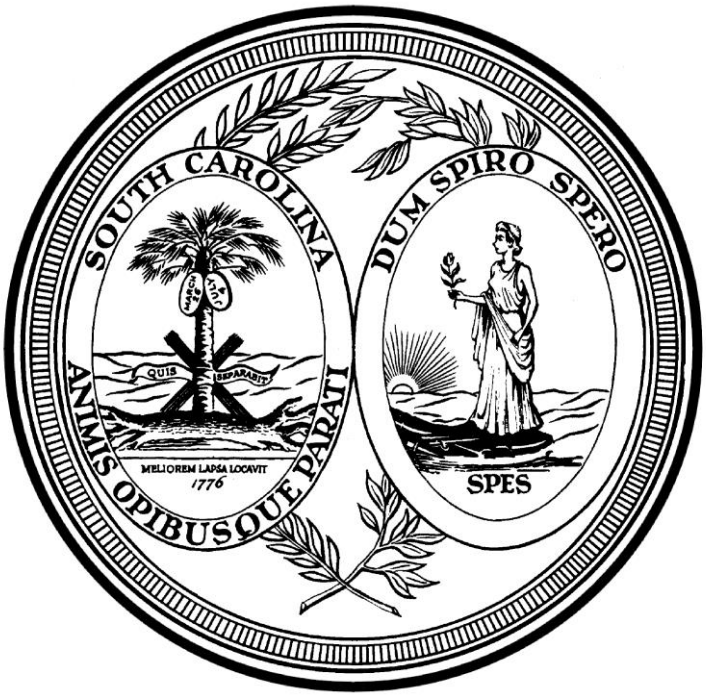
South Carolina
State Reading Plan



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Office of School Transformation
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South Carolina Department of Education

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Note from the South Carolina Department of Education

On February 11, 2015, the South Carolina State Board of Education adopted the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* (Appendix A) to help make certain that all students in our state graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and citizenship. State Superintendent of Education, Molly Spearman, encourages all stakeholders to work together toward the common vision embodied in the *Profile*. Foundational to the knowledge and skills outlined in the *Profile* is the ability to read proficiently. While South Carolina students have made some progress in reading, compared to some other states and in the face of an exciting, but demanding, future, the state education system still has far to go. It is imperative that our state move forward with urgency to ensure our students achieve proficiency in reading and writing. We will work toward this common vision through the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*, which is intended to guide districts and their schools in the design, implementation, and evaluation of literacy-focused instruction and interventions. The SCDE will continuously refine and build upon this state plan and provide districts with support and additional guidance as needed.

Introduction

Act 284 (Read to Succeed) was created to address literacy performance in our state, and put in place a comprehensive system of support to ensure South Carolina's students graduate on time with the literacy skills they need to be successful in college, careers, and citizenship. Research is clear that students who are not proficient readers by third grade are more likely to struggle academically, greatly reducing their chances of graduating from high school, going to college, or successfully participating in a 21st century high-skill economy. This is not an English Language Arts issue alone; students who are struggling readers are less able to access content in all areas of learning, including science and mathematics. While South Carolina students have made some progress in reading, the numbers of proficient students are still low compared to other states. There have been several statewide efforts to address the needs of our struggling readers over past years. From 2000-2010, South Carolina implemented three reading initiatives. SC Reading Initiative (SCRI) was in place for 9 of the 10 years, included kindergarten through

high school, and ended in 2009. SC READS focused on pre-kindergarten through grade three and took place from 2002 to 2007. Finally, South Carolina Reading First (SCRF) focused on kindergarten through grade five from 2004 to 2010. Together these initiatives impacted 68 districts, 435 schools, and an estimated 9,000 teachers. While there were positive outcomes from these very similar initiatives, impact was limited to the teachers, schools, and districts that participated. Moving forward under Read to Succeed, lessons learned from SCRI, SC READS, and SCRF continue to shape the literacy efforts in our state.

In 2009, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and a state literacy team, consisting of 34 members with expertise in literacy and education, provided input for a comprehensive literacy plan published in 2010 titled the *Literacy Matters Comprehensive Literacy Plan*. Efforts were continued in 2011 when the General Assembly initiated the South Carolina Literacy Panel, which worked intensively over a six-month period to prepare and report *Recommendations of the South Carolina Reading Panel: Final Report of the South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative,* published in March 2012. The *Literacy Matters* team and the South Carolina Literacy Panel analyzed data related to student achievement to determine the state's primary literacy challenges and recommended actions necessary to improve the literacy achievement of all students. This work of stakeholders and literacy experts provided the blueprint for Read to Succeed legislation and the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*.

While the *South Carolina State Reading Plan* reflects the requirement of Act 284 that the SCDE develop, implement, evaluate, and continuously refine a state reading plan, it also honors the work of stakeholders and experts who laid important groundwork. In addition, this document reflects input and feedback from a multitude of stakeholders from organizations, districts, and schools, particularly members of the 2014-15 Read to Succeed Advisory Group. Membership lists for the *Literacy Matters* team, the South Carolina Literacy Panel, and the Read to Succeed Advisory Group are included in Appendix B. An initial skeleton draft of the *South Carolina State Reading Plan* was reviewed by the SBE Education Professions Committee in January 2015. Comments were incorporated into the document submitted for first reading to the State Board of Education on May 13, 2015, then again for the second reading and approval in June 2015. A public comment period was held in May 2015. During this time, comments were also solicited directly from key stakeholders and staff of the Education Oversight Committee.

South Carolina's Literacy Challenges

Four major literacy challenges were identified by *Literacy Matters* and the South Carolina Literacy Panel that affect the reading achievement of South Carolina students:

Challenge 1: Low student achievement in reading and writing
Challenge 2: Literacy achievement gaps among demographic groups
Challenge 3: Summer reading achievement loss
Challenge 4: Limited number of exemplary literacy classrooms

Each of these primary state challenges is described in full in Appendix C, with a review of the research specific to each challenge. The Read to Succeed Team used these challenges to define elements incorporated in the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*. Fundamental to overcoming these challenges is a sense of urgency from all stakeholders in South Carolina.

Overview of Read to Succeed

In June 2014, the South Carolina General Assembly passed Act 284 (Read to Succeed), excerpted in Appendix D, as a monumental step toward closing the state's achievement gap and increasing opportunities for all students in South Carolina. The goal of Read to Succeed is to ensure all students graduate from high school with the reading and writing skills they need to be college- and career-ready. Read to Succeed legislation is ground-breaking for South Carolina because it is comprehensive, systematic, and affects every educator and student in the state through eight components:

1. State, district, and school reading plans
2. Focus on third grade progression
3. Summer reading camps
4. Provision of reading interventions
5. Requirements for in-service educator endorsements
6. Early learning and literacy development
7. Teacher preparation

8. Reading coaches

Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, Act 284 requires that a student must be retained in the third grade if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency at the end of the third grade. This critical year, which is typically when students must begin reading to learn, is a focus in the law to ensure that all South Carolina students, by the third grade, have had their individual literacy needs identified and met through appropriate and successful interventions, and that all teachers have the tools, skills, and knowledge they need to assess effectively, analyze data, and provide those targeted interventions.

The legislation is a clear indication that South Carolina is committed to all children, well before the third grade. The law's focus on early learning and literacy development – through the Child Development Education Program (CDEP) – demonstrates a commitment that all students have a successful start in kindergarten. CDEP funds a full-day early childhood program for at-risk four-year-olds to support their readiness for school success.

Act 284 ensures that students who are unable to read and comprehend on grade level will be identified as early as possible and be provided with targeted support from all classroom teachers, not just those specializing in English Language Arts or Reading. Read to Succeed requires that all educators have the knowledge and skills they need to assess and address student reading problems effectively. To this end, the law mandates requirements for teacher preparation, coursework for in-service educators, and the establishment of reading coaches in schools.

Reading plans, beginning with the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*, should cohesively guide the work of the SCDE, districts, and schools across all components of the law and be well-grounded in research and best practices as we work to make the vision of Read to Succeed a reality in South Carolina.

Connection with ELA State Standards

While Read to Succeed and the *South Carolina State Reading Plan* apply to every classroom in every subject area, it is important to note that the goals and intent of the *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts (ELA) 2015* align to and provide support for more broad-based literacy efforts. These ELA state standards, adopted

by the State Board of Education on March 10, 2015, are designed to ensure that South Carolina students are prepared to enter and succeed in economically viable career opportunities or postsecondary education and ensuing careers.

The standards are divided into strands:

- Inquiry-Based Literacy
- Reading – Literary Text
- Reading – Informational Text
- Writing
- Communication

Each strand, with the exception of the Inquiry-Based Literacy, is supported by key ideas.

- Reading
  - Principles of Reading (concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension)
  - Meaning and Context
  - Language, Craft, and Structure
  - Range and Complexity

- Writing
  - Meaning, Context, and Craft
  - Language
  - Range and Complexity

- Communication
  - Meaning and Context
  - Language, Craft, and Structure

Each key idea is supported by one or more standards which describe what students should know and be able to do when they leave the public school system. Therefore, the language included in each standard is the same for kindergarten through English 4. Each standard is supported by indicators which provide specific outcomes for each grade level or course. Also included as an integral part of the standards document are the research-based practices and processes of Inquiry-Based Literacy, Disciplinary Literacy, and Fundamentals of Reading, Writing, and Communication. These serve as the underpinnings for students as they become proficient readers, writers, and communicators. Inquiry-Based Literacy supports teachers in structuring classroom environments in which students can routinely and systematically engage in the process of inquiry.

The Disciplinary Literacy practices of reading, writing, communicating, thinking critically, and performing in meaningful, relevant ways within and across disciplines are essential for students to access and deeply understand content. The Fundamentals of Reading, Writing, and Communication delineate the underlying assumptions of the processes students must use and integrate to become successful and proficient readers, writers, and communicators.

It is important to recognize that reading is not a stand-alone activity that can be developed in isolation. Writing activities are essential learning experiences and should be part of every teacher's routine instructional practice. Having students write about the literary and informational texts they are reading improves reading skills, such as phonemic awareness and comprehension. Successful writers write with purpose and awareness of their readers; in this way, writing can be a vehicle for the teaching of reading. For all students, reading and writing processes are reciprocal; improving one improves the other.

These standards are designed to provide educators and administrators with a full scope and sequence for curriculum alignment. Additional information on the ELA standards can be found on the South Carolina Department of Education website.

State Reading Goals

To gauge success of Act 284 over time, the Read to Succeed Team, with input from the Read to Succeed Advisory Group and staff of the EOC, has established the following measurable goals for statewide implementation. For each goal, the SCDE will designate specific metrics and annual benchmarks over a five-year cycle. Benchmarks, metrics, and baseline data will be published in the first Read to Succeed Evaluation Report after Summer 2015. Reports on progress will be published annually in the fall after analysis of summer reading camp data. Preliminary data related to metrics and baseline data are given in Appendix G. Districts are asked to align their goals with the SCDE's state-level goals.

Through implementation of Act 284, the SCDE will:

1. Increase the number of South Carolina students reading on grade level based on state summative assessments in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11.
    - 1.1 Reduce the number of South Carolina public school students scoring at the lowest achievement level on the state summative reading assessment.

1.2 Increase the number of South Carolina public school students scoring at proficient or above on the state summative reading assessment.

2. Accelerate the progress of historically underperforming readers in the state based on assessments in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 as compared to average state progress. The *2012-13 Accountability Manual* (EOC, 2012) defines historically underachieving groups (HUGs) in South Carolina as follows:
   - 2.1 African American students
   - 2.2 Hispanic students
   - 2.3 Native American students
   - 2.4 Students eligible for free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines
   - 2.5 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students
   - 2.6 Migrant students
   - 2.7 Students with non-speech disabilities
3. Decrease the number of students requiring remediation at the start of post-secondary education.
4. Increase family awareness of and involvement in children's literacy development.
   - 4.1 Increase the percentage of positive responses to the state survey item related to family awareness of children's literacy development.
   - 4.2 Increase the percentage of positive responses to the state survey item related to family involvement in children's literacy development.
   - 4.3 Increase the number of hits on and/or downloads of family literacy resources on the SCDE Read to Succeed webpage.
5. Work with state partners to increase the number of community partnerships in public schools.

As stated previously, the goals listed above will be used to assess and report state progress on an annual basis. Elements in the *South Carolina State Reading Plan* align to the goals, encompass the eight components of Act 284, and are based on reading research and proven best practices. The *South Carolina State Reading Plan* is intended to provide a unified vision and foundation for addressing identified challenges, as well as to guide the SCDE's, districts', and schools' efforts to meet these goals through specific strategies and actions.

In addition, the SCDE will seek to institute two additional performance goals in the future related to what we believe schools and educators need to be able to do as a result of Read to Succeed legislation. During 2015-16, the SCDE will explore potential metrics and baseline data for the following goals, and if viable, will add them to the *SC State Reading Plan* after approval by the State Board of Education in June 2016. Districts should consider ways in which they might implement and assess these performance goals as they construct their plans in 2015-16:

- Improve the ability of South Carolina educators and/or schools to assess and identify the reading difficulties of their students.
- Improve the ability of South Carolina educators and/or schools to provide effective instruction and interventions.

Elements of the State Reading Plan

Reading is a complex and purposeful socio-cultural, cognitive, and linguistic process in which readers simultaneously use their knowledge of spoken and written language, their knowledge of the topic and text, and their knowledge of culture to construct meaning with text. (http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/onreading, 2004).

The following elements have been developed to reflect an intentional focus on the teaching of reading for all students, with intervention strategies to support struggling readers. The *South Carolina State Reading Plan* elements include:

Element 1: Provide professional learning that supports all pre-kindergarten through grade 12 educators in understanding and implementing the characteristics of exemplary literacy classrooms.

Element 2: Build a comprehensive assessment system that helps teachers make a clear connection between curriculum, assessment, and student data in order to develop effective instructional strategies.

Element 3: Provide research-based strategies for summer programs to districts and activities for parents to help prevent summer reading loss.

Element 4: Provide access to professional learning needed for Read to Succeed endorsements and other licensure requirements to help districts and schools train, reward, and retain effective teachers and reading coaches.

Element 5: Foster partnerships to communicate Read to Succeed goals and to promote literacy achievement from birth to grade 12 through collaboration efforts with stakeholders that include community organizations, businesses, and state agencies.

Element 6: Strengthen language and literacy instruction in pre-kindergarten programs through professional learning in evidence-based, intentional curricula and by providing resources for literacy-rich classroom environments.

Research Rationales for Plan Elements

In this section we provide a research rationale behind each element of the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*. Districts and schools should use this information to inform strategies chosen for district and school plans. Over time, the Read to Succeed Team will provide supplemental guidance documents containing further support, information, updates, and materials related to the elements.

Element 1: Provide professional learning that supports all pre-kindergarten through grade 12 educators in understanding and implementing the characteristics of exemplary literacy classrooms.

Research Rationale: Providing professional learning which focuses on the evidence-based characteristics of exemplary literacy classrooms can transform literacy achievement for South Carolina's students. There is clear and abundant research on exemplary literacy classrooms to provide a common vision of effective pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade literacy instruction. All classrooms across grades and content areas should display the characteristics of exemplary

literacy classrooms. Principals, assistant principals, and other district and school leaders – along with classroom teachers – should understand and be able to support these characteristics. Numerous studies (Allington & Johnston, 2000; Duffy-Hester, 1999; Langer, 2001; Pressley, et al., 2001; Pressely, Rankin, & Yokoi, 1996; Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Allington, Block, & Morrow, 1998; Taylor & Pearson, 2004; Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodrigues, 2002; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1999) indicate that effective, exemplary literacy classrooms consistently feature the following characteristics:

1. Significant time devoted to actual reading and writing.
2. Numerous books matched to the students' reading levels.
3. High-quality instruction in reading skills and strategies.
4. Prevalence of small group and individualized instruction based on students' needs.
5. Increased instructional focus and intensity based on students' needs.

By focusing on these five characteristics, the Read to Succeed Team will work to support districts with professional learning opportunities and establish common language and understandings about key literacy concepts and practices that will be shared across SCDE offices and with school districts as we move toward a common vision of the exemplary literacy classroom. Appendix E provides the research behind each of the exemplary literacy classroom characteristics.

The SCDE will ensure that professional learning is of high quality and effective and will be based on the guidelines recommended by the National Staff Development Council's *Standards for Staff Development* (National Staff Development Council, 2001). Additionally, the SCDE will continue to support state-funded reading coaches with professional development. There is a growing body of educational literature on literacy coaching, and a recent study indicated positive student outcomes when reading coaches were well-trained with professional learning sustained over time, particularly for those new to coaching (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010).

The coordination and providing of effective professional development requires strong leadership at all levels. District and school level literacy leadership will be essential for reaching and the Read to Succeed goals. District and school leaders should be well-trained and

knowledgeable about content area reading and writing. Principals and leadership at all levels should seek the professional learning needed to understand and provide literacy support to their teachers. Support provided by leadership may include the following:

- Professional development for all teachers in literacy instruction
- Provision of adequate time for literacy learning, assessment, planning, and instruction
- Use of support personnel, such as literacy coaches, library media specialists, and speech-language pathologists to work with teachers and students
- Prioritization of funding to support ongoing literacy initiatives
- Instructional materials and technologies to support differentiated literacy Instruction

<u>Element 2</u>: Build a comprehensive assessment system that helps teachers make a clear connection between curriculum, assessment, and student data in order to develop effective instructional strategies.

Research Rationale: In today's education climate, school success is defined as yearly progress for every student. To reach this goal, educators need tools to help them identify students who are at risk academically and adjust instructional strategies to better meet students' individual needs. Student progress monitoring is a practice that helps teachers use student performance data to continually evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and make more informed instructional decisions. Classroom-level progress monitoring is on-going and includes curriculum-embedded activities and research-based benchmark assessments which measure a student's learning based on systematic observation and guide teacher instruction. A review of the research confirms the SCDE belief that, when teachers use student progress monitoring, students learn more, teacher decision-making improves, and students become more aware of their own performance. A significant body of research conducted over the past 30 years has shown this method to be a reliable and valid predictor of subsequent performance on a variety of outcome measures, and thus useful for a wide range of instructional decisions (Deno, 2003, Fuchs, Deno, & Mirkin, 1984; Good & Jefferson, 1998). Fuchs and Fuchs (2002) conducted an analysis of research on students' progress monitoring that considered only experimental, controlled studies. These researchers concluded that, when teachers use on-going systematic progress monitoring to track

their students' progress in reading, math, or spelling, they are better able to identify students in need of additional or different forms of instruction, they design stronger instructional programs, and their students achieve more. The Read to Succeed Team will work with stakeholders to make certain South Carolina schools have progress monitoring and formative assessment systems for setting benchmarks that are reliable indicators of student performance and that support quality instruction. Additionally, the SCDE will provide specific guidance and support to districts for the implementation of readiness assessments for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, as required by legislation.

Element 3: Provide research-based strategies for summer programs to districts and activities for parents to help prevent summer reading loss.

Research Rationale: The Read to Succeed Team will provide resources and strategies for districts for summer reading programs, including summer reading camps as required by law, but also programs intended to support summer reading in general. Since 2011, the SCDE has supported SC Summer Reads, a program which provides targeted elementary, middle, and high school students with summer reading books. When funds can be obtained, schools are encouraged to supply books and engage their students in self-chosen summer reading with as much school support as possible. Research indicates that this strategy impacts student achievement, and a number of studies demonstrate that distributing books of choice during the summer months has the potential to mitigate summer reading loss among children from low-income families and also improve measured reading achievement (Allington, et al., 2010). These outcomes can narrow the existing reading achievement gap between children from low- and middle-income families (Lindsay, 2013).

The Read to Succeed legislation requires that every summer each district provide a summer reading camp, defined in the legislation as an educational program offered in the summer by each of the local school districts or consortia of school districts for students unable to comprehend grade level texts and who qualify for mandatory retention. The Read to Succeed Team will provide guidelines for the summer reading camps, and will support, monitor, and evaluate success of the camps annually.

<u>Element 4</u>: Provide access to professional learning needed for Read to Succeed endorsements and other licensure requirements to help districts and schools train, reward, and retain effective teachers and reading coaches.

Research Rationale: Professional learning is the single most accessible means educators have to develop new knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to better meet students' learning needs. Effective professional development, according to Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon (2001), enhances teachers' content knowledge and skills and results in changes in instructional practice. A summary of Richard Allington's 2002 literacy research concludes that teachers are more likely to change their teaching practice when professional learning is directly linked to the program they are teaching and the standards and assessments they use. Teacher professional learning can improve student achievement when it focuses on teachers' knowledge of the subject matter and how students understand and learn (Allington, 2002). Effective professional learning programs are job-embedded and provide teachers with five critical characteristics: 1) opportunities to learn in a supportive community that organizes curricula across grade levels and subjects; 2) links between curriculum, assessment and standards; 3) expectation and time to apply new knowledge in the classroom and receive feedback, with collection of data to reflect on how teaching practices influence student learning over time; 4) deeper knowledge of content and how to teach it; and 5) sustained learning over time. Professional learning efforts need to be sustained over multiple days and weeks (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos, 2009). When teachers receive well-designed professional learning an average of 49 hours spread out over six months to a year, they can increase student achievement significantly (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, and Shapley, 2007). In contrast, fragmented, one-shot workshops lasting 14 hours or less show no statistically significant effect on student learning (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009). Professional learning is essential to continuous improvement and must be seen by the state and districts as an investment. The goal of the Read to Succeed Team is to offer professional learning that has the capacity to create professionals who change their practices when their student data on reading and writing indicate that what they are doing is not improving literacy skills. The professional learning will include instructional practices to address diverse populations, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The SCDE endorses collaborative learning and planning among general education, ESOL, and

special education teachers where specific time is set aside for these teachers to learn and problem-solve together to improve outcomes for all students.

<u>Element 5</u>: Foster partnerships to communicate Read to Succeed goals and to promote literacy achievement from birth to grade 12 through collaboration efforts with stakeholders that include community organizations, businesses, and state agencies.

The foundations for literacy begin developing at birth. According to the Early Language and Literacy Development Zero to Three Policy Brief (2000), "Even in the first few months of life children begin to experiment with language, making sounds, and imitating." During the preschool years, language and cognitive development have an impact on later literacy ability. Children need a rich variety of language and literacy experiences at home and in early childhood programs to enter school with the skills needed to be successful readers and writers.

> The foundations for literacy begin well before children enter school. Sound policy should be grounded in the fact that young children's language and literacy development begins long before they walk through the door of the kindergarten classroom. The foundations of literacy and learning are laid during infancy and toddlerhood, when the brain undergoes its most dramatic development. During these first three years, children acquire the ability to think, speak, learn and reason. When this early development is not nurtured, the brain architecture is affected and young children begin to fall behind. (Zero to Three Policy Brief, 2000, p.1)

In the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*, there are two sub-elements related to fostering partnerships:

<u>Element 5.1:</u> Involve parents and family members in their children's education early.

Research Rationale: Studies have found that children from low-income families are read to less frequently than their middle-class peers, which can lead to the widening language gap. As a child's first teacher, parents should have print and language-rich homes. During the last decade, there has been an increased effort to provide parents and caregivers of young children with recommendations on how to help children gain the language skills needed to become successful readers. Community partners can be instrumental in addressing these identified needs. High-quality early childhood education programs implement practices which are family-focused by partnering with parents to meet the needs of the young children they serve (Sandall, et al., 2005). Teachers create "family friendly" environments for parents which include fostering informal

communication (e.g., during school drop-off/pick-up periods, and family events). Early childhood programs, public and private, can build the quality of their services by providing teachers with professional learning in a research-based curriculum that will equip them with the knowledge to strengthen their relationship with young children and their families. SCDE will work with other state agencies and community partners to support efforts to provide specific early literacy resources and public messages for families. For example, the resource, *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success* (National Research Council, 1999), could be made readily available in public libraries and other public locations for parents and parent educators of young children. SCDE will provide support to districts with a guidance document outlining suggestions and descriptions of model parent involvement programs in other South Carolina schools which can be replicated.

<u>Element 5.2:</u> Continue to involve parents and family members in their children's literacy development through elementary, middle, and high school.

Research Rationale: The research supports that family engagement continues to be important for not just the early grades, but all through elementary, middle, and high school. Parental involvement is directly linked to student engagement in learning for all students; and there is research that indicates this is particularly important for African American and Latino youth (Garcia-Reid, et al., 2005; Richman, Rosenfield, & Bowen, 1998). Many families do need guidance to understand how they can be most effective in helping their children succeed at each of these levels. Several decades of research show that family engagement is a key element of a successful district or school literacy initiative. SCDE and its state-level partners will work to provide districts and schools with access to the research-based activities and practices that will help build parent capacity to partner effectively with their schools in supporting improved student literacy. It is important to note that parents do not have to be in schools to be involved in their child's learning. Parents can offer a great deal of support from home to reinforce the importance of reading and of completing homework. To be effective, family engagement activities and programs should be strategically linked to one another and embedded throughout the components of a district or school literacy plan, not treated as add-ons or unconnected, one-time activities. Additionally, districts and schools should take into account the cultural diversity and other unique demographic characteristics of their families, such as whether they come from urban or rural areas, or are families for whom English is not their first language.

<u>Element 6:</u> Strengthen language and literacy instruction in pre-kindergarten programs through professional learning in evidence-based, intentional curricula and by providing resources for literacy-rich classroom environments.

Research Rationale: Children's development can be affected by high-quality preschool experiences that can improve later academic and social competence (Barnett, 1995; Morrow, 2004; Neuman & Dickinson, 2001). High-quality pre-kindergarten programs have indicators of structural quality which include classroom materials, curricula, teacher education, and teacher-child ratio. Other indicators of high quality include those which are linked to process and focus such as teacher-child and peer-to-peer interactions (Hamre & Pianta, 2007). Sustained, intensive professional learning for teachers has been linked to higher quality indicators and positive child outcomes (Neuman & Kamil, 2010). Research indicates that pre-kindergarten students score higher in language development and phonological awareness when teachers participate in targeted professional learning in intentional evidence-based literacy curricula (Dicknson & Cashwell, 2007). In the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*, there are three sub-elements related to pre-kindergarten programming:

<u>Element 6.1</u>: Expand accessibility to pre-kindergarten programs for all low-income students through expanding with partnering school districts and public and private partners providing quality preschool.

Research Rationale: Quality early childhood education programs are critically important for all children, particularly those who are from families of poverty. To meet this need, the Child Development Education Pilot Project (CDEPP) was established in 2006 to meet the educational needs and address school readiness of young children in poverty. To be eligible for the program, children must be four years of age and participate in either Medicaid or the federal subsidized lunch program, or both. As of 2014, this program's funding has been codified in the Read to Succeed legislation and expanded to 57 school districts. It is no longer considered a pilot, thus the name is now Child Development Education Program, with "Early Reading" added to the name in Act 184. (The SCDE now refers to the program as CDEP.)

<u>Element 6.2</u>: Provide comprehensive professional development, particularly in early literacy and social-emotional development, for early childhood educators in public schools, and partner with First Steps, the Department of Social Services, and Head Start programs

to support their efforts at the same level.

Research Rationale: South Carolina recognizes the critical importance of providing quality preschool programs for four year-olds whether they are enrolled in public schools, private childcare centers, or Head Start programs. Opportunities made available by knowledgeable teachers in effective 4K programs can provide the much needed bridge to eliminate the devastating social, emotional, cognitive, language, and literacy gaps that currently render so many of South Carolina's youngest citizens in jeopardy of living less that productive literate lives. Assembling the complex working systems for reading and writing begins with the early development of fundamental cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional competencies that shape minds for further learning. Social-emotional development is closely intertwined with skills necessary for academic success. Young children are developing a sense of self that is linked to feelings of competence, resiliency, and intrinsic motivation. Studies have shown that children who believe they are capable, know how to ask for help, and learn to persist when a task is difficult do better academically (Guthrie, et al., 2009). Enhancing these prerequisite capacities, while simultaneously providing meaningful, authentic, and embedded early literacy instruction, is the unique and challenging role of preschool educators. Achieving this goal requires intentional teaching and literacy-rich learning environments which provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities that support active cognitive engagement. Developmentally appropriate practice does not mean simply making things easier for children. Rather, it means ensuring that goals and experiences are suited to children's developmental levels and are challenging enough to promote their progress and interest (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009). This balance of practice is achieved when instructional decisions are based on knowledge of children's current levels of development and clear ideas about what the next appropriate level in early literacy learning should be. Professional learning in an intentional early literacy curriculum is needed for teachers in early childhood programs in public schools, Head Start programs, and childcare programs. The SCDE will ensure that reading coaches are trained in early literacy as well as social-emotional development to support public school early childhood teachers in identifying priorities and developing action plans for improving preschool children's language and literacy skills. In addition, the SCDE will continue to work with the Center for Child Care Career Development (CCCCD) to develop and deliver a series of professional learning sessions

for early childhood educators that will provide explicit teaching strategies in language and early literacy and social-emotional development.

<u>Element 6.3:</u> Assist early childhood programs with acquiring the resources for child assessment tools, specifically for language, literacy, and social/emotional development, and provide professional learning for teachers and administrators on the following topics: development of language and literacy, development of social/emotional skills, assessment of language and literacy, assessment of social/emotional skills, how to use the data from the assessments in planning instruction, how to plan small group activities, and one-on-one activities to target specific skills as needed.

Research Rationale: The International Literacy Association (ILA, formerly the International Reading Association) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) jointly formulated a position statement regarding early literacy development in 1998 in which assessment of literacy is addressed. The statement acknowledges the difficulty that teachers face, for example, in kindergarten classrooms where a five-year range in literacy skills is not uncommon. Assessing where each child is in terms of the acquisition of speaking, listening, and writing skills is critical to providing effective instruction to all children within a wide range. The position statement is clear:

> "Throughout these critical years accurate assessment of children's knowledge, skills, and dispositions in reading and writing will help teachers better match instruction with how and what children are learning. However, early reading and writing cannot simply be measured as a set of narrowly defined skills on standardized tests. These measures often are not reliable or valid indicators of what children can do in typical practice, nor are they sensitive to language variation, culture, or the experience of young children" (Bredekamp, Copple, & Neuman, 2000, p.13).

Our state has identified the need to specifically assess vocabulary development at an early age. There is very strong evidence supporting the power of vocabulary at school entry in predicting literacy outcomes, for early as well as later reading outcomes (Craig, Connor, & Washington, 2003; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Poe, Burchinal, & Roberts, 2004; Roth, Speece, & Cooper, 2002; Snow, et al., 1995, 2007). In Act 284, there is a requirement for an early literacy assessment as a readiness assessment in all publically funded preschool programs. The SCDE will partner with First Steps and Head Start programs to train teachers to administer the state-selected readiness assessment and to utilize the data from the assessment(s) to plan instruction to

meet the individual needs of children. The SCDE will strive to strengthen partnerships with First Steps and Head Start programs by incorporating the use of speech-language pathologists, who will be able to provide guidance on the assessment, acquisition, and development of language within literacy programming.

Evaluation of the State Reading Plan

As the SCDE oversees the implementation of the *South Carolina State Reading Plan* elements, lessons learned from the SC Reading First (SCRF) initiative will be closely considered. These lessons include the need to focus on collaboration with stakeholders and develop commitment of all stakeholders to support literacy, particularly the commitment of school and district administrators. Given the many demands placed on school administrators and staff, it is important to protect time for reading and the literacy capacity-building role of reading coaches. In addition, we must focus on the critical role of ongoing assessment to monitor student progress and to examine the impact of instruction within intervention services on student growth during the school year. This SCRF strategy was critical in revealing student achievement declines over summer. Equally as important, SCRF's recommendations include that there be implementation fidelity to understand what strategies truly work and that any results be viewed on a long-term basis. Reading initiatives similar to Read to Succeed have required extensive professional learning and culture change; time is needed to complete the training and build the capacity and skills of educators to make changes in practice (Dickenson, et al., 2015).

The *South Carolina State Reading Plan* will be evaluated and updated annually by the SCDE. The SCDE and the Read to Succeed Team will work with EOC staff and the Read to Succeed Advisory Group to measure progress of state plan goals and publish results. As stated previously, state performance objectives, five-year benchmarks, metrics, and baseline data will be published in the first Read to Succeed Evaluation Report after Summer 2015. Reports on progress will be published annually in the fall after analysis of summer reading camp data. These reports will be disseminated to the State Board of Education, General Assembly, and districts, and will be posted on the SCDE Read to Succeed website.

The SCDE will work in 2015-16 to revise the *South State Reading Plan* and/or associated evaluation report to include details and explanations for all substantial uses of state, local, and federal funds promoting reading-literacy and best judgment estimates of the cost of research-

supported, thoroughly analyzed proposals for initiation, expansion, or modification of major funding programs addressing reading and writing. Each year, the Read to Succeed Team will prepare an analysis of funding for incorporation into the *South State Reading Plan* and/or associated evaluation report.

Most importantly, data, analysis, and budget projections each year will be used to drive continuous improvement in the SCDE and Read to Succeed Team's service to students and educators as we work together to make certain that all students in South Carolina graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and citizenship.

Guidance for District Reading Plans

Districts and schools are encouraged to use the planning process to both hold themselves accountable to their communities and drive continuous improvement related to reading.
The SCDE and Read to Succeed Team will coordinate across divisions and offices to leverage current funding and advocate for funding needed in the next five to ten years to meet the goals of the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*. As specified in Act 284, the SCDE's 2015-16 evaluation report related to the *South Carolina State Reading Plan* may include details and explanations for all substantial uses of state, local, and federal funds promoting reading/literacy, along with estimates and analyses of the cost of initiation, expansion, or modification of major funding programs addressing reading and writing. As districts develop their reading plans, they are encouraged to consider the following funding streams to support their plans: EIA funds for students at risk of school failure, EIA funds specifically for reading, lottery funds for K-5 reading, Title I, grants, and/or foundation and business donations.

At the start of the 2015-16 school year, districts will begin the process of aligning their district reading plans to the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*. Reading plans will be submitted to the SCDE in the spring as part of regular District Strategic Plans. Appropriate leadership is critical to ensure that district plans are effective. To that end, the SCDE encourages each district to add one or more reading specialists to its strategic plan team for the development and monitoring of its reading plan. Technical assistance and a plan review opportunity will be provided in Fall 2015 to help district teams refine their plans for spring submission.

In addition to providing district goals aligned to the state goals in this document and requested data, each district's pre-kindergarten through grade 12 reading plan must address the

following as required in the Read to Succeed legislation:

1. Documentation of the reading and writing assessment and instruction planned for all pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students;
2. Documentation of the interventions in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 to be provided to all struggling readers who are not able to comprehend grade-level texts;
3. Description of a system for helping parents understand how they can support the student as a reader at home;
4. Description of how the district provides for monitoring reading achievement and growth at the classroom, school, and district levels with decisions about interventions based on all available data;
5. Description of how the district ensures that all students are provided with a wide selection of texts, matched to student reading levels, over a wide range of reading levels and genres;
6. Provision of professional learning related to reading and writing instruction for teachers;
7. Description of strategically planned and developed partnerships with county libraries, state and local arts organizations, volunteers, social service organizations**,** and school media specialists to promote reading; and
8. Budget information showing how literacy development has been prioritized. Districts and schools may need to re-allocate resources to fully implement their plans. Schools must prioritize the goal of all students reading proficiently by the end of third grade above all other priorities.

Act 284 requires districts to submit a variety of data to the SCDE. For example, Section 59-155-150 (A) states that reading instructional strategies and developmental activities for children whose oral language skills are assessed to be below the norm of their peers in the State must be aligned with the district's reading plan, and that the results of each assessment also must be reported to the Read to Succeed Team. The SCDE may request additional data in the district plan to help gauge state and district progress and plan for district support. Some of the data

required under the law may be asked for in the district's reading plan, while other data may be requested in other formats, for example through PowerSchool or an online portal, at more appropriate or timely points in the school year. Under particular components of the law, districts and schools are also required to provide data and information to parents and stakeholders. Specific direction will be provided from the SCDE under separate cover and as appropriate in relation to these requirements.

The district reading plan should be the central driver for district and school action related to literacy, and whenever possible and appropriate, should be referenced in alignment and implementation of all programs. For example, pursuant to Act 287, the First Steps to School Readiness Initiative, reading instructional strategies and developmental activities for children whose oral language and emergent literacy skills are assessed to be below the national standards must be aligned with the district's reading plan for addressing the readiness needs of each student.

The Read to Succeed Team will provide an online template and technical assistance in Fall 2015 to guide development of district goals and strategies. The template will be based on the goals and six elements outlined in the *South Carolina State Reading Plan*. In addition, the template will be aligned with and connected to District Strategic Plans to allow districts to integrate these two plans, eliminate redundancy and paperwork load, and prioritize district efforts strategically to maximize use of all available resources and funding. The template and deadlines will be provided by the Read to Succeed Team under separate cover. Act 284 requires that all district reading plans be reviewed and approved by the SCDE. The Read to Succeed Team will provide written comments to individual districts, communicate common issues raised in prior or newly submitted district reading plans to all districts, and use its review of district plans to inform training and support provided to districts and schools. The legislation requires that a district which does not submit a plan or whose plan is not approved does not receive any state funds for reading until it submits a plan that is approved. The SCDE may direct a district that is persistently unable to prepare an acceptable reading plan or to help all students comprehend grade-level texts to enter into a multidistrict or contractual arrangement to develop an effective intervention plan.

Districts are expected to develop their plans beginning in the 2015-16 school year with submission to the SCDE in the spring as part of regular District Strategic Plans. District plans will be evaluated and updated annually.

Guidance for School Reading Plans

Schools are expected to develop their reading plans beginning in the 2016-17 school year with submission to districts in the spring as part of regular School Improvement Plans. Reading plans will be submitted to districts in the spring, beginning in Spring 2017. As with district plans, appropriate leadership will be critical to ensure that school plans are effective. To that end, the SCDE encourages each school to include the school reading coach, along with SIC members, for the development and monitoring of its school reading plan.

Each school must prepare a school implementation plan aligned with the district reading plan to enable the district to monitor and support implementation at the school level. The school plan must be a component of the school's strategic plan required by Section 59-18-1310. A school implementation plan should be sufficiently detailed to provide practical guidance for classroom teachers. Proposed strategies for assessment, instruction, and other activities specified in the school plan must be sufficient to provide the classroom teachers and other instructional staff helpful guidance that can be related to the critical reading and writing needs of students in the school. In consultation with the School Improvement Council, each school must include in its implementation plan the training and support that will be provided to parents as needed to maximize their promotion of reading and writing by students at home and in the community (Read to Succeed Act, SC Code of Laws, 59.155.140(C), 2014). School plans will be evaluated and updated annually.

Appendix A: Profile of the South Carolina Graduate

Profile of the South Carolina Graduate

World Class Knowledge

- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

World Class Skills

- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

Life and Career Characteristics

- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

Approved by SCASA Superintendents' Roundtable, SC Chamber of Commerce, State Board of Education, and Education Oversight Committee.

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tomorrow won't wait for our students

AN INITIATIVE OF SOUTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON COMPETITIVENESS

Appendix B: List of Committee Members

***Literacy Matters* State Team**

(SLT) February 8-April 1, 2011 (final draft "Literacy SC" SC State Literacy Plan)

Name	Name of District or Organization Represented
C.C. Bates	Clemson University
Vickie Brockman	York 2
Ann Cannon	Sumter 17
Andress Carter-Sims	Richland 1
Cathy Chapman	SCDE Literacy Specialist
Melanie Clark	Spartanburg 7
Robin Cox	Lexington/Richland 5
Cathy Delaney	Berkeley
Kathy Durbin	Lancaster
Parmala Farmer	Spartanburg 1
Terry Fetner	SCDE
Crystal Fields	Lancaster
Barbara Hairfield	Charleston
Queenie Hall	York 3
Catherine Hamilton	Aiken
Harriette Jenerette	SCDE Adult Education
Jane Johns	SCDE Literacy Specialist
Christine LeBlanc	Richland 1
Ginger Manning	SCDE Literacy Specialist
Michele Martin	Success by 6, Sumter
Mary Anne Mathews	State Office of First Steps
Renee Mathews	East Point Academy Charter School
Lorena Newton	Anderson 2
Annette Parrott	Sumter 17
Renee Phillips	Spartanburg 3
Robin Sally	Children's Defense Fund
Susan Senn	Newberry
Kathleen Theodore	SEDL
Mary Thommasson	McCormick
Sherri Thurman	Chesterfield
Jan Waters	Cherokee
Rosemary Wilson	DHEC
Polly Wingate	York 3

Reading Proficiency Panel Selected in September of 2011

NAME	Designated Position	School/Org
Mrs. D'Etta P. Broam	Parent	Lexington 1
Ms. Leigh Bolick	First Steps Board	DSS-Director of Child Care Licensing
Mr. Earl Mitchell	State Library Board	South Carolina State Library Board
Dr. Charles Guy Castles	Pediatrician	Pediatric Associates
Mr. William Marcus	Community	Adult Learning Center
Ms. Molly C. Talbot-	Community	Mary Black Foundation
Ms. Pamela Lackey	Business Leader	AT&T
Dr. Mick Zais	Parent	SCDE
Ms. Amy Sprague	Parent Educator	Berkeley County School District
Dr. Kathy Headley	Reading Researcher	Clemson University
Ms. Mary Elizabeth	Literacy Coach	Lexington 4 School District
Ms. Mary Annette	Literacy Coach	Sumter School District
Ms. Cynthia Downs	Early	Newberry School District
Dr. Lynn Moody	Early	York 3 School District
Dr. Cherry Daniel	Elementary Principal	SC Virtual Charter School
Ms. Marisa Vickers	Middle School	Richland 1 School District
Ms. Audrea Phillips	Teacher	Horry School District
Ms. Kelli Sanders	Teacher	Bamberg 1 School District
Ms. Debbie Milner	Teacher	Spartanburg 7 School District
Ms. Angela Hutto	Teacher	Hampton 1 School District
The Honorable Michael	Senator	Senate
The Honorable Mark N.	Representative	House
Ms. Rose Sheheen	Board Member	State Board
Ms. Ann Marie Taylor	Board Member	EOC

2014-15 Read to Succeed Advisory Group (as of 3/11/2015)

Last Name	First Name	Name of School District, Business, Organization	City/Town
Apel	Kenn	University of South Carolina	Columbia
Bates	Celeste (C.C.)	Clemson University	Clemson
Bishop	Heidi	SC Branch of the Int. Dyslexia Assoc./ Camperdown Academy, Greenville, SC	Simpsonville
Bissell	Erica	Lexington School District One	Lexington
Brewington	Jean	Spartanburg School District Three	Glendale
Burrows	Virginia	Greenville, Legacy Charter Elementary School	Greenville
Coakley	Laura	Clemson University/Conder Elementary (Richland 2)	Lexington
Cox	Susan	Spartanburg School District 6	Roebuck
Edwards	Amy	Dorchester School District Four	St. George
Hammel	Patti	Georgetown County School District	Georgetown
Kelly	Neely	Fairfield County School District	Winnsboro
Kulisek	Barbara	Colleton County School District	Bluffton
Leopold	Carol	Charleston County School District	Charleston
Linkous	Jennifer	Spartanburg District 2, Carlisle-Foster's Grove Elem	Duncan
Long	Karen	Florence School District 1	Florence
Maness	Kathy	Palmetto State Teachers Association	Columbia
Parrott	Mary	Sumter School District	Sumter
Reidenbach	Elizabeth	Charleston County School District	Charleston
Schaffer Olson	Kathy	United Way of the Midlands	Columbia
Senior	Karen	SC Speech Language Hearing Association	Orangeburg
Solesbee	Mary Ann	Carolina Education Consultants	Lyman
Sparkman	Karen	School District of Greenville County	Greenville
Swetckie	Christopher	Berkeley County School Dist – Howe Hall Arts Infused Magnet School	Goose Creek

Thomas	Aldonza	South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind	Jonesville
Thompson	Ida	Richland School District One	Columbia
Tracy	Terrell	Converse College	Fountain Inn
Weaver	Ellen	Palmetto Promise Institute	Columbia
Wingate	Polly	Rock Hill School District 3 of York County	Rock Hill

Appendix C: South Carolina's Literacy Challenges

Challenge 1: Low Student Achievement in Reading and Writing

The 2013 state reading data indicate that only 82.9% of students meet the third grade reading standard (Level 3 or above) as measured by the state's summative assessment, the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS). Of further concern, the data show that the percentage of students who meet the grade level reading standard generally declines as students progress from elementary to middle school. National achievement data demonstrate that too many of South Carolina's children and adolescents are not progressing as compared with students in other states. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is administered to a randomly-sampled group of students in grades four, eight, and twelve every other year. In 2013, only 28% of our state's fourth grade students scored Proficient or Advanced in Reading, below the national average of 34%. South Carolina ranked forty-second of 50 states nationally with an average score of 214 compared to the national average score of 221. Only 29% of eighth grade students in South Carolina scored Proficient or Advanced in NAEP reading compared with a national average of 35%, scoring lower than those in 35 states, and only higher than 6 states (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2013). If South Carolina's students are to compete in a global society, we must ensure our children's academic achievement is comparable to that of other states.

Challenge 2: Literacy Achievement Gaps

In recent years, student data disaggregated by demographic groups is more readily available. This level of accountability is the first step in ensuring that all students (regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, disability, Limited English proficiency, or ethnicity) have the opportunity to receive an education that enables them to prosper in this nation's economy and fully engage its society. The results of two statewide assessments, the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) and the High School Assessment Program (HSAP), were examined. To measure literacy, the PASS assessed reading and writing (along with research skills) while the HSAP is an English language arts (ELA) exam. Three consistent patterns emerged from the data:

- Significant literacy achievement gaps exist between demographic subgroups.
- A higher percentage of students in every demographic group failed to meet literacy

standards, from third grade to eighth grade.

- Literacy achievement gaps widen from the third grade to the eighth grade.

Students from families with low socio-economic status are more likely to have a gap in school readiness scores that will represent at least a six-month difference between low- and middle-income students. Unfortunately, deficiencies early in childhood have long-lasting effects as the achievement gap widens and students fall further behind. Starting out behind, students will continue to have gaps in their learning. Children with limited exposure to print before coming to school fall behind in language acquisition and background knowledge. This sets them up to be at higher risk to be very slow readers with poor comprehension skills, and this does not need to be the case, when there are effective interventions. Describing the downward trajectory as the *Matthew Effect*, Keith Stanovich (1986) writes about an all-too-predictable pattern with children who struggle with reading and writing and perform poorly on standardized measures of reading during elementary and middle school. Without the instruction to meet their needs, all too often these students drop out before completing high school (National Goals Panel, 1995). In the 2012-13 school year, SCDE data indicated that there were 5,537 high school drop-outs in South Carolina, which constitutes a 2.6% drop-out rate. Although this rate has decreased in recent years, there are still too many South Carolina students who are not being prepared to meet expectations in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.*

Challenge 3: Summer Reading Achievement Loss

Another challenge facing South Carolina's students is the issue of summer reading achievement loss. Students who make achievement gains during the school year often experience losses in achievement over the summer. Many researchers have identified an achievement loss across the summer season (Cooper, Charlton, Valentine, & Muhlenbruck, 2000; Entwisle & Alexander, 1992; Heyns, 1987). Research suggests that summer achievement loss is greatest among students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Alexander, Entwistle, & Olson, 2000; Burkham, Ready, Lee, & LoGerfo, 2004; Condron, 2009; Cooper, et al., 1996) and the negative effects of low-SES on achievement during summer may be most pronounced during the early grades (Johnson, 2000). Student performance data from the South Carolina Reading First (SCRF) Initiative were analyzed to assess whether students experienced summer losses of reading achievement. Four matched groups of students who participated in the initiative from

2004 to 2010 took the Stanford Reading First (Stanford RF) assessment in first through third grade in the fall and spring of each school year. The pattern of achievement growth over academic and summer periods for students was similar across grade levels: scores increased from fall to spring and decreased after the summer break. Each year of instruction was followed by a substantial summer learning loss. The pattern of reading achievement gains during the school year and learning loss during summers was consistent across grade levels, cohorts, initial achievement level, genders, SES, and ethnicity. Students' reading achievement growth was severely hindered when multiple risk factors were present. For example, minority males with low SES had the lowest scores throughout the program and experienced less reading achievement growth and large summer learning losses. Many of South Carolina's students could achieve higher levels of reading performance if they did not have to overcome significant summer reading achievement losses each year.

Challenge 4: Limited number of exemplary literacy classrooms

The South Carolina Department of Education collected baseline data in 64 schools during the 2010–2011 school year to determine the degree to which classrooms in these schools reflected elements of the literacy classrooms described in the research as being exemplary and highly effective. The SCDE was particularly interested in assessing how much students are actually reading and writing, and whether students have access to materials appropriate for learning to read and reading to learn. The South Carolina data indicate that in about half of the schools sampled, students read and wrote text less than 25% of the time devoted to reading and writing instruction. In 72% of sampled schools, students read and wrote text less than 50% of the time. The vast majority of students in these classrooms are assigned work and activities that do not require them to engage with or use text, precisely the opposite of what takes place in exemplary literacy classrooms. In addition, the data collected regarding whether students had access to materials appropriate for reading success revealed that 43% of these classrooms had fewer than 100 books (about one-quarter of the number recommended for a classroom of 25 students) and 85% had fewer than 250 books (about half the number recommended for a classroom of 25 students). Furthermore, most of the books were well above the reading levels of students, making it challenging and often impossible for students, particularly struggling readers, to engage with text to read for understanding and gain content knowledge. Similar challenges

have been identified with some of the state's pre-kindergarten classrooms, showing a lack of essential literacy materials such as books, print materials, and writing supplies.

Appendix D: Excerpt from Act 284

Section 59-155-140. (A)(1) The department, with approval by the 39 State Board of Education, shall develop, implement, evaluate, and continuously refine a comprehensive state plan to improve reading achievement in public schools. The State Reading Proficiency Plan must be approved by the board by June 15, 2015, and must include, but not be limited to, sections addressing the following components:

(a) reading process;
(b) professional learning to increase teacher reading expertise;
(c) professional learning to increase reading expertise and literacy leadership of principals and assistant principals;
(d) reading instruction;
(e) reading assessment;
(f) discipline-specific literacy;
(g) writing;
(h) support for struggling readers;
(i) early childhood interventions;
(j) family support of literacy development;
(k) district guidance and support for reading proficiency;
(l) state guidance and support for reading proficiency;
(m) accountability; and
(n) urgency to improve reading proficiency.

(2) The state plan must be based on reading research and proven-effective practices, applied to the conditions prevailing in reading-literacy education in this State, with special emphasis on addressing instructional and institutional deficiencies that can be remedied through faithful implementation of research-based practices. The plan must provide standards, format, and guidance for districts to use to develop and annually update their plans, as well as to present and explain the research-based rationale for state-level actions to be taken. The plan must be updated annually and must incorporate a state reading proficiency progress report.

(3) The state plan must include specific details and explanations for all substantial uses of state, local, and federal funds promoting reading-literacy and best judgment estimates of the cost of research-supported, thoroughly analyzed proposals for initiation, expansion, or modification of major funding programs addressing reading and writing. Analyses of funding requirements must be prepared by the department for incorporation into the plan.

(B)(1) Beginning in Fiscal Year 2015-2016, each district must prepare a comprehensive annual reading proficiency plan for prekindergarten through twelfth grade consistent with the plan by responding to questions and presenting specific information and data in a format specified by the Read to Succeed Office. Each district's PK-12 reading proficiency plan must present the rationale and details of its blueprint for action and support at the district, school, and classroom levels. Each district shall develop a comprehensive plan for supporting the progress of students as readers and writers, monitoring the impact of its plan, and using data to make improvements and to inform its plan for the subsequent years. The district plan piloted in school districts in Fiscal Year 2013-2014 and revised based on the input of districts shall be used as the initial

district reading plan framework in Fiscal Year 2014-2015 to provide interventions for struggling readers and fully implemented in Fiscal Year 2015-2016 to align with the state plan.

(2) Each district PK-12 reading proficiency plan shall:
(a) document the reading and writing assessment and instruction planned for all PK-12 students and the interventions in prekindergarten through twelfth grade to be provided to all struggling readers who are not able to comprehend grade-level texts. Supplemental instruction shall be provided by teachers who have a literacy teacher add-on endorsement and offered during the school day and, as appropriate, before or after school in book clubs, through a summer reading camp, or both;
(b) include a system for helping parents understand how they can support the student as a reader at home;
(c) provide for the monitoring of reading achievement and growth at the classroom, school, and district levels with decisions about intervention based on all available data;
(d) ensure that students are provided with wide selections of texts over a wide range of genres and written on a wide range of reading levels to match the reading levels of students;
(e) provide teacher training in reading and writing instruction; and
(f) include strategically planned and developed partnerships with county libraries, state and local arts organizations, volunteers, social service organizations, and school media specialists to promote reading.

(3)(a) The Read to Succeed Office shall develop the format for the plan and the deadline for districts to submit their plans to the office for its approval. A school district that does not submit a plan or whose plan is not approved shall not receive any state funds for reading until it submits a plan that is approved. All district reading plans must be reviewed and approved by the Read to Succeed Office. The office shall provide written comments to each district on its plan and to all districts on common issues raised in prior or newly submitted district reading plans.
(b) The Read to Succeed Office shall monitor the district and school plans and use their findings to inform the training and support the office provides to districts and schools.
(c) The department may direct a district that is persistently unable to prepare an acceptable PK-12 reading proficiency plan or to help all students comprehend grade-level texts to enter into a multidistrict or contractual arrangement to develop an effective intervention plan.

(C) Each school must prepare an implementation plan aligned with the district reading proficiency plan to enable the district to monitor and support implementation at the school level. The school plan must be a component of the school's strategic plan required by Section 9 59-18-1310. A school implementation plan shall be sufficiently detailed to provide practical guidance for classroom teachers. Proposed strategies for assessment, instruction, and other activities specified in the school plan must be sufficient to provide to classroom teachers and other instructional staff helpful guidance that can be related to the critical reading and writing needs of students in the school. In consultation with the School Improvement Council, each school must include in its implementation plan the training and support that will be provided to parents as needed to maximize their promotion of reading and writing by students at home and in the community.

Appendix E: Characteristics of Exemplary Literacy Classrooms

Characteristic 1: Significant time devoted to actual reading and writing.

Research Rationale: The research on exemplary literacy classrooms is clear that supporting and challenging students to reach proficient and advanced levels of literacy requires that educators dramatically increase the time in classrooms students are expected to read and write. Classrooms that expect, support, and promote engaged reading and writing consistently yield higher levels of achievement than classrooms that expect and promote activities that do not require ample amounts of reading and writing. In studies of fourth-graders who took the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001) and fifteen-year-olds in 32 countries who took the Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA) (Kirsch, de Jong, LaFontaine, McQueen, Mendalovits, & Monseur, 2002), the two groups of researchers reached the same conclusion: the amount students read predicts achievement more than any other factor including gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Children of poverty who are engaged readers consistently outscore wealthier children who read less. The findings of the SCDE are consistent with numerous studies showing that students who read more achieve more. Allington and Johnson (2000) reported that effective teachers worked with small groups and individual students while students were reading independently. Guthrie (2004) clearly showed that teachers who consistently help all of their students to reach high levels of reading achievement do so by fully engaging students in reading and writing text. Students in these classrooms spend 75% to 90% of instructional time reading and writing connected text. Teachers routinely had students reading 40 to 45 minutes of each hour allocated to reading instruction, only 5 to 10 minutes preparing students to read, and only 5 to 10 minutes engaging students in activities after reading.

Characteristic 2: Numerous books matched to students' reading levels.

Research Rationale: There is an abundance of research supporting that all students, beginning with preschoolers, need to have classrooms that are literacy-rich to become successful readers. In a joint position statement (1998), the NAEYC and the ILA recommended a minimum of five to six books per student for pre-kindergarten classrooms and that half those books be non-fiction. Each elementary classroom should have a well-stocked library with at least 200 books accessible to students, half of which are also non-fiction. According to Taylor (2007), each middle and high

school classroom should have classroom libraries reflecting the content learned in the classroom and containing at least 60% nonfiction books for the middle school level and at least 70% nonfiction books for the high school level. Sanacore and Palumbo (2010) suggest that classroom libraries be a collection of different types of easily accessible materials that relate to relevant subject matters, including poetry, historical fiction, biography, autobiography, nonfiction, graphic novels, multicultural resources, bibliotherapeutic material, internet sources, magazines, comics, and illustrated books. All classroom libraries should also contain texts which reflect students' backgrounds and interests and which are written on a wide range of reading levels. All students need to have ready access to traditional texts as well as texts with alternative formats and assistive technology. While these literacy-rich classrooms are important for all students, they are particularly critical for students from low-income families who are less likely to have access to books and print materials at home. The findings from the Cunningham (2005) study indicate that the quality of the literacy environment and literacy development are positively and significantly related. Classrooms that were rated as deficient in literacy environment quality had a negative effect on students' language and literacy scores. Conversely, the highest scores were found in classrooms that were rated as having exemplary literacy environments (Cunningham, 2008). Other research supports these findings. In *Conversations*, Regie Routman provides a review of the research on the impact of literacy-rich classroom environments on student achievement:

> A comprehensive study in the early 1990s found that 'effective reading programs are usually supported by classroom libraries' (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 1992). Research has shown that 'better libraries are related to better reading, as measured by standardized tests' (Krashen 1998) Access to books increases the amount of reading children do (McQuillen 1998), and the easiest way to ensure student access to books is through a well-designed and organized classroom library (Fractor, Woodruff, Martinez, & Teale, 1993). It is clear that environments that support a large amount of reading materials dramatically impact student reading achievement (Routman, 2000).

Two decades of research on effective classroom and schools documents that without rich supplies of engaging, accessible, appropriate books, schools are not likely to teach many children to read at all, much less develop thoughtful, eager, engaged readers (Allington, 2005).

An important resource for teachers to provide the recommended access to books should be the school library. Good school libraries are full of enticing books for students reading at all levels with a wide variety of tastes and interests, and good librarians are experts at matching books to kids (Gordon, 2010). Lonsdale (2003) concluded that school library media programs lead to increased student achievement as measured by state standardized tests, had a positive effect on learning and cognitions for typical students, and school librarians' collaboration with general educators was a key factor in increased student achievement. (See Appendix F for details on the role of school librarians.)

Characteristic 3: High-quality instruction in reading skills and strategies.

Research Rationale: Educators have identified a definite need for professional learning on the reading process and they often indicate that their pre-service college coursework was lacking in this area. Many teachers have not had the opportunity to learn enough about the reading process to know how to most effectively teach reading. The Read to Succeed Team will collaborate with the state's higher education institutions to update the literacy courses of undergraduate and graduate programs to ensure pre-service teachers are well-prepared to teach reading to students, particularly those who struggle with reading. Partnering with teacher training institutions to establish common language and agreeing on methods for teaching reading which are based on the reading research are critical. Despite great progress in understanding how children learn to read, the field continues to be dominated by multiple perspectives and approaches. Additionally, there continue to be misconceptions about the reading process and the methods of teaching reading. Some parents, administrators, and teachers still believe that reading is primarily learned through skill instruction. The National Reading Panel released a report in 2000 that indicated that proficiency in phonemic awareness, word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are the necessary competencies for success in reading. Students need direct, thoughtful, organized, and regular instruction in all of these areas to become proficient readers (National Reading Panel Report, 2000). Reading at grade level requires more than the skill to sound out words. Reading proficiency requires interrelated skills and knowledge that are taught and practiced over time. The sets of skills which are the foundations for successful readers must be taught in concert and include 1) language skills – oral language, vocabulary, and comprehension, 2) mechanics of reading, including skills related to knowledge of letters and

sounds, and 3) content knowledge, which allows students to have an easier time understanding what they read. Marie Clay defines the reading process with the following explanation:

> "The child is building a processing network that will deal with literacy tasks. He has to learn the letters and the words and their relationship to sound, but he also has to build and expand the intricate interacting systems in the brain that must work together at great speed as he reads text" (Clay, 2005b, p. 102).

Research finds that students typically develop these skills before third grade, and high-quality instruction on all parts in concert is critical. However, teaching practices and reading curricula often focus too much on the mechanical skills and overlook the importance of time needed for students to practice oral language and reading for meaning. Reading instruction needs to be systematic and deliberate in application; however, this does not mean a rigid progression of one-size-fits-all teaching. It is critical that reading instruction accounts for learner variability. Encouraging invented spelling works side-by-side with instructing students in word recognition skills, including phonics, and each informs the other. Intensive instruction on any particular skill or strategy should be based on need (Strickland, 2005). For example, students who struggle decoding words in text need phonics instruction. Students who do not struggle with decoding words and can read fluently do not need phonics instruction but instead need explicit instruction in the strategies to comprehend text and adequate time to practice reading skills. As the nationally known teacher trainer and author, Stephanie Harvey, states:

> "We need to show students how to read and then let them read. Worksheets don't help. Reading, talking about what they have read, writing, and thinking are what students need to be doing" (Stephanie Harvey, presentation at the SCDE Research to Practice conference, Columbia SC, September 23, 2014).

Characteristic 4: Prevalence of small group and individualized instruction.

Research Rationale: Inherent in this state plan is the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as the foundation for teaching, learning, curriculum development, and assessment. UDL is based on a set of principles for curriculum development that give all students equal opportunities to learn. The "universal" in universal design does not imply one optimal solution, or a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs. It is important to note that just the mere access to materials and information does not equate to

access in learning for all. Studies indicate that professional learning for teachers in the design and implementation of the principles of universal design would promote lesson planning for all learners, including students with significant cognitive disabilities (Spooner, et al., 2007).

According to Tomlison (2009), the principle of the primacy of student differences in effective classrooms is necessary for literacy instruction. Teachers must consider the types of grouping arrangements they use during their literacy instruction. They need to employ a variety of grouping formats throughout their literacy instructional blocks of time, to include whole class, small group, and opportunities for individualized instruction. A review of the research indicates that whole group instruction will not meet the needs of every child. Small group and individualized instruction based on evidence from current classroom data, observations, and school, district, or state assessments are necessary components of the teacher's literacy block to meet the needs of all students. There is no substitute for ongoing documentation and monitoring of learning to determine the order in which skills should be addressed and the level of intensity required when supporting a student or small group to succeed in a particular area. The use of running records and analyses of invented spelling serve this purpose well.

Biancarosa (2012) found supporting adolescent literacy also requires simultaneous attention to the needs of students who have not mastered basic reading skills and to the common needs of all students to master ever-more-challenging texts in ever-changing contexts for increasingly divergent goals. Adolescent students must also have opportunities to learn specialized reading skills and goals through small group or individualized instruction, along with instruction in literacy through their whole group classroom instruction.

Characteristic 5: Increased instructional focus and intensity based on students' needs.
Research Rationale: Intensive literacy instruction should be based on readers' strengths and needs. Thus, intensity of instruction is needed both with individuals and small groups of students. The research indicates that the reading and writing processes are the same for all learners. Struggling readers may have less facility with the process, may not understand what they should be doing as they read, or may have difficulty understanding the language used in books, but they do not use different processes (as they read and write) than do other learners (Gilles, 1992). To meet the needs of struggling readers, it is critically important that classroom teachers are knowledgeable about the reading process and understand how to provide the instructional support, the materials, and most importantly the time every day that is devoted to

practicing reading. Reading difficulty can be identified through screening, progress monitoring, and classroom assessments. Students identified as having reading difficulties require extended reading time, more frequent progress monitoring, smaller group size, and more targeted instruction. Educators with students who are struggling readers know that teaching must be adjusted to discover how to meet students' individual needs. Recent legislation and focus on research-based reading instruction have led to more unified efforts to teach students with significant cognitive disabilities how to read because we know now that, through intensive instruction with a variety of different strategies, these students can learn how to read (Browder, et al., 2006). The Read to Succeed legislation requires that interventions in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 be provided to all struggling readers who are not able to comprehend grade-appropriate texts. The Read to Succeed Team recommends a framework which includes a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which includes Response to Intervention (RtI). This framework provides districts and schools with comprehensive systemic problem-solving approaches for developing, delivering, and evaluating instruction that meets the needs of all students. It accomplishes this by providing a structure to identify, develop, implement, and evaluate strategies to accelerate the performance of all students. The research indicates that such a framework that includes Response to Intervention can be used as a vehicle for distinguishing between children with and without reading disabilities (Vellutino, Scanlon, Small, & Fanuele, 2006). This approach guides educators to systematically deliver a range of interventions based on demonstrated levels of needs of students with learning and/or behavior problems. Additionally, teachers will be able to identify struggling readers early and offer the intensity of support students need beginning with high-quality instruction and on-going progress monitoring. Students are to be provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their reading proficiency. Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress in response to these targeted interventions are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation and additional intervention services. Although there are many formats for how a school might implement the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to best serve the needs of its students, it can be a school-wide framework for efficiently allocating resources to improve student outcomes. Good decisions are accomplished when teams have accurate and timely data, not only for student outcomes, but also for critical components of MTSS such as screening, instruction, intervention, progress monitoring, and evaluation. Effective MTSS teams collect and analyze systems data just

as systematically as they collect and review student data (Anderson, Childs, Kincaid, Horner, & George, 2009).

When there is a need for more intensive intervention for a struggling reader, the district must provide the intervention services. While there are an array of instructional strategies and programs that are research-based and have proven success, one strong example is the research-based Reading Recovery program, which is a short-term intervention that provides one-on-one tutoring to first-grade students who are struggling in reading. The supplementary program fosters the development of reading strategies with Reading Recovery teachers trained to tailor individualized lessons in daily pull-out sessions for 12 to 20 weeks, during which the majority of students (75%) reach grade level standards. The What Works Clearinghouse (2008) states that "no other intervention has such an extensive research base and has demonstrated such strong results." The SCDE continues to support this initiative in the state with funding for Reading Recovery Teacher Leader training.

The What Works Clearinghouse website can serve as a resource for districts/schools to determine what intervention is best suited for their students. However, interventions do not necessarily need to be delivered through a published program. The SCDE Read to Succeed Team will provide a resource document with intervention guidelines which will include reading strategies proven to be successful with struggling readers.

Appendix F: School Librarians to Support Read to Succeed

Since South Carolina has placed increased emphasis on literacy skills along with the development of The State Reading Plan, school librarians can serve important roles in supporting this initiative. Besides serving as the manager of the school library, school librarians can support teachers in the instruction and strategies of reading, building and designing classroom libraries, or through support in building text sets for integrated curriculum units. Good school libraries are full of enticing books for students reading at all levels with a wide variety of tastes and interests, and good librarians are experts at matching books to kids (Gordon, 2010). Lonsdale (2003) concluded that school library media programs lead to increased student achievement as measured by state standardized tests, had a positive effect on learning and cognitions for typical students, and school librarians' collaboration with general educators was a key factor in increased student achievement. Their collaboration with teachers also allows them to serve students in extensions of their balanced literacy programs or Reading/Writing Workshop models.

According to Vanneman (2011), each of the roles of the school librarian as described by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), such as teacher, informational specialist, instructional partner, curriculum partner, leader, and program administrator, put them in unique positions to serve as change agents in the arena of best practices in schools today (AASL, 2009). School librarians can develop actions that become integral parts of the school community through the teaching process and learning process for teachers and students.

School librarians can support classrooms by providing read-alouds to students during their scheduled library times or periods. Students are also provided opportunities for independent reading within the school library setting, book talks, or even literature circle discussions. School librarians can support and model shared writing or interactive writing activities and strategies. School librarians can support teachers and students with shared reading and guided reading activities and strategies. They can also support teachers and students in reading and writing conferences. School librarians also have the knowledge and access to provide book titles and specific selections which support specific comprehension strategies, such as determining mental images and background knowledge, books for questioning and inference, and books for determining importance and synthesis, along with nonfiction selections for specific reading and writing strategies and research. School librarians can provide support in book selections for teachers for setting up their classroom libraries. Some may even support classroom library

selections by allowing the books to be kept in secure areas within the school library for the teacher to access at a later date or through the use of a rolling cart.

School librarians have an important role in the efforts to improve reading achievement for our children. Not only can they provide resources for teachers and students, they can also provide the opportunities for each student to increase his or her motivation to be an accomplished reader.

Appendix G: Preliminary Metrics and Baseline Data for State Goals

1. Increase the number of South Carolina students reading on grade level based on state summative assessments in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11.
    - 1.1 Reduce the number of South Carolina public school students scoring at the lowest achievement level on the state summative reading assessment.
    - 1.2 Increase the number of South Carolina public school students scoring at proficient or above on the state summative reading assessment.

Figure 1. Number of Students Scoring at Each Level on PASS ELA (Grades 3-8) and HSAP Reading and Research (Grade 11), 2013-14

Level	**Grade**			
	3	**5**	**8**	**11***
Not Met 1	3,260	5,465	9,812	
Not Met 2	8,359	5,261	8,410	
Not Met				5,373
Met	13,019	23,562	16,688	13,855
Proficient	7,424	7,584	10,400	17,595
Exemplary	22,633	12,120	10,478	15,909

*HSAP has four performance levels compared to five for PASS

2. Accelerate the progress of historically underperforming readers in the state based on assessments in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 as compared to average state progress. The *2012-13 Accountability Manual* (EOC, 2012) defines historically underachieving groups (HUGs) in South Carolina as follows.
    - 2.1 African American students
    - 2.2 Hispanic students

2.3 Native American students

2.4 Students eligible free or reduced lunch under federal guidelines

2.5 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students

2.6 Migrant students

2.7 Students with non-speech disabilities

Figure 2. Average Scale Score of Students by Subgroup, PASS ELA, Grades 3-8 and HSAP, Grade 11, 2013-14 and 2012-13

Average Scale Score, 2013-14	**3**		**5**		**8**		**11**	
	3	**Difference from All Student Scale Score**	**5**	**Difference from All Student Scale Score**	**8**	**Difference from All Student Scale Score**	**11**	**Difference from All Student Scale Score**
All Student Average	649.1	--	641.9	--	625.8	--	229.1	--
African American	625.0	24.1	619.8	22.1	602.1	23.7	219.0	10.1
Hispanic	633.5	15.6	632.7	9.2	615.9	9.9	224.1	5.0
Native American	639.2	9.9	638.0	3.9	618.9	6.9	224.1	5.0
Free or Reduced	631.8	17.3	626.7	15.2	608.1	17.7	220.9	8.2
LEP	633.6	15.5	632.2	9.7	605.9	19.9	216.8	12.3
Migrant	598.0	51.1	614.8	27.1	588.0	37.8	205.1	24.0
Disabilities	603.3	45.8	597.3	44.6	568.1	57.7	202.8	26.3

Average Scale Score, 2012-13	**3**		**5**		**8**		**11**	
	3	**Difference from All Student Scale Score**	**5**	**Difference from All Student Scale Score**	**8**	**Difference from All Student Scale Score**	**11**	**Difference from All Student Scale Score**
All Student Average	651.2	--	647.4	--	629.5	--	229.1	--
African American	629.9	21.3	624.8	22.6	603.8	25.7	219.0	10.1
Hispanic	637.0	14.2	638.9	8.5	619.9	9.6	223.2	5.9

Native American	640.3	10.9	640.6	6.8	623.9	5.6	228.3	0.8
Free or Reduced	635.8	15.4	631.9	15.5	610.9	18.6	220.8	8.3
LEP	636.5	14.7	639.9	7.5	613.0	15.6	218.2	10.9
Migrant	624.8	26.4	611.0	36.4	620.9	8.6	212.0	17.1
Disabilities	608.3	42.9	596.3	51.1	569.6	59.9	203.0	26.1

3. Decrease the number of students requiring remediation at the start of post-secondary education.

   Assessment instrument and baseline data to be determined in 2015-16.

4. Increase family awareness of and involvement in children's literacy development.

   4.1 Increase percentage of positive responses to the state survey item related to family awareness of children's literacy development.

   4.2 Increase percentage of positive responses to the state survey item related to family involvement in children's literacy development.

   4.3 Increase number of hits on and/or downloads of family literacy resources on SCDE Read to Succeed webpage.

   Assessment instrument and baseline data to be determined in 2015-16.

5. Work with state partners to increase the number of community partnerships in public schools.

   Assessment instrument and baseline data to be determined in 2015-16.

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