



# SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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## REVISED AGENDA

### SC Education Oversight Full Committee Meeting

Monday, December 8, 2025

1:00 p.m.

Room 521, Blatt Building

I. Welcome and Introductions ..... April Allen

II. Approval of Full EOC Committee Minutes for  
October 13, 2025..... April Allen

III. Special Presentations:  
Presentation from the Education Commission of the States (ECS):  
Supports & Services by Joel Moore, Director, State Relations  
  
Presentation from 2025 High School Data Trailblazer Award Winner  
Tripp Aldredge, Principal, Ft. Dorchester High School (Dorchester Two)

IV. Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee ..... Dr. Patty Tate  
Information Items:  
SC Report Card Release  
CTE Data Project Update

Action Items:  
Cyclical Review of the SC Social Studies College and Career Ready  
Standards ..... Dr. Rainey Knight  
  
2025 Cyclical Review of the Accountability System..... Dana Yow  
& Laura Pinsonnault, Associate  
The Center for Assessment

V. EIA & Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee..... April Allen  
Action Item:  
2026-27 EIA Budget & Proviso Recommendations

VI. Executive Director's Update ..... Dana Yow

VII. Adjournment

April Allen

CHAIR

Brian Newsome

VICE CHAIR

Tammy Achziger

Terry Alexander

Melanie Barton

Russell Baxley

Neal Collins

Bill Hager

Barbara B. Hairfield

Sidney Locke

Melissa Pender

Patty J. Tate

C. Ross Turner, III

Ellen Weaver

Dana Yow  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

### **Full Committee Meeting**

Minutes of the Meeting

October 13, 2025

**Members Present (in-person or remote):** Rep. Neal Collins, Brian Newsome, Barbara Hairfield, Melissa Pender, Dr. Patty Tate, Sen. Ross Turner, April Allen, Melanie Barton, Rep. Bill Hager, Rep. Terry Alexander, and Jeri McCumbee

**Special Guests:** Glenview Middle School Principal, Ryan Roberts; Digital Integration Specialist, Ashley Pursley; Math 8 Teacher and Data Analyst, Sarah Dean; and Superintendent (Anderson School District Five), Dr. Brenda Kelly; and Dr. Abbey Duggins, SCDE

**EOC Staff Present:** Crystal Garcia, Tenell Felder, Amina Asghar, Hope Johnson-Jones, Dr. Rainey Knight, Dr. Matthew Lavery, Dr. Jenny May and Dana Yow

EOC Chair April Allen, opened the full committee meeting and asked for a motion to approve the full committee minutes from the August 11-12, 2025 EOC Retreat meeting. Representative Bill Hager motioned to approve the minutes which was seconded by Representative Neal Collins. After the minutes were approved Allen called forward Glenview Middle School Principal, Ryan Roberts to be recognized as the 2025 Data Trailblazer Middle School. Principal Ray Roberts presented on the school's achievements in using data to improve student outcomes, support families in understanding student progress, promote data-driven decision-making, and maintain strong data privacy practices.

Mr. Roberts highlighted the school's success as a result of strong leadership and data-driven improvement efforts inspired by Superintendent Dr. Brenda Kelly's vision. He credited Dr. Kelly for the district's highest report card results in seven years. Roberts emphasized the importance of combining strong systems and dedicated people, calling education the "ultimate team sport." He shared examples of staff compassion and commitment to students' well-being and growth. Roberts introduced Ashley Pursley, Digital Integration Specialist, and Sarah Dean, Math 8 Teacher and Data Analyst, who contribute to the school's ongoing progress through innovative data use and collaboration.

EOC Member, Melanie Barton commended the team for exemplifying the Governor's "3 Cs" philosophy—cooperation, communication, and collaboration. She presented a letter from the



Governor recognizing their outstanding work and emphasized his belief that “you can’t manage what you don’t measure,” thanking the group for using data to improve teaching and learning.

Next, Dr. Patty Tate, ASA Chair provided an update on the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee. The ASA subcommittee met on September 15 and reviewed two information items: an update from Mrs. Yow on the Cyclical Review of the Accountability System and an update from Dr. Knight on the Social Studies Standards Review Process. Both full reports will be presented in December. The committee also approved one action item—the Evaluation of Alternative Methods of Instruction—which was presented by Amina Asghar, EOC Data Engineer.

Asghar presented her report on the Evaluation of Alternative Instruction Methods using the 2023–24 Evaluation of Alternative Instruction Methods, which under Proviso 1A.66 analyzed SCREADY (Grades 3–8) and EOCEP (High School) assessment data across instructional types—face-to-face, VirtualSC, district virtual, hybrid, other virtual, out-of-state virtual, and unknown. Across all high school subjects, face-to-face students consistently achieved the highest scores and pass rates, while students in virtual and hybrid formats scored significantly lower. Results showed that students in face-to-face settings consistently outperformed those in virtual or hybrid environments. While prior academic achievement was the strongest predictor of performance, instructional method still had a statistically significant effect. A major limitation was missing data on instructional types, which will need to be addressed in future evaluations.

Representative Collins inquired whether data should be centralized or continue being submitted by schools. Amina Asghar noted confidence in the current data but acknowledged gaps due to missing information. Melanie Barton asked who determines the instructional method, and Asghar explained that districts manually classify each course. Barton highlighted that this manual process could contribute to data collection challenges.

April Allen updated the committee on the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee report for the 2025–2026 EIA Budget Process, noting that the subcommittee will meet three times this fall. The sole action item, the South Carolina Teacher Loan Program Report, was presented by EOC Consultant Sally Cauthen and no second was required, as the item originated from the subcommittee.

The 2025 TLP Report highlights declining participation, especially in Type 1 loans, despite higher caps and expanded eligibility. Contributing factors include limited awareness, weak marketing, and fewer Teacher Cadet programs. Recommendations focus on improving coordination, modernizing applications, promoting the program, aligning with other incentives, and strengthening retention to better address South Carolina’s educator shortages. Dr. Patty Tate



inquired about improving marketing efforts for better awareness of the program and asked if any funds are allocated for advertising. Ms. Cauthen responded that she is not aware of any money being used specifically for advertising. Melanie Barton questioned whether changes to the program's structure are needed to better attract teachers, citing a 21% decline in education program enrollment over the past decade. She suggested identifying obstacles preventing entry into the classroom and proposed that the committee speak directly with current and prospective teachers to gain insights. Representative Alexander asked about ownership and oversight of the program. Melanie Barton clarified that it is managed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) in partnership with the Student Loan Corporation. Rep. Alexander recommended that the Student Loan Corporation offer the EOC insights and recommendations on the program's effectiveness. Ms. Yow responded that Ray Jones from the Student Loan Corporation already presents to the EIA subcommittee, as they receive EIA funding, but noted that the budget is approved by the CHE and the program's governance structure is relatively complex.

Dr. Patty Tate moved to accept the TLP report and requested that the EOC chair form a strategic committee to conduct a comprehensive review of relevant statutes, provisos, and regulations. The committee would propose changes, including strategies for the long-term use of the revolving loan fund and other initiatives to recruit high school students into the teaching profession—which was option four presented by Ms. Cauthen. The committee would use the report to make specific recommendations to the EOC by the end of the current fiscal year. Rep. Alexander supported the motion, and Sen. Ross Turner seconded it. The motion carried.

April Allen moved to accept the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee report. Melanie Barton supported the motion, and Rep. Bill Hager seconded it. Following this, Ms. Yow provided the Executive Director Update.

Ms. Yow highlighted several key points. She reported that the EOC and State Board of Education are conducting a joint retreat with support from the University of Georgia's assessment office to clarify the assessment review and approval process. This effort aims to explain how standards and assessments progress through their seven-year cycle, the role of teachers, and the responsibilities of governing bodies, with findings expected in January. She also addressed the "Moonshot Goal," which targets 75% student proficiency by 2030, noting that tentative review dates have been shared with State Board staff, though confirmation is pending. Finally, Ms. Yow stated that the School Report Card release has been delayed to the first week of November due to inconsistencies in high school data, while elementary and middle school data are complete. Ms. Yow clarified that the main issue with the School Report Card data was related to the College



and Career Readiness Indicator and how it was calculated and aggregated. The EOC and State Department agreed to ensure all data are fully accurate before public release, and a specific release date will be communicated once finalized.

Rep. Collins emphasized the critical importance of the School Report Card, noting that teachers, principals, district superintendents, and families rely on it. Rep. Collins expressed frustration that the report, central to the accountability system, is delayed until November, arguing this fails both schools and families by providing information too late to be actionable. Rep. Collins highlighted concerns about inaccurate data, particularly at the high school level, and criticized the system for lacking prioritization, timely preparation, and transparency, which leaves educators anxious about their positions and undermines trust in the accountability process. Rep. Collins stressed that ensuring timely and accurate report card releases should be the Department's top priority. Rep. Alexander asked who is responsible for ensuring schools submit accurate data on time. Ms. Yow stated that responsibility lies with both the State Department of Education and the EOC.

Ms. Yow then provided an update on the December 8 committee agenda, noting it will be full and include the final report of the Cyclical Review of the Accountability System. She mentioned the final Accountability Advisory Committee meeting on December 3, explaining that the report will be provided shortly after, leaving a very tight review window. Additional items on the agenda include EIA improvement recommendations, the Social Studies Standards Review report, the Data Trailblazer Award presentation for a high school winner, and a presentation from the Education Commission of the States.

After this update, the meeting was adjourned.





## Raymond J. "Tripp" Aldredge, III

Principal

### Fort Dorchester High School

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Fort Dorchester High School is a comprehensive high school, serving the easternmost communities of our district over the past 32 years, offering a world-class educational experience that prepares each student for college and/or career success. We currently serve 2,350 students across grades 9-12 in our diverse community of North Charleston, in a rapidly growing area of Dorchester County.

As of 2022, our community of 116,000 residents has an average median income of \$40,000 with an employment rate of approximately 95%. However, 20% of our residents live

below the poverty line, and our school's poverty index stands at 57.5%. Reflecting the diversity of the community, our student population is 43.5% African American, 34.8% Caucasian, 12.5% Hispanic, 3.8% Asian, .26% Hawaiian-Pacific Islander and 5.2% other. This blend of long-time residents, transient citizens, and families from suburban and urban areas contributes to the unique fabric of our school.

Our school and community are committed to helping students achieve their full potential. We have consistently earned an "Excellent" school report card rating since 2019, and our school community firmly believes that prepared, responsible individuals who are determined to excel will succeed. Together, we embrace this shared commitment to excellence in all that we do.

## Data Highlights

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**SC School Report Card:** The school has earned an "Excellent" rating each year from 2019 to 2024, with notable growth in key indicators, including graduation rate and college/career readiness.

**ELA EOC Data:** From 2019 to 2024, the percentage of students earning A's and B's increased, while F grades decreased. The transition from English 1 to English 2 EOC in 2023 may explain some year-to-year changes.

**Algebra 1 EOC Data:** After a decline in 2020-2022 (affected by COVID-19), Algebra 1 performance improved in 2023 and 2024 with higher passing rates and more students earning C or higher.

**Biology EOC Data:** Performance in Biology declined from 2019 to 2023 but showed signs of recovery in 2024, with fewer students earning F's and more students achieving A's and B's.

**U.S. History EOC Data:** U.S. History performance fluctuated, with improvements in 2023 followed by mixed results in 2024, including a rise in F grades and challenges with new state standards.

**College and Career Readiness:** From 2021 to 2024, both college and career readiness showed strong growth, with career readiness increasing by 8.4% from 2023 to 2024.

**Attendance:** Attendance improved in 2023-2024, with a 40% reduction in average daily period absences.

**Acceleration Opportunities:** High-achieving students are provided with enrichment activities, AP courses, and dual credit programs in partnership with local colleges, allowing them to earn college credits while in high school.

**Recovery and Growth Plans:** A comprehensive recovery program supports students who are below grade level through credit recovery, quarterly recovery plans, and ongoing progress monitoring to ensure academic growth and success.

**Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS):** MTSS provides a framework for identifying at-risk students and offering personalized academic, behavioral, and emotional support through interventions and regular monitoring to ensure student success.

**Equity Initiatives:** The school emphasizes equity, offering flexible learning opportunities like Individualized Learning Time (ILT), ensuring all students can participate and thrive.





The School Report Cards are the fourth Report Cards released with ratings since 2019. The two-year pause occurred because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Summary of the Overall Ratings and Indicators**

#### **Overall Ratings**

- Based on a 100-point scale, per state law

#### **Number and percentage of schools receiving Overall Ratings by school year**

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			MIDDLE SCHOOLS			HIGH SCHOOLS		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Excellent	161 (24.1%)	124 (18%)	131 (19%)	70 (20.8%)	43 (12%)	60 (17%)	48 (20.3%)	63 (25%)	76 (30%)
Good	161 (24.1%)	187 (28%)	200 (29%)	97 (28.9%)	87 (25%)	98 (28%)	46 (19.4%)	42 (17%)	55 (22%)
Average	240 (36.0%)	250 (37%)	257 (38%)	134 (39.9%)	158 (46%)	153 (44%)	68 (28.7%)	69 (27%)	75 (30%)
Below Average	80 (12.0%)	86 (13%)	83 (12%)	30 (8.9%)	44 (13%)	9 (13%)	45 (19.0%)	56 (22%)	31 (12%)
Unsatisfactory	25 (3.7%)	25 (4%)	7 (1%)	5 (1.5%)	8 (2%)	2 (2%)	30 (12.7%)	14 (6%)	14 (6%)
Number of Report Cards	667	672	678	336	340	349	237	244	251

*Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. Fifteen schools did not receive Overall Ratings.*

#### **Ranges of scores necessary to receive overall Ratings by school type**

Overall Rating	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools
Excellent	61-100	56-100	67-100
Good	53-60	48-55	60-66
Average	42-52	36-47	51-59
Below Average	34-41	29-35	40-50
Unsatisfactory	0-33	0-28	0-39



### Indicator Ratings

**Academic Achievement:** Indicator determines if students in a school are meeting state standards in English Language Arts (Reading and Writing) and Math.

\*Counts 35 points for Elementary and Middle Schools; 25 points for High Schools

#### Number and percentage of schools receiving ratings in **Academic Achievement indicator** by school year

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			MIDDLE SCHOOLS			HIGH SCHOOLS		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Excellent	150 (23%)	170 (25%)	201 (30%)	58 (17.3%)	57 (17%)	61 (17%)	19 (8.2%)	21 (9%)	33 (13%)
Good	134 (20%)	140 (21%)	134 (20%)	63 (18.8%)	64 (19%)	71 (20%)	31 (13.3%)	44 (18%)	42 (17%)
Average	227 (34%)	224 (33%)	254 (37%)	123 (36.6%)	128 (37%)	137 (39%)	65 (27.9%)	73 (31%)	85 (34%)
Below Average	123 (18%)	121 (18%)	81 (12%)	72 (21.4%)	74 (21%)	67 (19%)	73 (31.3%)	74 (31%)	54 (22%)
Unsatisfactory	33 (5%)	17 (3%)	8 (1%)	20 (6.0%)	17 (5%)	13 (4%)	45 (19.3%)	27 (11%)	34 (14%)
Number of Report Cards	667	672	678	336	340	349	233	239	251

*Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. Eighteen schools did not receive Academic Achievement indicator Ratings.*

#### Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on SC READY by school year State Performance (Elementary and Middle Schools)

##### English Language Arts

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
42.4%	46.8%	52.7%	54.1%	60.3%

##### Mathematics

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
37.0%	38.8%	39.6%	42.8%	44.5%



**Percent Earning a C or better on End-of-Course exams by school year  
State Performance (High Schools)**

English 2

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
67.4%	66.84%	67.4%	66.4%	68.5%

Algebra I

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
34.6%	42.3%	44.86%	47.8%	51.6%

**Preparing for Success\***: This indicator determines if students in a school are meeting state standards in Science (as measured by SC READY Science given in 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades) in Elementary Middle Schools. For High Schools, the indicator measures performance on both the Biology I and U.S. History and the Constitution End-of-Course exams.

\*Preparing for Success *was not* calculated or reported for elementary and middle schools for the 2024 Report Cards to allow scoring for the new SC READY Science test to be developed.

10 points for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

**Number and percentage of schools receiving ratings in  
Preparing for Success by school year**

	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			MIDDLE SCHOOLS			HIGH SCHOOLS		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Excellent	71 (11%)	—	74 (11%)	22 (7%)	—	29 (9%)	9 (3.9%)	17 (7%)	17 (7%)
Good	76 (12%)	—	88 (13%)	28 (9%)	—	44 (14%)	12 (5.2%)	11 (5%)	14 (6%)
Average	174 (27%)	—	189 (29%)	70 (23%)	—	90 (28%)	59 (25.3%)	66 (26%)	71 (28%)
Below Average	144 (22%)	—	168 (26%)	79 (26%)	—	85 (27%)	73 (31.3%)	79 (34%)	82 (33%)
Unsatisfactory	178 (28%)	—	134 (21%)	106 (35%)	—	68 (22%)	80 (34.3%)	61 (26%)	66 (26%)
Number of Report Cards	643	—	678	305	—	349	233	234	250

*Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. Seventy-four schools did not receive Preparing for Success indicator Ratings.*



**Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on SC READY/PASS Science by school year  
State Performance (Elementary and Middle Schools)**

Science

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
42.9%	46.0%	43.7%	Not measured .	49.5%

**Percent Earning a C or better on End-of-Course exams by school year  
State Performance (High Schools)**

Biology I

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
39.3%	42.6%	42.9%	47.9%	44.0%

U.S. History and the Constitution

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
37.1%	39.3%	44.67%	41.5%	45.7%



**Student Progress:** This indicator determines how students are growing or improving academically in ELA and Math and how the lowest performing 20% of students in a school are growing academically.

\*Counts 35 points for Elementary and Middle Schools; does not count for High Schools

\*Scoring assumes there are 20 or more Multilingual Learners in a school.

**Number and percentage of schools receiving ratings in  
Student Progress indicator by school year**

St Prog. Rating	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			MIDDLE SCHOOLS		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Excellent	84 (13%)	75 (11%)	81 (12%)	20 (6.0%)	22 (6%)	57 (16%)
Good	157 (24%)	145 (22%)	185 (28%)	76 (22.6%)	52 (15%)	83 (24%)
Average	245 (37%)	307 (46%)	279 (42%)	182 (54.2%)	143 (42%)	132 (38%)
Below Average	140 (21%)	109 (16%)	94 (14%)	53 (15.8%)	91 (27%)	54 (16%)
Unsatisfactory	37 (6%)	33 (5%)	31 (5%)	5 (1.5%)	32 (9%)	22 (6%)
# of Cards	663	669	670	336	340	348

*Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. Twenty elementary and middle schools did not receive Preparing for Success indicator Ratings.*

**Multilingual Learners' Proficiency:** Indicator determines if students in a school who are non-native-English speakers are meeting growth targets to learn the English Language.

\*Counts 10 points for all schools with 20 or more Multilingual Learners.

**Number and percentage of schools receiving ratings in  
Multilingual Learners' Progress indicator by school year**

MLP Rating	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			MIDDLE SCHOOLS			HIGH SCHOOLS		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Excellent	49 (13%)	8 (1%)	6 (2%)	11 (6%)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	— (0%)
Good	167 (44%)	63 (18%)	56 (16%)	57 (31%)	11 (6%)	14 (8%)	36 (25%)	10 (7%)	10 (7%)
Average	127 (34%)	160 (46%)	168 (47%)	73 (40%)	48 (27%)	43 (25%)	66 (46%)	35 (25%)	38 (27%)
Below Average	31 (8%)	107 (31%)	122 (34%)	41 (22%)	83 (47%)	91 (53%)	38 (26%)	74 (52%)	77 (55%)
Unsatis- factory	0 (0%)	10 (3%)	6 (2%)	2 (1%)	31 (18%)	24 (14%)	3 (2%)	22 (15%)	16 (11%)
# of Cards	374	348	358	184	175	173	144	142	141

*Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. 621 schools without 20 or more Multilingual Learners did not receive ratings for this indicator.*



**School Climate:** Indicator uses results from the Teacher and Student Climate surveys to measure perceptions of safety, working conditions, instructional focus, and social-physical environment.

\*Counts 10 points for Elementary and Middle Schools; 5 points for High Schools

### Number and percentage of schools receiving ratings in **School Climate Indicator**

Sch Clim. Rating	ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS			MIDDLE SCHOOLS			HIGH SCHOOLS		
	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025
Excellent	135 (20%)	162 (24%)	159 (23%)	44 (13%)	71 (21%)	77 (22%)	31 (13%)	50 (20%)	58 (23%)
Good	128 (19%)	137 (20%)	145 (21%)	84 (25%)	91 (27%)	89 (26%)	41 (17%)	57 (23%)	51 (20%)
Average	212 (32%)	215 (32%)	222 (33%)	109 (32%)	127 (37%)	133 (38%)	78 (32%)	93 (38%)	98 (39%)
Below Average	123 (18%)	109 (16%)	113 (17%)	57 (17%)	42 (12%)	37 (11%)	53 (22%)	35 (14%)	37 (15%)
Unsatis- factory	70 (11%)	49 (7%)	40 (6%)	43 (13%)	9 (3%)	11 (3%)	38 (16%)	11 (4%)	9 (4%)
# of Cards	668	672	679	337	340	347	241	246	253

*Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. For this indicator, 14 schools did not receive a rating.*

**High School Student Success:** This indicator shows if high school students have earned the required 24 credits (four in English and four in math) to be eligible for graduation in four years OR shows if students have reached a successful high school outcome within five years of beginning high school.

### Number and percentage of schools receiving ratings in **High School Student Success** by school year

High School Student Success	2024	2025
Excellent	69 (28%)	78 (31%)
Good	72 (29%)	103 (41%)
Average	59 (24%)	45 (18%)
Below Average	27 (11%)	13 (5%)
Unsatisfactory	18 (7%)	11 (5%)
Number of Cards	245	252

*Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. Three high schools were not rated for this indicator in 2025.*



**Graduation Rate:** Indicator determines what percentage of students who entered the high school in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade graduated in at least 4 years.

\*Counts 19 points for High Schools only.

**Number and percentage of schools receiving ratings in  
Graduation Rate indicator by school year**

Graduation Rate Rating	High Schools			
	2022	2023	2024	2025
Excellent	77 (32.1%)	79 (33.3%)	84 (35%)	111 (44%)
Good	82 (34.2%)	81 (34.2%)	73 (30%)	79 (32%)
Average	54 (22.5%)	48 (20.3%)	61 (25%)	39 (16%)
Below Average	14 (5.8%)	17 (7.2%)	16 (7%)	10 (4%)
Unsatisfactory	13 (5.4%)	12 (5.1%)	8 (3%)	8 (3%)
Number of Cards	240	237	<b>242</b>	<b>242</b>

*Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. Eight high schools were not rated for this indicator in 2025.*

**State Graduation Rate**

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>82.6%</b>	<b>84.6%</b>	<b>81.0%</b>	<b>81.1%</b>	<b>82.2%</b>	<b>83.3%</b>	<b>83.8%</b>	<b>83.8%</b>	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>86.7</b>



**College and Career Ready:** Indicator determines if students who are graduating from a high school are prepared for college or careers after graduating.

\*Counts 25 points for High Schools only.

**Number and percentage of schools receiving ratings in  
College and Career Ready indicator by school year**

CCR Rating	High Schools		
	2023	2024	2025
Excellent	46 (19%)	85 (35%)	114 (46%)
Good	60 (25%)	68 (28%)	71 (29%)
Average	86 (36%)	66 (27%)	53 (21%)
Below Average	34 (14%)	17 (7%)	3 (1%)
Unsatisfactory	11 (5%)	6 (2%)	6 (2%)
Number of Cards	237	242	247

*Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. Eight high schools were not rated for this indicator.*

**Percent of Students College OR Career Ready**

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
61.1%	65.8%	64.7%	71.5%	75.1%

\*Students can be counted more than once as they may meet more than one option.

**Percent of Students College AND Career Ready**

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
28.7%	29.0%	29.3%	30.6%	31.2%



### Percent of Students Career Ready

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2023-24	2024-25
61.1%	55.7%	62.8%	69.6%	73.3%

### Career Ready Detail

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
CTE completer with certification	13.8%	17.5%	20.6%	25.1%	<b>28.9%</b>
Work-based learning	3.1%	5.3%	7.7%	9.7%	<b>11.0%</b>
Level 3 or higher on Career Readiness assessment	48.0%	54.1%	47.8%	55.1%	<b>54.9%</b>
ASVAB	6.7%	5.9%	6.9%	9.0%	<b>10.6%</b>
SC High School Employability Credential	Not yet implemented	0.6%	0.7%	0.7%	<b>0.8%</b>

### Percent of Students College Ready

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
34.1%	32.0%	32.6%	32.5%	33.0%

### College Ready Detail

CR Measure	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
ACT: 20 or higher	15.4%	11.3%	11.8%	12.4%	<b>10.2%</b>
SAT: 1020 or higher	20.5%	20.5%	20.0%	19.3%	<b>20.0%</b>
AP: 3 or higher	16.0%	14.9%	15.1%	14.9%	<b>15.7%</b>
IB: 4 or higher	1.1%	0.9%	0.8%	0.7%	<b>0.6%</b>
Dual Credit: C or better	15.3%	14.1%	15.2%	15.8%	<b>17.5%</b>
Cambridge C or better	Not yet implemented	0.04%	0.04%	0.03%	<b>0.11%</b>



# Academic Achievement & Student Progress Drive SC School Report Card Gains



**Mon, 11/03/2025**

**COLUMBIA, S.C.** – Rising test scores, student academic growth, and gains in college- and career- readiness fueled improvements across South Carolina schools according to the 2025 South Carolina School Report Cards, released Monday by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC).

The new report cards, unveiled at Annie Burnside Elementary School in Richland School District One, measure schools across key performance indicators, including academic achievement, student progress, college and career readiness, and school climate.

The number of South Carolina schools earning an overall rating of ‘Good’ or ‘Excellent’ increased from 549 to 623.

## **Why It Matters:**

South Carolina’s School Report Cards provide families, educators, and the community with a clear snapshot of how schools are performing, helping everyone stay informed and engaged on how their schools stack up.

They also provide a roadmap toward the state’s goal for every child to graduate college, career, or military ready, and that by 2030, at least 75% of students at or above grade level.

## **The Big Picture:**



These report cards serve as an important accountability measure, allowing parents, educators, and policy makers to understand and identify challenges in their schools. Schools are rated: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, Unsatisfactory.

#### Elementary Schools

- Nearly half of SC's elementary schools are rated Good or better.
- More than a quarter of SC elementary schools improved their Overall rating from 2024 to 2025.
- The percentage of elementary schools earning a Good or better on the 'Academic Achievement' and 'Student Progress' indicators rating increased 3% and 7% respectively over 2024.

#### Middle Schools

- The percentage of middle schools earning a Good or better for the 'Student Progress' indicator rating increased from 22% in 2024 to 40% in 2025.
- Nearly one in three middle schools improved their overall ratings from 2024 to 2025.

#### High Schools

- South Carolina's On-Time Graduation Rate is at 86.7%, a 10-year high.
- The percentage of high schools earning a Good or better on the 'College/Career Readiness' indicator increased from 63% in 2024 to 75% in 2025.

#### **Spotlight - Annie Burnside Elementary:**

Annie Burnside Elementary School earned an overall report card rating of **Excellent** for the 2024-25 school year. This marked an improvement from an Average overall rating in 2023-24.

- Annie Burnside Elementary is one of the EOC's [Beating the Odds Investigative Study Schools](#). Schools in this study are high poverty schools demonstrating strong academic achievement.
- 83% of students at Annie Burnside are considered Pupils in Poverty.
- The 'Student Progress' indicator at Annie Burnside improved from Average in 2023-24 to Excellent in 2024-25.

#### **Looking Ahead:**



College and Career Readiness remains a top priority for South Carolina students. While South Carolina's on-time graduation rate is at a ten-year high, only 75.1% of students are either career or college ready. While the gap between the state's graduation rate and college or career readiness has narrowed, more work must be done to ensure that a South Carolina diploma directly translates to post-secondary success.

The recent approval of [South Carolina's tiered stackable credential system](#) is one big step forward to increase alignment of high school credentials with employability. South Carolina's business and industry leaders will have a primary role in developing and maintaining the list of credentials. This tiered system is expected to be fully implemented by the 2027-2028 school year, allowing districts and high schools adequate time to transition to the new system.

### **What They're Saying:**

"These report cards tell a clear story: South Carolina students and educators are rolling up their sleeves and getting results," said **State Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver**. "From the Lowcountry to the Upstate, we're proving that when teachers are empowered, communities are engaged, and high expectations meet strong support students soar. The South Carolina Surge is growing, and together—from the classroom to the Statehouse—we're building the foundation for every child to reach their God-given potential. This progress is fuel in the tank: energy and inspiration to drive us forward in the vital work still ahead."

"Our state report cards show that South Carolina's on-time graduation rate for high school students remains high at 86.7%. This is great news, but we also acknowledge the need for an increase in students who are college and career ready," said **EOC Chair April Allen**. "With this goal in mind, we are happy to acknowledge the recent approval of the SC tiered credential system. We expect this new system will better prepare our high school students for successful career paths as it is implemented in the upcoming years."

"This 'Excellent' rating belongs to our entire Annie Burnside family. It reflects the hard work of our students, the dedication of our teachers, the support from the community, and their belief in what's possible," said **Dr. Janet Campbell, principal of Annie Burnside Elementary School**. "Our school made a commitment to work together, focus on growth, and hold high expectations for every child. Seeing our students rise to the challenge has been incredibly rewarding."

"What is happening at Annie Burnside proves that success is possible when a school community shares a clear vision and works together to make it real," said **Dr. Todd Walker, Superintendent of Richland School District One**. "I am incredibly proud of Dr. Campbell,



her dedicated staff, and their students, and I am confident that the same determination and collaboration can transform every school in Richland One moving forward.”

More detailed information on the 2025 SC School Report Cards can be found at [www.screportcards.com](http://www.screportcards.com).



## CTE Data Project Summary

### October 8, 2025

#### Work Completed

- June 24, 2025: At the annual Business and Education Conference, Bunnie Ward and Dana Yow presented to CTE educators about the CTE Data Project objectives and approach.
- Summer 2025: Contracted with The Riley Institute to begin compiling an in-depth, comprehensive [literature review](#) and annotated bibliography, to be concluded fall 2025.
- Summer 2025: Bunnie Ward provided an overview of CTE Data Project to SC Competes' Logistics, Aerospace and Technology clusters.
- August 14, 2025: SC Competes-led Project Team (Bunnie Ward, Ivy Coburn with SREB, Brooke Culclasure with The Riley Institute) presented project research questions, objectives, and approach during initial Working Group call. The presentation can be accessed [here](#).
- August 28, 2025: Working Group call focused on finalizing the research questions to guide the work. Based upon this and other relevant input, the Project Team organized questions in four data categories: participation, student experience, results and impact. An online collaborative working space was then created and can be accessed [here](#).
- September 9, 2025: The Working Group met (in person) at the Greenville CTE Roper Mountain Innovation Center. Members reviewed the in-depth, comprehensive literature review to inform the development of potential metrics for the participation and student experience data categories. The presentation may be accessed [here](#).
- September 12, 2025: Identified exemplars, including Arizona, Kentucky, and Georgia.
- October 2, 2025: The Working Group call focused on developing metrics for the results and impact data categories. The presentation may be accessed [here](#). The approach to group interviews and surveys of the three stakeholder groups (students, educators, business/industry) was also discussed.

#### Next Steps (Revised Timeline)

- (continued) Stakeholder Engagement (October - November 15, 2025): Based on input of the Working Group, interview questions will be developed for conversations with additional stakeholder groups, including educators and business/industry leaders. These group interviews will help develop further the survey questions and, most importantly, provide context to stakeholders so they are better informed in preparation of completion of the survey requests.



## **CTE Data Project Summary**

**October 8, 2025**

- October 16, 2025: Provide an overview of the CTE Data Project with district and center CTE Directors at the scheduled Fall Update meeting.
- October 23, 2025: The scheduled Working Group call will likely focus on group interview and survey questions.
- Economic Data (November): As a strategic next step, the project team will contact representatives from the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) to identify and incorporate state-specific economic data sources within the impact section of the report. While the results shared in the October meeting utilized JobsEQ, a national data tool, future reporting will prioritize employment data, wage trends, and information about priority occupations provided by SCDEW. Connecting with SCDEW ensures that our impact measures are directly aligned with South Carolina's labor market realities and that state leaders and stakeholders have access to the most relevant insights on workforce outcomes, regional job opportunities, and economic growth.
- November 1-15, 2025: Administration of the surveys to stakeholder groups.
- November 17, 2025: Provide update to EOC ASA Subcommittee.
- November 18, 2025: Scheduled Working Group call.
- December 1, 2025: Analysis and summary of survey results.
- December 11, 2025: Scheduled Working Group call.
- January 12, 2026: Submit status report 2 to EOC.
- February 9, 2026: Submit final report to EOC.



## **CTE Data Project Summary**

**October 8, 2025**

### **Summary of Priority Data Sets for Each Group** (based on October 2, 2025, Working Group Discussion)

Below find a summary of the affirmed priority data sets for each group (participation, student experiences, results, and impact), along with the survey questions and participant groups agreed upon for each dataset based on the transcript of the Working Group discussion.

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#### **Participation Data Group**

##### **Affirmed Priority Data Sets**

- Enrollment by geography (bubble map by zip code, showing student origins)
- Enrollment by program/cluster area, including gender and special populations
- Program funding streams, especially breaking out federal, state, local, and business/industry contributions
- Participant vs. regional demographics (comparing CTE participation to overall district demographics)
- Program progression (enrollment → concentrator → completer → credential attainment)
- Work-based learning participation (levels and types recorded)

##### **Survey Questions/Participants**

- Most participation data is planned for reporting from information systems, but work-based learning includes business/industry partners as respondents.
  - For work-based learning types:
    - Which work-based learning experiences do students have access to at your business? (options: job shadowing, paid/unpaid employment, internships, apprenticeships, tours, etc.)
  - For program progression: potential clarification from data coordinators; no direct survey, but systems-based reporting
  - For demographics: comparison only, not a direct survey
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#### **Student Experiences Data Group**

##### **Affirmed Priority Data Sets**

- Student engagement in work-based learning activities
- Dual credit and post-secondary exposure/awareness
- Program choice vs. placement (was the student assigned or did they self-select? How did the decision occur?)
- Job placement and awareness of post-secondary/career options
- Quality and support of educators (certifications, in-field status, years of business/industry experience)



## **CTE Data Project Summary**

**October 8, 2025**

### Survey Questions/Participants

- Target participant: Students, generally seniors or program completers
  - Limited, focused questions (ideally 5–10, max 25 if covering all areas; survey should be under 10 minutes):
    - Have you had the chance to explore different career options?
    - Have you been involved in work-based learning activities? (Yes/No)
    - Which career development opportunities have you had? (College fair, dual enrollment, campus tours, observations, etc.)
    - Do you know how to find information about post-secondary programs related to your field?
    - Were you placed into your program, or did you choose it? What factors influenced your decision?
    - What quality of support did you receive from educators? (certifications, years of experience, etc.)
    - Did you receive recognition/awards during your program?
    - Did you hold any leadership positions or receive special recognition?
  - Student survey responses should capture the home district/center for analysis by region.
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### **Results Data Group**

#### Affirmed Priority Data Sets

- Student completion, graduation, and dropout rates (end-of-program outcomes)
- State assessment proficiency scores (CTE students vs. all students)
- Perkins accountability indicators (federally required)
- Credentials earned, types, and tiers at graduation
- Scholarships awarded to CTE students
- Job/college placement after graduation (two-year/four-year college, technical, work, military, gap year)

#### Survey Questions/Participants

- For job/college placement:
  - What are your plans immediately after high school? (Options: two-year college, technical school, four-year college, work, military, travel, gap year)
  - Some result data sets are compiled administratively, while others (especially placement and scholarships) may require student reporting
  - Data on credentials/scholarships may be collected through both schools and student self-reports
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### **Impact Data Group**

#### Affirmed Priority Data Sets



## CTE Data Project Summary

October 8, 2025

- Economic impact/regional jobs and wage forecasts (JobsEQ data, regional priority occupations)
- Alumni outcomes (1, 3, 5 years out: employment, wages by field/credential)
- Advisory committee and business/industry engagement (nature and extent of advisory participation)
- Community recognition of student leadership and awards

### Survey Questions/Participants

- Business/industry partners: Nature of advisory participation (checked list: curriculum review, event sponsorship, providing work-based learning, facility tours, etc.)
  - Data for wage outcomes may come from state systems or separate studies, not surveys.
  - School/district-level reporting on community engagement and economic impact
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### General Survey/Process Notes

- Surveys should be concise, ideally under 10 minutes, and target only the necessary participant cohorts (e.g., seniors, completers for student experience data).
- Integration with existing reporting systems (e.g., PowerSchool) is critical; survey items must align with what systems are already designed to track.
- The group prioritized creating questions that are understandable and relevant to the specific student and partner groups and discussed ways to ensure clarity (e.g., distinguishing the tech center from sending high school in survey prompts).

### Summary of Phased Approach to Collecting and Reporting CTE Data

During the October 2nd Working Group session, members engaged in an in-depth exploration of how Career and Technical Education (CTE) data is collected, managed, and interpreted across both **Technical Centers** and **comprehensive high schools**. The discussion was sparked by the recognition that while both settings play essential roles in delivering CTE programming, they often utilize different reporting structures, definitions, and data systems. This has significant implications for how participation, progression, and outcomes are tracked for students throughout the state. The following provides an overview of key points to consider as we move forward with this project.

### Key Points:

- The Working Group agreed that capturing data from both Technical Centers and comprehensive high schools is crucial, given that a majority of CTE (Career and Technical Education) students are enrolled in comprehensive high schools rather than exclusively at the centers.



## CTE Data Project Summary

October 8, 2025

- It was emphasized that definitions of CTE participants, concentrators, and completers must be clarified for both settings. Centers typically use more structured approaches, whereas high schools may offer courses that count toward concentrator status, as defined by federal regulations, even when delivered outside the center.
- **A phased approach was supported:** start by perfecting data collection, cleaning, and visualization processes at the Technology Center level, then expand to include CTE programming at comprehensive high schools, accounting for their unique reporting structures and variations.
- Several participants noted that data reporting processes differ substantially between Technical Centers and high schools.
- The group discussed the necessity of collaborating with state and district data coordinators to ensure accurate and holistic data collection—particularly noting that, for federal Perkins accountability, concentrator data from high schools is essential. This is compounded by funding implications since Perkins funds are allocated based on student counts from both centers and high schools.
- Additional points were raised about barriers to program access, including seat limitations at centers and eligibility criteria at both sites. Opportunities for students may depend on district agreements, the number of available seats, completion of particular prerequisites (such as Algebra 1 and English 1), and policies unique to each setting.
- It was agreed that survey instruments and dashboards should clearly distinguish between experiences at the technical center and the sending high school, providing clear instructions to respondents to avoid confusion in responses and clarify reporting.
- Lastly, the need for future data integration and possible new survey development was noted, with a recommendation to keep all survey and data collection efforts consistent with the capabilities and reporting fields of existing student information systems (such as PowerSchool), and to design instruments that allow for center- and high school-level comparability and roll-up.

### Working Group Next Steps

The Working Group noted that several data sources—such as work-based learning participation—overlap across the four data groups (participation, student experiences, results, and impact). Members discussed that specific data points, like work-based learning, dual credit participation, credential attainment, and program enrollment, could logically contribute to more than one group, depending on the lens used for program evaluation.

For example, work-based learning data not only shows program participation rates but can also illustrate the depth of student experience, lead directly to measurable student outcomes (like credentials or job placements), and signal long-term program impact by supporting post-graduate success. Because of these overlaps, the group recognized the importance of clearly assigning data sources to the areas where they offer the most explanatory power in understanding the health and quality of CTE programs.



## **CTE Data Project Summary**

**October 8, 2025**

To support this clarification, meeting participants were given "homework"—a request to review the data slides shared during the session and reflect on where these overlapping data sources could have the most impact. Members were explicitly asked to determine which data group (participation, experience, results, impact) each overlapping data set most strongly supports in telling the story of the program, to maximize the strategic value of each data source in dashboard and report card development.



## EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**DATE:** December 8, 2025

### **ACTION ITEM**

**Cyclical Review of South Carolina 2019 College and Career Social Studies Standards**

### **PURPOSE/AUTHORITY**

**SECTION 59-18-350.** Cyclical review of state standards and assessments; analysis of assessment results.

(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. The previous content standards shall remain in effect until the recommended revisions are adopted pursuant to Section 59-18-355. 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.

### **CRITICAL FACTS**

Attached is a report that includes recommendations for modifications to the South Carolina College and-Career Ready Social Studies Standards. These recommendations were compiled under the advisement of two review panels: a national review panel of social studies educators who have worked with national or other state organizations and a state review panel made up of South Carolina social studies teachers, parents, business and community leaders and South Carolina teachers of English language learners and exceptional education drawn from various geographic areas in South Carolina.

### **TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS**

April, 2025	Letters of Agreement sent to National Review Panel
April, 2025	Cyclical Review Nominee Forms emailed to SC Leaders for State Review Panel
July, 2025	National Review Panel Conference Call
May, 2025	Selection of SC Review State Panel
September 8, 2025	National Review Panel submitted recommendations
September 22, 2025	Meeting 1 State Review Panel
October 6, 2025	Meeting 2 State Review Panel
October 20, 2025	Meeting 3 State Review Panel; Findings Submitted
November 17, 2025	ASA Approved Recommendations

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC**

**Cost:** None

**Fund/Source:** NA

### **ACTION REQUEST**

☒ **For approval**

☐ **For information**

### **ACTION TAKEN**

☐ **Approved**  
☐ **Not Approved**

☐ **Amended**  
☐ **Action deferred (explain)**





# Cyclical Review of the 2019 South Carolina College and Career Ready Social Studies Standards



Prepared by Dr. Rainey Knight

For presentation to the Education  
Oversight Committee

December 8, 2025



## INTRODUCTION

The South Carolina Education Accountability Act of 1998 establishes an accountability system for public education that focuses on improving teaching and learning so that students are equipped with a strong foundation in the four primary academic disciplines and a strong belief in lifelong learning. Academic standards are used to focus schools and districts toward higher performance by aligning the state assessment to those standards. The implementation of quality standards in classrooms across South Carolina is dependent upon systematic review of adopted standards, focused teacher development, strong instructional practices, and a high level of student engagement. Pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A) of the Education Accountability Act, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) and the State Board of Education are responsible for reviewing South Carolina's standards and assessments to ensure that high expectations for teaching and learning are being maintained.

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.

In October of 2025, the responsibilities of the EOC under the cyclical review of the South Carolina College and Career Social Studies Standards was completed. A timeline for the process is provided in appendix A.

This report presents recommendations for modifications to the 2019 South Carolina College and Career Ready Social Studies Academic Standards from the Education Oversight Committee. These recommendations were compiled under the advisement of two review teams: a national review team of social studies educators who have worked with national or other state organizations and a state review team of South Carolina teachers, parents, business, higher education, community leaders and faculty from higher education drawn from various geographical areas in South Carolina.

It is important to note that the adopted South Carolina College and Career Social Studies Standards represent the work of many educators, and that this review of the standards was undertaken to identify ways in which their work could be strengthened and supported. The Education Oversight Committee expresses its appreciation to those educators and commends their utilization of national source documents and their belief in the achievement of all students.



The Education Oversight Committee intends to ensure that all students are knowledgeable and capable.

## **I: CYCLICAL REVIEW PROCESS**

### **A. REVIEW PANEL MEMBERSHIP**

This cyclical review of the 2019 South Carolina Social Studies College and Career Standards was conducted beginning May 2025 through October 2025. Both a national review panel and a state review panel were used in seeking recommendations to the current social studies standards.

#### **National Review Panel**

The national review panel members consisted of recognized leaders in social studies education who are well versed in national and state social studies standards. Comments and recommendations included in this document are based in part on South Carolina legislation related to social studies, *College, Career and Civic Life C3 Framework* for social studies standards (NCSS, 2013), national standards for history, geography, civics and government and economics, financial literacy standards for South Carolina, the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, and social studies standards from various states. In addition, the national committee members used their expertise in social studies and their understanding of expectations for student learning. Members of the national team received materials for the review in May 2025. A Zoom meeting was held in July 2025 to provide an opportunity for the national team to share their perspectives on social studies education on a national level. After an independent review period, the members of the panel submitted his/her set of findings via individual final reports. Members of the National Review Panel included:

- Dr. Walter Edgar, Retired Professor Emeritus, University of South Carolina
- Dr. Felice Knight, Director of Education, International African American Museum
- Dr. Wilfred McClay, Victor Davis Hanson Chairman, Classical History and Western Civilization, Hillsdale College
- Ms. Stephanie Nickles, Elementary teacher, Gorham, Maine
- Dr. Robert Pondiscio, Senior Fellow, American Enterprise Institute
- Mr. Gerald Robinson, Professor, University of Virginia
- Mr. Anton Schulzki, Interim Executive Director, National Council on Social Studies

Note: Dr. McClay did not submit a final report.

#### **State Review Panel**

Legislators, EOC members, state education board members, superintendents and instructional leaders in districts were invited to recommend members of their respective communities to serve as members of the Social Studies State Cyclical Review Panel. The panel represented teachers, parents, business and community leaders and higher education. Thirty-four individuals



participated in the cyclical review process. Panel members participated in three days of social studies review in September and October. The review panel reached consensus on insights and specific recommendations about the 2019 South Carolina College and Career Social Studies Academic Standards. Members of the State Cyclical Review Panel included:

Claudia Aldamuy, community member, Communities in Schools  
Rev Matt Altman, Pastor, North Charleston  
Jill Ard, Social Studies teacher, Hanna Pamplico, Florence 2  
Brijesh Bala, Special Education Teacher, Calhoun County School District  
Timmerial Barnette, Teacher, Chester School District  
Teresa Cole, Teacher, Florence 1  
William Davis, Teacher, St Matthews Middle School, Calhoun  
J R Fennell, community member, Lexington County Museum  
Paige Garrett, Teacher, Glenview Middle School, Anderson 5  
Frank Gause, Call Me Mister, Coastal Carolina, Conway  
Dr. Margaret Wilson Gilliken, Professor, Winthrop, Rock Hill  
Rev, Merritt Graves, Pastor, Florence  
Keith Grybowski, Charleston County School District School Board member  
Timothy Hicks, Teacher, Richland School District Two  
Derrick Hines, K12, Teaching Fellows Coordinator, USC, Columbia  
Darnell Holland, K-12, Commission on Higher Education, Columbia  
Barbara Hunter, Ballentine Elementary, Lexington/Richland Five  
Elizabeth Long, School Library Media Specialist, Doby's Mill Elementary, Kershaw CSD  
Nancy Lingle, Berry Smalls, Spartanburg 5  
Dr. George Liscomb, Professor, Furman University, Greenville  
Corey Johnson, Teacher, Kershaw County School District  
Patrick Kelly, Teacher, Blythewood High School, Richland 2  
Bryan Lynip, Teacher, Meadowfield Elementary, Richland One  
Sarah Ostergaard, SC Economics, Darla Moore School Business, Columbia  
Darla Moore, Interventionist, Flat Rock Elementary, Anderson School District Three  
Madison Hutto Muller, W G Sanders, Richland One  
Austin Myers, Teacher, Muller Road Middle School, Richland Two  
Julie Parsons, Teacher, Flatrock Elementary, Anderson Three  
Shayla Royal, Parent, Florence One  
Valerie Sawyer, Teacher, Darlington CSD  
Jordan Walker-Reyes, Teacher, Lexington 1  
Stephanie Streetman, Parent, Anderson !  
Rev. Kevin Taylor, Pastor, Chester  
Braden Wilson, Teacher, Palmetto Middle, Williamston

In addition to members of the state committee, additional feedback from teachers was obtained via a survey sent to teachers across the state as recommended from the committee and members of the South Carolina Social Studies Supervisors.



Additional individuals from the South Carolina Department of Education were present to participate as observers and to offer their expertise as needed.

Dr. Kristi Austin, Director, Office of Assessment and Standards  
Josh Black, Assistant Director, Office Assessment and Standards  
Sandra Ammons, Team Lead, Office of Assessment and Standards  
Shelley Britt, Social Studies Test Development  
John Katorkas, Secondary Social Studies  
Reece Spradley, Elementary Social Studies

## **B. CRITERIA DESCRIPTIONS TO REVIEW STANDARDS**

The SC Social Studies Academic Standards Review Process conducted by the two review teams emphasized the application of the criteria addressing comprehensiveness/balance, rigor, and organization/communication. The South Carolina Department of Education representatives, district and university curriculum leaders, and EOC staff collaborated to identify the standards review criteria. The Standard Operating Procedures for the Review of Standards (SOP) agreed upon by the State Department of Education (SDE) and the EOC during the summer 2003 were followed for this review. Decisions on the criteria to be used were based on a comprehensive review of professional literature, and the goals for the standards review as specified in the Education Accountability Act of 1998.

### CRITERION ONE: COMPREHENSIVENESS/BALANCE

The criterion category for Comprehensiveness/Balance is concerned with how helpful the South Carolina Academic Standards document is to educators in designing a coherent curriculum. The criterion is directed at finding evidence that the standards document clearly communicates what constitutes social studies content, that is, what all students should know and be able to do in social studies by the time they graduate. The criterion includes consideration of the following areas:

- The standards address essential content and skills of social studies;
- The standards are aligned across grades as appropriate for content and skills;
- The standards have an appropriate balance of the content and skills needed for mastery of each area; and
- The standards reflect diversity (especially for ethnicity and gender) as appropriate for the subject area.
- The number and scope of the standards for each grade level should be realistic for teaching, learning, and student mastery within the academic year.

### CRITERION TWO: RIGOR

This criterion calls for standards that require students to use thinking and problem-solving skills that go beyond knowledge and comprehension. Standards meeting this criterion require students to perform at both national and international benchmark levels



- Standards should focus on cognitive content and skills (not affect);
- Standards should be developmentally appropriate for the grade level;
- Standards should include a sufficient number of standards that require application of learning (application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation);
- Standards should be informed by the content and skills in national and international standards; and,
- Standards should be written at a level of specificity that would best inform instruction for each grade level.

### CRITERION THREE: ORGANIZATION/COMMUNICATION

The Organization/Communication criterion category stipulates that the expectations for students are to be clearly written and organized in a manner understandable to all audiences and by teachers, curriculum developers, and assessment writers. Organization includes the following components:

- The content and skills in the standards should be organized in a way that is easy for teachers to understand and follow;
- The format and wording should be consistent across grades;
- The expectations for student learning should be clearly and precisely stated for each grade; and,
- The standards should use the appropriate terminology of the field but be as jargon free as possible.
- The content and skills presented in the standards should be assessable (are observable and demonstrable).



### C. MEASURABLE OUTCOMES FOR SOCIAL STUDIES IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The only statewide assessment in social studies that occurs in South Carolina schools is the End-of-Course exam that follows the U.S. History and the Constitution course. Although Social Studies in elementary and middle grades pursuant to Section 59-18-325, that testing has been suspended via budget proviso since the 2019-20 Appropriations Act.

The U.S. History and the Constitution End-of-Course test results over the past five years are shown below.

#### End of Course U.S. History and Constitution

Year	Percent Students Scoring A, B and C	Percent Students Scoring F
2025	48%	39%
2024	44%	41%
2023	45%	39%
2022	39%	44%
2021	37%	42%

### D. THE 2019 SOCIAL STUDIES COLLEGE AND CAREER STANDARDS DOCUMENT

The 2019 South Carolina Social Studies College and Career Ready Standards are organized by descriptive themes that focus on the grade level/course around a topic of study. The standards provide a basis for the development of local curricular for teachers and for statewide assessment in US History and Constitution. The academic standards describe for each grade level/high school course the specific areas for student learning that are considered the most important for proficiency in a discipline. The social studies standards focus on four core disciplines of civics, economics, geography and history.

Grades kindergarten through two are similar to other state approaches where there is an introduction to social studies through a disciplinary content focus of history, government, geography and economics. Grade three focuses on world geography.

Grades four and five focus on United States History from the involvement and perspective of South Carolina. Grades six and seven focus on world civilizations and geography and grade eight focuses on the history of South Carolina.

High school social studies standards are arranged by courses. Students are required to enroll and successfully complete three courses (two credits) for graduation: United States History and



Constitution, United States Government and Economics. See Table 1 for the listing of descriptive themes.

**Table 1. Descriptive Themes for the 2019 South Carolina College and Career Social Studies Standards**

<b>Grades K-Five</b>	
Kindergarten	The Community Around Us
Grade One	Life in South Carolina
Grade Two	Life in the United States
Grade Three	World Geography
Grade Four	United States and South Carolina Studies Part I
Grade Five	United States and South Carolina Studies Part II
<b>Grade Six-Eight</b>	
Grade Six	World Civilizations
Grade Seven	Geography of World Regions
Grade Eight	South Carolina and the United States
<b>High School Standards for Social Studies</b>	
Elective	Human Geography
Elective	Modern World History
Elective	Teaching the History and Literature of Old Testament Era
Elective	Teaching the History and Literature of the New Testament Era
Required	United States History and Constitution (1 unit)
Required	Economics and Personal Finance (0.5 unit)
Required	United States Government (0.5 unit)

In the standards document, there is an overview describing specific subject matter and themes, which is provided on a cover page for each grade level or high school course. The grade level standards are further broken down into:

- Academic standards that serve as the central learning expectations for student learning.
- Enduring understandings that frame the goal of the academic standard.
- Indicators that further breakdown the academic standard into specific knowledge and skills.

The standards document includes a skills progression for history in grade one and grade two to include comparison, causation, change and evidence. Geography skills are included for grade one and two to include maps, evidence and communication and connections. Economic and government skills are included for grades kindergarten through grade two described as relationships, interpretation, communication and informed participation. Vertical historical thinking skills are in grades four through eight and in the history courses in high school and include comparison, causation, periodization, content, change and evidence. Geography skills progression is in grades three, seven, and high school include mapping, models, evidence, connections, scale, and patterns.



Table 2 shows by grade level the themes, number of standards, enduring understandings and indicators.

**Table 2. Numeric Summary of the grade level academic standards, Enduring Understandings, Indicators by grade level**

		<b>Academic Standards</b>	<b>Enduring Understanding</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	<b>The Community Around US</b>	4	4	14
<b>Grade One</b>	<b>Life in South Carolina</b>	4	4	15
<b>Grade Two</b>	<b>Life in the United States</b>	4	4	15
<b>Grade Three</b>	<b>World Geography</b>	5	5	16
<b>Grade Four</b>	<b>United States and South Carolina Part 1</b>	5	5	30
<b>Grade Five</b>	<b>United States and South Carolina Part II</b>	5	5	29
<b>Grade Six</b>	<b>World Civilizations</b>	5	6	30
<b>Grade Seven</b>	<b>Geography of World Regions</b>	7	7	36
<b>Grade Eight</b>	<b>South Carolina and the United States</b>	5	5	27
<b>Elective</b>	<b>Human Geography</b>	5	5	30
<b>Elective</b>	<b>Modern World History</b>	8	8	30
<b>Elective</b>	<b>Teaching History and Literature of the Old Testament Era</b>	3	3	14



		Academic Standards	Enduring Understanding	Indicators
Elective	Teaching History and Literature of the New Testament Era	3	3	15
Required	United States History and Constitution	5	5	30
Required	Economics and Personal Finance	4	4	16
Required	United States Government	4	4	16

### III: FINDINGS

The discussion below summarizes reviews of the national and state panel members and presents recommendations for considerations by the Education Oversight Committee.

#### A. Commendations from State and National Panels

1. The alignment guides are more concise, specific and more easily understood than the standards themselves.
2. Overall, the content is appropriate.
3. The introduction of civics and government in the early grades is essential for inculcating values about civic participation.
4. South Carolina and United States history content is rich and complex.
5. The standards are informed by content and skills in national standards, especially in history.
6. Standards reflect many of the ideas encouraged by national professional groups.
7. The format of the social studies standards is consistent across grade levels.
8. The standards represent a skill-centered and inquiry-based framework.



## B. Concerns expressed by State Committee Subgroups

### Elementary Concerns

1. The standards should be more explicit and leaves too much for interpretation.
2. Teachers should be provided specific examples in a bulleted form such as in the Louisiana standards.
3. Elementary standards should be presented in a more logical format allowing for the progression of scaffolding information from part to whole in preparation for later grade level standards. An example is shown below.

Grade Three	South Carolina History	European Colonization to Civil War	Integrate geography <sup>1</sup>
Grade Four	United State History	American Revolution to Reconstruction	Integrate geography <sup>1</sup>
Grade Five	World History	Reconstruction to Present Day	Integrate geography <sup>1</sup>

Note 1: As regions are taught in South Carolina, the United States and the World, appropriate geography concepts and skills should be integrated.

4. The standards should revert to teaching South Carolina History in grade 3. This aligns with peer states teaching its state's history such as Louisiana and Virginia.
5. By moving grade 3 to South Carolina History, it will provide a clear progression from kindergarten through grade 2 and reinforces a student's identity and connection from family, community to state. This process will also allow a vertical progression to middle school.
6. To help parents and teachers, alignment guides and standards should be placed together on the website making it easier to access and more user-friendly.
7. Introduce United States and South Carolina symbols in grades 1 through 4.
8. Foundational skills should be taught in the early grades and then move to identifying similarities and differences.
9. Elementary grades should be encouraged to use digital sources.

Note: To ensure the elementary subgroup review was seen in its entirety, the work documents were shared with the SC Department of Education



### Middle School Concerns

1. World History should be split between sixth and seventh grades; there is far more content in the current course to be taught in one grade.
2. Grade six World Civilizations should cover ancient civilizations through the age of exploration and seventh grade from the age of explorations to the present. Geography skills should be added in both grades so there is a separate strand for geography. If the course is not split, then geography skills should be added to sixth grade course.
3. The standards should list specific content. Providing examples in various standards should provide more direction and guidance to teachers.
4. There is a lack of diversity in gender, ethnicity and among persons with disabilities. There is little mention of Native Americans, African Americans, gender or Gullah Geechee. The topic of diversity is dealt with unevenly and sometimes superficially throughout the standards.
5. Inquiry skills should be developed for each grade level.
6. There should be scaffolding of standards across grade levels.
7. Consider adding another column in the standards document with suggested content, which would provide more clarity, direction and diversity to the indicators and better define for teachers what is expected to be taught.
8. Standards should better focus on a global perspective. Students should have greater exposure to global events, past and present.
9. Add a hyperlink in the standards to the alignment guide for greater usage.
10. Each indicator should stand on its own and not need further clarification.
11. A separate geography strand should be added to grade eight SC History so that students are familiar with the basic geography of the state and its importance to the development of the state.

Note: To ensure the middle school subgroup review was seen in its entirety, the document was shared with the SC Department of Education. Appendix B shows examples of the middle school document.



### High School Concerns

1. Clarifying statements should be eliminated because they are not reflective of the indicators and excessively broad.
2. The alignment guides appear to be very useful to teachers. The existence of the standards and the alignment guides can be confusing and cumbersome to teachers. Greater alignment between the two documents would prove to be beneficial to teachers. The suggestion was to look at Kentucky's social studies standards.
3. It was suggested for history standards to be organized chronologically. The College, Career and Civics Life (C3) Framework might be a starting point.
4. Concerns about general school practices such as use of grade floors, no homework, no zeros, school attendance, etc. make it more difficult to ensure students have mastered the scope and depth of the standards, especially in history.
5. For U.S. History and Constitution's End of Course, a document with recommended sources would be very useful such as the Federalists papers, specific SCOTUS opinions, etc. In addition, released test items would be helpful in giving teachers more insight into how to prepare students for the end of course assessment. (For example, New York Regents exam does this.)
6. Teachers should have access to primary sources for all history classes. The Learning Objective Repository (LOR) would be a site for such documents.
7. The state should develop standards for elective courses (in addition to the current high school course standards) in World History (1200 to present), Human Geography and Current Events, Digital and Media Literacy, Civics (see Greenville County School District), Psychology and African American Studies.
8. Expand the number of social studies credits to four (4) credits (lowering the electives to 5.5 and thus not increasing the 24 credits to graduate.) U.S. History and Constitution would be spread out over a two-year period, each with a social studies credit. The end of course exam would cover only the content in the second year of the course.
9. The recommendation (not requirement) is to sequence social studies courses as follows:

Grade 9	Human Geography and Current Events (1 credit)
Grade 10	Modern World History (1200 to present) (1 credit)
Grade 11	US History and Constitution (2 credits)
Grade 12	Government (0.5 credit) and Economics (0.5)

Note: To ensure the high school subgroup review was seen in its entirety, the document was shared with the SC Department of Education. Examples of the high school document can be viewed in appendix C.



### **C. Findings of the National Review Panel**

1. The standards are coherent around United States history but are redundant and minimize a global perspective. In addition, there appears to be a lot of standards in middle school courses, especially grade seven.
2. The standards should emphasize higher order thinking skills that require greater cognitive complexity and effort. Most of the skills in the current standards fall at the lower levels of Bloom's revised taxonomy. Tasks that ask students to analyze continuity, change over time, compare, evaluate cause and effect, analyze perspectives, and interpret sources should be included. More emphasis needs to be placed on finding information, interpreting it, and using it to make decisions rather than mainly "memory work". Focus more on inquiry as a skill.

Look at New York state's standards documents. It focuses more on skill acquisition rather than knowledge. There should be an overarching framework that assists students in building inquiry skills.

3. The standards should show greater diversity with the inclusion of women, African Americans, Latin American, American Indians and Hispanics and to include the challenges and changes over time.
4. Real life economic skills need to be taught earlier than high school. Too many students graduate without being prepared for daily real-life economics.
5. Consider a survey course in United States History in grade seven and still maintain United States History and Constitution in grade eleven which would allow for more inquiry-based instruction in grade eleven. World History could be taught in grade six and ten.
6. Within the standards, incorporate differing perspectives from groups and individuals covering the same time and same issue.
7. In grade 6 early river civilizations, Egypt and pre-Roman Nubia (present day Sudan) should be included. In addition, classical civilizations should include Ancient Egypt and Alexandria.
8. In the early grades there appears to be more standards. There is a question about whether teachers can teach them in the allotted time.
9. There is a lack of civics readiness skills for students, and civics is not well-defined in the standards. The recommendation is to include a strand from kindergarten to grade 12. There is a lack of core content knowledge to develop a foundation of civics and cultural understanding.



10. Continue themes of history, geography, economics and government after grade two.
11. In government, discussions on United Nations and international courts should be prior to the comparison and contrast of constitutional right and human rights. In addition, students should understand United Nations documents before discussing international agreements.
12. In the United States History and Constitution course, it is suggested to add the Anti-Federalist Papers which argued against a stronger federal government. Also include revolutionary events in South Carolina.
13. In Modern World History, the inclusion of socialism and communism should be included in the discussion of Capitalism.
14. Include the role of South Carolina in World Wars and the effects in South Carolina.
15. The use of the term, enslaved Africans rather than slaves, is important as the former speaks to a human, legal condition set upon them.
16. In making predictions about a current event, there was a concern about what was an "appropriate news source". Should examples be provided and/or non-examples?
17. The listing of "specific content expected to be taught" is a weakness. The omission leaves schools responsible to determine the content which can lead to inconsistencies and knowledge gaps throughout the state.

Greater specificity should be provided in the standards and alignment guides to answer the question, "What can a teacher expect a student to know at a specific grade level?"

The standards should specify the content a student should encounter. For example, a standard might ask students to contextualize South Carolina's role in the development of a new nation but leave teachers to determine what content and materials is best to fulfill them.

One member stated, "South Carolina's standards are content-aware but not content specific."

18. The time spent on social studies in elementary grades has diminished. If it is not tested, it might not be taught.
19. In addition to the economic and political causes of the Civil War include the social causes. In addition, more emphasis needs to be placed on Jim Crow state and local laws.
20. In U.S. History and Constitution, more content should be provided on the transatlantic



slave trade and/or slavery.

21. Tap into resources in South Carolina such as the SC Archives and History, SC Historical Society and SC Library at USC.
22. In U.S. Government course, the role South Carolina played in the Constitutional Convention should be taught.
23. The terminology used in the standards such as enduring understanding and disciplinary thinking skills is too vague and not easily understood by teachers and parents. Clarify the definition of standard, which is content students should know and be able to do.
24. The expectations for students to “think like an historian” or “to interpret like an economist” are worthy goals but are not developmentally appropriate in most grades. Instead, the standards in the early grades should draw upon experts and artifacts such as maps, stories, and timelines. In the middle grades, students can use that knowledge to describe cause and effect, and continuity and changes, and finally in high school to reason like experts by analyzing evidence and evaluating interpretations.

#### **IV: EOC RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations that are listed below are based on the detailed review of the South Carolina College and Career Ready Social Studies Standards and are supported by the detailed comments that appear in the state and national review panel findings included in this report, as well as the joint discussion with the national panel.

1. Consider framing United States History and Constitution and world history standards within a time period to assist teachers with a contextual lens upon which to develop lessons and teaching practices. AP World History, AP US Government and Politics, and AP United States History frameworks may be helpful.
2. Ensure students have the historical context and background knowledge in content prior to beginning instruction on a standard.
3. Consider support of the removal of the state budget proviso that suspends the testing of social studies in grades 3-8 to promote the teaching of social studies and civics education.
4. Develop a civics strand from kindergarten to grade 12. There is a lack of core content knowledge to develop a foundation of civics and cultural understanding.
5. Address the redundancy in the content across grade levels to reduce the number of standards.
6. Provide access to teachers to primary sources for all history classes. The learning



objective repository (LOR) would be a site for such documents.

7. Address the lack of sufficient diversity, especially regarding gender, persons with disabilities, and ethnicities within the standards.
8. Standards should focus on a global perspective. Students should have greater exposure to global events, past and present.
9. Prioritize what has been identified as essential for all students to know – those standards that are the most critical to teach, learn, and master within one year. This would be helpful to accommodate the learning needs of students with disabilities as an example.
10. Improve the rigor by benchmarking social studies standards with national and international standards. The rigor could be improved by benchmarking the standards against national standards using the report, *Benchmarking for Success: Ensuring U.S. Students Receiving a World-class Education* (Achieve, 2008) or International Benchmarking Blueprint (Education Commission of the States, 2009) for guidance.

Review the C3 Framework's inquiry on which to build a progression of skills for the new social studies standards. The standards should emphasize higher skills that require greater cognitive complexity and effort and include a rationale for both skill and content progressions across all grade levels.

11. The expectations for students to "think like an historian" or "to interpret like an economist" are worthy goals but are not developmentally appropriate in most grades. Instead, the standards should students in the early grades should learn the knowledge experts draw upon such as maps, stories, and timelines, then use that knowledge in the middle grades to describe cause and effect, and continuity and changes, and finally in high school to reason like experts by analyzing evidence and evaluating interpretations.
12. The standards should use common language to communicate to teachers and parents.
13. Greater specificity should be provided in the standards and alignment guides to answer the question, "What can a teacher expect a student to know at a specific grade level?"
14. A strong alignment document to assist teachers in the teaching of the social studies standards is needed and should be incorporated into the standards. Greater alignment between the two documents would prove to be beneficial to teachers. The suggestion is to look at Kentucky's social studies standards.



# Appendices



## Appendix A. Social Studies Standards Review Timeline

### Timeline for Education Oversight Committee (EOC) Social Studies Review

April 5, 2025

Date	Action Item
February 28, 2025	National Reviewers Finalized
March 5	Letter announcing the process of social studies review to Governor, Ms Barton, President of Senate, Speaker, House Ed Chair, Senate Ed Chair, State Board and EOC Board
March 5	Letter requesting nominations for state social studies committee to House Ed, Senate Ed, State Board, EOC Board, Superintendents, Instructional Leaders, Quincy Moore, District Information Coordinators, School Improvement Councils
March 21	Nominations due to Hope
April 2	Social studies committee determined
April 16, 2025	State Review Committee Finalized
May 5, 2025	National Review Panel materials emailed
July 8, 2025	National Review Panel Conference Call
September 8, 2025	National Review Panel to submit Review Findings
September 22, 2025	Meeting of State Cyclical Review Committee
October 6, 2025	Meeting of State Cyclical Review Committee
October 20, 2025	Meeting (if needed) of State Cyclical Review Committee
November 17, 2025	Social Studies Standards Review Report Presented to EOC Academic and Standards Subcommittee
December 8, 2025	Social Studies Standards Review Report presented to EOC Final Report as approved by EOC forwarded to SCDE



## Appendix B. Examples of Middle Schol Recommendations

Concerning the current 6th Grade Standards, we recommend the following:  
Make the indicators more specific by incorporating the explanation that follows them.  
For example:

<p><b>CURRENT</b></p> <p>6.1.CX Contextualize the origins and spread of major world religions and their enduring influence.</p> <p>This indicator was designed to promote inquiry into the development, basic tenets, and impact of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism in relation to place and time.</p>
<p><b>SUGGESTED NEW INDICATOR</b></p> <p>6.1.CX Contextualize the origins, development, basic tenets, and spread of Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism in relation to place and time.</p>

We also recommend hyperlinking the standards and the Alignment Guide.  
The use of maps should be hyperlinked and made available and emphasized in the Evidence sections of each standard.

Recommended Changes (in red):

<p><u>6.1.CO</u> Current</p>	Compare the development of social systems among the early river valley civilizations.
<p><u>6.1.CO</u> Suggested</p>	Compare the development of social systems among the early river valley civilizations <b>of the Tigris-Euphrates, Nile/Kush, Indus, and Huang He Rivers.</b>
<p><u>6.2.CE</u> Current</p>	Explain the impact of global exchanges among world civilizations.
<p><u>6.2.CE</u> Suggested</p>	Explain the impact of global exchanges <b>(the Silk Road, Trans-Saharan Trade, and the Crusades)</b> among world civilizations.

However, should it be decided to keep 7th as World Geography, we make the following suggestions:

<p><u>7.1.1.PR</u> Current</p>	Identify select African physical systems and human characteristics of places. This indicator was designed to encourage inquiry into the primary physical and human characteristics of places within the African continent, such as landforms, water bodies, countries, and cities.
<p><u>7.1.1.PR</u> Suggested</p>	Identify <del>select African physical systems and human characteristics of places</del> and <del>this indicator was designed to</del> encourage inquiry into the primary physical and human characteristics within the African continent such as landforms, <b>bodies of water</b> , countries, and cities.
<p><u>7.1.2.ER</u> Current</p>	<b>7.1.2.ER</b> Identify climate and vegetation regions of Africa and the spatial distributions and patterns of natural resources, including the impact of their location on human activities.



	This indicator was designed to encourage inquiry into the distribution and pattern of physical systems within the African continent and how the locations and characteristics of these systems influence livelihood choices available to people.
<u>7.1.2.ER</u> Suggested	<p><b>7.1.2.ER</b> Identify climate and vegetation regions of Africa and the spatial distributions and patterns of natural resources, <del>including the impact of their location on human activities.</del>, <b>analyzing how their locations and characteristics influence human activities and livelihood choices across the continent.</b></p> <p><del>This indicator was designed to encourage inquiry into the distribution and pattern of physical systems within the African continent and how the locations and characteristics of these systems influence livelihood choices available to people.</del></p>

### Settlement and Development

**Standard 1:** Demonstrate an understanding of the development of South Carolina during the settlement and colonization of North America in the period of 1500– 1756.

**Enduring Understanding:** The Carolina colony was composed of indigenous, immigrant, and enslaved populations. Various factors across North America and the Carolina colony facilitated the eventual emergence of an American national identity.

8.1.CO Current	<p>Compare the three British North American colonial regions economically, politically, socially, and in regard to labor development.</p> <p>This indicator was developed to encourage inquiry into how the three British colonial regions developed in terms of their culture, economies, geography, and labor. The indicator was also developed to encourage inquiry into the unique story of the development of South Carolina.</p>
8.1.CO Suggested	Compare the three British North American colonial regions economically, politically, socially, and in regard to labor development, <b>to include the unique story of the development of South Carolina.</b>

### Revolution and Identity

**Standard 2:** Demonstrate an understanding of how South Carolinians and Americans created a revolutionary form of government during the period of 1757– 1815.

**Enduring Understanding:** Political and economic developments underscored how the colonists in British North America had become uniquely American, prompting the development of a new nation. Drawing on their experience under British rule, the founding generation created a government with shared powers between the state and federal institutions.

<u>8.2.CO</u> Current	<p>Compare the motives and demographics of loyalists and patriots within South Carolina and the colonies.</p> <p>This indicator was developed to encourage inquiry into the economic, political, and social motivations of the patriots and the loyalists in the era of the American Revolution.</p>
<u>8.2.CO</u> Suggested	Compare the <b>economic, political, and social motives</b> and demographics of loyalists and patriots within South Carolina and the colonies <b>in the era of the American Revolution.</b>
8.2.CE Current	<p>Explain the economic, political, and social factors surrounding the American Revolution.</p> <p>This indicator was developed to encourage inquiry into how the colonies began to unify to create a distinctive American identity over the course of events of the American Revolution.</p>



<u>8.2.CE</u> Suggested	Explain how the economic, political, and social factors <b>began to unify the colonies and create a distinctive American identity over the course of the American Revolution era.</b>
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### Compromises and Conflict

**Standard 3:** Demonstrate an understanding of conflict and compromise in South Carolina, the Southern region, and the United States as a result of sectionalism between the period 1816–1865.

**Enduring Understanding:** As the nation expanded, regional differences were exacerbated creating sectionalism threatening South Carolina’s identity and American unity. South Carolina struggled to maintain its unique culture and economy throughout the Reconstruction Era.

<u>8.3.CO</u> Current	Compare the debates between South Carolina and the federal government regarding slavery, federalism, and the Constitution.  This indicator was developed to encourage inquiry into the debates, heightened by Westward Expansion, over federal and state power concerning slavery, and the government’s role in protecting and securing natural rights.
<u>8.3.CO</u> Suggested	Compare the debates between South Carolina and the federal government regarding slavery, federalism, and the Constitution. <b>Incorporate corrective edits on alignment guide (1816-1877)</b>

### At a Crossroads

**Standard 4:** Demonstrate an understanding of South Carolina’s role in and response to the dynamic economic, political, and social developments in the United States and around the world during the period 1862–1929.

**Enduring Understanding:** Beginning with Reconstruction, South Carolina searched for ways to revitalize its economy and determine the social and political status of its population. Later in the period, South Carolina both contributed to World War I and grappled with economic depression.

<u>8.4.CO</u> Current	Compare perspectives toward reform that emerged during the Progressive Era.  This indicator was designed to encourage inquiry into how new state and federal Progressive legislation affected individuals and businesses in South Carolina and the U.S. The indicator was also designed to promote inquiry into the new perspectives that emerged regarding social and political change.
<u>8.4.CO</u> Suggested	Compare perspectives toward reform during the Progressive Era <b>that led to changes in the areas of labor, African American rights, temperance, and women’s suffrage through state and federal legislation and constitutional amendments.</b>

### Progress

**Standard 5:** Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of world events on South Carolina and the United States from 1929 to present.

**Enduring Understanding:** As a result of new perspectives on national security following World War I, South Carolina continues to benefit from and contribute to national and global communities. Additionally, civic participation and social change altered South Carolina’s social standing and political alignment.

<u>8.5.CO</u>	Compare South Carolina and U.S. wartime contributions and demobilization after World War II.
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Current	This indicator was designed to promote inquiry into military and economic policies during World War II, to include the significance of military bases in South Carolina. This indicator was also developed to foster inquiry into postwar economic developments and demographic changes, to include the immigration of Jewish refugees following the Holocaust.
8.5.CO Suggested	<b>Compare</b> South Carolina's economy from the Great Depression to its current economic diversification, including the New Deal, tourism, global trade and industry, and the maintenance of military bases.



## Appendix C. High School Examples of Recommendations for Course Specifics

### United States History and the Constitution

<b>Comprehensive</b> <i>What, if anything, is missing?</i>	<b>Rigor</b> <i>Are standards complex? Challenging? Progress to higher order thinking?</i>	<b>Measurability</b> <i>Can standards be translated into effective assessments?</i>	<b>Manageability</b> <i>Realistic to address scope of standards in a class? Why/why not?</i>	<b>Organization</b> <i>Are standards clear, concise, coherent, free of unnecessary jargon?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-European and general treatment of Native peoples</li> <li>• The Washington Administration</li> <li>• Coverage of major wars is exceptionally light</li> <li>• Key SCOTUS cases and realigning elections (1800, 1828, 1860, 1896, 1932, 1980)</li> <li>• Really weak on post-WWII world</li> <li>• Women's history, African-American history, Asian-American history, Mexican-American history (groups are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They don't progress to higher order thinking- "evaluate" or "synthesize" never really show up in here</li> <li>• The use of DOK in the existing standards is missing the mark and largely ignored</li> <li>• Students should be directed to build arguments as an extension and part of analyzing materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not really. The way they are written is more appropriate for a written assessment (that is heavily reliant on reading comprehension skills) than the constructed/select ed response set-up of the EOC.</li> <li>• <b><i>Lack of open response items on the existing EOC limits capacity to assess the higher order thinking skills in standards</i></b></li> <li>• Alignment guide is far more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realistic to address scope- but that's because the standards are too thin. They are missing SO many key details</li> <li>• Some teachers report that even with the thin standards, pacing is impossible (covering all of US History in effectively 17 weeks due to EOC timing)</li> <li>• Lack of chronological ordering in standards is challenging for teachers and students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronology would make more sense than the effort to shove everything into the "deconstructed skills" lens</li> <li>• I hate the two tiered indicator system (student action followed by explanation of what "indicator was developed to do....")</li> <li>• Incoherence throughout- example <a href="#">1.CE</a> talks about American Revolution but stretches until 1791</li> <li>• <b><i>Terminology/voc</i></b></li> </ul>



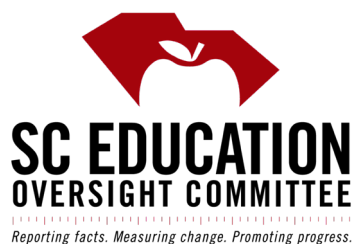
<p>depicted as having history done “to them” rather than “by them”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle colonies need to be included in the pre-1776 standards</li> </ul>		<p>manageable than the standards- and the division of the two documents causes confusion for teachers, public, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Standards need to reflect/include the detail provided in the Alignment document</i></b></li> <li>• The way the standards are written makes it hard to measure if students are lacking content knowledge and historical skills- or both</li> <li>• The standards and the EOC are intertwined in terms of how the standards are experienced in the classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would be more manageable if a timeline of key events was provided with each period within the standards (could emphasize events that stretch across time periods, such as Western Expansion, Jim Crow, etc.)</li> <li>• Would be helpful for teachers to have clarity on connection of other content areas (Econ, Geography, US Government)</li> <li>• <b><i>Currently, there is inequity between how this course is handled for AP/Honors and non-AP standards.</i></b> Districts are often providing additional</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>ab needs to be common across ALL US History grade levels.</i></b></p> <p>Terms that are currently handled differently include: Transatlantic Trade/Triangular Trade, Northern Colonies/ New England Colonies</p>
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			<p>instructional time (year-long block) for AP, whereas non-AP is almost always a semester block.</p> <p><b><u>BOTH levels of the course need/deserve the additional time.</u></b></p>	
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*The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is an independent, nonpartisan group of 18 educators, business people, and elected officials appointed by the legislature and governor. The EOC enacts the South Carolina Education Accountability Act of 1998, which sets standards for improving the state's K-12 educational system. The EOC reviews the state's education improvement process, assesses how schools are doing, and evaluates the standards schools must meet to build the education system needed to compete in this century.*



## EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Date: December 8, 2025

### **ACTION ITEM**

#### **Cyclical Review of the Accountability System**

### **PURPOSE/AUTHORITY**

§59-18-910 -- Beginning in 2020, 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. The cyclical review must include recommendations of a process for determining if students are graduating with the world-class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate to be successful in postsecondary education and in careers. The accountability system needs to reflect evidence that students have developed these skills and characteristics.

### **CRITICAL FACTS**

Review occurred throughout 2025. Findings to be shared with SC General Assembly following EOC approval

### **TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS**

- Spring/Summer 2025: Held focused convenings, conducted focus groups and did public opinion surveying for public on expectations and the current system meeting them.
- April 14, August 6, August 26, October 9, November 12, and December 3: SC Accountability Advisory Committee meets to conduct work.
- December 5, 2025: Final report posted on EOC website

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC**

Cost: \$109,800: Contract for facilitation of AAC meetings

Fund/Source: EIA

### **ACTION REQUEST**

☒ For approval

☐ for information

### **ACTION TAKEN**

☐ Approved  
☐ Not Approved

☐ Amended  
☐ Action deferred (explain)



# Cyclical Review of South Carolina’s Accountability System

Accountability Advisory Committee Report

Prepared by The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment

December 2025

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## Executive Summary

The South Carolina Code of Law ([Section 59-18-910](#)) calls for the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), working with the South Carolina State Board of Education (SBE), and a broad-based group of stakeholders, to conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system. A principle charge of the cyclical review is to consider how the state's accountability system reflects evidence that students have developed the skills and characteristics outlined in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

Pursuant to this legislative mandate, the EOC and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) convened the South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC), comprising members who represented the interests and priorities of various educational constituents in South Carolina. The EOC and SCDE contracted with the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (the Center) to facilitate the cyclical review process.

AAC members participated in an orientation session in April of 2025, then met a total of five times from August to December 2025. The primary focus of the AAC's work was to identify educational policy priorities, review key requirements and elements of the current accountability system, and, if deemed necessary, recommend changes to the accountability system.

This document contains the recommendations of the AAC. It starts with foundational priorities for South Carolina's accountability system, then delves into key components including system indicators, weighting and aggregation methods, school designations, reporting, and supports for school improvement. Next, it includes a summary of the supplemental outreach activities that informed the AAC's work. These activities included listening sessions, focused topical convenings, and a statewide survey. The report ends with next steps for the EOC and SCDE.

## Design Foundations: Users & Uses

The committee discussed the various users and related priority uses of accountability results in South Carolina. Discussion was wide-reaching given the broad range of people interested in school performance. These themes arose as critical feedback:

- **Reports should be accessible to all users.** This means that the way the reports are designed and talked about, as well as the resources accompanying reports, should be easy to find and understand. It also means actively reaching out to distribute reports to audiences that may otherwise have difficulty accessing the information.
- **Users want to know what to do with information in the reports.** Identify appropriate actions for continuous improvement clear to users.
- **Reports should be designed to support these priority uses**
  - Information should be **comparable** within and across years. This means that results should, to the extent practicable, be comparable across schools within a given year. It also means that multiple years of data should be included in reports so that users can easily see and better understand trends.
  - For reports to be comparable within a year, **users may appreciate being able explore results for “similar schools.”** Such a use case necessitates a definition for “similar,” which was not in the purview of the committee's work.



- Understanding that a key priority of accountability systems is to identify where there are educational needs in order to direct resources and supports to those schools and groups of students, report cards should also **highlight and celebrate successes** for specific outcomes (e.g., high growth or graduation rate) and for combined overall outcomes.

## Goals and Design Principles

Explicit goals and intended outcomes should guide the design of any accountability system. These goals articulate at a high level what the system is intended to accomplish. As part of the 2020 cyclical review process, the AAC devoted a significant amount of time to discuss and refine the goals listed below for the South Carolina accountability system.

The South Carolina accountability system should both reflect and incent:

- Attainment of knowledge, skills, and characteristics that support the components of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*,
- Elimination of access and equity gaps across the state with respect to both academic performance and the broader set of trans-academic skills, and
- Improvement of student learning via dissemination of clear, actionable information to help districts, schools, and families evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their programs.

Design principles and priorities also inform the development of the accountability system, serving as guides along the path of accountability system design and implementation. Accountability design decisions, however, always involve optimization under constraints that require tradeoffs between competing priorities. Given that reality, the AAC considered a number of competing priorities in accountability design. While consensus was not an expectation, a majority of committee members agreed that the following design principles should be prioritized in the South Carolina accountability system:

- While most committee members preferred a ***balance between simplicity and comprehensiveness***, some prioritized one over the other. All members agreed that ***transparency is a top priority***.
- The majority of committee members felt that South Carolina should have ***one accountability system that meets all federal and state requirements*** instead of multiple systems to pursue state-specific priorities outside of the constraints of the federal system. Many committee members also agreed that a hybrid system, in which some but not all elements in the system satisfy federal requirements, is also a promising approach. Such a system requires some decision-making about how tightly to couple state and federal requirements.
- Most committee members agreed that the system's ability ***to produce meaningful comparisons within the same year*** is more important than allowing flexibility in how schools earn points. Such comparisons would ideally allow users to examine performance for similar schools. As noted in one of the recommendations for intended use, no definition for "similar" currently exists.
- The committee members also largely preferred that the state ***pursue changes to the system with measured caution***, taking time to study some components more fully before determining if/how



they should be included in the accountability system in favor of the ability to ***compare results over time***. Relatedly, members emphasized the importance of ***reporting outcomes across years to enable such longitudinal comparisons***.

- Given a priority to take time to study components before making changes, committee members generally preferred ***mid- to longer-term implementation timelines for system change recommendations***, compared to moving quickly.
- The committee largely preferred ***approaches or changes that minimize - or at least do not dramatically increase - burden for schools, districts, or report card users***. The collection of additional information, if pursued, should ***prioritize the ability to enhance understanding of school context***.
- The committee widely agreed that ***report cards should be accessible to a wide audience, prioritizing a simple interface that can translate from more complex measures and that explains what results mean and why they matter***.

Subsequent discussions about the South Carolina accountability system components, supports, and resources were grounded in and connected back to these agreed-upon goals and design principles, as well as to considerations of the needs of users of the system.

## Committee Recommendations

The committee's recommendations organize into four categories:

- Indicators
- Aggregations and Identification
- Reporting and Communication
- Resources and Supports

### Indicators

Indicators are the components comprising the accountability system. They reflect priorities for the accountability system through what they measure and how. South Carolina's accountability system entails a total of eight indicators: academic achievement, student progress, multilingual learners' progress, preparing for success, school climate, college and career readiness, high school student success, and graduation rate. Some of these indicators apply only to high schools.

The committee had these recommendations pertaining to system indicators.

- Recommendation 1: Explore alternatives for incentivizing test participation.
- Recommendation 2: Study the impact of student progress with respect to prior performance.
- Recommendation 3: Promote accurate understanding and use of student progress scores.
- Recommendation 4: Adjust the relative weight of the multilingual learner progress indicator.
- Recommendation 5: Examine whether the testing window can be expanded.
- Recommendation 6: Enhance reporting of multilingual learners' progress.
- Recommendation 7: Explore approaches to increase the influence of the employability credential.
- Recommendation 8: Recognize the seal of biliteracy in the college and career readiness indicator.
- Recommendation 9: Strengthen reporting on college and career readiness.



- Recommendation 10: Engage in ongoing research to validate and improve the college and career readiness indicators.
- Recommendation 11: Study alternatives for a more comprehensive and balanced assessment system.

### *Aggregation and Identification*

Outcomes from each indicator are aggregated using a 100-point index system which assigns weight to each indicator. Based on its overall score, each school is assigned one of five ratings: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, or Unsatisfactory. These ratings are also applied to each indicator based on that indicator's score. Additionally, per requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the overall scores for schools and for student subgroups (with at least 20 students) are used to produce these federal designations:

- Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI): lowest performing 5% of Title I schools based on overall scores; any high school with a graduation rate below 70%
- Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI): consistently underperforming student groups
- Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI): student groups with overall scores below the CSI fifth percentile threshold.

Finally, South Carolina also identifies Palmetto Gold and Silver schools based on indicator and/or overall ratings.

The committee had these recommendations pertaining to aggregation and identification.

- Recommendation 12: Explore alternatives to create a more coherent and streamlined set of accountability designations.
- Recommendation 13: Review and potentially revise accountability performance standards.
- Recommendation 14: Adjust the relative weight of accountability indicators.

### *Reporting and Communication*

The topic of reporting and communications was prevalent in every AAC meeting. Members understood the importance of attending to how outcome data from the accountability system are presented, how the system is described, and how results are communicated.

The committee had these recommendations pertaining to reporting and communication.

- Recommendation 15: Continue to invest in dashboards and data visualizations with a goal of enabling a wide variety of users to access, understand, and use the available information.
- Recommendation 16: Produce ancillary report materials and professional development to ensure that users can understand and use the information in the reports as intended.

### *Resources and Supports*

Ultimately, accountability systems are intended to inform actions and decisions to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for students. Accountability system results should ideally be coherently connected to school improvement activities that are directly informed by those outcomes (e.g., resources are directed to schools identified for CSI in order to facilitate needs assessments; school



improvement planning; interventions are directed toward student populations contributing to a TSI or ATSI identification).

The committee had these recommendations pertaining to resources and supports.

- Recommendation 17: Continue to route school improvement activities through district offices.
- Recommendation 18: Conduct research to look for shared characteristics of schools with federal support designations and those that exit such designations.
- Recommendation 19: The state should seek partnerships with institutions of higher education, parents, and community members, and others in efforts to continuously improve its support model.



## Introduction

The South Carolina Code of Law calls for the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), working with the South Carolina State Board of Education (SBE), and a broad-based group of stakeholders, to conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system. A principle charge of the cyclical review is to consider how the state's accountability system reflects evidence that students have developed the skills and characteristics outlined in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

Specifically, [Section 59-18-910](#) of the South Carolina Code of Law states:

Beginning in 2020, 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. The cyclical review must include recommendations of a process for determining if students are graduating with the world class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate<sup>1</sup> to be successful in postsecondary education and in careers. The accountability system needs to reflect evidence that students have developed these skills and characteristics.

Pursuant to this legislative mandate, the EOC and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) convened the South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC), composed of members who represented the interests and priorities of various groups interested in the South Carolina public education system. The EOC and SCDE contracted with the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (the Center) to facilitate the cyclical review process.

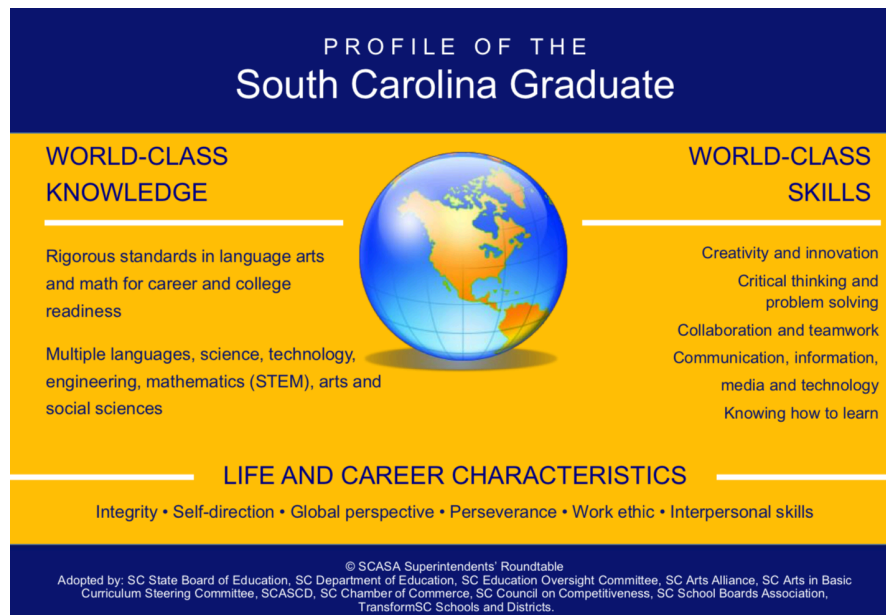
This report is a summary of the cyclical review process and resulting recommendations. It includes a description of the Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC), the goals and design priorities agreed upon by the AAC, and recommendations by the AAC pertaining to components of the accountability system. Notably, this second cyclical review process, unencumbered by the challenges encountered in the 2020 cyclical review resulting from the COVID pandemic, included additional outreach to gather feedback and perspective from varied constituent groups. The report also describes key takeaways of this supplemental outreach. As required by the legislation, the intended audience of this report is the South Carolina General Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> See Figure 1 for a visual summary of the knowledge, skills, and characteristics in the *Profile of a South Carolina Graduate*.



Figure 1: Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.



## South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee

This section describes how the South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC) was constituted and chronicles the process that the committee went through to evaluate and make recommendations regarding the current accountability system.

### Committee Composition

The membership requirements of Section 59-18-910 stipulate that the AAC should include members that represent the interests and priorities of various parties interested in public education in South Carolina. Building on the experience of the initial cyclical review in 2020, the Center recommended a committee of 20-25 members comprising state leadership, schools, districts, advocacy groups, and the broader community, including parents. The EOC assembled the committee to fulfill the recommendations and legislative requirements. Table 1 lists the AAC composition. [Appendix A](#) provides a meeting schedule and attendance record for the webinars and meetings in 2025.



*Table 1: 2025 South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee Membership*

Committee Member	Role and Organization
Melanie Barton	Governor's Representative
Whitney Broderick	Teacher, Anderson County School District 1
Jennifer Cauthen	Director of Special Projects, Fairfield County School District
Michelle Caya	Assistant VP of Academic Programs, Trident Technical College
Dee Christopher	Superintendent, Anderson County School District 4
Peter DeLorme	Community Member
Matthew Ferguson	Superintendent, Darlington County Schools
Janet Graham	School Board Member, Horry County Schools
Josie Kate Haupfear	Director of Secondary Instruction and Career and Technical Education, Laurens County School District 56
Patrick Kelly	AP U.S. Government and Politics Teachers, Richland School District 2
Celestine LaVan	Executive Director of Elementary Schools, Beaufort County Schools
Sallie R. Lee	Retired Educator and Former Member, State Board of Education
Monique McDaniels	VP of Community and Workforce Development, Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands South Carolina
Laura McKinney	Senior VP of Talent and Workforce Development, Columbia Chamber of Commerce
Ashton Pearson	Executive Director, Midlands Business Leadership Group
Buffy Roberts	Associate Superintendent, Office of Accountability, Charleston County School District
Frank Rodriguez	Superintendent, Beaufort County Schools
Yalonda Ross-Davis	Parent
Terrye Seckinger	Commissioner, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education
Molly Tuck	Interim Director of Research and Evaluation, SC First Steps
Ellen Weaver	State Superintendent
Audrey White-Garner	Principal, Hopkins Elementary School, Richland 1



## Role of the Committee

The purpose of the AAC was, in partnership with the EOC, to make recommendations to inform the work of state leaders working to continuously improve the design and implementation of South Carolina's school accountability system, while ensuring the system complies with federal and state requirements. In service of that purpose, the AAC first focused on identifying the primary users and appropriate use cases for information from the accountability system. The group also focused on identifying educational policy priorities, reviewing specific elements of the accountability system, discussing system design, and considering options for implementation and support activities including data collection and reporting opportunities. The group also reviewed feedback gathered in ancillary outreach activities described in the *Additional Outreach* section of this report. Throughout the review process, AAC members were encouraged to offer innovative ideas for improving the existing accountability system, including changes to existing components, new reporting practices, and training and support activities and resources; they were advised not to consider prior practice as a constraint. At the same time, the committee attended to critical policy, technical, and operational considerations to ensure that even as the system may change, it remains coherent, defensible, useful, feasible, and compliant with state and federal requirements.

## Meeting Cadence

The AAC convened remotely in April 2025 for an orientation webinar to learn about the cyclical review process, the current South Carolina accountability system, and requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The official cyclical review kicked off in August with a remote meeting followed by four in-person meetings.

Table 2 lists the dates and summarized topics addressed at each AAC meeting.

*Table 2: Summary of 2025 AAC Meetings*

Meeting	Date	Topics Addressed
AAC Meeting #1 (remote)	August 6, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Overview of accountability cyclical review process</li><li>● Fundamentals of school accountability</li><li>● Review and discussion of statewide survey feedback</li></ul>
AAC Meeting #2 (in-person)	August 26, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Initial discussion of accountability system users and use cases</li><li>● Initial discussion of design priorities and principles for the system</li><li>● Review of feedback from focused convenings</li></ul>
AAC Meeting #3 (in-person)	October 9, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Introduction of approaches to including components in the accountability system</li><li>● Discussion of proposed structure for the cyclical review report</li><li>● Discussion and affirmation of accountability users and primary use cases and design priorities</li><li>● Review of accountability indicators<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Academic Achievement</li><li>○ Preparing for Success</li></ul></li></ul>



Meeting	Date	Topics Addressed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ College and Career Readiness</li> <li>○ High School Student Success</li> </ul>
AAC Meeting #4 (in-person)	November 12, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discussion about through-year assessment recommendations</li> <li>● Review of accountability indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student Progress</li> <li>○ Graduation Rate</li> <li>○ Multilingual Learner's Progress</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Discussion of indicator aggregations, school designations, and school recognition</li> </ul>
AAC Meeting #5 (in-person)	December 3, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review of recommendations to date</li> <li>● Indicator weighting</li> <li>● Reporting and supports</li> <li>● School improvement activities in South Carolina</li> <li>● Evaluating performance expectations</li> </ul>

## Goals and Design Principles

### Goals

The design of any accountability system should be guided by explicit goals and intended outcomes. Clear goal statements both articulate at a high level what the system is intended to accomplish and serve to direct and help prioritize design decisions about the system. The AAC devoted a significant amount of time during the 2020 review to discuss and refine the goals of the South Carolina accountability system described below.

**The South Carolina accountability system should both reflect and incent:**

- **Attainment of knowledge, skills, and characteristics that support the components of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*.**

South Carolina's vision for its education system is encapsulated in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* (the Profile). The Profile serves as the guiding framework that motivated and informed the committee's discussion. The 2020 committee emphasized the importance of ensuring the state accountability system is tied to college and career readiness as expressed in the Profile.

- **Elimination of access and equity gaps across the state with respect to both academic performance and the broader set of trans-academic skills.**

The 2020 committee's commitment to promoting equity with the accountability system cannot be overstated. The need for the accountability system to identify and signal gaps in access and equity in the state for various student groups continues to be critical.



- **Improvement of student learning via dissemination of clear, actionable information to help districts, schools, and families evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their programs.**

The committee acknowledged that outcomes from the accountability system are only helpful if they are clearly understood, accurately interpreted, and appropriately acted on by the educational stakeholders that the system is intended to serve.

### *Design Principles*

Design principles and priorities also inform the development of the accountability system. If accountability system goals identify an intended destination on an educational roadmap (i.e., where we want to be), design principles and priorities help set the route (i.e., how to get there). They also serve as a basis for later evaluation, serving as guides along the path of accountability system design and implementation to check that the system is working as intended. However, one truth of accountability design is that there is no single “right” system, and accountability design decisions will always involve optimization under constraints. This optimization necessitates tradeoffs between competing priorities. Given that reality, the AAC considered a number of competing priorities in accountability design and agreed that the following design principles should be prioritized in South Carolina’s accountability system.

- The committee members largely preferred that the state ***pursue changes to the system with measured caution***, taking time to study some components more fully before determining if/how they should be included in the accountability system in favor of the ability to ***compare results over time***. Relatedly, members emphasized the importance of ***reporting outcomes across years to enable such longitudinal comparisons***.
- Most committee members agreed that the system’s ability ***to produce meaningful comparisons within the same year*** is more important than allowing flexibility in how schools earn points. Such comparisons would ideally allow users to examine performance for similar schools. As noted in one of the recommendations for intended use, no definition for “similar” currently exists.
- While most committee members preferred a ***balance between simplicity and comprehensiveness***, some prioritized one over the other. All members agreed that ***transparency is a top priority***.
- The majority of committee members felt that South Carolina should have ***one accountability system that meets all federal and state requirements*** instead of multiple systems to pursue state-specific priorities outside of the constraints of the federal system. Many committee members also agreed that a hybrid system, in which some but not all elements in the system satisfy federal requirements, is also a promising approach. Such a system requires some decision-making about how tightly to couple state and federal requirements.
- Given a priority to take time to study components before making changes, committee members generally preferred ***mid- to longer-term implementation timelines for system change recommendations***, compared to moving quickly.
- The committee largely preferred ***approaches or changes that minimize - or at least do not dramatically increase - burden for schools, districts, or report card users***. The collection of



additional information, if pursued, should **prioritize the ability to enhance understanding of school context.**

- The committee widely agreed that ***report cards should be accessible to a wide audience, prioritizing a simple interface that can translate from more complex measures and that explains what results mean and why they matter.***

Subsequent discussions about the South Carolina accountability system components, supports, and resources were grounded in and connected back to these goals and design principles, as well as to considerations of the needs of users of the system. In addition to foundational goals and design principles, information gathered through ancillary outreach activities was shared with AAC members in order to inform later discussion and recommendations. Those ancillary activities are described in the next section.

## Additional Outreach

A key goal of the EOC for the 2025 cyclical review of South Carolina’s accountability system was to engage with wide-reaching groups of educational constituents across the state. To that end, the EOC sponsored or supported three ancillary outreach activities as part of the cyclical review.

1. Focused convenings on specific priority topics from the 2020 cyclical review
2. Virtual listening sessions
3. A statewide survey

## Focused Convenings

The EOC held four Focused Convenings in the spring and summer of 2025 to bring specific attention to topics that consistently emerged since 2020. There were the priority topics discussed in each convening:

1. Public expectations of school ratings
2. High school experience (college and career readiness)
3. Multilingual learners’ progress in English language proficiency
4. Awarding performance

To assemble groups for each convening, the EOC requested nominations from teacher organizations, SCASA, SCSBA, members of State Board of Education, SC School Improvement Council, EOC, and others.

A summary of the discussion as well as the composition of participants in each convening is provided in Appendix B.

## Virtual Listening Sessions

In addition to the focused convenings, the EOC contracted with Rhodes Branding to host three virtual listening sessions in Spring 2025. There were 40 attendees representing 26 South Carolina cities across the three sessions. Attendees included parents, educators, and community members.



The listening sessions were intentionally broader in scope than the focused convenings. The discussions resulted in five key takeaways:

1. Stakeholders are generally aware of and make practical use of school report cards at the same time that they recognize there is room for improvement.
2. South Carolina schools are generally perceived as underperforming by listening session participants.
3. Those interested in South Carolina's educational system desire more comprehensive, relevant, and equitable data in the school report cards.
4. There is support for maintaining the current descriptive rating system (rather than switching to an A-F scale).
5. College and career readiness remains a top priority and area of concern regarding gaps between perceived and actual readiness.

The listening session report is available in Appendix C.

### Statewide Survey

Finally, the Center for Assessment developed and administered a survey about South Carolina's accountability system to a range of stakeholders in late May through early July. The survey gathered 1,621 responses, which lifted up four areas of interest:

1. Appropriateness and fairness → Setting expectations for school and district performance
2. Measuring what matters → System indicators
3. Understanding the system → Resources and communications
4. Serving all students → Community engagement; supports for school improvement

Survey responses were summarized and shared with AAC members in their August 6th meeting. Members agreed with the key areas of focus and these areas informed subsequent meetings.

A report summarizing the design, dissemination, and outcomes of the statewide survey is available in Appendix D.

By expanding the scope of the cyclical review and sharing that additional learning with the AAC, the EOC intended to help ensure that recommendations gathered during AAC convenings represented feedback from constituents across the state.

### System Components

After establishing the goals and design principles for South Carolina's accountability system, the AAC started to review components of the current system. In this process, facilitators provided information about federal and/or state requirements, South Carolina's current approach (described in South Carolina's approved [consolidated state plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act](#)), and the national landscape of approaches for each component. In response, members provided feedback about South



Carolina's design, indicating what aspects they thought should continue, which should stop, and what, if any, new practices or approaches should be considered.

### South Carolina's Current Accountability System

The following components comprise South Carolina's accountability system, which differs for elementary/middle schools and high schools.

#### *Accountability Indicators*

##### Elementary and Middle School

- Academic Achievement = 35 points
- Student Progress = 35 points
- Multilingual Learners' Progress = 10 points
- School Quality or Student Success (SQSS)
  - Preparing for Success (Science) = 10 points
  - School Climate = 10 points

##### High School

- Academic Achievement = 25 points
- Graduation Rate = 19 points
- Multilingual Learners' Progress = 10 points
- School Quality or Student Success (SQSS)
  - Preparing for Success = 10 points
  - College and Career Readiness = 19 points
  - High School Student Success = 12 points

Each school receives an overall score out of 100 possible points and is assigned one of **five state ratings**: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, or Unsatisfactory. The school is also assigned separate ratings, based on the same five performance categories, for each indicator. The school's performance is reported for all students and for each subgroup with at least 20 students.

Additionally, per requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the overall scores for schools and for student subgroups (with at least 20 students) are used to produce these **federal designations**:

- Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI): lowest performing 5% of Title I schools based on overall scores; any high school with a graduation rate below 70%;
- Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI): consistently underperforming student groups; and
- Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI): student groups with overall scores below the CSI fifth percentile threshold.

Finally, South Carolina also recognizes **Palmetto Gold and Silver schools** based on indicator and/or overall ratings.



### *Palmetto Gold for Elementary and Middle Schools*

To receive this recognition, a school may not be designated for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. Additionally, a school must receive any of the following combination of ratings for Academic Achievement and Student Progress.

- Academic Achievement and Student Progress = Excellent
- Academic Achievement = Excellent and Student Progress = Good
- Academic Achievement = Good and Student Progress = Excellent

### *Palmetto Silver for Elementary and Middle Schools*

To receive this recognition, a school may not be designated for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. Additionally, a school must receive any of the following combination of ratings for Academic Achievement and Student Progress.

- Academic Achievement and Student Progress = Good
- Academic Achievement = Average and Student Progress = Excellent
- Academic Achievement = Excellent and Student Progress = Average

### *Palmetto Gold for High Schools*

To receive this recognition, a school may not be designated for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. Additionally, a school must receive any of the following combination of indicator and overall ratings.

- Four indicators = Excellent; AND
- Remaining indicator = Good or higher; AND
- Overall rating = Good or above

### *Palmetto Silver for High Schools*

To receive this recognition, a school may not be designated for CSI, TSI, or ATSI. Additionally, a school must receive any of the following combination of indicator and overall ratings.

- Four indicators = Good; AND
- Remaining indicator = Average or higher; AND
- Overall rating = Average or above

## **Committee Recommendations**

In this section we describe the AAC's recommendations, which fall into four categories.

- Indicators
- Aggregations and Identification
- Reporting and Communication
- Resources and Supports



## *Indicators*

The AAC reviewed all current indicators in South Carolina's school accountability model and developed the following recommendations. These recommendations are organized by the existing indicator categories: academic achievement, student progress, multilingual learner progress, graduation rate, college and career readiness, preparing for success, and high school success. An additional, cross-cutting recommendation addresses the need to explore alternatives for a more balanced and comprehensive assessment system, given its relevance across multiple indicators.

### *Academic Achievement*

#### Recommendation 1: Explore alternatives for incentivizing test participation.

The AAC recognized the importance of incentivizing participation in state assessments and reaffirmed the need to comply with federal requirements mandating an adjustment when participation falls below 95%. However, many members expressed concern that the current approach of counting non-tested students against achievement scores results is excessively punitive. While the committee did not develop a specific alternative, and recognized the constraints of current federal requirements, members recommended exploring alternative approaches.

### *Student Progress*

#### Recommendation 2: Study the impact of student progress with respect to prior performance.

The AAC reviewed the student progress indicator and acknowledged that the current approach contains appropriate and defensible elements. For that reason, they did not propose any immediate changes. However, they identified areas requiring further study. In particular, members urged the state to evaluate whether the model performs appropriately and fairly for schools serving students with higher prior test scores. Such studies would examine the distribution of growth scores for students across the full range of prior achievement to determine the extent to which the resulting growth measures are comparable. Results from these studies may inform future refinements to the growth model and/or business rules.

#### Recommendation 3: Promote accurate understanding and use of student progress scores.

Committee members suggested that the state continue efforts to simplify the explanation of this indicator for various audiences. They noted that while the underlying methodology is technically appropriate, it remains difficult for many constituents to fully understand how progress scores are generated and interpreted. Clearer, more accessible communication materials would improve transparency and strengthen the appropriate use of the indicator.

### *Multilingual Learners' Progress*

#### Recommendation 4: Adjust the relative weight of the multilingual learner progress indicator.

AAC members expressed support for modifying the weight of this indicator to better reflect its role within the overall accountability system and the variation in multilingual learner populations across schools in the state. Specifically, they endorsed options that would either reduce the indicator's weight



from 10 percent to 5 percent or establish a weighting approach that is scaled to the proportion of ML students within each school.

Recommendation 5: Examine whether the testing window can be expanded.

Several committee members expressed concern that the testing window for multilingual learners occurs too early in the academic year, limiting students' opportunity to learn before assessment. AAC members encouraged the state to work with WIDA to explore options for extending the window so that students may test later in the year.

Recommendation 6: Enhance reporting of multilingual learners' progress.

The AAC expressed wide support for the state to provide additional information about the indicator on the report card site and to more clearly report the outcomes for students who recently exited multilingual learner services.

Additional Note: Native language testing

The review of the multilingual learner progress indicator prompted a broader discussion about assessing academic content in students' native languages, particularly for recently arrived language learners. Although members recognized that current state statute is prohibitive, some AAC members emphasized the importance of exploring the feasibility of native language assessments. Others expressed concern that such an approach would be overly resource-intensive given the wide range of languages represented in the state. While this conversation did not result in a formal recommendation, members agreed that the issue should be acknowledged and earmarked for future study.

Graduation Rate, College and Career Readiness, and High School Student Success

Recommendation 7: Explore approaches to increase the influence of the employability credential.

AAC members affirmed that the employability credential, an alternative certificate for students with disabilities, represents a meaningful accomplishment and should be appropriately valued within the accountability system. Some members argued that it should be treated as equivalent to a regular diploma for inclusion in the graduation rate; however, federal requirements prohibit this. Although the employability credential is included in the completion rate used for the High School Student Success indicator, members encouraged the state to consider adjustments that would increase the weight of this component so that its influence more closely aligns with that of the graduation rate.

Recommendation 8: Recognize the seal of biliteracy in the college and career readiness indicator.

Most AAC members expressed support for adding the seal of biliteracy to the list of college and career readiness criteria; but this was not a unanimous recommendation. Those supporting it noted that it would provide multiple pathways for students to demonstrate their college and/or career readiness and that it represents an important achievement, increasingly valued in higher education and the workforce.



#### Recommendation 9: Strengthen reporting on college and career readiness.

The AAC affirmed the importance of recognizing a broad range of college and career-ready indicators, noting that the distinction between these categories is often blurred. Although some members discussed eliminating separate reporting for college and career readiness, the committee ultimately favored improving the reporting structure to provide more granular and specific information about the accomplishments students earn. In particular, the AAC opposed the current practice of reporting the percentage of students who are both college and career ready, noting that this metric is misleading. For example, many students who are college ready may simply choose not to pursue career ready credentials.

#### Recommendation 10: Engage in ongoing research to validate and improve the college and career readiness indicators.

AAC members support ongoing research to strengthen the validity evidence for the CCR measures, especially by linking them to postsecondary and workforce outcomes. This could include examining the extent to which different CCR indicators predict college enrollment, persistence, and course performance, as well as employment outcomes. Such studies would strengthen the evidence base for the CCR measures and help ensure they reflect meaningful indicators of post secondary readiness.

#### Cross-Cutting

#### Recommendation 11: Study alternatives for a more comprehensive and balanced assessment system.

Because assessment issues influence many elements in the accountability system, the AAC identified assessment-related priorities that rise to the level of a cross-cutting recommendation.

Throughout the AAC convenings, members repeatedly suggested opportunities to strengthen South Carolina's state assessment system. One major area of discussion focused on science and social studies testing. Members strongly endorsed efforts to improve teaching and learning in these subjects and emphasized the importance of maintaining high-quality standards and assessments. Several members expressed concern that, within the accountability model, science and social studies assessments are overshadowed by ELA and mathematics, and they supported exploring ways to increase the influence of these subjects. Others cautioned that such changes could unintentionally increase testing burden. Although strategies such as matrix sampling were discussed as potential ways to mitigate this concern, members acknowledged that these approaches carry trade-offs and would require careful consideration.

A second topic examined in depth was the potential role of through-year assessment. Through-year testing, an approach in which multiple assessments administered across the school year contribute to a final summative result, generated substantial support among AAC members. The group encouraged continued exploration of through-year models but did not take a position on whether or how such assessments should ultimately factor into school accountability. Members agreed that any exploration should occur in phases. First, the state should clarify its highest priorities for through-year assessment



and review relevant research and practice to identify models that best align with those priorities. Once a coherent model is articulated, the state could then consider whether through-year results should be incorporated into South Carolina’s accountability system.

These discussions highlighted the importance of examining assessment issues collectively rather than in isolation. Decisions about testing in one area inevitably influence others, and improvements must contribute to a balanced, comprehensive, and coherent assessment system that supports teaching and learning and can be appropriately integrated into accountability.

To that end, AAC members supported launching an initiative to identify the state’s highest assessment priorities and to study models best suited to support them. Members also recommended conducting a statewide assessment audit to evaluate the scale and utility of existing assessments. Findings from this work could inform revisions to the state testing system so that it more effectively addresses the priorities surfaced by the AAC.

### *Aggregation and Identification*

In school accountability systems, aggregation refers to the process of combining multiple indicators into an overall rating or score that summarizes school performance. Identification refers to determining which schools require additional support, intervention, or recognition based on that aggregated information. As part of the cyclical review process, the AAC examined the existing designations and the methods used to generate them. The recommendations emerging from these discussions are summarized in this section.

#### Recommendation 12: Explore alternatives to create a more coherent and streamlined set of accountability designations.

There are at least four types of school designations produced by the state as detailed in the following table.

*Table 3: Summary of School Designations*

Designations	Description	Levels
Federally Required	Federally required designations to comply with requirements in ESSA	Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)
State Support	Designations required by state statute to identify schools in need of support.	Priority, Underperforming, Chronically Underperforming



State Ratings	Ratings produced for indicators and schools to describe levels of performance.	Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, Unsatisfactory
State Commendation	Recognizes and rewards schools for attaining high levels of performance	Palmetto Gold, Palmetto Silver

The AAC noted that the current designations can make it difficult to form a clear picture of school performance, particularly when state and federal identifications are not aligned. For example, a school may receive a state support designation but not a federal one, or vice versa.

Moreover, state commendation designations are tied to federal ratings that are produced on a different timeline. This hinders timely reporting to the field. Consequently, many AAC members favor decoupling the Palmetto Gold and Silver awards from the federal ratings.

Finally, some AAC members raised concerns about the terminology used for designation categories, recommending adjustments that enhance clear and helpful messaging.

Considered collectively, the AAC recommends exploring alternatives to create a more coherent and streamlined set of accountability designations. This may involve 1) examining if some designations should be removed or combined; 2) reviewing the relationships between designations to see if they should be adjusted; and 3) reconsidering the nomenclature and descriptions for the categories to ensure they are clear and useful.

#### Recommendation 13: Review and potentially revise accountability performance standards.

Performance standards define the levels of performance that schools are expected to meet on individual indicators and in their overall accountability ratings. In an index-based system such as South Carolina's these standards are operationalized as cutscores that represent the minimum level of performance required to attain each rating category.

There is not widespread agreement on what constitutes appropriate performance standards. For example, results from the statewide survey reviewed by the AAC (see Appendix D) showed that fewer than one-third of respondents believe the current standards are "about right," while the remainder viewed them as either too lenient, too rigorous, or were unsure. Additionally, the AAC discussed potential concerns that the current standards may lead to over or under identification of students in certain student groups (e.g., students with disabilities). Accordingly, they called for a review and potential revision of the performance standards.

The AAC stressed the importance of establishing performance standards through a transparent and defensible methodology. After reviewing different options, the committee agreed that South Carolina should adopt a "hybrid" accountability standard-setting process that incorporates both



criterion-referenced and norm-referenced elements. Criterion refers to establishing a fixed definition of performance for schools based on desired performance. Normative refers to using data to determine thresholds that are ambitious but achievable. When combined within a structured, transparent process involving experts, policymakers, and educational leaders, these approaches can produce performance standards that are both credible and clearly communicated. A further intended outcome is the development of clear descriptions of schools in each rating category, providing constituents with better context and more meaningful interpretation of accountability results.

Recommendation 14: Adjust the relative weight of accountability indicators.

As is common in school accountability models, overall scores are produced through a weighted composite, with each weight reflecting the relative priority or influence assigned to a given indicator. The AAC reviewed and discussed the current weighting structure, including completing an exercise in which members submitted individual proposed weights for the system. The mean of these proposed weights was then compared with the current weights to identify areas where adjustments might be warranted.

The AAC's mean recommendations for the achievement and growth indicators were generally aligned with the existing weights, although individual responses varied. However, the results indicated a preference for reducing the weight assigned to multilingual learners' progress. In addition, members expressed interest in decreasing the influence of the graduation rate and increasing the relative importance of the college and career readiness indicator. These findings align with recommendations four and seven, respectively.

*Reporting and Communications*

Every accountability system involves consideration of how to present and describe the system outcomes and overall results. Decisions about reporting include attention to what data to include, how to organize that information, and what features to include to make the data easier to understand and interact with. Communications help users understand system results and situate those results within appropriate contexts. This involves messaging about results (e.g., overall performance was higher this year compared to last year for elementary schools) as well as providing information to help people understand the accountability system (e.g., this document provides a quick overview about the academic achievement indicator).

The group identified these recommendations pertaining to reporting and communications.

Recommendation 15: Continue to invest in dashboards and data visualizations with a goal of enabling a wide variety of users to access, understand, and use the available information.

The group spent time reviewing the [South Carolina School Report Card website](#) as well as features of reports and dashboards from other states. They agreed that there are many excellent features about South Carolina's reporting system, highlighting the clear and simple layouts, comparison function, and links to additional information. At the same time, the group recognized that continuous improvement of



reporting systems should remain a priority. This includes ensuring that data can be disaggregated for all student groups that meet minimum group sizes to balance transparency with student privacy and making multiple years of data available for those interested in trend information. The group also suggested that an audit of current reports (e.g., What data are available and where?) and reporting practices (e.g., What are the features of how we present data publicly?) could be helpful when planning future system enhancements.

Overall, the group agreed that even the best designed accountability system will not have its desired impact if the information is not highly accessible and accompanied by helpful resources and supports.

Recommendation 16: Produce ancillary report materials and professional development to ensure that users can understand and use the information in the reports as intended.

Statewide survey results and listening sessions made clear that people representing various interest groups and roles across South Carolina are interested in understanding school performance. Many of these partners are interested in identifying ways that they can support school improvement. In order for these educational constituents, including educators and educational leaders to community members, parents, and members of the business community, etc., to make appropriate decisions about what and how they can contribute, they must first understand what the data do and do not signal regarding areas to celebrate for success and target for intervention and support. Materials like FAQs, indicator guides, and/or short videos about the accountability system can help users engage in asynchronous learning that can inform their engagement with the data. Professional development, most likely targeted toward educators, can play an important role in ensuring school and district improvement practices involves attention to appropriate data.

### *Resources and Supports*

Ultimately, accountability systems send signals that are used to inform decisions about where to allocate resources in interventions and other support activities. After learning about current school improvement cycles and supports facilitated by the South Carolina Department of Education, members had these recommendations.

Recommendation 17: Continue to route school improvement activities through district offices.

Members, particularly those representing district-level roles, noted with appreciation efforts to connect with both district- and school-level leaders regarding identifications and resulting school improvement requirements. According to members, this practice is leading to greater coherence and less confusion across schools and between schools and district offices. Continued collaboration between school improvement and school and district leadership will enhance the effectiveness of support initiatives.

Recommendation 18: Conduct research to look for shared characteristics of schools with federal support designations and those that exit such designations.



As the state understands any shared characteristics of schools with CSI, TSI, or ATSI designations, it can better direct resources and invest in interventions that may mitigate future identifications by addressing needs before or early as they arise. Additionally, schools that exit designation status and sustain improvement may be helpful examples for other identified schools; the state should gather and share these lessons learned.

Recommendation 19: The state should seek partnerships with institutions of higher education, parents, and community members, and others in efforts to continuously improve its support model.

AAC members recognize the importance of a “group effort” in continuing to address disparities and improve outcomes for students in all schools across South Carolina. To that end, members support continued outreach and partnership to identify root causes of persistent educational challenges and ways to address those challenges through policy, practice, and resource distribution.

## Next Steps

The recommendations in this report are intended to inform refinements to South Carolina’s state school accountability system. They are framed to reflect key policy priorities, articulate the underlying rationale, and outline features or criteria that should guide appropriate implementation. However, the recommendations are not sufficiently detailed to support full implementation on their own. Accordingly, we propose three guidelines to help inform next steps.

- **Engage in ongoing research:** Given the scope and complexity of several recommendations, particularly those that introduce more novel or sweeping changes (i.e., through year assessment), South Carolina should engage in a careful study of promising practices, relevant research, and lessons from other states. Such an inquiry will help ensure that proposed refinements are evidence based, feasible to implement, and aligned with the state’s policy priorities.
- **Define operational specifications:** While the committee’s recommendations articulate high-level features and criteria for the indicators and overall system design, they do not specify the operational definitions and business rules necessary for implementation, which is understandable given the committee’s policy advisory role. In subsequent phases, South Carolina should collaborate with subject matter experts (e.g., specialists in career readiness), technical advisors, practitioners, and other constituents to translate the recommendations into detailed specifications.
- **Pilot and Refine:** Once additional specifications have been established we recommend piloting indicators (particularly novel measures) and other aspects of the system such as the system reports to better understand the extent to which the system supports the intended interpretations and uses. Refinements to the indicators or overall design decisions may be necessary based on pilot results



## Conclusion

The Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC) conducted a review of the South Carolina accountability system in a series of meetings from August to December 2025. The AAC took care to develop clear goal statements, articulate design priorities, consider input from other outreach efforts, and produce recommendations coherent with these foundational principles.

This report documents the recommendations resulting from this review. The recommendations address revisions to the system, reporting enhancements, and priorities for ongoing research. The AAC hopes these recommendations will promote equity, better incentivize, and reflect a wide range of skills associated with the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*, and provide more useful information to support student and school improvement.



# Cyclical Review of South Carolina’s Accountability System

Accountability Advisory Committee Report

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## Appendix A – AAC Meeting Schedule and Attendance Record

Member\Meeting Date	4/14	8/6	8/26	10/9	11/12	12/03
Melanie Barton			√	√		√
Whitney Broderick	√	√	√	√	√	√
Jennifer Cauthen	√	√	√	√	√	√
Michelle Caya	√	√	√	√	√	√
Dee Christopher		√	√	√	√	√
Peter DeLorme	√	√	√	√		
Matthew Ferguson	√		√	√		√
Janet Graham	√	√	√		√	
Josie Kate Haupfear	√		√			
Patrick Kelly		√	√	√	√	√
Celestine LaVan	√	√	√	√		√
Sallie R. Lee	√			√	√	√
Monique McDaniels	√					
Laura McKinney	√	√	√	√	√	√
Ashton Pearson	√		√		√	
Buffy Roberts	√		√	√	√	√
Frank Rodriguez	√		√	√	√	
Yalonda Ross-Davis	<i>Invited to join the group in October</i>			√	√	√
Terrye Seckinger	√					
Molly Tuck		√	√	√	√	
Ellen Weaver	√	√	√	√	√	√
Audrey White-Garner				√	√	



## Appendix B: Summary of Focused Convenings

### Summary of EOC Focused Convenings

The EOC held four Focused Convenings in the spring and summer of 2025 to bring specific attention to topics that consistently emerged since 2020. EOC staff wanted to make certain that these topics were given priority in discussions. The results of discussions were shared with the Accountability Advisory Committee. Requests for nominations were sought from teacher organizations, SCASA, SCSBA, members of State Board of Education, SC School Improvement Council, EOC, and others.

### Public Expectations of School Ratings

#### Participants

Josie Kate Haupfear, *Director of Federal Programs at Laurens County School District 56*

Dr. Seath Young, *Anderson School District 1 Superintendent*

Scott Childers, *York 1 School Board Member*

Brad Johnson, *Lancaster County School District*

Genie Brainerd, *Parent*

Julius Scott, *Lexington Richland School District Five*

Shawnee Thrift, *Parent*

Denay Fullington, *Parent*

Kelly Scott, *Parent*

Dr. Latoya Dixon, *Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and Administration York County School District 1*

#### Summary of discussions:

- Expectation of Schools Rated Excellent: Participants indicated that 75% to 90% of students should be on grade level and should have academic growth from one year to the next in a school rated excellent.
  - “An excellent school will have first - high academic achievement, low truancy rates, high graduation rates for high schools, and high ratings in college and career preparedness”
  - “An excellent school should have good test scores, good teacher retention, good surveys”
- Expectation of Schools Rated Unsatisfactory: Participants indicated that 40% to 50% of students would be on grade level and have academic growth from one year to the next in a school rated unsatisfactory.
  - “An unsatisfactory school is one without any improvement in students’ scores, lots of discipline issues, having a high number of students who regress”
  - “Low test scores, no improvement year-to-year, low attendance rates and high teacher turnover”
- Participants’ perception of a school’s report card page:



- “I expect the grading system for the school would be the exact same that a student would receive (referring to the grading system). How is a 72% rated excellent?”
- “If you are wanting fast interpretation, these rating points could be a problem. It is not clear, fast or concise because I have to figure it out.”
- Participants’ perception of what the overall rating points for report cards should mirror uniform grading scale.

## High School Experience (College and Career Readiness)

### Participants

Michael Belk, *Principal, Lancaster CSD*

Jamie Brown, *Parent*

Dr. Chad Cox, *Exec. Director of Schools, Beaufort*

Danny Fox, *Parent*

Ken Hitchcock, *School District: CTE*

Lena McCloud, *Parent*

Laura McKinney, *Business/Chamber of Commerce Rep.*

Dr. Tanika McKissick, *Conway High School Principal*

Glenda Morrison-Fair, *School Board Representative*

Dr. Latrice Ratcliff-Small, *Higher Education, University of SC*

### Summary of discussion / Main questions that the group addressed:

- Are current college and career designations valid – do students succeed in post-secondary and/or in the workforce?
  - Discussion centered around the current designations and the current efforts that were attempting to measure post-secondary outcomes for students who had current CCR measures.
  - Are these measures what they say they are?
- Is HS Grad rate overemphasized in the current system/does a diploma mean enough for students?
  - The group discussed whether it was possible to alter the calculation of the graduation rate to give more points for students who also achieved a measure of CCR or less points if students received recovered credits. Federal law currently prohibits this practice and also still requires on-time graduation rate count a large percentage in the system.
- Do other measures of CCR need to be considered?
  - This question is what is often asked by school and district leaders. It goes back to the overall question of whether CCR measures – those that currently count or those that school leaders want included – lead to post-secondary successful outcomes.



## Multilingual Learners' Progress in English Language Proficiency

### Participants

Adanays (Addy) Aranda, *ML Teacher, Fort Mill School District 4*

Dr. Kathleen Corley, *Principal, Beaufort County School District*

R. Nicholas Flowers, *Director of Accountability, Beaufort County School District*

Tanya Franca, *MLP Coordinator, Greenville County Schools*

Niki Porter, *School Board Member, Richland School District 2*

Dr. Angela Rush, *Director of ML Services, Charleston County School District*

### Summary of discussions:

- Participants discussed strengths of the current Multilingual Learners' Progress indicator, including:
  - Participants appreciated that an ML's target score can be known in advance of the English Language Proficiency (ELP) test window.
  - Participants believed that the five-year timeframe within which to achieve proficiency in English is appropriate.
  - Participants appreciated that schools and districts were only being held accountable for language growth fostered within their own district.
- Participants discussed challenges of the current Multilingual Learners' Progress indicator, including:
  - Since MLs are typically the most transient subgroup in SC schools, participants expressed challenges getting records from sending schools.
  - In addition, MLs who regularly transfer between districts may never reach five years in the same district, affecting assignment of targets.
  - Annual growth targets are evenly spaced across the five-year timeframe, which may not reflect the actual pattern of language growth for MLs.
  - Record keeping for MLs in the student information system is complex and can often be confusing for school personnel updating the information (who may or may not be familiar with ML programs and procedures).
- Participants expressed the desire for any future changes to the Multilingual Learners' Progress indicator to meet the following goals, whenever possible:
  - Annual growth targets, calculation of indicator points, and cut scores for ratings should be informed by data collected within South Carolina based on observations of MLs in South Carolina schools.
  - Annual growth targets should be based on the MLs most recent English language proficiency score, without requiring the calculation of a multi-year growth progression for a given ML.
  - Record keeping for MLs related to the MLP and to accountability should be simplified to ensure accuracy of data and of accountability calculations.



- WIDA experts in English language acquisition and assessment were consulted, at the request of participants, to advise on the typical pattern of English language acquisition demonstrated by MLs nationally.
- Historical data within South Carolina was consistent with patterns described by WIDA experts.

## Awarding Performance

### Participants

Denean Green, *Richland 2*

Tim Hicks, *Richland 2*

Carole Ingram, *Beaufort*

Kelli Overcash, *Lancaster*

Gary Porth, *Calhoun*

Matt Sherman, *Richland 2*

Scott Smith, *Spartanburg 5*

### Summary of Discussions:

- Look at how the state could include collective efficacy (Hattie model) in a school as part of the report card; may be look at a subset of the teacher survey questions
- Consider adding a parent voice to report card, especially as it related to climate in the schools
- Inclusion of Closing the Achievement Gap was viewed positively; schools that might not make it on achievement and growth, could be rewarded for subgroup performance

### Other ideas shared:

- A question came up about using the state average on academic achievement for Closing the Achievement Gap; does using the state average work against schools? Specifically, a question was raised if using the state average, is this a normed approach with half the schools above and half below?
- Include another designation for schools that make Excellent/Excellent on academic achievement and growth and label it Platinum
- Include designations like "BTOIS" or Palmetto Gold and Silver status on the report cards.
- Consider rewarding schools that move 2 or more ratings in a given year such as Unsatisfactory to Average



## Appendix C: Listening Session Report

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# Summary Report

Prepared for South Carolina Education Oversight Committee

April 2025





# Introduction

South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is an independent, nonpartisan group made up of 18 educators, business people, and elected officials who have been appointed by the legislature and governor to enact the South Carolina Education Accountability Act of 1998. The Act sets standards for improving the state's K-12 educational system.

In 2001, a result of South Carolina's education accountability system was the creation of School Report Cards for public schools. The report cards are prepared annually for each public elementary, middle, and high school. School Report Cards evaluate public schools on the following areas: School Climate, Academic Achievement, Student Growth, College and Career Readiness, Student Progress, High School Student Success, Multilingual Learners Progress, Graduation Rate, Student Safety, Preparing for Success, and Classroom Environment. Each South Carolina public school receives a report card rating of Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, or Unsatisfactory based on the school's level of success on the indicators.

To inform future improvements, the South Carolina EOC recently conducted a five-year review of the state's accountability system. The EOC invited parents, educators, school administrators, and community members to participate in virtual listening sessions or submit written comments through an online portal. Participants were encouraged to share their insights on how South Carolina schools are evaluated and help shape the future of education in the state.

On April 3 and April 7, 2025, Rhodes Branding facilitated three separate listening sessions to gather feedback on the effectiveness, usage, and improvement areas of the state's School Report Cards and accountability system. Rhodes Branding also solicited written feedback between March and April 2025.

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the high-level themes gleaned from the listening sessions and written comments.

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# Summary of Feedback

## Key Takeaways

1. **Stakeholders generally are well aware and make practical use of report cards**, though concerns exist about timeliness, depth, selective communication, and effectiveness in driving improvement.
2. **South Carolina schools are generally perceived to be underperforming** compared to national standards, with notable disparities between rural versus urban or suburban areas. There are pockets of excellence in well-resourced suburban districts.
3. **Stakeholders desire more comprehensive, relevant, and equitable data** in school report cards, including student growth, teacher quality, community context, and long-term outcomes.
4. **There is support for maintaining the current descriptive rating system** (Excellent, Good, Average, etc.) over switching to an A–F grading scale, citing clarity and reduced stigma, but both systems are viewed as effective.
5. **College and career readiness remains a top concern**, with a gap between expectations and the perceived actual preparedness of graduates, particularly for marginalized students.



## [Detailed Themes and Insights](#)

### Awareness and Use of School Report Cards

Stakeholders across listening sessions and written comments generally reported high familiarity with the South Carolina School Report Cards.

- **Widespread use** of school report cards exists among school administrators and families, especially for decision-making, strategic planning, and relocation decisions.
- **The general public is mixed in their familiarity** with school report cards. Some use report cards for academic research, understanding school performance, or evaluating arts/specialty programs.

#### Use Cases:

- Parents and caregivers use report cards to choose schools or housing.
- Teachers and administrators use them for school improvement planning and job-seeking.
- Policymakers and advocates rely on them for strategic planning, setting goals, and communicating school performance.

*"I use the school report cards to decide where I want to work and live."*

*"They're helpful in strategic planning but can be too surface-level."*

*"I use the report cards to reference data almost daily."*

*"I use the report cards to know what to help our child with or emphasize while doing homework."*

*"We used the school report cards when we were looking at what area we wanted to move to, and that influenced our choice in school district and schools. The information was tremendously helpful."*



## Perception of School Report Card Effectiveness

### Positive Perceptions:

- School report cards serve as a helpful communication tool about statewide education goals and performance.
- School report cards support research and goal-setting.
- School report cards provide data for school comparisons and decision-making.

### Concerns Identified:

- **Timeliness:** Some participants noted that the data seems outdated by the time it's published.
- **Labeling effects:** Stakeholders believe there is a risk of stigmatizing low-performing schools. Example: If families use report cards to decide where to live, do under-performing schools suffer more if people avoid moving to those areas?
- **Selective communication:** Schools may highlight good ratings but avoid publicly revealing or addressing areas of concern.
- **Complexity of metrics:** Some participants mentioned that the metrics can feel overly technical and difficult to interpret.

A few responses emphasized that while the school report cards are generally easy to understand, they do not always reflect the full picture of a school, including school culture and student behavior.

*"The growth model is really helpful; it's for teachers, students, and schools, and it gives us a growthpost and lets us know where we need to move."*

*"School report cards can be effective tools for improvement, because they highlight areas of strength, areas of need, and things that we need to consider in planning and programming. But by the time we (a school district) get the final report card—and some of the metrics are pretty complicated to calculate—it isn't as useful as it could be. We are always having to respond after the fact, as opposed to either having the information along the way or in a more timely fashion."*

*"When a school is labeled as average or below average or unsatisfactory, that is a label, and it doesn't always communicate some of the good things that are going on in those schools."*

*"I believe they are helpful and a way of communicating statewide education goals for the public."*



*“If people are picking where they live based on these report cards, are underserved areas becoming even more underserved?”*

*“For those of us who moved from somewhere else, it was helpful to have that information to decide where we were going to end up and be able to make that choice. For other folks, they don't necessarily have that option. I can understand how it might be creating division. If the information can be shared in a timely fashion to help inform decisions about resource allocation and things are acted on, then great.”*

*“From the school perspective, we're having teacher meetings, and principals are emphasizing various parts of the report card. I'm assuming that those taking the surveys are honest, fair, and not overinflating just to get the school rating higher.”*



## Desired Information and Improvements in Report Cards

Across all feedback sources, there was a push for broader, more meaningful, and equity-minded data to be included in school report cards. Key suggested additions include:

- **Academic metrics:** Subject-specific breakdowns (arts, music, languages, etc.)
- **Student growth:** Year-over-year student achievement and improvement as longitudinal indicators of school effectiveness
- **Post-graduation outcomes:** College acceptance, trade school, military, or employment
- **Teacher- and leadership-related data:** Retention, qualifications, satisfaction, experience
- **Special programs:** Information on enrichment, intervention, and special education services
- **Equity indicators:** Economic disparity, school funding levels, and demographic breakdowns
- **Parent and community engagement:** Metrics around involvement and support

*"The report cards don't show what makes a school special, like language immersion or community ties."*

*"We need to know if students are getting jobs or into college, not just if they passed a test. Post-graduation information would be helpful."*

*"I think a lot of the things we expect are already in the report cards—reading, math, science, social studies, and other academic areas—the core things we expect out of our schools. And I know in talking to parents and families that they also care about things like school safety, sense of belonging, anti-bullying, and those types of things, too. Those things are hard to capture from a quantitative perspective. There are a bunch of other things that matter, but those things are harder to capture and measure, right?"*

*"I would like to see examples of how things are measured for the report cards, like scales used."*

*"I would like to see evidence of student achievement and growth in comparison to economic disparities."*

*"I'd like to see information about teacher retention."*



*"I'd be interested in the percentage of students going into different paths, employment, two-year school, four-year school."*

*"I think information about change over time would be extremely helpful. We get a one-year snapshot or maybe compared to the year before, but not that five-year or ten-year longitudinal look at the data."*



## Perceptions of School Performance

### Statewide Perceptions:

- South Carolina schools are generally viewed by participants as underperforming or middle-of-the-road nationally.
- Stakeholders commonly cited challenges include outdated curricula, limited resources, and lagging academic rigor.

### Regional Comparisons:

- Participants often compared South Carolina less favorably to North Carolina and Georgia, especially in education quality and investment.
- Several constituents noted that South Carolina's assessment systems differ, making direct comparisons difficult.

### In-State Disparities:

- Participants repeatedly mentioned concerns about the urban/rural divide:
  - Urban/suburban schools are seen as stronger and well-resourced.
  - Rural areas face challenges in funding, facilities, teacher recruitment and retention, and curriculum relevance.

*"I believe our rural communities are underserved due to a lack of funding and weak representation in the Legislature."*

*"Across the state, there's a lot of variety in the quality of education. Compared to other states around us—North Carolina and Georgia—the impression is that they have better quality education."*

*"I think we're in the middle of the pack."*

*"Compared to nearby states, South Carolina schools are fair. Much room for growth."*

*"I've taught in five states, and I think South Carolina is about 10 years behind other states that I've taught in, especially in reading. Concepts that I was teaching 10 years ago, they hadn't even heard of them when I came to South Carolina. We're moving in the right direction, but it is very hit or miss here. I work in a rural district, and we are next to a much larger district with brand new schools, a higher curriculum, and great PTOs. In this rural district, there is high poverty, and the Title I*



*funds do not even move us close to where other districts are around us, so it makes it hard to recruit and retain teachers. The curriculum is out of date, it's hard to maintain student data, and we don't have all the things we need to support our students in the ways we should."*

*'How do you compare? Having a comparison scale would be helpful."*

*"When districts and states publish student performance data, it's not an apples-to-apples comparison, because the expectations and standards vary from one state to the next."*



## School Rating Expectations and Labels

Participants shared an expectation that schools achieving an “Excellent” rating would have at least 80% of students performing at grade level.

Among the feedback, a preference emerged for retaining the current rating labels (Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, At Risk) over switching to an A–F scale.

### **Why some stakeholders prefer the current rating labels:**

- Seen as more nuanced and less stigmatizing (For example, “At Risk” gives hope for improvement, whereas “F” may suggest defeat.)
- Thought to better reflect school contexts and challenges
- Provide more constructive framing for improvement

Alternatively, some participants suggested that an A-F rating scale could be preferable because the A-F scale is widely recognized and used across many states; it could provide consistency in expectations; and it may allow a finer level of differentiation between performance levels (whereas “Excellent,” “Good,” and “Average,” may be too broad or ambiguous.)

*“It doesn’t matter what system you use, just be transparent about what the rankings mean and why schools are ranked as they are.”*

*“Letter grades reduce complex realities into something too simplistic and judgmental.”*

*“When a school is labeled as average or below average or unsatisfactory, it doesn’t always communicate some of the good things that are going on in those schools. And so, if there is a way to label a school where it doesn’t feel as threatening and judgmental, and it expresses some of the good things going on there, the EOC should consider that.”*

*“If the goal is clarity and comparability on a broader scale, I’d recommend the A-F rating system. It provides greater precision and familiarity and would likely help ensure clearer communication between schools, parents, and other stakeholders. However, if you’re aiming for a more nuanced or less stressful way to assess schools, South Carolina’s current grading system might have a place, though it may benefit from some refinements or additional metrics. Ultimately, both systems could be effective depending on the goals and the audience.”*



## Communication and Transparency

Participants expressed that communication from schools about ratings is inconsistent.

- Some schools are consistent about informing parents of ratings through websites or newsletters.
- Schools with strong ratings may celebrate publicly, while those with lower ratings may remain silent.
- Schools may opt to only report on good ratings and avoid addressing areas of concern on their school report card.
- Stakeholders recommended a less divisive, more growth-oriented approach to how ratings are communicated.

*“Our school does a great job communicating when they start to collect the data. And then once the report card rating comes out, they talk about it at a PTA or PTO meeting as well as in the newsletter.”*

*“My school communicates about the report card rating, but it always highlights the positive.”*

*“I do not recall our school district informing us about its ratings.”*

*“My child’s school is below average, however, the school only talks about Blue Ribbon, National Merit without any emphasis on how to improve the school report card.”*

*“We need to frame school performance in a way that motivates, not demoralizes, schools and communities.”*

*“Schools should put their report cards on their website homepage.”*



## College and Career Readiness

Stakeholders agreed that high school graduates should be ready for college, career, or other postsecondary paths, but they expressed deep concerns about the reality.

### Key concerns included:

- Gaps exist between test proficiency and real-world readiness.
- “SC Ready” scores often suggest students may only perform at C-level in college.
- There is a need for more robust tracking of actual post-graduate outcomes (college acceptance, employment, trade school, military enlistment).
- There is interest in having more pathways and support for underserved students, including undocumented students and those with disabilities.

*“Our students graduate, but that doesn’t mean they’re ready.”*

*“We need better metrics and support for kids who face serious barriers.”*

*“How are profile characteristics for readiness measured?”*

*“College or career readiness is an expectation, but the different criteria used to meet this designation are not always indicative of the student's readiness.”*

*“As a teacher, I know that many graduates are not ready for either college or career.”*

*“There are a lot of students whose life situations preclude them from having the opportunities either to pursue college or be employed. So you have some kids who can't enroll in college; they are prevented by laws and policies from enrolling in college. Therefore, they're not inclined to take the ACT or the SAT, which chips away at how we define college readiness on the report card. For most students, ideally, they should come away from high school prepared to be able to do either college or career, but the reality is that for some students, they have barriers that keep them from moving in those directions.”*



# Recommendations

Based on participant feedback, the following actions are recommended:

1. **Revise report card metrics** to include measures of student growth, post-graduation data, teacher satisfaction and quality, economic equity, and special programs.
2. **Improve the timeliness and usability** of data to ensure it supports real-time decisions and is presented in accessible ways for families, educators, and community members.
3. **Maintain the descriptive rating system** (“Excellent” through “At Risk”) if deemed satisfactory, rather than shifting to A–F grades.
4. **Redesign communication strategies** to encourage honest communication about both strengths and challenges in school performance and reduce stigma.
5. **Address systemic disparities** between districts by reporting contextual information to stakeholders and assessing how lower-rated schools can meet state standards.
6. **Develop cross-state comparison tools** to assess the progress of South Carolina’s schools regionally and nationally, if desired.
7. **Clarify post-graduate readiness standards and enhance reporting** to include outcome data for all student groups in performance metrics.

---

## Summary

Stakeholders in the South Carolina educational system see potential in school report cards as a tool for transparency, planning, and community engagement. However, to truly reflect school quality and student outcomes, the system must evolve. Stakeholders expressed a desire for a school accountability system that reflects the full picture of educational quality, respects community context, and supports improvement over stigmatization. Thoughtful updates would include expanding metrics and improving communication from schools. This feedback provides a strong foundation for strengthening the state’s accountability framework.



# Appendix

## Listening Session Dates & Attendance

### Session #1: April 3, 2025, 1:00-2:00 pm

- Number of registrants: 34
- Number of attendees: 18
- Attendees' cities:
  - Capital City
  - Chapin
  - Charleston (2)
  - Columbia (2)
  - Columbia
  - Greenville (2)
  - Hilton Head Island
  - Irmo
  - Pamplico
  - Spartanburg (4)
- Attendees' Affiliations (participants could check more than one affiliation):
  - Educator (8)
  - Community Member (5)
  - Parent/Guardian (5)
  - Philanthropy (1)
  - PreK-12 Arts Learning Director (1)
  - SC Arts Commission (1)
  - Principal (1)

### Session #2: April 3, 2025, 3:30-4:30 pm

- Number of registrants: 23
- Number of attendees: 12
- Attendees' cities:
  - Boiling Springs
  - Clinton (2)
  - Columbia (2)
  - Hanahan
  - Spartanburg (5)
- Attendees' Affiliations (participants could check more than one affiliation):
  - Educator (6)
  - Parent/Guardian (5)
  - Community Member (2)
  - District Data Manager (1)
  - Instructional Specialist (1)
  - SC Arts Commission (1)



### **Session #3: April 7, 2025, 4:30-5:30 pm**

- Number of registrants: 29
- Number of attendees: 10
- Attendees' cities:
  - City of Newberry
  - Columbia
  - Greenville
  - Lake Wylie
  - Spartanburg (3)
  - Union
  - York (2)
- Attendees' Affiliations (participants could check more than one affiliation):
  - Educator (7)
  - Parent/Guardian (5)
  - Community Member (3)
  - Arts Coordinator (1)
  - SC Arts Commission (1)

### **All Registrants' Cities**

Blythewood  
Boiling Springs  
Capital City  
Chapin  
Charleston  
City of Newberry  
Clinton  
Clover  
Columbia  
Darlington  
Greenville  
Greer  
Hanahan

Hilton Head Island  
Irmo  
James Island  
Lake Wyle  
Laurens  
Lugoff  
Okatie  
Pacolet  
Pamplico  
Spartanburg  
Union  
West Columbia  
York



## Appendix D: Statewide Survey Report

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# **SOUTH CAROLINA STAKEHOLDER SURVEY:**

*Design, Implementation,  
and Outcomes*

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October 14, 2025

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**André Rupp**

*National Center for the Improvement of  
Educational Assessment*



**Center for  
Assessment**

National Center for the Improvement  
of Educational Assessment  
Dover, New Hampshire





# SOUTH CAROLINA STAKEHOLDER SURVEY:

## *Design, Implementation, and Outcomes*

National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment, Inc. (the Center for Assessment) is a New Hampshire based not-for-profit (501(c)(3)) corporation. Founded in September 1998, the Center's mission is to improve student learning by partnering with educational leaders to advance effective practices and policies in support of high-quality assessment and accountability systems. The Center for Assessment does this by providing services directly to states, school districts, and partner organizations to support state and district assessment and accountability systems.

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# SOUTH CAROLINA STAKEHOLDER SURVEY:

## *Design, Implementation, and Outcomes*



### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Assessment partnered with the South Carolina (SC) Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to develop and administer a survey about the SC accountability system and its associated school report card. The survey was administered to a range of stakeholders during late May and early July 2025. This report summarizes the key methodological steps for all phases of this work as well as the key findings and recommendations.

A total of 1,621 responses were received and analyzed in multiple waves of outreach that reached parents, government officials, teachers, school administrators, superintendents, and the general public. Respondents received both common and unique question sets depending on their familiarity with the school report card.

In terms of the current school report card, users within the school system generally perceive the official school ratings as too low - indicating they thought that most schools are rated worse than they actually are - whereas members of the broader public generally perceive them as too high. Most users note that important information is missing and the survey contains detailed information on the relative importance of different aspects of school quality, indicators, and supplementary resources that are desired.

Generally speaking, reporting on academically-oriented areas, including postsecondary readiness, is desired the most along with school safety. Users generally like to look at the overall performance of schools and then make comparisons to other schools, districts, or the state/nation. Many respondents noted that various aspects of the system remained somewhat unclear to them, ranging from how the system is designed and used to how certain indicators are computed. Thus, more user-friendly, interactive dashboards with clearer explanations of rules and guidance on how to act upon the information are desired.

Respondents also provided a variety of suggestions for improving the system in the future. This included a call for clear, timely, and actionable information in user-friendly formats, having the state act more as a partner rather than enforcer, helping to reduce undue burdens of the system, and providing more outreach and support.



## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the key design and dissemination steps as well as outcomes for a broad-based stakeholder survey administered between late May and early July in South Carolina (SC) as part of the cyclical review process of the statewide accountability system. The survey was designed by a team at the Center for Assessment in cooperation with the Education Oversight Committee (EOC).

The report reflects largely the content that was presented to the SC Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC) during a virtual meeting on August 6, 2025, although it also includes a few further details on the qualitative analyses and some select statistical breakdowns of information.

The report is divided into three main sections. In the first main section it discusses the design, dissemination, and overall response metrics for the survey. In the second main section it discusses the key response patterns for all questions. This includes a more detailed characterization of the respondent sample by key characteristics, the responses provided by respondents with different levels of familiarity with the school report card in three branches of the survey, and broader recommendations about reporting for the future. The third section includes strategic recommendations for next steps based on major themes and patterns from open-ended responses.

## SECTION 1 - SURVEY DESIGN, DISSEMINATION, AND RESPONSES

### Survey Design

The broad-based survey that is the focus of this report was designed by the Center for Assessment in close cooperation with the SC EOC. Specifically, the Center team reviewed past and present surveys, research questions, and outreach efforts that were part of SC's cyclical review process. The Center team then created an initial draft that was presented to the EOC for initial feedback.

After a few revisions were made, the overall vision for the survey design, implementation, and analysis was presented to the SC AAC on April 14, 2025, during a virtual webinar. Specifically, the presentation reiterated that the survey was one of several outreach efforts designed to capture the voices and insights of key stakeholder groups across the state. These voices included:

- School and district leaders
- Educators
- Parents / caregivers
- Business / community leaders
- Other relevant stakeholders

As illustrated further below, all of these different stakeholder groups were reached through the survey.

The key questions targeted by the survey and the associated outreach efforts included the following:

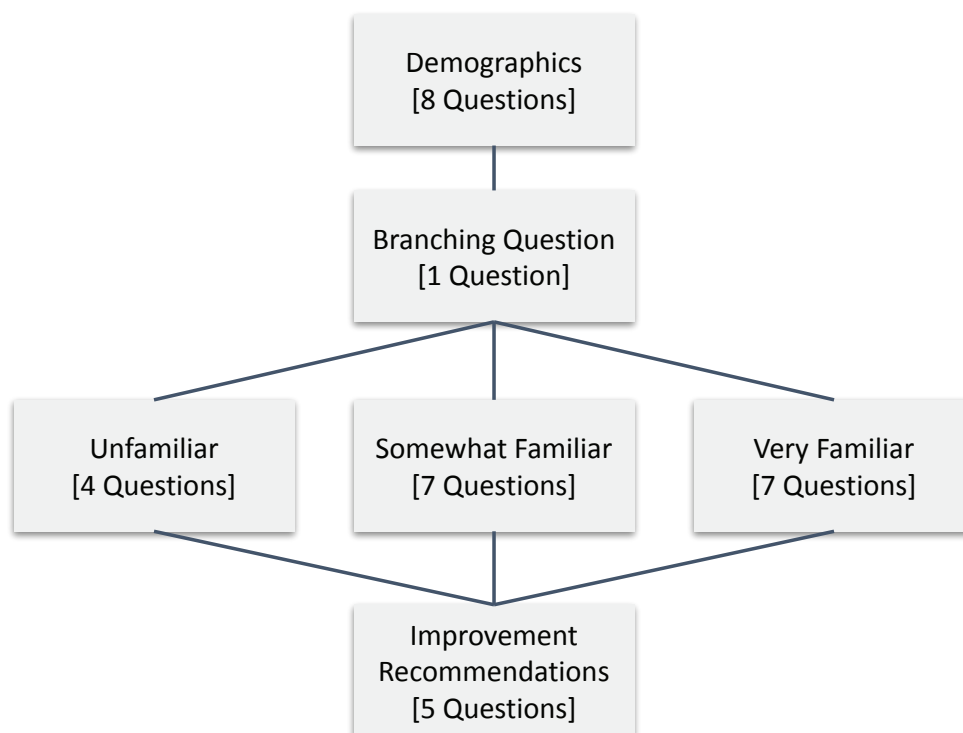
- How do stakeholders use accountability results?
- To what extent does the current system support priority uses for these stakeholders?
- Are the current rating categories clear and helpful?
- Are the performance expectations for schools appropriate?
- What information is more broadly important to measure school quality?
- To what extent is that information represented in the current system?



- What are priorities for potential new measures?
- How can reports and support be improved?

The SC AAC provided feedback at the April meeting. AAC members appreciated the overall design approach to the survey, including the idea of branching sets of questions based on report card familiarity, and recommended a few improvements. After this initial round of feedback was received, additional meetings with the EOC were held to fine tune the survey further. It was considered complete and ready for administration by mid-May. Figure 1.1 shows the overall structure of the survey in graphical form.

**Figure 1.1**



All respondents first received eight demographic-type questions that helped to characterize the respondent sample. Each respondent then received a branching question that allowed for funneling the respondents into one of three response branches based on their familiarity with the school report card.

Specifically, the question that was asked of respondents was:

**How familiar are you with the school report card?**  
 1 - I am not familiar with it / have never used it  
 2 - I have seen it or heard of it, but have not explored it much  
 3 - I have used it and understand the key sections / data it provides



The branching was done because it allowed for a more targeted phrasing of questions. For example, it did not make sense to ask questions about the accuracy of current school ratings or the degree to which respondents understood the computation of certain indicators when respondents were not even familiar with the school report card. Instead, broader questions about the system overall and its use could be asked of these respondents.

In the three response branches, respondents then received four, seven, or seven questions, respectively. After this respective question set, every respondent then received five additional questions asking about recommendations for reporting, other system improvements, and general comments. Table 1.1 shows the breakdown of the questions by format; this includes selected response and constructed-response / short-answer questions as well as the number of response options for selected-response questions.

**Table 1.1 Numbers and Types of Questions in Different Survey Sections**

Section	# Questions	# SR Questions	# Options	# CR Questions	Total # Questions
Demographics	8	8	5 - 11	0	
Unfamiliar	4	3	5 - 11	1	17
Somewhat Familiar	7	5	3 - 8	2	20
Very Familiar	7	5	3 - 17	2	20
Recommendations	5	2	15	3	

*Note.* SR = selected response, CR = constructed response.

Table 1.1 shows that several questions had more than three options, sometimes reaching up to 17 choices. The technology for SurveyMonkey made responding to these questions on different devices relatively easy, however, and the common scale used for all of these choices further helped with easing the response burden. In total, respondents across the three branches received 17, 20, and 20 questions respectively. The mean response time for the survey was 7.5 minutes.

## Survey Dissemination

As alluded to above, the survey was disseminated through SurveyMonkey appropriately ‘branded’ in order to emphasize it was distributed on behalf of the EOC. Specifically, a direct respondent link was provided to the EOC team that they were able to embed in different communication efforts. The survey remained open between May 19, 2025 and July 4, 2025. In total, five primary waves of outreach were done.

These included:

- One newsletter in May (1,433 people)
- Two press releases to school public information officers (102 people)
- One press release to news media, government officials, and Expect More SC subscribers (473 people)
- One request to the *School Improvement Council* to distribute the survey to parents



The Center team monitored the volume of incoming responses as well as the evolving composition of the respondent pool. This information was shared regularly with the EOC team via email, allowing them to initiate additional pushes for outreach focusing on underrepresented respondent groups.

These efforts were reflected in the waves of responses that came in during the open period, with larger volumes of response coming in directly after outreach efforts and, more generally, during weekdays rather than weekends.

## Survey Responses

A total of 1,621 responses were received through the various communication efforts by the EOC. One of these responses was provided via a PDF scan of the survey as the person had some unexplained issue with the response interface; however, this was an anomaly<sup>1</sup>. At a very high level, most respondents were White, English-speaking, had at least 10 – if not 15 or more than 20 – years of experience in the field, and were very familiar with the report card. The respondent characteristics are discussed in more detail in the next section.

## SECTION 2 - KEY FINDINGS

Key findings from the survey were compiled in a presentation that was given to the SC AAC on August 6, 2025, during a virtual meeting. In this section, response distributions for core selected-response questions are presented, taken directly from Survey Monkey.

All open-ended responses were analyzed in two ways. First, they were processed through ChatGPT Plus with iterative prompt engineering to extract initial themes with approximate relative frequencies and illustrative real-life quotes. This was done to support early presentation of themes during the August 6, 2025, virtual meeting and to investigate the defensibility of these themes and the overall AI-supported analysis approach in this context.

Second, the responses were entered into the freely available [Taguette](#) program and were manually hardcoded for key themes. This was done by the author of this report, who has formal training and experience in both quantitative and qualitative research methodology.

This section presents the results in the general order of the main sections on the survey. That is, it first discusses the demographic breakdown of the respondent sample followed by the responses within the three branches - unfamiliar, somewhat familiar, and very familiar in short - and concluding with the section on general recommendations.

## Respondent Characteristics

Two questions about the role that respondents have within the system were asked first. The first question asked about their current primary role in the education sector while the second question asked what roles they identified with when reflecting on their overall adult experiences; Figure 2.1 shows the resulting responses.

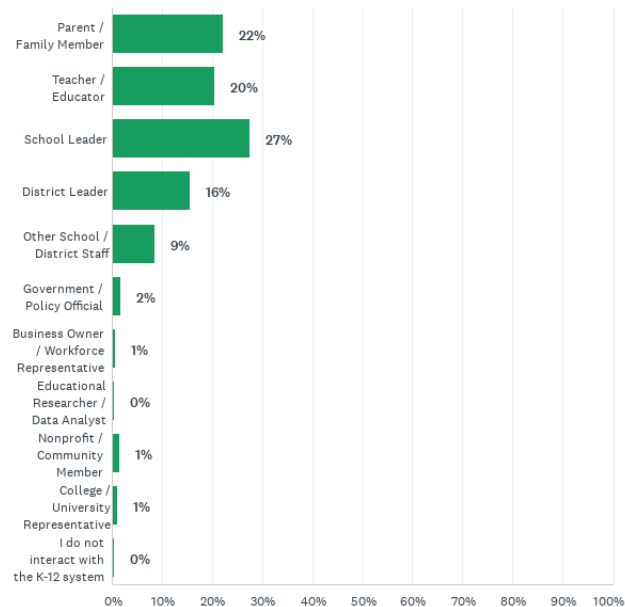
<sup>1</sup> This response was included in the downloaded data file that was used for some secondary analyses but excluded in the SurveyMonkey graphics for selected-response questions because it could not be manually added to the internal SurveyMonkey database.



**Figure 2.1 Primary Role and Overall Role Familiarity of Respondents**

**Q1 What is your primary role in interacting with the K-12 public education system right now?**  
Select one.

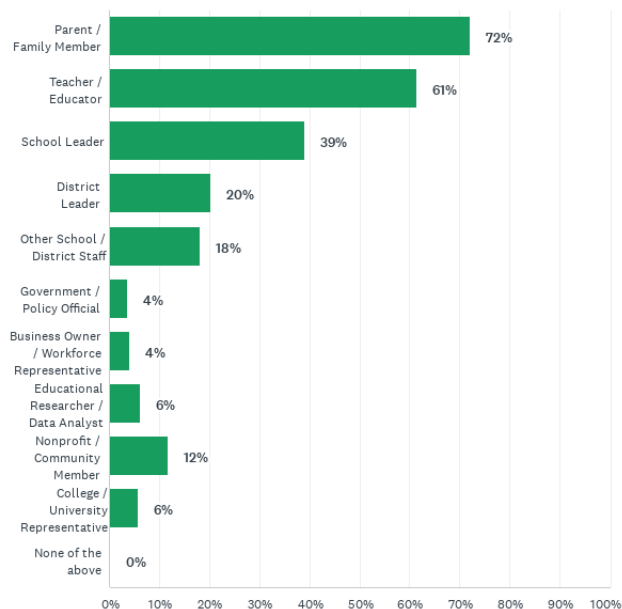
Answered: 1,620 Skipped: 0



**Primary Role**

**Q2 Considering your overall adult experiences, which of the following roles related to K-12 education do you identify with or have experience in? Select all that apply.**

Answered: 1,620 Skipped: 0



**All Roles**



Clearly, most respondents currently have a role that is directly related to the education sector with 27% identifying as school leaders, 20% identifying as teachers, 16% identifying as district leaders, and 9% identifying as other school or district staff. In addition, 22% of respondents identified as parents or family members with the remaining respondents falling into other groups.

Importantly, however, when respondents were asked about the roles that they could identify with more generally, 72% of respondents said that they could identify with parental roles followed by 61% who said that they could identify with the teacher role, 39% who said that they could identify with the school leader role, 20% who said that they could identify with the district leader role, and 18% who said that they could identify with another school or district staff role.

This shows that the key perspectives of interest were understood and reflected by a large proportion of the respondent pool and also underscores the importance of asking role-based questions in this dual manner.

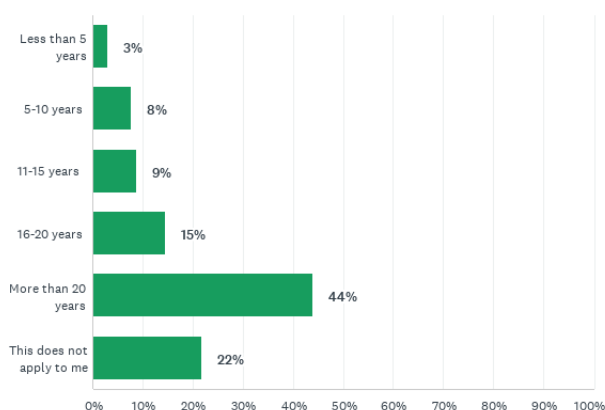
Two questions in particular underscored that the respondent sample skewed towards older, more experienced users of the system. Figure 2.2 shows the responses to the questions that were asked about their current age and their years of experience in the system.



**Figure 2.2 Responses Characterizing the Experience of Respondents**

**Q3 If you are currently an educator or educational leader/administrator, approximately how many years have you worked in the field of education?**

Answered: 1,620 Skipped: 0



Teachers Only  
(NCES, 2021 Data)

< 3 years: ~12.7%  
4-9 years: ~25.6%  
10-14 years: ~15.9%  
15+ years: ~45.8%

Principals Only  
(NCES, 2021 Data)

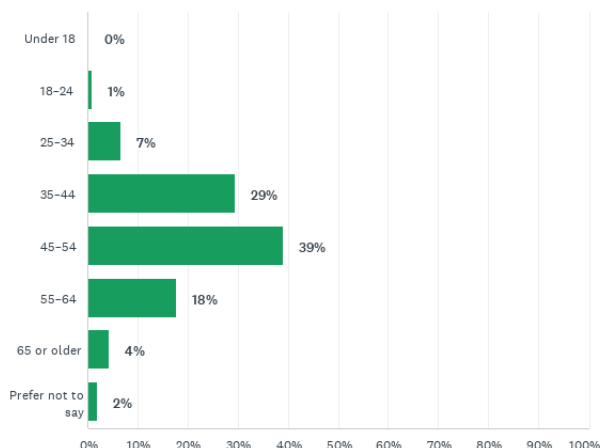
≤ 3 years: ~35%  
4-9 years: ~38%  
10-19 years: ~24%  
≥ 20 years: ~4%

Average teaching  
experience of principals  
was ~10 years  
(nationally)

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/cls/public-school-principals>  
[https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Career\\_Paths\\_of\\_Principals.pdf](https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Career_Paths_of_Principals.pdf)

**Q8 To which age group do you belong?**

Answered: 1,620 Skipped: 0



The first graph shows that 44% of respondents said that they had more than 20 years of experience in the field followed by another 15% who had at 15 but no more than 20 years of experience for a total of 59% of respondents who had at least 15 years of experience. This is reflected in the age distribution in the second graph, which shows that 39% of respondents were between 45 and 54 years old and a total of 90% of respondents were at least 35 years old.



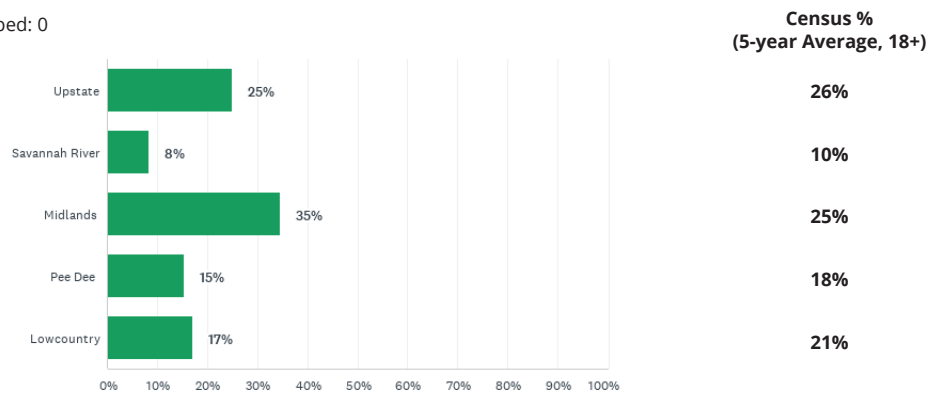
Figure 2.3 provides information on regional and ethnic composition. In particular, relative to 2025 census information regarding 18+ year-olds in SC, most regions are reasonably well represented in the respondent sample - which generally skews older anyway - while the Midlands region is a bit underrepresented. These are approximate comparisons.

In addition, while the overall proportions of ethnic groups reflect the relative prevalence of each in the state, White respondents were slightly underrepresented and Black or African American respondents were slightly overrepresented in comparison to the overall SC adult population.

### Figure 2.3 Regional and Ethnic Composition of Respondents

#### Q4 Which geographic region of the state do you live in?

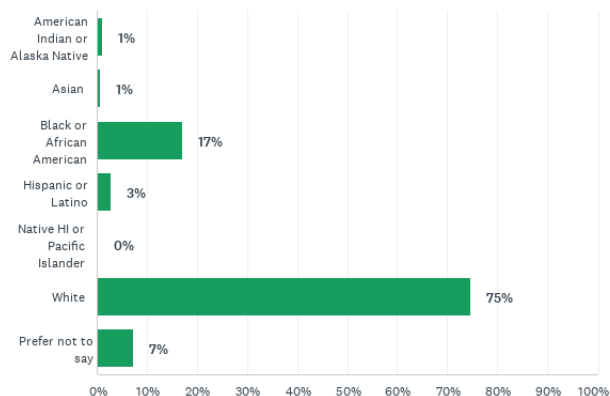
Answered: 1,620 Skipped: 0



Census data from: <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2023.S0101?q=S0101&g=040XX00US45&y=2023>

#### Q5 How would you describe your race or ethnicity? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 1,620 Skipped: 0



**98%** of respondents said that **English is spoken at home.**

**99%** of respondents said that **English is their preferred language of communication.**

<https://www.neilsberg.com/insights/south-carolina-population-by-race/>



In sum, the goal of the survey was to capture diverse voices from various stakeholder groups with a natural focus on people currently working within - or having historical familiarity with - the SC education system. This was accomplished reasonably well, along with geographic and ethnic diversity to the degree possible.

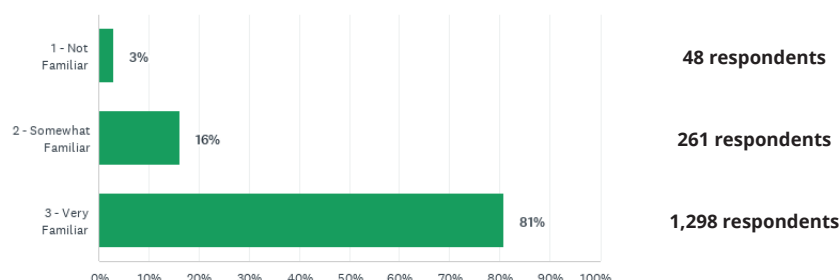
## Familiarity with Report Card

Given the importance of the branching question centered around familiarity, the responses to this question are reproduced below in Figure 2.4 and Table 2.1.

**Figure 2.4 Familiarity with School Report Card**

Q9 How familiar are you with the school report card?

Answered: 1,607 Skipped: 13



**Table 2.1 Distribution of Familiarity by Region**

		How familiar are you with the school report card?			Total
		1 - Not Familiar	2 - Somewhat Familiar	3 - Very Familiar	
Region	Lowcountry	Count	2	48	225
		% within Region	0.7%	17.5%	81.8%
		% within Familiarity	4.2%	18.4%	17.3%
	Midlands	Count	17	89	447
		% within Region	3.1%	16.1%	80.8%
		% within Familiarity	35.4%	34.1%	34.4%
	Pee Dee	Count	22	55	170
		% within Region	8.9%	22.3%	68.8%
		% within Familiarity	45.8%	21.1%	13.1%
	Savannah River	Count	0	12	121
		% within Region	0.0%	9.0%	91.0%
		% within Familiarity	0.0%	4.6%	9.3%
	Upstate	Count	7	57	336
		% within Region	1.8%	14.2%	84.0%
		% within Familiarity	14.6%	21.8%	25.9%
Total		Count	48	261	1299
		% within Region	3.0%	16.2%	80.8%
		% within Familiarity	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note. Table created in SPSS using the 1 additional, manually-entered response. Distribution of PeeDee and Savannah River differ most notably from others. This aligns with  $\chi^2$  value but the test is highly sensitive for this sample size.



The age of the respondents and years of experience in the system is clearly reflected in their overall level of familiarity with the school report card with 81% of respondents saying that they are very familiar with it, 16% saying that they are somewhat familiar with it, and only 3% saying that they are not very familiar with it. These percentage differences - and, thus, the differences in absolute numbers of respondents - should be kept in mind when interpreting the response patterns in the three branches in the following subsections.

There are a few notable regional differences in familiarity. In general, Savannah River respondents are more familiar with the school report card while Pee Dee respondents are somewhat less familiar with it. This is likely explainable by the fact that a higher proportion of respondents in Savannah River were district leaders whereas a higher proportion of respondents in Pee Dee were parents, relative to one another and the other regions.

## Branch 1 - Respondents Unfamiliar with the School Report Card

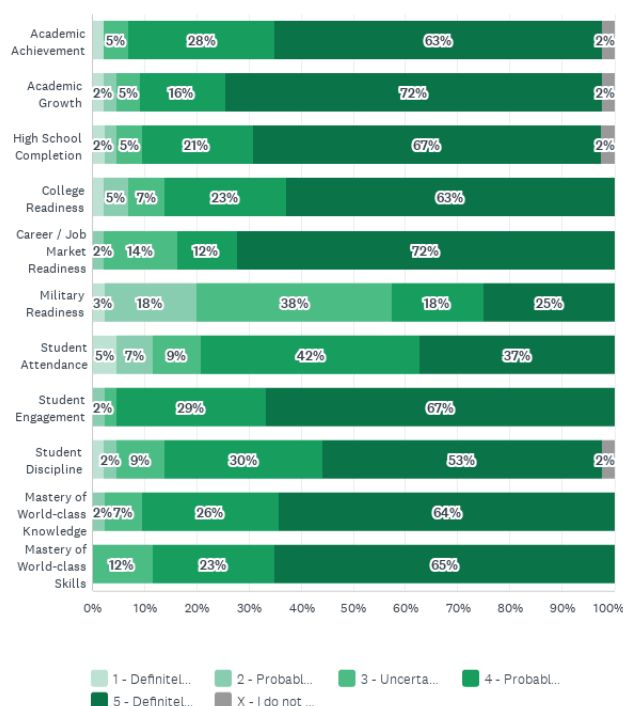
Given the relative lack of familiarity with the school report card, respondents in this branch were asked broader questions about the overall goals and potential design features of the accountability system. A total of 48 respondents were part of this branch.

First, respondents were asked for which aspects of student performance the state should hold schools accountable; Figure 2.5 shows the responses to this question. Questions about reporting on school offerings and other conditions of learning were asked of everyone in the final section.

**Figure 2.5 Aspects of Student Performance for which Schools Should be Held Accountable [Unfamiliar Respondents]**

Q10 For which of the following aspects of student performance should the state hold schools accountable? (We will have a question later about services that schools provide - this is about student performance.)

Answered: 43 Skipped: 1,577



1 - Definitely not  
 2 - Probably not  
 3 - Uncertain / not sure  
 4 - Probably yes  
 5 - Definitely yes  
 X - I do not understand what this means



Figure 2.5 shows that, overall, there is a desire to hold schools accountable for most of the aspects of performance that are currently part of the system. Arguably, there are slight differences across categories with some additional preference given to academically-oriented aspects along with student engagement and slightly less preference given to student discipline, student attendance, and, most clearly, military readiness. Interestingly, student discipline, bullying, and attendance were mentioned in several open-ended comments later in the survey.

However, 81% of respondents noted that it is very important that schools are held accountable for helping all students succeed, including those who may need extra help to catch up, and an additional 14% agreed that this is at least somewhat important. When they were being asked how helpful a global rating of school quality with an associated 0-100 rating scale would be for them - in other words, the kind of rating that is currently provided - 53% of respondents said that this would be very helpful while another 42% considered this to be somewhat helpful.

In addition, 22 respondents within this branch gave short descriptions of the kinds of additional information that they might find helpful on a school report card ranging from a more grade-type scale to clearer, more actionable explanations; see Figure 2.6.

### Figure 2.6 Useful Information in School Report Card [Unfamiliar Respondents]

What would make a school rating most helpful to you?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 1,598

- **Clearer, familiar formats**
  - Use A–F grades and 10-point scales (e.g., A = 90–100)
  - Avoid overly broad 0–100 ranges
- **More detailed breakdowns and explanations**
  - Show how the score was calculated
  - Include scores by category (achievement, growth, engagement)
  - Provide an overall rating *plus* explanatory context
- **Academic and non-academic indicators**
  - Include academic achievement and growth
  - Highlight student engagement and class offerings
  - Address support for disabilities and accommodations
- **School environment and safety**
  - Report on discipline incidents, criminal activity, and expulsions
  - Show teacher turnover, qualifications, and school climate
  - Include exit surveys or student perspectives on daily experience
- **Transparency and comparability**
  - Clearly explain the rating criteria
  - Compare to other local schools
- **Practical and personal relevance**
  - Help families choose where to live
  - Support decisions on where to work or enroll children
  - Recognize staff achievements and community involvement

## Branch 2 - Respondents Somewhat Familiar with the School Report Card

In this branch, respondents had some idea of what a school report card is, may have even used it a bit, but were generally not in-depth users of the information on it. Consequently, they were asked a few more targeted questions about the school report card, including questions about conceptual details, but without going into the specifics of particular indicators for instance. A total of 261 respondents were part of this branch.

Respondents were first asked two related questions about how they used the information on the school report card and the broader accountability system. The responses to the second question



revealed that many respondents equated the school report card with the accountability system and did not consider additional resources, data, or other supports much in this context.

Table 2.2 is based on a thematic analysis of the responses to both questions combined, reflecting in its layout an approximate relative rank-ordering of the categories shown. Essentially, this shows that the overall rating, academic performance, and academic growth are particularly important along with making comparisons of a particular school to other schools in the district or the state. Next up are aspects of the card that help users understand conditions of schooling such as climate and safety of teacher staffing information or information regarding demographic breakdowns of information to dig deeper.

**Table 2.2 Use of School Report Card Information [Somewhat Familiar Respondents]**

Please describe what information from the school report card you typically look at and what you do with it.

Answered: 142 Skipped: 1,478

Please describe what other information from the state accountability system you typically look at and what you do with it.

Answered: 92 Skipped: 1,528

Theme	Sample Response
Overall Rating	Overall rating [...]; How well the county is doing [...]
Academic Performance	Academic achievement; Test scores compared to state and national averages
Comparison to Others	Comparing school districts; Compare it to other schools [for] school choice
Student Growth / Improvement	Looking for growth within subgroups; [...] the growth of students and school
School Climate / Safety	School Climate - to look for ways to improve
Teacher / Staff Info	I look for [...] teachers' experience/stability; [...] student/teacher ratios
College & Career Readiness	I also factor career readiness; I look mainly at grad rates and state testing [...]
Demographic Breakdowns	[...] Demographics, decide which schools are best for my children [...]

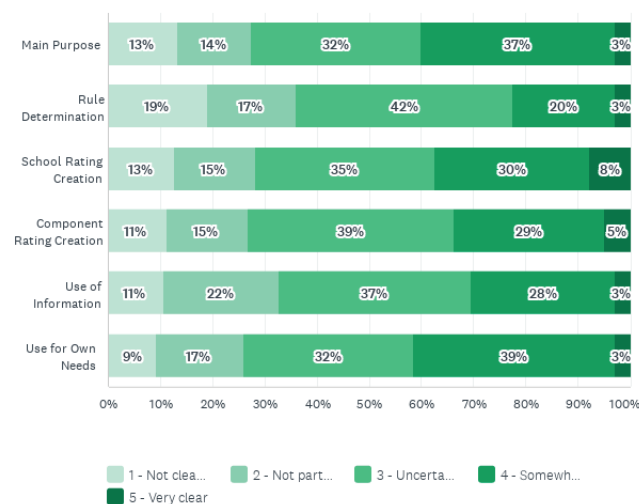
Figure 2.7 contains information about two related questions that pertain to clarity of information and ease of use. The first question is about clarity regarding different aspects of the overall system. Importantly, between 26% and 36% of respondents found each of the named aspects either not clear at all or not particularly clear with another 32% to 42% expressing uncertainty, indicating a need for more state and local support on that front.



**Figure 2.7 Clarity and Ease of Use of Different System Aspects [Somewhat Familiar Respondents]**

**Q16 How clear are the following aspects of the state accountability system to you? Please rate each one.**

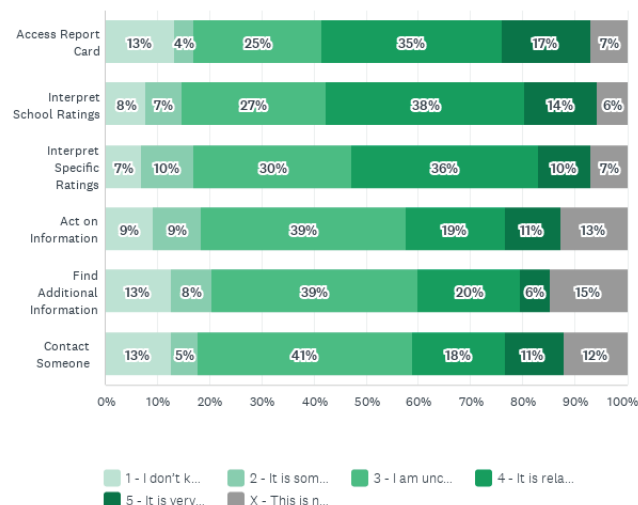
Answered: 142 Skipped: 1,478



1 - Not clear at all  
2 - Not particularly clear  
3 - Uncertain / not sure  
4 - Somewhat clear  
5 - Very clear

**Q17 How easy or difficult is it for you to complete the following activities? Please rate each one.**

Answered: 142 Skipped: 1,478



1 - I don't know how to do this  
2 - It is somewhat difficult  
3 - I am uncertain / not sure  
4 - It is relatively easy  
5 - It is very easy  
X - This is not something I typically do



In terms of ease of use, respondents felt rather comfortable with accessing the report card, interpreting the global rating, and interpreting component ratings. They expressed a bit more uncertainty when it comes to acting upon that information and, perhaps most strongly, finding additional information or contacting someone for help. This would suggest that the overall interpretational resources are working reasonably well but that more support could be provided for certain users when they want to dig deeper and, generally, in terms of helping them understand how different aspects of the system are designed or intended to be used.

Respondents in this branch also had questions about the accuracy of the current ratings, whether important information is currently missing, and what might help them to use the report cards better. Their responses are discussed in the next subsection together with the respondents in the third branch to bring out certain contrasts better.

### **Branch 3 - Respondents Very Familiar with the Report Card**

In this branch, respondents used the school report card frequently as part of their job or their overall engagement with the school (e.g., as parents) and, thus, were expected to be able to answer more specific, targeted questions about certain aspects of the report card. A total of 1,298 respondents were part of this branch.

Respondents were first asked about the types of information that they look at on the report card and how they use it. Their responses were overall very similar to those of the respondents in branch 2 when it came to the aspects and general uses, although their comments reflected more targeted uses relative to their roles as one would expect.

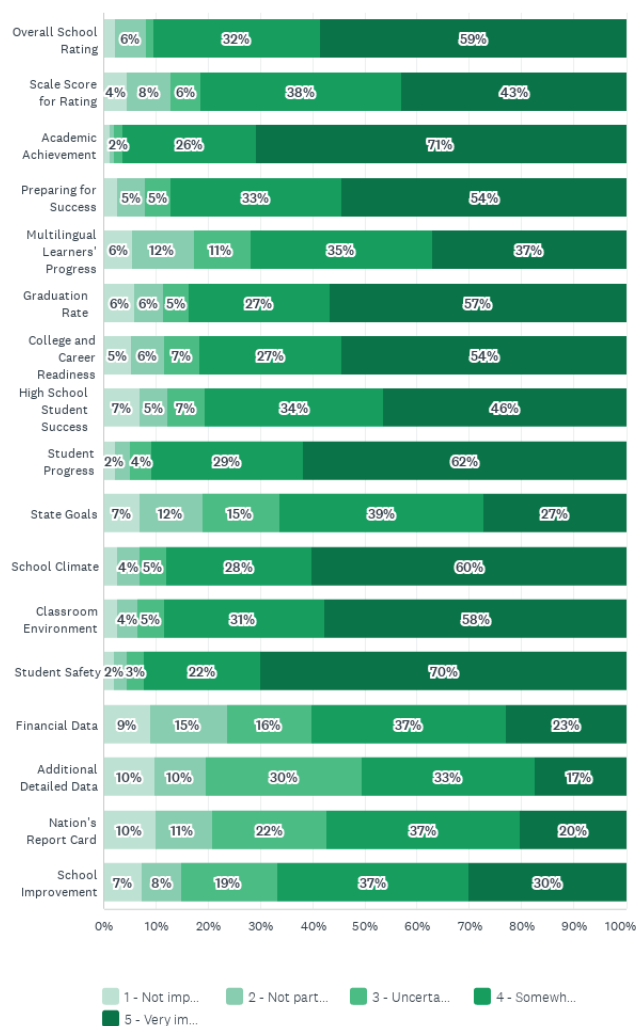
Respondents were asked next about the relative importance of all of the different sections of the report card available to them - this is an example of a level of detail that other respondents were not asked about given their relative lack of familiarity with the report card. Figure 2.8 shows their responses to this question.



**Figure 2.8 Relative Importance of Each School Report Card Component [Very Familiar Respondents]**

Q23 Think of how you typically use the school report card. How important are each of the following types of information for your uses?

Answered: 862 Skipped: 758



1 - Not important at all  
2 - Not particularly important  
3 - Uncertain / not sure  
4 - Somewhat important  
5 - Very important

The responses about the relative importance of different report card components reflect the relative importance of the overall aspects that respondents looked at, as expressed through the open-ended questions. For example, academic achievement, academic progress, and the overall school rating were seen as very important. Interestingly, information about student safety was also viewed as critical. Information about school climate and the classroom environment had similar response patterns to information about graduation rate, preparing for success, college and career readiness, and, perhaps slightly less so, high school student success.

Again, these responses come from people working in different settings of the education system and it is helpful to keep in mind that some of these indicators are more relevant to some than others (e.g., elementary school teachers or principals have to worry less about high school success and postsecondary readiness than middle school or high school teachers).



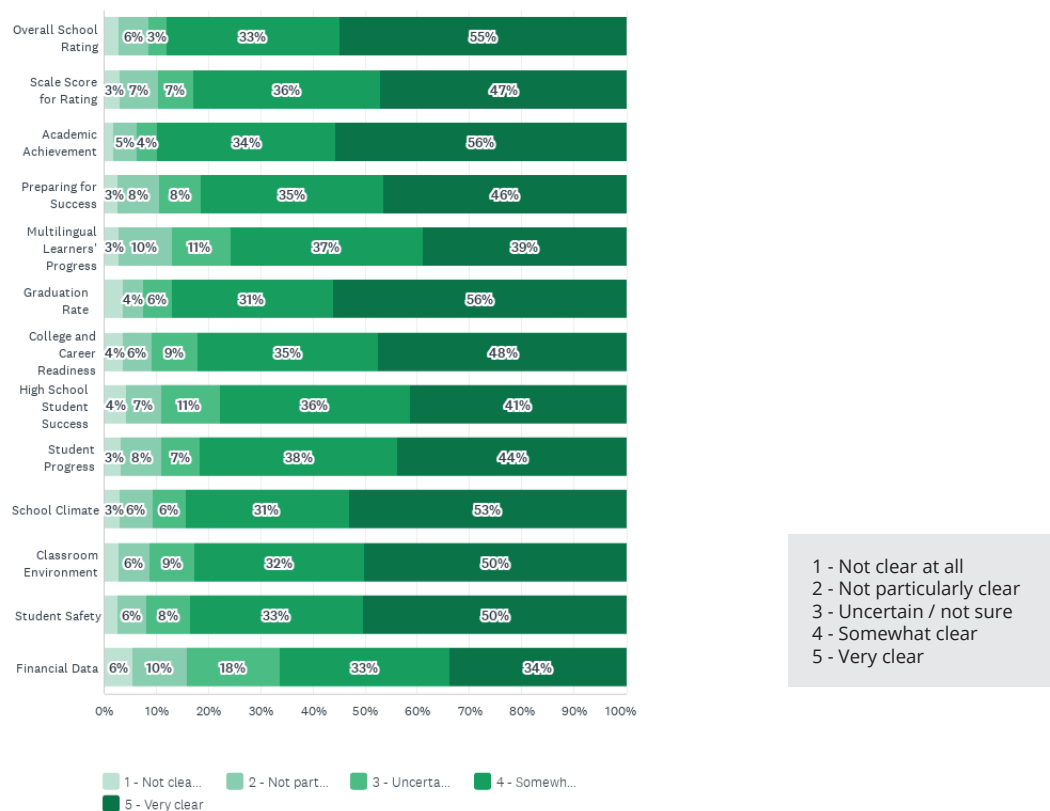
Respondents in this branch rated aspects such as the progress of multilingual learners as less important. This is perhaps explainable by the relatively low proportion of these learners in some schools or regions and the specific need of this information for particular roles. Similarly, less emphasis was placed on more secondary, contextual information about schools with specialized uses such as financial data, additional detailed data, or NAEP data.

Given that this branch contained respondents who are very familiar with the report card, it does not seem too surprising that they expressed a higher degree of clarity about how different ratings on the school report card are computed; Figure 2.9 shows the responses to the relevant question.

**Figure 2.9 Clarity about School Report Card Ratings [Very Familiar Respondents]**

Q24 How clear are you on how the ratings for each of the following types of information on the school report card are created?

Answered: 862 Skipped: 758



Specifically, between 77% and 90% of respondents found each of the ratings either somewhat clear or very clear with the exception of the financial data where that percentage dropped to 67%.

Some of the small differences might be explainable by at least one or two of the following factors. For example, it could be that indicators that have more intuitive interpretations such as graduation rate or academic achievement generally received higher clarity ratings than those who required a bit more interpretational effort such as multilingual learners' progress, the overall scale score,



preparing for success, and college and career readiness. However, to be fair, this may not necessarily be the result of a general interpretational difficulty but also the result of the lack of familiarity of respondents with certain indicators that are not of primary relevance to them.

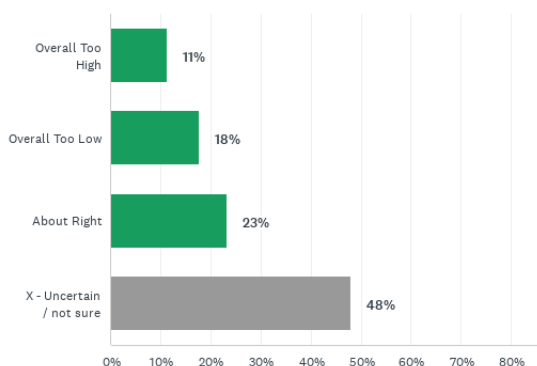
Respondents in this branch were then asked three questions that were identical to the ones for respondents in the second branch; all of these responses are discussed jointly now. The questions pertained to whether the respondents thought that the current school ratings were accurate, whether important information is missing, and what would help them make better use of the report card.

Figure 2.10 shows the responses to the first question about the accuracy of school ratings for respondents in the second and third branches. Importantly, rather than just using generic rating labels for the response categories for this question, specific labels were used to avoid misinterpretations. For example, rather than just saying “Too high” the label read “Overall too high – most schools are rated better than they actually are” and so on.

**Figure 2.10 Perceived Accuracy of Current School Ratings [Somewhat and Very Familiar Respondents]**

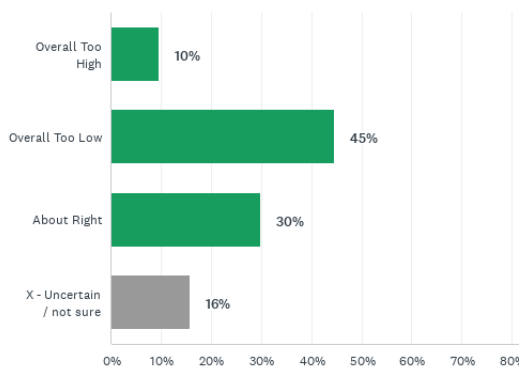
Q18 In your opinion, how accurate are current school ra

Answered: 142 Skipped: 1,478



**2 - Somewhat Familiar**  
**n = 142**

Answered: 862 Skipped: 758



**3 - Very Familiar**  
**n = 862**

Note. This question only got asked for branches 2 and 3.

Figure 2.10 shows that few respondents in either group thought that the ratings were overall too high – meaning that schools should receive lower ratings - yet there were important differences between the two groups. First of all, the percentage of respondents who said that they were uncertain about the ratings accuracy was much higher amongst the somewhat familiar respondents as one might expect.

Conditioning on respondents in each group who offered an opinion rather than expressing uncertainty, 54% of the very familiar respondents thought that schools are rated too low whereas only 35% of the somewhat familiar respondents thought so. Conversely, 12% of the very familiar



respondents said that school ratings are about right whereas 21% of the somewhat familiar respondents said so. Finally, only 36% of the very familiar respondents thought that school ratings are currently too high whereas 44% of the somewhat familiar respondents thought so.

This shows that, generally speaking, more familiar respondents do not generally think that school ratings are about right and find them overall too low whereas somewhat familiar respondents find them either about right or might consider them too high.

Table 2.3 shows a further breakdown of these ratings that uses a coarse grouping of respondents by both (1) familiarity ratings, as in Figure 2.10, and by (2) whether they have a current role in the school community (i.e., teacher, school leader, district leader, other staff) or are a member of the broader public (i.e., parent, business owner, educational researcher, and other roles). In addition, Table 2.4 shows the same breakdown but only for the subset of respondents who offered an opinion.

**Table 2.3 Breakdown of Accuracy Rating Perception by System Role [Somewhat and Very Familiar Respondents]**

Familiar Respondents]

			Accuracy of Overall Ratings [Somewhat Familiar]				
			About Right	Too High	Too Low	X - Uncertain / not sure	Total
Primary Role in Education System	School Community Members	Count	18	5	17	32	72
		% within Role	25.0%	6.9%	23.6%	44.4%	100.0%
	Broader Public	Count	15	11	9	36	71
		% within Role	21.1%	15.5%	12.7%	50.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	33	16	26	68	143
		% within Role	23.1%	11.2%	18.2%	47.6%	100.0%

			Accuracy of Overall School Ratings [Very Familiar]				
			About Right	Too High	Too Low	X - Uncertain / not sure	Total
Primary Role in Education System	School Community Members	Count	199	48	345	99	691
		% within Role	28.8%	6.9%	49.9%	14.3%	100.0%
	Broader Public	Count	59	35	41	37	172
		% within Role	34.3%	20.3%	23.8%	21.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	258	83	386	136	863
		% within Role	29.9%	9.6%	44.7%	15.8%	100.0%

**Table 2.4 Breakdown of Accuracy Rating Perception by System Role for Respondents with Opinions [Somewhat and Very Familiar Respondents]**

			Accuracy of Overall Ratings [Somewhat Familiar]			
			About Right	Too High	Too Low	Total
Primary Role in Education System	School Community Members	Count	18	5	17	40
		% within Role	45.0%	12.5%	42.5%	100.0%
	Broader Public	Count	15	11	9	35
		% within Role	42.9%	31.4%	25.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	33	16	26	75
		% within Role	44.0%	21.3%	34.7%	100.0%

			Accuracy of Overall School Ratings [Very Familiar]			
			About Right	Too High	Too Low	Total
Primary Role in Education System	School Community Members	Count	199	48	345	592
		% within Role	33.6%	8.1%	58.3%	100.0%
	Broader Public	Count	59	35	41	135
		% within Role	43.7%	25.9%	30.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	258	83	386	727
		% within Role	35.5%	11.4%	53.1%	100.0%



The two components of Table 2.4 show the following. Among somewhat familiar respondents, the proportion of respondents in either role group who think that ratings are about right is almost exactly the same (45% vs. 43%) whereas a much higher percentage of school community members thinks that ratings are too low (43% vs. 26%) and a much higher percentage of the broader public thinks that ratings are too high (13% vs. 31%).

Looking at the very familiar respondents, the percentage of school community members who think that schools are rated too low is also much higher than in the broader public (58% vs. 30%). The percentage of members of the broader public who think that schools are rated too high is again much higher than among the school community members (26% vs. 8%).

As a result of these stark differences, the percentages of respondents who think that ratings are about right for most schools differ among the two subgroups of very familiar respondents with a larger proportion of the broader public thinking that they are about right (44% vs. 34%).

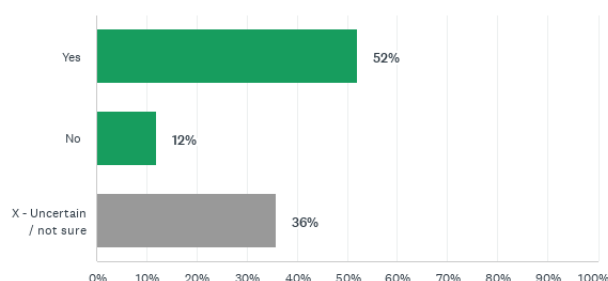
In short, school community members were more likely to indicate that schools are rated generally too low while members of the broader public were more likely to indicate that schools are generally rated too high. While percentages are used in these descriptions, the total numbers are different with the largest number of respondents being very familiar respondents that are members of the school community as noted at the outset in the demographics breakdown.

The next question in both the second and third branch was about whether important aspects are missing in the school report card; this is shown in Figure 2.11.

**Figure 2.11 Opinion about Missing Information [Somewhat and Very Familiar Respondents]**

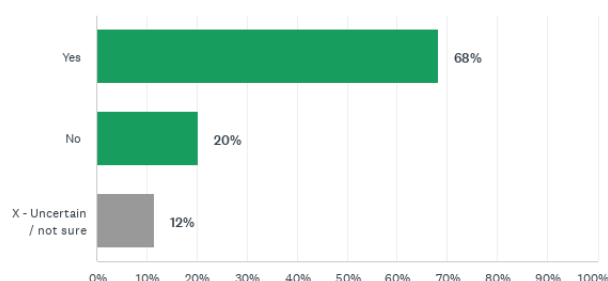
Q19 Do you believe school ratings leave out important information?

Answered: 142 Skipped: 1,478



**2 - Somewhat Familiar**  
**n = 142**

Answered: 862 Skipped: 758



**3 - Very Familiar**  
**n = 862**

A majority of both respondent groups think that important information is missing. This percentage is 81% of the somewhat familiar respondents with an opinion and 77% of the very familiar respondents with an opinion, with the percentage of respondents who have an opinion being higher in the very familiar group.

Similar to the previous analysis, Table 2.5 shows a breakdown of these responses by both familiarity level and by group membership overall while Table 2.6 shows this breakdown only for respondents with an opinion.



**Table 2.5 Breakdown of Missing Information Perception by System Role [Somewhat and Very Familiar Respondents]**

			Important Information Missing [Somewhat Familiar]			Total
			No	X - Uncertain	Yes	
Primary Role in Education System	School Community Members	Count	4	21	47	72
		% within Role	5.6%	29.2%	65.3%	100.0%
	Broader Public	Count	13	30	28	71
		% within Role	18.3%	42.3%	39.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	17	51	75	143
		% within Role	11.9%	35.7%	52.4%	100.0%

			Important Information Missing [Very Familiar]			
			No	X - Uncertain	Yes	Total
Primary Role in Education System	School Community Members	Count	137	68	486	691
		% within Role	19.8%	9.8%	70.3%	100.0%
	Broader Public	Count	37	32	103	172
		% within Role	21.5%	18.6%	59.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	174	100	589	863
		% within Role	20.2%	11.6%	68.3%	100.0%

**Table 2.6 Breakdown of Missing Information Perception by System Role for Respondents with Opinions [Somewhat and Very Familiar Respondents]**

			Important Information Missing [Somewhat Familiar]		
			No	Yes	Total
Primary Role in Education System	School Community Members	Count	4	47	51
		% within Role	7.8%	92.2%	100.0%
	Broader Public	Count	13	28	41
		% within Role	31.7%	68.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	17	75	92
		% within Role	18.5%	81.5%	100.0%

			Important Information Missing [Very Familiar]		Total
			No	Yes	
Primary Role in Education System	School Community Members	Count	137	486	623
		% within Role	22.0%	78.0%	100.0%
	Broader Public	Count	37	103	140
		% within Role	26.4%	73.6%	100.0%
Total	Count		174	589	763
	% within Role		22.8%	77.2%	100.0%

In simple terms, the majority of respondents in either branch and in either subgroup find that important information is missing from the school report card. The highest degree of uncertainty about having an opinion on this issue is expressed by the broader public that is somewhat familiar with the report card followed by the school community who is somewhat familiar followed by the



broader public who is very familiar. School community members who are very familiar with the school report card express the least degree of uncertainty about having an opinion on this issue, again as one would expect.

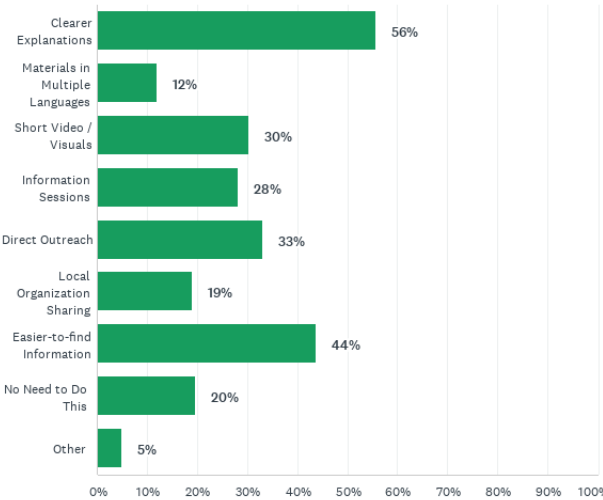
That being noted, the relative percentage of respondents who think that information is missing amongst those who have an opinion is notably different. Interestingly, 92% of school community members who are somewhat familiar with the report card think so compared to between 68% and 78% of the members in the other groups and branches.

The final question that was asked in both the second and third branch pertained to what additional information might be helpful to respondents to make better use of the school report card. The resulting responses are shown in Figure 2.12.

**Figure 2.12 Other Helpful Information for Supporting Report Card Use [Somewhat and Very Familiar Respondents]**

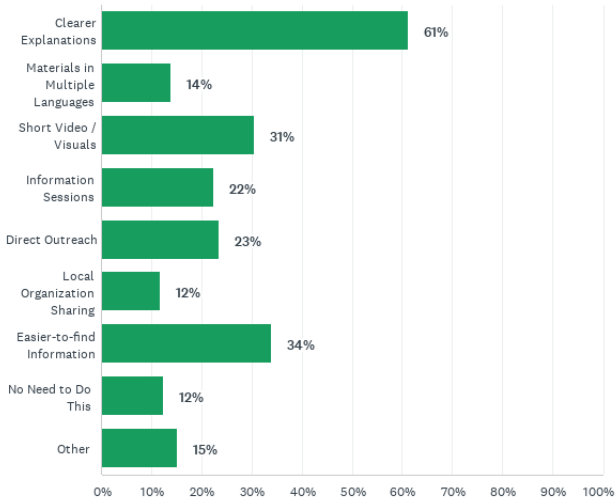
Q20 What would help you to better use school report cards? Select all that apply.

Answered: 142    Skipped: 1,478



**2 - Somewhat Familiar**  
**n = 142**

Answered: 862    Skipped: 758



**3 - Very Familiar**  
**n = 862**

In simple terms, clearer explanations were requested by most respondents in both groups, followed by easier search functionalities, videos or visuals, and either public information sessions or direct outreach.

Materials in multiple languages and direct outreach from local organizations were less of a priority with some respondents also noting that they actually did not need to use the report card better than they already do. Overall, what was requested was more similar amongst the respondent groups than not.



## Additional Reporting Recommendations

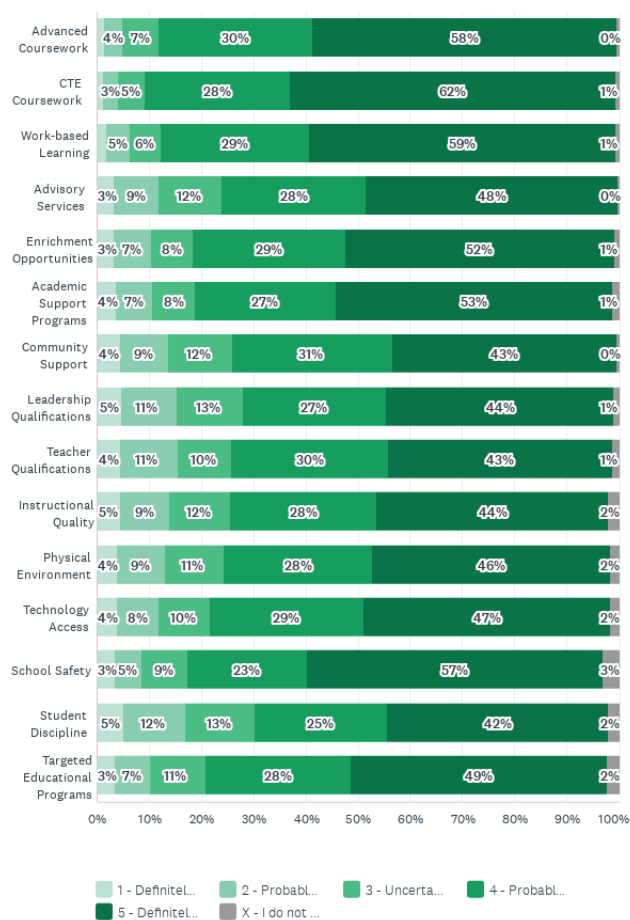
The final set of questions pertained to broader system reporting and improvement recommendations. These were questions that all respondents received, regardless of how familiar they said they were with the school report card. The reporting recommendation questions are discussed in this section while the improvement recommendation questions are discussed in the third section.

The first question was about whether the state should report on a range of services that schools provide. Importantly, this question was not about whether schools should be held accountable for how students perform in different areas, which was a separate question. Figure 2.13 shows the responses to the question about services; on the survey form, the actual question choices had a few examples listed for each category to clarify what was meant by each.

**Figure 2.13 Reporting on Services that Schools Provide**

**Q28 Schools provide a range of services to help students succeed. Should the state publicly report information on the following?**

Answered: 964 Skipped: 656



1 - Definitely not  
2 - Probably not  
3 - Uncertain / not sure  
4 - Probably yes  
5 - Definitely yes  
X - I do not understand what this means



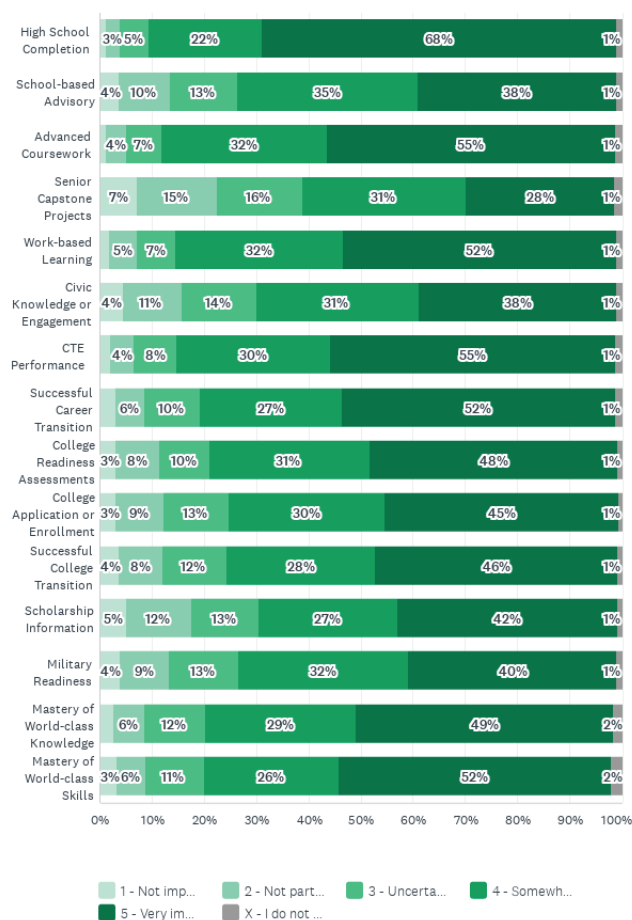
Advanced coursework, CTE coursework, work-based learning, and school safety received the strongest support but several other areas focused on academics such as enrichment opportunities and academic support received strong support as well. High school advisory and community-based program support were not quite as strongly supported and neither were areas related to qualifications of staff, physical conditions or technology access, or even targeted educational programs.

The next question was somewhat complementary to this one, with options phrased specifically in ways that reflected how students performed in certain areas rather than what was offered. For example, even though this is not shown in the figure for ease of reading, while the previous question asked about the advisory services offered by schools, this question asked about whether students participated in advisory services when offered. Figure 2.14 shows the resulting responses.

**Figure 2.14 Indicators of Student Readiness Success**

Q29 High schools use many strategies to prepare students for life after graduation. How important is each of the following types of information / indicator for understanding whether students are ready?

Answered: 964 Skipped: 656



1 - Not important at all  
2 - Not particularly important  
3 - Uncertain / not sure  
4 - Somewhat important  
5 - Very important  
X - I do not know what this means



The strongest support was for reporting on high school completion with 90% of respondents saying that this was either somewhat or very important to report. This was followed by student performance in advanced coursework, work-based learning, as well as career and technical education participation or performance.

Next up were data on successful career transitions as well as different indicators on successful college preparation or transition, as well as mastery of world-class knowledge and skills as reflected in the SC [profile of a graduate](#). Areas that received somewhat less support included scholarship applications and attainment, military readiness, civic knowledge or engagement, and completion of senior capstone projects.

Respondents were then asked about the kind of information that the state might report with respect to world class knowledge and skills in the SC profile of a graduate, which are aspects that are notoriously challenging to measure or represent even though developing them is critical. Table 2.7 includes common thematic suggestions, approximately ordered from higher to lower prevalence in the open-ended responses.

**Table 2.7 Thematic Recommendations for Reporting around the Portrait of a Graduate**

South Carolina has a Portrait of a Graduate. The portrait calls out world-class skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. What information do you recommend that the state report about these as part of the school report card?

Answered: 516 Skipped: 1,104

Theme	Sample Quotes
Uncertain / No Opinion	Honestly, I don't think it matters; Nobody pays attention to the portrait
Assessment / Rubrics	There should be a way to measure these skills, and be represented in the card
Real-world Connections	Strategies the school, community and parents can use to help develop the skills
Demonstrations of Learning	All of these involve research which leads to project presentations
Classroom / Teacher Practices	These should be happening in classrooms each day
Perceptions / Feedback-based Data	Information could be reported in the form of survey data
Opportunities	I believe the state needs to consider a system that is equitable across districts
Growth over Time	Should be required for graduation and also include growth rates

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many people expressed some uncertainty about what could be reported or whether information should even be reported. Many of the remaining thematic suggestions reflected a focus on the development of these skills and capturing non-traditional evidence that reflects the richness of the instruction and the associated work products. Several of the comments on this question were also broader comments about the underlying values or strategic implementation considerations around the portrait rather than specific assessment or reporting considerations.



## SECTION 3 - IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This stakeholder survey was a relatively comprehensive and detailed survey tailored to different groups of respondents who had different roles in the system and who had different levels of familiarity with the school report card and the accountability system overall. As a result, it is not possible to condense all of the valuable information into a few simple bullets. There is value in reviewing detailed response patterns for more complete understanding.

However, the final two questions on the survey can be used as a basis for summarizing a few meaningful strategies that connect to the choices that the respondents made in the survey prior. The two questions asked about specific actions that SC Department of Education could take to better support local school improvement work and any other general recommendations that respondents wanted to share through the survey. Some of these recommendations relate directly to the state accountability system while others are a bit broader, reflecting sociopolitical considerations that take into account broader educational policies and related systems.

As noted in Section 1, the Center team entered all of the responses into the program [Taguette](#) and tagged each one according to one or multiple themes.<sup>2</sup> The following themes were notable from these responses and align overall with the themes listed in the presentation that this report builds on.

### Theme 1: Clear, Simple, Timely, and Actionable Communication

Respondents generally requested clear, simple, timely, and actionable communication regarding the overall system. This included things like the following:

- Clear and simple explanation of scoring rules, formulas, and other technical components - including the data sources underlying them - especially for parents and teachers
- Clear and actionable directions for interpreting strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve ratings/scores for leaders, including ways to simulate future ratings/scores
- Timely reporting of assessment, survey, and accountability results in real-time, using user-friendly dashboards whenever possible
- Creation of interpretational guides for teachers, parents, and students that help them to act upon both assessment and accountability information
- Keeping standards, benchmarks, and computational rules consistent to facilitate stakeholders adapting to the system and meaningfully understanding trends over time

### Theme 2: State as Partner to Districts, not Enforcer

Several respondents noted that the current system puts a variety of burdens and pressures onto the stakeholders of the system and advocated for less state oversight, instead changing the role of the state to that of a supporter of improvement. For example, they asked for:

- Reducing the local administrative burden regarding data collection and management within the accountability system through consolidating all computational details in a single place and creating an integrated, state-wide database

<sup>2</sup> All tagged responses are available as a shared project file in Taguette that can be imported as well as a PDF.



- Changing the culture of school quality work to reduce undue pressures on teachers and students that currently exist through practices that are perceived to be unfair because they do not sufficiently consider the contextual differences of schools or rely on factors that are largely outside of the control of teachers and administrators
- Providing technical and strategic support to local districts to help them improve based on the report card and contextual insight, including coaching for local support teams

These state-level efforts were often mentioned alongside comments in which community and parental outreach were lifted up as important success strategies for improving school quality even though these efforts would be predominantly executed at the district level. This also included calls for holding parents more strongly accountable for their children's attendance and supporting their learning.

### **Theme 3: Systemic Fairness and Equity Issues**

Respondents mentioned issues of fairness and equity in a variety of ways, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly based on how responses were framed. They noted issues such as:

- Inequities of funding for schools that affect services they can offer
- Financial incentives offered for gains in achievement and growth
- Different criteria for or general treatments of charter and virtual schools
- Grade and graduation rate inflations
- Implicit penalization of high-performing schools
- Penalization for special education students, multilingual learners (MLLs), and high-mobility students
- Unreliable survey ratings, especially from younger children
- Broad-based pay raises rather than merit-based pay raises

Several respondents also suggested that state leaders visit schools to develop more grounded perspectives and use those to create a stronger system.

### **Theme 4: Improving Conditions for and Outreach to Teachers**

Many respondents advocated for better conditions of teachers that included the following:

- Better base pay and benefits for teachers, especially more senior teachers and special education teachers for instance, which would also help with teacher retention
- More financial incentives for teachers to participate in professional communities, conferences, and other development activities
- Broader support for teachers through resources, mentoring, and other professional development support to translate assessment and accountability results into actionable steps coupled with less micromanagement of the teaching process
- Deeper involvement of local teachers in processes for assessment and accountability redesign
- Additional contributions of teachers being requested only if the underlying initiatives have adequate funding so that they can be executed properly



## Theme 5: Other System Improvements

Various specific improvements of the assessment and accountability systems were mentioned repeatedly and are worth highlighting even though they do not form a singular coherent theme:

- Graduation rate computations were viewed as being subject to manipulation; for example, schools were perceived to be penalized for non-graduation-track students and special education students / students with a disability, employability credentials seem to be omitted, and evidence on important postsecondary readiness skills seems lacking
- Student progress / growth computations were seen as being too technically complex to be understandable, subject to too many computational changes, and reflecting unrealistic expectations despite growth being perceived as valuable conceptually
- MLLs were seen as requiring more detailed attention; for example, some respondents noted that the progress indicator did not reflect appropriate expectations, that there is an issue of double-counting MLLs in the accountability system, and requested more support services for MLLs and support for teachers to address their unique needs
- Broader mental and behavioral health services were listed as desirable along with better support to deal with disciplinary issues - including bullying - as well as changes to how students with these issues are counted in the system
- One group of respondents underscored the importance of physical and health resources and the asked for measures in this area to be reported on
- Some respondents advocated for a stronger support of arts, civics, and foreign languages, possibly reporting on these areas

Several other issues were mentioned occasionally (e.g., looking at best practices in other states and countries, political comments, or words of praise) that are not repeated here due to them being more of an exception than the norm.

## Limitations

Despite the carefulness in design, administration, and analysis there were a few limitations of this survey. For example, while the number of respondents is quite large, the lack of representativeness impedes generalization.

Moreover, while the survey grouped respondents by their level of familiarity of the system, it did not include questions to ascertain or confirm with more detail whether respondents had actually reviewed the dashboard or the accompanying materials in the past or whether they knew how the state currently supports identified schools. As such, any recommendations they provided could be based on a lack of awareness or understanding and should be triangulated with additional qualitative insight from the listening sessions.



## EDITORIAL NOTES

Special thanks to the members of the EOC for providing thoughtful, detailed feedback on various drafts of the survey during both virtual meetings and offline. Members of the EOC included, in alphabetical order, Wyatt Cothran, Tenell Fields, Vann Holden, Matthew Lavery, Jenny May, Dan Ralyea, Ellen Weaver, and Dana Yow.

Special thanks also to Laura Pinsonneault and Chris Domaleski at the Center for Assessment for providing strategic guidance and feedback through the process.

This report was created by a team at the Center for Assessment for the EOC. The suggested citation for this report is:

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National Center for the Improvement  
of Educational Assessment  
Dover, New Hampshire

[www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org)



## EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Date: December 8, 2025

### ACTION ITEM

**Budget and Proviso Recommendations, Fiscal Year 2026-27**

### PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

SECTION 59-6-10 of the Education Accountability Act requires the EOC to “review and monitor the implementation and evaluation of the Education Accountability Act and Education Improvement Act programs and funding” and to “make programmatic and funding recommendations to the General Assembly.”

### CRITICAL FACTS

The attached are recommendations from the EIA subcommittee, voted on December 1, 2025.

### TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

- November 10, 2025: Held public hearing for entities funded by or requesting EIA revenues.
- November 20, 2025: Held public hearing for entities funded by or requesting new EIA revenues and convened to discuss EIA budget priorities. Subcommittee requested EOC staff compile priorities of EIA budget from the discussion and present recommendations for consideration at the December 1, 2025 meeting.
- December 1, 2025: Subcommittee reviewed and discussed EIA recommendations for the Full EOC on December 8, 2025.

### ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

**Cost: No fiscal impact beyond current appropriations**

**Fund/Source: EIA**

### ACTION REQUEST

☒ For approval

☐ for information

### ACTION TAKEN

☐ Approved  
☐ Not Approved

☐ Amended  
☐ Action deferred (explain)



**Recommendations from the EIA Subcommittee for FY 2026-27 EIA Funding  
and Proviso Recommendations**

***Adopted on December 1, 2025; to be considered by full EOC December 8, 2025***

**Background**

The South Carolina Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984, Part II, SECTION 9 of Act 512 of 1984, the Fiscal Year 1984-85 General Appropriations Act, had seven objectives:

- A. Raising Student Performance by Increasing Academic Standards
- B. Strengthening the Teaching and Testing of the Basic Skills
- C. Elevating the Teaching Profession by Strengthening Teacher Training, Evaluation, and Compensation
- D. Improving Leadership, Management, and Fiscal Efficiency of Schools at All Levels
- E. Implementing Strict Quality Controls and Rewarding Productivity
- F. Creating More Effective Partnerships Among the Schools, Parents, Community, and Business
- G. Providing School Buildings Conducive to Improved Student Learning

The initial EIA appropriation in Fiscal Year 1984-85 was \$217,265,860. The total amount of general funds appropriated to the South Carolina Department of Education in Fiscal Year 1984-85 was \$852,508,991. Of this amount, \$754,988,127 was appropriated to the Education Finance Act, which is comparable to our State Aid to Classrooms appropriation today of \$4,531,474,416 in the current fiscal year.

Education Finance Act	\$754,988,127
All other General Fund	<u>\$ 97,520,764</u>
Total General Funds	\$852,508,991

Appendix A summarizes the EIA appropriation for Fiscal Year 1984-85.

The EIA also created the Select Committee, a nine-member legislative committee composed of the following individuals. Only a member of the legislature could serve as chair:

- (1) Speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee.
- (2) Lieutenant Governor or his designee.
- (3) Chairman of the Education and Public Works Committee of the House of Representatives or his designee.



- (4) Chairman of the Education Committee of the Senate or his designee.
- (5) State Superintendent of Education or his designee.
- (6) Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education or his designee.
- (7) Governor or his designee.
- (8) Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives or his designee.
- (9) Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Senate or his designee.

One of the responsibilities of the Select Committee was “to assist in, recommend and supervise the expenditure of funds for the Education Improvement Act.”

When the Education Accountability Act (EAA) of 1998 was enacted into law, the Education Oversight Committee replaced the Select Committee and added to its membership representatives from the business community. The responsibilities of the EOC were also expanded.

#### **EIA Subcommittee Recommendations, FY 2026-27**

For the 2026-27 funding year, the availability of new recurring EIA funds is **\$98,944,087**. The amount of nonrecurring EIA funds is **\$84,060,581**.

Appendix B summarizes all new EIA fund requests made to the EOC, which total **\$210,053,058**.

#### **Recurring Fund Recommendations**

For Fiscal Year 2026-27, the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee recommends **increasing** the appropriation to the following EIA line-item appropriations because these programs have demonstrated measurable return on investment:

1. **Teaching Fellows Scholarship Program** – The Teaching Fellows program is designed to recruit talented high school seniors in SC into the teaching profession. According to CERRA, 93% of graduates who received the Teaching Fellows scholarship have either satisfied their loan or are currently teaching for loan forgiveness in a SC public school. Candidates must complete a rigorous selection process that includes an interview and presentation. According to CERRA, there is currently a waitlist of 61 freshman and 57 sophomores for the program.
  - An increase of 20 additional scholarships at \$24,000 for the entire four years, which equates to **\$480,000**.



- Increase the scholarship amount from \$6000 to \$10,000 for junior and senior years at a cost of **\$432,000** (108 Fellows at juniors and seniors for \$4,000 each)
- 2. **State Aid to Classrooms** – Increasing the minimum teacher salary to at least \$50,000 by 2026 has been a priority of Governor McMaster and the General Assembly. Increasing teacher salaries has also been a priority of the EIA fund since its inception. A 2025 Report from SC-TEACHER showed that SC school districts bordering North Carolina employed about 10 to 41 percent of their teachers on reciprocity certificates in 2023-24, suggesting that SC’s higher teacher salaries are attracting teachers from neighboring states. Since State Aid to Classrooms is funded by General Funds and by EIA funds, the Subcommittee defers to the legislature on the amount of new EIA funds that will be used to increase State Aid to Classrooms.
  - Request from SC Department of Education of \$150,000,000; recommended **\$77,526,384** (remaining from general fund)
- 3. **Increase in special schools’ teacher salaries of \$650,454**

For Fiscal year 2026-27, the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee recommends **decreasing** the appropriation to the following EIA line-item appropriations due to reduced demand for the program:

1. **National Board Certification** – For 2024-25, \$34,500,000 has been allocated for National Board certification stipends. There are currently 3,545 teachers eligible for the stipend at a cost of \$17,725,000. The number of new National Board teachers has been increasing over the past three years (from 35 to 98 teachers); however, the total number of national board teachers has been decreasing over the past three years (from 3,821 to 3,447 teachers).
  - Recommended to reduce the amount allocated to National Board by (\$5,000,000)

For Fiscal Year 2026-27, the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee recommends **additional investment in the following initiatives**.

1. **Teacher Career Ladder** of \$1,400,000 million recurring funds – The original EIA legislation included a teacher incentive pay program, which was discontinued over time. South Carolina has long focused on retaining high quality teachers in the classroom. Creation of a career ladder would sustain these efforts.
2. **Instructional Materials** - \$10,000,000



3. **Instructional Support** - \$8,205,249
4. **Project Read** - \$250,000
5. **SC Council in Economics** - \$150,000

**Nonrecurring Fund Recommendations**

1. **School Safety** \$5,000,000
2. Remaining nonrecurring funds to be determined by General Assembly



## Summary of EIA Recommendations

### Recurring Funds

#### Increase Funding

Palmetto Teaching Fellows (increases the number of Teaching Fellows)	\$480,000
(increases junior and senior year scholarships)	\$432,000
State Aid to Classrooms (Teaching Salaries)	\$77,526,384
Special Schools Teacher Salaries	\$650,454
Teacher Career Ladder Pay	\$1,400,000
Instructional Materials	\$10,000,000
Instructional Support (Hub, LMS, SSO)	\$77,526,384
Project Read	\$250,000
SC Council on Economics	\$150,000

#### Decrease Funding

National Board	(\$5,000,000)
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**Total Recurring** **\$98,944,087**

### Nonrecurring

School Safety	\$5,000,000
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**Unallocated Nonrecurring** **\$79,060,581**



## Concerns/Issues for Future Recommendations

1. The EIA Subcommittee raised significant concerns about the effectiveness of the teacher recruitment and retention programs funded with EIA dollars. This year, roughly **\$67.2 million** was appropriated for these initiatives, including **\$18.7 million** specifically for teacher recruitment initiatives. Yet, based on program data, only **90 teachers in 2025** could be confirmed for programs other than the CERRA Teaching Fellows Program. In 2025, **177 Teaching Fellows** graduated from SC postsecondary institutions. The impact of the remaining \$48.5 million of funds could not be quantified. The Subcommittee concluded that high administrative costs and unclear outcomes indicate a low return on investment and warrant further analysis.

<b>Teacher Recruitment/Retention Programs</b>	<b>EIA Dollars Appropriated FY 25-26</b>	<b>Certified Teachers/Graduates confirmed 2025</b>
SDE Teach SC	\$727,650	
CHE Centers for Excellence	\$1,100,000	31
SC State SC Minority Teacher Program	\$339,482	6
Clemson Call Me Mister	\$1,195,000	29
CERRA Teaching Fellows	\$4,509,039	177
CERRA Rural Recruitment Initiative	\$7,598,392	
USC CAP and TIP	\$1,950,000	
USC Teacher Residency	\$1,000,000	0
SC Tech Foundation Teach to Tech*	\$1,500,000	
Teacher Strategic Compensation	\$5,000,000	
Teach for America	\$2,000,000	24
Teacher Loan	\$5,089,881	
CERRA ProTeam, Teacher Cadet	\$670,905	
National Board	\$34,500,000	
<b>Total EIA Dollars for Recruitment and Retention</b>	<b>\$67,180,349</b>	<b>267</b>

**\*new EIA-funded program**

2. The EIA Subcommittee has concerns regarding the EIA funding allocated for the SC Youth Challenge Program and program outcomes. The EOC staff, along with the Adjutant General's office, has plans to conduct a site visit to Youth Challenge in Eastover, SC in the spring 2026. A recommendation will be forthcoming in the summer 2026 from the EOC staff, in consultation with the Adjutant General's office, regarding future funding recommendations.



3. The EIA Subcommittee has concerns regarding the incentives allowed for pursuant to the Rural Teacher Recruitment Incentive (RRI) funds proviso. A clear return on investment on many of these incentives cannot be determined. As per proviso 1A.44, the EOC is required to conduct an evaluation of the impact of RRI funds. The evaluation report is due June 30, 2026. The EIA Subcommittee recommends a review of the evaluation report before making a recommendation on the continuation of funds.
4. The EIA Subcommittee would like to see an expansion of the current full day, 4K program in South Carolina. For the current school year 2025-2026, only one school district has opted not to participate in the full day, 4K program. Currently, \$128.8 million in EIA and general fund revenues is appropriated for the full day 4K program with 84 percent of these funds coming from the EIA.
5. Leadership in schools was a concern expressed by the EIA Subcommittee. While many schools have strong principals, it is a desire for all schools to have opportunities and access to high quality leadership. Principal leadership is key to a school's academic success. The success is attained by establishing high academic expectations, creating a positive school climate, and by supporting teachers and setting clear expectations. Training, coaching and mentorships should be established to generate a high-quality pipeline of principals across South Carolina.



## Appendix A

<b>EIA Appropriations Fiscal Year 1984-85</b>	
<b>X. Education Improvement</b>	
<b>A. Raise Academic Standards:</b>	
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Increase Credits for High School Diploma	\$5,020,449
Five-Year-Old Kindergarten	\$1,800,000
Advanced Placement (AP) courses	\$669,000
Gifted and Talented Program	\$3,700,000
Modernize Vocational Equipment	\$7,000,000
Handicapped Student Services	\$1,000,000
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$19,189,449</b>
<b>B. Basic Skills:</b>	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$107,774
Operating Expenses	\$224,952
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Basic Skill Test	\$5,274
Four-Year Early Childhood	\$2,400,000
Basic Skill Remediation	\$60,500,000
Exit Exam Child	\$5,000
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$63,243,000</b>
<b>C. Teaching Profession:</b>	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$124,000
Other Operating Expenses	\$2,220,400
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Teacher Salaries	\$60,180,181
Employer Contributions	\$9,287,321
Teacher Incentive Pay	\$450,000
State Agency Teacher Pay	\$603,000
Teacher Inservice Training	\$1,250,000
Competitive Teacher Grants	\$200,000
Mental Health Pupil Teacher	\$595,000
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$74,909,902</b>



<b>D. Leadership Management &amp; Efficiency</b>	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$270,839
Other Operating Expenses	\$379,171
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Principal Leadership	\$74,290
Administrative Apprentice	\$500,000
Salary Supplement Principals	\$1,800,000
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$3,024,300</b>
<b>E. Quality Control &amp; Production</b>	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$205,000
Other Operating Expenses	
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Innovation Program Grant	\$250,000
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$455,000</b>
<b>F. School Building Aid</b>	
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Construction and Renovation	\$55,738,136
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$55,738,136</b>
<b>G. School Intervention Program</b>	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$137,747
Other Operating Expenses	\$38,400
Classified Positions:	
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$176,147</b>
<b>H. EIA Implementation</b>	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$396,870
Other Operating Expenses	\$133,056
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$529,926</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$217,265,860</b>



Appendix B.

**New EIA Requests for 2026-27**

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Amount</b>
State Aid to Classrooms	\$150,000,000
Special Schools Salaries	\$650,454
Instructional Support (Hub, LMS, SSO)	\$8,206,249
Summer Reading Camps	\$30,000,000
Instructional Materials	\$16,885,759
Pattison's Academy	\$224,015
Palmetto Excel	\$300,000
Literacy and Distance Learning	\$250,000
SC Autism	\$180,000
STEM SC	\$250,000
SC Council on Economic Education	\$150,000
SC Educational Partnerships (USC)	\$160,000
CHE Centers for Excellence	\$11,300
BabyNet Autism	\$785,281
Regional Education Centers	\$500,000
The Continuum	\$1,000,000
Project Read	\$500,000
<b>Total Requests</b>	<b>\$210,053,058</b>



## **EOC Proviso Revision Requests FY 2026-27 (to be considered by EOC EIA Subcommittee, 12/1/2025)**

### **Proviso REVISION Request**

**1.46.** (SDE: Full-Day 4K) (D) Public and private providers shall be funded for instructional costs at a minimum rate of \$5,100 per student enrolled. Eligible students enrolling during the school year or withdrawing during the school year shall be funded on a pro rata basis determined by the length of their enrollment. Private providers transporting eligible children to and from school shall also be eligible for reimbursement at a minimum of \$620 per eligible child transported. First Steps and the Department of Education must provide an equitable distribution above the minimum between public and private providers. First Steps and the Department of Education must provide a quarterly report beginning October 1 detailing funding above the minimum made to any provider to the Governor, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. All providers who are reimbursed are required to retain records as required by their fiscal agent. New providers participating for the first time in the current fiscal year and enrolling between one and six eligible children shall be eligible to receive at a minimum of \$1,000 per child in materials and equipment funding, with providers enrolling seven or more such children eligible for funding at a minimum of \$10,000. The Department of Education and the Office of First Steps Readiness are authorized to utilize carry forward funds and federal funds to supplement the amount expended for materials and equipment. Providers receiving equipment funding are expected to participate in the program and provide high-quality, center-based programs as defined herein for a minimum of three years. Failure to participate for three years will require the provider to return a portion of the equipment allocation at a level determined by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps to School Readiness. Funding to providers is contingent upon receipt of data as requested by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps. The Department of Education shall only provide funding for public school students whose complete records have been entered into PowerSchool based on the one hundred and thirty-five day student average daily membership. For the current fiscal year, providers may enroll pay-lunch children who score at or below the twenty-fifth national percentile on two of the three DIAL-3 subscales by July 1 if at least seventy-five percent of the total number of children eligible or the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program in a district or county are projected to be enrolled in that program, Head Start, or ABC Child Care Program as determined by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps, Child Early Reading Development and Education Program. Providers may receive



reimbursement for these children if funds are available. By September 1, the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps must collect the documented waiting lists, share the lists, and determine a process to notify parents of eligible students of available slots in all approved providers. The Department of Education is required to offer waivers allowing students with disabilities to be served in multi-categorical classroom settings based on similar cognition and abilities. Funding appropriated for CERDEP may be carried forward and expended for the same purpose. **School districts participating in the EOC wait list pilot are exempt from the September 1 requirement.**

*Rationale for request: Most recently available data show that over 400 children in South Carolina spent time on a waitlist to access free, state-funded 4K. At the same time, there were over 2,300 available seats across the state. The process of collecting point-in-time data of eligible children waiting to access 4K is not efficient in matching children with available seats. It has previously been reported that pupils in poverty who access CERDEP-funded early childhood education are more likely to demonstrate readiness than their similarly-eligible counterparts. As a result, understanding how waitlists function across early childhood sectors to provide free 4K to eligible families is imperative in preparing our youngest learners for kindergarten. Understanding waitlists and the most efficient enrollment processes to match children with a 4K seat they are eligible for protects the investment South Carolina has made in early childhood education. During the spring and summer of 2025, the EOC worked with SCDE, SC First Steps, and two SC school districts to pilot a waitlist pilot that involved transfer of “real time” data and supported matching ensure that all eligible young children benefit from the state’s investment in early childhood education. The pilot followed a collaborative convening of early childhood stakeholders hosted by the EOC. The work was time-intensive for all parties involved but was successful. The proposed change would provide relief from one requirement for participating districts.*



### **Proviso REVISION Request**

**1A.44.** (SDE-EIA: Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive) (A) There is created a program within the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) to recruit and retain classroom educators in rural and underserved districts experiencing excessive turnover of classroom teachers on an annual basis.

(B) During the current fiscal year CERRA shall publish eligibility requirements and applications for individual educators, school districts, and institutions of higher education not inconsistent with existing licensure requirements for each, but also including:

(1) Eligible districts identified by CERRA as experiencing greater than eleven percent the statewide average annual teacher turnover, as reported on the districts' five most recent district report cards issued by the South Carolina Department of Education and are not one of the fifteen wealthiest districts based on the index of taxpaying ability, may make application to participate in the program.

(2) Individuals eligible for incentives shall be willing to provide instructional services in an eligible district in exchange for participation in an incentive detailed in item (C) pursuant to the obligations and restrictions stated for each.

(3) Institutions of higher education eligible to receive education funding as a component of recruiting incentives created pursuant to item (C) of this provision shall not be excluded from participation in Teaching Fellows Program.

(4) Any incentives requiring individuals to relocate into an eligible district to provide instructional services shall not be made available to individuals providing instructional services in other eligible districts.

(C) Pursuant to item (A), CERRA shall develop a set of incentives including, but not limited to, salary supplements, education subsidies, loan forgiveness, professional development, and mentorship to be provided to classroom educators that offer instructional services in eligible districts and shall provide incentive options for eligible individuals at all stages of their careers, including high-school and college or university students interested in entering the teaching profession and including individuals entering the field through an alternative certification pathway to include, but not limited to, PACE, ABCTE, Teach for America, and CATE Work-Based Certification.

At a minimum, the incentives shall include:

(1) Development of a program for forgiveness of undergraduate student loans, not to exceed \$5,000 per year, for up to 7 years, for teachers participating in this incentive that achieve certification through an alternative pathway or who have a loan from an institution



other than the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation or program other than the South Carolina Teachers Loan Program.

(2) Development of a forgivable loan program for individuals pursuing graduate coursework in furtherance of a teaching career, including enrollment in graduate-level coursework necessary to seek additional credentialing or certification relevant to the participant's teaching practice, or individuals seeking an alternative pathway to certification as a teacher.

(3) Support for the establishment and maintenance of a teaching mentorship program, including salary supplements for teaching mentors not to exceed \$2,500 per year.

(4) Other technical support and recruiting incentives as developed by CERRA in conjunction with the Department of Education and the Education Oversight Committee consistent with the objectives of this section.

(D) In addition to eligibility and application requirements, CERRA shall develop a process for recovering an amount equal to the incentives given to individual participants who fail to comply with the obligations associated with a relevant incentive in which they participate including, but not limited to, failure to complete a prescribed course of study, failure to obtain a relevant certification or licensure upon completion of a course of study, or failure to provide instructional services in an eligible district for a prescribed period of time.

(E) CERRA shall report by July thirty-first of the current fiscal year to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House on the incentives developed pursuant to item (C) of this proviso and make recommendations for attracting and retaining high quality teachers in rural and underserved districts. The report shall contain at a minimum eligibility requirements and application processes for districts and individuals, descriptions of and proposed budgets for each incentive program and an analysis of the number and demographics of individuals potentially eligible for each.

(F) Funds appropriated or transferred for use in the Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive may be carried forward from prior fiscal years and used for the same purpose.

~~—(G) The Education Oversight Committee is required to complete an evaluation of the impact of the funds and incentives related to the Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive. A completed evaluation is due to the House Ways and Means Committee, the House Education Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the Governor's Office by June 30, 2026.~~

*Rationale for request: The EOC will have completed the evaluation of ROI by the end of the fiscal year.*



### **Proviso REVISION Request**

**1A.6.** (SDE-EIA: CHE/Teacher Recruitment) **(A)** Of the funds appropriated in Part IA, Section 1, VIII.F. for the Teacher Recruitment Program, the Commission on Higher Education shall distribute a total of ninety-two percent to the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA-South Carolina) for a state teacher recruitment program, of which at least seventy-eight percent must be used for the Teaching Fellows Program specifically to provide scholarships for future teachers, and of which twenty-two percent must be used for other aspects of the state teacher recruitment program, including the Teacher Cadet Program and \$166,302 which must be used for specific programs to recruit minority teachers: and shall distribute eight percent to South Carolina State University to be used only for the operation of a minority teacher recruitment program and therefore shall not be used for the operation of their established general education programs. Working with districts with an absolute rating of At-Risk or Below Average, CERRA will provide shared initiatives to recruit and retain teachers to schools in these districts. CERRA will report annually by October first to the Education Oversight Committee and the Department of Education on the success of the recruitment and retention efforts in these schools. The Commission on Higher Education shall ensure that all funds are used to promote teacher recruitment on a statewide basis, shall ensure the continued coordination of efforts among the three teacher recruitment projects, shall review the use of funds and shall have prior program and budget approval. The South Carolina State University program, in consultation with the Commission on Higher Education, shall extend beyond the geographic area it currently serves. Annually, the Commission on Higher Education shall evaluate the effectiveness of each of the teacher recruitment projects and shall report its findings and its program and budget recommendations to the House and Senate Education Committees, the State Board of Education, and the Education Oversight Committee by October first annually, in a format agreed upon by the Education Oversight Committee and the Department of Education.

**(B)** With the funds appropriated CERRA shall also appoint and maintain the South Carolina Teacher Loan Advisory Committee **upon recommendations by the Education Oversight Committee**. The Committee shall be composed of one member representing each of the following: (1) Commission on Higher Education **who shall serve as chair of the Committee**; (2) State Board Department of Education; (3) Education Oversight Committee; (4) Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement; (5) South Carolina Student Loan Corporation; (6) South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (**SCASFAA**); (7) a local school district human resources officer; (8) a public higher education institution with an approved teacher education program; and (9) a private higher education institution with an approved teacher education program. The members of



the committee representing **SCASFAA, a local school district, and** the public and private higher education institutions ~~shall rotate among those institutions and~~ shall serve a **single** two-year term on the committee. The committee must be staffed by CERRA, and shall meet at least ~~twice~~ **four times** annually. The committee's responsibilities are limited to **its duties for:** (1) establishing, **monitoring, and reporting progress on** goals for the Teacher Loan Program; (2) facilitating communication among the cooperating ~~agencies~~ **entities**; (3) **actively** advocating for program participants; ~~and~~ (4) **using the most recent program evaluation reports as a guide,** recommending policies and procedures necessary to promote, ~~and publicize~~ maintain the program **as well as developing specific recommendations for changes necessary to statute, regulation, and or proviso necessary to modernize and streamline the program, enhance its alignment and parity with other teacher recruitment initiatives, and** (5) **annually by February first and August first, submitting a summary of meetings held during that period and actions taken to conform with each stated duty to the Commission on Higher Education, and to the Education Oversight Committee for inclusion in the annual program evaluation.**

**(C) In conformance with the 2025 Teacher Loan Program (TLP) Report Finding and Recommendations, the Student Loan Corporation shall:**

**(1) Review and revise TLP program applications and submit a plan to the Commission on Higher Education for implementing an online application process;**

**(2) Add a question on the TLP application which will designate applicant as a Teaching Fellow recipient;**

**(3) Provide audited financial statements for the TLP, which shall include the Revolving Loan Fund and sources of all charitable dollars to outside entities as well as the funding source that seeded the philanthropic arm of the Student Loan Corporation.**

*Rationale for request: These revisions are reflective of recommendations adopted by the EOC in June 2025 in the 2025 Teacher Loan Report.*



### **Proviso REVISION Request**

**1A.72.** (SDE-EIA: Teacher Loan Program) Of the available funds in the Teacher Loan Program revolving account administered by the SC Student Loan Corporation, **up to fifty percent of the interest earned, investment earnings, and late fees in the program revolving account,** ~~up to \$5,000,000~~ shall be made available **through a program administered by the Student Loan Corporation** to assist in refinancing student loan debt for all certified teachers employed in the public schools of the State. An additional \$5,000,000 from the revolving loan account will be made available to teachers **in rural school districts** for loan forgiveness patterned after the SC Teacher Loan **Program** ~~in the following school districts based on the number of teacher vacancies and/or the number of teachers of record uncertified in the subject area in which they are teaching: Bamberg, Allendale, Calhoun, Jasper, Lee, and McCormick school districts that show a vacancy rate of ten percent or greater based on the 2024-25 Teacher Supply and Demand Report.~~ **The Department of Education will identify the rural school districts for inclusion in loan forgiveness using data that documents the difficulty of the districts in recruiting and retaining certified teachers.**

**The Student Loan Corporation must have both programs operational by the end of the fiscal year.**

*Rationale for request: These revisions are reflective of the recommendations adopted by the EOC in June 2025 in the 2025 Teacher Loan Report. Additionally, staff recommends that SC Dept. of Education determine the criteria by which teachers in rural school districts will be given priority.*