



**SC EDUCATION  
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

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

**AGENDA**

**Full Education Oversight Committee Meeting**

Monday, October 12, 2020

Blatt Building, Room 110

1:00 P.M.

I. Welcome .....Ellen Weaver

II. Approval of Full Committee Minutes, August 3, 2020 .....Ellen Weaver

III. Subcommittee Reports:  
Academic Standards & Assessments and  
Public Awareness Joint Meeting ..... Barbara Hairfield  
Community Block Grant Evaluation for 2018-19  
eLearning Update  
Re-Think K-12 Grant  
Communications Plan  
Accountability Cyclical Review Update

Ellen Weaver  
CHAIR

Bob Gouch  
VICE CHAIR

Terry Alexander

IV. Information Items:  
Accountability Update: Waiver and Accountability..... Matthew Ferguson

April Allen

Neal Collins

Raye Felder

Appointment of Special Called Subcommittees:  
Nomination Subcommittee.....Ellen Weaver  
Strategic Planning Subcommittee .....Ellen Weaver

Barbara B. Hairfield

Greg Hembree

English 2 End-of Course: SC Department of Education Response

Kevin L. Johnson

John W. Matthews, Jr.

V. Adjournment

Henry McMaster

Brian Newsome

Neil C. Robinson, Jr.

Molly Spearman

Patti J. Tate

Scott Turner

C. Matthew Ferguson, Esq.  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



# **SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC) MEETING**

## **Annual Retreat**

### Minutes of the Meeting

(held at ETV Telecommunications Center in-person and via WebEx)

August 3, 2020

**Members present:** Ellen Weaver; Bob Couch; Sen. Greg Hembree; Barbara Hairfield; April Allen; Rep. Raye Felder; Brian Newsome; Rep. Terry Alexander; Patti Tate, Sen. Kevin Johnson, and John Stockwell

**Members joining via WebEx:** Scott Tuner; Neil Robinson; and Rep. Neal Collins

**EOC staff present:** Matthew Ferguson; Kevin Andrews; Valerie Harrison; Hope Johnson-Jones; Rainey Knight; and Dana Yow

**Others Present:** Linda Salane, Retreat Facilitator

Ms. Weaver called the meeting to order and reminded members that there was no live webcasting of the meeting. The minutes were approved from the June 15, 2020 EOC Meeting. Ms. Felder made the motion and Mr. Newsome seconded the motion. Ms. Weaver called upon Mr. Ferguson to introduce the retreat facilitator, Linda Salane. Ms. Weaver noted that she could not think of a more appropriate time and topic since the committee would be doing strategic planning.

Mr. Ferguson introduced Ms. Salane, noting she was “very adept at the work in front of us.”

Ms. Salane explained the process of developing strategic pillars to ultimately develop a strategic plan for the EOC. She facilitated the day’s work, much of which was accomplished in small group sessions.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned.



**DRAFT**



# South Carolina Community Block Grants 2018-2019



Prepared by

Leigh D'Amico, EdD

Hall West, PhD

Anna Hall, PhD

Xumei Fan, PhD Candidate



Evaluation Report  
August 2020

# South Carolina Community Block Grant Evaluation Report

## Overview

**Table 1: Seven Districts/Consortia Received 2018-2019 Community Block Grant Funding**

District/Consortia	Amount/Type	Description
<b>Berkeley</b>	\$113,650 New	Implemented a multipronged approach within 4K classrooms in seven schools to understand classroom interactions through the Classroom Assessment Scoring System and LENA Grow (“talk pedometer”); Developed and implemented family engagement plans.
<b>Chesterfield</b>	\$114,410 Continuing	Focused on literacy and mathematics-rich classroom environments in 13 4K classrooms across seven schools through use of the Early Language and Literacy Observation and Research-based Early Mathematics Assessment; Developed effective strategies in early mathematics and repeated reading across 4K and 5K.
<b>Greenwood 50</b>	\$84,156 New	Implemented the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool and Responsive Classroom program to enhance teacher-child interactions and promote social and emotional learning.
<b>Lexington/Richland 5</b>	\$106,889 New	Implemented the Pyramid Model social emotional strategies within 12 4K classrooms in five schools and used the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) to understand classroom practices and student behaviors.
<b>Pee Dee Consortia</b>	\$240,050 Continuing	Continued work in 4K classrooms across eight districts and Head Start centers to implement the Teaching Pyramid Model (social-emotional development) and Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) with the addition of Conscious Discipline modules to enhance key Pyramid practices.
<b>Spartanburg Consortia</b>	\$204,733 Continuing	Expanded work to 27 4K classrooms across five Spartanburg school districts to implement Quality Counts (Spartanburg County First Steps) model of ongoing feedback and professional development using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-3 and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System.
<b>York One</b>	\$86,112 Continuing	Continued a kindergarten awareness approach based on needs identified by the school district as well as summer programs for children entering kindergarten and their families; Worked with 4K classrooms to understand classroom interactions using the Early Language and Literacy Observation tool.

This report provides a **summary of findings** across seven Community Block Grants followed by **individual data profiles** for each grant. The report presents results from districts/consortia that received Community Block Grant funding in 2018-2019, which was used in Spring 2019-Summer 2020 including the 2019-2020 school year. Data for this report was collected through:

- electronic surveys disseminated in January 2020 and June 2020
- reports of teacher-child interaction data in January and June 2020
- virtual site visits with each district/consortia in spring 2020
- outcomes templates based on logic models completed in June 2020

In January 2020 and June 2020, surveys and reports were received from all seven grantees: (1) Berkeley County School District, (2) Chesterfield County School District, (3) Greenwood District Fifty, (4) Pee Dee Consortium, (5) School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties, (6) Spartanburg School District Consortium, and (7) York School District One. Data provided represent quantitative output data and qualitative codes related to three areas:

- (1) **professional development activities and partnerships** resulting from grant activities from the onset of the grant through June 30, 2020,
- (2) **teacher-child interaction measure results** from fall 2019 and winter 2020 including the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), the Environment Rating Scales, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (ECERS-3), the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO), and the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT). Spring assessments were not completed because of COVID-19, and
- (3) **outcomes** based on full project implementation; however, some outcomes have not been fully measured due to COVID-19 or the need for Fall 2020 KRA data.

### Professional Development Activities and Partnerships

As of June 30, 2020, a total of 857 professional development sessions or activities had been completed, and 1,253 educators or stakeholders participated in professional development related to the Community Block Grants (see Table 2). Approximately 131 professional development sessions or activities were canceled due to COVID-19 (Table 3). Approximately 94 schools, 248 classrooms, and 5,005 children were influenced by professional development and resulting actions by stakeholders (see Table 4).

**Table 2: Number of professional development activities completed and participants**

District/Consortia	Professional Development Sessions/Activities Completed	Participants Attended
Berkeley	8	87
Chesterfield	18	75
Greenwood 50	55	45
Lexington/Richland 5	15	38
Pee Dee	118	881
Spartanburg	635	95
York 1	8	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>1,253</b>

**Table 3: Number of PD activities planned but canceled due to COVID-19**

District/Consortia	Professional Development Sessions/Activities Planned
Berkeley	1
Chesterfield	0
Greenwood 50	1
Lexington/Richland 5	8
Pee Dee	12
Spartanburg	109
York 1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>

**Table 4: Number of schools, classrooms, and students influenced by professional development**

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Berkeley	7	20	400
Chesterfield	9	48	1,104
Greenwood 50	3	19	400
Lexington/Richland 5	5	13	260
Pee Dee	51	112	2,121
Spartanburg	14	27	540
York 1	5	9	180
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>5,005</b>

Many of the Community Block Grant districts/consortia engaged parents through their grant work. Based on these grants, approximately 2,900 parents were impacted through participating in parent engagement activities, receiving books and curriculum materials to facilitate common activities at school and home, and connecting with the school community through other events and parent-child activities.

**Table 5: Number of parents/caregivers impacted by grant**

District/Consortia	Parents
Berkeley	400
Chesterfield	1,500
Greenwood 50	250
Lexington/Richland 5	260
Pee Dee	404
Spartanburg	N/A
York 1	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,876</b>

## Professional Development and Partnership Activities

Based on information about professional development activities included in the 2020 mid-year reporting survey, REM Center researchers thematically coded responses. Professional development strategies and activities often included partnerships, particularly with institutions of higher education.

### *Focus Areas of Professional Development*

Themes related to the focus areas of professional development that occurred through these grants are identified in the order of their prevalence in the data. There are overlaps in some professional development areas such as curriculum and teacher-child interactions. Due to the overlaps in the areas, counts would not accurately identify the predominance of each theme.

- Curriculum
  - Social Emotional/Behavior Management/Responsive Classrooms
  - Mathematics
  - Literacy
- Teacher-Child Interactions
  - Research-based Early Mathematics Assessment—mathematics
  - Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT)—Pyramid/social emotional
  - Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)—general interactions
- Family and Community Engagement
  - Understand population of students
  - Partnerships with community organizations for events and information
  - Work with teachers/schools to engage families
- School Learning Environment
  - Health and Safety
  - Learning through Play

### *Partnerships*

Themes are identified below in order of their prevalence in the data and based on the number of times these specific partnerships were mentioned.

- Higher Education (n=5)
- Other School Districts (n=3)
- Head Start (n=3)
- First Steps (n=3)
- SC Department of Education/Pyramid Partnership (n=2)
- Community Organizations (n=1) including libraries, museums, and city/county government

## Teacher-Child Interaction Measure

Each district/consortium used an approved teacher-child interaction measure to assess the classroom environment and the interactions occurring within the classroom. During the 2019-2020 school year, 93 schools, 210 classrooms, and 4,214 students were involved in or influenced by the teacher-child interaction measure (see Table 6).

Districts/consortia formally assessed all 4K classrooms or a portion of their 4K classrooms at a minimum of two points during the academic year (fall and spring). Tables 7 through 10 provide the fall 2019 data collected from the CLASS, ECERS-3, ELLCO, and TPOT. Each district/consortium reported data using at least one teacher-child interaction measure; Spartanburg used two assessment measures (CLASS and ECERS-3). Some districts included a winter assessment, which are noted in the tables. Spring 2020 data were not collected due to COVID-19.

**Table 6: Number of schools, classrooms, and students influenced by measures**

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Berkeley	7	20	400
Chesterfield	7	36	828
Greenwood 50	1	7	140
Lexington/Richland 5	9	17	340
Pee Dee	51	97	1,846
Spartanburg	14	27	540
York 1	4	6	120
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>4,214</b>

**Table 7: CLASS Results Fall 2019 and Winter 2020**

Consortia	Emotional Support		Classroom Organization		Instructional Support		Classrooms #
	Fall 2019	Winter 2020	Fall 2019	Winter 2020	Fall 2019	Winter 2020	
Spartanburg	5.83	N/A	5.79	N/A	2.68	N/A	10
Berkeley	5.06	5.17	6.07	6.49	4.54	5.98	20

*NOTE: CLASS scores are on a 1-7 scale and are grouped within the following categories: "low" (1,2), "mid" (3, 4, 5), and "high" (6, 7).*

**Table 8. Fall 2019 results from ECERS-3 (1-7 scale)**

Consortia	Overall Score	Space/Furnish	Care Rout.	Lang/Lit.	Learn Activ.	Inter-action	Prog. Struct.	Number of Classrooms
Spartanburg	4.21	4.54	3.86	4.27	3.47	5.11	4.55	9

*NOTE: ECERS-3 scores are on a 1-7 scale; 1 is "inadequate," 3 is "minimal," 5 is "good," and 7 is "excellent."*

**Table 9. Fall 2019 results from ELLCO (1-5 scale)**

District	General Classroom Environment	Language and Literacy	Number of Classrooms
York	4.82	4.88	6
Chesterfield	4.69	4.67	13

NOTE: ELLCO scores are on a 1-5 scale; 1 is “deficient,” 2 is “inadequate,” 3 is “basic,” 4 is “strong,” and 5 is “exemplary.”

**Table 10. Fall/Winter 2019 results from TPOT**

District/Consortia	Key Practices (Average)	Red Flags (Number)	Incidents (Number)	Effective Strategies (Number)	Number of Classrooms
Lexington/Richland 5	55.4%	30	5	0	13
Pee Dee	82.0%	76	16	10	97
Greenwood	59.7%	18	8	1	7

### Impact Survey

As a part of end-of-year reporting, representatives from each district/consortia (n=7) completed a 16-item closed-response survey gauging the degree of impact the Community Block Grant funds had on various outcomes related to early childhood education. Table 11 shows the results of the survey. District/consortia representatives indicated the degree of impact per item using five responses: *major impact*, *moderate impact*, *minor impact*, and *no impact*. Responses were coded so that each response had a numerical value; codes ranged from four denoting *major impact* to one indicating *no impact*. Averages were calculated for each item and ranked from highest to lowest indicating degree of impact.

Responses indicate that the greatest impact of funds was on lead teachers’ quality of instruction in the classroom (m = 4.0). This is followed by an impact on assistant teachers’ quality of instruction (m = 3.7) as well as essential coordination between lead and assistant teachers in the classroom (m = 3.7). District/consortia representatives also indicated that funding also greatly impacted family/parental awareness of early childhood education practices (m = 3.7). The results also indicated that respondents feel the grant impacted a wide variety of aspects related to early childhood education; means for twelve out of sixteen items were rated as being at least moderately impacted by the funds. This suggests that grant funds impacted not only teachers and students within funded schools, but also parents, administrators, and the larger community.

**Table 11. Outcomes survey items and means**

Survey Item	Mean
Lead teachers' quality of instruction in early education classrooms	4.0
Assistant teachers' quality of instruction in early education classroom	3.7
Coordination between the lead teacher and assistant teacher	3.7
Family/parental awareness of early childhood education practices	3.7
Coordination of strategies within schools in district/consortia (alignment within a school)	3.5
*Principals' understanding of early childhood education best practices	3.4
Student academic achievement/growth	3.3
*District administrators' understanding of early childhood education best practices	3.3
Student behavior in the classroom	3.2
Coordination of strategies across schools in district/consortia (alignment across schools)	3.2
Quality of community partnerships in early childhood education	3.0
Community awareness of preschool opportunities in district/consortia	3.0
Family participation with schools/classrooms	2.7
*Enrollment in preschool/kindergarten	2.3
*Coordination of strategies across schools and child care centers in district/consortia	1.9
Student attendance	1.7

*NOTE: Scale responses are as follows: 4 is "major impact," 3 is "moderate impact," 2 is "minor impact," and 1 is "no impact."*

\*Due to a technical difficulty with the electronic survey, one district representative was only able to answer four items out of sixteen. Therefore, starred items indicate those that include responses from all seven respondents; all other items represent responses from only six district/consortia representatives.

## **Individual Profiles**

Berkeley County School District

Chesterfield School District

Greenwood School District 50

Lexington-Richland School District 5

Pee Dee Consortium

Consortia of Spartanburg 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7

York School District One

# Berkeley County School District

## Community Block Grant Strategy

Berkeley County School District's strategy focused on the quality and frequency of interactions between teachers and students to improve language and literacy as well as kindergarten readiness. The project was implemented in seven schools that had the greatest percentage of children living in poverty as well as the lowest scores on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). Overall, this resulted in 20 classrooms and 400 students affected by grant funds. Professional development focused on the CLASS and targeted both lead teachers and teacher assistants. An additional tool, LENA Grow, was not able to be implemented in Spring 2020 due to the pandemic. The grant also allowed for collaboration across Head Start and public preschools to improve overall early childhood education efforts.

## Outcomes

- Improved teacher-student interactions in targeted classrooms from baseline to mid-year across all three domains of the CLASS: (1) Emotional Support, (2) Classroom Organization, and (3) Instructional Support
- Improved district means on the PALS assessment in language tasks from baseline to mid-year

**Amount of Funding:** \$113,650

## 2018 County Enrollment Data: Berkeley County (SC Profile Early Childhood)

Kindergarten Enrollment: 2,429

Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 787

Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 23

Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 50

4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 190

## KRA 2019 Overall Results

	Emerging		Approaching		Demonstrating	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Berkeley	646	24	1,031	39	984	37
State	13,366	24	20,607	37	21,721	39

## District Reported Outputs

### Number of Professional Development Activities Completed and Attendees

District/Consortia	Professional Development Sessions/Activities Completed	Participants Attended
Berkeley	8	87

### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by Professional Development

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Berkeley	7	20	400

### Number of Parents/Caregivers Impacted

District/Consortia	Parents
Berkeley	400

## Teacher Child Interaction Measure

### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by CLASS

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Berkeley	7	20	400

### Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 CLASS Results (1-7 Scale)

	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support	Number of Classrooms
Pre (Fall 2019)	5.06	6.07	4.54	20
Mid-Year (Winter 2019)	5.17	6.49	5.98	19

## District Reported Outcomes

**Goal 1: Increase and improve the quality of interactions between teachers and students, as well as, increase and improve the interactive talk between teachers and students ultimately improving kindergarten readiness.**

Improvement in classroom interactions in all three domains of the CLASS (Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support) from baseline to mid-year (goal was a one-point increase in scores in all three domains from baseline to end-of-year). In the Instructional Support domain, gains from baseline to mid-year increased over 1 point, indicating improved quality of feedback, language modeling, and concept development in the classroom.

Improvement in language task PALS scores from baseline (4.75) to mid-year (8.75) on eight language tasks resulting in a four-point increase; Goal was a five-point increase from baseline to end-of-year.

A third intended goal of this project was to help improve kindergarten readiness scores assessed by the KRA. However, due to the pandemic and subsequent closure of schools in Spring 2020, Fall 2020 results of the KRA (if obtained) would be an unreliable measure of outcomes.

# Chesterfield School District

## Community Block Grant Strategy

Chesterfield School District implemented the Early Language and Literacy Tool (ELLCO) for the fourth consecutive year in all prekindergarten and kindergarten classrooms and added the Research-based Early Mathematics Assessment (REMA) to enhance early mathematics instruction. The district continued its partnership with Lancaster County Schools related to ELLCO and REMA. Training, modeling, and observations in partnership with Clemson University occurred to promote the addition of REMA. The district also used repeated reading and early literacy strategies through classroom-home partnerships including the distribution of books read in classrooms. In addition, the district expanded CERDEP to include 7 schools and 13 classrooms in 2019-2020 (compared to 3 schools and 7 classrooms in 2018-19).

### Outcomes:

- Expanded 4K in district by six classrooms to better meet needs of community
- Developed alignment between language/literacy and mathematics instruction in 4K and 5K classrooms
- Improved school-home partnership through repeated reading initiative based on common titles in classrooms that are also provided to families for at-home reading

**Amount of Funding:** \$114,410

### 2018 County 4K and 5K Enrollment Data: Chesterfield County (SC Profile Early Learning)

Kindergarten Enrollment: 517

Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 130

Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 81

Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 3

4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 112

### KRA Overall Results 2019

	Emerging		Approaching		Demonstrating	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Chesterfield	167	33	216	42	128	25
State	13,366	24	20,607	37	21,721	39

### District Reported Outputs

#### Number of Professional Development Activities Completed and Participants Attended

District/Consortia	Professional Development Sessions/Activities Completed	Participants Attended
Chesterfield	18	75

#### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by Professional Development

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Chesterfield	9	48	1104

#### Number of Parents Impacted

District/Consortia	Parents
Chesterfield	1,500

### Teacher Child Interaction Measure

#### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by ELLCO

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Chesterfield	7	36	828

#### Fall 2019 ELLCO Results (1-5 scale)

District/Consortia	General Classroom Environment (1-5 scale)	Language and Literacy (1-5 scale)	Number of Classrooms
Chesterfield	4.69	4.67	13

### District Reported Outcomes

**Goal 1: 85% of the children attending 4K in CCSD will score ready for Kindergarten on the Mathematics domain of KRA in the fall 2020.**

Data available in Fall 2020 pending ability to administer KRA.

CERDEP Expansion allowed for six new full day 4K classrooms. Mathematics focus integrated into 4K and 5K in 2019-2020

**Goal 2: 85% of the children attending 4K in CCSD will score ready for Kindergarten on the Language and Literacy domain of KRA in the fall 2020.**

Data available in Fall 2020 pending ability to administer KRA.

Continued use of ELLCO to promote literacy rich classroom and home environments.

**Goal 3: 85% of 5K students will improve their math MAP score by 10% from Winter to Spring administration**

Post assessment not conducted based on COVID-19.

**Goal 4: The overall mean of students' REMA scores will increase by 3 points when students are assessed in spring of 2020**

Post assessment not conducted based on COVID-19.

## Greenwood School District

### Community Block Grant Strategy

As first-time grantees of the Community Block Grant, Greenwood School District implemented the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) in prekindergarten classrooms to focus on teacher-child interactions and enhance social and emotional learning. Through a partnership with the South Carolina Pyramid Project, teachers were trained online in the spring to use the Pyramid model and began implementing interaction strategies in their classrooms in the fall. In addition, teachers were trained to use the Responsive Classroom model during summer professional development sessions, which is a program the district previously had in place. The Responsive Classroom model was selected to use in conjunction with the Pyramid model because the key strategies of both programs were aligned.

### Outcomes

- Increases in teachers' efforts towards relationship-building with students was noted during director observations in all participating classrooms
- Student referrals decreased by 61% from 2018-19 to 2019-20 when comparing August-March of each school year
- Increase in MyIGDIs strong progress scores from Fall-Winter in the areas of picture naming, counting, quantity comparison, and one-to-one correspondence

**Amount of Funding:** \$84,156

### 2018 4K and 5K Enrollment Data: Greenwood County (SC Profile Early Learning)

Kindergarten Enrollment: 881

Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 269

Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 20

Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 41

4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 136

### KRA Overall Results 2019

	Emerging		Approaching		Demonstrating	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Greenwood 50	189	27	302	44	203	29
State	13,366	24	20,607	37	21,721	39

### District Reported Outputs

#### Number of Professional Development Activities Completed and Participants Attended

District/Consortia	Professional Development Sessions/Activities Completed	Participants Attended
Greenwood 50	55	45

#### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by Professional Development

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Greenwood 50	3	19	400

#### Number of Parents Impacted

District/Consortia	Parents
Greenwood 50	250

### Teacher Child Interaction Measure

#### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by ELLCO

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Greenwood 50	1	7	140

#### Fall 2019 TPOT Results

District/Consortia	Key Practices (Average)	Red Flags (Number)	Incidents (Number)	Effective Strategies (Number)	Number of Classrooms
Greenwood 50	59.7%	18	8	1	7

### District Reported Outcomes

**Goal 1: To improve kindergarten readiness and equip teachers to help support and develop the social emotional needs of their students.**

Based on director observations, positive teacher interactions improved across all classrooms as teachers were trained as coaches and received ongoing instruction about the Pyramid Model and Responsive Classroom program. In addition, student referrals decreased 61% from the 2018-19 school year to the 2019-20 school year.

# School District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties

## Community Block Grant Strategy

The goal for School District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties (Lexington/Richland 5) focused on promoting social-emotional readiness for preschool students from high-need environments through professional development and coaching for teachers and teacher assistants. In this first year of funding, grant-related strategies supporting this goal were two-fold: (1) pilot the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) in high-needs schools to determine fidelity to the Pyramid Model by assessing teachers’ use of social-emotional practices in 4K classrooms; and (2) provide professional development and coaching to support teachers and teacher assistants in promoting positive student behavior in 4K classrooms. Lexington/Richland 5 will continue these efforts in the coming school year through an extension grant.

## Outcomes

- Increase in the percentage of total key practices from 55% at the beginning of the school year to 85% at mid-year as measured by the TPOT
- Increase in the number of teachers who improved key practices from 72% at the beginning of the school year to 100% at mid-year as measured by the TPOT
- Decrease in the number of red flags observed from 30 at the beginning of the school year to 6 at mid-year as measured by the TPOT
- Decrease in the percentage of teachers with red flags from 31% at the beginning of the year to 7% at mid-year as measured by the TPOT

**Amount of Funding:** \$106,889

## 2018 County Enrollment Data: SC Profile Early Childhood

### Lexington

Kindergarten Enrollment: 4,073  
 Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 515  
 Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 438  
 Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 117  
 4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 73

### Richland

Kindergarten Enrollment: 3,724  
 Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 1,358  
 Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 44  
 Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 261  
 4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 154

## KRA Overall Results 2019

	Emerging		Approaching		Demonstrating	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Lexington/Richland 5	194	18	432	41	439	41
State	13,366	24	20,607	37	21,721	39

## District Reported Outputs

### Number of Professional Development Activities Completed and Attendees

District/Consortia	Professional Development Sessions/Activities Completed	Participants Attended
Lex/Rich 5	15	38

### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by Professional Development

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Lex/Rich 5	5	13	260

### Number of Parents Impacted

District/Consortia	Parents
Lexington/Richland 5	260

## Teacher Child Interaction Measure

### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by TPOT

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Lex/Rich 5	9	17	340

### Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 TPOT Results

District/Consortia	Key Practices (Average)	Red Flags (Number)	Incidents (Number)	Effective Strategies (Number)	Number of Classrooms
Pre (Fall 2019)	55%	30	5	0	13
Mid-Year (Winter 2020)	85%	6	3	0	12

## District Reported Outcomes

**Goal 1: Pilot the use of the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) in five high-needs schools (12 classrooms) to monitor the fidelity and consistency of the Pyramid Model implementation by measuring changes in teacher practices.**

The percentage of total key practices increased from 55% at the beginning of the school year to 85% at mid-year (goal was 80%).

The number of red flags observed decreased from 30 at the beginning of the year to 6 at mid-year. This is an 80% reduction in observed instances of red flags (goal was 50%).

The percentage of teachers and teacher assistants demonstrating improved key practices overall increased to 100% (goal was 95%) by mid-year.

77.5% of teachers and teacher assistants reduced the number of red flags to 0 (goal was 75%). The percentage of teachers with red flags decreased from 31% at the beginning of the year to 7% at mid-year.

The percentage of teachers and teacher assistants who used essential strategies from the beginning of the school year (0%) to mid-year (0%) did not increase due to cancelled professional development sessions planned for Spring 2020 due to the pandemic (goal was a 50% increase from baseline to end-of-year administration).

**Goal 2: Provide professional development paired with on-site coaching to help teachers and teacher assistants promote positive student behaviors in the classroom using key practices supported by current research in social-emotional learning.**

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District administrators were unable to track the percent of disciplinary referrals due to inconsistency of internal data (goal was a 50% reduction from the previous school year).

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District administrators were unable to track the number of suspensions due to inconsistency of internal data (goal was a 50% reduction from the previous school year).

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Improved readiness for kindergarten could not be assessed because the Spring 2020 administration of the GOLD did not take place due to the pandemic (goal was 80% of students scoring “accomplished”).

# Pee Dee Consortium

## Community Block Grant Strategy

Through a partnership with eight school districts and Head Start within the Pee Dee region, Florence 1 led the implementation of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Young Children’s Social-Emotional Competence. The Teaching Pyramid Observational Tool (TPOT) was used to provide feedback and assist teachers in improving strategies related to social emotional development. This year, Conscious Discipline modules were layered onto Pyramid to address common challenges and enhance opportunities to enhance classroom culture related to social emotional development.

## Outcomes

- Approximately 85% of teachers scored a 75% or higher on the TPOT in Fall 2019
- Coaches worked with teachers in areas identified for improvement
- Comparison of TPOT data over time indicated a positive correlation between improvements and the amount of professional development
- Social-Emotional Assessment Measure (SEAM) was piloted with Florence 1 teachers; teachers shared SEAM data with parents and goals for each student with the parent

**Amount of Funding:** \$240,050

## 2018 County 4K and 5K Enrollment Data (SC Profile Early Learning)

### Darlington

Kindergarten Enrollment: 643  
Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 193  
Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 4  
Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 32  
4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 137

### Florence

Kindergarten Enrollment: 1,761  
Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 489  
Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 5  
Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 215  
4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 196

### Dillon

Kindergarten Enrollment: 438  
Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 158  
Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 0  
Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 59  
4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 79

### Marion

Kindergarten Enrollment: 311  
Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 95  
Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 2  
Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 89  
4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 60

## KRA Overall Results 2019

District	Emerging		Approaching		Demonstrating	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Darlington	214	34	268	42	154	24
Dillon 3	15	13	36	31	65	56
Dillon 4	127	47	94	35	51	19
Florence 1	324	29	442	39	361	32
Florence 2	23	28	26	32	33	40
Florence 3	101	40	101	40	52	20
Florence 4	19	38	24	48	7	14
Marion	104	33	130	42	77	25
State	13,366	24	20,607	37	21,721	39

## District Reported Outputs

### Number of Professional Development Activities Completed and Participants Attended

District/Consortia	Professional Development Sessions/Activities Completed	Participants Attended
Pee Dee Consortia	118	881

### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by Professional Development

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Pee Dee Consortia	51	112	2,121

### Number of Parents Impacted

District/Consortia	Parents
Pee Dee Consortia	404

## Teacher Child Interaction Measure

### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by TPOT

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Pee Dee Consortia	51	97	1,846

### Fall 2019 TPOT Results

District/Consortia	Key Practices (Percent)	Red Flags (Number)	Incidents (Number)	Effective Strategies (Number)	Number of Classrooms
Pee Dee Consortia	82.0%	76	16	10	97

## District Reported Outcomes

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**Goal 1: On average, quality of teacher-child interactions will improve with 100% of the teachers reaching the goal of scoring to at least 75% to fidelity on the TPOT after two classroom observations.**

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Approximately 85% of teachers scored a 75% or higher on the TPOT baseline measure in Fall 2019. Coaches were working with teachers in areas identified for improvement.

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**Goal 2: Coaching support for 4K teachers from trained coaches will improve the fidelity of teacher implementation of Pyramid, with at least 100% of teachers scoring at 75% or higher on TPOT by Spring of 2020. Coaching support for teachers with children with challenging behaviors will increase by 20%. Incidents of challenging behavior measured by number of teacher calls to guardians and parents and number of teacher referrals to principal, 4K student behavioral issues will improve by 10% during the 2019-20 school year.**

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Guidance was provided for the coaches, who in turn increased the amount of time coaches dedicated to setting goals with teachers on areas needing improvements based on the Fall TPOT data.

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**Goal 3: Teachers will attend PD related to Pyramid Key Practices and Teaching Children of Poverty. Teachers will implement one strategy per month documenting data on action-research forms monthly. Coaches will review teachers' data forms monthly with time for reflection. TPOT scores will improve on targeted Key Practices.**

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The comparison of the Fall 2019 TPOT data to the previous school year's data in Spring 2019 indicated that there was a positive correlation between teachers' improvements in Key Practices and the amount of professional development on the targeted topics. Observations made by the coaches confirmed this finding.

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**Goal 4: SEAM (Social-Emotional Assessment Measure) results will be used with Pyramid activities to provide Social-emotional support to all children. All teachers will be surveyed at the beginning, mid-point- and end of the academic year to gain feedback regarding use of the SEAM with Pyramid Modules to affect social-emotional change.**

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This was the first time for piloting this child assessment on social emotional skills, and feedback from teachers in Florence 1 who administered the SEAM indicated that it was useful data. Teachers shared the data with parents at the first Parent-Teacher Conference and set goals for each student with the parent.

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## Consortia of Spartanburg School Districts 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7

### Community Block Grant Strategy

Spartanburg County Quality Counts Expansion Project sought to “promote high quality learning environments in participating programs by assessing teacher-child interactions and providing targeted professional development, technical assistance, modeling and coaching.” This year’s funding enabled the addition of eleven 4K classrooms within three school districts (Districts 1, 2, and 6). The Consortia used the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-3) and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to evaluate classroom quality in targeted preschool classrooms with the ultimate goal of improving PALS Pre-K and Kindergarten readiness vulnerabilities as assessed by the Early Development Instrument (EDI). In addition to the ECERS-3 and CLASS, technical assistance providers also tracked classroom quality and growth through individualized Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs).

### Outcomes

- Expanded initiative to include eleven new 4K classrooms within three new districts
- Developed Quality Improvement Plans for classrooms based on ECERS-3 and CLASS scores that were used to focus professional development and coaching

**Amount of Funding:** \$204,733

### 2018 County Enrollment Data: Spartanburg County (SC Profile Early Childhood)

Kindergarten Enrollment: 3,522

Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 475

Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 130

4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 385

### KRA Overall Results 2019

District	Emerging		Approaching		Demonstrating	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Spartanburg 1	83	21%	168	43%	137	35%
Spartanburg 2	133	19%	238	34%	324	47%
Spartanburg 3	31	19%	57	35%	75	46%
Spartanburg 6	194	27%	264	37%	261	36%
Spartanburg 7	181	32%	177	31%	204	36%
State	13,366	24%	20,607	37%	21,721	39%

### District Reported Outputs: Spartanburg Consortia

#### Number of Professional Development Activities Completed and Attendees

District/Consortia	Professional Development Sessions/Activities Completed	Participants Attended
Spartanburg	635	95

#### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by Professional Development

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Spartanburg	14	27	540

### Teacher Child Interaction Measure

#### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by ECERS-3 and CLASS

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
Spartanburg	14	27	540

#### Fall 2019 ECERS-3 Results (1-7 Scale)

Consortia	Overall Score	Space Furn.	Care Rout.	Lang/Lit.	Learn Activ.	Inter-action	Prog. Struct.	Number of Classrooms
Pre (Fall 2019)	4.21	4.54	3.86	4.27	3.47	5.11	4.55	9

#### Fall 2019 CLASS Results (1-7 scale)

Consortia	Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support	Number of Classrooms
Pre (Fall 2019)	5.83	5.79	2.68	10

### District Reported Outcomes

**Goal 1: In the enrolled 4K classrooms, the quality of teacher-child interactions will improve as assessed by the ECERS-3 and CLASS.**

Classroom schedules were modified to allow at least one continuous hour of center play; teachers interacted with children during this time.

The teacher/child interactions during center play developed into deeper and focused conversations; children learned concepts authentically during play.

In new classrooms, rooms were arranged to the highest level in E3 after the pre-assessment. Several classrooms were moved into larger spaces due to the pre-assessment. Based on programmatic observations, all new rooms would have scored in the E3 5 range. Developmentally appropriate materials and furnishings were purchased.

Teachers focused on health and safety routines; teachers focused on teaching concepts throughout the day, not just during small group. They utilized routines to teach math and science. During the informal observations, there were high levels of creating or inventing, analysis and reasoning, and integration to previous learning. Teachers were using more open-ended teaching practices to give children the opportunity to learn the concepts.

## York 1

### Community Block Grant Strategy

To identify and promote opportunities for early learning and kindergarten readiness in a large geographic district that is considered rural, York 1 used a multiple-faceted approach consisting of a school registration event, a summer intensive camp for rising kindergarteners, family events, and professional development for teachers. The Kindergarten Carnival was held in March 2019 to register children for 4K and 5K as well as showcase learning and enrichment activities including a district-based intensive camp for rising kindergarteners funded through this grant. The carnival attracted more than 1,000 people. The three-week intensive summer camp served 65 children and involved partnerships with community organizations including a museum that facilitated science lesson two days per week. The Parent Institute was designed for families with children enrolled in 4K or 5K and occurred during the academic year. Five family events such as “Night at the Museum,” “Math in the House,” and “Books and Blankets” were held. District-based and Head Start teachers received professional development related to early mathematics, which was facilitated by a Clemson University faculty member, and the district continued its focus on the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation protocol.

### Outcomes

- Entering kindergarteners’ mathematics and reading skills increased (2018 to 2019)
- Higher than projected participation in intensive pre-kindergarten summer program
- Higher than projected participation in Parent Institute
- More than 50% of children who participated in the summer program demonstrated improved skills in letter and number recognition
- Parents who participated in Parent Institute indicated improved knowledge/skills
- Children enrolled in CERDEP outperformed a comparison group in reading skills at kindergarten entry with more than 70% scoring in the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile or above (compared to 59% of non-CERDEP participants)
- Children enrolled in CERDEP demonstrated similar mathematics skills to a comparison group with approximately 53% scoring in the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile or above

**Amount of Funding:** \$86,112

### 2018 District 4K and 5K Enrollment Data: York County (SC Profile Early Learning)

Kindergarten Enrollment: 3,395

Full-Day 4K Enrollment School: 584

Half-Day 4K Enrollment School: 392

Full-Day 4K Enrollment in Licensed Child Care (First Steps): 20

4-year-old Head Start Enrollment: 471

### KRA Overall Results 2019

	Emerging		Approaching		Demonstrating	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
York 1	83	22	172	46	120	32
State	13,366	24	20,607	37	21,721	39

## District Reported Outputs

### Number of Professional Development Activities Completed and Participants Attended

District/Consortia	Professional Development Sessions/Activities Completed	Participants Attended
York 1	8	32

### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by Professional Development

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
York 1	5	9	180

### Number of Parents Impacted

District/Consortia	Parents
York 1	62

## Teacher Child Interaction Measure

### Number of Schools, Classrooms, and Students Influenced by TPOT

District/Consortia	Schools	Classrooms	Students
York 1	4	6	120

### Fall 2019 ELLCO Results (1-5 Scale)

District/Consortia	General Classroom Environment (1-5 scale)	Language and Literacy (1-5 scale)	Number of Classrooms
York 1	4.82	4.88	6

## District Reported Outcomes

**Goal 1: The percent of 5K students who score A or higher on reading assessment in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of their 5K year will increase over the previous year by at least 3% (Fall 2019-20 compared to Fall 2018-19).**

There was a 3% increase from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019.

**Goal 2: The percent of entering kindergarteners scoring above the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile MAP math will increase by at least 10% from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020.**

There was a 2% increase in kindergarteners scoring above the 40th percentile on MAP math from Fall 2019 to Winter 2020.

**Goal 3: The percent of 5K students scoring above the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile on the Fall 2019-20 MAP reading will increase by at least 9% from Fall 2016 to Fall 2020.**

There was a 4% increase in kindergarteners scoring above the 40th percentile on MAP reading from Fall 2019 to Winter 2020.

**Goal 4: At least 60 children will enroll in Kindergarten Kamp in Summer 2018.**

65 children attended Kindergarten Kamp.

**Goal 5: At least 25 families will register and attend the Parent Institute.**

49 families enrolled in and attended at least one session of Parent Institute.

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**Goal 6: At least 75% of teachers will demonstrate their use of math strategies taught in summer institute as noted in classroom observations**

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More than 75% of teachers demonstrated their use of math strategies based on observations.

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**Goal 7: At least 70% of parents participating in the parent institute will list specific knowledge or skills learned through participating in the activity.**

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Based on survey responses, 70% of families specifically listed skills learned during the Parent Institute.

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**Goal 8: Students who participate in Kindergarten “Kamp” will demonstrate higher scores on letter and number recognition based on pre and post assessments.**

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Approximately 51% of students increased scores on letter recognition from pre to post camp, 52% increased scores from pre to post camp on number recognition, 20% had no change in number recognition pre/post, and 30% had no change from pre to post in letter recognition.

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**Goal 9: 2019-20 Kindergarten students who participated in “Kamp” will score at least 5% higher on Fall 2019 MAP reading than a comparison group of similar students.**

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70.5% of students who participated in CERDEP in 2018-19 scored 40% or higher on MAP reading in fall of their 5K year as compared to 58.6% of those who did not participate in CERDEP.

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**Goal 10: 2019-20 Kindergarten students who participated in “Kamp” will score at least 5% higher on Fall 2019 MAP math than a comparison group of similar students.**

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53.4% of students who participated in CERDEP in 2018-19 scored 40% or higher on MAP math in fall of their 5K year as compared to 53.3% of those who did not participate in CERDEP.

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## eLearning and Readiness Cohorts Pilot Project – Year 3

### Update – August/September 2020

#### Background:

For two years, fifteen districts were engaged in a pilot project funded by the EOC. The original request for the pilot project and subsequent data gathering centered on the use of eLearning (technology) to seamlessly continue instruction rather than postpone school and make the day up at a future date on the school calendar. During this investigation, key elements were identified as critical elements in the successful transition from face-to-face classroom instruction to use of an eLearning day. These elements are shown below in Graph 1.

With the onset of the pandemic (COVID19), many of the findings from the pilot project were used as districts transitioned to remote or emergency learning. Thus, the final and transition stage of the eLearning Pilot Project -Year 3 (2020-2021) helps prepare districts for **both** short-term like the eLearning project (inclement weather, utility outages, student absences, etc.) and long-term like the last twelve weeks of 2019-2020 (pandemic, catastrophic event, online by choice, etc.) situations. This pilot project focuses on the online, virtual or distance delivery component and not the paper packets or tutoring component. During this year of the project and with support from other current projects, each district will examine their status regarding the elements in Graph 1 and use all resources and networks to further the preparations for both types of situations.

#### Elements Found in Successful Implementation of eLearning Pilot Project

Graph 1

Leadership Commitment	Effective Ongoing Instruction	IT Support	Effective Ongoing Professional Development	Continuous Communications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Superintendent and Board set expectations; establish plan</li><li>• Resources allocated</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LMS deeply integrated</li><li>• Student-centered and used with fidelity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Efficient and ease of use</li><li>• Appropriate devices</li><li>• Switches, routers, servers and wireless overlay up-to-date</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of LMS, Resources and Assessments</li><li>• Lesson Planning</li><li>• Tiered for multi-level competencies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers and Staff</li><li>• Parents</li><li>• Community</li></ul>

#### Overview of Work in Year 3:

Cohort 3 Districts and Public Charter Schools - Planned resource development and networking activities, monthly Regional Cluster meetings with Regional Cluster Lead district, topic meetings (including each of the above elements), emails, media sharing, site visits, etc.

Readiness Districts – Planned resource development and networking activities, assigned Mentor district, individual status phone calls, topic meetings (including each of the above elements), site visits, invitations to attend Regional Cluster meetings, etc.

Current Status:

The original application period was scheduled for late April and early May. The pandemic and its impacts along with changes in school reopening plans for 2020-2021 changed the landscape. In efforts, working with the State Department of Education, the application process was re-opened for both eLearning district status and Readiness Cohort. With the knowledge outlined in the findings of the past two years, sharing, and networking those findings seems most important. This year's project focuses on building capacity in each district as they make progress on the journey to effective instruction in a digital ecosystem.

After the closing of applications and petitions, we now have 49 districts and 4 public charter schools in our Cohort 3 with eLearning status. They are grouped in five geographical regions with five Regional Cluster Lead districts. In addition, there are 23 districts in the Readiness Cohort. Each district is assigned a Mentor district. There are seven Mentor districts.

Two statewide meetings were held: one for all eLearning Districts on July 30 at SCETV and a second one for all Readiness districts on August 5 at SCETV and provided background and networking opportunities. With changes in leadership in some districts, a few districts were still requesting to join one of the groups. The updated and final notifications are occurring during the week of August 24. The final lists along with Regional Clusters and Mentor districts will be shared at the Sept. 14 meeting.

Districts in Readiness Cohort – Year 3 – 2020-2021

<i>District (color-coded with mentor district; districts with no color added July and August)</i>	<i>Readiness from original applications; and Readiness (A) added in summer</i>	<i>Region (#s begin at top of the state and continue clockwise; finish in the center of the state)</i>
Saluda	Readiness (A)	Anderson 1
Spartanburg 2	Readiness	Anderson 1
Spartanburg 4	Readiness	Anderson 1
Abbeville	Readiness	Anderson 3
Edgefield	Readiness	Anderson 3
McCormick	Readiness (A)	Anderson 3
Newberry	Readiness	Anderson 3
Clarendon 1	Readiness	Berkeley
Colleton	Readiness (A)	Berkeley
Jasper	Readiness	Berkeley
Orangeburg	Readiness (A)	Berkeley
Williamsburg	Readiness	Berkeley
Dillon 3	Readiness	Florence 1
Dillon 4	Readiness	Florence 1
Marion	Readiness	Florence 1
Chesterfield	Readiness	Kershaw
Clarendon 3	Readiness	Kershaw
Sumter	Readiness	Kershaw
Bamberg 1	Readiness (A)	Lexington 2
Bamberg 2	Readiness (A)	Lexington 2
Barnwell 19	Readiness	Lexington 2
East Point Academy (West Columbia)	Readiness (A)	Lexington 2
Hampton 2	Readiness	Lexington 2
York 1	Readiness	York 3 (RH)
York 4	Readiness	York 3 (RH)
<b>Total Readiness Districts</b>	<b>23</b>	
<b>Total Public Charter Schools (SC)</b>	<b>1</b>	

Districts in Readiness Cohort – Year 3 – 2020-2021

<i>District (light blue=Year 1&amp; 2; dark blue = added Year 3)</i>	<i>eLearning = Year 1 or 2; eLearning-Cohort 3 added</i>	<i>Region (#s begin at top of the state and continue clockwise; finish in the center)</i>
Spartanburg 1	eLearning	1
Spartanburg 7 ( RC Lead)	eLearning	1
York 2	eLearning	1
York 3	eLearning	1
Cherokee	eLearning-Cohort 3	1
Chester	eLearning-Cohort 3	1
Lancaster	eLearning-Cohort 3	1
Spartanburg 3	eLearning-Cohort 3	1
Spartanburg 5	eLearning-Cohort 3	1
Spartanburg 6	eLearning-Cohort 3	1
Union	eLearning-Cohort 3 (P)	1
Florence 1	eLearning	2
Georgetown (RC Lead)	eLearning	2
Darlington	eLearning-Cohort 3	2
Florence 2	eLearning-Cohort 3	2
Florence 3	eLearning-Cohort 3	2
Horry	eLearning-Cohort 3	2
Marlboro	eLearning-Cohort 3 (P)	2
Berkeley	eLearning	3
Pickens (RC Lead)	eLearning	3
Dorchester 2	eLearning Cohort 3	3
Barnwell 45	eLearning-Cohort 3	3
Beaufort	eLearning-Cohort 3	3
Charleston	eLearning-Cohort 3	3
Allendale	eLearning-Cohort 3 (P)	3
Barnwell 29 (Williston)	eLearning-Cohort 3 (P)	3
Dorchester 4	eLearning-Cohort 3 (P)	3
Royal Live Oaks Academy (Hardeeville)	Erskine Public Charter SD	3
Anderson 1	eLearning	4
Anderson 2	eLearning	4
Anderson 3	eLearning	4
Anderson 5 (RC Lead)	eLearning	4
Greenwood 50	eLearning cohort 3	4
Anderson 4	eLearning-Cohort 3	4
Greenville	eLearning-Cohort 3	4
Greenwood 51	eLearning-Cohort 3	4
Laurens 56	eLearning-Cohort 3	4
Oconee	eLearning-Cohort 3	4
Laurens 55	eLearning-Cohort 3 (P)	4
Horse Creek Academy (Aiken)	Erskine Public Charter SD	4
Kershaw (RC Lead)	eLearning	5
Lexington 2	eLearning	5
Lexington 3	eLearning	5
Calhoun	eLearning-Cohort 3	5
Fairfield	eLearning-Cohort 3	5
Lexington 1	eLearning-Cohort 3	5
Lexington 4	eLearning-Cohort 3	5
Lexington/Richland 5	eLearning-Cohort 3	5
Richland 1	eLearning-Cohort 3	5
Richland 2	eLearning-Cohort 3	5
Clarendon 2	eLearning-Cohort 3-(P)	5
Clear Dot Charter (Columbia)	Erskine Public Charter SD	5
Gray Collegiate Academy (West Columbia)	Erskine Public Charter SD	5
<b>Total eLearning Districts (Aug. 21.2020)</b>	<b>49</b>	
<b>Total Public Charter Schools (SC)</b>	<b>4</b>	

**EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**SUBCOMMITTEE:** Public Awareness Subcommittee

**DATE:** October 12, 2020

**INFORMATION ITEM:** 2020-2021 Communications/Public Awareness Plan

**PURPOSE/AUTHORITY**

Article 17 of the EAA states “an ongoing public information campaign must be established to apprise the public of the status of the public schools and the importance of high standards for academic performance for the public school students of South Carolina” (Section 59-18-1700(A)). The EOC has the authority to “plan and oversee the development of a campaign, including public service announcements for the media and other such avenues as deemed appropriate for informing the public.”

The directive of the law is complementary of the EOC’s mission: to affect the dramatic, results-based and continuous improvement of South Carolina’s educational system by creating a truly collaborative environment of parents, educators, community leaders, and policymakers. The values, which support the mission of the EOC, are:

1. A sole focus on what is best for students;
2. A belief in broad-based inclusion and collaboration;
3. A belief in rigorous standards, assessments and publicly known results;
4. The implementation of research and fact-based solutions that improve results; and
5. A passion for immediate, dramatic and continuous improvement that is unaffected by partisan politics.

**CRITICAL FACTS**

EOC staff maintains a thorough communications plan to identify ways to improve how the EOC communicates with, relates to, and influences its various stakeholder groups. The plan is updated at least every two years to support and enhance the overall mission and values of the agency; continuous feedback is welcome and essential. The EOC Retreat on August 3, 2020 was devoted to strategic planning; communications emerged as an area in need of operational improvement.

**TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS**

February 12, 2018	Updated Communications Plan approved by EOC
June 10, 2019	EOC approves updated plan as Information Item.

**ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC**

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

**Fund/Source:**

**ACTION REQUEST**

For approval

For Information

**ACTION TAKEN**

Approved

Amended

Not Approved  
(explain)

Action deferred



## **EOC Communications / Public Relations Plan**

### ***Proposed FY 2020-21 Objectives***

#### **Introduction**

Article 17 of the EAA states “an ongoing public information campaign must be established to apprise the public of the status of the public schools and the importance of high standards for academic performance for the public school students of South Carolina” (Section 59-18-1700(A)). The EOC has the authority to “plan and oversee the development of a campaign, including public service announcements for the media and other such avenues as deemed appropriate for informing the public.”

The directive of the law is complementary of the EOC’s mission: to affect the dramatic, results-based and continuous improvement of South Carolina’s educational system by creating a truly collaborative environment of parents, educators, community leaders, and policymakers. The values, which support the mission of the EOC, are:

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5. A passion for immediate, dramatic and continuous improvement that is unaffected by partisan politics.

EOC staff maintains a thorough communications plan to identify ways to improve how the EOC communicates with, relates to, and influences its various stakeholder groups. The plan is updated at least every two years to support and enhance the overall mission and values of the agency; continuous feedback is welcome and essential.

The EOC Retreat on August 3, 2020 was devoted to strategic planning; communications emerged as an area in need of operational improvement. Furthermore, the COVID-19 virus continues to disrupt the education of children as many schools are beginning the 2020-21 school year with remote learning and some state legislators and education leaders are promoting a second round of state summative testing suspension. Needless to say, the playbook for education in the United States has changed dramatically. High expectations still matter for students and data-informed decisions can be more made more difficult when the data is not accessible or available. Now more than ever, it is important to provide timely and accurate information to everyone who is a member of a student’s success team, whether they are a teacher, parent, caregiver, school board member, or a legislator making decisions designed to benefit all students in the state.

#### **Proposed FY 2020-21 Objectives**

This plan is designed as an ongoing effort to educate various audiences about four main objectives:

1. Increase the use of state and school report cards and other sources of data for decision-making and continuous student and school improvement.
2. Support a more coherent approach to effectively deploy and utilize the array of data and public reporting tools.
3. Continue to implement public awareness strategies which focus on providing support to students and families served by the PK-12 public school system as well as teachers.

4. Equip and empower parents and families to advocate in partnership with community organizations, businesses and others to be aware of, and part of, school improvement efforts.

### Objective 1.

Increase the use of state and school report cards and other sources of data for decision-making and continuous student and school improvement

The first proposed objective for the communications plan is to increase the use of state and school report cards and other sources of data for decision-making and continuous student and school improvement. How do we empower stakeholders to feel connected to the data and regularly utilize it to help students and schools? This is an intricate question, made even more complicated by the impact of the global pandemic. For the 2019-20 school year, schools will not receive overall or indicator ratings since spring statewide testing was suspended. Also, Section 59-180-910 mandates that the EOC work with the State Board of Education and a broad based group of stakeholders to conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system at least every five years and shall provide the General Assembly with a report on the findings and recommended actions to improve the accountability system and to accelerate improvements in student and school performance. The cyclical review, which is occurring this year, is also intended to better align the accountability system with the Profile of the SC Graduate.

The online Report Card, available since 2018 at [www.screportcards.com](http://www.screportcards.com), is designed to increase accessibility and accountability in schools while also providing easily understood information about school safety, teacher qualifications, and financial data, among other data. While initial usage of the site following the release of the first report cards was high, usage statistics have declined over time. As was noted in a January 2019 guide to communicating report cards, produced by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), “the next frontier for state leadership is to advance beyond providing access to data to driving the **use of data**.”<sup>1</sup>

It is important to remember that the Report Cards, and the data contained within, can be used as tools for various stakeholders. For example, parents could use information during conversations and conferences with teachers and school leaders. Families considering a move to South Carolina could use it to find schools suitable to the needs of their children. Financial information could be used by school board members and voters to make important decisions about schools. They must know about the information before they can use and learn from it.

In 2019-20, the following objectives were achieved:

- In partnership with the SCDE and the Center for Assessment, began the Cyclical Review of the Accountability System. The process is ongoing, and the final report will be provided to the EOC and the SC General Assembly in December 2020.
- Report card user survey was developed and launched in March 2019 by EOC staff with collaboration from SCDE staff: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3NJ863S>. As of August 2020, 298 individuals

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<sup>1</sup> Council of Chief State School Officers, <https://ccsso.org/resource-library/communicating-performance-best-practice-resource-encouraging-use-state-and-school>, January 2019

have taken the survey. The results are shared regularly with SCDE staff who build and maintain [www.screportcards.com](http://www.screportcards.com)

- EOC staff worked with various stakeholder groups and parent groups on using the report cards as a tool for school and student improvement.

EOC staff proposes the strategies and tactics, noting the intended audience, be used to achieve Objective 1 in FY 2020-21:

<b>Objective 1.</b> Increase the use of state and school report cards and other sources of data for decision-making and continuous student and school improvement		
<b>Objective / Tactic</b>	<b>Deliverable / Accountability Measures</b>	<b>Intended Audience(s)</b>
1.1. Complete cyclical review report by December 2020; implement short-term recommendations to the system and report card.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report along with supplemental summaries outlining short-term and long-term recommendations for the system.</li> </ul>	Legislators EOC, State Board
1.2. Conduct in-person and virtual meetings for principals and school personnel outlining short- and long-term recommendations to the accountability system/report cards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended to share basic information, updates to the system and provide tips to schools about telling their own stories to families and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Produced “Guide to Understanding the Report Card” in English and Spanish</li> <li>• Scheduled in early 2021</li> </ul>	Educators School Boards PIOs
1.3. Develop and launch a brief video providing an overview of the report cards, the changes to report cards, and how schools receive ratings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share via EOC social media channels</li> </ul>	All stakeholders: General Public
1.4. Develop and launch a brief video outlining ways that the report cards can be used to help students and schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share via EOC social media channels</li> </ul>	Parents/Families for school-aged children Community leaders Businesses SICs/PTAs/PTOs
1.5. Produce and publish 2020-21 Accountability Manual in conjunction with the SCDE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publication to occur no later than July 1, 2021</li> </ul>	Educators School district personnel

### Objective 2:

Support a more coherent approach to effectively utilize the array of data and public reporting tools

There is no shortage of data available to stakeholders when it comes to students and schools, but sometimes all the data doesn't make it into the hands of stakeholders. Other times, stakeholders get access to important information, but it isn't presented in a format or fashion so that it is understandable or actionable. In a December 2018 report from Learning Heroes, national research shows that parents rely heavily on report card grades as "their primary source of information and assume good grades mean their child is performing at grade level." While parents rely heavily on grades, nearly half of teachers (48%) in the research study agreed that report card grades "measure effort more than they measure achievement."<sup>2</sup>

As the report states, "when parents are exposed to a few pieces of understandable and relevant information together, including a report card grade, state test results, and a school performance rating, their thinking shifts." Parents deserve a complete and understandable view of the progress their child is making – both academic and non-academic -- so that they can help keep them on track for college, career and life success.

While teachers may have many data points about students – data such as Lexiles, state test scores, formative test scores, among others – they also need additional resources to help them engage and share that information with parents of the students they teach. In the Learning Heroes report, one in four teachers say they are "not given the proper support from school administrators" to help parents understand the full picture of a student's academic performance.

State report cards, as noted in Objective 1, also need to provide parents and the public with information about students and schools. According to an analysis of state ESSA Report Cards by the Data Quality Campaign, text on the majority of Report Cards is written on a postsecondary reading level.<sup>3</sup> While improving the language of the cards while meeting the federal and state mandates is challenging, there is room for improvement to make the report cards understandable and actionable. We must look at the design and language of the report cards and examine whether the design and functionality of the cards supports the use of the cards by target audience.

The second proposed objective for the communications plan is to support a more coherent approach to effectively utilize the array of data and public reporting tools.

In 2019-20, the following objectives were achieved:

- Worked with SCDE developers and staff to complete a landing page on [www.screportcards.com](http://www.screportcards.com) where the general public could search for schools based on chosen characteristics.

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<sup>2</sup> Learning Heroes, <https://belearninghero.org/parent-mindsets/>, December 2018

<sup>3</sup> Data Quality Campaign, <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/showmethedata/>, January 2019

GRADE LEVEL ^

PK3	PK4	KINDERGARTEN
GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3
GRADE 4	GRADE 5	GRADE 6
GRADE 7	GRADE 8	GRADE 9
GRADE 10	GRADE 11	GRADE 12
ADULT		

SCHOOL TYPE >

SCHOOL PROGRAM INFORMATION >

OVERALL RATING >

LOGISTICS >

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT >

- Using the feedback from the Report Card user survey, EOC and SCDE staff worked to make the Report Card site more usable and understandable.
- EOC staff worked with state education leaders and others to communicate the “lessons learned” from two years of eLearning pilot, in order to better inform remote learning practices in Spring 2020.
- Staff worked with Coordinating Council for Workforce Development State Data Sharing Task Force on work to establish a comprehensive, longitudinal student data system

EOC staff proposes the strategies and tactics, noting the intended audience, be used to achieve Objective 2 for FY 2020-21:

<b>Objective 2:</b> Support a more coherent approach to effectively utilize the array of data and public reporting tools		
Objective / Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures	Intended Audience
2.1. Conduct an analysis of remote learning, which occurred in SC districts from March to June 2020 following the closure of school buildings.	EOC will produce materials during the fall and winter of 2020 documenting the impact of remote learning which occurred during the forced closure of schools due to COVID-19.	Educators  Legislators  Parents and Families
2.2. Develop materials to help educators work with parents and families about how to understand student-score results, how to understand whether their child is “on-track” for success, and what testing means for parents and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with the SCDE to better communicate the purpose of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) to educators and also develop materials and tools for parents to better understand how they can use the results of the KRA to help children outside of school.</li> <li>• Explore a pilot with school districts to develop materials and/or training to make</li> </ul>	Parents and Families via Educators

	<p>student score results meaningful and understandable to parents and students. Once materials are developed, look at delivering widely to districts virtually.</p>	
<p>2.3. Develop and implement a communications initiative focused on the recommendations of the High School Redesign Committee in 2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with other agencies to explore the development of an online tool that would help parents and students in providing information for high school planning, college planning and career planning (see recommendation in High School Task Force Report, <a href="http://tinyurl.com/y6p8ht9j">http://tinyurl.com/y6p8ht9j</a>)</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: New Mexico has developed simple Parent Guide with links:</i>  <a href="https://families.ped.state.nm.us/index.html">https://families.ped.state.nm.us/index.html</a></p> <p><i>The College Foundation of NC has a much more robust tool:</i>  <a href="https://www.cfnc.org/plan-your-future/plan-for-college/">https://www.cfnc.org/plan-your-future/plan-for-college/</a></p>	<p>Parents and Families</p> <p>Businesses</p>
<p>2.4. Develop tool for public to understand early childhood options for children in SC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with SCDE on updating and maintaining SC Early Childhood Profile website, <a href="https://www.scprofile.com/">https://www.scprofile.com/</a></li> </ul>	<p>Parents and families</p> <p>General public</p>
<p>2.5. Continue work on establishing a comprehensive, longitudinal student data system that will be useful to students, teachers, business, and policymakers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EOC staff will continue to be involved with Coordinating Council for Workforce Development State Data Sharing Task Force (led by SC Commerce Dept.). Goals include identifying innovative ways to use data for effective program evaluation and improved outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>All stakeholders</p>
<p>2.6. Continue exploring options for Primary School Report Cards and Career Center Report Cards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will continue to work with educators and other agencies to find meaningful solutions to communicating out information for SC primary schools (K-2) and Career Centers</li> </ul>	<p>Educators</p> <p>SC Partners</p>

**Objective 3:**

Continue to implement public awareness strategies which focus on providing support to students and families served by the PK-12 public school system as well as teachers.

**Objective 3:** Continue to implement public awareness strategies which focus on providing support to students and families served by the PK-12 public school system as well as teachers.

Objective / Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures	Intended Audience
3.1. Develop and distribute resources to assist parents and families in the support of students during remote learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through USDE grant funding and working collaboratively with SCDE and other partners, EOC to develop and distribute video-based material to help families support students during remote learning.</li> </ul>	Parents and families
3.2. Update online Family Friendly Standards to reflect new Social Studies standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Parent Friendly standards at <a href="http://www.scfriendlystandards.org">www.scfriendlystandards.org</a>.</li> <li>Work with SCDE staff to have published in Fall 2020</li> </ul>	Parents and Families via Schools
3.3. Reprint “Student Reading Success Activity Guide” based on school district requests. Disseminate Spanish version of document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spanish version completed 2019; available online.</li> </ul>	Parents and Families Out-of-School-Time Providers
3.4. Publish monthly electronic newsletter for all constituent groups (principals; SC State Board; members of Gen. Assembly; Instructional Leaders; superintendents; business contacts; district testing coordinators; education deans; parents; EOC members and staff; PIOs; general interest list. Information communicated includes EOC Reports and Publications as well as surveys and information/opportunity items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue electronic publication of monthly EOC e-newsletter</li> </ul>	All stakeholders

<p>3.6. Continue Martin’s Math Team, a partnership with USC Athletics, designed to make math fun for kids, support teachers, and provide resources to support learning in math outside of school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program provided standards-based lessons for teachers and students. Other content on <a href="http://www.helpwithmathsc.org">www.helpwithmathsc.org</a> is to assist parents and non-educators with helping students with resources to help students with often-challenging math material.</li> <li>• Add lesson plans submitted and approved by SC teachers to <a href="http://www.helpwithmathsc.org">www.helpwithmathsc.org</a></li> <li>• Work with educators and Code.org to develop content for computer science; include on <a href="http://www.helpwithmathsc.org">www.helpwithmathsc.org</a>.</li> </ul>	<p>Educators</p> <p>Parents and Families</p>
<p>3.7. Provide resources and education for parents on reading and strategies to make children successful readers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide EOC-developed reading materials upon request.</li> <li>• Continue to provide in-office library, encouraging young people to read and choose their own reading material based on interest.</li> </ul>	<p>Parents and Families</p>
<p>3.8. Continue the publication of online information about private schools offering scholarships to students with exceptional needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the publication of information about private schools approved for scholarships <a href="https://www.eoc.sc.gov/ecenc-program">https://www.eoc.sc.gov/ecenc-program</a></li> </ul>	<p>Parents and Families</p>
<p>3.9. Prepare EOC Toolkit for new members of the committee. (includes a primer on Roberts Rules of Order, History of the EOC, etc...)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For new and interested EOC members</li> </ul>	<p>EOC members</p>

**Objective 4:**

Equip and empower parents and families to advocate in partnership with community organizations, businesses and others to be aware of, and part of, school improvement efforts

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Objective / Tactic	Deliverable / Accountability Measures	Intended Audience
4.1. Continue the promotion of ExpectmoreSC.com by targeted advertising on social media encouraging stakeholder groups to Take Action to help students and schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted ads on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter</li> <li>Potential production of video showing simple things stakeholders can do to help students and schools</li> </ul>	Parents and Families  Community Leaders  Businesses
4.2 Create blog posts from staff and members about education reform topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize blog on expectmoresc.com; push out via social media channels.</li> </ul>	All stakeholders -- General Public



## EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Subcommittees: Academic Standards and Assessments and Public Awareness

Date: October 12, 2020

### INFORMATION

**Cyclical Review of the Accountability System Update**

### PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

**SECTION 59-18-910.** Cyclical review of accountability system; stakeholders; development of necessary skills and characteristics.

Beginning in 2020, the Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education and a broad based group of stakeholders, selected by the Education Oversight Committee, shall conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system at least every five years and shall provide the General Assembly with a report on the findings and recommended actions to improve the accountability system and to accelerate improvements in student and school performance. The stakeholders must include the State Superintendent of Education and the Governor, or the Governor's designee. The other stakeholders include, but are not limited to, parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators. The cyclical review must include recommendations of a process for determining if students are graduating with the world class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate to be successful in postsecondary education and in careers. The accountability system needs to reflect evidence that students have developed these skills and characteristics.

### CRITICAL FACTS

The EOC is partnering with the SCDE and the Center for Assessment to accomplish a cyclical review pursuant to Section 59-18-910. The Accountability Advisory Committee members represent educators, parents, business people, and community members. The final Accountability Framework will be available in December 2020.

### TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

**October 2019:** EOC approves proposal for Cyclical Review process.

**February 24, 2020:** Accountability Advisory Committee Meeting #1

**May 5, 2020:** Accountability Advisory Committee Meeting #2

**July 28, 2020:** Accountability Advisory Committee Meeting #3

### ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

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

**Fund/Source:**

For approval

Approved

Not Approved  
(explain)

### ACTION REQUEST

### ACTION TAKEN

For Information

Amended

Action deferred



## South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC)

Meeting #3 Notes – July 28, 2020, 8:30am to 5pm ET

### Hybrid Meeting: *SC Educational Television Headquarters and Zoom Webinar*

#### Webinar Recording

A recording of the webinar is available at:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/x48qD7PR\\_1JLeY3TtUzcR6AvRYXoaaa8hndNrKUFnh17y73wnP80TKMGwJxeNdxW](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/x48qD7PR_1JLeY3TtUzcR6AvRYXoaaa8hndNrKUFnh17y73wnP80TKMGwJxeNdxW) (Password: Hm1%rU2r)

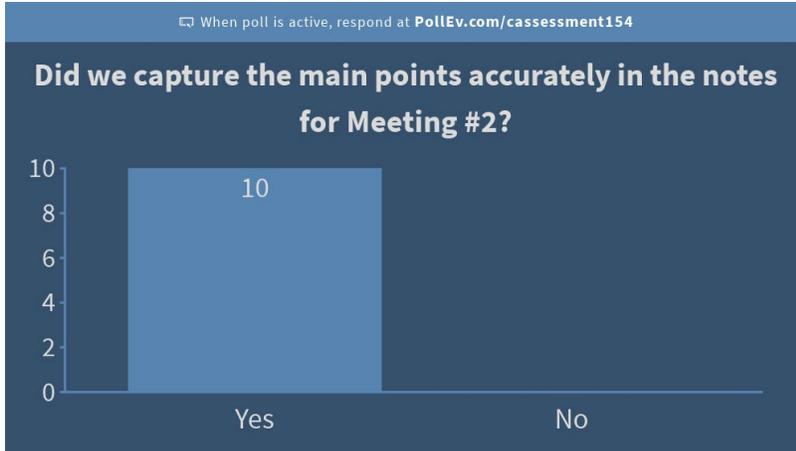
#### Welcome and Overview

Matthew Ferguson from the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) and John Payne from the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) welcomed the committee members and thanked everyone for their participation. They acknowledged the tremendous effort that has been put in by districts, schools, and educators across the state in planning for the restart of schooling in the fall. They also explained how South Carolina has submitted a waiver request to the United States Department of Education (USDE), requesting the suspension of assessment requirements for 2020-2021. However, until a decision is rendered by USDE, the EOC and SCDE will continue to plan for statewide assessments to be administered in the spring.

Chris Domaleski and Leslie Keng from the Center for Assessment (the Center) led the introduction of all meeting participants, both in-person and online. Chris gave an overview of the meeting agenda and reminded everyone of the charge and focus of the committee. A total of 13 members of the Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC) were in attendance for all or part of meeting. [Appendix A](#) shows the AAC members who were in attendance and whether they were in-person or virtual participants.

#### Review/Update on Report

Leslie reminded the committee of the online polling tool, *Poll Everywhere*, that would be used to collect input and feedback from committee members during the meeting. He also introduced the [South Carolina AAC Resources Page](#) that the Center has created as a central repository for all AAC meeting materials. Leslie then reviewed the key discussion points and outcomes from the previous AAC webinar in May. A draft of the May webinar notes was shared with the committee members as part of the advanced reading materials. The committee was asked to review and provide feedback on the minutes. Through the online poll, the committee unanimously approved the minutes.



Leslie then reminded the committee of the working version of South Carolina’s *Accountability Framework Report*, which will be the final work product of the committee’s cyclical review (per section 59-18-910 of the South Carolina Code of Law.) The working version of the report was also part of the advanced reading materials. In general, the committee felt that the draft report was a good start and accurately summarizes the discussions to date.



## Design Principles

Chris Domaleski from the Center gave a brief overview of accountability system design principles and led the committee through a series of seven competing priorities in accountability design. The competing priorities included:

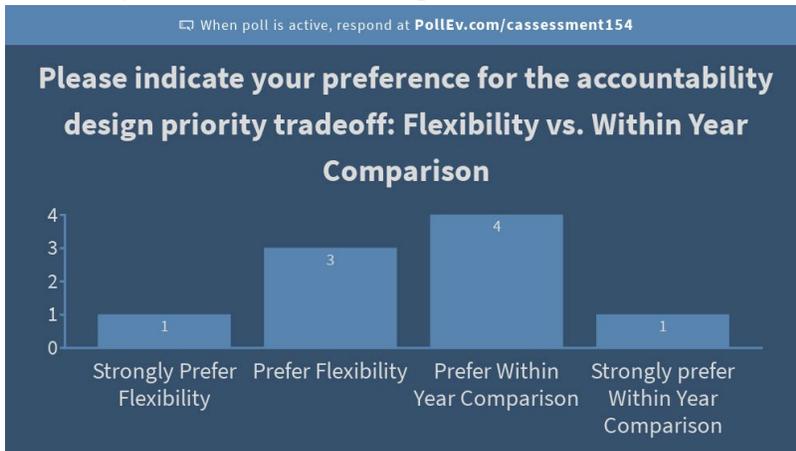
1. Change vs. Comparing Over Time
2. Flexibility vs. Within Year Comparison
3. Simplicity vs. Comprehensiveness
4. Single System vs. Multiple Systems (vs. Hybrid System)
5. Implementation – Right vs. Right Now
6. Reporting – Efficiency vs. Efficacy
7. New Information vs. Minimizing Burden

A short document explaining the tradeoffs associated with each pair of competing design priorities was provided to the committee members as part of the advanced reading materials. The committee was asked, via online poll, to indicate their preference for each tradeoff. If there were divergent preferences across the committee for a given tradeoff, committee members were invited to share their perspectives. Committee members could then adjust their responses to the poll. The outcome for each poll is summarized below.

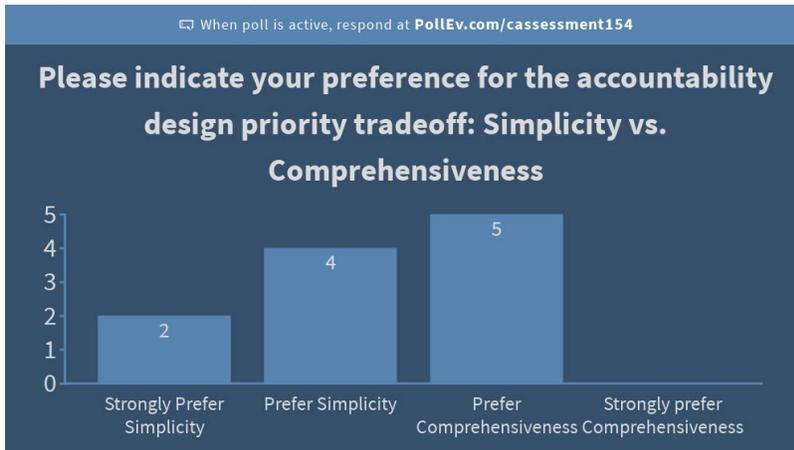
### Change vs. Comparing Over Time



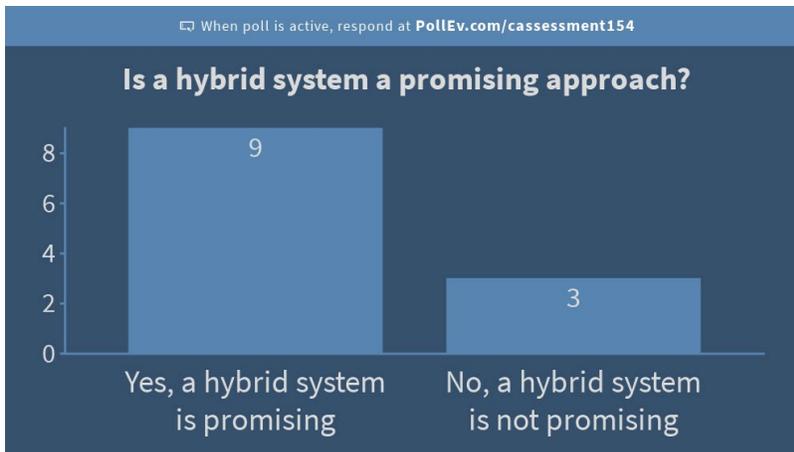
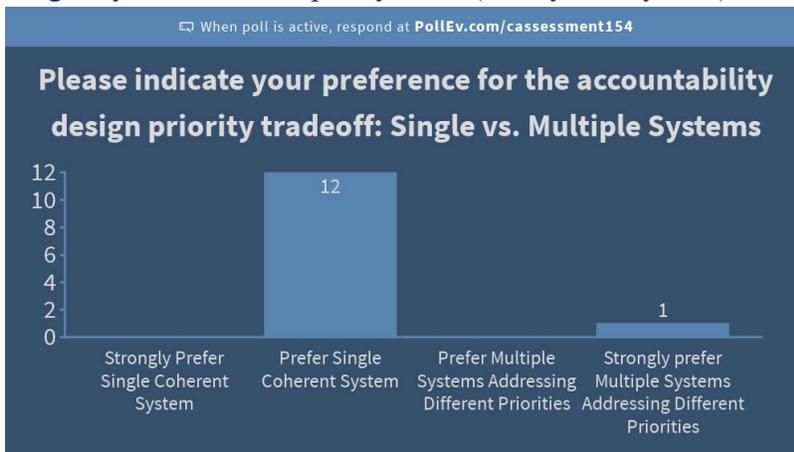
### Flexibility vs. Within Year Comparison



### Simplicity vs. Comprehensiveness



### Single System vs. Multiple Systems (vs. Hybrid System)



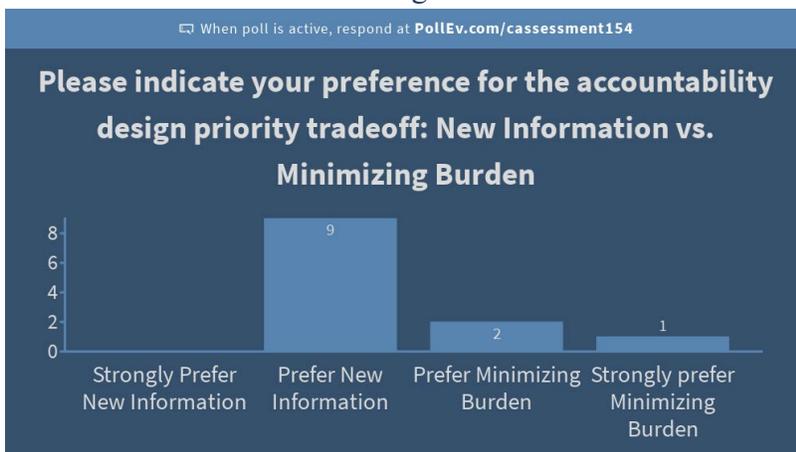
Implementation – Right vs. Right Now



Reporting – Efficiency vs. Efficacy



New Information vs. Minimizing Burden



The overarching design priorities for the South Carolina accountability system that resulted from this committee exercise are summarized in [Appendix B](#). The committee was instructed to

ground its subsequent discussion and recommendations about the accountability system components on these design principles and the previously defined goals of the system.

### **Academic Indicators**

Rainey Knight of the EOC gave an overview of the academic indicators in the current South Carolina accountability system. For this meeting, the academic indicators included Academic Achievement, Academic Progress, Preparing for Success, and English Learners' Progress Toward Proficiency. The committee was then divided into breakout groups to evaluate the academic indicators in light of the goals and overarching design principles (see [Appendix B](#)) and to identify noteworthy gaps or issues to address. The specific questions that the breakout groups were asked to discuss were:

- Are there recommendations for specific additions or changes to the current approach for academic indicators?
- What additional research and information is needed to inform your recommendations?

### *Academic Achievement*

#### *Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Suggest adding one or more measures or components in K-2 to reflect student academic achievement. There is currently an information gap.
- The Academic Achievement indicator should be weighted equally as the Academic Progress indicator.
- Consideration: if we moved to an assessment approach with more frequent testing during the academic year (e.g., after every nine weeks), it would support more standards-based reporting, which is what many districts are doing. It would also allow for a better measurement of growth throughout the year.
  - Such an approach would go beyond the current “quick and dirty” approach of end-of-year testing.
  - There would, however, be concerns around locally selected curriculum vs. standards.

#### *Additional Research Needed*

- South Carolina should research the viability of developing academic measures for K-2 and implementing with a phased-in approach.
- Need to look at assessment system to try and make it more coherent from one grade to the next. Along those lines, the End-of-Course assessments do not currently provide teachers with feedback to help guide their teaching or help students. Additionally, what does “Met” mean on SC READY...Does it mean that a student is on track for CCR and will potentially succeed in college?
- Group wanted to research the potential of using ACT or SAT as an academic achievement indicator for high school since other states do that.

- Examples of what other states are doing for the through-course model (e.g., Georgia) would be informative.
  - Does the state have the patience and appetite to consider a different approach to assessment?
  - Would the new approach meet educational best practices and be acceptable politically?

### Academic Progress

#### *Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Is growth being incentivized sufficiently? Is the ‘good enough’ growth criterion sufficient to ensure that a student is on-track to achieving proficiency in a reasonable amount of time?
- The lowest 20% progress piece is well-regarded.
- The Academic Progress indicator should be weighted equally as the Academic Achievement indicator.
- Need to do something to close the gaps: look at growth being focused on students who are not on grade level.
- This indicator helps promote equity, especially for traditionally lower-performing student groups.

#### *Additional Research Needed*

- Research the extent to which the current growth standards are sufficient to determine if a student is on-track to be proficient and/or graduate ready for postsecondary success. If not, consider adding a criterion-referenced growth component to the model in the future.
- Evaluate the benefit of additional measurement tools, such as the Aptitude test – Youth Science.

### Preparing for Success

#### *Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Social sciences, especially citizenship, is not adequately addressed. Consider additional measures of social studies for the model, perhaps as a grade-band approach similar to science.
- Incorporate science and technology together?
- Is there a way to include more science in career and technical education (CTE)?
- Not in favor of including pre-kindergarten in the accountability rating because it is not within the school/district’s control.
  - In general, schools should be held accountable for measures that are within their control.

*Additional Research Needed*

- The General Assembly removed social studies in elementary and middle schools. Reconsider bringing back social studies – especially the ‘social’ aspect, given the prevalent social justice issues.
- We are the bare minimum for testing. The only subject we test that is not required is US History and the Constitution.
- Are there alternative ways to measure this area without over-testing?

English Learners’ Progress Towards Proficiency

*Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Do we have any choices here?
- Where is the proficiency cut for students?
- The measure needs to account for the diversity of experience of ELs from different countries and at different grade levels.
- Concerns on ELs with disabilities and misidentification of students.
- Consider leveraging more current technology to measure language acquisition.

*Additional Research Needed*

- What approaches are being used to account for individual student differences in language acquisition?
- How can technology help with this group of students?

Other Academic Indicators

*Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Need to explore an indicator that reflects closing the achievement gap with respect to academic performance.
- Include measures of production capabilities, such as teacher qualifications, diversity of levels of teachers, continuous improvement of the teachers.
  - ‘Goose and the golden egg’ (production capability balance) issue – if we are only focused on the egg (the students), we lose sight of the health of the school (the goose). If we are only focused on the health of the students, then we lose sight of the health of the school.
  - Including such production capability measure would encourage schools to focus on the root cause of the issue.
  - If we are measuring the health of the school instead of the output of the students, it would help us focus on how to help the health of the school.
- Measures of opportunity gap vs. academic gap
- Rural school districts, such as Abbeville, do not have adequate resources to provide for the children. Nothing has happened. How do we factor that into the accountability system?

- The accountability indicators should only include measures that are within the district/school's control.

*Additional Research Needed*

- One committee member felt that the report card is fair. Elementary cards are problematic because of the overemphasis on test scores.

**Readiness Measures**

John Payne from the SCDE gave an overview of the readiness measures in the current South Carolina accountability system. For this meeting, the readiness measures included Graduation Rate, and College and Career Readiness (as part of the School Quality Student Success indicator). The committee members were also asked to consider a potential measure of early childhood (K-2) education readiness, which is not currently in the system. The committee members reconvened in their breakout groups to discuss these specific questions:

- Are there recommendations for specific additions or changes to the current approach for readiness measures?
- What additional research and information is needed to inform your recommendations?

**Graduation Rate**

*Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Faster reporting via release preliminary outcomes prior to final ratings
- Should we put more weight into graduation rate? Possibly move to 30% weight.
- Potentially expand to include 5- and 6-year graduation rates
- Potentially include credentialing for special education students (dual enrollment)

*Additional Research Needed*

- It might be informative to compare HS 4-year graduation rates with college 4-year graduation rates
- How do other states handle credentials of special education students? Do they count as a diploma for graduation?
- Is there evidence that students with a high school diploma are in fact ready for work?

**College and Career Readiness**

*Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- ASVAB score may be too low; consider raising the criterion and/or having it be accompanied by a credential associated with completing a pre-military career track, such as Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) or IGP.
- Include registered apprenticeship
- Consider dual credit options for CTE that count for CCR

- Should any credit that counts towards high school diploma also count for accountability?
- Incorporation of trans-academic measures (such as communication, financial literacy, etc.) and capstone projects
- Include a measure of entrepreneurship

#### *Additional Research Needed*

- Do states include measures that capture completion of extensive research projects, such as a “passion” project, from middle through high school?
- Do the current measures in fact capture what it means for a student to be ready for college and/or careers?

#### Early Childhood (K-2) Education Readiness

##### *Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Should there be an end of grade 2 reading assessment as a resource available to educators (not part of rating system)?
  - Explore approaches to address the K-2 gap.
  - Other approaches include model resources and assessment guidance.
- Kindergarten readiness should be left as reported but not counting towards school ratings.
- Tracking student development and strengths each year from K to 3.

##### *Additional Research Needed*

- Verify whether there are any legislative requirements for this (early childhood literacy).
- How can we address the gap in information for teachers between Kindergarten (KRA) and 3rd grade (SC READY)?
- Are there potential growth measures that could be used for K-2? (For reporting, not ratings)

#### Other Readiness Measures

##### *Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Measures of secondary/high school readiness (for elementary/middle schools)

##### *Additional Research Needed*

- Do other states include measures of secondary/high school readiness? (Beyond scores from end-of-year assessments)
- Is this an opportunity to consider whether schools are ready for students? (i.e., not just whether the students are ready for school.)

#### **Trans-Academic Measures**

Dana Yow from the EOC gave an overview of measures in the current South Carolina accountability system that could be considered as trans-academic. These included measures of

student engagement (part of the School Quality Student Success indicator), classroom environment, and school safety. Chris Domaleski of the Center reminded the committee of the findings from the previous meeting of how few states have explored School Quality Student Success (SQSS) options other than additional academic indicators and consistent attendance/chronic absenteeism. Compared to other states, South Carolina's system stands among the more broad and innovative state accountability models. As a follow-up to one of the committee's inquiries at the previous meeting, Chris shared examples capstone projects used in the other states. The committee members then discuss in their breakout groups the following questions:

- What recommendations do you have for including trans-academic measures in the South Carolina accountability system?
- What additional research and information is needed to inform your recommendations?

### Student Engagement

#### *Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Unless research yields some promising alternative; this is not a priority for the near future.
- Some potential ideas include use of capstone projects, involvement in school extracurricular activities, chronic absenteeism, a student survey about fairness, and a parent survey.

#### *Additional Research Needed*

- What other measures of engagement are promising? Another commercial metric? State developed? It may be useful to research new options.
- Is a menu approach viable (even though it is likely not permissible under ESSA)?
- What could engagement look like for digital, hybrid? Should the state explore some type of digital participation metric?
- Review Gallup study on student engagement that found it correlated to how well high school students see the relevance of what they are learning (i.e., "what matters to students").
- Consider unintended consequences of using attendance/absenteeism in the accountability system
- Are there other options for student surveys (i.e., not like AdvancedED's survey) that are not susceptible to corruption or manipulation?

### Classroom Environment

#### *Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Measure of teacher engagement
- Consider making some of the reported measures count in school accountability (e.g., teacher attendance rate, student-teacher ratio)

*Additional Research Needed*

- Is there research evidence that the reported measures impact student learning? How would we meaningfully distinguish performance on these measures?

Student Safety

*Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- Measure of implementing safety protocols (safety drills, building security procedures, etc.)

*Additional Research Needed*

- How are current student safety measures defined and coded by schools?
- Do other states have examples of measures of safety protocols?
- How is student safety defined in the post-pandemic world?

Other Trans-Academic Measures

*Suggested Additions or Changes to the Indicator*

- No agreement on the use of capstone projects.
  - Benefit: They could elicit a range of important trans-academic skills that are very important.
  - Drawback: They are hard to implement and there are concerns that they could exacerbate divides based on socioeconomic status.
  - If there is a way forward, it will probably have to be a light touch by the state (e.g. guidance and model resources; state plays role of ‘partner’) and will likely need to be piloted across the state before any implementation plan is affirmed.

*Additional Research Needed*

- Do other states include measures of secondary/high school readiness? (Beyond scores from end-of-year assessments)
- Is this an opportunity to consider whether schools are ready for students? (i.e., not just whether the students are ready for school.)
- Consider the American school climate survey. It provides a school rating based on a 25-question student survey, teacher survey, and administrator survey.

**Next Steps and Meeting Evaluation**

The webinar concluded with a summary of the follow-up action items. The committee members will be asked to provide feedback on the meeting minutes (i.e., this document) and updated *Accountability Framework Report*. The committee was asked to stay tuned for more information about the next meeting, which is planned for the fall. Before adjourning the meeting, the facilitators asked the committee members to complete the meeting evaluation survey. Overall, the six in-person committee members who responded to the survey felt that the meeting was well-organized and productive. They felt they had adequate opportunities to express their views

and opinion. Some committee members felt that there was not sufficient time for the breakout activities. One committee member also commented about the length of the meeting. [Appendix C](#) gives a summary of the responses to the meeting evaluation.

**Appendix A: South Carolina 2020 AAC Membership**

Committee Member	Group Representation	Present on 7/28
Molly Spearman	State Superintendent	No
Melanie Barton	Governor or designee	Yes
Cynthia Downs	State Board of Education	Virtual
Brian Newsome	EOC, principal, parent	Yes
Jessica Jackson	Business representative (Boeing)	Virtual
James Burton <sup>1</sup>	Business representative (Continental Tires)	Virtual
Jo Anne Anderson	Community member	Yes
J.T. McLawhorn	Community member	Yes
Chandra Jefferson	Educator: classroom teacher	Yes
Neil Vincent	Educator: district superintendent	Yes
Sandy Brossard	Educator: district instructional leader	Virtual
Takesha Pollock	Parent	Yes
Ian Feigel	Parent	Yes
Wanda Hassler	Local school board member (Darlington County)	Yes
Hope Rivers	Higher Education representative	No
Georgia Mjarten	Early Childhood education representative	No

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<sup>1</sup> This was Mr. Burton’s first AAC meeting. He replaced Ms. Michele Pridgen (from Honda) as one of the business representatives on the committee.

## Appendix B: Goals and Design Principles for the SC Accountability System



### Goals

The South Carolina Accountability System should both reflect and incent:

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

### Design Principles

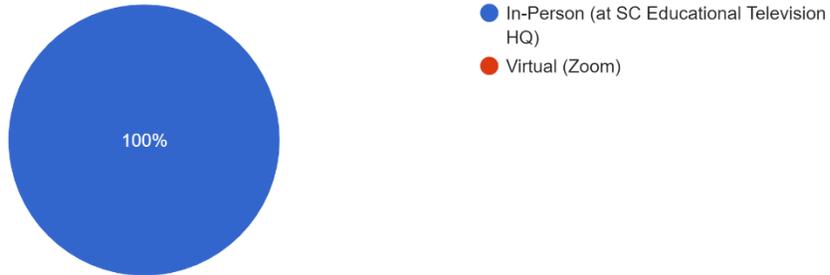
The following list shows the overarching design priorities based on input from the AAC during this meeting.

1. Change (over Comparing Over Time)
2. Within Year Comparison (over Flexibility)
3. Simplicity (over Comprehensiveness)
4. Single/Hybrid System (over Multiple Systems)
5. Implementation – Right (over Right Now)
6. Reporting – Efficiency (over Efficacy)
7. New Information (over Minimizing Burden)

### Appendix C: Summary of Meeting Evaluation Responses

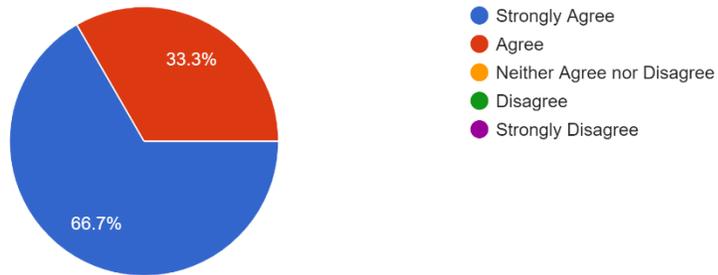
How did you participate in this meeting?

6 responses



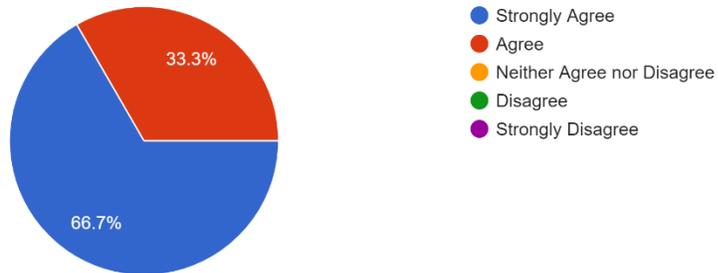
The meeting was well organized.

6 responses



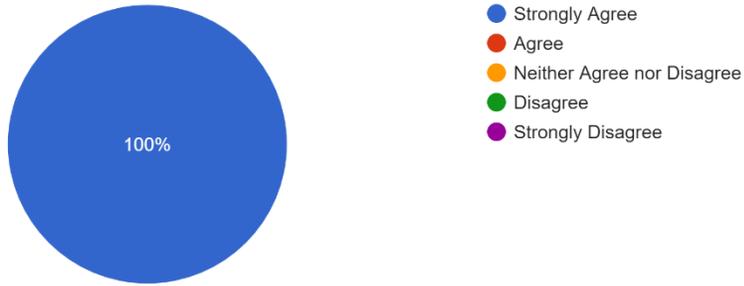
The meeting was well-facilitated.

6 responses



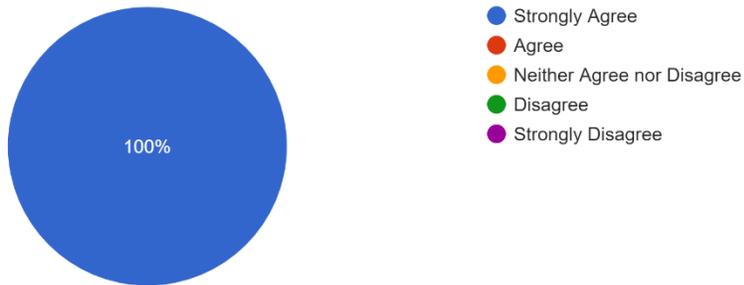
I had adequate opportunities to express my views and opinions at this meeting.

6 responses



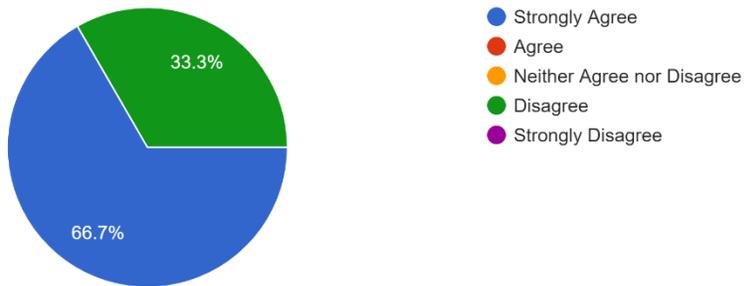
The breakout group discussions were helpful and productive.

6 responses



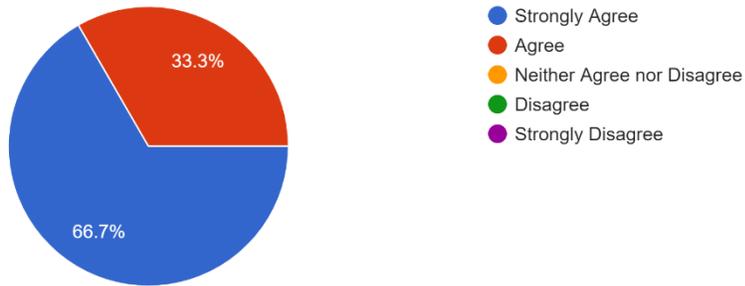
Sufficient time was allotted for the breakout group activities.

6 responses



The design principles/priorities on which the committee agreed are reasonable.

6 responses



Please provide any additional feedback or suggestions to help us evaluate the quality of this meeting and plan for the next meeting.

3 responses

A bit long !

Breakouts were hard to follow due to social distancing and lack of screen/ white board... but we worked through.

**The Future of SC's  
Accountability System:  
A Survey of EOC  
Members**



# Cyclical Review Update

October 12, 2020



**SC EDUCATION  
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

*Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.*



# Legislative Directive

**SECTION 59-18-910.** Cyclical review of accountability system; stakeholders; development of necessary skills and characteristics.

**Beginning in 2020**, the Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education and a broad-based group of stakeholders, selected by the Education Oversight Committee, shall conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system at least every five years and shall provide the General Assembly with a report on the findings and recommended actions to improve the accountability system and to accelerate improvements in student and school performance. The stakeholders must include the State Superintendent of Education and the Governor, or the Governor's designee. The other stakeholders include, but are not limited to, parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators. The cyclical review must include recommendations of a process for determining if students are graduating with the world-class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate to be successful in postsecondary education and in careers. The accountability system needs to reflect evidence that students have developed these skills and characteristics.

# Timeline

**October 2019:** EOC approves proposal for Cyclical Review process

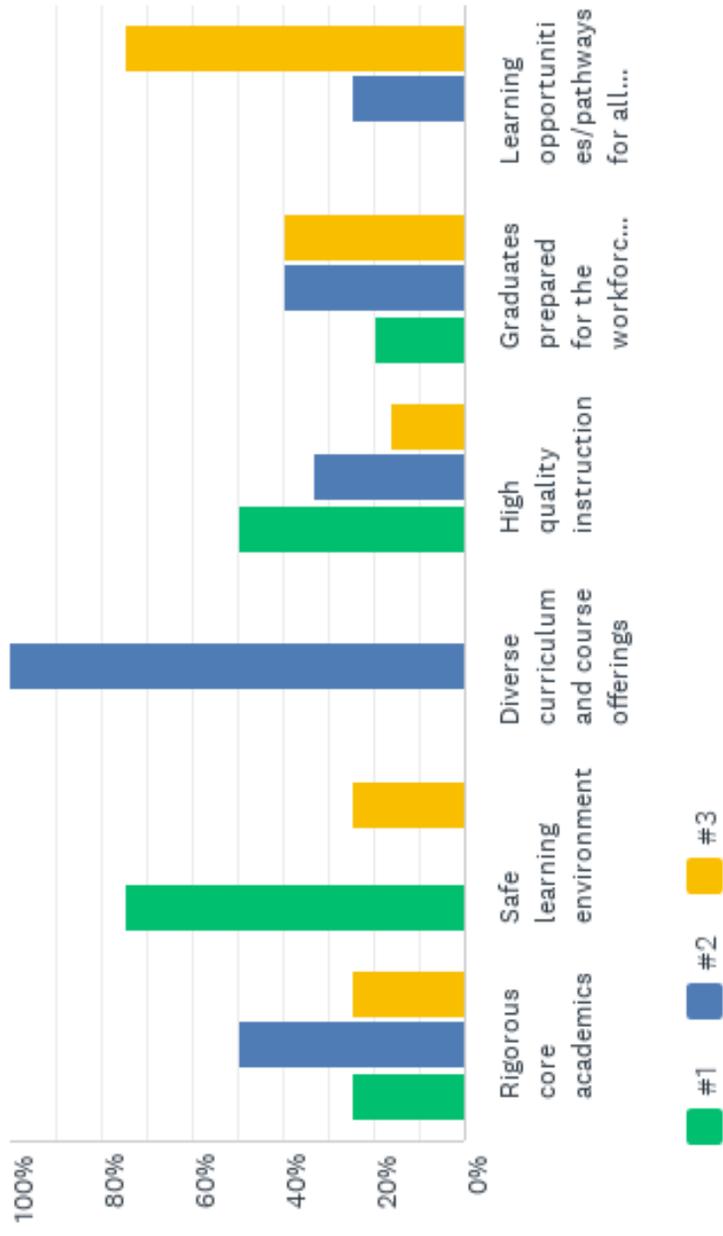
**Feb. 24, 2020:** Accountability Advisory Committee Meeting #1

**May 5, 2020:** Accountability Advisory Committee Meeting #2

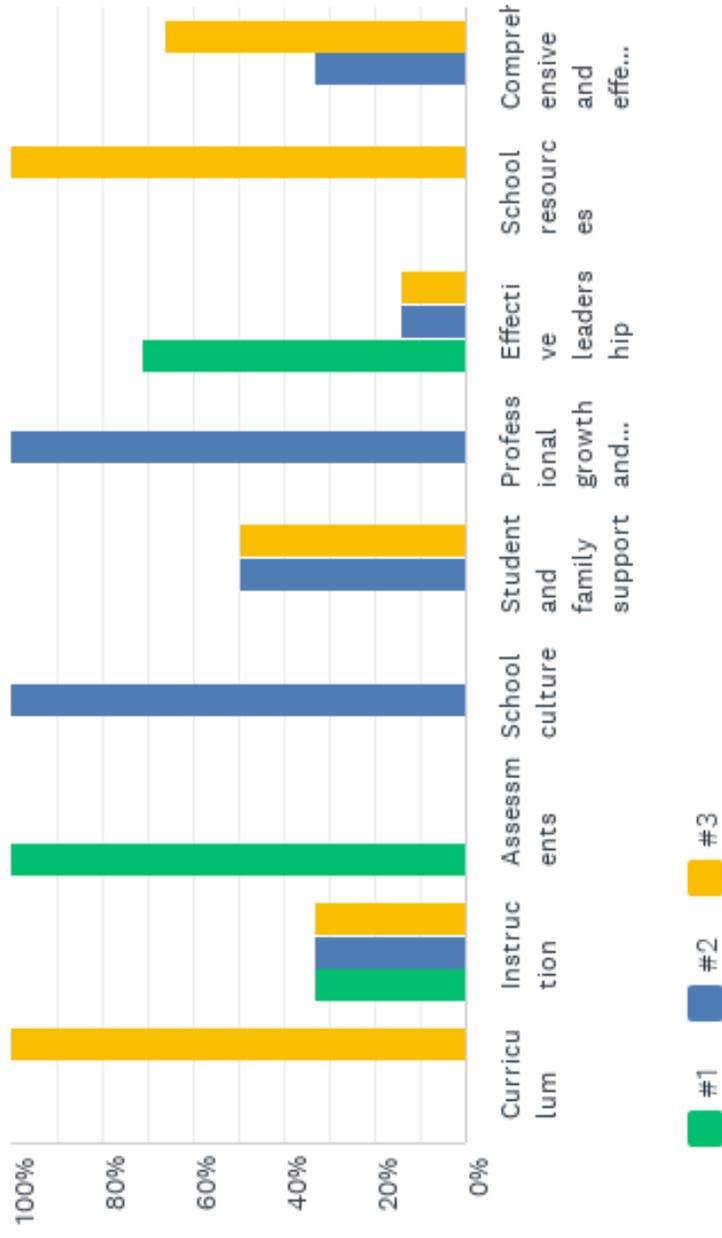
**July 28, 2020:** Accountability Advisory Committee Meeting #3

**December 2020:** Final Accountability Framework to the EOC

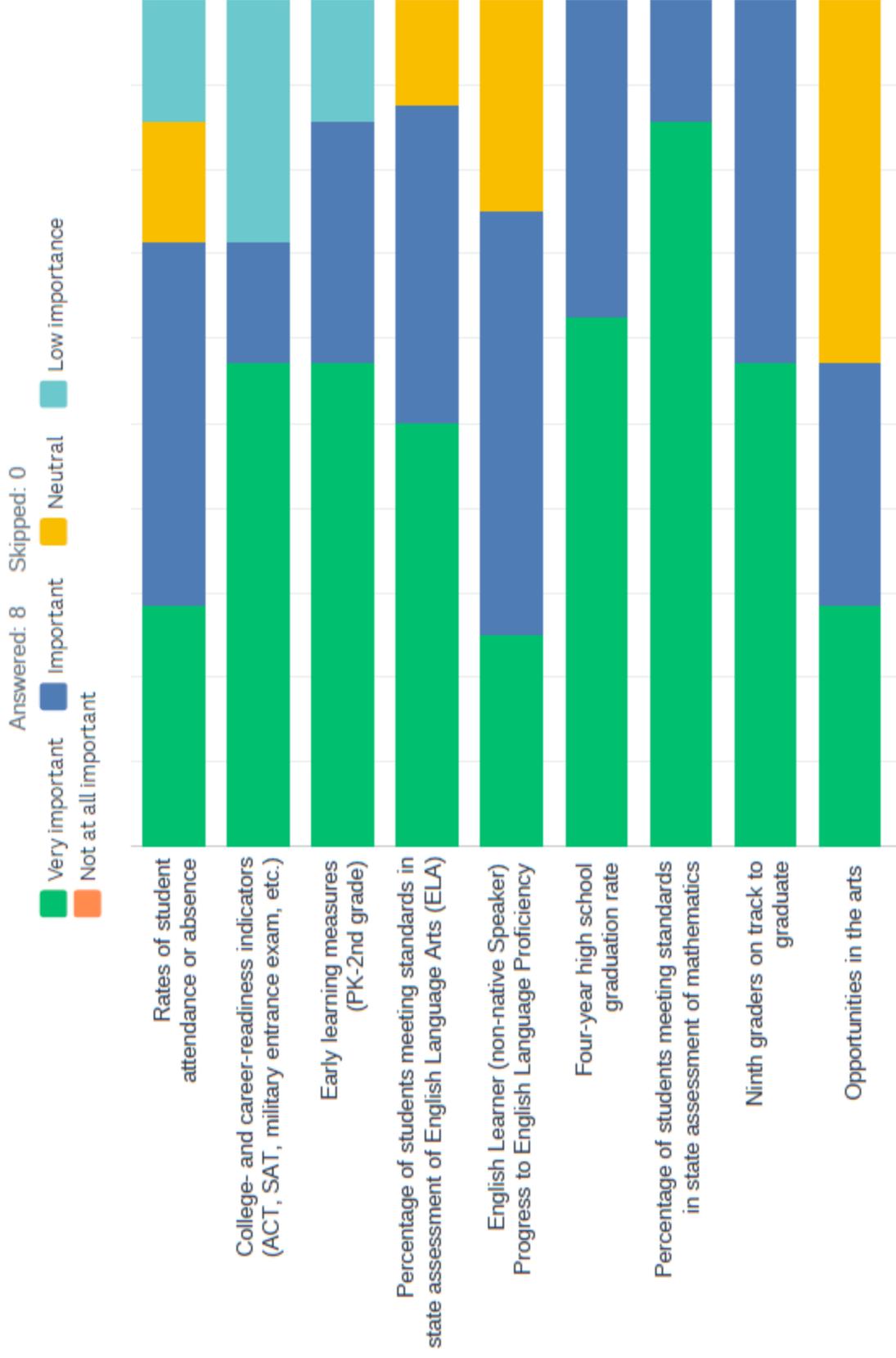
Q2 Which school characteristics are most important to you? (Choose top 3, #1 being the most important.)



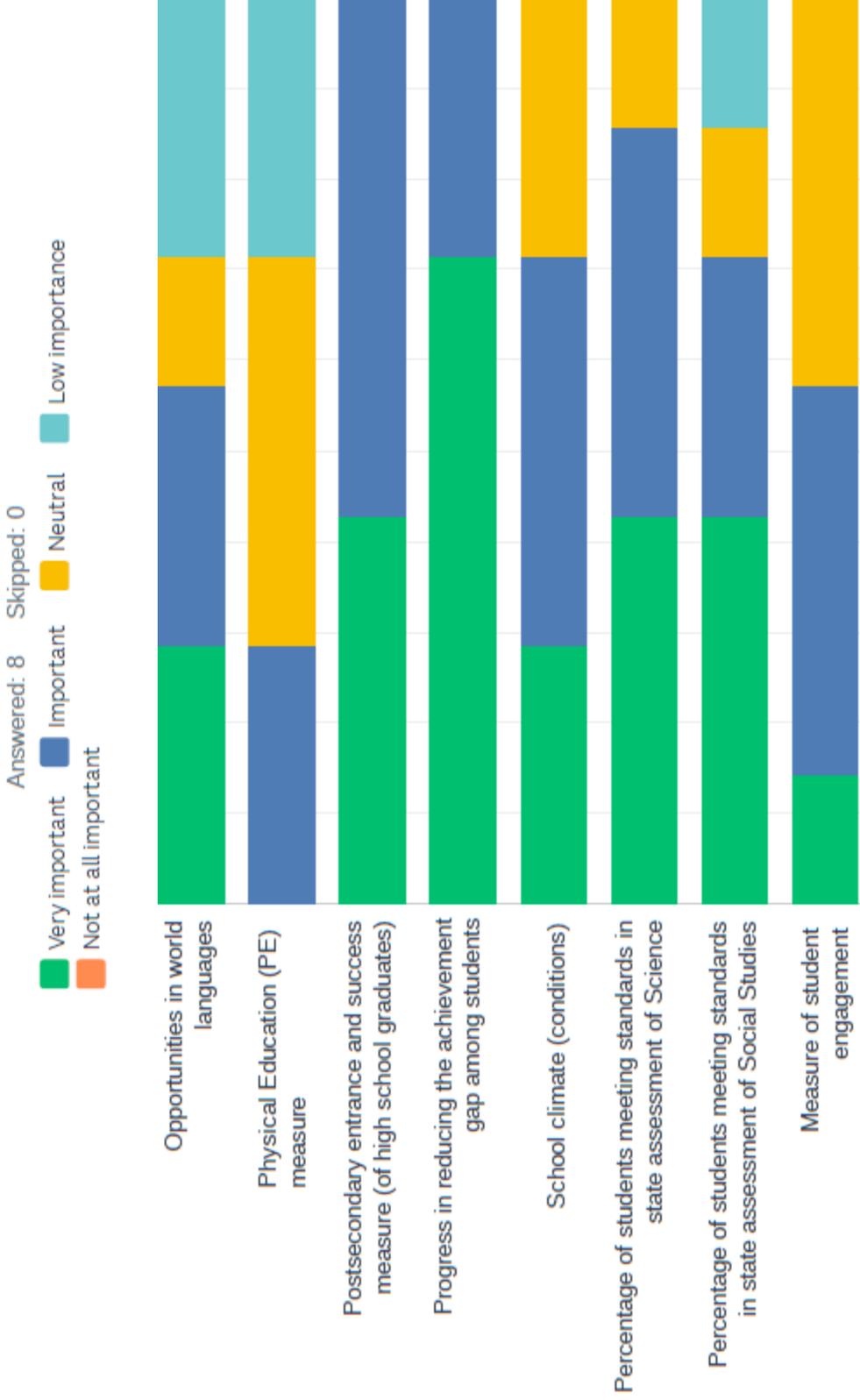
Q3 Every school can be improved. Which of the following are most important to you for school improvement? (Choose top 3, #1 being the most important.)



**Q4 Please indicate how important it is to you that South Carolina measure each of the following in our state education accountability system. Mark the degree of importance to you by using the scale provided, ranging from Very Important to Not at all important**

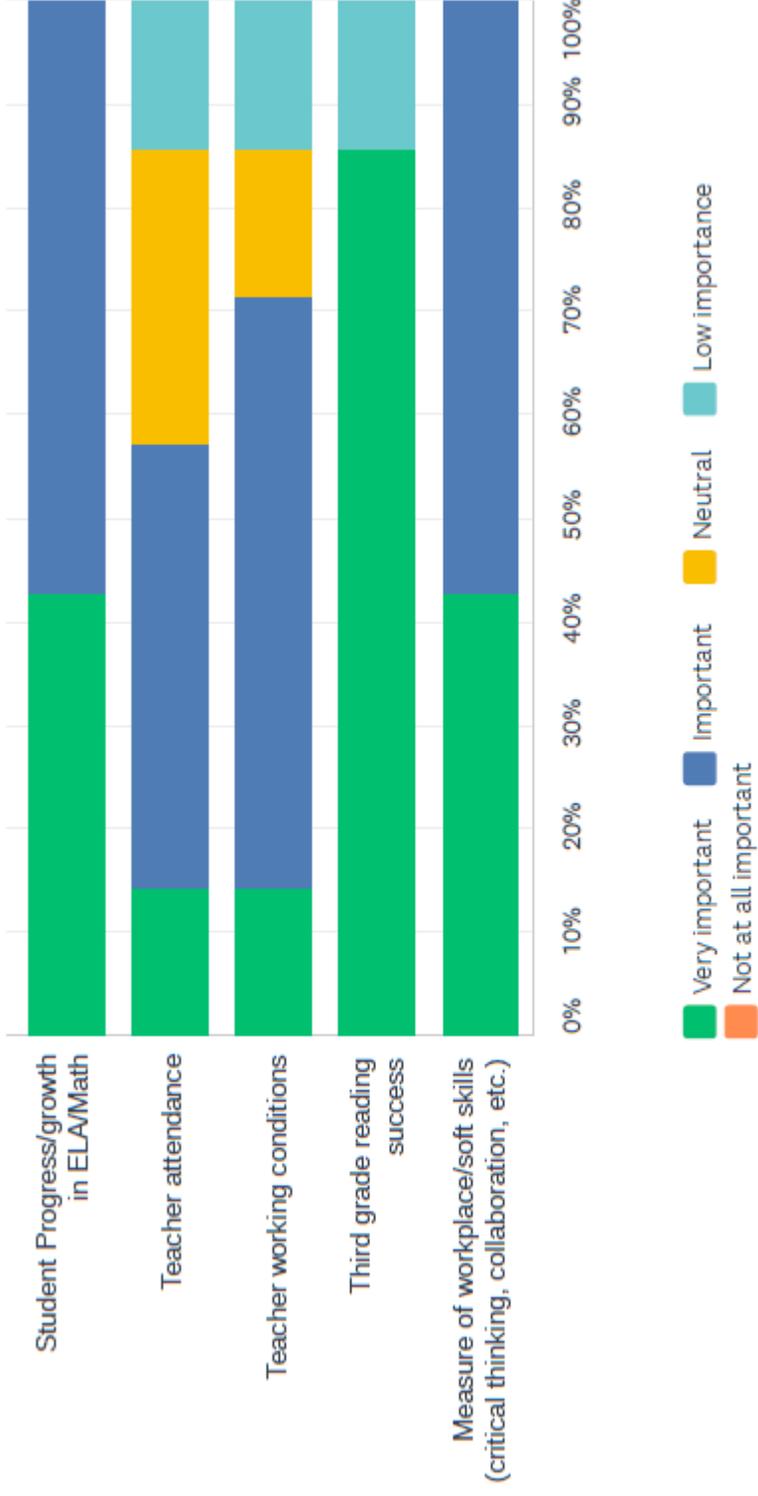


Q4 Please indicate how important it is to you that South Carolina measure each of the following in our state education accountability system. Mark the degree of importance to you by using the scale provided, ranging from Very Important to Not at all important



Q4 Please indicate how important it is to you that South Carolina measure each of the following in our state education accountability system. Mark the degree of importance to you by using the scale provided, ranging from Very Important to Not at all important

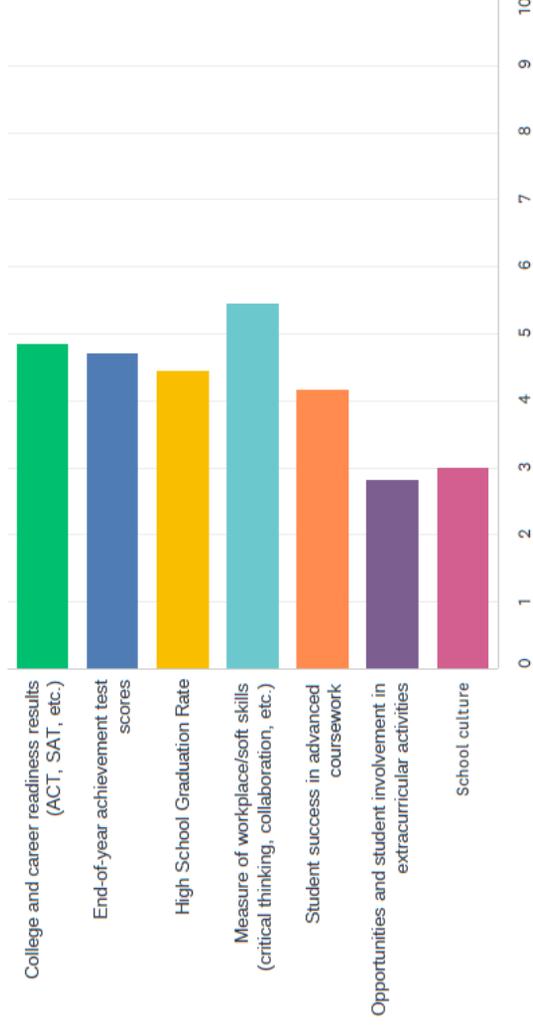
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Q5 What data are important to have when determining the academic success and college/career readiness of students in your community?(Rank order with 1 being the most important.)

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

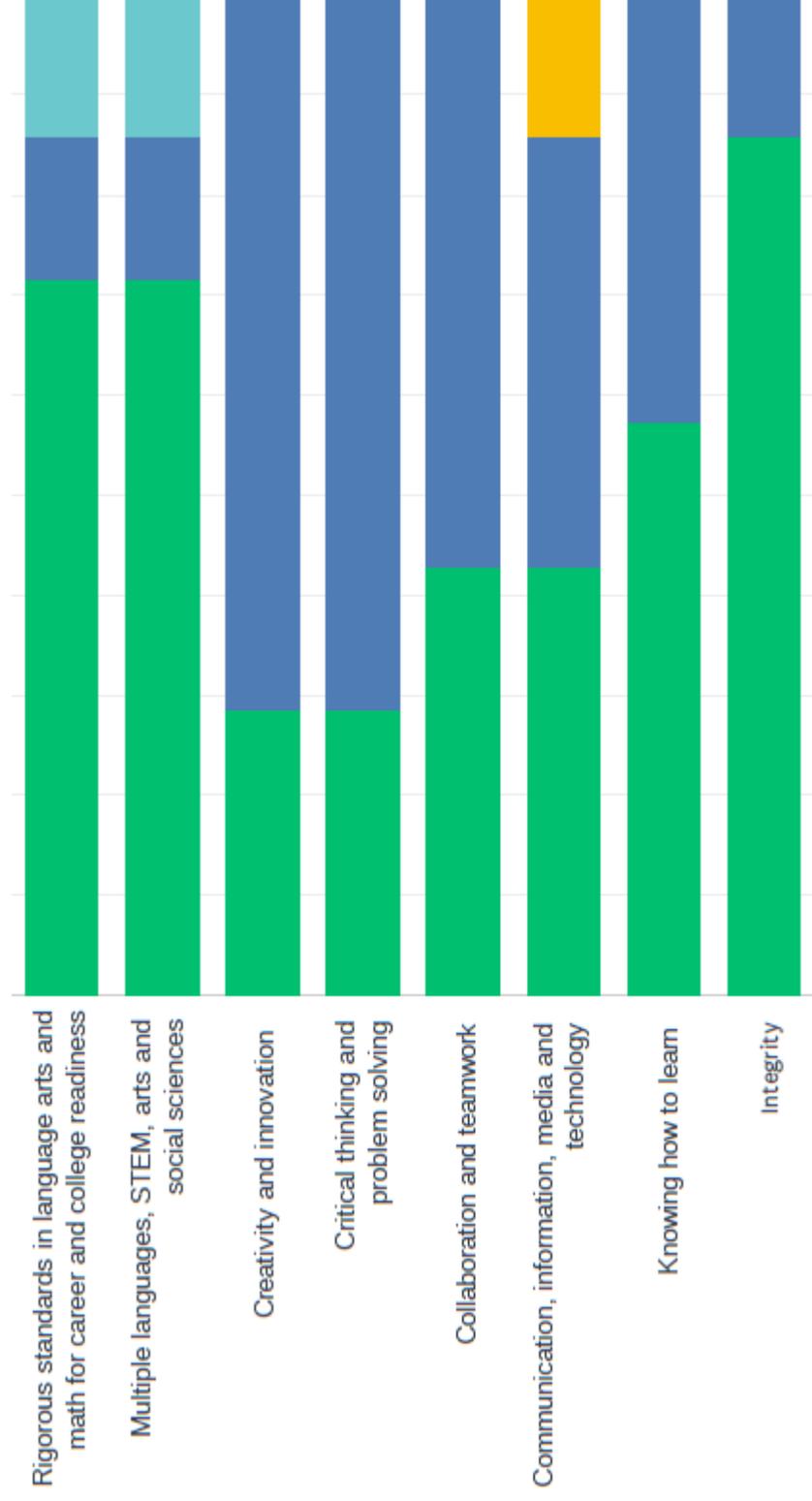
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	TOTAL	SCORE
College and career readiness results (ACT, SAT, etc.)	42.86%	0.00%	14.29%	0.00%	28.57%	14.29%	0.00%	7	4.86
End-of-year achievement test scores	14.29%	42.86%	0.00%	14.29%	14.29%	0.00%	14.29%	7	4.71
High School Graduation Rate	28.57%	14.29%	14.29%	14.29%	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	7	4.43
Measure of workplace/soft skills (critical thinking, collaboration, etc.)	14.29%	42.86%	14.29%	28.57%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7	5.43
Student success in advanced coursework	16.67%	0.00%	16.67%	33.33%	16.67%	16.67%	0.00%	6	4.17
Opportunities and student involvement in extracurricular activities	0.00%	0.00%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	16.67%	6	2.83
School culture	0.00%	14.29%	14.29%	0.00%	28.57%	14.29%	28.57%	7	3.00



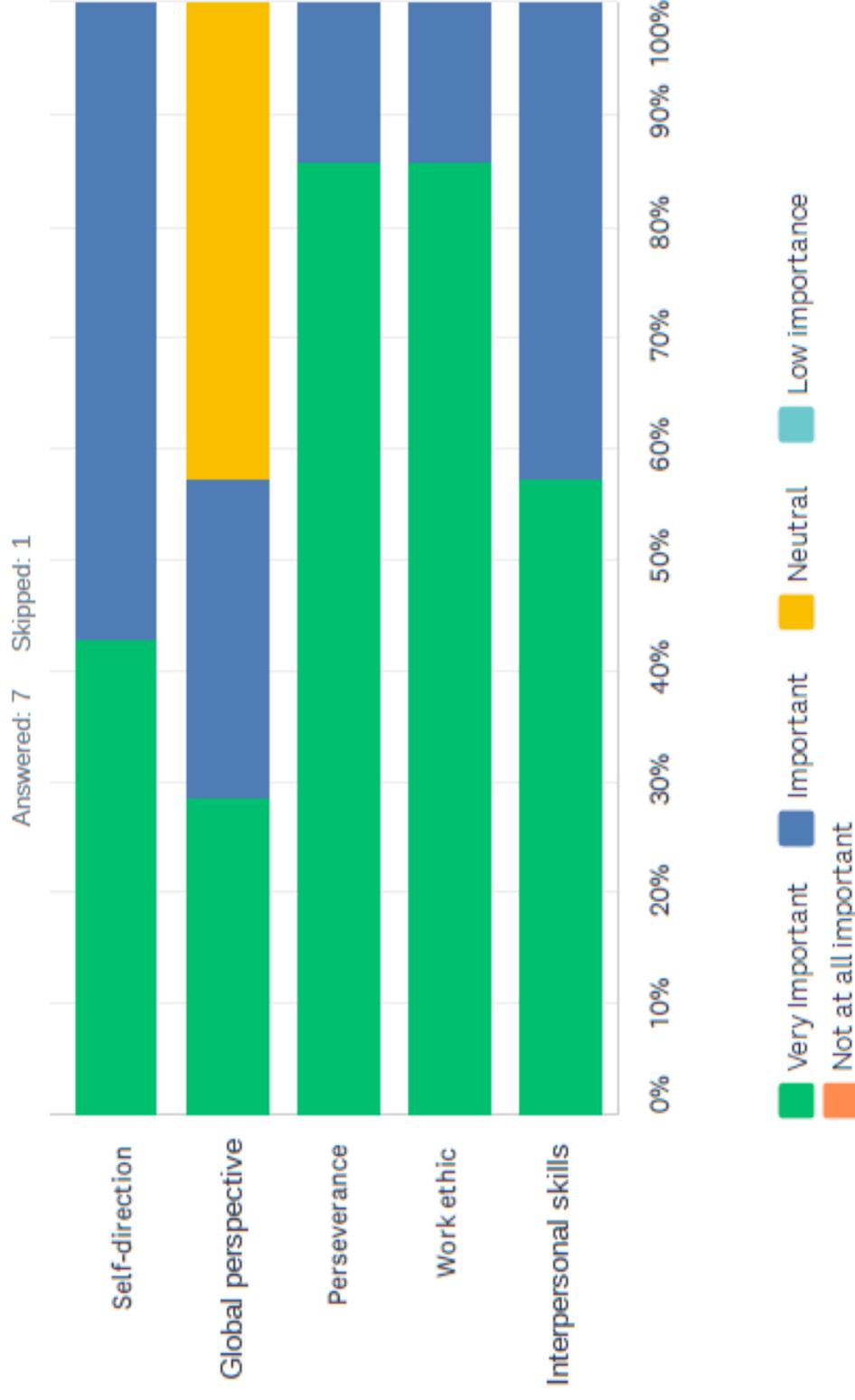
**Q6** The accountability system must “reflect evidence that students have developed the skills and characteristics” within the Profile of the SC Graduate. Which of the following Profile characteristics are important to include in the SC education accountability system? Mark the degree of importance to you by using the scale provided, ranging from Very Important to Not at all important.



Answered: 7    Skipped: 1

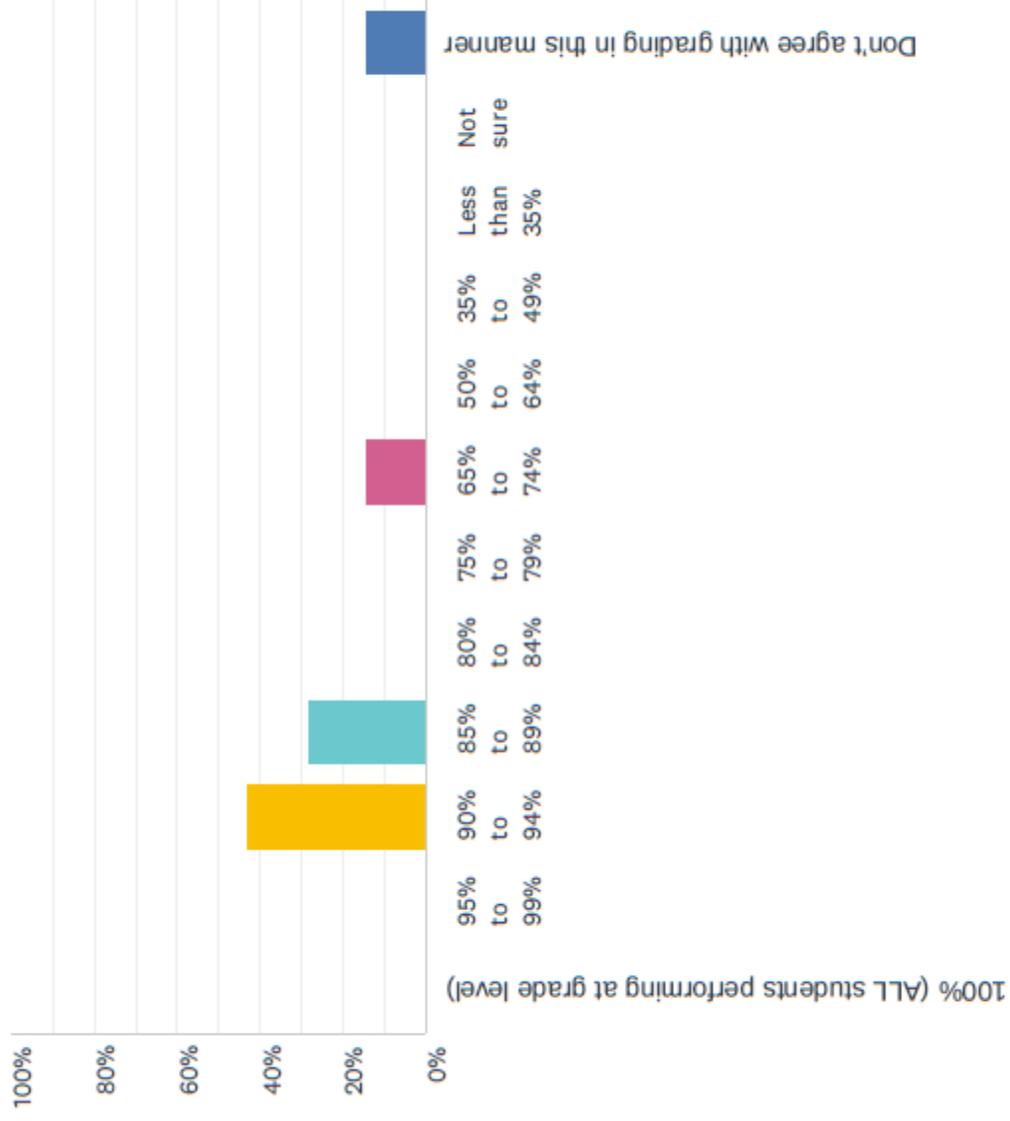


Q6 The accountability system must “reflect evidence that students have developed the skills and characteristics” within the Profile of the SC Graduate. Which of the following Profile characteristics are important to include in the SC education accountability system? Mark the degree of importance to you by using the scale provided, ranging from Very Important to Not at all important.



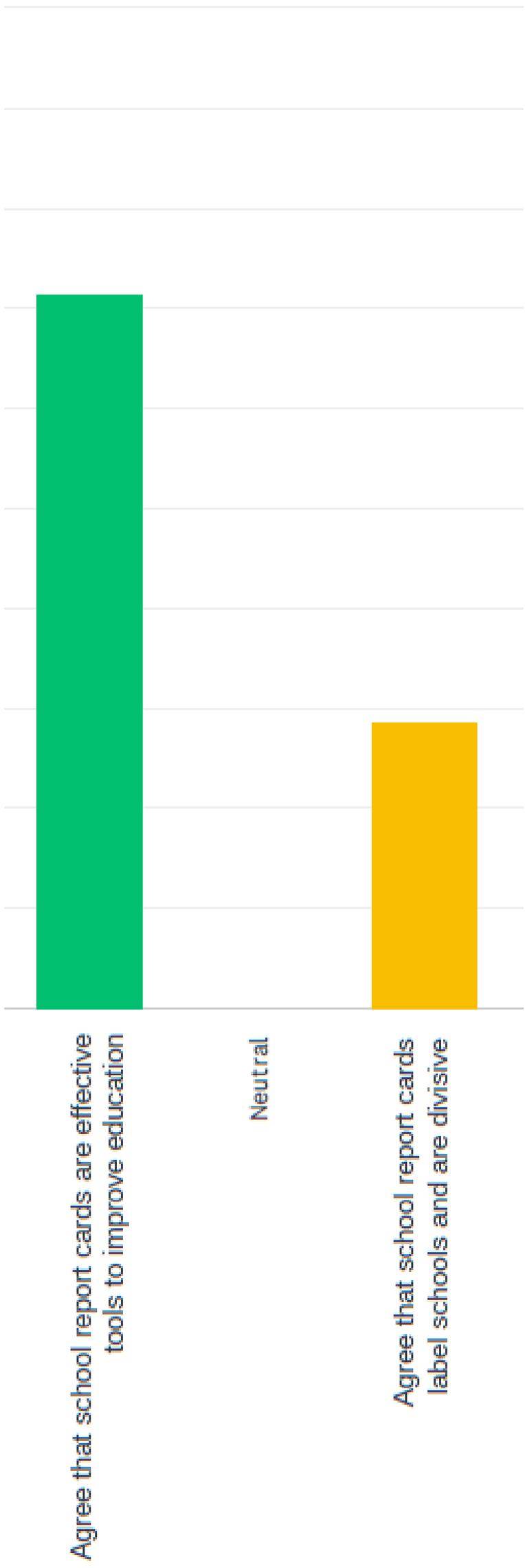
Q7 In a school receiving the highest overall rating for a school, what percentage of students do you expect to be performing at grade level or above in English Language Arts and Math?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



**Q8** Some people say that the school and district report cards are effective tools and contain information to improve education in the state. Other people say that the report cards label schools and create more division. Select the statement you most agree with.

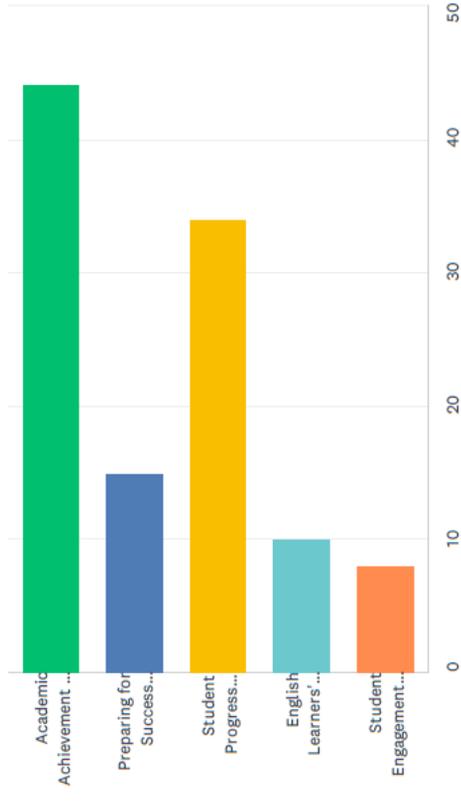
Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



Q9 The CURRENT points composing the Overall Ratings for Elementary/Middle Schools are based on a 100-point scale, which is required by State law. Do you think the current individual indicator weightings should be adjusted? Please enter a number below for each component between 0-100 that reflects the weight you believe should be assigned to this indicator. Please note the totals should add up to 100 points.

ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER
Academic Achievement in ELA and Math: Currently 35 points	44
Preparing for Success (achievement in Science): Currently 10 points	15
Student Progress (growth in achievement): Currently 35 points	34
English Learners' Progress toward Proficiency (children who are non-native speakers): Currently 10 points	10
Student Engagement Survey: Currently 10 points	8
Total Respondents: 6	

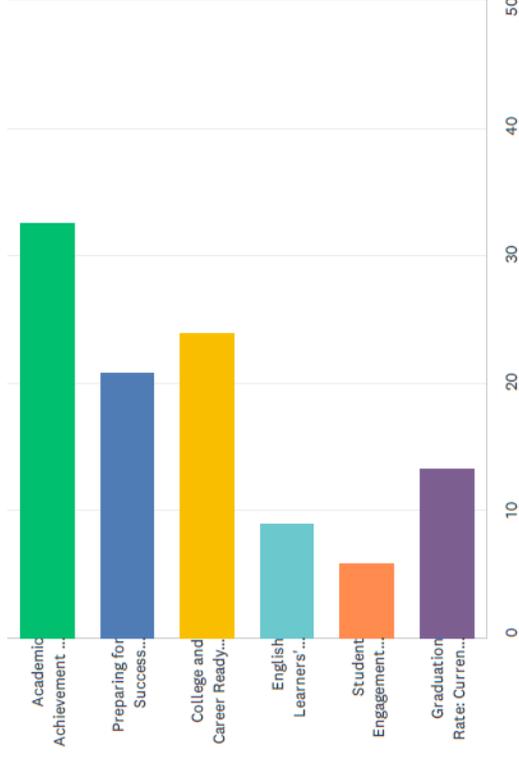
Answered: 6 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	AVERAGE NUMBER
Academic Achievement in ELA and Math: Currently 25 points	33
Preparing for Success (achievement in Science and Social Studies): Currently 10 points	21
College and Career Ready (ACT/SAT passage, ASVAB, work-ready on WIN, etc.): Currently 25 points	24
English Learners' Progress toward Proficiency (children who are non-native speakers): Currently 10 points	9
Student Engagement Survey: Currently 5 points	6
Graduation Rate: Currently 25 points	13
Total Respondents: 6	

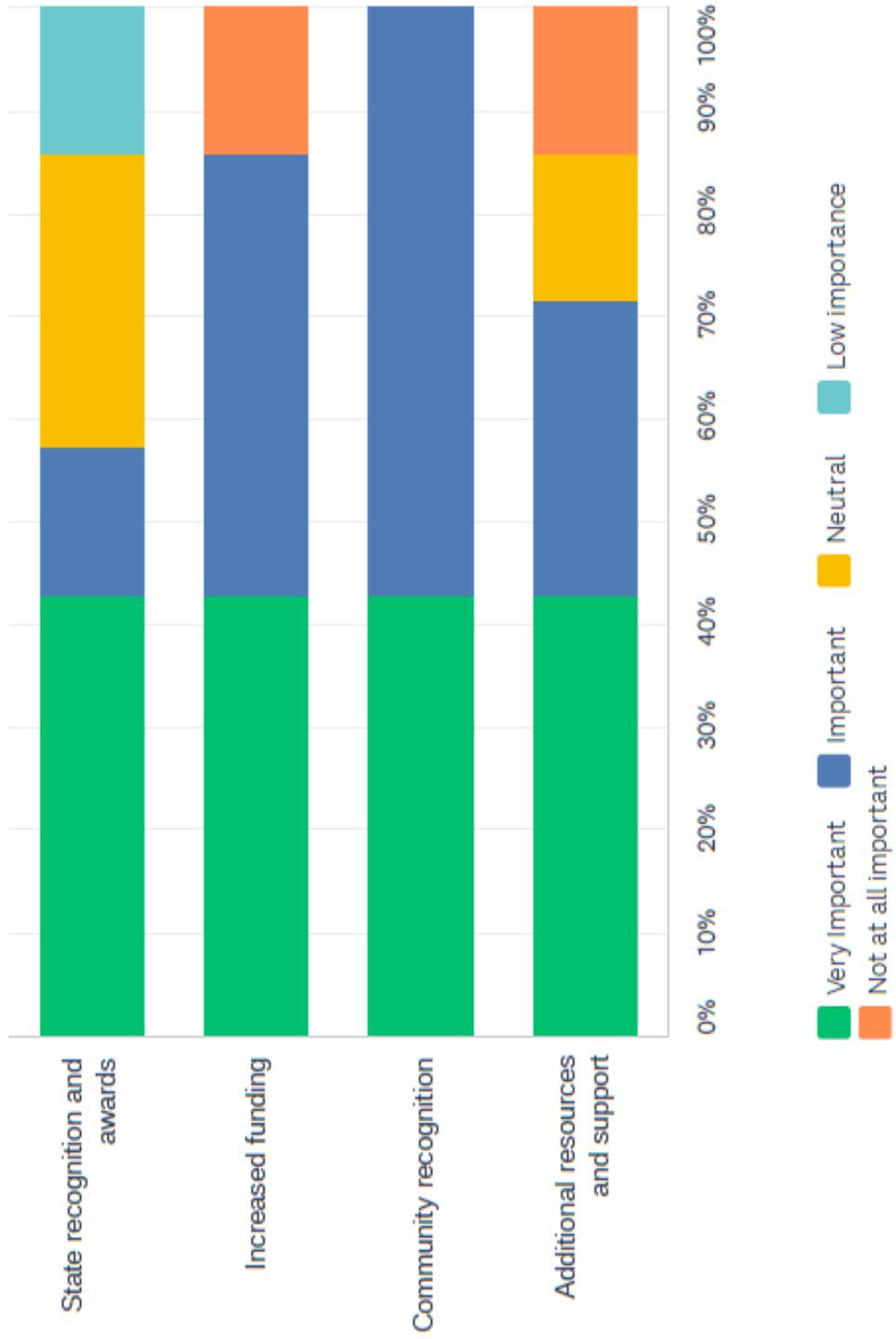
Q10 The CURRENT points composing the Overall Ratings for High Schools are based on a 100-point scale, which is required by State law. Do you think the current individual indicators should be adjusted? Please note the totals should add up to 100 points.

Answered: 6 Skipped: 2



# Q11 How important is it to celebrate school and student success with each of the following?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



## Q12 What is missing from the current accountability system that you believe should be added?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 3

- measurement for civic / life readiness
- High School rating including GPAs of graduates
- I believe report cards should focus on the basics: can kids read/write/do math at expected grade level (or are they being caught up so that they eventually can). Period.
- Teacher and staff confidential survey on school leadership
- 1) Measures of Continuous Improvement from year to year emphasizing gap closures by race and poverty as well as overall academic performance; 2) Even though multi-level measures of ELA, math, science, and social science are most important, percentages alone do not tell the story. Assessments must move beyond counting quantities to include correlations and regression analyses that tell deeper stories, addressing variables that are or are not contributing (e.g. school climate, teacher working conditions, etc.).

## Q13 What other comments, suggestions, or concerns do you have regarding future accountability systems?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 3

- All schools should be able to qualify in every category. It should not be based upon a bell curve model
- It seems like there is intentional effort by various stakeholder groups to complicate and thus dilute clear reporting of objective academic achievement and growth measures. Not being truthful and clear about where students stand in relation to an objective standard is education malpractice.
- It's all about being college or career ready at graduation. If a student is not, he/she shouldn't graduate, or have 2 graduation certificates. One that says Graduated and Deemed College and Career Ready, and another that simply says Graduated. That would be an incentive rather than a stigma.
- Quality leadership with results should be afforded more flexibility
- Please examine carefully the implications of both COVID-19 and racial unrest on our accountability systems. Do not simply assume that these two pandemics may not have serious implications for assessment. Both suggest we may need to simplify our assessment approaches, employ sampling methodologies where possible, examine root causes among performance gaps, provide teachers more time to teach and principals more incentive to lead, equalize digital learning capacity across schools, remove punitive labeling in favor of identifying interventions that are or are not working, etc. If the Accountability Cyclical Committee and/or the EOC do not examine assessment approaches in the light of these pandemics, we are missing important signals for future action.



## **It is time to reimagine what is possible for SC students**

August 31, 2020

C. Matthew Ferguson, Esq., EOC Executive Director

The global COVID-19 pandemic forced South Carolina public schools to abruptly close for the last nine weeks of the 2019-2020 school year. The entire education system, including teachers and administrators at every level, quickly pivoted over a weekend towards remote learning.

Necessary changes were implemented to ensure that children would continue to receive instruction even without the benefit of face-to-face instruction and brick and mortar classrooms. As a result of the rapid pace of disruption and school closures, all end of year, statewide student assessments were understandably canceled for the 2019-2020 school year.

Because end of year assessments were canceled, we do not yet know the impact that the COVID-19 remote learning experience had on student learning. [Researchers](#) predict students could enter this new school year missing 30% to 50% of what they otherwise would have learned. This is a loss that our children can little afford. Too many were already struggling: in 2019, only 1 out of 2 children (49.7%) were meeting or exceeding state standards in third grade ELA; less than 1 out of 2 children (44.6%) of children were meeting or exceeding state standards in grade 8 ELA.

Additionally, even before the pandemic, [research](#) indicated that long summer breaks were detrimental to economically disadvantaged students, and that summer slides were especially troublesome because the effects were cumulative. By the time a student reaches middle school, they've lost an average of two years to summer slide. They've been forced to constantly play catch up. When many students return to school this fall, they will have experienced nearly a six-month absence from the classroom. Though it is predicted that all students will suffer, the poorest, most at-risk students will likely suffer the most.

It was hoped that the actions taken this spring in response to COVID-19, though necessary, would be temporary measures to curb the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, the effects of COVID-19 are still being felt by public school districts reopening for the 2020-2021 school year. State and local education and public health leaders are working diligently to return to learning while keeping the health and safety of students and staff first and foremost.

A review of the plans currently approved by the South Carolina Department of Education reveals only a quarter of public-school districts in South Carolina plan to provide parents a restart to school on a traditional schedule. Most districts are instead offering a hybrid schedule with students reporting to the school building only twice a week. A small, but growing number of school districts are selecting to reopen exclusively online.

Additionally, almost all public-school districts in South Carolina are offering parents the option of some form of virtual only instruction for their children, though the particulars of these programs vary widely by school district across the state. A summary of South Carolina public

Article Link: <https://expectmoresc.com/it-is-time-to-reimagine-what-is-possible-for-sc-students/>

school reopening plans can be found [here](#). To find the specifics of your school district's approved plan, click [here](#).

The Education Oversight Committee plans to monitor this continually developing situation as well as follow lessons learned from across the country. In this time of instructional disruption, the importance of understanding student mastery of state standards has never been more critical, and at this point in the school year, the approval of a waiver to federal assessments would be premature. The vast majority of federal required assessments will not be administered until late Spring of 2021, nine months from now. For an overview of assessment in South Carolina public schools, see this [infographic](#).

More importantly, two years of no summative testing will mean that educators, at the school and district level, and policymakers will lack the information to be able to make data-informed decisions on behalf of students. While we recognize that there are challenges and limitations, we need useful information on student achievement in order to adjust instruction and the system. We have a responsibility to know so we can continue to do better.

Many challenges are ahead. There is also much potential for discovery, if only we resist the urge to blame the messenger and commit to collect the data. It is true that no one has ever taught under the requirements that will be necessary during this new normal. Adjustments will be necessary. Grace will be needed.

But we also have the opportunity to work collaboratively to reimagine what is possible for all students in South Carolina. While forging this new frontier, we could discover lessons of innovation that raise the expectations for what all children in our state can achieve, or we can stick our heads in the sand while hoping for the best.

Data collection is a key element to unlocking this potential and learning the lessons from these obstacles and new ways of operation. We have a responsibility to the children to move forward purposefully, founded on fact, not good intentions and spin.

<b>School Type</b>	<b>Current Indicator</b>	<b>With EL Points Possible</b>	<b>Without EL Points Possible</b>	<b>IMPACT of COVID-19 Waiver on 20-21 Report Cards</b>	<b>Potential Issues</b>
<b>Elementary / Middle Schools</b>	<i>Student Achievement</i>	35	40	SC READY to be administered in Spring, 2021. Available for report card calculations.	Should students not recover to pre-COVID levels of achievement, schools will receive lower ratings.
	<i>Preparing for Success</i>	10	10	SC PASS Science to be administered in Spring, 2021. Available for report card calculations.	Should students not recover to pre-COVID levels of achievement, schools will receive lower ratings.
	<i>Student Progress*</i>	35	40	SC READY from Spring 2020 is not available to compute student growth from Spring 2020 to Spring 2021.	Compute student progress from 2 years prior rather than using prior year scores. Strong possibility of inconsistent results.
	<i>ELL Progress</i>	10	n/a	ACCESS screeners in Spring 2020 were completed before schools were closed and are being administered this school year. Data is available for computations.	
	<i>Student Engagement*</i>	10	10	No student engagement survey has been procured for the 20-21 academic year. Previous survey tool was problematic.	Chronic Absenteeism was potential replacement for engagement survey; this is particularly problematic in 20-21 given combinations of online, hybrid, and in person instruction.

High Schools	Current Indicator	With EL Points Possible	Without EL Points Possible	IMPACT of COVID-19 Waiver on 20-21 School Report Cards	Potential Issues																		
Student Achievement	25	30	<p>The high school student achievement measure uses Algebra 1 and English 1 EOCEP scores. The measure calculates based on the 4-year graduation cohort.</p> <p>Absent approval of a federal testing waiver, EOCEP Algebra 1 and English 2 set to be administered in SY 2020-2021 and will be available for future report card calculations.</p>	<p>Because this is a lagging measure, the <u>most significant impact</u> of canceling Spring '20 tests will occur on the school report card for 23-24 when these mostly freshman matriculate as seniors.</p> <p>EOCEP scores used are based on history of scores from students. For 2019-20 school year, 11,692 students took Algebra I exam in the winter administration of 2020 vs. 61,278 students in the SY2018-19. Many students will be missing a year's test score – current method uses the highest score in a student's history.</p>	<p>Because this is a lagging measure, the <u>most significant impact</u> of canceling Spring '20 tests will occur on the report card for 20-21 when these juniors matriculate as seniors.</p> <p>The high school preparing for success measure uses Biology 1 and US History EOCEP scores. Biology 1 calculates based on the 4-year graduation cohort. US History calculates based on the students currently enrolled in the course.</p> <p>Absent approval of a federal testing waiver, Biology 1 EOCEP is set to be administered in SY 2020-21 and will be available for future report card calculations.</p> <p>US History EOCEP administration in SY 2020-21 may be considered waived by Act 142.</p>																		
Preparing for Success*	10	10	<p>EOCEP scores used are based on history of scores from students. For 19-20, 14,649 students took US History and 18,960 students took Biology 1 in the winter administration of 2020 vs. 45,662 students in US History and 57,046 students in Biology in the SY 2018-19.</p> <p><b>Biology 1 Grade Distributions</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="943 199 1149 632"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2018-19</th> <th>2019-20</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>9.9</td> <td>8.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>13.4</td> <td>13.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>17.8</td> <td>21.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>21.5</td> <td>23.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>F</td> <td>37.3</td> <td>33.6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2018-19	2019-20	A	9.9	8.4	B	13.4	13.9	C	17.8	21.1	D	21.5	23.0	F	37.3	33.6	<p>EOCEP scores used are based on history of scores from students. For 19-20, 14,649 students took US History and 18,960 students took Biology 1 in the winter administration of 2020 vs. 45,662 students in US History and 57,046 students in Biology in the SY 2018-19.</p>	<p>EOCEP scores used are based on history of scores from students. For 19-20, 14,649 students took US History and 18,960 students took Biology 1 in the winter administration of 2020 vs. 45,662 students in US History and 57,046 students in Biology in the SY 2018-19.</p>
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F	37.3	33.6																					

<i>Student Progress</i>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			n/a
<i>ELL Progress</i>	10	n/a	n/a	Assessments in Spring 2020 were completed before schools were closed. Data is available for computations.			
<i>Graduation Rate</i>	25	25	25	Data will be available.			Unknown impact of COVID-19 remote learning on credit completion.
<i>College/Career Ready</i>	25	25	25	Reduced data from SAT, ACT, AP, IB, ASVAB, Ready to Work not being available for test administration in Spring, 2020.  The calculations for this indicator would have changed in 19-20 to determine the denominator on the more inclusive 9gr cohort rather than just the high school graduates. This change would have likely impacted ratings negatively.  It is important to note that not every test taken is used for accountability purposes. There are multiple ways for a student to be considered College / Career Ready.			For seniors of the 2019-20 school year, 27,673 students took <b>SAT</b> vs. 28,321 seniors in the school year 2018-19.  In SY 18-19, 33,834 students took <b>ACT</b> . Data from ACT for SY 19-20 is not currently available.  For 2019-20 school year, 49,727 <b>AP exams were taken</b> vs. 53,615 exams in the SY 2018-19. Exams with a score of 3, 4, or 5 were down by 0.5%.  For 2019-20 school year, 10,451 students took <b>IB</b> vs. 9,777 students in the SY 2018-19. The written components of IB assessments were not administered in the SY 19-20.  <b>Ready to Work</b> was not administered in SY 19-20. Since 9GR-18 students were not tested during their junior year, these grade twelve students have two testing options: 1) a fall test window scheduled October 19 –November 13, 2020; and, 2) March 1-26, 2021, the same testing window as the 11th grade students.
<i>Student Engagement*</i>	5	5	5	No survey has been procured for the 20-21 academic year.			Chronic Absenteeism was potential replacement for engagement survey; this is particularly problematic in 20-21.

***Staff Recommendations***

1. EOC staff recommends a commitment to administering state assessments to all students in SY 20-21 to provide statewide and district level data. Given the unprecedented instructional disruption that has occurred as a result of COVID-19, the importance of understanding and being transparent about student mastery of state standards has never been more critical. We have a responsibility to provide policymakers and education leaders the information required to make data-informed decisions.
2. EOC staff recommends requesting from SCDE a plan to administer a stratified sample testing of students in SY20-21 to provide state level data by subgroup in the event it is not possible to administer state assessments to all students. Recognizing that schools and educational delivery have never looked like they must this year, we must remain adaptable and resist the urge to continue as we always have simply because that is how it has always been done while also acknowledging our responsibility to know so we can continue to do better.
3. EOC staff recommends waiving school ratings for SY 20-21. Because the administration of state level assessment was waived in Spring '20, there are significant gaps in the data available to calculate school ratings for SY 20-21. Up to 50 points of the elementary / middle school report card are significantly affected. Forty (40) points of the high school report card are potentially affected.

(A142, R148, H5202)

**A JOINT RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF FEDERAL FUNDS DISBURSED TO THE STATE IN THE CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY ACT, AND TO SPECIFY THE MANNER IN WHICH THE FUNDS MAY BE EXPENDED.**

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

....

SECTION 5. (A) The Department of Education is authorized to reimburse public school districts up to \$12,000,000 for the additional cost of cafeteria workers' salaries and the cost of meals to students that are not reimbursed by the United States Department of Agriculture.

(B) The Department of Education is authorized to reimburse public school districts up to \$210,700,000 for the cost of providing unbudgeted instructional support beyond the number of days and hours required by state law. The additional support is to focus on face-to-face instruction for (1) any at-risk students in kindergarten through third grade residing in the school district for Academic Recovery Camps in reading and mathematics during the summer and (2) students in 4K through eighth grade for five additional instructional days at the start of the school year.

(C) School districts utilizing Academic Recovery Camps will assess students at the beginning and end of the camp. The results of the pre- and post-assessments must be submitted to the Department of Education which, in turn, must provide the information to the Education Oversight Committee for evaluation of the impact the recovery camps had on student learning and the impact of the interventions on student learning.

(D) School districts are required to utilize the additional instructional days and to assess each student enrolled in 4K through eighth grade in reading and mathematics. The assessment shall utilize a pre- and post-formative assessment from the state-approved list.

(E) All students will be assessed during the first two weeks of school to identify students needing additional support and the support to be provided. All students will be assessed again prior to the end of the 2020 Calendar Year to measure the impact of the intervention provided. The results of the pre- and post-assessments must be submitted to the Department of Education which, in turn, must provide the

information to the Education Oversight Committee for evaluation of the pandemic's impact on student learning and the impact of the interventions on student learning.

(F) Each district is required to identify the strategies used and document the services received by each student. Districts must report the expenditure of funds to the Department of Education pursuant to a uniform reporting mechanism developed by the department.

(G) To help recoup extensive instruction time lost when our public schools closed in Spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

(1) the State Department of Education shall seek a waiver from all federal accountability-related testing requirements and concomitant accountability, school identification, and reporting requirements for the 2020-2021 School Year; and

(2) all state-mandated public school accountability testing requirements and concomitant requirements are suspended for the 2020-2021 School Year unless prohibited by federal law.



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**  
*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*

July 14, 2020

The Honorable Betsy DeVos  
Secretary of Education  
United States Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D. C. 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

The United States continues to experience an unprecedented, historic crisis related to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, and its effect on our public school systems. South Carolina joins many other states in determining the safest, most meaningful approach to determine how our public schools will reopen and how we will educate our children while simultaneously working to contain and reduce the contagion, to protect our most valuable assets—the students we serve. We know that hard days still lie ahead in the impact of this virus on our citizens and society.

While our public school districts performed remarkably in creating innovative distance learning, there was still an impact on students' learning. Currently, we are working with our public school districts to implement Academic Recovery Camps in July and August, along with additional instructional days to start school early. The intent is to assess the learning loss and slide caused by COVID-19, and to strategize how best to meet each student's unique academic needs.

We know the importance of having our schools focus on meeting students' needs as a result of this ongoing pandemic. The South Carolina General Assembly and the Governor, by a Continuing Resolution, have instructed me to seek a waiver from all federal accountability-related testing requirements and concomitant accountability, school identification, and reporting requirements for the 2020–21 school year. Although the bulk of our accountability assessments occur during the spring semester, we do administer some assessments in the fall semester.

The Honorable Betsy DeVos

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July 14, 2020

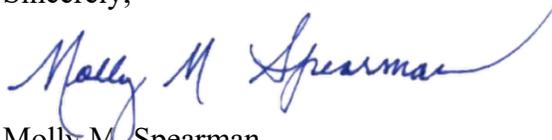
To meet this request, South Carolina will be requesting a waiver for the following:

1. Accountability assessments: Grades 3-8 English language arts and mathematics exams, elementary and middle level science exams, and high school exams in English, mathematics, and science;
2. Alternate assessments that correspond to the assessments designated above;
3. The English proficiency assessment;
4. Identification of any school for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement 2020–21 (and maintaining the last identification for the school until 2021–22); and
5. Other concomitant accountability requirements applicable to these assessments and South Carolina’s approved ESSA Consolidated Plan.

We hope that the United States Department of Education will consider broad waivers and expedited approvals so that states and local school districts can focus on ensuring the health and wellness of our students, faculty, and their families, during these unparalleled time.

In accordance with ESSA § 8401, the South Carolina Department of Education will begin steps to provide notice to the public and local educational agencies of their right to comment upon and provide input related to this waiver request. Following those requirements, we will then proceed with submitting a waiver request.

Sincerely,



Molly M. Spearman  
State Superintendent of Education

cc: The Honorable Henry McMaster, Governor  
The Honorable Harvey Peeler, President of the South Carolina Senate  
The Honorable Jay Lucas, Speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives



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**For Immediate Release**

August 25, 2020

Contact: Ryan Brown, 803-734-5080

[rybrown@ed.sc.gov](mailto:rybrown@ed.sc.gov)

## **South Carolina Department of Education Releases Assessment Waiver Survey for Public Input**

**Columbia, S.C.** -Today, the South Carolina Department of Education released an [online survey](#) for public input on the requested assessment waiver to the United States Department of Education. As required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the SCDE must provide public notice and give an opportunity for public input on the waiver request.

"It is critical that students, parents, educators, and anyone with a vested interest in our state's K-12 public education system take a moment to offer their feedback on [South Carolina's](#) waiver from federally mandated assessments for the 2020-2021 school year," said Molly Spearman, State Superintendent of Education. "As schools across our state reopen, we must focus on recouping the instruction time lost during COVID-19 school facility closures and ensuring that every member of the school community remains safe and healthy. Administering high stakes assessments in the current environment places undue stress on students, parents, and educators and takes time away from the classroom instruction and individualized support that every child needs."

During the summer of 2020, the South Carolina General Assembly and the Governor passed [Act 124](#), which allowed SCDE to seek a waiver for 2020-21 federally-required assessments and related accountability requirements, including:

- SC READY, grades 3-8 English language arts and mathematics;
- SCPASS, grades 4 and 6 science;
- End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) tests in Algebra 1, Biology 1, USHC, English 2, and English 1 (English 1 administered to specific students, as needed for accountability);
- English learning proficiency exams (ACCESS for ELLs); and
- All corresponding alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards.

The ESSA requires that states give end-of-year (or sometimes end-of-semester) tests to determine how schools, districts, and the state are doing in terms of students meeting proficiency in state standards. In addition, both the ESSA and the State require that the SCDE develop and publish report cards that rate schools and give information about assessment results and other important information.

If the waiver is granted, the SCDE would not administer the exams listed above, and whatever rating the district received last would stay in place until the SCDE resumes giving the exams, upon which the ratings are largely based. College entrance exams (like the SAT and ACT) and the state's Career Readiness Assessments, along with ASVAB (the exam used for military enrollment), the GED examination program will still be administered consistent with those vendors procedures. In addition, formative assessments/benchmark assessments will still be given to give teachers important information on how well students are progressing.

If the waiver is not granted, then the SCDE will be required to administer these assessments in the fall and spring to all students. Because of test security issues, and the test vendors' requirements, these assessments must be administered in person, although districts would need to ensure that they are following the applicable social distancing requirements in effect at that time.

Until the USED grants the waiver, the SCDE will continue preparing to administer these assessments.

The survey can be found [here](#).



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

September 3, 2020

Dear Chief State School Officer:

During the past several months, we have experienced unprecedented challenges across this nation, and I thank you for your efforts to meet the needs of all your students and safely reopen America's schools. I've benefited from talking with each of you as this pandemic has gone on, and please know that your ideas, contributions, and suggestions have all been put to good use. As we look ahead, I want you to know my perspective on the importance of assessing student performance.

Research shows that school closures this past spring disproportionately affected the most vulnerable students, widening disparities in achievement for low-income students, minority students, and students with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> Almost every student experienced some level of disruption. Moving forward, meeting the needs of all students will require tremendous effort. To be successful, we must use data to guide our decision-making.

Several of your colleagues recently inquired about the possibility of waivers to relieve states of the requirement to administer standardized tests during School Year (SY) 2020-2021. You will recall that, within a very short time, waivers were granted to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Bureau of Indian Education this past spring following the declaration of a national emergency. That was the right call, given the limited information available about the virus at the time and the need to stop its spread, as well as the practical realities limiting the administration of assessments. However, it is now our expectation that states will, in the interest of students, administer summative assessments during the 2020-2021 school year, consistent with the requirements of the law and following the guidance of local health officials. As a result, you should not anticipate such waivers being granted again.

As you'll recall, statewide assessments are at the very core of the bipartisan agreement that forged ESSA. They are among the most reliable tools available to help us understand how children are performing in school. The data from assessments can help inform personalized support to children based on their individual needs and provide transparency about their progress. There is broad and consistent support for assessments because there is general agreement among the public that a student's achievement should be measured, that parents deserve to know how their children are performing, and that it should be no secret how a school's performance as a whole compares to other schools.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis, Viruleg. "COVID-19 and student learning in the United States: The hurt could last a lifetime". McKinsey & Company. June 1, 2020 <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/covid-19-and-student-learning-in-the-united-states-the-hurt-could-last-a-lifetime>

<sup>2</sup> Gallup, NWEA. "Make Assessment Work for All Students: Multiple Measures Matter". May 2016 [https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2016/05/Make\\_Assessment\\_Work\\_for\\_All\\_Students\\_2016.pdf](https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2016/05/Make_Assessment_Work_for_All_Students_2016.pdf)

Organizations to which many of you belong, including the Council of Chief State School Officers and Chiefs for Change, researchers, and advocates have all recently expressed support for administering assessments during the upcoming school year. A letter signed by a bipartisan coalition, including the Center for American Progress, the Education Trust, the Foundation for Excellence in Education, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, among others, clearly noted:

The challenges posed by this crisis only underscore the value of collecting and reporting on a standard measure of student performance. Leaders should not have to continue to steer recovery efforts in the dark, and families and communities should be able to access the information they deserve about how schools are serving all students.<sup>3</sup>

Parents agree. A recent survey conducted by the Data Quality Campaign showed that nearly 90 percent of parents want information about how school closures affect students.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, 77 percent of parents agree that states should resume administration of statewide summative assessments in math and reading in 2021 to better understand how well schools and students are meeting academic standards in the wake of the pandemic.<sup>5</sup>

I understand that presently it might be difficult to imagine the administration of statewide assessments in the same manner as they have been administered in the past. In fact, it may be that the assessments will look different. I am reminded of the old saying: necessity is the mother of invention. Now may be the perfect time for you to rethink assessment in your state, including considering competency and mastery-based assessments, to better gauge the learning and academic growth of your students

My staff and I are prepared to work with you to help ensure every state can meaningfully assesses student performance during SY 2020-2021, including providing technical assistance and identifying and sharing best practices among states. We are open to discussions about what, if any, actions may be needed to adjust how the results of assessments are used in your state's school accountability determinations.

Make no mistake. If we fail to assess students, it will have a lasting effect for years to come. Not only will vulnerable students fall behind, but we will be abandoning the important, bipartisan reforms of the past two decades at a critical moment. Opponents of reform, like labor unions, have already begun to call for the permanent elimination of testing. If they succeed in eliminating assessments, transparency and accountability will soon follow.

In closing, let's remember that Americans are resourceful people and can accomplish great things even during the most challenging of times. Just as doctors, nurses, police officers, grocery clerks, and other essential workers have demonstrated their resolve, now is our opportunity to show that the same spirit is present in America's education leaders as we work to safely reopen schools and to successfully educate our nation's children.

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<sup>3</sup>Alliance for Excellent Education, Center for American Progress, Collaborative for Student Success, Data Quality Campaign, Foundation for Excellence in Education, National Urban League, Education Trust, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, UnidosUS, *et al.*, to Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos, July 31, 2020. [https://dataqualitycampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Assessment-Coalition-Letter-to-ED\\_7.30.20.pdf](https://dataqualitycampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Assessment-Coalition-Letter-to-ED_7.30.20.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Data Quality Campaign, "National Poll Finds Parents and Teachers Want More Data and Better Support to Use It Effectively to Help Students during COVID-19", June 24, 2020. <https://dataqualitycampaign.org/news/national-poll-finds-parents-and-teachers-want-more-data-and-better-support-to-use-it-effectively-to-help-students-during-covid-19/>

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Office of School Support and Accountability by e-mail at [OESE.TitleI-A@ed.gov](mailto:OESE.TitleI-A@ed.gov). Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Betsy DeVos



# Timeline of Federal and State-Required Assessment in SC Public Schools

## PreK

### 4-year olds

One of three formative assessments (PALS, myIGDIs, and Teaching Strategies Gold) is administered to publicly funded pre-K students during the first 45 days of school and the last 45 days of school.

**STATE-REQUIRED**



## Elementary



### Kindergarten

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment is administered to kindergarten students during their first 45 days of school. It provides a snapshot of a child's abilities in Language/Literacy, Mathematics, social foundations, and physical well-being. A universal screener is also required three times a year. **STATE-REQUIRED**

### 2nd Grade

Students are administered The CogAT and Iowa assessments to determine placement in a district gifted and talented program. **STATE-REQUIRED**

### 3rd-5th grade

Students are administered SC READY (ELA and Math) in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. SC PASS Science is given to students in 4th grade. All tests are given in the last 20 days of school.

**FEDERAL-REQUIRED**



## Middle

### 6th-8th grade

Students are administered SC READY (ELA and Math) in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. SC PASS Science is given to students in 6th grade. All tests are given in the last 20 days of school. **FEDERAL-REQUIRED**



## High



### High School students

End-of-Course exams are given to students in English I, Algebra I, Biology I and US History and the Constitution following the course. Some middle school students take End-of-Course exams. **FEDERAL-REQUIRED EXCEPT FOR U.S. HISTORY WHICH IS STATE-REQUIRED**

### 11th grade

Students in their 3rd year of high school are administered a Career Ready exam and offered a college readiness exam. **STATE-REQUIRED**



## Postsecondary Readiness in College & Careers

SC School Districts often choose to assess children using formative, or benchmark assessments (i.e., MAP or STAR) during their elementary and middle school years. School districts are assessing children when they enter school in Fall 2020 since the pandemic resulted in school closures and no Spring summative testing occurred.

South Carolina also administers assessments for students who are English Language Learners and students with significant cognitive disabilities.





**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**  
*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*

July 21, 2020

Mr. C. Matthew Ferguson  
Executive Director  
SC Education Oversight Committee  
Edgar A. Brown Building, Room 502  
1205 Pendleton Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

On behalf of the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), I would like to thank the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) for its review and approval of the End-of-Course Assessment Program (EOCEP) English 2 test. This letter responds to each of the recommendations presented in the report titled, "EOCEP Technical Evaluation of Fall 2019 Field Test Data: English 2," provided to the EOC by Dr. Christine DiStefano.

**Section A: Test Regulations, Construction, and Performance**

**EOC Recommendation:** Updated technical information regarding scoring and a test review will be helpful to include on the SCDE Website once the EOCEP English 2 becomes operational.

**SCDE Response:** The SCDE agrees that it would be useful to provide updated scoring information to the public that includes how English 2 scores are transformed to a total score. This information will be included on the Website and in the Technical Manual following the first operational year (anticipated to be 2020–21).

Educators have expressed the usefulness of the test review reports based on item level data. Data Review reports are posted on the SCDE Website each fall. The first report that includes English 2 data will be released following the first operational year (anticipated to be 2020–21).

C. Matthew Ferguson

Page 2

July 21, 2020

#### **Section D: Test Calibration, Equating, and CTT Item Analysis**

**EOC Recommendation:** Additional information about test calibration technical procedures may be helpful for stakeholders. This information may be provided in a future technical manual.

**SCDE Response:** The SCDE agrees that information about test calibration technical procedures is useful and will be included in the EOCEP Technical Manual.

**EOC Recommendation:** Items noted as problematic by CTT-based indices can be reviewed, revised, and re-field testing with future EOCEP English 2 administrations.

**SCDE Response:** The SCDE has flagged 125 items for review and action. The items identified in the EOC's report are included in these items. Forty of the items have been removed and will not be considered for revision, re-field testing, or consideration for inclusion in the item bank. Seventy of the items are being reviewed and will be considered for revision and re-field testing. The remaining fifteen items are being included in the item bank because the items are expected to perform well when administered to a larger group of students. These fifteen items will be monitored and will only be included in students' scores if the items perform at an acceptable level.

#### **Section E: Rasch-Based Indices and Assessment of Impact**

**EOC Recommendation:** Review the one item with C level racial/ethnicity DIF to see if revisions and/or re-testing can help alleviate problems with differential functioning across groups.

**SCDE Response:** This item with C level racial/ethnicity Differential Item Functioning (DIF) was removed from consideration for the item bank.

Again, we appreciate the EOC approving the EOCEP English 2 assessment.

Yours respectfully,



Elizabeth Jones

Director, Office of Assessment

cc: Molly M. Spearman, State Superintendent of Education  
John Payne, Deputy Superintendent of Federal Programs, Accountability & School Improvement

**FYI**



## **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) 2020 Supplement**

The results of the 2019 administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) were presented at the June 15, 2020 meeting of the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) by evaluators from the University of South Carolina. Following the report's presentation, EOC members posed questions for further investigation by EOC staff. Areas of interest were KRA test content and administration, recognition of districts with higher than expected KRA results and identification of practices being implemented in those districts that might be replicated for children in other districts across the state.

Another area identified for further investigation by the members was the perception of teachers, administrators and families around the usefulness of KRA results. As noted in this update, there is general agreement that assessing students as they enter kindergarten is of value to stakeholders for addressing educational priorities in classrooms, schools and communities. Additional data will be gathered during the 2020-21 school year related to the perception of South Carolina stakeholders regarding the value of the administration of the KRA for the enhancement of student learning.

This KRA supplement includes information on the following:

- Districts with Different than Predicted (Positive) Performance Trends;
- Instructional Practices in Districts with Different Than Predicted KRA Results;
- First Steps Services in Districts with Different Than Predicted KRA Results;
- KRA in South Carolina: Purpose, Sample Items and Administration.

### **Summary of 2019 KRA Test Results**

A summary of findings from the most recent (2019) administration of the KRA are as follows:

- The KRA was administered to 55,694 kindergartners with the first 45 days of the 2019-2020 school year.
- 39% of children were at the KRA Demonstrating Readiness level in the fall of 2019, meaning they entered kindergarten with sufficient skills, knowledge, and abilities to engage with kindergarten-level instruction. This is an increase over the 37% of children at the KRA Demonstrating Readiness level in the Fall of 2018.
- 37% of children were Approaching Readiness and needed supports to be able to engage with kindergarten-level instruction.
- Nearly 1 out of 4 children (24%) were identified at the Emerging Readiness level, meaning they required significant support to engage in kindergarten-level instruction.

### **District Selection Process**

Scores from the 2019 KRA administration reveal that 31 districts met or surpassed the overall state average for Demonstrating Readiness per comparison of district and statewide percentages for KRA (Appendix A of [2019 KRA Report](#)). Eight school districts showed double digit percentage improvements over 2018-19 KRA results. Districts obtaining this distinction include York 2, York 4, Spartanburg 4, Charleston, Georgetown, Dillion 3, McCormick, and Fairfield.

### Districts with Different than Predicted (Positive) Performance Trends

The districts featured in this section are Dorchester 4, Bamberg 2, Dillon 4, Fairfield, Horry, and Laurens 56. KRA results were used to predict SC READY in ELA and mathematics results in SC school districts. Specifically, the KRA results by district of Fall 2017 were used to predict SC READY results from 2017-18 and KRA results by district of Fall 2018 were used to predict 3<sup>rd</sup> grade SC READY results in Reading and Math from 2018-19. These analyses indicated better than predicted academic performance in the districts featured in this report in at least one aspect of staff analyses. The results in Fairfield and Horry, per this review, revealed better than predicted performance on SC READY 3<sup>rd</sup> grade English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics for both years reviewed; Bamberg 2 showed better than predicted results in ELA and mathematics for one of the two years reviewed. It should be noted that York School Districts 2, 3, and 4, which are non-CERDEP districts, are also consistent top KRA performers and yielded better than predicted results per this EOC performance review.

### Different Than Predicted Results (Poverty Index, KRA-SC Ready Results)

District	Poverty Index	KRA-2017 Percent Demonstrating Readiness	SC READY Percent Met ELA	SC READY Predicted ELA	SC READY Percent Met Math	SC READY Predicted Math
Dorchester 04	75.87	35	54.7	34.9	62.0	46.2
Bamberg 02	92.56	23	39.1	23.1	45.7	33.5
Horry 01	65.65	43	54.6	42.1	69.4	53.9
Dillon 04	93.26	18	32.2	22.8	41.6	32.9
Laurens 56	79.80	23	41.3	32.5	53.2	43.2
Fairfield 01	86.93	49	33.0	26.1	48.9	37.7

### Key District Instructional Practices in Districts with Different Than Predicted KRA Results

EOC staff contacted identified districts to request assistance with a review of factors that may have contributed to their success. Information was requested related to professional development opportunities, classroom strategies, curriculum resources, parental engagement and community partnerships that may have contributed to the successful preparation of students aged birth to five (B-5). Submissions received from districts varied in length and specificity.

**Common Practices Across Districts**

<i>Characteristics/Focus of Professional Development Opportunities</i>	<i>Curriculum Resources and Classroom Strategies</i>	<i>Parental Engagement and Community Partnerships</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing and throughout the Year; In Person</li> <li>• Early Literacy Best Practices</li> <li>• Social and Emotional Development of the Young Child</li> <li>• Instructional Coaching Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balanced Literacy Strategies</li> <li>• High Progress Family Engagement Resources</li> <li>• Creative Curriculum</li> <li>• High Scope Curriculum</li> <li>• South Carolina Early Childhood Standards (consistent focus)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Child Home Program</li> <li>• Count Down to Kindergarten</li> <li>• First Steps Partnerships</li> <li>• Head Start Collaboration</li> </ul>

**Fairfield County School District**

<i>Characteristics/Focus of Professional Development Opportunities</i>	<i>Curriculum Resources and Classroom Strategies</i>	<i>Parental Engagement and Community Partnerships</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Curriculum-professional development for all 3K and 4K teachers in early literacy best practices and numeracy (ongoing, required)</li> <li>• Formative assessments using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full day 3-year-old kindergarten (6 1/2 classes)</li> <li>• Full day 4K (8 classes) CERDEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent liaisons who work with parents and provide training via parent nights/training sessions.</li> <li>• Parent Child Home Program</li> <li>• Count Down to Kindergarten</li> <li>• First Steps Partnerships</li> <li>• Head Start Collaboration</li> </ul>

**Laurens 56**

<i>Characteristics/Focus of Professional Development Opportunities</i>	<i>Curriculum Resources and Classroom Strategies</i>	<i>Parental Engagement and Community Partnerships</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-year focus on professional development</li> <li>• STEP teams (PLCs) to focus on teaching strategies and impact on student learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Department of Education’s Early Learning Department.</li> <li>• High Progress Literacy Classroom guidelines in four-year-old classrooms</li> </ul>	

**Bamberg 2**

<i>Characteristics/Focus of Professional Development Opportunities</i>	<i>Curriculum Resources and Classroom Strategies</i>	<i>Parental Engagement and Community Partnerships</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vertical Articulation on readiness skills between prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLO - Goal setting for students</li> <li>Discipline-based Literacy Instruction</li> <li>RTI- Remediation and Intervention provided based on data-tiered instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents as Teachers</li> <li>Count Down to Kindergarten</li> <li>First Steps Partnerships</li> </ul>

**Dillon 4**

<i>Characteristics/Focus of Professional Development Opportunities</i>	<i>Curriculum Resources and Classroom Strategies</i>	<i>Parental Engagement and Community Partnerships</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner in the Pee Dee Consortium's EOC SC Community Block Grant since 2016-2017</li> <li>Teaching Children of Poverty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early language/literacy skills and positive social/emotional interactions</li> <li>Pyramid Model</li> <li>Creative Curriculum</li> <li>Opening the World of Learning (OWL) curriculum,</li> <li>Conscious Discipline</li> <li>South Carolina Early Learning Standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent Child Home Program</li> <li>Count Down to Kindergarten</li> <li>First Steps Partnerships</li> <li>Head Start Collaboration</li> </ul>

**Dorchester 4**

<i>Characteristics/Focus of Professional Development Opportunities</i>	<i>Curriculum Resources and Classroom Strategies</i>	<i>Parental Engagement and Community Partnerships</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This district emphasizes the importance of using existing resources effectively and monitoring student progress as well as positive interactions between teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DIAL 4 for Pre-K Screener</li> <li>DIAL 4 test data with MyIGIDs results for student lessons and activities development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership with First Steps Program</li> <li>Parent-Child Home Program</li> <li>Head Start Program (Encouraged Parental Participation)</li> </ul>

assistants/teachers and students as well as building K5 teacher rapport with students prior to KRA testing for positive results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Implementation of Pre-K Curriculum, Big Day for Pre-K; training for all teachers and curriculum support staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership with the Dorchester County Library</li> </ul>
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**Horry County School District**

<i>Characteristics/Focus of Professional Development Opportunities</i>	<i>Curriculum Resources and Classroom Strategies</i>	<i>Parental Engagement and Community Partnerships</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing Professional Development Topics: Monitoring program fidelity and implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SC Early Learning Standards Instructional Alignment</li> <li>• Big Day for PreK Curriculum</li> <li>• Monitoring student progress over time</li> <li>• Formal and informal data analysis to guide differentiated instruction</li> <li>• Big Day for PreK - Additional district developed resources</li> <li>• Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: CASEL: SEL Competencies Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: CSEFEL Technical Assistance Center for Social Emotional Intervention: TACSEI Family Engagement &amp; Resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Development Parent Involvement in Family Literacy/Math Night</li> <li>• Parents of children ages birth – 5-Preschool story time</li> <li>• Family-Community Outreach events.</li> <li>• HCS Adult Education Family Literacy Program- ParentChild+ Program.</li> <li>• HCS Data Office Collaboration with Head Start -KRA Data Analysis</li> </ul>

### First Steps Services in Districts with Different Than Predicted KRA Results

In addition to contacting the identified school districts, EOC staff also communicated with the Office of First Steps to identify services provided in partnership with First Steps in counties where school districts featured in this report are located. The table below summarizes the results of that inquiry.

Parents as Teachers was implemented in all four counties. Scholarships and childcare training opportunities were provided in three of the four counties. Half of the counties participated in Countdown to Kindergarten and Head Start Programs in collaboration with First Steps.

County	Bamberg	Dillon	Dorchester	Fairfield
<b>Program</b>				
<b>Parents as Teachers</b>	X	X	X	X
<b>Parent Child Home</b>			X	
<b>Scholarships</b>	X		X	X
<b>Child Care Training</b>	X	X	X	
<b>Raising a Reader</b>		X		
<b>Head Start Programing</b>		X	X	
<b>Imagination Library</b>				X
<b>Countdown to Kindergarten</b>			X	X
<b>Early Intervention/ Referral</b>			X	

*Source: SC First Steps Office*

### Descriptions of Collaborative Programs Provided in Counties of Featured Districts

#### Parents as Teachers<sup>1</sup>

The Parents as Teachers Evidence-Based Home Visiting Model is the comprehensive home-visiting, parent education model used by Parents as Teachers Affiliates. The model provides services to families with children from prenatal through kindergarten. Affiliates follow the essential requirements of the model, which provide minimum expectations for program design, infrastructure, and service delivery. Parents as Teachers provides support for affiliates to meet those requirements as well as further quality standards that represent best practices in the field. Grounded in the latest research, Parents as Teachers develops curricula that support a parent's role in promoting school readiness and healthy development of children. The program

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<sup>1</sup> <https://parentsasteachers.org>

approach is intimate and relationship-based and embraces learning experiences that are relevant and customized for the individual needs of each family and child.

### **Parent Child Home <sup>2</sup>**

Designed to promote the development of educationally at-risk pre-school children, the Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) sends trained home visitors into participants' homes to help parents become their children's first teacher and make home their first classroom. Home visitors teach parents to increase children's vocabulary through conversation, reading together, and play. They also assist children to develop pre-literacy skills so they will be on a par with their peers when they enter Pre-K. Developmentally appropriate books and toys are used to foster language development and pre-literacy skills.

### **Countdown to Kindergarten<sup>3</sup>**

Countdown to Kindergarten is a First Steps program based on other successful school transition models from around the country. The program goal is to increase the successful transition of South Carolina's most at-risk children into the K-12 school system. This effort has been identified as a promising state practice by the National Governor's Association in 2005. The program pairs the families of high-risk rising kindergartners with their future teachers during the summer before school entry. Teachers complete six visits with each family, centered upon classroom and content expectations of the school system.

### **Head Start<sup>4</sup>**

South Carolina Head Start is a federally funded program that promotes education for children from birth to age five for low-income to moderate-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. The South Carolina State Head Start Association works to create safe, healthy, nurturing learning environments for all children in South Carolina by focusing on the early years in children's lives, schools, and communities.

### **KRA in South Carolina: The Purpose**

- The purpose of the KRA assessment in South Carolina is to provide teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians with information to address the readiness needs of each student, especially by identifying language, cognitive, social, emotional, and health needs, and providing appropriate instruction and support for each child.
- The results of the screenings and the developmental intervention strategies recommended to address the child's identified needs must be provided, in writing, to the parent /guardian.
- Reading instructional strategies and developmental activities for children whose oral language and emergent literacy skills are assessed to be below the national standards must be aligned with the district's reading proficiency plan for addressing the readiness needs of each student.
- KRA has been adopted by the State Board of Education and may not be used to deny a student admission or progress to kindergarten or first grade.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.familyaccess.org/parent-child-home-program>

<sup>3</sup> <https://scfirststeps.org/what-we-do/school-transition/>

<sup>4</sup> [sc-headstart.org/](http://sc-headstart.org/)

- Every student entering the public schools for the first time in prekindergarten and kindergarten must be administered a readiness screening by the forty-fifth day of the school year.

### KRA in South Carolina: Test Administration

- The KRA includes selected-response items (multiple-choice), performance tasks, and observation items. The test consists of 50 items. All items are scripted, and the teacher reads the directions written in the Teacher Administration Manual to the students.
- Observations can take place in a variety of naturally occurring settings. Teachers can observe students individually, in small groups, or as a whole class. Observation items are scored using a rubric that includes specific criteria at three levels of proficiency: Proficient, In Progress, or Not Yet Evident.
- Professional educators who have received training and certification in the use of the KRA materials may administer the KRA assessment.

### KRA in South Carolina: Sample Test Items

#### ITEM: 1

Identify set that is "less than"

MA.3.1.D.A122

*[Sample Item Images Page 1. Point to the group of flowers above the line.]*



**SAY Look at this group of flowers.**

#### Manipulatives:

None needed for this item

*[Point to three groups of flowers below the line.]*

**SAY Now look at these groups of flowers.**

**SAY Touch the group of flowers that is MORE THAN the group of flowers at the top.**

*[Allow sufficient time for the student to indicate a group of flowers. Do not provide any cues or other interactions while the student is completing the task.]*

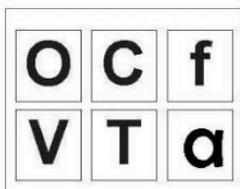
#### SCORING INFORMATION:

Score	Description
1	The student correctly touches the group of four white flowers (MORE THAN three).
0	The student does not touch the correct picture, or responds incorrectly in some other way.

**ITEM: 2**

Name letters

LL.1.3.C.A197

*[Sample Item Images Page 2.]*

**SAY** Now let's do an activity with letters. I will point to a letter, and you will tell me what the letter is. Let's do one together.

**Manipulatives:**

None needed  
for this item

*[Point to the letter O.]***SAY** What letter is this?*[Allow sufficient time for the student to respond.]**[Point to the letter O again.]***SAY** This is the letter O.*[Check to be sure the student was able to follow along. If not, remind the student to say what the letter is and do the practice activity again.]***SAY** You will do the rest by yourself.*[Point to the letter C.]***SAY** What letter is this?*[Allow sufficient time for the student to respond.]**[Point to the letter f.]***SAY** What letter is this?*[Allow sufficient time for the student to respond.]***SCORING INFORMATION:**

Score	Description
3	The student correctly names all five letters (C, f, V, T, a).
2	The student correctly names at least three letters.
1	The student correctly names at least one letter.
0	The student does not name any letter correctly.

## **KRA in South Carolina: Value of KRA Results for Stakeholders**

### **Students**

- KRA test results benefit children by identifying their strengths, weaknesses, challenges and informing instruction.

### **Teachers**

- KRA test results assist teachers with information to help them differentiate instruction and address learning gaps.

### **Families**

- KRA results inform families about their child's strengths and abilities.

### **Professional Educators**

- KRA results provide school leaders and early childhood specialists with information to target professional development.

### **Policy Makers**

- KRA results help community leaders and policy makers to make informed policy and funding decisions for preschool and early childhood programs

This section about value as presented in this report includes content compiled from informational resources and reports prepared by professional educators about the KRA assessment. Additional South Carolina specific perceptions about the value of this assessment will be included in future reports.

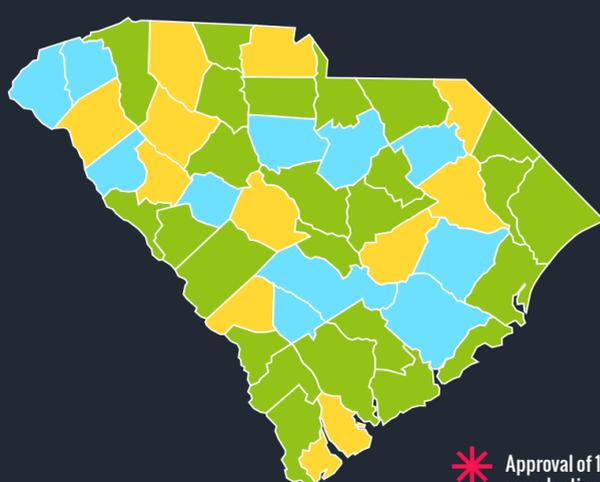


# South Carolina School District Reopening Plans

Approved Plans as of August 10, 2020

The global COVID-19 pandemic forced South Carolina public schools to abruptly close for the last nine-week quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. The entire education system, including administrators and teachers, quickly pivoted over a weekend towards remote learning and implemented necessary changes to ensure that children would continue to receive instruction even without the benefit of face-to-face instruction and brick and mortar classrooms.

It was hoped that these actions and the impact on schools would be temporary to curve the spread of the virus. However, the impact of COVID-19 is still being acutely felt by public school districts planning to reopen in the fall for the 2020-2021 school year. Below is a summary of SCDE approved district reopening plans across South Carolina.



TRADITIONAL FACE TO FACE

TRADITIONAL FACE TO FACE AT SOME SCHOOLS

HYBRID 2 DAY

\* Approval of 16 district plans is contingent upon the district and SCDE reevaluating the district's in-person option every two weeks, beginning with the district's official start date.

## RESTART PLANS

DELIVERY METHOD OPTIONS INCLUDE:



27

Traditional Face to Face



61

Hybrid



78

Virtual\*

\* There is currently much variance in the definition of what constitutes "virtual" among school districts. District reopening plans include synchronous and asynchronous learning, vendor purchased programs and district created options labeled as virtual.

OFFICIAL START DATE: NUMBER OF DISTRICTS

August 17: 17

August 18: 1

August 24: 15

August 25: 1

August 27: 1

August 28: 1

August 31: 13

September 2: 1

September 8: 29

## REOPENING PLAN CRITERIA

Plans approved by South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) must include all of the following criteria:

### 1. A virtual option for all students

- Districts may choose to deliver their own virtual program, take advantage of VirtualSC, suggest enrollment in one of the public charter virtual schools, or contract the service.
- Districts must ensure that any virtual model includes at least an initial in-person contact with students. Intermittent face-to-face contact with students is also strongly encouraged.

### 2. An in-person option for all students

- Hybrid/blended learning models will be considered an in-person option for students.
- If a five day a week face-to-face instruction model can be safely offered, districts are encourage to do so; however, it is not required for plan approval.

3. A time-frame for when districts intend to review operational plans so that implementation of a full face-to-face instruction model can be worked towards as health and safety conditions improve.

4. Establish how high quality instruction will be provided, regardless of instructional model, and demonstrate how a broad range of student services will be provided. This includes ensuring all federal and state law requirements are met.

SOURCE: <https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/covid-19-coronavirus-and-south-carolina-schools/school-district-reopening-plans/>



# Commentary: SC schools aren't underfunded, and more money won't fix them

- BY NEIL ROBINSON and JON BUTZON
- Aug 23, 2020 Updated Aug 24, 2020

Neil Robinson

Jon Butzon



We have never been more concerned about the state of education in South Carolina.

As active, long-time advocates for public education — both here in Charleston and statewide — that's a painful admission.

The impact of COVID-19 has exposed and is widening deep fissures in an education system already struggling to meet the demands of the modern world and workforce. While what we're doing may work for some children, it isn't working for far too many others.

Over the last four decades, public schools have become more and more segregated by race. Income has become the driver of this large and growing divide, with those who have the means exercising school choice by moving to a

neighborhood that has a school that works for their child. This has had the effect of resegregating schools.

As public schools struggle to reopen this fall, parents with this ability to choose have gotten a wake-up call, as they now wrestle with how to best get their children educated.

The bottom line: The one-size-fits-all status quo isn't working for students, parents or teachers. For far too long, we've been generally content to bump along as we have for decades. The simple fact is our state can no longer sustain that kind of complacency if our economy and communities are to recover and thrive. Yet as we participate in education conversations in Columbia, and observe debates among educators, it has been disheartening to see assertions long on hyperbole and politics but short on facts.

To navigate a ship, you can't get where you want to go if you don't know where you are. It's no different in education. We must have honest conversations and tell the unvarnished truth about the status of public school outcomes. No more spin. It is time to dispel the myth that more money will solve all the ills faced by the education system.

The biggest myth in South Carolina education policy is that our General Assembly has "underfunded" education.

It is true that the General Assembly has not always "fully funded" a line in the budget known as base student cost. But proponents of the underfunding narrative seem to forget about the \$12,000 or so that is spent per pupil each year, in addition to the base student cost. K-12 education is the second largest expenditure in the state budget, and when you combine federal, state and local sources, we spent \$10.4 billion on public education for the 2019-20 school year.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, that level of per-pupil spending puts us No. 3 among Southern states, with only Louisiana and Virginia spending more. Yet we remain at or near last in terms of education outcomes.

Which brings us to the crux of the S.C. Supreme Court's Abbeville decision: Our education inputs (funding) are not aligned with outcomes (student success). Or to put it in layman's terms: We aren't getting what we pay for.

At the end of 2019, the last school year for which we have data, 42% of graduates were deemed college ready, and 73% were career ready. So roughly a quarter of students graduated unprepared for their next step. Coupled with an 81% graduation rate, this means not only that thousands of students didn't graduate, but thousands more were unprepared when they graduated. What is to become of these students?

The picture when comparing fourth-grade reading scores, the key indicator of future education success, is just as discouraging. On the latest National Assessment of Education Progress results, only six states and the District of Columbia scored lower.

We have now been lapped by even Mississippi. In 2015, 60% of Mississippi students scored at or above basic, while South Carolina hit 65%. Over the ensuing four years, the Magnolia State surged to 65%, while South Carolina regressed to 61% of fourth-graders reading at or above grade level.

Acknowledging these facts, much less saying them out loud, won't win you a popularity contest. And we take no joy in saying them. But hundreds of thousands of real futures are at stake, and if we, as those who know the truth, don't bear witness, who will?

To get where we want to go, we have to know where we are, know where we want to go and not stop until we get there. Honesty, although difficult to hear, is the greatest gift we could give our students in charting a new course for education hope and opportunity.

**Jon Butzon** serves on the State Board of Education. **Neil Robinson** serves on the S.C. Education Oversight Committee and is the immediate past chair.

## Seeking Balance Amid Crisis

Risk—and, more specifically, the assessment of risk—is a top-tier concern for every district administrator and state official working to safely, efficiently open K-12 schools for the 2020-21 academic year amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of those risks are more obvious than others: the virus transmission rate in the community, the vulnerabilities of students and staff, the financial weight of unprecedented health precautions and complex, shifting logistics.

Others are less apparent, but no less significant: the cost of the pandemic's disruption on future academic achievement, and its real-time impact on learning for millions of students—many of whom can ill-afford to sacrifice their instructional opportunities.

To help school and district leaders weigh these risks, this third installment of Quality Counts 2020 provides near-term and longer-range analysis from the EdWeek Research Center on a host of data-driven indicators affecting school quality.

In addition to Quality Counts' annual summative report card for the nation and the states, this year's "Grading the States" features a Coronavirus Learning Loss Risk Index providing recent data for the decision-making process. This index draws on U.S. Census Bureau findings from the spring—at the height of the pandemic's shutdown of brick-and-mortar schooling—to assess the vulnerability of states regarding home-learning environments, especially in key areas such as access to technology and parental and teacher engagement with instruction.

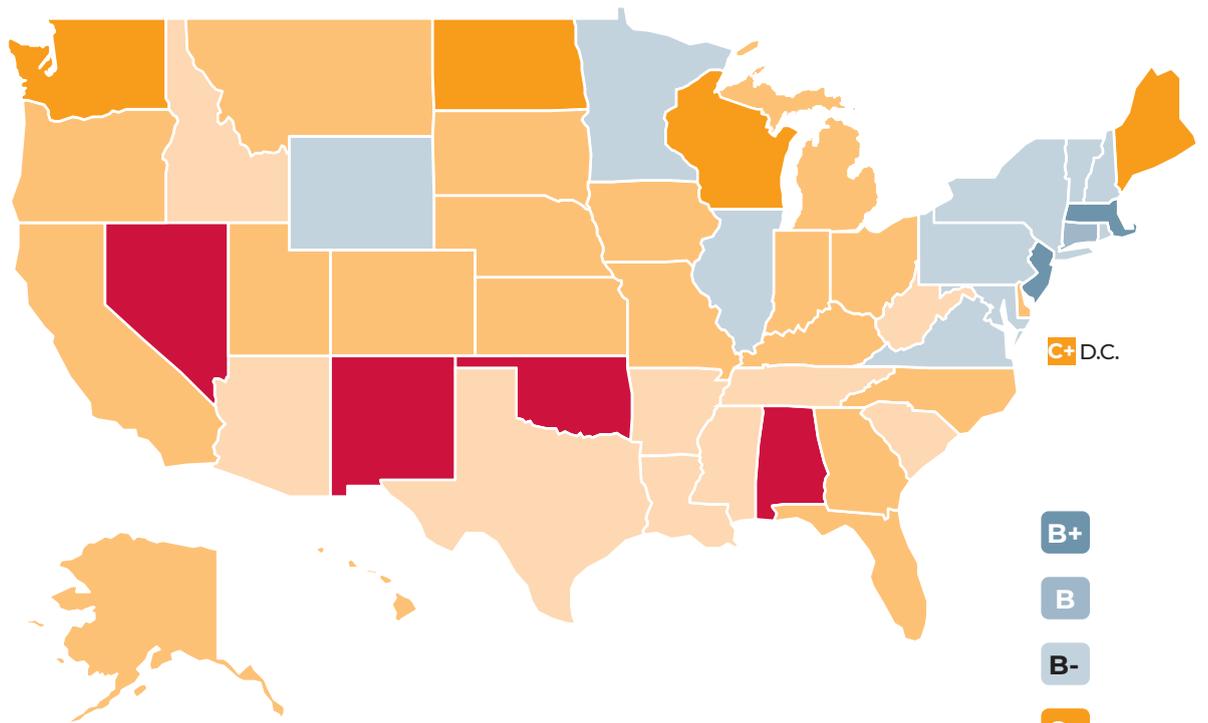
The aim of this Quality Counts installment is two-fold.

As educators and policymakers work to address schools' health and safety concerns, barriers to remote learning, and revenue losses due to the economic downturn, their efforts are heavily influenced by the academic and financial conditions already shaping their states. The summative grades and rankings, based on previous years' experience, offer crucial context for those decisions.

At the same time, the Coronavirus Learning Loss Index puts a spotlight on current conditions in the home that weigh heavily on students' ability, readiness, and likelihood of successfully navigating the challenges and shortcomings posed by COVID-19.

For more detail on findings from the Coronavirus Learning Loss Index and to access State Highlights Reports with in-depth breakouts of the data behind this year's Quality Counts grades and rankings, be sure to visit [edweek.org/go/qc20](https://edweek.org/go/qc20).

—THE EDITORS



### State Grades

New Jersey and Massachusetts post the nation's highest overall scores on the "Quality Counts 2020" report card, with the only B-plus grades. New Mexico receives the nation's lowest score and a D-plus. Three other states—Alabama, Nevada, and Oklahoma—also get D-plus grades.

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2020

# Nation's Schools Receive a 'C' As Pandemic Turns Up the Heat

By Sterling C. Lloyd & Alex Harwin

As the nation's K-12 schools struggle to open amid COVID-19's disruption, the challenges that confronted them before the pandemic—weak academic achievement, big gaps between high- and low-performing states, and room for improvement all around—remain front and center.

That's the composite picture painted by Quality Counts 2020's final grading of the nation and the states based largely on the most recent federal and state data, which gives the U.S. a grade of C on a range of academic, school finance, and long-term socioeconomic indicators.

The underlying data—which captures conditions from 2017 to 2019 on a 50-state basis—translates into a national score of 75.9 out of 100 possible points, an increase of 0.3 points from last year. While it's not a grade that's likely to prompt a confetti-filled celebration, it does reflect modest gains over 2019 results in cradle-to-career opportunities and school finance.

For the second consecutive year, New Jersey earns the top overall ranking with a B-plus grade and a score of 87.3. Massachusetts posts the only other B-plus grade at 86.7. By contrast, New Mexico receives the nation's lowest score of 66.5 and a D-plus. Three other states—Alabama, Nevada, and Oklahoma—also get D-plus grades.

This report provides overall grades and scores based on 39 indicators in three broad categories developed by the EdWeek Research Center: Chance for Success, School Finance, and K-12 Achievement.

The United States earns its highest grade (a C-plus, 79.2) on the Chance-for-Success Index, which evaluates opportunities for children to get off to a good start in early childhood, move successfully through pre-K-12 schooling, and ultimately achieve positive educational and career outcomes in adulthood. It posts a C (75.6) on the school finance analysis grading states on spending and equity in the distribution of funding across districts.

The nation receives its lowest score (72.8) and a C-grade on the K-12 Achievement Index, which gauges current performance,

trends over time, and poverty-based gaps. The comprehensive report card reveals an array of strengths and weaknesses with substantial disparities between the highest- and lowest-performing states.

The overall results featured in this installment are the average of the scores for the three categories in the report card framework. The state-by-state results for the Chance-for-Success Index were published in January and School Finance scores were released in June. The K-12 Achievement grades are newly updated for this September installment based largely on 2019 data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

The research center identified four key takeaways from this year's analysis.

### Even the top performers have substantial room for improvement.

No state earns an overall grade of A. The top-scorers—New Jersey and Massachusetts—garner less than 90 points and are about 13 points short of a perfect 100. States that are relatively strong in many respects can still use the report card to target specific areas that need work.

The pattern of indicator-by-indicator variability in performance holds true for all three of the major report categories. Results for the Chance-for-Success Index illustrate the need for even top states to aim higher. Massachusetts gets the nation's highest grade with an A-minus, but it still finishes 45th for steady employment and 42nd for linguistic integration, defined as the percent of dependent children whose parents are fluent English speakers.

The national Chance for Success leaders generally have a soft spot in at least one broad component of the index. New Jersey finishes second for indicators measuring student achievement in the K-12 years and fifth for success in adulthood but 17th on metrics gauging the degree to which children are prepared to start school. Similarly, Vermont, second for preparation in the early-childhood stage and fourth in K-12 performance, drops to

National Average



Grading  
the States

## OVERALL GRADES

## TOP-RANKED

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)
New Jersey	87.3 <b>B+</b>
Massachusetts	86.7 <b>B+</b>
Connecticut	84.1 <b>B</b>
Maryland	82.4 <b>B-</b>
Wyoming	82.3 <b>B-</b>

## BOTTOM-RANKED

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)
Louisiana	69.9 <b>C-</b>
Alabama	69.3 <b>D+</b>
Nevada	68.6 <b>D+</b>
Oklahoma	68.2 <b>D+</b>
New Mexico	66.5 <b>D+</b>

## MOST IMPROVED

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)	CHANGE 2018 to 2019
District of Columbia	77.8 <b>C+</b>	2.8 ↑
Mississippi	70.5 <b>C-</b>	2.1 ↑
Louisiana	69.9 <b>C-</b>	2.0 ↑
Nevada	68.6 <b>D+</b>	1.7 ↑
South Dakota	74.2 <b>C</b>	1.6 ↑

## LARGEST DECLINES

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)	CHANGE 2018 to 2019
New Hampshire	80.2 <b>B-</b>	-2.4 ↓
Iowa	74.8 <b>C</b>	-1.5 ↓
Indiana	74.0 <b>C</b>	-1.4 ↓
Nebraska	76.1 <b>C</b>	-1.1 ↓
Kansas	73.3 <b>C</b>	-1.0 ↓

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2020

13th for adult outcomes. No state makes it into the top five for all of the cradle-to-career stages.

When scores are averaged across the report card categories, states landing in the top 10 still fall near the very bottom on at least one of the report card's specific indicators. For instance, New Jersey stands at 47th for the percent of dependent children whose parents are fluent English-speakers. Wyoming (5th overall) is 47th in postsecondary participation. New York finishes eighth overall but ranks 43rd for parental employment. Vermont (6th overall) is 47th for kindergarten enrollment and 48th for school funding equity as measured by the per-pupil spending gap between its highest- and lowest-spending districts (\$12,865).

### New Jersey retains its crown as the top-ranked state largely due to its continued strength in school finance.

The Garden State expanded its razor-thin margin over Massachusetts, its nearest rival in the overall rankings, from a few hundredths of a point in 2019 to nearly a whole point this year. It maintained its 5.9-point advantage in school finance and cut into the Bay State's lead in the two other graded categories. In 2019, it trailed Massachusetts by 2.4 points in Chance for Success and by 3.4 points in K-12 Achievement but now falls behind by 2.1 and 2.0 points, respectively.

New Jersey ranks second, nationally, for school finance while Massachusetts is in 10th place. Although New Jersey finishes in the bottom tier for finance equity (31st), it is a pacesetter in the spending category where it trails only perennial standout, Wyoming. It ranks sixth for per-pupil expenditures at \$17,707 once figures are adjusted for regional cost differences and 99.9 percent of its students are in districts spending at or above the U.S. average.

These results are anchored by the state's commitment to education funding. It devotes 5.1 percent of its total taxable resources to education, the third-highest share in the nation.

### Large disparities between the overall scores of the highest-and lowest-performers continue.

Nearly 21 points separate the performance of New Jersey at the top of the scorecard from New Mexico at the bottom. Similar gaps define their widely differing results on each of the graded categories. New Jersey outpaces New Mexico by 21.9 points in Chance

for Success, 19.1 points in School Finance, and 21.3 points in K-12 Achievement. New Jersey lands in the top 10 on 24 of 39 report card indicators. At the other end of the scale, New Mexico is in the bottom 10 for 22 of the metrics.

### Some states have made encouraging progress over time while others have declined more than their peers.

The District of Columbia, Mississippi, and Louisiana all saw their overall scores improve by two points or more from 2019 to 2020. The District of Columbia gained the most with a jump of 2.8 points. Its Chance for Success and K-12 Achievement scores improved by 3.0 points and 2.6 points, respectively. The District's gains were fueled by solid improvements in family income, parental education, 4th grade reading and 8th grade math test scores, and high school graduation rates.

Mississippi made strides on the Chance-for-Success Index, adding 1.3 points to its score since last year largely due to improvements in parental education, 4th grade reading, and 8th grade math.

Mississippi also made the most progress in the nation on the K-12 Achievement Index from 2019 to 2020. Its score jumped by 5.2 points during that time propelled by increases in the percentage of 4th grade students proficient in math and reading on NAEP.

In some cases, 2019 to 2020 improvements bolster a trajectory that has been trending upward over more than a decade. Viewed from a longer-term perspective, the District of Columbia has seen the largest advances in the nation on the Chance-for-Success Index if 2020 results are measured against marks from 2008, the first year the index used its current scoring system. As its score jumped by 9.3 points, catapulting its letter grade from a C to a B, the District's ranking surged from 33rd to seventh.

Like the District of Columbia, Mississippi's gains contribute to a long-term climb up the mountain. Its Chance for Success grade was a D-plus in 2008. By 2020, it had improved to a C, with a gain of 6.2 points.

While some individual states made advances of two points or more in their overall scores, the nation saw increases of just 0.2 points in Chance for Success and 0.7 points in School Finance. Its score dropped by 0.2 points in K-12 Achievement.

Most states (34) receive overall grades between C-plus and C-minus, illustrating the complexity and difficulty of maintaining excellence across a diverse range of indicators. <sup>n</sup>

## The Big Picture

Catch up on how the nation and states fared on the Chance for Success and School Finance indices, first published in the Jan. 22 and June 3 installments of Quality Counts.

### State and National Highlights Reports

These online-only reports assess each state's performance on a basket of key education indicators.

[www.edweek.org/go/qc20shr](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc20shr)

### Dive Deeper Into the Data

Take an interactive tour into detailed state and national grades in critical areas of educational performance.

[www.edweek.org/go/qc20map](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc20map)

### Interactive Map

See how your state stacks up when it comes to K-12 Achievement and Chance for Success indexes.

[www.edweek.org/go/qc20interactive](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc20interactive)

# COVID-19 Learning Loss Index Reveals Big Equity Problems

By Alex Harwin & Yukiko Furuya

Students in Southern and Midwestern states appear to be at greater academic risk in key areas than those in other parts of the country as a result of pandemic-driven school shutdowns, concludes an analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data by the EdWeek Research Center.

The Research Center's new Coronavirus Learning Loss Risk Index examined time spent learning and interacting with teachers and family members during this spring's physical closures of K-12 schools, and the availability of devices and internet access that enable remote learning. The Index is designed to provide a relative—not absolute—sense of how the states compare when it comes to factors that might put students at risk of learning loss during the pandemic.

Students in Vermont were found to be the least susceptible to learning loss based on those factors, while Hawaii was the most prone to academic risks during the coronavirus outbreak, based

on the analysis, which tracks the impact on public school student learning from May 14 through May 19.

The data show students in all states, even Vermont, are at some risk, and that nearly half of states (23) are at “higher risk” or “much higher risk” of students not having access to the tools and conditions crucial for learning. The bottom nine out of 10 states flagged in the risk index are in the Midwest and the South, as defined by the Census Bureau. The data show technology gaps in the South and disparities in access to both teachers and parental support in the Midwest.

Aside from Vermont, states showing a lower risk of learning loss include Idaho, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island. Hawaii ranks as the most at-risk, alongside other higher-risk states, such as Kentucky, Louisiana, and Missouri.

Throughout the nation, the gaps in educational access between households where at least one person has a college degree or higher versus families with no post-high school degrees was wide-reaching across all measures. Forty states were found to be either at higher or much higher risk in providing education equitably to all students based on the Census data.

## Coronavirus Learning Loss Risk Index

The EdWeek Research Center's Coronavirus Learning Loss Risk Index combines results for the four overall indicators shown below with an evaluation of equity based on socioeconomic disparities across those same metrics.

### Weekly hours



household members spent on all teaching activities with children

**9**  
National Median

students spent in contact with teachers

**2**  
National Median

### Educational resources

Home internet always available

**72.4%**  
Percent of U.S. families

Devices always available at home

**70.6%**  
Percent of U.S. families



### The Picture Before COVID-19

The pandemic aside, there are underlying conditions that impact the infrastructure of states' K-12 systems and how state and local officials respond to the needs of teachers and students alike. States that were doing poorly before the pandemic based on the measures used in Education Week's overall Quality Counts summative grades and scores continue to perform poorly on the new COVID risk index.

Louisiana, which scores near the bottom on the Quality Counts index in terms of educational outcomes (K-12 Index) and cradle-to-career pathways (Chance for Success Index), ranks last when examining the percentage of weekly hours at or above the national median that household members spent on all teaching activities with children. Louisiana also ranks in the bottom five in terms of always having access to the internet and devices for educational purposes.

Louisiana's struggles are not unique, though. Students across the country are having issues accessing technology and the internet. Roughly 3 out of 10 households with public school students did not have home internet or devices always available for educational purposes as late as a couple of months after the virus outbreak began. Most states in the bottom 10 for always having access to the internet and devices are located in the South.

Mississippi ranks last when it comes to internet access always being available for educational purposes. West Virginia ranks at the bottom when it comes to devices. And both states score near the bottom on EdWeek's overall Quality Counts measures with a grade of C-minus each.

There also are gaps in access to technology devices and the internet nationally when comparing households based on educational attainment levels, especially for states that have been having difficulties trying to reopen school buildings. Virginia has the biggest difference, with children from less-educated homes seeing a nearly 40 percentage point gap in access to technological devices than their peers from more-educated households. Georgia, which has faced problems in opening school buildings amid the coronavirus spread, ranks near the bottom (49th) in terms of gaps in access to internet availability for doing schoolwork.

### Big Gaps Based on Family Education Levels

For most states, the number of weekly hours students spent in contact with teachers at or above the national median corresponds with the percentage at or above the median spent learning at home with family members.

This association is amplified for households where no one has a college degree. In most states, 25 and the District of Columbia,

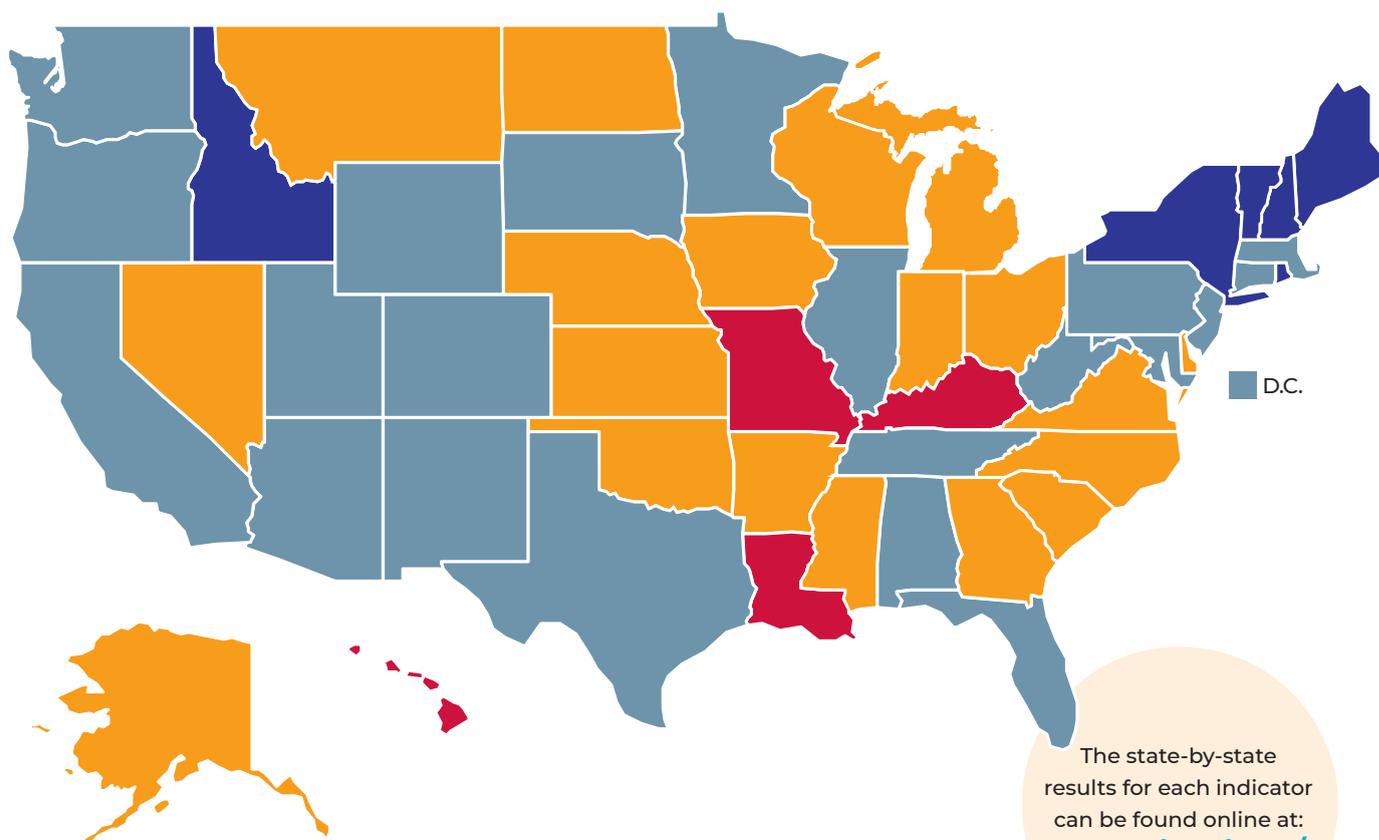
Images: Isovector/Stock

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, May 14-19, 2020

## The Pandemic's Impact

The Coronavirus Learning Loss Risk Index measures educational opportunities during the pandemic using eight indicators of instructional support and home technology access. The risk of learning loss varies across the states.

- Lower Risk
- Medium Risk
- Higher Risk
- Much Higher Risk



SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, May 14-19, 2020

The state-by-state results for each indicator can be found online at: [www.edweek.org/go/qc20](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc20)

lesser-educated households lag behind more-educated ones in terms of students having access to instruction from both teachers and family members.

This pattern appears to impact the Midwest disproportionately. Nine out of 12 Midwestern states see significant gaps in access between more- and less-educated households regarding household member and teacher learning hours. For instance, Missouri ranks 47th in educational disparities in access to learning time with household members and second from the bottom for teacher access.

Hawaii shows the largest disparity in weekly teacher interactions between more-educated and less-educated households. The gap for the nation is roughly 8 percentage points, while the gap for Hawaii is nearly 54 percentage points. Additionally, only 37 percent of household members in Hawaii spent more time in teaching activities with children than the national median or above.

Kirstyn Galius, a third-year teacher who works at a Title I school in Hawaii, went from interacting weekly with 60 students at the beginning of the school year to only two by the end of May, about two months after schools shut down in-person instruction. As she prepares for the new school year, she often finds herself calling parents to see what they need, even though some of them speak a different language than her.

One note of caution: Some of the Census data around how, and what, individual households define as “learning at home” can be ambiguous. One example: whether “learning at home” included more multifaceted learning involving outside activities with family.

“Do you think the way they [Census] are asking the question is capturing family engagement?” asked Lois Yamauchi, a parent activist and professor of educational psychology at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa. “Because the research on family engagement in education tends to be dominated by school-based activities, whereas I would argue learning and education is broader than school-based activities.”

The top- and bottom-ranking states on the COVID risk

Index, Vermont and Hawaii, also differ significantly from the rest of the country in size, population, and academic outcomes. However, there are policy implications that can apply to the rest of the nation.

### What to Learn From the Best and the Worst

In Vermont, the state may have been better positioned than others to deal with some pandemic-driven learning challenges due to Act 77 passed in 2013, which encouraged the use of personalized learning and may have increased access to devices, especially in rural environments, before the coronavirus even happened.

Hawaii, meanwhile, is a geographically diverse state with a single statewide school district. Its state schools superintendent, Christina Kishimoto, who was elected in 2017, came in under the framework of empowering schools and allowing for more school-level decision-making.

The state is considered to be at much higher risk than any other state in terms of equity based on EdWeek Research Center analysis. Hawaii has the widest gap in the amount of teacher interaction with lesser-educated households compared with more-educated ones.

Still, the district is under pressure to ensure all students can access a variety of resources that would enhance the learning environment. Under the CARES Act, the federal pandemic-relief law passed in March, the state has been able to create an IT help desk so parents can reach out if they have issues. And the district is also working to provide health-based wraparound services to help deal with the state’s immense homelessness, which affects students’ access to remote learning and teacher interaction.

One notable blank spot in the learning-risk picture for U.S. citizens: There is no public data available on the indicators tracked in the COVID risk index from the Census Bureau for Puerto Rico or any other U.S. territory. This is the case despite the fact that Puerto Rico alone, with more than 300,000 students, would be considered one of the 10 largest districts in the United States if it were part of the mainland. <sup>n</sup>

## K-12 ACHIEVEMENT GRADES

### TOP-RANKED

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)
Massachusetts	85.0 <b>B</b>
New Jersey	83.0 <b>B</b>
Florida	79.6 <b>B-</b>
Virginia	76.4 <b>C</b>
Connecticut	76.0 <b>C</b>

### BOTTOM-RANKED

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)
West Virginia	64.8 <b>D</b>
Louisiana	64.4 <b>D</b>
Alabama	64.0 <b>D</b>
New Mexico	61.7 <b>D-</b>
Alaska	61.4 <b>D-</b>

## OVERALL K-12 ACHIEVEMENT GRADES

### MOST IMPROVED

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)	CHANGE 2018 to 2019
Mississippi	69.3 <b>D+</b>	5.2 ↑
Nevada	73.2 <b>C</b>	4.1 ↑
Louisiana	64.4 <b>D</b>	3.7 ↑
Tennessee	74.1 <b>C</b>	2.7 ↑
District of Columbia	69.9 <b>C-</b>	2.6 ↑

### LARGEST DECLINES

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)	CHANGE 2018 to 2019
New Hampshire	72.2 <b>C-</b>	-5.3 ↓
Virginia	76.4 <b>C</b>	-3.6 ↓
Massachusetts	85.0 <b>B</b>	-3.5 ↓
Iowa	66.6 <b>D+</b>	-3.4 ↓
Alabama	64.0 <b>D</b>	-3.1 ↓

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2020

# Nation Shows Mediocre Academic Performance as Pandemic Continues

By Sterling C. Lloyd & Xinchun Chen

Amid unequal access to the digital devices, internet service, and instructional support that enable remote learning, the nation's academic achievement remains stalled, with a baseline of uneven performance among both low- and high-achieving states.

That's the context for the first full update of the Quality Counts K-12 Achievement Index since 2018, on which the nation receives a grade of C.

The index, which makes up one-third of a state's overall grade on the Quality Counts 2020 report card, is based largely on 2019 results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, offering a detailed portrait of where student achievement stood prior to the pandemic.

It is calculated using 18 distinct indicators in three broad categories: current achievement, trends over time, and poverty-based disparities. Results are determined by reading and math test scores from NAEP, high school graduation rates, and scores on Advanced Placement exams.

In 2019, only the high school graduation rates and AP scores were updated because data from the NAEP assessments—based on tests administered every other year—weren't available.

On this year's Achievement Index, the nation as a whole scores 72.8 out of a possible 100 points, down 0.2 points since last year. On a letter-grade basis, most states (31) earn marks of between C and C-minus. But 17 states receive a D-plus or lower.

Massachusetts (85.0) and New Jersey (83.0) lead the nation, posting the only grades of B. At the other end of the spectrum, Alaska gets the lowest score of 61.4, a D-minus. New Mexico (61.7) receives the only other D-minus grade.

The EdWeek Research Center identified five key findings from this year's analysis.

### Massachusetts earns the top spot on the index with the best overall test scores, but ranks lower for equity based on disparities by poverty status.

The Bay State ranks first in the current performance category. It places second in the nation, trailing only Minnesota, for the percent of 4th graders proficient in math on the 2019 NAEP exams and finishes first in 8th grade math proficiency. Similarly, it tops the charts for proficiency in 4th and 8th grade reading.

However, the state ranks just 20th in the equity category. Performance disparities between students eligible and not eligible for the national school lunch program remain relatively large. For instance, Massachusetts ranks 37th for NAEP scale-score differences between low-income students and their more-affluent peers in 8th grade math. Students from wealthier families score substantially higher—a gulf of 30.9 points separates them from those living in poverty.

Other high-performing states also struggle with equity.

Connecticut, for example, ranks fifth in the nation on the index, overall. But it falls to 50th for poverty-based disparities in 4th grade reading with a gap of 34.5 points and 49th in 8th grade math due to a score differential of 37 points. Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania are also in the top 10 on the complete index, but in the bottom tier for some equity measures.

### Consistent performance across metrics is the exception rather than the rule for states.

Many states have areas of both strength and weakness on the index. In fact, 24 states at some point rank in the top

10 for at least one broad component: current performance, change over time, or equity. But 27 states rank in the bottom 10 in at least one of those categories. Almost all states (47) finish in the top 10 for at least one of the index's 18 specific indicators. Nearly the same number (48) fall in the bottom 10 for at least one of those metrics. Only Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, and South Carolina were unable to crack the top 10, and only Florida, Massachusetts, and Tennessee were able to avoid a spot in the bottom group on any of the categories.

The 18 indicators on the index provide 18 distinct stories. In fact, 10 different states rank first in the nation on at least one of the metrics.

### Some high-performing states have boosted student achievement over time.

Several states have been able to post solid rankings for both current achievement and gains in student success over time. Massachusetts stands in first place for current achievement and takes the seventh spot in the improvement component of the analysis. It's 10th, for instance, in NAEP scale-score gains on 8th grade math exams where it improved by 8.0 points between 2003 and 2019.

New Jersey is second in the nation for current academic results and third for its achievement trajectory over time. It's fourth for NAEP scale-score gains in 8th grade math jumping up by 10.4 points since 2003. Maryland and Pennsylvania are also in the top 10 for current performance and the top 15 for achievement trends.

### Mississippi made the most progress in the nation on the K-12 Achievement Index.

The state's score increased by 5.2 points since last year, fueled by increases in the percentage of 4th grade students proficient in reading and math on NAEP.

Nevada improved by 4.1 points on the index, the second-highest gain in the nation. The state's grade rose from a D-plus to a C, propelled largely by advances in 4th grade reading and math.

Scores also improved by more than 2.5 points in Louisiana (3.7), Tennessee (2.7), and the District of Columbia (2.6). The District has also made strides in achievement over a longer period. It posts by far the nation's largest scale-score gains on NAEP in 4th grade reading (25.9) and math (29.7) since 2003. Mississippi has the second-largest gains in those areas, 13.9 and 17.8 points, respectively.

New Hampshire (-5.3), Virginia (-3.6), Massachusetts (-3.5), Iowa (-3.4), and Alabama (-3.1) all saw their overall index scores decline by more than three points.

### Disparities on NAEP narrowed markedly in four states, but widened substantially in others.

The 4th grade reading scale-score difference between students in low-income families and their wealthier peers narrowed by more than four points in just four states from 2003 to 2019: Illinois (-6.9), Mississippi (-5.4), Nevada (-4.8), and Florida (-4.4). In 8th grade math, only Illinois (-7.7) closed the gap by more than four points. By contrast, disparities in 4th grade reading widened by 11.1 points in Oregon and 17.2 points in the District of Columbia. In 8th grade math, gaps grew by 11.2 points in Ohio, 11.3 points in Washington, and 23.7 points in the District of Columbia.

The coronavirus pandemic has heightened concerns that such gaps in academic performance might expand further due to inequality in access to remote learning and technology. n

# Grading Summary

## QUALITY COUNTS 2020

	GRADE		Chance for Success		School Finance		K-12 Achievement	
	Grade	Total Score	Grade	Total Score	Grade	Total Score	Grade	Total Score
NEW JERSEY	B+	87.3	B+	89.1	A-	89.8	B	83.0
MASSACHUSETTS	B+	86.7	A-	91.3	B	84.0	B	85.0
CONNECTICUT	B	84.1	B+	88.0	B+	88.2	C	76.0
MARYLAND	B-	82.4	B	84.5	B+	86.9	C	75.8
WYOMING	B-	82.3	B-	81.9	A-	92.4	C-	72.4
VERMONT	B-	81.9	B+	87.7	B	86.1	C-	71.8
PENNSYLVANIA	B-	81.5	B	82.9	B	86.4	C	75.2
NEW YORK	B-	81.4	B-	82.2	B+	89.3	C	72.6
NEW HAMPSHIRE	B-	80.2	B+	87.1	B-	81.2	C-	72.2
MINNESOTA	B-	80.1	B+	87.5	C+	78.5	C	74.3
ILLINOIS	B-	80.0	B-	81.9	B-	82.1	C	76.0
VIRGINIA	B-	79.9	B	85.5	C+	77.7	C	76.4
RHODE ISLAND	B-	79.6	B-	79.8	B+	88.4	C-	70.7
WISCONSIN	C+	79.2	B	84.4	C+	77.8	C	75.4
NORTH DAKOTA	C+	79.0	B	84.8	B	83.2	D+	69.1
MAINE	C+	78.8	B-	81.9	B	84.4	C-	70.2
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	C+	77.8	B	85.7	NA	NA	C-	69.9
WASHINGTON	C+	77.6	B-	81.5	C+	77.3	C	74.0
DELAWARE	C	76.3	C+	77.8	B	83.5	D+	67.5
NEBRASKA	C	76.1	B	83.4	C	74.3	C-	70.8
OHIO	C	75.7	B-	79.7	C	75.9	C-	71.5
HAWAII	C	75.3	C+	78.7	NA	NA	C-	71.9
CALIFORNIA	C	75.3	C	76.4	C+	76.9	C-	72.5
FLORIDA	C	75.1	C+	77.6	D+	68.1	B-	79.6
COLORADO	C	75.0	B	84.0	D+	67.5	C	73.6
IOWA	C	74.8	B	83.2	C	74.5	D+	66.6
UTAH	C	74.4	B	84.3	D	64.4	C	74.4
SOUTH DAKOTA	C	74.2	B-	82.3	D+	69.4	C-	70.8
INDIANA	C	74.0	C+	78.8	C-	69.9	C	73.4
MONTANA	C	73.4	C+	79.0	C-	72.4	D+	68.7
GEORGIA	C	73.3	C+	77.4	C-	70.2	C-	72.3
KANSAS	C	73.3	B-	81.0	C-	72.4	D	66.5
NORTH CAROLINA	C	73.1	C+	79.1	D+	66.6	C	73.5
MICHIGAN	C	73.0	C+	78.0	C-	72.1	D+	68.9
OREGON	C	73.0	C+	77.9	C	74.2	D+	67.0
MISSOURI	C	72.7	C+	79.4	C-	71.3	D+	67.3
ALASKA	C	72.6	C	73.5	B	82.9	D-	61.4
KENTUCKY	C	72.6	C	76.1	C-	71.1	C-	70.5
TENNESSEE	C-	72.4	C	75.6	D+	67.6	C	74.1
ARKANSAS	C-	71.6	C	73.6	C	73.5	D+	67.6
SOUTH CAROLINA	C-	71.6	C	76.2	C-	72.4	D	66.1
TEXAS	C-	71.1	C	74.5	D+	68.3	C-	70.4
IDAHO	C-	70.6	C	76.1	D-	62.3	C	73.4
WEST VIRGINIA	C-	70.6	C-	70.9	C	76.1	D	64.8
MISSISSIPPI	C-	70.5	C	73.9	D+	68.4	D+	69.3
ARIZONA	C-	70.2	C	73.5	D	64.5	C	72.6
LOUISIANA	C-	69.9	C-	71.4	C	73.9	D	64.4
ALABAMA	D+	69.3	C	73.8	C-	70.2	D	64.0
NEVADA	D+	68.6	C-	69.9	D	62.6	C	73.2
OKLAHOMA	D+	68.2	C	73.0	D	65.8	D	65.6
NEW MEXICO	D+	66.5	D+	67.2	C-	70.8	D-	61.7
<b>U.S.</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>75.9</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>79.2</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>72.8</b>

Note: States are ranked based on unrounded scores.  
SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2020

## Methodology & Grading Scale

### How We Graded the States

The overall A-F letter grades in “Quality Counts 2020” are based on the average of scores on a traditional 100-point scale for three custom indices developed by the EdWeek Research Center: Chance for Success, K-12 Achievement, and School Finance. Each category carries equal weight in the grading.

The overall grades incorporate the most recent information available for all three categories that make up Quality Counts’ full report-card framework and reflect original analyses of federal data for 39 distinct indicators

### Best-in-Class Grading

The Chance for Success Index, K-12 Achievement Index, and School Finance Index are scored using a best-in-class rubric. Under this approach, the leading state on a particular indicator receives 100 points, and other states earn points in proportion to the gaps between themselves and the leader.

This calculation is straightforward for indicators with a clearly bounded measurement scale. Examples of such indicators include the 100-point scale for the percent of students proficient in reading, or states’ per-pupil expenditures expressed in positive dollar amounts.

But some of the indicators—such as those related to the equity of education spending—use more-complex scales for which minimum or maximum values are not as clearly defined. For such indicators, we evaluate a particular state based on its performance relative to the minimum and maximum values on that indicator. Those indicators are scored on a 50-point base, meaning that all states start with 50 points rather than zero.

To compute a state’s score for a given category, we average points across the applicable set of indicators. On a best-in-class scale, a state’s overall score for a category can be gauged against an implicit standard where 100 points would correspond to a state that finished first in the nation on each and every measure.

### The Grading Scale

Using the scoring rules already described, each state receives a numerical score for each of the indicator categories. After rounding scores to the closest whole-number values, we assign letter grades based on a conventional A-F grading scale, as follows:

- A** = 93 to 100
- A-minus** = 90 to 92
- B-plus** = 87 to 89
- B** = 83 to 86
- B-minus** = 80 to 82
- C-plus** = 77 to 79
- C** = 73 to 76
- C-minus** = 70 to 72
- D-plus** = 67 to 69
- D** = 63 to 66
- D-minus** = 60 to 62
- F** = Below 60

K-12 Achievement

	GRADE		ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL				ACHIEVEMENT GAINS			
			NAEP mathematics 2019 percent proficient		NAEP reading 2019 percent proficient		NAEP math scale score change 2003 to 2019		NAEP reading scale score change 2003 to 2019	
			4th grade	8th grade	4th grade	8th grade	4th grade	8th grade	4th grade	8th grade
MASSACHUSETTS	B	85.0	50.2	47.4	45.4	44.6	+5.7	+8.0	+3.5	+0.2
NEW JERSEY	B	83.0	48.2	44.1	41.9	42.9	+7.2	+10.4	+2.1	+2.6
FLORIDA	B-	79.6	47.5	30.6	37.7	33.9	+12.2	+7.2	+6.7	+6.1
VIRGINIA	C	76.4	47.9	37.8	38.3	33.2	+7.7	+5.4	+0.3	-6.2
CONNECTICUT	C	76.0	45.0	39.2	40.1	41.0	+2.6	+2.4	-4.0	+2.5
ILLINOIS	C	76.0	38.5	33.8	34.4	35.4	+4.5	+5.4	+1.9	-1.7
MARYLAND	C	75.8	39.1	32.6	35.1	36.0	+5.5	+2.4	+1.2	+2.8
WISCONSIN	C	75.4	44.8	41.3	35.5	38.5	+4.9	+4.7	-1.1	+0.9
PENNSYLVANIA	C	75.2	47.3	38.6	39.7	35.2	+8.0	+6.5	+4.5	-0.1
UTAH	C	74.4	46.3	37.3	40.0	37.8	+9.0	+4.3	+5.9	+3.1
MINNESOTA	C	74.3	52.9	44.2	38.1	34.2	+6.5	+0.1	-0.2	-3.9
TENNESSEE	C	74.1	39.9	31.2	34.6	31.6	+11.9	+11.9	+7.1	+4.4
WASHINGTON	C	74.0	39.3	40.0	35.1	38.5	+1.2	+4.7	-1.4	+1.8
COLORADO	C	73.6	44.5	36.9	39.7	37.7	+6.7	+1.3	+1.2	-0.3
NORTH CAROLINA	C	73.5	41.4	36.5	36.0	32.9	-0.6	+2.4	+0.1	+0.8
IDAHO	C	73.4	43.0	37.3	37.4	37.1	+7.0	+6.0	+4.2	+2.0
INDIANA	C	73.4	47.1	37.4	37.0	37.0	+6.9	+4.4	+1.4	+1.1
NEVADA	C	73.2	34.3	25.7	30.9	28.6	+8.1	+5.7	+10.7	+5.8
NEW YORK	C	72.6	36.9	33.5	34.3	32.5	+0.8	+0.7	-2.6	-3.6
ARIZONA	C	72.6	37.3	31.0	31.4	28.4	+8.7	+8.8	+7.0	+4.2
CALIFORNIA	C-	72.5	33.6	28.5	32.1	29.8	+7.3	+8.6	+10.8	+7.8
WYOMING	C-	72.4	47.8	37.1	40.6	33.9	+4.8	+2.8	+4.6	-2.4
GEORGIA	C-	72.3	36.5	31.1	32.2	32.1	+7.4	+9.8	+4.4	+4.7
NEW HAMPSHIRE	C-	72.2	45.8	38.5	38.2	37.7	+1.4	+1.0	-3.5	-2.8
HAWAII	C-	71.9	39.8	27.7	33.8	29.2	+11.7	+9.6	+9.3	+6.9
VERMONT	C-	71.8	38.8	38.3	37.1	40.2	-3.0	+1.0	-4.3	-2.0
OHIO	C-	71.5	41.1	37.5	36.1	38.1	+3.4	+4.1	+0.1	+0.5
SOUTH DAKOTA	C-	70.8	43.0	39.4	36.0	31.9	+4.0	+2.2	-0.3	-7.2
NEBRASKA	C-	70.8	45.5	36.9	36.8	33.8	+7.5	+2.8	+1.8	-2.3
RHODE ISLAND	C-	70.7	40.5	29.5	35.4	35.0	+9.0	+3.7	+3.7	+1.3
KENTUCKY	C-	70.5	39.9	29.0	35.1	33.4	+10.6	+3.8	+1.9	-3.2
TEXAS	C-	70.4	43.7	29.6	30.3	25.0	+6.3	+2.6	+1.2	-3.0
MAINE	C-	70.2	41.8	33.6	36.0	35.6	+3.1	+0.5	-2.6	-3.2
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	C-	69.9	34.2	23.0	30.1	23.0	+29.7	+26.1	+25.9	+11.1
MISSISSIPPI	D+	69.3	38.8	24.3	31.5	25.0	+17.8	+12.8	+13.9	+1.4
NORTH DAKOTA	D+	69.1	44.3	37.4	34.3	31.6	+5.4	-1.6	-0.5	-6.5
MICHIGAN	D+	68.9	35.6	31.0	31.6	31.5	+0.5	+3.8	-0.5	-1.8
MONTANA	D+	68.7	42.6	35.7	36.4	34.3	+5.4	-2.0	-1.1	-5.0
ARKANSAS	D+	67.6	33.2	27.3	31.2	29.5	+4.2	+8.6	+1.4	+0.8
DELAWARE	D+	67.5	39.1	29.2	32.5	31.0	+3.5	-0.5	-6.2	-4.9
MISSOURI	D+	67.3	39.3	31.6	34.2	33.3	+3.6	+2.0	-4.3	-4.1
OREGON	D+	67.0	37.2	31.4	33.8	34.0	+0.0	-1.4	+0.1	-0.3
IOWA	D+	66.6	42.0	32.5	35.1	32.6	+2.2	-2.3	-2.8	-5.2
KANSAS	D	66.5	40.3	32.9	33.8	32.3	-2.3	-2.0	-1.0	-3.2
SOUTH CAROLINA	D	66.1	36.3	28.9	31.8	29.3	+1.0	-1.0	+1.2	+0.9
OKLAHOMA	D	65.6	34.5	25.5	28.5	25.6	+8.1	+4.6	+2.8	-3.5
WEST VIRGINIA	D	64.8	29.6	24.1	30.3	25.3	+0.7	+1.6	-6.0	-3.9
LOUISIANA	D	64.4	28.8	23.1	25.7	27.2	+5.0	+5.3	+5.1	+4.0
ALABAMA	D	64.0	28.1	21.3	28.2	23.6	+6.3	+6.8	+4.6	+0.2
NEW MEXICO	D-	61.7	28.7	20.7	23.7	23.3	+8.6	+5.5	+4.4	+0.1
ALASKA	D-	61.4	33.2	29.0	25.1	23.3	-0.7	-4.7	-7.2	-4.0
<b>U.S.</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>72.8</b>	<b>40.4%</b>	<b>32.9%</b>	<b>34.3%</b>	<b>32.4%</b>	<b>+6.1</b>	<b>+4.9</b>	<b>+3.0</b>	<b>+0.7</b>

Note: States are ordered based on unrounded values for the K-12 Achievement Index.  
 †Values in the U.S. row report results for the nation as a whole, if it had been treated as a state.  
 SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2020

Sources & Notes

CHANCE FOR SUCCESS

The Chance for Success Index combines information from 13 indicators intended to offer perspective on the role that education in a state plays as a person moves from early childhood through the formal pre-K-12 school system and ultimately into postsecondary education and/or the workforce.

Several indicators, such as family income and parent education,

examine educational foundations in early childhood. Measures of participation and performance include reading and math scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, high school graduation rates, and other indicators. Outcomes in adulthood, such as educational attainment and annual income, form an additional component of the analysis. Most data for the index are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey.

K-12 ACHIEVEMENT

The K-12 Achievement Index examines 18 distinct measures of reading and math performance, high school graduation, and success on Advanced Placement tests. It scores states on current performance, changes over time, and poverty-based gaps. Data for the index are largely drawn from the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress.

POVERTY GAP				ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE		HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION		ADVANCED PLACEMENT		
National school lunch program non-eligible minus eligible 2019		Poverty-gap change 2003 to 2019 (negative value = narrowing gap)		NAEP math 2019 percent advanced	NAEP math percent advanced change 2003 to 2019	ACGR graduation rates (all students, public schools)		High test scores (3 or above) per 100 students in grades 11 and 12 (public schools)		
Reading 4th grade NAEP scale score difference	Math 8th grade NAEP scale score difference	4th grade	8th grade	8th grade	8th grade	2017-2018	Change 2014 to 2017	2019	Change 2000 to 2019	
26.4	30.9	-0.1	-2.9	17.8	+9.4	87.8	+1.7	49.5	+36.8	MASSACHUSETTS
29.9	37.8	-0.6	+3.4	17.3	+10.9	90.9	+2.3	48.4	+36.1	NEW JERSEY
22.0	26.9	-4.4	-1.3	8.5	+4.4	86.3	+10.2	42.4	+32.2	FLORIDA
28.0	28.0	+0.9	+0.7	11.2	+5.3	87.5	+2.2	49.8	+34.2	VIRGINIA
34.5	37.0	+1.6	+5.1	13.4	+5.1	88.4	+1.4	49.4	+37.4	CONNECTICUT
27.9	26.4	-6.9	-7.7	10.2	+4.3	86.5	+0.5	46.5	+35.7	ILLINOIS
30.1	35.4	-1.4	+5.3	11.8	+5.0	87.1	+0.7	58.5	+44.2	MARYLAND
29.0	31.9	+6.8	-1.4	12.5	+6.0	89.7	+1.1	37.2	+28.2	WISCONSIN
31.1	35.9	-2.0	+4.9	12.7	+7.6	85.9	+0.6	31.1	+23.4	PENNSYLVANIA
26.4	28.3	+6.3	+8.3	10.9	+5.2	87.0	+3.1	29.2	+12.4	UTAH
29.0	32.7	+1.7	+6.9	14.0	+5.3	83.2	+2.0	31.2	+23.9	MINNESOTA
25.1	24.9	+0.8	-3.7	8.6	+5.7	90.0	+2.8	21.1	+16.3	TENNESSEE
28.1	34.0	+6.4	+11.3	13.1	+7.0	86.7	+8.5	31.1	+25.0	WASHINGTON
29.9	31.7	+5.2	+1.7	10.7	+3.2	80.8	+3.5	38.3	+29.0	COLORADO
25.9	27.1	-1.3	-0.8	11.2	+4.0	86.3	+2.4	33.6	+24.0	NORTH CAROLINA
22.7	25.5	+4.0	+5.5	10.5	+6.2	80.7	+3.4	17.5	+12.5	IDAHO
27.2	25.8	+4.0	+4.0	10.4	+5.1	88.1	+0.2	24.2	+19.7	INDIANA
20.7	24.7	-4.8	+4.6	6.7	+4.0	83.2	+13.2	25.7	+19.9	NEVADA
30.6	27.6	+0.6	-3.4	11.2	+5.4	82.3	+4.5	44.5	+27.1	NEW YORK
28.9	21.1	-2.6	-3.4	8.8	+6.1	78.7	+3.0	22.5	+18.4	ARIZONA
31.1	35.8	+0.2	+6.0	9.6	+5.2	83.0	+2.0	43.2	+30.9	CALIFORNIA
19.6	20.7	+3.0	+3.4	8.5	+4.1	81.7	+3.1	14.3	+10.9	WYOMING
33.4	35.0	+6.0	+3.2	8.9	+4.9	81.6	+9.1	38.7	+31.5	GEORGIA
25.5	24.3	-1.0	+2.9	9.6	+3.1	88.8	+0.7	24.6	+18.3	NEW HAMPSHIRE
22.5	22.8	+1.0	+1.9	6.0	+3.6	84.5	+2.7	20.7	+15.7	HAWAII
26.5	22.6	+8.9	-0.5	11.0	+4.2	85.1	-2.7	34.4	+25.4	VERMONT
26.7	36.5	+2.6	+11.2	11.4	+6.3	82.1	+0.3	29.2	+22.8	OHIO
20.8	23.4	+0.6	+3.9	10.0	+5.2	84.1	+1.4	17.5	+11.4	SOUTH DAKOTA
24.8	26.4	+2.9	+1.4	9.1	+4.0	88.7	-1.0	16.4	+13.8	NEBRASKA
28.6	35.7	+0.0	+5.3	7.9	+4.8	84.0	+3.2	28.8	+23.6	RHODE ISLAND
23.6	25.5	+3.7	+3.0	6.9	+3.2	90.3	+2.8	26.3	+21.5	KENTUCKY
26.5	23.3	+5.0	-0.6	7.5	+3.4	90.0	+1.7	37.3	+28.4	TEXAS
22.1	24.9	+5.2	+5.3	9.1	+4.1	86.7	+0.2	25.6	+17.7	MAINE
40.7	42.0	+17.2	+23.7	7.8	+6.6	68.5	+7.1	37.5	+30.9	DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
23.6	28.3	-5.4	+4.1	5.0	+4.0	84.0	+6.4	7.7	+5.8	MISSISSIPPI
19.5	25.7	+2.6	+8.3	8.6	+3.8	88.1	+0.9	17.8	+13.1	NORTH DAKOTA
26.4	27.9	-2.2	+0.5	8.5	+3.8	80.6	+2.0	27.1	+20.0	MICHIGAN
26.0	25.3	+2.2	+6.6	9.2	+3.5	86.4	+1.0	17.4	+10.7	MONTANA
25.4	28.6	+2.7	+8.6	5.9	+3.8	89.2	+2.3	24.9	+20.7	ARKANSAS
22.8	24.5	+3.2	+0.6	7.2	+2.8	86.9	-0.1	25.9	+19.5	DELAWARE
27.2	27.1	+3.2	+4.2	7.4	+3.3	89.2	+1.9	18.2	+15.1	MISSOURI
29.5	28.1	+11.1	+8.4	9.6	+2.9	78.7	+6.7	22.0	+17.4	OREGON
25.0	26.6	+3.4	+2.8	7.1	+1.6	91.4	+0.9	16.3	+11.6	IOWA
26.9	26.1	+3.4	+5.6	9.2	+2.8	87.2	+1.5	14.2	+10.0	KANSAS
31.9	32.1	+6.0	+6.2	8.3	+3.4	81.0	+0.9	30.3	+21.4	SOUTH CAROLINA
21.5	21.7	-1.9	-0.1	5.3	+3.3	81.8	-0.9	14.0	+7.8	OKLAHOMA
19.9	19.2	+4.3	+0.7	4.8	+3.1	90.2	+5.7	14.7	+9.9	WEST VIRGINIA
27.8	28.8	-1.6	+4.7	4.4	+2.6	81.4	+6.8	12.1	+10.3	LOUISIANA
30.2	30.2	-1.4	+0.9	3.9	+2.0	90.0	+3.7	18.5	+14.8	ALABAMA
29.6	27.6	+3.3	+4.9	4.2	+2.5	73.9	+5.4	13.9	+8.7	NEW MEXICO
32.3	28.8	+0.1	+3.6	7.1	+1.4	78.5	+7.4	16.5	+8.2	ALASKA
<b>27.8</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>+1.5</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>+4.8</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>+3.0</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>+25.7</b>	<b>U.S.</b>

## SCHOOL FINANCE

The school finance analysis evaluates two dimensions of state performance: spending and equity.

To assess state spending patterns in K-12 education, the EdWeek Research Center analyzes results on four metrics: per-pupil expenditures adjusted for regional cost differences, percent of students in districts with per-pupil spending at or above U.S. average, Spending Index, and percent

of total taxable resources spent on education. State expenditures are adjusted by factors such as regional cost differences to facilitate apples-to-apples comparisons.

For the equity component of the grading, the Research Center conducts an analysis to capture the degree to which education funding is equitably distributed across the districts within a state. Equity is measured by four distinct indicators: Wealth-Neutrality Score,

McLoone Index, Coefficient of Variation, and Restricted Range.

The finance analysis is based on the most recent information available from federal agencies, which is from 2017.

Additional indicator-by-indicator details for all three graded categories can be found in the full Sources & Notes online at [www.edweek.org/go/qc20](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc20).