

## **2019-20 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]
2. Schools with fewer than 250 students enrolled must be staffed at least a half-time properly certified principal. [R43-205]
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 enrolment of 500 or more students must be staffed with one full-time properly certified assistant principal or curriculum coordinator. [R43-205]
2. An additional properly certified assistant principal or curriculum coordinator must be employed for a school with an enrolment of 1,000 or more. [R43-205]
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 must meet the applicable certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification. [R43-50, R43-205, §59-25-20, Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95, 129 STAT 1845]
3. For the current fiscal year, 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. [R42-62 (*Proviso 1.67 for 2019–20 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. SCHOOL 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 six hundred students must provide the services of a school counselor in the ratios in accordance with regulatory requirements. [R43-205]
3. Schools with an enrolment of five hundred-one or more students must employ one full-time certified counselor. Schools with more than six hundred students must provide guidance services at the ratio of one fifty-minute period for every one hundred students. [R43-205]

4. The student-to-guidance licensed personnel ratio will be reduced to 300:1. [R43-205, §59-59-100]

E. CAREER SPECIALIST(S)

1. Each career specialist must work under the supervision of a certified school counselor. [R43-205, §59-59-100, §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 four hundred students must employ a library media specialist who devotes not less than two hundred minutes daily to library media services. Schools with an enrolment of four hundred or more students must employ a certified library media specialist devoting full-time to library media services. [R43-205]
3. Schools having an enrollment of seven hundred fifty or more must employ an additional full-time person (paraprofessional or certified library media specialist) in the library media center. [R43-205]

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]

H. PARAPROFESSIONALS

1. Instructional paraprofessionals who work in Title I schools or a Title I targeted assistance programs meet applicable certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification. [R43-209, Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95, 129 STAT 1856]
2. Each teacher of pupils with trainable, orthopedic, emotional, or visual disabilities 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]
3. When four or more students identified as having an emotional disability or orthopaedic impairment 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]

## II. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

### Guidance & Career Awareness

A. HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT

1. When approved by the principal and the parents, a student promoted to the seventh or eighth grade may take units of ninth grade or higher work for high school credit. The high school courses offered must be limited to courses that are currently in the 9–12 section of the

Activity Coding System for the Student Information System with the exception of physical education and health education courses. It is expected that students taking courses for high school credit have been taught and mastered the middle school level standards prior to taking the courses for high school credit. The number of high school credits permitted at the middle school or junior high school level must be determined by the local school district. [R43-232]

2. For high school credit course above, the uniform grading policy is properly used in the computation of Carnegie units and applied correctly to all activity course codes. [§59-5-68]

#### B. GUIDANCE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

1. A comprehensive guidance program, including career development, is required in schools having any combination of grades six through eight. [R43-232, §59-59-90, §59-59-40, §59-59-140]
2. Beginning in grade six, 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, §59-59-90, §59-59-140]
3. In grade seven, 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, §59-59-90, §59-59-140]
4. In grade eight, 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, §59-59-90, §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]

#### C. 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]

#### D. CURRICULUM

1. Instruction is provided in the subject areas as specified in the Defined Program, grades six through eight, which include, but are not limited to the following:
  - a. English/Language Arts. [R43-232, §59-20-20]
  - b. Mathematics. [R43-232, §59-20-20]
  - c. Sciences. [R43-232, §59-20-20]
  - 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 [R43-232, R43-238, §59-32-30]

For grades six through eight, each school shall provide instruction in a comprehensive health education program for two hundred fifty minutes a week for nine weeks. The comprehension health education programs include community health personal 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. Students in grades six through eight annually, shall be provided age-appropriate instruction in sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention. This instruction must be based on the units developed by the board, through the department, pursuant to Section 59-32-20(B). [59-32-30]
  - g. Physical Education  
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. [R43-232, §59-29-80]
  - h. Visual/Performing Arts [R43-232, §59-26-220]
  - i. Exploratory  
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 seven through eight), keyboarding, computer literacy, and career exploration may be included. [R43-232]
  - j. Foreign Language  
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 basic curriculum. [R43-232]
  - k. Environmental education is offered as an integral part of the science, social studies, and health curricula. [R43-232, §59-32-30]
  - l. Alcohol and Drugs.  
Schools shall provide age-appropriate instruction regarding the dangers in the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Instruction shall emphasize problems related to their use and effects upon the total community. Instruction shall be offered in all schools of the State and shall be studied and presented as thoroughly and in the same manner as all other required subjects in grades 6–8. [R43-232, §59-29-20, §59-29-30, §59-29-40]
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 students with disabilities. [R43-232, R43-205, R43-243, R43-243.1, 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. [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 medial homebound or hospitalized instruction. [R43-241, §59-21-540]

6. A school encompassing any combination of grades six through eight 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, §59-20-60]

#### E. 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. 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]
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 seventy miles from his residence for a period greater than sixty days. [§59-63-31]
3. 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.

### III. OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

#### A. SCHOOL YEAR

1. The statutory school term is one hundred ninety days annually and shall consist of a minimum of one hundred eighty 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. All school days missed because of snow, extreme weather conditions, or other disruptions requiring schools to close must be made up. All school districts shall designate annually at least three days within their school calendars to be used as make-up days in the event of these occurrences. If those designated days have been used or are no longer available, the local school board of trustees may lengthen the hours of school operation by no less than one hour per day for the total number of hours missed, operate schools on Saturday, or may waive up to three days. A waiver granted by the local board of trustees may only be authorized by a majority vote of the local board, and may not be granted until the school has made up three full days, or the equivalent number of hours. The State Board of Education may waive the requirements of making up days beyond the three days forgiven by the local school district, not to exceed three additional days. The State Department annually before July first shall provide the General Assembly with a detailed report of information from each

district listing the number of days missed and the reason, regardless of whether any were missed; days made up; and days waived. [§59-1-425, R43-232]

3. Schools may reduce the length of the instructional day to no 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]
4. Early dismissal days for emergencies must be reported to and approved by the director of the Office of Federal and State Accountability. [§59-1-425]
5. 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 minutes or thirty 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 the full-time teachers is a minimum of seven 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 one hundred fifty students daily. [R43-232, R43-205]
2. Maximum class size shall not exceed the following: [R43-232, R43-205]

Grade 6	30:1	(English/language arts and math)
	35:1	(other subjects)
Grades 7-8	35:1	(all academic and exploratory subjects)
3. No class exceeds thirty-five students in membership with exceptions provided for physical education and music teachers. If PE and health are taught on alternate days by the same teacher to the same class, the forty-student maximum and two hundred forty-student total is also permitted for health. [R43-232, R43-205]
4. When health is taught as a separate subject, the teaching load is a maximum of thirty five students per period and a total of one hundred fifty students per day. (Health must be taught for two hundred fifty minutes per week for nine weeks.) [R43-232, R43-205]
5. No music teacher's daily student load exceeds two hundred forty students per day. [R43-232, R43-205]
6. When band, chorus, or orchestra require rehearsals for the entire membership, any number of students is acceptable if adequate space is available. [R43-234, R43-205]
7. The teaching load for teachers of self-contained classes must not exceed the following student-teacher ratios: [R43-205]

<u>Area Enrollment</u>	<u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily</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

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

<u>Area Enrollment</u>	<u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily</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

9. 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 Enrollment</u>	<u>Maximum Ratio Based on Average Daily</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

10. The maximum caseload for speech-language therapists does not exceed sixty students. [R43-205]
11. 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, §59-65-10]

1. The school’s attendance policy conforms to the state’s definitions of lawful and unlawful absences. [R43-274, §59-65-10, §59-65-90]

2. 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, §59-65-90]
3. Intervention plans are initiated for students who are truant (students ages six through seventeen who accrue three consecutive unlawful absences or five cumulative unlawful absences). [R43-274, §59-65-90]
4. Interventions plans contain the minimum elements stated in regulation. [R43-274, §59-65-90]
5. 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 et seq.]

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 manually 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, ~~§59-18-1310~~ this is the establishment of the assessment programs for academic progress, §59-139-510 et seq., R43-261]
6. The School Improvement Council must actively participate in the development of the school renewal plan and annual updates. [§59-20-60, §59-139-10, 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 strategies. Coordination of funding is from local, state, federal, and private sources. [R43-261, §59-20-60]
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, §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, R43-71, R43-237.1, §59-31-330]
6. All operating school facilities shall comply with safety regulations prescribed by the State Fire Marshall. [§5-25-370, §5-25-390, §5-25-400]
7. All public schools, including charter schools whose instruction is not primarily delivered online, shall conduct fire, active shooter/intruder, and severe weather/earthquake drills. Within each school year, schools must conduct at least two active shooter/intruder drills, and two severe weather/earthquake drills, with at least one of each drill conducted each semester.[§59-63-910(A) This is addition to the monthly fire drills required by §405.2 SC Fire Code]
8. A plan shall be designed to provide for the protection and welfare of students in the event of any disaster which threatens to involved 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]