

## 2015–16 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS

**NOTE:** *For Accreditation purposes, schools and school districts are responsible for determining compliance with the following Accreditation Standards. Schools and school districts are also responsible for being in compliance with all applicable State Board of Education Regulations, and relevant statutes as outlined in the South Carolina Code of Laws.*

### I. PERSONNEL

#### A. PRINCIPAL

1. Each school with an enrollment of 250 students or more must employ a full-time properly certified principal. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
2. Schools with fewer than 250 students enrolled must be staffed at least a half-time properly certified principal. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
3. A principal’s duties and responsibilities are prescribed by the district superintendent. [R43-205]
4. The principal shall develop an on-going professional development plan with annual updates. [§59-24-30]

#### B. ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL(S) OR CURRICULUM COORDINATOR(S)

1. Each school with an enrollment of 500 or more students must be staffed with one full-time properly certified assistant principal or curriculum coordinator. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
2. An additional properly certified assistant principal or curriculum coordinator must be employed for a school with an enrollment of 1,000 or more. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
3. Assistant principals or curriculum coordinators shall develop an on-going professional development plan with annual updates. [§59-24-30]

#### C. TEACHERS

1. Each teacher must be properly certified by the State Board of Education. [R43-50, R43-205, §59-25-20]
2. Teachers of core academic subjects must meet the “highly qualified” teacher requirements. [R43-205, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq. (2002)]

3. Effective July 1, 2013, the appropriate middle level certificate will be required for all teaching core content areas in grades 7–8. Since grades 5–6 are included in both elementary and middle certification, school districts have flexibility to determine which certification is most appropriate. [20 U.S.C. §6301, et. seq. (2002), R43-62] (*Proviso 1.88 states a teacher certified at the secondary level may teach such courses in grades seven through twelve without having the add on certification for middle level education.*)

D. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR(S)

1. Each guidance counselor must be properly certified by the State Board of Education. [R43-205, §59-26-10]
2. Schools with fewer than 600 students must provide the services of a guidance counselor in the ratios in accordance with regulatory requirements. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
3. Schools with an enrollment of 501 or more students must employ one full-time certified counselor. Schools with more than 600 students must provide guidance services at the ratio of one 50-minute period for every 100 students. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
4. The student-to-guidance licensed personnel ratio will be reduced to 300:1. [R43-205, §59-59-100] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)

E. CAREER SPECIALIST(S)

1. Each career specialist must work under the supervision of a certified guidance counselor. [R43-205, §59-26-10]
2. Each career specialist must hold a bachelor's degree and must have earned either Global Career and Development Facilitator certification (GCDF) or Career Development Facilitator certification (CDF). [R43-205, §59-59-100]

F. LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST(S)

1. Each library media specialist must be properly certified by the State Board of Education. [R43-205, §59-26-10]
2. Schools with fewer than 400 students must employ a library media specialist who devotes not less than 200 minutes daily to library media services. Schools with an enrollment of 400 or more students must employ a certified library media specialist devoting full-time to library media services. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
3. Schools having an enrollment of 750 or more must employ an additional full-time person (paraprofessional or certified library media specialist) in the library media center. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)

## G. SCHOOL NURSE(S)

Each school nurse must hold a current license issued by the State Board of Nursing to practice as a professional registered nurse or as a licensed practical nurse who is working under the supervision of a professional registered nurse. [R43-205, §59-10-210]

## H. PARAPROFESSIONALS

1. Instructional paraprofessionals who work in Title I schools or Title I targeted assistance programs must meet state and federal requirements. [R43-209, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq. (2002)]
2. Each teacher of trainable, orthopedically, emotionally, or visually disabled pupils in a self-contained classroom model shall have a paraprofessional, full-time, provided that the class has a minimum membership of four pupils. [R43-209, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq. (2002)]
3. When four or more students identified as emotionally disabled or orthopedically impaired are enrolled in a cross-categorical class, a full-time teaching assistant must be employed. [R43-205]
4. All instructional paraprofessionals must work under the direct supervision of a certified teacher. [R43-209]
5. Teaching assistants shall have at least a high school diploma or the equivalent. [43-209]

## I. SECRETARY AND CUSTODIAL SERVICES

1. Secretarial services shall be provided. [R43-209]
2. Custodial services shall be provided. [R43-209]

## II. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

### A. GUIDANCE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

1. A comprehensive guidance program, including career development, is required in schools having any combination of grades 6–8. [R43-232, §59-59-140]
2. Beginning in grade 6, students and their parents and/or legal guardians, in collaboration with appropriate school personnel, shall prepare a plan for a variety of career options in which the student has an interest. [R43-232, §59-59-140]
3. In grade 7, students and their parents and/or legal guardians, in collaboration with appropriate school personnel, shall revise career planning records in which students have an interest. [R43-232, §59-59-140]
4. In grade 8, students and their parents and/or legal guardians' in collaboration with appropriate school personnel, shall review and revise career planning records. [R43-232, §59-59-140]
5. Each school district shall offer a range of mentoring opportunities for students beginning no later than seventh grade. [R43-232, §59-59-140]

## B. LIBRARY/MEDIA

The library media programs and technology resources are required and accessible to all students and staff and are appropriate to achieve the strategies and goals in each school renewal and district strategic plan. [R43-232]

## C. CURRICULUM

1. Instruction is provided in the subject areas as specified in the Defined Program, grades 6–8, which include, but are not limited to the following:
  - a. English/Language Arts. [R43-232, §59-20-10]
  - b. Mathematics. [R43-232, §59-20-10]
  - c. Sciences. [R43-232, §59-20-10]
  - d. Social Studies. [R43-232]
    - (1) Each public school of the State must instruct students in the history of black people as a regular part of its history and social studies courses. [§59-29-55]
    - (2) Each public school of the State must instruct students in South Carolina history in eighth grade. [R43-232]
  - e. Health. [R43-231, R43-238, §59-32-30]

For grades 6–8, each school shall provide instruction in a comprehensive health education program for 250 minutes a week for nine weeks. The comprehensive health education programs includes community health, consumer health, environmental health, growth and development, nutritional health, personal health, prevention and control of diseases and disorders, safety and accident prevention, substance use and abuse, dental health, and mental and emotional health. Sexually transmitted diseases are to be included as a part of instruction. At the discretion of the local board, instruction in family life education or pregnancy prevention education or both may be included, but these instructions in these subjects may not include an explanation of the methods of contraception before the sixth grade.
  - f. Physical Education. [R43-232]

There shall be established and provided in all the public schools of this State physical education, training and instruction of pupils of both sexes, and every pupil attending any school, in so far as he is physically fit and able to do so, shall take the course. [§59-29-80]
  - g. Visual/Performing Arts. [R43-232, §59-26-220]
  - h. Exploratory. [R43-232]

At least one elective class of an occupational exploratory must be scheduled. Programs in areas such as, but not limited to, industrial technology education (grades 7–8), keyboarding, computer literacy, and career exploration may be included.
  - i. Foreign Language.<sup>1</sup> [R43-232]

<sup>1</sup> Foreign language as a separate course is recommended, but not required. If a separate course is not offered, foreign languages should be incorporated in the basis curriculum.

- j. Environmental education is offered as an integral part of the science, social studies, and health curricula. [R43-232, §59-32-30]
  - k. Alcohol and Drugs.  
Schools shall provide age-appropriate instruction regarding the dangers in the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. [R43-232, §59-29-307, §59-29-20]
2. Each school district shall see that in every school under their care there shall be taught, as far as practicable, orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English grammar and instruction in phonics, the elements of agriculture, the history of the United States and of this State, the principles of the Constitutions of the United States and of this State, morals and good behavior, algebra, physiology and hygiene (especially as to the effects of alcoholic liquors and narcotics upon the human system), English literature, and such other branches as the state board may from time to time direct. [§59-29-10]
  3. Specialized programs of instruction are provided for disabled students. [R43-232, R43-205, 43-243, R43-243.6, 20 U.S.C. §33 et seq.]
  4. Gifted and talented students are those who are identified in grades one through twelve as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas and therefore in order to achieve their potential, require educational programming beyond that normally provided by general school programming. To document planning, districts will submit a local gifted and talented programming plan every five years and delineate progress on this plan annually. [R43-220, §59-29-170]
  5. Students who cannot attend public school because of illness, accident, or pregnancy, even with the aid of transportation, are eligible for medical homebound or hospitalized instruction. [R43-241, §59-21-540]
  6. A school encompassing any combination of grades 6–8 may implement an innovative approach if it is approved by the local board of trustees and is incorporated in the school and district plans. [R43-232, §59-19-350]

D. TRANSFER STUDENTS PLACEMENT AND CREDIT

1. Transfer Students. Each student transferring shall be given a transfer form showing name, date of birth, grade placement, and attendance record to present to the appropriate school official where he or she is enrolling. Appropriate additional data shall be furnished by the sending school when requested in writing by the receiving school, as soon as possible but no later than ten business days upon receiving the written request, excluding weekends and recognized state holidays. [R43-273]
2. Transfer Students of Military Families. Children are entitled to attend public schools of a school district if a parent's or legal guardian's military deployment or call to active duty is more than 70 miles from his residence for a period greater than sixty days. [§59-63-31]

It is the purpose of this compact to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their parents by:

- a. Facilitating the timely enrollment of children of military families and ensuring that they are not placed at a disadvantage due to difficulty in the transfer of education records from the previous school districts or variations in entrance/age requirements. [§59-46-50]
- b. Facilitating the student placement process through which children of military families are not disadvantaged by variations in attendance requirements, scheduling, sequencing, grading, course content, or assessment. [§59-46-50]

### III. OPERATIONS & PROCEDURES

#### A. SCHOOL YEAR

1. The statutory school term is one hundred ninety (190) days annually and shall consist of a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days of instruction. The remaining days are utilized for the preparation for opening of school, staff development, planning, and parent conferences. [§59-1-425]
2. Full days missed because of weather or other unforeseen circumstances must be made up. [§59-1-425, R43-232]
3. The district board of trustees by majority vote may waive the make-up requirement for three or fewer additional missed days provided the school has made up three full days or the equivalent number of hours missed. [§59-1-425]
4. Schools may reduce the length of the instructional day to not less than three hours for not more than three days each year for staff development, teacher conferences, and for the purpose of administering end-of-semester and end-of-year examinations. [§59-1-425]
5. Early dismissal days for emergencies must be reported to and approved by the director of the Office of Federal and State Accountability. [R43-232, §59-1-440]
6. Three days must be used for collegial professional development. No more than two days may be used for the preparation of opening of schools and the remaining five days may be used for teacher planning, academic plans, and parent conferences. [§59-1-425]

#### B. SCHOOL DAY/WEEK

1. Instruction in the subject areas shall be scheduled for a minimum of eighteen hundred (1800) minutes or thirty (30) hours per week, including lunch, or the equivalent on a yearly basis. [R43-232, §59-1-425]
2. The length of the school day for full-time teachers is a minimum of seven (7) hours. [R43-57.1]
3. Priority during the instructional day must be given to teaching and learning tasks. [§59-1-425]
4. Class interruptions must be limited only to emergencies. [§59-1-425]

C. TEACHERS-CLASSLOADS/PREPARATIONS

1. The maximum daily teaching load shall not exceed 150 students daily. [R43-232] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
2. Maximum class size shall not exceed the following: [R43-232]

Grade 6	30:1	(English/language arts and math)
	35:1	(other subjects)
Grades 7–8	35:1	(all academic and exploratory subjects)

(*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
3. No class exceeds thirty-five (35) students in membership with exceptions provided for physical education and music teachers. [R43-232] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
4. When health is taught as a separate subject, the teaching load is a maximum of 35 students per period and a total of 150 students per day. Health must be taught for 250 minutes per week for nine weeks. [R43-232, R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
5. No music teacher’s daily student load exceeds two hundred forty (240) students per day. [R43-232, R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
7. When band, chorus, or orchestra require rehearsals of the entire membership, any number of students is acceptable if adequate space is available. [R43-234, R43-205]
8. The **teaching load** for teachers **of self-contained classes** must not exceed the following student-teacher ratios: [R43-205]

<u>Area</u>	<u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u>
Mild Mental Disabilities	18:1
Emotional Disabilities	15:1
Learning Disabilities	18:1
Moderate and Severe Disabilities and Orthopedically Impaired	15:1
Visually Impaired	12:1
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	12:1

9. **Cross-categorical classes** must not exceed the following student-teacher ratios: [R43-205]

<u>Area</u>	<u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily Enrollment</u>
Mild Mental Disabilities and Learning Disabilities	18:1
Mild Mental Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, and Emotional Disabilities	15:1
Mild Mental Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disabilities, and Orthopedically Impaired	15:1

10. The maximum **teaching load** for **resource teachers and itinerant teachers** for students with disabilities based on average daily enrollment is as follows: [R43-205]

<u>Area</u>	<u>Maximum Teaching Load</u>
Mild Mental Disabilities	33 students
Emotional Disabilities	33 students
Learning Disabilities	33 students
Moderate and Severe Disabilities and Orthopedically Impaired	20 students
Visually Impaired	15 students
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	15 students

11. The maximum caseload for speech-language therapists does not exceed sixty (60) students. [R43-205]
12. When resource teachers and/or itinerant teachers serve students with differing disabilities, the maximum **teaching load** must be determined by the majority of the students in enrollment in an area of disability. [R43-205]

**D. STUDENTS – ENROLLMENT/ATTENDANCE**

- Students are enrolled in accordance with state laws pertaining to age of attendance and qualifications for attendance. [§59-63-20, §59-63-30, §59-63-31]
- The school’s attendance policy conforms to the state’s definitions of lawful and unlawful absences. [R43-274, §59-65-10]
- The district board of trustees or its designee(s) shall approve or disapprove any student’s absence in excess of ten days, whether lawful or unlawful, for students in grades K–12. [R43-274, §59-65-10]
- Intervention plans are initiated for students who are truant (students ages 6–17 who accrue three (3) consecutive unlawful absences or five (5) cumulative unlawful absences). [R43-274, §59-65-90]
- Intervention plans contain the minimum elements stated in regulation. [R43-274, §59-65-90]

6. Family court referrals are made if the intervention is not successful and further inquiries by school officials fail. [R43-274, §59-65-50]

E. STUDENTS - DISCIPLINE/CONDUCT

There is a uniform system of minimum standards of student conduct and disciplinary enforcement procedures to be implemented by local school districts. [R43-279, §59-63-210]

F. RECORDS, REPORTS, REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

1. The district shall maintain accurate student data according to the pupil accounting system prescribed by the State Department of Education. A record of all dropouts shall be filed by school, grade, race and sex. The superintendent shall verify the accuracy of the enrollment attendance, membership by category, and dropout reports submitted to the SCDE's Office of Finance. [R43-232]
2. Appropriate additional data shall be furnished by the sending school when requested in writing by the receiving school, as soon as possible but no later than ten business days upon receiving the written request, excluding weekends and recognized state holidays. A school must transfer a student's disciplinary record of suspensions and expulsions to the public or private school to which the student is transferring when requested in writing by the receiving school, as soon as possible but no later than ten business days upon receiving the written request, excluding weekends and recognized state holidays. Schools must transfer these records within ten business days upon receiving the written request from the public or private school to which the student is transferring. Schools may not withhold the transfer of records to a public or private school for fees owed by the student. [R43-273, §59-63-420]
3. Financial resources are to be allocated, expended, and accounted for in accordance with accounting practices specified in the Financial Accounting Handbook, Funding Manual, and the Pupil and Staff Accountability Manual. [R43-172, §59-20-60]
4. Financial records are audited annually by a certified or licensed public accountant. [R43-172, §59-20-60]
5. Each school district must develop a five-year district strategic plan and each school must develop a five-year school renewal plan with annual updates. The district strategic plan, school renewal plans, and annual updates must be reviewed and approved by the local board of trustees and coordinate funding from local, state, federal, and private sources. New five-year district and school plans, along with the annual update of the district strategic plan, must be submitted to the SCDE by April 30 of each year. [§59-20-60, R43-261]
6. The School Improvement Council must actively participate in the development of the school renewal plan and annual updates. [§59-20-60, R43-261]
7. The School Improvement Council annually provides to parents and constituents a report on the school's progress in meeting school and district goals and objectives. [§59-20-60]
8. The School Improvement Council performs other duties as specified in law. [§59-20-60]

9. A staff development program has been implemented that meets national professional development standards, and provides participants the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the strategies. Coordination of funding is from local, state, federal, and private sources. [R43-261, §59-24-30]
10. The school has an appropriate means of reporting academic achievement to parents. [R43-232, §59-18-930]
11. Student participation in interscholastic competition is in accordance with regulatory and statutory requirements. [R43-244.1, §59-63-100]

G. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SCHOOL FACILITIES

1. Immunization records are current for each student. Records of vaccinations or immunizations must be maintained by the institution, school, or day care facility to which the child or person has been admitted. [§44-29-180]
2. No person will be initially hired to work in any public or private school, kindergarten, nursery or day care center for infants and children until appropriately evaluated for tuberculosis. [R43-207, §44-29-150, §44-29-160]
3. A pupil and teacher shall wear an industrial quality eye device while participating in courses necessitating wearing of protective eye devices. [§59-1-390]
4. Each school shall provide adequate first aid supplies and equipment. [R43-166]
5. All operating school facilities shall comply with sanitation and health regulations prescribed by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. [R61-42, §59-31-330]
6. All operating school facilities shall comply with safety regulations prescribed by the State Fire Marshal. [§5-25-370, §5-25-390, §5-25-400]
7. All schools shall conduct fire drills at least once each month. [§59-63-910]
8. A plan shall be designed to provide for the protection and welfare of students in the event of any disaster which threatens to involve the school community. [R43-166]
9. Each school shall conduct at least one emergency drill within the first month of school. [R43-166, §59-63-910]
10. All construction, improvement and renovation of public school buildings and property shall comply with the latest applicable standards and specifications set forth and published by SCDE. [§59-23-210]