



**Public Charter**  
**SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Academic, Finance, and Operations Index (AFO)**  
**for**  
**Charter Accountability**  
**Guide**

**Version 1.2**  
**June 2024**

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## Background

The South Carolina Public Charter School District (PCSD) convened a representative group of PCSD school leaders to serve as a Core Team to inform and direct the development of the PCSD's new accountability framework, styled the AFO Index (Academics, Finance, and Operations). To facilitate this work, the PCSD held Core Team meetings and email exchanges between 2022 and 2023. These meetings aimed to support school leaders in developing and implementing a continuous, sustainable framework model that promotes excellence in school achievement.

The Core Team training provided both theoretical and practical foundations for school leaders to enhance their efforts in school improvement. On July 25th, 2022, PCSD staff hosted the Core Team for their first session. The focus of this session was to introduce the AFO Index and determine the school's level of engagement in the continuous improvement model. The second session took place on September 19, 2022, with an emphasis on practicing consensus within the team, developing a name for the system, and identifying priorities in academics, organization, and finance.

The third core meeting occurred on October 19, 2022, with the primary focus on assisting schools in developing and implementing a performance framework that evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of the school's approach to structure, strategy, and consistency.

Eighteen school leaders participated in all the Core Team Meetings. At these meetings, Core Team members discussed issues unique to charter schools and identified areas of support they needed, such as getting more detailed information with respect to information and data collections.

In 2023–24, the PCSD received additional feedback and made refinements based on more relevant information. At the February 2024 PCSD Board of Trustees meeting, the Board unanimously voted to support the AFO Index.

This guide provides information regarding the AFO Index, which will be represented on a one-page dashboard for each school. In Summer 2024, the PCSD will issue the baseline AFO Index. Schools will have the opportunity to revise and update goals between August 2024 and May 2025. In Summer 2025, the PCSD will issue the Year One AFO and will make the dashboards publicly available on the PCSD's website.

# AFO INDEX

## Academics

### A1: Academic Excellence

<b>Component A1</b>	<b>Ensuring Academic Excellence (Lag Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The school’s performance in meeting Charter Academic Excellence as evidenced by the school-identified Specific Educational Goal</li> <li>2. The school’s performance on summative assessments (all grade bands) for English language arts (ELA)/ English II, and Mathematics/Algebra separately.</li> </ol>
<i>Data Source</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The most recent annual report submitted by the school from December 31 of each year;</li> <li>2. Annually posted assessment data online at <a href="https://screportcards.com/">https://screportcards.com/</a> using the “Data for Researchers” files.</li> </ol>
<i>Statutory References</i>	<a href="#">S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-40-20(6); 59-40-55(B)(6); 59-40-60(F)(3); 59-40-140(H)(2)</a>
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
<b><i>Charter Academic Excellence Goal</i></b>	
<i>Yes</i>	The school met its academic excellence goal, as provided in the school’s most recent annual report.
<i>Partially</i>	The school met some, but not all, of its academic excellence goal.
<i>No</i>	The school did not meet its academic excellence goal.
<i>Baseline</i>	<p>The school is establishing a baseline for one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is in Year One or Year Two of operation (new or renewal)</li> <li>• The school has amended goals, approved by the PCSD Board of Trustees.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Charter Summative Assessment</i></b>	
ELA/English II Math/Algebra I	With all grade bands combined, the percentage of students scoring Meets or higher (elementary and middle) and C or higher (high school) in ELA and English II, and separately in Mathematics and Algebra I; for two consecutive years.

### A2: Closing the Achievement Gap

<b>Component A2</b>	<b>Closing the Achievement Gap: Subgroup Growth Outcomes (Lag Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The performance of the school in meeting its specific Charter Achievement Gap Goal;</li> <li>2. The school’s achievement gap for Students of Color (SoC), Pupils in Poverty (PIP), and Students with Disabilities (SWD) on summative assessments (all grade bands) for ELA/English II and math/Algebra I combined.</li> </ol>
<i>Data Source</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The most recent annual report submitted by the school from December 31 of each year;</li> <li>2. Annually posted “ESSA Subgroup Performance” files at <a href="http://www.screportcards.com">www.screportcards.com</a>. Subgroups and comparison groups analyzed independently for all grades and in both subjects combined.</li> </ol>
<i>Statutory References</i>	<a href="#">S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-40-20(7); 59-40-20(6); 59-40-55(B)(6); 59-40-60(F)(3); 59-40-140(H)(2)</a>
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
<b>Charter Achievement Gap Goal</b>	
<i>Yes</i>	The school met its achievement gap goal, as provided in the school’s most recent annual report.
<i>Partially</i>	The school met some, but not all, of its achievement gap goal.
<i>No</i>	The school did not meet its achievement gap goal.
<i>Baseline</i>	<p>The school is establishing a baseline for one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is in Year One or Year Two of operation (new or renewal).</li> <li>• The school has amended goals, approved by the PCSD Board of Trustees.</li> </ul>
<b>Charter Achievement Gap – Summative Assessments</b>	
ELA/English II Math/Algebra I	With all grade bands combined, the gap percentage in the performance of SoC, PIP, and SWD to their respective counterparts in ELA and math combined as presented in the ESSA Subgroup Performance data file. If data are unavailable due to small group sizes, insufficient data (i/s) will appear.

### A3: Other Charter Goals

<b>Component A3</b>	<b>Other Charter Goals (Lag Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	The performance of the school in meeting any other charter goals as outlined in its charter.
<i>Data Source</i>	The most recent annual report submitted by the school from December 31 of each year.
<i>Statutory References</i>	<a href="#">S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-40-20(7); 59-40-20(6); 59-40-55(B)(6); 59-40-60(F)(3); 59-40-140(H)(2)</a>
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
Other Charter Goals will be represented on the AFO dashboard as “x/y” goals met.	

#### A4: Certified Staffing

<b>Component A4</b>	<b>Certified Staffing (Current Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	The percentage of certified staffing based on the 135 <sup>th</sup> day for the school (75% required).
<i>Data Source</i>	SCEducator data and the school's annual assurance submitted to Epicenter.
<i>Statutory References</i>	<a href="#">S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50(B)(5)</a>
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
Certified Staffing will be represented on the AFO dashboard as a percentage.	

## Finance

### F1: Timely and Compliant Audit

<b>Component F1</b>	<b>Timely and Compliant Annual Audit (Lag Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	The performance of the school in submitting a timely and compliant annual audit to the PCSD and SCDE.
<i>Data Source</i>	The annual independent audit submitted by the school.
<i>Statutory References</i>	<a href="#">S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50(B)(3)</a>
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
Timely and Compliant Annual Audit will be represented on the AFO dashboard, with one of seven applicable conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. On Time – No Findings</li> <li>2. On Time – With Findings</li> <li>3. On Time – Repeat Findings</li> <li>4. Late – No Findings</li> <li>5. Late – With Findings</li> <li>6. Late – Repeat Findings</li> <li>7. Year One</li> </ol>	

### F2a: Sustainable Fund Balance

<b>Component F2</b>	<b>Sustainable Fund Balance (Lag Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	The performance of the school in ensuring it retains a one-month fund balance.
<i>Data Source</i>	The annual independent audit submitted by the school.
<i>Statutory References</i>	<a href="#">SCDE Fiscal Practices Guidance</a>
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
Sustainable Fund Balance will be represented on the AFO Dashboard in months, as identified in the Annual Audit.	

### F2b: Cash on Hand

<b>Component F3</b>	<b>Cash on Hand (Lag Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	The performance of the school in ensuring it retains 30 days of cash on hand.
<i>Data Source</i>	The annual independent audit submitted by the school.
<i>Statutory References</i>	<a href="#">SCDE Fiscal Practices Guidance</a> The PCSD has implemented a minimum cash on hand requirement of 30 days to align with a fund balance of at least one month.
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
Cash on Hand will be represented on the AFO Dashboard in days, as identified in the Annual Audit.	

## Operations/Governance

### O1: Board Governance

<b>Component O1</b>	<b>Board Governance (Current Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The number of board members at the school who have completed the required training as outlined by the Charter Act; and</li> <li>2. The number of meeting minutes is equivalent to the number of posted agendas on the school's website.</li> </ol>
<i>Data Source</i>	Epicenter submissions and compliant posting of meeting agendas and corresponding meeting minutes.
<i>Statutory References</i>	<a href="#">S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-40-155(A); 59-40-50(B(10)); 30-4-80(A); 30-4-90</a>
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
Board Governance will be represented on the AFO dashboard in two components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of board members trained out of total number of board members.</li> <li>2. Number of meeting minutes posted compared to agendas posted.</li> </ol>	

Board Governance is measured by:

1. The ratio of board members who have completed the required training as stipulated by the Charter Act divided by the total number of board members.
  - o Example: If 8 out of 9 board members are trained, the compliance rate is 8/9 or 89%.
2. The sum of posted board agendas and meeting minutes divided by the total number of possible board agendas and meeting minutes.
  - o Example: If a school board held 9 meetings (8 regular and 1 special), there would be 18 possible postings (9 agendas and 9 minutes). If 9 agendas and 7 minutes are posted, the compliance rate is 16/18 or 89%.
  - o Note: The last board agenda for the school year is excluded from the analysis as it is understood that the Board will approve at their August board meeting.

### O2: Representative Demographics

<b>Component O2</b>	<b>Representative Demographics (Current Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	Whether the school is within the 20 percent representative demographics of the geographical school district in which it is located; and if not within the 20 percent, whether the school has a plan to address the representative demographics.
<i>Data Source</i>	PowerSchool data pull reflective of the 135th day.
<i>Statutory References</i>	<a href="#">S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-70(D)</a>
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
Representative demographics will be represented on the AFO dashboard in two components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The percentage of SoC at the school subtracted from percentage of SoC of the residential school district. Values greater than +20% indicate the school is not within the 20 percent representative demographics of its residential district.</li> <li>2. Whether the school has submitted a plan to the PCSD on how it will address the demographic representation if the percentage is greater than +20%.</li> <li>3. If the percentage is greater than +20%, but the school has a plan, it is meeting the requirements.</li> </ol>	



O3: Federal Program Compliance

<b>Component O3</b>	<b>Federal Program Compliance (Current Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	The school’s compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and compliance with other federal programs, including the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), by Tier.
<i>Data Source</i>	Assigned Federal Programs Tier.
<i>Statutory References</i>	IDEA, ESSA, McKinney-Vento
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
Federal Program Compliance will be represented on the AFO dashboard in two components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The school’s most current assigned Tier for IDEA Compliance.</li> <li>2. The school’s most current assigned Tier for Federal Programs Compliance.</li> <li>3. Tier 1 = universal support; Tier 2 = targeted support; Tier 3 = intensive support.</li> </ol>	

O4: Website Transparency

<b>Component O4</b>	<b>Website Transparency (Current Year Data)</b>
<i>Definition</i>	The school has all required documents posted to its website, including a) its Board approved budget, b) its Annual Audit, and c) its Health Education curriculum.
<i>Data Source</i>	Annual website review.
<i>Statutory References</i>	Proviso 1.41. (SDE: Health Education)
<b>AFO DASHBOARD DISPLAY</b>	
Website Transparency will be denoted on the AFO Dashboard with checkboxes if the school has the information posted to its website as required. In addition, the school’s website will be linked to the AFO Dashboard.	

## Technical Notes

### I. A1: Academic Excellence

- A. The source of data is the “Data for Researchers 20XX” file, for each respective year examined, located in the *Download Data* tab at <https://screportcards.com/>.
- B. Schools without data will be represented as “i/s” on the AFO Index, as the PCSD follows the SCDE’s group and subgroup size for reporting. Schools that administer no summative assessments will be represented as “N/A” on the AFO Index.
- C. Using the file, the PCSD conducted the following calculations for ELA/English II:

$$\frac{((ENbrME_E) + (ENbrME_M) + (ENbrABC_H))}{((ENbrTOT_E) + (ENbrTOT_M) + (ENbrTOT_H))}$$

1. Where ENbrME = Number of students scoring Meets or Exceeds in English language arts, and ENbrABC = Number of students scoring A, B, or C on the English II End of Course Exam; and
2. ENbrTOT = Number of students expected to test; and
3. Subscript E=Elementary, M=Middle, and H=High School.
4. Divided to obtain a percentage for all grade bands served by the school.
5. Calculated for the most current data available for the AFO Release and the prior year. (For the 2024 AFO, the data reflects the 2022-23 school year and 2021-22 school year.)

- D. Using the file, the PCSD conducted the following calculations for Mathematics/Algebra

$$\frac{((MNbrME_E) + (MNbrME_M) + (MNbrABC_H))}{((MNbrTOT_E) + (MNbrTOT_M) + (MNbrTOT_H))}$$

1. Where MNbrME = Number of students scoring Meets or Exceeds in Mathematics, and MNbrABC = Number of students scoring A, B, or C on the Algebra End of Course Exam; and
2. MNbrTOT = Number of students expected to test; and
3. Subscript E=Elementary, M=Middle, and H=High School.
4. Divided to obtain a percentage for all grade bands served by the school.
5. Calculated for the most current data available for the AFO Release and the prior year. (For the 2024 AFO, the data reflects the 2022-23 school year and 2021-22 school year.)

II. A2: Closing the Achievement Gap

- A. The source of the data is the “ESSA Subgroup Performance” file for the respective year examined, located in the *Download Data* tab at <https://screportcards.com/>.
- B. The data files provide the combined number of students who scored “Meets or Exceeds” in ELA or Math (or A, B, or C in English II and Algebra for high schools)
- C. Schools without data will be represented as “i/s” on the AFO Index, as the PCSD follows the SCDE’s group and subgroup size for reporting purposes. Schools that administer no summative assessments will be represented as “N/A” on the AFO Index. For any subgroup with missing or “\*” due to small n-sizes, that subgroup will be removed from the calculation. Only subgroups that have performance and participation data will be used.
- D. Using the “ESSA Subgroup Performance” file, PCSD identified the comparative groups:
  - 1. African American, Asian Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Hispanic (Students of Color) compared to Caucasian students. [SGINDEX 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]
  - 2. Disabled (Students with Disabilities, or SWD) compared to Not Disabled. [SGINDEX 8, 9]
  - 3. Economically Disadvantaged (Pupils in Poverty or PIP) compared to Non-Economically Disadvantaged. [SGINDEX 10, 11].
- E. For SoC gaps, the PCSD calculated the following:

$$\frac{((Sum(AchMET002 + 003 + 004 + 005)) \div (Sum(AchTOT002 + 003 + 004 + 005)))}{(AchMET006 \div AchTOT006)}$$

Using both the *ACHIEVEMENT\_ELEMMIDD* and *ACHIEVEMENT\_HIGH* for the school to encompass all grade bands served by the school.

- 1. Where  $AchMET_{xyz}$  = the number of students, by race/ethnicity (2-6) who scored Meets or Exceeds in ELA and math combined (and A, B, or C on English II and Algebra I combined),
- 2. Where  $AchTOT$  = the number of students, by race ethnicity, who were expected to test.
- 3. A positive value indicates that SoC outperformed their counterpart subgroup.
- 4. A negative value indicates that SoC did not outperform their counterpart subgroup.

- F. For SWD gap, the PCSD calculated the following:

$$\frac{((AchMET008) \div (AchTOT008))}{((AchMET009) \div (AchTOT009))}$$

Using both the *ACHIEVEMENT\_ELEMMIDD* and *ACHIEVEMENT\_HIGH* for the school to encompass all grade bands served by the school.

1. Where  $AchMET008/009$  = the number of students with disabilities/without disabilities who scored Meets or Exceeds in ELA and math combined (and A, B, or C on English II and Algebra I combined),
2. Where  $AchTOT008/009$  = the number of students who were expected to test.
3. Where  $AchTOT$  = the number of students who were expected to test.
4. A positive value indicates that SWD outperformed their counterpart subgroup.
5. A negative value indicates that SWD did not outperform their counterpart subgroup.

G. For PIP gap, the PCSD calculated the following

$$((AchMET010) \div (AchTOT010))$$

Minus

$$((AchMET010) \div (AchTOT010))$$

Using both the *ACHIEVEMENT\_ELEMMIDD* and *ACHIEVEMENT\_HIGH* for the school to encompass all grade bands served by the school.

1. Where  $AchMET010/011$  = the number of PIP/Non-PIP who scored Meets or Exceeds in ELA and math combined (and A, B, or C on English II and Algebra I combined),
2. Where  $AchTOT010/011$  = the number of students who were expected to test.
3. Where  $AchTOT$  = the number of students who were expected to test.
4. A positive value indicates that PIP outperformed their counterpart subgroup.
5. A negative value indicates that PIP did not outperform their counterpart subgroup.

### III. Technical Considerations

- A. The PCSD uses the same reporting sizes as the South Carolina Department of Education.
- B. If a school does not have summative assessment data, a Not Applicable label (“N/A”) will be applied to the AFO for A1 and A2 respectively.
- C. If a school has too few students for data to be populated, an Insufficient Data label (“i/s”) will be applied to A1 and/or A2 respectively.