South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education Journal

Volume 1 Article 8

2022

Analysis of Middle School Performance from Pre-COVID to Post COVID

Erik A. Lowry
Francis Marion University, elowry@fmarion.edu

Published online: 1 March 2022

Analysis of Middle School Performance from Pre-COVID to Post COVID

Dr. Erik Lowry
Francis Marion University, School of Education
elowry@fmarion.edu

SCAMLE
South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education

Abstract: According to a January 11, 2021, SC Education Oversight Committee news release, Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing data from approximately 220,000 South Carolina students showed a projected decrease in the percentage of students meeting grade level expectations. The news release defines this as the "COVID Slide" (SCEOC, 2021). The purpose of this review is to see if those projections were accurate by conducting a state-wide review of middle school performance on the South Carolina College-and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY). Comparisons are made by subject, grade level, gender, ethnicity, and poverty status from 2019 to 2021.

Keywords: COVID-19, SC READY, performance, assessment, middle school

Introduction

It is clear that schools, teachers, students, and parents have been through quite an experience during the past two years. While everything appeared to be "business as usual" in the Fall of 2019, circumstances were about to change. Little did we know that this was the start of a global pandemic that we now know as COVID.

History of COVID

December 31, 2019, was a normal day here in South Carolina. We were all on winter break from school and probably preparing for the New Year's Day celebrations. While this was occurring however, the World Health Organization's office in China picked up a media statement by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission on cases of viral pneumonia in Wuhan Peoples Republic of China (WHO, 2021). Nine days later on January 9, 2020, the virus was being referred to as a novel coronavirus (WHO, 2021). Authorities spent the next several days trying to determine the possibility of this virus being transmitted from person to person. On January 22, 2020, the WHO reported that there was evidence of human transmission and they needed to investigate more. Four days later, on January 24, 2020, France notified the WHO of three cases there. All three people had been in Wuhan. On January 30, 2020, "the Director-General of the WHO declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), WHO's highest level of alarm" (WHO, 2021, n.p.). This is also when it arrived in the United States. According to the WHO timeline for January 30, 2020, there were "98 cases and no deaths in 18 countries outside China. Four countries had evidence (eight cases) of human-to-human transmission outside China. Those countries were Germany, Japan, the United States of America, and Vietnam (WHO, 2021).

According to a DHEC news release on March 9, 2020, the novel virus, now known as COVID-19, made its first appearance in Camden, South Carolina on March 8, 2020. The news release offered further guidance stating that they *"*now have evidence of community spread that's likely to be causing these initial cases in Camden in Kershaw County and the risk of spread to other communities is possible, as seen in other states across the country" (SCDHEC, 2020, para 4). However, they concluded that*, "*in line with CDC guidance, the department does not recommend closing schools or canceling public events at this time. DHEC will monitor absentee rates in schools and businesses as well as reports of illness in the community to determine if or when closures may be recommended" (SCDHEC, 2020, para 5).

This is when South Carolina schools, government officials, teachers and parents began to speculate about what would happen if the virus continued to spread. The news was filled with daily case number updates. Below is a table showing the number of cases in South Carolina as they accumulated after March 8, 2020 (SCDHEC, 2021).

Table 1
Timeline of the Number of Cases

Date	# Of Cases
March 8, 2020	1
March 9, 2020	6
April1, 2020	1,595
May 1, 2020	6,551
June 1, 2020	12.952
August 10, 2020	103,416

September 1, 2020	122,367
January 1, 2021	300, 133
March 8, 2021 (1 year anniversary)	452,708
May 1, 2021	482,891

Data source: WHO (2021)

On March 9, 2020, South Carolina had six confirmed cases. Six days later, the governor of South Carolina, Henry McMaster, issued Executive Order 2020-09. A joint news release on March 15, 2020 stated that public schools would be closed for students and non-essential employees through March 31st. A few days later, the governor issued an additional executive order to extend the K-12 school closures through the month of April (McMaster, 2020). On April 22, Governor McMaster held a press conference along with Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman to announce that schools would be closed for the remainder of the year (Daprile, 2020).

Fast forward to August 2020. The start of the 2020-2021 school year began with much concern. Many school districts reopened with the option of virtual or face to face instruction. This was accompanied with policies requiring masks or recommending masks. The end result was a disruption of normal educational services which began on March 15, 2020 and lasted for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

Toward the end of the 2020-2021 school year, students were asked to take the state assessments for the first time since 2019. In the Spring of 2020, the schools were shut down in March and no testing was completed.

The question I considered when looking at all these categories was whether or not there was a decrease significant enough that it could be considered a "COVID Slide."

Overview of the Data

While all the scores in South Carolina could certainly be reviewed, I decided to focus this article on the middle school grades. I define middle school grades to be grades six through eight. The task was to discover any differences in the Spring 2019 SC READY state results when compared to the Spring 2021 SC READY state results.

For the purposes of this data analysis, I define the Spring 2019 SC READY scores as Pre-COVID scores and the Spring 2021 scores as Post COVID scores. I am hesitant to describe these scores as Post COVID, acknowledging that schools are still dealing with the COVID issue even in the Fall of 2021. With this hesitation in mind, I did collect and analyze the two test score data sets to see what impact COVID may have had on those scores. I wondered if the data would confirm the decrease as mentioned by the EOC when they looked at Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) scores in January of 2021 (SCEOC, 2021).

Number Tested

To begin this process, I analyzed the number of students tested in 2019 and again in 2021. I know that there were some students that did not test in 2021 and I wanted to see how significant the drop in the number tested was. In 2019, there was an average per grade level of 59,162 students tested in ELA and Math for Grades 6-8. In contrast, there was an average per grade level of 50,780 students tested in 2021. This represented an average decrease of 8,382 students tested per grade level from Pre-COVID to Post COVID (SCDE, 2021).

Table 2

Testing Participation for 2019 and 2021

Grade	**2019 # tested ELA**	**2021 # tested ELA**	**Difference**
6	61413	50681	-10,732
7	58969	50972	-7,997
8	57055	50359	-6,696
AVG	59146	50671	-8475
Grade	**2021 # tested MATH**	**2021 # tested MATH**	**Difference**
6	61452	50963	-10,489
7	59009	51230	-7,779
8	57077	50480	-6,597
AVG	59179	50891	-8288

Data source: SCDE (2021a)

Enrollment

To take this analysis a step further, I decided to look at the enrollment numbers for 2019 and 2021 for grades 6 through 8. Was there a drop in enrollment as well? I used the average daily membership counts for the 135th day in 2019 and again in 2021. In 2019, the 135 average daily membership of students in grades 6 through 8 was 59,922 per grade level (SCDE, 2021b). Of those students, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, I was able to analyze the test score results for 59,162 students. In contrast, for 2021, the 135 average daily membership of students in grades 6 through 8 increased to 61,747 per grade level (SCDE, 2021b). Of those students, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, I was able to analyze the test score results for 50,780 students. The numbers confirmed that while enrollment increased from 2019 to 2021, the number of students tested in 2021 was on average 8,382 students less than in 2019. This confirmed that there were students who opted out of testing in 2021.While this is a limitation, the number of students tested was still high enough for me to proceed with analyzing the results.

Table 3

Average Daily Membership for 2019 and 2021

Grade	135 ADM 2019	135 ADM 2021	Difference
6	62104	60662	-1442
7	59674	62000	2326
8	57990	62581	4591
AVG	59922	61748	1825

Data source: SCDE (2021a)

Overall Performance

After looking at the number tested and the enrollment numbers, the next step was to analyze the scores themselves. The indicator I chose to measure performance by was the percentage of students who scored Meets or Exceeds on the SC READY test in ELA and Math. For example, in 2019 the average percentage of students in grades six through eight who scored Meets or Exceeds for ELA and Math combined was 40.90%. In 2021, this same average of Meets and Exceeds declined to 36.87%. This represented a decrease of 4.03 % (SCDE, 2021a.).

The SC READY ELA performance for grades 6 through 8 as compared to the SC READY Math performance revealed that that average Meets and Exceeds in ELA for 2019 was 43.20 %. The Math Meets and Exceeds percentage was 38.60 %. This revealed that students scored 4.60 % higher in ELA than they did in Math in 2019. Comparatively, in 2021, the ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage was 42.07 %. The Math Meets and Exceeds percentage was 31.67 %. In 2021, the ELA scores were 10.40 % higher than the Math percentage (SCDE, 2021a). This was a much larger gap between ELA and Math and led to the concern that the Math scores in 2021 were much lower than in 2019.

Comparing the 2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage to the 2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage shows a slight drop in performance from 43.20 % to 42.07 %. This was a 1.13 % drop. For the Math Meets and Exceed percentage, the drop from 2019 to 2021 was 6.63 % (SCDE, 2021a), which is significant.

Table 4

Meets and Exceeds Percentages for 2019 and 2021

Year	ELA Meets and Exceeds %	Math Meets and Exceeds %	Difference
2019	43.20%	38.60%	4.60%
2021	42.07%	31.67%	10.40%
Change	-1.13%	-6.63%	----------

Data source: (SCDE, 2021a)

Performance by Subject and Grade Level

A review of the data by subject and grade level revealed that the largest percentage decrease in ELA Meets and Exceeds from 2019 to 2021 occurred in grade 8. The percentage dropped from 44.60% in 2019 to 41.90% in 2021. For Math, the largest percentage decrease in Math Meets and Exceeds from 2019 to 2021 occurred in grade 6. The percentage dropped ten percentage points from 43.90% in 2019 to 33.90% in 2021 (SCDE, 2021a.).

There was one grade level and subject that actually had an increase in the percentage of students at the Meets and Exceeds level. This increase occurred in grade 6 for ELA only. In 2019, there were 41.00% of sixth graders who scored Meets and Exceeds on the ELA portion of the SC READY. In 2021, that percentage rose slightly to 41.80% (SCDE, 2021a.).

Table 5

Meets and Exceeds Percentages by Grade Level

Grade	2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	Difference
6	41.0	41.8	0.8
7	44.0	42.5	-1.5
8	44.6	41.9	-2.7
Grade	**2019 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**
6	43.9	33.9	-10
7	35.3	30.4	-4.9
8	36.6	30.7	-5.9

Data source: (SCDE, 2021a)

Performance by Gender

An analysis of the performance by gender in grades 6 through 8 was performed. Sixth grade males increased their ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage from 35.40 % in 2019 to 36.80 % in 2021. This was an increase of 1.40 %. Sixth grade females had a slight decrease in their ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage from 2019 to 2021. In 2019, 47.00 % of sixth grade females scored Meets and Exceeds and in 2021, that percentage dropped slightly to 46.90 %. A drop of 0.10%. An interesting note here is how much higher the female sixth grade students scored in ELA as compared to the males. While their respective scores from 2019 to 2021 did not seem to suffer, the female sixth graders scored approximately ten to eleven percentage points higher in ELA than the sixth-grade boys. Looking at grades seven and eight, the female students continued this pattern scoring anywhere from ten to twelve percentage points higher than the male students in ELA. Overall, looking at difference between the 2019 ELA scores and the 2021 ELA scores, only one group actually increased their performance in ELA. That group was the sixth-grade male group. The other scores remained approximately the same or showed a slight decrease ranging from a 0.10 % drop to a 3.90 % drop. This was a much smaller negative drop as compared to the drop in math scores (SCDE, 2021a).

Looking at the difference between the 2019 Math scores and the 2021 Math scores showed a different picture. Each grade level and each gender showed a decrease in the percentage of Meets and Exceeds from 2019 to 2021. For example, sixth grade males' math percentage of Meets and Exceeds in 2019 was 41.70 %. In 2021, the percentage dropped by 8.20 % to 33.50 %. This was the second largest drop in the gender category. The largest decrease in scores occurred with the sixth-grade female group. In 2019, the sixth-grade females had a Meets and Exceeds percentage of 46.20 %. In 2021, that percentage dropped 12 percentage points to 34.20 (SCDE, 2021).

One final note to make about the analysis of the scores by gender. In both ELA and Math, for both 2019 and 2021, the female group of students had a higher Meets and Exceeds percentage for every grade level except one. That group was the seventh-grade male group. In 2021 they scored 30.60 % Meets and Exceeds as compared to 30.20 % Meets and Exceed for the seventh-grade females. This was a slight difference of 0.40 %. In every other grade and subject, the female students outperformed the male students (SCDE, 2021a).

Table 6

Meets and Exceeds Percentages by Gender

Grade	2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	Difference
6 Males	35.4	36.8	1.4
7 Males	38.2	38.2	0
8 Males	37.7	36.5	-1.2
Grade	**2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**
6 Females	47.0	46.9	-0.1
7 Females	50.0	47.0	-3
8 Females	51.7	47.8	-3.9
Grade	**2019 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**

6 Males	41.7	33.5	-8.2
7 Males	33.9	30.6	-3.3
8 Males	33.7	29.1	-4.6
Grade	**2019 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**
6 Females	46.2	34.2	-12
7 Females	36.7	30.2	-6.5
8 Females	39.4	32.5	-6.9

Data source: (SCDE, 2021a)

Performance by Ethnicity

An analysis of the performance by ethnicity in grades 6 through 8 was performed. The four demographic groups analyzed were Hispanic, African American, Asian, and White. In almost every grade level and every demographic group, the percentage of students scoring Meets and Exceeds decreased from 2019 to 2021. There were two exceptions to this. Sixth grade Asian students saw an increase in their ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage. In 2019, the Asian students had an ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage rate of 69.40 %. In 2021, that percentage increased by 4.40 % to 73.80 %. Sixth grade White students also saw an increase in their ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage. In 2019, the White students had an ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage rate of 54.40%. In 2021, that percentage increased by 1.00 % to 55.40 %. For Math, all percentages among all demographic groups dropped. The decreases ranged from 4.00 % to as high as 13.60 % (SCDE, 2021a).

Performance of Hispanic Students

Hispanic students dropped an average of 1.83 % in ELA and 8.47 % in Math. The largest decrease among all demographic groups was in the sixth-grade math Hispanic group. This group saw the Meets and Exceeds percentage drop 13.60 percentage points from 2019 to 2021 (SCDE, 2021a).

Table 7

Meets and Exceeds Percentages Hispanic Students

Grade	2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	Difference
6 Hispanic	33.80	30.70	-3.10
7 Hispanic	35.40	32.80	-2.60
8 Hispanic	36.80	34.30	-2.50
Grade	**2019 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**
6 Hispanic	39.20	25.60	-13.60
7 Hispanic	27.90	21.50	-6.40
8 Hispanic	29.20	23.80	-5.40

Data source: (SCDE, 2021a)

Performance of African American Students

African American students dropped an average of 2.73 % in ELA and 6.93 % in Math. Sixth grade math students, like the Hispanic group, showed the biggest decrease of 10.50 %. The sixth-grade African American group maintained their ELA percentage from 2019 to 2021. This percentage dropped less than 1% with a decrease of only 0.40 %. This was the lowest decrease of all the demographic groups and subjects (SCDE, 2021a).

Table 8

Meets and Exceeds Percentages African American Students

Grade	2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	Difference
6 African American	22.30	21.90	-0.40
7 African American	24.20	22.70	-1.50
8 African American	26.10	22.50	-3.60
Grade	**2019 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**
6 African American	23.40	12.90	-10.50

7 African American	14.50	10.60	-3.90
8 African American	18.10	11.70	-6.40

Data source: (SCDE, 2021a)

Performance of Asian Students

Asian students increased their average 0.43 % in ELA but showed a decrease of 7.13 % in Math. An interesting note here is that the sixth-grade Asian s group increased their ELA percentage from 2019 to 2021. This percentage increased by 4.40 %. This was the highest increase of all the demographic groups in both ELA and Math (SCDE, 2021a).

Table 9

Meets and Exceeds Percentages Asian Students

Grade	2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	Difference
6 Asian	69.40	73.80	4.40
7 Asian	73.90	73.10	-0.80
8 Asian	70.80	68.50	-2.30
Grade	**2019 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**
6 Asian	77.80	72.30	-5.50
7 Asian	71.60	67.60	-4.00
8 Asian	73.20	67.10	-6.10

Data source: (SCDE, 2021a)

Performance of Caucasian Students

Sixth grade Caucasian students dropped an average of 1.03 % in ELA and 6.93 % in Math. The sixth grade Caucasian group increased their ELA percentage from 2019 to 2021. This percentage increased by 1.00 %. This was the only increase for this demographic group (SCDE, 2021a).

Table 10

Meets and Exceeds Percentages Caucasian Students

Grade	2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	Difference
6 Caucasian	54.4	55.4	1
7 Caucasian	57.8	56.1	-1.7
8 Caucasian	56.7	54.3	-2.4
Grade	**2019 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**
6 Caucasian	57.9	47.7	-10.2
7 Caucasian	49.3	43.7	-5.6
8 Caucasian	48.3	42.7	-5.6

Data source: (SCDE, 2021a)

A summary of the data revealed that Math across all Demographics showed the highest drop in Meets and Exceeds percentage from 2019 to 2021. The overall average drop was 6.93 % in Math as compared to 1.29 % drop in ELA. Every demographic group in grades 6, 7 and 8 showed a drop in their percentage of Meets and Exceeds in Math. For ELA, only the sixth grade Asian and Caucasian student group showed a slight gain from 2019 to 2021. However, this same sixth grade group also had the highest drop in scores for math for each demographic group (SCDE, 2021).

Performance by Poverty Status

An analysis of the performance by poverty classification in grades 6 through 8 was performed. The average decrease in ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage for students in poverty was 1.33 % from 2019 to 2021. In Math, that percentage drop increased to an average of 6.77 %. For students categorized as not being in poverty, the average decrease in ELA Meets and Exceeds percentage was 1.10 % and 7.30 % in Math. Students of poverty had a lower percentage drop then the non-poverty students in Math. As the demographic data showed, the best performing group among the poverty and non-poverty group was in sixth grade ELA and the worst performing group was in sixth grade Math (SCDE, 2021a).

Table 11

Meets and Exceeds Percentages Non-Poverty Students

Grade	2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	Difference
6 Non-Poverty	61.90	62.30	0.40
7 Non-Poverty	64.60	63.00	-1.60
8 Non-Poverty	62.20	60.10	-2.10
Grade	**2019 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**
6 Non-Poverty	65.30	54.90	-10.40
7 Non-Poverty	55.80	50.30	-5.50
8 Non-Poverty	54.90	48.90	-6.00

Data source: (SCDE, 2021a)

Table 12

Meets and Exceeds Percentages Poverty Students

Grade	2019 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	2021 ELA Meets and Exceeds %	Difference
6 Poverty	28.60	28.80	0.20
7 Poverty	30.60	29.20	-1.40
8 Poverty	32.10	29.30	-2.80
Grade	**2019 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**2021 MATH Meets and Exceeds %**	**Difference**
6 Poverty	31.20	20.60	-10.60
7 Poverty	21.90	17.50	-4.40
8 Poverty	23.60	18.30	-5.30

Data source: (SCDE, 2021a)

Conclusion

This article began with a brief history of how COVID began. Once that history was established, the terms Pre-COVID and Post COVID were defined. Pre-COVID scores were defined as the 2019 SCREADY scores for grades six through eight. Post COVID scores were defined as the 2021 SCREADY scores for grades six through eight. Once establishing those parameters, the data analysis began by looking at the number of students tested in each of those years for grades six through eight. This was important to look at in order to determine if there was a significant drop in the number of students tested. I had heard this to be the case, but I needed to see what the data showed. The data revealed that there was an average decrease in the number of students tested in 2021 as compared to 2019. That average decrease was 8,382 students. This is somewhat significant given that the enrollment in grades six through eight increased an average of 1,825 students from 2019 to 2021. I consider this a small limitation, but the number tested was still high enough to continue the analysis.

Analysis of the performance in grades six through eight looked at several categories. Reviewing all of the middle school students who tested, the percentage of students who scored Meets and Exceeds decreased an average of 4.03% from 2019 to 2021. This did represent a decrease in the overall ELA and Math performance on the SCREADY from 2019 to 2021. Whether this 4.03% decrease would be large enough to be considered a "COVID Slide", as mentioned in the news article, is debatable (SCEOC, 2021).

After looking at the overall scores, the data were then disaggregated into several categories. Those categories included: overall ELA scores, overall Math scores, ELA scores per grade level, Math scores per grade level, scores for females in each subject, scores for males in each subject, scores for Hispanics in each subject, scores for African American students in each subject, scores for Asian students in each subject, scores for Caucasian students in each subject and scores in each subject for students identified as being in poverty and those not being in poverty.

The question I considered when looking at all these categories was whether or not there was a decrease significant enough that it could be considered a "COVID Slide", as mentioned in the news article (SCEOC, 2021). From 2019 to 2021, the Math scores did drop by 6.63% as compared to the ELA scores that only dropped 1.13%. Disaggregating this data further, grade 6 had the largest decrease in Math scores from 2019 to 2021. The decrease was 10.0%, perhaps large enough to be characterized as a "COVID Slide" (SCEOC, 2021). Referring to Table 5, you can also see that Math scores in each grade level had a larger decrease than ELA.

Another notable change in the scores is found in Table 6. Sixth-grade males increased their percentage of Meets and Exceeds in ELA from 2019 to 2021. Seventh-grade ELA male scores from 2019 to 2021 remained the same. These were the only two categories that did not decrease. On the other hand,

sixth-grade males had the second largest decrease in Math scores from 2019 to 2021. That decrease equaled 8.2%. The only students who saw a higher decrease in Math scores were the eighth-grade females. Their scores dropped by 12%. Another potential "COVID Slide" (SCEOC, 2021).

When analyzing the data by ethnicity, there were some notable changes in those scores as well. Table 7 revealed sixth-grade Hispanic students had a 13.6% decrease in Math scores from 2019 to 2021. This was two, or in some cases, three times more of a decrease than the other Hispanic scores in the table. Table 8 revealed that sixth-grade African American students had a 10.5% decrease in Math scores from 2019 to 2021. Table 9 revealed that sixth-grade Asian students increased their ELA scores from 2019 to 2021 by 4.40%. This was one of only two increases in scores among all the ethnicities. The other increase was a 1% increase in ELA scores for sixth grade Caucasian students. Table 10 revealed that sixth-grade Caucasian students had a 10.2% decrease in ELA scores from 2019 to 2021. All of these decreases could be a potential "COVID Slide" (SCEOC, 2021).

Tables 11 and 12 concluded the data analysis. These tables revealed test data by poverty level. Both poverty identified students and non-poverty identified students had over a 10% decrease in sixth-grade math scores. The data revealed a 10.6% decrease for poverty identified students and a 10.4% decrease for non-poverty identified students.

Overall, Math scores had the largest decrease in percentage of students Meeting or Exceeding the expectations on SCREADY. Diving a little deeper into this fact, the sixth graders had the highest decreases in these math scores. We may conclude from this that there was a "COVID Slide" in Math scores from 2019 to 2021, especially in sixth-grade (SCEOC, 2021). Most of the other grades and subject did see decreases, but not at the levels of the sixth-grade students in Math.

References

Daprile, L. (2020, April 22). Coronavirus forces SC K-12 Schools online for the rest of the year. *The State Newspaper*. https://www.thestate.com/news/local/education/article241805156.html

McMaster, H. (2020, March 15). Executive order. https://www.wbtv.com/2020/03/15/official-sc-governor-announce-closure-all-schools/

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) (2021). COVID-19 testing data. https://scdhec.gov/covid19/covid-19-data/sc-testing-data-projections-covid-19.

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), (2020, March 9). DHEC announces seventh possible case of 2019 novel coronavirus in South Carolina. https://scdhec.gov/news-releases/dhec-announces-seventh-possible-case-2019-novel-coronavirus-south-carolina

South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). (2021a). SC READY. https://ed.sc.gov/data/test-scores/state-assessments/sc-ready/.

South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) (2021b). Average daily membership and attendance. https://ed.sc.gov/data/other/student-counts/average-daily-membership-and-attendance/

South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (SCEOC), (2021, January 11). Study shows SC student achievement impacted by COVID-19. https://eoc.sc.gov/news/2021-01/study-shows-sc-student-achievement-impacted-covid-19-0.

World Health Organization (WHO), (2021). *Timeline: WHO's covid-19 response*. https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/interactive-timeline?gclid=CjwKCAiAp8iMBhAqEiwAJb94z4sDDRuTDttB2uTI6 AJvZwI-SH9P7ujfyk6UkBiFQ3RCSveRlCkIhoCmqQQAvD_BwE#event-3.

About the Author

Dr. Erik Lowry is currently an Associate Professor of Education at Francis Marion University's School of Education. Prior to serving at FMU, Dr. Lowry served as an Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, a Middle School Principal, Assistant Principal, a Middle Level Math teacher and an Elementary Teacher.

Recommended Citation (APA 7th ed.)

Lowry, E. (2022). Analysis of middle school performance from pre-COVID to post COVID. *South Carolina Association for Middle Level Education Journal*, 137-144.

Published online: 1 March 2022