

From: SC Education Oversight Committee <danay@eoc.sc.gov>
To: Kevin L. BryantKevinBryant@scstatehouse.gov
Date: 11/29/2018 4:12:59 PM
Subject: For Immediate Release: SCDE and EOC Release New School Report Cards

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Contact:

Dana Yow, Director of Public Engagement and Communications

Phone: (803) 734-6164 (office), (803) 477-6439 (mobile)

Email address: danay@eoc.sc.gov

SCDE and EOC Release New School Report Cards

Columbia, S.C., November 29, 2018 - Today, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and Education Oversight Committee (EOC) released school and district report cards as part of the state's merged state and federal accountability system. The 2018 report cards reflect school and district performance during the 2017-2018 school year and contain overall school ratings for the first time since 2014.

"The report cards unveiled today are the culmination of many years of South Carolina's hard work to design a rigorous accountability system that uses multiple measures to show the public the overall performance of our schools and districts," said State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman. "I encourage students, parents, and school communities to take an in-depth look and celebrate their successes and collaborate on areas where we need to improve."

The new report cards are web based and include new data elements required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), federal legislation governing accountability signed into law in 2015. South Carolina's state ESSA plan was approved by the U.S. Department of Education on May 3, 2018. Within the new system, all elementary, middle, and high schools receive overall ratings based on a 100-point scale. Although school districts and primary schools will receive report cards, they will not be rated. The ratings follow terms South Carolina public schools are familiar with from previous school rating systems: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and Unsatisfactory. Schools also receive ratings on seven out of the ten key report card indicators which contain vital information about schools and districts on how well students performed on state and national assessments, student growth, graduation rates, English language proficiency, student

engagement, safety, classroom learning environment and more.

While the rating terms look the same, EOC Chairman Neil Robinson cautions comparing school ratings from previous years. The EOC approved the accountability system in September 2017 following three years of work and stakeholder engagement, which included the participation of over 6,000 individuals.

"While previous systems looked exclusively at student achievement measures, the new system also looks at measures like student engagement and the progress English learners are making in learning the English language," stated Robinson. "I can't overemphasize that this new system sets higher expectations for students, focusing on their preparedness for college and careers, not just their ability to graduate from high school."

The detailed report card data is disaggregated by student subgroup and is aimed at giving educators, parents and communities a better picture of overall school success. The report cards present a tremendous opportunity for parents, families, community leaders, business people, and others to learn what they can do to help students and schools. The EOC plans to showcase several schools over the coming weeks to reinforce the importance of using the report cards as tools for celebrating achievement and identifying challenges for individuals and communities to address.

As with any new system, the South Carolina Department of Education, the EOC and stakeholders will continue to solicit feedback and make changes as necessary in order to best serve the needs of our state. Report cards are not the only measure of the success or accomplishments of a school or district. Visiting schools and talking to parents, students, teachers and graduates can paint a more complete picture of the overall educational experience.

Report cards can be accessed by visiting SCReportCards.com.

Summary of the Overall Ratings and indicators

Overall Ratings

Based on a 100-point scale, per state law

Overall ratings for schools are determined based on SC's performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2015. The percentage of schools in each rating category mirrors the performance of students in NAEP performance categories in 2015.

How the 100 points are broken down by indicator

Additional Resources:

The EOC has developed a website, www.expectmoreesc.com , which is intended to help community stakeholders, business leaders, and families get more information about the status of public schools and learn more about how they can help. Users of the site can find information about how to act on behalf of students and schools.

The EOC has also developed a [Guide to the 2018 SC School Report Cards](#).

The U.S. Department of Education has developed [A Parent Guide to State and Local Report Cards](#).

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, states must identify schools that meet certain criteria that classify them as schools in need of improvement. The South Carolina Department of Education has developed a [South Carolina School Improvement Designation document](#) explaining the criteria, identifications, and support these schools receive. The list of schools classified under each improvement designation will be released soon.

The SC Education Oversight Committee is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected leaders. Created in 1998, the committee is dedicated to reporting facts, measuring change, and promoting progress within South Carolina's education system.

SC Education Oversight Committee | 803-734-6148 | danay@eoc.sc.gov | www.eoc.sc.gov

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SC Education Oversight Committee, 1205 Pendleton St., Suite 502, Columbia, SC 29201

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