The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee

2001 Annual Report

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MISSION
To effect the dramatic, results-based and continuous improvement of South Carolina's education system by creating a truly collaborative environment of parents, educators, community leaders, and policy makers.

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

VALUES
- *A sole focus on what is best for students*
- *A belief in broad-based inclusion and collaboration*
- *A belief in standards, assessments and publicly known results*
- *The implementation of research- and fact-based solutions that improve results*
- *A passion for immediate, dramatic and continuous improvement that is unaffected by partisan politics*

Greetings:

On behalf of all of the members and staff of the Education Oversight Committee, I am transmitting our Annual Report 2001. The report offers highlights on the work of the EOC and underscores our shared beliefs in the potential of South Carolina's children.

We are competing with contiguous states, every other community in America, and countries around the world for investment of jobs and dollars in a knowledge-based economy. We benefit from expansion in many industries, but our optimism is limited because so many of these jobs are not high paying. We must build a social and economic structure as advantageous as South Carolina's wonderful climate and geography.

The disparity between our urban and rural communities is evident in both their economies and their educational systems. There is a real urgency to change, lest we fail in the increasingly competitive marketplace. In his report to the South Carolina Department of Commerce, Ross Boyle wrote, "Current efforts are evolutionary when a revolution is needed."

The EOC is working diligently on the task of implementing the EAA. In this report we outline the core elements of South Carolina's move forward to improve its education system. This is work to which we must all commit. We are resolved to working with all of the other stakeholders to build an education system that is more productive for our citizens and realizes the promise of opportunity embodied in our schools.

Sincerely,

William Barnet, III

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Committee and their appointed positions on the Committee are listed below:

MEMBER	REPRESENTATION	APPOINTMENT OF	APPOINT DATE	TERM
William Barnet, III *Chairman*	Business	Speaker	1998	1998-2002
Rosie Marie Berry *Vice Chairman*	Education	President Pro Tempore, Senate	1998	1998-2001
Robert Daniel	Business	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	2000	2000-2004
Barbara Everson	Education	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	2000	2000-2002
Mike Fair	Designee	President Pro Tempore, Senate	2001	Coterminous
Warren Giese	Chairman, Senate Education Committee		2001	Coterminous
William Gummerson	Education	Governor	1998	1998-2002
Robert Harrell	Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee		1998	Coterminous
Susan Hoag	Designee	Speaker of the House	1998	Coterminous
Alex Martin	Education	Speaker of the House	1998 *reappointed in 2001*	2001-2005
John Matthews	Designee	Chairman, Senate Finance Committee	1998	Coterminous
Douglas McTeer	Designee	Governor	1999	Coterminous
Joel A. Smith, III	Business	President Pro Tempore, Senate	1998	1998-2002
Robert E. Staton	Business	Chairman, Senate Education Committee	1998 *reappointed in 2000*	2000-2004
Inez M. Tenenbaum	State Superintendent of Education	Participant at EOC request	2000	Coterminous
Lynn D. Thompson	Education	Chairman, Senate Education Committee	1998	1998-2002
Ronald Townsend	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee		1998	Coterminous
G. Larry Wilson	Business	Governor	1998	1998-2002

FORMER MEMBERS				
James Bennett	Business	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	1998	resigned 1999
James Bryan	Designee	President Pro Tempore, Senate	1998	Coterminous
Clara Heinsohn	Education	Governor	1998	Coterminous
Nikki Setzler	Chairman, Senate Education Committee		1998	Coterminous
Henry Spann	Education	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	1998	resigned 2000
Stefan Wilson	Business	Chairman, House Education and Public Works Committee	1999	resigned 2000

Volunteers

The EOC uses advisory groups to inform its decisions and to ensure that the policies and practices are in the best interests of South Carolina. We deeply appreciate the work of these individuals and value their contributions.

Local Leadership Quality and Engagement Study Team
Don Herriott, Chairman of the Study Team, Roche Carolina, Florence
David Barr, Florence-Darlington Technical College, Florence
Evelyn Berry, SC School Boards Association, Columbia
Christa Compton, Richland Northeast High School and 2001 South Carolina Teacher of the Year, Lexington
Herman Gaither, Beaufort County Schools, Beaufort
Paul Livingston, Richland County Council, Columbia
Louis Lynn, Enviro AgScience, Inc., Columbia
Ron McWhirt, Charleston County Schools, Charleston
Darryl F. Owings, Dorman High School, Spartanburg
Gerrita Postlewait, Horry County Schools, Conway
William Schenck, Fleet Mortgage Group, Columbia
Anne Suite, past president of the SC School Boards Association, Fort Mill
Reed Swann, SC School Boards Association, Barnwell

Evaluation of Professional Development Advisory Committee
Russell Bedenbaugh, State Department of Education, Columbia
Evelyn Berry, SC School Boards Association, Columbia
Shirley Chapman, Hughes Academy, Greenville
Al Eads, Jr., SC Association for Rural Education, Summerville
Sanita Frazier, Richland School District One, Columbia
Elizabeth Gressette, Palmetto State Teachers Association, Columbia

Nancy Healy-Williams, SC Commission on Higher Education, Columbia
Mary Lostetter, Lugoff
Charles Love, USC Spartanburg, Spartanburg
Doug McTeer, Education Oversight Committee/Office of the Governor, Columbia
Jim Petrie, SC Education Association, Columbia
Janice Poda, State Department of Education, Columbia
Robert Scarborough, SC Association of School Administrators, Columbia
Sandy Smith, House Education Committee, Columbia
Ellen Still, Senate Education Committee, Columbia
Julie Swanson, School of Education, College of Charleston, Charleston

Technical Advisory Committee on School and District Ratings
Pat Burns, Lancaster County Schools, Lancaster
William Brown, Cary, NC
Robert Linn, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO
Garrett Mandeville, Columbia
Wayne Martin, Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington, DC
John Poggio, CETE, Lawrence, KA
John Segars, Darlington Co. Schools, Darlington
Jim Watts, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, GA

Career and Technology Center Ratings Advisory Group
Joe Dowling, Horry County School District, Conway
Jerry Kirkley, Anderson 1 & 2 Career and Technology Center, Williamston
Frank Lanford, Fred P. Hamilton Career Center, Oconee
Nick Milasnovich, State Department of Education, Columbia
Cathi Snyder, State Department of Education, Columbia
Joe Williams, State Department of Education, Columbia

High School Ratings Advisory Group
Allie E. Brooks, Jr., Wilson High School, Florence
Joe Clarke, Spartanburg High School, Spartanburg
W. Fred Crawford, Pickens County Schools, Pickens
W. Rutledge Dingle, Sumter High School, Sumter
Carol C. Gardner, Spartanburg District Seven, Spartanburg
Kathie Greer, Chester Senior High School, Chester
Debra Hamm, Richland District Two, Columbia
Proctor Hawkins, Anderson District Five, Anderson
Jim Jordan, Beaufort High School, Beaufort
Vicki Kirby, Marion District Two, Mullins
Wayne McIntosh, York Comprehensive High School, York
Buddy Phillips, Hampton District One, Hampton
John Robinson, SC Association of School Administrators, Columbia
William Ross, Jr., Fairfield County Office, Winnsboro
William Jay Ward, Ridge Spring-Monetta High School, Monetta

Early Childhood School Ratings Advisory Group
Mac H. Brown, USC, Columbia
Crystal Campbell, Dorchester School District Two, Summerville
Floyd Creech, Florence School District One, Florence
John Kelley, SACS, Walhalla
Linda C. Mims, State Department of Education, Columbia
Diane Monrad, SC Education Policy Center, Columbia
David Potter, Richland County School District One, Columbia
Rose S. Sheheen, Blaney Elementary School, Camden
Roger Wiley, Richland County School District Two, Columbia

Palmetto Gold and Silvery Advisory Group
Douglas Alexander, Richland School District One, Columbia
Jeff Radnor, Anderson School District Four, Pendleton
Janelle Rivers, Lexington School District One, Lexington
John Segars, Darlington County School District, Darlington
John Suber, State Department of Education, Columbia
Pin Pin Tee, Charleston County School District, Charleston
Missy Wall-Mitchell, Georgetown County School District, Georgetown

Long-range Plan Steering Committee
William Barnet, Education Oversight Committee/William Barnet and Son, Spartanburg
Ann Byrd, SC Center for Teacher Recruitment, Rock Hill
Queen Davis, State Board of Education, Winnsboro
Chester Floyd, Berkeley County Schools, Moncks Corner
William Gummerson, Education Oversight Committee/Northwestern High School, Rock Hill
Roger Hayes, Huffman Corporation, Clover
Don Herriott, Roche Carolina, Florence
Charles Love, USC Spartanburg School of Education, Spartanburg
Alex Martin, Education Oversight Committee/Greenville High School, Greenville
John Matthews, Education Oversight Committee/SC Senate, Bowman
J.T. McLawhorn, Columbia Urban League, Columbia
Doug McTeer, Education Oversight Committee/Office of the Governor, Columbia
Leola Robinson, Greenville County School Board, Greenville
Inez Tenenbaum, State Superintendent of Education, Columbia
Lynn Thompson, Education Oversight Committee/Northside Middle School, West Columbia
Frank Vail, Lexington School District Four, Swansea
Kent Williams, Marion County School Board, Marion
Larry Wilson, Education Oversight Committee/MYND, Blythewood
Dennis Wiseman, Coastal Carolina University, Coastal Carolina University, Conway

THE 2010 GOAL

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

And we are on the way. . . A summary of recent actions indicates the following:

Implementation of the Education Accountability Act of 1998
1. Standards
   - Adoption of competitive standards in English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies
   - Distribution of summary versions of the standards for parents
   - Cyclical review of mathematics standards completed
   - Cyclical review of English language arts standards beginning
   - SDE alignment of instructional materials adoption process with standards review
   - In 2000 the Fordham Foundation rated SC standards 3rd in the nation (up from 28th in 1998)

2. Assessments
   - Implementation of Grades 3-8 Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) in English language arts and mathematics
   - Field-testing of PACT in science in 2001
   - Field-testing of exit exam in 2001
   - Field-testing of the SC Readiness Assessment in 2001

3. Professional Development and Technical Assistance
   - Implementation of state-level professional development on the standards
   - Implementation of other professional development initiatives (SC Reading Initiative, Executive Leadership Academy)
   - Adoption of professional development standards for state-funded programs
   - Completion of comprehensive evaluation of professional development
   - Provision of technical assistance to 27 schools in formerly impaired districts
   - Annual evaluations of retraining grants

4. Public Reporting
   - Implementation of the public awareness campaign
   - Partnerships with the SC Broadcasters Association and the SC Outdoor Advertisers Association
   - Distribution of printed materials, videos, and other materials to schools, districts, pediatricians, DSS offices, and parents (approximately 150,000 copies of "Tips to Help Your Children Succeed in School")
   - Initiation of community leader workshops preparing for the report card publication
   - Development of the annual school and district report card,, with related support materials
   - Establishment of criteria for school and district ratings

5. Rewards and Sanctions
   - ❑ Criteria or the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards under development

Parent Involvement in Their Children's Education Act
   - ❑ Legislation signed by the Governor on September 28, 2001
   - ❑ Study of potential incentives for businesses underway
   - ❑ SDE established Office of Parent and Community Partnerships; educator training to begin in 2002

Local Leadership Quality and Engagement Study Team
   - ❑ Fourteen recommendations to align responsibility, authority and accountability have been forwarded to the General Assembly

Long-range Plan Steering Committee
   - ❑ Organized to blend together work of various task forces and commissions, identify gaps, conduct a cost-benefit analysis; a report is expected in late summer

PROGRESS TOWARD THE 2010 GOAL

Introduction

South Carolina has established a challenging but attainable goal. The goal requires intense focus, deliberate decision-making and a willingness to examine all that we have undertaken. The Education Accountability Act provides a strong framework for progress and compels our attention to thoughtful implementation.

As this report details, we have learned a great deal in our first three years. There is progress to celebrate but an even more urgent need to address the issues that limit realization of our potential. The data presented in this report indicate that while we have made incremental improvements, incremental gains are insufficient to be "one of the five fastest improving states in the country."

The analyses of student, performance, examination of rating simulations and evaluations of professional development programs suggest that attention must be paid to systemic issues. The data also suggest that the attention must be paid to students who historically have had limited opportunity: students in rural areas; students whose families are economically disadvantaged; underachieving African-American students; and students scoring at the lowest levels of academic assessments.

This report reflects the work accomplished during the Calendar Year 2000 and identifies the lessons we have learned and the challenges before us.

THE 2010 GOAL AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

The 2010 Goal

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) established, with the concurrence of statewide education and community leaders, the following goal for the school improvement efforts in South Carolina:

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

Historically, South Carolina's school achievement has been ranked at or near the bottom in comparisons with other states. But the current ranking does not deter South Carolinians from their aspirations for the system. In a series of focus groups across South Carolina, the EOC learned that South Carolinians believe their schools should be held to national standards and, despite disparate achievement patterns, that all of South Carolina's students should be held to the same standards (Brown, 1999).

How then do we determine if South Carolina's relative position in rankings of the states is improving and what are the indicators of growth? The EOC initially determined that academic (school results) measures used by the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) would be the criteria for determining goal accomplishment. (A more comprehensive set of ten measures is under development). Although the NEGP measures thirty-three factors, many of these address results outside the direction of schools. The academic measures to be used include 1) performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests; 2) high school completion rates; and 3) advanced placement passage rates. Verified and reported externally, these measures provide a stable set of criteria from which to develop comparisons.

(1) Performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress: The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a federal project established in 1969. NAEP reports performance of American elementary and secondary students in several subject areas. Representative samples of students are tested every two years in the nation's public and private schools at grades four, eight and twelve. NAEP content area tests vary according to the year and include reading, mathematics, science, writing, history, geography and the arts. The South Carolina curriculum content standards, which form the foundation for the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT), incorporate the content assessed by the NAEP tests.

The sampling process ensures reliable state-level data. Approximately 2500 students are tested per grade in each state. More than 120,000 students participate nationally.

NAEP scores are reported in two ways: scale scores and achievement levels (performance categories). The NAEP achievement levels are defined below:

<u>Basic</u>   This level denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade

Proficient	This level represents solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter
Advanced	This level signifies superior performance

NAEP results for South Carolina for 1996 and 1998 are shown in Table 1 below. Results from 2000 testing are not available at this writing.[1]

The National Assessment of Educational Progress tests different content areas in alternate years. Current scores are reported in the table below.

Table 1
National Assessment of Educational Progress
Comparison of SC and Other Jurisdictions Performance

	Average Scale Scores for South Carolina, the Southeast, and the Nation			Comparison of SC with Other Jurisdictions		
	South Carolina	The Southeast	The Nation	Higher than SC*	Same as & Including SC	Below SC*
1996 Grade 8 Science (0-300)	139	141	148	31	7	5
1996 Grade 4 Math (0-500)	213	216	222	32	9	4
1996 Grade 8 Math (0-500)	261	264	271	27	11	4
1998 Grade 4 Reading (0-500)	210	210	215	25	12	4
1998 Grade 8 Reading (0-500)	255	258	261	23	11	4

(Administered to a sample of students, cyclically, in participating jurisdictions including states, U.S. territories, and Department of Defense schools.)
*Number of jurisdictions with significantly higher/lower percentages of students scoring at or above Proficient.

A review of the performance suggests two findings: South Carolina is ranked low among states, but not at the very bottom and the distance between South Carolina's average scale scores and the national average is not insurmountable. Further analysis of the NAEP performance indicates little growth (since 1992) in the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient designation. Only 22 percent of SC fourth graders scored proficient or above on reading. In mathematics, SC also showed no gains from 1992. Only 12 and 14 percent of fourth and eighth graders respectively scored proficient or above. The national range extended from 3 to 31 percent for grade four and 5 to 34 percent for grade eight.

(2) High School Completion Rate: The NEGP reports South Carolina's high school completion rate as the percentage of the non-high-school enrolled population ages 18-24 that hold high school credentials. According to the 1997 data, reported in the 1999 Goals Panel Report,

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[1] Further information about NAEP can be obtained from the following web site:
http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/site/home.asp/.

South Carolina has an 89 percent completion rate. The SC State Department of Education reports the completion rate as a measure of students who were in a class in grade 8 and completed grade 12. That rate is 71.7 percent (or a loss of 28.3 percent of the class). The range across the state is quite wide, from 99.1 percent in York District Four to 44.3 percent in Clarendon District Three.   The difference between the SC measure and the NEGP measure points to the impact of alternative and adult education routes to the high school credential and suggests that these programs are significant contributors to South Carolina's move forward.   The NEGP reports that the rate has increased from 83 percent in 1990. Interestingly, the range of high school completion rate nationally is between 75 and 95 percent. This range is much narrower than the range within South Carolina.

The completion rate and the inter-district variations suggest an unanswered challenge for South Carolina. Over the past several years passage of the high school exit examination document improved performance, but the large numbers of students who do not graduate when eighth to twelfth grade progress is measured belie that success.

(3) Advanced Placement Passage Rate: The College Board administers the Advanced Placement (AP) Program. The program was introduced in the 1960s to permit qualified high school students to earn college credit while in high schools.   The curriculum, teacher training and assessments are aligned to ensure that the rigor and quality of the program is uniform across the nation.   Beginning with the 1984 Education Improvement Act, South Carolina's General Assembly has appropriated funds to pay exam fees for South Carolina students, to support the teacher institutes and to provide supplementary materials for the program.   Approximately 90 percent of the nation's colleges and universities accept AP credits in some manner.[2]

Exams are scored on a one to five grading scale. Generally, higher education institutions accept scores of three or higher, although the more selective institutions require a four or a five score. The grading scale is shown below:

5=   Extremely well qualified
4=   Well qualified
3=   Qualified
2=   Possible qualified
1=   No recommendations

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[2] For additional information on the Advanced Placement Program, contact the web site: http://www.collegeboard.org/.

Table 2
Number of AP Tests Taken & Average Score
(National & State) 1986-2000

Year	National		(Mean Grade)	Qualifying Percentage	State		(Mean Grade)	Qualifying Percentage
	Students	Exams			Students	Exams		
84	No Data Available			69%	2,400	3,406	No Data Available	55%
85				66%	4,670	6,262		39%
86	175,689	238,507	(3.05)	67%	5,181	7,152	(2.51)	48%
87	200,228	278,037	(3.04)	69%	5,889	7,980	(2.60)	51%
88	No Data Available				6,254	8,767	No Data Available	53%
89					6,125	8,521		56%
90	257,625	378,106	(3.03)	66%	6,526	9,331	(2.72)	55%
91	281,628	415,336	(2.97)	64%	6,598	9,657	(2.86)	54%
92	307,073	453,524	(3.01)	64%	7,000	10,205	(2.98)	55%
93	No Data Available			63%	7,523	11,105	(2.70)	53%
94	368,780	558,330	(3.02)	65%	8,140	12,125	(2.77)	55%
95	407,030	628,393	(2.93)	61%	8,514	13,124	(2.74)	50%
96	432,751	673,775	(2.95)	62%	9,036	13,895	(2.71)	51%
97	467,133	734,590	(2.98)	63%	8,962	14,169	(2.67)	53%
98	509,895	811,239	(3.13)	63%	9,269	14,921	(2.73)	54%
99	568,021	923,039	(3.10)	62%	9,402	14,975	(2.86)	55%
00	617,547	1,020,016	(2.97)	62%	9,103	14,560	(2.77)	55%

Successful student performance on advanced placement tests rose dramatically between 1991 and 1999. According to the NEGP, in 1991 only 69 students per 1000 scored three or above on Advanced Placement tests; by 1999 that rate had grown to 100 per 1000 eleventh and twelfth graders. The SC State Department of Education reports the data somewhat differently from the National Education Goals Panel. According to the SC State Department of Education, in 2000 14,560 exams were administered, with 55 percent of exams scored 3 or higher.

Other National Measures
Although not specified as evaluation measures for the 2010 Goal, South Carolina schools are evaluated informally through the publication of other performance results; most notably, the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), the American College Test (ACT), the Terra Nova and other NEGP measures. South Carolina performance on these measures is described below.

(1) The SAT is one of the most widely recognized and publicized student assessments. Historically used for admissions information in private, selective colleges the SAT is

used now by a majority of private and public colleges and universities. The test measures students' verbal and mathematical abilities and provides information on the students' preparation for college. The SAT is not administered to all students and the College Board (1988) advises that "using these scores in aggregate form as a single measure to rank or rate teachers, educational institutions, districts, or states is invalid because it does not include all students. . . in being incomplete, this use is inherently unfair." Trend data are published and disaggregated in a variety of ways.[3] The SAT is scored on a cumulative 1600 point scale (800 is the highest possible score for each component).

South Carolina student performance on the SAT has improved in recent years. The 2000 report indicates a 12-point gain, which tied for the largest increase in the nation.

Table 3
South Carolina and National Average SAT Scores
1996-2000

Year	South Carolina			Nation		
	Verbal	Math	Composite Score	Verbal	Math	Composite Score
1996	480	474	954	505	508	1013
1997	479	474	953	505	511	1016
1998	478	473	951	505	512	1017
1999	479	475	954	505	511	1016
2000	484	482	966	505	514	1019
1996-2000	+4	+8	+12	0	+6	+6

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2000.

South Carolina's LIFE Scholarship program is tied to SAT performance. For first-time entering college freshmen in 2000, the LIFE Scholarship requirement is a score of at least 1,050 on the SAT and a "B" average. Data presented in Table 4 indicate the percentage of public school students meeting the SAT requirement for LIFE Scholarships.

Table 4
Public School Students Meeting SAT Requirement for Tuition Assistance
(at a four-year college or university)

	All Students	Females	Males	African-Americans	Whites
Percent	33.6	30.0	38.5	10.7	43.9
Number	6,518	3,323	3,195	546	5,015
Tested	19,382	11,089	8,293	5,110	11.431

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2000.

(2) The American College Test (ACT): The ACT is an achievement test used by many colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The ACT includes four tests: English, Mathematics, Reading and Science Reasoning. Much like the cautions about interpretation of SAT performance, the reader is reminded that the ACT is a voluntary test administered to students paying a fee and is an inappropriate measure for the

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[3] Further information on the Scholastic Assessment Test can be obtained from the web site: http://www.collegeboard.org/.

evaluation of teachers, programs, school and districts. The scale score for each subtest, as well as the composite, ranges from 1 to 36.

A comparison of SC student performance and student performance nationally is detailed in the table below.

Table 5
ACT Average Scores for Subject Area and Composite
South Carolina and the Nation
1995-96 to 1999-2000

South Carolina

Year	# of students	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
1995-96	6,648	18.5	18.8	19.4	19.2	19.1
1996-97	4,994	18.1	18.9	19.1	19.0	18.9
1997-98	5,385	18.4	18.8	19.4	19.0	19.0
1998-99	6,766	18.6	19.0	19.3	19.2	19.1
1999-00	9,051	18.7	19.2	19.5	19.2	19.3

Nation

Year	# of students	English	Math	Reading	Science	Composite
1995-96	924,663	20.3	20.2	21.3	21.1	20.9
1996-97	959,301	20.3	20.6	21.3	21.1	21.0
1997-98	995,039	20.4	20.6	21.3	21.1	21.0
1998-99	1,019,053	20.5	20.7	21.4	21.0	21.0
1999-00	1,065,138	20.5	20.7	21.4	21.0	21.0

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2000.

South Carolina increased both its mean composite score and the number of students taking the ACT between 1999 and 2000. The state's scores continue to indicate inadequate preparation for college-level work. ACT advises that the cut-off scores indicating preparation for college level work are 22 for English; 24 for biology and 25 for chemistry; 23 for mathematics; and 22 for reading. ACT indicates that scores of 16-19 indicate "only minimal readiness" for college. South Carolina's students perform less well on the ACT than do students in all other states, except Mississippi.[4]

(3)   The Terra Nova: As a verification of South Carolina student performance relative to national performance, the General Assembly required that a sample of students be assessed using a nationally normed test. The sampling plan identifies students in three grades each year. The Terra Nova, a CTBS-McGraw Hill Test, is used for the national performance relationship. The test was administered in grades 3, 6, and 9 in 1999 and in grades 5, 8 and 11 in 2000 to a representative sample of approximately 7500 students per grade level.

The Terra Nova is not aligned completely with the South Carolina curriculum content standards. Terra Nova is designed to measure concepts, processes, and skills taught throughout the nation. Test items are classified according to content categories that reflect educational objectives commonly found in state and district curriculum guides;

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[4] More information on the ACT can be obtained from the web site: http://www.act.org/.

in major textbooks, basal series, and instructional programs; and in national standards publications.

As a norm-referenced test, Terra Nova is used to gauge the performance of South Carolina students with respect to national performance levels. A student's score is interpreted in the framework of comparison to the scores of other students. For example, if a student scored at the 50th percentile, one would interpret that student's score as the same as or higher than 50 percent of the norm-group that took the same test. The items on Terra Nova are not tailored to fully assess South Carolina standards. The study concluded that neither the match nor the coverage of the tests would provide sufficient evidence, across the board, to support decisions at the student, school, district, or state level relative to the South Carolina Content Standards.

The study was conducted in the summer 2000 and included the participation of 31 educators examining the content of eleven different test forms (grades 3-11) in comparison with the South Carolina standards. The study looked at the *match* of the test items to the standards, the *coverage* of the standards by the tests, and the *cognitive complexity* of the items. Match was defined as the extent to which the test items match the standards and reported as the percentage of items on each test that matched at least one strand in the South Carolina standards. The Mathematics tests exhibit a high degree of match through grade 6, and then drop dramatically, ranging from 72% to 81%. The Reading and Language Arts tests generally exhibited a higher degree of match with the exception of grade 7. Coverage is defined as the extent to which the content strands, content standards, and the content bullets are represented by test items. In Mathematics, with the exception of the Computer and Technology strand at grades 5 and 8 and Number and Numeration Systems at grade 11, all strands were represented by at least one item. The percentage of standards and bullets represented by at least one item was somewhat lower with between 40% and 70% of standards and 15% and 67% of bullets. In Reading and Language Arts, neither Listening nor Speaking was tested at any grade level. (Speaking is not tested by PACT either.) Research Skills were tested sporadically, and most Writing matches were editing skills. Few South Carolina standards were represented by sufficient items to warrant "mastery" information. Cognitive Complexity is defined as the extent to which a range of cognitive abilities is tapped by the test items. It was calculated as the percentage of items at each cognitive level corresponding to Bloom's taxonomy (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). The tests do tap a range of cognitive levels. The Mathematics tests appear to be less cognitively demanding, in terms of the cognitive complexity of the items, than the Reading and Language Arts tests.

South Carolina performance on the Terra Nova in 1999 is shown below. The State Department of Education has not released the results of the 2000 testing at this writing.

Table 6
South Carolina Student Performance on the Terra Nova
Percentage of Students Scoring Above 50th National Percentile Rank
Spring 1999 (SDE: October 1999 Report)

Grade	Mathematics	Reading	Language	Total Battery
3	49.8	44.7	48.5	49.1
6	42.1	43.1	41.4	41.6
9	43.7	45.0	44.3	42.2

(Administered to a sample of students at three grades annually.)

Lessons Learned
- South Carolina's performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Advanced Placement examinations suggests that while the state scores in the bottom fifth, the state does not score at the very bottom in state-by-state comparisons.
- South Carolina's SAT performance in 2000 reflected the largest gain of any state in the country (another state tied SC gains).

Challenges Ahead
- South Carolina must continue to improve the performance of students on college admission tests to reach its goal; both SAT and ACT performance rank the state at or near the bottom of state-by-state comparisons.

State Measures
The statewide testing program, as reconstructed under the Education Accountability Act, incorporates measures of first and second grade readiness, criterion-referenced assessments in four content areas (mathematics, English language arts, science and social studies) for grades three through eight, a standards-based high school exit examination and high school end-of-course assessments. Through the 2000-2001 academic year, only the grades three through eight assessments in English language arts and mathematics are in full implementation. The first and second grade readiness assessments and grades three through eight science assessments are being field-tested.

(1) The Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery: Soon to be replaced by the SC Readiness Assessment, the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB) has been used to determine readiness for first grade since 1979. The test results are to be used to provide appropriate developmental activities for first grade students. The percent of students meeting the readiness standard for the last five years follows:

Year	Percent Ready
1996	75.8
1997	79.
1998	81.2
1999	83.9
2000	85.3

(2)   Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests: In 2000 the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) were administered to students in grades three through eight in two content areas. Statewide performance indicates gains as displayed below.

Table 7
Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests, Grades 3-8
English Language Arts and Mathematics
1999-2000

English Language Arts

Grade	Below Basic		Basic		Proficient		Advanced	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
3	35	26	37	34	26	36	2	4
4	35	28	37	35	26	33	3	4
5	35	29	39	44	24	25	3	2
6	37	35	39	33	21	25	3	7
7	37	32	41	41	21	23	3	4
8	38	35	41	41	19	20	3	4

Mathematics

Grade	Below Basic		Basic		Proficient		Advanced	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
3	44	31	38	44	13	16	5	9
4	45	38	37	38	13	16	5	8
5	47	41	37	39	12	12	4	8
6	47	41	37	36	12	15	5	7
7	48	41	36	37	11	13	5	9
8	49	38	36	42	10	13	5	7

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2000.

PACT results between the first two years of test administration yield positive, but not surprising, increases. Historically student results on tests improve at a faster rate in the earlier years of administration. SC's challenge is to sustain that rate of increase over time.

The EOC determined that the school ratings methodology should be sensitive to gains schools accomplish within the Below Basic category. Splitting Below Basic at the two standard errors level enables an analysis to determine students who are in serious academic jeopardy. EOC analyses indicate that approximately 19.8 percent of students are scoring in Below Basic 1 (greater than two standard errors below the cut score) on English Language Arts tests and 21.9 percent of students are scoring in Below Basic 1 on Mathematics tests. These students have severe learning needs and should be provided extensive supplementary opportunities.

(3)   High School Exit Examination: Currently South Carolina high school students must complete successfully the exit examination developed under the Basic Skills Assessment Program. Initially administered in the tenth grade, students have multiple opportunities to pass subtests in reading, writing and mathematics before graduation.

Passage rates have fluctuated considerably over the fifteen-year administration of the examination. Highest in 1990 and 1991, performance dipped in the mid-1990s and began to rise again in 2000. Data for the last five years are displayed in Table 8 below.

Table 8
High School Exit Examination: Performance of Tenth Graders
Percentage of Students Meeting Standards by Subject Area and All Tests

Year	Reading	Mathematics	Writing	All Tests
1996	83.2	77.3	82.1	64.7
1997	82.6	75.4	84.1	65.9
1998	81.5	75.1	83.8	64.9
1999	81.9	76.1	82.8	63.6
2000	82.7	77.3	86.6	66.5

Source: SC State Department of Education, 2000.

The exit examination data offer chilling prospects for student performance on the standards-based exit examination. Passage rates on the current basic skills examination contribute to the discouragement of students from completing high school (as evidenced by the grade eight to twelve survival data and the cumulative dropout rate). Unless the high school curriculum is transformed quickly, students are in jeopardy when the next exit examination is administered. Yet, the professional development evaluation and data from participation in state-funded activities suggest a much lower participation rate among high school teachers. Without strong understanding of the content standards and standards-based assessments, teachers cannot be effective. Performance of SC's middle grades students on PACT 1999 and 2000 indicates that a significant percentage of students are entering high school with academic deficiencies.

Lessons Learned
- Gains in the percentage of students scoring "ready" on the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB) suggest the positive impact of investments in early childhood education.
- Students achieved at higher levels in the second PACT administration but large numbers of students continued to score Below Basic and are at risk of retention.
- Performance of tenth graders on the Exit Exam has not changed significantly over the last five years, indicating that many students are unprepared for the high school curriculum.

Challenges Ahead
- The CSAB is not aligned with the PACT; therefore, changes to the SC Readiness Assessment may require examination of the early childhood programs.
- Students scoring at the very lowest levels on PACT assessments require substantive, long-term intervention strategies to preclude retention in grade.
- The revised exit examination, scheduled for 2004, is more rigorous and should identify significant numbers of students requiring remediation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTENT STANDARDS

South Carolina's improvement effort is designed to ensure that South Carolina students achieve at competitive levels nationally and internationally. Throughout the 1990s South Carolina educators developed curriculum content standards which incorporate the recommendations of international and national organizations in the academic disciplines. A standards-based assessment system has been initiated to accompany the standards.

<u>Utilization of the Standards in Instruction</u>
SC educators, students and their parents have received published curriculum content standards in four disciplines for their use. The disciplines are mathematics, reading/English language arts, science, and in Fall 2000, social studies. These standards reflect what students should know and be able to do in grades kindergarten through twelve. Each set of standards has been reviewed by panels of national and state leaders in the content area to determine that SC students are taught a curriculum that enables them to compete successfully with students from around the world. In 2000 the Fordham Foundation reviewed content standards from the fifty states and rated SC's standards third in the nation, a rise from twenty-eighth in 1998.

To support implementation of the standards, the General Assembly appropriated additional monies for professional development: $7 million for professional development on the standards, $3 million for the Governor's Institute on Reading and either maintenance or increased funding for a number of other professional development programs (e.g., Geographic Alliance, Science and Math Hubs, Roper Mountain Science Center).

Coastal Carolina University conducted case studies of the implementation of the standards in a representative sample of middle schools in the state. Generally, each school seemed to be involved in the standards-based approach to instruction and standards based instruction was supported by principals and teachers. Principals reported encouraging teachers to use the standards and teachers felt the curriculum consistency across schools was a benefit. According to principals and teachers, students who did well in the standards curriculum were motivated, had strong skills and supportive parents. Principals perceived that students had more difficulties with mathematics than with language arts.

But some differences emerged among the schools when the schools were sorted by student socio-economic status (SES). When asked for negative effects of the standards-based approach, teachers and principals in lower SES schools tended to focus on lack of student academic ability. Many of their students were operating below grade level. Principals in higher SES schools were more concerned about teacher professional development. They felt that their students were capable. Principals and teachers in lower SES schools were concerned about students below grade level who did not have prerequisite skills and about the lack of parental support. The researchers concluded that schools that have a higher proportion of students below grade level exhibit less ownership of the standards-based approach and the PACT assessment process, attributing underperformance to student abilities and the level of parental support (Coastal Carolina University, 2000).

Anecdotal evidence indicates that availability of instructional materials to support the standards is uneven across schools and districts. Schools that have been underfunded over

time may not have sufficient instructional materials to support instruction. For many teachers and schools the introduction of the science standards magnifies the resource discrepancy. Comprehensive science instruction has not been a consistent part of the elementary curriculum. The certification requirements for elementary education require only a minimal amount of coursework in the sciences. Elementary teachers are facing a multi-faceted dilemma: insufficient preparation to teach the sciences, rigorous academic content standards, and shortages of instructional materials to support science instruction.

<u>Support for Student Mastery of the Standards</u>
An important provision of the SC Education Accountability Act of 1998 requires academic plans to be developed "for each student in grades three through eight who lacks the skills to perform at his current grade level based on assessments results, school work, or teacher judgment" (§59-18-500). School districts are given flexibility to select instructional strategies and materials that best match the academic needs of their students. The strategies selected by districts to meet the academic plans initiative during the 1999-2000 school year were the focus of a study conducted by the SC Educational Policy Center in collaboration with the Education Oversight Committee and the State Department of Education.

This study was designed to identify the instructional strategies used by state schools to improve student achievement, to solicit the principal's views on the effectiveness of various strategies, to collect descriptive data on summer school and extended day programs and to better understand the issues and challenges faced by schools in implementing student academic plans. A sample of 175 schools was drawn from 18 districts serving all geographic areas of SC. Principals were mailed surveys in May 2000 and 77 percent of the surveys were returned.

The responses of principals indicated the following major findings:

- The most frequently used academic plan strategies were parent conferencing (95%), computer-assisted learning (85%), additional instructional materials (82%), and summer school (81%);
- Small class size was judged to be the most effective strategy followed by small group instruction, added periods (of math or language arts), intensive in-class help by a teacher, and teacher aides;
- Students further below grade level were judged less likely to benefit from participation in any of the academic plan strategies. Strategies were judged to be most effective for students less than one year below grade level;
- Fifty-eight percent of the principals reported that 61% to 100% of the parents attended the plan conferences;
- Summer schools were operated for an average of 4 !/2 hours per day for 20 days;
- Fifty-three percent of the principals said that their schools offered after-school programs and served an average of 53 student each day. The programs operated an average of 51 days for 95 minutes per day and were staffed by certified teachers (48%), teacher aides (13%), and a variety of other staff and volunteers;
- Before-school programs were operated in only 9 of 133 schools in the sample;

- Principals noted that their greatest challenges involved difficulty in getting parent participation, lack of time for conferencing and other plan requirements, and lack of funding for materials/programs and transportation;
- In regard to additional support needed, principals most often stated that they needed additional staff positions to help with the plan requirements and additional funding.

Support for Parental Understanding of the Standards
Materials summarizing the mathematics and English language arts standards for parents were distributed to every district superintendent and school principal. Similar summaries are under development for science and social studies.

The EOC's Public Awareness campaign has issued a series of announcements and materials to encourage parents to be involved with their children's education. Two television announcements, two radio announcements, billboards, a toll-free number and printed materials have been distributed. A pamphlet, "Tips to Help Your Children Succeed in School" has been distributed to parents directly and through schools, the Department of Social Services and pediatricians.

Through passage of the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act in 2000, the General Assembly established a framework for actions to increase and sustain parental involvement. The Act calls upon state, district and school leaders to heighten awareness of the importance of parents' involvement in the education of their children throughout their schooling; encourage the establishment and maintenance of parent-friendly school settings; and emphasize that when parents and schools work as partners, a child's academic success can best be assured.

Among the requirements of Act 402 are that the Governor require state agencies that serve families and children to collaborate and establish networks with schools to heighten awareness of the importance of parental influence on the academic success of their children and to encourage and assist parents to become more involved in their children's educational. Goals, objectives and an evaluation component for parental involvement are to be included in district and school long-range improvement plans. The State Superintendent is charged with promotion and training to ensure that best practices, partnerships, and parent-friendly school settings are implemented. Parental involvement expectations are to be a component of the superintendent and principals evaluations. The EOC is charged with surveying parents to determine if efforts are successful and to publish jointly with the State Superintendent informational materials for parents and teachers.

Lessons Learned
- Variations in teacher and administrator expectations of students impact the rigor of instruction.
- Teachers want professional development activities that focus on assessments and how to work with students at risk of failure.
- School personnel do not have confidence that summer school is an effective intervention for students two or more years behind their peers.

Implementation of Standards-Based Assessments

The State Department of Education has initiated the development of assessments to measure student learning of the content standards. According to the schedule published by the State Department of Education in April 2000, the implementation of the new assessments should be accomplished in the years noted below:

Table 9
SDE Timeline for Implementation of New Assessments
April 2000

Test	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Readiness 1, 2				3					
PACT 1, 2				Optional					
PACT 3-8 Math, ELA	3								
PACT 3-8 Science				3					
PACT 3-8 Social Studies					3				
PACT Exit Exam Math, ELA					3				
PACT Exit Exam Science						3			
PACT Exit Exam Social Studies							3		
End-of-Course Math					3				
End-of-Course, ELA						3			
End-of-Course Science								3	
End-of-Course, Social Studies									3
Alternate Assess.			3						

Source: State Department of Education, 2000.

The schedule for implementation of new assessments is at a critical juncture. Although the content standards are written to drive instruction at each grade level, the assessment program provides tremendous motivation for teachers to incorporate the new standards in their instruction. Policy Studies Associates in their evaluation of professional development reported data that less than 48 percent of high school teachers are participating in

professional development on the standards. South Carolina must make some very practical decisions regarding implementation:

❑ Will the high school standards be implemented or delayed because of the protracted schedule for implementation of the end-of-course assessments?

❑ Could passage of the end-of-course assessments be accepted in lieu of the high school exit examination?

❑ Does the schedule for implementation of the new high school exit exam create confusion over graduation requirements?

Teachers express continuing concerns for professional development on assessment. Asked to identify the three most important topics for their own professional development, teachers listed in-depth study of the subject they teach (41 percent); aligning curricula, instructional and assessment with state standards (40 percent); and instructional strategies for students with learning difficulties or who are at risk of student failure (37 percent). Although 78 percent of teachers reported participating in professional development on assessment, the activities ranged from less than two hours to more than three days. Forty percent of teachers participated in the activities lasting less than one day (Policy Studies Associates, 2000).

Lessons Learned
- Teachers want an assessment system that provides information to guide instruction, including classroom assessments.
- Receiving PACT results in late summer or fall inhibits the utilization of statewide assessment in academic planning and promotion/retention decisions.
- Delayed implementation of assessments removes the urgency to change instruction.

Challenges Ahead
- Teacher competence in building classroom assessments, test items for benchmark tests and increased forms of PACT are needed to build a comprehensive assessment system.
- The administration of the PACT must be addressed so that its utility in instruction and decision-making is not compromised.

Implementation of Professional Development and Technical Assistance

The Education Accountability Act called for a comprehensive review of professional development to include a review of what is offered, how it is offered, the support given to implement skills acquired from professional development and how the professional development enhances the academic goals outlined in district and school strategic plans. That study was completed under contract to Policy Studies Associates of Washington, DC. Final data and recommendations were presented to the EOC in November 2000. (The full report is available from the EOC.)

But funding does not ensure that the professional development activities are as effective as policy-makers intend.   Key findings from a comprehensive evaluation of professional development indicate the following (Policy Studies Associates, 2000):

(1)   Although many SC educators think that the professional development available to them is worthwhile, it appears that professional development misses the mark for many others. For these teachers and principals, professional development may not meet their needs, reflect their input in planning, or contribute much to improve practice or greater student learning. For more than 80 percent of the educators who responded to our surveys, professional development does not include adequate follow-up;

(2)   Despite the fact that professional development does not get very high marks from teachers and principals, many SC schools and districts appear to be reasonably positive environments for professional development. In these places, teachers and principals agree that professional development is encouraged as part of their work and that there are resources and facilities in place to support their participation;

(3)   The problem in these places is time, or, to be precise, the lack of time. There is not enough time to take advantage of what is learned in various workshops and training, there is not enough time to engage in informal, job-embedded learning with colleagues, and there is not enough time to serve as a consistently effective ADEPT mentor or to complete all the work required by the ADEPT evaluation process;

(4)   Professional development at both the state and local levels is primarily supply-driven. State and local priorities and program goals and objectives define the content of professional development. In addition, resource limits combined with a general goal of reaching as many teachers and principals as possible, can result in professional development that is marked more by its breadth than its depth. Hence, teachers and principals report participation in professional development on a large number of topics, little or no follow-up, and limited input in planning. This is not to suggest that federal, state and local priorities and goals should not be reflected in professional development. It is, however, to suggest that when professional development does not explicitly link attention to these goals and priorities to participants' needs and concerns, the professional development is likely to have limited payoff, except perhaps as a dissemination or communication activity;

(5)   At the local level-perhaps as a reflection of the supply-driven system-professional development looks fragmented and appear to lack coordination. Professional development appears as a menu of events-including workshops, training, certification courses, and graduate courses. In some districts, strategic plans emphasize professional development as an ingredient in school improvement, but examples of comprehensive planning for professional development could not be found. Many principals report that planning professional development for their schools is one of their responsibilities, but they express frustration at the extent to which competing activities and priorities pull teaches away and make school-level activities difficult to plan. District staff and professional development providers express confidence that the professional development they provide is of high quality, but the is little evidence of formal evaluations of quality or impact.

The recommendations include the following:

Recommendations on Improving Quality of Professional Development
- The State Department should disseminate and build consensus around the SC Professional Development Standards.

- The State Department of Education should establish a professional development accountability system.
- The State Department of Education and school districts should review the need for professional development on assessment, using assessment data to plan school reform and reviewing student work to assess mastery of standards.

Recommendations on Enhancing Local Professional Development Capacity
- The State Department of Education and partners should provide professional development on professional development for principals, other school leaders, and districts staff.
- District leaders should establish district professional development working groups charged with strengthening local professional development systems.
- The Office of Teacher Certification and Renewal (the state and districts should continue to strengthen local organization and operation of ADEPT and take full advantage of ADEPT as a resource for professional development and improvement.
- Districts should support increased teacher participation in the NBPTS certification process.

Recommendations for Finding Time and Resources for Professional Development
- School and district leaders should alter school and district schedules to include more time for professional development.
- Limiting spending to high-quality professional development that supports core state and local priorities will maximize existing state and local professional development resources.

The EOC bears responsibility for evaluation of retraining grants provided to schools in greatest need. These grants for professional development (approximately $650 per teacher) support the development of new skills and implementation of new strategies.

In evaluations of the grants this year, several general observations were made:

Proviso 1.67 of the 2000-2001 General Appropriations Act provided alterations in the funding procedures for the Retraining Grants. "First year retraining grants awarded pursuant to Section 59-18-1560 of the 1976 Code in the prior year may be carried forward to the current fiscal year and expended for the same purposes. Second and third year retraining grant funds may be released to districts on a limited basis through September for summer programs in advance of submission of end-of-year reports for prior fiscal year retraining grants." Funding for 2000-2001 should have been released prior to the beginning of school so that professional development activities occurred before the start of school rather than later in the school year. Better planning of professional development activities was evident; fewer one-day workshops were scheduled, the activities scheduled completed fell within the guidelines for the retraining grants, and greater participation of teachers and administrators was apparent.

Most schools did not provide sufficient time for feedback and practice. A multi-year emphasis on these programs will accomplish that.

Despite the improvements cited above, several areas of concern remain. Many of the schools were unable to provide the data needed by the Education Oversight Committee in a timely manner because of the turnover in the principal leadership. More than half of the 27 schools participating in the Retraining Grant Program changed principals over the summer. The new principal was unaware of the previous professional development opportunities or unable to provide the data needed. Frequent turnover in the leadership at a school also has an impact on the educational program and focus of a school. In tandem with leadership turnover is teacher turnover. Many of the schools studied experience high teacher turnover rates, often as high as 32%. Moreover, more than one third of the teachers at each school studied had been at the school 5 years or less, with the highest percentage of 5 or less years being over 67%. Instability of administration and staff impacts the long-rage plans of the school and reduces student achievement. Teacher turnover will also lessen the effectiveness of the Retraining Grant Program because teachers will not be able to apply the knowledge they gain through the professional development activities over time.

Lessons Learned
- Currently offered professional development programs do not provide teachers with the depth of knowledge or time to implement new strategies.
- Professional development programs are offered on too many topics and do not address the areas of greatest teacher concern.

Challenges Ahead
- State, district and local professional development activities must be revised to provide time for teachers to practice and implement new activities.
- State, district and local educators must find ways to maximize the impact of funding and other resources.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PUBLIC REPORTING

Simulations of the school ratings methodologies confirm the limited results from blending minimal community capacity, inadequate educational resources, and limited access to strong teaching. The absolute performance rating, that is, the comparison of a school's performance against the target [Note: the comparison is made to the 2001 expectation, 80 % of the 2010 target]. Table 10, shown below, provides a demographic profile of schools by absolute rating category, demonstrating the differences in academic culture and achievement reflected disproportionately in rural and high poverty schools. Analyses of the improvement rating sharply contrast this. There is not a statistically significant relationship between poverty and the improvement rating.

Table 10
Demographic Profile of Schools
Absolute Achievement Rating

Variable	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Avg.	Unsatisfactory
Number of Schools	86	203	293	196	66
Total # Students in all schools in rating (Gr. K-12)	55186	125162	157478	98649	29805
Avg. Pct. Sp. Ed. / School	8.6	9.7	11.2	10.7	11.6
Avg. % Advanced	16.0	8.4	4.1	1.8	0.7
Avg. % Proficient	38.2	28.3	19.5	11.9	6.6
Avg. % Basic	34.4	41.0	42.2	38.1	30.1
Avg. % Below Basic	11.4	22.3	34.2	48.3	62.6
Avg. % Below Basic 2	6.2	11.0	15.1	18.5	18.8
Avg. % Below Basic 1	5.2	11.3	19.1	29.8	43.8
Avg. % Free/reduced Lunch	22.9	39.7	57.1	74.0	84.7
% in Category Mid-Size City	28.8	26.0	18.3	20.4	35.9
% in Category Suburban	58.8	40.1	26.0	7.0	3.1
% in Category Small Town	2.5	14.1	20.7	33.3	23.4
% in Category Rural	10.0	19.8	35.1	39.3	37.5

Schools demonstrated significant improvements from 1999 to 2000. Had school indices been calculated using 1999 PACT data, the means would have been 2.6 (on a 5.0 scale); the 2000 index would have been 2.8. Simulations of ratings suggest that 49 percent of grades 3-8 schools would have improved at least one absolute rating category.

Rural South Carolina holds one of the keys to South Carolina's improvement. Regardless of the data source, KidsCount, State Department of Education, Bureau of Research and Statistics, children growing up in rural South Carolina are more likely to enter school without the prerequisite base of school success. The health profile of students in rural schools is less optimistic than their urban counterparts. Once in school they are more likely to be taught by teachers who are new to the profession, have a bachelor's degree only and who have been at the school for a brief number of years. The Rural School and Community Trust points out that one-fourth of US school children go to school in rural areas [Note: In South Carolina 37 percent of the state's public school students and 41 percent of its private school enrollment are in rural settings.] The Trust examined a number of demographic and educational factors to answer two questions: How important is it to the overall educational performance of each state to explicitly address the particular needs of schools serving its rural communities? And given conditions in the state's rural schools and communities how urgent is it in each state that policy-makers develop explicit rural education policies?

Results of the "importance analysis" ranked SC 19th in importance among the states (Very Important) and 8th in urgency (Urgent) (Rural School and Community Trust, 2000).

South Carolina's African-American students perform less well than their white counterparts. The achievement gap is the focus of study and action by the Governor, the State Superintendent, the General Assembly, the Education Oversight Committee and others. The EOC has included an incentive within the improvement rating for gains by historically underachievement groups of students. South Carolina achievement data indicate the following gaps in performance:

	Students		
	All	White	African-American
Scholastic Assessment Test (2000):			
Composite Score	966	1022	833
Composite SAT score, 20 units	1054	1092	910
% meeting LIFE requirements	30.0	43.9	10.7
ACT (2000)			
Composite	19.3	20.9	16.4
Advanced Placement (2000)			
% earning a 3-5 score	55.2	60.1	23.9
BSAP Exit Examination (2000)			
Reading	82.7	90.9	69.8
Math	77.3	87.8	60.4
Writing	86.6	94.5	74.3
PACT (2000)			
Math-% Basic and Above	72	82	58
English language arts-%Basic & Above	74	84	61
Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery	85.2	90.7	79.6

IMPLEMENTATION OF REWARDS AND SANCTIONS

The criteria for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards is under development. The EOC anticipates establishment of those criteria in late Spring 2001.

CONCLUSION

The Need for Consistency Over time

How do we achieve and sustain consistency over time? The EOC feels that the foundation of that consistency lies in systemic and long-range planning and indicates that consistency is critical if we are to respect the dollars invested in achieving the 2010 goal.

The EOC determined that the system of public education can be no stronger than its decisions. After a comprehensive examination of educational governance, the EOC forwarded these recommendations to the General Assembly.

1.   In order to meet the challenges that local districts face in this era of accountability, state laws must be updated to codify the respective roles of superintendents and school boards. The current powers and duties of the school board as outlined in §59-19-90 and other statutes should conform to the duties outlined below:
    *   Responsibilities of the school board: Select, work with and evaluate the superintendent; adopt "students first" goals, policies, and budgets; delegate to the superintendent the day-to-day administration of the school district, including student discipline and personnel matters; and evaluate their own leadership, governance and teamwork on behalf of children.
    *   Responsibilities of the superintendent: Serve as the chief executive officer to the school board, including recommending all policies and the annual budget; support the school board by providing good information for decision-making; provide continuous leadership to ensure that the board policies and responsibilities of the board-superintendent team are addressed each day; oversee the educational program (curriculum, instruction, co-curricula, instructional materials, etc.); serve as the final authority for the hiring, assignment and dismissal of all employees.
    *   Responsibilities of the board-superintendent team: Create teamwork and advocacy for the high achievement and healthy development of all children in the community; provide educational leadership for the community, including the development and implementation of a long-range plan, in close collaboration with principals, teachers, other staff and parents; create strong linkages with social service, health and other community organizations and agencies to support the healthy development and high achievement of all children; set districtwide policies and annual goals and long range plan for education; approve an annual school district budget; ensure the safety and adequacy of all school facilities; provide resources for the professional development of teachers, principals and other staff; and periodically evaluate its own leadership, governance and teamwork for children.
        [NOTE: The realignment of responsibilities noted here are drawn from <u>Thinking Differently: Recommendations for 21st Century School Board/Superintendent Leadership, Governance and Teamwork for High Student Achievement</u> by Richard Goodman and William G. Zimmerman, Jr.]

2.   All school districts should have boards of trustees that are elected.

3. All future candidates filing to run for a school board must possess a high school diploma or a GED in addition to satisfying other statutory requirements.

4. The state should collect information indicating the participation of new board members in the required orientation and impose a statutory penalty on members not attending the orientation.

5. Continuous education is critical if board members are to be able to keep abreast of ever-changing requirements facing their governance role. Each school board member should complete a minimum of six hours training per year, a portion of which must focus on fiscal matters. Funding for this requirement must be provided by the state.

6. School boards are required to go through a board assessment every two years and the Freedom of Information Act should be amended to allow the evaluation to be held in executive session.

7. All school district boards of trustees should have fiscal autonomy.

8. When a district is rated Unsatisfactory,
    - The board of trustees and the superintendent should engage in a training program to focus on roles and actions in support of increases in student achievement. Should the working relationship between the board of trustees and the superintendent dissolve to the extent that the board is considering dismissal of the superintendent, the matter should be referred to the State Board of Education. The SBE should be provided authority to serve as an arbitrator for personnel matters between a local board and a superintendent; and
    - The school district boards shall appoint at least two non-voting board members from a pool nominated by the EOC to protect the State's interests in districts that are rated unsatisfactory. These appointed members should have demonstrated knowledge and commitment to high levels of achievement and bring public service experience to the Board. These members serve in a non-voting capacity. The EOC role should be expanded to include recruitment and training of individuals to serve as appointed board members to districts rated unsatisfactory.

9. South Carolina should provide support to those school board-superintendent teams who wish to explore a system of policy governance. The General Assembly should provide $100,000 annually for two years to fund a pilot program in several districts to determine the impact of using this model. The pilot program should have an evaluation component to ensure that the model is measured and that all districts learn from the model.

10. The Office of the State Superintendent should be eliminated as a constitutional office. The statutes should be amended to establish a Secretary of Education as a member of the Governor's Cabinet, appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Program leadership and administrative responsibilities currently assigned to the State Superintendent should be assigned to the Secretary

of Education. The Secretary should serve on designated boards and commissions previously assigned to the State Superintendent.

11. The members of the SBE should meet minimum qualifications to include experience in governance and commitment to strong public schools.

12. County boards of education (other than countywide districts) should be eliminated and their responsibilities placed with local district boards of trustees.

13. All legislation pending before the General Assembly should include a fiscal impact statement that details the potential impact on local revenue sources generally and specifically on school districts.

14. The Education Oversight Committee shall contract with an independent party to study school district organization in order to improve fiscal economies while promoting high achievement. The report of the study shall be available by January 2003.

The EOC joined with the State Superintendent and the Governor in establishing a long-range plan steering committee. That Steering Committee should report to the EOC in July 2001. Seven critical areas have been identified for action: governance and structure; sufficient funding for all school districts and schools; leadership and coalition building; teacher quality; efficient use of resources and accountability; community and parental support and involvement and early childhood education and development. Over the next several months the EOC and the Steering Committee are integrating current initiatives with cost-benefit analyses to identify strengths and weaknesses of our current efforts.

In conclusion, South Carolina's students, parents, educators and policy makers are focused on creating new levels of student and school achievement. The work is not easy. We have learned from this work of the past two and one-half years and are encouraged as we face the challenges ahead.

South Carolina must learn from our sister states.

Examinations of improvement efforts in other states identify actions characteristic of their success. The National Education Goals Panel released a report in December 2000 that identified critical elements of standards-based reform success stories. The report, <u>Bringing All Students to High Standards,</u> is the result of a yearlong study of successes in local schools. The report identified common strategies that formed the basis for success. The strategies are the following:

❑ *High expectations for all students.* Schools that succeeded expected all students to achieve at high levels, especially those who traditionally have not been expected to perform well.

❑ *Consistency over time.* Successful policies have remained in place for years, enabling schools to make needed changes and produce results.

- *Clear accountability.* Schools that succeeded had to produce results and knew that there were consequences for failure.

- *Using data to drive improvement.* Schools used performance information to determine where they were succeeding and where they needed to direct their efforts.

- *Improving teacher quality.* Schools and school systems placed a great emphasis on enhancing the skills and knowledge of teachers, particularly those already in the classroom.

- *Expanding the school day and year.* Schools provided additional instructional time for students who were struggling to meet high standards.

- *Supporting children and families.* Schools made services available to children and their families so that health and social problems would not be an impediment to learning.

- *Support from the business community.* Schools and schools systems formed alliances with businesses to promote the common agenda of improving schools and drew on the resources businesses could provide.[5]

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[5] For additional information on Bringing All Students to High Standards, contact the web site: http://www.negp.gov/.