

2004-2005



Objectives and Critical Actions

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.

South Carolinians are committed to excellence for our students, our schools and our communities. Building upon a commitment to every student learning, the General Assembly enacted the 1998 Education Accountability Act. The Act sets forth a bold vision of public education and the use of data and results to achieve that vision. The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, working in concert with elected officials at state and local levels, established this goal:

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

As the state's economy has shifted away from traditional agriculture and textiles, the level to which schools prepare students for continuing education and the workplace has become increasingly urgent in our lives. Today, more than ever, parents, educators and community members are working with students to broaden their perspective on careers — providing resources so that students may achieve their potential and creating communities that support our students.

We should celebrate the progress we have accomplished, but never forget that we have not reached the 2010 goal, and that our work is far from complete.

How do we measure progress toward South Carolina's school performance?

Nine performance measures are used to measure our progress and achievement of the 2010 goal:

1. South Carolina will rank in the top half of states on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other international and national measures.
2. Nine out of ten South Carolina students will score proficient or above on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT).
3. South Carolina will rank in the top half of states on the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT).
4. South Carolina's Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate program exam passage rates will be at or above the national average.
5. South Carolina's high school completion rate will be at or above the national average.
6. South Carolina's dropout rate will be in the lower half of states nationally.
7. South Carolina will be in the top half of states in the percentage of students with disabilities earning a high school diploma.

8. South Carolina will rank in the top half of states in freedom from drugs, weapons, violence, and teacher victimization by students.
9. The achievement gap among students of different racial/ethnic groups and different economic status will be eliminated.

What are the signs of progress?*

- Students have made significant improvements in statewide PACT testing, with gains across all grade levels, subjects, and demographic groups.
- South Carolina high school seniors have improved their average SAT score by 32 points in the past five years, the largest gain in the country and three times the national increase.
- The national report card “Quality Counts,” published by the respected magazine Education Week, ranked South Carolina No. 1 in the nation for improving teacher quality in both 2003 and 2004, and seventh in the nation for improving academic standards and accountability in 2004.
- South Carolina has the nation’s third-best improvement rate in mathematics, and the fourth best improvement in reading, on federal NAEP tests required by No Child Left Behind.
- South Carolina ranks third in the nation in the number of teachers certified by the prestigious National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (3,226).
- The Princeton Review ranked South Carolina’s testing system as No. 11 in the nation.
- Four independent research studies, including work by the Princeton Review and the Northwest Evaluation Association, have confirmed that South Carolina’s standards for student academic proficiency are among the nation’s most rigorous.

What barriers must we overcome?

Far too many South Carolinians are limited by low expectations for school and student performance. Too many students struggle because of limited language development as young children. This impacts their success in reading and a cumulative deficit builds as students struggle through middle and high school.

Our population is becoming increasingly diverse and without doubt, our state is benefiting from the rich mix of ethnicities and ages. But that mix also means that our educators and community leaders must be prepared to

**This list is taken from the State Department of Education’s “South Carolina education accomplishments,” August 31, 2004.*

work with parents and students from different cultures who may speak different languages.

We continue to face shortages among those who educate our children. Research studies indicate that our greatest needs are for teachers in mathematics and science and for teachers of students with disabilities.

Can these barriers be overcome?

Absolutely. Each and every South Carolinian must dedicate himself/herself to realizing the high expectations we have for our state and her students.

How is the Education Oversight Committee organizing its work to contribute to and stimulate continued progress?

At its August 2004 meeting, the Education Oversight Committee adopted the following objectives and critical actions for the year:

Objective 1:

Continue to implement the provisions and fulfill the responsibilities of the Education Accountability Act of 1998.

- Advocate quality teaching and learning experiences so that every student can achieve at high levels.
- Support the continuing professional development of school boards and their members and the development of strong school district governance structures.
- Extend parental and community involvement efforts to support young people as they progress through school, particularly at transitions between school levels.
- Increase the utilization of data published on the annual school and district report cards, and from other sources, in decision-making for students, schools and the state.
- Prepare educators and communities to work with the system of increasing rigor.

Objective 2:

Develop measures, promote policies and implement practices so that each student is able to earn a state high school diploma.

- Heighten public awareness of the importance of a high school diploma and its relationship to individual and state success.
- Determine the currency of high school graduation requirements, including the requirements (or lack of requirements) for specific courses and the attendance requirements.

- Explore tactical approaches to increasing the high school graduation rate such as matrix testing to demonstrate competencies, high school to college dual enrollment, career exploration, and creative articulation agreements.
- Explore the usefulness of choice programs for career/technology and college preparatory high school programs.
- Identify programs that help students develop the personal values and efficacy needed for high school graduation.
- Explore the identification and education of students with disabilities and how these systems may impact a student's opportunity to earn a state high school diploma.

Objective 3:

Strengthen the teaching of reading.

- Identify ways in which the teaching of reading can be given greater priority in kindergarten through grade-twelve teacher development.
- Ensure that administrators have sufficient knowledge and understanding to support strong instruction in reading.
- Determine how current professional development funding can be realigned to address teacher skills and knowledge to teach reading across the grades and through the content areas.

Objective 4:

Review and revise long-range plans to address strategic issues before South Carolina.

- Develop a comprehensive performance profile of students in the middle grades to identify areas for action to promote higher achievement.
- Ensure that teachers and administrators in the middle grades have adequate professional development.
- Modify leadership training to include teams of administrators and teachers working toward common goals.
- Review Title 59 to determine statutes that are inconsistent with a results-based orientation.
- Update funding model.
- Develop connections with higher education in support of a seamless system.
- Assign priority among actions in the long-range plan through a weighting system.

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee is an independent, non-partisan, 18-member legislative committee composed of educators, business persons and elected officials who serve by virtue of their elected position or by appointment of the legislative leaders or the Governor. The Committee bears responsibilities for the development and improvement of South Carolina's educational accountability system and for making recommendations to ensure the continuous improvement of schools and their results.

The mission of the Education Oversight Committee is to affect dramatic, results-based and continuous improvement of South Carolina's educational system by creating a truly collaborative environment of parents, educators, community leaders and policy makers.

2004-2005 Membership

Robert Staton, Chairman	Columbia
Alex Martin, Vice-Chairman	Greenville
Traci Young Cooper	Blythewood
Robert Daniel	Belton
Dennis Drew	Greenwood
Mike Fair	Greenville
Warren Giese	Columbia
Wallace Hall	Abbeville
Robert W. Harrell	Charleston
Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr.	Florence
Harry Lightsey, III	Columbia
Susan Marlowe	Charleston
Joseph Neal	Columbia
Harold Stowe	Myrtle Beach
Inez Tenenbaum	Columbia
Robert W. Walker	Landrum
Larry Wilson	Columbia
Judy H. Williams	Columbia

South Carolina Education Oversight Committee

PO Box 11867
Blatt Building, Room 227
Columbia, SC 29211
(803) 734-6148

www.sceoc.org