

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Monday, April 28, 2014
1:00 p.m.
433 Blatt Building

- | | | | |
|------|--|----------------|--|
| I. | Approval of the Minutes of February 10, 2014 | Mr. Whittemore | |
| III. | Subcommittee Reports | | |
| A. | Academic Standards and Assessments
Action: High School Biology Standard H.B.5.
Action: Cyclical Review of the Accountability System | Dr. Merck | |
| B. | EIA and Improvement Mechanisms
Information: FY2014-15 Budget Recommendations | Mrs. Barton | David Whittemore
CHAIR |
| C. | Public Awareness Subcommittee
Information: 2012-13 Communication Plan
Action: 2014-15 Communications Plan
Action: Parent Survey Report for 2013 | Mrs. Hairfield | Daniel B. Merck
VICE CHAIR
J. Phillip Bowers
Anne H. Bull
Mike Fair |
| D. | Special Reading Subcommittee
Action: P-20 Reading Initiative | Mrs. Hairfield | Margaret Anne Gaffney
Barbara B. Hairfield
Nikki Haley |
| | Adjournment | | R. Wesley Hayes, Jr.
Alex Martin
John W. Matthews, Jr.
Joseph H. Neal
Andrew S. Patrick
Neil C. Robinson, Jr.
J. Roland Smith
Patti J. Tate
John Warner
Mick Zais |
| | | | Melanie D. Barton
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR |

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Meeting
February 10, 2014

Members in Attendance: Mr. David Whittemore (Chair); Mr. Neil Robinson (Former Chair); Mrs. Barbara Hairfield (Former Vice-Chair); Mr. Phillip Bowers; Ms. Anne Bull; Sen. Mike Fair; Ms. Margaret Anne Gaffney; Sen. Wes Hayes; Sen. John Matthews; Mr. Alex Martin; Sen. John Matthews; Rep. Andy Patrick; Ms. Patti Tate; Mr. John Warner; and Dr. Mick Zais.

EOC Staff Present: Dr. Kevin Andrews; Mrs. Melanie Barton; Ms. Paulette Geiger; Ms. Regina King; Dr. Rainey Knight; and Ms. Dana Yow

Mr. Robinson notified the committee that until the members of the nominating committee were present, the EOC would continue with the agenda. Mr. Robinson introduced the two new members of the EOC, Ms. Anne Bull and Ms. Margaret Anne Gaffney, who were appointed by Governor Haley.

The minutes of the December 9, 2013 meeting were approved as submitted.

Mr. Robinson called the meeting to order. He notified the EOC that the first order of business would be the election of a chairman and vice chairman.

Due to the absence of Dr. Merck, who had an emergency at his high school, Ms. Barton provided an overview of the proposed science standards, which had been forwarded from the subcommittee to the full EOC without a recommendation. Ms. Hairfield noted that the subcommittee had questions about the implementation and timeline for the new standards and the assessment. The chairman called upon Liz Jones, of the South Carolina Department of Education, to answer questions. According to Ms. Jones, the Department will begin in the spring of 2014 to write items to be included in the new assessment. The items will be reviewed in the summer of 2015 to determine if the questions are biased, ambiguous, misleading or not rigorous, or lack validity and reliability. In the fall of 2015 the Department will create a field test and an end-of-course test for high school biology. These assessments will then be field tested in school year 2016-17. Dr. Briana Timmerman, Director of the Office of Instructional Practices and Evaluation at the South Carolina Department of Education, directly answered Ms. Hairfield question and stated that the fall of 2014 is considered the first year of implementation. Ms. Hairfield stated that the subcommittee had needed clarification of the timeline for the science assessment. While the standards will be implemented as soon as adopted by the EOC and the State Board of Education, full implementation will not occur until 2016-17 when the new science assessment is developed. Senator Fair asked questions regarding Biology standard H.B.5. He voiced concern and moved that all science standards as amended be approved by the EOC with the exception of Standard H.B.5. The committee voted to approve the science standards with the exception of H.B.5.

Then Mr. Robinson recognized Sen. Hayes, chair of the committee assigned to nominate a new chair and vice chair of the EOC. On behalf of the nominating committee, which was composed of Sen. Hayes, Rep. Patrick and Mr. Martin, Sen. Hayes nominated David Whittemore as chair of the EOC. There being no nominations from the floor, Mr. Whittemore was elected unanimously as chair. Sen. Hayes then recommended that Dr. Danny Merck be elected vice-chair. With no additional nominations from the floor, Dr. Merck was unanimously elected as vice chair.

Mr. Robinson expressed his appreciation to the members of the EOC for their support over the past four years and for their willingness to address key issues in public education, primarily improving the reading proficiency of students. Mr. Whittemore humbly expressed his appreciation for the honor to serve as EOC chair.

Ms. Hairfield then reported for the Special Reading Subcommittee. She called upon Dr. Rainey Knight, special consultant for the EOC and Dana Yow to update the work of the P-20 initiative that was focused on early literacy, K-12 public education and pre-service and in-service training by higher education. Ms. Yow summarized the NAEP scores of South Carolina over the past decade, comparing our state to Florida and Alabama, two states that have had systemic reading initiatives. Regarding the early childhood literacy plan, Ms. Yow talked about the fragmented system and the lack of a readiness assessment. Dr. Zais commented that many high-poverty schools like South Kilbourne in Richland 1 are making significant education gains while other high-poverty schools in the same district are not. Mr. Warner argued, "Poverty is not poverty. " A one-size solution to the problems of poor performance is not needed. He argued that holding teachers accountable for the results and treating them like professionals would improve learning more than requiring or mandating changes in policy from the top. Mr. Bowers recommended that the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee review the early literacy recommendations and report back to the full EOC at its next meeting, which was agreed to by the members of the EOC.

Regarding early literacy, Mr. Bowers asked the staff to look into the issue of expanding four-year-old kindergarten and reduced class size to determine what policy has the 'biggest bang for the buck.' The staff agreed to provide additional information on the issue.

Senator Matthews then addressed the EOC about an initiative that he is reviewing to increase the number of highly effective teachers and principals in underperforming schools and districts. In talking with Dr. Russell Booker of Spartanburg 7, Sen. Matthews confirmed that increasing time on task to expand the number of hours spent in instruction is important for children in poverty but comes at a significant cost in transportation. EOC staff will work with Sen. Matthews to consider alternative pilot projects to address the unique needs of rural, high-poverty districts.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittee: Academic Standards and Assessments

Date: April 28, 2014

INFORMATION/RECOMMENDATION

Science Standards Revision

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for the report is from the EAA, as amended in 2008 (Act 282 of 2008):

SECTION 59-18-350.

(A) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Education Oversight Committee, shall provide for a cyclical review by academic area of the state standards and assessments to ensure that the standards and assessments are maintaining high expectations for learning and teaching. At a minimum, each academic area should be reviewed and updated every seven years. After each academic area is reviewed, a report on the recommended revisions must be presented to the Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education for consideration. After approval by the Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education, the recommendations may be implemented. However, the previous content standards shall remain in effect until approval has been given by both entities. As a part of the review, a task force of parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators, to include special education teachers, shall examine the standards and assessment system to determine rigor and relevancy.

(B) The State Department of Education annually shall convene a team of curriculum experts to analyze the results of the assessments, including performance item by item. This analysis must yield a plan for disseminating additional information about the assessment results and instruction and the information must be disseminated to districts not later than January fifteenth of the subsequent year.

CRITICAL FACTS

On October 9, 2013 the State Board of Education gave first reading to the attached South Carolina Academic Standards and Performance Indicators for Science.

On November 18, 2013 the standards were revised by the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee. A time for public input was also given.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

June 2012 – EOC adopts *Report on the Review of the South Carolina Science Academic Standards*

April to January 2013 – SCDE revises science standards

February 2013 - SCDE publishes draft standards published and online feedback survey tool designed to get input from educators

May to July 2013 - SCDE revised and edited draft standards per public comments

October 9, 2013 - State Board of Education gives first reading to approve standards

November 18, 2013 – Academic Standards and Assessment (ASA) reviewed science standards, received public input, and made recommendations for amending standards.

December 9, 2013 – EOC adopted the subcommittee recommendation as amended. The science standards were referred to SCDE and State Board of Education with eight specific recommendations for clarifying and condensing several standards.

January 27, 2014 – ASA Subcommittee reviews standards as amended by the State Board. ASA voted to send revised science standards to the full EOC without a recommendation.

February 10, 2014 – EOC approves all science standards with one exception, Standard H.B.5 in High School Biology

March 24, 2014 – ASA Subcommittee reviewed Standard H.B.5 and a recommendation from the SCDE to amend Performance Indicator H.B.5C.3. Voted to send Standard H.B.5 to full EOC without a recommendation

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

Cost: Absorbed in operating budget

Fund/Source:

ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

ACTION TAKEN

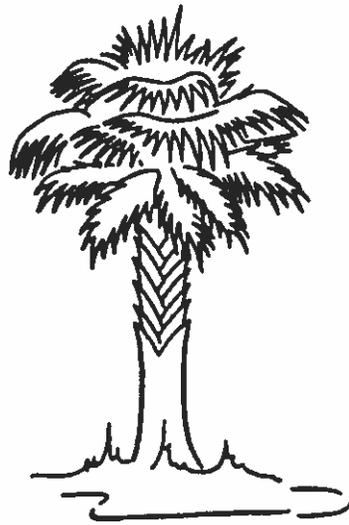
Approved

Not Approved

Amended

Action deferred (explain)

SOUTH CAROLINA SCIENCE ACADEMIC STANDARDS



**South Carolina Department of Education
Columbia, South Carolina**

November 2005

BIOLOGY

Standard B-5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of biological evolution and the diversity of life.

Indicators

- B-5.1 Summarize the process of natural selection.
- B-5.2 Explain how genetic processes result in the continuity of life-forms over time.
- B-5.3 Explain how diversity within a species increases the chances of its survival.
- B-5.4 Explain how genetic variability and environmental factors lead to biological evolution.
- B-5.5 Exemplify scientific evidence in the fields of anatomy, embryology, biochemistry, and paleontology that underlies the theory of biological evolution.
- B-5.6 Summarize ways that scientists use data from a variety of sources to investigate and critically analyze aspects of evolutionary theory.
- B-5.7 Use a phylogenetic tree to identify the evolutionary relationships among different groups of organisms.

**SOUTH CAROLINA
ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE
INDICATORS
FOR SCIENCE**



**Mick Zais, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education**

**South Carolina Department of Education
Columbia, South Carolina**

BIOLOGY 1

BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION – UNITY AND DIVERSITY

Standard H.B.5: The student will demonstrate an understanding of biological evolution and the unity and diversity of life on Earth.

H.B.5A. Conceptual Understanding: Scientific evidence from the fields of anatomy, embryology, biochemistry, and paleontology underlie the theory of biological evolution. The similarities and differences in DNA sequences, amino acid sequences, anatomical features and fossils all provide information about patterns of descent with modification. Organisms resemble their ancestors because genetic information is transferred from ancestor to offspring during reproduction.

Performance Indicators: Students who demonstrate this understanding can:

H.B.5A.1 Analyze scientific data to explain how multiple lines of evidence (including DNA or amino acid sequences, anatomical and embryological features, fossils, and artificial selection) are used to investigate common ancestry and descent with modification.

H.B.5A.2 Explain how scientists use data from a variety of sources to investigate and critically analyze aspects of the theory of biological evolution.

H.B.5A.3 Construct and interpret a phylogenetic tree, based on anatomical evidence, of the degree of relatedness among various organisms and revise the model based on the inclusion of molecular (such as DNA and/or amino acid sequence) evidence.

H.B.5B. Conceptual Understanding: Biological evolution occurs primarily when natural selection acts on the genetic variation in a population and changes the distribution of traits in that population over multiple generations.

Performance Indicators: Students who demonstrate this understanding can:

H.B.5B.1 Critically analyze and interpret data to explain that natural selection results from four factors: (1) the potential for a population to increase in number, (2) the genetic variation among individuals in a species due to sexual reproduction and mutation (3) competition for a limited supply of resources, and (4) the ensuing proliferation of those individuals that are better able to survive and reproduce in that environment.

H.B.5B.2 Conduct investigations by simulating several generations of natural selection to investigate how changes in environmental conditions may lead to changes in selective pressure on a population of organisms.

BIOLOGY 1

BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION: UNITY AND DIVERSITY *(CONTINUED)*

H.B.5C. Conceptual Understanding: According to the theory of biological evolution, natural selection results in populations that are adapted to a particular environment at a particular time. Changes in the physical environment have contributed to the expansion, emergence, or extinction of the Earth's species. Biodiversity is increased by the formation of new species (speciation) and decreased by the loss of species (extinction). Modern classification of Earth's biodiversity is based on the relationships of organisms to one another.

Performance Indicators: Students who demonstrate this understanding can:

- H.B.5C.1** Analyze and interpret data, using the principles of natural selection, to make predictions about the long term biological changes that may occur within two populations of the same species that become geographically isolated from one another.
- H.B.5C.2** Construct scientific arguments using data on how changes in environmental conditions could result in (1) the expansion of some species, (2) the emergence of new species over time, or (3) the extinction of other species.
- H.B.5C.3** Use models of the current three-domain, six-kingdom tree of life to explain how scientists classify organisms and how classification systems are revised over time as discoveries provide new evidence.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittee: Academic Standards and Assessments

Date: April 28, 2014

INFORMATION/RECOMMENDATION

Cyclical Review of the State Accountability System

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

The statutory authority for the report is from the EAA, as amended in 2008 (Act 282 of 2008):

SECTION 59-18-910. 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.

CRITICAL FACTS

The attached is an executive summary and detailed report that was adopted by the Subcommittee.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

January to October 2013 – Cyclical review conducted with panel, EPIC staff, stakeholders from across South Carolina, and EOC members.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

Cost: \$163,996

Fund/Source: EOC operating budget

ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

CYCLICAL REVIEW OF THE STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Executive Summary

Pursuant to Section 59-18-910, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is hereby providing to the General Assembly “a report on the findings and recommended actions to improve the accountability system and to accelerate improvements in student and school performance.”

Findings:

A. The earnings gap of college versus high school graduates has risen steadily for almost three decades. Gains in educational attainment have not kept pace with rising educational returns. If per capita personal income in South Carolina was at the national average, our citizens would have \$19 billion additional personal income. Few areas the General Assembly can address will increase the prosperity of South Carolinians more than improving public education.

B. By the year 2020, 65 percent of the 55 million job openings in the United States will require a postsecondary degree or credential beyond a high school diploma with the fastest growing occupation being STEM and healthcare professions and support that will require postsecondary education. In South Carolina, 62 percent of the 771,000 job openings will require postsecondary degree or credentials. However, currently, 22 percent all students who enter the ninth grade do not graduate from high school. The percentage of adults in South Carolina with at least an associate’s degree is only 34 percent. Furthermore, 41 percent of high school graduates require remediation at the state’s two-year institutions.

C. While South Carolina has witnessed sustained improvement in student performance since passage of the Education Accountability Act, too many students are still ill-served by the current public education system and the rate of improvement must accelerate. A strong and growing consensus has formed among parents, educators, business leaders and community advocates that public education must be transformed to meet the needs of individual students.

D. South Carolina’s current state accountability system is a “performance based accountability system for public education which focuses on improving teaching and learning so that students are equipped with a strong academic foundation.” To date, the strong academic foundation focuses entirely on student mastery of state standards through summative and end-of-course assessments and high school graduation rates. Today, however, a high school diploma is necessary but no longer sufficient to prepare our students for the next step in their lives. And, the academic performance of students in public schools and school districts in South Carolina is measured and reported by two accountability systems that give conflicting messages to parents, educators and communities.

Recommended Actions:

A. The General Assembly should adopt the following as South Carolina public education’s mission.

All students graduating from public high schools in South Carolina should have the **knowledge, skills, and opportunity** to be college ready, career ready, and life ready for success in the global, digital and knowledge-based world of the 21st century.

All graduates should qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit bearing college courses without the need for remedial coursework, in postsecondary job training, or significant on-the-job training.

B. South Carolina must set goals to measure and improve college, career, and citizenship readiness. Such goals would communicate the vision to the public, demonstrate the importance, and inspire transformative changes in the delivery of education. These goals would be set collaboratively with early childhood education, public education, postsecondary education, parents, and business. Annually, the EOC would monitor the state’s progress toward these goals.

C. To encourage progress towards these goals, the EOC recommends amending the current state accountability system to measure the postsecondary success of public school graduates. Year-end summative assessments and high school graduation rates are necessary but no longer sufficient. The accountability system would be a balanced system of multiple measures that give comprehensive, valid, and vital data to ensure that every student is prepared for the 21st century. Multiple measures would include extended performance tasks that rely upon the professional judgment of teachers to evaluate student mastery and critical thinking skills.

D. In addition to public reporting, accountability requires that standards for the core content areas be aligned to the mission and goals, and assessments accurately measure the standards.

E. To accelerate improvement, professional educators must be empowered to deliver new forms of radically, personalized, technology-embedded, education. The accountability system must be flexible enough to allow and even support schools and districts to be incubators of change and innovation.

F. South Carolina must evaluate and amend existing policies to remove barriers to transformation. For example, are there barriers that restrict the number of high school students who take dual enrollment classes? How can South Carolina prepare, recruit, retain and empower highly qualified teachers to lead the transformation, especially in historically low-achieving schools?

Cyclical Review of the State Accountability System

Section 59-18-910 of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) requires the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) in collaboration with the State Board of Education and a broad-based group of stakeholders in 2013 to conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the state's accountability system for public education.

SECTION 59-18-910. 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.

In December of 2012 the EOC contracted with the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) to assist the EOC in facilitating the findings and recommendations of the cyclical review. According to EPIC, South Carolina's cyclical review process "is situated within a contemporary policy context that carries deeper and more fundamental questions for a revision of the state accountability system:

- A changing economy is demanding new skills of current and future workers;
- South Carolina ranks 37th among the states in adults with post-secondary credentials;
- Fifteen years into the accountability era, a cohort of chronically low-performing schools has shown little improvement under the current set of measures and stakes;
- A wave of local innovation – aided in part by technology advances – is shifting the delivery unit of learning from seat-time to competencies; and
- States across the country are leveraging lessons learned from the early era of accountability to engage in wholesale redesigns for 'next generation' accountability systems.”¹

Engagement of Stakeholders

Beginning in January of 2013 members and staff of the EOC identified thirty-five (35) individuals to serve on a panel to review the accountability system. (Appendix A) Nominations were taken from the committee, from the Speaker of the House, and from the President Pro

¹ Collins, Sarah K. et. al. from the Educational Policy Improvement Center. *South Carolina Accountability Review & Revision: An Analytical Framework*. Provided to the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee on August 8, 2013.

Tempore of the Senate. The panel met in Columbia on the following dates and gathered information on the following:

- February 13, 2013 – The panel received an overview of the current accountability system from EOC staff, an update on the innovation initiative efforts led by New Carolina from Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, and a presentation by State Superintendent of Education Dr. Mick Zais on his recommendations for amending the accountability system.
- April 8, 2013 – Dr. David Conley, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) at the University of Oregon, discussed the post-recession job growth, projections of the workforce needs of 2020, and the four keys to college and career readiness.
- June 10, 2013 – Dr. Conley and his team from EPIC presented results of three regional stakeholder meetings and an accountability framework.
- September 16, 2013 – Cyclical review panel and EOC met in a joint meeting to discuss the framework and related accountability issues.

Three regional stakeholder meetings were also held in Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville in April of 2013. Approximately 57 individuals attended the meetings with half of the members of the cyclical review panel in attendance along with representatives of the State Board of Education, business and industry, public education, higher education, parents, and community. EPIC staff led the four-hour meetings, which focused on:

- Establishing the definition of and purpose of the state's accountability system;
- Reviewing the accountability systems of four peer states, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky and New Hampshire. EPIC staff selected these states "based on the following criteria: (1) the accountability system has a clear theory of action that connects purpose, goals, and indicators; (2) at least one component of the state policy context mirrors the environment of South Carolina; and (3) the state had recently undergone an accountability redesign process, reflecting the most contemporary educational policy agenda and available metrics for measuring school quality;"² and
- Designing an accountability system with actual indicators.

Between August of 2013 and April of 2014, members of the EOC discussed the framework and accountability system at each EOC meeting and received input from *TransformSC*, the initiative led by New Carolina, South Carolina's Council on Competitiveness, to transform the delivery system of education. The EOC also received a specific proposal from fellow board member John Warner, a business appointee to the EOC. Finally, the Academic and Standards Subcommittee of the EOC met in November of 2013 and March of 2014 to finalize the

² Ibid.

following findings and recommendations for the full EOC consideration at its April 28, 2014 meeting.

Findings

The academic performance of students in public schools and school districts in South Carolina is measured and reported by two accountability systems that give conflicting messages to parents, educators and communities.

Quality Counts, a publication of the education newspaper, *Education Week*, annually measures each state's public education performance against six indicators, assigning both a letter grade and a numeral score to each state. Overall, in 2013 South Carolina ranked at the national average. On Standards, Assessments and Accountability, the indicators for which the EOC's core mission focuses, South Carolina earned a **Grade of A** and a numerical score of **94.4** along with a national ranking of 6th best in the nation.³

When the Education Accountability Act (EAA) of 1998 was enacted, there was not a separate federal accountability system. South Carolina was a forerunner in establishing a formal reporting system for public schools and school districts. With passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, South Carolina public schools have been accountable to two systems – the state accountability system that the EOC is charged with creating and the federal accountability system that once was based on Adequate Yearly Progress but now is governed by the Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver as designed by the South Carolina Department of Education and approved by the United States Department of Education. Prior to the U.S. Department of Education's offer for states to receive waivers from certain requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 states had both a state and a federal accountability system.⁴ Furthermore, to receive Title I funds, which total approximately \$212 million annually, South Carolina must participate in either No Child Left Behind or the ESEA waiver process.

While the two accountability systems use the same state assessments to measure performance, the systems are markedly different and create conflicting messages in schools and communities.

- The federal accountability system combines the absolute achievement and growth in achievement into one score across subgroups. Growth is the difference between the achievement of students in the prior year to students in the current year (two different groups of students); It should be noted that these cohorts are

³ *Quality Counts, 2013*. Education Week. January 2013. < http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/2013/state_report_cards.html>.

⁴ National Governors Association. "Creating a College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools." January 29, 2012. <<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1201EDUACCOUNTABILITYBRIEF.PDF>>.

NOT the same students from year to year but compare the performance of students in the school in the prior year to the performance of students in the school in the current year (i.e. different cohorts of students.) The state system requires schools and districts to receive a status rating (Absolute Rating) and a separate growth rating (Growth Rating), which measures the improvement of **individual** student performance from year to year.

- The federal accountability system is based on **average scale scores** of students. These scores measure the **average** student performance in a school as well as average score of cohorts (students by ethnicity, disability, etc.) The federal system also measures gains made by subgroups of students. The state accountability system measures whether each **individual** student is meeting state standards or passing end-of-course assessments and the High School Assessment Program and whether each **individual** student improved from one year to the next. The state system focuses on whether students score Met, Not Met or Exemplary on the state assessment in grades 3 through 8, not on the individual student scale scores.
- Finally, due to the August release of the federal ratings, federal grades for high schools are based on the 2011-12, the previous school year's high school graduation rate and end-of-course assessments. The state ratings for high schools are based on the results of the 2012-13 school year graduate rate and assessment data.

District 2013 Federal and State Ratings

Federal Rating	Number	%		State Absolute Rating	Number	%
A	10	12%		Excellent	30	37%
B	32	39%		Good	20	24%
C	21	26%		Average	24	29%
D	9	11%		Below Average	6	7%
F	<u>10</u>	12%		At Risk	<u>2</u>	2%
Total	82				82	

While South Carolina has witnessed sustained improvement in student performance since passage of the Education Accountability Act in 1998, the rate of improvement must accelerate to meet the 21st century needs of our state. Too many South Carolina students are still ill-served by the current public education system.

Prior to enactment of the EAA in 1998, South Carolina:

- Did not have consistent standards in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies across all districts and schools or assessments to measure student achievement across content areas;
- Did not publically report on the performance of schools or districts using consistent measures across time;
- Did not monitor individual student performance over time because unique student identifiers did not exist;
- Did not measure the achievement gaps between subgroups of students; and
- Did not know the graduation rate for its public schools because the reporting system was not available.

In the past fifteen years South Carolina students have made sustained progress. The state's graduation rate has improved from below 60 percent to 77.5 percent in 2013. South Carolina ranks in the top half of states in the percentage of students taking and passing Advanced Placement (AP) courses. South Carolina's average ACT scores increase annually. On the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), South Carolina's reading and mathematics scores at grades 4 and 8 are consistently ranked 34th to 39th nationally.

However, even with the improvement, approximately 41 percent of students who enter the two-year technical college system today require remediation in English language arts and/or mathematics at a cost to taxpayers of \$21.0 million. And, one out of every five students who enters the 9th grade does not graduate with a high school diploma four or five years later.

By 2020 the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce projects that 62 percent of the job openings in South Carolina will require postsecondary education.⁵ Of these

⁵ *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020*. State Report. Center on Education and the Workforce, Georgetown University. June 2013. <http://cew.georgetown.edu/recovery2020/states/>

jobs, 34 percent will require some college, an associate's degree or some postsecondary vocational certificate.⁶ As of 2011 the United States Census Bureau reports that only 34 percent of the working-age population in South Carolina had at least an associate degree. Appendix B includes a list by county of the percentage of working-age population with at least an associate's degree. The relationship between public and higher education has never been so critical to the economy of our state and to the future of our citizens.

Educational attainment is highly correlated with personal income. The percentage of South Carolina's adult population graduating from high school and from college trails the nation as a whole, and as a result per capita personal income is below the national average. If per capita personal income was at the national average, there would be \$19 billion more personal income in South Carolina. (Appendix C) Few investments the state can make will have a bigger impact of the economic prosperity of our citizens than changes in the accountability and assessment system to provide the data and the flexibility for public schools to be transformed.

⁶ Ibid.

Recommendations

A. South Carolina should redefine what a strong academic foundation means for students and the goal of the State accountability system.

The original goal of the Education Accountability Act was “to establish a performance based accountability system for public education which focuses on improving teaching and learning so that students are equipped with a strong academic foundation.” The stakeholders defined a strong academic foundation for 21st century students as having a strong foundation in the basics, literacy and numeracy *and* in higher-order thinking skills. Other descriptors included students being college and career ready, having a love of learning, being global and digital literate, and having soft skills such as collaboration and personal responsibility. Consequently, the goal of the State’s accountability system for public education should be as follows:

All students graduating from public high schools in South Carolina should have the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to be college ready, career ready, and life ready for success in the global, digital and knowledge-based world of the 21st century.

All graduates should qualify for and succeed in entry-level, credit bearing college courses without the need for remedial coursework, in postsecondary job training, or significant on-the-job training.

This definition supports the Vision and Profile of the Successful Graduate as developed and adopted by the South Carolina Association of School Administrators and supported by *TransformSC* (Appendix D) And, the “student-centered” focus is consistent with the State Superintendent of Education’s recommendations for modernizing the EAA with a personalized system.

In 2013 the Arkansas legislature enacted Act 1081 which defines college and career readiness succinctly as:

“a set of criterion-referenced measurements of a student's acquisition of the knowledge and skills the student needs to be successful in future endeavors, including credit-bearing, first-year courses at a postsecondary institution, such as two-year or four-year college, trade school, or technical school, or to embark on a career.”

Florida defines students as college and career ready when they have “the knowledge, skills, and academic preparation needed in introductory college credit-bearing courses within an associate or baccalaureate degree program without the need for remediation. These same attributes and levels of achievement are needed for entry into and success in postsecondary workforce education or directly into a job that offers gainful employment and career advancement.”⁷ Knowledge focuses on mastery of standards as well as higher levels of demonstrated competencies as measured by SAT, ACT, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or Dual Enrollment. The term “skills” includes: effective communication skills; critical thinking and analytical skills; good time management skills; intellectual curiosity and a commitment to learning. Academic preparation encompasses students earning 24 credits, four each in English and mathematics and three each in science and social studies with one course taken online.

B. South Carolina must set goals to measure and improve college, career, and citizenship readiness.

Such goals would communicate the vision to the public, demonstrate the importance, and inspire transformative changes in the delivery of education. These goals would be set collaboratively with early childhood education, public education, postsecondary education, parents, and business. Annually, the EOC would monitor the state’s progress toward these goals.

In 2010 the National Governors Association recommended that state leaders measure five key college- and career-ready performance measures:

1. Percentage of students completing (or on track to complete) a college- and career-ready course of study
2. Percentage of students demonstrating proficiency on “anchor” assessments
3. Percentage of students obtaining college credit or a career certificate in high school
4. Four-year cohort graduation rate
5. Percent of traditional, first-year students enrolling in remedial coursework at a postsecondary institution.⁸

⁷ Florida Department of Education. Division of Florida Colleges. Accessed on August 27, 2013. <<http://www.fldoe.org/fcs/collegecareerreadiness.asp>>.

⁸ *Setting Statewide College- and Career-Ready Goals*,” NGA Center for Best Practices. August 5, 2010.

C. South Carolina should move from an assessment system to a balanced system of multiple measures that give comprehensive, valid and vital data to ensure that every student is prepared for the 21st century.

The measures used to determine how well our children are prepared for the 21st century will require accountability for the **knowledge, skills, and opportunity** that students acquire. These terms are defined below:

Knowledge – Do all students have the knowledge to be successful in the 21st century?

At the elementary and middle levels, knowledge would focus on measuring student understanding of content standards. Specifically, schools and districts should be held accountable for:

- Absolute scores on English language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and expanding to include science and social studies in grades 4 through 8 for all students with equal weighting of each content area in the state accountability system. Stakeholders wanted to focus on students having the numeracy and literacy skills needed by third grade;
- Student growth scores on assessments in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies to measure development over time;
- Reporting on subgroup scores to close achievement gaps; and
- Improving the performance of the bottom 25 percent of students to focus on students who need the most help and could be missed in subgroup data if the cohort size is too small.

At the high school level, the stakeholders resoundingly believed that while graduating from high school is important, it is no longer sufficient. Instead, student assessments used at the high school level should have a dual purpose: (1) accountability; and (2) the future goals of the student; i.e. college and career. The stakeholders emphasized the need to have a measure that has “high currency outside of the accountability system.” Consequently, the framework should include a variety of a variety of assessments that measure both career and college readiness such as:

- Silver level or higher on WorkKeys;
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery;
- Compass; and
- ACT, SAT or Smarter Balanced 11th grade assessment.

The EOC endorses the replacement of the High School Assessment Program with assessments that measure college and career readiness. The two-year technical colleges already use Compass, an ACT product; the four-year colleges and universities in the state

accept ACT Plus Writing scores in making admission decisions; and Governor Haley, in collaboration with the business community, has implemented SC Work Ready Communities. Given these facts, the EOC would recommend that South Carolina provide to every student in public schools the following:

All students in the 11th grade would take WorkKeys **and** ACT plus Writing. Based upon the results of the assessments, students would then receive in their 12th grade year either the remediation needed to become college and career ready or opportunities such as dual enrollment or internships to begin the next step in their jobs and career.

To address the conflicting messages over the state and federal accountability systems, the state rating for **knowledge** should be consistent with the federal rating, if at all possible. In addition, the use of student growth in the knowledge measurement is consistent with the State Superintendent of Education's recommendations to combine student achievement and student growth into one measure of performance.

Skills – Do all students have the skills to be successful? These skills include the higher order thinking skills that stakeholders value including the ability to conduct sustained research; analyze information; experiment and evaluate; communicate in various forms; use technology; collaborate with others, problem solve; and persist.

A 2012 report by the RAND Corporation evaluated 17 state assessments and determined that fewer than 2 percent of the mathematics test items and 21 percent of the English language arts test items tested students' abilities to analyze, synthesize, compare, connect, critique, hypothesize, prove or explain their ideas.⁹ What is most troubling is that these were 17 states evaluated to have the most rigorous standards and assessments.

No standardized assessment can adequately measure these abilities. Instead, states like New Hampshire and others are using quality **extended performance tasks** to measure these skills. These extended performance tasks engage students in applying their knowledge and skills to a problem or challenge. At the high school level, extended performance tasks could be linked to work-based learning, internship opportunities and service learning projects. The results of the performance tasks would be submitted to the local school board of trustees.

According to the Center for Collaborative Education, quality performance tasks “get at essential questions of curriculum and instruction: What content is most important? What do we

⁹ Yuan, K. & Le, V. (2012). Estimating the Percentage of Students Who Were Tested on Cognitively Demanding Items Through the State Achievement Tests. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

want learners to be able to do with their learning? What evidence will show that students really understand and can apply learned content?”¹⁰ Performance tasks are comparable to the assessments used in the performing arts.

Nationally, organizations are creating test banks with extended performance tasks that South Carolina should have the opportunity to use. Designing rubrics and training teachers in how to assess the results of the tasks would be the next step. Two school districts, Lexington 1 and Saluda County School Districts have volunteered to work with the EOC to pilot assessments of extended performance tasks.

Expanding the accountability functions of the local school boards of trustees will require board members to receive ongoing professional development and training. The recommendation is that annually each school board member attends three hours of training in each of the following four key policy areas for a total of twelve hours of continuing education training each year: (1) fiscal (2) accountability; (3) leadership; and (4) communication.

Opportunity – Do all students have the opportunity to be successful? The stakeholder groups identified several potential input measures whose inclusion in an accountability system could incentivize investment in a whole school curriculum and allow for multiple pathways that address college, career and life readiness.

Teacher and principal evaluations were recommended by stakeholders as a means to hold adults accountable for the overall school rating. These evaluations would include student academic achievement with a focus on student growth from one year to the next.

Within the classroom, which is the most important change agent, the quality of teachers is critical. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of school climate surveys of teachers, students and parents.

“School environment is one of the most important measures of school and district performance, but it is often overlooked.”¹¹

National Governors Association

Finally, beyond summative assessments at the end of the year, access to, participation in and performance on other measures and assessments are important including:

¹⁰ *Quality Performance Assessment: A Guide for Schools and Districts*. Center for Collaborative Education. Boston, MA. 2012.

¹¹ “Creating a College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools.” January 29, 2012. National Governors Association. <<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1201EDUACCOUNTABILITYBRIEF.PDF>>.

- Arts programs;
- Gifted and talented programs;
- World languages;
- Dual enrollment courses;
- Approved industry certification exams;
- IB/AP exams;
- Dropout recovery programs;
- Virtual or online learning;
- Students completing a college application;
- Students filling out a FAFSA form; and
- Students completing an individualized graduation plan

The National Governors Association in 2012 proposed that “schools and districts should receive additional credit for supporting all students on the path to college and career readiness with a special emphasis on hard-to-serve student populations. . . . States could give more weight to a school’s scores on measures for students” who are “overage and undercredited, limited English proficient, or receiving special education services and those who scored in the bottom 25 percent on assessments in eighth grade.”¹²

The relationship between public and higher education has never been so critical to the economy of our State and to the future of our citizens. The stakeholders prioritized other measures including college acceptance rates, college persistence rates, and college matriculation rates. With development and implementation of the South Carolina Longitudinal Information Center for Education (SLICE), the State will have in the future the ability to report on the success of students in post-secondary institutions. Such data could be useful in the redesign of the high school curriculum.

In September of 2013 the Colorado Department of Higher Education released an online, searchable database that provides information on college-going rates, first-year postsecondary outcomes, concurrent enrollment and remedial education for the graduates of each school district.¹³

D. In addition to public reporting, accountability requires that standards for the core content areas and assessments be aligned to the mission and goals.

¹² “Creating a College and Career Readiness Accountability Model for High Schools.” Page 7.

¹³ District At A Glance. Tracking the Success of High School Graduates. Colorado Department of Higher Education. Accessed on September 6, 2013. < <http://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/districtataglance/districtglancedefault.html>>.

E. To accelerate improvement, professional educators must be empowered to deliver new forms of radically, personalized, technology-embedded, education. The accountability system must be flexible enough to allow and even support schools and districts to be incubators of change.

The EOC supports the recommendation of the State Superintendent of Education to personalize learning and the initiative of *TransformSC*. Assessing both the mastery of knowledge and the attainment of higher-order thinking skills requires a balance of objective and subjective assessments. Formative assessments are the most effective at improving teacher and student performance.

In a sentence, the South Carolina public education system, and the accountability system that supports it, should be transformed as follows.

Learning must be personalized to each student including project-based learning, real-time diagnostic assessments, and technology-infused instruction.

A new accountability system balanced between summative, objective and subjective approaches will empower teachers as professionals even in existing classrooms to own the delivery of and accountability for their students mastering knowledge and gaining knowledge and higher-order thinking skills. It can result in students taking more ownership of their own education.

A new accountability system personalized to students empowers entrepreneurial educators to deliver new forms of radically personalized, technology-enabled education that can co-exist with current public schools. Once accountability is at the level of individual students progressing at their own pace and assessments provide teachers real-time data to guide their students, the stage is set for the fundamental transformation of the entire public education system sought by parents, teachers, business leaders, and community advocates. Below are the essential elements of the accountability framework we recommend.

- ***Learning must be more personalized to each student.*** Personalizing learning allows students to advance through the standards at an individual pace, allowing advanced students to move faster and students requiring more time to master earlier standards before moving onto later ones.
- ***Learning must include project-based learning.*** In addition to objective measures of the mastery of knowledge, project-based learning requires subjective assessments by professional teachers. For example, students develop higher-order thinking skills through activities such as artistic works or science projects, which teachers subjectively assess using rubrics to ensure consistency. Balanced objective and subjective assessments are important even in the earliest grades. Higher-order thinking skills include the ability to

conduct sustained research, analyze information, experiment, and persist. In addition to individual skills, communication, teamwork, and collaboration are essential skills.

- ***Learning must include real-time diagnostic assessments.*** For teachers to become the empowered professionals, more assessments should be formative providing real-time data to teachers and parents so appropriate support can be provided to improve student learning.
- ***Learning must include technology-infused instruction.*** Merely loading an existing classroom with technology likely will yield marginal improvements at best because it doesn't fundamentally change the way the classroom is managed. Like personalizing education, it is easy to imagine more transformational forms of technology infused instruction. A novel system of highly personalized education delivered through mobile devices was demonstrated by a college student at the first *TransformSC* forum in the spring of 2013. This would be the transformative equivalent of a digital book being delivered by Amazon.com to a Kindle versus a physical book being sold in a Barnes and Noble store. These are profoundly different experiences of consuming books. Transformed education will be a profoundly difference experience of education.

Many of the schools and districts participating in *TransformSC* are using project-based learning and blended learning approaches to instruction. Other examples include the two high schools in South Carolina that are implementing the New Tech Network this year: Scotts Branch High School in Clarendon 1 and Cougar New Tech High School in Colleton County. Project-based learning is the instructional approach of these New Tech schools. Next High, a charter high school that will be opening in Greenville in 2015, will also employ project-based learning and web-delivered curriculum. These projects build upon pathways that represent the disciplines and skills in greatest demand relative to the regional industry and economic clusters of the community.

To facilitate the innovation, schools and districts that are transforming the delivery system of education may need to be exempted from the state accountability system for a specified time. Instead, these schools or districts would report publically on student mastery of learning using alternative measures rather than summative assessments.

F. South Carolina must evaluate and amend existing policies to remove barriers to transformation.

Are there barriers that restrict the number of high school students who take dual enrollment classes? Do the policies and guidelines that govern the state scholarships funded by the

lottery deter students from taking challenging courses? How can South Carolina prepare, recruit, retain and empower highly qualified teachers to lead the transformation, especially in historically low-achieving schools?

Because teachers are no longer the providers of information and instead are the facilitators of learning, the transformative shift in pedagogy will require changes in pre-service teacher education programs, extensive professional development for existing teachers, especially in school districts without the local capacity, and expansion of wireless Internet access throughout the school building for portable devices.

Teachers are the critical component of transforming the delivery system of education. Consequently, South Carolina must invest in transforming the preparation of teachers by our colleges and universities for the 21st century classroom and the delivery of instruction in the classroom.

- Students in our colleges of education must have more hands-on practicum experience in schools before becoming classroom teachers as well as more knowledge of the needs of the 21st century graduate.
- Current and future teachers must transform their classroom instruction. No longer are teachers the provider of information; they are the facilitators of learning. Students can find knowledge from multiple sources; however, students must learn to think, analyze, collaborate, problem-solve and communicate.
- Blended learning opportunities using virtual courses and virtual coaching are necessary for both teachers and students.

Appendix A

Members of the Cyclical Review Panel

Name	Representative of or Expertise in:
Dr. Larry Allen, Clemson University	Higher Education
Dr. Cynthia Ambrose, Horry County School District	District Office/ Academic Officer
Ms. Mona Lisa M. Andrews, Florence 2 School Board	Local School Board of Trustees
Mr. Mike Brenan, President BB&T South Carolina	Business and Industry State Board of Education
Dr. Ray Brooks, President, Piedmont Technical College	Higher Education
Mr. Jon Butzon, Charleston	Community Leader
Dr. Jennifer Coleman, Richland 1	District Office/Accountability, Assessment, Research and Evaluation
Dr. James R. Delisle	Gifted and Talented Education
Mr. Jim Dumm, Tara Hall Home for Boys	Community Leader
The Honorable Mike Fair	Legislator
The Honorable Nikki Haley	Governor
Mrs. Jan Hammond, Lexington 2	Classroom Teacher
The Honorable Chip Jackson, Richland 2	Local School Board of Trustees
Dr. Rainey Knight, Darlington	District Superintendent
Ms. Charlie Jean "CJ" Lake, Saluda	Recent Student
The Honorable John W. Matthews	Legislator
Mrs. Amy McAllister	State Teacher of the Year
Mr. Charles O. Middleton, Jr.	Educator/Public Charter Virtual School
Ms. Glenda Morrison-Fair, Greenville County School District	Local School Board of Trustees
Mr. Wesley Mullinax	Business and Industry
Ms. Maggie Murdock	Parent
Ms. Linda O'Bryon	President SC ETV
Dr. Darryl F. Owing, Spartanburg 6	District Superintendent
Mr. Arthur Perry	Business Leader
The Honorable Joshua A. Putnam	Legislator
Mr. Jim Reynolds	Business Leader
Dr. Janet Rose, Charleston	Retired Educator
Mr. Phillip E. Waddell, Columbia	Business Leader
Dr. Gary West, Jasper County School District	District Office/Finance and Data Management
Dr. Leila W. Williams, Colleton	District Superintendent
Dr. Reginald Harrison Williams	Early Childhood Specialist
Dr. Carol B. Wilson, Upstate	Parent and Higher Education
Ms. Lee Yarborough, Greenville	Business Leader
The Honorable Mick Zais	State Superintendent of Education
Mr. Bernie Zeiler	Business Leader

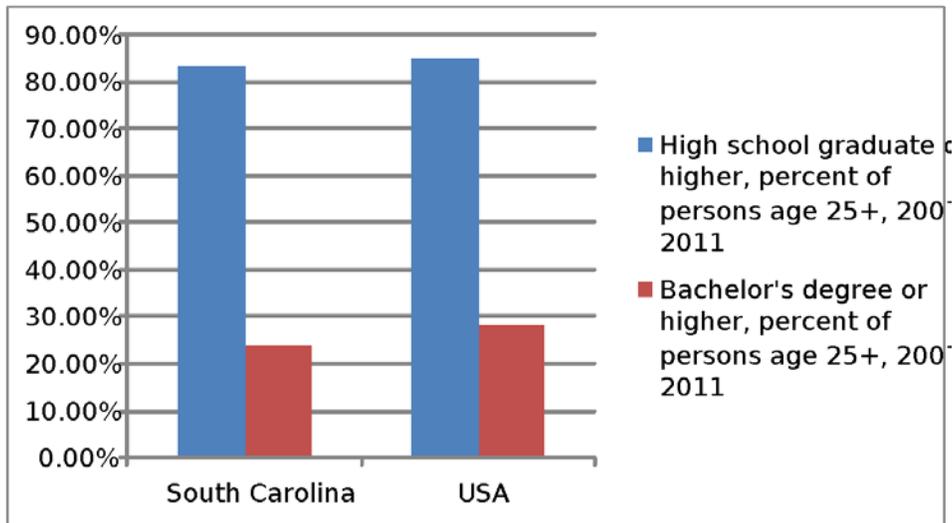
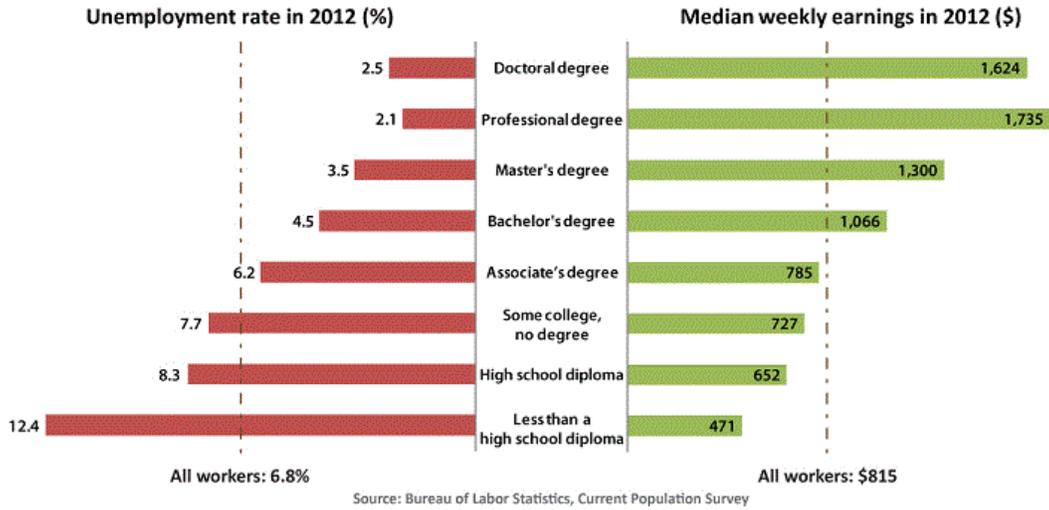
Appendix B
Percentage of South Carolina adults (ages 25-64)
with at least an associate degree by county

Abbeville	26.03	Orangeburg	25.73
Aiken	32.63	Pickens	34.28
Allendale	18.68	Richland	46.60
Anderson	30.09	Saluda	21.45
Bamberg	35.93	Spartanburg	32.55
Barnwell	21.19	Sumter	28.82
Beaufort	42.18	Union	22.65
Berkeley	29.77	Williamsburg	18.79
Calhoun	31.39	York	39.99
Charleston	47.75		
Cherokee	20.56		
Chester	19.89		
Chesterfield	20.69		
Clarendon	21.56		
Colleton	21.08		
Darlington	24.58		
Dillon	15.72		
Dorchester	36.92		
Edgefield	25.73		
Fairfield	25.73		
Florence	31.43		
Georgetown	30.13		
Greenville	40.93		
Greenwood	32.72		
Hampton	18.68		
Horry	33.37		
Jasper	15.74		
Kershaw	28.29		
Lancaster	27.65		
Laurens	23.92		
Lee	16.03		
Lexington	38.92		
McCormick	27.79		
Marion	20.51		
Marlboro	12.93		
Newberry	30.54		
Oconee	32.21		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Appendix C

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment



Per capita money income in the past 12 months (2011 dollars)

United States	\$ 27,915
South Carolina	\$ 23,854
Difference	\$ 4,061
South Carolina population	4,723,723
Additional per capita income if South Carolina was at the US average	\$19,183,039,103

Appendix D
2020 Vision Committee
Superintendents' Roundtable
(February 2013)

A clear picture of the new high school graduate will enable schools to best accomplish the goals of preparing students for the future.

Our vision for high school graduates is based on an education compass directed toward the future. Our vision and profile of our high school graduate follows. This vision is crafted toward preparing students for success and our communities, state and nation for prosperity in the 21st century world.

Vision of the EDCompass Graduate

“The EDCompass graduate of the K-12 public schools of South Carolina will be equipped for careers and college, lifelong learning and civic life in a global, digital and knowledge based world.

Our graduates will be creative, critical thinkers, problem solvers, collaborators, capable communicators and ethical.”

Profile of the EDCompass Graduate

World Class Knowledge:

1. Rigorous standards in language arts and math for college and career readiness
2. Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills:

1. Creativity and innovation
2. Critical thinking and problem solving
3. Collaboration and teamwork
4. Communication, information, media and technology
5. Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics:

1. Integrity
2. Self-direction
3. Global perspective
4. Perseverance
5. Work ethic
6. Interpersonal skills



EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittee: Public Awareness Subcommittee

Date: April 28, 2014

REPORT/RECOMMENDATION

2012-13 Communications / PR Plan Update

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

This plan is designed as an ongoing effort to educate various audiences about three main objectives:

1. Enhance understanding and impact of the accountability system by focusing on the 2020 Vision and the goals of student reading proficiency, innovation and college readiness
2. Implement a public engagement plan focused on the 2013 Cyclical Review of the Accountability System
3. Advocate for the utilization of data published on the annual school and district report cards to be used as tools for improvement.

CRITICAL FACTS

This plan has been updated with the status of each of the strategies outlined in the FY 2012-13 Communications Plan. Deliverables and accountability measures have been included for both.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

Fiscal year 2012-13

Review: February/March 2014

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Cost:

Fund/Source:

Public Awareness funds

ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

Communications / Public Relations Plan FY 2012-13
Updated January 14, 2014

FY 2012-13 Objectives:

1. Enhance understanding and impact of the accountability system by focusing on the 2020 Vision and the goals of student reading proficiency, innovation and college readiness
2. Implement a public engagement plan focused on the 2013 Cyclical Review of the Accountability System
3. Advocate for the utilization of data published on the annual school and district report cards to be used as tools for improvement.

Audience	Objective / Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures
General Public & Media	1.1. Write and design publication communicating SC's progress toward achieving 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed 3,000 copies of <i>World Within Our Reach</i> brochure; sent by mail to key audiences. Remaining copies used for events throughout year
	1.2. Press Event releasing SC's progress toward reaching 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 11, 2013 press event held in lobby of SC Statehouse • Eight members of local press corps present at event. • News release and media packet prepared for and distributed to attendees • Coverage of release: ABC Columbia; WLTX Columbia; WACH Fox, WIS-TV; WSPA; WBTW; Sun News; Rock Hill Herald; Charlotte Observer; The State
	1.3. Outdoor Advertising (Mass Media) – focus on reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOC continues to run an outdoor advertising campaign focused on reading for pleasure. The 12 “Kids Who Love Reading Live Happier Ever After” billboards are located in various locations around the state. • Through an arrangement with the Outdoor Advertising Association of SC, the billboard space was donated and the EOC paid for production and installation. • The billboards will remain up until June 17, 2014
	1.4. Update Progress Report on EOC Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOC staff updates website to include information about the status of the 2020 Vision, including links to stakeholder websites. • http://www.eoc.sc.gov/reportsandpublications/2020Vision/Pages/default.aspx

	1.5. Dramatically increase use of social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOC updates daily established Facebook and Twitter pages. • Began presence on Pinterest focused on innovation. • Started tumblr page (www.sceoc.tumblr.com) using hashtags created for Teacher Appreciation Month in May 2013. • Facebook: 136 likes; Twitter: 741 followers; LinkedIn: 500+ connections; Google+: 16 in our circle; and Pinterest: 51 followers • Hosted Twitter talk on reading following TransformSC innovation summit.
	1.6. Spread the news via radio & TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melanie Barton taped an episode of <i>Connections</i>, a public affairs program on SCETV. EOC staff responded to press inquiries via radio throughout the year.
	1.7. Target Education Reporters / Editorial Bd. members/writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 2013 press event for statewide media. • Barbara Hairfield and Melanie Barton met with <i>Greenville News</i> editorial board on August 7, 2013 to discuss reading legislation and EOC Retreat.
	1.8. Reach out to regional business publications (Midlands/Upstate/Low country Biz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent quarterly <i>At-A-Glance</i> to business editors of regional business publications.
	1.9 Develop a poster about 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not print posters; printed reading brochures for wide dissemination.
	1.9.1. SC ETV's "Speaking of Schools" Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio/podcast segment scheduled for February 2014 on release of 2020 Vision progress
	1.9.2. Work with ETV on development and implementation of innovation PR campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-branded EOC and ETV ed news bulletin was distributed electronically to 4,500 recipients. EOC submits information about reports and released to ETV monthly. • Working with ETV on developing web-based literacy essentials and a reading resource bank to support learning in literacy. Project first to focus on 12 school districts piloting reading proficiency plan.
	2.1. Solicit broad public input on the recommendations of broad-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifty-seven individuals attended the three stakeholder meetings in Columbia, Charleston and Greenville with half of the members of the cyclical review panel in attendance along with representatives of the State Board of Education, business and industry, public education, higher education, parents, and community.

	stakeholder group performing cyclical review of accountability system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyclical review panel composed of 35 individuals.
	3.1. Develop focus briefings on results of school and district report cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOC developed focus briefings related to the results of the school and district report cards, released in November 2013. EOC hosted a conference bridge prior to the release of the results. Participation exceeded capacity as all 25 ports were used. News media, district superintendents, and public information officers participated in the call.
	3.2. Meet with Editorial Boards of SC daily newspapers to discuss results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted conference bridge for the statewide release of school and district report cards. Ten education reporters and editorial board members attended and participated in the call. • All major news outlets in the state covered release of report cards.
Audience	Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures
Parents of school-aged Children	1.1 Mobilize school districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed 3,000 copies of <i>World Within Our Reach</i> brochure; sent by mail to key audiences. Remaining copies used for events throughout year, including dissemination to statewide School Improvement Council.
	1.2 Reach out to school boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melanie Barton presented before SC School Boards Association as well as SCASA meeting.
	1.3. Use social media to communicate with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began re-posting articles of interest to parents of school-age children as well as reading materials and link to family-friendly standards site. • Facebook: 136 likes; Twitter: 741 followers; LinkedIn: 500+ connections; Google+: 16 in our circle; and Pinterest: 51 followers
	1.4 Hold a student video contest focused on innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle and high school participated in video contest answering the following question: "How would I change schools to prepare me and my fellow students to be innovative" OR "How is my school already preparing me and my fellow students to be more innovative?" • 84 students participated in the contest. Five outside judges chose four winners which were announced in December 2012.
	1.5. Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 Vision brochure and information about updated family-friendly standards

	with parents through SC PTA, SIC	disseminated to statewide School Improvement Council.
	1.6. Develop and disseminate “Tips for Parents and Families” document focused on summer reading loss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed and created a brochure to assist non-profit organizations, faith-based, community, county libraries, etc. in ways to volunteer and assist in improving reading proficiency among SC students and reduce summer reading loss. Printed 50,000 copies of brochure. All have been distributed based on requests from schools and organizations. Staff is maintaining a waiting list for those requesting a second printing.
	1.7. Revise and distribute Family Friendly Standards to reflect new state standards in ELA and Math. Publish 4K Family-Friendly Standards as a tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with SCDE staff to create online family-friendly standards at www.scfriendlystandards.org. The site is updated to include material for the Common Core standards in ELA and Math
	1.8. Update online Family-Friendly Standards tool to include more grades and subject areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with SCDE staff to create online family-friendly standards at www.scfriendlystandards.org. The site is updated to include material for the Common Core standards in ELA and Math and includes K-12 content in English and Spanish.
	2.1. Four parents (one of whom is the parent of a child with special needs) to serve on cyclical review stakeholder group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twelve parents served as participants in focus groups in Columbia, Charleston, and Greenville. Three parents served on the cyclical accountability review panel acting in that capacity.
	3.2 Develop online materials for parents on understanding and using the school and district report cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site developed: http://www.eoc.sc.gov/reportsandpublications/2012reportcards/Pages/default.aspx Regina King working with SC Interactive to ascertain analytics for specific web pages.

Audience	Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures
Educators	1.1 Posters to schools for staff lounges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not print posters; printed reading brochures for wide dissemination.
	1.2 Draft article for newsletters of all education associations and content organizations in SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided article and news release on the 2020 Vision to education organizations in the state.
	1.3 Notify schools of 2020 Vision Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendents, instructional leaders, and public information officers received 2020 Vision update via mail as well as electronic mail.
	1.4 Send thank you notes to educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placed nine electronic billboard in Columbia and Charleston during the month of May “Teacher Appreciation Month” using private funds.
	1.5 Develop “tips for educators” document focused on innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using electronic software, provided <i>Tips for Education Engagement</i>, research-based and innovative strategies for engaging students in reading and writing. • Sent to 2,987 recipients. Analytics for each issue: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Motivating Students to Read</i> (Williamsburg County Magnet School of the Arts): 1,995 visitors (3 arrived via Facebook, 12 accessed outgoing links) 2. <i>Using Blogs in the Classroom</i> (Charleston School of the Arts): 713 visitors (12 accessed outgoing links) 3. <i>Engaging Middle School Students in Reading</i> (Alcorn Middle School): 1,170 visitors (22 accessed outgoing links) 4. <i>Using Dogs to Help Motivate Students to Read and Improve Reading Proficiency</i> (New Providence Elementary School): 1,162 visitors (19 arrived via Facebook; 3 via Twitter; 2 accessed outgoing links)
	1.6 Follow up with Teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent out daily messages about appreciating teachers during May. • Started tumblr page (www.sceoc.tumblr.com) using hashtags created for Teacher Appreciation Month in May 2013.
	1.7. Partner with SCDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with SCDE staff to create online family-friendly standards at www.scfriendlystandards.org. The site is updated to include material for the Common Core standards in ELA and Math

	2.1. Cyclical review group to include 2012 SC State Teacher of the Year, two members of local school boards, three district superintendents, two school district employees, and two individuals representing post-secondary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review group included 2012 Cyclical review group included 2012 SC State Teacher of the Year, two members of local school boards, three district superintendents, two school district employees, and two individuals representing post-secondary education.
	3.1. Distribute focus briefings on results of school and district report cards to educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All superintendents, instructional leaders, teachers received briefings via email and PIO listserv
Audience	Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures
Legislators and other Elected Officials	1.1. – Develop one-page printed piece on 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All members of the General Assembly and legislative staff received the 2020 Vision brochure.
	1.2. E-blast for legislators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the General Assembly electronically receive quarterly <i>At-A-Glance</i> publications
	1.3 Engage EOC members to share information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EOC members share information with their legislative delegation
	1.4 Provide talking points for legislators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the General Assembly and legislative staff receive talking points on the report card release, reading, and other issues upon request.
	1.5 Meet with key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Melanie Barton meets in person and by phone with staff weekly, even daily

	legislative staffers	
	2.1. Cyclical review group to include Governor or her designee, SC State Superintendent of Education, and four legislators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review group included SC State Superintendent of Education and two legislators. The Governor did not attend or specify a designee.
	3.1. Distribute “personalized” focus briefings on results of school and district report cards to legislators and legislative staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every member of the General Assembly received a focus briefing on the results of the school and district report cards. This year, legislators received historical ratings information about every school and district in the state.
Audience	Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures
Business community	1.1. – Engage business community on the importance of the 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members and staff participated in two major events organized by TransformSC, an initiative spearheaded by prominent business leaders designed to infuse innovation into the public school system. Melanie Barton serves on the board of TransformSC
	2.1. Cyclical review group to include ten individuals representing business and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review group included 11 individuals representing business and industry. Nine business members participated in the three regional focus groups.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittee: Public Awareness Subcommittee

Date: April 28, 2014

REPORT/RECOMMENDATION

FY Communications / Public Relations Plan

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

This plan is designed as an ongoing effort to educate various audiences about three main objectives:

1. Enhance understanding and impact of the accountability system by focusing on the 2020 Vision and the goals of student reading proficiency, innovation and college readiness
2. Continue to implement a public awareness and engagement plan focused on the EOC PK -20 Reading Initiative recommendations.
3. Advocate for the utilization of data published on the annual school and district report cards to be used as tools for improvement.

CRITICAL FACTS

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

Fiscal year 2014-15

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Cost:

Fund/Source:

Public Awareness funds

ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

Communications / Public Relations Plan FY 2014-15

Draft adopted as amended by Public Awareness Subcommittee, March 24, 2014

FY 2014-15 Objectives:

1. Enhance understanding and impact of the accountability system by focusing on the 2020 Vision and the goals of student reading proficiency, innovation and college readiness
2. Continue to implement a public awareness and engagement plan focused on the EOC PK-20 Reading Initiative recommendations.
3. Advocate for the utilization of data published on the state annual school and district report cards to be used as tools for improvement.

Audience	Objective / Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures
General Public & Media	1.1. Write and design publication communicating SC's progress toward achieving 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print copies of brochure updating key audiences on status of vision. Document coverage and comments.
	1.2. Press Event releasing SC's progress toward reaching 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document press coverage of news event and release
	1.3. Update Progress Report on EOC Website and social media channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOC staff updates website to include information about the status of the 2020 Vision, including links to stakeholder websites. Document traffic. • EOC updates daily through established Facebook, Twitter pages, and other social media channels.
	1.4. updates progress via radio & TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule tv and radio opportunities through local channels, including Speaking of Schools radio program with Doug Keels.
	1.5. Target Education Reporters / Editorial Bd. members/writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press event • News release distribution (document) • Key spokespersons from EOC available to media
	1.6. Reach out to regional business publications (Midlands/Upstate/Low country Biz)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send release info and brochure to business editors of regional business publications; document coverage

	1.7 Develop a poster about 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute to schools and other constituent groups; document coverage and comments
	2.1. Work with ETV on development and implementation of literacy resource bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with ETV on developing web-based literacy essentials and a reading resource bank to support learning in literacy. Project first to focus on 12 school districts piloting reading proficiency plan.
	2.2. Reprint brochure to assist non-profit organizations, faith-based, community, county libraries, etc. in ways to volunteer and assist in improving reading proficiency among SC students and reduce summer reading loss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document requests and usage. Consider placing a QR code on the brochure taking people to the EOC website. Research costs involved to fulfill request to print companion bookmarks for elementary school libraries.
	2.3. Distribute and promote "When the Bough Breaks" documentary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send copy to all county libraries with letter offering to host a showing providing information about reading and volunteerism. Document distribution, usage, and comments
	3.1. Develop focus briefings on results of school and district report cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute to all media, district superintendents, and public information officers
	3.2. Meet with Editorial Boards of SC daily newspapers and news media to discuss results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host conference bridge; document attendance and participation
	3.3. Create an online profile of private schools offering scholarships to students with exceptional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop with the assistance of Parent Advisory Committee Document usage and comments
	3.4. Create modified report card for school districts who are using approved alternative assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document usage and comments

Audience	Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures
Parents of school-aged Children	1.1. Use social media to communicate with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-post articles about college readiness, reading to parents of school-age children as well as reading materials and link to family-friendly standards site.
	1.2. Communicate with parents through SC PTA, SIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 Vision brochure and information about updated family-friendly standards disseminated to statewide School Improvement Councils.
	1.3. Develop and disseminate "Tips for Parents and Families" document focused on summer reading loss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SC State Library and county libraries to develop, disseminate, and document impact.
	1.4. Update online Family Friendly Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with SCDE to make minor revisions; Document usage and comments
	2.1. Hold a student contest focused on reading and literacy skills (possibly integrate service learning component)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document participation and results
	3.1 Develop online materials for parents on understanding and using the school and district report cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document usage, comments, and questions
Audience	Tactic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverable / Accountability Measures
Educators	1.1 Posters to schools for staff lounges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document use and comments
	1.2 Draft and distribute article for newsletters of all education associations and content organizations in SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide article and news release on the 2020 Vision to education organizations and ETV in the state. • Provide focused briefings and materials to all content area organizations (i.e., ELA coordinators, etc.)
	1.3 Notify schools of 2020 Vision Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate via superintendents and PIOs
	1.4 Honor teachers during	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute information about reading to teachers during May for Teacher

	May for Teacher Appreciation Month	<p>Appreciation Month</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use social media; follow-up
	1.5 Develop “tips for educators” document focused on innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue publication of occasional series and document results
	1.6 Develop monthly electronic newsletter for educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document use and comments
	2.1. Work with ETV on development and implementation of literacy resource bank to include professional development in reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document impact through usage, comments
	2.2. Distribute WTBB to all schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute WTBB to all schools with an offer to present information about reading and volunteerism.
	3.1. Distribute focus briefings on results of school and district report cards to educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document distribution and comments
Audience	Tactic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverable / Accountability Measures
Legislators and other Elected Officials	1.1. – Develop one-page printed piece on 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document distribution and comments
	1.2. E-blast for legislators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document distribution and comments
	1.3 Engage EOC members to share information with their legislative delegation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide EOC members with summaries and talking points in order to speak to members of their delegations.
	1.4 Provide talking points for legislators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document distribution and comments
	1.5 Meet with key legislative staffers	

	2.1. Provide information on activities of the EOC related to reading and reading legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host “issue briefing” for new legislators focusing on current education topics.
	3.1. Distribute “personalized” focus briefings on results of school and district report cards to legislators and legislative staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a focus briefing on the results of the school and district report cards for every member of the SC General Assembly.
Audience	Tactic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliverable / Accountability Measures
Business community	1.1. – Engage business community on the importance of the 2020 Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue participation in TransformSC and other efforts to invigorate business involvement in schools.
	2.1. Distribute and promote “When the Bough Breaks” documentary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute WTBB to local chambers of commerce with an offer to present information about reading and volunteerism. • Document distribution, usage, and comments

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittee: Public Awareness

Date: April 28, 2014

INFORMATION

Results of the 2013 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 2013 administration of the parent survey.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

Study began in February 2014 and completed in March 2014

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)

2014

Results of the 2013 Parent Survey



**SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**



PO Box 11867 | 227 Blatt Building | Columbia SC 29211 | WWW.SCEOC.ORG

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Acknowledgements

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) acknowledges the ongoing assistance of Cynthia Hearn and Ling Gao 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

Background: 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. From its inception, the parent survey contains items regarding parent perceptions of the learning environment in the school, home-school relations, and the social and physical environment of the school. Additional questions document characteristics of the parents and the children of the parents responding to the survey. Five new items are present in the 2013 Parent Survey, created by the State Department of Education. Two of these items collect information about the effectiveness of a child's teacher and a child's principal. One item addresses parent perceptions of the personalized learning experience of their child. Two items obtain information regarding whether parents have read the state and federal report cards for the school and district their child attends.

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 11th 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.

Survey Responses: In 2013 the number of parent surveys completed and returned totaled 66,787, a decline of 2,793 surveys or 4.0 percent from the prior year. Between 36 and 42 percent of all eligible parents surveyed responded to the 2013 parent survey. In 2013 there

were no changes in the process of administering the parent survey. As in the prior year, there were no parent surveys printed in Spanish made available to parents by the South Carolina Department of Education. In 2013 the percentage of parents who completed the survey who identified themselves as Hispanic was 5.3 percent as compared to 5.1 percent in 2012, 4.6 percent in 2011, and 5.0 percent in 2010.

An analysis of the respondents to the 2013 parent survey concluded that the survey responses typically overrepresented 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 obtained higher educational achievements and had 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. Furthermore, when compared to the enrollment of students in public schools, parents of African American students were underrepresented in the responses.

The data documented that the parent survey responses were generally representative, within four percentage points, of the percentage of students enrolled in schools by their Absolute Rating. Nine percent of the parents who responded to the survey had children attending schools with an Absolute Rating of Below Average or At Risk, the same percentage as students enrolled in a school with an Absolute Rating of Below Average or At Risk in school year 2012-13. On the other hand, 61 percent of the parents who responded to the survey had children attending schools with an Absolute Rating of Good or Excellent, compared to 60 percent of children who were enrolled in a school with an Absolute Rating of Good or Excellent in school year 2012-13.

2013 Absolute Rating	Percent of Students Enrolled in School 2012-13	Percent of Parents Responding to 2013 Survey
Excellent	41	38
Good	19	23
Average	31	31
Below Average	6	6
At Risk	3	3

Parent Survey Results: Despite a 4.0 percent decline in the number of parents responding to the annual parent survey, the results of the 2013 parent survey demonstrate that 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

Characteristic	2013	2012	2011	2010	Difference between 2013 and 2012
Learning Environment	87.0	87.2	84.3	85.9	(0.2)
Home and School Relations	83.3	82.9	80.2	81.9	0.4
Social and Physical Environment	84.3	84.1	82.4	83.2	0.2

When comparing parent satisfaction in 2013 with parent satisfaction over the most recent three-year period, there were no significant increases in parent satisfaction levels.

Percentage of Parents Satisfied with

Characteristic	2013	Mean % (2010-2012)	Difference between 2013 and Mean of three years
Learning Environment	87.0	85.8	1.3
Home and School Relations	83.3	81.7	1.6
Social and Physical Environment	84.3	83.2	1.1

Parents who completed the survey in 2013 were less positive about the learning environment of their child's school than in 2012 when responding to the following three questions:

Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree to:

Learning Environment Questions	2013	2012	Difference
My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	89.6	89.9	(0.3)
My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	91.5	91.8	(0.3)
My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	81.7	81.9	(0.2)

Parental satisfaction, the percentage of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing, generally declines as the Absolute Rating of the school declines. 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 by the learning environment.

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

Characteristic	Excellent Schools	At-Risk Schools	Difference
Learning Environment	90.1	81.3	8.8
Home and School Relations	86.3	82.4	3.9
Social and Physical Environment	88.5	74.8	13.7

Parents whose child attended a school with an Absolute Rating of Below Average were less satisfied with the learning environment and home and school relations at their child's school than parents whose child attended a school with an Absolute Rating of At Risk.

Percentage of Parents whose Child Attends a School Rated Below Average or At-Risk, Satisfied with:

Characteristic	Below Average Schools	At-Risk Schools	Difference
Learning Environment	78.7	81.3	(2.6)
Home and School Relations	78.7	82.4	(3.7)
Social and Physical Environment	75.7	74.8	0.9

Parents who responded to the 2013 annual survey reported levels of parental involvement compared to previous years and identified work schedules as their greatest obstacle to involvement.

Parents Report Obstacles to Parental Involvement in 2013

Work Schedule	54.6%
Lack of timely notification of volunteer opportunities	23.7%
School does not encourage involvement	16.1%
Family and health problems	14.6%
Lack of child or adult care services	14.1%
Transportation	11.6%
Involvement not appreciated	11.3%

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.

New Items: Five new questions were added to the parent questionnaire this year to obtain information about parent views about teacher and principal effectiveness, whether each child has a personalized learning experience, and parental awareness of federal and state report card grades. Three of these questions were unclear in their design, making interpretation of parent responses difficult. Parents of middle and high school students were asked to rate their

child's teacher, when their child had a different teacher for each core content class. All parents were asked to respond to questions regarding whether they have read state and federal report cards with responses of varying degrees of agreement rather than with a yes/no response.

If agree and strongly agree responses are combined, and disagree and strongly disagree are combined, parents of elementary school students view their child's teacher and principal more favorably than do parents of middle or high school students, and parents tend to regard their child's teacher more favorably than their child's principal. Parents of elementary school students view their child as experiencing a personalized learning experience more than do parents of middle or high school students. Approximately three-fourths of parents report having read the federal and state report cards for their schools, and slightly less report having read the report cards for their school district.

**Percent of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree with New Items in the 2013
Parent Survey by School Type:**

Item	Elementary	Middle	High
Teacher Effectiveness	91.4	85.5	83.6
Principal Effectiveness	86.6	81.6	78.8
Personalized Learning Experience	77.7	67.1	67.4
School Report Card	76.5	74.5	71.1
District Report Card	69.6	68.6	65.2

PART ONE

Administration of the 2013 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 11th 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 2013 to administer the parent as well as student and teacher surveys.

As in 2013, there were no parent surveys printed in Spanish. A copy of the 2013 survey is in the appendix. The 2013 administration of the parent survey occurred over the following time period and involved the following actions.

February 28, 2013	All schools received survey forms.
March 25, 2013	Date for parent survey forms returned to school.
March 28, 2013	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.¹

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.² 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 2013 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.³

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 2013 annual school report cards. For each school, SCDE aggregated the responses to all survey questions and provided the data files to the district office.

With the addition of five new items, the 2013 parent survey contained a total of fifty-nine questions. Forty-six questions were designed to elicit information on parental perceptions and

¹ “Administration of the 2013 Report Card Surveys,” South Carolina Department of Education.

² Cynthia Hearn, e-mail message to Melanie Barton, February 4, 2010.

³ “Administration of the 2013 Report Card Surveys,” South Carolina Department of Education.

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.

Parents were asked thirteen questions 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. Five new questions appear on the 2013 survey: the first two items asked about the effectiveness of a child's teacher and principal, the third asked about a child's personalized learning experience, and the last two of the new items asked about parental awareness of the school and district report cards. 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.

- Felton Laboratory School
- John de la Howe School
- Wil Lou Gray School
- School for the Deaf and the Blind
- Governor’s School for Science and Mathematics
- 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 2012-13 as the sample size. On the 45th, 90th and 135th 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 2012-13 the 135-day average daily membership for grades 5, 8 and 11 rounded to the nearest student totaled 156,859.⁶ This method underestimates the number of parents surveyed. The parents of some 3rd, 4th, 6th, 7th, 9th and 10th 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 2013 was 66,787, which was 2,794 (4.0 percent) fewer than the number returned in the prior year.

Table 1
Total Number of Parent Surveys Returned

2013	66,787
2012	69,581
2011	73,755
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 36 and 43 percent of all eligible parents surveyed responded to the 2013 parent survey. In the prior year (2012), using the same two methodologies, the response rate was between 38 and 44 percent. Compared to

⁶ “SC 135-Day Average Daily Membership by Grade, by District, 2012-13, obtained from Mellanie Jinnette, March 3, 2014.

IAR’s definitions of acceptable response rates for email and online surveys, the response rate to the 2013 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	185,119	66,787	36.1%
Method 2: ADM of 5, 8 and 11 th grades	156,859	66,787	42.6%

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

1. What grade is your child in? (3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th or 11th)
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
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 2013 parent survey. As in prior years, the “typical” parent responding to the survey was a white female having attended or graduated from college. Over 57 percent of the respondents who answered the question about income reported earning over \$35,000.

In 2013 the percentage of parents who completed the survey who identified themselves as Hispanic was 5.3 percent, as compared to 5.1 percent in 2012, 4.6 percent in 2011 and 5.0 percent in 2010.

Table 3
Respondents to the 2013 Parent Survey
(n=66,787)

Gender

Male	14.9%
Female	85.1%

Race

African-American	31.1%
Caucasian/white	59.6%
Hispanic	5.3%
All Other	4.0%

Education

Attended elementary/high school	10.7%
Completed high school/GED	23.2%
Earned Associate Degree	10.4%
Attended college/training program	21.1%
Earned college degree	21.8%
Postgraduate study/and/or degree	12.8%

Household Income

Less than \$15,000	13.9%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	14.1%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	14.1%
\$35,000 - \$54,999	16.6%
\$55,000 - \$75,000	14.1%
More than \$75,000	27.3%

Their Child Enrolled in:

Grades 3-5	45.2%
Grades 6-8	35.8%
Grades 9-11	19.0%

Their Child's Gender:

Male	45.4%
Female	54.6%

Their Child's Ethnicity:

African-American	31.5%
Caucasian/White	57.7%
Hispanic	5.4%
All Other	5.4%

Their Child's Grades:

All or mostly A's and B's	62.9%
All or mostly B's and C's	27.0%
All or mostly C's and D's	8.4%
All or mostly D's and F's	1.7%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

To determine if the survey responses were representative of elementary, middle and high school parents, the following analysis was done. First, 57,290 parents who returned the 2013 survey indicated that their child was in 5th, 8th, or 11th grade. Defining grade 5 as elementary schools, grade 8 as middle school and grade 11, high school, approximately 46 percent of parents who completed the survey were elementary school parents, 35 percent middle school, and 19 percent high school (Table 4). As compared to prior years, the percentage of surveys reflecting the perceptions of elementary school parents declined by 2 percent, middle school parents declined by 3 percent, and the percentage of parents of high school students increased by 5 percent (from 13 to 19 percent).

The representativeness of the 2013 parent surveys returned of the population of students was investigated by comparing the grade level and ethnicity of students enrolled in the 2012-13 academic year to the grade level and ethnicity of students as reported by parents in the 2013 parent survey. Considering only students in grades 5, 8, and 11, 46 percent of the parent surveys indicate their child was enrolled in grade 5, yet according to the 135-day Average Daily Membership (ADM) enrollment, only 35 percent of students are in grade 5. The percentage of children parents report as enrolled in grade 8 is nearly identical to the percentage of student enrolled in grade 8 according to the ADM. The percentage of students parents report as enrolled in grade 11 (19 percent) is much smaller than the percentage of students enrolled in grade 11 from the ADM (30%). Elementary school students are, then, over-represented in the parent surveys returned and high school students are under-represented in these data.

Table 4
Parental Respondents by Child's Grade

Grade of Child	Surveys Returned	% of Surveys from Grades 5, 8, & 11	2012-13 135-day ADM	% of ADMs for Grades 5, 8 & 11
Grade 5	26,405	46%	54,684	35%
Grade 8	20,034	35%	55,279	35%
Grade 11	10,851	19%	46,896	30%
TOTAL	57,290		156,859	

When asked about their child's race or ethnicity, 57.7 percent of the parents responded that their child's ethnicity was white, 31.5 percent African American and 5.4 percent Hispanic. Compared to the ethnicity of children in the public schools of South Carolina in 2010-11, parents whose children are African American were underrepresented by 4.7% in the results (Table 5).

Table 5
Ethnicity of Children

	2013 Parent Survey	Student Enrollment All Public Schools 2012-13⁷	Difference
White	57.7%	53.4%	4.3%
African American	31.5%	36.2%	(4.7%)
Hispanic	5.4%	6.4%	(1.2%)
Other	5.4%	4.0%	1.4%

Note: "Other" includes American Indian/Alaskan, Asian, Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander and Two or more races.

With respect to educational attainment, 34.6 percent of parents who responded to the survey in 2013 had earned a bachelor or postgraduate degree. For comparison purposes, the United States Census Bureau projected that 24.3 percent of persons 25 years old and over in South Carolina had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2009.⁸

Regarding the annual household income of the respondents, in 2013 58.0 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 2012 was \$52,763.⁹

Finally, staff performed an analysis that compared the number of parents who responded to the survey according to the Absolute Rating of their child’s school in 2013 with the percent of students enrolled in schools by their 2013 absolute report card rating.¹⁰

2013 Absolute Rating	% of Students Enrolled in School, 2012-13	% of Parents Responding to 2013 Survey
Excellent	41%	38%
Good	19%	23%
Average	31%	31%
Below Average	6%	6%
At Risk	3%	3%

The data document that for each report card rating, the percentages of students enrolled and parents responding are within four percent of one another. Nine percent of the parents who responded to the survey had children attending schools with an Absolute Rating of Below Average or At Risk, the same percentage as the number of students who were enrolled in a school with an Absolute Rating of Below Average or At Risk in school year 2012-13. Sixty-one percent of the parents who responded to the survey had children attending schools with an Absolute Rating of Good or Excellent, which is comparable to the 60 percent of students who were enrolled in a school with an Absolute Rating of Good or Excellent in school year 2012-13.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, Table 233, “Educational Attainment by State: 1990 to 2009.” <<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0233.pdf>>.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, “State and County Quick Facts” <<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/45000.html>>.

¹⁰ “Student Performance in SC,” South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, 2012. <<http://www.eoc.sc.gov/Home/Report%20Card%20Data/Report%20Card%20Brief.forprinter.pdf>>.

Conclusions

- A total of 66,787 parent surveys were completed and returned in 2013, which was 2,794 (4.0 percent) fewer than the number returned in the prior year.
- 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 2013 parent survey was between 36 and 42 percent, each of which by industry standards is considered average.
- An analysis of the respondents to the 2013 parent survey found that the survey responses typically overrepresented 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.
- The data documented that the parent survey responses were generally representative, within four percentage points, of the percentage of students enrolled in schools by their Absolute Rating. Nine percent of the parents who responded to the survey had children attending schools with an Absolute Rating of Below Average or At Risk, the same percentage as the number of students who were enrolled in a school with an Absolute Rating of Below Average or At Risk in school year 2012-13. Also, sixty percent of the parents who responded to the survey had children attending schools with an Absolute Rating of Good or Excellent, while 60 percent of students who were enrolled in a school with an Absolute Rating of Good or Excellent in school year 2012-13.

PART THREE

Results for Recurring Items of the 2013 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 2013 parent survey. 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. In analyzing responses, "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 2013 parent survey. Overall, 87.0 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 in parents either did not believe or did not know if their child received extra help when needed.

Table 6
Percentage of Parents in 2013 Responding

Learning Environment Questions	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	89.6	8.1	2.4
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	91.7	6.2	2.1
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	91.5	5.6	3.0
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	81.7	11.8	6.5
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	87.0	11.2	1.8

Table 7 compares the percentage of parents who responded that they agreed or strongly agreed to these questions each year from 2009 through 2013. The overall trend is of an increase in parental satisfaction.

Table 7
2009-2013
Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree

Learning Environment Questions	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	89.6	89.9	86.7	89.0	89.9
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	91.7	91.7	88.9	90.3	90.9
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	91.5	91.8	88.7	90.4	90.9
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	81.7	81.9	78.7	79.8	79.7
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	87.0	87.2	84.3	85.9	85.5

The differences between the percentages of parents who expressed that they are satisfied with the overall learning environment at their child's school in 2013 compared to 2012 are small and can be characterized as normal annual fluctuations. The percentage of parents who believe that their school has high expectations for learning also did not differ from 2012 to 2013. For the remaining questions regarding a school's learning environment there were very small decreases in the percentage of parents who view the learning environment favorably. It is worth noting, however, that the percentages of parents who agree or strongly agree with each statement reached their highest values in 2012. In this light, slight declines from 2012 to 2013 should not be over-interpreted.

Table 8
Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree

Learning Environment Questions	2013	2012	Difference
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	89.6	89.9	(0.3)
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	91.7	91.7	0.0
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	91.5	91.8	(0.3)
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	81.7	81.9	(0.2)
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	87.0	87.2	(0.2)

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 2013 results with the average or mean results of the prior three years. Table 9 documents the percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement regarding the learning environment of their child's school in 2013 compared to the average percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement in years 2010 through 2012. The 2013 respondents were overall more satisfied with the learning environment of their schools than the average of the respondents over the past three years; however, the difference did not exceed three percent on any one question.

Table 9
Comparing 2013 Results with Three-Year Average
(Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree)

Learning Environment Questions	2013	Mean % (2010-2012)	Difference
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	89.6	88.5	1.1
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	91.7	90.3	1.4
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	91.5	90.3	1.2
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	81.7	80.1	1.6
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	87.0	85.8	1.2

Table 10 presents the responses to Question 5 by the absolute report card ratings schools received in 2013. The highest percentage of parents who agree or strongly agree that they were satisfied with the overall learning environment at their child's schools were parents whose child attended a school with an Absolute Rating of Excellent. Parental satisfaction generally declines as the Absolute Rating of the school declines, except for the case of parents whose child attends a school rated At Risk. The percentage of parents of students who were satisfied with the overall learning environment in schools with Excellent Absolute Ratings was approximately 11 percent higher than the percentage of parents in schools with Below Average ratings. Furthermore, the percentage of parents in schools rated At Risk or Below Average who disagree or strongly disagree with the question is approximately twice that of parents in schools with an Excellent Absolute Rating.

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

2013 Absolute Rating	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Excellent	90.1	8.7
Good	87.8	10.4
Average	84.4	13.5
Below Average	78.7	18.6
At Risk	81.3	15.5

Analyzing the responses by Absolute Rating for elementary, middle and high schools, a clear pattern emerges: 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 declines for parents whose children are enrolled in middle or high schools, regardless of the Absolute Rating (Table 11). The only exception is for parents whose children attend schools with an At-Risk rating. Parents whose children attend high 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 11
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)

2013 Absolute Rating	School Type	Number of Responses	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Excellent	Elementary	12,187	92.8	6.4
	Middle	6,308	89.0	9.8
	High	5,928	85.5	12.3
Good	Elementary	6,821	90.2	8.5
	Middle	4,925	86.2	11.9
	High	1,574	81.1	15.6
Average	Elementary	10,247	87.8	10.6
	Middle	8,958	81.8	15.6
	High	1,521	76.9	20.5
Below Average	Elementary	1,731	81.2	16.4
	Middle	1,489	76.4	20.8
	High	148	72.3	23.0
At Risk	Elementary	356	82.6	12.9
	Middle	288	74.0	24.3
	High	482	83.6	13.1

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 12 summarizes the total responses to these eleven questions for all parents who completed the 2013 parent survey.

Table 12
Percentage of Parents in 2013 Responding:

Home and School Relations Questions	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child	56.9	41.0	2.1
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	64.5	33.1	2.3
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	51.5	43.6	5.0
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	80.9	13.5	5.6
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	69.2	24.6	6.2

Home and School Relations Questions	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	78.1	19.9	2.0
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	52.0	24.6	23.4
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	79.6	16.2	4.2
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	70.3	16.7	13.0
10. My principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	82.2	9.7	8.1
11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school	83.3	13.3	3.5

Overall, 83.3 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.
- Approximately 80 percent 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.
- Approximately four out of ten parents 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.

As documented by Table 13, the trend is that parental satisfaction with Home and School Relations has increased since 2005.

**Table 13
2005-2013**

Home and School Relations

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

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Agree or Strongly Agree	83.3	82.9	80.2	81.9	81.4	77.8	77.9	76.6	67.8
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	13.3	13.7	13.9	14.3	14.9	16.0	17.1	16.6	17.7

Analyzing parental satisfaction trends over the recent years, Table 14 documents parental satisfaction for all eleven questions regarding home and school relations since 2009. For nine of the eleven questions, the percentages of parents who view the Home School Relations favorably were highest in 2012. For the remaining two questions the highest ratings were obtained in 2013, one of which was the question regarding the overall satisfaction with home and school relations.

**Table 14
2009-2013**

Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree

Home and School Relations Questions	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	56.9	57.3	54.5	52.2	57.2
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	64.5	65.4	62.4	64.1	64.4
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	51.5	54.0	52.0	53.7	54.8
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	80.9	81.0	77.7	79.5	79.3
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	69.2	69.8	66.7	67.8	67.9
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	78.1	78.3	75.6	78.3	78.3
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	52.0	52.6	49.2	50.1	50.5
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	79.6	79.7	76.9	78.9	78.8
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	70.3	70.0	67.3	67.5	67.4
10. My principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	82.2	82.4	80.1	81.4	80.8
11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school	83.3	82.9	80.2	81.9	81.4

An additional analysis was done comparing the mean or average percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed to each statement over the past three years with the responses from 2013. Table 15 documents the percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement regarding home and school relations at their child's school in 2013 compared to the average percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement in years 2010 through 2012. Again, using a three percent change as "significant," there was no significant increase or decrease in parental responses to any of these questions.

Table 15
Comparing 2013 Results with Three-Year Average
(Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree)

Home and School Relations Questions	2013	Mean % (2010-2012)	Difference
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	56.9	54.7	2.2
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	64.5	63.9	0.6
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	51.5	53.2	-1.7
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	80.9	79.4	1.5
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	69.2	68.1	1.1
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	78.1	77.4	0.7
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	52.0	50.6	1.4
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	79.6	78.5	1.1
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	70.3	68.3	2.0
10. My principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	82.2	81.3	0.9
11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school	83.3	81.7	1.6

Table 16 presents the responses to Question 11 by the absolute report card ratings schools received in 2013. Table 16 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. The percentage of parents of students who were satisfied with the home and school relations in schools with Excellent Absolute Ratings was approximately 8 percent higher than the percentage of parents in schools with Below Average ratings. Recall that this difference was approximately 11 percent for parental perceptions of the learning environment in their child's school. The percentage of parents in schools with Below Average ratings who disagree or strongly disagree with the question is approximately 7 percent higher than the percentage of parents with students in schools with Absolute Ratings of Excellent.

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

2013 Absolute Rating	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Excellent	86.3	10.8
Good	83.3	13.3
Average	80.9	15.5
Below Average	78.7	17.6
At Risk	82.4	13.6

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, across

Absolute Ratings (Table 17). Exceptions occur for middle and high schools with Average or At Risk Absolute Ratings, where a larger percentage of high school parents view the home and school relations favorably than do middle school parents.

Table 17
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)

2013 Absolute Rating	School Type	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Excellent	Elementary	90.2	7.7
	Middle	84.4	12.5
	High	80.0	15.6
Good	Elementary	87.6	10.0
	Middle	79.1	16.6
	High	75.9	19.4
Average	Elementary	85.1	12.1
	Middle	76.4	19.0
	High	76.7	18.9
Below Average	Elementary	82.0	14.5
	Middle	75.9	20.9
	High	68.7	21.8
At Risk	Elementary	82.9	13.2
	Middle	76.1	19.0
	High	84.6	11.5

C. Social and Physical Environment

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 student behavior at 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 18 summarizes the total responses to these five questions for all parents who completed the 2013 parent survey.

Table 18
Percentage of Parents in 2013 Responding

Social and Physical Environment Questions	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	91.5	5.7	2.8
2. My child feels safe at school.	91.0	7.1	1.9
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	83.7	8.6	7.7
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	64.0	22.6	13.5
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	84.3	12.0	3.7

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 one out of three parents either did not believe or did not know whether students at their child's school were well behaved, and 16.3 percent of parents did not know or did not believe that their child's teachers cared about their child as an individual.

Table 19 compares the 2013 results of the South Carolina parent survey with the results of parent surveys administered since 2009. 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, 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 19
2009-2013
Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree

Social and Physical Environment Questions	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	91.5	91.3	90.0	91.0	90.7
2. My child feels safe at school.	91.0	90.9	89.7	90.5	90.1
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	83.7	84.1	81.1	82.1	82.2
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	64.0	63.7	61.2	62.4	61.4
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school	84.3	84.1	82.4	83.2	82.7

A final analysis was conducted to gauge parent satisfaction with the social and physical environment of their child's school in 2013 with the results of surveys completed during the prior three years. Table 20 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 2013 compared to the average percentage of parents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement in years 2010 through 2012. Again, there were no significant increases or decreases when comparing parental responses in 2013 with the average of the three prior years.

Table 20
Comparing 2013 Results with Three-Year Average
(Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree)

Social and Physical Environment Questions	2013	Mean % (2010-2012)	Difference
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	91.5	90.8	0.7
2. My child feels safe at school.	91.0	90.4	0.6
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	83.7	82.4	(0.7)
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	64.0	62.4	1.6
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	84.3	83.2	1.1

Comparing parental responses to Question 5 with the 2013 Absolute Rating of their child's school, Table 21 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 generally declines as the Absolute Rating of the school declines. The difference between the percentage of parents whose children attended a school with an Absolute Rating of Excellent and those whose children attended a school with an Absolute Rating of At Risk and who agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the social and physical environment of their child's school was 13.7 percent as compared to 8.3 percent for learning environment and 3.9 for home and school relations.

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 School)

2012 Absolute Rating	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Excellent	88.5	8.9
Good	85.2	11.4
Average	81.2	14.5
Below Average	75.7	19.3
At Risk	74.8	17.6

Analyzing the responses by school type (elementary, middle and high) and 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 22 documents the large differences between parent satisfaction between schools with an Excellent or Good Absolute Rating and schools with a Below Average or At-Risk rating. As in the answers to the prior questions, parents whose children attended a school with an Absolute Rating of Below Average were much less satisfied in 2013 with the overall performance of their child's school than even parents whose children attended a school with an Absolute Rating of At Risk. Parents of high school students in schools with an At Risk Absolute Rating were more satisfied with the social and physical environment of their child's school than were parents of middle school students whose children attended a school with an Absolute Rating of At Risk.

Table 22

**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)**

2012 Absolute Rating	Type	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Excellent	Elementary	92.9	5.5
	Middle	86.6	10.2
	High	81.3	14.6
Good	Elementary	89.7	7.9
	Middle	82.1	13.7
	High	73.9	20.7
Average	Elementary	86.5	10.2
	Middle	76.3	18.3
	High	72.4	22.8
Below Average	Elementary	79.3	16.6
	Middle	72.2	21.8
	High	68.5	26.9
At Risk	Elementary	79.1	15.9
	Middle	70.2	24.6
	High	72.7	15.5

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:¹¹

- 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.
- Type 5. Decision Making – Include families as participants in school decisions, and develop parent leaders and representatives.

¹¹ 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>.

- 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 23 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 23
Percent of Parents Providing Each Response to
Parental Involvement Questions Regarding Activities at the School

<u>Parental Involvement Question</u>	I do this	I don’t but would like to	I don’t and don’t care to	Activity/event not offered
Attend Open Houses or parent-teacher conferences	79.7	15.4	3.9	1.0
Attend student programs or performances	80.1	15.1	3.5	1.3
Volunteer for the school	36.2	37.3	23.1	3.4
Go on trip with my child’s school	35.0	42.3	16.7	6.0
Participate in School Improvement Council Meetings	12.7	43.9	37.8	5.6
Participate in Parent-teacher Student Organizations	31.0	34.8	31.3	2.9
Participate in school committees	16.4	38.2	38.3	7.1
Attend parent workshops	25.6	38.7	21.1	14.7

Based on the responses in Table 22 and the six types of involvement, there are significant opportunities for improving parental involvement in South Carolina’s public schools.

- Decision-Making – Substantially fewer parents report being involved in the School Improvement Council and school committees than in any other activity. Slightly less than one-third of parents report participating in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations. Decision making, including parents and families in school decisions, and developing parent leaders and representatives are areas for

growth where parents want to be involved in these decision-making organizations.

- Volunteering – Approximately 36 percent of the parents responded that they volunteered while 37 percent wanted to volunteer.
- Parenting - Over three-fourths of the parents attended open houses, parent-teacher conferences or student programs, all activities that support their children. Approximately one-fourth reported attending parent workshops while 15 percent contend that such workshops were not provided at their child’s school.

Parents were asked five questions about their involvement with their child’s learning, 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 24 summarizes parental responses to these five questions.

Table 24
Percent of Parents Providing Each Response to
Parental Involvement Questions Regarding Their Child’s Learning

	I do this	I don’t but would like to	I don’t and don’t care to
Visit my child’s classroom during the school day	30.8	51.5	17.7
Contact my child’s teachers about my child’s school work.	76.3	18.5	5.2
Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet	84.5	8.7	6.9
Make sure my child does his/her homework	95.2	3.3	1.5
Help my child with homework when he/she needs it.	93.9	4.7	1.5

Clearly, parents overwhelmingly report being involved in activities and decisions to support their child’s learning. Over 93 percent of parents reported helping their child with his or her homework while 84.5 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. These responses are similar to parent responses in prior years.

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 from 2007 through 2013 are included in Table 25. Consistently across years, work schedule is the most common obstacle to parent involvement. 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 25
Percentage of Parents Experiencing Each Impediment to Involvement in Schools

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Lack of transportation reduces my involvement	11.6	11.6	11.5	11.8	11.7	11.6	11.8
Family health problems reduce my involvement.	14.6	14.4	14.3	14.3	14.7	14.9	15.0
Lack of available care for my children or other family members reduces my involvement.	14.1	14.7	14.5	15.1	15.4	15.2	15.4
My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved.	54.6	53.8	54.4	55.1	55.6	56.2	55.4
The school does not encourage my involvement.	16.1	15.7	16.2	17.4	17.6	18.0	19.6
Information about how to be involved either comes too late or not at all.	23.7	23.5	24.6	25.3	25.7	26.8	27.3
I don't feel like it is appreciated when I try to be involved.	11.3	10.6	11.4	12.0	12.1	12.8	13.6

Finally, parents were also asked several questions about their child's school and its efforts at increasing parental involvement. Across these questions and across time, two-thirds or more of parents consistently rated the efforts of their child's school at parental involvement efforts as good or very good (Table 26). Approximately twenty percent rated their child's school overall as "okay". Fewer than 10 percent of parents have provided unfavorable responses regarding their child's school for any of these questions over the past three years.

Table 26
2011 – 2013
Percent of Parents Providing Each Response to
Parental Involvement Questions Regarding School Effort

Question:	Very Good or Good			Bad or Very Bad			Okay		
	2013	2012	2011	2013	2012	2011	2013	2012	2011
School's overall friendliness.	79.3	81.5	80.4	2.2	2.2	2.4	18.4	16.3	17.2
School's interest in parents' ideas and opinions.	63.4	63.9	63.0	7.6	7.2	7.6	30.1	28.9	29.5
School's effort to get important information from parents.	67.4	68.8	67.8	7.6	7.2	7.5	25.1	24.0	24.7
The school's efforts to give important information to parents.	73.1	74.3	73.3	6.1	6.0	6.2	20.8	19.7	20.5
How the school is doing overall.	75.8	77.5	76.4	3.2	3.2	3.4	21.0	19.3	20.2

Conclusions:

- Despite a 4.0 percent decline in the number of parents responding to the annual parent survey, the results of the 2013 parent survey demonstrate that parental satisfaction with their child’s public schools as measured by the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment, was at comparable levels to the prior year’s survey results.

Percentage of Parents Satisfied with:

Characteristic	2013	2012	2011	2010	Difference between 2013 and 2012
Learning Environment	87.0	87.2	84.3	85.9	(0.2)
Home and School Relations	83.3	82.9	80.2	81.9	0.4
Social and Physical Environment	84.3	84.1	82.4	83.2	0.2

- When comparing parent satisfaction in 2013 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

Characteristic	2013	Mean % (2010-2012)	Difference between 2013 and Mean of three years
Learning Environment	87.0	85.8	1.3
Home and School Relations	83.3	81.7	1.6
Social and Physical Environment	84.3	83.2	1.1

- 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.

PART FOUR

Results for New Items of the 2013 Parent Survey

Five new items were added to the parent survey for 2013. These items are not focused on a single aspect of teaching and learning. They are:

1. My child's teacher is effective.
2. My child's principal is effective.
3. My child receives a personalized learning experience.
4. I have read BOTH the federal and state report cards for my child's school.
5. I have read BOTH the federal and state report cards by my child's school district.

The possible responses for parents to these questions are:

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Don't Know

Each of these questions was examined by school type (elementary, middle, and high) and by the 2013 absolute report card rating. Because relatively few schools receive Absolute Ratings of At Risk and Below Average, these categories have been combined for reporting.

The first item may be relevant to parents of elementary school students. If their student has the same teacher for English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies parents may respond with this teacher in mind, however; elementary students tend to have different teachers for Art, Music, Physical Education, and other special classes that may be offered (e.g., foreign languages). Without clear wording of which teacher parents are to evaluate, the teacher parents will have in mind when answering this question is unknown. The same situation is present for the parents of middle and high school students. Middle and high school students have different teachers for most (or all) of their subjects. Parents may respond with their child's best teacher, worst teacher, favorite teacher, or some overall composite of their child's teachers in mind. Interpreting the responses to this question for parents of middle and high school teachers, then, is difficult.

Table 27 presents the results of teacher effectiveness by school type. Parents of elementary school students appear to have the most favorable views of their child's teacher. The percentage of parents who agree or strongly agree that their teacher is effective is approximately twice the percentages for parents of middle or high school students, and the percentage of parents who disagree or strongly disagree is approximately two-thirds that of the parents of middle or high school students.

Table 27
Teacher Effectiveness by School Type

School Type	Response				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary	2.3	3.8	45.5	45.9	2.5
Middle	2.3	6.7	60.7	24.9	5.5
High	2.5	7.0	62.4	21.2	7.0

Differences are also observed in parent perceptions of their child's teacher's effectiveness by the report card level of the school (Table 28). Parents of children in schools with Good or Excellent Absolute Ratings have the most favorable views of their child's teacher, and parents of children in schools with At Risk or Below Average Absolute Ratings have slightly less favorable views of their child's teacher. Differences between the responses for these parent groups are evident in the percentages of parents who Strongly Agree that their child's teacher is effective. The percentage of parents who Disagree or Strongly Disagree that their child's teacher is effective are nearly identical regardless of the Absolute Rating of the school.

Further analyses of parent perceptions of teacher effectiveness by both school type and Absolute Rating are presented in Table C-1 of Appendix C. These data clarify that it is only in elementary schools that parents vary in their perceptions of their child's teacher by the school report card rating. For parents of middle and high school students, perceptions of teacher effectiveness do not vary systematically by report card rating. These analyses also indicate that parents have more negative perceptions of their child's teacher as grade level increases from elementary to middle and high schools.

Table 28
Teacher Effectiveness by Report Card Rating

2013 Absolute Rating	Response					N
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	
Excellent	2.0	4.7	51.0	38.8	3.4	24,700
Good	2.2	5.2	54.3	33.9	4.4	13,859
Average	2.6	5.9	56.1	30.4	5.0	21,258
At Risk/Below Average	3.9	6.5	56.5	27.1	6.0	4,532

It is unclear whether the differences between the responses of the parents or elementary school students and those of middle and high school students can be attributed to actual perceptions of their teacher or whether these difference appear because the parents of middle and high school students do not have a single teacher to focus on when responding to this question. Providing a question such as "How effective is your child's teacher of Mathematics?" may enable middle and high school students to respond with respect to a specific teacher and, therefore, provide more comparable responses across school type.

Parent perceptions of the effectiveness of the principal at their child's school are presented by school type (Table 29) and by 2013 Absolute Rating (Table 30). Again, parents of elementary school students view their principal most favorably, and by a substantial margin over parents of students in middle school. Parents of students in high school view their principals least favorably, though the difference between middle and high schools is small. Indeed, parents of middle and high school students may be regarded as viewing their child's principals similarly.

**Table 29
Principal Effectiveness by School Type**

School Type	Response				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary	2.9	4.0	43.0	43.6	6.5
Middle	3.5	6.1	51.3	30.3	8.8
High	4.0	7.1	51.3	27.5	10.2

Parent perceptions of their child's school principal also vary by the absolute report card rating of the school. A much larger percentage of parents of students in schools with Excellent Absolute Ratings strongly agree that the principal is effective (41.3 percent) compared to parents of students in schools with At Risk or Below Average Absolute Ratings (28.1 percent). This trend is also evident when considering the percentage of parents who strongly disagree or disagree that the principal is effective, smaller percentages of parents with students in schools with Absolute Ratings of Excellent disagree or strongly disagree that their principal is effective. The smallest percentage of parents who disagree or strongly disagree was from parents with children in schools with Absolute Ratings of Excellent, and the largest percentage was from parents with children in school with At Risk or Below Average Absolute Ratings.

Additional analyses of parent perceptions of principal effectiveness by school type and Absolute Rating are presented in Appendix C (Table C-2). These analyses indicate that for parents of both elementary and middle school students perceptions of principal effectiveness increase as report card rating increases, while for parents of high school students there is no trend associated with report card rating. As with parent perceptions of teacher effectiveness, the percentage of parents who have unfavorable views of principal effectiveness increases from elementary to middle, and from middle to high school.

**Table 30
Principal Effectiveness by Report Card Rating**

2013 Absolute Rating	Response					N
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	
Excellent	2.8	4.2	44.5	41.3	7.2	24,836
Good	3.2	5.0	48.1	36.0	7.8	13,906
Average	3.8	6.3	49.8	31.7	8.3	21,304
At Risk/Below Average	4.6	7.1	49.7	28.1	10.5	4,546

Overall, the ratings of teachers and principals tend to coincide. Parents of elementary school students view their child’s teacher more favorable than they do their child’s principal while parents of middle and high school students appear to view their child’s principal more favorably than their child’s teacher. Comparisons between parent perceptions of teachers and principals may not be meaningful given the potential ambiguity of parental responses regarding perceived teacher quality for reasons already discussed.

The third new question asks parents if their child receives a personalized learning experience. Parents may or may not understand what is meant by a personalized learning experience. Narrowly, personalized learning tailors teaching, curriculum and the learning environment to meet the individual needs and aspirations of students. Technology is a key component to facilitate personalized learning. In essence, it is customization of teaching and learning. States participating in the Innovation Lab Network through the Council of Chief State School Officers are “developing and scaling models of personalize, competency-based, anytime/anywhere learning pathways for students to attain college and career readiness, and are working to prepare educators to thrive within these new pathways.” At the high school level, diversity in course offerings may be envisioned as personalized learning.

In an August 2011 article written by Dr. Mick Zais, State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Zais writes:

A personalized, customized education for every student is the future of education. A student-centered approach will transform education from a system that treats students as identical units, teachers as assembly line workers, and administrators as managers working to meet production quotas of dubious quality.

Dr. Zais mentions the need for students to be able to take virtual courses and to replace seat time requirements with competency-based learning.¹²

Table 31
Personalized Learning Environment by School Type

School Type	Response				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary	3.4	12.2	46.0	31.7	6.8
Middle	4.4	19.0	48.6	18.6	9.4
High	4.1	19.0	49.1	18.4	9.6

A larger percentage of parents of elementary school students strongly agree that their child receives a personalized learning environment than parents of middle or high school students, and a small percentage disagree or strongly disagree. This occurs despite the fact that there is

¹² “Personalized and Customized Education for Every Student,” by Dr. Mick Zais, State Superintendent of Education. August 8, 2011. <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/superintendent/documents/PersonalizedCustomizedEducation_FINAL_08112011.pdf>.

little flexibility in the course sequence available to elementary school students. Parents of high school students, where greater ability to customize the curriculum for each child is present, do not differ from parents of middle school students, where less ability to customize the curriculum is present. These results should bring into question the utility of this item for obtaining information regarding the intended concept.

Table 32
Personalized Learning Environment by Report Card Rating

2013 Absolute Rating	Response					N
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	
Excellent	3.5	15.6	45.7	27.6	7.7	24,724
Good	3.6	16.1	48.1	23.9	8.3	13,837
Average	4.4	16.0	48.6	22.4	8.7	21,149
At Risk/Below Average	4.9	15.0	49.6	22.2	8.3	4,509

As presented in Table 32, there are minimal observed differences in parent perceptions regarding their child's personalized learning environment by absolute report card rating. Approximately 70 percent of parents believe their child is receiving a personalized learning experience, and approximately 20 percent of parents do not believe their child is receiving a personalized learning experience, regardless of the Absolute Rating of the school.

Analyses of parent perceptions of their child's personalized learning environment by school type and report card rating are presented in Appendix C (Table C-3). These data confirm that there is no association of parent perceptions of personalized learning environment with report card rating for any school type.

The responses to questions 4 and 5 are also difficult to interpret because of the response alternatives parents were to choose from. Parents either have or have not read the report cards for their school and school district. It is not clear how a parent would interpret these questions in order to differentiate between the possible responses of "agree" or "strongly agree", and similarly for the responses of "disagree" or "strongly disagree". For this analysis both categories indicating agreement were collapsed, and both categories indicating disagreement were collapsed. Also unclear is how parents interpreted the "Don't know" response. Parents who are unaware of the report cards may provide this response, as might parents who were not able to understand the content of the report cards.

Tables 33 and 34 present parent responses to the items regarding whether they have read school and district report cards by school type. There appears to be relatively small differences between the percentages of parents who have read either report card type by school type. Approximately 5 percent more parents of elementary school students have read the report cards than parents of high school students. Also, approximately 6 percent more parents report having read their school report card than their district report card.

Table 33
Read State and Federal School Report Cards by School Type

School Type	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary	14.8	76.5	8.6
Middle	17.3	74.5	8.3
High	20.3	71.1	8.6

Table 34
Read State and Federal District Report Cards by School Type

School Type	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary	19.2	69.6	11.2
Middle	21.2	68.6	10.2
High	24.8	65.2	10.1

Tables 35 and 36 present parent responses to the items regarding whether they have read school and district report cards by absolute report card rating. There do not appear to be any differences among the percentages of parents who have read either report card type by absolute report card rating. Again, approximately 5 percent more parents of elementary school students have read the report cards than parents of high school students.

Table 35
Read BOTH State and Federal School Report Cards by Absolute Rating

2013 Absolute Rating	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Excellent	16.2	75.5	8.3
Good	15.8	76.2	8.0
Average	17.0	73.9	9.1
At Risk/ Below Average	18.5	72.6	9.0

Table 36
Read BOTH State and Federal District Report Cards by Absolute Rating

2013 Absolute Rating	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Excellent	21.1	68.5	10.4
Good	19.8	69.8	10.5
Average	20.5	68.3	11.1
At Risk/ Below Average	22.7	66.1	11.3

More detailed analyses of parent responses regarding whether they have read both the state and federal report cards are presented in Appendix C (Tables C-4 and C-5). There may be a slight trend in elementary and middle schools that parents with children in schools with Excellent report card ratings have read the school and district report cards more than parents of students in schools with lower ratings, but the differences are minimal and should not be over-interpreted.

Conclusions:

**Percent of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree with New Items in the 2013
Parent Survey by School Type:**

Item	Elementary	Middle	High
Teacher Effectiveness	91.4	85.5	83.6
Principal Effectiveness	86.6	81.6	78.8
Personalized Learning Experience	77.7	67.1	67.4
School Report Card	76.5	74.5	71.1
District Report Card	69.6	68.6	65.2

- Each question is unclear in some aspect, either in the content of the question or the response alternatives parents are asked to select from.
- Parents of elementary school students appear to view their teachers most favorably, as do parents of students in schools with the highest absolute report card ratings.
- Parents of elementary schools appear to view their child as experiencing a personalized learning experience more than do parents of middle or high school students.
- Approximately 74 percent of parents indicated they had read the state and federal report cards of their school, and approximately 69 percent of parents indicated they had read the state and federal report cards of their school district. There were minimal fluctuations by school type or report card rating.

PART FIVE

Recommendation

The Public Awareness Subcommittee of the Education Oversight Committee met on March 24, 2014 and reviewed the results of the 2013 parent survey. The Subcommittee unanimously approved the following recommendation. Given the increase accessibility of parents to computers, tablets and other electronic devices, the Subcommittee recommends that the Department of Education consider the possibility of using a mobile app for parents to use in completing the parent survey.



ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2013 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

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 website

- March 1, 2013 – Teacher Survey portal opens.
- April 9, 2013 – Teacher Survey portal closes.

Student & High School Student Surveys – paper forms

- February 28, 2013 – All schools should receive survey forms by this date.
- March 28, 2013 – Last day for schools to ship completed survey forms to contractor.

Parent Surveys – paper forms

- February 28, 2013 – All schools should receive survey forms by this date.
- March 25, 2013 – Date for parent survey forms to be returned to the school.
This is the due date in the letter to parents.
- March 28, 2013 – 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.

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



ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2013 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

INDEX

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

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CHANGES THIS YEAR

Five questions have been added to the Parent Survey.

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 11th 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.



ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2013 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

- ✓ 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 **cannot** 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 2012 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 printed for your school is based on numbers provided by your district office. 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 **director of the Education Oversight Committee** 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.
- 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 2012 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 should take approximately twenty 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 directly 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 2012 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.
- 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 25 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. **Remind teachers that they should not write any student names on the envelopes.**
- 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.
- 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 2012 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 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 shipped to the contractor 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 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, 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.**
- 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.
- All surveys must be shipped on or before **Thursday, March 28, 2013**.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2012
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

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2012
REPORT CARD SURVEYS**

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, 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.

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

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2013 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

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.
- Make no stray marks on this form.
- Erase clearly any marks you wish to change.
- Correct Mark: Incorrect Marks:

Please mark how much you agree or disagree 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"/>				
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.	<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"/>				
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. My child's school includes me in decision making.	<input type="radio"/>				
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. My child's school schedules activities at times I can attend.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	<input type="radio"/>				
10. The principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	<input type="radio"/>				
11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.	<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"/>				
2. My child feels safe at school.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Students at my child's school are well-behaved.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please tell us if you do the following.

	I do this	I don't do this, but would like to	I don't do this, and 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 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



ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2013 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

APPENDIX B

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	
1. My child's teacher is effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
2. My child's principal is effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
3. My child receives a personalized learning experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
4. I have read BOTH the federal and state report cards for my child's school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
5. I have read BOTH the federal and state report cards for my child's school district.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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 I'm 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 get important information from parents.		<input type="radio"/>				
4. The school's efforts to give important information to parents.		<input type="radio"/>				
5. How the school is doing overall.		<input type="radio"/>				
Please answer the following questions about <u>your child</u> who attends the school identified at the bottom of this page.						
1. What grade is your child in? <input type="radio"/> 3rd <input type="radio"/> 4th <input type="radio"/> 5th <input type="radio"/> 6th <input type="radio"/> 7th <input type="radio"/> 8th <input type="radio"/> 9th <input type="radio"/> 10th <input type="radio"/> 11th						
2. What is your child's gender? <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> 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 <u>yourself</u>. 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? <input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> 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"/> \$65,000 - \$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!

DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA		
	4701011	YORK PREPARATORY ACADEMY

APPENDIX C

Table C-1

Teacher Effectiveness by School Type and Absolute Rating

School Type and Absolute Rating	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary				
At Risk/Below Average	8.8	53.5	32.8	4.9
Average	6.6	49.7	40.2	3.5
Good	5.9	46.6	45.1	2.4
Excellent	5.4	40.2	53.0	1.5
Middle				
At Risk/Below Average	11.8	59.6	21.9	6.7
Average	10.0	61.4	22.6	6.0
Good	8.2	62.1	23.5	6.2
Excellent	7.3	58.9	29.9	4.0
High				
At Risk/Below Average	10.4	58.6	23.6	7.4
Average	10.3	59.8	22.7	7.2
Good	10.8	63.1	18.4	7.8
Excellent	8.9	63.7	20.7	6.7

Table C-2

Principal Effectiveness by School Type and Absolute Rating

School Type and Absolute Rating	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary				
At Risk/Below Average	9.6	48.1	32.3	10.1
Average	7.6	47.4	37.4	7.6
Good	6.8	43.8	43.1	6.3
Excellent	5.9	38.4	50.6	5.1
Middle				
At Risk/Below Average	13.0	52.3	23.7	11.0
Average	11.7	52.1	27.4	8.8
Good	8.3	52.8	30.0	8.9
Excellent	6.7	48.8	36.6	8.0
High				
At Risk/Below Average	15.2	48.5	26.4	9.9
Average	14.4	50.5	25.5	9.6
Good	12.9	51.6	24.8	10.7
Excellent	9.5	52.1	28.1	10.3

Table C-3
Personalized Learning Experience by School Type and Absolute Rating

School Type and Absolute Rating	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary				
At Risk/Below Average	17.0	50.7	24.6	7.8
Average	15.7	48.3	28.3	7.7
Good	15.6	47.0	30.8	6.7
Excellent	15.2	42.9	36.0	5.9
Middle				
At Risk/Below Average	23.0	48.7	19.0	9.4
Average	24.3	49.1	17.0	9.6
Good	23.9	49.3	17.1	9.7
Excellent	22.1	47.2	22.0	8.8
High				
At Risk/Below Average	19.1	51.7	23.2	6.0
Average	23.2	46.8	21.4	8.6
Good	23.9	49.8	15.3	11.0
Excellent	23.4	49.6	17.1	9.9

Table C-4
School Report Card by School Type and Absolute Rating

School Type and Absolute Rating	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary				
At Risk/Below Average	17.3	49.7	25.0	8.0
Average	15.0	48.9	26.8	9.3
Good	13.9	48.9	29.0	8.2
Excellent	14.8	43.9	32.9	8.5
Middle				
At Risk/Below Average	18.9	52.4	19.8	9.0
Average	18.4	52.0	20.7	8.9
Good	16.5	54.5	21.3	7.6
Excellent	15.8	50.6	26.0	7.7
High				
At Risk/Below Average	20.6	49.4	17.3	12.8
Average	20.5	49.1	22.1	8.3
Good	20.7	53.1	17.7	8.5
Excellent	20.0	52.0	19.6	8.4

**Table C-5
District Report Card by School Type and Absolute Rating**

School Type and Absolute Rating	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Elementary				
At Risk/Below Average	21.8	45.2	22.3	10.8
Average	18.8	45.3	24.4	11.5
Good	17.8	44.6	26.5	11.1
Excellent	19.9	39.4	29.5	11.2
Middle				
At Risk/Below Average	23.0	47.0	19.0	11.1
Average	21.8	48.6	18.7	10.9
Good	20.6	50.4	19.3	9.7
Excellent	20.2	46.8	23.5	9.5
High				
At Risk/Below Average	24.5	44.3	17.4	13.8
Average	24.0	46.2	20.3	9.6
Good	25.0	48.2	16.5	10.4
Excellent	25.1	47.6	17.5	9.8

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: Academic Standards and Assessments

Date: April 28, 2014

INFORMATION/RECOMMENDATION

PK-20 Literacy Initiative Recommendations

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

EOC Goals and Objectives for 2013-14:

3. Increase the level of student reading proficiency by:
 - a. Examining the performance of students, individual and in groups, to understand how and where emphasis is needed in policy and practice;
 - b. Linking student performance to instructional strategies and policies and promoting those which are most effective; and
 - c. Piloting a P-20 initiative focused on improving reading performance.

CRITICAL FACTS

The attached are recommendations from the ASA Subcommittee. These recommendations were approved by the EOC Special Reading and Public Awareness Subcommittees.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

These recommendations were approved by the EOC Special Reading and Public Awareness Subcommittees on 1/27/2014; referred to ASA Subcommittee 2/10/14.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

Cost:

Fund/Source:

ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

Recommendations for PK-20 Literacy Initiative

Recommendations approved by the EOC Special Reading Subcommittee and Public Awareness Subcommittees on January 27, 2014; referred to EOC Subcommittee Feb. 10, 2014. All recommendations based on best practices.

Early Literacy Recommendations	Status
<p>1. Revise state law to include a statewide mandatory readiness assessment for all students entering 5K kindergarten or state-funded, full-day 4K programs (including CDEPP) beginning with 2014-15 school year. The assessment would be given three times throughout a year and would measure language development, early math, and literacy. Regular progress monitoring for literacy will be done for children beginning in 4K. The results of these assessments will be used to determine the readiness of children entering kindergarten for the first time, to inform classroom instruction, and provide useful information to parents. Results will not be used for accountability purposes or teacher evaluation.</p>	<p>Recommendation included in H.3994 and S.516. Mandate: YES, if legislation passes</p>
<p>2. Establish an Early Provider Readiness Rate compiled from the assessment results of children who attended and completed state-funded 4K programs (including CDEPP). Providers must have readiness rates above the minimum set by the State Board of Education before they are granted provider status. Existing providers whose readiness rate falls below the minimum set by the State Board of Education will be placed on probation and required to submit and implement an improvement plan before receiving future state funding.</p>	<p>Mandate: YES, though legislation not yet proposed.</p>
<p>3. Require any individual who works with children (birth-preschool) that receives state-administered funds to complete 5 hours or 0.5 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) of approved in-service training and technical assistance in early literacy and language development of children from birth to 5 years old. To be administered by DSS Division of Child Care Services.</p>	<p>Mandate: NO Requirements already exist and would not increase. Focus would be on literacy</p>
<p>4. Coordinate within existing initiatives to develop a parent education program for families who have young children from birth to 5 years old that emphasizes essential early literacy skills such as oral language development and print awareness.</p>	<p>Mandate: NO</p>
<p>5. Establish a statewide Task Force on Early Literacy to create public private partnerships designed to promote higher levels of early literacy in programs and homes. Include representatives from family literacy programs, family service programs, center-based programs, and community organizations (i.e., Head Start, DSS, SCDE, First Steps, Reach Out and Read, United Way, etc.) Good examples include the Washington State Dept. of Early Learning partnership with Reach Out and Read and Massachusetts public-private partnership with IBM.</p>	<p>This structure already exists as the Early Literacy Team working with EOC staff Mandate: NO</p>
<p>6. Require school districts to form collaborative teams devoted to serving children ages 0-5 and their families in their own communities. Groups should include local representatives from family literacy programs, family service programs, center-based programs, community organizations, local businesses, and county libraries, etc.</p>	<p>This was a suggestion of a school district employee in the Early Literacy Team. It was suggested that this team could work through the District</p>

	Literacy Team, a requirement in H.3994 and S.526 Mandate: NO
K-12 Recommendations	Status
1. Place qualified reading/literacy coaches in elementary schools based on the percentage of students scoring at the lowest levels of PASS Reading in grade 3. These coaches would provide daily support to classroom teachers, coaching and mentoring them in differentiated instruction and training them to provide intensive literacy intervention to students. Consideration should be given to K-2 schools where students feed into schools where higher levels of students score at the lowest level of PASS in grade 3.	In Governor Haley's budget recommendations and in the current House Ways and Means budget Mandate: NO; districts that have to support the salary and fringe for half of a reading coach can opt not to do so.
2. Require retention for students who score at the lowest level of PASS ELA during their third grade year, provided they don't qualify for one of four "good cause exemptions" outlined in Read to Succeed legislation. The reading instruction of students during the "reinforcement" year would be intensive, explicit, comprehensive, supportive, and provided daily by teacher who has shown proven effectiveness in teaching reading and who has the literacy teacher endorsement.	Included in H.3994 and S.516. Mandate: YES, if legislation passes
3. Require students in middle school scoring Not Met 1 on PASS ELA or any high school student who has not passed HSAP to receive explicit, systematic, and direct literacy instruction from a teacher who has shown proven effectiveness in teaching reading and who has the literacy teacher endorsement during a daily intensive reading course. These students will be frequently progress monitored.	Parts of this recommendation included in current legislation. Mandate: Yes, if legislation passes.
4. Require all school districts complete a K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan annually outlining how they intend to provide intervention to students who struggle in reading.	Recommendation included in H.3994 and S.516. Mandate: YES, if legislation passes
5. Require all school districts to create a District Literacy Team or consortium of multiple districts whose responsibility is to provide the leadership, support, and guidance in the development and implementation of the District Reading Plan. Each school will have a School Literacy Team and the principal must be a team member.	Recommendation included in H.3994 and S.516. Mandate: YES, if legislation passes
6. Require districts to offer skills-based summer reading camps/academies for students who score at the lowest level of PASS ELA during their third grade year. Summer academies should be staffed by teachers highly qualified in literacy. Students earning a passing grade on a selected assessment or who earn a passing grade on a reading portfolio (a series of competency-based benchmarks) will be promoted to fourth grade.	Recommendation included in H.3994 and S.516. Mandate: YES, if legislation passes

Higher Education and Continuing Education for Practicing Professionals	Status
<p>1. <i>Add-on Literacy Endorsement for pre-service teachers:</i> Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, mandate that all pre-service teacher education programs (including MAT degree programs) will require all candidates seeking licensure at the early childhood or elementary level complete a 12 semester credit sequence in literacy that includes a school-based practicum and includes courses in theory, research, and practices that guide and support the teaching of reading.</p>	<p>Recommendation included in H.3994 and S.516. Mandate: YES, if legislation passes</p>
<p>2. <i>Add-on Literacy Endorsement for pre-service teachers:</i> Beginning with the 2015-16 school year, mandate that all pre-service teacher education programs (including MAT degree programs) will require all candidates seeking licensure at the middle or secondary level complete a 6 semester credit sequence in literacy that includes a course in the foundations of literacy and a course in content area literacy as well as a school-based practicum experience.</p>	<p>Recommendation included in H.3994 and S.516. Mandate: YES, if legislation passes</p>
<p>3. Work with CHE and the State Board of Education to relax current regulations that would allow more postsecondary institutions to develop and offer masters' level reading programs in compliance with International Reading Association standards.</p>	<p>Mandate: NO</p>
<p>4. By the 2018-19 school year, all in-service teachers will be required to have the literacy endorsement, courses which will be part of their re-certification. To accomplish this, a network of school districts and postsecondary institutions will be established to coordinate graduate level literacy coursework throughout the state to be used as in-service professional development for teachers and administrators.</p>	<p>Parts of recommendation included in H.3994 and S.516. Mandate: YES, if legislation passes</p>
System-wide Recommendations	Status
<p>1. Develop coordinated early childhood, K-12, and postsecondary data systems to include a statewide progress monitoring system, to support sustained improvement (i.e., CDEPP child-level data systems should be linked to K-12 longitudinal data systems and when possible, postsecondary data systems)</p>	<p>Mandate: NO</p>
<p>2. SCETV, in collaboration with other groups and agencies, will create and maintain an online literacy essentials and reading resource bank to support learning in literacy. The online tools will be geared toward audiences in K-12, afterschool programs, child care programs, as well as parents and families. The network can also be used for online professional development offerings for practicing professionals.</p>	<p>Mandate: NO</p>

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Education Oversight Committee
FROM: Melanie Barton *Melanie Barton*
DATE: April 14, 2014
IN RE: Defining Effective Intervention Strategies

At the last meeting of the EOC, Mr. Bowers posed the question of what form of intervention is most effective and most cost-effective? Should South Carolina focus on lower class sizes, pre-kindergarten interventions, etc.?

Attached are several research briefs and articles that focus on this issue. The EOC staff over the next few months will begin to summarize the information in a format to assist EOC members and policymakers. Overall, the research points to two key factors: (1) initiatives designed to prepare students for readiness before entering five-year-old kindergarten such as nurse-family partnership programs and quality early childhood education; and (2) strategies that ensure students achieve academic success in kindergarten through grade twelve which namely are effective classroom teachers and quality instructional leaders, principals, in schools.

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RESEARCH BRIEF #1: STATE PRE-KINDERGARTEN

BY: JULIA ISAACS



WHAT ARE STATE PRE-KINDERGARTEN (PRE-K) PROGRAMS?

State pre-kindergarten programs (also called state pre-K) provide state-funded, classroom-based educational services to young children, typically four-year-old children, although some states also enroll three-year-old children. About two-thirds of children are served in public schools, but most states also fund pre-kindergarten programs in community-based settings such as private preschools, local child care agencies, and Head Start centers. Some programs are for low-income children or others at risk of entering school unprepared while some are universally open to all children. Programs are typically half-day programs provided during the academic year, with some extending to full-day services and/or year-round education. Teacher requirements vary across the states.¹

States are in different phases of implementation, with only a few states providing services statewide. In 2006–2007, 38 states had some form of state pre-kindergarten or preschool program, serving just over one million children in 2006–2007. State spending averaged about \$3,600 per child in 2006–2007; total spending, including spending from federal and local sources, was estimated to be at least \$4,100 per child.²

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF STATE PRE-K ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

A growing body of research provides good evidence that state pre-K programs have positive impacts on children’s cognitive skills, including both pre-reading and pre-math skills. While some studies find quite large program impacts, others find smaller impacts. This variation in findings may reflect differences in evaluation design as well as variation in the types and quality of state pre-kindergarten programs. Some studies have found small negative impacts on children’s classroom behavior.

Cognitive and School-Related Outcomes: Three recent well-designed studies conclude that children attending state pre-K programs gain in cognitive skills:

- Universal pre-kindergarten in Oklahoma has large impacts on children’s ability to identify letters and pronounce words (a 53 percent gain in letter-word identification test scores), as well as

medium-sized impacts on both math and spelling skills (an 18 percent gain in applied problems test scores and a 26 percent gain in spelling scores), according to a well-regarded study of pre-K in Tulsa.³

- Similar patterns were found in a five-state study of state pre-K programs in Michigan, New Jersey, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia. Fairly large effects were reported for children’s awareness of the letters of the alphabet (print awareness), accompanied by smaller but still substantial effects on math skills and vocabulary development.⁴
- A study analyzing nationally representative data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Survey of children entering kindergarten (ECLS-K) found somewhat smaller gains from pre-kindergarten attendance than those found in Oklahoma and the five-state study. The gains were statistically significant, however, and enough to move the

This research brief is one in a series of research briefs on the impacts of early childhood programs. See the websites for First Focus (www.firstfocus.net) and the Brookings Center on Children and Families (www.brookings.edu/ccf) for the full series including an overview and briefs on State Pre-K, Head Start, Early Head Start, Model Early Childhood Programs, and Nurse Home Visiting.

average child from the 50th to the 55th percentile in pre-reading skills and from the 50th to the 54th percentile in pre-math skills.⁵ As discussed further below, the gains in the ECLS-K study were higher for disadvantaged children.

A review of 13 evaluations from the 1980s and 1990s of state-funded preschool also reported gains in cognitive skills (though the review noted that the earlier evaluations suffered from many methodological weaknesses). In addition, the review found consistent evidence of reduced grade retention among children attending state pre-kindergarten programs. For example, 26 percent of children attending preschool in Maryland were held back one or more years by third grade, compared to 45 percent of children in the comparison group.⁶

Behavioral and Socio-emotional Outcomes:

Kindergarten teachers reported higher rates of classroom behavior problems among former participants in state pre-K when compared to children who were solely cared for by parents, even after controlling for many differences between the two groups of families in the ECLS-K sample. While the change was small and observed among a population with fairly low levels of aggressive behavior overall, the impacts persisted through spring of first grade. Interestingly, behavior problems did not increase noticeably for children whose pre-K and kindergarten classrooms were located in the same public school.⁷

Other studies of preschool programs and child care report both positive and negative effects on children's emotional development and social skills, with a number of studies finding small increases in aggression, in line with those reported above, and other studies emphasizing improvements in self-esteem and motivation, and reductions in later criminal behavior and teen births.⁸

Health and Safety Outcomes: Evaluations of state pre-kindergarten provide no evidence on health and safety outcomes, which are not a focus of state pre-K programs.⁹

Outcomes for Parents: State pre-kindergarten programs generally do not include services to parents among their goals, and there is no evidence on outcomes for parents.¹⁰

Medium- and Long-term Outcomes: As much as 70 to 80 percent of the observed gains in cognitive skills associated with pre-kindergarten attendance fade out over time, according to analysis of ECLS-K data on children in the spring of first grade, as other children “catch up” in educational skills. An important exception is that the increased skills associated with public preschool attendance persist for children of low-income or low-skilled parents in this nationally representative sample.

There are no data on the medium- or long-term outcomes in Oklahoma or other states in the five-state study of state pre-K. However, earlier studies of state preschool programs have found that many of the cognitive gains fade out by the end of first grade, a problem observed in studies of other early childhood interventions.

While Perry Preschool and other model preschools showed some very positive long-term outcomes despite fadeout in cognitive gains (e.g., higher educational achievement and higher lifetime earnings as an adult despite fadeout in IQ gains), there are no long-term studies of public pre-K outcomes.

Benefit-Cost Estimates: The RAND Corporation has estimated a positive return of \$2.62 in societal benefits in return for every \$1 spent on preschool services if a universal pre-K program were adopted in California. While this estimate is extrapolated from findings from the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, not a traditional state pre-K program, it provides a reasonable estimate of the economic benefits of state investments in pre-K programs.¹¹

HOW DO THE IMPACTS OF STATE PRE-K VARY?

Family Income. Research suggests that children of all income levels gain from pre-K but the impacts are largest among disadvantaged children. For example, the gain in math and reading skills was larger among disadvantaged children than in the overall national sample in ECLS-K, and impacts persisted through the spring of first grade, in contrast to the fadeout observed for the overall population.¹²

Race and Ethnicity. The study of universal pre-K in Oklahoma found that effects were particularly large for Hispanic children across all three cognitive domains tested – pre-reading skills, pre-math skills, and pre-writing skills.¹³

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR STATE PRE-K?

The three studies central to this review are technically superior to the earlier state pre-K evaluations, while still falling short of the gold standard of random-assignment evaluation.¹⁴ All three evaluations use rigorous study designs to isolate the effects of pre-K from the many other differences between children enrolled in pre-K and children not enrolled in such programs, including differences in the family’s motivation levels, as well as more readily observed differences in family income, parental education, maternal employment status, etc. The studies of pre-K in Oklahoma and across the five-state evaluation used a technique called “regression discontinuity design” to control for self-selection,¹⁵ while the national study of ECLS-K data exploits the rich information on child and family characteristics to try to control for demographic differences between children who participate in preschool programs and those who do not participate.

It is possible that outcomes in the typical state may be lower than outcomes in Oklahoma and other states in the five-state study since these states were not randomly selected and have programs that are more mature and higher than average in quality.¹⁶ In fact, impacts are considerably smaller in the national ECLS-K data, although the differences could be due to study design as much as inclusion of states with weaker programs. The national study relied on parental reports of pre-kindergarten attendance (which is easily confused with Head Start, private preschool, and other center-based programs) and its results may suffer from selection bias despite the researchers’ efforts.

IS STATE PRE-K GENERALLY VIEWED AS EFFECTIVE?

Most observers agree that pre-K programs are effective at their stated goal of improving children’s

readiness to learn. Some studies suggest that public pre-K programs have quite large impacts on cognitive skills, as large as those found in more expensive, model childhood interventions, such as the Perry Preschool program. Other studies suggest the impacts are more modest – though still significant, both statistically and when compared to other educational policy interventions. A number of studies find evidence that the positive impacts may diminish over time, though not for all subgroups. Some research suggests that positive impacts on cognitive development may be larger or more long-lasting for low-income or at-risk children. Finally, there is some evidence that increases in cognitive skills are accompanied by small increases in classroom behavior problems, prompting some observers to call for increased attention to the socio-emotional dimensions of preschool learning.

WHAT FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION LIES AHEAD FOR STATE PRE-K?

Three major legislative proposals providing grants to states to support, establish, or expand public pre-kindergarten program were introduced in 2007:

- S. 1374/H.R. 2859, the Prepare All Kids Act of 2007, introduced by Senator Casey (D-PA) and Representative Maloney (D-NY).
- S. 1823, The Ready to Learn Act, introduced by Senators Clinton (D-NY) and Bond (R-MO); and
- H.R. 3829, the Providing Resources Early for Kids or Pre-K Act, introduced by Representative Hirono (D-HI).

The House bills have been referred to the House Committee on Education and Labor, which approved H.R. 3829, the Providing Resources Early for Kids Act in late June 2008. The Senate bills have been referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. Since the fall of 2007, there has been discussion of incorporating pre-K legislation into the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Alternatively, pre-K legislation could move forward independently of action on elementary and secondary education.

NOTES:

¹ Pre-K Now, *Pre-K Across the Country*, <http://preknow.org/policy/factsheets/snapshot.cfm>.

² W. Steve Barnett, Jason Hustedt and others, *The State of Preschool 2007* (New Brunswick, N.J.: National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), 2007), <http://nieer.org/yearbook/>.

³ In Oklahoma, effect sizes were large for letter-word identification (0.79) and medium for spelling (0.64) and applied problems or pre-math (0.38). (Note that this review follows common convention in considering an effect size of 0.80 as “large,” 0.50 as “medium” and 0.20 as “small.”) William T. Gormley Jr., Ted Gayer, Deborah Phillips, and Brittany Dawson, “The Effects of Universal Pre-K on Cognitive Development,” *Developmental Psychology* 41 (2005): 872-884.

⁴ The state pre-kindergarten programs increased print awareness by an effect size of 0.70 (averaged across the five states). Effect sizes for math and vocabulary were 0.29 and 0.14 respectively. Vivian Wong, Thomas Cook, W. Steven Barnett, and Kwanghee Jung, “An Effectiveness-Based Evaluation of Five State Pre-Kindergarten Programs,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 27 (2008): 122-154. NIEER researchers have also used similar research techniques (the regression discontinuity research design described in footnote 15) and found positive impacts in two additional states (Arkansas and New Mexico). A comprehensive but less methodologically rigorous evaluation in Georgia also shows increases in cognitive skills for children enrolled in public pre-K programs. See Gary T. Henry and Dana Rickman with four other authors, *The Georgia Early Childhood Study, 2001-2004 Final Report* (Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University, 2005), <http://aysps.gsu.edu/publications/2005/EarlyChildhoodReport.pdf>.

⁵ Effect sizes were small: 0.12 in reading and 0.10 in math. The comparison is between children in prekindergarten (not including Head Start, private preschool or center-based child care) to children who are only in parental care. See Katherine Magnuson, Christopher Ruhm, and Jane Waldfogel, “Does Prekindergarten Improve School Preparation and Performance?” *Economics of Education Review* 26 (2007): 33-51.

⁶ The recent study of ECLK-K by Magnuson et al., 2007 also found that children attending pre-K were less likely to be held back in kindergarten, although being held back was an infrequent event (affecting only 3% of children) and the observed change was not statistically significant, except among children whose mothers were welfare recipients. For the earlier review, see Walter Gilliam and Edward Zigler, “A Critical Meta-Analysis of All Evaluation of State-Funded Preschool from 1977 to 1998: Implications for Policy, Service Delivery and Program Evaluation,” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 15 (2001): 441-473.

⁷ The effect sizes on classroom behavior were small, an 0.11 increase in externalizing behavior and an -0.07 decrease in self control. This is equivalent to raising children from the 50th to the 54th percentile in externalizing (aggressive) behavior and from the 50th to the 47th percentile in self-control. Magnuson et al., 2007.

⁸ Studies of child care settings more generally also indicate that time spent in non-maternal care between birth and age five is associated with small increases in aggression and non-compliance, and that this effect may persist longer for children who attend center-based settings for more than two years. Evaluations of model preschool programs for low-income children provide mixed evidence of effects on behavior problems; the Abecedarian program, which involved center-based care from infancy onward, found some increase in elementary school classroom behavior problems among early cohorts of participants, while the Perry Preschool and Chicago Parent-Child Centers found less behavioral problems as measured by rates of juvenile and adult criminal activity. Lisa A. McCabe and Ellen C. Frede, “Challenging Behaviors and the Role of Preschool Education,” NIEER Preschool Policy Brief 16 (2007), <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/16.pdf>.

⁹ Only one of the thirteen evaluations reviewed by Gilliam and Zigler, 2001 included health outcomes; it found no significant difference between pre-kindergarten and a comparison group of similar children.

¹⁰ Three of the thirteen evaluations reviewed by Gilliam and Zigler, 2001 collected data on parental involvement in elementary school; two found small positive impacts (effect size of 0.15) but only one of them was statistically significant.

¹¹ This benefit-cost estimate is based on an extrapolation of results from the Chicago Child-Parent Centers, a preschool intervention which, while located in the Chicago Public Schools, differs in some ways from state pre-kindergarten programs. For example, the Chicago Child-Parent Centers serve an economically disadvantaged population, have a fairly low student to staff ratio, higher spending per child than most state pre-K programs, and include an active parent involvement component.

The RAND estimate for universal pre-K in California included an explicit downward adjustment in benefits to reflect the likelihood that the benefits of preschool interventions will be lower for a universal population than for a population at risk for economic failure. Lynn Karoly and James H. Bigelow, *The Economics of Investing in Universal Preschool Education in California*, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2005).

¹² The effect sizes on pre-reading and pre-math scores were 0.24 and 0.20, respectively, for disadvantaged children, compared to 0.12 and 0.10 for all children. The predicted increase in reading was from the 39th to the 44th percentile in reading for children whose parents had low income (less than poverty) or low skills (less than a high school diploma). Note that even after the pre-K gain, the average disadvantaged child would still score below the 50th percentile. (Magnuson et al., 2007).

¹³ Gormley et al., 2005 report effect sizes for Hispanic children of 1.50 for letter-word identification, 0.98 for spelling, and 0.99 for applied problems. These effect sizes are large and higher than those reported for all children (see footnote 3).

¹⁴ Under random-assignment evaluations, children would be randomly assigned to the program intervention (pre-K) or a control group of non-participants. This method would make it highly likely that observed differences are caused by the intervention rather than merely reflecting pre-existing differences in participating and non-participating children (such as the motivation of their parents to send them to educational programs).

¹⁵ Under the regression discontinuity design (RDD), pre-K alumni entering kindergarten are compared with pre-K entrants, controlling for age and demographic differences and exploiting the fact that with strict birthday cut-off rules for pre-K entry, the pre-kindergarten treatment is the key difference between children a few weeks shy of the birthday cutoff and children a few weeks past the cut-off.

¹⁶ Although the five states may not be nationally representative, classrooms within each state, and children within each classroom, were drawn randomly, and so the outcomes can likely be generalized for the five states.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The author thanks Phillip Lovell and Melissa Lazarín of First Focus for their comments and guidance.

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ABOUT THE CENTER ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES AT THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

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- Low-income working families and policies designed to improve their economic prospects;
- Economic mobility and opportunity in the United States and investments in children, such as preschool programs, that could improve their chances to get ahead;
- The key role of education at all levels in creating the skills needed to promote opportunity and reduce poverty;
- The growth of single-parent families caused by early unwed childbearing and the decline of marriage; and
- The growing fiscal problems at the federal and state levels and steps that might be taken to ensure fiscal responsibility while minimizing cuts in effective programs targeted to this low-income families and children.

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ABOUT FIRST FOCUS

First Focus is a bipartisan advocacy organization that is committed to making children and families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions. First Focus brings both traditional and non-traditional leaders together to advocate for federal policies that will improve the lives of America's children. Child health, education, family economics, child welfare, and child safety are the core issue areas in which First Focus promotes bipartisan policy solutions.

While not the only organization working to improve public policies that impact kids, First Focus approaches advocacy in a unique way, bridging the partisan divide to make children a primary focus in federal policymaking. First Focus engages a new generation of academic experts to examine issues affecting children from multiple points of view in an effort to create innovative policy proposals. First Focus convenes cross-sector leaders in key states to influence federal policy and budget debates, and to advocate for federal policies that will ensure a brighter future for the next generation of America's leaders.

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RESEARCH BRIEF #5: NURSE HOME VISITING

BY: JULIA ISAACS

WHAT IS NURSE HOME VISITING?

Under the Nurse-Family Partnership program, the most well-developed nurse home visiting program in the United States, nurses conduct a series of home visits to low-income, first-time mothers, starting during pregnancy and continuing through the child's second birthday. Registered nurses work closely with first-time mothers following a curriculum that focuses on 1) healthy behaviors to improve pregnancy outcomes; 2) parenting skills to improve child health and development; and 3) plans for the mother's life (delaying second pregnancies, finishing school, getting a job). Initially visits are weekly, but then they taper to once a month through the child's second birthday. Adherence to the Nurse-Family Partnership intervention model is closely monitored through a web-based management information system. By restricting eligibility to low-income, first-time mothers, the program serves those whose children are at highest risk; many in the client population are single and/or teen parents. The program is currently serving approximately 13,000 families in 23 states with operating costs of approximately \$4,500 per family per year.¹

This research brief is one in a series of research briefs on the impacts of early childhood programs. See the websites for First Focus (www.firstfocus.net) and the Brookings Center on Children and Families (www.brookings.edu/ccf) for the full series including an overview and briefs on State Pre-K, Head Start, Early Head Start, Model Early Childhood Programs, and Nurse Home Visiting.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF NURSE HOME VISITING ON CHILDREN AND THEIR MOTHERS?

Random-assignment evaluations in three sites (Elmira, New York; Memphis, Tennessee; and Denver, Colorado) have documented positive effects on both mothers and children.

Cognitive and School-Related Outcomes: The positive impacts of nurse home visitation on children's IQ scores and school achievement have been limited largely to children born to mothers who were low in psychological resources, that is, mothers who scored low on measures of intelligence, mental health, and self-confidence:

- *Higher achievement scores.* In Memphis, home-visited children born to mothers with low psychological resources had higher achievement scores on state math and reading tests in grades one to three than a control group who were not visited, as well as higher grade point averages (increase from 2.44 to 2.68 in math and reading GPA).²

- *Higher language skills.* In Denver, children of mothers low in psychological resources had higher scores on language and intellectual functioning after nurse home visiting.³

Behavioral and Socio-emotional Outcomes: There is some scattered evidence that nurse home visits have positive impacts on children's behavior in early years.⁴ In addition, the fifteen-year follow-up in Elmira, New York, found a significant reduction in criminal behavior among children of nurse-visited mothers (see below under long-term outcomes).

Health and Safety Outcomes: Nurse home visitation has been successful in improving the health of pregnant mothers, with enough improvement in one site to lead to noticeable improvements in birth outcomes. In addition, the program has led to a noticeable reduction in health care encounters for injuries after the child is born, an indication of improved child safety practices and quite possibly a reduction in child abuse and neglect. Specific outcomes include:

- *Reduced smoking and fewer preterm deliveries.* Mothers visited by nurses smoked fewer cigarettes and showed dietary improvements over the course of the pregnancy. Rates of preterm births were lower among younger adolescent mothers and mothers who smoked upon program entry in Elmira.⁵
- *Fewer emergency room visits.* When compared with children not visited by nurses, nurse-visited children in Elmira had fewer emergency room visits and children in Memphis had fewer physician or hospital visits to treat injuries and ingestions.⁶
- *Reduced rates of child abuse and neglect.* The fifteen-year study in Elmira found a 48 percent reduction in rates of child abuse and neglect among low-income families.⁷ Rates of substantiated child abuse and neglect were too low in the other sites to adequately assess the impact, but as noted above, the programs did show reductions in emergency room visits and child mortality.
- *Some evidence of lower child mortality rates.* The Memphis site found suggestive evidence of lower child mortality – one death among those who were visited by nurses compared to ten deaths among children in the control group. The one death in the nurse-visited group was due to a chromosomal anomaly, while nine out of the ten deaths in the other group involved preterm delivery, sudden infant death syndrome, or injuries that were potentially preventable.⁸
- *Lower rates of criminal behavior.* Nurse-visited mothers had 61 percent fewer arrests and 72 percent fewer convictions than mothers not visited by nurses over the 15-year follow-up period in Elmira.¹⁰

Other positive outcomes for nurse-visited families include reductions in welfare and food stamp use, increased maternal employment, more father involvement, and less domestic violence. These impacts were not observed consistently across all three sites, however.¹¹

Long-term Outcomes: Currently, published findings track children through age four in Denver, through age nine in Memphis, and through age fifteen in Elmira, providing good evidence that impacts have lasted over time:

- Positive impacts on children’s school achievement have been observed through age nine in Memphis (see above under cognitive outcomes);
- At age fifteen, nurse-visited children in Elmira had 59 percent fewer arrests than children not visited by nurses, as well as fewer convictions. They also were less likely to be adjudicated as a “Person in Need of Supervision” because of incorrigible behavior.¹²
- Many of the positive outcomes for mothers, including reduced subsequent births and longer delays between births, persist over the long term.

Benefit-Cost Estimates: Two benefit-cost analyses suggest benefits exceed costs. Analysts at RAND calculated a benefit-cost ratio of \$5.68 for the high-risk sample in Elmira (and \$1.26, lower but still cost-effective, for the low-risk sample). An analysis of costs across the full samples at all three sites conducted for the Washington State legislature resulted in a benefit-cost ratio of \$2.88.¹³

HOW DO NURSE HOME VISITING IMPACTS VARY?

At-Risk Mothers. All mothers enrolled in the program are first-time mothers. Results from the first

Outcomes for Parents: As noted above, mothers’ health improved during pregnancy. In addition, program participants had the following outcomes:

- *Fewer subsequent births and longer duration between births.* The number of months between first and second births increased by 4.1 months in Denver, 6.6 months in Memphis, and 27.5 months for the unmarried, low-income sample in Elmira (by 4.4 months for the full Elmira sample). The total number of subsequent births also declined.⁹

site (Elmira) indicate that impacts were larger for first-time mothers who faced additional risk factors (specifically, being low-income, unmarried, or teen mothers). Following this finding, the nurse home visiting program has limited enrollment to low-income first-time mothers, a population that also is predominantly unmarried and adolescent.

Race and Ethnicity. It is not possible to compare impacts across different racial and ethnic groups. However, it is important to note that positive impacts have been found in locations serving diverse racial and ethnic groups: semi-rural upstate New York (largely White); Memphis, Tennessee (predominantly Black); and Denver, Colorado (a population including a large number of Hispanics).

Professional Credentials of Home Visitors. Program impacts were smaller and often statistically insignificant when the intervention was provided by paraprofessionals in place of nurses, according to a careful randomized study of the two types of home visitors.¹⁴

HOW STRONG IS THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR NURSE HOME VISITING?

The research evidence on nurse home visiting is quite strong, drawing on rigorous, random-assignment evaluations of nurse home visiting programs in three different sites, operating in a variety of settings and serving populations of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.¹⁵ All three evaluations had fairly large samples (400 in Elmira, 735 in Denver, and 743 in Memphis), gathered data over a broad range of outcomes (interview data was supplemented by various health, crime, and education administrative records), and followed participants for many years (through age fifteen in Elmira, and at this point, through age nine in Memphis, and age four in Denver), with relatively little attrition.

Critics point out that results are not found consistently across all three sites, and that the programs in Memphis and Denver, while showing significant effects on some outcomes, did not have as strong results as those shown for the low-income sample in Elmira, New York. Another potential

concern is that the principal investigator, David Olds, is also the architect of the program, and, thus, the program has not been evaluated by an independent investigator. This concern is lessened by the fact that the research staff were blind to whether participants were in the nurse-visited or control groups, results have been published in peer-reviewed journals, and the overall quality of the trials is generally viewed as high. A final critique is that nurse home visiting, like other home visiting programs, does not have as much effect on children's cognitive outcomes as center-based preschool programs, where the intervention is directly targeted to the child, rather than focused on changing the behavior of the parent.

IS NURSE HOME VISITING GENERALLY VIEWED AS EFFECTIVE?

Overall, the evidence of effectiveness for nurse home visiting, and specifically, the Nurse-Family Partnership program, is very strong, given the range of positive outcomes across three different randomized trials – and given the extensive follow-up data showing that effects, while modest, endure over time and outweigh program costs. The program has been named as an “effective” or “cost-effective” program in reviews by researchers at a variety of organizations, including the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, the Committee for Economic Development, the Brookings Institution, the RAND Corporation, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, and Blueprints for Violence Protection. Note that most of these reviews focus on *nurse* home visiting, not home visiting overall, in their citation for effectiveness.

WHAT FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION LIES AHEAD FOR NURSE HOME VISITING?

Both the President and Congress demonstrated support for nurse home visiting by appropriating \$10 million for home visitation models in fiscal year 2008, a year when many other discretionary programs were being cut. Until these funds were appropriated, there was no direct federal funding source for nurse home visiting programs, although many state and local programs drew on federal funding under Medicaid and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, as well as state, local, and private funding. Bills have been

introduced to expand funding for nurse home visiting specifically, and for home visiting more generally:

- S. 1052/H.R. 3024, the Healthy Children and Families Act, introduced by Senator Salazar (D-CO) and Representative DeGette (D-CO) would allow states the option of providing nurse home visitation services under Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program.
- S. 667/H.R. 2343, the Education Begins at Home Act, introduced by Senator Bond (R-MO) and Representative Davis (D-IL), would authorize grants to states to fund home visitation services during early childhood. H.R. 2343 was reported out of the House Committee on Education and Labor on June 18, 2008.

In addition, presidential candidate Barack Obama has declared his support for providing nurse home visiting to all low-income first-time mothers.¹⁶

NOTES:

- ¹ Nurse Family Partnership National Service Office, *Nurse-Family Partnership: Effective and Affordable - What's Not to Like About It?* (Denver: Nurse Family Partnership, 2008), http://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/resources/files/PDF/Fact_Sheets/NFPCostBrief.pdf.
- ² The cognitive outcomes of children in Memphis have been studied at ages two, six, and nine. There were no statistically significant differences in cognitive skills at age two; small positive gains at age six on IQ, particularly among the low-resource sample; and gains in achievement tests at age nine (only significant for the low-resource sample). See Kitzman et al. 1997; Olds et al., 2004a; Olds et al., 2007 (full citations in reference table below).
- ³ The children in Denver have been observed at ages two and four (published results thus far). There was some evidence of small positive gains at age two (in overall sample, and to a greater extent in low-resource sample) and at age four (among the low-resource sample). The effect sizes of nurse home visiting were 0.31 on language skills and 0.47 on executive functioning among the low-resource children at age four. See Olds et al., 2002 and 2004b.
- ⁴ There were no significant effects on mothers' reports of children's behavior at age four in Denver (although testers reported that nurse-visited children born to low-resource mothers regulated their behavior better during testing), nor at ages two or nine in Memphis. However, at age six, nurse-home visited mothers in Memphis reported fewer children exhibiting severe behavioral problems (1.8 percent vs. 5.4 percent) and children born to low-resource mothers revealed less dysregulated aggression and incoherence in response to story stems. See Olds et al., 2004a.
- ⁵ The improvement in pregnancy outcomes was strongest in Elmira, where nurse-visited women improved their diets and reduced cigarette smoking, and there were significant reductions in preterm births among smokers and adolescents (but not older non-smokers). In addition, nurse-visited women in Memphis had fewer prenatal hypertensive disorders, and nurse-visited women in Denver had lower levels of cotinine (a biological marker for cigarette smoking). See Olds et al, 1986, Kitzman et al, 1997, and Olds et al., 2002.
- ⁶ Differences in days of hospitalization and health care encounters for injuries and ingestions are based on observations during the first four years in Elmira and two years in Memphis. Such data were not tracked in Denver because researchers were unable to access similar health system records. See Olds et al., 1986b; Olds et al., 1994; Kitzman et al., 1997.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ The difference in mortality in Memphis at age nine was statistically significant at the 0.10 confidence level but not the 0.05 level. See Olds et al., 2007.
- ⁹ The reduction in subsequent births was significant in Memphis and Elmira but was not statistically significant in Denver, at least not as of data collected when the first child was four years old. See Olds et al., 2007; Olds et al., 1997; and Olds et al., 2004b.
- ¹⁰ See Olds et al, 1997 (Elmira, age 15).
- ¹¹ Reductions in welfare use were observed in Elmira (child age fifteen) and Memphis (child age six and age nine), but not Denver (child age four). Increases in father involvement and partner stability were observed in Memphis (age six and nine), but not in Denver (age four). Reductions in domestic violence against mothers were observed in Denver. Differences in populations served, available measures, and historical context (e.g., before and after welfare reform) may explain some of the differences observed across sites. See Olds et al., 1998, Olds et al, 2004a, Olds et al, 2007, Olds et al, 2004b.
- ¹² These outcomes are for the full sample; similar outcomes occurred for the low-income sample. See Olds et al, 1998, and Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, *Nurse-Family Partnership*, <http://www.evidencebasedprograms.org/Default.aspx?tabid=35>.
- ¹³ Benefit-cost evidence is summarized in Julia Isaacs, *Cost-Effective Investments in Children* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2007), http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2007/01childrenfamilies_isaacs.aspx.
- ¹⁴ Olds et al., 2002.
- ¹⁵ The first site, Elmira, served a largely White, semi-rural population in upstate New York and included first-time mothers of varying levels of socioeconomic advantage. Program effects were

concentrated in low-income populations, and services were restricted to such mothers in the second and third site. The second site, Memphis, served many African American mothers and was implemented in the “real-world” setting of the county health department. The third site, Denver, served a sizable Hispanic population and experimented with using paraprofessionals in place of professional nurses (outcomes above are reported for nurses, who had stronger impacts than paraprofessionals).

¹⁶ Julia Isaacs, *Candidates Issue Index: Children* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2008), http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2008/0515_children_isaacs_opp08.aspx.

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The Tennessee Study of Class Size in the Early School Grades

Frederick Mosteller

Abstract

The Tennessee class size project is a three-phase study designed to determine the effect of smaller class size in the earliest grades on short-term and long-term pupil performance. The first phase of this project, termed Project STAR (for Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio), was begun in 1985, when Lamar Alexander was governor of Tennessee. Governor Alexander, who later served as secretary of education in the cabinet of President George Bush, had made education a top priority for his second term. The legislature and the educational community of Tennessee were mindful of a promising study of the benefits of small class size carried out in nearby Indiana, but were also aware of the costs associated with additional classrooms and teachers. Wishing to obtain data on the effectiveness of reduced class size before committing additional funds, the Tennessee legislature authorized this four-year study in which results obtained in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classrooms of 13 to 17 pupils were compared with those obtained in classrooms of 22 to 25 pupils and in classrooms of this larger size where the teacher was assisted by a paid aide. Both standardized and curriculum-based tests were used to assess and compare the performance of some 6,500 pupils in about 330 classrooms at approximately 80 schools in the areas of reading, mathematics, and basic study skills. After four years, it was clear that smaller classes did produce substantial improvement in early learning and cognitive studies and that the effect of small class size on the achievement of minority children was initially about double that observed for majority children, but in later years, it was about the same.

The second phase of the project, called the Lasting Benefits Study, was begun in 1989 to determine whether these perceived benefits persisted. Observations made as a part of this phase confirmed that the children who were originally enrolled in smaller classes continued to perform better than their grade-mates (whose school experience had begun in larger classes) when they were returned to regular-sized classes in later grades. Under the third phase, Project Challenge, the 17 economically poorest school districts were given small classes in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. These districts improved their end-of-year standing in rank among the 139 districts from well below average to above average in reading and mathematics. This article briefly summarizes the Tennessee class size project, a controlled experiment which is one of the most important educational investigations ever carried out and illustrates the kind and magnitude of research needed in the field of education to strengthen schools.

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Because we have all gone to school, we each have ideas about how to improve the system. For example, James Garfield once said that a pine log with a student on one end and Mark Hopkins, a beloved president of Williams College, on the other would be an ideal university. But if we want to improve school systems, we need to consider what changes may be practical and effective. Setting aside the discomfort of outdoor logs during New England winters, would Garfield's design have made effective use of President Hopkins's time? Aristotle, even when tutoring the young Alexander before he was called "the Great," is believed to have had more than one student per class.

The size of the class is largely under control of the school system, and its choice influences the size and number of classrooms and the number of teachers required, and so class size is naturally a concern of parents, teachers, and school administrators. Everyone is concerned that the pupils receive adequate attention and that the teachers are able to control their classes. Some courses seem to need more teachers per student than others. For example, classes in carpentry or cooking, in which hazardous tools and equipment are used, may require closer supervision than a class in arithmetic.

The effects of class size on children's learning have been studied, usually without reaching definitive conclusions. Most research on class size has compared the performance of pupils in classes of different sizes in such cognitive subjects as reading, mathematics, or social studies. Designing and executing these studies is difficult not only because parents may object to variation in the treatment of children but also because of the constraints that must be imposed if anything of value is to be learned from the investigation. Groups to be compared following different treatments need to be equivalent at the start. The treatments must be carefully described and delivered. Suitable measures of performance must be chosen. Beyond all this, a healthy atmosphere toward the investigation must be created; otherwise, the study can be easily sabotaged. It does not take many unwilling workers or full-time grumblers to spoil a research program.

In the 1980s, conditions favorable for a study of class size evolved in the state of Tennessee. Governor Lamar Alexander had established education as a top priority for his second term. Members of both the state legislature and the educational community in Tennessee had been intrigued by a modest-sized study in the state of Indiana, called Project Prime Time, which investigated the effect of reduced class sizes in kindergarten and first and second grades. For example, Bain and Achilles¹ report that, in Project Prime Time, (1) students in smaller classes scored higher on standardized tests than did those in larger classes, (2) the smaller classes had fewer behavioral problems, and (3) teachers of smaller classes reported themselves as more productive and efficient than they were when they taught larger classes.

The Tennessee legislators and teachers were also aware of an investigation by Glass and colleagues² which reviewed the vast literature on the effects of class size on learning using a special quantitative method called

meta-analysis. The results of this investigation suggested that a class size of 15 or fewer would be needed to make a noticeable improvement in classroom performance. At the time of the Glass study, the effect of class size on performance was controversial because many studies in the literature differed in their outcomes. The new methods used by Glass and his colleagues were not accepted by all professional groups. At the same time, there were ongoing discussions about the lesser cost and possibly equal effectiveness of placing paid teachers' aides in elementary classrooms. Because of the additional expense associated with a reduction in class size for early grades, members of the Tennessee legislature decided that any proposed innovation should be based on solid information and, therefore, authorized a four-year study of class size which would also examine the cost-effectiveness of teachers' aides. The legislature appropriated \$3 million in the first year for a study of pupils in kindergarten and then appropriated similar amounts in subsequent years for the project, which carried the acronym STAR (for Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio).³

The study was carried out in three kinds of groups: (1) classes one-third smaller than regular-sized classes, (2) regular-sized classes without a teacher's aide, and (3) regular-sized classes with a teacher's aide. By comparing average pupil performance in the different kinds of classes, researchers were able to assess the relative benefits of small class size and the presence of a teacher's aide. The experiment involved many schools and classes from inner-city, urban, suburban, and rural areas so that the progress of children from different backgrounds could be evaluated.

Study Design and Execution

Personnel from four Tennessee universities helped design and execute the Tennessee study, which was carried out in three phases (see Box 1). Each year, \$2.5 million was spent on additional teachers and teachers' aides. The remaining funds were used to gather and analyze the data and to carry out other obligations imposed by the enabling legislation.

Legislation for the STAR experiment required that studies be made of classes in inner-city, suburban, urban, and rural schools. Because the legislators did not define these types of residential areas, the study makers had to invent categories appropriate for Tennessee and their experiment. To do so, they placed inner-city and suburban schools in the category of *metropolitan* areas. Inner-city schools were defined as those in which more than half of the students received free or reduced-price lunches. Schools in outlying areas of metropolitan cities were called *suburban*. In nonmetropolitan areas,

schools in towns of more than 2,500 serving primarily an "urban" population were called *urban*, and the rest were classified as *rural*.

To be eligible to participate in the experiment, a school was required to sign up for four years and to have at least 57 children for any given grade (to comprise a small class of 13 and two classes of 22). This constraint assured the ability to make comparisons among the three kinds of classes within a single school. Participating schools received no extra support other than funds for additional teachers and aides and had to supply the extra classrooms. In any given calendar year, the experiment was carried out in one grade only, and this minimized the number of new classrooms needed. No new textbooks or curricula were to be introduced. Although 180 schools offered to participate, only 100 were large enough to qualify, and 79 actually participated in the kindergarten year.

The treatments planned for the program were started in 1985, beginning with

Box 1

The Tennessee Class Size Project

The Tennessee project on the effectiveness of small classes and of teachers' aides has had three phases:

Phase 1

1985–1989. The educational system of Tennessee carried out a four-year experiment, called Project STAR (for Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio), to assess the effectiveness of small classes compared with regular-sized classes and of teachers' aides in regular-sized classes on improving cognitive achievement in kindergarten and in the first, second, and third grades.

Phase 2

1989–. The Lasting Benefits Study (LBS) was an observational study of the consequences of the experimental program on children when they returned to regular-sized classes in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades and beyond. This research phase asked whether the children who started in the smaller classes performed better in later grades. Only students who had been in the experiment (Phase 1) could contribute data to this second phase.

Phase 3

1989–. Project Challenge implemented the small classes in kindergarten and in the first, second, and third grades in the 17 districts of Tennessee where children are highly at risk of dropping out early. These districts have the lowest average incomes in the state.

kindergarten and continuing each year through first, second, and third grades. The classes were of three types: (1) small, 13 to 17 pupils; (2) regular size, 22 to 25 pupils; and (3) regular size with a teacher's aide. The small classes averaged

A teacher's aide had no specific duties but helped each teacher of a regular-sized class in whatever way the teacher wished. Some aides participated in teaching, others prepared materials and kept records, and some carried out all of these duties. Teachers' aides were paid.

The study findings apply to poor and well-to-do, farm and city, minority and majority children.

15 pupils, down about 35% from the average regular size of about 22 or 23. During the first year, the study involved about 6,400 pupils in 108 small classes, 101 regular-sized classes, and 99 regular-sized classes with teachers' aides.

Within a school, pupils and teachers were assigned to classes at random each year to ensure that classes came from equivalent populations and that teachers did not choose their classes. In a study of this kind, randomization protects against all variables that might matter, whether they have been identified or not.

Analysts report that attendance was about 95%, independent of school location, type of class, or minority or nonminority status.

Table 1 indicates the composition of the experimental groups by giving a breakdown of schools by city type and of classes by city type and ethnicity at the end of the first grade (second year of the experiment). This table shows participation by 6,572 pupils in 331 classes at 76 schools and is important because it indicates that enough pupils were studied to enable researchers to reach a conclusion. Ultimately, the findings from the investigations repeated themselves at least qualitatively in nearly every large cell of Table 1, suggesting that the study findings apply to poor and well-to-do, farm and city, minority and majority children. The magnitude,

Table 1

Composition of the First Grade Cross-Sectional Sample in the Second Year of the Tennessee Experiment				
	Location			
	Inner City	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Number of schools	15	8	15	38
Number of classes				
All majority students	0	18	28	119
All minority students	65	0	13	0
Mixed classes	5	23	21	39
TOTAL CLASSES	70	41	62	158
Number of students	1,495	804	1,214	3,059

Source: Finn, J.D., and Achilles, C.M. Answers and questions about class size: A statewide experiment. *American Educational Research Journal* (1990) 27,3:557-77.

control, and duration of the experiment illustrate the sort of investigations that are needed to improve education in the schools.

Examining and Interpreting the Findings

In assessing student performance, two types of tests were used: (1) standardized tests, which have the advantage of being used nationally but the disadvantage of not being directly related to any particular curriculum or course of study; and (2) curriculum-based tests, which reverse the advantages and disadvantages of standardized tests. Curriculum-based tests measure more directly the student’s increased knowledge of what was actually taught, but they give little indication of where local results stand in the national picture.

The first graders took two standardized tests in reading: (1) the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) for word study skills and reading, and (2) the Tennessee Basic Skills First (BSF) test for reading, a curriculum-based measure. In mathematics, first graders took one SAT (standardized) and one BSF (curriculum-based) test.

When an experiment applies a new treatment or employs a new method, one

way of comparing the effects of this new approach with those previously achieved using old treatments or methods is by expressing individual test scores in terms of standard deviation (see Box 2) and then expressing group differences as effect sizes (see Box 3). Here, *effect size* is defined as the difference between means divided by the standard deviation for individuals in the regular classes without aides. Thus Table 2 shows the effect sizes for small classes compared with the average of the

Both math and reading scores show a benefit of about one-fourth of a standard deviation.

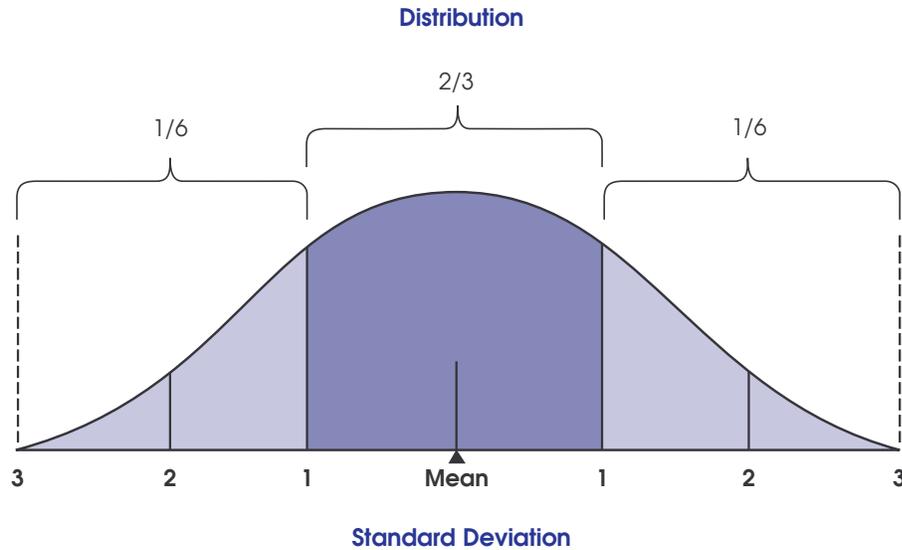
performance of the regular-sized classes with and without aides for the standardized tests. Both math and reading scores show a benefit of about one-fourth of a standard deviation. On the curriculum-based tests (BSF), reading scores improve by about one-fifth of a standard deviation and math scores by only one-twelfth.

To interpret the gains represented by these effects, it is useful to consider a pupil who, without a special treatment such as attending small classes, would achieve about the average score, say at the midpoint or 50th percentile, of all students.

Box 2

Standard Deviation

When considering distributions of quantities such as heights of people, family incomes, and scores on standardized tests, it is often useful to think first of the typical person, family, or score and then to represent that typical one by either the *mean* (average) of the numbers or the *median* (value of the middle measurement).



This drawing is of a distribution about the mean. The total area between the curve and the horizontal axis is one (or 100% of the measurements, incomes, or scores). For distributions that are approximately symmetrical, about half of the measurements lie to the right of the mean and half to the left. The slightly asymmetrical mountain-shaped (or bell-shaped) curve indicates roughly the way that many types of measurements distribute themselves in large populations, with the height of the curve representing the density of the scores at various positions. Typically, the distributions are dense in the middle and are less dense as one moves farther from the middle in either direction.

For many common distributions of everyday quantities, it is convenient to relate the mean and a measure of variability called the *standard deviation* to the fraction of measurements falling within a symmetrical interval about the mean. For example, this drawing indicates that the proportion of measurements falling in the interval that goes from one standard deviation to the left of the mean to one standard deviation to its right is about two-thirds. This number is not exact but is a rough approximation for distributions that are shaped generally like the one pictured.

What about the interval that includes the mean plus or minus two standard deviations? In the same approximate sense, this interval contains about 95% of the measurements for many distributions occurring in practice. If the interval is extended to three standard deviations each way from the mean, it will include nearly all—almost 100%—of the measurements.

What would a gain of one-fourth of a standard deviation do for such a pupil? That pupil would move from the 50th percentile of all pupils up to the 60th percentile, thus surpassing an additional 10% of the population beyond the 50% that were exceeded originally. Thus, an increase of one-fourth of a standard deviation can amount to considerable gain in performance.

In the study report, the average performance of small classes was compared with the average for all regular-sized classes with or without an aide. The resulting gain is shown in the first line of Table 2. The second line of that table shows the effect size of the gain from having an aide in the regular-sized class compared with the performance in the regular-sized class without an aide. When the effect of the small class is compared with that of the regular-sized class without an aide, the numbers in the first row of Table 2 increase to 0.30, 0.25, 0.32, and 0.15, respectively.

When performance of classes with an aide is compared with that of regular-sized classes without an aide, the gain averages about one-twelfth of a standard deviation. In other words, the average gain associated with an aide is about 35% of the gain achieved by reducing class size from regular to small.

Of special interest is the effect of class size on minority students. At the end of the second year of the experiment, in small classes compared with regular-sized classes and regular-sized classes with an aide, the effect size for minorities was about double that for majorities, averaged over the four tests. This extra gain occurred only in the first two years of the experiment; thereafter, the gains of both groups were about the same.

The original plan of the study was that all students would remain in their class types for all four years of the experiment. But after the first year, parents of students in regular classes objected to the continuation of the assignments. As a result of discussions with parents and with the people guiding the experiment, in the second year, students in the regular-sized classes with and without the teacher's aide were randomly reassigned half to classes with a teacher's aide and half to ones without,

but the assignments to small classes remained unchanged. Such changes were not allowed in later years. It was the view of the advisory group from the four universities that continued changes would make it impossible to interpret the results of the experiment. As a result of the changes that had been allowed, at the end of the second year, there were four situations in the regular classes for those who had attended kindergarten and first grade: (1) two years without an aide, (2) two years with an aide, (3) first year without an aide and second year with an aide, and (4) first year with an aide and second year without.

Schools had an influx of children in first grade who had not attended kindergarten the first year of the experiment. (Subsequently, kindergarten became required in Tennessee.) These children had to be assigned to the experiment in participating schools. This led to some separate analyses of results from kindergarten and first grade (for years one and two of the experiment) and of results from first, sec-

Of special interest is the effect of class size on minority students. The effect size for minorities was about double that for majorities.

ond, and third grades (for years two, three, and four of the experiment) to increase the numbers of students who experienced the same circumstances. (The rerandomization before the second year of the experiment shuffled some people between regular-sized classes with an aide and those without. Consequently, starting in the second year of the experiment, pupils could be classified according to their having experienced regular-sized classes with and without an aide.)

One way of summarizing results gives the percentile ranks for the average score based on national norms for the test. Table 3 shows the results for small classes, regular-sized classes, and regular-sized classes with a teacher's aide for both Total Reading SAT and Total Math SAT. Averaged over the four grades, the small classes gained a little more than eight percentiles over the regular-sized classes

Box 3

Effect Size

When an experiment applies a new treatment whose consequences are to be compared with those of the old or standard treatment, the difference in their consequences is often called the *size of effect* of the new treatment. For standardized tests, information is usually available which gives the distribution of scores for members of large populations who take the tests. Frequently, these distributions look like the common distributions described in Box 2. They are shaped approximately like distributions called Gaussian, or normal, in English-speaking countries. (When used in this way, the term *normal* means “usual, customary, or related to the norm” and does not connote an ideal situation or a desirable state of being.) The shapes of these curves are often well described by a formula that requires knowing only their mean and standard deviation.

Suppose that the national mean of a certain test is 500 and that its standard deviation is 100. Suppose as well that a new method of teaching produces higher test scores in an experimental group than would have been achieved without it, say a distribution with a mean of 550 instead of the usual 500. One way of thinking about this situation is to view the effect as shifting the original distribution to the right by 50 points—essentially adding 50 points to everyone’s score.

To interpret the value of this gain requires knowing how variable the scores are. If, for example, the standard deviation is 1,000 instead of 100, then 50 points does not look like much of a gain; but if the standard deviation is 10, a gain of 50 points is astounding because it represents a gain of five standard deviations, when a gain of only three standard deviations would take a student from an average score to one of the best scores that had ever been made.

One interpretable quantity is the gain represented as a fraction of the standard deviation of the original distribution. In this example, the fractional gain would be $50/100 = 0.5$, or half a standard deviation. An improvement of half a standard deviation would move people who were originally at the mean, which is also about the 50% point on these distributions, up to about the 69% point. Thus, a person who originally scored higher than half the population would now score higher than 69%.

This particular ratio of gain to the standard deviation is often called the *effect size*, a technical term that has a more specific meaning for such tests than the general notion of *size of effect*, which refers to any method of describing changes. In practice, effect sizes of half a standard deviation are rare.

Although effect sizes of the magnitude of 0.1, 0.2, or 0.3 may not seem to be impressive gains for a single individual, for a population they can be quite substantial. For example, a 0.2 effect size corresponds in the United States to the difference between the average heights of 15-year-old versus 16-year-old girls. For large numbers of girls of each age, this average difference may seem small, but most people notice it.^a An effect size of 0.3 corresponds to about 30 points on a SAT verbal or mathematics standardized test.

How much does computer-based instruction help students learn when it is offered as an adjunct to traditional teaching in certain settings? A review of 59 studies finds a mean effect size of 0.25 for computer-based instruction.^b And, as a result of this finding, computer-based instruction is viewed as an extraordinarily promising innovation—one that might revolutionize education.

Sources:

^a Cohen, J. *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. 2nd ed. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1988.

^b Kulik, J.A., Kulik, C.C., and Cohen, P.A. Effectiveness of computer-based college teaching: A meta-analysis of findings. *Review of Educational Research* (1980) 50:525–44.

Table 2

Gains in Effect Sizes from Small Classes				
Gains in effect sizes from small classes in first grade compared with all regular-sized classes and from regular-sized classes with an aide compared with regular-sized classes without an aide				
	SAT Reading	BSF Reading	SAT Math	BSF Math
The effect size on performance in small classes compared with performance in regular-sized classes with or without an aide	.23	.21	.27	.13
The effect size on performance in regular-sized classes with an aide compared with regular-sized classes without an aide	.14	.08	.10	.05

Source: Finn, J.D., and Achilles, C.M. Answers and questions about class size: A statewide experiment. *American Educational Research Journal* (1990) 27,3:557-77, Table 5.

without aides in reading and a little less than eight percentiles in mathematics. The addition of an aide to a regular-sized class results in a slight gain in both reading and math over the regular-sized class without an aide.

In the third year of the four-year study, questions were raised about the persistence of effects when children returned to regular-sized classes, as they would in fourth grade, and so an additional sum was appropriated for a three-year follow-up observation called the Lasting Benefits Study (LBS). As a part of this study, researchers observed the performance of children who had been in the three types of experimental classes during kindergarten and the first, second, and third grades after they returned to regular-sized classes in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and later grades.

In a paper presented at a meeting of the North Carolina Association for Research in Education at Greensboro, North Carolina, Achilles and colleagues reported on the Lasting Benefits Study.⁴ These authors found that, in the fourth and fifth grades, the children who had originally been in small classes scored higher than those who had been in regu-

lar-sized classes or in regular-sized classes with a teacher's aide. In the fourth grade—the first year after return to regular-sized classes—the effect size was about one-eighth of a standard deviation, averaged across six different cognitive subjects studied, and in the fifth grade, it was nearly two-tenths of a standard deviation, again averaged across six subjects. Within each grade, the different subjects produced almost the same effect size, though the

In the fourth and fifth grades, the children who had originally been in small classes scored higher than those who had been in regular-sized classes.

observed gain was somewhat larger for the fifth grade. Curiously, in both of these years, the effect size systematically favored the regular-sized classes previously without a teacher's aide over those previously with an aide, though the difference was small, averaging about 0.03 over all subjects in both grades. The encouraging finding is that early experience with the smaller class size seems to have had a continued effect beyond the moment when the children returned to regular-sized classes.

Table 3

Summary of Project STAR Results in Terms of the Percentile Ranks of Average Scores Based on National Test Norms				
	Percentile^a			
Grade level	K	1	2	3
Total reading SAT				
Small	59	64	61	62
Regular without an aide	53	53	52	55
Regular with an aide	54	58	54	54
Total math SAT				
Small	66	59	76	76
Regular without an aide	61	48	68	69
Regular with an aide	61	51	69	68

^a Percentile ranks are based on Stanford's multilevel norms.

Source: Word, E., Johnston, J., Bain, H.P., et al. *Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR): Tennessee's K-3 class size study*. Nashville: Tennessee Department of Education, Figures 1 and 2.

As a consequence of the systematic findings of improvement in performance of pupils in small classes over those in regular-sized classes, Tennessee implemented reduced class sizes for beginning students in kindergarten and first, second, and third grades in a program called Project

ematics. Before the small classes were introduced, these districts had been performing well below the average for the state in mathematics; after the intervention, they moved above the average.

It should be noted that the gains recorded here are not part of a carefully controlled experiment; they are consequences of installing the program. For this reason, the comparisons are not as well equated as they were in the original investigation. To measure experiment gains would require carrying out new class size experiments in the districts where the program is being implemented. Belief in the continuing benefits of the program is based on the uniform improvement found in the experiment for all types of classes in all types of cities. The additional evidence based on norms during the implementation phase, while reassuring, must be regarded as weaker because this new investigation is less well controlled.

An additional way to report the progress gives the average rank of the test scores of the 17 Tennessee districts in Project Challenge (among the 139 districts) for the years reported so far (1989–1993) in reading and mathematics. The results reported by Achilles, Nye, and Zaharias⁶ for the second grade are shown in Table 4.

Belief in the continuing benefits of the program is based on the uniform improvement found in the experiment for all types of classes in all types of cities.

Challenge (refer to the description of Phase 3 in Box 1) in the 17 school districts with the lowest per capita income and the highest percent of free or reduced-price lunch participation among students.

In the summary report for Project Challenge, Nye and colleagues observe that, in the school districts where small classes were installed in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades, both the reading scores and the math scores improved, compared with previous performance by children in these districts and with other schools in the state.⁵ The gains in effect sizes were 0.4 for reading and 0.6 for math-

Table 4

Average Second Grade Ranks for the 17 Districts Among the 139 School Districts for Early Years of Project Challenge				
Subject	Year			
	1989–90	1990–91	1991–92	1992–93
Reading	99	94	87	78
Mathematics	85	79	60	56

Source: Achilles, C.M., Nye, B.A., and Zaharias, J.B. Policy use of research results: Tennessee's Project Challenge. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 1995. Available from the Center of Excellence for Research in Basic Skills, College of Education, Tennessee State University.

When these districts are ranked from 1 to 139, where 1 indicates best academic performance and 139 indicates the worst, the average rank for all districts is 70. Note that in mathematics, the average rank for 1991–92 and for 1992–93 is below 60 (and so above the median) so that the 17 districts have shown a startling improvement as well as a gain of 20 ranks in reading for second grade. The same report mentions that the corresponding analysis of first grade shows that the 17 districts were better than average in both reading and mathematics in 1992.⁷

In summary, the evidence is strong that smaller class size at the beginning of the school experience does improve the performance of children on cognitive tests. Observations from the Lasting Benefits Study confirm that the effect continues into later grades when children are returned to regular-sized classes. In addition, the implementation of the program for the economically poorest districts seems to be improving the performance of children in these districts by noticeable amounts. In regular-sized classes, an aide produced some gain in kindergarten and in the first, second, and third grades; but when students returned to regular-sized classes, the gain from aides did not persist. After the small classes were implemented in all 17 school districts, no further observations were made about the in-classroom value of paid teachers' aides.

Special Concerns

During the course of the experiment, researchers made two substantial departures from the basic plan: they rerandomized regular-sized classes during the second year and moved incompatible children. In addition, researchers instituted a teacher training program between the second and third year.

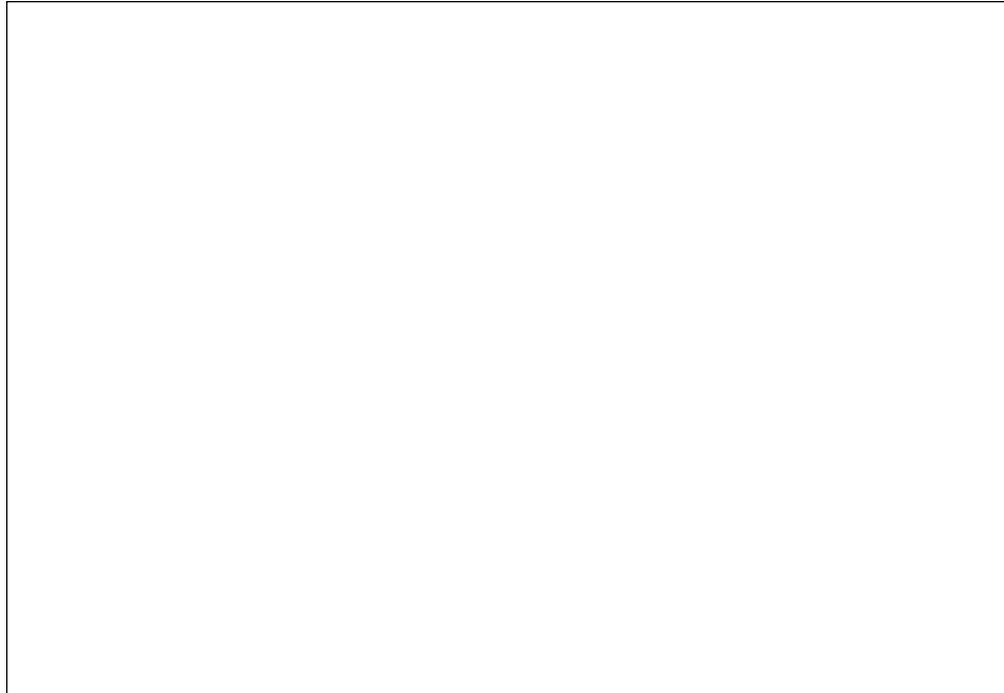
As reported earlier, one departure from the original plan occurred in the second year, when the children in regular-sized classes were rerandomized to regular-sized classes with an aide and regular-sized classes without an aide. Such a change applied to all who had entered the experiment in kindergarten. From the point of view of

Second-Year Rerandomization in Regular-Sized Classes

those beginning in kindergarten, it created four rather than two regular-sized groups of classes for analysis and comparison, as described above. After the second year, the children in regular-sized classes continued with their second-year assignment. This change complicates the analysis for all children except those whose assignments remained unchanged and makes it difficult to assess accurately the effectiveness of having or not having a teacher's aide.

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Moving Incompatible Children

One benefit reported from the Indiana study was that behavioral problems were reduced in the smaller classes. Nevertheless, in Project STAR at the end of the first year, 48 students moved from small kindergarten classes to regular classes with an aide, and 60 moved to regular classes without an aide.⁸ Thus, the number of students moved from small classes was 108 of 1,678 students.⁹ This move was intended to separate incompatible chil-

It is impossible to assess the impact of this reassignment on the experiment; and, in fact, it may have had little impact because the affected students may have been removed from the analysis altogether.

The Teacher Training Program

The added feature in Project STAR came between the second and third years, when it was decided to give a special training course to 57 teachers. The enabling legislation had specified teacher training. Essentially, all teachers were getting some additional training as a routine matter in Tennessee, but apparently it was felt that the legislation called for something special. The participating teachers in 15 selected Project STAR schools were all given a total of three days of special training. The training was the same for all teachers selected; their assignment to small or regular-sized classes had not yet been made.⁸ When one considers that 30% of these teachers already had 20 years of teaching experience and only four had fewer than 3 years of experience, a three-day training program seems modest. As it turned out after the training, the classes with trained teachers performed the same as did the classes with untrained teachers.

Having fewer children in class reduces the distractions in the room and gives the teacher more time to devote to each child.

dren and “to achieve sexual and racial balance,”¹⁰ the latter a puzzling remark in view of the purported emphasis on randomization. No mention is made of what was done about incompatible students who were already in regular-sized classes. Perhaps there was nowhere to move them if there was only one small class or perhaps children seem more incompatible in small classes. A school administration planning to reduce class sizes might want to keep this potential difficulty in mind.

Class Size Drift

In addition, the sizes of the classes drifted a bit as time went on. Some small classes

became larger than their intended upper bound, and some regular-sized classes became smaller than their intended lower bound. The overall outcome of these violations of the original distributions should be to underestimate the effectiveness of the small classes compared with that of the regular-sized classes.

Assessing the Implications of the Study

Smaller Class Size

Why does smaller class size help teaching and learning? Reducing a class from 23 to 15 reduces the number of children in the room by about one-third. Having fewer children in class reduces the distractions in the room and gives the teacher more time to devote to each child. However, the impression one gets from reading papers emerging from Project STAR is that at least some teachers and administrators engaged in the study think of themselves as dealing with a start-up phenomenon. When children first come to school, they are confronted with many changes and much confusion. They come into this new setting from a variety of homes and circumstances. Many need training in paying attention, carrying out tasks, and interacting with others in a working situation. In other words, when children start school, they need to learn to cooperate with others, to learn to learn, and generally to get oriented to being students. These observations fit neatly with several current theories of education, including the idea of frames and scripts.^{11–16}

The experiment showed that the minority groups gained more than others in the first two years of the experiment; and although the last two years showed benefits comparable with those of the majority, there was a falling off of benefit. Some statements in the report by Word and colleagues³ suggest that much of the gain from the small classes was achieved in the first two years. The data presented in Table 3 do not show the falling off, but other summary tables from the study might.

Optimum Class Size

The idea of an ideal, or optimum, class size is open to question. This investigation

did not provide information about a variety of class sizes. Within the ranges of what is affordable, it is reasonable to suppose that smaller classes are preferable for beginners. But some desired training probably could not be accomplished in classes of such small sizes as one or two pupils even if they were affordable. Learning to work in a group is important and requires the presence of others.

Persistence of Beneficial Effects

In the Lasting Benefits Study,⁴ a continuation of studies evaluated the performance of students from small classes as compared with the performance of students from regular-sized classes or regular-sized classes with an aide after all students had returned to regular-sized classes. The results always favored the students from smaller classes. One year later (1989–90), the effect sizes ranged from 0.11 to 0.16 ($n = 4, 230$) in the fourth grade, and then, in subsequent years, from 0.17 to 0.34 ($n = 4, 639$) in the fifth grade, from 0.14 to 0.26 ($n = 4, 333$) in the sixth grade, and

The students who were originally in smaller classes continued to perform better than the students from regular-sized classes with or without a teacher's aide.

from 0.08 to 0.16 ($n = 4, 944$) in the seventh grade. Data from the eighth grade have been gathered and are being analyzed. Thus, year after year, the students who were originally in smaller classes continued to perform better than the students from regular-sized classes with or without a teacher's aide.¹⁷

Conclusion

Compelling evidence that smaller classes help, at least in early grades, and that the benefits derived from these smaller classes persist leaves open the possibility that additional or different educational devices could lead to still further gains. For example, applying to small classes the technique of within-class grouping in which the teacher handles each small group separately for short periods could strengthen

the educational process (essentially a second-order use of small class size). The point is that small classes can be used jointly with other teaching techniques which may add further gains.

Because a controlled education experiment (as distinct from a sample survey) of this quality, magnitude, and duration is a rarity, it is important that both educators and policymakers have access to its statistical information and understand its implications. Thought should be given by both public and private organizations to making sure that this information is preserved and well documented and that access to it is encouraged. The Tennessee three-phase study calls attention to the statewide con-

trolled experiment as a valuable device for assessing educational interventions and, thereby, improving school systems.

The preparation of this material was supported in part by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in support of the Center for Evaluation of its Initiatives for Children program. The author's efforts have been helped by the kind responses of people who worked on the Tennessee class size project and have kept him in touch with project publications as they have appeared. Professors C.M. Achilles and J.D. Finn have given helpful advice and information. In addition, suggestions from John Emerson, Richard Light, Marjorie Olson, Jori Raymond, Jason Sachs, and Cleo Youtz improved early versions of the manuscript.

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*Pictured is
Bertram Generlette,
formerly principal at
Piney Branch Elementary in
Takoma Park, Maryland, and now
principal at Montgomery Knolls Elementary
School in Silver Spring, Maryland.*

School Leaders Matter

It is widely believed that a good principal is the key to a successful school. No Child Left Behind encouraged the replacement of the principal in persistently low-performing schools, and the Obama administration has made this a requirement for schools undergoing federally funded turnarounds. Foundations have invested millions over the past decade in New Leaders for New Schools, an organization that recruits nontraditional principal candidates and prepares them for the challenges of school leadership. And the recently launched George W. Bush Institute is making the principalship a focus of its activities. Yet until very recently there was little rigorous research demonstrating the importance of principal quality for student outcomes, much less the specific practices that cause some principals to be more successful than others. As is often the case in education policy discussions, we have relied on anecdotes instead.

This study provides new evidence on the importance of school leadership by estimating individual principals' contributions to growth in student achievement. Our approach is quite similar to studies that measure teachers' "value added" to student achievement, except that the calculation is applied to the entire school. Specifically, we measure how average gains in achievement, adjusted for individual student and school characteristics, differ across principals—both in different schools and in the same school at

Measuring the impact of effective principals

different points in time. From this, we are able to determine how much effectiveness varies from one principal to the next.

Our results indicate that highly effective principals raise the achievement of a typical student in their schools by between two and seven months of learning in a single school year; ineffective principals lower achievement by the same amount. These impacts are somewhat smaller than those associated with having a highly effective teacher. But teachers have a direct impact on only those students in their classroom; differences in principal quality affect all students in a given school.

We also investigate one widely discussed mechanism through which principals affect student achievement: the management of teacher transitions. Importantly, because high teacher turnover can be associated with both improvement and decline in the quality of instruction, the amount of turnover on its own provides little insight into the wisdom of a principal's personnel decisions. We confirm, however, that teachers who leave schools with the most-successful principals are much more likely to have been among the less-effective teachers in their school than teachers leaving schools run by less-successful principals.

The final component of our analysis considers the dynamics of the principal labor market, comparing the effectiveness of principals who move on to those who stay in their initial schools. Constrained by salary inertia and the historical absence of good performance measures, the principal labor market

by GREGORY F. BRANCH, ERIC A. HANUSHEK, and STEVEN G. RIVKIN

Teachers affect only their students, while principals affect all students in a school. The overall impact from increasing principal quality exceeds the benefit from a comparable increase in the quality of a single teacher.

does not appear to weed out those principals who are least successful in raising student achievement. This is especially true in schools serving disadvantaged students. This is troubling, as the demands of leading such schools, including the need to attract and retain high-quality teachers despite less desirable working conditions, may amplify the importance of having an effective leader.

The Texas Database

Our analysis relies on administrative data constructed as part of the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) Texas Schools Project. Working with the Texas Education Agency (TEA), this project has combined different data sources to create matched data sets of students, teachers, and principals over many school years. The data include all Texas public-school teachers, administrators, staff, and students in each year, permitting accurate descriptions of the schools led by each principal.

The Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), TEA's statewide database, reports key demographic data, including race, ethnicity, and gender for students and school personnel, as well as student eligibility for subsidized lunch (a standard indicator of poverty). PEIMS also contains detailed annual information on teacher and administrator experience, salary, education, class size, grade, population served, and subject. Importantly, this database can be merged with information on student achievement by school, grade, and year. Beginning in 1993, Texas schools have administered the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) each spring to eligible students in grades 3 through 8. Our analysis therefore focuses on principals in elementary and middle schools, for whom it is possible to develop performance measures.

The personnel data combine time as a teacher and as an administrator into total experience, so it is not possible to measure tenure as a principal accurately for those who became a principal prior to the initial year of our data (the 1990–91 school year). We therefore concentrate on the years from 1995 to 2001. Over this period, we are able to observe 7,420 individual principals and make use of 28,147 annual principal observations.

Measuring Principal Quality

The fundamental challenge to measuring the impact of school leaders is separating their contributions from the many other factors that drive student achievement. For example, a school that serves largely affluent families may create the illusion that it has a great principal, when family backgrounds are the key cause of high achievement. Alternatively, a school that serves disadvantaged students may appear to be doing poorly but in fact have a great principal who is producing better outcomes than any other principal would.

Our basic value-added model measures the effectiveness of a principal by examining the extent to which math achievement in a school is higher or lower than would be expected based on the characteristics of students in that school, including their achievement in the prior year. Put another way, it examines whether some schools have higher achievement than other schools that serve similar students and attributes that achievement difference to the principal. This approach is very similar to that employed in studies that measure teacher quality using databases tracking the performance of individual students over time.

The main concern with this approach is that there may be unmeasured factors that affect school performance. Our data contain only basic information on student background characteristics, such as gender, race or ethnicity, and eligibility for subsidized lunch. As a result, we cannot control for more nuanced measures of students and their families, such as motivation or wealth. We are, however, able to control for students' test scores from the previous year, which may well capture a lot of the characteristics that we cannot measure directly. Moreover, there are also school factors not under the direct control of the school, including the quality of teachers inherited by the principal. Below we describe alternative approaches to isolating the contributions of the current principal.

In estimating principal effectiveness, we want to minimize the influence of specific circumstances and look at the underlying stable differences in impacts. This issue is important because a principal's impact may vary with tenure in a school. A principal's impact on the quality of the teaching staff (whether negative or positive), for example, probably

increases over time as the share of teachers who were hired on her watch rises. To account for any differences in effectiveness that are related to tenure as a principal in a given school, we begin our analysis by focusing on data from the first three years a principal leads a school.

This first analysis indicates that the standard deviation of principal effectiveness is 0.21 standard deviations of test scores (see Table 1). This is a very large figure, perhaps unbelievably large, implying that a principal at the 75th percentile of this effectiveness measure shows average achievement gains of 0.11 standard deviations (relative to the average principal), while one at the 25th percentile shows average losses of 0.15 standard deviations. These differences are even more pronounced in high-poverty schools, for which the gap between the 25th and 75th percentile principal is more than one-third of a standard deviation. On average across all schools, the impact of having a principal 1 standard deviation more effective than the average principal is as much as seven additional months of learning in a single academic year.

As noted above, this initial estimate of the variability in principal effectiveness may partly reflect differences in school

characteristics that are not under the principal's control, such as the quality of the school building, or decisions made by district administrators as well as unmeasured parental influences. As a result, it may overestimate the amount of influence principals actually have.

We begin to address this issue by measuring principal effectiveness based only on comparisons of within-school differences in student achievement growth over time. In simplest terms, we compare average student achievement gains in the same school under different principals. This method eliminates the influence of any student, school, or neighborhood characteristics that do not change over time. Its main drawback is that it ignores all differences in principal effectiveness between schools, potentially underestimating the amount of variation in principal quality. For example, if each school tends to attract principals who are similar in quality whenever it searches for a new principal, this approach will understate the true extent of variation in principal effectiveness.

We conduct this second analysis using all of the principals in our data, not just those in their first three years leading a school, because the numbers of schools with

Methods and Results (Table 1)

All three methods find that school principals have a substantial impact on student achievement.

Method used to estimate the impact of school principals	Sample used to estimate the impact of school principals	Standard deviation of principal effects	Annual impact of having an effective rather than an ineffective principal
1. Average math achievement gains adjusted for student background characteristics and school mobility rates	Texas principals in their first three years of leading the school	0.21	+ 16 percentile points of student achievement
2. Difference in average adjusted math achievement gains between students attending the same school under different leaders	All Texas principals	0.11	+ 8 percentile points of student achievement
3. Additional year-to-year fluctuation in average adjusted achievement gains surrounding a leadership transition	All Texas principals	0.05	+ 4 percentile points of student achievement

Note: The standard deviation of principal effectiveness is reported in standard deviations of student achievement. An effective principal is one at the 84th percentile of the quality distribution; an ineffective principal is one at the 16th percentile. The impact of an effective principal is reported for the median student.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on Texas Education Agency data

two principals observed in their first three years is quite small. (Note that re-doing the prior analysis using data on all principals does not significantly alter the results presented above.) Restricting the analysis to comparisons within schools, however, cuts our estimate of the variation in principal effectiveness in half. Even this reduced estimate is substantial, however, indicating that a 1-standard-deviation increase in principal effectiveness raises school average achievement by slightly more than 0.10 standard deviations. This impact is roughly comparable to that observed for variations in teacher effectiveness in studies that use the same kinds of within-school comparisons.

Our first two methods involved estimating effectiveness measures for individual principals and then calculating the standard deviation of those measures. Although any unmeasured school factors that are unrelated to principal quality would not bias these results, such factors would inflate our estimates of the variation in principal quality based on these approaches. We therefore employ a third approach that gauges the amount of variation in principal effectiveness directly by measuring the additional fluctuation in school average achievement gains when a new principal assumes leadership, as compared to typical fluctuations from year to year.

Focusing on the additional variation in school average achievement gains around principal transitions reduces the magnitude of the estimates. Nonetheless, the results remain educationally significant: a 1-standard-deviation increase in principal quality translates into roughly 0.05 standard deviations in average student achievement gains, or nearly

quality between schools and again ignores any tendency for a given school to attract principals of similar quality over time, suggesting that it likely understates principals' actual impact.

Teacher Turnover

The results presented so far rely on indirect measures of principal impact, namely, student learning gains during a principal's tenure in a school. The data do not include any observations about what a principal actually does, or fails to do, to improve learning. We now turn to an analysis of the interactions of principals with teaching staff, which bears directly on a number of current policy debates.

A primary channel through which principals can be expected to improve the quality of education is by raising the quality of teachers, either by improving the instruction provided by existing teachers or through teacher transitions that improve the caliber of the school's workforce. Teacher turnover per se has received considerable policy attention, largely because of the well-documented difficulties that new teachers experience. The potential benefits of reducing turnover nonetheless hinge on the effectiveness of both entering and exiting teachers.

We expect highly rated principals to be more successful both at retaining effective teachers and at moving out less-effective ones. Less highly rated principals may be less successful in raising the quality of their teaching staffs, either because they are less skilled in evaluating teacher quality, place less emphasis on teacher effectiveness in personnel

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less-effective teachers are more likely to leave schools run by highly
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two months of additional learning. By comparison, previous research suggests that a 1-standard-deviation increase in teacher quality raises achievement by somewhat more than 0.10 standard deviations. Teachers affect only their students, however, while principals affect all students in a school. The overall impact from increasing principal quality therefore substantially exceeds the benefit from a comparable increase in the quality of a single teacher. Importantly, this estimate ignores all variation in principal

decisions, or are less successful in creating an environment that attracts and retains better teachers. Although better principals may also attract and hire more-effective teachers, the absence of reliable quality measures for new teachers and the fact that many principals have little control over new hires lead us to focus specifically on turnover.

Unfortunately, our data do not contain direct information on personnel decisions that would enable us to separate voluntary and involuntary transitions, and existing evidence



The role of principals in fostering student learning is an important facet of education policy discussions. Strong leadership is viewed as especially important for revitalization of failing schools.

suggests that teachers rather than principals initiate the majority of transitions. In addition, the Texas data do not match students to individual teachers, meaning that we must draw inferences about teacher effectiveness from average information across an entire grade.

With detailed information on teacher effectiveness and transitions, we could investigate whether better principals are more likely to dismiss the least-effective teachers and reduce the likelihood that the more-effective teachers depart voluntarily. In the absence of such information, however, we focus on the relationship within schools between the share of teachers that exits each grade and the average value-added to student achievement in the grade. We examine how this varies with our measures of principal quality based on student achievement gains. For example, in a school where 5th-grade students learn more than 4th-grade students, we would expect a good principal to make more changes to the 4th-grade teaching staff.

The results of this analysis confirm that the relationship between higher teacher turnover and lower average value-added in a given grade is stronger as principal quality rises. This pattern of results is consistent with the theory that management of teacher quality is an important pathway through

which principals affect school quality. The fact that less-effective teachers are more likely to leave schools run by highly effective principals also validates our measure of principal quality. If our measure was just capturing random noise in the data rather than information about true principal quality, we would not expect it to be related to teacher quality and turnover.

Principal Transitions and Quality

Along with teacher turnover, instability of leadership is often cited as an impediment to improving high-poverty and low-performing schools. Consistent with these concerns, we find that Texas schools with a high proportion of low-income students are more likely to have first-year principals and less likely to have principals who have been at the school at least six years than those serving a less-disadvantaged population. Sorting schools by initial achievement rather than poverty level produces even larger differences (see Figure 1). The proportion of principals in their first year leading a school is roughly 40 percent higher in schools in the bottom quartile of average prior achievement than in schools in the top quartile; the proportion of

principals that have been at their current school at least six years is roughly 50 percent higher in schools with higher-achieving students.

Yet the import of leadership turnover also depends on whether high- or low-quality personnel are leaving, something prior research has been unable to address. We therefore examine whether the likelihood that a principal leaves following the third year in a school varies with her effectiveness and with the share of low-income students in the school. We observe principals making a variety of career decisions: remaining in the same school as principal, becoming a principal at another school in the same district, becoming a principal in another district, moving into a central office position, or exiting the public schools entirely. We divide principals into four equal-sized groups based on estimates of their effectiveness using the first of the three methods described above. We also limit the data to include only principals with fewer than 25 years of total experience in order to minimize complications introduced by the decision to retire.

Our results confirm that the least-effective principals are least likely to remain in their current position and most likely to leave the public schools entirely. With the exception of the schools with the lowest poverty level, however, there is not a consistent relationship between the likelihood of remaining on as principal and principal quality (see Figure 2). In high-poverty schools, for example, principals in the middle two quartiles of effectiveness are substantially more likely to remain than those in the bottom quarter. The most effective principals are more likely to remain in the same position than those in the bottom quartile, but are considerably more likely to move on than those in the middle of the quality distribution.

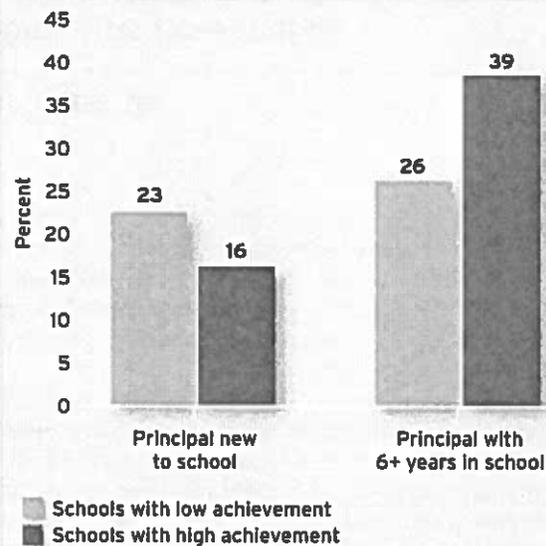
Another result emerging from this analysis that is troubling from a policy perspective is the frequency with which



A principal in the top 16 percent of the quality distribution will produce annual student gains that are 0.05 percent higher.

Principal Tenure (Figure 1)

Schools with high achievement were less likely to have a new principal and more likely to have had the same leader for several years.



Note: Schools with low achievement are those in the bottom quartile of Texas schools in terms of the prior math test scores of their students; schools with high achievement are those in the top quartile.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on Texas Education Agency data

low-performing principals move to principal positions at other schools. This trend is particularly striking in high-poverty schools, where more than 12 percent of poor performers annually make such a move. In contrast, less than 7 percent of the poorest performers in more-affluent schools become principals at other schools. This may reflect the fact that it is challenging in high-poverty schools to separate the effects of school circumstances from the quality of the principal, leading district administrators to give principals from high-poverty schools a chance at a different school.

The simple conclusion, nonetheless, is that the operation of the principal labor market does not appear to screen out the least-effective principals. Instead, they frequently move to different schools, perhaps reflecting the bargain necessary to move out an ineffective leader in a public-sector organization. Potentially, this is where the superintendent enters the picture. Making good decisions on the retention and assignment of principals may be among the distinguishing characteristics of successful superintendents, a possibility that warrants additional study.

Patterns of principal transitions indicate that it is the least and the most effective who tend to leave schools, suggesting some combination of push and pull factors.

Conclusions

The role of principals in fostering student learning is an important facet of education policy discussions. Strong leadership is viewed as especially important for revitalization of failing schools. To date, however, this discussion has been largely uninformed by systematic analysis of principals' impact on student outcomes.

Determining the impact of principals on learning is a particularly difficult analytical problem. Nevertheless, even the most conservative of our three methodological approaches suggests substantial variation in principal effectiveness: a principal in the top 16 percent of the quality distribution will produce annual student gains that are

0.05 standard deviations higher than an average principal for all students in their school.

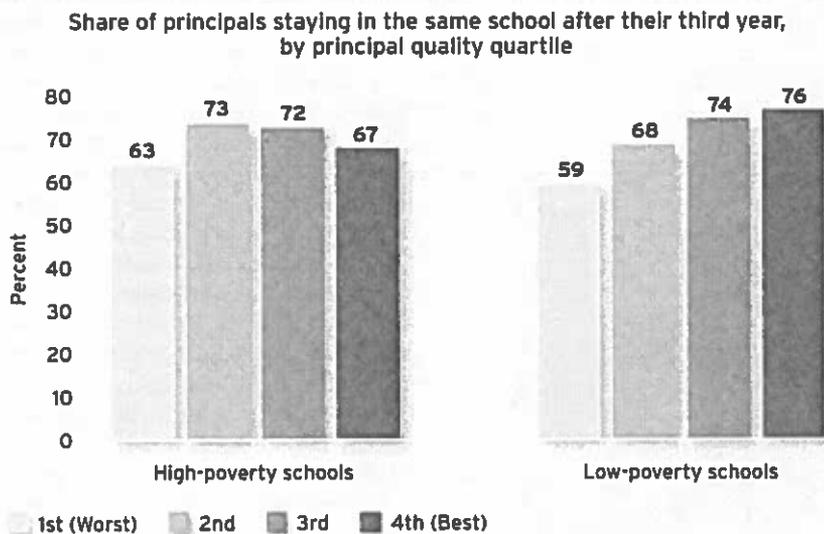
There are many channels through which principals influence school quality, although the precise mechanisms likely vary across districts with the regulatory and institutional structures that define principal authority. Because all principals participate in personnel decisions, we have focused on the composition of teacher turnover. For the best principals, the rate of teacher turnover is highest in grades in which teachers are least effective, supporting the belief that improvement in teacher effectiveness provides an important channel through which principals can raise the quality of education.

Finally, patterns of principal transitions indicate that

it is the least and most effective who tend to leave schools, suggesting some combination of push and pull factors. This pattern is particularly pronounced in high-poverty schools. It is also worrisome that a substantial share of the ineffective principals in high-poverty schools takes principal positions in other schools and districts. Clearly, much more needs to be learned about the dynamics of the principal labor market. For student outcomes, greater emphasis on the selection and retention of high-quality principals would appear to have a very high payoff.

Principal Turnover (Figure 2)

In high-poverty schools, the best and worst principals are more likely to move on after three years than those in the middle quartiles. In low-poverty schools, the likelihood of staying on increases with principal quality.



Note: High-poverty schools are those in the top quartile of Texas schools in terms of the percent of students eligible for a subsidized lunch; low-poverty schools are those in the bottom quartile.

SOURCE: Authors' calculations based on Texas Education Agency data

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Teacher quality and student achievement: Research review

The importance of good teachers is no secret. Schools and their communities have always sought out the best teachers they could get in the belief that their students' success depends on it.

But what we know instinctively still leaves some big questions, especially for those in charge of hiring, training and retaining a qualified teaching force. To begin with, how do you define a good teacher? What characteristics do you look for? Given all the factors related to student performance, how much impact can we expect from teachers? And finally, if teachers are so important to student learning, how can we make sure all students receive the benefit of good teachers?

In this overview, the Center looks at research that seeks to answer these questions.

Teacher quality counts

More than two decades of research findings are unequivocal about the connection between teacher quality and student learning. Indeed, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* (1996), the influential report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, made teaching the core of its "three simple premises" in its blueprint for reforming the nation's schools. They are:

- What teachers know and can do is the most important influence on what students learn.
- Recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers is the central strategy for improving our schools.
- School reform cannot succeed unless it focuses on creating the conditions under which teachers can teach and teach well.

Key teacher quality provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) underscore the importance of these premises. Central to NCLB's goal of closing the achievement gap by 2014 is the requirement that all teachers be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-06 school year. For new teachers, this means that they must meet existing state certification requirements and demonstrate mastery of the content area in which they teach, either by passing a content knowledge test or by having majored in the subject in an undergraduate or graduate program.

Achieving this goal is proving to be a challenge for states and districts. The 2004 estimates put the number of teachers who have not yet met the highly qualified standard at 20 percent in elementary schools and 25 percent in secondary schools (U.S. Department of Education 2004).

Yet a growing body of research shows why current education policies emphasize teaching and why it's important for states and districts to rise to this challenge. These studies not only provide insight into the characteristics of good teachers, they reveal how these contribute to student learning and closing achievement gaps.

Gauging the effect of teachers on student achievement

The most compelling evidence for the importance of teaching came initially from economists who adapted value-added models from business to measure the effect of teachers on student learning. While the statistical methods are complex, the definition of effective teaching is not. Simply, researchers looked for the change in students' test scores according to the teacher they were assigned to. A highly effective teacher, therefore, is one whose students show the most gains from one year to the next. By using this approach, researchers are able to isolate the effect of the teacher from other factors related to student performance, for example, students' prior academic record or school they attend.

Reports and data from two initiatives in Tennessee—the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS) and Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) project—and one in Texas—the University of Texas at Dallas Texas Schools Project—provide good starting points for understanding how much of an effect teachers have on student outcomes.

Insights from Tennessee and Texas

Highlights

- The effect of teaching on student learning is greater than student ethnicity or family income, school attended by student, or class size.
- The effect is stronger for poor and/or minority students than for their more affluent and/or white peers, although all groups benefit from effective teachers.
- The effects accumulate over the years.

Tennessee

TVAAS was the first data-tracking system in the country to measure individual teacher performance according to annual gains in student test scores. Initiated in 1990, this system provides extensive data on state achievement tests for all students in grades 2-8 in Tennessee and allows for comparisons of teacher effects on students' learning. Other states, such as North Carolina, Arizona, and Florida, have since adopted similar models, additional states are expected to follow suit.

The Tennessee Department of Education's STAR project was an experiment designed to evaluate the effects of smaller classes on student achievement over four years. The experiment randomly assigned students from various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds to small and regular-size classes in 79 schools across the state. STAR's reliance on randomized samples, combined with the data-tracking capacity of TVAAS, offered an important and unique opportunity to examine variations in student achievement where the only difference between classes was the teacher.

Analyses of TVAAS and STAR data indicated that teachers had a substantial effect on student achievement. While the Tennessee data from STAR showed achievement gains associated with smaller class sizes, a stronger achievement gain is associated with teacher quality (Nye, Konstantopoulos and Hedges 2004). In addition, differences in student

performance were more heavily influenced by the teacher than by student ethnicity or class, or by the school attended by the student.

The positive effects associated with being taught by a highly effective teacher, defined as a teacher whose average student score gain is in the top 25 percent, were stronger for poor and minority students than for their white and affluent counterparts. For example, one study of the Tennessee data found that low-income students were more likely to benefit from instruction by a highly effective teacher than were their more advantaged peers (Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Hedges 2004). Another study found that the achievement gains from having a highly effective teacher could be almost three times as large for African American students as for white students, even when comparing students who start with similar achievement levels (Sanders and Rivers 1996).

A second important finding from this work was that the positive effects of teacher quality appear to accumulate over the years. That is, students who were enrolled in a succession of classes taught by effective teachers demonstrated greater learning gains than did students who had the least effective teachers one after another. For example, fifth-grade math students who had three consecutive highly effective teachers scored between 52 and 54 percentile points ahead of students who had three consecutive teachers who were least effective, even though the math achievement of both groups of students was the same prior to entering second grade (Sanders and Rivers 1996).

Texas

Findings from the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) Texas Schools Project lent additional credence to the Tennessee findings. This project gathered individual-level data on more than 10 million Texas students in grades K-12 from 1990 to 2002. By comparing the achievement of similar students within the same schools but assigned to different teachers, researchers were able to isolate the effects of the teacher on student achievement.

In their analysis of these data, Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) found that teacher quality differences explained the largest portion of the variation in reading and math achievement. As in the Tennessee findings, Jordan, Mendro, and Weerasinghe (1997) found that the difference between students who had three consecutive highly effective teachers (again defined as those whose students showed the most improvement) and those who had three consecutive low-effect teachers (those with the least improvement) in the Dallas schools was 34 percentile points in reading achievement and 49 percentile points in math.

Characteristics of an effective teacher

Highlights

The following teacher qualities are related to higher student achievement are:

- **Content knowledge:** Effective teachers have a solid background in the subject area they teach as measured by a college major or minor in the field.
- **Teaching experience:** Teaching experience, typically five years or more, produces higher student results. Some studies further suggest that the effect of inexperience can be a significant obstacle to student achievement.
- **Teacher training and credentials:** Certified teachers are more effective than uncertified, particularly in mathematics. In general, teachers with emergency certificates don't perform as well as those with traditional certification. However, opinions conflict about the effectiveness of Teach for America (TFA) teachers, who enter classrooms with alternate certificates. Some comparative studies show larger gains by TFA teachers and others show fewer.
- **Overall academic ability:** Teachers with stronger academic skills perform better, whether these skills are measured by teachers' SAT or ACT scores, grade point average or selectivity of the college they attended.

The Tennessee and Texas studies provide empirical evidence that teachers make a substantial difference in student achievement. But they are silent on the question of what characterizes an "effective teacher." Other research helps pinpoint the dimensions of teacher quality. In the following sections, we review research findings on teacher characteristics that are commonly recognized measures of quality: Content knowledge, teaching experience, training and credentials, and overall academic ability.

Each of these measures shows a positive relationship to student performance. At the same time, the studies vary in their assessment of how strong an effect each dimension has on student outcomes.

Content knowledge

Teachers' knowledge of the content they teach is a consistently strong predictor of student performance, even though studies differ in how strong its effects are. This research typically uses teachers' college degree to represent content knowledge.

- **Minor in field.** Darling-Hammond (1999) found that, although other factors had a stronger association with achievement, the presence of a teacher who did not have at least a minor in the subject matter that he or she taught accounted for about 20 percent of the variation in NAEP scores.
- **Major in field.** Goldhaber and Brewer (1996) found that the presence of teachers with at least a major in their subject area was the most reliable predictor of student achievement scores in math and science. They also found that, although advanced degrees in general were not associated with higher student achievement, an advanced degree that was specific to the subject area that a teacher taught was associated with higher achievement. In contrast, other studies did not indicate that teachers with graduate-level training in a content area performed better than did teachers having an undergraduate degree in their content area (Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain 2005; Ferguson and Ladd 1996).

Teaching experience

Research has also been consistent in finding positive correlations between years of teaching experience and higher student achievement. Teachers with more than five years in the classroom seem to be the most effective. Conversely, inexperience is shown to have a strong negative effect on student performance.

- **Experienced teachers produce higher student test scores.** A comprehensive analysis by Greenwald, Hedges, and Laine (1996) examined data from 60 studies and found a positive relationship between years of teacher experience and student test scores. Similarly, the UTD Texas Schools Project data showed that students of experienced teachers attained significantly higher levels of achievement than did students of new teachers (those with one to three years of experience) (Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain 2005).
- **Schools with more inexperienced teachers have higher drop-out rates.** In a related finding, an analysis of math achievement and dropout rates in a sample of California high schools (Fetler 2001) found that schools whose dropout rates were in the highest 10 percent had 50 percent more new teachers than did schools in the lowest 10 percent.

Teacher training and credentials

There are several studies providing evidence that the students of certified teachers perform better than students of uncertified teachers.

- **Certification in math produces better math scores.** Fuller and Alexander's (2004) analysis identified similar students who were taught by Texas math teachers who were also similar except that some were certified and others were not. The study found that the students taught by certified teachers scored better on the state math achievement test. A study that examined the math achievement of elementary students also found that students taught by new, uncertified teachers did significantly worse on achievement tests than did those taught by new, certified teachers (Laczko-Kerr and Berliner 2002).
- **New or uncertified teachers have the least effect.** Likewise, Darling-Hammond (1999) found a significant positive association between achievement and teacher certification. She also found a significant negative association between achievement and the presence of a high proportion of new or uncertified teachers in the school.
- **Teachers on emergency certificates don't perform as well as fully certified teachers.** Fetler (1999) found that teachers with emergency teaching certificates did not perform as well as teachers who were fully certified, even when controlling for the amount of teaching experience.

The factor that sets certified teachers apart from other teachers is usually their training in teaching methods and in child and adolescent development, in addition to content knowledge. Because certification standards between states differ significantly, several researchers have sought to evaluate the effects of the teacher training that certification indicates. An analysis that synthesized findings from a group of studies showed that teachers with pedagogical training performed better than those who entered teaching without such training (Greenwald, Hedges, and Laine 1996).

Mixed reviews on alternate routes

Recently, studies have sought to evaluate the effects of teacher training by comparing teachers who take alternative routes to teaching with those who complete a traditional teacher preparation program. Alternative routes, which can take a number of different forms and which are growing in popularity, offer opportunities for people with an undergraduate degree in an area other than education to enter teaching and work toward certification while bypassing some of the education coursework that is required of college students getting their certification through a school of education.

- **Conflicting research on Teach for America.** One study of Teach for America (TFA) teachers in Houston found that TFA teachers had a positive effect on student achievement scores when compared with other new teachers (Raymond, Fletcher, and Luque 2001). Another analysis of the same data confirmed that students of TFA teachers did outperform those taught by other untrained teachers, especially in math, however, they did not perform as well as new teachers who had pedagogical training and certification (Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, Gatlin, and Heilig 2005).
- **Little agreement on the balance of content knowledge and pedagogical training.** Most of the research suggests that teachers who have had pedagogical training and who have received certification produce better student achievement scores than those who have not, although some studies dispute this finding (Goldhaber and Brewer 2000). Together, these studies have touched off a debate over the optimal balance between content and pedagogical knowledge (see, for example, Goldhaber Brewer 2000; Darling-Hammond, Berry, and Thoreson 2001).

Criticisms of teacher training and licensing procedures stem largely from a belief that the requirements for certification do not encompass all the characteristics that should be sought in teachers and thus should be reformed to require more content knowledge and displays of teaching competency (Walsh and Snyder 2004). While different certification requirements in different states make generalizing about the research difficult (Hanushek, Rivkin, and Taylor 1996), most research does show a positive connection between the training required for certification and student achievement.

Overall academic ability

There is research that has shown that students of teachers who have greater academic ability—be it measured through SAT or ACT scores, GPA, IQ, tests of verbal ability, or selectivity of the college attended—perform better. As mentioned earlier, the one exception where the evidence is mixed occurs in studies that used the attainment of advanced degrees as a proxy for academic ability. Most of the research on these traits is old (see Darling-Hammond 1999 for a summary), but more recent studies support these results.

- **Teachers' verbal ability counts.** Greenwald, Hedges, and Laine's (1996) analysis showed an overall positive relationship between a teacher's verbal ability and student performance.
- **Teachers with high ACT scores produce better readers.** A study of teachers in Alabama by Ferguson and Ladd (1996) found a correlation between a teacher's higher ACT scores and higher reading scores for her students. But the researchers found no significant difference for math scores.

How does teacher quality affect the achievement gap?

Teacher quality and student achievement: Research review

Regardless of how it's measured, teacher quality is not distributed equitably across schools and districts. Poor and minority students are much less likely to get well-qualified teachers than students who are better off.

- The Tennessee studies revealed that African American students were almost twice as likely to be taught by the least effective teachers (Sanders and Rivers 1996).
- Data from the U.S. Department of Education's national Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) showed that students in high-poverty secondary schools were 77 percent more likely to be taught by teachers without degrees in the subject they were teaching than were their affluent counterparts. Students in high-minority schools were 40 percent more likely to be taught by out-of-field teachers. The problem is especially acute in middle schools (Jerald and Ingersoll 2002).
- Poor and minority students are about twice as likely to have teachers with less than three years of teaching experience (National Center for Education Statistics 2000).
- Districts that are predominantly poor or minority were considerably more likely to employ uncertified teachers (Darling-Hammond 1999).
- Teacher mobility is a much greater problem for poor and minority students; teachers are much more likely to move from urban to suburban schools than vice versa (Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin 2004).

The distribution of teachers with these qualities has grown more inequitable in recent years. Jerald and Ingersoll (2002) showed that the problem of out-of-field teachers actually got worse for disadvantaged students during the 1990s. In addition, some states' efforts to reduce class size—and in so doing creating a need to increase the teacher workforce—have led to the hiring of more unqualified and untrained teachers, thus minimizing the possible benefits of lower class sizes (Jepsen and Rivkin 2002).

The impending teacher shortage, estimated at more than two million teachers by 2007 (Ingersoll 2003), could exacerbate the inequitable distribution of teacher quality in the coming decades unless policymakers and educational leaders find ways of increasing the supply of skilled teachers and ensuring that the lowest performing students are enrolled in their classes.

Implications for closing the achievement gap

Research consistently shows that teacher quality—whether measured by content knowledge, experience, training and credentials, or general intellectual skills—is strongly related to student achievement. Simply, skilled teachers produce better student results. Many researchers and analysts argue that the fact that poor and minority students are the least likely to have qualified teachers is itself a major contributor to the achievement gap. It follows that assigning experienced, qualified teachers to low-performing schools and students is likely to pay off in better performance and narrowing gaps.

This is sometimes easier said than done. Some attempts to redistribute good teachers to low-performing schools have not been entirely successful. The most common strategy has been to offer pay increases or signing bonuses for teachers to come to high-need areas or to teach high-need subjects. Massachusetts, for example, offered a \$20,000 signing bonus to attract qualified candidates into the teaching profession. Yet even when the incentives were substantial, teachers have not always been willing to go to or to stay in difficult schools. Major drawbacks to these efforts were: (1) not enough attention to what was needed to retain teachers, and (2) too much attention to individuals and too little on schools (Liu, Johnson, and Peske 2003).

What these results mean is that incentives to work in hard-to-staff schools should also take into account the working conditions they provide for teachers. For example, low-performing schools often have weak organizational supports for teachers. Often they do not have a culture of high expectations for students and teachers or that values teacher learning, collegiality, and cooperation. Districts also need strategies to ensure that these schools have strong and resourceful principals and that teachers have sustained professional learning opportunities, including intensive long-term new teacher-induction programs, in which they can work with colleague to continually sharpen and upgrade their knowledge and skills. (see [high-performing, high-poverty schools](#))

This research also suggests that scattering a handful of good teachers around the district is not going to produce wide-ranging results. One study has identified a teacher quality "tipping point" when the proportion of underqualified teachers is about 20 percent of the total school faculty. Beyond this point, schools no longer have the ability to improve student achievement (Shields, Esch, Humphrey, Young, Gaston, and Hunt 1999). Clearly, districts need to recruit, develop, and retain a well-qualified teaching force.

Toward a highly qualified teacher in every classroom

Questions still remain for research to answer. Most of the effective teacher studies, for example, have focused on elementary school. While a few studies suggest that the teaching effect is somewhat less in high school, a lot more needs to be discovered before we can make that statement with confidence. In addition, the conflicting findings on the effectiveness of alternate route teachers need to be resolved, especially since many districts rely on such non-traditional candidates to deal with teacher shortages. We also need to know more about the incentives and working conditions that will attract highly effective teachers to traditionally hard-to-staff schools.

But as this review has shown, there is already enough evidence to show unequivocally that good teachers are vital to raising student achievement and closing achievement gaps. The challenge for districts is to ensure that every classroom is staffed by a skilled, qualified teacher.

There are a number of actions to take:

- Districts can step up recruitment efforts to hire teacher candidates who have strong academic credentials and who have completed a rigorous teacher preparation program.
- District recruiters could assess the rigor of teacher preparation programs by closely examining transcripts and other records that identify and describe the actual courses that teacher candidates have taken in order to be certified. This information could prompt K–16 discussions between districts and institutions of higher education regarding ways to ensure that teacher preparation programs explicitly address the districts' needs.

- States and districts can also collaborate with higher education to target and recruit top candidates to enter teaching. K-16 partnerships can further help address areas of shortage through dual enrollment agreements, faculty sharing and distance learning opportunities.
- For newly hired teachers, districts can establish and maintain intensive, long-term induction programs that focus on helping new teachers meet challenging professional performance standards.

States and districts can also explore value-added methods for monitoring teacher effectiveness, such as those used in Texas, North Carolina and other states. This data helps inform decisions about where to assign teachers, how to staff schools, and what supports and professional development opportunities are needed in order to maximize the benefits of the most valuable academic resource, teachers.

The Center for Public Education will continue to monitor state and district efforts to provide each child with a highly qualified, effective teacher.

This document was prepared by Policy Studies Associates (PSA). PSA, based in Washington, D.C., is a research and evaluation consulting firm specializing in education and youth development. Its clients include federal, state, and local government agencies, foundations, and other organizations.

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¹ Teach for America (TFA) is an AmeriCorps program that places recent college graduates in teaching positions in high-need districts throughout the country. Participants typically do not have education backgrounds and receive a brief training and induction period before beginning their teaching assignments. It should be noted, however, that TFA is highly competitive and often attracts students from top universities.

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Teachers Matter

Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement



Many people emphasize the importance of good teachers, and many local, state, and federal policies are designed to promote teacher quality. Research using student scores on standardized tests confirms the common perception that some teachers are more effective than others and also reveals that being taught by an effective teacher has important consequences for student achievement.



Teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of schooling.

Many factors contribute to a student's academic performance, including individual characteristics and family and neighborhood experiences. But research suggests that, among school-related factors, teachers matter most. When it comes to student performance on reading and math tests, a teacher is estimated to have two to three times the impact of any other school factor, including services, facilities, and even leadership.



Nonschool factors do influence student achievement, but they are largely outside a school's control.

Some research suggests that, compared with teachers, individual and family characteristics may have four to eight times the impact on student achievement. But policy discussions focus on teachers because it is arguably easier for public policy to improve teaching than to change students' personal characteristics or family circumstances. Effective teaching has the potential to help level the playing field.



Effective teachers are best identified by their performance, not by their background or experience.

Despite common perceptions, effective teachers cannot reliably be identified based on where they went to school, whether they're licensed, or (after the first few years) how long they've taught. The best way to assess teachers' effectiveness is to look at their on-the-job performance, including what they do in the classroom and how much progress their students make on achievement tests. This has led to more policies that require evaluating teachers' on-the-job performance, based in part on evidence about their students' learning.



Effective teachers tend to stay effective even when they change schools.

Recent evidence suggests that a teacher's impact on student achievement remains reasonably consistent even if the teacher changes schools and regardless of whether the new school is more or less advantaged than the old one.



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The Impact of Effective Teachers and Principals

Accelerating Student Performance by Focusing On What Matters Most in Our Schools

July 2010



Partnership
for Learning

**What matters most when it comes to increasing student achievement?
Small class sizes? Whether a child lives in poverty?
A fair and equitable state school finance formula?**

While the above, and much more, play a role in raising student achievement, *teacher and principal effectiveness has a greater impact on student learning than any other factor in a school system.*

Studies across the nation demonstrate the impact of teacher and principal effectiveness in increasing student performance:

- In Texas, the increase student test scores can be traced to a teacher’s effectiveness and it is 20 times more likely to improve student achievement any other variableⁱ;
- In Los Angeles schools, the difference between the performance of a student assigned to a top-quartile teacher rather than a bottom-quartile teacher averaged 10 percentile points on a standardized math testⁱⁱ; and
- In North Carolina, a strong teacher in a classroom has 14 times the impact on student

achievement as decreasing the class size by five students.ⁱⁱⁱ

Great schools cannot exist without great teachers and principals. In order to accelerate student performance states must enact policies and procedures that attract, recruit, retain, develop, compensate, and promote the best possible talent in our classrooms. As displayed in Figure 1 by The New Teacher Project, effective teachers and principals are supported by a comprehensive human capital system working in concert to optimize the supply of quality teachers and principals, and manage their effectiveness.

How to enact these foundational policies is a source of debate. Yet, one thing is certain, the status quo approach to developing effective teacher and principal corps can no longer continue. Not only does the achievement of future generations

One thing is certain, the status quo approach to developing effective teacher and principal corps can no longer continue.

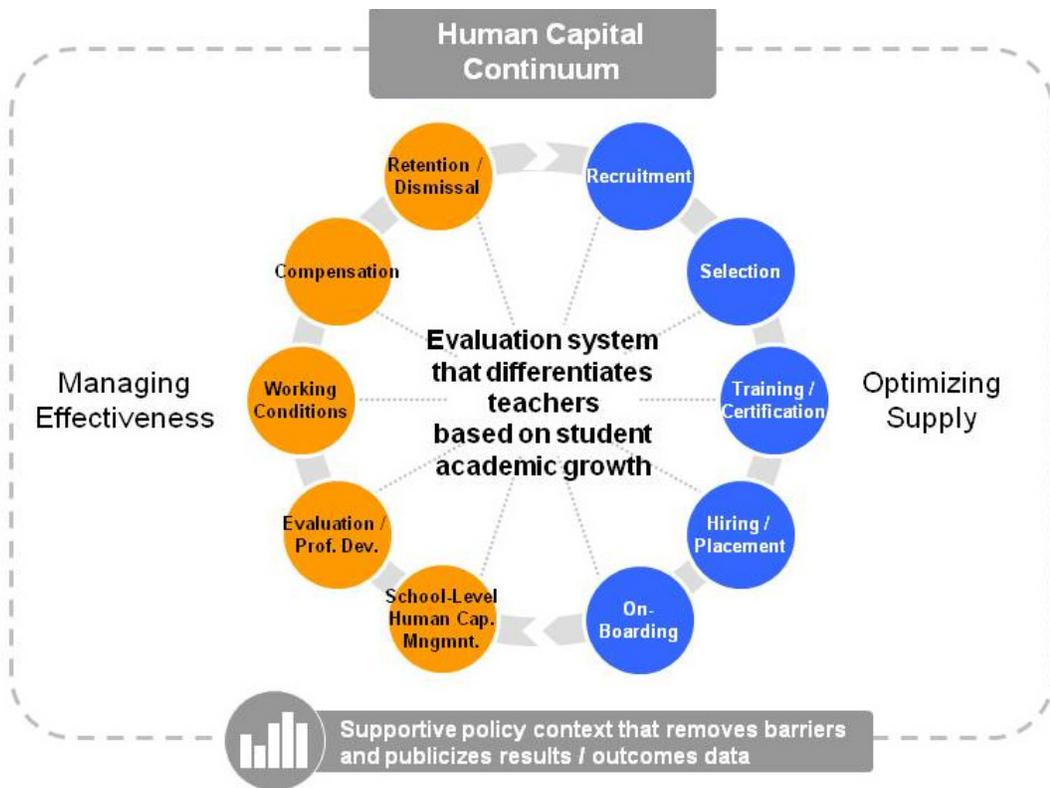


Figure 1: Education leaders must use clear evaluations of teacher effectiveness to inform decisions at each step of the human capital continuum.

Source: *The New Teacher Project*

depend on a high-quality teachers and principals, but the Obama Administration is giving federal grant awards to support states that change their human capital practices to create conditions in which students receive the high-quality classroom instruction and school leadership that they deserve.

Teacher Effectiveness in Washington

Recent efforts to grade Washington state on its teacher quality policies paint a mixed picture. In a report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Center for American Progress, “Leaders and Laggards: A State-by-State Report Card on Educational Innovation,” Washington received an “A” grade for a 21st-century teaching force.^{iv} The authors commended the state for requiring incoming teachers to take a basic skills test, assessing high school teachers on content knowledge, and requiring graduates of alternative route programs to demonstrate content knowledge. But the annual State Teacher Policy Yearbook, published by the National Council on Teacher Quality, gave Washington a “D+” for its efforts in 2009 – down from a “C-” the year before.^v The authors praised Washington for its requirement of annual evaluations for all teachers, but faulted the state for not linking tenure and evaluation decisions to objective evidence of teacher effectiveness and for lacking an efficient termination process for ineffective teachers.

Furthermore, the state’s Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) forecasts that Washington will need more than 460 math and 400 science teachers – above current rates of production – to fill current shortages and to implement the new course requirements in math and science.^{vi} Given this, developing a high-quality recruitment program designed to attract, retain and develop effective teachers is crucial in Washington.

The New Teacher Project (TNTP) confirms this supply problem in Boosting the Supply and Effectiveness of Washington’s STEM Teachers, its recent study on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) instruction in Washington. The report, which was based on teacher, principal and administrator surveys in three leading school districts and on analyses of state policy, finds that many administrators, particularly in high-poverty schools, are unsatisfied with the quality of math

and science instruction in their schools because of the limited pool of talent. Indeed, one district’s low-poverty schools had three times as many applicants for high school science positions as did its high-poverty schools.^{vii}

Washington’s student achievement gap will continue to increase without concrete action. As states vie for federal dollars they are proposing key reforms to implement stronger teacher evaluation and tenure policies. States such as Florida, Louisiana and Tennessee have enacted legislation that requires 50 percent of a teacher and principal’s evaluation to be based on student academic achievement, as defined by growth in standardized test scores or other objective measures. In Washington, data from The New Teacher Project (TNTP) study, Boosting the Supply and Effectiveness of Washington’s STEM Teachers, identified that 70 percent of teachers and administrators believe that the current evaluation process does not provide meaningful feedback or identify professional development and only 46 percent of teachers indicating that their evaluation helps improve their instruction.^{viii} As other states have revamped their evaluation process to include student growth data as a means to providing teachers with more impactful data, and in some cases, used the evaluations for major decisions such as tenure, compensation, promotion, or dismissal, Washington state trails behind despite data indicating that teachers seek this type of evaluation structure.

Successful Human Capital Initiatives

Colleges and universities prepare the majority of teachers, and they will continue to do so. But many states and districts have worked with national organizations to recruit candidates from different backgrounds and majors, including career-changers and college graduates from elite universities who have deep content knowledge but are not education majors. Examples of such programs include Teach for America and The New Teacher Project, which heavily screen their applicants and rely on short (six weeks, for example), intense preparation sessions before their candidates enter classrooms. In some districts, TNTP also works closely with their human resources offices to improve recruitment, screening, and induction of all new hires, regardless of what program they came from.

Washington will need more than 460 math and 400 science teachers to fill current shortages and to implement the new course requirements in math and science.

In Louisiana, one study found that teachers who came through TNTP outperformed graduates of traditional teacher education programs in terms of increasing student achievement.^{ix} Recruiting also must focus on the next generation of school leaders, with groups such as New Leaders for New Schools filling that niche (see sidebar). In December 2008, Washington's Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB) released a report to the legislature that recommended that the state fund Teacher Residency and Fellowship programs, operated by Teach for America (TFA) or The New Teacher Project (TNTP), with oversight by the PESB.

Legislation passed during Washington's 2010 legislative session authorizes the PESB to implement alternative teaching preparation programs operated by community colleges and non-higher education providers such as TFA and TNTP.

While these programs cannot fill all vacancies or even the majority, they are one source of talent. In the end, teacher surveys consistently show that low starting salaries and poor or average working conditions are reasons that many undergraduates do not pursue teaching – or why so many teachers leave after a few years in the classroom. Many states have labored to increase their starting salaries, and some, like North Carolina, administer publicly reported teacher working condition surveys to focus administrators' attention on improving classroom conditions.

Teacher preparation is another area that is receiving renewed scrutiny around the country, with colleges and universities being asked to better align teacher colleges to the needs of districts, particularly urban districts. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, in a speech at Columbia University's Teachers College, noted, "By almost any standard, many if not most of the nation's 1,450 schools, colleges, and departments of education are doing a mediocre job of preparing teachers for the realities of the 21st century classroom. America's university-based teacher preparation programs need revolutionary change – not evolutionary tinkering."^x

Increasingly, the federal government is asking states to demonstrate how they will publicly report teacher effectiveness by preparation program. The goal is to not only to guide districts in their recruitment, but also to help preparation programs understand how they need to adapt.

Louisiana has established a promising model to link teacher preparation programs and student performance. The Bayou State was the first in the nation to track teacher preparation institutions based on student achievement data linked to their graduates. As a result, teacher preparation programs in the state – whether they are universities or non-traditional

Principals for a New Generation

The Story of New Leaders for New Schools

New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS), a national non-profit, provides a pathway for current and former educators to become outstanding principals of urban public schools. NLNS identifies and admits exceptional individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

Its recruitment is driven primarily by nominations and the application process is highly competitive. A selection committee composed of national and district-based staff members, including former teachers, principals, business executives and superintendents, selects less than seven percent of those who apply. Two-thirds of New Leaders are people of color, ranging from age 26 to 60 and all representing diverse professional backgrounds.

All New Leaders have prior teaching experience, with half coming directly from schools and the others from outside universities, companies, nonprofit organizations and foundations. The salary-loss barrier to enter the profession is minimized because the program is just over a year long and involves a paid, year-long principal residency.

Once selected, the New Leader undergoes an intense summer program of coursework, spends a yearlong residency under a mentor principal, receives ongoing feedback and support from a coach, and, if successful, is placed as principal of an urban school.

New Leaders requires applicants to have K-12 teaching experience, as well as adherence to 10 core principles of belief in students' capabilities, orientation toward results, and good communication skills, among others. Interest in the program has grown as more states and districts search for qualified principals. Studies are showing that over the nine years of the program, elementary and middle schools led by New Leaders are making academic gains at faster rates than their peers in other schools. Graduation rates are also climbing in high schools led by New Leaders.

Source: New Leaders for New Schools, www.nlins.org.

programs – can use student outcome data from their graduates to make improvements. Secretary Duncan praised the University of Louisiana at Lafayette for increasing its admissions and graduation requirements after results indicated that graduates were struggling to effectively teach English in the field.^{xi} With a robust state evaluation model that measures student growth and a longitudinal data system that links students to teachers and teachers to their education program, Washington state can make the same comparisons.

A crucial piece of the educator quality puzzle is the evaluation of teachers and principals through an objective measure, like student growth data. One district that has long embraced this notion is the Memphis City Schools. The 105,000-student district applied for and received a grant of nearly \$100 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to enact its “Teacher Effectiveness Initiative,” which would re-engineer the districts entire system of teacher induction, promotion, compensation, evaluation and support. This new model would place student progress at the heart of all human capital decisions, as well as provide the city’s most highly effective teachers with opportunities to share their skills through new career pathways. There are four components to this model:

1. Implementing a new teacher effectiveness measure, a critical component for evaluating teachers that will bear on decisions regarding tenure, dismissal, compensation and other areas. In Tennessee, a new state law requires that at least 35 percent of evaluations will be based on the state’s value-added student growth measure, with another 15 percent coming from an approved list of objective growth measures.
2. Bolstering the numbers of effective teachers in the district through a combination of recruiting high-quality teachers, retaining high-quality teachers and culling low-performing teachers.
3. Improving the support, utilization, and evaluation of teachers. This step involves the creation of a Teacher Talent Office and a modified compensation system.
4. Improving the context for teaching, including deepening principal leadership capacity, improving school culture, and developing new technology systems.

These four goals reinforce each other and allow Memphis to rethink its teacher pipeline. In addition, the city’s teachers union was involved in developing the initiative.

A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Human Capital Challenges

The Obama Administration’s 2011 budget request seeks to raise education spending by \$3.5 billion overall with much of the budget dedicated to continuing and expanding the grant programs created under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. These programs are focused on five major policy areas—one of which is effective teaching and leadership.

It will take political will, intense collaboration, and resources to change practices in Washington state related to teacher quality. This will mean working closely with those who will be most affected by the changes – district leaders, administrators, and teachers – and ensuring that underlying data and assessment systems allow the types of measurements that new teacher-quality policies require.

Specifically, implementing the following policies will significantly increase the quality and impact of teachers and principals in increasing student achievement.

Revamp principals’ and teachers’ evaluations to include student growth as a significant measure

Teachers often note that their evaluations do not provide them with enough information or support to improve. Student achievement should never be the sole criterion of an evaluation – but to ignore this data completely de-values a teacher’s impact.

As part of Washington’s recent mandate through Senate bill 6696, the state will require districts to implement a new teacher evaluation system by 2013–14. To prepare for this, and learn from best practices in other districts, the state is launching a series of “pilot districts” that are capable of exploring different evaluation models. Districts participating in the pilot program are in an excellent position to advance the state’s evaluation system to one that is truly robust and comprehensive by including a in the model a significant measure of student growth data.

By piloting an evaluation model with student growth data as a significant factor, the state will be much more likely to adopt a statewide model that will

It will take political will, intense collaboration, and resources to change practices in Washington state related to teacher quality.

advance teacher and principal effectiveness. This means scaling up models that highlight targeted professional development for teachers and principals that have been identified as ineffective and for best practices by teachers and principals to be replicated and scaled throughout the state.

Include evaluations and student growth indicators in key human capital decisions

School districts rarely make decisions about their teachers and principals – hiring, placement, transfers, layoffs, compensation, and tenure – based on effectiveness. More often, these decisions are made based on seniority or other factors. A revamped evaluation system, along with training for principals on how to use it, should ground these decisions in student growth as the primary factor. Washington policymakers should take advantage of current federal funding opportunities to propose innovative ways to use teacher and principal effectiveness data to inform (as defined by growth in student academic achievement, as opposed to absolute performance) decisions such as compensation, tenure, promotion, or dismissal.

Expand alternate routes to attract talent into education leadership positions.

Colleges of education are the major provider of principals, but they do not have to be the only ones. There is emerging evidence that principals who come from non-traditional preparation programs have a significant impact on student achievement. Washington should expand its alternative route programs to include programs that develop principals, not just teachers. Alternative route principal preparation programs can attract qualified applicants, place them in a rigorous pre-service program, and enable them to become certified to fill the next generation of principalships.

Require districts to conduct annual evaluations and better monitor these evaluations

Teachers are evaluated every year for their first four years, and at least once every three years after. This is not enough to gauge effectiveness. Instead, the state should require districts to conduct annual evaluations of all teachers and principals. Furthermore, Washington requires administrators to be trained in evaluation procedures, but not

on an ongoing basis. In addition, there is no requirement that districts monitor principals' evaluations of teachers to ensure accuracy, fairness, and consistency. This must change.

Evaluate teacher preparation institutions

Washington's longitudinal data system is capable of connecting student achievement to individual teachers and their teacher preparation institutions; yet the state has not built out its data system to enable this link. Student achievement data linked to preparation institutions should be publicly reported. High-performing programs should be expanded, while low-performing programs should be eliminated.

Implement a common statewide evaluation model

The state passed legislation during the 2010 session that creates a new, four-tiered evaluation model. This is a significant improvement on the model the state has been using which since 1975 and only has two ratings—satisfactory or unsatisfactory. While the state is considering adopting a common statewide evaluation model, each of the 295 districts will be able to implement their own evaluation system. This will make teacher and principal effectiveness comparisons from district-to-district difficult.

Highly-effective teachers and principals make a fundamental difference in children's lives. Recruiting, inducting, supporting, and promoting talented teachers and principals can be achieved through policies that thoughtfully measure the impact they have, help them improve, and foster preparation programs that help them succeed. Taken collectively, the changes outlined in this document can put Washington at the forefront of the nation in growing teacher and principal talent, ensuring high-quality instruction for every child, and making the state competitive for forthcoming federal dollars.



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About Partnership for Learning

Partnership for Learning is an independent, statewide nonprofit organization that communicates about Washington State's school improvement efforts and the need to better prepare ALL of our high school graduates for the demands of today's global society.

FYI

EDUCATION WEEK

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New Tools Gauge Fidelity of Lessons to Common Core

By Catherine Gewertz

Arlington, Va.

The 53 teachers gathered around tables here have been called to a new kind of jury duty. But they won't be deciding whether a fellow citizen is guilty of a crime: Their charge is to pass judgment on stacks of instructional materials.

Amid papers and coffee cups, they pore over a 90-page curricular unit on constitutional freedoms. In Socratic rounds of discussion, they explore the high school unit from dozens of angles, looking for fidelity to the common core.

How clearly does the unit state its purpose? Does it expect students to read texts that are rich and complex enough? Does it offer sufficient support for students who are struggling? Does it provide good, clear ways to assess how well students are learning as they go along?

These teachers are trying to answer one of the most vexing questions in the age of common-core instruction: Which materials fully reflect the new standards for English/language arts and mathematics? They've come to this suburb of the nation's capital from more than 20 states to learn and practice a new rating system for lessons and units that purport to be "fully aligned" with the Common Core State Standards.

The new system, called EQUiP, represents one way that teachers are trying to make sense of the flood of curricular offerings that's been unleashed by the nearly nationwide adoption of the common standards.

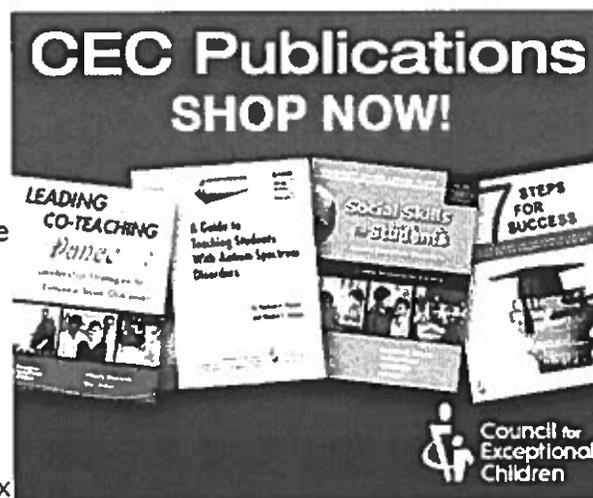
There are other tools or processes, too, that are designed to evaluate instructional materials for common-core alignment. The two national teachers' unions have launched free portals where teachers can post and comment on lessons. Student Achievement Partners, whose founders led the writing of the common standards, has a set of free online tools that can be used to judge the fidelity of instructional materials to the standards.

Reviewing Materials

For-profit groups—like the Austin, Texas-based Learning List, which uses panels of judges to size up instructional materials—are also wading into the alignment-evaluation business. The Business Roundtable is talking with partners about creating a group to do "Consumer Reports-type reviews" of common-core materials.

And a group of experts led by Maria M. Klawe, the president of Harvey Mudd College, is creating a

[Back to Story](#)



nonprofit to review the most widely used common-core math materials.

The EQuIP program was created by **Achieve**, a Washington-based nonprofit organization that played a key role in launching the common-standards initiative in 2009. Achieve has worked for many years with states on academic expectations and accountability.

The approach for EQuIP originated with the work of three states—Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island—that designed a set of criteria to use in judging lessons and units for alignment with the standards.

The **Tri-State Rubric**, as it came to be known, created a buzz as other states tried it out and sought training to spread its use among teachers and curriculum writers. Achieve renamed the project EQuIP—for **Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products**—and began training for states, districts, teachers' unions, colleges of education, and others interested in using it.

Achieve selected its first round of teacher-jurors last June. It chose a second group in November. Both groups came together late last month for training and practice using the rubrics—checklists of criteria—to evaluate math and English/language arts lessons and units that had been submitted by states, districts, groups of teachers, and nonprofit curriculum developers.

Jurors have reviewed about 40 of the 125-plus lessons and units that have been submitted so far, and of those, only nine have been deemed sufficiently aligned to be posted as resources on the EQuIP website, according to Alissa Peltzman, a vice president of Achieve who leads the project.

Curricular materials produced by large publishing houses—which dominate tens of thousands of classrooms—haven't been submitted to EQuIP for review, Ms. Peltzman said. EQuIP doesn't anticipate evaluating much from that sector, either, in part because of licensing restrictions that limit those materials' use, she said, and in part because it lacks the capacity to analyze such a big volume of materials.

At the session here in Arlington, Va., reaching consensus on whether a lesson was aligned wasn't easy

EVALUATING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Educators who review curricular units and instructional lessons as part of Achieve's "EQuIP" program evaluate four aspects, or "dimensions," of the materials submitted. Below are highlights of some of the English/language arts criteria they consider.

Do They:

I. Aligning to the Common Core State Standards.

- Target a set of grade-level standards?
- Include a clear and explicit purpose for instruction?
- Choose texts that measure within students' grade-level band?

II. Reflecting key shifts of the standards.

- Require students to read text closely for evidence and deep meaning?
- Facilitate rich, rigorous evidence-based discussion and writing through thought-provoking, text-dependent questions?
- Expect students to draw evidence from texts to produce clear, coherent writing that informs, explains, or argues?

III. Responding to students' varied needs for instructional support.

- Cultivate student interest and engagement?
- Integrate appropriate supports in reading, writing, listening, and speaking for students who read below grade level, are English-learners, or have disabilities?
- Provide extensions and/or more advanced text for students who read well above grade level?

IV. Regularly assessing whether students are mastering the content and skills in the lesson/unit.

- Elicit direct, observable evidence of degree of mastery?
- Provide sufficient guidelines for interpreting student performance?

or quick. It took all day to evaluate and rate the constitutional-freedoms unit, with rounds of detailed analysis and areas of disagreement.

One table of teachers, for instance, was deeply divided on whether the unit lived up to a key criterion in the rubric: stating a "clear and explicit purpose for

instruction." The teachers also disagreed about whether the unit met a criterion that required materials to demand a good deal of writing based on evidence in a text.

One middle school teacher criticized the unit for providing "scaffolding," or support, for students in the assignments but not in the readings. A group of elementary school teachers at a nearby table got into an animated debate about whether the unit's reading material from primary and secondary sources was challenging enough, yet still accessible to students.

Terri King Hunt, a teacher from Atlanta, told the group that she thought the unit fell short on that criterion.

"You could say you threw a lot of material at them, but what did they get out of it?" she said.

Next to Ms. Hunt, Kay Dugan, an assistant superintendent from Bensenville, Ill., pressed her colleagues to "be hard" in sizing up how well the unit provides ways to assess student learning day to day. "We need to get better at giving students feedback through formative assessment," she told them.

Cautionary Notes

Since this was a sample exercise, votes on rating each "dimension" of the materials were taken by a show of hands. Collectively, the teachers voting showed they thought the unit needed significant revision.

Had it been a real evaluation, three or more reviewers would have graded each dimension on a scale of 0 to 3, and written explicit feedback to guide developers in revising the materials. Then a "lead reviewer" would have written one evaluation, summarizing the feedback and assigning an overall rating.

The materials rated "exemplar" or "exemplar if improved" would be posted on EQuIP's website. Those needing more revision, or not yet ready for review, would not be posted, but feedback would be returned to the developers.

Guiding curriculum developers is a central aim of the EQuIP project. In fact, a section of the training was devoted to giving effective feedback.

"It's easy to get cranky, like 'Why didn't you do *this*?' and 'If I were teaching this, I'd do it *this* way,'" Judson Odell, one of the facilitators of the training, told the participants. "Try to stay positive."

The first round of EQuIP judging returned individual reviewers' comments to developers. That feedback could be "conflicted and confusing" because of the differences in each reviewer's comments, Ms. Peltzman of Achieve said. So another layer—the lead review—has been added to the process in an attempt to send clear, overall messages about the revisions needed.

Note: A full version of this evaluation rubric and a companion document for mathematics are on the EQuIP website at www.achieve.org/EQuIP.

Sources: Achieve; Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products

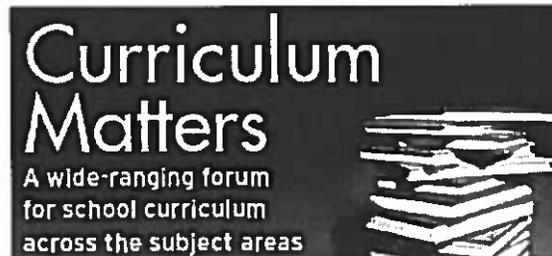
Evaluating instructional materials for quality or alignment is inherently thorny and subjective, and reaching consensus can be tricky. Assembling juries of experts to make those choices is hardly new.

In 19 states, panels comb through submitted materials and decide what to include on an "adoption list" from which districts must choose if they purchase materials with state funds. Elsewhere, districts are left to shop for themselves.

Even those who welcome the evaluations by EQuIP and other organizations voice cautionary notes about the process.

Sandy Hayes, the immediate past president of the National Council of Teachers of English, said the EQuIP guidelines are "terrific tools for conversation" as teachers write lessons together in their schools. But she worries that a rating system could subtly work to narrow the concept of "good" materials.

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"In talking about what's good, sometimes people can be silenced, or there's this 'groupthink' that happens, when you find yourself compromising to get consensus," Ms. Hayes said. "I just wonder what's lost in that process."

Another risk in creating panels to evaluate materials is that their findings can be viewed as silver bullets.

Jim Burke, an English teacher at Burlingame High School in California, said it's important to avoid mistaking any panel's approved materials for a "total curriculum solution."

"It does give you some assurance of quality about the 'what,' but it doesn't deal with the heart of the work—the 'how'—how you are teaching your students," he said.

Educators who had come to the Virginia training and EQuIP jurors were eager, however, to see how the process could help them, and cadres of colleagues back home, move forward with the common standards. They seemed particularly interested in its value as a tool for creating their own instructional materials.

In Idaho, a small team of literacy coaches at the state department of education will use the EQuIP process this spring to help 250 teachers write model units, said Christopher Butts, one of the state coaches, who is serving as an EQuIP juror.

Suzanne Snider, a curriculum coordinator, said many of the teachers in her districts in California's San Bernardino County "haven't had a lot of direction" in figuring out what constitutes real alignment to the common core. "Teachers have been going on Pinterest, for goodness' sake," she said. "We really need this."

Different Uses

States, districts, and vendors have been using the EQuIP tools in a variety of ways. The Maryland education department submitted sample lessons and units, and found the reviewers' feedback "explicit and valuable," said Ava B. Spencer, the state's English/language arts coordinator. Teachers

are working on revisions based on that feedback, she said.

In North Carolina, the state education department has used the EQUiP rubrics in training to help teachers think about how to design their own curriculum materials, said Julie Joslin, who oversees English/language arts. Eight regional programs in the fall of 2012 proved so popular that the department added seven more the next winter and spring, she said.

"We would get phone calls all the time, 'Is this a common-core-aligned lesson?' " Ms. Joslin said. "Teachers were struggling to understand what that is, and the rubric does help with that."

Washington state has used EQUiP's evaluation criteria as it searches for open education resources to build a digital library that the state legislature mandated in 2012. But "one of the big questions people had about open education resources was 'It's free, but is it good?' " said Barbara Soots, the state's program manager for such resources.

In scouring instructional materials from such sources as the Library of Congress, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and those developed by other states, including New York and Utah, Washington state's panel of reviewers is employing a handful of evaluation tools as guidance, Ms. Soots said.

Along with EQUiP, which evaluates lessons and units, it is also using Student Achievement Partners' **Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool**, which is more focused on full-course content, she said.

'A Wild West Moment'

Expeditionary Learning has been both a consumer and a subject of the EQUiP process. The New York City-based nonprofit company, which runs 170 regular and charter schools, used the criteria to shape an English/language arts curriculum for grades 3-8 in New York state, and then submitted the curriculum to EQUiP reviewers for evaluation.

Scott Hartl, its chief executive officer, said he viewed participation in the evaluation process as important because of the way the curricular landscape is evolving in the common-core era.

"It's a Wild West moment, with lots of people saying their materials are aligned to these new expectations," he said. "We wanted our curriculum to go through the rigors of smart folks with a common vision looking at our stuff in relationship to what was out there."

No curriculum developer can rightfully draw conclusions yet about what's good, Mr. Hartl said. That will be left to time and experience.

"There has been a tremendous wave of innovation and new-product creation that eventually will get sorted out by real-life market forces," he said. "That's what will show us the results."



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Includes correction(s): February 13, 2014

Stakes Are High for K-12 Policy in 2014 Elections

Campaigns start in earnest

By Andrew Ujifusa

State elections involving three dozen governors and more than 6,000 legislators this year could have major consequences for a variety of education policies, with the Common Core State Standards, school choice, collective bargaining, and early education among the topics most likely to get time in the spotlight and on the stump.

In some states, the 2014 elections may prove pivotal for the fate of controversial education measures enacted as a result of Republicans' strong showing in 2010. The GOP took control of 12 additional state legislatures and six more governorships that year.

The list of state elections includes 36 gubernatorial contests and legislative races in all but four states (Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, and Virginia). There are also seven elections for state schools superintendent, as well as announced or official ballot initiatives related to K-12 education in a number of states, including Hawaii, Nevada, and New York.

Houses Divided

As of last week, the GOP controlled 26 legislatures and 29 governorships nationwide. In total, Republicans **control both the executive and legislative branches** of government in 23 states, while 15 states are in the hands of Democrats, and 11 are split, according to information from the National Conference of State Legislatures. (Nebraska has a unicameral, nonpartisan legislature.)

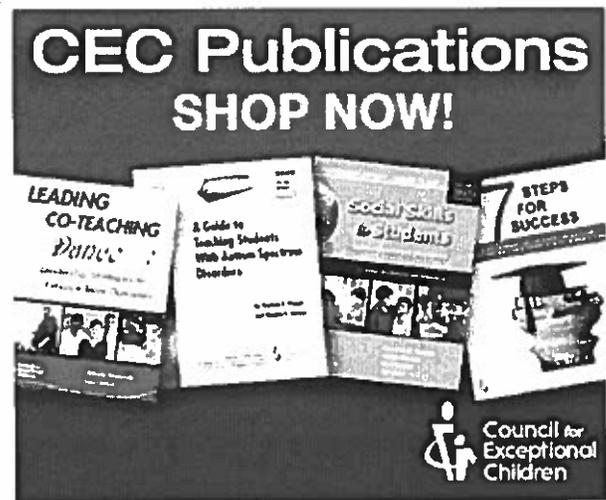
Only four legislatures have divided partisan control, down from eight four years ago, when Democrats controlled 27 legislatures.

Following state elections in 2010 and afterward that gave Republicans dominance over state government nationwide, many legislators and governors have been aggressive in instituting new policies affecting such matters as school accountability, teacher evaluation, and school employment.

For example, since 2011, nine states have adopted A-F school accountability systems. All of those states except Virginia have elected new Republican governors in 2010 or since.

The issue of such ratings can be tricky politically. To the extent that Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction Janet Barresi, a Republican, faces opposition in her re-election bid, including in the GOP primary, resistance to A-F accountability as it has been implemented in the state could be a factor. The system has been revised several times since it was adopted in 2011, but some people in the state have complained that it still doesn't work as intended, or that it unfairly punishes

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schools.

Collective Bargaining

The 2014 elections will also test the voting public's response to, and the durability of, changes reducing public employees' collective-bargaining power that GOP leaders such as Gov. Scott Walker (Wisconsin) and Gov. Rick Snyder (Michigan) championed. In Mr. Walker's case, his push that won adoption of those changes sparked an unsuccessful recall election in 2012.

It's far from clear that those dramatic shifts in states' approaches to public employees will end up hurting lawmakers at the ballot box.

"I don't know if the unions have figured out a good way to make the case of, 'Hey, they're being mean to us teachers and they're hurting our bargaining rights.' That is a tough sell," said Michael J. Petrilli, the executive vice president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute in Washington.

But the chance to push back on those kinds of signature accomplishments from some lawmakers, combined with a desire to pressure leaders to restore funding and services, could invigorate many races and provide more opportunities for traditional education leaders.

"It's impossible to talk about your strategy in 2014 without going back and looking what happened in 2010," said Karen White, the national political director of the National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' union, with 3 million members.

In fact, Ms. White said, the NEA has decided to invest more than 80 percent of its 2014 election war chest in state races, the largest-ever percentage the group has devoted to state contests. (At the federal level, all seats in the House of Representatives and 36 Senate seats will also be on the ballot this year.)

The pressure of such commitments by key education players, or the anticipation of it, could be having an effect before the election season really heats up.

Last week, Florida Gov. Rick Scott, a Republican facing a tough re-election bid against one-time Gov. Charlie Crist, now a Democrat, **proposed a \$542 million increase** for state education funding. It is the second year in a row that Gov. Scott has pushed such a K-12 funding boost.

Other Republican chief executives, including Gov. Nathan Deal of Georgia and Gov. Susana Martinez of New Mexico, have put forth education funding increases in their proposed budgets this year.

Of the 36 gubernatorial contests, GOP incumbents are running or are eligible to do so in 20.

"I think a lot of the tea party governors should be fearful, because they're going to be facing very energized public employees," said Michael T. Hartney, a researcher at the University of Notre Dame who tracks state elections.

Common-Core Anxiety

But the education issue with the biggest peril for state

Legislative Control: Who's in Charge?

Republicans control most state legislatures. Democrats hold narrow margins in the Colorado and the Iowa Senates, while the same is true for the GOP in the Iowa House and the Wisconsin Senate.



officials in 2014 could be what to do, and say, about the common-core standards.

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

For both the left and the right, the common core could open the door for partisans to pursue other K-12 issues, including a shortage of resources in the face of new mandates, the privacy of student data, and claims of federal intrusion.

The common-core issue could be particularly difficult, however, for Republicans in tough primary elections over the spring and summer. GOP candidates in those races might have very little to gain from vigorously defending the standards, which have been adopted by all but a handful of states, and a great deal to lose by doing so.

That is particularly the case among voters in the Republican base who fear that the common core—an initiative led by groups representing the nation's governors and state schools chiefs, but with strong federal backing—amounts to federal encroachment on local schools.

"They're really upset with their state governments ... they realize that the governors and legislators should have said 'No,' and they didn't," said Emmett McGroarty, the education director at the American Principles Project, a Washington-based advocacy group that opposes the common core. "That's why it's the moms going into the statehouse saying, 'Excuse me, I'm upset that my children are learning this and being taught in this way, and why is it that your signature is on this piece of paper?' "

His group has worked with at least one statewide candidate, South Carolina superintendent candidate Sheri Few, a Republican.

At least one GOP governor up for re-election has already taken a firm stance regarding the common core, which covers English/language arts and mathematics.

In remarks Jan. 16 to a local Republican Party club, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley said she would sign a state Senate bill repealing the adoption of the common core in her state. She justified her position (**which she originally staked out in 2012**) by saying that children in her state should not be educated in the same way as those in California, reportedly saying, "We are telling the legislature: Roll back common core. Let's take it back to South Carolina standards."

Even those candidates who don't use language that is explicitly against the standards are more likely to tiptoe whenever the common core comes up in debates and interviews.

"They aren't going to come out and stump for them, because they'll either want to protect their tails, or they'll say, 'I like standards,' " said Arnold Shober, a professor of government at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wis., who tracks state K-12 governance issues.

Business organizations, like local and state chambers of commerce, might step up campaign and lobbying efforts to shore up the spines of governors and key legislators who start feeling heat from questions about the common core at campaign forums. ("**Business Groups Defend Common**

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Standards," Jan. 29, 2014.)

An approach that may prove popular for many lawmakers is the one articulated recently by Gov. Walker, the Wisconsin Republican, and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat. Despite reviews of the common core by officials in their respective states, both governors have claimed dissatisfaction with either the substance of the standards, in the case of Mr. Walker, or how they have been implemented, a concern Mr. Cuomo has expressed.

Gov. Walker and Gov. Cuomo have said their states should review the common core again.

The number of governors seeking to shield the common core—and their re-election bids—through executive orders could also grow. Those orders, which have been issued by four GOP governors eligible for re-election this year, **including Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad**, assert their states' control over content standards but don't toss the common standards overboard.

Test in Texas

One interesting case study for the power of education in gubernatorial campaigns is in the race to replace Texas GOP Gov. Rick Perry, who won't seek another term.

In the Lone Star State, one of the Democratic gubernatorial candidates with the highest profiles of any in the nation, state Sen. Wendy Davis, has made education a key issue in her campaign.

After declaring the importance of public schools to Texans at her campaign kickoff speech in October, Sen. Davis subsequently released a **plan for improving education** that includes promising a high school student in the top 20 percent of his or her class during junior year early acceptance to college and a Texas teaching job, if he or she commits to a teaching career; a loan-repayment program for teachers; and "bringing Texas teacher pay in line with the rest of the country." (The NEA ranked Texas 30th in the nation in average public school teacher salaries in a report last year.)



Texas Sen. Wendy Davis, one of the Democratic gubernatorial candidates, reads her education proposals to reporters after an education roundtable last month in Arlington, Texas.
—LM Otero/AP

The man who is potentially her prime Republican opponent for governor, state Attorney General Greg Abbott, hasn't ignored education on the campaign trail, either.

In a **Jan. 21 interview** with Texas radio station KFYO, Mr. Abbott warned against a "cookie-cutter approach" to K-12 education, and advocated school choice (although he didn't explicitly advocate for vouchers the help parents enroll children in private schools).

Regarding teachers, he said that educators wanted government "off their backs" in order to exercise more local control. Mr. Abbott also said, "A person who is a teacher is genuinely inspired to educate a child. That's what they wake up for, and they all know that they are underpaid for what they do."

EDUCATION WEEK

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State Chiefs Reaffirm Intent to Safeguard Student Data

Common core noted in letter to Ed. Dept.

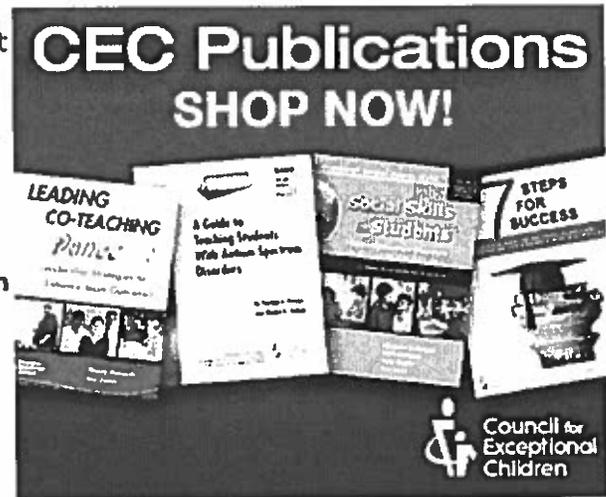
By Catherine Gewertz and Michele McNeil

Amid the growing uproar over the collection and sharing of student data, schools chiefs from 34 states have banded together to make a public declaration that they will not share personally identifiable student data with the federal government.

But the letter was more of a political statement than a practical one.

In the **Jan. 23 letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan**, the state superintendents said they are trying to calm a rising tide of concern that student privacy is at risk in states administering assessments through two federally funded multistate consortia developing tests tied to the Common Core State Standards.

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All of the chiefs are participating in test design through one of the consortia: the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium or the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, known as PARCC.

"We are writing today to confirm that the consortia will not share any personally identifiable information about K-12 students with [the U.S. Department of Education] or any federal agency," the letter said. It has "long been the practice" of the federal Education Department not to require student-level data, and nothing about the consortia work changes that practice, the chiefs said.

"Our states have not submitted student-level assessment data in the past; the transition to the new assessments should not cause anyone to worry that federal reporting requirements will change when, in fact, the federal government is prohibited from establishing a student-level database that would contain assessment data for every student."

Reassurance Offered

Data experts say that parents and others with concerns shouldn't worry about states or assessment organizations sharing student-level data with federal officials.

"The U.S. Department of Education is prohibited from collecting this type of information," said Paige Kowalski, the director of state policy and advocacy for the Data Quality Campaign in Washington, which pushes states to adopt high-quality data systems. "However, it is easy to understand parent concerns in this regard, and more needs to be done to inform and reassure parents and other stakeholders around data collection, storage, and use. Letters like this aid in state efforts to be transparent about their use of data and their intent with regard to their participation in the

assessment consortia.

"Parents are more likely to trust information coming from sources closer to home, so having a state official reiterate facts is critical to building trust," she said.

U.S. Department of Education officials say they are reviewing the letter.

Mindful of growing concerns over data privacy, the Education Department clarified its data-collection requirements in a **June 2013 letter**, and has posted a **"myths and facts" chart** on its website that addresses data privacy.

That chart, for example, explains: "The department does not collect personally identifiable information at all except as required for mandated tasks such as administering student loans and grants and investigating individual complaints. The department is not legally authorized to create a national, student-level database and has no intention to create a student-records data system at the national level."

The Education Department often takes great pains to mask any data that might come too close to identifying individual students. For example, in the school-level data collection conducted by the department's office for civil rights—which includes sensitive information on student discipline by race—officials round every statistic to prevent any student's identity from being revealed.

The states say they will continue to share such school-level data with the department as required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and will "continue to retain control over" the privacy of student-level data, the letter said.

Not on the list of signatories were states that have a track record of being strongly committed to one or the other consortia, such as California (a Smarter Balanced state), as well as some, such as Kentucky and Indiana, that are wavering about whether they'll use consortium tests or some other organization's tests.

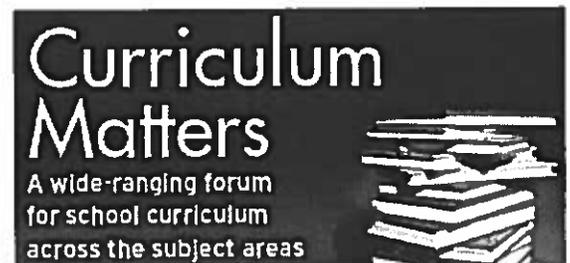
Consortia Under Pressure

The two assessment consortia are coming under increasing pressure to help their member states as they try to calm jitters that have arisen in some sectors about student-level test data.

A recent legislative study of assessment options, done by the state of Michigan, included that concern and made clear that many test providers are feeling the data-privacy heat as well. PARCC has approved a consortium wide data-privacy policy that governs how data will be handled at each step along the way, including by third-party vendors in the testing process. Smarter Balanced has a brief, general privacy principle, and is drafting more detailed privacy policies with each member state.

Concerns about the collection and sharing of student data are not just limited to the testing consortia. In New York, **40 districts have dropped out of the state's Race to the Top grant** amid the state's plan to collect student data and store it in a cloud-based system run by inBloom, a private, nonprofit group.

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EDUCATION WEEK

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Unfazed, Houston Pushes Ahead on 1-to-1 Computing

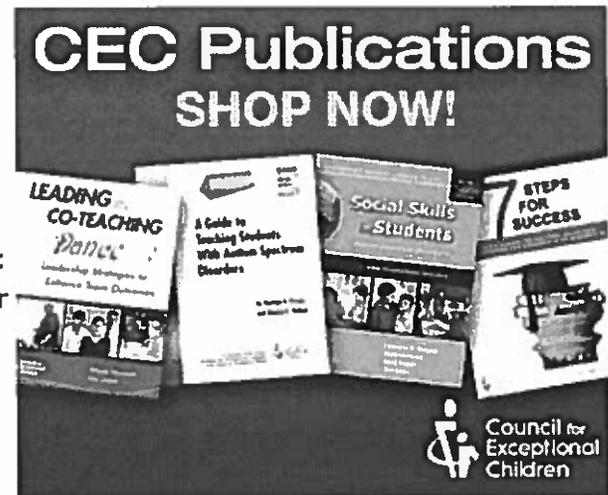
Texas district is hoping to avoid others' missteps

By Benjamin Herold

Undeterred by high-profile problems experienced by other large school systems attempting to put digital devices in the hands of their students, the Houston Independent School District began distributing **more than 18,000 laptop computers** to high schools last month.

Officials from the 210,000-student district point to several elements of their plan as reasons for optimism: Unlike the **troubled iPad initiative** in Los Angeles, for example, Houston will give students laptops instead of digital tablets; rely on "Web 2.0 tools" rather than a pre-loaded digital curriculum; and offer extensive training for students and staff members before the devices are deployed.

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Instead of paying for the leased devices with **bonds**, the Houston district will also fund its 1-to-1 program, dubbed **PowerUp**, with repurposed savings, operating dollars, and grant funds.

The Houston initiative is the largest, but not the only, student computing effort in an urban district to take a significant step forward in recent weeks, a sign that districts may be overcoming the skittishness that emerged in the wake of well-publicized missteps in Los Angeles, Guilford County, N.C., and Fort Bend, Texas.

"I find [Houston ISD's] planning to be admirable," said Leslie Wilson, the chief executive officer of the One-to-One Institute, a nonprofit based in Mason, Mich., that provides assistance to districts implementing student-computing initiatives. "I think a lot of these hiccups that we've seen have really helped refocus districts on teaching and learning, rather than on hardware and publishers who are trying to sell you a bill of goods."

For almost a decade, K-12 schools have been embracing 1-to-1 computing as a means for increasing students' access to technology and preparing them for college and the workforce. When examined from a wide view, said Ms. Wilson of the One-to-One Institute, that trend continues unabated.

Series of Skirmishes

But last fall, the 651,000-student Los Angeles Unified School District became the symbol for 1-to-1 initiatives gone awry. Almost from its inception, the effort was plagued by security issues, confusion about who is responsible for the tens of thousands of iPads being distributed, criticisms around cost and the use of bond financing, and **concerns about the readiness and price** of the pre-loaded curriculum purchased along with the devices.

Following a series of skirmishes, with the district's board and teachers' union, Superintendent John Deasy was forced to slow the pace of the rollout. In January, the district's board voted to continue with the initiative's second phase, in which iPads will be distributed to 38 more campuses.

A major 1-to-1 initiative in North Carolina's 72,500 student Guilford County district also ran into trouble last year when hardware problems were reported with thousands of tablets provided by New York City-based Amplify, an independent subsidiary of the global media conglomerate News Corp. that is headed by former New York City schools chancellor Joel Klein. Guilford County officials ultimately decided to delay that program for a year.

And in Texas, the 70,000-student Fort Bend district shelved its initiative after a scathing report from an outside consultant said the project had "unrealistic goals" and "insufficient planning and project management," among a host of other shortcomings.

Those **troubles had a ripple effect**: In November, Florida's 354,000-student **Miami-Dade County school district** paused its much-anticipated 1-to-1 initiative, citing the troubles in Los Angeles and elsewhere. Superintendent Alberto Carvalho proposed in January a cautious approach to restarting the program.

Word of such difficulties made its way to Houston, said Lenny Schad, the district's chief technology officer. "Every time one of those [other] districts made the paper, we got questions from the school board and community," Mr. Schad said. "But we were able to come back to them and say, 'Here's what we've done, here's what we're doing, and here's what we're planning to do.' That gave everyone a sense of comfort."

'Realistic Expectations'

By the 2015-16 school year, Houston aims to distribute roughly 65,000 laptops, enough for every student and teacher in the district's 45 high schools. The initiative is expected to cost about \$18 million annually.

This school year, the district is paying \$6 million for PowerUp's first phase, in which devices will be distributed to students and staff members in 11 schools. All of those dollars are being reallocated from existing pots of money, including federal Title I and Title II funds to be used for disadvantaged students and teacher training.

Mr. Schad said extensive training time is key to the PowerUp initiative. Houston teachers and principals received their laptops in August in order to allow for extensive professional development. Also, a group of principals and district officials took an extended field trip to Mooresville, N.C., to observe that district's **acclaimed 1-to-1 program** firsthand. An initial group of three Houston high schools received their devices in October to give them time to test the district's deployment plan. All Houston students will also be required to complete a digital citizenship course before receiving a device.

"It's so important to go into something like this with realistic expectations, and to have a pace of implementation that is linked to those expectations," said Mr. Schad, who **previously oversaw** the making of a successful "bring your own device" initiative in Texas' 66,000-student Katy Independent School District.

While some "early adopters" are expected to embrace the digital tools immediately, Mr. Schad said his district will be patient while other educators adjust, a stance that Ms. Wilson of the One-to-One

Institute praised.

"It takes a teacher three years to truly change their craft to engage with ubiquitous technology," Ms. Wilson said, and successful 1-to-1 initiatives "honor where each individual is and help them along from their point of entry."

Ultimately, however, Mr. Schad said Houston officials want to see a "huge" shift in how teaching and learning occur in their high school classrooms. He pointed to the decision to lease laptops loaded with digital tools, rather than tablets loaded with a complete curriculum, as key to providing students with greater opportunity to solve problems and search out answers, collaborate with each other, and generate more of their own content.

Ms. Wilson was again laudatory: "Just purchasing curricular content from a publisher," she said, "is the kiss of death if you're trying to transform schools."

Expansion Plans

Other districts have moved forward with 1-to-1 initiatives recently, as well. In late January, for example, the board of the 27,000-student Madison, Wis., district approved a \$28 million plan to put a mix of digital tablets and notebooks in the hands of most of its students. The initiative is part of a five-year "Information and Technology Plan" that also includes network and server upgrades and the rethinking of school learning spaces.

"There are now a lot more people who care about doing [1-to-1 initiatives] well, rather than just doing what's fashionable," said Ms. Wilson, who pointed to the Houston and Madison districts' decisions to provide older students with keyboard-enabled laptop computers as an example of smart thinking.

The Houston district is leasing HP 9470m EliteBook laptops under a four-year term that officials say works out to roughly \$260 per year, per student.

Mr. Schad said the district found savings in its existing budget lines for print textbooks, software, and professional development to help pay for the initiative this school year.

Eighteen more high schools are expected to receive laptops through the PowerUp initiative next school year, and 16 additional high schools will join their ranks in 2015-16. Mr. Schad said the district has not yet finalized how subsequent years of the program will be funded, but bonds will not be considered as a funding source.

Despite the careful planning and cautious approach, he said, problems are inevitable. But Mr. Schad confidently predicted that Houston's strong foundation—including a steering committee consisting of heads of the curriculum, technology, and professional development departments, as well as school leaders—will allow the district to weather any such storms.

"When bumps in the road occur," he said, "we will be able to react, address the problems, and move on."

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