

RETREAT AT A GLANCE

Sunday, August 7		Monday, August 8	
TRAVEL TO HARTSVILLE		9am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introducing SC's New School Funding Formula ○ Student Progress as North Star of School Relief Funding
		10am	
		11am	
		12pm	LUNCH
2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data to Impact Student Outcomes ○ EIA Budget Update ○ Charting the EOC's Course ○ School Climate Survey Report 	RETURN HOME	
3pm			
4pm			
5pm			
6:30 pm	DINNER Sam Kendall's		

LOCATIONS

Meeting Location	Hampton Inn 203 E. Carolina Ave Hartsville, SC 29550
Alternate Hotel Location	The Mantissa Hotel 130 E. Carolina Ave Hartsville, SC 29550
Dinner Location	Sam Kendall's 134 E. Carolina Ave Hartsville, SC 29550

AGENDA

Full Education Oversight Committee Meeting

Sunday, August 7, 2022
Hampton Inn, Hartsville, SC
2:00 P.M.

- I. WelcomeNeil Robinson
- II. Approval of Full Committee Minutes, June 13, 2022.....Neil Robinson
- III. Presentations & Information Items
 - Using Data to Improve Student Outcomes in Spartanburg
..... Dr. Russell Booker
Executive Director &
Beth Thompson
Spartanburg Academic Movement
 - EIA Budget Update.....Dr. Rainey Knight
 - Accountability Update & Charting the Course for the EOC in 2022-23
..... Matthew Ferguson
- IV. Action Item
 - *School Climate Survey Report, FY2021-22..... Dr. Matthew Lavery
- V. Adjournment

Neil C. Robinson, Jr.
CHAIR
Barbara B. Hairfield
VICE CHAIR
Terry Alexander
April Allen
Melanie Barton
Neal Collins
Bob Couch
Raye Felder
Kevin L. Johnson
Sidney Locke
Dwight Loftis
Brian Newsome
Molly Spearman
Patti J. Tate
C. Ross Turner, III
Scott Turner
Ellen Weaver

5:00 p.m.

Members ,staff and guests to check in at hotel:

- Hampton Inn (203 E. Carolina Ave, Hartsville, SC 29550)
- The Mantissa Hotel (130 E. Carolina Ave, Hartsville, SC 29550)

6:30 p.m.

Dinner for Members, staff, and guests at Sam Kendall's
(134 E. Carolina Ave, Hartsville, SC 29550)

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Full Committee Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting

June 13, 2022

Members Present (in-person or remote): Sen. Kevin Johnson; Neil Robinson; Dr. Patti Tate; Rep. Terry Alexander; Rep. Raye Felder; Dr. Brian Newsome; Dr. Bob Couch; Sidney Locke; Melanie Barton; Ellen Weaver; Sen. Dwight Loftis; Dr. David Mathis (representing Molly Spearman); Sen. Greg Hembree (remote); April Allen (remote); and Barbara Hairfield (remote)

EOC Staff Present: Dr. Rainey Knight; Matthew Ferguson; Dr. Matt Lavery; Dr. Jenny May; Dana Yow; and Hope Johnson-Jones

Guest(s) Present: Dr. Jesulon Gibbs-Brown; Levon Kirkland; and David Wyatt

As the first order of business, Mr. Robinson called a vote for the approval of the minutes from the April 11, 2022 meeting. All voted in favor of approving. Next, Mr. Robinson congratulated Dr. Bob Couch, who was recently granted the Governor's Award for Excellence in Scientific Achievement.

Dr. Tate provided a summary of the Academic Standards & Assessments and Public Awareness joint subcommittee meeting held on June 16. Dr. Tate provided a summary of the presentations given and provided members with a summary of the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children (ECENC) Report and the Military Connected Students Report. A summary of each can be found in the June 13 Topline (in the meeting packet) and full reports can be found at www.eoc.sc.gov.

Ms. Barton then asked a question about Appendix A in the ECENC report, asking to clarify that the column "% Funded by ECENC" refers to the percent of the school population. Mr. Ferguson confirmed this. Mr. Robinson noted that it was interesting that a majority of the grants went to higher income families. Mr. Ferguson affirmed that this is the case, noting that this has been a consistent trend. Ms. Barton noted her opinion that this could be attributed to lower income parents not knowing how to apply.

Rep. Alexander stated that it is important to be intentional and make sure everyone has the opportunity to access ECENC funds. Sen. Johnson agreed, sharing that to make families aware, it will take extra work.

Mr. Robinson called a vote, with all members voting in favor of approving the report. Mr. Robinson asked if any members had questions about the Military Connected Students Report. No members did, and all voted in favor of approving the report.

Dr. Couch next provided a summary of the EIA and Improvement Mechanisms subcommittee meeting also held on April 11. Refer to the EIA minutes for more information or the topline of today's meeting. Ms. Felder asked a question about what the eight agencies in the teacher retention report are. Mr. Ferguson stated that this included universities with CAP, Bridge programs, CERRA, teacher loan, etc.

Ms. Barton stated that in the budget now, there is a study commissioned to examine systemic plans for how to address teacher retention. Mr. Robinson agreed for the need to address this and that the issue of fewer teachers in the pipeline is compounded with greater need for teachers.

Rep. Alexander questioned if CERRA is utilizing and looking at identifying diverse students, particularly at HBCUs. Additionally, he noted, many potential teachers don't continue to the profession because if they miss a single Praxis, they are out of it.

Dr. Mathis stated that there is an upcoming survey to examine how many school districts are interested in a "Grow Your Own" program. How can we help teachers get into the pipeline and guarantee a job? Ms. Weaver stated that Tennessee piloted a program to repurpose federal dollars for teacher recruitment.

Dr. Tate stated that Teacher Cadets is a great program to recruit. Charleston County School District offered a Teacher in Residency program, so first year teachers were matched with a mentor. Once students are in the classroom, they need the resources to make it a lifelong profession.

Dr. Mathis highlighted Tennessee's model for teacher retention, looking at a two-year model for apprenticeship that would provide the financial help needed to get through student teaching. Mr. Robinson stated that it looks like we are poised for a teacher salary increase, which may help as well. Mr. Ferguson stated that the EOC will continue to monitor the EIA budget changes.

Next, Mr. Robinson welcomed Dr. Jesulon Gibbs-Brown to present the Teacher Loan Report for FY2020-21. Dr. Gibbs-Brown began by outlining the corresponding statutory requirement and provided an outline of the Teacher Loan Program goals. A summary of the key findings can be found in the meeting materials, while the full report is available on the [EOC website](#). Dr. Gibbs-Brown noted that one difficulty in creating the report came in a difference between data from the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education. At this time, work is being done to account for the difference in data. Dr. Gibbs-Brown opened the floor to questions.

Ms. Barton asked to clarify the number of applicants in 20-21, 1,250. Dr. Gibbs-Brown confirmed this number. Ms. Barton stated that this was a crisis, as there are more scholarships being distributed, but the numbers are still dropping precipitously. Mr. Robinson asked if students were just not aware of these scholarships. Dr. Gibbs-Brown stated the need to advertise availability to applicants early on.

Ms. Hairfield wondered about why 18-19 data is being used in some cases, noting that it would be helpful to see more recent data to look at possible changes due to COVID. Dr. Gibbs-Brown stated that in the cases where 18-19 data is being used, it is because this is the most recent data given to us and is the most current for outcomes. Part of the reason for a lack of recent data is due to issues with data sharing agreements between CHE and Department of Education, however, there are plans to update the report pending data updates.

Dr. Couch asked where these teachers are teaching, what geographic areas, what levels, and what subjects? Dr. Gibbs-Brown stated that this information is usually gathered through Department of Ed. Dr. Couch asked if teachers are mostly retiring from elementary or high school, noting that the retirement storm could hit South Carolina soon. Dr. Gibbs-Brown said that this question is one worth discussing with CERRA and that Dr. Gibbs-Brown and Mr. Ferguson had discussions with CERRA in preparation for this report. Mr. Ferguson stated that, for context, it is worth considering FTEs when looking at the number of vacancies. While there are approximately more 200 vacancies than in previous years, there are approximately 1200 more FTEs, probably created with nonrecurring federal COVID relief monies.

Mr. Robinson moved to approve the report, with Ms. Barton seconding. All voted in favor of approval.

Mr. Robinson then introduced David Wyatt from the SC Football Hall of Fame. Mr. Wyatt began by introducing the High School Football Hall of Fame, an effort to connect young men to charities and nonprofits. Their award grows every year, with a GPA requirement and necessary leadership. Mr. Wyatt stated that this project led them to look for a way to measure their goals. Mr. Wyatt introduced Mr. Levon Kirkland, who introduced himself and the Bridge Builders Program, a program with the goal of SC students reaching the top ten in College and Career Readiness by 2030 (College and Career Readiness as defined by *US News and World Report*).

Mr. Robinson thanked Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Kirkland and introduced Dr. May to provide a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment brief.

Dr. May highlighted the 4K/5K dashboard as a means to empower EOC members to answer questions. It is recommended to maintain the dashboard, as it currently has a shelf life. Staff are working on how to maintain the dashboard in order to determine for our state the impact that 4K has. Dr. May noted the significant difference between performance of the total population and those in poverty, noting that CERDEP appears to have a significant positive impact on kindergarten readiness. Dr. May then opened the floor to questions.

Mr. Robinson asked to clarify the number of total Kindergarteners, Dr. May stated that it was around 54,000. Mr. Robinson then asked how many students are in the program. Dr. May stated that around 34,000 Kindergartners are in poverty, but that $\frac{3}{4}$ of pupils in poverty do not access CERDEP. However, those who do tend to fare much better. Ms. Barton stated that in 2019, 37% demonstrated readiness on KRA so the data does not show a huge drop, but we would like to see a higher percentage of readiness.

Sen. Johnson, returning to Mr. Wyatt's presentation, made a comment on the Bridge program. Sen. Johnson wanted to note that this Bridge program is a good reminder that young people aren't all doing bad, those who are doing well just don't necessarily receive the same level of attention. Mr. Robinson agreed with this, before introducing Dr. Mathis for an update from the Department of Education.

Dr. Mathis began by providing an update on content standards revision for ELA and math. The revision process for ELA standards is in its final stages and these standards should be out for public comment sometime in August. There is a significant trend towards focusing on the science of reading and foundational literacy skills. The process has begun for reviewing and revising math standards.

Spring interim assessment from Education Analytics will be available the week of June 20th. Fall and Winter interim data showed evidence of some recovery with less recovery in math than ELA. Several math interventions have begun with use of ESSER funds, including DreamBox Learning and Math Nation. ESSER II and III funds are allocated for a focus on the science of reading in schools with $\frac{1}{3}$ or more of 3rd grade students scoring in Does Not Meet on SC READY ELA. K-3rd grade teachers receive the training.

Department of Education is also focusing on Multilingual Learners, with a new Multilingual Learner Program Data Management and Instruction Platform that will allow for streamlined transitions between grades and allow for more effective collaboration to meet the language development needs of MLs.

Tutoring services are available to students for free through a partnership with the SC State Library on Tutor.com. This allows students to receive tutoring in specific subjects, help with particular

lessons, and to receive feedback. Department of Ed is also partnering with SC CHE and SC Technical College System to increase dual credit and summer programs to reduce amount of remediation. ESSER III funds have been allocated to Virtual SC to hire more teachers and expand course offerings. Dr. Mathis then introduced Tonya Smith, Director of Emergency Programs, to expand on ESSER spending. For a breakdown of ESSER spending, visit the [ESSER funding dashboard developed by SCDE](#). Program monitoring will begin in fall.

Rep. Felder stated that she didn't see funding dedicated to learning loss in ESSER I, only 16% dedicated to learning loss in ESSER II, and no funding dedicated to learning loss in ESSER III. We know that children are behind, are we going to incentivize these districts with huge gaps in learning loss to be creative in using the funding?

Ms. Smith stated that for ESSER I, the funds came very quickly, but with ESSER III, there was time to slow things down. ESSER III required that 20% of all the funding to the districts had to be set aside for learning loss. Districts were asked to use that 20% to address their academic recovery plans.

Ms. Barton asked why districts aren't using ESSER II for learning loss now and are instead waiting. Rep. Felder stated that she is concerned that the money is not being used for learning loss and that we will be even farther behind after the summer. Ms. Smith stated that districts can use ESSER funding simultaneously, meaning that they do not have to wait for ESSER III in order to fund their learning loss programs. Dr. Mathis added that it will be a new day with the improved growth model. As we look at the data, districts will have to revise their plans based on the growth model.

Sen. Loftis asked to clarify that the money has not been spent in the areas addressed by Rep. Felder. Dr. Mathis stated that money could have been encumbered, but not drawn down. In the fall, we will see the spending reflected in their budget.

Ms. Barton asked if there were any restrictions on how many could be spent. Ms. Smith stated that districts are told everything must be used to prepare for, respond to, or prevent the spread of COVID. Dr. Mathis stated that there is an opportunity to do things differently now. Ms. Barton stated that this is the point, now SCDE has the money and there are no excuses. Dr. Mathis stated that at the same time, there is a caution, before you jump from something to something else, you must be sure that the change is working well. Dr. Mathis emphasized that this provides a new opportunity to affect Tier I instruction for every child. We will get further down the road if we make sure that with the funding we have, we have the best Tier I instruction for our students.

Rep. Alexander asked who will be responsible for the funding of new staff members once the funds expire. Ms. Smith stated that districts have been cautioned about the upcoming expiration and must work towards sustainability at the local level. Dr. Mathis stated that they are keeping this in mind as they are planning now. Rep. Alexander asked about development training for teachers, stating his hope that we can look at enhancing professional development for teachers. Dr. Mathis stated that with LETRS training, the timeline can be tailored and teachers are able to implement the training as they go.

Sen. Loftis asked when ELA standards were last revised. Dr. Mathis clarified that the last time instructional materials were bought for ELA was in 2012. Sen. Loftis asked about math standards. Dr. Mathis stated they are being revised now and may be ready for public review in late fall. Sen. Loftis asked about the basis for Geometry beginning earlier. Dr. Mathis stated that this was one of the EOC recommendations, citing studies out of other states. With Geometry, you can see the visual understanding of the math and then apply it to Algebra. Sen. Loftis clarified if this would help with Algebra, which Dr. Mathis confirmed. Sen. Loftis stated that more Algebra may be

required for Artificial Intelligence and other computer science fields. Dr. Mathis stated that early Geometry will help with the process of learning other courses and that this provides a good starting point. Dr. Couch asked if Dr. Mathis foresaw an integrated sequence of math, such as what is used in other countries. Dr. Mathis stated that we are not ready for that yet, but that eventually we may get there, this is a next step. Dr. Couch asked what the teachers' response was about application of mathematics. Dr. Mathis stated that we are starting with the end in mind; these are the standards necessary for postsecondary success, and working backwards from that. Dr. Couch noted that at Walhalla HS, those students who had completed engineering in middle school and applied math principles, performed much higher. Dr. Mathis agreed and noted a study done with Florida State showing the greatest indicator of success for ACT is preparation success in 5th grade.

Sen. Loftis stated that a few years ago, Arkansas did a presentation on computer science. They stated that they are doing the same things in Kindergarten, just at a lower level. Districts are looking for a model, a pathway, to help with math beginning early and following them through high school. Sen. Loftis asked how SC standards are aligned with national and regional standards. Dr. Mathis stated that our science standards are tightly aligned to national standards; in literacy, they are aligned, and as we are working through the math standards, we are looking to see how we compare to other states. Dr. Mathis stated that a past problem has been in having too many standards. It is important to lower the amount of standards so that teachers can dig deeper. Mr. Robinson thanked Dr. Mathis and asked Mr. Ferguson for an Executive Director update.

Mr. Ferguson thanked Dr. Gibbs-Brown and welcomed her students. The EOC will have its annual retreat from August 7-8 in Hartsville, South Carolina. Dr. Margarita Roza from Georgetown will present on school finance, and Mr. Rainwater will provide an update on the new funding model. Mr. Ferguson thanked the EOC. Mr. Robinson thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting.

EIA & EAA PROGRAM APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY2022-23

EIA Program Line Items	2021-22 EIA Appropriation Recurring Base	EOC		Governor's		House		Senate		Appropriation Act FY 2022-23	
		Recommended Increase	Recommended Increase	Recommended Increase	Recommended Increase	Recommended Increase	Recommended Increase	Recommended Increase	Recommended Increase	Recommended Increase	
STEM Centers SC (H120)	\$1,750,000			\$1,500,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000				\$250,000
Teach For America SC(A850)	\$2,000,000										
SC Council on Economic Education(H270)	\$300,000										
Center for Educational Partnerships(H270)	\$715,933	\$750,000		\$1,500,000							
Centers for Excellence CHE(H030)	\$787,526										
Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty - Francis Marion (Proviso 1A.31.)	\$350,000										
CERRA(H470)	\$13,034,117										
SC Program for Recruitment of Minority Teachers (Proviso 1A.6.)	\$339,482										
Teacher Loan Program(E160)	\$5,089,881										
Babynet Autism Therapy(J020)	\$3,926,408										
Call Me MISTER(H120)	\$500,000										
Regional Education Centers(P320)	\$1,952,000			\$3,000,000	\$500,000	\$500,000				\$500,000	
TransformSC(H850)	\$400,000										
SC Public Charter Schools & Charter Institute at Erskine	\$129,162,798			\$46,107,935							
First Steps to School Readiness	\$39,552,162	\$3,000,000		\$6,000,000							(\$129,162,798)
SCDE Personnel & Operations	\$9,162,318										
USC - Pilot Teacher Recruitment Program (CAP) (Proviso 1A.71)	\$750,000										
SC State University BRIDGE Program (Proviso 1A.72)	\$1,000,000										
Clafin University (Proviso 1A.72)	\$400,000										
GED Incentive Program(R600)	\$1										
DJJ Teacher Salaries (N120)	\$1,850,000										
Computer Science Regional Specialist	\$568,000										
NEW:											
Save the Children					\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000			\$1	\$1,000,000	
Education Data Dashboards		\$3,500,000		\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000			\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	
Hype					\$750,000	\$750,000			\$1	\$750,000	
The Continuum					\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000			\$749,998	\$2,500,000	
Working Conditions Survey (H270)		\$475,000		\$475,000							
State Aid to Classrooms					\$103,305,435	\$103,305,435			\$561,186,435	\$557,686,435	
SUB TOTALS	\$219,532,274	\$3,750,000		\$58,107,935	\$108,305,435	\$108,305,435			\$437,023,637	\$437,023,637	
EIA TOTALS	\$894,400,000	(\$48,934)		\$87,309,001	\$110,196,001	\$110,196,001			\$110,196,001	\$110,196,001	

EIA & EAA PROGRAM APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY2022-23

EIA Surplus Funded Programs FY 2021-22 (nonrecurring funds)	FY 2021-22	EOC	Governor's	House	Senate	Appropriation Act FY2022-23
GED Incentive Program(R600)	\$1,500,000					
Patterson Academy	\$1,014,094			\$1,214,094	\$1,214,094	\$1,214,094
Meyer Center	\$173,667			\$173,667	\$173,667	\$307,667
The Continuum	\$1,500,000					
HYPE	\$500,000					
Save the Children (A850)	\$1,000,000					
Greenville Children's Museum	\$200,000					
Brooklyn Baptist Fifth Quarter	\$350,000					
Town of Kershaw First Steps Building	\$300,000					
Roper Mountain Science Center	\$250,000					
Reading Partners	\$250,000			\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000
Aid to Districts	\$10,821,878					
SDE Grants Committee	\$3,000,000		\$4,083,275	\$12,148,240	\$12,148,240	\$12,148,240
Full Day 4K (FS)	\$5,219,976					
Full Day 4K (SDE)	\$6,758,978					
Charter Schools	\$33,216,180		\$14,067,725			
Instructional Materials	\$25,680,251	\$20,000,000	\$59,000,000	\$100,000,000	\$100,000,000	\$100,000,000
Carolina Collaborative for Alternative Preparation (H270)	\$450,000		\$450,000	\$1,500,000	\$450,000	\$450,000
Computer Science Certification and Professional Learning	\$700,000					
NEW:						
Schools of Innovation			\$10,000,000			
Artificial Intelligence		\$3,000,000	\$1,500,000			
CERRA Working Condition Survey (H470)				\$500,000		
Capital Funding for Disadvantage Schools				\$40,000,000	\$39,550,000	\$40,000,000
Center for Education Partnerships(H270)					\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
Working Conditions Survey(H270)					\$500,000	\$500,000
Project Read						\$100,000
RIZE Prevention						\$150,000
Communities in Schools						\$1,000,000
First SC (SC First Lego League)						\$150,000
Annabelle						<i> vetoed (\$1,000,000)</i>
Plasma Games						<i> vetoed (\$1,500,000)</i>
EIA Surplus (nonrecurring) 2021-22	\$92,885,024	\$23,000,000	\$89,101,000	\$155,936,001	\$155,936,001	\$157,920,001
Total New EIA Funds 2021-22 (nonrecurring)		\$23,000,000	\$89,101,000	\$155,936,001	\$155,936,001	\$157,920,001

Governor vetoed items on June 22, 2022 and General Assembly sustained vetoes on June 28, 2022.

Available EIA Funds 2022-23*	\$110,196,001
Available EIA Surplus Fund 2021-22*	\$185,520,001
Residual Balance EIA Surplus	\$30,010,000

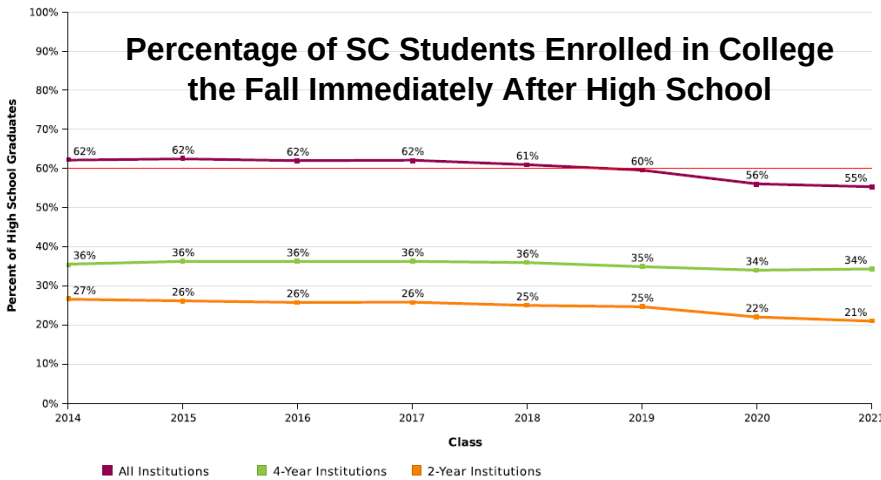
*as per conference report

National Clearinghouse Data Sessions

March - July 2022



In February 2022, the EOC received its first look at data showing the college success of SC's high school graduates. The EOC purchased existing data from the National Student Clearinghouse and between March and July, 2022, introduced this data to schools and districts across the state. The EOC partnered with the Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM) on the twelve sessions held on-site.



What these data provide: National Student Clearinghouse data provides actionable insights into high school graduates' access, success, persistence, and completion rates across institution types (public, private, for-profit, international, career, and technical) regardless of state boundaries.

I just love that we have this data and can use it to help our students experience success at a greater rate. -Workshop Attendee

Impact of Sessions

- **14** sessions across the state
 - **12** on-site in the following locations: Anderson, Chapin, Charleston, Chesterfield, Clover, Florence, Summerville
 - **2** virtual sessions
- **Over 200** attendees
- **92** high schools reached (38%)
- **53** school districts reached (62%)

After their session, attendees were asked to complete an exit survey. Overwhelmingly, attendees reported satisfaction with the session content and excitement regarding the use of this data in the future.



For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/EOCReport22>



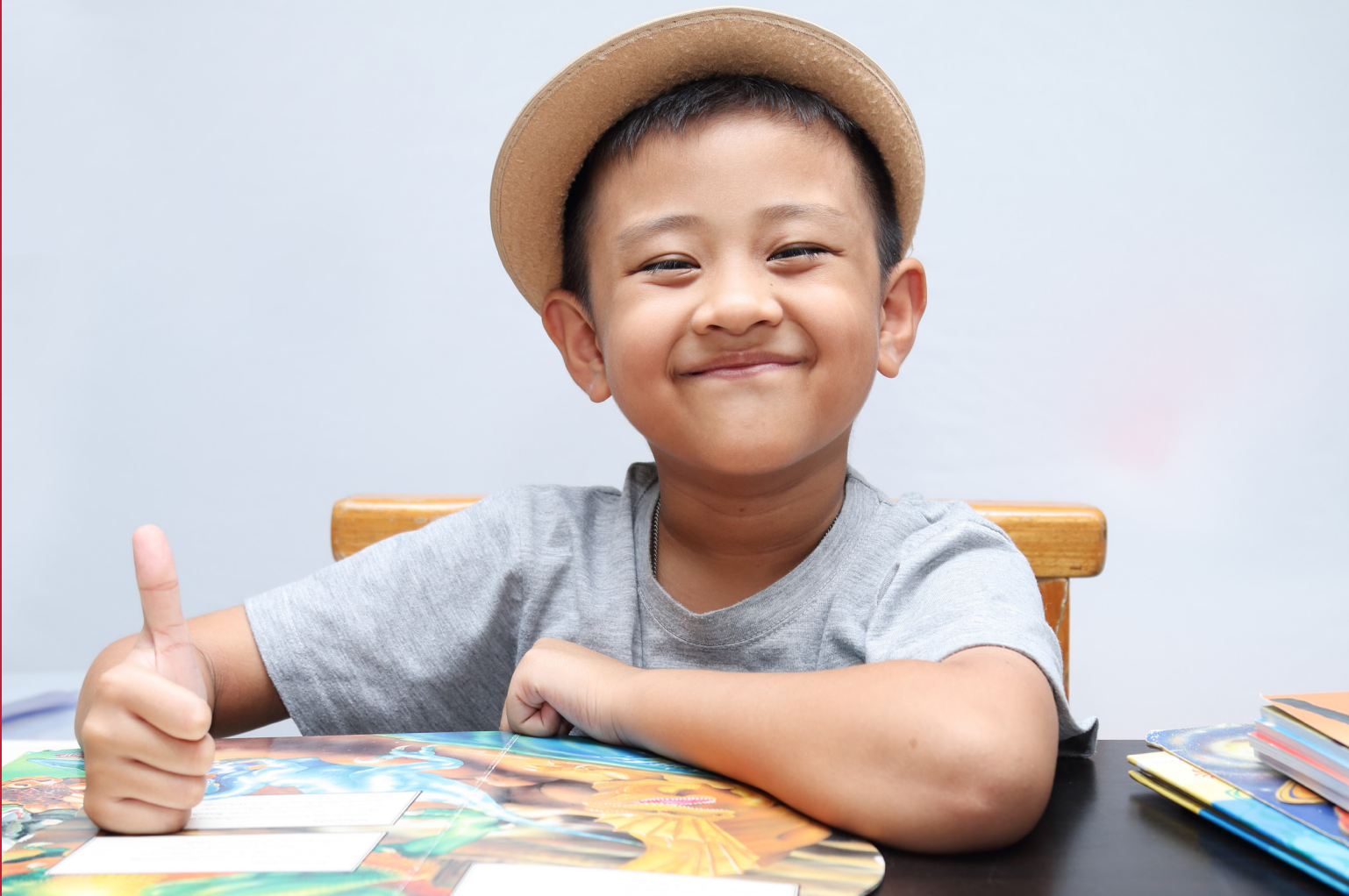
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2022 ANNUAL REPORT



SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is an independent, non-partisan group made up of 18 educators, business people, and elected officials appointed by the Governor and General Assembly.

The EOC is charged with encouraging continuous improvement in SC public schools, approving academic content standards and assessments, overseeing the implementation of the state's educational accountability system, and documenting improvements in education.



Contents

Providing a Foundation for Learning

EOC Strategic Plan, 2021-2025

2021 Report Card

State-Funded Full Day 4k

Parent Survey

Data-Rich Tools for Informative Decision Making

Education Data Dashboard

College Success of SC High School Graduates

Impact of the Pandemic on Student Learning

EOC Study of Remote Learning

Learning Loss to Acceleration Symposium

Student Success and School Accountability

Recommendations to Education Accountability System

Standards Review

Other Reports and Projects

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to once again lead the SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC) as its chairman – here’s to the third time being the charm! I commend and thank Ellen Weaver for her capable leadership over the last two years. Under her direction, the committee started and finished a strategic plan process and hired a new Executive Director, Matthew Ferguson. In just a short while, both Matthew and Ellen have led the committee through some difficult decisions amid chaotic times.

Although the last two years have presented us with an unprecedented set of challenges in public education, I see progress and cause for hope as we navigate the changes to the education landscape. All decisions made by the EOC have been focused on the success of SC’s students. We acknowledge that many students are struggling, and that challenges us to make informed decisions that will help schools continuously improve and lead to better student outcomes.

This annual report provides some of the highlights of some of the projects that are promoting progress in South Carolina schools and providing policymakers, families, communities and educators with the information they need to make informed decisions. Each of the reports highlighted in this report are available in their entirety on the EOC website, as are the other reports listed at the back of this report. I also thank the educators, legislators, and others who have helped us accomplish this work during the past year.

I am excited about the some of the new projects the EOC has embarked on. A new, interactive dashboard focused on early childhood readiness shows the capacity of surfacing existing data in a user-friendly, actionable way. The EOC’s collaboration with the National Student Clearinghouse will be a game-changer for monitoring student success as students depart the K-12 school system. All of these projects provide us with a clearer picture of how to effectively help our students.

I want to thank SC educators for their work and the positive impact they have on the lives of children. They have the opportunity each day to unlock the potential of the young people they teach. The children are our inspiration to do the work we do – we believe in their potential, and we want every child to have the opportunity to succeed. Our goal is to provide an environment where there are no barriers to any child’s success.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Robinson, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Neil Robinson, Jr.

The Year in Review



**Analyses, Updates, and Program Summaries
from March 2021 to February 2022**



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

In 2021, the EOC created a strategic plan to guide priorities of the committee until 2025. Conversations about the plan began at the EOC's 2020 Annual Retreat and the EOC was guided by a governance audit, completed by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) in 2000. The following plan was adopted by the full EOC in June 2021.

Strategy I: Report Facts

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategy II: Measure Change

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

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

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

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

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

Objective F: Identify and reward school accountability success.

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

Strategy III: Promote Progress

To more effectively promote progress throughout South Carolina schools, the EOC will strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders and promote collaborative, coordinated action for the continuous improvement of schools and student success.

Objective G: Clarify the role of the Education Oversight Committee as the authority in PK-12 school accountability.

- Solidify the EOC's role as responsible for the development of federal and state accountability
- Become a co-equal partner in the procurement of measures used for school accountability (e.g. assessments, surveys)

Objective H: Realign EOC resources to become a more effective advisor and honest broker to multiple stakeholder groups.

- Research the needs of multiple stakeholder groups
- Serve as a bridge to connect research to policy and practice for the following stakeholder groups: policy makers, educators, families / students, and business / community leaders

Objective I: Collaborate with other agencies, schools, and organizations to jointly explore topics relevant to school and student success.

- Convene stakeholders to collaboratively update the accountability standards for a Vision 2030 document
- Convene forums / speakers on relevant education topics



SC Student Academic Performance: 2021 Report Card

Significant Takeaways:

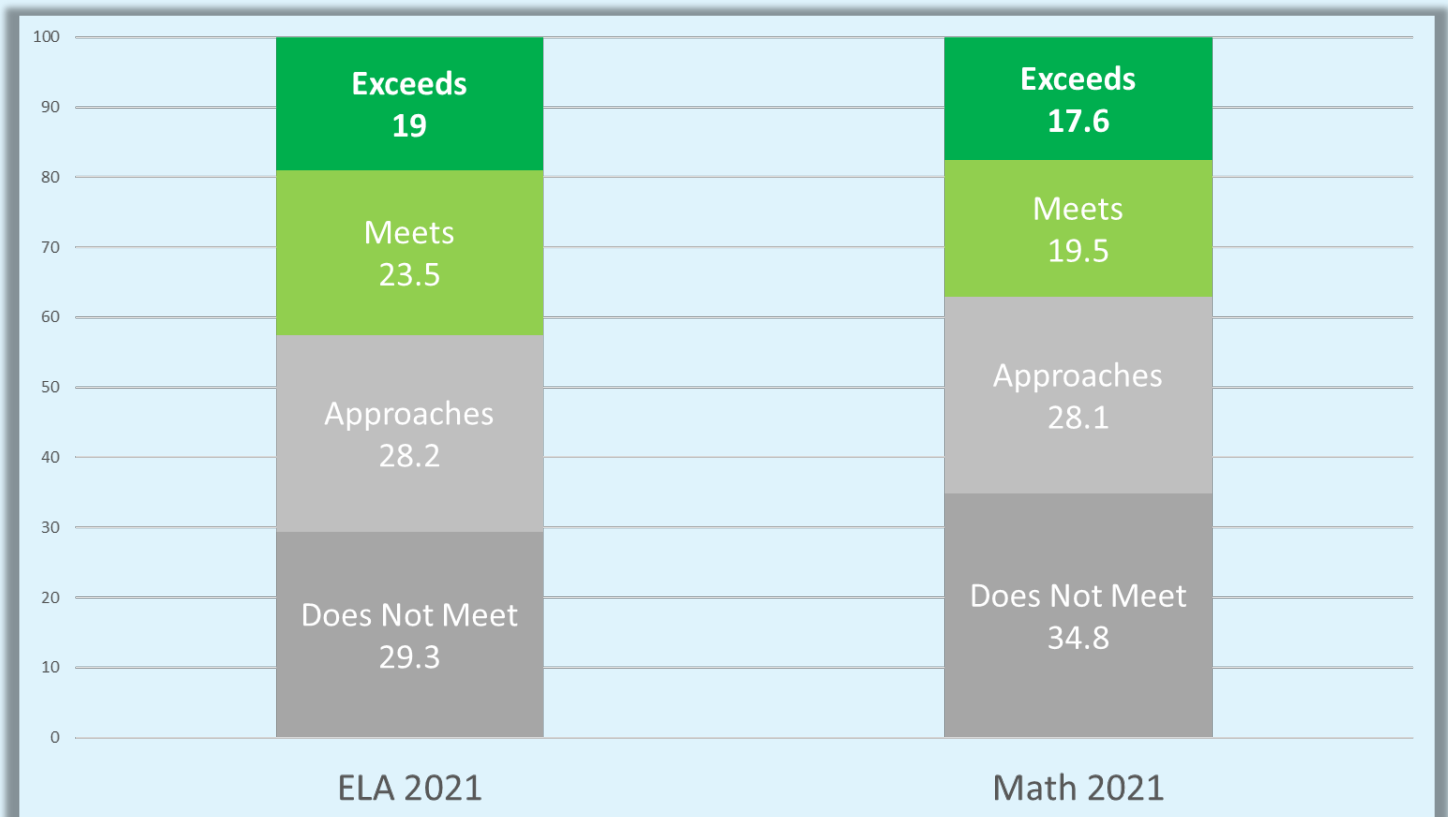
- Students who received education virtually were much less likely to be assessed on SCREADY in 2021.
- Pupils in Poverty were much less likely to be assessed on SCREADY in 2021, particularly at the district level.
- Significant achievement gaps continue to be present and seem to have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Poverty alone does not seem to explain this difference.

SC READY 2021 Results

- Only about 4 in 10 students in grades 3-8 met standard in math and ELA in 2021.
- Nearly 1/3 of students are scoring at the Does Not Meet Level, which is approximately 2 years below standard.

Math and English Language Arts (ELA) Results

- Math proficiency was more negatively impacted by COVID-19 disruptions than ELA proficiency.
- Less than 2 in 10 Black/African American students in grades 3-8 met standard in math in 2021.
- ELA student performance did fall after COVID-19 disruptions, but not to historical lows.
- Significant achievement gaps continue to be present in both ELA and Math.



Report of Public-Funded Full-Day 4K Programs

Since 2006, the SC General Assembly has invested in funding full-day kindergarten for four-year-olds in poverty. The program, which is in public and private centers, has been expanded over the years and now includes any eligible student in SC school districts, provided the district opts to accept funding.

Key Findings from this year’s report include:

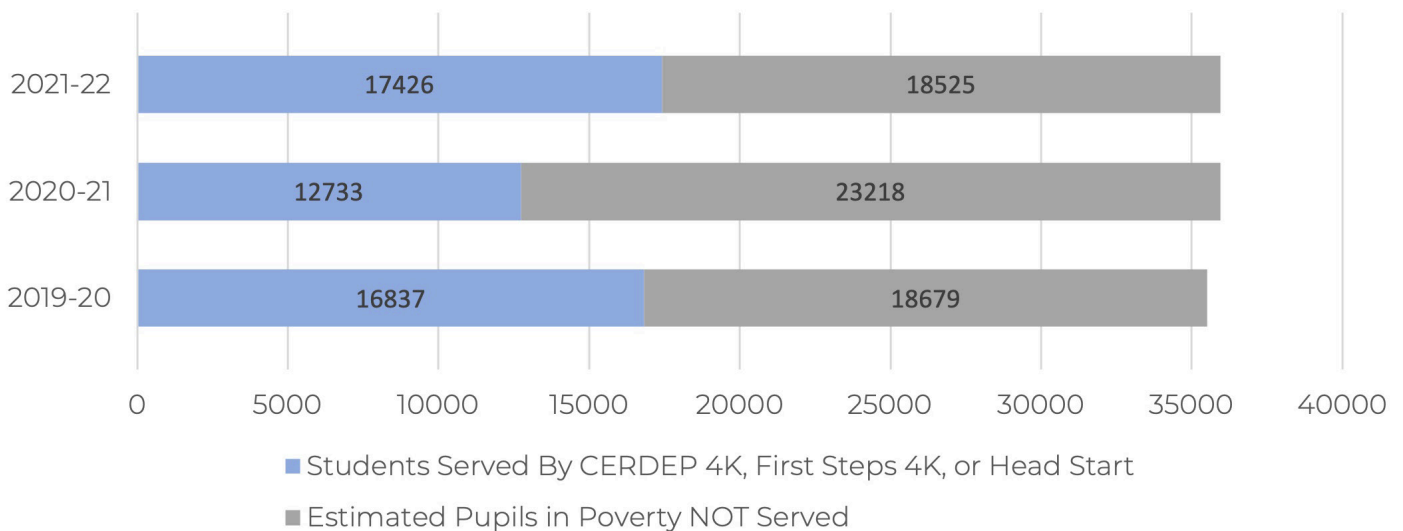
- In SY2020-21, 35,951 of the state’s 57,030 four-year-olds (63%) lived in poverty and were at risk of not being ready for kindergarten.
- 52% of eligible SC four-year-olds remain unserved by CERDEP 4K, First Steps 4K, or Head Start programs, though they may be served by other 4K programs.
- In school districts that are eligible with no students participating in CERDEP, over 75% of estimated students in poverty are not being served by CERDEP 4K, First Steps 4K, or Head Start programs.
- The State’s investment in CERDEP 4K is beneficial for student kindergarten readiness. Among kindergartners who participated in the 4K CERDEP, 23% tested at the Demonstrating Readiness category. Of those who were not enrolled in CERDEP 4K and Pupils in Poverty (PiP), 18% tested at the Demonstrating Readiness level.

\$72,835,228 Total CERDEP Investment for FY 2020-21, including projected Carry Forward

\$4,800 Per Student CERDEP Reimbursement Rate

\$10,000 Startup Cost Per New CERDEP Classroom with minimum student count

Estimate of SC Pupils in Poverty Served and Not Served by CERDEP or Head Start



Recommendations: 2022 CERDEP Report

Recommendation 1. Expand Opportunities for CERDEP Access

Increase the student reimbursement rate to \$5,100. An estimated 18,679 students who live in poverty remain unserved by CERDEP. Therefore, expansion efforts should focus on districts with a high percentage of eligible children, but who opt out of CERDEP. One barrier to this expansion is reimbursement rate; districts report that the current level of funding and the required teacher:student ratio do not always fully cover the cost of a classroom. If increased to \$5,100, districts will be able to meet teacher:student ratios and fully fund more experienced certified teachers.

Explore mixed-ability, heterogenous grouping in CERDEP classrooms, building towards universal 4K eligibility. Research has shown that mixed-ability grouping benefits student achievement for students at all levels. Pilots should explore if heterogeneous class composition and professional development for teachers in differentiating instruction would improve quality in South Carolina's publicly funded 4K classrooms.

Recommendation 2. Evaluation of program quality

Evaluating the quality of the CERDEP experience should be central to the creation and scale of the program. Further research and evaluation should continue to consider improving and ensuring quality and quantity of publicly funded early childhood programming.

Recommendation 3. Evaluation of CERDEP 4K Assessments

Research should be conducted to analyze and define the constructs measured by the three CERDEP-approved assessments (e.g., PALS, Gold, and MyIGDIs), the degree to which the assessment constructs align across assessments, comparability of results, and the extent to which assessment results are indicators of Kindergarten Readiness. Due to the multitude of assessments currently used, it is harder to create an accurate student growth continuum that teachers can rely on. Therefore, a single statewide assessment would be ideal.

Recommendation 4. Expanded Coordination & Collaboration

CERDEP 4K and First Steps 4K should continue to expand coordination and collaboration efforts, including data sharing and shared professional development, in order to serve as many eligible children as possible. Efforts should continue to be made to provide parents information about the programs they may qualify for.

Though still in the early stages, the South Carolina Early Learning Extension has the potential to link data across several early childhood programs to K-12 educational outcomes.



Parent Survey Report, 2021

The Parent Survey was designed in 2001 to meet the requirements of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) and the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act. Section 59-18-900 of the EAA requires that the annual school report card include "evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students" as performance indicators to evaluate schools. Schools in South Carolina were closed on March 16, 2020. As a result, the Parent Survey was not distributed in the Spring of 2020. This report addresses changes to the Parent Survey first implemented in the Spring of 2021.

Future Changes to the Parent Survey

For the first time, in the Spring of 2021, the Parent Survey was accessible using electronic devices, including smart phones. With these changes, the survey is now annually available to parents of students at all grade levels, instead of limited to only parents of children at the highest grade level. The move to electronic presentation will also allow for content changes to be more easily implemented.

Other future changes include:

- Following parental feedback, the survey will be shorter.
- Eliminating the item format with responses that ask about parent desires will make summarization and interpretation of results simpler.
- Changing the administration to electronic media provides greater flexibility in updating the survey.
- In 2022, the Parent Survey will be electronically administered on a new platform allowing for greater parent participation.



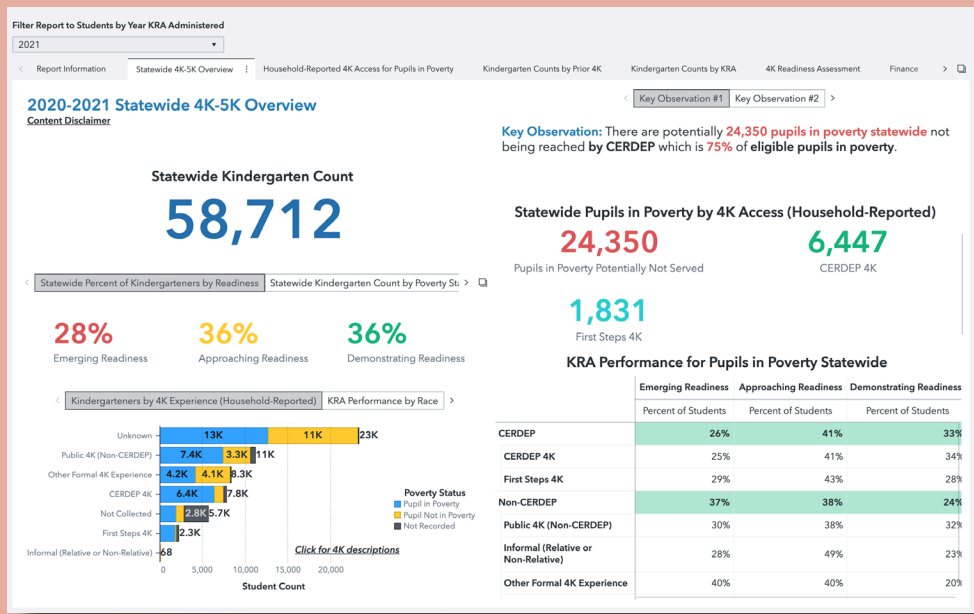
More information and downloadable resources:
<https://bit.ly/ParentSurveyReport21>

SC Education Data Dashboard

In February 2022, the EOC received the South Carolina Education Data Dashboard for 4K-5K Students, an interactive data display of 4K enrollment and 5K readiness throughout the state. For the first time in an online environment, this dashboard allows users to investigate the effectiveness of early education initiatives in our state, including state-funded full day 4K programs. Users can filter results by disability status, school location, poverty status, and English Learners status. And, data can also be filtered by county, school district, House district, Senate district, and Congressional district.

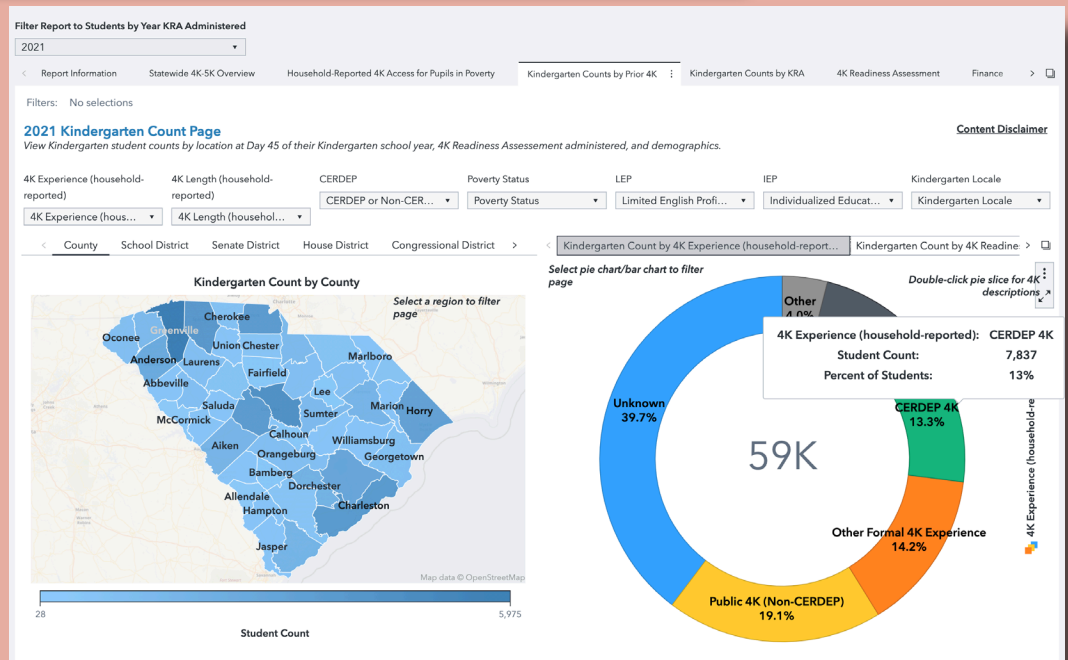
As part of its annual budget recommendations to the General Assembly in December 2021, the EOC requested recurring Education Data Improvement Act (EIA) funds be allocated toward a broader Education Data Dashboard which would interface with existing systems in order to document education attainment and growth and surface financial data.

The Education Data Dashboard showcases existing data in a user-friendly, accessible environment. Examples from the 4K-5K Data Dashboard include:



The Dashboard examines 2021 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) performance by 4K experience.

Users can filter information by county, school district, House district, Senate district, and Congressional district.

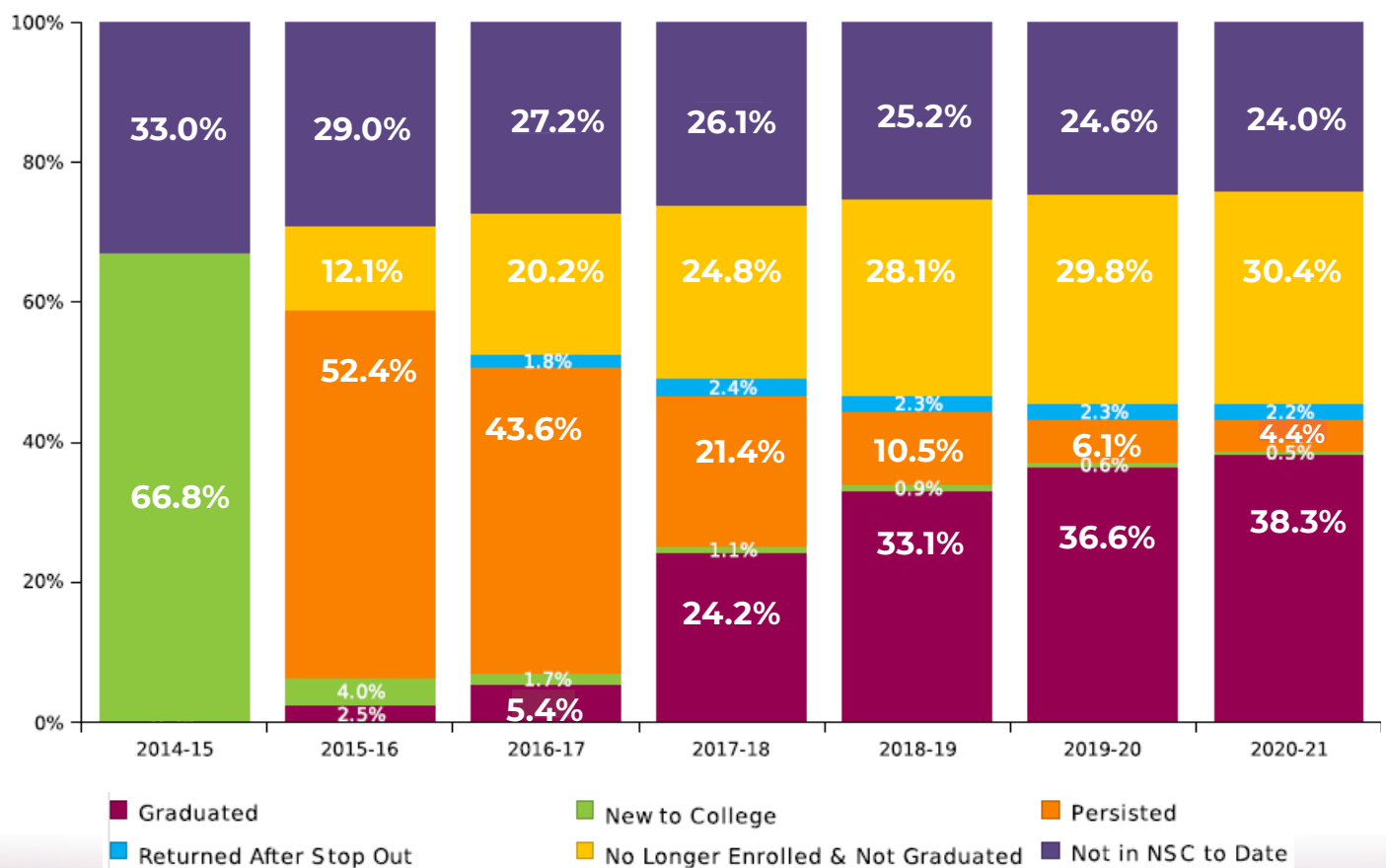


College Success of SC High School Graduates

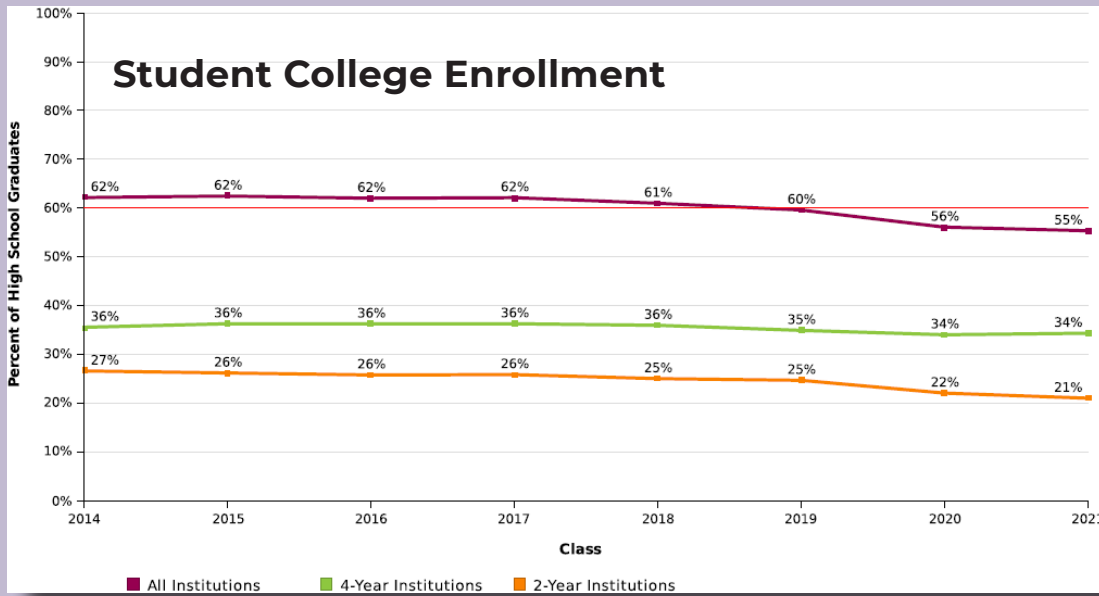
In February 2022, the EOC received its first look of data that show the college success of SC's high school graduates. The EOC purchased existing data from the National Student Clearinghouse, which has information on high school graduates' access, persistence, and completion rates across institution types (public, private, for-profit, international, career, and technical) regardless of state boundaries.

- The vast majority of SC students who enroll in college the first year after high school return for a second year of college.
- The transition between years 2 and 3 and years 3 and 4 are points at which students who do not have a degree seem less likely to persist in college.

Class of 2014 Postsecondary Enrollment and Progress



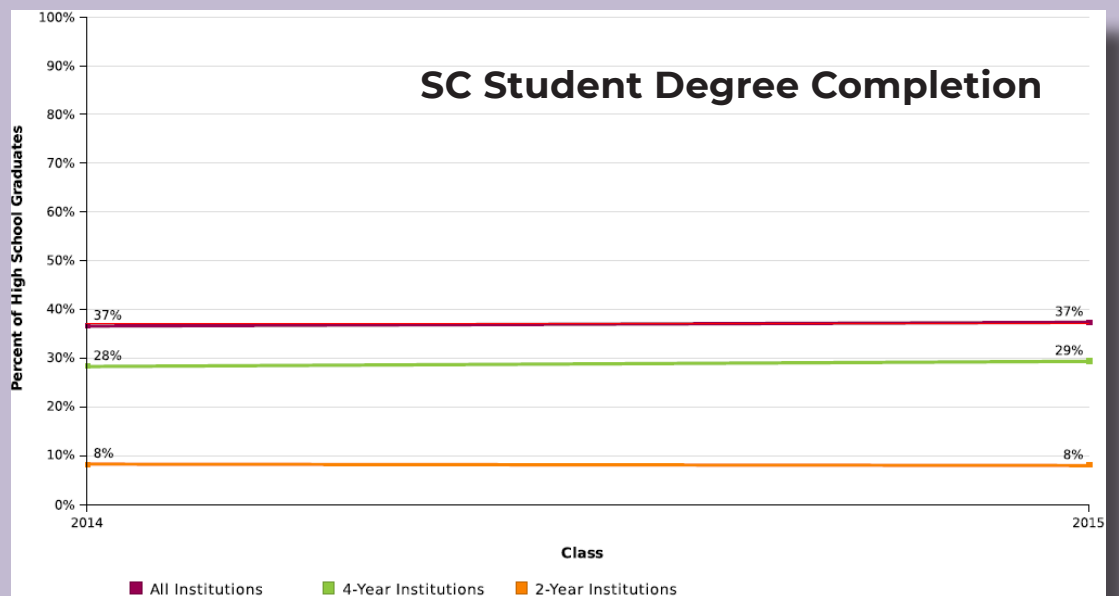
Percent of Students Enrolled in College the Fall Immediately After High School by Institutional Level



- On average, 60% of South Carolina graduates enroll in College in the Fall Immediately after high school.
- College enrollment has been negatively impacted during the period of COVID-19.

Percent of High School Class Who Completed a Degree Within Six Years by Institutional Level

- 37% of SC students who graduated in 2014 and 2015 have completed an associate's or bachelor's degree by the time they turn 24.
- There are meaningful differences in the proportion of degrees obtained by institutional type.



Review of Remote Learning's Impact on SC's Students

Recognizing the “unprecedented upheaval to the education of students in every corner of the state” and the need for a data driven approach to the state’s response to COVID-19, the EOC staff undertook a thorough review of the opportunities for innovation, lessons learned for future planning, and barriers to the success during emergency remote learning.

Results from the study include:

Opportunities for Students

- Accelerated student access to technology across the state
- Investment in instructional technology resources by districts and the State
- Increased learning opportunities for students, flattening the classroom and providing a global perspective
- District virtual school offerings will remain, but state level guidance needed

Obstacles Identified

- Unequal distribution of internet access and 1:1 devices.
- Lack of a digital ecosystem to support long-term virtual instruction.
- Lack of clearly defined instructional strategies for forward progress in remote learning.
- COVID expenses will be recurring.

Impact on Student Learning

- SC students declined in projected proficiency and in median percentile rank in both mathematics and reading. The decline was most dramatic in elementary and math.
- Significant achievement gaps among historically underachieving students and their higher achieving peers continue to exist but do not appear to have widened during emergency remote learning.
- For SC students in a sample of 14 districts, there was no statistically significant difference observed in the COVID slide of students with respect to instructional method.

Emerging Issues

- Many vulnerable students are opting for virtual options while more resourced students are opting for brick and-mortar schooling.
- Concerns with reliability of assessments delivered remotely
- Recognition of the need for quality assessments to make data-informed decisions

7 of 10

in grades 3 through 8 are projected NOT to meet grade level standards in ELA and math in spring 2021

STUDENTS



based on analysis of SC students who took NWEA ELA and Math MAP tests in fall 2020.

Recommendations

- Strategically design and implement curriculum focused on student learning gaps and priority standards.
- Better coordinate efforts to accurately track student attendance, completion of assignments, and mastery of grade level standards.
- Require coordinated efforts and deploy strategies to establish communication with students who are not attending school or disengaging from instruction.
- Continue regular assessment of all students, allowing for individual and system academic performance to be monitored, guiding instruction and policy decisions.
- Continue to address disparities in learning opportunities by ensuring that supports, such as access to the internet and a device, are in place for students.
- Provide access to a robust virtual curriculum for students in remote learning.
- Provide tutoring services and extra interventions for students identified at-risk.
- Create a process to allow districts to develop and create innovative programs and/or community partnerships to provide after-school, summer, or Saturday ARCs in mathematics and reading.
- Provide meaningful and responsive professional development to staff to address needs in remote learning.
- Prioritize the return to face-to-face classrooms as soon as safely possible



More information and downloadable resources:
Part One: <https://bit.ly/RLpt1>
Part Two: <https://bit.ly/RLpt2>
Part Three: <https://bit.ly/RLearningpt3>

“Accelerated Learning: What It Is and How To Get There”

Presentation by Dr. David Steiner, Executive Director of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy, Professor of Education at Johns Hopkins University

During the August, 2021 retreat, the EOC conducted a symposium on learning loss due to COVID-19. SC Superintendents participated in a panel discussion about how they were operating effectively during challenging conditions.

As part of this symposium, Dr. David Steiner gave a presentation to EOC members and staff on the drawbacks of traditional methods of combating learning loss, such as remediation, and the benefits of acceleration in order to engage students with new content while integrating past content that may have been missed.



Remediation	Acceleration
Focuses on below-grade level content before moving to new learning. Educators emphasize isolated skills from past years' standards.	Focuses on connecting unfinished learning with new, grade-level content. Rather than requiring mastery of past content before moving to grade-level subjects, educators address past content in the context of current learning.

Benefits of Acceleration

- Accelerated Learning strategically prepares students for success in current grade-level content. Acceleration readies students for new learning. Past concepts and skills are addressed, but always in the purposeful context of current learning.
- Effective acceleration ensures access to grade-level instruction. It gives students the most important skills they need to stay with their classmates at grade level.
- Implication: acceleration means homing in on just those critical skills that students need, week by week, to participate fully.
- Readies the student for new learning.

Dr. Steiner’s Recommendations Moving Forward

- Use high-quality instructional materials in every subject.
- Focus professional development on supporting curriculum-aligned classroom instruction.
- Leverage diagnostic data to ensure precise support of important skills, using the curriculum’s content.
- Design systems to support acceleration.

“Recovering from COVID: From Learning Loss to Acceleration”:
<https://bit.ly/RecoverLearningLoss>

Recommendations to Education Accountability System, 2021-22

The EOC approved recommendations to the Education Accountability system for school year 2021-22; many of the decisions were based on recommendations from the Accountability Advisory Committee made in 2020.

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the resulting disruptions in teaching and learning, ratings were not calculated for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 Report Cards. Ratings have been restored to Report Cards for 2021-22. Other changes for the current school year's system include:

- US History and the Constitution End-of-Course Exam Program (EOCEP) Excluded: Due to delays caused by the transition to a new version of the exam necessitated by the approval and adoption of the 2019 South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards, EOCEP scores in US History and the Constitution, and the corresponding SC ALT assessment in Social Studies, have been excluded from the Preparing for Success indicator for High Schools for the 2021-22 school year, though these scores will still be reported.
- South Carolina High School Employability Credential: The South Carolina High School Employability Credential has been added as a method by which certain students who receive special education services and who do not receive a regular diploma may be identified as Career Ready for the purpose of the College & Career Readiness Indicator.
- School Climate: Administration of the Student Engagement Survey stopped during COVID-19 and the contract with the survey vendor was discontinued on May 29, 2020. At its meeting on December 13, 2021, the EOC decided to use factor scores based on select items from the South Carolina School Climate Survey, which has been given to teachers, students, and families in the state for more than twenty years, for the Rating Points previously allocated to the Student Engagement Survey.

More information and
downloadable resources:

[https://bit.ly/
EdAccountability](https://bit.ly/EdAccountability)



Standards Review

This year, the EOC finalized their review of the SC College- and Career-Ready Mathematics Standards. The recommendations were compiled under the advice of two review teams: a national review team of educators who have worked with national or other state organizations and a state committee composed of parents, business/community representatives, mathematics educators, and teachers of English Language Learners and exceptional education students. The state team was composed of individuals from various geographical areas across South Carolina. The recommendations were transmitted to the SC Dept. of Education as they began to convene writing teams.

The EOC also completed a review of the Grade 4 and 6 PASS Science Assessments with the assistance of SC Science teachers. The review was forwarded to the SC Dept. of Education to aid in the peer review process.



More information and downloadable resources:
<https://bit.ly/CycMath>
<https://bit.ly/SCPASSscience>

Community Block Grants Program, FY 2015-2021

In June 2021, the EOC produced a cumulative review of the EOC Community Block Grants Program, which was implemented by the EOC from 2015 to 2021. The review was designed to determine the extent to which the program fulfilled the intent and detail of the enabling proviso; ways in which success was defined and measured; grantees fulfilled their commitments, and, if not, why not; improvements achieved and if they were sufficient relative to the investments made; and program elements that should be continued or amended in future grant programs.

More information: <https://bit.ly/EOCBlockGrant>

Cyclical Review of SC Science Standards

Pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A) of the Education Accountability Act, the EOC and the State Board of Education (SBE) are responsible for reviewing South Carolina's standards and assessments to ensure that high expectations for teaching and learning are being maintained. The EOC worked with parents, business and community persons, as well as teachers of special education, to make recommendations on the K-12 Science standards.

More information: <https://bit.ly/CycScience>

ECENC Report

The ECENC program provides grants and parental tax credits to exceptional needs students attending private schools that meet specific eligibility requirements and that are approved by the EOC. This report includes information about the process for collecting results, participation and compliance of schools, and academic achievement of students who received ECENC grants in 2019-20.

More information: <https://bit.ly/ECENCSC>

e-Learning Pilot Project: Final Report

The EOC received the final report of the eLearning Pilot Project in 2021 as it was the third year of the program, and control of the program has been transferred to the SCDE. When schools closed due to COVID, EOC staff pivoted for eLearning Year 3. Recognizing that many more districts would be required to offer some form of virtual instruction during emergency remote learning, a streamlined application process was created. Thirty-one districts and public charter schools were added to the Year 3 cohort. A Readiness Cohort was also created that would eventually include 25 districts. The Readiness Cohort was for those districts interested in harnessing the potential of instructional technology but who lacked some foundational or technical requirements of eLearning. Dr. D'Andrea, who led the eLearning program for the EOC, documented that eLearning for the short term is not the same as virtual learning that is exclusively online.

More information: <https://bit.ly/EOCeLearn>

EOC FY 2022-23 EIA Budget Recommendations

As required by state law, the EOC approved budget and proviso recommendations in December 2021 for Fiscal Year 2022-23. These recommendations focus on the revenues generated by the one-cent sales tax, the Education Improvement Act. The committee's recommendations are dedicated to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for students and to supporting the teaching profession. The recommendations were forwarded to the Governor and General Assembly for their consideration.

More information: <https://bit.ly/EIAbudget>

Military Connected Students Report, 2021

As legislated by Act 289 of the Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act, the EOC is tasked with developing an annual report on the educational performance of military-connected students. This report is meant to provide an overview of demographics, academic performance, and school attendance of military-connected students as reported for the 2019-20 school year.

More information: <https://bit.ly/MCStudentsEOC>

Report on Alternative Instructional Methods

In February 2022, the EOC received a report from Dr. Lee D'Andrea documenting the alternative methods of instruction that have been implemented in SC school districts during the school year 2021-22. Data from the 45th day of instruction shows that 745,186 SC students were enrolled this school year in approved virtual programs, approximately 2% of the students statewide. About 34% of all students were in some type of temporary, virtual learning environment during the first 45 days of the current school year.

More information: <https://bit.ly/EOCAltInst>

Teacher Loan Program Report, Annual Report for FY2019-20

The Teacher Loan Program seeks to encourage talented, qualified potential teachers to enter the profession. As required by the Teacher Quality Act of 2000, the EOC conducts an annual review of the SC Teacher Loan Program. This report describes applicants and recipients to the program in order to examine teacher recruitment and retention in South Carolina.

More information: <https://bit.ly/TLReportEOC>



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Ellen Weaver, Columbia

**Molly Spearman, Columbia, Ex-Officio, State Superintendent of
Education**

The EOC wants to thank the numerous individuals and groups who contributed to the work of the Committee over the course of the year.



SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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Total Printing Costs:	\$1,959.30
Units Printed:	600
Cost Per Unit:	\$3.26

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

Tentative Meeting Schedule

Subcommittees	Full Committee
	August 7-8, 2022
September 19, 2022	
	October 10, 2022
October 17, 2022*	
November 14, 2022*	
December 5, 2022 *	
	December 12, 2022
January 23, 2023	
	February 13, 2023
March 20, 2023	
	April 17, 2023
May 15, 2023	
	June 12, 2023

* The EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee will tentatively meet in October, November and December, if needed, for EIA budget hearings and reviews.

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AGENDA

Full Education Oversight Committee Meeting

Monday, August 8, 2022
Hampton Inn, Hartsville, SC
9:00 A.M.

I. WelcomeNeil Robinson

II. Presentations & Information Items

Introduction to South Carolina's new school funding model
.....Frank Rainwater,
South Carolina Revenue & Fiscal Affairs Office

Setting Student Progress as North Star of School Funds
.....Dr. Marguerite Roza
Director
Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University

Executive Director Update Matthew Ferguson

III. Adjournment

Neil C. Robinson, Jr.
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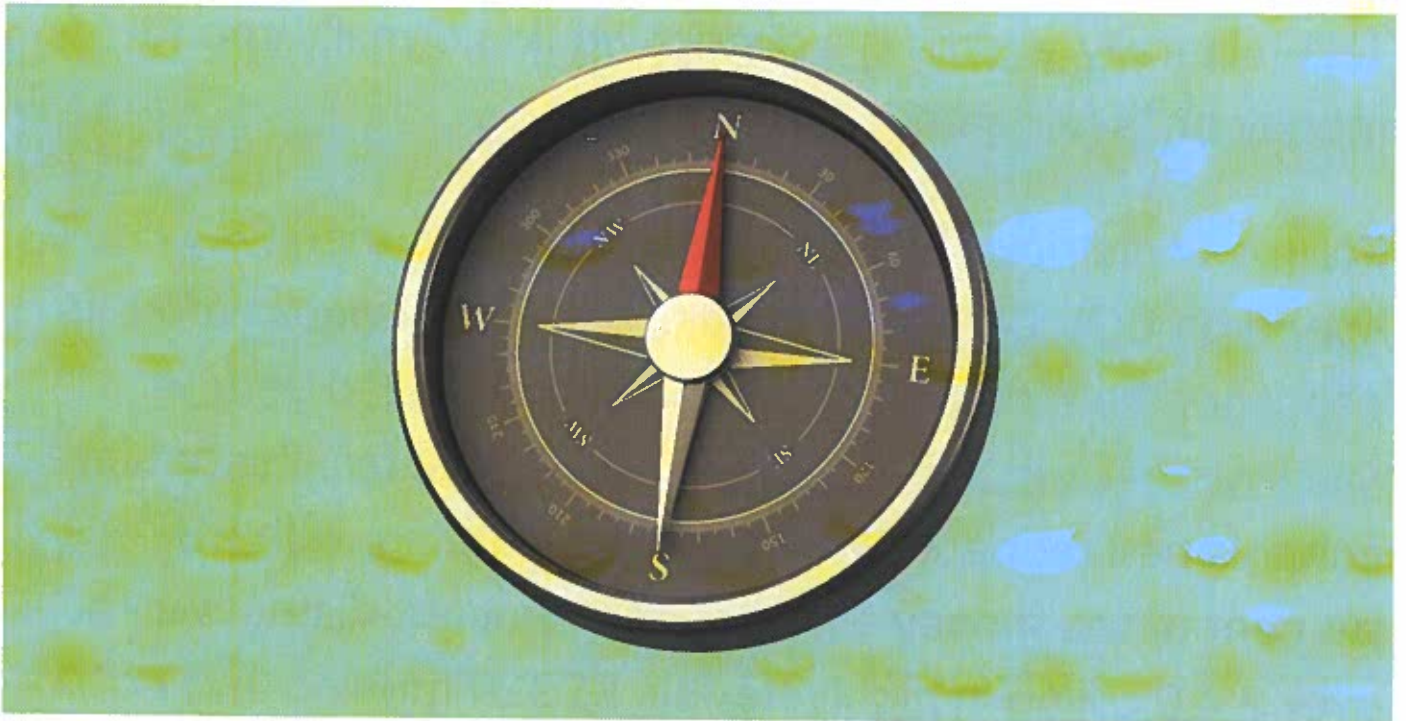
C. Ross Turner, III
Scott Turner

Ellen Weaver

C. Matthew Ferguson, Esq.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roza: Without Clear Rules, There's No Way to Judge How School Relief Funds Are Being Spent. Setting Student Progress as a North Star Would Be a Game Changer

[Marguerite Roza](#)



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When it's all said and done, how should ESSER investments be judged? That depends on what we hope to get from the

\$123 billion pumped into public schools. Here's the problem: No end goal, no focused objective, no common yardstick has ever been attached to this mammoth federal investment.

The ESSER money lacks a North Star.

Metaphorically speaking, a North Star is the mission statement. It's a fixed destination to aim for even as the world changes.

The murkiness dates to when the American Rescue Plan was signed nearly a year ago. Language [in the law](#) reads like a laundry list of 18 broad categories of allowable activities. Taken literally, anything a district would normally spend money on is fair game.

For many districts, ESSER funds were more than they could spend on COVID-related needs. In the early weeks after its passage, the Biden administration emphasized [getting students back in the classroom](#). But by last fall, the nation's schools had reopened for in-person learning, with 98 percent of the money still unspent. That left districts with over \$120 billion in highly flexible ESSER funding and no focused mission to guide spending decisions.

Eventually, the Department of Education's suggestions went beyond its initial [guidance](#) "to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID." Federal FAQs coaxed leaders to spend

more broadly, "[to emerge stronger post-pandemic.](#)" And to [address crime](#). And fix leaky [roofs](#).

It's become hard to see a forest for the trees.

Not surprisingly, analysts and journalists started checking on what was looking more and more like an [expensive experiment](#): What happens when the feds give historic sums to districts with few restrictions and no clear ask in return?

With nothing else to measure, the focus landed on measuring what districts bought with the money. Early reports surfaced [generous teacher bonuses](#), eyebrow-raising expenditures on [sports fields](#) and [electric buses](#), [rebates to local taxpayers](#) and the occasional plan that offered [little to offset learning losses](#) that students had accrued during the pandemic.

Then came calls for more accountability. At a November congressional hearing, concerns about how districts were using these funds came from both sides of the aisle. Virginia Democratic Rep. Bobby Scott wanted evidence that districts were "using this funding responsibly" and "holding up their end of the bargain."

But there never had been much of a "bargain." At the hearing, Deputy Secretary of Education Cindy Marten explained that districts were tracking spending, but, "the

kinds of things that they need are decided school by school, state by state."

This has all been confusing for state education agencies whose job it is to monitor compliance. Some have resorted to advising districts that what matters is not what was purchased, but why. Districts have been told that outdoor playground equipment is "allowable" [if they'll simply proclaim it is for social distancing](#), making leaders craft creative (if eyeroll-worthy) justifications.

But "allowability" is a distraction. Districts need to focus on student learning. It is indisputable that students have [fallen behind in math and reading](#) during the pandemic. While outcomes are [worse for those who are poor and non-white](#), there are learning gaps in all student demographic groups.

A well-designed North Star could put every leader on a mission to remedy those gaps.

Shifting the focus from what districts are purchasing to what progress students are making would be a game changer. First and foremost, it's a shift that requires school systems to start tracking and regularly checking whether they're making headway, and for which students.

There's no need to wait for federal leaders to establish the North Star. A state leader could outline goals and create

mechanisms for districts to track progress. A district leader could do the same for its schools. A principal for the school.

Imagine a North Star that established the following four priorities related to student learning:

1. Reading, grades K-5
2. Math, all grades
3. High schoolers on track to graduate
4. Student attendance and engagement

Then imagine that states and districts started measuring progress month by month.

Surfacing baseline figures would be painful at first. Kids are behind and have a long way to go. But soon after, we would start to see progress, learning what's working and where plans need to shift.

With a North Star, financial flexibility isn't a problem; it's an asset. It means worrying less about spending specifications (even that 20 percent of the funds are earmarked for learning loss) and more about whether students are learning. Districts need flexibility to try things that can work. And they need the flexibility to pivot when labor shortages or Omicron changes everything. We'll know what's working when we

look at the numbers.

Narrowing our goals doesn't mean abandoning efforts to address mental health, ventilation or other priorities, but rather that they're all connected to the big (measurable) mission of getting students up to speed on their learning. Yes, make buildings safe so students are present and learning. Yes, help students regain their emotional balance, while ensuring that corresponds to increases in attendance, homework completion and active participation in school. Having that North Star clearly communicates to everybody, from the superintendent to the classroom teacher and counselor, what they should pay attention to; what matters.

None of this would need to work as a gotcha. Measuring and tracking outcomes doesn't just let districts pivot when things aren't working as intended — it gives staff and students alike a much-needed chance to celebrate progress, even if they're still way behind where they want to be. This is the way to learn what works. This is how we learn from each other. And this is how to ensure that the money helps kids. It tells them: We're here for you. We'll figure this out.

Dr. Marguerite Roza is [research professor at Georgetown University](#) and director of the [Edunomics Lab](#), a research center exploring and modeling complex education finance decisions to inform policy and practice. She leads the McCourt School of Public Policy's [Certificate in Education](#)

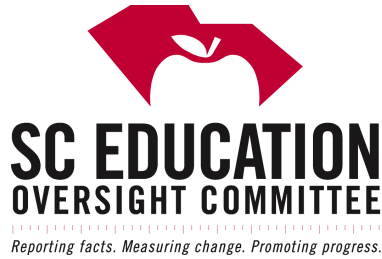
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News – For Immediate for Release

July 20, 2022

Sen. Ross Turner appointed to EOC

Columbia, SC – The Honorable Ross Turner, an SC State Senator serving Greenville County residents in Senate District 8, has been appointed to serve as a member of the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC). Turner was appointed by Senator Greg Hembree, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, to serve as his designee.



"A strong public education system has and always will be critical to the future of South Carolina," Turner stated. "I look forward to serving on the EOC and the opportunity to make a long term difference in the lives of our school children."

Turner has represented District 8 since 2012. In addition to the Senate Education Committee, Turner serves on the Banking and Insurance; Corrections and Penology; Labor, Commerce and Industry; and Finance Committees. Turner serves as the Senate appointee to the State Infrastructure Bank.

A Greenville native, Turner graduated from Clemson University with a degree in financial management. Turner also serves on the Board of Trustees for the Peace Center of Greenville and is an alumni member of Leadership Greenville, Class of 33.

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

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