SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
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AGENDA
Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee Meeting

Monday, May 18, 2026
10:00 A.M.
Room 433, Blatt Building

I. Welcome and Introductions ..... Dr. Patty Tate

II. Approval of Minutes of March 16, 2026 ..... Dr. Patty Tate

III. Special Presentation:
Security Issues with the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) ..... Lt. Col Gerald Isabelle, Commander
CMDCS Anthony Scott, Sr. Enlisted Advisor
Mike Pruitt, Test Control Officer
Scott Burgess, Education Services Specialist
Fort Jackson MEPS

IV. Action Items:
Technical Review of SC READY ELA & English 2 End-of-Course ..... Heather Bolinger, Stehpanie A. Lai & Dr. Matthew Madison
K-12 Assessment Solutions
University of Georgia

Multilingual Learners' Progress Indicator ..... Dr. Matthew Lavery
Deputy Director

High School Employability Credential:
Inclusion of On-Track Measure ..... Dr. Matthew Lavery

Inclusion of Seal of Biliteracy in CCR ..... Dr. Matthew Lavery

Dual Credit Process Revision ..... Dr. Matthew Lavery

V. Information Items:
Industry Certification Review Update ..... Dana Yow

Retreat Update ..... Dana Yow

VI. Adjournment

Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee

Dr. Patty Tate, Chair	Barbara Hairfield
Tammy Achziger	Sidney Locke
Rep. Terry Alexander	Melissa Pender
Rep. Bill Hager	Sen. Ross Turner

The EOC will hold a Strategic Planning Session following this meeting in Room 305 of the Blatt Building

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

Minutes of the Meeting

March 16, 2026

Members Present (in-person or remote): Dr. Patty Tate, Barbara Hairfield, Melissa Pender, Tammy Achziger, Sidney Locke, and Laura McKinney.

Special Guests: SCDE Deputy Superintendent Dr. Abbey Duggins, Dr. Kayce Cook SCDE Office of Career Readiness, Dr. Rocio Zalba SCDE Department of World Languages.

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

Executive Director Dana Yow opened the meeting, welcomed members and guests, and introduced Laura McKinney as the newest EOC member, noting her appointment by Senator Hembree to fill the unexpired business seat vacated by Jeri McCumbee and highlighting her 25+ years of national and international experience in public relations, economic development, and communications, as well as her role as Senior Vice President for Talent and Workforce Development with the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce. The board then approved the January 12, 2026 meeting minutes following a motion and second, with attendance confirmed for Patty Tate, Barbara Hairfield, and Melissa Pender online, and Tammy Achziger, Sidney Locke, and Laura McKinney in person. The meeting moved to the next agenda item, a Technical Review of SC READY Science for Grades 4 and 6, featuring a presentation via Zoom from Heather Bolinger, Stephanie A. Lai, and Dr. Matthew Madison of K-12 Assessment Solutions at the University of Georgia.

The group presented the review process conducted by K-12 Assessment Solutions at the University of Georgia in collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education and Data Recognition Corporation, guided by the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. The review included blueprint analysis, content alignment, depth of knowledge analysis, psychometric evaluation, and performance classification, with subject matter experts examining all items for alignment and rigor. Findings showed that the Grade 4 and Grade 6 SC READY Science test blueprints are well aligned to state standards and emphasize DOK Level 2, with most items appropriately aligned, though a small number were flagged for potential realignment or DOK

misclassification. Psychometric results indicated strong item performance, high overall reliability, support for unidimensionality, and minimal differential item functioning, though subdomain reliability was lower due to fewer items. Performance level analysis confirmed four established levels, with adequate reliability for broad classifications but less precision across all four levels. Recommendations included reviewing flagged items, strengthening overall DOK alignment, exercising caution with subdomain scores, incorporating additional psychometric analyses, adding items near cut scores to improve classification precision, and exploring models to enhance decision accuracy.

Ms. Yow explained that the item comes before the subcommittee as an action item and noted that the University of Georgia has now conducted its second psychometric review of an accountability assessment, following a previous review of Biology I. She stated that the review focuses on test validity, reliability, and overall psychometric quality, and added that staff from the State Department's Office of Assessment were present to address any questions from members attending in person or online. Barbara Hairfield asked whether there were enough items addressing performance indicators, specifically the skills within the science standards. Heather Bolinger responded that this relates to rigor and alignment, emphasizing that assessment items are designed to reflect the intent of the standards, such as requiring students to construct arguments or demonstrate deeper understanding. She explained that the test blueprints appropriately emphasize higher-level skills, with the majority of items falling within DOK Levels 2 and 3, while only about 10–20% assess DOK Level 1 recall skills. Overall, she noted that roughly 80% or more of the assessment targets higher-order thinking, indicating that the test is well aligned to measure mastery of the standards. Ms. Yow asked about the recommendation to add items near cut scores to improve classification precision and whether this would make it easier to meet those cut scores. Dr. Matthew Madison clarified that the goal is not to make the test easier, but to reduce uncertainty around the cut scores and improve the consistency and reliability of classifications. He explained that this could be done by replacing some items with ones that are closer to the cut score rather than simply adding more items, though he acknowledged this would be a complex process requiring recalibration and may be challenging to implement, but is worth considering as a potential improvement.

A motion was made to approve the report, and it was accepted.

Dana Yow presented the next action item on Requests for New Industry Certifications, outlining the state's transition to a tiered credential system designed to strengthen career readiness by aligning credentials with workforce needs and emphasizing their real employment value. The

system includes three tiers—Tier 1 (introductory, foundational skills), Tier 2 (intermediate, industry-aligned), and Tier 3 (career-ready, required for high-demand occupations with clear economic benefits)—and will be fully implemented for students entering high school in 2024–2025, requiring them to earn at least three points through specified credential combinations aligned to their career pathways. She also reviewed the credential approval process, which includes SCDE screening, workforce evaluation, and industry validation, followed by EOC approval. EOC staff recommended approval of several new and existing credentials with assigned tiers, including CAT Simulator Certification (Tier 2), SMFA Turfgrass Science Certification (Tier 2), CAT SimsScholars Certification (Tier 3), Harmony Premium Associate Certification (Tier 3), and FAA 107 UAV License (Tier 3). For new certifications such as YouScience Game Development Fundamentals 1, YouScience Retailing, and YouScience Agricultural Mechanics and Technology 1, staff recommended Tier 1 placement instead of the requested Tier 2. Additionally, for reevaluation requests including NCCER Core, Science 3D Animation 1, and NOCTI-JROTC Leadership and Employability Skills, staff recommended maintaining Tier 1 to better align with tier expectations. Laura McKinney asked for clarification on the review process, specifically what the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) evaluation looks like and how occupational alignment is determined. She questioned how a credential like the FAA UAV license is mapped primarily to roles such as camera operator for television, video, and film, noting that the skills learned likely apply to a broader range of occupations. Her question focused on understanding how SCDEW evaluates credentials, determines workforce relevance, and aligns them to specific occupations within the labor market.

Ms. Yow explained that the tiered credential system was designed in part to address past gaps where credentials were submitted without sufficient business input, noting that while efforts have been made to incorporate industry feedback, the process is still evolving and not yet fully refined. She added that districts are expected to engage advisory councils when establishing programs. Dr. Cook clarified that SCDE considers outside data, industry demand, and regional workforce needs during review, while Dr. Herb Bocchino described the internal evaluation process, including consultation with applicants and analysis of employability, acknowledging that this is the first year of implementation and improvements are ongoing, with Technical Advisory Committees to be convened in the spring for additional input. Dr. Cook further explained that industry-recognized credentials are developed and assessed by industry providers, ensuring consistency, and that instruction integrates standards and soft skills to prepare students for success. Following discussion and concerns from EOC members about the process, a motion was made and

unanimously approved to delay action on the credentials until the Technical Advisory Committees meet in the spring.

Ms. Yow presented the 2026 Report on the Educational Performance of Military-Connected Students in South Carolina, developed in accordance with Act 289, the Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act, which requires the EOC to annually report on the academic outcomes of military-connected students. The report includes demographic data from the 2024–25 school year, an overview of state data collection practices, academic performance, attendance, and existing supports for these students. Federal requirements under ESSA mandate that districts identify military-connected students, typically through parent surveys entered into PowerSchool, though the report noted that 18 districts reported no such students despite this requirement. Of the 18,824 identified students, about 74% were concentrated in ten districts. Overall, military-connected students in South Carolina outperformed their non-military peers across all tested areas, including math, ELA, and science. Recommendations included requiring consistent data collection during enrollment, continuing collaboration with SCDE to improve military-related data, and exploring partnerships with postsecondary institutions to better support military-connected students.

A motion was made to approve the report, and it was accepted.

Next, Dr. Rocio Zalba presented information on the South Carolina Seal of Biliteracy, a nationally recognized credential that signifies high proficiency in English and at least one additional language and is valued by employers and universities. She explained that all 50 states and Washington, D.C. offer similar seals, and in South Carolina students must demonstrate proficiency in both English and another language, with language proficiency measured across reading, writing, speaking, and listening using approved assessments. The seal includes three tiers—bronze (intermediate mid), silver (intermediate high), and gold (advanced low)—based on the lowest proficiency level across all four skills. Dr. Zalba noted that most of the assessment emphasizes intermediate to advanced proficiency, which typically reflects years of language study, and that these levels align with real-world workplace skills and career opportunities. She highlighted that the seal supports college readiness, with seven South Carolina universities currently recognizing it for placement and awarding 6 to 12 college credits, and that it is comparable to or more rigorous than AP language assessments. Participation in the program has grown significantly, with a 67% increase in district involvement from 2021 to 2025, and all juniors and seniors are eligible. Overall, the Seal of Biliteracy enhances college applications, improves employability, and provides a meaningful credential that validates students' language skills. Barbara Hairfield asked whether the Seal of Biliteracy truly reflects college readiness,

emphasizing that while she strongly supports the program and noted Charleston County's growing participation, she wants to ensure that students are not only proficient in another language but also prepared to handle the cognitive demands of college-level coursework. Dr. Zalba explained that when students enter college, they are typically required to take a world language placement test to determine the appropriate course level. For students who have earned the Seal of Biliteracy, universities may use the credential to award credit or adjust placement. She noted that all seven South Carolina universities currently recognizing the seal provide retroactive credit, generally ranging from 6 to 12 credits. In some cases, such as UNC, students may receive credit without needing to take additional language courses, while other institutions may still place students in a course and award or confirm credit based on their performance, with the possibility of adjusting those credits if needed.

Dana Yow presented an information item regarding a proposal to include the High School Employability Credential in the on-track measure, stemming from a December 2025 resolution passed by the South Carolina School Boards Association House of Delegates. She explained that the employability credential, introduced statewide in 2021–22 for students with IEPs not pursuing a traditional diploma, is a separate pathway requiring 24 credits, significant work-based learning (360 hours), a work readiness assessment, and a career portfolio. While the credential is already included in the accountability system under career readiness and the five-year student success measure, it is not part of the graduation rate due to federal rules and is currently excluded from the on-track to graduate metric because those courses do not meet diploma requirements. Data show increasing participation and positive outcomes, including about 8% higher wages for credential earners compared to non-graduates without credentials. In response to concerns—particularly from Greenville—about recognizing the value of the credential, Ms. Yow outlined a potential path forward to revise the measure from "on track to graduate" to simply "on track," allowing limited inclusion of credential-track students (capped at 1% of a district's cohort) with safeguards to prevent misuse. She emphasized that this was for discussion only, with a formal proposal to come later. Laura McKinney raised concerns about students pursuing the employability credential remaining in the graduation rate denominator despite being ineligible to earn a standard diploma. Ms. Yow explained that under federal rules, these students are included in the cohort starting in ninth grade and cannot be counted as graduates in the on-time graduation rate, meaning they remain in the denominator but not the numerator. She clarified that the proposed change would not affect the graduation rate itself, but would instead modify the on-track to graduate metric—renaming it to "on track" and allowing limited inclusion of credential-track students (up to 1% of the cohort) based on their coursework. Ms. Yow added that these students

were previously excluded because the metric was designed around diploma attainment as the end goal, based on research from the University of Chicago, and noted that earlier discussions revealed some misunderstandings as well as challenges districts faced in communicating the value of the credential to the business community.

Dana Yow presented an overview of College and Career Readiness (CCR) measures in accountability, including ACT, SAT, AP, IB, Cambridge, dual enrollment, industry credentials, WIN, ASVAB, and work-based learning. She noted that the EOC has requested a formal psychometric review of the WIN Career Readiness Assessment due to recent unanticipated changes in cut scores, with plans for the University of Georgia to conduct the review to inform future decisions and contract considerations. She also raised concerns about potential inconsistencies in how AP scores are counted toward college readiness, particularly when students may not be enrolled in the corresponding course, and mentioned ongoing discussions about expanding dual enrollment to include CTE courses, pending further data review.

Ms. Yow highlighted data showing that many students earn only one CCR measure, with a significant number relying solely on CTE completer status or ASVAB scores. She then focused on emerging concerns with the ASVAB, explaining that the shift to school staff testing without a secure lockdown browser has raised serious validity and security issues, including reports of irregular testing practices and unusually large score increases. Data from Fort Jackson indicated that while other standardized test scores are declining, ASVAB scores are increasing, raising questions about reliability. As a result, she presented potential next steps for consideration, including removing ASVAB as a CCR measure starting in 2026–27 or incorporating it instead into the tiered credential system, such as within a JROTC or public service pathway. Laura McKinney asked whether the ASVAB would be securely proctored if it were moved into the CTE assessment framework. Melissa Pender expressed concern about fully removing the ASVAB as a CCR measure, noting that doing so could unfairly impact students who took the test honestly and that cheating may not be widespread. In response, Dana Yow offered to invite representatives from Fort Jackson to present their data and concerns directly to the subcommittee, and members agreed that additional discussion and information would be helpful before making a decision.

After this update, the meeting was adjourned.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

DATE: May 18, 2026

SUBCOMMITTEE:
Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

ACTION ITEM:
Evaluation of SC READY English Language Arts (ELA) and English 2 EOCEP

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY
§SECTION 59-18-320 Review of field test; general administration of test; accommodations for students with disabilities; adoption of new standards.

(A) After the first statewide field test of the assessment program in each of the four academic areas, and after the field tests of the end of course assessments of high school credit courses, the Education Oversight Committee, established in Section 59-6-10, will review the state assessment program and the course assessments for alignment with the state standards, level of difficulty and validity, and for the ability to differentiate levels of achievement, and will make recommendations for needed changes, if any. The review will be provided to the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, the Governor, the Senate Education Committee, and the House Education and Public Works Committee as soon as feasible after the field tests. The Department of Education will then report to the Education Oversight Committee no later than one month after receiving the reports on the changes made to the assessments to comply with the recommendations.

(B) After review and approval by the Education Oversight Committee, and pursuant to Section 59-18-325, the standards-based assessment of mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, and science will be administered for accountability purposes to all public school students in grades three through eight, to include those students as required by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and by Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. To reduce the number of days of testing, to the extent possible, field test items must be embedded with the annual assessments. To ensure that school districts maintain the high standard of accountability established in the Education Accountability Act, performance level results reported on school and district report cards must meet consistently high levels in all four core content areas. For students with documented disabilities, the assessments developed by the Department of Education shall include the appropriate modifications and accommodations with necessary supplemental devices as outlined in a student's Individualized Education Program and as stated in the Administrative Guidelines and Procedures for Testing Students with Documented Disabilities.

(C) After review and approval by the Education Oversight Committee, the end of course assessments of high school credit courses will be administered to all public school students as they complete each course.

(D) Any new standards and assessments required to be developed and adopted by the State Board of Education, through the Department of Education for use as an accountability measure, must be developed and adopted upon the advice and consent of the Education Oversight Committee.

§**SECTION 59-18-355**. Content standards revisions; required approval.

(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.

CRITICAL FACTS

The 2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready English Language Arts Standards were officially approved by the State Board of Education on January 17, 2023. The Standards became fully operational and assessed in the year 2024-2025.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

- **May 18, 2026:** anticipated ASA subcommittee approval of UGA review of SC READY ELA and English 2 EOCEP
- **June 15, 2026:** anticipated EOC approval of UGA review of SC READY ELA and English 2 EOCEP; review to be provided to the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, the Governor, the Senate Education Committee, and the House Education and Public Works Committee. SCDE to respond to review within one month of receipt.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

Cost: $164,162.16 (includes review of multiple assessments by University of GA K-12 Assessment Solutions)

ACTION REQUEST

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

ACTION TAKEN

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

Mary Frances Early College of Education
K–12 Assessment Solutions
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

South Carolina State Assessment Programs: English Language Arts

Evaluation of ELA Grades 3-8 and English 2

Spring 2024-2025 Test Data

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Table of Contents

Summary

This document reviews the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) English Language Arts (ELA) Grades 3-8 and the South Carolina End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) English 2 assessment, focusing on their alignment with the 2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready English Language Arts Standards, and the validity, difficulty, and ability to differentiate achievement levels, thereby ensuring it provides reliable data for evaluating student mastery and state accountability.

The review of the SC READY ELA Grades 3-8 and EOCEP English 2 assessments yielded several key findings. Overall, the test blueprints are well aligned with the intended standards and reporting categories, and the operational forms generally reflect blueprint specifications. Across grades, most reporting categories are adequately represented; however, a small number of standards listed in the blueprints are not represented on the operational forms. Despite these findings, the overall alignment between operational items and reporting categories is acceptable. With respect to Depth of Knowledge, the assessments are predominantly weighted at DOK Level 2, which is appropriate for measuring conceptual understanding and application of skills, with a smaller yet sufficient proportion of DOK Level 3 items to assess higher-order thinking, particularly at the middle and high school levels. Item-level reviews identified a limited number of items where DOK classifications or standard alignments could be improved through metadata updates or item revision.

Evidence based on the internal structure of the assessments indicated that the SC READY and EOCEP ELA tests function as intended. Classical Test Theory (CTT) analyses demonstrated appropriate ranges of item difficulty and strong item discrimination across grades and administrations. Rasch model analyses showed that item difficulties spanned the ability continuum, and that model fit statistics generally fell within acceptable ranges, supporting the validity of score interpretations. Dimensionality analyses provided evidence that each assessment measured a single dominant construct, and reliability estimates were strong across grades, forms, and student subgroups. Differential item functioning analyses further indicated that the assessments satisfied measurement invariance assumptions, with minimal evidence of bias across demographic and administration groups.

The evaluation also examined Performance Level Classifications for the SC READY and EOCEP ELA assessments. Cut scores were established using a recognized standard-setting methodology and applied to Rasch-based ability estimates to classify students into four performance levels for SC READY and corresponding achievement and letter-grade categories for EOCEP English 2. Classification consistency indices indicated strong agreement for broader performance distinctions, with acceptable levels of reliability for finer-grained classifications, consistent with industry standards.

Overall, the SC READY ELA Grades 3-8 and EOCEP English 2 assessments demonstrate sound technical quality and alignment with the state’s ELA standards. While the assessments are generally functioning as intended, targeted refinements such as addressing minor gaps in standard coverage, reviewing flagged items for alignment and DOK classification, and exercising caution when making high-stakes decisions based on fine-grained performance levels would further strengthen the validity and interpretability of assessment results.

1. South Carolina State Assessment Programs

This report reviews the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) program and the South Carolina End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) in English Language Arts grades 3-8 and English 2, respectively.

The 2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready English Language Arts Standards were officially approved by the State Board of Education on January 17, 2023. The Standards became fully operational and assessed in the year 2024-2025. After the initial statewide field tests of the assessment program, the Education Oversight Committee reviews the state assessment program for alignment with standards, difficulty, validity, and its ability to differentiate achievement levels. The committee makes recommendations for changes, if needed, and provides this review to various educational and governmental bodies.

1.1 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments Program Overview

The South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) is a statewide program of assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science and social studies administered to students in grades 3-8 as required by the Education Accountability Act (EAA).

SC READY test items measure student performance on the South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Standards. SC READY English language Arts (ELA) items are aligned with the 2024 South Carolina College- and Career- Ready Standards for English Language Arts. Standards specify what schools are expected to teach and what students are expected to learn. Academic standards also include indicators that are statements of the specific cognitive processes and the content knowledge and skills that students must demonstrate to meet the grade-level standards. SC READY test items are written to assess the content knowledge and skills described in the academic standards and indicators.

1.2 South Carolina End-of-Course Examination Program Overview

The South Carolina End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) is a statewide program of end-of-course tests for gateway courses in South Carolina, including English 2. The EOCEP English 2 is a standardized test administered by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to assess students' understanding of standards based on the College and Career Ready English Language Arts Standards (2024). The test is designed to measure student mastery of English 2 content and skills as defined by the state standards and serves as an accountability measure for schools and districts, contributing 20% to students' final course grades. Passing English 2 is required for a South Carolina high school diploma (https://ed.sc.gov/tests/high/eocep/).

As listed in the South Carolina State Board of Education Regulation 43-262 (SBE Regulation 43-262: Assessment Program), the purposes and uses of the EOCEP tests are as stated:

A. The examinations shall encourage instruction in the specific academic standards for the courses, encourage student achievement, and document the level of students' mastery of the academic standards.
B. The examinations shall serve as indicators of program, school, and school district effectiveness in the manner prescribed by the Education Oversight Committee in accordance with the provisions of the Education Accountability Act of 1998 (EAA).
C. The examinations shall be weighted 20 percent in the determination of students' final grades in the gateway courses.

1.3 South Carolina Review Process

As per the South Carolina Code of Laws-Title 59 (Title 59 - Education, § 59-18-320):

> (A) After the first statewide field test of the assessment program in each of the four academic areas, and after the field tests of the end of course assessments of high school credit courses, the Education Oversight Committee, established in Section 59-6-10, will review the state assessment program and the course assessments for alignment with the state standards, level of difficulty and validity, and for the ability to differentiate levels of achievement, and will make recommendations for needed changes, if any. The review will be provided to the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, the Governor, the Senate Education Committee, and the House Education and Public Works Committee as soon as feasible after the field tests. The Department of Education will then report to the Education Oversight Committee no later than one month after receiving the reports on the changes made to the assessments to comply with the recommendations.

With the support of the Education Oversight Committee, experts from the University of Georgia evaluated the SC READY assessments in ELA grades 3 through 8 and the EOCEP assessment in English 2 for reliability and validity in assessing student mastery, school/district performance, and state accountability, following best practices in educational measurement, as detailed by the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, NCME, 2014).

The following materials were provided by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and the test contractor, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) for evaluation:

- UGA Access Information SC READY and EOCEP Test Forms
- For each grade level:
    - ESC593_ELA GrX_Final DOTS
    - ESC593_ELAS_GRX_Online260D (test booklet)
    - Spring 25 SC READY ELA Blueprint
    - SC READY ELA 3-5 Test Blueprint 2024-25
    - SC READY ELA 6-8 Test Blueprint 2024-25
    - SC EOCEP English 2 Test Blueprint 2024-25

- For grades 3-4:
    - Convey Experience Writer's Checklist

    - To Convey an Experience Rubric
- For grades 5-8:
    - Persuasive Writer's Checklist
    - To Persuade Rubric

Additionally, the following materials were publicly available and utilized for the evaluation:

- South Carolina College- and Career-Ready English Language Arts Standards

The test map (Dots) included metadata about individual items and psychometric indices. All parameters were calculated by the test contractor; no additional estimation of item or test parameters was conducted. The items reviewed for content validity were presented in the Spring 2025 administration, and the psychometric review is based on the draft chapter summaries from the 2024-2025 Technical Report which reported on Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 administrations.

This report was prepared by the University of Georgia and examines critical elements of the SC READY ELA Grades 3-8 and EOCEP English 2 test designs and summarizes findings and recommendations for each.

2. Test Blueprint Review

A test blueprint review is crucial for an assessment's validity, fairness, and reliability. It ensures alignment with state standards, balanced content representation, and appropriate mix of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels, providing valid data for instructional and accountability purposes.

The test blueprint review involved evaluating two key aspects.

- **Coverage of Standards**. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and assessment designers assessed how well each state standard is represented on the test blueprint, ensuring balanced weighting across content domains (reporting categories).
- **DOK distribution**. SMEs reviewed the distribution of DOK levels, ensuring a mix of items requiring recall, application of knowledge, and critical thinking skills to prevent over- or under-emphasis of any one area and promote a comprehensive, fair assessment.

2.1 Coverage of Standards

The Spring 2024-2025 SC READY ELA 3-5 tests consist of 50 operational test items. Table 1 summarizes the test blueprint for grades 3-5 by reporting category, designed to measure the 2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards.

Table 1. SC READY ELA 3-5 Test Blueprint 2024-2025

Session	Reporting Category	Indicators Within Reporting Categories	Number of Indicators	Number of Items per Reporting Category
Reading Session	Reading Literary Text	AOR.1.1, AOR.1.2, AOR.2.1, AOR.3.1 AOR.5.1, AOR.6.1(a)	6	8-12
	Reading Informational Text	AOR.2.2, AOR.4.1 AOR.5.2, AOR.5.3 AOR.6.1(b)	5	8-12
	Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	AOR.7.1, AOR.8.1 AOR.9.1	3	7-10
Writing Session	Writing	C.1.1, C.2.1 C.3.1, C.4.1, C.5.1	5	14-16 plus one 4-point TDW Item
	Research and Evaluating Ideas	R.1.1, R.1.2 R.1.3*, R.1.4* *Not assessed at grade 3.	2* or 4	6-8
Total Number of Operational Items Including TDW				**50**

The Spring 2024-2025 SC READY ELA 6-8 tests consist of 55 operational test items. Table 2 summarizes the test blueprint for grades 6-8 by reporting category, designed to measure the 2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards.

Table 2. SC READY ELA 6-8 Test Blueprint 2024-2025

Session	Reporting Category	Indicators Within Reporting Categories	Number of Indicators	Number of Items per Reporting Category
Reading Session	Reading Literary Text	AOR.1.1, AOR.1.2 AOR.2.1, AOR.3.1 AOR.5.1, AOR.6.1(RL)	6	8-12
	Reading Informational Text	AOR.2.2, AOR.4.1 AOR.5.2, AOR.5.3 AOR.6.1(RI)	5	8-12
	Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	AOR.7.1, AOR.8.1 AOR.9.1	3	8-12
Writing Session	Writing	C.1.1, C.2.1 C.3.1, C.4.1, C.5.1	5	16-20 plus one 4-point TDW Item
	Research and Evaluating Ideas	R.1.1, R.1.2 R.1.3, R.1.4	4	8-10
Total Number of Operational Items Including TDW				**55**

The 2024-2025 EOCEP English 2 test consists of 55 operational test items. Table 3 summarizes the test blueprint by reporting category, designed to measure the 2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards.

Table 3. EOCEP English 2 Test Blueprint 2024-2025

Session	Reporting Category	Indicators Within Reporting Categories	Number of Indicators	Number of Items per Reporting Category
Reading Session	Reading Literary Text	AOR.1.1, AOR.1.2 AOR.2.1, AOR.3.1 AOR.5.1, AOR.6.1(a)	6	8-12
	Reading Informational Text	AOR.2.2, AOR.4.1 AOR.5.2, AOR.5.3 AOR.6.1(b)	5	8-12
	Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	AOR.7.1, AOR.8.1 AOR.9.1, AOR.10.1	4	8-12
Writing Session	Writing	C.1.1, C.2.1 C.3.1, C.4.1, C.5.1	5	16-20 plus one 6-point TDW Item
	Research and Evaluating Ideas	R.1.1, R.1.2 R.1.3, R.1.4, C.9.1	5	8-10
Total Number of OP Items Including TDW				**55**

Evaluation: Based on the 2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready English Language Arts Standards, the test blueprints align and inform stakeholders of the SC READY ELA 3-5, ELA 6-8, and EOCEP English 2 assessment content.

Recommendation: N/A

2.2 Depth of Knowledge Distribution

The SC READY ELA assessments use the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) framework to categorize items based on the cognitive complexity required to answer the item. Items span a range of cognitive complexity levels and difficulty levels. The DOK framework categorizes items into one of four categories (Webb, 2002); as DOK levels increase, the cognitive demand on students also increases. Higher DOK levels require more than just recalling facts; they require deeper understanding, application, analysis, and synthesis.

- Level 1. Recall and Reproduction: This level requires students to recall basic facts, information, definitions, terms, or perform simple, routine procedures.
- Level 2. Skills and Concepts: This level requires engaging in mental processing beyond simple recall. Students need to apply concepts, use skills, and make decisions. It requires understanding and using knowledge.
- Level 3. Strategic Thinking: This level requires deep understanding, planning, using evidence, and more complex reasoning. Students must analyze, evaluate, and draw conclusions. The cognitive demands are more abstract and require justification.
- Level 4. Extended Thinking: This level requires students to make connections, relate ideas within or among content areas, and select or devise an approach to solve a problem. It often involves extended time and requires synthesis and in-depth analysis.

Standardized tests like the SC READY ELA assessments primarily include items at DOK Levels 1-3, as Level 4 is less common. It is designed to include a variety of questions across these three DOK levels, ranging from simple recall to more complex reasoning. Table 4 and Table 5 show the DOK distribution as specified on the SC READY ELA Grades 3-5 and SC READY ELA Grades 6-8 test blueprints.

Table 4. Percent Range of DOK Levels for SC READY ELA 3-5

DOK Level	Minimum %	Maximum %
1	0%	16%
2	76%	92%
3	4%	16%

Table 5. Percent Range of DOK Levels for SC READY ELA 6-8

DOK Level	Minimum %	Maximum %
1	0%	15%
2	60%	90%
3	5%	15%

Table 6 shows the DOK distribution as specified on the EOCEP English 2 test blueprints.

Table 6. Percent Range of DOK Levels for EOCEP English 2

DOK Level	Minimum %	Maximum %
1	0%	10%
2	55%	85%
3	25%	45%

Evaluation:

- SC READY: The SC READY ELA 3-5 and 6-8 tests are mostly weighted at DOK Level 2 (Skills and Concepts), with between 60% and 92% of the items at this complexity level. Level 2 is appropriate, emphasizing conceptual understanding and problem-solving. In addition, having 4-16% of items at DOK Level 3 is acceptable, ensuring the test focuses on higher-order thinking skills such as students' ability to analyze, justify, and reason more abstractly. The SC READY assessments are of medium to medium-hard complexity.

- EOCEP: The EOCEP English 2 test is mostly weighted at DOK Level 2 (Skills and Concepts), with between 55% and 85% of the items at this complexity level. This is appropriate, emphasizing conceptual understanding and problem-solving. In addition, having 25-45% of items at DOK Level 3 is appropriate to assess the more complex high school standards.

Recommendation: N/A

3. Evaluation of Overall Validity

Content validity is essential for ensuring an assessment accurately measures the intended knowledge and skills (Bandalos, 2018). It involves a thorough evaluation of the items and domains to ensure they represent the target domain. This review ensures that the information gathered from administering the assessment is relevant and minimizes construct-irrelevant variance. Furthermore, content specification and item review help to ensure that the full range of the construct(s) is measured, minimizing construct underrepresentation.

To verify content validity, subject matter experts (SMEs) compared the SC READY ELA Grades 3-8 and the EOCEP English 2 assessments with the 2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready ELA Standards. The assessments were reviewed for domain coverage (i.e., reporting category) and item alignment to standards and DOK. Two SMEs independently reviewed each item for standard alignment. A third SME resolved any discrepancies. The panel of SMEs then held a consensus meeting to finalize alignment recommendations. The internal structure of the assessment was reviewed by an educational measurement expert at the University of Georgia.

3.1 Coverage by Reporting Category

Operational items on the SC READY ELA Grades 3-8 and EOCEP English 2 were reviewed for alignment to reporting category and evaluated against each Test Blueprint 2024-2025. First, the provided 'Final DOTS' file was evaluated against each Test Blueprint 2024-2025. Then, all items were reviewed for alignment to reporting category.

Table 7 through Table 13 summarize number and percentage of operational items aligned with each reporting category as reflected in the provided 'Final DOTS' file. If a standard on the test blueprint was not represented in the test, it is noted within the table.

Table 7. Coverage by Reporting Category for SC READY ELA Grade 3 (Operational Items)

Reporting Category	Test Blueprint			Final Dots	
	Number of Indicators	% of Category Coverage	Range of the Number of Items per Category	Number of Items per Category	% of Assessment
Reading Literary Text	6	83% *AOR.5.1*	8-12	10	20%
Reading Informational Text	5	80% *AOR.5.3*	8-12	8	16%
Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	3	100%	7-10	10	20%
Writing	5	100%	14-16 plus one 4-point TDW Item	16	32%
Research and Evaluating Ideas	2	100%	6-8	6	12%
Total Number of OP Items				**50**	**100%**

Table 8. Coverage by Reporting Category for SC READY ELA Grade 4 (Operational Items)

Reporting Category	Test Blueprint			Final Dots	
	Number of Indicators	**% of Category Coverage**	**Range of the Number of Items per Category**	**Number of Items per Category**	**% of Assessment**
Reading Literary Text	6	83% *AOR.6.1(a)*	8-12	9	18%
Reading Informational Text	5	80% *AOR.6.1(b)*	8-12	10	20%
Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	3	100%	7-10	10	20%
Writing	5	100%	14-16 plus one 4-point TDW Item	15	30%
Research and Evaluating Ideas	4	100%	6-8	6	12%
Total Number of OP Items				**50**	**100%**

Table 9. Coverage by Reporting Category for SC READY ELA Grade 5 (Operational Items)

Reporting Category	Test Blueprint			Final Dots	
	Number of Indicators	**% of Category Coverage**	**Range of the Number of Items per Category**	**Number of Items per Category**	**% of Assessment**
Reading Literary Text	6	67% *AOR.2.1, AOR.6.1(a)*	8-12	8	16%
Reading Informational Text	5	60% *AOR.4.1, AOR.5.3*	8-12	10	20%
Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	3	100%	7-10	8	16%
Writing	5	100%	14-16 plus one 4-point TDW Item	16	32%
Research and Evaluating Ideas	4	100%	6-8	8	16%
Total Number of OP Items				**50**	**100%**

Table 10. Coverage by Reporting Category for SC READY ELA Grade 6 (Operational Items)

Reporting Category	Test Blueprint			Final Dots	
	Number of Indicators	% of Category Coverage	Range of the Number of Items per Category	Number of Items per Category	% of Assessment
Reading Literary Text	6	83% *AOR.3.1*	8-12	10	18%
Reading Informational Text	5	80% *AOR.4.1*	8-12	10	18%
Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	3	100%	8-12	8	15%
Writing	5	100%	16-20 plus one 4-point TDW Item	17	31%
Research and Evaluating Ideas	4	100%	8-10	10	18%
Total Number of OP Items				**55**	**100%**

Table 11. Coverage by Reporting Category for SC READY ELA Grade 7 (Operational Items)

Reporting Category	Test Blueprint			Final Dots	
	Number of Indicators	% of Category Coverage	Range of the Number of Items per Category	Number of Items per Category	% of Assessment
Reading Literary Text	6	83% *AOR.1.2*	8-12	12	22%
Reading Informational Text	5	100%	8-12	8	15%
Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	3	100%	8-12	8	15%
Writing	5	100%	16-20 plus one 4-point TDW Item	19	35%
Research and Evaluating Ideas	4	75% *R.1.3*	8-10	8	15%
Total Number of OP Items				**55**	**100%**

Table 12. Coverage by Reporting Category for SC READY ELA Grade 8 (Operational Items)

Reporting Category	Test Blueprint			Final Dots	
	Number of Indicators	% of Category Coverage	Range of the Number of Items per Category	Number of Items per Category	% of Assessment
Reading Literary Text	6	67% *AOR.1.2, AOR.3.1*	8-12	8	15%
Reading Informational Text	5	100%	8-12	12	22%
Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	3	67% *AOR.9.1*	8-12	10	18%
Writing	5	100%	16-20 plus one 4-point TDW Item	17	31%
Research and Evaluating Ideas	4	75% *R.1.2*	8-10	8	15%
Total Number of OP Items				**55**	**100%**

Table 13. Coverage by Reporting Category for EOCEP English 2 (Operational Items)

Reporting Category	Test Blueprint			Final Dots	
	Number of Indicators	% of Category Coverage	Range of the Number of Items per Category	Number of Items per Category	% of Assessment
Reading Literary Text	6	67% *AOR 2.1 AOR 5.1*	8-12	10	18%
Reading Informational Text	5	80% AOR 5.3	8-12	12	22%
Reading (vocabulary) Across Genres	4	75% *AOR.10.1*	8-12	8	15%
Writing	5	100%	16-20 plus one 6-point TDW Item	17	31%
Research and Evaluating Ideas	5	80% *C.9.1*	8-10	8	15%
Total Number of OP Items				**55**	**100%**

Evaluation: Table 7 through Table 13 summarize alignment for operational items on the SC READY ELA Grades 3-8 and EOCEP English 2 assessments.

Grade 3: There are two standards on the test blueprint that are not represented on the operational form. But as a whole, operational items align with the test blueprint's reporting categories.

Grade 4: There are two standards on the test blueprint that are not represented on the operational form. But as a whole, operational items align with the test blueprint's reporting categories.

Grade 5: There are four standards on the test blueprint that are not represented on the operational form. But as a whole, operational items align with the test blueprint's reporting categories.

Grade 6: There are two standards on the test blueprint that are not represented on the operational form. But as a whole, operational items align with the test blueprint's reporting categories.

Grade 7: There are two standards on the test blueprint that are not represented on the operational form. But as a whole, operational items align with the test blueprint's reporting categories.

Grade 8: There are four standards on the test blueprint that are not represented on the operational form. But as a whole, operational items align with the test blueprint's reporting categories.

English 2: There are five standards on the test blueprint that are not represented on the operational form. But as a whole, operational items align with the test blueprint's reporting categories.

Recommendation: N/A

3.2 Alignment to Standards

All operational items on the SC READY ELA Grades 3-8 and EOCEP English 2 assessments were reviewed for standard alignment.

Evaluation: Table 14 through Table 15 highlights items flagged during review in grades 3 and 7. No items were flagged for issues with standard alignment in grades 4, 5, 6, 8, and English 2 assessments.

Table 14. Alignment to Standards for SC READY ELA Grade 3

Item Sequence	Standard on Final Dots	Suggested Re-alignment	Notes
2	C.4.1j	NA	Item **does not align** with a grade 3 standard. Item does not assess coordinating/ subordinating conjunctions or independent/dependent clauses. Recommend revising or replacing the item.
17	C.4.1i	C.4.1f	Item **aligns well** to C.4.1f: distinguish between and use comparative and superlative adverbs. Recommend re-aligning item.

Table 15. Alignment to Standards for SC READY ELA Grade 7

Item Sequence	Standard on Final Dots	Suggested Re-alignment	Notes
12	C.5.1	C.4.1e	Item may have double alignment. A**ligns better to C.4.1e: identify and revise sentence fragments, run-on sentences, pronoun antecedent agreement, and inappropriate shifts in verb tense**. Item also generally aligns to the noted standard, C5.1: improve writing by planning, editing, and considering feedback from adults and peers and revising for clarity of content.

Recommendation: Overall, the SC READY and EOCEP ELA items are well aligned with the stated standards. Review alignment for two items in grade 3 and one item in grade 7.

It is also worth reviewing item #21 on the EOCEP English 2 assessment, particularly the meta data in the DOTs document. The item does align to the noted 2024 South Carolina College- and Career-Ready English Language Arts Standards though the description in the DOTs does not match the description of the standard.

3.3 Depth of Knowledge

Operational items on the SC READY ELA Grades 3-8 and EOCEP English 2 were reviewed for DOK distribution and evaluated against each Test Blueprint 2024-2025. First, the provided 'Final DOTS' file was evaluated against each Test Blueprint 2024-2025. Then, all items were reviewed for DOK.

3.3.1 Distribution of DOK Levels

Table 16 through Table 22 summarize number and percentage of operational items aligned with each DOK level as reflected in the provided 'Final DOTS' file.

Table 16. DOK Distribution for SC READY ELA Grade 3 (Operational Items)

DOK	Test Blueprint		Final Dots	
	Min %	Max %	Number of OP Items	% of Assessment
1	0%	16%	4	8%
2	76%	92%	43	86%
3	4%	16%	3	6%
Total Number of OP Items			**50**	**100%**

Table 17. DOK Distribution for SC READY ELA Grade 4 (Operational Items)

DOK	Test Blueprint		Final Dots	
	Min %	Max %	Number of OP Items	% of Assessment
1	0%	16%	1	2%
2	76%	92%	45	90%
3	4%	16%	4	8%
Total Number of OP Items			**50**	**100%**

Table 18. DOK Distribution for SC READY ELA Grade 5 (Operational Items)

DOK	Test Blueprint		Final Dots	
	Min %	Max %	Number of OP Items	% of Assessment
1	0%	16%	2	4%
2	76%	92%	45	90%
3	4%	16%	3	6%
Total Number of OP Items			**50**	**100%**

Table 19. DOK Distribution for SC READY ELA Grade 6 (Operational Items)

DOK	Test Blueprint		Final Dots	
	Min %	Max %	Number of OP Items	% of Assessment
1	0%	15%	1	2%
2	60%	90%	48	87%
3	5%	15%	6	11%
Total Number of OP Items			**55**	**100%**

Table 20. DOK Distribution for SC READY ELA Grade 7 (Operational Items)

DOK	Test Blueprint		Final Dots	
	Min %	Max %	Number of OP Items	% of Assessment
1	0%	15%	1	2%
2	60%	90%	49	89%
3	5%	15%	5	9%
Total Number of OP Items			**55**	**100%**

Table 21. DOK Distribution for SC READY ELA Grade 8 (Operational Items)

DOK	Test Blueprint		Final Dots	
	Min %	Max %	Number of OP Items	% of Assessment
1	0%	15%	2	4%
2	60%	90%	47	85%
3	5%	15%	6	11%
Total Number of OP Items			**55**	**100%**

Table 22. DOK Distribution for EOCEP English 2 (Operational Items)

DOK	Test Blueprint		Final Dots	
	Min %	Max %	Number of OP Items	% of Assessment
1	0%	10%	0	0%
2	55%	85%	43	78%
3	25%	45%	12	22%
Total Number of OP Items			**55**	**100%**

Evaluation:

Grade 3: The DOK of SC READY ELA Grade 3 operational items as reflected on the Final Dots do reflect the Test Blueprint.

Grade 4: The DOK of SC READY ELA Grade 4 operational items as reflected on the Final Dots do reflect the Test Blueprint.

Grade 5: The DOK of SC READY ELA Grade 5 operational items as reflected on the Final Dots do reflect the Test Blueprint.

Grade 6: The DOK of SC READY ELA Grade 6 operational items as reflected on the Final Dots do reflect the Test Blueprint.

Grade 7: The DOK of SC READY ELA Grade 7 operational items as reflected on the Final Dots do reflect the Test Blueprint.

Grade 8: The DOK of SC READY ELA Grade 8 operational items as reflected on the Final Dots do reflect the Test Blueprint.

English 2: The DOK of EOCEP English 2 operational items as reflected on the Final Dots do reflect the Test Blueprint.

Recommendation: N/A

3.3.2 Review Items for DOK Level

All operational items on the SC READY ELA Grades 3-8 and EOCEP English 2 were reviewed for DOK level.

Evaluation: Table 23 through Table 29 highlights items flagged during review.

Table 23. Alignment to DOK for SC READY ELA Grade 3

Item Sequence	DOK on Test Map	Suggested DOK	Notes
43	3	2	Item asks students to determine the theme of the passage. Item does not require strategic thinking or abstract reasoning to classify as Level 3.

Table 24. Alignment to DOK for SC READY ELA Grade 4

Item Sequence	DOK on Test Map	Suggested DOK	Notes
2	1	2	Item asks students to identify the opinion and then determine which one is best to include in the essay. This requires some reasoning beyond recall.
18	2	1	Item asks students to place/use a comma correctly. This requires recalling a simple, routine procedure.

Table 25. Alignment to DOK for SC READY ELA Grade 5

Item Sequence	DOK on Test Map	Suggested DOK	Notes
1	2	1	Item asks students to identify the correct use of a colon. This requires recalling a simple, routine procedure.
2	2	1	Item asks students to identify the correct use of punctuation (comma). This requires recalling a simple, routine procedure.

Table 26. Alignment to DOK for SC READY ELA Grade 6

Item Sequence	DOK on Test Map	Suggested DOK	Notes
3	2	1	Item asks students to identify the sentence with correct punctuation. The distractors are incorrect regardless of punctuation; the key is the only grammatical sentence. This requires recalling a simple, routine procedure.
5	2	1	Item asks students to identify the correct use of parentheses. This requires recalling a simple, routine procedure.
25	3	2	Item asks students to determine which sentence from the paragraph acknowledges an alternative viewpoint. Item does not require strategic thinking or abstract reasoning to classify as Level 3. The reasoning is done within the provided text/paragraph.

Table 27. Alignment to DOK for SC READY ELA Grade 7

Item Sequence	DOK on Test Map	Suggested DOK	Notes
10	2	1	Item asks students to identify the sentence that correctly uses a comma. This requires recalling a simple, routine procedure.
19	3	2	Item asks students to determine which research question would help students gain understanding of a particular topic. Item does not require strategic thinking or abstract reasoning to classify as Level 3.
23	3	2	Item asks students to determine which research question would help students gain understanding of a particular topic. Item does not require strategic thinking or abstract reasoning to classify as Level 3.

Table 28. Alignment to DOK for SC READY ELA Grade 8

Item Sequence	DOK on Test Map	Suggested DOK	Notes
1	2	1	Item asks students to identify the error in capitalization. This requires recall of basic information/rules of capitalization (such as for proper nouns).
19	3	2	Item asks students to select the correct heading to organize notes on a topic. Item does not require strategic thinking or abstract reasoning to classify as Level 3. The reasoning is done within the provided notes.

Table 29. Alignment to DOK for EOCEP English 2

Item Sequence	DOK on Test Map	Suggested DOK	Notes
8	3	2	Item asks students to determine the most valid and reliable source to include in a report. Item does not require strategic thinking or abstract reasoning to classify as Level 3.
44	3	2	Item requires students to determine the tone of a paragraph. Item does not require strategic thinking or abstract reasoning to classify as Level 3. The reasoning is done within the provided text.
50	3	2	Item requires students to determine the purpose of a key detail. Item does not require strategic thinking or abstract reasoning to classify as Level 3. The reasoning is done within the provided text.

Recommendation:

Overall, the SC READY and EOCEP ELA items are well aligned with the stated DOK Levels. In addition to the item-level DOK review, a comprehensive, holistic review is necessary to determine whether the operational form will adequately reflect the cognitive demands and distribution parameters specified in the test blueprint, particularly considering any cumulative effect of these proposed DOK reclassifications.

Grade 3: Review the 1 flagged item and either update the associated metadata or revise the items to more accurately reflect the intended DOK classification.

Grade 4: Review the 2 flagged items and either update the associated metadata or revise the items to more accurately reflect the intended DOK classification.

Grade 5: Review the 2 flagged items and either update the associated metadata or revise the items to more accurately reflect the intended DOK classification.

Grade 6: Review the 3 flagged items and either update the associated metadata or revise the items to more accurately reflect the intended DOK classification.

Grade 7: Review the 3 flagged items and either update the associated metadata or revise the items to more accurately reflect the intended DOK classification.

Grade 8: Review the 2 flagged items and either update the associated metadata or revise the items to more accurately reflect the intended DOK classification.

English 2: Review the 3 flagged items and either update the associated metadata or revise the items to more accurately reflect the intended DOK classification.

3.4 Internal Structure

According to the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, NCME, 2014), validity evidence based on internal structure relates to how test items, individually and collectively, align with the construct(s) being measured. To that end, this evaluation included summaries of classical test theory and Rasch model item analyses, dimensionality, reliability, and measurement invariance. No additional analyses were conducted. Rather, materials provided by SCDE and DRC, including the 2024-25 Technical Report (DRC, 2025) and psychometric statistics files, are summarized and interpreted.

3.4.1 CTT Item Statistics

A classical test theory (CTT) item analysis is conducted as a baseline check for the appropriateness of items. To support the ELA psychometric analyses and ability estimation, items need to be sufficiently difficult for the population and function properly. CTT item difficulty is reported as the proportion of examinees who answered an item correctly. Lower values indicate harder items (e.g., 0.15 (15%) of the examinees answered the item correctly), and higher values indicate easier items (e.g., 0.85 (85%) of examinees answered the item correctly).

For these ELA assessments, a wide range of difficulty values should be observed to indicate utility across the breadth of examinee ability levels. Additionally, values near 0.50 provide strong information (Bandalos, 2018). One measure of CTT item quality is the item-total correlation. The item-total correlation is a quantification of the degree to which individual items separate examinees with low and high scores. Values greater than 0.30 are considered satisfactory, while values less than 0.20 indicate low discrimination and suggest revision of the item (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Negative values indicate that higher scoring examinees tended to get the item incorrect more often than low scoring examinees, which is a red flag for immediate item review.

Evaluation: Results from CTT analysis are displayed in Table 30.

Table 30. Classical Test Theory Item Statistics

Assessment	Number of Items	Mean *p*-value	*p*-value Range	Item-Total Correlation
Grade 3 ELA	50	0.66	0.46 - 0.85	0.51
Grade 4 ELA	50	0.65	0.28 - 0.80	0.50
Grade 5 ELA	50	0.64	0.45 - 0.89	0.48
Grade 6 ELA	55	0.63	0.33 - 0.86	0.49
Grade 7 ELA	55	0.65	0.33 - 0.85	0.46
Grade 8 ELA	55	0.65	0.30 - 0.87	0.47
English 2 Fall/Winter	55	0.67	0.24 - 0.85	0.42
English 2 Spring	55	0.70	0.42 - 0.89	0.45

Overall, each ELA assessment has an appropriate range of item difficulties to properly assess students across the span of ability levels. Additionally, item-total correlations are well above 0.40, indicating that items discriminate adequately. Altogether, the difficulty and item-total correlation estimates provide preliminary evidence that the items are functioning properly for the SC READY and EOCEP ELA assessments.

Recommendation: N/A

3.4.2 Rasch Item Statistics

The Rasch item response theory model was used for calibration and scaling. While it makes strong assumptions about items, the Rasch model has preferrable measurement properties including sum-score sufficiency, invariant item ordering, and a common item-to-ability scale (Engelhard, 2013). These properties are useful for interpretation of items, ability estimates, and performance level classifications. The Rasch model includes ability estimates and item parameter estimates. The Rasch model assumes that each item discriminates equally and only estimates a difficulty parameter for each item. This difficulty parameter is a location parameter, indicating the point on the ability scale where an examinee has a 50% chance of answering the item correctly. For SC READY and EOCEP ELA purposes, difficulty parameters should span the ability distribution (e.g., -3 to 3) to reliably locate all examinees.

When applying the Rasch model, it is important to assess the degree to which the data fits the model. Rasch model fit statistics, including infit and outfit, quantify the differences between

observed responses and model-predicted responses. Values less than 0.80 or greater than 1.2 can indicate poor fit (Wright, 1994).

Evaluation: Results from Rasch model psychometric analyses are displayed in Table 31.

Table 31. Rasch Model Item Parameters and Fit Statistics

Assessment	Number of Items	Mean Rasch Difficulty	Rasch Difficulty Range	Infit 90% Interval	Outfit 90% Interval
Grade 3 ELA	50	-1.24	-2.65 - 0.30	0.83 - 1.12	0.67 - 1.17
Grade 4 ELA	50	-0.60	-1.53 - 1.30	0.88 - 1.15	0.77 - 1.22
Grade 5 ELA	50	-0.07	-1.93 - 1.12	0.91 - 1.13	0.76 - 1.20
Grade 6 ELA	55	0.12	-1.72 - 1.94	0.89 - 1.12	0.74 - 1.30
Grade 7 ELA	55	0.34	-1.14 - 2.19	0.87 - 1.20	0.69 - 1.36
Grade 8 ELA	55	0.60	-0.99 - 2.44	0.89 - 1.14	0.79 - 1.21
English 2 (Fall/Winter)	55	0.31	-1.06 - 1.96	0.86 - 1.21	0.74 - 1.33

Overall, each ELA assessment has an appropriate range of item difficulties to properly assess students across the span of ability levels. Each assessment had infit and outfit mean square averages values near 1.0 with ranges that were mostly contained in the recommended range of 0.80 to 1.20. Generally, these values indicate that the Rasch model fits the data adequately and supports the intended interpretations. The small proportion of items for which fit statistics approached or exceeded the thresholds were flagged and reviewed by the DRC psychometric staff.

Recommendation: While being sufficient for reliable scaling across the span of abilities, Grade 3 ELA could include more difficult items to more precisely estimate ability for higher ability students.

3.4.3 Dimensionality

The item response theory models used to scale SC READY and EOCEP ELA tests have an underlying assumption of unidimensionality. That is, each test measures a single domain. If this is not the case, and more than one factor exists, then the validity and interpretation of scale scores are called into question. To assess dimensionality, common approaches are factor analysis and principal components analysis (PCA). Within the PCA framework, Reckase (1979) suggested that the first principal component should account for at least 20% of the total variance

to support unidimensionality. Also, the first component should account for substantially more variance than the second (Zopluoglu & Davenport, 2017).

Evaluation: Results from a PCA on the fall administration of the SC READY and EOCEP ELA tests indicated that the first components were at least 7 - 11 times as large as the second components, and that they all explained more than 20% of the variance. These results suggest that the unidimensionality assumption is met for the SC READY and EOCEP ELA tests.

Recommendation: N/A

3.4.4 Reliability

Test score reliability is concerned with the consistency and precision of scores and is a function of the amount of measurement error (Wells & Wollack, 2003). Reliability is a necessary condition for validity because if scores are highly variable and error-ridden, they cannot be said to measure the construct(s) accurately. There are several ways to quantify reliability in the CTT framework, including Cronbach's alpha and the standard error of measurement. Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1 and quantifies the degree to which the items consistently measure the target domain. For high stakes settings, alpha should be approaching or above 0.90 (Wells & Wollack, 2003). The standard error of measurement (SEM) provides an interval estimate around raw scores.

Evaluation: For the SC READY and EOCEP ELA tests, Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates were strong, ranging from 0.93 - 0.94 for non-accommodated forms and 0.86 - 0.87 for accommodated forms. Subgroup analysis indicated that the tests were reliable for all subgroups, with subgroup alpha estimates being very similar (within ±.03). SEM values ranged from 2.68 to 3.51. Raw score SEMs near 3 is adequate considering there were 50 - 55 operational items. In summary, reliability is adequate for the SC READY and EOCEP ELA scaling purposes.

Recommendation: N/A

3.4.5 Measurement Invariance

Test fairness is a fundamental aspect of conducting group comparisons and ensuring the validity of assessments, particularly when examining differences based on gender, ethnicities, culture, or treatment conditions. To achieve test fairness, it is essential to detect and prevent any form of unfairness throughout the entire testing process, including test design, development, administration, and scoring (Camilli, 2006). When a test is free of systematic bias, measurement invariance has been met.

Differential item functioning (DIF) analysis plays a crucial role in addressing test fairness by identifying potentially biased items in a test. DIF procedures assess whether examinees from different subgroups, who possess the same underlying ability or trait, have different probabilities of endorsing an item (Angoff, 1993). By identifying items that function differently across groups, DIF analysis helps to minimize the impact of factors unrelated to the construct being measured (Sireci & Rios, 2013). Biased items systemically advantage or disadvantage a specific

subgroup because of factors irrelevant to the intended construct. By addressing DIF, the fairness and validity of the test can be enhanced, ensuring that an item is unbiased and measures the same construct across groups.

From a psychometric perspective, DIF is commonly analyzed using methods that compare item performance across groups. For the SC READY and EOCEP ELA tests, subgroups of interest were gender (male/female), racial/ethnic groups (Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic, two or more races), disability status (no/yes), multilingual status (no/yes), and paper versus online administrations. To measure DIF, the Mantel-Haenszel (MH) delta statistic quantifies the difference in item response distribution for two groups. Researchers at ETS developed thresholds to interpret MH delta values (Zwick, et al., 2005).

Evaluation: During the test development phase, item writers followed guidelines for fairness and sensitivity to minimize bias. In the analysis phase, DIF analysis compared genders, race/ethnicities, students speaking multiple languages, students with and without disabilities, and paper vs online administrations. Overall, across all ELA tests and comparison groups, 2566/2630 (98%) possible item comparisons displayed no or negligible DIF; 56/2630 (2%) showed slight DIF; and 8/2630 (0.3%) show moderate DIF. Items that were flagged were reviewed by teachers, SCDE staff, and DRC test development experts. In summary, the SC READY and EOCEP ELA tests satisfied measurement invariance assumptions.

Recommendation: N/A

4. Performance Level Classifications

For summative assessments, in addition to scale scores, it is often useful to provide performance level classifications that are coupled with interpretable descriptors of skill and understanding development for each performance level. In an item response theory framework, cut scores for each performance level must be determined and applied to classify examinees. For the SC READY and EOCEP ELA tests, cut scores were determined in a standard setting process and applied to classify examinees into one of four performance levels:

- **Does Not Meet Expectations**: the student does not meet the expectations of the course or grade-level content standards.
- **Approaches/Minimally Meets Expectations**: the student approaches (or minimally meets) expectations of the course or grade-level content standards.
- **Meets Expectations**: the student meets the expectations of the course or grade-level content standards.
- **Exceeds Expectations**: the student exceeds the expectations of the course or grade-level content standards.

Additionally, for the EOCEP English 2 test, cut scores were determined to letter grade categories (A/B/C/D/F). According to the cut-scores, a grade of A corresponds to Exceeds, B-C corresponds to Meets, D corresponds to Minimally Meets, and F corresponds to Does not Meet.

This evaluation concerns the degree to which these classifications are valid and reliable. Data for this section comes from the technical report (DRC, 2025).

Evaluation: A bookmark standard setting was used to determine the SC READY and EOCEP ELA cut scores. This method is commonly applied in industry and accepted as a valid procedure for standard settings. The cut scores were then applied to the ability estimates derived from the Rasch scaling process to classify students into the achievement levels. Conditional SEMs around the cut scores range from 3.5 to 5.0 points for EOCEP (100-point scale) and 20 to 30 points for SC READY (800-point variable scale by grade). These conditional SEMs are not excessively large considering the grading scale ranges. Classification consistency indices indicate strong consistency for classification agreement into two achievement levels; Kappa values ranged from 0.7 to 0.8, indicating substantial agreement. Kappa values were lower for five (and four) achievement levels (0.5 - 0.7), but still acceptable by industry standards.

Recommendation: While the standard setting process was sound, and classification consistency exceeded acceptable industry standards, decisions made based on classifications of the four or five achievement levels could be supported with additional student data or assessments. Additionally, the use of psychometric models that better support classification (e.g., cognitive diagnosis models) could be explored.

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EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

DATE: May 18, 2026

SUBCOMMITTEE:
Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

INFORMATION ITEM:
Multilingual Learners' Progress Indicator Revision

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY
§59-18-900(A): The Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education, is directed to establish the format of a comprehensive, web-based, annual report card to report on the performance for the State and for individual primary, elementary, middle, high schools, career centers, and school districts of the State. The comprehensive report card must be in a reader-friendly format, using graphics whenever possible, published on the state, district, and school websites, and, upon request, printed by the school districts. The school's rating must be emphasized and an explanation of its meaning and significance for the school also must be reported. The annual report card must serve at least six purposes:
(1) inform parents and the public about the school's performance including, but not limited to, that on the home page of the report there must be each school's overall performance rating in a font size larger than twenty-six and the total number of points the school achieved on a zero to one hundred scale;
(2) assist in addressing the strengths and weaknesses within a particular school;
(3) recognize schools with high performance;
(4) evaluate and focus resources on schools with low performance;
(5) meet federal report card requirements; and
(6) document the preparedness of high school graduates for college and career.

(D) The comprehensive report card must include a comprehensive set of performance indicators with information on comparisons, trends, needs, and performance over time which is helpful to parents and the public in evaluating the school. In addition, the comprehensive report card must include indicators that meet federal law requirements.

CRITICAL FACTS
In SC's current accountability system, to meet federal requirements, includes a Multilingual Learners' Progress Indicator measures the percent of multilingual learners (MLs) at a school who meet progress targets to achieve English language proficiency within five years.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS
January 12, 2026: Following Cyclical Review of the Accountability System, ASA hears information item describing proposed revisions to indicator. EOC staff describe analyses and impact data to be consider prior to finalizing proposal.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC
none

ACTION REQUEST

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

ACTION TAKEN

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

INDICATOR: Multilingual Learners' Progress

School Level: Elementary, Middle, & High

This indicator assesses growth toward the English language proficiency criteria for South Carolina's Multilingual Learner Program (MLP) which is to be achieved within 5 years after the initial assessment of English language proficiency (ELP) as stipulated in the State's approved ESSA plan. The state's definition of English proficiency is a composite score of 4.4 (Expanding) on South Carolina's current ELP test (or Level 3 on the corresponding alternate assessment for not more than 1% of test takers as deemed appropriate by the student's IEP team). Based on analyses of South Carolina's historical ELP test data and consultation with national experts in English language acquisition and ELP growth, annual growth targets (see Table 1) have been developed based on a Multilingual Learner's (ML's) most recent proficiency level which are designed to support MLs achieving proficiency within five years.

Report the percent of Multilingual Learners (MLs) at the school who have met or exceeded their current annual target to achieve ELP within 5 years of beginning the MLP.

> *Note: Do not report this indicator for schools or districts with fewer than 20 students identified as Multilingual Learners (MLs) who are eligible to be included in the Multilingual Learners' Progress metric. All MLs are included in the calculation of the Multilingual Learners' Progress metric for the District and the State regardless of whether that ML is reported at the school level.*

Total Rating Points Available for the Indicator:

10 points

What Students Are Included in the Indicator:

Note that there are two distinct definitions of the ML subgroup. This section describes the ML Students Included in the Indicator (SII). Per federal requirements, the Multilingual Learners' Proficiency indicator may only include MLs who take the ELP test in the current accountability year (or who are meant to take the test but are not tested).

ML students who have achieved proficiency and are in a four-year period of monitoring (coded as M1, M2, M3, or M4) are included in the ML Reporting Subgroup (RS) for the purposes of reporting disaggregated results for all other accountability indicators or for Continuous Improvement Designations and Supports based on subgroup performance. The ML RS includes all MLs in the ML SII (*i.e.*, who meet the criteria described below) *plus* MLs in a monitoring status.

For any additional questions relating to the identification and assessment of MLs, consult the Multilingual Learner Program Guiding Principles (*the link provided leads to the ESEA, Title III, Part A*

/ Multilingual Learner Program website, on which the most current Guiding Principles document may be found).

- For the purposes of the Multilingual Learners' Progress indicator, the ML population includes ML students who have not yet achieved proficiency and are required to receive services in the ML Program. MLs included in the indicator may be identified as follows:
    - MLs coded in the student information system with an English proficiency level 1.0–6.0 (AL1–AL5 or "ALS - <3 Less Than Three" for MLs assessed with the alternate test) or coded as AW (Awaiting).

      Note: Most students with a score of 4.4–6.0 or AL3–AL5 will have met the English proficiency criteria and will be coded M1, 8FRMEL, or 8NVRML. However, there are a few exceptions where a student may score a 4.4-6.0 or AL3–AL5 and remain in the Multilingual Learner Program (MLP). Please see the example scenarios embedded in the most current MLP Coding Matrix on the Title III/MLP website (under the PowerSchool Coding and Data drop-down menu from the Office of Federal and State Accountability) where this coding may be applicable.

      Further Note: MLs who have a missing composite score on their most recent ELP test or MLs who have transferred into the district and for whom an ELP test score from within the past calendar year has not yet been received must take an ELP Screener for the purpose of determining their ELP Growth Target for the current accountability year.

- **School:** All MLs in Kindergarten (K5) through Grade 12 who are enrolled at the school from the 45th day of the school year and on the first day of English Language Proficiency (ELP) testing, with no break in enrollment, and who either (a) took the ELP test during the administration window, or (b) were also included in the calculation of test participation at the school and did not take the test, are included in the denominator for the calculation of school indicators.

  Note: All MLs enrolled at the school who meet the continuous enrollment criteria, regardless of grade level, are included in the Multilingual Learner's Progress indicator for any Report Card received by the school; this indicator is not calculated separately by grade band per federal guidance.

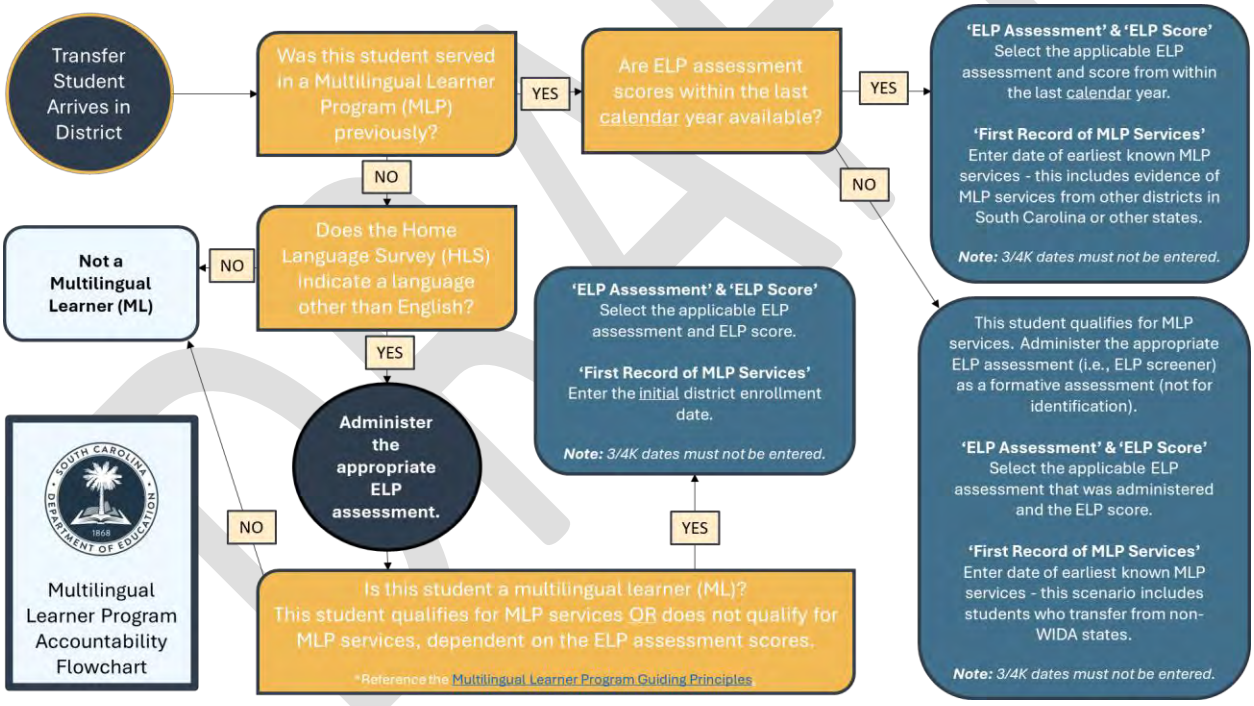
- **District:** All MLs in Kindergarten (K5) through Grade 12 enrolled in the district from the 45th day of the school year and on the first day of ELP testing, with no break in enrollment in the district, regardless of whether the student transferred between two or more schools within the district (including students served by Residential Treatment Facilities and Group Homes), and who either (a) took the ELP test during the administration window, or (b) were also included in the calculation of test participation for at least one school in the district and did not take the test, are included in the denominator for the calculation of district indicators for comparison metrics or for district report cards.
- **State:** All MLs in Kindergarten (K5) through Grade 12 who are enrolled in the state from the 45th day of the school year and on the first day of ELP testing, with no break in enrollment in the state, regardless of whether the student transferred between two or more schools within the state (including students served by Residential Treatment Facilities and Group Homes),

and who either (a) took the ELP test during the administration window, or (b) were also included in the calculation of test participation for at least one school in the state and did not take the test, are included in the denominator for the calculation of state indicators for comparison metrics or for state report cards.

Note: For School, District, and State Report Cards, MLs who are continuously enrolled at a school (or district, or the state), who are included in the calculation of test participation for the same school (or for the same district, or for the state), and who did not take the test are included in the denominator of the indicator but cannot be included in the numerator because they did not take the test. Students not tested for an authorized and properly documented purpose described in the most recently released Students Not Tested Guidelines (distributed to District Accountability Coordinators through ADTS) are excluded from both the numerator and denominator of this indicator.

The SCDE Office of Federal and State Accountability has created **Figure 1** to help guide school and district staff in assessing ML students:

Figure 1
ML Accountability Flowchart



What Students Are Included in the Calculation of Test Participation:

The testing participation rate (*ParticRate*) is calculated for all federally required assessments used in accountability indicators. The *ParticRate* for the Multilingual Learners' Progress indicator shall be calculated (according to the procedures under How Rating Points are Earned for the Indicator, described next) as the proportion of the ML population who meet the following criteria and who took the ELP test.

- For the purposes of the Multilingual Learners' Progress indicator, the ML population includes ML students who have not yet achieved proficiency and are required to receive services in the ML Program. MLs included in the indicator may be identified as follows:
    - MLs coded in the student information system with an English proficiency level 1.0–6.0 (AL1–AL5 or "ALS - <3 Less Than Three" for MLs assessed with the alternate test) or coded as AW (Awaiting).
- **School:** All MLs in Kindergarten (K5) through Grade 12 who are enrolled at the school for at least 20 instructional days during the ELP testing window are included in the denominator for the calculation of school participation.
- **District:** All MLs in Kindergarten (K5) through Grade 12 who are enrolled at any school in the district for at least 20 instructional days during the ELP testing window are included in the denominator for the calculation of district participation.
- **State:** All MLs in Kindergarten (K5) through Grade 12 who are enrolled at any school in the state for at least 20 instructional days during the ELP testing window are included in the denominator for the calculation of state participation.

How Rating Points are Earned for the Indicator:

Rating Points are awarded for the percentage of MLs in the ML SII who either achieve a composite score that is greater than or equal to 4.4 (*i.e.*, MLs who demonstrate proficiency on this year's test) or who achieve a composite score that is greater than or equal to their individual ELP Growth Target given their most recently assessed English language proficiency level (Most Recent ELP Level) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
English Language Proficiency (ELP) Growth Targets for MLs based on Most Recent ELP Level

Most Recent ELP Level	ELP Growth Target
1.0 – 1.6	Most Recent ELP Level + 0.9
1.7 – 2.3	Most Recent ELP Level + 0.8
2.4 – 2.9	Most Recent ELP Level + 0.7
3.0 – 3.4	Most Recent ELP Level + 0.6
3.5 – 3.8	Most Recent ELP Level + 0.5
3.9 or higher	Most Recent ELP Level + 0.4 or 4.4 (whichever is least)
Alternate ELP Test	See note.

Note: *Although the ELP Growth Targets in Table 1 were set to promote MLs achieving English proficiency within five years, all MLs in the SII subgroup are included in the indicator until they have achieved English proficiency.*

Further Note: *MLs assessed with the Alternate ELP Test must earn an Overall Scale Score that is no lower than the Overall Scale score earned on the most recent Alternate ELP Test. In addition, MLs assessed with the Alternate ELP Test must earn the same ELP Level for no more than two consecutive years before earning a higher ELP Level.*

For the purposes of this indicator, the Most Recent ELP Level must have been earned on an ELP assessment or screener that was administered within a calendar year of the current test window (*The Most Recent ELP level must have been completed no earlier than 1/21/2026 for 2027 Report Cards*).

If the ML was not tested last year, if the most recent assessment was given too long ago, or if an appropriate ELP transfer score report is not yet received, then the ML in question must be re-screened for the purpose of setting an ELP Growth Target for the current accountability year. If an appropriate ELP transfer score taken no earlier than the first day of the previous school year's ELP assessment window in South Carolina is received after the ML has been re-screened, then the score earned on the transfer ELP assessment shall be used as the Most Recent ELP Level to determine the ELP Growth Target rather than the more recent screener.

First, calculate Rating Points for the school (or district or state for comparison metrics or for district or state report cards) according to the following equation and subsequent steps:

$$RP_{initial} = max\left(12.5\left(\frac{n_{MLs\ who\ met\ ELP\ Growth\ Target}}{n_{ML\ SII}}\right), 10\right) \quad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

Note: $RP_{initial}$ = Initial Rating Points earned (before participation rate adjustment). $n_{MLs\ who\ met\ ELP\ Growth\ Target}$ = The number of MLs included in the indicator who achieved an ELP Test score that met or exceeded their ELP Growth Target (as indicated by Table 1). $n_{ML\ SII}$ = The number of MLs included in the indicator per the What Students Are Included in the Indicator section above.

1. First, divide the number of MLs who achieved an ELP Score greater than or equal to their ELP Growth Target (as indicated by Table 1) by the number of MLs included in the indicator (as described in What Students are Included in the Indicator).

   Note: MLs who are continuously enrolled at a school, who are included in the calculation of test participation at the same school, and who did not take the test are included in the denominator of the indicator but cannot be included in the numerator because they did not meet or exceed their growth target. MLs who are continuously enrolled at a school, who are included in the calculation of test participation at a different school, and who did not take the test are not included in the calculation of the indicator for the school of their continuous enrollment but shall be included in the calculation of the participation rate and shall contribute to the adjustment applied to Rating Points earned (described beginning in step 3) by the school responsible for testing them.

2. Multiply the quotient obtained in Step 1 by 12.5. If the product is greater than 10 (the number of points available for the indicator), then set it to 10.

   Note: Step 2 sets the upper bound of the range of points available for the indicator to match the highest historically observed values for $\left(\frac{n_{MLs\ who\ met\ ELP\ Growth\ Target}}{n_{ML\ SII}}\right)$ *such that schools at which at least 80% of MLs meeting or exceeding their ELP Growth Targets earn maximum points.*

Next, calculate the testing participation rate according to the following equation and subsequent steps. Students not tested for an authorized and properly documented purpose described in the most recently released Students Not Tested Guidelines (distributed to

District Accountability Coordinators through ADTS) are excluded from both the numerator and denominator of the formula presented below.

$$ParticRate = \left({n_{tested}} \Big/ {\left(n_{MLs\ enrolled\ during\ window} - n_{excluded}\right)} \right) \quad \text{Eq. (2)}$$

Note: $ParticRate$ = Participation Rate. n_{tested} = Number of MLs included in the calculation of participation rate for the indicator with an ELP test score. $n_{MLs\ enrolled\ during\ window}$ = Number of MLs actively enrolled at the school (or district, or state, as appropriate for the report card in question) for at least 20 instructional days during the ELP testing window. $n_{excluded}$ = Number of students excluded from the indicator for an authorized and properly documented purpose.

3. Determine the number of MLs who were actively enrolled at the school (or district, or state, as appropriate for the report card in question) for at least 20 instructional days during the ELP testing window (*i.e.*, $n_{MLs\ enrolled\ during\ window}$).
4. Subtract from the number obtained in Step 3 those MLs who have been excluded from the indicator for an authorized and properly documented purpose (*i.e.*, $n_{excluded}$).
5. Determine the number of MLs found in Step 4 who took the ELP Test (*i.e.*, n_{tested}).
6. Divide the number found in Step 5 (*i.e.*, n_{tested}) by the difference found in Step 4 to find the Participation Rate, expressed as a decimal (*i.e.*, *ParticRate*).

$$\mathrm{RP} = RP_{initial} \times ParticRate \quad \text{Eq. (3)}$$

Note: RP = Rating Points. $RP_{initial}$ = Initial Rating Points earned (described in Step 1 through Step 2). $ParticRate$ = Participation Rate (described in Step 3 through Step 6).

7. Multiply the unrounded initial Ratings Points earned (*i.e.*, $RP_{initial}$; found in Step 2) by the unrounded Participation Rate expressed as a decimal (*i.e.*, $ParticRate$; found in Step 6), rounding the product to the nearest thousandth (*e.g.*, 7.21).
8. Finally, compare the final Rating Points found in Step 7 to Table 2 to determine the Multilingual Learners' Progress Rating.

Table 2

Multilingual Learners' Progress Rating Point Conversions to Ratings

Rating	Rating Points
Excellent	6.59 – 10.00
Good	5.46 – 6.58
Average	3.78 – 5.45
Below Average	2.51 – 3.77
Unsatisfactory	0.00 – 2.50

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

DATE: May 18, 2026

SUBCOMMITTEE:
Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

INFORMATION ITEM:
High School Employability Credential: Inclusion in On-Track Measure

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY
§SECTION 59-18-900(C) In setting the criteria for the academic performance ratings and the performance indicators, the Education Oversight Committee shall report the performance by subgroups of students in the school and schools similar in student characteristics. Criteria must use established guidelines for statistical analysis and build on current data-reporting practices.
(D) The comprehensive report card must include a comprehensive set of performance indicators with information on comparisons, trends, needs, and performance over time which is helpful to parents and the public in evaluating the school. In addition, the comprehensive report card must include indicators that meet federal law requirements. Special efforts are to be made to ensure that the information contained in the report card is provided in an easily understood manner and a reader-friendly format. This information should also provide a context for the performance of the school. Where appropriate, the data should yield disaggregated results to schools and districts in planning for improvement

CRITICAL FACTS
In SC's current accountability system, the High School Student Success Measure includes an On-Track to Graduate Measure and a Five-Year Student Success Rate. The High School Employability Credential is not currently included in the On-Track to Graduate measure but is included in the 5-Yr. Student Success rate. The Credential is also part of the CCR indicator.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS
December 2025: Resolution passes the SC School Boards Association House of Delegates addressing the inclusion of courses taken by students seeking the credential to be included in the On-Track measure.
March 2, 2026: EOC staff convenes meeting with members of Greenville School District, school board, SC Senate, SCASA, SCDE, and SCSBA staff.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC
none

ACTION REQUEST

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

ACTION TAKEN

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

Note: Highlights indicate additions or significant revisions from the text in the previous Accountability Manual.

INDICATOR: High School Student Success

School Level: High

The High School Student Success Indicator (HSSSI) measures the percent of students who are either (a) in their first three years at a high school and are on track to graduate within four years, or (b) who achieve a successful high school outcome within five years of starting High School. The HSSSI includes the First Year On Track (1YOT) rate, the Second Year On Track (2YOT) rate, the Third Year On Track (3YOT) rate, and the Five Year Success Rate (5YSR).

Since 24 High School credits are required to earn a regular diploma in South Carolina, at least four of which must be English credits and at least four of which must be math credits, a student is considered on track to graduate within four years if they have earned six or more High School credits, at least one of which must be an English credit and at least one of which must be a math credit by the end of each successive year in High School.

Thus, by the end of their first year in High School, a student is considered on track if they have earned at least 6 credits, with at least 1 English credit and 1 math credit. By the end of their second year in High School, a student is considered on track if they have earned at least 12 credits, with at least 2 English credits and 2 math credits. By the end of their third year in High School, a student is considered on track if they have earned at least 18 credits, with at least 3 English credits and 3 math credits.

The 5YSR reports the percent of students who have either earned a regular High School diploma, earned a high school equivalency diploma, or earned the SC High School Employability Credential (see https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/special-education-services/post-secondary-outcomes/employability-credential-south-carolina-high-school-credential/) within five years of starting High School.

The On Track metrics were developed to monitor students' steady progress towards on-time graduation with a regular high school diploma, since the regular high school diploma is considered the primary goal of the PK12 education system in South Carolina and is the most appropriate outcome for nearly all South Carolina students. The 5YSR includes the regular high school diploma, a high school equivalency diploma, and the SC High School Employability Credential because these outcomes demonstrate success for the students for whom they are appropriate.

Since the Employability Credential was added to the CCR Indicator for 2022 School Report Cards, fewer than 1% of each Graduating Cohort statewide has demonstrated career readiness via that credential. However, students pursuing the credential have not been considered "On Track" for the purposes of the 1YOT, 2YOT, or 3YOT because the Essentials of English and Essentials of Math courses included in the course progression for the Employability Credential do not satisfy the English and Mathematics requirements of S.C. Code Regs. §43-234 (Defined Program, Grades 9–12 and Graduation Requirements). Since the Employability Credential is a successful outcome for the students for whom it has been designed, not more than 1% of students in each

Graduating Cohort may be considered "On Track" for the 1YOT, 2YOT, or 3YOT metrics provided the students in question

a) Are students with a disability (SWD) whose Individualized Education Plan (IEP) identifies the Employability Credential as the appropriate goal for the student,
b) Are not already considered on track to receive a high school diploma,
c) Have successfully completed six (6) high school credits, at least one of which is an Essentials of English (EoE) credit and at least one of which is an Essentials of Math (EoM) credit for each year in High School (*i.e.*, 6 credits with 1 EoE, & 1 EoM for 1YOT; 12 credits with 2 EoE, & 2 EoM for 2YOT; and 18 credits with 3 EoE, & 3 EoM for 3YOT).

Note: Because the Employability Credential is not offered in all high schools, and because students pursuing the Employability Credential are not uniformly distributed throughout the state, the 1% limit shall be applied at the state level and allocated to high schools within the state based on the proportion of students in the cohort pursuing an Employability Credential who are enrolled at that high school.

The HSSSI shall be reported in two ways. First, it shall be reported as the percent of all students included in any of the metrics included in the indicator for the high school who meet the criteria to be counted positively in that metric (*i.e.*, who are either considered on track or who have achieved a successful High School outcome within five years, depending on the metric for which the student is included) along with the number of students who are counted positively for their respective HSSSI metrics as the numerator of a fraction with the total number of students included in the indicator as the denominator of that fraction. This first display shall also include comparison metrics for the district and the state, with similarly formatted fractions showing the number of students at the district and state levels.

A detailed view shall also be provided showing the proportion of students on track to receive the high school diploma and the proportion of students on track to receive the Employability Credential for 1YOT, 2YOT, and 3YOT, and the proportion of students who graduated in three years or less, the proportion of students who graduated on time, the proportion of students who graduated in their fifth year, the proportion of students who earned a high school equivalency diploma, the proportion of students who earned the Employability Credential, and the proportion of students who did not obtain a successful outcome within five years of starting High School.

Second, the HSSSI shall be reported in an interactive data visualization that allows the viewer to, as required by ESSA section 1111(c)(4)(B), see the combined indicator as well as each metric included in the indicator for all students included in the indicator, as well as disaggregated for students from major racial and ethnic groups, economically-disadvantaged students (as compared to students who are not economically disadvantaged), children with disabilities (as compared to children without disabilities), and Multilingual Learners (MLs). The visualization may also provide the ability to view additional subgroups, and comparison metrics for the district and state, as available.

Total Rating Points Available for the Indicator:

12 points

What Students Are Included in the Indicator:

Four-Year Graduation Cohort: Students shall be included in the various HSSSI metrics according to their ninth-grade code (9GR) which determines their Four-Year Graduation Cohort. The method of assignment for 9GR and for a school's Four-Year Graduation Cohort are described in the What Students are Included in the Indicator section of INDICATOR: Graduation Rate (please refer to that location for additional details). Students shall be included in the HSSSI metrics as described below.

First-Year On Track (1YOT):

- Students who are assigned to the high school's First-Year Cohort (1Y-Cohort) according to the guidelines and procedures described in the Graduation Rate section.

  Note that the graduation cohort reported for the 1YOT metric on any given report card contains students with 9GR equal to the two-digit year of report cards (e.g., students with 9GR = 26 shall be reported on 2026 Report Cards, also referred to as the school's 9GR26).

Second-Year On Track (2YOT):

- Students who are assigned to the high school's Second-Year Cohort (2Y-Cohort) according to the guidelines and procedures described in the Graduation Rate section.

  Note that the cohort reported for the 2YOT metric on any given report card contains students with 9GR equal to the two-digit year of report cards minus 1 (e.g., students with 9GR = 25 shall be reported on 2026 Report Cards, also referred to as the school's 9GR25).

Third-Year On Track (3YOT):

- Students who are assigned to the high school's Third-Year Cohort (3Y-Cohort) according to the guidelines and procedures described in the Graduation Rate section.

  Note that the cohort reported for the 3YOT metric on any given report card contains students with 9GR equal to the two-digit year of report cards minus 2 (e.g., students with 9GR = 24 shall be reported on 2026 Report Cards, also referred to as the school's 9GR24).

Five-Year Success Rate (5YSR):

- Students who were reported in the Graduation Rate indicator for the prior year Report Cards shall be included in the 5YSR of the High School for which they were included in the four-year on time graduation cohort that year.

  Note that the cohort reported for the 5YSR metric on any given report card contains students with 9GR equal to the two-digit year of report cards minus 4 (e.g., students with 9GR = 22, or the school's 9GR22,

shall be reported on 2026 Report Cards since they were reported in the Graduation Rate indicator on 2025 Report Cards).

- Students shall be removed from the cohort for student death, emigration, or transfer to prison or juvenile facility following adjudication but shall not be removed from the cohort for properly documented transfer during the fifth year.
- Students shall not be added to the cohort during the fifth year.

How Rating Points are Earned for the Indicator:

Rating Points are calculated according to the following equation:

$$\mathrm{RP} = 24\left(\frac{\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n_1} 1YOT_i\right) + \left(\sum_{i=1}^{n_2} 2YOT_i\right) + \left(\sum_{i=1}^{n_3} 3YOT_i\right) + \left(\sum_{i=1}^{n_5} 5YSR_i\right)}{n_1 + n_2 + n_3 + n_5} - 0.5\right) \quad \text{Eq. (1)}$$

Note: RP = Rating Points. i = an index for the student (from 1 to the number of students included for each metric). n_1 = the number of students included in the First Year on Track (1YOT) metric. $1YOT_i$ = an indicator of whether student i is a high school student in their first year who is on track (where 1 = on track and 0 = not on track). n_2 = the number of students included in the Second Year on Track (2YOT) metric. $2YOT_i$ = an indicator of whether student i is a high school student in their second year who is on track (where 1 = on track and 0 = not on track). n_3 = the number of students included in the Third Year on Track (3YOT) metric. $3YOT_i$ = an indicator of whether student i is a high school student in their third year who is on track (where 1 = on track and 0 = not on track). n_5 = the number of students included in the Five-Year Student Success Rate (5YSR) metric. $5YSR_i$ = an indicator of whether student i obtained a successful outcome (as defined in this section) within five years of enrollment at a US High School (where 1 = obtained a successful outcome and 0 = did not obtain a successful outcome). If this equation produces a negative value, then set RP = 0.

To calculate the number of Rating Points for the High School, first calculate the number of students in the First-Year Cohort (1Y-Cohort; n_1) and the number of students considered on track in their first year ($\sum_{i=1}^{n_1} 1YOT_i$) according to the following steps:

1. Determine the number of students assigned to the state's 1Y-Cohort according to the guidelines and procedures described in the Graduation Rate section (*e.g.*, 60,589).
2. Determine 1% of the number found in Step 1, rounding ***down*** to the nearest whole number (*e.g.*, 605).
3. Determine the number of students assigned to the state's 1Y-Cohort who are pursuing the Employability Credential (*e.g.*, 588).

   Note: The number obtained in Step 3 may or may not be equal to the number obtained in Step 2. The processes described in this manual will ensure that no more than 1% of students per cohort in the state will be considered on track via the Employability Credential while allocating that proportion appropriately among High Schools in the state according to the number of students enrolled at the high school in that cohort who are pursuing the Employability Credential.

4. Determine the number of students assigned to the high school's 1Y-Cohort according to the guidelines and procedures described in the Graduation Rate section (n_1; *e.g.*, 230).
5. Determine the number of students included in Step 4 who are considered on track (*i.e.*, who have accumulated at least 6 high school credits, at least 1 of which is in English and at least 1 of which is in math; *e.g.*, 199).

Note: Any valid high school credit listed in the SCDE Course Code Database (linked from the Student Information Systems page on the SCDE website) that has been earned by the student at any time in the past can contribute to the 6 HS credits required to be considered on track. Because 1YOT measures whether students are on track to graduate with a regular high school diploma within four years of starting high school, only courses listed as satisfying an English graduation credit can contribute to the 1 required English credit and only courses listed as satisfying a mathematics graduation credit can contribute to the 1 required math credit.

6. Subtract the number of students found in Step 5 from the number of students found in Step 4 to find the number of students in the high school's 1Y-Cohort who are not yet considered on track (*e.g.*, 31).
7. Of the students identified in Step 6 who are not yet considered on track, determine how many of them are students with an IEP pursuing the Employability Credential (*e.g.*, 4).
8. Divide the number found in Step 7 by the number found in Step 3, leaving the quotient unrounded (*e.g.*, 0.0068027210).

   Note: The use of the term "unrounded" in Step 8 and other similar steps is not meant to imply a requirement for perfect precision. Retaining more than six decimal places of precision is unlikely to affect the final values of publicly reported metrics.

9. Multiply the quotient found in Step 8 by the number found in Step 2, rounding the product ***down*** to the nearest whole number (*e.g.*, 4) to find the number of students pursuing the Employability Credential at the High School who may be considered on track according to criterion (c) above (*e.g.*, 4).
10. Determine the number of students pursuing the Employability Credential at the High School who are on track to earn the Employability Credential within four years (*i.e.*, at least 6 HS credits with at least 1 EoE, & at least 1 EoM; *e.g.*, 3). If that number is greater than the number found in Step 9, set it to the number found in Step 9 (*e.g.*, 3).
11. The sum of the numbers found in Step 5 and Step 10 is the number of students included in the high school's 1Y-Cohort who are considered on track (*i.e.*, $\sum_{i=1}^{n_1} 1YOT_i$)

Next, calculate the number of students in the Second-Year Cohort (2Y-Cohort; n_2) and the number of students considered on track in their second year ($\sum_{i=1}^{n_2} 2YOT_i$) according to the following steps:

12. Determine the number of students assigned to the state's Second-Year Cohort (2Y-Cohort) according to the guidelines and procedures described in the Graduation Rate section (*e.g.*, 62,169).
13. Determine 1% of the number found in Step 12, rounding ***down*** to the nearest whole number (*e.g.*, 621).
14. Determine the number of students assigned to the state's 2Y-Cohort who are pursuing the Employability Credential (*e.g.*, 750).

    Note: The number obtained in Step 14 may or may not be equal to the number obtained in Step 13. The example counts given for the 2Y-Cohort were chosen to demonstrate that process described in this manual will ensure that no more than 1% of students per cohort in the state will be considered on track via the Employability Credential, even if greater than 1% of the cohort is pursuing the credential, while still allocating that proportion appropriately among High Schools in

the state according to the number of students enrolled at the high school in that cohort who are pursuing the Employability Credential.

15. Determine the number of students assigned to the high school's 2Y-Cohort according to the guidelines and procedures described in the Graduation Rate section (n_2; *e.g.*, 238).
16. Determine the number of students included in Step 15 who are considered on track (*i.e.*, who have accumulated at least 12 high school credits, at least 2 of which are in English and at least 2 of which are in math; *e.g.*, 204).

    Note: Any valid high school credit listed in the SCDE Course Code Database (linked from the Student Information Systems page on the SCDE website) that has been earned by the student at any time in the past can contribute to the 12 HS credits required to be considered on track. Because 2YOT measures whether students are on track to graduate with a regular high school diploma within four years of starting high school, only courses listed as satisfying an English graduation credit can contribute to the 2 required English credits and only courses listed as satisfying a mathematics graduation credit can contribute to the 2 required math credits.

17. Subtract the number of students found in Step 16 from the number of students found in Step 15 to find the number of students in the high school's 2Y-Cohort who are not yet considered on track (*e.g.*, 34).
18. Of the students identified in Step 17 who are not yet considered on track, determine how many of them are students with an IEP pursuing the Employability Credential (*e.g.*, 3).
19. Divide the number found in Step 18 by the number found in Step 14, leaving the quotient unrounded (*e.g.*, 0.004).
20. Multiply the quotient found in Step 19 by the number found in Step 13, rounding the product ***down*** to the nearest whole number to find the number of students pursuing the Employability Credential at the High School who may be considered on track according to criterion (c) above (*e.g.*, 2).
21. Determine the number of students pursuing the Employability Credential in the high school's 2Y-Cohort who are on track to earn the Employability Credential within four years (*i.e.*, at least 12 HS credits with at least 2 EoE, & at least 2 EoM; *e.g.*, 3). If that number is greater than the number found in Step 20, set it to the number found in Step 20 (*e.g.*, 2).
22. The sum of the numbers found in Step 16 and Step 21 is the number of students included in the high school's 2Y-Cohort who are considered on track (*i.e.*, $\sum_{i=1}^{n_2} 2YOT_i$)

Next, calculate the number of students in the Third-Year Cohort (3Y-Cohort; n_3) and the number of students considered on track in their third year ($\sum_{i=1}^{n_3} 3YOT_i$) according to the following steps:

23. Determine the number of students assigned to the state's Third-Year Cohort (3Y-Cohort) according to the guidelines and procedures described in the Graduation Rate section.
24. Determine 1% of the number found in Step 23, rounding ***down*** to the nearest whole number.
25. Determine the number of students assigned to the state's 3Y-Cohort who are pursuing the Employability Credential.

Note: The number obtained in Step 25 may or may not be equal to the number obtained in Step 24. The processes described in this manual will ensure that no more than 1% of students per cohort in the state will be considered on track via the Employability Credential while allocating that proportion appropriately among High Schools in the state according to the number of students enrolled at the high school in that cohort who are pursuing the Employability Credential.

26. Determine the number of students assigned to the high school's 3Y-Cohort according to the guidelines and procedures described in the Graduation Rate section (n_3).
27. Determine the number of students included in Step 26 who are considered on track (*i.e.*, who have accumulated at least 18 high school credits, at least 3 of which are in English and at least 3 of which are in math).

    Note: Any valid high school credit listed in the SCDE Course Code Database (linked from the Student Information Systems page on the SCDE website) that has been earned by the student at any time in the past can contribute to the 18 HS credits required to be considered on track. Because 3YOT measures whether students are on track to graduate with a regular high school diploma within four years of starting high school, only courses listed as satisfying an English graduation credit can contribute to the 3 required English credits and only courses listed as satisfying a mathematics graduation credit can contribute to the 3 required math credits.

28. Subtract the number of students found in Step 27 from the number of students found in Step 26 to find the number of students in the high school's 3Y-Cohort who are not yet considered on track.
29. Of the students identified in Step 28 who are not yet considered on track, determine how many of them are students with an IEP pursuing the Employability Credential.
30. Divide the number found in Step 29 by the number found in Step 25, leaving the quotient unrounded.
31. Multiply the quotient found in Step 30 by the number found in Step 24, rounding the product ***down*** to the nearest whole number to find the number of students pursuing the Employability Credential at the High School who may be considered on track according to criterion (c) above.
32. Determine the number of students identified in Step 29 who are on track to earn the Employability Credential within four years (*i.e.*, at least 18 HS credits with at least 3 EoE, & at least 3 EoM). If that number is greater than the number found in Step 31, set it to the number found in Step 31.
33. The sum of the numbers found in Step 27 and Step 32 is the number of students included in the high school's 3Y-Cohort who are considered on track (*i.e.*, $\sum_{i=1}^{n_3} 3YOT_i$).

Next, calculate the number of students included in the 5YSR (n_5) and the number of students who obtained a successful outcome within five years ($\sum_{i=1}^{n_5} 5YSR_i$) according to the following steps:

34. Determine the number of students who were included in the Graduation Rate for the High School on the prior year Report Cards (n_5; the fifth year cohort; *i.e.*, 9GR = 22 for 2026 Report Cards).

    Note: Students shall be removed from the cohort for student death, emigration, or transfer to prison or juvenile facility following adjudication but shall not be removed for transfer during year five.

35. Determine the number of students included in Step 34 who obtained a successful High School outcome (*i.e.*, a regular High School diploma, a high school equivalency diploma, or the SC HS Employability Credential) within five years of beginning High School in the US ($\sum_{i=1}^{n_5} 5YSR_i$).

    Note: Students contribute to the number of students who obtained a successful high school outcome within five years of starting high school regardless of when that outcome was obtained; students do not need to obtain the outcome during the fifth year of high school.

Finally, determine the Rating Points earned by combining the metrics calculated above according to the following steps:

36. Total the numbers found in Step 11, Step 22, Step 33, and Step 35.
37. Divide by the sum of the numbers found in Step 4, Step 15, Step 26, and Step 34.
38. Subtract 0.5 from the quotient found in Step 37. If the difference is less than zero, set it to zero.
39. Multiply 24 by the difference found in Step 38.

    Note: Steps 1 through 38 generate a value between 0.0 and 0.5. Multiplying this value by 24 will generate a value between 0 and 12, the total points available for the indicator.

40. The product obtained in Step 39, rounded to the nearest hundredth (*e.g.*, 10.65), is the number of Rating Points
41. Finally, total Rating Points earned are converted to Ratings using Table 1. Per this table, any High School with a percentage of students on track or obtaining successful outcomes that is less than 70% is deemed Unsatisfactory and any High School with rates exceeding 90% is deemed Excellent.

Table 1
High School Student Success Rating Point Conversions to Ratings

Rating	Rating Points
Excellent	9.60 – 12.00
Good	8.00 – 9.59
Average	6.40 – 7.99
Below Average	4.80 – 6.39
Unsatisfactory	0.00 – 4.79

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

DATE: May 18, 2026

SUBCOMMITTEE:
Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

INFORMATION ITEM:
Inclusion of Seal of Biliteracy in CCR

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY
§SECTION 59-18-900(C) In setting the criteria for the academic performance ratings and the performance indicators, the Education Oversight Committee shall report the performance by subgroups of students in the school and schools similar in student characteristics. Criteria must use established guidelines for statistical analysis and build on current data-reporting practices.
(D) The comprehensive report card must include a comprehensive set of performance indicators with information on comparisons, trends, needs, and performance over time which is helpful to parents and the public in evaluating the school. In addition, the comprehensive report card must include indicators that meet federal law requirements. Special efforts are to be made to ensure that the information contained in the report card is provided in an easily understood manner and a reader-friendly format. This information should also provide a context for the performance of the school. Where appropriate, the data should yield disaggregated results to schools and districts in planning for improvement.

CRITICAL FACTS
In SC's current accountability system, a High School student in the fourth-year cohort (also called the graduating cohort) may be identified as College- or Career-Ready on any of up to 11 criteria. Under the current proposal, earning the Seal of Biliteracy would be added as a College-Ready Criterion, since several postsecondary institutions in SC and in other states award college credit to incoming students who have earned the seal.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS
January 12, 2026: Following Cyclical Review of the Accountability System, ASA considers action item to include seal in CCR. EOC asks staff to run data to see impact of seal in SC and nationally.
March 16, 2026: Addition information provided to ASA by SCDE personnel who oversee the Seal of Biliteracy within South Carolina schools.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC
none

ACTION REQUEST

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

ACTION TAKEN

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

Historical Analysis of the Seal of Biliteracy

EOC Members had requested further information about the Seal of Biliteracy to support their decisions about including it as a College Ready criterion in the College & Career Readiness (CCR) indicator for High School Report Cards. Specifically, they had asked

1. How many students have earned the Seal,
2. What proportion of Seal earners graduate within four years of starting High School,
3. What proportion of Seal earners had also satisfied another College Ready criterion,
4. What proportion of Seal earners were already designated either College or Career Ready via one of the existing 11 CCR criteria,
5. What proportion of Seal earners enroll in postsecondary education within one year after High School graduation, and
6. What are the differences in all these metrics between students who earn the Bronze, Silver, or Gold Seals of Biliteracy?

We analyzed data from students in 9GR21, for whom Graduation Rate and CCR were reported on 2024 Report Cards. This allowed us to examine the relationship between earning the Seal of Biliteracy, on-time graduation, and other CCR designations. Results are displayed below.

Seal of Biliteracy Earned	*n*	On-Time Grads	% College Ready	% CCR
Gold	108	97.2%	68.5%	96.3%
Silver or Higher	689	99.0%	69.4%	94.3%
Bronze or Higher	1,277	99.1%	69.5%	94.1%
No Seal	59,093	85.6%	31.8%	71.4%
Total 9GR21 Cohort	**60,370**	**85.9%**	**32.6%**	**71.8%**

To answer the question about college-going rates, only graduates who were found in data from the National Student Clearinghouse were analyzed. This excludes students who did not graduate, students with a FERPA block or privacy block on their postsecondary enrollment records, and graduates from 4 relatively new High Schools which had not yet been added to our service agreement with the National Student Clearinghouse. Results are below.

Seal of Biliteracy Earned	*n*	% College Ready	% CCR	% Enrolled w/in 1Yr
Gold	105	69.5%	98.1%	79.4%
Silver or Higher	684	69.7%	94.3%	74.4%
Bronze or Higher	1,267	69.9%	94.1%	75.1%
No Seal	50,589	37.0%	80.5%	56.5%
Total 9GR21 Graduates	**51,856**	**37.8%**	**80.8%**	**57.0%**

These analyses suggest that, although the vast majority of students who earn the Seal of Biliteracy already meet at least one CCR criterion (94%) and most are already identified as College Ready (70%), Seal earners are still much more likely to enroll in college in the 1st year after graduation (75%) than graduates who do not earn the Seal (57%).

ACTFL
AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
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The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages provides the following information to assist the Illinois State Board of Education in setting in its administrative rules the threshold level of language performance for earning the Illinois Seal of Biliteracy.

Talking Points on Setting Level for Illinois' Seal of Biliteracy

- The WIDA Performance Definitions and ACTFL Proficiency Levels represent different purposes and scales. WIDA criteria are intended to measure academic second language development, content and subject area specific, representing a hierarchy of vocabulary and text type. ACTFL Proficiency Levels are intended to measure a broader usage of language, not limited to an academic context, representing a hierarchy of language functions.
- Since the Illinois Seal of Biliteracy will be representative of high school performance, another source of comparison is the College Board's Advanced Placement descriptions of Achievement Levels for the Language and Culture Exams, a measure of end of program performance. The Advanced Placement Achievement Level Descriptions address language functions and provide a close match for purposes of comparison with the ACTFL Proficiency Levels.
- Native speakers spend most of their life for everyday communication at the ACTFL Advanced level. The WIDA level 5 therefore is more like Intermediate High as it is defined as "approaching comparability to that of proficient English peers." The Intermediate High language user is able to produce Advanced level language, as they approach comparability, but are not able to do it all the time.

Comparison of ACTFL Proficiency Levels with WIDA Performance Definitions

- Language functions are not the basis of the WIDA Performance Definitions; language functions are at the heart of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. Intermediate High language users are able to perform the functions of the Advanced level, but not all the time, showing more success with more familiar topics.
- The WIDA Performance Definitions mainly focus on text type: "variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity, extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports"
- The WIDA Performance Definitions focus on a different context: "specialized or technical language of content areas" (which is generally based on familiarity with basic information for the subject area)
- The WIDA Performance Definitions emphasize comparability to oral or written language of English-proficiency peers (when presented with grade level material). Grade level material will be practiced within a unit of instruction, thus providing the element of familiarity for Intermediate High language users to be able to frequently perform like Advanced level language users and deal with vocabulary that is specialized. However, beyond vocabulary, it is important to identify the language functions and the degree of accuracy demonstrated.

Seal of Biliteracy Requirements in Other States

California: Not tied to a proficiency level (evidence includes years of study of a language)

New Jersey: Looking at Intermediate High, but maybe Intermediate Mid

New York: Criterion is "high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages, in addition to English." 2014-15 will be a one-year pilot implementation program; 2015-16 will be full implementation with participating districts

States considering the Seal of Biliteracy:

Utah: Under consideration is having two levels for the Seal of Biliteracy (likely a basic "gold" Seal at Intermediate Mid; a "platinum" level of the Seal at Advanced Low)

Maryland is considering Intermediate High for the Seal of Biliteracy

Comparison of ACTFL Proficiency Levels with Advanced Placement Exams:

- The College Board's Achievement Level Descriptions provide very detailed expectations for student performance at each AP score level for each of six learning objectives for the course and exam. These are published in each of the College Board's re-designed courses' *Course and Exam Descriptions*.
- Anecdotal evidence and examination of the scoring rubric indicate that students who are showing evidence of Intermediate Mid proficiency are likely to score a 3 (passing score) on the AP Language and Culture Exam; students showing evidence of Intermediate High proficiency are likely to score a 4 or 5; students showing evidence of Advanced level proficiency are the most likely to score a 5 on the AP exam. Intermediate High language users are able to function at the Advanced level, but are not able to sustain that performance across the tasks and contexts of the Advanced level.
- Here is a link to the current Achievement Level Descriptions in Spanish (see pages 8-29 of this document for the long and detailed descriptions): http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/descriptions/index.html
- The College Board website provides sample activities from the AP Language and Culture exams, which are based on the National Standards' three modes of communication (Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational):
    - Listen to a radio or television broadcast and present its content and your own opinions about it to your class)
    - Read and discuss current events
    - Compare and contrast cultural perspectives between your community and those of a Spanish-speaking community

Supporting Materials:

Comparison of AP Achievement Level Descriptions (Level 3 – Passing) with ACTFL Proficiency Level of Intermediate High

Categories	AP – Level 3	Corresponding ACTFL Proficiency Level and Sub-Level
Interpersonal		
Strategies	Circumlocution and paraphrasing	**Advanced** (Low): able to use rephrasing and circumlocution; some evidence at Intermediate High
	Seek clarification by asking for repetition	**Novice** (High): with repetition or rephrasing, can generally be understood by those used to non-natives
	Use context to deduce meaning of unfamiliar words	**Intermediate**: Listeners rely heavily on redundancy, restatement, paraphrasing, and contextual clues; Advanced listeners compensate for limitations in lexical and structural control by using real-world knowledge and contextual clues
	May recognize errors; attempts at correction are only occasionally successful	**Intermediate** (Mid): speech may contain pauses, reformulations, and self-corrections
Opinions	State opinions on topics of personal interest	**Intermediate**: familiar topics related to their daily life (Advanced: topics of community, national, or international interest)
	Understand and respond to questions and statements on familiar topics	**Intermediate** (High): able to handle successfully uncomplicated tasks and social situations requiring an exchange related to work, school, recreation, interests, and areas of competence
Language structures	Narrations and descriptions characterized by strings of simple sentences and a few compound sentences; Most accuracy in the present time and some accuracy in other time frames	**Intermediate** (High): can narrate and describe in all major time frames using connected discourse of paragraph length, but not all the time; Intermediate Mid: produce responses typically consisting of sentences and strings of sentences
Vocabulary	Use vocabulary from familiar thematic word groups; Some culturally appropriate and idiomatic expressions	**Intermediate**: Recombine learned material in order to produce personal meaning
Pronunciation	Comprehensible to an audience accustomed to interacting with language learners, yet errors occasionally impede comprehensibility	**Intermediate** (Mid): generally understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives
Interpretive		
Comprehension of Content	Identify some main ideas and details on familiar topics	**Advanced** (Low): understand the main ideas and some supporting details; Intermediate High: occasional gaps in understanding due to a limited knowledge of the vocabulary, structures, and writing conventions of the language.

	Respond accurately to basic information questions	**Intermediate**: understand texts that convey basic information
	Can sometimes use context to deduce meaning of unfamiliar words and make limited inferences	**Intermediate**: Readers rely heavily on contextual clues
Vocabulary	Comprehend a variety of vocabulary on topics of personal interest	**Intermediate** (High): text that convey basic information and deal with personal and social topics
Presentational – Spoken or Written		
Discourse and development	Use strings of sentences and a few basic cohesive devices to express personal opinions, describe and narrate on familiar topics	**Intermediate** (High): can narrate and describe in different time frames when writing about everyday events and situations; often but not always of paragraph length
Language structures	Produce simple and compound sentences with the most accuracy in the present time; some accuracy in other time frames	**Intermediate** (Mid): their writing is framed in present time but may contain references to other time frames. Intermediate High: Narrations and descriptions are often but not always of paragraph length
	Errors may impede comprehensibility	**Intermediate** (High): even with numerous and perhaps significant errors, is generally comprehensible to native not used to the writing of non-natives.
Writing Conventions	Use of standard conventions of written language is inconsistent, which may cause confusion for the reader	**Intermediate** (Low): There may be basic errors in punctuation, spelling.

The redesigned Advanced Placement Spanish Language and Culture Exam requires students to demonstrate their ability to do the following tasks, which represent language functions across many different ACTFL Proficiency Levels; however, it is in the evaluation criteria that the performance expectations are defined for each rating (1-5):

- Identify and summarize the main points and significant details and make appropriate inferences and predictions from a spoken source, such as a broadcast news report or a lecture on an academic or cultural topic related to the Spanish-speaking world.
- Identify and summarize the main points and significant details and predict outcomes from an everyday conversation on a familiar topic, a dialogue from a film or other broadcast media, or an interview on a social or cultural topic related to the Spanish-speaking world.
- Identify and summarize main points and important details; make appropriate inferences and predictions from a written text such as a newspaper/magazine article or contemporary literary excerpt.
- Write a cohesive and coherent analytical or persuasive essay in reaction to a text or on a personal, academic, cultural or social issue, with control of grammar and syntax.
- Describe, narrate and present information or persuasive arguments on general topics with grammatical control and good pronunciation.
- Use information from sources provided to present a synthesis and express an opinion.
- Recognize cultural elements implicit in oral and written texts.
- Interpret linguistic cues to infer social relationships.
- Communicate via interpersonal and presentational written correspondence.
- Initiate, maintain and close a conversation on a familiar topic.
- Formulate questions to seek clarification or additional information.
- Use language that is semantically and grammatically accurate according to a given context.

From: Zalba, Rocio <rzalba@ed.sc.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 12:04 PM
To: Yow, Dana <danay@eoc.sc.gov>; Lavery, Matthew <mlavery@eoc.sc.gov>
Cc: Stokes, Stephen <sstokes@ed.sc.gov>; Austin, Kristi D <kdaustin@ed.sc.gov>; Black, Josh S <jsblack@ed.sc.gov>
Subject: [External] AP scores and SC Seal of Biliteracy

Dear Ms. Yow,

Thank you once again for inviting me to the EOC Subcommittee meeting. I appreciated the opportunity to present and address questions regarding the SC Seal of Biliteracy.

During our session, you requested that I provide research and data on the equivalency of AP scores and the proficiency requirements for the SC Seal of Biliteracy.

The Center for Advanced Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota has developed a website grounded on extensive research that includes many valuable resources related to Seals of Biliteracy. Below are two components that directly address your request:

1. Test Scores to ACTFL Proficiency Level Conversion
This resource outlines the corresponding scores for Intermediate Mid to Advanced Low proficiency levels across various assessments: AP, IB, STAMP4S, STAMP WS, AAPPL, and ALTA. As you know, these assessments are approved for use in our state.

2. Test Comparison Overview
This document compares the most widely used assessments for earning a Seal of Biliteracy. AP and IB assessments are included among the assessments reviewed, indicating that other states use these scores to grant their recipients a Seal of Biliteracy. However, please note that South Carolina does not grant a Seal of Biliteracy based on AP and IB scores.

Additionally, I have attached a document from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) that offers recommendations for establishing rules regarding the Seal of Biliteracy in Illinois. You will find a section titled **Comparison of ACTFL Proficiency Levels with Advanced Placement Exams** on pages 2-4.

I hope these resources provide you with the guidance you are seeking. Please feel free to reach out if you need any additional information.

Kindly,
Rocio

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

DATE: May 18, 2026

COMMITTEE:
Education Oversight Committee

ACTION ITEM:
Process for approval of Dual Enrollment for CCR

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

Section 59-18-900 of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) as amended by Act 94 of 2017 requires the EOC to "determine the criteria for and establish performance ratings of excellent, good, average, below average, and unsatisfactory for schools." Furthermore, "the same categories of performance ratings also must be assigned to individual indicators used to measure a school's performance including, but not limited to, academic achievement, student growth or progress, graduation rate, English language proficiency, and college and career readiness." The EAA also encourages students to earn industry credentials to be career ready. In addition, the state longitudinal data system created by Section 59-18-1950 requires the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office to measure the continuous improvement of the state public education system and the college and career readiness and success of its graduates by documenting "working-aged adults in South Carolina by county who possess a postsecondary degree or industry credential."

CRITICAL FACTS
Per the SC accountability system, high schools receive an indicator rating for College / Career Readiness, which is the percentage of high school graduates who are college or career ready. While there are several metrics that can define both "college ready" and "career ready," students completing at least six credit hours in an approved dual enrollment course with a grade of C or higher are considered "college ready" in the current accountability system. Approved courses should be in English, mathematics, STEM, or social studies. EOC staff is proposing a revision to the process that was initiated in 2023 to further refine list of approved courses to include only those courses that meet the associate of science or associate of arts that transfer to a four-year degree, Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Arts degree and those that have been approved by CHE's Office of Academic Affairs.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS
Timelines outlined within process documents.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC
none

ACTION REQUEST

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

ACTION TAKEN

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

Process for Dual Enrollment Course Approval for SC Report Card

Action Item	Person Responsible	Deadline[1]
SCDE submits course(s) to EOC for consideration for approval	Director, SCDE Standards and Assessment Office	August 1
EOC reviews list and submits to Office of Academic Affairs at SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE)	Executive Director, EOC	August 15
CHE conducts review of courses submitted against college credit criteria[2] and confirms courses meet criteria; submits list to EOC	Director, CHE Office Academic Affairs	September 15
EOC submits revisions/final list to SCDE	Executive Director, EOC	October 1

Note 1: The deadline is for the approval of dual credit courses for the school year in which this process is initiated. The dual credit course approval is not retroactive.

EOC staff review of courses includes inclusion of courses that meet the associate of science or associate of arts that transfer to a four-year degree, Bachelor of Science, or Bachelor of Arts degree.

Note 2: In December 2017, the EOC approved the criteria by which dual enrollment courses are approved as College-Ready as defined in the accountability system.
Prior to December 2017, the EOC had approved the following criteria for dual enrollment course inclusion in CCR:

Students completing at least six (6) credit hours in dual enrollment courses in an English or mathematics course or STEM course with a grade of C or higher. STEM is defined as a natural/lab science or computer science course. The SCDE recommended that social studies courses be included in the criteria, and the recommendation was approved in December 2017.

Requirements & Processes for CCR Approval of Dual Enrollment Courses

Beginning with 2026-2027 Accountability Year as Reported on 2027 School Report Cards

As determined by the EOC and described in the annual Accountability Manual, a student may be designated "**College Ready**" for the purpose of the College and Career Ready (CCR) indicator for High School Report Cards by completing **at least six (6) credit hours** (typically equivalent to 2 units of high school credit) in **approved dual enrollment courses** with **a grade of C or higher**.

To contribute to a student's College Ready designation, the course must have been approved for this purpose at the time that it was taken by the student. Enrollments in dual enrollment courses (also referred to as "dual credit" courses) which are completed before the course was approved for use in the CCR indicator cannot be retroactively considered College Ready.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) shall maintain a publicly accessible listing of approved dual enrollment courses that clearly indicates the earliest school year to which each approval applies. **Approval received during a given school year shall apply to courses taken no earlier than the fall semester *following* the date of approval.**

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) establishes the process, timelines, and criteria for the approval of specific dual enrollment courses for use in accountability. EOC members have established the following criteria for dual enrollment courses approved for use in the CCR indicator. **Courses approved to meet the College Ready requirement for CCR should meet all the following criteria:**

1. Courses in English, Mathematics, Engineering, Computer Science, the Natural Sciences, or the Social Sciences
2. Courses which satisfy a general education or content-specific course requirement towards an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree
3. Courses which are likely to be accepted in transfer to a four-year institution to satisfy a general education or program-specific course requirement towards a baccalaureate degree (*i.e.*, not accepted ***only*** as free elective credit)

SCDE may submit new courses to the EOC for consideration for CCR approval. However, to receive a thorough review and informed decision, **courses submitted to the EOC later than May 1 cannot be approved in time for the upcoming school year**.

Consideration for approval shall follow these steps according to the following timeline:

A. SCDE Director of Assessment and Standards (or designee) submits list of courses for consideration to EOC Executive Director
B. EOC conducts initial review for satisfaction of above criteria and forwards list within 15 days to SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE) Office of Academic Affairs
C. Director, CHE Office of Academic Affairs facilitates review of submitted list to confirm course(s) meet the above criteria, returning list to EOC Executive Director within 30 days
D. EOC Executive Director submits revisions and/or courses which receive final approval to SCDE Director of Assessment and Standards (or designee) within 15 days

Approval for all courses shall be reviewed at least every five years. At the time of its review, each CCR-approved dual enrollment course shall be evaluated in the following manner:

- SCDE shall provide the EOC with the number of students who have enrolled in the CCR-approved dual enrollment course for the past five school years, disaggregated by school year and high school.
- SCDE shall provide the EOC with a list of students (including, at a minimum, their state student ID, graduation date, and high school of graduation) who meet all these criteria:
    - have taken the CCR-approved dual enrollment course,
    - have received a final grade of C or better,
    - were identified as College Ready by completing at least six (6) credit hours of approved dual enrollment courses with a grade of C or higher, and
    - graduated high school during the three most recent, complete school years.
- With the data provided above, the EOC will evaluate the course(s) by
    - determining the rate at which students take the dual enrollment course
    - determining the rate at which students taking the course are deemed College Ready
    - determining the rate at which students taking the course enroll in college within a year of high school graduation
    - determining the rate at which students who have taken the course and enrolled in college persist to a second year
- Outcomes for students taking the course being evaluated shall be compared to similar outcomes for suitable comparison groups of South Carolina students.
- Informed by the evaluation findings, the EOC may recommend revocation of CCR approval for an evaluated course for either of the following reasons:
    - No enrollment or extremely low enrollment over the review period
    - Student outcomes which suggest the course is not promoting college readiness

CREATIVE LEADERSHIP SOLUTIONS

Strategic Planning Session Education Oversight Committee

Monday, May 18, 2026

Time: 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Blatt Room 305

Facilitator: Christina Melton, Ed.D.

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Purpose and Success Criteria for Planning Session
3. Timeline of Project and Accomplishments to Date
4. Review and Respond:
    a. Strategy 1: Reporting Facts
    b. Strategy II: Measuring Change
    c. Strategy III: Promoting Progress
5. Discussion: Implementation of the Strategic Plan
6. Timeline and Next Steps