

**South Carolina**

High School Assessment Program (HSAP)

**Part I: Policy Trends**

<p><b>Type of test</b></p>	<p>English language arts and mathematics tests are standards-based. Science and U.S. history are assessed through end-of-course examinations.</p>
<p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>The purpose of the test is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate students’ achievement based on selected South Carolina academic standards</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<p><b>Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2007-08 school year or any pending changes</b></p>	<p>South Carolina began using the state’s end-of-course test in physical science for NCLB science assessment purposes at the high school level for school year 2009-10. (Results of the statewide end-of-course test in physical science have been used as 20% of the final course grade for physical science since fall 2004.)</p> <p>Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, students in South Carolina public high schools were required to pass a high school credit course in science in which an end-of-course examination is administered. The science test is biology. Items for an end-of-course test in biology were field-tested in spring 2009.</p>
<p><b>Status of state’s decision regarding the Common Core State Standards and impact of that decision on exit exam policies</b></p>	<p>The South Carolina State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards on July 14, 2010. The press release announcing the adoption of the standards can be found at the Web site listed below.</p> <p><a href="http://ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=1600">http://ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=1600</a>.</p> <p>South Carolina has joined the following two consortia: the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers. Pending decisions made by the state regarding future consortia memberships, new assessments may be developed that will replace the HSAP tests that are currently administered to meet the state exit examination requirement for high school graduation.</p>
<p><b>Test used by colleges or</b></p>	<p>Passing both the HSAP English language arts test and the</p>

<b>universities for undergraduate admission?</b>	HSAP mathematics test meets the testing requirement for a South Carolina high school diploma. Most colleges and universities require a high school diploma or equivalent for undergraduate admission. HSAP scores are not used for undergraduate admission.
<b>Year first administered</b>	Prior to the High School Assessment Program, the state administered the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP), a minimum-competency exam, as its exit exam. The BSAP exam was first given in 1986.  The HSAP was field-tested for exit exam purposes in spring 2003. Results from this same administration were also used as a baseline for NCLB accountability.  Beginning in spring 2004, HSAP was gradually phased in as the state exit examination. HSAP replaced BSAP as the state exit examination for all students after the final BSAP administration in summer 2005.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	For most graduating seniors, 2006 was the first year that diplomas could have been withheld based on the HSAP. A small number of students were required to pass the HSAP in order to graduate before spring 2006.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	The current exit examination has an English language arts test and a mathematics test.  Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, students will be required to pass a high school credit course in science. The proposed science course is biology. A student's score on the corresponding end-of-course exam for science will be counted as 20% of the final course grade.
<b>Types of questions</b>	Multiple choice, constructed response, extended response
<b>Grade first administered</b>	HSAP tests are first administered to students in the second spring after their initial enrollment in the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade; therefore, an individual student's first attempt could occur in any grade including or after the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	The test is aligned to standards that a student would have an opportunity to learn by the second spring after the initial enrollment in the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade. These standards include selected standards across many grades, but do not include standards for 11 <sup>th</sup> or 12 <sup>th</sup> grade that students have not had an opportunity to

	learn.
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	<p>Students who do not pass one or both HSAP tests are scheduled to retake the test(s) not passed at the next scheduled administration. The HSAP is administered each spring and fall. Students who are expected to graduate before the beginning of the next school year are also eligible to participate in a summer administration of the HSAP.</p> <p>Participation of students with individualized education programs (IEPs) is determined annually by their IEP teams if the students meet specified criteria.</p>
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	<p>A summer administration of the HSAP is available for students who are expected to graduate by the beginning of the next school year. Eligible students enrolled in South Carolina public adult education programs can continue to retake the exam without any limits on age or the number of attempts.</p>
<b>Does the state have reciprocity with other states?</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind?</b>	<p>HSAP test results in English language arts and mathematics have been used for NCLB reporting since fall 2004. Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, students will be required to pass a high school credit course in science.</p>
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	No. The cut score for the exit exam requirement (level 2) is lower than the cut score for NCLB proficiency (level 3).
<b>Evaluations of state exit exam</b>	<p>The U.S. Department of Education conducted a peer review of the South Carolina assessment system and sent the state superintendent of education a letter of approval on February 15, 2006. The results of this evaluation are available online at: <a href="http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/sc2.html">www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/sc2.html</a></p>
<b>State test contractor</b>	<p>American Institutes for Research (2002-06)                  Pearson Educational Measurement (2007-08)                  Data Recognition Corporation (beginning spring 2009)</p>
<b>Does the state provide students with alternate paths to graduation?</b>	<p>No. Students who do not pass the HSAP may receive a certificate of attendance issued by a school district. Students may receive a state certificate if they complete all credit requirements but have not passed the exit examination. This</p>

state certificate is not the same as the certificate of attendance issued by the district. (A student who receives a district certificate of attendance is not eligible for a state certificate unless he or she has completed all class credits for graduation and has not passed the exit examination.)

If 12<sup>th</sup> graders complete all credit requirements but fail the exit exams, they will be automatically considered for a state certificate.

In 2006 a task force established by the state board of education met over several months to consider whether alternative procedures should be recommended to allow students who failed the exit examination to meet graduation requirements. The task force concluded that public school students in South Carolina have numerous ways and opportunities in which to receive a state high school diploma and that alternate paths to graduation were not required.

South Carolina students first take the exit examination in the second spring after their initial enrollment in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. For most students, this is in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Students have at least four additional opportunities before the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade to take a part or parts of the exit examination not passed: fall and spring of 11<sup>th</sup> grade and fall and spring of 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, state regulations stipulate that an administration of the exit examination be available during the summer after the 12<sup>th</sup> grade for students who have met all other requirements for graduation and who were actively enrolled in school.

Future administrations also are available under conditions that specify that students between the ages of 17-21 who have failed the exit examination may (a) return to high school in the fall as a senior, fully enroll, and retake the exit examination twice if necessary in the same manner it is offered to other seniors, or (b) enroll in the summer school exit examination program, or (c) enroll in the South Carolina Adult Education High School Diploma Program.

Students choosing the latter option have individualized learning plans developed by adult education staff and are eligible to take the HSAP as many times as needed so long as they have accrued 12 hours of enrollment. Upon passage of the exit examination, these students are issued a South Carolina high school diploma bearing the name of the high school from which they would have graduated. Since 1987, adult education

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners**

programs throughout the state have been awarded substantial state funding based on the number of remedial programs they administer.

There are not any alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners. Students who have limited English proficiency are not required to take the HSAP English language arts test during the first year they are enrolled in a U.S. school, but they must still pass the test to meet the graduation requirement.

English language learners who do not pass the HSAP may receive a district certificate of attendance or the state certificate, or both, based on whether they meet the requirements for each certificate.

There are several accommodations for English language learners who are taking the South Carolina HSAP tests. Accommodations are as follows:

- Word-for-word bilingual dictionary without examples, pictures, or definitions for the English language arts test and the HSAP mathematics test; except during the extended writing part of the HSAP ELA test.
- Rewording of directions, in which test directions only may be read to the students
- Oral administration or use of an oral administration CD-ROM for the mathematics test only
- Oral administration of ELA only for limited English proficient (LEP) students who have a documented disability and an individualized education program specifying oral administration of the ELA test
- Scheduling accommodations, including taking the test over several sessions in a day, over several days, or in the afternoon rather than in the morning
- Individual or small group administration and setting, including preferential seating or separate testing location of individual students or small group of students
- Timing accommodations as long as the tests are completed during the school day, including frequent or extended breaks with or without contact with other students

LEP students with disabilities may require customized materials or additional testing accommodations or

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities**

modifications related to their disability and specified and documented in their IEP plans.

No, but students with serious cognitive impairments who cannot participate in the HSAP with accommodations or modifications may meet the criteria for taking the SC-Alt, an alternate assessment. Students who participate in the alternate assessment receive a certificate of attendance instead of a high school diploma.

Students with or without disabilities who complete all course credit requirements but do not pass the exit examination are eligible for a state certificate.

There are several accommodations for students with disabilities who take the South Carolina HSAP tests. Accommodations are as follows:

- Customized materials, including a Form C Braille test booklet, Form A loose-leaf test booklet, Form A large-print test booklet, Form C sign language test booklet
- Form A oral administration script and Form A oral administration CD-ROM
- Form C Braille audiotape
- Form C Sign Language videotapes in ASL and PSE formats
- Numerous supplemental materials and devices
- Scheduling accommodations
- Responding on separate pages, bold-line, or other special paper
- Typing of responses
- Nonverbal indication of answer choices for multiple-choice items
- Responding directly in the test booklet
- Dictation of responses to multiple-choice items
- Dictation of responses to extended-response items
- Braille responses to multiple-choice, constructed-response, and extended-response items
- Oral administration of ELA and mathematics with Form A CD-Rom operated by student, Form C Braille audiotape operated by student or test administrator, or Form A or Form C oral script read by test administrator
- Signed administration with a sign language videotape

Detailed procedures for all of the accommodations listed above

can be found in the HSAP Spring 2010 Test Administration Manual on the South Carolina Department of Education Web site page listed below.

**Who makes decisions on whether a student is eligible to use alternate paths?**

South Carolina has no alternate paths to graduation.

If a student earns 24 units but does not pass the exit examination, he or she automatically receives a state certificate.

**How are students identified as eligible for alternate paths to graduate?**

South Carolina has no alternate paths to graduation.

There is no application process for the South Carolina state certificate. Receiving a state certificate for students who earn 24 units is automatic upon failure of the exit examination. There is no appeals process.

**When calculating the graduation rate for adequate yearly progress (AYP) purposes, does the state count students taking alternate paths together with graduates who passed the high school exit exams?**

No, students with state certificates are not counted in calculating the graduation rate for purposes of AYP.

**How many full-time equivalent staff in the state department of education are involved in implementing alternate paths?**

None. One person attends to issues related to state certificates.

**Types of assistance the state provides for all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam**

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and a test administration manual;
- All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance,

and Professional Development on Standards Implementation (PDSI) funds that support increasing teachers' content knowledge and instructional strategies;

- Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which include specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and state lottery funds that help school districts purchase formative assessment instruments;
- Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and PDSI funding;
- All districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and grants to districts.

The state also provides:

- Test items (prototype HSAP test forms for English language arts and math) and online materials to help students and teachers understand and practice item types and scoring
- Exam preparation materials for students and teachers

**Types of assistance or remediation the state provides for all districts to help students who have failed to pass the exit exam**

The state does *not* provide specific remediation assistance to local school districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam. Remediation is a district-level responsibility.

**Does the state provide funding for remediation?**

For the 2009-10 school year, the total amount of state funding provided for remediation was \$60,430,445 after budget reductions. The relative allocation of funds to schools is based on individual school ratings on the South Carolina state school report card. Only schools with ratings of “below average” or “unsatisfactory” on the South Carolina state report card receive state funding for intervention and assistance.

Due to the increased number of eligible schools and the reduction of funds available for intervention and assistance, the schools received the minimum dollar amounts specified by proviso for the year. Schools with ratings of “below average” received \$75,000 per school, and schools with ratings of “unsatisfactory” received \$250,000 per school.

**Are districts mandated by law to provide remediation?**

Yes. Local school districts are responsible for providing academic assistance to students related to the part or parts of the exit examination not passed.

**Are students required to participate in remediation?**

No

**Part II: Student Performance**

**Initial pass rates, 2008-09**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2008-09</b>		
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>
All students	85%	80%
White	91%	89%
African American	77%	68%
Latino	77%	78%
Asian	90%	93%
Native American	84%	80%
English language learners	69%	73%
Students with disabilities	43%	36%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	77%	70%
<b>Passing score (1-312)</b>	<b>200 (level II)</b>	<b>200 (level II)</b>

Note: Data retrieved from state Web site at <http://www.ed.sc.gov/topics/assessment/scores/hsap/2009/default.cfm> on July 12, 2010.

**Denominator used to calculate these rates:** Number of students in their second year of high school who were enrolled on the first day of the exit examination in the 2008-09 school year

<b>State Graduation Rates</b>		
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>
All students	NA	NA
White	NA	NA
African American	NA	NA
Latino	NA	NA
Asian	NA	NA
Native American	NA	NA

English language learners	NA	NA
Migrant	NA	NA
Students with disabilities	NA	NA
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	NA	NA
<b>Current state graduation rate calculation formula for AYP purposes</b>	South Carolina uses the Adjusted Cohort Rate and defines legitimate leavers as students who transferred to another diploma-granting program. Students who receive GEDs are not included as graduates.	