



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents
ESEA Title III MLP Coordinators
School Counseling Personnel
PowerSchool IT Contacts
Principals

FROM: Jewell Stanley
Interim Director, Office of Federal and State Accountability

Quincie L. Moore, Ph.D.
Director, Career and Technical Education and Student Transition Services

Dan Ralyea
Director, Office of Research and Data Analysis

DATE: July 25, 2023

RE: Student Enrollment, Age-Appropriate Placement, Ninth Grade Cohort, and
International Transcript Guidance

The purpose of this memorandum is to supplement a previous memorandum, [Multilingual Learner Enrollment](#), and to provide additional information regarding common questions received by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE).

Initial grade placement for all students enrolling in South Carolina public schools, including multilingual learners and immigrant students, must be with same-age classmates regardless of the grade level. At the high school level, a student must be placed with age-level peers when possible (e.g., homeroom, electives, lunch, etc.), and decisions for coursework should be based on the student's transcript, if available. While classes should be scheduled accordingly to meet course prerequisites and graduation requirements, students must have the opportunity to interact and advance with peers. When applicable, school districts must be proactive and thoughtful in planning around specific grade-level activities or requirements (e.g., graduation, 9GR specific assessments). Districts must communicate with students and families in a language they

understand and prefer for any decisions regarding participation in specific grade level requirements.

A student who enrolls for the first time in a U.S. high school is added to the four-year graduation cohort. **This is a separate consideration from age-appropriate placement and grade level classification.** If a high school aged student without a transcript enrolls for their first year in a U.S. high school *on or prior to* the 45th day, the 9GR will be set to the two-digit year of the spring semester of that school year (e.g., for students who the 2023-24 school year is their first year in a U.S. high school will have a 9GR=24). If a high school aged student without a transcript enrolls for their first year in a U.S. high school *after* the 45th day, the 9GR will be set to the two-digit year of the spring semester for the following school year (i.e., the school year in which they are enrolled for their first 45th day; e.g., a student who enrolls for the first time in a U.S. high school in January of 2024 will have 9GR=25). For example, if an international student enrolls with enough credits to be classified as a junior, their 9GR will be the same as a first year freshman as it is their first year of high school in the U.S. Students who enroll at an older age must be allowed to accrue credits to meet graduation requirements until they age out of school.

Pursuant to S.C. Code of Law Ann. § 59-63-20 (Supp. 2020), students aged 3-21 enrolling in South Carolina public schools must be allowed to do so at all grade levels. A school's graduation rate may decrease if students do not graduate with their 9GR cohort or if they age out. Although the graduation rate is important, keeping students' best interests in mind is essential to ensuring equitable enrollment and compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974.

A 9GR cannot be changed for any reason but rather corrected. Corrections (e.g., transcript translation error) typically occur within four to six weeks of student enrollment but not longer than the school year. With the release of this new guidance, please review [Student Enrollment, Age Appropriate Placement, Ninth Grade Cohort, and International Transcript Guidance](#) for additional information regarding correcting 9GR codes as applicable.

Per the [Uniform Grading Policy \(May 2019\)](#), the criteria for accepting international transcripts from international students are a local decision based on district policy. However, the SCDE provides guidance to assist districts with best practices for awarding credits, specifically related to international transcripts.

Students who transfer to South Carolina with prior End-of-Course subject credits should not be administered the End-of-Course exam to satisfy federal reporting and accountability requirements. For students transferring from a non-SC public school and having taken English 2, Algebra 1, Biology 1, and/or U.S. History and the Constitution (or equivalent), the SCDE will collect students not tested data from PowerSchool and districts will need to retain transcripts as documentation for Students Not Tested reason, i.e., "009 – Transfer Student (EOCEP only). Districts must reference the [Combined Students Not Tested on Elementary, Middle, and High School Report \(SNTEMR\) Guidelines](#).

Student Enrollment, Age-Appropriate Placement, Ninth Grade Cohort, and International Transcript Guidance

Page 3

July 25, 2023

For questions regarding multilingual learner (ML) and immigrant student enrollment and age-appropriate placement, contact Susan Murphy at SMurphy@ed.sc.gov. For questions regarding international transcripts, contact Laura McNair at LMcnair@ed.sc.gov. For questions regarding 9GR and accountability, please contact Dan Ralyea at DRalyea@ed.sc.gov.