

REPORT and RECOMMENDATIONS  
to the  
Education Oversight Committee

The 2010 High School Working Group

May 26, 2010

## Executive Summary

Periodically the Education Oversight Committee reviews the criteria upon which schools are rated. At the advice of a 2008 advisory group on the calculation of high school graduation rates, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) requested that colleagues at the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) collect and analyze fifth-year graduation rates in order that the professional community ascertain the progress and consider the utility of including fifth-year graduation rates in the calculation of school and district ratings.

The EOC appointed the 2010 High School Working Group to address the following charge:

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is requesting advice on the criteria use to evaluate high schools in promoting higher levels of student achievement and high school graduation rates. The EOC requests specific advice on the following: (a) accountability for scores earned in virtual and dual credit settings; (b) performance of students with disabilities; (c) fifth-year-graduation success; (d) utilization of HSAP generally and the longitudinal measure; and (e) utilization of a workforce readiness measure.

The Working Group is chaired by Alex Martin, Associate Superintendent for Accountability, Greenville County School District and EOC member. The Group members include the following:

Kevin Andrews, York County School District 3  
Yvonne Barnes, Sumter School District 17  
Robbie Barnett, South Carolina Chamber of Commerce  
Rutledge Dingle, Sumter High School  
Titus Duren, Educational Consultant  
Thomas Gladden, Lugoff Elgin High School  
Darrell M. Johnson, Provost Academy  
Nona Kerr, Myrtle Beach High School  
David Mathis, Saluda County School  
Otha Meadows, Charleston Trident Urban League  
Grier Mullins, Alliance for Quality Education  
Karen Neal, Spartanburg School District 4  
Rose Pelzer-Brower, Lake Marion High School  
Jim Reynolds, Total Comfort Service Center  
Walt Tobin, Orangeburg Calhoun Technical College  
Chuck Welch, Sullivan Center, Lifelong Learning  
Jeff Wilson, Anderson County School District 5  
Steve Wilson, Richland School District One  
Ron Youmans, Estill High School

The Working Group offers the following recommendations:

### Ninth Grade Students

1.1 The Working Group recommends that the Education Oversight Committee, the State Board of Education and the SC Department of Education pursue changes in federal policies and regulations to address the Working Group's concern;

1.2 Within the authority of the SC Department of Education to interpret federal guidelines, the Working Group recommends that only those students enrolled on the 45<sup>th</sup> day of their first enrollment as a ninth grader (applying the current rules for transfers) be included in the calculation of graduation rates; and

1.3 The district should be held accountable for students who may have left the middle school, yet not enrolled in the high school. The Working Group believes that the new student information system (i.e., Power School) gives districts and the state the capacity to track students across schools and that the districts have resources to find the students not enrolled as ninth graders.

#### Students Experiencing Extended Illness

2.1 The Working Group requests that policies and procedures be established so that a district superintendent may provide documentation and request that the State Superintendent of Education reassign a student to a different graduation year cohort because of a catastrophic and/or extended illness which precludes the student from pursuing the high school diploma over the four-year period.

#### Students in Adult Education

3.1 The Working Group applauds the efforts of the adult education program leaders and teachers and celebrates the successes of that program. The Working Group recommends that additional information about the successes of adult education be published within the profile data section of the annual district report card, reporting not only on the diplomas and the South Carolina High School Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs) earned in adult education program but workforce readiness and other credentials recognizing student proficiency as well as the attainment of federal performance levels; and

3.2 The Working Group recommends that the SC Department refine intra-agency data sharing so that the adult education students may be included in the high school fifth-year-graduation rates.

#### Students with Disabilities

4.1 The Working Group recommends the General Assembly provide for the development and implementation of a uniform state occupational diploma and that the State Board of Education regulate its award to students. The diploma requirements should include limited eligibility, earned Carnegie units, community living and service learning experiences and be a credential option *only* for students with disabilities whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) provides that they are not on the diploma track. The Working Group calls upon the General Assembly and the State Board of Education to ensure that this uniform state occupational diploma does not become a “dumping ground.” The addition of this option should be accompanied by programmatic changes to provide additional teaching, learning and school engagement opportunities for all students with disabilities, even those earning Carnegie units, so that they may succeed in high school and in the work force when they finish high school;

4.2 While the Working Group acknowledges the federal barriers to reporting those students who earn the uniform state occupational diploma as a graduate in the calculation of the state graduation rate, the Working Group urges policymakers to advocate for their inclusion in state rates; and

4.3 The Working Group further recommends that assessments which provide information about the progress of students with disabilities be adopted and used, particularly for students

working toward a uniform state occupational diploma. The current assessments (SC-Alt, HSAP and end-of-course tests) do not reflect the progress made by these students.

#### End-of-Course Scores Earned in Virtual and Dual Credit Settings

5.1 The Working Group recommends that end-of-course test passage rates for students enrolled in virtual and dual credit courses be collected and reported for each agency or institution offering the courses; and

5.2 The Working Group recommends that the end-of-course test scores linked to virtual and dual credit courses be excluded from the high school rating calculation.

#### High School Assessment Program

6.1 The Working Group asks that the responsibilities of the High School Assessment Program task force, pursuant to H4823, be expanded to include study of the use of a workforce readiness credential in lieu of the HSAP exit examination. The study should include alignment with the content standards, comparison of performance for those students already taking both HSAP and a workforce readiness exam and a pilot study to compare student and school performance.

#### Fifth-year-graduation Rate

7.1 The Working Group recommends that the fifth-year-graduation rate be included as a separate criterion in the calculation of high school ratings. While results from the SCDE 2009 study ([www.eoc.sc.gov](http://www.eoc.sc.gov)) suggest that an overall two percent increase was realized by responding high schools, the Working Group believes that attention to the fifth-year can result in much higher rates over time; and

7.2 The Working Group recommends that the EOC monitor those rates to ascertain impact over the next five years.

#### Workforce Readiness

8.1 The Working Group recommends that the EEDA Coordinating Council collect and publish data on the success of students and the IGP process; and

8.2 The Working Group recommends that Work Keys be considered as an alternate method by which students can demonstrate competency to satisfy state-mandated testing requirements.

#### Recentering the High School Absolute Ratings Criteria and Indices

9.1 After study of each of the criteria included in the calculation of the high school ratings, the performance of schools on these criteria and the weights and values assigned to these in the ratings calculation, the Working Group recommends the following be used in the determination of absolute ratings for the 2010-2011 school year and beyond:

(a) Five criteria should be used in the calculation of the high school rating: First-attempt HSAP, longitudinal HSAP, end-of-course test scores, on-time graduation rate and fifth-year-graduation rate (Model Two);

(b) The criteria should be weighted as below:

- |                                |     |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 1. First-attempt HSAP          | 20% |
| 2. Longitudinal HSAP           | 20% |
| 3. End-of-course test scores   | 20% |
| 4. On-time graduation rate     | 30% |
| 5. Fifth-year-graduation rate; | 10% |

- (c) A 0.75 standard deviation applied to the 2009-centered performance should be used to establish point weights for each criterion;
- (d) Values for the longitudinal HSAP and fifth year graduation rate should be changed so that a school may earn five points for performance at the 97 percent level;
- (e) The Elementary-Middle values for indices should be used to determine the ratings.

9.2 For the determination of absolute ratings in 2010 (i.e., report cards published in fall 2010), the 2009-centered performance on each criterion at the 0.75 standard deviation, using Elementary-Middle values for indices should be used.

## Introduction

The Education Accountability Act (EAA) establishes a state system for continuous improvement of academic achievement in the public schools of the state. Enacted in 1998 and amended in 2005 and 2008, the EAA continues to pursue the objectives initially established in law and shown below:

### **SECTION 59-18-110.** Objectives.

The system is to:

- (1) use academic achievement standards to push schools and students toward higher performance by aligning the state assessment to those standards and linking policies and criteria for performance standards, accreditation, reporting, school rewards, and targeted assistance;
- (2) provide an annual report card with a performance indicator system that is logical, reasonable, fair, challenging, and technically defensible, which furnishes clear and specific information about school and district academic performance and other performance to parents and the public;
- (3) require all districts to establish local accountability systems to stimulate quality teaching and learning practices and target assistance to low performing schools;
- (4) provide resources to strengthen the process of teaching and learning in the classroom to improve student performance and reduce gaps in performance;
- (5) support professional development as integral to improvement and to the actual work of teachers and school staff; and
- (6) expand the ability to evaluate the system and to conduct in-depth studies on implementation, efficiency, and the effectiveness of academic improvement efforts.

A key, and often most visible, component of the system is the annual school and district rating system. As outlined in Section 59-18-900, the

(B) The Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education and a broad-based group of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators, shall determine the criteria for and establish five academic performance ratings of excellent, good, average, below average, and school/district at-risk. Schools and districts shall receive a rating for absolute and growth performance. Only the scores of students enrolled in the school at the time of the forty-five-day enrollment count shall be used to determine the absolute and growth ratings. Graduation rates must be used as an additional accountability measure for high schools and school districts. . .

(C) In setting the criteria for the academic performance ratings and the performance indicators, the Education Oversight Committee shall report the performance by subgroups of students in the school and schools similar in student characteristics. Criteria must use established guidelines for statistical analysis and build on current data-reporting practices.

## **Calculation of the High School Rating** (as presented in the 2009 Accountability Manual)

The Absolute Ratings for high schools are calculated on a weighted model using the following criteria: performance on HSAP of students at the school taking the test for the first time, longitudinal High School Assessment Program (HSAP) performance, the percentage of end-of-course tests administered at the school having scores of 70 or above, and on-time graduation rate. The following four elements are defined below:

- Longitudinal High School Assessment Program (HSAP) performance: This factor gauges the percentage of students who pass the HSAP by the spring or subsequent summer graduation two years after taking the examination for the first-time. Students transferring to other schools should be deleted from the calculation; however students dropping out are included. Longitudinal HSAP performance is the percentage of students who score a “2” level or higher on both ELA and Math within two years after taking it for the first-time.
- First-attempt HSAP performance: The percentage of students taking the High School Assessment Program (HSAP) for the first-time who passed both the English language arts and mathematics subtests by scoring at the performance level of “2” or higher.
- Percentage passing End of Course tests: The percent of passing scores (70 or higher) on all of the End of Course tests administered in the high school during the school year and subsequent summer session. The end-of-course assessments currently include Algebra I, English I, and Physical Science (and Biology I when the test is reinstated). The U.S. History and Constitution End of Course test will be administered in 2008-2009, pending approval by the EOC. In June 2007 the EOC adopted the following policies regarding End of Course test results: for the school years 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, End of Course test scores for courses offered through the Virtual High School and End of Course test scores for courses offered through dual high school and college credit are to be reported with the high school in which the student is enrolled and calculated into the school ratings and in the district’s ratings.
- On-time Graduation rate: The percentage of all students (including students with disabilities) enrolled for the first-time in grade nine four years prior to the year of the report card who earn a standard high school diploma (not GED), adjusted for transfers in and out of the school. Adjustments for students transferring out of the school or district cannot be made for those students for whom there is not evidence of enrollment in another state diploma granting program (for example, requests for transcripts from another state diploma granting program. Data from students who meet the state diploma requirements as a result of attending summer school and/or successfully passing HSAP in the summer following their senior year will be included in the calculation of the on-time graduation rate.

The values assigned to each element are shown on the next page.

**Table 1**  
**Points Assigned to Each Criterion on the Calculation of High School Absolute ratings**

Criterion	Points Assigned				
	5	4	3	2	1
Longitudinal Exit Exam Passage (30 % weight)	100 %	97.5 - 99.9 %	90.7-97.4 %	87.3 – 90.6 %	Below 87.3 %
First-attempt HSAP Passage(20 percent weight)	62.9 % or more	53.7-62.8 %	37.4-53.6 %	26.7-37.3 %	Below 26.7 %
% Scoring 70 or Above on End of Course Tests (20 percent weight)	87.8 % or more	72.4-87.7 %	41.6-72.3 %	26.2-41.5 %	Below 26.2 %
On-time Graduation Rate (30 percent weight)	88.3 % or more	79.6-88.2 %	62.2-79.5 %	53.5-62.1 %	Below 53.5 %

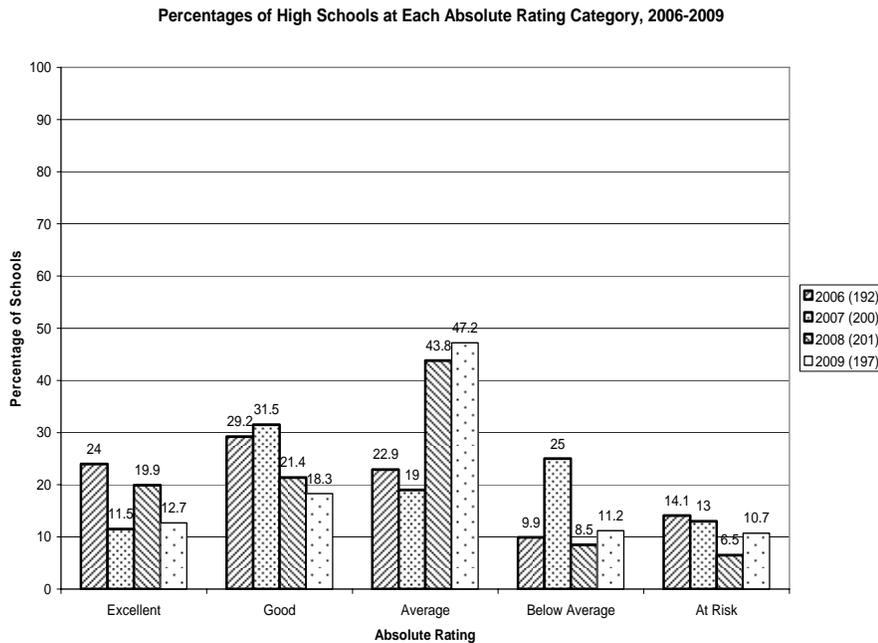
Source: Education Oversight Committee, 2009-2010 Accountability Manual

Using the index values associated with each rating category:

Excellent	3.9 and above
Good	3.5-3.8
Average	3.1-3.4
Below Average	2.7-3.0
At Risk	2.6 or below

Over the last four years the calculation of absolute ratings yielded the distribution of high school absolute ratings shown below:

Figure 1



The Growth Ratings are calculated using a mathematical formula that results in an index. The index is calculated by subtracting the school's Absolute Rating index from the prior year from the school's current year's Absolute Rating index. The difference determines the rating as follows:

High School Growth Rating Criteria  
Growth Rating Index Changes

Excellent	0.4 or greater
Good	0.3
Average	0.1–0.2
Below Average	0.0
School at Risk	-0.1 or less

**The High School Working Group**

Periodically the Education Oversight Committee reviews the criteria upon which schools are rated. At the advice of a 2008 advisory group on the calculation of high school graduation rates, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) requested that colleagues at the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) collect and analyze fifth-year-graduation rates in order that the professional community ascertain the progress and consider the utility of including fifth-year-graduation rates in the calculation of school and district ratings.

The EOC appointed the 2010 High School Working Group to address the following charge:

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is requesting advice on the criteria use to evaluate high schools in promoting higher levels of student achievement and high school graduation rates. The EOC requests specific advice on the following: (a) accountability for scores earned in virtual and dual credit settings; (b) performance of students with disabilities; (c) fifth-year-graduation success; (d) utilization of HSAP generally and the longitudinal measure; and (e) utilization of a workforce readiness measure.

The Working Group is chaired by Alex Martin, Associate Superintendent for Accountability, Greenville County School District and EOC member. The Group members include the following:

- Kevin Andrews, York County School District 3
- Yvonne Barnes, Sumter School District 17
- Robbie Barnett, South Carolina Chamber of Commerce
- Rutledge Dingle, Sumter High School
- Titus Duren, Educational Consultant
- Thomas Gladden, Lugoff Elgin High School
- Darrell M. Johnson, Provost Academy
- Nona Kerr, Myrtle Beach High School
- David Mathis, Saluda County School
- Otha Meadows, Charleston Trident Urban League
- Grier Mullins, Alliance for Quality Education
- Karen Neal, Spartanburg School District 4
- Rose Pelzer-Brower, Lake Marion High School
- Jim Reynolds, Total Comfort Service Center

Walt Tobin, Orangeburg Calhoun Technical College  
Chuck Welch, Sullivan Center, Lifelong Learning  
Jeff Wilson, Anderson County School District 5  
Steve Wilson, Richland School District One  
Ron Youmans, Estill High School

Over the course of winter and spring 2010 the Working Group met and received information and insights from the following individuals:

David Potter, Education Oversight Committee  
Dee Appleby, SC Department of Education  
Tracy Sanders, SC Department of Education  
David Stout, SC Department of Education  
Gary West, SC Department of Education  
Sandra Covington Smith, Clemson University  
Gail Morrison, SC Commission on Higher Education  
Margaret Torrey, SC Department of Commerce

The 2010 High School Working Group offers the following comments and recommendations:

## **Comments and Recommendations**

### **1.0 Ninth Grade Students**

The Working Group expresses deep concern for the practice of automatically shifting eighth grade students into the high school cohort the subsequent year, without active enrollment of those students. While the Working Group agrees with the intent that aggressive dropout prevention efforts be undertaken so that no student is lost between the eighth and ninth grades, the Working Group points out that the automatic enrollment (rollover) practice holds high schools accountable for students who have never attended the high school and may never have intended to attend the high school. The group of students for which high schools are held accountable in the graduation rate differs sharply from the group of students for which elementary-middle schools are held accountable in the testing and ratings programs. For testing purposes students are included among the following rules: (a) grades three through eight students enrolled in the school as of the 45<sup>th</sup> day of instruction and on the first day of testing, (b) tenth graders and those ninth graders in their second spring of high school enrollment for the High School Assessment Program and (c) students enrolled in a course for which there is an end-of-course examination as of the first day of testing.

**1.1 The Working Group recommends that the Education Oversight Committee, the State Board of Education and the SC Department of Education pursue changes in federal policies and regulations to address the Working Group's concern; and**

**1.2 Within the authority of the SC Department of Education to interpret federal guidelines, the Working Group recommends that only those students enrolled on the 45<sup>th</sup> day of their first enrollment as a ninth grader (applying the current rules for transfers) be included in the calculation of graduation rates; and**

**1.3 The district should be held accountable for students who may have left the middle school, yet are not enrolled in the high school. The Working Group believes that the new student information system (i.e., Power School) gives districts and the state the capacity**

**to track students across schools and that the districts have resources to find the students not enrolled as ninth graders.**

**2.0 Students Experiencing Extended Illnesses**

The Working Group also noted that, albeit a low incidence challenge, some students experience catastrophic and/or extended illnesses such that a student is unable to finish high school within the four-year on-time period. Rules governing inclusion in the testing program provide for exemptions based upon medical verification of the student’s inability to complete a course of study.

**2.1 The Working Group requests that policies and procedures be established so that a district superintendent may provide documentation and request that the State Superintendent of Education reassign a student to a different graduation year cohort because of a catastrophic and/or extended illness which precludes the student from pursuing the high school diploma over the four-year period.**

**3.0 Students in Adult Education**

The adult education programs in South Carolina offer adult basic education, GED preparation and high school diploma programs. In 2008-2009 54,653 students were enrolled in adult education (48,187 in school district programs, 5,222 in community-based programs and 1,244 in the Palmetto Unified School District/SC Department of Corrections). Of the 9,750 GED examinees, 6,698 earned a GED diploma. School district adult education programs issued 1,093 high school diplomas. The adult education programs also administer Work Keys™ to determine if, and the level of, a Career Readiness Certificate is to be awarded. Thirty-four (34) percent of all SC career readiness certificates issued in 2008-2009 were earned through adult education. One of the more popular programs within adult education is the Young Adult Program (YAP) focusing on students between 17 and 21 years of age. Over the last three years the program has served 54,724 students with the results shown below:

Table 2  
Young Adult Program Enrollment and Success

Year	17-21 Year Olds	High School Diplomas	GED Diplomas
2006-2007	17,251	1,222	3,522
2007-2008	18,800	1,084	3,805
2008-2009	18,667	934	4,011
	54,724	3,240	11,338

Source: SC Department of Education, Office of Adult Education, February 5, 2010

For a variety of reasons a student may transfer to the adult education high school diploma program. The progress and achievements of those students are not accounted for in the school or district rating.

**3.1 The Working Group applauds the efforts of the adult education program leaders and teachers and celebrates the successes of that program. The Working Group recommends that additional information about the successes of adult education be published within the profile data section of the annual district report card, reporting not only on the diplomas and the South Carolina High School Equivalency Diplomas (GEDs) earned in adult education program but workforce readiness and other credentials recognizing student proficiency as well as the attainment of federal performance levels.**

**3.2 The Working Group recommends that the SC Department refine intra-agency data sharing so that the adult education students may be included in the high school fifth-year-graduation rates.**

#### **4.0 Students with Disabilities**

In 2009 the on-time high school graduation rate for South Carolina was 73.7 percent. The rate for students without disabilities was 77.3 percent; however, the rate for students with disabilities was only 42.9 percent. The Working Group described the difficulties in providing instructional support and information for students who may exhibit greater achievements than those measured by SC-Alt yet HSAP and end-of-course tests are not sufficiently sensitive to the progress made by these students. The Working Group believes that the state has a responsibility to educate all students so that they are productive members of our communities. Because South Carolina does not offer a uniform state occupational diploma the accomplishments of a large number of students with disabilities are not recognized.

**4.1 The Working Group recommends the General Assembly provide for the development and implementation of a uniform state occupational diploma and that the State Board of Education regulate its award to students. The diploma requirements should include limited eligibility, earned Carnegie units, community living and service learning experiences and be a credential option *only* for students with disabilities whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) provides that they are not on the diploma track. The Working Group calls upon the General Assembly and the State Board of Education to ensure that this uniform state occupational diploma does not become a “dumping ground.” The addition of this option should be accompanied by programmatic changes to provide additional teaching, learning and school engagement opportunities for all students with disabilities, even those earning Carnegie units, so that they may succeed in high school and in the work force when they finish high school.**

**4.2 While the Working Group acknowledges the federal barriers to reporting those students who earn the uniform state occupational diploma as a graduate in the calculation of the state graduation rate, the Working Group urges policymakers to advocate for their inclusion in state rates.**

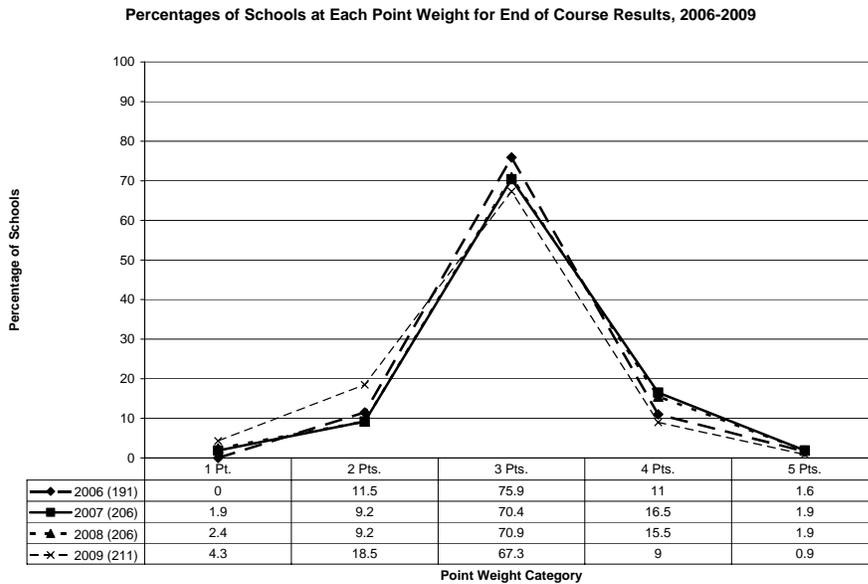
**4.3 The Working Group further recommends that assessments which provide information about the progress of students with disabilities be adopted and used, particularly for students working toward a uniform state occupational diploma. The current assessments (SC-Alt, HSAP and end-of-course tests) do not reflect the progress made by these students.**

#### **5.0 End-of-Course Scores Earned in Virtual and Dual Credit Settings**

End-of-course assessments are provided for gateway or benchmark courses in each of the four major content areas. Currently the assessments are Algebra I, English I, Physical Science and US History and Constitution. A Biology end-of-course assessment is to be added when the test is approved by the Education Oversight Committee (anticipated in June 2010).

The ratings calculation awards between one and five points for the levels of student performance on the end-of-course tests. Over the last three years, the percentage of schools at each point weight (displayed below) indicates that a majority of schools are earning the middle values. The mean test passage rate is 53.21 percent.

Figure 2  
Percentages of Schools at Each Point Weight for End-of-Course Results 2006-2009



South Carolina has been recognized as a leader in the use of virtual course offerings. Through the auspices of the South Carolina Department of Education students may access a large number of courses through on-line functions. “During the 2008-2009 school year, 6,830 individual students registered for one or more of the courses offered by the SC Virtual School Program. This resulted in an unprecedented 80 percent growth in individual student enrollments” compared to the previous year (Integrity Research and Consulting, 2009). During the 2008-2009 year, 67 courses were offered, primarily to students in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades. 64 percent of students passed the virtual courses in which they were enrolled in 2008-2009. SCDE representatives told the Working Group that 2009-2010 course passage rates currently are 81 percent. No data have been reported indicating the performance of virtual course students on end-of-course tests. These scores may be negligible as the preponderance of virtual courses are offered in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades and three of the four end-of-course tests measure performance in courses taken in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

Table 3  
Enrollment in SC Virtual School Program by Grade and Year

Year	Grade 12	Grade 11	Grade 10	Grade 9	Grade 8	Grade 7
2007-08	3,848	1,336	726	143	10	0
2008-09	7,046	2,642	1,215	335	37	14
2009-10	4,846	1,993	1,067	344	216	24

Source: SC Department of Education, Office of eLearning, March 5, 2010.

The Education and Economic Development Act included provisions to expand dramatically the proportion of students earning dual credit, that is, credit earned in the postsecondary setting that also counts toward the Carnegie units required for high school graduation. Data presented by representatives of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education indicates that 3,983 of the 27,699 fall 2007 First-time, Full-time, Degree-seeking freshmen had taken college classes while in high school. Of these 88.2 percent continued to be enrolled in the fall of 2008. In

contrast, of the 23,716 who had not taken college classes while in high school, only 72.4 percent were enrolled by the fall of 2008. Data from the Commission on Higher Education indicate that 13,464 students (duplicated headcount) were enrolled in dual enrollment courses in 2007-2008. An overwhelming majority of this enrollment is in the technical colleges: 9,790 in technical colleges, 2,068 in regional institutions and 1,606 in four-year colleges or universities. Sixty (60) percent of the enrolled students were seniors, 22 percent were juniors.

High schools neither select nor supervise the teaching and learning occurring in virtual or dual credit courses; however, they are held accountable for those scores. In fact, the high schools have no input regarding the instruction. The SC Virtual School and the various institutions of postsecondary education providing the virtual and dual credit courses are not held accountable.

**5.1 The Working Group recommends that end-of-course test passage rates for students enrolled in virtual and dual credit courses be collected and reported for each agency or institution offering the courses.**

**5.2 The Working Group recommends that the end-of-course test scores linked to virtual and dual credit courses be excluded from the high school rating calculation.**

## **6.0 High School Assessment Program**

The High School Assessment Program (HSAP) serves as the state's exit examination. According to the Education Commission of the States (ECS, 2008) twenty-three (23) states require passage of an exit exam prior to the awarding of the state's high school diploma. Ten of those states permit students to substitute end-of-course test scores for the high school exit examination.

South Carolina students initially take the HSAP exam in the tenth grade (or the second spring in the ninth grade); those students passing both subtests (reading and mathematics) are not required to take the exam again. Other students are provided additional opportunities to pass the exam while enrolled in the traditional high school or in adult education programs. Representatives from the SCDE Adult Education Department indicate that approximately 400 students enroll in adult education each year for the sole purpose of re-taking the exit examination.

The 2009 first-time passage rate was 76.1 percent; the mean across high schools was 73.14 percent. High passage rates in almost every high school in the state confound the use of the exam to discriminate among high schools. .

The charts below indicate the weights assigned to First-attempt HSAP in the ratings calculation and to Longitudinal HSAP. A majority of schools are earning 4 or 5 points for First-attempt HSAP. Longitudinal scores are more variable as might be expected with the small number of students in the longitudinal calculation.

Figure 3  
 Percentages of Schools at Each Point Value for First-attempt HSAP

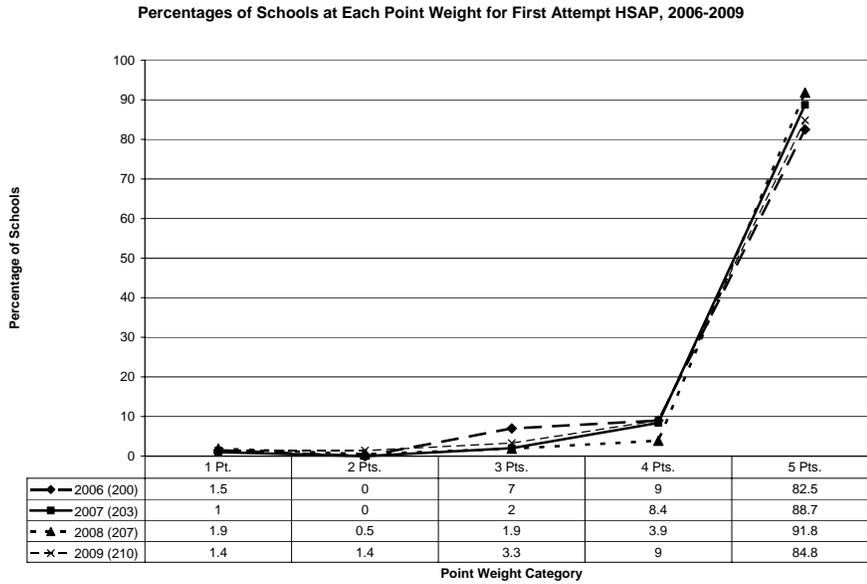
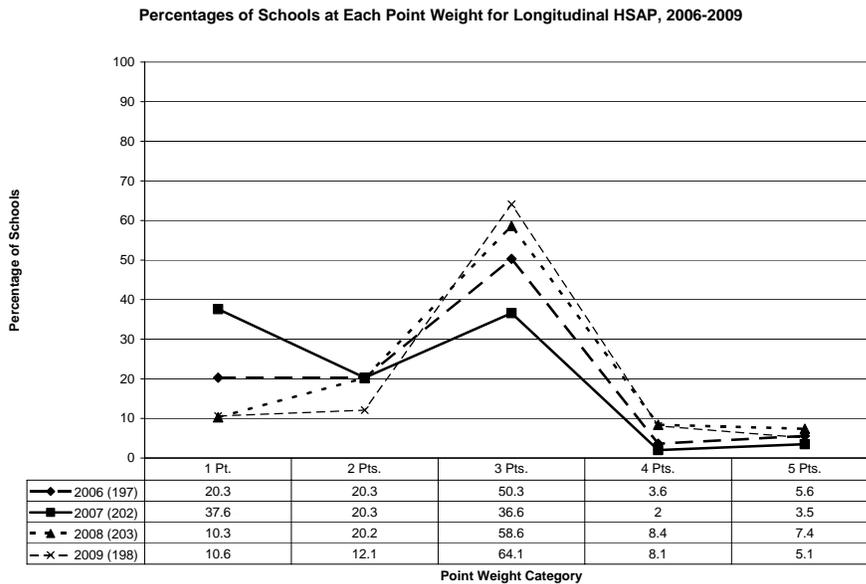


Figure 4  
 Percentages of Schools at Each Point Value for Longitudinal HSAP



H4823, a joint resolution of the General Assembly provides that during the summer and fall of 2010, the following shall occur:

The State Department of Education, in collaboration with the Education Oversight Committee, shall convene a task force to include, but not be limited to, district level instructional and assessment personnel to examine the feasibility of shifting from the use of HSAP to end-of-course assessments for meeting federal assessment requirements. The task force shall, at a minimum, examine the utility of the HSAP and end-of-course assessment programs and the benefits and information each provides as well as implementation considerations, costs factors, and appropriate transition timelines the State encounters in shifting from HSAP to end-of-course assessments for federal purposes. The task force shall submit its findings to the Senate Finance Committee, Senate Education Committee, House Ways and Means Committee, House Education and Public Works Committee, the State Board of Education, and the Education Oversight Committee by January 15, 2011.

**6.1 The Working Group asks that the responsibilities of the High School Assessment Program task force, pursuant to H4823, be expanded to include study of the use of a workforce readiness credential in lieu of the HSAP exit examination. The study should include alignment with the content standards, comparison of performance for those students already taking both HSAP and a workforce readiness exam and a pilot study to compare student and school performance.**

**7.0 Fifth-year-graduation Rate**

In 2008 an advisory group to the Education Oversight Committee requested that the EOC and SCDE determine the fifth-year-graduation rate and the utility of that rate in evaluating high school performance. The study examining fifth-year-graduation rates included responses from 50 school districts and 116 of 211 high schools. Detailed analyses indicated the increases in rates shown below: Generally the respondents' rate increased by 2 percent although the range among the schools was from 0 to 5.88 percent.

Table 4  
Summary Data from the 2009 Study of Fifth-year-graduation Rates

Group	Number of Districts /Schools	4 Year Graduation Rate	5 Year Graduation Rate
TOTAL SCHOOL			
Class of 2007-2008	85/211	74.97	
Respondents	50/116	75.06	77.08
Non-Respondents	35/95	74.88	
SCHOOL DATA BY RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP			
Class of 2007-2008	85/211	74.97	
White		79.19	
African-American		70.53	
Other		64.72	
Respondents			77.08
White		79.25	80.90
African-American		70.63	73.08
Other		62.62	65.42
Non-		74.86	

Group	Number of Districts /Schools	4 Year Graduation Rate	5 Year Graduation Rate
Respondents			
White		79.11	
African-American		70.43	
Other		66.54	

Source: SC Department of Education, Office of the CIO, March 5, 2010.

**7.1 The Working Group recommends that the fifth-year-graduation rate be included as a separate criterion in the calculation of high school ratings. While results from the SCDE 2009 study ([www.eoc.sc.gov](http://www.eoc.sc.gov)) suggest that an overall two percent increase was realized by responding high schools, the Working Group believes that attention to the fifth-year can result in much higher rates over time.**

**7.2 The Working Group recommends that the EOC monitor those rates to ascertain impact over the next five years.**

### **8.0 Workforce Readiness**

The Working Group endorses the Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) established through the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA). The IGP is developed with the intention of focusing students on academic and work skills such that the student achieves the college and career readiness necessary to succeed in the next stage of his/her life. The Working Group suggests that successful completion of the IGP, including meeting established levels on the Work Keys subtests for reading for information, locating information and mathematics, should be included in the evaluation of high schools; however, there are insufficient data on either to indicate what is the level of implementation and success. The Working Group also indicates that measures of “soft skills” related to job performance be considered.

**8.1 The Working Group recommends that the EEDA Coordinating Council collect and publish data on the success of students and the IGP process; and**

**8.2 The Working Group recommends that Work Keys be considered as an alternate method by which students can demonstrate competency to satisfy state-mandated testing requirements.**

### **9.0 Recentering the High School Absolute Ratings Criteria and Indices**

The elements of the criteria, expected performance levels and weights and values assigned to each criterion are displayed in Figure 1.

The Working Group examined the current absolute ratings calculation and two re-centered approaches. The Working Group asked that models for calculating the high school absolute ratings be developed which would not vary the distribution of ratings values achieved in 2009, conform to the same index values as those used for elementary and middle school absolute ratings, and re-center the values for the criteria and the index.

The range of indices used for elementary and middle schools is shown on the next page.

Table 5  
Elementary and Middle School Absolute Ratings Indices

Rating	Absolute Index Cut Points
Excellent	3.40 or above
Good	3.18 – 3.39
Average	2.65 – 3.17
Below Average	2.32 – 2.64
At Risk	2.31 or below

Model One included the same criteria used in the 2009 absolute ratings calculation, with re-centering at the criterion level. Model Two added fifth-year-graduation rate as an addition criterion and Model Three eliminated longitudinal HSAP, replacing it with fifth-year-graduation rate. For each model, the point values were displayed using a 0.5 or a 0.75 standard deviation. 121 schools were used in the simulation; EOC staff had obtained performance data from five high schools that did not respond to the original request.

Results from the simulation of Model One are shown below in Tables 6a, 6b and 6c:

Table 6a

Model One  
2009-Centered Components, 0.5 SD  
n=121 Schools

Component	5 pts.	4 pts.	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.
On-time Grad Rate	88.0% or more	79.9% – 87.9%	63.6% – 79.8%	55.5% – 63.5%	55.4% or less
Long HSAP	100%	97.7% - 99.9%	86.8% - 97.6%	81.3% - 86.7%	81.2% or less
1 <sup>st</sup> HSAP	86.4% or more	79.7% - 86.3%	66.5% - 79.6%	59.8% - 66.3%	59.7% or less
End of Course	68.0% or more	60.5% - 67.9%	45.7% - 60.5%	38.2% - 45.6%	38.1% or less

Table 6b

Model One  
2009-Centered Components, 0.75 SD  
n=121

Component	5 pts.	4 pts.	3 pts.	2 pts.	1 pt.
On-time Grad Rate	96.1% or more	84.0% – 96.0%	59.6% – 83.9%	47.4% – 59.5%	47.3% or less
Long HSAP	100%	99.5% - 99.9%	84.1% - 99.4%	75.9% - 84.0%	75.8% or less
1 <sup>st</sup> HSAP	93.0% or more	83.0% - 92.9%	63.1% - 82.9%	53.2% - 63.0%	53.1% or less
End of Course	75.5% or more	64.3% - 75.4%	42.0% - 64.2%	30.8% - 41.9%	30.7% or less

The mean school index at 0.5 standard deviation is 3.09 and at 0.75 standard deviation is 3.05. When the indices are centered based on 2009 performance, the results shown in Table 6c are achieved:

Table 6c  
Model One  
Comparison of Actual and Simulated Absolute Ratings Using 2009-  
Centered Criterion Weights

Rating	At 0.5 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index	At 0.75 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index	At 0.5 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index	At 0.75 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index
	Values for Each Criterion on 0.5 standard deviation		Values for Each Criterion on 0.75 standard deviation	
Excellent	3.8 or above	4.2 or above	3.6 or above	3.8 or above
Good	3.5-3.7	3.6-4.1	3.3-3.5	3.4-3.7
Average	2.7-3.4	2.4-3.5	2.8-3.2	2.7-3.3
Below Average	2.4-2.6	2.0-2.4	2.5-2.7	2.3-2.6
At-risk	2.3 or below	1.9 or below	2.4 or below	2.2 or below

For consideration of the fifth-year-graduation rate criterion the values shown in Table 7 were used.

Table 7  
Models Two and Three  
5-year Graduation Rate Statistics

Component	2009 Mean	2009 SD	Number Schools
5-year Graduation Rate	75.21	16.6355	126

Again, the mean school index at 0.5 standard deviation is 3.09 and at 0.75 standard deviation is 3.05.

Using the fifth-year-graduation rate data, the values associated with each rating were recalculated as shown in Table 8 on the next page.

Table 8a  
Model Two  
Comparison of Actual and Simulated Absolute Ratings Using 2009-  
Centered Criterion Weights

Rating	At 0.5 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index	At 0.75 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index	At 0.5 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index	At 0.75 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index
	Values for Each Criterion on 0.5 standard deviation		Values for Each Criterion on 0.75 standard deviation	
Excellent	3.8 or above	4.2 or above	3.6 or above	3.9 or above
Good	3.5-3.7	3.7-4.1	3.3-3.5	3.5-3.8
Average	2.7-3.4	2.5-3.6	2.8-3.2	2.7-3.4
Below Average	2.3-2.6	2.0-2.4	2.5-2.7	2.2-2.6
At-risk	2.2 or below	1.9 or below	2.4 or below	2.1 or below

A simulation then was conducted for Model Three.

Table 9  
Model Three  
Comparison of Actual and Simulated Absolute Ratings Using 2009-  
Centered Criterion Weights

Rating	At 0.5 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index	At 0.75 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index	At 0.5 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index	At 0.75 Standard Deviations for the Absolute Index
	Values for Each Criterion on 0.5 standard deviation		Values for Each Criterion on 0.75 standard deviation	
Excellent	3.9 or above	4.3 or above	3.7 or above	4.0 or above
Good	3.5-3.8	3.7-4.2	3.4-3.6	3.5-3.9
Average	2.7-3.4	2.5-3.6	2.7-3.3	2.6-3.4
Below Average	2.3-2.6	1.9-2.4	2.4-2.6	2.1-2.5
At-risk	2.2 or below	1.8 or below	2.3 or below	2.0 or below

Using the values from the three simulations a comparison was developed to understand the distribution of absolute ratings across the high schools. The comparative distribution is shown in Table 10 on the next page.

Table 10  
 Simulations of High School Absolute Ratings Based on Models One, Two and Three  
 N=121

<b>Model One</b>							
Rating	Model 1 (0.5SD Point Weights)			Model 1 (0.75 SD Point Weights)			2009 Absolute ratings (Original Criteria)
	0.5SD Cuts	0.75SD Cuts	EL/MID Cuts	0.5SD Cuts	0.75SD Cuts	EL/MID Cuts	
Excellent	15	10	37	12	9	20	18
Good	15	15	11	9	11	15	19
Average	69	81	51	84	86	71	60
Below Average	7	8	7	8	9	8	13
At Risk	15	7	15	8	6	7	11
Totals	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
<b>Model Two</b>							
Rating	Model 2 (0.5SD Point Weights)			Model 2 (0.75 SD Point Weights)			2009 Absolute ratings (Original Criteria)
	0.5SD Cuts	0.75SD Cuts	EL/MID Cuts	0.5SD Cuts	0.75SD Cuts	EL/MID Cuts	
Excellent	16	11	38	11	8	20	18
Good	14	10	8	13	7	15	19
Average	66	80	50	81	91	71	60
Below Average	14	12	9	8	10	9	13
At Risk	11	8	16	8	5	6	11
Totals	121	121	121	121	121	121	121
<b>Model Three</b>							
Rating	Model 3 (0.5SD Point Weights)			Model 3 (0.75 SD Point Weights)			2009 Absolute ratings (Original Criteria)
	0.5SD Cuts	0.75SD Cuts	EL/MID Cuts	0.5SD Cuts	0.75SD Cuts	EL/MID Cuts	
Excellent	18	10	39	12	7	20	18
Good	18	17	14	8	12	14	19
Average	58	73	41	87	89	73	60
Below Average	12	14	8	7	7	7	13
At Risk	15	7	19	7	6	7	11
Totals	121	121	121	121	121	121	121

The Working Group then discussed the difficulty of 100 percent of students passing the longitudinal exit exam or graduating within five years. While these are the target performance levels, the 100 percent level is impossible to achieve, considering up to 2 percent of students can be excluded from longitudinal HSAP and that same or a slightly larger group of students are not expected to achieve a regular high school diploma because of severe disabling conditions.

Another simulation was performed which yielded the following results.

Table 11  
Simulation of Model Two as Recommended on May 14  
Distribution of Schools by Rating Category  
Using Elementary-Middle School Indices Values  
(Number of High Schools/Percent of High Schools)

Rating	Using High Schools with Fifth Year Graduation Data N=121	Actual 2009 Results N=121	Applying Values to 197 High Schools	Actual 2009 Results
Excellent	35 (28.9%)	18 (14.9%)	33 (16.8%)	25 (12.7 %)
Good	19 (15.7%)	19 (15.7%)	25 (12.7%)	36 (18.3%)
Average	54 (44.6%)	60 (49.6%)	111 (56.3%)	93 (47.2%)
Below Average	7 (5.8%)	13 (10.7%)	15 (7.6%)	22 (11.2%)
At Risk	6 (5.0%)	11 (9.1%)	13 (6.6%)	21 (10.7%)

**9.1 After study of each of the criteria included in the calculation of the high school ratings, the performance of schools on these criteria and the weights and values assigned to these in the ratings calculation, the Working Group recommends the following be used in the determination of absolute ratings for the 2010-2011 school year and beyond:**

- (a) Five criteria should be used in the calculation of the high school rating: First-attempt HSAP, longitudinal HSAP, end-of-course test scores, on-time graduation rate and fifth-year-graduation rate (Model Two);**
- (b) The criteria should be weighted as below:**
  - 1. First-attempt HSAP 20%**
  - 2. Longitudinal HSAP 20%**
  - 3. End-of-course test scores 20%**
  - 4. On-time graduation rate 30%**
  - 5 Fifth-year-graduation rate; 10%**
- (c) A 0.75 standard deviation applied to the 2009-centered performance should be used to establish point weights for each criterion;**
- (d) Values for the longitudinal HSAP and fifth year graduation rate should be changed so that a school may earn five points for performance at the 97 percent level;**
- (e) The Elementary-Middle values for indices should be used to determine the ratings.**

**9.2 For the determination of absolute ratings in 2010 (i.e., report cards published in fall 2010), the 2009-centered performance on each criterion at the 0.75 standard deviation, using Elementary-Middle values for indices should be used.**