Model 1

### Performance Criteria:

#### Gold Award Criteria:

- ❑ A school with an Absolute rating of **Excellent** would receive a Gold Award for high levels of academic performance as long as its Growth Rating was **Average** or better.
- ❑ A school with a Growth rating of **Excellent** would receive a Gold Award for high levels of growth as long as its absolute performance rating was **Average** or better.
- ❑ A school earning a Gold award for Closing the Achievement Gap, with existing criteria unchanged.

#### Silver Award Criteria:

- ❑ A school with an Absolute rating of **Good** would receive a Silver Award if its Growth Rating was **Good** or **Average**.
- ❑ A School with a Growth rating of **Good** would receive a Silver Award if its Absolute rating was **Good** or **Average**.
- ❑ A school earning a Silver award for Closing the Achievement Gap, with existing criteria unchanged

### What is Different:

#### Gold Award Criteria:

- ❑ Excludes schools with an Absolute rating of **Below Average** but **Excellent** Growth rating

#### Silver Award Criteria:

- ❑ Excludes schools with an Absolute rating of **Below Average** but Growth Rating of **Good**
- ❑ Excludes schools with **Good** or better Growth for 2 years or **Average** or better growth for 3 years

<b>Model 1</b>			
<b>Number of Schools Recognized (with General Performance and Closing Achievement Gap)</b>			
Number of schools in both lists (Performance & Gap)	Number of schools selected (Performance Only)	Number of schools receive gap award ONLY	Total number of schools that would receive recognition with the program
217	378	43	<b>638</b>



**Model 2**

**Performance Criteria:**

Gold Award Criteria:

- ❑ A school with an Absolute rating of **Excellent** and a Growth Rating of **Good** or **Excellent** would receive a Gold Award.
- ❑ A school earning a Gold award for Closing the Achievement Gap, with existing criteria unchanged.

Silver Award Criteria:

- ❑ A school with an Absolute rating of **Good** and a Growth Rating of **Good** or **Excellent** would receive a Silver Award.
- ❑ A school earning a Silver award for Closing the Achievement Gap, with existing criteria unchanged

<b>Model 2</b>			
<b>Number of Schools Recognized (with General Performance and Closing Achievement Gap)</b>			
Number of schools would be recognized for General Performance AND for Closing Achievement Gap	Number of schools would be recognized for General Performance only	Number of schools receive Closing Achievement Gap only	Total number of schools that would receive recognition with the program
<b>161</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>478</b>

<b>Model 2</b>								
<b>Distribution of Schools That Would Be Recognized by Absolute, Growth Ratings, and School Type</b>								
Award Category	Absolute Rating	Growth Rating	Elementary	Middle	High	Career Center	State Special	Total
Gold	Excellent	Excellent	129	45	28	7	3	212
Gold	Excellent	Good	29	7	22	9	3	70
<b>Total Gold</b>			<b>158</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>282</b>
Silver	Good	Excellent	11	3	9	2	0	25
Silver	Good	Good	52	32	2	0	0	86
<b>Silver Total</b>			<b>63</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>221</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>393</b>

**Model 2**

ABSOLUTE RATING	GROWTH RATING					TOTAL
	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	At Risk	
Excellent	<b>GOLD</b>	<b>GOLD</b>				<b>282</b>
	<b>212</b>	<b>70</b>				
Good	<b>SILVER</b>	<b>SILVER</b>				<b>111</b>
	<b>25</b>	<b>86</b>				
Average						
Below Average						
At Risk						
						<b>393</b>

**Gold**                    **282**  
**Silver**                 **111**  
**TOTAL:**                 **393**

### Model 3

#### Gold Award Criteria:

- A school with an Absolute rating of **Excellent** would receive a Gold Award for high levels of academic performance as long as its Growth index was **Excellent** or **Good**.
- A school with a Growth rating of **Excellent** and Absolute **Good** would receive a Gold Award for high levels of growth.
- A school earning a Gold Award for Closing the Achievement Gap, with existing criteria unchanged.

#### Silver Award Criteria:

- A school with an Absolute rating of **Excellent** and a Growth rating of **Average** would receive a Silver Award.
- A school with a Growth rating of **Excellent** and an Absolute rating of **Average** would receive a Silver Award.
- A school with a Growth rating of **Good** and Absolute rating of **Good** would receive a Silver Award.
- A school earning a Silver Award for Closing the Achievement Gap, with existing criteria unchanged.

<b>Model 3</b>			
<b>Number of Schools Recognized (with General Performance and Closing Achievement Gap)</b>			
Number of schools would be recognized for General Performance AND for Closing Achievement Gap	Number of schools would be recognized for General Performance only	Number of schools receive Closing Achievement Gap only	Total number of schools that would receive recognition with the program
<b>175</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>500</b>

<b>Model 3</b>								
<b>Distribution of Schools That Would Be Recognized by Absolute, Growth Ratings, and School Type</b>								
Award Category	Absolute Rating	Growth Rating	Elementary	Middle	High	Career Center	State Special	Total
Gold	Excellent	Excellent	129	45	28	7	3	212
Gold	Excellent	Good	29	7	22	9	3	70
Gold	Good	Excellent	11	9	3	2	0	25
Gold	Average	Excellent	12	0	5	0	0	17
<b>Total Gold</b>			<b>181</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>324</b>
Silver	Excellent	Average	8	1	10	0	0	19
Silver	Good	Good	52	32	2	0	0	86
<b>Silver Total</b>			<b>60</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>241</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>429</b>

<b>Model 3</b>						
<b>GROWTH RATING</b>						
<b>ABSOLUTE RATING</b>	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	At Risk	<b>TOTAL</b>
Excellent	<b>GOLD</b>	<b>GOLD</b>	<b>SILVER</b>			
	<b>212</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>19</b>			
Good	<b>GOLD</b>	<b>SILVER</b>				
	<b>25</b>	<b>86</b>				
Average	<b>GOLD</b>					
	<b>17</b>					
Below Average						
At Risk						
<b>Gold</b>	<b>324</b>					
<b>Silver</b>	<b><u>105</u></b>					
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>429</b>					

## **Additional Analysis**

The EOC staff looked at several alternative proposals to reward consistent growth improvement. The staff looked at schools that had moved from one absolute rating to another each year for two consecutive years. The staff looked at using an unadjusted growth rating. The simulations only marginally impacted the number of schools that would qualify. The impact was insignificant. In addition, the staff looked at the following: How could the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award program also recognize consistent, outstanding Growth in student achievement? For Models 2 and 3, the following simulations were run:

### **If Model 2 were amended to also include the following:**

Schools would also receive a Silver award for having three years of a Growth rating of Excellent or Good as long as the most recent absolute rating was Average or better. How many additional schools, schools that are not yet recognized under Model 2 would be recognized? Of these schools, how many are elementary, middle, high, vocational center, etc.?

### **If Model 3 were amended to include the following:**

Schools would receive a Silver award for having three years of a Growth rating of Excellent or Good as long as the most recent absolute rating was Average or better. How many additional schools, schools that are not yet recognized under Model 3 would be recognized? Of these schools, how many are elementary, middle, high, vocational center, etc.?

The result was between 11 and 12 additional schools would qualify for a Silver award for having consistent growth improvement.

<b>School Type</b>	<b>ADDENDUM Model 2</b>	<b>ADDENDUM Model 3</b>
Elementary	11	10
Middle	1	1
High	0	0
Career Center	0	0
Special Schools	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>

## Summary

1. Table 4 below compares the three models. The staff recommends that the Subcommittee consider these three models for amending the criteria for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award program along with any input provided by school district personnel. The data demonstrate that the percentage of schools by type that would qualify is consistent across all models.

**Table 4  
Comparison of Three Models**

School Type	Current Criteria		Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	# of Schools	% of schools	# of Schools	% of schools	# of Schools	% of schools	# of Schools	% of schools
Elementary	511	60.0	346	56.9	221	56.2	241	56.2
Middle	214	25.1	132	21.7	87	22.1	94	21.9
High	102	12.0	106	17.4	61	15.5	70	16.3
Career Center	19	2.2	18	3.0	18	4.6	18	4.2
Special Schools	6	0.7	6	1.0	6	1.5	6	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>852</b>		<b>608</b>		<b>393</b>		<b>429</b>	

**Additional Silver Award Recipients  
Consistent Growth**

School Type	ADDENDUM Model 2	ADDENDUM Model 3
Elementary	11	10
Middle	1	1
High	0	0
Career Center	0	0
Special Schools	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>

2. The staff recommends that additional analysis of the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award winners should be conducted by the South Carolina Department of Education. Not only should schools be recognized for academic achievement, but the student achievement of these schools should be analyzed. The analysis should also include looking at schools that close the achievement gap. For example, comparing Palmetto Gold and Silver award winners to comparable schools, “schools like ours” could potentially reveal initiatives, teacher recruitment and retention policies, or resource allocations that support the achievement gains. The information could be used to publicize effective reform strategies and promote statewide learning communities.

## **Cyclical Review of Accountability System**

When the Education Accountability Act was amended in 2008, the General Assembly enacted Section 59-18-910 that requires a cyclical review of the accountability system by the Education Oversight Committee (EOC).

Beginning in 2013, the Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education and a broad-based group of stakeholders, selected by the Education Oversight Committee, shall conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system at least every five years and shall provide the General Assembly with a report on the findings and recommended actions to improve the accountability system and to accelerate improvements in student and school performance. The stakeholders must include the State Superintendent of Education and the Governor, or the Governor's designee. The other stakeholders include, but are not limited to, parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators. (Section 59-18-910)

At its August 13, 2012 retreat, the EOC discussed the importance of defining the process that the agency would take in meeting this statutory requirement. Below is a summary of objectives and action items that the staff is presenting and requesting revisions and additions by the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee. The revised plan will then be forwarded to the full EOC for its consideration and approval on October 8, 2012.

### Objective:

The law states that the cyclical review must "provide the General Assembly with a report on the findings and recommended actions *"to improve the accountability system and to accelerate improvements in student and school performance."*

### Core Functions of the Accountability Systems:

Currently, under state and federal law there exist three accountability systems. First, the EAA, which was enacted in 1998 prior to passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, establishes the core functions of the state accountability to include:

1. Adopting academic standards that set high performance standards (*Article 3, Chapter 18 of Title 59*);
2. Developing or adopting state assessments to measure student performance on the academic standards (*Article 3, Chapter 18 of Title 59*);
3. Aligning instructional materials with academic standards (*Article 7, Chapter 18 of Title 59*);
4. Annual reporting of school and district performance to parents and the public via school and district report cards (*Article 9, Chapter 18 of Title 59*);
5. Awarding performance through the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program (*Article 11, Chapter 18 of Title 59*);
6. Aligning professional development to improve teaching and learning (*Article 11, Chapter 18 of Title 59*);

7. Intervening and assisting underperforming schools and school districts (*Article 15, Chapter 18 of Title 59*);
8. Informing the public on status of public education (Article 17 of Chapter 18 of Title 59);  
and
9. Conducting in-depth studies on implementation, efficiency and effectiveness of academic improvement efforts (*Chapter 6 of Title 59*).

Article 13, Chapter 18 of Title 59 also establishes a local accountability system. Each local school board must establish and review annually a performance based accountability system that reinforces the state accountability system. Parents, teachers and principals are involved in the “development, annual review and revisions of the accountability system established by the district.” The law also requires local school boards, school districts and schools to collect, document, and establish an annual performance-based accountability system.

Finally, there is a federal accountability system. On July 19, 2012 U.S., Secretary of Education Arne Duncan notified State Superintendent of Education Mick Zais that South Carolina’s request for flexibility from certain requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, had been approved. Based upon South Carolina’s waiver, the South Carolina Department of Education released letter grades for schools and school districts on August 2, 2012.

The accountability systems should share a common vision and work together towards obtaining the same goals for students and schools. Therefore, the broad-based stakeholder group would address the following issues for the accountability systems:

1. What should be the goal or goals of the accountability systems?
2. To whom is each system accountable?
3. What should be the core functions of the systems, and what entity should be responsible for each function?
4. Upon defining the goals and core functions of the accountability systems, then what should be the measures of quality and student learning at each point along the spectrum from kindergarten through grade 12 and beyond?
5. What oversight is necessary to assure that the accountability systems are compatible and that the public does not receive mixed or confusing reports?
6. What state intervention/assistance should be considered for underperforming school districts and schools?
7. How can the accountability systems foster innovation and transformation of public education in South Carolina to accelerate student performance?

Process and Outcomes:

The cyclical review process would involve the following:

1. Appointment of the broad-based stakeholder group and appointment of a chairperson to lead the group by the EOC.
2. Extensive review of the existing accountability systems focusing on effectiveness and results of the current systems.
3. Gathering information from national experts on accountability measures either being used in other states or under development that are consistent with *Educational Measurement*, the professional reference book on educational measurement, which is sponsored by the American Council on Education and the National Council on Measurement in Education.
4. Discussion and consensus on the goals/outcomes of the accountability systems with recommendations for how to obtain these goals through various measures including, but not limited to, student assessments.
5. Discussion and consensus of methods to accelerate improvements in student and school performance.
6. Findings and recommendations from the broad-based stakeholder group would then be submitted to the full EOC.
7. The EOC would then solicit public input into the findings and recommendations of the broad-based stakeholder group, including input from the State Board of Education.
8. EOC would then finalize recommendations to the General Assembly.

Composition of Broad-Based Group of Stakeholders

The EOC, working with the State Board of Education, will convene a stakeholder group of thirty-five (35) individuals from across the state to include the following:

- Governor or her designee;
- State Superintendent of Education;
- Four legislators, two from the House of Representatives and two from the Senate;
- President and Chief Executive Officer of ETV or her designee;
- 2012 South Carolina Teacher of the Year;
- Ten individuals representing business and industry;
- Three community leaders;
- One individual representing a two-year technical college;
- One individual representing a four-year college or university;
- Four parents with at least one individual being a parent of a child with special needs;
- One recent graduate from South Carolina public schools;
- Two members of local school boards;
- Three district superintendents; and
- Two district employees with responsibility for instruction, assessment and/or accountability.

**EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**Subcommittee: Academic Standards and Assessments**

**Date: September 17, 2012**

**INFORMATION/RECOMMENDATION**

Virtual Courses in Public Schools

**PURPOSE/AUTHORITY**

Section 59-6-110 of the South Carolina Code of Laws requires the Accountability Division of the EOC to “monitor and evaluate the functioning of the public education system and its components, programs, policies, and practices and report annually its findings and recommendations.” Pursuant to this legislative authority, the EOC has as an objective for the 2012-13 year to identify the availability and distribution of virtual courses in public schools.

**CRITICAL FACTS**

Virtual courses have been offered through the South Carolina Virtual School Program since 2006. The South Carolina Public Charter School District has been existence since 2008 with five schools, and has expanded each year. Several of the schools in the SCPCSD offer courses exclusively in an online environment. To date, no information has been reported regarding the students utilizing these resources or of student outcomes in this environment.

**TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS**

September, 2012 – Obtain data from entities studied.

October, 2012 – Data Analysis.

January or March, 2013 – Results to ASA Subcommittee.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC**

**Cost:** Absorbed in EOC operating budget

**Fund/Source:**

**ACTION REQUEST**

**For approval**

**For information**

**ACTION TAKEN**

**Approved**

**Amended**

**Not Approved**

**Action deferred (explain)**

## Virtual Courses in Public Schools

Virtual (online) courses are offered by a number of institutions in South Carolina. The South Carolina Virtual School Program, operated by the South Carolina Department of Education, is available to all students in grades 7 through 12 who attend a public, private, or homeschool in South Carolina. Several schools in the South Carolina Public Charter School District offer their curriculum exclusively in an online setting.

### Objective:

Section 59-6-110 of the South Carolina Code of Laws requires the Accountability Division of the EOC to “monitor and evaluate the functioning of the public education system and its components, programs, policies, and practices and report annually its findings and recommendations.” Pursuant to this legislative authority, the EOC has as an objective for the 2012-13 year to identify the availability and distribution of virtual courses in public schools.

### Specific Goals:

This study will provide initial information regarding the usage of online learning by students, and attempt to document:

- 1) The usage of virtual courses and/or enrollment in a virtual school by public school district over time,
- 2) the extent to which students enroll and unenroll in an online course or Virtual school within the same academic year,
- 3) policies regarding required student/teacher interaction,
- 4) teacher employment and certification,
- 5) expenditures associated with both the Virtual School Program and virtual charter schools;
- 6) profile of students who receive instruction virtually (i.e. place of residency and demographic information)
- 7) the academic achievement of students enrolled in online classes compared to students who enroll in traditional learning environments.

Results will be disaggregated by demographic groups.

### Data

Completion of the study relies heavily on the ability of the student information system at each institution to provide information dates of student enrollment, the school district of the student's residence, and student course grades as well as data from PowerSchool. Student achievement data will focus on PASS, End-of-Course Assessments and HSAP results.

Providers of Virtual Courses that will be studied include:

- 1) The South Carolina Virtual School Program,
- 2) the Palmetto State e-Cademy,
- 3) the Provost Academy South Carolina,
- 4) the South Carolina Virtual Charter School,
- 5) the South Carolina Calvert Academy,
- 6) the South Carolina Connections Academy, and
- 7) the South Carolina Whitmore School.

An Evaluation

# **Virtual Charter Schools**

*Department of Public Instruction*

## **2009-2010 Joint Legislative Audit Committee Members**

Senate Members:

Kathleen Vinehout, Co-chairperson  
Robert Jauch  
Mark Miller  
Robert Cowles  
Mary Lazich

Assembly Members:

Peter Barca, Co-chairperson  
Andy Jorgensen  
Mark Pocan  
Bill Kramer  
Samantha Kerkman

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## **Appendices**

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Appendix 2—Virtual Charter School Pupils
Appendix 3—Virtual Charter Schools' Estimated Other Revenue
Appendix 4—Estimated Virtual Charter School Expenditures
Appendix 5—Supplemental Online Programs
Appendix 6—Satisfaction with Virtual Charter Schools

## **Response**

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From the Department of Public Instruction