

**Report Card Issues and Recommendations  
Adopted March 21, 2002**

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**ISSUE 1: School Grade (School Report Cards Only)**

Issue: Should the School Grade no longer be reported? Some educators have questioned the fairness of the school grade. Others have supported it because it emphasizes the importance of a school's improvement in achievement.

The school grade represents an adjustment of a school's Absolute Performance Rating upward or downward, depending on the school's Improvement Rating for the year. A school earning an Excellent Improvement Rating receives a School Grade which can be two levels higher than its Absolute Rating (e. g., Absolute Rating of Average along with an Excellent Improvement Rating results in a School Grade of Excellent). A Good Improvement Rating provides for a School Grade one level higher than the Absolute Rating (e. g., Average Absolute Rating along with Good Improvement Rating results in a Good School Grade). An Unsatisfactory Improvement Rating, however, results in a lowering of a school's Absolute Rating by one level (e. g., Average Absolute Rating along with Unsatisfactory Improvement Rating results in Below Average School Grade).

**Frequencies of School Grades and Absolute Ratings, Fall 2001 Report Cards**

School Grade	Absolute Rating					Total No. (%)
	Excellent No. (%)	Good No. (%)	Average No. (%)	Below Average No. (%)	Unsatisfactory No. (%)	
<b>Excellent</b>	165 (15.2)	29 (2.7)	24 (2.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	218 (20.1)
<b>Good</b>	3 (0.3)	223 (20.6)	25 (2.3)	14 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	265 (24.4)
<b>Average</b>	0 (0.0)	74 (6.8)	172 (15.9)	17 (1.6)	12 (1.1)	275 (25.3)
<b>Below Average</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	100 (9.2)	104 (9.6)	5 (0.5)	209 (19.3)
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	65 (6.0)	53 (4.9)	118 (10.9)
<b>Total No. (%)</b>	168 (15.5)	326 (30.0)	321 (29.6)	200 (18.4)	70 (6.5)	1085 (100.0)

Based on the report card ratings published in December, 2001, in approximately 66.1% of schools the School Grade was the same as the Absolute Grade; there were no adjustments to the Absolute Ratings in these schools. The School Grade was higher than the Absolute Rating in 11.6% of the schools, and was lower in 22.3%.

Concerns that have been expressed about the School Grade include:

- It does not add new information to the ratings (it is not based on additional data or different analyses of existing data);
- It is not specified in the law, does not provide the basis for technical assistance, and is not used as the basis of incentives or awards;
- It is difficult to communicate and is confusing to parents;
- It denigrates a school's accomplishments by lowering the Absolute Rating it has earned;
- Its name should reflect that it is a composite of a school's ratings.

Supporters of the School Grade have mentioned:

- It reflects the level of improvement made by schools;
- Reporting it will provide consistency of interpretation of a school's achievement over time;
- It provides a simple, clear indicator of school achievement and progress;
- It is consistent with school results.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report card, eliminate the School Grade from the report card.

Rationale: Discontinuing the reporting of the School Grade will help eliminate confusion about the school's status and will not be necessary if the Absolute and Improvement Ratings are reported on page one (see recommendation for Issue 2 below).

## **ISSUE 2: Absolute and Improvement Ratings (School and District Report Cards)**

Issue: The Absolute and Improvement Ratings are currently printed on page two of the report card, and are separated from the School Grade reported on page one. This separation has led to confusion about the importance of the Absolute and Improvement Ratings and has made it difficult to interpret the School Grade. The sentences stating the ranges of ratings reported for Schools With Students Similar To Ours are not informative because the range of ratings is often very broad (e. g., Unsatisfactory to Excellent).

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report card, move the Absolute and Improvement Ratings to page one of the report card. Report the two ratings together. Example:

Absolute Rating: Average  
Improvement Rating: Average

Eliminate the sentences on page 2 of the report card stating the range of Absolute and Improvement Ratings reported for similar schools. Place a table on page 1 which lists the number of comparison schools having students similar to ours for each level of the Absolute Rating. The table should be placed below the Absolute and Improvement Ratings. Example:

Absolute Rating	Number of Schools Like Ours
Excellent	3
Good	8
Average	15
Below Average	3
Unsatisfactory	0

Rationale: All school ratings will be reported together in a prominent location, which will aid individuals examining and interpreting a school's achievement level and progress.

## **ISSUE 3: Improvement Rating Incentive for Achievement Gains of Historically Underachieving Groups (District and School Report Cards)**

Issue: Schools and districts should receive recognition for exceptional achievement gains made by students belonging to historically underachieving groups.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2003 report card, for schools/districts in which Improvement Ratings are raised a level because of the exemplary improvement of students belonging to historically underachieving demographic groups, include the following statement with the ratings reported on page one:

*Improvement Rating was raised one level because of substantial improvement in the achievement of students belonging to historically underachieving groups of students.*

Rationale: Provides recognition to schools or districts which are especially effective at closing achievement gaps between students belonging to different demographic groups.

#### **ISSUE 4: Fiscal Authority (District Cards Only)**

Issue: Educators and others have requested that the fiscal authority for the school district be listed on the cover of the report card.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2003 report card, add a line following the Board Chairman listing which states the fiscal authority for the school district. Examples:

Fiscal Authority: County Council  
Fiscal Authority: Board of School Trustees

Rationale: Listing the fiscal authority informs the public about how their schools are financed.

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#### **ISSUE 5: School or District Name (District and School Report Cards)**

Issue: The identity of the school/district is not listed on the page which reports important achievement information, leading to confusion when several school results are compared.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2003 report card, list the name of the school or district at the top of page two of the report card.

Rationale: School/district achievement results can be properly attributed.

#### **ISSUE 6: Improvement Rating (District and School Report Cards)**

Issue: Improvement is seen as the key to meeting South Carolina's 2010 achievement goal. The 2001 report card improvement ratings disappointed some educators because fewer schools received high improvement ratings than expected, especially at the elementary and middle school levels (see Table 1 below):

**Table 1**  
**Frequencies of School Report Card Improvement Ratings**  
**2000-2001 School Year**  
**By School Organization Type**

<b>Improvement Rating</b>	<b>Elementary Schools Number (%)</b>	<b>Middle Schools Number (%)</b>	<b>High Schools Number (%)</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	54 (8.9)	7 (2.5)	66 (33.2)
<b>Good</b>	98 (16.1)	22 (8.0)	35 (17.6)
<b>Average</b>	146 (23.9)	63 (22.8)	5 (2.5)
<b>Below Average</b>	162 (26.6)	89 (32.3)	48 (24.1)
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	144 (23.6)	91 (33.0)	32 (16.1)
<b>New/Special - No Rating</b>	6 (1.0)	4 (1.5)	13 (6.5)
<b>Total</b>	610 (100)	276 (100)	199 (100)

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

The data revealed that approximately half of the elementary schools and nearly two-thirds of the state's middle schools either showed no progress in PACT scores from 1999-2000 to 2000-2001 (Below Average Improvement Rating) or a loss in achievement (Unsatisfactory Improvement Rating). This finding has given rise to questions about the Improvement Rating and the index upon which it is based: was it calculated incorrectly, is it inaccurate, etc.?

The Improvement Rating and the Improvement Index reflect several desired features of an accountability system:

- Improvement is measured in terms of growth of individual students over time, so that individual student improvement is recognized, regardless of how low the student's initial achievement may have been;
- Improvement is measured in terms of the increases in achievement of students scoring initially at all levels of performance (Below Basic 1 , Below Basic 2, Basic, Proficient, Advanced), such that, over time, students are expected to score at higher performance levels;
- The Improvement Index reflects the increases in school performance which are built into the accountability system, so schools have to achieve at higher levels from 2001 to 2010 to maintain the same Absolute Rating;
- The Improvement Rating is adjusted upward to recognize sustained high achievement (schools which maintain Excellent Absolute Ratings over time) and to recognize exceptional achievement gains on the part of students belonging to demographic groups which have historically underachieved in South Carolina schools.

Improvement Ratings for schools were reported for the first time in December, 2001. We are still analyzing the data for 2001, and are matching data to conduct additional analyses, but some observations can be made about the Improvement Indices and Ratings based on currently available data.

First of all, the mean Improvement Index for elementary and middle schools in 2001 was 0.014, which rounds to 0.0 when rounded to the nearest tenth, as is done for the Improvement and Absolute Indices. A gain of 0.0 corresponds to a Below Average Improvement Rating. By comparison, the mean Improvement Index in the simulation of 1999-2000 data was 0.2, which corresponds to an Average Improvement Rating. Thus the Improvement Index for 2001 indicates that very modest positive gains were made in PACT scores in 2001 compared to 2000.

How well does this apparent modest improvement compare to the results when the PACT data for 2001 are analyzed using a different method? Unfortunately, matched longitudinal PACT data, which provided the basis for the calculation of the 2001 Improvement Index, are not available yet. One way to estimate the gains in matched data when it is not available is to look at data which approximate this match. The data in Table 2 represent the statewide results for the cohorts used for determining the 2001 Improvement Index. In Table 2, the statewide results for 4<sup>th</sup> graders in 2001 are compared to the statewide results for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in 2000. While these scores are not individually matched (e.g., each 4<sup>th</sup> grader's posttest score is not matched with his or her pretest score), the data for the two years generally represent information for the same students. That is, most 4<sup>th</sup> graders in 2001 were 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in 2000, etc. Thus the data provide an approximation of the results if the data were individually matched, at least at the statewide level.

**Table 2  
Comparisons of PACT Performance for Cohorts  
2000-2001**

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS					MATH				
	# Tested	% BB	% BA	% PF	% AD	# Tested	% BB	% BA	% PF	% AD
<b>Grade 4 2001</b>	50463	19.5	43.0	35.4	2.1	51332	32.7	41.4	16.3	9.6
<b>Grade 3 2000</b>	51766	25.6	34.4	36.0	4.0	52112	31.0	43.5	16.1	9.4
<b>Difference</b>	-1303	-6.1	8.6	-0.6	-1.9	-780	1.7	-2.1	0.2	0.2
<b>Grade 5 2001</b>	45835	26.0	46.4	25.6	2.1	46560	37.2	35.3	16.5	11.0
<b>Grade 4 2000</b>	47515	28.0	35.1	33.0	3.9	47932	38.4	38.0	15.6	8.0
<b>Difference</b>	-1680	-2.0	11.3	-7.4	-1.8	-1372.0	-1.2	-2.7	0.9	3.0
<b>Grade 6 2001</b>	50916	31.6	36.0	26.6	5.8	51498	36.5	37.0	16.9	9.6
<b>Grade 5 2000</b>	51608	28.9	43.8	25.0	2.2	52089	41.3	38.8	12.2	7.7
<b>Difference</b>	-692	2.7	-7.8	1.6	3.6	-591	-4.8	-1.8	4.7	1.9
<b>Grade 7 2001</b>	49322	31.4	40.5	25.0	3.1	49633	42.7	32.0	14.8	10.5
<b>Grade 6 2000</b>	50475	34.8	33.3	25.1	6.8	50864	41.4	36.0	15.1	7.4
<b>Difference</b>	-1153	-3.4	7.2	-0.1	-3.7	-1231	1.3	-4.0	-0.3	3.1
<b>Grade 8 2001</b>	47205	30.7	45.9	20.9	2.5	47366	37.1	44.6	13.0	5.3
<b>Grade 7 2000</b>	49439	31.9	40.8	23.4	4.0	49785	40.9	37.4	13.0	8.8
<b>Difference</b>	-2234	-1.2	5.1	-2.5	-1.5	-2419	-3.8	7.2	0.0	-3.5

The test results in Table 2 are reported on the State Department of Education web site. The differences between the two years of test data for each cohort are displayed in Table 2. Note that fewer students were apparently tested in each cohort in 2001 compared to 2000. This difference in the numbers apparently tested may actually represent the large number of special education students tested at the off-grade (e. g., lower grade) level in 2001. The results from these students are not reported in the web site, but their scores are used in the calculation of the Absolute and Improvement Indices for schools and districts. If the results from these students were included in Table 2, the statewide performance reported for 2001 would be lower because these students' performance was lower than that of students not receiving special education services. Another difference between the data reported in Table 2 and the data used to calculate the report card ratings is that Table 2 does not contain information on the number of students who should have been tested

but were not. The data from these students tend to lower a school's rating because there is a penalty in the calculation for students who should have been tested but were not.

The percentages of students achieving at each performance level (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) in each content area are reported in Table 2, along with the differences in percentages between 2000 and 2001. In general, the accountability system expects that students will improve their performance from year to year. That is, the percentages of students scoring Below Basic will decrease as the percent scoring Basic, Proficient, or Advanced increases over time. This is the general pattern observed in Table 2, with the percentages of students scoring Below Basic in English Language Arts (ELA) decreasing in grades 4, 5, 7, and 8, and the number scoring Below Basic in math decreasing in grades 5, 6, and 8. However, the percentages of students scoring Proficient or Advanced in ELA also declined in grades 4, 5, 7, and 8. In math, the percent Proficient declined in only one grade (7) and the percent Advanced dropped only in grade 8. In general, the data in Table 2 are consistent with the findings from the Improvement Index that there was a modest improvement in PACT performance in 2001. It appears that there were small declines in ELA and small increases in math in 2001.

A similar analysis of 1999-2000 PACT data (Table 3) reveals larger and more consistent increases in the desired direction (decreases in percent Below Basic and increases in percent Proficient or Advanced) than in 2001, which is consistent with the higher simulated Improvement Index for 2000.

**Table 3**  
**Comparisons of PACT Performance for Cohorts**  
**1999-2000**

	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS					MATH				
	# Tested	% BB	% BA	% PF	% AD	# Tested	% BB	% BA	% PF	% AD
<b>Grade 4 2000</b>	47515	28.0	35.1	33.0	3.9	47932	38.4	38.0	15.6	8.0
<b>Grade 3 1999</b>	47287	34.9	37.1	26.1	1.9	47492	43.7	38.4	12.6	5.3
<b>Difference</b>	228	-6.9	-2.0	6.9	2.0	440	-5.3	-0.4	3.0	2.7
<b>Grade 5 2000</b>	51608	28.9	43.8	25.0	2.2	52089	41.3	38.8	12.2	7.7
<b>Grade 4 1999</b>	51628	34.6	36.9	26.0	2.5	51900	45.4	37.3	12.6	4.6
<b>Difference</b>	-20	-5.7	6.9	-1.0	-0.3	189.0	-4.1	1.5	-0.4	3.1
<b>Grade 6 2000</b>	50475	34.8	33.3	25.1	6.8	50864	41.4	36.0	15.1	7.4
<b>Grade 5 1999</b>	49869	35.0	39.0	23.6	2.5	50146	46.7	37.1	11.9	4.4
<b>Difference</b>	606	-0.2	-5.7	1.5	4.3	718	-5.3	-1.1	3.2	3.0
<b>Grade 7 2000</b>	49439	31.9	40.8	23.4	4.0	49785	40.9	37.4	13.0	8.8
<b>Grade 6 1999</b>	49857	37.1	38.9	21.0	3.0	49850	47.2	36.9	11.5	4.5
<b>Difference</b>	-418	-5.2	1.9	2.4	1.0	-65	-6.3	0.5	1.5	4.3
<b>Grade 8 2000</b>	48486	35.1	41.3	20.0	3.5	48838	38.0	42.3	13.1	6.6
<b>Grade 7 1999</b>	50373	37.3	39.1	20.5	3.1	50282	48.4	36.0	11.1	4.6
<b>Difference</b>	-1887	-2.2	2.2	-0.5	0.4	-1444	-10.4	6.3	2.0	2.0

The data available indicate that the improvement in PACT scores in 2001, while slightly positive, leave cause for concern that sufficient progress was made toward the 2010 goal. However, one year's data

are not sufficient to reliably indicate achievement trends. It remains to be seen if scores will stabilize or if further increases can be expected in the next few years. The differences observed between the 2000 simulation and the 2001 results suggest that we may need to evaluate trends in school achievement over a period of time.

Recommendation: Continue to calculate Improvement Indices using the current methodology through 2003, when the methodology should be re-evaluated and revised if needed. Analyze the data for trends over time to determine the feasibility of measuring growth over a multi-year period.

Rationale: Use of the current methodology provides continuity in results and consistency in comparisons of school progress through 2003, when revisions needed should be more apparent.

### **ISSUE 7: Improvement Rating (District and School Report Cards)**

Issue: High-achieving schools may not be able to earn Excellent Improvement Ratings because their students are already scoring at the highest level of the PACT test. Currently a school which earns Excellent Absolute Ratings for two consecutive years is automatically awarded a minimum of a Good Improvement Rating. If the school improvement index is greater than zero, the school is awarded an Excellent Improvement Rating, regardless of the size of the index. A school which achieves an absolute index at the highest level (5.0) for two consecutive years cannot show a positive improvement index ( $5.0 - 5.0 = 0.0$ ). One high school achieved a 5.0 absolute index in 2001. Additionally, schools which achieve very high absolute indices, such as 4.8 or above, are scoring near the top of the distribution of scores and may not be able to show positive achievement gains from year to year, even though they maintain their high indices of 4.8 or higher. An Absolute Index of 4.8 is 4.7 standard deviation units above the mean for elementary schools, 5.1 standard deviations above the middle school mean, and 2.5 standard deviations above the high school mean in 2001.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2003 report cards, include the following text in the Criteria for Improvement Ratings for all schools:

*Schools achieving an Absolute Index of 4.8 or higher for two consecutive years will be awarded an Excellent Improvement Rating.*

Rationale: Schools performing at the highest levels will receive appropriate recognition.

### **ISSUE 8: High School Ratings (School and District Report Cards)**

Issues: Criteria for high school ratings need to be clarified with regard to LIFE Scholarship Eligibility, status of students in grades other than grade 10 taking the Exit Exam for the first time, and the graduation rate criterion to be added for the 2003 ratings. Although the criteria for LIFE Scholarship eligibility were revised for the 2001-2002 school year, to maintain continuity and comparability of the high school ratings, the point weightings for the 2002 report card will be based on the same criteria as those used for the 2001 report card ratings. Ninth grade students may not be classified as tenth graders in their second year of high school, but may instead be promoted from ninth to eleventh grade because block scheduling allows them to earn sufficient credits. Exit Exam results from such students will not be included in the rating system under the current criteria because the students are not classified as tenth graders when they take the Exit Exam for the first attempt.

Recommendation 1 (Eligibility for LIFE Scholarships): To maintain continuity with the 2001 ratings, the same criteria for LIFE scholarship eligibility will be used for the 2002 report cards (e. g., SAT of 1050 or higher or ACT of 22 or higher, and B average).

Recommendation 2 (Revision of ratings criteria for 2003): Beginning with the 2003 report cards, graduation rate will be added to the criteria. The LIFE Scholarship criterion will remain in the criteria. EOC staff are directed to explore additional measures of achievement in the upper levels of high school, including Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate measures. The ratings criteria beginning in 2003 will include the following:

- 1) Longitudinal Exit Examination Performance: This factor gauges the percentage of tenth grade students who pass the exit exam by the spring graduation two years later. Students transferring to other schools should be deleted from the calculation; however students dropping out are included;
- 2) Tenth Grade First attempt Exit Examination Performance: The percentage of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students in the current school year who meet the standards on all three Exit Examination subtests (Reading, Writing, Mathematics);
- 3) Eligibility for LIFE Scholarships: The percentage of students in the spring graduating class who qualify for LIFE Scholarships under the criteria for the 2002-2003 school year (e. g., SAT of 1100 or higher or ACT of 24 or higher, and B average; does not include class rank criterion).
- 4) Graduation Rate: Calculation of the graduation rate as defined in the EOC Accountability Manual adopted in May 2000. *Point weightings will be established in Summer, 2002 based on the availability of data for simulation.*

Recommendation 3 (Study of retention and Exit Exam testing): Examine the 2002 and 2003 data to identify the progression of students from 9<sup>th</sup> grade onward and the impact of ninth grade retention on Exit Exam results and the accountability system. Make recommendations for changes to the accountability system based on the study.

Rationale: The calculation of the high school ratings is clarified and the impact of high school grade retention policies on the accountability system will be examined.

## **ISSUE 9: Career and Technology Center Ratings (School and District Report Cards)**

Issue: The results from the ratings reported on the 2001 report card were reviewed with Career and Technology Center principals and representatives from the State Department of Education. The 2001 ratings did not successfully differentiate levels of quality among centers (95% were rated Excellent, 2.5% were rated Good, and 2.5% were rated Average). The initial ratings criteria and definitions were developed through work with a group of career and technology center directors and with advice from the School-to-Work Advisory Council. Four criteria for use in the ratings for the 2000-2001 school year were adopted as shown below.

1. Enrollment in the Center: The percentage of students enrolled in the Center for one or more courses as a percentage of students eligible to attend. For example, a center serving five high schools would calculate this criterion by determining the enrollment at each of the high schools in the grades eligible to attend the center; divide the number eligible into the number of students actually enrolled in the center;



2. Mastering Core Competencies or Certification Requirements: The percentage of students enrolled in Center courses who earn a 2.0 or above on the final course grade. Students are to be assessed on the competencies identified in the adopted syllabi or specified for certification programs (e.g., FAMS). This criterion is weighted at twice the value of other criteria;
3. Graduation Rate: The number of 12<sup>th</sup> grade career technology education students who graduate in the spring is divided by the number of 12<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled in the Center and converted to a percentage. This criterion incorporates passage of the Exit Examination required for graduation;
4. Placement Rate: The percent of career and technology completers who are available for placement in either postsecondary instruction, military services or employment is divided into the percentage of students over a three-year period who are actually placed. This criterion mirrors the Perkins standard.

The results from a review of the criteria by State Department of Education personnel indicate that the enrollment criterion in the rating did not reflect program quality but rather was affected by factors not under direct control of career and technology center personnel. For example, the percentage enrollment was dependent in some cases on the distance and time needed for students to travel between a center and its feeder high schools. These factors did not allow for improvement in enrollment in all cases.

Recommendations: The enrollment criterion should be eliminated from the ratings criteria reported beginning with the Fall, 2003 report card. The revised criteria to be used beginning with the 2003 report card are listed below, with changes indicated in italics:

1. *This criterion is eliminated from the rating: Enrollment in the Center: The percentage of students enrolled in the Center for one or more courses as a percentage of students eligible to attend. For example, a center serving five high schools would calculate this criterion by determining the enrollment at each of the high schools in the grades eligible to attend the center; divide the number eligible into the number of students actually enrolled in the center;*
1. Mastering Core Competencies or Certification Requirements: The percentage of students enrolled in *career and technology* courses at the center who earn a 2.0 or above on the final course grade. Students are to be assessed on the competencies identified in the adopted syllabi or specified for certification programs (e.g., FAMS). This factor applies to any *career and technology* course in the center. This criterion is weighted at twice the value of other criteria; *(the italicized additions clarify that grades from applied academic courses are not to be used in the rating)*
2. Graduation Rate: The number of 12<sup>th</sup> grade career technology education students who graduate in the spring is divided by the number of 12<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled in the Center and converted to a percentage. This criterion incorporates passage of the Exit Examination required for graduation;
3. Placement Rate: The percent of career and technology completers who are available for placement in either postsecondary instruction, military services or employment is divided into the percentage of students over a three-year period who are actually placed. This criterion mirrors the Perkins standard.

The criteria should be weighted as follows:

- *Mastering Core Competencies or Certification Requirements should be weighted 50% in the calculation of the rating;*
- *Graduation Rate should be weighted 25%;*
- *Placement Rate should be weighted 25%.*

Absolute Performance Level

The Career and Technology Center principals and SDE personnel also recommended that the weightings for the criteria be revised for the Fall, 2003 report card. The scale is shown below:

Criterion	Points Assigned				
	5	4	3	2	1
<i>Mastery (weighted x 5)</i>	<i>86 % or more</i>	<i>78-85 %</i>	<i>70-77%</i>	<i>62-69%</i>	<i>61 % or below</i>
<i>Graduation (weighted x 2.5)</i>	<i>97% or more</i>	<i>92-96 %</i>	<i>87-91%</i>	<i>82-86%</i>	<i>81% or below</i>
<i>Placement (weighted x 2.5)</i>	<i>98 % or more</i>	<i>95-97 %</i>	<i>92-94 %</i>	<i>89-91 %</i>	<i>88 % or below</i>

The revised criteria and point weightings represent more stringent criteria than used for the 2001 report card, but will result in more accurate identification of center quality. The use of the new criteria using data from FY 2001 would lead to the following results:

Comparison of FY 2001 Career & Technology Center Ratings and Simulated 2001 Ratings Using Revised Criteria

Center Ratings	Absolute Performance Ratings - Number of Schools (%)				
	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory
Current Criteria	38 (95.0%)	1 (2.5%)	1 (2.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Revised Criteria	26 (65.0%)	6 (15.0%)	4 (10.0%)	4 (10.0%)	0 (0%)

Improvement Rating

Improvement ratings for the 2001-2002 school year will be calculated and reported based on the absolute performance criteria used for the Fall, 2001 ratings. Improvement ratings based on the revised criteria will be reported beginning with the Fall, 2003 report card.

Rationale: Revising the ratings criteria for career and technology centers will provide a ratings system which more accurately reflects quality differences among centers.

**ISSUE 10: Department Of Juvenile Justice Ratings Criteria (School Report Cards)**

Issue: The Department of Juvenile Justice has requested that the formula for calculating its absolute rating be revised to better reflect student achievement in each of the two subject areas assessed

(reading and math) by the California Achievement Test (CAT). The current formula combines reading and math scores when assigning the point weighting for the calculation of the index. The requested revised formula provides for point weightings to be assigned separately for reading and math performance. The resulting index will provide more variability which will better reflect achievement changes in these subjects from year to year.

Criteria for the Rating

- (1) California Achievement Test (CAT): A pretest is administered when the juvenile is first committed. A post-test is administered at the juvenile's 8-month anniversary and each 8-month anniversary thereafter. Scores are reported as differences in grade equivalencies in reading and math;
- (2) The Exit Exam is administered to juveniles who are enrolled at DJJ during the month of state testing. The sample of students who take the Exit Exam and have been committed to DJJ for at least 8 months will be reported as a percentage meeting standards.

Current Calculation of the Absolute Performance Rating

Criterion	Points Assigned				
	5	4	3	2	1
% students gaining at least one grade on CAT	90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	Less than 60
% students passing one or more subtests on Exit Exam	90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	Less than 60

Add points relevant to percentage of students meeting goal and divide by 2 to determine the index.

Note: Staff from the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Education Oversight Committee will meet in Fall, 2002 to review student assessment data and identify methods to improve the accuracy and validity of the calculation of school ratings for the special populations of students attending DJJ schools.

Recommendation:

*Proposed Revised Calculation of the Absolute Performance Rating, Beginning With the 2003 Report Card*

Criterion	Points Assigned				
	5	4	3	2	1
<i>% students gaining at least one grade on CAT reading</i>	<i>90-100</i>	<i>80-89</i>	<i>70-79</i>	<i>60-69</i>	<i>Less than 60</i>
<i>% students gaining at least one grade on CAT math</i>	<i>90-100</i>	<i>80-89</i>	<i>70-79</i>	<i>60-69</i>	<i>Less than 60</i>
% students passing one or more subtests on Exit Exam	90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	Less than 60

Add points relevant to percentage of students meeting goal and divide by 3 to determine the index.

Rationale: Revising the ratings criteria for the Department of Juvenile Justice will provide ratings more sensitive to variation from year to year.

**ISSUE 11: Percentage of Students Matched (District and School Report Cards)**

Issue: The percentage of student records longitudinally matched for the purpose of calculating the improvement index should be reported (page 7 of the 2001-2002 Accountability Manual), but was not reported on the 2001 report cards. The 2001-2002 Accountability Manual did not specify where on the report card this information should be reported.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2003 report card, report the percentage of student records matched on page 2 of the report card.

Rationale: Educators and others will be provided information on the completeness of the matched data used for reporting improvement in achievement.

## **ISSUE 12: Test Results for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students (English Language Learners) (District and School Report Cards)**

Issue: Test results for students who are tested under guidelines for Limited English Proficiency, a growing demographic group in South Carolina, are not currently disaggregated and reported on the report card. The ESEA No Child Left Behind Act calls for states to report disaggregated data for such students.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2003 report card, report the disaggregated test results for students designated Limited English Proficient or English Language Learners on page two of the report card.

Rationale: Reporting results for LEP students will provide additional useful information to schools and will be consonant with the requirements of federal legislation.

## **ISSUE 13: Special Schools Serving Multiple Districts (District Report Cards)**

Issue: Performance data from students attending schools created to serve students with disabilities from more than one school district should be included in the students' home district report cards. Currently, data for all students are reported only for the district in which the special school is located.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report card, the student performance data for students attending multi-district schools in which 100% of the students have Individualized Education Plans under IDEA that require either assessment with Alternate PACT and/or a special school placement as the least restrictive environment should be included in the data reported for each student's home school district. The data from students attending such special schools will also be reported on the special school's report card.

Rationale: Student achievement results will be reported appropriately to the students' home districts as well as on the special school's report card.

## **ISSUE 14: Comparison Schools for Special Schools (School Report Cards)**

Issue: The achievement data from special schools serving students with disabilities are currently compared to schools having similar levels of poverty but much lower proportions of students with disabilities. Personnel from the special schools have requested that their schools be compared with schools having similar student characteristics.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report cards for special schools as defined below, report data for comparison from schools similar in student characteristics: schools in which 100% of the students have Individualized Education Plans under IDEA that require either assessment with Alternate PACT and/or a special school placement as the least restrictive environment.

Rationale: More appropriate comparison information will be provided for a unique group of schools serving a very specialized population of students.

## **Page Three of the Report Card (Profile Information)**

### **ISSUE 15: School or District Name (District and School Report Cards)**

Issue: The identity of the school/district is not listed on the page which reports important information, leading to confusion when several school results are compared.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2003 report card, list the name of the school or district at the top of page three of the report card.

Rationale: School/district facts and indicators can be properly attributed.

### **ISSUE 16: Special Schools Serving Multiple Districts (District Report Cards)**

Issue: Data from students attending special multi-district schools are not reported in their home districts, but are reported only for the district in which the special school is located. Reporting all such students' data in one district results in misleading information for all the districts involved.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report card, the student data such as per-pupil expenditure and other student-based data from students attending multi-district schools in which 100% of the students have Individualized Education Plans under IDEA that require either assessment with Alternate PACT and/or a special school placement as the least restrictive environment should be included in the data reported for each student's home school district. The data from students attending such special schools will also be reported on the special school's report card.

Rationale: Provides fairer and more accurate information.

### **ISSUE 17: Comparison Schools for Special Schools (School Report Cards)**

Issue: The fact and indicator data from special schools serving students with disabilities are currently compared to schools having similar levels of poverty but much lower proportions of students with disabilities. Personnel from the special schools have requested that their schools be compared with schools having similar student characteristics.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report cards for special schools as defined below, report data for comparison from schools similar in student characteristics: schools in which 100% of the students have Individualized Education Plans under IDEA that require either assessment with Alternate PACT and/or a special school placement as the least restrictive environment.

Rationale: More appropriate comparison information will be provided for a unique group of schools serving a very specialized population of students.

## **ISSUE 18: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate Success Ratio**

Issue: Data are currently reported as a percentage, although the Accountability Manual calls for data to be reported as a ratio of the duplicated number of students enrolled in the courses to the number receiving scores high enough to qualify for college credit. Educators and others have expressed the need to report both participation levels in AP and IB courses, and success on the examinations administered at the end of the courses.

Recommendation 1: Beginning with the 2002 report cards, report the data as a ratio, as defined in the Accountability Manual.

Recommendation 2: Beginning with the 2003 report cards, report the participation rate as the unduplicated count of students enrolled in AP or IB courses divided by the 45-day ADM, expressed as a percent.

Recommendation 3: Beginning with the 2003 report cards, report the success rate in AP or IB courses as the unduplicated count of students scoring 3 or above on the AP tests, or 4 or above on the IB examinations, divided by the unduplicated count of students taking the tests, expressed as a percentage.

Rationale: Reporting the data as a ratio provides information on the extent of student participation in the programs, as well as their success. Reporting participation and success based on unduplicated counts provides information both on opportunities provided to students for participation in advanced courses and on the success of students in those courses.

## **ISSUE 19: Out of School Suspensions or Expulsions for Violent and/or Criminal Offenses (School and District Report Cards)**

Issue: This school and district fact is reported on the report card as the number of offenses. The number reported is not adjusted or transformed to account for school size, so it is difficult to interpret. The data collection procedures also need to be clarified to improve accuracy and comparability.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2003 report cards, collect data on out of school suspensions and expulsions for violent and/or criminal offenses as an unduplicated student count, divide by 45-day Average Daily Membership for the school/district, and convert to a percentage for reporting.

Rationale: The data reported will be more accurate and comparable from school to school.

## **ISSUE 20: Facts and Indicators Not Reported for Career and Technology Centers (Career Center and District Report Cards)**

Issue: The following facts and indicators cannot be reported on the Career and Technology Center report cards because the data are not available or are not available in formats which permit accurate calculation:

- Annual Dropout Rate
- Prime Instructional Time

- Student-Teacher Ratio in Core Subjects
- Students Retained
- Average Daily Attendance - Students
- Out of School Suspensions or Expulsions for Violent and/or Criminal Offenses

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report card, delete the following from the Career and Technology Center Report Card:

- Annual Dropout Rate
- Prime Instructional Time
- Student-Teacher Ratio in Core Subjects
- Students Retained
- Average Daily Attendance - Students
- Out of School Suspensions or Expulsions for Violent and/or Criminal Offenses

Rationale: Currently these data are reported as "N/A." Deleting these variables will free space for possible new information.

### **ISSUE 21: Students Who Met the Readiness Standard (School and District Report Cards)**

Issue: Since the South Carolina Readiness Assessment results will report student profile information, but not a designation of "Ready" or "Not Ready," the information to report this indicator will not be available after the cessation of CSAB testing.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report card, drop this variable from page three of the elementary and primary report cards. Consider replacement with indicators based on the SCRA profile information. The indicators should be developed for use on future report cards.

Rationale: The information originally intended for reporting will not be available.

### **ISSUE 22: Prime Instructional Time (School and District Report Cards)**

Issue: The calculation of Prime Instructional Time reported on the 2001 report cards apparently was based on a 190-day teacher contract year. The Accountability Manual calls for the calculation to be based on the 180 days of instructional time. Some districts report that their leave policies encourage teachers to take leave during the 10 staff development days, resulting in lower prime instructional time values. Some schools report that releasing teachers for staff development during their planning period in the school day results in data indicating that the teacher was absent for the full day, which adversely affects the prime instructional time reported.

Recommendation: Beginning with the data collection for the 2002 report cards, collect information on teacher absences during teaching and non teaching periods, so data can be collected to calculate prime instructional time based on actual face-to-face instructional days.

Rationale: Provides a more accurate measure of proportion of actual instructional time made use of in schools.



**ISSUE 23: Attending Parent Conferences (District and School Report Cards)**

Issue: School personnel have requested clarification of what constitutes a parent conference because of confusion on how to collect these data.

Recommendation: Add the following sentence to the description of the parent conference fact in the Accountability Manual to take effect with the data collection for the 2003 report cards:

*Conferences include face-to-face and telephone conferences and two-way e-mail conferences.*

Rationale: Data collected will be more accurate and reliable.

**ISSUE 24: School District Governance (District Report Cards)**

Issue: The Education Oversight Committee has placed emphasis on strong school district governance, yet very little about governance is included on the report. The following addition to page three of the district report card is recommended.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2003 report card, include boxed information on page three between "College Admission Tests" and the reports of statewide data to include the following information (example for illustration):

	School District Governance
Board Membership:	7 trustees elected in nonpartisan elections
Fiscal Authority:	Wilson County Council
Average Hours of Training Annually:	6.5

**Page Four of the Report Card**

**ISSUE 25: Teacher, Student, and Parent Survey Results**

Issue: The number of surveys returned by teachers, students, and parents should be reported to provide information on the degree to which survey results represent the school population.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report cards, print the number of teacher, student, and parent surveys returned and upon which the data reported are based.

Rationale: Provides additional information for interpreting the survey results.

## **Editorial Changes to Report Cards**

### **ISSUE 26: Education Oversight Committee Web Address (School and District Report Cards)**

Issue: The web address for the EOC is not reported on page one of the report card.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report cards, add the EOC web address to the bottom of page one:

For more information, visit the web sites at:

[www.myschools.com](http://www.myschools.com)

[www.sceoc.org](http://www.sceoc.org)

Rationale: The EOC web site has important information, such as the Accountability Manual, for interpreting and understanding the report cards.

### **ISSUE 27: Data Reported as "N/A" (School and District Report Cards)**

Issue: "N/A" is currently reported when data are not available, not collected, or are from an insufficient sample. Using the same designation for all instances of unavailable data is misleading.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report cards, report "N/A" (Not Available) only when appropriate. Report "Data not reported," "Data not collected," or "Insufficient Sample" when appropriate.

Rationale: Use of correct descriptors will provide public with more accurate picture of school or district data.

### **ISSUE 28: High School and Career and Technology Center Achievement Data (School Report Cards)**

Issue: The table on page two reporting disaggregated achievement data does not report the numbers of students on which the percentages are based.

Recommendation: Beginning with the 2002 report card, report the number of students along with the percentages on which they are based.

Rationale: Provides useful information for interpreting achievement results.

### **ISSUE 29: Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities (School Report Cards)**

Issue: Editorial changes are needed to better describe the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. The following changes were suggested by Governor's School staff.

Recommendations: Beginning with the 2002 report card, make the following changes:

Page Two – Delete the word "levels" in the first sentence.

Page Two – Delete the publication of Advanced Placement data by content area.

Page Three – Delete the variable, “Opportunities in the Arts.”

Page Three – Delete the variable, “Gifted and Talented.”

Page Three – Adjust the calculation of “Prime Instructional Time” to reflect the longer teaching year at the Governor's School.

Rationale: Changes will result in a more accurate description of the school on the report card.

### **Report Card Pilots for 2002-2003**

The following measures will be developed and/or piloted during 2002-2003 for future reporting:

#### **School Technology Indicators**

Ratio of instructional computers to students in school

#### **Library Resources**

Average age of media collection

#### **Physical Education and Health**

A funding request for a student assessment is pending before the General Assembly. Data are to be reported for one-third of the schools effective with the 2003 report card if funding is allocated. In the absence of student assessment measures of physical education and health, EOC staff are directed to explore the use of measures of program effectiveness for use in 2003.

#### **Foreign Language**

The South Carolina Foreign Language Teachers Association has developed a measure of program quality for high school foreign language programs. Pending sufficient financial resources, the measure will be field tested in a sample of high schools during the 2002-2003 school year.

#### **Character Education**

A committee to study and propose a measure of school character education programs will be convened during Summer, 2002.

### **Procedural Issues Regarding the Report Cards Cited During Review**

- Provide access to test scores before the principal's letter is written.
- Provide schools with data for verification before publication of the report card.
- Mail sufficient copies of the report cards for teachers and other school personnel.
- Develop a system for reprint authority when errors in ratings calculations are corrected.
- Correct the errors on the 2001 report card so that the 2002 report card reflects actual changes from the previous year.
- Correct the errors in per pupil expenditures reported (for some schools per-pupil expenditures reported included capital expenditures).
- Increase the font size of text whenever possible to improve legibility.
- Request sufficient funding during FY 2004 budget process to print the report cards in two colors to highlight the graphics displayed.

## **Appendix**

### **Letters and Comments From the Field**