



State of South Carolina Office of the Governor

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

1205 PENDLETON STREET
COLUMBIA 29201

May 23, 2014

Dear Superintendents and School Board Members,

Earlier this year, I signed Act 155 of 2014 into law, eliminating the exit exam requirement to receive a high school diploma. This common-sense reform also allows people to apply for diplomas if they previously did not graduate solely because they failed their exit exam.

It has come to my attention that the combination of individual district policy and the timing of this Act has resulted in some members of the Class of 2014 being excluded from their graduation ceremony, despite the fact that they are members of the Class of 2014 and, under this new law, will receive their diplomas this year. Accordingly, I encourage all school districts to allow students who will not graduate solely because they failed the exit exam to participate in commencement ceremonies.

Additional concerns have been raised about the implementation of this Act, particularly with regard to how the timeliness of a district's processing of a diploma request will affect eligibility for college financial aid. My office has been in conversations with the South Carolina Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education to develop an expedited process for addressing diploma requests from eligible members of the Class of 2014. My understanding is that the Department is releasing guidance, and I encourage your district to take immediate steps to process these requests so these students have their diplomas by July.

Thank you for your service to South Carolina's students and your timely attention to this matter. If I may be of further assistance, please contact Joshua Baker in my office at 803.734.5153 or joshbaker@gov.sc.gov. God bless.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nikki R. Haley".

Nikki R. Haley

NRH/jdb