

**AGENDA**

**Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee Meeting**

Monday, March 17, 2025  
10:00 a.m.  
Room 433, Blatt Building

- I. Welcome ..... Dr. Patty Tate
- II. Approval of Minutes of January 13, 2025 ..... Dr. Patty Tate
- III. Information Items:
  - Special Presentation:
    - Stackable Credentials System & Impact on CCR  
..... Kayce Cook, Interim Director  
Career & Technical Education  
SCDE,  
Ivy Coburn, Director  
Education & Workforce  
Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) &  
Dale Winkler, Sr. Vice President  
SREB
  - Update on Chronic Absenteeism Initiative ..... Tenell Felder
  - Credit Recovery Analysis ..... Dr. Matthew Lavery
- IV. Adjournment

April Allen  
CHAIR

Brian Newsome  
VICE CHAIR

Terry Alexander  
Melanie Barton  
Russell Baxley  
Neal Collins  
Bob Couch  
Bill Hager  
Barbara B. Hairfield  
Sidney Locke  
Jeri McCumbee  
Melissa Pender  
Patty J. Tate  
C. Ross Turner, III  
Ellen Weaver

Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee  
Dr. Patty Tate, Chair  
Rep. Terry Alexander  
Rep. Bill Hager  
Barbara Hairfield  
Sidney Locke  
Melissa Pender  
Sen. Ross Turner

Dana Yow  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

### **Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee**

Minutes of the Meeting

January 13, 2025

**Members Present (in-person or remote):** Dr. Patty Tate, Rep. Terry Alexander, Rep. Bill Hager, Barbara Hairfield, Sidney Locke, Melissa Pender, and Sen. Ross Turner

**EOC Staff Present:** Tenell Felder, Gabrielle Fulton, Hope Johnson-Jones, Dr. Rainey Knight, Dr. Matthew Lavery, Dr. Jenny May and Dana Yow

**Special Guests:** Philip Cease, SC Department of Education and Joshua Gross, SC Department of Education

ASA subcommittee chair Dr. Patty Tate opened the meeting and asked for a motion to approve the ASA subcommittee minutes from the November 18<sup>th</sup> 2024 meeting. Senator Ross Turner motioned to approve the minutes which was seconded by Sidney Locke. After the minutes were approved Dr. Tate presented the two information items that would be discussed – Multilingual Learners (MLL) Test Participation and the Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program Survey.

EOC Deputy Director Dr. Matthew Lavery was then called forward to present on the Multilingual Learners' Test Participation information item. Dr. Lavery stated that the Multilingual Learners' Progress Indicator was federally required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The act requires School Report Cards to report "...progress in achieving English language proficiency, as defined by the State and measured by the assessments described in subsection (b)(2)(G), within a State-determined timeline for all English learners."

Dr. Lavery stated that South Carolina selected WIDA, which is housed in the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, as its English language proficiency test. WIDA defines English language proficiency as getting a composite score of 4.4 on the test. South Carolina defines continuously enrolled Multilingual Language students as students enrolled by day 45 who stay in the same school, without a break in enrollment, to the relevant test window. Progress is defined as measuring growth towards gaining English Language Proficiency (ELP) within five years of the student's initial screening. Dr. Lavery then noted that for current implementation the ELP testing window is early and long, being open for seven weeks from Jan. 22 to March 8.

Next, Dr. Lavery presented potential drawbacks of ML student testing which included MLs being one of the most transient subgroups, not incentivizing testing MLLs who have not been continuously enrolled at the school, and that the long and early test window motivates delays in testing.

Possible solutions to the drawbacks were then presented as separating the Multilingual Learners Progress indicator from the calculation of the ELP Participation Rate and applying a score penalty if a school fails to test at least 95% of MLLs enrolled for at least 2 weeks during the test window.

Following this presentation, questions were accepted.

Sen. Turner asked how long it takes students to complete the tests and what the students are tested on. Dr. Lavery responded that the test window was three to four days and that the students were tested on spoken language, written language, listening comprehension and reading comprehension.

Sen. Turner then asked for clarity on if the test's purpose was to assess improvement throughout the year or to assess proficiency. Dr. Lavery responded that the test is a moment-in-time assessment to test proficiency, not improvement. Sen Turner then asked how long they needed to continue to take the test to which Dr. Lavery responded that students would need to continue taking the test until they scored a 4.4 or higher and move into monitoring status.

EOC Executive Director Dana Yow then clarified that students in monitoring status are still considered to be a Multilingual Learners to which Dr. Lavery agreed.

Next, Representative Bill Hager asked if charter schools participated in the testing to which Dr. Lavery replied yes as all public schools in the state are.

Representative Terry Alexander then asked what type of penalties would be imposed.

Dr. Lavery replied that the penalties had yet to be determined but that it would likely be points taken from the school's rating. He also clarified that federal law requires there be a substantial penalty within the accountability system but that it does not define what the penalty will be. South Carolina decided that if a school tests fewer than 95% of the students responsible for testing, that a five-point penalty would be assigned to their rating points.

Melissa Pender then asked how it is calculated when parent indicates a language other than English is spoken in the home, but the student is determined to be proficient. Dr. Lavery answered that student would not be included in the calculations as a Multilingual Learner is considered a

student who is not proficient in English at the time of enrollment and who answers one of the three questions on the enrollment survey with a language other than English.

Pender then asked what indicators a student who moves into the four-year monitoring phase is a part of. Dr. Lavery replied that they would be included in the Multilingual Learners subgroup in all of the indicators but that they would not appear in the ML progress indicator.

Senator Turner then asked if the accountability was measuring participation rather than results to which Dr. Lavery replied yes; the change they were discussing was about participation rather than results.

Yow then asked another follow up question for clarity if about half of the schools got the indicator to which Dr. Lavery replied that about half of schools received the multilingual learners progress indicator.

Yow then asked if the committee had any other data run requests needed before the meeting to make a decision. Seeing as there were none, Dr. Tate thanked Dr. Lavery then called forward EOC Director of Qualitative Research and Stakeholder Engagement Dr. Jenny May to present on the Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF) Survey.

Dr. May thanked the subcommittee for having her and acknowledged the SC Department of Education partners who were in attendance. The EOC is directed pursuant to Section 59-8-110 (E) to “collaborate with the (SC Department of Education) to develop and administer an annual parental satisfaction survey for all parents of scholarship students on issues relevant to the ESTF program, to include effectiveness and length of the program participation. Results of this survey must be provided to the General Assembly by December thirty-first of each year.” Dr. May noted that the other requirements of the law were not able to be completed yet as the full year of data needed were not yet available.

Dr. May then provided background on the ESTF, noting that the act became effective in June 2023 and allowed \$6,000 to be distributed to eligible students yearly (\$1,500 each quarter). Eligibility requirements are as follows: the student must have SC residency, must have attended public school during the 2023-24 school year or be a rising Kindergarten student in the 2024-25 school year, and household income cannot exceed 200% poverty rate. Students must also attend a school that is outside of their resident school district.

Next Dr. May reviewed the allowable use for ESTF funds which include the following: Education Service Provider Tuition and Fees, Textbook and Student Workbooks, Reading books, Curriculum in the Following Subject Areas: Math, English, Science, Social Studies, or Foreign Language,

Instructional Materials/School Supplies, Tutoring, Computer Hardware, and Technological Devices. An October 2023 lawsuit led to the September 11, 2024 ruling of the SC Supreme Court stating that tax dollars could not be used to benefit private industry therefore making the use of ESTF funds for private school tuition unconstitutional. Dr. May noted that on October 15, 2024 approximately 1000 student accounts were temporarily and that on October 29 the ESTF satisfaction survey was released using the Department of Ed's list serves. Surveys were sent to all families who had been approved with no omissions. Dr. May noted that the survey closed on November 15<sup>th</sup> and had collected 243 responses.

Representative Alexander then asked Dr. May to reiterate the complete number of surveys that were sent out to which she answered 2,879.

Dr. May informed the subcommittee that she reached out to 28 states with similar programs to SC's ESTF program and received feedback from two which offered to share their parent survey questions. Using those questions, Dr. May stated she worked with the Survey Advisory Group, an ad hoc committee of the EOC to advise and assist on survey development for the state. She stated that a priority for the group was to assure privacy and anonymity for survey respondents, children and families. She also explained that the Net Promoter Scale was used in analyzing the survey. Dr. May then went through the survey questions which covered program satisfaction, participation, and use of program funds.

Next, a short video on the Net Promoter Scale was played explaining the NPS as a popular customer experience metric used to drive improvements, and based on how likely someone is to recommend the company to a friend or relative. Dr. May clarified that they selected NPS for this survey it fit with a culture of action that the SC Department of Education had emphasized. The NPS categories are Promoters with ratings of nine to 10, Passives with ratings of sevens and eights, and Detractors with ratings of zero to six. A NPS score of zero is considered neutral, above 20 is favorable, 50 is excellent, and above 80 is considered world class.

Findings related to overall satisfaction were as follows: Likelihood to Recommend ESTF received an NPS score of -.92, and Overall Satisfaction with ESTF received an NPS score of -20. Both scores indicated dissatisfaction. Dr. May then presented survey responses noting that though some of the views expressed was harsh, it was important to properly convey parent sentiment.

Dr. May presented survey responses related to the Supreme Court decision to discontinue funds for private school tuition, eligibility, and overall communication of the ESTF program. She noted program participants expressed frustration over discontinued funds as well as parents reporting being unaware that their child had to leave their resident school district to utilize ESTF funds.

Survey responses also revealed a significant number of parents were dissatisfied with the communication around the program's requirements and changes.

Melissa Pender asked if it was clear to parents that they needed to leave their school district to which Dr. May answered that she did not have access to that information but that she hoped the report would communicate to the department that there might be room for improvement in communication of program guidelines.

Pender then asked if participants were not required to clearly communicate what they would be using the funds for before they receive the money. Dr. May referred the question to South Carolina Department of Education Director of Governmental Affairs Philip Cease.

Cease clarified that participants did not have to indicate what they were going to use the funds for before they enrolled though they need to agree to stipulations such as not being enrolled in their home public school district.

Pender then asked for the number of checkpoints parents must do to ensure that funds are being used properly to which Cease answered that there were four.

Pender then asked if data would be captured to help determine if students were performing better academically to which it was answered there were requirements in the law to do so.

Representative Alexander then expressed dissatisfaction over using public funding for private revenue and asked if there was a breakdown of how the money was spent.

Dr. May thanked Representative Alexander for his comment then mentioned she would be presenting how the money was spent in an upcoming slide.

Based on the review of the parent survey results, Dr. May presented the following recommendations from EOC staff:

- Prioritize communication of program eligibility and participation requirements in multiple and repeated ways
- Confirm eligibility before funds are released on July 31st for the first quarter payment.

She then presented the information showing where the money was used noting which uses were deemed unconstitutional. The survey indicated that parents were very happy to be able to use funds for computer hardware such as an iPad and that parents believed that this helped their student's academic achievement. The second highest use of funds was used to access curriculum material

Survey comments from ESTF program Promoters were then shared. Parents expressed their positive experiences with the program noting perceived improvement in their child's academic achievement and ease of using funds for necessary materials.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Dr. May accepted questions and comments.

Representative Alexander then asked if a copy of the report would be presented to house members to which Yow replied that the report had been shared with the General Assembly but that efforts could be made to share it specifically with education committees.

He then asked if the funds were being used for homeschools to which Dr. May replied that the statute indicated they were not supposed to be used for such. However, Dr. May noted that the funds do allow for the purchase of curriculum however a number of families indicated that they could now homeschool their child.

Yow then commended the General Assembly for drafting the law to require a parent satisfaction survey to provide valuable information on the parents' experience with the ESTF program

Representative Alexander then commented that he did not believe the law allowing for the ESTF program was a good law given the fact that it used public dollars for private means.

Senator Turner then commented he was surprised of the number of promoters for the program given the tuition funds being revoked. He then stated the program will help give parents a choice of where to send their child to receive the best education.

Following this, Dr. May concluded her presentation.

Representative Alexander then asked if any action needed to be taken from the report to which Yow replied that it was an information item to use for upcoming deliberations, and to give insight into how parents felt about the program.

The meeting was then adjourned.

**EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** March 17, 2025

**SUBCOMMITTEE:**

**Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee**

**INFORMATION ITEM:**

**Update on Chronic Absenteeism**

**PURPOSE/AUTHORITY**

**§SECTION 59-18-1700.** Public information campaign; development and approval; funding.

(A) An on-going public information campaign must be established to apprise the public of the status of the public schools and the importance of high standards for academic performance for the public school students of South Carolina.

**CRITICAL FACTS**

EOC members have determined that student attendance and chronic absenteeism are a concern as they significantly impact student achievement. The EOC has asked for staff to follow-up focus groups with students by talking to parents. The EOC has also asked staff to develop a public awareness campaign focused on the importance of being present at school.

**TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS**

Ongoing

**ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC**

**Cost:** no impact

**ACTION REQUEST**

For approval

For information

**ACTION TAKEN**

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)





## CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM – THE PARENTS’ PERSPECTIVE

### METHODOLOGY

This report presents the findings of a focus group study conducted on behalf of the Education Oversight Committee. Three online focus groups were conducted among parents with children in public school. The groups were conducted on January 14 and 15, 2025. One group was comprised of parents of elementary school students, one was comprised of parents of middle school students, and one was comprised of parents of high school students.

This study complements a focus group study that was conducted among South Carolina public high school students in October of last year.

The primary objectives of the study were to better understand the underlying issues that contribute to chronic absenteeism and how South Carolina’s public schools can develop strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a general principal, parents feel their children should be in school every day. At the same time, they recognize that their students will be absent some. In fact, as discussions delved into acceptable reasons their student might be absent, parents identified many reasons they would consider acceptable for their child to be absent. Further, when discussing whether or not absenteeism is a problem, many parents view absenteeism as situational. For example, some parents feel if a student has good grades and is keeping up with his/her classes, being absent a few days here and there is acceptable. The age of the student is also a factor in that parents recognize that it’s easier to “catch up” after missing two days of kindergarten than two days of high school.

Unlike students, who see a lot of different behaviors related to attendance in the schools they attend, the perspectives of parents are somewhat limited to their children and their children’s peer group. In other words, parents could not speak broadly to the problem. Instead, their comments were more narrowly focused on their children.

Still, many of the same themes emerged around why students are absent, including safety, bullying, mental health (medical or stress induced), teachers, and transportation. Of note, parents, particularly parents of elementary middle school students, had different views on bullying and problems with teachers and other students than the high school students did. While students identified those issues as reasons to be absent, parents said those were issues that would be addressed immediately with a meeting with school officials.

As with students, many parents are not familiar with the term chronic absenteeism and there is some confusion between chronic absenteeism and truancy, how much of a day a student can miss before being considered absent, tardy versus absent, etc.

### DETAILED STUDY FINDINGS

The remainder of the report follows the outline of the focus group discussion guide. The narrative includes verbatim quotes from parents on the various topics covered. The verbatims have been edited in some cases for clarity, grammar, etc.

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING IN SCHOOL EVERY DAY

Most parents began the discussion by saying their student should be in class every day.

*I think my kids should be in school every day unless they're sick. If my kids aren't sick, they're not running a fever, they're going to school.*

*I think it's very important to be at school every day.*

*Yeah, I agree. We do our best to try to get them there and if they're not there, we definitely request their schoolwork and things from their teachers, so they don't get behind and stay up to date.*

*Yes, I agree the same. I believe that they should be physically in school every single day.*

*I believe it's important to be able to articulate the curriculum more appropriately. They're able to ask questions, they're able to be more informed about the curriculum that they're learning about.*

*I agree. I also think there's a lot of social interaction where kids have to navigate people who come from all different lifestyles and walks of life and have different attitudes and opinions and things of that nature as well.*

However, as the conversations developed, parents were quick to mention a lot of reasons why their students would not necessarily be in class every day. (This topic is covered in detail later in the report.)

*I'm big on mental health days in our house. I feel like first of all, education is his only job right now, so of course he should definitely try to be there as often as possible. But even as an adult, some days I wake up and I can't... So granted it might be once a school year, but I don't make him go. He goes because he knows that's his job and he needs to focus on his education right now, but I will flex that a little bit if he's like, mom, I don't feel like going today. Sometimes I will let him off with that. But I do feel like it's important to be in school every day because it teaches interaction skills, it teaches them responsibility for getting up and being where they say they're going to be and putting in the time.*

## HOW MANY DAYS CAN YOU MISS AND HOW EASY IS IT TO CATCH UP?

Parents had a hard time answering the question regarding how many days their student could miss school without being negatively impacted. They also struggled with how hard or easy it would be for their student to catch up after missing a class. Understandably, a lot of it depends on the class, the student, the communication between the family/student and the teacher, the time of year, whether it's a half day or a full day, etc.

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*Okay, so not to be impacted. I would say maybe four to five at the most, but it depends on... if it's like a half a day or doctor's appointments, stuff like that, orthodontist, stuff of that nature. But if they're missing over seven to eight for just unexcused, that's a problem.*

*I don't know if I have an exact [number of] days in mind, but it all really depends on the time of year too because it seems like certain times of the year, especially right before report cards come out, at least at our school and his teachers, they kind of cram everything in right before that happens. So, if he misses that, he's going to miss a whole bunch more than leading up to let's say spring break or something where, I mean they're half days and watching movies type of deal.*

*One class or one day? Easy. Yeah, any more than that, it gets a little overwhelming.*

*One day. I think one day is pretty easy, but two to three days is where they're going to struggle.*

*I feel being in middle school, it is hard to miss days because they have so much work that if they miss one day they're behind six different classes. In each class you have your physical online work that you're doing as well as paperwork as well as what you're hearing from the teacher. So, it is hard when they miss a day.*

*It depends. If it's a consecutive back-to-back, they'll be extremely behind, but if it's sporadically here and there they can catch up.*

*I agree with [name]. I think it's the multiple days in a row that really causes a snowball effect and [make it] harder to catch up and you're missing what the teacher's saying, you're trying to catch up on Schoology and it is kind of harder to keep up with that, but a day here and there it's a little bit easier to pick back up where you left off.*

*Also, I think it depends on the subject. In ELA, they might be doing a novel study where they can catch up with that reading. Math, they might be learning a new skill or building on that skill, whereas if they're missing that they might be missing how to do that. So, it might be a little bit more difficult class to class.*

*I was going to say, I think it depends on what time of the year, too. We all know the day before break they aren't doing anything.*

*I feel like it's pretty easy for us as in that its elementary, it's like third grade, so it's stuff that I feel confident that I'm knowledgeable about enough to explain to him about and get him to understand, kind of keep him updated even though he is missing the seat time, he's still learning.*

## **HOW ARE PARENTS CONTACTED WHEN THEIR STUDENT IS ABSENT?**

Parents said they are contacted via phone, email and through apps when their student is absent. Parents say they receive an automated in the morning if their student is absent. They also receive automated

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emails and are apprised via apps like Schoology and PowerSchool. Even though the communication is automated, parents feel it is very effective. Parents did not report instances where teachers, guidance counselors or principals called them.

*We'll receive a call early in the morning if they're not there. And then same thing, we actually receive notifications from, I think it's PowerSchool or Schoology or maybe the county app, same thing. And then I'll receive an email at the end of the day and usually another phone call or text message at the end of the day. So, there's at least three to four communications for us throughout the day.*

*Yeah, our school calls us by 10 30 in the morning if our student is absent.*

*We get contacted, we get text, phone calls, emails and carrier pigeon. I feel like we get all kinds of contact when they're absent.*

*I get a notification through PowerSchool saying your child was marked unexcused or absent in this class. So it'll start as soon as first period, but I drive him so I know he is there.*

## **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE STUDENTS ARE IN SCHOOL EACH DAY?**

Parents feel very strongly that they are responsible for making sure their students are in school each. While this might be obvious for parents of elementary school students, parents of middle school and high school students also say they are the ones responsible.

*Agreed. The parents. Even though when I had a senior last year, she actually worked half the day and then went to school after and it was kind of difficult to get to school on time, but I was still the one, even after she turned 18, they called me. It was still my job to get her there even though I wasn't driving her, and I had no control really of her getting from work to the school, but the school still held me responsible.*

*They're just large babies. They're still just large babies. You got to wake them up.*

## **WHAT DOES CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM MEAN?**

As with students, chronic absenteeism is not a household term among parents. Further, there is some confusion between chronic absenteeism and truancy, how much of a day a student can miss before being considered absent, tardy versus absent, etc.

*I would think just over 10 days, if that's kind of the rule, you cannot miss more than 10. Then anything over that would be chronic absenteeism.*

*I thought there was a legal amount of days that if you have missed 12 or 15, I don't actually know what it was. I don't think I've ever gotten close to that.*

*I think it's like five [to be chronically absent].*

*15, 11 or more?*

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*[I think] it's 10%. I don't know what the number is.*

Most parents have a general understanding that missing 50% or more of the day is counted as an absence, although some are not clear on the specific percentage, time, etc.

*That's what we have at our school. If you're not there by 11 o'clock or if you leave before a certain time, you're considered absent for the day. But there's individual absentees for each class loaded into their file as well.*

*I mean I guess maybe not that term, but I'm understanding I think what it means, right? Somebody [that's] absent all the time.*

*Our school has a cutoff. I believe it's either 11:00 or 1:00. I honestly can't remember. It's kind of confusing to me because even if they're tardy, they count them absent and I had some confusion with that because I was like, how are they tardy and absent? I thought you get so many tardies that equal an absence, but they do it where your tardy is considered an absence and it's an unexcused absence. So, that doesn't sit well with me and I'm still trying to learn what's going on.*

*Mine's broken down based on classes: first, second, third, fourth period. If you're out for the first two, but you're there for the second two, then it just breaks down per class.*

## **WHAT ARE SOME ACCEPTABLE REASONS FOR STUDENTS TO MISS 50% OR MORE OF A SCHOOL DAY?**

Parents did not have any trouble mentioning acceptable reasons for their student to miss 50% or more of a school day. As mentioned previously, parents began the conversation by saying their student should be in school every day during the school week but quickly identified many and varied “acceptable” reasons for their student to be absent. Although most of the reasons surfaced naturally in group discussions, the moderator probed parents on the “acceptability” of following reasons for being absent:

- > Doctors' appointments
- > Vacations
- > Concerns about school safety
- > Sports activities
- > The student is ill
- > Mental health struggles/depression
- > Problems with teachers/other students
- > Student saying they are not feeling well

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## > Extracurricular activities

As illustrated in the quotes that follow, the general take-away is that the reasons above are acceptable as long as the student isn't missing too much class, keeping grades up, etc.

There were two notable exceptions: concerns about school safety and problems with teachers/other students. With respect to safety, parents feel it is acceptable for their student to be absent if there is a bomb threat (or something similar). However, if the issue with safety directly pertains to their child, they say would meet with school officials to resolve the issue. Similarly, parents would request a meeting with school officials if their student had problems with teachers or other students. Parents view these issues as ones that need to be resolved so their student can learn in a healthy environment.

*Appointments are during the school day. You try, I mean try to get something that's 3:30 or later, but that's impossible. Impossible first thing in the morning and you try to miss the least amount of school or try to pick them up. But it is nearly impossible to try and get something that's not inside the school hours.*

*Vacation? The thing about vacations is sometimes the week before it's [less expensive] versus the week of, so that'd be kind of tricky too. But vacation, not really, unless it's towards the end of the year and they haven't missed any major days maybe.*

*Financially, some of us can't afford to go on the holidays when everybody's off school, when prices are skyrocketing. We can only afford to go when it's off season, which is [during school].*

*We've done that with my oldest. There's been bomb threats called in and stuff to where it's a text and it hasn't been official, but we're going to. Okay, we're going to miss a little bit just in case.*

*I mean as a dad who has a traveling soccer kid, we haven't had to miss school, but that would be a reason to miss, but I don't think that that would become a chronic thing. Tournaments are usually on the weekends; games are on the weekends. So, I mean I don't think that there should be a lot of scheduling interference there, but I do think it's a legitimate reason if that's something that that person is into.*

*That might be the opposite of what she just said. As I said, my kid's an athlete, we're trying to get him on the 3.5 GPA. So, to motivate him, if he busts his tail for a very long period of time, then maybe he can take Friday off. Really anything that will work with him, anything that will work, I'll do it.*

*Being sick, maybe a death in the family [are acceptable reasons].*

*Extreme medical condition [would be an acceptable reason].*

*I'm not one to give in easily on something like this, but there are days where you just didn't wake up in a good place in the world and I see it more in some of our friends that have kids*

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*that are a touch older than mine, more in the seventh and eighth grade, but some days you just wake up, you're not ready to take on the world and I think there's certain days where that can be okay.*

*I went through this with my fifth grader who was a fourth grader last year, and just a flip of a switch, he just decided he didn't want to go to school out of nowhere. And so it was like every day a struggle for us. Turns out it was anxiety of starting the new school year, even though we were at the same school.*

*For us and our family and our situation, I'm okay if she only missed one day a month. Unfortunately, it seems like we're missing more often. I'm okay with one day a month and of course anytime you miss you, you're going to get behind on work. So, they're going to have to make that up and again, it causes anxiety and stress. So again, I'm okay with one day a month and that probably adds up to eight or nine or ten days. Most of them are doctor notes for her issues. They don't have an individualized education program yet for folks with mental health issues like they do for folks who have physical disabilities, and I am an advocate of mental health being in that same category of disability. So, we're working through it with our situation.*

*As a parent, I think it's very important for her to be there every day. However, she does have anxiety and depression issues, so we take those days as needed and she makes up her work even though it compounds more anxiety and stress when you fall behind. So, we try to have a balance of not missing too many days, but I know as a parent and as a person who's been through school and an adult learner, if you don't go, you do miss stuff.*

Many parents feel there are situation aspects to absenteeism and that it's okay for their student to be absent here and there as long as it doesn't become an issue or cause a problem.

*What are their grades? I mean, if they've got straight A's and they're not struggling in anything and they're getting all good marks in their tests, I mean they're not in trouble... In my book, the grades matter. I mean, if you're sitting on C's and you're flunking a class, we've got a whole lot more issues going on. So, I wouldn't have as much focus on the number of days, I'd be looking at, oh, you're doing fine. You understand everything.*

*I'm probably a little bit more on the lax side with letting some days slide, especially if she keeps good grades. I feel like I almost wish that they could correlate days that they could miss with her grades. If they're getting good grades, give them a day or two as long as they're keeping them up. But yeah, I'm probably much more lax. When I was in high school, my mom was the same way. She would let me miss the maximum amount of days that I could, as long as my grades were up there, she didn't care. So, I'm kind of the same.*

*There's a lot of good reasons they could just have a personal day is a good reason for just a day off. I agree with that.*

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*If he needs a day to stay home, then by all means do it. He's a good kid. He's on the honor roll, he's diligent and getting caught up on his work. I'm comfortable with him saying, you know what, I don't want to do this today and we'll take a little break.*

*A lot of times if it's a day that they've done all their tests, they're just waiting on Christmas break to come and oh, today's going to be a half day and we're not really going over anything, no [they wouldn't have to go]. All that's going to happen is they're going to come back home riled up because they're not doing anything in class.*

*Yeah, I've let them miss half days if they want. I give them a choice. Do you want to go, or do you want to stay home?*

*I think it depends on the child's academic success. Some kids are able to retain information a lot quicker than others and so if they do miss a day or two, they're able to look back and pick right up where they [left off]. I think sometimes too, some people have some learning challenges, and it might be a little bit more difficult for them to retain information and get caught up quicker than others. I think it just depends on the individual child itself.*

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS FOR BEING FREQUENTLY ABSENT**

Only one parent spoke up about their child being frequently/chronically absent and it was for a medical condition, so the topic was not pressed as the situation did not involve a decision to be absent, it was a medical necessity.

## **IDEAS FOR REDUCING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM**

Several parents mentioned ideas around rewarding good attendance, particularly when the student with good attendance had a good GPA and no disciplinary problems.

*In elementary school they, they got perfect attendance, and they got a pizza or something. I mean I remember there being an award, it was a big deal. I can't miss any days of school because I want to get this piece of paper. Or even if it was just something small, they got a pizza party or they got ice cream or something.*

*So, if you really want that carrot, I think you got to shorten the timeframe down. So hey, for the whole month of September, these 20 kids didn't miss a day, and they all get a prize. They get a Chick-fil-A gift card, or they get pizza party or something simple, not expensive.*

*Attendance awards and my first grader thinks it's the coolest thing in the world. Mom, you're going to come this week and celebrate me going to school every day.*

*That's true. If they make [attendance] a bigger deal, that would encourage them to want to go to school and push [them] to get there no matter what.*

While positive reinforcement is a good idea and one worth exploring, the following quotes speak to the complexity of some of the underlying factors related to chronic absenteeism that serve to remind there is not a one size fits all solution.



# Midlands Market Research



*I think there's a lot of factors that maybe play into that, a lot of socioeconomic factors that I think aren't discussed at times. And so, I know that we talked about parents being responsible about getting their kids, but what if they're having to go to work first thing in the morning and their kid's getting on the school bus or they don't have the means to get the kids to school? So, I think it just all depends on the family and the individual outcomes for absenteeism.*

*That's kind of a hard question for me to answer. And I think the reason is because it depends on what were the reasons for why the person was out. So, if there was some type of family situations going on, maybe there's some counseling that needs to be added.*

## **CONCLUSION**

The underlying issues and factors that contribute to chronic absenteeism are varied, diverse and interrelated. Safety and mental health seem to be two of the biggest issues related to chronic absenteeism and perhaps should be the priorities for the Education Oversight Committee. Addressing the teacher shortage should be among the top priorities as well, as having adequately staffed schools will help address safety and, likely, mental health for both students and teachers. Finally, schools should consider recognizing/rewarding students with good attendance.

**EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** March 17, 2025

**SUBCOMMITTEE:**

**Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee**

**INFORMATION ITEM:**

**Credit Recovery Analysis**

**PURPOSE/AUTHORITY**

**§SECTION 59-18-1700.** Public information campaign; development and approval; funding.

(A) An on-going public information campaign must be established to apprise the public of the status of the public schools and the importance of high standards for academic performance for the public school students of South Carolina.

**§SECTION 59-16-70.** Review of student records by Education Oversight Committee.

At the end of each semester, the State Department of Education shall provide student records, including course grades and performance on state assessments, to the Education Oversight Committee. The Education Oversight Committee shall monitor the impact of credits earned in the virtual school, on the school and district ratings, with particular attention to performance on end-of-course examinations and graduation rates.<sup>1</sup>

**CRITICAL FACTS**

Credit recovery is defined as a course-specific, skill-based learning opportunity for students who have previously failed to master content or skills required to receive credit. The term “Credit Recovery” refers to a block of instruction that is less than the entirety of the course. Credit Recovery targets specific components or a subset of the standards to address deficiencies necessary for student proficiency in the overall course<sup>i</sup>

EOC staff was asked by members and school district personnel to examine the impact of credit recovery on student academic success.

**TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS**

Ongoing

**ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC**

**Cost:** no impact

**ACTION REQUEST**

For approval

For information

**ACTION TAKEN**

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

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<sup>1</sup> [South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy](#)

# Credit Recovery Summary Findings and Analysis

Provided by SC Education Oversight Committee staff



**SC EDUCATION  
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

*Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.*

## Student Data in Analysis

- The data used for these analyses were provided by SCDE and contained the complete course history of every member of the 9GR = 19 cohort (those students whose first year in High School was the 2018-2019 school year who were expected to graduate by 2022)
- Staff used the graduates files that SCDE provided for Clearinghouse to check whether the students in question graduated in 2021 (one year early), 2022 (on-time), or 2023 (5-year grad), filtering out the non-graduates from the analysis.
- Following filters, what remained was course histories for 47,962 graduates from 237 SC High Schools from 74 current districts.
- Records were consolidated to reflect school districts that have consolidated and dropped records from special schools.

## Key Findings

- Across the cohort, 7357 graduates (15.3%) have recovered credits (henceforth “CR Graduates”).
- CR Graduates have, on average, 1.82 recovered credits, representing 7.6% of the 24 credits required for a diploma.
- The majority of CR Graduates (5912, or 80%) have fewer than 3 recovered credits, with 4112 (56%) having recovered one credit or less.
- Nearly 3% of CR Graduates (197 graduates) have recovered at least 6 credits, accounting for 25% of a diploma.
- Two CR Graduates (0.03%) had 12 recovered credits, representing half of a diploma.
- There is variance in these rates by district.
  - There were four districts (Anderson 3, Dillon 3, Greenwood 52, and Spartanburg 1) in which fewer than 5% of graduates had recovered credits.
  - There were 30 districts in which at least 20% of graduates had recovered credits. These districts together graduated 11,471 (24%) of the graduates analyzed, 2913 (or 25%) of whom had recovered credits.
  - There were 7 districts in which at least 30% of graduates had recovered credits. These districts together graduated 1065 (2%) of the graduates analyzed, 456 (or 43%) of whom had recovered credits.
  - Two districts (Clarendon 6 and Jasper County) had more than half of their 287 graduates with recovered credits. In these districts, 20% of CR Graduates had 6 or more recovered credits (23% in Clarendon 6 and 17% in Jasper County).



## Does Taking Credit Recovery in High School Impact Entry into Postsecondary?

Count of Students	Attended College within 1 Year?		
	Yes	No	Total
No Recovered Credits	25,641 (63%)	15,097 (37%)	40,738 (100%)
Has Recovered Credits	1,927 (26%)	5,425 (74%)	7,352 (100%)
Grand Total	27,568 (57%)	20,522 (43%)	48,090 (100%)
Recovered no credits	25,641 (63%)	15,097 (37%)	40,738 (100%)
Recovered up to 1 credit	1,229 (30%)	2,880 (70%)	4,109 (100%)
Recovered more than 1 but up to 2 credits	409 (24%)	1,271 (76%)	1,680 (100%)
Recovered more than 2 but up to 3 credits	159 (20%)	625 (80%)	784 (100%)
Recovered more than 3 but up to 6 credits	118 (18%)	555 (82%)	673 (100%)
Recovered more than 6 but up to 9 credits	12 (12%)	85 (88%)	97 (100%)
Recovered more than 9 credits	0%	9 (100%)	9 (100%)
Grand Total	27,568	20,522	48,090

## Does Absenteeism in K-12 Impact Enrollment in Postsecondary within one year?

Count of Students	Attended College within 1 Year?		
	Yes	No	Total
Perfect Attendance	3,655 (67%)	1,804 (33%)	5,459 (100%)
Not Chronically Absent	18,506 (64%)	10,530 (36%)	29,036 (100%)
Chronically Absent	1,872 (51%)	1,818 (49%)	3,690 (100%)
Very Chronically Absent	1,808 (43%)	2,416 (57%)	4,224 (100%)
Extremely Chronically Absent	789 (31%)	1,773 (69%)	2,562 (100%)
Grand Total	26,630 (59%)	18,341 (41%)	44,971 (100%)