

2005 Annual School and District Ratings

DISCUSSION POINTS

Based on data received from SDE, November 4, 2005

Absolute Ratings

Overall, the 2005 school and district ratings reveal a larger number of schools rated *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory* than in the last three years.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	71 (6%)	50 (5%)	46 (4%)	28 (3%)	65 (6%)
<i>Below Average</i>	200 (18%)	159 (15%)	150 (14%)	160 (15%)	222 (20%)

There were changes to school absolute ratings from 2004 to 2005 in the following manner:

- 57 schools elevated their ratings – “*Improvers*”
 - 27 of the “*Improvers*” are high schools
- 675 schools maintained their ratings
- 354 schools lowered their ratings – “*Sliders*”
 - 1 school dropped 3 ratings, 19 schools dropped 2 ratings, and 334 schools dropped 1 rating.
 - 56 of the 354 “*Sliders*” are high schools (15.8%).

South Carolina's Students

21.3% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Excellent*.

30.0% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Good*.

28.5% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Average*.

15.7% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Below Average*.

4.5% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Unsatisfactory*.

This year, a number of changes were made to the calculation of the Absolute and Improvement ratings, which factor into an analysis of the ratings.

Inclusion of PACT Science and Social Studies in the Ratings for Elementary and Middle Schools

- Although this is the third year Social Studies and Science have been tested on the PACT, 2005 is the first year results have been included in the calculation of the ratings. The results are being phased in over a three-year period and the weighting will increase each year (5 percentage points per year) until the target weightings are achieved in school year 2006-2007. This year, Science and Social Studies absolute rating weights are set at 10% for Elementary schools and 15% for middle schools.
- Student performance in Social Studies and Science is lower than performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math.

2005 PACT Performance

	% Basic or Above	% Proficient or Advanced
ELA	75%	34%
Math	76%	33%
Science	60%	26%
Social Studies	68%	27%

* Does not include students tested off level or with PACT-Alt.

Increase in the Rigor

- Designed as a system to encourage and reward continuous improvement in South Carolina's public schools, the rigor of the absolute performance ratings increased last year by one-tenth of a point on a five-point scale. This year, the rigor increased an additional one-tenth of a point.
- Our initial analysis shows that the increase in the rigor affected about 7% of the total number of schools.

Poverty and Absolute Ratings

- Significant poverty exists in the majority of South Carolina schools. Only 6% of schools have fewer than one-third of their students living in poverty (68 of 1109 schools).
- The number of schools in poverty is increasing. Of 1058 schools which had poverty indexes in both 2004 and 2005, 797 (75.3%) showed an increase in the poverty index.
- Half (50.4%) of all South Carolina schools have at least 70% of their students living in poverty. In 2004, 48.3% of schools served a student population of at least 70% below the poverty line.
- One out of 6 schools (17.3%) serves a population of students in very high poverty (90% or more.)

In 2005, 12.6% of schools with a poverty composite of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*; that percentage has dropped from 2004, when 19.6% of schools with a 80% or greater poverty composite earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

**2005 School Ratings
Poverty Levels Across Primary, Elementary, Middle, and High Schools**

	Extent of Poverty (Poverty Index)		
	High Poverty (70%+)	Very High Poverty (80%+)	Extreme Poverty (90%+)
Number of Schools with Excellent or Good Absolute Ratings in 2005	97 down from 141 last year	47 down from 70 last year	14 down from 20 last year
Total Number of Schools (% of 1109 Schools)	557 (50.2%)	372 (33.5%)	192 (17.3%)
Percent Excellent or Good	17.4% down from 26.6% last year	12.6% down from 19.6% last year	7.3% down from 10.5% last year

Poverty by Organizational Level – Absolute Ratings

Primary and elementary schools constitute a disproportionately-larger percentage of those schools with extreme poverty rates. Primary and elementary schools represent 57.4% of all schools, but 70.8% of schools with a Poverty Index of 90% or greater.

Elementary

- 9.24% of elementary schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, down from 21.9% in 2004. 6.5% of elementary schools with a poverty index of 90% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

Middle Schools

- Poverty has the greatest negative impact on school ratings for middle schools. In 2005, no middle schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good* while 93.7% of these schools earned an absolute rating of *Unsatisfactory* or *Below Average*. In 2004, 1.4% of middle schools earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

High Schools

- 23.1% of high schools with a poverty level of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, up from 18.2% in 2004.

District Absolute Ratings

- This year, 4 school districts are rated *Unsatisfactory*, up from 1 in 2004.

Career and Technology Center Absolute Ratings

- Absolute ratings for Career and Technology Centers, as well as special schools, are not included in the overall "snapshot" of the ratings. However, 63.2% of the 38 Career and Technology Centers are rated *Excellent* and 1 is rated *Unsatisfactory* in 2005.

Technical Assistance

- 84% of schools rated *Unsatisfactory* or *Below Average* have been rated at that level at some point between 2001 and 2004.

Blue Ribbon/Red Carpet Schools – Absolute Ratings

- To assist with rewards for successful schools, the Secretary of Education has established the No Child Left Behind -- Blue Ribbon Schools Program to honor those elementary and secondary schools in the United States that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels. The schools are selected based on one of three criteria:
 - Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance on state tests, as determined by the state school chief;
 - Schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent on state tests; and
 - Private schools that achieve in the top 10 percent in the nation.

This year, 2 of the 4 SC Blue Ribbon schools received *Excellent* absolute ratings. One school was rated *Good* and 1 school received an absolute rating of *Average*. Two schools received *Good Improvement Ratings*, 1 *Average*, and 1 *Below Average*.

- Each year, the SC State Dept. of Education honors schools who exhibit family-friendly philosophies and environments, as well as good customer service. The schools are listed as Red Carpet Schools. The distributions of absolute ratings among 2005 Red Carpet schools are: *Excellent* - 20%; *Good* - 31%; *Average* - 35%; *Below Average* - 12%; and *Unsatisfactory* - 2%

Improvement Ratings

- There were changes to school improvement ratings from 2004 to 2005 in the following manner:
 - 277 schools elevated their rating
 - 381 schools maintained their rating
 - 421 schools earned lower improvement ratings
- The number of elementary schools with an Improvement rating of *Excellent* went up to 34, from 20 in 2004. Improvement ratings in middle schools dropped. 83% of middle schools earned an Improvement rating of *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory* in 2005, compared to 58% in 2004.
- Of the 314 schools with an improvement rating of *Unsatisfactory* in 2004, 20.6% earned *Average* or above improvement ratings in 2005. 24.4% of schools rated *Below Average* in 2004 earned *Average* or above improvement ratings in 2005.

- 153 schools (down from 160 schools in 2004) 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.
- Improvement ratings for Career and Technology Centers, as well as special schools, are not included in the overall "snapshot" of the ratings. However, 68.5% of the 38 Career and Technology Centers earned an improvement rating of *Good* or *Excellent* in 2005.

Poverty by Organizational Level – Improvement Ratings

- One in five schools with high levels of poverty have improvement ratings of *Excellent* or *Good*. 18.3% of all schools (primary, elementary, middle, and high) with a poverty index of 90% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, while 19.6% of schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, and 19.8% of schools with a poverty index of 70% or greater earned an improvement rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

2005 Improvement Rating	Average Poverty Index
Excellent	49.2%
Good	62.8%
Average	66.1%
Below Average	69.1%
Unsatisfactory	74.1%

- On average, schools with *Unsatisfactory* improvement ratings have 1.5 times as many students in poverty than schools with *Excellent* improvement ratings. The average school poverty index for schools with an *Excellent* improvement rating is 49.2% while the average school poverty index for schools with an *Unsatisfactory* improvement rating is 74.1%.

2005 Profile Data

Policy Challenges Regarding Teachers

Schools with lower ratings have, on average, fewer teachers with advanced degrees and more teachers with emergency or provisional certificates.

In particular, schools with a 2005 Absolute Rating of Unsatisfactory had, on average, over four times as many teachers on emergency or provisional certificates as schools rated Excellent or Good.

	Advanced Degrees	Emergency or Provisional Certificates
Unsatisfactory (65 schools)	47.4%	16.0%
Below Average (222 schools)	49.5%	6.8%
Average (349 schools)	51.2%	4.0%
Good (304 schools)	53.7%	3.5%
Excellent (169 schools)	56.9%	4.1%

Schools with lower ratings have, on average, fewer teachers on continuing contracts and fewer teachers returning from the previous year.

	Continuing Contracts	Returning
Unsatisfactory (65 schools)	60.0%	77.3%
Below Average (222 schools)	74.9%	82.3%
Average (349 schools)	79.6%	85.4%
Good (304 schools)	82.3%	86.8%
Excellent (169 schools)	83.7%	88.1%

Schools with lower ratings, on average, pay teachers less than schools with higher ratings. In particular, schools with an Absolute Rating of Unsatisfactory paid their teachers over \$3,570 less on average than schools with an Absolute Rating of Excellent.

	Average Teacher Salaries
Unsatisfactory (65 schools)	\$39,714
Below Average (222 schools)	\$40,391
Average (349 schools)	\$41,450
Good (304 schools)	\$42,294
Excellent (169 schools)	\$43,189

Schools with lower ratings have fewer students enrolled, a lower student-teacher ratio and a higher per pupil expenditure than schools with higher ratings.

	Number of Students Enrolled	Student- Teacher Ratio	Expenditure per Student
Unsatisfactory (65 schools)	470.4	19.0	\$7,512
Below Average (222 schools)	484.2	18.7	\$6,934
Average (349 schools)	556.2	19.9	\$6,363
Good (304 schools)	672.3	21.0	\$6,211
Excellent (169 schools)	857.8	22.8	\$6,362

In schools with lower ratings, on average, the attendance rate is lower, as is prime instructional time, compared to schools with higher ratings.

	Attendance Rate	Prime Instructional Time
Unsatisfactory (65 schools)	95.0%	87.6%
Below Average (222 schools)	95.6%	88.5%
Average (349 schools)	96.0%	89.2%
Good (304 schools)	96.3%	90.1%
Excellent (169 schools)	96.2%	90.0%

Schools with lower ratings, on average, retain more students and have fewer students eligible for gifted and talented programs than schools with higher ratings.

In particular, schools with a 2005 Absolute Rating of Unsatisfactory, on average, retained over twice as many students and had one-fifth as many students eligible for gifted and talented programs as schools rated Excellent.

	Retention	Eligible for Gifted and Talented
Unsatisfactory (65 schools)	8.8%	5.1%
Below Average (222 schools)	4.8%	8.2%
Average (349 schools)	4.0%	12.1%
Good (304 schools)	3.8%	17.7%
Excellent (169 schools)	4.3%	22.0%

Critical Questions

1. Are students taught the content standards on grade level?
2. Does technical assistance build local capacity that can be sustained over time?
3. What is the impact of low reading skills on student performance in other content areas?
4. How can we recover students who enter middle school performing below grade level?
5. How do we close early achievement gaps and keep them closed as students move through school?