

2013

# Revisions to 2012-13 Accountability Manual – Affecting Palmetto Gold and Silver Award and Growth Ratings



**SC EDUCATION**  
**OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**



PO Box 11867 | 227 Blatt Building | Columbia SC 29211 | [WWW.SCEOC.ORG](http://WWW.SCEOC.ORG)

## **Background**

On April 9, 2012 the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) approved a revised value table to be used in calculating Growth ratings for elementary and middle schools beginning with the release of the 2013 annual school and district report cards. In the following report, the staff of the EOC analyzed the impact of the Revised Growth Value Table on: (1) the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards program, including the General Performance and Closing the Achievement Gap awards; and (2) the calculation of the Growth rating for elementary and middle schools that increase meet or exceed a criterion for closing the gap between historically underachieving groups on the Reading and Research assessment portion of Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS).

## **Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards**

The EOC amended the criteria in October of 2012 to exclude schools having an Average or better Growth index for three years from being eligible to receive a Silver award. Regarding schools with steady Growth, only schools that had a Growth rating of Good or better for two consecutive years could receive a Palmetto Silver Award (Table 1). As a result of the change, approximately 277 elementary, middle and high schools did not receive a Silver Award for having three years of an Average or better Growth rating based upon academic achievement in school year 2011-12.

**Table 1**  
**Gold and Silver Awards Criteria for General Performance**  
**Beginning with the 2011-12 Academic Year**

<b>Absolute Rating</b>	<b>Growth Rating</b>	<b>Award Designation</b>	<b>Steady Growth</b>
Excellent	Excellent	Gold	
Excellent	Good	Gold	
Excellent	Average	Gold	
Good	Excellent	Gold	
Good	Good	Silver	
Average	Excellent	Gold	
Average	Good	Silver	
Below Average	Excellent	Gold	
Below Average	Good	Silver	
		Silver	Good or better Growth for 2 Years

## **Impact of New Growth Index**

In April 2012, the EOC reviewed and approved a change in the Growth Value Table which is used to determine the indices for the Growth rating for elementary and middle schools. The EOC reviewed alternative value tables and adopted a revised Growth Value Table (Table 2) to be used in the calculations for elementary and middle schools **beginning with the release of the 2013 annual report cards, which is based upon data the 2012-13 academic year.** In the new value table, students receive 100 points for maintaining their previous level of achievement, 10 points less for each decrease in achievement of one level, and an additional 10 points for each increase in achievement of one level – with one exception. The exception is that students

scoring Not Met 1 or Not Met 2 receive 20 additional points for increasing their achievement by one level, and 10 points for subsequent increases of one level.

**Table 2**  
**Revised Growth Value Table for Elementary & Middle Schools**  
**Beginning with 2012-13 Academic Year**

Year One (Pre-test)	Year Two (Post-test)				
	Not Met 1	Not Met 2	Met	Exemplary 4	Exemplary 5
Exemplary 5	60	70	80	90	100
Exemplary 4	70	80	90	100	110
Met	80	90	100	110	120
Not Met 2	90	100	120	130	140
Not Met 1	100	120	130	140	150

*Source: 2012-2013 Accountability Manual, p. 34.*

**Table 3**  
**Growth Rating Criteria Based on Growth Indices**  
**Elementary and Middle School Growth Ratings**

Growth Rating	Range of Indices
Excellent	103.05 and higher
Good	102.10 to 103.04
Average	99.89 to 102.09
Below Average	98.84 to 99.88
At Risk	99.83 and lower

*Source: 2012-2013 Accountability Manual, p. 36.*

The Growth Value Table is only used to create the Growth ratings for elementary and middle schools. To determine the effect of the changes in the Growth Value Table on the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program for the general performance awards, the EOC asked staff to use the new Growth indices to answer the following question regarding the Palmetto Gold and Silver:

*If the revised Growth Value Table and Growth indices had been used in the determination of awards for the Palmetto Gold and Silver Award Program for the 2011-12 academic year, how many elementary and middle schools would have qualified for the award under the general performance criteria?*

Staff reviewed data from the 2011 and 2012 school report cards to determine the impact of the new value table on the number (and percent) of schools that would receive Palmetto Gold and Silver awards. Table 4 presents the number and percent of Elementary and Middle schools that received Palmetto Gold and Silver awards for the 2011-12 academic year, and the number that

would have received awards had the new value table been used for each of the past two years. Because the Growth Indices and ratings were recomputed for each of the past two years using the revised value table, the percentages of schools receiving Palmetto Gold and Silver awards accurately represents the awards that would have presented for 2012, and should provide insight into the percentage of schools receiving future awards.

Using the new value table, the percentage of schools receiving a Palmetto Gold award would have decreased by seven percent (65 schools), with no change to the percentage of schools receiving Palmetto Silver awards (although six fewer schools would have received a Palmetto Silver award). A total of 438 elementary and middle schools would have received a Palmetto Gold and Silver Award using the new value table (268 Gold and 170 Silver). Of the 170 schools that would have received a Silver award, nine would have received the award for having a Growth rating of Good or better for two years.

**Table 4**  
**Current and Projected Palmetto Gold & Silver Awards**  
**in Elementary and Middle Schools for the 2011-12 Academic Year**

General Performance	Current Value Table*		New Value Table	
	Number of Schools	Percent	Number of Schools	Percent
Gold	333	35%	268	28%
Silver	176	18%	170	18%
No Award	<u>449</u>	47%	<u>520</u>	54%
TOTAL	958		958	

\*These awards were announced by the SCDE on March 25, 2013.

The number of schools receiving Palmetto Gold and Silver awards based on each combination of Absolute and Growth rating is presented in Table 5. Using the current value table, schools with Absolute ratings of Excellent were much more likely to also receive a Growth rating of Excellent. Indeed, 233 schools received Palmetto Gold awards with Excellent Absolute and Growth ratings. Using the new value table, it is less likely that schools with Excellent Absolute ratings will also receive Excellent Growth ratings. The most frequently occurring combination of Absolute and Growth ratings eligible for an award is Excellent (Absolute) / Average (Growth) (112 schools).

**Table 5**  
**Combinations of Ratings for**  
**Current and Projected Palmetto Gold & Silver Awards**  
**in Elementary and Middle Schools for the 2011-12 Academic Year**  
**for General Performance ONLY.**

<b>Absolute Rating</b>	<b>Growth Rating</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Current Value Table*</b>	<b>New Value Table</b>
Excellent	Excellent	Gold	233	12
Excellent	Good	Gold	32	63
Excellent	Average	Gold	10	112
Good	Excellent	Gold	39	18
Good	Good	Silver	92	42
Average	Excellent	Gold	17	48
Average	Good	Silver	84	97
Below Average	Excellent	Gold	2	15
Below Average	Good	Silver	0	22
Good or better Growth for 2 Years		Silver	0	9
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>509</b>	<b>438</b>

\*These awards were announced by the SCDE on March 25, 2013.

Table 6 presents a history of the number of Palmetto Gold and Silver awards. From 2001-02 through 2007-08, the number of Palmetto Gold awards ranged from 114 to 285, and the number of Palmetto Silver Awards ranged from 77 to 149. In 2008-09, several changes were made: the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) replaced the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT), the value table methodology was adopted to create Growth indices and ratings, and the Palmetto Gold and Silver program was amended to include schools that closed the achievement gap. Closing the achievement gap awards were given when one or more of the historically underachieving student groups (African-American, Hispanic, students receiving subsidized meals, and students with disabilities) either (1) obtains a mean score on PASS Reading and Writing or PASS Mathematics that is as high or higher than that of the average of white and full-pay meals students, or (2) the Growth index (computed using scores from ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies) for one or more the historically underachieving student groups is as high or higher than the average Growth index of white and full-pay meal students. For the 2012 report cards, the EOC amended the criteria to discontinue Palmetto Silver awards for schools having three years of Average or better Growth. By eliminating this award, the number of Palmetto Silver awards in 2011-2012 declined to 189 schools because 277 schools did not receive a Palmetto Silver award for having three years of Average Growth or better.

**Table 6**  
**Schools Receiving Palmetto Gold or Silver Award / EOC Closing the Gap Award \***

Academic Year	Award Category	Number of Schools Receiving Gold Award	Number of Schools Receiving Silver Award	Total Number of Schools Receiving General Performance Award	Total Number of Schools Being Recognized for General Performance and /or for Closing the Achievement Gap	Number of Elementary and Middle Schools Receiving EOC Award for Closing the Achievement Gap
2000-01	General Performance	198	100	298	NA	NA
2001-02	General Performance	198	92	290	NA	87
2002-03	General Performance	229	77	306	NA	107
2003-04	General Performance	285	135	418	NA	132
2004-05	General Performance	187	125	312	NA	138
2005-06	General Performance	163	147	310	NA	135
2006-07	General Performance	114	126	240	NA	141
2007-08	General Performance	162	149	311	403	NA
	Closing Achievement Gap	79	163	242		NA
2008-09	General Performance	211	129	340	403	NA
	Closing Achievement Gap	66	150	216		NA
2009-10	General Performance	297	200	497	551	NA
	Closing Achievement Gap	55	243	298		NA
2010-11	General Performance	339	476	815	852	NA
	Achievement Gap	76	165	241		NA
2011-12**	General Performance	449	189	638	677	NA
	Achievement Gap	91	140	231		NA

\* Totals reflect school report cards; based on grade configurations some schools receive more than one report card.

\*\* Eliminated Silver awards for Average or better Growth for three consecutive years

Also awarded as a part of the Palmetto Gold and Silver awards program are awards for closing the achievement gap. A review of the current process when applied to data using the new value table indicated that the number of schools that would receive awards for closing the achievement gap will increase dramatically. An examination of the process of deriving closing the achievement gap awards is warranted.

The current process for making awards for closing the achievement gap is:

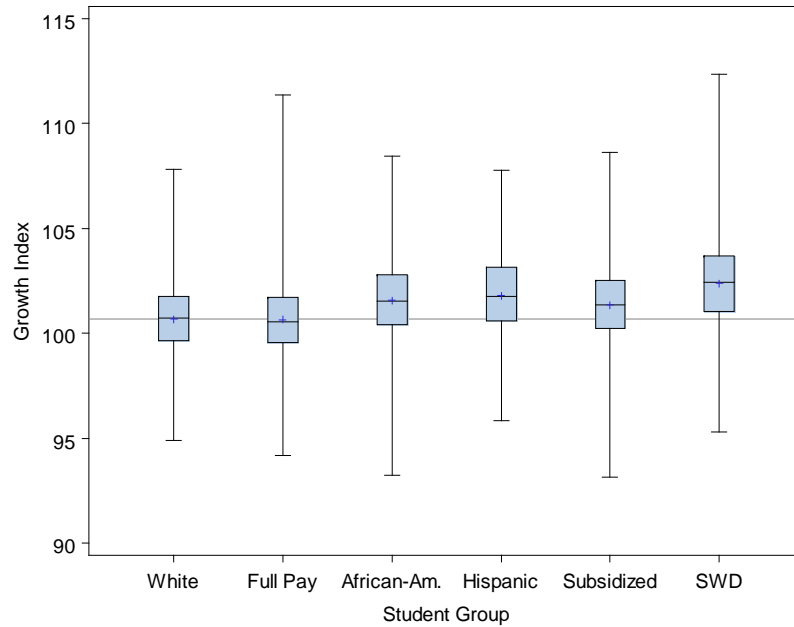
- 1) Determine the average school-level Growth indices for white students and for full-pay lunch students statewide. Average the Growth indices for white and full-pay lunch students to obtain a single statewide Growth index criterion.
- 2) Determine the average school-level Growth indices for each historically underachieving group (HUG: Hispanic, African-American, subsidized meal, students with disabilities) for each school.
- 3) Compare the Growth index for each HUG group to the criterion obtained in step 1. If at least one HUG group exceeds the Growth index criterion, the school receives an award for closing the achievement gap.

Given the changes that will occur in the Growth ratings due to the new value table, an investigation of the potential consequences for awards made for closing the achievement gap was conducted. Changing the value table has changed the ranges of Growth indices obtained for schools overall, and for each student group (white, African-American, Hispanic, full-pay meal, subsidized meal, and students with disabilities).

Figure 1 displays the distributions of Growth indices obtained in 2012 for each student group used in computing closing the achievement gap awards using box and whisker plots. Each box has four elements to it that indicate different summary statistics of the Growth indices for each group; the bottom of the box is the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, the top of the box is the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile, the horizontal line inside the box is the median (50<sup>th</sup> percentile), and the “x” inside the box is the mean (average) Growth index. Recall the correct interpretation of a percentile; 25 percent of schools have Growth indices below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile. The whiskers extend to the lowest and the highest Growth indices within each group.

The average Growth index for white and full-pay lunch students, which is the current Growth reference criterion from step (1) above is 100.66, and is presented as a horizontal line in Figure 1. Notice that for students with disabilities (SWD) the entire box is above the mean Absolute index for white and full-pay lunch students, which means that more than 75 percent of schools with 30 or more students with disabilities would be identified as closing the achievement gap. Similarly, very near to 75 percent of schools with 30 or more African-American students, Hispanic students, and subsidized meal students would also be identified as closing the achievement gap. For an individual school to be recognized for closing the achievement gap, it needs to have only one group with 30 or more students and a Growth index that exceeds the average Growth index of white and full-pay lunch students. It is projected that 87 percent of schools would receive awards for closing the achievement gap by the current process.

**Figure 1. Distributions of Growth Indices by Student Group**



An alternative strategy is proposed here. Because the distributions of Growth indices for white and full-pay lunch students are substantially lower than those of the four historically under-achieving groups, it was not possible to use white and full-pay lunch students as a reference point for defining closing the achievement gap awards. To provide consistency with the award rate with previous years, the number and percentage of schools that received awards for closing the achievement gap in 2013 was used as reference points. In 2013, 145 elementary and middle schools received awards for closing the achievement (approximately 15% of schools).

To consistently identify comparable percentage of schools, the new methodology is referenced to a distribution of Growth indices for each school. The Growth index for each school that is used is the highest Growth index of the historically underachieving groups that is based on 30 or more students. Any school that meets a Growth index criteria by comparing each group to a Growth index criteria will also meet the Growth index criteria by comparing the highest Growth index to the Growth index criteria. Therefore, rather than consider the Growth indices for all historically underachieving groups when deriving a Growth index criteria, it is sufficient to consider only the highest Growth index for each school.

The process of identifying schools, then, is as follows:

- 1) For each school, find the Growth index computed for each of the four historically under-achieving groups (African-Americans, Hispanic, subsidized meal, students with disabilities).
- 2) For each school, find the maximum Growth index among the Growth indices based on 30 or more students for the four historically underachieving groups.
- 3) Create a distribution of the maximum Growth indices obtained from step (2). Let the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of this distribution be the Growth index criterion.
- 4) Compare the Growth index for each HUG group to the Growth index criterion obtained in step (3). If at least one HUG group exceeds the Growth index criterion, the school receives an award for closing the achievement gap.



To clarify step (2) above by example, consider Table 7 below, which presents the number of students and the Growth indices for each of the four historically underachieving groups in two schools. In both of these schools the number of African-American students, subsidized meal students, and students with disabilities is greater than 30, and the number of Hispanic students is less than 30. For both schools the maximum Growth index among all four groups is the Growth index for Hispanic students. However, because there are fewer than 30 Hispanic students, their Growth index is not considered when obtaining the maximum Growth index for determining the Growth index criterion. For school 1, the maximum Growth index for determining the Growth index criterion (103.429) is the Growth index for students with disabilities, and for school 2, the maximum Growth index for determining the Growth index criterion (102.061) is the Growth index for African-American students.

**Table 7**  
**Identifying the maximum Growth index used in finding the Growth index criterion.**

School	African-American		Hispanic		Subsidized		Students with Disabilities		Maximum Growth Index	
	N	Growth Index	N	Growth Index	N	Growth Index	N	Growth Index	All Groups	For Criterion
1	349	102.748	21	111.000	517	102.730	63	103.429	111.000	103.429
2	509	102.061	22	106.136	749	101.311	150	100.468	106.136	102.061

To verify that the proposed methodology would consistently identify approximately 85 percent of schools, the proposed methodology was applied to data from the 2010, 2011, and 2012 academic years. Results of this analysis are provided in Table 8. By choosing the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, the number of schools that would receive closing the achievement gap awards in 2012 is 131, which is 14% of schools. In 2010 and 2011 15% of schools are identified. In all three years, the targeted percentage of schools identified is matched.

**Table 8**  
**Percent of schools that would have received closing the achievement gap awards with various Growth index criteria.**

Academic Year	80 <sup>th</sup> percentile		85 <sup>th</sup> percentile		90 <sup>th</sup> percentile	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
2010	182	20	137	15	92	10
2011	181	19	138	15	91	10
2012	178	19	131	14	84	9

**Recommendation 1:** The Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee recommends that the calculation of the Closing the Achievement Award for elementary and middle schools be amended beginning with the results of the 2013 state district and school report cards accordingly.

- 1) For each school, find the Growth index computed for each of the four historically under-achieving groups (African-Americans, Hispanic, subsidized meal, students with disabilities).
- 2) For each school, find the maximum Growth index among the Growth indices based on 30 or more students for the four historically underachieving groups.
- 3) Create a distribution of the maximum Growth indices obtained from step (2). Let the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of this distribution be the Growth index criterion.
- 4) Compare the Growth index for each HUG group to the Growth index criterion obtained in step (3). If at least one HUG group exceeds the Growth index criterion, the school receives an award for closing the achievement gap.

### **Growth Ratings Calculations for Historically Underachieving Groups (HUG)**

Also affected by the change in the value table will be changes to Growth ratings made because the achievement of one or more historically underachieving groups has been higher than expected. The process as presented in the current accountability manual is as follows:

A school's Growth rating may be increased by one level if the Growth in performance on the Reading & Research assessment of historically underachieving demographic groups of students meets or exceeds a criterion. Historically underachieving groups consist of African- American, Hispanic, and Native American students, those eligible for the free or reduced-price federal lunch program, Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, migrant students, and students with non-speech disabilities. The school's eligibility for the increased Growth rating is determined as follows:

- a. Calculate the reading & research Growth index for the group of eligible students. The group must consist of 40 or more students to be considered for analysis.
- b. Compare the reading & research Growth index for the group to the state two-year average reading & research Growth index for all students in the state. The state two-year average Growth index is the average of the Growth indices for all students for the current and prior years. If the Growth index for the historically underachieving group in the school exceeds the state two-year average Growth index by at least one standard deviation, the school's Growth rating may be increased by one level. If the school is rated Excellent for Growth on the basis of all students, the performance for groups also should be calculated and reported even though the school's rating cannot be increased. (*2012-13 Accountability Manual*, page 36)

As indicated in (b) above, the HUG criterion, the point each historically underachieving group is compared to, is one standard deviation above the state two-year average Growth index for all students. Using the new value table, the HUG criterion point is 101.044, computed as follows:

<b>2-year Reading Index</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>HUG Criterion</b>
99.47	+	1.57	=	101.04

The projected number and percent of schools that would receive HUG awards using the new value table in 2012 is presented in Table 9, and the number and percent of schools that received HUG awards in 2009 through 2012 is presented in Table 10.

In 2012, 8.9% of schools received HUG awards, and using the new value table and the current HUG calculation, 33.3% of schools are projected to receive a HUG award, nearly four times the current percentage of schools that would receive an award.

**Table 9. Projected Number and Percent of Elementary and Middle Schools Receiving HUG Awards in 2012 using New Value Table**

Award	HUG Awards	HUG Awards by Group			
		African-Am.	Hispanic	Subsidized	SWD
<b>Eligible - Award</b>	313 (33.3)	185 (19.9)	42 (5.1)	210 (22.4)	127 (13.9)
<b>Eligible - No Award</b>	626 (66.7)	461 (49.5)	55 (6.6)	622 (66.4)	77 (8.4)
<b>Not Eligible (n&lt;40)</b>		286 (30.7)	735 (88.3)	104 (11.1)	712 (77.7)
<b>Total</b>	939	932	832	936	916

**Table 10. Number and Percent of Schools that Received HUG Awards: 2009-2012.**

Year	Number of Schools	Percent Receiving HUG	Number receiving HUG
2009-2012.	3788	8.3	315
2009	940	5.2	49
2010	939	15.3	144
2011	951	3.9	37
2012	958	8.9	85

**Conclusion:**

In essence, the HUG awards, which incentivize schools for making progress in improving the performance of historically underachieving groups and the revised Growth Value Table accomplish the same objective; maintaining both would inflate the percentage of schools receiving a HUG. In 2012, 8.9% of schools received HUG awards, and using the new value table and the current HUG calculation, 33.3% of schools are projected to receive a HUG award, nearly four times the current percentage of schools that would receive an award.

**Recommendation 2:** Based on the analysis of HUG award projections using the Revised Growth Value Table, the Academic Standards and Assessment Subcommittee recommends that the HUG award be deleted from the Growth ratings beginning with the release of the 2013 annual report cards. School districts will be notified of the change immediately. As in the past, the EOC will review, monitor, and adjust as needed.