

August 14, 2014

Dear Superintendents:

I have received several questions about the state's accountability system and wanted to clarify a few of the changes that occurred with legislation enacted in 2014.

First, this fall the state report cards will be issued that represent student academic achievement for school year 2013-14. While there will continue to be state report cards issued in the fall of 2015 and 2016, these report cards will not have a ranking for schools or districts. Instead, the EOC will work with school districts and the South Carolina Department of Education to devise school and district report cards that report assessment results of the assessments and other key indicators like graduation rates, dropout recovery rates, etc. No rankings will be issued.

Section 59-18-325 (6) as amended by Act 200 specifically states that the EOC "may not determine state ratings for schools or districts, pursuant to Section 59-18-900, using the results of the assessments required by this subsection until after the conclusion of the 2015-2016 school year; provided, however, state ratings must be determined by the results of these assessments beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. The Oversight Committee also must develop and recommend a single accountability system that meets federal and state accountability requirements by the fall of 2016." At the EOC retreat this week, the members received guidance from Gene Wilhoit, Executive Director of the National Center of innovation at the University of Kentucky and former director of the Council of Chief State School Officers on developing a new paradigm for accountability for college and career readiness.

Second, per recommendations of the EOC, Act 200 and Act 284, the Read to Succeed legislation, the state assessment system beginning in school year 2014-15 was amended accordingly:

- 4K and 5K students in publicly funded programs, which include half-day and full-day 4K programs, will be administered an early language and literacy development assessment during the first 45 days of the school year. The actual assessment will be selected next week.
- Grade 3 - All students will be assessed in English language arts and mathematics **only**.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Grades 4 through 8 – **All** students will be assessed in English language arts, mathematics, science **and** social studies.
- Grade 11 – All students will be assessed a college and career readiness assessment and WorkKeys®.

And, finally, the EOC has prepared a flyer for students and principals explaining the reasons why students need to do their best on these Grade 11 assessments. Additional information will be forthcoming when the college and career assessment is selected. I would encourage your high school principals, guidance counselors, career specialists, etc. to do two things: (1) provide the information to parents via electronic or printed means; and (2) give us feedback on how to improve the document to meet the needs of students and parents.

Please contact me if you have any questions. I wish you and your staff a great year of learning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melanie Barton".

Melanie Barton

c: Members of the EOC