STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Test Coordinators for Alternate Assessment
District Special Education Directors

FROM: Elizabeth Jones
Director, Office of Assessment

DATE: February 14, 2018

RE: South Carolina Alternate Assessment: Grade vs. Age

The purpose of this memorandum is to share important changes regarding students who are eligible to take the South Carolina Alternate Assessment (SC-Alt). Students who take an alternate assessment must be taught on-grade-level standards (i.e., the Prioritized Standards).

Beginning with the 2018–19 school year, students in grades three through eight will be tested based on their instructional grade rather than on their age-based grade. Some students tested outside their age-based-grade level in 2017–18; therefore, it is possible that these students will take the same test in 2017–18 and 2018–19.

For high school students meeting the eligibility criteria for alternate assessments, the IEP team will determine when it is most appropriate for the student to receive instruction on the standards for each subject for which the alternate assessment is aligned. The student should be scheduled for instruction using the appropriate activity code(s) provided below and assessed by the end of the semester or year in which they receive instruction. These students will take each of the subject tests only once before "aging-out" of high school.

4853000W	English (for SC Alt)
4854000W	Algebra (for SC Alt)
4855000W	Biology (for SC Alt)
4856000W	US History and Constitution (for SC Alt)

For alternate assessment test takers, it is essential that the following fields are coded correctly in PowerSchool:

1. Instructional Setting (InstrSetting) must be coded for all students.

2. The Alternate Assessment Code (AltAssessCde) must be selected for all students taking alternate assessments.

3. Grade Level must be coded according to the instructional grade (i.e., grade level in which the student is receiving instruction). If the instructional grade is not available, code Grade Level using the PowerSchool instructions provided in 2016–17.

    Examples of cases in which a Grade Level code may not be available:

    A high school student is enrolled in a middle school; or

    An elementary school student is enrolled in a high school.

4. True Grade should be coded <u>only</u> if the student's instructional grade is not available in the Grade Level code described in number three above.

5. Ninth Grade Code must be completed for students during the first year they receive ninth-grade level instruction. Once set this code is not changed. (e.g., a student first receiving ninth grade instruction in 2017–18 will have a Ninth Grade Code of 18).

Please refer to the *PowerSchool Data Collection Manual* for more information on AltAssessCde, True Grade, InstrSetting, and other related PowerSchool fields.

Training that includes data entry for alternate assessment precoding is being scheduled for March. Please inform IEP teams of the importance of having correct information in each student's IEP and in PowerSchool since the data will impact the student's alternate assessment. Remember that the student will be assessed according to the instructional grade in Grade Level or True Grade field.

For questions regarding precoding into PowerSchool, please contact Alissa Wise at awise@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-0874. For questions regarding SC-Alt please contact Jill Christmus at mchristmus@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-8048. For questions regarding Enrich or IEP documentation please contact Peter Keup at pkeup@ed.sc.gov or at 803-734-6771.