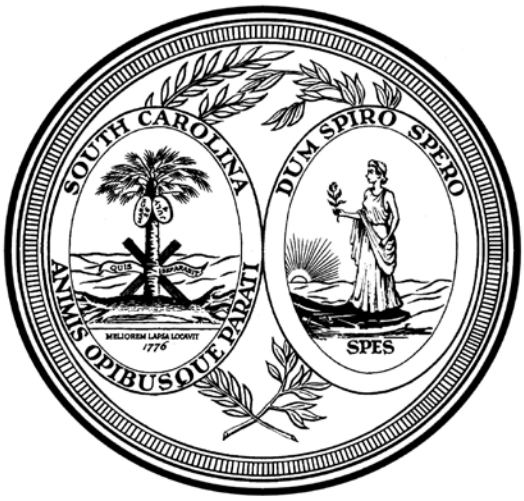
ESEA Flexibility

Request



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

For submission to the
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202
February 28, 2012

OMB Number: 1810-0708

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COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester: South Carolina Department of Education	Requester's Mailing Address: 1429 Senate Street Room 1005 The Rutledge Building Columbia, SC 29201
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request Name: Charmeka Bosket Position and Office: Deputy Superintendent, Office of Policy and Research Contact's Mailing Address: 1429 Senate Street Suite 1001 The Rutledge Building Columbia, SC 29201 Telephone: (803) 734-8104 Fax: (803) 734-4426 Email address: CBosket@ed.sc.gov	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Mick Zais, Ph.D.	Telephone: (803) 734-8500
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X Mick Zais	Date: February 28, 2012
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

WAIVERS

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.

☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.

☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.

☒ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.

☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a schoolwide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that

section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's reward schools that meet the definition of "reward schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State's priority schools that meet the definition of "priority schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

☐ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

☒ 12. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA's State-developed differentiated

recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.

☒ 13. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority school even if that school does not rank sufficiently high to be served.

ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.

☒ 2. It will adopt English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)

☒ 3. It will develop and administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii). (Principle 1)

☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)

☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; provide appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)

Note on revision to Assurance #6: Under the advice of staff of the U.S. Department of Education, South Carolina is revising Assurance #6 to reflect the methodology the state is using to assess students in social studies and science in certain grades.

☒ 7. It will report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)

☒ 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and

the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)

☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its request.

☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs (Attachment 2).

☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice (Attachment 3).

☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout this request.

☒ 14. It will report annually on its State report card, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the "all students" group and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State's annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. It will also annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively.

If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:

☒ 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) held two rounds of stakeholder meetings during which feedback was solicited from educators and interested community parties. The first round of targeted stakeholder meetings took place in November and December 2011, and the second round of open public forums (referred to as community stakeholder meetings) took place during January 2012. Both rounds of meetings addressed teachers and their representatives and other diverse communities.

Initial Stakeholder Meetings

The SCDE engaged teachers to solicit their input on South Carolina's ESEA waiver request initially through a targeted stakeholder meeting on the morning of November 8, 2011; invitees included current and previous Teacher of the Year awardees, previous Milken Award winners, Honor Roll Teachers (the top five runners-up for the teacher of the year awards), Montessori, charter school, and virtual school teachers. State Superintendent Zais welcomed the participants to this three-hour working meeting and shared his vision for how the waivers can help schools and districts and build on reform activities already underway. Staff from SEDL (the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory) explained the ten waiver opportunities and led the work groups in discussion and reporting activities following presentations by SCDE staff on the state's status regarding each of the four principles of the waiver request.

Teachers participating in this stakeholder meeting provided valuable input that was incorporated into a draft ESEA waiver request document. They advocated for including the content areas of science and social studies in the accountability system. They also expressed interest in exploring other methods of evaluating teacher performance, such as peer evaluations and student surveys, which we have included in the process that the Educator Evaluator Stakeholder Group will consider as we implement aspects of Principle 3. The SCDE also incorporated teacher input in providing and expediting the timeline for professional development and instructional materials that support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

In another targeted stakeholder meeting on the ESEA waiver request with principals from elementary, middle, and high schools on the afternoon of November 8, all attendees were asked to communicate the ESEA waiver plans to their teachers (see section 2 below for details on more of these stakeholder meetings).

South Carolina is a right-to-work state and, as such, does not have teacher unions. Representatives from SCASA (the South Carolina Association of School Administrators) and SCSBA (the South Carolina School Boards Association) were invited to and actively participated in a targeted stakeholder meeting on the ESEA waiver request on November 9, 2011. SCASA presented a webinar on the ESEA waiver request process and the state's draft request, which is posted with accompanying slides on its website (www.scasa.org). SCSBA posted a response to the state's draft request on its website (www.scsba.org) that indicated areas of concern.

Community Stakeholder Meetings

Along with making a draft of the waiver request available for public comment, the SCDE held a series of 20 evening community stakeholder meetings across South Carolina from January 3–23, 2012 (schedule at http://ed.sc.gov/agency/lpa/ESEAFlexibility.cfm); eleven of these meetings were held at LEA and local school facilities. At each meeting, a team of three staff members, representing the SCDE's Office of Policy and Research, Division of School Accountability, and Division of School Effectiveness respectively, presented on the four principles of the ESEA waiver opportunity and details of the state's draft plan. After each principle, staff paused to invite questions from the audience. These question-and-answer exchanges provided useful feedback and allowed staff to provide additional information and ask questions of attendees. Reminders for every meeting were posted to both the Department Facebook page and Twitter account with the county, location, and time of that evening's meetings. Each post linked back to the SC ESEA webpage.

Teachers, administrators, and district personnel comprised a large majority of attendees. The large majority of questions asked came from teachers, superintendents, principals, and district accountability personnel. Based on the e-mail addresses provided with the online responses submitted, 699 LEA/school personnel, including teachers, submitted the online form to provide feedback on the draft ESEA flexibility request, and 16 provided their response via the e-mail address.

Effects of the Community Stakeholder Meetings

During the public input process, stakeholders expressed strong concerns about the accountability system presented in the draft waiver request; the requests for simulations were compelling. To respond to this request before finalizing and submitting the state's ESEA waiver request, the SCDE's Office of Data Management and Analysis made changes to the system that was initially proposed in the draft waiver request and ran simulations for each school and LEA statewide. The SCDE invited two representatives from each LEA to a meeting on the morning of January 31, 2012, for division staff to explain the proposed methodology, which had been modified based on stakeholder feedback, and discuss the results of the simulations using the spring 2011 student assessment data.

The SCDE does not anticipate that the concerns raised by teachers will serve as an impediment to implementing the proposed changes to the state's educator evaluation system.

School districts, with the exception of public charter schools, are required by state statute to use the SCDE's educator evaluation system. Public charter schools are given the option of using the system and many choose to use it.

Equally important as the state's statutory authority is the process that the state follows when making significant changes to the educator evaluation system. Previous changes to the educator evaluation system were open to the educator community and transparent to the public. State law, through the Administrative Procedures Act, requires this transparent process. The same process used in previous regulatory revisions to the statewide educator evaluation system will be used again to implement Principle 3. This includes but is not limited to public notice, public comment at State Board of Education meetings, and public hearings to receive public testimony before legislative committees. Based upon the public comments received and the stakeholder meetings, there was little to no opposition to Principle 3.

In summary, there is a transparent process for receiving input from educators and legislative review prior to the full implementation of Principle 3.

The SCDE recognizes that districts continue to raise concerns about the proposed school and district rating system, as well as technical matters related to the calculation of Annual Measureable Objectives in South Carolina's ESEA Flexibility request. The SCDE does not anticipate that these concerns will impede implementation of the state's plan. The Education Accountability Act of 1998 requires school districts and schools to implement a statewide system of academic standards and accountability measures; this Act also grants the SCDE significant legal authority to ensure compliance. Public charter schools must also follow these statutes. The reforms required in Principles 1 and 2 will be implemented because state law requires schools and school districts to implement them.

The state's request presents the opportunity for meaningful change in South Carolina. Many aspects of the request, including the rating system, are based on models that have already been approved by the USED for other states, districts, or schools. Like South Carolina, these states experienced tremendous opposition to the reforms they sought to implement. South Carolina has benefited from these trailblazers by being able to observe the impact a transparent, fair, and easy-to-understand system of accountability can have in shifting priorities and resources to focus the full force of the education system on raising student achievement. Such reforms rarely receive praise when they are proposed or initially implemented; yet, given the opportunity, they yield a harvest that few can question. Like several other states, South Carolina seeks to create a system of accountability that serves students and parents with a clear message of how well schools are performing.

The SCDE will continue to meaningfully engage stakeholders in the implementation of the state's ESEA Flexibility request through an existing process that is transparent, draws on input from educators, and provides for legislative review prior to the full implementation.

Since the submission of the state's request, the SCDE has presented to the state's Instructional Leaders Roundtable during its April 2012 meeting at SCASA on the status of the

waiver request. The SCDE plans additional meetings and presentations once South Carolina's waiver request is approved, to inform and engage teachers in the implementation plans and processes as the state transitions to the Common Core State Standards, the new accountability system, and the enhanced teacher and principal evaluation systems.

The SCDE values the input we solicited and received from teachers and their representatives. Throughout our waiver request we identify areas where we received and considered input from teachers or their representatives. We also indicate ways in which their input shaped our request or will shape aspects of our proposal that are planned and will develop over the implementation timeline.

2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) held two rounds of stakeholder meetings during which feedback was solicited from educators and interested community parties. The first round of targeted stakeholder meetings took place in November and December 2011, and the second round of Community Stakeholder Meetings took place during January 2012. Both rounds of meetings addressed teachers and their representatives (see 1 above) and other diverse communities.

Initial Stakeholder Meetings

In addition to the initial stakeholder meetings for teachers and their representatives (detailed in 1 above), the SCDE began engaging other diverse communities through the initial stakeholder meetings in November 2011. As he did for the teacher stakeholder meeting, State Superintendent Zais welcomed participants to each of these three-hour working meetings and shared his vision for how the waivers can help schools and districts and build on reform activities already underway. Staff from SEDL then explained the ten waiver opportunities. SCDE staff presented on the state's status regarding each of the four principles of the waiver request. SEDL staff led the work groups in discussion and reporting activities following the presentations on each principle.

The SCDE gained valuable ideas and input through these stakeholder meetings, which included, in addition to the teacher stakeholder meeting already mentioned,

- principals from elementary schools, middle schools and high schools (12 participants) on November 8, 2011;
- superintendents and assessment personnel from LEAs across the state (22 participants) on November 9, 2011; and
- representatives from community groups, boards, and professional organizations (17 participants) on November 9, 2011. This meeting included representatives from the state council of the NAACP, the SC Hispanic Leadership Council, the South Carolina

Commission on Minority Affairs, and the Special Education Advisory Council.

The SCDE conducted additional stakeholder meetings to engage

- representatives (27 participants) from Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) on December 1, 2011; and
- South Carolina's Title I Committee of Practitioners (25 participants) on December 9, 2011.

The SCDE also briefed other stakeholders through presentations to

- 14 participants of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education's DataSC meeting of public IHEs on November 29, 2011;
- the Education Professions Committee of the State Board of Education on December 8, 2011; and
- the South Carolina State Board of Education on January 11, 2012.

Accessibility, Legislative Inclusion, and Media Outreach

On December 16, 2011, the SCDE posted a draft of the waiver request on its website (www.ed.sc.gov) and announced a public comment period that was scheduled through January 21, 2012. State Superintendent Zais sent a memo notifying all LEA superintendents (see Attachment 1) and requesting that they inform all staff, including teachers, of the waiver draft and the public comment period. The ESEA waiver request news release was posted to the rotating display on the homepage, and a large button featured prominently on the homepage linked any visitor from ed.sc.gov to the ESEA Waiver specific information.

To facilitate public response, the SCDE posted an online comment form on its ESEA Waiver request web page (http://ed.sc.gov/agency/lpa/ESEAFlexibility.cfm) and provided an e-mail address (ESEAWaiver@ed.sc.gov). The SCDE's Office of Legislative and Public Affairs notified media throughout the state (see Attachment 3) of the availability of the draft and the public comment period.

The Office of Legislative and Public Affairs also contacted each member of the legislative delegations for every county in which a meeting was held. For the meetings taking place before the legislature was back in session, SCDE staff members mailed letters to each senator and representative's home address and followed up with a phone call inviting them to attend the stakeholder meeting in their county. For meetings taking place after the legislature returned to Columbia, letters were hand-delivered to the offices of each senator and representative.

Once the General Assembly reconvened, Dr. Zais testified in front of the Senate Education Committee on January 18, 2012. Amongst other areas of interest, he discussed the ESEA Flexibility Waiver application process and draft content with the committee members.

The Office of Legislative and Public Affairs sent out a press release to all members of the South Carolina media in December to announce the ESEA Waiver community stakeholder

meeting locations and meeting times. South Carolina media were alerted to the upcoming NCLB Waiver event locations a week prior to the scheduled event, and media were notified the day of the event as well. A link to the full ESEA Waiver schedule, the comment form, and an updated draft of the ESEA Waiver request were included in each e-mail to the media. Overall, the Office of Legislative and Public Affairs sent a total of 14 e-mails to South Carolina media.

Community Stakeholder Meetings

Along with the three presenters from their respective offices/divisions, a staff member from the SCDE's Office of Legislative and Public Affairs attended each community stakeholder meeting to coordinate the presentation, greet attendees, administer a sign-in sheet, and distribute an "ESEA Community Stakeholder Meeting Comment Form" (Attachment A) to encourage attendees to provide their input at the meeting. Presenting staff also told attendees about the other methods for providing feedback—through the online comment form and the e-mail address.

For teachers and others unable to attend one of the community stakeholder meetings, the SCDE held a live webcast meeting on January 11, 2012. This presentation was recorded and posted to the SCDE's ESEA flexibility website (http://ed.sc.gov/agency/lpa/ESEAFlexibility.cfm) to enable 24/7 access.

The regional community stakeholder meetings held statewide from January 3–23, 2012, gave local civil rights and other groups an opportunity to voice their concerns about the draft waiver request directly to SCDE staff. Participants in the January 3 meeting in Manning, South Carolina, included the leader of the local NAACP chapter, the mayor, and representatives from the Clarendon County Education Association. More than 20 members of 100 Black Men of Columbia, Inc. attended the January 17 meeting in Columbia, South Carolina, along with members of the Catalytic Leadership Initiative. Three legislators, including a vice chair and a member of the House Education Committee and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee were present at the Anderson County meeting. The entire Aiken County School Board changed their regularly scheduled monthly meeting and all attended the Aiken County Community Stakeholder Meeting. The largest meeting was held in Horry County with 83 participants. The Deans of Education from Anderson University, Clemson University, and South Carolina State University all attended their local community stakeholder meetings as well.

Effects of the Community Stakeholder Meetings

Initially, the public comment period was set to end on January 23, 2012. However, the SCDE's Division of Accountability proposed providing additional information to the LEAs, so on January, 23, 2012, State Superintendent Zais announced an extension of the public comment period to February 1, 2011, in a memo to LEAs (Attachment 1; see Attachment 2 for LEA (school district) responses); this memo was also distributed to all who were invited to the November and December 2011 stakeholder meetings, which included teachers, principals, superintendents, LEA assessment personnel, representatives of both public and private

institutions of higher education (professors and administrators), the SC Commission on Higher Education, and community leaders and organizations, including the United Way of South Carolina, the South Carolina Advisory Council on the Education of Students with Disabilities, the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, and the Public Charter School Alliance of South Carolina.

One of the largest concerns raised by members of these diverse stakeholder groups centered on whether the ESEA Flexibility request process would allow the state to reduce the level of transparency and accountability on the performance of all students in the public education system. In response to these concerns, the SCDE has preserved the subgroup reporting that will prevent the proposed system of accountability from masking the performance of historically underperforming subgroups.

Additionally, the SCDE plans to build on the relationships forged during this period of stakeholder involvement in the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Request by continuing to engage stakeholder groups, particularly civil rights groups and those that represent historically low-performing student subgroup populations. We believe that these groups are a missing component of efforts to raise student achievement, close achievement gaps, and increase access to rigorous courses among students that the state simply has not served well.

EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☐ Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and

2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

The General Assembly finds that South Carolinians have a commitment to public education and a conviction that high expectations for all students are vital components for improving academic achievement.

—Preamble to the Education Accountability Act (1998)

In the global economy and rapidly changing world of the 21st century, a quality education is neither a privilege nor luxury; it is a basic necessity. South Carolina's students' future ability to survive—to support themselves and their families and to contribute to their communities—will be determined by the competencies and skills they attain and maintain over the course of their lifetimes.

The public education system has a duty to help students attain the skills that today's world demands. To fulfill this responsibility in South Carolina, we believe that

- Education must be personalized.
- Instruction must be high quality.
- Schools must grow stronger and cultivate strong community support.

South Carolina's commitment to personalizing learning dates back to 1977 when the state's General Assembly, recognizing that each student needs a base level of funding for educational services and practices to be effective, passed the Education Finance Act to set a funding formula. Subsequent legislation—the Education Improvement Act (1984), the Charter School Act (1996), the Education Accountability Act (1998), the Education and Economic Development Act (2005), and the South Carolina Virtual School Program (2006)—reflects an increased recognition that the state must set expectations, make provisions for learning to take place, and hold schools and districts accountable for results.

South Carolina is committed to establishing higher curriculum and achievement standards and to demonstrating national and international competitiveness. Our hardworking teachers and leaders are currently getting mixed results in their efforts to raise student achievement, as evidenced by our fluctuating graduation rates and scores on the state assessment, PASS (Palmetto Assessment of State Standards).

With passage of the Education Accountability Act (EAA, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-100 *et seq.* (Supp. 2011); see Appendix B; see Appendix C for a glossary of acronyms) the General Assembly established a statewide accountability system to measure school performance, provide recognition for high performing schools, and provide technical assistance for low performing schools prior to the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

The passage of NCLB brought another accountability system to accompany South Carolina's system. Initially, the federal system improved our ability to identify student subgroups that needed assistance and to hold schools and districts accountable for all their students. Both systems provided useful information to parents and taxpayers.

However, as the adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals under NCLB have increased

over the years, disparities between the state and federal systems have grown. Today, many of the schools that the state system identifies as "average" and "above average" are labeled through the federal system as failing to make AYP. This confuses parents and taxpayers. The stigma of failure demoralizes the teachers and principals in some of our most effective schools who are working diligently to better serve their students and whose results are not accurately reflected in the federal accountability system.

The federal accountability system imposes punishments and sanctions and at the same time limits action. Hence, it compels leaders to give reasons for failures rather than inspiring them to blaze trails to success. The system over-identifies schools in need of assistance, which has diluted the state resources available to serve these schools.

In 2011, only one school district in the state, Saluda School District One, made AYP. Without changes, by 2014, the goal year for 100 percent proficiency under the federal system, no schools or districts in South Carolina will meet the requirements of NCLB.

For South Carolina to see the outcomes that only transforming the system can yield, federal restrictions that limit innovation need to be lifted. The opportunity to request flexibility from some of the requirements of NCLB is timely. The four principles for improving student academic achievement and increasing the quality of instruction required for the flexibility waivers are well-aligned with the statewide reform efforts currently underway:

- For almost 15 years, the state has had a teacher evaluation system that it has constantly improved. Largely for this reason, *Ed Week's* annual *Quality Counts* has ranked South Carolina highest in its "Teaching Professions" category for six consecutive years.
- The state has adopted and is implementing the Common Core State Standards.
- The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has reorganized its resources to target aggressive strategies for turning around our lowest performing schools and districts through the newly-created Office of School Transformation.

South Carolina already meets many of the requirements of the four principles for the waivers and continues to lead the nation in establishing rigorous standards and assessments and developing great teachers and leaders. By developing a system of differentiated recognition, accountability, and support, we will improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction in our schools.

While unifying the state's two accountability systems into one will require action by the state legislature, which falls beyond the timeframe for requesting and enacting the federal waivers, this waiver opportunity will nonetheless propel the state further toward achieving the goal of a modernized and unified accountability system.

<u>Personalizing Learning</u>

South Carolina is committed to modernizing our system of accountability to take better advantage of our ability to provide feedback and intervention. The effective use of data makes

it possible for education to truly meet each student where they are, rather than simply provide an account of what happened—or, all too often, what did not happen—over the school year. Likewise, the effective use of data makes it possible to identify areas where teachers and leaders need more customized instruction and assistance to enhance their abilities to provide quality instruction that improves student achievement.

The state continues to set high and clearly defined objectives for students. As the State Board of Education and the Education Oversight Committee review and approve standards, each cycle of updates improves the precision with which the state defines the learning expectations for students. South Carolina is also improving the tools by which we measure progress towards reaching objectives and to measure student progress towards proficiency.

Improving Instruction

The ESEA Flexibility Request opportunity supports the state's progression in improving the education profession. It provides an impetus for refining our teacher evaluation system to reflect the latest research and

- increase the precision with which we identify a teacher's effectiveness;
- incorporate the use of quantifiable student performance data to provide feedback quickly on how a teacher is performing over the course of the school year as well as long-term;
- personalize professional development so that our good teachers get better and our better teachers become the best they can be; and
- identify our strongest professionals for recognition and our weakest for effective interventions to improve their abilities.

Our plan will also enhance our principal evaluation system so that it better assesses a leader's specific performance in raising overall student achievement and his or her general performance in school leadership. Improving our educator evaluation systems by including multiple measures of student performance will lead to increased quality of instruction and greater student achievement.

South Carolina will hold educators to a higher standard. Continued failure will no longer be an option. We will identify, recognize, and reward those who perform well with the flexibility they need for continued success. Those who perform poorly will receive appropriate interventions so that they can serve our students more effectively.

Building Stronger Community Schools

The state is moving from a model that largely forces compliance on inputs to one that requires progress toward reaching attainable results. Our plan is to eliminate the disincentives that have cultivated low-performance so that we can leverage state and federal resources to build capacity in our lowest-performing schools. We will accomplish this, in part, by reducing the ineffective "treatments" that are imposed on struggling schools so that we can recruit and empower effective leaders for these schools where we most need to set a new course.

In schools where leaders demonstrate success, we plan to decrease the prescriptive nature of programmatic requirements; leaders who are getting results deserve a level of trust that reflects their hard work. Our highest-performing schools need far less government direction and, in some instances, intrusion. We will identify, recognize, and reward those who perform well with the flexibility they need for continued success.

The community stakeholder meetings (see Consultation above) demonstrated the strong commitment the citizens of South Carolina have for their community schools. The SCDE will continue such efforts to engage parents, community members, leaders, and other stakeholders to build stronger local support for our community schools.

Flexibility to Move Our Students Forward

South Carolina has made much improvement; yet we have far to go. The last decade reflects a focus by key decision makers in our state to reform education to better prepare students for work or higher education by

- aligning academic content with student's long-term career goals;
- implementing interventions to engage low-performing or at-risk students;
- expanding educational options to meet student needs rather than force them to fit into systems adults have created; and
- improving instructional practices to better equip educators to meet the challenge of preparing students for an ever changing and increasingly competitive world.

This request reflects our state's ambition to change so that our students can succeed. South Carolina will use the flexibility afforded through the waivers to target resources more effectively to increase student learning; to encourage, recognize, and reward success by schools and districts; to accurately identify low-performing schools through a refined accountability system; and to strengthen our teacher and principal evaluation systems. This flexibility request is a means to establish a comprehensive and coherent approach to align the state's professional development programs, state and federal accountability systems, student and school intervention programs, and educator evaluation systems. The request demonstrates how this flexibility will help the SCDE and the state's 86 school districts to align accountability and improvement initiatives.

In the request that follows, South Carolina presents its commitments to fulfill the requirements of each principle (Principle 4 is presented in Appendix D).

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

1.A ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B
☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)	☐ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4) ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level. (Attachment 5)

1.B TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

COMMITMENT 1: SOUTH CAROLINA WILL IMPLEMENT AND TRANSITION TO NEW COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS TO INCREASE QUALITY INSTRUCTION AND IMPROVE STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

South Carolina has adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (see Attachment 4) and will transition to and implement them by the 2013−14 school year. The CCSS complement initiatives already underway, as legislated through the South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-59-10 *et seq.* (Supp. 2011); see Appendix E), to match a student's school work with his or her career objectives. Hence, the CCSS will enhance the state's goal to increase the high school graduation rate through efforts to better prepare students for success after graduation, whether their preference is to immediately enter the workforce or to continue their education. (See Appendix C for a glossary of acronyms.)

Passed by the SC General Assembly and signed into law in 2005, the EEDA mandates a system to provide students with individualized educational, academic, and career-oriented choices and greater exposure to career information and opportunities. This system includes individual graduation plans, career clusters of study, career counseling, regional education centers, and a model for addressing at-risk students. We will discuss the specific ways that the EEDA complements the CCSS as details of the plan are presented in this section.

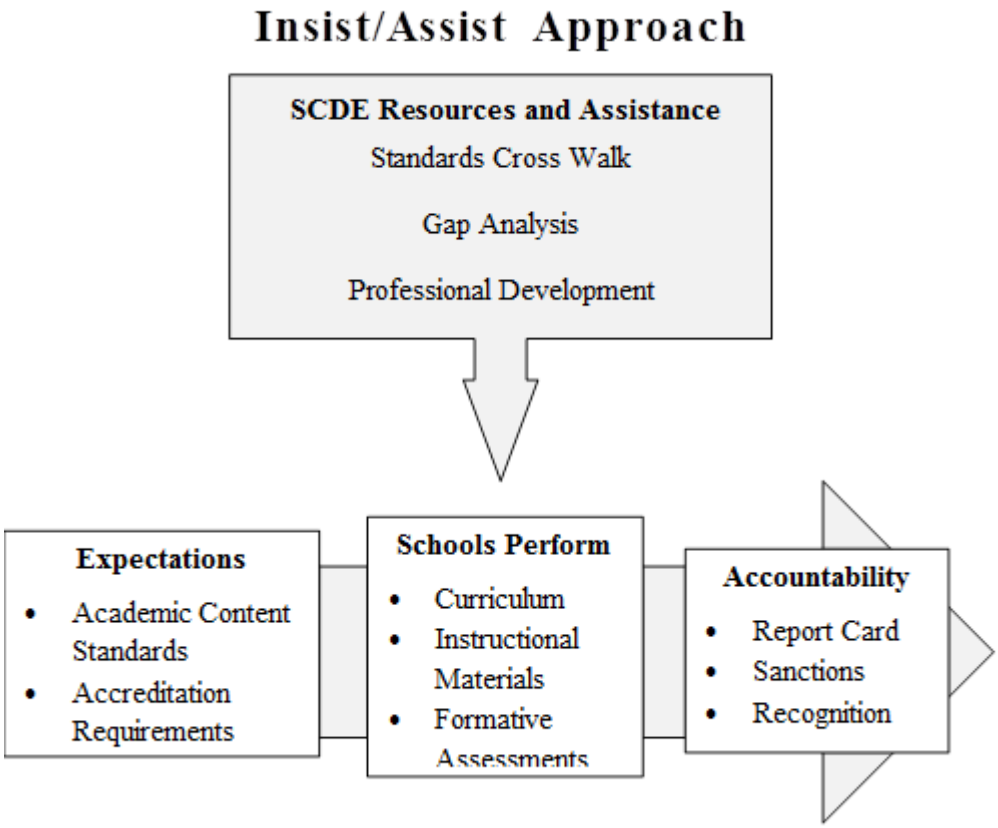
The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is charged with guiding the transition to and implementation of the CCSS and will use this opportunity to refine its processes for moving to new academic standards and delivering professional development, resources, and supports to the state's 86 public school districts. Through this process, the SCDE will work to better coordinate with school districts, institutions of higher education, parents, parent organizations, and business and community organizations, especially those representing special student populations and historically underrepresented groups.

In guiding the transition to the new standards, the SCDE will also focus on better intra-office collaboration while transitioning to and implementing the CCSS. Offices within the Division of Accountability (Assessment, Data Management and Analysis, Exceptional Children, Federal and State Accountability), Division of School Effectiveness (e-Learning, Leader Effectiveness, Teacher Effectiveness), and the Office of Policy and Research (Standards and Curriculum) will work together to develop more efficient and effective processes that can form a model for transitioning to and implementing future curriculum standards.

The SCDE would like to see the CCSS transform instruction and learning in South Carolina schools. While the CCSS are rigorous, their power to change instruction and learning hinges on how well superintendents, district and school administrators, principals, teachers, other educators and education professionals, parents, students, schools of education, business leaders, and community members understand the role the new standards play in improving educational outcomes for all students. Our approach for implementing and transitioning to the new standards is to leverage these multiple points of influence on instruction and learning to focus on achieving the state's goal of increasing the high school graduation rate. If any group does not understand the role the standards play, the impetus to change is lessened.

The CCSS will help make English language arts (ELA) and mathematics courses more relevant to and challenging for students as they place greater emphasis on academic content, such as informational texts and problem solving, that develop skills all students need when they finish high school.

To support South Carolina's 86 districts and more than 1,100 public schools, the SCDE adheres to an insist/assist approach (see graphic below), in part because, historically and culturally, the state places high value on preserving local control in many policy issues. Within education, the state sets high standards and expectations for students, teachers, and schools; sets metrics for performance expectations; and then holds schools and districts accountable for their performance. The state does not mandate curriculum, professional development courses, formative test selections, and a whole host of other local decisions that drive instruction. The SCDE does insist on high quality performance, and we offer strong assistance and support (including curriculum models, timelines for testing changes, etc.) where it is needed.



A benefit of the insist/assist approach is that it places the focus for educating students where it should be—in the community at each school site. The SCDE exists to build capacity where it is needed and to push resources out to the frontlines—to teachers, administrators, principals, and superintendents—as efficiently and effectively as possible.

To guide the transition to and implementation of the CCSS, the SCDE has developed an Implementation Timeline that culminates with the new standards in ELA and mathematics guiding instruction statewide beginning with the 2013−14 school year.

Common Core State Standards Implementation Timeline Outline	
School Year	**Implementation Phase**
2010−11	Planning, Awareness, and Alignment
2011−12	Transition and Professional Development
2012−13	Transition and Professional Development
2013−14	Implementation (Bridge Year)
2014−15	Full Implementation

In South Carolina, our plan to implement Common Core State Standards incorporates the use of a bridge year in 2013-14. During the 2013-14 school year, all schools in all districts will use the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and for mathematics to guide instruction. The SCDE identifies the 2013-14 school year as a bridge year referring to the transition from the use of the current state developed assessments to a new test developed to align to the Common Core State Standards. South Carolina will continue using the state developed assessments in 2013-14, limiting test items to those that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The South Carolina State Board of Education has adopted the assessment that is being developed by Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortia (refer to page 47, *Assessments of the Common Core State Standards*) to replace the state developed assessments for English language arts and mathematics. However, the Smarter Balanced assessment will not be available for state use until the 2014-15 school year. South Carolina refers to the 2014-15 school year as the year of full implementation for Common Core State Standards as it is the year in which the standards will be used to guide instruction and tested using the Smarter Balanced assessment.

During the community stakeholder meetings and public comment period, much of the feedback regarding the implementation of the CCSS centered on whether the state has the capacity to implement the new standards and if it is moving quickly enough to fully implement by the start of the 2014−15 school year. Such feedback reflects how capacity varies from district to district across the state. The school districts that are well-situated to implement the CCSS are anxious for the entire state to move more rapidly. However, those that recognize the challenges that the CCSS represent in the way of needed professional development and changes to assessment question the state's readiness to move forward with initiating implementation by the 2013−14 bridge year.

In response to the feedback from districts, administrators, and teachers, the SCDE has

- developed a Common Core State Standards in South Carolina website (http://ed.sc.gov/agency/pr/standards-and-curriculum/South_Carolina_Common_Core.cfm) to enable 24/7 access to the state's implementation timeline and other useful resources to help all teachers, schools, and districts as they prepare for full implementation by the 2014−15

school year; and

- added a process for sharing sample implementation timelines so that districts can see the different approaches to implementing the CCSS. We will post these samples to the Common Core in South Carolina website in early spring 2012, and will incorporate them into the professional development and support that the SCDE's Office of Teacher Effectiveness will provide to districts.

The state's approach to the transition to and implementation of the CCSS is balanced, reflecting our continued commitment to an insist/assist approach and the state's disposition towards local control. The SCDE will insist on implementation by the 2013−14 school year; we have communicated that expectation thoroughly and frequently. However, we will provide a customized assortment of support to assist districts in building their capacity to attain and sustain high-quality instructional practices through the implementation of the CCSS.

While the SCDE recognizes that some districts are ready to implement and should not be prevented nor delayed in their desire to move forward, we caution these districts regarding the timeline for changes in assessment for accountability but encourage them to move forward as their capacity allows.

The work plan (see page 47) for implementation and transition provides milestones to keeping all involved stakeholders on track to move from using the current South Carolina academic standards for mathematics and ELA to using the CCSS for ELA and mathematics to guide instruction.

In school year 2010−11, the SCDE provided training to increase awareness among school district personnel on the strengths of the CCSS, how they align with current state standards, and ways in which content will transfer from different grade levels, emphasis, and rigor.

School years 2011−12 and 2012−13 are capacity-building years. As mentioned previously, not all of our districts are equal in their ability to provide their teachers training in the content mastery and pedagogical strategies necessary to successfully implement the CCSS. The SCDE will take the time necessary to assist districts in developing transition plans to help them build their capacity to sustain the transition to and support for the CCSS in their schools.

The first year in which the state will modify its assessment to reflect the CCSS is the 2013−14 school year. During this year, we will only assess content that is shared across the current standards and CCSS. Teachers are expected to use the CCSS to guide instruction in 2013−14.

By 2014−15, the state will no longer support the use of the now current state standards for mathematics and ELA. The state will only support the CCSS. The state will no longer use the state-developed summative assessment. It will use the assessment that will have been developed by the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium.

<u>Alignment between South Carolina's Current Standards and the Common Core State</u>

Standards

South Carolina engaged in a thorough process to analyze the alignment between the state's current content standards and the CCSS prior to adopting these new standards in the summer of 2010. However, as was revealed by questions that parents, teachers, and others posed during the statewide community stakeholder meetings in January 2012, the public needs more information both on how the state adopted the CCSS and how it will assist its 86 school districts in the implementation of and transition to using and assessing these new standards for ELA and mathematics.

In South Carolina, the process for review and adoption of state standards and assessments is defined in the Education Accountability Act (EAA; see Appendix B). Passed in 1998, the EAA establishes the subject areas in which standards are set and establishes the accountability system by which schools and student performance are measured. This state statute requires that the South Carolina State Board of Education, in consultation with the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC), review state standards and assessments every seven years to ensure that they maintain a high level of expectation for learning and teaching. This cyclical review process places a high premium on active participation by a variety of stakeholders. Prior to the development of the CCSS, the state most recently completed reviews of mathematics in 2007 and ELA in 2008.

Although the CCSS initiative began earlier, the SCDE began working with the EOC regarding adoption of these standards in 2009 in preparing its initial application for the Race to the Top grant for submission to the US Department of Education in January 2010. A requirement of the Race to the Top program was that states demonstrate their commitment to and progress toward adopting a common set of K−12 standards.

In November 2009, staff from the SCDE and the EOC attended a meeting that the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association jointly convened to provide details about the Common Core State Standards Initiative and the timeline for adopting the standards. During this meeting, the EOC and SCDE representatives considered the implications of the timeline for adoption and decided to request a joint meeting of the State Board of Education and the EOC to update all members on the initiative and the timeline; this meeting was held on February 8, 2010.

The SCDE established a Leadership Team to recruit two review panels, one for ELA and one for mathematics, to examine the draft CCSS documents. To ensure a variety of stakeholders, the team solicited nominations to the panels from the State Board of Education, the EOC, and the state's public school districts; nominations included teachers, school and district administrators, and representatives from higher education and professional organizations. SCDE staff assigned the nominees to one of the two review panels. Because the CCSS ELA standards integrate content from science and social studies to foster thematic instruction and real-life types of problem solving, staff convened science and social studies practitioners to consider the inclusion of science and social studies content in the ELA standards and discuss implications of those content areas if the CCSS were adopted.

The two review panels carefully compared the CCSS content and format to current South Carolina standards for ELA and mathematics. This review and alignment process focused on the criteria of comprehensiveness and balance, rigor, measurability, manageability, organization, and communication. Each review panel conducted a standard-by-standard review of its respective CCSS standards (ELA or mathematics) for the assigned grade levels, calculating the percentage that align with the state's standards. This analysis culminated in a report on the alignment between the two sets of standards and an assessment of whether the CCSS are at least as rigorous as current state standards (Appendix F).

In many cases, the CCSS aligned with but exceeded the rigor of the current South Carolina standards for ELA and mathematics. Where the review panels identified differences, they convened a working group of their respective panels, recruited additional members for their expertise, and continued meeting to determine whether action was needed to address the specific differences between the two sets of standards. Subsequently, these working groups made recommendations based on what is crucial to student learning and what is necessary for success in subsequent grade levels.

As a result of this review and alignment process, South Carolina deemed that the differences between the current state standards for ELA and mathematics and the CCSS did warrant adoption without modifications. Thus, in July 2010, South Carolina adopted the *Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts* and *Common Core State Standards for Mathematics* (see Attachment 4) The recommendations of the review panels have guided the timeline for implementation.

Ensuring Success for All Students

South Carolina's college- and career-readiness aspirations extend to all students, including those who need additional support and consideration because English is not their first language or due to a disability. To help ensure that we effectively analyze the linguistic demands of the CCSS to inform development of corresponding standards specific to these students that enable their success, the SCDE is actively participating in two organizations, the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (www.wida.us/) and the National Center and State Collaborative (www.cehd.umn.edu/nceo/projects/NCSC/NCSC.html).

The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium (WIDA) is comprised of 27 member states. It supports academic language development and academic achievement for linguistically diverse students through high-quality standards, assessments, research, and professional development for educators. Already WIDA has conducted an alignment study (www.wida.us/Research/agenda/Alignment) that found adequate linkage between the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards (2007 edition) and the CCSS for ELA, which suggests that the WIDA standards are an option for consideration as South Carolina revises its English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) standards to align them with CCSS for ELA. WIDA's timeline for revising its CCSS-aligned standards coincides with the

state's timeline for the full implementation of the new standards for all of our students (pilot testing in 2012−13, standards revised and field testing by 2013−14, and full implementation by 2014−15).

When last updated in 2006, South Carolina's ESOL standards were closely aligned to the state's 2001 ELA standards. The SCDE will work with the State Board of Education and the EOC to analyze the linguistic demands of the CCSS in ELA to develop aligned ESOL standards that can be used by both ESOL and English immersion content teachers and address social and academic language development across the four language domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in the major content disciplines. Adoption of the WIDA standards will be considered as part of this process.

The SCDE is continuing to analyze the learning and accommodation factors necessary to ensure that students with disabilities will have the opportunity to access learning content aligned with the CCSS. The SCDE will ensure that all activities related to the CCSS, including outreach, dissemination, and professional development, address the needs of students with disabilities. The SCDE also plans to analyze the learning factors necessary to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities have access to the CCSS at reduced levels of complexity.

South Carolina is working with the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) to develop an alternative assessment on alternate achievement standards aligned to the CCSS. South Carolina is a partner state in the NCSC, a consortia funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs General Supervision Enhancement Grant to develop a system of support, including assessment, curriculum, instruction, and professional development, to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities graduate from high school ready for post-secondary options.

Currently, staff in the SCDE's Office of Assessment and Office of Exceptional Children (within the Division of Accountability) are participating with the NCSC to analyze the learning and accommodation factors necessary to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities will have the opportunity to achieve the CCSS in ELA and mathematics. This work includes developing linkages to the CCSS in ELA and mathematics, known as Common Core Connectors, which will be the basis of instruction and assessment for students who participate in the alternate assessment aligned to the CCSS. The SCDE has established a 30-member community of practitioners, which includes special educators and other stakeholders, to support implementation of professional development related to instruction based on the CCSS for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Following a timeline that coincides with the full implementation of the CCSS in South Carolina, the NCSC member states will use the Common Core Connectors to guide instruction by the 2013−14 school year, field test assessment items aligned to the CCSS through the Common Core Connectors, and fully implement the alternate assessment aligned to the CCSS by the 2014−15 school year.

Educating Stakeholders on the Common Core State Standards

South Carolina is using multiple approaches to inform stakeholders statewide about the CCSS. Our outreach entails making educators aware of the importance of fully implementing the CCSS, involving the larger community that supports schools through the state's Regional Education Centers, and communicating to parents through a network of programs to ensure that they are on board with preparing their children for the new standards. In addition to the professional development and supports that the Office of Teacher Effectiveness is providing (to be detailed later in this section), the SCDE is providing resources to educators and administrators digitally via the state's educational television network and the SCDE's website and leveraging the resources of partnering state and community organizations to inform families, businesses, and institutions of higher education at the local level.

Beginning in 2011, the SCDE released its *Implementing Common Core State Standards for South Carolina* video series through StreamlineSC. A free resource available to all public, private, and home schools in the state, StreamlineSC is a partnership between South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV), the SCDE, and the K−12 Technology Initiative to improve and manage learning resources in the state's schools. This release reflects the SCDE's commitment to using a digital platform to enable a more customized approach to deploying CCSS professional development.

Many of the state's principals, instructional leaders, and district administrators are using the *Implementing the Common Core State Standards for South Carolina* videos to develop their plans for implementing the CCSS. The series has reinforced to superintendents the importance of establishing strong district implementation teams to lead their schools through the transition to the CCSS. District instructional leaders are using the videos to help them assess their district's human resource capacity to implement the CCSS. For most South Carolina school districts, the issue for educators is not a matter of having enough teachers, but rather a matter of retraining teachers to have the right skills in terms of subject content and pedagogical strategies.

The SCDE will begin public engagement activities in spring 2013 to help parents and the general public more clearly understand the impact the CCSS will have on instruction. These activities will focus on the importance of supporting students, especially children of less-engaged parents, through the CCSS implementation. This outreach will include information sessions similar to the community stakeholder meeting process in January 2012 (see Consultation section above) and digital distribution of information directly to stakeholders.

An important resource to help parents and families understand the CCSS is the Family Friendly Standards that the EOC and the SCDE have published and disseminated ever since the South Carolina Legislature passed the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act (www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t59c028.php) in 2001. The *South Carolina Family Friendly Standards* (http://scffs.org/) are a series of guides to help families understand the South Carolina academic standards; the guides are presented by grade level so that a family can access all of the academic standards for a given grade in one document. The *Family Friendly*

*Standar*ds are published in English and Spanish and are updated with each cyclical review of academic standards.

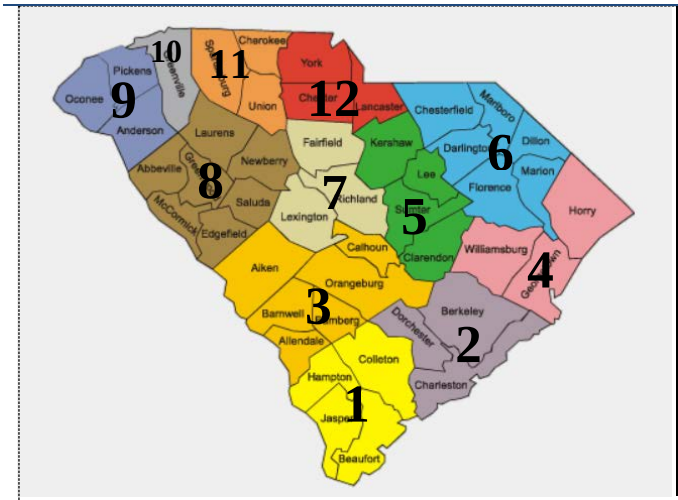
Rather than wait until the full implementation year of 2013−14 to provide *Family Friendly Standards* that reflect the CCSS, the SCDE and the EOC will provide updated *Family Friendly Standards* beginning in fall 2012. During the 2012−13 transition year, two versions of the *Family Friendly Standards* will be available—one that reflects the current state standards in ELA and mathematics as updated to include the social studies standards that the state adopted in 2011, and a second version that reflects the full implementation of the CCSS for all grades.

The SCDE plans additional outreach activities to complement the *South Carolina Family Friendly Standards* and communicate the value of the CCSS throughout the state. In March 2012, the SCDE's Office of Teacher Effectiveness will provide an informational resource for parents on the CCSS (Appendix G). We will make this resource available electronically to inform parents about the new standards, what they mean for students, and the state's plan for implementation. Another resource is the CCSS Support Site (http://scde.mrooms.org/index.php?page=27424) which provides a link to the National PTA website where parents can access *Parent Guides to Student Success* (http://www.pta.org/4446.htm).

Another component of the plan to inform and involve the larger community in the implementation of the CCSS is to work with the state's 12 Regional Education Centers. The EEDA established the Regional Education Centers to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of information, resources, and services to students, educators, employers, and the community (http://recs.sc.gov) by providing

- services to students and adults for career planning, employment seeking, training, and other support functions;
- information, resources, and professional development programs to educators;
- resources to school districts for compliance and accountability pursuant to the provisions of the EEDA; and
- information and resources to employers including, but not limited to, education partnerships, career-oriented learning, and training services.

The state's counties are clustered into 12 Regional Education Centers as indicated below.



Regional Education Centers Map Legend			
REC	**Color**	**REC**	**Color**
Lowcountry	**1**	Midlands	**7**
Trident	**2**	Upper Savannah	**8**
Lower Savannah	**3**	Pendleton	**9**
Waccamaw	**4**	Greenville	**10**
Santee-Lynches	**5**	Upstate	**11**
Pee Dee	**6**	Catawba	**12**

They work with school districts and institutions of higher education to create and coordinate workforce education programs. The local impact of the Regional Education Centers is driven by the composition of their Advisory Boards, as each consists of

- a school district superintendent;
- high school principal;
- local workforce investment board chairperson;
- technical college president;
- four-year college or university representative;
- career center director or school district career and technology education coordinator;
- parent-teacher organization representative; and
- business and civic leaders.

As the state moves towards using college- and career-ready standards to guide instruction, it stands to reason that Regional Education Centers will play a role in compelling leaders in their respective communities to see the impact that the CCSS and college- and career-ready expectations can have for the long-term viability of their communities.

The SCDE will also work with the state's Commission on Higher Education to inform institutions of higher education statewide about the transition to the CCSS. The Division of School Effectiveness has an established partnership with the state's colleges of education, regularly meeting with the deans through the South Carolina Education Deans Alliance and representatives from the Commission on Higher Education to exchange information. This forum allows the SCDE to keep the colleges of education aware of the impact the CCSS will have on the public education system.

Preparing Teachers to Teach All Students to the Common Core State Standards

South Carolina intends to provide professional development and other supports for the CCSS in a way that will prepare teachers to teach all students. Our plan is to provide professional development that will be customized for districts and schools so that they are able

to incorporate the use of multiple measures of student data, benefit from coordinated services from the SCDE, and understand how to incorporate CCSS-aligned instructional materials to teach the new standards.

South Carolina's system of delivering professional development is evolving. Over the next few years we will incorporate more targeted professional development to help teachers and principals understand how to use student performance data continuously to improve instruction. The South Carolina Longitudinal Information Center for Education—SLICE—will assist with this process.

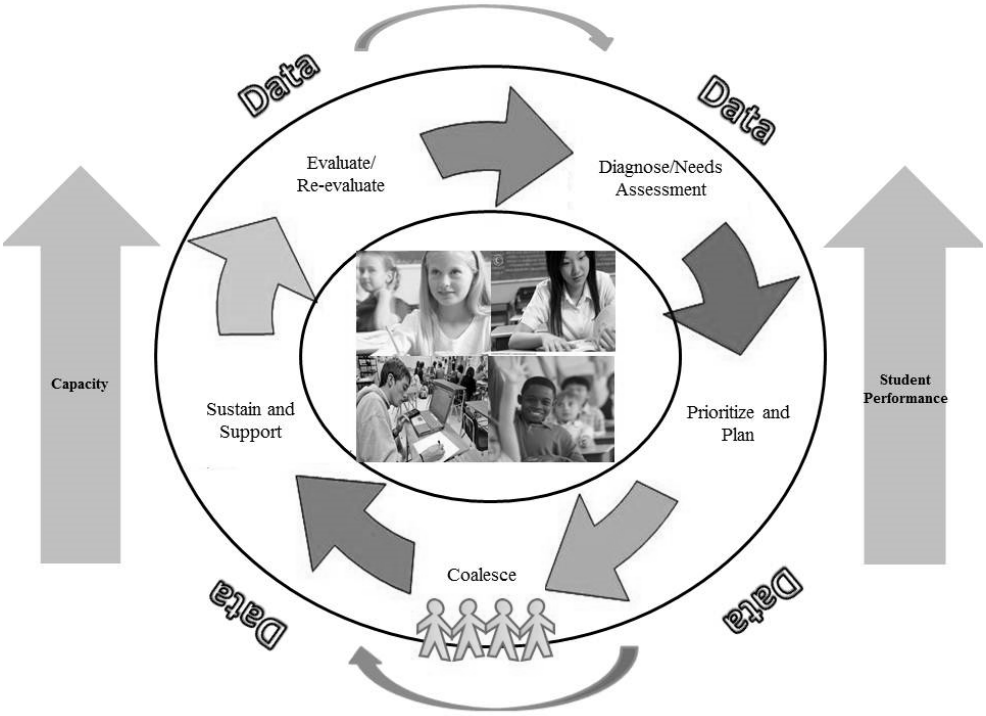
In 2006, the SCDE received a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant from the US Department of Education which allowed us to build a statewide data system to store and analyze educational data. In July 2010, the SCDE received a second SLDS grant to expand the use of educational data in decision-making at the school and classroom levels. When fully implemented, SLICE will provide access to educational data so that day-to-day decisions can be made about meeting individual student's needs. This web-based solution will inform teachers of specific student needs and will suggest educational strategies and activities to address those needs.

To provide data for informed decision-making related to individual students or groups of students, the SCDE developed the Student Potential Performance Snapshot (SPPS) and released it in SLICE. The SPPS is available to every school and district in the state, detailing information on every student to provide early warnings about low-performing students who are at-risk of not advancing to the next grade or of not graduating. The SPPS provides information for determining effective strategies and programs for improving academic performance and getting a student on course for graduation. The Enrich Assess system is another performance tool currently available in every district and school in the state to provide early warning of low-performing students through the analysis of academic assessments.

We want our teachers to be more effective at using multiple measures of student performance data to guide instruction. The SCDE will support teachers' capacity to use the assessments that they develop to check for student understanding. Over time, teachers will strengthen their ability to use the state-approved formative assessments as objective measures of how well students are progressing toward mastering the new standards.

When designing professional development offerings, the SCDE's Office of Teacher Effectiveness engages an implementation cycle: conducting an assessment of current needs, developing a plan of action, implementing the plan of action, and evaluating the plan of action's success based on outcomes, such as improved student performance and an increase in teacher effectiveness (see graphic below).

Professional Development Cycle



The CCSS professional development initiative is an example of the dynamic process of moving from development to delivery. Following this cycle, the Office of Teacher Effectiveness will offer professional development and other supports to districts using a hybrid delivery model.

To bridge the gap between development and delivery, the SCDE's Offices of Policy and Research and Teacher Effectiveness collaborated on a Timeline for Professional Development (Appendix H) to guide the transition to the CCSS.

The SCDE partnered with SEDL (Southwest Educational Developmental Laboratory), beginning in 2010−11, to develop video training modules to clarify the meaning of each of the CCSS standards and provide illustrations and samples to help teachers, schools, and states better understand implementing the new standards. CCSS Math Support is now available (http://secc.sedl.org/common_core_videos/) as a free resource for educators nationwide. We anticipate that SEDL will complete the remaining modules for all standards in both subjects by fall 2012.

In September 2011, the Office of Policy and Research reminded each district to establish a District Implementation Team, with representatives from each grade band and content area, to serve as the conduit for district-level support on the CCSS implementation. The District Implementation Teams are an example of the "train-the-trainer" delivery model

the SCDE uses to build internal capacity in districts and schools across the state. The designated leader of each District Implementation Team is the team's liaison with the SCDE.

Following the establishment of the District Implementation Teams, the SCDE released a video series to provide an overview of the CCSS and guide the creation of a district transition plan from the current state standards to the new standards.

In November 2011, the Office of Teacher Effectiveness held regional sessions throughout the state entitled *Common Core State Standards: Transitioning from Awareness to Implementation.* These sessions provided an overview of the SCDE's professional development delivery model for the CCSS and resources for developing or refining a district's plan for integrating the CCSS into classroom practice. Both the presentation and resources were provided electronically to assist the team leaders in planning professional learning opportunities for their District Implementation Team and teachers.

Following these sessions, the Office of Teacher Effectiveness surveyed District Implementation Team leaders using the CCSS for ELA and Mathematics Needs Assessment Survey (Appendix I), which is divided into three sections:

- Implementation Continuum,
- Guiding Questions, and
- Customized Assistance.

From this needs assessment, the SCDE developed a professional development plan to both meet the identified needs and have the greatest statewide impact. Two new resources resulting from this process are

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Support Site (http://scde.mrooms.org/index.php?page=27424)—maintained by the SCDE's Office of eLearning, this digital platform makes a variety of resources and supports accessible 24/7 and enables continuous feedback on implementation from the SCDE.
- The Common Core State Standards Professional Development Series (Appendix J)—the Office of Teacher Effectiveness will present these face-to-face sessions regionally throughout the state. To accommodate remote/off-site participants, the sessions will be web streamed live and also recorded and archived on the CCSS Support Site to facilitate access by those unable to participate at the scheduled time. Virtual follow-up sessions will be held via discussion threads and blog posts on the CCSS Support Site.

Based on ongoing virtual updates from the District Implementation Teams, the Office of Teacher Effectiveness will collaborate with other SCDE offices to develop offerings for summer 2012. The new K−2 standards for both ELA and mathematics will be a specific focus of the summer sessions.

In winter 2012, the SCDE will expand its partnership with SEDL to provide high quality resources to support the Office of Teacher Effectiveness as it works with districts, institutions of higher education, and private vendors to ensure that the districts are developing high-quality transition plans for implementing the CCSS.

As the 2012−13 school year begins, the SCDE will survey districts on their transition status and results of their transition efforts. The Office of Teacher Effectiveness will continue to provide customized and targeted professional development services to schools using a tiered system of support. Throughout the year, the SCDE will continue monitoring the efforts of other states, maintain contact with national organizations, and explore school leadership needs through its Office of School Transformation in an effort to assess and evaluate our programs and services.

The SCDE is also partnering with the state's schools of education to provide support to schools and districts on the implementation of CCSS. Many of the state's colleges of education have long standing partnerships with school districts that will help facilitate these professional development opportunities. The collaboration between the SCDE and the colleges of education will help ensure all districts receive the assistance and services they need to be successful.

The SCDE's Division of School Effectiveness regularly meets with the South Carolina Education Deans Alliance, which is comprised of the leadership of the state's 31 colleges of education. These regular meetings provide a forum for exchanging information and synchronizing efforts. Already, the Division and the Deans Alliance have had initial discussions on the CCSS implementation, and they will continue to collaborate to create and deliver an action plan for serving the needs of South Carolina's school districts, administrators, and teachers as they transition to and implement the new standards.

South Carolina has incorporated strengthening the system of support for students with disabilities (SWD) and English language learners (ELL) into its plan for the implementation of CCSS. Within the SCDE, the Office of Teacher Effectiveness will work cross-divisionally with the Office of Exceptional Children to deliver professional development on serving SWD and with the Office of Federal and State Accountability to deliver similar professional development models on serving ELL.

With both populations, our approach is to help all teachers understand their responsibility to serve these students and to empower teachers by embedding differentiated strategies that benefit SWD and ELL students into all of the professional development training that the SCDE provides. By offering customized professional development for teachers, the SCDE strives to encourage teachers to design instructional support that is customized or tailored to meet a student's needs.

The SCDE will also work with the District Implementation Teams to ensure that the learning and accommodation factors necessary for ELL students to be successful are in place. Our plan embeds support for and training on instructional strategies for ELL students into the general content training that the Office of Teacher Effectiveness currently conducts. This will build on and strengthen the training that the Office of Federal and State Accountability's ESOL program conducts.

Currently the ESOL program offers separate professional development on effective

strategies to support ELL students. The program conducts two or three meetings per year at the state level and disseminates a five-part series through the state's Instructional Television (ITV) network. The content of the training is included in the Teacher Resources (http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/90/TeacherResources.cfm) that we share with all educators. This training is separate from other professional development that content area teachers attend.

The SCDE's Office of Exceptional Children serves students with special needs and offers professional development on effective strategies to support this population. This training is separate from other professional development that content area teachers receive. The program conducts two or three meetings per year at the state level and provides onsite training for districts that request the service.

Our plan to implement the CCSS supports our continuing efforts to engage low-performing students, improve their academic performance, and keep them on course to graduate from high school. Relevant, challenging standards, customized education programs, sound at-risk interventions, and effective professional development combine to drive increased student achievement among low-performing students.

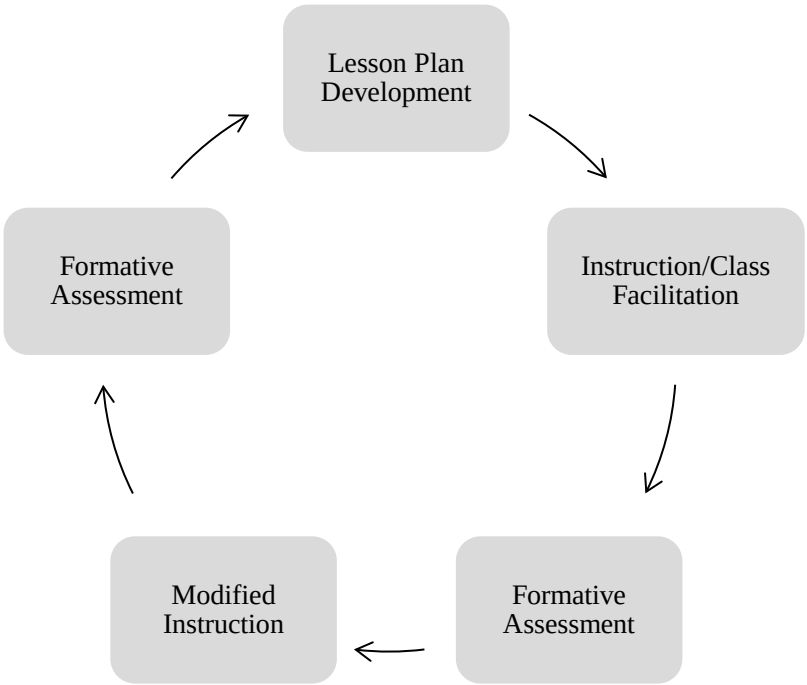
In South Carolina, we believe all students can learn. When students are not performing well, we consider external factors such as the structure of their schedules, the instructional strategies their teachers use, and the overall environments in which they live and attend school. We also consider internal factors—the student's knowledge, skills, motivation, and aspirations. Our state recognizes that doing the same things the same way will not raise student achievement. Instead, we search for ways to create an educational experience for low-performing students by varying the external and, to the extent possible, internal factors that place the student at-risk.

As part of the EEDA, the state created the *Personal Pathways to Success: At-Risk Student Intervention Implementation Guide* (http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/174/documents/AtRiskStudentGuide2.pdf) to help schools identify effective programs that are designed to prevent at-risk students from dropping out of high school. This guide evaluates programs using National Dropout Prevention Center's strategies and external research assessments of the data available for each program. Each high school in the state must implement an at-risk student intervention program that is approved by the SCDE to help decrease their drop-out rate.

To assist schools and districts with identifying students and appropriate interventions, the SPPS identifies characteristics that put students at risk of dropping out, including specific attendance issues, discipline problems, and low academic performance. The SPPS identifies areas of need for interventions designed to help the student improve and to motivate the student to stay in school. Every district, school, and student has a calculated South Carolina Risk Index based on ten at-risk characteristics. The ten characteristics are a sub-set of 22 at-risk characteristics that the SPPS can monitor for a student.

The EAA requires that all schools offer a formative assessment during the course of the school year. Most of our schools offer these assessments two or more times a year. SLICE will serve as a real-time data portal that will allow the administration of each state-approved formative assessment to serve as a data collection point that will empower principals, superintendents, and SCDE student intervention specialists to identify places where student progress is not projected to reach the state expectation of standards mastery. SLICE provides access to data on long-term student performance down to the individual student. Sharing information this way allows for meaningful communication so that the state testing system will no longer serve as an account of what did or did not take place during the school year. Rather, the state can more effectively hone the professional development services that we offer specific districts, schools, or teachers by acquiring timely, reliable data. This process will not be tied to any form of sanctions for schools or teachers.

Student Performance Feedback Loop



We believe that this continuous feedback loop will contribute to the improved performance of ELL, SWD, and low-performing students by serving as an early warning signal that will empower the state to more effectively customize the professional development we offer to districts, schools, and teachers. Principals will also be able to more seamlessly combine the use of information on student performance with the program evaluation of various student interventions and programs to more effectively determine the impact interventions and programs have on participating students. The SCDE will update the professional development we offer principals on how SLICE can improve their effectiveness as instructional and program leaders in their schools. As we expand SLICE, the SCDE will update its professional development to incorporate the use of this powerful tool.

SLICE expands on what some schools are already doing. For example, 59 schools in the state are using the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP™). TAP™ uses student performance data to develop customized professional development for participating educators. This professional development is crafted to fit a teacher's needs based on the performance of his or her students. This is also true of schools that have partnered with Edison Learning where educators and students are taught to use student performance to inform instructional practices. While it is very much up to local leaders in schools to determine which specific models to use, the SCDE can assist schools by developing agency and, consequently, district capacity to more effectively use accurate student performance data to provide educators professional development that will ensure that all of their students benefit from the implementation of the CCSS.

However, the SCDE is not waiting for the full expansion of SLICE to update our professional development to reflect the adoption of the CCSS. While school performance on the current ELA and mathematic standards may not predict performance on the CCSS ELA and mathematics, we believe schools that have not performed well on the current ELA and mathematics standards should receive targeted assistance as they prepare to implement the CCSS. Below we describe the process by which the SCDE is providing professional development to assist teachers and principals in preparing for the CCSS to guide instruction. Our customization incorporates attention to past school performance to identify instances where strategies to address special populations need to be incorporated into the professional development services.

As needed, the Office of Teacher Effectiveness will coordinate with the Offices of Exceptional Children, School Transformation, Student Interventions, and Federal and State Accountability to assist districts and schools in a coordinated system of support.

Preparing Principals to Lead Based on the Common Core State Standards

To successfully implement the CCSS, school leaders must prioritize changing instruction in their schools. South Carolina has long recognized the importance of developing strong school leaders; indeed, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-24-50 (2004) mandates "continuous professional development programs which meet national standards for professional development and focus on the improvement of teaching and learning…." These programs must "provide training, modeling, and coaching on effective instructional leadership as it pertains to instructional leadership and school-based improvement…."

In fulfillment of this state mandate, the mission of the Office of Leader Effectiveness is to improve school and student achievement by enhancing the effectiveness of school leaders in South Carolina. The Office offers the Leadership Development Continuum for school leaders based on proven research on educational leadership practices in order to provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.

The Office of Leader Effectiveness leadership continuum includes leadership education and training for administrators at all phases of their careers. These professional

development opportunities begin with programs for teacher leaders and include tailored programs for assistant principals, principals, district staff, guidance personnel, media specialists, and superintendents. Programs last from one to two years and include both on-site and virtual experiences.

The Leadership Development Continuum consists of five learning strands which provide a framework for improving leader effectiveness:

- Leading Student Achievement,
- Leading Change,
- Leading Collaboration,
- Leading an Effective Organization, and
- Leading with Self-Knowledge.

The five learning strands intentionally begin with Leading Student Achievement as this strand is the primary objective and determinant of a truly effective school leader. To prepare school leaders to provide strong, supportive instructional leadership on the CCSS, the Leading Student Achievement strand will include the following: resources that assist the school leaders with locating high-quality instructional materials aligned to the new standards; face-to face networking and online discussions with other school leaders regarding the CCSS; methods to personalize the learning of each student, as well as personalize the professional growth of each staff member; and instructional strategies that add relevance to students' learning.

To ensure that future school leaders are well prepared to serve as instructional leaders based on the state's new college- and career-ready standards for the state, the SCDE's Division of School Effectiveness will emphasize CCSS in discussions with the Education Leadership Round Table, which is comprised of leaders of the eleven education leadership preparation programs in South Carolina.

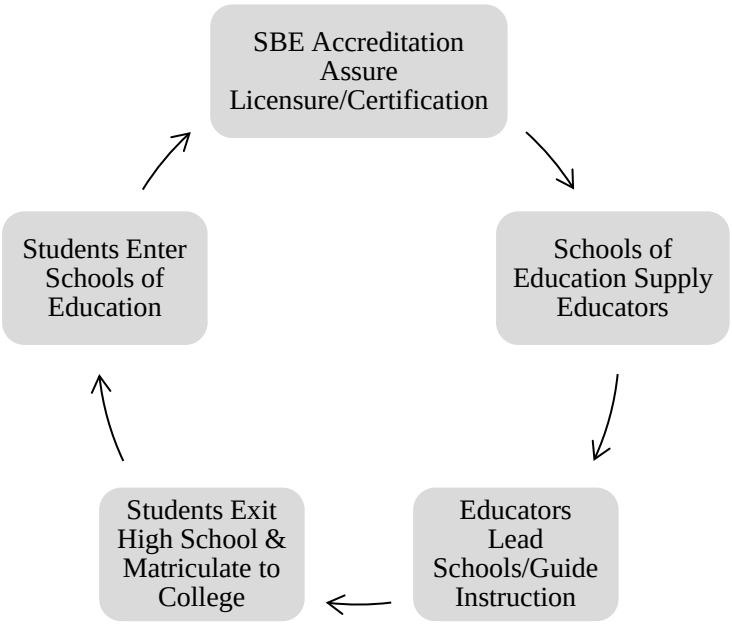
Working with South Carolina's Teacher and Principal Preparation Programs Regarding the Common Core State Standards

In addition to preparing veteran educators, it is critically important that newly licensed teachers be prepared for the heightened expectations of the new CCSS at the same time we prepare them for the reality that is the modern classroom. Annually, approximately one-third of new teachers are recent graduates of the state's schools of education. While the schools of education are not the only supply of new teachers, they are a substantial influence on the educator labor pool. Raising the quality of instruction is tied to teacher training; poorly trained teachers are not likely to offer high-quality instruction. Educators are second only to parents in the influence they have over student achievement. Consequently, it is essential that the SCDE, the Commission on Higher Education, and the institutions of higher education across the state collaborate on the state objective to increase the high school graduation rate.

The South Carolina State Board of Education is the accrediting body for schools of education that wish for their teacher candidates to attain certification and licensure upon program completion. This solidifies a partnership between the elementary and secondary

education system and the post-secondary education system in which the investment for effectiveness of educator certification programs returns to them in the students who eventually matriculate to their institutions of higher education (see graphic below).

Strong Schools of Education, Strong College Matriculants



The SCDE's Division of School Effectiveness will work closely with the state's educator preparation programs and institutions of higher education to ensure that all programs produce highly effective educators who have a deep understanding of the content contained in the state's new standards. The State Board of Education also plays an important role in driving the changes that will need to take place in the state's schools of education.

South Carolina's State Board of Education requires that all teacher education programs meet the performance-based standards as established by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Statutory authority to determine accreditation decisions for and impose sanctions against teacher education programs is granted to the State Board of Education. For State Board of Education approval, public institutions must seek and receive NCATE accreditation. Private institutions may seek NCATE accreditation or meet NCATE standards for State Board of Education approval. The SCDE develops guidelines to assist teacher education programs to meet the NCATE performance-based standards.

Through its Division of School Effectiveness, the SCDE routinely works with the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the institutions of higher education across the state to properly accredit institutions and to communicate standards implementation timelines and expectations. This coordination is essential to the partnership the SCDE and schools of education share in preparing teachers and educators who are new entrants to the

classroom or those changing the role they serve in the state's system of public schools.

The Division of School Effectiveness convenes a South Carolina Education Deans Alliance, which consists of the deans of the schools of education across the state. A representative from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education also participates in the Deans Alliance. The Deans Alliance is the mechanism by which the SCDE vets proposed changes to the requirements schools of education must meet in order for their programs to lead to certification for their teacher or principal candidates. The Deans Alliance also helps inform the deans of the schools of education on ways in which practices within the schools of education can better support the elementary and postsecondary schools that they indirectly serve. This relationship is an important one as it facilitates communication regarding changes in the classroom that are relevant to raising student achievement and increasing the quality of instruction.

Already, the Division of School Effectiveness and Deans Alliance have had an initial discussion on CCSS implementation. The schools of education will continue to collaborate to create and deliver an action plan for serving the needs of South Carolina school districts, administrators, and teachers as they implement the CCSS. In fall 2012, the SCDE will review and align its professional standards for teacher licensure with the new standards and indicators for teacher evaluation, which are linked to the state's standards. Together, these two strategies—formally updating accreditation and informally coordinating with the deans of the schools of education—will ensure that incoming teachers and administrative leaders are prepared to implement the new college- and career-ready standards in classrooms.

As mentioned previously, many schools of education have long-standing partnerships with districts that will help facilitate these professional development opportunities. The collaboration between the SCDE and the schools of education will help ensure all districts receive the assistance and services they need to be successful.

Various initiatives of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education strengthen our state's effort to improve the quality of instruction. The Improving Teacher Quality program is a collaboration between higher education and the pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade (P−12) system that will ensure that in-service teachers and principals are prepared to use CCSS. The Commission on Higher Education uses the funds provided by the Improving Teacher Quality program to conduct a competitive awards program, *Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High-Quality Teachers and Principals.* The program supports increasing student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in classrooms and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools by focusing on improving the content knowledge of the teachers and/or administrators in the content area they teach.

The Commission provides a competitive grants program to partnerships comprised, at a minimum, of schools of education and divisions of arts and sciences from higher education institutions along with one or more high-need school districts as identified by federal guidelines.

The Improving Teacher Quality program provides the Commission with the ability to expand its professional development offerings to the P−12 community to cover nine content areas and reach other school personnel. The program seeks to bring together higher education faculty and P−12 school personnel to foster mutually beneficial partnerships based on sustained professional development. The ultimate goal of the partnership is improved student achievement. The Commission on Higher Education has begun working with the SCDE to update the professional development provided under the *Improving Teacher Quality* program to reflect the CCSS.

Higher education collaboration for the implementation of the CCSS is also supported by South Carolina's Centers of Excellence program. The South Carolina General Assembly created the Centers of Excellence program to enable institutions of higher education to create state-of-the-art resource centers to improve teacher education. Resource centers develop and model state-of-the-art teaching practices, conduct research, disseminate information, and provide training for K−12 and higher education personnel in the Center's specific area of expertise.

Any institution of higher education in the state authorized by the State Board of Education to offer one or more degree programs at graduate or undergraduate levels for the preparation of teachers is eligible to apply. A Center must focus on the development and modeling of state-of-the-art teacher training programs (in-service and pre-service) at the host institution as well as serve as a catalyst for changing teacher training programs at other institutions of higher education which prepare and support teachers. A Center should enhance the institution's professional development programs as an integral part of its mission and focus services on low-performing schools as identified under the EAA's annual report cards.

The Centers of Excellence will foster the implementation of the CCSS by updating their models for teaching practices to reflect the instructional changes that are necessary for the CCSS to guide instruction by 2013−14. The SCDE and Commission on Higher Education will continue to work collaboratively on this effort.

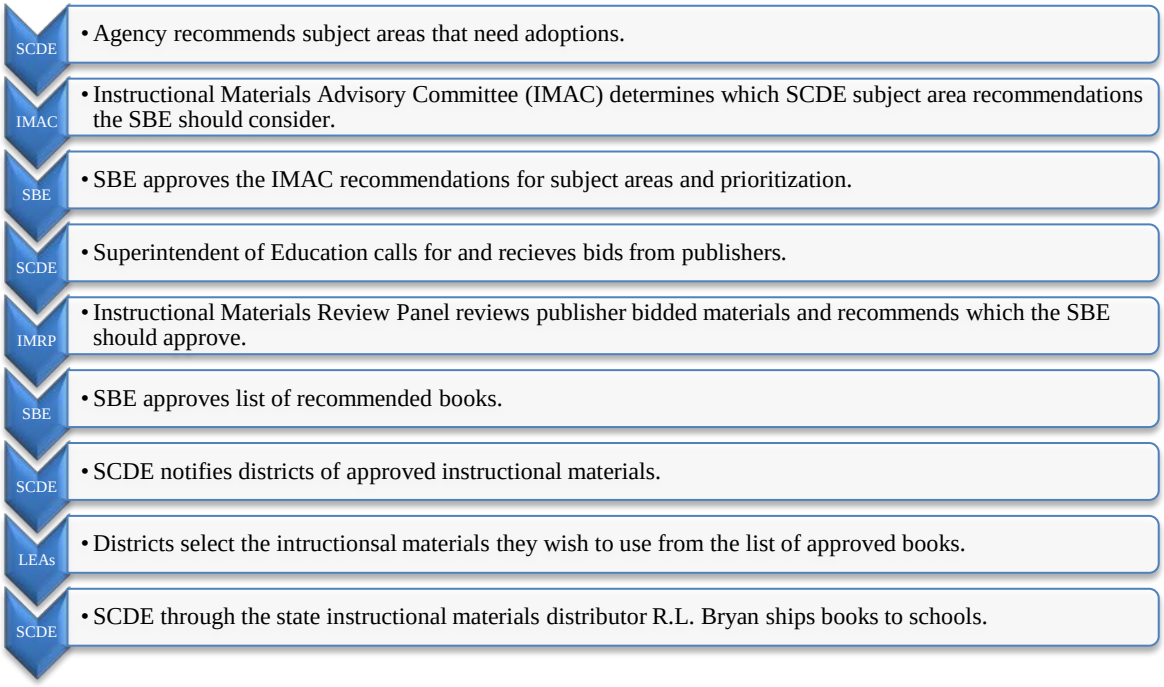
<u>Developing and Disseminating High-Quality Instructional Materials Aligned with the Common Core State Standards</u>

South Carolina's commitment to providing teachers and students with the instructional materials they need to effectively implement the CCSS is reflected in the SCDE's commitment to investing in instructional materials that will support the implementation of the standards. This comes at a time when the state is struggling with a recession that has limited the availability of resources. Additionally, the very concept of instructional materials is changing to reflect the digitization of content delivery and democratization of content development.

South Carolina has prioritized providing students and teachers with instructional materials that support implementing the CCSS as part of the state's existing practice for the instructional materials process that occurs any time the state adopts new standards. When new

academic content standards are adopted, state statute and regulations require that the State Board of Education evaluate the instructional materials currently in use in South Carolina classrooms to analyze whether or not existing books are aligned with the newly adopted standards. This process is conducted via the Instructional Materials Adoption Cycle. (http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/pr/standards-and-curriculum/documents/Instructional_Materials_Review_Process_10-24-11.pdf)

Instructional Materials Adoption Cycle



The Instructional Materials Adoption Cycle takes approximately 18 months from the initial meeting of the IMAC to the teachers receiving materials for use in her or his classroom.

The SCDE is investing in our students' futures by investing in instructional materials that are compatible with the CCSS. The following table presents the timeline for when instructional materials will be distributed to schools.

Common Core State Standards Instructional Materials Planning Timeline	
School Year 2012–13	
Summer 2012	ELA Kindergarten–Grade 2
	ELA Grade 3–5
	Algebra
	Geometry
	Calculus
	Probability and Statistics
	Discrete Math

School Year 2013−14	
Summer 2013	ELA Grades 6−8
	Math Kindergarten-Grade 5
School Year 2014−15	
Summer 2014	ELA Grades 9−12
	Math Algebra II
	Math Probability and Statistics

Courses to Prepare Students for College and a Career

The EEDA required the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education to convene the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs to address articulation agreements between school districts and public institutions of higher education in South Carolina to provide seamless pathways that adequately prepare students to move from high school directly into institutions of higher education. The law requires dual enrollment college courses offered to high school students by two-year and four-year colleges and universities to be the same in content and rigor to the equivalent college courses offered to college students and to be taught by appropriately credentialed faculty.

The Commission on Higher Education sets guidelines for offering dual enrollment coursework and their articulation to two-year and four-year colleges and universities, reporting annually on student participation in dual enrollment courses. The Commission has also created the South Carolina Transfer and Articulation Center (SC TRAC), a web portal designed to improve college course transfer and articulation in the State (see http://www.che.sc.gov/InfoCntr/PressRelFiles/ImprovingCollegeTransfer_Press_Release_032910.pdf). SC TRAC serves all public higher education students, including students who are participating in dual enrollment programs. The system helps students plan their education by giving them the ability to see how coursework earned at one college or university would apply at other institutions of higher learning within the state by providing easy access to transfer policies, transfer agreements, course equivalencies, and detailed and up-to-date information on degree pathways.

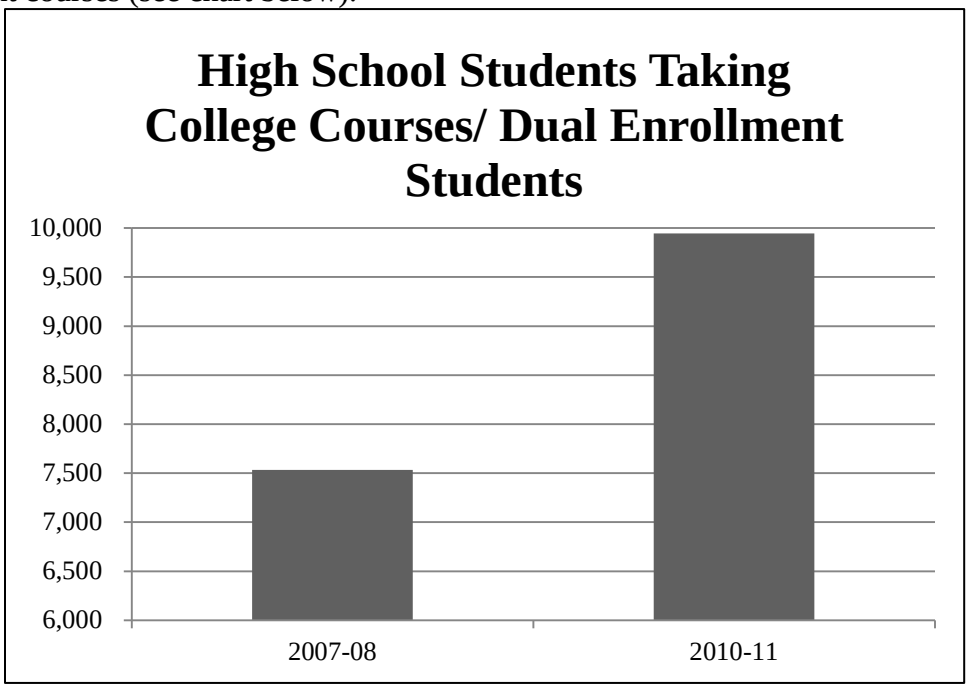
As of October 2011, SC TRAC was populated with approximately 551,000 course equivalencies and 770 transfer agreements between and among public institutions of higher education in the state. So strong is the service that the Commission provides that in 2011, the Postsecondary Electronic Standards Council (PESC) recognized SC TRAC as the winner of the PESC 12th Annual Competition for Best Practices (https://www.sctrac.org/portals/8/SCFiles/PESC%20BestPractices-Awards03-2011.pdf).

The EEDA is changing the expectations for high school student access to college credit-bearing courses and their prerequisites. Systems like SC TRAC support this increased demand by removing the barrier to access that was once represented by unclear or inconsistent course transfer policies, which made it difficult for students seeking to plan their courses. College-bound high school students may also take advantage of SC TRAC to

- learn about each public college and university in South Carolina;

- learn about the programs (majors, minors, and concentrations) and degrees offered at each public college and university;
- discover how college credit will be awarded for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) exams; and
- discover how college credit will be awarded for dual enrollment and other college courses taken while in high school.

South Carolina is seeing an increase in the number of students participating in dual enrollment courses (see chart below).

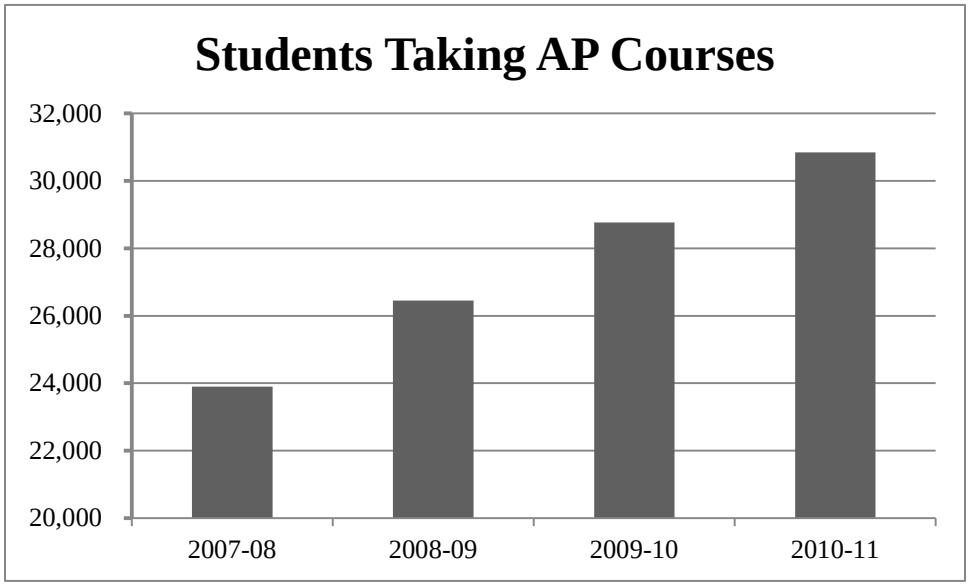


Since 1984, each school district in South Carolina has been required to provide Advanced Placement (AP) courses in all secondary schools that include grade 11 or 12. These classes prepare students for the national AP examinations. Students who score 3, 4, or 5 on an AP exam, in many instances, are considered qualified to receive credit for the equivalent course(s) at colleges and universities that give credit for AP exams. In accordance with state policy, all public colleges and universities in South Carolina award credit for AP exams with scores of 3 or higher.

South Carolina is increasing the number of students taking AP courses, the number of students taking AP exams, and the number of exams with scores of 3 to 5 (see chart below: "Students Taking AP Courses"). We believe this represents an increased expectation of college and career readiness among students and parents alike.

The number of exams taken in South Carolina public schools rose from nearly 24,000 in 2008 to 30,845 in 2011, an increase of 28.5 percent. Of South Carolina public school students taking AP examinations in 2011, 56 percent earned scores of 3 or higher (17,424 out

of 30,845); this equals the national percentage of 56 percent of examinations with scores of 3 or higher for public school students during the same period.



Assessments of the Common Core State Standards

South Carolina's EAA requires that the State Board of Education, through the SCDE, develop or adopt a statewide assessment program to promote student learning and to measure student performance on state standards. To assist the State Board of Education in making an informed decision about the CCSS assessments, the SCDE formed an Assessment Study Group in 2011 and contracted for an independent fiscal impact study.

The Assessment Study Group was charged with studying four assessment options and reporting on the strengths and weaknesses of each option:

- Developing and administering home-grown assessments. Home-grown assessments are developed by the SCDE through contracts with testing companies. Assessments may be administered online and/or using paper tests.
- Administering off-the-shelf assessments. Off-the-shelf assessments are developed by a testing company and then purchased by the user. Assessments may be administered online and/or using paper tests.
- Administering assessments developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Assessments will be administered online with the possibility of a paper-testing option.
- Administering assessments developed by the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Assessments will be administered online. During the first three years, paper tests will be available on a limited basis to schools that are not computer-ready.

The SBAC (http://www.k12.wa.us/smarter) and PARCC (http://parcconline.org/) are

state-led consortia in which multiple states are collaborating to develop next-generation assessments aligned to the CCSS. South Carolina is a participating state in both consortia (see Attachment 6).

The Assessment Study Group presented its report to the State Board of Education on November 10, 2011. Likewise, the results of the fiscal impact study on the costs for the four options were provided to the State Board of Education on January 11, 2012.

The SCDE's analysis determined that assessments currently administered in South Carolina as part of the statewide assessment program are not aligned to the CCSS. These assessments include the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) administered in grades 3 through 8, the High School Assessment Program (HSAP) administered to high school students and used as an exit examination, and the End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) administered to students when they complete gateway courses.

In evaluating the current assessments, the SCDE determined that the best way to increase the rigor of the state's assessments and their alignment with the CCSS is to adopt the assessments being developed by the SBAC for administration beginning in 2014–15 and to become a governing state with the SBAC. By adopting the assessments being developed by the SBAC, the SCDE is revising our current assessments to better align the state's assessments with the CCSS. (As of June 2012, South Carolina is a governing state in SBAC.)

The SCDE plans to continue to administer its statewide system of summative and formative assessments and gradually transition to the content between 2013–14 and 2014–15 to reflect the new CCSS in ELA and mathematics. This approach was carefully designed to ensure that students and their teachers are not unfairly penalized as they adjust to the new standards. In 2011–12 and 2012−13, tests will only contain content that addresses the South Carolina Academic Standards for English Language Arts (2008) and Mathematics (2007). In 2013−14, the state will test items that are part of the South Carolina standards and that also appear in the CCSS for ELA and mathematics, and 2013−14 will serve as a bridge year for assessment.

The SBAC will pilot and field-test assessment items in years prior to 2014–15. Items that are very different from those used on large-scale assessments in South Carolina will be piloted to students to assess whether the items function properly. Item data from the field testing will be used in making test design decisions and determining test form difficulties.

In 2014−15 new assessments aligned to the CCSS are to be administered so that the entire ELA and mathematics assessment will be based on the new standards.

Adopting an assessment that is aligned with the CCSS will help the state determine the impact that the CCSS has, not only on the high school graduation rate but also on how well our state prepares students for college. Each public school student in South Carolina is assigned a unique student identifier that is tied to their performance throughout the course of their K−12 career. From grade 3, the state will be able to use SLICE to evaluate the impact of

the specific courses a student has taken and the interventions that they have received on their long-term performance. The Governing Partners in SLICE include the Department of Employment and Workforce, the Commission on Higher Education, and the South Carolina Board of Technical Colleges. Using SLICE as the platform, the SCDE will be able to connect the performance of students at any point in the SBAC assessment system to college-going and college-credit accumulation rates.

In December 2013, South Carolina will begin reporting college-going and college-credit accumulation rates through the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Program Indicators. Also in December 2013, SLICE will become fully operational. In the summer of 2015, the state will have access to student performance data on SBAC.

Plan for Implementation					
Activity	**Timeline**	**Party or Parties Responsible**	**Evidence**	**Resources**	**Significant Obstacles**
English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Standards Analysis and Revision					
ESOL information updates for district office personnel and ESOL instructors	May 2012	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/90/documents/ESOLeMediaTownMeetingSchedule2011-12.pdf	Staff time	South Carolina is awaiting the product that WIDA will produce to ensure that we are not duplicating the consortia's work in our alignment process for the SC ESOL standards
Revise the South Carolina English Speakers of Other Languages Standards (ESOL) to align with CCSS by adopting the WIDA ELL Standards	June 2012	Office of Federal and State Accountability and State Board of Education	http://ed.sc.gov/agency/pr/standards-and-curriculum/documents/ESOLStandards.pdf	Staff time	
District Implementation Teams updated on the pending revisions to ESOL Standards	June 2012	Offices of Teacher Effectiveness and Federal and State Accountability	CCSS site http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/190/	Staff time	
Pilot Testing for newly revised South Carolina ESOL Standards	August 2012–June 2013	Office of Federal and State Accountability		Staff time	
ESOL program updates: LEA training updated to reflect the new ELL standards	July 2013	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/90/TeacherResources.cfm	Staff time	
Field testing for revised ESOL standards	August 2013–June 2014	Office of Federal and State Accountability		Staff time	
Full implementation of ESOL	August 2014–June 2015	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://ed.sc.gov/agency/pr/standards-and-	Staff time	

Standards			curriculum/South_Carolina_Common_Core.cfm		
Students With Disabilities					
Finalize development of Common Core Connectors via membership in National Center and State Collaboration Consortia	Summer 2012	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ncscpartners.org/about	Staff time	South Carolina is awaiting the product that NCSC will produce to ensure that we are not duplicating the consortia's work in our alignment process for the CCSS since the Extended Standards relate to the extensions to the previous ELA and math standards
Prioritize Common Core Connectors that will comprise an alternate assessment that is aligned to CCSS	Summer 2012	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ncscpartners.org/workgroup-1	Staff time	
Develop training on Common Core Connectors curriculum design and instruction	November 2011–August 2012	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ncscpartners.org/workgroup-2	Staff time	
Create professional development for Common Core Connectors	November 2011–August 2012	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ncscpartners.org/professional-development	Staff time	
Design validity evaluation for Common Core Connectors	November 2011–August 2012	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ncscpartners.org/workgroup-4	Staff time	
Conduct District Implementation Team training updated to incorporate aspects of Common Core Connectors	September 2012	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	http://www.ncscpartners.org/professional-development	Staff time	
Train LEAs on use of Common Core Connectors via DTC-Alt Pretest Workshop	November–December 2012	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/48/DistrictTrainingSC-Alt.cfm	Staff time	
Train LEAs on use of Common Core Connectors via SC-ALT District Training	January–February 2013	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/48/DistrictTrainingSC-Alt.cfm	Staff time	
Train LEAs on use of Common Core Connectors	Summer 2013	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-	Staff time	

via SC-ALT District Training			services/48/DistrictTrainingSC-Alt.cfm		
Use Common Core Connectors to guide instruction	August 2013–June 2014	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ncscpartners.org/about	Staff time	
Field test assessment tasks aligned to Common Core Connectors	August 2013–June 2014	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ncscpartners.org/about	Staff time	
Fully implement Common Core Connectors in all schools	August 2014–June 2015	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ncscpartners.org/about	Staff time	
Fully implement Alternate Assessment on Alternate Achievement Standards aligned to the CCSS through the Common Core Connectors in all schools	August 2014–June 2015	Office of Federal and State Accountability	http://www.ncscpartners.org/about	Staff time	
Outreach and Dissemination on Common Core State Standards					
Professional development videos developed	October 2011	Office of Policy and Research	CCSS Site http://ed.sc.gov/agency/pr/standards-and-curriculum/South_Carolina_Common_Core.cfm	Staff time	Ensuring equitable impact across the state
District Implementation Teams established	September 2011	Office of Policy and Research	http://ed.sc.gov/agency/pr/standards-and-curriculum/South_Carolina_Common_Core.cfm	Staff Time	District compliance
CCSS: Transitioning from Awareness to Implementation Professional Development	November–December 2011	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	Appendix H CCSS Support Site http://scde.mrooms.org/index.php?page=27424	Staff time and funding	Ensuring equitable impact across the state
Disseminate the *Implementing Common Core State Standards for South Carolina* video series	September 2011–August 2012	Office of Policy and Research	http://www.scetv.org/education/streamlinesc/	Staff Time	
Administered CCSS for English Language Arts and Mathematics Needs	December 2011	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	Appendix I: CCSS for English Language Arts and Mathematics Needs		District compliance

Assessment Survey to District Implementation Teams			Assessment Survey		
Created the CCSS Support Site	January 2012	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	CCSS Site http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/190/ CCSS Support Site http://scde.mrooms.org/index.php?page=27424	Staff time	
Updated the Regional Education Center Advisory Board on Nature of Common Core State Standards	January 2012	Office of Policy and Research		Staff Time	
Update State Board of Education on implementation of CCSS	February 2012	Offices of Policy and Research, Assessment, and Teacher Effectiveness	http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/stateboard/documents/BdDev-Agenda-MorningSession-02-08-12.pdf	Staff Time	
CCSS sessions for SC Schools of Education	February 2012	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/190/documents/CCSS20Professional20Development20Series1.pdf	Staff time and funding	SC CoE attendance
CCSS Spring and Summer Seminar Series	February 2012–August 2012	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	CCSS Site http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/190/	Staff time and funding	Ensuring equitable impact across the state
Disseminate CCSS Informational Resource for Parents	March 2012	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	Appendix G	Staff Time	
Meet with local representatives of minority and civil rights groups	March 2012–March 2013	Office of Policy and Research		Staff Time	
Meet with South Carolina Deans Alliance (SCDA) to provide update on SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortia recommendations	March 2012	Division of School Effectiveness		Staff Time	
Provide SCDA the CCSS Informational	March 2012	Office of Teacher Effectiveness		Staff Time	

Resource for Parents					
Provide Regional Educational Centers the CCSS Informational Resource for Parents	April 2012	Office of Policy and Research		Staff Time	
Meet with Regional Education Committees to share presentation *CCSS and the EEDA*	April 2012–April 2013	Office of Policy and Research		Staff Time	
Disseminate the Family Friendly Standards to SICs/PTOs/PTAs	January 2013	Education Oversight Committee	http://www.eoc.sc.gov/informationforfamilies/familystandards/Pages/default.aspx	EOC Staff time and funding	
Provide REC Advisory Panel the Family Friendly Standards	April 2013	Office of Policy and Research		Staff time	
Meeting with RECs to share Family Friendly Standards	April 2013–April 2014	Office of Policy and Research		Staff time	
Reconvene civil rights and minority stakeholder group (state level)	April 2012–June 2012	Office of Policy and Research		Staff time	
Administer CCSS Needs Assessment to District Implementation Teams on their transition status and results of their transition efforts	August 2012	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	Appendix I: CCSS for English Language Arts and Mathematics Needs Assessment Survey	Staff time	District compliance
CCSS Fall Seminar Series	September 2012–August 2013	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	Appendix J	Staff time and funding	Ensuring equitable impact across the state
Update SCDA on the release of Family Friendly Standards	September 2012	Office of Teacher Effectiveness	http://www.eoc.sc.gov/informationforfamilies/familystandards/Pages/default.aspx	Staff time	
Provide SCDA an Overview of the updates to CCSS Professional Development	May 2012	Office of Teacher Effectiveness		Staff time	

1.C DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B	Option C
☒ The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition. i. Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 6)	☐ The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. i. Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.	☐ The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. i. Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)

For Option B, insert plan here

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A.i Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

COMMITMENT 1: SOUTH CAROLINA WILL DEVELOP A DIFFERENTIATED SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTABILITY THAT INCENTIVIZES AND REWARDS CONTINUAL GROWTH.

Presently, South Carolina assesses its schools and districts through two accountability systems. The state-mandated system was created in 1998, when the South Carolina General Assembly passed the Education Accountability Act (EAA, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-100 *et seq*. (Supp. 2011); see Appendix B) to hold public schools accountable for the performance of their students. Schools and districts are required to test students in four subject areas in grades 3−8 and students have to pass an exit exam as a requirement to graduate. Each school and district is given a rating based on student achievement and other factors and those ratings are publicized in School Report Cards. When *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) was enacted, the state maintained this original system and developed a separate, distinct system to meet the federal requirements. The state has since been operating under the two systems, which has caused duplicity and is confusing to parents and the community. (See Appendix C for a glossary of acronyms.)

To reduce duplication, the state plans to merge the two current systems into one unified and more modern system; the ESEA flexibility allows South Carolina to begin aligning the two current systems toward this objective. However, changing the state system requires legislative action beyond the timeframe for submitting this request, which prohibits us from proposing one unified system at this time. Despite this, many of the elements included in this waiver request address major shortcomings of the federal system and more closely mirror the elements of the state system.

The most significant deficiency in the federally mandated annual yearly progress (AYP) system is that it is essentially a pass/fail system, whereby failing to reach even one annual measurable objective (AMO), among many, automatically means that a school has not met AYP and thus is labeled as failing. Another significant flaw in the AYP system is that the original baseline year AMO from which all future AMOs were calculated was the 2002−03 test score that identified the bottom 20 percent of students tested that year. Thus, the AMO that year and every projected AMO in subsequent years has been based on a minimal definition of proficiency.

Early on in using the federal system, the majority of schools had little difficulty meeting the AYP goal. Over time, however, as the AYP goal increased significantly every three years in approaching the 2014 goal of 100 percent of students scoring Proficient or above, the goal has outpaced the performance of schools, resulting in more and more schools lagging farther and farther behind the AMO each year.

The opportunity for ESEA flexibility will allow South Carolina to develop a new system that is based on the achievement of all students in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies and includes graduation rate for high schools and districts, and measures the progress of all students over time.

The cornerstone of South Carolina's proposed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support plan is a fundamental change in the way schools and districts are judged to have met AYP. The proposed system substantively improves the method for determining student achievement and progress in schools and districts without sacrificing the high standards that have been a hallmark of South Carolina's state accountability system since the inception of NCLB.

The current federal AYP system over-identifies hundreds of schools for assistance and, as a result, dilutes available state and federal resources. By significantly narrowing the scope to target fewer schools for assistance, the proposed system will allow the state to use resources more effectively. Once schools are identified as needing assistance, we will employ a differentiated system of support to ensure all students, regardless of learning needs, meet the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and are college or career ready when they graduate from high school.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) will use multiple factors beyond ELA and math to determine a letter grade (A−F) for each school and district in the state and to recognize progress that schools and districts make towards achievement goals.

With input from a variety of stakeholders, the SCDE has developed a matrix that includes multiple measures to determine ESEA Grades. These measures include achievement in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies; graduation rates; and percentage of students tested. South Carolina's proposed school composite index includes two measures of participation: percent of students tested in ELA and percent of students tested in math. All schools will be expected to meet or exceed the goal of 95 percent participation on all student assessments in order to meet the AMO. Although input from stakeholders was mixed regarding the addition of science and social studies to the ESEA Grade determinations (stakeholders, including teachers, in initial meetings requested that we include these content areas while participants in the community stakeholder meetings questioned their inclusion.), the SCDE has chosen to include these content areas, which are part of the current state assessment system, as the state moves towards unifying the current state and federal accountability requirements into a modernized, state-based accountability system that will provide transparent, accurate, and meaningful data to students, parents, educators, and the public.

In addition to giving full credit to schools and districts that meet the AMOs, we also give partial credit to schools and districts for student progress towards the AMO in the four content areas and graduation rate when they do not meet the AMO. In the matrix calculation, for each of the multiple measures used to assess performance, a school receives a full point (1.0) for each student subgroup and the "All Students" group that meets the AMO for that measure. If the subgroup does not meet the AMO on a particular measure, progress toward the AMO is awarded in two ways:

- If the mean is above Proficient, partial credit of .6 to .9 is awarded based upon the quartile between Proficient and the AMO in which the mean falls.
- If the mean is below Proficient, partial credit of .1 to .5 is awarded if the mean for that subgroup improved over the previous year. One tenth of one point is given for each scale score point improvement over the previous year, up to 5 scale score points.

For example: in the sample high school matrix (Matrix 1 below):

- The school did not meet the AMO for the African-American subgroup on the mathematics measure, but the subgroup performance was in the first quartile above Proficient and was awarded a .6.
- The school did not meet the AMO for the male subgroup on the science measure, but the mean of the subgroup performance improved 5 scale score points over the mean of this subgroup in the previous year, and was awarded a .5.

Matrix 1

High School Sample

	English/LA Proficiency Met/Improved?	Math Proficiency Met/Improved?	Science Proficiency Met/Improved?	SS / History Proficiency Met/Improved?	English/LA Percent Tested 95 % Tested?	Math Percent Tested 95 % Tested?	Graduation Rate Met/Improved?
All Students	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Male	1	1	0.5	0	1	1	1
Female	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
White	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
African-American	1	0.6	1	1	1	1	1
Asian/Pacific Is	I/S	I/S	I/S	I/S	I/S	I/S	I/S
Hispanic	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	1	1	1
Am Indian/Alaskan	I/S	I/S	I/S	I/S	I/S	I/S	I/S
Disabled	0.5	1	0.5	1	1	1	0.5
Limited Eng. Prof	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Subsidized Meals	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**
Total # of Points	**8**	**7.6**	**7.5**	**7.5**	**9**	**9**	**7.5**
Total # of Objectives	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**
Percent of Above	**89%**	**84%**	**83%**	**83%**	**100%**	**100%**	**83%**
Weight	**22.5**	**22.5**	**5**	**5**	**7.5**	**7.5**	**30**
Weighted Points Subtotal	**20.00**	**18.90**	**4.17**	**4.17**	**7.50**	**7.50**	**24.90**

Grade: 90 to 100 = A, 80 to 89.9 = B, 70 to 79.9 = C, 60 to 69.9 = D, < 60 = F

Key: Met=1, Improved= .1-.9, Not Met & Not Improved=0
(Note: Percent Tested may only be Met or Not Met)

Weighted Points Total	**87.14**
Grade Conversion	B

Each of the measures carries a specific weighting; the weighted points are then totaled, and a letter grade—the ESEA Grade—is assigned based on the following scale:

District and School ESEA Grading Scale

Weighted Composite Index Score	ESEA Grade	Description
90−100	A	Performance substantially exceeds the state's expectations.
80−89	B	Performance exceeds the state's expectations.
70−79	C	Performance meets the state's expectations.
60−69	D	Performance does not meet the state's expectations.
Below 60	F	Performance is substantially below the state's expectations.

In determining the ESEA Grade for high schools, ELA and mathematics proficiency and graduation rates will carry the most weight. For elementary and middle schools, ELA and mathematics proficiency will carry the most weight in determining the letter grade. To determine the ESEA Grade for districts, the weights for elementary, middle, and high schools will be incorporated into the calculation.

Through the community stakeholder meetings, online comment forms, and e-mails, a majority of stakeholders, including school and district personnel, expressed serious reservations regarding the use of letter grades. However, the SCDE feels that using letter grades is in the best interest of transparency and clarity so that the public can better understand the rating system.

Letter grades will simplify the accountability system and give parents and other stakeholders a clear and easily understandable means to identify effective schools. The descriptors define each grade within the context of the state's performance expectations. While the lower grades signify that the school or district has not yet met performance standards, the state recognizes that there are students achieving at high levels in that school or district, and we intend to provide supports so that all students meet our expectations of college and career

readiness at graduation.

We will continue to disaggregate data by subgroups and have added the subgroups of male and female to the calculation of ESEA Grades. Data indicate existing performance gaps between these subgroups in South Carolina in certain subjects in certain years. The SCDE feels strongly that these gaps should be addressed through the accountability system despite mixed feedback from stakeholders who attended the community stakeholder meetings.

It is worth noting that South Carolina's LEP students perform very well on our statewide tests and generally exceed the performance of other struggling students in other subgroups at both the school and district levels.

South Carolina believes that the proposed ESEA grading system will create additional incentives for schools and districts to work diligently to meet high standards and to focus on improving the academic achievement and performance of the "All Students" group, as well as the achievement and performance of all students in all subgroups, including historically underperforming groups such as students with disabilities and students from low socioeconomic households. Specific interventions for these subgroups will be determined through the comprehensive needs assessments described in the Priority and Focus Schools sections below.

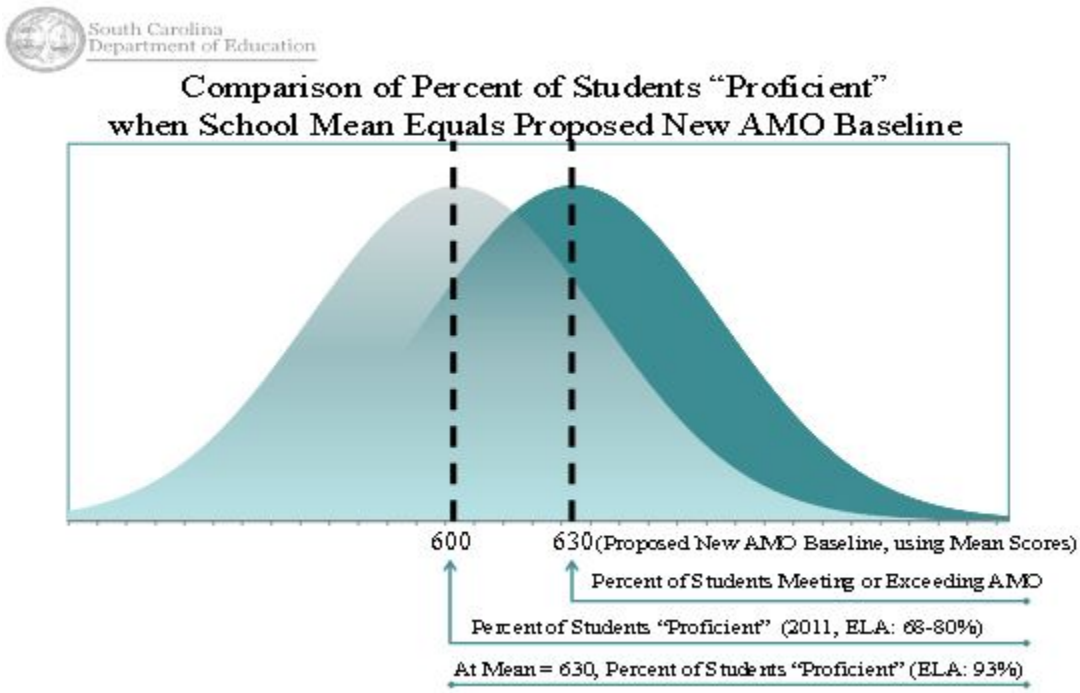
Because the determination of ESEA Grades will no longer be an "all or nothing" exercise, schools and districts will have a much more realistic accountability system that will allow them to demonstrate, measure, and track improvement in making a positive impact on student achievement.

The ESEA grading system is also much more transparent and will be more easily understood by parents and the general public, because the ESEA Grades will be specified in terms of mean test scores rather than the percentage of students who test Proficient or above, which currently is a concept not easily understood, except by individuals with a working knowledge of NCLB and AYP.

At the beginning of each school year, the State Superintendent of Education will publicly acknowledge Reward Schools and will reiterate and emphasize the purpose, importance, and goals of the state's proposed new accountability system, so that everyone in the state is aware of the success and positive accomplishments of the state's public schools. The favorable media attention will be a welcome counterpoint to the usual gloom-and-doom media accounts that our public schools typically receive.

The method used to measure improvement in South Carolina's accountability system is rigorous and accurately reflects substantial progress toward student achievement goals.

The following figure illustrates how a school with a mean ELA score of 630—that is, a school that meets the proposed new AMO in the base year—would compare in terms of the percent of students Proficient or above, using the current cut score of 600. Clearly, South Carolina's proposed new AMOs reflect substantial progress toward proficiency.



The number of additional schools estimated to be included in the accountability system when the N size is reduced from N > = 40 to N > = 30 are presented in the following tables. (These projected counts are based on simulations using 2010−11 data.)

In 2010−11, of the 1,131 total number of schools in the state (305 elementary schools, 646 middle schools and 180 high schools), only 10 schools (4 elementary schools, 6 middle schools and 0 high schools) did not meet the N > = 40 criteria. With the N >=30 criteria, only 1 additional school, a middle school, would be included in the accountability system, based on the "All Students" category. The effect of reducing the N size from 40 to 30 is much more pronounced across subgroups, with the number of additional schools whose subgroup performance would be taken into account in calculating overall school performance ranging from 1 additional school to as many as 149 additional schools.

TABLE S1: Number of ELEMENTARY Schools in Accountability System, based on N equal to or greater than 40 versus N equal to or greater than 30.

State	Students	Number of Schools Held Accountable				Total Number of Schools in State	Number of Additional Schools	Percentage of Additional Schools
		Schools under NCLB (n>=40)		Schools under Flex (n>=30)				
		#	%	#	%			
ELEM SCHOOLS	All Students	642	99.38	642	99.38	646	0	0.0%
	Male	623	96.44	633	97.99	646	10	1.5%
	Female	615	95.20	629	97.37	646	14	2.2%
	White	504	78.02	528	81.73	646	24	3.7%

	African-American	523	80.96	552	85.45	646	29	4.5%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	7	1.08	15	2.32	646	8	1.2%
	Hispanic	66	10.22	118	18.27	646	52	8.0%
	Am Indian / Alaskan	1	0.15	1	0.15	646	0	0.0%
	Disability	259	40.09	408	63.16	646	149	23.1%
	Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	65	10.06	113	17.49	646	48	7.4%
	Subsidized Meals	624	96.59	633	97.99	646	9	1.4%

TABLE S2: Number of MIDDLE Schools in Accountability System, based on N equal to or greater than 40 versus N equal to or greater than 30.

State	Students	Number of Schools Held Accountable				Total Number of Schools in State	Number of Additional Schools	Percentage of Additional Schools
		Schools under NCLB (n>=40)		Schools under Flex (n>=30)				
		#	%	#	%			
MIDDLE SCHOOLS	All Students	299	98.03	300	98.36	305	1	0.3%
	Male	295	96.72	296	97.05	305	1	0.3%
	Female	292	95.72	295	96.72	305	3	1.0%
	White	251	82.30	258	84.59	305	7	2.3%
	African-American	276	90.49	285	93.44	305	9	3.0%
	Asian/Pacific Islander	10	3.28	23	7.54	305	13	4.3%
	Hispanic	75	24.59	110	36.07	305	35	11.5%
	Am Indian / Alaskan	2	0.66	2	0.66	305	0	0.0%
	Disability	216	70.82	243	79.67	305	27	8.9%
	Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	62	20.33	87	28.52	305	25	8.2%
	Subsidized Meals	291	95.41	292	95.74	305	1	0.3%

TABLE S3: Number of HIGH Schools in Accountability System, based on N equal to or greater than 40 versus N equal to or greater than 30.

State	Students	Number of Schools Held Accountable				Total Number of Schools in State	Number of Additional Schools	Percentage of Additional Schools
		Schools under NCLB (n>=40)		Schools under Flex (n>=30)				
		#	%	#	%			
HIGH SCHOOLS	All Students	180	100	180	100	180	0	0.0%
	Male	165	91.6	175	97.2	180	10	5.6%
	Female	163	90.5	175	97.2	180	12	6.7%
	White	145	80.5	149	82.7	180	4	2.2%
	African-American	138	76.6	150	83.3	180	12	6.7%
	Asian/ Pacific Islander	1	0	3	0.1	180	2	1.1%
	Hispanic	8	0.4	17	0.9	180	9	5.0%
	Am Indian / Alaskan	0	0	0	0	180	0	0.0%
	Disability	35	19.4	78	43.3	180	33	18.3%
	Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	3	0.1	6	0.3	180	3	1.7%
	Subsidized Meals	169	93.8	174	96.6	180	5	2.8%

Current scale scores for "Proficient" and "Exemplary" by grade level are detailed in the *2011−2012 ACCOUNTABILITY MANUAL: The Annual School and District Report Card System for South Carolina Public Schools and School Districts*.

For Elementary and Middle Schools, on the PASS a single cut score is used to define "Proficient." Proficient is defined as a score of 600 or above for all subjects (ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies) and all grades tested (grades 3-8), while "Exemplary" is defined by separate cut scores for each subject and grade level.

For High Schools, student performance is assessed by the High School Longitudinal Assessment Program (HSAP) and End-Of-Course (EOC) tests. At the high school level, the concept of "Proficient" for student performance is more complicated to define. Accordingly, at the high school level the metric used to track student performance is the percent of students passing HSAP and EOC tests. For HSAP, passing is defined as a score at the 2 level or higher on both ELA and Math (within two years after taking HSAP for the first time). A passing score is defined as 70 or higher for any EOC test administered in the high school.

PASS cut-off scale scores are summarized in the following table, excerpted from the South Carolina Accountability Manual.

Table S4: PASS Cut-Off Scale Scores Established by SCDE for Use in Calculating Absolute Ratings					
Subject	**Grade**	**Not Met 1**	**Not Met 2**	**Met**	**Exemplary**
ELA (Reading & Research)	3	LT 563	563	600	GE 643
ELA (Reading & Research)	4	LT 569	569	600	GE 649
ELA (Reading & Research)	5	LT 574	574	600	GE 661
ELA (Reading & Research)	6	LT 565	565	600	GE 648
ELA (Reading & Research)	7	LT 566	566	600	GE 644
ELA (Reading & Research)	8	LT 569	569	600	GE 649
Math	3	LT 566	566	600	GE 642
Math	4	LT 580	580	600	GE 658
Math	5	LT 579	579	600	GE 659
Math	6	LT 582	582	600	GE 658
Math	7	LT 585	585	600	GE 652
Math	8	LT 585	585	600	GE 657
Science	3	LT 537	537	600	GE 649
Science	4	LT 564	564	600	GE 674
Science	5	LT 566	566	600	GE 676
Science	6	LT 560	560	600	GE 669
Science	7	LT 571	571	600	GE 664
Science	8	LT 562	562	600	GE 651
Social Studies	3	LT 580	580	600	GE 653
Social Studies	4	LT 590	590	600	GE 668
Social Studies	5	LT 570	570	600	GE 658
Social Studies	6	LT 585	585	600	GE 671
Social Studies	7	LT 562	562	600	GE 646
Social Studies	8	LT 571	571	600	GE 656

LR = Less Than GE = Greater Than or Equal To

Plan for Annual Implementation			
Key Milestone or Activity	**Detailed Timeline**	**Party or Parties Responsible**	**Evidence (Attachment)**
Conduct statewide assessments in ELA, math, social studies, and science	September - May	Office of Assessment	Test results from contractor
Run profiles of all schools and districts to determine grades	July	Office of Research and Data Analysis	List of schools and districts with grades
Run data to determine Priority schools	July	Office of Research and Data Analysis	List of Priority schools
Run data to determine Focus schools	July	Office of Research and Data Analysis	List of Focus schools
Run data to determine Reward schools	July	Office of Research and Data Analysis	List of Reward schools
Run data to determine non-Title I "D" and "F" schools	July	Office of Research and Data Analysis	List of "D" and "F" schools
Run data to determine Title I "D" and "F" schools	July	Office of Research and Data Analysis	List of Title I "D" and "F" schools
Public Release of ESEA Grades	August	Office of Research and Data Analysis	Posted on SCDE Website
Technical Assistance to districts on the analysis of ESEA Grades.	August	Office of Federal and State Accountability and Office of Research and Data Analysis	
Disburse Title I, 1003(a) funds to Focus schools and to Title I "D" and "F"schools	September/ October	Office of Federal and State Accountability	Grant Award Letters

2.A.ii Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

Option A	**Option B**
☐ The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	☒ If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and

	focus schools, it must: a. provide the percentage of students in the "all students" group that performed at the proficient level on the State's most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and b. include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.

The following table presents the percentage of students in the "All Students" group that performed at Proficient or above on each state assessment at each grade level for 2011:

2011 Assessment Results Percent of All Students at Proficient								
Grade	PASS				HSAP		EOC	
	ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies	ELA	Math	Biology	US History
3	80.00%	70.40%	60.80%	76.60%	-	-	-	-
4	78.00%	79.40%	70.90%	77.10%	-	-	-	-
5	78.30%	75.30%	64.90%	70.40%	-	-	-	-
6	70.20%	72.50%	64.90%	77.60%	-	-	-	-
7	68.40%	69.70%	71.70%	63.40%	-	-	-	-
8	67.80%	69.50%	70.10%	71.90%	-	-	-	-
High School	-	-	-	-	60.60%	51.80%	68.00%	49.70%*

PASS – Palmetto Assessment of State Standards
HSAP – High School Assessment Program (High School Exit Exam)
EOC – End-of-Course Exam

The State Superintendent of Education, in consultation with major stakeholders, strongly supports efforts to use graduation rates as a key indicator of workforce, career, or college readiness. Policy recommendations from the CSSO and the conclusions of the Alliance for Excellent Education reinforce this approach:

"To achieve meaningful accountability for high school graduation rates, it is important that states a) target schools with the lowest graduation rates for intensive intervention, and, at the same time, b) hold all high schools accountable for maintaining adequate graduate rates [sic]."

"In order to ensure students are graduating high school ready to succeed in college and a career, states should include four key elements of high school graduation rate policy in their redesigned accountability systems: meaningful accountability for graduation rates;

disaggregation of graduation rates for accountability purposes; accurate and uniform calculation of high school graduation rates; and ambitious and achievable graduation rate goals and targets."

—Alliance for Excellent Education, January 2012.

Graduation rates will carry the highest weight in determining the weighted composite index score and attainment of the AMOs for high schools and school districts. We have set the goal that each high school in South Carolina reach a high school graduation rate of at least 90 percent. This goal is ambitious, as is reflected by the large number of high schools in our state that fall far short of this goal, and it is achievable, as is demonstrated by the high performing, high poverty schools that have been able to meet or exceed this graduation rate.

South Carolina's achievement goals remain some of the highest in the nation, and schools and districts will continue to be held accountable for students learning those standards. In keeping with the original intent of NCLB, the second most important factor in determining the school's ESEA Grade is student performance in ELA and mathematics. We include science and social studies as factors in determining the school grade, but at a lesser weight than ELA and mathematics. To ensure accurate results, we are retaining the 95 percent student participation in testing indicators for both ELA and math. South Carolina's proposed school composite index includes two measures of participation: percent of students tested in ELA and percent of students tested in math. All schools will be expected to meet and exceed the goal of 95 percent participation on all student assessments.

Because the system will no longer be "all or nothing" in terms of meeting AYP, a more nuanced system of recognition and support will be offered to districts and schools. As detailed in Table 2 below, each school and district will receive a calculated, weighted numerical index score ranging from zero to 100; this will allow a school or district to measure its progress in relation to the state AMO, and determine its relative position when compared to other schools and districts in the state, or compared to peers.

To reinforce the importance of academic achievement, the four multiple measures of academic achievement combined will account for the majority of the total weight in the school composite index score.

At the elementary and middle school levels, the combined weights for the four academic achievement measures (ELA, math, science and social studies) will account for 90 percent of the total composite index score. ELA and math have the highest relative weights of 40 percent each, with science and social studies contributing an additional 5 percent each. In addition, percent of students tested in ELA will account for 5 percent of the total composite index score, and percent of students tested in math, likewise, will account for 5 percent.

At the high school level, the academic achievement measures plus graduation rate will account for 85 percent of the total composite index score. Graduation rate has a weight of 30 percent, and ELA, and math have equivalent weights of 22.5 percent each. The four academic achievement measures (ELA, math, science and social studies) have a combined weight totaling

55 percent, with ELA and math each weighted at 22.5 percent, and the science and social studies measures, 5 percent each. The two participation measures (i.e., percent of students tested in ELA and math) are weighted 7.5 percent each.

At the SEA and the LEA level, the proposed weights for performance measures and additional indicators are identical to the measure weights at the high school levels.

For the SEA and LEAs, the total composite index score and corresponding letter grade for the SEA and the LEA as a whole will be reported, as will the composite index score and letter grade for each grade span (elementary, middle, and high school) in the SEA and the district. Also, the matrix details for each grade span will be reported, including the means and Ns for each subgroup in each cell (with an N equal to or greater than 30). The minimum N size will not apply to the "All Student" group to allow for the calculation of an ESEA Grade for small schools. Similarly, achievement gaps by subgroup and measure will also be reported and highlighted. This will allow the SCDE and the LEAs to easily identify which subgroups have met the AMO, which are above Proficient, which have made progress from the previous year, and which subgroup(s) and measures require particular attention and effort in order for the SEA and the LEA to achieve the state's expectations in the next year.

Table 2

Proposed Weights for Performance Measures and Additional Indicators

	Performance Measures				Additional Indicators		
	ELA Proficiency	Math Proficiency	Science Proficiency	Social Studies Proficiency	ELA Percent Tested	Math Percent Tested	Graduation Rate
Elem/Middle Schools, LEAs, and the SEA	40	40	5	5	5	5	N/A
High Schools, LEAs, and the SEA	22.5	22.5	5	5	7.5	7.5	30

South Carolina believes this system will result in strong accountability with a continued emphasis on ELA and mathematics student achievement for all students, high graduation rates, participation of all students in testing, and the addition of student achievement measures for science and social studies. For high schools, a total of 77 possible objectives will be used to determine ESEA Grades. For elementary schools, the maximum number of objectives is 66; for districts it is 77. In the NCLB-AYP system, South Carolina uses a minimum "N" size of 40 in subgroup calculations. In order to use as much data as possible from as many students as possible to assess school performance more accurately, for all students and all subgroups, the new ESEA Grading method proposes to use an "N" size of 30 for all subgroups except the "All Students" group, which will not use an N size. Lowering the "N" size addresses concerns expressed by some stakeholders and shared by the SCDE that too high an "N" could mask the performance of small subgroups of students.

The student achievement measures included in the proposed school composite index score include ELA, math, science and social studies. In the calculation of the school composite index score, all available assessment data for all eligible students will be used in the calculations.

Testing South Carolina Students

Eligible South Carolina students in grades 3 through 8 are tested by the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) testing program. PASS tests include five subjects:

1. writing
2. English language arts (ELA)
3. mathematics
4. science
5. social studies.

All students are tested in all six grades in ELA, writing, and math.

All students are tested in both science and social studies in grades 4 and 7. In grades 3, 5, 6, and 8, students are tested in science or social studies, but not both. The testing contractor randomly assigns students within grade and school, with equal probability, to either science or social studies. For these grades, schools enter new students into an on-line registration system which alternately assigns students to science or social studies.

Students in high school are tested by another program. The High School Assessment Program (HSAP) tests students in ELA and math. HSAP constitutes the state Exit Examination. Students must pass both HSAP subjects to earn a diploma. Testing begins in a student's second year of high school. Students who do not pass an HSAP subject are given repeated opportunities to attempt the test.

The End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) includes tests associated with four groups of courses:

1. Algebra I (or Math for the Technologies II)
2. Biology I (or Applied Biology II)
3. English I
4. U. S. History and the Constitution (USHC).

The algebra and English courses may be taken in either middle or high school. The biology courses are typically taken in either the first or second year of high school, and USHC course is typically taken in the third year of high school. All students enrolled in these courses must take the EOCEP tests. By law, the test accounts for 20% of a student's grade in the course. Students must pass the courses to earn a high school diploma.

The South Carolina Alternative Assessment (SC-Alt) is administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities who are determined by the Individualized Education Program

Team to be unable to participate in the general assessment even with appropriate accommodations. Students participate in the assessment based on their ages commensurate with the grades of students in the tested grades (3-8 and 10). All students participate in English Language Arts and mathematics. Science and social studies testing rules parallel those of PASS at the elementary and middle school levels. Students take a biology alternate assessment at the high school level.

To incorporate students tested with SC-ALT, the new ESEA methodology realigns the SC-ALT scores with the standard state assessment (PASS) scores so that all SC-ALT students will be included in all of the calculations at the school, district and state level. This will be accomplished by using SC-ALT scale scores which have been transformed to the PASS scale score system (i.e., with 600 = Proficient, a standard deviation of 50, and the same range). This transformation is possible because SC-ALT scores are based on a carefully constructed Rasch-based scale score system, and a review of the PASS and SC-ALT transformed scale score distributions has shown that the distributions are very similar. South Carolina also will apply the 1% rule, as summarized below, specific to using mean scale scores, which follows our new ESEA methodology.

Using SC-ALT Scores in ESEA Accountability: Applying the 1% Cap Adjustments and Establishing AMOs for Special Education Center Schools

The NCLB 1% rules requires that the cap be applied at the district and state level and allows each state to propose how the scores for the districts exceeding the cap would be adjusted to meet the 1% limitation of inclusion of Proficient scores. The ESEA flexibility model currently used by SCDE uses mean scale score data for determining whether schools or districts meet achievement AMOs. This model introduces additional considerations in regard to choosing how to adjust scores and which student scores to adjust.

After several simulations and in-depth analyses were run using 2012 data, which created a methodology for and reviewed the effects of making different 1% cap score adjustments, it was recommended that the best method for applying the 1% adjustment would be to rank the Proficient scale scores from high to low and select the highest scores for adjustment (that is, resetting the selected scores to 599 which is 1 point below Proficient (i.e., the Proficient performance level in PASS assessments is equal to 600).

The rationale for proposing the rank order adjustment method is that the districts exceeding the 1% cap are consistently including large numbers of students (proportionately) in the SC-ALT assessment who are scoring at the very highest level (70.8 % at Level 4 for ELA and 49.5 % and Level 4 for mathematics). This method fairly addresses those schools that have extreme scores and are most likely over-identifying students for the SC-ALT. The analysis of the data from 2012 supports the use of this ranked score adjustment method over a random score adjustment, because it more logically addresses the over-identification issue of extreme scores for both districts and schools.

2.B SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

Option A	Option B	Option C
☐ Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☐ Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☒ Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups. i. Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs. ii. Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below. iii. Provide a link to the State's report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups. (Attachment 8)

In compliance with NCLB, South Carolina adopted AMOs for two key components of student academic achievement, ELA and mathematics in 2002−03. Hence, the state's current AMOs for ELA and mathematics were calculated using 2001−02 as the baseline year and 2014 as the goal year. The current 2014 goal is for 100 percent of students to meet or exceed proficiency on the state standards and the system tracks school performance on the basis of the percent of students in each school who score "Proficient" or above on the state standards assessment tests.

ESEA Flexibility provides the SCDE an opportunity to reconsider both the efficacy of the 2014 goal and the impact that NCLB's annual yearly progress (AYP) has had on public K−12 education in South Carolina. By any reasonable standard, the current AYP accountability system is seriously flawed and the goal of 100 percent of students meeting or exceeding proficiency by 2014 is neither realistic nor attainable.

The SCDE proposes a new, more meaningful method of measuring school performance annually by setting rigorous goals for elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools, by replacing an indirect measure of school performance that tracks the minimum performance level over time—*percent of students who score Proficient or above*—with a more appropriate, more meaningful, and more direct measure of student performance and school performance—*actual test scores*.

Under the current NCLB-AYP system, on the PASS tests, where scores can range from 200 to 900, "Proficient" is defined as a score of 600 (or above). When examining actual student performance on PASS school by school, we find that for a majority of schools in South Carolina, the average of student scores on the state assessments (in statistical terms, the school mean) already exceed the minimum score of 600, which defines "Proficient."

Continuous improvement

The current AMOs for ELA and mathematics are presented in Appendix K. In 2011−12, the ELA AMOs for

- elementary schools (elementary and middle schools) is 79.4 percent of students Proficient or above;
- high schools is 90.3 percent of students Proficient or above; and
- school districts is 89.4 percent of students Proficient or above.

For elementary schools, "Proficient" is defined as a PASS ELA and mathematics assessment score of 600 (on a normed scale from 200 to 900). For high schools, "Proficient" is defined as a HSAP ELA score of 200 in the ESEA Grades methodology.

With AMOs as currently defined—as the percent of students Proficient or above—and with current AMO levels set at 79.4 percent, only about one in four elementary schools in the state (27 percent of elementary and middle schools combined) met AYP in 2010−11. Only eight percent of high schools in the state met AYP in 2010−11.

South Carolina proposes new AMOs that are both ambitious and achievable, based on actual school performance as measured by student test scores on the state standards assessments and end-of-course exams. We anticipate that using actual test scores will reflect the impact of instruction and learning more accurately than the previous system.

Using 2011−12 as the base year, we will set realistic AMOs for elementary, middle and

high schools, respectively, using current student mean scores. For 2012−13 and beyond, the proposed new AMOs increase by 3−5 points annually, based on empirical examination. This incremental increase is consistent with previous growth trends of schools in South Carolina and reflects our objective to have ambitious yet attainable goals.

The mean (average) of PASS test scores for elementary schools was 644 for ELA and 641 for mathematics. Because "Proficient" is defined as a PASS score of 600 or above, the elementary school performance, as measured by PASS test scores instead of percent of student scoring Proficient or above, is already about 7 percentage points higher than the test score associated with the minimum proficiency level.

Similarly, the performance of middle schools, measured as the average (mean) of PASS test scores in each school rather than simply as the percent of students scoring Proficient or above, also is currently about 5 percentage points higher than "Proficient." The average (mean) of middle schools is 630 for PASS ELA and 634 for PASS Math, while a score of 600 is defined as "Proficient."

While high school test scores, on average, are closer to or a little below the score for "Proficient," a similar disparity exists between the federal system determination that most high schools have not met AYP and actual high school student performance when measured in test score units instead of percent of students scoring "Proficient" or above.

South Carolina's proposed new AMOs for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools in ELA, mathematics, science and social studies are presented below:

Annual Measurable Objectives for South Carolina
Mean Student Scores on State Standards Assessments and End-Of-Course Examinations

	ELA				Math		
	Elementary	**Middle**	**High**		**Elementary**	**Middle**	**High**
2011−12	630	624	223		630	624	220
2012−13	635	628	226		635	628	223
2013−14	640	632	229		640	632	226
2014−15	645	636	232		645	636	230
2015−16	650	640	235		650	640	233
2016−17	655	644	238		655	644	236
2017−18	660	648	241		660	648	241
	Science				**Social Studies**		
	Elementary	**Middle**	**High**		**Elementary**	**Middle**	**High**
2011−12	630	624	76		630	624	71
2012−13	635	628	77		635	628	73
2013−14	640	632	78		640	632	75

2014−15	645	636	79		645	636	77
2015−16	650	640	80		650	640	79
2016−17	655	644	81		655	644	81
2017−18	660	648	82		660	648	82
Elementary school AMOs are an annual increase of 5 points based on Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS). Middle school AMOs are an annual increase of 4 points based on Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS). High school AMOs for ELA and math are an annual increase of 3-to-4 points based on the High School Assessment Program (HSAP). High school AMO for science (biology) is an annual increase of 1 point and the AMO for social studies (US History) is an annual increase of 1-to-2 points; both AMOs are based on End-Of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP).							

We are projecting the anticipated AMOs through the 2017−18 school year based on guidance from the US Department of Education. South Carolina anticipates implementing the assessment being developed by the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium during the 2014−15 school year. Prior to that time, the state proposes to re-formulate the AMOs that it uses for federal and state accountability.

Each component measures the success of the "All Students" group and all student subgroups as defined by demographic categories of gender, race/ethnicity, disability status, limited English proficiency status, and socioeconomic status (as measured by eligibility for the free and reduced-price meals program).

The state has set ambitious and attainable goals for student performance on state standards assessments and end-of-course examinations. The table below, *Student Performance Goals*, presents the goals for mean school scores for each school level and content area. Once a school reaches these goals, the state will not penalize them for a lack of continual growth as long as the mean school score remains at or above the goal. South Carolina proposes an annual increase in the AMOs for each content area and school level through the 2017−18 school year.

Student Performance Goals by SY 2017−18
Desired Mean Student Scores on State Standards Assessments and End-Of-Course Examinations

ELA				Math		
Elementary	**Middle**	**High**		**Elementary**	**Middle**	**High**
660	648	241		660	648	241
Science				**Social Studies**		
Elementary	**Middle**	**High**		**Elementary**	**Middle**	**High**
660	648	82		660	648	82

South Carolina's report card is accessible at http://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/2011/index.cfm and indicates the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010−11 school year in ELA and mathematics for the "All Students"group

and all subgroups.

Proposed ESEA Grade Methodology

For Measuring Performance

Step 1—Identify the student cohort for accountability purposes
Students continuously enrolled in current year between 45th day and 1st day of testing.

Step 2—Calculate the averages (means):
For the "All Students" group (N > 0), and
For each subgroup (N ≥ 30).

Step 3—Compare each mean to the annual measurable objective (AMO) score. Award partial credit for each mean that is above the Proficient score or for improvement for each mean that is less than Proficient (if the mean improved over the previous year).
For the "All Students" group (N > 0), and
For each subgroup (N ≥ 30).

Step 4—Add the Objective Scores.
Divide by Total Possible Objectives and
Convert to a percent Objectives Score.

Step 5—For Each Measure, multiply percent Objectives Scores times weight.

Step 6—Calculate the Total Score:
Add the weighted scores for each measure for a Total Score (Range: 0 – 100).

For Calculating Graduation Rate

Step 1—Identify the student cohort for accountability purposes.

Step 2—Compare the graduation rate percentage to the AMO.

Step 3—Award partial credit for each graduation rate that is above the rate for Proficient (66.7%) or award partial credit for improvement for each graduation rate that is less than Proficient (if the graduation rate improved over the previous year).
For the "All Students" group (N > 0), and
For each subgroup (N ≥ 30).

Step 4—Add the Objective Scores.
Divide by Total Possible Objectives and
Convert to a percent Objectives Score.

Step 5—For Each Measure, multiply percent Objectives Scores times weight.

Step 6—Calculate the Total Score:
Add the weighted scores for each measure for a Total Score (Range: 0 – 100).

Step 7—For each school, LEA, and the SEA, assign an ESEA Grade using the following scale:

District and School ESEA Grading Scale		
Weighted Composite Index Score	**Weighted Composite Index Score**	**Weighted Composite Index Score**
90−100	A	Performance substantially exceeds the state's expectations.
80−89	B	Performance exceeds the state's expectations.
70−79	C	Performance meets the state's expectations.
60−69	D	Performance does not meet the state's expectations.
Below 60	F	Performance is substantially below the state's expectations.

For state accountability purposes, South Carolina proposes to report and track the total composite index score and associated letter grade for the SEA, each school and district, as well as more detailed performance information for the "All Students" group and for each ESEA subgroup. In addition, for the sake of continuity in federal reporting, South Carolina will also continue to report by SEA, district, and school the percent of students who are Proficient as well as the percent below and above proficiency for the "All Students" group and for each ESEA subgroup.

A significant problem with the current federally mandated AYP system is that the goal, defined as percent of students who score "Proficient" or above, places undue emphasis only on those students who score slightly below 600. The focus of school improvement often has been to "bump" the students just below "Proficient," ignoring those students who are too far below "Proficient," and not likely to reach proficiency in a short period of time. Hence, the goal, by definition, is set at a level of *minimum* proficiency. So long as a school is able to get a sufficient number of students in the "All Students" group and students in each subgroup to score at least 600, then the school can meet the AMO.

The SCDE proposes to redefine school performance expectations, AYP goals, and the metric by which student performance is assessed in terms of test scores rather than percent of students who meet minimum proficiency.

This will shift the focus from primarily those students who are scoring slightly below the criterion score (600) to, more appropriately, the performance of *all students* and all students in each subgroup. Schools and districts will be able and encouraged to simultaneously focus on increasing student achievement and closing achievement gaps.

At the present time, based on actual test performance of students, a majority of schools in

the state already exceed the minimum score of 600. For example, in 2010−11, elementary and middle schools ranged from 630–644 in ELA and 634–641 in mathematics—significantly above the minimum proficiency score of 600. South Carolina's proposed AMOs are both ambitious and achievable.

South Carolina's proposed AMOs are defined directly using scale scores for the academic achievement assessments rather than indirectly by calculating the percent of students in each school who score at or above a cut score defined as "Proficient."

The proposed AMOs are based on analysis and review of actual student performance on each assessment measure over the past several years. Student assessment scores were analyzed at the state, district and school level, by school type, for All Students as well as by subgroup. Measures of central tendency and the distributions of scores were reviewed.

When student performance is disaggregated by school type, student performance at the elementary school level is higher than at the middle school level and lower at the high school level:

- For elementary schools, the average scale score across the various subjects was 636.5 (or 6% above the current target of 600 for MET AYP);
- For middle schools, the average scale score across all subjects was slightly lower at 631.7 (or 5% above the current target for MET).
- For high schools, the average scale scores (on the high school assessments, with difference scale range) were close to the current cut-off for Proficient, so we set the AMOs at the mean scores for the current year — that is, a scale score of 223 in ELA and 220 on math.

In addition, when current student assessment data (2010−11) are further disaggregated and analyzed by subgroups, substantial differences were evident between the mean performance of the "All Students" group and the means of the various ESEA subgroups.

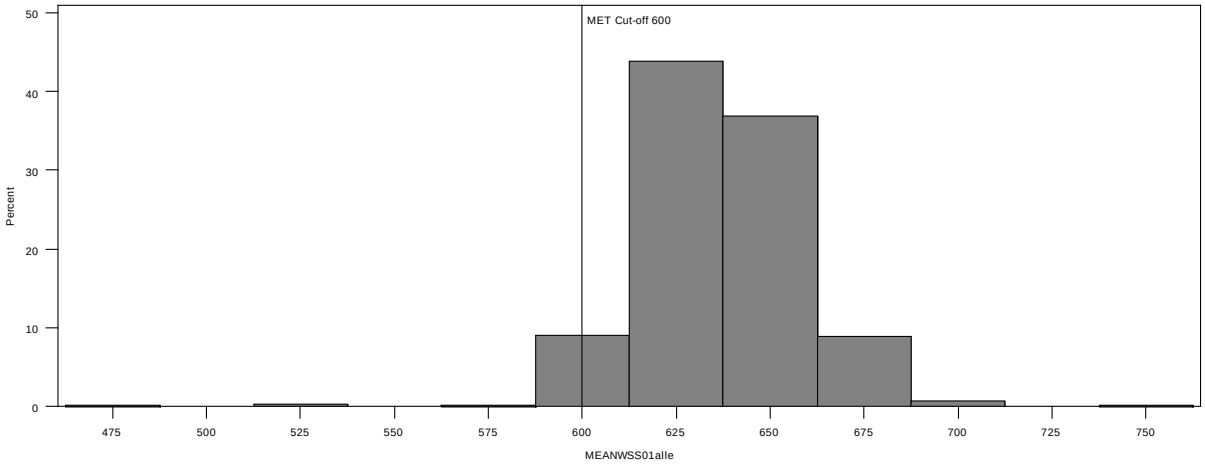
In setting the initial year AMOs, we tried to balance the desire to set an ambitious starting point with the need to set realistic annual goals that reflect the variability that exists in student performance by school type, grade level, and especially by subgroup.

For illustrative purposes, selected frequency distributions for student performance measures are presented below.

2011 ASSESSMENTS RESULTS
DISTRIBUTIONS OF MEAN TEST SCORES BY SCHOOL TYPE

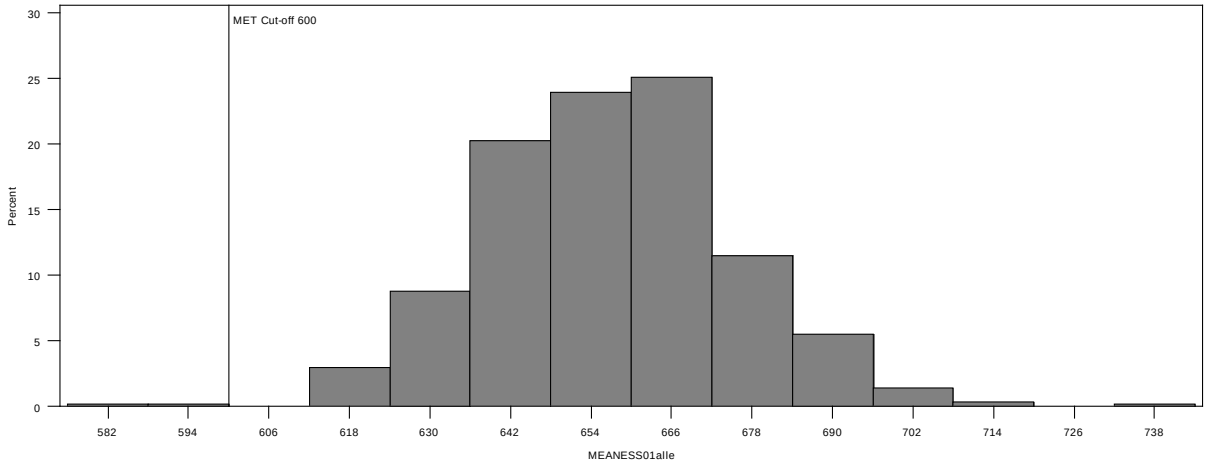
Elementary School: Writing

DISTRIBUTIONS



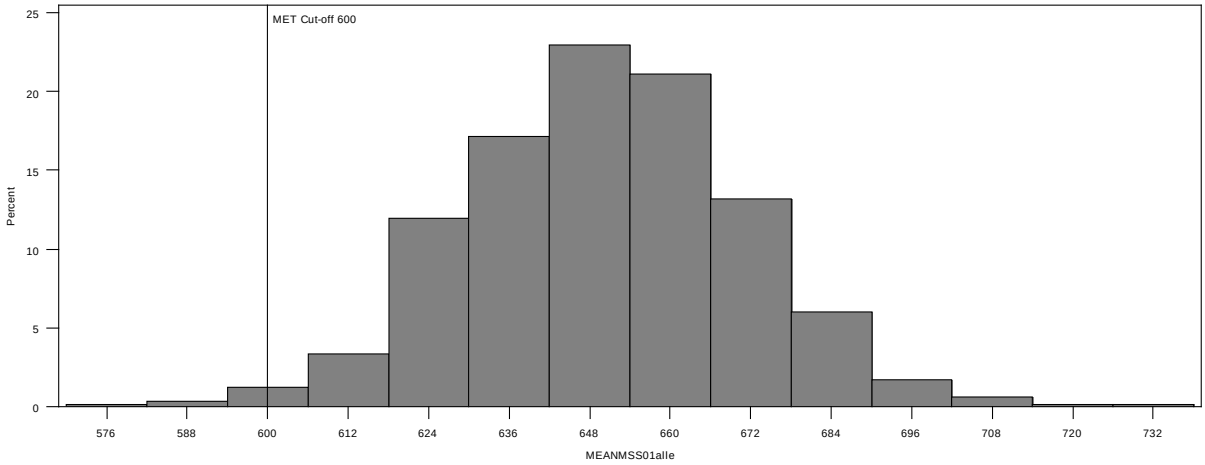
Elementary School: English Language Arts (ELA)

DISTRIBUTIONS



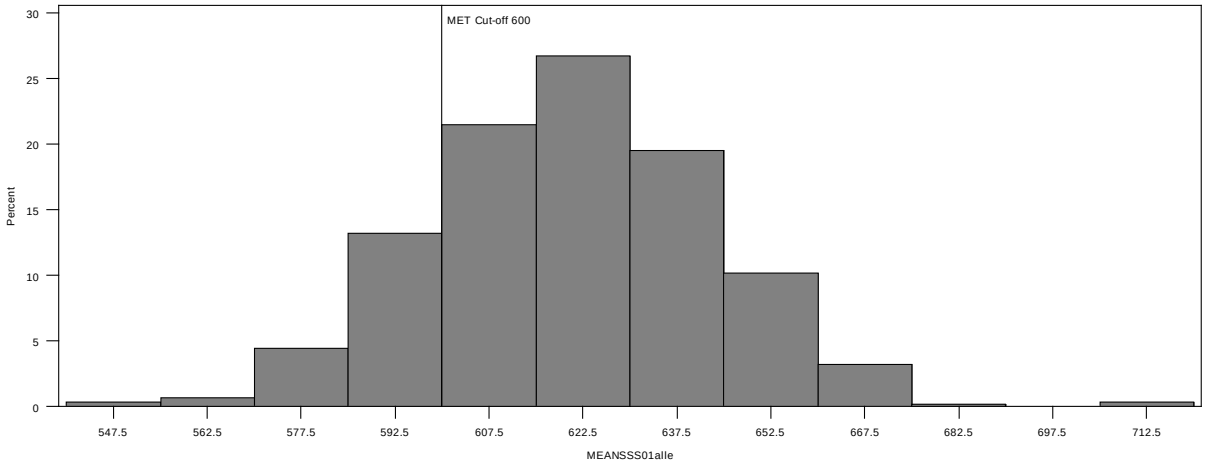
Elementary Schools: Mathematics

DISTRIBUTIONS



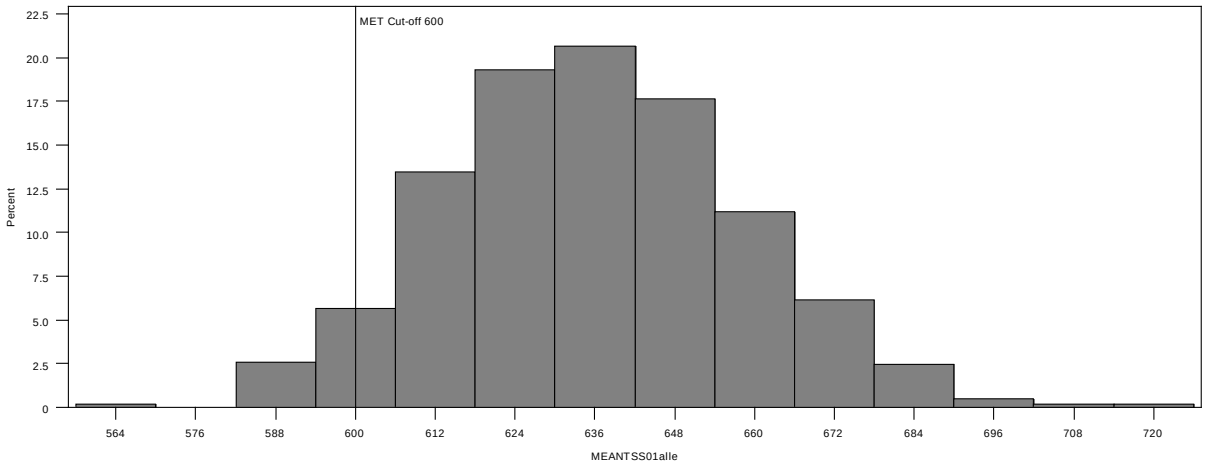
Elementary Schools: Science

DISTRIBUTIONS



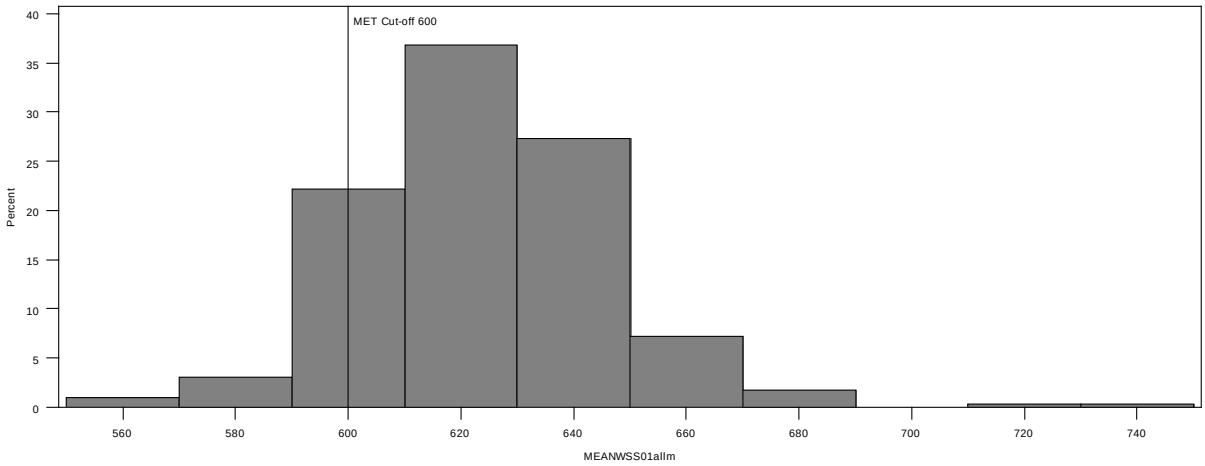
Elementary Schools: Social Studies

DISTRIBUTIONS



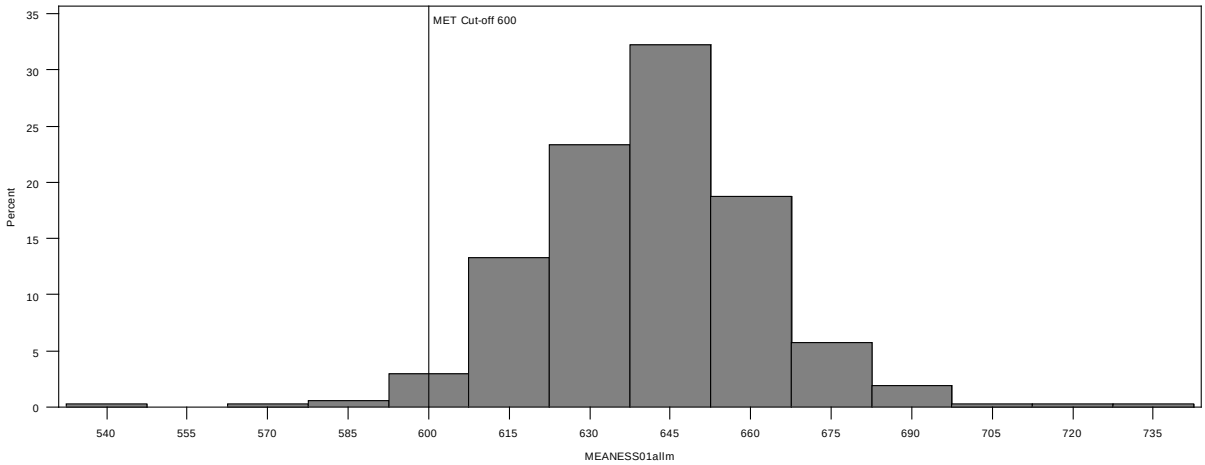
Middle Schools: Writing

DISTRIBUTIONS



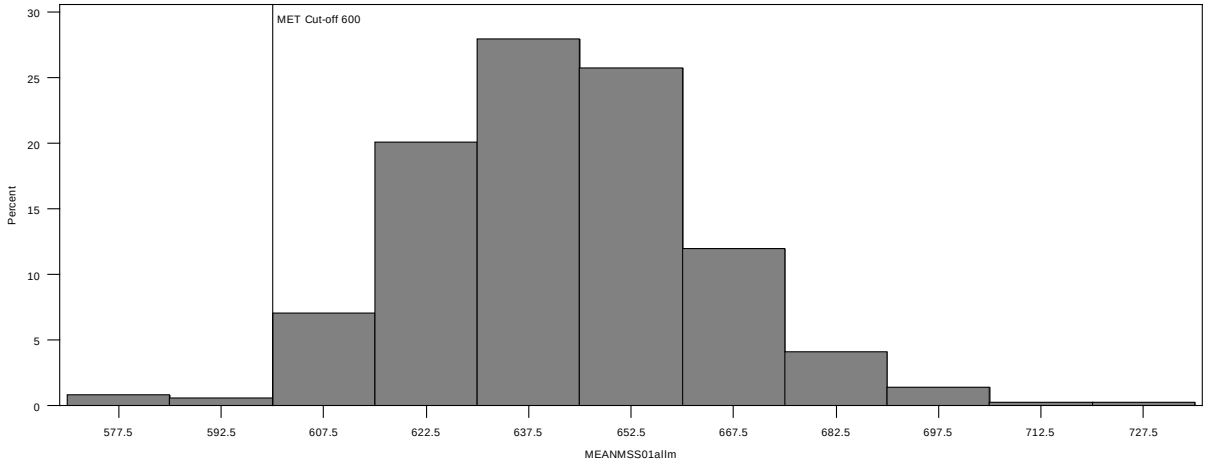
Middle Schools: ELA

DISTRIBUTIONS



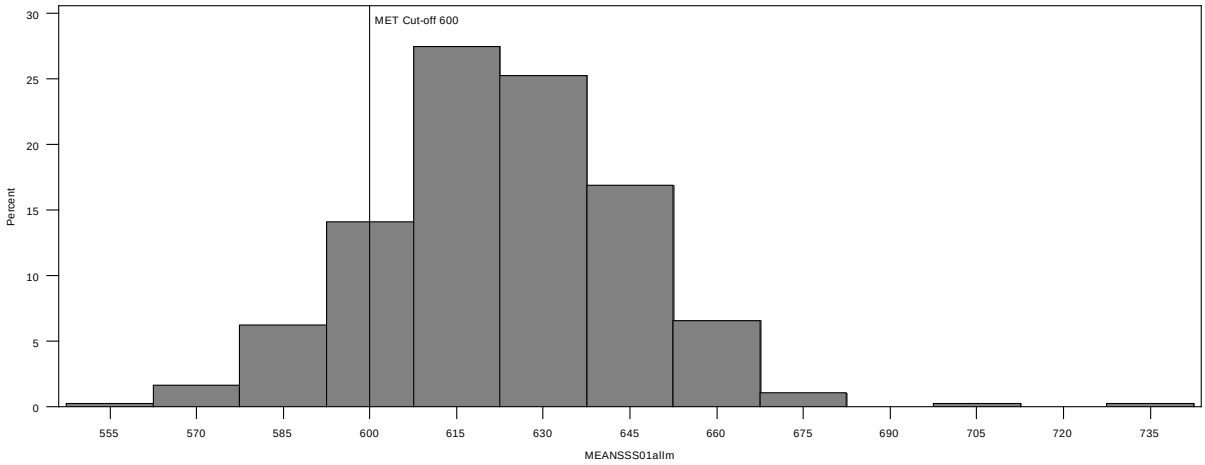
Middle Schools: Mathematics

DISTRIBUTIONS



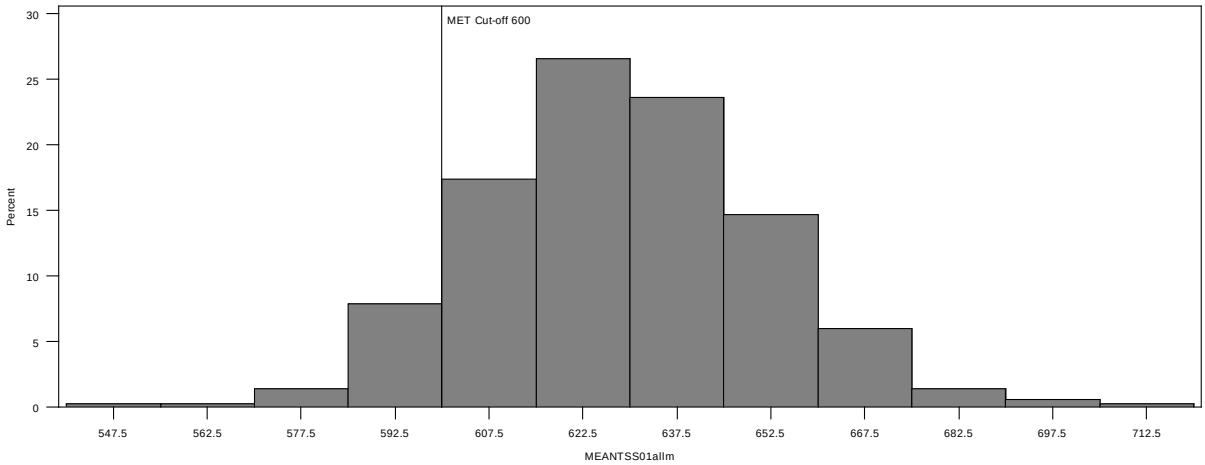
Middle Schools: Science

DISTRIBUTIONS



Middle Schools: Social Studies

DISTRIBUTIONS



For the base year, elementary and middle school AMOs are set at a goal level that is substantially higher than past cut-off for "MET" (e.g., in ELA and math, a score of 600), and at the same time about one percentage point below the mean or average scale score for the school type.

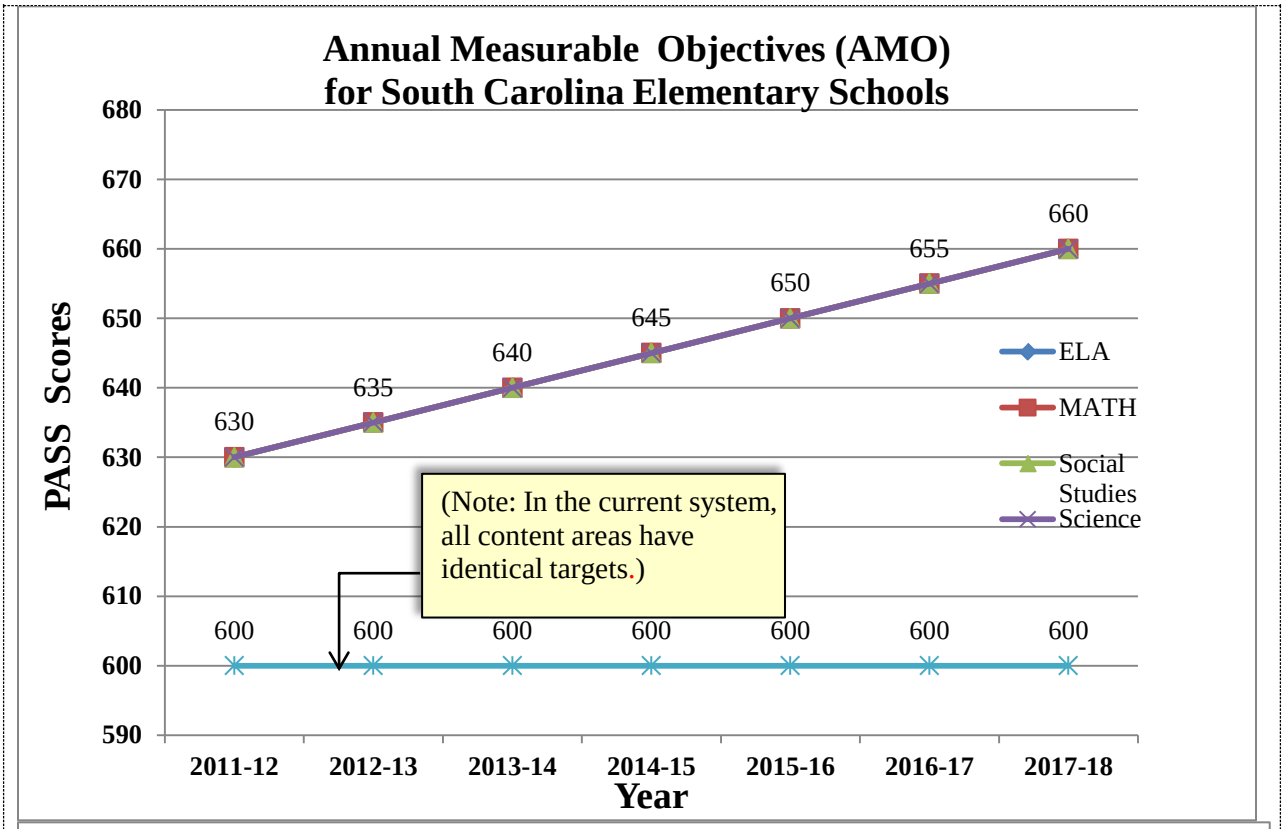
South Carolina's experience with the current state system for school accountability, the School and District Report Cards, reinforced by input from stakeholders, strongly suggested that schools whose performance is in the lowest quartile of the distribution (on a given measure) need the proposed new ESEA goals to be more realistic than the percent of students Proficient cut score and that the new proposed AMOs need to be perceived to be "within reach." In addition, with districts and schools accustomed to dealing with a single score defining the AYP "Proficient" goal across assessment measures, we feel it is important to remain consistent and set the new proposed AMOs in terms of a single mean score for ELA, math, science and social studies, rather than having different AMOs unique to each measure.

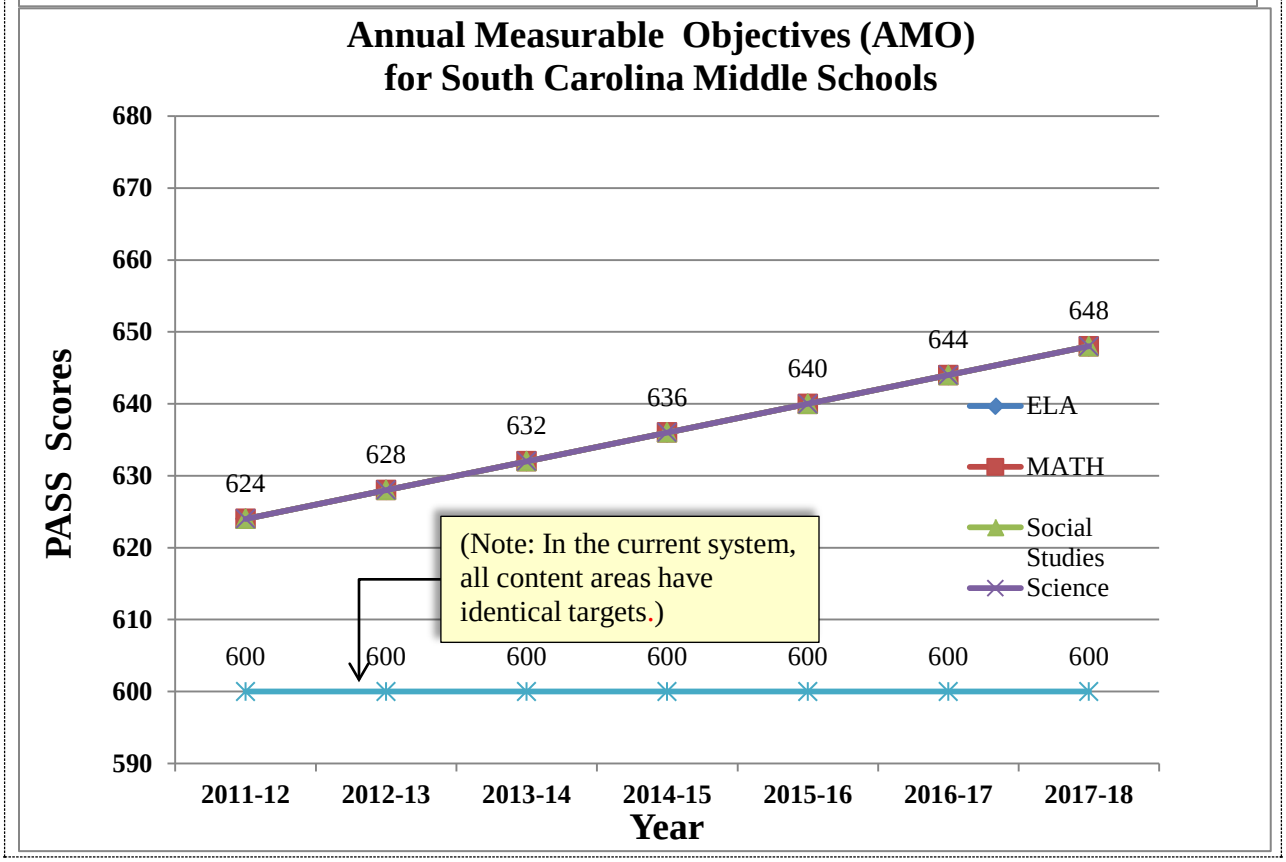
Accordingly, South Carolina's AMO targets were set by taking the scale score cut off point for "Meeting Grade Level Standard" (600) using the current year test data and adding five (5) percent for elementary schools (630) and four (4) percent for middle schools (624).

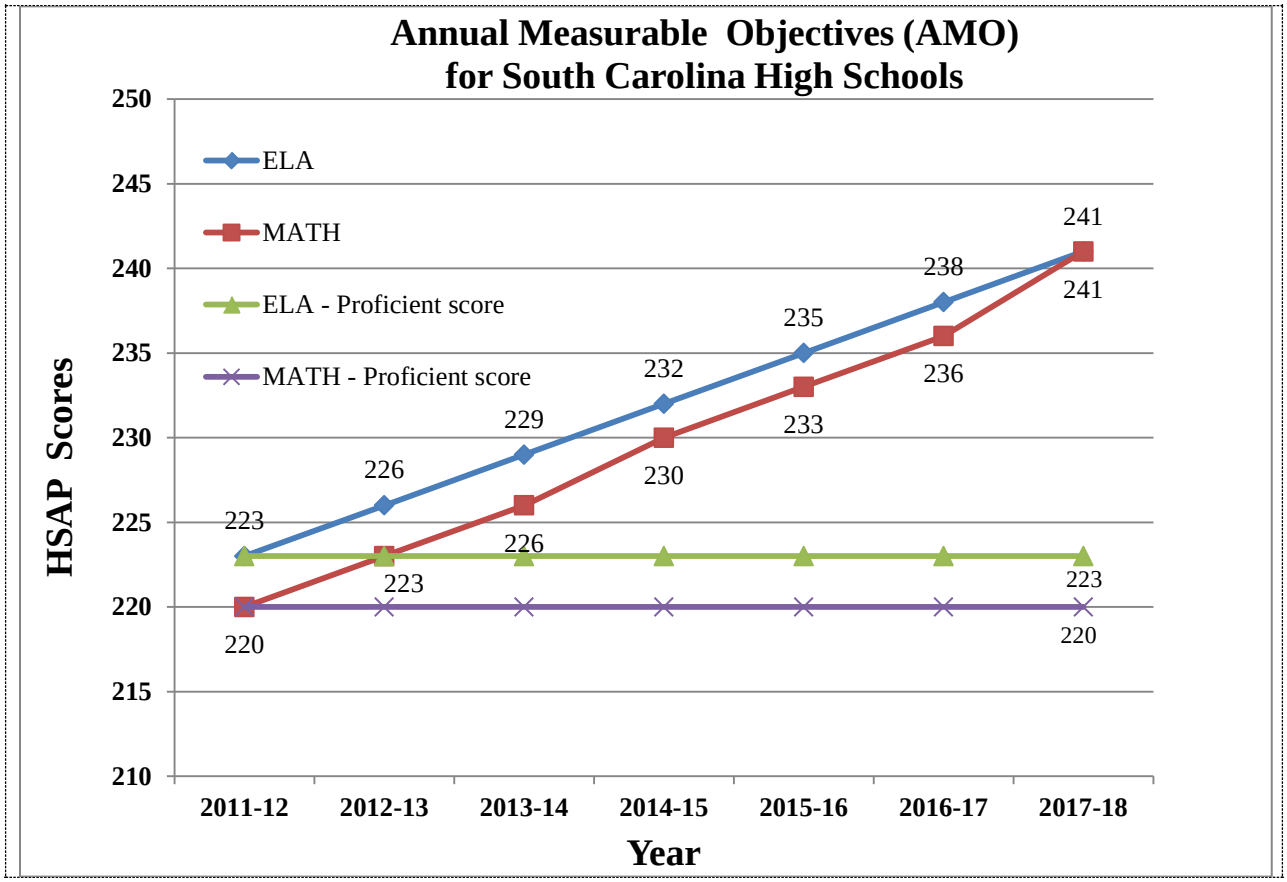
For elementary schools, the proposed new AMO starting in 2011−12 starts at a mean scale score of 630 which is approximately equivalent to an AMO of 93 percent of students Proficient or above (when 600 is used as the cut score for "Proficient"). That is, based on 2011−12 actual data, a school with a mean ELA score of 630 and a mean math score of 630—equal to the AMO—would be estimated to have about 93 percent of students Proficient or above (i.e., when the mean of the distribution is 630 and sd = 20, a score of 600 is equivalent to a *z*-score = -1.5, and approximately 93 percent of the distribution would be expected to be above 600.) For middle schools, the proposed new AMO of 624 for ELA and math would be approximately equal to 88 percent of students Proficient or above (i.e., a *z*-score = -1.2, 88.5 percent above 600). By comparison, the current AMOs for ELA and math with a cut score of 600 are set at 79.4 percent of students scoring Proficient or above.

To determine the proposed annual increases in AMOs, we analyzed mean student assessment scores over time by school type, and chose realistic incremental increases within the range of observed increases in school means over the past three years.

Beginning in 2012−13, South Carolina proposes to raise AYP goals from 600 in ELA and mathematics to the following:


Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO)
for South Carolina Elementary Schools
PASS Scores
680
670
660
650
640
630
620
610
600
590
630
635
640
645
650
655
660
600
600
600
600
600
600
600
ELA
MATH
Social Studies
Science
(Note: In the current system, all content areas have identical targets.)
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year


Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO)
for South Carolina Middle Schools
PASS Scores
680
670
660
650
640
630
620
610
600
590
624
628
632
636
640
644
648
600
600
600
600
600
600
600
ELA
MATH
Social Studies
Science
(Note: In the current system, all content areas have identical targets.)
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year



To determine the proposed AMOs, South Carolina analyzed statewide mean student assessment scores over time, by school type, for all students, and subgroups.

The recent historical trajectory of statewide mean scale scores for the "All Students" group and for student subgroups are presented in Figures A1-A6.

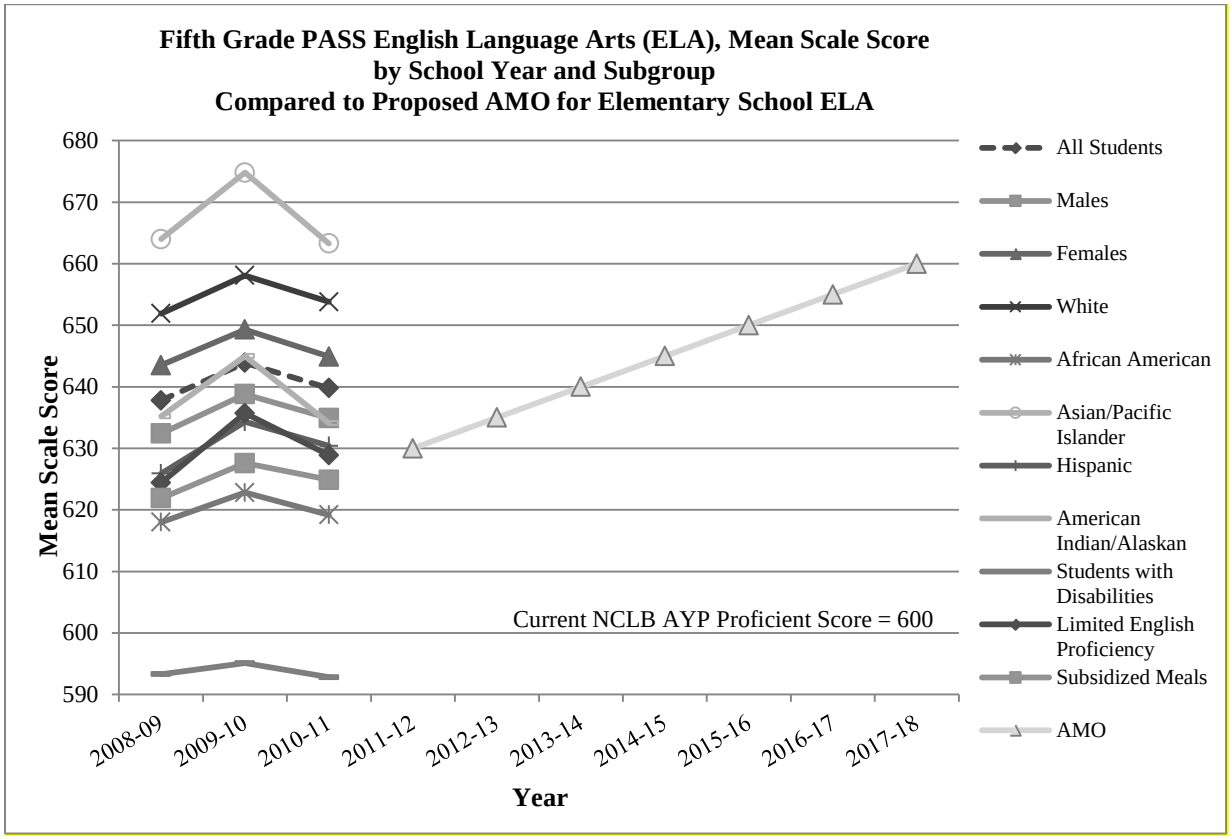
For illustrative purposes and ease of comparison, the trend data presented for elementary and middle schools focuses on 5th grade and 8th grade, the final grade level for elementary schools and middle schools, respectively. (To inform decisions about the proposed AMOs, similar analyses and reviews of historical trends were conducted for all grades tested, 3-5 for elementary schools and 6-8 for middle schools.)

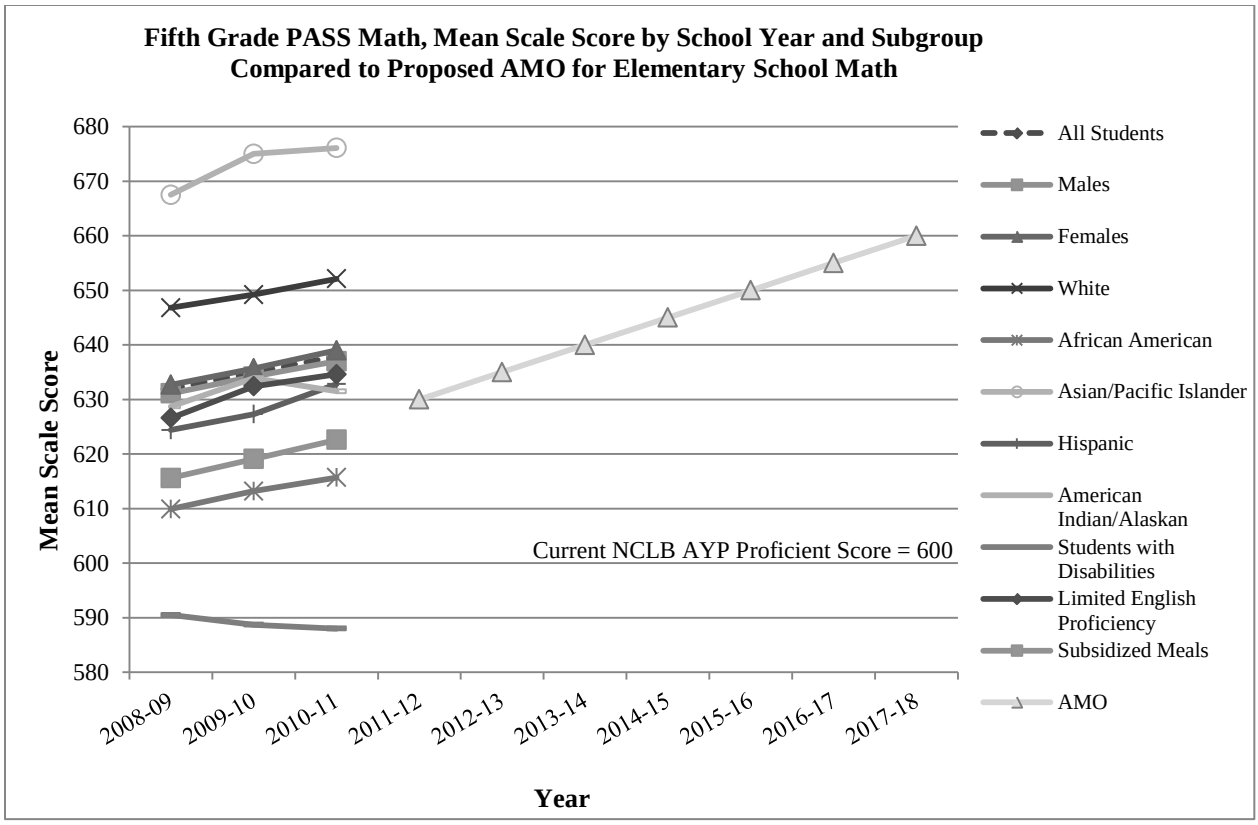
As previously mentioned, the starting points for the proposed AMOs for PASS ELA and Math, and for HSAP ELA and Math were determined, in large part, by detailed analysis and review of recent historical trend data, such as these.

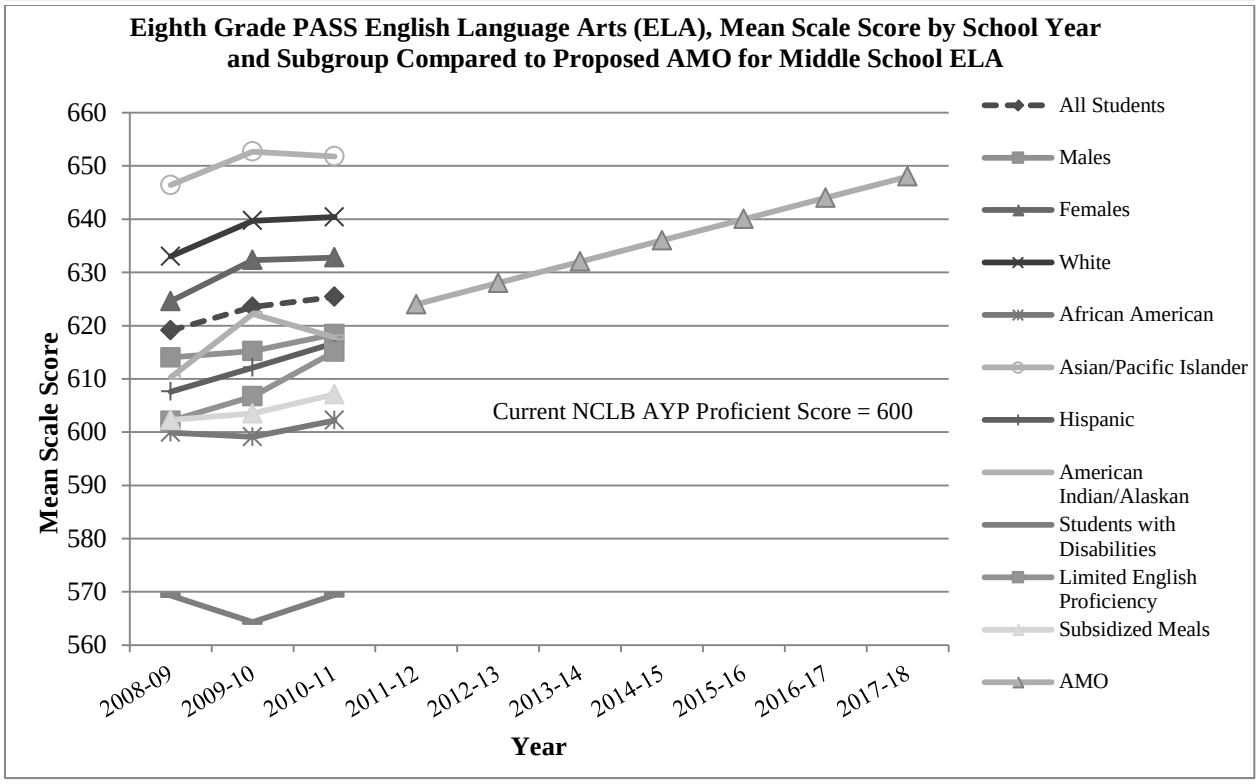
Note: The South Carolina Palmetto Assessments of State Standards (PASS) field tests of writing were first administered in March 2009 and the PASS field tests of reading & research, mathematics, science, and social studies were administered in May 2009. Thus, for Elementary and Middle Schools, only three years of PASS data are available at the present time. For High

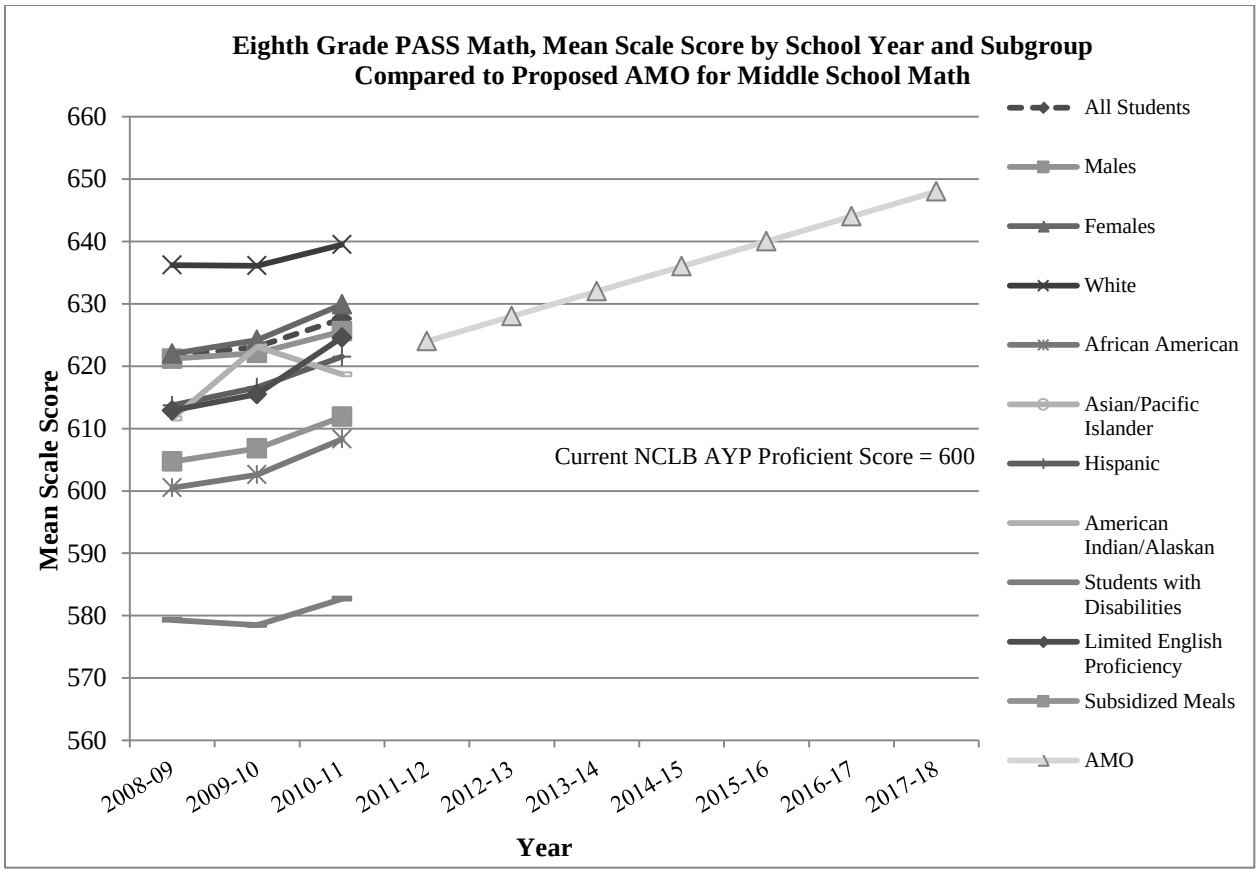
Schools, eight years of historical HSAP data are available, beginning with the 2003-04 school year through 2010-11.

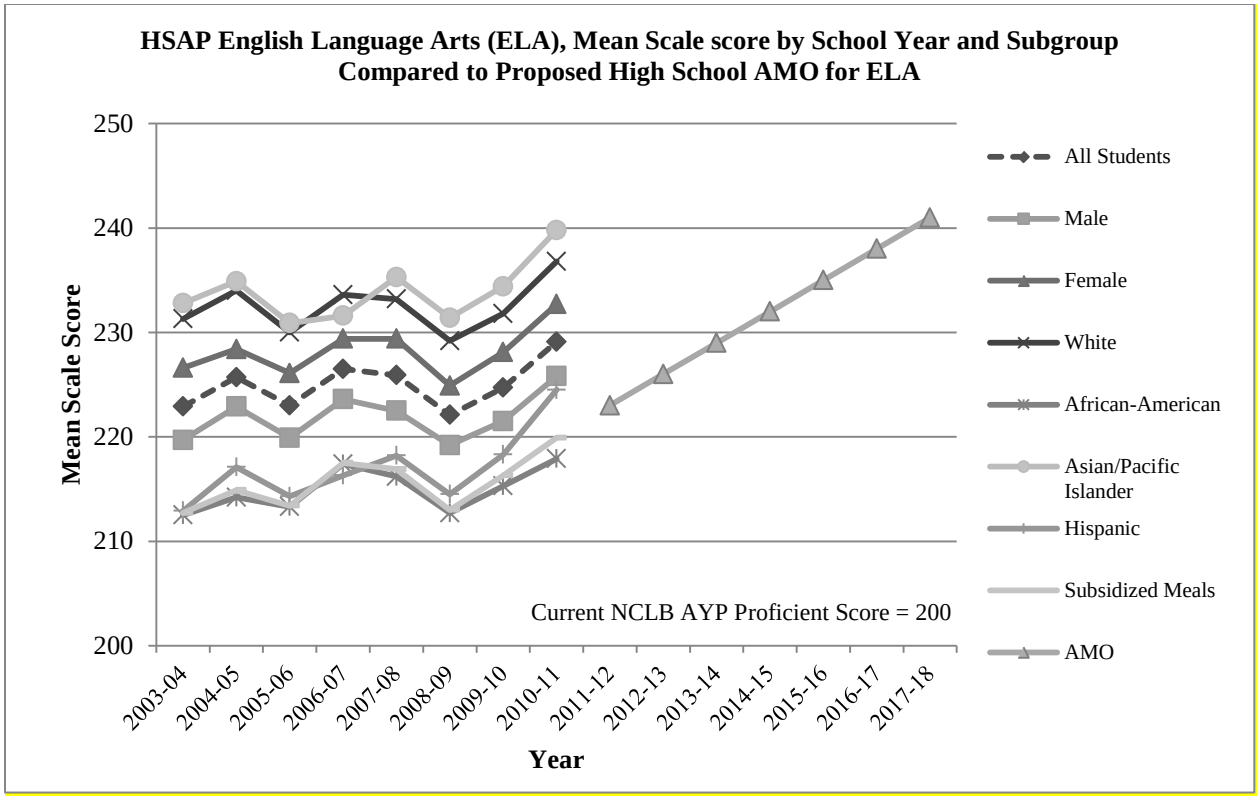
FIGURES A1-A6:

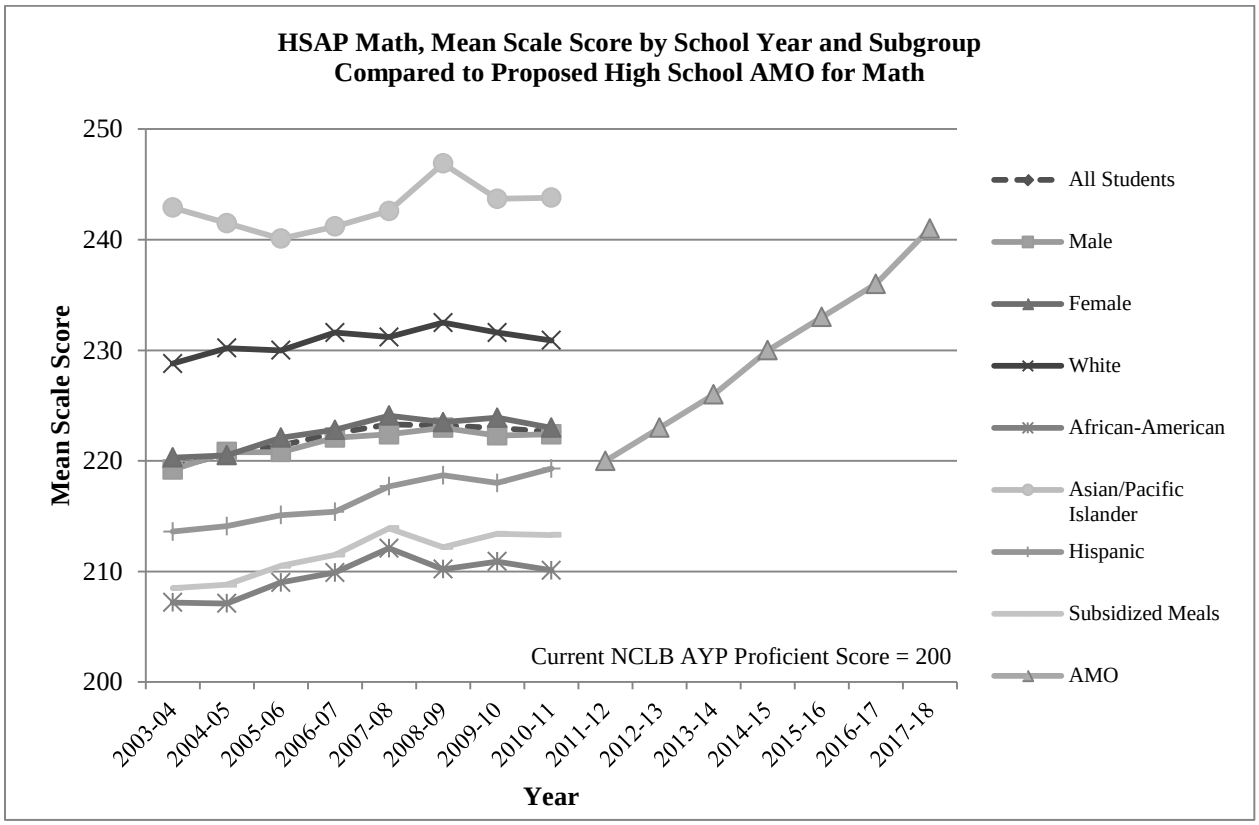



Fifth Grade PASS Math, Mean Scale Score by School Year and Subgroup Compared to Proposed AMO for Elementary School Math
Mean Scale Score
680
670
660
650
640
630
620
610
600
590
580
Current NCLB AYP Proficient Score = 600
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year
All Students
Males
Females
White
African American
Asian/Pacific Islander
Hispanic
American Indian/Alaskan
Students with Disabilities
Limited English Proficiency
Subsidized Meals
AMO


Eighth Grade PASS English Language Arts (ELA), Mean Scale Score by School Year and Subgroup Compared to Proposed AMO for Middle School ELA
Mean Scale Score
660
650
640
630
620
610
600
590
580
570
560
Current NCLB AYP Proficient Score = 600
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year
All Students
Males
Females
White
African American
Asian/Pacific Islander
Hispanic
American Indian/Alaskan
Students with Disabilities
Limited English Proficiency
Subsidized Meals
AMO


Eighth Grade PASS Math, Mean Scale Score by School Year and Subgroup
Compared to Proposed AMO for Middle School Math
Mean Scale Score
660
650
640
630
620
610
600
590
580
570
560
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year
Current NCLB AYP Proficient Score = 600
All Students
Males
Females
White
African American
Asian/Pacific Islander
Hispanic
American Indian/Alaskan
Students with Disabilities
Limited English Proficiency
Subsidized Meals
AMO


HSAP English Language Arts (ELA), Mean Scale score by School Year and Subgroup
Compared to Proposed High School AMO for ELA
Mean Scale Score
250
240
230
220
210
200
2003-04
2004-05
2005-06
2006-07
2007-08
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year
Current NCLB AYP Proficient Score = 200
All Students
Male
Female
White
African-American
Asian/Pacific Islander
Hispanic
Subsidized Meals
AMO

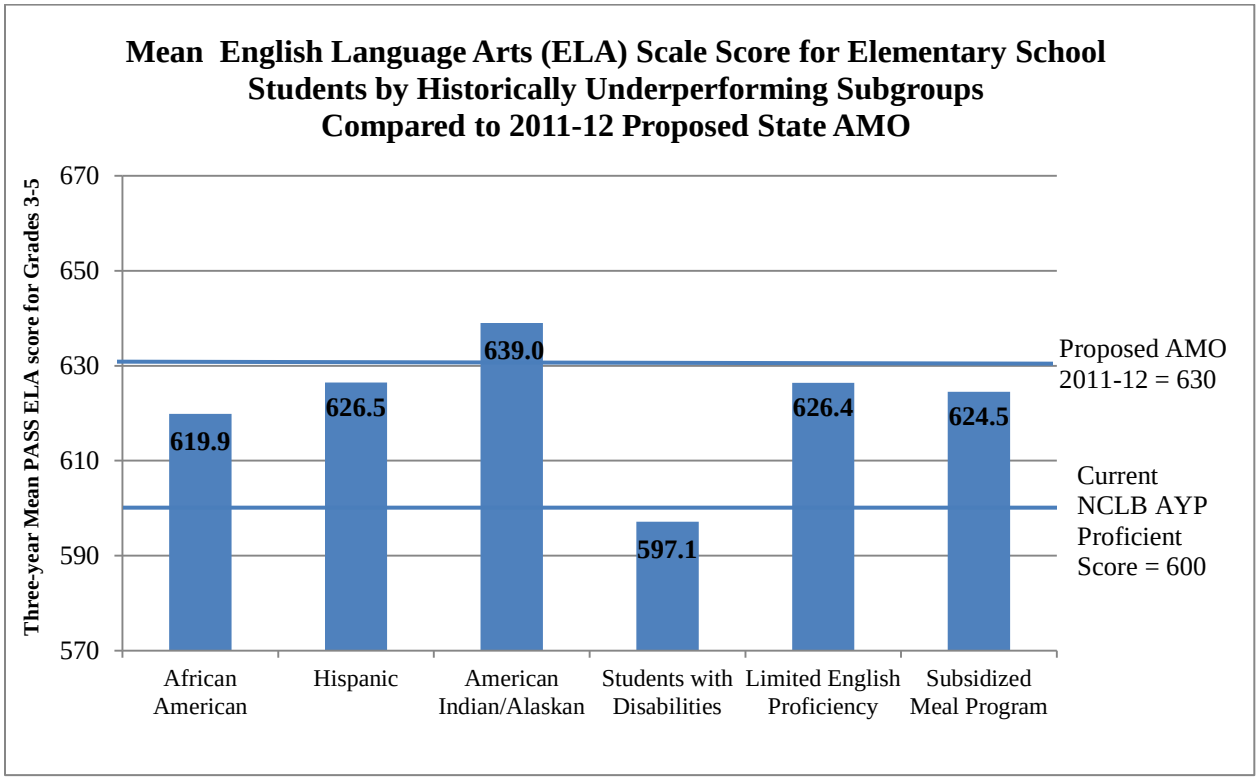


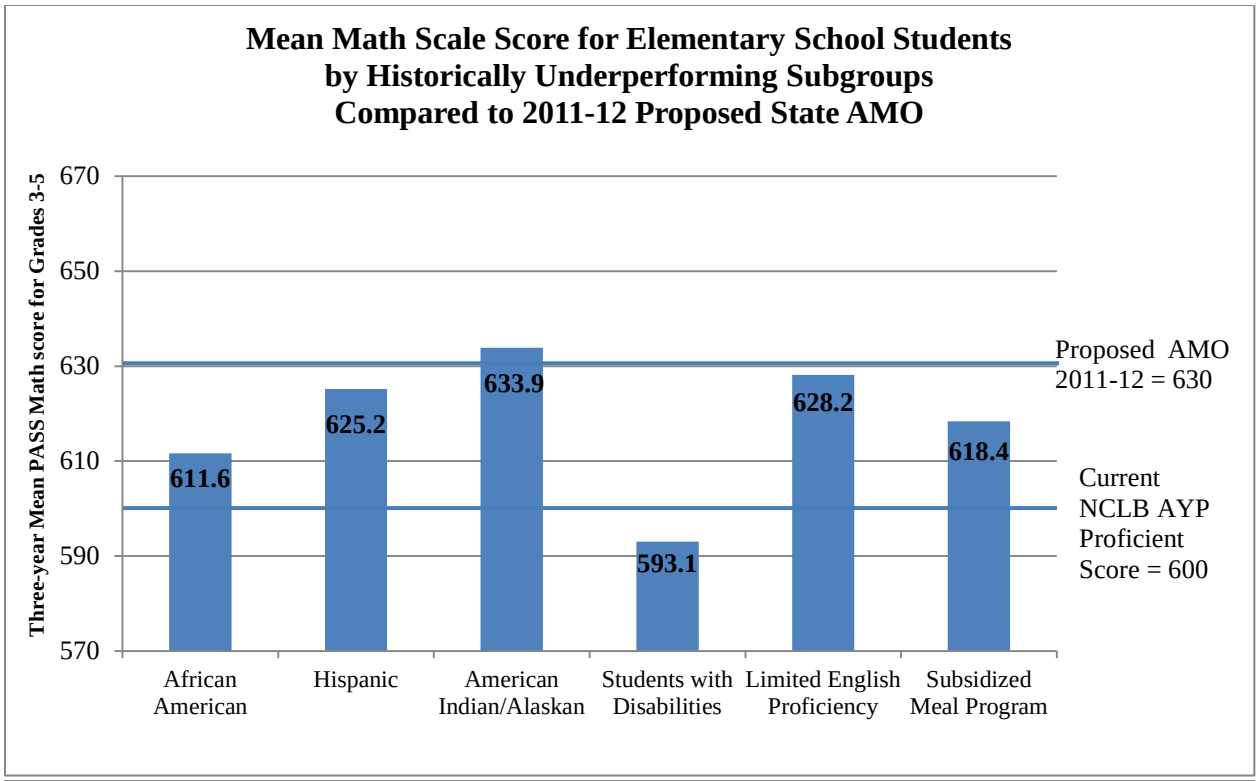
To determine the appropriate and optimal starting point for each AMO, South Carolina also conducted analyses and reviews of PASS and HSAP assessment scores disaggregated by subgroup.

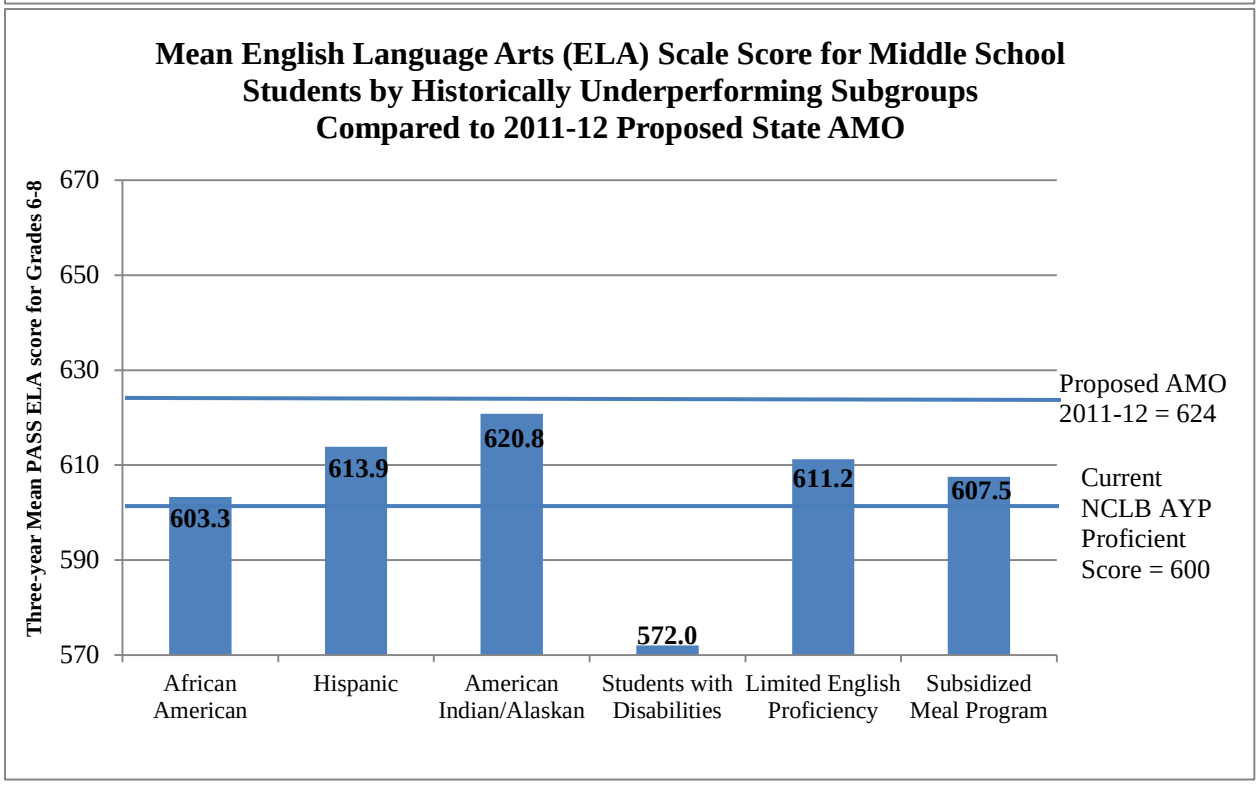
Mean scale scores by school type and student subgroup are presented in Figures B1-B6.

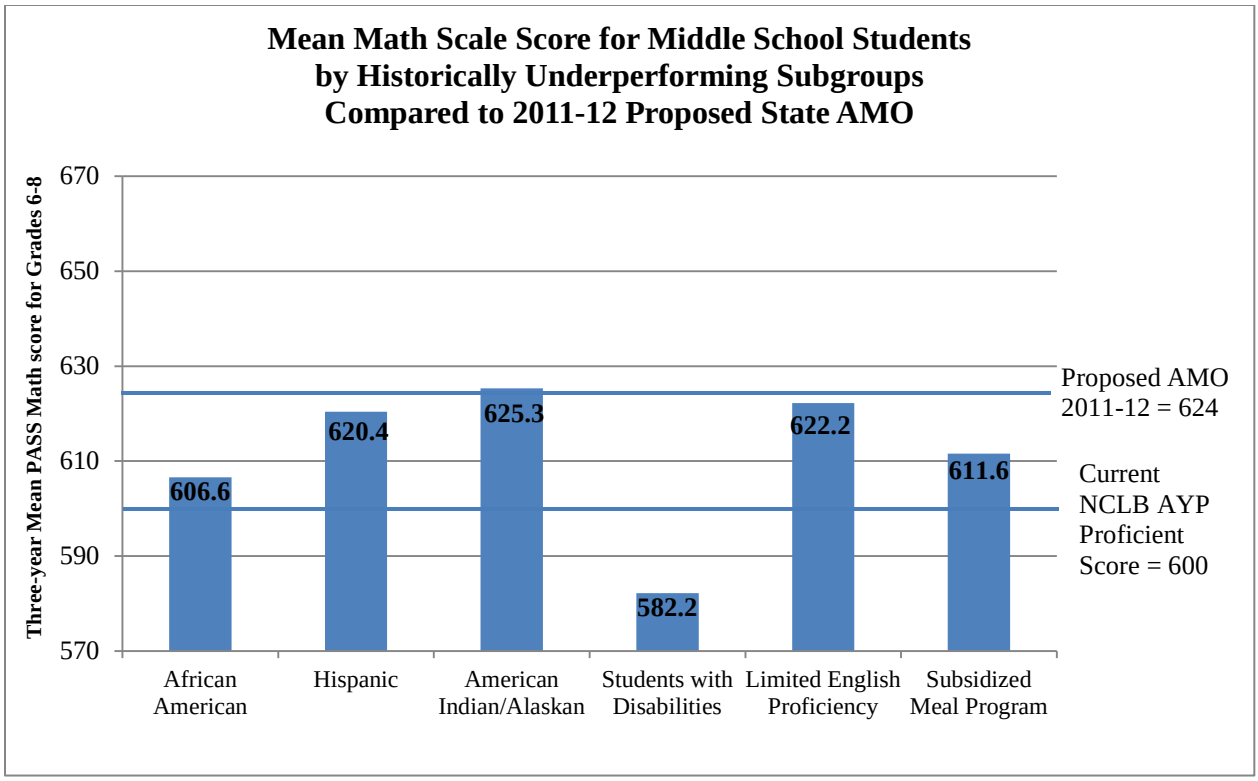
As is evident, South Carolina's proposed 2011-12 AMOs for elementary, middle and high schools are above the recent (three-year) mean student performance of all historically underperforming subgroups, (with the exception of one subgroup, American Indian/Alaskan students, at the elementary school level). These data clearly demonstrate that the proposed AMOs for elementary, middle and high schools are, in fact, both rigorous and ambitious, relative to student subgroup performance on PASS and HSAP.

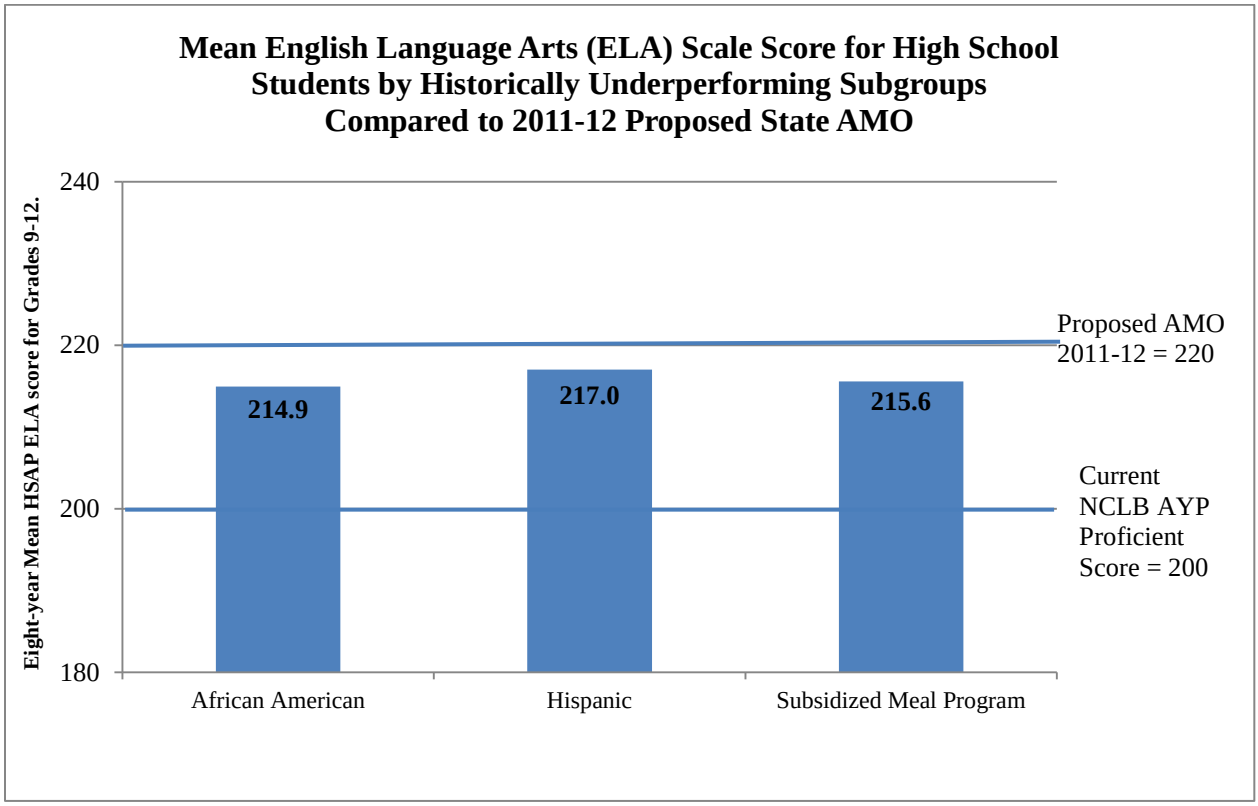
FIGURES B1-B6:

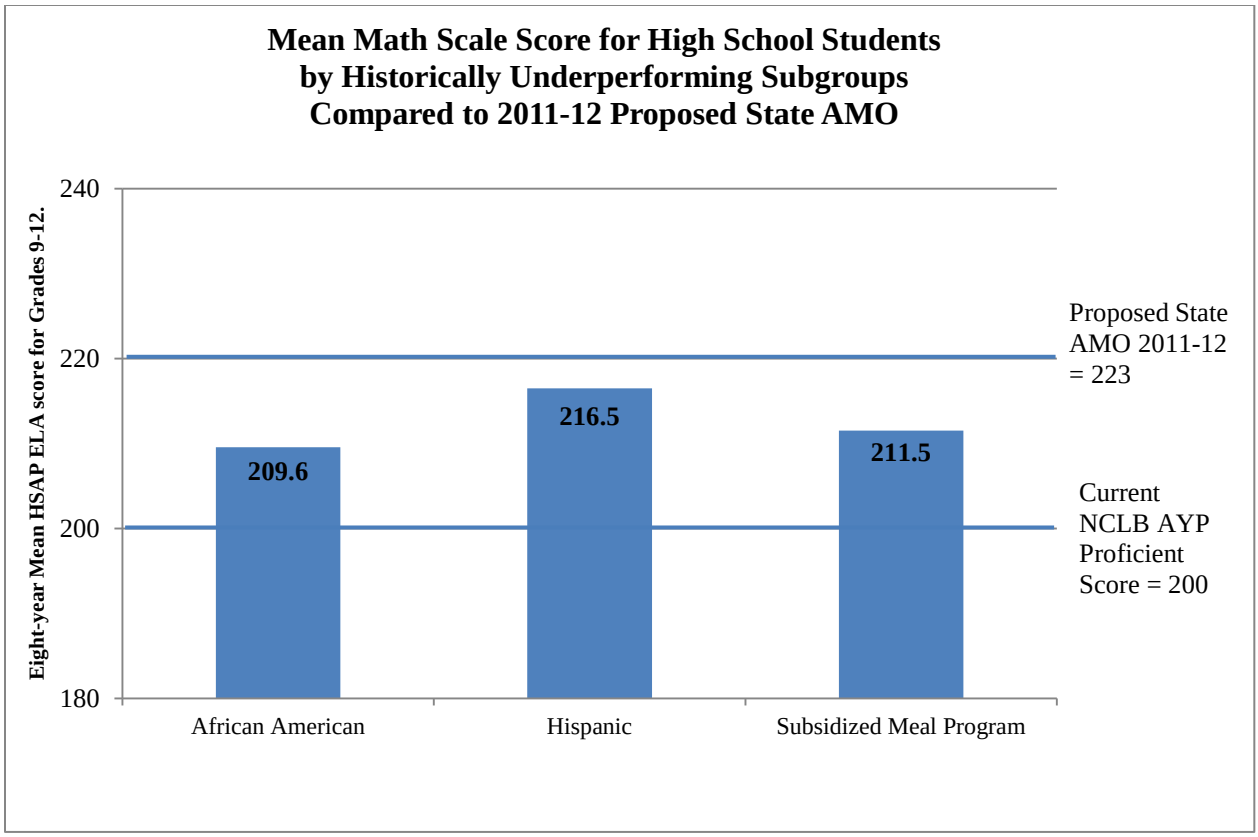



Mean Math Scale Score for Elementary School Students
by Historically Underperforming Subgroups
Compared to 2011-12 Proposed State AMO
Three-year Mean PASS Math score for Grades 3-5
670
650
630
610
590
570
611.6
625.2
633.9
593.1
628.2
618.4
Proposed AMO
2011-12 = 630
Current
NCLB AYP
Proficient
Score = 600
African American
Hispanic
American Indian/Alaskan
Students with Disabilities
Limited English Proficiency
Subsidized Meal Program


Mean English Language Arts (ELA) Scale Score for Middle School
Students by Historically Underperforming Subgroups
Compared to 2011-12 Proposed State AMO
Three-year Mean PASS ELA score for Grades 6-8
670
650
630
610
590
570
603.3
613.9
620.8
572.0
611.2
607.5
Proposed AMO
2011-12 = 624
Current
NCLB AYP
Proficient
Score = 600
African American
Hispanic
American Indian/Alaskan
Students with Disabilities
Limited English Proficiency
Subsidized Meal Program


Mean Math Scale Score for Middle School Students
by Historically Underperforming Subgroups
Compared to 2011-12 Proposed State AMO
Three-year Mean PASS Math score for Grades 6-8
670
650
630
610
590
570
606.6
620.4
625.3
582.2
622.2
611.6
Proposed AMO
2011-12 = 624
Current
NCLB AYP
Proficient
Score = 600
African American
Hispanic
American Indian/Alaskan
Students with Disabilities
Limited English Proficiency
Subsidized Meal Program

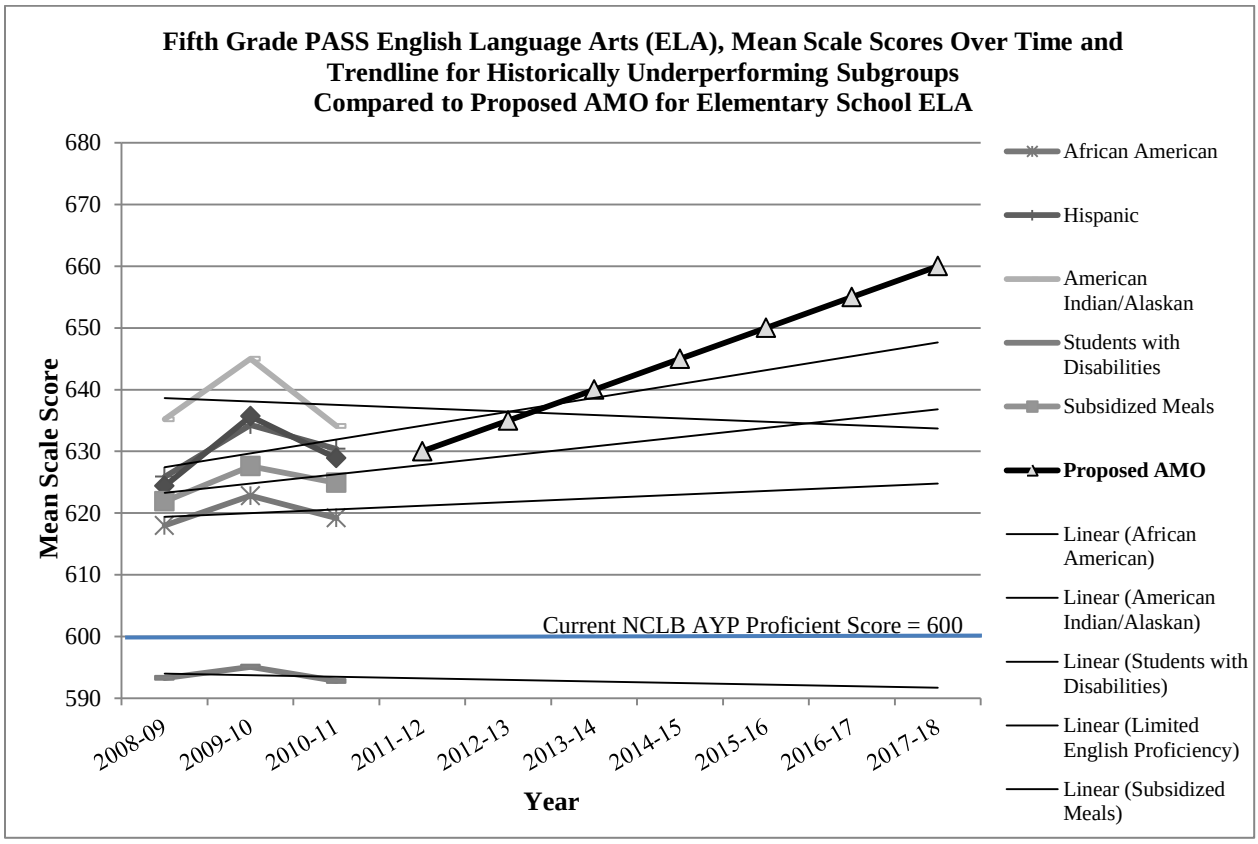

Mean English Language Arts (ELA) Scale Score for High School
Students by Historically Underperforming Subgroups
Compared to 2011-12 Proposed State AMO
Eight-year Mean HSAP ELA score for Grades 9-12.
240
220
200
180
214.9
217.0
215.6
Proposed AMO
2011-12 = 220
Current
NCLB AYP
Proficient
Score = 200
African American
Hispanic
Subsidized Meal Program

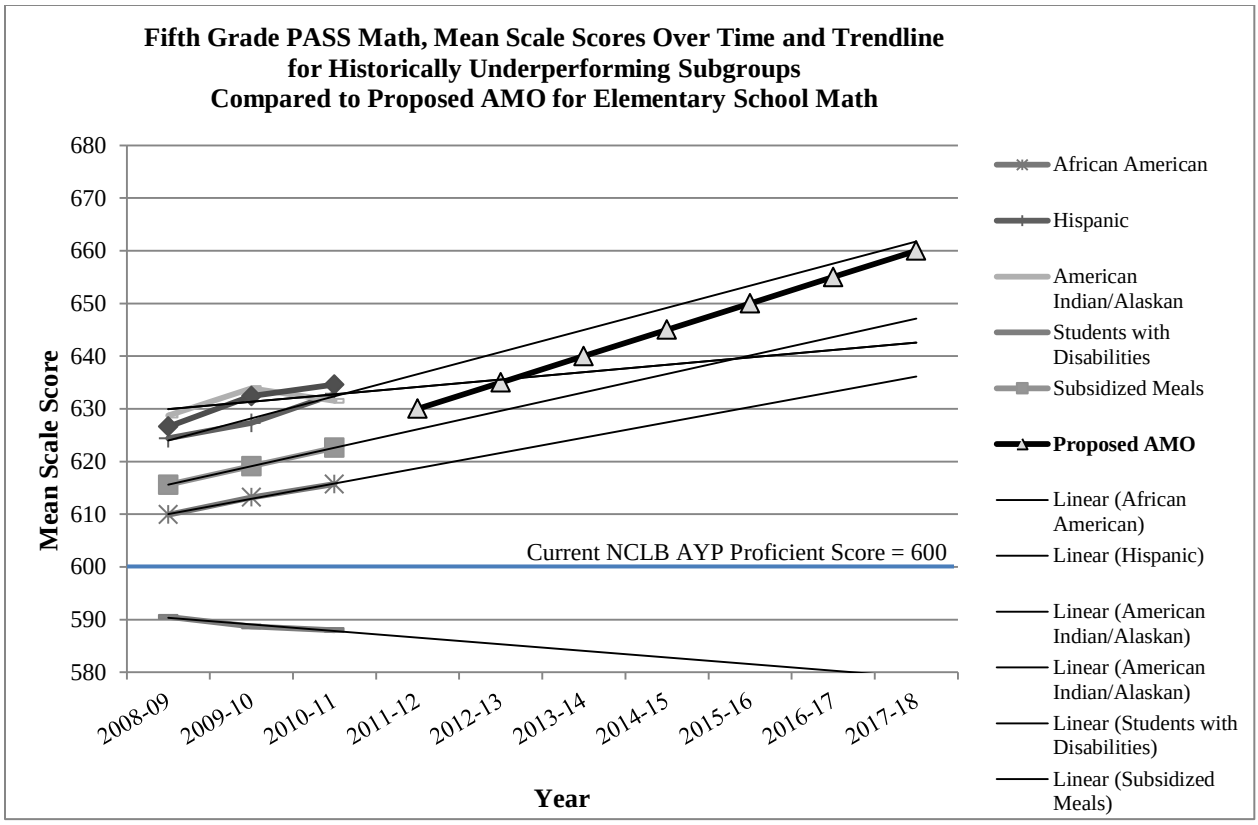


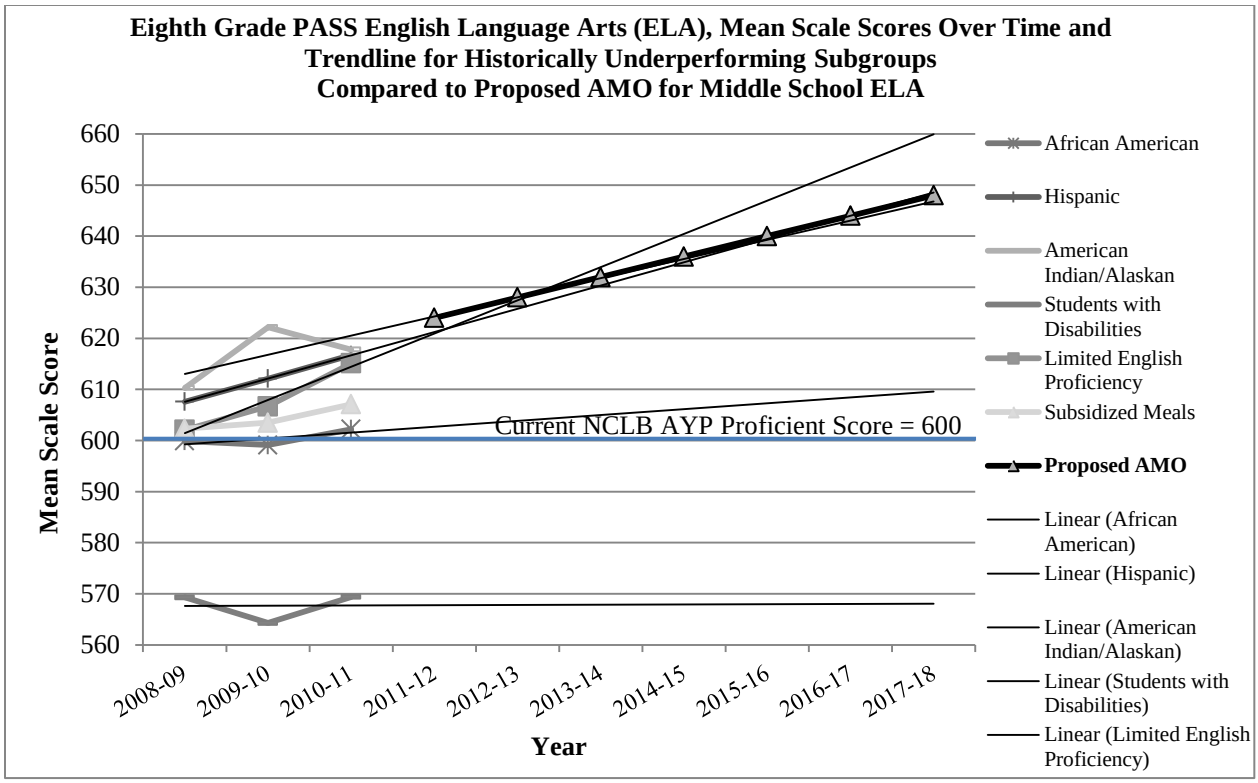
In Figures C1-C6, below, South Carolina's proposed AMOs for elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools are presented in relation to future projections of student performance based on the past trajectory of PASS and HSAP scale score means.

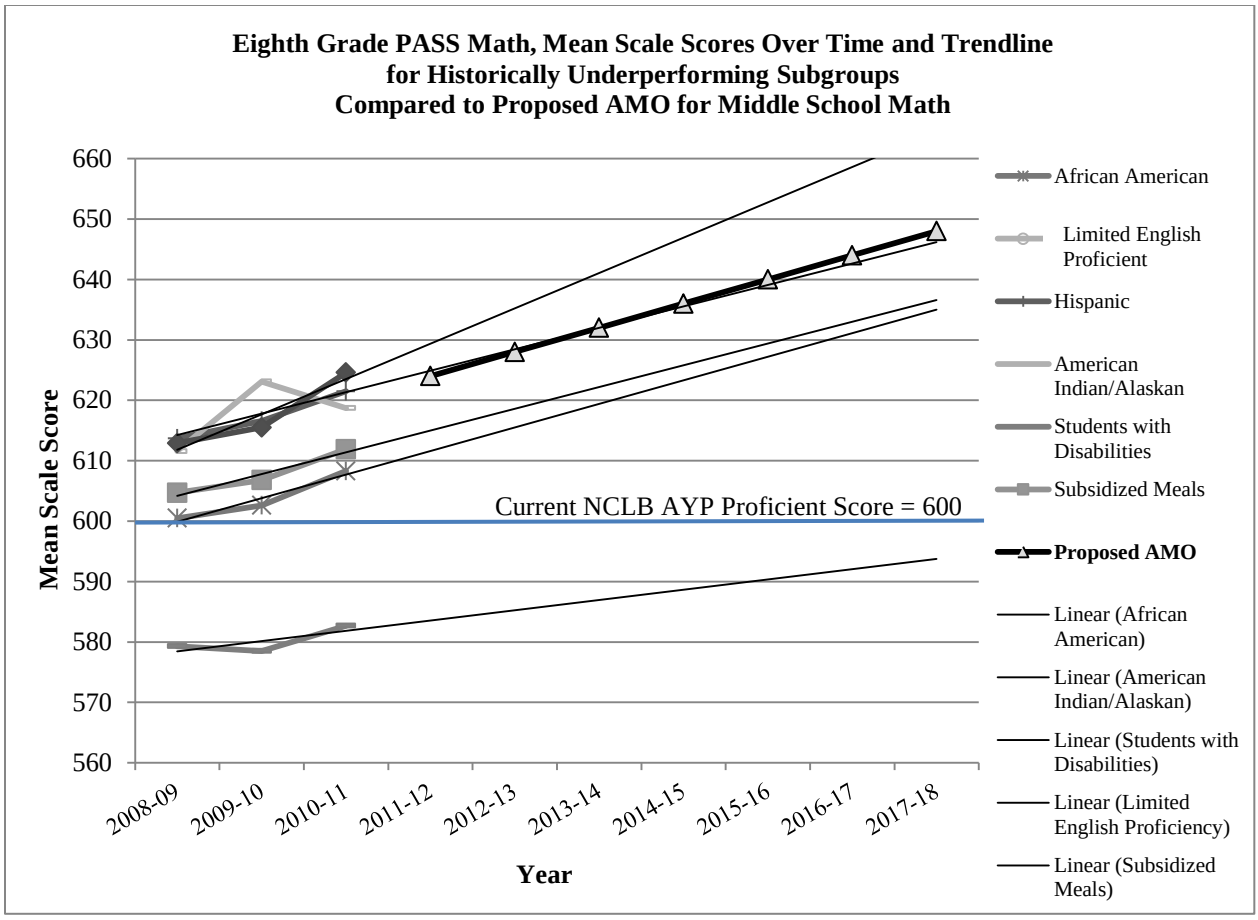
Keeping in mind that some of the observed increase (positive slope) from 2008-09 to 2009-10 is likely due to deflated initial implementation year assessment results for PASS, in general, the proposed AMOs over time clearly indicate that South Carolina's annual expectations will set ambitious targets for all schools and all students.

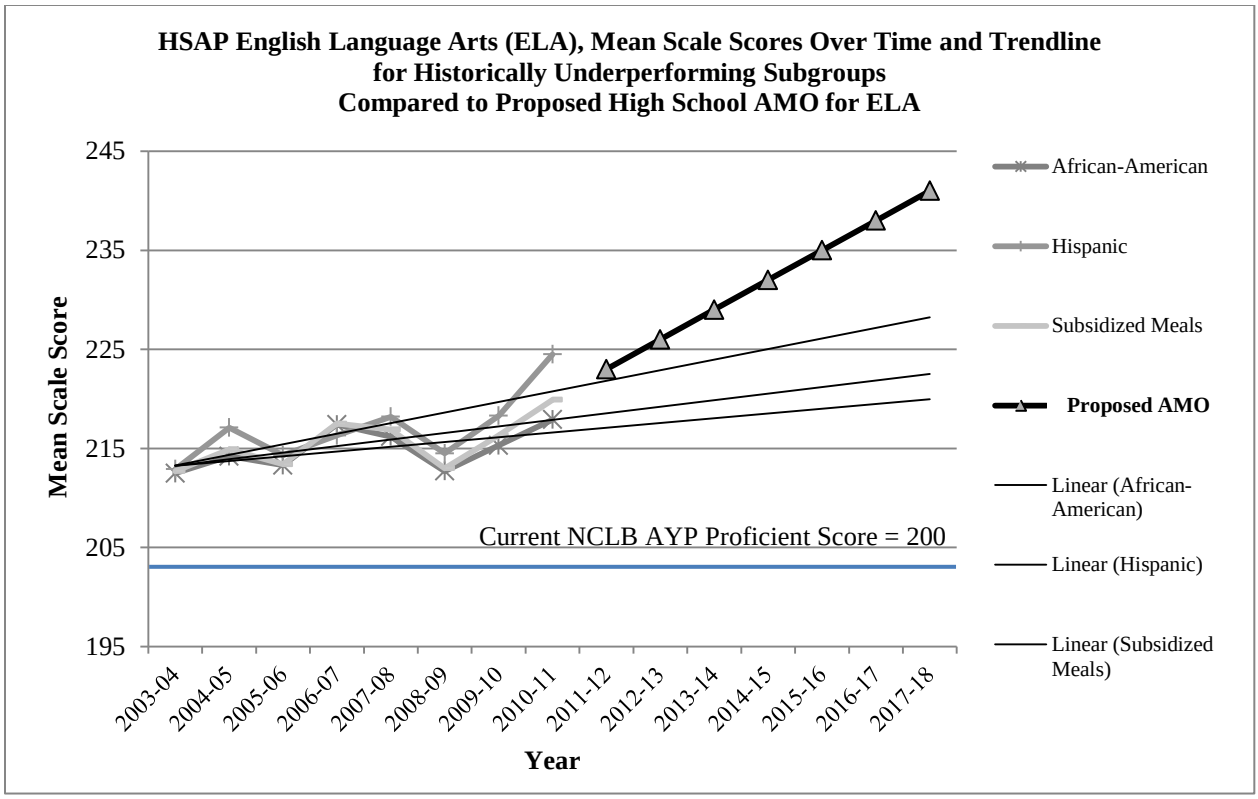
FIGURES C1-C6:

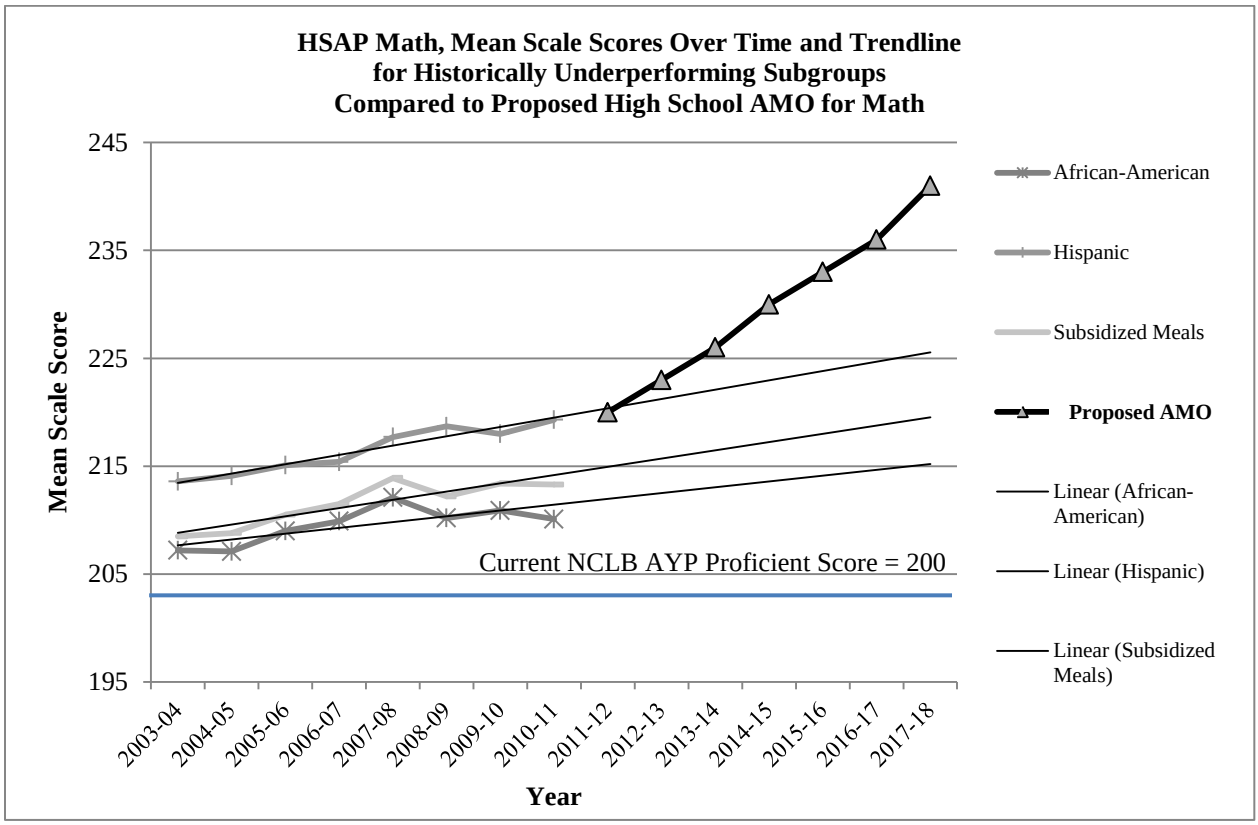



Fifth Grade PASS Math, Mean Scale Scores Over Time and Trendline for Historically Underperforming Subgroups Compared to Proposed AMO for Elementary School Math
Mean Scale Score
680
670
660
650
640
630
620
610
600
590
580
Current NCLB AYP Proficient Score = 600
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year
African American
Hispanic
American Indian/Alaskan
Students with Disabilities
Subsidized Meals
Proposed AMO
Linear (African American)
Linear (Hispanic)
Linear (American Indian/Alaskan)
Linear (American Indian/Alaskan)
Linear (Students with Disabilities)
Linear (Subsidized Meals)


Eighth Grade PASS English Language Arts (ELA), Mean Scale Scores Over Time and Trendline for Historically Underperforming Subgroups Compared to Proposed AMO for Middle School ELA
Mean Scale Score
660
650
640
630
620
610
600
590
580
570
560
Current NCLB AYP Proficient Score = 600
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year
African American
Hispanic
American Indian/Alaskan
Students with Disabilities
Limited English Proficiency
Subsidized Meals
Proposed AMO
Linear (African American)
Linear (Hispanic)
Linear (American Indian/Alaskan)
Linear (Students with Disabilities)
Linear (Limited English Proficiency)


Eighth Grade PASS Math, Mean Scale Scores Over Time and Trendline
for Historically Underperforming Subgroups
Compared to Proposed AMO for Middle School Math
Mean Scale Score
660
650
640
630
620
610
600
590
580
570
560
Current NCLB AYP Proficient Score = 600
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year
African American
Limited English Proficient
Hispanic
American Indian/Alaskan
Students with Disabilities
Subsidized Meals
Proposed AMO
Linear (African American)
Linear (American Indian/Alaskan)
Linear (Students with Disabilities)
Linear (Limited English Proficiency)
Linear (Subsidized Meals)


HSAP English Language Arts (ELA), Mean Scale Scores Over Time and Trendline
for Historically Underperforming Subgroups
Compared to Proposed High School AMO for ELA
Mean Scale Score
245
235
225
215
205
195
Current NCLB AYP Proficient Score = 200
2003-04
2004-05
2005-06
2006-07
2007-08
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year
African-American
Hispanic
Subsidized Meals
Proposed AMO
Linear (African-American)
Linear (Hispanic)
Linear (Subsidized Meals)


HSAP Math, Mean Scale Scores Over Time and Trendline
for Historically Underperforming Subgroups
Compared to Proposed High School AMO for Math
Mean Scale Score
245
235
225
215
205
195
Current NCLB AYP Proficient Score = 200
2003-04
2004-05
2005-06
2006-07
2007-08
2008-09
2009-10
2010-11
2011-12
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
2016-17
2017-18
Year
African-American
Hispanic
Subsidized Meals
Proposed AMO
Linear (African-American)
Linear (Hispanic)
Linear (Subsidized Meals)

In the weighted composite index calculation (i.e., in the matrix), a subgroup receives a point for meeting the AMO or a partial point (.6 to .9) to reflect how far each mean (above Proficient) is from the AMO. A partial point (.1 up to .5) may be received within the appropriate cell if the subgroup mean (that falls below Proficient) demonstrates an increase when compared to the previous year's subgroup mean.

To measure improvement from one year to the next within the index, we analyzed and reviewed student performance by subgroup for each school over the past three years. For example, for high schools we looked at the "All Students" group and each subgroup to see if the mean of each subgroup increased from 2009 to 2010 and from 2010 to 2011. Similarly, we looked elementary schools and middle schools – in every cell of the matrix where a school did not meet the AMO, we looked to see if there had been any improvement at all from one year to the next. What we observed was that when there was some improvement, the typical increase was in the range of 1−8 or 9 points, with very few instances where the increase was more than 9 scale score points.

For example, from 2010 to 2011, while 90 percent of high schools (162 of 180) that did not meet AMO in a particular subgroup, demonstrated some increase in that subgroup on HSAP-ELA. However, 71 percent of the increases were between 1 and 6 scale points, while the other 29 percent had increases greater than 6 points. (From 2010 to 2011, the maximum point increase in HSAP-ELA, was 13 points in one school. Similarly, 68 percent of high schools (73 of 180) had some increase in subgroup performance from 2010 to 2011, with about 90 percent of those increases being in the 1-6 point range. Only 9.6 percent of the HSAP-Math increases from one year to the next were greater than 6 scale points, with the maximum observed increase of 8 points (in only 1 school).

Accordingly, while we tested several alternative methods of calculating partial scores for improvement, including calculating partial improvement relative to the distance between the subgroup mean and the AMO, we found that a relatively straightforward method of assigning a tenth of a point for each scale point increase provided a fairly consistent partial score in a given cell of the matrix. Because the distribution of change scores is skewed to the right, that is, the majority of schools that do not meet a particular subgroup AMO, tend to have only a relatively small increase from the previous year. Thus, assigning relative rather than an absolute partial score would result in a relatively small decimal increase.

By assigning a tenth of a point as an improvement score for each scale score point increase, we were able to provide a meaningful reward for improvement and at the same time an easy way for schools and districts to determine how that partial score was derived.

In a similar fashion, we analyzed and reviewed student performance by subgroup for each elementary and middle school, as well, and determined that the same correspondence of one scale point increase to .1 partial improvement point score would suffice.

To ensure that schools or districts do not receive a 1.0 (or higher) by the partial improvement calculation, we limited the possible range of improvement scores from .1 to .9 .

This also made for a simpler explanation of how improvement would be calculated (than assigning partial scores relative to the distance between the individual subgroup mean and the AMO, which potentially could be different for each subgroup at each school).

The 2013 amendment of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Request decreased the impact of partial credit for improvement and added a partial score for each mean above Proficient to provide stability in the state, school, or district grade from one year to the next.

2.C REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Through a project of the SCDE's Office of Federal and State Accountability, South Carolina has long recognized Title I schools that have made improvements in two categories—student achievement and closing or reducing the achievement gap—by designating them as Title I Distinguished Schools. This Title I Distinguished Schools project has been an opportunity to publicly recognize Title I schools for their positive educational achievements. We have refined the system for identifying Distinguished Schools so that the categories reflect the requirements for identifying these highest-performing and high-progress schools as **Reward Schools** at two levels, as defined in the ESEA Flexibility Request Review Guidance.

A school will be designated a Reward School if the school is one of the highest performing Title I schools in a given year or if the Title I school demonstrates substantial progress over a number of years in either the "All Students" group or in subgroups.

<u>Title I Distinguished Schools for Performance</u>

This process recognizes Title I schools that have attained the highest weighted average of the percentage of students scoring Proficient in ELA and mathematics for two or more consecutive years. To qualify as highest performing, a Title I school must:

- attain an "A" or "B" in the two most recent school years assessed, and
- have a free/reduced lunch count that is greater than 50 percent.

Step 1—Identify Title I schools for both the previous and current school years.

Step 2—Identify schools with at least one tested grade.

Step 3—Identify Title I schools with greater than 50 percent poverty (based on enrollment on the first day of testing – number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch divided by total enrollment).

Step 4—Identify Title I schools that attained an ESEA Grade of "A" or "B" in both of the previous two years.

Step 5—Identify highest performing Title I schools.

Step 6—Exclude any Title I schools with a significant achievement gap(s) in one or more student subgroups.

For this purpose, a significant achievement gap in subgroup performance is defined as a gap equal to or greater than one standard deviation above the mean achievement gap for that particular subgroup across all schools of the same type. In other words, if the mean achievement gap for LEP students in middle schools is 15 scale points and the standard deviation is 6.0, then any school with an LEP achievement gap of 21points or more-would be considered to have a significant subgroup achievement gap for LEP students. A significant subgroup achievement gap in any other subgroup will be determined in similar fashion as equal to or greater than one standard deviation above the mean achievement gap for that particular subgroup, across all schools of the same type.

Title I Distinguished Schools for Progress

This process recognizes Title I schools that have made substantial progress over a number of years in either the "All Students" group or in subgroups. To qualify as Distinguished School for High Progress, a Title I school must:

- attain an "A," "B," or "C" in the two most recent school years assessed, and
- have a free/reduced lunch count that is greater than 50 percent.

In addition, to qualify as Distinguished School for High Progress, a Title I school must also be ranked in the top 10 percent of schools on improvement from one year to the next in student performance for the "All Students" group or for one or more subgroups, on each assessment measure, and for high schools, also on graduation rate.
To identify Title I High Progress schools:

Step 1—Identify Title I schools for the previous two school years.

Step 2—Identify schools with at least one tested grade.

Step 3—Identify Title I schools with greater than 50 percent poverty (based on enrollment on the first day of testing—number of students eligible for free or reduced lunch divided by total enrollment).

Step 4—Identify Title I schools attaining an "A," "B," or "C" in the most recent two school years.

Step 5—Identify schools that demonstrate progress in the performance of all students on statewide assessments and at the high school level are making the most progress in increasing graduation rates. [Calculate change in student performance from one year to

the next and rank order all schools in the state, by school type, on each assessment measure and for high schools, also on graduation rate. Separately rank schools based on change in student performance for "All Students" and for each subgroup.]

Step 6—Exclude any Title I schools with a significant achievement gap in one or more student subgroups.

For this purpose, a significant achievement gap in subgroup performance is defined as a gap equal to or greater than one standard deviation above the mean achievement gap for that particular subgroup across all schools of the same type. In other words, if the mean achievement gap for LEP students in middle schools is 15 scale points and the standard deviation is 6.0, then any school with an LEP achievement gap of 21 points or more would be considered to have a significant subgroup achievement gap for LEP students. A significant subgroup achievement gap in any other subgroup will be determined in similar fashion as equal to or greater than one standard deviation above the mean achievement gap for that particular subgroup, across all schools of the same type.

Step 7—Identify schools that rank in the top 10 percent statewide in progress, on each assessment and graduation rate, for all students and each subgroup.

South Carolina will identify and recognize Distinguished Schools for High Progress annually, in conjunction with the release of the state's annual school and district performance reports.

South Carolina's list of Reward Schools is presented in Table 2 (see Attachment 9).

Reporting District Performance

The grading system that the SCDE will apply to districts is for reporting purposes. The SCDE will report district and school performance broadly to local leadership, which includes district superintendents, local school boards of trustees, county legislative delegations, Regional Education Centers as defined in the Education and Economic Development Act (please see Appendix E). Including the Regional Education Centers will ensure that the leadership within major workforce and economic development entities are informed of overall district performance. The SCDE will also inform major and local media outlets of the performance of districts and schools in their respective communities.

The state does not intend to assign incentives or supports to districts based on the grade districts earn within the proposed grading system. Our focus is on providing supports and incentives directly to schools as they are the closest point of contact to impact students. We believe that by targeting services to the schools where support or incentives are most needed, the state will be more effective in raising student achievement.

2.C.ii Provide the SEA's list of reward schools in Table 2.

2.C.iii Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

The SCDE's Office of Federal and State Accountability will continue its Title I Distinguished Schools project to identify and recognize the Reward Schools. All schools that meet the criteria in 2.C.i. will be considered Reward Schools. The top six to ten schools (three to five in "highest performing" and three to five in "high progress") will be awarded a $5,000 grant to recognize their hard work. In addition, the top school in each category will receive a $10,000 grant. These schools will be expected to serve as models for other similar schools and will present at state and national meetings. As additional administrative funds or 1003(a) Statewide System of Support funds are available, more schools may be allocated awards to assist in sharing best practices as part of providing support and technical assistance to struggling Title I schools. The SCDE will issue press releases announcing the semi-finalists and, later, the two full award winners. Schools that are not among those receiving monetary awards will be considered "honorable mention" schools.

South Carolina recognizes these distinguished schools as models for other Title I schools each year with a celebration during the state Title I association conference, which features a marching band heralding each school. We will continue this public celebration for the Reward School award-winners.

All Reward Schools will be announced via a press release from the SCDE.

The SCDE also recognizes schools through the state's Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program. The statutory authority for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards is from the state statute Educational Accountability Act (EAA), as amended in 2008 (Act 282 of 2008):

> *Section 59-18-1100. The State Board of Education, working with the division and the SCDE, must establish the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program to recognize and reward schools for academic achievement and for closing the achievement gap. Awards will be established for schools attaining high levels of absolute performance, for schools attaining high rates of growth, and for schools making substantial progress in closing the achievement gap between disaggregated groups. The award program must base improved performance on longitudinally matched student data and may include such additional criteria as:*
>
> *(1) student attendance;*
> *(2) teacher attendance;*
> *(3) graduation rates; and*
> *(4) other factors promoting or maintaining high levels of achievement and performance. Schools shall be rewarded according to specific criteria established by the division. In defining eligibility for a reward for high levels of performance, student performance should exceed expected levels of improvement. The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations to ensure districts of the State*

utilize these funds to improve or maintain exceptional performance according to their school's plans established in Section 59-139-10.

At a minimum, schools that achieve the status of Reward School, Distinguished School, or Palmetto Gold or Silver Awards will be announced via a press release from the SCDE.

2.D PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State's Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

COMMITMENT 2: SOUTH CAROLINA WILL CREATE AND MAINTAIN A PROCESS TO TRANSFORM PRIORITY AND FOCUS SCHOOLS BY BUILDING THEIR CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT.

The SCDE will identify underperforming schools annually on the basis of overall school performance on the AMOs, as measured by the total weighted composite index score for each school. We will rank all elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools by type of school, and designate the lowest 5 percent of schools as **Priority Schools**.

Step 1—Identify Title I schools for the previous and current school year.

Step 2—Identify schools with at least one tested grade.

Step 3—Identify schools with enrollment greater than or equal to 30 students in any subgroup used for analysis.

Step 4—Rank order the elementary, middle, and high schools by their total weighted composite index score. Identify the 5 percent of schools with the lowest overall performance as measured by the total weighted composite index score.

Similarly, we will rank all Title I schools on the basis of their total weighted composite index score to identify the lowest 5 percent. This process will allow us to identify and designate as a Priority School any Title I school that is not already designated as such based on its overall performance ranking among all schools.

Charter Schools that are identified as Priority (or Focus School) are not eligible for the technical assistance outlined below. Instead, charter school sponsors are expected to uphold the state revocation requirements for low-performing charter schools.

Demonstrating Priority Schools
(based on ESEA Simulations and actual 2011-12 Title I or Tier II SIG Schools)

Table P-1 (below) demonstrates that South Carolina has identified the required number of Priority Schools that meet the definition in ESEA Flexibility. Currently, South Carolina has 511 Title I schools. Based on simulations, we have identified the lowest five (5) percent (i.e., 26 Title I schools), based on rank order using total weighted composite index scores. Of those 26 schools, 13 are currently-served Title I or Tier II SIG schools. In addition, 2 of the schools with the lowest ranking total composite index score are Title I-eligible or Title I-participating high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent in each of the past 3 years. An additional 11 schools are among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools.

Note: Once the ESEA Flexibility Request is approved, South Carolina intends to designate as a Priority School and continue to work with any current Palmetto Priority School (PPS) that does not meet current exit criteria by the end of 2011−12. Accordingly, in addition to the projected 26 Priority Schools counted in Table P-1, we estimate that up to an additional 11 schools may be designated Priority Schools, which will bring the total to 47 schools in 2012−13.

Table P-1

SOUTH CAROLINA	
Category of Priority Schools (lowest 5 percent)	**Number of Schools**
Total number of Title I schools	**511**
Total number of Title I schools to be identified as Priority Schools	**26**
Total number of schools on list generated based on total weighted composite index score (schools whose performance is rated "F") that are currently-served Title I or Tier II SIG schools	**13**
Total number of schools on list generated based on total weighted composite index score (schools whose performance is rated "F") that are Title I-eligible or Title I-participating high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent in each of the past 3 years	**2**
Total number of schools on list generated based on total weighted composite index score (schools whose performance is rated "F") that are among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools	**11**

Once South Carolina's request for the ESEA Flexibility is approved and the SCDE begins implementing the proposed new AYP system in 2012−13, we will generate a prospective list of Priority and Focus schools, based on 2011−12 complete year data, so that we can maintain intervention and support services as schools migrate from PPS and SIG to Priority School program status.

In addition, by generating a prospective diagnostic analysis (projection) of school performance at the beginning of the 2012−13 school year, we can provide additional data and suggestions for interventions and supports to all underperforming schools about their relative

strengths and weaknesses. The underperforming schools can then use this information to address identified issues immediately and throughout the school year.

2.D.ii Provide the SEA's list of priority schools in Table 2.

2.D.iii Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

South Carolina has a long history of school intervention and transformation. Requesting this waiver is a natural progression in the state's efforts to identify, intervene, and improve its lowest performing schools.

In 1998, the South Carolina General Assembly created a system to hold public schools accountable for the performance of their students when it passed the EAA, which specifically outlines *Intervention and Assistance* (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1520 (Supp. 2011); see Appendix B). Technical Assistance (TA) funds from the state have supported strategies and activities, including on-site assistance, professional development, compensation incentives, homework centers, formative assessments, and comprehensive school reform efforts, to schools being served as expressly outlined in their improvement plans.

South Carolina released its first school report cards in 2001–02, and the first external reviews followed for schools that had absolute ratings of "unsatisfactory" (the term "unsatisfactory" was replaced with the term "at-risk" in 2008), "below average," "average," "good," and "excellent." An External Review Team (ERT) of three members was assigned to a school that was newly rated "at-risk" immediately after school report cards were released in the fall of each year. The team members included superintendents, principals, and other educational leaders outside the district being reviewed. These ERT members reviewed all aspects of the school operations, in compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1510 (Supp. 2011), in a four-to-five-day period during which they relied on the triangulation of documentation, interviews, and observation. The ERT Report was a compliance instrument that included standards and indicators, with references to regulations, and was divided into four focus areas: Leadership and Governance; Curriculum and Instruction; Professional Development; and Performance. Recommendations for needed changes were made in order for the school to move forward with student academic improvement. This ERT Process was in effect through the 2006–07 school year. On-site TA personnel—content specialists and leadership mentors—were assigned to assist schools that were designated as "unsatisfactory/at-risk," based on ERT recommendations and school need.

When it restructured operations in July 2011, the SCDE created the Office of School Transformation to leverage and coordinate internal and external resources to build school capacity through educational options, transformational school leadership and transformational instructional practices and evaluations. This office bridges what we have learned from past experiences in implementing segments of our state accountability system and in providing technical assistance to at-risk schools with the new school transformation principles established by the US Department of Education.

Beginning with the 2012−13 academic year, the Office of School Transformation ~~is to~~ began raising the consciousness of internal and external stakeholders on new paradigms for transforming the conceptual framework for improving student achievement via systemic and sustainable educational options, school leadership, instructional practices, and evaluations in South Carolina's most challenged, at-risk and Title I schools. This mission is accomplished through the following: (1) implement a *Challenge To Achieve Plan* template based on the federal school transformation principles; (2) reinstate the External Review Team process for the Priority Schools and state-identified at-risk schools to assist with the development and implementation of the schools *Challenge to Achieve Plan*; and (3) eliminate agency silos and duplication of services in favor of a theory of change predicated on coordinated and collaborative technical assistance. Each of the aforementioned strategic goals of the Office of the School Transformation is discussed below.

First, the Office of School Transformation has created and implemented a *Challenge to Achieve Plan* encompassing all but one of the federal school transformation principles. Excluding the SIG schools that are also Priority Schools, the Priority Schools are not required to implement the tenth federal transformation principle calling for the replacement of a school principal. Adoption of the federal transformation principles inherently incorporates the school transformation strategies captured throughout the three principles of this waiver, such as the promotion of customized education and use of value-added assessments. In addition, the Priority Schools will receive a direct allocation from 1003(a) funds to support the implementation of the strategies in the *Challenge to Achieve Plan.* Below is the list of the transformation principles included in the *Challenge to Achieve Plan* and the alignment between those principles and the federal transformation principles.

Note, the only federal turnaround principle not included in the Challenge to Achieve Plan is "replacement of the principal." However, equally effective, principal performance is assessed through leadership tools, such as Vanderbilt University's VAL-ED tool, facilitated by the Office of School Leadership for all Priority Schools. Val-ED triangulates leadership survey results collected from each principal, the principal's supervisor and all teachers at the school on the following six (6) areas: (1) High Standards for Student Learning; (2) Rigorous Curriculum; (3) Quality Instruction; (4) Culture of Learning and Professional Behavior; (5) Connections to External Communities; and (6) Performance Accountability. The principal is then provided a leadership rating on each of the six areas. Using these outcomes, the Office of School Leadership offers tailored technical assistance sessions on each topic. In addition, the principals are expected to continuously refine their Challenge to Achieve Plan for improvement based on their professional development.

1. Implement a career-prep or college-prep and life skills curriculum that is customized to students' abilities and interests (aligns with Turnaround Principle(s): (1) Select and implement an instructional model based on student needs).

2. Create a flexible learning environment with a menu of delivery options to accommodate the learning styles of all students (aligns with Turnaround Principle(s): (1) Select and implement

an instructional model based on student needs).

3. Explore and adopt adaptable means of intensity as it relates to curriculum delivery to include an extended school day and year (aligns with Turnaround Principle(s): (1) Provide increased learning time for staff and students).

4. Improve transitions from elementary to middle and from middle to high school (aligns with Turnaround Principle(s): (1) Select and implement an instructional model based on student needs).

5. Employ research-based methods of instructional delivery that focuses on a 21st century learning environment and promotes skills articulated by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills in their "Framework for 21st Century Learning" (aligns with Turnaround Principle(s): (1) Select and implement an instructional model based on student needs).

6. Recruit, train, motivate, and retain qualified teachers and school leaders whose evaluations are tied to student achievement (value-added assessment) and provide them with high quality, job-embedded professional development to increase student achievement (aligns with Turnaround Principle(s): (1) Implement strategies to recruit, place, and retain staff; (2) Ensure continuous use of data to inform and differentiate instruction).

7. Provide frequent measures of student progress to determine students' acquisition of state-approved standards, as well as teacher and strategy effectiveness (aligns with Turnaround Principle(s): (1) Ensure continuous use of data to inform and differentiate instruction).

8. Permit operational flexibility to schools over core elements (people, time, money, and programming) to allow successful implementation of individual *Challenge to Achieve Plans* in supporting increased student achievement (aligns with Turnaround Principle(s): (1) Grant operating flexibility to school leader).

9. Create or sustain a governance structure within the LEA that will
    - Incorporate and sustain this transformation throughout an entire feeder pattern;
    - Facilitate improved hiring practices;
    - Provide high quality and effective professional development;
    - Monitor for fidelity of implementation of the chosen turnaround model and the accompanying budget; and
    - Support improved family and community outreach.

    (aligns with Turnaround Principle(s): (1) Implement new governance structure; Provide social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports; (2) Provide job-embedded

professional development (PD) designed to build capacity and support staff; (3) Use locally adopted "turnaround" competencies to review and select staff for school).

Second, the Office of School Transformation will reinstate the External Review Process as part of the technical assistance offered to the Priority Schools and at-risk schools. Each of the identified schools will be assigned a two or three member team to assist with developing and implementing a tailored *Challenge to Achieve Plan.* In addition, we seek to further align our state and federal accountability systems by subjecting the federal Priority Schools to the longstanding state accountability scheme for transforming low-performing schools as described in South Code Ann. § 59-18-1510 *et seq.* (Supp. 2011). This convergence of state and federal commitments through congruent adherence to guidance already adopted by the state General Assembly and embodied in state statute further strengthens the state's movement to a unified system of accountability.

Third, to align the interventions for the Priority Schools identified under the federal accountability system (the at-risk schools identified under the state system of accountability and recipients of the federal School Improvement Grant), the Office of School Transformation promotes seamless technical assistance to all of the groups of low-performing schools through inter-agency collaborations. The following offices have committed to the coordinated and collaborative approach advocated for by the Office of School Transformation: (1) Office of Federal and State Accountability; (2) Office of Instructional Practices; (3) Office of School Leadership; (4) Office of Exceptional Children; (5) Office of Student Intervention Services; (6) Office of Educator Services; and (7) Office of Virtual Education. Below are examples of the work-product from this technical assistance network.

The SCDE's Office of Exceptional Children has provided a great deal of technical assistance to the districts on the strategies and instruction needed to allow students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum. In addition, this office is authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) to make annual determinations of the level of support that districts need in implementing the requirement of IDEA Part B to serve their students with disabilities.

The Office of Exceptional Children will work in conjunction with the Office of School Transformation to provide intensive technical assistance to districts that it determines are in the "needs intervention" and "needs substantial intervention" categories for implementing IDEA Part B. Also, as administrators and teachers are identified for participation in more intensive initiatives through the new accountability system and the transition to and implementation of the CCSS, an increasing emphasis will be placed on instructing students with disabilities in the general education curriculum. Appropriate use of peer-reviewed, scientifically based instruction, coupled with appropriate accommodations and modifications, will lead to closing this achievement gap between students with and without disabilities. The Office of Exceptional Children has devoted significant technical assistance to the districts regarding the strategies and instruction needed to allow students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum. As administrators and teachers are chosen to participate in more intensive initiatives through the accountability system, an emphasis will be placed on the instruction of students with disabilities

in the general education curriculum. Appropriate use of peer-reviewed, scientifically based instruction coupled with appropriate accommodations and modifications will lead to a closing of the achievement gap between students with and without disabilities.

Regarding English language learners (ELL), we will continue to focus professional development efforts to address areas of concern and training on how to appropriately serve and meet the needs of ELL. Training will be provided to both regular classroom teachers where English learners typically spend the majority of the day learning and ESOL teachers who support academic content instruction, along with administrators. Other important staff, such as guidance counselors, special education, gifted and talented, paraprofessionals, and others who work with ELL are often included in trainings. The Office of Federal and State Accountability will continue to monitor Title III districts (74 Title III districts out of 82 districts in the state). All Title III districts in South Carolina are also Title I. A major part of Title III monitoring for compliance with Title III and other federal laws includes reviewing the practices of regular classroom and ESOL teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and others that work with ELL using interviews, data review, and other components of South Carolina's Title III monitoring instrument. Technical assistance and additional professional development is provided as needed based on the review. The Office of Federal and State Accountability will continue to analyze data such as the performance of ELL and former ELL across the state, including performance on statewide tests; proportionality in special programs – special education, gifted and talented; grade-retention; and graduation rates.

The Office of Federal and State Accountability will work in conjunction with the Office of School Transformation to provide intensive technical assistance to districts that it determines are in the "needs intervention" and "needs substantial intervention" categories ensure that proper intervention strategies are in place for ELL in compliance with Title III. Also, as administrators and teachers are identified for participation in more intensive initiatives through the new accountability system and the transition to and implementation of the CCSS, an increasing emphasis will be placed on instructing ELL in the general education curriculum. Appropriate use of peer-reviewed, scientifically based instruction, coupled with appropriate accommodations and modifications, will lead to closing this achievement gap between ELL and other students. The Office of Federal and State Accountability has devoted significant technical assistance to the districts regarding the strategies and instruction needed to allow ELL to access the general education curriculum. As administrators and teachers are chosen to participate in more intensive initiatives through the accountability system, an emphasis will be placed on the instruction of ELL in the general education curriculum. Appropriate use of peer-reviewed, scientifically based instruction coupled with appropriate accommodations and modifications will lead to a closing of the achievement gap between ELL and other students.

2.D.iv Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each

priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA's choice of timeline.

Justification for Timeline

In our lowest-performing schools, we want to build local capacity for strong community schools, so that the school district has a board of trustees that recognizes their responsibility to raise student achievement, a district office and school leaders that recognize strong leadership practices to benefit students, and teachers that can provide measurable high-quality instruction. However, the schools identified for Priority status are the least likely to have this full capacity. As the state moves from a model that largely forces compliance on inputs to one that requires progress to reach attainable outcomes, we will collaborate with each Priority school through a Memorandum of Agreement that clarifies the state's expectations, the assistance the SCDE will provide, and the school's and district's responsibilities.

Annual Timeline

July	Release report cards with school and district grades.
July	Identify schools that are Priority and Focus.
July – August	• Notify identified schools/districts; • send Memorandums of Agreement for signatures; and • provide relevant training.
August	Develop and submit year-long Challenge to Achieve Plan.
August – May	• Monitor ongoing, year-long Challenge to Achieve Plans; and • conduct periodic collaborative professional development aligned to the Turnaround Principles in the Challenge to Achieve Plans.
May – June	Evaluate achievement of goals/implementation of Challenge to Achieve Plans.
August	Release the new Priority School List

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Because ESEA Grades are based on student performance and improvement over time, a school will exit Priority status when it no longer falls within the five percent of the lowest performing Title I schools for two consecutive years and has made progress.

To exit Priority School status, a Priority School's overall performance (as measured by the total composite index score) must be:

a) in Priority School Status and receive intervention services for a minimum of three consecutive years;

b) ranked higher than the lowest 5 percent of Title I schools for two or more consecutive years (as measured by rank order on total composite index score) and has made progress.

2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State's Title I schools as "focus schools." If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

South Carolina will identify underperforming schools with the largest subgroup performance gaps, and schools with significantly underperforming subgroups will be designated **focus schools**.

In analyzing subgroup performance, gap analysis can be calculated in a variety of ways. Based on input from stakeholders, educators, and school district administrators, we choose to look at the average (mean) performance of subgroups across content areas (ELA~~,~~ and mathematics), subtract the subgroup average (mean) scores to determine the performance gap, identify schools that had a significant performance gap in one or more subgroups, and average the significant gaps across content areas to produce ~~an~~ a ranking of the significant performance gaps for each school.

Methodology for Identifying Focus Schools

The general approach presented below approximates the method we propose for determining Focus schools.

Step 1—Annually identify Title I schools for the previous and current school year.

Step 2—Identify schools with at least one tested grade.

Step 3—Identify schools with enrollment greater than or equal to 30 students in any subgroup used for analysis.

Step 4—Identify and exclude schools whose subgroups have met or exceeded all AMOs.

Step 5—Calculate an average performance gap for each elementary, middle, and high school.

a. Using ELA and Math scale scores, calculate for each subject and school an average (mean) score for each subgroup.
b. By subject and school, subtract mean scores (for example, non-Limited English

Proficient subtracted from LEP) to produce the achievement gap score by subject. Exclude negative gaps. Average the mean gaps across both subjects (ELA and Math) for each subgroup.

c. Select schools with significant achievement gap(s) in one or more student subgroups.
   1. For this purpose, a significant achievement gap in subgroup performance is defined as a gap equal to or greater than one standard deviation above the mean achievement gap for that particular subgroup across all schools of that same type state-wide. For example, if the mean achievement gap for LEP students in middle schools is 15 scale points and the standard deviation is 6.0, then any school with an LEP achievement gap of 21 points or more would be considered to have a significant subgroup achievement gap for LEP students. A significant subgroup achievement gap in any other subgroup will be determined in similar fashion as equal to or greater than one standard deviation above the mean achievement gap for that particular subgroup, across all schools of that same type state-wide.
   2. Calculate the difference between the subgroup mean gap and the state mean gap for each subgroup in the school that has a significant gap.
   3. Sum the differences from step B across all subgroups in the school that have a significant gap.
   4. Sum the number of subgroups in the school that have a significant achievement gap.
   5. Divide the results of C3 by C4 to determine schools with the largest significant gaps.

Step 6—Rank order the schools by the significant gaps from largest to smallest and identify schools with the largest significant gap to equal at least 10 percent of the Title I schools in the state. If the number of schools identified using Step 5 does not equal at least 10% of the Title I schools in the state, rank order the remaining schools by their average achievement gap from largest to smallest and identify from the remaining schools those with the largest achievement gap to complete the list of Focus schools to equal at least 10 percent of the Title I schools in the state.

Step 7—At the high school level, identify the Title I schools with low graduation rates (less than 60 percent) for both years assessed.

Step 8—Identify schools that have persistent achievement gaps over a number of years that have not been previously identified in the above steps. For schools with persistent achievement gaps over several years, we propose to use the same achievement gap analysis we currently use for Title I schools.

For achievement gap analysis, the SCDE will compare each subgroup performance with the corresponding non-subgroup comparison group. For example, the performance of African-American students in a particular school will be compared with the non-African-American students and the gap in performance calculated. Similarly, looking at the

performance of LEP students, a comparison of the LEP subgroup performance will be made to the performance of non-LEP students. Then, all of the gap differences in all of the subgroups will be calculated and the average of all of the observed achievement gaps will be compared in order to determine the mean achievement gap across all subgroups.

To track the progress (or lack of progress) of schools, and in particular schools with persistent achievement gaps over time, individual subgroup achievement gaps and the average (mean) achievement gap across all subgroups will be monitored. Schools with specific subgroup achievement gaps that persist over time will receive targeted interventions for that subgroup, as part of the overall Focus school interventions.

Demonstrating Focus Schools
(based on ESEA simulations and actual 2011−12 Title I schools with largest subgroup achievement gaps)

Table F-1 demonstrates that South Carolina has identified the required number of Focus schools that meet the definition for ESEA Flexibility. Currently, South Carolina has 511 Title I schools, so based on simulations of the proposed ESEA methodology, ten (10) percent have been identified (i.e., 52 Title I schools), with the largest average (mean) achievement gap across all subgroups. Of the 52 schools to be identified as Focus Schools, at present zero (0) schools are currently-served Title I or Tier II SIG schools. In addition, zero (0) schools with the largest average achievement gap are Title I-eligible or Title I-participating high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent in each of the past 3 years. Accordingly, based on 2011−12 data, all 52 schools would come from the ranked list of Title I schools with the largest average achievement gap.

Table F-1

SOUTH CAROLINA	
Category of Focus Schools	**Number of Schools**
Total number of Title I schools	**511**
Total number of Title I schools to be identified as Focus Schools	**52**
Total number of schools on list generated based on largest subgroup achievement gaps (average) that are Title I-participating high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent in each of the past 3 years	**0**
Total number of additional Title I-participating high schools with a graduation rate less than 60 percent in each of the past 3 years and are not identified as Priority Schools	**0**
Total number of schools on list generated based on overall rating (e.g., schools graded “D” or “F”) that have the largest subgroups achievement gaps (average) or, at the high school level, low graduation rates	**52**

2.E.ii Provide the SEA's list of focus schools in Table 2.

2.E.iii Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA's focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

The SCDE will develop a methodology to identify disaggregated data for subsets of students to include race, gender, SES status, disabled, and non-disabled students. The causes of underperformance will be ascertained using historical and current data regarding discipline, teacher retention, academic performance and use of fiscal resources. These data will be coupled with information gathered from the Comprehensive Capacity Assessment (CCA). The CCA will focus on current: 1. Teaching and Learning; 2. Fiscal Management; 3. Recruitment, Development and Retention of Effective Teacher Leaders; 4. Physical Plant Operations; and 5. Parent and Community Engagement. Based on a collation of these data, SCDE can target research-based interventions on root causes.

Focus schools will use this data to develop a focused CTA plan, in collaboration with their TLC. The school's CTA will include specific research-based strategies and interventions to address the identified subgroups. Targeted interventions outlined in the school's CTA plan must be in alignment with the federal turnaround principles and research-proven best practices for the identified subgroups and focus areas. As the school implements its CTA plan, ongoing data will be collected and analyzed to ensure that the identified subgroups are academically performing and on a trajectory to be performing consistently with their cohorts.

We will allocate funds to Focus schools from 1003(a) and from Statewide System of Support funds to implement interventions to directly address the underachieving subgroups. For the 2012-13 school year, approximately $5.8 million was allocated on a formula basis and must be incorporated into the school's Title I plan. (See Table F-2 below.) Needs and funding will be reviewed annually to determine funding levels to meet the needs of identified Focus schools. Districts will use the SCDE's web-based Title I application, which will reduce their paperwork requirements when serving their Focus schools (see Appendix D for more activities to address Principle 4).

Table F-2

1003(a) School Improvement Funds		
	Number of Schools	Average amount of 1003(a) funds per school
2012−13 Focus Schools	52	$107,945
2012−13 Title I "C," "D" and "F" Schools	121	$15,463
2011−12 Schools in Improvement	180	$46,576
2012−13 Schools in Improvement (projected)	310	$24,142

The AYP performance requirement subgroup of students with disabilities (SWD) has been problematic for schools and districts in the past. For the 2010−11 school year, only one school district met AYP for the performance of the SWD subgroup. The SCDE's Office of Exceptional Children has devoted a great deal of technical assistance to the districts regarding the strategies and instruction needed to allow students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum. As administrators and teachers are chosen to participate in more intensive initiatives through the accountability system, we will emphasize the instruction of SWD in the general education curriculum. Appropriate use of peer-reviewed, scientifically based instruction, coupled with appropriate accommodations and modifications, will lead to a closing of the achievement gap between students with and without disabilities. The Office of Exceptional Children, in conjunction with the Office of School Transformation, will provide intensive technical assistance to districts with identified Focus schools.

The Office of Federal and State Accountability will continue to monitor Title III districts (74 Title III districts out of 82 districts in the state). All Title III districts in South Carolina are also Title I. A major part of Title III monitoring for compliance with Title III and other federal laws includes reviewing the practices of regular classroom and ESOL teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and others that work with ELL using interviews, data review, and other components of South Carolina's Title III monitoring instrument. Technical assistance and additional professional development is provided as needed based on the review. The Office of Federal and State Accountability will continue to analyze data such as the performance of ELL and former ELL across the state, including performance on statewide tests; proportionality in special programs – special education, gifted and talented; grade-retention; and graduation rates. There will continue to be focused professional development efforts to address areas of concern and training on how to appropriately serve and meet the needs of ELL. Training will be provided to both regular classroom teachers where English learners typically spend the majority of the day learning and ESOL teachers who support academic content instruction, along with administrators. Other important staff, such as guidance counselors, special education, gifted and talented, paraprofessionals, and others who work with ELL are often included in trainings.

Additionally, districts and schools can access several resources on our Title III/ESOL website to assist them with supporting the instruction of ELL. http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/90/.

To ensure that all schools that may have achievement gap issues are captured as ~~f~~Focus schools, data will include those schools that may not be in the bottom 10 percent of Title I schools but have persistent problems with achievement gaps. These schools will receive the same interventions as the required 10 percent of Title I schools.

Annual Timeline

July	Identify Focus schools.
July − August	Notify identified schools/districts.

August	Develop and submit year-long Challenge to Achieve Plan.
August – May	• Monitor ongoing, year-long Challenge to Achieve Plan; and • conduct periodic collaborative professional development aligned to the Turnaround Principles in the Challenge to Achieve Plan.
May–June	Evaluate achievement of goals/implementation of Challenge to Achieve Plan.

2.E.iv Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Because ESEA Grades are based on student performance and improvement over time, a school will exit Focus status when it no longer falls within the five percent of the lowest performing Title I schools. A new Focus School list will be established annually.

Number of Years	Meaningful Consequences for underperforming subgroups for schools that remain on the Focus School list for multiple years
1	Schools must develop a Challenge to Achieve Plan with research-based strategies to improve subgroup(s) performance.
2	1. Schools must develop a Challenge to Achieve Plan with research-based strategies to improve subgroup(s) performance; 2. SCDE will partner school with school of similar demographics that is performing well with particular subgroup.
3	Schools must develop a Challenge to Achieve Plan with research-based strategies to improve subgroup(s) performance.
4	Schools must develop a Challenge to Achieve Plan with research-based strategies to improve subgroup(s) performance and present to State Superintendent and State Board of Education.

2.F PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

2.F Describe how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

COMMITMENT 3: SOUTH CAROLINA WILL ESTABLISH A PLAN FOR A STATEWIDE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT TO LEVERAGE THE SERVICES PROVIDED TO OUR LOWEST-

PERFORMING SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, NARROW ACHIEVEMENT GAPS, AND RAISE THE QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION IN ALL OUR SCHOOLS.

Schools that receive a "D" or "F" in the proposed system underperformed in either the "All Students" group or one of the student subgroups. The SCDE will target the Title I schools that are assigned a grade of "D" or "F" but are not identified as Priority or Focus schools to receive differentiated support. These schools must conduct a comprehensive needs assessment in existing federal program plan applications to determine root causes of failure to meet state standards either in the All Students group or by sub-group.

The identified schools will amend existing federal ~~a~~ plans to outline how the school and district will address the issues identified in their comprehensive needs assessments and submit these plans to the SCDE's Office of Federal and State Accountability. Schools and districts must demonstrate that they have the capacity to implement improvement strategies and must illustrate how the school plans to use existing Title I, Part A funds, funds previously used for Choice and SES, other federal formula allocations, and any additional funds made available to meet their needs.

The SCDE has formerly partnered with SEDL (formerly the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory) to develop an agency-wide approach to serving districts and schools that are identified as needing assistance in improving student achievement. Previously, various offices within the SCDE have been providing disparate activities based on categorical funding streams or state and federal mandates. The goal of this new effort is to eliminate silos within our structure to facilitate agency-wide awareness and to focus our school improvement efforts across programs to provide coherent, consistent assistance to our customers. Staff from the offices of Exceptional Children, School Transformation, Federal and State Accountability, and School Leadership have come together to discuss ways to eliminate duplicative, and often competing, services and to reduce burdensome paperwork requirements (see Principle 4 in Appendix D for more plans to eliminate duplication and reduce reporting burdens).

While the schools identified in this category (Title I schools receiving a "D" or "F," but not Priority or Focus schools) will not receive the same intensive services offered to Priority or Focus schools, they will nonetheless benefit from a statewide support system driven by responding to individual school needs with appropriate interventions. Our goal is to not lose the momentum we've gained over the past several years through our statewide system of support as required by NCLB. In general, these schools have made progress and need continued support to ensure that all their students are provided the means to reach the state's high standards and be college and career ready upon graduating from high school.

After addressing needs in Priority and Focus schools, the SCDE will set aside a portion of the remaining 1003(a) funds and/or funds for Statewide System of Support to be disbursed on a formula basis to help the schools address the root causes of their less than "Proficient" student achievement. Funds will be first allocated to "F" schools and if sufficient funds remain, they will be allocated to "D" schools. (See Table F-2 on page 123 above.) The schools will submit

improvement plans to the Office of Federal and State Accountability through the Title I on-line application, which will eliminate additional paperwork and provide a more coherent, focused, and global plan. Through their improvement plan, a school will detail the actions they intend to take and how the district and school will use the 1003(a) funds to implement the plan.

The SCDE will provide assistance to districts and schools based on the Statewide System of Support used in coordination with other offices within the agency and through contracted services where appropriate. We anticipate providing this assistance and support as indicated in the table below.

Assistance and Support to Other Title I Schools Earning "D" or "F"		
Office	**Needs Addressed**	**Staff Involved**
Federal & State Accountability	English language learners	Crystal Fields
Special Education Services	Students with disabilities	John Payne
Leader Effectiveness	Principals and Assistant Principals knowledge and skills	Sally Barefoot
School Effectiveness	Instructional Practices and Evaluations	Brianna Timmerman
Finance	Allocation of resources	Melanie Jinnette

Particular emphasis will be placed on student sub-groups that are not meeting the AMOs. For example, SCDE staff will continue to provide high quality professional development to general education and special education teachers in order to assist students in meeting the accountability measures. Key elements for instruction of students with disabilities (SWD) include the following:

- use of research-based, effective instructional strategies both within and across a variety of academic and functional domains;
- differentiation of instruction for all learners, including students performing above and below grade-level expectations;
- instruction in strategic approaches to learning new concepts and skills; and
- continued use of inclusive practices for SWD.

Teachers of English language learners (ELL) will receive support from staff from the Office of Federal and State Accountability through quarterly regional meetings, ongoing intensive professional development, and episodic technical assistance as needed based on the results of the needs assessments. The Office of Federal and State Accountability will continue to monitor Title III districts (74 Title III districts of the 82 districts in the state). All Title III districts in South Carolina are also Title I. A major part of Title III monitoring for compliance with Title III and other federal laws includes reviewing the practices of regular classroom and ESOL teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, and others that work with ELL using interviews, data review, and other components of South Carolina's Title III monitoring instrument. Technical assistance and additional professional development is provided as needed based on the review. The Office of Federal and State Accountability will continue to analyze

data such as the performance of ELL and former ELL across the state, including performance on statewide tests; proportionality in special programs – special education, gifted and talented; grade-retention; and graduation rates. There will continue to be focused professional development efforts to address areas of concern and training on how to appropriately serve and meet the needs of ELL. Training will be provided to both regular classroom teachers where English learners typically spend the majority of the day learning and ESOL teachers who support academic content instruction, along with administrators. Other important staff, such as guidance counselors, special education, gifted and talented, paraprofessionals, and others who work with ELL are often included in trainings.

As they move toward English proficiency, ELL can benefit from many accommodations. In South Carolina, most school districts use the Individual Modifications/Accommodations Plan (see Attachment M) to document individual student accommodations, including ones used during testing. Because ELL progress toward English proficiency is very individualized, with much growth at the lower levels of English proficiency and slower growth as full English proficiency is acquired, these accommodations are in a pretty constant state of flux for most of these students.

The Office of Federal and State Accountability is offering year-long professional development for the 34 districts in Title III improvement. Monthly sessions will focus on strategies and accommodations for working with ELLs, building academic language, as well as for intensive training on equitable access to the CCSS with emphasized learning opportunities in reading, writing, and mathematics. The Office of Teacher Effectiveness will also provide assistance to help teachers address the changing needs of these students.

As is our plan for professional development on the CCSS (see Principle 1 above), we will customize the assistance to teachers of SWD and ELL based on the data and the identified needs of their students and schools.

2.G BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

2.G Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:

i. timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;

ii. ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and

iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

The SCDE's Division of School Effectiveness and the Division of Accountability are collaborating on the implementation, support, and monitoring of the components of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver. The Division of School Effectiveness includes the offices of Educator Services, Educator Evaluation, Instructional Practices and Evaluations, School Leadership, School Transformation, and Virtual Education. The Division focuses on improving student achievement and school performance by providing an array of services including professional development on college–and career–ready standards, teacher and principal leadership, and school transformation to all schools and especially to low–performing schools. The Division of Accountability includes the offices of Assessment, Career and Technology Education, Exceptional Children, Student Intervention Services, Federal and State Accountability, and Adult Education. The Division focuses on raising student achievement through leadership and technical assistance while ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements through comprehensive monitoring and training. Working together, the two divisions provide comprehensive support to LEAs and schools for raising student achievement and meeting federal and state accountability goals.

The Office of School Transformation and the Office of Federal and State Accountability have direct responsibility for working with Priority, Focus and low-performing Title I ("D" or "F") schools. The *Challenge to Achieve Plans* will be used to gauge implementation, and the two offices will monitor and provide technical assistance as appropriate. Funding for implementation and support for low-performing schools will include a combination of state and federal dollars. State Technical Assistance funding, federal 1003(a,) and Statewide System of Support funds will be used to provide support to low-performing schools. The Office of Federal and State Accountability which includes many of the ESEA programs will work with LEAs and schools providing technical assistance regarding the flexibility available to use federal funding streams to accomplish school-wide program goals.

Both offices offer programs that support low-performing schools while ensuring compliance with state and federal laws that hold LEAs accountable for improving student and school performance.

The federal CTA process for low-performing schools, the reward system for high-performing schools, and the new ESEA Grades accountability system will improve capacity at the state, district, and school levels. South Carolina believes that the proposed new accountability system will create additional incentives for schools and districts to work diligently to meet high standards and to focus on improving the academic achievement and performance of All Students, as well as the achievement and performance of all students in all subgroups, including historically underperforming groups.

PRINCIPLE 3: SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

3.A DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

Option A	**Option B**
☒ If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. the SEA's plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year; ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14).	☐ If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students; ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.

For the sixth consecutive year, *Education Week*'s *Quality Counts* (January 12, 2012) ranked South Carolina as #1 in the nation in the Teaching Professions Category. This achievement is due, in large measure, to the state's widely recognized, statewide systems for evaluating and supporting teacher and principal performance and effectiveness—the system for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) and the Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP). (See Appendix C for a glossary of acronyms.)

The SCDE has developed and continues to administer, maintain, and make ongoing refinements to the ADEPT and PADEPP systems. These evaluation and support systems provide effective and consistent methods for evaluating and supporting all teachers and principals across the state's school districts.

Guidelines for ADEPT (Attachment 10) were originally adopted in 2006; they will be further refined to comply with the requirements of the ESEA Flexibility Request Principle 3 as detailed later. PADEPP guidelines are currently presented through the

authorizing state regulations (Attachment 11). The SCDE will develop an independent PADEPP guideline document, similar to the ADEPT guidelines, as they are modified to comply with the requirements of Principle 3.

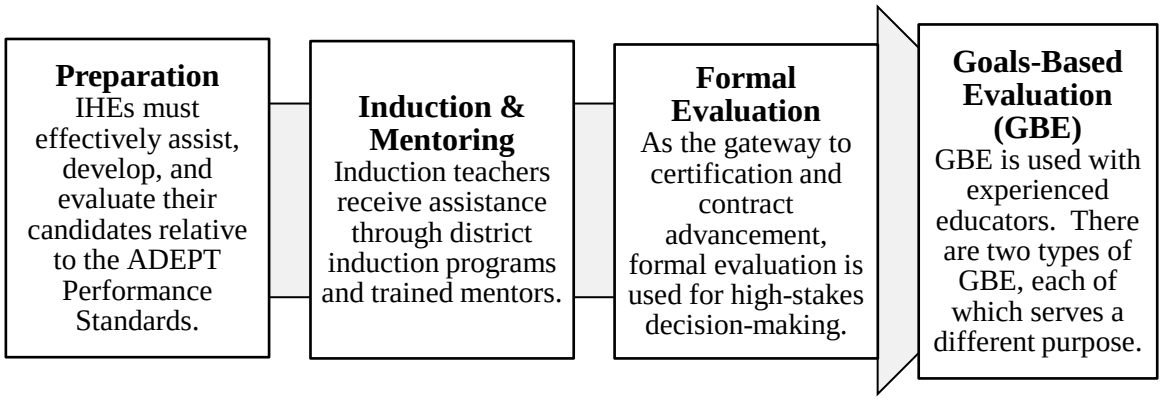
The background of both systems in South Carolina illustrates the shift that has occurred since 1998 from evaluation based on limited methods that varied at the local level to dynamic yet consistent statewide evaluation and support systems that promote effective instruction and leadership. Even prior to the announcement of an ESEA Flexibility Request, the state was progressing with enhancements to the guidelines and frameworks for both the ADEPT and PADEPP systems.

ADEPT Background

When it was implemented in 1998, ADEPT signaled a shift in South Carolina's perspective on teacher evaluation. Prior to ADEPT, evaluation instruments had been limited, for the most part, to behavioral checklists and showcase lessons. While almost all teachers "passed" these evaluations, the evaluation process itself did little to reflect or improve day-to-day instructional practices. The ADEPT system was built on the knowledge that effective teaching must be defined, facilitated, and evidenced throughout everyday practice and must ultimately result in a positive impact on student learning.

The purpose of ADEPT is two-fold: (1) to promote teacher effectiveness and (2) to provide quality assurance and accountability via valid, reliable, consistent, and fair evaluations of teacher performance and effectiveness, as indicated in the following diagram:

ADEPT Processes and Functions



The current ADEPT system is authorized under three primary sources:

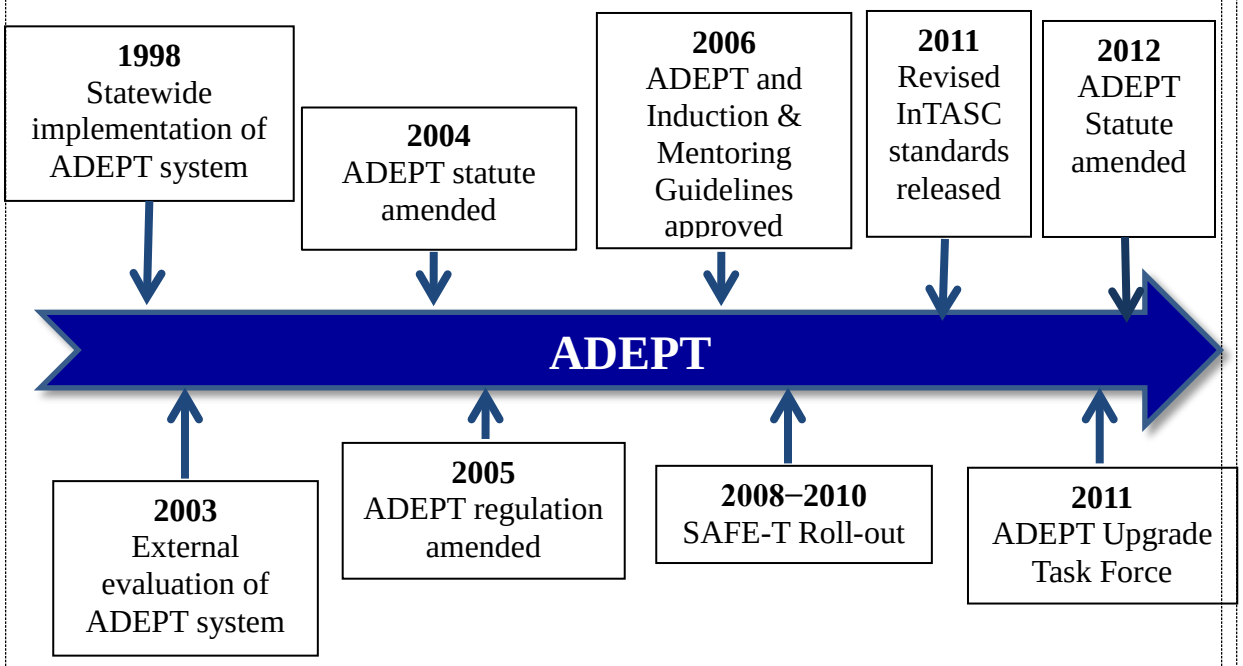
- South Carolina Code Ann. §§ 59-26-30 (2004 and Supp. 2011 updated June 2012) and 59-26-40 (Supp. 2011) (see Attachment 11). Evidence of statewide adoption of this state statute is available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/documents/ADEPTStatute.pdf.
- State Board of Education Regulation 43-205.1 (see Attachment 11) is due for second reading at the February 2013, State Board meeting. Evidence of statewide adoption

of this regulation is available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/adeptreg.cfm.

- ADEPT System Guidelines (see Attachment 10). Evidence of statewide adoption of these guidelines is available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/documents/adept_guidelines.pdf. The 2006 ADEPT Steering Committee that developed these guidelines included 27 district- and school-level administrators, teachers, representatives from institutions of higher education, and representatives from related professional organizations under the leadership of two consultants. (A list of these members is available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/documents/acknowledgments.pdf.)

Because ADEPT is designed to be an iterative process rather than a final product, the system has undergone several major transformations since its inception, including amendments to the authorizing statute and regulations, and approval of system and induction and mentoring guidelines (see the ADEPT Chronology below).

ADEPT Chronology



The most recent reforms to the system began in the spring of 2011 when the SCDE convened a stakeholder group that included principals, teachers, district superintendents, district administrators, higher education representatives, and a State Board of Education member. This 33-member ADEPT Upgrade Task Force (see Appendix N for a list of members) was charged with analyzing the ADEPT System Guidelines in the context of current best practices, met three times over a three-month period, and made recommendations for revisions to the ADEPT System Guidelines. These recommendations —summarized later in this section (Commitments 1, 2, and 3 below)—inform the plan to

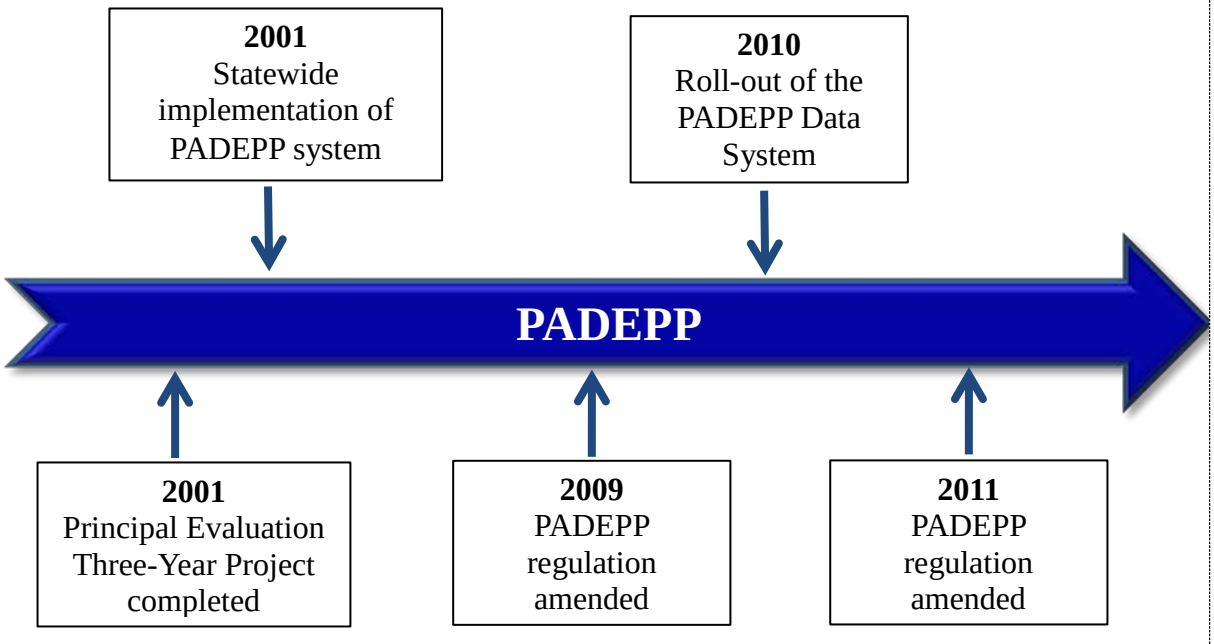
revise the ADEPT System Guidelines which ultimately will include the updated 2012 statute designed to allow the potential three year induction of new teachers.

The Summative ADEPT Formal Evaluation of Teachers (SAFE-T) is the formal evaluation model for classroom-based teachers that is used statewide; it is described in more detail in Commitment 3 below. InTASC is the Council of Chief State School Officer's Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, which has developed a set of model core teaching standards. These standards outline what teachers should know and be able to do to ensure every K-12 student reaches the goal of being ready to enter college or the workforce in today's world. These standards also outline the common principles and foundations of teaching practice that cut across all subject areas and grade levels and that are necessary to improve student achievement. ADEPT standards are aligned with the InTASC standards; thus, the release of the revised InTASC standards in 2011 prompted the work to update the state's evaluation system (Commitments 1, 2, and 3 below).

PADEPP Background

Similar to ADEPT, South Carolina's Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP) has evolved since it was implemented in 2001.

PADEPP Chronology



PADEPP is based on statewide performance standards and criteria that apply to both all principal preparation programs at institutions of higher education and all principals employed in the state's public school districts. The current PADEPP system is authorized by

- South Carolina Code Ann. § 59-24-5 *et seq*. (2004 and Supp.2011) (see Attachment

11). Evidence of statewide adoption of these state statutes is available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/49/documents/SouthCarolinaCodeofLaws-Title59-Chapter24_SchoolAdministrators_.pdf.

- State Board of Education Regulation 43-165.1 (see Attachment 11). Evidence of statewide adoption of this regulation is available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/49/documents/SouthCarolinaCodeofLaws-Title59-Chapter24_SchoolAdministrators_.pdf.

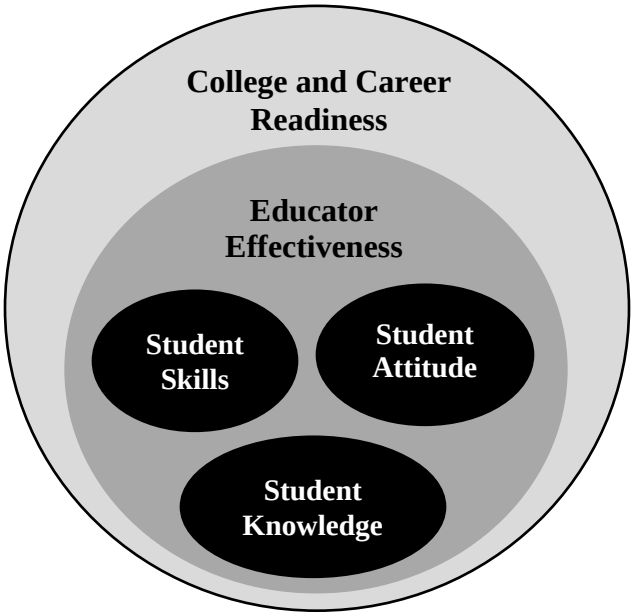
An iterative process like ADEPT, the PADEPP regulation was most recently amended in June 2011 to include a requirement for the annual evaluation of principals and a tiered certification system.

ADEPT and PADEPP: Advancing Toward Effectiveness

As the emphasis of evaluation has shifted from teacher and leader quality to teacher and leader effectiveness over time through the development, use, and continuous refinement of ADEPT and PADEPP, South Carolina is focusing on ensuring that all of its students acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to graduate high school college and career ready and to be well-equipped to succeed in the life path they choose.

As the graphic below indicates, our focus on educator effectiveness ensures that teachers, using the standards (like the CCSS), help students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that they will need to achieve academically and ultimately succeed in college and careers.

Educator Effectiveness Builds College and Career Readiness



In its July 2011 reorganization, the SCDE demonstrated its commitment to placing a high priority on teacher evaluation and support by establishing the Division of School Effectiveness and emphasizing the integration of educator evaluation as a key tool in a continuous improvement model for educator professional development. The reorganization links educator professional development practices to educator evaluations as a way to ultimately improve instructional practices in South Carolinas classrooms. This change at the state level is indicative of a cultural change that the agency is encouraging across the state. This division will coordinate the development and implementation of the enhanced statewide ADEPT and PADEPP systems for evaluating and supporting teacher and principal effectiveness.

The SCDE currently is partnering with SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) to review ADEPT and PADEPP, make recommendations for enhancing the systems, and help guide the work of the state and its stakeholders in developing new guidelines for the enhanced systems. Also, the SCDE has worked with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) State Consortium on Educator Effectiveness (SCEE) and benefitted from their expertise in the development of this plan.

South Carolina has the infrastructure in place to move quickly to meet all of the Principle 3 requirements of the ESEA Flexibility Request. As we will indicate in 3.a.ii below, many requirements have already been met, but there is work to be done to meet other requirements, such as differentiating our evaluation levels for ADEPT. In our plan for these requirements, we will use the lessons we have learned from ADEPT, PADEPP, and our TAP™ schools, as well as lessons from work being done in the districts within the state and across the country, to create a more effective and efficient educator evaluation system that provides meaningful information focused on improving the quality of instruction and leading to improved student performance and outcomes and stronger community schools.

The SCDE is continuing to form and work with ~~a~~ new statewide working groups of stakeholders to include principals, teachers, district superintendents, district administrators, and representatives from higher education. The Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group has and will continue to offer the SCDE input on the new, enhanced guidelines for both ADEPT and PADEPP evaluation and support processes. The revised South Carolina Educator Evaluation Guidelines, once finalized based on the new statutes and creation of the final version of the evaluation system from both the beta and the pilot, will be brought to the State Board of Education for approval.

Additionally, new developments have provided significant opportunities for increased stakeholder involvement. Just prior to submitting South Carolina's ESEA Flexibility Waiver Request, the SCDE's Office of School Transformation called on the Office of Educator Evaluation to assist the state's School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools in meeting the SIG requirements for evaluating and supporting teachers and principals. The SCDE offered four educator evaluation and support options from which each SIG school could choose for implementation in 2012−13:

Option 1: Partner with the Office of Educator Evaluation to develop and implement an enhanced ADEPT/PADEPP model that would meet SIG requirements.
Option 2: Implement the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP™).
Option 3: Implement the National Institute for Excellent in Teaching (NIET™) rubric.
Option 4: Create an alternate evaluation model.

Of the 25 SIG schools, 21 schools selected Option 1—partnering with the SCDE to develop and implement an enhanced ADEPT/PADEPP model that would meet SIG requirements. Two schools selected the TAP™ model, and one school is revising its currently approved alternate model in collaboration with the SCDE.

The 21 SIG schools that opted into the enhanced ADEPT/PADEPP models all agreed to partner with the SCDE throughout the development process and to serve as a beta test in 2012−13 to help inform the work of the Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Committee and support models that are described in this request for ESEA flexibility.

A first round of meetings was held in April 2012 with representatives from all 22 partnering SIG schools and their respective (12) school districts. In all, 103 teachers, principals and other school administrators, teacher leaders, and district office staff participated in this initial round of meetings. The purpose of these meetings was to develop enhanced ADEPT standards that would include, as a significant factor, data on student growth and to draft a format for a performance and effectiveness rubric to accompany each of the standards. As part of the development process, participants were asked to complete and submit feedback forms regarding the proposed standards and rubrics.

In response to this request, the SCDE received 33 completed feedback forms from the SIG participants. A total of 178 teachers, 23 school administrators, and 26 district administrators provided input on the proposed ADEPT standards and performance and evaluation rubrics.

The second of the series of SIG meetings was held on April 26, 2012, with 98 SIG representatives in attendance. The agenda for this meeting included the following topics:

- Answering questions submitted on the feedback forms
- Presenting editorial changes made to the draft standards and rubrics based on feedback from the field
- Determining weightings for each of the standards and key indicators
- Making preliminary recommendations for evaluation requirements for various "categories" of teachers
- Discussing the use of evaluation data for making employment decisions
- Discussing incentives and rewards

A third SIG educator evaluation development meeting occurred May 2012, and SIG

evaluator training began in June 2012.

Training Opportunities for schools that chose the Enhanced ADEPT model: Each trainer chose one day (required):

- Charleston July 24, 2012
- Charleston July 26, 2012
- Columbia September 5, 2012

In Collaboration with SIG :

- Columbia, November 1
- Columbia, December 14

Optional Technical Assistance Meeting Enhanced ADEPT: Columbia, November 16, 2012.

At the end of November, user feedback forms were sent to Principals at each of the 22 schools to provide initial feedback regarding usability, applicability, effectiveness (thus far), strengths and weaknesses of the program

The SCDE is taking full advantage of this additional—and very significant—opportunity to gain insight and input from its stakeholders as it works to enhance its statewide system for evaluating and supporting teachers and principals. For example, the leaders within the SCDE provided the following six regional stakeholder meetings in the fall:

- Virtual Community Meeting: October 3, 2012
- Beaufort Community Meeting: October 16, 2012
- Greenville Community Meeting: October 24, 2012
- Charleston Community Meeting: November 26, 2012
- Florence Community Meeting: December 6, 2012
- Richland Community Meeting: December 10, 2012.

In compliance with Assurance 15, South Carolina will submit a copy of the State Board of Education−approved ADEPT and PADEPP guidelines to the US Department of Education by the end of the 2013−14 school year.

3.A.ii Option B: South Carolina is committed to enhancing its current guidelines to create systems that appropriately evaluate and effectively support teachers and principals.

South Carolina makes the following commitments to enhancing the current ADEPT and PADEPP evaluation systems to comply with the requirements of Principle 3 as follows.

COMMITMENT 1: SOUTH CAROLINA'S SYSTEMS FOR EVALUATING AND SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS WILL BE USED FOR CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION.

South Carolina continues to redefine its professional standards to reflect educator

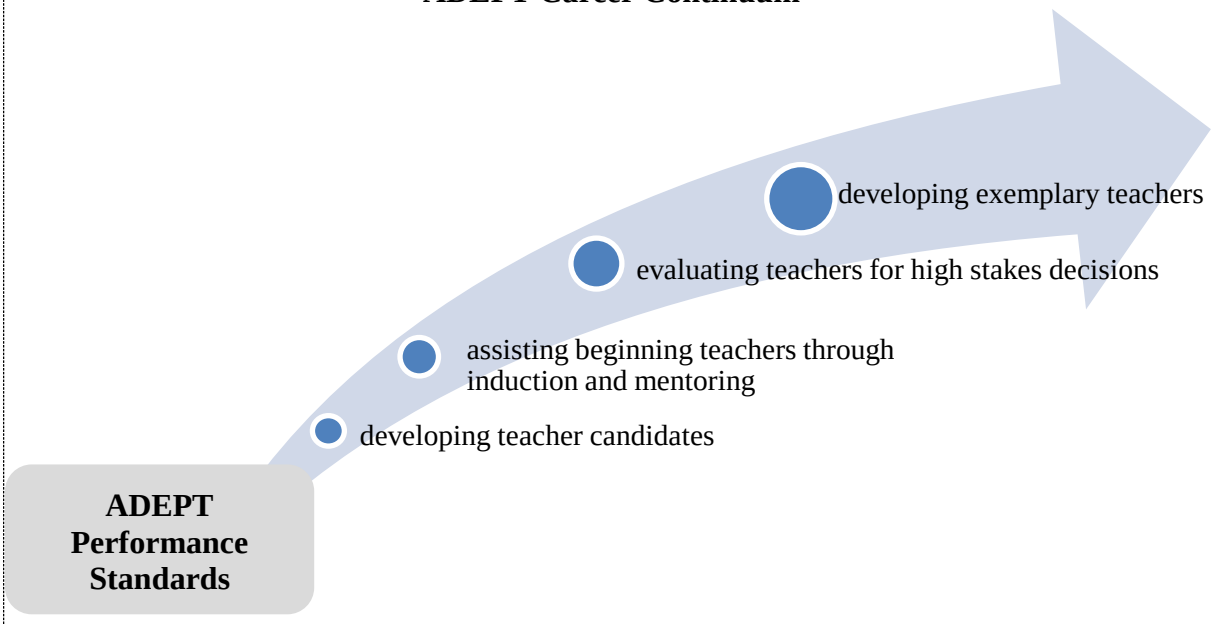
effectiveness and will work to build educators' capacities to achieve—and exceed—these standards. These enhanced ADEPT and PADEPP standards focus on improvements to instruction that promote student learning.

Quantifying teacher and principal effectiveness is a necessary, but not a sufficient, requisite to bringing about improved instruction and student achievement. Continuous improvement can only be effected by comparing student performance to instructional practices and learning conditions and by using multiple measures to identify the practices and conditions that are most effective in promoting student-learning gains. These become the standards that set our state's expectations for teachers and principals.

South Carolina believes that established professional standards must serve as the foundation for both the ADEPT and PADEPP systems. These standards must be routinely revalidated and, as necessary, revised.

South Carolina's standards for what teachers should know, be able to do, and accomplish on an ongoing basis are known as the ADEPT Performance Standards (APS). The current APS for classroom-based teachers, developed in 2006, are based on Charlotte Danielson's framework (http://www.danielsongroup.org/article.aspx?page=frameworkforteaching). The 10 APS are categorized into four domains—Planning, Instruction, Environment, and Professionalism—and include a total of 34 key elements. A copy of the APS is included in Appendix O and is available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/documents/ADEPTStandards.pdf. The APS define the expectations for teacher effectiveness throughout the entirety of a teacher's career, beginning with their preparation as teacher candidates and continuing through each stage of their practice.

ADEPT Career Continuum



In the initial phase of ADEPT system enhancements, the 2011 ADEPT Upgrade Task Force began the revalidation process for the APS. As part of this process, the Task Force reviewed 13 sets of nationally recognized professional teaching standards from

- Colorado;
- Connecticut;
- Georgia;
- Harrison County, Colorado;
- Hillsboro County, Florida;
- InTASC (the 2011 revised Model Core Teaching Standards);
- Kentucky;
- Louisiana;
- Marzano Evaluation Model Standards;
- Montgomery County, Maryland;
- Teacher Advancement Program (TAP™);
- Tennessee; and
- Washington, DC (IMPACT).

The Upgrade Task Force conducted a gap analysis by developing crosswalks that compared each set of standards to the APS. For example, the completed crosswalk between the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and the ADEPT Performance Standards is included in Appendix P and is available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/documents/InTASCStandardsCrosswalk.pdf.

The gap analysis revealed no significant gaps between the 2006 APS for classroom-based teachers and other sets of current, nationally recognized teacher performance standards. However, the Upgrade Task Force recommended updating the language in several APS descriptors and establishing clearer, deeper, and more meaningful standards by adding a stand-alone student growth standard, combining several of the other standards, and reducing the overall number of key elements from 34 to 17. As mentioned previously,-The SCDE will continue to convene the Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group to consider future recommendations and offer input on the standards the SCDE will finalize as part of the enhanced guidelines to be approved by the State Board of Education at the conclusion of the 2013-2014 school year.

The PADEPP system includes nine principal performance standards that are aligned with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards:

PADEPP Standards
1 – Vision
2 – Instructional Leadership
3 – Effective Management
4 – Climate
5 – School-Community Relations
6 – Ethical Behavior
7 – Interpersonal Skills
8 – Staff Development
9 – Principal's Professional Development

The descriptions and performance criteria for each of these PADEPP standards, updated in June 2010, are available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/49/documents/adeppstandardsandcriteria.pdf.

The SCDE will work with the Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group to revalidate these PADEPP standards. We will also work with the Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group to consider whether school-wide achievement/growth will become a separate, stand-alone standard or continue to be integrated within one of the existing standards. The finalized performance standards for principals will then become part of the enhanced PADEPP guidelines.

In summary, the standards for teachers and principals must clearly establish the state's expectations in terms of

- competence—the knowledge and skills the educator must possess,
- performance—what the educator does as part of his or her practice, and
- effectiveness—the impact the educator has on intended student growth and performance.

Central to all three of these components are the academic standards for students (e.g., the CCSS for ELA and mathematics and the state academic standards for other content areas) and multiple student assessment measures. That is, educators must have a strong working knowledge and understanding of the academic standards and their subject area (i.e., *competence*); they must create conditions that increase the likelihood that students will achieve these standards (i.e., *performance*); and they must analyze formative and summative assessment results to determine the extent to which their efforts have resulted in positive student gains (i.e., *effectiveness*).

Likewise, these three components are essential to equity—the commitment to educate all students, including English language learners (ELL), students with disabilities, and low-achieving students. To meet the unique needs of all students, educators must have

a thorough knowledge and understanding of their particular students (i.e., *competence*), they must implement strategies designed to meet the diverse needs of their students (i.e., *performance*), and they must demonstrate that their efforts have resulted in positive learning gains for every student (i.e., *effectiveness*).

Ensuring the continual improvement of instruction also involves a systemic approach to capacity-building. ADEPT and PADEPP systematically assess and analyze an educator's professional practices, as well as their impact on the learning, achievement, and overall well-being of their students. Systematically providing feedback compels educators reach successively higher levels of efficacy as they progress through the various stages of their career continua (see ADEPT Career Continuum graphic on page 99).

Both the ADEPT and PADEPP standards are infused into the preparation programs at the institutions of higher education (IHEs) in South Carolina. Integration of the PADEPP and ADEPT systems are included in the accreditation process for colleges of education in the state. The seamless use of these systems from preparation, induction, professional growth, and evaluation helps ensure continuity and consistency for educators.

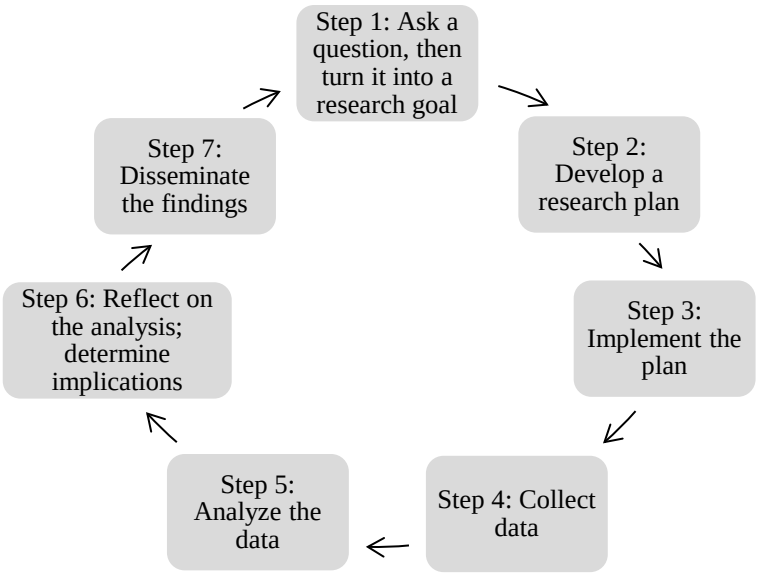
Teachers and principals continue in their respective evaluation and support system through their induction experience. South Carolina requires that teachers and principals have an induction experience upon entering professional practice; this induction experience must include formative feedback from supervisors on each of the performance standards, coaching support from mentors, and participation in a formalized induction program.

Currently, the induction period for both teachers and principals is one year. However, during the 2012 legislative session, the South Carolina General Assembly passed legislation to increase the required induction period for teachers to up to three years, at the discretion of local school leadership.

Throughout the entirety of their careers, teachers and principals are required to collaborate with their respective supervisors to establish annual professional growth and development plans. These personalized learning plans are designed to identify and build upon each educator's strengths as well as target and address any weaknesses that may have been evidenced (see Commitment 5 below for more on professional growth and development plans).

The most recent addition to the ADEPT system, Research and Development (R&D) Goals-Based Evaluation (GBE), encourages teachers to collaborate in conducting action research to improve student learning and to share their findings with others.

Research & Development Goals-Based Evaluation (GBE)



Preliminary reports from the field indicate enthusiastic support for, and positive findings from, this type of "practical" professional development that results in a positive impact on students. As the SCDE revises the ADEPT guidelines, we will consider and seek additional input from the Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group on this component of the system to determine whether more detailed descriptions of the R&D GBE process is necessary.

Note regarding Charter Schools: The SCDE will require that all charter schools boards of directors and authorizers submit an annual written statement to the SCDE Charter School Program outlining their chosen method of teacher evaluation by September 1 of each year. The assurance will guarantee that a charter school adheres to one of two options as specified below:

In accordance with the ESEA Flexibility Waiver Principle 3, all charter schools in South Carolina must guarantee that they will adhere to one of the following options regarding teacher evaluations:

A. As a South Carolina public charter school, we agree to adopt and implement the principles of the state approved ADEPT teacher evaluation system.

Or

B. As a South Carolina public charter school, we will develop and implement teacher

and principal evaluation and support systems that meets all of the elements of Principle 3 in the document titled ESEA flexibility, as follows:

a. Will be used for continual improvement of instruction;
b. Meaningfully differentiates performance using at least three performance levels;
c. Uses multiple valid measures in determining performance levels, including
    i. data on student growth for all students (including English Learners and students with disabilities) as a significant factor
    ii. other measures of professional practice (which may be gathered through multiple formats and sources, such as observations based on rigorous teacher performance standards, teacher portfolios, and student and parent surveys);
d. Ensures that all measures included in determining performance levels are valid measures (meaning measures that are clearly related to increasing student academic achievement and school performance) and are implemented in a consistent and high-quality manner across schools within an LEA;
e. Evaluates teachers and principals on a regular basis;
f. Provides clear, timely, and useful feedback, including feedback that identifies needs and guides professional development; and
g. Will be used to inform personnel decisions.
h. Will meet approval from the Division of School Effectiveness as an approved Evaluation System.

COMMITMENT 2: SOUTH CAROLINA'S SYSTEMS FOR EVALUATING AND SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS WILL DIFFERENTIATE PERFORMANCE USING AT LEAST THREE PERFORMANCE LEVELS.

ADEPT's current bimodal (*Met* and *Not Met*) rating scale does not adequately identify either developing or outstanding teachers. To address this need, the 2011 ADEPT Upgrade Task Force reviewed 13 sets of nationally recognized performance rubrics (see Appendix Q). Based on this review, the Task Force recommended creating a four-level rating scale for teacher performance—*Exemplary*, *Proficient*, *Needs Improvement*, and *Unsatisfactory*—and developing rubrics to describe teacher performance at each of these levels. The SCDE convened the Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group to consider these recommendations further and gather additional input based upon the initial rubric study within the beta which is showing a greater need to move this to a five point scale.

The PADEPP system already uses three performance levels: *Exemplary*, *Proficient*, and *Needs Improvement*, and the PADEPP Principal Evaluation Instrument (available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/49/documents/PrincipalEvaluation.pdf) includes rubrics for each principal performance standard.

However, the current PADEPP system does not include a standard criterion for determining overall principal performance. The state will involve the Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group in developing an overall principal evaluation rating that includes a student growth component as a significant factor in determining principals' ratings in the revised South Carolina principal evaluation system.

With regard to differentiating performance, the ESEA waiver stakeholder meetings in November 2011 generated discussion about whether the teacher and principal evaluation systems should include the same number of rating levels. The Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group will consider these issues relative to the performance levels for teachers and principals and will solicit further stakeholder input prior to drafting the revised guidelines.

COMMITMENT 3: SOUTH CAROLINA'S SYSTEMS FOR EVALUATING AND SUPPORTING TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS WILL USE MULTIPLE VALID MEASURES TO DETERMINE PERFORMANCE LEVELS, INCLUDING, AS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR, DATA IN STUDENT GROWTH FOR ALL STUDENTS (INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES), AND OTHER MEASURES OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE.

Both the ADEPT and PADEPP systems include multiple valid measures to determine performance levels. Currently, the ADEPT evaluation model for classroom-based teachers, the Summative ADEPT Formal Evaluation of Teachers (SAFE-T), is used statewide and includes the following six measures:

- the teacher's *long-range plan*(s);
- one or more *unit work samples* to demonstrate student learning;
- classroom *observations* (a minimum of four unannounced visits per year that must each include an entire lesson, or at least 50 minutes if the lesson exceeds that length of time. Additional walk-through observations are permitted.);
- teacher *reflections* following each classroom observation;
- *professional performance review*, completed by the principal (or designee) and other supervisors; and
- *professional self-assessment*, completed by the teacher as the first step to developing the teacher's professional growth and development plan.

Documentation for each of these six measures becomes part of the teacher's dossier, which is reviewed and judged by an evaluation team of at least two trained, certified evaluators as part of the summative evaluation process.

The *SAFE-T Guide for Teachers and Evaluators* (February 2010) details all of the required procedures, including all documentation templates, and is available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/documents/SAFETGuideTeachersEvaluators.pdf.

The PADEPP Principal Evaluation Instrument (available online at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/49/documents/PrincipalEvaluation.pdf) requires superintendents (or their designated evaluators) to use appropriate methods for gathering data and to present evidence of performance relative to each of the nine performance standards.

Stakeholders who attended the November 2011 ESEA Flexibility Request Stakeholder meetings expressed interest in exploring other methods of evaluating performance such as peer evaluations and student surveys. Considering these suggestions, the SCDE will work with the Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group to seek additional stakeholder input and make final recommendations regarding methods for determining teacher and principal performance levels as part of the revised guidelines. The SCDE is using the beta SIG project and will continue to seek additional input from teacher and principal evaluation work groups to inform the upgrades to each respective evaluation model.

Student growth is an essential part of examining teacher and principal effectiveness. The SCDE is looking to the 59 schools that currently participate in South Carolina's Teacher Advancement Program (SC TAP™)—through a federal Teacher Incentive Fund Grant—to serve as incubators for value-added assessments for teachers, as well as for principals, in tested subject areas and grade levels. Data from the state's Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS)—and, later, from the tests developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)—will be a required source for the calculating value-added scores for teachers in the tested subject areas and grades.

As an additional measure of student growth, South Carolina is reviewing its unit work sample process to provide student growth data for teachers in all subject areas and grade levels (including grades and subjects in which assessments are—and are not—required under ESEA section 1111 (b)(3)). The unit work sample is based on the teacher work sample concept developed by the nationally recognized Renaissance Partnership (http://www.uni.edu/itq/Research/ATEFinalfromTony061203.pdf). In this context, a *unit* is defined as a set of integrated lessons designed to accomplish learning objectives related to one or more curricular themes, areas of knowledge, and/or general skills or processes. As such, the unit concept applies to all teachers, regardless of subject area or grade level. A unit work sample includes the following six components:

- the major *unit objectives* (a maximum of five objectives is recommended), along with the teacher's rationale for selecting these as the top objectives;
- the *instructional plan* for the unit—that is, the sequence of steps that the teacher will take to ensure that the students achieve the unit objectives—including the key activities or strategies and resources (e.g., materials, technology);
- the key *unit assessments* that will be used to determine student progress and achievement relative to the unit objectives;
- the results of the assessments and the *analysis of student performance* (aggregated and, if appropriate, by subgroup—for example, ELL or students with disabilities—and/or individually);

- a description of the *formative uses of the assessment data* to promote student learning and to inform future instructional plans; and
- a description of the *summative assessment data* that reflects student achievement (e.g., grades and/or other indicators of student achievement).

The Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group will consider the types of student growth measures (e.g., value-added assessment, unit work sample rating, school-level rating, and other possible measures such as common assessments, projects, and assignments) that will be included. The SCDE will consider a process implemented in other states that allows local school districts to develop and pilot new measures that we will then validate for use by other school districts in the state. Through R&D GBE, the SCDE plans to encourage groups of teachers to develop common assessments and to submit them for consideration for statewide use. Student learning objectives (SLOs) provide another approach that is worthy of consideration, as are project-based assessments. This challenge presents a unique opportunity for us to contemplate three important questions: What do we want students to know and to be able to do? How will we measure student growth in terms of meeting these expectations? And, how do we determine the impact of teachers and principals in terms of promoting the growth of student knowledge and skills?

The Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group, as well as an external evaluator, will offer input as the SCDE determines proportion (i.e., the weighted values) that each applicable component will contribute toward the educator's overall effectiveness rating. Determining the overall effectiveness ratings for both teachers and principals will require the use of multiple measures, with student growth as a significant factor. The weightings assigned to each component will ensure that student growth is a significant factor in determining teacher and principal effectiveness. The final requirements will be detailed in the new, enhanced guidelines.

COMMITMENT 4: SOUTH CAROLINA WILL EVALUATE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS ON A REGULAR BASIS.

South Carolina currently requires annual evaluations for both teachers and principals. While the components of these evaluations will be refined and improved, the annual requirement will remain. The ADEPT system requires that teachers be evaluated annually, either formally (i.e., summatively) or informally (i.e., formatively). A successful year-long summative evaluation is required for a teacher to advance from an annual to a continuing contract. Once a teacher receives a continuing contract, the teacher may be evaluated through a full summative evaluation (SAFE-T), a partial summative evaluation (Competence-Building Goals-Based Evaluation), or a formative evaluation (Research and Development Goals-Based Evaluation) at the discretion of the employing school district.

The PADEPP system requires that principals be evaluated annually. A successful evaluation using all PADEPP standards is required for a principal to advance from a Tier 1 to a Tier 2 certificate. Once the principal advances to a Tier 2 certificate, a full evaluation using all PADEPP Performance Standards must be conducted every other year. On years

between the full evaluations, principal evaluations must include Performance Standard 2 (Instructional Leadership), any Performance Standards that were rated as *Needs Improvement* in the previous year, and any additional Performance Standards identified for growth in the Principal's Professional Development Plan (PDP). Full evaluations may be conducted every year at the discretion of the superintendent.

The Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group will consider the recommendation to develop a matrix of the types of measures, including student growth, that must be used to measure teacher and principal performance on an annual basis. This matrix will define the type, scope, and depth of annual evaluations for each educator and will vary depending on the educator's experience level and previous performance/effectiveness. The matrix will be included as part of the revised guidelines.

COMMITMENT 5: SOUTH CAROLINA WILL PROVIDE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS WITH CLEAR, TIMELY, AND USEFUL FEEDBACK, INCLUDING FEEDBACK THAT IDENTIFIES NEEDS AND GUIDES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Both the ADEPT and PADEPP systems require that formative feedback be provided relative to each performance standard during each educator's induction period. During summative evaluations, a conference must be held at least twice during the year to present written and oral feedback to the educator on his or her performance relative to each standard.

Additionally, both systems require the development of an annual Professional Growth and Development Plan for every educator, based on his or her identified strengths and weaknesses. Principals' professional growth plans also must relate to their School Renewal Plans. Each educator's Professional Growth and Development Plan must be individualized to meet their unique needs and must be developed in collaboration with the educator's supervisor. Feedback regarding the educator's progress and performance must be provided at least annually and more frequently if problems are evidenced.

The educator's individualized Professional Growth and Development Plan also serve as the basis for renewal of his or her teaching credential that must be revalidated every five years. By successfully completing and implementing strategies that relate to the goals in his or her approved plan, the educator can accrue certificate renewal credits for certificate revalidation purposes.

Reflection and self-assessments are important components of the growth and development processes. The ultimate goal is to help each educator transform from externally mandated to internally motivated professional development that is relevant, meaningful, and effective in promoting student success.

COMMITMENT 6: SOUTH CAROLINA'S TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS WILL GENERATE DATA THAT WILL BE USED TO INFORM PERSONNEL DECISIONS.

South Carolina supports two Web-based systems for collecting and reporting data on the annual performance of every teacher and principal in the state.

Via the ADEPT Data System (ADS), school districts report the following information on an annual basis for each teacher:

- the teacher's contract level for the current school year and the ADEPT process in which the teacher participated (e.g., induction, formal/summative evaluation, or goals-based evaluation);
- the teacher's ADEPT results for the current school year (including, for teachers who underwent a full formal/summative evaluation, the results for each of the current 34 key elements);
- the teacher's hiring status for the following school year (e.g., rehired, resigned, retired, workforce reduction); and
- the teacher's recommended contract level and ADEPT process for the following school year.

This information is used to generate a chronological ADEPT history for each teacher—an ongoing record of the teacher's employment status and performance. A teacher's ADEPT history may be accessed online by the teacher, the teacher's employing school district, and any public school district in the state to which the teacher applies for teaching employment. School districts rely on ADEPT histories and other types of ADEPT documentation to help make re-employment decisions, and they also use ADEPT histories to assist in making decisions about hiring teachers who apply from other districts.

ADEPT History

Year	District	Current Contract	Results	Hiring Status	Next Year Contract
2012	Richland 01	Continuing - GBE	No Data	No Data	No Data
2011	Richland 01	Continuing - GBE	Met or Ready	Rehired	Continuing - GBE
2010	Richland 01	Annual - Formal 1	Met or Ready	Rehired	Continuing - GBE
2009	Richland 01	Induction	Met or Ready	Rehired	Annual - Formal 1

The ADEPT Data System also generates reports that enable districts to compare the performance of their teachers at each contract level with the overall statewide data. The SCDE presents an aggregated report annually to the State Board of Education. A copy of the 2011 ADEPT Report is included in Attachment R.

South Carolina requires that beginning teachers complete an ADEPT induction

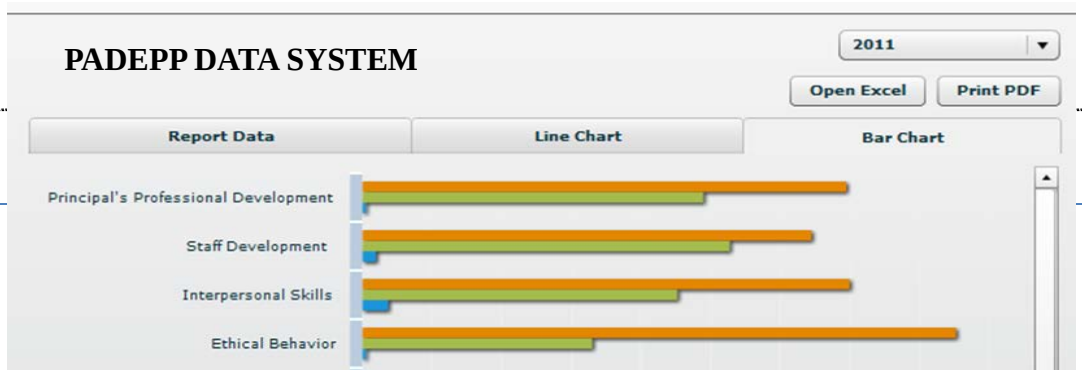
period and that they successfully complete an ADEPT formal/summative evaluation during a subsequent (annual-contract) year in order to be eligible for certificate and contract advancements. Additionally, the State Board of Education must suspend the teaching certificate of any teacher at the annual-contract level who is unable to successfully complete the ADEPT formal/summative evaluation process after two attempts (years).

The state provides data to each teacher preparation program regarding the performance of its graduates once they enter their second year of teaching employment. The ADEPT pass rate for each institution of higher education (IHE) is included in the IHE's Fact Sheet and is published as part of the Title II—Higher Education reporting requirements. Additionally, IHEs use the IHE Portal System to obtain a standard-by-standard report on the performance of their graduates to help the IHE determine programmatic strengths and weaknesses in order to guide their program improvements.

In 2010, the SCDE partnered with Clemson University to pilot Project HEAT—the Higher Education Assessment of Teaching. This project provides value-added data to Clemson on their teacher preparation program graduates who teach in TAP™ schools. Clemson uses this data to inform instructional offerings and practices. Project HEAT is providing a foundation for moving forward with more actionable data for colleges of education and teacher preparation programs.

The second Web-based data system, the PADEPP Data System (PDS), is used to collect and report the annual performance of all principals in South Carolina. Beginning with the 2011–12 school year, school districts are using PDS to report principal ratings for each of the PADEPP performance standards. Following the end of each school year, annual reports, similar to the ADEPT reports, will be generated and published.

PADEPP Data System Report



	Exemplary		Proficient		Needs Improvement

PADEPP results not only help guide local employment decisions, but they also serve as the gateway to certificate advancement. The amended (2011) PADEPP regulation provides for tiered certification for principals. To advance from a Tier 1 to a Tier 2 certificate, a principal must complete the state's Principal Induction Program during his or her first year of the principalship and must then receive an overall rating of *Proficient* or *Exemplary* on a full PADEPP evaluation during a subsequent principalship year.

Reports generated via the PADEPP Data System also help identify performance strengths and weaknesses for individual principals, for local school districts, and for the state. The report above is an example of a statewide data report on principal performance (exemplary, proficient, and needs improvement) for each of the nine PADEPP standards.

COMMITMENT 7: SOUTH CAROLINA WILL PROVIDE ONGOING TRAINING TO ALL TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND EVALUATORS TO HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSES OF THE EVALUATION SYSTEMS, THE ELEMENTS OF THE EVALUATIONS SYSTEMS, AND THEIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN IMPLEMENTING THESE SYSTEMS.

Through their holistic approaches to assisting, developing, and evaluating the performance and effectiveness of teachers and principals, the ADEPT and PADEPP systems embed training throughout every stage, beginning with the educator preparation programs and continuing through induction and the formal/summative evaluations.

Prior to the beginning of the formal/summative ADEPT evaluation process, each teacher scheduled for this type of evaluation must receive a comprehensive orientation. At a minimum, this teacher orientation must include written and oral explanations of the ADEPT

Performance Standards, the evaluation process, the evaluation timeline or calendar, the criteria for successfully completing the evaluation, and the intended use of the evaluation results. Also, each teacher must be informed of the names of the members of his or her evaluation team prior to the beginning of the evaluation.

All ADEPT evaluators must hold evaluator certification. To become evaluator-certified, an educator must meet the evaluator eligibility requirements (i.e., the educator must hold a South Carolina professional teaching certificate and be recommended for evaluator training by a district or school administrator), must successfully complete the three-day evaluator training in its entirety, must satisfactorily complete all required assignments, and must receive a passing score on the online examination. ADEPT training is accomplished via a train-the-trainer model through which the SCDE provides training for all trainers while the certified trainers, in turn, provide training for the evaluators. A complete description of all ADEPT/SAFE-T evaluator and trainer requirements is available at http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/. (SAFE-T—the Summative ADEPT Formal Evaluation of Teachers—is the evaluation model for classroom-based teachers.)

Currently, there are 7,914 certified ADEPT/SAFE-T evaluators in South Carolina. The pass rate for the evaluator examination is 94 percent. As the stakes for the educator evaluations rise, it will be important to improve the evaluator certification system. The SCDE will work with SEDL's Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) to refine the evaluator training and certification system to help ensure the best possible inter-rater reliability.

All PADEPP evaluators must have successfully completed the SCDE's PADEPP training before evaluating principals. The SCDE provides this training for all district superintendents and other designated principal evaluators.

To ensure that principals are prepared to meet the state's professional expectations, all administrator preparation programs must integrate the PADEPP standards throughout their curricula.

All first-year principals are required to complete the state's Principal Induction Program. A detailed overview of the PADEPP standards and criteria, the principal evaluation instrument, and the PADEPP regulation (R 43-165.1) is included as an integral part of this program for beginning principals.

Prior to evaluating a principal, the employing school district must ensure that the principal receives awareness training that includes (1) the PADEPP Performance Standards and Criteria for Principal Evaluation, (2) the PADEPP principal evaluation instrument, and (3) the PADEPP regulation (R 43-165.1).

Like ADEPT, the principal evaluator certification system will be refined to ensure the best possible inter-rater reliability across the state.

Plan for Implementation

Key Milestone or Activity	Detailed Timeline (given in document)	Party or Parties Responsible	Evidence (Attachment)	Resources	Significant Obstacles
Work with SEDL and CCSSO to get input and advice on the SC proposed educator evaluation system.	11/2011-15	Division of School Effectiveness	Record of communications between SEDL, CCSSO, and the Division of School Effectiveness	Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group, working groups, and staff time.	NA
Appoint and convene the Educator Evaluation Stakeholder Group to assist in the revisions to South Carolina's Guidelines for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT) and the development of the Guidelines for the Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP)	2/2012-6/2012	Division of School Effectiveness	Names of Committee members Posted to http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Educator-evaluations	Staff time to organize and conduct meetings; reimbursement for group member travel	Availability of key stakeholders to serve on the stakeholder committee
Provide data to teachers and principals on the growth of their students in reading/language arts and mathematics in grades 3–8	July 2013	Office of Data Management and Analysis	SCDE Data Reports	Staff time IT Support Funding	IT code that will integrate the system Waiting for the data to be available. Securing a vendor to complete this.
Determine additional methods for calculating "student growth" for all students, including ELL students and students with disabilities for teachers in	August 2012–January 2014	Division of School Effectiveness Division of Accountability	Description(s) published to SCDE website http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Educator-Evaluations	Staff time to research available models (e.g., value-added and other options) A request for proposals (RFP) or other similar process may be required	Student growth (value-added) data is only available for approximately 25%–30% of all teachers. The current state Student examination (PASS) was not designed for use

tested subject areas and grade levels, teachers in non-tested subject areas and grade levels, and on a school-wide basis					in evaluating teachers. Adoption of the new CCSS assessments and the use of the SAS model will remedy this problem.
Appoint and convene a PADEPP work group to network with their constituencies and assist in revising the PADEPP evaluation model, consistent with the approved 2013 PADEPP Guidelines	Summer 2013 until Implement-tation is complete	Division of School Effectiveness	Names of the PADEPP Work Group Members posted to the SCDE website	Staff time to appoint and convene the work group Staff time to facilitate the work group meetings to guide the development of the revised evaluation model	PADEPP position was not filled in OEE until 12/17/12. Current PADEPP needs revisions to make better connections to the evaluation system.
Revise the PADEPP evaluation model consistent with the 2013 Guidelines	August 2013–June 2014	Division of School Effectiveness	Group Members and Educator Evaluation Progress Reports posted to the SCDE website http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Educator-Evaluations/ Meeting agendas	Staff time to develop the revised principal evaluation materials IT support for the development and management of the upgrades to the PADEPP Data System	Internal capacity Funding New Ed. Associate was just hired.
Select and train a sub-group of school districts to participate in the pilot of the revised ADEPT and PADEPP evaluation models	May 2013–August 2013	Division of School Effectiveness	List of schools/districts in pilot project District invitation letters; data analysis	Research consultant to guide the design of the pilot and analyze the pilot data (validity/ reliability) IT support for the redevelopment and management of the ADEPT	Public's perception of the new evaluation system may deter some districts from participating Research consultant has not been hired yet. Internal capacity funding Tight timeline for developing the pilot project training and evaluation materials.

Monitor the ADEPT and PADEPP pilot project implementation; conduct and analyze data and collect statewide feedback	Spring 2014	Division of School Effectiveness	Pilot Project Report	IT support for the redevelopment and management of the ADEPT Data System and PADEPP Data System	Internal capacity Funding Changing TOPS and or the weightings, will significantly affect the data and outcomes
Revise the evaluation models, based on the findings of the pilot project	Spring 2014	Division of School Effectiveness	Revised evaluation models	IT support for the redevelopment and management of the ADEPT Data System and PADEPP Data System	Tight timeline for revising all training and evaluation materials based on the results of the pilot project.
Revise the Guidelines and present to South Carolina State Board of Education for approval by June 30, 2014.	June 2014	Division of School Effectiveness	Minutes of the State Board of Education meetings The State Board of Education approved ADEPT Guidelines	Staff Time	Legislation is before the 2012 South Carolina General Assembly to increase the length of teacher induction from the current one year period to a three-year period. Since induction is a component of the ADEPT system this legislation will have an impact on the ADEPT Guidelines.
Develop the PADEPP Guidelines and present to the South Carolina State Board of Education for approval Note: The PADEPP Guidelines must be approved by the State Board of Education by June 30, 2014	June 2014	Division of School Effectiveness	Minutes of the State Board of Education meetings The State Board of Education approved PADEPP Guidelines	Staff time	Staff time to facilitate the development of the Guidelines and ensure the Guidelines meet the requirements of the state's ESEA Flexibility Waiver Request
Appoint and convene an Educator Evaluation work group to	Summer 2013 until complete	Division of School Effectiveness	Names of the Educator Evaluation Work Groups will be posted	Convene the work group Staff time to facilitate the	Staff time

network with their constituencies and assist in revising the educator evaluation model, consistent with the approved 2014 Guidelines			on the SCDE website.	work group meetings to guide the development of the revised evaluation model	
Revise the educator evaluation model consistent with the approved 2014 Guidelines	June 2014–September 2014	Division of School Effectiveness	Educator Evaluation Progress Reports published to the SCDE website	Educator Evaluation System materials	Staff time to develop the revised teacher evaluation materials IT support for the development and management of the upgrades to the ADEPT Data System
Assist LEAs in developing their plans to implement the Revised evaluation models	June 2014 Until Complete	Division of School Effectiveness	Pilot Project Report	Staff time	Building out internal capacity
Implement the revised aspects of the approved Evaluation models. Provide statewide evaluator training and recertification. Engage educators to build awareness on the newly approved system and its impact on instructional practices.	August 2014–June 2015	Division of School Effectiveness	Evaluation materials published to the SCDE website End-of-year data reports published to the SCDE website.	Funding to districts to support the adoption and implementation of the revised evaluation models	In previous iterations of the ADEPT and PADEPP formal Evaluation models, the state has staggered implementation over a three-year period. Full scale implementation (i.e., all school districts) in a single year will present a major challenge.
Provide technical assistance to LEAs, and monitor the implementation of the valuation and support	August 2014–June 2015	Division of School Effectiveness	Evaluation materials published to the SCDE website End-of-year data reports published to the SCDE website.	Funding to districts to support the adoption and implementation of the revised evaluation models	

models					
Collect, analyze, and report data on teacher and principal performance and effectiveness	August 2014–June 2015	Division of School Effectiveness	Evaluation materials published to the SCDE website End-of-year data reports published to the SCDE website.	Funding to districts to support the adoption and implementation of the revised evaluation models	
Inform and provide guidance to local boards of education, boards of directors, boards of trustees, and district offices on using effectiveness ratings to inform personnel decisions	January 2015–June 2016	Division of School Effectiveness	Evaluation materials published to the SCDE website.	SCDE Staff Time	Devising a strong communication strategy for communicating directly with local boards of trustees, boards of directors, and boards of education.
Use new effectiveness ratings to inform personnel decisions	August 2016	Division of School Effectiveness	Evaluation materials published to the SCDE website. New evaluations system data collection and reporting system.	SCDE staff time Local district office staff time	Ensuring that the proper supports are in place as district offices and local boards make decisions. Assisting educators in understanding how the new evaluation system provides reliable, valid, and fair information on an educator's effectiveness.

3.B ENSURE LEAS IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to

review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

South Carolina already has a well-tested and validated statewide system for evaluating and supporting teachers (ADEPT) and principals (PADEPP). Public school teachers, principals, and administrators were heavily involved in the development of these systems (for example, see the 2006 ADEPT Steering Committee roster at http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/documents/acknowledgments.pdf).

Following the pending adoption of the enhanced ADEPT and PADEPP guidelines, the ADEPT and PADEPP work groups will network with their respective constituent groups to assist the SCDE in developing the enhanced formal evaluation models for each system. Prior to the beginning of the 2013–14 school year, the SCDE will select a subgroup of school districts from throughout the state to pilot the enhanced ADEPT and PADEPP formal evaluation models. We will collect and analyze data from these pilot projects and use this information to further refine the models. Statewide training on the enhanced formal evaluation models will begin in the summer of 2014, with full implementation anticipated for the 2014–15 school year per the timeline provided in the Plan of Implementation. As the state works to implement the new evaluation system, the SCDE will work with districts to provide a sound transition so that districts thoroughly understand the new evaluation system, implement the proper supports for the system to have its intended impact on instructional practices, and properly use the educator effectiveness ratings generated by the new system to inform personnel decisions. South Carolina will begin using the new educator effectiveness ratings to inform personnel decisions in the 2016–17 school year.

Currently, the SCDE uses several methods to help ensure that school districts follow the prescribed guidelines for evaluating and supporting teachers and principals through ADEPT and PADEPP. To verify the school district's intent to maintain the fidelity of implementation of the teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, South Carolina requires each school district to submit an annual ADEPT plan and PADEPP assurances.

Because both ADEPT and PADEPP are statewide systems, proposed variations to the standard evaluation models and/or support processes are rare. However, if a district does propose any changes, the SCDE's established process requires that the district describe the changes in detail in their ADEPT or PADEPP plan; the SCDE will conduct a comprehensive review of the plan to ensure that the technical criteria for validity, reliability, and maximum freedom from bias have been met and that the district has fully complied with all requirements of the educator evaluation guidelines. The SCDE must approve the district's plan prior to its implementation.

To help ensure adherence to the evaluation system guidelines, districts are required to enter data annually into the ADEPT Data System and the PADEPP Data System. Based on the data reported by the school districts, the SCDE provides annual district and statewide reports to the State Board of Education.

The SCDE maintains ongoing communications with and technical assistance to the districts regarding the evaluation systems, which helps the agency monitor the fidelity of implementation of the ADEPT and PADEPP systems. Although each district is required to assign ADEPT and PADEPP coordinators, and these are the liaisons who most frequently interact with SCDE staff, other stakeholders—including teachers, principals, superintendents, district personnel administrators, and legal counsel—call SCDE staff for assistance on a regular basis. Additionally, the Division of School Effectiveness uses the SCDE website, face-to-face and virtual meetings, and e-mails to communicate information to its stakeholders. The state's evaluator and trainer trainings further support these technical assistance efforts.

The SCDE invites input and feedback and responds to suggestions regarding ways to improve the ADEPT and PADEPP systems on a continual basis. Formal feedback is solicited in response to the annual ADEPT plans and PADEPP assurances, and informal feedback is obtained via the staff's frequent stakeholder contacts. By encouraging this ongoing dialogue, the SCDE seeks to ensure district implementation, not out of mere compliance, but rather through the commitment that these evaluation and support systems hold tremendous potential for promoting the effectiveness of teachers and principals, improving the quality of instruction, and improving education for all students in South Carolina.