AGENDA

Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee Meeting

Monday, September 16, 2024
10:00 a.m.
Room 433, Blatt Building

I. Welcome ....Dr. Patty Tate

II. Approval of Minutes of May 20, 2024 ....Dr. Patty Tate

III. <u>Action Item:</u>
Cut Score Concordance of College Readiness Exams...........................
Dr. Matthew Lavery

IV. <u>Information Items:</u>
Cyclical Review of the Accountability System Update .... Dana Yow

V. EOC Strategic Plan Update .... Dr. Matthew Lavery & Dana Yow

VI. Adjournment

<u>Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee</u>

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

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Jeri McCumbee

Melissa Pender

Patty J. Tate

C. Ross Turner, III

Ellen Weaver

Dana Yow
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

Minutes of the Meeting

May 20, 2024

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

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

ASA committee chair Dr. Patty Tate opened the meeting and asked for a motion to approve the ASA committee meeting minutes from March 18. After the minutes were approved, Dr. Tate called Dr. Sara Jane Arnett forward to present the Military Connected Students annual report.

Dr. Arnett stated that she would report on the academic performance of military connected students compared to non-military connected students, provide a purple star school overview, and then conclude with findings and recommendations.

She stated the Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act was established in 2014 to enhance quality of life issues for members of the armed forces, findings and recommendation for future policies, procedures and legislation to better support military connected students.

Dr. Arnett then clarified that by federal definition, military connected students are defined as students whose parent is active duty or serves full-time in the national guard or reserves.

She also clarified that Power School was the source of the report data, clarifying that students identified in Power School by codes 00, 01 or 02 are not considered Military Connected in the report.

In regard to local level reporting, Dr. Arnett stated that 25 South Carolina School Districts reported zero military connected students which raised the question of the accuracy of self-reported data.

Dr. Arnett stated the report included more information on racial makeup, enrollment percentage by grade and Advanced Placement Exam passage of military connected students.

Dr. Arnett then addressed how military connected students outperformed nonmilitary students on the kindergarten readiness assessment (KRA). This assessment measures readiness in social

foundations, language and literacy, math, and physical wellbeing. She referred to Table 9 in the report which showed that the Military Connected Student was more likely to score Meets or Exceeds in Mathematics, ELA and Science during the 2022-2023 school year.

Next, Dr. Arnett presented the report's findings for Military Connected Students performance for the End of Course Exam, High School Graduation Rates and Attendance rates. The report indicated that military connected students outperformed nonmilitary students and all three of those sections. She suggested that Military Connected Students might perform better due to increased responsibilities from being in a military family.

Next, Dr. Arnett discussed the Purple Star Schools Program, a statewide initiative that recognizes school districts and campuses that show a concerted commitment to military-connected families. She shared that to date, there are 13 designated Purple Star Schools and two public charter schools. In addition to this, there are two school districts actively working to receive designation.

Dr. Arnett then discussed findings and recommendations from the report. Significant findings included an increase in *Active-Duty Military Wounded within the last year*, and in *Active Duty Military Deceased within last year*. Because of this finding, she reached out to the Department of Defense suicide prevention for statistics to help account for the steep increase of deceased active military.

Dr. Arnett then stated that improvement in data quality and additional research were needed. In regard to data quality issues, Dr. Arnett stated this could cause issues in fully understanding the needs of military connected students.

She also noted the lack of uniform military student identifier collection protocol. She asserted that the lack of a universal definition of a military connected student is a nationwide issue that several organizations and the federal government are trying to address.

Dr. Arnett then stated that district level reporting of military connected children excludes National Guard and Reserves. She stated this was significant considering the report's information on academic performance does not include data from National Guard or Reserve children and urged state leadership to address that issue.

She then addressed the issue with a lack of reporting and consistency so the information, stating it needed to be fixed.

This concluded Dr. Arnett's presentation.

EOC Executive Director Dana Yow thanked Dr. Arnett, noting that she brought both professional and personal knowledge to this year's report. She agreed with Dr. Arnett's emphasis on the need for improved data quality and accuracy. Yow added the finding she found surprising was the data on military connected students who had lost a parent.

Dr. Arnett then commented that in her personal experience, she has noted a lack of resources for military families during some of her family's deployment, particularly for military children who had lost their parents due to suicide.

Questions were then accepted.

Senator Dwight Loftis asked how schools are asked for their information on their military connected students.

Yow replied that the information is usually collected as a part of student registration and is done through PowerSchool, adding that there is no uniform method for collection throughout the districts. The field that parents select to indicate if their child is a military student is not mandatory, therefore a parent could just skip the question.

Senator Loftis suggested that the schools require the military field be filled out and then asked if the fields were clear.

Dr. Arnett replied that the fields were not clear and did not allow for nuances in identification or for multiple relevant fields to be selected.

Barbara Hairfield then commented that she recalled the high priority her district placed on collecting military impact aid forms because schools received money for every student with a military affiliation.

Next, Representative Terry Alexander asked what services public schools provide to military children.

Dr. Arnett referred to Purple Star Schools that provide programs, peer-to-peer mentor groups and had a point of contact for new military connected students when they begin at a new school. She also stated that schools should have a dedicated web page with a point of contact for military connected children's parents to access. She suggested schools provide professional development to staff and administration to help meet the specific challenges and emotional needs of military connected kids.

Yow then mentioned that a majority of military students are transient and might be in two or more schools in one school year which further supports the need for military connected students to have special resources.

She also stated the report suggested that some of that federal impact aid dollars could be leveraged for school districts that are supplying resources for military-connected students.

Dr. Arnett then spoke about how she utilized such resources when her family moved from Michigan to South Carolina. In addition, she spoke of how she is involved with a school district that set aside a portion of their military impact aid to employ a military student liaison.

Rep. Alexander then asked how much Federal Impact Aid comes into South Carolina.

 Dr. Arnett replied she did not have the information at the moment but could look it up.

Melissa Pender shared that Beaufort County was a Purple Star School district and that Coosa Elementary School, which she is principal of, has a full-time military liaison. Pender stated that their military liaison supports military students through running lunch groups and meeting with newly deployed students and helping to prep students for deployment. Pender said the liaison also supported students academically and emotionally.

Yow commented that she wanted to address another recommendation in the report to include military connected as a filter on the education data dashboard to showcase the importance of reporting accurate data. She noted this might encourage school districts that reported zero military connected students to collect the information.

Representative Bill Hager asked if schools received aid for students whose parents served in the National Guard.

Jason Fowler from the South Carolina Department of Veteran Affairs clarified that National Guard is included if the parent is serving full time. He also stated he would work on getting the Federal Impact Aid for the committee member who requested it.

Senator Loftis asked about the status of how students are classified.

Yow clarified they were classified through Power School.

Senator Loftis then commented his agreeance that military children generally did better academically than non-military children due to having to have more responsibility.

Dr. Arnett replied that that has seemed to be true citing personal experience with her own children. She also stated that she was impressed with what Pender shared about her school's military support for military connected children.

Rep. Alexander then asked Dr. Arnett what her ideal program for military connected children would look like.

Dr. Arnett replied that she would like a general awareness of the different challenges military children face daily. She also stated she would change the classification indicators so that military students whose parents were deceased would still receive needed services.

This concluded the question-and-answer period.

Dr. Tate asked for a motion to approve the recommendations in the report. The committee moved to approve the report recommendations.

Next, Dr. Tate called EOC Deputy Director Dr. Matthew Lavery to present an information item on the cut score concordance of college readiness exams.

Dr. Lavery reviewed that a concordance study establishes a relationship between two tests that measure similar, but not identical, constructs. He then explained how college ready benchmarks are established for the ACT and the SAT.

He presented to the committee the following three staff recommendations that were up for discussion:

- Use ACT college ready benchmarks to set ACT ≥ 21 as College-Ready, and concordance study to match with SAT ≥ 1080
- Keep current College-Ready criterion of ACT ≥ 20, and concordance study to match with SAT ≥ 1040.
- Use SAT college ready benchmarks to set SAT ≥ 1010 as College-Ready, and concordance study to match with ACT ≥ 21

He then reviewed the discussion questions committee members asked which were as followed:

- How many students (and by extension, their schools) would be affected by the proposed change?
- What do district personnel say about this proposed change?
- How well do the ACT and SAT predict college success for SC graduates?

To the first question, Dr. Lavery responded that the proposed change would reduce college ready students by .3%

To the second question, Dr. Lavery responded that he sent a follow up survey to district Teaching and Accountability personnel to ask them to rank order the priorities that the EOC could consider for College Ready criteria. Of the items, the two that ranked the highest were as follows:

- College Ready criteria should indicate evidence that a student will be successful in college.
- College Ready criteria should reflect the admissions requirements of colleges in SC.

Dr. Lavery responded that as a whole, the priorities differed vastly.

For the third question on how well do the ACT and SAT predict college success for graduates, Dr. Lavery responded that 78.7% of ACT takers go to college and 83.8% of SAT takers go to college while 65% of them persist.

Following the conclusion of his presentation, Dr. Lavery accepted questions from committee members.

Next, EOC communications manager Tenell Felder was asked to provide an update on the EOC retreat. Members were asked to ensure that they reserved their hotel room. Committee member Russell Baxley was thanked for his assistance in helping with establishing a meeting place.

Following this, the meeting was adjourned.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

DATE: September 16, 2024

SUBCOMMITTEE:
Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

ACTION ITEM:
Cut Score Concordance of College Readiness Exams

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY
§ 59-18-900(A) The Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education, is directed to establish the format of a comprehensive, web-based, annual report card to report on the performance for the State and for individual primary, elementary, middle, high schools, career centers, and school districts of the State. The comprehensive report card must be in a reader-friendly format, using graphics whenever possible, published on the state, district, and school websites, and, upon request, printed by the school districts. The school's rating must be emphasized and an explanation of its meaning and significance for the school also must be reported. The annual report card must serve at least six purposes:

(1) inform parents and the public about the school's performance including, but not limited to, that on the home page of the report there must be each school's overall performance rating in a font size larger than twenty-six and the total number of points the school achieved on a zero to one hundred scale;

(2) assist in addressing the strengths and weaknesses within a particular school;

(3) recognize schools with high performance;

(4) evaluate and focus resources on schools with low performance;

(5) meet federal report card requirements; and

(6) document the preparedness of high school graduates for college and career.

CRITICAL FACTS
According to concordance tables, the current college ready scores for the ACT and SAT used to determine college readiness in use in the accountability for the ACT and SAT are *not* equivalent to one another.
   •   The current college ready benchmarks for the ACT produce a composite score of **21**
   •   Current CCR criterion for ACT is set to 20 in Accountability Manual
   •   The current college ready benchmarks for the SAT produce a combined score of **1010**
   •   Current criterion for SAT is set to 1020 in Accountability Manual

Based on member discussion of options, the staff recommendation is to keep the current College-Ready criterion of **ACT ≥ 20**, and concordance study to match with **SAT ≥ 1040**

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS
The EOC has considered this as an information item for discussion during three ASA subcommittee meetings:
   •   November 13, 2023
   •   January 22, 2024
   •   May 20, 2024

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC
     Cost: no impact

ACTION REQUEST

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

ACTION TAKEN

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

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Date: September 16, 2024

INFORMATION ITEM:
Cyclical Review of the Accountability System

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY
§ 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/REVIEW PROCESS
The upcoming year marks the second time the accountability system will be reviewed, per state law.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC
No economic impact currently.

ACTION REQUEST

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

ACTION TAKEN

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

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
§ 59-6-100	Within the Education Oversight Committee, an Accountability Division must be established to report on the monitoring, development, and implementation of the performance-based accountability system and reviewing and evaluating all aspects of the Education Accountability Act and the Education Improvement Act.	HISTORY: 1998, Act No. 400 Established the EOC as the reviewer of the state accountability system and Education Improvement Act (EIA), which was implemented in 1984. When the Education Accountability Act (EAA) of 1998 was enacted, there was not a separate federal accountability system. SC was a forerunner in establishing a formal reporting system for evaluating the performance of public schools and school districts. With passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, SC public schools were accountable to two systems – the state accountability system AND a federal accountability system that was based on Adequate Yearly Progress and following the allowance of Education and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waivers from certain requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 which were granted to many states.	While South Carolina has witnessed improvements in student performance since passage of the Education Accountability Act in 1998, the rate of improvement has not accelerated to meet the ever-expanding needs of our state. Too many South Carolina students are ill-served by the current public education system. Will recent changes made to the growth system in the accountability system for elementary and middle schools and greater access to data tools allow schools to focus efforts and interventions for students in a more focused way?
§ 59-6-110. Duties of Accountability Division	The division must examine the public education system to ensure that the system and its components and the EIA programs are functioning for the enhancement of student learning. <u>The division will recommend the repeal or modification of statutes, policies, and rules that deter school improvement.</u> The division must provide annually its findings and recommendations in a report to the Education Oversight Committee no later than February first. <u>The division is to conduct in-depth studies on implementation, efficiency, and the effectiveness of academic improvement efforts and:</u> <u>(1) monitor and evaluate the implementation of the state standards and assessment;</u>	HISTORY: 1998, Act No. 400 Established the EOC's authority as it relates to examining EIA programs and other programs that impact school improvement. Established the EOC as authority for state accountability system, "a performance based accountability system for public education which focuses on improving teaching and	Current limitations in data collection prohibit in-depth studies that target the effectiveness of efforts – i.e. are programs/polices impacting student performance? Will current efforts of the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD) and others allow for a cohesive, usable PK-workforce longitudinal data system and strategy in order to evaluate impact and return on investment (ROI) of state dollars?

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
	(2) oversee the development, establishment, implementation, and maintenance of the accountability system; (3) monitor and evaluate the functioning of the public education system and its components, programs, policies, and practices and report annually its findings and recommendations in a report to the commission no later than February first of each year; and (4) perform other studies and reviews as required by law. The responsibilities of the division do not include fiscal audit functions or funding recommendations except as they relate to accountability. It is not a function of this division to draft legislation and neither the director nor any other employee of the division shall urge or oppose any legislation. In the performance of its duties and responsibilities, the division and staff members are subject to the statutory provisions and penalties regarding confidentiality of records as they apply to students, schools, school districts, the Department of Education, and the Board of Education.	learning so that students are equipped with a strong academic foundation."	
§59-18-120 (7), Definitions	"Performance rating" means the classification a school will receive based on the percentage of students meeting standard on the state's standards-based assessment, student growth or student progress from one school year to the next, graduation rates, and other indicators as determined by federal guidelines and the Education Oversight Committee, as applicable. To increase transparency and accountability, the overall points achieved by a school to determine its 'performance rating' must be based on a numerical scale from zero to one hundred, with one hundred being the maximum total achievable points for a school.	HISTORY: 1998 Act No. 400, Revisions made in June 2017 merged the state and federal accountability systems into one system. Established a rating system for schools based on a 100-point scale.	Does the current rating system communicate properly and transparently to students, families, and the general public? In two statewide public opinion research studies conducted by the EOC, the expectation is that 80 to 90 percent of students should be on grade level in a school rated *Excellent*; that is not true in the current system.
§ 59-18-310(B)(1)	(B)(1) The statewide assessment program must include the subjects of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies in grades three through eight, as delineated in Section 59-18-320, and end-of-course tests for courses selected by the State Board of Education and approved by the Education Oversight Committee for federal accountability, which award units of credit in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. A student's score on an end-of-year assessment may not be the sole criterion for placing the student on academic probation, retaining the student in his current grade, or	HISTORY: 1998 Act No. 400, Revisions made in June 2017 eliminated the need for students to take an exit exam to receive a high school diploma.	Did the removal of the requirement for a high school exit exam help students, schools, or the system? While we don't have impact data, students are graduating from SC high schools while not passing end-of-course exams in core content areas. The EOC is studying the prevalence of credit recovery in SC schools, which allows students to recover the credits and not pass the end-of-course exam. Does this practice help students, schools, or the system?

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
	requiring the student to attend summer school. Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, students are required to pass a high school credit course in science and a course in United States history in which end-of-course examinations are administered to receive the state high school diploma. Beginning with the graduating class of 2015, students are no longer required to meet the exit examination requirements set forth in this section and State Regulation to earn a South Carolina high school diploma.		
§ 59-18-325(8)(A)	Beginning in eleventh grade for the first time in School Year 2017-2018 and subsequent years, all students must be offered a college entrance assessment that is from a provider secured by the department. In addition, all students entering the eleventh grade for the first time in School Year 2017-2018 and subsequent years must be administered a career readiness assessment. The results of the assessments must be provided to each student, their respective schools, and to the State to: (1) assist students, parents, teachers, and guidance counselors in developing individual graduation plans and in selecting courses aligned with each student's future ambitions; (2) promote South Carolina's Work Ready Communities initiative; and (3) meet federal and state accountability requirements.	HISTORY: 1998 Act No. 400, Revisions made in June 2017 required that students be offered a college entrance exam and they must take a career readiness exam.	Some states are beginning to phase in a requirement for students to have a measure of college-or-career readiness before they can receive a high school diploma. Should SC consider a similar requirement? Are the current career readiness exam offerings providing students with something of value when they leave high school? Are the results of the assessments being used in accordance with the law, in developing and selecting courses best suited to students? Some states are also using a college readiness assessment to measure ELA and math performance at the high school level.
§ 59-18-320. Review of field test; general administration of test; accommodations for students with disabilities; adoption of new standards.	(A) After the first statewide field test of the assessment program in each of the four academic areas, and after the field tests of the end of course assessments of high school credit courses, the Education Oversight Committee, established in Section 59-6-10, will review the state assessment program and the course assessments for alignment with the state standards, level of difficulty and validity, and for the ability to differentiate levels of achievement, and will make recommendations for needed changes, if any. The review will be provided to the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, the Governor, the Senate Education Committee, and the House Education and Public Works Committee as soon as feasible after the field tests. The Department of Education will then report to the Education Oversight Committee no later than one month after receiving the reports on the changes made to the assessments to comply with the recommendations.	HISTORY: 1998 Act No. 400 Revisions made in 2017 removed obsolete language Outlines the process by which the EOC reviews and is part of the process of adoption of new standards and reviews and adopts assessments Social studies summative testing currently suspended by Proviso 1.72 in the 2024-25 Appropriation Act in all grade levels expect high school.	The EOC will need to do a review of upcoming assessments to meet the requirements of statute. The current schedule requires the EOC to review upcoming tests on this schedule: Fall/Winter 2024: Review Biology I (including Alt assessment) Fall 2025: SC READY Science; SC READY ELA; English 2 (all Alt assessments included) Fall 2026: SC READY Math, Algebra I (includes Alt)

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

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

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
§ 59-18-325(6)	Within thirty days after providing student performance data to the school districts as required by law, the department must provide to the Education Oversight Committee student performance results on assessments authorized in this subsection and end-of-course assessments in a format agreed upon by the department and the Oversight Committee. The results of these assessments must be included in state ratings for each school beginning in the 2017-2018 School Year. The Oversight Committee also must develop and recommend a single accountability system that meets federal and state accountability requirements by the Fall of 2017. While developing the single accountability system that will be implemented in the 2017-2018 School Year, the Education Oversight Committee shall determine the format of a transitional report card released to the public in the Fall of 2016 and 2017 that will also identify underperforming schools and districts. These transitional reports will, at a minimum, include the following: (A) school, district, and statewide student assessment results in reading and mathematics in grades three through eight; (B) high school and district graduation rates; and (C) measures of student college and career readiness at the school, district, and statewide level. These transitional reports will inform schools and districts, the public, and the Department of Education of school and district general academic performance and assist in identifying potentially underperforming schools and districts and in targeting technical assistance support and interventions in the interim before ratings are issued. (7) When standards are subsequently revised, the Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and the Education Oversight Committee shall approve assessments pursuant to Section 59-18-320.	HISTORY: 2014 Act No. 155 Revisions made in 2017 outlined the formation of a single accountability system. During the development of a single system, State law suspended ratings of schools and districts from school year 2014-15 until school year 2017-18. Outlines the requirement for EOC to approve assessments when standards are revised.	
§ 59-18-350. Cyclical review of state standards and assessments; analysis of assessment results.	(A) The State Board of Education, in consultation with the Education Oversight Committee, shall provide for a cyclical review by academic area of the state standards and assessments to ensure that the standards and assessments are maintaining high expectations for learning and teaching. At a minimum, each academic area should be reviewed and updated every seven years. After each academic area is reviewed, a report on the recommended revisions must be presented to the Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education for	HISTORY: 1998 Act No. 400 Revisions in 2014 provided for 7-year review of academic content standards and removed SC as part of Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium	EOC to begin review of Social Studies standards in 2025.

Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
	consideration. The previous content standards shall remain in effect until the recommended revisions are adopted pursuant to Section 59-18-355. As a part of the review, a task force of parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators, to include special education teachers, shall examine the standards and assessment system to determine rigor and relevancy.		
§ 59-18-355. Content standards revisions; required approval.	(A)(1) A revision to a state content standard recommended pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A), as well as a new standard or a change in a current standard that the State Board of Education otherwise considers for approval as an accountability measure, may not be adopted and implemented without the: (a) advice and consent of the Education Oversight Committee; and (b) approval by a Joint Resolution of the General Assembly. (2) General Assembly approval required by item (1)(b) does not apply to a revision recommended pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A), other approval of a new standard, and other changes to an old standard if the revision, new standard, or changed standard is developed by the State Department of Education. (B) A revision to an assessment recommended pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A), as well as a new assessment or a change in a current assessment that the State Board of Education otherwise considers for approval as an accountability measure, may not be adopted and implemented without the advice and consent of the Education Oversight Committee. (C) Upon initiating a change to an existing standard, including a cyclical review, the Education Oversight Committee and the Department of Education shall provide notice of their plans and intent to the General Assembly and the Governor. (D) Nothing in this section may be interpreted to prevent the Department of Education, Board of Education, and Education Oversight	HISTORY: 2014 Act No. 200 (H.3893), § 2, eff June 19, 2014. Codifies process for adoption and implementation of standards and EOC's involvement.	

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
	Committee from considering best practices in education standards and assessments while developing its own standards and assessments.		
§ 59-18-900(A) Annual report cards; performance ratings; criteria; annual school progress narrative; trustee training; data regulations; military-connected student performance reports.	The Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education, is directed to establish the format of a comprehensive, web-based, annual report card to report on the performance for the State and for individual primary, elementary, middle, high schools, career centers, and school districts of the State. The comprehensive report card must be in a reader-friendly format, using graphics whenever possible, published on the state, district, and school websites, and, upon request, printed by the school districts. The school's rating must be emphasized and an explanation of its meaning and significance for the school also must be reported. The annual report card must serve at least six purposes: (1) inform parents and the public about the school's performance including, but not limited to, that on the home page of the report there must be each school's overall performance rating in a font size larger than twenty-six and the total number of points the school achieved on a zero to one hundred scale; (2) assist in addressing the strengths and weaknesses within a particular school; (3) recognize schools with high performance; (4) evaluate and focus resources on schools with low performance; (5) meet federal report card requirements; and (6) document the preparedness of high school graduates for college and career.	HISTORY: 1998 Act No. 400, Revisions in 2017 outlines the need to document college and career readiness on the report card Outlines the purposes of the web-based school report cards Primary, career and district report cards removed in 2017.	College and career readiness measures for high school accountability are widely regarded as generous. And, in many instances, we do not have documented data that show that these measures do in fact lead to readiness in college or careers. How can high school accountability be strengthened to allow students to achieve more successful outcomes upon leaving high school? Schools with lower performance often receive more assistance. How can schools with higher performance be recognized and rewarded?
§ 59-18-900	(B)(1) The Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education and a broad-based group of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators, shall determine the criteria for and establish performance ratings of excellent, good, average, below average, and	HISTORY: 1998 Act No. 400, Revisions in 2017 tied ratings to the Profile of the SC Graduate	Do current school ratings provide a transparent picture of school performance? Do the indicators used in the current accountability system provide meaningful measures for students, schools, and the system as a whole?

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
	unsatisfactory for schools to increase transparency and accountability as provided below: (a) Excellent—School performance substantially exceeds the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate; (b) Good—School performance exceeds the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate; (c) Average—School performance meets the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate; (d) Below Average—School performance is in jeopardy of not meeting the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate; and (e) Unsatisfactory—School performance fails to meet the criteria to ensure all students meet the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. (2) The same categories of performance ratings also must be assigned to individual indicators used to measure a school's performance including, but not limited to, academic achievement, student growth or progress, graduation rate, English language proficiency, and college and career readiness. (3) Only the scores of students enrolled continuously in the school from the time of the forty-five-day enrollment count to the first day of testing must be included in calculating the rating. Graduation rates must be used as an additional accountability measure for high schools and school districts. (4) The Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education, shall establish student performance indicators which will be those considered to be useful for inclusion as a component of a school's overall performance and appropriate for the grade levels within the school.		What is the status of SCDE's measuring of skills/life and career characteristics in Profile?

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
	(C) In setting the criteria for the academic performance ratings and the performance indicators, the Education Oversight Committee shall report the performance by subgroups of students in the school and schools similar in student characteristics. Criteria must use established guidelines for statistical analysis and build on current data-reporting practices. (D) The comprehensive report card must include a comprehensive set of performance indicators with information on comparisons, trends, needs, and performance over time which is helpful to parents and the public in evaluating the school. In addition, the comprehensive report card must include indicators that meet federal law requirements. Special efforts are to be made to ensure that the information contained in the report card is provided in an easily understood manner and a reader-friendly format. This information should also provide a context for the performance of the school. Where appropriate, the data should yield disaggregated results to schools and districts in planning for improvement. The report card should include information in such areas as programs and curriculum, school leadership, community and parent support, faculty qualifications, evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students. In addition, the report card must contain other criteria including, but not limited to, information on promotion and retention ratios, disciplinary climate, dropout ratios, dropout reduction data, dropout retention data, access to technology, student and teacher ratios, and attendance data. (E) After reviewing the school's performance on statewide assessments and results of other report card criteria, the principal, in conjunction with the School Improvement Council established in Section 59-20-60, must write an annual narrative of a school's progress in order to further inform parents and the community about the school and its efforts to ensure that all students graduate with the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to be college ready, career ready, and life ready for success in the global, digital, and knowledge-based world of the twenty-first century as provided in Section 59-1-50. The narrative must be reviewed by the district superintendent or appropriate body for a local charter		

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

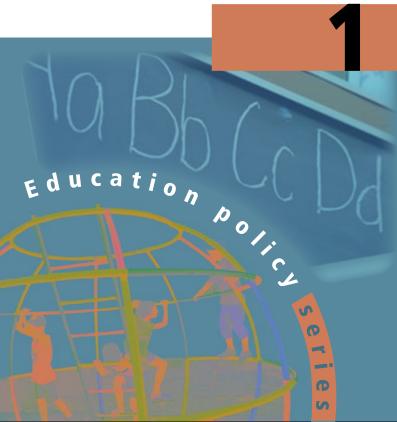| Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
	school. The narrative must cite factors or activities supporting progress and barriers which inhibit progress. The school's report card must be furnished to parents and the public no later than November fifteenth for the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 School Years. To further increase transparency and accountability, for the 2018-2019 School Year, the school's report card must be furnished to parents and the public no later than October first. For the 2019-2020 School Year, and every subsequent year, the school's report card must be furnished to parents and the public no later than September first. (F) The percentage of new trustees who have completed the orientation requirement provided in Section 59-19-45 must be reflected on the school district website. (G) The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations outlining the procedures for data collection, data accuracy, data reporting, and consequences for failure to provide data required in this 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.	HISTORY: 1998 Act No. 400, Revisions made in 2017	The first cyclical review of the system occurred in 2020; to comply with State law, the 2nd review will commence in 2025. The requirement to consider the Profile of the Graduate in the cyclical review proved a challenge in 2020; will the competency-based work that the SCDE has done help? What is the status?

SC State Code Citations and Current Budget Provisos that impact the State Accountability System

Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
§ 59-18-920. Report card requirements for charter, alternative, and career and technology schools.	A charter school established pursuant to Chapter 40, Title 59 shall report the data requested by the Department of Education necessary to generate a report card and a rating. The performance of students attending charter schools sponsored by the South Carolina Public Charter School District must be included in the overall performance ratings of each school in the South Carolina Public Charter School District. The performance of students attending a charter school authorized by a local school district must be reflected on a separate line on the school district's report card. An alternative school is included in the requirements of this chapter; however, the purpose of an alternative school must be taken into consideration in determining its performance rating. The Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education and the School to Work Advisory Council, shall develop a report card for career and technology schools.	HISTORY: 1998 Act No. 400 Latest revisions made in 2017 During the development of a single system, State law suspended ratings for schools and districts from school year 2014-15 until school year 2017-18. Beginning with the report cards for SY 2017-18, there was no requirement for districts or primary schools to receive ratings. Efforts have been made to develop primary report cards and cards for career and technology schools, to comply with this law, but each have not been successful.	We have an opportunity to develop career center report cards that are both creative and meaningful to stakeholders. How can we be successful? How can these complement work of the CCWD? Do ratings for districts need to be considered again?
§ 59-18-1960. School growth measurement system.	In measuring annual school growth, with approval of the State Board of Education and the Education Oversight Committee, the State shall use a value-added system that calculates student progress or growth. A local school district may, in its discretion, use the value-added system to evaluate classroom teachers using student progress or growth. The estimates of specific teacher effects on the educational progress of students will not be a public record and will be made available only to the specific teacher, principal, and superintendent. Furthermore, the estimates of specific teacher effects also may be made to any teacher preparation programs approved by the State Board of Education. The estimates made available to the teacher preparation programs shall not be a public record and shall be used only in evaluation of the respective teacher preparation programs. Furthermore, educator effectiveness data must be exempt from public disclosure pursuant to Section 30-4-30, and may not be subject to the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act. An institution or postsecondary system receiving the estimates shall develop a policy to protect the confidentiality of the data.	HISTORY: 2017 Act No. 94 (H.3969), § 3, eff June 10, 2017.	Will recent changes made to the growth system in the accountability system for elementary and middle schools and greater access to data tools allow schools to focus efforts and interventions for students in a more focused way?
§ 59-29-240. Civics test	(A) For purposes of this section, "civics test" means the one hundred questions that, as of January 1, 2015, and updated accordingly, officers	HISTORY: 2015 Act No. 52 (S.437), § 2, eff June 3, 2015.	Self-reported by schools

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Code/Proviso	Relevant Text	History and Explanation	Research Questions/Considerations
required; report.	of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services use in order that the applicants can demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of United States history and the principles and form of United States government, as required by 8 U.S.C. 1423. (B) As part of the high school curriculum regarding the United States government required credit, students are required to take the civics test, as defined in subsection (A), provided there is no cost to a school or school district for obtaining and giving the test, but are not required to obtain a minimum score. However, a student who receives a passing grade, as determined by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, or better, may be recognized by the school district. This requirement applies to each student enrolled in a public or charter school in this State. This requirement does not apply to a student who is exempted in accordance with the student's individualized education program plan. (C) Each public school, including charter schools, must report the percentage of students at or above the designated passing score on the test to the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee which must then include such on the school report card. (D) No school or school district of this State may impose or collect any fees or charges in connection with this section. (E) This section must be applied to any student entering ninth grade beginning in the 2016-2017 school year.		Is this the most effective measure of civic readiness and is it valuable to students, schools, and the system?
§ 59-16-70. Review of student records by Education Oversight Committee.	At the end of each semester, the State Department of Education shall provide student records, including course grades and performance on state assessments, to the Education Oversight Committee. The Education Oversight Committee shall monitor the impact of credits earned in the virtual school, on the school and district ratings, with particular attention to performance on end-of-course examinations and graduation rates.	HISTORY: 2007 Act No. 26, § 1, eff May 15, 2007.	

Accountability in education

Jo Anne Anderson

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Education policy series

International Academy of Education
International Institute for Educational Planning

UNESCO

The International Academy of Education

The International Academy of Education (**IAE**) is a not-for-profit scientific association that promotes educational research, its dissemination, and the implementation of its implications. Founded in 1986, the Academy is dedicated to strengthening the contributions of research, solving critical educational problems throughout the world, and providing better communication among policy makers, researchers, and practitioners. The seat of the Academy is at the Royal Academy of Science, Literature and Arts in Brussels, Belgium, and its co-ordinating centre is at Curtin University of Technology in Perth, Australia.

The general aim of the Academy is to foster scholarly excellence in all fields of education. Towards this end, the Academy provides timely syntheses of research-based evidence of international importance. The Academy also provides critiques of research, its evidentiary basis, and its application to policy.

http://www.smec.curtin.edu.au/iae/

The International Institute for Educational Planning

The International Institute for Educational Planning (**IIEP**) was established in Paris in 1963 by UNESCO, with initial financial help from the World Bank and the Ford Foundation. The French Government provided resources for the IIEP's building and equipment. In recent years the IIEP has been supported by UNESCO and a wide range of governments and agencies.

The IIEP is an integral part of UNESCO and undertakes research and training activities that address the main priorities within UNESCO's overall education programme. It enjoys intellectual and administrative autonomy, and operates according to its own special statutes. The IIEP has its own Governing Board, which decides the general orientation of the Institute's activities and approves its annual budget.

The IIEP's mission is capacity building in educational planning and management. To this end, the IIEP uses several strategies: training of educational planners and administrators; providing support to national training and research institutions; encouraging a favourable and supportive environment for educational change; and co-operating with countries in the design of their own educational policies and plans.

The Paris headquarters of the IIEP is headed by a Director, who is assisted by around 100 professional and supporting staff. However, this is only the nucleus of the Institute. Over the years, the IIEP has developed successful partnerships with regional and international networks of individuals and institutions – both in developed and developing countries. These networks support the Institute in its different training activities, and also provide opportunities for extending the reach of its research programmes.

http://www.unesco.org/iiep/

Education policy series

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Preface
Education policy booklet series

The International Academy of Education and the International Institute for Educational Planning are jointly publishing the Education Policy Booklet Series. The purpose of the series is to summarize what is known, based on research, about selected policy issues in the field of education.

The series was designed for rapid consultation "on the run" by busy senior decision-makers in Ministries of Education. These people rarely have time to read lengthy research reports, to attend conferences and seminars, or to become engaged in extended scholarly debates with educational policy research specialists.

The booklets have been (a) focused on policy topics that the Academy considers to be of high priority across many Ministries of Education – in both developed and developing countries, (b) structured for clarity – containing an introductory overview, a research-based discussion of around ten key issues considered to be critical to the topic of the booklet, and references that provide supporting evidence and further reading related to the discussion of issues, (c) restricted in length – requiring around 30-45 minutes of reading time; and (d) sized to fit easily into a jacket pocket – providing opportunities for readily accessible consultation inside or outside the office.

The authors of the series were selected by the International Academy of Education because of their expertise concerning the booklet topics, and also because of their recognized ability to communicate complex research findings in a manner that can be readily understood and used for policy purposes.

The booklets will appear first in English, and shortly afterwards in French and Spanish. Plans are being made for translations into other languages.

Four booklets will be published each year and made freely available for download from the web site of the International Institute for Educational Planning. A limited printed edition will also be prepared shortly after electronic publication.

This booklet

As the economies of nations compete for strong positions within a competitive global market place, many governments have become increasingly interested in the performance of all aspects of their education systems. This trend, coupled with the enormous expenditures that are devoted to education, has also precipitated widespread public requests for higher levels of scrutiny concerning the quality of education. These demands for information about school system performance can only be addressed through the implementation of systematic accountability systems.

Historically, the education profession has conformed to the requirements of regulatory or compliance accountability systems (usually based on government statutes), and has also subscribed to professional norms established by associations of educators. However, at the beginning of the 21st Century, accountability systems have also been required to respond to demands that professional performance be judged by the results that have been achieved.

This booklet offers a set of principles and strategies to be considered in the development and implementation of results-based accountability systems. Technical and political issues are addressed as well as the ways in which educators, policymakers, and community members can use the information from accountability systems to improve results.

The statements presented here about accountability systems are likely to be generally applicable throughout the world. Even so, they should be assessed with reference to local conditions, and adapted accordingly. In any educational setting or cultural context, suggestions or guidelines for practice require sensitive and sensible application, and continuing evaluation.

Jo Anne Anderson ——————

has been active in the development and evaluation of educational policy for over twenty years, serving directly or in an advisory capacity to state, regional, and national organizations.

She currently holds the position of Executive Director of the Education Oversight Committee for the state of South Carolina in the United States. This agency is responsible for the creation and implementation of the State Accountability System.

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1

Types of accountability system

There are three main types of accountability systems that are sometimes applied simultaneously in education systems.

In the field of education there are three main types of accountability system: (a) compliance with regulations, (b) adherence to professional norms, and (c) results driven. School accountability systems operate according to a set of principles and use a variety of implementation strategies. In this booklet, these principles and strategies are described, with particular attention given to the political and technical aspects of accountability. Accountability systems are not new. The differences between current systems and those employed previously are matters of "for what" and "to whom."

Educators have worked mostly within three accountability systems, often simultaneously. The first system demands compliance with statutes and regulations such as those embodied in the British Office for Standards in Education. Anchored in an industrial model of education, compliance systems view the school as the embodiment of constant processes and allow for variation in results, generally attributed to the varying characteristics of students. Simply stated, educators were **accountable for** adherence to rules and **accountable to** the bureaucracy.

The second system is based upon adherence to professional norms. Although neither mandated nor required, the impact of widespread agreement on certain principles and practices has done much to elevate education as a profession. In the United States, the curriculum and evaluation

standards for school mathematics (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989), the standards for educational and psychological testing (American Educational Research Association, 2000), and the program evaluation standards (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994) exemplify the professional norm approach to accountability. Within this system, educators are **accountable for** adherence to standards and **accountable to** their peers.

The third accountability system is based upon results, with results defined in terms of student learning. This system has emerged from increasing political involvement in education. The "No Child Left Behind" requirements in the United States and the Australian National Education Performance Monitoring Task Force are examples of results-based systems. In these systems educators are **accountable for** student learning and **accountable to** the general public.

Educators often find themselves responding to all three systems, attempting to balance the requirements of each. Professional norms complement both compliance and results systems. On the other hand, compliance and results systems often conflict. Part of this conflict stems from the fact that the emergence of results systems has been fostered by dissatisfaction with historic results; that is, those achieved under compliance systems. At present, accountability systems focus less on compliance and more on results.

What are the components of a workable, defensible accountability system that is based primarily on results, while at the same time being attentive to professional norms and regulatory compliance requirements. First, the system defines educators' responsibility for all students, regardless of the advantages or disadvantages they bring to school. Second, the system must be built upon aligned components—objectives, assessments, instruction, resources, and rewards or sanctions. Third, the technical aspects of the system must meet high standards. Fourth, the system must provide the vehicle for positive change.

2 Values and aspirations

Accountability systems embody prevailing societal values and aspirations.

The relationship between the educational attainment of citizens and the quality of their life has grown from a point of research interest to a call for action. In the second half of the 20th century governments in a number of Western nations experienced (a) low relative performance of their students on academic assessments when compared with students from certain Asian nations; and (b) a loss of historic industries (and jobs) to these nations.

Within the United States, the insistence on comprehensive accountability systems was intensified by two events: widespread publication in the popular press of results from the 1995 Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) and the 1996 National Governors Association Education Summit. The TIMSS results suggested that United States students in Grade 3 were slightly behind their peers in other developed countries and, importantly from a policy perspective, this difference increased the longer they remained in school. At the Summit the governors from almost every state committed to introduce strong accountability measures to ensure that public schools performed at the level necessary for economic supremacy. Within two years, United States educators were grappling with the change imposed by the shift in accountability systems from those based on compliance and professional norms to one based on results.

United States educators are not alone. Reviews of accountability programs throughout the world provide evidence

that accountability is an international issue. England has a national curriculum accompanied by assessments and measures for rating schools. France, Hong Kong, China, Japan, and others use national assessments to measure student and school progress and to make decisions about each. Many European systems use examinations to determine student access to the next level of education. All these systems are based on explicit definitions of what students are expected to learn and to what level they are expected to perform. Furthermore, examinations are used to monitor student learning, with the data providing the basis for changes within the system.

Educational opportunity, an extension of civil rights and economic inclusion, has been redefined: concerns for equal access and treatment have been replaced with an emphasis on equal attainment. To have equal attainment, however, variations in access and, particularly, treatment must be available to meet the needs of increasingly diverse populations of students.

This focus on equal attainment has led us back to the age-old question, "What's worth learning?" That is, what should we expect students to attain as a result of the formal education they receive? The answer to this question depends primarily on societal values. The population of students to whom this question applies depends to a great extent on the aspirations societies have for their citizens.

3 The goals of schooling

Accountability systems are based on the expectation that students can and will achieve the goals of schooling.

Traditionally, schools have been expected to teach students. However, there has been general acceptance that only those students who bring advantages to the school are likely to benefit from the exposure to this teaching. Minority students, economically disadvantaged students, disabled students, and other groups simply have not been expected to learn at the level of their advantaged peers.

Current research findings counter the premise that some students cannot benefit from schooling. Almost a quarter century ago, Ron Edmonds' (1979) work on effective schools identified principles that should underlie school practices. Subsequently, teaching practices have been identified and instructional models developed that promote high levels of learning for large numbers of students, regardless of the disadvantages they bring into the classroom. Intense study of Asian school systems suggests that the combination of national aspiration, cultural support, and individual effort overcomes both real and perceived barriers.

Assuming responsibility for the learning of all students transforms the school and the classroom environment and, to some degree, the way that teachers view their profession and themselves. The popular literature is replete with heroic educators who, despite overwhelming odds, are able to change and improve a school through their zeal. A challenge of accountability systems is to make the heroic, customary. In results-based systems, students'

learning failures are attributed to weaknesses in educational programs and practices rather than to students' characteristics and backgrounds.

Schools that are accomplishing the goal of all students achieving success are most likely to have strong and stable teachers and administrators. Strength comes from factors such as greater content knowledge and visionary instructional leadership. Stability, in terms of commitment to the school over time, is needed to shape the school culture and climate. Stability enables the development of relationships with parents and the community that are anchored in mutual trust and focused upon students' present and future needs.

Why then, is there scepticism about goals based upon all students learning? Educators may find themselves overwhelmed by the disadvantages that students bring to the learning environment over which they have no control. Educators also have little control over the resources available to them to achieve the goals. Administrators must build consensus around the goals and cultivate a professional dialogue that encourages the definition of solvable problems. This dialogue must be extended to the broader community so that the disadvantages students bring to the school can be ameliorated over time.

Workable, defensible accountability systems are built upon aligned components—objectives, assessments, instruction, resources, and rewards or sanctions.

4

The main components of accountability systems

Accountability systems should include five components: objectives, assessments, instructions, resources, and rewards or sanctions.

Analyses of current results-based accountability systems reveal agreement on five guiding questions: What do we expect students to know and be able to do? How satisfied are we that students have mastered the established content standards? How are teachers prepared to be effective in their classrooms with all students? How and to what degree is the public informed about school results and the contributors to those results? How does society respond to the information they receive about the performance of schools?

Content standards have shifted from the *trivium* of ancient Greece to today's workforce preparation. Throughout the world, education systems emphasize literacy, mathematical reasoning, scientific inquiry, and historical and social understanding to support civic participation. Within developing nations, literacy is the most often defined learning expectation. Within developed nations, the emphasis is on increasing mathematical and scientific competence. In general, curricula mirror the economic focus of nations.

The establishment of content standards impacts on the nature and structure of the curriculum. Teachers must exhibit an understanding of the structure of the curriculum both horizontally (within levels) and vertically (across levels). Access to a variety of learning resources (including supplementary materials) and extended or enriched in-

formal learning opportunities are important. In practical terms, the introduction of content standards has proceeded at a much faster pace than have the learning resources and supportive opportunities that must be aligned with the standards if the intended learning is to occur.

The use of assessments to inform decisions about students, schools, and personnel has been accelerated by the rise of results-based accountability systems. Aligned with the content standards, assessments are used to make decisions about student eligibility for and progress to the next level of school; for administrator and teacher employment and rewards; and for resource allocation. When these assessments are used in this way, they are referred to as "high stake" assessments. These "high stakes" decisions generate demands that information from assessments can be used to improve the teaching-learning process. Because they are designed for administration to large numbers of students, however, accountability assessments generally do not offer sufficient diagnostic information for teacher planning and in-class work with individual students. Some assessment programs release items and/or parallel assessments so that teachers are comfortable with both the content to be tested and the manner in which each standard is assessed.

Changes in expectations about students should lead to changes in instruction. The rapid change of the curriculum, particularly in mathematics and science, has left many teachers responsible for teaching content they may not have learned in a formal setting. Teachers also are expected to adapt their teaching for students from diverse backgrounds, exhibiting a range of motivations and prior experiences. Instead of a consistent methodology yielding differentiated results, teachers are expected to differentiate their methodologies to yield consistent results for diverse student populations.

Results-based accountability systems utilize public reporting to a greater degree than do the compliance or professional norms systems. In the latter two systems information about student performance is held within

the profession. Results-based systems rely upon widespread communication of results to parents and the general public. Many results-based systems generate school report cards or school profiles for distribution to general audiences. These reports include summaries of the performance of students or subgroups of students as well as information about resources (for example, per student expenditures), programs (for example, participation in accelerated courses), and behaviour (for example, student attendance.) Providing this information to the public has required that teachers and administrators become comfortable discussing strengths and weaknesses, explaining a variety of statistical data, and facilitating positive change. This new communications role for educators can be intimidating as educators struggle both to understand underperformance and to inspire confidence that they can lead the change process needed to improve performance.

Finally, in most results-based accountability systems performance is publicly acknowledged and rewards, sometimes financial, are provided to those schools or individuals exhibiting high and/or improving performance. Schools not succeeding are provided encouragement and often technical assistance. Technical assistance is most effective when the local school assumes ownership of the results-based change process. Schools needing to improve dramatically benefit from increased attention and resources. Yet these schools also may be overwhelmed by the infusion of new practices and greater expectations for simultaneous rapid and long-lasting change. In extreme circumstances another layer of educational governance may assume management of the school. The continuum from providing technical assistance to taking control often is ill defined. Technical assistance should provide immediate and temporary support whereas assumption of responsibility extends to governance and data management. All schools are most vulnerable when the public demands quick change, rather than exercising the patience to implement sustainable changes. Long-lasting change requires integration of remedies across community agencies and responsibilities.

5. Aligning the components of an accountability system

Attention, scrutiny, and discipline should be exercised to ensure that the five components are aligned, with concerns for alignment evident from planning through implementation.

The foundation of results-based accountability systems is clear expectations for student learning, both what students are to learn and how that learning is to be demonstrated. Thus, content standards and the accompanying assessments are the components with which the other components, most importantly, instructional materials and teaching-learning strategies, must be aligned. When content standards, assessments, materials, and strategies are aligned, students have the maximum opportunity to learn. Also, when the public understands data derived from an "aligned" accountability system, they are more likely to respond to the performance of schools in a thoughtful and supportive way.

Concerns for alignment are relatively new. Throughout much of the 20th century, textbooks formed the basis for instructional planning. Although the structure and content of textbooks changed in response to discipline-based organizations, the presumption was that textbooks incorporated all that was needed to facilitate the desired student learning. Thus, alignment was part and parcel of buying into the textbook "package". As access to multi-media and a wider range of materials increased, reliance on a primary textbook for the design of an instructional plan began to fade. Currently, the specification of content standards presumes independence from a primary text and the use of diverse materials and teaching-learning strategies.

How are decisions of alignment reached? Policy and disciplinary organizations, government agencies, and local school districts typically employ a professional judgment methodology. In the United States, the Council of Chief State School Officers (State Education Improvement Partnership, 1996) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS, 2003) are among the organizations that have developed structured processes for the review of content standards and assessments. These processes require agreement on the depth and breadth of the knowledge expected within a content standard or assessment, the degree of cognitive demand and evidence of discrete or integrated knowledge, the emphasis placed on the standard in instruction or assessment, and the ways in which student learning is reported.

These methodologies are relatively new and there are not similarly consistent strategies for use by local administrators and teachers. As studies of alignment expand to address instructional validity, practitioner tools and skills should be developed to inform local decisions about instructional materials and the teaching-learning process within each school community.

6 The use of student assessment data

Data from student assessments should be the primary source for identifying the problems to be solved.

Similar concerns for alignment are evident in the testing industry. Accountability systems emphasize student mastery of specified content and rely more on criterion-referenced assessments than on norm-referenced ones to determine how well students are learning. If these measures are misaligned with content standards, the information they yield is irrelevant to determining school effectiveness.

Assessments in results-based accountability systems must be of sufficient technical quality to support the decisions that are based on the results. In the United States, recommended voluntary standards for the construction and use of accountability systems have been developed in a collaborative project between the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing (CRESST) and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) (Baker et al., 2002). When these standards are examined in the context of the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, some general principles for using assessments in accountability systems emerge:

- Make explicit the purposes that the assessment system and individual assessments are intended to serve;

- decide on a strategy to meet the testing requirements at various grade levels;

- determine the degree to which validity evidence is available or could be accumulated for multiple purposes and "the widest possible range of students;"

- determine a standard of adequacy for technical quality; and

- make plans to acquire needed technical quality information during piloting, field trials and implementation.

Assessment systems can "lower the stakes" when educators and others have sufficient documentation that the assessments have met technical standards and there is clear understanding of how the assessment data are to be used. The stakes also are lowered when assessment data are used for positive purposes such as providing technical assistance to schools, initiating supplemental services to students, and amending policies and practices that interfere with goal attainment. When the stakes are consistently negative, the assessment data are viewed sceptically; when the stakes lead to improvements, assessment data can become accepted as an integral and necessary part of the decision-making process that leads to educational improvement.

7 Information about the context of accountability systems

Supporting information about teacher quality, curriculum rigor, and resource allocation should provide the basis for selecting or designing strategies that are most likely to solve problems.

School quality is not only evident in assessment results, but also in the diversity of programs offered, the preparation and performance of educational professionals, student behaviour and attitudes, and the relationship between the school and the community. School reports should publish contextual and programmatic information along with assessment results. This additional information provides a more complete description of the school and enhances the public's understanding of its overall performance. The information also offers a point of comparison among schools as patterns of inputs, processes, and outputs are related to levels of school performance.

Inputs include fiscal and other resources, teacher quality, students' backgrounds, and parent/community norms. Processes include the organization of schools, the curriculum and pedagogy, and opportunities for student participation in non-academic activities. Outputs include student achievement, participation, attitudes, and aspirations (Porter, 1991). Other potentially useful information includes attendance (both teacher and student), student behaviour (or misbehaviour), teacher professional development, and parents' and students' perceptions of the school. As school reports gain public attention, program advocates view publication of data as a way of ensuring much needed attention to their programs.

Collecting and reporting these data are mammoth tasks. Few countries have educational data systems with the flexibility to extract contextual information. Most reporting systems, therefore, rely upon supplementary self-reported data. As reliance on self-reporting increases, data on program characteristics are vulnerable to hurried collections, natural inclinations to present the factor positively, and inadvertent errors. At school sites, data collection is relegated to one of many tasks in a busy environment and often becomes secondary to more immediate concerns.

Results-based accountability systems require both educators and the public to understand the meaning of data, the implications of the ways in which data are aggregated, and, of greater import, ways in which the data can be used to make improvements. For example, disaggregated student mathematics scores are interesting and may point to a gap in achievement, but only when those data are interpreted within our knowledge of the curriculum and instruction are we able to determine how best to improve student performance.

8 The need for high quality information

All data collection instruments and procedures used in the construction of information systems must meet or exceed specified standards of quality.

Accountability systems demand that schools establish and maintain data bases that can be manipulated in response to a variety of inquiries. The most extensive system includes different security levels and permits inquiries on a school, classroom, or student basis. Data systems, however simple or complex, require administrative time and attention to accuracy. When the data are meaningful to those reporting them, use of the data is more likely to impact the quality of reporting. As data are used in decision-making at the school level, attention to accuracy should increase. Users of the data should not forget that while standardized collections offer uniformity and consistency, the unique aspects of a school or program may be sacrificed to standardization.

There are several ways of enhancing the validity, credibility, and positive impact of assessments used for accountability purposes while minimizing their negative effects. Linn (2000) recommends the following five actions:

- Provide safeguards against selective exclusion of students. One way of doing this is to include all students in accountability calculations.

- Make the case that high-stakes accountability requires new high-quality assessments each year that are equated to those of previous years. Failure to do this can result in distorted results (for example, inflated,

non-generalizable gains) and distortions in education (for example, narrowly teaching to the test).

- Place more emphasis on comparisons of performance from year to year than from school to school. This allows for differences in starting points while maintaining expectations of improvement for all.

- Consider both value added and status measures in the system. A value added measure provides schools that start out far from the goal a reasonable change to show improvement. In contrast, a status measure guards against "institutionalizing" low expectations for these same students and schools.

- Recognize, evaluate, and report the degree of uncertainty in the reported results. Assessments do not yield perfect data. Rather, all data are flawed in some way. The amount of error in the data as well as in the decisions made based on the data should be recognized, reported, and evaluated. In addition, the use of multiple assessments (rather than a single assessment) enables educators to better understand and take into consideration the nature and magnitude of the error.

Performance standards

There is a need to establish clear and explicit performance standards by which success will be determined.

Results-based accountability systems are based on student performance. There are three general ways in which student performance can be interpreted and reported: status of a cohort of students against a criterion; change in status of a cohort of students over time; and longitudinal change in the performance of individual students.

Status against a criterion is the simplest to collect, report, and explain. Cohorts of students are used as the unit of analysis. The report might state that "68 percent of our students in grades three through five met the standard." Extensions of this type of reporting include the percentage of students scoring at various performance levels or the achievement patterns of various subgroups.

Reporting change in status of a cohort over time is based on the assumption that school performance should improve from one year to the next, regardless of the students who make up the cohort. This report might state that the "percentage of elementary students meeting the standard this year is twelve percent higher than last year." Subgroup performance also can be reported.

In the longitudinal change model, the student, not the cohort, is the unit of analysis. Individual students are followed from one year to the next and the stability or change in performance is reported. The report might say that "This year 34 percent of students scored at a higher level than they (the same students) scored last year."

This approach provides greater measurement precision by tracking assessment data for individual students over time but requires more frequent administration of assessments.

This booklet began with the premise that current results-based accountability systems are broadening the responsibility of educational systems for all students. At the same time, however, reliable and valid measures of the impact of schooling necessitate that students be enrolled in the school for an amount of time sufficient for the school to have an impact. Therefore, in practice, accountability systems have had to address several questions.

- For what portion of the school year must students be enrolled for the school to be held accountable for their performance?

- Are there groups of students that should not be included in the system (e.g., students with severe disabilities, non-native language speakers)?

- Because the results are the basis for substantive organizational decisions and the results are available to the general public, should a minimum number of students in a group be required before the data are reported?

Performance standards simultaneously must protect the individual student, support needed changes, and promote the aspirations of the society for its educational system.

10

The generation of useful information

Accountability systems should provide data that enable educators to do their job better.

Results-based accountability systems should provide information that is understood and can be used by a variety of audiences. Systems fail when they yield only a single level of analysis and fall prey to the assumption that one report satisfies the needs of all audiences. Each audience should have sufficient information to carry out its particular responsibilities. For educators, the information must enable them to identify needed services and resources (in terms of both substance and quality) and evaluate the impact.

Stewardship of resources such as time, teacher quality, and positive working relationships with parents and the community stimulates higher levels of student performance. School personnel generally focus their energies on those elements over which they can exercise control. For example, thorough analysis of student and teacher performance data can help educators identify the conditions they can alter to increase attendance. Parents, on the other hand, view schools differently and, in surveys, have suggested that they are interested in issues of school and student safety, teacher qualifications, and student performance indicators such as dropouts or graduation rates. Parents and the community may be less interested in reviewing student demographics than educators are in presenting them. Educators argue that the demographics enable parents and the community to understand the context in which the school performances should be in-

terpreted. Parents and the community often lament that schools use the demographics as excuses for low perform-ance.

Educators tend to benefit when the results-based account-ability reports are accompanied by substantiating tech-nical information. As schools seek to improve, reports should provide a sufficiently high level of detail so that their accuracy and validity can be maintained. At various organizational levels, expanded assessment reports (for example, information about curricular strands and objec-tives, performance of subgroups of students on specific objectives) are essential to plan for program changes.

Although using indicator data has the potential to increase understanding, a balance must be achieved. Placing too great an emphasis on one factor can distort perceptions and lead to questionable decisions. For example, high levels of teacher attendance are desirable, but not at the cost of denying teachers opportunities to participate in meaningful professional development. Missing two days of face-to-face teaching to learn an effective instructional strategy could lead to higher results than perfect teacher attendance.

Some systems employ a data warehouse with varying access to levels of analysis. Parents may have access to information about their individual child but are precluded from data on other children or teacher performance. De-cisions about warehousing data should consider retrieval strategies and security.

11

Parent and community involvement

Accountability systems should provide data that increase parent involvement and community support as well as inform public policy and the allocation of resources.

Each audience should have sufficient information to carry out its responsibility within the overall accountability framework. Parents have a responsibility to make decisions for their children, to advocate for their children, and to support positive changes in the educational system (both locally and elsewhere).

Useful reports for parents are those that help them understand what is in the best interest of their child(ren). Consequently, these reports should be private, but allow for interpretation of the child's progress against explicit standards, against grade level expectations, and in comparison to peers. School reports should be provided in formats that are easy-to-read and at reading levels appropriate to the general population. Graphic representations should be used and ancillary materials provided to parents who wish to go beyond the published summary.

Parents are expected to use the information to encourage and motivate their children and as a basis for interacting with school personnel. Ultimately parents also are expected to portray the school factually to the community and to advocate citizen responsibility for creating a culture of high expectations and performance.

Policymakers range from local officials through members of state and national governing bodies. What do those

who make the rules want to know? They require information to help them understand what progress is being made, to inform their resource allocation decisions, and to enable them to ensure that the system meets not only the present requirements and needs but those of the future.

Public polices provide the framework for the actions of those who work in and benefit from results-based accountability systems. Those policies serve as both the foundation and the subject of the system. This booklet began with the premise that accountability systems embody the values and aspirations of a society. Societies communicate their values through their policies and practices.

Policymakers need to know that the measures used to assess student performance and evaluate school performance provide valid descriptions of the quality of education. They need to understand the meaning of the assessment results. They also need to know the populations of students to whom the results do (and do not) apply.

Because no society has unlimited resources, those charged with policy development must examine the available information to determine how resource allocations promote or hinder achievement of the primary goals. Patterns of allocation and usage that slow progress must be redirected.

Finally, as advocates for the future, policymakers need information to ensure that the system continues to improve. As substantive and technical challenges arise, accountability systems can be modified to focus more intently on desired learning, to assess that learning more accurately and precisely, and to communicate assessment results in proper forms to a variety of audiences. Sound and defensible policies provide for these changes, enabling growth over time.

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Strategy I: Report Facts

To support all stakeholders in making informed decisions for the continuous improvement of schools and student outcomes, the EOC will advocate for, access, and use a comprehensive, quality, statewide data system

Objective A: Enhance the EOC's direct access to comprehensive, quality, statewide data for reporting information
- Advocate for EOC staff to have secure, administrative-user access to Student Information System data
- Institute processes for EOC staff to have co-equal access to files that contain student-level data used for accountability
- Establish quality control processes to ensure accurate accountability reporting

Objective B: Advocate for the synthesis of existing data sources into a comprehensive, quality statewide data system that is secure, transparent and relevant to decision making for schools and student outcomes
- Partner with existing stakeholder groups to establish policies and processes to connect existing data systems
- Advocate for the establishment of policies and processes to ensure the security, privacy, and appropriate use of all stakeholder data

Objective C: Transform data into information that equips multiple stakeholder groups to act for the continuous improvement of schools and student outcomes
- Create information, to include data visualizations, that empowers multiple stakeholders to take more action-oriented approaches to continuous improvement of schools and student success
- Increase the use of state and school report cards and other sources of data for decision making and continuous school and student improvement
- Streamline the accessibility and transparency of information

Strategy II: Measure Change

To more accurately and efficiently measure change, the EOC will refocus accountability to emphasize school improvement and the success of students

Objective D: Align system-wide (PK-12) accountability measures with characteristics of college and career readiness (CCR)
- Study the ability of current accountability measures to predict college and career success
- Select accurate and appropriate measures of CCR progress throughout the PK-12 system
- Establish a framework to include international and national benchmarks of student success
- Monitor student CCR success and the continuous improvement of schools

Objective E: Design and implement an educational accountability system that enables stakeholders to take action and focus on continuous improvement
- Research the needs of multiple stakeholder groups to determine appropriate measures
- Develop measures to meet identified needs

Objective F: Identify and reward school accountability success
- Recognize schools that demonstrate success
- Include select awards on school report cards

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

Strategy III: Promote Progress

To more effectively promote progress throughout South Carolina schools, the EOC will strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders and promote collaborative, coordinated action for the continuous improvement of schools and student success

Objective G: Clarify the role of the Education Oversight Committee as the authority in PK-12 school accountability
- Solidify the EOC's role as responsible for the development of federal and state accountability
- Become a co-equal partner in the procurement of measures used for school accountability (e.g. assessments, surveys)

Objective H: Realign EOC resources to become a more effective advisor and honest broker to multiple stakeholder groups
- Research the needs of multiple stakeholder groups
- Serve as a bridge to connect research to policy and practice for the following stakeholder groups: policy makers, educators, families / students, and business / community leaders

Objective I: Collaborate with other agencies, schools, and organizations to jointly explore topics relevant to school and student success
- Convene stakeholders to collaboratively update the accountability standards for a Vision 2030 document
- Convene forums / speakers on relevant education topics