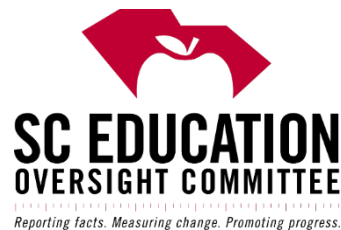


SC Education Oversight Full Committee Meeting

April 13, 2026



Welcome & Approval of Full EOC Committee Minutes

February 9, 2026

April Allen



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**State-Funded
Full-Day 4K
Annual Report
2024-25 & 2025-26**

Prepared by
Dr. Jenny May, Amina Asghar, Dana Yow,
and Tenell Felder

Information Item: State Funded Full- Day 4K Report for FY2024-25 & 2025-26

*Dr. Jenny May, EOC Qualitative Research & Stakeholder
Engagement Director*



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Pursuant to Proviso 1.47:

Of the funds appropriated, \$300,000 shall be allocated to the Education Oversight Committee to conduct an annual evaluation of the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program and to issue findings in a report to the General Assembly by March first of each year. To aid in this evaluation, the Education Oversight Committee shall determine the data necessary and both public and private providers are required to submit the necessary data as a condition of continued participation in and funding of the program. This data shall include developmentally appropriate measures of student progress....The Education Oversight Committee shall use this data and all other collected and maintained data necessary to conduct a research based review of the programs implementation and assessment of student success in the early elementary grades along with information, recommendations, and a timeline for how the state can increase the number of students served in high-quality programs.

What Are We Talking About?

Terms

CERDEP

This is the inclusive term for full-day programs for four-year-olds administered by the SC Department of Education (SCDE) and the Office of First Steps (SCFS) funded by the state of South Carolina. It includes public schools, non-profit independent schools, and child care centers that adhere to program and quality requirements for CERDEP funding and serve eligible four-year-olds.

CERDEP 4K

This is the term for CERDEP in public schools that are state funded and run by the local school district with the school district and SCDE as the reporting and oversight agency.

First Steps 4K

This is the term for the state-funded CERDEP programs run in non-public school settings with SC First Steps as the oversight and reporting agency.

Potentially Unserved

This refers to students eligible for, but not accessing CERDEP. Some of these students may be accessing district-funded or other programs, or it may not be known. If a student is a Pupil in Poverty (PIP) and their 4K experience is either Unknown, Other Public 4K (non CERDEP), or Private 4K — the student is considered Potentially Unserved by CERDEP. Head Start students are not counted as CERDEP or Potentially Unserved.

Changes to CERDEP

CERDEP Changes to the 2024-25 Fiscal Year:	CERDEP Changes to the 2025-26 Fiscal Year	Proposed CERDEP Changes to the 2025-26 Fiscal Year:
<p>Data collected by the EOC from SCDE and SCFS will include average daily attendance data so that consistent enrollment may be determined. The SCDE shall also issue a unique student identifier for each child receiving services from public or private provider including CERDEP, Head Start, SC Child Care Scholarships, EIA, Title I, district-funded, and all other federal, state and local public sources.</p>	<p>The required date for school districts to of share students on a CERDEP 4K waitlist with First Steps 4K and SCDE changed from November 15th to September 1st.</p>	<p>A proposed proviso amendment would relieve school districts that participate in EOC waitlist pilot activities from submitting waitlist numbers annually using the SCDE Formstack survey. These numbers will be reported to SCDE and in the annual CERDEP report to the General Assembly by EOC staff.</p>
<p>1A.73.(SDE-EIA: Foundational Literacy Skill Training) Beginning with the current 2023-24 fiscal year, this proviso directs the Department of Education to provide training in foundational literacy skills to public school educators in kindergarten through grade three. The amendment expands the training to educators in state-funded four-year-old programs and allows the Department to carry forward funds as needed to provide the training.</p>	<p>At the request of EOC, a revised proviso was approved in the 2024-25 Appropriation Act that SCDE will provide a Suns ID number to all children receiving services from a public or private provider.</p>	<p>CERDEP expansion for FY 2026-27 would allow for districts to expand CERDEP by: 1. Extend the number of days up to 220 or offer a summer program, 2. Add CERDEP classrooms or extend the length of CERDEP class from 6.5 to 8.5 hours, 3. Elect to participate in CERDEP for the 2026-27 school year for non-participating districts.</p> <p>The Governor's proposed budget would allow for First Steps 4K to serve students at or below 300% of poverty, an expansion from the current threshold of 185% of poverty or Medicaid eligible.</p>

This Report Seeks to Answer

Access:

1. How many CERDEP programs are in South Carolina?
2. How many four-year-old children in South Carolina are in poverty and eligible for CERDEP programming?
3. How many children are served by CERDEP in South Carolina?
 - How many eligible children are not served by CERDEP?
 - How many children are on a waitlist to access a 4K opportunity?
4. What is the financial investment in 4K?
 - Are financial reimbursements a contributing factor to lack of access to 4K?
 - How does SC compare to other states in early childhood investment?

This Report Seeks to Answer

Quality:

1. On national benchmarks of quality, how does South Carolina fare when considering quality preschool programming?
2. How does South Carolina measure quality?
3. What is the quality of CERDEP programming?

Impact:

1. Are students who participate in CERDEP programming ready for Kindergarten?

Readiness Levels on Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) School Year 2025-26

Pupils in Poverty
30,004
(56%)

54,037
total test takers

non-PiP
24,033
(44%)

KRA Performance of the 30,004
Kindergartners Identified as
Pupils in Poverty



Demonstrating
8,811 (29%)

Approaching
10,939 (36%)

Emerging
9,467 (32%)

Did Not Test 787 (3%)

KRA Performance of the 24,033
Kindergartners Identified as
Non-Pupils in Poverty



Demonstrating
11,353 (47%)

Approaching
7,247 (30%)

Emerging
4,616 (19%)

Did Not Test 817 (3%)

Access to CERDEP: Pupils in Poverty

4 K Experience	Pupils in Poverty 5K (2025-26) Served in 4K Experience (2024-25)	Percent of all Pupils in Poverty Served in 4K Experience (2024-25)	Pupils NOT in Poverty 5K (2025-26) Served in 4K Experience (2024-25)	Percent of Pupils NOT in Poverty Served in 4K Experience (2024-25)	Total	Percent of Total Enrolled in 5K by 4K Experience in 2024-25
CERDEP 4K	11,890	84%	2,253	16%	14,143	26%
First Steps 4K	2,543	68%	1,224	32%	3,767	7%
HeadStart	775	59%	537	41%	1,312	2%
Other Public 4K	4,491	55%	3,725	45%	8,216	15%
Private 4K	1,450	17%	7,087	83%	8,537	16%
Unknown	8,855	49%	9,207	51%	18,062	33%
Total	30,004	56%	24,033	44%	54,037	100%



First Steps 4K Classrooms:

2023-24 School Year		2024-25 School Year		2025-26 School Year	
Number of classrooms	327	Number of classrooms	355	Number of classrooms	368
Classrooms that offer 8-hour instructional day	214 (65%)	Classrooms that offer 8-hour instructional day	227 (64%)	Classrooms that offer 8-hour instructional day	249 (68%)
Classrooms that offer 6.5-hour instructional days	113 (35%)	Classrooms that offer 6.5-hour instructional days	128 (36%)	Classrooms that offer 6.5-hour instructional days	119 (32%)

2023-24 School Year		2024-25 School Year		2025-26 School Year	
Number of classrooms	327	Number of classrooms	355	Number of classrooms	368
220 instructional days	258 (79%)	220 instructional days	260 (73%)	220 instructional days	279 (76%)
180 instructional days	69 (21%)	180 instructional days	95 (27%)	180 instructional days	89 (24%)
Total Capacity	5,534	Total Capacity	5,948	Total Capacity	5,544

School Districts without a First Steps 4K Center in the District Service Area: 2025-26
Abbeville
Allendale
Anderson 1
Anderson 3
Anderson 4
Calhoun
Clarendon 6
Dorchester 4
Fairfield
Florence 2
Florence 3
Florence 5
Greenwood 52
Lexington 4
McCormick
York 2 (Clover)

State-Funded Full-Day 4K Enrollment, SY 25-26

Child Early Reading and Development Program (CERDEP) 2025-26 Enrollment



4-year olds enrolled:

16,034 on 45th day
43 average days enrolled
3.5 average days absent

72 Districts
960 Classrooms

\$91,455,273 State funding
allocated



711 four-year-olds on
Waitlist, SY 2025-26

Unknown Open Seats



4-year olds enrolled:

3,980 four-year-olds enrolled for
at least one day on 45th day
24 average days absent

309 Providers
368 Classrooms

\$52,526,803 State funding
allocated



1,739 First Steps 4K
Open Seats
2025-26

Unknown Waitlist

Access to CERDEP: Students on Waitlist

- 711 students on the 4K waitlist at a CERDEP school district
- 1,739 open seats in First Steps 4K
- In 2024-25 approximately 8,855 pupils in poverty unknown 4K experience

Access to CERDEP: Absence

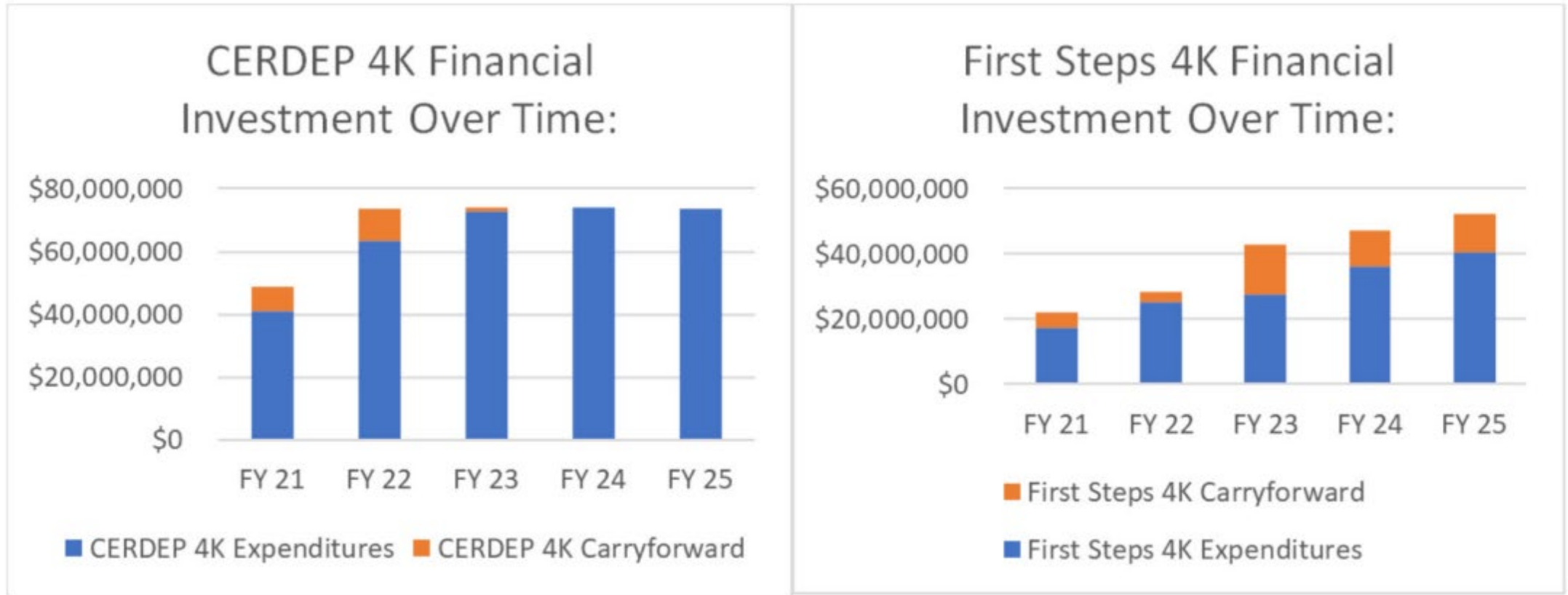
CERDEP 4K KRA Results by Absence

	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating	Not Tested	Total
Absent More than 10 Days	127 (42%)	97 (32%)	60 (20%)	20 (7%)	304 (2%)
Absent 10 Days or Less	3,041 (22%)	5,255 (38%)	5,291 (38%)	252 (2%)	13,839 (98%)
Total	3,168 (22%)	5,352 (38%)	5,351 (38%)	272 (2%)	14,143 (100%)

First Steps 4K KRA Results by Absence

	Emerging	Approaching	Demonstrating	Not Tested	Total
Absent More than 10 Days	52 (58%)	22 (24%)	11 (12%)	5 (6%)	90 (7%)
Absent 10 Days or Less	326 (27%)	488 (41%)	350 (29%)	34 (3%)	1,198 (93%)
Total	378 (29%)	510 (40%)	361 (28%)	39 (3%)	1,288 (100%)

Access: Financial Investment Over Time



Access: Financial Investment

- In the 2024-25 school year, \$73,629,158 state expenditures were spent to serve 14,143 CERDEP 4K students who enrolled in kindergarten in SC public schools in the 2025-26 school year.
- There were \$40,617,912 actual state expenditures used to fund 3,767 First Steps 4K students later enrolled in public school kindergarten in SC public schools in 2025-26.
- National Rankings for South Carolina:
 - 15th in Access for 4-year-olds
 - 38th in state financial investment to early childhood.
 - 42nd when other funds are considered

Quality:

Policy	Requirement	Benchmark	Meets Benchmark
Early Learning & Development Standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Yes
Curriculum Supports	Approval process and supports	Approval process and supports	Yes
Teacher Degree	BA (public), AA (non-public)	BA	Not Yet
Teacher Specialized Training	Early Childhood Education	Specializing in pre-K	Yes
Assistant Teacher Degree	High School Diploma	CDA or equivalent	Not Yet
Staff Professional Development (PD)	15 hours/year, PD plans and coaching	For teachers and assistants: at least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	Yes
Maximum Class Size	20 (4-year-olds)	20 or lower	Yes
Staff to Child Ratio	1:10 (4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	Yes
Screening and Referral	Immunizations, developmental; vision, hearing, health and more	Vision, hearing, health screenings and referral	Not Yet
Continuous Quality Improvement System	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	Yes

Quality: First Steps 4K QRIS Over Time

2023-24 School Year		2024-25 School Year		2025-26 School Year	
A+ Quality Rating	14	A+ Quality Rating	16	A+ Quality Rating	12
A Quality Rating	14	A Quality Rating	15	A Quality Rating	13
B+ Quality Rating	41	B+ Quality Rating	43	B+ Quality Rating	42
B Quality Rating	111	B Quality Rating	121	B Quality Rating	119
C Quality Rating	56	C Quality Rating	103	C Quality Rating	75
Pending Quality Rating	27	Pending Quality Rating	2	Pending Quality Rating	6
No Quality Rating	64	No Quality Rating	55	No Quality Rating	42

Quality: Teacher Qualifications 2025-26

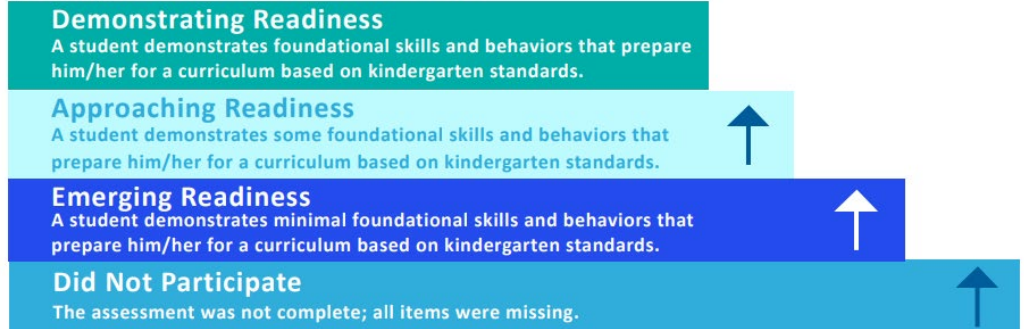
First Steps 4K Teacher Qualifications		
Associates Degree	137	37%
Bachelors	176	48%
Masters	53	14%
EdD/PhD	2	1%
Total	368	100%

CERDEP 4K Teacher Degrees		
Bachelors	377	33%
Bachelors + 18	67	6%
Masters	524	46%
Masters + 30	160	14%
Doctorate	15	1%
Total	1,143	100%

Impact on Kindergarten Readiness:

KRA Performance Level	Emerging Readiness		Approaching Readiness		Demonstrating Readiness		Did Not Participate		Total
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
PIP	9,467	32%	10,939	36%	8,811	29%	787	3%	30,004
Non-PIP	4,616	19%	7,247	30%	11,353	47%	817	3%	24,033
Total	14,083	26%	18,186	34%	20,164	37%	1,604	3%	54,037

▶▶ Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Performance Levels



Impact on Kindergarten Readiness by 4K Experience

KRA Performance Level	Emerging Readiness		Approaching Readiness		Demonstrating Readiness		Did Not Participate		Total
CERDEP 4K	2,776	23%	4,617	39%	4,281	36%	216	2%	11,890
First Steps 4K	738	29%	1,046	41%	708	28%	51	2%	2,543
Subtotal All CERDEP	3,514	24%	5,663	39%	4,989	35%	267	2%	14,433
Head Start	276	36%	305	39%	175	23%	19	2%	775
Other Public 4K	1,501	33%	1,570	35%	1,291	29%	129	3%	4,491
Private 4K	343	24%	548	38%	532	37%	27	2%	1,450
Unknown	3,833	43%	2,853	32%	1,824	21%	345	4%	8,855
Subtotal non-CERDEP	5,953	38%	5,276	34%	3,822	25%	520	3%	15,571
Total	9,467	32%	10,939	36%	8,811	29%	787	3%	30,004

Recommendations

- Pilot efforts and innovations to ensure CERDEP eligible children are not waiting for 4K
 - Waitlist Pilot Efforts Year 2 and future expansion and automation
- Increase CERDEP infrastructure using data to prioritize recruitment efforts for families and/or providers
 - Consistency in students kept on a waitlist and open seats reported in each CERDEP sector
- Continue to increase quality by meeting NIEER Benchmarks related to screening and teacher/assistant teacher qualifications

Recommendations:

- Recruit families for available seats using additional marketing strategies
- Focus on access, quality and support for teachers and administrators in CERDEP classes

Next Steps:

- 4K Data Dashboard at www.dashboardsc.gov/prek
- CERDEP Collaborative Convening
- 4K Waitlists Pilot Year 2
- Include CERDEP assessment data in assessment audit
- Academic outcomes correlated with participation in CERDEP including: graduation rate and third grade reading performance
- Teacher preparation and retention in 4K for both CERDEP 4K and First Steps 4K
- Screening efforts in 4K and recommendations to implement universal hearing, vision, and developmental screening and referral in CERDEP funded classrooms.

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Information Item: Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee

Dr. Patty Tate, ASA Chair



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Report on the
Educational
Credit for
Exceptional
Needs Children
(ECENC)
Program

FY 2024-25
Prepared by
Dr. Jenny May



Action Item: Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children (ECENC) Report

*Dr. Jenny May, EOC Qualitative Research & Stakeholder
Engagement Director*



Pursuant to Act 247

Issue a report to the General Assembly documenting the impact of the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Program on student achievement. In addition, the report must include information on individual schools if at least a 51% of the total enrolled students in the private school participated in the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Program in the prior school year. The report must be according to each participating private school and for participating students, in which there are at least 30 participating students who have scores for tests administered. If the Education Oversight Committee determines that the 30 participating student cell size may be reduced without disclosing personally identifiable information of a participating student, the Education Oversight Committee may reduce the participating student cell size, but the cell size may not be reduced to less than 10 participating students. (Section 12-6-3790 E) (6) of the SC Code of Laws).

Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children (ECENC) Program Report:

- This report seeks to provide:
 1. Information on the approval process, participation, and compliance for ECENC schools;
 2. Information about the process for collecting assessment results used to document the impact of the ECENC program on student success; and,
 3. Updates to previous recommendations from the EOC report.

Terms:

Term	Definition per Act 247
➤ Qualifying Student	A student who is an exceptional needs child is a South Carolina resident, and is eligible to be enrolled in a South Carolina secondary or elementary public school at the Kindergarten or later grade for the applicable school year.
➤ Exceptional Needs Child	A child who has been evaluated in accordance with the state's evaluation criteria as set forth in S.C. Code Ann. Regs 43-243.1, and determined eligible as a child with a disability who needs special education and related services, in accordance with the requirements of the Section 300.8 of the federal individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Or a child who has been diagnosed within the last three years by a licensed speech-language pathologist, psychiatrist, or medical, mental health, psychoeducational or other comparable licensed health care provider as having a neurodevelopmental disorder, a substantial sensory or physical impairment such as deaf, blind, or orthopedic disability, or some other disability or acute or chronic condition that significantly impeded the student's ability to learn and succeed in school without specialized instructional and associated supports and services tailored to the child's unique needs.

Eligible Schools and Timeline

- Meet criteria listed in Act 247
- Timeline for approval:
 - January 2, 2025 Manual and application to participate available and schools in good standing notified via email; applications published on EOC website for 2019-20
 - February 28, 2025 Application and Statement of services received by 2/28/25 to be approved for SY 2024-25
 - June 30, 2025 Grants Received are completed, signed and returned to EOC with enrollment information but no personally identifiable info.

Timeline Continued:

- September 1, 2025 School Level Assessment Results, and name of assessment administered provided to EOC but no personally identifiable info; Staff responsible for submission of school-level assessment results must sign and complete submission
- November 15, 2025 Compliance audit of school's financial statement relating to grants submitted by CPA firm.

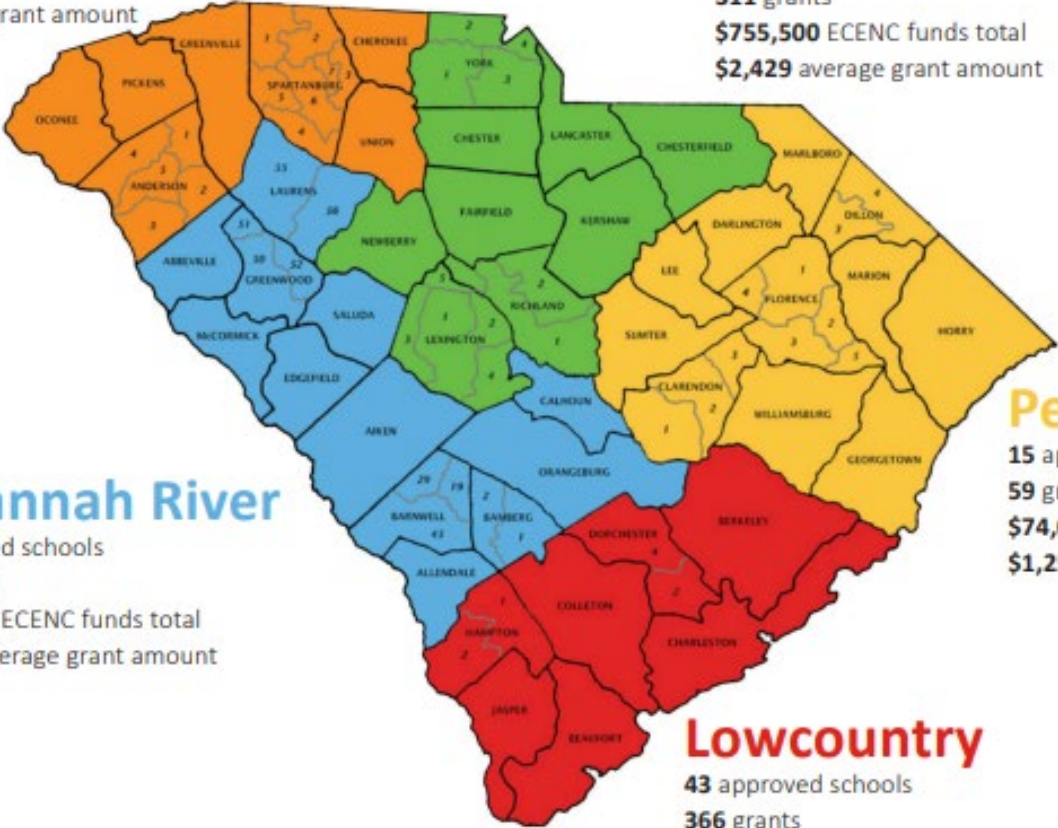
Participating Schools 2024-25

Upstate

30 approved schools
630 grants
\$1,577,641 ECENC funds total
\$2,504 average grant amount

Midlands

23 approved schools
311 grants
\$755,500 ECENC funds total
\$2,429 average grant amount



Savannah River

5 approved schools
59 grants
\$104,800 ECENC funds total
\$1,776 average grant amount

Pee Dee

15 approved schools
59 grants
\$74,000 ECENC funds total
\$1,254 average grant amount

Lowcountry

43 approved schools
366 grants
\$734,337 ECENC funds total
\$2,006 average grant amount

Accrediting Association by CERRA Region

CERRA Region	SCISA	SACS	SCACS	PAIS
Region 1 Upstate	15	16	6	3
Region 2 Savannah River Basin	3	3	0	0
Region 3 Midlands	9	10	8	4
Region 4 Pee Dee	11	3	3	1
Region 5 Lowcountry	28	31	1	8
Total	66	63	18	16

Approved Schools and Grants Over Time

Region	Approved Schools		Grants		Total Amount Funded		Average Amount per Student	
	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26	2024-25	2025-26
Region 1 Upstate	34	30	643	630	\$3,024,928	\$1,577,641	\$4,704	\$2,504
Region 2 Savannah River Basin	9	5	69	59	\$240,300	\$104,800	\$3,482	\$1,776
Region 3 Midlands	19	23	233	311	\$1,163,760	\$755,500	\$4,995	\$2,429
Region 4 Pee Dee	15	15	52	59	\$131,600	\$74,000	\$2,531	\$1,254
Region 5 Lowcountry	39	43	333	366	\$1,273,137	\$734,337	\$3,823	\$2,006
State Total	116	116	1,330	1,425	\$5,833,725	\$3,246,278	\$4,386	\$2,278

Student Participation by Grade Level

Grade	Funded	Applied	% Funded
K5	39	42	93%
1st	69	69	100%
2nd	109	123	89%
3rd	97	97	100%
4th	121	121	100%
5th	140	145	97%
6th	144	144	100%
7th	175	175	100%
8th	140	143	98%
9th	103	105	98%
10th	98	98	100%
11th	96	96	100%
12th	119	119	100%
Total	1,450	1,477	98%

School	Accrediting Body	CERRA Region	Percentage of Students Funded through ECENC	Total Amount	Assessment
Camperdown Academy	SCISA	1	78%	\$496,000.00	GMADE
Glenforest School	SCISA	3	59%	\$99,400.00	Fast Bridge, PSAT, ACT, SAT, SRA Mastery
Hidden Treasure Christian School	SCACS	1	74%	\$125,240.85	Woodcock-Johnson IV
Hope Christian Academy	SCACS	3	73%	\$16,800.00	Woodcock-Johnson IV
Sandhills School	SCISA/PAIS	3	83%	\$332,200.00	Woodcock-Johnson IV, PACT
The Chandler School	SCISA	1	78%	\$132,100.00	Stanford 10, OLSAT,
Trailhead Community Farm School	SACS	1	62%	\$20,800.00	MAP
Trident Academy	SCISA/SACS/PAIS	5	70%	\$357,800.00	Gates MacGinitie, WRAT

Recommendations:

1. Convene the Advisory Committee of the ECENC
2. Offer Summative State Assessments to ECENC Students in Public Schools
3. Consider Communication Around the ECENC Program and Other Scholarships

Convene the Advisory Committee of the ECENC:

- Act 247 requires that the EOC establishes an advisory committee and states that the advisory committee shall:
 1. Consult with the EOC concerning requests for exemptions from the curriculum requirements
 2. Provide recommendations on matters requested by the EOC

Member	Organization
Robbie Braciszewski	SCISA
Kimberly Tissot	Able SC
Amy Holbert	Family Connections SC
Patricia Parrish	SACSCOC
Ramsay Bokinsky	Sandhills School
Edward Earwood	SCACS
Matt Palyok	Parent

Offer Summative State Assessments to ECENC Students in Public Schools

- Offering these examinations to students participating in the ECENC program would offer an assessment opportunity to determine ECENC program impact.

Consider Coordination at the State Level between ESTF and ECENC

- Implement safeguards at the state level to ensure parents cannot be granted both funds OR
- Allow funding from these two programs to be braided.

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Report of the Academic Standards and Assessments (ASA) Subcommittee

Dr. Patty, EOC ASA Chair



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Action Item:
**Nomination to Public Charter School
District Board of Trustees**

April Allen, EOC Chair



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Executive Director Update

Dana Yow, EOC Executive Director



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Monday, May 18
1-3 PM



**Education Oversight Committee Strategic Plan
2021-2025
Summary Strategies and Objectives**

approved by Strategic Planning Subcommittee, May 17, 2021

Strategy I: Report Facts

To support all stakeholders in making informed decisions for the continuous improvement of schools and student outcomes, the EOC will advocate for, access, and use a comprehensive, quality, statewide data system

Objective A: Enhance the EOC's direct access to comprehensive, quality, statewide data for reporting information

- Advocate for EOC staff to have secure, administrative-user access to Student Information System data
- Institute processes for EOC staff to have co-equal access to files that contain student-level data used for accountability
- Establish quality control processes to ensure accurate accountability reporting

Objective B: Advocate for the synthesis of existing data sources into a comprehensive, quality statewide data system that is secure, transparent and relevant to decision making for schools and student outcomes

- Partner with existing stakeholder groups to establish policies and processes to connect existing data systems
- Advocate for the establishment of policies and processes to ensure the security, privacy, and appropriate use of all stakeholder data

Objective C: Transform data into information that equips multiple stakeholder groups to act for the continuous improvement of schools and student outcomes

- Create information, to include data visualizations, that empowers multiple stakeholders to take more action-oriented approaches to continuous improvement of schools and student success
- Increase the use of state and school report cards and other sources of data for decision making and continuous school and student improvement
- Streamline the accessibility and transparency of information

Strategy II: Measure Change

To more accurately and efficiently measure change, the EOC will refocus accountability to emphasize school improvement and the success of students

Objective D: Align system-wide (PK-12) accountability measures with characteristics of college and career readiness (CCR)

- Study the ability of current accountability measures to predict college and career success
- Select accurate and appropriate measures of CCR progress throughout the PK-12 system
- Establish a framework to include international and national benchmarks of student success
- Monitor student CCR success and the continuous improvement of schools

Objective E: Design and implement an educational accountability system that enables stakeholders to take action and focus on continuous improvement

- Research the needs of multiple stakeholder groups to determine appropriate measures
- Develop measures to meet identified needs

Objective F: Identify and reward school accountability success

- Recognize schools that demonstrate success
- Include select awards on school report cards

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August 9-10, 2026



Adjournment



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