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## **South Carolina public schools receive state report cards**

For the first time since 2014, South Carolina public schools received ratings on new school report cards released by the State Department of Education and the S.C. Oversight Committee as part of the state's merged state and federal accountability system. In order to meet the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements, this year's state report cards utilized a new format and an expanded rating system to show progress towards new rigorous goals and expectations. The 2018 report cards reflect school and district performance during the 2017-2018 school year.

Each elementary, middle and high school received an excellent, good, average, below average or unsatisfactory overall performance rating based on a 100-point scale. Dorchester District Two schools received three excellent, six good, nine average, five below average and one unsatisfactory overall performance ratings. Elementary and middle schools also received an excellent, good, average, below average or unsatisfactory rating for the following performance indicators: academic achievement, student progress, preparing for success, English learners' proficiency and school quality. High schools received an excellent, good, average, below average or unsatisfactory rating for each of the performance indicators: academic achievement, preparing for success, English learners' proficiency, graduation rate, college and career readiness and school quality. Three other performance indicators are measured for all schools but not rated: classroom environment, student safety and financial information about schools.

The new report card ratings show that Dorchester District Two schools continue to achieve at or above average in the indicators of academic achievement (ELA and math) and preparing for success (science and social studies). School ratings surpassed state averages in all four core academic areas, as well as surrounding districts, with the exception of math in one district.

The district was also pleased that the three high schools increased their on time graduation rate to 88.7%, an increase of 2.7% over last year. This surpasses the state average and that of surrounding districts. The Career and College Readiness indicator was an area of strength for all three high schools with two high schools scoring in the top 10% in the state. Ashley Ridge High School earned an Excellent rating and Fort Dorchester High School and Summerville High School earned a Good.

Significant problems with data in several report card calculations caused the state to delay the release of the school report cards from November 15 to November 29. There are questions regarding the methods of calculation that have resulted in many districts questioning the accuracy of ratings. The new Student Progress indicator data was only recently made available to districts. District leadership looks forward to thoroughly examining this data before commenting on this indicator further. There also appear to be issues with the School Quality indicator that are of concern. District officials have voiced these concerns to the State Department of Education.

Another area in question by the district is the fact that the Classroom Environment indicator reports that 13.3% of district teachers are teaching “out of field.” In actuality, there were no teachers in Dorchester School District Two teaching out of field in 2017-2018.

Superintendent Joe Pye remains concerned that the report card was hurriedly released with last minute revisions and unresolved issues.

Parent and the public are encouraged to visit the following web sites to access detailed information on the new report cards:

The EOC has 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](#).