

## Formative Assessment and Proviso 1.118

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for 2025–2026

#### Introduction to Proviso 1.118

In alignment with South Carolina’s commitment to meaningful assessment practices, Proviso 1.118 for Fiscal Year 2025–26 establishes clear boundaries around the use of district-selected benchmark assessments in determining student grades. **This proviso reinforces the role of formative assessments as tools for instructional support rather than evaluative measures tied to final grades.**

Under this guidance, school districts receiving funds through Section 1 of the Appropriations Act are prohibited from including student performance on district-selected benchmark assessments in final course grades, unless specific conditions are met. These conditions require that the assessment be developed or directly approved by the course instructor and measure only previously taught content.

This document provides clarification, frequently asked questions, and recommended practices to ensure districts remain in compliance with the proviso and uphold the integrity of the instructional assessment practices.

#### Proviso 1.118 2025–26

**1.118 (SDE: Assessments and Final Grade Determination)** For Fiscal Year 2025–26, no school district receiving funds pursuant to Section 1 of the Appropriations Act may require the inclusion of student performance on any district-selected benchmark assessment in calculating a student's final grade in any course or subject. District-selected benchmark assessments may only be used as formative assessments for informing instructional purposes and shall not factor into a student's course grade unless the assessment is developed or directly approved by the course instructor and exclusively measures content that has previously been taught in the course. Any school district found in violation of this provision may be subject to corrective action, including a reduction in state funding allocations as determined by the department. These provisions do not apply to End of Course assessments.

#### June 11 Guidance

**1.118 (SDE: Assessments and Final Grade Determination)** – This proviso prohibits districts from using any student's score on any district-selected benchmark assessment in calculating the student’s final grade. To align with the Education Accountability Act, this proviso applies to the required formative assessments defined in 59-18-310(D)(2).

"Districts shall ensure all students in kindergarten through eighth grade are assessed using a state-approved, nationally normed formative assessment tool during the fall, winter, and spring each year."

District-selected benchmark assessments, which are interpreted by the South Carolina Department of Education to include the required formative assessments defined in 59-18-310(D)(2), may only be used as formative assessments for informing instructional purposes unless the assessment is developed or directly approved by the course instructor and exclusively measures content that has previously been taught in the course. Districts that are found in violation of this are subject to corrective action, including a reduction in state funding allocations. This proviso does not apply to End of Course assessments.

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#### **Proviso 1.118 FAQs:**

- **Q: Can my district's required formative assessment (DRC BEACON, i-Ready Diagnostic, ISIP, NWEA MAP, Mastery View, Star Reading/Mathematics) be calculated into a student's final grades?**
  - A: No.
- **Q: If my district developed a common assessment using a question bank, can that assessment be calculated into students' final grades?**
  - A: Districts may use ungraded common assessments and benchmarks to inform instruction. If the district wishes to use a common assessment across schools and include the common assessment in student grades, the South Carolina Department of Education recommends the following practices to ensure alignment with Proviso 1.118.
    - Classroom teachers should be made aware of the assessment content and format well in advance of the expected administration of the assessment.
    - The district should clearly communicate the expectation that teachers have taught the content and adjust any common curriculum and pacing guides accordingly to align with the assessment content.
    - The district should clearly communicate the expectations for assessment implementation with enough time for teachers to incorporate the assessment into course planning.
- **Q: If my district developed a common districtwide assessment with a small group of teachers with expertise in that course, can that assessment be implemented across the district? Can that assessment be calculated into students' final grades?**
  - A: Districts may use ungraded common assessments and benchmarks to inform instruction. If the district wishes to use a common teacher-developed assessment across schools and include the common assessment in student grades, the South Carolina Department of Education recommends the following practices to ensure alignment with Proviso 1.118.

- Classroom teachers should be made aware of the assessment content and format well in advance of the expected administration of the assessment.
  - The district should clearly communicate the expectation that teachers have taught the content and adjust any common curriculum and pacing guides accordingly to align with the assessment content.
  - The district should clearly communicate the expectations for assessment implementation with enough time for teachers to incorporate the assessment into course planning.
- **Q: I'm a legislator or community member and I'm not sure my school district is implementing Proviso 1.118 with fidelity.**
    - This proviso prohibits districts from using any student's score on any district-selected benchmark assessment in calculating the student's final grade. To align with the Education Accountability Act, this proviso applies to the required formative assessments defined in 59-18-310(D)(2).
    - Districts may choose to use other common formative assessments to inform instruction. If they choose to require common assessments that count toward student grades, the South Carolina Department of Education recommends that classroom teachers be made aware of the assessment content and the expectation that this content is taught during the course. Districts may make the decision to have instructors plan to administer and count that test in students' grades, but it is essential that teachers be aware of the assessment format, questions, and connection with the curriculum for the course.