

South Carolina
Education Oversight Committee



2000 Annual Report

Findings and Recommendations

*To The
South Carolina
General Assembly*

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
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INTRODUCTION

In accordance with **§59-6-10, South Carolina Code of Laws**, this report is submitted to the members of the General Assembly for their consideration. The report consolidates the requirements contained in the Education Accountability Act of 1998 for the Education Oversight Committee to accomplish the following:

- (1) **review and monitor the implementation and evaluation of the Education Accountability Act and Education Improvement Act programs and funding;**
- (2) **make programmatic and funding recommendations to the General Assembly;**
- (3) **report annually to the General Assembly, State Board of Education, and the public on the progress of the programs; and**
- (4) **recommend Education Accountability Act and EIA program changes to state agencies and other entities as it considers necessary.**

The report also incorporates the work and accomplishments of the Committee, in relation to the directives and the requirements of the 1998 Act, including the requirements of § 59-18-1700 regarding a public information campaign and the requirements of § 59-6-110 regarding a report from the Accountability Division to the Education Oversight Committee.

The report, adopted by the Education Oversight Committee on February 17, 2000, is the second report of the Committee to the General Assembly. The Education Oversight Committee was organized in July 1998 in accordance with the requirements of the Education Accountability Act. The Committee has met monthly since its inception.

Membership

Members of the Committee and their appointed positions on the Committee are listed below:

MEMBER	REPRESENTATION	APPOINTMENT OF	APPOINT DATE	TERM
William Barnet, III <i>Chairman</i>	Business	Chairman House Ways and Means Committee	1998	1998-2002
Rosie Marie Berry <i>Vice Chairman</i>	Education	President Pro Tempore Senate	1998	1998-2001
Sen. James Bryan	Designee	President Pro Tempore Senate	1998	Coterminous
Dr. William Gummerson	Education	Governor	1998	1998-2002

Membership (continued)

MEMBER	REPRESENTATION	APPOINTMENT OF	APPOINT DATE	TERM
Rep. Robert Harrell	Chairman House Ways and Means Committee		1998	Coterminous
Susan Hoag	Designee	Speaker of the House	1998	Coterminous
Douglas McTeer	Designee	Governor	1999	Coterminous
Alex Martin	Education	Speaker of the House	1998	1998-2001
Sen. John Matthews	Designee	Chairman Senate Finance Committee	1998	Coterminous
Sen. Nikki Setzler	Chairman Senate Education Committee		1998	Coterminous
Joel A. Smith, III	Business	President Pro Tempore Senate	1998	1998-2002
Henry Spann	Education	Chairman House Education and Public Works Committee	1998	1998-2002
Robert E. Staton	Business	Chairman Senate Education Committee	1998	1998-2000
Lynn D. Thompson	Education	Chairman Senate Education Committee	1998	1998-2002
Rep. Ronald Townsend	Chairman House Education and Public Works Committee		1998	Coterminous
G. Larry Wilson	Business	Governor	1998	1998-2002
Stefan Wilson	Business	Chairman House Education and Public Works Committee	1999	1999-2000
FORMER MEMBERS				
Clara Heinsohn	Education	Governor	1998	Coterminous
James Bennett	Business	Chairman House Education and Public Works Committee	1998	1998-2000 <i>resigned 1999</i>

Subcommittees

Much of the work of the Committee is accomplished through its five subcommittees that are outlined here:

- (1) **Academic Standards and Assessments** is chaired by G. Larry Wilson and includes Dr. William Gummerson, Susan Hoag, Douglas McTeer and Sen. John Matthews.
- (2) **Education Improvement Act and Improvement Mechanisms** is chaired by Robert E. Staton and includes Rosie Marie Berry, Sen. Nikki Setzler, Henry Spann and Lynn D. Thompson.
- (3) **Parent Involvement** is chaired by Lynn Thompson [interim] and includes Rosie Marie Berry, Joel A. Smith, III, Stefan Wilson, and Rep. Ronald Townsend.
- (4) **Public Awareness** is chaired by Joel A. Smith, III, and includes William Barnet, III, Rep. Robert Harrell, Alex Martin, Henry Spann, Robert E. Staton, and G. Larry Wilson.
- (5) **Staff and Administration** is chaired by William Barnet, III, and includes Sen. James Bryan, Douglas McTeer, Stefan Wilson and Susan Hoag.

Committee Staff

The Committee's work is supported by seven staff persons. Dr. Jo Anne Anderson serves as Executive Director. Other staff persons include Valerie Harrison, Dr. Theresa Siskind, Trisha Pizzuti Bockus, Sharon Miller, Paulette Geiger, and Shellie Allen.

SECTION I

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE'S GOALS

At its July 1999 meeting and in subsequent actions the Committee affirmed its commitment to high achieving schools. Through conversations with political, business, community and professional group leaders the EOC developed a vision statement and related goal and objectives to guide its work. These are shown below:

Believing in the power of collaboration, the Education Oversight Committee, as a stakeholder in the journey for improvement in K-12 education in South Carolina invites other key participants to share the vision for this effort.

Shared Vision

South Carolina must unite, with a sense of urgency, to build an educational environment that fosters academic excellence and provides the children of our state with a world class education. This energetic effort will create a better future for our children and our state. It requires setting high standards and providing our students support and encouragement to reach those standards.

Shared Mission

Our mission is to effect the dramatic, results-based, and continuous improvement of South Carolina's education system by creating a truly collaborative environment of parents, educators, community leaders, and policy-makers.

Shared Values

We are guided in our efforts by the following values:

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

Shared Goal

By 2010, South Carolina's student achievement will be ranked in the top half of states nationally. To achieve this goal, we must become one of the five fastest improving systems in the country.

In pursuit of its responsibilities and our shared vision, the EOC has established its priorities for the year 1999/2000 as follows:

EOC Objectives 1999/2000

1. Continue the implementation of the Education Accountability Act.
2. Persuade others to work toward our shared vision.
3. Implement a proactive public relations effort and provide information on all EAA issues through education and engagement.

4. Collaborate with all partners to effect the implementation of a comprehensive educator-training program relative to the standards.
5. Collaborate with the Commission on Teacher Quality to achieve our shared goals.
6. Implement the approved recommendations of the Parent Involvement Task Force.
7. Serve as catalyst and form study teams on a) improving local leadership quality and engagement and b) the utilization of resources, specifically the utilization of educators, facilities, and time to meet the 2010 goal.

To determine if South Carolina meets its goal, the EOC is following three performance measures of school results which can be used in comparisons with the performance of other state systems: student performance on the **National Assessment of Educational Progress tests**; **high school completion rate**; and **Advanced Placement success rates**. These measures are reported annually by the National Education Goals Panel. Current performance is shown in the tables or notes below.

Table One
National Assessment of Educational Progress
(administered to a sample of students)

	Average Scale Scores for South Carolina, the Southeast, and the Nation			Comparison of SC with Other Jurisdictions		
	South Carolina	The Southeast	The Nation	Higher than SC*	Same as & Including SC	Below SC*
1996 Grade 8 Science (0-300)	139	141	148	31	7	5
1996 Grade 4 Math (0-500)	213	216	222	32	9	4
1996 Grade 8 Math (0-500)	261	264	271	27	11	4
1998 Grade 4 Reading (0-500)	210	210	215	25	12	4
1998 Grade 8 Reading (0-500)	255	258	261	23	11	4

(Administered to a sample of students, cyclically, in participating jurisdictions including states, U.S. territories, and Department of Defense schools.)

*Number of jurisdictions with significantly higher/lower percentages of students scoring at or above Proficient.

High School Completion Rates

*National Education Goals Panel (1997): 89% (defined as the percentage of non-high-school enrolled population ages 18-24 that hold high school credentials)

*SC State Department of Education (1996): 69% (defined as grade 8 to grade 12 completion rate)

Advanced Placement Passage Rate

*National Education Goals Panel (1998): 96 per 1,000 eleventh and twelfth grades received a grade of 3 or higher

*SC State Department of Education (1998): Of 14,921 exams administered, 54.2 % were scored 3 or higher

SECTION II

STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

§ 59-18-1700

APPRIISING THE PUBLIC OF THE STATUS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HIGH STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Public and Educator Attitudes toward the Education Accountability Act and the Importance of Improvement:

As a part of its continuing responsibilities for a public awareness campaign, the Committee has conducted several initiatives including the production of a video on the purpose of the accountability system. The video and related print materials were distributed to all South Carolina schools, local chambers of commerce and to School Improvement Councils.

The Committee has published two *Bulletins* apprising members of the education community and other interested parties of the status of Committee work, particularly the development of the report card.

Committee members and staff have participated in numerous professional meetings providing information on the status of the accountability system and the Committee's responsibilities.

The Committee has developed two partnerships with professional communications organizations to build understanding of the educational challenges before South Carolina and the productive utilization of the school and district report card. These partnerships are with the SC Broadcasters' Association and the SC Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association.

The Committee, through a private contractor, conducted focus groups across South Carolina to learn about South Carolinians perceptions of the school ratings and the critical elements that should be included in those ratings. South Carolinians recommended actions that cluster into four categories:

- South Carolina's schools should be held to national performance levels;
- All students should be expected to achieve at the same levels;
- The information on the report card should be used to build strong schools not to demoralize communities and educators; and
- The State should provide the technical assistance and comprehensive support to address the achievement shortcomings.

§ 59-18-900

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT CARD: THE EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE, WORKING WITH THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, IS DIRECTED TO ESTABLISH AN ANNUAL REPORT CARD AND ITS FORMAT TO REPORT ON THE PERFORMANCE FOR INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, HIGH SCHOOLS, VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS, ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS, AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE STATE. THE REPORT CARD IS TO SERVE FOUR PURPOSES:

- **inform parents and the public about the school's performance;**
- **assist in addressing the strengths and weaknesses within a particular school**
- **recognize schools with high performance; and**
- **evaluate and focus resources on schools with low performance.**

Through a series of reviews, drafts of the annual school and *district* report card have been developed. Advice and counsel from the State Board of Education and the School to Work Advisory Committee has yielded a number of changes designed to increase the utility of the information by educators, parents and community leaders. In late March the Education Oversight Committee is to establish the data elements for the report card, including the student characteristics that are to define school groupings, the indicators of school or district performance, school facts or descriptors, and the format of the report card.

After a number of simulations, the Committee staff has defined two methodologies for calculating the ratings. One methodology employs a weighted average system; another methodology uses the distributional pattern of student scores. Following administration and analysis of the 2000 PACT data the Committee shall establish the single methodology and the scores fitting the school or district rating categories of Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average and Unsatisfactory.

The report card is to be published in November 2001. Ratings for the absolute performance level are to be calculated using 2001 PACT performance. Ratings for the improvement ratings use a longitudinal match and are based upon gains in student performance using 2000 PACT performance as the base against which gains in 2001 are measured.

§ 59-18-100

DEVELOPMENT, ESTABLISHMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE OF AN ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

The Education Accountability Act of 1998 calls for "the acceptance of the responsibility for improving student performance and taking actions to improve classroom practice and school performance by the Governor, the General Assembly, the State Department of Education, colleges and universities, local school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community".

During this initial year there have been a number of actions taken by individuals and groups to shape and implement South Carolina's accountability system. The

Governor initiated the Governor's Institute on Reading, a professional development program for teachers, and First Steps, a community-based program to improve the quality of children's early life experiences so that they enter school "ready to learn." The State Superintendent also invested in professional development through the initiation of the Principals' Executive Institute and teacher workshops on the standards. The State Department of Education has been reorganized to improve basic services to schools. The General Assembly increased teacher salaries, funded a capital improvement program for the construction and/or renovation of school buildings, and expanded technical assistance services offered through the State Department of Education. One of the most significant steps in the assumption of accountability for improving classroom practices and school performance occurred when the State Superintendent assumed the administration of the Allendale County Schools after the school district had failed to implement improvement strategies.

With respect to those actions required by the Education Accountability Act, the State has made progress by establishing the policies and guidelines for the program. The State Department of Education provides initial technical assistance to the twenty-nine (29) schools in districts identified as "in greatest need of technical assistance."

Table Two
Implementation Status of Education Accountability Act Provisions

Statutory Citation	Provision	Status
59-18-300	Content Standards	Math, English, and Science adopted, Social Studies in review
59-18-360	Cyclical Review of Standards	Begins with mathematics in June 2000
59-18-310-370	Assessments	Math, English implemented in grades 3-8
59-18-910	Levels of difficulty reports	Ongoing, with assessments as developed
59-18-340	Norm-referenced test	Terra Nova selected, first administered in 1999
59-18-370	Longitudinal matched data	SDE to develop
59-18-350	PSAT/PLAN offered to grade 10	Implemented in 1998
59-18-500	Academic Plans	Implemented in 1998
59-18-700	Instructional materials alignment	Incorporated into SDE adoption cycle
59-18-710	Revise accreditation criteria	To be drafted June 2000
59-18-900	Annual report card	Development on schedule for 2001 publication
59-18-900	Criteria for performance ratings	To be drafted in Summer 2000
59-18-1100	Gold and Silver Awards criteria	To be drafted by Summer 2000
59-18-1110	Flexibility Guidelines	To be drafted by Summer 2000
59-18-1300	District Accountability Systems	Implemented in 1999
59-18-1500-1510	Intervention and Assistance	Currently serving 29 schools in 7 districts
59-18-1510	Criteria for review team	Established in Spring 1999
59-18-1520	Teacher specialists	Criteria set in 1998; implemented in 1999 in 7 districts
59-18-1530	Principal specialists	Criteria set in 1999; implemented in 1999 in one school; evaluation underway
59-18-1540	Principal Mentoring program	Established and implemented in 1998
59-18-1550	Rectification credit	SDE establishes criteria
59-18-1560	Retraining Grants	Implemented in 1998; evaluated in 1999; modifications proposed for 2000
59-18-1560	Public School Assistance Fund (SBE)	Not established
59-18-1700	Public Awareness Campaign	Initiated in 1999
59-18-1900	Alternative Schools Grants	Implemented in 1998
59-18-1910	Homework Center Grants	Implemented in 1998 in 7 districts
59-18-1920	Modified School Year Grant	Implemented in 1998 in 5 districts
59-18-1930	Professional Development Review	Review under contract, final report due in December 2000
59-24-10	New Principal Assessment	Incorporated in SDE actions
59-24-30	Professional Development Plans for administrators	Included in Assessment Center and induction program guidelines

Statutory Citation	Provision	Status
59-24-50	Training with School Councils	Currently SICA provides training
59-24-80	Principal Induction Program	Implemented in 1998
59-6-100	EOC established	Implemented in 1998
59-6-110	Accountability Division established	Implemented in 1998
Section 10	Parent Involvement Task Force	Implemented; recommendations received in October 1999
Section 12	Class Size Study	Study initiated in 11 districts

Both the **Task Force on the Middle Grades** and the **Commission on Teacher Quality** have recommended changes in the preparation of teachers and other educators. While individual institutions (e.g., Winthrop University) have made significant changes in their curriculum to ensure more content knowledge and opportunities to learn in diverse educational settings and with diverse student bodies, there has not been a statewide shift in teacher preparation practices. Some postsecondary administrators suggest that the performance funding system for South Carolina higher education institutions discourages priority investments of institutional resources in the preparation of teachers.

Implementation of the accountability system at the district and school level, including the incorporation of accountability principles in educator practice, is shaded by the fear that accountability is a sanction imposed upon educators rather than a realignment of policies, practices and rewards to achieve stronger results.

A number of school districts are taking actions that implement accountability structures beyond the steps required in the enabling legislation. Laurens School District 56 is utilizing an interactive data system that permits individual queries from school and district administrators. Bamberg District One has developed a longitudinal tracking system to follow its students through their school years. Kershaw County Schools also use a longitudinal model in their reporting system. Horry County School District principals are evaluated on a series of student achievement measures and annually present their schools' progress to the School Board of Trustees. Anderson School District Four is using the Baldrige Aligned Management System for its strategic planning and implementation and evaluation of improvement action. The SC School Boards Association has developed an assessment for school boards to use in examining themselves.

South Carolina's public education system includes many small school districts. Small districts have limited administrative personnel or, in many economically disadvantaged settings, very few resources with which to address the administrative requirements of accountability systems, strategic planning, grants applications, and others.

Although the state historically has collected and reported information about schools (e.g., Rankings, School Profiles, In\$ite) there is no system that permits independent and interactive information queries by researchers or policymakers from diverse settings. The IBM Data Warehouse project has been extended with an \$800,000 grant from IBM to the State Department of Education, but implementation of the data warehouse concept is not likely in the immediate

future. Comprehensive data systems that permit professional inquiry contribute to the intellectual culture of schooling and allow for the system to exercise a thoughtful process of inquiry and analysis. Failure to utilize a strong and diverse database limits South Carolina to the questions raised historically. In too many instances the profession is limited to using what has been collected rather than asking timely questions and collecting information relative to those questions.

States that have moved further ahead in the use of information (e.g., Texas, Tennessee, Louisiana) advise us that the state's data system should accomplish the following purposes:

- Facilitate data-based decision-making;
- Disaggregate data to identify variables of elements of practice that impact on student achievement;
- Evaluate programs in a timely fashion;
- Identify total costs of programs and policies;
- Examine the relationships between cost and effectiveness; and
- Generate required reports through templates and electronic submissions and retrievals.

The data system should have the capacity to merge multiple sources including In\$ite, certification files, teacher contract and evaluation records, school and district student information records, student testing data, community demographics and other major data sources. By using varying levels of access, security of the system can be maintained. The State Department of Education is exploring a number of models that have potential for providing this capacity.

§ 59-18-300 et seq.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS

South Carolina's improvement effort is designed to ensure that South Carolina students achieve at competitive levels nationally and internationally. Throughout the 1990s South Carolina educators developed curriculum content standards which incorporate the recommendations of international and national organizations in the academic disciplines. A standards-based assessment system has been initiated to accompany the standards.

State Level Efforts

Curriculum content standards in three disciplines have been published for use by SC educators, students and their parents. The disciplines are mathematics, reading/English language arts, and science. Standards in social studies are under review and should be adopted in late spring. These standards reflect what students should know and be able to do in grades kindergarten through twelve.

The Education Oversight Committee conducted reviews of curriculum content standards in two disciplines: science and social studies. These reviews were based upon six criteria that emphasized comprehensiveness, balance, rigor, measurability, manageability, organization and communication. Reviews were conducted through three screens using a panel of discipline leaders recognized for their work nationally, a panel of South Carolina educators recognized for their

work in the states, and a third panel composed of business leaders, parents and educators of students with disabilities. Recommendations for strengthening the standards were presented to staff in the State Department of Education. The State Board of Education approved changes in the science standards prior to their distribution to South Carolina educators. Recommendations on the social studies standards are to be considered in March 2000.

The cyclical review of curriculum content standards is to begin in June 2000 with the mathematics standards.

The State Department of Education has initiated the development of assessments to measure student learning of the content standards. According to the schedule adopted by the State Board of Education in May 1999, the implementation of the new assessments should be accomplished in the years noted below:

Table Three
Timeline for Implementation of New Assessments
Adopted by State Board of Education, May 12, 1999

Test	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Readiness 1, 2			√				
PACT 1, 2				Optional			
PACT 3-8 Math, ELA	√						
PACT 3-8 Science				√			
PACT 3-8 Social Studies					√		
PACT Exit Exam Math, ELA					√		
PACT Exit Exam Science						√	
PACT Exit Exam Social Studies							√
End-of-Course Math, ELA				√			
End-of-Course Science, Social Studies					√		
Alternate Assess.			√				

Classroom Implementation

Despite state-level work, the standards (and their related assessments) are not implemented until they form the basis for classroom instruction and student learning. Experiences in other states teach us that classroom implementation takes several years and must include the following phases:

- Belief that policies requiring standards-based instruction and related assessments are not going to be changed;
- Teacher knowledge of the standards and assessments documents;
- Teacher knowledge of the content addressed in the standards and the instructional practices necessary to teach the standards;

- Modifications of school district curriculum guides to incorporate the standards;
- Modification of teacher instructional plans and teacher-designed assessments; and
- Modification of classroom instruction and evaluation.

A September 16, 1999, article in the Chicago Tribune reported on a study by the Illinois Board of Education about the status of standards implementation in that state. Regrettably only about 15 percent of teachers reported incorporation of the standards in their teaching. Other teachers were adopting a "wait and see" attitude. Many expressed the sense that the Illinois Board of Education would pull back from the new standards and assessments when the first test scores were released.

Although SC teachers have not been surveyed, an informal meeting with instructional leaders in eighteen school districts indicated that teachers were not implementing the standards fully because they had insufficient time to become familiar with the standards and to modify their lesson plans accordingly. Only the larger school districts reported having sufficient time and other resources to adapt district curriculum materials. Teachers expressed doubts that current South Carolina textbook/instructional materials adoptions offer sufficient resources to teach the standards. Local administrators report that high school teachers are reluctant to change their teaching plans without the impetus of standards-driven tests.

During these first two years (1998-2000) the State Department of Education and the mathematics and science hubs offered a number of opportunities for teachers to become familiar with the standards. The State Department of Education Standards Content Workshops (as of December 1999) provided training for 464 teachers in mathematics, 344 teachers in English Language Arts and 600 in science. Preliminary figures indicate that 535 teachers have registered for math and English Language Arts workshops to be held in January and February 2000. The State Department of Education also offered small grants for Standards Academics. Fifty-four proposals were submitted and the Department estimates that forty-five are to be approved. These would involve 1,350 teachers in a 45-contact hour (three credit hours) graduate course. Despite these initiatives, only a minority of the state's 41,000 teachers has been prepared to teach the standards. Other professional development providers also maintain that their work is focusing on teacher knowledge and use of the standards as a basis for instruction, although there is no system by which to verify the degree of alignment of these offerings. A number of South Carolina districts have made significant progress in the implementation of standards. These districts could provide comprehensive professional development to teachers and administrators in other districts. They also should have access to resources so that they may continue their development to even deeper levels of competence. The tasks of on-going professional growth should be shared among state agencies, higher education institutions and school districts. All professional development offerings would be enhanced if they adhered to the principles of the National

Staff Development Council and offered substantial opportunity for learning, practice and feedback, including time for teacher collaboration.

There are a number of bright spots of innovation which offer guidance and encouragement in the shift to a standards-based instructional program. A number of school districts have developed interim testing (typically 9-weeks) programs. School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties, Anderson School District Five, and Richland County School District One are among the districts using this strategy. Anderson County School District Four is using district-developed interim and end-of-course testing to inform instruction. The Pee Dee Consortium of school districts developed teacher guides and related materials that have been shared among the eleven participating school districts.

Teacher capacity to teach the standards is at a point of vulnerability. South Carolina is experiencing teacher shortages across all certification areas and, most dramatically, in rural communities. The SC Center for Teacher Recruitment (SCCTR) reports both shortages and as many as 30 percent of SC teachers teaching at least one class outside their area of certification. According to November 1999 data from the SCCTR, South Carolina had 518 teaching vacancies that represented an increase of 155 vacancies over the same time period in 1998. Although many vacancies are related to retirement, SC school districts also suffer from large numbers of teachers moving from one district to another and leaving SC to teach in other states (SCCTR, 1999). This impact is felt more dramatically in small and rural school districts; that is, those districts with fewest resources to recruit and compensate competitively. When teachers leave a district, not only are position vacancies created but also there are vacancies in experience and knowledge.

Through both focus groups and informal discussions, the Division of Accountability heard repeatedly that teachers and parents have questions about the utility of the PACT tests for modifying instruction or for advising students and their parents on how to improve the student's performance. Although some reluctance is symptomatic of the initial year of the testing program, four overriding concerns were expressed:

- variations in the administration of the PACT tests from school to school suggest that comparisons using the 1999 data should be limited;
- although publicly noted during the design phase of the tests, teachers express dismay over the small amount of information available from which to address instructional or learning deficiencies;
- parents do not understand the categorical reporting system and cannot link that system to their actions in support of their child's learning; and
- results from the 1999 test administration were not available in time for summer school decisions or for planning for the subsequent instructional year.

Education Improvement Act Programs as Levers for Change

After several months of reviewing EIA-funded programs and careful study of the current needs in South Carolina's educational system, the Education Oversight Committee determined that the initial purpose of the EIA fund had been eroded through expansion in the number of programs without coordination among the programs. Many programs failed to collect results data that confounds efforts to determine the effectiveness of the programs. The EOC affirmed that the purpose of the EIA Fund should be to initiate and encourage innovative professional actions that restructure services in support of higher levels of student achievement. The funds should move South Carolina schools toward its vision of academic excellence for all children. The funds should *not* be used for ongoing, maintenance of educational services that form the foundation upon which excellence is built; in other words, any service that is part of the basic educational program should be funded by sources other than the Education Improvement Act Fund.

Teacher quality is credited with 42 percent of the variation in student achievement (Darling-Hammond in SC Commission on Teacher Quality). Therefore, the EOC argues that the highest priority for EIA revenues during this and the next several years is the enhancement of the teaching profession through (a) effective, sustained professional development to ensure student accomplishment of the South Carolina standards; (b) incentives for teachers in critical shortage certification areas or underachieving schools; and (c) aggressive and immediate recruitment of teachers to South Carolina.

To align programs with the 2010 goal and implementation of standards-based educational systems, the EOC determined that each program or service funded with EIA funds should develop a plan consistent with the EIA innovative purposes and demonstrate through objectives, actions, annual reporting, and periodic evaluation that the program/service is contributing to the change effort required for higher levels of achievement.

The Role of Parents in Implementation of the Standards

Parents matter. The educational achievements of the parent, the encouragement of the child, the frequency with which a parent asks about a child's school day all contribute to the success of a child's experiences in school.

From national surveys we learn the importance of participating with a child in reading activities. The National Center for Education Statistics reports the following relationship between a parent's education and the incidence of supporting reading with children ages 3-5:

Table Four
Percentage of Children Ages 3-5 Who Participated in Various Reading Activities with a Parent or Family Member: 1996

Parents' Highest Education	Read to 3 or more times in last week	Told story at least once in last week	Visited library in past month
Total	82.9	82	38.2
Less than high school	58.8	72.8	19.4
High School	77.4	79.9	30.1
Some college	86.5	84.6	37.1
Bachelor's degree	90.9	83.2	51.9
Graduate/Professional degree	96.1	85.8	59.5

Source: US Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics. National Household Education Survey, 1991 and 1996.

These data take on stronger meaning when compared to the level of education among SC adults (see Table Five) and the predictive level of reading involvement with young children.

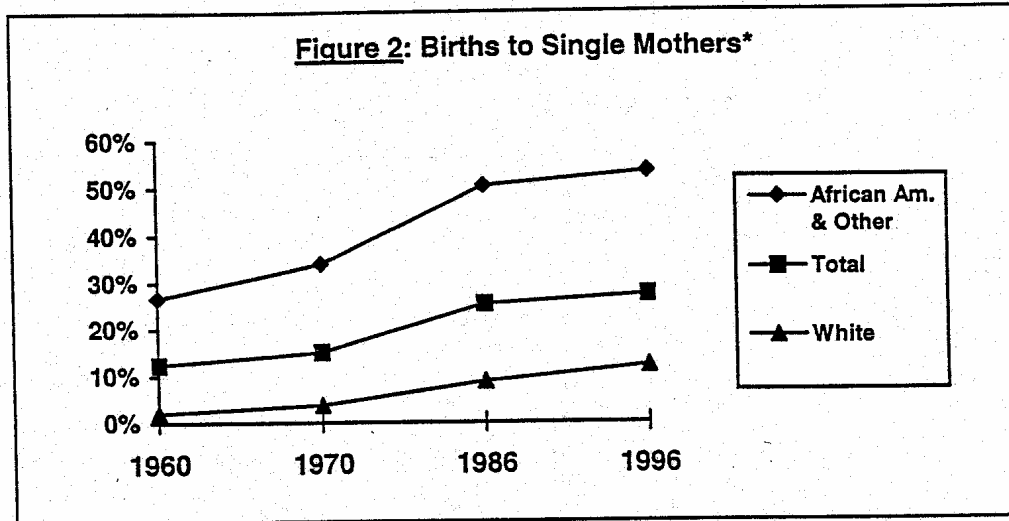
Table Five
Level of Education in SC Adults 25 Years and Over by Race, 1990

	TOTAL	White	Black	Other
Less than high school	31.7%	26.4%	46.7%	26.0%
High School	29.5%	29.7%	29.2%	24.7%
Some College	15.8%	17.2%	11.9%	15.1%
Bachelor's degree	11.2%	13.3%	5.3%	14.4%
Graduate/Professional Degree	5.4%	6.5%	2.3%	10.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census, South Carolina Summary Tape File 3A

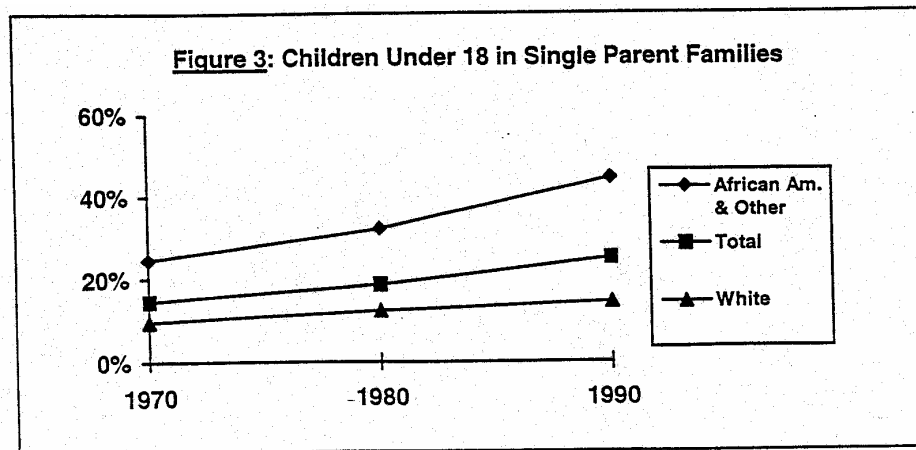
Parental support of student learning goes well beyond the educational history a parent brings to his/her child; it includes the level of parental involvement. That level is impacted greatly by the presence of two parents in a home. SC Kids Count data for 1999 report that "births to single mothers have increased steadily over four decades. In 1996, 13,905 babies, 27.2% of all babies, were born to single mothers. A decade earlier in 1986, the percentage was 25.2% and in 1965 it was 12.3%. In 1996, 12.1% of White children and 53.2% of African-American and Other children were born to single mothers." The numbers of children living in single-parent families is increasing as well. "In 1990, 200,590 children lived with only one parent. This was 25.1% of all children, up from 18.9% in 1980 and 14.5% in 1970. In 1990, 14.5% of White children and 44.6% of African-American and Other children lived in single-parent families." (Kids Count, 1999). *Refer to Figures One and Two on the next page.*

Figure One
Births to Single Mothers



Source: Kids Count 1998: South Carolina

**Figure Two
Children Under 18 in Single Parent Families**



Source: Kids Count 1998: South Carolina

The involvement of a second parent impacts school outcomes. The National Household Education Survey (1996) suggests that the involvement of a student's father is a critical contributor of school outcomes. See Table Six on the next page.

**Table Six
Percentage of Students in Grades K-12 with Selected School Outcomes, 1996**

Family Type and Fathers' Involvement	Child enjoys school	Child ever suspended/expelled (grades 6-12)
Fathers in two-parent families		
Low involvement	33.0	17.7
High involvement	49.8	9.8
Fathers in single-parent families		
Low involvement	29.8	34.5
High involvement	43.9	11.4
Nonresident fathers		
Low involvement	34.7	27.8
High involvement	44.8	14.4

Source: US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Household Education Survey, 1996.

Therefore, South Carolina's road to higher levels of student performance must include opportunities for parents to achieve their educational goals and to be involved with their children.

In work by the **Education Oversight Committee's Parent Involvement Task Force** in 1999, findings of significant barriers to parent involvement were identified and supported by the EOC survey data reported earlier in the year. The Task Force findings support parent involvement as a parent responsibility but suggest that the education system must enable and support parent involvement. The most common barriers to parent involvement identified in the research include the following:

Barriers identified by parents

- **Uncertainty about how to communicate or collaborate with teacher/school**
- **Time**
- **Work schedule constraints**
- **Transportation**
- **Failure to understand teaching practices**
- **Failure to understand how changes in education policy affect their children**

Barriers identified by educators

- **Uncertainty about how to communicate or collaborate with parent/home**
- **Lack of understanding of parent diversity**
- **Failure to understand student learning styles**
- **Difficulty in ensuring parent understanding of education policy and funding and how they impact on a child's learning**

The Task Force study findings point to various best practices to overcome these barriers and effective mechanisms to promote, enhance and increase parent involvement in the education of their children. In its report to the Committee, the Task Force recommended a formal framework to encourage increased parent involvement statewide, with specific actions directed at the various state and

local levels of governance and administration. The Task Force recommendations and the Committee's response to those recommendations are reported in greater detail in Section III.

Study of Local Leadership Quality and Engagement

The Committee has formed a study team to examine structures and responsibilities which support local leadership quality and engagement. Mr. Don Herriott, Chief Executive Officer of Roche Carolina, chairs the study team. The EOC has requested recommendations from the study team by October 15, 2000.

**SECTION III
STUDIES REQUIRED BY LAW**

§59-18-1930

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

The Education Accountability Act called for the Committee to conduct a comprehensive review of professional development to include a review of what is offered, how it is offered, the support given to implement skills acquired from professional development and how the professional development enhances the academic goals outlined in district and school strategic plans

STATUS: The Committee contracted with Policy Studies Associates of Washington, DC, to conduct the study. Interim reports are expected throughout 2000, with a final report delivered in December 2000.

Section 10, EAA of 1998

PARENT INVOLVEMENT TASK FORCE

The Education Accountability Act directed the Committee to establish a Parent Involvement Task Force to "review current state programs and policies for participation in their children's education . . .and to recommend to the Committee ways to induce and increase parent involvement in the education of their children . . ."

STATUS: The Committee's Parent Involvement Task Force completed its study and issued its final report to the Committee in October 1999. The Task Force recommended five broad recommendations emphasizing (1) parent involvement leadership at state and local levels of school governance and administration; (2) parent involvement training; (3) parent responsibility for their children's success in school; (4) increased opportunity and flexibility for parent-teacher contacts; and (5) a system for monitoring and evaluating parent involvement efforts. The Task Force recommended a formal framework for parent involvement that included the five components referenced above and recommended implementation of the framework through twenty-five (25) specific state actions and seventeen (17) specific local actions.

In January 2000 the Committee endorsed the Task Force recommendations with few amendments and formally forwarded the recommendations to the legislative leadership and the education committees of the House and Senate for consideration. The recommendations were also provided to the Governor, Lt. Governor and State Superintendent of Education. Among the Task Force recommendations endorsed by the Committee are the following:

- The Governor should require state agencies that serve families and children (and their governing boards) to collaborate with one another and establish networks with schools serving their audiences;
- The State Board and State Department of Education should emphasize parent involvement through the district and school plans, professional development programs and a best practices conference;
- South Carolina, through the State Department of Education and the school districts, should affiliate with national networks targeting high and effective levels of parent involvement; Teachers and other school staff should be provided professional development in working with parents, two additional teacher contract days should be added specifically for conferring with parents, and involvement with parents should be a component of teacher evaluations;
- The Education Oversight Committee should include parent involvement on the annual school and district report card, annually survey parents for effective practices; and evaluate school and district efforts;
- Best practices should be communicated through an annual conference, print and media materials and emphasis by education leaders;
- The State Department of Education and schools districts should organize administratively to support parent involvement and collaborations between home and school;
- District superintendents and principals should ensure that the School Improvement Council and other school decision-making groups are functioning in accordance with state requirements an in the best interest of an inclusive system; and
- The Education Oversight Committee should request employers to (a) adopt parent friendly workplace policies; (b) offer the workplace for parent-teacher conferences; (c) provide recognition awards to parent employees completing diploma and GED programs; and (d) donate goods and services to schools in the name of both the business and their employees.

§ 59-6-110

EVALUATION OF THE PRINCIPAL SPECIALIST PROGRAM

The Education Oversight Committee and the Division of Accountability are charged with broad responsibilities for the monitoring and evaluating of programs funded with Education Improvement Act funds. The Committee has established a multi-year project to follow the implementation of the principal specialist program and to determine ways in which the program can be effective.

STATUS: The University of South Carolina Department of Educational Leadership is conducting a multi-year evaluation of the principal specialist program. The initial year is focusing on initiation issues and laying the groundwork for future analyses. At this time there is only one principal specialist in South Carolina.

§59-63-65

CLASS SIZE STUDY

The Education Accountability Act provides that the Department of Education, working with the Accountability Division [develop] a plan for evaluating the impact of this initiative and report to the Education Oversight Committee no later than December 1, 2001.

STATUS: The State Department of Education is conducting a study to determine the impact of reducing class size in grades one through three.

Eleven districts are included in the study and nationally norm-referenced testing data available for all years within the funding cycle are included.

MIDDLE GRADES PROJECT

Through proviso to the General Appropriations Act, the Education Oversight Committee is the administrative agent for the Middle Grades Project.

STATUS: Coastal Carolina University is conducting a study of implementation of the standards in classroom instruction. Through review of documents, surveys and classroom observations, middle grades implementation is to be evaluated. A report of the study is due in May 2000.

SECTION IV

COMMITTEE PROGRAMMATIC AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the work conducted through the review of the implementation of the standards based accountability system, the cost-benefit analyses and the examination of Education Improvement Act and Education Accountability Act programs, the Education Oversight Committee offers the summary recommendations below. Recommendations specific to each of these reviews can be provided upon request.

1. The Education Oversight Committee's budget recommendations and the work of the Cost-Benefit Analyses consistently represent the synergy of collaborations among agencies, communities, educators and parents. The level of student achievement will not rise through independent action. **We recommend systemic collaboration to include long-range planning which achieves alignment of policies, programs and actions within the following six categories:**
 - **The Teaching Profession**
 - **Students Learning**
 - **Facilities**
 - **School District and Community Leadership**
 - **Parents**
 - **Accountability**
2. The Education Improvement Act funds should be used to initiate and encourage innovative professional actions that restructure services in support of higher levels of student achievement.
3. Highest priority for EIA revenues during this and the next several years is the enhancement of the teaching profession through (a) effective, sustained professional development to ensure student accomplishment of the SC curriculum content standards; (b) incentives for teachers in critical shortage certification areas or underachieving schools.
4. Implementation plans for the content standards should address the varied needs of educators, schools and school districts, recognizing that some have greater proficiency than others. Training should adhere to the national professional development standards and offer opportunities for initial learning, practice, feedback and teacher to teacher collaborations.
5. Students who have failed to score at the proficient level on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests must have extended learning opportunities, capable teachers, adequate funding and community support structures that ensure the achievement of the standards. Teachers, time and technology must be provided to address the extraordinary barriers facing our students, particularly students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
6. Opportunities for parents to contribute to their children's education should be developed through implementation of the recommendations of the Parent

Involvement Task Force (see Section III) and through increased opportunities for parents to achieve their educational goals.

7. The administration of the PACT tests should be reviewed to address barriers to full utilization of the results. These barriers include the amount of information provided to teachers and parents, the inter-school variations in administration and the timing of results delivery. The communication of the technical qualities of the tests is critical to understanding and confidence in the program.
8. An interactive, multi-agency data system should be implemented to ensure that factors impacting on student achievement could be explored fully at all system levels.
9. The delivery of technical assistance to underachieving schools should be expanded and restructured to encompass collaborations which ensure that all schools needing assistance receive optimally effective assistance targeted to the specific challenges of the school; and
10. Requirements for planning documents and grants should be streamlined to reduce administrative requirements, particularly on small districts with limited personnel.

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