

AGENDA

Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee Meeting

Monday, September 15, 2025
10:00 a.m.
Room 516, Blatt Building

- I. Welcome Dr. Patty Tate
- II. Approval of Minutes of May 19, 2025 Dr. Patty Tate
- III. Information Items:
Cyclical Review of the Accountability System Update Dana Yow

Cyclical Review of the CCR SC Social Studies Standards
..... Dr. Rainey Knight
- IV. Action Item:
Evaluation of Alternative Instruction Methods Report .Amina Asghar
- V. Executive Director's Update Dana Yow
- VI. Adjournment

April Allen

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Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee

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Tammy Achziger

Rep. Terry Alexander

Rep. Bill Hager

Barbara Hairfield

Sidney Locke

Melissa Pender

Sen. Ross Turner

Dana Yow
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

Minutes of the Meeting

May 19, 2025

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

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

Special Guests: Ivy Coburn, Southern Regional Education Board; Dr. Matthew Ferguson, SCDE; Dr. Abbey Duggins, SCDE; Sandra Ammons, SCDE; Dr. Matthew Madison, UGA Assistant Professor Department of Educational Psychology; Heather Bolinger, K-12 Assessment Solutions Co-Director; Tracy Davenport, K-12 Assessment Solutions Co-Director; Dr. Stephanie Lai, K-12 Assessment Solutions Content Evaluator

ASA subcommittee member Barbara Hairfield opened the meeting and asked for a motion to approve the ASA subcommittee minutes from the March 17, 2025 meeting. Senator Ross Turner motioned to approve the minutes which was seconded by Melissa Pender. After the minutes were approved Hairfield called forward EOC Executive Director Dana Yow to discuss the first action item on the SC Tiered Credential System.

Yow thanked the committee for the opportunity to present then acknowledged the assistance of EOC staff, the SC Department of Education, and the South Regional Education Board in helping to develop the SC Tiered Credential System.

After reviewing how the current credential system worked, it was emphasized that school districts and schools were aware of the proposed upcoming changes and that they would have time to transition into the new proposed system.

Businesses, industries and SC Competes were acknowledged as partners who contributed to making decisions about credentials that are meaningful in the workplace. Yow stated the importance of providing students with “credential currency” that would increase employability when entering the work force.

Next, Yow discussed the reasoning behind transitioning to a Tiered system which included better workforce alignment, clearer credential differentiation, support for stackable credentials, and building a stronger connection between education and industry.

The descriptors for each Tier were then reviewed. Yow identified Tier one credentials as introductory, Tier two credentials as intermediate, and Tier three credentials as career ready. It was clarified Tier one credentials focus on foundational skills, while Tier two credentials are aligned to industry in order to support career pathways. Tier three credentials are aligned with high demand careers and should provide clear economic benefit to students who obtain them.

Yow then showed committee members an example of credentials under the new system for a Health Science career cluster for Pharmacy Tech.

Following this, Yow explained the process to transition to the Tiered system while clarifying that students who began high school before the 2024-2025 school year would still meet career ready status under the current system. Therefore, the updated Tiered system would be implemented in the SC accountability system during the 2027-28 school year.

Next, Yow showed committee members “low use” certifications that were noted by the SREB.

Representative Terry Alexander asked Yow to clarify what was meant by low usage to which Yow answered there were not many students pursuing that particular certification. She then expounded that despite low usage, it was not advisable to remove the certification until they had been integrated into the new system and given the opportunity to be utilized more.

Representative Alexander then asked if there were any job placement data available for students who utilized certifications. Yow answered that the data was not available yet, but that there were plans for it to be available to help identify if certifications were leading to job placements.

Dr. Ivy Coburn also responded that the gathering of that data was a challenge nationally, and that they were working on being able to track that type of information.

Representative Alexander thanked Dr. Coburn, then clarified that he was asking those questions because he was interested in the projected job market and how that would impact students in his district. He stated that he wanted to ensure students were being trained for up to date, local workforce needs. He also stated that the Department of Education would have a responsibility to ensure that the courses needed for the particular certifications would need to be offered to students.

Yow then replied that there had been discussions on that matter with the department to determine what that application process would look like for schools. She stated that the process would be more rigorous requiring a legitimate employer verification that the certification is valuable in that particular field.

Next, Representative Alexander asked how an industry would work with the department to get the courses needed at the school for students to take.

Yow clarified that it would be for certifications rather than a course, and that particular process would require the district or school to have business support for requesting a new certification.

Dr. Coburn also clarified that in such a case for an actual course, the Department of Education would provide technical assistance to first identify if there are already existing classes before the district partners with the department to identify the process needed to move forward. If it was determined that a course should be developed, then a framework of standards would need to be created.

Representative Alexander then asked for an estimate of how long that process would take to which Dr. Coburn replied that it is basically a three-year process in South Carolina. She then clarified that the process Yow was speaking of was for certifications, which was a process.

Yow then reviewed how points were earned in the Tiered system, explaining they were earned through one of the following combinations:

- One Tier 3 credential aligned with their career cluster.
- A combination of one Tier 2 and one Tier 1 credential within the same career pathway.
- A Universal Credential (e.g., OSHA 10) paired with a Tier 2 or higher credential within the student's career cluster.

She clarified that a bundle of Tier 1 credentials would not receive a career ready designation, and that only state approved credentials would count towards a career ready status. In addition to these requirements, credentials must align within the student's career cluster.

The process for credential review was then reviewed in the following three steps: a screening by the SCDE, a review by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce and an industry review.

Yow also reviewed how the Technical Advisory Committee's would assist in evaluating high school CTE credentials.

Finally, Yow reviewed the final approval process noting that the deadline to submit credentials would close on Oct. 1, and that the topic would come before the EOC full committee during December's meeting.

She concluded by stating the staff recommendation was that the current credential list be accepted.

Next, Hairfield called forward EOC Deputy Director Dr. Matthew Lavery to introduce the team from K12 Assessment Solutions from the University of Georgia to present the next action item: Evaluation of the Biology I spring 2024 End-of-Course Exam.

Hairfield cited section 59-18-320 of the Code of Laws which states that the EOC must review end course assessments after the first statewide field test. Hairfield also clarified that pending EOC approval, the review would be provided to the State Board of Education, the South Carolina Department of Education, the SC Governor, and the House and Senate Education committees.

She stated that the ASASubcommittee would consider the approval of the Biology I End of Course during its September meeting, and that it would go before the full EOC at the October meeting.

Dr. Lavery thanked Hairfield and members of the committee, reiterating the importance of reviewing due to the change in science standards. He then invited K-12 Assessment Solutions to present their findings.

K-12 Assessment Solutions Co-Director Heather Bolinger greeted the committee and introduced her colleagues. K-12 Assessment solutions partnered with the SC Department of Education as well as the exam's vendor for the review. Bolinger then reviewed the evaluation process stating that the review process included blueprint analysis, content alignment, DOK review, psychometric evaluation, and performance classification analysis. She also stated that Subject Matter Experts reviewed all items for standard alignment and cognitive rigor, and that a Psychometric evaluation was carried out.

During the presentation, K-12 Assessment Solutions presented on the EOCEP Biology I test blueprint, item validity and alignment, psychometric quality and fairness, and on performance level classification. Recommendations were offered for each reviewed category.

Questions were then accepted.

Hairfield asked for clarification as to why there was a large difference in the number of items on the blueprint that were not tested on the assessment. She stated that she understood the items on the blueprint are supposed to be included on the assessment.

Dr. Abbey Duggins from the SCDE stated that there was confusion around the blueprint that was sent to K-12 Assessment Solutions, but that the correct assessment is available on the SC Department of Education's website.

Yow then asked if they could explain the acronyms that were included in the response from the department. Dr. Duggins and Sandra Ammons from the SCDE replied that DCI stood for

Disciplinary Content Indicator and that CCC stood for Cross Cutting Concepts which span across content areas.

Hairfield then asked that since the field test given in 2024, how would results be used for high school accountability.

Ammons answered that the six items identified were either not aligning or were incorrectly aligned.

Yow clarified that she believed there was a communication gap between the department and the EOC, as the EOC did work with the department to provide information to UGA.

Hairfield then asked for clarification that the science test for grades four and six had not come out yet for review by the EOC. Duggins affirmed this was correct. Hairfield then asked if the test would then need to be reviewed. Dr. Lavery then replied by distinguishing between the two types of field tests that can be administered and that the operational field test is used by UGA.

After more discussion regarding the blueprint and printable standards, Yow acknowledged the disconnect between the two and stated that the blueprint was outdated.

Melissa Pender asked her to confirm that what was being voted on by the committee were the test bank items that the students were given.

Committee members also asked if the test results could be valid with the blueprint discrepancy.

Yow asked subcommittee members if they would like to make a motion to bring the topic back to full committee and wait for the discrepancies to be addressed before the subcommittee took action to which they agreed.

Following this, Miss Yow was called forward to present an information item on the report on the education performance of military connected children.

According to Act 289, the Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act - the EOC is directed "to establish a comprehensive annual report concerning the performance of military-connected children who attend primary, elementary, middle, and high schools in this State."

Yow defined a military connected student as a student with a parent who is a member of the armed forces on active duty or serves on full-time National Guard duty. She then showed that the number of MCSs had slightly increased over the past two years.

The report found that demographically, the largest percentage of MCS were in 6th-8th grade and were White or African American.

She then reported that seventeen school districts reported zero military connected students despite ESSA reporting requirements.

Next, Yow presented the following general findings from the report:

- In SC READY Math, military-connected students more frequently scored Meets or Exceeds Expectations (51.18% combined) than their non-military-connected peers (41.94%).
- In ELA, 35.78% military-connected students scored Exceeds Expectations, markedly higher than the 28.49% among non-military-connected students.
- Conversely, fewer military-connected students fall into the lowest category (14.93%) compared to non-military-connected students (23.47%).

In addition to these findings, MCSs also exceeded non MCSs in their on-time graduation rate.

The following recommendations were made from the report:

- SC school districts should require the collection of these data during school enrollment procedures and the data should be populated into the Student Information System.
- In collaboration with the SC Dept of Veterans Affairs, include a data visualization including data related to this report on dashboardSC.sc.gov, the EOC's Education Data Dashboard (work underway currently.)
- Address the recommendations of the SC K-12 Military Readiness Task Force, adopted in June 2024

Questions were accepted. Seeing there were none, Hairfield called Director of Strategic Innovation Dr. Rainy Knight forward to discuss EIA budget updates during which Dr. Knight discussed the EOC recommendations that were accepted.

Following this, Yow provided an update on the upcoming committee retreat.

After this update, the meeting was adjourned.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

DATE: September 15, 2025

SUBCOMMITTEE:

Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

ACTION ITEM:

Evaluation of Alternative Instruction Methods

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

Proviso 1A.66 of 2024-25 Appropriation Act. (SDE-EIA: Evaluation of Alternative Instruction Methods) With funds appropriated, the Education Oversight Committee is responsible for evaluating the impact of alternative methods of instruction on student learning and working with other agencies to expand access to quality remote instruction which can be dispatched if necessary. Alternative methods of instruction may include, but are not limited to, online or virtual instruction, remote learning, and hybrid models. The Department of Education and school districts providing alternative methods of instruction must provide data as requested by the committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction. The Education Oversight Committee shall report annually to the Governor, the General Assembly, the Department of Education, and the State Board of Education.

CRITICAL FACTS

This study presents a comprehensive analysis of student outcomes associated with various instructional delivery methods across South Carolina public schools during the 2023-2024 academic year. The study focuses on two major statewide assessments:

EOCEP (End of Course Examination Program) for high school students (Grades 9-12)

SC READY for elementary and middle school students (Grades 3-8)

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

2023-2024 academic year

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

Cost: no impact

ACTION REQUEST

☒ **For approval**

☐ **For information**

ACTION TAKEN

☐ **Approved**

☐ **Not Approved**

☐ **Amended**

☐ **Action deferred (explain)**

Alternative Instruction Methods Findings and Analysis Summary

This study presents a comprehensive analysis of student outcomes associated with various instructional delivery methods across South Carolina public schools during the 2023-2024 academic year. The study - which will be released to the EOC subcommittee in September - focuses on two major statewide assessments.

- EOCEP (End of Course Examination Program) for high school students (Grades 9-12)
- SC READY for elementary and middle school students (Grades 3-8)

The instructional methods examined include:

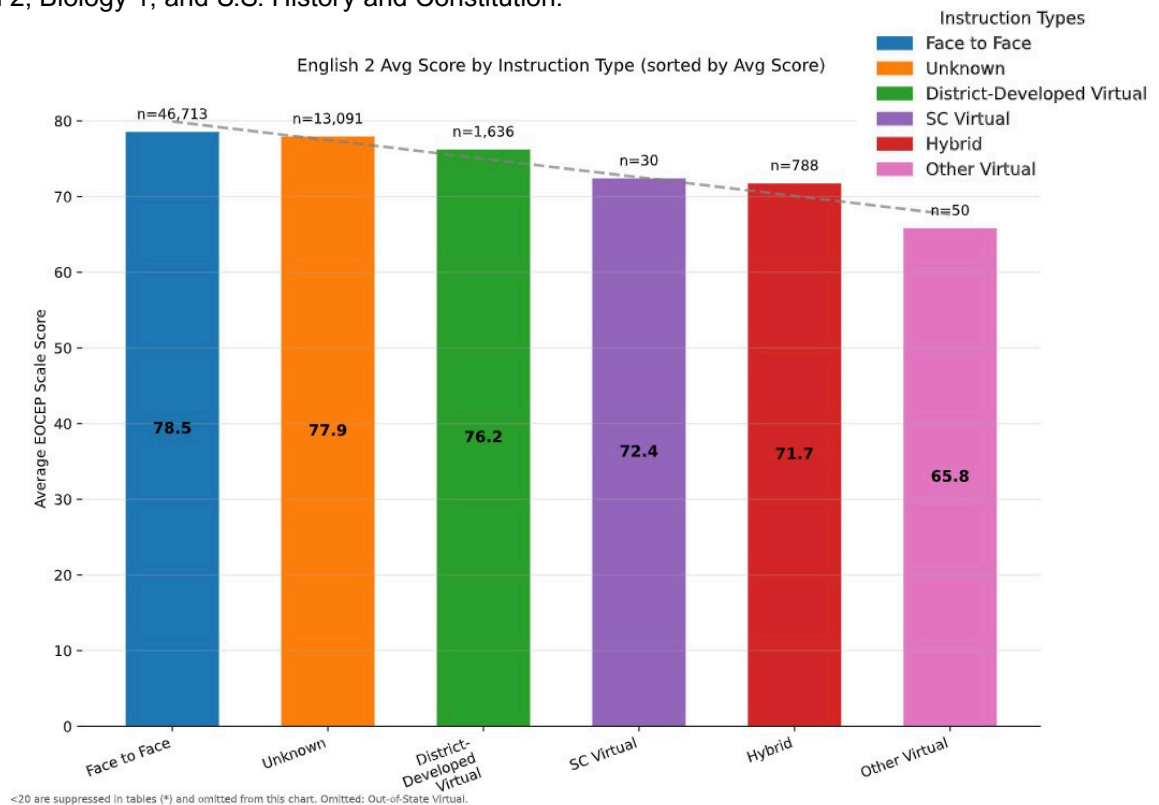
- Face-to-Face (traditional classroom instruction)
- SC Virtual (State-operated virtual programs)
- District-Developed Virtual (local virtual initiatives)
- Out-of-State Virtual (Instruction provided by out-of-state vendors)
- Hybrid (Combination of in-person and virtual instruction)
- Other Virtual (non-traditional or unspecified virtual models)
- Unknown (records where the mode of instruction was not identified, treated analytically as a distinct group)

By examining student performance across instructional delivery types, this study assesses the impact of each format on academic outcomes.

EOCEP Performance Summary

Students in Face-to-Face instruction consistently outperformed peers in virtual and hybrid formats across all EOCEP subjects: Algebra 1, English 2, Biology 1, and U.S. History and Constitution.

- Top outcomes: Face-to-Face and Unknown showed the highest average scores and pass rates, especially in English 2 (78-79% pass rate).
- The lowest outcomes were observed in the Hybrid, Other Virtual, and Out-of-State Virtual formats, which had the weakest results, particularly in Algebra 1 and U.S. History, with averages in the mid-50s.
- SC Virtual demonstrated strong results in some areas; however, its sample size was very small, which limited the generalizability of its findings.



Findings Based on Statistical Methods

To better isolate the impact of instruction type, we applied a statistical model which controls for school, term, and grade level.

- Models confirm the pattern: Face-to-Face and Unknown settings significantly outperform other formats.

A separate statistical analysis compared the likelihood of a student passing a subject when compared to Face-to-Face instruction.

- Students in Hybrid and other virtual formats were 14-45 percentage points less likely to pass, with the sharpest deficits in Biology and Algebra.
- Traditional classroom instruction remains the most effective method of teaching for student performance in high school. Virtual and hybrid methods are linked to significantly lower performance.

SC READY Performance Summary

The SC READY analysis in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math reveals more modest instructional impacts than observed at the high school level.

- Face-to-Face instruction consistently produced strong and stable results across grades, with scores steadily improving from Grade 3 to Grade 8.
- SC Virtual was competitive in upper elementary grades, occasionally matching or exceeding Face-to-Face, although this was based on a small sample size.
- District Virtual, Hybrid, and Out-of-State Virtual formats showed weaker performance, with scores trailing Face-to-Face by 20 to 70 points across grades.
- Other virtual and unknown instruction methods exhibited inconsistent patterns; the latter raises concerns about data quality.

Statistical Findings

- Instructional methods had minimal impact on scores in Grades 4-8 despite being statistically significant.
- Grade 3 was the only exception, with small but meaningful effects suggesting instructional format matters more in early foundational years.
- Prior achievement was the strongest predictor, explaining 41% to 77% of the outcome variance, and it outweighed the instructional format across all grades.

Instruction type plays a limited role in SC READY outcomes beyond the third grade. Previous student outcomes are far more predictive of future success. Data reliability issues, particularly in the “unknown” category, underscore the need for improved administrative tracking and record-keeping.

Subject	Grade	Significant?	Most Effective Method	Least Effective Method	Face To Face Rank (1=best)
ELA	3	☑ Yes	Unknown	Hybrid	2
ELA	4	☑ Yes	Unknown	Hybrid	2
ELA	5	☑ Yes	Unknown	Out-of-State Virtual	3
ELA	6	☑ Yes	Unknown	Other Virtual	3
ELA	7	☑ Yes	SC Virtual	Other Virtual	4
ELA	8	☑ Yes	SC Virtual	Other Virtual	6
Math	3	☑ Yes	Unknown	Hybrid	2
Math	4	☑ Yes	Unknown	Hybrid	2
Math	5	☑ Yes	Unknown	Out-of-State Virtual	2
Math	6	☑ Yes	Unknown	Other Virtual	2
Math	7	☑ Yes	Unknown	Other Virtual	3
Math	8	☑ Yes	Unknown	Other Virtual	3