PROFILE OF THE SC GRADUATE:
Focus on Building Successful Graduates Through Innovation

Profile of the South Carolina Graduate

World Class Knowledge

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

transformSC
tomorrow won't wait for our students

Approved by SCASA Superintendent's Roundtable and SC Chamber of Commerce

an initiative of **NEW CAROLINA**
SOUTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON COMPETITIVENESS

SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEMBERS
current February 27, 2015

David Whittemore, Easley *(Chair)*
Danny Merck, Easley *(Vice Chair)*
Anne Bull, Lexington
Bob Couch, Columbia
Mike Fair, Greenville
Raye Felder, Fort Mill
Margaret Anne Gaffney, Lexington
Barbara B. Hairfield, Charleston
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R. Wesley Hayes, Jr., Rock Hill
Dwight Loftis, Greenville
Deb Marks, Columbia
John Matthews, Jr., St. Matthews
Joseph H. Neal, Hopkins
Neil Robinson, Charleston
Molly Spearman, Columbia (ex-oficio)
Patti Tate, Rock Hill

Individuals serving on the EOC during 2014:
Philip Bowers, Pickens
Alex Martin, Greenville
Andy Patrick, Hilton Head
J. Roland Smith, Warrenville
John Warner, Greer
Mick Zais, Columbia (ex-oficio)

"Too many kids go beyond the third grade without a critical foundation in place. When that happens, our educational system fails them, and it's high time we stop it." -- Sen. Harvey Peeler, Read to Succeed Legislative Leader

"The measures used to determine how well our children are prepared for the 21st century will require more than just snapshots of how students perform on achievement measures of knowledge within K-12. The system must also account for measures of skills and opportunity, as well as how students perform once they graduate from high school." -- David Whittemore, EOC Chairman

Profile of the SC Graduate
## Building the Foundation for Student Success, Birth to 5

EARLY LITERACY ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

A great deal of the work the EOC has been doing regarding literacy has hinged on a commitment to early literacy. Children with substantially under-developed language and literacy skills should be identified as early as possible and provided with language and literacy supports before their needs become too great. This can be done, but only by well-trained staff implementing proven-effective language and literacy practices. Unfortunately, many existing family literacy, child care, Head Start, and preschool programs have insufficiently trained staff using practices that are less than proven-effective.

READ TO SUCCEED

This landmark education legislation passed by the General Assembly in 2014 hinges on identification of and effective interventions for students who have reading difficulties earlier. As a result of the legislation, an early literacy assessment was procured and school districts were required to administer it within the first 45 days of school for all students in publicly funded 4K and 5K programs.

In February 2014, the EOC released "When the Bough Breaks," a documentary produced by Bud Ferillo at the USC Children's Law Center. Through interviews with experts and practitioners, the video focuses on the importance of language and reading on the brain development of infants, the need for K-12 students to have access to materials and teachers trained in diagnosing and intervening when students have reading difficulties, as well as the role reading has on the economic development of SC.
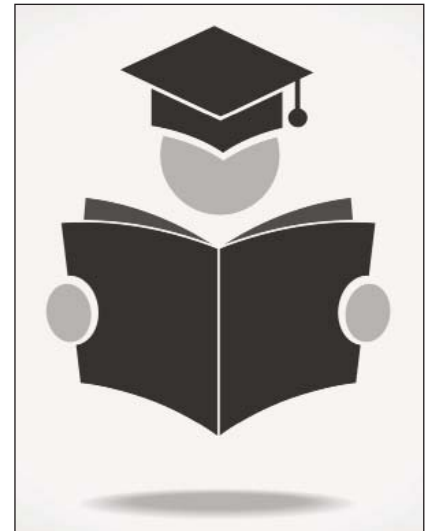
ASSESSEMENT OF EARLY LITERACY

On June 30, 2014, the EOC forwarded the State Board of Education characteristics of an early readiness assessment to measure the early literacy and language development of all four and five year-olds enrolled in a publicly funded program during the first 45 days of the 2014-15 school year (Proviso 1A.76. of the 2014-15 General Appropriation Act). The EOC also advised the General Assembly on how to reallocate existing funds to pay for the statewide assessment.

The kindergarten class of 2014-15 is the first cohort of students who could be retained for being significantly below reading proficiency in the 3rd grade in school year 2017-18.

Last session, the General Assembly enacted the Read to Succeed legislation that addresses the importance of early identification and intervention of struggling readers, of teacher preparation and training, and of parental involvement and community support to systemically improve reading achievement. Furthermore, the General Assembly expanded the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP). Any four-year-old who qualifies for the free or reduced price Federal lunch program and/or Medicaid and who resides in a school district where the poverty index is at least 70 percent or more is eligible to participate in a full-day education program in a public or private center at no cost. The legislature also addressed the importance of a readiness assessment focused on early literacy based on evidence that:

The assessment of emergent literacy skills can serve to identify those children who may be at risk for later reading difficulties. Furthermore, assessment results can guide the content and delivery of early literacy instruction. Failure to identify children early and provide appropriate intervention to promote emergent literacy skills is likely to have serious repercussions for later development of conventional reading skills.

Using a framework that was created by early childhood advocates to evaluate the Child Development Education Pilot Program, the EOC identified key academic and social accomplishments that must be addressed if children are to succeed in kindergarten. Included in these accomplishments are language and literacy skills defined as follows:

Critical language and literacy skills including communication of needs and preferences, listening, receptive and expressive vocabulary, phonological awareness, alphabetic principal and knowledge, print and book knowledge, prewriting and writing skills, and reading comprehension.

The EOC also received input from the following experts:

•   Florida Center for Reading Research at Florida State University;

•   Florida Just Read! Office;

•   Early childhood experts in South Carolina at the school, district, higher education and state levels on the P-20 reading initiative;

•   Institute for Child Success in Greenville; and

•   First Steps to School Readiness Board of Trustees.

Characteristics of a readiness assessment focused on literacy

A readiness assessment administered to children in four-year-old and five-year-old kindergarten which is focused on early language and literacy development should have the following characteristics:

1. The assessment should measure critical language and literacy skills including, but not limited to communication of needs and preferences, listening, receptive and expressive vocabulary, phonological awareness, alphabetic principal and knowledge, print and book knowledge, prewriting and writing skills, and reading comprehension.

2. The assessment must be supported by empirical data or evidence documenting that it measures these critical language and literacy skills and that these competencies are predictive of later reading and writing success.

3. The assessment should provide student-level results that can be used to inform individual literacy instruction by teachers.

4. The assessment should provide student-level results that can assist parents or guardians in providing appropriate support to assist their child's language development.

5. The assessment should be able to measure student growth from one year to the next, from 4K to 5K, at a minimum.

6. The assessment should provide accommodations for children with disabilities and children who are English language learners.

7. The assessment should give timely, student-level feedback and reports to parents, teachers, schools and the state.

8. The assessment should demonstrate alignment with South Carolina English language arts standards.

9. The assessment should have a well-documented and detailed description of its development and history, including what states use the assessment to guarantee the assessment's reliability and validity.

10. The assessment should be curriculum neutral and therefore not require the use of any specific early childhood curriculum in the publicly funded prekindergarten or public kindergarten programs.

In addition, based upon the input received, the EOC also recommended to the State Board of Education that vendors responding to the request for proposal be asked to:
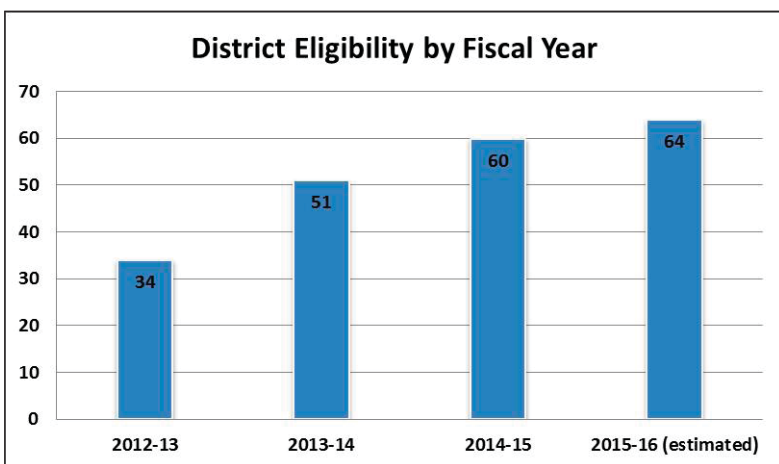
• Document the specific components of the assessment, including but not limited to, print awareness and orientation, verbal communication, picture and letter recognition, ability to tell a story, beginning of proper oral word use and sentence structure, alphabetic principle and knowledge, prewriting and writing/pretend, listening/story recall and vocabulary;

• Document the amount of ongoing professional development that can be provided to schools and districts; and

• Document the amount of time that will be required to administer the assessment so that the assessment is respectful of classroom teachers' time and needs for professional development.

2

The Executive Director of the Budget and Control Board then procured for the Department of Education by emergency procurement the assessment CIRCLE by Amplify. All four and five-year-olds in public schools in South Carolina and four-year-olds enrolled in the Child Development Education Pilot Program in both public schools and private centers were administered the assessment in fall of 2014.

REPORT OF PUBLICLY FUNDED 4K PROGRAM ISSUED

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) released a report in January 2015 evaluating the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP), a full-day educational pre-kindergarten program for at-risk four-year-olds. The program, which was written into permanent law as the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program last legislative session, began in 2006 as a pilot program for children residing in the plaintiff districts in the school funding lawsuit, Abbeville County School District et al. vs. SC. The program is implemented in both public and private centers across the state.

According to the report, at-risk four-year-olds residing in 60 school districts are currently eligible to enroll in a program in either a public school or in a private child care center, a significant increase from the 34 eligible school districts in fiscal year 2012-13. The expansion in accessibility comes as a result of the S.C. General Assembly expanding the eligibility criteria in Fiscal year 2013-14 to include districts with a poverty index of 75 percent or more. In fiscal year 2014-15, the General Assembly further expanded the eligibility criteria to include districts with a poverty index of 70 percent or higher. The General Assembly currently funds the full-day, 4K program at $75 million.

District Eligibility by Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year	Number
2012-13	34
2013-14	51
2014-15	60
2015-16 (estimated)	64

The report found that 46 percent of all at-risk four-year-olds statewide are now being served in a publicly funded program, a percentage that also includes children being served by federally funded ABC voucher programs as well as Head Start.

A majority, 86%, of the approximately 12,000 students being served by CDEPP in school year 2014-15, 86 percent, are being served in public schools in 57 school districts. Three CDEPP eligible school districts -- Barnwell 45, Horry, and Union -- chose not to participate in CDEPP during 2014-15. Approximately 144 private providers serve the other 14 percent of students statewide in the program, including students in the eligible, non-participating school districts.

While access to the program has significantly expanded, an analysis of the academic achievement of students participating in the program shows modest improvement in student achievement. While a greater percentage of CDEPP students met or exceeded state standards in ELA and mathematics than did low-income students who resided in the CDEPP districts but who did not participate in the program as four-year-olds, the statewide achievement gap between CDEPP students and all other students in the state is not narrowing, most notably in mathematics.
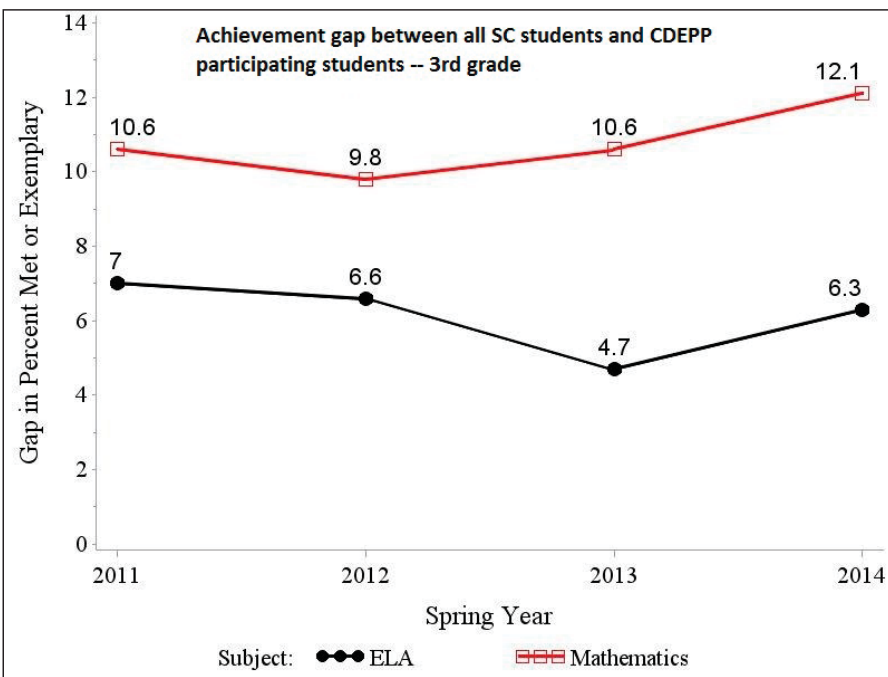
A follow-up report will be published in mid-2015 to document the initial results of the recently-implemented CIRCLE assessment, which measures early literacy skills.

Achievement gap between all SC students and CDEPP participating students -- 3rd grade

Gap in Percent Met or Exemplary vs. Spring Year

Spring Year	ELA	Mathematics
2011	7	10.6
2012	6.6	9.8
2013	4.7	10.6
2014	6.3	12.1

Subject: ELA, Mathematics

Eight recommendations are included in the report, which was sent to members of the SC General Assembly. The recommendations follow:

1. While expansion in the state-funded full-day 4K program has occurred, a more integrated, focused effort to leverage existing 4K program opportunities and enhance the quality of current 4K programs opportunities needs to be considered.

2. Statewide, the number of four-year-olds participating in Head Start declined from 6,364 in 2013 to 5,975 in 2014. Consequently, at the state and local levels greater collaboration between the Office of First Steps, the South Carolina Department of Education and the Head Start Collaboration Office must occur to ensure that parents have all relevant information to determine if and which 4K program best serves the individual needs of their children. The evaluation team would recommend all three 4K providers develop a joint, consolidated community outreach strategy that encourages families of students at-risk of school failure to enroll in voluntary full-day quality 4K programs. An example of such collaboration would be the joint publication and distribution of a brochure for families to use in understanding the program and in choosing a provider of services.

3. The evaluation team could not find any statutory authority allowing the expenditure of funds for "advance payments" by the State Office of SC First Steps. To maintain fiscal accountability for the funds appropriated and expended for the program, the evaluation team recommends that the Office of First Steps cease making advance payments and only reimburse for actual services provided.

4. Advancements in quality and improvements in young students' readiness should be incentivized, utilizing assessment data (for example: individual student growth, classroom environment, teacher:child interaction). At a minimum any private provider participating in state-funded full-day 4K should be required to participate in ABC Quality, a program administered by SC DSS.

5. The Office of First Steps carried forward $4.0 million in FY2013-14 and is projected to carry forward an additional $5.0 million in the current fiscal year. No additional funds should be appropriated to the Office of First Steps for the program, even with the addition of four districts that will be eligible to participate in FY2015-16. Instead, the General Assembly should reduce the full-day 4K appropriation to the Office of First Steps by at least $2.0 million and reallocate those funds to the South Carolina Department of Education. Public schools are serving 86 percent of the four-year-olds in the program but received 73 percent of the total funds appropriated for the program in FY2014-15. South Carolina should invest in improving the quality of CDEPP by addressing staff qualifications, implementation of formal, systematic continuous improvement initiatives with ongoing program monitoring. Program monitoring should include frequent assessments of the classroom environment, including the quality of teacher-child interactions. The evaluation team would point to the school district of Florence 1 as a model.

6. Based upon analysis of SC PASS results, specific attention to the professional development and training of CDEPP teachers in math must be enhanced.

7. When the results of the fall 2014 CIRCLE assessment can be analyzed, the data should be used to reinforce individualized instruction that meets the needs of each CDEPP student in 4K, 5K, 1st and 2nd grades, especially to prepare all students to be on reading level by 3rd grade.

Opportunity for Success Through Innovation

The Reach Out and Read program works to prepare students to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Doctors, nurse practitioners, and other medical professionals incorporate Reach Out and Read's evidence-based model into regular pediatric checkups. The evidence base of 15 peer-reviewed research studies shows that during the preschool years, children served by Reach Out and Read score three to six months ahead of their non-Reach Out and Read peers on vocabulary tests.

In its 2015-16 budget recommendations, the EOC was supportive of a new, one-time appropriation of $500,000 to the Reach Out and Read Carolinas program for early literacy. The program, which provides literacy training to medical professionals who treat families of young children, will match the one-time appropriation and focus their efforts on high-poverty, rural areas of SC if funded.

Profile of the SC Graduate
Building K-12 Student Success

2014 SCHOOL AND DISTRICT REPORT CARD RELEASE

In November, the results of the 14th annual state district and school report cards were released, showing improvement among schools and districts. Forty-two school districts received a rating of *Excellent* in 2014, compared to only one in 2009. The increase in ratings is consistent with a statewide increase in the on-time graduation rate from 77.5% to 80.1%. The on-time graduation rate accounts for 40 percent of the district's Absolute Rating on the state report card. However, three school districts received an Absolute Rating of *At Risk*.

SC On-Time Graduation Rate, 2009-2014

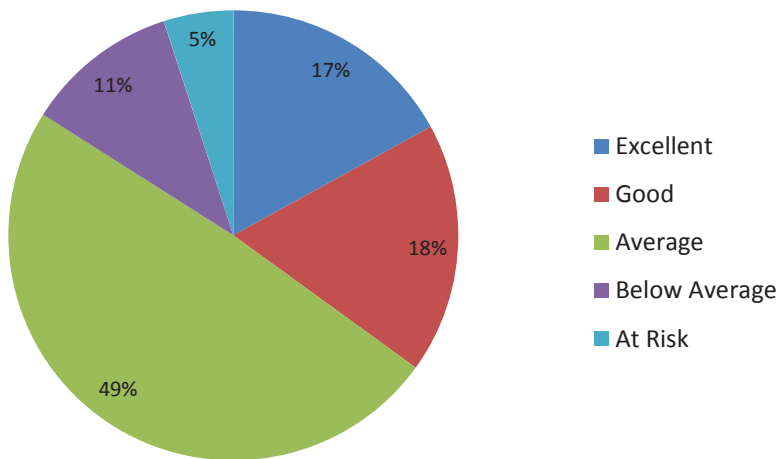| 2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
80.1%	77.5%	74.9%	73.6%	72.1%	73.7%

2020 Goal: 88.3%

The percentage of students scoring *Exemplary* on SC PASS increased in the majority of grade levels and content areas, which was a factor in the improvements seen in elementary and middle school ratings.
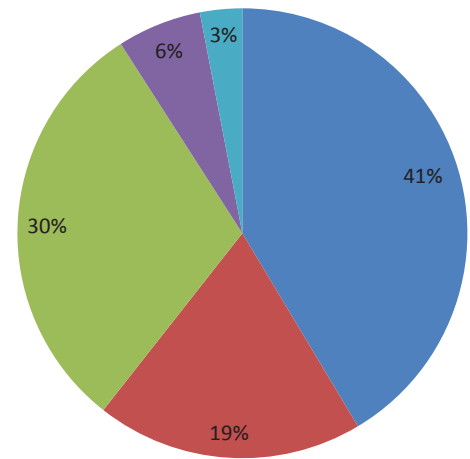
Grade	Content Area	% Met or Above		Difference	% Exemplary		Difference
		2014	2013		2014	2013	
3rd	Writing	78.1	70.3	+7.8	46.7	37.0	+9.7
	Reading & Research	78.9	82.9	-4.0	55.1	57.5	-2.4
	Mathematics	71.6	69.8	+1.8	45.6	42.0	+3.6
	Science	63.5	67.8	-4.3	26.1	23.1	+3.0
	Social Studies	77.2	79.8	-2.6	34.6	34.9	-0.3
4th	Writing	77.1	74.4	+2.7	38.8	31.6	+7.2
	Reading & Research	76.6	79.0	-2.4	42.2	40.7	+1.5
	Mathematics	75.4	79.8	-4.4	38.6	40.0	-1.4
	Science	69.9	73.1	-3.2	17.7	19.5	-1.8
	Social Studies	83.7	81.8	+1.9	36.9	36.2	+0.7
5th	Writing	80.8	74.5	+6.3	40.8	33.7	+7.1
	Reading & Research	80.1	82.0	-1.9	36.5	38.3	-1.8
	Mathematics	75.5	76.3	-0.8	40.3	37.0	+3.3
	Science	68.4	73.0	-4.6	21.8	17.1	+4.7
	Social Studies	72.0	71.7	+0.3	35.7	35.3	+0.4
6th	Writing	74.3	74.7	-0.4	32.0	31.1	+0.9
	Reading & Research	69.3	74.4	-5.1	40.4	35.9	+4.5
	Mathematics	67.7	71.3	-3.6	29.6	30.9	-1.3
	Science	65.7	68.4	-2.7	19.5	16.8	+2.7
	Social Studies	79.3	78.0	+1.3	30.5	30.6	-0.1
7th	Writing	73.7	76.6	-2.9	36.1	34.4	+1.7
	Reading & Research	68.1	73.2	-5.1	37.8	36.8	-1.0
	Mathematics	69.1	68.3	+0.8	33.4	31.8	+1.6
	Science	73.5	75.5	-2.0	31.0	27.7	+3.3
	Social Studies	67.4	68.3	-0.9	37.9	37.1	+0.8
8th	Writing	72.4	75.7	-3.3	35.2	33.0	+2.2
	Reading & Research	67.3	67.4	-0.1	37.4	36.5	+0.9
	Mathematics	69.6	70.2	-0.6	26.4	25.8	+0.6
	Science	69.2	71.1	-1.9	31.0	31.4	-0.4
	Social Studies	70.1	71.3	-1.2	41.0	40.1	+0.9

Forty-one percent of students were enrolled in a school rated *Excellent* in 2014, compared to 17 percent of students in 2009. The percentage of students enrolled in a school rated *At Risk* has declined from 5 percent to 3 percent.

Percent of Students Enrolled in Schools by Report Card Rating, 2009

- Excellent: 17%
- Good: 18%
- Average: 49%
- Below Average: 11%
- At Risk: 5%

Percent of Students Enrolled in Schools by Report Card Rating, 2014

- Excellent: 41%
- Good: 19%
- Average: 30%
- Below Average: 6%
- At Risk: 3%

Legend:
- ■ Excellent
- ■ Good
- ■ Average
- ■ Below Average
- ■ At Risk

The November state report card release marked the end of state ratings for two years as the state prepares for a combined state and federal report card. The "hiatus" for state school and district report card results occurs as a result of Act 200, legislation that passed the SC General Assembly last session.

SUMMER READING CAMP PILOT STUDY

In October, the EOC released a report on a study of 20 school districts who participated in a pilot study of summer reading camps in 2014. Act 284, or the Read to Succeed Act, requires all school districts to serve students who are in significant need of intervention during their third grade year beginning Summer 2015. The pilot study involved districts submitting data regarding demographics and reading growth results in the camp in addition to EOC staff observations. Third grade students who participated in the Summer Reading Camp were initially on average 1.7 years below grade level. Upon completion of the camp, these students were 1.3 years behind in reading. Third grade students averaged approximately three weeks of growth for each week of instruction during Summer Reading Camp.

The results of 3.7 months average growth for 3rd graders was below the expected growth of 4 months. However, the rule of thumb approximates it takes five hours in two weeks of additional intervention instruction to achieve one month's growth.

Of the 2014 SC PASS scores provided by districts for the 2014 summer reading camp students, 31% scored Not Met 1 on SC PASS (lowest level) and 53% scored Not Met 2. A total of 85% of the students in the summer reading camp scored below the Met level in reading.

Summer Reading Camp 2014
End-of-Program Data Summary

GRADE LEVEL DATA				
GRADE LEVEL	STUDENTS ENROLLED	AVG. ENTRANCE GRADE LEVEL EQUIVALENT (Beginning of Summer Reading Camp)		AVG. GROWTH
Kindergarten	37	.71	- .29 year	+ .26 year
First Grade	53	1.64	-.36 year	+ .15 year
Second Grade	55	2.34	-.66 year	+ .25 year
Third Grade	353	2.33	-1.67 years	+ .37 year
OVERALL PROGRAM	498			+ . 35 year

Districts in the pilot study that produced student reading growth gains above the pilot average implemented their camps in different ways, using varying curriculum, progress monitoring tools, as well as structuring the camps differently. However attributes that appeared to be similar for districts with student reading growth above the pilot average were: *highly effective teachers in the program; a focused, intensive approach to teaching and learning; strong community/business partnerships; effective utilization of all staff in the program; engaging, motivating lessons by the teachers; and a strong process for effective progress monitoring of student growth.*
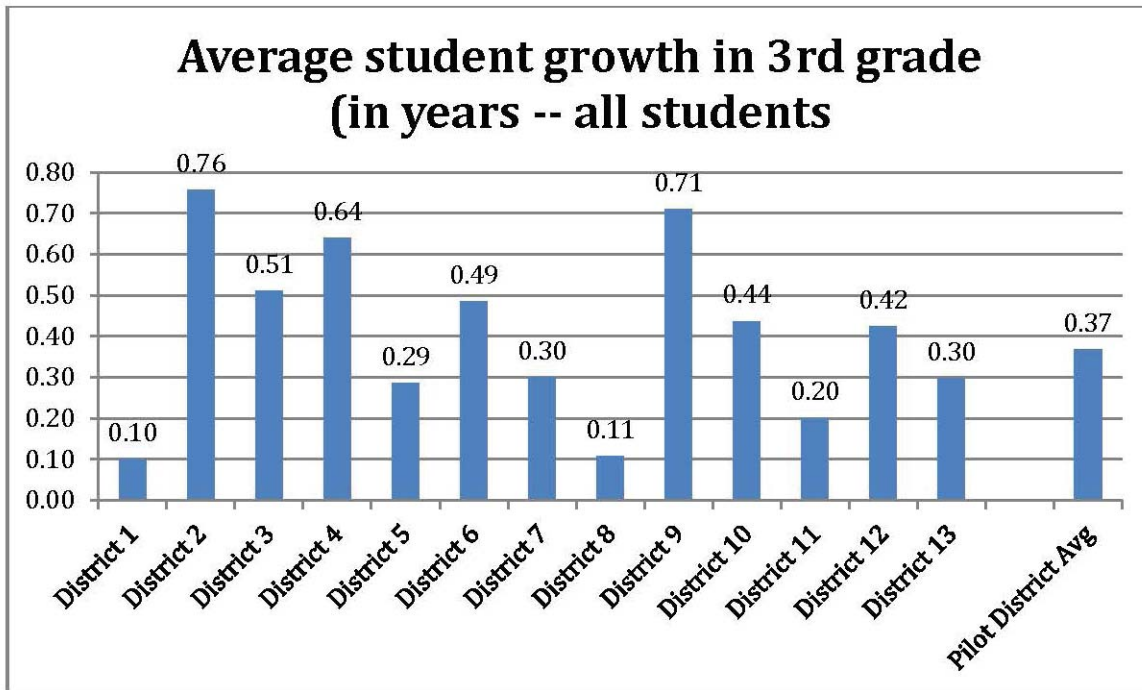

Figure 1. Data demonstrates the growth of **3rd grade** student (all students) reading district and the pilot districts average.

EDUCATIONAL CREDIT FOR EXCEPTIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS

The General Assembly requires the EOC to publish on its website the private or independent schools and nonprofit scholarship funding organizations eligible to participate in the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children (ECENC) program. A nonprofit scholarship funding organization can award grants up to $10,000 to cover the cost of tuition, transportation and textbooks to "exceptional needs students" attending eligible, independent schools in South Carolina. The nonprofit scholarship funding organizations receives donations from individuals or corporations. These donations are in turn, eligible for South Carolina income tax credits, up to a maximum of $8.0 million for Fiscal Year 2013-14 if the donations were made on or after January 1, 2014 and $8.0 million in Fiscal Year 2014-15.

To provide additional information to the public and policymakers, the EOC on July 21, 2014 wrote a letter to the five nonprofit funding scholarship organizations asking for the following information for the time period of July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014:

- Total dollar amount of revenues collected
- Total number of individual and corporate donors
- Total number of applications received
- Total number of applications approved

Revenues Collected and Awarded (Fiscal Year 2013-14)

Nonprofit Scholarship Funding Organizations	Total Revenues Collected	Number of Individual and Corporate Donors	Total Amount of Grants Awarded	Any Revenue Obligated for Scholarships
Advance Carolina	$78,870	23	$75,250	$0
Donors Enriching Students' Knowledge (D.E.S.K.)	$32,000	4	$10,000	$0
Palmetto Kids FIRST[1]	$4,700,000	340	$2,300,000	$0
South Carolina Corporate Coalition for Community Service	$0			
St. Thomas Aquinas	$1,194,202	158	$1,150,207	$0
TOTAL	$6,005,072	525	$3,535,457	$0

- Total number of applications denied
- Total number of eligible children awarded grants. "Awarded" is defined as checks being issued on or before June 30, 2014, or similarly, funds allocated or expended for grants by the nonprofit scholarship funding organization for specific individual students
- Total dollar amount of grants awarded and/or allocated
- Total number of eligible schools in which the eligible children were enrolled
- Of any balance of revenues/contributions as of June 30, 2014, what is the total amount of these revenues/contributions that are already obligated to eligible children who have applied for and been approved a grant for the 2014-15 school year?
- If you like to provide any information on the criteria used in approving or denying applications, the EOC would be interested in having the information.
- If you would like to share any information on the applicants (e.g. gender, ethnicity, or educational needs) but without providing personally identifiable information, the EOC would be interesting in having such data.

Applications and Awards (Fiscal Year 2013-14)

Nonprofit Scholarship Funding Organizations	Number of Applications Received	Number of Applications Approved	Number of Applications Denied	Number of Children Awarded Grants	Number of Eligible Schools
Advance Carolina	79	79	0	22	12
Donors Enriching Students' Knowledge (D.E.S.K.)	3	2	1	2	2
Palmetto Kids FIRST	300	300	0	300	16
South Carolina Corporate Coalition for Community Service	--	--	--	--	3
St. Thomas Aquinas	81	81	0	81	18
TOTAL	463	462	1	405	51

Note: Palmetto Kids FIRST Data are approximate dollar amounts. As reported by Palmetto Kids FIRST, these "figures may be adjusted slightly upon final CPA audit." In addition, Palmetto Kids FIRST reported that less than $133,000 was retained for expenses and fees. And, "of the $2.3 million available at the end of the fiscal year, 100% had been awarded in 2014-15 for grants as of August 5, 2014."

- Donors Enriching Students' Knowledge (D.E.S.K.) explained that one application was denied due to the child not having documentation as being identified as eligible for special education services. In 2013-14 students making application for grants had to have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) issued by a public school district verifying that the child was eligible for special education services. In school year 2014-15 the proviso governing the program was changed to allow children diagnosed by a private provider as needing specialized instruction and services to be eligible for the program as well.

- South Carolina Corporate Coalition for Community Service explained that the Coalition's "interest over the last year has been to educate parents regarding the opportunities for the Scholarships. As such our method has been more methodical and grassroots in nature as we try not to rush children into the program but allow a natural interest of the program through education and awareness that provides parents with the most up to date and thorough information possible."

The EOC also asked the nonprofit scholarship funding organizations for information about the criteria used in making the grants and demographic information on the grant recipients. The responses appear below:

- Advance Carolina reported that a committee of three individuals makes the final determination. These individuals have no connections to the eligible schools receiving the grants and no children eligible for the grant.

- Donors Enriching Students' Knowledge (D.E.S.K.) reported that it "looks at the family's financial ability and the severity of the student's disability as criteria for a scholarship. DESK prioritizes applicants with the severest educational and financial needs." An independent panel composed of a former special needs public school teacher of the year and a former deputy superintendent at the South Carolina Department of Education and others review and award the scholarships.

- Palmetto Kids FIRST reported that it "does not collect financial data, but coordinate(s) based on a cooperative 'honor system' with our partnered schools to help families in need first. However, our goal is to fund 100% of our eligible 'special needs' applicants. We believe families of 'special needs' children have extensive medical, personal, time and financial burdens out of just school tuition."

- St. Thomas Aquinas reported that enough funds were collected "to provide a scholarship to 100% of the applicants at a rate of 90%. In the future, if funding is constrained, we would apply a means test to determine which students were to receive scholarships to a greater extent than others. We would use the company FACTS that already has a contract with our diocesan schools." St. Thomas Aquinas also reported the following demographic information. Of the 81 applicants

  o 19.7% were minority

  o 33% were female

  o 67% were male

Fiscal Year 2014-15

The General Assembly reauthorized the ECENC Program in the 2014-15 General Appropriation Act through Proviso 1.80. Regarding implementation of the program in Fiscal Year 2014-15, the Education Oversight Committee reports that as of February 1, 2015:

- Ninety-eight schools are eligible to participate in the program. Two schools have been denied participating. One school did not provide the general education program as required by the proviso. The other school was not a member in good standing with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools or the South Carolina Independent School Association.

- An Advisory Committee was selected and has met on two occasions. The Committee has recommended: (1) school compliance audits for schools to complete and submit to the Department of Revenue and to the Secretary of State; and (2) the data and format for academic profiles. Each eligible school participating in the program must submit information to the EOC on student assessments and other information that will then be downloaded into an online, academic profile.

Policy and budget recommendations

In December, EOC members adopted budget recommendations for the 2015-16 fiscal year. The programmatic and funding recommendations were designed to accelerate improvements in student and school performance by better preparing students for success in careers or in postsecondary education.

Committee members annually make recommendations for the spending of Education Improvement Act (EIA) funds, which are generated by the penny sales tax. In November, the Board of Economic Advisors projected that the EIA will generate $677 million in total revenues in fiscal year 2015-16, an increase of $29.2 million from the current base funding.

Highlights of the recommendations, which were sent to the General Assembly and the Governor for consideration during next year's legislative session, include:

Technology

• The committee recommended continued funding of $29.3 million for technology, currently funded with lottery monies, as well as an increase of $2.1 million for the K-12 Technology Initiative. The recommended increase is due to the increased bandwidth requirements in school districts and county libraries as well as changes in federal technology funding. There continues to be a need to provide high-capacity wireless access points in schools to handle the expansion of wireless devices currently used to instruct and assess students.

Student College and Career Readiness:

• Funding for new assessments as well as print and digital instructional materials.

• The committee recommended an increase of $4.2 million to cover the cost of the ACT, the college and career readiness test, and WorkKeys, assessments which will be given to all 11th graders beginning this school year. The increase will also cover the cost of ACT Aspire, an assessment that will be given to students in grades 3-8. The committee agreed that any balance of EIA recurring and non-recurring funds should be allocated to fund instructional materials, both print and digital.

• Additionally, the EOC recommended an increase of $2.0 million for modernization of vocational equipment, a recommendation which came forward from the SC Department of Education.

Early Childhood Support

• Funding additional students in full-day 4K programs as well as appropriate $500,000 to Reach Out and Read Carolinas.

• The committee found that an increase of $4.0 million will be necessary to fund additional districts for the full-day, 4K program for students at risk for school failure in districts that now have a poverty index of 70% or higher.

Educator Support

• Increase funding for teacher supplies.

• Recognizing that many teachers use personal funds to provide supplies for their classrooms and students, the committee recommended an increase of $1.3 million to increase the teacher supply allocation to $300 per eligible teacher, an increase from the current $250 allocation.

Opportunity for Success Through Innovation

In January 2015, school districts received an invitation to apply for the SC Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program, a matching grants program designed to encourage sustainable partnerships among South Carolina school districts and community groups. Proviso 1.94 of the 2014-15 General Appropriation Act created the program, which is focused on "state-of-the-art education initiatives and models to improve students learning."

"When there is community support of school initiatives, you often see a positive impact on student motivation and learning," said Dr. Allison Jacques, Assistant Dean for Assessment at the University of South Carolina School of Education and chair of the seven-member grants committee. "We hope to be able to share many innovative ideas following the grant awards, particularly in high-poverty communities where it can be difficult to find community support."

Grant applications, which must include matching financial support, cannot exceed $250,000 unless the grants committee finds that exceptional circumstances warrant exceeding that amount. It is expected that funded grants will be announced in late March 2015.

SC Community Block Grants for EDUCATION

2013 Parent Survey

Since 2002 the SCDE has administered the parent survey to a sample of parents whose children attended public schools in South Carolina. From its inception, the parent survey contains items regarding parent perceptions of the learning environment in the school, home-school relations, and the social and physical environment of the school. Additional questions document characteristics of the parents and the children of the parents responding to the survey. Five new items are present in the 2013 Parent Survey, created by the State Department of Education. Two of these items collect information about the effectiveness of a child's teacher and a child's principal. One item addresses parent perceptions of the personalized learning experience of their child. Two items obtain information regarding whether parents have read the state and federal report cards for the school and district their child attends.

Annually, the EOC has analyzed the results of the parent survey and issued reports.

2013 Survey Responses: In 2013 the number of parent surveys completed and returned totaled 66,787, a decline of 2,793 surveys or 4.0 percent from the prior year.

An analysis of the respondents to the 2013 parent survey concluded that the survey responses typically overrepresented the perceptions of parents who had children in elementary schools and underrepresented the perceptions of parents who had children in high school. Furthermore, the respondents typically obtained higher educational achievements and had greater median household incomes than the general population of South Carolina. As in prior years, the "typical" parent responding to the survey was a white female having attended or graduated from college and having a household income of greater than $35,000. Furthermore, when compared to the enrollment of students in public schools, parents of African American students were underrepresented in the responses.

The data documented that the parent survey responses were generally representative, within four percentage points, of the percentage of students enrolled in schools by their Absolute Rating. Nine percent of the parents who responded to the survey had children attending schools with an Absolute Rating of *Below Average* or *At Risk*, the same percentage as students enrolled in a school with an Absolute Rating of *Below Average* or *At Risk* in school year 2012-13. On the other hand, 61 percent of the parents who responded to the survey had children attending schools with an Absolute Rating of *Good* or *Excellent*, compared to 60 percent of children who were enrolled in a school with an Absolute Rating of *Good* or *Excellent* in school year 2012-13.

Despite a 4.0 percent decline in the number of parents responding to the annual parent survey, the results of the 2013 parent survey demonstrate that parent satisfaction levels with the three characteristics measured - the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child's school—were consistent with the prior year's results.

Percentage of Parents Satisfied with

Characteristic	2013	2012	2011	2010	Difference between 2013 and 2012
Learning Environment	87.0	87.2	84.3	85.9	(0.2)
Home and School Relations	83.3	82.9	80.2	81.9	0.4
Social and Physical Environment	84.3	84.1	82.4	83.2	0.2

Standards Review

Pursuant to Act 200 of 2014, passed by the SC General Assembly, the EOC is to consult with the State Board of Education and conduct a cyclical review of the current standards. According to state law, the review must begin on or before January 1, 2015, and the new college and career readiness state content standards must be implemented for the 2015-2016 school year. The following timeline outlines the EOC's involvement in the process:

South Carolina Academic Standards for English/Language Arts and Mathematics Review Timeline

Date	Description of Activity
July 10, 2014	Notified Governor and General Assembly of initiation of cyclical review per Act 200. Asked for nominations of individuals to serve on panels to review current standards
July 11, 2014	Launched website for Academic Standards Review Survey (link sent to district superintendents, PIOs, media outlets, ETV, higher education and business contacts)
July 2014	Solicited recommendations for EOC Academic Standards Review Panels from district superintendents, instructional leaders, business/community leaders, higher education contacts, EOC members, State Board members, and TransformSC leadership
August 2014	Selected and notified Academic Standards Review Panel members for EOC
September 30, 2014	Academic Standards Review Survey website closed
October 2, 2014 October 28, 2014 November 6, 2014 November 12, 2014 November 24, 2014	ELA and Math Academic Standards Review Panels reviewed draft standards submitted by SCDE Writing Panels evaluating them for comprehensiveness, rigor, and organization/communication. Resources used during evaluation included current state standards, results of statewide survey of current standards, quality standards from other states, as well as other resources.
December 1, 2014	EOC Evaluation Teams presented standards review and survey results to EOC Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee
December 15, 2014	EOC Evaluation Teams presented standards review to full EOC; report and recommendations transmitted to SCDE
January 6, 2015	Representatives from ELA EOC Evaluation Panel and SCDE ELA Writing Team met to revise draft of ELA standards
January 7, 2015 January 13, 2015	Representatives from Math Evaluation Panel and SCDE Math Writing Team met to revise draft of Math standards
January 21, 2015	State Board of Education gave first reading approval to new ELA standards.
February 12, 2015	CHE Advisory Committee on Academic Programs to receive standards from SCDE. Group to determine college- and career-readiness of standards
March 2015 TBD	ASA and full EOC to meet to consider approval of new ELA and Math standards
March 11, 2015	Anticipated State Board of Education second reading consideration of new standards

Profile of the SC Graduate
Building Post-secondary Success

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS DATA

As part of its release of SC's progress toward reaching the 2020 Vision, the EOC compiles and publishes data related to the SAT, ACT, and Advanced Placement participation and passage.

SAT, 2009-2014*

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Average Composite Score Reading & Math	982	979	972	969	971	978
Rank among States	48th	48th	48th	48th	46th	46th

ACT, 2009-2014*

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Average Composite Score	19.8	20.0	20.1	20.2	20.4	20.4
Rank among States	46th	43rd	42nd	43rd	39th	40th

*maximum score in SAT Reading and Math: 1600; ACT maximum score: 36

The composite score on ACT is the average of the performance on four ACT Subject tests: English, Reading, Math, and Science.

Advanced Placement (AP) Participation, 2008-2012

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
% of Students who took an AP Exam in High School	23.1%	26.0%	26.8%	28.6%	30.5%
Rank among states *	22nd	20th	20th	20th	22nd

* Rank is determined in a comparison of AP participation rates among all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Advanced Placement (AP) Passage, 2008-2012

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
% of Students in graduating class scoring a 3 or higher on AP exam	13.8%	14.8%	15.1%	16.5%	18.0%
Rank among states*	21st	21st	22nd	21st	21st

*Rank is determined in a comparison of AP passage rates among all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Opportunity for Success Through Innovation

Communicating important information isn't innovative. However, in the Summer of 2014, the EOC, along with TranformSC leadership, recognized the urgent need to get information out to students and families about upcoming changes in assessment. With the assistance of education partners and ACT, information publications were produced by the EOC about WorkKeys and The ACT, assessments every 11th grader will take beginning in 2015. The information flyers were used by districts to communicate information to students and parents about why these tests were important to student success now and in the future.

The ACT
Changes in 11th Grade Testing: Information for Students and Families

This school year marks the beginning of important changes in state testing for all 11th graders in South Carolina. The High School Assessment Program (HSAP) will no longer be given. Instead, students in 11th grade will take two assessments: The ACT, a college and career readiness assessment and WorkKeys®, which measures essential workforce skills.

What is The ACT?
The ACT test is a college entrance exam covering English, reading, math, and science, and writing. It measures what students have learned in high school coursework. The ACT includes 215 multiple-choice questions and takes approximately 4 hours to complete, including a short break. Actual testing time is 3 hours and 25 minutes. The Writing portion of the test, which is included in the testing time total, is 30 minutes.

Who will take the ACT in 2015 and when will it be administered?
Students who entered ninth grade in school year 2012-13 will take the ACT this year. The English, Math, Reading, and Science tests will be administered on Tuesday, April 28, 2015.

Why is every 11th grader taking the test this year?
The S.C. General Assembly passed legislation in 2014 requiring that all 11th grade students take WorkKeys® as well as an assessment that measures college readiness. The ACT was chosen as a result of a state procurement. These assessments measure how well prepared students are for coursework in two- and four-year colleges as well for the jobs available in today's workforce. If your child has documented disabilities requiring testing accommodations, you should be in communication with your child's school about testing options.

One of the benefits of the legislation is that the state now covers the cost of the administration of the ACT assessment in 11th grade, a current savings of $54.50.

What are the benefits of taking the ACT and should students not planning on going to college to their best on the ACT?
There are many benefits to taking the ACT! The ACT is accepted by all four-year colleges and universities in the United States as well as all of South Carolina's two-year colleges. By taking the ACT, students make themselves visible to colleges and scholarship agencies. Scores can also be used to qualify for SC's Life and Palmetto Fellows Scholarships. Students can send their scores to up to four colleges if they choose to do so.

And, a student needs to do his or her best on the ACT because the results may provide more choices for the future. A student may discover that he or she has the skills and knowledge to pursue a certificate, associate's or four-year degree. Just having the information will help plan for the future. Once a person starts working, they may decide that they want or need a four-year degree, associate's degree or industry credential to move up. Even if a student does not immediately enter college upon graduation, their ACT score is valid for up to five years.

CHANGES IN 11TH GRADE STATE TESTING
Information for Students and Parents

This school year marks the beginning of important changes in state testing for all 11th graders in South Carolina. For the first time, the High School Assessment Program (HSAP) will no longer be given. Instead, students in 11th grade will take two assessments — The ACT, a college and career readiness assessment and WorkKeys®, which measures essential workforce skills.

What are the benefits of taking a workforce skills assessment like WorkKeys®?
There are many benefits!
- Successful completion of WorkKeys® can earn an 11th grader a National Career Readiness Certificate, which will help with finding summer and part-time jobs as well as internships. In South Carolina alone, over 1,500 employers recognize the certificate.
- National companies and industries also use WorkKeys® certificates in hiring. South Carolina will document the skill levels of our state's workforce and in turn, recruit more jobs that will be available to all students, including those graduating from a two or four-year college.
- A financial or personal crisis can occur and delay college plans. Having a WorkKeys® certificate can immediately open doors for jobs.

But, my child has never taken career and technical education courses. Will he or she be prepared for WorkKeys®?
The WorkKeys® assessment measures "real world" skills that employers believe are critical to job success. Test questions are based on situations in the everyday work world. There are three parts of the assessment:
1. **Applied Mathematics** – Applying mathematical reasoning, critical thinking and problem-solving to work-related problems from making change to plotting a patient's temperature readings
2. **Reading for Information** – Reading and using written texts like letters, directions, signs, notices, policies and regulations in a job
3. **Locating Information** – Using graphics like charts, graphs and tables to find information

11th graders should be prepared for the test no matter which courses were taken in high school. Students who need assistance should have the opportunity to utilize Career Ready 101, a preparatory course, this Fall.

What does a WorkKeys® score mean?
On each of the three assessments (Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information and Locating Information), a student receives a score of Level 3 through Level 7, with Level 7 being the highest possible score. Depending upon the **minimum** score received on all three assessments, the student may earn one of four National Career Readiness Certificates — Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze.

Lowest Minimum Score on All Three Assessments:	Qualifies for the Following National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)	% of NCRC Qualifiers by Certificate in U.S. (2006-2011)	Qualifier Has Skills for the Following % of Jobs in U.S.
3	Bronze	21%	30%
4	Silver	49%	65%
5	Gold	19%	90%
6	Platinum	1%	99%

Source: The Condition of Work Readiness in the United States, 2013.
<http://www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/ConditionWorkReadiness.pdf>.

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