



## HALF OF SC HIGH SCHOOLS ARE "DROPOUT FACTORIES"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has released a new report on high school graduation rates in the American Southeast.

Making real apples-to-apples comparisons difficult, the State of South Carolina failed to report all of its graduation/dropout data to the United States Department of Education -the data which SREB researches used for their analysis.

Working with the information they *could* obtain, SREB researches noted the following, troubling conclusions:

South Carolina ranks **50th** (dead last) in "**promoting power**," a measure of the percentage of 9th grade students who progress to 12th grade in three years. Only 61% of freshman rise to become seniors on time.

South Carolina ranks **48th** in "**Average Freshman Graduation Rate**" (AFGR), a measure of freshman who go onto receive full high school diplomas. Again, the figure reported by state officials is just 61%.

South Carolina has **gained only 0.2 percent** in its on-time graduation from the period from **1996 to 2006**. Across the United States, the average state gain was 2.4 percent, and the Southeastern average gain was 5.6 percent during the same period.

While school officials in South Carolina self-reported a 2006 graduation rate of 74 percent, SREB researchers found the actual "**Average Freshman Graduation Rate**" (AFGR) to be 14 points lower (61 percent).

SREB concluded that "Dropout factories" (those schools with the most persistent and troubling failure to graduate their students) made up half of high schools in South Carolina.

Randy Page, President of South Carolinians for Responsible Government, an education watchdog group, expressed disappointment with the report's findings.

*"On one hand, South Carolina is spending over \$12,000 per child at our public schools, even during the midst of a serious budget crisis. On the other hand, between one third and one half of students fail to graduate from high school. Parents and taxpayers should be outraged. They need answers, not more excuses."*

The full report, "Gaining Ground on High School Graduation Rates in SREB States: Milestones and Guideposts" may be found at <http://www.sreb.org/>

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