

**Recommendations from the EOC for FY 2026-27 EIA Funding
and Proviso Recommendations**

Adopted by the EOC on December 8, 2025

Background

The South Carolina Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984, Part II, SECTION 9 of Act 512 of 1984, the Fiscal Year 1984-85 General Appropriations Act, had seven objectives:

1. Raising Student Performance by Increasing Academic Standards
2. Strengthening the Teaching and Testing of the Basic Skills
3. Elevating the Teaching Profession by Strengthening Teacher Training, Evaluation, and Compensation
4. Improving Leadership, Management, and Fiscal Efficiency of Schools at All Levels
5. Implementing Strict Quality Controls and Rewarding Productivity
6. Creating More Effective Partnerships Among the Schools, Parents, Community, and Business
7. Providing School Buildings Conducive to Improved Student Learning

The initial EIA appropriation in Fiscal Year 1984-85 was \$217,265,860. The total amount of general funds appropriated to the South Carolina Department of Education in Fiscal Year 1984-85 was \$852,508,991. Of this amount, \$754,988,127 was appropriated to the Education Finance Act, which is comparable to our State Aid to Classrooms appropriation today of \$4,531,474,416 in the current fiscal year.

Appendix A summarizes the EIA appropriation for Fiscal Year 1984-85.

The EIA also created the Select Committee, a nine-member legislative committee composed of the following individuals. Only a member of the legislature could serve as chair:

- (1) Speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee.
- (2) Lieutenant Governor or his designee.
- (3) Chairman of the Education and Public Works Committee of the House of Representatives or his designee.
- (4) Chairman of the Education Committee of the Senate or his designee.
- (5) State Superintendent of Education or his designee.
- (6) Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education or his designee.
- (7) Governor or his designee.

- (8) Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives or his designee.
- (9) Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Senate or his designee.

One of the responsibilities of the Select Committee was “to assist in, recommend and supervise the expenditure of funds for the Education Improvement Act.”

When the Education Accountability Act (EAA) of 1998 was enacted into law, the Education Oversight Committee replaced the Select Committee and added to its membership representatives from the business community. The responsibilities of the EOC were also expanded.

EIA Subcommittee Recommendations, FY 2026-27

For the 2026-27 funding year, the availability of new recurring EIA funds is **\$98,944,087**. The amount of nonrecurring EIA funds is **\$84,060,581**.

Appendix B summarizes all new EIA fund requests made to the EOC, which total **\$210,053,058**.

Recurring Fund Recommendations

For Fiscal Year 2026-27, the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee recommends **increasing** the appropriation to the following EIA line-item appropriations because these programs have demonstrated measurable return on investment:

1. **Teaching Fellows Scholarship Program** – The Teaching Fellows program is designed to recruit talented high school seniors in SC into the teaching profession. According to CERRA, 93% of graduates who received the Teaching Fellows scholarship have either satisfied their loan or are currently teaching for loan forgiveness in a SC public school. Candidates must complete a rigorous selection process that includes an interview and presentation. According to CERRA, there is currently a waitlist of 61 freshman and 57 sophomores for the program.
 - An increase of 20 additional four-year scholarships at \$32,000 each, which equates to **\$640,000**.
 - Increase the scholarship amount from \$6,000 to \$10,000 for junior and senior years at a cost of **\$1,756,000** (439 juniors and seniors at \$4,000 each).

2. State Aid to Classrooms – Increasing the minimum teacher salary to at least \$50,000 by 2026 has been a priority of Governor McMaster and the General Assembly. Increasing teacher salaries has also been a priority of the EIA fund since its inception. A 2025 Report from SC-TEACHER showed that SC school districts bordering North Carolina employed about 10 to 41 percent of their teachers on reciprocity certificates in 2023-24, suggesting that SC’s higher teacher salaries are attracting teachers from neighboring states. Since State Aid to Classrooms is funded by General Funds and by EIA funds, the Subcommittee defers to the legislature on the amount of new EIA funds that will be used to increase State Aid to Classrooms.

- Request from SC Department of Education of \$150,000,000; recommended **\$80,892,384** (remaining from general fund)

3. Increase in special schools’ teacher salaries of \$650,454

For Fiscal year 2026-27, the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee recommends **decreasing** the appropriation to the following EIA line-item appropriations due to reduced demand for the program:

1. National Board Certification – For 2024-25, \$34,500,000 has been allocated for National Board certification stipends. There are currently 3,545 teachers eligible for the stipend at a cost of \$17,725,000. The number of new National Board teachers has been increasing over the past three years (from 35 to 98 teachers); however, the total number of national board teachers has been decreasing over the past three years (from 3,821 to 3,447 teachers).

- Recommended to reduce the amount allocated to National Board by (\$5,000,000)

For Fiscal Year 2026-27, the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee recommends **additional investment in the following initiatives**.

- 1. Teacher Career Ladder** of \$1,400,000 million recurring funds – The original EIA legislation included a teacher incentive pay program, which was discontinued over time. South Carolina has long focused on retaining high quality teachers in the classroom. Creation of a career ladder would sustain these efforts.
- 2. Instructional Materials** - \$10,000,000
- 3. Instructional Support** - \$8,205,249
- 4. Project Read** - \$250,000
- 5. SC Council in Economics** - \$150,000

Nonrecurring Fund Recommendations

1. **School Safety** \$5,000,000
2. Remaining nonrecurring funds to be determined by General Assembly

Summary of EIA Recommendations

Recurring Funds

Increase Funding*

Palmetto Teaching Fellows (increases the number of Teaching Fellows)	\$640,000
(increases junior and senior year scholarships)	\$1,756,000
State Aid to Classrooms (Teaching Salaries)	\$80,892,384
Special Schools Teacher Salaries	\$650,454
Teacher Career Ladder Pay	\$1,400,000
Instructional Materials	\$10,000,000
Instructional Support (Hub, LMS, SSO)	\$8,205,249
Project Read	\$250,000
SC Council on Economics	\$150,000

**Note revisions in amounts for Teaching Fellows and State Aid to Classrooms from EOC recommendation. Original calculations were not accurate.*

Decrease Funding

National Board	(\$5,000,000)
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Total Recurring **\$98,944,087**

Nonrecurring

School Safety	\$5,000,000
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Unallocated Nonrecurring **\$84,060,581**

Concerns/Issues for Future Recommendations

1. The EIA Subcommittee raised significant concerns about the effectiveness of the teacher recruitment and retention programs funded with EIA dollars. This year, roughly **\$67.2 million** was appropriated for these initiatives, including **\$18.7 million** specifically for teacher recruitment initiatives. Yet, based on program data, only **90 teachers in 2025** could be confirmed for programs **other than the CERRA Teaching Fellows Program**. In 2025, **177 Teaching Fellows** graduated from SC postsecondary institutions. The impact of the remaining \$48.5 million of funds could not be quantified. The Subcommittee concluded that high administrative costs and unclear outcomes indicate a low return on investment and warrant further analysis.

Teacher Recruitment/Retention Programs	EIA Dollars Appropriated FY 25-26	Certified Teachers/Graduates confirmed 2025
SDE Teach SC	\$727,650	
CHE Centers for Excellence	\$1,100,000	31
SC State SC Minority Teacher Program	\$339,482	6
Clemson Call Me Mister	\$1,195,000	29
CERRA Teaching Fellows	\$4,509,039	177
CERRA Rural Recruitment Initiative	\$7,598,392	
USC CAP and TIP	\$1,950,000	
USC Teacher Residency	\$1,000,000	0
SC Tech Foundation Teach to Tech*	\$1,500,000	
Teacher Strategic Compensation	\$5,000,000	
Teach for America	\$2,000,000	24
Teacher Loan	\$5,089,881	
CERRA ProTeam, Teacher Cadet	\$670,905	
National Board	\$34,500,000	
Total EIA Dollars for Recruitment and Retention	\$67,180,349	267

*new EIA-funded program

2. The EIA Subcommittee has concerns regarding the EIA funding allocated for the SC Youth Challenge Program and program outcomes. The EOC staff, along with the Adjutant General's office, has plans to conduct a site visit to Youth Challenge in Eastover, SC in the spring 2026. A recommendation will be forthcoming in the summer 2026 from the EOC staff, in consultation with the Adjutant General's office, regarding future funding recommendations.

3. The EIA Subcommittee has concerns regarding the incentives allowed for pursuant to the Rural Teacher Recruitment Incentive (RRI) funds proviso. A clear return on investment on many of these incentives cannot be determined. As per proviso 1A.44, the EOC is required to conduct an evaluation of the impact of RRI funds. The evaluation report is due June 30, 2026. The EIA Subcommittee recommends a review of the evaluation report before making a recommendation on the continuation of funds.
4. The EIA Subcommittee would like to see an expansion of the current full day, 4K program in South Carolina. For the current school year 2025-2026, only one school district has opted not to participate in the full day, 4K program. Currently, \$128.8 million in EIA and general fund revenues is appropriated for the full day 4K program with 84 percent of these funds coming from the EIA.
5. Leadership in schools was a concern expressed by the EIA Subcommittee. While many schools have strong principals, it is a desire for all schools to have opportunities and access to high quality leadership. Principal leadership is key to a school's academic success. The success is attained by establishing high academic expectations, creating a positive school climate, and by supporting teachers and setting clear expectations. Training, coaching and mentorships should be established to generate a high-quality pipeline of principals across South Carolina.

Appendix A

EIA Appropriations Fiscal Year 1984-85	
X. Education Improvement	
A. Raise Academic Standards:	
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Increase Credits for High School Diploma	\$5,020,449
Five-Year-Old Kindergarten	\$1,800,000
Advanced Placement (AP) courses	\$669,000
Gifted and Talented Program	\$3,700,000
Modernize Vocational Equipment	\$7,000,000
Handicapped Student Services	\$1,000,000
Subtotal:	\$19,189,449
B. Basic Skills:	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$107,774
Operating Expenses	\$224,952
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Basic Skill Test	\$5,274
Four-Year Early Childhood	\$2,400,000
Basic Skill Remediation	\$60,500,000
Exit Exam Child	\$5,000
Subtotal:	\$63,243,000
C. Teaching Profession:	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$124,000
Other Operating Expenses	\$2,220,400
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Teacher Salaries	\$60,180,181
Employer Contributions	\$9,287,321
Teacher Incentive Pay	\$450,000
State Agency Teacher Pay	\$603,000
Teacher Inservice Training	\$1,250,000
Competitive Teacher Grants	\$200,000
Mental Health Pupil Teacher	\$595,000
Subtotal:	\$74,909,902

D. Leadership Management & Efficiency	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$270,839
Other Operating Expenses	\$379,171
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Principal Leadership	\$74,290
Administrative Apprentice	\$500,000
Salary Supplement Principals	\$1,800,000
Subtotal:	\$3,024,300
E. Quality Control & Production	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$205,000
Other Operating Expenses	
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Innovation Program Grant	\$250,000
Subtotal:	\$455,000
F. School Building Aid	
Aid to Subdivisions:	
Construction and Renovation	\$55,738,136
Subtotal:	\$55,738,136
G. School Intervention Program	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$137,747
Other Operating Expenses	\$38,400
Classified Positions:	
Subtotal:	\$176,147
H. EIA Implementation	
Personal Service (New Positions)	\$396,870
Other Operating Expenses	\$133,056
Subtotal:	\$529,926
TOTAL:	\$217,265,860

Appendix B.

New EIA Requests for 2026-27

Program Name	Amount
State Aid to Classrooms	\$150,000,000
Special Schools Salaries	\$650,454
Instructional Support (Hub, LMS, SSO)	\$8,206,249
Summer Reading Camps	\$30,000,000
Instructional Materials	\$16,885,759
Pattison's Academy	\$224,015
Palmetto Excel	\$300,000
Literacy and Distance Learning	\$250,000
SC Autism	\$180,000
STEM SC	\$250,000
SC Council on Economic Education	\$150,000
SC Educational Partnerships (USC)	\$160,000
CHE Centers for Excellence	\$11,300
BabyNet Autism	\$785,281
Regional Education Centers	\$500,000
The Continuum	\$1,000,000
Project Read	\$500,000
Total Requests	\$210,053,058

EOC Proviso Revision Requests FY 2026-27 (to be considered by EOC EIA Subcommittee, 12/1/2025)

Proviso REVISION Request

1.46. (SDE: Full-Day 4K) (D) Public and private providers shall be funded for instructional costs at a minimum rate of \$5,100 per student enrolled. Eligible students enrolling during the school year or withdrawing during the school year shall be funded on a pro rata basis determined by the length of their enrollment. Private providers transporting eligible children to and from school shall also be eligible for reimbursement at a minimum of \$620 per eligible child transported. First Steps and the Department of Education must provide an equitable distribution above the minimum between public and private providers. First Steps and the Department of Education must provide a quarterly report beginning October 1 detailing funding above the minimum made to any provider to the Governor, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. All providers who are reimbursed are required to retain records as required by their fiscal agent. New providers participating for the first time in the current fiscal year and enrolling between one and six eligible children shall be eligible to receive at a minimum of \$1,000 per child in materials and equipment funding, with providers enrolling seven or more such children eligible for funding at a minimum of \$10,000. The Department of Education and the Office of First Steps Readiness are authorized to utilize carry forward funds and federal funds to supplement the amount expended for materials and equipment. Providers receiving equipment funding are expected to participate in the program and provide high-quality, center-based programs as defined herein for a minimum of three years. Failure to participate for three years will require the provider to return a portion of the equipment allocation at a level determined by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps to School Readiness. Funding to providers is contingent upon receipt of data as requested by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps. The Department of Education shall only provide funding for public school students whose complete records have been entered into PowerSchool based on the one hundred and thirty-five day student average daily membership. For the current fiscal year, providers may enroll pay-lunch children who score at or below the twenty-fifth national percentile on two of the three DIAL-3 subscales by July 1 if at least seventy-five percent of the total number of children eligible or the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program in a district or county are projected to be enrolled in that program, Head Start, or ABC Child Care Program as determined by the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps, Child Early Reading Development and Education Program. Providers may receive

reimbursement for these children if funds are available. By September 1, the Department of Education and the Office of First Steps must collect the documented waiting lists, share the lists, and determine a process to notify parents of eligible students of available slots in all approved providers. The Department of Education is required to offer waivers allowing students with disabilities to be served in multi-categorical classroom settings based on similar cognition and abilities. Funding appropriated for CERDEP may be carried forward and expended for the same purpose. **School districts participating in the EOC wait list pilot are exempt from the September 1 requirement.**

Rationale for request: Most recently available data show that over 400 children in South Carolina spent time on a waitlist to access free, state-funded 4K. At the same time, there were over 2,300 available seats across the state. The process of collecting point-in-time data of eligible children waiting to access 4K is not efficient in matching children with available seats. It has previously been reported that pupils in poverty who access CERDEP-funded early childhood education are more likely to demonstrate readiness than their similarly-eligible counterparts. As a result, understanding how waitlists function across early childhood sectors to provide free 4K to eligible families is imperative in preparing our youngest learners for kindergarten. Understanding waitlists and the most efficient enrollment processes to match children with a 4K seat they are eligible for protects the investment South Carolina has made in early childhood education. During the spring and summer of 2025, the EOC worked with SCDE, SC First Steps, and two SC school districts to pilot a waitlist pilot that involved transfer of “real time” data and supported matching ensure that all eligible young children benefit from the state’s investment in early childhood education. The pilot followed a collaborative convening of early childhood stakeholders hosted by the EOC. The work was time-intensive for all parties involved but was successful. The proposed change would provide relief from one requirement for participating districts.

Proviso REVISION Request

1A.44. (SDE-EIA: Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive) (A) There is created a program within the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) to recruit and retain classroom educators in rural and underserved districts experiencing excessive turnover of classroom teachers on an annual basis.

(B) During the current fiscal year CERRA shall publish eligibility requirements and applications for individual educators, school districts, and institutions of higher education not inconsistent with existing licensure requirements for each, but also including:

(1) Eligible districts identified by CERRA as experiencing greater than eleven percent the statewide average annual teacher turnover, as reported on the districts' five most recent district report cards issued by the South Carolina Department of Education and are not one of the fifteen wealthiest districts based on the index of taxpaying ability, may make application to participate in the program.

(2) Individuals eligible for incentives shall be willing to provide instructional services in an eligible district in exchange for participation in an incentive detailed in item (C) pursuant to the obligations and restrictions stated for each.

(3) Institutions of higher education eligible to receive education funding as a component of recruiting incentives created pursuant to item (C) of this provision shall not be excluded from participation in Teaching Fellows Program.

(4) Any incentives requiring individuals to relocate into an eligible district to provide instructional services shall not be made available to individuals providing instructional services in other eligible districts.

(C) Pursuant to item (A), CERRA shall develop a set of incentives including, but not limited to, salary supplements, education subsidies, loan forgiveness, professional development, and mentorship to be provided to classroom educators that offer instructional services in eligible districts and shall provide incentive options for eligible individuals at all stages of their careers, including high-school and college or university students interested in entering the teaching profession and including individuals entering the field through an alternative certification pathway to include, but not limited to, PACE, ABCTE, Teach for America, and CATE Work-Based Certification.

At a minimum, the incentives shall include:

(1) Development of a program for forgiveness of undergraduate student loans, not to exceed \$5,000 per year, for up to 7 years, for teachers participating in this incentive that achieve certification through an alternative pathway or who have a loan from an institution

other than the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation or program other than the South Carolina Teachers Loan Program.

(2) Development of a forgivable loan program for individuals pursuing graduate coursework in furtherance of a teaching career, including enrollment in graduate-level coursework necessary to seek additional credentialing or certification relevant to the participant's teaching practice, or individuals seeking an alternative pathway to certification as a teacher.

(3) Support for the establishment and maintenance of a teaching mentorship program, including salary supplements for teaching mentors not to exceed \$2,500 per year.

(4) Other technical support and recruiting incentives as developed by CERRA in conjunction with the Department of Education and the Education Oversight Committee consistent with the objectives of this section.

(D) In addition to eligibility and application requirements, CERRA shall develop a process for recovering an amount equal to the incentives given to individual participants who fail to comply with the obligations associated with a relevant incentive in which they participate including, but not limited to, failure to complete a prescribed course of study, failure to obtain a relevant certification or licensure upon completion of a course of study, or failure to provide instructional services in an eligible district for a prescribed period of time.

(E) CERRA shall report by July thirty-first of the current fiscal year to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House on the incentives developed pursuant to item (C) of this proviso and make recommendations for attracting and retaining high quality teachers in rural and underserved districts. The report shall contain at a minimum eligibility requirements and application processes for districts and individuals, descriptions of and proposed budgets for each incentive program and an analysis of the number and demographics of individuals potentially eligible for each.

(F) Funds appropriated or transferred for use in the Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive may be carried forward from prior fiscal years and used for the same purpose.

~~—(G) The Education Oversight Committee is required to complete an evaluation of the impact of the funds and incentives related to the Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive. A completed evaluation is due to the House Ways and Means Committee, the House Education Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the Governor's Office by June 30, 2026.~~

Rationale for request: The EOC will have completed the evaluation of ROI by the end of the fiscal year.

Proviso REVISION Request

1A.6. (SDE-EIA: CHE/Teacher Recruitment) **(A)** Of the funds appropriated in Part IA, Section 1, VIII.F. for the Teacher Recruitment Program, the Commission on Higher Education shall distribute a total of ninety-two percent to the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA-South Carolina) for a state teacher recruitment program, of which at least seventy-eight percent must be used for the Teaching Fellows Program specifically to provide scholarships for future teachers, and of which twenty-two percent must be used for other aspects of the state teacher recruitment program, including the Teacher Cadet Program and \$166,302 which must be used for specific programs to recruit minority teachers: and shall distribute eight percent to South Carolina State University to be used only for the operation of a minority teacher recruitment program and therefore shall not be used for the operation of their established general education programs. Working with districts with an absolute rating of At-Risk or Below Average, CERRA will provide shared initiatives to recruit and retain teachers to schools in these districts. CERRA will report annually by October first to the Education Oversight Committee and the Department of Education on the success of the recruitment and retention efforts in these schools. The Commission on Higher Education shall ensure that all funds are used to promote teacher recruitment on a statewide basis, shall ensure the continued coordination of efforts among the three teacher recruitment projects, shall review the use of funds and shall have prior program and budget approval. The South Carolina State University program, in consultation with the Commission on Higher Education, shall extend beyond the geographic area it currently serves. Annually, the Commission on Higher Education shall evaluate the effectiveness of each of the teacher recruitment projects and shall report its findings and its program and budget recommendations to the House and Senate Education Committees, the State Board of Education, and the Education Oversight Committee by October first annually, in a format agreed upon by the Education Oversight Committee and the Department of Education.

(B) With the funds appropriated CERRA shall also appoint and maintain the South Carolina Teacher Loan Advisory Committee **upon recommendations by the Education Oversight Committee**. The Committee shall be composed of one member representing each of the following: (1) Commission on Higher Education **who shall serve as chair of the Committee**; (2) ~~State Board~~ **Department** of Education; (3) Education Oversight Committee; (4) Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement; (5) South Carolina Student Loan Corporation; (6) South Carolina Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (**SCASFAA**); (7) a local school district human resources officer; (8) a public higher education institution with an approved teacher education program; and (9) a private higher education institution with an approved teacher education program. The members of

the committee representing **SCASFAA, a local school district, and** the public and private higher education institutions ~~shall rotate among those institutions and~~ shall serve a **single** two-year term on the committee. The committee must be staffed by CERRA, and shall meet at least ~~twice~~ **four times** annually. The committee's responsibilities are limited to **its duties for:** (1) establishing, **monitoring, and reporting progress on** goals for the Teacher Loan Program; (2) facilitating communication among the cooperating ~~agencies~~ **entities**; (3) **actively** advocating for program participants; ~~and~~ (4) **using the most recent program evaluation reports as a guide,** recommending policies and procedures necessary to promote, ~~and publicize~~ maintain the program **as well as developing specific recommendations for changes necessary to statute, regulation, and or proviso necessary to modernize and streamline the program, enhance its alignment and parity with other teacher recruitment initiatives, and** (5) **annually by February first and August first, submitting a summary of meetings held during that period and actions taken to conform with each stated duty to the Commission on Higher Education, and to the Education Oversight Committee for inclusion in the annual program evaluation.**

(C) In conformance with the 2025 Teacher Loan Program (TLP) Report Finding and Recommendations, the Student Loan Corporation shall:

(1) Review and revise TLP program applications and submit a plan to the Commission on Higher Education for implementing an online application process;

(2) Add a question on the TLP application which will designate applicant as a Teaching Fellow recipient;

(3) Provide audited financial statements for the TLP, which shall include the Revolving Loan Fund and sources of all charitable dollars to outside entities as well as the funding source that seeded the philanthropic arm of the Student Loan Corporation.

Rationale for request: These revisions are reflective of recommendations adopted by the EOC in June 2025 in the 2025 Teacher Loan Report.

Proviso REVISION Request

1A.72. (SDE-EIA: Teacher Loan Program) Of the available funds in the Teacher Loan Program revolving account administered by the SC Student Loan Corporation, **up to fifty percent of the interest earned, investment earnings, and late fees in the program revolving account,** ~~up to \$5,000,000~~ shall be made available **through a program administered by the Student Loan Corporation** to assist in refinancing student loan debt for all certified teachers employed in the public schools of the State. An additional \$5,000,000 from the revolving loan account will be made available to teachers **in rural school districts** for loan forgiveness patterned after the SC Teacher Loan **Program** ~~in the following school districts based on the number of teacher vacancies and/or the number of teachers of record uncertified in the subject area in which they are teaching: Bamberg, Allendale, Calhoun, Jasper, Lee, and McCormick school districts that show a vacancy rate of ten percent or greater based on the 2024-25 Teacher Supply and Demand Report.~~ **The Department of Education will identify the rural school districts for inclusion in loan forgiveness using data that documents the difficulty of the districts in recruiting and retaining certified teachers.**

The Student Loan Corporation must have both programs operational by the end of the fiscal year.

Rationale for request: These revisions are reflective of the recommendations adopted by the EOC in June 2025 in the 2025 Teacher Loan Report. Additionally, staff recommends that SC Dept. of Education determine the criteria by which teachers in rural school districts will be given priority.