

2015–16 ACCREDITATION STANDARDS FOR SECONDARY 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(S)/DIRECTOR(S)

1. Each school must be staffed with a full-time properly certified principal/director. [R43-205]
2. The principal/director shall develop an on-going professional development plan with annual updates. [§59-24-30]

B. ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL(S)/DIRECTOR(S) OR CURRICULUM COORDINATOR(S)

1. Each school with an enrollment of 400 to 499 students must be staffed with at least one half-time properly certified assistant principal or the equivalent. [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 500 or more students must be staffed with at least one full-time properly certified assistant principal and a properly certified assistant principal for each additional 500 students. [R43-205] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
3. Assistant principals/directors 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)]

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 enrollments of 501 or more must employ one full-time certified counselor. Schools with more than 600 students must provide guidance services at the ratio of 50 minutes for each additional 51 to 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 certified 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. SCHOOL TRANSITION COORDINATOR(S) AND CAREER SPECIALIST(S)

1. Each school-to-work transition coordinator must be certified or meet all other regulatory requirements. [R43-205]
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]
3. Any career specialist providing classroom instruction must be properly certified. [R43-205]

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. The number of library media specialists employed is in accordance with regulatory enrollment requirements. [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 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 AND INSTRUCTION

A. GUIDANCE AND CAREER AWARENESS

All schools are required to provide a comprehensive guidance program that addresses the academic, personal and social, and the career domains. Specifically, students must be provided guidance and career awareness programs and activities that assist students in developing and fulfilling individual graduation plans, and prepare them for a seamless transition to relevant employment, further training or postsecondary study. [R43-234, §59-59-100]

B. LIBRARY

The library media program and technology resources must be available and accessible to all students and staff and must be appropriate for the accomplishment of the strategies and goals in each school renewal or district strategic plan. [R43-234]

C. CURRICULUM

1. Requirements for a South Carolina High School Diploma: [R43-234, §59-29-10]

a. The student must earn a total of 24 units of credit as follows:

English language arts:	4.0
mathematics:	4.0
science:	3.0
US History and Constitution:	1.0
Economics	0.5
Other Social studies:	0.5
physical education or Junior ROTC:	1.0
computer science (including keyboarding):	1.0
foreign language or career and technology education:	1.0
electives:	7.0

b. 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]

- c. All students of public or charter schools in this state are required to take the civics test produced by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services as part of the US Government requirement. [§59-29-240]
- d. 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. [§59-29-80]
- e. Comprehensive Health Education: At least one time during the four years of grades nine through twelve, each student shall receive a program of instruction in comprehensive health education, including at least seven hundred fifty (750) minutes of reproductive health education and pregnancy prevention. [§59-32-30, R43-231, R43-238]

A school program shall provide instruction in Comprehensive Health Education from one or more of the following:

- (1) Each student shall receive instruction in a comprehensive health education course for 36 weeks or a semester from the list of approved high school health courses.
 - (2) Each student shall receive instruction in each of the comprehensive health subjects through a series of mini courses, e.g., three-week short courses selected or developed by the school or district.
 - (3) A school or district shall select or develop modular units of instruction for each of the comprehensive health education subjects and integrate them into existing required courses.
 - (4) If options 1, 2, or 3 are not selected, a school shall develop a written plan that demonstrates that all students shall receive instruction in the required comprehensive health subjects within existing courses before graduation. This plan must be submitted to the Division of Curriculum (Division of Instructional Practices and Evaluations) for written approval at least six weeks prior to implementation.
- f. Environmental Studies: Schools must include environmental studies as part of the instructional program. [R43-234, §59-32-30]
 - g. Financial Literacy: Schools must include financial is part of the school instructional programs. [R43-234, §59-29-410]
 - h. Foreign Language: Schools must offer levels 1 and 2 of at least one modern or classical language. [R43-234]
 - i. Visual and Performing Arts: Schools must offer courses in the visual and performing arts. [R43-234, §59-29-220]

- j. Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs: Schools shall provide age-appropriate instruction regarding the dangers in the use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. [R43-234, §59-29-307, §59-29-20]
 - k. Driver Education: Schools must provide a complete program of driver education, including classroom and behind-the-wheel phases, each semester on an elective basis for eligible students. [R43-234, R43-242] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.45 suspends this requirement for 2015–16.*)
 - l. Career and Technology Education: Schools must offer CATE courses. Students who plan to complete a CATE program must earn at least four units in an approved sequence of CATE courses leading to a career goal. [R43-234, §59-59-1000]
2. Advanced Placement courses are offered in accordance with regulatory requirements. [R43-258.1, R43-234, §59-29-190]
 3. Each high school shall provide an accelerated program of study whereby any student who demonstrates sufficient ability shall be allowed to undertake such courses of study as will enable the student to graduate at the end of eleven years of primary and secondary schooling. [§59-39-110]
 4. All secondary schools must offer a clearly define college preparatory program. [§59-5-65]
 5. Each high school student shall develop a pre-registration form outlining the courses in which a student may enroll for his/her entire high school career. [R43-272, §59-59-160]
 6. Specialized programs of instruction are provided to disabled students. [R43-205, R43-243, R43-243.6, 20 U.S.C. §33 et seq.]
 7. 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 require educational programming beyond that normally provided by general school programming, in order to achieve their potential. 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]
 8. 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]
 9. All tenth grade students are offered the PSAT or PLAN tests, and the results are used as a diagnostic tool. [§59-18-340] (*Proviso 1A.18 suspends funding for 2015–16 **FOR PLAN TEST ONLY.***)

10. 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]
11. All students entering the eleventh grade must be administered a WorkKeys assessment. [§59-18-325]

D. AWARDING HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT

1. A school may award one unit of credit for an academic standards-based course that requires a minimum of 120 hours of instruction; one-half unit of credit for standards-based course that requires a minimum of 60 hours of instruction; and one-fourth unit of credit for standards-based course that requires a minimum of 30 hours of instruction. [R43-234]
2. Proficiency-Based System. A school may award credit for proficiency-based courses for initial credit, credit recovery or credit through prior knowledge if the district files a proficiency-based, system-wide application that is approved by the SCDE. [R43-234]
3. A school may award credit for locally designed courses under the following conditions:
 - a. **Locally designed subject area courses** must be approved by the local board of trustees and State Superintendent of Education and aligned with the state academic standards for the particular subject area. [R43-234]
 - b. **Locally designed elective courses** must be approved by the local board of trustees. [R43-234]
 - c. **Locally designed Career and Technology Education (CATE) courses** funded with state or federal CATE monies must be approved by the SCDE's Office of Career and Technology Education or locally designed courses approved through the CATE's innovative course application process. [R43-234]
4. Summer School Program: A school may award credit if a district-wide or school-site summer school program meets all of the regulatory requirements for the courses offered for students in grades 9–12. [R43-234, R43-240]
5. Adult Education: A school may award credit toward the high school diploma for a course that the student takes in an approved adult education program if the course is granted approval by the superintendent or his/her designee. [R43-234, R43-259]
6. Dual Credit Arrangement: A school may award credit for a college course that students in grades 9–12 take under the district's dual credit arrangement. A three-semester-hour college course transfers as one unit of credit. [R43-234]

7. Transfer Students Credits. Units earned by a student in an accredited high school of this state or in a school of another state which is accredited under the regulations of the board of education of that state, or the appropriate regional accrediting agency (New England Association of Colleges and Schools, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Colleges and Schools, and the Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools), will be accepted under the same value which would apply to students in the school to which they transferred.

If a student transfers from a school, which is not accredited, he or she shall be given tests to evaluate prior academic work and/or be given a tentative assignment in classes for a probationary period. [R43-273, §59-46-50]

8. 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]

E. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

1. To earn a South Carolina High School Diploma, a public school student must earn a total of twenty-four units of credit. [R43-234, §59-39-100]
2. The student must be enrolled for a minimum of one semester immediately preceding his or her graduation except in cases of bona-fide change of residence. [R43-234]
3. The Uniform Grading Scale is used in all public schools in the state. [§59-5-68]

III. OPERATIONS AND 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, R43-234]

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. Early dismissal days for emergencies must be reported to and approved by the director of the Office of Federal and State Accountability. [R43-234, §59-1-440]
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]
6. 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]

B. SCHOOL DAY/WEEK

1. The instructional day for secondary students must be at least six (6) hours a day, or its equivalent weekly, excluding lunch periods. [R43-234, §59-1-425]
2. Schools may exercise options and vary the number of minutes in the instructional week, provided that such variation meets statutory requirements and is approved by the local board of trustees. [R43-234, §59-1-425]
3. A class period is defined as a minimum of fifty (50) minutes or an accumulation of the equivalency of 120 hours required for a Carnegie Unit of Credit. [R43-172]
4. Homeroom periods, announcement times, and administrative activities such as attendance are not counted as part of the instructional day. [R43-234]
5. Priority during the instructional day must be given to teaching and learning tasks. [§59-1-425]
6. Class interruptions are limited to emergencies. [§59-1-425]
7. The length of the school day for full-time teachers is a minimum of seven (7) hours. [R43-57.1]

C. TEACHERS - CLASSLOADS/PREPARATIONS

1. The maximum daily teaching load for teachers of academic classes is 150 students. No class may exceed 35 students in enrollment with the exceptions provided for physical education and music teachers. [R43-205, R43-234]] (*Flexibility Provisos 1.28 and 1A.15 suspends professional staffing ratios for 2015–16 in eligible districts.*)
2. 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]
3. A teacher must not be permitted to teach more than fifteen hundred (1,500) minutes weekly. [R43-205]

4. A teacher must not be assigned classes requiring more than four (4) preparations per day. [R43-205]
5. When a teacher's daily schedule includes a combination of academic and nonacademic subjects, the maximum daily teaching load is calculated in accordance with the Defined Program, grades 9–12. [R43-234]
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	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

7. **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	17:1
Mild Mental Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Emotional Disabilities, and Orthopedically Impaired	16:1

8. 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

9. The caseload for speech/language therapist does 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]
7. There is outlined specific, objective criteria for districts to use in identifying students who may be poorly prepared for the next level of study or who are at-risk of dropping out of school. [R43-274.1, §59-59-150]

E. STUDENT – 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, AND REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

1. Each school district must file a record of all dropouts that specifies for every student the name of the school in which he or she was enrolled and gives the following information on the student: his or her name, grade, race, sex, date of birth, free/reduced meals status, English proficiency status, and migrant status. Each district superintendent must verify the accuracy of the student enrollment, attendance, membership by category, and dropout reports submitted to the State Department of Education's Office of Finance. [R43-234]
2. Each school must have an appropriate means of reporting academic achievement to parents. [R43-234, §59-18-930]
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. A report of previous year graduates' post-high school education or employment status is submitted to the State Department of Education by May 1 each year. [R43-234]
6. 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. Accurate accounting records shall be developed and maintained for student transfers and withdrawals. Comprehensive transcripts shall be submitted directly to the receiving school when requested in writing, as soon as possible, but no later than ten business days upon receiving the written request, excluding weekends and recognized state holidays. A permanent record of the transferred student shall be retained in the school from which the student is transferred. The school of record must transfer a student's disciplinary record of suspensions and expulsions to the public or private school to which the student is transferring as soon as possible, but no later than ten business days upon receiving the written request, excluding weekends and recognized state holidays. 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]
7. Each school district must maintain accurate student data according to the pupil accounting system prescribed by the SCDE. [R43-234]
8. Each school district must develop a five-year district strategic plan and each school must develop a five-year school renewal plan and 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]
9. The School Improvement Council must actively participate in the development of the school renewal plan and annual updates. [§59-20-60, R43-261]
10. 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]
11. The School Improvement Council performs other duties as specified in law. [§59-20-60]
12. 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]
13. 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]