

Section VI PALMETTO GOLD AND SILVER AWARDS CRITERIA

Statutory Authority

The statutory authority for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards is from the EAA, as amended in 2008 (Act 282 of 2008):

Section 59-18-1100. The State Board of Education, working with the division and the Department of Education, must establish the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program to recognize and reward schools for academic achievement and for closing the achievement gap. Awards will be established for schools attaining high levels of absolute performance, for schools attaining high rates of growth, and for schools making substantial progress in closing the achievement gap between disaggregated groups. The award program must base improved performance on longitudinally matched student data and may include such additional criteria as:

- (1) student attendance;
- (2) teacher attendance;
- (3) graduation rates; and
- (4) other factors promoting or maintaining high levels of achievement and performance. Schools shall be rewarded according to specific criteria established by the division. In defining eligibility for a reward for high levels of performance, student performance should exceed expected levels of improvement. The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations to ensure districts of the State utilize these funds to improve or maintain exceptional performance according to their school's plans established in Section 59-139-10. Funds may be utilized for professional development support.

Special schools for the academically talented are not eligible to receive an award pursuant to the provisions of this section unless they have demonstrated improvement and high absolute achievement for three years immediately preceding.

Prior to the enactment of Act 282, the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program and the Education Oversight Committee awards to schools closing the achievement gap existed independently. The original Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program selected schools for award on the basis of the combined end of year general performance by all students and the general growth during the school year by all students. Schools were selected based on having high Absolute or Growth ratings or a combination of Absolute and Growth ratings. Schools were also selected if their growth indexes were exceptionally high. The designation of a Gold or Silver award was dependent on the level of general performance by students in the school, with Gold awards for the highest performance levels.

The original achievement gap awards were based on exceptional performance in a school by at least one of the targeted historically underachieving groups of students, and the awards were available only to schools in which the PACT state accountability tests were administered (elementary and middle schools). In response to Act 282, and to maximize the number of schools eligible for receiving an award based on closing the achievement gap, the procedures for identifying gap-closing schools were reviewed and modified for use in the revised Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program. The

modifications are based on changes to the awards program approved by the EOC on December 8, 2008. The modifications include:

- Including performance by students with disabilities along with performance by the other historically underachieving groups (African American students, Hispanic students, and students participating in the Federal free- or reduced-price lunch program) in the identification of schools closing the gap;
- Including measures of exceptional growth in performance on the state accountability tests (PACT or PASS) by students belonging to historically underachieving groups of students;
- Including high schools in the gap-closing awards by identifying schools in which students from the four historically underachieving groups have closed the gap in graduation rates or are making annual gains in their graduation rates such that they will meet the state graduation rate goal of 88.3% on or before the year 2014 (details on the methodology are available in a technical report on www.eoc.sc.gov).

Based on criteria approved by the EOC in December 2008, separate Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards are established for general performance and for closing the achievement gap. Schools meeting the criteria for general performance may receive a Palmetto Gold or Silver Award for general performance based on the criteria in use since the inception of the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award program. Schools meeting the criteria for closing the gap may receive a Palmetto Gold or Silver Award for closing the achievement gap.

Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards for General Performance:

- School meets criteria for Silver award for high general absolute performance, high growth, or a combination of the two based on criteria in original Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program.
- School meets criteria for Gold award for exceptional general absolute performance, exceptional growth, or a combination of the two based on criteria in original Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program.

Palmetto Gold and Silver Award for Closing the Achievement Gap:

- School meets criteria for Silver award if end of year performance in English language arts (ELA) or mathematics or growth in achievement by at least one historically underachieving group meets or exceeds performance of historically high achieving students (elementary or middle schools), or, the growth in the graduation rate by at least one historically underachieving group meets or exceeds the annual growth rate needed to meet the state high school graduation rate goal of 88.3% by 2014 (high schools).
- School meets criteria for Gold awards if end of year performance in both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics by at least one historically underachieving group meets or exceeds performance of historically high achieving students (elementary or middle schools), or, the graduation rate of at least one historically underachieving group of students meets or exceeds the statewide graduation rate of historically high achieving students (high schools).

Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards for General Performance:

Criteria and Procedures

Criteria for the original Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program is maintained for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards for General Performance. Schools are awarded on the basis of the combined end of year general performance by all students and the general growth during the school year by all students.

Eligibility

All schools and career and technology centers with student learning achievement outcome data will be eligible for participation in the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program. No application is required.

There are no additional requirements for percentage of students tested and the inclusion of special education students, since the methodology for calculating the Absolute and Improvement ratings addresses these issues.

According to the Education Accountability Act of 1998, Section 59-18-1100, "special schools for the academically talented are not eligible to receive an award pursuant to the provision of this section unless they have demonstrated improvement and high absolute achievement for three years immediately preceding."

Schools Enrolling Students in Only Grade Two or Below

Schools enrolling students in only grade two or below will not qualify for a Palmetto Gold or Silver Award for lack of student learning achievement outcome data.

Wil Lou Gray Special School

The school may qualify for an award on its Absolute and Growth Ratings as defined in *Criteria for School and District Ratings*.

Career and Technology Centers

Career and technology centers may qualify for a Gold or Silver Award based on the criteria developed for generating the center report cards. These three criteria are

- ❑ mastering for competencies or certification requirements,
- ❑ center 12th grade graduation rate, and
- ❑ placement rate.

As described in the *Criteria for School and District Ratings*, the mastery criterion will be weighted at twice the value of the other criteria. The proportion of students enrolling is not considered as part of the criteria.

Criteria for Selecting Schools for Awards: High Schools

Eligibility

Schools receiving a high school report card, in accordance with procedures outlined in the *Accountability Manual*, with student learning achievement outcome data will be eligible for participation in the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program. Special schools for the academically talented are eligible in accordance with the requirements outlined in Section 59-18-1100 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina. These

requirements state that "special schools for the academically talented are not eligible to receive an award pursuant to the provisions of this section unless they have demonstrated improvement and high absolute achievement for three years immediately preceding." No application is required.

Award Criteria

Two procedures are employed to select schools that meet the criteria for attaining high levels of absolute performance and high rates of growth. Schools that are selected through one of the two procedures are recognized through the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program.

Selection Procedure Based on Absolute Performance and Growth Ratings

This procedure is a combination of the Absolute performance and Growth Ratings as prescribed in the *Criteria for School and District Ratings*. The Growth Rating used for selection of award-recipient schools includes an adjustment for gap reduction. To qualify for a Gold or Silver Award, a school's Absolute performance rating must be above School At Risk. Schools will receive a Gold or Silver Award when one of the following three conditions occurs:

- ❑ A school with an Excellent rating in Absolute performance will receive a Gold Award for high levels of academic performance as long as its Growth Rating is equal to or above Average.
- ❑ A school with an Excellent rating in growth will receive a Gold Award for high levels of growth as long as its absolute performance rating is above School At Risk.
- ❑ A school with a Good rating in growth will receive a Silver Award for good growth results as long as its absolute performance rating is above School At Risk.

The following table outlines the ratings blend for the awards:

Gold and Silver Awards Criteria

Absolute Performance Rating	Growth Rating	Award Designation
Excellent	Excellent	Gold
Excellent	Good	Gold
Excellent	Average	Gold
Good	Excellent	Gold
Good	Good	Silver
Average	Excellent	Gold
Average	Good	Silver
Below Average	Excellent	Gold
Below Average	Good	Silver

Selection Procedure Based on Steady Growth over at Least Two Consecutive Years

This procedure is based upon steady growth demonstrated over a minimum of two consecutive years. A school may qualify for a Silver Award if the school's absolute performance rating is above *School At Risk* for the most recent year, and its growth index meets defined criteria.

for High Schools:

- ❑ its growth index is 0.20 or greater for two consecutive years, or
- ❑ its growth index is 0.10 or greater for three consecutive years.

for Elementary & Middle Schools (2009):

- ❑ its growth index in 2009 is 96.38 or greater **and** its growth index in 2008 is 0.20 or greater **or**
- ❑ its growth index in 2009 is 92.20 or greater **and** its growth indexes in both 2008 and 2007 are 0.10 or greater.

for Elementary & Middle Schools (2010):

- ❑ its growth index in 2010 is 96.38 or greater **and** its growth index in 2009 is 96.38 or greater **or**
- ❑ its growth **indexes** in both 2009 and 2010 are 92.20 or greater **and** its growth index in 2008 is 0.10 or greater.

Procedure for Special High Schools for the Academically Talented

A special school for the academically talented is a district-operated school that has at least 50 percent of its enrollment of students based upon predicted or realized high achievement from across multiple school attendance zones.

Special schools for academically talented will qualify to receive a Gold Award when one of the following two conditions occurs:

- ❑ Beginning with the 2000–2001 school year, a school with an Excellent rating in absolute performance for three consecutive years will receive a Gold Award for attaining high levels of academic performance.
- ❑ A school with a Good or Excellent rating in absolute performance for three consecutive years and an absolute performance index value of 4.5 for the most recent year will receive a Gold Award for attaining high levels of achievement.

Allocation of Funds and Non-Achievement Criteria

School financial awards will be calculated on a per pupil basis in accordance with the particular criteria met. A school qualifying for a financial award will receive 80 percent of the per pupil allocation, plus up to an additional 20 percent based on the following criteria:

- ❑ student attendance, criterion set at a minimum of 97 percent;
- ❑ teacher attendance, criterion set at a minimum of 97 percent; and

- on-time graduation rate, grades nine through twelve, criterion set at a minimum of 79.6 percent.

Schools qualifying for a Silver Award will receive two-thirds of the per-pupil allocation of schools receiving a Gold Award.

Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards for Closing the Achievement Gap:

The criteria for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award for Closing the Achievement Gap are based on exceptional performance or exceptional growth in performance in a school by at least one of the targeted historically underachieving groups of students on the state accountability tests (PASS) for elementary and middle schools and in graduation rate for high schools.

The historically underachieving groups are defined as:

- Students with non-speech disabilities
- African American students
- Hispanic students
- Students participating in the Federal free- or reduced-price lunch program

Schools having at least one historically underachieving group in which at least 30 students are enrolled and tested are eligible for consideration for a Gold or Silver Award for Closing the Achievement Gap.

Award Eligibility

All schools and career and technology centers having accountability test results or high school graduation rates are eligible. Schools that have an absolute rating or a growth rating of "At Risk" for the current year are not eligible for awards for closing the achievement gaps. Schools enrolling students in only grade two or below are not eligible for a Palmetto Gold or Silver Award for lack of student learning achievement outcome data.

Award Criteria and Procedures

Schools with Students Enrolled in Grades 3 through 8

A. End-Of-Year Absolute Performance

Schools are awarded Palmetto Gold or Silver awards for closing the achievement gap in end-of-year absolute performance if they meet the criteria outlined in the following procedural steps.

- Determine the average school-level performance on PASS Reading and Writing tests, and on the PASS Mathematics tests of white students and of pay lunch students in schools statewide. Average the statewide performance of white and pay lunch students for each subject to determine a single value for each subject. This value for each subject is the statewide criterion for performance for an award. (Note: PASS tests will be used from 2009 forward. PASS Reading and Writing scores will be weighted to create a

single ELA score using the same methodology as used for calculating school report card ratings.)

- Determine the average school-level performance of each historically underachieving group in the school on the PACT or PASS tests in each subject area for each school. The target group in the school must meet the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress objectives for percent tested and performance.
- Compare the performance of each historically underachieving group in the school to the statewide criterion for each subject (ELA, math, science, and social studies). If the performance of the historically underachieving group is at or above the performance of white and pay lunch students statewide for that subject, the school is awarded the end-of-year absolute performance closing the achievement gap. A school is awarded if the performance of at least one historically underachieving group of students meets or exceeds the criterion in at least one subject.

B. Exceptional Achievement Growth Closing the Achievement Gap

Closing the achievement gap between historically lower- and higher-achieving demographic groups of students requires that historically lower-achieving groups of students must make faster gains in achievement growth over time than historically higher-achieving groups of students if they are to “catch up.” While the historically lower-achieving groups of students within a school may not be performing at the level of historically higher-achieving students statewide, they may be making exceptional achievement gains over the year which, if sustained, will result in the higher levels of achievement needed for them to be successful. Schools may receive an award for closing the gap through exceptional achievement growth on the part of historically lower-achieving demographic groups of students based on the following procedural steps.

- Determine the average school-level growth index for white students and for pay lunch students statewide. The growth index is calculated based on longitudinal student performance on tests in all four subject areas (ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies). If the average growth indexes for white and pay lunch students are not identical, average them to obtain a single statewide growth index criterion.
- Determine the average school-level growth indexes for each historically underachieving group for each school. The target group in the school must meet the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress objectives for percent tested and performance.
- Compare the growth index for each historically underachieving group in each school to the statewide growth index criterion. To earn the award, the growth index of at least one historically underachieving group must exceed the average growth of white and pay lunch students statewide or be at or above 94.00, whichever is greater.

High Schools – Closing the Achievement Gap

A. End-of-Year Performance

Palmetto Gold or Silver awards for closing the achievement gap at the high school level are awarded to schools in which the on-time graduation rate of at least one historically underachieving group of students (African American, Hispanic, free- or reduced-price lunch recipients, or students with disabilities) exceeds that of historically higher-achieving students (white or pay lunch students) statewide. The graduation rates of historically underachieving groups of students in a school are compared to a statewide criterion rather than to those of other groups of students in the same school to ensure that high standards are met and to avoid making within school comparisons in schools having insufficient numbers of white or pay lunch students for accurate comparison.

- Determine the average school-level on-time graduation rates for white students and for pay lunch students statewide. If the average statewide graduation rates for the two groups differ, average the rates to determine a single statewide criterion to be used for comparison to average school-level on-time graduation rates for historically underachieving demographic groups of students.
- Determine the average school-level on-time graduation rates for African American, Hispanic, free- or reduced-price lunch students, and students with disabilities in each high school.
- Compare the on-time graduation rate for each historically underachieving group in the school to the statewide criterion. To earn an award for closing the achievement gap, the on-time graduation rate for at least one of the historically underachieving groups of students must meet or exceed the statewide criterion.

B. Exceptional Achievement Growth

In April 2008, the SC Education Oversight Committee adopted the state high school on-time graduation rate of 88.3% for all students to be achieved by 2014. The evaluation of school growth in closing the achievement gap is based on the 2014 graduation rate goal. Schools in which at least one of the historically underachieving groups of students meets or exceeds the annual increase in the on-time graduation rate needed for that group in the school to achieve the goal by 2014 is recognized for exceptional growth in closing the achievement gap. The methodology for evaluating growth in closing the gap in on-time graduation rates includes the following procedural steps.

- Determine the on-time graduation rate for the current year and the previous year of each of the historically underachieving groups of students in the school.
- Determine the annual rate of growth needed to reach the 2014 goal by subtracting the graduation rate for the previous year of the historically

underachieving group from 88.3% and dividing by the number of years between the previous year and 2014.

- Determine the actual rate of growth by the historically underachieving group from the previous year to the current year by subtracting the group's previous year graduation rate from the current year graduation rate.
- Compare the actual growth rate in graduation rate for the historically underachieving group to the expected rate needed to achieve the 2014 goal. If the group's actual rate for the current year equals or exceeds the expected rate, the school is recognized for exceptional growth in closing the graduation rate achievement gap.

Designation of Award Types

The following table illustrates the designation of award types for the Awards for Closing the Achievement Gaps.

School Group	Silver	Gold
Elementary and Middle Schools	End of year performance by <i>at least one</i> (but could be only one) subgroup meets criteria for ELA <u>OR</u> Math <u>OR</u> Growth in achievement by <i>at least one</i> (but could be only one) subgroup meets criterion	End of year performance by <i>at least one</i> (but could be only one) subgroup meets criteria for ELA <u>AND</u> Math
High Schools	Growth in graduation rate by <i>at least one</i> (but could be only one) subgroup meets or exceeds annual growth rate needed to meet 2014 graduation rate goal of 88.3%	Graduation rate of <i>at least one</i> (but could be only one) subgroup meets or exceeds statewide graduation rate of historically high achieving subgroups

Recognition

Schools recognized for closing the achievement gaps will receive an award certificate and a congratulatory letter from the SC State Superintendent. When EIA funds are available for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program, an award bonus will be allocated, \$1,200 for a Gold Award and \$1,000 for a Silver Award.

Schools Receiving Palmetto Gold or Silver Awards

The following data were provided by the State Department of Education (SCDE):

Schools Receiving Palmetto Gold or Silver Award
2001-2008

Year	Number of Schools Receiving Gold Award	Number of Schools Receiving Silver Award	Total Number of Schools Receiving Award
2001-02	198	100	298
2002-03	198	92	290
2003-04	229	77	306
2004-05	285	135	418
2005-06	187	125	312
2006-07	163	147	310
2007-08	114	126	240

Numbers of Schools Receiving Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards for General Performance
and /or for Closing the Achievement Gap 2008-09*

2008-09	Number of Silver Awards	Number of Gold Awards	Total Number of Awards	Total Number of Schools Receiving Awards
Palmetto Gold or Silver for General Performance	162	149	311	403
Palmetto Gold or Silver for Closing the Gap	79	163	242	

*Based on 2008 report card release