



REPORT

to

THE SOUTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

and

THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

from

THE SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

March 1, 2004

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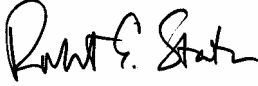
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March 1, 2004

TO: Members, General Assembly of South Carolina
Members, State Board of Education

FROM: Robert Staton 

RE: Report from the Education Oversight Committee

In 1998 the South Carolina General Assembly created the Education Accountability Act. The Act sets South Carolina on a bold path leading toward high levels of achievement for all of South Carolina's children. The members of the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) are proud to be on this journey with you. We believe in South Carolina, the schools we provide our students, and the future today's students are building.

Through a series of publications and presentations our members and staff inform the various constituencies of South Carolina's progress toward this vision. Each year we summarize activities related to the EOC's major responsibilities and provide them to you in the enclosed annual report. Should you have questions or wish additional information, please call the members or staff of the EOC.

We appreciate your support and the commitment you have made to a strong, public education system.

Table of Contents

	Page
Letter of Transmittal	i
Introduction	1
Membership	
Members of the EOC and terms	2
Former members and volunteers.....	3
Development, Establishment, Implementation and.....	6
Maintenance of the Accountability System	
Implementation of State Standards and Assessments.....	37
The Functioning of the Public Education System	46
Other Studies and Reviews as Required by Law	51
The 2010 Goal and Academic Performance.....	63
Recommended Education Accountability Act and EIA Program	
Changes to State Agency and Other Entities as Necessary	73

Introduction

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

The Education Accountability Act of 1998 establishes the Education Oversight Committee (EOC). This report from the EOC frames progress toward the 2010 goal with data on student performance and results of several studies examining SC's progress.

The report is organized around the statutory responsibilities of the EOC. As outlined in §59-6-10, the EOC shall 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.

While SC schools, districts and state entities have maintained their commitment to high standards, we are experiencing both the success and frustrations of early implementation. As in previous years, the data presented in this report indicate that while we continue to make incremental improvements, the gains must be accelerated to be "one of the five fastest improving states in the country."

Each year Education Week publishes *Quality Counts*. This publication rates each of the states on a number of measures and identifies policies linked to gains. South Carolina rated very well in comparisons with other states earning the grades shown below.

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>
Standards and Accountability	B+	B	A
Improving Teacher Quality	B	B+	A-
School Climate	not graded	D+	C+
Resources: Adequacy	B-	B	B-
Resources: Equity	C	C-	C

Membership

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

MEMBER	REPRESENTATION	APPOINTMENT OF	APPOINTMENT DATE	TERM
Robert E. Staton <i>Chairman</i>	Business	Chairman, Senate Education Committee	1998 <i>reappointed 2000</i>	2000-2004
Alex Martin <i>Vice Chairman</i>	Education	Speaker of the House	1998 <i>reappointed 2001</i>	2001-2005
Traci Young Cooper	Education	Chairman, Senate Education Committee	2002	2002-2006
Robert Daniel	Business	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	2000	2000-2004
Dennis Drew	Education	Governor	2003	2003-2006
Mike Fair	Designee	President Pro Tempore, Senate	2001	Coterminous
Warren Giese	Chairman, Senate Education Committee		2001	Coterminous
Wallace Hall, on leave of absence, military service	Education	Chairman, House Education and Public Works	2002	2002-2006
Robert W. Harrell, Jr.	Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee		1998	Coterminous
Hugh Leatherman, Jr.	Chairman, Senate Finance Committee		2001	Coterminous
Harry Lightsey, III	Business	President Pro Tempore, Senate	2001	Coterminous
Susan Marlowe	Education	President Pro Tempore, Senate	2001	2001-2005
George Martin	Education	Chairman, House Education and Public Works	2003	In place of Wallace Hall
Joseph Neal	Designee	Speaker of the House	2004	Coterminous
Harold C. Stowe	Business	Speaker of the House	2002	2002-2006
Inez M. Tenenbaum	State Superintendent of Education		1999-2002 invited participant 2002 appointment	Coterminous
Robert E. Walker	Designee	Chairman, House Education and Public Works	2002	Coterminous
Judy Williams	Designee	Governor	2003	Coterminous
G. Larry Wilson	Business	Governor	1998 <i>reappointed 2002</i>	2002-2006

FORMER MEMBERS			
MEMBER	REPRESENTATION	APPOINTMENT OF	TERM
William Barnet, III	Business	Speaker of the House	1998-2002
James Bennett	Business	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	1998-1999
Rosie Berry	Education	President Pro Tempore, Senate	1998-2001
James Bryan	Designee	President Pro Tempore, Senate	1998-2000
Barbara Everson	Education	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	2000-2002
William Gummerson	Education	Governor	1998-2003
Clara Heinsohn	Designee	Governor	1998-1999
Susan Hoag	Designee	Speaker of the House	1998-2004
John Matthews	Designee	Chairman, Senate Finance Committee and Governor	1998-2003
Doug McTeer, Jr.	Designee	Governor	1999-2002
Nikki Setzler	Chairman, Senate Education Committee		1998-2000
Joel A. Smith, III	Business	President Pro Tempore, Senate	1998-2002
Henry Spann	Education	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	1998-2000
Lynn Thompson	Education	Chairman, Senate Education Committee	1998-2002
Ronald P. Townsend	Chairman, House Education Committee		1998-2002
Stefan Wilson	Business	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	1999-2000

Volunteers

The EOC uses advisory groups to inform its decisions and to ensure that the policies and practices are in the best interests of South Carolina. We deeply appreciate the work of these individuals and value their contributions.

Data Quality Advisory Group

Dr. David Burnett, SC Department of Education, Columbia, SC
 Dr. Glen Carson, Spartanburg County School District Four, Woodruff, SC
 Dr. Min Ching, Richland County School District One, Columbia, SC
 Dr. Lee D'Andrea, Anderson County School District Four, Pendleton, SC

Mr. Tom Pritchard, Horry County Schools, Conway, SC
Mr. Cleo Richardson, Marion County School District One, Marion, SC
Dr. Janet Rose-Beale, Charleston County School District, Charleston, SC
Dr. Teri Siskind, SC Department of Education, Columbia, SC
Ms. Barbara Teusink, SC Department of Education, Columbia, SC
Dr. Missy Wall-Mitchell, Richland/Lexington School District Five, Ballentine, SC

Public Information Advisory Group

Mr. Bill Baker, Anderson County School District Five, Anderson, SC
Ms. Teal Britton, Horry County Schools, Conway, SC
Ms. Tammy Butler, Allendale County Schools, Allendale, SC
Mr. Greg Carson, Orangeburg County School District Five, Orangeburg, SC
Ms. Audrey Childers, Darlington County School District, Darlington, SC
Ms. Tricia Crimminger, Charleston County Schools, Charleston, SC
Ms. Michelle Foster, Richland /Lexington School District Five, Ballentine, SC
Mr. Brian Huckabee, Florence County School District Three, Lake City, SC
Mr. Oby Lyles, Greenville County Schools, Greenville, SC
Ms. Tammie Newman, Aiken County Schools, Aiken, SC
Mr. Bob Ormseth, Fort Mill School District Four, Fort Mill, SC
Ms. Cathleen Skelley, Clarendon County School District One, Summerton, SC

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Ms. Chantay Boulter, York Four School Board, Fort Mill, SC
Ms. June Bradham, Corporate Develop Mint, Charleston, SC
Mr. Bruce Davis, Hampton Two School Board, Estill, SC
Ms. Carol DeShields, DeShields Grading, Inc., Woodruff, SC
Mr. Carl Gullick, Carolina Staff Resource, Inc., Rock Hill, SC
Mr. John Lazur, Lazur & Associates, Columbia, SC
Ms. Doris Lockhart, Florence One School Board, Effingham, SC
The Honorable Joel Lourie, SC Legislature, Columbia, SC
Mr. Melvin Smoak, Orangeburg Consolated District Five, Orangeburg, SC
Ms. Ellen Still, State Department of Education, Columbia, SC
Mr. Frank Wideman, III, The Self-Family Foundation, Greenwood, SC
Ms. Deborah Young, DAY Consultants, Inc., Myrtle Beach, SC

Evaluation of the Program for Four Year Olds Advisory Group

Dr. Mac Brown, USC, College of Education, Columbia, SC
Dr. Baron Holmes, State Budget & Control Board, Columbia, SC
Ms. Crystal Campbell, Dorchester District Two, Summerville, SC
Dr. Floyd Creech, Florence School District One, Florence, SC
Dr. Linda Mims, SC Department of Education, Columbia, SC
Dr. Nancy Freeman, USC, College of Education, Columbia, SC
Ms. Gayle Morris, SC Department of Education, Columbia, SC
Mrs. Dorothy Ham, Webber Elementary School, Eastover, SC
Mr. Dan Wuori, Columbia, SC
Dr. Albert Jeter, Spartanburg School District Seven, Spartanburg, SC
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Dr. Robert Linn, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO
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Ms. Cindy Saylor, SC Department of Education, Columbia, SC
Dr. Teri Siskind, SC Department of Education, Columbia, SC

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Dr. Robert Linn, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado
Dr. Wayne Martin, Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington, DC
Dr. Jim Ray, Spartanburg County School District Three, Glendale, SC
Dr. Janelle Rivers, Lexington County School District One, Lexington, SC
Dr. Frank Roberson, Aiken County Schools, Aiken, SC
Dr. Jim Watts, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, GA

High School Ratings Advisory Group

Mr. Allie Brooks, Jr. Wilson High School, Florence, SC
Mr. Daryl C. Brown, Carvers Bay High School, Hemingway, SC
Mr. Joe Clarke, Principal, Spartanburg High School, Spartanburg, SC
Mr. Ed Curlee, Horry County Schools, Horry, SC
Dr. Lee D'Andrea, Anderson School District Four, Pendleton, SC
Mr. W. Rutledge Dingle, Sumter High School, Sumter, SC
Ms. Karen Neal, Woodruff High School, Woodruff, SC
Mr. Terry Pruitt, Hampton School District One, Hampton, SC
Mr. William Jay Ward, Ridge Spring-Monetta High School, Monetta, SC
Dr. Steve Wilson, Keenan High School, Columbia, SC

Development, Establishment, Implementation and Maintenance of the 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" (§59-18-900).

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.

Table One

Implementation Status of Education Accountability Act Provisions for State Agencies

Statutory Citation	Provision	Status
59-18-300	Content Standards	Math, English, Science and Social Studies adopted
59-18-360	Cyclical Review of Standards	Mathematics completed in Sept. 2000, ELA completed in September 2001, Social Studies completed January 2004, science scheduled for fall of 2004
59-18-310-370	Assessments	Math, English, science and social studies implemented in grades 3-8; Algebra I End-of-Course in Fall, 2002; HSAP scheduled for Spring 2004; Physical Science, Biology I and English I end of course scheduled for fall 2004.
59-18-910	Levels of difficulty reports	Ongoing, with assessments as developed
59-18-340	Norm-referenced test	Terra Nova administered in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003; alignment study conducted in 2000; new RFP issued in 2003, new test not chosen, remain with Terra Nova
59-18-370	Longitudinal matched data	SDE developed for use in school ratings 2001
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	Adopted by SBE in Fall 2000, returned to SDE from General Assembly for amendments
59-18-900	Annual report card	Report cards published in December 2001, November 2002, November 2003
59-18-900	Criteria for performance ratings	Adopted by EOC in December 2000; reviewed in 2002
59-18-1100	Gold and Silver Awards criteria	Awards given in 2001, 2002 and 2003
59-18-1110	Flexibility Guidelines	Adopted by SBE in Fall 2000
59-18-1300	District Accountability Systems	Implemented in 1999
59-18-1500-1510	Intervention and Assistance	Continuing
59-18-1510	Criteria for review team	Established in Spring 1999
59-18-1520	Teacher specialists	Criteria set in 1998; implemented in 1999 in 73 schools or tiered assistance program implemented, evaluation underway
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	Recertification credit	SDE establishes criteria
59-18-1560	Retraining Grants	Implemented in 1998, evaluated in 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003
59-18-1560	Public School Assistance Fund	Not established

Statutory Citation	Provision	Status
	(SBE)	
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
59-18-1920	Modified School Year Grant	Implemented in 1998 in 5 districts; discontinued because of lack of applicants
59-18-1930	Professional Development Review	Completed in December 2000; related accountability legislation adopted in 2001
59-24-10	New Principal Assessment	Incorporated in SDE actions
59-24-30	Professional Development Plans for administrators	Under SDE development
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	Recommendations formed basis for Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act of 2000
Section 12	Class Size Study	SDE Study initiated in 11 districts; report completed in 2001

The 2003 School Ratings

The school ratings for elementary, middle, and high schools are based on measures of student achievement at each school. The academic achievement results for each school are converted to numeric indices based on formulas listed in the 2002-2003 Accountability Manual. The test data used in the calculations come only from students who attended the school for most of the school year (e. g., only from students who were enrolled in the school on the 45th day of instruction). The PACT data are used to calculate the indices in the elementary and middle schools; current and longitudinal Exit Exam results, graduation rates and percentages eligible for the LIFE scholarships provide the basis for the high school indices. The ratings based on those indices are Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and Unsatisfactory. The rating terms are specified in the EAA.

Ratings were reported for each school. The Absolute performance rating describes the academic performance of students for the current school year. It is a descriptor of the level of the average academic achievement of students in the schools compared to the performance standards on the tests (e. g., Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced). In 2003, an Absolute rating of Excellent indicates that the average student performance on the PACT tests is between Basic and Proficient. An Unsatisfactory rating indicates that the average performance of students in the school is Below Basic. There is a penalty in the Absolute rating for exceeding a specified percentage of students scoring below Basic. Schools receiving Absolute ratings of Unsatisfactory must review and revise their strategic plans and undergo review by an external review team. Extra resources such as teacher specialists are made available to schools rated Unsatisfactory. Schools rated Below Average must also review and revise their strategic plans, and may request external review teams.

The Improvement rating reflects the average change in academic achievement for individual students in the school for the current year compared to their performance in the previous year. The Improvement indices in the elementary and middle schools are based on longitudinally matched student test data. An Excellent Improvement rating indicates that the school is making major progress toward the 2010 Goal. A school receiving an Unsatisfactory Improvement rating lost ground (experienced an achievement decline) over the school year compared to the previous year. Absolute ratings and Improvement ratings are largely independent of each other. For example, a school receiving an Unsatisfactory absolute rating could be awarded an Excellent improvement rating if students made exceptional progress, but the average score for the school still was Below Basic.

Schools having absolute ratings of Excellent for two consecutive years receive special consideration when assigning the Improvement rating, since such schools may have such high achievement levels that it is difficult to maintain the high levels, let alone increase them; such schools automatically receive a Good Improvement rating, and may receive an Excellent rating if the students increased their achievement compared to the previous year. A school's Improvement rating can be raised one level if the improvement index calculated for students belonging to historically underachieving groups (the target groups include students with non-speech disabilities, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and students eligible for free-or reduced-price lunch) exceed the level of improvement for all students by one standard deviation. The Improvement rating schedule is approved for three years only to allow for analysis of patterns of improvement.

A review of the improvement rating began in the fall of 2002 with the convening of a technical advisory group to review the data for 2001 and 2002 with the purpose of identifying any revisions needed. The advisory panel met in Columbia on November 25, 2002 to review and discuss the data related to the improvement ratings and to generate recommendations based on their review. The advisory panel consisted of four national experts in the areas of testing and accountability, three representatives from South Carolina school districts, and a representative from the SC Department of Education.

The advisory panel reviewed the improvement rating methodology; concerns about the improvement ratings raised by South Carolina educators; historical test data; and simulations of methodological changes to the calculation of the improvement ratings which have been suggested by various groups of educators. The panel's charge was to make recommendations regarding the improvement rating methodology. The panel focused on the improvement rating methodology for schools in which PACT is administered because of the concerns about the ratings for elementary and middle schools which have been raised by educators.

Concerns about the improvement rating methodology have included concerns about communicating the basis for the ratings and concerns about the perceived fairness of the methodology for computing the ratings. Problems with communication have centered on the differences between the absolute ratings, which provide a measure of the average performance status of all students tested at the end of the current school year, and the improvement ratings, which in the elementary and middle schools are based on the average change in test performance of the same students from the end of the previous year to the end of the current year. The longitudinal methodology required by statute for the improvement rating also depends on data from students for whom both pretest and posttest data are available, but matched pretest scores are not required for the absolute rating methodology. Since at present the pretest and posttest data for some students cannot be matched because of inconsistencies in the data, and since pretest data are not available for all grade levels (e. g., since there is no statewide test administered to students in grade 2, a pretest is not available for students in grade 3 who take the PACT test), the absolute and improvement ratings for a school may be based on data from different numbers of students.

Concerns about the perceived fairness of the improvement ratings have centered on the current methodology in which changes in weighted scores used to calculate the improvement rating index only occur when a student has improved or declined by a performance level (e. g., a student's pretest performance level of Basic must increase to Proficient or drop to Below Basic 2 on the posttest to result in a change in the improvement index). The perceived unfairness in this methodology is that a student may improve his or her performance on the posttest compared to the pretest, but not enough to achieve the next higher performance level and thus contribute to a positive gain index for the school. (Of course, a student may also regress in his or her achievement on the posttest compared to the pretest, but unless the posttest score is at a lower performance level than the pretest this change will also not be reflected in the school's improvement index, this time as a loss.) This concern is thus with the perceived lack of precision of the current improvement rating methodology to detect small achievement changes.

The advisory panel reviewed the historical PACT data to determine whether longitudinal progress in achievement had occurred which was not detected with the improvement rating methodology. While there were gains in the percentages of students attaining higher performance levels on the posttests in some grades, especially in mathematics, these were offset by drops in other areas, especially in English language arts. The panel reviewed PACT technical data and concluded that the performance levels within each subject were set initially at similar levels across the grade levels, suggesting that the improvement rating methodology based on comparing percentages of students attaining higher performance levels over time was reasonably supported by the PACT test design. The panel noted that student performance on the PACT tests was lower at the upper grades than at the lower ones, that improvement in grades 4 and 5 in 2002 was lower than expected, and that improvement was noted between 2001 and 2002 in the percentages of students increasing their performance levels from Below Basic to Basic, but these improvements were offset by the increased percentages of students whose performance levels dropped from Proficient or Advanced to Basic.

The panel identified four general issues and made recommendations regarding each issue. The first issue identified was: With what precision is improvement measured? The panel made a recommendation suggesting how precision of the calculation could be enhanced. The second issue dealt with which students are included in the ratings. The panel made four recommendations in this area: 1) report the percentage of student data matched on the report card (Note: this information is currently scheduled to be reported beginning with the 2003 report cards); 2) establish a consistent and unique student ID system to improve the accuracy and completeness of the matched student data; 3) study the effects of transience on student achievement in South Carolina; 4) include data only from students who attended the same school or district for both the pretest and posttest years.

The third issue was: What information about the improvement ratings should be published to improve communication and understanding? The panel made two recommendations in this area dealing with providing more information to schools regarding the calculated ratings indices and the specific student data used for those calculations.

Finally, the fourth issue dealt with how improvement can be facilitated. The panel made two recommendations:

1. The State Department of Education should provide more information to educators to help them evaluate and target their instruction and curriculum so that students receive the maximum benefit from instruction and are able to increase their achievement levels to the levels needed if South Carolina is to improve its educational system. This effort to improve the information provided by the assessment system should be given top priority.
2. The validity of the PACT tests for measuring growth and achievement levels should be studied and recommendations made for improvement where needed.

The panel's report was disseminated for public review. The EOC reviewed the panel's recommendations and public comments and in February 2003 and adopted the recommendations listed above. More precise calculation of the improvement rating as recommended by the task force began with the 2003 School Report Card.

Concerns have been expressed about the quality of data used to determine school ratings and reported on the individual report cards since the first report card was issued in 2001. Most of the data on the report card, except for assessment data, is self-reported by the schools to SDE. SDE provides schools an opportunity to review the data, but there usually is insufficient time to make changes prior to the publishing of the report cards. Concerns about the quality of data became acute in the fall of 2003 as a number of schools had report cards with inaccurate or incomplete data. To address the data quality concern, the EOC, with SDE participation, has appointed a Data Quality Advisory Group to review all aspects of the data collection and review process. As part of the review, the advisory group will meet with Glynn Ligon, a national expert on data quality. The advisory group is planning studies of a limited

number of critical data elements to identify ways to improve the collection and reporting processes. The group will meet during the winter and spring of 2004 to study the issue and offer recommendations on how to improve data quality in late spring or early summer 2004.

Report card ratings are awarded to each school organizational unit: primary, elementary, middle, or high. A school which has grades Kindergarten through 8 receives two sets of ratings (and two sets of report cards). One set of ratings pertains to the elementary grades in the school (PACT test results in grades 3 through 5), and the other set of ratings are based on the middle school grades (PACT results from grades 6 through 8). Primary level schools which do not contain PACT-tested grades (such as a school having Kindergarten through grade 2) and career and vocational centers also receive ratings based on different sets of criteria. Some schools, such as new schools, do not receive ratings.

The frequencies of ratings reported for all primary, elementary, middle, and high schools in South Carolina are listed in the tables that follow.

Table Two
ALL SCHOOLS (K-2 PRIMARY, ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOLS)
2001-2002 and 2002-2003 School Report Card Ratings
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	2003 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2002 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2003 Improvement Rating Number (%)	2002 Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	217 (19.9)	191 (18.1)	76 (7.0)	94 (8.9)
Good	359 (32.9)	354 (33.5)	176 (16.3)	183 (17.4)
Average	319 (29.3)	304 (28.7)	90 (8.3)	186 (17.6)
Below Average	151 (13.9)	159 (15.0)	274 (25.4)	311 (29.5)
Unsatisfactory	44 (4.0)	50 (4.7)	464 (43.0)	280 (26.6)
New/Special - No Rating	14	22	14	26
Total	1090 (100)	1058* (100)	1080* (100)	1054* (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Elementary, Middle, High).

*24 schools receiving Absolute and Improvement ratings in 2003 were missing 2002 data, most likely because they were new schools in 2003.

**Based on data from the SC Department of Education, October 2003.

Slightly more than half (576, or 52.8%) of the schools received Absolute ratings of Good or Excellent, while approximately one-fifth (195 schools, or 17.9%) were rated Below Average or Unsatisfactory. None of the schools received a penalty (lowering their Absolute ratings one level) because their percentage of students scoring Below Basic exceeded the criteria. The results for the Improvement ratings were less positive, however. Somewhat less than one-fourth (23.4%, or 252 schools) had Good or Excellent Improvement ratings, and slightly more than two-thirds (68.4%, or 738 schools) either did not improve or had declining achievement (e. g., Improvement ratings of Below Average or Unsatisfactory). In order to reach the 2010 goal, the expectations for school achievement increase annually beginning in 2004, so that by 2009 the average achievement needed to attain an Excellent Absolute rating is Proficient. For most schools, achievement must increase each year to reach the 2010 goal.

Many schools having high proportions of historically underachieving students exhibited achievement improvements over the two-year period. For example, of 144 schools with 90 percent or more students identified as living in poverty, 15 received a Good or Excellent Absolute rating, and 21 earned a Good or Excellent Improvement rating. The preliminary analyses indicate that at least 75 schools in 2003

(compared to 126 in 2002) were awarded a higher Improvement rating because of exceptional improvement by their historically underachieving students.

One measure of the validity of the rating system is to compare its results to ratings from other groups. The national Blue Ribbon Schools Award system identifies schools of quality based on several measures in addition to student achievement. The South Carolina accountability ratings are based solely on student achievement, so the two awards systems are not directly comparable. However, one would expect that schools of high quality would have a similar pattern of ratings from both systems. The school ratings for schools which have received Blue Ribbon awards during the time period the South Carolina ratings were calculated are listed in Table Three. Fourteen schools received Absolute ratings of Good or Excellent in 2000-2001 (one was new that year); fourteen of fifteen schools received Good or Excellent ratings in 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. Six of the schools were unable to increase their achievement during the 2001-2002 school year and five were unable to increase their achievement in 2002-2003.

Table Three

BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL	Year of Award	Absolute Performance Rating			Improvement Rating		
		2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
Reidville Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good
Rice Creek Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good	Below Average	Good
Satchel Ford Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good
Forestbrook Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
Mitchell Road Elem	2000-01	Good	Good	Good	Unsatisfactory	Below Average	Unsatisfactory
Oakview Elem	2000-01	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
Woodland Heights Elem	2000-01	Good	Good	Good	Below Average	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
RP Dawkins Middle	1999-2000	Good	Good	Good	Below Average	Below Average	Below Average
Hand Middle	1999-2000	Good	Good	Good	Average	Below Average	Below Average
Pickens Middle	1999-2000	Good	Average	Average	Below Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory
TL Hanna High	1999-2000	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Excellent
Academy of Arts, Science and Technology (Horry)	2001-02	NA	Excellent	Excellent	NA	Excellent	Excellent
Forestbrook Elem	2002-03	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
Mt. Pleasant Academy	2002-03	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
Irmo High School	2002-03	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Excellent	Good

The ratings results for each school organizational level are presented in tables Four through Eight.

Table Four
K-2 PRIMARY SCHOOLS ONLY (GRADE 2 IS HIGHEST GRADE LEVEL)
2001-2002 and 2002-2003 School Report Card Ratings
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	2003 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2002 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2003 Improvement Rating Number (%)	2002 Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	23 (100)	20 (100)	4 (20.0)	10 (55.6)
Good	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (80.0)	8 (44.4)
Average	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Below Average	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Unsatisfactory	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
New/Special – No Rating	0	3	3	5
Total	23 (100)	20 (100)	20 (100)	18 (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, October 2003.

Table Five
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ONLY
2001-2002 and 2002-2003 School Report Card Ratings
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	2003 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2002 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2003 Improvement Rating Number (%)	2002 Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	114 (18.8)	108 (18.3)	27 (4.5)	36 (6.1)
Good	227 (37.4)	211 (35.8)	94 (15.5)	124 (21.1)
Average	196 (32.3)	191 (32.4)	52 (8.6)	99 (16.8)
Below Average	66 (10.9)	74 (12.6)	141 (23.3)	152 (25.8)
Unsatisfactory	4 (0.7)	5 (0.8)	292 (48.2)	178 (30.2)
New/Special - No Rating	2	2	3	2
Total	607 (100)	589* (100)	606 (100)	589* (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Elementary, Middle, High).

*18 schools receiving Absolute and Improvement ratings in 2003 were missing 2002 data, most likely because they were new schools in 2003.

**Based on data from the SC Department of Education, October 2003.

Table Six
MIDDLE SCHOOLS ONLY
2001-2002 and 2002-2003 School Report Card Ratings
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	2003 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2002 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2003 Improvement Rating Number (%)	2002 Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	13 (4.8)	14 (5.3)	1 (0.4)	8 (3.0)
Good	72 (26.8)	73 (27.7)	16 (5.9)	28 (10.6)
Average	95 (35.3)	90 (34.1)	23 (8.6)	77 (29.2)
Below Average	70 (26.0)	66 (25.0)	91 (33.8)	104 (39.4)
Unsatisfactory	19 (7.1)	21 (8.0)	138 (51.3)	47 (17.8)
New/Special – No Rating	1	2	1	2
Total	269 (100)	264* (100)	269 (100)	264* (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Elementary, Middle, High).

*4 schools receiving Absolute and Improvement ratings in 2003 were missing 2002 data, most likely because they were new schools in 2003.

**Based on data from the SC Department of Education, October 2003.

Table Seven
HIGH SCHOOLS ONLY
2001-2002 and 2002-2003 School Report Card Ratings
Number and Percentage of School Report Cards

Rating	2003 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2002 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2003 Improvement Rating Number (%)	2002 Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	67 (35.1)	49 (26.5)	44 (23.8)	40 (21.9)
Good	60 (31.4)	70 (37.8)	50 (27.0)	23 (12.6)
Average	28 (14.7)	23 (12.4)	15 (8.1)	10 (5.5)
Below Average	15 (7.8)	19 (10.3)	42 (22.7)	55 (30.0)
Unsatisfactory	21 (11.0)	24 (13.0)	34 (18.4)	55 (30.0)
New/Special - No Rating	11	15	6	17
Total	191 (100)	185* (100)	185* (100)	183* (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (Elementary, Middle, High).

*2 schools receiving Absolute and Improvement ratings in 2003 were missing 2002 data, most likely because they were new schools in 2003.

**Based on data from the SC Department of Education, October 2003.

Table Eight
DISTRICTS ONLY
2001-2002 and 2002-2003 District Report Card Ratings
Number and Percentage of District Report Cards

Rating	2003 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2002 Absolute Performance Rating Number (%)	2003 Improvement Rating Number (%)	2002 Improvement Rating Number (%)
Excellent	9 (10.6)	3 (3.5)	4 (4.7)	1 (1.2)
Good	26 (30.6)	27 (31.8)	7 (8.2)	3 (3.6)
Average	32 (37.7)	33 (38.8)	24 (28.2)	28 (33.3)
Below Average	12 (14.1)	20 (23.5)	20 (23.5)	45 (53.6)
Unsatisfactory	6 (7.1)	2 (2.4)	30 (35.3)	7 (8.3)
New/Special - No Rating	0	0	0	1
Total	85 (100)	85 (100)	85 (100)	84 (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, October 2003.

Analysis of the Absolute ratings provides the following information:

- The number of schools rated *Unsatisfactory* or *Below Average* has decreased over time.

	2001	2002	2003
• <i>Unsatisfactory</i>	71 (6.4%)	60 (5.2%)	44 (4.0%)
• <i>Below Average</i>	200 (18.1%)	170 (14.7%)	151 (13.9%)
- There were changes to school absolute ratings from 2002 to 2003 in the following manner:
 - 154 schools elevated their ratings
 - 771 schools maintained their ratings

112 schools lowered their ratings

3. Even with changes in the high school rating criteria (addition of graduation rate criterion), the number of high schools rated *Excellent* or *Good* rose to 127 in 2003 from 119 in 2002.
4. 10.4% of schools with poverty composite of 90% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*. 12.5% of schools with a poverty composite of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.
5. There is movement to the outer ends of the rating scale for school districts.
 - The number of districts rated *Excellent* has grown from three to nine.
 - The number of districts rated *Unsatisfactory* has grown from two to six.

Analysis of the Improvement ratings provides the following information:

1. There were changes to school improvement ratings from 2002 to 2003 in the following manner:
 - 196 schools elevated their rating
 - 378 schools maintained their rating
 - 461 schools earned lower improvement ratings
2. The number and percentage of elementary and middle schools rated unsatisfactory increased. These ratings likely reflect declines in performance on PACT English/language arts as students progress to upper elementary and middle grades.
3. High school improvement ratings rose. The calculation incorporated like data from 2002 and 2003 for the LIFE scholarship criterion and did not include graduation rate.
4. 67 schools benefited from the incentive for improving the performance of historically underachieving student groups. When these groups of students demonstrate gains greater than the average gains for all students statewide, the school's improvement ratings are elevated one level.
5. 14.6% of schools with a poverty composite of 90% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*. 12.8% of schools with a poverty composite of 80% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.
6. Of the 50 schools rated *Unsatisfactory* in 2002, 36% earned Average or above improvement ratings in 2003. 27% of schools rated *Below Average* in 2002 earned Average or above improvement ratings in 2003.

The analysis of the data over the last three years raises four critical issues. South Carolina must:

1. Exercise patience to solve historical underachievement and continue to support improvement strategies
2. Sustain the gains in ratings and student performance made by schools emerging from unsatisfactory status
3. Utilize the student performance data to understand how schools and the education system can improve
4. Implement multi-disciplinary strategies to ensure maximum impact from school services in communities with deep social and economic challenges.

The Achievement Gap in South Carolina

The achievement gap is an area of particular interest to improving education in South Carolina and the Education Oversight Committee requested that staff conduct in-depth studies of South Carolina's educational system. A review of the data provided a description of the achievement gap in elementary and middle schools and identified a set of schools that are closing the gaps in specific subjects for specific student groups.

The achievement gap is often described in terms of differential performance by different student demographic groups on state or national achievement tests. For example, a finding from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the performance of white students exceeds that of African-American students and the performance of students living above the poverty line exceeds that of students living in poverty. An important education reform goal is to close the achievement gap between the demographic groups by raising the performance of all groups with the expectation that the lower scoring groups must improve more rapidly than the higher scoring groups to "catch up." The gap is described in terms of the target group (the lower-scoring demographic group) and the comparison group (the higher-scoring group). The difference in achievement between the target and comparison groups at various performance levels (Basic, Proficient, Advanced) is the achievement gap.

EOC staff studied the 2001-2002 performance on PACT English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in grades three through eight of African-American and White students, and of students participating in the federal free/reduced price lunch program and students who pay for lunch. The target groups were African-American students and students participating in the free/reduced lunch program. The comparison groups were white students and students not participating in the lunch program (pay lunch). Table Nine provides some additional insight into these demographic groups.

Table Nine
**South Carolina Demographic Statistics
Measures of Child Well-Being
2000 Census Data**

Measure	African-American	Non-Hispanic White
Children ages 6 – 17 Years	259,282	399,219
% children in poverty, 1999	33.7%	9.2%
Number of children ages 6-17 years in poverty	87,378	36,728
Median family income, 1999	\$28,742	\$50,794
% children in neighborhoods where more than 32.2% of families are female-headed, no spouse	50.5%	13.3%
% children in neighborhoods with more than 18.6% persons in poverty	47.5%	13.0%
% children in neighborhoods where more than 14.7% of persons 16-19 are high school dropouts	36.0%	30.4%
% children in neighborhoods where more than 38.1% of working age men are unemployed	22.8%	4.7%
% children with all four characteristics	9.9%	1.1%
% children (Pre-K – 12) in public school	95.9%	82.0%
% children (Pre-K – 12) in private school	4.1%	18.0%

Source: Kids Count, 2003

African-American children are more likely to be living in poverty than white students. Even though there are more white children than African-American, there are more than twice as many African-American school-aged children in poverty as white children in South Carolina. The depth and breadth of poverty for South Carolina's children, especially among African-American children, is a major factor to consider when attempting to understand the source of achievement differences among different demographic

groups of children. The achievement levels studied were the percentages of students in each group scoring Basic or higher (Basic, Proficient, or Advanced) and percentages of students scoring Proficient or higher (Proficient or Advanced) on the PACT ELA and math tests administered in spring 2002.

In addition to studying the performances of the target and comparison groups described above, we also studied the PACT performance of each of the combinations of student demographic groups (African-American free/reduced lunch, African-American pay lunch, white free/reduced lunch, and white pay lunch). The study of the combinations helps to understand the effects of poverty when evaluating the performance of demographic groups. For example, is the higher performance of white students in part because fewer white students live in poverty than African-American students? By studying the performance of poor- and non-poor White and African-American students, we can help to control for effects related to socioeconomic status.

EOC staff also studied an additional factor, the overall achievement level of the school attended. School overall achievement level was defined as school Absolute Rating (Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and Unsatisfactory). This study was done to identify the relationships among school overall achievement and the achievement gap.

Finally, EOC staff identified a group of schools that were closing the achievement gap for at least one of the target groups in at least one subject area. In the future we hope to further study these schools and other schools like them to identify common educational practices that can be encouraged and implemented in other schools.

Data for the study came from two primary sources: 2002 PACT test results for demographic groups published by the SC Department of Education (SDE) and the original 2002 PACT test data files to obtain data on the combinations of demographic groups (white pay lunch, African-American free/reduced lunch, etc.). The 2002 PACT results reported on the SDE web site are from students who were attending the same school on both the 45th day and on the first day of testing; these data also include data from students with disabilities tested at a lower grade level than their nominal grade based on age (off-level testing).

The Statewide results for the 2002 ELA PACT tests are listed in Table Ten and the achievement gaps are listed in Table Eleven.

Table Ten
2002 PACT Results By Demographic Group

Demographic Group	ELA		Math	
	% Basic or above	% Proficient or Advanced	% Basic or above	% Proficient or Advanced
All Students	74.8	31.2	68.2	28.6
White	84.8	42.9	80.4	40.2
African-American	61.2	15.3	51.7	12.7
Free/Reduced Lunch	63.3	16.7	55.3	15.2
Pay Lunch	86.9	46.4	81.8	42.8

Table Eleven
2002 PACT Achievement Gaps Between Demographic Groups

Target – Comparison Group	ELA		Math	
	% Basic or above	% Proficient or Advanced	% Basic or above	% Proficient or Advanced
African-American – White	-23.6	-27.6	-28.7	-27.5
Free/Reduced Lunch – Pay Lunch	-23.6	-29.7	-26.5	-27.6

The data in Table Ten indicate that pay lunch students have the highest scores and African-American students have the lowest. The percentages of students scoring Proficient or Advanced in both subjects are considerably lower than the percentages scoring Basic or above for all groups.

The achievement gaps between the groups listed in Table Eleven were calculated by subtracting the performance of the comparison groups (white and pay lunch) from that of the target groups (African-American and free/reduced lunch). Since the comparison groups score higher than the target groups, the differences are negative. For example, the percentage of African-American students scoring Basic or above in ELA is 23.6 percentage points lower than white students. The gaps in 2002 ranged from -23.6% (ELA % Basic or above and % Proficient or Advanced for African-American vs. white students) to -29.7% (ELA % Proficient or Advanced, free/reduced vs. pay lunch students).

The analysis of the achievement of demographic subgroups generated several additional issues to be considered, including:

- The overall achievement of all the subgroups was quite low in Unsatisfactory and Below Average schools, especially for the % Proficient or Advanced achievement level. The smaller gaps in the % Proficient or Advanced category in these schools may simply reflect the low overall achievement levels, which would limit the size of the gap attainable.
- While the average performance of African-American students participating in the free/reduced lunch program is highest in schools rated Excellent, the achievement level for these students is at the same level as White free/reduced lunch students in Average schools. The low achievement at the % Proficient or Advanced levels by African-American free/reduced lunch students in schools receiving high Absolute Ratings is a matter of deep concern and should be a major focus of attention for personnel in those schools.

What changes in the achievement gap have taken place since the first year of PACT testing in 1999? PACT data for 1999 and 2001 were available for comparison. The 2002 PACT demographic data reported by the SDE could not be compared to data for previous years because the 2002 data were calculated differently. Unlike in previous years, the data from students who were not present in the same school on both the 45th day and on the first day of testing in the spring were omitted from the 2002 results. The 2002 data included results from students with disabilities tested off-level (at a grade level lower than their nominal grade based on age), while data from previous years did not. The 1999 and 2001 data and trends are indicated in Tables Twelve, Thirteen and Fourteen.

Table Twelve
1999 and 2001 PACT Results for Selected Demographic Groups

Group	ELA					
	% Basic or above		Difference	% Proficient or Advanced		Difference
	2001	1999	2001-1999	2001	1999	2001-1999
All Students	73.3	63.8	9.5	31.9	25.3	6.6
White	84.0	76.5	7.5	43.7	35.8	7.9
African-American	58.6	46.7	11.9	15.7	11.0	4.7
Free/Reduced Lunch	60.7	48.5	12.2	17.0	11.8	5.2
Pay Lunch	85.2	78.4	6.8	46.1	37.9	8.2

Table Thirteen
1999 and 2001 PACT Results for Selected Demographic Groups

Group	Math					
	% Basic or above		Difference	% Proficient or Advanced		Difference
	2001	1999	2001-1999	2001	1999	2001-1999
All Students	64.4	53.3	11.1	26.1	16.5	9.6
White	76.9	68.3	8.6	36.9	23.2	13.7
African-American	47.2	32.8	14.4	11.4	5.2	6.2
Free/Reduced Lunch	50.4	36.2	14.2	13.2	5.9	7.3
Pay Lunch	77.7	69.3	8.4	38.6	26.4	12.2

Table Fourteen
Differences in Achievement Gaps, 1999 – 2001 PACT

Target – Comparison Group	ELA Achievement Gaps				Math Achievement Gaps			
	% Basic or above		% Proficient or Advanced		% Basic or above		% Proficient or Advanced	
	1999	2001	1999	2001	1999	2001	1999	2001
African-American – White	-29.8	-25.4	-24.8	-28.0	-35.5	-29.7	-18.0	-25.5
Free/Reduced Lunch – Pay Lunch	-29.9	-24.5	-26.1	-29.1	-33.1	-27.3	-20.5	-25.4

Tables Twelve and Thirteen show that the achievement levels of all the demographic groups improved between 1999 and 2001. However, the groups showed different rates of improvement for different performance levels. African-American students and free/reduced lunch students made larger increases than white and pay lunch students at the Basic or above performance level on both the ELA and math tests. Conversely, white and pay lunch students increased their performance at the Proficient or Advanced levels more than African-American and free/reduced lunch students.

These differences among the groups at different performance levels affected the sizes of the achievement gaps between groups over time (Table Fourteen). At the Basic or above levels for both the ELA and math tests, the sizes of the gaps were reduced between 1999 and 2001 for African-American compared to white students and for free/reduced lunch eligible students compared to pay lunch students. However, the gaps in the percentages of students scoring Proficient or Advanced increased between the African-American and white students and between the free/reduced and pay lunch students.

Although the gaps remain large, the reduction of the gaps at the Basic or above performance levels is a real sign of progress. However, the federal requirement in No Child Left Behind and the South Carolina achievement goals in the SC Education Accountability Act both demand that students score at least at the Proficient level. The increases in the gaps at the Proficient or above level are thus a real cause for concern.

To provide further insight into the achievement gap in South Carolina, we identified schools that had high levels of performance by one or more of the target groups in ELA, math, or both. The performance of the target group of students had to be in the range of the performance of the comparison group (or higher). For example, a school in which the percentage of African-American students (target group)

scoring Proficient or Advanced was in the range of or higher than the percentage of white students (comparison group) scoring at that level statewide would meet the criteria for selection. The following process was used to identify these schools.

The following prerequisite conditions had to be met for a school to be considered:

- The school must have test results from at least one of the target groups to be considered.
- The size of the target group in the school must be large enough to provide reliable information (at least 30 students).

To obtain the achievement cut points to identify schools making exemplary progress in closing the gap, schools were ranked by the PACT achievement performance of all students in the school for these tests and performance levels:

- ELA - % scoring Basic or higher;
- ELA - % scoring Proficient or Advanced;
- Math - % scoring Basic or higher;
- Math - % scoring Proficient or Advanced.

The achievement level for each test corresponding to the 75th percentile and the 90th percentile for all schools was identified. These data and the averages of the school percentages of students scoring at each achievement level for all students and for the demographic groups are shown in Table Fifteen. These analyses were carried out with school as the level of analysis, so the percentages listed in Table Fifteen represent the percentile ranks of schools and the average of the school percentages for all schools.

Table Fifteen
**75th and 90th Percentiles and Averages of
 School Percentages of Students in Each Category
 2002 Pact Test Performance**

PACT Test Performance Levels	All Students – 75th %ile and Above of All Schools	All Students – 90th %ile and Above of All Schools	Average School Performance - All Students	Average School Performance - African-American Students	Average School Performance - White Students	Average School Performance - Free/Reduced Lunch Students	Average School Performance - Pay Lunch Students
ELA % Basic or higher	84.3%	90.0%	74.7%	61.2%	84.8%	63.3%	86.9%
Math % Basic or higher	79.6%	87.0%	68.2%	51.6%	80.4%	55.4%	81.8%
ELA % Proficient or Advanced	39.5%	50.0%	31.2%	15.3%	42.9%	16.7%	46.4%
Math % Proficient or Advanced	38.7%	48.0%	28.6%	12.7%	40.2%	15.2%	42.8%

Source: SC Department of Education www.myschools.com

The performance of each qualifying target group (having at least 30 tested students) in each school was evaluated against the performance corresponding to the 75th and 90th percentiles for all schools statewide. The criteria for identification were that the target group had to score at least at the level of the 75th percentile for all students in all schools (this level of performance was near that of the comparison groups). For example, a school in which 36 of the 42 African-American students (85.7%) tested scored Basic or higher on the ELA test would be identified as a school closing the gap because 85.7% of the target group (African-American students) scored Basic or higher, which is greater the 75th percentile for all students (84.3%).

The performance of each target group in schools meeting the 75th percentile criterion was also examined to see if it was at or above the 90th percentile for all students in all schools (exceeded the performance of the comparison group). In our example school, the 85.7% scoring Basic or higher was less than the criterion at the 90th percentile (90.0%).

Schools in which at least one target group met or exceeded the 75th or 90th percentile for each test were identified as schools showing strong evidence of closing the achievement gap.

Fifteen of 859 schools with data did not have sufficient students (at least 30) in any of the target groups, so could not be evaluated. The remaining 844 schools were eligible for consideration. Eighty-seven schools (two of which had both elementary and middle school grades and thus two report cards) were identified. These schools represent approximately 10% of all schools having sufficient numbers of students in the target groups for analysis. Fifty-seven schools had at least one target group achieve between the 75th and 89th state percentiles, and thirty had at least one group achieve at the 90th percentile or higher. The schools are listed in Table Sixteen.

Table Sixteen
Schools With Target Demographic Groups Scoring At or Above the 75th or 90th Percentiles

District	School	Group(s) Identified**						
		A-A ELA 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+					
Aiken	Hammond Hill E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+					
Aiken	Chukker Creek E	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Anderson 1	Cedar Grove E*	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+				
Anderson 1	Concrete E*	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+					
Anderson 1	West Pelzer E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Prof+				
Anderson 1	Spearman E	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Anderson 1	Wren E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+					
Anderson 1	Hunt Meadow E*	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+			
Anderson 2	Marshall Primary	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Anderson 2	Honea Path E*	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+				
Anderson 4	La France E*	F/R ELA 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+					
Anderson 4	Pendleton E*	A-A Math 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+					
Anderson 4	Townville E*	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+			
Bamberg 1	Richard Carroll P	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+					
Beaufort	St Helena E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+	A-A Math 75th Basic+	A-A Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Prof+
Berkeley	Sangaree E	A-A ELA 75th Prof+						
Berkeley	Menriv Park E*	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+	F/R ELA 90th Prof+				
Berkeley	Marrington E	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Basic+					
Charleston	James Island M	A-A ELA 75th Basic+						
Charleston	Orange Grove E	A-A Math 75th Basic+						
Charleston	Stono Park E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+	A-A Math 75th Basic+	A-A Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Prof+	
Charleston	Ashley River E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+						
Charleston	James B Edwards E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+						

District	School	Group(s) Identified**							
Charleston	Buist Academy*	A-A ELA 90th Basic+	A-A ELA 90th Prof+	A-A Math 90th Basic+	A-A Math 90th Prof+				
Charleston	Charleston School Arts*	A-A ELA 75th Prof+	A-A Math 75th Basic+	A-A ELA 90th Basic+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+			
Charleston	Charles Pinckney E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+							
Cherokee	Goucher E	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Prof+						
Chesterfield	Edwards E*	F/R Math 75th Prof+	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+					
Clarendon 2	Manning P	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Darlington	Pate E*	A-A ELA 75th Prof+	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Prof+	A-A ELA 90th Basic+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+	
Dillon 2	East E	A-A Math 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Prof+						
Dillon 2	Stewart Heights E*	A-A Math 90th Prof+	F/R Math 90th Prof+						
Dorchester 2	Rollings M*	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	A-A ELA 90th Basic+	A-A ELA 90th Prof+	F/R ELA 90th Prof+		
Dorchester 2	Oakbrook E	F/R Math 75th Basic+							
Edgefield	Merriwether E*	A-A Math 75th Prof+	A-A ELA 90th Basic+	A-A Math 90th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+			
Florence 1	Royall E	F/R Math 75th Basic+							
Greenville	Brook Glenn E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Prof+				
Greenville	Bakers Chapel E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+							
Greenville	Mountain View E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Greenville	Oakview E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+							
Hampton 1	Brunson E*	A-A ELA 90th Basic+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+						
Horry	Aynor High	F/R Math 75th Basic+							
Horry	Daisy E	F/R Math 75th Basic+							
Horry	Homewood E*	A-A Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Prof+				
Horry	Kingston E	F/R Math 75th Basic+							
Horry	Lakewood E*	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Prof+				
Horry	St James E	F/R Math 75th Basic+							
Horry	Pee Dee E	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Horry	Waccamaw E	F/R Math 75th Basic+							
Horry	Forestbrook E*	F/R ELA 90th Basic+	F/R ELA 90th Prof+	F/R Math 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Prof+				
Horry	Carolina Forest E*	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Prof+	F/R Math 90th Basic+					
Horry	Seaside E	F/R ELA 75th Prof+							
Kershaw	Baron-Dekalb E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+							
Kershaw	Bethune E	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Kershaw	Jackson School	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Kershaw	Lugoff E*	A-A Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	A-A ELA 90th Basic+	A-A ELA 90th Prof+	A-A Math 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+
Lexington 2	Saluda E for Arts	F/R Math 75th Prof+							
Lexington 5	Dutch Fork E*	A-A ELA 75th Basic+	A-A ELA 75th Prof+	A-A Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	A-A Math 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Prof+
Lexington 5	Seven Oaks E	A-A Math 75th Basic+							

District	School	Group(s) Identified**							
		A-A ELA 75th Basic+	A-A ELA 75th Prof+	A-A Math 75th Basic+					
Lexington 5	River Springs E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+	A-A ELA 75th Prof+	A-A Math 75th Basic+					
Oconee	Keowee E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+							
Oconee	Northside E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+							
Oconee	James M. Brown E	F/R Math 75th Basic+							
Oconee	Ravenel E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Oconee	Westminster E*	F/R Math 90th Basic+							
Oconee	Orchard Park E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+							
Pickens	Ambler E*	F/R ELA 90th Basic+							
Pickens	East End E	F/R Math 75th Basic+							
Pickens	Holly Springs E*	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+						
Pickens	Liberty E	F/R ELA 75th Prof+							
Richland 1	H B Rhame E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+							
Richland 2	North Springs E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+	A-A ELA 75th Prof+	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+			
Richland 2	Rice Creek E	A-A ELA 75th Basic+							
Richland 2	Bookman Road Ele.	A-A ELA 75th Basic+	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+					
Spartanburg 1	Campobello-Gramling	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Spartanburg 1	Holly Spgs-Motlow E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+							
Spartanburg 1	New Prospect E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+						
Spartanburg 2	Boiling Springs Jr H*	A-A ELA 75th Basic+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+					
Spartanburg 2	Cooley Spgs-Fingerville E	F/R Math 75th Prof+							
Spartanburg 3	Clifdale E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+							
Spartanburg 6	Pauline Glenn Springs E*	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+					
Sumter 2	Shaw Heights E	F/R ELA 75th Basic+							
Williamsburg	W M Anderson P	A-A ELA 75th Prof+	A-A Math 75th Basic+	A-A Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Prof+		
Williamsburg	M.B. Lee Sr. P*	A-A Math 75th Prof+	F/R Math 75th Prof+	A-A Math 90th Basic+	F/R Math 90th Basic+				
Williamsburg	St Mark E*	F/R Math 75th Basic+	A-A Math 90th Basic+						
York 2	Bethany E*	F/R Math 75th Prof+	F/R ELA 90th Basic+	F/R ELA 90th Prof+	F/R Math 90th Basic+				
York 2	Crowders Creek E	A-A Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Basic+	F/R Math 75th Prof+					

* School had at least one group score at or above the 90th percentile.

Not surprisingly, since these schools were chosen because their target demographic groups were achieving near or above the levels of the comparison groups statewide, their overall achievement tended to be high. Of the 89 report card absolute ratings issued for these 87 schools (two schools received both elementary and middle school report cards), 51 were Excellent, 36 were Good, and 2 were Average. These schools also received recognition for achievement and for other qualities in the past two years:

- 58 had received Palmetto Gold Awards, 28 of them for two consecutive years;
- 13 had received Palmetto Silver Awards;
- 3 were National Blue Ribbon Award schools; and
- 30 had received Red Carpet awards.

In an attempt to identify characteristics of these schools which would help to differentiate them from other schools, we compared their report card profile data to those from all schools in the State and to those from schools rated Excellent or Good. These comparisons for selected report card data are listed in Table Seventeen.

Table Seventeen
Comparison of 2002 Selected Report Card Variables
Schools In Which Target Group Scores Are At or Above 75th Percentile for All Students
Compared to All Schools And to Schools Rated Excellent or Good

Report Card Variable	Above 75 th ile Schools			Excellent or Good Schools			All Schools (Grades 3-8)		
	Mean	5 th ile	95 th ile	Mean	5 th ile	95 th ile	Mean	5 th ile	95 th ile
Poverty Index	52.8	17.7	90.9	49.0	18.3	79.2	64.2	26.2	95.5
% Students Below Basic	13.2	5.7	21.2	18.0	7.5	26.5	29.4	10.2	54.7
Dollars per Student	5545.17	4140.00	7000.00	5531.35	4172.00	7075.00	5664.51	4194.00	7681.00
Student Teacher Ratio	19.2	14.4	22.9	19.2	12.3	24.5	18.4	10.6	24.5
Student Attendance	96.5	95.2	97.7	96.3	94.1	97.5	96.1	93.5	98.0
Teacher Attendance	95.1	92.1	97.4	95.4	92.4	98.3	95.2	92.4	98.2
Student Retention	3.5	0.6	7.5	3.1	0.5	7.0	4.1	0.7	9.2
Days Prof. Development	11.0	6.9	17.1	10.6	6.5	16.7	10.5	5.8	16.4
Teachers Advanced Degrees	50.7	30.0	71.4	51.4	30.0	71.1	48.3	25.6	69.0
% Cont. Contract Teachers	85.6	71.2	97.4	86.1	71.2	97.3	81.6	58.6	96.4
Teachers Out of Field	1.4	0	7.0	1.6	0	7.4	2.3	0	9.5
Teacher Retention	88.1	79.5	95.0	86.7	75.4	94.4	83.9	69.1	93.6
Average Teacher Salary	40057.28	36178.00	44433.00	40334.86	36333.00	44433.00	39347.35	34807.00	43707.00
% Spent on Teacher Salaries	65.1	54.9	72.3	65.7	57.5	74.5	64.9	55.5	74.1
Principal's Years At School	6.8	1.0	17.0	6.1	1.0	17.0	5.3	1.0	16.0
% Parents Conferencing	97.2	82.8	100	96.6	80.6	99.8	92.3	61.3	99.7
Gifted & Talented Students	19.9	5.2	40.4	21.6	6.8	41.5	14.7	1.4	35.8
Students with Disabilities	7.9	3.3	14.6	8.9	3.4	17.0	10.2	3.3	20.1
Teacher Satisfaction Learning Environment	96.2	84.4	100	94.2	79.2	100	86.5	53.6	100
Student Satisfaction Learning Environment	90.1	76.6	100	85.7	67.2	97.6	80.7	56.3	96.6
Parent Satisfaction Learning Environment	90.4	77.8	100	88.0	71.3	100	82.5	60.0	97.4
Teacher Satisfaction Phys. & Social Environment	95.2	81.8	100	94.0	80.0	100	87.4	55.6	100
Student Satisfaction Phys. & Social Environment	88.7	73.1	98.8	86.3	69.1	97.8	81.5	59.6	97.1
Parent Satisfaction Phys. & Social Environment	89.4	77.8	100	86.9	70.0	99.2	80.5	56.1	97.6
Teacher Satisfaction Home-School	88.5	55.2	100	87.5	56.5	100	69.5	23.8	100
Student Satisfaction Home-School	91.9	83.3	100	89.9	78.8	98.8	87.8	75.1	97.7
Parent Satisfaction Home-School	81.5	63.8	94.4	76.9	56.3	92.1	72.7	50.0	90.2
Enrollment	542.2	224.0	955.0	600.1	232.0	1043.0	545.6	213.0	955.0

The identified schools had a higher poverty rate than the Excellent or Good schools but lower than that for all schools. Their dollars spent per student was less than all schools, but slightly higher than Excellent or Good schools. However, most of the differences between the identified schools and other schools were small. One exceptional area was in the teacher, student, and parent survey results, where the identified schools tended to have consistently higher results than the comparison schools. Parents, teachers, and students in the gap-reducing schools tended to be much more satisfied with home-school relations than survey respondents from other South Carolina schools. This suggests that teachers,

students, and parents perceive these schools to be welcoming and positive places with a strong focus on learning.

The performance of the identified target group(s) in these schools was at such a high level that the achievement gap for those students compared to comparison students statewide was virtually eliminated. What the adults in these schools and their communities do every day is making a positive difference for their students. It would be helpful to further study these schools to identify practices and policies they have in common that would be helpful to other schools.

Unsatisfactory and Below Average schools demonstrate an undesirable gap reduction; overall low achievement for all groups leads to small achievement gaps. The challenge for these schools is to raise the achievement levels of all groups. The large gaps between student demographic groups in the percentages of students scoring Proficient or Advanced in Excellent and Good schools presents a somewhat different challenge. The challenge for these schools is to raise the achievement of their lower income students and students of color while maintaining the high levels of achievement of their higher-scoring students.

The need to reduce the achievement gaps among demographic groups of students is clear if we are to meet our goal that all students achieve at high levels of performance. While the achievement gaps remain large, the trend data indicate that South Carolina educators have risen to the initial challenge to reduce the numbers of poor and African-American children who are scoring below grade level. However, in 2002 it appears that only about 10% of South Carolina elementary and middle schools are coming close to eliminating the gap, and then only for some groups in one subject area in many cases. The trend data indicating that the gaps have increased at the Proficient and Advanced levels should prompt us to focus our efforts at increasing the performance of all students to higher levels.

The data also indicate that what the adults in schools and in communities do makes a difference, and that schools can be successful in raising the achievement levels of all students to a high level regardless of the risk factors students bring to school with them. The challenge now is to raise our expectations for all groups of students.

Longitudinal School and Student PACT Performance

During the 2003-04 year the EOC staff also studied the longitudinal performance of both schools and individuals in order to better understand the progress South Carolina is making towards the 2010 goal. Tables Eighteen and Nineteen show the comparison of elementary and middle school performance respectively between 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. For elementary schools, the data showed that the percentages of elementary school absolute ratings of Good and Excellent increased slightly. The data also showed that the percentage of elementary school improvement ratings of Unsatisfactory increased, while the percentage of Excellent improvement ratings decreased

Table Eighteen: Elementary Schools
**2000-2001 and 2001-2002 Report Card Ratings
 Number and Percentage of School Report Cards**

Rating	Absolute Rating Number (%)		Improvement Rating Number (%)	
	2000-2001*	2001-2002**	2000-2001*	2001-2002**
Excellent	96 (15.9)	106 (17.5)	54 (8.9)	37 (6.1)
Good	191 (31.6)	217 (35.8)	98 (16.2)	120 (19.8)
Average	208 (34.4)	195 (32.2)	146 (24.2)	104 (17.2)
Below Average	100 (16.5)	81 (13.4)	162 (26.8)	159 (26.2)
Unsatisfactory	10 (1.7)	7 (1.2)	144 (23.8)	186 (30.7)
Total	605 (100)	606 (100)	604 (100)	606 (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (elementary, Middle).

*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 30, 2001.

**Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 2002

Table Nineteen: Middle Schools
**2000-2001 and 2001-2002 Report Card Ratings
 Number and Percentage of School Report Cards**

Rating	Absolute Rating Number (%)		Improvement Rating Number (%)	
	2000-2001	2001-2002	2000-2001	2001-2002
Excellent	11 (4.0)	14 (5.1)	7 (2.6)	8 (2.9)
Good	58 (21.3)	73 (26.6)	22 (8.1)	32 (11.7)
Average	91 (33.5)	91 (33.2)	63 (23.2)	78 (28.5)
Below Average	83 (30.5)	70 (25.6)	89 (32.7)	107 (39.1)
Unsatisfactory	29 (10.7)	26 (9.5)	91 (33.5)	49 (17.9)
Total	272 (100)	274 (100)	272 (100)	274 (100)

Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding. Some schools may have received more than one report card if the school contained more than one organizational grade level (elementary, Middle).

*Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 30, 2001.

** Based on data from the SC Department of Education, November 2002

For middle school, the data showed that the percentages of middle school absolute ratings of Good and Excellent increased slightly and that the percentage of middle school improvement ratings of Unsatisfactory decreased greatly.

Table Twenty
**Median School Improvement Indices
 Elementary and Middle Schools
 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 School Years**

School Year*	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools
2000-2001	0.015	-0.012
2001-2002	-0.013	0.027

*Improvement indices for 2000-2001 represent achievement gains from 1999-2000 compared to 2000-2001; improvement indices for 2001-2002 represent achievement gains from 2000-2001 compared to 2001-2002.

Table Twenty contains information on the Improvement Rating over the period of 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. The data indicate that, on average, schools made little or no progress in increasing individual students' achievement levels over each school year evaluated. While many students may have scored at the same achievement level each year and some increased their achievement levels from one year to the next, an approximately equal number scored lower, resulting in overall gains of approximately zero. The data also show that the scores of students scoring at the Below Basic 1, Below Basic 2, and Basic levels must increase over time and the scores of students currently scoring Proficient or Advanced must not drop if we are to meet the 2010 goal and fulfill the requirements of No Child Left Behind.

The longitudinal study also examined the pattern of achievement among individual students studied for three consecutive years, rather than the two years evaluated for the improvement ratings. To accomplish this portion of the study the PACT ELA and Math scores for 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 were matched for each student. The resulting data allows us to evaluate the progress of students who were attending the following grades in 1999-2000: grade 3 (test data from grades 3, 4, and 5);

grade 4 (test data from grades 4, 5, and 6); grade 5 (test data from grades 5, 6, and 7); and grade 6 (test data from grades 6, 7, and 8). Data from students repeating grades during this period were also matched. The analyses include data only from students who were tested in the same school district for all three years studied. The data were then analyzed according to score on the assessment – Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced.

The data from students who failed to pass PACT ELA and/or Math in 1999-2000 (scored BB1 or BB2) were analyzed to determine the number and percentage who passed the test at the Basic level or higher in 2001-2002 (e. g., improved performance) and the number and percentage who continued to fail the test (scored below Basic) in 2001-2002 (e. g., failed to improve). Students scoring just below the Basic cutoff (Below Basic 2) were much more likely to score Basic or higher at the end of the three year period than students initially scoring Below Basic 1. Less than one-third of the students initially failing the test passed it at the end of the three years studied.

Table Twenty-One
**Three-Year Longitudinal Progress of Students
 Initially Scoring Below Basic 1 or Below Basic 2
 PACT ELA and Math
 1999-2000 – 2001-2002**

PACT Test	Students Scoring Below Basic 1 in 1999-2000		Students Scoring Below Basic 2 in 1999-2000		Totals – Students Scoring Below Basic 1 or Below Basic 2 in 1999-2000	
	Improved by 2001-2002	Failed to Improve by 2001-2002	Improved by 2001-2002	Failed to Improve by 2001-2002	Improved by 2001-2002	Failed to Improve by 2001-2002
	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)	# (%)
ELA	6,577 (23.6)	21,314 (76.4)	8,280 (46.2)	9,645 (53.8)	14,857 (32.4)	30,959 (67.6)
Math	6,245 (19.4)	25,917 (80.6)	12,339 (43.6)	15,937 (56.4)	18,574 (30.7)	41,854 (69.3)

A special study of the students whose 1999-2000 scores were in the lowest range (Below Basic 1) was conducted to identify the number and percentage who continued to score Below Basic 1 every year for three years. The students who continue to score at the lowest levels present a considerable challenge to the system. The 11,234 students consistently scoring BB1 on PACT ELA represent 6.8% of all students with ELA data (165,098); the 12,525 students consistently scoring BB1 on PACT Math are 7.5% of all students with Math data (166,156).

Table Twenty-Two
**Students Scoring Below Basic 1 for Three Consecutive Years
 PACT ELA and Math
 1999-2000 – 2001-2002**

PACT Test	# Scoring BB1 in 1999-2000	# (%) Scoring BB1 Every Year 1999-2000 – 2001-2002
ELA	27,966	11,234 (40.2)
Math	32,162	12,525 (38.9)

For students scoring Basic in 1999-2000 the progress over the three years of students initially scoring at the minimal passing level (Basic) in ELA and Math was also tracked. Three categories of students who initially scored Basic in 1999-2000 were identified:

- ✓ Students whose scores neither increased nor decreased (e. g., also scored Basic in 2001-2002);
- ✓ Students whose scores in 2001-2002 were above Basic (e. g., Proficient or Advanced);
- ✓ Students whose scores in 2001-2002 had fallen below Basic.

Table Twenty-Three
Three-Year Longitudinal Progress of Students Initially Scoring Basic
PACT ELA and Math
1999-2000 – 2001-2002

PACT Test	Students Scoring Basic All 3 Years # (%)	Students Scoring Above Basic in 2001-2002 # (%)	Students Scoring Below Basic in 2001-2002 # (%)	Total # of Students Scoring Basic in 1999-2000
ELA	40,132 (65.8)	8,206 (13.5)	12,613 (20.7)	60,951
Math	38,913 (59.1)	13,245 (20.1)	13,644 (20.7)	65,802

Results of the study showed a higher percentage of students increased their scores above Basic in Math than in ELA at the end of the three year period. Results also show that the percentage and number of students whose Math scores increased was similar to the number and percentage which decreased over the three years. In addition, the number and percentage of students whose ELA scores decreased was considerably larger than the number and percentage whose scores increased over the three years and the percentage of students whose ELA scores decreased below Basic was the same as the percentage of students whose Math scores decreased.

In regards to students scoring Proficient or Advanced in 1999-2000 the progress of students whose ELA or Math scores were initially at the Proficient or Advanced levels in 1999-2000 was also studied. Two groups were identified among the students who initially scored Proficient or Advanced:

- ✓ Students who maintained at least Proficient scores between 1999-2000 and 2001-2002;
- ✓ Students whose scores dropped below Proficient by 2001-2002.

Table Twenty-Four
Three-Year Longitudinal Progress of Students
Initially Scoring Proficient or Advanced
PACT ELA and Math
1999-2000 – 2001-2002

PACT Test	Students Who Maintained Proficient or Above From 1999-2000 – 2001-2002 n (%)	Students Whose Scores Dropped Below Proficient in 2001-2002 n (%)	Total Number of Students Initially Scoring Proficient or Advanced in 1999-2000
ELA	37,679 (64.6)	20,652 (35.4)	58,331
Math	30,028 (75.2)	9,888 (24.8)	39,916

For the students who initially scored Proficient and Advanced in 1999-2000, approximately one-fourth of the students initially scoring Proficient or Advanced in Math saw their scores decrease at the end of three years. Over one-third of the students initially scoring Proficient or Advanced in ELA saw their scores decrease over the three years. In 1999-2000 fewer students scored Proficient or Advanced in Math than in ELA, but by 2001-2002 a higher percentage of students had maintained their high Math scores. Students initially scoring Proficient or Advanced in ELA were more likely to see their scores decrease than students initially scoring at the same level in Math.

The performance of students belonging to different demographic groups was also studied and Table Twenty-Five holds the information. To achieve this portion of the study the three year longitudinal data were also analyzed by student demographic group. Overall, the data showed that the percentages of students initially scoring Below Basic in ELA whose scores improved were larger than the percentages in Math for most groups. In addition, the percentages of students initially scoring Proficient or Advanced in Math who maintained their high scores were higher than those for ELA. Finally, the percentages of students initially scoring Basic in Math who improved their scores was also higher than for ELA.

Table Twenty-Five
Statewide Analysis of Three Year Longitudinal Data By Student Demographic Group
PACT ELA and Math
1999-2000 – 2001-2002

Student Group	% Students Initially Scoring BB1 Who Improved By 2001-2002		% Students Initially Scoring BB2 Who Improved By 2001-2002		% Students Initially Scoring Proficient or Advanced Who Maintained High Scores Through 2001-2002		% Students Initially Scoring Basic Whose Scores Were Higher Than Basic in 2001-2002		% Students Initially Scoring Basic Whose Scores Dropped Below Basic in 2001-2002	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
All Students	23.6	19.4	46.2	43.6	64.6	75.2	13.5	20.1	20.7	20.7
Free/Reduced Lunch	22.2	18.2	42.6	40.1	47.6	61.8	9.3	14.5	25.9	26.9
Pay Lunch	27.9	23.1	54.4	50.3	70.5	78.8	18.1	25.0	14.9	15.3
African-American	20.3	16.1	41.3	38.5	47.9	60.6	8.7	13.1	26.2	28.0
White	31.1	26.7	53.6	50.6	68.9	77.7	17.2	24.4	16.3	16.3
African-American Free/Reduced Lunch	20.1	16.0	40.4	37.5	42.4	55.5	7.7	11.8	28.1	30.2
White Free/Reduced Lunch	30.2	25.9	48.2	46.8	52.7	66.2	12.0	18.7	22.0	22.1
African-American Pay Lunch	21.4	16.8	46.6	43.4	57.4	68.5	12.2	17.3	19.5	21.3
White Pay Lunch	31.9	27.3	57.7	53.3	71.9	79.5	19.6	26.6	13.7	14.0

Analyses such as these have not been available in the past but understanding this type of data is crucial to long term improvement in South Carolina schools. The longitudinal analysis of PACT performance can be used to improve academic achievement. It can assist district and school level instructional leaders to better evaluate their school or district performance over time and help them identify program strengths and weaknesses. The availability of a unique student ID would allow districts to monitor their own longitudinal data. And, longitudinal data reports can provide the basis for district and school personnel to ask (and answer) substantive questions about their programs.

Technical Assistance to Underperforming Schools

Section 59-18-1500 of the Education Accountability Act of 1998 outlines the technical assistance programs that will be provided to unsatisfactory and below average schools. Each unsatisfactory school will receive, and each below average school can request these programs. The specific programs include external review teams, retraining grants, homework centers, teacher specialists on site, and principal specialists.

During the 2001-2002 school year, the state served 256 schools in 55 school districts. These schools were identified on the basis of receiving either an "Unsatisfactory" or "Below Average" rating on the 2001 school report card issued in December 2001.

During the spring of 2001, the State Department of Education developed a plan to implement technical assistance at the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year in anticipation of the release of the first school report cards. In the process of developing the plan, it became apparent that the shortage of teacher specialists would prevent full implementation of the technical assistance components in EAA. The SDE established a tier system, with schools whose absolute score was less than 1.9 classified as Tier 1 schools, schools scoring 1.9 and 2.0 were listed as Tier 2 schools, and schools scoring 2.1 as Tier 3

schools. The SDE system also established two new technical assistance positions – curriculum specialists and lead principals. Tier 1 schools would receive curriculum specialists and lead principals in addition to the other technical assistance programs. Tier 2 and Tier 3 schools would be served by curriculum specialists operating out of the hubs.

Implementation of the plan began with the 2001 school year. Schools expected to be unsatisfactory received homework centers, funded by grants of \$25,000 per school. The grants are provided through the Office of School Safety and pay for transportation of students, teacher salaries and other operating expenses. The goal of the program is to provide students in need of additional time at school with after-school instruction.

During the fall semester, identified schools receive a visit by an external review. The review teams for Tier 1 and Tier 2 schools were conducted by teams of three educators, business leaders, and community leaders. Tier 3 schools received review teams staffed by SDE personnel. The review teams met with school personnel, community leaders, parents and school district leaders and reviewed all aspects of the school and submitted a report to the State Board of Education outlining the needs of the schools. The report is then used to revise the school's School Renewal Plan to address the deficiencies noted at the school.

As a direct result of the report provided by the review team and other research conducted by school personnel, the school develops a plan for professional development for school personnel. The plan is submitted the SDE for approval, and the activities approved by the SDE are funded through retraining grants. During the 2001-2002 school year unsatisfactory schools received \$500 for each certificated person on staff, and below average schools received \$330 for each certificated person on staff. The amount of the grant was increased in 2002-2003 to \$550 for each certificated person at all qualifying schools. The average cost of the retraining grant per school is \$36,000. The retraining grants are to be expended on activities that should lead to long term changes at the school in a number of areas, including school climate, instruction, curriculum development, and strategic planning. The Accountability Division each year carries out a review of the effectiveness of each school's retraining grant program.

Teacher specialists on site are provided as part of the technical assistance program. The teacher specialists help teachers with instruction and offer professional development on an as needed basis. Teacher specialists conduct model lessons, assist with planning, and give assistance with development of classroom activities. Each elementary school is eligible for one teacher specialist per grade at the school. Middle and high schools are eligible for a teacher specialist in each of the four core subject areas.

The principal specialist program is the least used of the assistance programs. The average cost of a principal specialist is \$124,790. For 2001-2002, there were two principal specialists and for 2002-2003, eight principal specialists were assigned.

There were a total of 347 employed personnel providing technical assistance in 174 schools in the state during the 2002-03 school year. There are a total of 440 personnel employed either on a part-time or full time basis providing technical assistance in 162 school sites in the state during the 2003-04 school year. There were 173 school sites that were eligible for services; however, of these 173 sites, five declined services. In another six sites that were eligible for and desired services, technical assistance personnel were not able to be hired or placed.

Table Twenty-Six
Technical Assistance Personnel

Titles	2002-2003 # Employed	2003-2004 # Employed
Principal Leaders	9	9
Principal Specialists	8	16
Principal Mentors	13	7
Curriculum and Instructional Facilitators	73	155
Curriculum Specialists	41	40
Teacher Specialists	203	213

Each year the EOC evaluates the retraining grants given to schools identified as Below Average or Unsatisfactory. Generally, the schools have had insufficient time to institutionalize the new learning; however, few of the schools provided teachers with time for feedback and practice (a finding similar to that found in the statewide professional development study). The review of 2002-2003 Retraining Grant Program found that many schools were not using the funds to implement the professional development activities listed in their School Renewal Plans or the School Renewal Plan was not specific enough. Confounding success of the retraining grants and the consistent implementation of new knowledge and skills are the principal and teacher turnover rates. Over half of the schools served in 1998-1999 had different principals in 1999-2000. Teacher turnover rates hovered near 30 percent in many of the lowest performing schools. Instability negatively impacts the long-range plans of the school and progress in student achievement. Teacher turnover also lessens the effectiveness of the Retraining Grant Program because teachers are not able to apply the knowledge they gain through the professional development activities before moving to another school to teach.

Revisions to the Technical Assistance Program

There are gaps in the technical assistance model defined under the EAA. If the improvement strategies are limited to those specifically provided in the EAA, then there are no strategies to address the full structure of decision-making at the district level. Improving the quality of board and central administrative decision making is omitted from the statutory menu of improvement strategies. Systemic change requires that the entire system be addressed. The technical assistance model also relies heavily on teacher specialists assigned to each school. In a period of teacher shortages statewide, the State Department of Education may have difficulty placing significant number of teacher specialists without creating problems in other SC schools. Alternative, but equally effective, strategies may be necessary in selected settings.

South Carolina's financial investment in technical assistance exceeds the other 27 states that provide technical assistance for underperforming schools. Technical assistance in South Carolina is very prescriptive, with little flexibility in how schools can spend the money provided, and far more emphasis is placed on identifying and correcting underperforming schools than rewarding schools that are doing well and/or improving. In addition, none of the money appropriated for technical assistance can be spent on instructional materials that may be lacking in the underperforming schools.

Can change be sustained? As shown in the list below, 27 schools have received *Unsatisfactory* absolute ratings of all three report cards, 2001, 2002 and 2003. None of these schools is an elementary school. That may suggest that our efforts to intervene early are working. There are 91 schools that were rated *Unsatisfactory* (on the absolute rating) in either 2001, 2002 or 2003. Of the 68 schools with *Unsatisfactory* absolute ratings in 2001, only two were rated above *Below Average* in 2002 but neither school was able to retain their rating of *Average* or above. Of the 59 schools with *Unsatisfactory* absolute ratings in 2002, only five were rated above *Below Average* in 2001. Of the schools rated *Unsatisfactory* for the first time in 2003, none was rated higher than *Below Average* in 2001 or 2002.

Table Twenty-Seven
Schools with Unsatisfactory Absolute Ratings in 2001, 2002 and 2003

District	School	Report Card School Level
Allendale	Allendale-Fairfax Middle	MIDDLE
Allendale	Allendale-Fairfax High	HIGH
Bamberg 2	Denmark-Olar High	HIGH
Charleston	M R Rivers Middle	MIDDLE
Charleston	Brentwood Middle	MIDDLE
Charleston	Baptist Hill High	HIGH
Charleston	Burke High	HIGH
Charleston	Lincoln High	HIGH
Charleston	St. John's High	HIGH
Fairfield	Fairfield Middle	MIDDLE
Florence 4	Johnson Middle	MIDDLE
Greenville	Tanglewood Middle	MIDDLE
Hampton 2	Estill High	MIDDLE
Hampton 2	Estill Middle	MIDDLE
Hampton 2	Estill High	HIGH
Jasper	Ridgeland Middle	MIDDLE
Jasper	Jasper County High	HIGH
Lee	Mount Pleasant Middle	MIDDLE
Marlboro	Bennettsville Middle	MIDDLE
Orangeburg 3	Elloree High	MIDDLE
Orangeburg 3	Holly Hill-Roberts High	HIGH
Orangeburg 3	Elloree High	HIGH
Orangeburg 5	Bowman High	HIGH
Richland 1	Heyward Gibbes Middle	MIDDLE
Richland 1	W A Perry Middle	MIDDLE
Richland 1	Eau Claire High	HIGH
Richland 1	C A Johnson High	HIGH

The schools rated *Unsatisfactory* on the absolute rating in 2002 fall into 26 districts as shown in Table Fifty (sorted by percentage of schools rated *Unsatisfactory* and then poverty index). The clustering suggests that there are some districts in which the problems to be solved go beyond the school level.

Table Twenty-Eight
District: Percent of Unsatisfactory Schools

District	Number of Schools in District	Poverty Index	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Absolute	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Improvement	Percent of Absolute Unsatisfactory	Percent of Improvement Unsatisfactory
Allendale	4	92.6	3	1	75	25
Hampton 2	3	92.1	2	1	66.7	33.3
Lee	6	91.6	3	2	50	33.3
State Special	2		0	1	50	50
Jasper	5	83.8	2	2	40	40
Orangeburg 3	8	91.4	3	3	37.5	37.5
Bamberg 2	3	95.4	1	2	33.3	66.7
Florence 4	3	88.2	1	1	33.3	33.3
Dorchester 4	4	82.2	1	3	25	75
Marion 7	4	94.7	1	2	25	50
Fairfield	7	85	1	5	14.3	71.4
Richland 1	50	69.6	6	23	12	46
Charleston	79	61.4	9	29	11.4	36.7
Chester	9	65.4	1	2	11.1	22.2
Orangeburg 4	10	74.9	1	5	10	50
Union	12	65.7	0	3	8.3	25

District	Number of Schools in District	Poverty Index	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Absolute	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Improvement	Percent of Absolute Unsatisfactory	Percent of Improvement Unsatisfactory
Marlboro	13	85	1	8	7.7	61.5
Orangeburg 5	15	84.7	1	6	6.7	40
Chesterfield	18	68.4	1	7	5.6	38.9
Williamsburg	15	91.4	1	6	5.6	40
Greenville	84	44.7	3	43	3.6	51.2
Berkeley	36	59.6	1	16	2.8	44.4
Abbeville	13	67.1	0	4	0	30.8
Aiken	39	55.9	0	17	0	43.6
Anderson 1	14	38.4	0	6	0	42.9
Anderson 2	7	51.7	0	3	0	42.9
Anderson 3	4	62.1	0	1	0	25
Anderson 4	5	50.8	0	2	0	40
Anderson 5	14	52.3	0	5	0	35.7
Bamberg 1	5	71.8	0	4	0	80
Barnwell 19	3	86	0	0	0	0
Barnwell 29	3	70.9	0	2	0	66.7
Barnwell 45	3	62.7	0	2	0	66.7
Clarendon 2	6	81.4	0	2	0	33.3
Clarendon 3	3	64.6	0	2	0	66.7
Colleton	11	80	0	5	0	45.5
Darlington	22	71.8	0	4	0	18.2
Dillon 1	3	77.6	0	1	0	33.3
Dillon 2	6	86.2	0	2	0	33.3
Dillon 3	3	73.1	0	1	0	33.3
Dorchester 2	16	41.2	0	6	0	37.5
Edgefield	7	63.3	0	1	0	14.3
Florence 1	19	59.5	0	10	0	52.6
Florence 2	3	68.3	0	2	0	66.7
Florence 3	8	82.9	0	3	0	37.5
Florence 5	3	57.2	0	1	0	33.3
Georgetown	17	68.5	0	5	0	29.4
Greenwood 50	14	57.5	0	6	0	42.9
Greenwood 51	4	60	0	1	0	25
Greenwood 52	4	49.9	0	0	0	0
Hampton 1	7	70	0	4	0	57.1
Horry	41	62.1	0	14	0	34.1
Kershaw	18	55.7	0	11	0	61.1
Lancaster	19	57.5	0	11	0	57.9
Laurens 55	12	64.9	0	2	0	16.7
Laurens 56	7	70.6	0	3	0	42.9
Lexington 1	19	35.4	0	3	0	15.8
Lexington 2	16	56.8	0	3	0	18.8
Lexington 3	4	61.9	0	3	0	75
Lexington 4	6	71	0	3	0	50
Lexington 5	18	24.7	0	5	0	27.8
Marion 1	4	80.2	0	2	0	50
Marion 2	5	58.9	0	2	0	40
McCormick	5	85.1	0	1	0	20
Newberry	14	67	0	5	0	35.7
Oconee	20	54.9	0	10	0	50
Pickens	24	45.1	0	9	0	37.5
Richland 2	21	40	0	6	0	28.6
Spartanburg 1	10	48.7	0	4	0	40
Spartanburg 2	12	45.4	0	7	0	58.3
Spartanburg 3	7	58.1	0	3	0	42.9

District	Number of Schools in District	Poverty Index	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Absolute	Number of Unsatisfactory Schools Improvement	Percent of Absolute Unsatisfactory	Percent of Improvement Unsatisfactory
Spartanburg 4	4	54	0	1	0	25
Spartanburg 5	8	47.6	0	5	0	62.5
Spartanburg 6	14	48.1	0	8	0	57.1
Spartanburg 7	14	67.8	1	8	0	57.1
Sumter 17	11	65.7	0	8	0	72.7
Sumter 2	15	74.4	0	7	0	46.7
York 1	7	54.7	0	3	0	42.9
York 2	8	38.1	0	2	0	25
York 3	21	44.1	0	10	0	47.6
York 4	8	18.9	0	1	0	12.5

Recommendations Regarding Technical Assistance Strategies

In January 2003, the EOC began a discussion of technical assistance strategies to determine ways in which the technical assistance provided in accordance with the Education Accountability Act could be structured to increase local capacity. Chairman Staton and Superintendent Tenenbaum designated staff members to explore the current system and determine if changes would strengthen the results.

Over the spring, summer and fall the staff members have studied various aspects of the program, including evaluations of components and subsequent ratings of schools receiving technical assistance.

The recommendations stated below require amendments to the Education Accountability Act.

1. In the year of the initial rating of below average or unsatisfactory, schools are to be awarded planning grants to study the school and school community and, with the recommendations of an SDE-approved or appointed review team, align the school plan to address the core elements of governance and leadership, curriculum and instruction, professional development and student achievement. Schools would not receive technical assistance funding or services until the subsequent fiscal year.
 - This aligns with the current practice, with the exception that retraining grant funds would not be provided to the school. Currently schools may not spend the funds prior to district and state approval
 - This enables budgeting and assignment of personnel to follow both the review team and planning processes;
 - This strengthens the planning process.

2. Technical assistance funding (for schools with absolute ratings of unsatisfactory or below average) should be provided for a minimum of three years in accordance with the improvement plan, regardless of changes in absolute ratings during the three years.
 - Currently technical assistance is provided on an annual basis;
 - Research on program improvement suggests that a minimum of three years is needed to implement a new strategy or practice and many programs suggest that five years is needed to realize substantive gains.

3. Target improvement ratings should be established for schools rated unsatisfactory or below average in the assistance cycle.
 - This establishes clear expectations for gains and creates a sense of urgency and focus on improvement efforts;

- The SDE has accomplished background work on expected gains that can inform the targets.
4. Schools rated unsatisfactory shall receive technical assistance services from the State Department of Education to include statutorily-defined services in accordance with the recommendations of the external review team. A very limited number of schools rated unsatisfactory, upon the recommendation of the external review team and inclusion in the school improvement plan, may participate in a technical assistance model designed to test strategies other than those outlined in the statute. Schools rated unsatisfactory should not be permitted to use flexibility and reallocate homework center funds for other purposes. Schools rated below average shall receive a block grant to implement a technical assistance strategy chosen from a limited menu approved by the State Board of Education and appropriate to address the needs at the school.
 - This acknowledges the need for continuing assistance to unsatisfactory schools;
 - This would enable the SDE to “test” alternate improvement strategies and, if successful, recommend alternatives to districts and the state;
 - Schools rated below average would implement comprehensive, research-based models with integrated components rather than a series of smaller actions.
 5. Schools rated below average may use funding for homework centers and retraining grants in a flexible manner to respond to school needs and ensure that target improvement ratings are achieved, but these funds should not be reallocated to other schools or the district under general flexibility provisions.
 - This enables schools to use the funds with flexibility for extended learning time and /or professional development;
 - This protects the technical assistance funds from reallocation to other schools.
 6. Limited funds should be available to provide additional instructional materials for schools rated unsatisfactory or below average when recommended by the review team and incorporated in the school improvement plan.
 - This acknowledges the needs present in some schools, but does not automatically send resources to schools that may not need them.
 7. In districts with one-third or more schools designated unsatisfactory, the superintendent and board members must participate in professional development programs approved by the SDE to enhance their capacity to improve performance and the district must designate a contact person to integrate improvement efforts with other activities, including those required by No Child Left Behind.
 - This ensures district involvement with school efforts;
 - This integrates the multiple improvement strategies in which a school may be participating.
 8. There should be a systemic improvement model for situations in which the district is rated unsatisfactory. The model should encompass school-specific strategies but also should address those comprehensive education, management and community factors that deter high achievement. Funding would include those resources initially designated for schools but reallocated to the systemic strategies.

- This acknowledges the depth and breadth of issues facing schools and school districts in the most challenging situations.

The recommendations were adopted by the EOC at the December 2003 meeting and efforts to implement the changes are underway.

Rewards for Exemplary Performance or Improvement

Based upon report card units, there were a total of 306 public schools, career centers and special state schools that received recognition and a monetary award as either Palmetto Gold or Palmetto Silver in December 2003. (There were 327 report card units receiving awards in 2002-2003.) These schools demonstrated high levels of academic achievement and high rates of student academic improvement as measured by the absolute and improvement ratings assigned to the schools on the 2003 annual report card. For Fiscal Year 2002-03, the General Assembly appropriated \$1.0 million in Lottery Funds to reward schools receiving distinction as Palmetto Gold or Palmetto Silver. For Fiscal Year 2003-04, the General Assembly appropriated \$2.0 million in EIA and Lottery Funds to reward schools receiving distinction as Palmetto Gold or Palmetto Silver. Student enrollment, student attendance, teacher attendance, and dropout rates determined the financial award. The minimum award to a Palmetto Gold school was \$1,500 and the minimum for a Palmetto Silver school was \$1,000. All initial awards totaled \$1,999,971.

Table Twenty-Nine

	Palmetto Gold		Palmetto Silver	
	No. of Recipients 2003-2004	Amount of Awards 2003-2004	No. of Recipients 2003-2004	Amount of Awards 2003-2004
Elementary	106	\$568,291	37	\$99,300
Middle	11	\$101,225	24	\$81,982
High	75	\$841,593	15	\$99,018
Career Centers	32	\$189,727	1	\$ 5,415
State Special Schools	5	\$ 18,835		

2003-04 EIA and EAA Budgets

In September the EOC's annual budget review of all programs funded through the EIA and all programs implemented under the EAA began. All EIA-funded programs were required to submit program reports and budget recommendations. Using this information as well as a budget hearing where representatives of all EIA programs were encouraged to attend and respond to inquiries, the EOC in December adopted budget and proviso recommendations to the General Assembly. The EOC focused its recommendations on three objectives: (1) implementing the EAA as required by the law; (2) funding programs that improve student academic achievement; and (3) retaining and recruiting quality teachers to the classroom. First, and foremost, the EOC reaffirmed the importance of full funding of the EFA as the first priority.

In its deliberations the EOC analyzed the EAA budget and related programs by determining which programs are actually required by the law and which programs supplement or are in addition to the original EAA requirements. Among the programs which are funded by the General Assembly in support of the EAA but are not required by the law include professional development on the standards and summer schools. The EOC also reviewed the funding history of the EAA as described in the following table:

Table Thirty
EAA Technical Assistance Programs
Total Appropriation by Fiscal Years
 \$

Program	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04
Teacher Specialists Principal Specialists	1,455,239	5,206,698	10,469,189	19,602,447	33,862,589	32,365,839
Home Work Centers	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,178,000	3,616,376	3,616,376
External Review teams/Intervention & Assistance	0	0	0	4,000,000	5,466,872	5,466,872
Retraining Grants	750,000	750,000	750,000	4,875,000	9,265,645	9,265,645
Principal Mentors	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	81,000	58,722
Summer School	0	10,000,000	18,000,000	21,000,000	21,000,000	21,000,000
Modified School Year/Day	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	0	0
TOTAL:	3,055,239	16,806,698	30,069,189	52,005,447	73,292,482	71,773,454

Source: Annual General Appropriation Acts

Then, after reviewing the original requirements of the EAA, the EOC recommended a \$24.9 increase for all EAA programs. This increase was based upon a reallocation of exiting funds and an increase for three specific initiatives. First, to implement sound data based decision-making at all levels of the education system would require a unique student identifier and teacher/faculty identifier for students and personnel in the state's public schools and public institutions of postsecondary education. Implementation of a unique student and teacher identifier program is crucial to the analysis of test data and program evaluation. Second, to improve the quality of data, the ease of collection and access to information for decision-making, the completion of an interactive data warehouse is needed. The EOC wants to give schools, districts and policymakers the data necessary for targeting services to students and for evaluating current education programs. And, finally, the EAA establishes specific requirements for the number of teacher specialists to be serving in schools. According to the statute, a total of 612 teacher specialists would be needed to serve in all unsatisfactory and below average schools. The EOC recognized that fulfilling the requirements of the EAA by hiring and placing these specialists would be difficult. Therefore, the EOC recommended increased funding of \$22.4 million for teacher specialist and a proviso transferring any funds in excess of the amount needed to hire these teacher specialists to alternative research-based technical assistance programs, including the tiered system, as approved by the Education Oversight Committee.

Regarding changes to the implementation of the EAA, the EOC made several proviso recommendations. The EOC recommended amending the Retraining Grant proviso to require schools to plan for the implementation of professional development initiatives prior to receiving funding. The EOC recognized that the long term impact of all technical assistance programs on student academic success are contingent upon the development of local capacity and responsibility. To this end, the EOC began to review and recommend changes in the technical assistance program. Regarding the testing program, the EOC recognized the need to reevaluate the statewide testing system in order to provide teachers and parents with diagnostic information and to contain costs. To this objective, the EOC proposed the creation of a special testing task force. Finally, the EOC recommended that the General Assembly consider amending the flexibility provisos to require that grant funds awarded to individual schools for specific education purposes not be reallocated by the district to other purposes. In the case of technical assistance grants, these funds were designed to address the academic needs of specific students at a specific school.

Implementation of State 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.

Review of the Content Standards

A review of the 1998 Social Studies Curriculum Standards began in October 2003 in accordance with Section 59-18-360 of the Education Accountability Act. The review of the standards was completed in January 2004 and the scheduled completion date for final State Board of Education approval of the new social studies standards is December 2004. While the present social studies curriculum standards were determined to be sufficient in many ways, several recommendations were made. Those recommendations included:

1. The new social studies standards document should integrate the present four strands into one set of standards (the four disciplines of history, civics/government, geography and economics can be marked within the standards);
2. The new standards should be developed around a theme or lead discipline in order to reduce the number of standards and provide an overall focus for the social studies program;
3. The number of standards for each grade level should be reduced to improve the manageability of the content, resulting in greater student learning;
4. Diversity in the document should be increased, especially in regards to gender, but it should be presented as integrated in the standards rather than as stand alone items;
5. The standards, especially in grades K-5, should be reviewed and rewritten as necessary to make sure the content and skills expected are age appropriate;
6. The content and scope in world history and world geography in grades 6, 7, 9 and 10 needs to be clarified with more specificity and designated courses to ensure that all students are provided the opportunity to learn essential content in these two areas (world history is the one area that consistently has been found lacking by national reviews of the South Carolina Social Studies Curriculum Standards);
7. There should be thorough development of several specific concepts and skills in each grade rather than superficial treatment of all concepts and skills across all grades;
8. An End of Course Test should be developed for all required high school social studies courses and a course should be identified in either the ninth or tenth grade for all students to take in order for the social studies to be included, as required by law, on the Exit Exam; and,
9. The content regarding the period 1877-1914 in U. S. history in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 should be rewritten to include more specifics on the rise of Jim Crow and segregation.

In accordance with a recommendation to the General Assembly from the Education Oversight Committee and the State Department of Education, the General Assembly amended Section 59-18-360 of the Education Accountability Act to require a review of the standards in each core discipline every seven years instead of every four years. Following the change, staff from the State Department of Education and the Education Oversight Committee updated the "Standard Operating Procedures" for the process of reviewing existing standards and the future development of new course and content standards. The procedures relate to standards review and development under Sections 59-18-300, 320 and 360 of the Education Accountability Act in order to make the process more efficient. In addition, the procedures outline the order in which steps in the process will be conducted. The procedures will be followed in all future standards reviews and development.

Utilization of the Standards in Instruction

The State Board of Education and the Education Oversight Committee have published curriculum content standards in four disciplines for use in SC classrooms. The disciplines are mathematics, English language

arts, science and social studies. These standards reflect what students should know and be able to do in kindergarten through grade twelve. Each set of standards has been reviewed by panels of national and state leaders in the content area to determine that SC students are taught a curriculum that enables them to compete successfully with students from around the world. In 2000 the Fordham Foundation reviewed content standards from the fifty states and rated SC's standards third in the nation, a rise from twenty-eighth in 1998.

Despite severe financial circumstances, the General Assembly maintained its support for implementation of the standards by funding several professional development programs. First, in the EIA, the legislature appropriated \$6.6 million for professional development on the standards; \$950,000 for the Principals Executive Institute; \$3.0 million for Math/Science Hubs; \$1.3 million for the Governor's Institute on Reading; and \$3.2 million for Reading Recovery. In lottery funds, the legislature increased funding for K-5 professional development from \$32.9 million to \$40 million. These funds are in addition to the \$50.7 million in technical assistance targeted to schools with absolute ratings of below average and unsatisfactory. In addition, for 2003-04 the state received federal funds in the amount of \$9.1million for SC READS and an estimated \$11.5 for SC Reading First.

Support for Parental Understanding of the Standards

Materials summarizing the mathematics, English language arts, science and social studies standards for parents were distributed to every district superintendent and school principal. The standards were available in Spanish as well as English. The publication won one of the Notable State Document awards presented by the South Carolina State Library in March 2003.

Through passage of the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act in 2000, the General Assembly established a framework for actions to increase and sustain parental involvement. The Act calls upon state, district and school leaders to heighten awareness of the importance of parents' involvement in the education of their children throughout their schooling; encourage the establishment and maintenance of parent-friendly school settings; and emphasize that when parents and schools work as partners, a child's academic success can best be assured.

The EOC's Public Awareness campaign has issued a series of announcements and materials to encourage parents to be involved with their children's education. A pamphlet, *Tips to Help Your Children Succeed in School* has been distributed to parents directly through schools and EOC presentations to community organizations throughout the state.

In addition, the EOC collaborated with the South Carolina School Improvement Council Assistance office to offer school and district report card information workshops for parent leaders and school advocates. Post analyses of parent responses to the first school and district report cards in 2001 revealed that while they reviewed their child's report card, they were not sure what to do with the information or how to provide feedback to the schools. More than 150 parents and school advocates throughout the state attended the three regional Saturday morning workshops in October and November. Workshop participants were provided with information on the contents and purposes of the school report card and learned how they can use data and other report card information to drive positive school-community discussion and action focusing on ensuring all students achieve. In addition to information provided at the workshops, each participant was sent a new EOC publication, *Using Report Cards to Ensure Quality Schools: A Resource for Parents*.

The EOC has continued to increase parental involvement in the public schools through other means. First, among the requirements of the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act of 2002 (Act 402), the EOC is required to recognize businesses and employers who have adopted parent-friendly workplace policies and programs. In collaboration with the United Way, the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the Office of First Steps, other state agencies, and several non-profit organizations, a Family Friendly Workplace Award program was implemented in 2002.

On April 24, 2003 in Greenville seven employers received the Family Friendly Workplace Awards: Arthur J. Gallagher and Company, Erwin-Penland, Inc., Capsugel Division of Pfizer, Blue Cross Blue Shield of South Carolina, Lexington Medical Center, McCleod Regional Medical Center, and The United Way of the Midlands. Many of the winners provided paid flex time for employees to become involved in their child's school or volunteer in schools, provided tuition assistance to employees and their children to attend college or improve their skills, and recognized the academic achievement of their employees' children. Not only does the award reward employers who have promoted parent-friendly policies, but also the application form itself is an education tool to promote family-friendly policies that employers can implement. In turn, such policies allow parents who are employees to become more involved in their child's education.

Second, the EOC is required by Act 402 to survey parents to determine if state and local efforts are successful in increasing parental involvement in public schools. The Institute for Families in Society at the University of South Carolina developed the parent survey. In addition to assessing parental involvement efforts in the state, the survey was designed to determine parent perceptions of public schools as required by the EAA. The survey was administered in the spring of 2002 and the summary results published on the 2002 annual report card.

The 2002 parent survey revealed the following perceptions of public schools and effectiveness of parental involvement efforts. The data showed that parents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the learning environment at their child's school (80.61%) and with the social and physical environment at their child's school (77.94%). However, just over two-thirds (68.59%) were satisfied with home-school relations. The overall perceptions were more positive for parents of elementary students than that of middle and high school parents. Finally, the data revealed that parents whose children attend schools having a higher absolute performance rating had higher overall satisfaction levels with their child's school.

Regarding the effectiveness of parental involvement programs, almost one-third of the parents who responded to the survey felt that they were not involved in school changes, were not told how to help their child learn, and were not included in the decision-making process at the school site. Another 35.02% of the respondents indicated they did not volunteer at their child's school, citing lack of timely information on how to become involved.

In response to the survey findings, the EOC recommended the following:

1. To maintain the validity and confidentiality of the survey and to increase parent response rates, a uniform distribution and collection of the parent survey is needed. The parent survey should be mailed to each parent along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return.
2. To increase parental involvement and improve home-school relations, school improvement councils and principals should analyze and utilize the extensive amount of data provided by the parent, teacher and student surveys.
3. To assist the Department of Education in devising statewide parental involvement programs and to assist school districts in parental involvement initiatives and programs, the results of the 2002 parent survey were distributed to the Department of Education.

Principals' Focus Group – Using Data to Improve Schools

Third, the EOC pursued initiatives to assist principals in utilizing the results of the parent surveys to improve parental involvement. To ensure that the results of the annual parent survey are used to improve parental involvement in schools, the EOC contracted with the Center for Child and Family Studies at the University of South Carolina to conduct a focused study of what tools or expertise principals need in order to utilize the parent survey results. The Center presented its findings and recommendations to the EOC in September.

Two focus groups, each consisting of six principals, met in Columbia and Florence in May of 2003. The groups discussed the following: How principals can improve the parent survey response rate at their

schools; what tools they need to analyze and understand the results of the parent, teacher and student surveys; and what tools they need to improve home-school relations, the learning environment, the physical environment, and level of parental involvement at their schools.

The report noted that the principals' concerns about sampling, about the survey instrument itself and the sampling methodology presented impediments to their using the results of the survey. The report made four recommendations:

1. Display the survey results through more charts and colorful graphs. (Details to accompany this recommendation are presented in the full report.)
2. Provide ways for principals to talk about the survey results with evaluators, either through telephone conversations or group meetings or both. Follow up with the principals from the focus groups to understand which method of communication or combination of methods best meets their needs.
3. Address concerns expressed by the principals regarding the representativeness of the survey results. Review for feasibility their ideas about how to improve the response rate.
4. Conduct a factor analysis of the survey (to understand how a profile of scores can be reported) and other statistical analyses (to generate a significance criterion for interpreting the percentages provided in the score reports.)

In response to the report, the EOC drafted a letter to all principals explaining the survey methodology, clarifying the intent of the surveys, and encouraging schools to improve survey response rates. The Department of Education will include the letter in its spring 2004 mailing of the surveys to schools. In addition, the EOC began work on developing a template to be used to analyze the responses from the parent as well as teacher and student surveys and to present the findings in a user friendly format for principals and superintendents.

Implementation of Standards-Based Assessments

The State Department of Education has initiated the development of assessments to measure student learning of the content standards. According to the schedule published by the State Department of Education in November 2003, the implementation of the new assessments should be accomplished in the years noted below:

Table Thirty-One
**SDE Timeline for Implementation of New Assessments
 November 2003**

Test	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
Readiness 1, 2				X						
PACT 1, 2	Deleted from EAA in 2001									
PACT 3-8 Math, ELA	X									
PACT 3-8 Science					X					
PACT 3-8 Social Studies					X					
HSAP Exit Exam Math, ELA						X				
HSAP Exit Exam Science										X
HSAP Exit Exam Social Studies						Not scheduled				
End-of-Course Math					X					
End-of-Course, ELA						X				

Test	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08
End-of-Course Science						X				
End-of-Course, Social Studies									X	
Alternate Assess.			X							

Source: State Department of Education, 2003.

Reviews of Standards-Based Assessments

The field tests for four assessments have come under review during this year: Physical Science, Biology I and English I end of course and the High School Assessment Program (HSAP) Math and ELA. In addition, the initial stages of the review of the South Carolina Readiness Assessment for students in grades K-1 began in January 2004 with completion of the review expected in spring 2004. Furthermore, PACT Social Studies for grades 3-8, which was reviewed in 2002-2003, was approved for use in spring 2003.

Each assessment is reviewed by panels of state and national educators with experience in the relevant fields. The process for review provides for EOC review and recommendations following the first field test, a response to those recommendations from the State Department of Education (SDE), and review and eventual consent from the EOC prior to administration.

The Physical Science, Biology I and English I assessments are multiple choice tests, while the HSAP Math and ELA assessment contains both multiple choice and constructed response questions. The Physical Science, Biology I and English I assessments are administered at the end of the course to students enrolled in the Physical Science, Biology I and/or English I courses, and the results are to be reported to the schools in time for use in calculating students' course grades. Most students enrolled in Physical Science and English I are in the ninth grade and students enrolled in Biology I are in the ninth or tenth grade. Students' scores on the Physical Science, Biology I and English I assessments will account for 20% of their final course grades.

Following its review and the response to its recommendations by the SDE, the EOC approved the PACT Social Studies and the Physical Science, Biology I and English I end-of-course assessments for administration, with the expectation that SDE will increase the number of items available in the item pools.

The HSAP ELA and Math tests are scheduled to replace the BSAP Exit Examinations in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics in Spring 2004. Students attending their second year of high school in Spring 2004 will be required to take the HSAP ELA and Math tests, and will be required to pass both tests at the minimal ("2", or basic) level as one of the requirements to receive a state high school diploma. Students will have multiple opportunities to pass the tests. HSAP ELA and Math are based on the South Carolina Curriculum Standards in ELA and Mathematics. Performance levels of "1" (below basic), "2" (basic), "3" (proficient), and "4" (advanced) in ELA and Math will be reported for each student. In addition to the graduation requirement, HSAP results will be used in the calculation of high school and district report card ratings for the EAA and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for No Child Left Behind.

Five studies of the HSAP ELA and Math field tests were conducted:

1. The HSAP ELA and Math Measurement Guidelines documents, which specify the curriculum standards on which the test items are based, were examined to determine the extent of coverage of the curriculum standards.
2. A committee composed of thirty-nine South Carolina high school English educators and a committee of thirty-eight SC high school math educators evaluated the alignment of the test items with the standards at separate meetings. The committees were composed of high school teachers and school district curriculum and instruction specialists.
3. The difficulty and ability to differentiate levels of achievement of the HSAP ELA and Math tests were investigated with two studies: ratings by the standards alignment committees

of the cognitive processing levels required for students to successfully answer each item; and a study of the performance of the students who took the HSAP ELA and Math field tests compared to their performance on the BSAP Exit Exam Reading, Writing, and Mathematics tests taken in 2003 and their grade 8 PACT ELA and Math tests taken in 2001.

4. A team of researchers at Michigan State University investigated the technical aspects of the HSAP ELA and Math field tests and reported their findings to the Education Oversight Committee for the report.
5. The support and informational materials available about HSAP to educators, the HSAP ELA and Math test Blueprints, which specify the depth and breadth of coverage of the curriculum standards to be covered by the tests, and the plans for reporting the HSAP results to students, parents, and educators were identified and examined by EOC staff to evaluate their availability and utility.

The Measurement Guidelines, which provided direction to the item writers about the curriculum standards to which items were to be written, included standards from several grade levels and courses. The HSAP ELA Measurement Guidelines addressed the 2002 ELA standards in reading, writing, and research standards from grades seven and eight and from the high school courses English I and English II. ELA standards from the Communication strand (Speaking, Listening, and Viewing) are not addressed in the HSAP ELA test. The revision of the ELA curriculum standards in 2002 following the cyclical review of the standards may have resulted in an interruption to the opportunity to learn some ELA standards for students taking the HSAP ELA test for the first time in 2004. These students would have been in eighth grade in the 2001-2002 school year. The ELA standards upon which the Measurement Guidelines are based were adopted in May 2002 and were not implemented until the 2002-2003 school year. The students who graduated from eighth grade in Spring 2002 would not have been exposed to the 2002 standards during middle school, and would have been taught with the 2002 standards when they entered ninth grade in 2002-2003. Test items based on the 2002 standards for grades seven and eight may not be appropriate for these students. In the course of this review EOC staff discussed this problem with staff from the State Department of Education (SDE), who reviewed the HSAP ELA test form intended for use in Spring 2004 to identify items which may present this opportunity to learn issue. SDE staff identified a small number of such items and are currently considering ways of addressing the issue.

The HSAP Math Measurement Guidelines address the 2000 math curriculum standards in grades 6-8 and 9-12, and in the high school courses Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and Mathematics for the Technologies II. Approximately 80% of the mathematics standards listed in these grade levels and courses at the Roman numeral level are addressed by the HSAP Math Measurement Guidelines.

The alignment of the field test items to the standards can be inferred from the coverage of the standards in the Measurement Guidelines. The standards selected for inclusion in the Measurement Guidelines are intended to be appropriate for students at the end of their second year of high school. Since the HSAP items were not written directly to standards in a specific grade or course, the alignment committees reviewed each field test item and identified the statement(s) in the Measurement Guidelines measured by the item, and the coverage of the standards was inferred from the extent the Measurement Guidelines were addressed by the items. Based on the analyses from the alignment committees, the field test items in both ELA and Math assessed all the areas specified in the Measurement Guidelines. The field test items addressed each of the major areas specified in the test Blueprints in the approximate proportions specified in the Blueprints.

The review of the levels of cognitive processing required to successfully answer the ELA field test items indicated that the overall level of thinking required was at the Analytical level, which was in the middle of the range of cognitive levels rated (from lowest to highest cognitive level, the levels were Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation). With the exception of Research Skills,

the majority of cognitive skills required were at the lowest three levels; the modal level for Research Skills was at the highest level, Evaluation.

The cognitive levels of the HSAP Math field test items were evaluated based on a three-level system, with Conceptual and Procedural Understanding at the lowest level, Application in the middle, and Problem Solving and Reasoning at the highest level. The distribution of cognitive levels for all HSAP Math field test items was bimodal at the two lower levels. The modal level for Algebra items was the lowest, Conceptual and Procedural Understanding, and the mode for Number and Operations items was the highest at the Application level.

Performance standards were set on the HSAP ELA and Math field test results in July 2003. These standards were set for the purpose of calculating high school AYP ratings for the 2002-2003 school year. The existence of these performance standards permitted studies of the relationships between the performance of the students on the HSAP field tests and their performance on the BSAP Exit Exam and grade 8 PACT. The main focus of these studies was on the "2" or basic level on the HSAP tests, since this is the level that students must achieve to meet the diploma requirement; the "3" (proficient) level was also considered when the grade 8 PACT and HSAP field test data were compared. The HSAP performance standards set in 2003 and based on the field test data should be viewed as provisional, subject to review and possible revision when operational HSAP test data are available in 2004. The correlation between HSAP Math field test scores and BSAP Math Exit Exam scores was found to be higher than the correlations between HSAP ELA field test scores and the BSAP Exit Reading and Writing test scores. The correlations between the HSAP field test scores and the grade 8 PACT scores in both subject areas were higher than those between HSAP and BSAP. In general the HSAP ELA field test "2" level was found to be in the range of the BSAP Exit Exam Reading and Writing standards. The HSAP Math field test "2" level was also in the range of the BSAP Math standard, although it appears to be somewhat higher when compared to BSAP Math than the HSAP ELA "2" standard is when compared to BSAP Reading and Writing.

The technical reviews identified some evidence for multidimensionality in both the HSAP ELA and Math field tests; the likely sources of the multidimensionality were identified. The correlations between the pairs of scores assigned to each constructed response item on the HSAP ELA field test constructed response items were found to be lower than desirable for an operational test form. The authors of the technical studies indicate that 23% of the HSAP ELA field test items and 18% of the HSAP Math field test items show evidence of possibly serious technical problems and should be reviewed before they are used on an operational test form; these items were identified and listed in their reports. Data provided by the SDE also flagged field test items for review: 12.8% of the ELA items and 14.8% of the Math items. Review of the affected items indicates that sufficient items remain in the item pool for construction of operational test forms.

The report lists support materials for HSAP ELA and Math provided by the SDE for educators. From discussions with SDE staff, planned HSAP ELA and Math student score reports will include, in addition to the overall performance level attained on each, indicators of student performance in each of the major areas identified in the Blueprint for each test. For ELA, these areas include Reading Process and Comprehension, Analysis of Texts, Word Study and Analysis, Writing, and Research. Students' scores from the extended writing rubric will also be reported. In Math, the areas planned to be reported are Number and Operations, Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Data Analysis and Probability. Students' math process level performance on the constructed response items will also be reported.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for improvement were made based on the findings of the review:

1. Review the test items identified as having potentially serious technical problems and revise or exclude them from the item pool as appropriate;
2. Improve the training of scorers and take other appropriate measures to ensure high interrater reliabilities when scoring the tests;
3. Revise or eliminate the items on the 2004 HSAP ELA test identified as assessing standards which students may not have been taught;
4. Develop and disseminate, with the assistance of curriculum specialists and in cooperation with the EOC, specific guidelines for test development and administration following the cyclical review and revision of curriculum standards;
5. Continue progress on the development of detailed score reports for use in reporting the results of the 2004 HSAP administration;
6. Re-examine the performance levels set in 2003 on the field test data for their rigor and precision and revise them as necessary;
7. Accelerate the development and dissemination of professional development and support materials regarding HSAP to high school teachers.

The EOC is currently waiting on the response from SDE regarding the recommendations. State law provides SDE with thirty days to respond. Approval of the HSAP is dependent on the response of SDE to the recommendations.

Continuing Assessment Issues

The assessment program continues to be a source of discussion. Two related issues dominate the discussion: should the PACT assessments be diagnostic in nature (that is, structured to provide individual student information for use in designing instruction); and how can the assessments help us monitor and improve student learning of the academic standards? During the 2003-04 year an additional issue was raised regarding the frequency of testing.

The Accountability Division supports increases in the level of instructional information provided by the PACT assessments. Based on discussions with SDE staff, modifying the PACT assessments to provide information at the individual standard level would require additional items per standard to avoid unacceptable levels of measurement error. According to SDE staff, enough additional items would be required that the assessments would be too cumbersome and time-consuming to administer. However, individual academic standards are grouped into strands which represent major components of an instructional area such as mathematics. The SDE assessment team is exploring ways in which strand level information can be aggregated reliably at the school and/or district level. This information can be used to modify and sharpen instruction. The information also can be used to focus time, re-teaching activities, and resources. Teachers, working with students on a daily basis, should gather individual student diagnostic information from their analysis of student work and classroom assessments.

A committee of outside experts and school district representatives convened in November 2002 to study the school improvement rating methodology discussed the issue of diagnostic information at some length. They concluded that academic improvement has been less rapid than desired and that PACT at the present time provides educators inadequate information to improve student performance. The committee suggested several ways in which PACT information could be improved, including the release of items or test forms after use, providing additional information on the design and make-up of the PACT assessments, and providing information demonstrating the linkages between PACT performance, such as scale scores, and performance expectations in the state standards.

An additional issue identified by the improvement rating study group relates to the validity of the PACT assessments as a measure of growth and achievement levels. A similar issue was identified by a different committee composed of school district representatives and outside experts convened in August 2002 to provide recommendations regarding how best to study the quality and the alignment of the state tests with the standards. The observed relative lack of growth in PACT achievement among students as they

progress from one grade level to the next may arise from several factors. Teachers may not be teaching and expecting students to learn the state standards. Or teachers may be teaching the standards and students are learning them, but the assessments may not be testing the standards being taught (the tests and the standards are not properly aligned). Or possibly the tests are assessing student background characteristics or other areas than the academic expectations for the grade level assessed.

The alignment reviews of the field tests and the upcoming cyclical reviews of the current PACT ELA and math tests are intended to address some of the validity concerns listed above. Based on the recommendations of the alignment study committee, EOC and SDE staff are engaged in developing a mutually agreed upon set of criteria for reviewing and evaluating test alignment. Evaluating and improving the quality of the state assessments is a major priority. However, little formal study has been conducted of other issues which affect the validity of the assessment basis for the accountability system, especially of the degree and fidelity to which the standards are being taught in classrooms across South Carolina. At issue is the extent to which teachers understand and embrace the academic skills and content exemplified in the state standards, and the extent to which they are successful in helping students to learn them. Studies of the focus and instructional effectiveness of classroom activities across the State would provide information to help address the first validity issue above: are teachers effectively teaching the standards in ways consonant with expectations, especially as they are assessed?

Another on-going issue regarding the assessment program is how comprehensive should the testing program be? EAA requires testing in all four of the disciplines of mathematics, English language arts, science and social studies in grades 3-8, the high school exit exam program, and in selected high school courses. The spring 2003 administration of PACT was the first time all four disciplines were assessed to students in grades 3-8. As the 2003-04 school year approached SDE announced that science and social studies would be assessed in grades 5 and 8 and 4 and 7, respectively, due to funding shortages. Discussion on the decision included a review of the testing results for the 2003 test administration, an analysis of the costs of testing program, the demands of the testing schedule and the fatigue students experience from it, the need or wisdom of giving all four tests to all six grades each year and whether SDE could alter the testing program without legislative action. SDE announced in mid-September that both the science and social studies PACT tests would be administered to all students in grades 3-8. As a result of the discussion, the EOC adopted the following statement at the October 18 meeting.

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) and the State Department of Education are committed to the principles of accountability outlined in the Education Accountability Act (EAA) of 1998. We believe that any changes to the principles and programs of South Carolina's education accountability system should be made after full deliberation and debate by the members of the General Assembly.

We are sensitive to the demands that the accountability system makes upon our educators, students and communities and encourage solutions to administrative challenges so that we maintain South Carolina's focus on the highest levels of student and school achievement.

We will work together to develop alternative testing schedules that recognize the importance of the four academic content areas (English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies), prepare our students and schools for the rigor of *No Child Left Behind* requirements and maintain South Carolina's education improvement efforts.

The Functioning of the Public Education System

In April 1999 the South Carolina Supreme Court declared that the SC Constitution included an affirmative duty to provide adequate schooling. The opinion of the Court provides that "The South Carolina Constitution's education clause required the General Assembly to provide the opportunity for each child to receive a minimally adequate education." The Court continued by defining a minimally adequate education required by the Constitution "to include providing students adequate and safe facilities in which they have the opportunity to acquire:

1. the ability to read, write and speak the English language, and knowledge of mathematics and physical science;
2. a fundamental knowledge of economic, social and political systems, and of history and governmental processes; and
3. academic and vocational skills."

Source: SC Supreme Court, 1999.

Study of Sufficient Funding

The EOC is required by law to "make programmatic and funding recommendations to the General Assembly." For the past two years, the committee has been reviewing the basic funding system of public education to determine if current funding is adequate to meet the state's education goals and to provide each student with the resources needed to meet these academic standards. The review includes determining if funding for current programs should be redirected to other programs or initiatives to assure the most effective use of the state's financial resources.

In February of 2003 the EOC staff presented three models for establishing sufficient funding levels for South Carolina's public school districts. The three models were based on the assumption that public schools would receive sufficient funding to:

Provide a level of services in public schools as required by state statutes, regulations and provisos using reasonable cost estimates (State Requirements Model);

Ensure that a school district and its students can meet state education standards (Standards-Based Model); and

Provide per pupil funding at the national median for per pupil expenditures (National Median Model).

The EOC then solicited public comment from superintendents, principals, and other interested parties in the state. Based upon additional analysis and public comments received, the staff amended the report and presented its findings at the July 2003 EOC retreat.

At the July retreat the EOC as well as the Governor, former EOC members, legislators, legislative staff, educators, and interested parties discussed the issues impacting school finance. The participants discussed the three funding models and raised questions regarding the balance between state and local responsibility and control including the financial obligations. The overriding concern that was expressed by the Committee was the following: Is the state of South Carolina funding a minimally adequate education to meet the individual needs of all students?

Based upon the discussion, the EOC staff was asked to define adequate funding needed to achieve the state's goal including a provision to address the special education needs of students living in poverty. The adequate funding model would require reviewing existing statutory and regulatory requirements as

well as current state and local funding. In addition the model had to include components to ensure that quality teachers are in all classrooms and effective leaders in all schools.

In December 2003 the EOC staff presented to the committee a revised Education Finance Act funding model. The model defined a base student cost and revised weighting system that would provide adequate revenues per pupil for all districts and schools to deploy research-based educational strategies that are successful in educating all students to high academic standards. The model recommended a base student cost of \$5,259 for all students in grades kindergarten through twelve.

First, the new base student cost includes funding for the following:

- Teacher student ratio of 1:21 for all elementary, middle and high school classes
- Data collection and reporting requirements of NCLB and EAA
- Parental involvement initiatives
- District costs for transportation, professional development and instructional materials
- Five additional days of professional development as required by the Teacher Quality Act

The cost of classroom teachers comprises over one-half of the total base student cost:

Components of Base Student Cost

	Non-Teacher Component	Classroom Teacher
Elementary	\$2,347.14	2,899.09
Middle	\$2,374.35	\$2,864.81
High	\$2,425.48	\$2,834.44

The EOC then analyzed how changes in the teacher-student ratios would impact the base student cost. The current teacher-student ratio for “regular education students” in grades 4-12 is 1:35.

Ratio	Lowest Base Student Cost	Highest Base Student Cost
1:21	\$5,239	\$5,259
1:24	\$4,977	\$4,991
1:25	\$4,870	\$4,901
1:30	\$4,548	\$4,603
1:35	\$4,333	\$4,364

Second, the EOC recommended revisions of the weighting system in order to guarantee that each student receives instruction appropriate to his or her needs and which will assist the student in achieving high standards. These new weightings are built upon an examination of student performance and statewide educational issues. For example, to address underachievement by students from economic disadvantage, a weighting is included for prevention to serve students in grades kindergarten through three who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches or are Medicaid eligible. There is also a remediation weighting for students in grades four through twelve scoring below basic on any state assessment test. For students who underachieve due to their limited English proficiency, a weighting based on the North Carolina system, is recommended. For the first time, the special population of adult education, the seventeen to twenty-one year olds are funded at a higher weighting. To address the inability of students to maintain a high level of achievement on state assessments, all academic and artistically gifted students in grades three through twelve would receive a weighting. And, to provide

students with needed career planning, a weighting is recommended for all students in grades six through nine to fund counselors and career specialists. All weightings for special needs children were maintained at the current level.

Adult Education 17 to 21 year olds	.20
Adult Education over age of 21	.10
Gifted and Talented	.15
Career Exploration	.0039
Prevention	.20
Remediation	.114
Limited English Proficiency	.20

The total cost of implementing a base student cost of \$5,259 was determined to be \$4,343,783,277. The EOC then identified current EIA, general fund, lottery, and other revenues to school districts that totaled \$2,500,012,828. Assuming that the state share would remain 70%, the EOC determined that an additional amount of \$540,635,466 would be required to fund the base student cost. If, however, other student teacher ratios were implemented, the cost would be as follows:

Teacher-Student Ratio	Cost
1:21	\$540,635,466
1:24	\$385,683,243
1:25	\$333,647,048
1:30	\$161,349,427
1:35	\$ 23,264,421

Communication Strategies

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee continued its charge under the EAA to apprise the public of the status of public schools and the importance of high standards for academic performance for public school students. The focus of the 2003 public awareness plan was to support and sustain the state's progress made towards higher student achievement through effective accountability efforts.

The long-range communications plan incorporated three primary objectives:

- enhance understanding and impact of the accountability system by focusing on the 2010 goal.
- strengthen the EOC's ongoing message encouraging communities to utilize school and district report cards as tools for improvement
- increase the level of parental, community and political engagement in and support of school improvement.

Four distinct audiences of education and community leaders, classroom teachers, parents, and the media were targeted using various communication strategies including face-to-face dialogue, support/resource materials, and train-the-trainer workshops.

The EOC is in the midst of completing public engagement meetings in every county of the state. Through "Conversations With The EOC" meetings, education and community leaders are providing input on issues related to ensuring all students succeed. Meetings consist of sharing information on SC's progress to the 2010 education goal and participants sharing their thoughts and ideas on the following questions:

- What does educational achievement mean to our community?
- What is needed in our community so that ALL students can succeed? (Strengths & Challenges)
- What programs, partnerships, etc. work well in your community to support all students succeeding?
- What can we do in our homes and neighborhoods to strengthen our schools?

Meetings began in September 2003 and conclude in March 2004. Responses from each county are being compiled and scheduled to be presented to the full committee in March.

A significant portion of public awareness activities supported and recognized teachers through the "Teachers: Moving SC to the Top" campaign. The campaign focused on issues raised in an EOC statewide teacher survey (released in February 2003) to analyze teacher knowledge, perceptions and level of involvement of the state's educational system. The findings clustered around the following three themes:

- a general feeling that student achievement is improving and will continue to do so;
- teacher support for accountability; and,
- consensus that through the combined efforts of the state, educators and the general public, SC can improve its position relative to other states.

To emphasize the importance of teaching the EOC provided schools, districts, education organizations, and business organizations with individually boxed sets of four posters and one banner to showcase during the 2003-04 academic year. A special Web page was developed to provide access to the following:

- Art work used in the posters for use in organizational publications or on t-shirts and other give-away items;
- Sample teacher appreciation letters for students, parents, business/community leaders, and others;
- Tips sheets for businesses and parents on ideas to their show appreciation to teachers;
- A blueprint for students to plan and implement a teacher recognition program;
- Photos and quotes by South Carolina celebrities describing their favorite teachers; and
- Other action items to be developed throughout the year.

To expand the teacher campaign, the EOC at its August 2003 meeting approved for the committee to pursue implementing a citizen philanthropic program to support teacher ideas in response to two lingering EOC issues: (1) ways to promote/support teachers and (2) ways to involve individuals and groups in support of public education. The program goals will be to

- Provide a tangible means by which individuals, organizations and businesses can support teachers
- Provide a grassroots mechanism by which individuals can become engaged in the improvement of teaching and learning
- Demonstrate the state's and EOC individual commitment and response to the teaching and learning needs identified by teachers.

In the spring of 2003, the EOC partnered with the SC School Boards Association and the SC Association of School Administrators to pilot a school-community public engagement project in McCormick County. Using the Study Circles model, the project focused on community collaboration for increased student achievement and utilizes information presented in the school and district report cards. The success of the pilot project was shared with superintendents and school board members and is currently being implemented in three other school districts, Barnwell School District 19, York School District One and Florence School District One.

Other supporting activities included:

- Three regional Saturday morning workshops in October and November with more than 150 parent leaders on how they can utilize information on school report cards as tools for improvement;
- Information briefings with the editorial boards from 44 South Carolina weekly and daily newspapers;
- A school and district report card information workshop in October with reporters and editors from print and broadcast media invited by the S.C. Press Association and the S.C. Broadcaster's Association;

- Publication of a *Learning Matters* newsletter to summarize findings of EOC research projects and studies; and
- PowerPoint presentations with professional organizations and local civic/service organizations.

Other Studies and Reviews as Required by Law

Proviso 1.65 of the General Appropriations Act

The proviso requires the Education Oversight Committee to review the pilot program for the applied curriculum program for high school students at the greatest risk of dropping out. The proviso provides:

1.65. (SDE: Applied Curriculum Program) Of the funds authorized in Part IA, Section 1.V., Other Operating Expenses for the federal School-to-Work Program, the Department of Education, in cooperation with a local school district, must conduct a pilot of an applied curriculum program for high school students who are at the greatest risk of dropping out of school. The Education Oversight Committee shall review the pilot for consistency with State and Federal education goals, the potential to increase high school graduation rates and reduce the high school dropout rate, and the potential to increase student employability. The Education Oversight Committee shall report to the House Education and Public Works Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the State Board of Education annually for the duration of the pilot.

The Applied Curriculum Pilot Program was based in a suburban school district. The program identified students who had failed the ninth grade and were at risk of dropping out of school. The students entered a three-year program that placed them in courses designed to provide them with job skill competencies based upon the Work Keys program, a copyrighted assessment system developed by ACT in response to concerns business leaders raised in the late 1980s and early 1990s about the skills high school graduates bring to the work place. The district used the grant money to purchase the WIN Work Keys software program to help teach the work force skills outlined in the Work Keys assessment program.

The report on the first year of the pilot was delivered in September 2003. In summary, the Applied Curriculum Pilot Program does not meet the requirements for the State of South Carolina high school diploma and, therefore, will not increase the graduation rate for high school students. A review of the English curriculum for the program found that the curriculum is not strongly correlated to the standards for high school English courses as outlined in the South Carolina English Language Arts Curriculum Standards.

There were positive portions of the Applied Curriculum Pilot Program. The Program is closely aligned to the Work Keys skills assessment program developed by ACT and it utilized the WIN Work Keys software program to help teach the work force skills outlined in the Work Keys assessment program with some success. In addition, the program may hold the potential to decrease the dropout rate and may hold the potential to increase the employability of students upon completion of the program. However, at least two more years of data on the dropout rate and the employability issue are needed to complete the study and make any valid statements about its full potential.

Teacher Loan Program

The Teacher Quality Act of 2000 requires the EOC to "review the [SC Teacher] loan program annually and report to the General Assembly" (§59-26-20 (j), SC Code of Laws of 1976, as amended.) The Teacher Loan Program is established within the Education Improvement Act of 1984. The program is intended to provide loans enabling qualified state residents to attend South Carolina public or private colleges and universities for the purpose of becoming certified teachers employed in areas of critical need. Critical need is defined as a critical geographic or certification area. A percentage of the loan is cancelled by fulfillment of the teaching requirement. The Teacher Loan Program is exemplary of programs offered in almost every state and is linked to similar efforts at the federal level. The SC Student Loan Corporation administers the program.

The initial EOC review of the Teacher Loan Program (TLP) focused on four aspects of the program: (1) a description of the program; (2) a description of the applicant and recipient populations; (3) the utilization of repayment and cancellation options; and (4) the degree to which program participants are represented among current public school teachers. Findings of the report, released in June 2002, included: the Teacher Loan Program is fulfilling the statutory mission to attract individuals into the teaching profession and into areas of critical need; the Student Loan Corporation has managed the program and the assets of the program well; approximately half of the loan recipients teach at least a minimum number of years to repay the loans; the number of areas of critical need has increased since the inception of the program; the vast majority of loan recipients are white females; and the collection of and sharing of data among the various partners in the program could be improved.

Based on these findings several recommendations were made:

1. Communication and sharing of data among the various partners of the program should be improved;
2. Additional data on why individuals who receive the loans but do not teach is needed;
3. Vigorous recruitment of African-Americans and males into the program should be implemented;
4. The impact on the program from South Carolina's multiple scholarship options should be studied;
5. Data on loan recipients teaching in rural critical needs schools versus urban critical should be collected and studied;
6. The General Assembly should develop long range goals and objectives for the Teacher Loan Program.

In keeping with the recommendations from the initial review, the review of the Teacher Loan Program (TLP) for the last two fiscal years focused on the following questions:

- How did the statistics of the last two fiscal years compare to previous years?
- Where geographically did the teachers whose loans were being canceled during the last two fiscal years teach and in what critical need subject areas?
- What connection did the recipients of the TLP have with the Life Scholarship Program?
- How can the TLP contribute to the Technical Assistance programs that are part of the Accountability System?

Prior to the completion of the review for the 2001-2002 school year the present study was expanded to include the 2002-2003 school year and move the report date from May to September in an effort to bring the review in line with the budget development process; thus the 2003 study covered two years. Subsequent studies should cover only one year.

The findings of the 2003 report were:

- The Teacher Loan Program continues to fulfill the statutory mission to attract individuals into the teaching profession and into areas of critical need.
- White females constitute the vast majority of the applicants.
- The sharing of information among the various agencies involved with the Program has improved.
- The scholarship programs established by the General Assembly have not negatively impacted on the TLP.
- There was a significant increase in the average SAT score of TLP applicants between 1998-1999 and 2002-2003.

Recommendations coming from the report included:

1. The General Assembly should develop long range goals and objectives for the Teacher Loan Program.
2. The General Assembly should amend the enabling legislation for the Program to allow the Program to assist teachers in obtaining advanced degrees in exchange for service in critical geographic need schools.
3. Service in Unsatisfactory and Below Average Schools should not become a classification for designation of critical geographic need schools.

4. Movement of teachers educated with funds from the TLP from school to school should be studied to determine if the program has an impact on providing long term solutions to critical geographic need schools.
5. A study should be conducted to determine why roughly half of the loan recipients pay back the loans in monthly installments instead of through cancellation.

The Child Development Program for Four Year Olds

The Child Development Program for Four-Year-Olds was a two-year study of the child development program established in 1984 as a component of the Education Improvement Act. The study, conducted under contract by the University of South Carolina College of Education, was structured to describe the program's critical components and the effectiveness of each component; examine professional preparation and development and, through intensive observation, determine the degree of program effectiveness. The final report was issued in September 2003.

Based on two years of descriptive evaluation, the study showed that in general the state-funded, four-year-old child development programs in South Carolina provide high quality early childhood education services to preschoolers. Nevertheless, from a contemporary systems perspective which emphasizes continuous improvement for educational programs, three critical issues became apparent from the study descriptive evaluation efforts, specifically:

- (a) How do we assure that all preschoolers who are at risk for school readiness difficulties are recruited and enrolled in high-quality preschool programs?;
- (b) How do we enhance the ability of early childhood personnel to promote school readiness, particularly in areas of child assessment and curriculum implementation?;
- and
- (c) How do we promote interagency coordination and collaboration of early childhood services for children and their families?

Based on two years of descriptive evaluation and the understanding of high-quality preschool services to enhance young children's school readiness, the following five recommendations were made:

1. Clear criteria for what constitutes at risk status for young children and their families should be widely disseminated and accessible to the general public;
2. Methods in state-funded preschools that promote recruitment and enrollment of all children who are at the greatest risk for school readiness difficulties should be established and carefully monitored;
3. As future funds become available or as flexible use of funds is permitted, these monies should be allocated to serve children who are at high risk for school failure, or to enroll children who are at high risk for school failure in full-day programs, or both;
4. An interagency task force composed of public and private stakeholders in early childhood services should be established to review implementation issues and make recommendations to address those issues; and
5. A statewide, interagency professional development system should be established, which will identify early childhood personnel's professional needs and then implement and evaluate professional development activities to meet those needs, especially in the areas of teaching literacy and numeracy to preschoolers, working with families of young children, implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practices for preschoolers, employing positive child guidance strategies with young children, and effectively assessing preschoolers' learning.

Act 135 Parenting/Family Literacy Programs

As part of its statutory mandate to “review and monitor the implementation and evaluation of the Education Accountability Act and Education Improvement Act programs and funding, the EOC reviewed the Parenting/Family Literacy programs funded through the EIA. This study was completed in the fall of 2003. The evaluation documented the funding, expenditure, and operations of the program since its inception and assessed the effectiveness of the program based upon statutory requirements and upon education objectives of the State.

The principal findings of the review can be summarized accordingly. First, unlike the CSAB, the South Carolina Readiness Assessment test is not designed to determine absolute school readiness scores. Consequently, assessing the impact of parenting/family literacy programs on student achievement requires a variety of indicators and established state objectives for the goal. Second, despite family literacy as one statutory objective of the program, there is no evidence of a significant improvement in adult literacy in the State since the inception of the program. Third, as required by law, parent education and/or family literacy programs are now operational in every school district in the state. Fourth, while all districts do recruit at-risk children and their parent into the program, there is no evidence to determine how extensive and successful are the recruitment strategies, especially in rural school districts where transportation is a major obstacle. Furthermore, while collaboration is reported between school districts and First Steps and adult education, collaboration is weakest between school districts and social service agencies. Also, professional development and staff training for individuals who carry out the functions of Act 135 are critically limited. And, finally, there is great variation between districts in the amount of resources and programs provided to at-risk families.

Based upon these findings, the EOC made four recommendations:

1. The state should establish alternative indicators to assess the impact of parenting/family literacy programs on the educational achievement of students whose parents participated in the program. Among the indicators that could be used are PACT scores and retention rates in kindergarten through grades.
2. The on-line reporting system being implemented to assess Act 135 should include profiles of the persons and families who participate in the parenting/family literacy programs and indicators of academic success for both parents and children using many of the “Indicators of Program Quality for Family Literacy” as proposed. Having a unique student identifier would greatly assist the state and districts in long term tracking of these students.
3. The legislature should appropriate funds only to school districts that provide comprehensive family literacy programs using the Even Start Model. The Even Start Model provides a comprehensive approach to addressing the intergenerational cycles of poverty through adult education, early childhood education and parenting programs.
4. Local school district boards of trustees and superintendents should focus their parenting education and family literacy activities on teen parents and first-time parents in order to address long term, cyclical patterns of poverty in their community. Currently, most districts do not focus their services on a strategic subpopulation. Focusing on these subgroups would assist schools in improving graduation rates which is a state and federal objective.

A proviso was drafted and adopted by the EOC which required all future allocations of funds for parenting/family literacy be made to school districts that provide comprehensive family literacy programs which address intergenerational cycles of poverty through adult education, early childhood education and parenting programs.

Review and monitor the implementation and evaluation of the Education Accountability Act and Education Improvement Act programs

One study is underway at this time - the Teacher Specialist on Site Program. The EIA Subcommittee was to consider additional review programs at its February 2004 meeting.

The Teacher Specialist on Site Program is a core technical assistance strategy outlined in the Education Accountability Act. The EOC has initiated a three-year study of the program. The EOC staff worked with staff from the SC State Department of Education (SDE) to identify the following principal research question:

Does student achievement improve in schools assigned teacher specialists?

Five related questions also were identified:

- How has student achievement improved over time in schools assigned teacher specialists?
- Are there changes in the school community and/or culture during the years with teacher specialists?
- How has the teacher specialist program impacted upon the instructional skills and professional growth of the teachers involved?
- How has the program functioned over time?
- What are the unintended consequences of the teacher specialist program?

The EOC and SDE also worked with the University of South Carolina (USC) Education Policy Center on the evaluation. The USC Center assumed responsibility for a comprehensive survey.

Findings from the first year review are reported with focus on survey responses and academic achievement. The survey findings include the following:

- Principals, teacher specialists, and teachers expressed positive views about the TSOS program. Seventy-seven percent of the principals, 84% of the teacher specialists, and 71% of the teachers graded the program "A" or "B." A failing grade of "F" was assigned by 4 to 6% of the respondent groups.
- Sixty-nine percent of the teachers, 83% of the teacher specialists, and 94% of the principals agreed that the implementation of the program had gone smoothly.
- The school climate for the program was generally quite positive. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust seemed to exist in almost all schools. Seventy-five percent of the teachers and all but two of the principals reported that they enjoyed working with the teacher specialists.
- Despite the generally favorable climate for the program, only 46% of teachers and 56% of principals agreed that they felt "ownership" in the TSOS program.
- Sixty-five percent of the teachers, 88% of principals, and 95% of the teacher specialists agreed that the TSOS had "contributed greatly to the effectiveness of the instructional program at this school."
- Teachers most frequently mentioned that the TSOS program had resulted in improvements in instruction, teacher skills, the use of best practices, and the alignment of the curriculum to the state standards.

- Between 5% and 15% of the teachers were consistently negative about the TSOS program and the work of individual teacher specialists.

With respect to academic achievement, the following was found:

- 6 (55 %) of 11 schools in Tier 1 met or surpassed a 5% improvement threshold in one or more areas
- 29 (76 %) of 38 schools in Tier 2 met or surpassed a 5% improvement threshold in one or more areas
- 4 (33 %) of 12 schools in Tier 3 met or surpassed a 5% improvement threshold in one or more areas
- 4 (40%) of the 10 schools designated for teacher specialists, but not receiving them, met or surpassed the 5% improvement threshold in one or more areas (gains should be considered in light of other interventions)
- Schools tended to reduce the percentage of students scoring Below Basic more than raise the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced
- Only four of ten high schools met or surpassed the improvement threshold
- Only one school (Brockington Elementary) met or surpassed the threshold in all four areas

On school ratings

- 14 (23 %) of the 61 schools elevated their absolute rating
- 18 (30 %) of 61 schools elevated their improvement rating
- 7 (11 %) of 61 schools declined in their absolute rating
- 22 (36 %) declined in their improvement rating
- 4 (40%) of the 10 schools receiving alternate interventions improved one or more ratings
- 2 (20%) of 10 high schools elevated one rating

The schools all continue to struggle with the establishment of a stable staff. Although there were small improvements, these schools experience teacher turnover rates between 25 and 30 percent.

Formative Issues identified for discussion include the following:

1. Would a thorough and systematic definition of the treatment model(s), overall goal and annual objectives generate more uniform progress and minimize the impact of local turnover and variations of technical assistance personnel assignments?
2. Do all external review team reports recommend teacher specialists or are there settings in which a different technical assistance strategy is recommended and/or appropriate? Does the external review team fully understand the available options and when each is appropriate?
3. Can the building blocks for sustainable change be identified and annual as well as long-range expectations made clear to school communities and technical assistance teams so that immediate and interim progress can be recognized?
4. How should the high school model differ from the elementary and middle school model?
5. Can the lines of authority and cooperation among the SDE, local district and school administrations and teacher specialists be clarified to support program implementation and sustain improvement?
6. How can local district and school administrators' support and ownership of the teacher specialist role be enhanced?
7. What is the level of annual improvement expected or the level of improvement expected across three years?
8. How can the positive relationships among teachers and teacher specialists be sustained and focused more intently upon student achievement?
9. What are local factors associated with higher levels of student performance among schools in the teacher specialist program?
10. What are the financial and instructional costs to schools and districts sending teachers to serve as teacher specialists in underperforming schools?

The second year installment of the report was released in February 2004. The information below comes from the executive summary of the report.

The largest technical assistance program currently serving unsatisfactory or below average schools in South Carolina is the Teacher Specialist On-Site (TSOS) Program. In 2002-2003 the program provided 84 schools with 202 master teachers to work with classroom teachers in improving instruction. The South Carolina Educational Policy Center (SCEPC) in the College of Education at the University of South Carolina was asked to assist the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) in their review of the 2002-2003 TSOS program. In collaboration with EOC staff and staff from the Office of School Quality at the South Carolina Department of Education, questionnaires were developed to assess the implementation and effectiveness of the TSOS program. Questionnaires were sent to principals, teacher specialists, and teachers in all 84 schools where teacher specialists were assigned. The questionnaire return rate was about 95% for the selected schools and for the groups of principals, teacher specialists, and teachers.

Of the 84 schools, 46 schools were in their first year of program participation, 22 in their second year, 7 in their third year, and 9 in their fourth year. The number of teacher specialists per school ranged from one to eight with an average of 2.4. Teacher specialists reported that they served an average of about six teachers. Teachers who worked with the specialists typically had a continuing contract (74%), although 26% of the teachers held annual, induction, or provisional contracts. Eighty-two percent of the teachers had a professional teaching certificate, 8% had critical needs/PACE certification, and the remaining 10% had initial, temporary, or special subject certificates. In some schools, all or a majority of teachers were veterans with the highest levels of certification or licensure. In other schools, the majority of teachers had been in the profession less than 2 years or held other types of certificates or licenses. Similarly, while some schools had veteran principals, one third of the principals were in their first or second year of the principalship and 59% had served in their current school for 2 years or less.

Analysis of the questionnaire data found that:

- Eighty-six percent of the principals, 94% of the specialists, and 79% of the teachers assigned either an "A" or a "B" to the TSOS program. When asked to describe why they assigned the grade they did, principals and specialists most frequently stated that the program improved teacher effectiveness, teacher skills, instruction, alignment of curriculum, student achievement, and similar types of statements. Teachers said that the TSOS were encouraging, supportive, or helpful to them and inspired teamwork and collaboration.
- About 80% of the teachers and 90% of the principals and specialists agreed that the climate for implementation of the program was positive.
- Although many principals and teachers were new to their current school or new to the profession, about one-third of the principals and more than three-fourths of the teachers reported receiving less than one hour of training/orientation to the TSOS program prior to the first day of school in 2002-2003.
- About 8 in 10 teachers and 9 in 10 principals and specialists agreed that the climate for implementation of the program was positive.
- Nearly all principals and about 90% of the teachers agreed that the specialists had the content knowledge to be effective, had modeled instruction well, had responded promptly to requests for assistance, and had helped the faculty incorporate curriculum standards.
- In response to the item, "I support the teacher specialist program," 92% of principals agreed. The comparable figures for teacher specialists and teachers were 99% and 84%, respectively.

- Ninety-four percent of the principals agreed that they had been actively involved in program implementation, but fewer - 75% - said that they had a sense of ownership in the program. For teachers, only 57% agreed that they had a "sense of ownership," 19% were not sure, and 24% disagreed.
- Ninety-four percent of principals and 89% of the teachers agreed, "You can count on the teacher specialist to be at school, on the job, helping the school improve." Almost three-fourths of the teachers and more than four in five principals said that the program should continue to be funded, perhaps reflecting ambivalence about budget priorities.
- Eighty-nine percent of the principals, 93% of the specialists, and 74% of the teachers responded favorably to the item: "The teacher specialist program has contributed greatly to the effectiveness of instruction at this school."
- Eighty-four percent of the principals and 83% of the teachers planned to continue working at their current schools next year.
- Activities by the TSOS in the areas of demonstrating or modeling lessons, helping align instruction to the state standards, and sharing new strategies for instruction were noted by principals and teachers as most helpful to them.
- Although the TSOS received strong support from three-fourths of the teachers, the program was not without its detractors. Of the more than 800 teachers included in the study, about 18% were identified as "nay sayers." Nay sayers assigned grades of "C," "D," or "F" to the program and also disagreed with the proposition that the TSOS program "has contributed greatly to the effectiveness of the instructional program at the school." This group felt little program ownership, had little confidence that the program was improving their teaching or meeting their needs, and saw little prospect of going to the specialist for advice regarding classroom or personal problems. In contrast, the "supportive teachers," those assigning grades of "A," or "B" to the program and also agreeing with the proposition that the program had contributed greatly to the effectiveness of the instructional program at the school (two-thirds of the total), indicated greater trust in the teacher specialist, more confidence in the specialist's ability to improve the skills of the teacher, and greater ownership in the program.

The responses to the questionnaire resulted in the following observations:

- In developing a description of the TSOS program, it was found that the program took many forms in the 84 schools using teacher specialists. In addition to varying numbers of specialists, other assistance providers such as principal specialists or leaders, curriculum specialists, or curriculum instructional facilitators were also working in many of the schools. Ten distinct models of assistance were identified among the 84 schools studied. This type of variation in models related to the implementation of the TSOS program makes it very difficult to attribute any outcomes (such as increased student achievement) directly to the presence of the teacher specialists. A discrete number of potential program implementation models should be developed and schools be allowed to select the model that they believe will most effectively address their needs as outlined in their revised school improvement plan. The models should be developed within the context of a comprehensive, ongoing evaluation design and be small enough in number to ensure evaluability. An annual review of program effectiveness should be conducted that addresses both overall program performance and the performance of the various implementation models.
- The identification of schools to be served by teacher specialists should take into account longitudinal school performance and the needs of the teachers and administrators.

School performance data for both absolute and improvement ratings should be examined over a 3-year period to establish priorities for the provision of services. Once schools are identified, assistance services should be provided for 3 years. Districts and schools should also sign contracts assuring support and agreeing to follow the guidelines for the TSOS program. In addition, the specific types and numbers of assistance providers should be determined based on a detailed analysis of the experience of the school administration and faculty as well as other factors. There was considerable variation among the 84 schools in teacher experience, teacher certification, teacher contract status, and principal experience. Diagnosis of individual school staff needs will ensure that appropriate services are provided.

- Prior to implementation of the TSOS program, every teacher and administrator in the selected schools as well as the district superintendent or designee should attend training to receive oral and written descriptions of approved and non-approved teacher specialist roles and responsibilities. Areas of potential confusion, such as teacher specialists conducting student tutoring or writing school improvement plans, should be clarified prior to the beginning of the school year. Districts or schools that choose not to participate in training should not be assigned teacher specialists. The principal, specialists, and any other assistance providers should work as a team to develop a unified plan for raising student achievement and make certain that all curricula, professional development, and other assistance services are focused on major school goals. This plan should be based on an assessment of school climate and an analysis of the professional development needs of the school staff in relation to the school improvement plan for raising student achievement. Principals and the district superintendent should participate to the greatest extent possible in training opportunities provided to the specialists in order to build the capacity of the district and the principal as instructional leaders. Teacher specialists should be provided with professional development on the coaching and mentoring of adult learners and trained to deal with teachers who may not welcome their attentions. Ongoing opportunities for the specialists to interact with other specialists in person or through electronic means should be enhanced.

The second component of the evaluation explored the question, has the program contributed to school-wide academic performance and can that performance be sustained over time?

Of the schools eligible for teacher specialists in 2001-2002, student performance on statewide assessments resulted in the following:

Grades 3-8 English language arts performance

- Only three elementary or middle schools in any tier reduced the percentage of students scoring below basic by five percent or greater;
- Two elementary schools in the "other" category reduced the percentage of students scoring below basic by five percent or greater;
- Six of 33 Tier Two schools increased the percentage of students scoring proficient or above although only three schools of the 57 did so by five percent or greater;
- Two primary and two elementary schools met the threshold for Adequate Yearly Progress as defined under No Child Left Behind federal requirements.

Grades 3-8 Mathematics performance

- 31 of 57 schools reduced the percentage of students scoring below basic by five percent or greater; tier assignment did not reflect differences in impact;
- 22 of 57 schools increased the percentage of students scoring proficient or above although only four schools did so by five percent or greater;

- Two primary and three elementary schools met the threshold for Adequate Yearly Progress as defined under No Child Left Behind federal requirements.

Exit Examination performance

- With respect to passing all subtests, three schools improved the percentage of students by at least 5 percent, while four schools lost ground by that amount;
- Performance on the reading subtests demonstrates three schools improving by five percent, and three regressing;
- Performance on the math subtest was most positive; five of nine high schools improved and only one lost ground;
- Performance on the writing subtest was most disappointing; five schools lost ground while only one improved by 5 percent.

Schools also received ratings for absolute and improvement performance in accordance with the state's annual school and district report card system:

- Approximately one-fourth (13 of 57) of the schools receiving services earned improvement ratings of average or above;
- 15 of 57 schools elevated their absolute ratings; eight moved from Unsatisfactory to Below Average; six moved from Below Average to Average; one moved from Average to Good;
- Elementary schools were most likely to elevate absolute and improvement ratings;
- Three middle schools elevated absolute between 2001 and 2003;
- Ten of the 57 schools elevated their improvement ratings between 2001 and 2003;
- Tier assignment did not impact consistently upon movement within ratings categories.

The schools eligible for technical assistance exhibit considerable turnover among teaching and administrative personnel. The TSOS program faces tremendous challenges in school environments with teacher turnover rates between 20 and 50 percent and average administrative tenure only slightly more than two years.

Neither the First nor Second Year Formative Review is intended to provide summative judgments about the program. The reviews provide information for program development and refinement. Ten issues were offered for reflection in the First Year Formative Review. During the 2002-2003 year the State Department of Education addressed a number of these issues and took the following actions:

1. Would a thorough and systematic definition of the treatment model(s), overall goal and annual objectives generate more uniform progress and minimize the impact of local turnover and variations of technical assistance personnel assignments?

The SDE adheres to the leadership team model as described in this report. [NOTE: Effective with the 2003-2004 academic year, the SDE has modified its processes for tier designations and structured technical assistance within seven priorities among the three tiers.]

2. Do all external review team reports recommend teacher specialists or are there settings in which a different technical assistance strategy is recommended and/or appropriate? Does the external review team fully understand the available options and when each is appropriate?

The external review team process has been clarified so that reports and recommendations now provide opportunities for team members to comment on the school in a narrative form and to indicate the priority for assignment of teacher specialists.

Through a proviso in the General Appropriations Act, the SDE is to assign teacher specialists at the rate of an average of five per school and may assign teacher specialists to teachers working with students with disabilities or with students with limited English proficiency.

3. Can the building blocks for sustainable change be identified and annual as well as long-range expectations made clear to school communities and technical assistance teams so that immediate and interim progress can be recognized?

Although the SDE and EOC staff members have worked on this issue, a consensus model has not been achieved. There is agreement on a number of principles including multi-year improvement efforts, the need for local board and administrator training, flexibility in the use of certain funds and the need for a district guiding administrator to coordinate efforts across schools and within the provisions of No Child Left Behind. Eight recommendations to strengthen the technical assistance program were agreed to by the SDE and EOC staff members and adopted by the EOC at its December 2003 meeting. These recommendations are forwarded to the leadership of the General Assembly.

4. How should the high school model differ from the elementary and middle school model?

The high school model differs in that teacher specialists are assigned by content area, instead of grade level. At the middle school, teacher specialists also are assigned by content area. A review of external review team materials indicates that the teams are not given the option of assigning teacher specialists in social studies.

5. Can the lines of authority and cooperation among the SDE, local district and school administrations and teacher specialists be clarified to support program implementation and sustain improvement?

The SCEPC survey data indicate that this has been improved, particularly with respect to program administration; however, the relationship of the program with other state and local initiatives offers substantial opportunity for confusion. The data suggest that local orientation to and understanding of the program is critical to support.

6. How can local district and school administrative support and ownership of the teacher specialist role be enhanced?

The SDE has enhanced the training model to address these concerns.

7. What is the level of annual improvement expected or the level of improvement expected across three years?

This has not been specified although the SDE has completed background work to establish expectations and the designation of an expected improvement rating is among the recommendations on the technical assistance program adopted by the EOC in December 2003.

8. How can the positive relationships among teachers and teacher specialists be sustained and focused more intently upon student achievement?

The SDE has increased opportunities for principals and teachers to receive an orientation to the program.

9. What are local factors associated with higher levels of student performance among schools in the teacher specialist program?

The SDE relies upon the recommendations of the external review team to assign priorities for the assignment of teacher specialists. Other data in the two formative reviews suggest that administrator and teacher readiness and understanding of the teacher specialist program are critical. In those settings in which the school personnel have been trained there is a higher level of program acceptance. Stability in school assignment for both administrators and teachers is necessary for professional development to move beyond the novice level.

10. What are the financial and instructional costs to schools and districts sending teachers to serve as teacher specialists in underperforming schools?

Although this remains an issue, mid-year budget reductions resulting (in many districts) in larger pupil-teacher ratios have ameliorated this issue---for the short term.

A number of formative issues remain and/or have arisen through the second year review. These issues are the following:

1. How can the program models be clarified so that expectations, roles, responsibilities and authority are clear? The current variations of the teacher specialist program confound internal coherence and consistency; preclude attribution of results and ultimately challenge efforts to replicate the services.
2. Can the protocols used by the external review team be defined so that priority assignments are linked to data and transparent to those administering, participating in and evaluating the program?
3. What is the most successful model to effect change in high school performance and/or should priorities be placed on ninth and tenth grade instruction? How is the dilemma of low graduation rates affected by the teacher specialist model?
4. Can program administration and authority be defined within the variations using teacher specialists and across school, district and state improvement strategies?
5. Can the teacher specialist program assist in developing local capacity beyond the period of state support?
6. Can the teacher specialist coaching role be separated from the allocation of supplementary instructional materials or services; student extended learning time and other expectations?
7. What is the responsibility of the teacher specialist for student and school achievement?
8. How is this represented in the evaluation of individuals serving as teacher specialists?

The 2010 Goal and Academic Performance

The 2010 Goal

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) established, with the concurrence of statewide education and community leaders, the following goal for the school improvement efforts in South Carolina:

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

Historically, South Carolina's school achievement has been ranked at or near the bottom in comparisons with other states. But the current ranking does not deter South Carolinians from their aspirations for the system. In a series of focus groups across South Carolina, the EOC learned that South Carolinians believe their schools should be held to national standards and, despite disparate achievement patterns, that all of South Carolina's students should be held to the same standards (Brown, 1999). This was reaffirmed in a survey administered in 2001 before the annual school and district report cards were published (Brown, 2002) and by teachers in a survey administered to teachers in late 2002 (Brown, 2003). South Carolina's citizens reaffirmed their belief that all students should be held to the same standards during the community meetings held in the various counties during the fall of 2003 and winter of 2004.

During the fall of 2000 the EOC organized a long-range planning team to identify the major elements of the educational system that should be addressed to meet the 2010 goal. The group, composed of twenty-two individuals representing the education, business and legislative communities, developed recommendations that were accepted as a working document by the EOC in July 2001. The long-range planning team also asked for greater detail on the measures to evaluate the 2010 goal. Those measures are discussed below:

- (1) South Carolina will rank in the top half of states on NAEP examinations and other international and national measures.

(a) Performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress: The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a federal project established in 1969. NAEP reports performance of American elementary and secondary students in several subject areas. Representative samples of students are tested every two years in the nation's public and private schools at grades four, eight and twelve. NAEP content area tests vary according to the year and include reading, mathematics, science, writing, history, geography and the arts. The South Carolina curriculum content standards, which form the foundation for the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT), incorporate the content assessed by the NAEP tests.

The sampling process ensures reliable state-level data. Approximately 2,500 students are tested per grade in each state. More than 120,000 students participate nationally.

NAEP scores are reported in two ways: scale scores and achievement levels (performance categories). The NAEP achievement levels are defined below:

Basic This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade

Proficient This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject matter knowledge, application of such

knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter

Advanced This level signifies superior performance

NAEP results for South Carolina for 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2003 are shown in Table Thirty-Two below.

Table Thirty-Two
**National Assessment of Educational Progress
 Comparison of SC and Other Jurisdictions Performance**

NAEP Grade/Subject	Average Scale Score		National Ranking
4/Reading 1998	210	215	33 of 42
4/Reading 2003	215	216	36 of 50
8/Reading 1998	255	261	33 of 39
8/Reading 2003	258	261	37 of 50***
4/Math 1996	213	222	41 of 47
4/Math 2000	220	226	29 of 46*
4/Math 2003	236	234	23 of 50
8/Math 1996	261	271	39 of 44
8/Math 2000	266	274	29 of 46**
8/Math 2003	277	276	30 of 50
4/Science 2000	141	148	33 of 39
8/Science 1996	139	148	30 of 45
8/Science 2000	142	149	32 of 38
4/Writing 2002	145	153	35 of 43
8/Writing 1998	140	148	32 of 39
8/Writing 2002	146	152	30 of 43

*TN, GA and NC scored the same as SC. ** GA scored the same as SC ***GA and TN scored same as SC

- Source: National Assessment Governing Board 2003

A review of the performance suggests three findings: in mathematics the state is making progress as South Carolina scored above the national average for the first time in both fourth and eighth grades; in reading, South Carolina closed the gap between its scores and the national average and though the state is still ranked low among states, it is not at the very bottom and the distance between South Carolina's average scale scores and the national average is not insurmountable; and, in writing, the state is ranked low among the states but not at the very bottom and the distance between South Carolina's average scale scores and the national average is not insurmountable. Further analysis of the NAEP performance indicates some growth (since 1998) in the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient designation; 26 percent of SC fourth graders scored proficient or above on reading in 2003. In mathematics, SC also showed gains from 1992; in 1996 only 12 and 14 percent of fourth and eighth graders respectively scored proficient or above, but in 2003 32 and 26 percent respectively scored proficient or above. The national range extended from seven to 43 percent for grade four and six to 44 percent for grade eight. In writing, SC's performance is lackluster with only 17 and 20 percent of fourth and eighth graders respectively scoring proficient or above. SC's performance on the science assessment is also static.

(b) Performance on TIMSS & TIMSS-R: A sample of South Carolina students also participated in the Third International Math and Science Study (1995) and the Repeat Study (1999). SC scores are not available for 1995. Only thirteen states participated in TIMSS-R; South Carolina scored ninth among the thirteen as detailed below.

Table Thirty-Three
**Third International Math and Science Study
 And
 Third International Math and Science Study-Repeat**

TIMSS-R 8 th Grade, 1999	SC	US	International
Mathematics	502	502	487
Science	515	515	488

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2000.

(c) The Terra Nova: As a verification of South Carolina student performance relative to national performance, the General Assembly required that a sample of students be assessed using a nationally normed test. The sampling plan identifies students in three grades each year. The Terra Nova, a CTBS-McGraw Hill Test, is used for the national performance relationship. The test was administered in grades three, six, and nine in 1999 and 2002; in grades five, eight, and eleven in 2000 and 2003; and in grades four, seven, and ten in 2001 to a representative sample of approximately 7,500 students per grade level.

The Terra Nova is not aligned completely with the South Carolina curriculum content standards. Terra Nova is designed to measure concepts, processes, and skills taught throughout the nation. Test items are classified according to content categories that reflect educational objectives commonly found in state and district curriculum guides; in major textbooks, basal series, and instructional programs; and in national standards publications.

As a norm-referenced test, Terra Nova is used to gauge the performance of South Carolina students with respect to national performance levels. A student's score is interpreted in the framework of comparison to the scores of other students. For example, if a student scored at the 50th percentile, one would interpret that student's score as the same as or higher than 50 percent of the norm-group that took the same test. The items on Terra Nova are not tailored to fully assess South Carolina standards. An EOC study concluded that neither the match nor the coverage of the tests would provide sufficient evidence, across the board, to support decisions at the student, school, district, or state level relative to the South Carolina Content Standards.

Table Thirty-Four
**Terra Nova Survey Testing Program
 1999 - 2003**

Grade	Reading					Language					Math					Total				
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
3	44.7			49.2		48.5			51.5		49.8			58.2		49.1			54.8	
4			47.8					43.1					58.4					50.5		
5		48.2			52.9		51.1			55.4		51.4			60.7		50			57.1
6	43.1			57.6		41.4			49.0		42.1			51.2		41.6			51.4	
7			45.8					59.4					54.7					53.9		
8		52.3			51.4		49.5			45.8		52.0			57.4		51.5			51.3
9	45			56.1		44.3			46.8		43.7			51.6		42.2			51.2	
10			59.6					59.5						62.4				59.1		
11		57.1			55.3		56.7			55.7		52.9			52.5		55.9			54.6

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2003

(2) Nine out of ten SC students will score at or above proficient on PACT, SC's standards-based criterion-referenced tests.

Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests: Beginning in 2000 the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) have been administered to students in grades three through eight in two content areas. Testing in science and social studies was added in Spring 2003. Statewide performance indicates changes in the percentage of students scoring proficient and above as displayed below:

Table Thirty-Five
PACT English Language Arts Performance
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and above

Year	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
2001	41.6	37.3	27.4	32.0	28.0	23.6
2002	41.8	33.5	24.9	33.5	26.9	26.8
2003	43.8	31.4	19.7	26.8	22.7	19.9

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2003

Table Thirty-Six
PACT Mathematics Performance
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and above

Year	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
2001	33.3	26.0	27.1	26.4	25.2	18.4
2002	31.5	36.0	28.7	29.1	27.0	19.1
2003	33.1	33.7	26.6	36.2	28.9	19.2

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2003

Table Thirty-Seven
PACT Science Performance
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and above

Year	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
2003	23.2	21.9	21.4	20.1	20.3	17.3

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2003

Table Thirty-Eight
PACT Social Studies Performance
Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and above

Year	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
2003	21.3	19.8	18.6	17.7	18.2	19.2

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2003

(3) SC will rank in the top half of states on the SAT and ACT.

(a) The SAT is one of the most widely recognized and publicized student assessments. Historically used for admissions information in private, selective colleges the SAT is used now by a majority of private and public colleges and universities. The test measures students' verbal and mathematical abilities and provides information on the students' preparation for college. The SAT is not administered to all students and the College Board (1988) advises that "using these scores in aggregate form as a single measure to rank or rate teachers, educational institutions, districts, or states is invalid because it does not include all students. . . in being incomplete, this use is inherently unfair." Trend data are published and disaggregated in a variety of ways.¹ The SAT is scored on a cumulative 1600 point scale (800 is the highest possible score for each component).

¹ Further information on the Scholastic Assessment Test can be obtained from the web site: <http://www.collegeboard.org/>.

Table Thirty-Nine
**South Carolina and National Average SAT Scores
 1996-2003**

Year	South Carolina			Nation		
	Verbal	Math	Composite Score	Verbal	Math	Composite Score
1996	480	474	954	505	508	1013
1997	479	474	953	505	511	1016
1998	478	473	951	505	512	1017
1999	479	475	954	505	511	1016
2000	484	482	966	505	514	1019
2001	486	489	975	506	514	1020
2002	488	493	981	504	516	1020
2003	493	496	989	507	519	1026

Source: The College Board, 2003.

Table Forty
**SAT Ranking of South Carolina with
 States Having a 54% or Greater Senior Participation Rate (N=24 states)**

Year	Verbal	Math	Composite
1998	24	24	24
1999	24	24	24
2000	24	24	24
2001	24	24	24
2002	23	22	22
2003	23	22	22

South Carolina's recent state ranking is 49th among the fifty states. Performance among the twenty-four states with 54 percent or more of their students participating in SAT exams does not offer a more optimistic view of SC performance. In both verbal and mathematics performance SC has ranked near the bottom among the twenty-four states through 2003.

(b) The American College Test (ACT): The ACT is an achievement test used by many colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The ACT includes four tests: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science Reasoning. Much like the cautions about interpretation of SAT performance, the reader is reminded that the ACT is a voluntary test administered to students paying a fee and is an inappropriate measure for the evaluation of teachers, programs, schools and districts. The scale score for each subtest, as well as the composite, ranges from one to 36.

A comparison of SC student performance and student performance nationally is detailed in the table below.

Table Forty-One
ACT Average Scores for Subject Area and Composite
South Carolina and the Nation
1995-96 to 2002-03

South Carolina

Year	# of students	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
1995-96	6,648	18.5	18.8	19.4	19.2	19.1
1996-97	4,994	18.1	18.9	19.1	19.0	18.9
1997-98	5,385	18.4	18.8	19.4	19.0	19.0
1998-99	6,766	18.6	19.0	19.3	19.2	19.1
1999-00	9,051	18.7	19.2	19.5	19.2	19.3
2000-01	10,797	18.8	19.3	19.2	19.2	19.3
2001-02	11,978	18.8	19.1	19.3	19.2	19.2
2002-03	13,359	18.7	19.0	19.4	19.2	19.2

Nation

Year	# of students	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
1995-96	924,663	20.3	20.2	21.3	21.1	20.9
1996-97	959,301	20.3	20.6	21.3	21.1	21.0
1997-98	995,039	20.4	20.6	21.3	21.1	21.0
1998-99	1,019,053	20.5	20.7	21.4	21.0	21.0
1999-00	1,065,138	20.5	20.7	21.4	21.0	21.0
2000-01	1,069,772	20.5	20.7	21.3	21.0	21.0
2001-02	1,116,082	20.2	20.6	21.1	20.8	20.8
2002-03	1,175,059	20.3	20.6	21.2	20.8	20.8

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2003 and American College Testing Program, 2003.

South Carolina increased both its mean composite score and the number of students taking the ACT between 1999 and 2001, although the composite fell very slightly in 2002 and remained the same in 2003. The state's scores continue to indicate inadequate preparation for college-level work. ACT advises that the cut-off scores indicating preparation for college level work are 22 for English; 24 for biology and 25 for chemistry; 23 for mathematics; and 22 for reading. ACT indicates that scores of 16-19 indicate "only minimal readiness" for college. South Carolina's students perform less well on the ACT than do students in all other states, except Mississippi.²

- (4) Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) passage rates will be at or above the national average.

Advanced Placement Passage Rate: The College Board administers the Advanced Placement (AP) Program. The program was introduced in the 1960s to permit qualified high school students to earn college credit while in high school. The curriculum, teacher training and assessments are aligned to ensure that the rigor and quality of the program is uniform across the nation. Beginning with the 1984 Education Improvement Act, South Carolina's General Assembly has appropriated funds to pay exam fees for South Carolina students, to support the teacher institutes and to provide supplementary materials for the program. Approximately 90 percent of the nation's colleges and universities accept AP credits in some manner.³

² More information on the ACT can be obtained from the web site: <http://www.act.org/>.

³ For additional information on the Advanced Placement Program, contact the web site: <http://www.collegeboard.org/>.

Exams are scored on a one to five grading scale. Generally, higher education institutions accept scores of three or higher, although the more selective institutions require a four or a five score. The grading scale is shown below:

- 5= Extremely well-qualified
- 4= Well-qualified
- 3= Qualified
- 2= Possibly qualified
- 1= No recommendations

Successful student performance on advanced placement tests rose dramatically between 1991 and 2002, although the percentage of qualifying exams fell slightly in 2003. The percentage of exams meeting the qualifying score remains just short of the national average. South Carolina also has increased participation rates at the same time performance has improved. The table below displays current participation and passage rates.

Table Forty-Two
Advanced Placement Exam Rates: Percentage of Exams Scored 3 or Above

Year		1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Number of Tests Taken in SC		13,139	13,896	14,177	14,994	14,894	14,560	15,703	16,614	17,429
Qualifying Percentage	SC	51	52	53	54	55	55	56	59	57
	Nation	61	62	63	63	62	62	60	61	60

The International Baccalaureate (IB) program also employs external exams to measure student performance. IB programs are offered in only a few SC high schools as the data below detail:

Table Forty-Three
**Performance on International Baccalaureate Examinations
SC and the Nation**

Year	SC				Nation	
	# Schools Participating	# Candidates	# Exams Taken	% Qualifying	# Exams Taken	% Qualifying
1998	7	212	498	62	36,1089	79
1999	12	303	809	76	43,017	81
2000	9	290	750	77	50,745	81
2001	11	400	1012	79	57,782	78
2002	12	548	1296	71	67,692	80
2003	14	686	1646	73	76,079	78

- (5) SC's high school completion rate will be at or above the national average.

Table Forty-Four
High School Graduation 2001

SC	National	SC Rankings
51%	67%	50

Source: NCES, Digest of Educational Statistics, 2003.

- (6) SC's dropout rate will be in the lower half of states.

Dropout data are collected differently across the states making comparisons difficult. SC's State Department of Education uses a formula of dividing the number of dropouts for grades 9-12 by the total enrollment for grades 9-12. Using this methodology the annual dropout rates for the last several years follow:

1994-95	3.1
1995-96	2.9
1996-97	2.7
1997-98	2.7
1998-99	2.7
1999-2000	3.2
2000-2001	3.3

- (7) SC will be in the top half of states in percentage of students with disabilities earning a high school diploma.

These data are collected inconsistently across the states. Although a national comparison is not available, SC is working to establish consistent in-state collections.

Table Forty-Five
Comparison of Percentage of Students with Disabilities Receiving High School Diplomas or Certificates in SC and the Nation

Students with Disabilities in SC Ages 17-21				Percentage of students with disabilities receiving a diploma or certificate	
Year	Total Number of Students	Number Receiving Diploma	Number Receiving Certificates	South Carolina	Nation
1998	9,322	703	978	18.0	25.6
1999	7,045	1,083	1,094	31.0	NA
2000	7,380	1,033	986	27.4	NA
2001	7,522	1,120	1,106	29.6	NA
2002	9,046	1,361	1,479	31.4	NA

Source: SC State Department of Education 2003 (estimates only)

- (8) SC will be in the top half of states in freedom from drugs, weapons, violence and teacher victimization by students.

States collect data on different aspects of student behavior. Some data are reported through Federal Bureau of Investigation reports; others through the youth surveys and a variety of national agencies. The data shown below are taken from the SC School Crime Reports.

Table Forty-Six
Top Crimes in SC Schools, 1998-2002

Crime	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Simple Assault	NA	3,489	3,504	3,972	3,851
Disturbing Schools	2,690	2,051	2,051	2,649	2,605
Intimidation	539	1,017	1,017	1,005	867
Weapon Possession	970	996	860	875	813
Larceny/Theft	655	718	720	969	915

Crime	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Vandalism	618	646	616	619	613
Aggravated Assault	596	724	412	369	441
Liquor Violations	265	202	233	194	NA
Burglary/B&E	363	320	230	215	NA

(9) The gap among achievements of students of different racial/ethnic groups and different economic status will be eliminated.

(a) Differences among the SAT performance of White, African-American and Hispanic students persist. There has been a slight increase in the achievement of African-American students in the last decade, while the improvement in achievement for white students has been more significant. The achievement gap between white and African-American students has not been narrowed and the gap between white and Hispanic students has fluctuated.

Table Forty-Seven
SAT Verbal Performance by Ethnicity 1992-2003

Group	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
AA	410	410	409	415	419	415	414	415	415	420	418	422
Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	482	483	473	490	485	472	491
White	498	501	501	506	508	508	508	509	512	514	515	518

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2003

Table Forty-Eight
SAT Math Performance by Ethnicity 1992-2003

Group	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
AA	411	415	409	412	412	407	407	407	414	421	421	425
Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	477	479	468	489	480	455	483
White	491	497	501	499	500	502	502	504	510	515	519	521

Note: Data by lunch status are not available. Source: SC State Department of Education, 2003

(b) The ACT includes four tests: English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning. Results are reported for all four tests and as a composite score. The range of scores for each ACT subtest, as well as the composite score, is from one to 36.

Table Forty-Nine
ACT Performance by Ethnicity 1995-2003

Group	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
AA	17.3	17.13	16.8	17.1	17.2	17.2	16.5	16.2	16.3
Hispanic	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
White	21.4	21.7	21.3	21.3	21.4	21.3	20.9	21.0	21.0

Note: Data by lunch status are not available.

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2003

(c) Differences persist in both participation and performance on advanced placement tests.

Table Fifty
Percentage of Students Earning an Advanced Placement Score Qualifying for College Credit

Group	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
AA	26	26	28	21	24	24	17	25	23	26	32	30
Hispanic	64	55	69	60	69	55	55	60	58	59	61	60
White	59	57	59	55	55	58	60	60	60	61	62	61

Source: College Board, 2003

(d) And finally, performance on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests.

Table Fifty-One
**Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient and Above
 on Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests**

Percent Group	English Language Arts		Mathematics		Science	Social Studies
	2002	2003	2002	2003	2003	2003
African-American	15.3	13.6	12.7	12.7	6.9	6.9
Hispanic	24.5	17.9	23.7	13.4	12	12.3
White	42.9	37.8	40.2	41.7	31.3	28.5
Free/Reduced Lunch	16.7	14.6	15.2	16.1	9.1	7.8
Pay Lunch	46.4	41.4	42.8	44.5	33.8	31.8

Recommended Education Accountability Act and EIA Program Changes to State Agencies and Other Entities as Necessary

At the August 21, 2003 meeting of the EOC, the following Objectives and Critical Actions were approved for the 2003-04 fiscal year.

1. Continue to implement the provisions and fulfill the responsibilities of the Education Accountability Act of 1998.
 - Increase actions to promote public and community involvement in the promotion of strong public schools;
 - Strengthen relationships with elected officials at all levels of government to ensure that the education of young people is a first priority in communities and the state.
2. Define sufficient funding for schools and develop models for shared responsibility between state and local governments.
 - Define adequate funding needed to achieve the state's goal with models incorporating recognition of student poverty, measures to ensure teacher quality, and elimination of selected process or program requirements;
 - Explore alternative revenue streams and the related responsibilities of state and local governing bodies.
3. Advocate legislation and align budget recommendations to implement systems and structures to ensure that South Carolina schools have the capacity to reach the state's 2010 goal and the goals of No Child Left Behind.
 - Review accountability reports for professional development programs to determine the most effective use of resources;
 - Explore salary structures, incentives and working environments to promote employment packages that ensure highly qualified administrators and teachers in the pre-kindergarten through postsecondary system;
 - Identify teaching and learning practices and policies that eliminate the achievement gaps by advancing the achievement of all students to a high level;
 - Align technical assistance programs with strategies that ensure the development of local capacity and responsibility;
 - Propose changes to the state assessment systems to provide more information to teachers and parents and to contain costs.
4. Provide the resources and professional development so that data-based decision-making is implemented at all levels with the educational system.
 - Advocate for a unique student identifier and teacher/faculty identifier for students and personnel in the state's public schools and public institutions of postsecondary education;
 - Establish an interactive data warehouse to improve the quality of data, the ease of collection and access to information for decision-making.

In accordance with these objectives and critical actions, the EOC adopted the following recommendations for changes in technical assistance provided through the EAA:

1. In the year of the initial rating of below average or unsatisfactory, schools are to be awarded planning grants to study the school and school community and, with the recommendations of an SDE-approved or appointed review team, align the school plan to address the core elements of governance and leadership, curriculum and instruction, professional development and student achievement. Schools would not receive technical assistance funding or services until the subsequent fiscal year.

2. Technical assistance funding (for schools with absolute ratings of unsatisfactory or below average) should be provided for a minimum of three years in accordance with the improvement plan, regardless of changes in absolute ratings during the three years.
3. Target improvement ratings should be established for schools rated unsatisfactory or below average in the assistance cycle.
4. Schools rated unsatisfactory shall receive technical assistance services from the State Department of Education to include statutorily-defined services in accordance with the recommendations of the external review team. A very limited number of schools rated unsatisfactory, upon the recommendation of the external review team and inclusion in the school improvement plan, may participate in a technical assistance model designed to test strategies other than those outlined in the statute. Schools rated unsatisfactory should not be permitted to use flexibility and reallocate homework center funds for other purposes. Schools rated below average shall receive a block grant to implement a technical assistance strategy chosen from a limited menu approved by the State Board of Education and appropriate to address the needs at the school.
5. Schools rated below average may use funding for homework centers and retraining grants in a flexible manner to respond to school needs and ensure that target improvement ratings are achieved, but these funds should not be reallocated to other schools or the district under general flexibility provisions.
6. Limited funds should be available to provide additional instructional materials for schools rated unsatisfactory or below average when recommended by the review team and incorporated in the school improvement plan.
7. In districts with one-third or more schools designated unsatisfactory, the superintendent and board members must participate in professional development programs approved by the SDE to enhance their capacity to improve performance and the district must designate a contact person to integrate improvement efforts with other activities, including those required by No Child Left Behind.
8. There should be a systemic improvement model for situations in which the district is rated unsatisfactory. The model should encompass school-specific strategies but also should address those comprehensive education, management and community factors that deter high achievement. Funding would include those resources initially designated for schools but reallocated to the systemic strategies.

As part of the EIA budget process, the following recommendations were made:

1. Fully fund the technical assistance portion of the EAA.
2. Fund the establishment and maintenance of a data-warehouse.
3. Fund the creation of a unique student identifier and teacher/faculty identifier.
4. Create and fund a program similar to the Teacher Loan Program for teachers seeking a master's degree

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