



# STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mick Zais  
Superintendent

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District Superintendent

**FROM:** Mick Zais, Ph.D. *MZ 30 Apr '12*  
State Superintendent of Education

**DATE:** April 30, 2012

**RE:** Uniform Grading Policy

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has received citizen comment on district or school grading practices that fail to comply with policy established by the South Carolina State Board of Education. Schools and districts have been reported to inappropriately set a floor for student grades. In some instances, teachers are directed not to record a numerical grade of below 60% on mid-term or first semester grades. Furthermore, some grading practices have prohibited teachers from recording a 69% on report cards. The purpose of this memo is to address these use violations of State policy.

These violations do not serve our students well. Both fail to reflect an honest assessment of student mastery of work and the level of completion of a course of study. In the long-term, these practices are a disservice to students because these practices undermine their preparedness for life after high school, be it work, college, the military, or some other form of advanced training where students will not be provided minimum grade floors.

There seems to be some confusion about the South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy. Let me be clear. The policy does not include any provisions or recommendations that support districts or schools engaging in minimum grade practices for students who may be failing a course. The Uniform Grading Policy does not have a provision that would encourage such practices. You may review the Uniform Grading Policy by viewing <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/131/>.

The South Carolina General Assembly directed the State Board of Education to develop and adopt a uniform grading scale to fairly determine GPA and class rank that ultimately may be used to support academic financial assistance for South Carolina students. The policy's intent is not to establish a floor for quizzes, tests, essays, or any other graded projects. The practice or policy of assigning failing students a minimum grade is not encouraged by the General Assembly, the State Board of Education, or the South Carolina Department of Education.

As the South Carolina Department of Education continues to receive input from concerned citizens regarding the use of minimum grades, we will continue to follow-up with the affected school, district, and county leadership.

If you have any questions, please contact Roy Stehle, Director, Federal and State Accountability at [RStehle@ed.sc.gov](mailto:RStehle@ed.sc.gov) or at (803)734-8118.