

MARCH 2010

ANNUAL REPORT

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**SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

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STUDENT / SCHOOL / DISTRICT PERFORMANCE

WHERE ARE WE NOW -- 2010 GOAL AND 2020 VISION

On December 14, 2009, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) released South Carolina's progress toward the 2010 Goal, which states that SC will be in the top half of states by the year 2010. The annual release provided evidence of the accomplishments of SC's students, schools, and the education accountability system.

This year's release also examined SC's progress toward reaching the 2020 Vision, which states that by 2020, all students will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete successfully in the global economy, participate in a democratic society and contribute positively as members of families and communities.

This year's release focused on the progress made in achieving the both the 2010 Goal and the 2020 Vision. South Carolina has made significant progress in some areas, but challenges persist.

In 2009, South Carolina's achievement attained the following ranks on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests used as the Nation's Report Card:

- + 4th Grade Reading -- 42nd
- + 8th Grade Reading -- 41st
- + 4th Grade Math -- 38th
- + 8th Grade Math -- 33rd
- + 4th Grade Science -- 32nd
- + 8th Grade Science -- 29th

"By 2020, all students will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete successfully in the global economy, participate in a democratic society and contribute positively as members of families and communities." -- 2020 Vision, adopted by the EOC in August 2009

The data show that SC students still struggle in reading. Within the 2020 Vision, the EOC established a measure of reading proficiency, targeting 95 percent of students scoring Basic and above on NAEP at grades 4 and 8. Data from the 2007 NAEP Reading assessment show that 58 percent of SC 4th graders scored Basic and above; 69 percent of 8th graders did so.

With respect to Advanced Placement tests, South Carolina is in the top half of states, ranking 22nd in the nation for participation and 21st in the nation for the percentage of exams scored 3, 4 or 5.

On college admissions tests, although South Carolina's SAT improvement is among the nation's best, scores on both the SAT and the ACT rank SC low among states. SC's ranking on SAT slipped from 47th in 2008 to 48th in 2009. SC's ranking on the ACT moved from 47th in 2008 to 46th in 2009.

South Carolina's standing among states on students graduating from high school on-time is highlighted in this year's release. Graduation rate is a measure that historically has been difficult to compare because states have various ways of calculating high school graduation rates. SC is one of 19 states that currently report data using

the “compact cohort rate,” methodology agreed upon by the nations’ governors in 2005. Of the 19 states, SC ranks 13th, ahead of Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, and New Mexico.

The release also looked at SC’s progress in eliminating the achievement gap among groups of students of different racial/ethnic groups and of different economic or disability status. Results continue to show achievement disparities among groups. Large gaps persist between the performance of white students, compared to African American students, as well as between pay-lunch students and students who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunch. The gap between Hispanic students, which had showed improvement in some areas, increased this year as well.

QUALITY COUNTS RELEASE

In January 2010, *Quality Counts 2010: Fresh Course, Swift Current –Momentum and Challenges in the New Surge toward Common Standards*, the 14th annual report card on the state of school reform nationwide, was released. The report, published by *Education Week*, uses a variety of sources for its annual evaluations, including data from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). This year, South Carolina earned a perfect score of 100 for standards and school accountability and a score of 83.3 for assessments. In terms of rankings, South Carolina maintained its No. 1 ranking in state efforts to improve teaching and ranked No. 7 nationally for academic standards, assessment, and school accountability.

Chance for Success: C (75.1)	Standards, Assessments, & Accountability: A (94.4)
• Early foundations: B- (80.4)	• Standards: A (100.0)
• School years: C- (71.4)	• Assessments: B (83.3)
• Adult Outcomes: C (75.4)	• School accountability: A (100.0)
K-12 Achievement: D (64.5)	Transitions & Alignment: C (75.0)
• Status: F (55.5)	• Early childhood education: C-(70.0)
• Change: D+ (67.1)	• College readiness: D- (60.0)
• Equity: C (75.5)	• Economy & workforce: A (100.0)
School Finance: C (73.8)	The Teaching Profession: A (95.8)
• Equity: B (84.7)	• Accountability for quality: A- (91.2)
• Spending: D (62.9)	• Incentives & allocation: A (96.2)
	• Building & supporting capacity: A (100.0)
South Carolina Overall: B- (79.8)	

CDEPP EVALUATION

The interdisciplinary evaluation team composed of evaluators from the University of South Carolina and staff from the EOC has issued an annual report on CDEPP since the program’s implementation in Fiscal Year 2006-07. This year’s evaluation was the third annual report issued by the team pursuant to Proviso 1.62. of the 2009-10 General Appropriations Act.

What makes this evaluation unique is its inclusion of individual student assessments.

Annually, children from a representative sample of CDEPP students are individually assessed in the fall when entering CDEPP and again at the end of the preschool year. These same children are individually assessed again at the beginning of kindergarten. The evaluation model intends to assess and track these children until third grade when the state assessment test (PASS) will be used to measure student academic progress. Children in both public and private centers are assessed. The longitudinal data will provide policymakers and educators with concrete evidence of the impact of CDEPP on school readiness and academic achievement. To date, individual preschool assessments of children served in CDEPP show modest yet meaningful gains; the program is addressing school readiness for students at-risk for school failure.

What did the current evaluation reveal?

The number of children served has increased slightly and stabilized.

- + Barnwell 45 and Saluda are CDEPP-eligible school districts. However, Barnwell 45 has not participated in the program, and Saluda only began participating in the current school year.
- + Number of private centers participating and enrolling CDEPP students decreased from 46 to 42; however, average class sizes increased from 9.3 to 11.8. Number of private providers serving five or fewer students also declined from 15 in 2007-08 to 6 in 2008-09.

CDEPP has successfully attracted parents and providers into the program.

- + 78.0% of 4-year-olds at-risk for school failure due to poverty are being served with a publicly-funded pre-kindergarten program in school districts implementing CDEPP. In the remaining 48 districts, only
- + 57.2% of the 4-year-olds at-risk due to poverty are being served with a publicly-funded program.

Funding – General Assembly funded CDEPP with recurring general funds in FY10

- + Total program expenditures for CDEPP were \$19.9 million in FY2008-09.

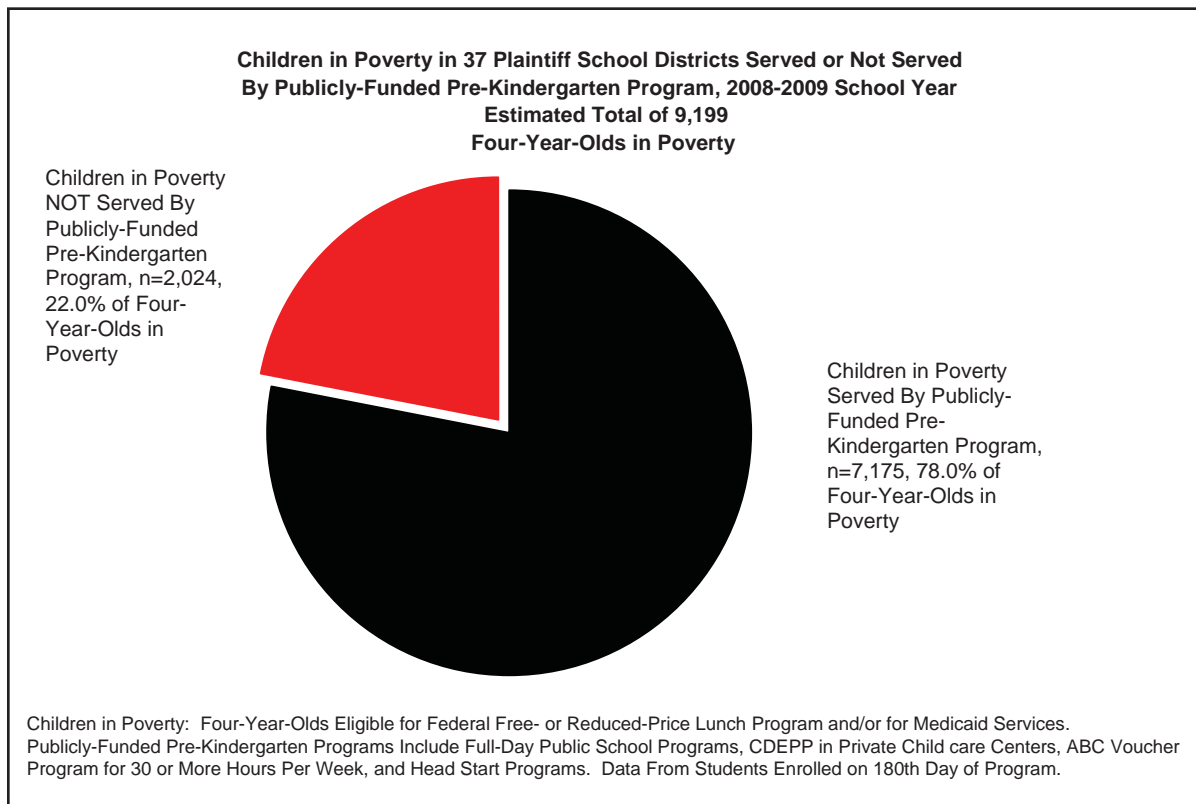
Future demands – Number of four-year-olds to increase

- + By school year 2011-12 the number of four-year-olds in South Carolina is projected to increase by 6.7% to 64,637 and number of four-year-olds in poverty by 4.9% to 42,139.

In addition to ongoing evaluation activities, the team conducted:

Interviews with CDEPP personnel in Florence and Berkeley Counties, where the program significantly expanded from the first to second year of the program's implementation, that revealed common leadership elements in these providers:

- + commitment by the organization and leadership to implement and expand CDEPP regardless of obstacles;



- + designation of at least one staff person for implementation and expansion of CDEPP;
- + intentionality in expansion including the recruitment of children, the securing of funds, and the preparation of classrooms; and
- + collaboration among public schools, child care providers, Head Start and other community entities + whenever possible.

On-line survey of CDEPP coordinators in public school districts to determine what, if any, local administrative costs related to CDEPP are incurred by school districts. The results showed:

- + sufficient funding for supplies, materials, transportation and professional development;
- + administration of program delegated among several district and school staff;
- + recruitment of children and families is generally a school function;
- + maintaining DSS licensure is greatest challenge; however, the issues of ongoing professional development, background checks and medical check-ups likely impact rural school districts due to limited transportation. The challenge seems to involve administrative oversight rather than significant financial costs;
- + cost of playground equipment cited as the greatest initial cost of implementing CDEPP and not covered by the \$10,000 state allocation; and
- + 26 percent of districts reported “no” collaboration with early childhood programs (private, Head Start, etc.).

Comparison of professional development and technical assistance provided by SCDE and OFS with national models revealed:

- + SCDE and OFS implement separate programs supporting their respective CDEPP personnel;
- + most information on professional development and technical assistance limited to process measures like number of hours of training, number of site visits, etc.; and
- + no data to evaluate the impact of these efforts on CDEPP workforce.

“Despite negative economic conditions, the General Assembly should continue funding CDEPP and when funds are available, expand the program in both public schools and private centers statewide. The modest yet meaningful gains made by students in CDEPP provide evidence of the program’s success in better preparing these at-risk children for kindergarten.” -- *CDEPP evaluation, 2010*

The report’s recommendations:

- 1 Continue funding of the program
- 2 Prepare for future expansion by utilizing experiences and expertise of individuals who lead efforts to expand CDEPP in public and private centers
- 3 Require greater collaboration at state level to administer the program
- 4 Encourage greater collaboration at the local level to address transportation issues and professional development needs of CDEPP personnel
- 5 Engage higher education by establishing a Center of Excellence for Professional Development to Enhance the Recruitment and Retention of Preschool Teachers in South Carolina’s State Funded Pre-kindergarten Programs for Children at Risk for School Failure
- 6 Consolidate all funds for early childhood education in the Education Improvement Act budget and streamline funding by eliminating the \$2,500 per class allocation for supplies and materials and by increasing the per child reimbursement rate by \$125 for the cost of supplies and materials.

SC TEACHER LOAN PROGRAM STUDY

The Teacher Loan Program (TLP) was created in 1984 as part of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) to recruit individuals into teaching in critical needs areas and critical needs schools. In 2000 the South Carolina General Assembly directed the EOC to conduct an annual review of the program and to report their findings to the General Assembly. The first report was issued in 2002 and subsequent reports were issued annually thereafter. The focus of each report has remained the same over the continuum of reports, though there have been different research questions analyzed each year.

The report on the program for the 2008-09 academic year confirmed previous findings:

- 1 applications continue to increase annually;
- 2 white females are the overwhelming majority of teacher loan applicants and recipients;
- 3 the program has a significantly low default rate of only one percent; yet
- 4 the program still lacks identified and adopted goals and objectives and a governing board.

This study also found significant changes in the following areas:

- 1 in 2008-09 the average SAT scores of TLP recipients increased from 1081 in 2007-08 to 1096;
- 2 the number of loan applications increased by nine percent between 2007-08 and 2008-09;
- 3 the number of loans awarded increased by ten percent to 1,888, the largest total number since the program's inception;
- 4 the total amount of loans was \$7.7 million, also an historic level; and
- 5 the percentage of male applicants increased to eighteen percent in 2008-09, the highest percentage since the program's inception.

The ongoing national recession may likely impact the amount of appropriations for the program which will in turn impact the number of teacher loans awarded in 2009-10.



STATE SUPPORT FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

CYCLICAL REVIEW OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

The EOC is charged with encouraging continuous improvement in our public schools, approving academic content standards and assessments, and establishing the state educational accountability system. The agency works collaboratively with our partners at the State Board of Education and the SC Department of Education on a number of tasks, including a seven-year cyclical review of the academic content standards.

The time has arrived for the cyclical review of the academic content standards in social studies for grades K-12. Since the adoption of standards in 2005, the state has administered a grade-level assessment for students in the grades 3-8 and an end-of-course test in US History and Constitution. Some improvement in performance over time is evident in grades 3-8 assessment; however, students have not achieved the level of performance to which SC aspires. Performance on the US History end-of-course assessment is well below what the state feels critical for its young people so that they can succeed in a global economy.

The cyclical review of the content standards is based upon advice from national leaders, a community review panel and in-state curriculum and instructional leaders. The review is based upon the following six criteria:

- + Comprehensiveness and balance
- + Rigor
- + Measurability
- + Manageability
- + Organization and communication

Other considerations are a set of principles endorsed by the state's social studies education, international and national benchmark studies, and broad understandings of twenty-first century learning skills. Recommendations are anticipated in April to be followed by revision, review, and final drafting.

SC FAMILY-FRIENDLY STANDARDS

The EOC, in cooperation with the SCDE, publishes the annual "Guide for Parents and Families about what Your Child Should Be Learning in School this Year." The publication, available in both English and Spanish versions, provides current information on the standards in the four core content areas in grades K-12. This year, an interactive version of the family-friendly standards was developed and launched in collaboration with the SC State Library. The new website, www.scffs.org, provides families with interactive activities that support the teaching and learning that occurs in the state's public schools. The website currently provides content for English Language Arts, kindergarten through second grade. Additional grade levels and subjects will be available in 2010.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Under the coordination of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), 46 states are exploring ways in which state standards and curriculum documents can be aligned with a national set of standards. The standards are to be “aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and be internationally benchmarked.” Each state is conducting a review of the document developed nationally and determining adoption. There are attendant efforts to develop common assessments.

Under the coordination of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center), 46 states are exploring ways in which state standards and curriculum documents can be aligned with a national set of standards.

The State Board of Education and the EOC are working together to conduct a systematic review of the Common Core standards statements. These statements are to be compared with SC academic content standards through two screens: general criteria for academic content standards (comprehensiveness, rigor, measurability, manageability and communication) and the degree to which the standards are aligned with respect to cognitive demand and knowledge dimensions. When this review is completed, recommendations regarding further participation and an intent to adopt the Common Core are to be considered by the SBE and the EOC.

Should the two groups agreed to adopt the Common Core standards, then educator-work teams would determine how to address those areas in which there is not alignment, in which there are gaps, and in which SC wishes to extend its curriculum. South Carolina standards would be revised accordingly.

ASSESSMENTS

DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF PASS

Amendments made in 2008 to the Education Accountability Act (EAA) required the development and adoption of a new statewide assessment program for grades 3–8. The Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) was administered to students for the first time during the 2009–10 school year in reading and research, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Prior to the administration of the new assessment, the EOC was charged with reviewing the state assessment program for alignment with state academic standards. In January 2009, 145 educators from across the state participated in the alignment study and issued recommendations to the EOC. Additionally, a technical review of the items occurred in June 2009 and recommendations were issued.

Following the first statewide administration of PASS, the EOC charge was to review the assessment program and the course assessments for their difficulty, validity, and for the ability to differentiate levels of student achievement. Descriptors of Achievement Levels (DALs) were developed by teacher teams and used for test development and standard setting. In August 2009, 145 teachers from across the state participated in a week-long book-marking process. Recommendations from the group were given to the EOC. In September 2009, the EOC approved PASS.

ESTABLISHMENT OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS ON PASS

On October 5, 2009, the EOC gave approval to “cut scores,” defining levels of student performance levels on the PASS. The committee voted to approve the Academic Standards and Assessment (ASA) subcommittee’s

recommendation to adjust the “Met” level standard to match the “Basic” level on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT), not exceeding one standard error of measurement. The change affects all subject areas tested: Reading and Research, Mathematics, Writing, Science, and Social Studies.

The EOC’s approval of student performance levels came after a comparison of recommendations regarding the establishment of student performance levels from a bookmarking process, which involved 145 teachers from across the state as well as recommendations from the SC School Boards Association and the SC Association of School Administrators. The committee also received a report produced by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), which projected the impact of the PASS cut scores on school AYP outcomes using the 2007 NWEA study “The Proficiency Illusion.”

According to amendments made to the Education Accountability Act in 2008, the student performance levels are “Not Met” (student does not meet grade level standard); “Met” (student does meet grade level standard); and “Exemplary” (student demonstrated exemplary performance in meeting the grade level standard). For purposes of reporting as required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), ‘proficiency’ includes students performing at “Met” or “Exemplary”.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

PALMETTO PRIORITY SCHOOLS EVALUATION

The EOC is following the progress of the original 16 Palmetto Priority Schools (PPS) identified by Superintendent Rex for additional technical assistance and foundation for a turnaround school effort. The EOC is monitoring implementation of the Focused School Renewal Plans, the Star Academies, improvements in school climate and improvements in student achievement. As we examine the second year of the Palmetto Priority Schools, we note that one school has been closed; another school has merged with a second district school.

The PPS collaborative model, aligned with research-based practices, is coordinated by the Office of Special Projects (OSP) at the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). The collaborative model combines four strategies administered by the OSP. The four strategies include the following: Collaboration; Leadership Mentoring; Drop-out Intervention-The Star Academy; and Teacher Recruitment.

In 2007, the EOC agreed to conduct an on-going formative evaluation of the Palmetto Priority Schools Intervention. The evaluation plan consists of an analysis of student and school performance data; examination of school climate as reported by school personnel, students and families; and monitoring the degree to which the elements of the intervention have achieved success. The evaluation is intended both to inform decisions about the Palmetto Priority Schools and to inform state-level policy decisions regarding actions to increase student and school performance generally. The evaluation is not intended for use in personnel decisions nor to limit the flexibility of the State Superintendent’s ability to address the challenges in the schools. The evaluation design was approved through meetings with SCDE leadership and by the EOC.

The evaluation focuses on the following questions:

- + was the intervention implemented, and if not, why?
- + did the intervention and/or other actions change the conditions under which teaching and learning occurred? and
- + to what extent is there a change in performance?

The expectation is that within five years the schools would achieve an absolute rating of Average; that is, achievement is at the level that state-defined assistance is no longer required. To monitor progress at a level of detail and inclusive of the indices used in the ratings, the following performance benchmarks are used:

- + At least 75 percent of students in each school will score Basic on state standards-based assessments;

- + At least 50 percent of eighth graders will score Proficient on state standards-based assessments;
- + At least 75 percent of each high school's 2008 entering ninth grade class will graduate on-time; and
- + Each school will achieve an absolute performance index of 3.3 or higher on a 5.0 scale.

PUBLIC REPORTING

ESTABLISHMENT OF METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA FOR THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT REPORT CARD RATINGS

On January 22, 2010, the EOC established methodologies and criteria for the elementary and middle school and district ratings, a task outlined in modifications made to the Education Accountability Act (EAA) in 2008. The five performance ratings outlined in statute for the Absolute and Growth ratings given to schools and districts are Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and At-Risk.

Absolute Rating

With respect to the calculation of the Absolute rating, which reports a school's or district's level of student performance during a school year measured against South Carolina's expectations for a successful education system, the EOC established the following criteria:

- 1 Utilize five (5) student performance levels (Not Met 1, Not Met 2, Met, Exemplary 4, and Exemplary 5)
- 2 Differentiate between school ratings using a combination .5 standard deviation above the mean and .75 standard deviation cuts below the mean. Simulations of 2009 PASS performance suggest that the distribution of Absolute ratings using this methodology would result in the following elementary and middle school ratings in 2009:

Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Absolute Rating of Excellent	Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Absolute Rating of Good	Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Absolute Rating of Average	Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Absolute Rating of Below Average	Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Absolute Rating of At Risk
137 (14.7%)	147 (15.8%)	440 (47.3%)	148 (15.9%)	58 (6.2%)

Growth Rating

With respect to the calculation of the Growth rating, which reports a school's or district's progress with student achievement from one school year to the next, the EOC established the following criteria:

- 1 Utilize five (5) student performance levels;
- 2 Utilize an asymmetrical value model for calculating growth which recognizes grade-to-grade accomplishments at the same performance level (for example, the growth in student knowledge and skills at the Met level from grade 7 to grade 8);
- 3 Maintain the ratings adjustment for schools performing at high levels; that is, "If a school is rated Excellent for absolute achievement for both the current and the previous years, the school will receive a growth rating of Good. If the school's growth index for all students is a positive number (i.e., greater than zero), the school's Growth Rating will be elevated to Excellent. The absolute index of 4.8 or higher for two consecutive years will be awarded an Excellent Growth Rating."

Simulations of 2009 PASS performance suggest that the distribution of Growth ratings using the approved methodology would result in the following elementary and middle school Growth ratings in 2009:

Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Growth Rating of Excellent	Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Growth Rating of Good	Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Growth Rating of Average	Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Growth Rating of Below Average	Number (%) of Elem/Middle Schools Receiving Growth Rating of At Risk
37 (4.1%)	168 (18.5%)	536 (59.0%)	97 (10.7%)	70 (7.7%)

STATEWIDE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STUDY AFFIRMS PUBLIC'S HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS

Amendments made to the Education Accountability Act in 2008 directed the EOC to work with the State Board of Education and a “broad-based group of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators.” To accomplish this level of public engagement, the EOC worked with Clemson University to conduct a statewide public engagement project.

The effort, which began in Fall 2008, yielded over 6,500 quantitative responses from phone and web surveys. A companion business survey and eleven focus groups were also included in the project.

Results of the project showed that South Carolinians are concerned about their schools, the future of public school students, and hold high expectations for both. Four key findings emerged from the project:

- + All stakeholder groups (parents, business, educators, and taxpayers) share high expectations for schools and students. Results showed that over 60 percent of respondents believed at least 90 percent of children in a school rated Excellent should be performing at grade level and improving from one year to the next.
- + Stakeholders differed in views about achieving those expectations.
- + Many South Carolinians are not familiar with educational trends regionally or nationally.
- + South Carolinians expressed a large degree of surprise or no knowledge concerning achievement gaps among student groups.

Results showed that over 60 percent of respondents believed at least 90 percent of children in a school rated Excellent should be performing at grade level and improving from one year to the next.

Results of the Clemson project were among the information used to set a 2020 Vision, student performance levels, and school ratings.

PARENT SURVEY ANALYSIS

Since 2002 the South Carolina Department of Education has administered the parent survey to a sample of parents whose children attended public schools in South Carolina. Annually, the EOC has analyzed the results of the parent survey and issued reports. In June of 2009, the EOC staff reported on the results of the 2008 administration of the parent survey. The findings were consistent with prior year parent survey results with the following exceptions. First, the percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent and who were satisfied with the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child's school declined significantly between 2007 and 2008. A significant decline is defined as an annual reduction of three percent or greater. The decline may be explained by the distribution of Excellent schools in 2008 versus 2007. In 2007 36 percent of all Excellent schools were high schools, but in 2008 the percentage of Excellent schools

that were high schools was 53 percent. As national research and prior results of the parent survey document, parent satisfaction with public schools declines as the child moves from elementary to middle to high schools. Another explanation is that parents who responded to the 2008 parent survey and who had children attending high schools with an Excellent rating were significantly less satisfied than all other parents whose children attended an Excellent elementary or middle school with the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child's school. The results show that even in Excellent high schools opportunities exist to improve the educational achievement of students through greater collaboration between parents, principals and teachers. Second, the data also revealed that all parents of high school students in South Carolina who responded to the survey were less satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school, down from 77.3 percent in 2007 to 72.5 percent in 2008.

Parents continue to express concern over three issues: student behavior; not being involved in making decisions affecting their school; and, not having information about what their child should be learning. As in previous years, the primary impediment to parent involvement is work schedules.

According to the 2008 Parent Survey analysis, only 56.6% of parents believe students at their child's school are well-behaved

Parents who believe students at their child's school are well-behaved by school Absolute Rating:

Excellent	70.2%
Good	67.3%
Average	57.8%
Below Average	48.4%
At-Risk	39.8%

INTERACTIVE REPORT CARD

Three years ago, the EOC initiated a web-based interactive site with SC Interactive on a site which has been used widely. This site, <https://ssl.sc.gov/SchoolReportCards/>, offers selected searches for public consumers but does not link directly with state data systems for planning or reporting to the SCDE.

This year, the EOC convened a group of leaders from SCDE, the University of South Carolina, and Midlands Technical College to explore the possibilities of building a more comprehensive site offering data access and analysis capacity. The group was especially interested in an impressive site (<http://iirc.niu.edu>) built as a result of a collaboration between the Illinois State Board of Education and Northern Illinois University.

With the group's support, the EOC was accepted for a second phase of development by SC Interactive. The new site will offer expanded functionality and greater access to data available on the school and district report cards. The expanded site is expected to be functional in late 2010.

FUNDING

EOC 2010-2011 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

As in the prior year, when the EOC proposed the consolidation of 14 EIA line item appropriations into 4 line item appropriations and the elimination of 20 provisos, the Committee recommended to the General Assembly continued realignment and consolidation of existing financial resources in Fiscal Year 2010-11 to guarantee that funds follow the child and that school districts have greater flexibility in meeting the educational needs of students. To these ends, the EOC is advocating the following:

- 1 Establish a reduced EIA base for FY2010-11 to reflect an approximate reduction of 2.7 percent to EIA programs, exempting teacher salaries, National Board, and teacher supplies.
- 2 Continue the consolidation and realignment of existing resources to increase system efficiencies:
 - Eliminate all EIA line item appropriations of less than \$25,000;
 - Permanently realign funds for Competitive Teacher Grants to Teacher Supply;
 - Permanently eliminate funding for External Review teams;
 - Transfer from the EIA to the EFA funds originally appropriated to three programs: Middle School Initiative, Credits for High School Diploma, and Principal Supplement; and
 - Transfer from the General Fund to EIA: (1) All funds for the Child Development Education Pilot Program; (2) All funds for young adult and adult education to consolidate all funding for adult education into one line item in the EIA; and (3) general funds in the Clemson PSA budget which are appropriated for agriculture education teachers to the EIA where other funds currently exist to fund these teacher salaries.
- 3 Focus on teachers and parents, those who have a direct impact on students

With savings created from the elimination of several EIA line items, the EOC recommended reallocating those funds accordingly:

- + Students at Risk of School Failure - Increase in the appropriation for Students at Risk of School Failure of \$350,000 with the funds designated for the Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty at Francis Marion University. The Center, which currently serves districts in the I-95 corridor, would expand statewide to develop a program of study for an add-on certification for teachers specializing in teaching children of poverty.
- + Science PLUS Institute – Annualize funding (\$175,000) for the Institute which provides professional development and supplies to science teachers throughout the state.
- + Young Adults – Increase funding of adult education by \$539,689 with at least one-third of all adult education funds going to young adults seeking a GED or high school diploma.
- + Family and Community Initiative – Consolidate four existing line item appropriations into one line item, establishing a competitive grants program to schools, districts, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations to improve student academic performance by expanding family and community engagement. In the current fiscal year, at least 50% of the funds would be used to support school improvement councils. National research cited by the Harvard Family Research Project in its July 2009 issue brief, “Seeing is Believing: Promising Practices for How School Districts Promote Family Engagement,” estimates that “schools would have to spend \$1,000 more per pupil to reap the same gains in student achievement that an involved parent brings.”

The EOC also recommended that \$2.5 million in any available non-recurring EIA revenues be appropriated to the South Carolina Department of Education for the final phase of installing and converting to PowerSchool. In school year

2010-11 PowerSchool will be the statewide student information system, replacing SASI.

Regarding provisos, the EOC recommended the deletion of four provisos due to the consolidation of several EIA line items. Also included in the EOC recommendations are amendments to existing provisos that would discontinue National Board supplements after all existing commitments are met and that would allow students attending persistently underperforming schools to transfer to schools with a higher Absolute rating, either in or outside the district of residence.

FLEXIBILITY STUDY

The EOC staff analyzed transfers made in Fiscal Year 2008-09 pursuant to the flexibility provisos. The number and amount of transfers made pursuant to the provisos were impacted by two issues. First, successive budget reductions reduced the amount of funds eligible to be transferred. And, second, the General Assembly approved a joint resolution allowing school districts and special schools of the State to transfer all monies, including lottery funds, among programs “to ensure the delivery of academic and arts instructions to students” for fiscal years 2008-09 and 2009-10 (Act 86).

The report concluded:

- + Due to successive budget reductions in Fiscal Year 2008-09, school districts were eligible to transfer \$253.5 million in funds allocated for education programs funded through general fund and EIA revenues or 20% less than in Fiscal Year 2007-08.
- + The number of school districts utilizing the flexibility provisos declined in Fiscal Year 2008-09 to the lowest level since reporting began in 2003-04. Ten school districts transferred funds from the Barnwell (Children’s Endowment) Fund and twenty-seven school districts transferred funds from general and EIA-funded programs. Five districts transferred funds from both Barnwell and from general and EIA-funded programs.
- + The total amount of transfers made per the flexibility provisos was 30% of the amount transferred in the prior fiscal year. In 2008-09 districts transferred approximately \$2.3 million in Barnwell (Children’s Endowment) Funds and another \$8.7 million in general fund and EIA funds. Successive mid-year budget reductions and passage of joint resolution H.3352 likely impacted utilization of the flexibility provisos. Mid-year budget reductions reduced the total amount of funds available for transferring. Act 86 (R.14, H.3352) supplanted the flexibility provisos by giving districts greater financial and staffing flexibility beginning April 7, 2009.
- + Approximately, two-thirds of all transfers were reallocations of funds from the Reduce Class Size program.
- + Of the funds transferred, districts allocated over 64% to Act 135 Academic Assistance, 22% to the High School Diploma program and 9% to the half-day four-year-old program.



READING

Consistently, the EOC has indicated that the greatest opportunity for improvement in student achievement lies in the effective teaching of reading to young people. The EOC has focused its attention on reading by emphasizing reading in the measurement of the 2020 Vision, determining practices that are working in elementary and middle schools, participating in an early reading proficiency project with Kids Count, rewarding service learning on reading and emphasizing reading in collaborative projects with other state agencies, private providers and school districts.

READING AND THE 2020 VISION

Measurements determining achievement of the 2020 Vision establish a target that 95 percent of students are to be scoring on grade level at grades 3 and 8 on the PASS and scoring Basic and above on NAEP at grades 4 and 8. A second measurement is that gaps between the performance of pay and free/reduced price lunch program participants, majority and minority racial/ethnic groups and students with and without disabilities are to be eliminated.

ANALYSIS OF READING PERFORMANCE

In 2009, the EOC analyzed student performance on PACT reading questions in elementary and middle schools and across the school years 2005-2008. This analysis identified schools with the highest and lowest performance across time as well as schools with the highest and lowest growth over time. In 2010, the EOC is conducting surveys of principals and/or instructional leaders in those schools to determine the practices and services the schools are using to improve student achievement.

PARENTS AND ADULTS INSPIRING READING SUCCESS (PAIRS)

Launched in February 2005, Parents and Adults Inspiring Reading Success (PAIRS) is a project of SC's daily newspapers and is administered as a public awareness initiative of the Education Oversight Committee. The mission of PAIRS is to encourage and support the achievement of reading literacy on grade level for every child in South Carolina.

In December, the 2009 SC Literacy Champion Award was given to the Writing and Reading Achievement Program (WRAP), based at the University of South Carolina's Department of Psychology. The first-ever award included grant-funding support of \$10,000 provided by the Central Carolina Community Foundation.

The EOC created the award to recognize successful service-learning programs within post-secondary institutions focused on building reading skills among SC public school students in grades K-12. The 2010 Literacy Champions Award will recognize up to two service learning programs.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT FOCUSED ON LITERACY

In partnership with the SC Department of Education (SCDE), SC First Steps, the SC State Library, and SC Educational Television (SCETV), the EOC has launched a community engagement project focused on literacy. Objectives of the plan include creating urgency leading to actions to improve literacy skills, including making literacy an issue in the 2010 political debates; and providing opportunities for individuals, communities, and statewide groups to act to advance the literacy skills of South Carolinians. Communities are being selected for a pilot of the initiative based on growth experienced in literacy. The pilot of the community engagement project is scheduled to commence in late Spring 2010.

IV

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