

Definitions of Critical Terms (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-120, Supp. 2008)

Oversight committee: The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) established in Section 59-6-10.

Standards-based assessment: An assessment in which an individual's performance is compared to specific performance standards and not to the performance of other students.

Disaggregated data: Data broken out for specific groups within the total student population, such as by race, gender, level of poverty, limited English proficiency status, disability status, or other groups as required by federal statute or regulations.

Longitudinally matched student data: Data used to examine the performance of a single student or a group of students by considering their test scores over time.

Academic achievement standards: Statements of expectations for student learning.

Department: The State Department of Education.

Absolute rating: The rating a school will receive based on the percentage of students meeting standard on the state's standards-based assessment.

Growth rating: The rating a school will receive based on longitudinally matched student data comparing current performance to the previous year's for the purpose of determining student academic growth.

Objective and reliable statewide assessment: Assessments that yield consistent results; that measure the cognitive knowledge and skills specified in the state-approved academic standards; that do not include questions relative to personal opinions, feelings, or attitudes; and that are not biased with regard to race, gender, or socioeconomic status. The assessments must include a writing assessment and multiple-choice questions designed to reflect a range of cognitive abilities beyond the knowledge level. Constructed response questions may be included as a component of the writing assessment.

Division of Accountability: The special unit within the Education Oversight Committee established in Section 59-6-100.

Ratings year: The academic year of the state test data that are incorporated into the performance level rating.

Formative assessment: Assessments used within the school year to analyze general strengths and weaknesses in learning and instruction, to understand the performance of students individually and across achievement categories, to adapt instruction to meet students' needs, and to consider placement and planning for the next grade level. Data and performance from the formative assessments must not be used in the calculation of school or district ratings.

Manual Organization

The organization of this manual is structured to provide state and local education agencies with details regarding the implementation of the accountability system, to enable those agencies to plan for meaningful and accurate data collections, to work with their professional colleagues and the public toward understanding of the elements reported, and to ensure that the system improves continuously.