



*from* the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee  
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## **For Immediate Release**

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# **Efficiency review identifies measures that would result in significant savings for school districts**

## ***Four districts studied could save over \$11 million over five years, study states***

*Editor's Note: Tidwell and Associates presented an overview of the study to the full EOC today at 1 PM. Presentations to district superintendents and school boards will occur this week and full district review will be made available by June 30, per Proviso 1.95*

**Columbia** – Today the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) received the results of district efficiency reviews of four districts: Barnwell 19, Clarendon 1, Lexington 4, and Dorchester 2. The review conducted by Tidwell & Associates, Inc. of Columbia identified measures that would save these districts \$1.6 million in one year and \$11.8 million over five years. The reviews focused on the following areas: 1.) Organization & management; 2.) Financial Management; 3.) Human Resources; 4.) Facility Use & Energy Management; 5.) Transportation; 6.) Food Services; and 7.) Technology.

The current year's state budget appropriated \$300,000 in one-time funds to the EOC for this pilot program. The EOC was directed to review the central operations of at least three school districts who volunteered for the review. The goal of the review was to identify opportunities to improve operational efficiencies and reduce non-instructional costs for districts.

There were ten school districts that volunteered to be in the review. Of these ten, four were selected: Barnwell 19, Clarendon 1, Lexington 4 and Dorchester 2. These four districts have student enrollments that vary from 744 to 3,438 to over 25,000. Dr. JoAnn Cox, who oversaw the efficiency review process, noted that all participating districts were supportive of the process and many have begun implementation of the findings.

Selected global issues identified by the Tidwell team include, but are not limited to:

- Need for stronger training of school board members, particularly in understanding their roles as policymakers.
- Need to study and consider shared central office services of the smaller, rural districts.
- Need for districts to study Medicaid reimbursements each fiscal year for opportunities to increase the amounts received.

- Need to extend the teacher mentorship program, currently at one year, for an additional year for teachers to reduce teacher turnover, which are costly. Implement a formal strategic succession plan.

Since January, Tidwell and Associates and team of 12 consultants conducted the reviews including interviews, focus groups, site visits and analysis of cost data. The results are summarized below:

| <b>District</b> | <b>Commendations</b> | <b>Recommendations</b> |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Barnwell 19     | 22                   | 62                     |
| Clarendon 1     | 31                   | 48                     |
| Lexington 4     | 37                   | 70                     |
| Dorchester 2    | 22                   | 60                     |

During the time when Tidwell worked onsite, the consulting team reviewed documents, visited schools and district facilities, held community feedback sessions and met with students, parents, school staff, and district leadership and staff. The Tidwell consulting team was comprised of both national and state-level experts and professionals.

In addition to this onsite work, Tidwell conducted a survey to engage central office administrators, school leadership and teachers in the reviews. The survey allowed staff to provide anonymous input regardless if they were selected for an in-person interview with the consulting team.

*The SC Education Oversight Committee is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business persons, and elected leaders. Created in 1998, the committee is dedicated to reporting facts, measuring change, and promoting progress within South Carolina's education system.*

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