

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Instructional Leaders
School Principals

FROM: Dr. Abbey Duggins, Chief Academic Officer and Deputy Superintendent of
College, Career, and Military Readiness

DATE: July 14, 2026

RE: Updates on School Grading Practices, Act 204 of 2026

As districts prepare for the 2026-27 school year, this memorandum summarizes [Act 204](#) of 2026, which establishes statewide requirements for consistent grading practices in public school districts and charter schools. South Carolina’s College- and Career-Ready Standards and state accountability system are designed to ensure that high school graduates are truly ready for college, career, military service, and civic engagement. Because a high school degree should be a meaningful reflection of students’ academic achievement, and because cumulative grade point averages impact postsecondary scholarships, districts should update local grading policies to align with Act 204.

- **No grading floors.** Districts and schools may not require teachers to assign a minimum grade or score that exceeds a student's actual performance on required assignments. This provision is intended to prevent grade inflation and ensure grades accurately reflect student achievement.
- **Set policies for credit and content recovery.** Districts must define “required assignments” and “timely submission of student work.” These definitions should be applied consistently and align with the intent of credit and content recovery opportunities in South Carolina’s Uniform Grading Policy.
- **No required inclusion of formative or district-selected benchmark assessments in calculating a student’s final grade.** This provision does not apply to the End of

Course Examination Program (EOCEP). For additional definitions and clarifications, see the attached Frequently Asked Questions.

- **The establishment of a Uniform Grading Policy Task Force.** The South Carolina State Board of Education will establish a task force to evaluate potential revisions to the Uniform Grading Policy. Superintendents who want to self-nominate to serve or to nominate principals, teachers, school board members, or high school students to serve on the committee should [complete the linked form](#) with nominee email names and contact information by July 29.

For any further guidance or assistance in this process of aligning policies and practices with this new law, please reference the attached Frequently Asked Questions document or contact:

- Questions about assessments: Office of Assessment and Standards, Kristi Austin, kdaustin@ed.sc.gov,
- Questions about policy: Office of Federal and State Accountability, Daniel Bailey, dbailey@ed.sc.gov.

Public School Grading Practices FAQ

Act 204 of 2026, H. 5073

Act 204 ensures consistency of grading practices across South Carolina schools, including specific guidance about minimum grades, eligibility for credit and content recovery, and the exclusion of formative and benchmark assessments in final grades. Additionally, the act establishes the need for a task force to review and make recommendations to update the Uniform Grading Scale.

General Grading Policy Questions

Does the prohibition against any “grading system that requires a teacher to assign a minimum grade or score that exceeds the student's actual performance on required assignments” inhibit standards-based grading?

No. By definition, standards-based grading focuses on students’ mastery of standards, a way of reflecting actual performance. Districts employing a standards-based grading system in any grade-level or school should submit a Competency-Based Education (CBE) or Proficiency-Based System application for SCDE approval based on the needs of the district.

The language says a school or district can't require a grading floor; does this mean individual teachers can use one?

No. The intent of Act 204 is to achieve uniformity in grading practices. The prohibition against any grading system that requires a minimum grade or score that exceeds the student’s actual performance on required assignments applies to both required assignments and a grading term (e.g., nine weeks, semester, year).

How do I know if my school or district is implementing Act 204 with fidelity?

These are the key components of implementing Act 204.

- The act prohibits districts from adopting any type of grading system that requires a teacher to assign a minimum grade or score that exceeds the student's actual performance on required assignments (e.g. assigning a 50 instead of a 0 for missing work). If a school district is found to be in violation of this requirement, the State

Department of Education shall withhold ten percent of the school district's State Aid to Classrooms funding.

- Districts must establish consistent requirements for timely submission of course assignments and eligibility for credit and content recovery.
- Districts shall not require the inclusion of student performance on the formative assessments required in Section 59-18-310(D) or on any district-selected benchmark assessment in calculating a student's final grade in any course or subject. For more information on assessment-specific questions, see the **Formative and Common Assessments** section.
- Districts may choose to use other common formative assessments to inform instruction. If they choose to require common assessments that count toward student grades, the South Carolina Department of Education recommends that classroom teachers be made aware of the assessment content and the expectation that this content is taught during the course. Districts may make the decision to have instructors plan to administer and count that test in students' grades, but it is essential that teachers be aware of the assessment format, questions, and connection with the curriculum for the course. Educators, students, and families should also have access to assessment results.
- The SCDE will monitor Act 204 through the consolidated state monitoring process.

Credit and Content Recovery

Does a student have to complete every assignment in a given course to be eligible for credit recovery?

In order for a student to be eligible to participate in a district-approved credit recovery course, a student must have submitted all required assignments for the course in a manner consistent with district policies for timely submission of student work. Districts must revise or set policies to define "required assignments" and "timely submission" for the purposes of credit recovery. All assignments that are required for the course must be included when determining eligibility for credit recovery.

Does a student have to complete every assignment in a given unit of a course to be eligible for content recovery?

In order for a student to be eligible to participate in a district-approved content recovery program, a student must have completed all required assignments for the relevant subset of the course in a manner consistent with district policies for timely submission of student work. Districts must revise or set policies to define "required assignments" and "timely

submission” for the purposes of content recovery. All assignments that are required for the course must be included when determining eligibility for content recovery.

Formative and Common Assessments

Can my district’s required formative assessment (ex. DRC BEACON, i-Ready Diagnostic, ISIP, NWEA MAP, Mastery View, Star Reading/Mathematics) be calculated into a student’s final grades?

No.

If my district developed a common assessment using a question bank, can that assessment be calculated into students’ final grades?

Districts may use ungraded common assessments and benchmarks to inform instruction. If the district wishes to use a common assessment across schools and include the common assessment in student grades, the South Carolina Department of Education recommends the following practices to ensure compliance with Act 204:

- Classroom teachers should be made aware of the assessment content and format well in advance of the expected administration of the assessment. Course instructors should have direct access to the assessment.
- The district should clearly communicate the expectation that teachers have taught the content and adjust any common curriculum and pacing guides accordingly to align with the assessment content.
- The district should clearly communicate the expectations for assessment implementation with enough time for teachers to incorporate the assessment into course planning.
- The district should make student results on district-developed benchmark assessments available in a timely fashion to educators, students, and parents.

If my district developed a common districtwide assessment with a small group of teachers with expertise in that course, can that assessment be implemented across the district? Can that assessment be calculated into students’ final grades?

Districts may use ungraded common assessments and benchmarks to inform instruction. If the district wishes to use a common teacher-developed assessment across schools and include the common assessment in student grades, the South Carolina Department of Education recommends the following practices to ensure compliance with Act 204:

- Classroom teachers should be made aware of the assessment content and format well in advance of the expected administration of the assessment. Course instructors should have direct access to the assessment.
- The district should clearly communicate the expectation that teachers have taught the content and adjust any common curriculum and pacing guides accordingly to align with the assessment content.
- The district should clearly communicate the expectations for assessment implementation with enough time for teachers to incorporate the assessment into course planning.
- The district should make student results on district-developed benchmark assessments available in a timely fashion to educators, students, and parents.