

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SYNOPSIS AGENDA/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CODE:	PL-05
COMMITTEE:	Policy and Legislative
DATE:	February 10, 2016

SUBJECT/TITLE

Florence School District Four's (Florence Four) Preliminary Accreditation Classification based on State Board of Education (SBE) Regulation 2 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-300 (R.43-300), Accreditation Criteria

PURPOSE OF REPORT/REGULATION/ITEM

This report advises the SBE of the preliminary Accreditation/Denied classification of Florence Four's district office, Timmonsville High School, and Johnson Middle School. In addition, this report advises the SBE of recent fiscal audit findings of Florence Four by independent auditors and steps being taken by related South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) program offices that oversee three critical federal programs.

CRITICAL FACTS

SBE R.43-300 states that an Accreditation/Denied status is given to a school or district that is not in compliance with the standards for a defined program and with all current statutes and regulations as prescribed by the SBE and General Assembly for a fourth year and does not merit accreditation. If the accreditation of a high school is denied, that school cannot issue State high school diplomas subsequent to the school year in which the accreditation is denied.

Accreditation/Denied by the defined program accreditation procedures shall not be eligible for funding in the following fiscal year until an acceptable plan to eliminate the deficiencies is submitted and approved by the SBE.

Additionally, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-20-60 states that "schools which have been classified as 'dropped' by the defined minimum program accreditation procedures are not eligible for funding in the following fiscal year until an acceptable plan to eliminate the deficiencies is submitted and approved by the State Board of Education."

For years 2011–12 and 2012–13, Florence Four's district office and schools were classified as Accredited/Advised. In years 2013–14, the accreditation classification was dropped to Accredited/Warned for all except Brockington Elementary, which remained at an Accredited/Advised classification.

Similarly, in 2014–15 Florence Four’s accreditation rating was dropped to Accredited/Probation while Brockington Elementary remained at an Accredited/Warned classification.

State Accountability has worked with the district and schools to rectify the deficiencies; however, substantial compliance issues have remained with the district for at least four (4) years. The Florence Four district office, Timmonsville High, and Johnson Middle Schools are now facing a final accreditation status of Accreditation/Denied for the 2015–16 school year.

Per SBE R.43-300, Florence Four has until February 22, 2016, to provide written documentation to request removal of deficiencies prior to the SCDE assigning a final accreditation classification.

Florence Four has recently received its independent fiscal audit. During the audit, as required by 2 C.F.R. § 200, Florence Four was identified with numerous findings related to their use of funds, including four audit findings that affect three federal programs administered by the SCDE. These specific four findings were related to revenue reporting claims; general ledger monitoring for 2012–15; expenditure calculations; journal entries; and payroll. The related federal program offices are currently determining management decisions regarding this audit. Following, Florence Four must initiate and proceed with corrective actions as rapidly as possible.

The State Superintendent of Education (Superintendent Spearman) will deliver a formal presentation of the final accreditation classification at the March 9, 2016, SBE Meeting.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

October 22, 2015	Superintendent Spearman issues statement of corrective action to district that includes accreditation concerns and is signed by the district superintendent, school principals, and board chairperson. Support for corrective action to be provided throughout school year through Transformation Coaches and multiple SCDE offices.
October 2015–January 2016	SCDE accreditation team reviews school/district data and documentation for compliance to SBE regulations and accreditation standards. Office of School Transformation provides a full-time Transformation Coach who assists with accreditation issues.
January 2016	SCDE external review team finalizes recommendations for school improvement. Report to be provided to Florence Four in February 2016.
January 19, 2016	Updated list of accreditation deficiencies presented to new board chairperson and select members in Columbia SC.
February 1, 2016	Preliminary analysis reports and accreditation ratings are posted online for school and district viewing.
February 22, 2016	Florence Four must upload a written response to the preliminary analysis.

March 9, 2016

Superintendent Spearman gives formal recommendation to the SBE regarding the accreditation status of Florence Four.

July 2016

The *2015–16 Annual Report of the Accreditation of School Districts in South Carolina*, containing the final accreditation status for schools and districts, goes to the SBE for approval.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

COST: N/A
FUND/SOURCE: N/A

ATTACHMENTS

Attachments: yes no
(attachments must be submitted with synopsis)

Name of Attachments:

RECOMMENDATION

This item is presented as information on the pending Accreditation/Denied status of Florence School District Four.

ACTION REQUEST

FOR APPROVAL:

FOR INFORMATION ONLY: