AGENDA

Full Education Oversight Committee Meeting
Monday, February 8, 2021
Blatt Building, Room 110
1:00 P.M.

I. Welcome ....Ellen Weaver

II. Approval of Full Committee Minutes, December 15, 2020 ....Ellen Weaver

III. <u>Subcommittee Reports:</u>
Academic Standards & Assessments and
Public Awareness Joint Meeting...Neil Robinson
Information Item:
    Cyclical Review of SC's Accountability System:
    Accountability Framework Report.....................................C. Matthew Ferguson

    Discussion..Full Committee

Strategic Planning Meeting.. Dr. Bob Couch
Information Item:
    SC Governance Audit ....Bob Couch

    Discussion..Full Committee

IV. <u>Presentations:</u>
Effects of Remote Learning in SC During the COVID-19 Pandemic:
Influence of the Epidemic on Our State's Educators,
Students & Families... Dr. Christine DiStefano
Professor
Educational Psychology & Research, USC

State-Funded Full-Day 4K for FY2019-20 & FY2020-21.............. Dr. Lee D'Andrea

*eLearning Preliminary Report..Lee D'Andrea

V. Adjournment

*This Item will be Handed Out at the Meeting

Members Present (in-person or remote): Ellen Weaver, Chair; Rep. Terry Alexander; April Allen; Rep. Neal Collins; Dr. Bob Couch, Rep. Raye Felder; Barbara Hairfield (remote); Sen. Greg Hembree; Sen. Kevin Johnson; Sidney Locke; Dr. Brian Newsome; Neil Robinson; Jamie Shuster (remote); Patti Tate; and Dr. Scott Turner

EOC Staff Present: Dr. Kevin Andrews; Matthew Ferguson; Dr. Valerie Harrison; Hope Johnson-Jones; Dr. Rainey Knight; and Dana Yow.

Guests Present: Ms. Angel Malone, CTE Director, SCDE; and Ms. Katie Nigles, Director of Governmental Affairs, SCDE (remote)

Ms. Weaver welcomed members and guests to the meeting. She welcomed new EOC members, Sidney Locke and Jamie Shuster, both in attendance at the meeting. Ms. Weaver also thanked Sen. John Matthews for his many years of service to the EOC; Sen. Matthews has retired from the Senate.

The minutes of the October 12, 2020 EOC meeting were approved and seconded. Ms. Weaver asked Mr. Robinson to present the report of the Academic Standards and Assessments/Public Awareness joint meeting, which met on November 16. Mr. Robinson summarized the discussion on each of the items that came before the group as information.

Career Ready Certifications

Ms. Angel H. Malone, Director of Career and Technology Education, South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), provided an update on the recommended Industry Recognized Credentials for the 2020-2021 academic year. She also shared that SCDE is currently moving toward the implementation of a stackable credential system during the 21-22 academic year; work on the stackable system was delayed because of COVID related demands on staff, completion of this work is anticipated by March 2021 with presentation for approval to the EOC in April 2021.

Academic Recovery Camp Data Summary

Dr. Andrews provided an update on student data from Academic Recovery Camps. Dr. Andrews explained: 1) the assessments administered for 2020 Academic Recovery Camps were not state assessments and varied by district; 2) results had to be entered into to the state database by districts; 3) post-test scores were higher for students participating in Academic Recovery Camp but remained below grade level expectation. Since NWEA does not have summer norms, caution should be exercised when making inferences about summer results.

ACT/SAT Performance Summary, 2020 Graduate Cohort

In South Carolina, 66% of seniors indicated aspirations to postsecondary education in 2020, yet the data suggest many are not prepared.

Dr. Kevin Andrews provided general information about SC 2020 Graduate Cohort Advanced Placement (AP) results. In 2020, 49,727 AP exams were taken by 30,443 students. Of the exams taken, 62% scored at 3, 4, or 5 – all passing scores. Most AP test takers (66.5%) in 2020 were White, with Black and Hispanic student participation totaling 20 percent when put together.

Dr. Andrews explained commonalities between the ACT and SAT. Both assessments are self-selected assessments that make predictions about college academic success.

Of those SC students who graduated from high school in 2020, 64% of the graduating class took the SAT. South Carolina public school students' overall mean score was 1019 compared with the national public school mean of 1030.

Of those SC students who graduated from high school in 2020, approximately 76% of the graduating class took the ACT. The average composite score for SC's 2020 Class of public-school students was 18.1 (out of 36 points). SC's performance declined in 2020 and ranks near the bottom among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

There is reason for concern when looking at the racial and ethnic performance of SC's 2020 Graduating Class. Only 5% of Black/African American students met College Readiness Benchmarks in Math; only 2% of Black/African American students met College Readiness Benchmarks in all four content areas on the ACT: English, Math Reading, Science.

It was stated that this is not simply a high school problem, but a system wide issue. College preparedness begins in elementary school and continues in high school.

<u>Cyclical Review of SC College and Career Ready Standards English Language Arts Standards (ELA)</u>

Dr. Knight presented the Cyclical Review of SC College and Career Ready Standards English Language Arts Standards (ELA) for approval. Per EOC statutory responsibility, the review is conducted at least every seven years. The last English language arts cyclical review was completed in 2014. Mr. Robinson recognized Dr. Knight to discuss on overview of the standard review.

Dr. Knight provided an overview of the recommendations from both the national and state review panels. Citing a need to align with other recommendations being forwarded to the SCDE, Ms. Weaver made a motion amending recommendation #7 in the report with the following language: "Ensure the standards and support documents reflect and provide multiple resources from varied perspectives as well as instructional strategies to address the learning needs of diverse students." The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. Mr. Robinson then called for a vote on the amended report.

Dr. Turner asked a question about recommendation two which deals with reducing the number of standards; he wanted to know what led to that decision. Dr. Knight discussed the redundancy of the current standards and the rationale for the recommendation, citing that the text of the standards and indicators within "Reading for Informational Text" and "Reading for Literary Text" are almost identical. Dr. Turner asked if we know about the discussion regarding pacing and being able to cover all the standards. This was one way to allow teachers to have flexibility and reduce the number of standards.

Dr. Tuner asked if all standards are created equally? Dr. Knight stated her opinion was no. Dr. Turner followed up, asking how would a teacher know that? Dr. Knight stated that the SCDE is working to publish power standards. She has had discussions with the SCDE, and they are calling them priority standards; they will give teachers direction and guidance.

Ms. Barton stated that we (within the Governor's Office) have heard from lots of teachers who have looked at the reading scores. Teachers said they never understood the rigor of the standards because there are no examples of texts. She said we must do something to help the teachers in that regard.

Ms. Barton also asked about the timeline on the math standards. Dr. Knight said that math is up next, so she expects that to come before the EOC next spring. Dr. Knight stressed that the standards are for teachers so they will understand the rigor of what is expected of students.

Ms. Hairfield made a comment about college readiness, stating it is evident that we are not reaching large portions of SC's population. She believes we must better understand the diversity of our students. That needs to be addressed in the standards and support documents.

Rep. Alexander stated that we need to look at the diversity of instruction in terms of developing the content. He suggested that perhaps the developers of the content are not as diverse and inclusive as it could be.

Dr. Knight reminded members they will see the standards again to approve. The Cyclical Review of SC College and Career Ready Standards English Language Arts Standards (ELA) were approved unanimously.

EIA Report

Dr. Couch then called upon Dr. Knight to summarize the EIA recommendations for FY2021-22. She stressed that the funding of charter schools needs to be looked at quite urgently.

Rep. Alexander asked if charter school recommendations require action by the Gen. Assembly to go into effect. Dr. Knight said the recommendations were required to be acted on by the legislature. He supports charters but doesn't agree with taking money or resources away from other schools.

Following a question by Dr. Turner, Dr. Knight reminded the EOC that the recommendations, once approved, will be forwarded to the General Assembly for consideration.

Sen. Hembree asked for clarification on charter school funding and what happens with the local money. We have two funding sources now. If you have a district charter, the local per pupil share goes to the charter school. If you have a charter through a public charter district, the local per pupil share stays with the local district while EIA funding is used in lieu of the local per pupil share. The current system incentivizes districts to offload the charter schools to the state.

Sen. Johnson said he would agree with a windfall when we fully fund education.

Dr. Turner asked about how to keep charters financially and academically accountable? Dr. Newsome clarified that information about authorizer shopping is not accurate; schools were leaving districts because of lack of leadership

Rep. Alexander stated that he and Rep. Felder are working on recommendations on charter schools.

Rep. Felder stated that one of the issues with holding charters accountable is inconsistency with the report card. Since we haven't had three years with consistent report cards and now, we have missed a year of testing and have no ratings, it is difficult to hold charter schools accountable because the law requires three years of data. Taking the money with the child is truly not that simple. Property values are in line with location.

Ms. Weaver reminded members that charters don't receive brick and mortar and transportation monies.

Ms. Barton stated that the discussion has been sparked. The charter school enrollment is up 30 percent, but we don't have state monies right now to handle the growth. The dilemma is how do you fund charters right now? We must figure this all out.

Dr. Newsome stated we need to talk about accountability for all kids. We can't forget about accountability in this process. Charters are not being funded correctly and we must figure out how to fix it.

Rep. Alexander stated we have to figure out how to fund the whole education system. All of education, not just charters. We need to look at it holistically – not just the charter piece.

Sen. Hembree wants a follow up on the success of the National Clearinghouse in other states. Dr. Turner said that it was really initiated by the Spartanburg Academic Movement. It gives information as children go through the higher education system. It is a truer picture of student readiness than what we get currently. The National Clearinghouse would allow us to get state, district, and school level data on college readiness. According to Ms. Barton, SC is one of the few states that does not access National Clearinghouse data.

Dr. Turner said he has comments on the teacher pay band recommendation. He doesn't feel comfortable with it with what educators are facing right now. How are we recruiting teachers to rural areas of this state – we need to look at this? He can't imagine how districts with no tax base are recruiting. We must step up and supplement the salary schedule to the rural districts.

Mr. Ferguson provided a list of proviso amendments that staff proposes sending to the Gen. Assembly. The list was approved as presented.

Rep. Alexander stated he wants to know about carry forward funds to charter schools.

Ms. Hairfield stated she likes the focus areas of the EIA recommendations. Teachers are in a different environment. Retention is becoming a very large problem in all the districts. Teachers don't feel like they can teach in dual modalities. She suggested adding questions to the working conditions survey that deal with the new environment of teaching due to COVID.

Ms. Weaver stated that she feels strongly about recommendation #9, dealing with academic recovery camps. Ms. Hairfield said it would be nice to see recovery camps for teachers too.

Rep. Alexander asked about the Academic Recovery Camp money. Ms. Nilges stated that the SCDE was only allowed to reimburse those districts who were face-to-face over the summer. The SCDE reallocated funding to go directly to districts to continue one-on-one instruction.

Coming as a subcommittee report, the EOC unanimously approved the EIA budget recommendations.

Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Mr. Robinson brought forward the nominations of Chair and Vice-Chair from the Selection Committee. Ms. Weaver is brought forward to serve a second term as Chair. Ms. Hairfield will serve as Vice-Chair. Mr. Robinson stated that Ms. Weaver has exceeded all expectations he had as Chair. The recommendations of the Selection Committee were unanimously approved.

Career Ready Industry Credentials

Ms. Malone presented the career ready industry credentials and certifications for 2020 to the EOC. The stackable credentials will be ready for review in April 2021.

Ms. Barton stated she had spent a lot of time looking through these. She said there should be a way to compare these credentials to the workforce needs.

Mr. Robinson stated that there is a subcommittee looking at the issues Ms. Barton referenced. Artificial intelligence and cybersecurity are sectors that need to be represented in career centers and comprehensive high schools.

A motion was made to accept the credentials list. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Accountability Cyclical Review Update

Ms. Yow provided the committee with an update on the Cyclical Review of the Accountability System. The final framework is close to being finalized and will be forwarded to members of the committee when completed.

The committee approved the following motion: The EOC staff proposes that that the final framework be sent to all members of the EOC and State Board of Education upon receipt. A Working Group, composed of EOC and State Board of Education members, will provide details and timelines before sending on to the SC General Assembly.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

CYCLICAL REVIEW OF SOUTH CAROLINA'S ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Accountability Framework Report

DECEMBER 2020

Center for Assessment

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ed.sc.gov

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[Section 59-18-910](#) of the South Carolina Code of Law calls for the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), working with the South Carolina State Board of Education (SBE), and a broad-based group of stakeholders, to conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system. One of the key charges for the cyclical review is to consider how the state's accountability system reflects evidence that students have developed the skills and characteristics outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.*

Pursuant to this legislative mandate, the EOC and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) convened the South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC), comprised of members who represented the interests and priorities of various educational stakeholders in South Carolina. The EOC and SCDE contracted with the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (the Center) to facilitate the cyclical review process.

The AAC met a total of seven times from February to December 2020. The primary focus of the AAC's work was to identify educational policy priorities, discuss system design and implementation considerations and constraints, review key elements of the current accountability system, and, if deemed necessary, recommend changes to the accountability system. During the review process, the AAC was encouraged to offer innovative ideas for improving the existing accountability system and not be constrained by prior practices. However, the committee also attended to critical technical and operational considerations to ensure that the accountability system is coherent, defensible, useful, feasible, and compliant with state and federal requirements. What follows is a summary of the AAC's key findings and recommendations.

GOALS AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The design of any accountability system should be guided by explicit goals and intended outcomes. The goals articulate at a high level what the system is intended to accomplish. The AAC devoted a significant amount of time to discuss and refine the goals of the South Carolina accountability system. The following statement represents the committee's consensus with respect to the system's goals.

The South Carolina accountability system should both reflect and incent:

> ✓ **Attainment of knowledge, skills, and characteristics that support the components of the** *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate,*

> ✓ **Elimination of access and equity gaps across the state with respect to both academic performance and the broader set of trans-academic skills, and**

> ✓ **Improvement of student learning via dissemination of clear, actionable information to help districts, schools, and families evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their programs.**

Design principles are another set of important guiding decisions to inform the development of the accountability system. If the goals represent the intended destination on a roadmap (i.e., where we would like to go), the design principles serve to establish the nature and manner of the route (i.e., how we get there). Accountability design, however, is always a case of optimization under constraints that requires tradeoffs between several competing priorities. The AAC considered several competing priorities

in accountability design. While there was not consensus, a majority of committee members agreed that the following design principles should be prioritized in the South Carolina accountability system:

1. Most committee members indicated that **changing the model to reflect needed improvements** was a higher priority than minimizing changes to the existing model in order to measure year-to-year change.

2. More committee members agreed that the system's ability **to produce meaningful comparisons within the same year** is more important than allowing flexibility in how schools earn points.

3. More committee members felt that a **simple and streamlined model** is preferred over a more comprehensive model.

4. Committee members felt strongly that South Carolina should have **one accountability system that meets all federal and state requirements** instead of multiple systems to pursue state-specific priorities outside of the constraints of the federal system. Most committee members also agreed that a hybrid system, in which some but not all elements in the system satisfy federal requirements, is also a promising approach. Such a system requires some decision-making about how tightly to couple state and federal requirements.

5. The committee members also strongly preferred that the state **take time to study some components more fully** before determining if/how they should be included in the accountability system over moving quickly to implement any system change recommendations.

6. More committee members felt that the state should **privilege accountability metrics that can be reported quickly** over a broader range of elements that may be more informative.

7. The committee preferred to **collect new types of data, such as performance on trans-academic skills or post-secondary performance,** that can more fully realize the design priorities even if doing so is more time consuming, expensive, and burdensome, especially in the initial years.

The AAC was instructed to ground its subsequent discussions about and recommendations for the South Carolina accountability system components on these agreed-upon goals and design principles.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The AAC's recommendations are organized into three categories:

1. Revising the ESSA School Accountability System
2. Enhancing Data Collection and/or Reporting
3. Engaging in Further Research and Development

The first category represents changes to the indicators or design decisions that inform ratings or classifications of schools in the state and federal accountability systems. The second category reflects suggestions for additional information the state should collect and publicly report to help a wide range

of stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, community leaders, educators, and parents) better understand and support school success. The third category represents ideas that the committee feels are promising but will benefit from additional research to determine if or how they might be suitable for implementation. The tables below summarized the committee's recommendation in each of the categories.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR *REVISING THE ESSA SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM*

Develop and report new information related to achievement gaps in academic performance that:
  • Includes all student groups,
  • Is tied to a fixed and meaningful criterion, and
  • Measures progress toward elimination of gaps.
Achievement gap measures should be prominently and clearly reported in a manner that is easily accessed and understood by stakeholders. Schools with achievement gaps that are large and persistent should NOT attain favorable ratings.

Evaluate the current school performance ratings to ensure they reflect clear, appropriate, and consistent criteria. This includes the following:
  • Study the range of 'school profiles' for each rating level to certify these patterns are appropriate and consistent with the state's educational goals, especially related to equity,
  • Revise performance expectations as necessary, and
  • Clearly communicate the meaning of each rating in terms of the expected performance.

Consider the following changes to the graduation rate and college and career readiness (CCR) indicators:
  • Evaluate and potentially adjust the weights of graduation rate and the CCR indicators, and
  • Include extended (5-year) graduation rate, but with the following parameters:
    - Extended graduation rate should have less influence than the traditional 4-year rate to maintain on-time graduation as the primary goal, and
    - Extended graduation rate alone should not decrease accountability scores.

Career-ready credit should be awarded to qualifying students who earn the South Carolina High School Credential. The state should engage in ongoing evaluation and monitoring to ensure that students are not inappropriately routed to this option.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR *ENHANCING DATA COLLECTION AND/OR REPORTING*

The state should conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all career readiness measures to ensure patterns of participation and performance demonstrate that students are well-prepared for post-secondary career success. Evaluation results should be publicly and prominently reported.

The committee supports research, development, and implementation of a reporting initiative to better communicate *Conditions for Success* for South Carolina's districts and schools. This component should include factors such as:

• Educator quality, training, and competencies, including cultural competencies,

• Diversity of educator and leader workforce,

• Rates of disciplinary actions, such as suspension and expulsion, including for early learners,

• Access to resources within the community (e.g., mentoring programs, parent engagement, corporate partnerships), and

• Data to inform readiness and capacity for remote learning such as infrastructure (e.g., device availability, connectivity) and training.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR *ENGAGING IN FURTHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT*

Research alternatives for developing academic and trans-academic measures for students in kindergarten to grade 2.

Consider developing state guidance and standards for performance demonstration (e.g., capstone projects, service initiatives, research studies) for South Carolina high school students.

Evaluate alternatives for through-course assessment.

Assess whether the criteria for student progress, for both the academic content areas and English language proficiency, are appropriate.

Social sciences, especially citizenship, is not adequately addressed. Consider additional measures, perhaps for each grade.

The full report to follow includes a comprehensive description of the cyclical review process for the South Carolina accountability system, including committee membership, topics discussed at each AAC meeting, research considered by the committee, and rationale for the committee's recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

South Carolina legislation calls for the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), working with the South Carolina State Board of Education (SBE), and a broad-based group of stakeholders, to conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system. Specifically, Section 59-18-910 of the South Carolina Code of Law states:

> Beginning in 2020, the Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education and a broad based group of stakeholders, selected by the Education Oversight Committee, shall conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system at least every five years and shall provide the General Assembly with a report on the findings and recommended actions to improve the accountability system and to accelerate improvements in student and school performance. The stakeholders must include the State Superintendent of Education and the Governor, or the Governor's designee. The other stakeholders include, but are not limited to, parents, business and industry persons, community leaders, and educators. The cyclical review must include recommendations of a process for determining if students are graduating with the world class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate to be successful in postsecondary education and in careers. The accountability system needs to reflect evidence that students have developed these skills and characteristics.

One of the key charges for the cyclical review is to consider how the state's accountability system reflects evidence that students have developed the skills and characteristics outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.* Figure 1 below is a visual summary of the knowledge, skills, and characteristics in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.*

Pursuant to this legislative mandate, the EOC and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) contracted with the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (the Center) in January 2020 to support the cyclical review process. This report is a summary of the process. It includes a description of the Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC), the goals and design priorities agreed upon by the AAC, the AAC's suggestions for components of the accountability system, and recommendations by the AAC. As required by the legislation, the intended audience of this report is the South Carolina General Assembly.

PROFILE OF THE
South Carolina Graduate

WORLD-CLASS KNOWLEDGE

Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness

Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

WORLD-CLASS SKILLS

Creativity and innovation
Critical thinking and problem solving
Collaboration and teamwork
Communication, information, media and technology
Knowing how to learn

LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

Integrity • Self-direction • Global perspective • Perseverance • Work ethic • Interpersonal skills

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Adopted by: SC State Board of Education, SC Department of Education, SC Education Oversight Committee, SC Arts Alliance, SC Arts in Basic Curriculum Steering Committee, SCASCD, SC Chamber of Commerce, SC Council on Competitiveness, SC School Boards Association, TransformSC Schools and Districts.
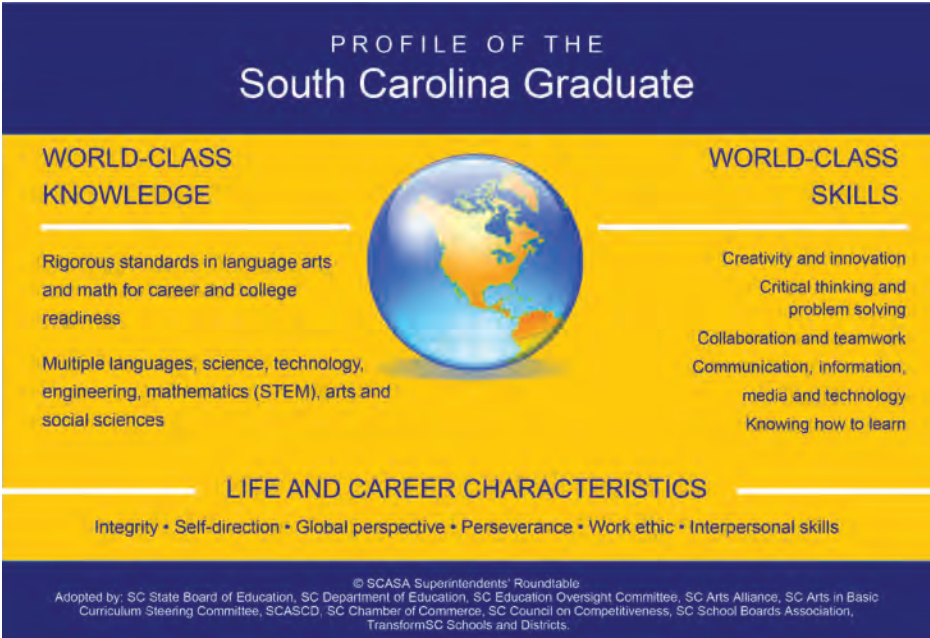
Figure 1: Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

SOUTH CAROLINA ACCOUNTABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This section describes how the South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC) was constituted and chronicles the process that the committee went through to evaluate the current accountability system and make its recommendations.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The EOC and the SCDE worked with the Center to assemble the AAC. According to the membership requirements specified in Section 59-18-910, the committee should include members that represent the interests and priorities of various educational stakeholders in South Carolina. Based on its experience working with similar committees in other states, the Center suggested a committee size of about 10-15 members from state leadership, schools, districts, advocacy groups, and the broader community. Table 1 shows the committee that the SCDE and the EOC put together based on these criteria. The Appendix shows the attendance of the committee members at the meetings and webinars throughout 2020.

Table 1: 2020 South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee Membership

COMMITTEE MEMBER	GROUP REPRESENTATION
Molly Spearman	State Superintendent
Melanie Barton	Governor or designee
Cynthia Downs	State Board of Education
Brian Newsome	EOC, principal, parent
Jessica Jackson	Business representative (Boeing)
James Burton	Business representative (Continental Tires)
Jo Anne Anderson	Community member
J.T. McLawhorn	Community member
Chandra Jefferson	Educator: classroom teacher
Neil Vincent	Educator: district superintendent
Sandy Brossard	Educator: district instructional leader
Takesha Pollock	Parent
Ian Feigel	Parent
Wanda Hassler	Local school board member (Darlington County)
Hope Rivers	Higher education representative
Georgia Mjartan	Early childhood education representative

ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

The AAC's purpose was to work with the EOC and the SCDE to help state leaders make good decisions about the design and implementation of school accountability. With that purpose in mind, the primary focus of the AAC was to identify educational policy priorities, discuss system design and implementation considerations and constraints, review key elements of the current accountability system, and, if deemed necessary, recommend changes to the accountability system. During the review process, the AAC was encouraged to offer innovative ideas for improving the existing accountability system and not be constrained by prior practices. However, the committee also attended to critical technical and operational considerations to ensure that the framework is coherent, defensible, useful, feasible, and compliant with state and federal requirements.

The original plan shared with the AAC included five meetings during 2020 with three all-day in-person meetings and two virtual webinars. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, in-person gatherings were not ideal for most of 2020. Consequently, the all-day in-person meetings were re-purposed as shorter virtual webinars with more focused discussion topics. Table 2 summarizes the dates and topics addressed at each AAC meeting.

Table 2: Summary of 2020 AAC Meetings

MEETING	DATE	TOPICS ADDRESSED
AAC Meeting #1 (in-person)	Feb 24, 2020	• Overview of current accountability system and design principles, • Initial discussion of goals and priorities of the system, • Evaluation of what components of the system are working well and what components are not working as intended.
AAC Meeting #2 (virtual)	May 5, 2020	• Articulation of goals of the accountability system, • Mapping of elements of the *Profile of a South Carolina Graduate* to components of the current system, • Discussion of options for the school quality or student success (SQSS) indicator.
AAC Meeting #3 (hybrid)	July 28, 2020	• Articulation of design principles and priorities for the accountability system, • Examination of system components and determination of which components should be preserved and which should be changed, • Discussion of analysis and/or research to inform recommendations.
AAC Meeting #4 (virtual)	Oct 27, 2020	• Review of *The Future of SC's Accountability System* stakeholder survey results, • Review of initial set of committee recommendations based on discussions at previous meetings, • Focused discussion on the committee's recommendations for eliminating achievement gap.

MEETING	DATE	TOPICS ADDRESSED
AAC Meeting #5 (virtual)	Nov 9, 2020	• Affirmation of committee's recommendations on eliminating achievement gaps and evaluating performance expectations, • Focused discussion on the committee's recommendations for extended graduation rate and career readiness criteria, • Initial brainstorming of ideas for "conditions for success" measures.
AAC Meeting #6 (virtual)	Dec 10, 2020	• Committee feedback on partial draft of the South Carolina *Accountability Framework Report* (i.e., this document), • Affirmation of committee's recommendations on extended graduation rate and high school credential, • Focused discussion on career readiness criteria, particularly with respect to military readiness, • Focused discussion on recommendation for "conditions for success" measures, • Brainstorm of ideas to frame recommendation for engagement, • Review of the committee's recommendations for research and development.
AAC Meeting #7 (virtual)	Dec 16, 2020	• Committee feedback on complete draft of the South Carolina *Accountability Framework Report* (i.e., this document), • Resolution of gaps and/or points of disagreement, • Affirmation of the committee's findings and recommendations.

GOALS AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Goals

The design of any accountability system should be guided by explicit goals and intended outcomes. The goals articulate at a high level what the system is intended to accomplish. Clear goal statements serve to direct and help prioritize design decisions about the system. The AAC devoted a significant amount of time during its first and second meetings to discuss and refine the goals of the South Carolina accountability system. The following statement represents the committee's consensus with respect to the system's goals.

The South Carolina accountability system should both reflect and incent:

> • **Attainment of knowledge, skills, and characteristics that support the components of the** *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*,
> South Carolina's vision for its education system is encapsulated in the *Profile of the South*

Carolina Graduate (the Profile). The Profile serves as the guiding framework that motivated and informed the committee's discussion. The committee emphasized the importance of ensuring the state accountability system is tied to college and career readiness as expressed in the Profile. The committee also recognized that the current system may not be sufficiently broad to capture all Profile components, especially measures of world-class skills and life and career characteristics and the various pathways to success.

- **Elimination of access and equity gaps across the state with respect to both academic performance and the broader set of trans-academic skills, and**
The committee's concerns and commitment to promoting equity with the accountability system cannot be overstated. This was brought into greater focus by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was ongoing during the cyclical review process. Several committee members expressed concerns about how the COVID-19 school disruptions would highlight and likely further exacerbate the digital divide and achievement gaps. The need for the accountability system to identify and signal gaps in access and equity in the state for various student groups is more critical and prevalent than ever.

- **Improvement of student learning via dissemination of clear, actionable information to help districts, schools, and families evaluate and improve the effectiveness of their programs.**
The committee acknowledged that outcomes from the accountability system are only helpful if they are clearly understood, accurately interpreted, and appropriately acted on by the educational stakeholders that the system is intended to serve. The committee also recognized accountability reporting and supports as a key area for improvement with the current system. The committee discussed strategies such as enhancing the scope, clarity, and utility of information provided to stakeholders, exploring reports for indicators that provide more 'along-the-way' information about risk factors earlier, and considering how the state can facilitate the sharing of promising practices for school improvement.

When asked about key words that committee members felt should be associated with the goals of the South Carolina accountability system, the most prominent ones were equitable, attainable, and actionable (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Key words that the AAC associated with the accountability system

Design Principles

Design principles are another set of important guiding decisions to inform the development of the accountability system. If the goals represent the intended destination on a roadmap (i.e., where we would like to go), the design principles serve to establish the nature and manner of the route (i.e., how we get there). Design principles can also serve as a basis for evaluating whether the system is working as intended. Accountability design, however, is always a case of optimization under constraints that requires tradeoffs between several competing priorities. During its third meeting, the AAC considered seven pairs of competing priorities in accountability design. The competing priorities were:

1. Change vs. Comparing Over Time

2. Flexibility vs. Within Year Comparison

3. Simplicity vs. Comprehensiveness

4. Single System vs. Multiple Systems (vs. Hybrid System)

5. Implementation – Right vs. Right Now

6. Reporting – Efficiency vs. Efficacy

7. New Information vs. Minimizing Burden

A short document explaining the tradeoffs associated with each pair of competing priorities was shared with committee members as part of the advanced reading materials. Committee members were polled about their preference for each tradeoff and were invited to share their perspectives. While there was not consensus, more committee members agreed that the following design principles should be prioritized in the South Carolina accountability system:

1. Most committee members indicated that **changing the model to reflect needed improvements** was a higher priority than minimizing changes to the existing model in order to measure year-to-year change.

2. More committee members agreed that the system's ability **to produce meaningful comparisons within the same year** is more important than allowing flexibility in how schools earn points.

3. More committee members felt that a **simple and streamlined model** is preferred over a more comprehensive model.

4. Committee members felt strongly that South Carolina should have **one accountability system that meets all federal and state requirements** instead of multiple systems to pursue state-specific priorities outside of the constraints of the federal system. Most committee members also agreed that a hybrid system, in which some but not all elements in the system satisfy federal requirements, is also a promising approach. Such a system requires some decision-making about how tightly to couple state and federal requirements.

5. The committee members also strongly preferred that the state **take time to study some components more fully** before determining if/how they should be included in the accountability system over moving quickly to implement any system change recommendations.

6. More committee members felt that the state should **privilege accountability metrics that can be reported quickly** over a broader range of elements that may be more informative.

7. The committee preferred to **collect new types of data, such as performance on trans-academic skills or post-secondary performance,** that can more fully realize the design priorities even if doing so is more time consuming, expensive, and burdensome, especially in the initial years.

The AAC was instructed to ground its subsequent discussions about and recommendations for the South Carolina accountability system components on the goals and design principles summarized in this section.

SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Once the goals and design principles for South Carolina accountability system were established, the AAC took a closer look at the components of the system. The current system, as described in detail in South Carolina's approved plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), includes the following accountability indicators and associated point allocation in the overall school rating.

Elementary and Middle School

- Academic Achievement = 35 points with ELP; 40 points without ELP

- Student Progress = 35 points with ELP; 40 points without ELP

- Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) = 10 points, if English learner n-size ≥ 20

- School Quality or Student Success (SQSS)
    - Preparing for Success (Science) = 10 points
    - Positive and Effective Learning Environment = 10 points

High School

- Academic Achievement = 25 points with ELP; 30 points without ELP

- Graduation Rate = 25 points with ELP; 30 points without ELP

- Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency (ELP) = 10 points, if English learner n-size ≥ 20

- School Quality or Student Success (SQSS)
    - Preparing for Success (Biology and U.S. History) = 10 points
    - College and Career Readiness = 25 points
    - Positive and Effective Learning Environment = 5 points

Each school receives an overall score out of 100 possible points and is assigned one of five ratings: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, or Unsatisfactory. The school is also assigned separate ratings, based on the same five performance categories, for each indicator. The school's performance is reported for all students and for each subgroup with enough students (i.e., n-size ≥ 20).

RELATIONSHIP TO *PROFILE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GRADUATE*

One of the key charges for the committee is to examine the extent to which the state's accountability system reflects the skills and characteristics outlined in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* (or the Profile). To support this review, the Center facilitators generated crosswalks between the elements of the Profile and current accountability system components. Tables 3 and 4 show the crosswalks organized by the key areas of the Profile: World Class Knowledge, World Class Skills, and Life and Career Characteristics.

Table 3: Profile-Accountability System Crosswalk: World Class Knowledge

PROFILE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GRADUATE	SOUTH CAROLINA ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM
Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences	Academic Achievement Indicator: • Grades 3-8: Results on SC Ready in 3-8 ELA and Mathematics • High School: End-of-course assessments in Algebra I and English I/II
	Student Progress Indicator (for Grades 3-8): • Value-added growth measuring gains of students in ELA and Mathematics
	Preparing for Success Indicator: • Grades 3-8: SC Ready assessment in science grades 4 and 6 • High School: End-of-course assessments in Biology and U.S. History

Table 4: Profile-Accountability System Crosswalk: World Class Skills, Life and Career Characteristics

PROFILE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GRADUATE	SOUTH CAROLINA ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM
World Class Skills • Creativity and Innovation • Critical Thinking and Problem Solving • Collaboration and Teamwork • Communication, information, media and technology, knowing how to learn	Indirectly addressed via: Student Engagement (All Schools) Graduation Rate (High Schools) College Ready (High Schools) • Qualifying performance on ACT, SAT, AP, IB or dual enrollment
Life and Career Characteristics • Integrity • Self-Direction • Global Perspective • Perseverance • Work Ethic • Interpersonal Skills	Career Ready (HS): • Career and Technical Education (CTE) completer with earned credential, qualifying score on career readiness assessment or Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), complete work-based learning program

The Center also identified components of the current accountability system that are reported, but not factored into a school's annual rating, that can inform the skills and characteristics in the Profile. These components include:

- Percentage of students passing the Civics test,

- Participation and passage rates for advanced courses,

- College applications, college enrollment, and FAFSA completions,

- LIFE and Palmetto Fellow Scholarship information,

- Average ACT and SAT scores,

- Dual enrollment/credit success rate and,

- CTE enrollment and work-based learning.

Finally, the Center conducted a scan of college and career readiness (CCR) measures and SQSS indicators in other states and summarized its findings with the committee. The key findings included:

- Most states have expanded the range of CCR indicators to include advanced coursework and select career ready credentials.

- Few states have explored SQSS options other than 1) additional academic indicators and 2) attendance or absenteeism.

    - Infrequently, we find examples of surveys and participation in enrichment activities or courses.

    - We find no states that have incorporated formal, direct measures of trans-academic skills. Some indirect measures may be found in indicators such as service or co/extra-curricular activities.

- ***Compared to other states, South Carolina's system stands among the more broad and innovative state accountability models.***

REVIEW OF ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM COMPONENTS

The AAC reviewed and provided recommendations on the system components during its third meeting. For discussion purposes, the accountability system components were grouped into three main categories: academic indicators, readiness measures, and trans-academic measures. For each category of system components, the committee members noted recommendations for additions or changes to the current approach. They also identified priorities for additional research. Their feedback was used to craft the recommendations presented in the next section.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The section summarizes the key recommendations by the AAC. These recommendations represent the priorities expressed by committee members during the first three meetings, then expounded on and confirmed by the committee in the remaining webinars. The recommendations are organized into three categories:

1. Revising the ESSA School Accountability System

2. Enhancing Data Collection and/or Reporting

3. Engaging in Further Research and Development

The first category represents changes to the indicators or design decisions that inform ratings or classifications of schools in the state and federal accountability systems. The second category reflects suggestions for additional information the state should collect and publicly report to help a wide range of stakeholders (e.g., policymakers, community leaders, educators, and parents) better understand and support school success. The third category represents ideas that the committee feels are promising but will benefit from additional research to determine if or how they might be suitable for implementation.

REVISING THE ESSA SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Recommendation #1
Develop and report new information related to achievement gaps in academic performance that:

• Includes all student groups,

• Is tied to a fixed and meaningful criterion, and

• Measures progress toward elimination of gaps.

Achievement gap measures should influence school ratings in addition to being prominently and clearly reported in a manner that is easily accessed and understood by stakeholders. Schools with achievement gaps that are large and persistent should NOT attain favorable ratings.

Rationale
The AAC identified "elimination of access and equity gaps" as a central goal for the school accountability system. While the current system includes indicators that address this goal, such as student progress for the lowest 20% at each school, the current approach may not be sufficiently transparent and influential.

Recommendation #2
Evaluate the current school performance ratings to ensure they reflect clear, appropriate, and consistent criteria. This includes the following:

• Study the range of 'school profiles' for each rating level to certify these patterns are appropriate and consistent with the state's educational goals, especially related to equity,

• Revise performance expectations as necessary, and

• Clearly communicate the meaning of each rating in terms of the expected performance

Rationale

School ratings are important signals to stakeholders about performance that is valued and the outcomes we want South Carolina students to attain. The meaning and interpretation of each rating should reflect these values in a manner that is clear, consistent, and supported by evidence.

Recommendation #3

Consider the following changes to the graduation rate and college and career readiness (CCR) indicators:

• Evaluate and potentially adjust the weights of graduation rate and the CCR indicators, and

• Include extended (5-year) graduation rate, but with the following parameters:
   - Extended graduation rate should have less influence than the traditional 4-year rate to maintain on-time graduation as the primary goal, and
   - Extended graduation rate alone should not decrease accountability scores.

Rationale

High school graduation and readiness for college and career is a central goal and should be heavily incentivized in the state's school accountability model. Including extended graduation rate will further support the equity and college-career readiness priorities articulated by the AAC. That is, it sends the message that different educational pathways are allowable for different students, such as students with disabilities and English learners, who often need more than four years to graduate from high school due to their specific needs or circumstances.

Recommendation #4

Career-ready credit should be awarded to qualifying students who earn the South Carolina High School Credential. The state should engage in ongoing evaluation and monitoring to ensure that students are not inappropriately routed to this option.

Rationale

The accountability system should honor the accomplishments of students with disabilities who have met the state's standards for demonstrating employability skills and career readiness.

ENHANCING DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

Recommendation #5

The state should conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all career readiness measures to ensure patterns of participation and performance demonstrate that students are well-prepared for post-secondary career success. Evaluation results should be publicly and prominently reported.

Rationale

The committee discussed at length the career readiness criterion related to military readiness currently operationalized as earning a qualifying score on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Some members of the committee expressed concern that the ASVAB qualification criterion may not reflect the appropriate level of rigor. In particular, "are students using ASVAB as a means to

circumvent other career criteria?" Another critique was that the ASVAB was not a suitable measure for the accountability system, as this assessment addresses factors outside of a school's influence. To be clear, all members of the committee expressed a desire to honor military service. The committee's interest was in ensuring the criteria were appropriate and not working against other system goals.

To better understand this issue, the SCDE provided data analyses revealing that fewer than 2% of students demonstrate career readiness based on ASVAB alone (1.2% of the full cohort; 1.65% of career-ready students). Moreover, there were no districts with unusually high rates of identification based on ASVAB alone. These analyses represent the types of monitoring and evaluation that should be regularly conducted and reported.

The committee also discussed whether it would be prudent to combine ASVAB performance with another criterion, such as completing a military course pathway. Ultimately this idea was not endorsed for a number of reasons, not least was the unequal access to the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) courses. While the committee decided to refrain from making a recommendation related to military readiness, this was not a unanimous decision. A minority of committee members expressed a preference for adjusting or removing the ASVAB criteria.

Although the committee did not discuss any of the other career readiness measures, the insights gained via the inquiry into military readiness shaped this recommendation. Specifically, the accountability model will be strengthened by ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and public reporting of all career readiness measures.

Recommendation #6

The committee supports research, development, and implementation of a reporting initiative to better communicate *Conditions for Success* for South Carolina's districts and schools. This component should include factors such as:

- Educator quality, training, and competencies, including cultural competencies,
- Diversity of educator and leader workforce,
- Rates of disciplinary actions, such as suspension and expulsion, including for early learners,
- Access to resources within the community (e.g., mentoring programs, parent engagement, corporate partnerships), and
- Data to inform readiness and capacity for remote learning such as infrastructure (e.g., device availability, connectivity) and training.

The *Conditions for Success* indicator should be reported in a clear and accessible manner and include, whenever feasible, breakdowns for districts, schools, and student groups. Draft report templates or mock-ups should be vetted with stakeholders to help ensure information is clear and complete.

The *Conditions for Success* indicator will likely include both standardized metrics and information to be customized for districts and schools to reflect the unique communities and initiatives across South Carolina schools. Because the committee was clear that this component should not be used to rate schools or support causal inferences, this recommendation does not work against the design goal of providing standardized comparable data used to inform school ratings.

Rationale

The AAC identified "elimination of access and equity gaps" as a central goal for the school accountability system. Understanding and addressing conditions for success is vital to achieving this goal. Data from this indicator will also help support the AAC's goal to produce clear, actionable information to support schools.

ENGAGING IN FURTHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Finally, the committee developed a number of recommendations for further research and development. These recommendations, presented in Table 5, reflect priorities of the committee and potentially promising new directions. However, the ideas will benefit from additional examination to more fully explore the range of alternatives and the potential benefits or unintended consequences.

Table 5: Recommendations for Ongoing Research and Development

RECOMMENDATION	RATIONALE
Research alternatives for developing academic and trans-academic measures for students in K-2.	There is currently an 'information gap' prior to grade three. Additional information will help educators better understand and support student success for early learners.
Consider developing state guidance and standards for performance demonstrations (e.g., capstone projects, service initiatives, research studies) for South Carolina high school students.	Many of the world class skills and life and career characteristics prominent in the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate* are not adequately cultivated and measured. A performance demonstration could help students demonstrate a range of these critical trans-academic skills in an area of interest to the student associated with his or her post-secondary goals.
Evaluate alternatives for through-course assessment.	End-of-year summative assessments do not provide sufficient or timely information to inform instruction. Providing measures 'along-the-way' may help educators better address student needs throughout the year and could potentially leveraged to inform summative classifications.
Assess whether the criteria for student progress, for both the academic content areas and English language proficiency, are appropriate.	While the AAC did not offer recommendations for changes to the progress indicators, they raised questions about whether the criterion for rewarding progress is appropriate. The criterion should be achievable and fair for all students regardless of 'starting position' and should be sufficiently rigorous such that students receiving favorable scores are on-track to proficiency in a reasonable amount of time.
Social sciences, especially citizenship, is not adequately addressed. Consider additional measures, perhaps for each grade.	The development and practice of the knowledge and skills necessary to be an engaged citizen in the 21st century has never been more important. More emphasis should be placed on cultivating and measuring these skills in South Carolina schools.

CONCLUSION

The Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC) conducted a comprehensive review of the South Carolina accountability system in a series of meetings from February to December 2020. The AAC took care to develop clear goal statements, articulate design priorities, and produce recommendations coherent with these foundational principles.

The culminating recommendations are detailed in this report. The recommendations address 1) revisions to the system, 2) reporting enhancements, and 3) priorities for ongoing research. The AAC hopes these recommendations will promote equity, better incentivize, and reflect a wide range of skills associated with the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*, and provide more useful information to support student and school improvement.

APPENDIX – AAC MEETING/WEBINAR ATTENDANCE RECORD

MEMBER\MEETING DATE	2/24	5/5	7/28	10/27	11/9	12/10	12/16
Molly Spearman	√						
Melanie Barton			√	√	√	√	
Cynthia Downs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Brian Newsome	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Jessica Jackson	√		√	√	√		
James Burton			√				
Jo Anne Anderson	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
J.T. McLawhorn	√	√	√	√	√		√
Chandra Jefferson	√	√	√	√			
Neal Vincent	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Sandy Brossard	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Takesha Pollock	√	√	√	√		√	
Ian Feigel	√	√	√	√		√	√
Wanda Hassler	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Hope Rivers	√	√	√				
Georgia Mjartan	√	√	√		√	√	

CYCLICAL REVIEW OF SOUTH CAROLINA'S ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Accountability Framework Report

Audit of the Education Governance System in South Carolina

Lauren Freemire and Siri Smillie

Executive Summary

State education governance systems establish the infrastructure for the responsibilities and decision-making processes of various entities and leadership positions to develop and implement policies, administer programs and oversee the delivery of services. Governance systems can be formally outlined in state statutes, regulations and constitutional provisions, as well as informally developed over time due to circumstances such as a lack of clarity in laws and regulations, emergency situations that require immediate action and political influences.

Though there is state-by-state variance, typically states utilize one of four education governance models:

- **Model I:** Voters elect the governor, who then appoints both the members of the state board of education and the chief state school officer.

- **Model II:** Voters elect the governor, who then appoints either all or most members of the state board of education. The state board, in turn, appoints the chief state school officer.

- **Model III:** Voters elect both the governor and the chief state school officer. The governor then appoints the state board of education.

- **Model IV:** Voters elect both the governor and the state board of education. The state board then appoints the chief state school officer.

In South Carolina, the education governance structure most closely resembles Model III, with the caveat that it is the legislature, not the governor that selects the state board of education.

As states evaluate the effectiveness of their state education systems, considering the strengths and weaknesses of their education governance model can be a helpful approach to identify future policy actions. Education stakeholders in South Carolina have signaled their interest in examining the state's education governance system to identify strategies to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. The Education Oversight Committee reached out to Education Commission of the States (ECS) to conduct an audit of the K-12 education governance system in South Carolina. This audit examines the roles and authorities of the education policy leadership in the state as outlined in relevant South Carolina laws and rules and is supplemented by interviews with key education policy leadership in the state.

After performing the audit of current statutes, regulations and constitutional provisions for education governance in South Carolina — along with the information gathered through the interviews with South Carolina stakeholders and the lessons learned and best practices from other states — Education Commission of the States has identified several approaches South Carolina could consider to improve its education governance system:

- **Consideration #1:** Develop unified strategic vision that keeps students at the center, garners broad buy-in, and specifies roles and responsibilities.

- **Consideration #2:** Formalize communication across governance entities and formalize robust stakeholder engagement processes.

- **Consideration #3:** Clarify roles, maintaining a balance between collaboration and accountability.

Introduction

Education policymaking relies on a governance structure that allows for effective and efficient decision-making appropriate to a state's unique cultural context and student success goals. Education governance relates to the responsibilities and decision-making processes of various entities and leadership positions to develop and implement policies, administer programs and oversee the delivery of services — this can be formal and informal. As states' education systems evolve to meet the changing needs of students and the demands of an ever-shifting economy, it is essential to ensure education governance systems can support these changes through clear operational processes and assigned responsibilities for stakeholders. Many states, including South Carolina, have shown increasing interest in recent years to take a closer look at their current education governance systems to identify strategies for refinement and improvement to better support their states' educational goals.

Education stakeholders in South Carolina have made previous efforts to examine governance in the state and make recommendations on possible adjustments and reforms to improve the system. In 1997, then-Gov. David Beasley issued executive order 97-05, creating the Performance and Accountability Standards for Schools (PASS) Commission. The PASS Commission was tasked with identifying academic standards, assessments and an accountability system for South Carolina; comparing South Carolina's current standards and accountability systems with those in other states and countries; examining best practices in local school districts that could be applied as a strategy statewide; identifying ways to align current statewide education efforts with the new strategies that may arise from the PASS Commission; and developing recommendations to increase academic accomplishment in South Carolina and keep the public informed about the progress of these efforts. The PASS Commission submitted recommendations to Gov. Beasley in August of 1997.

Many of the recommendations of the PASS Commission were codified into statute through the passage of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) in 1998, including the establishment of statewide academic

standards and assessments; the provision of resources to strengthen teaching and classroom learning; supporting the professional development of educators and administrators; the creation of accountability systems and requirements of an annual report card of school performance, and the creation of the Education Oversight Committee (EOC).

The EOC further examined the state education governance system through its Study Team on Local Leadership and Engagement in 2000 and the creation of the Long-Range Plan by the EOC in 2001. Both reports expressed similar concerns about the current state of the education systems in South Carolina — that the governance system needed to change in order to align with the needs of students and the goals for education in the state. As the recommendations to the EOC from the study team stated, "Today our state's educational governance structure can be described, at best, as a patchwork quilt and, at worst, as a fragmented system in which some excel despite the environment, most struggle through it and few are aided by it."

In contrast with the PASS Commission and resulting EAA, few of the recommendations proposed by the long-range plan have been implemented. The concerns raised by these earlier examinations of the education governance system in South Carolina still hold relevant, as education stakeholders have signaled renewed interest in studying the system and enacting any needed changes to support today's education goals. In August of 2020, the Education Oversight Committee reached out to Education Commission of the States to help conduct a comprehensive audit of the K-12 education governance system in South Carolina.

Education Commission of the States has conducted the following governance audit of South Carolina's Constitution and education statutes, supported by interviews conducted with education governing authorities and other stakeholders in the state. This audit examines the roles and authorities of the education policy leadership in the state, as well as provides a national overview of state approaches to

education governance. Education Commission of the States concludes the audit with considerations for the education governing authorities in South Carolina for possible strategies to refine and strengthen the state education governance system.

Overview of K-12 Governance Models Across the States

Each state tends to have similar role groups acting as the primary stakeholders in education governance — including governor's offices, chief state school officers, legislatures, state boards of education and state departments of education — and most states fit into the four overarching models described below. However, the processes and norms that guide collective education policy decision-making and action vary widely even within these models.

The following four governance models are in descending order of authority of the executive branch — governor. Note that in each of the models, in addition to the discussed authority structures, decisions on major education issues generally require legislative approval.

- **Model I:** Voters elect the governor, who then appoints both the members of the state board of education and the chief state school officer.
- **Model II:** Voters elect the governor, who then appoints either all or most members of the state board of education. The state board, in turn, appoints the chief state school officer.
- **Model III:** Voters elect both the governor and the chief state school officer. The governor then appoints the state board of education.
- **Model IV:** Voters elect both the governor and the state board of education. The state board then appoints the chief state school officer.

Not all states fit neatly into these models, and we have identified twelve states with education governance structures that are variations on these models. That exception list includes South Carolina, which most closely falls into Model III, with the legislature selecting the state board of education, rather than the governor. For a more detailed analysis of each model, see ECS' State Education Governance Structures: 2017 update.

MODEL I
Appointed Board, Appointed Chief

ELECTORATE

ELECTS

GOVERNOR

APPOINTS

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER
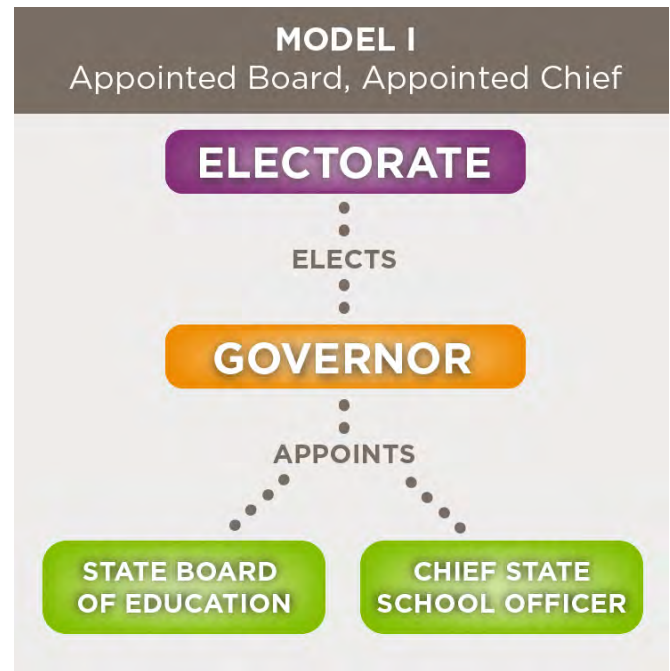
Even across states that have the same or similar governance model, the processes and norms for the individual entities can vary greatly. In November 2020, Education Commission of the States released an updated K-12 Governance 50-State Comparison, which reviews the key roles in education governance across the states and the general powers and

MODEL II
Governor Appoints Board, Board Appoints Chief

ELECTORATE

ELECTS

GOVERNOR

APPOINTS

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

APPOINTS

CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER

MODEL III
Appointed Board, Elected Chief

ELECTORATE

ELECTS

GOVERNOR

CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER

APPOINTS

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

MODEL IV
Elected Board, Board Appoints Chief

ELECTORATE

ELECTS

GOVERNOR

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

APPOINTS

CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER

duties that have been prescribed to these roles through state constitutional provisions and state statute. This database explores powers for the state legislature, governor, chief state school officer, executive-level secretary, state board of education and local school boards. Key findings from this research include:

- Twenty-five states have outlined a formal constitutional role specific to education for their governor.

- Every state has constitutional language detailing the authority and duties of state legislatures in education, and 40 states give the legislature some role in appointing or confirming the chief state school officer or state board of education members.

- Thirty chief state school officers have a formal constitutional role in state government. Additionally, how they are selected for office varies: Twenty-one are appointed by state boards of education, 16 are appointed by the governor, 12 are elected and one is appointed by the state executive-level secretary. In Oregon, the governor is the superintendent of education.

- State board of education authority and duties are also detailed in state constitutions and statute. Twenty-three states include state boards in the constitution, and 26 have only statutory powers and duties. Only Minnesota and Wisconsin do not have a state board, and New Mexico's public education commission is advisory only.

- Thirty-four states have some variation of an executive-level secretary. Such positions may mean additional formal duties for chief state school officers, or they may be individually appointed positions designated to serve the state board of education or work in some other capacity.

- Every state except for the District of Columbia and Hawaii has statutory provisions related to outlining the authority of local school boards. (Hawaii is one single school district and so is the District of Columbia.)

South Carolina Statutory Review and Analysis

The key governance entities in South Carolina's K-12 education system at the state level are the governor, general assembly, superintendent of public instruction, department of education, state board of education and the EOC. These key state entities have roles that interact with one another, as well as with local K-12 governance

entities — the county superintendents, county boards of education, school districts (including superintendents) and school trustees. The chart found in Appendix A summarizes the general powers and duties of each of these entities, derived from the South Carolina Constitution and enabling statutes.

When looking across all 50 states' education governance systems, two things stand out as unique to South Carolina: the selection of the state board of education by the legislature and the role of the EOC.

- Selection of State Board of Education members by legislative delegations. South Carolina's state board of education is composed of one member from each of the judicial circuits of the state, the legislative delegations representing each circuit, plus one additional member appointed by the governor. Most other states determine state board membership either by gubernatorial appointment (generally confirmed by the senate), popular election or a combination of those. New York is the only other state in which the majority of state board members are chosen by the legislature while legislative leadership in Indiana and Mississippi chose two of 10 and two of nine board members, respectively. Four of the 21 state board members for Pennsylvania's Council on Basic Education and the Council of Higher Education are legislators.

- Education Oversight Committee. While the functions of the South Carolina EOC are not unique, the composition of the committee and the structure are different than most other states. The most common structure that states use to oversee their accountability systems is with an office or entity within the state department of education that reports to the chief state school officer and/or the state board of education. Several states (Kentucky and Nevada) charge entities or offices within their legislative agencies with program evaluation and monitoring of the K-12 education accountability system, but do not have an associated committee or commission (Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 7.410 and Nev. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 218E.625). North Carolina's Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee serves a similar role and is a standing legislative

GENERAL ROLE OF EACH ENTITY:

- **Education Oversight Committee** — develops the state accountability system and report card; serves as a check (advise) on department and board actions, including standards adoption, assessment adoption, implementing interventions for underperforming schools, etc.

  - **Exceptions** — administer South Carolina Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program. (not currently administering)

- **State Board of Education** — adopts content standards and assessments, promulgates regulations to implement accreditation work with the EOC to implement the accountability system, oversees implementation of interventions for underperforming schools.

  - **Exceptions** — administer grant program for underperforming schools.

- **Department of Education/Superintendent** — makes recommendations to the board for content standards and assessments, including running review process and stakeholder input. Supports districts and schools through professional development and special TA and resources for underperforming schools.

  - **Exceptions** — monitor performance of underperforming schools.

committee (N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 120-70.80). The closest comparison to South Carolina appears to be Oklahoma's Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability, which is a stand-alone agency with a similar charge to that of the EOC (70 OK Stat § 70-3-116.2).

These unique aspects of South Carolina's K-12 governance system appear to have both advantages

and disadvantages. While the method of selection for state board of education members has not attracted as much attention as the EOC in previous governance analyses and reports or in more recent governance discussions, the challenges and opportunities arising from the existence of the EOC were frequently raised in interviews with system stakeholders and are discussed later in this report. The apparent lack of consensus about the role of the EOC plays an important part in understanding the current distribution of authority and responsibility within South Carolina's education-related statutes.

In order to analyze the role prescribed to each key governance entity, in addition to the summary of powers and general duties described in Appendix A, Education Commission of the States examined two sections of the South Carolina Code of Laws, which require significant coordination and collaboration across multiple governance entities — the Education Accountability Act (Title 59, Chapter 18) and the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act (Title 59, Chapter 28). The statutes outline the legislative intent for each act, as well as the specific responsibilities and directives delegated to each governance entity to meet the intent. Appendix B provides a side-by-side analysis of the duties assigned to each governance entity in the Education Accountability Act and Appendix C does the same for the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act. Below, we provide an analysis of the authorities delegated in these sections of code.

EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

The EAA created South Carolina's accountability system for public education, defining accountability as "acceptance of the responsibility for improving student performance and taking actions to improve classroom practice and school performance by the Governor, the General Assembly, the State Department of Education, colleges and universities, local school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community." Further, the statute states that the intent of the accountability system is to meet the following objectives:

(1) Use academic achievement standards to push schools and students toward higher performance by aligning the state assessment to those standards, and linking policies and criteria for performance standards, accreditation, reporting, school rewards and targeted assistance.

(2) Provide an annual report card with a performance indicator system that is logical, reasonable, fair, challenging and technically defensible, which furnishes clear and specific information about school and district academic performance and other performance to parents and the public.

(3) Require all districts to establish local accountability systems to stimulate quality teaching and learning practices and to target assistance to low performing schools.

(4) Provide resources to strengthen the process of teaching and learning in the classroom to improve student performance and reduce gaps in performance.

(5) Support professional development as integral to improvement and to the actual work of teachers and school staff.

(6) Expand the ability to evaluate the system and to conduct in-depth studies on implementation, efficiency and the effectiveness of academic improvement efforts.

The definition of accountability and the objectives make clear that South Carolina policymakers believe that a broad array of stakeholders have a role in holding the public education system accountable and, to support those efforts, it is necessary to have transparency in expectations and a method to evaluate each school and district against those expectations. These objectives are similar to other states' accountability systems.

The EAA provides a framework for implementation of the accountability system, including determination of performance metrics, content standard development and review, assessment, reporting (including public-facing report cards) and intervention for low-performing

schools and districts. The EAA also outlines specific requirements for coordination with accreditation processes, professional development, communication with the public and creation of a longitudinal data system.

As shown in Appendix B, many of the duties assigned in the EAA require coordination and collaboration across multiple education authorities in the state. Language such as: "The State Board of Education, through the Department of Education and in consultation with the Education Oversight Committee…" is common. For example, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-310, which covers formative assessments, requires the department of education and the EOC to work together to determine criteria for professional measurement standards for formative assessments. Once the criteria are established, the state board of education must create a statewide adoption list of formative assessments for grades kindergarten through nine aligned with the state content standards in English/language arts and mathematics that satisfies professional measurement standards in accordance with the criteria. The general assembly must allocate resources for districts to administer the assessments and, ultimately, districts are responsible for administering assessments from the list created by the state board of education.

In S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-920, the provision that outlines reporting requirements for charter, alternative, and career and technology schools, the EOC is directed to work with the state board of education and the School to Work Advisory Council to develop a report card for career and technology schools, while the department of education is responsible for receiving the data from those schools and publishing the career and technology report card.

This distribution of duties across the state entities aligning to their unique role in the system is common across states, but because of the unique role that the EOC plays in South Carolina, there are multiple instances of overlapping powers and duties, such as the formative assessment example. In addition to requirements to work with either the department or state board to implement various sections of the EAA, the EOC is also tasked with requirements to advise or consult on department and board actions, including

standards adoption, assessment adoption, implementing interventions for underperforming schools. In some cases, the EOC is working with, advising or consulting with the department, while in others, the EOC is advising/consulting with the state board.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION ACT

The Parental Involvement in their Children's Education Act was enacted in 2000 to "heighten awareness of the importance of parents' involvement in the education of their children throughout their schooling; encourage the establishment and maintenance of parent-friendly school settings; and emphasize that when parents and schools work as partners, a child's academic success can best be assured." (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-110).

Generally, this act assigns specific duties required to implement the act and achieve the intent of increased family engagement to the various governance entities aligned with their general purpose and role. The board of education must require schools and districts to incorporate parental involvement into their long-range improvement plans, recognize districts and schools for successful efforts to engage families, and set criteria for staff professional development and training. The superintendent and department of education are responsible for implementation, including supporting districts, providing resources and training, and staying up to date with best practices and national resources. Local districts must adopt and incorporate parental involvement efforts as required, ensure that staff receive proper training and communicate with parents.

The EOC also has a role in implementation that includes jointly developing, publishing and distributing resources for teachers and parents that explain the grade-level academic content standards and provide advice on how parents can help their children achieve the standards. In addition, the EOC must integrate parental involvement into a public relations campaign and survey parents to understand the effectiveness of the state efforts to increase parental involvement. Of these, the duty that most closely aligns with the EOC's charge to serve as the oversight committee that reviews and monitors the

implementation of the Education Accountability Act and the Education Improvement Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-6-10) is the parent survey.

PROVISOS

In addition to authority granted in the constitution and education statute, the Legislature also delegates specific authorities via provisos in the Appropriations Act. An example of provisos that impact education governance authorities can be found in the 2019-20 state General Appropriations Act, included as Appendix D. Provisos in effect for the 2019-20 budget year include:

- 2019-20, 1A.49: Requires charter schools to report graduation and achievement data to the Education Oversight Committee and requires the EOC to issue a report to the general assembly recommending one or more funding systems for charter schools.

- 2019-20, 1A.67: Provides funds to the department of education for awarding Innovation Grants to schools or school districts, a duty that had been delegated to the Education Oversight Committee, also via proviso in the 2017-18 appropriations bill.

- 2019-20, 1.64: Delegates authority to administer the South Carolina Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program to the EOC.

Based on the information available about these three provisos, the first two (1A.49 and 1A.67) appear to be assigned to the entity with general powers and duties that align with the charge put forward in the proviso. Proviso 1A.49 involves evaluation of achievement data and utilizing available data to make recommendations to the general assembly regarding appropriate funding mechanisms and is assigned to the EOC. Proviso 1A.67 is a grant program — an operational function to support districts that appears appropriately placed within the department's scope and authority. However, Proviso 1.64 is also a grant program, and there is no clear reason within the proviso language or purpose of the program, which is "to encourage and sustain partnerships between a community and its local public school district or school for the implementation of innovative, state-of-the-art education initiatives and models to improve student learning," that suggests it should not be administered by the department of education.

Informal Authorities

Though the infrastructure of education governance in South Carolina exists primarily in statute, regulation and the state constitution, the governing authorities of education policy and programs in the state also each have informal authorities. These informal authorities have developed over time because of circumstances such as a lack of clarity in laws and regulations, emergency situations that require immediate action and political impacts. For this portion of the audit, Education Commission of the States relied heavily on interviews with key stakeholders. Across the stakeholders interviewed, several common types of informal authority were identified.

PUBLIC INFLUENCE

A majority of the stakeholders identified public influence as their primary informal authority. The ability to bring an education policy issue to the attention of their constituents, or the broader public in South Carolina, and to publicly champion their organization or agency's point of view on the issue was the most common response across the interviews. The bully pulpit provided by these education authority positions ranged in level of impact but was also cited as an informal authority that allowed for cross-agency or cross-authority collaboration on initiatives and issues.

CONVENING AND CONSENSUS

The second most consistent informal authority cited by stakeholders was the ability to convene stakeholders and build consensus within specific stakeholder groups. Interviewees identified part of their role as a governing authority to be convening their constituents and stakeholders as necessary. These convenings serve to build more consistent communication and flow of information between the governing authority and its stakeholders, but to also build community consensus on education policy issues that are being considered locally or at the state level.

REQUESTS

A specific form of informal authority identified in the interviews were requests from governing authorities to their agencies or departments to take on a specific authority or to conduct a report or study on a relevant topic of interest.

For example, in April of 2020, the EOC was tasked, through a request made by Senate Education Committee Chairman Greg Hembree, to convene and collaborate with a broad array of stakeholders, including the department of education, state board of education, school districts and schools, state institutions of higher learning and legislative staff to "review the challenges and opportunities presented by South Carolina's COVID-19 crisis to education across the state, and develop a repository of timely, actionable recommendations for moving forward."

Recent Actions to Impact Governance

Recent actions to alter or clarify the processes and responsibilities within the education governance system in South Carolina should be noted when considering any future action related to governance. Legislation introduced in the South Carolina General Assembly in 2019 and a ballot measure considered by South Carolina voters in 2018 proposed substantive changes to the education governance system in the state that should be noted, as well as several public studies of the education governance system in South Carolina.

2019 LEGISLATION

During the 2019-20 legislative session, South Carolina representatives introduced H.B. 3759 or "South Carolina Career Opportunity and Access for All Act." H.B. 3759 and its counterpart S.B. 419 proposed extensive changes to state code related to education, although neither bill was enacted. The bill as originally written included the following statutory changes to the education governance system.

STATE-LEVEL CHANGES

Governor's Office:

- Creation of a Zero to Twenty Committee in the governor's office.

- Allowing the governor to suspend an entire local school board and appoint a temporary board in certain instances following a state board of education hearing.

- Allowing the governor to remove school board trustees from office in certain circumstances.

State Board of Education:

- The addition of a public-school student appointed by the governor to serve as a non-voting advisory member to the state board of education.

- Requiring the state board of education and local school boards to adopt a code of ethics.

- Requiring that notice be given to the state board of education of actions by public school accrediting bodies.

- Requiring the state board of education to notify the state ethics commission of any school board trustee who fails to complete required ethics training and specifying the following hearing process.

- Requiring the state board of education to adopt a model training program for school board members that must be completed within one year of a member taking office.

State Superintendent and State Department of Education:

- Requiring the state superintendent to develop and provide recommendations on the consolidation of school districts.

- Requiring the state department of education to post all reports, studies, published findings, memoranda, guidelines, rules and other relevant documents to the department's website within 24 hours of the document being made public that is also accessible for viewing and download by the public.

- Reinforcing a system of accountability for student

progress toward college and career readiness for K-12 students.

LOCAL-LEVEL CHANGES

School Districts:

- Allowing school districts to create multiple schools of innovation.

School Boards:

- New requirements for local school board governance and conduct, including processes for any ethical breaches by local school board members.

- Requiring school board trustees and school officials to comply with certain ethics provisions.

- Revising the grounds for removal and the filling of vacant school district trustee seats.

- Requiring rules adopted by local school district board of trustees to align with applicable state and federal accountability standards.

- Allowing local school boards to require additional units of study for high school diploma attainment.

Amendments to the bill suggested further changes to education governance in South Carolina, including:

- Adding the South Carolina Teacher of the Year as a non-voting advisory member to the state board of education.

- Transferring the reporting requirements for the proposed Zero to Twenty Committee to the state board of education and department of education.

- Providing for further processes for district consolidation and establishing a state consolidation incentive fund to support the costs related to consolidation.

2018 BALLOT MEASURE

South Carolina Amendment 1, the Appointed Superintendent of Education Measure was a legislatively referred constitutional amendment considered by voters in 2018 that would have made the position of state superintendent of education a governor-appointed position rather than an elected position. The switch from election to appointment would have begun in January of 2023, requiring senate approval of the governor's appointee and authorizing the legislature to provide for the duties, compensation and qualifications for the position. The measure was passed by the South Carolina legislature through a joint resolution in 2018. The measure was defeated with 60.1 percent of votes in oppositions and 39.9 percent of votes in favor of the constitutional amendment.

Proponents of the measure argued the amendment would ensure only qualified candidates would be selected to fill the position of state superintendent since the existing law does not include any requirements for education policy experience or specific education background for the elected position. Changing the position from elected to appointed would also remove the politics of campaigning from the position according to proponents, removing the distraction of campaigning and the potential barrier campaigning poses to qualified candidates that do not want to participate in an electoral process. Proponents also felt an appointed state superintendent would increase the governor's accountability and involvement in education issues. The governor would be able to be held accountable for campaign promises related to education with deeper involvement in the system, and proponents believed the appointed superintendent would create a better authority balance between the governor's office and the legislature.

Opponents of the measure argued electing a state superintendent keeps the position directly accountable to voters and allowed for greater public input in the education system. Opponents also felt the consolidation of decision-making authority within the governor's office with a governor-appointed state superintendent would also give the governor too much power and influence over education in the state and could potentially allow for more influence of special interest lobbying on education.

Of the chief state school officers across the country, 37 currently are appointed either by the governor or by

the state board of education, 12 are elected directly by voters, one is elected by the state board of regents, and in one state the governor acts as the superintendent of education. Only eight of the 12 states with elected chief state school officers, including South Carolina, hold partisan elections.

Key Themes From Stakeholder Interviews

To supplement the information gathered for this audit through statutory, regulatory and legislative research, interviews were held with education governing authorities and engaged stakeholders in South Carolina. Representatives (both current and former) from the following agencies and organizations were interviewed:

- South Carolina Department of Education.
- South Carolina State Board of Education.
- South Carolina General Assembly.
- South Carolina Governor's Office.
- South Carolina Higher Education Commission.
- South Carolina Education Oversight Committee.
- South Carolina School Boards Association.
- Local South Carolina school districts.

Overall, the interviews focused on understanding the context of the South Carolina education system from varying perspectives, including understanding formal and informal authorities of the entities, current state of collaboration across governing agencies and stakeholders and recommended strategies to improve the education governance system in the state. The full list of questions used to guide these interviews, as well as the full list of interviewees, can be found in Appendix E and Appendix F.

Several common themes were consistent across the interviews and different stakeholder groups represented. Please note the opinions and recommendations in this section are those expressed by stakeholders interviewed for this audit and are being reported by Education Commission of the States.

DISPERSED AUTHORITY

The phrase "everyone is in charge, so no one is in charge" was shared by many of the interviewees when asked to summarize the state of education governance in South Carolina. Stakeholders felt decision-making power is too dispersed across the education governing authorities in the state, making it unclear who is the ultimate decision-maker for specific education policies and programs. The layering of authority in South Carolina on both a state and local levels further complicates the system and creates many pockets of power and influence over education. The dispersion of power and authority also creates issues for the education system in terms of accountability, as stakeholders were unsure of how and by whom governing authorities are being held accountable for their policy proposals and program implementation. Consolidation of certain governing authorities was a common suggestion by stakeholders to address the dispersed authority in the education system.

Stakeholders most commonly cited making the position of the state superintendent a governor- or state board-appointed position, rather than an elected position, and consolidating or clarifying the roles of the state board of education and the Education Oversight Committee as actions that could be considered to resolve the dispersed decision-making in the state.

NEED FOR A STATEWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN

Stakeholders expressed a critical need for a statewide strategic plan for education with clear, delineated roles for each governing authority. The plan would ideally be created collaboratively with all education governing authorities and input from stakeholders, including local authorities, business representatives, educators, parents and students. Specific, measurable goals would need to be included in the report that have accountability processes attached, including regular and public reporting mechanisms.

The creation of a statewide strategic plan would address two of the major concerns shared by stakeholders in interviews: increasing siloes within the education governance system and a lack of substantial policy

action related to education goals in the state. A collaborative strategic plan for education could allow for more intentional and coordinated actions across governing authorities toward specific education goals.

UNCLEAR PROCESSES FOR COLLABORATION

Consistently, stakeholders identified the need for greater collaboration across the different agencies, organizations and governing authorities for the state to improve its education system. Stakeholders cited a lack of regularly occurring communication between governing authorities as a primary factor in the breakdown of collaboration, both a lack of formal communication — such as regular cross-agency meetings — to informal connections across the stakeholders. Several stakeholders showed interest in the creation of a P-20 council or a children's cabinet to ensure more regular collaboration and catalyze collective policymaking action.

More clear processes for collaboration would allow stakeholders to be more intentional in working toward common education policy goals, especially with an increased level of transparency across authorities and the sharing of data and institutional knowledge. More constituent interfacing between governing authorities could also allow for better utilization of resources, including education funding by avoiding duplicitous efforts by multiple agencies.

An example raised by several stakeholders was a lack of collaboration across education governing authorities throughout the state and education system's COVID-19 pandemic response. Several stakeholders expressed interest in having more of an engaged role in the creation and implementation of reopening plans moving forward but were unsure of how to pursue a more active role that was also appropriate to their specific governing position.

LACK OF QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING FOR LOCAL BOARDS

Concerns were raised across the interviews about the lack of consistent qualification requirements for local

school board members, and insufficient training and onboarding for these elected members. Stakeholders acknowledged that while local control is important to South Carolinians and the education system, inconsistencies across local boards and districts could create inequities across the education system.

Stakeholders were interested in establishing more specific qualifications for local board members to ensure each elected member had adequate working knowledge of the education system and its programs to be in a decision-making role. Beyond qualifications, stakeholders also expressed interest in creating a more specific designated onboarding and training process for new local board members to orient them to their role and the specific issues they will be focusing on, as well as continuing education requirements. Concerns were also raised about a lack of ethical standards or codes of conduct for local boards.

Additional suggestions stakeholders shared in relation to local boards is the possibility of consolidating local boards into regional boards and changing the governance structure to require local board members to be appointed rather than elected.

ACCOUNTABILITY UTILIZATION

Though there was disagreement in the interviews about whether the current means of accountability in the education systems are adequate, there was general agreement on a lack of follow through in the accountability systems. Stakeholders felt that entities with some accountability authority — primarily the state board of education and Education Oversight Committee — were not empowered to hold governing authorities in the education system accountable.

Several stakeholders also highlighted the lack of clarity and communication between state accountability systems and local accountability systems, which led to further lack of true accountability in the education system.

CONSOLIDATION AT A DISTRICT AND AGENCY LEVEL

Seen throughout some of the themes of the interviews was utilizing consolidation as a tool to improve the education governance system in South Carolina. Many stakeholders acknowledged South Carolina's regional based culture of local control has led to an unnecessary number of school districts that are not consistent in their size, governance and funding strategies. Though some districts have been consolidated across the state, greater consolidation was a high interest to many of the stakeholders inclusive of the districts' governing authorities.

ENGAGEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

In a similar vein to the need for greater collaboration across agencies and organizations, interviewees also identified the need to incorporate more varied stakeholder voices into the education policymaking process in a meaningful way. Specifically, stakeholders elevated the need to empower and incorporate educators, parents and family members, and students to become more involved in the policy development and implementation process. There was strong interest from several stakeholders to increase the role of stakeholder and community engagement in the legislative development process as well as the development of guidelines and regulations by the state department of education. Several stakeholders also identified a need in South Carolina for greater outreach and communication with parents and family members of students currently active in the state education system to ensure they understand both the governance system as well as any policy changes that occur that may impact them or their student. Parents need better resources as well as access to clear and understandable information and data to become more engaged stakeholders in the education system.

SCHOOL FINANCE

The most common education policy topic identified by stakeholders as a crucial priority for change in South Carolina was school finance. Stakeholders generally agreed that any education governance reform would require education funding reform — not necessarily reform to increase the amount of funding but reform to address competing priorities and inequities in the current system.

The number of line items for special programs, projects and specific student populations was also seen as a driver of inequities and inefficiencies in the state education budget. The ad hoc nature of these line items were seen either as temporary fixes for issues that needed long-term solutions, or as personal interests of certain groups that did not serve the overall student population in the state. Stakeholders instead were interested in creating a unified funding strategy that would support strategic, statewide student outcomes.

Stakeholders raised concerns about the equity of the current school finance system in the state, particularly in relation to the inequities across school districts. The local share of school finance was highlighted as a driver of inequity as different districts utilize different funding mechanisms and tools that impact levels of funding. Stakeholders had diverging opinions on whether the solution to address local inequities was a more centralized and consolidated school finance system or to allow for local school board fiscal autonomy.

Stakeholders also raised concerns about the complication of the school finance system and how the complexity makes understanding the system difficult both for governing authorities as well as for community members. This lack of understanding of the school finance system has led to public mistrust in governing authorities' ability to properly allocate education funding, which was particularly felt by stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Considerations for South Carolina

Taking into account the audit of current statutes, regulations and constitutional provisions for education governance in South Carolina, the information gathered through the interviews with South Carolina stakeholders, and insights from other states, there are several approaches South Carolina could consider to strengthen its K-12 education governance system. Some of the suggestions offered below can be accomplished within existing authorities but others would require statutory or even constitutional amendments. The demand and political will for such changes and the state's ability to provide the necessary resources to make those changes successful are as important to consider as the changes themselves.

It is important to note that each state context is unique, and no state has identified the perfect governance structure or mechanisms for their K-12 system. While these options are based on structures found in other states, and we have provided some examples for reference, Education Commission of the States urges education leaders in South Carolina to use these considerations as a springboard for discussion and planning but does not necessarily advocate for the state's adoption of any of these options.

In addition to the specific considerations below, we suggest prioritizing simplicity and transparency when approaching any governance reviews or changes. Actors within state education governance structures should consider the benefits of pursuing less complex and more transparent policy solutions in the pursuit of achieving state education goals. Such considerations may help to both improve the tenor of the dialogue surrounding policy debates, and support governance and administrative structures in improving education quality.

CONSIDERATION #1: Develop unified strategic vision that keeps students at the center, garners broad buy-in, and specifies roles and responsibilities.

In order to help guide priorities, funding decisions and unify stakeholders with a common objective, consider developing a joint strategic vision. Such a vision

may help keep the focus on the students in South Carolina and could serve to outline specific roles and responsibilities for education governance entities at the state and local levels. The strategic vision may be comprehensive in nature, considering early learning, K-12 and postsecondary goals, or could be limited to K-12 education. Regardless of the scope of the vision, South Carolina leaders may consider a broadly inclusive stakeholder engagement process to ensure that the vision is aligned and supported by policy and practice across the P-20 spectrum.

Some examples of statewide, jointly agreed upon plans include **Ohio**'s Each Child Our Future and the Rhode Island Children's Cabinet 5-Year Strategic Plan.

Once a strategic vision is in place, consider examining resource allocation and funding mechanisms — to ensure that districts and schools have the financial resources needed to improve student outcomes aligned with the vision.

CONSIDERATION #2: Formalize communication across governance entities and formalize robust stakeholder engagement processes.

While many informal and some formal communication avenues exist between education governance entities in South Carolina, communication was frequently mentioned as inadequate or inconsistent. To improve communication, consider relying less on individual personalities and relationships, and instead examine where formal communication mechanisms may offer a chance to improve communication across the multiple entities. Formal communication mechanisms may include regular reports, joint meetings and ex-officio membership of the state board of education or EOC. Even where ex-officio or full membership exists already, there may be opportunities to enhance the stature and role of those positions, including adding standing reports to regular meeting agendas. There may also be an opportunity to deliberately structure agendas and meeting participation with items that promote cross-agency collaboration and welcome stakeholder

engagement, to include not just K-12 leaders and stakeholders from multiple entities, but also early learning and postsecondary entities and stakeholders.

One state that has effectively utilized these formal communication mechanisms to advance education policy and outcomes is **Montana**. Montana leverages ex-officio membership, joint meetings and reporting to link the governor's office, state board of education, board of regents (postsecondary governance), superintendent and the commissioner of higher education. The governor, superintendent and commissioner each participate or send a representative to all board of regents and state board of education meetings, and a standing agenda item allows for reports from each entity at all regular meetings. Additionally, both boards are statutorily required to meet together with the governor serving as chair and the superintendent serving as secretary, twice per year and submit a joint education budget request to the legislature prior to each biannual legislative session (Mont. Code Ann. § 20-2-101). The joint meetings offer a chance to discuss common challenges, align priorities and identify areas for the two agencies to collaborate on to advance student success.

In **Illinois**, the P-20 council was created to study the education system and make recommendations for improving the integrating across all aspects of the P-20 continuum in order to strengthen the state's workforce and increase their economic competitiveness (105 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/22-45). The Council is charged with developing "a statewide agenda that will move the State towards the common goals of improving academic achievement, increasing college access and success, improving use of existing data and measurements, developing improved accountability, fostering innovative approaches to education, promoting lifelong learning, easing the transition to college, and reducing remediation."

Another developing state example is the Commonwealth Education Continuum in **Kentucky**. Announced in December of 2020, the Commonwealth Education Continuum is a cross-agency partnership between the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet and the Kentucky Department of Education. The Commonwealth Education Continuum will consist of 27 members representing the education spectrum from early childhood to adult education, and will act as a collaborative forum to strengthen the education pipeline and work towards specific common goals like diversifying the teacher workforce and increasing student awareness of degree and credential options.

CONSIDERATION #3: Clarify roles, maintaining a balance between collaboration and accountability.

Ensure that as new duties are assigned, whether through formal or informal avenues, the function and role of each entity is taken into consideration. To take this one step further, South Carolina may consider revisiting previously delegated duties with this lens and making adjustments to clarify any confusion that has resulted from overlapping responsibilities.

In the division of powers and duties, there is a necessary need for both collaboration as well as checks and balances between the multiple entities engaged in education governance. Clarifying the expectations of each entity as it relates to their collaborative duties and their duty to provide a "check" to another entity may reduce tensions that can result from attempting to do both. The EOC currently faces this duality. In some cases, the legislature asks the EOC to provide evaluation and oversight to hold the K-12 education system — including fellow governance stakeholders — accountable, yet in other cases the EOC is tasked as a convener and collaborator. It is difficult to fill both of those roles, and the former may cause strain on their ability to do the latter. The superintendent and department similarly could have a difficult time both supporting districts/schools and advocating for them, while also playing an accountability role.

Appendix A: Summary of General Powers and Duties

Entity	General Duties
State Department of Education	*S.C. Code Ann. § 1-30-10* (B)(1) The governing authority of each department shall be: (iii) in the case of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Education, the State Commissioner of Agriculture and the State Superintendent of Education, respectively, elected to office under the Constitution of this State; (D) The governing authority of a department is vested with the duty of overseeing, managing, and controlling the operation, administration, and organization of the department. The governing authority has the power to create and appoint standing or ad hoc advisory committees in its discretion or at the direction of the Governor to assist the department in particular areas of public concern or professional expertise as is deemed appropriate. Such committees shall serve at the pleasure of the governing authority and committee members shall not receive salary or per diem, but shall be entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred pursuant to the discharge of official duties not to exceed the per diem, mileage, and subsistence amounts allowed by law for members of boards, commissions, and committees.
Superintendent of Public Instruction	*S.C. Code Ann. § 59-3-30* (1) Serve as secretary and administrative officer to the State Board of Education. (2) Have general supervision over and management of all public school funds provided by the State and Federal Governments. (3) Organize, staff and administer a State Department of Education which shall include such division and departments as are necessary to render the maximum service to public education in the State. (4) Keep the public informed as to the problems and needs of the public schools by constant contact with all school administrators and teachers, by his personal appearances at public gatherings and by information furnished to the various news media of the State. (5) Have printed and distributed such bulletins, manuals, and circulars as he may deem necessary for the professional improvement of teachers and for the cultivation of public sentiment for public education, and have printed all forms necessary and proper for the administration of the State Department of Education. (6) Administer, through the State Department of Education, all policies and procedures adopted by the State Board of Education. (7) Assume such other responsibilities and perform such other duties as may be prescribed by law or as may be assigned by the State Board of Education. *S.C. Code Ann. § 59-6-10* Serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Education Oversight Committee

State Board of Education

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-5-60

(1) Adopt policies, rules and regulations not inconsistent with the laws of the State for its own government and for the government of the free public schools.

(2) Annually approve budget requests for the institutions, agencies, and service under the control of the Board as prepared by the State Superintendent of Education prior to being submitted to the Governor and to the General Assembly.

(3) Adopt minimum standards for any phase of education as are considered necessary to aid in providing adequate educational opportunities and facilities.

(4) Prescribe and enforce rules for the examination and certification of teachers.

(5) Grant State teachers' certificates and revoke them for immoral or unprofessional conduct, or evident unfitness for teaching.

(6) Prescribe and enforce courses of study for the free public schools.

(7) Prescribe and enforce the use of textbooks and other instructional materials for the various subjects taught or used in conjunction within the free public schools of the State, both high schools and elementary schools in accordance with the courses of study as prepared and promulgated by the Board.

(8) Appoint such committees and such members of committees as may be required or as may be desirable to carry out the orderly function of the Board.

(9) Cooperate fully with the State Superintendent at all times to the end that the State system of public education may constantly be improved.

(10) Assume such other responsibilities and exercise such other powers and perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by law or as it may find necessary to aid in carrying out the purpose and objectives of the Constitution of the State.

*In assuming the role of the State Educational Finance Commission, the Board of Education "shall disburse such funds as are provided by the General Assembly and shall have such further powers as are committed to it by this Title. It shall promote the improvement of the school system and its physical facilities. It shall make plans for the construction of necessary public school buildings. It shall make surveys incident to the acquisition of sites for public schools. It shall seek the more efficient operation of the pupil transportation system. It shall effect desirable consolidations of school districts throughout the entire State. And it shall make provision for the acquisition of such further facilities as may be necessary to operate the public school system in an efficient manner." *S.C. Code Ann. § 59-5-100*

Education Oversight Committee	*S.C. Code Ann. § 59-6-10* (A)(1) In order to assist in, recommend, and supervise implementation of programs and expenditure of funds for the Education Accountability Act and the Education Improvement Act of 1984, the Education Oversight Committee is to serve as the oversight committee for these acts. The Education Oversight Committee shall: (a) review and monitor the implementation and evaluation of the Education Accountability Act and Education Improvement Act programs and funding; (b) make programmatic and funding recommendations to the General Assembly; (c) report annually to the General Assembly, State Board of Education, and the public on the progress of the programs; (d) recommend Education Accountability Act and EIA program changes to state agencies and other entities as it considers necessary. (2) Each state agency and entity responsible for implementing the Education Accountability Act and the Education Improvement Act funded programs shall submit to the Education Oversight Committee programs and expenditure reports and budget requests as needed and in a manner prescribed by the Education Oversight Committee.
County Superintendent	*S.C. Code Ann. § 59-13-60* Each county and district superintendent of education shall assume such responsibilities and perform such duties as may be prescribed by law or by rules and regulations of the State Board of Education or as may be assigned or prescribed by the county board of education or the district board of trustees. Additionally, County Superintendents must: • Keep a record of school bonds issued by school districts in the respective counties • Keep a record of claims he approves and report all claims approved to the county treasurer • Receive reports required by teachers, principals or superintendents in the county • Receive reports from private schools in the county on enrollment, staffing and "the amount of work actually done" • Report to the State Board of Education within two months after the close of the scholastic year a full and accurate report of all schools under his supervision, which report shall contain such statistics and such other information as the law and the State Board may require. In any county which does not have a county superintendent of education, the report shall be made by the district superintendent. • Serve as ex officio member of the county board of education

County Boards of Education	*S.C. Code Ann. § 59-15-20* The county board of education shall constitute an advisory body with whom the county superintendent of education shall have the right to consult when he is in doubt as to his official duty. *S.C. Code Ann. § 59-15-40* County boards of education may prescribe such rules and regulations not inconsistent with the statute law of this State as they may deem necessary or advisable to the proper disposition of matters brought before them. *S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-100* Where the county educational system operates as a unit, the county board of education or the educational governing body of the county shall have all the powers and duties of school trustees.
School Districts	*S.C. Code Ann. § 59-17-10* Every school district is and shall be a body politic and corporate, by the name and style of _____ (a descriptive name may be designated by the county board of education or legislative act) School District No _____ (such number may be designated by the county board of education or legislative act), of _____ County (the name of the county in which the district is situated), the State of South Carolina. In that name it may sue and be sued and be capable of contracting and being contracted with to the extent of its school fund and holding such real and personal estate as it may have or come into possession of, by will or otherwise, or as is authorized by law to be purchased, all of which shall be used exclusively for school purposes.

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-10

Each school district shall be under the management and control of the board of trustees provided for in this article, subject to the supervision and orders of the county board of education.

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-90 General powers and duties of school trustees.

(1) Provide schoolhouses. Provide suitable schoolhouses in its district and make them comfortable, paying due regard to any schoolhouse already built or site procured, as well as to all other circumstances proper to be considered so as best to promote the educational interest of the districts;

(2) Employ and discharge teachers. Employ teachers from those having certificates from the State Board of Education, fix their salaries and discharge them when good and sufficient reasons for so doing present themselves, subject to the supervision of the county board of education. In reaching a decision as to whether or not to employ any person qualified as a teacher, consideration may be given to the residence of such person but it shall not be the deciding factor or a bar to employing such person.

(3) Promulgate rules and regulations. Promulgate rules prescribing scholastic standards of achievement and standards of conduct and behavior that must be met by all pupils as a condition to the right of such pupils to attend the public schools of such district. The rules shall take into account the necessity of proper conduct on the part of all pupils and the necessity for scholastic progress in order that the welfare of the greatest possible number of pupils shall be promoted notwithstanding that such rules may result in the ineligibility of pupils who fail to observe the required standards, and require the suspension or permanent dismissal of such pupils;

School Trustees

(4) Call meetings of electors for consultation. Call meetings of the qualified electors of the district for consultation in regard to the school interests thereof, at which meetings the chairman or other member of the board shall preside, if present;

(5) Control school property. Take care of, manage and control the school property of the district;

(6) Visit schools. Visit the public schools within its district from time to time and at least once in every school term and take care that they are conducted according to law and with the utmost efficiency;

(7) Control educational interest of district. Manage and control local educational interests of its district, with the exclusive authority to operate or not to operate any public school or schools;

(8) Charge matriculation and incidental fees. Charge and collect matriculation and incidental fees from students; however, regulations or policies adopted by the board regarding charges and collections must take into account the students' ability to pay and must hold the fee to a minimum reasonable amount. Fees may not be charged to students eligible for free lunches and must be reduced pro rata for students eligible for reduced price lunches;

(9) Transfer and assign pupils. Transfer any pupil from one school to another so as to promote the best interests of education, and determine the school within its district in which any pupil shall enroll; and

(10) Prescribe conditions and charges for attendance. Be empowered to prescribe conditions and a schedule of charges based on cost per pupil as last determined, for attendance in the public schools of the school district for

(a) children of parents temporarily residing within the school district;

(b) children whose parents or legal guardians live elsewhere but who are residing with residents of the school district; and

School Trustees (CONT'D)	(c) children of parents residing on Federal property or military or naval bases of the United States located within or adjacent to the boundaries of such school district; and (d) all other children specially situated and not meeting the eligibility requirements of Section 59-63-30, but who shall have petitioned the trustees in writing seeking permission to attend the public schools of the school district. (11) Provide school-age child care program or facilities therefor. Provide: (a) a school-age child care program for children aged five through fourteen years that operates before or after the school day, or both, and during periods when school is not in session; (b) a school-age child care program that operates during periods when school is in session for students who are enrolled in a half-day kindergarten program; or (c) classrooms, other space, or both, in a school for use by an organization that is operating a school-age child care program before or after the school day, or both, and during periods when school is not in session for children aged five through fourteen years. All latchkey programs operating pursuant to this item must be licensed. (12) Establish the annual calendar. Have the authority to establish an annual school calendar for students, faculty, and staff to include starting dates, ending dates, holidays, make-up days, in-service days, and professional development days. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-19-110 The boards of trustees of the several school districts may prescribe such rules and regulations not inconsistent with the statute law of this State as they may deem necessary or advisable to the proper disposition of matters brought before them.
General Assembly	*South Carolina Constitution* Article XI, Section 1: Appoint members to the Board of Education and specify powers and duties of the Board of Education Article XI, Section 2: Specify powers and duties of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Article XI, Section 3: The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free public schools open to all children in the State and shall establish, organize and support such other public institutions of learning, as may be desirable. *S.C. Code Ann. § 59-6-10* The Senate President, Speaker of the House, Chairs of the House Education and Public Works Committee, House Ways and Means Committee, Senate Education Committee and Senate Finance Committee each serve or appoint designees to serve on the Education Oversight Committee. The Senate President, Speaker of the House, Chairs of the House Education and Public Works Committee and Senate Education Committee each appoint two members of the Education Oversight Committee (one business and one educator representative).

Governor	*South Carolina Constitution* Article XI, Section 1: Appoint one member to the Board of Education *S.C. Code Ann. § 59-6-10* Member of the Education Oversight Committee Appoint two members to the Education Oversight Committee (one business and one educator representative)

Appendix B: Summary of Statutory Responsibilities

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Accountability -performance indicators	Determine indicators to be considered in a school's performance rating. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-120(7)	Adopt performance-oriented educational standards for the core academic areas (math, English language arts, social studies and science) for grades K-12. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-300			

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Assessments – statewide assessment program		Through the State Dept. of Education, develop or adopt a statewide assessment program to promote student learning and to measure student performance on state standards and: (1) identify areas in which students, schools, or school districts need additional support; (2) indicate the academic achievement for schools, districts, and the State; (3) satisfy federal reporting requirements; and 4) provide professional development to educators. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-310	With the State board, develop or adopt a statewide assessment program. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-310		

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Assessments – formative	With the State Department of Education, determine criteria for professional measurement standards for formative assessments. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-310	Create a statewide adoption list of formative assessments for grades kindergarten through nine aligned with the state content standards in English/language arts and mathematics that satisfies professional measurement standards in accordance with criteria jointly determined by the Education Oversight Committee and the State Department of Education. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-310	With the EOC, determine criteria for professional measurement standards for formative assessments. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-310	Allocate resources to districts to administer formative assessments. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-310	Administer formative assessments that meet the state standards and criteria. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-310

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Assessments – professional development			Provide on-going professional development on the development and use of assessments. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-310		

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Assessments for accountability (field tests)	Review the state assessment program and the course assessments for alignment with the state standards, level of difficulty and validity, and for the ability to differentiate levels of achievement, and will make recommendations for needed changes, if any. The review will be provided to the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, the Governor, the Senate Education Committee, and the House Education and Public Works Committee as soon as feasible after the field tests. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-320		The Department of Education will then report to the Education Oversight Committee no later than one month after receiving the reports (on the field tests) on the changes made to the assessments to comply with the recommendations. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-320		

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Assessments (for accountability)	Review and approve the standards-based assessment of mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, and science. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-320		Develop the standards-based assessment of mathematics, English/language arts, social studies, and science will be administered for accountability purposes. Include appropriate modifications and accommodations for students with documented disabilities. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-320		(Implied) Administration of assessments for accountability. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-320
Assessments (end of course)	Review and approve end of course assessments of high school credit courses. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-320				

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Assessments and standards (for accountability)	Advise on consent on the development and adoption of new standards and assessments for use as an accountability measure. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-320	Develop and adopt new standards and assessments through the Department of Education for use as an accountability measure when required. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-320			

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
College entrance assessment and career readiness assessment			Secure provider to offer all students a college entrance assessment in eleventh grade. Maintain assessment results for each student as part of their permanent record for at least 10 years. Reimburse school districts for the administration of the college entrance and career readiness assessments. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-325		Offer college entrance assessment to all eleventh grade students. Administer career readiness assessment to all students entering eleventh grade. Offer accommodations for assessments that comply with students' IEP or 504 plans.

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Assessments (summative)		Promulgate regulations for the testing process to ensure testing security and procedures for make-up days. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-325	Procure and maintain a summative assessment system, which must assess students in ELA and math and measure student mastery of the state standards. Procure and administer the standards-based assessment in science to students in grades 4, 6 and 8 and the standards-based assessment in social studies to students in grades 5 and 7. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-325		Administer summative assessment to all students in grades 3 through 8. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-325

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Accountability	Develop and recommend a single accountability system that meets federal and state accountability requirements (by Fall 2017) S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-325				
Assessment – NAEP			Coordinate the annual administration of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-330		

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Assessment – PSAT, pre-ACT, Aspire				Fund PSAT, Pre-ACT or Aspire for all 10th grade students. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-340	Offer PSAT, Pre-ACT or Aspire to each 10th grade student. Schools and districts shall use these assessments as diagnostic tools to support students academic needs and to provide guidance and direction for parents and students in planning for postsecondary. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-340

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Standards and assessments review and revision	Advise and consent to changes or additions to content standards recommended by the Department of Education. Advise and consent to changes or additions to an assessment. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-355 With the Dept. of Education, notify the General Assembly and Governor of any plans to change an existing standard or engage in cyclical review of standards. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-355	Adopt revisions to content standards or new standards, pursuant to the recommendation of the Department of Education and the advice and consent of the EOC and General Assembly. Approval from the General Assembly is not required if the change or new standard is developed by the Department of Education. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-355	In consultation with the EOC, provide for cyclical review by academic area of the state standards and assessments. After each academic area is reviewed, the department must present a report on recommended revisions to the EOC and the State Board of Education for consideration. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-350 With the EOC, notify the General Assembly and Governor of any plans to change an existing standard or engage in cyclical review of standards. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-355		

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Analysis of Assessment Results			Annually convene a team of curriculum experts to analyze the results of the assessments and performance item-by-item. This analysis should result in additional information about assessment results to be disseminated to districts no later than Jan. 15 of the subsequent year. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-350		
Accreditation		Revise criteria governing the adoption of instructional materials to ensure alignment with grade-specific content standards. Develop criteria for the accreditation system. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-700	Seek broad-based stakeholder engagement and use input to provide recommendations regarding the state's accreditation system to the State Board of Education. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-700		

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
			Provide assessment results annually on individual students and schools by Aug. 1. Standards-based assessment data must be longitudinally matched and include information on performance of subgroups of students within the school. Must work with the Division of Accountability (EOC) in developing the format of the assessment results. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-360		Disseminate assessment results (individual and school) to parents. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-360
Reporting			Provide student performance results on college and career readiness and summative assessments to the Education Oversight Committee within 30 days of providing the data to school districts. The EOC and Department must agree on the format for the data reporting. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-325		

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
	Working with the State Board of Education, establish the format of the comprehensive, web-based annual report card on performance for the State and for individual schools and school districts.	Work with the EOC to establish the format of the comprehensive, web-based annual report card on performance for the State and for individual schools and school districts.	Publish the report card to all schools and districts of the state on the department home page (and in a downloadable PDF format) no later than Sept. 1.		Publish district and school report cards on their websites and print report cards when requested.
					The school's report card must be made available to parents no later than Sept. 1
	Working with the State Board of Education and a broad-based group of stakeholders, determine the criteria for and establish performance ratings of excellent, good, average, below average and unsatisfactory.	Working with the EOC and a broad-based group of stakeholders, determine the criteria for and establish performance ratings of excellent, good, average, below average and unsatisfactory.	S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-930		The principal of each school must write a narrative of the school's progress after reviewing the school's performance on statewide assessments and results of other report card criteria, and must be reviewed by the district superintendent.
		Working with the EOC, establish student performance indicators to be included as a component of a school's overall performance.			
Reporting - Report Cards	Working with the State Board of Education, establish student performance indicators to be included as a component of a school's overall performance.	Promulgate regulations outlining procedures for data collection, data accuracy, data reporting and consequences for failure to provide data required in this section.			School/district must advertise the report card results in at least one SC daily newspaper within 45 days of receipt. (Unless a newspaper circulated in the school's geographic area covers the report card as a news item)
	Report must include performance by subgroups of students.	S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-900			S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-930
	Working with the State Board of Education, establish an annual report card of the performance of military-connected children who attend school in SC.				
	S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-900				

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
	Select a broad-based group of stakeholders (must include the Superintendent and Governor or Governor's designee) and work with the State Board of Education to conduct a comprehensive review of the accountability system every five years, beginning in 2020.	Work with the EOC to conduct a comprehensive review of the accountability system every five years. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-910	Superintendent must engage in the EOC's review of the accountability system. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-910		
Reporting – 5 year review	Provide the General Assembly with a report on the findings of the review and recommended actions to improve the accountability system and accelerate improvements in school and student performance. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-910				

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Reporting – charter, alternative, and career and technology schools	Working with the State Board of Education and the School to Work Advisory Council, develop a report card for career and technology schools. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-920	Working with the EOC and the School to Work Advisory Council, develop a report card for career and technology schools. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-920	Request and receive data from charter schools.		Report charter school data for schools authorized by the district on the district's report card. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-920
Awarding Performance		Working with the Dept. of Education, establish the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program to recognize and reward schools for academic achievement and closing achievement gaps. Promulgate rules for use of award funds. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1100	Working with the State Board of Education, establish the Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards Program to recognize and reward schools for academic achievement and closing achievement gaps. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1100		

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Flexibility Status		Grant flexibility to receive exemptions from regulations if certain criteria are met (award winners, meeting improvement standards, or a high-risk school for which a review team recommends flexibility) S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1110 and S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1120	Notify schools of flexibility status changes. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1110		
Professional Development			May provide professional development services to districts. Create validation process for teachers to administer the South Carolina Readiness Assessment and professional development on effective utilization		Spend at least 25% of PD funds on PD that supports that teaching of reading.

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
District Accountability System		Develop regulations for district to establish and annually review a performance-based accountability system. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1300	Recommend regulations for the State Board of Education to require districts to establish performance-based accountability systems. Offer technical support to districts in the development of an accountability plan. Review accountability plans as part of the peer review process (Section 59-139-10(H)). S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1300		Each board of trustees must establish and annually review a performance-based accountability system (following regulations from the State Board of Education) to reinforce the state accountability system. Parents, teachers and principals must be involved in the development, annual review and revisions of the district accountability system. Provide school improvement reports to parents by Feb. 1. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1300

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention and assistance			Review school renewal plans and provide support and technical assistance that it will make available to support the school's plan. Provide regional workshops to assist schools in formulating school renewal plans. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1500		When a school receives a rating of below average or school/district at-risk, the school must work together with the School Improvement Council to review and revise a school improvement plan. The plan must be consistent with technical assistance criteria approved by the EOC and the State Department of Education. The Superintendent and Board of Trustees review and the Board of Trustees approves the plan. The district must provide support for the implementation of the plan, teacher PD plans must be updated and parents must be notified of the rating and actions that will be taken to improve. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1500

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention -- External review team process for at-risk schools	In consultation with the Department of Education, develop the criteria for the identification of persons to serve as members of an external review team. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1510	Receive and approve recommendations from the external review team. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1510		Implement an external review team process for a school receiving an "at-risk" rating or upon request of a school rated below average. Consult with the EOC on the criteria for identifying members of the external review team. Notify the principal, superintendent, and board of trustees of recommendations approved by the State Board of Education and the support the Department will provide to the school. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1510	

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention – declaration of emergency		Conduct an administrative hearing for a school that has not satisfactorily implemented the plan or recommendations approved by the State Board of Education. Approve the superintendent's authority to declare and emergency in the school. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1520	After an administrative hearing, and with the approval of the state board of Education, if recommendations and actions are not satisfactorily implemented by the school on a timeline developed by the State Board of Education, the superintendent may: • Continue to provide TA and advise to implement the recommendations • Declare a state of emergency in the school and replace the school's principal • Declare a state of emergency in the school and assume management of the school. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1520		

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention – teacher and principal specialists	In consultation with the Department of Education, develop criteria for the identification, selection and training of principals to serve as principal specialists on site. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1530	Extend the term of a principal specialist to a third year if requested by the local school board and recommended by the external review team. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1530	In consultation with the Division of Accountability (EOC), develop a program for identification, selection and training of teachers to serve as teacher specialists on site. Consult with the EOC on the criteria for the identification, selection and training of principals to serve as principal specialists. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1530		
Intervention – mentoring program for principals	Work with the Department of Education to design a mentoring program for principals in schools designated below average or school/district at-risk. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1540		Working with the EOC, design a mentoring program for principals in schools designated below average or school/district at-risk. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1540		

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
		Working with the Accountability Division (EOC) and the Department of Education, establish grant programs for schools designated as below average and unsatisfactory.		Establish a public school assistance fund within the state general fund for the purpose of providing financial support to poorly-performing schools. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1550	
Intervention - grant program		In consultation with the commission, administer and authorize any disbursements from the public school assistance fund. Promulgate rules to implement the grant program. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1550			

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention – external review committee for below average district		Approve district external review committee. Approve recommendations from the external review committee S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1560	Notify districts of the recommendations approved by the State Board of Education and support that it will provide to support those recommendations. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1560		When a district receives a rating of below average, the superintendent shall appoint an external review committee (to include Department staff). Within three months, the committee shall report recommendations to the superintendent, board of trustees and the State Board of Education. (and annually report over the next four years to the board of trustees and the state board). S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1560

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention – districts and state of emergency	With the Department of Education, nominate members to a pool to serve as nonvoting members to the local district board to represent the interests of the State Board of Education. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1570	Pay compensation to any nonvoting members of a district board selected from the EOC/ Department pool to represent the interests of the State Board. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1570	If recommendations are not satisfactorily implemented on the timeline developed by the State Board of Education, the board may approve authority for the Superintendent to: • Continue advice and TA including training for trustees and the superintendent • Mediate personnel matters if the board informs the State Board of Education that the district board is considering removal of the superintendent. • Recommend to the Governor that the office of superintendent be declared vacant and subsequently furnish an interim replacement until the district board fills the position. • Declare a state of emergency in the district and assume management of the district. With the EOC, nominate members to a pool to serve as nonvoting members to the local district board to represent the interests of the State Board of Education. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1570		May appoint nonvoting members to the board of trustees from the EOC/Department pool to represent the interests of the State Board.

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention – technical assistance			Provide technical assistance to underperforming (below average or at-risk) schools and districts as directed by the Superintendent. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1575		
Intervention - Technical Assistance to schools and districts			Increase the delivery of quality technical assistance services and the assessment of instructional programs to schools and districts. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1580		

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SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention - Reallocation of technical assistance funding			Establish criteria for reviewing and assisting schools rated school/ district at-risk or below average. (in order to inform reallocation of funding provided under the Education Accountability Act)		
			Provide information on the technical assistance strategies and their impact to the State Board of Education, the EOC, the various general assembly committees annually.		
			S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1590		

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention - Parent orientation classes					A school receiving a school/district at-risk absolute academic performance rating shall offer an orientation class for parents. [parents or guardians shall attend each year the class is offered.] S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1600

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TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Intervention – assistance to districts and monitoring of performance			Develop a system for providing services and TA to districts.		
			Report to the General Assembly on the progress of the system, including assistance provided and data documenting the impact on student academic achievement and high school graduation rates.		
			Monitor the professional development of staff and administrators in districts that are underperforming to ascertain what improvements and changes are necessary. Monitor the operations of school boards in underperforming districts in order to determine if they are operating efficiently and effectively. Communicate improvements and changes to school districts and other entities.		
			S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1610		

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Public Information	Appoint a committee to plan and oversee the development of a public information campaign to apprise the public of the status of the public schools and the importance of high standards for academic performance. Administer and authorize any disbursements from the fund. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1700			Establish a fund withing the state general fund to accept grants, gifts, donations or appropriations for the public information campaign. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1700	
Misc.		Through the Department of Education, establish a grant program to encourage school districts to test modified school year or school day schedules. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1920	Determine format for district applications for these grants. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1920	Appropriate funds for the modified school year or school day grant program. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1920	

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Professional development	Provide for a comprehensive review of state and local professional developing (for principals and teachers). Recommend better ways to provide and meet the needs for professional development. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1930		Receive the comprehensive review from the EOC and develop an accountability system to ensure that identified professional development standards are effectively implemented. Provide information on the identified standards to all principals and other PD leaders and provide training for all school districts in how to design comprehensive professional development programs. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1930		

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Accountability for CBE pilot	Work with the Department to design and pilot school district accountability models that focus on competency-based education. Accept applications (with the Department) for district participation. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1940		Working with the EOC, design and pilot school district accountability models that focus on competency-based education. Accept applications (with the EOC) for district participation. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1940		
Longitudinal Data System			Work with the Revenue and Fiscal Affairs office, along with various other state agencies to develop, implement and maintain a universal identification system for a longitudinal data system. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1950		

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SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 18)

TOPIC	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	GENERAL ASSEMBLY	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
School growth measurement	Approve school growth measurement system. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1960	Approve school growth measurement system. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1960	Use a value-added system that calculates student progress or growth to measure annual school growth. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1960		

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Appendix C

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 28)

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	GOVERNOR	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/ SUPERINTENDENT	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	PARENTS
General and communications	Require state agencies that serve families and children to collaborate and establish networks with schools to heighten awareness of the importance of parental influence on the academic success of their children and to encourage and assist parents to become more involved in their children's education. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-120	Implement a public relations campaign to promote the importance of parental involvement. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-190 and S.C. Code Ann. § 59-18-1700 With the Superintendent of Public Instruction, develop and publish jointly informational materials for distribution to all public school parents and to teachers the grade-level academic content standards and advice on how parents can help their children achieve the standards and the relationship of the standards to the state assessments AND printed information about the standards and advice relative to parental involvement in their children's education for visible display and use in every public school K-12 classroom.	Recognize districts and schools where parental involvement significantly increases beyond stated goals and objectives. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-130	Design parental involvement and best practices training programs in conjunction with higher education institutions and the pre-K through grade 12 education community, including parental program coordinators. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-140 Promote parental involvement as a priority for all levels from pre-K through grade 12. Designate a Department of Education staff position whose specific role is to coordinate statewide initiatives to support school and district parental involvement. Collect and disseminate to districts and schools practices shown by research to be effective in increasing parental involvement at all grade levels.	Consider joining national organizations which promote and provide technical assistance on various proven parental involvement frameworks and models. Incorporate, where possible, proven parental involvement practices into existing policies and efforts. Adopt policies that emphasize the importance, strive to increase and clearly define expectations for effective parental involvement practices in the district schools. Provide incentives and formal recognition for schools that significantly increase parental involvement as defined by the State Board of Education. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-160	Parents are expected to: (1) uphold high expectations for academic achievement; (2) expect and communicate expectations for success; (3) recognize that parental involvement in middle and high school is equally as critical as in elementary school; (4) ensure attendance and punctuality; (5) attend parent-teacher conferences; (6) monitor and check homework; (7) communicate with the school and teachers; (8) build partnerships with teachers to promote successful school experiences;

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 28)

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	GOVERNOR	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/ SUPERINTENDENT	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	PARENTS
General and communications (CONT'D)			S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-200 The Education Oversight Committee shall disseminate the informational materials prepared pursuant to Section 59-28-200 to all districts and schools. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-210 In cooperation with representatives of the Department of Commerce, the Department of Revenue, and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, develop recommendations for employer tax credits as incentives to: (1) provide parent-employee release time for parent-teacher conferences or attendance at their children's academic-related events without loss of pay; and	Sponsor statewide conferences on best practices. Identify, recommend, and implement ways to integrate programs and funding for maximum benefit to enhance parental involvement. Enroll the Department of Education as a state member of national organizations which promote proven parental involvement frameworks, models, and practices and provide related services to state and local members. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-150 With the EOC, develop and publish jointly informational materials for distribution to all public school parents and to teachers the grade-level academic content standards and advice on how parents can help their children achieve the standards and the	Each Superintendent shall consider ways to implement and integrate parental engagement at the school level. Disseminate expectations to all parents of the district. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-170	(9) attend, when possible, school events; (10) model desirable behaviors; (11) use encouraging words; (12) stimulate thought and curiosity; and (13) show support for school expectations and efforts to increase student learning. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-180

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 28)

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	GOVERNOR	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/ SUPERINTENDENT	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	PARENTS
General and communications (CONT'D)		(2) develop workplace policies which enable parents to improve their literacy, assist their children with academics, and become more involved in their child's education as a result of employers working with local school officials. Report recommendations to the Senate Finance and Education Committees, House Ways and Means Committee, and the House Education and Public Works Committee no later than January 1, 2001 S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-220		relationship of the standards to the state assessments AND printed information about the standards and advice relative to parental involvement in their children's education for visible display and use in every public school K-12 classroom. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-200		

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 28)

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	GOVERNOR	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/ SUPERINTENDENT	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	PARENTS
School Improvement Plans			Require school and district long-range improvement plans required in Section 59-139-10 to include parental involvement goals, objectives, and an evaluation component. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-130			

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 28)

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	GOVERNOR	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/ SUPERINTENDENT	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	PARENTS
Professional development and training			Establish criteria for staff training on school initiatives and activities shown by research to increase parental involvement in their children's education. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-130	Work collaboratively with the Commission on Higher Education to incorporate parental involvement training into teacher preparation and principal preparation programs. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-140 Provide parental involvement staff development training for district and school liaisons. Provide technical assistance relating to parental involvement training to districts and schools. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-150	Provide for all faculty and staff parental involvement orientation and training through staff development on an ongoing basis as indicated by results of evaluations of district and school parental involvement practices and as required by the State Board of Education. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-160	

SUMMARY OF STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES – PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION ACT (TITLE 59, CHAPTER 28)

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	GOVERNOR	EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (EOC)	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/ SUPERINTENDENT	LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	PARENTS
					Require an annual briefing on district and school parental involvement programs including findings from state and local evaluations on the success of the district and schools' efforts.	
					Include parental involvement expectations as part of the superintendent's evaluation.	
		The Education Oversight Committee shall survey parents to determine if state and local efforts are effective in increasing parental involvement. This information shall be used in the public awareness campaign required by the Education Accountability Act to promote the importance of parental involvement. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-190		Monitor and evaluate parental involvement programs statewide by designing a statewide system which will determine program effectiveness and identify best practices and report evaluation findings and implications to the General Assembly, State Board of Education, and Education Oversight Committee. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-150	S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-160 Include parental involvement expectations as part of each principal's evaluation.	
Evaluation					Include information about parental involvement opportunities and participation in the district's annual report. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-28-170	

Appendix D: Provisos 2017-18 and 2019-20

2019-20 GENERAL APPROPRIATION ACT

1A.49. (SDEEIA: South Carolina Public Charter School Funding) The funds appropriated in Part IA, Section VIII.H. South Carolina Public Charter School Statewide Sponsor must be allocated in the following manner to students at charter schools within the South Carolina Public Charter School District or within a registered Institution of Higher Education: Pupils enrolled in virtual charter schools sponsored by the South Carolina Public Charter School District or a registered Institution of Higher Education shall receive $1,900 per weighted pupil and pupils enrolled in brick and mortar charter schools sponsored by the South Carolina Public Charter School District or a registered Institution of Higher Education shall receive $3,600 per weighted pupil. Three and four year old students with a disability, who are eligible for services under IDEA and enrolled in brick and mortar charter schools sponsored by the South Carolina Public Charter School District or registered IHE, shall receive $3,600 per student for brick and mortar charter schools. Three and four year old students with a disability, who are eligible for serves under IDEA and enrolled in charter schools sponsored by the South Carolina Public Charter School District or a registered IHE, shall be included in student counts for the South Carolina Public Charter School District and registered IHE's solely for purposes of funding under this proviso. Any unexpended funds, not to exceed ten percent of the prior year appropriation, must be carried forward from the prior fiscal year and expended for the same purpose. Any unexpended funds exceeding ten percent of the prior year appropriation must be transferred to the Charter School Facility Revolving Loan Program established in Section 5940175. For Fiscal Year 201920, the timelines set forth for ruling on charter school applications are extended for sixty calendar days for all applications submitted to the South Carolina Public Charter School District if the district determines that an applicant should be permitted to amend its application to meet the requirements of Section 594060 and Section 594070, of the 1976 Code, based on an applicant's proposal to address an existing achievement gap utilizing an evidencebased educational program in an underserved geographical area of the state including, but not limited to, charter schools proposed to be located in any school district that is a plaintiff in the Abbeville law suit. The South Carolina Public Charter School District shall report to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee on the outcomes of this extended time for a hearing at the end of the application cycle.

In addition, from the EIA funds appropriated in and carried forward from Act 97 of 2017, the Department of Education shall distribute to the South Carolina Public Charter School District, an amount equal to $3,600 per pupil for three and four year old students with a disability, who were eligible for services under IDEA and who were enrolled in brick and mortar charter schools sponsored by the district or registered institution of higher education during the 20172018 School Year and for whom EIA funding previously was not provided. The district shall distribute the funds on a per pupil basis to the charter schools which provided the IDEA services and shall not retain any portion thereof. The schools shall submit documentation of the student count to both the district and the department before the funds are dispersed.

The Education Oversight Committee shall issue a report to the General Assembly recommending one or more funding systems for charter schools using such indicators as graduation rate and academic achievement data. At a minimum the report will break out graduation and achievement data by school. Any charter school receiving funding pursuant to this proviso must send the required information to the Education Oversight Committee by October 1 and the Education Oversight Committee shall issue its report to the General

Assembly by June 1. Any school failing to report this information to the Education Oversight Committee shall have one percent of the funds received pursuant to this proviso withheld until they become compliant with the data submission requirements.

1A.67. (SDEEIA: Grants Committee) Of the funds appropriated to the Department of Education for Innovation Grants, the grants committee, in, shall give priority to funding projects funded by the Education Oversight Committee Partnerships of Innovation in the prior fiscal year while keeping with its established criteria. Additionally, the committee shall accept applications per the established process for new grantees not to exceed the amount appropriated by the General Assembly.

The Superintendent of Education is directed to appoint an independent grants committee to develop the process for awarding the grants or directly purchasing services. The committee members shall serve four year terms. The process shall include the application procedure, selection process, and matching grant formula if applicable. The grants committee must be comprised of seven members, three members selected from the education community and four members selected from the business community. The chairman of the committee shall be selected by the committee members at the first meeting of the committee. The suggested criteria for awarding the grants to schools or school districts or directly purchasing services must include, but are not limited to:

(1) a demonstrated ability to meet the match throughout the granting period;

(2) a demonstrated ability to implement the initiative or model as set forth in the application;

(3) identification of key measurable benchmarks in the education continuum that must be improved to raise student achievement and ensure all students graduate college, career and civic ready;

(4) a demonstrated ability to be both replicable and scalable with priority given to those projects that focus on applied learning opportunities and experiences, especially in the STEM or STEAM fields;

(5) blended and personalized learning focused on content mastery and experiential learning; and

(6) innovative strategies to close student achievement gaps, with a focus on below average and unsatisfactory schools.

No matching amount will exceed more than seventy percent of the grant request or be less than ten percent of the request. The required match may be met by funds or by inkind donations, such as technology, to be further defined by the grants committee. Public school districts and schools that have high poverty and low achievement will receive priority for grants when their applications are judged to meet the criteria established for the grant program. Grantees and service providers will be required to participate in an external evaluation as prescribed by the committee and agreed upon in the application and award process.

The committee shall submit an annual report to the Governor, the Chairman of House Ways and Means and the Chairman of Senate Finance by June 30.

1.64. (SDE: South Carolina Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program) There is created the South Carolina Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program. The purpose of this matching grants program is to encourage and sustain partnerships between a community and its local public school district or school for the implementation of innovative, state-of-the-art education initiatives and models to improve student

learning. The initiatives and models funded by the grant must be well designed, based on strong evidence of effectiveness, and have a history of improved student performance.

The General Assembly finds that the success offered by these initiatives and programs is assured best when vigorous community support is integral to their development and implementation. It is the intent of this proviso to encourage public school and district communities and their entrepreneurial public educators to undertake state-of-the-art initiatives to improve student learning and to share the results of these efforts with the states public education community.

As used in this proviso:

(1) Community is defined as a group of parents, educators, and individuals from business, faith groups, elected officials, nonprofit organizations and others who support the public school district or school in its efforts to provide an outstanding education for each child. As applied to the schools impacted within a district or an individual school, community includes the school faculty and the School Improvement Council as established in Section 59-20-60 of the 1976 Code;

(2) Poverty is defined as the percent of students eligible in the prior year for the free and reduced price lunch program and or Medicaid; and

(3) Achievement is as established by the Education Oversight Committee for the report card ratings developed pursuant to Section 59-18-900 of the 1976 Code.

The Executive Director of the Education Oversight Committee is directed to appoint an independent grants committee to develop the process for awarding the grants including the application procedure, selection process, and matching grant formula. The grants committee will be comprised of seven members, three members selected from the education community and four members from the business community. The chairman of the committee will be selected by the committee members at the first meeting of the grants committee. The grants committee will review and select the recipients of the Community Block Grants for Education.

The criteria for awarding the grants must include, but are not limited to:

(1) the establishment and continuation of a robust community advisory committee to leverage funding, expertise, and other resources to assist the district or school throughout the implementation of the initiatives funded through the Block Grant Program;

(2) a demonstrated ability to meet the match throughout the granting period;

(3) a demonstrated ability to implement the initiative or model as set forth in the application; and

(4) an explanation of the manner in which the initiative supports the districts or schools strategic plan required by Section 59-18-1310 of the 1976 Code.

In addition, the district or school, with input from the community advisory committee, must include:

(1) a comprehensive plan to examine delivery implementation and measure impact of the model;

(2) a report on implementation problems and successes and impact of the innovation or model; and

(3) evidence of support for the project from the school district administration when an individual school applies for a grant.

The match required from a grant recipient is based on the poverty of the district or school. No matching amount will exceed more than seventy percent of the grant request or be less than ten percent of the request. The required match may be met by funds or by in-kind donations, such as technology, to be further defined by the grants committee. Public school districts and schools that have high poverty and low achievement will receive priority for grants when their applications are judged to meet the criteria established for the grant program.

However, no grant may exceed $250,000 annually unless the grants committee finds that exceptional circumstances warrant exceeding this amount.

The Education Oversight Committee will review the grantee reports and examine the implementation of the initiatives and models to understand the delivery of services and any contextual factors. The Oversight Committee will then highlight the accomplishments and common challenges of the initiatives and models funded by the Community Block Grant for Education Pilot Program to share the lessons learned with the states public education community.

For the current fiscal year, funds allocated to the Community Block Grant for Education Pilot Program must be used to provide or expand high-quality early childhood programs for a targeted population of at-risk four-year-olds. High-quality is defined as meeting the minimum program requirements of the Child Early Reading Development and Education Program and providing measurable high-quality child-teacher interactions, curricula and instruction. Priority will be given to applications that involve public-private partnerships between school districts, schools, Head Start, and private child care providers who collaborate to: (1) provide high-quality programs to four-year-olds to maximize the return on investment; (2) assist in making the transition to kindergarten; (3) improve the early literacy, social and emotional, and numeracy readiness of children; and (4) engage families in improving their children's readiness.

2017-18 GENERAL APPROPRIATION ACT

1A.43. (SDE-EIA: EOC Partnerships for Innovation) Of the funds appropriated or carried forward from the prior fiscal year, the Education Oversight Committee is directed to participate in public-private partnerships to promote innovative ways to transform the assessment of public education in South Carolina that support increased student achievement in reading and college and career readiness. The Education Oversight Committee may provide financial support to districts and to public-private partnerships for planning and support to implement, sustain and evaluate the innovation and to develop a matrix and measurements of student academic success based on evidence-based models. These funds may also be used to support the innovative delivery of science, technology, and genetic education and exposure to career opportunities in science, including mobile science laboratory programs, to students enrolled in the Abbeville equity school districts and students in high poverty schools. These funds may also focus on creating public-private literacy partnerships utilizing a 2:1 matching funds provision when the initiative employs research-based methods, has demonstrated success in increasing reading proficiency of struggling readers, and works directly with high poverty schools and districts. The committee will work to expand the engagement of stakeholders including state agencies and boards like the Educational Television Commission, businesses, and higher education

institutions. The committee shall annually report to the General Assembly on the measurement results.

The Education Oversight Committee and the Department of Education shall recommend to the Senate Finance Committee and to the House Ways and Means Committee a plan to develop and implement a strategic grants process for reviewing, awarding, and monitoring innovative education strategies in schools and districts. The plan would identify the process and priority areas for funding that address the educational needs of the state. The plan must be submitted by January 15, 2018.

1A.50. (SDE-EIA: Surplus) For Fiscal Year 2017-18, EIA cash funds from the prior fiscal year and EIA funds not otherwise appropriated or authorized must be carried forward and expended on the following items in the order listed: 1. Computer Science Task Force - $400,000; 2. EOC-Partnerships - $6,281,500; 3. Industry Certification - $3,000,000; 4. SDE-School Districts Capital Improvement Plan - $55,828,859; 5. SDE-Technical Assistance - $1,308,500; and 6. SDE-K-12 Funding Gap - $450,000. The Department of Education shall disburse the funds for the K-12 Funding Gap proportionately to school districts that, in the current fiscal year, are cumulatively appropriated and allocated at least eight percent less state funds than the school district was appropriated and allocated in Fiscal Year 2016-17. For purposes of this proviso, state funds includes Education Improvement Act funds. Further, the amounts appropriated and allocated in Part IA and Sections 1 and 1A of this Part IB, shall be considered for purposes of determining whether a school district received less state funds.

Appendix E: Interview Questions

1. Please share your name and title.

2. How did you come into this role (appointed, elected, hired)? How long have you been in your role?

3. What is your previous professional experience in education leadership in South Carolina?

4. Please describe in your own words what your organization does for the education system in South Carolina.

5. What formal authority (constitutional, statutory, or regulatory) related to education policy does your organization have?

6. What informal authority related to education policy does your organization have?

7. Who are your organization's stakeholders or customers?

8. Has your organization been granted any emergency authorities related to education policy during the COVID-19 pandemic? If yes, what are they?

9. How does your organization work with other education leaders/governing authorities? Would you describe these relationships as largely positive or largely negative?

10. How do the different education leaders/governing authorities in South Carolina communicate?

11. How do the different education leaders/governing authorities in South Carolina work together on policy priorities?

12. What suggestions do you have in relation to making the education governance structure in South Carolina better? What resources would be needed for that change – funding, stakeholder buy-in, voter engagement, legislations, executive order, etc.?

13. Do you believe there is overlap in governance structures, duties not assigned that should be?

14. Anything else you would like to share?

Appendix F: Interviews Conducted by ECS

Representative Rita Allison
Chair, South Carolina House Education Committee

Dr. Jo Anne Anderson
First EOC Executive Director

Melanie Barton
Current EOC member, Governor McMaster's Senior Education Advisor, former EOC Executive Director

Mike Brennan
Chair of South Carolina State Board of Education, former EOC member

Jon Butzon
South Carolina State Board of Education member

Barbara Hairfield
Current EOC member; educator from Charleston, SC

Wes Hayes
Chair of South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, former EOC member and State Senator

Senator Greg Hembree
Chair, South Carolina Senate Education Committee, current EOC member

Dr. John Lane
Director of Academic Affairs, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

Dr. Danny Merck
District Superintendent, Pickens County Schools

Georgia Mjartan
Executive Director of SC First Steps

Rusty Monhollon
Executive Director of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education

Barbara Neilsen
Former South Carolina State Superintendent of Education

Scott Price
Executive Director, South Carolina School Boards Association

Neil C. Robinson, Jr.
Former Chair of EOC

Superintendent Molly Spearman
South Carolina State Superintendent of Education; ex-officio, non-voting member of the EOC

Patti Tate
Current EOC member; educator in Rock Hill, SC; former State Teacher of the Year

John Warner
Former EOC member

Ellen Weaver
Current EOC Chair
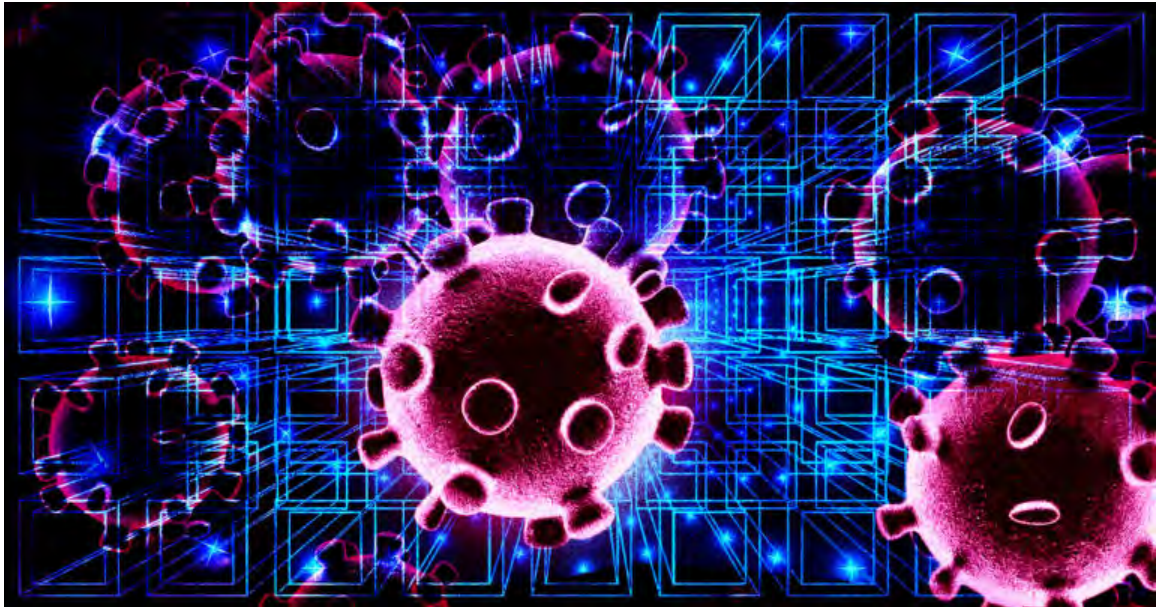
Effects of Remote Learning in South Carolina During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Influence of the Epidemic on Our State's Educators, Students and Families

Christine DiStefano, PhD

December 2020

Executive Summary

- A total of 847 educators and 263 parents responded to the Remote Learning Experience survey. The samples included persons from a variety of locales, varied amounts of work experience for educators, and encompassed experiences for children from PK through 12th grade.

- Both parents and educators recognized the difficulties faced by schools and school districts in Spring 2020. A variety of modes were used deliver content, with asynchronous lessons or distributing physical packets of materials as most popular options. Physical packets of materials were an option for students in lower grades as well as for families without reliable Internet access.

- Educators recognized that they had to scramble when schools closed abruptly in March 2020 to provide lessons and, educators recognized that the information was at a lower level of rigor as was delivered in-person. Parents, however, reported conflicting information as to the level of the lessons, in some places noting the lessons were "busy work" and in other responses, noting that the rigor level was approximately equal to in-person learning. Student grades, however, were reported by parents as largely the same at the end of 2019-20 as in previous quarters of the school year.

- Related to remote learning in Spring 2020, there were benefits and challenges noted across the two sets of respondents. Unexpected benefits of the remote learning experience included educator pride to show that they could meet the needs of their communities and to work together as a team. Educators also felt that districts/schools were concerned for their personal health in Spring 2020. Parents noted similar themes, stating that they were pleased at the ability of their child(ren) to complete schoolwork remotely and also with the district's concerns for children's health.

- Challenges noted by educators in Spring 2020 were largely related to student issues and lesson content. Educators noted that the tasks were less rigorous than in-person learning and also took a long time to prepare. Student Internet capability was noted as problematic as well. However, the biggest complaint for educators was the amount of missing work turned in by students.

- During the 2020 summer break, educators tried to solve problems related to student connectivity (e.g., Hot Spots, lack of technical support, access to Internet, and device shortages for students.) Many school districts spent time and money during Summer 2020 to provide additional materials and support to students. Schools/districts did request feedback from parents as the 2020-21 school year was planned. Teachers/educators were upset that parent feedback was solicited and considered, yet teachers mentioned feeling "left out" of many of the decision making-processes.

- In Fall 2020, schools and families were provided more options for remote learning. Use of paper packets was greatly reduced, due to connectivity work and securing devices for students. Educators noted a big increase in the ability to hold synchronized class meetings. While parents elected one (or few) ways for their child(ren) would attend school, educators were faced with providing service through multiple modes, often simultaneously. Most parents elected to continue with virtual learning or participated in a hybrid mix (some in-person, some online). Teachers noted frustrations with having to accommodate so many different learning modes simultaneously.

- There were different challenges noted by parents and teachers in Fall 2020 than were present in Spring 2020. In the fall, educators recognized that there was still high levels of stress on teachers/administrators, that students still had a lot of missing work, and online courses were very time consuming. Parents were concerned with the lack of social interaction for students, monitoring children's schoolwork with family and work duties, and increased stress on children and families. However, providing free meals for all students, effective computing devices, rigorous activities, and safety measures were beneficial.

- Most parents and teachers did not see drawbacks related to the decision to remove standardized testing in Spring 2020 (as well as the potential for Spring 2021 waiver). Both parents and educators noted that there would be lower stress, anxiety, and pressure – on both students and teachers. Teachers would have greater freedom to engage in meaningful lessons without pressure to "teach to the test."

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Effects of Remote Learning in South Carolina
During the COVID-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The start of 2020 brought about the most serious world-wide event in recent history. In the United States, most citizens learned about the virus shortly after a cluster of severe pneumonia cases was reported on New Year's Eve 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China. From January to the present, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) evolved from an isolated disease to a global pandemic. The virus has brought countries to a standstill, pushed hospital systems to the brink, and dragged the global economy into a recession.

In the U.S., the pandemic spread rapidly in the early months of 2020. As the number of people who became sickened with COVID-19 increased, the U.S. government declared a public health emergency on February 3, 2020. Roughly one month later, state governments began issuing stay-at-home orders, mandating that all residents stay at home except to go to an essential job or shop for essential needs. South Carolina followed similar procedures.

To help curb the rapid spread of COVID-19, Governor Henry McMaster ordered all public schools in South Carolina to close on March 15, 2020 for two weeks (https://governor.sc.gov/executive-branch/executive-orders). Instead, of attending typical "brick-and-mortar" schooling, distance learning was ordered to take place. School closures were thought to be a temporary solution; however, on April 22, 2020, Governor McMaster announced that all South Carolina schools would remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 academic year.

While citizens knew the reason to close schools was to protect people from illness during a serious public health emergency, the repercussion was a major disruption in the lives of educators, children, and families across the state. Educators scrambled to provide instruction and lessons which could be completed via remote learning using alternative teaching methods, such as distributing physical packets of materials to children/families or holding virtual class meetings. Where available, schools implementing 1:1 technology instruction sent computers (e.g., Chromebooks, iPads) home with children.

While citizens across the country hoped for the virus to abate during the summer of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic did not slow. In South Carolina (and across the U.S.) school districts realized that safety precautions to protect children and educators from becoming ill would part of the 2020-21 academic year planning. However, instead of solely providing instruction through remote learning, Gov. McMaster announced on July 15, 2020 that all South Carolina school districts were required to offer families options for face-to-face learning. Now, midway into the 2020-21 academic year, educators, families, and children are attending schooling through multiple modes as districts across the state continue to deal with the virus.

The sudden rise of COVID-19, and its continued presence, has affected education in South Carolina in many ways. These effects have imposed additional stressors on school administrators, teachers, students, and their families. This unprecedented experience may reveal unintended benefits along with challenges. To

gain a greater understanding of the effects of remote education due to COVID-19, this report summarizes feedback from educators and families regarding their experiences. Lessons learned can help inform policy makers, educators, and stakeholders interested in education. Feedback from educators and parents can be used to improve a variety of areas related to education in South Carolina such as remote learning, technology infrastructure, computing needs, curriculum, and modes of instruction.

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

Two separate surveys were constructed to capture feedback from stakeholders. The first survey was developed for educators to gauge experiences of administrators, teachers, and other school personnel related to remote learning. The survey solicited educator feedback regarding experiences at three time periods: 1) spring of the 2019-20 academic year, 2) summer 2020 when planning for the new school year, and 3) at the start of the 2020-21 academic year. A second (separate) survey was developed for parents/guardians of children attending South Carolina schools. The parent survey asked guardians to provide their perspectives of remote learning and other educational activities in the spring of the 2019-20 academic year and at the start of the 2020-21 academic year.

Both surveys included a mix of closed-ended items and open-ended items. Closed-ended items included formats of Likert scaling, ranking, and checklists, were included to facilitate ease of data collection. These questions were summarized by providing frequency information, percentages, and item averages. To allow more detailed reflections, open-ended items were also included; responses were summarized by grouping similar statements and reactions to identify underlying themes. Descriptive information, such as school location, school size, and district name, were requested; however, surveys were purposefully created to be anonymous to allow respondents to provide candid feedback. In this summary, information will largely be aggregated; however, select statements from open-ended questions were included as exemplars of themes.

To develop the surveys, the evaluator drafted items for the surveys to address the objectives of the study. After drafting, the evaluator collaborated with members of the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) for editing, ensuring that surveys included item content was clear, easy to read, relevant for the appropriate audience, and could be easily understood. After finalization, surveys were input into the online platform SurveyMonkey for distribution. An Internet link was emailed to prospective respondents for completion on a variety of devices (computer, tablet, phone). A copy of the Educator Survey and the Parent Survey are included in Supplemental Materials.

In early November 2020, surveys were sent to interested participants or websites with email banks (e.g., LinkedIn, Constant Contact) through email. Survey links were also forwarded or posted on school/communication websites by various organizations (e.g., school Parent-Teacher Organizations, District Offices, Palmetto State Teachers Association) to increase the number of respondents. The survey website captured responses for approximately three weeks, closing on November 29, 2020. Given that the links were forwarded, the response rate cannot be estimated. In addition, use of an email link may limit the ability to capture information from stakeholders, especially families from lower income backgrounds and/or more rural parts of the state, that may not have adequate access or needed technology.

A total of 847 educators and 263 parents across South Carolina participated in the survey. As respondents could exit the survey at any time without penalty, the sample size per item may vary from the total because all data were available per item were summarized. The sample is one of convenience and self-selection, yet, demographic information showed a distribution of parent/teacher responses from across the state. Table 1 lists districts with at least 10 educators responding, Appendix C provides the frequency and percentages of respondents for all districts in the samples.

Table1. Remote Learning in South Carolina, Participants by District

District	Educator Responses		Parent Responses	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Aiken	18	2.1	8	3.0
Beaufort	24	2.8	6	2.3
Berkeley	70	8.3	46	17.5
Charleston	38	4.5	21	8.0
Darlington	16	1.9	2	.8
Dorchester 2	24	2.8	8	3.0
Florence 1	29	3.4	2	.8
Greenville	48	5.7	45	17.1
Horry	23	2.7	5	1.9
Kershaw	14	1.7	1	.4
Lancaster	10	1.2	3	1.1
Lexington 1	21	2.5	9	3.4
Lexington 4	93	11.0	--	--
Lexington-Richland 5	18	2.1	7	2.7
Pickens	12	1.4	3	1.1
Richland 1	25	3.0	6	2.3
Richland 2	54	6.4	14	5.3
SC Public Charter School District	34	4.0	2	.8
York 1	16	1.9	2	.8
York 3 (Rock Hill)	32	3.8	14	5.3
York 4 (Fort Mill)	20	2.4	1	.4

The school locales of respondents are provided in Table 2. As expected, parents were largely from suburban locations. Educators places of work were roughly equally distributed between rural and suburban locations. A few educators wrote in that their district encompassed a mixture of locations. While rural educators and parents are in the minority of the survey respondents, people working/living in these environments comprise are at least 10% of each sample.

Table 2. Remote Learning in South Carolina, School Locations

	Educator Responses		Parent Responses	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	354	41.8	53	20.2
Suburban	372	43.9	178	67.7
Urban	92	10.9	27	10.3
Other (specified)	22	2.6	--	--
No Response	7	.8	5	1.9
Total	847	100.0	263	100.0

Roughly half of the educators in the sample reported working at schools serving over 600 students. Thirty-seven percent of the sample worked at mid-size schools, and roughly 8 percent of the educators were at small schools.   Open-ended responses largely referred to the size of the entire district; the size of the districts noted were between 10,000 to 77,000 students. Figure 1 reports workplace/school size reported by educators.
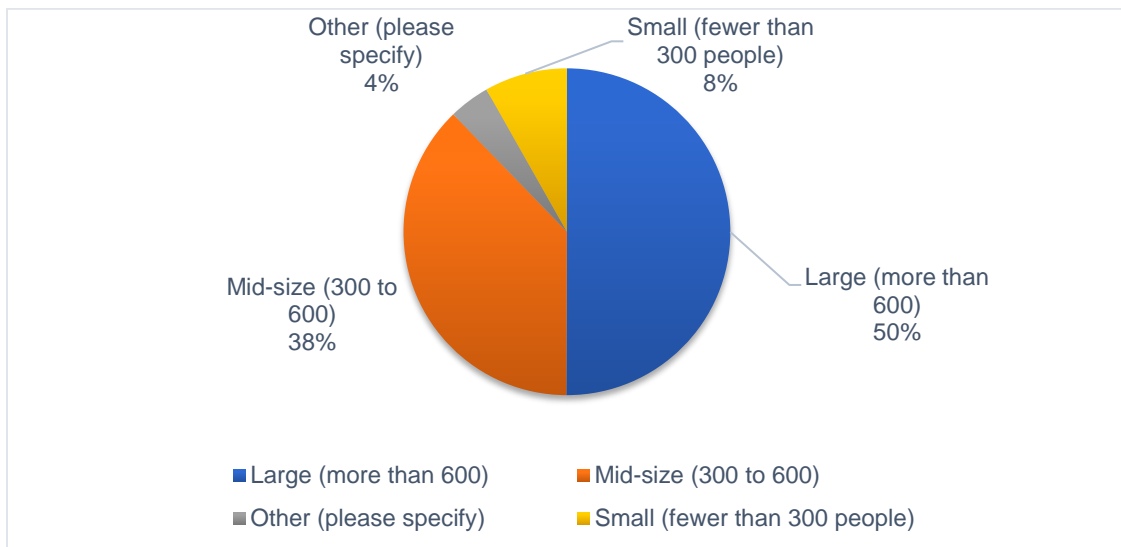
Figure 1. School Sizes of Sample Respondents

Although the sample is a sample of convenience, the samples are large, dispersed across the state, and representing various locations. While there are some limitations with the sample, the responses are thought to be adequate to provide a snapshot of educator and parent views to show how South Carolinians dealt with remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EDUCATOR SURVEY RESULTS

In mid-March 2021, the rising COVID-19 health pandemic resulted in an order from the Governor to close schools across South Carolina. Teachers were asked to meet the needs of students by shifting to five-day remote learning with little time for preparation or planning. As the health crisis had not diminished at the start of the 2020-21 academic year, school districts balanced increased safety and health precautions as well as how to deliver academic content (i.e., remote, five day "in person" learning, or a hybrid approach). The new modes for education delivery presented unique challenges for school personnel, administrators, and teachers.

To better understand the influence remote learning situations have had on teachers and school administrators, an online questionnaire was administered. The survey, presented in the supplemental materials, consisted of 26 questions (many with additional sub-parts). After demographic information, respondents provided feedback on four areas related to remote learning due to COVID-19: 1) spring 2020, 2) planning during summer break 2020, 3) start of the 2020-21 school year, and 4) the impact on academic learning. Respondents were asked to provide candid responses to all questions. Response diagnostics reported that the average time to complete the educator survey was 11 minutes.

EDUCATOR DEMOGRAPHICS

The sample of 847 educators hold a variety of positions in the education field; these data are detailed in Table 3. Roughly 80% of survey respondents held a teaching position, with content area teachers (e.g., mathematics, social studies) comprising the majority of the sample. Other types of teachers, such as special areas (e.g., physical education, art, music), special education, and English as a Second Language (ESOL) encompassed 2% to 9% of the sample. Administrators (e.g., superintendents, principals, curriculum coordinators), were present at 11.5% of the sample. If respondents did not see their position listed, a description could be written in. Responses in this category consisted of a variety of positions, such as: counselors, school psychologists, teachers assistants, secretaries, adult educators, and attendance coordinators/data clerks. The sample is diverse, allowing for a variety of perspectives regarding remote learning due to COVID-19 from educators and related professionals. For simplicity, all respondents are referred to as educators in this evaluation report.

Table 3. Positions Held by Educators, Remote Learning Sample

Position	Frequency	Percentage
Administrator	97	11.5
Teacher - Content Areas	497	58.7
Teacher - Special Areas	77	9.1
Teacher - Special Education	72	8.5
Teacher -ESOL	18	2.1
No Response Provided	18	2.1
Other (please specify)	68	8.0
Total	847	100.0

Table 4 reports on the number of years an educator has been in their current position. Responses were spread across the categories. Over half of the sample had been in their current position for 10 or fewer years; roughly 34% of the sample reported time in their current position between 0-5 years and 20% between 6-10 years. Approximately 18% of educators had 20 or more years of experience in their current position.

Table 4. Number of Years Educators Employment, Remote Learning Sample

Number of Years	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 years	287	33.9
6-10 years	173	20.4
11-15 years	122	14.4
16-20 years	106	12.5
More than 20 years	154	18.2
No response	5	0.6
Total	847	100.0

Figure 2 displays the grade levels of students that educators serve. As shown, there were fewer respondents reported involvement with preschool (PK) level students. Slightly higher numbers of educators reported working with high school grades (9th - 12th); this may be related to teachers teaching classes which serve a variety of grade levels in the same course.
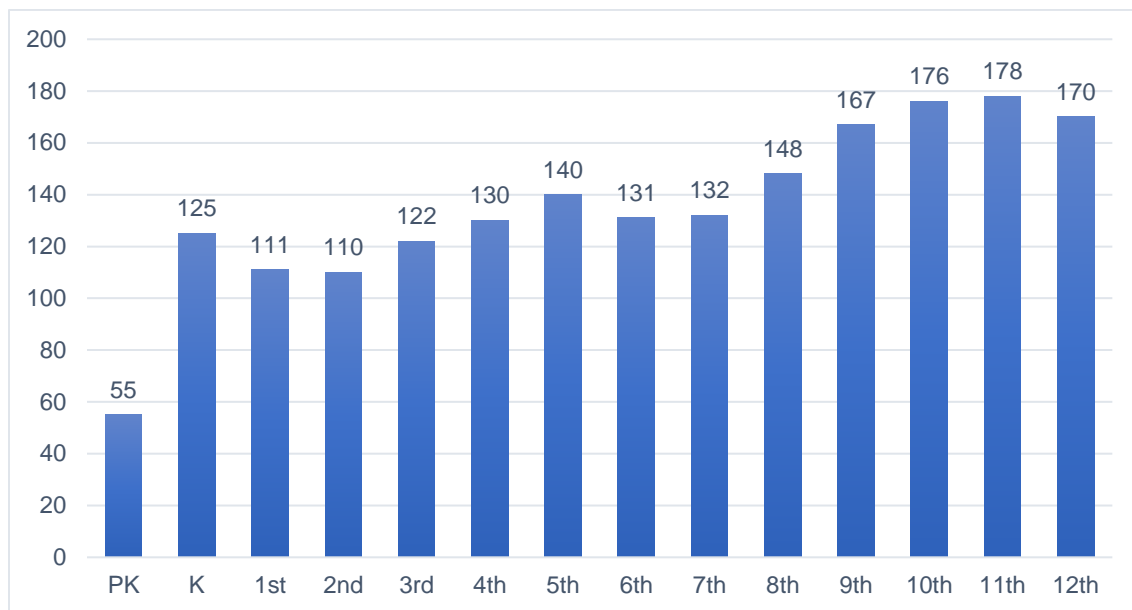
Figure 2. Grade Levels Taught by Educators, Remote Learning Sample

REFLECTIONS ON REMOTE LEARNING IN SPRING 2020, EDUCATOR RESPONSES

In the first section of the survey, respondents noted how lessons were provided to students learning when schools were abruptly closed to in-person learning (March 2020 through the remainder of the 2019-20 school year). Table 5 reports modes which schools and teachers delivered lessons, where respondents could select as many options as applicable. The percentage reported was computed using the total number of respondents (N = 847) and will not sum to 100%. In addition, educators could state supplementary comments/information. Where appropriate, comments are included to supplement tabled information.

As shown, 44% of respondents stated that paper packets were prepared for students to pick-up and return to the school to document learning. The "in-person" option to turn in work was retained through the end of the 2019-20 school year. Asynchronous lessons, where assignments are provided and completed work is turned in online, was used by roughly 36% of the respondents. Roughly 29% of the respondents used a mix of online content meetings at a set time (synchronous delivery) and asynchronous learning (activities delivered via Internet to complete off-line) was a popular method for delivering content.

Table 5. Spring 2020 Educator's Lesson Delivery Mode, Remote Learning Sample

Lesson Delivery Mode	Frequency	Percentage
Prepared (paper) work packets turned in in-person	373	44.0
Online lessons where students completed work online, but there was no online meeting at a set time (asynchronous)	304	35.9
Mix of asynchronous lessons and synchronous meetings at least 1 time a week	241	28.5
Paper packets but work was turned in online (i.e., pictures of work, artifacts)	146	17.2
Online lessons where students met 2 or more times a week at a set time (synchronous)	133	15.7
Total	847	

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to "select all that apply" option.

Write-in responses provided additional comments concerning how lessons were provided to students. Many schools using paper packets stated that the same information was provided online (asynchronous learning) and paper packets were distributed to students without reliable Internet access.

> *(We had..) A mix of 2 options. Paper packets of 10 days' worth of lessons at a time (were distributed). Students also had the option to turn in very similar assignments online as in the paper packets.*

Online packets or activities were also utilized more throughout spring 2020 for students in lower grades (PK-5th) or were an option for students if parents preferred.

> *Packets were made at the district level for all elementary students.*

Educators reported implementing additional virtual options after the initial two-week period, with many districts experimenting use of both asynchronous and synchronous activities. School districts used a mixture of all methods in Spring 2020: synchronous learning, asynchronous; distribution of physical lesson packets was still an option, largely for younger grade levels (PK-1st) and for students without Internet services.

> *Off-line lessons were completed via Chromebook, but all work did not require Internet access to complete. Students with no Internet access came to the schools at the beginning of April and again at the beginning of May to download assignments from Google Classroom and at the end of each month to submit work.*

> *Students met at a specified class time for 30 minutes during this time [Spring 2020]. Students completed work online and submitted assignments online. Packets were distributed to students for pick up at the school but was also provided digitally to students.*

Fewer respondents in Table 5 (roughly 16%) reported that synchronous lessons were used. This mode of content delivery was primarily used with older students (middle school and high school levels).

> *Our classes continued with only one day missed as teachers just moved to zoom and continued teaching on regular teaching schedule and we completed the year at the regular time on May 28.*

Educators reflected on the level of rigor for Spring 2020 assigned activities as compared to rigor of in-person lessons. Responses are detailed in Figure 3. As shown in the chart, a majority of educators stated remote learning lessons were at a lower level of rigor (56%) as compared to lessons conducted in-person. Very few educators noted that the lessons were at a higher level (2%) and a moderate number of noted that lessons were at the same level of rigor as would have been presented in-person (32%).
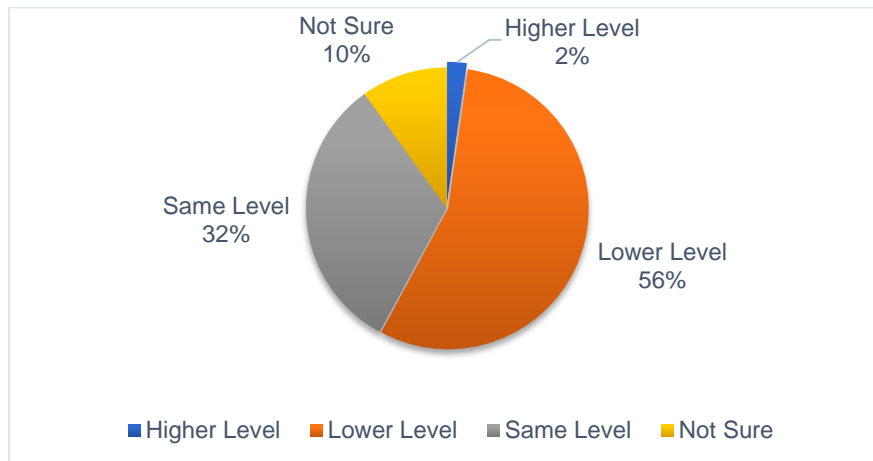
Figure 3. Rigor Level of Academic Lessons Delivered in Spring 2020, Educator Remote Learning Sample

To gain greater understanding of the Spring 2020 remote learning experience, educators were asked to report level of agreement with a series of statements. These questions concerned a variety of aspects: communication with school personnel, families, and students; stress experienced by educators and/or students and families, and ability to conduct learning and (if applicable) online learning and feedback. Responses are summarized in Figure 4.
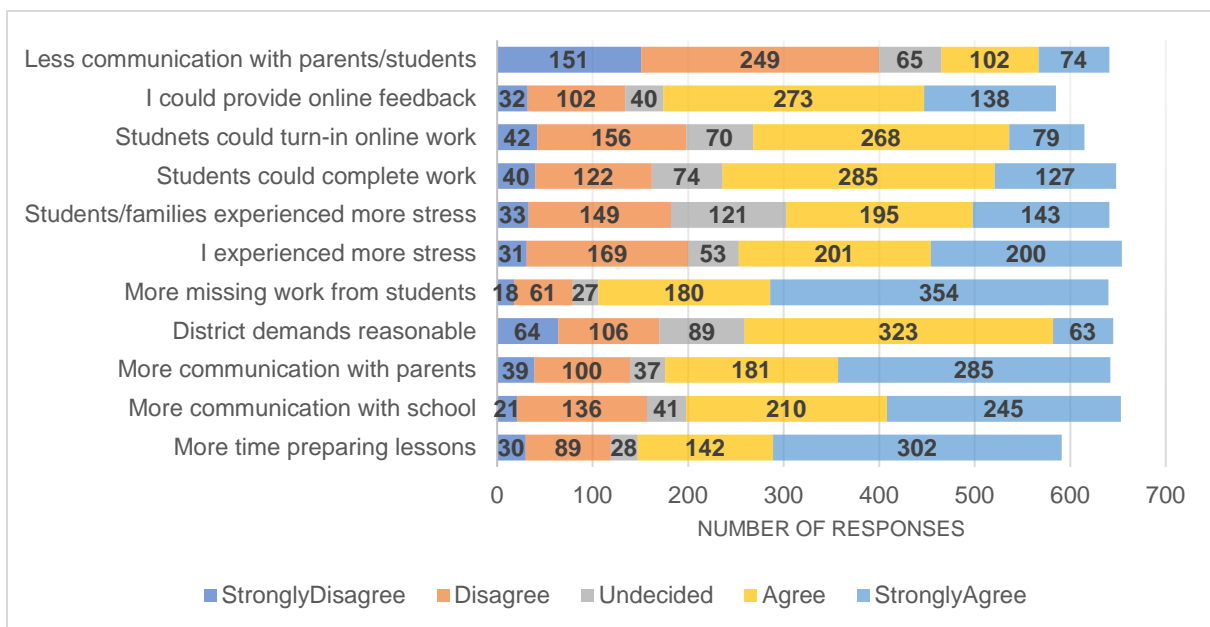
Figure 4. Educator Agreement with Aspects of Remote Learning, Spring 2020.

As shown in the figure, educators generally agreed or strongly agreed with most statements. A few aspects yielding particularly high levels of agreement (over 300 responses) are noteworthy. Educators strongly agreed that more time was spent preparing lessons during the end of the 2019-20 school year and also strongly agreed

that there was a lot of missing work from students during Spring 2020. However, educators largely agreed that students could complete the lessons (and turn in assignments online, if applicable) and that teachers were able to provide feedback online (if applicable). There was also agreement with increased communication with parents and with the school district. While educators agreed Spring 2020 was a time in which more stress was felt personally and that students/families were also experiencing more stress than usual, school district remote learning demands were reasonable.

Remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it (unexpected) positive aspects as well as challenges. Educators were asked to select beneficial areas arising from the spring 2020 remote learning situation. Table 6 displays the percentages of selected responses, where the percentage is computed from the total number of surveys returned (N = 847). As educators could check as many positive aspects as applied, we recognize that the percentage will not compute to 100%.

Three aspects were selected by approximately 40% of educators in the sample. These areas reflected pride related to the ability to meet the needs of their communities and to work together as a team. Educators also felt that districts/schools were concerned for their personal health. Two areas received notably lower ratings than others. Educators did not state that parents were more supportive during Spring 2020. Further, only 4.5% of educators noted that students were motivated to learn online/remotely during this experience.

Table 6. Positive Aspects of Spring 202 Remote Learning Noted by Educators

	Frequency	Percentage
I was proud that we were able to meet this challenge	375	44.3
We worked as a team at my school	343	40.5
Felt like the school/district was concerned for my health	325	38.4
I was able to keep in touch with my students through email/online meetings	306	36.1
Increased communication with families/students	273	32.2
Students were able to complete necessary work remotely	191	22.6
Students became more independent learners (took ownership of own learning more)	171	20.2
Increased support from parents	142	16.8
Students were more motivated to learn/achieve online	38	4.5

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to "select all that apply" option.

Fifty-seven educators wrote in comments related to positive benefits of the Spring 2020 remote learning experience. The majority of the benefits (31.7% or 18

comments) described areas of growth related to learning more technology skills, new ways of approaching teaching, and professional growth. For example:

Some of my thinking was shaped differently. Certain principles that I thought were important were reordered in a way that I am now seeing myself use as a reordered practice in the classroom.

I learned a lot of technology-related skills for delivering instruction that I have been able to carry over to this year.

Another theme emerging related teacher's ability to positively affect student learning (19.3% or 11 responses). Responses described benefits related to the remote learning environment, instruction, and classroom support.

My students got much more quality instruction without disruption of behavioral outbursts in the classroom.

I felt I was able to help more people faster and communicate with students and families better.

The third theme reflected support and pride for the impact that the school districts were having on communities and students through distribution of materials and services (24.5% or 14 responses).

Our district was able to issue Chromebook to all students in grades 3-12

I am proud that, with almost no notice, we were able to set up services to students including classwork, food services, technology and tech support, mental health counseling and family outreach.

A number of responses however, reflected frustrations of educators (24.5% or 14 responses). This set echoed personal stressors such as losses of income, additional duties at home, and worries about students and the community.

There was not anything positive about this experience. As an ESOL teacher my students were lost in the shuffle. Many have quit school or have just given up. The language barrier and the lack of experience in technology for parents and some students made online learning difficult and discouraging. Even now, many of my students have quit school or simply disappeared.

It was overwhelming to teach online and manage online with my own children.

Educators were asked to select the three main difficulties encountered in Spring of 2020. Similarly, the number of times that an obstacle was chosen as one of the top three reasons was tallied and converted to a percentage using the total number of respondents (N = 847). Figure 5 lists the barriers encountered by educators and the percentage of responses associated with hurdle.
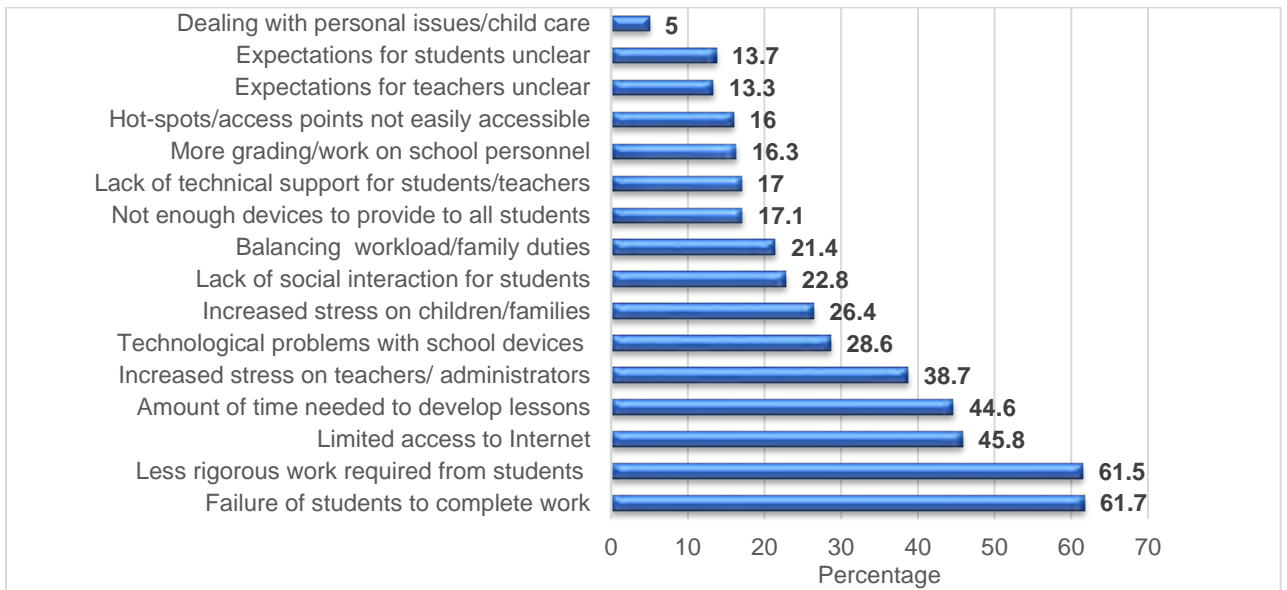
Figure 5. Barriers Encountered During the Spring 2020 Remote Learning Experience

As shown in Figure 5, the primary barriers encountered in Spring 2020 were student-related issues. Approximately 61% of the respondents noted less rigorous tasks and failure of students to complete activities as the main barriers. Amount of time needed to construct lessons as well as student Internet problems were endorsed by over 40% of the educators. Few respondents noted unclear expectations of students' responsibilities or teachers' duties as a limitation of remote learning (roughly 14% each) and only 5% of educators noted personal problems/childcare issues as a hinderance to Spring 2020 remote learning.

SUMMER 2020, PLANNING FOR THE UPCOMING SCHOOL YEAR: EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

As COVID-19 cases continued to spread in the U.S. during the summer months, lessons learned at the end of 2019-20 may have been useful to assist schools and families prepare for the 2020-21 academic year. To determine effects of the spring remote learning experiences on planning, educators reflected on procedures and policies the end of the 2019-20 school year to find potential solutions.

Figure 6 below contrasts the main barriers noted at the end of the 2019-20 academic year (blue bars) with those that were discussed during summer 2020 (orange).
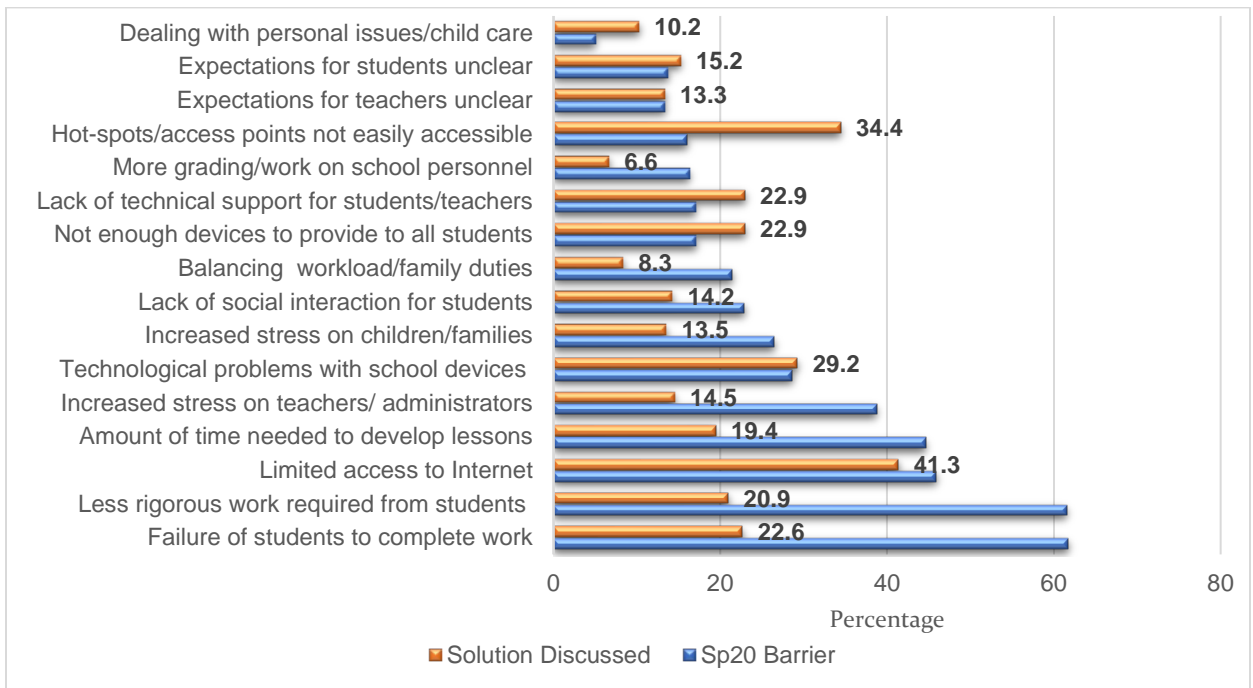
Figure 6. Barriers to Remote Learning Discussed in Summer 2020.

The figure shows summer discussions discussed dealt primarily with issues of student access and technology. During the 2020 summer break, educators tried to solve problems related to Hot Spots, lack of technical support, access to Internet, and device shortages for students. The two main barriers, lack of rigorous work and failure of students to complete assigned work, were not discussed as much as technical issues.

Educators were able to write in responses noting how barriers were addressed. Twenty-nine educators provided responses. While five of the responses noted differences in selected areas such as due dates of assignments being adhered to, increased preparation for teachers over the summer, and discussions to clarify expectations for teachers were noted as sample responses. The remaining responses noted frustrations that the summer 2020 planning time did not address the main barriers. These educators noted feelings of little progress in the way of planning for the 2020-21 academic year, with limited opportunities for teachers to provide input.

> *Very little thought seemed to go into planning and teachers were not given a voice!*

> *I don't feel any of the above were addressed in planning for the 20-21 school year. Devices were not an issue in my district, as we've be one-to-one for a few years. All other items listed are MAJOR issues for this school year.*

> *I do not believe that planning effort were made to make this time, a pandemic and international crisis, less stressful for any stakeholders.*

Educators noted parent concerns brought to the attention of teachers/ schools/district during the Summer 2020 break. There were 160 responses provided. Responses were grouped into four overarching categories: 1) Technology/Device related

concerns, 2) Academic Concerns, 3) Health and Safety Concerns, and 4) Scheduling Problems. Each of theme is discussed below and sample responses are provided in some places to provide additional detail.

Many concerns parents brought to schools were related to issues of technology (52 responses or 32%). The main worry relayed by parents was the lack of devices and/or the lack of Internet access. As noted with Figure 6, providing device access and Hot Spot/WiFi access to students was a focal issue for schools to address. Other concerns noted by parents were lack of technology support for fixing broken devices and increased technology support for families/parents to understand how to use school-issued devices and software packages.

Table 7. Technology/Device Related Concerns Noted by Families, Summer 2020 (52 Comments)

Issue	Sample Comments
Devices/Internet – No computer or device at home for students to conduct virtual work, no access to Internet to be able to attend virtually (37 responses)	*Students were unable to use technology due to lack of devices and internet access. The district provided technology including devices and hotspots in the fall*
Software support – Need for support for parents to know how to access devices, use GoogleClassroom, and use software specific to schools or districts (e.g., PowerSchool), (8 responses)	*Parents complained about the new program our district threw in to help with virtual learning.*
Technology support – How will families get timely help for addressing problems with devices, troubleshooting, getting device repaired (7 responses)	*Timely student device repair.*

A second area relayed to educators by families concerned academic/instructional learning. This category of 56 responses (35%) included concerns with work for virtual work, such as too much work for students to complete before due dates or students unable (or unwilling) to complete work independently. Also noted by parents was the lack of challenging and rigorous work for students. Other areas included the need for alternate activities to be available for families/students, ability to communicate with non-English speaking families, and need for increased clarity academic expectations between school and home; two related comments concerning working high school students are noted. Table 8 summarizes the emergent subcategories.

Table 8. Academic Concerns Noted to Educators by Families, Summer 2020 (56 Comments)

Issue	Sample Comments
Work Load - Too much work was assigned and concerns that children are	*The students had too much work in their core classes and the parents were*

not able to learn independently due to age, attention, or not wanting to listen to parents (19 responses)	*struggling to get their child to do everything in the time allotted.* *That they [parent] were having a hard time getting their child to actually sit in front of a computer and work.*
Rigor – Academic work was not challenging at the end of spring 2020; little accountability for students, children will be unprepared for the next grade level (18 responses)	*Providing higher level work for students and holding them accountable for their learning.* *That their student would have a severe learning gap going into the next class*
Alternate activities – need for alternative activities and/or modes of delivery (6 responses)	*Providing alternative assignments for students who cannot log in at specific times (sitter doesn't have internet, alternating when siblings use streaming, etc.)*
Expectations – Parent need for more clarity in teacher expectations for work, poor communication between school and home (6 responses)	*Parents were concerned about unclear directions by some teachers and accommodations were made to meet that concern at my school.*
Communication – ESOL, only communicate with younger students through parents (5 responses)	*Ways that my non-English speaking parents could effectively communicate with teachers on a regular basis.*
Working Students – High school students needing to work and missing class (responses)	

A third area of comments discussed parents' health and safety concerns (33 responses or 21% of comments); these are presented in Table 9. Comments elucidated families' debating over whether or not to return to school for face-to-face classes in the 2020-21 school year as well concerns with how school will adhere toward recommended safety precautions (e.g., mask wearing, social distancing, physical set up of classrooms). Parents mentioned concerns for students' social well-being and mental health if children were socially isolated in 2020-21. One comment related to health and safety was provided by a teacher, stating: *Students were given an option for remote learning, but teachers with health issues or concerns were not.* While this is not a concern stated by a parent, it is related to health and safety concerns when considering planning for the 2020-21 school year.

Table 9. Health and Safety Concerns Noted to Educators by Families, Summer 2020 (32 Comments)

Issue	Sample Comments
COVID Safety at School – How will schools ensure that recommended guidelines are followed, what safety	*Parents have asked what precautions the school is practicing, such as: masks, separation during meals, not using*

precautions will be in place, how will rooms and layouts of desks be organized, how will scheduling be staggered or altered to keep students apart? (37.5% or 12 responses)	*lockers, longer transition periods, no mass meetings in the cafeteria or gym.*
Student Mental Health – recognizing students' need for social interaction, issues of social/emotional well being, fears of social isolation (37.5% or 12 responses)	*Student mental health - I think that the effort to bring students back addressed this for some students but not for the ones remaining at home to learn virtually.*
Return to school – difficulty selecting between face-to-face or virtual learning (25% or 8 responses)	*Uncertainty about whether or not to return to school due to Covid-19 fears*

The last area which parents discussed with school personnel consisted of scheduling issues during 2020-21(12% or 19 responses). Descriptions are provided in Table 10. Issues included concerns with working from home and providing child care and wanting to know what face-to-face learning options schools would have available at the start of the new school year.

Table 10. Scheduling Concerns Noted to Educators by Families, Summer 2020 (19 Comments)

Issue	Sample Comments
Work/Child care – Child care concerns, how to help children with school work after working, how to manage children's work while working at home too (58% or 11 responses)	*Parents needed to work during the day and did not have the time to teach their children at night.*
Face-to-face-- parent/family desires for in-person learning options (12% or 8 responses)	*Those (parents) who wanted face to face instruction were back in school upon request. This solved a lot of issues regarding lack of engagement, but we still have students at home, zooming in, but not completing assignments.*

START OF THE 2020-21 ACADEMIC YEAR, EDUCATOR RESPONSES

The COVID-19 pandemic continued into fall, coinciding with reopening for the 2020-21 academic year. In the survey, educators reflected upon the start of the school year and the challenges, new and existing, were present. This section discusses how educators adapted to the new academic year, while dealing with the pandemic.

At the start of the 2020-21 academic year, Gov. McMaster ordered school districts to include face-to-face learning options for parents; totally remote format as a mandatory format (as with Spring 2020) was not permitted. Districts provided multiple options to stakeholders, allowing greater choice for attendance. Most educators stated that Fall 2020 was most likely to include hybrid format of delivery –a mix of face-to-face options and virtual delivery—was used most frequently (approximately 46% of respondents). Virtual learning only was noted as the delivery method for by approximately 30% of respondents. Fewer educators reported in-person 5-day learning schedules or mandatory virtual learning for all students in the district. Table 11 reports school delivery formats in Fall 2020.

Table 11. Fall 2020 School Delivery Format, Educator Remote Learning Sample

Format	Frequency	Percentage
In-person, 5-day delivery	111	13.1
Hybrid (mix of in-person and virtual learning)	392	46.3
Mandatory virtual delivery	105	12.4
Virtual learning as an elective (in place of hybrid or in-person)	248	29.3
Total	847	100.0

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to "select all that apply" option.

Educators stated how lessons were delivered to students at the start of the 2020-21 academic year. Of the respondents, 76% of the educators noted that Fall 2020 lesson delivery was different from the method(s) used in Spring 2020. Only 16% of educators stated that same lesson delivery method was in use at the start of the academic year (8% were undecided). Responses are provided in Table 12. As seen in the table, there are notable differences between selected categories. Paper packets, which had been utilized by many districts in Spring 2020 were mentioned as in use by only 8.7% of the educators in Fall 2020. Lesson delivery through asynchronized meetings showed a large jump in use, noted by approximately 40% of educators, as compared to roughly 16% use in Spring 2020. Very few respondents reported that their school delivered paper packets for lessons to be turned in online or in-person.

Table 12.   Fall 2020 Lesson Delivery Mode, Educator Remote Learning Sample

Lesson Delivery Mode	Frequency	Percent. Fall 2021	Percent. Spring 2020
Prepared (paper) work packets turned in in-person	74	8.7	44.0
Online lessons where students completed work online, but there was no online meeting at a set time (asynchronous)	159	18.8	35.9
Mix of asynchronous lessons and synchronous meetings at least 1 time a week	204	24.1	28.5
Paper packets but work was turned in online (i.e., pictures of work, artifacts)	32	3.8	17.2
Online lessons where students met 2 or more times a week at a set time (synchronous)	341	40.3	15.7
Total	847		

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to a "select all that apply" option.

For educators responding that the delivery mode was different in Fall 2020 than Spring 2020, many wrote in reasons explaining why the methods differed. Responses largely mentioned district activities toward new software options, summer opportunities for professional development, and training. For example:

We had more time to prepare and communicate expectations with faculty, parents and students as well as make online learning more engaging and meaningful.

We continue to use Google Meet; however, numerous hours of professional development were completed by every teacher to ensure all students are provided engaging and rigorous learning opportunities.

Platforms were consolidated across the district and lesson formatting was in a pre-determined structure district wide. All students were provided with devices. Both parents and students were provided tutorials on tech Platforms and devices.

Other educators noted that differences if delivery format were due to providing internet access and/or devices made available to all students. The increased support allowed for virtual learning.

> *Spring, our students did not have school issued devices. In fall, all kindergartners have Chromebooks.*

> *The district provided computers and Hotspots for fall that were not available in spring.*

Relatedly, educators noted that synchronous lessons could now be required, given increased student access to devices and internet access.

> *We felt that students needed to have more synchronous learning with the classroom teacher. Synchronous learning is a vital component incorporated into all eLearning or virtual learning platforms.*

> *The paper packets sent home last year were unsuccessful. Very few were returned. Instead we switched to google classroom and handed out packets with instructions.*

The majority of written-in responses, however, discussed that differences were present, not only with the mode of delivery, but also the rigor and expectations accompanying the delivered lessons.

> *I could actually teach children rather than being told to lay low on having expectations for students.*

> *Last year it was some lessons that met standards and some fun work. This year is as similar to a real classroom as possible. We have live lessons set up, videos, we do guided practice, meet our children for small groups. We give our children everything they need to be successful and are adapting every day to make our virtual platform better.*

Educators reflected on the same barriers which impacted the Spring 2020 remote learning experience and discussed which barriers were still present at the start of the 2020-21 academic year. Educators could select as many of the barriers that they felt were still an issue in Fall 2020. These percentages are shown in Figure 7 in blue and are contrasted with the same barriers graphed earlier, shown in orange (percentages reported in Figure 5).

The top three Fall 2020 challenges noted by educators were: 1) Increased stress on teachers/administrators (selected by 50.4% of the respondents), 2) failure of students to turn in work (48.4%), and 3) the amount of time needed to prepare lesson (39.4%). Some challenges noted in Spring 2020 were not as problematic by Fall 2020. For example, less rigorous work was noted as a barrier to learning in Spring 2020 by 61.7% of educators dropping to 10.3% by Fall 2020. Similarly, the percentage of educators noting student access to Internet as a major challenge was 46% Spring 2020, dropping to 31% in Fall 2020. A few areas not noted as a challenge in Spring 2020 were problematic in Fall 20202. For example, increased time grading student work was noted

in Spring 2020 as a challenge by 16% of educators, increasing to 33% by Fall 2020. The percentage of educators reporting stress level as a problem also increased from 39% in Spring 2020 to 50% in Fall 2020.
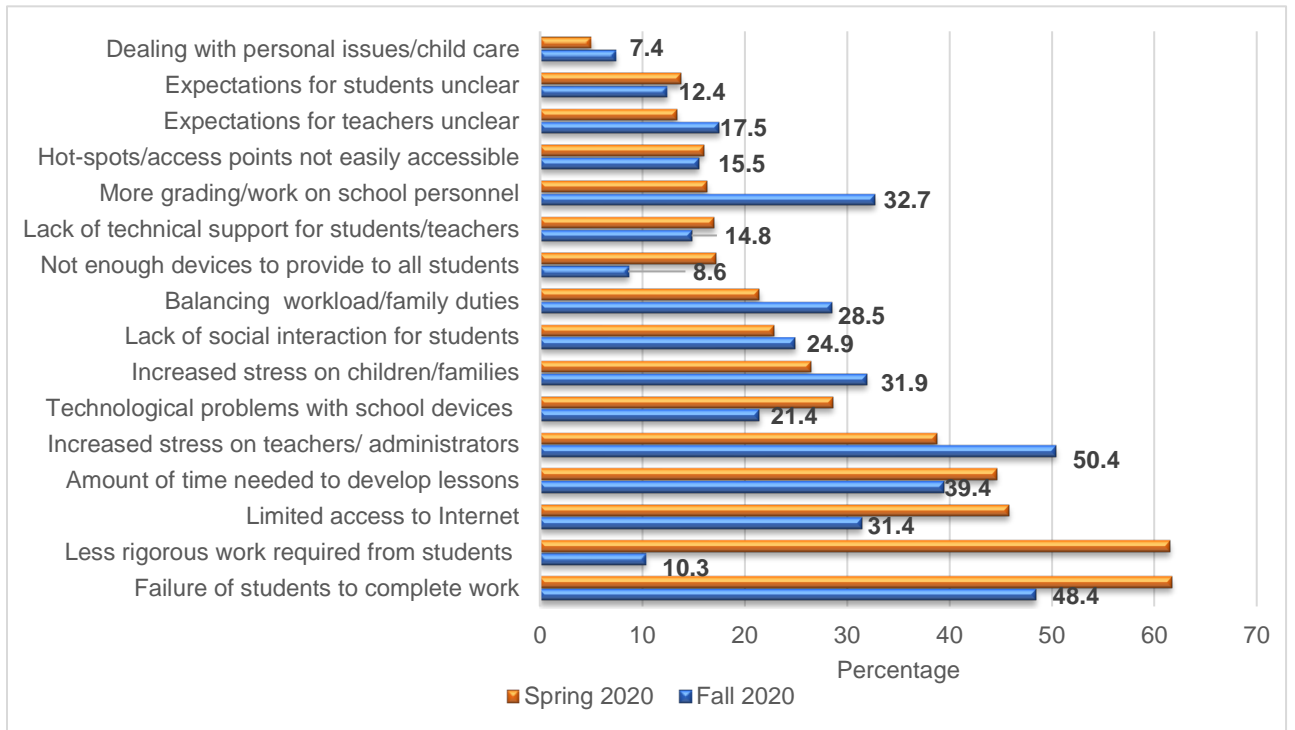
Figure 7. Barriers Present in Fall 2020, contrasted with Spring 2020, Remote

Educators wrote in additional barriers present in Fall 2020 which were not present in Spring 2020. While many respondents did not provide an answer, 214 comments were provided. These comments were categorized into three different themes of concerns: 1) health, 2) virtual delivery, and 3) school and administration.

In Fall 202, health was the area most often noted by educators as concerning. Comments reflected worry and concern for their health and the health of their families and other teachers. The majority of the write-in responses mentioned educators not feeling valued or supported by administration due to what was interpreted as lapses in following COVID-19 procedures, reporting of COVID-19, and resulting in stress on teachers' physical and mental well-being.

Table 13. Educator Concerns in Fall 2020, Health Concerns (76 Comments, 36%)

Safety concerns – Worries about getting sick or exposing family members to disease, high rates of COVID, and how to teach through it all (58 responses)	*We still have so many cases. I am very nervous about being at school. We closed in March with much less deaths and positive tests. We put ourselves on the front line every day and the people making the decisions are still having*

	zoom and google meets and never step in the classrooms or lunch rooms with the students. *Forcing the physical return to the buildings, with limited testing and enforcement of quarantines* *Teaching through a mask. Fear of getting sick. Fear of using all sick days. Fear of getting my husband sick.*
Stress concerns – increased stress due to situation (mixed modes, increased responsibilities, health concerns) (18 responses)	*The stress of the pandemic has taken a real toll on families and students. The sustained emotional and financial strain of an ongoing pandemic has left many teachers and students emotionally fragile and anxious.* *The stress (level) is higher and no attempt is being made to help teachers deal with it.* *Pressure from outside forces-politicians, etc. to do things in ways that were unsafe or caused increase in our stress/mental health issues.*

At the start of the academic year, educators noted academic concerns as problematic. Challenges in Fall 2020 included delivering lessons with multiple modes -- requiring teachers to conduct both virtual and in-person learning concurrently, more work and reduced teacher planning time. Also in this category were problems due to virtual delivery. Many educators mentioned the lack of support from both parents and children, reporting parents unwilling to assist children and children being apathetic, unmotivated, or not showing up for classes. Still, problems remained with technology including parents not well versed in the technology/platforms used or school-provided devices breaking.

Table 14. Educator Concerns in Fall 2020, Virtual Delivery Concerns (68 Comments, 33%)

Grading – Concerns associated with grading and expectations for work, students not turning in work, problems with students handling the increased rigor of content (24 responses)	*The past was a barrier to student and parent expectations. Many students and families remembered that in the spring, there were fewer expectations for attendance and grading, so they expected the same for 2020-2021. We worked hard to clarify and communicate that last*

	spring was an emergency situation that had to be put into place very quickly. *Students were conditioned last year to not believe they could fail, and now many will NOT do anything.*
Lack of student support – Students online or disengaged from learning when virtual; not attending school/turning on computer and leaving (18 responses)	*Students are so far behind academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally that I am doing way more than "teaching".*
Lack of parent support – Parents not assisting children, not understanding the amount of work needed to support virtual learning (13 responses)	*Parents are less willing to help their children. They are angry that they are fully responsible for their children and are bullying teachers.*
Technology Concerns– Problems with sufficient bandwidth to complete virtual lessons, lack of parent skills to assist with technology, devices breaking (13 responses)	*Some families needed more than one Hot Spot due to multiple children learning online.* *Now that we have distributed district devices to students, families are having some technical issues with the devices.*

A third broad theme of concerns dealt with the school environment. A majority of these comments dealt with teachers having to teach using both remote and in-person modes, leading to increased workloads. Educators were concerned with the perception that 2020-21 was a "normal" academic year, requiring benchmarks and accountability measures to be in place. Issues of miscommunication and changing expectations were noted by educators as well. Finally, teachers mentioned personal childcare needs, concerns regarding the lack social interaction for children, and extra responsibilities due to COVID-19 as new challenges for Fall 2020.

Table 14. Educator Concerns in Fall 2020, School and Administration Concerns (70 Comments, 33%)

Teaching Modality – problems associated with conducting competing models of delivery at the same time (29 responses)	*I am teaching in-person and remotely via Zoom at the same time. My student load is huge. For example: I have 37students enrolled in my last period class. Only 24 are in person, but I still have to grade and assess 37 students. The workload has increased significantly as has the stress level on teachers! I fear there will be vacancies in the future in my profession as a result.* *With the focus on synchronous learning, many students just walk away from their*

	computers and there is little accountability with distance learning outside of grades.
	Our asynchronous kids are able to turn in all work for the week on Friday. This wasn't thought out very well because that means teachers have to wait to see what they mastered or didn't in order to plan correctly. It also means we HAVE to grade over the weekend in order to plan accordingly. WE. ARE. TIRED.
Communication issues – miscommunications, inconsistent expectations, lack of communication between teachers and administrators (14 responses)	*Still a miscommunication of expectations from district to school admin to teachers; constant micromanaging and lack of teacher autonomy; changes being made midstream with little to no input from teachers; new curriculum being expected to be used by certain content areas.* *Total lack of communication from those making the decisions. Teacher's voices have not been heard or asked.*
Testing Concerns – Concerns with treating 2020-21 as a "normal" school year, with standardized testing, following pacing guides, and meeting SLOs (8 responses)	*We still have to prepare for standardized tests, which were designed for in-person learning, and there is no slack being cut for the differences in virtual learning. Also, no one seems to give attention to the fact that too much screen time is bad for students and teachers.* *Students are being assessed on grade level even though there is a huge learning gap from being out of school for so long in the spring.*
Extra Duties- extra duties required by in-person teaching (8 responses)	*In person means we're dealing with masks, hand sanitizer, and distancing all day. I teach music and I can't sing or teach in my room so I'm traveling from room to room on a cart or teaching outside with limited resources.*
Child Care for Teachers (7 responses)	*Childcare became an issue because my district was very inflexible about allowing virtual teachers to work from home.*
Social Interaction – lack of social interaction for children (at school and in-person; 4 responses)	*Students are quiet and not bonding or responding like a class socially usually does. Not just my classes but other teachers and classes as well. Quiet zombies going through the motions.*

REMOTE LEARNING AND ACADEMIC IMPACT: EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

Due to COVID-19, standardized testing was waived at the end of 2019-20 and there is the potential for a waiver of standardized testing for the 2020-21 school year. Educators were asked their thoughts on the decisions to remove standardized testing and how the removal of testing may affect student learning and school ratings.

Educators identified potential negative aspects related to the decision to remove standardized testing in Spring 2020 (as well as the potential for Spring 2021 waiver). While respondents could check all aspects which applied, the number of responses was suggesting that educators did not see a detriment to the removal of standardized tests. At most, roughly 10% of the sample responded, with issues related to students' not focusing on testing and lack of accountability for student learning as (potential) negative impacts of removing standardized tests. Table 15 summarizes the percentage of educators selecting an area.

Table 15. Potential Negative Aspects of Removing Standardized Testing, Educator Remote Learning Sample

Negative Aspects	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of emphasis/students will not take the testing seriously	82	9.7
Lack of accountability for student learning	80	9.4
Lack of information for accountability ratings	77	9.1
Inadequate student preparedness for the next grade level	76	9.0
Concerns from parents regarding testing (EOC, PSAT/SAT, ACT, SCREADY)	59	7.0
Limited feedback to help prepare students	54	6.4
Less emphasis on rigor for classroom activities and tests	52	6.1
Lack of formative information to guide student learning	51	6.0
Lower performance on formative tests (e.g., MAP, STAR)	45	5.3
Less emphasis on standards/alignment of activities to standards	35	4.1
Lack of accountability at teacher /school level	25	3.0
Total	847	

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to "select all that apply" option.

Open-ended comments related to removal of standardized testing were input by 183 educators. The statements suggested educators did not perceive the decision to remove standardized testing as detrimental to students in any way.

> *There is absolutely no negative effect. In fact, the uncertainty of the decision is the only negative effect because we are wasting our precious instructional time on preparing for standardized tests that may not happen. Schools can function and teachers can do their jobs without any of the arbitrary "concerns" listed above.*

There are no negative impacts of the removal of standardized testing. Removing the standardize testing actually improves student learning, because teachers can focus on what the student needs and have more focused and creative lessons.

A few comments reiterated that standardized testing was still present for the 2020-21 year. Results from testing were to be used for accountability. Educators also noted that test validity, security, preparation, and test administration was very difficult to do through online delivery.

We have not removed EOC's [End of Course Examinations]

We ARE doing standardized testing and at a much-increased rigor this year!

Many educators, however, did note (potential) positive aspects related to decisions to remove standardized testing. Over 50% of the sample selected aspect related to lower stress and pressure – on both students and teachers. The most often cited benefit was that there would be less stress/anxiety on students if standardized tests were removed, followed closely by less stress on teachers and less pressure on teachers to "teach to the test." Responses are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16. Potential Positive Aspects of Removing Standardized Testing

Positive Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
Less stress/anxiety on students	490	57.9
Less stress on teachers	470	55.5
Less pressure to "teach to the test"	444	52.4
More freedom to create lessons that are engaging	375	44.3
More creative lessons can be created	331	39.1
Reduced pressure from school/district on high student performance	294	34.7
More students/parent focus on learning	270	31.9
School performance will not be affected	234	27.6
Less worry about technology misfunction	222	26.2
Positive feedback from parents and/or students	213	25.1
Test performance will not be affected	189	22.3
Total	847	

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to "select all that apply" option.

Thirty-two educators included additional comments. Most of the comments related to positive aspects related to the decision to remove testing in spring of 2020, and many hoped for the potential of a waiver in spring 2021.

Many days I struggle to get some students just to feel as "normal" as possible throughout the day. The last thing they need is to stress over a high stakes test.

Everyone needs grace this year from testing. We need the ability to catch these children up and move them forward. We are professionals and can do this if we are not micromanaged and are allowed to teach and not have to teach to the tests. We need ALL of the allotted days to teach—not a mad dash to the testing dates.

Ability to truly address student deficits. I can focus on deep teaching, not the broad and superficial teaching required by pacing calendars created with the "get to this before testing" mentality.

The final question asked educators to state any other thoughts concerning remote learning. Of the sample of 847, 252 educators (30%), left a comment. These are broadly divided into three sections, 1) positive comments, 2) comments concerning parents/students, and 3) comments concerning teaching, school procedures, and the field of education. Summary comments are provided to illustrate major themes demonstrated in category.

The smallest category (34 responses) were positive comments regarding remote learning. In this set of comments, educators were proud that they were able to meet the needs of the state and our children, doing whatever was needed in the face of the pandemic.

Teachers performed phenomenally under intense pressure.

Teachers are working so hard to meet the needs of students and families. Many of us are doing more professional growth than we have ever done before out of necessity. Overall, it has been a positive experience, but it is tough work! Most teachers are doing what is best for kids no matter what.

I think our school district has done a fantastic job of trying to meet an overwhelming challenge to continue educating students. Things are not perfect; there are many problems and pitfalls, but we are truly working hard in our district to do the job. The administrators at my school are excellent, and our superintendent and others at the district level have been making good decisions based on the guidelines given by the state.

Responses also noted benefits to remote learning, including investments of software and professional development. Many comments stated desires to continue remote learning in the future.

Our district's remote learning framework has evolved significantly. I am hopeful we keep much of it in place beyond COVID-19.

I'm a 3rd grade virtual teacher, and I love it. I want to stay virtual.

The second largest category (75 responses or 30%) concerned of children and families. Many of the responses dealt with issues of student and parent accountability.

As noted earlier, educators felt that a problem with remote learning has been the lack of student engagement and motivation. Educators were concerned that students were not achieving and parents were not aware or were apathetic to the situation.

> *This is not a good situation for the majority of our students in general. Students do not take it seriously, believe they can turn assignments in at their own leisure, and refuse to take any responsibility for their own non-active learning. Parents, for the most part, are supporting their children in their lack of effort.*

> *There must be some way to make parents and students accountable. If a student does nothing in a class and then expects to be given a grade, that is something that has been instilled in him from somewhere. Since when did we become such an entitled society? There is little work ethic in expecting something for nothing.*

Other responses mentioned inequities in technology and infrastructure which made it difficult for the state to move to remote learning. Comments also discussed ways in which to support remote learning after the pandemic.

> *The state should have provided platform subscriptions to create equitable learning opportunities for all SC students.*

> *The state must consider how to continue to support district's technology purchases. Once you have the device it is difficult for small, rural districts to upkeep them and develop a replacement plan.*

The largest category dealt with issues relating to teaching and the decision to move to remote learning and the impact that this had on the teaching workforce. There were 143 comments (57%) in this area. These comments were negative, reflecting frustrations and stress with the situation –and what this has done to the decision to remain in or pursue a teaching career.

> *I feel like this year has really made me question whether or not I want to teach in the future. The overall feeling that I have is that there isn't enough credit given to teachers. Likewise, I feel like this year has really exposed how much teachers are ignored when big decisions are made. We are tired and this year has really pushed a lot of teachers over their thresholds.*

> *I feel like the state leaders did not recognize how hard teachers were working in an impossible situation. I cried after the press conference stating how lazy and selfish teachers were.*

> *I am exhausted and working harder than I think I even have in my life. I have heard very experienced and wonderful teachers say if they make it through this year this will be their last! I am heartbroken over what this has done to the profession.*

A subset of the responses noted that move to the remote format put more work on teachers to teach in multiple modes at the same time. Besides the extra work, many

responses reflected disappointment with decisions to remove a step increase/pay raise for teachers during this tie.

> *I am concerned that teachers are held to high standards such as possible high stakes testing as well as SLOs when we are expected to provide grace to our students, yet no grace has been provided to us. I am concerned that the safety of teachers has not been placed at the forefront and that we have been looked at as mere babysitters to keep the workforce going. I am concerned that despite our hard work and efforts we have been belittled and have not received the raise that we were promised. I am concerned that no one sat and talked with the teachers during this process.*

> *District is treating this with a "customer service" mentality without regard to the teachers.*

> *I am a 22-year veteran teacher. This year I taught remotely from home virtually to fourth graders. I have worked harder this year than I have in the past 10 or 15 years. I would say that it's akin to my first and second year in the classroom. I have struggled with finding balance. Dealing with a huge learning curve, including the learning management system. Daily lesson plans that were required not only required but also that had to be uploaded learning new programs that were specific to online learning. Revamping my classroom management. To meet the needs of the virtual environment. Struggling with students cheating and turning in blank assignments. I have struggled with parents upset because I can't do more to help their children if their children are unable to do the work independently. And this has caused stress and has been taxing emotionally.*

> *We need to be compensated. The least the state can do is pay us our step increases. Of all the years for it not to be given, it is really a slap in the face.*

Even in the face of the pandemic, educators felt as the health considerations of teachers were not considered.

> *There is too much expected of teachers in hybrid learning. It is not safe for anyone to be in person right now and those in power to make changes do not care that teachers, staff, and students are getting sick and dying. These past 3 months alone has shown how little care and value the government and parents have for education. There's going to be a massive exodus of teachers and America is not prepared for it.*

Responses showed the frustration of teachers in their personal and professional lives, feelings of being ignored and devalued.

SUMMARY OF EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

- A total of 847 educators across South Carolina participated in the survey. Educators' work places were roughly equally distributed between rural and suburban locations.

- Roughly 80% of survey respondents held a teaching position, with content area teachers (e.g., mathematics, social studies) comprising the majority. Other teachers, such as special areas teachers (e.g., PE, music), special education, and English as a Second Language encompassed 2% to 9% of the sample. Administrators comprised 11.5% of the sample; the remaining portion were other personnel such as teaching assistants, media specialists, school psychologists, counselors, etc.

- Over half of the sample of educators had been in their current position for 10 or fewer years; roughly 34% of the sample reported time in their current position between 0-5 years and 20% between 6-10 years. Approximately 18% of educators had 20 or more years of experience in their current position.

- In Spring 2020, schools used a variety of modes to deliver content, with asynchronous lessons or distributing physical packets of materials as most popular. However, educators thought that lessons demonstrated a lower level of rigor as was delivered in-person.

- Educators largely agreed that the time devoted to preparing lessons was increased, yet there was a great deal of missing work from students at the end of the 2019-20 school year. Increases in communication with parents and with the school district were observed. District demands during this time were thought of as reasonable.

- Unexpected benefits of the remote learning experience included educator pride due to e ability to meet the needs of their communities and to work together as a team. Educators also felt that districts/schools were concerned for their personal health in Spring 2020.

- Primary barriers encountered in Spring 2020 were largely related to student issues. Approximately 61% of the respondents noted less rigorous tasks and failure of students to complete activities as the main barriers. Also, the time needed to construct lessons as well as dealing with student Internet problems were endorsed by over 40% of the educators.

- During the 2020 summer break, educators tried to solve problems related to Hot Spots, lack of technical support, access to Internet, and device shortages for students. The two main barriers, lack of rigorous work and failure of students to complete assigned work, were not discussed much; educators responses reflected frustrations that summer 2020 planning time did not address these issues and teachers felt there were few opportunities to provide input.

- In summer 2020, parents brought to the attention of teachers/ schools/district issues four areas of concern: 1) Technology/Device related concerns, 2) Academic Concerns, 3) Health and Safety Concerns, and 4) Scheduling Problems.

- Most educators stated that Fall 2020 was most likely to include hybrid format of delivery –a mix of face-to-face options and virtual delivery—was used by 46% of respondents. Virtual learning only was noted as the delivery method for 30% of respondents. Fewer educators reported in-person 5-day learning schedules or mandatory virtual learning for all students in the district (13% and % respectively).

- In Fall 2020, 76% of the educators noted lesson delivery was different from the method(s) used in Spring 2020. Paper packets, which had been utilized by many districts in Spring 2020 were mentioned as in use by only 8.7% of the educators in Fall 2020. Lesson delivery through asynchronized meetings showed a large jump in use, noted by approximately 40% of educators. Very few respondents reported that their school delivered paper packets for lessons to be turned in online or in-person.

- The top three Fall 2020 challenges noted by educators were: 1) Increased stress on teachers/administrators (selected by 50.4% of the respondents), 2) failure of students to turn in work (48.4%), and 3) the amount of time needed to prepare lesson (39.4%). Some challenges noted in Spring 2020 were not as problematic by Fall 2020. For example, less rigorous work was noted as a barrier to learning in Spring 2020 by 61.7% of educators dropping to 10.3% by Fall 2020. A few areas not noted as a challenge in Spring 2020 were problematic in Fall 20202. For example, increased time grading student work was noted in Spring 2020 as a challenge by 16% of educators, increasing to 33% by Fall 2020. The percentage of educators reporting stress level as a problem also increased from 39% in Spring 2020 to 50% in Fall 2020. Write-in comments showed additional areas of concern around themes related to: 1) health, 2) virtual delivery, and 3) school and administration.

- Educators identified potential positive and negative aspects related to the decision to remove standardized testing in Spring 2020 (as well as the potential for Spring 2021 waiver). Most educators did not see a detriment to the removal of standardized tests. Roughly 10% of the sample responded, with issues related to students' not focusing on testing and lack of accountability for student learning as (potential) negative impacts of removing standardized tests. Educators, however, did note (potential) positive aspects related to decisions to remove standardized testing. Over 50% of the sample selected aspect related to lower stress and pressure – on both students and teachers. The most often cited benefit was that there would be less stress/anxiety on students if standardized tests were removed, followed closely by less stress on teachers and less pressure on teachers to "teach to the test."

- Considering remote learning, open-ended comments displayed a wide variety of educator reflections. Many comments showed affinity for online learning, especially with the ability to provide this service and continue teaching during the pandemic. The majority of comments, however, were negative. Reflections centered on problems related to parents/students, the workload on teachers, and related to school procedures. Educators were concerned on the lasting impact of this experience on the teaching profession.

PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

During the same time frame, parent/guardians were surveyed to determine the effects of the remote learning experience on children and families in South Carolina. The same online platform (SurveyMonkey) was used to collect information from parents/guardians (hereafter termed parents for simplicity). A total of 263 parents responded to the survey during November 2020.

The parent survey consisted of 24 questions (many with subparts), with an average completion time of 6 minutes. After providing demographic information, respondents provided feedback on three areas related to remote learning due to COVID-19: 1) spring 2020 and planning during summer break 2020, 2) start of the 2020-21 school year, and 3) impact on academics. To encourage more responses from parents, the questionnaire was shorter than the educator survey and included more closed ended questions. Respondents were asked to provide candid responses to all questions.

PARENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The sample of parents provided opinions about remote education for children; grade levels of the children spanned the preschool (PK) to 12th grade levels. With the exception of preschool (PK), there were at least 20 children in each grade level; parents reported slightly higher numbers of 4th graders (39 students) and 7th graders (37 students) as compared to other student grade levels.
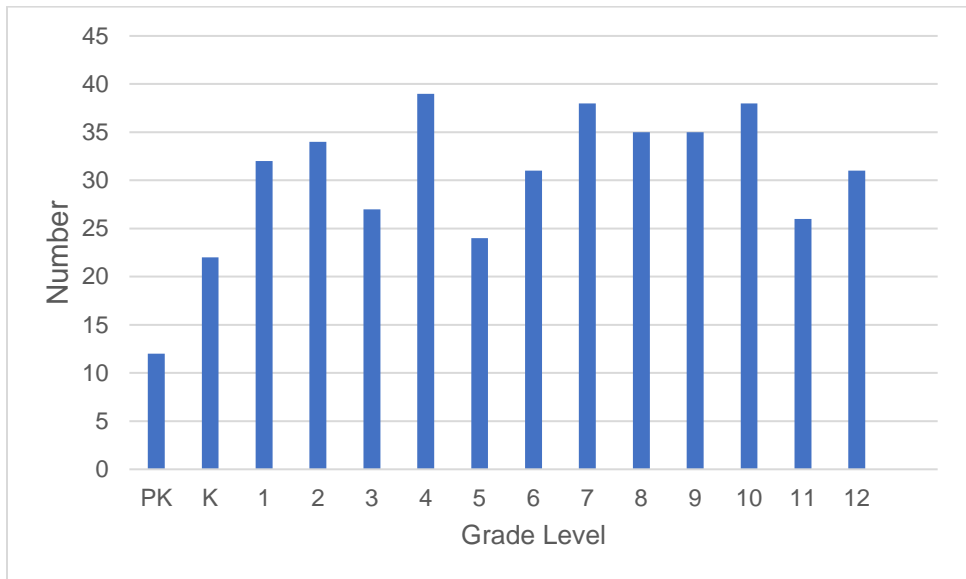
Figure 8. Grade Levels of Children Involved in Remote Learning, Parent Respondents

Parents respondents noted between one and four children attending in various South Carolina school settings, with most parents having one or two children at school. Figure 9 details the number of children within a family attending school.
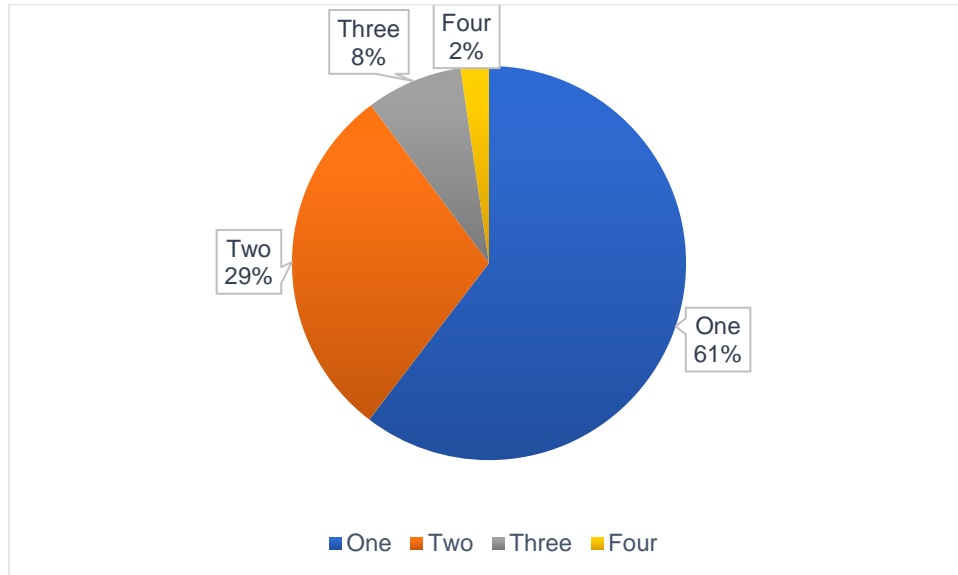
Figure 9. Number of Children Attending School, Parent Remote Learning Sample

In addition, most children were not receiving special services. The most common services mentioned was by parents included a 504 accommodation (roughly 14% of responses) or that a child was following an IEP plan (roughly 14%). Fewer students in the sample were reported as having a BIP (less than 1%) or involvement with ESOL services (approximately 1%). Table 17 reports special services as noted by parents.

Table 17. Special Services Received, Parent Remote Learning Sample

Service	Frequency	Percent
504 Plan	38	14.4
IEP (Individualized Education Program)	36	13.7
Speech/Language assistance	18	6.8
Gifted Education	17	6.5
English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	3	1.1
BIP (Behavioral Intervention Plan)	2	0.1
Total	263	100.0

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to "select all that apply" option.

REFLECTIONS ON REMOTE LEARNING IN SPRING 2020, PARENT RESPONSES

Parents discussed how lessons were provided to students learning when schools were ordered to close in-person learning (March 2020 through the remainder of the 2019-20 school year). Table 18 reports modes which schools and teachers delivered academic content. Educator data were included (far right column) to compare parent and educator perceptions of lesson delivery during Spring 2020. Respondents could select as many options applied to their situation; thus, percentages in the table will not total to 100%.

Parents noted that online lessons with two or more meetings at set times (synchronous learning) were the most common mode of lesson delivery during Spring 2020 (36.5%); however, educators noted this as the least frequent option for lesson delivery. Five additional comments were written in from parents, these comments largely stated that teachers were available for online lessons or tutoring sessions through Zoom meetings or GoogleChat availability. These activities may have been interpreted by parents as online meetings at a set time, leading to selection of synchronous classes. Conversely, options noted by educators (prepared paper packets, 44% and asynchronous learning, roughly 36%) as popular lesson delivery options were selected by roughly a quarter of the parent respondents.

Table 18.   Spring 2020 Lesson Delivery Mode, Parent Remote Learning Sample

Lesson Delivery Mode	Frequency	Parent Percentage	Educator Percentage
Prepared (paper) work packets turned in in-person	65	24.7	44.0
Online lessons where students completed work online, but there was no online meeting at a set time (asynchronous)	64	24.3	35.9
Mix of asynchronous lessons and synchronous meetings at least 1 time a week	41	15.6	28.5
Paper packets but work was turned in online (i.e., pictures of work, artifacts)	35	13.3	17.2
Online lessons where students met 2 or more times a week at a set time (synchronous)	96	36.5	15.7
Total	263		

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to "select all that apply" option

Parents reflected upon the level of rigor associate with remote learning activities conducted during Spring 2020. Figure 10 displays the reflections of parents regarding academic rigor of the lessons. While the majority of educators perceived lessons were at a lower level of rigor as compared to in-person delivery (56%), most parents perceived

the lessons at the same level of rigor (42%). Only 32% of parents felt that the lessons were at a lower level of rigor; however, lower rigor of the Spring 2020 assignments was a major complaint of educators. Where 2% of educators noted Spring 2020 activities at a higher level of rigor, 15% of parents perceived remote learning lessons at a higher level.
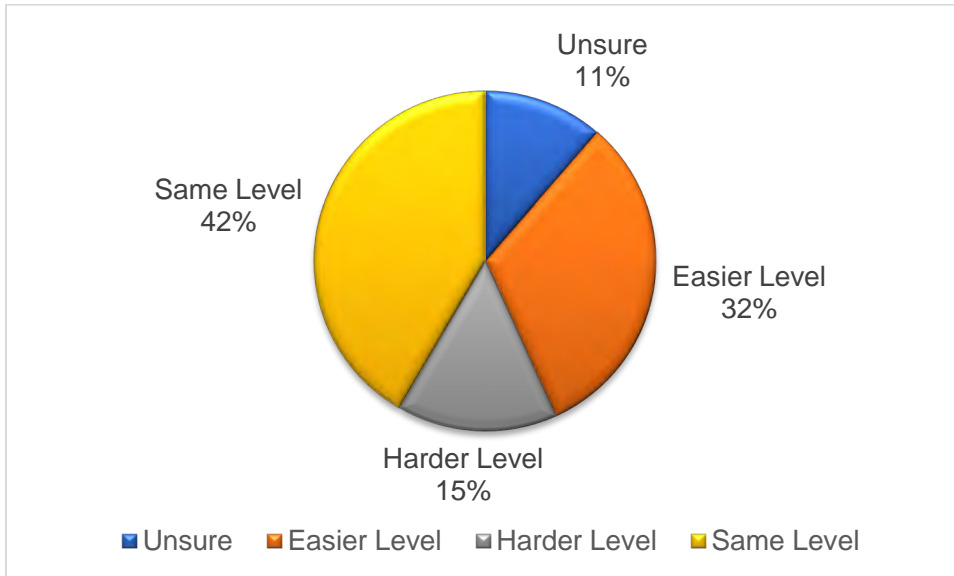
Figure 10. Rigor Level of Academic Lessons Delivered in Spring 2020, Parent Remote Learning Sample

In terms of impact of Spring 2020 activities on grades, parents could write-in reflections of their child(ren)'s performance for their child(ren)'s Spring 4th quarter report card. Of the 173 parents who provided information about their child's report card, the majority (126 or 73%) reported that report card grades were at the same level as in previous quarters. Thirty-three (19%) reported higher grades and only 8% reported lower grades than in previous quarters.

Parents were asked the extent to which they agreed with various aspects of the Spring 2020 remote learning experience. Questions presented various aspects, such as amount of communication with school personnel, stress experienced by students and families, the ease of conducting activities, and (if applicable) online learning Responses are summarized in Figure 11.
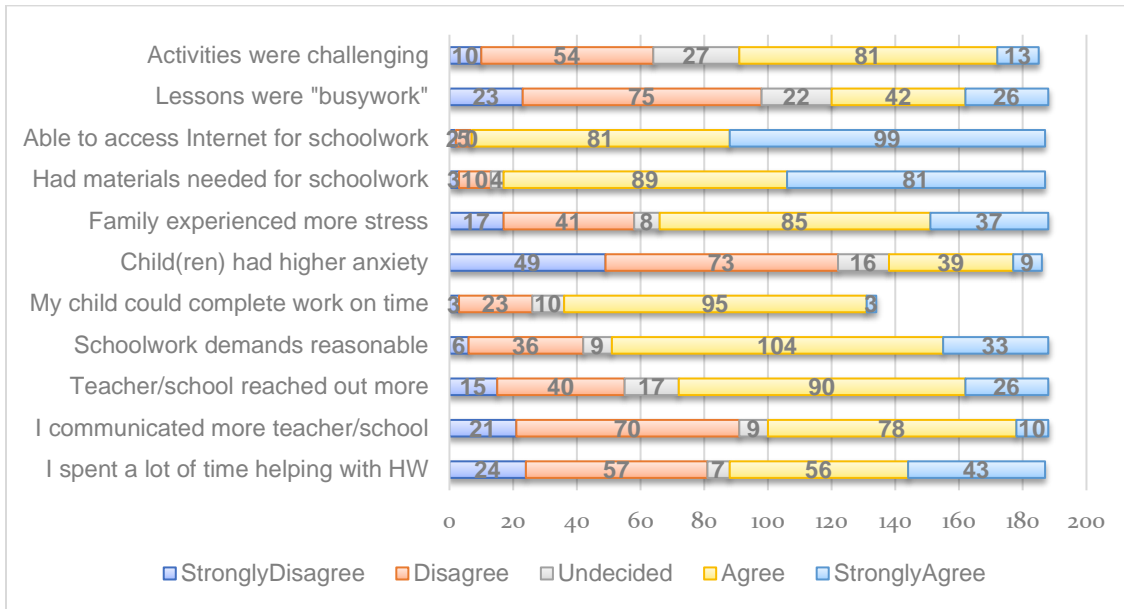
Figure 11. Parent Agreement with Aspects of Remote Learning, Spring 2020.

As shown in the figure, parent responses were typically in agreement with most statements. Parents typically agreed that Spring 2020 activities were challenging and that the schoolwork demands were reasonable. More communication was noted between home and school, whether that was initiated by the teacher/school or the parent. While teachers mentioned that there was a lot of missing work, parents largely agreed that their child(ren) could complete the work on time. Almost all parents in the sample agreed or strongly agreed that they had materials needed to complete schoolwork and also had Internet access. This may be largely due to the sample at hand, and not fully representative of families across South Carolina.

Parents were asked to reflect upon positive aspects of the Spring 2020 remote learning experience. Areas evaluated are provided in Figure 12. As shown, parents viewed the ability of their child(ren) to complete schoolwork remotely and the district's concerns for heath as the most positive aspects of the Spring 2020 remote learning experience. Approximately 40% of the parent sample stated remote learning helped children become more independent learners, that school provided materials were helpful, and devices exhibited few technical problems. While materials were helpful and communication increased, relatively few parents stated that their child(ren) were motivated to learn (roughly 8%) during Spring 2020. Also, very few parents in this sample used Hot Spots or Internet access provided by schools/districts (1.9%).
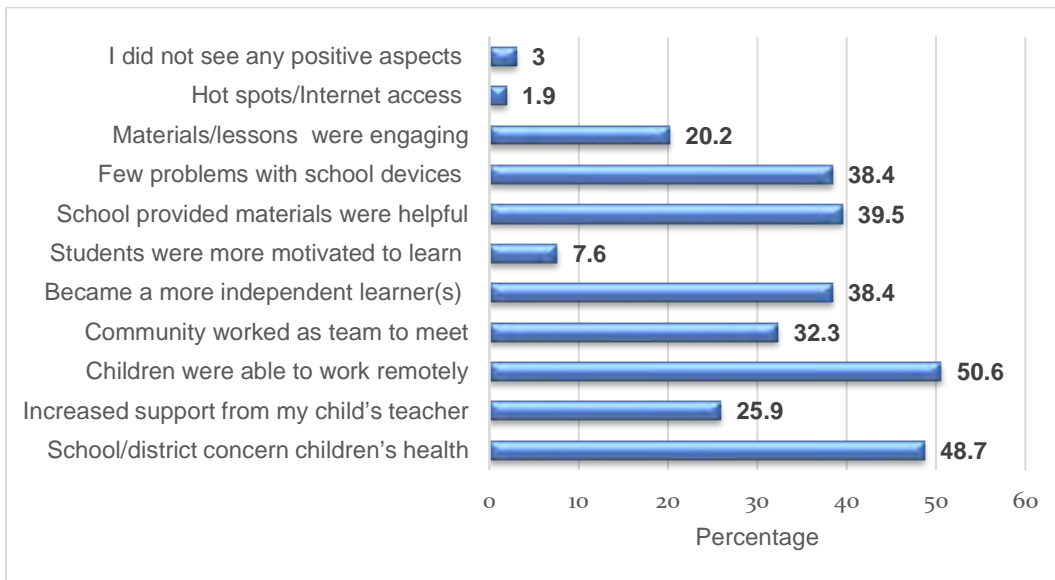
Figure 12. Positive aspects remote learning in Spring 2020.

While only 10 parents wrote in additional comments, the comments reflected additional positive aspects such as the ability for a child to learn at his/her own pace and benefits of a more flexible schedule. Parents were appreciative of the opportunity to have remote learning.

> They were given the assignment and a due date. It was a lot of "busy" work, but most of the material was new and it was a good way to learn the material. They could work at their own pace and in our home, this was a great experience.   It was one of the reasons we elected to do virtual in the fall. Much different now though.

> My children were able to complete assignments on their own time schedules. The younger three were done early in the morning or by noon, but the oldest was in eighth grade and worked a full day almost every day.

> An attempt to continue learning was made and that also helped provide some reassuring structure to the experience of the pandemic

Parents were asked to choose the top three challenges experienced with remote learning observed during Spring 2020. The number of times that a challenge was noted as one of the top three choices was tallied and converted to a percentage from the total number of parent respondents. Challenges are presented in Figure 13.
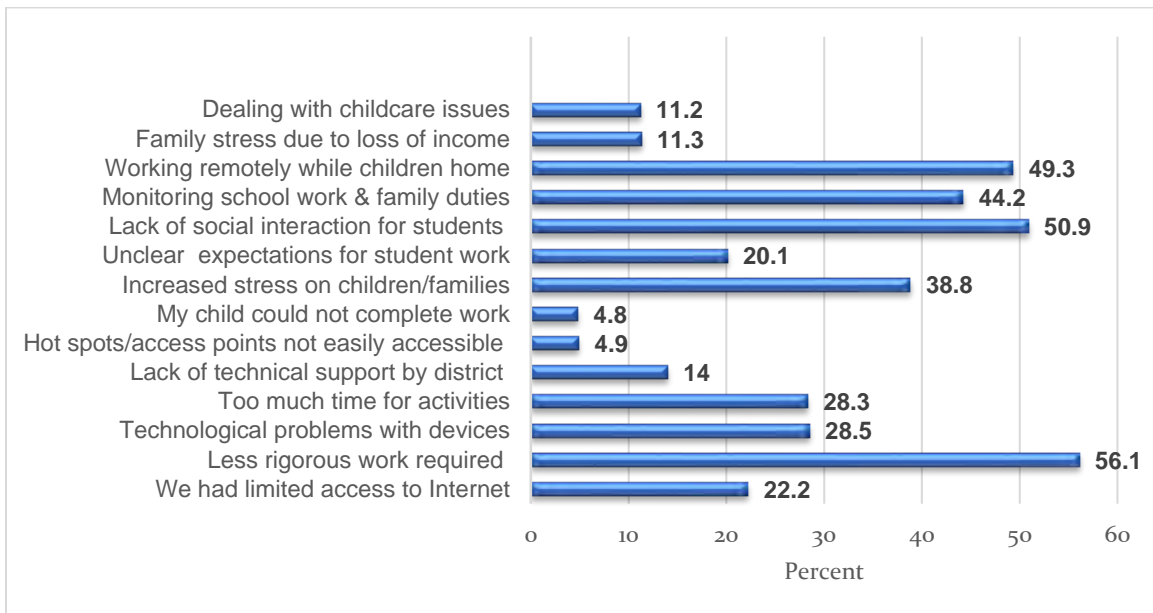
Figure 13. Challenges to Spring 202 Remote Learning, Parent Respondents

As shown, 56% of parents noted as a challenge that classwork required in Spring 2020 was less rigorous than in-person work; this may be confusing as many parents stated previously that lessons were at the same level of rigor. In addition, parents mentioned that lack of social interaction for children was a major challenge of the Spring 2020 remote learning experience. Two other highly rated challenges dealt with parents working remotely while children were home (49.1%) and the difficulties of parents to monitor schoolwork and family duties (44.3%). Very few parents; however, stated that their child(ren) could not complete the remote learning activities (4.8%) or problems with Internet access were noted (4.8%).

Parents could write in additional challenges noted in Spring 2020. Forty parents provided information about additional barriers faced by children/families. These were generally related to two major areas: unbalanced workloads across children in different grades and problems encountered with receiving special services. Other responses noted by parents represented a mix of issues such as: busywork or too challenging assignments, needs to monitor children to keep them on task, and problems with learning platforms (e.g., ClassDojo).

Parents with more than one child in the house noted that workloads and expectations were often unbalanced across grade levels. As noted, this varied more by teacher than across grade level.

My then 5th grader had so much work that it was difficult to get it done while my then 1st grader finished quickly.

My children had uneven workloads given to them by their teachers. My high school student was given about two hours of work each day. My two middle school students had 4 to 6 hours of work daily.

Another area noted was the lack of assistance which special education students received due to remote learning.

The only school problem I had was receiving special needs services were almost impossible. The school provided a program for him to use, and being high-functioning (autistic), he could do it-- but nothing can replace the impact of face to face instruction

For the seventh grader with the IEP, there were major issues with teachers and the literacy coach implementing universal design in a virtual environment. With the junior, it was disappointing to see a teacher completely give up on teaching.

Parents were asked if schools/districts solicited information in summer 2020 to assist with planning for the 2020-21 school year. Parents respond to the three questions noted below in Figure 14. As shown, it was largely reported that schools asked for feedback about the online learning experience from parents/families. Schools/districts largely reported on the problems that were mentioned and actively tried to find solutions to these barriers.
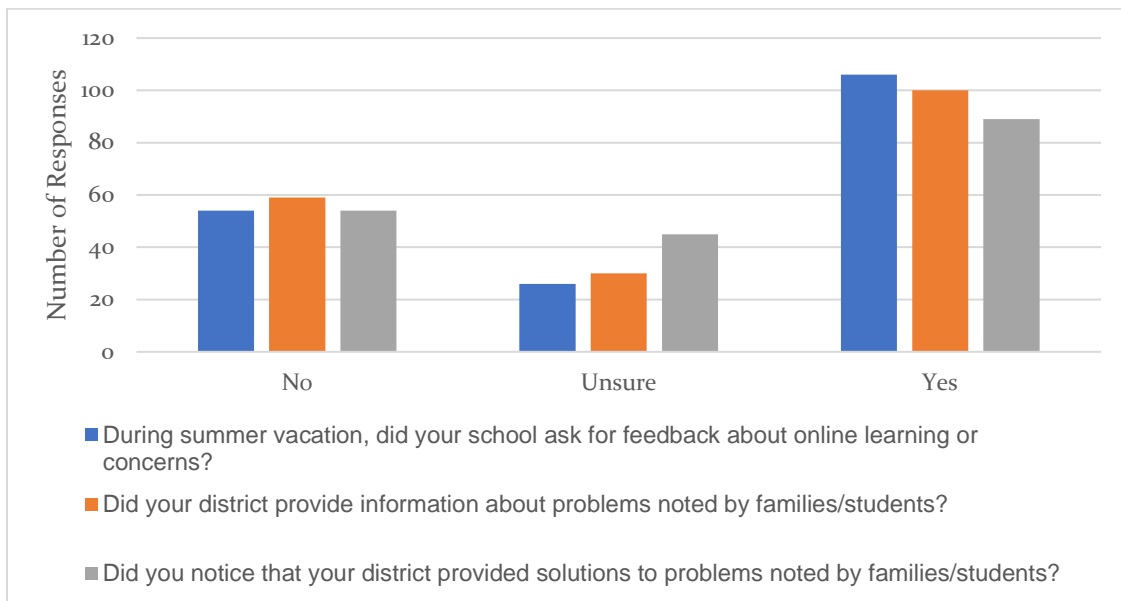
Figure 14. District/school input when planning for 2020-21, Parent Responses

START OF 2020-21 ACADEMIC YEAR, PARENT RESPONSES

Given the pandemic, schools followed different conventions than in past years. Parents reflected on the start of the 2020-21academic year and relayed their opinions regarding fall 2020 learning. Parents were asked how their child(ren) began the new academic year by selecting all delivery mode options that applicable to their child(ren)'s situation. Responses are summarized in Table 19.

As shown in the table, most parents stated that elected virtual learning was selected (roughly 27%) by most parents in the sample; the next popular option was a hybrid option (mix of in-person and virtual learning) selected by almost 22% of the parent responders. Approximately 11% of the sample noted that students began the school year with five-day in-person learning. We recognize that many parents did not respond to this question.

Table 19. 2020-21 School Delivery Mode, Parent Remote Learning Sample

Delivery Mode	Frequency	Percent
In-person 5-day learning	30	11.4
Hybrid (mix of in-person and virtual learning)	57	21.7
Mandatory virtual learning	23	8.7
Elected Virtual Learning	70	26.6
Decided to homeschool	3	1.1
Missing/No Response	78	29.6
Total	263	

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to "select all that apply" option

Parents reflected upon differences between academic delivery mode in Spring 2020 compared to Fall 2020. The item allowed parents to select all options that applied, allowing a response for children at different grade levels and schools with the same household. Of the sample, the majority of parents (126 responses or 49.0% of the sample) stated that Fall 2020 mode of delivery was different than in Spring 2020. Table 20 provides the summary of parent response. As shown below, most parents elected for children to have synchronous classes (held two or more times per week at a set time) or a mix of asynchronous (work provided but no online meeting at a set time) and one or more synchronous meetings per week.

Table 20. Fall 2020, Lesson Delivery Mode, Parent Remote Learning Sample

Lesson Delivery Mode	Frequency	Percentage
Prepared (paper) work packets turned in in-person	8	3.0
Online lessons where students completed work online, but there was no online meeting at a set time (asynchronous)	33	12.5
Mix of asynchronous lessons and synchronous meetings at least 1 time a week	66	25.1
Paper packets but work was turned in online (i.e., pictures of work, artifacts)	3	1.1
Online lessons where students met 2 or more times a week at a set time (synchronous)	73	27.8
Total	263	100.0

Note: Percentage will not total to 100% due to "select all that apply" option

Parents could write in different responses or additional information regarding the Fall 2020 model of delivery; 28 parents provided additional comments concerning delivery mode. With these responses, 20 comments mentioned that students met at a set time via an online platform (e.g., Zoom). Many comments specifically mentioned that remote instruction was daily, five-days a week.

Online with teacher 5 days a week as though it is a normal school day all day.

Five comments mentioned specific software (e.g., Schoolology) or discussed additional information concerning additional teacher materials and support provide.

Most work done online, teachers at school provide video lessons, teacher available daily during her only planning to provide support.

Three comments mentioned complaints. One with the overall setup of remote learning and two comments regarding problems with children and/or parents navigating software platforms in place at school.

It's been horribly inconsistent. No set schedule, classes meet at the same time, teachers schedule online classes with no notice. No one place for communication. Child has to check several places for work.

Parents were asked which barriers present in Spring 2020 were still an issue in Fall 2020. From the same list included in the Spring, parents could check all options that were present in Fall 2020. Figure 15 compares the two sets of information.
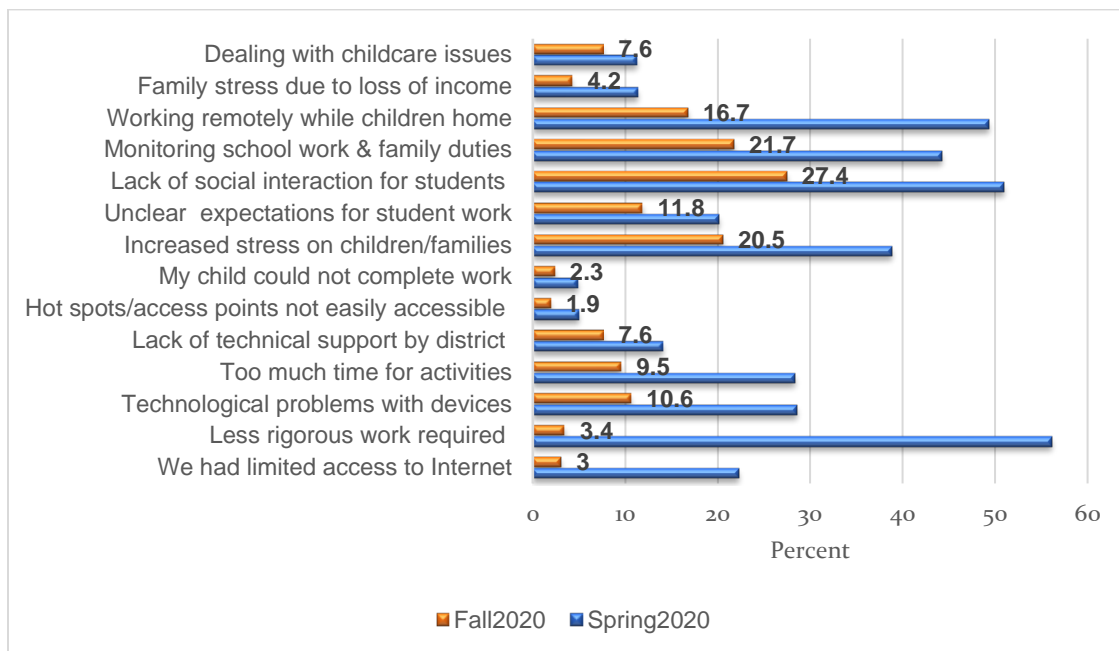
Figure 15. Challenges with Remote Learning Spring to Fall 2020, Parent Respondents

As noted in Figure 15, the percent of parents citing barriers dropped for all aspects by Fall 2020 (orange bars) as compared to Spring 2020 (blue bars). In Fall 2020, only three areas were noted as a challenge by over 20% of parent respondents: lack of social interaction for students, monitoring children's school work with family and work duties, and increased stress on children and families. The largest drops were noted for rigorous work, with Fall 2020 representing more rigorous work than in Spring 2020.

An option was provided for parents to note any new challenges which families were encountering in Fall 2020. Parents wrote in 53 responses provided related to new concerns which arose at the start of the 2020-21 academic year. The responses were grouped into two categories, academic (26 responses, 49%) and personal (27 responses or 51%) comments, with percentage in each category approximately evenly split.

 Under the academic learning category, there were two issues mentioned by parents. The first area, Virtual Schooling Problems, noted concerns about using the school provided devices, various e-learning platforms, or access problems. Also noted by parents were problems related to children's workloads. Sample responses are provided in Table 21.

Table 21. Academic Concerns New in Fall 2020, Parent Respondents (26 Comments)

Virtual schooling problems –Work expectations, platform/software problems, problems with Internet access or devices (17 responses)	*Unrealistic length of assignments on e-learning days (9+ hours if work for a 4th grade student)* *It's horrible. Lack of communication, frustration with child having to log into multiple websites and create log ins across multiple platforms. No feedback on assignments. She doesn't know what she got wrong on quizzes or classwork to be able to correct it and learn from it. The software doesnt always work right and the district only deals with hardware. Stress levels are off the chart. Anxiety and depression are things we never had to deal with before. She has a good support network but the school work is the biggest problem* *.* *Our 7th grader is having a difficult time keeping up with what is due when which has never been a problem for her in the past, but has resulted in late assignments and lower grades.*
Lack of support – lacking services (e.g., guidance, mental health), food, inconsistent schedules in districts (9 responses)	*The district keeps switching its plan and expectations to bring more students back into the classroom. Even though cases are rising and percent positive is staying high, they are still pressuring people to come back in school. We were told this would not happen and that they would offer the virtual option all year.* *Free meals aren't offered for pick-up in mornings like previously... not as easily accessible.*

The second broad category was related to personal concerns. This included 27 responses in two categories- health concerns (16 responses) and family/life concerns (11 responses). Health concerns focused on parent's concerns with a child or parent contracting COVID. The responses mentioned feeling unsafe for going back to schools five days a week, concerns with parents working, and concerns about other children in schools being sick and transmitting COVID-19. The second area was related to home life issues (11 responses). These comments noted families' struggles with loss of income, child care expenses, worry with leaving children home alone while parents work outside the home. Table 22 provides illustrative comments for each subcategory.

Table 21. Academic Concerns New in Fall 2020, Parent Respondents (26 Comments)

Health concerns – worries about children contracting COVID, children anxious, stress and feeling as if districts/schools are not concerned (16 responses)	*We are worried about the current push for face to face for all students. Plexiglass only protects the desk space, as students sit outside of this space in their chair. Hybrid is working well and pushing more interaction is pushing for more illnesses.* *We are very concerned about safety, should we go back 5 days a week. Cases are on the rise, and we know several kids who are infected.* *They want all students to return to traditional learning, but we are not comfortable with the safety measures from the district (no mandatory mask policy, students tell my son that they are not socially distancing in the building)*
Home/life concerns – costs associated with childcare, leaving kids at home alone while working, loss of income (11 responses)	*I teach elementary school and we are now back to school five days a week. That means my middle and high schooler are home alone completing work. They only go to school two days a week. Therefore, if they have a question there is no one here to help them.*

Parents were asked which positive aspects were noted (to date) at the start of the 2020-21 academic year. Aspects are listed in Table 22 below. Respondents could select as many options as applied to their school/district. Percentages are computed from the total sample.

Parents identified free meals for all students was the most positive aspect of the start of the 2020 school year, as selected by 43% of respondents. Other areas rated highly were the effectiveness of school-provided computing devices (36%), increased rigor of school work (32%), and safety measures in place at schools (31%).

Table 22. Fall 2020 Positive Aspects Related to Schools/Districts, Parent Remote Learning Sample

	Frequency	Percent
Free meals for all students	112	42.6
Devices (e.g., iPads, Chromebooks, etc.) provided by the school are functioning adequately	94	35.7
Improved rigor of assignments	84	31.9
Safety measures in place (masks, increased cleaning, etc.) at school	81	30.8
Students/families are engaged in online learning	68	25.9
Students are completing remote work in a timely manner	61	23.2
Hybrid schedule is more relaxed for students/families	48	18.3
Connectivity issues for families have been solved (e.g., free/reduced price Internet)	37	14.1
Increased Hot Spot/Internet access availability	29	11.0
Total	263	

Thirteen parents elected to write in an additional positive aspect noted in Fall 2020. Seven statements relayed positive comments regarding virtual schooling and its impact. Parents applauded efforts by teachers and schools, noting that teachers were managing well with the situation at hand. Comments suggested that children were happy to be in school a few days a week, leading to feelings of "normalcy."

We have been impressed overall with the virtual school and what we have seen our 3rd grader able to do with a computer. He is definitely learning new skills to manage his schoolwork. His teacher is extremely engaged with the students. Also, we have been impressed with how our child's teacher has made efforts to encourage social interactions remotely.

The teachers are doing great with what little they were given.

The other six responses did not state positive aspects noted at the start of the 2020-21 year, but reiterated concerns of the potential for COVID infection of children and families in South Carolina.

The lack of adequate safety measures and the fact that the districts returned to face to face without using the DHEC data. Both are still opening face to face even though the percent positive is so high. I am extremely worried for teachers and families. The virus is out of control.

It has been a horrible experiment that will cost the students and state much more than politicians understand.

IMPACT ON ACADEMIC LEARNING, PARENT RESPONSES

As no standardized tests were administered at the end of the 2019-20 school year (and the potential for no standardized testing in the 2020-21), parents were asked about the decision to remove standardized testing and how this decision may affect academics. A list of potential challenges was provided, where parents could select all options that were relevant.

Similar to educator responses, parents did not identify many negatives regarding the decision to remove standardized testing in Spring 2020. The number of parents selecting any positives regarding testing was low, with only one category noting approximately 10% of respondents. For this item, parents were concerned that there would not be feedback available to schools/parents to know how much learning was lost. All other areas had below 10% endorsement. Percentages for aspects to select are noted in Table 23.

Table 23. Potential Negative Aspects Related to Standardized Test Removal, Parent Remote Learning Sample

Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
There won't be feedback available to schools and parents to know how much learning was lost	25	9.5
My child will have lower performance on formative tests when testing returns	12	4.6
My child won't know what is needed to progress to the next grade	10	3.8
I won't be able to compare my child's school performance to other schools	8	3.0
Students will become lazy if there are not tests at the end of the year	8	3.0
There won't be information for me to see in the school/district report card	7	2.7
Easier classroom activities and tests	2	.8
State standards won't be followed	4	1.5
My child's teacher won't be held accountable for learning	4	1.5
Total	263	

Parents could also write in additional potential negative aspects regarding the decision to remove standardized testing. Only 24 responses were written in; of these, the majority of responses were in support of removing standardized tests.

Children are resilient. We have been pushing them to grow up and learn to fast anyway. The students will scaffold up to the correct levels for reading and math after this pandemic is over. Look at the kids of Katrina.

If state standardized testing ceased, more instructional time is given to the students and teachers. Plus anxiety levels for all students are decreased.

Only four responses discussed any potential weaknesses related to removing standardized testing. Issues noted by parents were concerned with the lack of comparative data to use for assessing student growth, measuring literacy, and using data to drive decision making.

Literacy scores in South Carolina are considerably low. My fear is that by losing that data, the state's literacy rates are going to sink even lower.

Decision-makers are lacking an important data source for measuring student achievement

Parents could select positive aspects regarding the decision to remove standardized testing. These items were much higher endorsed. For each element, the frequency and percent of sample were computed; these values are noted in Table 24. The most frequently cited positive reasons for removing standardized testing revolve around reduced pressure for teachers to "teach to the test" (55.5%) and less stress and anxiety noted for teachers (54.8) and for children (54.8). In addition, parents felt that teacher freedom to engage in meaningful lessons (49.4%) and that learning would not have to pause for test review (51.3%) would be beneficial to teachers and students.

Table 24. Potential Positive Aspects Related to Standardized Test Removal, Parent Remote Learning Sample

	Frequency	Percentage
My child's teacher will have less pressure to "teach to the test"	146	55.5
Less stress noted on teachers	145	55.1
Less stress/anxiety noted for my child	144	54.8
Teachers will have more freedom to create engaging lessons	130	49.4
My child doesn't have to stop learning to review for the test	135	51.3
My child's school rating/report card score will not be affected	89	33.8
Total	263	100.0

Eighteen parents wrote in additional positive aspects regarding the decision to remove standardized testing in 2019-20 and the potential to remove testing for 2020-21. Five of the responses reiterated positive aspects related to the removal of standardized testing including: lower teacher/student, stress, the opportunity for teachers to teach content and prepare more engaging lessons, and noting that the amount of testing was excessive pre-COVID.

Thirteen responses provided positive viewpoints for removing/the potential to remove standardized testing. Three responses noted benefits for saving money at the state and district level:

More money will be saved by the state since state standardized testing costs at least $15 million a year. Also, districts will save money from purchasing other benchmarks to prepare for those state tests.

Other responses noted that removing testing provided stakeholders an opportunity to rethink standardized testing and the information it provided.

(This is a) Chance to see the relevance/importance of standard tests

The remaining responses noted how the virtual environment may influence testing, including the potential for children to receive help on the test or have to go in-person into a school to take the test (and risk exposure to COVID).

I was concerned about the potential for unauthorized assistance if standardized testing was done remotely.

SUMMARY OF PARENT FEEDBACK

- 263 parents across South Carolina provided feedback about the remote learning experience; respondents were largely from suburban locales. Parents were able to reflect upon schooling experiences for children across preschool (PK) -12th grade. With the exception of preschool (PK), there were at least 20 children in each grade level. Parents in the sample had between one and four children attending South Carolina public schools, with most parents reporting one or two children attending school.

- Most children were not receiving special services. The most common services mentioned were: involvement with a 504 accommodation (roughly 14% of responses) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) (roughly 14%).

- Online lessons with two or more meetings at set times (synchronous learning) were noted by parents the most common mode of lesson delivery during Spring 2020 (36.5%); however, educators noted this as the least frequent option for lesson delivery. Conversely, options noted by educators (prepared paper packets, 44% and asynchronous learning, roughly 36%) as popular lesson delivery options were selected by roughly a quarter of the parent respondents.

- Most parents perceived the Spring 2020 academic lessons at the same level of rigor (42%) as the in-person work and only 32% of parents felt that the lessons were at a lower level of rigor. The majority of parents (126 or 73% of parent sample) reported that report card grades were at the same level as in previous quarters; 33 parents (19% of parent sample) reported higher grades and only 21 parents (8% of parent sample) reported lower 4th quarter grades.

- Parents typically agreed that Spring 2020 activities were challenging and that the schoolwork demands were reasonable. More communication was noted between home and school, whether that was initiated by the teacher/school or the parent.

- The ability of their child(ren) to complete schoolwork remotely and the district's concerns for heath was mentioned by parents as the two most positive aspects of the remote learning experience. Approximately 40% of the parent sample stated remote learning helped children become more independent learners, that school provided materials were helpful, and devices exhibited few technical problems.

- In terms of challenges, 56% of parent respondents noted that classwork required in Spring 2020 was less rigorous than in-person work and a lack of social interaction for children was a major challenge of the Spring 2020 remote learning experience. Two other highly rated challenges dealt with parents working remotely while children were home (49.1%) and the difficulties of parents to monitor schoolwork and family duties (44.3%).

- In Fall 2020, most parents stated that their child(ren) would attend school through (elected) virtual learning (roughly 27%) and 22% of respondents began the 2020-21 school year with a hybrid option (mix of in-person and virtual learning). Approximately

11% of the sample stated that children began the school year with five-day in-person learning.

- Parents reflected upon differences between academic delivery mode in Spring 2020 compared to Fall 2020. The majority of parents (49.0% of the sample) stated that Fall 2020 mode of delivery was different than in Spring 2020.

- Parents reported fewer barriers to remote learning in Fall 2020. At this time, only three areas were noted as a challenge by over 20% of parent respondents: lack of social interaction for students, monitoring children's schoolwork with family and work duties, and increased stress on children and families. Parents identified free meals for all students as the most positive aspect of the start of the 2020 school year (43% of respondents). Other areas noted favorably by many parents were the effectiveness of school-provided computing devices (36%), increased rigor of schoolwork (32%), and safety measures in place at schools (31%).

- Parents did not identify many negatives regarding the decision to remove standardized testing in Spring 2020. The number of parents selecting any positives associated with standardized testing was low. Only one item was endorsed by 10% of respondents, with parents noting concerned that there would not be feedback available to schools/parents to know how much learning was lost.

- Positive aspects regarding the decision were more highly endorsed by parents. The most frequently cited positive reasons for removing standardized testing revolve around reduced pressure for teachers to "teach to the test" (55.5%) and less stress and anxiety noted for teachers (54.8) and for children (54.8). In addition, parents felt that teacher freedom to engage in meaningful lessons (49.4%) and that learning would not have to pause teaching new content for test review activities (51.3%).

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE REMOTE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

In total, over 1,000 educators and parents from across South Carolina provided feedback about remote learning experiences during the period from March 2020 through November 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This time period covered the sudden closing of schools due to COVID-19, planning for the 2020-21 school year, and starting the new academic year while the virus was still present. This section summarizes key points noted by educators and parents.

Both parents and educators recognized the difficulties faced by schools and school districts in Spring 2020. A variety of modes were used deliver content, with asynchronous lessons or distributing physical packets of materials as most popular options. Physical packets of materials were an option for students in lower grades as well as for families without reliable Internet access.

Educators recognized that they had to scramble when schools closed abruptly in March 2020 to provide lessons and, educators recognized that the information was at a lower level of rigor as was delivered in-person. Parents, however, reported conflicting information as to the level of the lessons, in some places noting the lessons were "busy work" and in other responses, noting that the rigor level was approximately equal to in-person learning. Student grades, however, were reported by parents as largely the same at the end of 2019-20 as in previous quarters of the school year.

Related to remote learning in Spring 2020, there were benefits and challenges noted across the two sets of respondents. Unexpected benefits of the remote learning experience included educator pride to show that they could meet the needs of their communities and to work together as a team. Educators also felt that districts/schools were concerned for their personal health in Spring 2020. Parents noted similar themes, stating that they were pleased at the ability of their child(ren) to complete schoolwork remotely and also with the district's concerns for children's health.

Challenges were noted in Spring 2020. For educators, these challenges were largely related to student issues and lesson content. Educators noted that the tasks were less rigorous than in-person learning and also took a long time to prepare. Student Internet capability was noted as problematic as well. However, the biggest complaint for educators was the amount of missing work turned in by students.

Lessons Learned:

1. Schools and communities were able to provide lessons when schools were abruptly closed schools due to COVID-19.
2. To help serve all students, physical packets of lessons allowed students/families to participate in school without the need for Internet access and with the ability to provide materials to the largest numbers of children. While the lessons may not have been as rigorous as in-person schooling, they provided a way to keep children engaged and learning.

3. During Spring 2020, there was a high percentage of missing student assignments. However, parents found academic demands reasonable and were engaged with more communication with schools/teachers. Additional ways to encourage student engagement are needed to continue remote learning.

During the 2020 summer break, educators tried to solve problems related to student connectivity (e.g., Hot Spots, lack of technical support, access to Internet, and device shortages for students.) Many school districts spent time and money during Summer 2020 to provide additional materials and support to students. Schools/districts did request feedback from parents as the 2020-21 school year was planned. Teachers/educators were upset that parent feedback was solicited and considered, yet teachers mentioned feeling "left out" of many of the decision making-processes.

4. Ensure solicitation from all stakeholders on a broad level to give educators as well as parents additional voice in decision making processes.
5. School districts were able to provide additional materials and devices to increase connectivity. This could be used for other purposes and/or a continuation of remote learning after the threat of COVID-19 infections diminish.

In Fall 2020, schools and families were provided more options for remote learning. Use of paper packets was greatly reduced, due to connectivity work and securing devices for students. Educators noted a big increase in the ability to hold synchronized class meetings. While parents elected one (or few) ways for their child(ren) would attend school, educators were faced with providing service through multiple modes, often simultaneously. Most parents elected to continue with virtual learning or participated in a hybrid mix (some in-person, some online). Teachers noted frustrations with having to accommodate so many different learning modes simultaneously

There were different challenges noted by parents and teachers in Fall 2020 than were present in Spring 2020. In the fall, educators recognized that there was still high levels of stress on teachers/administrators, that students still had a lot of missing work, and online courses were very time consuming. Parents were concerned with the lack of social interaction for students, monitoring children's schoolwork with family and work duties, and increased stress on children and families. However, providing free meals for all students, effective computing devices, rigorous activities, and safety measures were beneficial.

6. Given the high levels of stress and anxiety noted by teachers/administrators, ways to deal with stress and to support positive mental health could be very beneficial. Suggestions include sharing online materials, providing online speaking engagements from mental health professionals, and creating a safe place for educators to express frustrations.
7. To combat a lack of social-interaction fro (virtual) students, online clubs and activities can help children feel connected.

Most parents and teachers did not see drawbacks related to the decision to remove standardized testing in Spring 2020 (as well as the potential for Spring 2021 waiver). Both parents and educators noted that there would be lower stress, anxiety, and pressure – on both students and teachers. Teachers would have greater freedom to engage in meaningful lessons without pressure to "teach to the test."

8. Given the negative view of standardized testing from parents and educators, greater emphasis on usefulness of results may be communicated to the public as well as greater information concerning how the information is used to support student learning and school success.

Appendix A. Remote Learning in South Carolina, Participants by District

District	Teacher Responses		Parent Responses	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Abbeville	5	.6	1	.4
Aiken	18	2.1	8	3.0
Allendale	1	.1		5.2
Anderson 1	1	.1	1	.4
Anderson 2	5	.6	2	.8
Anderson 5	7	.8		
Bamberg 1	1	.1		
Bamberg 2	1	.1		
Barnwell 19	2	.2	1	.4
Beaufort	24	2.8	6	2.3
Berkeley	70	8.3	46	17.5
Calhoun	9	1.1		
Charleston	38	4.5	21	8.0
Cherokee	7	.8	2	.8
Chester	5	.6		25.1
Chesterfield	9	1.1	2	.8
Clarendon 2	2	.2	1	.4
Clarendon 3	1	.1		
Clarendon 4	1	.1		
Darlington	16	1.9	2	.8
Dillon 4	3	.4		
Diocese of Charleston	1	.1		29.0
Dorchester 2	24	2.8	8	3.0
Dorchester 4	1	.1		
Edgefield	1	.1	2	.8
Erskine Institute	4	.5		
Fairfield	4	.5		
Florence 1	29	3.4	2	.8
Florence 2	1	.1		
Florence 3	1	.1		
Florence 5	4	.5	1	.4
Georgetown	5	.6	2	.8
Greenville	48	5.7	45	17.1

District	Teacher Responses		Parent Responses	
	Frequency	Percent	District	Frequency
Greenwood 50	7	.8		
Greenwood 52	2	.2		
Greenwood 95	1	.1		
Hampton 1	2	.2		
Horry	23	2.7	5	1.9
Kershaw	14	1.7	1	.4
Lancaster	10	1.2	3	1.1
Laurens 55	3	.4		
Laurens 56	2	.2	1	.4
Lee	2	.2		
Lexington 1	21	2.5	9	3.4
Lexington 2	6	.7	4	1.5
Lexington 3	3	.4		
Lexington 4	93	11.0		
Lexington-Richland 5	18	2.1	7	2.7
Marion	4	.5		
Marlboro	4	.5		
Multi-District CTE Center	1	.1		
Newberry	8	.9		
Oconee	4	.5	6	2.3
Orangeburg	5	.6	1	.4
Pickens	12	1.4	3	1.1
Piedmont Technical College	1	.1		
Richland 1	25	3.0	6	2.3
Richland 2	54	6.4	14	5.3
Richland 3	1	.1		
Saluda	4	.5		
SC Governors School for Science and Math	1	.1		
SC Public Charter School District	34	4.0	2	.8
SCDJJ	1	.1		
Spartanburg 1	2	.2		
Spartanburg 2	2	.2	2	.8

	Teacher Responses		Parent Responses	
District	Frequency	Percent	District	Frequency
Spartanburg 3			1	.4
Spartanburg 4	2	.2		
Spartanburg 5	5	.6	5	1.9
Spartanburg 6	9	1.1	5	1.9
Spartanburg 7	4	.5		
Sumter	7	.8	4	1.5
Union	3	.4	1	.4
Williamsburg	3	.4	1	.4
York 1	16	1.9	2	.8
York 2 (Clover)	7	.8	3	1.1
York 3 (Rock Hill)	32	3.8	14	5.3
York 4 (Fort Mill)	20	2.4	1	.4
No Response	20	2.4	10	3.8
Total	847	100.0	263	100.0

Parent Reflections -Remote Learning

In March 2020, the Governor closed schools across South Carolina due to the COVID-19 crisis. As the health crisis had not gone away by the start of the 2020-21 school year, school districts across the state made plans to continue remote learning, as well as to adopt a variety of other options (e.g., hybrid learning plans). These changes presented unique challenges for families and students the end of the 2019-20 school year and the start of the 2020-21 school year.

We would like to better understand the effect that the switch remote learning had for your children and your family. This questionnaire asks for your perspectives of the experience of remote learning for PK-12 education. Please provide your honest opinions; the survey should take about 10 minutes. There are no correct answers to any of the questions. All information will be kept confidential.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is very important and appreciated!

School Characteristics

1. What is your school district?

2. What is the grade level(s) of your child(ren) ? (check all that apply)

☐ PK	☐ 4th	☐ 9th
☐ K	☐ 5th	☐ 10th
☐ 1st	☐ 6h	☐ 11th
☐ 2nd	☐ 7th	☐ 12th
☐ 3rd	☐ 8th	☐ Not applicable

3. Do you have a child in any of the following programs: (check all that apply)

☐ Special Education

☐ ESOL

☐ Speech/Language assistance

☐ 504 Plan

☐ IEP (Individualized Education Program)

☐ BIP (Behavioral Intervention Plan)

☐ Other (please specify)

4. How would you describe the community your school is in?

○ Rural   ○ Suburban   ○ Urban

○ Other (please specify)

Spring 2020

Please tell us about your experiences with remote learning when SC schools were closed for in-person learning beginning March 2020 through the end of the 2019-20 school year.

5. When schools closed, how were lessons provided ? (check all that apply)

☐ Prepared paper packets of work turned in in person

☐ Online lessons where students completed work on online, but there no online meetings at a set time

☐ Online lessons where students met 2 or more times a week at a set time

☐ Mix of online set meetings and work to complete/turn in online

☐ Paper packets but work was turned in online (i.e., pictures of work, artifacts)

☐ Other (please specify)

[ ]

6. Compared to in-person learning, the remote learning activities were

◯ harder than usual

◯ the same as usual

◯ easier than usual

◯ difficult to say/unsure

7. In 2019-20, how did your child's fourth quarter report card compare to other quarters? (if more than one child, please note grade level)

[ ]

8. Please reflect on the end of the 2019-20 school year (March- May) and state your agreement level. If you have more than one child in school, please answer these by think in general of how your time was spent.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I spent a lot of time helping my child with schoolwork.	○	○	○	○	○
I spent more time communicating with my child's teacher/schools.	○	○	○	○	○
I had more communication (e.g., calls, emails) from my child's school/teachers.	○	○	○	○	○
The schoolwork provided was reasonable.	○	○	○	○	○
My child was able to complete all the work on time.	○	○	○	○	○
My child had higher levels of anxiety, which kept them from completing work.	○	○	○	○	○
Our family was experiencing higher levels of stress or anxiety	○	○	○	○	○
My child had the materials needed to complete assignments.	○	○	○	○	○
If lessons required the Internet, we were able to get access to complete school work.	○	○	○	○	○
The lessons seemed to be "busywork"	○	○	○	○	○
The activities were challenging for my child.	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

_____

4

9. What did you see as **positive** from the remote learning experience? (Check all that apply)

☐ The school/district was concerned for children's health

☐ Increased support from my child's teacher

☐ Students were able to complete necessary work remotely

☐ I felt like our community worked as team to meet this challenge

☐ My child became a more independent learner

☐ Students were more motivated to learn

☐ Students were able to work remotely using school provided materials (packets or with technology)

☐ The technology provided by the school (iPads, Chromebooks) worked with few problems

☐ Materials/lessons provided for student learning were engaging

☐ We used the Hot spots/Internet access provided by the school

☐ I did not see any positive aspects

Other (please specify)

[   ]

10. What do you feel were the main **challenges** from the Remote Learning in South Carolina experience delivered March-May 2020. Select up to **THREE** that you feel were most important, where 1 is the most important challenge.

☰
[   ]

We had limited access to Internet

☰
[   ]

Less rigorous work required

☰
[   ]

Technological problems with the school-provided devices

☰
[   ]

Too much time needed to complete the remote learning activities

☰
[   ]

Lack of technical support by district

≡

Hot spots/access points not easily accessible

≡

My child could not to complete work

≡

Increased stress on children/families

≡

Unclear communication of expectations for student work

≡

Lack of social interaction for students

≡

Monitoring my child's assignments along with other home/family duties

≡

Trying to work remotely while children are also at home

≡

Family stress due to loss of income

≡

Dealing with childcare issues

11. If you had children at different grade levels, did you notice different problems at different levels? Please describe, noting the grade level/specific problem(s).

12. During the 2019 summer break, did your school ask for feedback about online learning or concerns?

○ Yes

○ Yes, but I did not respond

○ No

○ Unsure

13. Did your district discuss any of the challenges noted by families/students (e.g., emails, newsletters, etc.)?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Unsure

14. Did you notice that your district provided solutions to the challenges noted by families or students?

○ Yes

○ N0

○ Unsure

Other (please specify)

_____

2020-21 school year

Schools reopened, but it is a different school year than in the past. Please reflect on the start of the 2020-21 academic year as you answer the following questions.

15. At the start of the 2020-21 school year (August –October), how did your child(ren) attend school? (check all that apply)

- [ ] In person 5-day learning
- [ ] Hybrid (mix of in-person and virtual learning)
- [ ] Mandatory virtual learning
- [ ] We chose Virtual learning (in place of hybrid or in-personal)
- [ ] Decided to homeschool

Other (please specify)

[   ]

16. If your child(ren) has an online learning component in 2020-21, how are lessons provided?

- [ ] Prepared (paper) work packets
- [ ] Online lessons where students complete work on online, but there is no online meeting at a set time
- [ ] Online lessons where students met 2 or more times a week at a set time
- [ ] Mix of online meetings at a set time (at least 1 time per week) and work to complete "off line" but turned in online
- [ ] Paper packets but work turned in online (pictures of work, attach worksheets)
- [ ] Not Applicable
- [ ] Other (please specify)

[   ]

17. At the start of the 2020-21 school year, is the online learning component delivered the same way as in March-May 2020?

- ( ) Yes
- ( ) No
- ( ) Not Applicable

18. Why or why not?

```
[                                                                    ]
[                                                                    ]
[                                                                    ]
```

19. Considering the challenges encountered at the end of the 2019-20 school year, which were still present at the start of the 2020-21 academic year (check all that apply).

☐ We had limited access to Internet

☐ Less rigorous work required

☐ Technological problems with the school-provided devices

☐ Too much time needed to complete the remote learning activities

☐ Lack of technical support by district

☐ Hot spots/access points not easily accessible

☐ My child could not complete assignments

☐ Increased stress on children/families

☐ Unclear communication of expectations for student work

☐ Lack of social interaction for students

☐ Monitoring my child's schoolwork along with my other home/family duties

☐ Dealing with childcare issues

☐ Trying to work remotely while children are also at home

☐ Family stress due to loss of income

☐ Other (please specify)

```
[                                                        ]
```

20. At the start of the 2020-21 school year, are there any new problems with school that your family is dealing with?

```
[                                                                    ]
[                                                                    ]
[                                                                    ]
```

21. For the with the 2020-21 academic year (to date), what **positive** aspects have you seen?

☐ Safety measures in place (masks, increased cleaning, etc.) at school

☐ Free meals for all students

☐ Hybrid schedule is more relaxed for students/families

☐ Students are completing remote work in a timely manner

☐ Students/families are engaged in online learning

☐ Devices (e.g., iPads, Chromebooks, etc) provided by the school are functioning adequately

☐ Connectivity issues for families have been solved (e.g., free/reduced price Internet)

☐ Increased hot spot access/availability

☐ Rigor of work has improved

Other (please specify)

[   ]

Academic Learning

At the end of 2019-20 there were no standardized tests given and there is the potential for no standardized testing in the 2020-21 school year.

22. What do you see as a **negative** result for the decision to remove standardized tests (MAP, STAR, SCREADY)? Check all that apply

- [ ] Easier classroom activities and tests
- [ ] My child won't know what is needed to progress to the next grade
- [ ] State standards won't be followed
- [ ] My child will have lower performance on formative tests when testing returns
- [ ] My child's teacher won't be held accountable for learning
- [ ] There won't be information for me to see in the school/district report card
- [ ] There won't be feedback available to schools and parents to know how much learning was lost
- [ ] I won't be able to compare my child's school performance to other schools
- [ ] Students will become lazy if there are not tests at the end of the year
- [ ] There are no negative results that I see

Other (please specify)

[   ]

23. What areas do you see as **positively** affected by the decision to remove standardized testing?

- [ ] Less stress noted on teachers
- [ ] Less stress/anxiety noted for my child
- [ ] Teachers will have more freedom to create engaging lessons
- [ ] My child doesn't have to stop learning to review for the test
- [ ] My child's teacher will have less pressure to "teach to the test"
- [ ] My child's school rating/report card score will not be affected

Other (please specify)

[   ]

24. If you are willing to participate in a focus group, please provide your email address.

[   ]

Remote Learning in South Carolina During COVID-19

Remote Learning in SC Schools

In March 2020, the rising COVID-19 health pandemic resulted in an order from the Governor to close schools across South Carolina and suddenly shift to 5-day remote learning. As the health crisis had not diminished by the start of the 2020-21 school year, school districts continued remote learning, among other options (e.g., hybrid learning plans). The new modes of education delivery have presented unique challenges for school personnel, families, and teachers at the end of the 2019-20 school year, planning for the 2020-21 school year and starting school.

We would like to better understand the impact these situations have had on teachers and school administrators. This questionnaire asks for your perspectives of the experience of remote learning for K-12 administrators, teachers, and other school personnel. This survey will take roughly 20 minutes to complete; for each question, please provide your candid opinions. There are no correct answers to any of the following questions. All information will be kept confidential.

Thank you for participating in the survey. Your feedback is very important.

School Locale

Please give us some information about your school/district.

1. What is your district?

2. What is your current position?

3. How many years have you been in your current position?

○ 0-5 years   ○ 6-10 years   ○ 11-15 years   ○ 16-20 years   ○ more than 20 years

4. What grade level(s) do you teach? (check all that apply)

☐ PK   ☐ K   ☐ 1st   ☐ 2nd   ☐ 3rd   ☐ 4th   ☐ 5th   ☐ 6th   ☐ 7th

☐ 8th

☐ 9th   ☐ 10th   ☐ 11th   ☐ 12th   ☐ Not Applicable

☐ Other (please specify)

5. How would you describe the community where your school is located?

○ Rural   ○ Suburban   ○ Urban

○ Other (please specify)

6. How many students attend your school?

○ Small (fewer than 300 people)

○ Mid-size (300 to 600)

○ Large (more than 600)

○ Other (please specify)

Spring of 2020

Please tell us about your experiences with remote learning when SC schools were ordered to close in-person learning in March 2020 through the remainder of the 2019-20 school year

7. When schools closed abruptly, how were lessons provided to students? (check all that apply)

☐ Prepared (paper) work packets turned in in-person

☐ Online lessons where students complete work online, but there is no online meeting at a set time (asynchronous)

☐ Online lessons where students meet 2 or more times a week at a set time (synchronous)

☐ Mix of asynchronous lessons and synchronous meetings at least 1 time a week

☐ Paper packets but work was turned in online (i.e., pictures of work, artifacts)

Other (please specify)

_____

8. By the end of the 2019-20, the activities provided to students were:

○ at a higher level of rigor as would have been delivered in-person.

○ at the same level of rigor as would have been delivered in-person.

○ at a lower level of rigor as would have been delivered in-person.

○ not sure/difficult to say.

9. Please reflect on the time spent on duties at the end of the 2019-20 school year (March- May) and think in general of how your time was spent. State your level of agreement with the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I spent more time preparing lessons.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I spent more time communicating with school personnel.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I had more communication (e.g., calls, emails) from parents and students.	○	○	○	○	○	○
The demands placed by the district were reasonable.	○	○	○	○	○	○
There was more missing work/uncompleted work from students.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Students/families displayed higher levels of stress or anxiety, which hindered my ability to do my job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I was personally experiencing higher levels of stress or anxiety, which impacted my ability to do my job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Students could effectively complete assignments provided.	○	○	○	○	○	○
If lessons required Internet access, students were able to complete assignments.	○	○	○	○	○	○
If lessons required Internet access, I was able to provide feedback without many problems.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I had less contact/communication with parents or students	○	○	○	○	○	○

10. What did you recognize as **positive** from your remote learning experience in Spring 2020? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Felt like the school/district was concerned for my health
- ☐ Increased support from parents
- ☐ Students were able to complete necessary work remotely
- ☐ We worked as a team at my school
- ☐ I was able to keep in touch with my students through email/online meetings
- ☐ I was proud that we were able to meet this challenge
- ☐ Increased communication with parents/families/students
- ☐ Students became more independent learners (took ownership of own learning more)
- ☐ Students were more motivated to learn/achieve online

Other (please specify)

[   ]

11. What did <u>parents/families</u> you worked with mention as **positive** aspects of the remote learning experience in Spring 2020? (check all that apply)

- ☐ The school/district was concerned for children's health
- ☐ Increased support from schools/districts
- ☐ Students were able to work remotely using school provided materials (packets or with technology)
- ☐ Materials/lessons provided for student learning were engaging
- ☐ Hot spots/Internet access outside of the home was provided
- ☐ Increased communication with parents/families/students
- ☐ Parents understood that we were trying hard to meet this challenge
- ☐ Increased autonomy
- ☐ I did not hear any positive aspects from parents/students

Other (please specify)

[   ]

12. 1f. What do you feel were the <u>main barriers</u> from the remote learning experience in Spring 2020. Select up to **THREE** barriers, rating 1 as the most important, 2 as second most important, and 3 as the least important.

☰
[   ]

Bandwidth problems/Limited access to Internet

☰
[   ]

Less rigorous work required from students

≡

☐

Technological problems with the school-provided devices

≡

☐

Amount of time needed to develop lessons for remote learning

≡

☐

Lack of technical support for students/teachers

≡

☐

Not enough devices to provide to all students

≡

☐

Hot spots/access points not easily accessible for families

≡

☐

Failure of students to complete work

≡

☐

More grading/work on school personnel

≡

☐

Increased stress on teachers/school administrators

≡

☐

Increased stress on children/families

≡

☐

Unclear communication of expectations for teachers

≡

☐

Unclear communication of expectations for student work

≡

Lack of social interaction for students

≡

Balancing my workload with other home/family duties

≡

Dealing with personal child care issues

Lessons learned at the end of the 2019-20 school year's Remote Learning in South Carolina experience could help schools and families prepare for the 2020-21 academic year. Please reflect on the end of the 2019-20 school year as you respond to the questions below.

13. Considering the main barriers/challenges that you encountered in Spring 2020, to your knowledge which were addressed when planning for the 2020-21 academic year? (check all that apply)

☐ Less rigorous work required from students

☐ Bandwidth problems/Limited access to Internet

☐ Technological problems with the school-provided devices

☐ Amount of time needed to develop lessons for remote learning

☐ Lack of technical support for students/teachers

☐ Not enough devices to provide to all students

☐ Hot spots/access points not easily accessible for families

☐ Failure of students to complete work

☐ More grading/work on school personnel

☐ Increased stress on teachers/school administrators

☐ Increased stress on children/families

☐ Unclear communication of expectations for teachers

☐ Unclear communication of expectations for student work

☐ Lack of social interaction for students

☐ Balancing my workload with other home/family duties

☐ Dealing with personal child care issues

Other (please specify)

14. Name at least one parent/family concern communicated to you which was considered/addressed when planning for the 2020-21 school year. (If no concerns were expressed and addressed, please state N/A)

2020-21 school year

The COVID-19 pandemic continued in the fall, even as schools reopened for the 2020-21 academic year. Please reflect on the start of the 2020-21 academic year as you answer the following questions.

15. At the start of the 2020-21 school year (August –October), what was the delivery format for student learning? (check all that apply)

☐ In person 5-day learning

☐ Hybrid (mix of in-person and virtual learning)

☐ Mandatory virtual learning

☐ Virtual learning as an elective (in place of hybrid or in-person)

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

16. If there is an online learning component in 2020-21, how are lessons provided to students? (check all that apply)

☐ Prepared (paper) work packets

☐ Online lessons where students complete work on online, but there is no online meeting at a set time (asynchronous)

☐ Online lessons where students meet 2 or more times a week at a set time (synchronous)

☐ Mix of asynchronous lessons and synchronous meetings at least 1 time a week

☐ Paper packets but work was turned in online (i.e., pictures of work, artifacts)

☐ Other (please specify)

[   ]

17. At the start of the 2020-21 school year, is the online learning component delivered the same way as in Spring 2020?

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Unsure

◯ Not Applicable

Why or why not? Please describe.

[   ]

18. Considering the challenges encountered at the end of the 2019-20 school year, which were still present at the start of the 2020-21 academic year (check all that apply)

☐ Bandwidth problems/Limited access to Internet

☐ Less rigorous work required from students

☐ Technological problems with the school-provided devices

☐ Amount of time needed to develop lessons for remote learning

☐ Lack of technical support for students/teachers

☐ Not enough devices to provide to all students

☐ Hot spots/access points not easily accessible for families

☐ Failure of students to complete work

☐ More grading/work on school personnel

☐ Increased stress on teachers/school administrators

☐ Increased stress on children/families

☐ Unclear communication of expectations for teachers

☐ Unclear communication of expectations for student work

☐ Lack of social interaction for students

☐ Balancing my workload with other home/family duties

☐ Dealing with personal child care issues

☐ Other (please specify)

19. At the start of the 2020-21 school year, are there any different or additional barriers noted by you or by your students/families than were present at the end of 2019-20?

20. Considering the 2020-21 academic year (to date), what positive aspects have been noted by parents/families? (check all that apply)

☐ Safety measures in place (masks, increased cleaning, etc.) at school

☐ Free meals for all students

☐ Hybrid schedule is more relaxed for students/families

☐ Students are completing remote work in a timely manner

☐ Students/families are engaged in online learning

☐ Devices (e.g., iPads, Chromebooks, etc) provided by the school are functioning adequately

☐ Connectivity issues for families have been solved (e.g., free/reduced price Internet)

☐ Increased hot spot access/availability

☐ Other (please specify)

21. At the start of the 2020-21, are any positive aspects noted which are different than ones noted at the end of 2019-20?

Remote Learning -Impact on Academic Learning

Standardized testing was waived at the end of 2019-20 and is there is the potential for a waiver of standardized testing for the 2020-21 school year.

22. What areas do you see as being negatively affected by the decision to remove standardized testing? (check all that apply)

☐ Less emphasis on rigor for classroom activities and tests

☐ Less emphasis on standards/alignment of activities to standards

☐ Lower performance on formative tests (e.g., MAP, STAR)

☐ Concerns from parents regarding testing (EOC, PSAT/SAT, ACT, SCREADY)

☐ Lack of information for accountability ratings

☐ Inadequate student preparedness for the next grade level

☐ Lack of formative information to guide student learning

☐ Limited feedback to help prepare students

☐ Lack of accountability for student learning

☐ Lack of accountability at teacher /school level

☐ Lack of emphasis/students will not take the testing seriously

☐ Other (please specify)

23. What areas do you see as positively affected by the decision to remove standardized testing?

- ☐ Less stress on teachers
- ☐ Less stress/anxiety on students
- ☐ Positive feedback from parents and/or students
- ☐ More freedom to create lessons that are engaging
- ☐ Less worry about technology misfunction
- ☐ More students/parent focus on learning
- ☐ Less pressure to "teach to the test
- ☐ More creative lessons can be created
- ☐ Test performance will not be affected
- ☐ School performance will not be affected
- ☐ Reduced pressure from school/district on high student performance
- ☐ Other (please specify)

24. Regarding the lack of standardized testing or the impact of remote instruction on academic learning, what concerns have you heard from stakeholders ?

25. Please feel free to state any other comments you wish to provide concerning remote learning over the past 8 months.

26. Please provide your email address if you be willing to participate in a follow-up virtual discussion about remote learning.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Date: <u>February 8, 2021</u>

<u>**INFORMATION ITEM:**</u>
FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 State-Funded Full Day 4K Annual Report

<u>**PURPOSE/AUTHORITY**</u>
Provisos 1.56 and 1A.29 of the 2020-21 General Appropriation Act

Of the funds appropriated, $300,000 shall be allocated to the Education Oversight Committee to conduct an annual evaluation of the South Carolina Child Early Reading Development and Education Program (CERDEP) and to issue findings in a report to the General Assembly by January fifteenth 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 fund of the program. This data shall include developmentally appropriate measures of student progress. Additionally, the Department of Education shall issue a unique student identifier for each child receiving services from a private provider. The Department of Education shall be responsible for the collection and maintenance of data on the public state funded full day and half day four year old kindergarten programs. The Office of First Steps to School Readiness shall be responsible for the collection and maintenance of data on the state funded programs provided through private providers. The Education Oversight Committee shall use this data and all other collected and maintained data necessary to conduct a research based review of the program's implementation and assessment of student success in the early elementary grades.

<u>**CRITICAL FACTS**</u>
The report addresses the following:
- Documents CERDEP's implementation in FY 2019-20 by focusing on the number of students served and the program's financial data;
- Uses available information and provides estimates of the four-year-old population in 2019-20 and the number of four-year-olds in poverty served by a formal publicly funded 4K program in South Carolina.
- Provides preliminary estimates for FY 2020-21, including the number of four-year-olds in poverty enrolled in CERDEP and financial data, including agency budget estimates and EOC projections.
- Makes recommendations on how the program might address the impacts on the 2019-20 and 2020-21 cohorts of 4-year olds because of significantly interrupted learning experiences (created in response to the global pandemic of Coronavirus).

<u>**TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS**</u>
The FY2019-20 and FY2020-21 State-Funded Full Day 4K Annual Report was posted to the General Assembly website on January 14, 2021.

<u>**ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC**</u>
The General Assembly allocated $300,000 to the annual evaluation.

<u>**ACTION REQUEST**</u>

☐ **For approval**   ☒ **For information**

<u>**ACTION TAKEN**</u>

☐ **Approved**   ☐ **Amended**
☐ **Not Approved**   ☐ **Action deferred (explain)**

FY2019–20 & FY2020–21

STATE–FUNDED FULL DAY 4K

Annual Report

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

**Report of State-Funded Full-Day 4K
for Fiscal Year 2019-20 and 2020-21**

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Acknowledgements

The EOC is grateful for a formal partnership that contributed greatly to the development of this report. The University of South Carolina College of Education evaluation team played a critical role in the collection and analysis of student assessment data and consideration of 2018-19 language and literacy assessments. Below is a list of contributors to this report:

Executive Summary

The General Assembly first created and funded the Child Development Education Pilot Program by a budget proviso in Fiscal Year 2006-07. In 2014 the General Assembly codified the program in Act 284 and renamed it the South Carolina Child Early Reading Development and Education Program. For purposes of this report, the program is referred to as CERDEP or state-funded full-day four-year-old kindergarten. CERDEP provides full-day early childhood education for at-risk children who are four years of age by September 1. In school year 2018-19, eligibility is defined as an annual family income of 185 percent or less of the federal poverty guidelines as promulgated annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or Medicaid eligibility. Both public schools and non-public childcare centers licensed by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) may participate in the program and serve eligible children. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) oversees implementation of CERDEP in public schools and South Carolina Office of First Steps to School Readiness (OFS) oversees implementation in non-public childcare settings, including private childcare centers and faith-based settings. For this report, PreK-4 and 4K terms refer to *full day programs* for 4-year-old students.

Scope of the CERDEP Report

Over time, the General Assembly has tasked the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) with an annual evaluation of CERDEP and has asked recurring questions every year, and occasionally has requested additional information about various aspects of CERDEP. In response, the EOC undertakes its annual evaluation with a strong focus on programmatic results, quality, and growth in CERDEP and participation rates for at-risk four-year-old children.

This report reflects the period is which the global Coronavirus pandemic significantly impacted enrollment, attendance and overall teaching and learning. In a separate report prepared by the EOC staff, Remote Learning Report 2020, the immediate impact of the changes made in education systems in SC were examined. It is suggested that both reports and the forthcoming report on the final year of the eLearning Pilot Project be examined closely and in concert as the General Assembly makes determinations on any next steps.

Structure of the CERDEP Report

In response to ongoing questions about the impact of the interruptions and changes in classroom delivery of instruction of CERDEP within school districts, to current non-providing districts and non-public providers, the EOC took the approach to provide a review of the CERDEP program in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 in the context of Act 284 Child Early Reading Development and Education Program, its implementation, effectiveness, and efficiency.

EOC staff continue to work with other state agencies and provides (1) final 2019-20 CERDEP Program Results in Section I and (2) preliminary 2020-21 CERDEP Program Results in Section II.

EOC staff consults with OFS staff, the SCDE staff, and surveys districts without a CERDEP public school program. Findings and Recommendations are provided in Section IV.

CERDEP Program Update

Chart 1 shows that over the past three years, overall CERDEP enrollment, as defined as the number of children reimbursed at the maximum reimbursable rate, declined and rebounded in school year 2018-19.

For the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, CERDEP districts and non-public providers were reimbursed for 11,784 and 11,734 students, respectively. For the 2018-19 school year, the enrollment in the public schools increased to 10,561 based on the 45-day Student Count. Enrollment in non-public CERDEP is increased by 418 students.

Chart 1

CERDEP Full-Time Equivalents, 2017-2020 School Years[1]
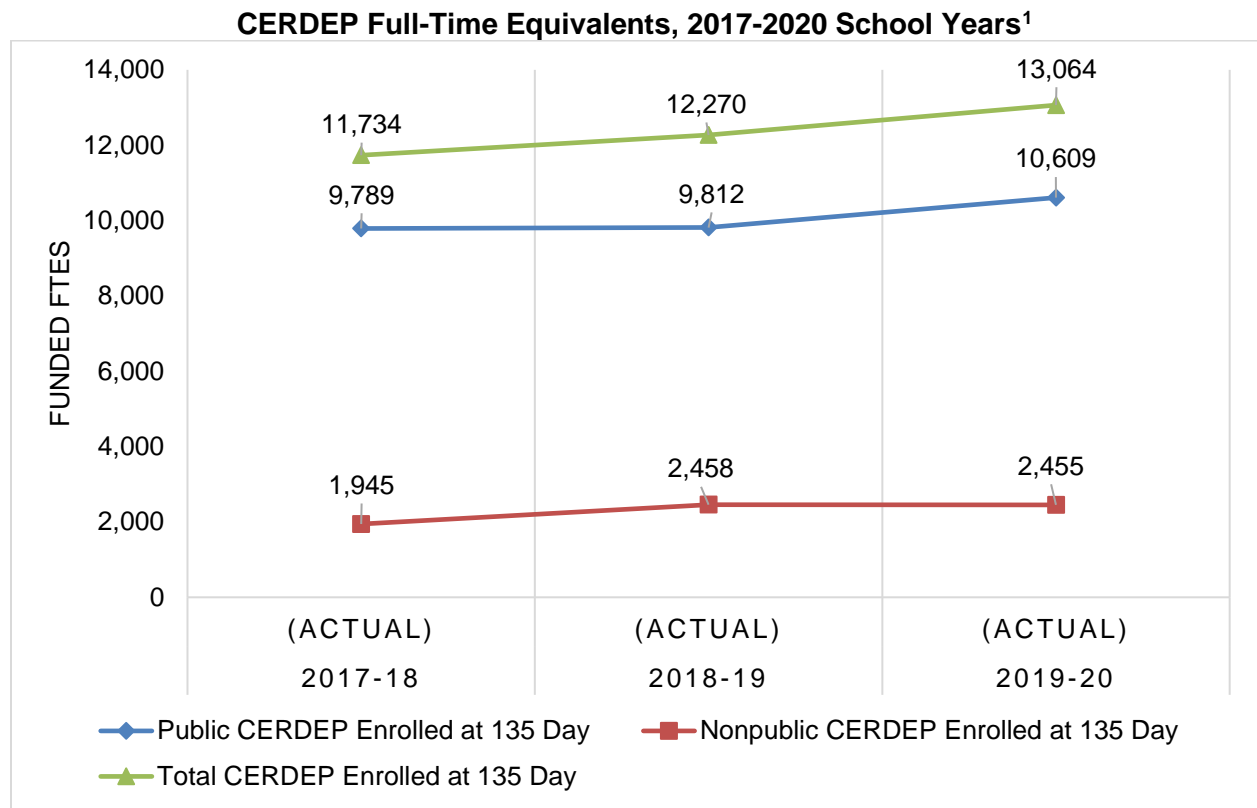
CERDEP carry forward amounts are provided in Chart 2. Over the fiscal years, carry forward amounts decreased to provide additional classroom coaches in OFS and Waterford Upstart services in SCDE. The carry forward from FY2020-21 to FY2021-22 is projected to be $4,016,482 for OFS and $5,052,462 for SCDE. The increase in carry forward amounts can be attributed to the Coronavirus pandemic and decreased enrollment.

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[1] "Full-time equivalent" (FTE) is determined by dividing the total amount of funds expended for instructional funds by the per child maximum reimbursable rate for CERDEP ($4,600 for FY 2019-2020, $4,510 for FY 2018-19, and $4,422 for FY 2017-18).

Chart 2

CERDEP Carryforward Amounts, Fiscal Years 2018-21

	Carryforward to FY19	Carryforward to FY20	Carryforward to FY21	Carryforward to FY22
Total	$20,123,458	$13,237,100	$2,641,918	$9,068,944
SCDE	$10,357,141	$6,699,138	$1,444,310	$5,052,462
First Steps	$9,766,317	$6,537,962	$1,197,608	$4,016,482
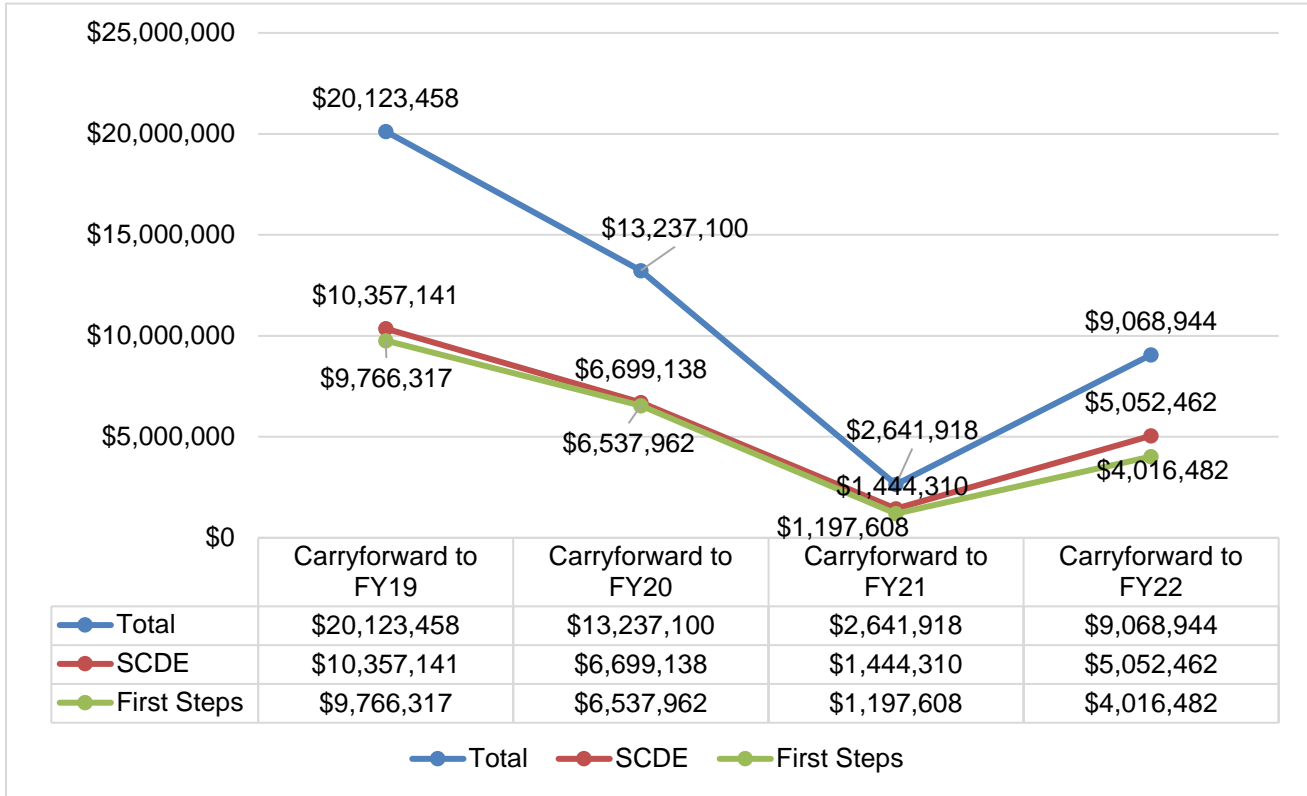
Statewide Progress in Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Participating in 4K

In school year 2019-20, over 35,000 four-year-olds, or 61 percent of all four-year-olds in our state, lived in poverty. Just over 18,200 of these children participated in either CERDEP or Head Start; therefore, at a minimum, 51 percent of four-year-olds in poverty in South Carolina received a full-day, publicly funded, education program.

The table below summarizes the number of four-year-olds in poverty served statewide in FY 2019-2020.

Summary of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Served Statewide, FY 2019-20

	2019-20
Public CERDEP Enrollment	10,561
Non-public CERDEP Enrollment	2,455
Total CERDEP Enrollment	**13,016**
Total Head Start Enrollment[2]	5,188
Estimated Number of Four-Year-Olds Served by CERDEP or Head Start	**18,204**
Estimated Number of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty	**35,520**
Estimated Percentage of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Served by CERDEP or Head Start	51.2%
Estimated Percentage of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Not Served by CERDEP or Head Start	48.8%

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[2] Head Start enrollment has been impacted by the global Coronavirus pandemic. The federal office has provided guidance regarding attendance recording and enrollment which precludes full reporting at the time of this report.

From 2019-2020 Information and Data

Finding 1:

Additional public CERDEP classrooms were added (47) during the 2019-2020 school year, and the actual number of children (full-time equivalent) increased from 9,812 in 2018-19 to 10,609 in 2019-20. This represents an 7.8% growth in number of classrooms and an 8.1% growth in children (FTEs). Waiting lists were shared in the fall of 2019 and enrollment efficiency was realized. However, the global Coronavirus pandemic necessitated the closing of schools in March 2020. This cohort of Pre-K 4-year-olds lost one-fourth of the school year in face-to-face instruction.

The cohort of Pre-K 4-year-olds in the school year 2019-2020 are now in kindergarten, again their instruction impacted by the global Coronavirus pandemic. These children have the real probability of beginning first grade in the Fall of 2021 significantly behind in readiness for the grade level instruction.

Finding 2:

Both SCDE and OFS manage CERDEP as separate programs. There are separate criteria for enrollment and reimbursement, teacher qualification and professional development, student data collection, student assessment, and facility standards and licensing. Even within OFS there are different levels of reimbursement for meeting a higher quality program. In the expansion initiative in both public and non-public environments, separate initiatives by SCDE and OFS were also implemented differently.

Act 284 of 2014 that established in law the CERDEP clearly states the program must focus on (1) a comprehensive, systemic approach to reading (Section 59-156-110) and (2) a list of data collection needs to be used in the implementation and evaluation of the program (Section 59-156-150). The current disconnected implementation results in inconsistencies in the amount of additional CERDEP instruction and reimbursement rates provided by public schools and non-public providers, the number of times students are assessed and the record-keeping to perform meaningful evaluations. Limited research can be conducted and analyzed for return on investment, identifying successful programs/systems and helping underperforming programs/systems.

Finding 3:

Documentation of students' longitudinal learning progress toward reading in grade three is scarce at the state level. Thus, aggregated longitudinal data is not available to document success in programs/districts/schools from 4K through grade three. Some schools and districts monitor individual student progress, including a robust multi-tier support system (MTSS). Statewide funds invested in 4-year-old children has helped CERDEP participating children score at the level of their non-CERDEP participating peers on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). Statewide, children in poverty continue to underperform on the statewide assessment in reading and English Language Arts administered at the end of third grade. Sometime during the kindergarten to third grade year, regression or lack of grade level achievement occurs.

This Finding was noted in the prior year report. No action toward establishing a continuum of growth has been taken. And the well-established impact on children in poverty due to the global

Coronavirus pandemic escalates the critical aspect of this Finding. Two cohorts of 4-year-olds (2019-20 and 2020-21) have had their teaching and learning experiences significantly interrupted. Statistically, one can anticipate a greater gap in achievement on 3rd grade reading scores in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Finding 4:

The estimated number of four-year-olds living in poverty remained relatively stable from 36,038 in school year 2018-19 to 35,520 in school year 2019-20. While there is a decrease of 508 in the actual count, the 1.4% decline also does not fully reflect the financial impacts of the global Coronavirus pandemic on children in South Carolina. More than 51 percent of four-year-olds living in poverty were enrolled in CERDEP or Head Start. If student enrollment in public non-CERDEP classrooms is included – 10,489, 81% of most at-risk 4-year-olds students are served by a formal publicly-funded four-year-old program. This estimate does not include four-year-olds receiving ABC childcare vouchers.

- Head Start enrollment has been impacted by the global Coronavirus pandemic. The federal office has provided guidance regarding attendance recording and enrollment which precludes full reporting at the time of this report.

From 2020-2021 Information and Data

Finding 5:

There is a significant decline in enrollment in the School Year 2020-21. While this overall 23% decline can be attributed to the concerns associated with the global Coronavirus pandemic, the children impacted may be disadvantaged for years in the future. The OFS reports an enrollment count of 2,145, only a twelve percent decline from 2,455 in 2019-2020 (pre-pandemic). Anecdotal feedback indicates this is due to the need for many essential workers to have childcare. SCDE reports a 45-day count of 7,822 students in 647 4K CERDEP classrooms, a 26% reduction from the 10,609 in 2019-2020 (pre-pandemic).

From Synthesis of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Information and Data

Recommendation 1:

Continue to share waiting lists for the purpose of serving as many children as possible. SCDE should maintain a master list with schools, number of 4K classrooms, 45-day count and 135-day count enrollments and make available to the public and other agencies (through a website or statewide coordinator for 4K data collection). The OFS should maintain a list of provider classrooms with vacancies noted on October 1 and March 1. Continue to focus on increasing numbers of children served while reaching the efficiency of full classrooms.

Recommendation 2:

While the ideal statewide system would have all state-funded, pre-kindergarten program operating in one office, this may be too ambitious at the current time. The recommendation is the designation of a 4K data collection office/center. With the input of all involved agencies serving

4K children using state monies as well as benchmarking other state models, a centralized place for the collection of information in similar formats, matched expectations including assessment data, hours of instruction, district of residence, level of teacher training, etc., be established. Therefore, the data and accountabilities help establish consistencies in programs and allow for research to provide the General Assembly meaningful information regarding investment in 4K in South Carolina.

Recommendation 3:

OFS student enrollment data should include the student's district of residence. Inclusion of district of residence would improve the accuracy of the number of CERDEP students served as indicated by their district of residence.

Recommendation 4:

The stable number of identified students living in poverty and small percentage increases in the overall population of four-year-olds must be addressed through continuing and expanding services to include more of the eligible population.

Recommendation 5:

The current multitude of assessments used in Pre-K 4, kindergarten, first and second grade do not provide an accurate student growth continuum for teachers to use in determining next steps in instruction. Neither does it provide parents with substantive information regarding their child's progress, including the growth needed to meet third grade targets. Since the stated focus of Act 284 is a "comprehensive, systemic approach to reading," it is necessary to have a comprehensive and systemic assessment continuum established. Districts should be required to adopt or establish a continuum of assessment for students in Pre-K 4 through 2nd grade. The requirements of the choice should include growth measurements, correlation to the SC Standards and alignment with the SC Ready Third Grade ELA. Private providers would use the same assessment "adopted or established" by the home district where the provider is located. Teacher professional development and student progress could be coordinated.

Recommendation 6:

As soon as safely possible, crisis intervention instruction must begin for the cohort of students now in kindergarten (2019-20 PreK 4-year-olds). Perhaps, extended day during the last quarter of the School Year 2020-2021 can be established for students who were enrolled in the prior year cohort. Summer instructional events should be provided in face-to-face environments. Triage delivery should include meals, transportation and direct instruction in reading and math. The currently enrolled cohort of PreK-4, plus additional students in the qualifying districts should also be offered extended day during the last quarter and summer of 2021.

Introduction

January 15, 2021

The following is a report from the Education Oversight Committee pursuant to Provisos 1.56 and 1A.29 of the 2020-21 General Appropriation Act.

The General Assembly created and funded the Child Development Education Pilot Program beginning by a budget proviso in Fiscal Year 2006-07. In 2014 the General Assembly codified the program in Act 284 and renamed it the South Carolina Child Early Reading Development and Education Program. For purposes of this report, the program is referred to as CERDEP or state-funded full-day four-year-old kindergarten (4K). CERDEP provides full-day early childhood education for at-risk children who are four-year-olds by September 1. Both public schools and non-public childcare centers licensed by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) may participate in the program and serve eligible children. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) oversees implementation of CERDEP in public schools and South Carolina Office of First Steps to School Readiness (OFS) oversees implementation in non-public childcare settings.

Between school years 2006-07 and 2012-13, CERDEP services targeted eligible children residing in the plaintiff and trial districts in the Abbeville equity lawsuit, Abbeville County School District et. al. vs. South Carolina. In Fiscal Year 2013-14, the General Assembly expanded the program to include children who met the same age and socioeconomic criteria and who resided in a district with a poverty index of 75 percent or more. The poverty index is a measure of the percentage of students who are eligible for subsidized meals and/or Medicaid. The expansion included 17 eligible school districts that were not original trial and plaintiff districts. The legislature appropriated additional state funds of $26.1 million to provide the educational services to children residing in these districts. In Fiscal Year 2014-15, the General Assembly further expanded the program to include children who met the same age and socioeconomic criteria and who resided in a district with a poverty index of 70 percent or more.

Of the funds appropriated for state-funded full-day 4K in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21, the General Assembly allocated $300,000 to the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to perform an evaluation of the program by January 15, 2021. This report:

- Documents CERDEP's implementation in FY 2019-20 by focusing on the number of students served and the program's financial data;

- Uses available information and provides estimates of the four-year-old population in 2019-20 and the number of four-year-olds in poverty served by a formal publicly funded 4K program in South Carolina.

- Provides preliminary estimates for FY 2020-21, including the number of four-year-olds in poverty enrolled in CERDEP and financial data, including agency budget estimates and EOC projections.

- Makes recommendations on how the program might address the impacts on the 2019-20 and 2020-21 cohorts of 4-year olds because of significantly interrupted learning experiences (created in response to the global pandemic of Coronavirus).

I. CERDEP Program Results in 2019-20 (EOC)

In Fiscal Year 2019-20, at-risk four-year-olds residing in one of the following 61 school districts could participate in the full-day 4K program in a public school or in a non-public childcare center. The list includes districts that were in trial or plaintiff districts in the Abbeville equity lawsuit and districts that in 2014-15 had a poverty index of 70 percent or more based on the number of students in the district eligible for the free/reduced price lunch program and/or Medicaid.

Table 1
At-Risk Four-year-olds Residing in Following School Districts
Eligible to Participate in CERDEP, 2019-20
Districts with Poverty Index of 70 percent or Greater

1	Abbeville	17	Clarendon 1	33	Greenwood 50	49	McCormick
2	Aiken	18	Clarendon 2	34	Greenwood 51	50	Newberry
3	Allendale	19	Clarendon 3	35	Greenwood 52	51	Oconee
4	Anderson 2	20	Colleton	36	Hampton 1	52	Orangeburg
5	Anderson 3	21	Darlington	37	Hampton 2	53	Richland 1
6	Anderson 5	22	Dillon 3	38	Horry	54	Saluda
7	Bamberg 1	23	Dillon 4	39	Jasper	55	Spartanburg 3
8	Bamberg 2	24	Dorchester 4	40	Kershaw	56	Spartanburg 4
9	Barnwell 19	25	Edgefield	41	Laurens 55	57	Spartanburg 6
10	Barnwell 29	26	Fairfield	42	Laurens 56	58	Spartanburg 7
11	Barnwell 45	27	Florence 1	43	Lee	59	Sumter
12	Berkeley	28	Florence 2	44	Lexington 2	60	Williamsburg
13	Calhoun	29	Florence 3	45	Lexington 3	61	York 1
14	Cherokee	30	Florence 4	46	Lexington 4		
15	Chester	31	Florence 5	47	Marion		
16	Chesterfield	32	Georgetown	48	Marlboro		

The January 2020 annual report on CERDEP documented the projected enrollments and expenditures for CERDEP for Fiscal Year 2019-20. The following is an analysis of the actual 2019-20 program metrics in public CERDEP classrooms as administered by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and in non-public classrooms as administered by the Office of First Steps (OFS). The analysis focuses on:

- Program expenditures and services for both SCDE and OFS;
- Analysis of the percentage of four-year-olds in poverty served by a publicly funded program across counties and districts; and
- Analysis of the impact on two cohorts of 4-year-olds' education/learning experiences during the global Coronavirus pandemic.

Program Expenditures and Services in Public Schools (SCDE)

SCDE administers CERDEP in public schools. In school year 2019-20, 61 school districts were eligible to participate in CERDEP. Union County School District chose not to participate, and Horry County School District students are served in a charter school.

In school year 2019-20, there were 10,609 four-year-olds FTEs who were reimbursed at the instructional cost of $4,600 per child (maximum allowed) and who were served in 257 schools and 647 classrooms. Historically, the EOC has divided the total amount spent for instruction by $4,600 which is the maximum reimbursement rate per child. This determines the FTE and is calculated at 10,609 for 2019-2020, an increase of 797 FTEs from 2018-2019. The SCDE reports that 11,071 unique students were enrolled at some point in the school year.

Table 2
CERDEP Public School Growth in FY 2019-20

	FY 2019-20 (Final)
Number of New Schools	10
Number of Existing Schools	247
Total Number of Schools	**257**
Number of New Classrooms	47
Number of Existing Classrooms	600
Total Number of Classrooms	**647**
Total Number of Full Time Equivalents	**10,609**

Source: SC Department of Education, December 2020

Table 3 documents the revenues and expenditures for CERDEP by the SCDE in Fiscal Year 2019-20 as reported to the EOC by SCDE. The data document the following:

- An additional 797 children were served in additional 47 classrooms
- SCDE expended a total of $263,515 to expand the school day, the school year and summer programs in CERDEP districts. The following 41 districts offered expanded services during the 2019-20 school year:

Expansion Option	Districts
Additional Classrooms	Aiken, Chesterfield, Colleton, Florence 1, Florence 3, Kershaw, Laurens 55, Laurens 56, Lexington 2, McCormick, Richland 1
Extended Year	Kershaw
Summer Program	Aiken, Anderson 3, Barnwell 19, Chester, Florence 3, Saluda

SCDE allocated $3.8 million in CERDEP funds to 18 school districts to implement the parent engagement program, Waterford Upstart in school year 2019-20. The program provides computer and internet if needed as well as adaptive educational software for parents to use at home as a supplement to the regular full day 4K program. The program was first piloted in Fiscal Years 2017-18 and 2018-19 in two districts in our state, Marion and Chesterfield County School Districts, through provisos in the state budget ($1,368,000) and through oversight by the EOC. The program's impact on early literacy skills has been detailed in reports provided

to the EOC. The 18 districts are: Allendale, Bamberg 1 and 2, Barnwell 19, Calhoun, Chester, Chesterfield, Clarendon 1 and 2, Dillon 4, Florence 3, Hampton 1 and 2, Laurens 56, Lexington 4, Marion, Marlboro, and Williamsburg.

Table 3 documents the revenues and expenditures for CERDEP by SCDE in Fiscal Year 2019-20 as reported to the EOC.

Table 3
SCDE CERDEP Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-20

TOTAL Available Funds	
Carry forward from FY19 to FY20	$6,699,138
FY20 General Fund Appropriation	$5,983,049
FY20 EIA Appropriation	$41,441,053
TOTAL	**$54,123,240**
TOTAL Actual Transfers/Expenditures	
Transfers:	
Portion of EOC Evaluation	$195,000
Internal transfer of agency funds for Parent Engagement	$1,444,309.00
Subtotal:	**$1,639,309.00**
Agency Expenditures:	
Transportation	$0
Assessment	$500,000
Professional Development	$27,510
Subtotal:	***$527,510***
Payments to Districts:	
Instruction ($4,600 per child pro-rata)	$48,803,172
Supplies for New Classrooms ($10,000 per classroom)	$470,000
Expansion:	
Extended Year	$0
Extended Day	$0
Funds Returned to SCDE From Districts for Extended Year	$0
Summer Program	$263,515
Parent Engagement	3,864,042
Subtotal:	**$53,400,729**
TOTAL	***$54,123,239***
Funds Carried Forward to FY21	**$1,444,310**

Note: Expenditures have been rounded to the nearest whole dollar

For comparison purposes, Table 4 documents the number of children served in public schools since school year 2017-18, the annual expenditures of the program, and carry forward amounts by SCDE over the past three years.

Table 4
Summary of Program as Administered by SCDE in Public Schools
FY18 to FY20

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020
Full-time Equivalent Children Funded	9,789	9,812	10,609
Number of New Classrooms Funded	22	12	47
Total Number CERDEP Classrooms	588	600	647
Total Expenditures	$47,334,876	$51,082,105	$54,123,239
Funds Carried Forward	$9,766,317	$6,699,138	$1,444,310
Expenditures for Expansion	--	$537,277	--

Program Expenditures and Services in OFS (Non-Public) Centers

OFS administers CERDEP in non-public (or private) childcare centers approved by OFS. The non-public childcare centers can operate in any county but serve eligible children who reside in a CERDEP-eligible school district. Table 5 shows during FY 2019-20, OFS added 14 new providers and 22 new classrooms that served 3,048 children who received the maximum reimbursement rate of $4,600.

Table 5
OFS CERDEP (non-public) Provider Growth in FY 2019-20

	FY 2019-20 (Actual)
Number of New Providers	14
Number of Existing Providers	201
Total Number of Providers	**215**
Number of New Classrooms	22
Number of Existing Classrooms	219
Total Number of Classrooms	**241**
Total Number of Full Time Equivalents	**2,455**

Source: SC Office of First Steps, December 2020.

Historically, the EOC has divided the total amount spent for instruction by $4,600 which is the maximum reimbursement rate per child for instructional costs. This determines the FTE and is calculated at 2,455 and 3 FTEs fewer than FY19. Non-public providers were reimbursed on children enrolled regardless of the time the child stayed in the program; the enrollment data therefore indicates an additional 590 children were funded in school year 2019-20. 22 additional classrooms were added during the school year 2019-20.

Table 6 documents the revenues and expenditures for CERDEP by OFS in Fiscal Year 2019-20 as reported to the EOC.

Table 6
Revenues & Expenditures for CERDEP for FY2019-20

Office of First Steps CERDEP (non-public) Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-20 TOTAL Available Funds	
Carry forward from FY19 to FY20	$6,531,620
State Funds Expended and On-hold Locally	$6,222
EIA Appropriation	$9,767,864
Transfer of Teacher Supply Funds	$66,550
General Fund	$6,522,877
Interest Earned on Cash	$52,403
TOTAL REVENUES	$22,947,536
TOTAL Actual Transfers/Expenditures	
Transfers:	
Portion of EOC Evaluation	$105,000
To EOC for Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program (Provisos 1.56, 1.68 and 1A.56	$1,000,000
Subtotal:	*$1,105,000*
Agency Expenditures:	
Salaries	$1,257,147
Contractual Services	$239,678
Technology (Proviso 1.65)	$37,907
Supplies and Materials	$112,313
Rental/Leased Space	$68,564
Travel	$75,234
Fringe Benefits	$500,006
Parent Engagement (Proviso 1.68)	$176,900
Quality Evaluations of the Program (Proviso 1.68)	$982,945
Subtotal for Agency Expenditures:	$3,450,694
Payments to Centers:	
Instruction ($4,600 per child pro-rata)	$11,292,318
Higher Reimbursement Rates (Proviso 1.68)	$927,226
Expansion (Extended Day, Extended Year & Summer Programs)	$3,595,806
Stipends	$373,740
Substitute Teacher Reimbursement	$7,340
Teacher Supplies	$69,175
Transportation ($574 per child)	$167,476
Curriculum, Equipment and Materials for New Classrooms ($1000 to $10,000 per provider)	$589,392
Other: Explain (Proviso 1.74) Public Private Partnerships	$171,762
Subtotal for Center-Level Expenditures:	$17,194,235
TOTAL TRANSFERS/EXPENDITURES	$21,749,929
Funds Carried Forward to FY 21	$1,197,608

Note: Expenditures have been rounded to the nearest whole dollar.
Stipends are used to pay for attending professional development events.

SCDE Extended and Expanded Services

According to the SCDE Child Early Reading and Development Education Program (CERDEP) Annual Report, December 2020*, during the 2019–2020 school year, districts were reimbursed for 10,609 CERDEP students, an eight percent increase over the total number of full-time equivalent students in 2018–19. Approximately 11,070 total students were served in CERDEP classrooms during the 2019–2020 school year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SCDE expects the total number of students enrolled in public CERDEP to decline during the 2020–21 school year, but expects enrollment will return to pre-pandemic levels for the 2021–22 school year.*

During the 2017–18 school year, the SCDE began offering expansion options to CERDEP districts, including the ability to add additional classrooms and to offer extended day, extended school year, and/or summer instructional programming. The following districts offered expanded services during the 2019–2020 school year:

SDE CERDEP Extension and/or Expansion by District, 2019–2020

Extension/Expansion Option	Districts
Additional Classrooms	Aiken, Chesterfield, Colleton, Florence 1, Florence 3, Kershaw, Laurens 55, Laurens 56, Lexington 2, McCormick, Richland 1
Extended Day	Kershaw
Summer Programs	Aiken, Anderson 3, Barnwell 19, Chester, Florence 3, Saluda

OFS CERDEP Extension and/or Expansion, 2019–2020

Out of the 215 centers for the 2019-2020 year:

- 40 offered a traditional day/year, 6.5 hrs. for 180 days
- 56 offered a traditional day with summer school for 220 days
- 18 offered an extended day for 180 days, and
- 101 offered an extended day and summer school.

All classrooms shifted to virtual service under the Governor's orders in March 2020. At the time, there were 157 centers scheduled to hold 2020 summer school. Given the global Coronavirus pandemic situation, the decision was left to families and directors with the offer of our support to re-open for summer school. 122 made the choice to re-open and offered face to face fulltime instruction beginning on June 1 through July 31, 2020.

CERDEP Waiting List Process

According to the SCDE Child Early Reading and Development Education Program (CERDEP) Annual Report, December 2020, in collaboration with the Office of First Steps, the SCDE annually

collects documented waiting lists from districts in an effort to ensure as many at-risk four-year-olds as possible have access to high quality 4K. The SCDE shared the current year's waitlists in August, which included a total of 169 students from 11 districts (see Table 7).

Table 7
Waiting List Shared with First Steps

District	Count of Students on Waiting List
Aiken	36
Anderson 3	17
Berkeley	52
Chesterfield	11
Colleton	1
Edgefield	12
Florence 4	10
McCormick	1
Newbery	19
Saluda	6
Spartanburg 3	4
Total	*169*

A change in the 2019–2020 provisos allowed the SCDE to collect and share district waiting lists earlier in the summer, allowing families to receive 4K placements before the beginning of the school year. Additionally, the SCDE now collects parent leads from the Palmetto Pre-K website and distributes this information to districts. Prior to the start of the 2020–21 school year, the SCDE received 884 leads. The SCDE forwarded these leads to each district, and each district is responsible for contacting interested families. A list of districts and numbers of referrals are listed in below in Table 8.

Table 8
Palmetto Pre-K Leads by District

School District	Referral Counts
Abbeville	2
Aiken	51
Allendale	2
Anderson 2	6
Anderson 3	3
Anderson 5	20
Bamberg 1	2
Barnwell 45	1
Berkeley	126
Calhoun	3
Cherokee	4
Chester	9

School District	Referral Counts
Chesterfield	3
Clarendon 2	3
Colleton	8
Darlington	28
Dillon 3	2
Dorchester 4	5
Edgefield	4
Fairfield	3
Florence 1	42
Florence 4	3
Georgetown	6
Greenwood 50	10
Greenwood 52	1
Hampton 1	1
Horry	149
Jasper	6
Kershaw	21
Laurens 55	8
Laurens 56	3
Lee	2
Lexington 2	46
Lexington 3	1
Lexington 4	4
Marlboro	7
Newberry	6
Oconee	21
Orangeburg	3
Richland 1	122
Saluda	1
Spartanburg 3	5
Spartanburg 4	3
Spartanburg 6	38
Spartanburg 7	22
Sumter	46
Union	5
Williamsburg	7
York 1	5
Total	**884**

Proviso 1.69 of the 2019-20 General Appropriation Act allowed both the SDE and OFS to use available CERDEP funding to lengthen the school day or school calendar or to provide a summer program for four-year-olds served in CERDEP:

For Fiscal Year 2018-2019, the Office of First Steps to School Readiness is permitted to retain the first $1,000,000 of any unexpended CDEPP funds of the prior fiscal year and expend these funds to enhance the quality of the full-day 4K program in private centers and provide professional development opportunities.

By August first, the Office of First Steps is directed to allocate any additional unexpended CDEPP funds from the prior fiscal year and any CDEPP funds carried forward from prior fiscal years that were transferred to the restricted account for the following purpose: Education Oversight Committee - $1,000,000 for the South Carolina Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program.

If carry forward funds are less than the amounts appropriated, funding for the items listed herein shall be reduced on a pro rata basis.

If by August first, the SCDE or the OFS determines there will be funds available, funds shall be allocated on a per pupil basis for districts eligible for participation first, who have a documented waiting list, then to districts to increase the length of the program to a maximum of eight and a half hours per day or two hundred and twenty days per year or to fund summer programs. If a district chooses to fund summer enrollment the program funding shall conform to the funding in this act for full year programs, however, shall be reduced on a pro rata basis to conform with the length of the program. A summer program shall be no more than eight and a half hours per day and shall be not more than ten weeks in length. The per pupil allocation and classroom grant must conform with the appropriated amount contained in this Act and end of year adjustments shall be based on the one hundred and thirty-five-day student average daily membership or later student average daily membership for districts choosing to extend the program past one hundred and eighty days. Funds may also be used to provide professional development and quality evaluations of programs.

No later than April first, the SCDE and the OFS must report to the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee on the expenditure of these funds to include the following information: the amount of money used and specific steps and measures taken to enhance the quality of the 4K program and the amount of money used for professional development as well as the types of professional development offered and the number of participants.

Appendix A details CERDEP expenditures by district, including total instructional, supply, curriculum and expansion costs. District reimbursement for expansion options was $4.65 million engaging in the Upstart expansion option.

Table 9
Summary of CERDEP Provider and School Growth in 2019-20

	SCDE School Year 19-20 (Final)	First Steps School Year 19-20 (Final)	Total
Number of New Schools or Providers	10	14	24
Number of Existing Schools or Providers	247	201	448
Total Number of Schools or Providers	**257**	**215**	**472**
Number of New Classrooms	47	22	69
Number of Existing Classrooms	600	219	819
Total Number of Classrooms	**647**	**2241**	**888**
Total Number of Full-Time Equivalents	**10,609**	**2,455**	**13,064**

Source: SC Department of Education and SC Office of First Steps, December 2020

Documenting both the history of carry forward monies as well as the number of students served over the past two fiscal years, Table 9 shows $13.2 million was carried forward from FY 2018-19 to FY 2019-20.

A goal of CERDEP is to increase the number of four-year-olds in poverty who are served with a full-day high-quality program that meets specific structural and process criteria for quality such as minimum adult: child ratios, evidence-based curriculum and qualified teachers.[3] This analysis provides a comprehensive picture of the projected enrollment of eligible four-year-old children during the 2018-19 school year.

Multiple full-day programs serve children in South Carolina, including: OFS, Head Start, and school districts that manage multiple 4K programs, including CERDEP through the SC Department of Education (SCDE). While the focus of this report is state-funded full-day (CERDEP), other publicly-funded 4K programs are included in the analysis. Head Start is a federal program, and the SC Department of Social Services (DSS) provides federal childcare vouchers (ABC Vouchers) to eligible children. However, a child's receipt of an ABC voucher does not necessarily mean the child is enrolled in a full-day program. The child could receive the voucher to pay for wraparound care (either before or after the formal 4K program day) or for 4K enrollment in participating non-public childcare settings.

Some school districts also opt to fund additional half-day or full-day 4K with local revenue and other state revenue sources, such as funds from the Education Improvement Act. Program and enrollment data regarding local and EIA funding of 4K programs are not collected at the state level.

Methodology

Appendix D documents the estimated number of four-year-olds in poverty projected to reside in each school district in school year 2019-20 and the number of four-year-olds in poverty being served in a publicly-funded early education program or service.

County birth rates reported by the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) provided the number of four-year-old children by county. For counties that had multiple districts, the analysis allocates the number of four-year-old children to districts based on the student enrollment in school year 2019-20.

The 2019-20 poverty index is the poverty index created by SCDE, in cooperation with the Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs. The poverty index was developed because of the implementation of the United States Department of Agriculture's Community Eligibility Program. The index uses student data from the federal Supplemental Nutrition and Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Medicaid. It also includes foster, homeless and migrant students. By multiplying the district poverty index by the number of projected four-year-old children, an approximate number of at-risk four-year-olds in poverty by district was estimated.

While a student must live in a district that is eligible to participate in CERDEP, a student may attend a non-public CERDEP provider that is in any district. Because the child's district of residence was not included in the CERDEP student data file submitted by OFS to the EOC, the data reflect the physical location of the non-public CERDEP provider in a county with allocation of children across districts in a county based pro rata on the enrollment of districts in that county.

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[3] National indicators of prekindergarten quality selected by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).

This may partially explain why some districts have more than 100 percent of estimated children in poverty being served. CERDEP enrollment in school district used the number of children funded in school year 2019-20. The CERDEP counts reflect 135-day student enrollment counts in public schools and private centers. These numbers are not the number of full-time equivalents or students funded as documented in Chart 1.

The SC Head Start Collaboration Office provided student information based on May 2019 Head Start Census data. The data reflect the number of students served in Head Start in each county.

Appendix D shows that in school year 2019-20, 36,038 of the state's 57,631 four-year-olds lived in poverty and were at risk of not being ready for kindergarten. The estimated size of four-year-olds living in poverty increased slightly from 61 percent in school year 2017-18 to 62.5 percent in school year 2018-19. Over 17,000 of the state's at-risk four-year-old population, or 48 percent, were served by a full-day, publicly funded early learning intervention (including CERDEP and Head Start).

Table 10 summarizes the number of four-year-olds in poverty served statewide in FY 2019-20.

Table 10
Summary of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Served Statewide, FY 2019-20

	2019-20
Public CERDEP Enrollment	10,561
Non-public CERDEP Enrollment	2,455
Total CERDEP Enrollment	**13,016**
Total Head Start Enrollment[4]	5,188
Estimated Number of Four-Year-Olds Served by CERDEP or Head Start	**18,204**
Estimated Number of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty	**35,520**
Estimated Percentage of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Served by CERDEP or Head Start	51.2%
Estimated Percentage of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Not Served by CERDEP or Head Start	48.8%

By design and statue, non-CERDEP public pre-K 4-year-olds are identified at-risk (poverty, physical, language or developmental delays, etc.). The SCDE reports 10,489 students served in these classes in 2019-2020. When this number is included with the CERDEP population, 80.7% of the pre-K 4-year-olds at-risk population were served in 2019-2020.

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[4] Head Start enrollment has been impacted by the global Coronavirus pandemic. The federal office has provided guidance regarding attendance recording and enrollment which precludes full reporting at the time of this report.

II.   Preliminary CERDEP Program Results in 2020-21 (EOC)

Provisos 1.56 and 1A.29 of the 2020-21 General Appropriation Act govern the administration of the state-funded, full-day four-year-old kindergarten program (CERDEP) in school year 2020-21 The program's eligibility remains consistent; an at-risk four-year-old residing in a district with a poverty index of 70 percent or greater could attend a public school or non-public center participating in the program. The per pupil reimbursement rate for instructional costs increased to $4,600 in 2020-21, per the continuing resolution from 2019-20. SCDE continues to manage CERDEP in public schools while the OFS administers the program in non-public classrooms, including non-public childcare centers and faith-based settings.

CERDEP Participation in Public Schools

In 2019-20, there are 61 school districts eligible to participate in CERDEP. Table 11 lists districts eligible to participate in CERDEP. Of the 61 eligible school districts, Union chose not to participate in CERDEP.

Table 11
Districts with Poverty Index of 70 percent or greater

1	Abbeville	17	Clarendon 1	33	Greenwood 50	49	McCormick
2	Aiken	18	Clarendon 2	34	Greenwood 51	50	Newberry
3	Allendale	19	Clarendon 3	35	Greenwood 52	51	Oconee
4	Anderson 2	20	Colleton	36	Hampton 1	52	Orangeburg
5	Anderson 3	21	Darlington	37	Hampton 2	53	Richland 1
6	Anderson 5	22	Dillon 3	38	Horry	54	Saluda
7	Bamberg 1	23	Dillon 4	39	Jasper	55	Spartanburg 3
8	Bamberg 2	24	Dorchester 4	40	Kershaw	56	Spartanburg 4
9	Barnwell 19	25	Edgefield	41	Laurens 55	57	Spartanburg 6
10	Barnwell 29	26	Fairfield	42	Laurens 56	58	Spartanburg 7
11	Barnwell 45	27	Florence 1	43	Lee	59	Sumter
12	Berkeley	28	Florence 2	44	Lexington 2	60	Williamsburg
13	Calhoun	29	Florence 3	45	Lexington 3	61	York 1
14	Cherokee	30	Florence 4	46	Lexington 4		
15	Chester	31	Florence 5	47	Marion		
16	Chesterfield	32	Georgetown	48	Marlboro		

Table 12 shows a 2020-21 enrollment of 7,822 students in public schools based on the 45-Day Student Count.

Table 12
Public CERDEP Enrollment by District, based on 2019-2020 45-Day Student Count

	District	Count			District	Count
1	Abbeville	19		32	Georgetown	193
2	Aiken	374		33	Greenwood 50	151
3	Allendale	49		34	Greenwood 51	27
4	Anderson 2	42		35	Greenwood 52	26
5	Anderson 3	95		36	Hampton 1	86
6	Anderson 5	294		37	Hampton 2	28
7	Bamberg 1	20		38	Horry[5]	5
8	Bamberg 2	21		39	Jasper	58
9	Barnwell 19	19		40	Kershaw	318
10	Barnwell 29	18		41	Laurens 55	151
11	Barnwell 45	36		42	Laurens 56	66
12	Berkeley	834		43	Lee	15
13	Calhoun	81		44	Lexington 2	252
14	Cherokee	220		45	Lexington 3	89
15	Chester	112		46	Lexington 4	166
16	Chesterfield	166		47	Marion 10	93
17	Clarendon 1	28		48	Marlboro	100
18	Clarendon 2	54		49	McCormick	20
19	Clarendon 3	15		50	Newberry	132
20	Colleton	122		51	Oconee	299
21	Darlington	157		52	Orangeburg	358
22	Dillon 3	48		53	Richland 1	445
23	Dillon 4	121		54	Saluda	75
24	Dorchester 4	45		55	Spartanburg 3	79
25	Edgefield	98		56	Spartanburg 4	79
26	Fairfield	124		57	Spartanburg 6	274
27	Florence 1	142		58	Spartanburg 7	106
28	Florence 2	35		59	Sumter	385
29	Florence 3	113		60	Williamsburg	79
30	Florence 4	34		61	York 1 (York)	104
31	Florence 5	21			**Total**	**7,822**

Source: SCDE response to EOC data request, December 2020.

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[5] Students in Horry are enrolled in a charter school.

Table 13 details SCDE CERDEP appropriations and projected expenditures for FY 2020-21. As submitted by SCDE, instructional costs are projected to be $36.3 million, which would fund 7,900 students who remain continuously enrolled in public CERDEP classrooms during the 2020-21 school year. Based on the 45-Day Student Count, actual CERDEP enrollment is 26.2% less than 2019-20. Since the original budget provided for the 10,609 FTE count, a significant amount remains in the budget and is shown as carryover. The 45-Day Count of 7,822 may decrease by the 135-Day Count.

Table 13
SCDE Summary of Actual Appropriations and Projected Expenditures for FY 2020-21

Appropriations	
Carry Forward from FY 19 to FY 20	$1,444,310
FY 21 General Fund Appropriation	$5,983,049
FY 21 EIA Appropriation	$41,441,053
Total Revenues	**$48,868,412**
Projected Expenditures	
Portion of EOC Evaluation (EIA)	$195,000
Cost of Instruction ($4,600 per child pro-rata)	$36,340,000
Supplies for New Classrooms ($10,000 per classroom)	$10,000
Expenditures for Transportation	$0
Professional Development - Math	$30,000
Assessment	$500,000.00
Other: Expansion	
Extended Year	-
Summer Program	$1,000,000
Extended Day	$500,000
Parent Engagement (Waterford Upstart)	$5,240,950
Total Projected Expenditures	**$43,815,950**
Amount Remaining to Carry Forward to FY 22	**$5,052,462**
Outputs	
Total Full-Time Equivalents*	**7,822**

*Note: A full-time equivalent served is determined by dividing the total number of funds expended for instructional services by $4,600 the per child maximum reimbursable rate.
Source: SC Department of Education Response to EOC Data Request, November 2019

Table 14
Estimated CERDEP Public School Growth in FY 2020-21

	FY 2020-21 (Estimated)
Number of New Schools	0
Number of Existing Schools	257
Total Number of Schools	**257**
Number of New Classrooms	1
Number of Existing Classrooms	579
Total Number of Classrooms	**580**
Students Enrolled at 45-Day Count	**7,822**

This year's additional classroom, as noted in Table 14, was added in Barnwell 45. Currently, no districts are offering Extended Day. Districts will submit summer programming plans to the SCDE in January, and a majority of CERDEP districts have indicated interest in a summer program for 4K students to bolster kindergarten readiness. (Source: SC Department of Education email response, December 2020)

Table 15
Non-public CERDEP Rolling Student Enrollment by County during 2020-21

County	Number of Students	County	Number of Students
Abbeville	0	Greenville	38
Aiken	113	Greenwood	12
Allendale	4	Hampton	13
Anderson	38	Horry	354
Bamberg	8	Jasper	16
Barnwell	19	Kershaw	4
Beaufort	14	Laurens	58
Berkeley	54	Lee	15
Calhoun	0	Lexington	93
Charleston	6	Marion	66
Cherokee	22	Marlboro	13
Chester	6	Newberry	25
Chesterfield	9	Oconee	17
Clarendon	0	Orangeburg	27
Colleton	8	Pickens	22
Darlington	44	Richland	359
Dillon	40	Saluda	4
Dorchester	20	Spartanburg	152
Edgefield	5	Sumter	162
Fairfield	0	Union	22
Florence	155	Williamsburg	22
Georgetown	38	York	48
		Total	**2,145**

Source: SC First Steps Response to EOC Data Request, as of November 6, 2020.

The decline from 2,455 from 2019-20 to 2,145 in November 2020, as noted in Table 15, represents a 12% decline in enrollment. In both programs, the global Coronavirus pandemic impacted enrollments for 4-year-olds.

Table 16 details OFS CERDEP appropriations and projected expenditures for FY 2020-21. As submitted by OFS, instructional costs are projected to be $9,298,812 million, which would fund students who remain enrolled in OFS CERDEP classrooms during the 2020-21 school year. Based on the Nov. 6, 2020 student count, actual OFS CERDEP enrollment is 12% less than 2019-20. Table 16 shows an estimated $4,016,482 in OFS carry forward (or cash balance) to FY 2021-22.

Table 16

OFS Estimated Budget Fiscal Year 2019-2020 TOTAL Available Funds	
Carry forward from FY19-FY20	$280,466
State Funds Expended and On-Hold locally	$917,142
Interested Earned on Cash	$52,403
EIA Funds	$9,767,864
General Fund	$6,522,877
Teacher Supply Funds	$66,550
CARES Act Reimbursement (Approved, not received 1-4-2021)	**$4,070,000**
CARES Act Funds (DSS Quality Rating Funds, committed but not received 11-9-2020)	**$1,200,000**
TOTAL Available Funds	**$22,877,302**
TOTAL Budget Transfers/Expenditures	
Transfers:	
Portion of EOC Evaluation	$105,000
Allocation to EOC per Proviso 1.56, 1.68 and 1A.56 for Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program (Not required due to Continuing Resolution)	0
Subtotal for Transfers and Provisos:	**$105,000**
OFS Agency Expenditures (These are Program Expenses, not Administrative):	
Salaries	$1,469,348
Fringe Benefits	$607,332
Contractual Services	$525,086
Supplies and Materials	$475,287
Rental/Leased Space	$163,000
Travel	$96,044
Capital Equipment	$0
Technology (Proviso 1.65) Carry forward cash already obligated	$0
Parent Engagement (Proviso 1.68) Carry forward cash already obligated	$0
Quality Improvements (Proviso 1.68)	$325,000
Other (Explain)	$0
Subtotal for Agency Expenditures:	**$3,661,097**
Payments to Centers:	
Instruction ($4,600 per child pro-rata)	$9,298,812
Extended Program (Extended Day, Extended Year and Summer Programs)	$2,961,015
Curriculum/Equipment and Materials for New Classrooms ($1000 to $10,000 per provider)	$637,660
Incentives and Miscellaneous	$0
Stipends	$175,000
Substitute Teacher Reimbursement	$7,400
Teacher Supplies	$69,300
Transportation ($574 per child)	$160,000
Higher Reimbursement Rates (Proviso 1.68)	$763,536
Other: (Proviso 1.74) Public Private Partnerships, office supplies, grants	$1,022,000
Subtotal for Center-Level Expenditures:	**$15,094,723**
TOTAL Transfers/Expenditures	**$18,860,820**
Outputs	
Funds Projected to Carry Forward to FY21-22	**$4,016,482**

Provided by SC Office of First Steps, December 2020.
Note: Administration includes salaries, contractual services, travel, equipment and rental/leased space.
 *Note: Full-time equivalent served is determined by dividing the total number of funds expended for instructional services by $4,600, the per child maximum reimbursable rate.

Summary

Table 17 summarizes SCDE's and OFS' 2020-21 budget and the EOC projection for actual CERDEP expenditures, carry forward and students enrolled for the 2020-21 school year. SCDE reports 7,822 children were enrolled in CERDEP at the 45-Day Student Count. As of December 2020, OFS reports 2,145 children were enrolled CERDEP at some point during the August 20 through December 1, 2020 period. Projected expenditures for SCDE are $48.8 million as shown in Table 42. A projected enrollment, included in past reports, is indeterminable at this time given the current circumstances of the global Coronavirus pandemic and possible vaccine availability in the spring and summer 2021.

Table 17
EOC Analysis of Preliminary CERDEP Program and Financial Data for FY 2020-2021

	SCDE	OFS	TOTAL
SCDE and First Steps Budget			
Total Available Funds	$48,868,412	$22,877,302	**$71,745,714**
Budgeted Transfers and Expenditures for 2020-21	$43,815,950	$18,860,820	**$62,676,770**
Budgeted Carry Forward to 2021-22	$5,052,462	$4,016,482	$9,068,944
Total Students Budgeted	7900	2145	10,045

III. Impact from Global Coronavirus Pandemic on CERDEP Services

The General Assembly, both in Act 284 – Child Early Reading Development and Education and Program and in its Proviso 1A.29. of the 2019-20 General Appropriation Act, intends South Carolina to have "a comprehensive, systemic approach to reading" and to review "the program's implementation and assessment of student success in the early elementary grades."

Over the years, thousands of pieces of information in EOC Reports on State Funded Full Day 4K have been reported, along with many recommendations. Without question, the global Coronavirus pandemic impacted Pre-K 4 programs administered by both the SCDE and the OFS. The two cohorts in school years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 have experienced interrupted face-to-face instruction as well as multiple challenges in all types of virtual learning (hybrid, asynchronous and synchronous). While districts tried to continue learning experiences in one of the above modalities and/or distributed paper packets in heroic fashion, the interruptions, lack of infrastructure and general health concerns severely impacted teaching and instruction. Perhaps, no information previously provided is as important to the fulfillment of the CERDEP legislation as the ideas, findings and recommendations made in this section. Literally, the future of at least two cohorts of children is directly impacted. In addition, regaining the positive strides made in serving children in poverty through Pre-K 4 classrooms must be targeted.

While the global Coronavirus pandemic continues, research and white papers emerge documenting the negative impacts on teaching and learning. In addition, the lack of socialization in classrooms, student support services such as guidance and early intervention, and economic changes at home are quickly being documented as detrimental to the growth and learning of young children.

Since Act 284 and its Proviso 1A.29 focus on reading and student success in the early grades, this report examines the impact of the loss of face-to-face instruction for the two cohorts of children included in the time of the global Coronavirus pandemic. In the September 2020 issue of the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, researchers from Georgia Institute of Technology and School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Massachusetts General Hospital, Institute of Health Professions, reported "using a pre-existing database, we calculated changes in children's reading ability without formal education (i.e., the summer months). The resultant models predicted that the rate of reading ability gain in kindergarten children during COVID-19 school closures without formal in-person education will decrease 66% (2.46 vs. 7.17 points/100 days), compared to the business-as-usual scenario, resulting in a 31% less reading ability gain from 1 January 2020 to 1 September 2020." https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/17/17/6371

The 13,064 children in CERDEP classrooms for the school year 2019-2020, already at-risk due to family poverty levels, will likely see a 66% decrease in reading ability. This group of students in kindergarten in the school year 2020-2021 will likely experience another 33% decrease (prorated) in reading ability. In the book, **Annual Growth, Catch-up Growth**, authors Fielding, Kerr and Rosier, examine a school district's (Kennewick) instruction and interventions and conclude "when students leave kindergarten three years behind in reading, they must make two full years' growth plus annual growth in first, second, and third grades to be at grade level by the end of third grade." (p. 228)

In South Carolina, no empirical evidence exist that systems are in place to close these reading level gaps; thousands of children are already on a path leading in a negative direction. The longitudal assessments are not in place. The seamless data system is not fully operable. Evidence from recent SC Ready ELA scores do not demonstrate achievement gaps closing.

Recommendation 1 noted above in Findings and Recommendations 2020-21 CERDEP should be implemented with full fidelity. Robust schedules should as two sessions – one morning (8-1) and one afternoon (12-5) should be offered with direct instruction in reading and math, meals and transportation. Summer offerings should be in place long enough to support interventions and reading level growth, no less than 6 weeks.

In addition, the Recommendations in 2019-2020 should be strongly considered. Either one single statewide assessment for four-year children or a "short list" of assessments with formative information available must be determined. Early reading/literacy and reading skills must be assessed on a growth continuum and the smaller the number of instruments used in the state the more concise the decision making. The continued use of multiple assessments in different programs allows ineffective programs and practices to "hide" in data. It does not provide parents, educators, or policymakers the information to make appropriate decisions for individuals, reading/literacy curriculum, or instructional strategies.

Then, determine a new comprehensive list of data collection for future reporting and evaluation. This must include mirroring enrollment demographics, standardized increments of instruction time (full day, extended day and summer) district and county of residence, classroom teacher and level of certification/training (state certified, 2-year associate, etc.), school/provider and number of days of attendance. This will create meaningful and useful research within a year of implementation.

And finally, an aggressive PreK 4-year-old campaign should be a part of spring 2021 communications. In 2021-2022, serving at least the pre-pandemic numbers should be a goal while also continuing the long-term goal of serving 100% of 4-year-olds in poverty.

These Findings and Recommendations require not only resolve, but leadership expertise. For the individual children and South Carolina's future quality of life, CERDEP programs must accomplish the intended goals.

IV.   Findings and Recommendations

From 2019-2020 Information and Data

Finding 1:

Additional public CERDEP classrooms were added (47) during the 2019-2020 school year, and the actual number of children (full-time equivalent) increased from 9,812 in 2018-19 to 10,609 in 2019-20. This represents an 7.8% growth in number of classrooms and an 8.1% growth in children (FTEs). Waiting lists were shared in the fall of 2019 and enrollment efficiency was realized. However, the global Coronavirus pandemic necessitated the closing of schools in March 2020. This cohort of Pre-K 4-year-olds lost one-fourth of the school year in face-to-face instruction.

The cohort of Pre-K 4-year-olds in the school year 2019-2020 are now in kindergarten, again their instruction impacted by the global Coronavirus pandemic. These children have the real probability of beginning first grade in the Fall of 2021 significantly behind in readiness for the grade level instruction.

Finding 2:

Both SCDE and OFS manage CERDEP as separate programs. There are separate criteria for enrollment and reimbursement, teacher qualification and professional development, student data collection, student assessment, and facility standards and licensing. Even within OFS there are different levels of reimbursement for meeting a higher quality program. In the expansion initiative in both public and non-public environments, separate initiatives by SCDE and OFS were also implemented differently.

Act 284 of 2014 that established in law the CERDEP clearly states the program must focus on (1) a comprehensive, systemic approach to reading (Section 59-156-110) and (2) a list of data collection needs to be used in the implementation and evaluation of the program (Section 59-156-150). The current disconnected implementation results in inconsistencies in the amount of additional CERDEP instruction and reimbursement rates provided by public schools and non-public providers, the number of times students are assessed and the record-keeping to perform meaningful evaluations. Limited research can be conducted and analyzed for return on investment, identifying successful programs/systems and helping underperforming programs/systems.

Finding 3:

Documentation of students' longitudinal learning progress toward reading in grade three is scarce at the state level. Thus, aggregated longitudinal data is not available to document success in programs/districts/schools from 4K through grade three. Some schools and districts monitor individual student progress, including a robust multi-tier support system (MTSS). Statewide funds invested in 4-year-old children has helped CERDEP participating children score at the level of their non-CERDEP participating peers on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). Statewide, children in poverty continue to underperform on the statewide assessment in reading and English Language Arts administered at the end of third grade. Sometime during the kindergarten to third grade year, regression or lack of grade level achievement occurs.

This Finding was noted in the prior year report. No action toward establishing a continuum of growth has been taken. And the well-established impact on children in poverty due to the global

Coronavirus pandemic escalates the critical aspect of this Finding. Two cohorts of 4-year-olds (2019-20 and 2020-21) have had their teaching and learning experiences significantly interrupted. Statistically, one can anticipate a greater gap in achievement on 3rd grade reading scores in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Finding 4:

The estimated number of four-year-olds living in poverty remained relatively stable from 36,038 in school year 2018-19 to 35,520 in school year 2019-20. While there is a decrease of 508 in the actual count, the 1.4% decline also does not fully reflect the financial impacts of the global Coronavirus pandemic on children in South Carolina. More than 51 percent of four-year-olds living in poverty were enrolled in CERDEP or Head Start. If student enrollment in public non-CERDEP classrooms is included – 10,489, 81% of most at-risk 4-ear-olds students are served by a formal publicly-funded four-year-old program. This estimate does not include four-year-olds receiving ABC childcare vouchers.

- Head Start enrollment has been impacted by the global Coronavirus pandemic. The federal office has provided guidance regarding attendance recording and enrollment which precludes full reporting at the time of this report.

From 2020-2021 Information and Data

Finding 5:

There is a significant decline in enrollment in the School Year 2020-21. While this overall 23% decline can be attributed to the concerns associated with the global Coronavirus pandemic, the children impacted may be disadvantaged for years in the future. The OFS reports an enrollment count of 2,145, only a twelve percent decline from 2,455 in 2019-2020 (pre-pandemic). Anecdotal feedback indicates this is due to the need for many essential workers to have childcare. SCDE reports a 45-day count of 7,822 students in 647 4K CERDEP classrooms, a 26% reduction from the 10,609 in 2019-2020 (pre-pandemic).

From Synthesis of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Information and Data

Recommendation 1:

Continue to share waiting lists for the purpose of serving as many children as possible. SCDE should maintain a master list with schools, number of 4K classrooms, 45-day count and 135-day count enrollments and make available to the public and other agencies (through a website or statewide coordinator for 4K data collection). The OFS should maintain a list of provider classrooms with vacancies noted on October 1 and March 1. Continue to focus on increasing numbers of children served while reaching the efficiency of full classrooms.

Recommendation 2:

While the ideal statewide system would have all state-funded, pre-kindergarten program operating in one office, this may be too ambitious at the current time. The recommendation is the designation of a 4K data collection office/center. With the input of all involved agencies serving 4K children using state monies as well as benchmarking other state models, a centralized place

for the collection of information in similar formats, matched expectations including assessment data, hours of instruction, district of residence, level of teacher training, etc., be established. Therefore, the data and accountabilities help establish consistencies in programs and allow for research to provide the General Assembly meaningful information regarding investment in 4K in South Carolina.

Recommendation 3:

OFS student enrollment data should include the student's district of residence. Inclusion of district of residence would improve the accuracy of the number of CERDEP students served as indicated by their district of residence.

Recommendation 4:

The stable number of identified students living in poverty and small percentage increase in the overall population of four-year-olds must be addressed through continuing and expanding services to include more of the eligible population.

Recommendation 5:

The current multitude of assessments used in Pre-K 4, kindergarten, first and second grade do not provide an accurate student growth continuum for teachers to use in determining next steps in instruction. Neither does it provide parents with substantive information regarding their child's progress, including the growth needed to meet third grade targets. Since the stated focus of Act 284 is a "comprehensive, systemic approach to reading," it is necessary to have a comprehensive and systemic assessment continuum established. Districts should be required to adopt or establish a continuum of assessment for students in Pre-K 4 through 2nd grade. The requirements of the choice should include growth measurements, correlation to the SC Standards and alignment with the SC Ready Third Grade ELA. Private providers would use the same assessment "adopted or established" by the home district where the provider is located. Teacher professional development and student progress could be coordinated.

Recommendation 6:

As soon as safely possible, crisis intervention instruction must begin for the cohort of students now in kindergarten (2019-20 PreK 4-year-olds). Perhaps, extended day during the last quarter of the School Year 2020-2021 can be established for students who were enrolled in the prior year cohort. Summer instructional events should be provided in face-to-face environments. Triage delivery should include meals, transportation and direct instruction in reading and math. The currently enrolled cohort of PreK-4, plus additional students in the qualifying districts should also be offered extended day during the last quarter and summer of 2021.

Resources and References

The list below provides extended context and/or background information on the topics included in the report.

Annual Growth, Catch-up Growth: Annual Growth for All Students, Catch-up Growth for Those Who Are Behind. Paul Rosier, Lynn Fielding, Nancy Kerr. New Foundation Press. April 2007.

Council of Chief State School Officers. Equity Starts Early. January 2021. https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/EquityStartsEarly3242016.pdf

Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB). Research Snapshot Pre-K Benefits: 2018 Update. https://www.sreb.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/research_snapshot_pre-k_march_2018.pdf?1523549430

Teaching and Leading Through a Pandemic, Key Findings from the American Educator Panels Spring 2020 COVID-19 Surveys. Laura S. Hamilton, Julia H. Kaufman, Melissa Diliberti. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA168-2.html

Young Children May Have Lost Significant Reading Ability During COVID-19 School Closings. Xue Bao, Tiffany Hogan. https://www.mghihp.edu/young-children-may-have-lost-significant-reading-ability-during-covid-19-school-closings

Source: Monthly Payments to School Districts. Fiscal Year 2019-2020. 13th Month Payments to Districts. https://ed.sc.gov/finance/financial-services/payment-information/monthly-payments-to-districts/

	H6303134 Instruction	H6303541 Instruction	H6303134A Supplies/New Classrooms	H6303134D Curriculum	H6303134H Summer Program	3145W Waterford	H630541W Parental Engagement	Grand Total
ABBEVILLE	288,062.22				3,679.20			291,741.42
AIKEN	2,205,478.52		10,000.00		6,798.40			2,222,276.92
ALLENDALE	152,174.81				7,618.24		234,950.00	394,743.05
ANDERSON 2	448,380.74				13,356.98			461,737.72
ANDERSON 3	503,069.63				16,151.64			519,221.27
ANDERSON 5	1,822,962.96							1,822,962.96
BAMBERG 1	89,717.04							89,717.04
BAMBERG 2	114,897.78						80,000.00	194,897.78
BARNWELL 19	70,294.81				4,032.96		40,000.00	114,327.77
BARNWELL 29	87,400.00				1,272.04			88,672.04
BARNWELL 45	179,400.00							179,400.00
BERKELEY		4,136,967.41						4,136,967.41
CALHOUN		367,182.22			3,007.20		240,000.00	610,189.42
CHEROKEE		1,145,774.81						1,145,774.81

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	H6303134 Instruction	H6303541 Instruction	H6303134A Supplies/New Classrooms	H6303134D Curriculum	H6303134H Summer Program	3145W Waterford	H6303541W Parental Engagement	Grand Total
CHESTER		859,927.41			26,464.97		400,000.00	1,286,392.38
CHESTERFIELD		1,159,063.70	60,000.00				398,000.00	1,617,063.70
CLARENDON 1		135,887.41					80,000.00	215,887.41
CLARENDON 2		408,752.59					200,000.00	608,752.59
CLARENDON 3		164,339.26			539.60			164,878.86
COLLETON		1,049,242.96	-					1,049,242.96
DARLINGTON		1,385,656.30			2,325.96			1,387,982.26
DILLON 3		264,755.56						264,755.56
DILLON 4		542,016.30					240,000.00	782,016.30
DORCHESTER 4		445,314.07			2,555.28			447,869.35
EDGEFIELD		535,167.41						535,167.41
FAIRFIELD		715,146.67						715,146.67
FLORENCE 1		1,829,675.56	10,000.00					1,839,675.56
FLORENCE 2		173,743.70						173,743.70
FLORENCE 3		609,414.81	40,000.00		24,412.54		254,000.00	927,827.35
FLORENCE 4		86,684.44						86,684.44
FLORENCE 5		160,488.89						160,488.89

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	H6303134 Instruction	H6303541 Instruction	H6303134A Supplies/New Classrooms	H6303134D Curriculum	H6303134H Summer Program	3145W Waterford	H6303541W Parental Engagement	Grand Total
GEORGETOWN		1,311,715.56						1,311,715.56
GREENWOOD 50		986,001.48			9,712.80			995,714.28
GREENWOOD 51		164,100.74						164,100.74
GREENWOOD 52		168,223.70						168,223.70
HAMPTON 1		532,134.81			12,981.08		280,000.00	825,115.89
HAMPTON 2		177,798.52				80,000.00	80,000.00	337,798.52
HORRY		69,408.89						69,408.89
JASPER		731,161.48						731,161.48
KERSHAW		1,286,739.26	170,000.00	27,510.12	16,439.36			1,500,688.74
LAURENS 55		956,663.70	10,000.00					966,663.70
LAURENS 56		315,151.11	10,000.00		8,628.92	160,000.00		493,780.03
LEE UNTY		252,284.44						252,284.44
LEXINGTON 2		1,309,875.56	10,000.00		6,866.44			1,326,742.00
LEXINGTON 3		572,512.59			2,405.76			574,918.35
LEXINGTON 4		914,684.44			4,886.70	420,000.00		1,339,571.14
MARION		713,136.30				262,000.00	212,000.00	1,187,136.30
MARLBORO		648,327.41			8,094.38	360,000.00		1,016,421.79

	H6303134 Instruction	H6303541 Instruction	H6303134A Supplies/New Classrooms	H6303134D Curriculum	H6303134H Summer Program	3145W Waterford	H6303541W Parental Engagement	Grand Total
MCCORMICK		150,811.85	10,000.00					160,811.85
NEWBERRY		699,711.11			30,783.34			730,494.45
OCONEE		1,604,139.26						1,604,139.26
ORANGEBURG		2,153,856.30			3,533.46	400,000.00		2,557,389.76
RICHLAND 1		3,317,826.67	140,000.00		13,660.92	500,000.00		3,971,487.59
SALUDA		377,404.44			12,382.08			389,786.52
SPARTANBURG 3		504,807.41						504,807.41
SPARTANBURG 4		479,217.78						479,217.78
SPARTANBURG 6		1,680,635.56			17,316.46			1,697,952.02
SPARTANBURG 7		869,093.33						869,093.33
SUMTER		2,306,133.33						2,306,133.33
WILLIAMSBURG		594,013.33			3,608.64	320,000.00		917,621.97
YORK 1		818,561.48						818,561.48
Grand Total	5,961,838.51	42,841,333.32	470,000.00	27,510.12	263,515.35	2,502,000.00	2,738,950.00	54,805,147.30

DISTRICT	H6303134 Instruction	H6303541 Instruction	H6303134A Supplies/New Classrooms	H6303134D Curriculum	H6303134H Summer Program	3145W Waterford Summer Program	H6303541W Parental Engagement
	Instruction	Instruction	Supplies/New Classrooms	Curriculum	Extended Year	Summer Program	Upstart Pilot
Abbeville	$422,536.89						
Aiken	$2,120,100.89		$10,000.00			$8,372.74	
Allendale	$284,363.85						$132,000.00
Anderson 2	$417,225.11					$9,623.04	
Anderson 3	$473,316.15					$12,523.54	
Anderson 5	$1,773,833.11					$10,147.50	
Bamberg 1	$89,398.22						$40,000.00
Bamberg 2	$146,491.48					$9,623.04	$80,000.00
Barnwell 19	$82,984.00					$1,804.32	$40,000.00
Barnwell 29	$90,200.00					$3,266.68	
Barnwell 45	$175,890.00						
Berkeley	$4,036,416.59						
Calhoun	$412,080.37		$10,000.00			$9,021.60	$240,000.00
Cherokee	$1,107,956.67		$50,000.00				
Chester	$818,548.30					$16,890.33	$400,000.00
Chesterfield	$625,119.41						
Clarendon 1		$163,395.63					$80,000.00
Clarendon 2		$396,612.74					$200,000.00
Clarendon 3		$168,841.04			$294.79	$2,428.20	
Colleton		$1,043,079.48				$24,030.52	
Darlington		$1,373,746.00	$10,000.00			$29,999.65	
Dillon 3		$265,856.15					
Dillon 4		$547,614.22					$240,000.00

DISTRICT	H6303134 Instruction	H6303541 Instruction	H6303134A Supplies/New Classrooms	H6303134D Curriculum	H6303134H Summer Program	3145W Waterford	H6303541W Parental Engagement
Dorchester 4		$445,755.04		$18,353.88		$6,289.92	
Edgefield		$492,959.70					
Fairfield		$665,976.67					
Florence 1		$1,743,532.59			$38,748.78		
Florence 2		$163,262.00					
Florence 3		$539,329.19	$10,000.00			$9,712.80	$254,000.00
Florence 4		$93,006.22				$7,217.28	
Florence 5		$129,286.67					
Georgetown		$1,422,487.41					
Greenwood 50		$976,498.52				$32,376.00	
Greenwood 51		$141,547.19					
Greenwood 52		$180,400.00					
Hampton 1		$433,360.89				$27,239.32	$280,000.00
Hampton 2		$122,705.41				$17,861.11	
Horry		$71,291.41					
Jasper		$677,936.52				$58,058.42	
Kershaw		$58,529.78		$12,235.92			
Laurens 55		$869,561.41				$9,021.60	
Laurens 56		$286,134.44				$7,217.28	$160,000.00
Lee		$325,120.89				$18,043.20	
Lexington 2		$1,186,063.19	$20,000.00			$13,736.56	
Lexington 3		$612,290.96				$4,811.52	
Lexington 4		$953,714.67				$9,021.60	$420,000.00
Marion		$587,936.96					
Marlboro		$684,584.59				$14,434.56	$360,000.00

DISTRICT	H6303134 Instruction	H6303541 Instruction	H6303134A Supplies/New Classrooms	H6303134D Curriculum	H6303134H Summer Program	3145W Waterford	H6303541W Parental Engagement
McCormick		$88,930.52					
Newberry		$668,415.41				$25,536.68	
Oconee		$1,586,851.85					
Orangeburg 3		$507,993.04				$10,825.92	
Orangeburg 4		$445,320.74					
Orangeburg 5		$859,138.30				$15,036.00	$400,000.00
Richland 1		$1,858,788.15				$67,034.52	$1,000,000.00
Saluda		$351,212.07				$12,952.16	
Spartanburg 3		$475,053.33		$6,447.00		$6,014.40	
Spartanburg 4		$487,046.59					
Spartanburg 6		$1,454,792.37				$27,064.80	
Spartanburg 7		$845,474.67				$10,825.92	
Sumter		$2,380,177.56	$10,000.00				
Union							
Williamsburg		$567,358.00				$17,972.06	$320,000.00
York 1		$774,751.19					
TOTALS	**$13,076,461.04**	**$31,173,721.37**	**$120,000.00**	**$37,036.80**	**$39,043.57**	**$566,034.79**	**$4,646,000.00**

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District	Additional Classes	Extended Year	Summer Program
Aiken	1		X
Anderson 3			X
Barnwell 19			X
Chester			X
Chesterfield	6		
Colleton	1		
Florence 1	1		
Florence 3	4		X
Kershaw	16	X	
Laurens 55	1		
Laurens 56	1		
Lexington 2	1		
McCormick	1		
Richland 1	14		
Saluda			X
TOTAL	**47**	**1**	**6**

Appendix C: Extended Year Provided by Non-public Providers 2019-2020			
Provider Name 2020-2021	County	# of classes	# of enrolled FS 4Ks as of 11-06-20
Betty's Creative Corner 929	Aiken	1	4
Busy Bee's Childcare	Aiken	1	18
Family Affair CC, Aiken	Aiken	1	13
Family Affair CC, N Augusta	Aiken	1	9
Learning On Main	Aiken	1	19
Megiddo Kid Station	Aiken	1	3
Sunshine House 57	Aiken	1	8
Sunshine House 59	Aiken	1	6
True Foundations	Aiken	1	4
Allendale Early Learning	Allendale	1	5
Kiddie Land CCC	Anderson	1	11
Welfare Baptist Church DC	Anderson	1	7
New Jerusalem MBC CDC	Barnwell	1	19
Betty's Daycare And Preschool	Berkeley	1	2
Daniel Island Academy	Berkeley	1	8
La Petite Academy 7514	Berkeley	1	19
The House of Smiles	Berkeley	1	4
Foster's Child Care Center	Charleston	1	7
Eagle Academy	Cherokee	1	9
KL Kids Learning Academy	Cherokee	1	1
Montessori Day School	Darlington	1	4
Prosperity CC	Darlington	1	20
Thompson's Learning Center	Darlington	1	10
True Saints Christian DCC And LC	Darlington	1	12
Kids Limited CDC	Dillon	2	18

Provider Name 2020-2021	County	# of classes	# of enrolled FS 4Ks as of 11-06-20
Little Treasures Christian LC	Dillon	1	8
Mother's Love Daycare	Dillon	1	13
Riverpointe Christian Academy	Dorchester	1	10
Little Folks Daycare	Edgefield	1	6
Angel's Inn	Florence	1	7
Antioch 3 & 4K Development Center	Florence	1	17
Edu Scholars Learning Center	Florence	1	5
Excellent Learning Preschool, In	Florence	3	24
Kids Corner ELA	Florence	1	15
La Petite Academy 7504	Florence	1	9
Little Creations LC	Florence	2	15
Live Love Grow LC	Florence	1	10
Precious Ones Learning Center	Florence	2	22
Sunshine House 30	Florence	1	20
Zion Canaan CDC	Florence	1	15
East Carolina ELA	Georgetown	1	6
Little Smurfs Daycare	Georgetown	2	18
Sampit CCC	Georgetown	1	5
Small Minds Of Tomorrow II	Georgetown	1	8
Small Impressions	Greenville	1	10
Sunshine House 02	Greenwood	1	1
Sunshine House 134	Greenwood	1	4
Sunshine House 135	Greenwood	1	5
Children's Keeper LC	Hampton	1	10
Hampton Early Learning Center	Hampton	1	2
Anchors Away CDC	Horry	1	19

Provider Name 2020-2021	County	# of classes	# of enrolled FS 4Ks as of 11-06-20
ATM Daycare Center	Horry	1	11
Beginners Paradise	Horry	1	6
Capture CDC	Horry	2	22
Carolina Forest CD And LC	Horry	1	13
Chabad Academy	Horry	1	8
Coastal Children's Academy, Inc	Horry	2	9
Coastal Kids Academy Of SC	Horry	1	20
Connect Kids	Horry	1	8
Little Blessings CDC	Horry	1	18
Mercy Baptist CDC	Horry	1	9
My Sunshine CDC	Horry	1	7
School A Child LC	Horry	1	6
Sherman's CDC	Horry	1	9
The Learning Station	Horry	2	32
The Learning Station- Forestbrook	Horry	1	8
Your Neighborhood CDC	Horry	2	18
Beacon Of Hope L&EC	Jasper	1	10
Stephanie's Preschool And Afters	Kershaw	1	4
Thornwell CDC	Laurens	3	29
Bishopville-Lee CCC, Inc	Lee	1	14
5 Star Academy LC	Lexington	1	7
A & A Learning Center	Lexington	1	10
Big Blue Marble Academy 3	Lexington	1	14
La Petite Academy 7503	Lexington	1	10
Lexington CDC	Lexington	1	8
MEGA (Midlands Elite Gymnastics Academy)	Lexington	1	14

Provider Name 2020-2021	County	# of classes	# of enrolled FS 4Ks as of 11-06-20
Midlands Primary Learning Ctr	Lexington	1	6
Seven Oaks Kids Academy	Lexington	1	13
Turner CDC	Lexington	1	6
McGill's Bundles of Joy	Marion	2	32
Sugar Bears Day Care	Marion	1	8
Troy-Johnson Learning Korner	Marion	1	18
First United Methodist Children's Center	Marlboro	1	13
Newberry CDC	Newberry	1	10
Our Clubhouse, Inc	Oconee	1	14
Pennsylvania Children's Center	Oconee	1	3
Brighter Children's Center	Orangeburg	1	2
J & J Childcare, Inc	Orangeburg	1	2
Kidz Will Be Kidz Daycare	Orangeburg	1	4
Wright Way CDC	Orangeburg	1	7
Wright's Daycare	Orangeburg	1	11
Clemson CDC	Pickens	1	9
Angels Club CDC	Richland	1	13
Aspire Early Learning	Richland	1	6
Aye's Kinderoo Care II	Richland	1	3
Belvedere ELC	Richland	1	10
Children's World 5	Richland	1	11
Dream Catcher CDC	Richland	1	6
Education Express	Richland	2	22
Fantasy Island CCC	Richland	1	5
First Nazareth CDC	Richland	1	10
Footprints Academy	Richland	1	12

Provider Name 2020-2021	County	# of classes	# of enrolled FS 4Ks as of 11-06-20
Footprints Daycare & CDC	Richland	1	13
Grace Academy CDC	Richland	2	23
Kinder Academy, LLC	Richland	1	6
Kinder Academy, TOO	Richland	1	10
La Petite Academy 7501	Richland	1	10
Little Love Christian Academy	Richland	1	5
Myers Nursery and Day Care	Richland	2	9
Nana's Little Elephants	Richland	1	7
New Hope ELA	Richland	1	20
Renaissance Academy At Agape	Richland	1	10
Spring Valley ELA	Richland	1	14
Sunshine House 110	Richland	1	13
Sunshine House 19	Richland	1	11
Sunshine House 21	Richland	2	31
Sunshine House 22	Richland	1	18
Sunshine House 23	Richland	1	8
Sunshine House 43	Richland	1	19
Tiny Creators LC	Richland	1	4
Trinity LC	Richland	1	1
Wonderful Beginnings	Richland	1	5
Abundant Blessings CDC	Spartanburg	1	6
Cowpens Creative Kids	Spartanburg	1	6
Creative Learning Kids CDC	Spartanburg	1	13
Exceptional Child Academy LLC	Spartanburg	1	6
Learning Years CDC	Spartanburg	1	1
Legacy Christian School	Spartanburg	1	4

Provider Name 2020-2021	County	# of classes	# of enrolled FS 4Ks as of 11-06-20
Piedmont Community Action ELC	Spartanburg	1	13
Precious Little Angels	Spartanburg	1	15
Sunshine House 10	Spartanburg	1	17
Sunshine House 17	Spartanburg	1	12
The Children's Academy	Spartanburg	1	9
The Franklin School	Spartanburg	1	13
Care-A-Lot Day Care Too	Sumter	1	5
Itsy Bitsy Steps LC	Sumter	1	11
Jehovah MBC Christian & Academic	Sumter	1	16
Kid's Academy	Sumter	1	11
Kids First Academy	Sumter	1	14
Love Covenant	Sumter	1	5
Luv N Care Child Care, Inc	Sumter	1	6
New Beginnings At Warth CCC	Sumter	1	15
Palmetto Prep LLC	Sumter	1	17
Simon Says Learning Center	Sumter	1	9
Swan Lake Academy	Sumter	1	10
Vanessa Palace LLC	Sumter	1	7
Vanessa's Playland	Sumter	1	11
Mon-Aetna Baptist Church CEC	Union	2	22
Cool Kids Academy	Williamsburg	1	7
Little Wizard's Learning Center	Williamsburg	1	10
Tender Bears Daycare & Learning	Williamsburg	1	3
Wilson's Day Care & LC	Williamsburg	1	3
Agape United Daycare	York	1	5
House of Joy	York	1	17

Provider Name 2020-2021	County	# of classes	# of enrolled FS 4Ks as of 11-06-20
Joyful Academy	York	1	0
Love N Cherish Academy	York	1	4
Right Choice CDC	York	1	10
		176 total classrooms	**1,674 total students**

Source: SC First Steps, November 2020 Response to EOC Data Request.

Appendix D: School Year 2019-2020 Four-Year-Old Children in Poverty Served by Publicly-Funded and Private Programs, by School District or County

School District	Student Headcount Enrollment 2019-20	Estimated Number of 4-Year-Olds	2020 District Poverty Index	Estimated Number of 4-Year-Olds in Poverty	4-Year-Olds Served in Head Start	Student Enrollment in CERDEP in Public Schools	Student Enrollment in CERDEP in Non-Public Schools	Four-Year-Olds in CERDEP or Head Start	Percent of 4-Year-Olds in Poverty Served by CERDEP or Head Start
Abbeville	2,956	208	69.40%	144	21	98	1	120	83%
Aiken	24,024	1,964	63.50%	1,247	118	490	190	798	64%
Allendale	1,089	74	95.00%	70	21	66	1	88	125%
Anderson 1	10,238	732	50.50%	369	55			55	15%
Anderson 2	3,650	261	64.50%	168	20	102	3	125	74%
Anderson 3	2,591	185	72.60%	134	14	117		131	97%
Anderson 4	2,861	204	60.50%	124	15		1	16	13%
Anderson 5	13,130	938	66.10%	620	71	423	27	521	84%
Bamberg 1	1,236	84	77.70%	65	20	25	18	63	97%
Bamberg 2	645	44	91.80%	40	11	36	19	66	163%
Barnwell 19	593	42	90.40%	38	7	21	4	32	86%
Barnwell 29	816	58	76.70%	44	10	20	2	32	73%
Barnwell 45	2,102	148	77.40%	115	26	39	27	92	80%
Beaufort	22,258	1,956	56.70%	1,109	90			90	8%
Berkeley	36,913	2,756	56.60%	1,560	195	963	68	1,226	79%
Calhoun	1,688	122	77.90%	95	4	97	1	102	107%
Charleston	49,941	5,010	50.90%	2,550	280			280	11%
Cherokee	8,536	653	73.60%	481	53	261	22	336	70%
Chester	5,008	354	78.40%	278	75	189	12	276	99%
Chesterfield	6,993	483	74.30%	359	126	147	4	277	77%
Clarendon 1	682	44	90.60%	40	9	41	1	51	126%

School District	Student Headcount Enrollment 2019-20	Estimated Number of 4-Year-Olds	2020 District Poverty Index	Estimated Number of 4-Year-Olds in Poverty	4-Year-Olds Served in Head Start	Student Enrollment in CERDEP in Public Schools	Student Enrollment in CERDEP in Non-Public Schools	Four-Year-Olds in CERDEP or Head Start	Percent of 4-Year-Olds in Poverty Served by CERDEP or Head Start
Clarendon 2	2,867	186	85.40%	159	36	95		131	83%
Clarendon 3	1,283	83	61.90%	51	16	39		55	107%
Colleton	5,329	441	83.40%	368	62	241	15	318	86%
Darlington	9,741	774	78.00%	604	178	318	46	542	90%
Dillon 3	1,575	111	71.50%	79	19	63	8	90	114%
Dillon 4	3,966	278	92.10%	256	48	123	30	201	78%
Dorchester 2	25,971	1,655	50.90%	843	14		1	15	2%
Dorchester 4	2,253	144	73.30%	105	1	100	2	103	98%
Edgefield	3,331	197	64.20%	126	16	125	6	147	116%
Fairfield	2,536	206	87.60%	180		150	6	156	86%
Florence 1	15,793	1,184	67.50%	799	117	393	181	691	86%
Florence 2	1,085	81	70.30%	57	8	38		46	80%
Florence 3	3,315	249	87.20%	217	24	128	13	165	76%
Florence 4	687	52	90.70%	47	5	22	27	54	116%
Florence 5	1,201	90	70.90%	64	9	29		38	59%
Georgetown	9,056	578	68.10%	394	69	324	36	429	109%
Greenville	76,964	6,292	55.80%	3,511	345			345	10%
Greenwood 50	8,742	617	73.90%	456	124	230	22	376	83%
Greenwood 51	960	68	77.10%	52	14	32	1	47	89%
Greenwood 52	1,555	110	62.90%	69	22	40		62	90%
Hampton 1	2,110	157	93.00%	146	30	104	11	145	100%
Hampton 2	679	50	91.20%	46	10	29	3	42	91%
Horry	45,604	3,125	64.30%	2,009	78	21	340	439	22%
Jasper	2,691	349	81.90%	286	38	156	18	212	74%

School District	Student Headcount Enrollment 2019-20	Estimated Number of 4-Year-Olds	2020 District Poverty Index	Estimated Number of 4-Year-Olds in Poverty	4-Year-Olds Served in Head Start	Student Enrollment in CERDEP in Public Schools	Student Enrollment in CERDEP in Non-Public Schools	Four-Year-Olds in CERDEP or Head Start	Percent of 4-Year-Olds in Poverty Served by CERDEP or Head Start
Kershaw	10,856	793	61.40%	487	45	146	47	238	49%
Lancaster	14,143	1,062	53.20%	565	68			68	12%
Laurens 55	5,608	515	74.00%	381	11	203	19	233	61%
Laurens 56	2,867	264	80.00%	211	6	68	70	144	68%
Lee	1,650	190	90.20%	171	25	77	27	129	75%
Lexington 1	27,248	1,499	44.80%	672	35			35	5%
Lexington 2	8,982	494	75.40%	373	12	274	62	348	93%
Lexington 3	2,114	116	70.80%	82	3	139	9	151	183%
Lexington 4	3,424	188	80.40%	151	4	226	8	238	157%
Lexington 5	17,504	963	45.00%	433	23			23	5%
McCormick	658	52	82.70%	43	10	19		29	67%
Marion	4,321	369	89.70%	331	57	142	103	302	91%
Marlboro	3,797	277	85.30%	236	102	160	16	278	118%
Newberry	5,927	453	71.30%	323	53	162	22	237	73%
Oconee	10,432	748	65.80%	492	45	368	25	438	89%
Orangeburg	12,148	970	84.80%	823	116	124	19	259	31%
Pickens	16,302	1,225	59.80%	733	110			110	15%
Richland 1	23,226	2,165	75.60%	1,637	46	480	335	861	53%
Richland 2	28,293	2,638	55.10%	1,453	55		2	57	4%
Saluda	2,304	237	77.10%	183	31	81	11	123	67%
Spartanburg 1	5,287	394	58.90%	232	23			23	10%
Spartanburg 2	10,516	783	57.10%	447	46		2	48	11%
Spartanburg 3	2,781	207	70.90%	147	12	113	16	141	96%
Spartanburg 4	2,880	214	65.70%	141	13	109	6	128	91%

School District	Student Headcount Enrollment 2019-20	Estimated Number of 4-Year-Olds	2020 District Poverty Index	Estimated Number of 4-Year-Olds in Poverty	4-Year-Olds Served in Head Start	Student Enrollment in CERDEP in Public Schools	Student Enrollment in CERDEP in Non-Public Schools	Four-Year-Olds in CERDEP or Head Start	Percent of 4-Year-Olds in Poverty Served by CERDEP or Head Start
Spartanburg 5	9,108	678	53.90%	365	40		1	41	11%
Spartanburg 6	11,520	858	66.80%	573	50	339	44	433	76%
Spartanburg 7	7,463	556	72.10%	401	33	211	74	318	79%
Sumter	16,257	1,379	74.20%	1,023	210	574	143	927	91%
Union	3,974	326	78.10%	255	43		54	97	38%
Williamsburg	3,348	317	89.90%	285	74	131	36	241	85%
York 1	5,205	326	66.90%	218	30	183	25	238	109%
York 2	8,270	519	34.80%	181	48			48	27%
York 3	17,481	1,096	61.80%	678	102		1	103	15%
York 4	17,052	1,069	20.10%	215	100			100	46%
SC Public Charter School District	20,733		47.90%	0				0	
Charter Institute at Erskine	9,797		52.50%	0					
Migrant					22				
Homeless (McKinney Vento)							1		
TOTAL	**780,720**	**57,337**	**61.10%**	**35,516**	**4,228**	**10,264**	**2,345**	**16,837**	**47%**

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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
If you have questions, please contact the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) staff for additional information. The phone number is 803.734.6148. Also, please visit the EOC website at www.eoc.sc.gov for additional resources.

FYI

Follow Up to January EOC Subcommittee Questions

Definition of the Pupil in Poverty (PIP) Indicator

DEFINITION: As defined for purposes of the Education Finance Act (EFA), students who are transient, a runaway, in foster care, homeless, or have been Medicaid-eligible or qualified for SNAP or TANF services within the last three years.

PROCEDURES:
Collected by:
　　South Carolina Department of Education
　　SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs (RFA) Office
Reported by:
　　School Districts: District Student Information System
Timeframe:
　　180 Day Collection
Reported on School Cards: Yes
Reported on District Cards: Yes
Included in Accountability Measure: No

Range of Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Scoring

Standard scores for ASVAB are reported as percentiles between 1-99.

A percentile score indicates the percentage of examinees in a reference group that scored at or below that particular score. For current ASVAB scores, the reference group is a sample of 18 to 23 year old youth who took the ASVAB as part of a national norming study conducted in 1997. Thus, an AFQT score of 90 indicates that the examinee scored as well as or better than 90% of the nationally-representative sample of 18 to 23 year old youth. A score of 50 indicates that the examinee scored as well as or better than 50% of the nationally-representative sample.

Weighing Factors That Help Shape Students' Prospects

In disrupting every aspect of national life, the COVID-19 pandemic has redoubled attention to the challenge families face in assuring that their children are fully prepared and supported in their journey through school. This first of three Quality Counts 2021 installments aims to equip education leaders with the insights they need in responding both to long-term and current conditions facing the students in their brick-and-mortar schools and virtual classrooms.

The report takes a two-pronged approach: a historical one, with grades and scores for the nation and each state based mostly on federal data from 2019; and—to provide a more real-time perspective—an original analysis of U.S. Census Bureau surveys from fall 2020 on how families with children in school are coping with the coronavirus pandemic.

Taken together, these snapshots provide evidence for both hope and concern. On the one hand, the nation overall has notched improvements in recent years in numerous categories captured by the EdWeek Research Center's Chance-for-Success Index. But the more-recent Census survey also shows families struggling with the basics of daily life during the pandemic, including adequate food, secure employment, and the technology crucial to maintaining their children's learning. And in both categories, the data show entrenched regional and state-by-state disparities.

This report captures just one piece of the overall school quality picture. It will be followed in June by the second installment in this series, "Quality Counts: School Finance." And in September, Education Week once again will release the annual "Quality Counts: Grading the States" report, which includes both school achievement data and summative grades and rankings based on findings from all three reports.

Explore the interactive, online features of each of these reports and download the State Highlights Reports providing even more detail on individual states.

—Mark W. Bomster, Deputy Managing Editor
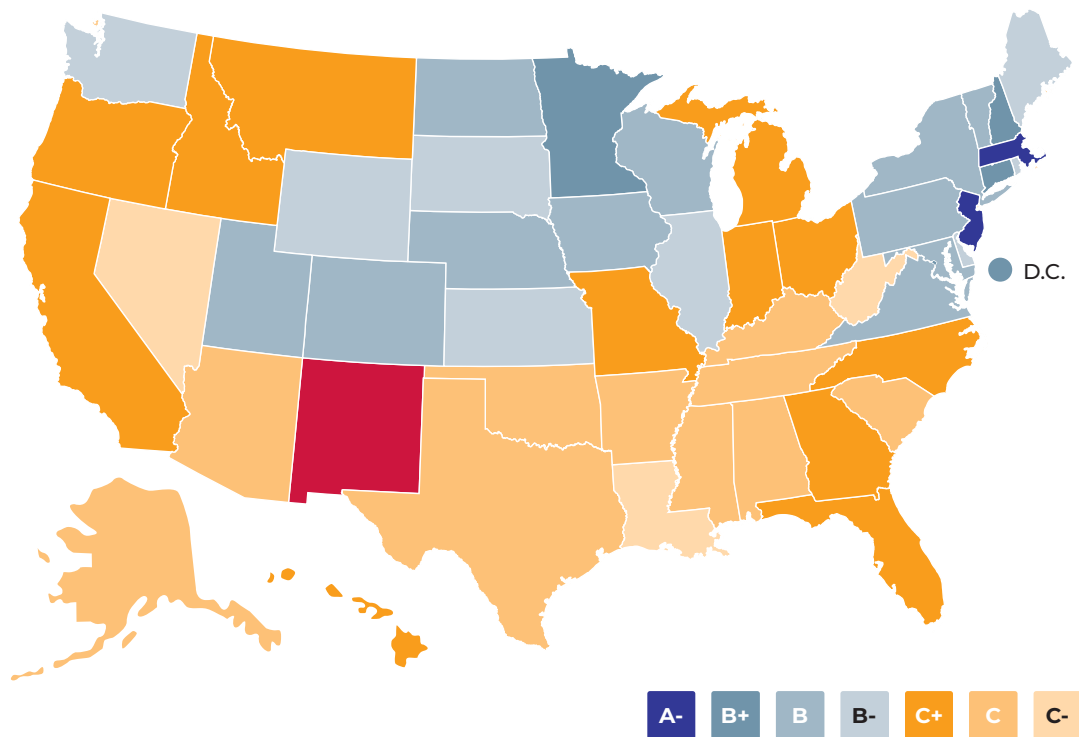
Chance for Success

Massachusetts (91.6 out of 100 points) and New Jersey (89.6) earn the nation's highest scores on the Chance-for-Success Index with grades of A-minus. New Mexico receives the lowest grade, a D-plus.

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2021

Nation Notches Progress on Chance-for-Success Index

But challenges loom large for families pressed by pandemic

By Sterling C. Lloyd & Alex Harwin

The nation has made notable gains over the past decade on a wide-ranging basket of academic and socioeconomic factors that make up Education Week's Chance-for-Success Index, earning the first B-minus grade on the index in its current form since 2008.

But it's far too early to tell whether that progress—which largely reflects 2019 federal data—can withstand the COVID-19 pandemic's disruption of schooling nationwide and its devastating economic impact on families and communities.

First the good news: The nation earns a score of 79.5 out of 100 possible points and a B-minus letter grade on Education Week's annual Chance-for-Success Index, which captures 13 cradle-to-career indicators that play into the chances for successful outcomes over a person's lifetime, based on the most recent data available on a national basis. The current scoring system debuted in 2008.

Massachusetts (91.6) and New Jersey (89.6) post the nation's highest scores and earn A-minus grades. Three other perennial leaders round out the top five: New Hampshire (87.9), Connecticut (87.5), and Minnesota (87.4). Those states receive B-plus grades, as does the District of Columbia, which reaches that mark for the first time. New Mexico (69.0) finishes at the bottom of the rankings, with the only D-plus.

But every state has substantial room for improvement on some aspect of the index. No state earns an A, and roughly half the states post mediocre grades between C-minus and C-plus.

And the prospects headed forward appear rocky, at least in the near term. As the pandemic shakes the nation's economy, job losses and pay cuts may continue to put downward pressure on the index's family income and parental employment variables.

Meanwhile, the shift to remote learning prompted by the pandemic has also caused widespread concern about learning loss for the nation's K-12 and college students. Lack of access to adequate technology and disruption of young adults' plans for postsecondary enrollment are just two of many barriers that may ultimately hinder academic participation and performance.

As a result of all these factors, educators and policymakers will have to contend with budget constraints and unfamiliar instructional models as they work to ensure that residents of their states have a solid chance for success.

Analysis uses a cradle-to-career lens

The index is designed to measure opportunities for residents of each state during three key stages of their lifetimes. Of the 13 indicators, four capture building blocks that support the development of young children. This "early foundations" category measures family income, parental education levels, parental employment, and the share of children whose parents are fluent in English.

The index's "school years" category gauges student participation and performance in formal education from preschool to postsecondary. It includes six metrics: preschool and kindergarten enrollment, 4th grade reading test scores, results on 8th grade math exams, high school graduation rates, and postsecondary participation.

Ultimately, the education system is intended to produce graduates who can earn a living and be productive adults. But to make good on an education, students will benefit from completing a postsecondary degree and joining a workforce in which there are good opportunities for employment and earnings. The "adult outcomes" section of the index offers perspective on the availability of such opportunities. It measures adult educational attainment, annual income, and steady employment.

Results on the index reflect the EdWeek Research Center's analysis of the most recent federal data. Reading and math test scores are taken from the 2019 National Assessment of Educa-

Chance for Success

Top-Ranked

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)	
Massachusetts	91.6	A-
New Jersey	89.6	A-
New Hampshire	87.9	B+
Connecticut	87.5	B+
Minnesota	87.4	B+

Bottom-Ranked

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)	
Oklahoma	73.4	C
West Virginia	72.1	C-
Louisiana	72.0	C-
Nevada	70.2	C-
New Mexico	69.0	D+

Most-Improved

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)		CHANGE 2020 to 2021
Delaware	80.4	B-	2.6 ↑
Rhode Island	82.1	B-	2.4 ↑
New Mexico	69.0	D+	1.8 ↑
Alaska	75.4	C	1.8 ↑
Idaho	77.5	C+	1.4 ↑

Largest Declines

STATE	SCORE (GRADE)		CHANGE 2020 to 2021
Vermont	85.8	B	-2.0 ↓
North Dakota	83.7	B	-1.1 ↓
Maine	81.2	B-	-0.7 ↓
Connecticut	87.5	B+	-0.6 ↓
South Dakota	81.8	B-	-0.5 ↓

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2021

tional Progress. The index also incorporates 2017-18 adjusted co-hort graduation rates published by the U.S. Department of Education. All other metrics rely on 2019 information from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. More details on data sources and methodology are available in the Sources and Notes section of the report.

Here are key takeaways from this year's analysis:

1. The nation's climb to a milestone with its first B-minus grade reflects gradual gains over time.

The nation's score increased from 78.4 on the 2008 Chance-for-Success Index to 79.5 in 2021. The national score declined in the years following the Great Recession of 2008 as most states faced the lingering effects of that severe economic downturn. But the nation has improved slightly on the index every year since 2018. The 0.3 point increase in its score since last year's report boosted its letter grade to B-minus for the first time.

Across the index, the nation's strongest improvements since the 2008 report are in parental education and employment levels. The share of children with at least one parent with a postsecondary degree increased from 43.3 percent in 2008 to 52.3 percent in the 2021 report. The percent of children with at least one parent working full time and year-round jumped from 71.8 to 79.0.

2. The nation's long-term gains have been driven largely by progress in the South.

The District of Columbia leads the nation in gains since the 2008 report. Its score increased from 76.4 in 2008 to 86.8 this year. Its letter grade improved from a C to a B-plus in that time. It made gains in family income, parent education, parental employment, kindergarten enrollment, 4th grade reading, and 8th grade math.

Three Southern states round out the top four in gains during this period: Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Each state saw gains of at least four points. All three states made gains in parental education and employment levels, as well as 4th grade reading and 8th grade math test scores. Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas are other Southern states that also saw their scores improve by more than a point.

By contrast, Maryland and Vermont are the only states to decline by more than three points over that period. Both saw their grades drop from a B-plus to a B. Maryland lost ground in family and adult income, the percent of children whose parents are fluent English-speakers, kindergarten enrollment, and 8th grade math. Vermont saw its largest declines in the percent of children whose parents are fluent English-speakers, kindergarten enrollment, and 4th grade reading.

From a shorter-term perspective, Delaware and Rhode Island made the most improvement between the 2020 report and this year's and are the only states to gain more than two points since last year. On the other hand, Vermont was the only state to decline by two points.

3. The striking disparities between the top- and bottom-ranked states on specific indicators shine a light on inequality.

The 22.6 points that separate Massachusetts and New Mexico, the highest- and lowest-scoring states on the index, illustrate the substantial differences in overall opportunities across states.

Drilling down to identify the top- and bottom-ranked states on specific graded categories and indicators reveals similar disparities in key stages of the education pipeline. Children in New Hampshire have the strongest early foundations to prepare for school success while those in New Mexico have the weakest. Those states' scores in that category differ by 22.1 points.

For instance, 77.7 percent of children in New Hampshire live in families with incomes at least 200 percent of the poverty level compared with just 51.9 percent in New Mexico, 49.0 percent in Arkansas, and 48.5 percent in Mississippi.

In the school years indicators, Massachusetts outpaces New Mexico by 28.7 points. Scores on 8th grade NAEP math tests highlight the disparities. In Massachusetts, 47.4 percent of 8th graders are proficient in math but only 20.7 reach that level in New Mexico.

Strong outcomes for adults in the District of Columbia result in an A grade and a score of 99.7 in that category. By contrast, Mississippi gets a D, with a score of 66.2. Roughly two-thirds of the District's adults between the ages of 25 and 64 have a two- or four-year postsecondary degree. In West Virginia, only about 3 in 10 adults have that level of educational attainment.

The additional degrees translate into economic returns for the residents of the District where 7 in 10 adults earn incomes at or above the national median. Only 35.5 percent of adults have incomes at that level in Mississippi.

4. Across the indicators, state performance is characterized by peaks and valleys.

Many states post uneven results, leading in at least one area but lagging in another. In all, 17 states rank in the top 10 for at least one broad stage of the educational pipeline: early foundations, the school years, or adult outcomes.

At the same time, 16 states rank in the bottom 10 in at least one of those categories. Nearly every state (42) earns a top 10 ranking for at least one of the index's 13 specific indicators. Most states (35) also land in the bottom 10 for at least one of those metrics. And while six different states rank first in the nation on at least one of the 13 metrics, nine states finish last on an indicator. ■

Census Data Show Impact on Home Learning Environment

By Alex Harwin & Yukiko Furuya

About This Analysis

The EdWeek Research Center analyzed data from the Oct. 28-Nov. 9, 2020 U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey. The analysis gauges the loss of employment in households with children currently in school, food insecurity for families with children, education disruptions, and other effects of the pandemic. For data regarding the availability of internet and computers for academic purposes, the Research Center compared results with an earlier survey fielded in April. More information on the Household Pulse Survey is available at: https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products.html.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare some of the educational and resource inequities facing families across the country in a host of areas, from access to technology and time for home-based learning to the literal bread-and-butter issues of household finances and food for the table.

The EdWeek Research Center's analysis of recent U.S. Census Bureau survey data on families with children paints a picture of regional winners and losers, areas of progress even during the pandemic, and places where deficits remain entrenched amid the continued disruption of school and family life.

Among the key takeaways from the Census surveys conducted Oct. 28 through Nov. 9 of last year:

- **COVID-19 continues to squeeze many households with children enrolled in school.** Nationally, 17 percent of such families said they lost employment income due to pandemic-related reasons during the survey period. But the impact is uneven: 19 percent of families in the Northeast and the South documented job loss or the inability to find a job, compared with 12 percent in the Midwest.
- **Families in every state began experiencing hunger during the pandemic.** Nationwide, 16 percent of families who said they had enough to eat before the pandemic now say their children sometimes or often have to go without food.
- **Technology access remains uneven.** Seventy-nine percent of households with children said they always had access to computer devices as of November, up from 71 percent in April. That same improvement wasn't true for access to the home internet service crucial for remote instruction. That remained stagnant at around 75 percent.
- **States and regions vary widely in how much they think the pandemic has disrupted normal schooling.** Nationally, 27 percent of households with students said that their current learning time was "much less than [in] a school day before the coronavirus pandemic." But the numbers vary widely by state—from 42 percent in Nevada and Oregon to just 15 percent each in Florida and South Dakota, where schools were less likely to have adopted remote learning in response to the pandemic.

A closer look at the data illustrates how the pandemic's effect on factors affecting readiness to learn—much like the disease itself—varies in location and in intensity.

Food insecurity is a regional issue

That disparity is especially true in an area that hits close to home: food insecurity. For example, the proportion of families reporting that they no longer have enough to eat is the highest in Mississippi, at 38 percent, and the lowest in Maine and South Dakota, each at 5 percent.

Regionally, the data show that pandemic-induced hunger issues are most severe in the West at 19 percent, and in the South at 18 percent. Overall, the Northeast appears to be struggling the least on this front at 12 percent, in contrast to having the largest earning loss relative to other regions. Additionally, only 14 percent of Midwestern households documented having issues with food security.

"Communities that had the highest levels of food insecurity prior to the pandemic have also been hit the hardest," said Emily Engelhard, the managing director of research at Feeding America, an umbrella organization for food banks across the country. "Like Mississippi, these states in the South have higher levels of poverty, higher levels of unemployment. Across a number of those different socioeconomic indicators, you are seeing that people are worse off, and so food insecurity is going to fall into those social detriments of health."

Engelhard describes a rise in demand, a drop in the number of volunteers, and supply chain problems all putting pressure on the charitable systems assisting those without food.

She and her team are currently piloting various programs, including giving clients the ability to preorder groceries from food banks. She is interested in seeing what works and what can be continued, if not expanded, after the pandemic.

On the related issue of income loss for families as a result of the pandemic, reasons cited in the survey data included falling ill with the virus, caring for sick loved ones, and children whose schools or day cares closed.

There's uneven access to computers and Wi-Fi

With so many children learning from home, access to technology has become more important than ever.

"Schools have done a pretty good job at handing out devices in part because they had a lot of devices that were sitting on laptop carts," said Evan Marwell, the founder of EducationSuperHighway, a nonprofit that works to alleviate internet access disparities. "Internet connectivity is a totally different animal."

Marwell said school districts during the pandemic have mostly tried to do deals with carriers for mobile hotspots. He believes the

Device Access

In Delaware, the District of Columbia, and Rhode Island, a computer or other digital device is always available to children for educational purposes in at least 90 percent of households, the highest in the nation. By contrast, just 61 percent in Mississippi have such access.

Computer access

Top-ranked		Bottom-ranked	
R. I.	91%	Mo.	68%
Del.	91	Mont.	67
D.C.	90	S.C.	63
Ore.	88	Idaho	63
Va.	87	Miss.	61

Internet Availability

More than 9 in 10 households in the District of Columbia and Rhode Island always have internet available to children for educational purposes. At the other end of the scale, just 56 percent always have access in Alabama and Mississippi.

Internet availability

Top-ranked		Bottom-ranked	
R. I.	92%	Tenn.	64%
D.C.	91	N.M.	64
Pa.	88	Mo.	63
Conn.	84	Ala.	56
Mont.	84	Miss.	56

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2021

better approach is working with cable companies to get families broadband directly. Marwell notes how hotspots often have coverage issues; often, the quality of the signal being available, especially in low-income neighborhoods, is weak and makes it difficult to do things like complete homework assignments.

Access to technology also is regionally inconsistent. Even though computers' availability for educational purposes has improved across all regions, the South is still behind at 75 percent compared to the Northeast, at 83 percent, or the West, at 82 percent.

Wi-Fi access, meanwhile, has improved in the Northeast, going from 78 percent to 83 percent, and in the Midwest, increasing from 72 percent to 77 percent since April. But it has remained mostly stagnant in the South, decreasing to 71 percent from 72 percent. And the West Coast dropped in terms of internet access, from 77 percent in the spring to 75 percent in the more recent survey period.

"The more rural the state is, the worse off they're going to be," said Marwell, noting that there's been little new infrastructure building during the pandemic in places that didn't already have it. "And so when you talk about the Southern states and places like Mississippi, like there's huge rural populations there."

Surveys give a snapshot of lost learning time

It's no surprise that the pandemic has affected the number of hours students spend on their education, and the Census data bear that out.

The Census asked specifically how much time students typically had spent on learning activities over the past seven days compared to the length of their school days before the coronavirus pandemic.

The South, at 24 percent, and Midwest, at 28 percent, were less likely to report having lost hours than the Northeast at 31 percent and the West at 30 percent.

In states at the lowest end of the spectrum for lost instructional time—including South Dakota, Florida, Nebraska, and Wyoming—households were the most likely to say that their children had not experienced remote learning, canceled classes, or any other changes resulting from the pandemic.

Nationally, most families with K-12 students in 44 states and the District of Columbia say classes normally taught in person had moved to some form of distance learning due to the pandemic during the 2020-21 school year.

The percentage of households experiencing the shift ranged from more than 90 percent in Oregon and the District of Columbia to less than 40 percent in Nebraska and South Dakota.

Students in the West at 82 percent were more likely to shift to distance learning than their counterparts in the Midwest at 64 percent. Those living in the South and Northeast changed to remote learning 69 percent and 70 percent, respectively. Only 1 percent of households in California and Oregon noted zero changes to their children's education.

One in 10 households say their children's education did not change due to the pandemic because their schools did not close for in-person instruction. That ranged from just 4 percent of households on the West Coast to 15 percent in the South and Midwest.

The crisis makes things worse for the most-vulnerable

Despite the many regional and state variations, the Census data confirm that households with school-age children in all states continue to suffer significant challenges to the resources and conditions needed to support students in the pandemic-disrupted learning environment.

But the data also pinpoint ironies in states' individual experiences and show how the coronavirus amplifies issues for the most-vulnerable of populations.

South Dakotan families, for example, say that their childrens' education hasn't changed as much as in other states. However, South Dakota, alongside North Dakota, has had some of the virus's highest case rates for COVID-19 since January 2020. According to developmental psychologists, this kind of stress alone influences the socioemotional development and executive functioning skills of children.

And Mississippi has always scored near the bottom with a C- grade on the Quality Counts the Chance-for-Success Index. This year, for example, it finishes 46th in the national index, which captures a wide range of socioeconomic indicators. The pandemic has only added to those deficits. Case in point: According to the recent Census data, 2 out of 5 households in Mississippi no longer have the same degree of certainty that they can feed their children. ∎

Distance Learning

For the majority of households with K-12 students in 43 states and the District of Columbia, classes normally taught in-person have moved to some form of distance learning due to the pandemic. The percentage of households experiencing a shift to remote learning ranges from 95 percent in Oregon to 33 percent in Nebraska.

- 90% or more
- 80–89%
- 70–79%
- 60–69%
- 50–59%
- 40–49%
- Less than 40%

Food Insecurity

The degree of food insecurity caused by the pandemic varies across the states. Nationwide, 16 percent of families with children reported they had enough food to eat before March 13, 2020 but now do not. That percentage is highest in Mississippi (38 percent) and lowest in Maine and South Dakota (5 percent).

- 30% or more
- 20–29%
- 10–19%
- 9% or less

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2021

Chance for Success

	GRADE		EARLY FOUNDATIONS				SCHOOL YEARS	
			Family Income	Parent Education	Parental Employment	Linguistic Integration	Preschool Enrollment	Kindergarten Enrollment
			Percent of children in families with incomes at least 200% of poverty level	Percent of children with at least one parent with a postsecondary degree	Percent of children with at least one parent working full time and year-round	Percent of children whose parents are fluent English-speakers	Percent of 3- and 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool	Percent of eligible children enrolled in kindergarten programs
Massachusetts	A-	91.6	74.2	64.2	79.2	82.4	59.9	76.4
New Jersey	A-	89.6	71.1	60.7	81.2	77.2	66.8	78.5
New Hampshire	B+	87.9	77.7	66.7	81.4	94.8	54.9	74.0
Connecticut	B+	87.5	69.9	61.2	76.2	84.1	66.6	80.0
Minnesota	B+	87.4	72.6	65.1	83.6	87.7	48.9	76.9
District of Columbia	B+	86.8	65.5	54.4	72.8	88.5	80.6	83.8
Vermont	B	85.8	68.7	61.7	76.2	96.9	63.2	67.9
Virginia	B	85.3	69.9	60.8	82.7	87.5	49.1	76.5
Nebraska	B	84.6	67.3	61.8	85.8	88.1	46.0	76.4
Wisconsin	B	84.6	67.8	60.0	84.0	92.4	44.4	79.2
Colorado	B	84.5	70.4	60.7	81.4	86.9	49.9	75.5
Utah	B	84.3	70.7	63.2	85.0	91.3	43.7	80.9
Maryland	B	84.0	70.9	58.6	80.8	84.6	50.0	77.3
North Dakota	B	83.7	71.3	64.2	85.7	96.7	32.4	68.2
New York	B	82.8	63.6	56.7	75.8	76.5	59.7	80.1
Iowa	B	82.7	65.8	60.2	85.0	92.1	46.1	76.5
Pennsylvania	B	82.7	63.7	55.5	79.4	90.7	46.7	74.6
Washington	B-	82.5	69.6	56.5	80.2	83.3	46.8	75.4
Illinois	B-	82.4	64.1	55.2	80.8	83.5	55.1	77.6
Rhode Island	B-	82.1	70.0	55.8	81.7	83.8	43.3	75.6
South Dakota	B-	81.8	63.9	59.5	83.7	97.2	39.4	73.3
Wyoming	B-	81.7	70.1	54.3	85.1	95.5	39.3	76.7
Maine	B-	81.2	63.6	59.4	79.0	97.7	49.4	73.7
Kansas	B-	80.9	63.3	56.1	83.9	89.1	48.8	77.9
Delaware	B-	80.4	66.3	53.4	79.8	85.2	51.3	77.5
Montana	C+	79.4	61.7	56.0	77.2	99.1	40.9	74.2
Ohio	C+	79.4	60.0	51.3	78.7	94.5	45.4	74.8
North Carolina	C+	79.3	57.8	52.3	78.8	88.1	43.7	78.0
Hawaii	C+	79.3	73.4	58.4	81.7	80.4	47.9	71.1
Missouri	C+	79.0	60.3	51.6	80.3	95.3	46.6	75.5
Indiana	C+	78.6	61.7	49.7	78.1	92.3	40.6	74.5
Florida	C+	78.2	56.5	53.3	78.3	80.1	52.4	78.6
Michigan	C+	78.0	60.3	52.4	78.2	92.2	47.4	76.7
Georgia	C+	77.8	57.1	49.1	78.9	87.8	50.1	81.0
Oregon	C+	77.7	66.3	54.0	77.4	86.1	45.8	74.8
Idaho	C+	77.5	58.4	54.6	83.4	92.0	36.8	73.4
California	C+	77.2	62.9	47.6	77.7	67.1	50.0	79.6
Tennessee	C	76.4	57.0	47.9	77.9	91.1	39.3	76.2
Kentucky	C	76.0	57.9	50.1	75.7	93.3	39.1	75.0
South Carolina	C	75.9	56.2	50.1	77.2	92.8	44.4	79.2
Alaska	C	75.4	71.6	53.7	77.7	93.1	44.7	76.2
Texas	C	75.0	57.0	44.8	79.3	74.2	43.0	78.1
Arizona	C	74.1	56.4	46.7	79.0	81.4	40.3	77.0
Alabama	C	74.1	54.6	47.7	76.3	94.9	44.2	76.5
Arkansas	C	73.5	49.0	44.4	76.8	92.2	46.5	77.4
Mississippi	C	73.5	48.5	44.6	71.1	96.4	53.0	79.5
Oklahoma	C	73.4	55.1	43.4	79.9	90.5	44.6	78.3
West Virginia	C-	72.1	53.3	45.0	73.3	99.0	34.3	73.9
Louisiana	C-	72.0	52.8	41.5	72.0	95.1	52.4	78.0
Nevada	C-	70.2	58.5	41.2	78.9	74.1	37.1	77.8
New Mexico	D+	69.0	51.9	43.2	74.7	82.8	45.0	78.0
U.S.	**B-**	**79.5**	**61.9%**	**52.3%**	**79.0%**	**83.4%**	**48.6%**	**77.6%**

Note: States are ordered based on unrounded values for the Chance-for-Success Index.

	SCHOOL YEARS				ADULT OUTCOMES			
4th Grade Reading	8th Grade Mathematics	High School Graduation	Young-Adult Education	Adult Educational Attainment	Annual Income	Steady Employment	
Percent of 4th grade public school students "proficient" on NAEP	Percent of 8th grade public school students "proficient" on NAEP	Percent of public high school students who graduate with a diploma	Percent of young adults (18-24) enrolled in postsecondary education or with a degree	Percent of adults (25-64) with a 2- or 4-year postsecondary degree	Percent of adults (25-64) with incomes at or above national median	Percent of adults (25-64) in labor force working full time and year-round	
45.4	47.4	87.8	71.6	55.4	60.4	74.7	Massachusetts
41.9	44.1	90.9	66.8	50.9	58.2	76.6	New Jersey
38.2	38.5	88.8	61.8	49.0	56.1	75.7	New Hampshire
40.1	39.2	88.4	64.7	49.8	56.7	72.1	Connecticut
38.1	44.2	83.2	62.0	52.5	55.8	75.7	Minnesota
30.1	23.0	68.5	72.2	66.6	70.0	79.1	District of Columbia
37.1	38.3	85.1	70.1	49.9	48.8	72.3	Vermont
38.3	37.8	87.5	58.5	50.2	53.7	78.5	Virginia
36.8	36.9	88.7	63.7	48.5	46.9	79.9	Nebraska
35.5	41.3	89.7	58.8	45.8	49.8	77.3	Wisconsin
39.7	36.9	80.8	56.7	52.7	54.2	75.0	Colorado
40.0	37.3	87.0	53.8	46.0	48.9	74.3	Utah
35.1	32.6	87.1	59.6	49.6	58.5	77.7	Maryland
34.3	37.4	88.1	67.6	47.2	49.5	75.3	North Dakota
34.3	33.5	82.3	66.9	49.6	53.7	74.9	New York
35.1	32.5	91.4	58.9	45.4	46.9	77.2	Iowa
39.7	38.6	85.9	59.4	44.7	49.4	76.5	Pennsylvania
35.1	40.0	86.7	51.5	48.4	55.7	73.4	Washington
34.4	33.8	86.5	61.0	47.2	51.0	76.7	Illinois
35.4	29.5	84.0	71.9	46.2	51.9	76.1	Rhode Island
36.0	39.4	84.1	54.0	45.9	43.4	79.1	South Dakota
40.6	37.1	81.7	49.1	41.1	50.1	76.4	Wyoming
36.0	33.6	86.7	56.9	44.6	43.6	73.3	Maine
33.8	32.9	87.2	53.0	44.5	46.8	78.2	Kansas
32.5	29.2	86.9	58.0	44.2	51.5	76.5	Delaware
36.4	35.7	86.4	50.3	45.0	43.7	71.9	Montana
36.1	37.5	82.1	54.0	40.7	46.3	75.6	Ohio
36.0	36.5	86.3	54.9	44.6	42.7	76.4	North Carolina
33.8	27.7	84.5	45.1	45.6	52.0	77.8	Hawaii
34.2	31.6	89.2	51.7	41.0	44.8	77.9	Missouri
37.0	37.4	88.1	51.4	38.8	44.0	76.1	Indiana
37.7	30.6	86.3	55.2	42.3	38.9	76.0	Florida
31.6	31.0	80.6	57.2	41.7	46.2	73.1	Michigan
32.2	31.1	81.6	51.6	42.5	45.2	78.6	Georgia
33.8	31.4	78.7	52.1	44.0	47.3	70.5	Oregon
37.4	37.3	80.7	47.4	40.5	42.0	73.1	Idaho
32.1	28.5	83.0	61.3	43.7	50.4	73.0	California
34.6	31.2	90.0	50.6	38.6	42.3	77.2	Tennessee
35.1	29.0	90.3	49.6	36.3	42.8	76.6	Kentucky
31.8	28.9	81.0	48.9	40.6	42.0	77.5	South Carolina
25.1	29.0	78.5	31.9	40.7	56.5	70.0	Alaska
30.3	29.6	90.0	50.2	39.5	46.4	78.2	Texas
31.4	31.0	78.7	48.9	38.8	44.1	75.2	Arizona
28.2	21.3	90.0	52.0	37.4	41.5	77.7	Alabama
31.2	27.3	89.2	49.8	32.9	37.3	78.0	Arkansas
31.5	24.3	84.0	53.3	34.4	35.5	77.0	Mississippi
28.5	25.5	81.8	48.7	35.0	42.5	78.9	Oklahoma
30.3	24.1	90.2	50.4	31.9	39.9	75.5	West Virginia
25.7	23.1	81.4	48.6	32.9	43.0	75.9	Louisiana
30.9	25.7	83.2	37.6	34.2	41.7	75.0	Nevada
23.7	20.7	73.9	45.3	37.2	40.3	74.4	New Mexico
34.3%	**32.9%**	**85.3%**	**56.5%**	**43.8%**	**48.3%**	**75.8%**	**U.S.**

[1]Values in the U.S. row report results for the nation as a whole, if it had been treated as a state.   SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2021

Methodology

What's Behind the Grades and Scores?

A user's guide to the Chance-for-Success Index

Quality Counts grades all 50 states and the nation on the Chance-for-Success Index, which gives a snapshot of a person's prospect of successful outcomes over a lifetime, from early childhood to adulthood and the working world.

But what's behind those top-line numbers and letter grades? Here's how it's done:

• The EdWeek Research Center collects the most recently available federal data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the National Assessment of Education Progress, the U.S. Department of Education, and other sources to get a more-detailed portrait of how people are likely to fare from their earliest years through adulthood.

• The states are scored and graded on 13 separate indicators. Four of them deal with conditions related to early childhood that can make a big difference in the years before formal schooling. Six others focus on formal education from preschool through the college years. And another three offer a snapshot of adult outcomes, completing the cradle-to-career trajectory.

• All these calculations then are blended for each state's final A-F grade and numerical score.

Here's a quick and easy guide to the grading scale and each of the 13 indicators that make up the Chance for Success grade. For more detail, see this report's full sources and notes at **www.edweek.org/go/qc21sources**.

The Grading Scale

Each state receives a numerical score for each of the indicator categories. After rounding scores to the closest whole-number values, we assign letter grades based on a conventional A-F grading scale, as follows:

A	93 to 100
A-minus	90 to 92
B-plus	87 to 89
B	83 to 86
B-minus	80 to 82
C-plus	77 to 79
C	73 to 76
C-minus	70 to 72
D-plus	67 to 69
D	63 to 66
D-minus	60 to 62
F	Below 60

Early Foundations

• **Family Income:** Percent of dependent children (under 18 years of age) in families that are above low-income threshold. Low income is defined as 200 percent of the federal poverty level, which depends on the size and composition of the family.

• **Parent Education:** Percent of dependent children with at least one parent who holds a two- or four-year postsecondary degree.

• **Parental Employment:** Percent of dependent children with at least one parent who is steadily employed, defined as working full time (at least 35 hours per week) and year-round (at least 50 weeks during the previous year). Those not in the labor force are excluded from calculations. Active-duty military service is considered participation in the labor force.

• **Linguistic Integration:** Percent of dependent children whose parents are fluent speakers of English. Fluency is defined as being a native speaker or speaking the language "very well." All resident parents must be fluent in English for a family to be considered linguistically integrated.

School Years

• **Preschool Enrollment:** Percent of 3- and 4-year-olds who are attending preschool, based on a three-year average. Both public and private education programs are counted.

• **Kindergarten Enrollment:** Percent of eligible children attending public or private kindergarten programs, based on a three-year average. The size of the entering kindergarten cohort is calculated based on the number of 5- and 6-year-olds in a state.

• **Elementary Reading Achievement:** Percent of 4th graders in public schools who scored at or above the "proficient" level in reading on the 2019 NAEP, known as "the Nation's Report Card."

• **Middle School Mathematics Achievement:** Percent of 8th graders in public schools who scored at or above the proficient level in mathematics on the 2019 NAEP.

• **High School Graduation Rate:** Percent of public high school students who graduated on time with a standard diploma for the 2017–18 school year.

• **Young-Adult Education:** Percent of young adults (ages 18 to 24) who either are currently enrolled in a postsecondary education program or have already earned a postsecondary credential. Those still enrolled in high school programs are excluded from the calculation.

Adult Outcomes

• **Adult Educational Attainment:** Percent of adults (ages 25 to 64) who have earned a postsecondary degree. Calculations include all individuals whose highest level of attained education is an associate, bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree.

• **Annual Income:** Percent of adults (ages 25 to 64) whose annual personal income reaches or exceeds the national median ($45,457 in 2019 dollars). Only individuals in the labor force are included in calculations.

• **Steady Employment:** Percent of adults (ages 25 to 64) who are steadily employed, defined as working full time (at least 35 hours per week) and year-round (at least 50 weeks during the previous year). Those not in the labor force are excluded from calculations. Active-duty military service is considered participation in the labor force.

SOURCE: EdWeek Research Center, 2021