AGENDA

Joint Meeting of the
Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee
&
Public Awareness Subcommittee

Monday, September 17, 2018
10:00 a.m.
Room 433, Blatt Building

I.   Welcome .... Barbara Hairfield

II.   Approval of Minutes
       Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee – May 21, 2018
       Public Awareness Subcommittee – January 22, 2018

III.   Action Item:
       Amendment to Definition of College Ready .... Melanie Barton

IV.   Information Items:
       Report of Accountability Working Group .... Dr. Rainey Knight
       Release of 2018 Report Cards .... Dana Yow
       Cyclical Review of Social Studies Standards .... Melanie Barton
       English Language Arts Standards .... Melanie Barton

Adjournment

Academic Standards and Assessments
Neil Robinson, Vice Chair
Barbara Hairfield
Sen. Greg Hembree
Dr. John Stockwell
Patti Tate
Dr. Scott Turner

Public Awareness
Barbara Hairfield, Chair
Anne Bull, Vice-Chair
Rep. Terry Alexander
Rep. Raye Felder
Sen. John Matthews

Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee

May 21, 2018

10:00 a.m., Room 433 Blatt Building

Subcommittee Members Present:
Neil Robinson (Vice-Chair); Dr. Bob Couch; Barbara Hairfield; Sen. Greg Hembree; and Rep. Dwight Loftis.

EOC Staff Present: Dr. Kevin Andrews; Melanie Barton; Hope Johnson-Jones; Dr. Rainey Knight; Bunnie Ward; and Dana Yow.

Mr. Robinson welcomed members and guests in attendance. He noted that as vice chair of the subcommittee he would preside at the subcommittee meeting due to Dr. Merck's absence. He also announced that as chair of the EOC he was appointing Dr. Couch and Rep. Loftis to serve on this subcommittee.

The minutes of the March 19, 2018 meeting of the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee were approved as distributed.

Mr. Robinson called upon Ms. Barton to summarize the first action item on the agenda, the approval of high school industry certifications and credentials. Ms. Barton explained that the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) submitted to the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) a list of 130 assessment/certification/industry credentials to measure career readiness for school year 2017-18. A Career and Technology Education (CTE) completer who successfully completes one of the 130 assessments and earns a credential or certification would be deemed "career ready" for purposes of the accountability system and school ratings issued this fall. These 130 credentials have received the endorsement of the EEDA Coordinating Council and the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD) along with the support of various employers as collected by CTE directors and local business advisory groups across the state. In addition, SCDE proposes that for school year 2018-19, the EOC also approve 34 additional assessments that lead to a certification or industry credential.

The EOC staff recommended to the ASA Subcommittee the following:
1. For the accountability system for school year 2017-18, 130 assessment/ certification/industry credentials as proposed by the South Carolina Department of Education, endorsed by the EEDA Coordinating Council and the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development, and supported by various businesses in the state be approved.

2. For the accountability system for school year 2018-19, 34 additional assessment/ certification/industry credentials as proposed by the South Carolina Department of Education be tentatively approved. The staff further recommends that this fall the EEDA Coordinating Council and the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development review these 34 assessment/certification/industry credentials and propose deletions or additions for consideration by the EOC at its October 2018 meeting, if possible.

Then, Mr. Robinson called upon Dr. David Mathis, Deputy Superintendent for the Division of College and Career Readiness at SCDE, to provide additional information. Dr. Mathis described the process by which the certifications were identified, noting that the CTE directors worked diligently over the past several months to identify certifications that met the needs of employers, that were rigorous for students and that led to a living-wage job. Dr. Mathis stated that the list should be considered fluid. The list with input from local business advisory councils as well as the Department of Commerce and South Carolina Chamber of Commerce will need to review the list twice a year. The constraint that SCDE must work around is the deadline for making changes to PowerSchool, the data collection system by which districts and schools will report which certifications are earned.

Mr. Robinson agreed that data collection appear to be a significant issue, especially in the first few years of the new accountability system. Sen. Hembree asked about the process for taking certifications off the list. Dr. Mathis responded that certifications would be added and deleted during the review process. Dr. Mathis gave an example that several new certifications were added to the manufacturing cluster for 2018-19 to address the advanced manufacturing needs of the state. Rep. Loftis observed that some certifications cross multiple clusters. Ms. Hairfield asked for confirmation that business support is required for inclusion on the list. She also noted that one of the sixteen career clusters, Government and Public Administration, contains no courses.

Rep. Loftis asked about the status of the computer science initiative since computer science and information technology affect all careers. Dr. Mathis stated that the 9-12 computer science standards are up for consideration this summer. In addition, school year 2018-19 is the last year that keyboarding as a stand-alone course will be provided. Dr. Mathis stated that SCDE will work with The Citadel, Clemson and the University of South Carolina on pre-service and in-service training of teachers.

There being no further questions or discussion, the subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the staff recommendations.

Mr. Robinson then called upon Ms. Barton to discuss the next action item, approval of guidelines for eLearning for school make-up days. Ms. Barton explained that the House and the Senate had adopted two very different provisos regarding eLearning for school make-up days. Proviso 1A.86. of the 2018-19 General Appropriation Bill (H.4950) as

adopted by the House of Representatives would require the EOC to implement a pilot program that includes online or virtual instruction for school make-up days. The Senate adopted Proviso 1A.93 authorizing the Department of Education to approve districts wanting to use alternative methods, including online or virtual instruction, "towards up to three days of schedule make up time." Until the Conference Committee submits its report to the General Assembly, which will occur when the legislature returns on June 27 and 28, the EOC does not know which version will be adopted.

Therefore, to be proactive and to ensure that districts have sufficient time to adjust school calendars, the EOC staff consulted with Anderson School District 5 and reviewed other state guidelines regarding eLearning to devise draft guidelines for the EOC to consider *if* the House version of the proviso is enacted. Ms. Barton described the components of the pilot program which focus on ensuring: access to the make-up work for all students in a district, including special needs students; communication between teachers, students and staff about the eLearning opportunities and responsibilities; and support by the districts for the evaluation of the pilot program.

Members asked questions about access to the lesson plans and concurred that no more than five districts should be selected for the pilot to ensure a thorough review of the program. In addition, members suggested that one of the districts be a district that needs additional support or guidance in implementing the program. Members suggested that one of the by-products of the valuation be a manual that would assist districts in participating in the initiative in the future. Members also agreed that Anderson School District 5 should be one of the five districts selected due to the district's initiative in proposing the pilot and the district's ability to implement the pilot.

There being on further discussion, the subcommittee voted unanimously to approve the draft requirements and recommend inclusion of Anderson 5 as one of the five pilot districts.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Public Awareness Subcommittee

January 22, 2018

10:00 a.m., Room 433 Blatt Building

Subcommittee Members Present: Barbara Hairfield (Chair); Anne Bull (Vice-Chair); and Senator Matthews

Other EOC Members Present: Dr. Bob Couch

EOC Staff Present: Dr. Kevin Andrews; Melanie Barton; Hope Johnson-Jones; and Bunnie Ward

Ms. Hairfield called the meeting to order, welcoming members and guests in attendance.

The minutes of the November 20, 2017 joint meeting of the Academic Standards and Assessment and Public Awareness Subcommittees were approved as distributed.

Status of November 2018 Release of School and District Report Cards
Ms. Hairfield called upon Ms. Barton to update the subcommittee on the development of the school and district report cards that will be released in November of 2018. Staff distributed draft templates of school and district report cards. The focus of the online report cards is to ensure the information is accessible to all families and written in parent-friendly terms that all parents can understand. All of the information will be collected at the school and district level; there will be no student-level data. The report card should provide a roadmap on areas for improvement.

As Ms. Barton described the template, she answered questions. Under the Preparing for Success indicator, Sen. Matthews expressed interest in reporting various indicators that identify whether students are being prepared for college/career. As he explained, the graduation rate does not guarantee that students are prepared for the next stage of life. He suggested considering SAT scores, industry credentials earned, etc. Ms. Barton noted that the information will be collected; however, to ensure parents have access to all indicators, the staff will work with the South Carolina Department of Education to identify metrics that should be documented under multiple measures or buttons added to other indicators like College & Career Readiness. Dr. Couch concurred that such predictors should be added to the "Preparing for Success" indicator. Ms. Hairfield noted that the indicator "Preparing for Success" may be confused with "Academic Achievement"; therefore, non-academic indicators may need to be reported in this indicator.

Sen. Matthews asked about the "financial data" to be reported. Ms. Barton responded the report card it will include per pupil expenditures and percentage of expenditures for teacher salaries. Ms. Barton said that the Department is working to get the financial data as required by ESSA.

Ms. Hairfield expressed concern that the district and school report cards also contain data or evidence that districts and schools are ensuring that students are developing the world-class skills and characteristics of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. Ms. Hairfield pointed out that per state law the accountability system should reflect the knowledge, skills and characteristics of the Profile. Dr. Couch shared a recent classroom visit that he had with 4th graders in a rural school district who were engaged in robotics. He noted that the students were using technology to engage students in learning that developed problem-solving skills. The members discussed the tension that exists in many classrooms between learning environments that mirror the state assessments and learning environments that promote critical thinking and problem-solving.

In reviewing the district report card template, Ms. Barton noted the NAEP results for the state and nation will be included on the district report card even though it is not rated. The EOC continues to work the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office to get additional college and career statistics that document the success of graduates.

Sen. Matthews asked how similar the draft report cards are to other states. Mrs. Barton noted SC's template is similar to other states, including Tennessee, Louisiana and Ohio. Mrs. Barton also noted EOC is working with SCDE on a searchable database.

In reviewing the second page of the elementary report card for the "Academic Achievement" indicator, Ms. Barton clarified that determining which students are not on track to be reading on grade level by 3rd grade will be reported by the districts using the screener selected by the district or school. There are no common screeners.

Ms. Barton noted she is going to research states that including a K-2 progress in their "Academic Achievement" category. Sen. Matthews noted he is receiving significant pushback about the lack of inclusion of educators. He requested inclusion of educators as soon as possible in the design of the report card. Mrs. Barton stated that EOC staff would be meeting with South Carolina Department of Education staff later that day and would bring up the concern.

Update of 2017-18 Communications/Public Awareness Plan
Ms. Hairfield explained the updates to the 2017-18 Communications Plan, highlighting the PK-20 transformation goals. She noted the various audiences and communication strategies being implemented. She stressed that the focus of the Plan for the upcoming months will be on developing educational tools to help the public understand the status of public schools in South Carolina and the new accountability system which will bring ratings for the first time in three years. Ms. Barton highlighted the new strategies implemented which include working with the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development State Data Sharing Task Force.

Proposal for EOC Annual Report

Finally, the Subcommittee approved the template shared for developing the EOC's March 1 report to the General Assembly as required by law. Ms. Barton noted that the EOC is revising the annual plan to include more infographics. The EOC will report out on kindergarten readiness results, state assessment results, and postsecondary results that related directly to the transformation goals of the accountability system. The theme will be "Accountability, Innovation, Motivation." The draft March 1 Report will be presented to the full EOC at its February 12 meeting for input prior to the release on March 1.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittees: <u>Academic Standards and Assessments and Public Awareness</u>

Date: <u>September 17, 2018</u>

<u>ACTION ITEM</u>
Amendment to Definition of College Ready - School Year 2018-19

<u>PURPOSE/AUTHORITY</u>
Sections 59-18-120 and 59-18-900 of the Education Accountability Act require the EOC to determine the criteria by which schools receive performance ratings and by which individual metrics are rated.

<u>CRITICAL FACTS</u>
In May of 2017 Aiken High School became the first Cambridge Assessment International Education certified school in South Carolina. Students are eligible to earn the Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Diploma, an international curriculum and examination system. The Aiken County School District is requesting that beginning with school year 2018-19 the state's accountability system for public education recognize as "college ready" students who participate in the Cambridge program and earn passing grades on Cambridge International exams. The change is requested to be consistent with the accountability metrics that allows students who earn passing grades on Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams to be considered college ready.

<u>TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS</u>
The change in the definition of the accountability metric would go into effect beginning with the report cards issued in the fall of 2019 for the 2018-19 academic year.

<u>ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC</u>
None

      Fund/Source:

<div align="center">

<u>ACTION REQUEST</u>

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☒ **For approval**   ☐ **For information**

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<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>

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☐ **Approved**   ☐ **Amended**

☐ **Not Approved**   ☐ **Action deferred (explain)**

Explanation of Request

In May of 2017 Aiken High School became the first Cambridge Assessment International Education certified school in South Carolina. Students are eligible to earn the Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Diploma, an international curriculum and examination system. The Aiken County School District is requesting that beginning with school year 2018-19 the state's accountability system for public education recognize as "college ready" students who participate in the Cambridge program and earn passing grades on Cambridge International exams. Currently, any student who earns a score of 3 or higher on any Advanced Placement (AP) exam or a score of 4 or higher on any Higher Learning International Baccalaureate (IB) exam is deemed "college ready."

According to Cambridge Assessment International Education, there are currently seven institutions of higher education in South Carolina who recognize the Cambridge system as a rigorous academic program and award credit on a case-by-case basis for admitted students.[1] These institutions are: Clemson University; College of Charleston; Furman University; Lander University; Presbyterian College, University of South Carolina; and Wofford College. Unlike policies for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB), the policies that these institutions have implemented to award college credit for Cambridge exam results vary significantly. For example:

- Clemson University and the University of South Carolina award credit on a case-by-case basis after faculty review/examination of individual courses submitted by the student.
- College of Charleston awards credit for selected Advanced (A) Level and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level grade exams of generally C or higher.
- Furman University awards credit for exam grades of A or B for selective Advanced (A) Level and selective Advanced Subsidiary (AS) exams.
- Lander University awards credit for exam grades of C or better in Advanced (A) Level exams.
- Presbyterian College – Credit is awarded for passing grades of C or better on Advanced (A) Level exams.

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[1] http://recognition.cambridgeinternational.org/

- Wofford College recognizes Cambridge International Advanced (A) Levels for matriculation purposes only.

The following tables describe which Cambridge International Exams and their corresponding exam grades are awarded credit hours at the College of Charleston and Furman University.

College of Charleston
Grade Exams Needed to Earn Credit Hours

Cambridge International Exam	Advanced (A) Level	Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level
Art and Design	C or Higher	None
Biology	C or Higher	C or Higher
Business	C or Higher	None
Chemistry	D or Higher	C or Higher
Classical Studies	None	None
Computer Science	C or Higher	C or Higher
Economics	C or Higher	C or Higher
English Literature	C or Higher	C or Higher
Environmental Management	C or Higher	C or Higher
Foreign Languages - French, German, Japanese and Spanish	D or Higher	D or Higher
French Literature	None*	D or Higher
Geography	C or Higher	None
Global Perspectives & Research	C or Higher	None
History	C or Higher	C or Higher
Mathematics	None	None
Physics	C or Higher	None
Psychology	C or Higher	C or Higher
Sociology	C or Higher	None
Spanish Literature	None*	D or Higher
Thinking Skills	None	None

http://registrar.cofc.edu/pdf/cambridge-alevel-and-aslevel-exams-2017-2018.pdf

*Should be N/A (Not Available) because only AS level exam is offered.

Furman University
Grade Exams Needed to Earn Credit Hours

Cambridge International Exam	Advanced (A) Level	Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level
Biology	B or A	None
Business Studies	B or A	None
Chemistry	B or A	None
Economics	B or A	None
English	B or A	B or A
Environmental Science	B or A	None
Foreign Languages – Chinese, French, German, Japanese and Spanish	A	None
Geography	B or A	None
Government and Politics	B or A	None
History: European	B or A	None
History: United States	B or A	None
History: African	B or A	None
Mathematics	B or A	None
Physics (AS **AND** A-Level)	B	B
Politics	B or A	B or A
Psychology	B	None
Sociology	A	A

http://www2.furman.edu/sites/registrar/Documents/exam_course_equivalencies.pdf

Proposal:

Based upon the above information, for purposes of accountability in school year 2018-19, a student would be deemed "college ready" if the student earns a grade of C or higher in any Advanced Level (A) Level Cambridge International Exam **or** if the student earns a grade of C or higher in an Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level Cambridge International Exam in: Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, English Literature, Environmental Science/Management, History, Psychology, Sociology, foreign language (Chinese, French, German, Japanese or Spanish) or foreign literature (French or Spanish).

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SC ACCOUNTABILITY WORKING GROUP

FINAL REPORT Submitted to the EOC

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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

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Appendices

Appendix A: External Review South Carolina Every Student Succeeds Act

Appendix B: Revisions to the ESSA Accountability

Acknowledgements

Throughout this process, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is grateful for the partnerships, participation and expertise from a number of organizations including the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, the South Carolina Department of Commerce, South Carolina Department of Education, the South Carolina Technical College System and our South Carolina public schools. The following individuals provided technical expertise throughout discussions.

Introduction

The Education Accountability Act (EAA) of 1998, as amended by Act 94 of 2017, provides the foundation and requirements for the South Carolina accountability system for public schools and districts. Specifically, the preamble and purposes of the EAA include:

> 59-18-100 The General Assembly finds that South Carolinians have a commitment to public education and a conviction that high expectations for all students are vital components for improving academic achievement. It is the purpose of the General Assembly in this chapter to establish a performance-based accountability system for public education which focuses on improving teaching and learning so that students are equipped with a strong educational foundation. Moreover, to meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, all students graduating from public high schools in this State should have the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to be college ready, career ready, and life ready for success in the global, digital and knowledge-based world of the twenty-first century as provided in Section 59-1-50. All graduates should have the opportunity to qualify for and be prepared to succeed in entry-level, credit bearing college courses, without the need for remedial coursework, post secondary job training, or significant on-the-job training. Accountability, as defined in this chapter, means acceptance of the responsibility for improving student performance and taking actions to improve classroom practice and school performance by the Governor, the General Assembly. The State Department of Education, public colleges and universities, local school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community.[1]

The state's accountability system is to improve teaching and learning so that all students will graduate with the world-class knowledge, the world class skills, and the life/career characteristics needed in this dynamic, highly competitive environment. To this end, in 2016, the South Carolina General Assembly Enacted Act 195, establishing the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* as the "standard by which our high school graduates should be measured and are this state's achievement goals for all high school students."[2] The

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[1] South Carolina Code Section 59-18-100
[2] Act 195, 2016

Profile of the South Carolina Graduate is the vision for South Carolina and is showcased below.
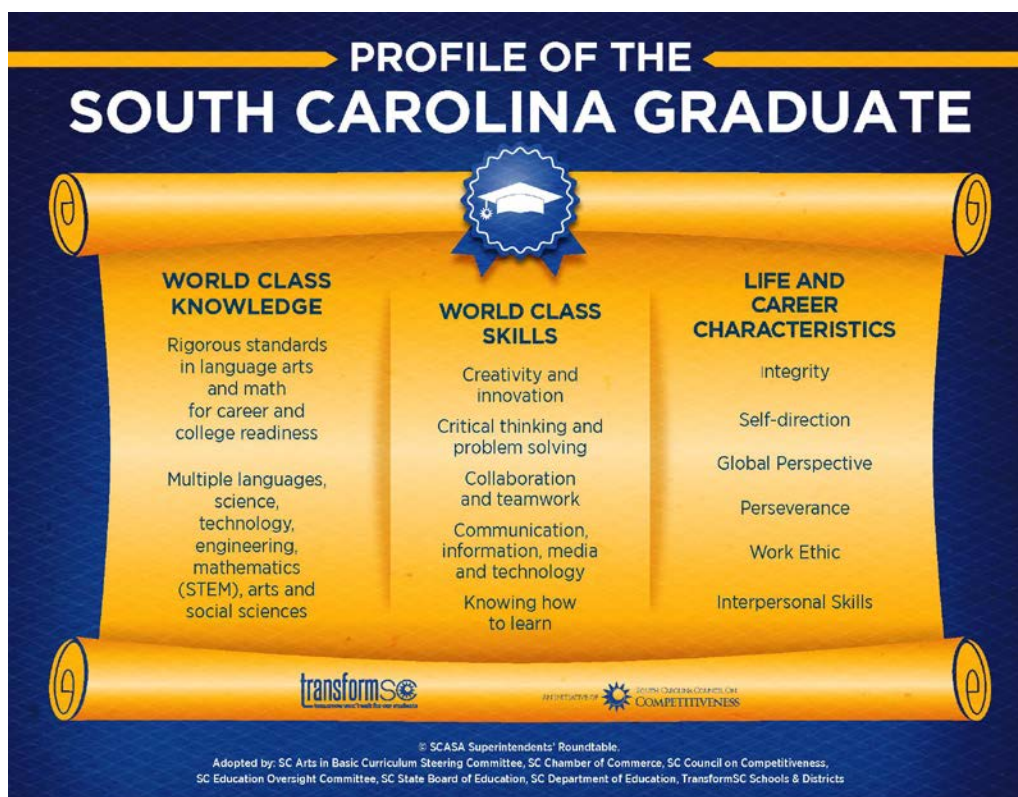
Over the past few years, the EOC has worked in conjunction with the South Carolina Department of Education (SDE) in merging Act 94 (the state accountability system) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, the federal accountability system) to create a single accountability system for South Carolina. The EOC approved the state accountability plan in December 2017. The state accountability system must meet the requirements of the ESSA, which was approved on May 3, 2018. This new accountability system went into effect for this school year, 2017-18, with report cards published in November of 2018.

To further establish expectations for South Carolina students and to better meet the needs of the workforce, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has established transformational goals (long term) and benchmarks (statewide leading metrics) as part of the state's ESSA plan as shown below.
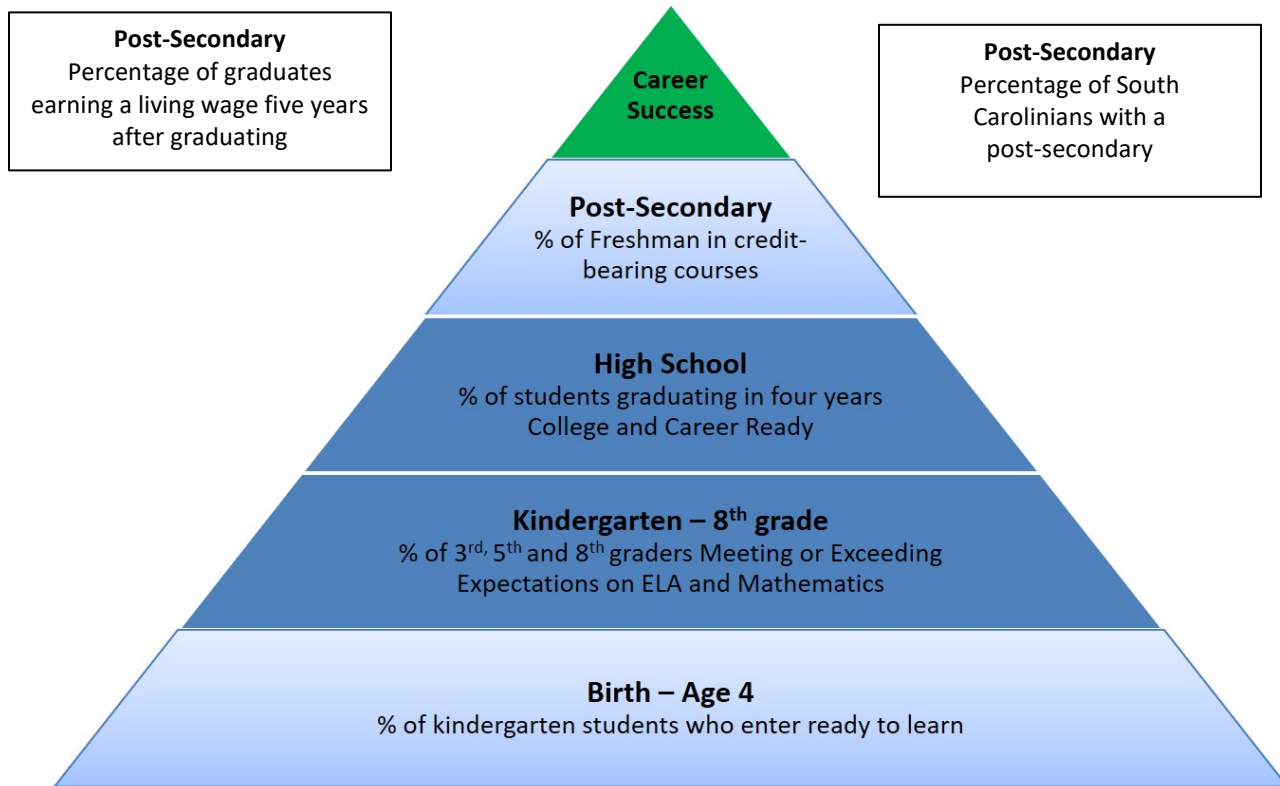
Source: SC ESSA Plan, as approved on May 3, 2018

Transformational Goals (long term)

- By 2035, 90 percent of students will graduate "college and career ready" as outlined in the profile of the Graduate.
- Beginning with graduating class of 2020, the state, each district and each high school in South Carolina should increase annually by 5 percent, the percentage of student who graduate ready to enter the post-secondary education to pursue a degree or national industry credential without the need for remediation in mathematics or English.

While the current accountability system addresses many components of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*, there are components that are not being measured and components that could be strengthened to meet the vision for South Carolina students. Some components, such as creativity, knowing how to learn, collaboration, and perseverance, which speak to a well-rounded student, have traditionally been not only difficult to define but equally as difficult to measure. Other components could be considered to create an accountability system that more strongly aligns the academic

preparation of our students with the expectations of colleges/universities and career readiness to better prepare our students to meet the challenges beyond twelfth grade.

No system is perfect, but the flexibility of the current ESSA system allows states to evolve and change plans based on new information and research. The EOC believes the accountability system should be fluid and reflect the most current research and best practices on metrics that can be implemented to measure all aspects of a well-rounded high school graduate.

With these thoughts in mind, the EOC convened a Metrics Accountability Working Group for the purpose of reviewing the current accountability system and determining what metrics could be reported on the district and school report cards that address the world-class skills and life/career characteristics of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.* Questions poised were: Where are there gaps? What are we missing? Are the metrics currently in the accountability model at the level that will ensure career-readiness and college readiness? How can we strengthen the model to better prepare students for the twenty-first century? And, what, if any, recommendations made by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to the EOC on October 9, 2017 for inclusion in the accountability system in 2018-19 should be implemented?

Overview of Metrics Accountability Working Group

The charge to the Metrics Accountability Working Group was twofold: (1) determine what metrics or evidence are currently reported on the district and school report cards to address the world class knowledge, skills and characteristics of the *Prolife of the South Carolina Graduate;* and (2) recommend what metrics or evidence could be reported or counted on the district and school report cards for school year 2018-19 or beyond to reflect the world class knowledge, skills and characteristics of the *Prolife of the South Carolina Graduate.* The goal is to continuously improve the state's accountability system to ensure that the accountability metrics are driving the behavior that is needed to improve student outcomes.

The Metrics Accountability Working Group was composed of the following individuals.

Name	Title
Dr. Jennifer Anderson	Director, Accountability and Personalized Learning, School District of Pickens County
Ms. Cynthia Ambrose	Deputy Superintendent, Learning Services, Charleston County School District
Ms. Ashley Brown	Arts Education Program Director, South Carolina Arts Commission
Dr. Jennifer Coleman	Executive Director of Research, Richland School District One
Mr. Christopher Leventis Cox	CEO, ACC Partners, and parent
Mr. Robert Davis	Workforce Development Coordinator, South Carolina Department of Commerce
Ms. Stephanie DiStasio	Director, Office of Personalized Learning, South Carolina Department of Education
Ms. Barbara Hairfield	Member, Education Oversight Committee
Dr. Tim Hardee	President & Executive Director, South Carolina Technical College System
Dr. Tammy Haile	Director, Career & Technology Education, Chesterfield County School District
Ms. Laura Hickson	Superintendent, Florence School District Three
Dr. Linda Lavender	Superintendent, Lexington County School District 4
Dr. Kevin O'Gorman	Chief Academic Officer, Berkeley County School District
Mr. Jeff Schilz	Interim President/Executive Director, South Carolina Commission of Higher Education

Others who participated in the meetings and assisted in the discussions were staff from the following state agencies:

SCDE: Dr. John Payne and Dr. Dan Ralyea

South Carolina Commission on Higher Education: Dr. John Lane, Dr. Lishu Yin, and Dr. Regine Rucker

EOC stand EOC staff members: Melanie Barton, Dr. Kevin Andrews, Hope Johnson-Jones, Dr. Rainey Knight, Bunnie Ward, and Dana Yow

The Accountability Working Group met in Columbia on the following dates and discussed the following.

April 25, 2018 – Initial meeting focused on components of state's ESSA plan, the state accountability model, and *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*, led by EOC staff.

May 31, 2018 – Dr. Terry Holiday, a consultant with the Southern Regional Education Board, facilitated the discussion that included:

- Review of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* and the requirements of the Federal law, Every Student Succeeds Act;
- Highlights from external reviewers who had evaluated South Carolina's ESSA plan;
- Discussion of accountability measures in the state's ESSA plan and their alignment to the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*;
- Identification of internal measures of college and career readiness (state assessment results) and external measures of student academic performance (NAEP, ACT, etc.); and
- Recommendations from trusted sources and partners for future modifications to ESSA plan and accountability/report card structure

June 12, 2018 – Following up on the May discussion, the Metrics Accountability Working Group reviewed the areas of consensus and potential recommendations for improving the state's accountability system. Then the group was divided into three working subcommittees focused on elementary, middle and high school levels to discuss specific metrics. The groups had access to several support documents to use in its discussions, including the Superintendent of Education's proposal to the EOC on alternative data elements, "Revisions to the ESSA Accountability Plan" (Appendix B).

July 19, 2018 – The final meeting included a presentation on competency prototypes by Stephanie DiStasio, Director of Personalized Learning at the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)[3]. She shared the work the SCDE is conducting to distill and operationalize the skill sets and dispositions as outlined in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.   The SCDE is developing taxonomy around the competencies of:

- reading critically,
- expressing ideas,
- investigating through inquiry,
- reasoning quantitatively,
- Designing solutions,
- building networks,
- using sources,
- learning independently,
- leading teams,
- navigating conflicts,
- sustaining wellness; and
- engaging as a citizen.

The small group discussions, based on grade spans of elementary, middle and high schools, continued their deliberations as to what metrics could be included in the accountability model and issues related to current and proposed future accountability metrics. At the conclusion of the subgroup work, each subgroup reported out their discussions and as appropriate, suggestions/recommendations from the other members were incorporated into the work of each subgroup. Each subgroup, then, submitted a consolidated matrix outlining the consensus of the subgroup. Members of the metric accountability group were also allowed access to the consolidated matrices to submit additional questions and comments via a Google document.

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[3] Competency Set and Continua Prototype, SCDE, 2018. May be accessed at
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ULuRalBLlhSjStD0bxoMV0ByuwXpJIP2tP-bKwgJQOI/edit#gid=1223617546

Summary of Reviews of South Carolina's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan

With states submitting their ESSA plan over the past year, independent groups have conducted various external reviews of state ESSA plans across the country. South Carolina submitted its plan in September 2017 and received approval from the US Department of Education on May 3, 2018. Overall the state's plan has been received positively. A summary of the reviews for South Carolina's plan including promising aspects of the plan and pressing issues are outlined below.[4] [5]

Promising Aspects of the Plan

- Indicators aligned with college and career readiness
- Addition of science and social studies shows need for well-rounded student
- Emphasis on growth of bottom 20% of students by including them in the growth model
- Reporting the percentage of students who are college and career ready
- State goes beyond minimum in identifying number of schools in need of comprehensive support and intervention
- Strong stance on 95 percent participation rate in testing; state will lower school's rating if 95 percent rate not met
- Assigns annual rating for schools

Pressing Issues for the Plan

- State's goals are overly complex and disconnected from the accountability system
- Plan overemphasizes high performing students; runs risk of masking performance of underperforming students and achievement gaps because subgroup performance is not included in the ratings
- In the awarding of funds to schools for improvement, state is not specific
- State goes beyond minimum in identifying number of schools in need of comprehensive support and intervention
- Defines proficiency as earning a D or better on end of course
- College and career readiness may be inflated because students that have dropped out or have not graduated are not included in the percentage

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[4] Bellwether Education Partners, December, 2017.
[5] Holliday, T., External Review of South Carolina Every Student Succeeds Act Plan, Report presented to the Metrics Accountability Working Group (May 31, 2018).

Findings and Recommendations

Overall, the Metric Accountability Working Group made the following generalizations regarding South Carolina's ESSA plan and our accountability system:

- South Carolina should not have separate state and federal accountability systems but instead should have one system as currently required by state law, Act 94 of 2016. Otherwise, the competing systems create distrust and confusion for the public and for educators.

- Creating an accountability system around the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* and meeting the federal requirements of ESSA is like "putting a round peg into a square hole." The federal requirements are so prescriptive especially regarding Academic Achievement, which must only measure achievement in English language arts and mathematics. Consequently, South Carolina should focus on using the Other Academic Indicators and School Quality/Student Success Indicator under the current framework of ESSA to count or report other metrics that measure the world class skills and characteristics of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*.

- Before any metric is used to rate schools in the accountability system, the metric should be reported first on the annual school report card to ensure that data collection issues are resolved and to document the validity and reliability of the data.

The following are the key findings and recommendations for improving the state's accountability system as identified by a consensus of the members of the Metric Accountability Working Group. The findings and recommendations are listed by key components of the state's accountability plan – the State's ESSA goals and specific indicators.

State's ESSA Goals

Finding: The members of the Metric Accountability Working Group overwhelmingly do not believe that South Carolina will meet the overall goal of our ESSA plan:

- By 2035 90 percent of students will graduate college, career, and citizenship ready' as shown in the state's ESSA plan.

In addition, the overall goal of the state's ESSA plan and the metrics of the accountability system are inconsistent. For example, increasing by five (5) percent annually the percentage of students who graduate ready to enter postsecondary education to pursue

a degree or national industry credential without the need for remediation in mathematics or English will not result in the state achieving its 90 percent overarching goal.

A second issue is the lack of data or inconsistency of data. For example, the state currently cannot determine the percentage of high school graduates earning a living wage within five years of graduation. The state is still implementing its longitudinal data system as required by Act 94 of 2016. And, because each two-year institution establishes its own benchmarks to determine if students must take remediation or developmental courses in mathematics, reading or English, there is not a consistent measure to determine the percentage of freshman who are eligible to enroll in credit-bearing courses.

Recommendation: To improve the alignment of the state's ESSA goal with the accountability metrics and focus on student's success in college and careers, South Carolina should measure and count the percentage of high school graduates who:

➤ Earn a living wage within three and five years of graduation from high school. A definition of living wage will need to be created; and
➤ Enroll in a postsecondary institution and succeed. Success can be defined as earning 15 credits in the first semester or 30 credits per year.[6]

College and Career Readiness Indicator

Finding: South Carolina's definition of career readiness currently measures academic **or** technical skills of students, but not both. The definition also excludes the importance of essential skills, those skills formerly referred to as "soft skills."[7] These skills include teamwork, leadership, and agility. As defined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*, career ready should include essential skills, academic skills and technical skills.

Recommendation: While no consensus was reached by the Metric Accountability Working Group, the EOC might consider for future accountability systems reviewing and revising the definition of career ready to include academic, technical **and** essential skills.

Finding: According to the state's ESSA plan, a student may demonstrate career readiness upon completion of a career and technical education (CTE) program with a state/national credential that leads to a living wage. Industry certifications levels vary

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[6] https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/momentum-summary.pdf and
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED555671.pdf
[7] Building the Workforce of Tomorrow. https://files.ontario.ca/hsw_rev_engaoda_webfinal_july6.pdf

according to the knowledge and skills needed to meet the certification. Currently, for a state/national certification to be approved, the certifications are vetted and approved by the business community through the EEDA Coordinating Council, the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development, and others.

Recommendation: In the annual review of industry certifications, the state could consider including those national/state certifications that ensure the credential earned that leads to a living wage job for a graduate that lead to careers identified in the South Carolina's WIOA state plan as being in high demand. Another approach is to award bonus points if students are becoming career ready in clusters that are identified in the state workforce plan and are tied to earning a living wage.[8] Finally, stackable credentials, which lead to a living wage career, should be identified and developed. Examples of states working in this area include Louisiana, New York, and South Dakota.

Finding: South Carolina's current system gives points to students who are either college or career ready and does not incentivize students who are both college and career ready.

Recommendation: To incentivize schools to prepare students who are college and career ready, provide incentives and tiered point system so that schools earn more points for students who are college AND career ready. Consideration should be given to carefully review and consider only those national/state certifications that ensure the credential is at a level that adequately prepares students for a career and leads to a living wage. Bonus points could also be earned if students are becoming career ready in clusters that are identified in the state workforce plan and are tied to earning a living wage.[9] Finally, stackable credentials, which lead to a living wage career, should be identified and developed. Examples of states working in this area include Louisiana, New York, and South Dakota.

School Quality/Student Success Indicator

Finding: Currently, elementary, middle and high schools receive an overall rating for School Quality that is based on the results of a student engagement survey. In school year 2017-18, students in grades 3 through 12 took the AdvancED Student Engagement

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[8] South Carolina WIOA Unified State Plan, 2016. Access is provided by the link
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55119bb3e4b0ff5f4d08ac93/t/5b59f9e21ae6cf7e3a053e7e/15326233355
02/2018-2020+Modified+SC+WIOA+Unified+State+Plan.pdf

[9] South Carolina WIOA Unified State Plan, 2016. Access is provided by the link
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55119bb3e4b0ff5f4d08ac93/t/5b59f9e21ae6cf7e3a053e7e/15326233355
02/2018-2020+Modified+SC+WIOA+Unified+State+Plan.pdf

Survey to measure students' engagement in learning. Several educators on the Metric Accountability Work Group cited issues with the survey including poorly worded questions, technical issues, etc.

Recommendation: The members concluded that ESSA allows states to use multiple metrics to measure School Quality/Student Success. The members reviewed other states' ESSA plans that identify various inputs to measure School Quality/Student Success. For example, Michigan uses chronic absenteeism, access to advanced coursework, access to instruction in arts, world languages, etc.[10] Other inputs include a quality program review and use of state accreditation. Kentucky is developing a work ethic certification that is showing some promise in this area.[11]

The members did identify the following as other metrics of School Quality:

Chronic Absenteeism – The members did not reach consensus on whether to include student chronic absenteeism as a measure of students' opportunity to learn. According to the Brookings Institute, students who are absent fewer than ten days per year are more likely to be promoted the next grade level.[12] Other research provides support that student attendance as an important factor in student learning. South Carolina does not currently count student absenteeism in the overall ratings of a school.

Teacher Attendance – The majority of members of the group did agree that teacher attendance should count in School Quality.

Early Learning (Elementary Schools) 4K-3 accountability – Some members of the group identified early learning in math and literacy as an area that needed to be reported on. There was consensus that early math is as important as early literacy. Currently, the percentage of kindergarteners ready to learn is reported on as is the percentage of students at end of 3rd grade who were on track or making progress. Examples of states working in this area are Ohio, Oklahoma, Georgia and North Carolina. The current 4K assessment administered in a school is a decision made by the district/school based on an approved list of three formative assessments provided by the state. The 4K assessment selected measures a variety of competencies depending on the instrument selected. There is a need to capture and be able to report 4K

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[10] ESSA, Michigan Department of Education, 2017, May be accessed at:
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Michigan-ESSA-Plan_11-15-17_606136_7.pdf.
[11] Work Ethic Certification, Kentucky Department of Education, 2017. May be accessed at:
https://education.ky.gov/CTE/Pages/CTE-St-Acc.aspx
[12] Bauer, Lauren, Liu, Patrick, Schanzenbach, Diane, Shambaugh, Jay; Brooking Institute, 2018,
https://www.brookings.edu/research/reducing-chronic-absenteeism-under-the-every-student-succeeds-act/

readiness on a consistent basis statewide. Furthermore, the members agreed that having a 4K through grade 2 aligned assessment system is needed to allow the district, school or state to monitor children's progression over these critical years.

Teacher Working Conditions Survey (All school levels) – If South Carolina wants to use accountability to drive behavior, then the state might consider reporting teacher working conditions survey results, teacher perceptions of discipline, principal's expectations, etc. to measure School Quality. Teacher retention is an important fact in the maintaining quality teachers in the classroom. The working conditions of teachers and their opinions play a role in whether they remain in teaching. The level of school support, the culture of the school and perceptions on school effectiveness should be captured and reported on a statewide basis to be used as a tool to identify the issues affecting the retention of teachers.

Access and Participation (All school levels) – Consistent with the Department of Education's October 2017 recommendations to the EOC, the group recommended phasing-in a metric that first documents access to a well-rounded curriculum followed by documenting participation. The Group identified the following as examples of a well-rounded education system. Students would have access to:

➢ Advanced coursework;
➢ Computer science courses
➢ Arts
➢ World languages
➢ Physical education
➢ Virtual or online learning
➢ Career courses

World Class Skills and Life/Career Characteristics (All school levels) – The *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* expects students to develop world class skills and life/career characteristics. Currently, there is no measure of these areas in the South Carolina accountability model. South Carolina should review and consider using other indicators to measure world class skills and characteristics as outlined in the *Profile of South Carolina Graduate*.

The SCDE has started foundational work on assessing the world class skills and characteristics found in the Profile. The recommendation is to continue to work with the SCDE and other groups to first report these measures in the accountability system (i.e., availability and participation.) When measurements

of quality are developed and refined, the group recommends measures count in a future accountability system. Several measures were mentioned by workgroup members as potential measures of world class skills and characteristics.

Academic Achievement Indicator

Finding: The use of Lexiles and Quantiles as measures to track student performance or student growth is a metric used by numerous states to report reading and mathematics performance. These measures track a students' trajectory of growth year to year. It is vertically aligned and a seamless way to communicate student growth and achievement. Through the SC Ready assessment, the state provides Lexile and Quantile scores in grades 3-8. Schools could provide Lexile and Quantile scores for grades K-2 to track student progress if they administered an assessment that provides Lexile/Quantile scores. Utilizing the Lexile and Quantile Framework, developed by MetaMetrics, Inc., would allow for progress monitoring across grades and grade levels. Furthermore, if changes in assessments occur, longitudinal data could still be reported.

Members also identified the fragmentation of the current assessment system in PK-8; the current system does not allow for effective progress monitoring of children as they progress through the grades. South Carolina should work with other states and the U.S. Department of Education to determine how to use Lexiles and Quantile results from grade 3 through 8 SC READY (and even earlier, possible grade 1) to measure Academic Achievement.

Recommendation: South Carolina should work with other states and the U.S. Department of Education to determine how to use Lexiles and Quantile results from grade 3 through 8 SC READY (and even earlier, possible grade 1) to measure Academic Achievement. The state should consider using Lexiles and Quantiles for high school end of courses as well. Using Lexiles and Quantiles will ensure that even if the state assessment changes, South Carolina can still compare assessment results and measure students' trajectory for college and career readiness. NAEP, SAT, ACT, and SC READY all can be tied to Lexile and Quantiles. These Lexiles and Quantiles can also be tired to individual career clusters as evidenced in work done in Georgia, West Virginia, Illinois, etc. and/or to progress as in Oklahoma, Georgia and North Carolina.

Finding: As required by ESSA, the subgroup performance will be reported on the South Carolina report card. And, the Student Progress indicator reflects the academic progress of all students in a school in English language arts and mathematics compared to other students in South Carolina who initially scored at the same levels and the academic

progress of the lowest 20 percent of students in a school relative to students statewide who initially scored at the same level. However, individual subgroup performance is not a measure on the state report card that counts in the schools' rating.

There exists a disparity in the performance of subgroups in South Carolina with minority groups, pupils in poverty, disabled and English learners falling behind their counterparts. Specifically based on the 2017 statewide administration of SC Ready in grades 3-8, the achievement gap in whites as compared to African-Americans varies from 23 points in grade 5 mathematics to 34 points in grade 4 mathematics. For example, in grade 4 mathematics, 60 percent of white students met the mathematics proficiency level as compared to only 23 percent of African Americans.[13] The reporting and use of subgroup performance to drive instruction has the potential to change the behavior of administrators and teachers by more closely focusing the school on the needs of individual students and the existing achievement gaps.

Recommendation: The Metric Accountability Working Group did not reach consensus on if and how subgroup performance could be included in the accountability system.

Preparing for Success Indicator

Finding: A component in several states' ESSA plans is a readiness indicator that focuses on the metrics tracked to ensure students are being prepared as they matriculate through school. A study at the University of Chicago suggests there are three key factors that predict a student's success in school: student attendance, behavior and grades.[14]

For example, Arizona uses a menu approach that looks a variety of data points such as exceptional education children and the percent of time spent in the general curriculum, comparison of chronic absenteeism rates, attendance, grades, behavior, percent of students accelerating in math in grades 5-8, etc. Almost half the of the states established in their ESSA plans a readiness indicator based on students' progression in high school. An illustration of how some states are capturing this progression is shown below for high schools.

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[13] SC Ready Assessment, South Carolina Department of Education, 2017. May be accessed at: https://ed.sc.gov/data/test-scores/state-assessments/sc-ready/2017/State-Scores-by-Grade-Level-and-Demographic-Category/?ID=999999

[14] Allensworth, E. (2013). The use of ninth-grade early warning indicators to improve Chicago schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 18*(1), 68–83. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ995400

State	Readiness Indicator	Target Audience
Connecticut	Minimum five units	Ninth graders
Illinois	Minimum five units/no F	Ninth graders
Nevada	Earning at least 25% of units required for graduation	Ninth graders
Oregon	Earning at least 25% of units required for graduation	Ninth and Tenth graders
Alaska	Five units incl. English, math, science and social studies	Ninth graders
Arkansas	Minimum number of units at each grade level	Ninth –Twelfth graders

Other Issues of Discussion

The Metric Accountability Working Group focused its efforts on addressing the gaps in current accountability model; however, the results of their discussions also revealed additional important issues related to the accountability system and to the functioning of public education. These issues, some of which directly impact state policy, are noted below.

1. Equity in educational opportunity across our state, within a district and school and in a classroom was an issue raised by the group. The group felt inequities in teacher quality and resources were evident across the state. Suggestions were made to include the demographics, the average family income and the average amount of money spent by schools in a section together on the report card which would inform the reader of the community the school serves as well as the support provide by the district/school. Other issues raised regarding equity related to the unacceptable performance gaps of minorities in our state and that this an important issue for our state.

2. An issue of funding as it related to career and technology education (CTE) courses in the middle schools was raised. CTE courses are not funded at the middle school level and it was suggested that the funding should follow the student, e.g., computer related courses and career related courses offered in the middle grades.

3. South Carolina must develop and implement a robust, longitudinal data system to must develop its longitudinal data system to ensure that higher education and labor success of our high school graduates is captured.

4. South Carolina must develop a system whereby math, reading and English remediation occurs in the senior year, 12th grade of high school, rather than in the two-year college system. Students should have a second opportunity to meet a college and career ready measure after the remediation. The change would save students and families money and would improve the success rate of students in our two-year colleges.

5. South Carolina must develop a cut score on college ready assessments, such as Accuplacer, that all two-year institutions agree is the minimum score for students to be eligible to enroll in courses at a postsecondary without the need for remediation in mathematics, reading or English. These cut scores would not affect a student's placement or acceptance into a specific field of study. For example, a student pursing a degree in a STEM field might need to have a higher mathematics score to be accepted into the program.

6. South Carolina should consider an opportunity to have two windows of state assessment - one in early March and then a second assessment later in the year for students who needed additional remediation.

7. Access to high quality teachers continues to be a challenge in providing all students with the opportunity to achieve at high levels.

8. The metrics in the high school portion of the state report card should be closely analyzed and reviewed annually to ensure what is counted on the report card and how it is measured on the report card is aligned with what South Carolina needs in its college and career ready students.

9. The social and emotional learning (SEL) of all students is important but it is critically important to address this aspect of learning with students in the elementary grades. A recent meta-analysis of research on social emotional learning shows that a systematic approach to promoting student's social and emotional development is a common element of schools who report an increase in student achievement, stronger relationships with teachers and decreased occurrences of poor student behavior.[15]

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[15] Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development, 82*, 405-432. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01564.x

Appendix A

EXTERNAL REVIEW OF SOUTH CAROLINA EVERY STUDENT SUCCEDS ACT PLAN

Prepared for South Carolina Education Oversight Committee Study Group

Goals of report:

1) Provide analysis of external reviews of the SC ESSA plan and accountability system to enable working group members to comprehend reported strengths and opportunities for improvement of the SC ESSA plan and subsequent improvements/recommendations for SC accountability system;

2) Analyze the potential that South Carolina will achieve the common vision of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* and the subsequent long-range goals of the state ESSA plan and accountability system based on current performance of SC students;

- By 2035, 90 percent of students will graduate "college, career, and citizenship ready" as outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.*
- Beginning with the graduating class of 2020, the state, each district, and each high school in South Carolina should increase annually by 5 percent, the percentage of students who graduate ready to enter postsecondary education to pursue a degree or national industry credential without the need for remediation in mathematics or English.

3) Provide systemic recommendations from trusted sources and current partners for South Carolina to continue to progress toward achieving the common vision and goals of *Profile of The South Carolina Graduate*.

Terry Holliday
Retired Kentucky Commissioner of Education 2009-2015
Retired South Carolina educator 1972-1998
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Contents

Introduction

As a South Carolina retired educator, graduate of a South Carolina high school, and graduate of Furman University, Winthrop University, and University of South Carolina, it has been my honor to work closely with SC over the past 2 years as the state developed the federally required Every Student Succeeds Act plan.

I have been quite impressed with the level of cooperation and commitment to excellence exhibited by all partners across South Carolina. I worked closely with the SC Department of Education, Education Oversight Committee, SC Association of School Administrators, Charleston Chamber of Commerce, and Charleston area school districts.

State Superintendent Molly Spearman and her staff are to be commended for the level of stakeholder engagement in the development of the SC ESSA plan. Melanie Barton and her team at the Education Oversight Committee were invaluable in the development of this report. All the stakeholders in SC that I met over the past 2 years have been universally committed to the vision of *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.*

The *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* is the guiding force to develop a citizenry and workforce in South Carolina that is second to none in the nation. The state's education system will be the key driver for employment opportunities and economic opportunities for the citizens of the state. This is a fact that every Governor and legislature in the nation recognizes. Every state is working to better align state Workforce Innovation and Opportunities plans, economic development plans, and education plans to improve employment and economic opportunities for citizens.

The education system cannot drive all improvements needed in South Carolina to achieve *Profile of The South Carolina Graduate*. Indeed, as many states across the nation and countries across the world have learned, it takes an integrated and aligned system of supports to achieve education, employment, and economic goals.

This report and subsequent meetings and recommendations are offered to support the excellent work that South Carolina has already started through the ESSA plan and other support systems.

Terry Holliday
Retired Kentucky Commissioner of Education, 2009-2015
Retired SC Educator, 1972-1998

Executive Summary

Purpose of Working Group: "*We have assembled a working group of educators, business leaders, higher education leaders, etc., to work during the spring and summer on addressing changes to the accountability system. Specifically, we are looking at two things: (1) to determine what metrics or evidence that is reported on the district and school report cards to address the world class skills and characteristics of the Profile of the SC Graduate; and (2) determine what metrics or evidence can be reported or counted on the district and school report cards for school year 2018-19.*" Melanie Barton (EOC)

Goals of Report: The goals of the report are to;

1) Provide analysis of external reviews of the SC ESSA plan and accountability system to enable working group members to comprehend reported strengths and opportunities for improvement of the SC ESSA plan and subsequent improvements/recommendations for SC accountability system;

2) Analyze the potential that South Carolina will achieve the common vision of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* and the subsequent long-range goals of the state ESSA plan and accountability system based on current performance of SC students;

- By 2035, 90 percent of students will graduate "college, career, and citizenship ready" as outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.*

- Beginning with the graduating class of 2020, the state, each district, and each high school in South Carolina should increase annually by 5 percent, the percentage of students who graduate ready to enter postsecondary education to pursue a degree or national industry credential without the need for remediation in mathematics or English.

3) Provide systemic recommendations from trusted sources and current partners for South Carolina to continue to progress toward achieving the common vision and goals of *Profile of The South Carolina Graduate*. Recommendations will also be based on 50 state analysis of ESSA plans.

Highlights from external reviews of South Carolina's ESSA plan submitted October 2017. See pages 16-18 for description of each review and link to the full review.

US Department of Education - As of April 14, 2018, the South Carolina ESSA plan has not been approved by the US Secretary of Education. In the Secretary's letter to State Superintendent Molly Spearman dated January 17, 2018 the following areas required additional information prior to approval. For specifics*, please refer to pages 19-22 in the report.*

- N-size, academic achievement long-term goals, academic achievement measurements of interim progress, long-term goals for four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, measurements of interim progress for graduation rates, graduation rate indicator, school quality or student success indicator, annual meaningful differentiation, comprehensive and targeted support for improvement schools, exit criteria for improvement schools, Title II, Title III, Title V, and Title VII.

Bellwether Education Partners, in partnership with the Collaborative for Student Success, convened an objective, independent panel of accountability experts to review ESSA state plans. A diverse group of

peer reviewers with a range of political viewpoints and backgrounds were asked to review each state's accountability plan with an eye toward capturing strengths and weaknesses**. *See pages 22-24 for additional information*

Overall Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths: What are the most promising aspects of the state's plan? What parts are worth emulating by other states?

- South Carolina's accountability system is built on indicators that are aligned with college and career readiness. The state deserves credit for including science and social studies in its accountability system, which will help signal the critical importance of a well-rounded education for all students. The state places a significant emphasis on the growth of schools' lowest-performing students. The state will also report the percentage of graduates who are college ready, career ready, or college and career ready.
- South Carolina's accountability system goes above and beyond ESSA's minimum requirements for identifying schools for comprehensive support and improvement. As a result, it is likely that the state will identify a greater number of very low-performing schools.
- In addition, its exit criteria for schools identified for comprehensive support requires schools to demonstrate some improvement rather than simply no longer qualify for the designation.
- South Carolina deserves credit for taking a strong stance on the 95 percent assessment participation rate. The state counts untested students as a zero for determining achievement ratings. Schools that miss the participation requirement cannot receive the highest rating in achievement or in the summative rating. In addition, the state threatens the loss of Title I funds if the problem persists.

Weaknesses: What are the most pressing areas for the state to improve in its plan? What aspects should other states avoid?

- South Carolina's plan could be improved in a number of ways. The state's goals are overly complex and disconnected from the accountability system. The state's approach to awarding points and assigning corresponding ratings to indicators and schools is also unnecessarily complicated. In its current form, this approach likely overemphasizes high-performing students and runs the risk of overlooking or masking underperformance and achievement gaps. This is particularly likely because student subgroup performance is not included in the state's rating system.
- South Carolina should provide greater detail about its plans to support and intervene in struggling schools. For example, the state says it plans to award all of its 7 percent set-aside for school improvement activities through a formula, but it does not specify how it would implement that formula. Moreover, the state would have had a stronger plan if it had used some portion of that money for competitive grants to the schools and districts with the strongest improvement plans. This step could materially improve the quality of interventions in identified schools. The state's identification criteria for targeted support schools and exit criteria both deserve further clarification and confirmation that sustained improvement is likely.

Partners for Each and Every Child – this report analyzed the stakeholder engagement process in the first 17 states that submitted ESSA plans in April 2017. South Carolina was not included in the review.

Fordham Institute - The analysis examines the plans submitted by all fifty states and the District of Columbia, and whether they are strong or weak (or in-between) in achieving three objectives:

- Assigning annual ratings to schools that are clear and intuitive for parents, educators, and the public; **(SC received a strong rating)**

- Encouraging schools to focus on all students, not just their low performers; **(SC received a strong rating)** and

- Fairly measuring and judging all schools, including those with high rates of poverty. **(SC received a medium rating)**

For additional information, see page 25 in report.

Center for American Progress – review of first 17 ESSA plans submitted in April 2017. South Carolina was not reviewed.

Alliance for Excellent Education - To summarize the strengths—and shortcomings—for each state's plan, the Alliance created a series of one-page quick-reference guides for anyone looking to determine how well a state's plan will address the needs of its students.

These ESSA Equity Dashboards use a red-yellow-green light–system to rate state plans on several indicators, including long-term goals, accountability provisions, and school rating systems.

Summary of ratings
Long-Term Goals

- Academic Achievement – *yellow*
- Academic Achievement by subgroup – *green*
- 4-year cohort graduation rate – *yellow*
- English language proficiency – *green*

Accountability

- Disaggregation of student subgroups – *green*
- N-size – yellow
- School quality and student success indicator – *yellow*
- High School graduation rate – *green*
- Weighting of academic indicators – *green*
- Testing participation rates – *green*
- Inclusion of student subgroup performance – *red*

Support and Intervention

- Definition of consistently underperforming to identify schools for targeted support – yellow
- High school graduation rate used to identify schools for comprehensive support – green

Concerns:

- South Carolina defines student proficiency as earning a "D" or better on end-of-year exams.
- College and career readiness indicator may appear inflated because it does not include students who may have dropped out or do not graduate in four years.

Bonus:

- South Carolina will lower a schools rating one step if it fails to meet 95% participation rate for 3 consecutive years.

For additional information, see pages 25-27 in report

National Center for Teacher Quality – South Carolina was not reviewed in the report.

Education Strategy Group and Advance CTE – Education Strategy Group and Advance CTE reviewed all state plans to examine and document the extent to which states took advantage of the ESSA opportunity to improve career readiness in grades K-12.

Criteria from report:
Career Readiness in Vision/Goals – SC yes
Career Readiness in accountability system – SC yes
Career Readiness indicator publicly reported – SC yes
Plans to adopt future career readiness indicator – SC yes
Discussion in Title II – SC no
Explicit plans in Title II – SC no
Use of Title IV to support career readiness – SC no
Explicit use of funds to support career readiness through SSAE – SC no
Prioritization of career readiness in community grants – SC no
Title I DSS set aside used to support career readiness – SC no

For additional information, see page 28 in report

Education Trust - focused tightly on three questions we believe are especially important in determining whether a plan is likely to promote opportunity and improve outcomes for all groups of students:
- Are states keeping student learning front and center?
- Do school ratings reflect how schools are doing for all groups of students?
- Is the state being honest about which schools need to take steps to improve for one or more student groups?

No specific mention of South Carolina in the report.

Results for America - In May 2017, Results for America's Evidence in Education Lab team identified in its Leverage Points report 13 key opportunities for states to advance the use of evidence, evaluation, and continuous improvement through their implementation of ESSA. Across all 51 state plans (50 states plus

the District of Columbia), they identified 162 promising practices for building and using evidence to improve student outcomes; all but five states included at least one promising practice.

- Only three states (Delaware, **South Carolina**, and Texas) described strong plans to prioritize the use of evidence and continuous improvement when exercising their authority to intervene in districts unable to improve their lowest-performing schools (Leverage Point 12); just nine states emphasized the use of evidence and continuous improvement in the design of their school improvement applications (Leverage Point 5); and only 14 states highlighted plans to base funding allocations at least in part on the proposed use of evidence (Leverage Point 4).

For other highlights for South Carolina, see pages 28-30 in report.

New Leaders – no specific mention of South Carolina.

Highlights of Current Academic Performance of South Carolina Students

2017 National Assessment of Education Progress

South Carolina saw significant declines in scale scores for 4th grade mathematics from 2015 to 2017. SC declined from 237 to 234. With a correlated decline in percentage of students achieving NAEP proficiency or above from 37% in 2015 to 32% in 2017. Significant gaps in performance among student subgroups were prominent (White 45% Black 13%). National scale score average was 239 (SC 5 points below) and percentage at or above proficient was 40% (SC 8% points lower).

South Carolina saw a decline in 8th grade math scale score from 276 in 2015 to 275 in 2017. The percentage of SC 8th grade students at or above proficiency in math improved from 25% in 2015 to 27% in 2017. The achievement gaps in performance among student subgroups were prominent (White 38% Black 8%). National scale score average was 282 (SC 7 points below) and percentage at or above proficient was 34% (SC 7% points below).

South Carolina saw a significant decline in 4th grade reading scale score from 218 in 2015 to 213 in 2017. With a correlated decline in percentage of students achieving NAEP proficiency or above from 33% in 2015 to 29% in 2017. Significant gaps in performance among subgroups were prominent (White 40% Black 15%). National scale score average was 221 (SC 8 points below) and percentage at or above proficient was 36% (SC 7% points below)

South Carolina maintained a scale score average of 260 for 8th grade reading. South Carolina increased in percentage of students at or above proficiency from 28% in 2015 to 30% in 2017. Significant gaps persist in student subgroups proficiency rates (White 42% Black 12%).

NAEP 8th grade proficiency rates in reading and mathematics have proven to be excellent predictors of the percentage of 12th graders who graduate academically prepared to be successful in entry level college coursework in reading and mathematics. Given the current percentage of SC 8th graders achieving proficiency or above in 8th grade reading (30%) and 8th grade math (27%), South Carolina has a challenge in meeting the goal of 90% of students achieving the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* vision of "college ready" by 2035. Given the gap of at least 60% points, the rate of improvement over the next 17 years would require an annual rate of improvement of at least 3.5 percentage points. While SC has set a specific long-term goal of an annual 5% point improvement in percentage of graduates who reach college and career readiness, the rate of performance on NAEP since 2000 is as follows;

- 4th grade mathematics 2000 percent proficient or above was 16% compared to current performance of 32% reveals an annual average gain of less than 1%.
- 8th grade mathematics 2000 percent proficient or above was 15% compared to current performance of 27% reveals an annual gain of less than 1%.
- 4th grade reading 1998 percent proficient or above was 22% compared to current performance of 29% reveals an annual average gain of less than 1%.
- 8th grade reading 1998 percent proficient was 22% compared to current performance of 30% reveals an annual gain of less than 1%.

For more information on NAEP, see state snapshots on pages 32-34 in this report.

ACT Performance

South Carolina is one of 17 states that measures 100% of high school juniors with the ACT. Current state composite average is 18.7 compared to national average of 21. The percentage of students meeting ACT benchmarks on ACT is 25% compared to national average of 39%. Given that the increasing employability requirements project 65% of South Carolina graduates will need some type of postsecondary credential to qualify for jobs that pay a living wage, SC has a challenge to reach the 2035 vision for college and career readiness detailed in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*.

See page 35 for additional information

College Remediation Rates

College remediation rates vary significantly in South Carolina from as high as 70% or more students needing remediation in some community and technical colleges to less than 10% in universities. The ACT results reveal the best overall average prediction of remediation rates in South Carolina. Given that only 25% of graduates achieve ACT college readiness benchmarks and an estimated 60-65% of high school graduates apply to postsecondary institutions, the practical overall remediation rate for the state would range between 45-55%. This presents a challenge for the vision of 90% of graduates achieving college, career, and citizenship readiness.

South Carolina Kindergarten Readiness

For the first time in over a decade, all students entering kindergarten in the public schools of South Carolina in school year 2017-18 were administered a kindergarten readiness assessment during the first 45 days of the school year, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA).[1] The purpose of the KRA is to provide information to stakeholders at the local, regional, and state levels about how prepared children are for kindergarten.

Many states are using kindergarten readiness as a predictor of future success in schooling. The current readiness rates in SC are 36% overall with a significant gap between white (44%) and black (27%) students. Given that the kindergarten class of 2017-18 will graduate in 2030 and beyond, this cohort of

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[1] The Ready for Kindergarten: Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System is a partnership between the Maryland State Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Education, in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education and WestEd, that is supported by a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (CFDA 84.412A) and by a Race to the Top grant from the U.S. Department of Education (CFDA 84.395).

students will require significant interventions throughout their public school career to reach the vision of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* goal of 90% college, career, and citizenship ready.

For more information, see pages 36-38 in report

Why Is This Important to South Carolina – article in Post and Courier, April 12, 2018

Volvo needs to fill 700 jobs — but fewer than 4 percent of applicants meet basic requirements

Volvo is competing for workers with the region's other advanced manufacturing firms, such as a new Mercedes-Benz Vans plant in North Charleston, which is looking to hire 1,300 people by 2020. ReadySC, a worker training program that's part of the state's technical college system, is in charge of recruiting and training most new Volvo employees. Recent workshops for residents interested in jobs at the plant drew overflow crowds. "We are going to put a lot of jobs in place here," said Katarina Fjording, the Volvo vice president in charge of getting the Berkeley County plant on the ground.

But only about 4 percent of the people who apply through ReadySC have the basic skills, education and aptitude needed to make it through the screening process. That includes scoring well on a standard assessment test, making a good impression during telephone and in-person interviews, completing a training program and passing a drug test and background check.

Recommendations

Given the purpose of the task force, I would recommend the first meeting result in a brief summary of strengths, weakness, and opportunities for improvement of the state ESSA plan based on this review, information from the SC State Department of Education, data from the Education Oversight Committee staff, and other relevant information presented by task force members and other sources.

I am including two reports that will form the basis for the May 31 meeting with the task force. These reports come from two groups that South Carolina has collaborated in the recent past. The structure of the May 31 meeting would focus on the components recommended in these reports and how future revisions to the state ESSA plan and other key support systems could incorporate these recommendations.

Southern Regional Education Board - *States Need Accountability Systems That Value Both "Cs" in College and Career Readiness*: Gene Bottoms and Kirsten Sundell, Southern Regional Education Board

Six Key Areas and Improvement Strategies

- Building Accountability Systems That Value Career Readiness
- Defining and Measuring College Readiness
- Defining and Measuring Academic Career Readiness
- Defining and Measuring Technical Career Readiness
- Essential Elements of College- and Career-Ready Accountability Systems
- Other Policies and Practices That Support College and Career Readiness

National Conference of State Legislatures – *No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State*, August 2016.

ELEMENTS OF A WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION SYSTEM

Children come to school ready to learn, and extra support is given to struggling students so that all have the opportunity to achieve high standards.

- Necessary resources ensure that all children enter the first grade with the cognitive and non-cognitive skills needed to master a first-grade curriculum set to high standards.

- Once students are in school, resources are distributed so that students who may find it harder to meet high standards will be given the extra resources—especially highly effective teachers—they need to succeed.

A world-class teaching profession supports a world-class instructional system, where every student has access to highly effective teachers and is expected to succeed.

- The highly professional teaching force is well-prepared, well-compensated and well-supported throughout their careers.

- Teachers support a well-designed instruction system that includes high standards for learning, a core curriculum created by world-class teachers, and high-quality assessments designed to measure complex skills demanded by the standards and curriculum.

- All students are expected to be ready for college and career, and all educators are expected to get them there.

A highly effective, intellectually rigorous system of career and technical education is available to those preferring an applied education.

- A powerful, hands-on applied curriculum is built, requiring strong academic skills.

- The system has no "dead ends," and pathways to university are clear and always available.

- Schools partner with employers to ensure that high standards are set for the students and provide on-the-job training and learning opportunities to enable them to reach those standards.

Individual reforms are connected and aligned as parts of a clearly planned and carefully designed comprehensive system.

- All policies and practices are developed to support the larger education system.
- The coherent system of education is designed to ensure that every student meets the same goal of college and career readiness.

Excerpts from South Carolina ESSA plan submitted October, 2017

Source: https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/scconsolidatedstateplan.pdf

South Carolina is an ambitious state. While our state has one of the highest poverty rates in the nation, South Carolina is determined to work and is capable of working its way to the forefront of twenty-first century industry while ensuring that its citizens – rural and urban – have equitable access to opportunity. Education plays a critical role in this upward climb for each and every South Carolinian, and we, as a citizenry, are united around what is necessary for all South Carolina students to succeed. Organizations as diverse as the South Carolina Association of School Administrators, the South Carolina Council on Competitiveness, and the South Carolina General Assembly have come together to adopt the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate as a common vision for all South Carolina children, beginning with Pre–K education and continuing through college and careers. The Profile of the South Carolina Graduate outlines the world-class knowledge, world-class skills, and life and career characteristics necessary for children and our state to be successful in the global marketplace.

Profile of the South Carolina Graduate

World Class Knowledge
- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills
- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics
- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

transformSC
tomorrow won't wait for our students

Approved by SCASA Superintendent's Roundtable and SC Chamber of Commerce

an initiative of NEW CAROLINA

The Profile of the South Carolina Graduate serves as the foundation for the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) mission, which is that all South Carolina students graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and citizenship. This mission drives all agency activity, from the design of its integrated accountability system, to revision of the state's diploma pathways, to the streamlining of teacher certification processes.

SCDE Strategic Initiatives

The SCDE has built a state-level framework which connects agency work to statewide student learning and to achievement of the Profile to support South Carolina's mission that students graduate prepared

for success in college, careers, and citizenship. Agency goals are focused around three main strategic initiatives as outlined below.

Personalized and Competency-Based Learning

Personalized learning supports *all* students as they seek to achieve the knowledge, skills, and characteristics identified in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. By fostering student ownership of learning, by restructuring learning around quality evidence of competence, by developing learner profiles and learning pathways, and by adopting flexible learning environments, each student's educational experience is tailored to meet his or her unique strengths, needs, and interests. The SCDE is working with all South Carolina districts across a variety of personalized and competency-based learning models to ensure that every district in the state includes at least one school fully committed to personalized and/or competency-based learning.

Expanded Learning

All students must have the opportunity to develop world-class knowledge, world-class skills, and life and career characteristics. Providing this opportunity requires a diversity of options outside the traditional school day or building. Ensuring that all students – not just those in high income, high capacity districts – have access to career and technical education, virtual options, world languages, the arts, advanced credit in middle school, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual credit coursework is critical to achieving the SCDE's mission. The SCDE is working to increase the number of students achieving industry credentials and to increase the number of students earning a silver certificate or higher on the National Career Readiness Certificate; is partnering with high needs schools to supply needed virtual programming; and is increasing professional learning support needed by teachers to provide world-class content. The state is also committed to early childhood education as a way of supporting kindergarten readiness before school even begins. Community partnerships, especially with the faith-based community, are an important component in supporting opportunity and success in expanded learning options for students. The SCDE is working to measure, support, and increase high-quality expanded learning opportunities and partnerships across the state.

School Improvement

Educational success should not be a function of zip code or history. In the 2016–17 academic year, South Carolina instituted a tiered support system and the use of transformation coaches for identified high-need schools in the state. Under ESSA, these schools are designated for Comprehensive Support and Intervention (CSI) or Targeted Support and Intervention (TSI). Instead of allowing schools and districts to flounder on their own, the SCDE is providing direct support and guidance based on a portfolio of evidence-based school turnaround strategies. The SCDE is not afraid to take management of long-term failing schools identified in the top tier of intervention, but all interventions are put in place with the goal of building local success and capacity for long-term positive change. Furthermore, school improvement across the state is supported by having all districts engage in high-quality systems review and accreditation and by ensuring that the state has a world-class accountability system and a central data warehouse which can be used across programs and agencies to improve educational processes and outcomes in the state. The SCDE is working to improve data feedback loops and to improve reporting with all districts while focusing attention on the improvement of academic performance in districts and schools identified as low-performing.

Three additional strategic initiatives revolve around district support, individual educator support, and internal excellence. To support innovation in educational systems, internally and across the state, the SCDE has instituted indicators of quality and a strong continuous improvement process to ensure successful delivery of strategic initiatives. The SCDE indicators of quality, in the form of evidence- and research-based rubrics, inform overall agency and individual office self-assessment. These indicators include the following:

- *Return on Investment:* Educational productivity including efficient achievement of educational outcomes, as well as the institution of strong, equitable fiscal processes;
- *Fidelity:* Knowledge of and adherence to law, guidance, and/or program design;
- *Stakeholder Satisfaction:* Stakeholder perception that communication and implementation have been purposeful, responsive to stakeholder needs, two-way, supportive, and impactful; and
- *Effectiveness:* Educational productivity, including efficient achievement of educational outcomes and/or program effectiveness as well as institution of strong, equitable fiscal processes and risk management.
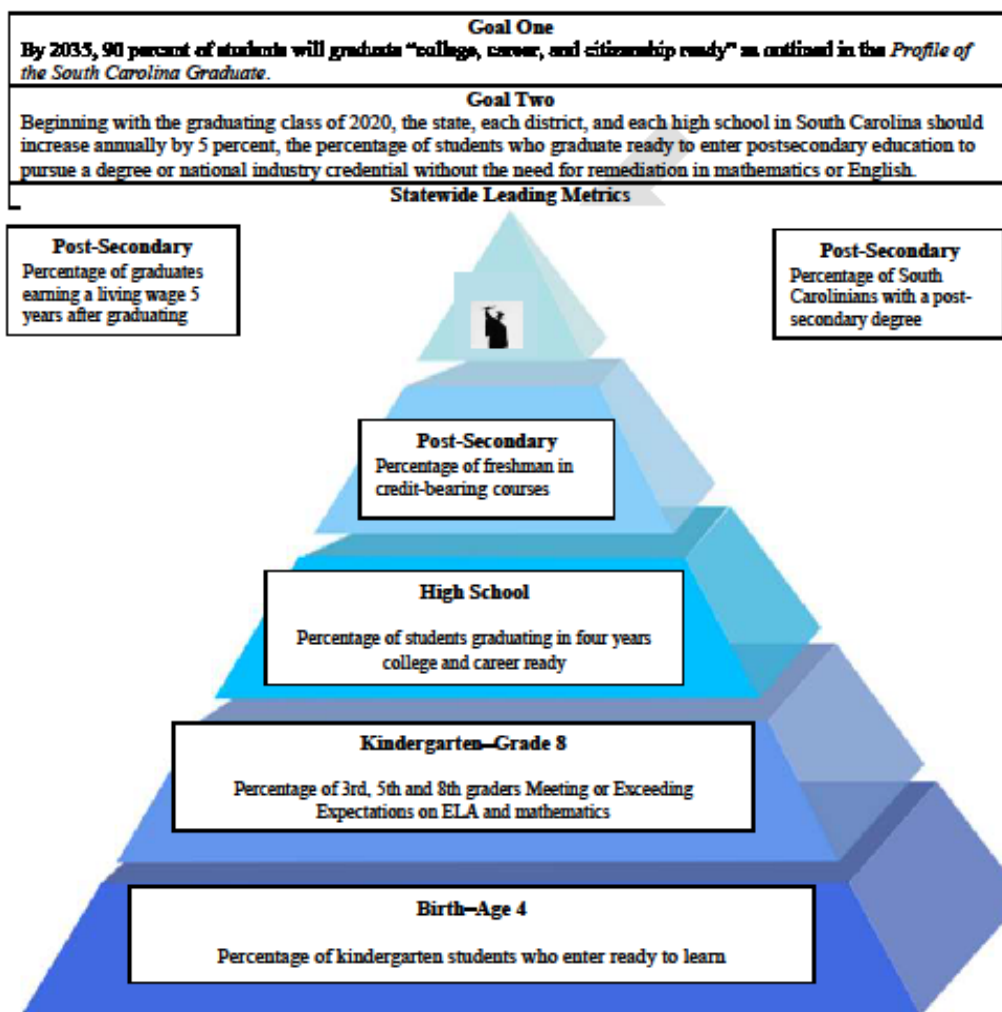
The SCDE believes that targeted strategic initiatives guided by these indicators of quality will result in strong statewide learning outcomes which will ensure that all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate and that all students graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and citizenship.

Throughout development of its ESSA consolidated state plan, the SCDE has worked to ensure strong communication and consultation with a diversity of stakeholders across the state. Exit survey data from three statewide stakeholder meetings provided in Appendix A show stakeholders grew in their understanding and engagement with ESSA over time and viewed the SCDE's consultation process favorably. Appendix B documents, the SCDE's outreach at over 120 meetings between December 2015 and July 2017, and Appendix C provides a summary of SCDE responses to stakeholder feedback.

South Carolina Transformational Goals and Benchmarks

To meet the profile of the South Carolina Graduate, South Carolina will set two overarching long term goals and report on the progress of **key indicators along the continuum of a student's journey through the** system from birth through career.

Goal One

By 2035, 90 percent of students will graduate "college, career, and citizenship ready" as outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*.

Goal Two

Beginning with the graduating class of 2020, the state, each district, and each high school in South Carolina should increase annually by 5 percent, the percentage of students who graduate ready to enter postsecondary education to pursue a degree or national industry credential without the need for remediation in mathematics or English.

Statewide Leading Metrics

Post-Secondary
Percentage of graduates earning a living wage 5 years after graduating

Post-Secondary
Percentage of South Carolinians with a post-secondary degree

Post-Secondary
Percentage of freshman in credit-bearing courses

High School
Percentage of students graduating in four years college and career ready

Kindergarten–Grade 8
Percentage of 3rd, 5th and 8th graders Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on ELA and mathematics

Birth–Age 4
Percentage of kindergarten students who enter ready to learn

10

Independent Reviews of State ESSA Plans

US Department of Education –. The following link provides access to status of South Carolina's ESSA plan. The initial Secretary of Education letter to State Superintendent Spearman can be accessed here and the peer review feedback. As of date of this review, the SC ESSA plan had not been approved. https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/map/sc.html

Bellwether Education Partners - Bellwether Education Partners, in partnership with the Collaborative for Student Success, convened an objective, independent panel of accountability experts to review ESSA state plans. A diverse group of peer reviewers with a range of political viewpoints and backgrounds were asked to review each state's accountability plan with an eye toward capturing strengths and weaknesses**.** https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/independent-review-essa-state-plans

Partners for Each and Every Child - *Have State Engagement Efforts Under ESSA Been Meaningful?* We are excited to share ***Process and Protest***, a report exploring how thoughtful, meaningful, structured, and ongoing engagement among a variety of stakeholders is essential to unlocking the promise of ESSA and advancing excellence with equity in our schools. http://partnersforeachandeverychild.org/process-and-protest/

Fordham Institute - The Every Student Succeeds Act grants states more authority over their accountability systems than did No Child Left Behind, but have they seized the opportunity to develop school ratings that are clearer and fairer than those in the past? Our new analysis examines the plans submitted by all fifty states and the District of Columbia, and whether they are strong or weak (or in-between) in achieving three objectives:

- Assigning annual ratings to schools that are clear and intuitive for parents, educators, and the public;
- Encouraging schools to focus on all students, not just their low performers; and
- Fairly measuring and judging all schools, including those with high rates of poverty.

https://edexcellence.net/publications/rating-the-ratings

Center for American Progress - Sixteen states and Washington, D.C., submitted their ESSA plans—which cover multiple provisions of the law—to the U.S. Department of Education for review during the first submission window. The Center for American Progress reviewed these submissions for their school classification systems and school improvement plans. The summary provides critical context and methodology. The 17 individual state fact sheets break down each state's school classification system in addition to school improvement timeline, grant structure, types of schools identified, and key improvement strategies. https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2017/08/04/436963/school-accountability-first-round-essa-state-plans/

Alliance for Excellent Education - Under ESSA, states received flexibility to chart their own path to educational success, but they must submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Education explaining how they will reach these goals. To summarize the strengths—and shortcomings—for each state's plan, the Alliance created a series of one-page quick-reference guides for anyone looking to determine how well a state's plan will address the needs of its students.

These ESSA Equity Dashboards use a red-yellow-green light–system to rate state plans on several indicators, including long-term goals, accountability provisions, and school rating systems. https://all4ed.org/essa/essa-in-your-state/

National Center for Teacher Quality - The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released its analyses of educator equity in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plans of 16 states and the District of Columbia. These analyses highlight the strengths and opportunities in states' work to ensure that low-income and minority students are not disproportionately taught by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers. NCTQ designed these analyses, along with our ESSA Educator Equity Best Practices Guide, to support states' educator equity work under the ESSA. https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/ESSAAnalysesPressRelease

Education Strategy Group and Advance CTE - The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) presented states with a significant opportunity to design their K-12 education systems to prepare all students for college and careers. States used this occasion to set and execute a vision that provides students with multiple, meaningful opportunities to engage in pathways that build awareness of career opportunities, provide real-world instruction and lead to credentials with labor market value. Education Strategy Group and Advance CTE reviewed all state plans to examine and document the extent to which states took advantage of the ESSA opportunity to improve career readiness in grades K-12. http://edstrategy.org/resource/career-readiness-the-every-student-succeeds-act/

Education Trust - At The Education Trust we've been closely following the decisions states are making in their new accountability systems. Our analysis of state ESSA plans focused tightly on three questions we believe are especially important in determining whether a plan is likely to promote opportunity and improve outcomes for all groups of students:
1. Are states keeping student learning front and center?
2. Do school ratings reflect how schools are doing for all groups of students?
3. Is the state being honest about which schools need to take steps to improve for one or more student groups?
https://edtrust.org/resource/trends-state-essa-plans/

Achieve - The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provided an opportunity for states to rethink their accountability systems and redesign them to emphasize multiple measures of student and school performance, including academic achievement, student growth, graduation rates, improving the English language proficiency of English learners, and other indicators of school quality and student success. States took different approaches to developing their state plans under ESSA. Many states took the opportunity to develop a new vision and strategy for their education systems and designed an accountability system to incent improved student outcomes. Other states approached the development of a state ESSA plan as an exercise to meet new federal requirements for their accountability systems.

This series of briefs analyzes states' widely-varying approaches to long-term goal setting around graduation rates and academic achievement, science and STEM education, inclusion of on-track to graduate measures, and – coming soon – college and career readiness measures in their accountability systems. For a more detailed look at all components of each state's accountability plan as submitted

under ESSA, and to compare two states' plans, take a look at our [online tracker](). Details on each state's long-term goals can be viewed in the [goals tracker](). https://www.achieve.org/accountability-in-essa

Results for America - The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives states, school districts, and schools new flexibility to design K-12 education systems that reflect local needs and priorities. In exchange, ESSA encourages, and in some cases requires, the use of evidence-based approaches and continuous improvement to drive improved outcomes. In May 2017, Results for America's Evidence in Education Lab team identified in its Leverage Points report 13 key opportunities for states to advance the use of evidence, evaluation, and continuous improvement through their implementation of ESSA. In July 2017, RFA published an initial analysis of the first 17 ESSA consolidated state plans submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) that highlighted the extent to which these states propose to use the 13 leverage points to strengthen how they use evidence, evaluation, and continuous improvement. https://results4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/RFA-ESSA-50-State-Report_final.pdf

New Leaders - In their plans to carry out the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states universally recognize what New Leaders has long known: leadership changes everything. In fact, every single state has committed to directing some portion of its federal funding into investments in leadership—from teacher leaders to principals and superintendents. file:///C:/Users/comhl/Desktop/consulting/sc%20accountability/2018.NL_.ESSA-State-Plan-Policy-Brief-FINAL.pdf

Highlights from External Reviews of the SC Every Student Succeeds Act Plan

Secretary of Education Letter to Superintendent Spearman – 1/17/18

Items That Require Additional Information or Revision in South Carolina's Consolidated State Plan
Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)

A.4.ii.a: Minimum N-Size for Accountability
In its State plan, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) states that it will use an nsize of 20 for student subgroups. Later in its State plan, SCDE states that if there are fewer than 30 students with scores in the current and previous year, the school rating will be based on the all students group progress score for the other academic indicator. The ESEA requires each State to describe the minimum number of students that the State determines are necessary to be included for the purposes of accountability. While the State may have different n sizes for different aspects of its accountability system, it is unclear what n-size SCDE intends to use, specifically whether it will use 20 or 30 as its n-size. Therefore, it is unclear whether SCDE meets this requirement.

A.4.iii.a.1: Academic Achievement Long-term Goals
ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(a)(i)(I) requires State-designed long-term goals that show improved academic achievement for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. Because its long-term goals for academic achievement do not show improved academic achievement for each subgroup of students, SCDE has not met the statutory requirements for the establishment of longterm goals for academic achievement.

A.4.iii.a.2: Academic Achievement Measurements of Interim Progress
In its State plan, SCDE does not provide measurements of interim progress by subgroup for mathematics and reading/language arts proficiency. The ESEA requires States to establish ambitious long-term goals, including measurements of interim progress toward meeting such goals, for all students and separately for each subgroup for improved academic achievement, as measured by proficiency on annual mathematics and reading/language arts assessments.

A.4.iii.b.1: Long-term Goals for Four-year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate
ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(a)(i)(I) requires State-designed long-term goals that show improvement in high school graduation rates for all students and separately for each subgroup of students. Because its long-term goals for high school graduation rates do not show improvement for each subgroup of students, SCDE has not met the statutory requirements for the establishment of longterm goals for high school graduation rates.

A.4.iii.b.3: Measurements of Interim Progress
In its State plan, SCDE does not provide measurements of interim progress by subgroup for high school graduation rates. The ESEA requires States to establish ambitious long-term goals, including measurements of interim progress toward meeting such goals, for all students and separately for each subgroup for high school graduation rates.

A.4.iv.c: Graduation Rate Indicator
In its State plan, under "students included in the rating," SCDE states that it will not include students who withdraw in the graduation rate. The ESEA requires that a State use the criteria in section 8101(25) to calculate the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, which provides the specific scenarios in which a student may not be counted in the denominator (e.g., documentation confirming that the student has transferred out, emigrated to another country, or transferred to a prison or juvenile facility, or is deceased). All other students must be included in the denominator when

calculating the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. Therefore, it is unclear whether SCDE has meets the statutory requirement for calculation of the graduation rate indicator.

A.4.iv.e: School Quality or Student Success Indicator(s)

The ESEA requires that a State must include at least one School Quality or Student Success indicator that is valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide with the same indicator or indicators used for each grade span, as such term is determined by the State. Among the indicators proposed in this section, SCDE proposes a Positive & Effective Learning Environments Engagement Tool but it is unclear whether the State intends to use this indicator in its system of annual meaningful differentiation beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. If SCDE intends to include this indicator, the ESEA requires the State to fully describe the indicator in order to demonstrate that the statutory requirements are met. If SCDE is not intending to use the indicator at this time, SCDE should clarify the timeline for inclusion in the system of annual meaningful differentiation and amend its plan with the necessary information to demonstrate that the statutory requirements are met before the indicator may be included in the accountability system.

A.4.v.c: If Applicable, Different Methodology for Annual Meaningful Differentiation

In its State plan, SCDE describes a number of public schools on p. 64 and in Appendix F that will be excluded from the State's system of annual meaningful differentiation and notes that the proposed alternative methodologies for annual meaningful differentiation are still under development by the Education Oversight Committee (EOC). The ESEA requires that the State establish a system of meaningfully differentiating, on an annual basis, all public schools in the State. Because SCDE does not clearly describe how all public schools in the State will be included in its system of annual meaningful differentiation, and whether the different methodology is limited to schools for which an accountability determination cannot otherwise be made, it is unclear whether SCDE meets the statutory requirements.

A.4.vi.c: Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools—Additional Targeted Support Not Exiting Such Status

The ESEA requires the State to identify for comprehensive support and improvement schools that do not exit additional targeted support within a State-defined period of time. In its State plan, SCDE describes identifying additional targeted support schools that do not exit due to low performing subgroups based on "graduation rate, college and career readiness, and student engagement for two consecutive identification cycles." Therefore, it appears that SCDE is not identifying schools for additional targeted support and improvement based on all indicators. The ESEA requires the State to identify for additional targeted support any school that has a subgroup of students that, on its own, would lead to identification as performing as poorly as the lowest five percent of Title I schools on all indicators.

A.4.vi.e: Targeted Support and Improvement Schools—"Consistently Underperforming" Subgroups

In its State plan, SCDE defines "consistently underperforming subgroups," as schools with one or more "historically underperforming groups" at or below the bottom 10 percent of schools for three consecutive years across all indicators. SCDE further defines "underperforming subgroups" as "those *historically under-achieving groups* who are performing in the bottom 10 percent across all accountability metrics" (emphasis added). The ESEA requires that the State identify any school for targeted support and improvement where any subgroup meets the State's definition of "consistently underperforming." In addition, it is not clear from the State's description that it will annually identify schools, if any, with consistently underperforming subgroups for targeted support and improvement.

A.4.vi.f: Targeted Support and Improvement Schools— Additional Targeted Support

In its State plan, SCDE describes identifying schools for additional targeted support based on a subset of the indicators included in its accountability system that does not include the Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency indicator. The ESEA requires a State to describe a

methodology for identifying schools for additional targeted support (schools in which the performance of any subgroup of students, on its own, would lead to identification under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i)(I) using the State's methodology under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(D)) that is based on all indicators.

A.4.viii.b: Exit Criteria for Schools Receiving Additional Targeted Support
The ESEA requires a State to establish statewide exit criteria for schools identified for additional targeted support, which shall be satisfied within a State-determined number of years. It is not clear in the plan what the State-determined number of years will be.

Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction
D.5: Data and Consultation In its State plan, SCDE describes its comprehensive efforts to engage stakeholders in developing
its State plan. SCDE also describes how it will convene the State Human Capital Team to examine data, and SCDE will share data and strategies with an SCDE-external stakeholder group for consultation. However, SCDE does not address how it will use ongoing consultation with all required stakeholder groups. The ESEA also requires a State to describe how it will use ongoing consultation with all required stakeholders consistent with ESEA section 2101(d)(3), which includes teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals (including organizations representing such individuals), specialized instructional support personnel, charter school leaders (in a State that has charter schools), parents, community partners, and other organizations or partners with relevant and demonstrated expertise in programs and activities designed to meet the purpose of Title II.

Title III, Part A, Subpart 1: English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement
E.1: Entrance and Exit Procedures
In its State plan, SCDE does not describe consultation with LEAs representing the geographic diversity of the State. The ESEA requires a State to describe how the SEA will establish and implement, with timely and meaningful consultation with LEAs representing the geographic diversity of the State, standardized, statewide entrance and exit procedures.

Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program
H.1: Outcomes and Objectives
The ESEA requires a State to provide information on program objectives and outcomes for activities under Title V, Part B, Subpart 2, including how the SEA will use funds to help all students meet the challenging State academic standards. While SCDE provides a description of its program objectives and outcomes under the ESEA generally, SCDE does not identify its objectives and outcomes for activities under the Rural and Low-Income School program (RLIS) (*e.g.*, which of the objectives and outcomes under the ESEA programs in 5222(a) are the objectives and outcomes for RLIS; or objectives and outcomes tailored specifically to SCDE's plans for RLIS). The ESEA requires a State to include a description of how it will use RLIS funds to help all students meet the challenging State academic standards

H.2: Technical Assistance
The ESEA requires a State to describe how it will provide technical assistance specifically to LEAs eligible for funds under the RLIS program to help such agencies implement the activities described in ESEA section 5222. While SCDE provides a description of how it will provide technical assistance to LEAs generally, this description does not specifically address technical assistance for RLIS-eligible LEAs. In particular, the ESEA requires a State to include information about how the SEA will provide technical assistance to RLIS-eligible LEAs (*i.e.*, the methods and strategies). Additionally, the ESEA requires that the description specifically address how the SEA's technical assistance will assist RLIS-eligible LEAs' implementation of RLIS activities.

Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B
I.7: Assistance from Counselors
While SCDE describes the professional development provided to school counselors on the requirement to provide assistance to homeless students, and that all students participate in a series of Individual Graduation Plan conferences beginning in the eighth grade, the plan does not describe how homeless youths will receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths, and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college. The McKinney-Vento Act requires a State to describe how homeless youths will receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college.

Bellwether Education Partners, in partnership with the Collaborative for Student Success, convened an objective, independent panel of accountability experts to review ESSA state plans. We sought out a diverse group of peer reviewers with a range of political viewpoints and backgrounds, and we asked them to review each state's accountability plan with an eye toward capturing strengths and weaknesses**.**

Overall Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths: What are the most promising aspects of the state's plan? What parts are worth emulating by other states?

South Carolina's accountability system is built on indicators that are aligned with college and career readiness. The state deserves credit for including science and social studies in its accountability system, which will help signal the critical importance of a well-rounded education for all students. The state places a significant emphasis on the growth of schools' lowest-performing students. The state will also report the percentage of graduates who are college ready, career ready, or college and career ready.

South Carolina's accountability system goes above and beyond ESSA's minimum requirements for identifying schools for comprehensive support and improvement. As a result, it is likely that the state will identify a greater number of very low-performing schools.

In addition, its exit criteria for schools identified for comprehensive support requires schools to demonstrate some improvement rather than simply no longer qualify for the designation.

South Carolina deserves credit for taking a strong stance on the 95 percent assessment participation rate. The state counts untested students as a zero for determining achievement ratings. Schools that miss the participation requirement cannot receive the highest rating in achievement or in the summative rating. In addition, the state threatens the loss of Title I funds if the problem persists.

Weaknesses: What are the most pressing areas for the state to improve in its plan? What aspects should other states avoid?

South Carolina's plan could be improved in a number of ways. The state's goals are overly complex and disconnected from the accountability system. The state's approach to awarding points and assigning corresponding ratings to indicators and schools is also unnecessarily complicated. In its current form, this approach likely overemphasizes high-performing students and runs the risk of overlooking or

masking underperformance and achievement gaps. This is particularly likely because student subgroup performance is not included in the state's rating system.

South Carolina should provide greater detail about its plans to support and intervene in struggling schools. For example, the state says it plans to award all of its 7 percent set-aside for school improvement activities through a formula, but it does not specify how it would implement that formula. Moreover, the state would have had a stronger plan if it had used some portion of that money for competitive grants to the schools and districts with the strongest improvement plans. This step could materially improve the quality of interventions in identified schools. The state's identification criteria for targeted support schools and exit criteria both deserve further clarification and confirmation that sustained improvement is likely.

Plan Components

Each state's plan has been rated on a scale of 1 ("This practice should be avoided by other states") to 5 ("This could be a potential model for other states").

Goals: Are the state's vision, goals, and interim targets aligned, ambitious, and attainable? Why or why not? **SC Rating - 2**

South Carolina sets a strong overarching vision by articulating a comprehensive "profile for a graduate" that includes world-class knowledge, world-class skills, and life/career characteristics. While the vision is aspirational, it is not easy to measure against student performance. The goals the state proposes to meet that vision are overly complex, the time span is long, and there is some ambiguity about the interim target numbers. Finally, it does not appear that performance against the goals matters in the state's accountability system.

Standards and Assessments: Is the state's accountability system built on high-quality standards and assessments aligned to college and career readiness? Why or why not? **SC Rating - 3**

South Carolina is in the midst of a transition on its assessments and will have fully transitioned by 2018. Its assessments are aligned to its standards, which are in turn aligned to college- and career-readiness benchmarks. The plan clearly explains its standards-setting process and how it aligned the new assessments to the standards, but it is too early to tell if its assessments and standards alignment will set students up for success.

Indicators: Are the state's chosen accountability indicators aligned to ensure targets and goals are met and likely to lead to improved educational outcomes for students? Why or why not? **SC Rating - 3**

South Carolina's selection of indicators and weights (with the exception of English language proficiency) are generally strong, but there are concerns about how performance on the indicators translates into an overall rating for schools.

Academic Progress: Has the state created sufficient incentives for schools to care about both student proficiency and student growth over time? Why or why not? **SC Rating - 3**

In its performance index, South Carolina will weight student growth comparably to academic achievement and will give significant weight to both. However, neither measure places much weight on students reaching grade-level standards. To measure achievement, South Carolina plans to use a

performance index that rewards performance at all levels, but especially for students scoring at the highest levels. The particular points system South Carolina has chosen de-emphasizes the proficiency threshold and may result in overlooking or undervaluing underperforming students.

All Students: Does the state system mask the performance of some subgroups of students, or does it have adequate checks in place to ensure all students (including all subgroups of students) receive a high-quality education? Why or why not? **SC Rating - 2**

South Carolina's rating system does not specifically take into account the performance of student subgroups. The state's growth measure, which applies to elementary and middle schools, is split 50-50 between the growth of all students and the growth of the bottom quintile. This approach will encourage schools to prioritize the academic growth of its lowest-performing students; still, it does not specifically incorporate student subgroups.

Identifying Schools: Is the state's plan to identify schools for comprehensive and targeted support likely to identify the schools and student groups most in need? **SC Rating** - **3**

South Carolina's policy to identify schools for comprehensive schools is strong. However, the state's targeted support policy warrants further attention.

Supporting Schools: Are the state's planned interventions in comprehensive and targeted support schools evidence-based and sufficiently rigorous to match the challenges those schools face? Why or why not? **SC Rating** - **3**

South Carolina has developed a Tiered Support and Intervention Matrix to guide the implementation of improvement strategies based on a school's relative need. Schools are assigned a tier from 1 to 4 based on key elements within the school. These tiers correspond with interventions and supports the school improvement team will pursue to raise achievement in that school. The higher the tier, the less autonomy and more evidence required to support the intervention.

Exiting Improvement Status: Are the state's criteria for schools to exit comprehensive and targeted support status sufficient to demonstrate sustained improvements? Why or why not? **SC Rating - 3**

The peers felt that South Carolina's exit criteria for comprehensive support was strong; however, the targeted support exit criteria policy warrants improvement.

Continuous Improvement: Has the state outlined a clear plan to learn from its implementation efforts and modify its actions accordingly, including through continued consultation and engagement of key stakeholders? If not, what steps could the state take to do so? **SC Rating** - **2**

In its plan, South Carolina provides some general information about its continuous improvement activities. For example, the state plans to evaluate annually the results of the district strategic plans to assess the effectiveness of interventions. This could eventually be positive, but it is difficult to tell from the plan.

Partners for Each and Every Child – this report analyzed the stakeholder engagement process in the first 17 states that submitted ESSA plans in April 2017. South Carolina was not included in the review.

Fordham Institute - The Every Student Succeeds Act grants states more authority over their accountability systems than did No Child Left Behind, but have they seized the opportunity to develop school ratings that are clearer and fairer than those in the past? Our new analysis examines the plans submitted by all fifty states and the District of Columbia, and whether they are strong or weak (or in-between) in achieving three objectives:

- Assigning annual ratings to schools that are clear and intuitive for parents, educators, and the public;
- Encouraging schools to focus on all students, not just their low performers; and
- Fairly measuring and judging all schools, including those with high rates of poverty.

To determine whether South Carolina's proposed ESSA accountability system accomplishes these three objectives, this analysis evaluates its state plan, as submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on October 13, 2017, as explained below.

Are the labels or ratings for schools clear and intuitive for parents, educators, and the public? South Carolina's plan is **strong** on this point because it proposes to annually rate schools with a system that combines a one-hundred-point scale with text labels that are easy to understand. This model immediately conveys to all observers how well a given school is performing.

Does the rating system encourage schools to focus on all students? There are two primary ways for state accountability systems to encourage schools to focus on all students: (1) use a performance index or scale scores in place of proficiency rates when measuring achievement and (2) measure the growth of all students. South Carolina receives a **strong** rating because those two components constitute 60 percent of schools' annual ratings. Performance indexes count for 40 percent, which encourages schools to look beyond those pupils who are near the cutoff for proficiency. And a measure of growth for all students constitutes another 20 percent of schools' summative ratings, which should also lead schools to heed the educational needs of every child.

Is the rating system fair to all schools, including those with high rates of poverty? South Carolina earns a **medium** here because academic growth will constitute 40 percent of schools' annual ratings—split evenly between a measure of growth for all students and a measure of students scoring in the bottom quartile of achievement. Growth measures gauge changes in pupil achievement over time, independent of prior achievement, and are therefore less correlated with poverty—thus affording high-poverty schools the opportunity to earn positive ratings.

Center for American Progress – review of first 17 ESSA plans submitted in April 2017. South Carolina was not reviewed.

Alliance for Excellent Education - Under ESSA, states received flexibility to chart their own path to educational success, but they must submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Education explaining how they will reach these goals. To summarize the strengths—and shortcomings—for each state's plan, the Alliance created a series of one-page quick-reference guides for anyone looking to determine how well a state's plan will address the needs of its students.

AN ANALYSIS OF SOUTH CAROLINA'S ESSA PLAN

This dashboard analyzes South Carolina's plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), specifically its commitment to equity and excellence and its compliance with the law. This analysis is not all-encompassing but rather focuses on the indicators most essential for advancing equitable educational opportunities for all students. South Carolina submitted its plan on October 13, 2017; full text is available at https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/stateplan17/scconsolidatedstateplan.pdf. View ESSA equity dashboards for other states at www.all4ed.org/essa.

ESSA EQUITY DASHBOARD
SOUTH CAROLINA

LONG-TERM GOALS

Academic Achievement

🟡 90% of students proficient in reading and math by 2035
Yellow

Academic Achievement by Student Subgroup

🟢 Same long-term goals for each subgroup
Green

4-Year Cohort High School Graduation Rate

🟡 90% of students graduating by 2035
Yellow

English Language Proficiency

🟢 Accounts for student's initial proficiency level in setting student goals with maximum of 5 years to attain proficiency
Green

SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION

Definition of "Consistently Underperforming" Used to Identify Schools for Targeted Support

🟡 Definition is meaningfully different from statutory definition of "additional targeted support," but a student subgroup must fail all indicators to trigger intervention
Yellow

High School Graduation Rate Used to Identify Schools for Comprehensive Support

🟢 4-year cohort graduation rate
Green

! CONCERN

South Carolina defines student proficiency as earning a "D" or better on end-of-course exams

ACCOUNTABILITY

Disaggregation of Student Subgroups

🟢 Disaggregates subgroups by race, ethnicity, income, English language proficiency, and disability status
Green

N-Size

🟡 20 students
Yellow

School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) Indicator

🟡 Preparing for success (performance in science and social studies), college and career readiness, and positive and effective learning environment (survey tool still under development) for all schools
Yellow

High School Graduation Rate

🟢 Does not use extended-year cohort graduation rates
Green

Weighting of Academic Indicators

🟢 95% weight for high schools; 90% weight for elementary and middle schools
Green

Testing Participation Rates

🟢 No credit for untested students; requires schools that do not meet 95% participation rate to develop plan to increase participation
Green

Inclusion of Student Subgroup Performance

🔴 Subgroup performance does not affect school ratings
Red

! CONCERN

College and career readiness indicator may appear inflated because it does not account for students who drop out or who do not graduate in 4 years

⭐ BONUS

South Carolina will lower a school's rating one step if it fails to meet 95% participation rate for 3 consecutive years

Note: Some indicators do not apply to some states and do not appear in the analysis included on the front of this document. The Alliance for Excellent Education set the parameters associated with the green, yellow, and red designations.

LONG-TERM GOALS

Academic Achievement
- 🟢 Green: 75% or more of all students proficient on statewide assessments by 2030 or equivalently rigorous goal
- 🟡 Yellow: 60–74.9% of all students proficient by 2030 or 75% or more proficient by 2031–39 or equivalently rigorous goal
- 🔴 Red: Less rigorous goals and/or longer timeline than 2040

Academic Achievement by Student Subgroup
- 🟢 Green: Same long-term goals for each subgroup or similarly ambitious commitment to closing achievement gaps
- 🟡 Yellow: Less ambitious goals but requires higher rates of growth from lower-performing subgroups
- 🔴 Red: Same or similar rates of academic growth for all subgroups

4-Year Cohort High School Graduation Rate
- 🟢 Green: 90% or more of students graduating by 2030
- 🟡 Yellow: 85–89.9% of students graduating by 2030 or 90% or more graduating by 2031–39
- 🔴 Red: Less rigorous goals and/or longer timeline than 2040

Extended-Year Cohort High School Graduation Rate
- 🟢 Green: At least 3 percentage points higher than 4-year cohort rate goal or 1 percentage point higher if 4-year cohort rate goal is at least 90%
- 🟡 Yellow: 1–2 percentage points higher than 4-year cohort rate goal
- 🔴 Red: Goals are the same or state does not set goals for each cohort rate

English Language Proficiency
- 🟢 Green: Accounts for initial age/grade or proficiency level in setting student targets with maximum timeline of no more than 6 years to achieve proficiency
- 🟡 Yellow: Accounts for initial age/grade or proficiency level with maximum timeline of 7 years to achieve proficiency
- 🔴 Red: Does not account for initial age/grade or proficiency level and/or sets maximum timeline of 8 or more years to achieve proficiency

ACCOUNTABILITY

Disaggregation of Student Subgroups
- 🟢 Green: State does not use super-subgroup or uses it only in addition to disaggregated subgroups for school ratings and/or identifying schools for support
- 🔴 Red: State uses super-subgroups instead of required subgroups for school ratings and/or identifying schools for support

N-Size
- 🟢 Green: N-size for accountability of 15 or fewer students
- 🟡 Yellow: N-size for accountability of 16–25 students
- 🔴 Red: N-size for accountability of 26 or more students

School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) Indicator
- 🟢 Green: Evidence-based statewide SQSS measures are disaggregated by student subgroup
- 🟡 Yellow: Inconclusive evidence for SQSS measures or significant measures are in development but still statewide and disaggregated by student subgroup
- 🔴 Red: No evidence for SQSS measures and/or not statewide or disaggregated by student subgroup

High School Graduation Rate
- 🟢 Green: Exclusively uses or gives more weight to 4-year cohort graduation rate
- 🟡 Yellow: Uses 4- and extended-year cohort rates and weights 4-year rate equally or less than other rates
- 🔴 Red: Does not use 4-year cohort rate or uses another unlawful graduation rate calculation

Weighting of Academic Indicators
- 🟢 Green: 75% or more weight on academic indicators
- 🟡 Yellow: 50–74% weight on academic indicators
- 🔴 Red: Less than 50% weight on academic indicators or weight is unclear in plan

Testing Participation Rates
- 🟢 Green: No credit for untested students or similarly rigorous consequences
- 🟡 Yellow: Less rigorous consequences that have limited implications for accountability
- 🔴 Red: Does not specify consequences for untested students

Inclusion of Subgroup Performance
- 🟢 Green: Schools receive lower rating if they have a struggling subgroup or subgroup performance is an independent and substantial portion of rating index
- 🟡 Yellow: Subgroups have lesser but still meaningful effect on a school's rating
- 🔴 Red: Subgroups have little to no effect on a school's rating

SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION

Definition of "Consistently Underperforming" Used to Identify Schools for Targeted Support
- 🟢 Green: Definition is meaningfully different from "additional targeted support" (ATS) and triggers intervention based on 2 or fewer indicators
- 🟡 Yellow: Definition is meaningfully different from ATS and triggers intervention based on 3 or more indicators
- 🔴 Red: Definition is not meaningfully different from ATS or does not comply with ESSA

High School Graduation Rate Used to Identify Schools for Comprehensive Support
- 🟢 Green: 4-year cohort graduation rate
- 🟡 Yellow: 5-year cohort graduation rate
- 🔴 Red: 6-year (or longer) cohort graduation rate

National Center for Teacher Quality – South Carolina was not reviewed in the report.

Education Strategy Group and Advance CTE **–** The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) presented states with a significant opportunity to design their K-12 education systems to prepare all students for college and careers. States used this occasion to set and execute a vision that provides students with multiple, meaningful opportunities to engage in pathways that build awareness of career opportunities, provide real-world instruction and lead to credentials with labor market value. Education Strategy Group and Advance CTE reviewed all state plans to examine and document the extent to which states took advantage of the ESSA opportunity to improve career readiness in grades K-12.

While a number of states defined a college-and career-ready graduate, only 13 states actually connected their long-term goals to that vision. This is a missed opportunity for bringing alignment across K-12 and postsecondary education. Leading examples from round 2 include;

- **South Carolina** connects its goals to the *Profile of a South Carolina* graduate. First, by 2035, the state seeks to have 90 percent of graduates meeting that definition. Second, beginning with the graduating class of 2020, South Carolina aims for the state, each district, and each high school to annually increase the percentage of students who graduate ready to enter postsecondary education without remediation by 5 percent.

Criteria from report:
Career Readiness in Vision/Goals – SC yes
Career Readiness in accountability system – SC yes
Career Readiness indicator publicly reported – SC yes
Plans to adopt future career readiness indicator – SC yes
Discussion in Title II – SC no
Explicit plans in Title II – SC no
Use of Title IV to support career readiness – SC no
Explicit use of funds to support career readiness through SSAE – SC no
Prioritization of career readiness in community grants – SC no
Title I DSS set aside used to support career readiness – SC no

Education Trust - At The Education Trust we've been closely following the decisions states are making in their new accountability systems. Our analysis of state ESSA plans focused tightly on three questions we believe are especially important in determining whether a plan is likely to promote opportunity and improve outcomes for all groups of students:
- Are states keeping student learning front and center?
- Do school ratings reflect how schools are doing for all groups of students?
- Is the state being honest about which schools need to take steps to improve for one or more student groups?

No specific mention of South Carolina in the report.

Results for America - The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives states, school districts, and schools new flexibility to design K-12 education systems that reflect local needs and priorities. In exchange, ESSA encourages, and in some cases requires, the use of evidence-based approaches and continuous improvement to drive improved outcomes. In May 2017, Results for America's Evidence in Education

Lab team identified in its Leverage Points report 13 key opportunities for states to advance the use of evidence, evaluation, and continuous improvement through their implementation of ESSA. In July 2017, RFA published an initial analysis of the first 17 ESSA consolidated state plans submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) that highlighted the extent to which these states propose to use the 13 leverage points to strengthen how they use evidence, evaluation, and continuous improvement Across all 51 state plans (50 states plus the District of Columbia), we identified 162 promising practices for building and using evidence to improve student outcomes; all but five states included at least one promising practice. Here are the main findings from the analysis:

- Eleven states described in their plans the largest number of promising practices related to the 13 ESSA evidence leverage points: New Mexico (9), Minnesota (8), Connecticut (7), Delaware (7), Iowa (7), Rhode Island (7), Tennessee (7), Indiana (6), Massachusetts (6), Ohio (6), and Oklahoma (6).
- Only three states (Delaware, **South Carolina**, and Texas) described strong plans to prioritize the use of evidence and continuous improvement when exercising their authority to intervene in districts unable to improve their lowest-performing schools (Leverage Point 12); just nine states emphasized the use of evidence and continuous improvement in the design of their school improvement applications (Leverage Point 5); and only 14 states highlighted plans to base funding allocations at least in part on the proposed use of evidence (Leverage Point 4).
- No state fully articulated a clear vision for using and building evidence outside of Title I school improvement (e.g., in ESSA Title II and Title IV), although 17 states did include promising approaches to advancing evidence-based strategies under these titles.

South Carolina is instituting a new set of indicators of quality in the form of evidence and research-based rubrics to inform statewide, programmatic, and local self-assessment of progress toward successful delivery of strategic initiatives. All LEAs, in addition to programmatic SEA leaders, will engage in these regular systems reviews informed by data collected and warehoused centrally (pp. 2–3).

Several states are designing multitiered systems of support that focus in part on supporting the thoughtful use of evidence, data, and continuous improvement. For example, North Dakota's system includes five components: assessment, data-driven decision making, multilevel evidence-based instruction, infrastructure and support mechanisms, and fidelity and evaluation. CSI and TSI schools will also be assigned a liaison from the state's School Improvement and Intervention Office, as well as a partner success manager through the School Improvement Network (p. 76). Similar approaches are planned in **South Carolina** (pp. 66–71) and Arkansas (pp. 54–58), which includes a focus on support at the LEA level.

South Carolina has designed a catalog of state-approved evidence-based practices and interventions from which identified schools are required to select based on their tiered level of need and support. Schools and districts will receive support in finding, implementing, and monitoring evidence-based interventions by Transformation Coaches, but the amount and frequency of support—as well as the required level of evidence for interventions—will vary based on the assigned tier (p. 71).

In Washington (pp. 52–53) and New Hampshire (p. 51), non-exiting schools will be required to undergo a new comprehensive needs assessment and use the results to amend their improvement plans to (1) address reasons for failing to meet exit criteria, including whether interventions were implemented with fidelity and quality; (2) continue addressing any previously identified or new resource inequities; and (3) include additional evidence-based interventions supported by strong or moderate levels of evidence. Similarly, **South Carolina** (p. 70) and Wyoming (p. 26) will require CSI schools that fail to meet exit criteria to amend their improvement plans to include evidence-based interventions supported by moderate or strong evidence.

In **South Carolina**, an SEA-appointed support liaison will be paired with LEAs serving a significant number or percentage of identified schools to help carry out technical assistance activities such as

systems-level capacity reviews, plan reviews and revisions, evaluations of implementation and impact of plan strategies, and guidance resources on selecting and monitoring implementation of evidence-based practices (pp. 72–73).

New Leaders - In their plans to carry out the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states universally recognize what New Leaders has long known: leadership changes everything. In fact, every single state has committed to directing some portion of its federal funding into investments in leadership—from teacher leaders to principals and superintendents.

- **52** states, including DC and Puerto Rico intend to invest in leadership
- **24** states plan to use the Title II 3 percent set-aside for school leadership1
- **46** states identify, require, or prioritize evidence-based strategies to support school leadership or school improvement

No specific mention of SC other than inclusion in bullets above.

South Carolina 2017 NAEP Results

2017 Mathematics State Snapshot Report
South Carolina • Grade 4 • Public Schools

Overall Results

- In 2017, the average score of fourth-grade students in South Carolina was 234. This was lower than the average score of 239 for public school students in the nation.
- The average score for students in South Carolina in 2017 (234) was lower than their average score in 2015 (237) and was higher than their average score in 2000 (220).
- The percentage of students in South Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP *Proficient* level was 32 percent in 2017. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2015 (36 percent) and was greater than that in 2000 (18 percent).
- The percentage of students in South Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP *Basic* level was 75 percent in 2017. This percentage was smaller than that in 2015 (79 percent) and was greater than that in 2000 (59 percent).

Achievement-Level Percentages and Average Score Results

South Carolina				Average Score
2000	41*	41	16* 2*	220*
2015	21*	43	31 6	237*
2017	25	43	26 6	234
Nation (public)				
2017	21*	39*	32* 8*	239*

Percent below *Basic* / Percent at *Proficient* or at *Basic* or *Advanced*

Below *Basic* ■ *Basic* ■ *Proficient* ■ *Advanced*

* Significantly different (p < .05) from state's results in 2017. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Compare the Average Score in 2017 to Other States/Jurisdictions

●DC
○DE
○RI
○DoDEA
●PR

In 2017, the average score in South Carolina (234) was
■ lower than those in 34 states/jurisdictions
■ higher than those in 5 states/jurisdictions
□ not significantly different from those in 13 states/jurisdictions

DoDEA = Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools)

Average Scores for State/Jurisdiction and Nation (public)

■ Nation (public)   ● South Carolina

* Significantly different (p < .05) from 2017. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.

Results for Student Groups in 2017

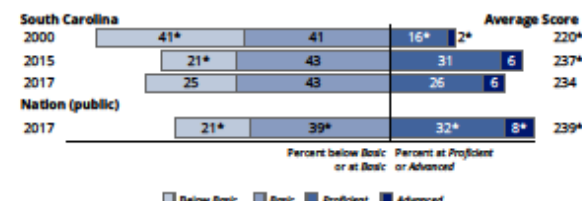| Reporting Groups	Percentage of students	Avg. score	Percentage at or above Basic	Percentage at or above Proficient	Percentage at Advanced
Race/Ethnicity					
White	50	245	86	45	9
Black	34	219	59	13	1
Hispanic	10	230	71	26	4
Asian	1	‡	‡	‡	‡
American Indian/Alaska Native	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Two or more races	4	232	73	31	4
Gender					
Male	52	235	75	34	6
Female	48	233	75	30	5
National School Lunch Program					
Eligible	62	226	67	22	3
Not eligible	36	248	88	51	11

\# Rounds to zero.
‡ Reporting standards not met.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding, and because the "Information not available" category for the National School Lunch Program, which provides free/reduced-price lunches, is not displayed. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.
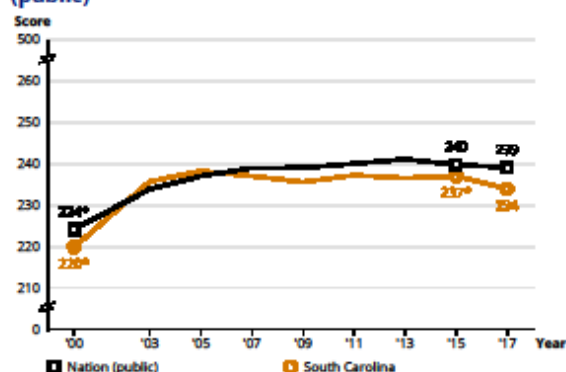
Score Gaps for Student Groups

- In 2017, Black students had an average score that was 26 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2000 (30 points).
- In 2017, Hispanic students had an average score that was 15 points lower than that for White students. Data are not reported for Hispanic students in 2000, because reporting standards were not met.
- In 2017, male students in South Carolina had an average score that was not significantly different from that for female students.
- In 2017, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of low family income, had an average score that was 22 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2000 (26 points).

Overall Results

- In 2017, the average score of eighth-grade students in South Carolina was 275. This was lower than the average score of 282 for public school students in the nation.
- The average score for students in South Carolina in 2017 (275) was not significantly different from their average score in 2015 (276) and was higher than their average score in 2000 (265).
- The percentage of students in South Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP *Proficient* level was 26 percent in 2017. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2015 (26 percent) and was greater than that in 2000 (17 percent).
- The percentage of students in South Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP *Basic* level was 62 percent in 2017. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2015 (65 percent) and was greater than that in 2000 (53 percent).

Compare the Average Score in 2017 to Other States/Jurisdictions
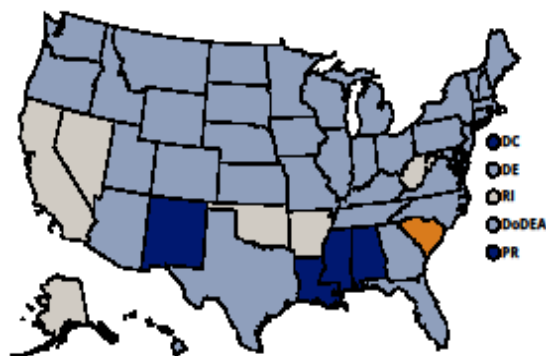
In 2017, the average score in South Carolina (275) was
- lower than those in 39 states/jurisdictions
- higher than those in 6 states/jurisdictions
- not significantly different from those in 7 states/jurisdictions

DoDEA = Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools)

Achievement-Level Percentages and Average Score Results
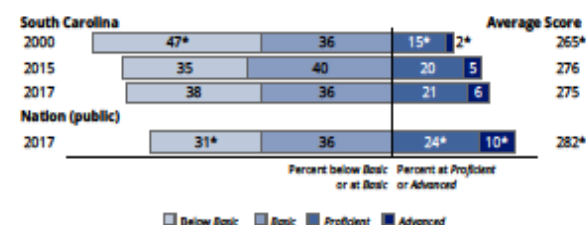

South Carolina	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced	Average Score
2000	47*	36	15*	2*	265*
2015	35	40	20	5	276
2017	38	36	21	6	275
Nation (public)					
2017	31*	36	24*	10*	282*

Percent below Basic Percent at Proficient
or at Basic or Advanced

☐ Below Basic ☐ Basic ■ Proficient ■ Advanced

* Significantly different (p < .05) from state's results in 2017. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Average Scores for State/Jurisdiction and Nation (public)

■ Nation (public)   ○ South Carolina

* Significantly different (p < .05) from 2017. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.

Results for Student Groups in 2017

Reporting Groups	Percentage of students	Avg. score	Percentage at or above Basic	Percentage at or above Proficient	Percentage at Advanced
Race/Ethnicity					
White	51	288	78	38	9
Black	34	253	37	8	1
Hispanic	9	272	64	19	3
Asian	2	‡	‡	‡	‡
American Indian/Alaska Native	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Two or more races	3	278	71	27	4
Gender					
Male	51	274	61	26	7
Female	49	275	64	26	5
National School Lunch Program					
Eligible	54	263	50	14	2
Not eligible	44	290	79	42	10

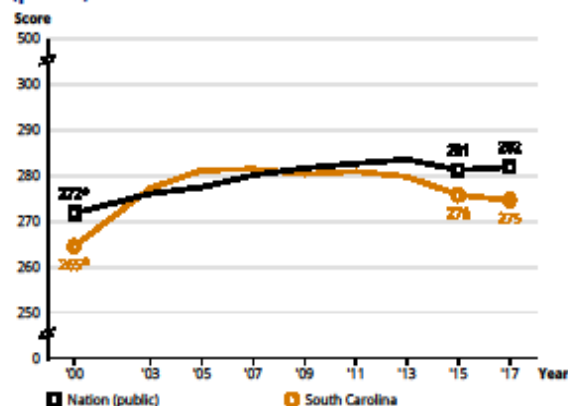\# Rounds to zero.
‡ Reporting standards not met.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding, and because the "Information not available" category for the National School Lunch Program, which provides free/reduced-price lunches, is not displayed. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

Score Gaps for Student Groups

- In 2017, Black students had an average score that was 35 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2000 (30 points).
- In 2017, Hispanic students had an average score that was 16 points lower than that for White students. Data are not reported for Hispanic students in 2000, because reporting standards were not met.
- In 2017, male students in South Carolina had an average score that was not significantly different from that for female students.
- In 2017, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of low family income, had an average score that was 28 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 2000 (29 points).

The Nation's Report Card

2017 Reading State Snapshot Report
South Carolina • Grade 4 • Public Schools

Overall Results

- In 2017, the average score of fourth-grade students in South Carolina was 213. This was lower than the average score of 221 for public school students in the nation.
- The average score for students in South Carolina in 2017 (213) was lower than their average score in 2015 (218) and was higher than their average score in 1998 (209).
- The percentage of students in South Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP *Proficient* level was 29 percent in 2017. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2015 (33 percent) and was greater than that in 1998 (22 percent).
- The percentage of students in South Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP *Basic* level was 59 percent in 2017. This percentage was smaller than that in 2015 (65 percent) and was greater than that in 1998 (53 percent).

Compare the Average Score in 2017 to Other States/Jurisdictions
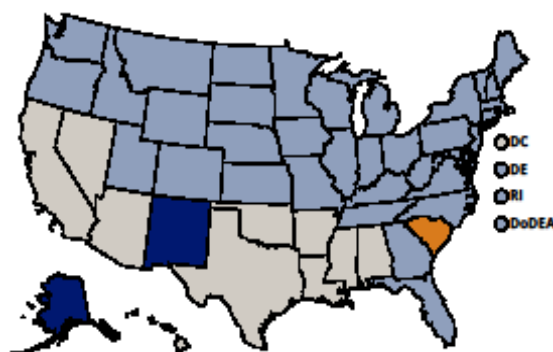
In 2017, the average score in South Carolina (213) was
- lower than those in 38 states/jurisdictions
- higher than those in 2 states/jurisdictions
- not significantly different from those in 11 states/jurisdictions

DoDEA = Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools)

Results for Student Groups in 2017

| Reporting Groups	Percentage of students	Avg. score	Percentage at or above *Basic*	Percentage at or above *Proficient*	Percentage at *Advanced*
Race/Ethnicity					
White	50	225	72	40	9
Black	34	196	40	15	2
Hispanic	11	205	51	22	5
Asian	1	‡	‡	‡	‡
American Indian/Alaska Native	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Two or more races	4	224	71	37	9
Gender					
Male	51	210	55	28	6
Female	49	217	63	31	7
National School Lunch Program					
Eligible	62	202	48	19	3
Not eligible	35	233	79	48	12

Rounds to zero.
‡ Reporting standards not met.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding, and because the "Information not available" category for the National School Lunch Program, which provides free/reduced-price lunches, is not displayed. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

Achievement-Level Percentages and Average Score Results
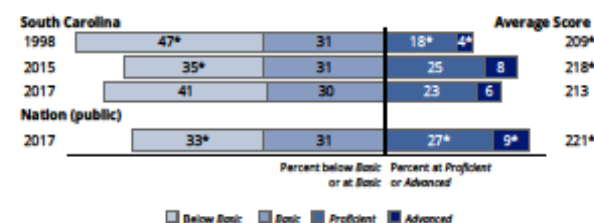
* Significantly different (*p* < .05) from state's results in 2017. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Average Scores for State/Jurisdiction and Nation (public)
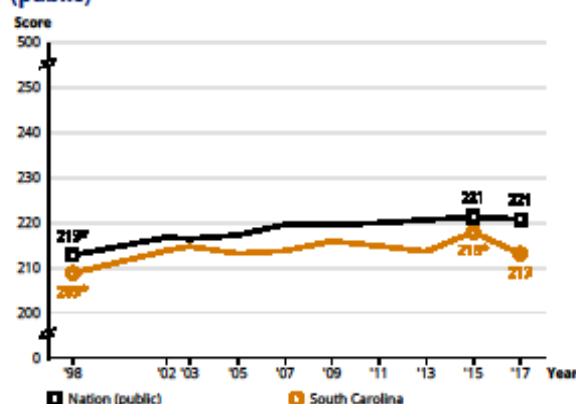
* Significantly different (*p* < .05) from 2017. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.
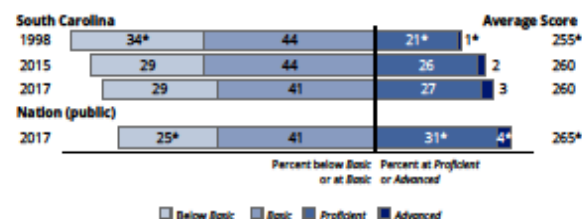
Score Gaps for Student Groups

- In 2017, Black students had an average score that was 29 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (29 points).
- In 2017, Hispanic students had an average score that was 20 points lower than that for White students. Data are not reported for Hispanic students in 1998, because reporting standards were not met.
- In 2017, female students in South Carolina had an average score that was higher than that for male students by 7 points.
- In 2017, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of low family income, had an average score that was 31 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (29 points).

NOTE: The NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Statistical comparisons are calculated on the basis of unrounded scale scores or percentages. Read more about how to interpret NAEP results from the reading assessment at https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/interpret_results.aspx.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1998-2017 Reading Assessments.

ies NATIONAL CENTER for EDUCATION STATISTICS
Institute of Education Sciences

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Overall Results

- In 2017, the average score of eighth-grade students in South Carolina was 260. This was lower than the average score of 265 for public school students in the nation.
- The average score for students in South Carolina in 2017 (260) was not significantly different from their average score in 2015 (260) and was higher than their average score in 1998 (255).
- The percentage of students in South Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP *Proficient* level was 30 percent in 2017. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2015 (28 percent) and was greater than that in 1998 (22 percent).
- The percentage of students in South Carolina who performed at or above the NAEP *Basic* level was 71 percent in 2017. This percentage was not significantly different from that in 2015 (71 percent) and was greater than that in 1998 (66 percent).

Compare the Average Score in 2017 to Other States/Jurisdictions
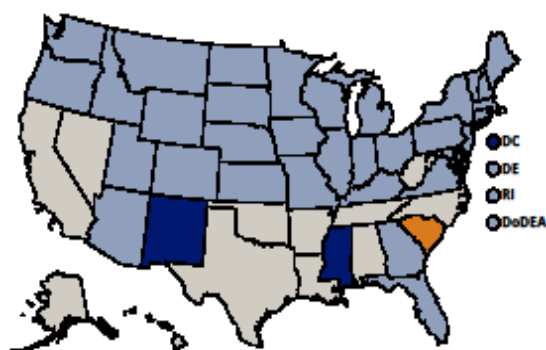
In 2017, the average score in South Carolina (260) was

- lower than those in 36 states/jurisdictions
- higher than those in 3 states/jurisdictions
- not significantly different from those in 12 states/jurisdictions

DoDEA = Department of Defense Education Activity (overseas and domestic schools)

Achievement-Level Percentages and Average Score Results

* Significantly different (p < .05) from state's results in 2017. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Average Scores for State/Jurisdiction and Nation (public)

* Significantly different (p < .05) from 2017. Significance tests were performed using unrounded numbers.

Results for Student Groups in 2017

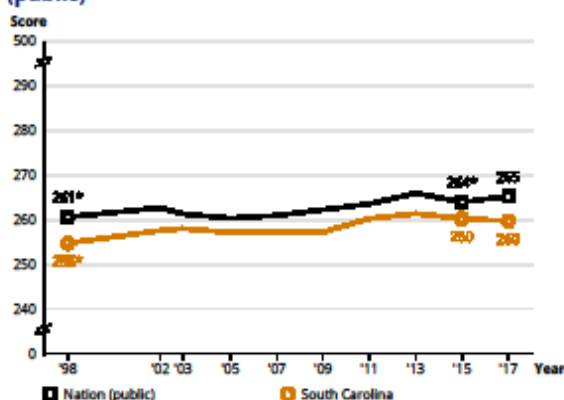| Reporting Groups	Percentage of students	Avg. score	Percentage at or above Basic	Percentage at or above Proficient	Percentage at Advanced
Race/Ethnicity					
White	51	272	82	42	4
Black	34	241	52	12	#
Hispanic	9	256	66	27	3
Asian	2	‡	‡	‡	‡
American Indian/Alaska Native	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	#	‡	‡	‡	‡
Two or more races	3	267	79	34	3
Gender					
Male	51	254	66	25	2
Female	49	265	75	35	4
National School Lunch Program					
Eligible	56	249	61	19	1
Not eligible	42	274	84	45	5

\# Rounds to zero.
‡ Reporting standards not met.
NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding, and because the "Information not available" category for the National School Lunch Program, which provides free/reduced-price lunches, is not displayed. Black includes African American and Hispanic includes Latino. Race categories exclude Hispanic origin.

Score Gaps for Student Groups

- In 2017, Black students had an average score that was 31 points lower than that for White students. This performance gap was wider than that in 1998 (25 points).
- In 2017, Hispanic students had an average score that was 16 points lower than that for White students. Data are not reported for Hispanic students in 1998, because reporting standards were not met.
- In 2017, female students in South Carolina had an average score that was higher than that for male students by 11 points.
- In 2017, students who were eligible for free/reduced-price school lunch, an indicator of low family income, had an average score that was 25 points lower than that for students who were not eligible. This performance gap was not significantly different from that in 1998 (26 points).

SC Class of 2017 ACT Results

ACT PROFILE REPORT - State: SECTION I, EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Graduating Class 2017

PAGE 6
Code 419999
South Carolina

Total Students in Report: 50,936

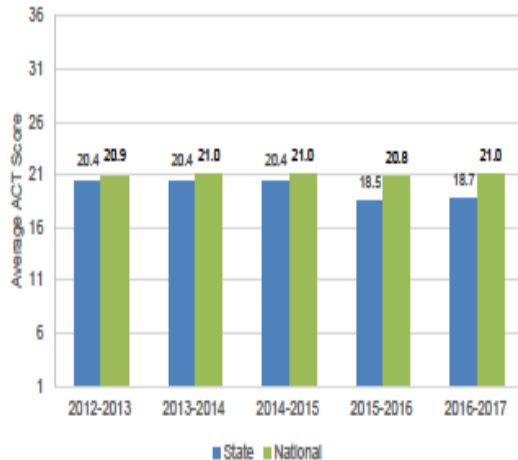### Figure 1.1. Average Composite Scores: 5 Years of Testing*

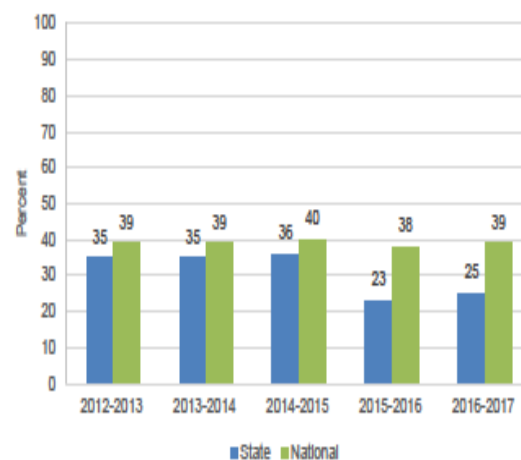### Figure 1.2. Percent Meeting 3 or 4 Benchmarks: 5 Years of Testing*

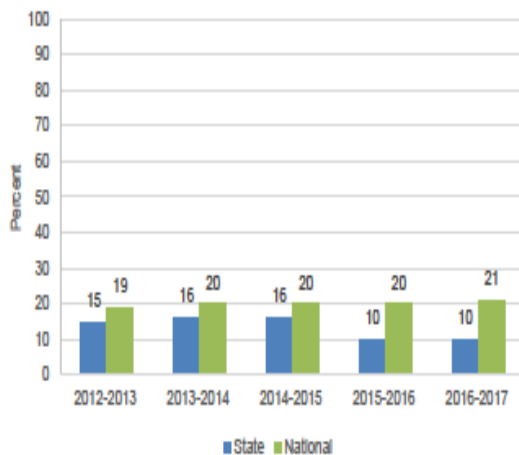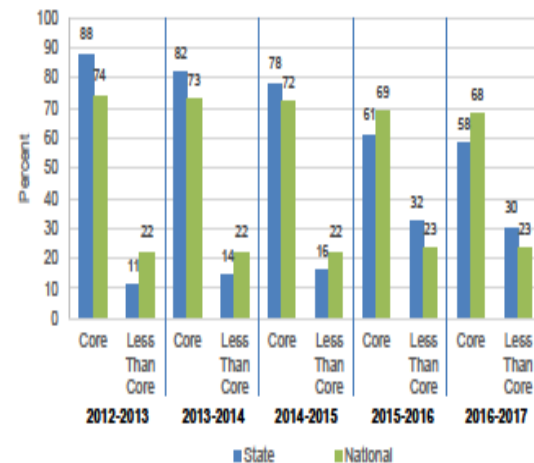### Figure 1.3. Percent Meeting STEM Benchmark: 5 Years of Testing*

Figure 1.4. Percent Taking A Core Curriculum: 5 Years of Testing*

* Missing columns in above graphs reflect years in which no students were tested.

South Carolina Kindergarten Readiness

For the first time in over a decade, all students entering kindergarten in the public schools of South Carolina in school year 2017-18 were administered a kindergarten readiness assessment during the first 45 days of the school year, the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA).[2] The purpose of the KRA is to provide information to stakeholders at the local, regional, and state levels about how prepared children are for kindergarten. [3] The assessment may not be used to deny a student admission to kindergarten. Instead, the results are used for the following objectives:

1. At the macro level, at the state, district and county level and pursuant to Section 59-152-33 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, the results should be used by policymakers to measure progress toward kindergarten readiness and by educators to inform instruction, to guide the expansion or improvement of early childhood programs, etc.
2. At the student level, the "results of the assessments and the developmental intervention strategies recommended or services needed to address each child's identified needs" are to be provided to teachers and parents to assist in the development of the child.

The KRA assesses four areas of early learning:

- Social Foundations- including social and emotional development, and approaches toward learning

- Mathematics

- Language and Literacy

- Physical Well-being and Motor Development

The assessment has three performance level descriptors (PLDS):

- Demonstrating Readiness: The child demonstrates foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him or her for instruction based on kindergarten standards.
- Approaching Readiness: The child demonstrates some foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him or her for instruction based on kindergarten standards.
- Emerging Readiness: The child demonstrates minimal foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him or her for instruction based on kindergarten standards.

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[2] The Ready for Kindergarten: Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System is a partnership between the Maryland State Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Education, in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education and WestEd, that is supported by a Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (CFDA 84.412A) and by a Race to the Top grant from the U.S. Department of Education (CFDA 84.395).

[3] https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Early-Learning/Kindergarten/Ohios-Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment/Kindergarten-Readiness-Assessment-for-Data-Manager/KRA_Technical_Report_Addendum_2015_Final.pdf.aspx

In addition to South Carolina, the states of Maryland and Ohio administer annually the KRA. The results of the 2017 administration of KRA in SC are summarized in the following tables. Overall readiness levels at the county level can be found at: https://www.scprofile.com/
The EOC will publish district level data in June.

Percentage of Readiness Levels on KRA Tasks

Children	Emerging Readiness	Approaching Readiness	Demonstrating Readiness
Overall			
54,927	26%	38%	36%
Social Foundations			
54,927	28%	27%	45%
Language and Literacy			
54,927	23%	43%	34%
Mathematics			
54,927	31%	38%	31%
Physical Development and Well-Being			
54,927	28%	24%	48%

Percentage of Readiness Level on KRA Tasks by Ethnicity

Task	Children	Emerging Readiness	Approaching Readiness	Demonstrating Readiness
Overall				
African American	18,142	32%	41%	27%
Hispanic	5,466	39%	39%	22%
White	27,253	19%	37%	44%
Social Foundations				
African American	18,142	34%	28%	38%
Hispanic	5,466	35%	28%	37%
White	27,253	23%	26%	51%
Language and Literacy				
African American	18,142	28%	45%	27%
Hispanic	5,466	41%	40%	19%
White	27,253	17%	42%	41%
Mathematics				
African American	18,142	39%	41%	20%
Hispanic	5,466	45%	37%	18%
White	27,253	23%	37%	40%
Physical Development and Well-Being				
African American	18,142	33%	25%	43%
Hispanic	5,466	30%	26%	44%
White	27,253	26%	22%	52%

Source: Education Oversight Committee. Files provided by SC Department of Education to EOC on February 1, 2018.

SECTION 59-152-33. School readiness assessment.

(A) Before July 1, 2015, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee shall recommend an assessment to evaluate and measure the school readiness of students prior to their entrance into a prekindergarten or kindergarten program per the goals pursuant to Section 59-152-30 to the State Board of Education. Prior to submitting the recommendation to the State Board, the Education Oversight Committee shall seek input from the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees and other early childhood advocates. In making the recommendation, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee shall consider assessments that are research-based, reliable, and appropriate for measuring readiness. The assessment chosen must evaluate each child's early language and literacy development, numeracy skills, physical well-being, social and emotional development, and approaches to learning. The assessment of academic readiness must be aligned with first and second grade standards for English language arts and mathematics. The purpose of the assessment is to provide teachers, administrators, and parents or guardians with information to address the readiness needs of each student, especially by identifying language, cognitive, social, emotional, and health needs, and providing appropriate instruction and support for each child. The results of the screenings and the developmental intervention strategies recommended to address the child's identified needs must be provided, in writing, to the parent or guardian. Reading instructional strategies and developmental activities for children whose oral language and emergent literacy skills are assessed to be below the national standards must be aligned with the district's reading proficiency plan for addressing the readiness needs of each student. The school readiness assessment adopted by the State Board of Education may not be used to deny a student admission or progress to kindergarten or first grade. Every student entering the public schools for the first time in prekindergarten and kindergarten must be administered a readiness screening by the forty-fifth day of the school year.

(B) The results of individual students in a school readiness assessment may not be publicly reported.

(C) Following adoption of a school readiness assessment, the State Board of Education shall adopt a system for reporting population-level results that provides baseline data for measuring overall change and improvement in the skills and knowledge of students over time. The Department of Education shall house and monitor the system.

(D) The South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees shall support the implementation of the school readiness assessment and must provide professional development to support the readiness assessment for teachers and parents of programs supported with First Steps funds. The board shall utilize the annual aggregate literacy and other readiness assessment information in establishing standards and practices to support all early childhood providers served by First Steps.

HISTORY: 2014 Act No. 287 (H.3428), Section 3, eff June 18, 2014.

Revisions to the ESSA Accountability Plan proposed by the South Carolina Department of Education

<u>Recommendation 1</u> – Effective 2017-18

Include ALL AP and IB courses in the College and Career Ready metrics. The EOC recommendation only includes AP and IB courses in English, mathematics, science, and social studies, which excludes college level courses in the arts, technology, and world languages where students take examinations and earn passing scores that lead to college credit. These courses are not only key facets of the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*, they are also rigorous college-level courses that integrate reading, writing, mathematics, and social science knowledge within the disciplines. They also represent fields of study where students can obtain viable skills that lead to careers in the state, nation, and world.

<u>Recommendation 2</u> – Effective 2017-18

In the career readiness metric for CATE completers with an <u>industry credential</u>, allow for 1) a national or <u>state-recognized</u> industry certification, or 2) a successful state-approved work-based learning exit evaluation from an employer, or 3) a state-approved end-of-pathway assessment to document career-readiness (Example: *Precision Exams, KOSSA* assessments, or other end-of-course assessments across CATE programs that document technical skill attainment). Southern Regional Education Board published *A Blueprint for College Readiness: Incorporating Measures of Career Readiness* where they document and endorse several states' approaches to validating authentic career readiness. All three options listed above were praised and are in use in other states. For example, Georgia allows both national and state-recognized industry certifications as well as work-based learning employee evaluations to document career readiness. Kentucky also uses state-approved, end-of-course exams entitled the Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Assessment (*KOSSA*). The CATE programs in South Carolina that do not have a nationally-recognized industry credential include Cosmetology and Agriculture.

<u>Recommendation 3</u> – Effective 2017-18

Include social studies dual credit/enrollment courses in the courses that count for college readiness if a student earns a C or higher. The current EOC recommendation only includes English, mathematics, science, engineering and technology dual credit/enrollment courses to be counted for college-ready. There is no research to support the notion that college-level courses in history/social sciences are less rigorous, valuable, or viable for a student's intellectual development and global awareness. The *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* specifically names the social sciences in the world class knowledge we expect students to attain. Additionally, AP and IB social studies/social science courses are already approved in the college ready metrics.

<u>Recommendation 4</u> – Effective 2018-19

Include a college and career readiness metric that is aligned to the outcomes of the SC Employability Credential and IDEA for students with moderate to severe disabilities to demonstrate career readiness aligned to their IEP goals and career transition plans. Although these students represent a statistically small population in South Carolina, they should be able to work in ways that are meaningful to them to become career ready. Career preparation is a central part of their high school curriculum, but the appropriate metrics to measure career readiness for these students are not a part of the four "career-ready" metrics in the current EOC proposal. Documentation of career readiness should include:

- ✓ A career portfolio that includes a multimedia presentation project;
- ✓ Work readiness assessment results that demonstrate the student is ready for competitive employment;

✓ Work-based learning/training that totals at least 360 hours

Recommendation 5 – Effective 2018-19

Develop a Student Success metric for elementary and middle school that measures student participation, progress and/or mastery in non-tested subjects aligned to the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.* ESSA explicitly describes the expectation that students have access to a well-rounded education. The EOC recommendation for elementary and middle schools does not reflect opportunities for students to demonstrate progress and proficiency outside of English, mathematics, science, and social studies. This metric should include:

✓ Documented student participation and "meets or exceeds expectations" performance levels in Arts, Technology and/or STEM, World languages, Physical Education, and/or Character Education

Recommendation 6 – Effective 2018-19

Include a School Quality metric that documents continuous improvement initiatives and/or high quality curricular programs (*STEM, STEAM, Arts in Basic Curriculum, Primary Years International Baccalaureate Programme*, etc.) for schools that receive externally-validated scores on national or international program evaluation rubrics. First, schools and districts are intensely involved in continuous improvement initiatives that focus on specific priorities identified within the school and district and externally recommended by external review teams. School quality is documented by an external team on an international rubric across five high leverage standards of quality including mission and vision, governance and leadership, teaching and learning, resource management, continuous improvement which lead to a district Index of Educational Quality (IEQ) Score. Districts with higher IEQ scores indicate that the system is working to create the conditions necessary for effective teaching and learning. Second, the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* highlights world class skills (critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, collaboration and teamwork, communication, and knowing how to learn) and world class characteristics (integrity, self-direction, global perspective, perseverance, work ethic, interpersonal skills). Student focus groups in South Carolina identified that students gain these skills and dispositions through project-based learning and other engaging curricular programs that are deeply embedded into the school instructional program. Students also gain these skills and dispositions through participation in extra-curricular, co-curricular, and athletic programs. Suggestions for this metric include:

✓ Differentiated points could be distributed using accreditation or school improvement scores (Ex. AdvancED rating) that are *at or above the state average*. The district IEQ score, which is a compilation of each school's rating, is compared to the state and national IEQ average.

✓ Initiatives, such as STEM certification, Arts in Basic Curriculum, Primary Years and Middle Years International Baccalaureate Programme, Lighthouse Status for Leader in Me, Learning Forward Designation, Partial Immersion Programs, etc. use external teams to validate high levels of curricular implementation in the school.

✓ Other student-centered measures of school quality can be obtained by analyzing the unduplicated student participation in a wide range of academic clubs and competitions, service learning programs, sports, and co-curricular programs.

The SC Education Oversight Committee is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected leaders. Created in 1998, the committee is dedicated to reporting facts, measuring change, and promoting progress within South Carolina's education system.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you have questions, please contact the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) staff for additional information. The phone number is 803.734.6148. Also, please visit the EOC website at www.eoc.sc.gov for additional resources.

The Education Oversight Committee does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or handicap in its practices relating to employment or establishment and administration of its programs and initiatives. Inquiries regarding employment, programs and initiatives of the Committee should be directed to the Executive Director 803.734.6148.

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
            District Test Coordinators
            Public Information Officers
            Principals

FROM: Ryan Brown
            Chief Communications Officer

DATE: August 13, 2018

RE: 2018 State Assessment Result Release Schedule

The chart below outlines district and public release dates for statewide assessments administered in the 2017–18 school year. Please note that AP, SAT, and ACT report release dates are set by the testing vendors.

On the date of each assessment's district release, you will receive embargoed links to the assessment data. Please feel free to share summary data with district and school staff members who understand that this is not to be shared publicly until after the official statewide release. The embargo extends to local school board meetings because data presented to a local board becomes public information under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. Please ensure that staff members understand that embargoed information cannot be shared with members of the news media or on social media.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these assessments or the release schedule, please contact me at rybrown@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-5080.

2018 Assessment Release Dates		
Assessment	District Release	Public Release
SC PASS	Monday, August 27, 2018	Tuesday, September 4, 2018
AP/IB	September 2018 – AP set by College Board	
WIN	Monday, September 17, 2018	Monday, September 24, 2018
EOCEP	Monday, September 10, 2018	Monday, September 17, 2018
SC READY	Monday, August 27, 2018	Tuesday, September 4, 2018
SAT	September 2018 – set by College Board	
ACT*	October 17, 2018 – Set by The ACT	
Report Card	November 1, 2018, at 12:00 p.m.	November 15, 2018, at 12:00 p.m.

*ACT's official statement regarding national release:
At the core of ACT's values is our commitment to data that is accurate, valid, and reliable. Reporting of ACT's 2018 grad class score reports will be delayed this year due to our desire to include scores from the new July test date, which attracted far more test takers than we had anticipated, and some additional quality control checks that we chose to run on the data.

2018 Release of SC School Report Cards
Timeline of Events

Activity / Event	Deliverable	Timeline	Place	Staff Responsible	Notes / Questions
Develop Communications Plan for Release of "new" school Report Cards	Identify target audiences, define tactics, and determine print materials and digital content	July 2018		EOC and SCDE Communications Staff	
Develop necessary communication materials to various audiences	EOC to develop online guide to report cards as well as printed materials. SCDE finalizing Report Card Website and Accountability Manual	EOC materials to be available for publication by September 4, 2018

Dissemination of Accountability Manual by SCDE and EOC: week of September 3, 2018 | | EOC and SCDE Staff | |
School Report Card Presentation for School District Public Information Officers	Presentation and printed copies of "Guide to the 2018 SC School Report Cards"	September 13, 2018	SCASA Headquarters	EOC and SCDE Staff	Purpose is to answer questions and clarify issues about the report card release.

DRAFT.09042018

Activity / Event	Deliverable	Timeline	Place	Staff Responsible	Notes / Questions
School Report Card Regional Workshops for District and School Personnel (principals, school personnel)	"Guide to the 2018 SC School Report Cards", Accountability Manual	September and October, 2018	Olde English Consortium; Salkehatchie Education Consortium; Western Piedmont Education Consortium; Pee Dee Education Center; meetings in Columbia, Greenville, and Berkeley	EOC and SCDE Staff	Purpose is to answer questions and clarify issues about the report card release.
School Report Card Release Advance Briefing for media, Editorial Boards (if requested)	Access to embargoed results; EOC summaries and materials	Week prior to release		EOC and SCDE Staff	
School Report Card release materials for legislators	EOC summaries and materials	Post-embargo		EOC staff	
School Report Card Release Event		Thursday, November 15	School TBD	EOC and SCDE staff	
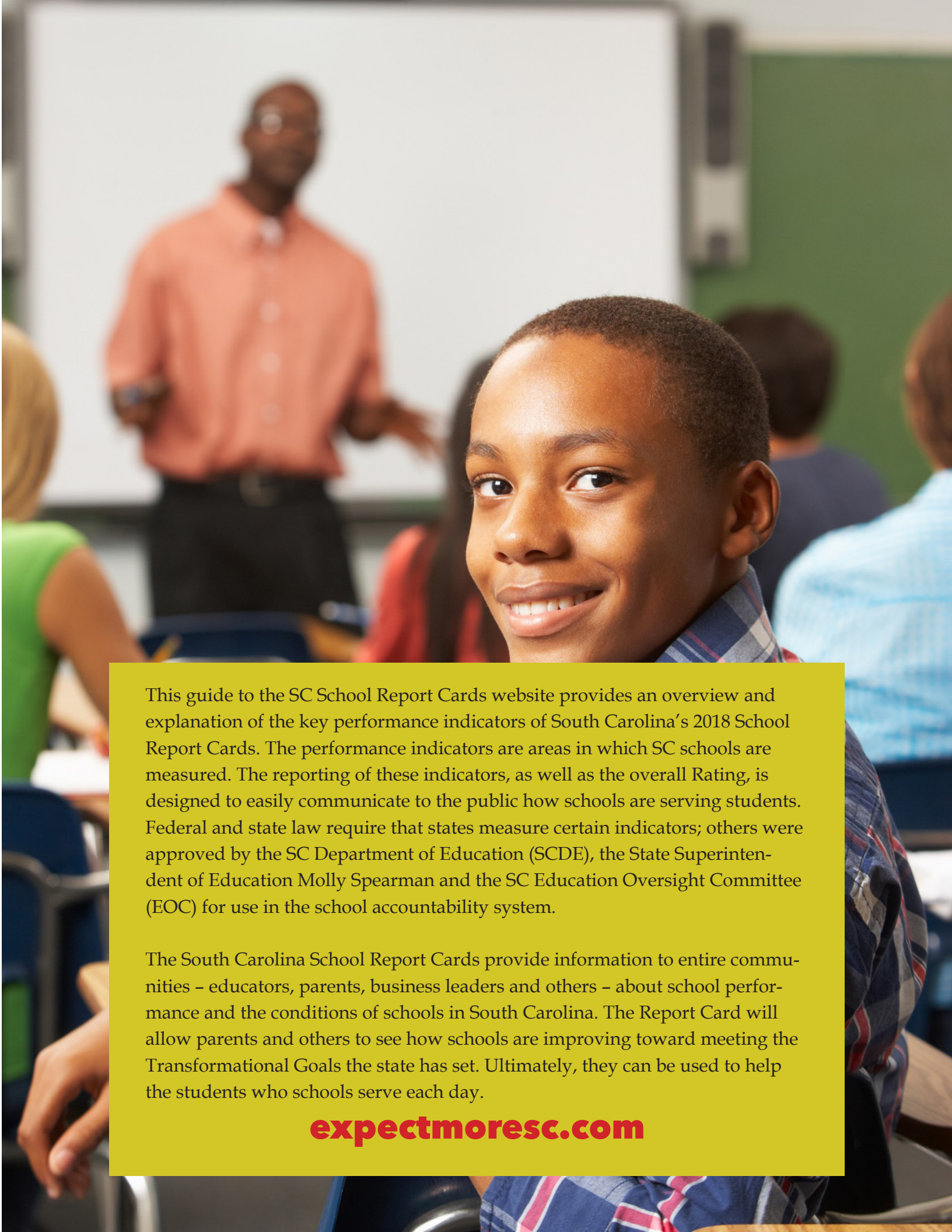
Note: The SCDE will be presenting to other audiences as well; information above pertains only to joint presentations.

GUIDE TO THE 2018
SC SCHOOL REPORT CARDS

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

expectmoresc.com

This guide to the SC School Report Cards website provides an overview and explanation of the key performance indicators of South Carolina's 2018 School Report Cards. The performance indicators are areas in which SC schools are measured. The reporting of these indicators, as well as the overall Rating, is designed to easily communicate to the public how schools are serving students. Federal and state law require that states measure certain indicators; others were approved by the SC Department of Education (SCDE), the State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman and the SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC) for use in the school accountability system.

The South Carolina School Report Cards provide information to entire communities – educators, parents, business leaders and others – about school performance and the conditions of schools in South Carolina. The Report Card will allow parents and others to see how schools are improving toward meeting the Transformational Goals the state has set. Ultimately, they can be used to help the students who schools serve each day.

expectmoresc.com

Table of Contents

PROFILE OF THE
SOUTH CAROLINA GRADUATE

WORLD CLASS KNOWLEDGE
Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness

Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

WORLD CLASS SKILLS
Creativity and innovation

Critical thinking and problem solving

Collaboration and teamwork

Communication, information, media and technology

Knowing how to learn

LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS
Integrity

Self-direction

Global Perspective

Perseverance

Work Ethic

Interpersonal Skills

transformSC

© SCASA Superintendents' Roundtable
Adopted by: SC Arts in Basic Curriculum Steering Committee, SC Chamber of Commerce, SC Council on Competitiveness, SC Education Oversight Committee, SC State Board of Education, SC Department of Education, TransformSC Schools & Districts

Welcome!

The release of the 2018 South Carolina School Report Cards is an important milestone for our state. The SC Education Oversight Committee, the SC Department of Education, and other key stakeholders, have spent the last three years developing an accountability system that will inform the public of the status of public schools while meeting the mandates of state and federal law. The Report Cards give South Carolinians and those who may move to this great state, a glimpse into how schools are performing in ten key areas. These key areas, known as performance indicators, provide information about schools. Some indicators are Rated; others are just reported. The indicators reflect our aspirations for our schools. We want them to show students reaching levels of proficiency, as well as show the growth students are making in one academic year. We want all students graduating on-time, within four years, and meeting the expectations of college- and career-readiness. We want all students to meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, ready to start a career or enter a two- or four-year university. To meet the workforce demands of the 21st century, all students should graduate college- or career-ready.

We hope the results from the Report Cards will start productive conversations in our communities about improving and supporting schools and students. Some of the indicators provide important information about schools that aren't part of the Rating; that information is still important for the public to understand.

We encourage stakeholders to talk about the results and ask questions of your school and school district leaders. By asking meaningful questions, we can develop and implement improvement strategies that can make a difference going forward. We are ALL part of the solution in helping schools and students. Please join us.
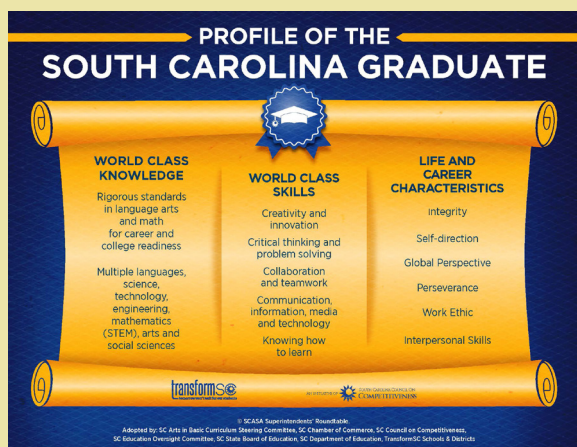
Neil C. Robinson, Jr.
Chairman
SC Education Oversight Committee

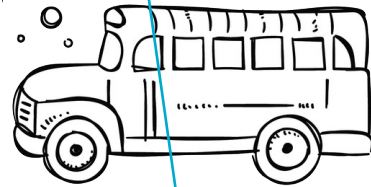# UNDERSTANDING ESSA in South Carolina

SC CLASSROOMS
Teachers teach SC College- and Career-Ready Standards

SC SCHOOLS
State assessments are required by federal and state law to be given to students in certain subjects and certain grades. These assessments measure how well SC schools are doing in helping students achieve standards. SC schools are given School Report Cards which contain Ratings.

WHAT IS ESSA?

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is a U.S. law passed in December 2015 that governs the United States K-12 public education policy. The law replaced its predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

South Carolina, like other states, submitted an ESSA plan to the U.S. Department of Education. Certain measures, such as measuring the progress of English Learners and measuring the high school graduation rate, were required components of all ESSA plans. South Carolina's plan was approved on May 3, 2018.

Report cards issued in November 2018, which will measure the 2017-18 school year, will be the first report cards to include Ratings in three years and the first Report Cards issued under SC's new ESSA plan.

SCHOOL REPORT CARDS
Report cards are intended to provide parents, community members, and others with the tools to understand schools. Armed with that understanding, individuals can better understand how to help the schools and the students they serve.

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WHAT IS RATED?

Beginning with the 2018 Report Cards, each elementary, middle, and high school will receive an overall performance Rating as well as a Rating for seven of the ten reported indicators. State law outlines the names used for the Ratings and also requires that the overall Rating for schools is based on a 100-point scale. A school's overall Rating is based on a school's performance on the seven indicators which are rated.

No school district will receive a performance Rating. Primary schools serving students in grades 3 or below and career centers will not receive a Rating in 2018 although Primary Schools will receive report cards in a PDF format.

WHAT DO THE RATINGS MEAN?

In state law, performance Ratings for schools are based on performance on meeting the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. Each of the seven measured indicators use specific criteria to determine a Rating. State law defines each Rating:

EXCELLENT:

School performance substantially exceeds the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

GOOD:

School performance exceeds the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

AVERAGE:

School performance meets the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

BELOW AVERAGE:

School performance is in jeopardy of not meeting the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

UNSATISFACTORY:

School performance fails to meet the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.
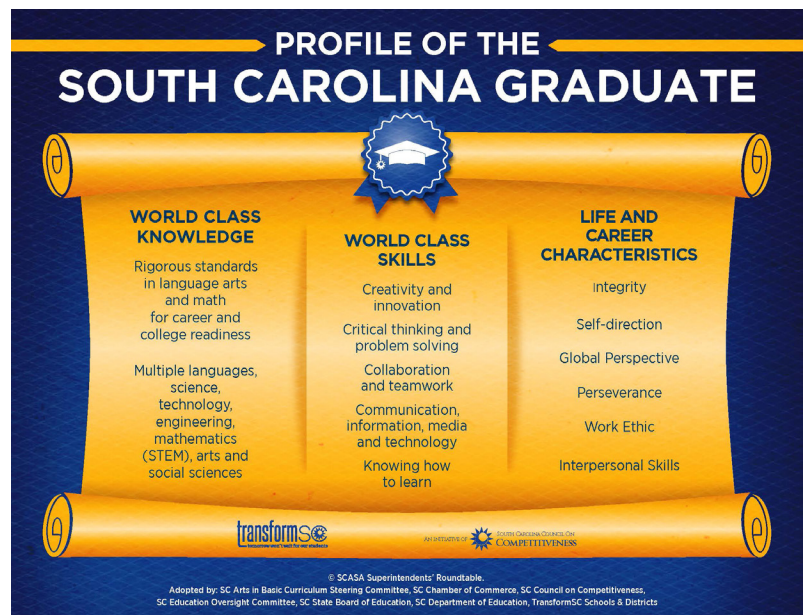
FOR THE 2018 REPORT CARDS, HOW ARE THE OVERALL RATINGS DETERMINED FOR SCHOOLS?

The overall Rating for schools will be based on the performance of SC's students on the 2015 Nation's Report Card, which was administered to students in every state. The total number of points needed for a school to earn an overall Rating of Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, or Unsatisfactory will be based on the following percentages: Excellent: 15%; Good: 20%; Average: 35%; Below Average: 35%; and Unsatisfactory: 10%. The EOC recommends that these target percentages stay in place for at least 5 years to allow schools to improve within a consistent system.

UNDERSTANDING the 100 point scale

HOW ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS ARE RATED

Below are the point totals for each of the rated indicators impacting Elementary and Middle Schools. The point totals are based on a school having 20 or more English Learners (ELs). The number in parentheses applies to schools who have *fewer than* 20 English Learners (ELs) and do not receive a rating for English Learners' Proficiency.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:
35 points (40 points without ELs)

STUDENT PROGRESS:
35 points (40 points without ELs)
The points in this category are split evenly, rating the progress of all students and the progress of the lowest performing 20% of students.
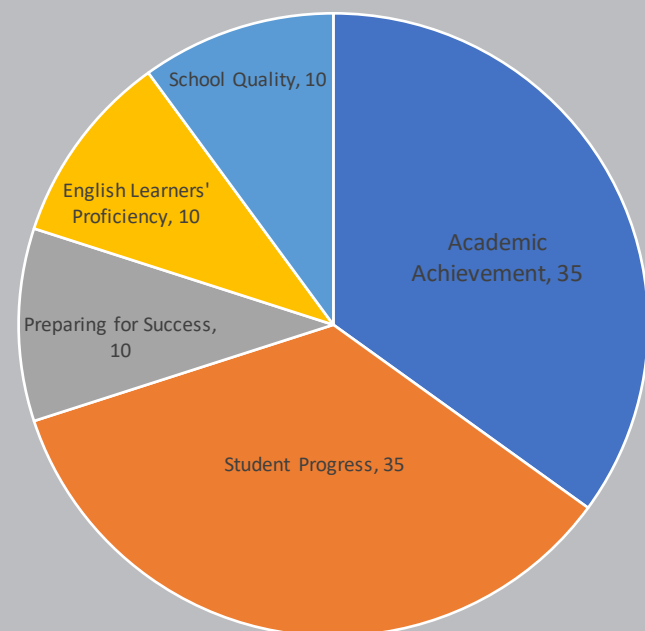
PREPARING FOR SUCCESS:
10 points (10 points without ELs)

ENGLISH LEARNERS' PROFICIENCY:
10 points (0 points without ELs)
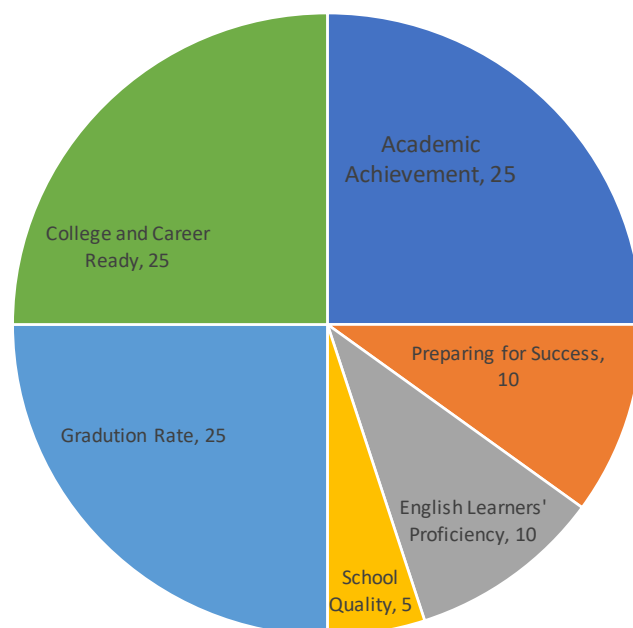
SCHOOL QUALITY:
10 points (10 points without ELs)

*Chart shows the breakdown of points in a school with 20 or more English Language Learners.

HOW HIGH SCHOOLS ARE RATED

Below are the point totals for each of the rated indicators impacting High Schools. The point totals are based on a school having 20 or more English Learners (ELs). The number in parentheses applies to schools who have *fewer than* 20 English Learners (ELs) and do not receive a rating for English Learners' Proficiency.

*Chart shows the breakdown of points in a school with 20 or more English Language Learners.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:
25 points (30 points without ELs)

PREPARING FOR SUCCESS:
10 points (10 points without ELs)

ENGLISH LEARNERS' PROFICIENCY:
10 points (0 points without ELs)

GRADUATION RATE:
25 points (30 points without ELs)

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY:
25 points (25 points without ELs)

SCHOOL QUALITY:
5 points (5 points without ELs)

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South Carolina's approved plan for Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) outlines ambitious goals for the students and schools of the state. The Transformational Goals are built around the Profile of the SC Graduate, the road map for success that guides the work that goes on in K-12 schools.

SC Transformational Goals

1. By 2035, the on-time graduation rate of state, each district and each high school should be at least 90%.
2. By 2035, 90 percent of students will score at Level 2 or higher (Approaches and above on SC READY) and a D or higher on end-of-course assessments) in English language arts and mathematics.
3. By 2035, 70 percent of students will score at Level 3 or higher (Meets and above on SC READY and a C or higher on end-of-course assessments) in English language arts and mathematics.
4. Beginning with the graduating class of 2020, the state must increase annually by 5% the percentage of students who graduate ready to enter postsecondary education to pursue a degree or national industry credential without the need for remediation.

WHAT do the SC Report Cards Measure?

Schools report information for the South Carolina School Report Cards in specific areas – called indicators. The indicators are **Academic Achievement**; **Student Progress**; **Preparing for Success**; **College and Career Ready**; **English Learners' Proficiency**; **Graduation Rate**; **School Quality**; **Classroom Environment**; **Student Safety**; and **Financial Information**. Seven of the ten indicators will receive a Rating for the indicator. Three of the indicators are measured but not Rated. Each school will also receive an overall School Rating. The Ratings, as well as the information contained in each indicator, helps give parents, community members, business leaders, and others a snapshot of the quality of education schools are providing children.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
This indicator determines if students in a school are meeting state standards in English Language Arts (Reading and Writing) and Math. *Impacts all schools and is Rated.*

STUDENT PROGRESS
This indicator determines how students are growing or improving academically in English Language Arts and Math and how the lowest performing 20% of students in a school are growing academically. *Impacts Elementary and Middle Schools and is Rated.*

PREPARING FOR SUCCESS
This indicator determines if students in a school are meeting state standards in the Sciences and Social Studies AND to help understand if schools are preparing students for success in critical areas. *Impacts all schools and is Rated.*

ENGLISH LEARNERS' PROFICIENCY
This indicator determines if students who are non-native-English speakers are meeting growth targets to learn the English Language. *Impacts all schools and is Rated.*

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY
The College and Career Ready indicator determines if students who are graduating from a high school are prepared for college or careers after graduating. *Impacts High schools and is Rated.*

GRADUATION RATE
The Graduation Rate indicator determines what percentage of students who entered the high school in the 9th grade, graduated in at least 4 years. *Impacts High schools and is Rated.*

SCHOOL QUALITY
This indicator determines if students feel engaged in their school and reports data to better understand the school climate. *Impacts all schools and is Rated.*

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT
This indicator shows all the data that is collected about teachers in a school and how it relates to students. *Impacts all schools and is not Rated.*

STUDENT SAFETY
The Student Safety indicator shows information about unsafe incidents that have occurred on school grounds, on some transportation, or at school-sponsored events. *Impacts all schools and is not Rated.*

FINANCIAL INFORMATION
This indicator shows all of the financial information that is collected about schools and school districts -- from average salaries to the percent of money spent on classroom instruction. *Impacts all schools and is not Rated.*

HOW do I use this information?

Look at the Ratings for each of the indicators as well as the information that is not part of the Rating. Ask questions about the information you see.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

This indicator determines if students in a school are meeting state standards in English Language Arts (Reading and Writing) and Math. *Impacts all schools and is rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

Overall, this indicator shows how students in a school are doing in Reading, Writing, and Math compared to state standards. These standards tell us if students are on-track to be college- and career-ready, which implies grade level success.

What makes up the Rating for the indicator

- Test scores on SC READY tests given to students in grades 3-8 at the end of a school year in English Language Arts and Math
- End-of-course grades in Algebra I and English I

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

Information about the percentage of instructional time when both students and teachers are present in the school.

Why is the indicator important?

State end-of-year tests are designed to measure if students are on grade level. Ratings for this indicator are based on how many students in a school are achieving grade level success in Reading, Writing, and Math.

What are some questions to ask?

- What percentage of students in this school are at least meeting grade level standards in Reading, Writing, and Math?
- In which subjects and grades are students meeting grade level expectations? Why?
- In which subjects and grades are students not doing well? Why?

8 STUDENT PROGRESS

This indicator determines how students are growing or improving academically in English Language Arts and Math and how the lowest performing 20% of students in a school are growing academically. *Impacts Elementary and Middle Schools and is rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

This indicator measures how students in each school are making progress in Reading, Writing, and Math as compared to their peers statewide. It measures progress over time from one grade or course to the next.

What makes up the Rating for the indicator?

The results of a value-added system that measures the academic gains of students on English Language Arts and Math, comparing them to their peers.

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

N/A

Why is the indicator important?

The economic status of students in a school does not hold students back from growing as learners. Schools serving high poverty populations have and can make incredible academic progress. It also emphasizes the learning needs of students who are struggling.

What are some questions to ask?

- Look at a school's Student Progress Rating in relation to its Academic Achievement Rating. Is there a difference? If the Student Progress Rating is high but the Academic Achievement Rating is low, the school is doing a good job growing students but students are not, on average, meeting state standards.
- Which students are making progress and which are not?

PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

This indicator determines if students in a school are meeting state standards in Science and Social Studies AND how schools are preparing students for success in critical areas. *Impacts all schools and is rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

Overall, how students in a school are doing in Science and Social Studies compared to state standards.

What makes up the Rating for the indicator?

- Test scores on SC PASS tests given to students in grades 3-8 at the end of a school year in Science and Social Studies
- End-of-course grades in Biology and U.S. History and the Constitution

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

For Elem Schools:
- The number and percentage of students entering Kindergarten ready to learn
- The percentage of 2nd graders on track for 3rd grade success in Reading and Math

For High Schools:
- The percentage of students passing a Civics Test

Why is the indicator important?

State end-of-year tests are designed to measure if students are on grade level. Ratings for this indicator are based on how many students in a school are achieving grade level success in Science and Social Studies.

Although not factored into the rating for this indicator, Kindergarten Readiness will be reported on Elementary School Report Cards within this indicator. This information will show the percentage of kindergarten students who are "ready to learn" upon entering Kindergarten.

What are some questions to ask?

- Are students entering Kindergarten in the school ready for learning?
- What percentage of students are meeting grade level standards in Science and Social Studies?

ENGLISH LEARNERS' PROFICIENCY

This indicator determines if students who are non-native-English speakers are meeting growth targets to learn the English Language. *Impacts all schools and is rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

How non-English speaking students are progressing in learning English.

What makes up the Rating for the indicator?

Scores from the ACCESS assessment, which has scores in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
If there are fewer than 20 English language learners in a school, then schools are NOT rated on this indicator.

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

N/A

Why is the indicator important?

It is a federal requirement to measure the progress of English Learners (ELs).

What are some questions to ask?

- Does the school provide extra programs and supports for English Language Learners?

COLLEGE AND CAREER READY

The College and Career Ready indicator determines if students who are graduating from a high school are prepared for college or careers after graduating. *Impacts High schools and is rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

If students graduating from a high school are prepared for college or a career

What makes up the Rating for the indicator?

To be college-ready, a student must meet one of the following:
1. Scores a composite score of 20 or higher on the ACT;
2. Scores a composite score of 1020 or higher on the SAT;
3. Scores a 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam;
4. Scores a 4 or higher on an International Baccalaureate (IB) assessment. Only higher learning (HL) exams may count; or
5. Completes at least six (6) credit hours in dual enrollment courses with a grade of C or higher.

To be career-ready, a student must meet one of the following:
1. Is a Career and Technical Education (CTE) completer and earns a national or state industry credential as determined by the business community; or
2. Earns a Silver, Gold or Platinum National Career Readiness Certificate on the state-approved career readiness assessment; or
3. Earns a scale score of 31 or higher on the ASVAB; or
4. Successfully completes a state-approved work-based learning program.

The rating for this indicator looks at either the college OR career readiness of graduates. This measure does not account for students who drop out and do not graduate.

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

1. The participation and passage rates for Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, and dual enrollment courses;
2. college enrollment information;
3. LIFE and Palmetto Fellow Scholarship information
4. School, school district, and state average ACT and SAT scores.

Why is the indicator important?

A high school diploma is important, but not sufficient today. It's about being prepared for what's next on a student's journey. College? Military Service? A Career?

What are some questions to ask?

- Want to see what schools are preparing students for what kinds of opportunities post-graduation? Look at the percentages by each of the choices. On what college and career measures are most students in the school meeting?
- Are the number and percentage of dropouts significant?

GRADUATION RATE

The Graduation Rate indicator determines what percentage of students who entered high school in the 9th grade, graduated in at least 4 years. *Impacts High schools and is rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

This indicator shows how well a school does in graduating students in 4 years.

What makes up the Rating for the indicator?

Percentage of students who entered the high school in the 9th grade that graduated in at least 4 years

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

- Dropout Rates
- Dropout Recovery Rates (where students re-enroll in a high school or Adult Education Program after dropping out)

Why is the indicator important?

High school graduation rates are no longer an indicator for success alone. Graduation is just the beginning for students, so the focus has turned to college- and career-readiness.

What are some questions to ask?

- Compare the graduation rate at the school with the information in the College and Career Ready Indicator. Does the school have a high percentage of both?

SCHOOL QUALITY

This indicator determines if students feel engaged in their school and what other measures of school quality are in the school. *Impacts all schools and is rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

This measures the quality of the student experience as measured by students' engagement.

What makes up the Rating for the indicator?

Student engagement levels are determined by an Advanced-ED survey given to students in grades 3-12.

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

For Elementary and Middle Schools:
- student retention rates
- wireless access rates
- rate of chronic absenteeism
- capability of providing all students with an electronic device
- percentage of students served in a gifted and talented program

For High Schools:
- available career and technology education courses
- rate of chronic absenteeism in a school
- retention rates
- wireless access rates
- capability of providing all students with an electronic device

Why is the indicator important?

Engaged students are the foundation for student success AND school success. It's about both resources and relationships schools have for/with their students.

What are some questions to ask

With the AdvancedED survey, this is the first time in history that the student voice has been incorporated into the rating of a SC School Report Card. Is student satisfaction high or low? Why?

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

This indicator shows the data collected about teachers in a school and how it relates to students. *Impacts all schools and is not rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

This information is to help parents and others understand about the teaching force in a school -- if teachers are returning from the previous year, their experience, and effectiveness. Teachers are critical to the academic success of students.

What makes up the Rating for the indicator?

Not rated

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

- student-teacher ratios
- number of teachers in school
- teacher attendance rate
- percentage of teachers returning from the previous year
- teacher vacancies
- average teacher salary
- percentage of teachers with advanced degrees

Why is the indicator important?

The biggest factor leading to student success is the quality of a teacher in the classroom.

What are some questions to ask?

- Did you know? Research shows a direct correlation between the number of certified teachers in a school classroom and student achievement. Look at the information provided about the teachers in the school. Are teachers returning from the previous year?
- Are there a large number of teaching vacancies?

STUDENT SAFETY

The Student Safety indicator shows information about unsafe incidents that have occurred on school grounds, on school transportation, or at school-sponsored events. *Impacts all schools and is not rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

This indicator shows parents and others how many unsafe incidents have occurred at a school or at school functions.

What makes up the Rating for the indicator?

Not rated

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

Percentage of the student population in a school involved in incidents occurring on school grounds, on school transportation, or at school-sponsored events.

The incidents are broken down by type (i.e., robbery, drug violations, weapon possession, vandalism, etc.)

Why is the indicator important?

School should be a learning environment, safe from violence and harassment.

What are some questions to ask?

- Did you know? A school's climate, which includes school safety, impacts student achievement. A positive school climate has a positive influence on student achievement. Look at the data related to safety and ask questions of school administrators.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

This indicator shows all of the financial information that is collected about schools and school districts -- from average salaries to the percent of money spent on classroom instruction. *Impacts all schools and is not rated.*

What does this indicator mean?

This indicator breaks down how schools spend money.

What makes up the Rating for the indicator?

Not rated

What is measured in this indicator but not included in the Rating?

Measures per pupil expenditures, percentage of expenditures for instruction, percentage of total expenditures for teacher salaries. This indicator also shows the poverty index of schools, which is the percentage of the school's students who are transient, in foster care, homeless, or have been Medicaid-eligible or qualified for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services with the last three years.

Why is the indicator important?

Resources are important. Research also shows that how schools spend resources is even more important to the success of students.

What are some questions to ask?

This indicator highlights how schools actually spend their money on. What percentage of expenditures are devoted to the instruction of students?

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittees: <u>Academic Standards and Assessments and Public Awareness</u>

Date: <u>September 17, 2018</u>

<u>ACTION ITEM</u>

<u>PURPOSE/AUTHORITY</u>
Sections 59-18-320, 59-18-325, 59-18-350 and 59-18-360 of the Education Accountability Act require the EOC to approval all standards and assessments used for accountability. In addition, all standards must be reviewed cyclically and at a minimum, every seven years.

<u>CRITICAL FACTS</u>
The attached information provides information concerning the current cyclical review of the 2011 social studies standards

<u>TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS</u>
The cyclical review began in the fall of 2016.

<u>ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC</u>
None

     Fund/Source:

<u>ACTION REQUEST</u>

☐ **For approval**　　　　　　　　　　☒ **For information**

<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>

☐ **Approved**　　　　　　　　　　☐ **Amended**

☐ **Not Approved**　　　　　　　　　　☐ **Action deferred (explain)**

Timeline of Cyclical Review of

South Carolina Social Studies Academic Standards (August 8, 2011)

Fiscal Year 2016-17

August – October 2016

EOC staff facilitated cyclical review of existing standards with a national review panel of five state and national experts and with a state review panel of 65 individuals representing teachers, parents, business and community leaders, and higher education. Additional individuals were invited to participate as observers and to offer their expertise. These individuals represented: South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), SC Council for the Social Studies, SC Economics, SC African American Heritage Commission, and the EOC.

December 12, 2016 – EOC approved report of cyclical review, which contained findings and recommendations to improve the standards during the revision process and forwarded the report to SCDE.

http://www.eoc.sc.gov/Reports%20%20Publications/SS%20Review%20Dec%202016/SC%20Social%20Studies%20Report,%20Cyclical%20Review%2012.12.16.pdf

Fiscal Year 2017-18

June 13, 2017 - SCDE convened writing panel of educational leaders from school and district levels and institutions of higher education from across the state to amend/rewrite social studies standards

December 8 – February 5, 2018 – SCDE posts draft *South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards* and seeks public review and feedback.

February 5, 2018 – SCDE staff reviews over 4,000 comments received from the online review.

Fiscal Year 2018-19

Summer 2018 – SCDE assists writing panel in amending standards

September 2018 – SCDE meets with focus groups to review amended standards

October 2018 – SCDE conducts public review of amended standards

* November 13, 2018 – State Board of Education to consider amended standards for first reading and then refer to EOC

* November 26, 2018 – Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee of EOC to consider standards

* December 10 or February 11, 2019 – EOC to consider/approve standards

Winter and Spring of 2018 – SCDE to provide professional development to teachers on new standards and SCDE to begin developing assessments for new standards

Fiscal Year 2019-20

SCDE to continue test development of new assessment

SCDE to develop resources and instructional support materials (ongoing)

Spring 2020 SCDE to field test new assessment

Fiscal Year 2020-21

Full implementation of new standards and assessment that will be included in accountability

* Timeline of State Board of Education and EOC review and approval of standards is contingent upon public review of amended standards and extent to which further changes are made to the standards.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittees: <u>Academic Standards and Assessments and Public Awareness</u>

Date: <u>**September 17, 2018**</u>

<u>ACTION ITEM</u>

<u>PURPOSE/AUTHORITY</u>
Sections 59-18-320, 59-18-325, 59-18-350 and 59-18-360 of the Education Accountability Act require the EOC to approval all standards and assessments used for accountability. In addition, all standards must be reviewed cyclically and at a minimum, every seven years.

<u>CRITICAL FACTS</u>
The attached provides information concerning the most recent independent evaluation of the state's English language arts (ELA) standards that were approved by the EOC on March 9, 2015. The standards were implemented and assessed in school year 2015-16. In addition, the information documents the decision of the State Board of Education in 2017 to replace the end-of-course assessment in English 1 with an English 2 end-of-course assessment.

<u>TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS</u>

<u>ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC</u>
None

Fund/Source:

<u>ACTION REQUEST</u>

☐ For approval   ☒ For information

<u>ACTION TAKEN</u>

☐ Approved   ☐ Amended

☐ Not Approved   ☐ Action deferred (explain)

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Elizabeth Jones
             Director, Office of Assessment

DATE: July 31, 2018

RE: Transition to English 2 EOCEP Assessments

On November 14, 2017, the State Board of Education approved replacing the End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) English 1 test with an English 2 test. Field tests for English 2 will be administered during the spring 2019 EOCEP testing window. With the exception of students who take alternate assessments, the English 2 field tests <u>must</u> be administered to:

- Students who are enrolled in a credit bearing English 2 course (year-round or spring semester).

- Students who are in their second year or above of high school, whose projected high school outcomes are non-diploma, and who are enrolled in an English 2 aligned course.

The English 2 assessment will be structured similarly to the English 1 test, with separate Reading and Writing sections. The Writing section will include a Text Dependent Analysis item.

Students will not receive results from the field test. English 2 will be <u>implemented</u> in 2019–20. The implementation tests will not be included as 20 percent of students' grades for the course. Students, schools, and districts will receive scores from the implementation tests. These scores will be used for accountability for students who will be in their third year of high school in 2021–22 (9GR20) or later.

Beginning in fall 2020, the test will be administered <u>operationally</u>. For students in a high school, credit-bearing course, the score from the operational EOCEP must be included as 20 percent of a student's final grade. As explained in a memorandum from Dr. Sheila Quinn dated January 27, 2017, the requirement of counting the EOCEP score as 20 percent of a student's final grade in

the course does not apply for students who are enrolled in a non-diploma course. The memorandum is posted at https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/school-district-memoranda-archive/eocep-and-course-grades-effective-2017-18/eocep-and-course-grades-effective-2017-18-memo/. The January memorandum refers to an attached memorandum dated August 24, 2016. The August 2016 memo is posted at https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/school-district-memoranda-archive/eocep-and-course-grades-effective-2017-18/end-of-course-examination-program-eocep-clarification-memo/.

English 1 will continue to be the test used for accountability through the fall 2021 reporting. Students who are in their third year of high school in 2021–22 and beyond will need an English 2 score for accountability.

English 1 EOCEP will no longer be administered statewide after summer 2019. However, English 1 tests can be administered to specific students through spring 2021, as needed for accountability.

The schedule below was developed for students who are following a traditional progression, taking English 1 in grade 9 and English 2 in grade 10. If there are students who are not following a normal progression, districts will need to ensure that the correct English test is administered for accountability and that either the EOCEP English 1 or English 2 test is included as 20 percent of course grade for the appropriate course.

Timeline for Transitioning from English 1 to English 2

	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
English 1	• English 1 census testing • Scores count 20% of student's grade	• English 1 tests administered to specific students, as needed for accountability	• English 1 tests administered to specific students, as needed for accountability	• English 1 tests no longer available.
English 2	• Field test in spring 2019 only	• Implementation tests administered beginning in fall 2019 • Scores do not count as 20% of any student's grade in the course • Scores for advanced students (e.g., 9GR20) will be used for accountability in 2021–22 or later	• Operational administration beginning in fall 2020 • Scores count 20% of student's grade	• Operational administration • Scores count 20% of student's grade
Accountability	English 1	English 1	English 1	English 2

For information on high school students who meet eligibility requirements for the alternate assessment, see the memorandum titled "South Carolina Alternate Assessment: Grade vs. Age" dated February 14, 2018.

For additional information please contact Kirsten Hural at khural@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-5981 about the administration of EOCEP tests, Jill Christmus at mchristmus@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-8048 about alternate assessments, and Dan Ralyea at dralyea@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-8086 about accountability.

cc: District Test Coordinators
        District Test Coordinators for Alternate Assessment
        Accountability Coordinators
        District Special Education Directors

August 22, 2018

The Honorable Molly Spearman
State Superintendent of Education
1429 Senate Street
Columbia, SC 29201

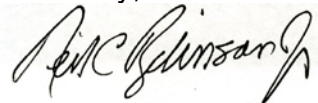Dr. Sharon Wall
Board Chair
State Board of Education

Mrs. Del-Gratia Jones
Board Chair-Elect
State Board of Education

Dear Superintendent Spearman, Dr. Wall and Mrs. Jones:

Pursuant to Sections 59-18-350 and 59-18-355 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, as chairman of the Education Oversight Committee, I am requesting that the State Board of Education, initiate a cyclical review of the 2015 *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts* based upon the recent release of the Thomas B. Fordham's Institute's report, *The State of State Standards Post-Common Core*. The report focuses on states that have made the most substantive changes to the Common Core, or that never adopted them in the first place. The review of our state's ELA standards as adopted in 2015 reveals several significant weaknesses that need to be corrected to ensure our student's academic success. Unfortunately, our state's standards were deemed so weak that they "should be significantly revised before schools devote more effort to their implementation."

The EOC is prepared to support the review as needed with internal and external staff and expertise.

Sincerely,

Neil C. Robinson, Jr.

Attachment

C: The Honorable Henry McMaster
    The Honorable Harvey S. Peeler
    The Honorable Rita Allison

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.

(B) For the purpose of developing new college and career readiness English/language arts and mathematics state content standards, a cyclical review must be performed pursuant to subsection (A) for English/language arts and mathematics state content standards not developed by the South Carolina Department of Education. The review must begin on or before January 1, 2015, and the new college and career readiness state content standards must be implemented for the 2015-2016 school year.

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

SECTION 59-18-355. Content standards revisions, approval by Education Oversight Committee and General Assembly required.

(A)(1) A revision to a state content standard recommended pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A), as well as a new standard or a change in a current standard that the State Board of Education otherwise considers for approval as an accountability measure, may not be adopted and implemented without the:

   (a) advice and consent of the Education Oversight Committee; and
   (b) approval by a Joint Resolution of the General Assembly.

(2) General Assembly approval required by item (1)(b) does not apply to a revision recommended pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A), other approval of a new standard, and other changes to an old standard if the revision, new standard, or changed standard is developed by the State Department of Education.

(B) A revision to an assessment recommended pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A), as well as a new assessment or a change in a current assessment that the State Board of Education otherwise considers for approval as an accountability measure, may not be adopted and implemented without the advice and consent of the Education Oversight Committee.

(C) Upon initiating a change to an existing standard, including a cyclical review, the Education Oversight Committee and the Department of Education shall provide notice of their plans and intent to the General Assembly and the Governor.

(D) Nothing in this section may be interpreted to prevent the Department of Education, Board of Education, and Education Oversight Committee from considering best practices in education standards and assessments while developing its own standards and assessments.

THE STATE OF STATE STANDARDS POST-COMMON CORE

By Solomon Friedberg, Diane Barone,
Juliana Belding, Andrew Chen,
Linda Dixon, Francis (Skip) Fennell,
Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey,
Roger Howe, and Tim Shanahan

With David Griffith
and Victoria McDougald

Foreword and Executive Summary by
Amber M. Northern and Michael J. Petrilli

THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE
ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

THOMAS B.
FORDHAM
INSTITUTE
ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Contents

Foreword & Executive Summary

By Amber M. Northern and Michael J. Petrilli

For the first decade of Fordham's existence, starting in 1997, reviewing state academic standards was our bread-and-butter. We would gather trusted subject-matter experts, request that they read all fifty sets of standards, and then ask them to offer their opinion. But the pattern was always the same: A few states had done a commendable job of identifying the knowledge and skills that students needed to master, grade-by-grade, to be considered on track for success. But most state standards were horrendous: poorly written, disorganized, and replete with dubious ideas. We would say so, and encourage these wayward states to adopt the exemplars as their own. Whether they took our advice was another story.

All that changed in 2010, when we read the final drafts of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Our *State of State Standards—and the Common Core—in 2010* found that the CCSS were clearer and more rigorous than the English language arts (ELA) standards in 37 states and stronger than the math standards in 39 states. Naturally, we encouraged those states to adopt the CCSS instead of starting from scratch.

This time, states took notice. Within a year, all but four had climbed aboard the Common Core train. But of course, it wasn't just that we had suddenly become more persuasive and influential. Lots of states had helped to develop the Common Core, so they were already "bought in" and happy to adopt them. And there were also those federal Race to the Top funds; states that adopted "common" college- and career-ready standards had a better shot at winning a piece of that tantalizing pie.

Even at the time, that last bit was rather worrisome. We had argued forever that "national" standards were a good idea—but would only be politically palatable if they avoided the stigma of "federal" involvement. Still, for several years, all was quiet. States started to implement the CCSS, and we were lulled into believing that we'd never need to evaluate state standards again. It was the "end of history"—at least when it came to battles over national standards.

Or so we thought.

As readers know, by 2013 the country was engulfed in a full-fledged culture war over the Common Core, with a loose coalition of populist conservatives teaming up with educational progressives in a push to dump the standards (and get out from under testing). Some states responded by "un-adopting" the Common Core; others tweaked, renamed, or rebranded them. But in general, the end of history was, alas, short-lived. So here we find ourselves, once again, evaluating state ELA and math standards.

***

Why bother? What's the purpose of a review of state standards in 2018?

Quite simply, even the steadfast states have room for improvement. No matter how good they are, every state's academic standards need to be updated periodically to reflect the latest advances in content and pedagogy, as well as the lessons learned during their implementation. So the overarching goal of this report is to provide helpful guidance to states as they look to modernize their standards in the years ahead.

Because many states have kept the CCSS (or a variant thereof), this report—unlike our previous "state of the state standards" reports—does not formally review standards in all fifty states. Instead, it focuses on the subset of states that have made the *most* substantive changes to the CCSS, as well as those that never adopted them in the first place. By taking a close look at the standards in these states, plus a fresh look at the CCSS, it seeks to identify those changes and ideas that are worthy of broader adoption, as well as mistakes to avoid.

With those ends in mind, we assembled two teams of highly respected subject matter experts—one for ELA and one for math—with deep knowledge of the content standards in their respective fields.

Because these teams worked independently, their paths inevitably diverged. For example, because the ELA team saw evidence of substantive changes to more states' standards, it formally reviewed standards in fourteen states, while the math team limited itself to ten. And the two teams took different approaches to summarizing their findings. For example, the math team identified four "positive trends" that it attributed to the enduring influence of the CCSS—as well as important exceptions to those trends. However, our ELA reviewers were more inclined to see unwanted patterns in the data, as demonstrated by the six "persistent shortcomings" they identified, which include several areas where they see evidence of "backsliding" since the adoption of the Common Core.

Due to the differences between our review teams, as well as the inherent differences between English language arts and math, we advise against comparisons between or across the two subjects, and against simplistic or reductive readings of either team's findings. Ultimately, what matters most is where states go from here—and what they do with the information and recommendations in this report.

ELA Results

Although no set of ELA standards received a perfect score, the CCSS-ELA once again earned a 9 out of 10, reflecting the consensus among our reviewers that they are generally a "strong" set of standards that states can and should continue to implement (Table 1).

Our reviewers also rated seven states' ELA standards "good" because they earned scores of 7 or 8 (Indiana, Kansas, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia) and were worthy of implementation with "targeted revisions." Of the standards in this group, our reviewers found Indiana's to be particularly commendable.

Further down the spectrum, five states earned overall scores of 5 or 6 and were thus deemed to have "weak" standards (Arizona, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas). Our reviewers recommend that these standards be significantly revised before educators and policymakers devote any more effort to their implementation.

Finally, two states—Missouri and Virginia—earned overall scores of 4, indicating that their ELA standards are "inadequate" and should be completely overhauled as soon as possible.

Math Results

Overall, the pattern for math is similar to that of ELA. Again, no set of standards received a perfect score (Table 2). However, both the CCSS-M and Texas's math standards earned a 9 out of 10, reflecting the consensus among our reviewers that they are "strong" and worthy of implementation.

Below those two exemplars are three states that earned overall scores of 7 (Indiana, Tennessee, and Virginia), meaning their standards are "good" and should be implemented with "targeted revisions."

Further down the spectrum are five states (Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Oklahoma) that earned overall scores of 5 or 6. According to our reviewers, these states' math standards are "weak" and should not be implemented without "significant revisions."

Finally, one state—Pennsylvania—earned an overall score of 4, meaning that its math standards are "inadequate" in the eyes of our reviewers and should be completely re-written.

As Table 1 and Table 2 make clear, most states that "un-adopted" or made non-trivial changes to the Common Core replaced them with standards that were substantially weaker in both subjects. In general, these states would have been better off if they had simply adopted the Common Core without making any revisions.

Table 1. State Standards Ratings: English Language Arts

	Content & Rigor (out of 7)	Clarity & Specificity (out of 3)	Total Score (out of 10)	Overall Rating
Common Core ELA	6	3	9	Strong
Indiana	6	2	8	Good
Kansas	6	1	7	Good
New York	5	2	7	Good
North Carolina	5	2	7	Good
Oklahoma	4	3	7	Good
Pennsylvania	4	3	7	Good
West Virginia	5	2	7	Good
Arizona	4	2	6	Weak
South Carolina	4	2	6	Weak
Texas	5	1	6	Weak
Nebraska	3	2	5	Weak
Tennessee	4	1	5	Weak
Missouri	3	1	4	Inadequate
Virginia	2	2	4	Inadequate

Table 2. State Standards Ratings: Mathematics

	Content & Rigor* (out of 7)	Clarity & Specificity* (out of 3)	Total Score (out of 10)	Overall Rating
Common Core Math	7	2	9	Strong
Texas	7	2	9	Strong
Indiana	5	2	7	Good
Tennessee	5	2	7	Good
Virginia	4	3	7	Good
Minnesota	4	2	6	Weak
North Carolina	5	1	6	Weak
Missouri	4	1	5	Weak
Nebraska	3	2	5	Weak
Oklahoma	3	2	5	Weak
Pennsylvania	3	1	4	Inadequate

* Referred to more broadly as Content and Communication in the mathematics standards reviews.

National Trends in ELA Standards

After completing their reviews, our ELA reviewers identified two positive trends in state ELA standards:

1. *More states are prioritizing writing, including foundational writing skills* such as printing, keyboarding, phonics, and spelling.

2. *More states are emphasizing vocabulary development* including word meanings, roots and affixes, context clues, and connotation and denotation.

Unfortunately, these positive developments are at least partially overshadowed by six persistent failings, though note that (for the most part) these criticisms do not apply to the majority of states that adopted the CCSS-ELA and chose not to make substantive revisions to their standards in recent years. The failings identified by our reviewers include:

1. *A marked retreat from rigorous quantitative and qualitative expectations for reading and text complexity*, a development that leaves educators in the dark about what types of texts students should be reading, and at what levels.

2. *A lack of disciplinary literacy standards* showing how literacy skills extend beyond the English classroom into other subjects such as history, science, and mathematics.

3. *A lack of clear skill progressions between grade levels, especially at the high school level,* and a lack of strong college- and career-readiness (CCR) standards to anchor K–12 expectations.

4. *Insufficient guidance on the specific types of literary and informational texts and genres/subgenres to which students should be exposed*, such as drama and literary criticism, or satire and epic poetry.

5. *A focus on writing processes rather than measurable student outcomes*, which leaves educators with insufficient guidance regarding the frequency, length, and type of writing assignments.

6. *A dearth of supporting documents that are critical to implementation*, such as glossaries of key terms, specific guidance for determining text complexity, and lists of exemplar texts.

As the length of this list suggests, there is substantial room for improvement in some states' ELA standards. However, in many cases, the shortcomings our reviewers identify could be addressed through straightforward additions and clarifications, rather than a complete overhaul of existing standards.

National Trends in Math Standards

Like the ELA team, the math team identified several trends in state standards, all of which are at least partly attributable to the enduring influence of the CCSS-M. These include:

1. *A stronger focus on arithmetic in grades K–5*, where the priority should be ensuring students' mastery of foundational skills, such as counting and flexibly computing with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions, as well as their understanding of the place value principle.

2. *More coherent treatment of proportionality and linearity in middle school*, including rates and ratios, slope, and linear relationships and functions (e.g., $y = mx + b$).

3. *An appropriate balance between conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application*, each of which is an essential dimension of mathematical thinking.

4. *Better organization and teacher supports*, including focused introductions for individual grade levels and courses, mathematically coherent organizational approaches that highlight the connections between standards, and helpful ancillary materials.

All of this counts as good news. However, as suggested by the low scores that some states' math standards received, there are more exceptions to these trends than one would want to see. For example, some states do not explicitly require students to know their addition and multiplication facts from memory, while others make no mention of proficiency in the standard algorithms for the four major operations. Similarly, some states still have incoherent (or partially coherent) middle school progressions that fail to make the appropriate connections between interrelated

standards and topics. And some give short shrift to conceptual understanding at all grade levels. Finally, some states have poorly organized standards, while others fail to include process or practice standards that describe the "essential mathematical habits of mind" that all students should learn—or fail to connect those habits to content.

For States that Kept the Common Core

Specific recommendations for those states that made the most significant changes to the Common Core (or that never adopted it in the first place) can be found in the individual reviews that comprise *Section IV*. In nearly every case, the simplest "fix" would be for these states to adopt (or re-adopt) the Common Core. However, since there would be little point in restarting that fight, the individual reviews meet these states halfway by describing the *specific* changes they could make to address the weaknesses in their current standards. States with weaker standards are encouraged to make changes based on this information.

But what of the majority of states that have kept the CCSS, or a close facsimile thereof? In general, the question facing these states is not whether to scrap their standards but how to build on them. So with that mind, we have three broad recommendations for states that are part of this group, including subject-specific guidance as appropriate.

1 Focus on implementation.

Insofar as they have chosen to stick with the Common Core, most states now have excellent ELA and math standards. So, policymakers would do well to remember the most famous principle of sound medicine: "First, do no harm." Any improvements to ELA or math standards in these states are likely to have (at most) a minor impact on student achievement, and recent experience suggests that ill-advised revisions have the potential to do considerable damage.

To be clear, the CCSS are not perfect, and states that have stuck with them can and should learn from the minor revisions and additions that other states have made. But the need for revisions is not urgent. So in addition to considering the recommendations below, we advise states with solid standards to devote their resources to implementing them well. Replacing the general "all-purpose" professional

development that many teachers currently receive with sustained, coherent, and *subject-specific* professional development focused on ELA and math content (and pedagogy) would be a good first step.

2 Adopt the improvements that other states have made to support implementation.

In recent years, numerous states have embellished the Common Core with a wide variety of supporting documents and minor additions—in most cases, without attempting a fundamental rewrite. Although the quality of these innovations varies, some of them are well done. In particular, the efforts of California and Massachusetts are worth highlighting.

On the ELA side, Massachusetts has added over 100 grade-specific examples to its grade level content standards, in an effort to make them more concrete. In general, the quality of these examples is high, and their presentation is straightforward and user-friendly. Similarly, California has made some useful additions to its standards for Writing. For example, students are now expected to "write routinely over extended… and shorter time frames" starting in grade 2 rather than grade 3, and the standards for higher grades include more detailed expectations related to thesis statements (grade 6) and dealing with counterarguments (grade 7). Additions to the Speaking and Listening standards also emphasize logic and critical thinking. For example, fifth-grade students are expected to "identify and analyze any logical fallacies" in a speaker's presentation.

On the math side, Massachusetts has added a description of the Mathematical Practice Standards by grade band that includes specific examples of connections between the content and practice standards (in addition to revising and updating its glossary and bibliography). However, perhaps the most important innovations are at the high school level, where California and Massachusetts have effectively integrated the CCSS-M high school standards (which are presented by conceptual category) with *Appendix A* of the CCSS-M (which provides options for organizing those standards into courses), thus providing a coherent and thorough treatment of high school content and pathways that is ideal for implementation. (The Golden State also includes excellent standards for AP Probability and Statistics and for Calculus courses, while the Commonwealth includes model Precalculus and Advanced Quantitative Reasoning courses.)

3 If possible, take the next step by precisely addressing specific limitations of the CCSS-ELA and CCSS-M.

In addition to adopting the improvements identified above, some states should consider taking the next step by addressing some of the other weaknesses our reviewers identify—especially if doing so involves making well-conceived additions, rather than disturbing the delicate internal logic of the existing standards. Specifically, states that feel confident in their ability to manage this process should take the following steps:

a *Develop disciplinary literacy standards for Speaking and Listening, and for Language, and further develop the disciplinary literacy aspect of the ELA standards for grades 6–12.*

Each discipline uses language in particular ways to create, disseminate, and evaluate knowledge. So it's important that students develop an understanding of these differences. As noted in our updated review, however, the Literacy Standards in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (i.e., the Common Core's "disciplinary literacy" standards) could be strengthened, especially in grades 6–12. Most obviously, states could develop specific standards in Speaking and Listening, and in Language, since both of these domains are omitted entirely from the current disciplinary literacy standards.

b *Define the differences in expectations between 9th and 10th grade and between 11th and 12th grade in ELA.*

At the high school level, the CCSS-ELA standards are divided into two-year grade bands (9–10 and 11–12) "to allow schools, districts, and states flexibility in high school course design." However, reviewers found that this lack of specificity resulted in redundancies across grade levels, making it difficult for teachers to know which standards to cover in which grade, or how the rigor of individual standards ought to increase from one grade to the next. Consequently, states should consider creating grade-specific English language arts standards for high school such that each grade has specific expectations.

c *Articulate clear pathways in high school math that are explicitly aligned with specific post-secondary and labor market outcomes.*

Currently, most states list standards for specific high school math courses, but are not clear about how these courses fit together and what they prepare a student to do post-graduation. Ideally, standards would indicate which pathways prepare students for STEM or other quantitative college majors, for the intellectual demands of completing college with a non-STEM major, and for technical and non-technical fields that may not require a four-year degree. Regardless of the path they choose, all students should learn algebra, geometry, and statistics and probability —and every student should take four years of high school math.

d *Take another look at the alignment between K–12 and pre-K.*

Although a comprehensive review of states' pre-K standards is beyond the scope of this report, both review teams noted that a few states (including Massachusetts) had made a conscious effort to align their pre-K and K–12 standards—something that is clearly desirable in principle. Because it has been more than a decade since most states adopted their pre-K standards, the potential for some sort of misalignment is considerable. Consequently, states that have yet to do so may want to take another look at this issue in consultation with early childhood experts.

* * *

Our reviewers, as well as those of us at Fordham, believe that the Common Core standards have aged well. Still, we must remember that standards are only words on paper if they don't inspire great instruction in the classroom. And on that front, there is clearly more work to be done, as we have learned from various implementation studies, including Fordham's own *Reading and Writing in America's Schools* (2018).[1]

Confusion still reigns in too many places: Do the standards expect young students to learn history, science, and other subjects in order to become better readers? (Yes.) Do they require high school English teachers to ditch classic works of literature? (No.) Do they want young children to master their math facts? (Yes.)

The standards, we believe, are clear and on target, on these and other important points. But something is getting lost in translation. Fixing that problem is as urgent as ever.

Acknowledgments

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1.   D. Griffith, *Reading and Writing Instruction in America's Schools*, Thomas B. Fordham Institute (2018), accessed from https://edexcellence.net/publications/reading-and-writing-instruction-in-americas-schools

Introduction

It has been eight years since the Thomas B. Fordham Institute compared states' English language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards to what were then the newly minted Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Yet the questions that ought to concern policymakers and the public have not changed: *Are states' ELA and math standards as good as they need to be? And how might they be improved?*

Because many states have kept the Common Core standards (or a close facsimile thereof), this report—unlike previous "state of the state standards" reports—does not formally review standards in all fifty states. Instead, it focuses on the subset of states that have made substantive changes to the Common Core, as well as those that never adopted them in the first place. More specifically, it seeks to update our understanding of state ELA and math standards based on our reviews of fourteen state ELA standards and ten state math standards, as well as the original CCSS.

To that end, the rest of this report is organized as follows: The remainder of *Section I* provides an overview of our methods. *Section II* summarizes our results, as well as the positive and negative trends across states. *Section III* offers specific guidance for states that are looking to revise or update their standards. Finally, *Section IV* presents the individual reviews.

Methods

In the summer of 2017, Fordham staff located each state's most recently adopted English language arts and mathematics standards on state department of education (DOE) websites, and confirmed what we found by checking with state DOE representatives. (To the best of our knowledge, they are current as of December 2017.) At the same time, we recruited five math and five ELA experts to serve as our reviewers. Each of these review teams comprised individuals who are widely recognized as subject matter specialists and who possess deep knowledge of the content standards in their respective fields. On the math side, they include lead reviewer Solomon Friedberg (Boston College), Juliana Belding (Boston College), Andrew Chen (EduTron), Francis (Skip) Fennell (McDaniel College), and Roger Howe (Yale and Texas A&M). On the ELA side, they include lead reviewer Diane Barone (University of Nevada, Reno), Linda Dixon (Colton Joint Unified School District), Nancy Frey (San Diego State University), Douglas Fisher (San Diego State University), and Timothy Shanahan (University of Illinois at Chicago). (See *Appendix A* for reviewer bios.) We met with each team to determine the scope of the project, develop evaluation criteria and scoring conventions, and complete sample review exercises to calibrate vetting and scoring across reviewers.

Key Differences Between the 2010 and 2018 Criteria

In light of the improvements that many states have made to their standards in the last eight years, both teams stiffened their criteria for this review.

In particular, the ELA team made the following revisions to the 2010 ELA criteria:

1. Specified as "crucial content" the following: foundational knowledge, comprehension of literary and informational texts, vocabulary, language, fluency, writing, text complexity, and disciplinary literacy.

2. Specified that ELA standards should focus on learning outcomes, not processes.

3. Specified that ELA standards should connect to other disciplines such as art, science, and social studies.

Similarly, the math team made the following revisions to the 2010 math criteria:

1. Provided additional detail regarding place value, fractions, geometry, and statistics and probability (in light of the ever-increasing role of data in society).

2. Replaced the section on Problem-Solving with a section on the Development of Mathematical Thinking and Practices, and specified that standards should address such practices and integrate them with content.

3. Removed the section on STEM-Ready Standards on the grounds that our criteria already included significant STEM-Ready content (such as logarithms and trigonometric functions).[2]

4. Toughened the scoring criteria by specifying that standards omitting "some" crucial content should receive a 5 rather than a 6 while removing the quantitative measures of content shortfall (e.g., "at least 5 percent and up to 20 percent" of crucial content is missing), as well as the distinctions between individual content scores (e.g., 6 and 7) to make the scoring process more authentic.

5. Added the expectation that standards and any related materials be available, identifiable, and accessible on the Internet.

We began by updating the evaluation criteria from our most recent (2010) round of state standard reviews to reflect the latest research on ELA and mathematics instruction, as well as the expertise of a new group of reviewers (see *Key Differences Between the 2010 and 2018 Criteria*). Because we have new evaluation criteria and new reviewers, the scores from this report and our 2010 report are not directly comparable (see *Review and Scoring Criteria*).

After reaching a consensus on the criteria, reviewers conducted a preliminary review of ELA and math standards in all fifty states to determine which states should undergo a full evaluation. In general, states with minor rewordings and/or clarifications to the CCSS were excluded, since the updated Common Core review in this report would also apply to them. Conversely, states with numerous and substantive additions, subtractions, or other changes were reviewed—in addition to those states that never adopted the CCSS.

To be clear, there is no bright line between these groups, since determining "substantive" change is inherently subjective. Nor does the inclusion and exclusion of particular states imply the existence of such a line. Finally, because the two review teams worked independently (and because some states made more changes to their ELA standards than their math standards), a handful of states were included for ELA but not for math (and in Minnesota's case, only math was reviewed).

After scanning every state's standards, our review teams ultimately selected fourteen for an ELA review and ten for a math review, in addition to conducting fresh reviews of the CCSS.

Review and Scoring Criteria

Academic standards are the foundation upon which much of public education rests, so it's critical that they achieve two overarching goals: First, they must capture the essential content that students need to know for each grade level or band. Second, they must effectively communicate that content to educators, parents, curriculum writers, and other stakeholders. Accordingly, the review criteria for both ELA and mathematics focus on two categories: "content and rigor" and "clarity and specificity" (referred to as "communication" in the math reviews).

2. Despite this change, reviewers identified missing STEM-ready content as a weakness of several states' math standards.

On the ELA side, content-specific criteria are organized into four categories: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking, and Research. To receive a high score for content and rigor, ELA standards must focus on learning outcomes over processes; include explicit text complexity definitions/explanations; specify the genres and subgenres to be learned; articulate specific foundational skills to be mastered; address disciplinary literacy standards; and include digital and multimedia sources, among other criteria. (See *Appendix B* for the full ELA criteria.)

On the math side, content-specific criteria are organized into six categories: Whole Numbers, Fractions, Measurement and Data, Algebra, Geometry, and Statistics and Probability. To receive a high score for content and rigor, math standards must address the appropriate grade level topics in each of these domains in a focused, coherent, and rigorous manner, while also integrating and promoting the "math processes" or mathematical habits of mind that every student should possess. (See *Appendix C* for the full math criteria.)

In addition to being rated on their content and rigor, the ELA and math standards were also evaluated on clarity and specificity—a category that includes factors such as the overall organization of a state's standards and how user-friendly they are, in addition to how clearly they are written and whether they are sufficiently detailed and specific. Essentially, this bucket asks the question that matters most for implementation: *Are the standards understandable and useful to educators, parents, and other stakeholders—in addition to experts?*

After much deliberation, both review teams decided to focus on the actual text of the standards, rather than the sometimes voluminous support materials that some states have developed to accompany them. However, in the few cases where such materials were needed to make sense of the standards—and were explicitly cross-referenced in them—they were included in the review.

Based on the above criteria, states could receive a maximum of 10 points, including 7 for content and rigor, and 3 for clarity and specificity/communication. States with standards that receive a total score of 9 or 10 are deemed "strong to excellent" and worthy of full implementation. A score of 7 or 8 signifies that those standards are "good," but should be implemented with targeted revisions. A score of 5 or 6 means that the state's standards are weak and require significant revisions. Finally, a 4 or lower indicates inadequate standards that require a total rewrite before implementation.

The scoring system for this report differs slightly from the system that was used in the 2010 report (which also included letter grades).

Findings

English Language Arts

This section presents state- and national-level findings for ELA and math. For each subject, we first present scores for individual states (and the CCSS), along with a brief description of the "2018 Best in Class" standards, which is followed by a longer discussion of the positive trends in standards across the country, as well as the persistent failings or common mistakes that states should address or avoid as they revise their standards in the coming years. General guidance for states as they revise their standards is available in *Section III*. Full reviews of individual states (including state-specific recommendations) can be found in *Section IV*.

English Language Arts

Scores for ELA standards are shown in Table 3.

Although no set of ELA standards received a perfect score, the CCSS-ELA earned a 9 out of 10, reflecting the consensus among reviewers that they are generally a "strong" set of standards that states should continue to implement.

Similarly, our reviewers rated seven states' ELA standards "good" and worthy of implementation with targeted revisions (Indiana, Kansas, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia). Of the standards in this group, reviewers found Indiana's to be particularly commendable.

Further down the spectrum, five states earned overall scores of 5 or 6 and were deemed to have "weak" standards (Arizona, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas). Our reviewers recommend that these standards be significantly revised before educators and policymakers in

these states devote any more effort to their implementation.

Finally, two states—Missouri and Virginia—earned overall scores of 4, indicating that their current ELA standards are "inadequate" and should be completely overhauled before they do further damage to teaching and learning.

"Best in Class"

Though no set of ELA standards earned perfect marks, the CCSS-ELA and Indiana earned the highest scores. Overall, these standards do a good job of describing the key content, knowledge, and skills that are imperative for success in college or career, focusing on measurable student learning outcomes over learning processes, and using clear language that is easy for teachers and other stakeholders to understand.

Of this best-in-class duo, only the CCSS-ELA received a total score of 9, including a 6 for content and rigor and a 3 for clarity and specificity. Notable strengths of the CCSS-ELA include a clear emphasis on foundational literacy skills in the early grades, and on reading comprehension and vocabulary throughout K–12. In addition, the CCSS-ELA provides specific guidance on what constitutes a "complex text," how to measure text complexity, and how those requirements need to shift as students move from one grade to the next.

Finally, the secondary-level standards include a nascent attempt to address disciplinary literacy—that is, specialized literacy skills in areas such as history, social studies, and technical subjects—though these standards could be further developed. Overall, the CCSS-ELA are clearly written, well-organized, and appropriately detailed, with a consistent focus on measurable student learning outcomes (as opposed to processes).

Table 3. State Standards Ratings: English Language Arts

	Content & Rigor (out of 7)	Clarity & Specificity (out of 3)	Total Score (out of 10)	Overall Rating
Common Core ELA	6	3	9	Strong
Indiana	6	2	8	Good
Kansas	6	1	7	Good
New York	5	2	7	Good
North Carolina	5	2	7	Good
Oklahoma	4	3	7	Good
Pennsylvania	4	3	7	Good
West Virginia	5	2	7	Good
Arizona	4	2	6	Weak
South Carolina	4	2	6	Weak
Texas	5	1	6	Weak
Nebraska	3	2	5	Weak
Tennessee	4	1	5	Weak
Missouri	3	1	4	Inadequate
Virginia	2	2	4	Inadequate

Like the CCSS-ELA, Indiana's ELA standards are admirably thorough and well-written, earning them a score of 8 overall, including a 6 for content and rigor and a 2 for clarity and specificity. Indiana's standards for foundational literacy skills in reading and writing are comprehensive and consistent with current research findings. Its Reading Literature, Reading Nonfiction, and Writing standards are rigorous and thorough, as is the development of a separate vocabulary strand. Finally, the Hoosier state's standards address reading and writing in various disciplines, and do a commendable job articulating how these expectations progress across grade levels.

To be clear, neither the Indiana standards nor the CCSS-ELA is perfect. For example, Indiana should consider revisions that clarify what is meant by "grade-level texts," set explicit quantitative and qualitative expectations for text complexity, and provide exemplar texts for all grade levels. Similarly, states using the CCSS-ELA should consider revising the Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects standards to include specific standards in Speaking and Listening, and in Language, in addition to

further developing their disciplinary literacy standards in high school. Finally, both Indiana and the CCSS-ELA would benefit from the addition of grade-specific English language arts standards in high school. (For more, see the guidance in *Section III* and the full reviews in *Section IV*.)

National Trends (ELA)

Thanks to the widespread adoption of the CCSS-ELA, our nation's ELA standards are stronger today than they were a decade ago. Yet, as noted previously, even the CCSS-ELA are not perfect, and in some states they have sustained serious damage in the years since their adoption (if they were adopted at all). Consequently, although it begins with a brief discussion of some noteworthy positive trends, this section focuses primarily on the "persistent failings" in many states' ELA standards—that is, the areas where a significant number of states could still improve.

+ Positive Trend 1:

Increased emphasis on writing and inclusion of foundational writing skills

In general, the reviews suggest an increased emphasis on writing. For example, fourth-grade students in Oklahoma are expected to "write facts about a subject, including a clear main idea with supporting details, and use transitional and signal words" (4.3.W.2). Similarly, twelfth-grade students are expected to "(1) introduce precise, informed claims, (2) distinguish them from alternate or opposing claims, (3) organize claims, counterclaims, and evidence in a way that provides a logical sequence for the entire argument, and (4) provide the most relevant evidences to develop balanced arguments, using credible sources" (12.3.W.4).

Foundational writing skills are now included in several states' standards. For example, in Arizona, a foundational writing strand was added for grades K–5, which calls for students to develop basic writing skills that are essential underpinnings of composition (e.g., spelling, phonics, and handwriting). This foundation helps ensure that students learn why writing is important, how to write, and how to generate writing ideas.

+ Positive Trend 2:

Increased emphasis on vocabulary development

Another laudable trend is the inclusion of specific standards devoted solely to vocabulary development. For example, second-grade students in South Carolina are expected to "determine the meaning of a newly formed word when a known affix is added to a known word" (2.RL.10.2, 2.RI.9.2), while students in fourth and fifth grade are expected to "determine the meaning of an unknown word using knowledge of base words and Greek and Latin affixes" (4.RL.10.2, 4.RI.9.2, 5.RL.10.2, 5.RI.9.2).

Similarly, despite being inadequate in other areas, Virginia's vocabulary standards are extensive and specific, covering topics such as denotation, connotation, and morphology (the study of how words are formed in language). And vocabulary also appears as an important element for conveying information in writing and improving one's craft. For example, fourth graders are expected to "revise writing for clarity of content using specific vocabulary and information" (4.7.m), while fifth graders are expected to "use precise and descriptive vocabulary to create tone and voice" (5.7.j).

− Persistent Failing 1:

A marked retreat from rigorous quantitative and qualitative expectations for reading and text complexity

Studies show that large percentages of graduating seniors in the United States are unable to read the types of texts that they will encounter in college and the workplace. So it's a serious problem if standards are vague when it comes to the types and levels of texts that students should be able to navigate. In the absence of grade-specific guidance regarding text complexity, teachers must rely on personal or local expectations to guide their selections, and the meaning of "grade-level text" may vary drastically from one school (or district) to another.

In light of these concerns, many states have adopted standards that specify the text levels at which students should be able to read—yet others have not. In fact, one of the broadest and most alarming trends that we observe is a marked retreat from such expectations in states that initially adopted the CCSS-ELA.

Some states (such as Virginia) are silent regarding text difficulty. Others (such as New York and South Carolina) expect students to read "grade-level" texts, but do not specify the quantitative or qualitative criteria that texts must satisfy to be considered grade-level texts. And still other states (such as Kansas and Pennsylvania) don't set clear text complexity expectations within their standards documents, choosing instead to include resources on text complexity measures elsewhere on their website (or refer users to CCSS-ELA's 2010 *Appendix A* on text complexity, as Pennsylvania does). Though better than no guidance, such information would be much more helpful if included in or linked directly from the standards.

There are multiple ways that states can make text complexity requirements specific, including adopting quantitative measures of readability. Absent that, they might provide a list of exemplar texts that demonstrate the level of complexity students should be able to handle. Yet not many states are doing that either (see Persistent Failing 4).

− Persistent Failing 2:

The absence of disciplinary literacy standards

Each academic discipline—from biology to anthropology—uses language in particular ways to create, disseminate, and evaluate knowledge. For example, the conventions and

expectations of scientific journals are different from those of a literary magazine. Yet although many states mention literacy in disciplines or content areas other than language arts, few detail the specific textual features or reading and writing approaches that students must master to read or write sophisticated texts that are appropriate to other disciplines. For example, although students in Kansas are expected to write "for a range of discipline-specific tasks" starting in 3rd grade (W.3.12), and to attend to "norms and conventions of the discipline" starting in high school (W.9-10.1.d, W.9-10.2.e), no other guidance or expectations are provided. And Virginia's disciplinary literacy standards are even more confusing and incomplete. (Although they note that students are to read in other subjects, there is no recognition of the specialized nature of texts or reading purposes/approaches in these other fields.)

By failing to show how reading, writing, language, and speaking/listening extend beyond the English classroom, these standards leave students ill-prepared to master the advanced literacy skills they will need in college and the workplace, which become increasingly specialized over time. In contrast, the CCSS-ELA include clearly articulated expectations for disciplinary literacy.

— Persistent Failing 3:

A lack of clear skill progressions between grade levels and/or a lack of strong CCR standards to anchor skills progressions

In many states, a lack of clear skill progressions between grade levels is a serious issue, especially at the high school level. For example, many states and the CCSS-ELA band their ninth- and tenth-grade and eleventh- and twelfth-grade standards together (thus reducing four years of secondary expectations to two levels). And some states' standards are redundant within or across these grade bands, as demonstrated by the following West Virginia standards:

- *Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a literary text, interact with other characters, and **advance** the plot or develop the theme (9.3).*

- *Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a literary text, interact with other characters, and **affect** the plot or develop the theme (10.3).*

It's not clear what the difference between advancing and affecting the plot is supposed to be (or if the difference in wording is even intentional). Similarly, the bolded text in the following Missouri standard applies to eleventh- and twelfth-grade students, but not to those in ninth and tenth grade.

> *Draw conclusions, infer, and analyze by citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, **including where the text leaves matters uncertain** (11–12.R.1.A).*

Again, the value of this addition isn't clear, and this sort of redundancy makes it less likely that students will be exposed to more complex texts as they move through school.

In addition to such redundancies, many states fail to include strong college- and career-readiness (CCR) standards that "anchor" their K–12 standards by defining the skill level expected of graduates who are (as the term implies) college- and career-ready. For example, although Pennsylvania's standards claim to "focus on college- and career-readiness," such capstone standards are never articulated. And Nebraska has just four broad and unhelpfully vague CCR standards, including "students will learn and apply reading skills and strategies to comprehend text" and "students will learn and apply writing skills to communicate."

Unfortunately, although the Common Core's CCR standards are intended to anchor the K–12 expectations, they too have internal inconsistencies that can obscure the intent. For example, one standard for reading literature in kindergarten expects students to "recognize common types of texts" (RL.K.5). However, the corresponding standard for reading informational text expects them to "identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book" (RI.K.5). These are two highly disparate skills, yet they fall under the same CCR standard.

— Persistent Failing 4:

A lack of guidance on specific types of literary and informational texts and genres/subgenres

Strong ELA standards address both literary and informational reading (e.g., literary nonfiction). However, many states' academic standards continue to treat literary reading in a general manner, with scant attention paid to the reading and writing of different genres, subgenres, and types of text. And when states do specify the genres that students need

to be able to comprehend (e.g., fiction, poetry, drama), they usually offer insufficient guidance on subgenres (e.g., epic poems, satires, parodies). This weakness is also evident in standards on informational text (e.g., speeches, literary criticism). For example, Missouri's standards do not specify subgenre requirements in the elementary grades or genre reading requirements in grades 6–12 for informational texts.

In many state standards, a lack of exemplar texts compounds the sparse detail imparted to genres and subgenres. Suggested texts should be offered for all literary, informational, and other discipline-specific materials at all grades. Yet states such as Arizona, Kansas, Missouri, New York, and Virginia have *no requirements* that students be familiar with any particular works of literature, authors, or historical documents—exemplary or otherwise. Although states often stress that these omissions are intended to leave curricular choices to local schools, this lack of guidance makes it harder for teachers to choose grade-level texts.

Among them, these unfortunate silences on subgenres, exemplars, and text requirements in general make it less likely that students will be exposed to appropriately rigorous texts—much less to a shared body of knowledge—and seriously undermine the rigor of many states' standards.

Persistent Failing 5:

Vague and/or process-writing standards that are not measurable

Despite the increased emphasis on writing noted above, many ELA standards still suffer from vague or confusing writing standards that focus on activities, processes (e.g., "brainstorming"), or experiences, as opposed to measurable learning outcomes. For example, Nebraska's standards note only that writing tasks should be "of increasing length and complexity" starting with third grade (LA 3.2.1.g).

The preponderance of Texas's Composing and Research standards focus on writing processes. For example, students are expected to "revise drafts for clarity, development, organization, style, word choice, and sentence variety" (6.10.C). While such standards ensure that students have certain writing *experiences*, they fail to specify how well students should be able to write. Similarly, Virginia's writing standards conflate processes, expectations, and learning outcome standards by asking students in grades 3–8 to "plan, draft, revise, and edit" or to use "prewriting strategies," while providing little direction as to the frequency or amount

of writing that students are expected to produce. This unhelpful mixing of process and outcome goals skirts what it means to be an effective writer, and makes the standards difficult to implement effectively.

In contrast, the Common Core's writing standards are primarily dedicated to outcomes, rather than processes. For example, eighth-grade students are expected to "write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence" (W.8.1). Moreover, they are expected to "acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically" (W.8.1a), in addition to "using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text" (W.8.1b), and using "words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence" (W.8.1c).

(Helpfully, the CCSS-ELA writing standards are paired with reading standards so there are clear connections between reading and writing outcomes.)

Persistent Failing 6:

A lack of critical supporting documents to aid implementation

Most of the issues above are compounded by a lack of ancillary guidance for students, teachers, curriculum directors, test developers, and/or textbook writers (such as one finds on the CCSS-ELA website). The need for such supplementary documents varies by state. For example, some states want students to develop grade-level phonological awareness and decoding skills in the primary grades, but do not specify which of these skills should be developed when. Similarly, most states need more information about the determination of text complexity, or to provide lists of exemplar texts representing various genres and disciplines that are appropriate for a given grade level. For states that already provide these resources in an appendix or elsewhere, cross-referencing or otherwise internally referring to them is critical. For example, Pennsylvania's appendices contain valuable information, but this is easily overlooked when not directly referenced or linked within the standards themselves.

Mathematics

Scores for math standards are shown in Table 4.

Overall, the pattern for math is similar to the pattern for ELA. Again, no set of standards received a perfect score. However, the CCSS-M earned a 9, as did Texas, signaling that these standards are "strong" and worthy of implementation without significant revision.

Slightly below the two exemplars are three states that earned overall scores of 7 (Indiana, Tennessee, and Virginia), meaning that their standards are "good" and should be implemented with targeted revisions. Following behind are five others (Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Oklahoma) that earned overall scores of 5 or 6. These states' math standards are considered "weak" and should not be implemented without significant revisions.

Finally, one state—Pennsylvania—earned an overall score of 4, meaning that its math standards are "inadequate" in the eyes of our reviewers and should be completely re-written before they do further damage.

"Best in Class"

Of the math standards reviewed for this study, two—the CCSS-M and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)—are strong enough to serve as exemplars.

Both standards do an excellent job with the math at each grade level. For example, both focus on arithmetic in grades K–5, with a thorough treatment of place value and the standard algorithms, and a thoughtful approach to fractions. Similarly, both standards provide a coherent treatment of proportionality and linearity in the middle grades, as well as a systematic development of geometry and statistics. Finally, both include a full treatment of algebra, geometry, and basic probability and statistics in their high school courses. In addition to these strengths, at all grade levels, both the CCSS-M and the TEKS support the development of conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application (through modeling and problem solving), as well as the integration of mathematical practices with mathematical content.

Table 4. State Standards Ratings: Mathematics

	Content & Rigor* (out of 7)	Clarity & Specificity* (out of 3)	Total Score (out of 10)	Overall Rating
Common Core Math	7	2	9	Strong
Texas	7	2	9	Strong
Indiana	5	2	7	Good
Tennessee	5	2	7	Good
Virginia	4	3	7	Good
Minnesota	4	2	6	Weak
North Carolina	5	1	6	Weak
Missouri	4	1	5	Weak
Nebraska	3	2	5	Weak
Oklahoma	3	2	5	Weak
Pennsylvania	3	1	4	Inadequate

* Referred to more broadly as Content and Communication in the mathematics standards reviews.

As noted in our review, the CCSS-M have several particularly excellent features when it comes to organization and communication. For example, each grade (K–8) and each content area (in high school) begins with a lucid introduction that effectively communicates the big picture, including the most critical areas of instruction. And the specific math content standards that follow these introductions are clear and appropriately detailed, with helpful examples for teachers and other stakeholders. Texas's math standards are less detailed and explanatory. But they do a very good job of specifying the outcomes that are expected of students, and the website that houses the TEKS includes a significant amount of supplementary material that is easy to find.

National Trends (Math)

Overall, mathematics standards in the United States are far stronger today than they were in 2010, when Fordham conducted its last fifty-state review. And much of this improvement is due to the CCSS-M, which earned a rating of A- in the 2010 report and a score of 9 out of 10 in this one. In general, the states with the strongest math standards are the thirty-five to forty states that have built on the CCSS-M, modified it in minor ways, or independently drafted separate standards that mirror the pacing and organization of the CCSS-M. As indicated in the introduction, it's imperative that those states continue to take the implementation of their standards seriously and support teachers—operationally, instructionally, and fiscally—in carrying them out.

At the same time, significant weaknesses remain in some states' standards—especially if they chose not to adopt or build on the CCSS-M—but also in other cases, because they made unnecessary and poorly conceived changes to what is a carefully thought out and impressively rigorous set of standards. This is not to say that every modification of the CCSS-M is poor or that every non-CCSS-M set of standards is inadequate (as demonstrated by our review of Texas, which did an exemplary job on its own). Still, in most states that have diverged appreciably from the CCSS-M, the result has not been an improvement.

Below we highlight four critical areas where the majority of states have made important progress and the various ways in which a minority continues to lag behind.

+ Positive Trend 1:

Stronger focus on arithmetic in grades K–5

Because it is the foundation for much of the mathematics that students will encounter in higher grades, experts agree that arithmetic should be the primary focus of math instruction in grades K–5. Yet in 2010, the biggest problem we identified in state math standards was that arithmetic was not a priority. Back then, mathematicians Steven Wilson and Gabrielle Martino lamented,

> Many states include solid arithmetic standards, but these are buried among a multitude of distracting and less important content... By failing to clearly prioritize this essential content, states fail to ensure that it gets the attention it deserves. Only a few states either explicitly or implicitly set arithmetic as a top priority. More often, states devote fewer than 30 percent of their standards in crucial elementary grades to arithmetic.

Thanks in large part to the CCSS-M, this is no longer true. To the contrary, a focus on arithmetic is now evident in many states' K–5 math standards. For example, most states' standards begin with a clear focus on counting, whole numbers, and place value. And from the earliest grades, addition and subtraction facts are connected to the "base-10" number system. Similarly, most states expect students to know their single-digit addition and multiplication facts, as well as the related subtraction and division facts, and to be proficient with the standard algorithms for these operations, as well as strategies related to place value and the properties of operations. Finally, most states systematically develop a strong understanding of fractions and decimals.

Topics such as geometry and measurement, the representation of data, and algebraic reasoning are also included in most states' elementary standards. However, in strong standards these topics are connected to number and operations—enhancing rather than diluting the focus on arithmetic. For example, length measurement, leading to the number line, is used to interpret and unify conceptions of addition and subtraction, and to relate numbers of different types (whole numbers, fractions, decimals, signed numbers). Similarly, area models are used to interpret and understand multiplication.

➖ Exceptions to Trend 1

Notwithstanding the progress noted above, a few states continue to fall short when it comes to basic arithmetic. For example, by the end of second grade, students in Pennsylvania are expected to "use mental strategies to add and subtract within 20" (2.2.2.A.2). Yet they are never specifically required to know from memory all sums of two single-digit numbers, or to add and subtract "automatically" or "fluently" within 20. Nor are they expected to know from memory all products of two single-digit numbers within 100. (At least five other states—including Minnesota, North Carolina, North Dakota, and Virginia—make some version of this mistake.) Though math experts continue to debate the wording of such expectations, there is little disagreement about the importance of these "math facts." Similarly, experts agree that students must be familiar with a variety of techniques if they are to compute fluently and accurately, including the standard algorithms for the four arithmetic operations. Yet some state standards instead require students to learn *a* standard algorithm[3] or to use algorithms.[4] Insofar as they are intended to soften or undermine the expectation that students know the standard algorithm (in addition to other approaches) these alternative wordings have the potential to do serious damage.

On an equally serious note, some states should improve their development of fractions—a topic that has historically given them trouble. For example, Nebraska and Pennsylvania devote too little attention to the role of unit fractions, while Missouri skips several important steps in fractional arithmetic, including various forms of equivalence (e.g., between fractions and whole numbers). Missouri omits several common representations of fractions, making it less likely that students will understand what fractions are and how they arise.

In addition to these omissions, some states fail to maintain an appropriate pace in the elementary grades. For example, first graders in Arizona are only expected to add and subtract within 10 rather than 20, thus needlessly delaying their understanding of the base-10 system. Similarly, although almost every state expects students to multiply and divide fluently within 100 by the end of third grade, Minnesota defers this expectation until fourth grade and doesn't address division with remainders until fifth grade.

➕ Positive Trend 2:

More coherent treatment of proportionality and linearity in middle school

The study of fractions is closely tied to proportional relationships and reasoning (involving rates and ratios). And such reasoning, in turn, provides students with a platform for understanding slopes and linear relationships (e.g., y=mx+b), which are a key foundation for algebra.[5] Thus, the sequence and pacing of these topics is critical to helping students move from elementary to middle to high school mathematics.

In recent years, the treatment of all of these topics has improved in many states. For example, in most states that used the CCSS-M as a starting point, ratios and proportional relationships is a main topic in grades 6 and 7, slope is developed in grade 7, and linear equations are an important part of grade 8, where they are both analyzed and used to describe linear relationships for bivariate data. Similarly, in Texas's standards, proportionality is a main topic in grades 6 and 7, linear equations are treated in grade 7, and the formal treatment of slope—though delayed until grade 8—is impressively thorough. Despite their differences, both of these approaches are strong because they are fundamentally coherent, meaning that the order, pacing, and presentation of topics help teachers and students understand the connections between them.

➖ Exceptions to Trend 2

Despite these improvements, there are still problems with some states' middle and high school progressions. For example, Nebraska defers several topics that are usually covered in grade 8 to later grades, including linear relationships and functions. Similarly, North Carolina's admirably thorough treatment of unit rates and ratios for proportional relationships ought to serve as a foundation for the concept of slope, yet the standards on slope never explicitly make this connection.[6]

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3.   See New York's and South Carolina's mathematics standards.

4.   See the mathematics standards adopted by Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Tennessee; also, Pennsylvania does not specify the standard algorithm.

5.   For example, the National Math Advisory Panel recommended that students be familiar with the slope of a line by the end of grade 7.

6.   See North Carolina mathematics standards 6.RP.2, 7.RP1, NC.8.F.4.

Positive Trend 3:

An appropriate balance between conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and application

Years ago, experts quarreled over the relative importance of students' conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and ability to apply what they have learned. Yet, as the 2008 National Math Advisory Panel noted in its final report,

> *To prepare students for Algebra, the curriculum must simultaneously develop conceptual understanding, computational fluency, and problem solving skills. Debates regarding the relative importance of these aspects of mathematical knowledge are misguided.[7]*

Thankfully, judging from their current math standards, most states have embraced the importance of each of these capacities and the implicit compromise represented by the quote. For example, the introduction to the CCSS-M states that "Mathematical understanding and procedural skill are equally important" while also asking students to "make sense of problems and persevere in solving them." Similarly, teachers in Texas are charged with "focusing on computational thinking, mathematical fluency, and solid understanding" so that students can become "successful problem solvers."

The tripartite mission articulated in these documents is also evident in the standards themselves. For example, most states now ask students to explain their reasoning, in addition to performing computations and solving problems. And most states' high school frameworks include modeling, which links classroom math and statistics to everyday life, work, and decision making, in addition to standards about formal mathematical proof and carrying out mathematical procedures accurately.

Exceptions to Trend 3

When the balance between conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and applications is off—as is still the case in some states—it is conceptual understanding that is most likely to be shortchanged. For example, although geometry is a prime area for developing mathematical thinking, the words "proof" and "prove" do not appear in

any of Pennsylvania's high school geometry standards.[8] Similarly, the word "understand" does not appear in any of Nebraska's standards for grades 4–11, and the word "explain" is used only once in each of grades 5–8, with unfortunate consequences for important topics. (For example, the third-grade standards mention the distributive property, but don't ask students to understand or explain it.)

In a similar vein, although the word "understand" appears repeatedly in the Introduction and Front Matter of Virginia's standards, the "curriculum frameworks" that are the heart of that state's standards focus heavily on the mechanics of computing, estimating, and performing operations, as well as real-world applications—as opposed to conceptual understanding. Because the generalities about understanding in Virginia's standards aren't buttressed by individual standards, they are thus unlikely to be reflected in Virginia's classrooms. Similarly, many Oklahoma standards expect students to "understand" a concept, process, or application. However, in about half of these cases, the related sub-standards (or "objectives") are purely procedural, suggesting that the conceptual goal is unlikely to be met.

Finally, a different imbalance is found in Florida's high school standards, which omit mathematical modeling as a conceptual category. This raises the concern that real-world applications are being underemphasized.

Positive Trend 4:

Better organization and teacher supports

Well-organized math standards do at least two things: First, they provide an account of key themes for each grade level or course, as well as a list of major benchmarks to ensure that instruction is appropriately focused. Second, they are organized in a mathematically coherent way that makes clear how mathematical topics fit together within a grade or course and how they are connected to prior and future work. In addition to this organizational transparency, strong math standards typically include ancillary materials that support teachers in their work (such as a glossary or other documents that aid with interpretation).

The CCSS-M are a clear example of well-organized standards. For example, prior to the content standards for each grade level (K–8), there is an introduction describing the focus for

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7.   See *National Math Advisory Panel: Final Report*, accessed from https://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/report/final-report.pdf#page=19.

8.   They do appear in, for example, Anchor Descriptor G.1.3.2.

the grade and a bulleted list of critical topics. Similarly, each high school domain (or area of math) includes a narrative introduction, followed by the individual standards for each of the clusters in that domain. In general, the organization of the CCSS-M into domains and clusters supports coherence by providing teachers and other stakeholders with conceptual cues about the connections among individual standards and about the intended learning progressions within and across grade levels. Helpfully, states such as Massachusetts and California have extended these positive features to high school courses (see *Section III*).

In addition to content standards, most states have adopted practice or process standards, reflecting the broad consensus among math experts that there are certain mathematical habits of mind that educators at all levels should seek to develop in students. For example, the CCSS-M include eight Standards for Mathematical Practice, abbreviated versions of which are listed in the introduction to each grade (K–8) and high school category. And even states that are clearly non-CCSS-M—such as Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas— have practice or process standards. Some states have even expanded on the approach taken by the CCSS-M.

For example, Massachusetts articulates particular expectations for each of three grade spans: pre-K–5, 6–8, and 9–12 (see *Section III*).

In addition to the supports described above, most states include a mathematical glossary in their standards, as well as other resources and links. Though the forms and content of these resources are too diverse to summarize here, many are likely to be useful for teachers. For example, a number of states have developed "vertical alignment charts" that describe the desired progressions for particular topics across grades, and there is a "wiring diagram" for the CCSS-M showing connections across both topics and grades.

⚊ Exceptions to Trend 4

Despite the various improvements noted above, poor or inadequate organization is still a major problem in some state standards, including several that have inexplicably weakened the organizational structure of the CCSS-M (often while retaining much of their content). For example, Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina all lack introductions or overviews for individual grades or courses, which are typically used to specify the most critical

areas within each grade or course. Similarly, the North Dakota and Pennsylvania standards lack narratives for each high school domain, making the progression within these domains less clear. And South Carolina's standards lack cluster headings, which typically provide conceptual cues for the connections and coherent progressions within clusters.

In addition to these gaps, some states employ a strange or sloppy organization that is likely to be confusing for teachers. For example, the North Carolina standards don't highlight the focal points for each grade, but there are two sets of accompanying documents that do so ("critical areas" and "major work"). And Nebraska's standards are sometimes incoherent because the same mathematical topics appear in multiple categories, sub-categories, and/or grades, leaving teachers on their own when it comes to identifying standards that are part of the same broader topic.

Some states' content standards are simply too broad or cryptic to provide useful guidance to teachers. For example, Pennsylvania asks second graders to "use place-value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic" but declines to elaborate (CC.2.1.4.B.2).[9] And in Missouri and Virginia, more specific information can be found in supporting documents. However, this format only works if these documents are clearly linked to the standards themselves and appropriately updated when a state revises its standards. For example, consider the following Missouri standards:

- *Interpret products of whole numbers (3.RA.A.1).*
- *Interpret quotients of whole numbers (3.RA.A.2).*
- *Prove theorems about lines and angles (G.CO.C.8).*
- *Prove theorems about triangles (G.CO.C.9).*
- *Prove theorems about polygons (G.CO.C.10).*

By themselves, these statements are of little use to teachers. Yet Missouri does not provide clear links to supporting documents (such as its Expanded Expectations) within its standards.

In addition to these organizational issues, some state standards lack common support materials. For example, at least ten states lack glossaries in their mathematics standards, while New York's glossary is limited to a short list of verbs associated with the state's standards.

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9.   See Pennsylvania mathematics standard CC.2.1.4.B.2.

Finally, some states make little effort to establish expectations for math practices or processes. For example, Florida and Missouri have chosen not to adopt practice standards, while Minnesota's process standards and Pennsylvania's practice standards are just short phrases (e.g., "Attend to precision") that are never explained or illustrated. Somewhat less egregiously, Nebraska and North Carolina never explicitly connect their practice standards to their content standards (though the former are often implicit in standards that ask students to interpret, model, or explain their reasoning).

Guidance for States

What approach should states take to updating their ELA and math standards, in light of the findings in *Section II*?

As indicated by their total scores and ratings, most states that either failed to adopt or made non-trivial changes to the Common Core State Standards replaced them with standards that were weaker in both subjects. Still, not all changes or choices are created equal: In ELA, Indiana, Kansas, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia made choices that still resulted in decent standards. But that wasn't the case in Arizona, Missouri, Nebraska, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia, whose new ELA standards are a clear step backwards. Similarly, Indiana, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia have good math standards, but the same cannot be said of Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, or Pennsylvania. In general, these states would have been better off if they had adopted the Common Core without making any revisions.

Obviously, the simplest solution for all of these states would be to adopt (or re-adopt) those standards. However, as noted in the *Foreword and Executive Summary*, there would be little point in relitigating that fight. So rather than seeking to do so, the individual reviews in the final section of this report meet states halfway by describing the specific changes they ought to make to address the weaknesses in their current standards. States with weaker standards are encouraged to make changes based on this information.

But what of the majority of states that have kept the CCSS, or a close facsimile thereof? In general, the question facing these states is not whether to scrap their standards but how to build on them. So with that mind, we have three broad recommendations for states that are part of this group, including subject-specific guidance as appropriate.

For States that Kept the Common Core

1 **Focus on implementation.**

Insofar as they have chosen to stick with the Common Core, most states now have excellent ELA and math standards. So, policymakers would do well to remember the most famous principle of sound medicine: "First, do no harm." Any improvements to ELA or math standards in these states are likely to have (at most) a minor impact on student achievement, and recent experience suggests that ill-advised revisions have the potential to do considerable damage.

To be clear, the CCSS are not perfect, and states that have stuck with them can and should learn from the minor revisions and additions that other states have made. But the need for revisions is not urgent. So in addition to considering the recommendations below, we advise states with solid standards to devote their resources to implementing them well. Replacing the general "all-purpose" professional development that many teachers currently receive with sustained, coherent, and *subject-specific* professional development focused on ELA and math content (and pedagogy) would be a good first step.

2   Adopt the improvements that other states have made to support implementation.

In recent years, numerous states have embellished the Common Core with a wide variety of supporting documents and minor additions–in most cases, without attempting a fundamental rewrite. Although the quality of these innovations varies, some of them are well done. In particular, the efforts of California and Massachusetts are worth highlighting.

On the ELA side, Massachusetts has added over 100 grade-specific examples to its grade level content standards, in an effort to make them more concrete. In general, the quality of these examples is high, and their presentation is straightforward and user-friendly. Similarly, California has made some useful additions to its standards for Writing. For example, students are now expected to "write routinely over extended… and shorter time frames" starting in grade 2 rather than grade 3, and the standards for higher grades include more detailed expectations related to thesis statements (grade 6) and dealing with counterarguments (grade 7). Additions to the Speaking and Listening standards also emphasize logic and critical thinking. For example, fifth-grade students are expected to "identify and analyze any logical fallacies" in a speaker's presentation (SL.5.3 CA).

On the math side, Massachusetts has added a description of the Mathematical Practice Standards by grade band that includes specific examples of connections between the content and practice standards (in addition to revising and updating its glossary and bibliography). However, perhaps the most important innovations are at the high school level, where California and Massachusetts have effectively integrated the CCSS-M high school standards (which are presented by conceptual category) with *Appendix A* of the CCSS-M (which provides options for organizing those standards into courses), thus providing a coherent and thorough treatment of high school content and pathways that is ideal for implementation. (The Golden State also includes excellent standards for AP Probability and Statistics and for Calculus courses, while the Commonwealth includes model Precalculus and Advanced Quantitative Reasoning courses.)

3   If possible, take the next step by precisely addressing specific limitations of the CCSS-ELA and CCSS-M.

In addition to adopting the improvements identified above, some states should consider taking the next step by addressing some of the other weaknesses our reviewers identify—especially if doing so involves making well-conceived additions, rather than disturbing the delicate internal logic of the existing standards. Specifically, states that feel confident in their ability to manage this process should take the following steps:

a   *Develop disciplinary literacy standards for Speaking and Listening, and for Language, and further develop the disciplinary literacy aspect of the ELA standards for grades 6–12.*

Each discipline (e.g., history, science, mathematics, literature) uses language in particular ways to create, disseminate, and evaluate knowledge. So it's important that students develop an understanding of these differences. As noted in our updated review, however, the Literacy Standards in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (i.e., the Common Core's "disciplinary literacy" standards) could be strengthened, especially in grades 6–12. Most obviously, states could develop specific standards in Speaking and Listening, and in Language, since both of these domains are omitted entirely from the current disciplinary literacy standards.

b   *Define the differences in expectations between 9th and 10th grade and between 11th and 12th grade in ELA.*

At the high school level, the CCSS-ELA standards are divided into two-year grade bands (9–10 and 11–12) "to allow schools, districts, and states flexibility in high school course design." However, reviewers found that this lack of specificity resulted in redundancies across grade levels, making it difficult for teachers to know which standards to cover in which grade, or how the rigor of individual standards ought to increase from one grade to the next. Consequently, states should consider creating grade-specific English language arts standards for high school such that each grade has specific expectations.

c *Articulate clear pathways in high school math that are explicitly aligned with specific post-secondary and labor market outcomes.*

Currently, most states list standards for specific high school math courses, but are not clear about how these courses fit together and what they prepare a student to do post-graduation. Ideally, standards would indicate which pathways prepare students for STEM or other quantitative college majors, for the intellectual demands of completing college with a non-STEM major, and for technical and non-technical fields that may not require a four-year degree. Regardless of the path they choose, however, all students should learn algebra, geometry, and statistics and probability —and every student should take four years of high school math.

d *Take another look at the alignment between K–12 and pre-K.*

Although a comprehensive review of states' pre-K standards is beyond the scope of this report, both review teams noted that a few states (including Massachusetts) had made a conscious effort to align their pre-K and K–12 standards— something that is clearly desirable in principle. Because it has been more than a decade since most states adopted their pre-K standards, the potential for some sort of misalignment is considerable. Consequently, states that have yet to do so may want to take another look at this issue in consultation with early childhood experts.

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Our reviewers, as well as those of us at Fordham, believe that the Common Core standards have aged well. Eight years after their publication they still represent a good-faith effort to identify the knowledge and skills that students need to master in order to be on track for success in college and the workplace. Nevertheless, we must remember that standards are only words on paper if they don't inspire great instruction in the classroom. That's where there is clearly more work to be done, as we have learned from various implementation studies, including Fordham's own *Reading and Writing in America's Schools*. Confusion still reigns in too many places. Do the standards expect young students to learn history, science, and other subjects in order to become better readers? (Yes.) Do they require high school English teachers to ditch classic works of literature? (No.) Do they want young children to master their math facts? (Yes.)

The standards, we believe, are clear, and on target, on these and other important points. But something is getting lost in translation. Fixing that problem is as urgent as ever.

State Reviews

State Reviews: English Language Arts

by Diane Barone, Linda Dixon, Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and Tim Shanahan

State Reviews: Mathematics

by Solomon Friedberg, Juliana Belding, Andrew Chen, Francis (Skip) Fennell, and Roger Howe

English Language Arts

Common Core State Standards

Strong

10

9 — Recommend focus on the implementation of these standards.

Good

8

7 — Targeted revisions recommended along with a focus on implementation of these standards.

Weak

6

5 — Significant revisions recommended. Standards should not be implemented until and unless these revisions are made.

Inadequate

4

3

2

1 — Complete revision highly recommended. Standards have critical shortcomings and should not be implemented.

Overall Rating: Strong (9/10)

Content & Rigor (6/7) **+** Clarity & Specificity (3/3)

Overview

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects are well focused, coherent, and rigorous. Major strengths include clear definitions and expectations relative to teaching students to read complex texts, including useful examples of what constitutes appropriate texts; inclusion of disciplinary literacy standards in grades 6–12 (that designate the specialized literacy skills in areas such as history, social studies, science, and technical subjects); and "learning progressions" embodied in College- and Career-Readiness standards (CCR) that describe what students should be able to do in reading, writing, listening, and speaking by the time they graduate high school.

In addition, the emphasis on Foundational Skills in elementary reading (e.g., basic print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency) underscores the importance of these skills to early reading development, while also communicating the value of comprehension and academic vocabulary development. Unfortunately, these progressions are occasionally undermined by vague or inconsistent terminology, abrupt transitions between grade levels, and a focus on skills over key content to be taught. The omission of Speaking and Listening and Language standards in grades 6–12 for subjects other than English language arts is problematic. Despite these minor weaknesses, the Common Core State Standards provide a rigorous and coherent pathway for preparing students to be ready for post-secondary opportunities.

General Organization

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (herein referred to as CCSS-ELA) are organized into three distinct sections:

1. Grades K–5 ELA;

2. Grades 6–12 ELA; and

3. Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, grades 6–12.

The first two sets of standards (grades K–5 and 6–12 ELA) are organized into four domains: Reading; Writing; Speaking and Listening; and Language. The standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects are divided into two domains: Reading and Writing. (The Speaking and Listening and Language domains are not specified in this section of the document.)

The CCSS-ELA are articulated horizontally and vertically across the grade levels. More specifically, each grade-specific standard can be associated with all of the other grade-specific standards in the same strand such that a reader can see in a simple table how a reading standard progresses from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Each standard is also associated with a College- and Career-Readiness standard (CCR). For instance, a fourth-grade reading standard such as "Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text" (RL.4.1), is linked to the CCR standard that specifies, "Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text" (CCRA.R.1). Such linkages provide a clear idea of how learning expectations evolve and deepen from K–12.

Individual grade-level standards are defined for grades K–8. In high school, the grade-level standards are reported in two-year bands "to allow schools, districts, and states flexibility in high school course design" (grades 9–10 and 11–12).

The standards are also accompanied by three appendices: a resource with information on text complexity, early reading foundations, and text types; a list of "exemplar" literary and informational texts and performance tasks by grade span; and annotated student writing samples that demonstrate writing expectations.

Content & Rigor

+ Content & Rigor Strengths

The CCSS-ELA have several notable content strengths. First, the standards make clear that college- and career-readiness is a fundamental goal of education. The broad CCR standards link effectively to grade-specific standards and remind educators to keep the end goal in mind, regardless of students' age. For instance, one CCR Anchor Standard for Reading requires students to "read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text" (CCRA.R.1). The standards carefully build from grade to grade to assure that the desired outcome is reached by the end of high school. Standards that lack this focus may unintentionally lull educators into attending primarily to a specific grade level, with less regard for what students should have mastered along the way, and what they need to learn to progress to the next grade level and beyond.

Second, the CCSS-ELA notably include disciplinary literacy standards for science, history/social studies, and technical subjects in grades 6–12. These standards illuminate the role of literacy in knowledge construction and articulate the nature of reading and writing that is unique to each of the several disciplines. For instance, in the Reading Standards for Informational Text in K–5, fifth-grade students are expected to "draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently" (RI.5.7). This expectation reveals the close connection between literacy and knowledge development.

The grades 6–12 ELA standards do a fine job of covering this same ground for the reading of literature and general informational text. For instance, RST.11-12.8 reads, "Evaluate the hypotheses, data, analysis, and conclusions in a science or technical text, verifying the data when possible and corroborating or challenging conclusions with other sources of information." This standard is relevant to a particular type of reading in a specific discipline. Notice how it is distinguished from a corollary History standard: "Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence" (RH.11-12.6), and an English standard, "Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and

content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text" (RI 11-12.6). While the Literacy Standards in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects could be strengthened (see below), they succeed in showcasing disciplinary literacy as an essential element of secondary education.

Third, the CCSS-ELA establish clear guidelines regarding the level of text complexity that students are expected to be able to read. Text complexity is described in Reading Standard 10, which requires that students "read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts." These general statements are further delineated in the standards by quantitative (not qualitative) expectations of reading performance across the grades (such as word frequency and sentence length). *Appendix A* of the CCSS-ELA also identifies new research on quantitative and qualitative measures of text complexity (such as text structure and knowledge demands) and concludes with a set of recommendations for educators to support appropriate text selection and a list of exemplar texts representative of these complexity requirements. This list of exemplars is meant to be illustrative rather than complete; it presents examples of items that could be included in a curriculum rather than a curriculum itself.

Finally, the CCSS-ELA writing standards are thoughtfully organized into four major categories:

1. Text Types and Purposes;

2. Production and Distribution;

3. Research to Build and Present Knowledge; and

4. Range of Writing.

In general, these standards emphasize writing production and outcomes, as opposed to processes. For example, one eighth-grade literacy standard requires that students, "provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events" (W.8.3e). Although writing is often perceived as an independent task, the standards also include consistent language about the collaborative nature of the process, calling for "guidance and support from peers and adults" (e.g., W.5.6), and requiring students to "interact and collaborate with others" (e.g., W.4.6). These expectations connect seamlessly to the standards for the Speaking and Listening domain, which call for students to engage in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) for the purpose of discussing grade-appropriate topics, texts, and tasks.

— Content & Rigor Weaknesses

While there are many strengths relative to the content of the CCSS-ELA, several areas could be improved.

First, the standards lack grade-specific English language arts standards for high school. While intended to provide flexibility, this lack of specificity for each high school grade level results in redundancy in standards for the two grade bands. For instance, reading and writing standards are identical for ninth and tenth graders; consequently, teachers and others cannot see how rigor should advance from grade to grade within high school.

There are also some issues in the learning progressions. The CCR standards serve to anchor the standards across the grade levels; however, some internal inconsistencies may obscure the intent of the standards. For example, a standard for reading literature in kindergarten is to "recognize common types of texts" (RL.K.5), yet the corresponding standard for reading informational text is to "identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book" (RI.K.5). These are two highly disparate skills, yet they are placed in parallel and linked to the same CCR standard.

Another significant gap in the *Literacy in the History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects* section is that the Speaking and Listening and Language domains are omitted altogether. This omission suggests a lack of importance of oral language in the acquisition and consolidation of disciplinary knowledge. Yet, collaborative discussion about abstract concepts is crucial for schema building and deepening of knowledge. Similarly, the need for mastery of academic vocabulary and language is integral to every subject and discipline, though the nature of vocabulary in the different disciplines differ in important ways (such as the use of metaphorical terms like the *Gilded Age* in history or the use of Greek or Latin combining forms in science).

Finally, the text complexity progressions are a bit uneven and overly rigorous, seemingly requiring faster progress in the early elementary grades (e.g., 2, 3, 4) than in the later grades. For example, in Foundational Skills, kindergartners are expected to apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills when decoding words and associate short and long vowel sounds with common spellings, a rigorous expectation for kindergartners. Similar issues are evident in the writing standards. The articulation of the writing standards, for example, reveals that argumentative writing requires years to master and must be practiced through twelfth grade. But the initial step to writing for argumentation in grade 6

is overly ambitious (e.g., students are expected to write an argument with supportive claims and evidence using credible sources, use words to clarify relationships among the claims, use a formal style, and provide a concluding statement), and the wording of the standard fails to adequately account for the progressive nature of young adolescents' writing.

The learning progressions in grades 7 and 8 are similarly worded, where students are expected to learn how to build counterarguments/counterclaims and foster internal cohesion in the text. While the call for writing for argumentation beginning in middle school is laudable, it is ambitious to expect that all students will learn what is required regarding claims, reasoning, and evidence.

Clarity & Specificity

+ Clarity & Specificity Strengths

Overall, the CCSS-ELA are admirably clear, specific, and well organized. They focus on presenting high-quality standards without the distraction of superfluous items. The organization of the standards makes them comprehensible both within and across grades, and the overviews at the beginning of each section offer clarity about the standards that follow. As indicated, the CCR standards helpfully focus attention on the desired outcomes of a K–12 education and provide a grade-by-grade roadmap for getting there. By and large, the standards document is free of jargon, and can be understood by educators, curriculum developers, and textbook writers alike. The majority of standards are measurable, with only rare exceptions (e.g., K.RL.5, which states that students "recognize" types of text, without further elaboration).

Additionally, several supporting documents buttress the standards and aid in interpretation, including the three appendices and documents that explain or provide exemplars for various standards. The document is also greatly enhanced by the introduction that contextualizes the standards themselves. These include an introductory section explaining the history of the standards, detailed information on key design details, a page on what the standards *are not* (e.g., they are not specifications of how to teach; they are not all that students should learn, and so on) and directions on how to read the document. This section also includes a helpful table illustrating language progressions, text complexity, text exemplars, and a sample knowledge progression in K–5.

– Clarity & Specificity Weaknesses

Although the CCSS-ELA are coherent, clear, and well organized, there are occasional uses of vague or unnecessary terminology that interrupts the flow of the learning progressions. In grade 2, for instance, writers use "digital tools to produce and publish" (W.2.6), but in grade 3 they "use technology" to do the same thing. In grade 5, students "develop the topic with facts" (W.5.2b), but in grade 6 students are expected to use "relevant facts" (W.6.2b). Sixth-grade writers are encouraged to use "credible sources" (W.6.1b), but in grade 7 these are now "accurate, credible sources" (W.7.1b). It is unclear how quoting "accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly" in grade 5 (RL.5.1) is different from citing "textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly" in grade 6 (RL.6.1).

In addition, transitions between major grade-level bands, especially between grades 2 and 3 and grades 5 and 6, are sometimes precipitous or abrupt. For example, second-grade writers are advised to use linking words such as *because, and, also* (W.2.1), but in third grade the examples include *therefore*, an unlikely word for young children to use, let alone incorporate in their writing. Similarly, the jump from writing opinion with evidence (in grade 5) to writing for argumentation as a genre (in grade 6) is steep and disjointed. These standards do not properly scaffold necessary skills to accomplish these outcomes

Recommendations

1. Revise the Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects to include specific standards in Speaking and Listening and in Language, and further develop the disciplinary literacy aspect of the standards for grades 6–12.

2. Improve transitions between grade bands, especially the transition between grades 2 and 3 and between grades 5 and 6, to determine whether the expectations are appropriately paced. Particular attention should be paid to the pacing of initial expectations for argumentation in writing in grade 6 and text complexity from grades 2 to 4.

3. Create grade-specific English language arts standards for high school to clarify expectations at each grade level and eliminate duplication across grades.

4. Examine the learning progressions across the grade levels to ensure that language is consistent and precise.

5. Review the wording of individual standards to reduce vague, inconsistent, or extraneous language that obscures the intent.

≡ Bottom Line

Recommend focus on the implementation of these standards.

Documents Reviewed

- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, accessed from http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/.

- *Appendix A*. Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards and Glossary of Key Terms: http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf and *Appendix B*, accessed from www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf.

South Carolina

Scale

10
9
Strong

Recommend focus on the implementation of these standards.

8
7
Good

Targeted revisions recommended along with a focus on implementation of these standards.

6
5
Weak

Significant revisions recommended. Standards should not be implemented until and unless these revisions are made.

4
3
2
1
Inadequate

Complete revision highly recommended. Standards have critical shortcomings and should not be implemented.

Overall Rating: Weak (6/10)

Content & Rigor (4/7) ✚ Clarity & Specificity (2/3)

Overview

The South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts were adopted in 2015. They are generally clearly written and measurable, and have several content strengths, including extending expectations of literacy development in areas of fluency and handwriting. Unfortunately, the standards offer insufficient guidance on text complexity and disciplinary literacy, and lack examples of rigorous texts. In addition, in places, the knowledge and skills standards articulated for each grade remain the same for three or even four consecutive years, meaning that there is no expectation of growth for long periods of time. At the time of review, critical supporting documents that were promised three years ago have also not yet been delivered, which leaves educators and curriculum developers unclear as to the kinds of materials South Carolina students should be reading, writing about, and discussing.

General Organization

The standards open with an explanation of the state's adoption process and a rationale for their format and content and are generally well organized and easy to follow. Several versions of the standards are available: by grade level, by grade bands (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12), and a vertical articulation, so that educators see the progress across grades K–12. Unfortunately, some standards show no progression at all for multiple years. Standards for grades K–8 are presented for each grade level, while the standards for high school are aligned to specific courses (English I–IV), rather than by grade, which is an unusual organizational method for high school ELA standards.

The standards are organized into five strands: Inquiry-Based Literacy; Reading-Literary Text; Reading-Informational Text; Writing; and Communication. The standards are also accompanied by five college- and career-readiness standards (CCR), which South Carolina calls "Inquiry-Based Literacy Standards," anchored to each grade level standard, which articulate what high school graduates should know and be able to do as they move into post-secondary studies or the world of work. Although the front matter promises that supporting documents will be developed, including "a glossary, vertical articulation documents, Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Bloom's levels, and a correlation/crosswalk document," at the time of the review, only one of those (addressing vertical articulation) was currently available. Other supporting documents promised elsewhere in the standards are also unavailable on the website, and include information on disciplinary literacy, inquiry-based literacy, and fundamentals of reading, writing, and communication.

Content & Rigor

+ Content & Rigor Strengths

South Carolina's ELA standards provide clear expectations in several noteworthy areas, beginning with a largely successful attempt to present a coherent vision of literacy development. For instance, principles of reading—which include phonemic awareness, concepts of print, and phonics—are presented as early essential skills that are woven into reading comprehension. In other words, they are not viewed as entirely separate from the act of reading itself, but are rightly seen as crucial early indicators.

Also strong is the presentation of vocabulary growth within the context of Language, Craft, and Structure. Vocabulary is correctly viewed not as the acquisition of words and phrases in their own right, but rather as a vital facet of reading comprehension. For example, first graders are already exploring "word relationships and nuances in word meaning" (1.RI.10.5), not just learning definitions. Similarly, mastery of language conventions is cast within the context of the writing standards. Examples include the expectation that kindergartners use spaces between words, third-grade students consult print and multimedia sources to check and correct spelling, and fifth-grade students correctly capitalize.

Other strengths include a longer view of fluency expectations through twelfth grade. While many states end fluency expectations around fifth grade, South Carolina standards wisely recognize that fluency norms typically extend through eighth grade, and are impacted by the complexity of the text itself. Even in high school English courses, students are expected to "read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, expression, intonation, and phrasing on successive readings" (E1.RL.4.2–E4.RL.4.2).

Another notable strength is the addition of a handwriting and cursive standard for elementary students, which aligns well with keyboarding expectations for developing digital texts. Therefore, second-grade students "begin to develop efficient keyboarding skills" (2.W.6.4) at the same time they are expected to "begin to develop cursive writing" (2.W.6.5).

Finally, South Carolina identifies genres and subgenres of literature and informational text at all grade levels. These range from odes and epic poems to speeches, contracts, and government documents. The inclusion of specific genres and subgenres communicates an expectation to teachers, students, and other stakeholders that instruction must include a rich array of text types.

− Content & Rigor Weaknesses

Several important omissions undermine South Carolina's ELA standards. Chief among them is a lack of any definition whatsoever of text complexity. While students are expected to read "grade-level texts," as noted in Range and Complexity standard 13.3, there is no information about what quantitatively and qualitatively makes for such a text. Nor are South Carolina educators assisted by text exemplars, as these are also lacking.

Exacerbating these deficiencies, the standards do not specify any foundational texts or documents from literature or letters that students are to read and know, meaning that some students are likely to go through their schooling without a deep exploration of canonical texts or foundational documents. The result of these omissions is that text selections become local decisions, meaning that a "grade-level text" in one school or district may be vastly different from one read and discussed in another. The median reading level of a classroom therefore becomes the yardstick that educators typically use to select texts, which is an inherently inequitable system that perpetuates differing opportunities to learn for children and adolescents.

Second, the state's disciplinary literacy standards, which describe how literacies are utilized in subject areas such as science, history, and technical subjects, are not actually standards. Instead, they simply include a bulleted list of three vague and general practices that are exactly the same from kindergarten through twelfth grade. For example, students are expected to "determine appropriate disciplinary tools" in inquiry (I.4.2)—but these are never specified. Similarly, there is no mention of discipline-specific writing at all beyond the three text types of argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing.

Third, learning progressions are problematic in several places within the standards. One should be able to read the standards across grade levels to see the incremental growth of knowledge and skills expected. However, there are places where the standards remain the same for multiple years. Chief among these are Inquiry-Based Literacy standards that do not change within grade bands (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–12). For example, in Inquiry-Based Literacy standards for grades 3–5, the same standard repeats for each grade: "Formulate questions to focus thinking on an idea to narrow and direct further inquiry" (I.1.1). The same issue holds for Writing for text types in grades 6–8, as well as in the aforementioned Disciplinary Literacy grade band practices. Presumably these should change based on increasing text complexity and production. However, the lack of grade-specific learning progressions undermines the value of the K–12 Inquiry-Based standards, and the grades 6–12 Writing standards.

Finally, while the state's Inquiry-Based Literacy standards spotlight the vital nature of using digital and print texts, they lack specific expectations for use in investigation and research. While it is commendable to emphasize inquiry as a reason for engaging in reading, writing, and communication, the majority of these standards focus on processes, such as metacognition, rather than on measurable learning outcomes. For instance, it is impossible to determine whether a student "employ[s] past learning to monitor and assess current learning to guide inquiry" (3.I.5.2–5.I.5.2). Further, the document confusingly states that these standards "work in concert with Disciplinary Literacy and should be viewed as a system." Unfortunately, as noted previously, there are no disciplinary literacy standards, only a list of three practices.

Clarity & Specificity

+ Clarity & Specificity Strengths

The standards are jargon-free and stated clearly. Aside from the inquiry-based literacy standards, most standards are measurable, with an overall focus on learning outcomes more than on process. The standards are also helpfully presented in several forms: by grade level, by grade bands (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12), and vertically, so that educators can view complete learning progressions across several grade levels to see how expectations change. These are further linked to broad CCR anchor standards at each grade level to keep the focus on outcomes for graduates.

— Clarity & Specificity Weaknesses

The standards are unnecessarily repetitive in places. For example, every standard is presented through twelfth grade, even when the standard has long since been mastered. This occurs specifically in the Principles of Reading foundational skills, which students should have mastered a decade earlier. For instance, it is unnecessary to mention that high school students should have mastered the ability to "recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence" in first grade (E1.P.1.1). This repetition is likely to be cumbersome and confusing to educators and parents alike.

More concerning, the standards do not include sufficient guidance to help educators, curriculum developers, and test developers select texts. For example, there is no information provided on quantitative and qualitative expectations of text complexity, which should guide how materials are selected. The lack of promised supporting documents three years after the adoption of these standards is deeply troubling.

Recommendations

1. Identify and revise standards that remain unchanged for two or more years to more clearly articulate how learning progresses from one grade level to the next.

2. Establish text complexity requirements that specify particular text complexity levels that students should be able to read at the various grade levels.

3. Revise Inquiry-Based Literacy standards into requirements that can be taught and measured. Eliminate standards that are only process-oriented.

4. Develop discipline-specific literacy standards for grades 6–12 to communicate expectations for use outside of the English classroom.

5. Designate specific literary and informational texts at all grade levels with which students should be familiar (or at minimum, provide exemplar texts for teacher consideration).

6. Complete the supporting documents that were promised in 2015. These are needed to provide specific guidance to educators. Particularly urgent is information on depth of knowledge, disciplinary literacy, foundational skills, as well as a glossary.

= Bottom Line

Significant revisions recommended. Standards should not be implemented until and unless these revisions are made.

Documents Reviewed

South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for English, accessed from https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/english-language-arts/standards/.

Reviewer Biographies

ELA Reviewers

Diane Barone (Lead Reviewer)

Diane Barone is a foundation professor of literacy at the University of Nevada, Reno, where she teaches courses in literacy and qualitative research method. She is currently editor of The Reading Teacher and previously served as the editor of Reading Research Quarterly. She has served on the IRA Board of Directors and won the John Manning Award for Service to Public Schools in 2010. Professor Barone has conducted two longitudinal studies of literacy development: 1) a four-year study of children prenatally exposed to crack/cocaine and 2) a seven-year study of children, predominantly English language learners, in a high-poverty school. She has had articles published in journals such as Reading Research Quarterly, Journal of Literacy Research, Elementary School Journal, The Reading Teacher, Gifted Childhood Quarterly, and Research in the Teaching of English, and has written several books on literacy. She has just completed terms as a board member of the International Reading Association and the National Reading Conference. She was inducted into the Reading Hall of Fame in 2014.

Linda Dixon

Linda Dixon is an English language arts teacher with nineteen years of classroom experience. She holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and a Master of Arts in Education (with an emphasis in Curriculum and Instruction) from the University of Redlands, and has done post-graduate work in social emotional learning, English learner instruction, and gifted education. She has worked for the California Department of Education on determining cut scores for the ELPAC (English Language Proficiency Assessment California), range-finding for fourth-grade CST writing, and item alignment using California English Language Development standards. She served on a Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium panel, creating an instructional playlist for their Digital Library. Since December 2015 she has worked as a content reviewer for nonprofit Edreports.org, conducting reviews of English language arts textbook adoptions. She is currently teaching fourth grade in the Colton Joint Unified School District in Colton, CA.

Douglas Fisher

Douglas Fisher, PhD, is professor of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University, where he previously served in the Department of Teacher Education since 1998, and is a teacher and administrator at Health Sciences High and Middle College. He is a board member of the International Reading Association and a past board member of the Literacy Research Association. He has served as a teacher, language development specialist, and administrator in public schools and nonprofit organizations, including eight years as the director of professional development for the City Heights Collaborative, a time of increased student achievement in some of San Diego's urban schools. Dr. Fisher is a member of the California Reading Hall of Fame and the recipient of an International Reading Association Celebrate Literacy Award and a Christa McAuliffe award for excellence in teacher education, and was a co-recipient (with Nancy Frey) of the 2004 Kate and Paul Farmer award from the National Council

of Teachers of English. In 2011, his book Implementing RTI with English Learners won the innovation award from the Academy of Educational Publishers. He has published widely on school improvement and has written several books on the topic.

Nancy Frey

Nancy Frey, PhD, is a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University. She had previously served in the School of Teacher Education, beginning in 2003, as a professor of literacy. She is the recipient of the Christa McAuliffe award for excellence in teacher education from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the 2008 Early Career Achievement Award from the National Reading Conference, and was a co-recipient (with Doug Fisher) of the 2004 Kate and Paul Farmer award from the National Council of Teachers of English. Dr. Frey has published numerous articles and co-authored several books on literacy, formative assessment, instructional design, data-driven instruction, and brain-based learning. Her research interests lie in school-wide practices, literacy interventions, and the leadership of teachers and administrators who create these positive changes in the lives of young people. She is a credentialed special educator, reading specialist, and administrator in California, and has taught at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in Florida and California for two decades. She is a teacher-leader at Health Sciences High and Middle College.

Timothy Shanahan

Timothy Shanahan is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he was founding di¬rector of the UIC Center for Literacy. Previously, he was director of reading for the Chicago Public Schools. He is author/editor of more than two hundred publications, and his research emphasizes the connections between reading and writing, literacy in the disciplines, and improving reading achievement. Professor Shanahan is past president of the International Literacy Association. He served as a member of the Advisory Board of the National Institute for Literacy under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, and he helped lead the National Reading Panel, convened at the request of Congress to evaluate research on the teaching reading—a major influence on reading education. He chaired two other federal research review panels: the National Literacy Panel for Language Minority Children and Youth,

and the National Early Literacy Panel, making him the only scholar to serve on all three national literacy research panels. Professor Shanahan helped write the Common Core State Standards. He was inducted into the Reading Hall of Fame in 2007, and is a former first-grade teacher.

Math Reviewers

Solomon Friedberg (Lead Reviewer)

Solomon Friedberg is James P. McIntyre Professor of Mathematics at Boston College. A well-known researcher in number theory and representation theory and a Fellow of the American Mathematical Society, Dr. Friedberg served as chair of the BC Mathematics Department for nine years and led the development of a new and highly regarded doctoral program. Dr. Friedberg has been involved in pre-collegiate mathematics education since the 1990s. He has been an editor of the CBMS book series Issues in Mathematics Education from 2006 on and serves on the National Academy of Science's U.S National Commission on Mathematics Instruction. He also received an award for Distinguished College or University Teaching from the Mathematical Association of America in 2009, and is chair of the AMS-MAA Joint Committee on TAs and Part-Time Instructors. He is co-principal investigator for a current National Science Foundation-funded project, "Exemplary Mathematics Educators for High-need Schools," through which Boston College partners with MƒA Boston in support of teaching fellows.

Juliana Belding

Juliana Belding is a professor of the Practice in Mathematics at Boston College. Her primary interests are mathematics teaching and learning at the undergraduate and K–12 level. At BC, she teaches math courses ranging from those for pre-service teachers to early level math majors, and she works with the training and mentoring of graduate student instructors. Previously, she was a Preceptor in Math at Harvard University, where she taught introductory courses and worked on a grant to developed multi-media case studies of calculus in other fields ("Calculus Applied!"). She received her PhD in algebraic number theory and cryptography at the University of Maryland in 2008. In the area of teacher education, Professor Belding has designed

and facilitated a variety of professional development on mathematical investigations and habits of mind. Most recently, she worked with an NSF-funded grant for Pittsburgh Public Schools, "Designing for Equity by Thinking about Mathematics." Previously, she led a seminar for Math for America, Boston, and Boston University's Math Teaching Scholars on making sense of the Common Core State Standards in the classroom. She is a founding member of the Boston Math Teachers' Circle, has led study groups for middle and high school math teachers in Cambridge Public Schools, and served as counselor and assistant director of the PROMYS for Teachers program at Boston University. At the undergraduate level, she is interested in increasing student persistence in STEM via the development of resources like the open online edX course "Calculus Applied!" She currently serves on the Mathematical Association of America committee on Assessment.

Andrew Chen

Dr. Andrew Chen served on the Common Core Standards Development Team in mathematics and frequently consults with education research institutions, including the Institute for Education Science at the U.S. Department of Education and Achieve, Inc. A former professor and principal research scientist at MIT, he is the founder and president of EduTron Corporation. He is currently on the advisory board of the National Council on Teacher Quality and the Mathematics and Science Advisory Council for the Massachusetts Board of Education. He was an adviser for the Massachusetts 2008 Guidelines for the Mathematical Preparation of Elementary Teachers. Dr. Chen provides high-quality professional development in mathematics and science to teachers at all levels through Intensive Immersion Institutes. He works with school districts and school administrators to increase their capacity to support excellent mathematics and science instruction. He also works with higher education institutions to develop rigorous and effective pre-service and in-service offerings in mathematics and science, and continues to teach and do research in physics.

Francis (Skip) Fennell

Francis (Skip) Fennell, PhD, is the L. Stanley Bowlsbey Professor of Education and Graduate and Professional Studies at McDaniel College in Maryland. A mathematics educator who has experience as a classroom teacher, principal, and supervisor of instruction, he is a past president of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)

and the Association of Mathematics Teacher Education (AMTE). Dr. Fennell is widely published in professional journals and textbooks related to elementary and middle-grade mathematics education and has played key leadership roles in the Research Council for Mathematics Learning, the Mathematical Sciences Education Board, the National Science Foundation, the Maryland Mathematics Commission, the United States National Commission for Mathematics Instruction, the Association for Mathematics Teacher Educators, and the National Mathematics Advisory Panel. He was a writer for the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics. He has received numerous honors and awards, including Maryland's Outstanding Mathematics Educator (1990), McDaniel College's Professor of the Year (1997), the Glenn Gilbert National Leadership Award from the National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics, the CASE-Carnegie Foundation Professor of the Year – Maryland (1997) and the AMTE Distinguished Outstanding Teacher Educator Award for Excellence in Service (2010).

Roger Howe

Roger Howe is the Curtis D. Roberts Professor of Mathematics Education in the College of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University. He assumed this position in 2016, after retirement from Yale University, where he was a member of the Yale Mathematics Department for over forty years, and is now the William Kenan Jr. Professor of Mathematics, Emeritus. Beginning in the late 1990s, Dr. Howe served on a multitude of committees studying mathematics education, including several that produced major reports on mathematics education. He has reviewed texts and instructional materials for several publishers and curriculum developers. He served on the Committee of Education for the American Mathematical Society, the Steering Committee for the Park City/IAS Mathematics Institute, the U.S. National Commission on Mathematics Instruction (2006–2016), and the executive committee of the International Commission on Mathematics Instruction (ICMI) (2008–2016). In 1997 and 1998, Dr. Howe served as a Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Sciences, and fellow of the American Mathematical Society; he received their Award for Distinguished Public Service in 2006. Dr. Howe's mathematical research investigates symmetry and its applications. His work in mathematics education is directed toward clarifying the conceptual development of mathematical ideas through the K–12 curriculum. He has focused especially on place value, the role of word problems, and productive use of the number line.

English Language Arts Review & Scoring Criteria

Below are the content-specific criteria for ELA standards upon which states were evaluated for their "Content" score (see also the *Scoring Criteria* that follows).

Content-Specific Criteria

Elementary School (Grades K–5)

Reading

1. The standards delineate explicit and systematic outcome expectations in foundational skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary) and comprehension.

2. The standards outline specific expectations for reading and for analyzing narrative and informational texts[1] (e.g., recognizing and interpreting genres and subgenres; organizational and/or argument structures; narrative elements; stylistic devices).

3. The standards reflect the importance of knowing specific works of outstanding literature and culturally significant informational texts.

4. The standards describe the quantitative and qualitative text complexity[2] of both narrative and informational texts to be studied and include lists (authors and/or titles), sample passages, and/or commentary that serve as exemplars of the levels of complexity required.

5. The standards require students to analyze and evaluate information presented in multimedia formats (e.g., the effect of various visual and aural techniques; how information presented in print is different from that which is presented through the use of multimedia).

Writing

1. The standards delineate explicitly the foundational skills of writing (e.g., printing, handwriting, keyboarding, spelling) as well as providing a clear progression of expectations that address the characteristics and quality of writing products that students must learn to produce (e.g., organization of ideas and focus; introduction, body, and conclusion; elements of a paragraph; elaboration; accuracy).

2. The standards require students to recognize, explain, and produce writing that reflects the defining characteristics of various grade-appropriate writing genres and subgenres, including specific literary elements or organizational structures and stylistic devices.

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1. Informational texts include biographies, autobiographies, historical books, technical texts, and literary nonfiction.
2. Measures of quantitative text complexity include formulas for calculating word frequency and sentence and word length. Qualitative measures include the language, structure, and knowledge demands of a text.

3. The standards describe or reference the use of specific criteria for evaluating pieces of writing (e.g., logically organized and detailed genre- or prompt-specific rubrics) that include examples regarding the quality of writing expected.

4. The standards specify expectations for the correct use of Standard English, describing a grade-appropriate facility with the parts of speech, sentence structure, usage, and mechanics appropriate to the grade level (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and nominative/objective/interrogative pronouns; sentence types; complete/incomplete sentences; subject/verb (S/V) agreement; initial, internal, and ending punctuation; and basic spelling rules, such as plurals, contractions, and inflections).

5. The standards specify the expectations for using technological tools to produce and revise writing, including word processing software, spell checkers, etc.

Listening and Speaking

1. The standards clearly address active listening and effective speaking skills (e.g., summarizing information presented orally, asking and answering relevant questions).

2. The standards address the ability to make formal oral presentations (e.g., recitation; story retelling; and sequencing).

3. The standards describe or reference the use of specific criteria for evaluating oral presentations (e.g., content, organization, and presentation style).

4. The standards include specific expectations for participation in group discussions (e.g., turn-taking and applying agreed-upon rules for decision making).

5. The standards require that students learn about multimedia techniques for presenting information.

Research

1. The standards require students to learn to conduct research, outlining specific expectations for the essential components of the process (e.g., identifying or finalizing a research question, locating information, evaluating and compiling information, using evidence from text to present their ideas and findings, and acknowledging sources using a standard format).

2. The standards specify that students be able to use and evaluate digital and multimedia sources and technological within the research process.

Middle School (Grades 6–8)

Reading

1. The standards address vocabulary development (e.g., knowledge of word meanings, roots and affixes, context clues, connotation and denotation, figurative language, and use of the dictionary for clarifying multiple meanings, etymology, and pronunciation).

2. The standards describe specific expectations for reading and analyzing narrative and informational texts—including specific requirements for mastering particular literary genres and subgenres and rhetorical structures (e.g., recognizing and interpreting genres, subgenres, and literary elements; organizational and/or argument structures; narrative elements; stylistic devices).

3. The standards reflect the importance of knowing specific works of outstanding American literature that reflect our common heritage, world literature that expands students' understanding of different human experiences, as well as culturally significant informational texts.

4. The standards describe the quantitative and qualitative text complexity of both narrative and informational texts to be studied and include lists (authors and/or titles), sample passages, and/or commentary that serve as exemplars of the levels of complexity required.

5. The standards specify that students learn to deal with text features unique to the different disciplines and that they develop reading skills or approaches that are appropriate to the specialized reading demands of the disciplines (e.g., determining theme in literary works, sourcing information in history, comparing prose and graphic sources in science reading).

6. The standards require students to analyze and evaluate information presented in multimedia formats (e.g., how information presented in print is different from that which is presented through the use of multimedia, noting what is conveyed through the use of various visual and aural techniques, such as bias and propaganda).

Writing

1. The standards delineate expectations for writing that address the characteristics and quality of writing products appropriate to each grade level and there is a clear progression from grade to grade that demonstrates increased rigor (e.g., increasingly sophisticated understanding of audience and purpose, clear organization and consistent focus, development of ideas through multi-paragraph essays, use of transitions, elaboration, accuracy).

2. The standards require students to interpret and produce writing that reflects the defining characteristics of various writing genres and subgenres (e.g., argument, rhetorical, narrative, and informational).

3. The standards describe or reference the use of specific criteria for evaluating writing (e.g., logically organized and detailed genre- or prompt-specific rubrics) that include examples regarding the quality of writing expected.

4. The standards specify expectations for the correct use of Standard English, describing a grade-appropriate facility with the parts of speech, sentence structure, usage, and mechanics appropriate to the grade level (e.g., parts of the verb; interjections, possessive/ demonstrative/relative/indefinite pronouns; tenses; analysis of sentence structure; types of phrases and clauses; fragments and run-on sentences; and facility with mechanics grounded in understanding of sentence structure).

5. The standards require students to learn to write in ways that reflect the specified communication demands of the various disciplines (e.g., history, mathematics, science, literature).

6. The standards specify the expectations for using technological tools to produce and revise writing, including word processing software, spell checkers, etc.

Listening and Speaking

1. The standards clearly address active listening and effective speaking skills (e.g., give, restate, and execute multi-step directions; convey ideas orally and interpret spoken ideas; make inferences from spoken information; ask and answer clarifying questions).

2. The standards address the ability to make formal oral presentations (e.g., recitation, informative and persuasive presentations that offer supporting details and evidence, and address anticipated counterclaims and include a call to action when appropriate).

3. The standards describe or reference the use of detailed criteria for evaluating formal oral presentations.

4. The standards include specific expectations for participation in group discussions (e.g., designation of roles and eliciting and considering suggestions).

5. The standards require that students use multimedia techniques to present information.

Research

1. The standards require that students learn to conduct research, specifying expectations for the essential components of the inquiry process (e.g., identifying and refining a research question; locating information; evaluating the quality of information/sources; selecting information that supports a thesis; using evidence from text to present their ideas and findings; citing sources correctly using standard guidelines; avoiding plagiarism).

High School (Grades 9–12)

Reading

1. The standards address vocabulary development and skills for building discipline- specific vocabulary (e.g., applying knowledge of roots and affixes to help determine meanings of words; applying knowledge of context clues to determine word meanings; tracing etymology; determining shades of meaning).

2. The standards describe specific expectations for reading and analyzing narrative and informational texts—including specific requirements for mastering particular literary genres and subgenres and rhetorical structures (e.g., analyzing specific literary elements for the genres/subgenres, the effectiveness of rhetorical techniques, and the manipulation of stylistic devices; describing the truth and/or validity of an argument; recognizing and explaining the presence of fallacious reasoning).

3. The standards reflect the importance of knowing specific works of outstanding American literature that reflect our common literary heritage, world literature that expands students' understanding of different human experiences, as well as culturally significant informational texts.

4. The standards describe the quantitative and qualitative text complexity of both narrative and informational texts to be studied and includes lists (authors and/or titles), sample passages, and/or commentary that are exemplars of the levels of complexity required.

5. The standards specify that students learn to deal with text features unique to the different disciplines and that they develop reading skills or approaches that are appropriate to the specialized reading demands of those disciplines (e.g., determining theme in literary works, sourcing information in history, comparing prose and graphic sources in science reading).

6. The standards require students to analyze and evaluate information presented in multimedia formats (e.g., noting instances of manipulation, bias, propaganda, and potential fallacies).

Writing

1. The standards delineate expectations for writing, including rhetorical and argumentative writing, that address the characteristics and quality of writing products appropriate to the grade level (e.g., strong organization and development of ideas, facility with selection and blending of genres appropriate to audience and purpose, the use of sophisticated transitions, active rather than passive voice, and other stylistic elements for rhetorical effect).

2. The standards require students to analyze and produce writing that reflects the defining characteristics of writing genres and subgenres (e.g., argumentation, explanatory).

3. The standards describe or reference the use of specific criteria for evaluating writing (e.g., logically organized and detailed genre- or prompt-specific rubrics) that include examples regarding the quality of writing expected.

4. The standards specify expectations for the correct use of Standard English, describing a grade-appropriate

facility with the parts of speech, sentence structure, usage, and mechanics (e.g., demonstrate control of sentence structure, usage, and mechanics).

5. The standards require students to learn to write in ways that reflect the specified communication demands of the various disciplines (e.g., history, mathematics, science, literature).

6. The standards require that students use multimedia techniques to prepare and present information.

Listening and Speaking

1. The standards clearly address active listening and effective speaking skills (e.g., interpret complex information and ideas presented orally, convey complex information or ideas orally).

2. The standards address the ability to make formal oral presentations (e.g., recitation and complex informative or persuasive oral presentations that require a logical structure, well-chosen supporting evidence/details, skillful rhetorical techniques, and a strong presentation style).

3. The standards describe or reference the use of detailed criteria for evaluating formal oral presentations.

4. The standards include specific expectations for participation in group discussions (e.g., tolerating ambiguity, building on the ideas of others, and reaching consensus).

Research

1. The standards require students to learn to conduct research, outlining specific expectations for the essential components of the process (e.g., identifying and refining a research question; locating information; evaluating the quality of information/sources; selecting information and evidence that supports a thesis; excluding extraneous information; presenting findings in a format appropriate for the audience and purpose; citing sources correctly in a standard format; avoiding plagiarism).

Scoring Criteria

Standards are evaluated in two categories: "content and rigor" and "clarity and specificity." Based on the degree to which the standards included the content above, states could earn up to 7 points for content and rigor as summarized below.

Content & Rigor

7 Points

Standards meet all of the following criteria:

- The standards are of high quality in terms of the content chosen. Categories of content deemed crucial include: Foundational Knowledge; Comprehension; Vocabulary; Language; Fluency; Writing; Text Complexity; Research; Familiarity with important Literary/Cultural Works; and Disciplinary Literacy.

- The standards focus on learning outcomes, as opposed to learning processes. (Less that 5 percent of the standards focus on learning processes.)

- The standards connect to content standards in other disciplines such as art, science, and social studies.

- The content identified by the standards is well explained.

- Good decisions are made about what content should be omitted. (Less than 5 percent of the content in the standards is unnecessary or superfluous.)

- The standards do not overemphasize topics of little importance or underemphasize topics of great importance.

- The level of rigor is appropriate for the targeted grade level(s), and these expectations are clearly articulated. Students are expected to learn the content and skills in a sensible order and at an increasing level of difficulty.

- The standards articulate the level of text complexity expected of students and provide text exemplars of this level of complexity.

- The standards are specific about the genres and subgenres that students need to master, including particular literary elements relevant to those genres/subgenres.

- The standards are specific about the types of literature and informational text that students should know, including specifying some particular texts/authors that students should be familiar with.

- The standards, taken as a whole, define core literacy for all students in the subject under review; at the same time, the standards that run through grade 12 are sufficiently challenging to ensure that students who achieve proficiency by the final year of high school will be college- or career-ready.

- The standards do not overemphasize the importance of students' life experiences or "real-world" problems. They do not embrace fads, suggest political bias, or teach moral dogma. They do not imply that all interpretations are equally valid (regardless of logic or the adequacy of supporting evidence). The standards also avoid other major subject-specific problems identified by the reviewers.

6 Points

Standards fall short in one or more of the following ways:

- Some content (as specified in the content-specific criteria) is missing (approximately 5 percent and up to 20 percent).

- The standards include learning outcomes. Approximately 6 percent to 15 percent of the standards focus on learning processes rather than learning outcomes.

- The standards haphazardly connect to standards in other disciplines such as art, science, and social studies.

- Some of the content in the standards is unnecessary (approximately 5 percent and up to 20 percent).

- The level of rigor is appropriate for most of the targeted grade level(s), and these expectations are articulated. Students are expected to learn the content and skills in a sensible order and at an increasing level of difficulty.

- The standards are inconsistent in their coverage of the text complexity expected of students.

- The standards specify types of literature and informational text (e.g., poetry, American literature) that should be known by students, but without indicating any specific texts or authors.

- The standards do not fully distinguish between more- and less-important content and skills (i.e., importance is neither expressly articulated nor conveyed via the number of standards dedicated to particular topics). In other words, the standards overemphasize one or two topics of little importance or underemphasize one or two topics of great importance.

- Standards at particular grade levels are not as rigorous as they should be, or are too rigorous (i.e., expectations are slightly too high or too low).

- There are minor problems or shortcomings (e.g., one or more of the problems listed in the last paragraph under the 7-point score affects the standards in a small way, or there are other minor subject-specific problems).

5 Points

Standards fall short in one or more of the following ways:

- Crucial content is missing (approximately 20 percent and up to 35 percent).

- Standards include learning outcomes (approximately 20 percent, but less than 50 percent, of the standards focus on learning processes rather than learning outcomes).

- While most of the appropriate content is covered by the standards, the content is nonetheless covered in a manner that is not satisfactory (i.e., the standards cover the right material but do not cover that material robustly; thus, the material is shortchanged in some way).

- Some of the content in the standards is unnecessary (approximately 35 percent).

- The level of rigor is appropriate for about half of the targeted grade level(s) and these expectations are not always clearly articulated. Students are expected to learn the content and skills in a sequential order and at an increasing level of difficulty, but this order and increasing level of difficulty are not always articulated.

- The standards are inconsistent in their descriptions of text complexity expected of students.

- Standards do not distinguish between more- and less-important content and skills (i.e., importance is not articulated or conveyed in any way). The standards

often overemphasize topics of little importance or underemphasize topics of great importance.

- The standards specify only that students should be familiar with literary and informational texts.

- Standards generally need to be more or less rigorous than they are at certain grade levels (i.e., expectations are too high or too low).

- There is an important shortcoming (perhaps one of the problems listed in the last paragraph of the 7-point score, or there are other subject-specific problems).

4 Points

Standards fall short in one or more of the following ways:

- At least 35 percent and up to 50 percent of crucial content is missing.

- Some of the content in the standards is unnecessary (at least 35 percent, and up to 50 percent).

- The level of rigor is appropriate for less than half of the targeted grade level(s), and these expectations are not always clearly articulated. Students are expected to learn the content and skills in a sequential order and at an increasing level of difficulty, but this order and increasing level of difficulty are infrequently articulated.

- More than 50 percent of the standards focus on learning processes rather than learning outcomes.

- The standards are inconsistent in their descriptions of the text complexity expected of students.

- There are a few critical shortcomings (as listed above).

3 Points

Standards fall short in one or more of the following ways:

- At least 50 percent of crucial content is missing.

- The majority of the content in the standards is unnecessary.

- The standards focus on learning processes rather than outcomes.

- The level of rigor is inappropriate for more than half of the targeted grade level(s) and these expectations

are not clearly articulated. Students are expected to learn the content and skills in a sequential order and at an increasing level of difficulty, but this order and increasing level of difficulty are infrequently articulated.

- The standards do not mention text complexity expected of students.

- There are serious problems, shortcomings, or errors in the standards, although the standards have some redeeming qualities and there is some evidence of rigor.

2 Points

Standards fall short in one or more of the following ways:

- At least 50 percent of crucial content is missing.

- The majority (approximately 80 percent) of the content in the standards is unnecessary.

- There are several serious problems, shortcomings, or errors (as listed above).

1 Point

Standards fall short in one or more of the following ways:

- At least 80 percent of crucial content is missing.

- At least 80 percent of the content in the standards is unnecessary.

There are numerous problems, shortcomings, or errors (as listed above).

0 Points

Standards fall short in one or more of the following ways:

- The content of the standards does not address or barely addresses the subject-specific content expectations.

- The content is poorly chosen and fails to provide the level of rigor appropriate for the targeted grade level(s).

- Content is full of problems, shortcomings, and errors (as listed above).

Clarity & Specificity

Standards should be clearly written and organized. The purpose of standards is to communicate educational goals to students, parents, and educators. To meet the needs of all of these audiences, standards must be clearly written, without jargon, and must be laid out in a manner that makes them easy to follow and understand.

States could earn up to three points for clarity and specificity, as explained below.

3 Points

Standards are coherent, clear, and well organized. The scope and sequence of the standards are apparent and sensible. They provide solid guidance to users (students, teachers, curriculum directors, test developers, textbook writers, etc.) as to the content knowledge and skills required to be college- or career-ready. The right level of detail is provided.

The document(s) are written in prose that the general public can understand and are mostly free from jargon. The standards describe things that are measurable (i.e., can lead to observable, comparable results across students and schools). The standards as a whole clearly illustrate the growth expected through the grades, and the organization of the standards across reading, writing, and oral language are clearly specified.

2 Points

The standards are somewhat lacking in coherence, clarity, or organization.

The scope and sequence of the standards is not completely apparent or sensible. The standards do not provide a complete guide to users as to the content knowledge and skills required to be college or career ready (i.e., as a guide for users, there are shortcomings that were not already addressed by the content and rigor score). The standards provide insufficient detail. There is some connection between the organization of the different components of the language arts (reading, writing, speaking, listening); perhaps there are connections between reading and writing or speaking and listening.

The prose is generally comprehensible but there is some jargon and some vague or unclear language. Some standards are not measurable.

1 Point

The standards are somewhat coherent, clear, and organized. They offer limited guidance to users (students, teachers, curriculum directors, textbook writers, etc.) about the content knowledge and skills required to be college- or career-ready, but there are significant shortcomings (as a guide for users) that were not already addressed by the content and rigor score. The standards are seriously lacking in detail, and much of the language is vague enough to be unclear in what is being asked of students and teachers. There is no obvious connection among the components of the language arts.

O Points

The standards are incoherent and/or disorganized. They are not helpful to users. They are sorely lacking in detail. Scope and sequence are not apparent.

Overall Ratings

States can earn a total of 10 possible points. Final scores translate to the following overall ratings in Table B-1:

Table B-1. Overall Ratings for State Reviews

Total Score	Overall Rating	Recommendation
9–10	Strong	Recommend implementation of these standards and the development of sample lessons that demonstrate their use.
7–8	Good	Recommend implementation of these standards with targeted revisions.
5–6	Weak	Weak. Recommend significant and immediate revisions. Standards are not suitable until and unless these revisions occur.
0–4	Inadequate	Highly recommend complete revision or rewrite. Do not recommend implementation of standards as they have critical shortcomings.