

2015–16 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT¹

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 more than 375 students must be staffed with 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. Each school with an enrollment of fewer than 375 students must be staffed with at least a part-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 600 or more students must be staffed with at least 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. 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. Each child development classroom shall be staffed with one appropriately certified teacher. [R43-264.1]

¹Child Development applies to 3 & 4 year old programs only.

4. A Reading/Literacy Coach shall be employed in each elementary school. [§59-155-180]

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 having any combination of grades one through five must employ the full-time equivalent of a school guidance counselor in 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.*)

E. 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 375 students must provide at least half-time services of a certified library media specialist. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
3. Schools with 375 or more students must provide the services of a full-time certified library media specialist. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)

F. 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]

G. PARAPROFESSIONALS

1. Instructional paraprofessionals who work in Title I schools or a 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. Each teacher of a kindergarten unit shall have a paraprofessional full time. [R43-209]
6. Each child development classroom shall be staffed with one teaching assistant. [R43-264.1]
7. Teaching assistants shall have at least a high school diploma or the equivalent. [R43-264.1, 43-209]

H. 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 AWARENESS

A comprehensive guidance program including career awareness is provided in any combination of grades K–5. [R43-231, §59-59-100]

B. LIBRARY/MEDIA

The library/media program and technology resources are accessible to all students and staff and are appropriate to achieve the strategies and goals in each school renewal and district strategic plan. [R43-231]

C. CURRICULUM

1. A developmental educational program in a child development classroom setting shall be the major component of the program. [R43-264.1]
2. The kindergarten curriculum meets regulatory requirements. [R43-231, R43-267]
3. Instruction in the subject areas shall be scheduled for each student for a minimum of 1800 minutes or 30 hours per week including lunch, or the equivalent time on a yearly basis, for grades 1–5. The subject areas shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. English/Language Arts. [R43-231, §59-29-10]
 - b. Mathematics. [R43-231, §59-29-10]
 - c. Science. [R43-231, §59-29-10]
 - d. Social Studies. [R43-231]
The 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]

- e. Health and Safety. [R43-231, R43-238, §59-32-30]
Each school shall provide instruction in a comprehensive health education program for 75 minutes per week for 36 weeks. In grades K–5, instruction in comprehensive health education must include the following subjects: 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 as defined in the annual Department of Health and Environmental Control List of Reportable Diseases are to be excluded from instruction on the prevention and control of diseases and disorders. At the discretion of the local board, age-appropriate instruction in reproductive health may be included. [R43-231, R43-238, §59-32-30]
 - f. Physical Education. [R43-231]
 - (1) Students in grades K–5 must have physical education and planned physical activity. [§59-10-10]
 - (2) 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. [R43-231, §59-29-220]
 - h. Foreign Language.² [R43-231]
 - i. Alcohol and Drugs.
Through special instruction, schools shall provide age-appropriate instruction regarding the dangers in the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. [R43-231, §59-29-20, §59-29-307]
 - j. Environmental education is offered as an integral part of the science, social studies, and health curricula. [R 43-231, §59-32-30]
 - k. Program of Safety Instruction
A definite program of safety instruction shall be included in the curriculum and provided in each primary and elementary grade in the public schools of the State. [§59-29-60]
4. 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]

² 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.

5. Specialized programs of instruction are provided for disabled students. [R43-231, R43-205, 20 U.S.C. §33 et seq.]
6. 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]
7. 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]
8. A school encompassing any combination of grades K–5 may implement an innovative approach if it is approved by the local board of trustees and is incorporated in the school and district plans. [R43-231, §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.
- 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. The child development program year will include 190 days of operation for staff (180 days service to children) subject to the same conditions for waiver of make-up days as prescribed by state law. [R43-264.1]
3. 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]
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 are reported in writing to the director, Office of Federal and State Accountability. [R43-231, §59-1-440]
6. Full days missed because of weather or other unforeseen circumstances must be made up. [R43-231, §59-1-425]
7. 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]

B. SCHOOL DAY/WEEK

1. Instruction in the subject areas shall be scheduled for each student for a minimum of eighteen hundred (1800) minutes or thirty (30) hours per week including lunch, or the equivalent on a yearly basis. [R43-231, §59-1-425]
2. The child development classroom program shall be operative five days a week (or the equivalent) for at least 2 ½ hours of instructional time, exclusive of breakfast, lunch and transportation. [R43-264.1]
3. The length of the school day for full-time teachers is a minimum of seven (7) hours. [R43-57.1]
4. Priority during the instructional day must be given to teaching and learning tasks. [§59-1-425]
5. Class interruptions must be limited only to emergencies. [§59-1-425]

C. TEACHER - CLASSLOADS/PREPARATIONS

1. No teacher's classload exceeds regulatory requirements as provided by the Defined Program, grades K–5. [R43-205, R43-231] (*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:

Child Development/ Prekindergarten	20:1	(NOT INCLUDED IN FLEXIBILITY PROVISO)
Grades K–3	30:1	
Grades 4–5	30:1	(English/language arts and math)
Grades 4–5	35:1	(all other subjects)

[R43-205, R43-231, R43-264.1, §59-20-40] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts **FOR GRADES K–5 ONLY.***)
3. The student to certified physical education teacher ratio in the elementary schools must be 600 to 1. [§59-10-20] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
4. The student to teacher ratio in a physical education class may not exceed the average student to teacher ratio of 28 to 1. [§59-10-20] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
5. Music teachers may teach a maximum of 40 students per class period. The total teaching load must not exceed 240 students per day, except when band, chorus, and orchestra require rehearsal of their entire enrollment. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
6. 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	15:1
Emotional Disabilities	12:1
Learning Disabilities	15:1
Moderate and Severe Disabilities and Orthopedically Impaired	12:1
Visually Impaired	10:1
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	10:1

7. The **teaching load** for teachers of **cross-categorical 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 and Learning Disabilities	15:1
Mild Mental Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, and Emotional Disabilities	12:1
Mild Mental Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disabilities, and Orthopedically Impaired	12:1

8. The maximum **teaching load** required for **resource teachers and itinerant teachers** for students with disabilities based on the 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

9. The maximum caseload for speech/language clinicians must not exceed sixty (60). [R43-205]
10. 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

1. 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]
2. The school's attendance policy conforms to the state's definitions of lawful and unlawful absences. [R43-274, §59-65-10]
3. 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]
4. 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]

5. 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. [R43-231]
2. Each kindergarten and first-grade pupil, not previously enrolled, shall submit a birth certificate or other documentation to verify a birth record as allowed by the local board of trustees. All students in grades K–12 must show evidence of compliance with South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control rules and regulations concerning immunization. [R43-272, §59-63-20]
3. 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. 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]
4. 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].
5. Child development expenditures must adhere to definitions and guidelines established by the Office of Finance, State Department of Education, or the State Procurement Code. [R43-264.1]
6. An annual audit of all financial records shall be made by a certified or licensed public accountant selected by the district, county board of education, or occupational education center. [R43-172, §59-20-60]

7. 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]
8. The School Improvement Council must actively participate in the development of the school renewal plan and annual updates. [§59-20-60, R43-261]
9. 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]
10. The School Improvement Council performs other duties as specified in law. [§59-20-60]
11. 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, §59-24-930]
12. Appropriate ongoing staff development activities shall be described and incorporated in the school or district's comprehensive plan as required by the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act of 1993 (ACT 135), State Board of Education Regulations and Guidelines. [R43-264.1]
13. Each school shall have appropriate means of reporting academic achievement to parents. [R43-231, §59-18-930]

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]