

2012

PALMETTO GOLD AND SILVER AWARDS

Review and Options for Amending Criteria



**SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**



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Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee

Recommendations

Regarding the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PALMETTO GOLD AND SILVER AWARDS CRITERIA

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards for General Performance Criteria

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

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

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

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

**Table 1
Gold and Silver Awards Criteria**

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

Palmetto Gold and Silver Award for Closing the Achievement Gap

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

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

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

Results and Questions

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

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

The Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee must determine the following:

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

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

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

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

* Based on 2009 report card release

** Based on 2010 report card release

*** Based on 2011 report card release

Table 3

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

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

Model 1

Performance Criteria:

Gold Award Criteria:

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

Silver Award Criteria:

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

What is Different:

Gold Award Criteria:

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

Silver Award Criteria:

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

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

Model 2

Performance Criteria:

Gold Award Criteria:

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

Silver Award Criteria:

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

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

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

Model 2

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

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

Model 3

Gold Award Criteria:

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

Silver Award Criteria:

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

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

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

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

Additional Analysis

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

If Model 2 were amended to also include the following:

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

If Model 3 were amended to include the following:

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

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

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

Summary

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

**Table 4
Comparison of Three Models**

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

**Additional Silver Award Recipients
Consistent Growth**

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

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