

2008 Annual School and District Ratings Discussion Points

Based on data received from SDE, October 20, 2008; October 30, 2008; February 5, 2009; and February 12



Ratings

Absolute Ratings

The 2008 school ratings reveal an increase from 2007 in the percentage of schools rated *Excellent*. The percentage of schools rated *At Risk (Unsatisfactory)* increased as well.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<i>Excellent</i>	168 (15%)	191 (18%)	217 (20%)	224 (20%)	169 (15%)	131 (12%)	75 (7%)	97 (8%)
<i>At-Risk (Unsatisfactory)</i>	71 (6%)	50 (5%)	46 (4%)	28 (3%)	65 (6%)	137 (12%)	170 (15%)	185 (16%)
<i>Below Average</i>	200 (18%)	159 (15%)	150 (14%)	160 (15%)	222 (20%)	252 (22%)	298 (26%)	281 (24%)

Table does not include ratings for career and technology centers or special schools. Percentages calculated using total number of schools receiving a rating in 2008 (1148 schools).

There were changes to school absolute ratings from 2007 to 2008 in the following manner:

“Improvers”: 131 schools, 12% of schools receiving Absolute ratings both years, elevated their ratings –

- 78 of the *Improvers* are high schools, 11 are middle schools.

“Maintainers”: 797 schools, 72% of schools receiving Absolute ratings both years, maintained their ratings

“Sliders”: 183 schools, 16% of schools receiving Absolute ratings both years, lowered their ratings –

- 112, or 61% of the “Sliders”, are elementary schools.
- The Absolute ratings of 65 schools rated *Average* or above in 2007 slipped into either *Below Average* or *At Risk* in 2008.

South Carolina’s Students – 2008

10.5% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Excellent*.

18.2% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Good*.

40.6% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Average*.

20.1% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *Below Average*.

10.5% of students are enrolled in a school with an Absolute rating of *At Risk*.

District Absolute Ratings

- This year, 12 school districts are rated *At Risk* down from 17 in 2007.

Career and Technology Center Absolute Ratings

- Absolute ratings for Career and Technology Centers, as well as special schools, are not included in the overall “snapshot” of the ratings. However, 34 percent of the 37 Career and Technology Centers are rated *Excellent* (92 percent).

Charter School Absolute Ratings

- The performance of charter schools is included in the overall “snapshot” of the ratings. Of the 34 charter schools who will receive an Absolute rating in 2008, four schools are rated *Excellent*, up from 1 in 2007. Seventeen of the charter schools are rated *At Risk* and five are rated *Below Average*.

Growth Ratings

- There were changes to school *Growth* (formerly *Improvement*) Ratings from 2007 to 2008 in the following manner:
 - 429 schools (39% of schools receiving Growth rating both years) elevated their *Growth* rating
 - 406 schools (37% of schools receiving Growth rating both years) maintained their *Growth* rating
 - 276 schools (25% of schools receiving Growth rating both years) earned lower *Growth* ratings. Seventy-four percent of the schools earning lower *Growth* ratings were elementary schools.

Student Performance

- PACT performance among all students improved in every subject area tested and at every level. When comparing elementary and middle PACT performance at the percent Basic or Above and percent Proficient or Advanced, performance improved in every subject area except for a slight one-tenth of a point slip in Elementary ELA (at the Basic or Above level). Elementary Math performance at the Basic or above level stayed the same from 2007 to 2008.

PACT Performance (2006-2008)

	Elementary (Grades 3-5) % Basic or Above			Middle (Grades 6-8) % Basic or Above			Elementary (Grades 3-5) % Proficient or Advanced			Middle (Grades 6-8) % Proficient or Advanced		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
ELA	82.7%	81.9%	81.8%	70.7%	70.7%	72.9%	43.5%	43.0%	45.0%	27.2%	28.0%	31.1%
Math	78.4%	78.1%	78.1%	72.9%	73.9%	74.4%	36.7%	35.2%	37.7%	30.1%	30.0%	31.5%
Science	61.7%	63.2%	67.6%	56.4%	63.2%	64.9%	27.1%	31.9%	36.5%	24.1%	33.8%	33.8%
Social Studies	71.4%	74.0%	75.8%	63.0%	64.3%	64.7%	31.1%	33.9%	38.5%	24.1%	24.7%	28.7%

Does not include students tested with PACT-Alt.

Notes on Ratings Calculations

This year, modifications were made to the calculation of the Absolute and Growth ratings, which factor into an analysis of the ratings.

On-Time Graduation Rate

Although the on-time graduation rate improved from 2007, the rate is lower than reported in previous years. This fact may be the result of stronger and more accurate databases.

End-of-Course Assessments in middle school ratings

- This is the first year that end-of-course assessments administered to students in middle school are factored into the calculation of middle school Absolute ratings.

Revisions to rating terms

- Due to revisions made to the Education Accountability Act in 2008, the school rating term *Unsatisfactory* is now *At Risk*. The Improvement rating has been replaced with the term, *Growth* rating. No changes were made to the calculation method of the *Growth* rating or to the formula used to determine a rating of *At Risk*.

Inclusion of PACT Science and Social Studies in the Ratings for Elementary and Middle Schools

- This is the sixth year Social Studies and Science have been tested on the PACT and 2008 is the fourth year results have been included in the calculation of the ratings. The results were phased in over a three-

year period and the weighting increased each year (5 percentage points per year) until the target weightings were achieved in school year 2006-2007. This year, Science absolute rating weights are set at 20% for elementary schools and 25% for middle schools. Social Studies absolute rating weights are set at 20% for elementary schools and 25% for middle schools.

Increase in Expectations (Rigor)

- Designed as a system to require and reward continuous improvement in South Carolina's public schools, the rigor of the absolute performance ratings increased last year by one-tenth of a point on a five-point scale. This year, the rigor increased an additional one-tenth of a point.
- Our analysis shows that the increase in the rigor only affected 77 schools, meaning seven percent of schools were "caught in the rigor." The 2008 statewide average index is 3.14, which establishes an Absolute rating of *Average*.
- In 2008, seven districts were "caught in the rigor."

Confronting Poverty

Note: Numbers of schools will vary within data sets. Data provided from the SC Office of Data Management and Analysis includes information from schools that may not have received a report card or received more than one report card, depending on their school structure.

Poverty and Absolute Ratings

- Significant poverty exists in the majority of South Carolina schools. Only 6% of schools have fewer than one-third of their students living in poverty (67 of 1172 schools).
- Only 47 schools (4%) serve a population of 30% poverty or less.
- Of 1142 schools that had poverty indexes in both 2007 and 2008, 779 (68.1%) showed an increase in the poverty index.
- Over half (56%) of all South Carolina schools have at least 70% of their students living in poverty in 2008. This percentage increased from 2006 and 2007 when 53 percent of schools were affected and in 2005, when the percentage was 50%.
- Almost one-quarter of schools (23.7%) serve a population of students in very high poverty (90% or more.)

Absolute Rating	Average 2007 Poverty Index	Average 2008 Poverty Index
Excellent	46.2% (n=71)	49.9% (n=97)
Good	52.8% (n=217)	53.1% (n=182)
Average	67.5% (n=371)	66.6% (n=402)
Below Average	81.5% (n=289)	82.1% (n=281)
At-Risk/Unsatisfactory	90.6% (n=154)	92.2% (n=185)

**2006-2008 School Ratings
Poverty Levels Across Primary, Elementary, Middle, and High Schools Report Cards**

	Extent of Poverty (Poverty Index)		
	High Poverty (70%+)	Very High Poverty (80%+)	Extreme Poverty (90%+)
Total Number of Report Cards (% of 1171 Report Cards in 2008, 1128 in 2007, and 1106 in 2006)	2008: 656 (56.0%) 2007: 601 (53.3%) 2006: 599 (54.2%)	2008: 471 (40.2%) 2007: 421 (37.3%) 2006: 402 (36.3%)	2008: 278 (23.7%) 2007: 228 (20.2%) 2006: 215 (19.4%)
Number of Report Cards with <i>Excellent</i> or <i>Good</i> Absolute Ratings in 2008	2008: 59 (9.0%) 2007: 49 (8.2%) 2006: 76 (12.7%)	2008: 37 (7.9%) 2007: 24 (5.7%) 2006: 36 (9.0%)	2008: 14 (5.0%) 2007: 10 (4.4%) 2006: 14 (6.5%)

Poverty by Organizational Level – Absolute Ratings

Primary and elementary schools constitute a disproportionately-larger percentage of those schools with extreme poverty rates. Primary and elementary schools represent 56.7% of all schools, but 66.9% of schools with a poverty Index of 90% or greater.

Elementary

- 1.8% of elementary schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, the same percentage as in 2007. 2.3% of elementary schools with a poverty index of 90% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, down from 2.5% in 2007.

Middle Schools

- Poverty presents a great challenge for middle schools. In 2008, no middle schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good* while 97.2% of these schools earned an absolute rating of *At Risk* or *Below Average*.

High Schools

- 30.5% of high schools with a poverty level of 80% or greater earned an absolute rating of *Excellent* or *Good*, up from 13.7% in 2007.

Poverty by Organizational Level – Growth Ratings

- Seventeen percent of all schools (primary, elementary, middle, and high) with a poverty index of 90% or greater earned a growth rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.
- Nineteen percent of schools with a poverty index of 80% or greater earned a growth rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.
- Twenty percent of schools with a poverty index of 70% or greater earned a growth rating of *Excellent* or *Good*.

Growth Rating	2007 Average Poverty Index	2008 Average Poverty Index
Excellent	67.3% (n=49)	62.6% (n=104)
Good	65.9% (n=148)	66.7% (n=166)
Average	65.0% (n=104)	68.8% (n=147)
Below Average	69.7% (n=337)	70.2% (n=356)
At Risk/Unsatisfactory	73.2% (n=489)	76.8% (n=368)

Blue Ribbon/Red Carpet Schools – Absolute Ratings

- To assist with rewards for successful schools, the Secretary of Education established the No Child Left Behind -- Blue Ribbon Schools Program to honor those elementary and secondary schools in the United States that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap or whose students achieve at very high levels. The schools are selected based on one of three criteria:
 - Schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance on state tests, as determined by the state school chief;
 - Schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent on state tests; and
 - Private schools that achieve in the top 10 percent in the nation.

This year, 2 of the 4 SC Blue Ribbon public schools received *Excellent* absolute ratings. The other two schools were rated *Good*. One school received an *Excellent* Growth Rating, 1 *Average*, and 2 *Below Average*.

- Each year, the SC State Dept. of Education honors schools who exhibit family-friendly philosophies and environments, as well as good customer service. The schools are listed as Red Carpet Schools. The distributions of absolute ratings among 2008 Red Carpet schools are: *Excellent* – 11%; *Good* - 17%; *Average* - 52%; *Below Average* - 13%; and *At Risk* - 5%