

Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000

SOUTH CAROLINA

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State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.

PACT (The Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests) is a rigorous new testing program designed to measure the achievement levels of South Carolina students. It is replacing the Basic Skills Assessment Program (**BSAP**) which is almost 20 years old and only measures the ability of students to meet minimum achievement levels.

2. What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)* The **PACT** system is replacing the BSAP and Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Seventh Edition (MAT7). The new norm-referenced assessment administered in South Carolina is the **TerraNova**.
- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested* (Many of these assessments are being phased in; please refer to question 8 of this section for implementation schedule)
 - Readiness Test administered in Kindergarten and Grade 1 to assess readiness for Grades 1 and 2.

- Grade 3 – 8: PACT end-of-year tests: mathematics, reading/English language arts, science, and social studies.
 - Grade 10: PACT Exit Exam: mathematics, reading/English language arts, science, social studies. End-of-course tests: mathematics, reading/English language arts, science, social studies
 - Grade 11, 12: End-of-course tests: mathematics, reading/English language arts, science, social studies. PACT Exit Exam: retake parts not passed.
 - TerraNova is administered to varying grades each year: grades 3, 6, and 9 in 1999; grades 5, 8, and 11 in 2000, scheduled for 4, 7, and 10 in 2001. Tested subjects are: Reading, Language, and Math.
- *Norm or Criterion Referenced* The PACT tests are criterion-referenced, the norm-referenced test is TerraNova.
 - *Matrix or Census Testing* The TerraNova assessment is administered to a sample of students; all other tests are census.
 - *Item Types (including proportions if available via Internet or interview) such as: traditional or enhanced multiple choice, performance tasks, open-ended questions, portfolios, essays, etc.* The PACT tests include both multiple-choice questions and questions requiring a written response to demonstrate knowledge and skills, such as fill-in-the-blank, short-answer and essay questions. Other parts of the tests require students to draw solutions and complete graphs, tables, and charts.
 - *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)* PACT is administered in the spring; during 1999-2000 it was administered in April, the following academic year it will be May. TerraNova was administered the same week as PACT for the past two years but will be administered earlier in the future.

- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)*

The current High School Exit Examination was first administered in 1986. It was established as a requirement for students to receive a South Carolina State High School Diploma in 1990. The Exit Examination is part of the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) which assessed student performance on statewide objectives in reading, mathematics, writing, and science. The Exit examination is first administered to students in the spring of their tenth-grade year. The Exit Examination includes three subtests: reading, mathematics, and writing. Students who do not pass all sections of the examination are given opportunities to retake the subtests they did not pass. Students have up to five opportunities, if necessary, to pass the Exit Examination. The current Exit Examination is scheduled to be replaced by the PACT Exit Examination according to the dates indicated below.

South Carolina is in the process of developing, piloting and implementing the new PACT Exit Exams, which are to be administered in grade 10, with retesting in later grades for portions that students did not pass. The tests should be implemented according to the following schedule:

- PACT Exit Exam Math, ELA 1999-2000, 2000-2001: Field Test. 2001-2002: Field Test grade 10, practice test grade 9. 2002-2003: Implement in grade 10.

- PACT Exit Exam Science 1999-2000: Revise test, develop additional items. 2000-2001, 2001-2002: Field Test. 2002-2003: Field Test grade 10, practice test grade 9. 2003-2004: Implement in grade 10.
 - PACT Exit Exam Social Studies 1999-2000: Design tests. 2000-2001: Develop items. 2001-2002, 2002-2003: Field test. 2003-2004: Field test in grade 10, practice test in grade 9. 2004-2005: Implement in grade 10.
- *Other Assessments* NAEP, PSAT/PLAN, School district tests
 - *Transitional or Final Assessment System* South Carolina is in the process of developing and implementing the final assessment system.
3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state?*
- *State Department of Education*
 - *Commercial Testing Organization*
 - *State teachers and administrators*
 - *Assessment Committee*

Teachers, college and university faculty members, and professional test writers developed the PACT tests, using the South Carolina standards as a guide. The TerraNova test is developed by CTB/McGraw-Hill.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

There are no requirements for local assessment in South Carolina. However, districts do have the local option of administering the PACT assessments for grades 1 and 2.

5. *Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned? Probe on:*

- *Refining standards*
- *Revamping assessments*
- *Adding components to assessments*

The plan to raise standards in South Carolina and to increase student achievement has been an ongoing process that began with the establishment of curriculum frameworks and culminated with the development of the new state tests. The frameworks outlined broad goals in each academic area specifying what student should know and be able to do as they progress through school. The next step was the development of grade-by-grade standards that are directly related to curriculum frameworks. These standards went a step further describing in greater detail what students should be learning. The Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests were developed to measure accurately what that students in South Carolina should know as outlined in the frameworks and the standards.

6. *What is the state's approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

New test questions have been developed by state and national subject area experts, as well as testing experts. Committees, including representatives from the community, also reviewed the items to ensure they were not biased and that they matched the high academic standards.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

- *Student Grade Promotion/Retention, Graduation, Diploma Certification*
- *Teacher, School and/or District accountability*
- *Program Evaluation (Identify federal, state programs)*
- *Identification of students for programs like Title I, state CompEd, Bilingual, etc.*
- *Instructional guidance to local administrators and/or teachers*
- *School improvement (e.g., preparing a school improvement plan)*

The tests that comprise the state assessment system are administered for two primary reasons:

- ✓ To measure students' level of achievement and progress each year. Schools and parents need information about how students are performing; assessment information tells teachers and school administrators what students have learned and where they need additional help. If progress is insufficient, students may be retained (for further information on student accountability, please refer to page 16 of this document).
- ✓ To hold schools accountable for their effectiveness. The public – parents, the community, businesses, and the Legislature – has a right to know how schools are performing. Schools need that help are given extra support and assistance so student performance and test scores can improve.

Moreover, specific tests may have specific functions, for example:

- ✓ A passing score on the High School Exit Examination is a requirement for the South Carolina State High School Diploma.
- ✓ High schools offer state-funded PSAT or PLAN tests to each tenth grade student in order to assess and identify curricular areas that need to be strengthened and re-enforced. Schools and districts use these assessments as diagnostic tools to provide academic assistance to students whose scores reflect the need for assistance. Schools and districts use these assessments to provide guidance and direction for parents and students as they plan for postsecondary experiences.

8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The primary changes planned for the state assessment system of South Carolina consist of the full implementation of the PACT assessments. The full implementation of these assessments will have implications for Title I, as the state will shift away from reliance on a norm-referenced test in measuring adequate yearly progress.

Optional for districts as of 1998-99: PACT grades 1 and 2.

- 1999-2000: Administer: PACT grades 3-8 in Math, ELA
Field Test: Readiness assessment in Kindergarten and Grade 1; PACT Exit Exam in Math, ELA; Alternate Assessment
Design and develop: all other assessments
- 2000-2001 Administer: PACT Grades 3-8 in Math, ELA; Alternate Assessment.
Field Test: Readiness assessment; PACT grades 3-8 in Science; PACT Exit Exam in Math, ELA.
Design and develop: End-of-Course Math.
- 2001-2002 Administer: Readiness grades 1 and 2; PACT grades 3-8 in Math, ELA, Science; Alternate assessment.
Field Test: PACT grades 3-8 in Social Studies; PACT Exit Exam in Math, ELA. End-of-Course Math.
Design and develop: End-of-Course ELA.
- 2002-2003 Administer: Readiness grades 1 and 2; PACT grades 3-8 in Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies; PACT Exit Exam in Math, ELA; End-of-Course in Math; Alternate Assessment.
Field Test: PACT Exit Exam in Science; End-of-Course ELA
- 2003-2004 Administer: Readiness grades 1 and 2; PACT grades 3-8 in Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies; PACT Exit Exam in Math, ELA, and Science; End-of-Course in Math, ELA; Alternate Assessment.
Field Test: PACT Exit Exam in Social Studies
Design and Develop: End-of-Course Science
- 2004-2005 Administer: all tests listed above plus Exit Exam Social Studies.
Field Test: End-of-Course Science.
Design and develop: End-of-Course Social Studies
- 2005-2006: Administer: all tests listed above plus End-of-Course Science.
Field Test: End-of-Course Social Studies
- 2006-2007: Administer: all tests listed above plus End-of-Course Social Studies

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

The most significant challenge identified by South Carolina officials is how to appropriately address the requirements of IDEA in the assessment of all students. Implementing policies that include all students in assessments are difficult, and in South Carolina there has been some opposition from the parents of students with disabilities, who have reservations about having their children participate in the state assessment.

Scoring of assessments in a timely manner has been another area of concern for South Carolina officials. Many elements are dependent upon assessment scores – public reports, accountability models and measures – and a delay in assessment results causes delays in much of the educational system.

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

1. What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?

All students in South Carolina are to be tested unless they qualify for the Alternate Assessment, which will be implemented in 2001. Students cannot be exempt from PACT because of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) unless they specifically qualify for the Alternate Assessment. Decisions regarding the testing of students with disabilities under IDEA must be made on an individual basis.

Students with 504 Accommodations Plans must participate in statewide testing, but are also allowed accommodations when needed. The need for accommodations offered to these students must be documented in their 504 Accommodations Plans.

Students with Limited English Proficiency may be exempted from statewide assessments for up to three years.

2. What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?

The permitted accommodations include the following:

Setting:

- Administer the test to a small group in a separate location
- Administer the test individually in a separate location
- Provide special lighting
- Provide adaptive or special furniture
- Administer the test in a location with minimal distractions

Presentation

- Reduce the number of items per page
- Increase the size of answer bubbles (use in the large print version of the test)
- Highlight key words or phrases in directions (e.g. complete sentences, show your work)
- Provide cues (e.g. arrows and stop signs) on test booklet
- Secure papers to work area with tape/magnets
- Provide color overlays
- Modifying test directions
- Oral administration

- Signed administration
- Braille

Timing

- Extend the time allotted to complete the test
- Allow frequent breaks during testing
- Provide frequent breaks on one test but not another

Scheduling

- Administer the test in several sessions, specifying the duration of each session
- Administer the test over several days, specifying the duration for each day's session
- Administer the test in the afternoon rather than in the morning, or vice versa

Response

- Tape record responses for open-ended and extended items
- Allow use of a scribe
- Large print paper, typed compositions, dictated compositions.

Other

- Provide special test preparation (e.g. practice with filling in bubbles and writing responses)

Permitted Modifications

- Alternate scoring of PACT items scored for writing
- Modifications for PACT items scored for writing (e.g. spell-checker, word prediction program, word process that includes spell-check, voice activation, grammar-checker, poor speller's dictionary)
- Calculators
- Testing Off-Grade Level

3. *Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

No, South Carolina does not offer assessments in languages other than English

4. *Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

Yes, South Carolina does provide an alternate assessment, which is portfolio-based.

5. *Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

Yes, South Carolina regulations and legislation affirm compliance with IDEA.

6. Are changes planned in the for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

Changes will be in accordance with federal regulations.

Performance Standards

1. How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?

South Carolina has established four performance levels – below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced - indicate how an individual student is performing based on the curriculum standards assessed by the PACT.

Below Basic

A student who performs at the BELOW BASIC level on the PACT has not met minimum expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is not prepared for work at the next grade.

Basic

Performance at the BASIC level means a student has passed the test. A student who performs at the BASIC level at the PACT has met minimum expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is minimally prepared for work at the next grade.

Proficient

A student who performs at the PROFICIENT level on the PACT has met expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is well prepared for work at the next grade. The PROFICIENT level represents the long-term goal for student performance in South Carolina.

Advanced

A student who performs at the ADVANCED level on the PACT has exceeded expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the State Board of Education. The student is very well prepared for work at the next grade.

The following tables provide the score ranges and cut points for each score category for each grade and subject area. The score ranges and cut points for the four performance levels were determined by the Department of Education.

PACT English Language Arts, Test Ranges and Cut-Offs

Grade	Range	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
8	736-864	789	797	813	827
7	636-764	688	696	712	729
6	536-664	587	596	612	629

5	436-564	485	495	511	531
4	336-464	386	395	410	430
3	236-364	286	296	310	331

PACT Mathematics, Test Ranges and Cut-Offs

Grade	Range	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
8	736-864	791	800	818	827
7	636-764	689	700	717	727
6	536-664	588	599	617	628
5	436-564	488	499	517	528
4	336-464	388	399	416	427
3	236-364	287	298	316	326

As legislated by the Education Accountability Act of 1998, performance categories for schools and districts, based on performance and improvement, are being developed. These categories for schools and districts will include the following: excellent, good, average, below average, and unsatisfactory.

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures?*

- *Target level*
- *Percentage of students expected to attain target level*
- *Time period in which to attain level*
- *Annual increase required*

South Carolina has several goals, some of which are in place, others yet to be implemented. The general state goal is to be in the top half of nation academically by the year 2010.

In addition, through 1998, South Carolina identified 35 indicators for measuring the growth of districts: 27 standards for the BSAP and MAT7 achievement test results and 8 standards for accreditation deficiencies, dropout rates, student attendance, and faculty attendance (specifications of each of these indicators is detailed in the *Accountability* section of this profile). Each district was required to satisfy two-thirds of the criteria for testing programs, and two-thirds of the non-cognitive requirements in order to avoid the designation of “highest priority for technical assistance,” generally referred to as impaired. Although some districts are still identified as impaired, no additional districts have been identified as such.

Finally, the Education Accountability Act of 1998 requires the rating of schools based on an absolute indicator (performance) and improvement indicators. These are in the process of development; they will be influenced by the general state goal. Schools will be rated for the first time in 2001.

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance*

rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?

The performance levels described in question 1 are based on the PACT assessments and were derived using the Bookmarking method. The system of performance standards for districts, (soon to be replaced) was based on a combination of testing and non-cognitive indicators.

The final unit of analysis for the new accountability system – linked to the performance standards of question 1– will be categories of school performance and improvement. However, this system is not fully developed.

4. Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?

If students participated in the PACT assessments, they are to be included in performance calculations. Moreover, South Carolina has specific regulations for the inclusion of different groups of students depending on the performance measure in question:

Absolute Performance Ratings for Schools: Any student who is in membership in a school at the time of the 45-day enrollment count will be included in the absolute performance rating for a school for the Ratings Year if he or she was enrolled at the time of listing. Students who have taken at least one complete subject area test (e.g., mathematics) will be included. For the absolute performance rating, repeating students will be included.

Absolute Performance Ratings for Districts: Any student who is enrolled in a district at the time of the 45-day enrollment count will be included in the absolute performance rating for a district for the Ratings Year, even if he or she has changed schools within the district. All other conditions stipulated for schools will apply for district ratings.

Mobile students are of particular import to the accountability system. The EOC shall conduct studies to determine the impact of student mobility on the accountability system.

Improvement Ratings for Grades 3-8: Any student will be included if he or she is enrolled in a school (or district) on the 45th day, can be matched to the previous year, and has PACT test scores for both years, even if the student attended a different school during the previous year.

5. Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?

Changes are anticipated with regard to the performance standards for schools. Further details on this system are provided in the *Accountability* section of this profile.

6. What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?

At the moment, 6 districts have been identified as impaired. Only 1 district has been taken over by the state.

Reporting Performance Data

1. Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:

- *Student reports*

Reports with information on student performance on statewide assessments are sent home to parents.

- *School*

Schools reports, accessible on the state education website, include the following:

- ✓ Demographic information (includes ADM, teacher preparation and experience, post-secondary activities)
- ✓ Attendance rate for students and teachers
- ✓ Dropout rates for grades 7-8, 9-12
- ✓ Promotion/retention rates by grade, since 1994-95
- ✓ Student count, student characteristics
- ✓ CSAB data (Readiness Assessment): disaggregated percent meeting standard
- ✓ AP exam results since 1994, disaggregated
- ✓ SAT data since 1994, disaggregated
- ✓ Exit Exam data, since 1994, disaggregated

- *District reports*

District reports, accessible on the state education website, include the following information:

- ✓ Demographic information (includes ADM, teacher preparation and experience, post-secondary activities)
- ✓ Attendance rate for students and teachers
- ✓ Dropout rates for grades 7-8, 9-12
- ✓ Promotion/retention rates by grade, since 1994-95
- ✓ Student count, student characteristics
- ✓ CSAB data (Readiness Assessment): disaggregated percent meeting standard
- ✓ AP exam results since 1994, disaggregated
- ✓ SAT data since 1994, disaggregated
- ✓ Exit Exam data, since 1994, disaggregated

- *State reports*

A wide range of state-level reports are accessible on the state Department of Education website. These include:

Results of South Carolina's First-Grade Readiness Test (CSAB)

- ✓ Background and state results
- ✓ Percent of students meeting standards by ethnicity

- ✓ Percent of students meeting standards by gender
- ✓ Percent of students meeting standards by repeater status
- ✓ Percent of students meeting standards by disability status
- ✓ Percent of students meeting standards by lunch status
- ✓ Results by kindergarten program status
- ✓ Results by kindergarten program length

TerraNova test results

- ✓ Number of students tested
- ✓ Summary of results
- ✓ Results by grade, subject, quartile
- ✓ Graphical representation of results

High School Exit Examination Results

- ✓ Student participants
- ✓ Percentages of students meeting the standards by subject area, two year performance and change.
- ✓ Results disaggregated by: gender, ethnicity (white, African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander), white male, white female, African-American male, African-American female, other male, other female, free lunch, reduced-price lunch, no free/reduced price lunch, non-repeater, repeater, not disabled, disabled, within age range, overage.
- ✓ Adult education student test data

Results of the ACT

- ✓ ACT average scores for subject area and composite, for state and nation
- ✓ Trend data for subject, composite, state and nation
- ✓ Disaggregated ACT results
- ✓ ACT results by annual family income
- ✓ ACT results by coursework (i.e. college core)

South Carolina SAT report

- ✓ Data by gender
- ✓ Data by educational level of parents
- ✓ Data by ethnicity
- ✓ Data by class rank
- ✓ Data by grade point average
- ✓ SC districts above national average
- ✓ SC high schools above national average
- ✓ Summary of SAT data
- ✓ Performance of SC and nation
- ✓ Academic preparation
- ✓ State participation rates
- ✓ Private schools

In addition, South Carolina maintains an Education Data Bank containing the most frequently requested data for the State, 86 school districts, and regular public schools in South Carolina. This Excel file contains data for all levels for the following:

- ✓ Percent Ready for 1st grade using CSAB
- ✓ Percent meeting standard on PACT in grades 3-8 (ELA and Math)
- ✓ Exit Exam (grade 10, 1st attempt for Reading, Math, and Writing)
- ✓ Percent making scores of 3 or higher on the AP test
- ✓ Average scores on the SAT for seniors
- ✓ Average Daily Membership by grade and total
- ✓ Lunch data – percent free or reduced-price lunch
- ✓ Ethnic percentages
- ✓ Hub or regional service area

- *Title I reports*

Title I reports include background information about participating schools and students, staff information, statewide assessment results, proficiency levels, disaggregated.

2. How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?

The Education Accountability Act requires the following: The school's report card must be furnished to parents and the public no later than November 15th. The report card must be mailed to all parents of the school and the school district [for the district report card]. The school, in conjunction with the district board, must also inform the community of the school's report card by advertising the results in at least one South Carolina daily newspaper of general circulation in the area. This notice must be published within ninety days of receipt of the report cards from the State Department of Education and must be a minimum of two columns by ten inches (four and one-half by ten inches) with at least a twenty-four point bold headline.

3. At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?

State and district level data is currently disaggregated for the following groups: Gender, ethnicity (white, African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander), white male, white female, African-American male, African-American female, other male, other female, free lunch, reduced-price lunch, no free/reduced price lunch, non-repeater, repeater, not disabled, disabled, within age range, overage. Disaggregated data is reported publicly and is accessible on the state education website.

The Education Accountability Act has additional requirements for the reporting of disaggregated data, to be in effect in 2001: Student performance is disaggregated in the following categories: gender, ethnicity, and disability and lunch status for each subtest. A disaggregated group is reported if the following conditions are met:

- ✓ The group is composed of at least 30 students (summed across grades) for each subject area, and the group comprises 10 percent or more of all test takers in each subject area, or

- ✓ The group includes at least 20 students, even if that group represents less than 10 percent of all test takers.

4. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments?*

Trend data ranges from two years – on the High School Exit Examination results – to five years for ACT, attendance rates, dropout rates, promotion rates, AP exams, among others.

5. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

The scores of students with disabilities and LEP are included in the aggregate if they participated in the assessment, with or without accommodations. The results for students with disabilities are also disaggregated.

6. *What are the state's requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

Districts that are identified as impaired are required to undergo a review by a state team and to develop a technical assistance plan in cooperation with the review team. The entire process should be data-driven.

7. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

The South Carolina Education Accountability Act of 1998 has specific requirements for both school and district report cards. These reporting regulations will go into effect in 2001:

The Report Card is to be printed in a format providing four pages of information (an 8 1/2 by 11 sheet folded). The printed format should accomplish easy mailing. The Report Card is to be printed in four colors, providing ease in understanding of the graphics.

To begin, school and district report cards should include the following information:

- ✓ Designation that the document is "The State of South Carolina Annual School or District Report Card";
- ✓ Designation of the school year that is the basis for the ratings and related information;
- ✓ The name and address of the school, program unit, center, or district;
- ✓ The grades and number of students served;
- ✓ The special purpose of the school if it is an alternative, charter, magnet or special school;
- ✓ The names and telephone numbers of the principal, and superintendent (multiple superintendents for career and technology centers);
- ✓ The name of the school board chairperson;
- ✓ The ratings assigned to the school for "Performance Level" and "Improvement Rate";
- ✓ There are _____ schools similar to school X whose performance level rating ranged from _____ to _____. For improvement ratings the range was _____ to _____.

- ✓ Indications of the state website address or state office to be contacted for additional information;
- ✓ A table displaying the "Trends in Performance Levels and Improvement Rates";
- ✓ Definitions of the Critical Terms; that is, the meaning of each of the school or district rating category.

In general, the following information should be provided for all school levels. However, specific requirements for high schools are to be developed following consideration of a proviso for interim ratings criteria by the General Assembly.

- ✓ Definitions of Critical Terms: The SBE-adopted meanings of Advanced, Proficient, Basic and Below Basic should be published;
- ✓ Pie charts displaying the proportion of students scoring at each performance level aggregated across all grades and disaggregated by content area. The percentage of students scoring at each performance level should be printed on or adjacent to the pie piece representing that performance level. The size of the pie piece should reflect the percentage. Advanced scores should be displayed in blue; proficient scores displayed in green; basic scores displayed in yellow; and below basic scores displayed in red;
- ✓ Pie charts should be presented that demonstrate the performance of students (aggregated and disaggregated in a similar manner) in schools similar in student characteristics;
- ✓ The report card should include sentences stating when science scores are to be reported and when social studies scores are to be reported;
- ✓ A table displaying the "Percentage of Students Scoring Basic or Above" should display student performance for each content area and disaggregated by these student groups: All Students; Students with Disabilities; Students without Disabilities; Gender: Male; Female; Ethnic Group: African-American; Asian/Pacific Islander; Hispanic; Native American; White; and Other Groups. No student group should be reported that contains less than 10 percent of the student population or fewer than 30 students. When an ethnic group is too small to report, the small groups should be collapsed into the Other category.
- ✓ A table for the Exit Exam should display student performance for students passing all portions on the first attempt and be disaggregated by the student groups listed above.
- ✓ Lunch Status: Free/reduced lunch; Pay for lunch.
- ✓ A table displaying "South Carolina's Performance on National Measures" should be displayed. These scores are based on a sample of students at selected grade levels. Include in this table are state results on the following assessments: 1.) TerraNova Survey Test (grade levels tested, state and national average), Median Percentile Rank; 2.) NAEP, Percentage Scoring in Each Category (sub test, grade level, advanced, proficient, basic, below basic); 3.) SAT/ACT for High School Graduating Seniors (verbal, math, composite with district average, state average and national average comparisons)

The third page of the report card should include the following:

- ✓ Designation of the title as "SCHOOL OR DISTRICT PROFILE Based on the School Year 2000-2001";
- ✓ A section identified as "INDICATORS OF SCHOOL [or CENTER or DISTRICT] PERFORMANCE";
- ✓ The section should be divided among three categories: Students, Staff and School Program;

- ✓ A table displaying information designated as indicators. The table should contain five columns: The data elements, the calculation for "This School", the "Change from Last Year", the calculation for "Schools Like Ours"; and the calculation for the "State";
- ✓ The "Change from Last Year" column should use phrasing such as No Change, an increase of --- , or a decrease of ---;
- ✓ A section identified as "SCHOOL OR DISTRICT FACTS";
- ✓ The section should be divided among three categories: Students, Staff, and School or District Program;
- ✓ Within the School or District Program category, the area designated for a health education measure should include the statement: "This measure is under development";
- ✓ Within the School or District Program category and for elementary and middle schools, the area designated for a physical education measure should include the statement: "This measure is under development".

Page Four is reserved for information of a subjective nature. This is the area in which the principal and the School Improvement Council should provide a narrative detailing the accomplishments of the school and the barriers to be addressed in its efforts for higher levels of student achievement. The Superintendent should provide the narrative for the district card.

8. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.

One of the major challenges in the area of performance standards is the setting of the standards for schools: South Carolina officials are in the process of conducting analyses and modeling data to determine the system of standards as legislated by the 1998 Education Accountability Act.

In addition, shifting from a performance standards system based on districts to one based on schools will engender some technical assistance challenges. At the moment, six districts have been identified as impaired, but when schools (rather than districts) are targeted for technical assistance, the figure could be well over 100 schools. This will require a different approach on the part of technical assistance staff, and a greater capacity on the part of the State Department of Education.

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.

The accountability system in South Carolina is in a state of transition. The previous system was legislated by the 1984 Education Improvement Act, which established a system for identifying districts as impaired. The 1984 legislation was replaced by the **1998 Education Accountability Act**, which included numerous provisions for a new accountability and reporting system. The new system shall focus on the school level, although districts will still be targeted as well. The new system of performance standards for schools will be in place in 2001.

2. What are the characteristics of the state accountability system?

- *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

Student accountability measures for grades 3 through 8:

- ✓ A school must notify the parents of the need for a conference for each student in grades three through eight who lacks the skills to perform at his current grade level based on assessment results, school work, or teacher judgment. An academic plan will be developed to outline additional services the school and district will provide and the actions the student and the parents will undertake to further student success.
- ✓ The participants in the conference will sign off on the academic plan, including any requirement for summer school attendance. Should a parent, after attempts by the school to schedule the conference at their convenience, not attend the conference, the school will appoint a school mentor, either a teacher or adult volunteer, to work with the student and advocate for services.
- ✓ At the end of the school year, the student's performance will be reviewed by appropriate school personnel. If the student's work has not been at grade level or if the terms of the academic plan have not been met, the student may be retained or he may be required to attend summer school for promotion.

Graduation Requirements

The current High School Exit Examination was first administered in 1986. It was established as a requirement for students to receive a South Carolina State High School Diploma in 1990. The Exit Examination is part of the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) which assessed student performance on statewide objectives in reading, mathematics, writing, and science. The Exit examination is first administered to students in the spring of their tenth-grade year. The Exit Examination includes three subtests: reading, mathematics, and writing. Students who do not pass all sections of the examination are given opportunities to retake the subtests they did not pass. Students have up to five opportunities, if necessary, to pass the Exit Examination.

- *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The current accountability system – which is to be replaced by 2001 – focuses on the district level, rather than the school level. The new system, legislated in 1998, will address both the school and district levels. For information on the school-based accountability, please refer to question 8 of this section.

- *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The previous – and not yet entirely replaced – accountability system identified districts as impaired on the basis of 35 indicators. Districts have not been identified as impaired since 1998, as the system is based on now-outdated assessments. In the interim, districts have not been removed from the impaired list, and continue to receive technical assistance. As the old system will still impact districts until 2001, details are provided in this profile.

Thirty-five standards were established for the evaluation of school district performance under the previous accountability system. Twenty-seven standards for BSAP and MAT7 achievement test

results and eight standards for accreditation deficiencies, dropout rates, student attendance, and faculty attendance were applied in two distinct groups. Separate summary requirements were established for these two groups of standards. The school districts were required to satisfy two-thirds of the standards for the BSAP and MAT7 achievement test results and two-thirds of the non-cognitive indicators.

The performance standard for any BSAP measure was satisfied if at least one of the following two conditions were met:

- (1) the improvement in performance by the district meets or exceeds the gain realized by the statewide population above the prior administration of that measure, or
- (2) the performance of the district meets or exceeds a defined minimum level for that measure. The minimum performance level for a BSAP measure was defined as the most recently available, or estimated, achievement results of the statewide free lunch population.

Standard #	Subtest	Grade	Minimum Gain-Increase in % of students scoring above BSAP standards 1997	Minimum Gain-Increase in % of students scoring above BSAP standards 1998	Minimum Performance Level - % of students scoring above BSAP Standards Meets or Exceeds
1	Reading	3	1.3	-1.1	76.4
2	Math	3	1.6	0.7	76.6
3	Science	3	-2.1	0.7	47.8
4	Writing	6	-2.1	-2.9	53.8
5	Science	6	-4.0	3.6	32.4
6	Reading	8	1.2	-4.0	50.6
7	Math	8	0.9	-1.1	47.3
8	Writing	8	-1.5	-1.2	64.6
9	Science	8	0.2	-0.9	22.3
10	Reading	10	-1.7	-0.2	64.7
11	Math	10	-2.0	-0.3	57.7
12	Writing	10	1.0	-0.3	67.9

The performance standard for any MAT7 measure was satisfied if at least one of the following conditions were met (1) the improvement in performance by the district meets or exceeds the gain realized by the statewide population above the prior administration of that measure, or (2) the performance of the district meets or exceeds a defined minimum level for that measure. The minimum performance level for a MAT7 measure was defined as the most recently available, or estimated, achievement results of the statewide free lunch population.

Standard #	Subtest	Grade	Minimum Gain-Increase in mean NCE, meets or exceeds, 1997	Minimum Gain-Increase in mean NCE, meets or exceeds, 1998	Minimum Performance Level – mean NCE meets or exceeds
13	Reading	4	0.6	0.9	37.8
14	Language	4	1.0	0.2	45.3
15	Math	4	1.9	0.5	46.4
16	Reading	5	-0.1	0.2	38.3
17	Language	5	0.2	0.3	45.1
18	Math	5	0.8	0.8	47.0
19	Reading	7	0.1	0.5	38.4
20	Language	7	0.8	0.7	44.3
21	Math	7	1.3	0.5	40.3
22	Reading	9	0.2	-0.7	37.2
23	Language	9	0.1	-0.1	41.7
24	Math	9	0.1	-0.2	38.2
25	Reading	11	-0.6	-0.2	38.4
26	Language	11	-0.5	0.2	41.4
27	Math	11	-0.7	-0.1	39.8

School districts were required to satisfy two-thirds of the following standards for accreditation deficiencies, dropout rates, student attendance, and faculty attendance.

- 1) No school units within a district have received a probationary classification for the school year upon review by the Office of Organizational Development, Department of Education. (Exception to this standard is provided for school units that have received a probationary classification due to recurring deficiencies described in standards two and three, below)
- 2) No school units within the district have more than 10.0 percent of classes taught by improperly certified personnel for the school year upon review by the Office of Organizational Development, Department of Education.
- 3) No school units within a district have a deficiency in the allocation of instructional time or offering of required courses in the areas of language arts or mathematics for the school year upon review.
- 4) The total dropout rate for grades 7-8 in a district does not exceed 2.9 percent of grades 7-8 enrollment as reported. (Exception to this standard is provided if fewer than four pupils in the district in grades 7-8 drop out.)
- 5) The dropout rate for grades 9-12 in a district does not exceed 7.9 percent of grades 9-12 enrollment as reported.
- 6) The average daily attendance of grades K-8 meets or exceeds 94.5 percent of average daily membership in a district.
- 7) The average daily attendance of grades 9-12 meets or exceeds 94.5 percent of average daily membership in a district.
- 8) The faculty attendance rate in a school district meets or exceeds 94.5 percent of total employment days for the 1997-98 school year. Absences due to professional duties, long-term illness, jury duty, bereavement, suspension, military duty, and injury on the job are excluded from the calculation of faculty attendance rates.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

- *Relative growth*
- *Absolute target*
- *Narrowing the Gap between high and low achievers*

The method of measuring progress under the district-based system was relative growth. The school-based system of accountability will measure the overall performance of the school as well as the relative growth.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

In general, all students who participate in state assessments (including students with disabilities and LEP students) are included in performance measures. However, the Education Oversight Committee is in the process of determining the exact manner in which different populations will be included in and accounted for in the system of school performance. For further details, please refer to pages 9-10 of this document.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

The general state accountability and Title I accountability systems are not aligned: The state system is in transition, moving from one based on districts, to one based on school performance. Given that the state system is on a hiatus until 2001, the Title I system has established its own performance measures based on the PACT tests.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

To a certain extent, subgroup performance was included in the performance standards of the district-based accountability system, given that the performance of the statewide free lunch population established the minimum performance level for the BSAP measure. Subgroup performance is not used by Title I. However, the new accountability measure will do so in a more systematic manner: the gold and silver Palmetto awards will be based, among other things, upon subgroup performances.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

These schools are not included in the state accountability system; however, they are included in Title I accountability.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The General Provisions of the Education Accountability Act of 1998 provide an overview of the accountability system that South Carolina is currently implementing:

“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. It is the purpose of the General Assembly to establish a performance based accountability system for public education which focuses on improving teaching and learning so that students are equipped with a strong academic foundation. Accountability, as defined by this chapter, means acceptance of the responsibility for improving student performance and taking actions to improve classroom practice and school performance by the Governor, the General Assembly, the State Department of Education, colleges and universities, local school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community.”

The system is to:

- (1) use academic achievement standards to push schools and students toward higher performance by aligning the state assessment to those standards and linking policies and criteria for performance standards, accreditation, reporting, school rewards, and targeted assistance;
- (2) provide an annual report card with a performance indicator system that is logical, reasonable, fair, challenging, and technically defensible which furnishes clear and specific information about school and district academic performance and other performance to parents and the public;
- (3) require all districts to establish local accountability systems to stimulate quality teaching and learning practices and target assistance to low performing schools;
- (4) provide resources to strengthen the process of teaching and learning in the classroom to improve student performance and reduce gaps in performance;
- (5) support professional development as integral to improvement and to the actual work of teachers and school staff; and
- (6) expand the ability to evaluate the system and to conduct in-depth studies on implementation, efficiency, and the effectiveness of academic improvement efforts.

Ratings

Each school and district will receive two ratings, one for absolute performance level and one for improvement rate:

- ✓ Absolute performance refers to the rating a school will receive based on the percentage of students meeting standards on the state's standards-based assessment; and
- ✓ Improvement performance refers to the rating a school will receive based on longitudinally matched student data comparing current performance to the previous year's for the purpose of determining student academic growth.

The five ratings categories include the following: **Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average and Unsatisfactory.**

Absolute Ratings for Schools Without PACT Data

Although the Education Accountability Act calls for the development of a PACT Exit Exam and end-of-course exams for gateway courses, these tests will not be operational until 2003 and 2002,

respectively. [In the interim between report card production schedule and test implementation schedule, the Education Oversight Committee has recommended a proviso that would allow high school ratings to be built upon "current exit exam performance and other criteria identified by technical experts and appropriate groups of educators..." The current exit exam is inadequate as the sole measure of high school performance because it is a basic skills test that is not necessarily linked to the current approved state curriculum standards.] (bracketed text proposed)

Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards

The Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program is designed to recognize and reward schools for academic achievement. Awards will be established for schools attaining high levels of absolute performance and for schools attaining high rates of improvement. The awards program must base improved performance on longitudinally matched student data and may include such criteria as:

- (1) Student achievement;
- (2) Teacher attendance;
- (3) Student dropout rates; and
- (4) any other factors promoting or maintaining high levels of achievement and performance. (§59-18-1100)

Criteria for the awards are to be established by the State Board of Education, working with the Department of Education and the Division of Accountability, Education Oversight Committee. The Division of Accountability is to establish the criteria for the school reward. Eligibility for a reward for high levels of performance is built upon student performance that exceeds expected levels of improvement. Special schools for the academically talented are not eligible to receive an award unless they have demonstrated improvement and high absolute achievement for three years immediately preceding the award.

Indicators of School or District Performance and School or District Facts

Indicators provide information about the educational environment over which the school community has control and precede performance. "School or District Facts" provide other information about the staff, students, or school. Annual analyses of these and other data elements are to be conducted to determine the relationship to student academic performance.

Schools that are rated Below Average or Unsatisfactory are required to revise their school improvement plan in cooperation with education stakeholders. If the school's revised plan is not satisfactorily implemented by the school rated unsatisfactory, the principal, district superintendent, and members of the board of trustees must appear before the State Board of Education to outline the reasons why a state of emergency should not be declared in the school. The state superintendent, after consulting with the external review committee and with the approval of the State Board of Education, shall be granted the authority to take any of the following actions:

- ✓ Furnish continuing advice and technical assistance in implementing the recommendations of the State Board of Education;
- ✓ Declare a state of emergency in the school and replace the school's principal; or
- ✓ Declare a state of emergency in the school and assume management of the school.

[District rating approaches will parallel those used at the school level. Depending upon the method selected, district ratings will be calculated by aggregating student level data or by aggregating school ratings.] (bracketed text proposed)

If a **District receives a rating of below average**, it must develop and implement an improvement plan. If recommendations approved by the State Board of Education are not satisfactorily implemented, the district superintendent and members of the board of trustees must appear before the State Board of Education to outline the reasons why a state of emergency should not be declared in the district. The state superintendent, with the approval of the State Board of Education, is granted authority to do any of the following:

- ✓ Furnish continuing advice and technical assistance in implementing the recommendations of the State Board of Education;
- ✓ Recommend to the Governor that the office of superintendent be declared vacant.
- ✓ Declare a state of emergency in the school district and assume management of the school district.

New assessments are to be included in school and district absolute ratings upon their third administration. For example, the PACT science exam for Grades 3-8 is administered first in 2002. Data on student performance would be included in the November 2004 report card. Growth from the second to third administration would be used in the Improvement Rating.

Improvement ratings are reliant upon two consecutive years of test data. The improvement rating on the first report card issued in November 2001 will be based on test data from Spring 2000 and Spring 2001. Like the absolute rating, the criteria for improvement ratings for high schools may change after consideration by the General Assembly. Currently the models for improvement have not been identified because simulations can not be undertaken until two consecutive years of test data are available. Since the PACT was first administered in Spring 1999, the second year of test data will not be available until after the Spring 2000 administration (Projected availability: October 3, 2000). The Education Oversight Committee will simulate methods based on scale scores and on performance levels for matched longitudinal (individual students) and cohort longitudinal (groups) for grades 3-8. The PACT test is not vertically equated across grades at the current time, so scale score comparisons may not prove fruitful although they would be the preferred method if the tests were vertically linked.

9. What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.

Districts and schools with small numbers of students present a special challenge to the accountability system of South Carolina (and indeed, of other states with rural areas). There are two types of small numbers situations. One is small numbers of students within a group, e.g., few Hispanic test takers in reading. The second is small numbers of total students, that is, few total students tested.

Districts and schools with small numbers of total students present special challenges regarding the stability of the data as well as the confidentiality of student performance. While all districts and campuses are rated initially under standard evaluation, these small districts and schools are

subject to Special Analysis under the circumstances specified below. If Special Analysis is necessary, only total student performance is examined:

- ✓ If standard evaluation indicates that a rating of *Excellent* or *Good* is appropriate, then a Special Analysis is conducted when there are fewer than 30 total students tested in two or more PACT areas;
- ✓ If standard evaluation indicates that a rating of *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory* may be appropriate, then Special Analysis is conducted only when there are fewer than 30 total students tested which caused the district/school to be considered *Below Average* or *Unsatisfactory*.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?

In 1998, districts were identified as low-performing, or impaired, for the last time, based on the 35 indicators described in the previous section. Although no additional districts have been identified since then, those districts retain their low-performing designation through the interim. The new system for identifying low-performing schools is being developed, as indicated above. The requirements of general state accountability systems apply to Title I and non-Title I schools. However, Title I also has its own system determining adequate yearly progress and of identifying low-performing schools and districts.

2. Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?

In the past, the state decided whether a district was low-performing, and will retain this role in the future.

3. What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?

- *Evaluation and Planning*
- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

All of the above types of assistance are provided to districts (and in the future, schools) in need of improvement.

4. Who provides the state assistance?

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*

Impaired districts receive assistance from the State Department of Education, university staff, and other educators as they review their performance, areas of weakness, and determine steps to

improve. These individuals collaborate to develop a Technical Assistance Plan which identifies necessary forms of assistance. Districts are also allocated special state improvement funds to support their improvement efforts

In addition, through federal funds, South Carolina operates Science and Math Hubs, which can and do get involved with the improvement activities of impaired districts, particularly in these academic areas. South Carolina also organizes district consortiums, which collaborate and support improvement efforts.

The activities of the district are monitored throughout the improvement process. The 1984 legislation allotted six months for districts to implement their improvement agenda. However, the length of time was increased to three years as it became apparent that six months was inadequate. If, during the course of these three years, the Department of Education determined that they could no longer effectively work in a technical assistance capacity, the state could take over the impaired district. However, this only occurred on one occasion.

One component of the Education Accountability Act with regard to technical assistance is already in place, that of teacher specialists. Teacher specialists on site may be assigned in any of the four core academic areas to a middle or high school in an impaired district or designated as below average or unsatisfactory, if the review team so recommends and the recommendation is approved by the State Board of Education.

- ✓ Teacher specialists on site must be assigned at a rate of one teacher for each grade level with a maximum of five to elementary schools in impaired districts or designated as below average or unsatisfactory. The Department of Education, in consultation with the Division of Accountability, shall develop a program for the identification, selection, and training of teachers with a history of exemplary student academic achievement to serve as teacher specialists on site. Retired educators may be considered for specialist positions.
- ✓ In order to sustain improvement and help implement the review team's recommendations, the specialists will teach and work with the school faculty on a regular basis throughout the school year for up to three years, or as recommended by the review committee and approved by the state board. The specialists will assist the school in gaining knowledge of best practices and well-validated alternatives, demonstrate effective teaching, act as coach for improving classroom practices, give support and training to identify needed changes in classroom instructional strategies based upon analyses of assessment data, and support teachers in acquiring new skills.
- ✓ To encourage and recruit teachers for assignment to below standard and unsatisfactory schools, those assigned to such schools will receive their salary and a supplement equal to fifty percent of the current southeastern average teacher salary as projected by the State Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Analysis. The salary and supplement is to be paid by the State for three years.
- ✓ In order to attract a pool of qualified principals to work in low-performing schools, the principal specialists hired in such schools will receive their salary and a supplement equal to 1.25 times the supplement amount calculated for teachers. The salary and supplement are to be paid by the State for two years.

5. Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?

The support system described above is specifically designed for low performing districts, and is not available to all schools and districts. The system of support for Title I schools is somewhat different: although both focus on the role of distinguished teachers, under the general state system these are “teacher specialists” and under Title I they are “master teachers.” The two programs are based on different funding and legislation.

6. Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?

In the past, districts would no longer be identified as impaired if they met two-thirds of the 35 indicators outlined in the accountability section. However, the new method of identifying schools rated as unsatisfactory, and their subsequent improvement criteria, have not been established.

7. Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?

Currently, districts in need of improvement must proceed through several steps toward improved performance. First, the impaired district is assigned a review team by the State Department of Education, which generally consists of department staff, university faculty members, the superintendent, school board members, and other stakeholders. The review team meets on site for several days to review assessment and other data, conduct interviews, and generate recommendations that constitute a report for the Department of Education. This report must be presented to the State Board of Education.

Next, in cooperation with the review team, a Technical Assistance Committee must prepare a Technical Assistance Plan. During this phase, there may be further investigation to identify specific steps to remedy shortcomings, and performance targets may be established. The recommendations of the technical assistance committee carry great weight in allocating technical assistance resources.

8. Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?

The Education Accountability Act has a number of provisions relating to the steps that low-performing schools and districts must undertake to improve their academic performance. Many of these provisions are similar to the process already in place, but there are some additional details and modifications:

When a school receives a rating of below average or unsatisfactory, the following actions must be undertaken by the school, the district, and the board of trustees:

- ✓ The faculty of the school, with the leadership of the principal must review its improvement plan and revise it with the assistance of the school improvement council. The revised plan should look at every aspect of schooling, and must outline activities that, when implemented, can reasonably be expected to improve student performance and increase the rate of student progress. A time line for implementation of the activities and the goals to be achieved must be included.
- ✓ Once the revised plan is developed, the district superintendent and the local board of trustees shall review the school's strategic plan to determine if the plan focuses on strategies to increase student academic performance.
- ✓ After the approval of the revised plan, the principals' and teachers' professional growth plans should be reviewed and amended.
- ✓ The school, in conjunction with the district board, must inform the parents of children attending the school of the ratings received from the State Board of Education and must outline the steps in the revised plan to improve performance, including the support which the board of trustees has agreed to give the plan. This information must go to the parents no later than February first. This information must also be advertised in at least one South Carolina daily newspaper of general circulation in the area.
- ✓ Upon a review of the revised plan to ensure it contains sufficiently high standards and expectations for improvement, the Department of Education is to delineate the activities, support, services, and technical assistance it will make available to support the school's plan and sustain improvement over time.

When a school receives a rating of unsatisfactory or upon the request of a school rated below average, an external review team must be assigned by the Department of Education to examine school and district educational programs, actions, and activities. The activities of the external review committee may include:

- ✓ Examine all facets of school operations, focusing on strengths and weaknesses, determining the extent to which the instructional program is aligned with the content standards, develop recommendations;
- ✓ Consult with parents, community members, and members of the School Improvement Council to gather additional information on the strengths and weaknesses of the school;
- ✓ Identify personnel changes, if any, that are needed at the school and/or district level and discuss such findings with the board;
- ✓ Work with school staff, central offices, and local boards of trustees in the design of the school's plan, implementation strategies, and professional development training that can reasonably be expected to improve student performance and increase the rate of student progress in that school;
- ✓ Identify needed support from the district, the State Department of Education, and other sources for targeted long-term technical assistance;
- ✓ Report its recommendations, no later than three months after the school receives the designation of unsatisfactory to the school, the district board of trustees, and the State Board of Education; and

- ✓ Report annually to the local board of trustees and state board over the next four years, or as deemed necessary by the state board, on the district's and school's progress in implementing the plans and recommendations and in improving student performance.

Within thirty days, the Department of Education must notify the principal, the superintendent, and the district board of trustees of the recommendations approved by the State Board of Education. After the approval of the recommendations, the department shall delineate the activities, support, services, and technical assistance it will provide to the school. With the approval of the state board, this assistance will continue for at least three years, or as determined to be needed by the review committee to sustain improvement.

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?

- *What measures are used (relationship between cognitive/non-cognitive data)?*
- *What targets have been established?*
- *Are local assessment systems included as criteria? If so, does the state provide guidance? Monitor their use?*
- *Is subgroup performance included in the criteria?*

South Carolina used a norm-referenced test, the Metropolitan Achievement Test, 7th Edition (MAT7), for evaluating Title I through 1998 as part of the Transitional Assessments phase allowed under the IASA. In 1999, a new criterion-referenced state assessment program, the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) was used for the first time. The 1999 Title I evaluation was transitional because there was no pre-test data available for the assessment of adequate progress. The 1999 PACT data will serve as the baseline data for 2000. The year 2000 is the first year in which pre- and post-assessment data will be available to make judgements regarding adequate yearly progress.

2. What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:

- *Title I schools and non-Title I schools*
- *Targeted vs. schoolwide programs, charter, non-public and small schools*
- *Districts*

Adequate yearly progress is defined as the progress that would result in continuous and substantial yearly improvement sufficient to achieve the goal of all children meeting or exceeding South Carolina's high standard of performance. A continuous and substantial increase in the percentage of students at each grade level who perform at the basic level is expected. Goals will be set based on a timeline for reducing the percentage of students performing below the basic level, while substantially increasing the percentage in the basic and above levels. The following procedures should be used to develop the target progress to demonstrate adequate yearly progress.

Adequate yearly progress for schools

1. Determine the percentage of students at the performance levels of “basic” and “above” in each grade and subject area for the school.

2. Compare the difference, or gap, between the current performance and the goal of having at least:

- 75% of the students meeting the basic and above levels in English Language Arts (ELA)
- 70% of the students meeting the basic and above levels in Mathematics

These are done by subtracting the total percent of students currently reaching the above-mentioned performance levels from the goals.

3. Determine the annual improvement rates in each grade and subject area using 6 years as the duration within which the goal will be accomplished (e.g. divide the gap by 6 years). These computations will yield the required improvement rate in the subject areas of ELA and Math in each grade for the school. Under this model, South Carolina will be able to assist maximally the number of schools identified and served with the Federal funds available. Schools that currently reached the above-mentioned goals will be required to at least maintain the performance at or above the goal level, no further gain will be required. However, if the performance of such schools drops 3 percentage points or more in average in the subject areas of grades targeted in the following year, the school will be considered “not meeting adequate yearly progress.”

4. A weighting method will be used in the students’ performance levels and the school indicators in the calculation for the composite score in each subject area by grades:

- The percentage of students meeting basic weights 90% of the total composite score
- The school indicator weights 10% of the composite score

5. Schools that meet 50% or above the AYP in subject areas of all grades available will meet the 1999-2000 Title I evaluation criteria.

Additional School Indicators in the evaluation for progress

To incorporate information from other factors that should promote school progress, additional indicators are desired so as not to determine the progress on a single test. At this time, state level data for a valid and reliable indicator that promotes school progress is not available for each grade. Therefore, to meet the requirement for Title I school evaluation, it is required that certain indicators be used in the 1999-2000 evaluation. They will be varied by grade level:

- Schools containing grades K-5 will use the percentage ready for school from the Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB).
- Schools containing grades 6-8 will use retention.
- School containing grades 9-12 will use the percentage of 10th grade students meeting the writing criteria on the High School Exit Examination.

Adequate Yearly Progress for Districts

At least 50% of the Title I schools in the district must meet the definition of adequate yearly progress in the 1999-2000 school year in order for a district to be determined to have met the requirement for adequate yearly progress.

Evaluation of Title I in Private Schools

The district Title I coordinator is expected to evaluate the Title I program in private schools using the district guidelines that meet the State's definition of adequate yearly progress for Title I schools regardless of the number of children being served. If the district, in consultation with private school officials, determines that the State assessment would not provide accurate information about the progress of participating private school children, the district may use other assessment measures that more accurately reflect the progress of those children towards meeting the State's standards.

Districts with Title I programs in private schools must submit in writing: the measure selected, the criteria established (same growth as regular schools is required), the actual performance of the program, and the evaluation results by each school to the South Carolina Department of Education.

3. What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts plays a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?

According to law, districts are responsible for identifying schools that did not make adequate yearly progress (using the state guidelines and criteria) while the state does so for districts. In South Carolina, the state analyzes the data for both school improvement and district improvement. However, districts are given the option of analyzing data for their schools.

4. What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?

The criteria and processes have been addressed throughout the document. The schools and districts are required to develop improvement plans; however, the schoolwide plan does meet this requirement for schools. According to law, schools and districts are designated as "in need of improvement" when they fail to make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years. They may place out of improvement by showing two out of three years in meeting the adequate yearly progress requirement. The state makes the determination of those placing out of improvement for both schools and districts at the same time the identification process is conducted.

5. What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?

- *Evaluation and Planning*
- *Financial*
- *Expert Assistance*

Expert assistance is the primary focus of the Title I system of support to schools in need of improvement, although they do provide evaluation, planning, and financial assistance as necessary.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

- *School/district support teams*
- *Regional centers*
- *Distinguished educators*
- *SDE staff*

Title I, Part A funds master teachers in English language arts to work directly with schools/districts identified as in need of improvement. These master teachers are granted a one-year sabbatical leave from their regular school district to work in their assigned school/district. They offer model lessons, staff development, classroom observations, instructional feedback, and assistance to their school(s) on implementation of the standards at the classroom level. These teachers serve with members of the math and science regional hubs, state staff, and others on the Title I school support team. These team members through their regular job responsibilities, are working with the schools of need on an almost daily basis. Therefore, the needs of English language arts, mathematics, and science are being met in these schools.

Further, instructional staff of the State Department funded by Title I work directly with schools identified for improvement in sites where state school improvement funds were insufficient to place Master Teachers. The state staff provide assistance on site as well via as regional instructional training.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

No, waivers have not played a significant role.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

As the state assessment and accountability systems are being phased in, Title I anticipates some changes to their system as well. They anticipate revising their current plan to reflect changes in the educational system as a whole.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

No, the Title I and non-Title I systems of adequate yearly progress are not aligned.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

The major challenge that was noted by South Carolina officials is how to address the funding needs to support staff and Master Teachers who are assigned to address the identified needs of schools/districts as well as to carry forth mandates of the legislation.

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