

ASA Subcommittee Recommendations Based on the Advice of the High School Graduation Rate Goal Advisory Panel

Goal Recommendations:

- 1) The graduation rate goal should be 88.3% for schools, districts, and the state, achieved by 2014. This goal is based on the percentage of students achieving a high school diploma on-time, using the National Governor's Association compact on calculation.
- 2) A second goal should be established to measure a statewide success rate of 95% of 21-year-olds achieving readiness for postsecondary school and/or the workforce by the year 2018. The readiness measure may include successful completion of high school with a diploma, a GED, or a State Board of Education-approved occupational certificate for students with severe disabilities.

Policy and Procedural Recommendations:

Students Included in the Calculations

- 3) The rules and procedures for documenting the status of students as transfer students rather than dropouts for graduation rate purposes should be revised to improve their practicality and reasonableness.
 - a) The time period of continuous enrollment required for the documentation of student transfer status should be defined.
 - b) The inclusion in the graduation rate calculation of data from special education students who, based on their Individual Education Plan (IEP), have never been enrolled in courses earning high school credit and who meet the other criteria excusing special education students from re-administration of the High School Assessment Program (HSAP) should be reviewed for possible exclusion and compliance with federal law.

Procedural Recommendations

- 4) The rules and procedures for documentation and data reporting for the current school year must be published and disseminated to school and district personnel by January of that school year. Rule changes affecting year-to-year data comparisons must be documented on the report card.
- 5) Requirements for documentation regarding a student's withdrawal from a high school should more practical such as:
 - a) Acceptable documentation for a deceased student may include a published obituary;
 - b) Withdrawal forms, common to all public schools, signed by a parent or legal guardian documenting the specific educational plans for the student (enrollment in another high school in SC or out of state, home schooling, etc.) may be acceptable to establish a student's dropout or transfer status.

Ratings Calculations and Public Reporting

- 6) The graduation rate calculation each year for schools for report card rating purposes must include the following groups of students as graduates (e.g., in the numerator for the calculation of graduation rate):
 - a) Students obtaining the state high school diploma within four years (including the summer following their senior year) from the time they first entered grade nine and students with disabilities who earn the diploma within the extended time period specified in their IEPs;
 - b) Students obtaining the state high school diploma within five years from the time they first entered grade nine.
- 7) The graduation rate calculation each year for school districts for report card rating purposes must include the following groups of students as graduates:
 - a) Students earning the state high school diploma within four years (including the summer following their senior year) from the time they first entered grade nine and students with disabilities who earn the diploma within the extended time period specified in their IEPs;
 - b) Students earning the state high school diploma within five years from the time they first entered grade nine, including students attending district Adult Education programs who earn the state high school diploma within five years from the time they first entered grade nine;
- 8) Annual reporting of the graduation rate for the State must include the following information:
 - a) Students earning the state high school diploma within four years (including the summer following their senior year) from the time they first entered grade nine and students with disabilities who earn the diploma within the extended time period specified in their IEPs;
 - b) The statewide success rate of 21-year-olds achieving readiness for postsecondary school and/or the workforce. The readiness measure may include successful completion of high school with a diploma, a GED, or a State Board of Education-approved occupational certificate for students with severe disabilities.

**Recommendations of the High School Graduation Rate Goal Advisory Panel
February 28, 2008**

Background Information

Each year the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) establishes objectives regarding its mission to improve the outcomes from our public educational system. One of the EOC's objectives for 2007-2008 is to "establish a goal for high school graduation to include reporting data for different student groups and the inclusion of fifth year graduates." A publicly-adopted goal for high school graduation is needed to provide focus and direction to support the efforts by individuals and groups engaged in efforts to improve the lives of South Carolina's young people.

To accomplish this goal, the EOC convened an advisory panel to make recommendations regarding the goal and how public policy may be directed to meet the goal. The advisory panel is made up of school, school district, and state-level educators and community representatives from the business and private sectors (the list of panel members is attached). The panel met on February 8, 2008 and had a follow-up teleconference meeting on February 28, 2008. At its February 8 meeting the panel was charged to identify factors affecting the high school graduation rate in South Carolina, to discuss those factors and identify policy issues regarding the graduation rate, and to set a goal for the graduation rate and make recommendations for policy changes needed to improve the accuracy of the graduation rates reported. The panel developed a set of draft recommendations and refined those recommendations in its teleconference meeting on February 28.

The recommendations from the panel are attached for submission to the Academic Standards and Assessments Subcommittee for consideration at their March 24, 2008 meeting.

**Recommendations of the High School Graduation Rate Goal Advisory Panel
February 28, 2008**

Modifications of Current Goals, Practices and Procedures

Goal Recommendations:

- 1) The goal should be 88.3% graduation rate achieved by 2014. This goal is based on the percentage of students achieving a high school diploma on-time, using the National Governor's Association compact on calculation.
- 2) A second goal should be established to measure a statewide success rate of 95% of 21-year-olds achieving readiness for postsecondary school and/or the workforce by the year 2018. The readiness measure should include successful completion of high school with a diploma, a GED, or a state occupational certificate for students with severe disabilities.

Policy and Procedural Recommendations:

Students Included in the Calculations

- 3) The rules and procedures for documenting the status of students as transfer students rather than dropouts for graduation rate purposes should be revised to improve their practicality and reasonableness. The advisory team recommends:
 - c) The time period of continuous enrollment required for the documentation of student transfer status should be defined.
 - d) The inclusion in the graduation rate calculation of data from special education students who, based on their IEP, have never been enrolled in courses earning high school credit and who meet the other criteria excusing special education students from re-administration of the High School Assessment Program (HSAP) should be reviewed for possible modification.

Procedural Recommendations

- 4) The rules and procedures for documentation and data reporting for the current school year should be published and disseminated to school and district personnel by January of that school year. Rule changes affecting year-to-year data comparisons should be documented on the report card.
- 5) Requirements for documentation regarding a student's withdrawal from a high school should be more practical such as:
 - e) Acceptable documentation for a deceased student should include a published obituary;
 - f) Withdrawal forms, common to all public schools, signed by a parent or legal guardian documenting the specific educational plans for the student (enrollment in another high school in SC or out of state, home schooling, etc.) should be acceptable to establish a student's dropout or transfer status.

Ratings Calculations and Public Reporting

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 - b. Students obtaining the state high school diploma within five years from the time they first entered grade nine.
- 7) The graduation rate calculation each year for school districts for report card rating purposes should include the following groups of students as graduates:
 - a. Students earning the state high school diploma within four years (including the summer following their senior year) from the time they first entered grade nine and students with disabilities who earn the diploma within the extended time period specified in their IEPs;
 - b. Students earning the state high school diploma within five years from the time they first entered grade nine, including students attending district Adult Education programs who earn the state high school diploma within five years from the time they first entered grade nine;
- 8) Annual reporting of the graduation rate for the State should include the following information:
 - a. Students earning the state high school diploma within four years (including the summer following their senior year) from the time they first entered grade nine and students with disabilities who earn the diploma within the extended time period specified in their IEPs;
 - b. The statewide success rate of 21-year-olds achieving readiness for postsecondary school and/or the workforce. The readiness measure should include successful completion of high school with a diploma, a GED, or a state occupational certificate for students with severe disabilities.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS: AREAS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- 9) The WorkKeys assessment should be administered to all high school students, with the results provided to the students and their families.
- 10) Districts should be encouraged and enabled to enact policies and practices for the early identification of and effective intervention with potential dropouts among elementary and middle school students.
- 11) More financial and other resources should be devoted to alternative education programs to increase high school graduation rates
- 12) More high school courses should be competency-based, with end of course examinations to maintain standards and accountability.

High School Graduation Rate Goal Advisory Panel

Robbie Barnett
Associate Vice President
Education Policy
SC Chamber of Commerce

David Barrow
Principal
Timberland High School
Berkeley County School District

Daryl Brown
Principal
North Myrtle Beach High School
Horry County School District

Russ Bumba
Academic Affairs
SC State Board for Technical & Comprehensive
Education

Rutledge Dingle
Principal
Sumter High School
Sumter School District Four

Samuel Drew, Jr.
Associate Director
Nation Dropout Prevention Center/Network
Clemson University

Mary Gaston
Director
Adult Education Center
Pickens County School District

J. Russel Gunter
Principal
Langley Bath Clearwater Middle School
Aiken County School District

Valerie Harrison
Deputy Superintendent
Division of Standards & Learning
SC Department of Education

Sherry Henderson
Standardized Testing
Spartanburg High School
Spartanburg School District Seven

Sandra Jameson
Director
Cope Area Career Center
Orangeburg School District Four

Richard Kalk
Director
Career Education/Business Partnerships
Spartanburg School District Five

Nathaniel Miller
Superintendent of Schools
Marion School District Two

Karen Neal
Principal
Woodruff High School
Spartanburg School District Four

Elainna Rickenbacker
Technical Support Officer
Assessment & Accountability Office
Charleston County School District

Craig Stine
Research Associate
Alliance for Quality Education

Peggy Torrey
Deputy Secretary
Workforce Development
SC Department of Commerce

McKinley Washington, Jr.
Commissioner Vice Chair
SC Employment Security Commission

Reena Watson
Principal
Blue Ridge High School
Greenville County School District

EOC & SCDE Staff
Jo Anne Anderson
Executive Director
SC Education Oversight Committee

David Potter
Director of Research
SC Education Oversight Committee

David Stout
Director
Adult & Community Education
SC Department of Education