



Principal and SIC Write Report Card Narrative

The shared responsibility of writing a narrative for the School Report Card is stated in the Education Accountability Act (EAA). Article 9 of the EAA outlines the purpose of the report card, criteria for the rating system, requires a set of performance indicators to be developed and how the data is to be reported in “an easily understood manner and a reader friendly format.” It also includes the following language as to how a narrative is to be written and by whom.

“The principal, in conjunction with the School Improvement Council established in Section 59-20-60, must write an annual narrative of a school’s progress in order to further inform parents and the community about the school and its operation. The narrative must cite factors or activities supporting progress and barriers which inhibit progress. The school’s report card must be furnished to parents and the public no later than November fifteenth.”



Dr. Jean Norman (right) interviews Deputy Superintendent Dr. Sandra Lindsay about School Report Cards.

Narrative Timeline

- May 15-June 15 Schools submit all data including the narrative to SDE website.
- June 15-July 31 The Department will review the narrative for each school. If does not fit in the space, has too many words, or does not relate to the other information on the report card, it will be sent back for editing by the principal and SIC.

Narrative Limits

The fourth and back page of the Report Card includes the narrative, level of satisfaction about the school by teachers and students based on surveys (student evaluations will be included next year), and definitions of the school rating terms. (See sample, page 2.)

- Amount of space: width 4.5”, length 3.25”
- Number of words: 425 approximately
- Point size: 10 pt.

What to Write

Describe the school briefly, remembering there are lots of details on page 3. State the actions or strategies the school has implemented based on the needs of the students over the last year or two. Note the implementation of the school improvement plan and the results already experienced through the efforts of the faculty and students. Outline the challenges the school, students, families, and community must meet to improve. Close with anticipated improvements based on the current year’s efforts.

SCHOOL REPORT CARD SUMMER DATA COLLECTION TIMELINE

The amount of information required to be collected by the SC Department of Education for over 1100 schools and 86 districts takes time. To be ready to distribute the Report Cards to the districts by November 1, the Department is following this schedule. (For detailed information on this timeline, see page 2.)

May 15 – June 15

Collect data from all schools and districts through SDE web site.

June – July

Review, edit, and verify facts for each school; return to school for corrections or revisions.

July 31 – mid-Sept.

PACT data cleaned up and verified; school and district ratings computed; data disaggregated by subgroups of students.

Mid-September

Send to printer.

November 1

Distribute school and district report cards to districts.

November 15

Schools distribute report cards to parents and community.

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November Report Card Information Gathered Now

District and School Report Cards must be distributed by the SC Department of Education (SDE) by November 1 of each year. Schools distribute the reports cards to their parents and the community by November 15 annually. The information that goes on the Report Card must be gathered now – almost six months in advance of its distribution.

The School Report Card has four pages in which to report ratings based on the PACT, test score comparisons of the school with other like schools, information describing the school, and a narrative about the school programs and challenges to improvement. The PACT was given in early May and the results will not be available until late July. While the tests are being scored the other information for the Report Card will be gathered.

According to Deputy Superintendent Sandra Lindsay there are “implementation realities” for gathering the amount of information required from over 1100 schools and 86 districts. Dr. Lindsay directs a staff of 10 professionals responsible for collecting the information for the report card and making sure that each school and district report card is accurate before it is distributed. She and her staff are also responsible for checking the PACT data for accuracy when it arrives before beginning the task of computing three ratings per school and disaggregating the information by several subgroups.

“Each school has a unique set of data,” Dr. Lindsay comments. “We want to make sure that the information on their School Report Card is accurate. The process we have put in place was designed with that as our goal.”

By mid-September all of the data must be completed and inserted correctly with the right school and district. The printer will have four to five weeks to complete the task of printing the nearly 1200 different report cards. The Department of Education will have about a week to distribute the report cards to all of the districts by the November 1 deadline. The districts then will have about two weeks to get the report cards to the schools for distribution to the parents and community by November 15.

(continued on page 3)

(Actual Size Report Card Narrative Page)

**PRINCIPAL
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL
REPORT**

INSERT NARRATIVE HERE

width: 4.5”
length: 3.25”
point size: 10
word length: approx. 425

EVALUATIONS BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

	Teachers	Students
% satisfied w/ learning environment	___%	___%
% satisfied w/ social and physical environment	___%	___%
% satisfied w/ home-school relations	___%	___%

* Evaluation measures for parents are to be added in 2002.

DEFINITIONS OF SCHOOL RATING TERMS:

- **Excellent** - School performance is substantially exceeding the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal (stated page 1).
- **Good** - School is exceeding the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal (stated page 1).
- **Average** - School is successfully meeting the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal (stated page 1).
- **Below Average** - School is in jeopardy of not meeting the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal (stated page 1).
- **Unsatisfactory** - School is failing to meet the standards for progress toward the 2010 SC Performance Goal (stated page 1).

Teen Pregnancy Rate Dropping, But ...

The SC Kids Count Report indicates that teen pregnancy rates are dropping, but EVERY 48 MINUTES a SC girl between the ages of 10 and 19 becomes pregnant. The SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy is launching a yearlong public awareness campaign to encourage parents to talk with their children about love, sex, relationships, and values. The Campaign is also giving parents the resources to do it. Visit www.teenpregnancysc.org or call (803) 771-7700 for reading lists, tips, data, links to other resources, and teen pregnancy prevention contacts *in every county in the state.*

(continued from page 2)

Indicators and Stressors

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) was directed by the EAA to develop a set of indicators or set of data to be collected for the School Report Card. The items of information to be collected were intended to create a picture of school conditions. Data about funding per pupil, teaching degrees and vacancies, categories of students, and percentages for attendance, drop out, and other items are among the data that fill one page of the report card. The EOC conducted research to determine those items that were found to influence student achievement and therefore influence the school's rating.

Because much of the data had not been collected statewide before, the SDE spent the previous year creating a system for uniform data collection. Each school will transfer the information by entering the data directly on the Department's web site. The directions for accessing the database and entering the data were sent to superintendents and principals in early May. Data will be collected from May 15-June 15. If received on time, the data will be returned for review; if received late, time for review may not be possible.

After the data is submitted to the SDE, each School Improvement Council (SIC) and faculty will have time to consider the implications of the information on the implementation of the school improvement strategies. Since this is the first year the information has been collected and made public statewide, Dr. Lindsay encourages "Schools and districts to consider the information as a benchmark, a place to start rather than a place to lay blame." The information is likely to provide insight into the challenges the school faces and give the school direction for their improvement efforts.

SICs Eligible for State Board Awards

Each year the State Board of Education recognizes significant contributions made by volunteers to schools around the state. The State Department of Education sent requests for nominations of exemplary School Improvement Councils (SICs) to district volunteer coordinators in April. To be nominated, SICs must display excellence in at least one of the following areas:

- Promoting student achievement
- Enhancing school/community relations
- Strengthening school or district resources
- Promoting a positive school climate
- Supporting teacher effectiveness
- Promoting or developing an effective mentoring program

SICs must also be recognized in their local district awards program to be considered for the State Board Award. The deadline for nominations is June 30. To learn more about how your SIC could be nominated, please contact your district volunteer coordinator.

What Data Is Being Collected for School Report Cards?

In addition to information about numbers of students taking the PACT, alternative formats, language considerations, and special conditions and circumstances, the following list of information will be collected; **note what applies for each school.**

- Type of *accreditation* (up to grade 2 schools)
- Number of professional days devoted exclusively to working with students less than *8 years old* (up to grade 2 schools)
- Number of students in spring *graduating class* by demographic category
- Number of students in spring graduating class with a cumulative *grade point average* of 3.0 or better by demographic category
- FTE of *regular classroom teachers* in grades K-5
- For grades 6-12, FTE of teachers in: *ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies*
- Teacher *vacancies* for more than 9 weeks
- Total number of teachers and number of certified teachers providing instruction at the school for *art, dance, drama, music*
- Number of out-of-school *suspensions and expulsions* for violent and/or criminal offenses
- Number of self-contained students with *disabilities* enrolled in the school
- Number of 7th and 8th graders enrolled in courses for *high school credit*
- Number of students enrolled in *advanced placement* courses (count each student once for each course)
- Number of students enrolled in *IB courses* (count each student once for each course)
- Number of *IB examinations taken* at the school with scores 4, 5, 6, or 7
- Number of students in grade 6-12 enrolled in *ELA, math, science or social students courses*
- Total number of students whose parents attended an individual *parent conference* or academic plan conference during the school year
- Principal's or vocational center director's *name, mailing address, and phone number*
- Total number of *years* the principal or vocational center director has held the position in the school
- Total number of classrooms and total number of *portable* classrooms
- Principal's/vocational director's /School Improvement Council *narrative*

For Your Information . . .

FREE BOOKLET – Talking with Kids About Tough Issues

Dominic Cappello, endnote speaker at the 2001 SIC Conference, has co-written a free booklet, *Talking with Kids About Tough Issues*. Children Now, the Kaiser Family Foundation and Nickelodeon have mounted a national campaign to help parents open the lines of communication with their children. Available in English and Spanish, the booklet is written in the spirit of the *Can We Talk?* parent-child communication workshops co-designed by Cappello. To get your free copy, visit www.talkingwithkids.org, or call 1-800-Child44.

EOC to Host Report Card Workshops

The SC Education Oversight Committee will host eleven regional workshops for principals, district superintendents, and district public information officers to focus on how to communicate the purposes and the results of their report cards. Participants will receive a free School Report Card Communications Tool Kit. The EOC encourages principals to include SICs in the development of the school and district report card communications plan before school begins and to involve SIC members after the release of the report cards. For more information, contact Debbie Elmore at (803) 734-6164.

FREE Environmental Workshop for Teachers

SC DHEC, along with the SC Energy Office, International Paper and the US Postal Service will sponsor a FREE one-day workshop for K-12 teachers. The workshop, “Energy 2 Learn” will be held Wednesday, July 18, 2001 at Seawell’s in Columbia. The workshop will feature “Action for a Cleaner Tomorrow: A South Carolina Environmental Curriculum Supplement” on CD-ROM and the latest on energy education in the classroom, including updates on the Palmetto Energy Awards Program (PEAP) and the National Energy Education Development Project (NEED). Registration is limited to 200 teachers. Call the Recycling Hotline, 1-800-768-7348, ASAP.

“Point of Light”

Mary Louise Resch, Executive Director of the SC Center for Family Policy (SCCFP), was chosen as the Daily Point of Light for April 27, 2001. SCCFP collaborates with SICA on the statewide level and we salute Mary, who is very deserving of this honor. The mission of the Points of Light Foundation is to engage more people more effectively in volunteer service to help solve serious social problems. To learn more about the Foundation, Mary Resch, and other Points of Light, visit www.pointsoflight.org.

Help Find the Heroes

The South Carolina Year of the Child Campaign is dedicated to finding, recognizing and celebrating the heroes in our state who serve children in extraordinary ways. Supported by Governor and Mrs. Hodges, and an impressive list of South Carolina businesses, the campaign wants your help to find those heroes, celebrate their accomplishments, and offer thanks for their extraordinary efforts. To receive materials and nomination forms, contact 1-866-574-HERO, or visit www.scyearofthechild.org.



LEGISLATIVE WATCH

As the SICA News went to press, budget issues and the lottery continued to be the main topics of debate at the SC General Assembly. The Senate and the House have each passed very different versions of an education lottery bill.

The Senate Finance Committee reinstated funds for K-12 that had been cut from the state budget by the House. The committee restored \$22 million in local school innovation funds, part of the Education Improvement Act. They also increased funding for high school credits to \$23.9 million and set continuous improvement innovation funds at \$3.3 million. No funding was provided for K-12 technology initiatives. Debate in the full Senate is expected to begin May 14.

The House Education Committee approved a variety of new regulations for teachers and principals. R2558 is a new principal evaluation program; R2567 sets requirements for additional areas of certification; R2569 deals with types and levels of credential classifications.

The Senate Education Committee approved H3600 relating to academic performance ratings and performance indicators, saying the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) must consider all ratings, not just improvement ratings, when grading our schools. The committee also approved H3602, which adds the State Superintendent of Education as a voting member of the EOC; S464, dealing with standards, specifications, and codes applicable to the construction, renovation, and improvement of school buildings; and S524 dealing with certification of school social workers.

All bills that have not been passed from one legislative body to the next by May 1 are essentially “dead” for this legislative session. They can be brought up again during next year’s session. If both legislative bodies cannot agree on all parts of a bill, they will appoint a conference committee comprised of three members each from the House and the Senate to hammer out the differences.

You can monitor proceedings in the House and Senate on the web, track bills, and get contact information for your legislators at www.scstatehouse.net.

South Carolina Stand for Children Day

“South Carolina: a Child’s Playground of Learning” is the theme for this year’s Stand for Children Day. The event will be held at the SC State Museum in Columbia with free admission for all participants; music, art, and other hands-on learning activities will be provided. Children will also have the opportunity to help others by bringing items from a “Wish List” for needy children’s programs. Spearheaded by the Children’s Defense Fund, the local event is an opportunity to demonstrate to lawmakers and other decision makers that you will “Stand for Children”. Contact Sandra Hackley at (803) 252-8390.

And The Winner Is. . .

SICA News Wins Award

The *SICA News* received an Award for Excellence from the SC Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (SC NSPRA) during a luncheon held at the Riverbanks Zoo in Columbia on April 26.

SC NSPRA seeks to improve school public relations throughout the state through a variety of supportive activities and programs. Each spring the chapter recognizes outstanding communications and public relations efforts by schools, school districts and education agencies/associations. Judging is based on national criteria established by NSPRA and award winners included newsletters, websites, videos, annual reports, and comprehensive public relations plans.

Local schools and school districts are encouraged to enter the competition each year. Requests for entries are usually mailed out in February. To learn more about the South Carolina Chapter, contact Debbie Elmore, 803-734-6164. The NSPRS website, www.nspr.org, features articles on school public relations and how to start a public relations program at your school.



(SC NSPRA President, Debbie Elmore, presents award to SICA News Editor, Cassie Barber)

Palmetto's Finest Award Winners

Carolina First Bank and the SC Association of School Administrators co-sponsored the 23rd annual Palmetto's Finest Awards. The application process for this coveted award includes components on student achievement, faculty training, program goals, and delivery systems, office practices, and community involvement.

Summer 2001

The 2001 award winners are: James M. Brown ES, Oconee County Schools, Kathy Whitmire, principal; Johnston-Edgefield-Trenton MS; Edgefield County Schools, Robert Heflin, principal; North Springs ES, Richland District Two, James Ann Lynch, principal; Northwestern HS, York District Three, William Gummerson, principal.

State Teacher of the Year Named

Traci Young Cooper, a teacher from C. A. Johnson High School in Richland District One became South Carolina's 2002 Teacher of the Year during a banquet held at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Columbia. Mrs. Cooper received \$25,000 in cash and the use of a BMW Z-3 Roadster during her yearlong sabbatical from the classroom during which she will promote the teaching profession.

Four district teachers of the year who were finalists for the title received \$10,000; all finalists received laptop computers and the 77 district finalists all received digital cameras. The other finalists in the top five are: Fran Warwick Emmel, Duncan ES, Spartanburg District 5; Vicky Graham Horne, CrossRoads MS, Lexington-Richland District 5; Dr. Pamela J. Simpson, Chukker Creek ES, Aiken County; and Shelly White, Easterling Primary School, Marion District One.

SC Teachers Win Math and Science Awards

Four SC teachers have received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Winners were honored in Washington DC and received National Science Foundation grants of \$7,500 each to be used under their direction over the next five years. Award winners include: Barbara Ann Ward, Scranton ES, Florence District 3; Betty Watkins Woodham, Gettys MS, Pickens County; Dale Morris Smith, Chukker Creek ES, Aiken County; and Sherri Garrett Kennedy, Gettys MS, Pickens County.

SIC ACTION TIMELINE

MAY

- Assist principal to draft the narrative for the School Report Card.
- Compile and analyze information gathered about the strategies implemented this year.
- Organize to assist in the writing of the annual update for the improvement plan.
- Conduct elections for upcoming year (optional, though recommended).
- Review SIC bylaws for revision purposes.

JUNE

- Review, revise, and/or edit the final draft of the School Report Card narrative before submission to SDE.
- Analyze "summer data collection" information.
- Assist in writing annual update for the improvement plan.
- Complete revision of bylaws.

JULY

- Organize, prepare for SIC elections in August/September.
- Monitor summer activities as it relates to implementation of improvement strategies.

How Much Is an SIC Meeting Worth?

The federal government's Economic Report of the President has designated the hourly wage for volunteers at \$15.39. The average School Improvement Council has twelve members who meet for one and a half hours each month. That works out to \$277.02 worth of donated time per meeting. If the Council meets twelve times a year, their contributed time comes to \$3,324.24. Volunteers are valuable!



State and County Reports Released

The 2001 Kids Count Report contains the most comprehensive data on South Carolina's children you can find in one place. The report includes statistical information on such topics as teen pregnancy, early childhood development, drug use, suicide, health care, family stability, education, and more. Many state and local agencies have joined together in a State Prevention Partnership to address the problems described in the report. Despite this and other positive efforts on behalf of children, indicators suggest that 500,000 of South Carolina's children are at risk.

The report was released during a media briefing in Columbia on April 20. Dr. Baron Holmes, SC Kids Count Director at the state Budget and Control Board, reviewed twenty years of trends in adolescent problem behaviors, which indicate there is good news and bad news. Delinquency is much worse; teen pregnancy is much better. Families tend to be less stable, but our schools are improving. Data indicate there is often a large disparity between the well-being of white children and those who are African American or other minorities (AA-O).

Some sample data from the state report:

- 35.5% of families included children under 18 in 1990.
 - This rate is down from 49% in 1960.
- Child poverty at 23% has improved slightly.
- Teen pregnancy is down 31.9 % since 1989.
- 38.8% of all children born in 1998 had single mothers.
 - 22% were white.
 - 67.8% AA-O.
- 21% of single moms do not complete high school.
 - This is an improvement from 1970, when the number was 44.6%.
- The high school dropout rate is 28.3%.
 - AA-O males drop out the most at a rate of 37.5%.
 - AA-O females drop out the least at a rate of 23.2%.

You can access the full state report, individual county reports, and trends data on the Kids Count website at www.ors.state.sc.us, or contact the Alliance for SC's Children at 803-256-4670 for a hard copy.

Summer 2001

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SICA NEWS...

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