

South Carolina Whole Child Education Policy: A Preliminary Analysis

Accelerating a *systems approach* to deeper, more equitable learning outcomes for every student.



UofSC COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In Spring 2019, the Learning Policy Institute, in collaboration with a number of national research and policy partners, launched the Whole Child Policy Table to create a supportive context for whole child development work in America's public schools. The evidence assembled in this report builds out and employs a policy inventory for South Carolina policy leaders and practitioners to better understand and guide planning efforts to accelerate a *systems approach* to deeper, more equitable learning outcomes for every student. It is a first-of-its-kind analysis of how states can better understand the create the conditions necessary for a system of whole child education.

The authors also want to acknowledge the insights of Anita Zucker (Chair of the Board) and Phyllis Martin (CEO) of the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative, based in Charleston, SC, with whom we are now partnering to advance a whole child/whole community system of education in South Carolina. We so appreciate Anita writing the forward to the report.

The authors also are grateful for the thoughtful review from some of South Carolina's leading education policy leaders and practitioners, including Donna Barton, Melanie Barton, Sally Cauthen, Matthew Ferguson, Debbie Hamm, and Peggy Torrey. They were essential to the process, and we wish we could have spent more time with them and others before putting together this first-of-its-kind state-level whole child policy analysis. We thank them for the care and attention they gave the report; any shortcomings remain our own.

We came to this task recognizing the complexity of the undertaking, knowing that we will not get it totally right. Collective action needed for whole child education requires collective knowledge of our foundations upon which to build, gaps to close, and opportunities to leverage. The children of South Carolina and across the nation deserve no less.

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ABOUT ALL4SC

ALL4SC (Accelerating Learning and Leadership for South Carolina) seeks to rally, focus and help direct UofSC capacities and capabilities to assist communities in the transformation of schooling in South Carolina into a system of equitable, inclusive community-supported schools, actively engaged in supporting the development of the whole child from cradle to career to lives of high integrity, self-directed learners with world-class skills.

ABOUT SC-TEACHER

The purpose of SC-TEACHER is to understand, through comprehensive research, the impact of recruitment, preparation, and retention policies and practices on teacher effectiveness in South Carolina, as well as advance the teaching profession.

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FOREWORD

Every child should have every opportunity to succeed in life. Our public schools play a critical role in ensuring that they do. However, many of us in the business community have come to realize too many children, especially those who are most vulnerable, need far more social, emotional, and physical health services than K-12 teachers and administrators can provide.

As a former teacher and business leader, I have seen the power and potential of how local and state policy can fuel the public-private partnerships and the cradle-to-career system of education designed to lift up every child. The future of education requires both social safety nets and entrepreneurship. Not one or the other.

I have seen first-hand the importance of how our universities can serve as a catalyst for change. Forward-looking institutions are drawing on all of their assets not just to improve, but also to transform how educators and researchers work together in service of children and their families. I am proud of the work of my alma mater, the University of Florida College of Education (at the Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies), which draws on an interdisciplinary team of faculty to work with communities so every child experiences nurturing, responsive early learning experiences. We need the same approach for every young person throughout their entire education, from cradle to career.

I applaud the University of South Carolina and the leadership of ALL4SC in advancing whole child/whole community education. They are creating a new pathway for the future of education. The comprehensive analysis by the ALL4SC team at UofSC points to our state's successes and opportunities as well as our challenges – setting the stage for the innovative policy roadmap that South Carolina needs. They also report that we have more to learn from what is already working in whole child education in South Carolina by focusing on what a whole child system of education looks like from the perspective of students and parents, and the frontline professionals who serve them.

The Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative has committed to partner with the UofSC to align our efforts and work together rather than in isolation. Through collaboration, we can achieve more. Across America, collective impact efforts have improved educational outcomes. This same type of collaboration holds great promise in South Carolina communities where so many are committed to helping every child succeed.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." We must heed his words as the future prospects for every young person depend on all of us to build a new system of public education that is effective, equitable, and efficient for everyone.

*– Anita Zucker, Chair and CEO, The InterTech Group, Inc.,
and Chair, Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative*



Introduction

// When it comes to education reform, it is time for no more nibbling around the edges of school improvement. Everyone wants reform, but too few want the system reformed. It is time for transformation.

– A legislative leader, South Carolina General Assembly (2021)

NOW IS THE TIME FOR WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

More children ready for school. More high school graduates ready for post-secondary education. More opportunities for students to succeed in life, and economic mobility for everyone. This is the essence of whole child education – and it is for *every child*.

Whole child education connects and supports a young person’s academic learning by also attending to their social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and mental health development and needs.

The implementation of whole child education ideally anchors schools as hubs of their communities. It is a more effective and cost-efficient system of schooling that draws on cross-sector partnerships to ensure that all students reach their full potential and have the knowledge and skills to succeed in life and career. Whole child education builds a new education ecosystem co-created by young people and their families in partnership with educators both in and out of the PK-12 system.

The whole child approach builds on decades of research from the science of learning and development that defines the environments and experiences that children need to thrive.¹

The science has made clear that the variability in human development is the norm, not the exception. The pace and profile of each child’s development is unique. Adversity affects learning – and the way schools respond matters.² Students don’t learn in a vacuum. Physical conditions matter as does a student’s emotional state. Both have a direct impact on the learning centers of the brain and the ability to engage in the process of learning.³

Unfortunately, most schools organize their resources “around a mythical ‘average’ student and are not designed to serve the interests, abilities, and needs of each and every child.”⁴ Teachers and principals, their preparation and support for their continued development as professionals, are essential to student learning. However, schools alone cannot do the work of ensuring every student is college- or career-ready.

Schools alone cannot close achievement gaps. Researchers, for some time, have shown that most of the student achievement gap can be explained by out of school factors.⁵ And schools need to focus on more than academic achievement if students are to succeed academically and in

The Whole Child Education Movement is Growing

There are powerful examples of whole child education across the United States and the globe. One nearby example is in Georgia where several state agencies are [developing a shared vision](#) for whole child education and [collecting data](#) that inform policy and practice.

North Carolina, as part of its “healthy schools” initiative, has proposed efforts to improve the health of students (and teachers) by providing coordination and resources within the context of the [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model](#).

In Ohio, the [Each Child, Our Future](#) education reform strategy is anchored in cross-sector partnership to ensure life success for every student.

South Carolina has several examples of communities beginning to put together the pieces of whole child education. One such program is the Spartanburg Academic Movement which is part of the StriveTogether national network. Also, First Steps is providing leadership to bring agencies’ resources and programs together to serve the state’s youngest children and their families.

life. This does not mean teachers and principals need to do more than they are now. Not at all. In the future, schools must work more closely with their communities, businesses, and other agencies in personalizing learning so all students can reach their full potential. Partnerships among PK-12 school communities and other child- and youth-serving systems (early childhood, afterschool, juvenile justice, health, and other fields) are now indispensable.

The pandemic – which has laid bare colossal inequities in opportunities for young people to thrive as well as learn – has made a system of whole child education more important. And connecting the social, emotional, and academic parts of learning has never been more essential – for every child. The pandemic, and school closures beginning in March 2020, have wreaked havoc on almost everyone – and clearly disrupted schooling for educators and the children and families they serve. Now the federal government is offering states an unprecedented infusion of dollars to schools to address the immense academic and social emotional challenges of their students.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S CURRENT APPROACH TO WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

South Carolina's 1,200 public schools (in 79 districts and two statewide charter authorizers) serve about 774,000 students, of which over 61 percent are high needs (i.e., eligible for Medicaid, SNAP, TANF, or are homeless, transient, or in foster care). Slightly less than 1 in 2 students are white, while 33 and 11 percent are Black and Hispanic, respectively. About one in six students goes to school in a rural community. According a 2017 Brookings Institute report, South Carolina has the sixth lowest percentage of rural students taking at least one Advanced Placement course (14 percent) and the eleventh lowest graduation rate for rural students.⁶

In many ways, the South Carolina is no different than many states when it comes to the need for whole child education. Consider these out of school factors, identified by the SC Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children, that undermine students' capacity to learn and educators' capacity to teach them.

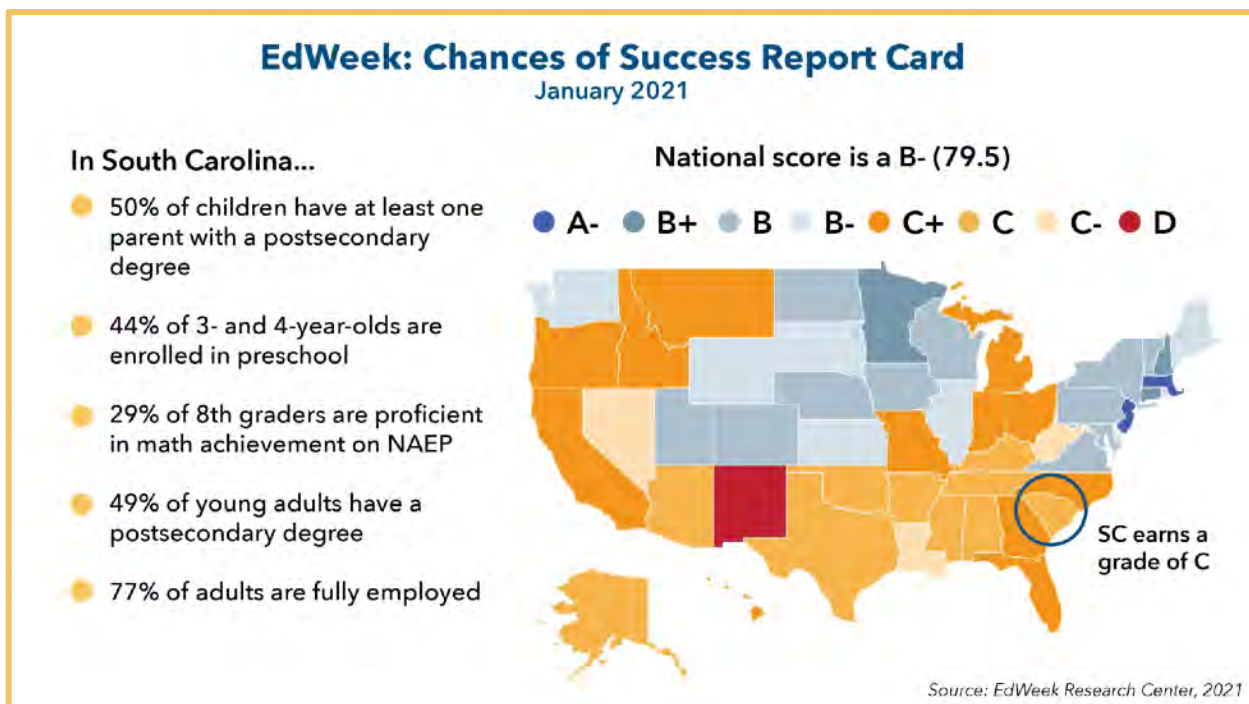
- One in six (or 178,710) children in South Carolina are food insecure – numbers that are growing due to the pandemic-induced unemployment.
- Over 12,000 students experienced homelessness in 2017-19, and another unidentified 34,000 were estimated to be without a home.
- Over 40 percent of South Carolinians live in childcare deserts – a term used to describe a Census tract of more than 50 children under the age of five where there are no childcare providers.
- In 2019, about 10 percent of the 15,000 children referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice were for status offenses (truancy, curfew violation, etc.) reflecting underlying personal, family, or community problems, not criminal ones.⁷

Like many other states, South Carolina has many of the pieces of whole child education. The state is already home to cutting-edge collaborations. Examples include:

- The [Early Childhood Advisory Council](#) works with eight state agencies and focuses on Birth to Five.
- The [Beaufort County Human Services Alliance](#) connects 60 local agencies and non-profits and its local school district to support integrated services. The [Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative](#) and [Spartanburg Academic Movement](#) have developed whole child models as well.
- In 2015, the South Carolina Department of Education led the work to develop the [Profile of the SC Graduate](#) to begin [personalizing learning](#) for every student in South Carolina to transcend the “one-size-fits-all” approach to education.

However, in most parts of South Carolina, many of the pieces sit in siloed agencies and school districts. In interviews for this policy paper, policy leaders and practitioners said that fragmented rules and regulations favor compliance over competence, competition over collaboration, and reactive responses over preventive strategies. Governmental agencies and non-profits, with incentives to independently serve more youth and families, push helping professionals in early childhood, PK-12, afterschool, and postsecondary teaching environments to work only inside of their organizational siloes.

Since 2018, the state has improved its grades on *Education Week’s* Chances of Success national report card from a score of 74.6 in 2018 to a 75.9 in 2021. The grading system, drawing on 13 measures from early childhood to PK-12 academic achievement to adult outcomes, shows South Carolina scoring a C.



On these indicators, South Carolina is better off than New Mexico and is only slightly behind Georgia and North Carolina. However, the state is considerably below Massachusetts graded at 91.6. The national average is 79.5.

South Carolina has not had a comprehensive approach to school reform since the [Education Improvement Act](#) of the 1980s. Led by then-Governor Richard Riley and a business community that raised deep concerns about the scarcity of well-prepared workers, the reform package was seen as “ideal” – for its time.⁸ As one policy leader noted:

The EIA was right for its time, but it was almost 30 years ago, and it would not be seen as comprehensive and transformative today.

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION IN SC THROUGH A WHOLE CHILD APPROACH

The global pandemic disrupted the schooling of children everywhere. The dramatic pivot to remote teaching exposed profound inequities in education and in the *out-of-school* factors essential to student outcomes, such as the basic health of children and their families, food and housing security, and access to internet. In South Carolina, the state Department of Education released a [report](#) using [school report card](#) data. The report found that from 2019 to 2021 student test scores beginning in the third grade decreased in nearly all areas with the exception of English 1 end-of-course exams. In small rural school communities, the negative impact on student well-being and access to opportunity was more profound. For example, between 2019 and 2021, Lee County School District eighth grade students who met or exceeded grade-level expectations in English/language arts plummeted by about 70 percent. Another [report](#) revealed that in Dorchester District 4, about 33 percent of the district’s 2,200 students had limited or no access to the internet. The trauma induced by the pandemic led school districts, like [Greenville](#), to recognize and invest more in the mental health needs of students. These data are compelling. However, the pandemic also revealed the limitations of current measures of student learning as well as the lack of useful data on indicators of effective approaches to whole child education.

With the rapid changes in the global economy and the acceleration of artificial intelligence in every aspect of people’s lives, South Carolina needs this transformation in public education now more than ever. As a recent Brookings Institute report concluded:

Emerging from this global pandemic with a stronger public education system is an ambitious vision, and one that will require (reimagining) both financial and human resources.

Now is the time for a powered-up school, one that well serves the educational needs of children and youth, is one that puts a strong public school at the center of the community and leverages the most effective partnerships to help learners grow and develop a broad range of competencies and skills.⁹

Over the last 30 years, South Carolina has made progress, and education reform in the state has focused entirely on improving the current delivery system for K-12 education – and not on the needs of the whole child. No one state has put together and implemented a comprehensive whole child education strategy that brings together people and programs from different agencies and school districts to drive more effective and cost-efficient outcomes for young people.

However, neighboring states of Georgia and North Carolina, as well as Ohio and Maryland, do have efforts underway. [Ohio's Whole Child Framework](#) is a blueprint to meet students' social emotional, physical and safety needs, which are foundational to a child's intellectual and social development and necessary for students to fully engage in learning and school. With a shared vision and policy framework established by the bi-partisan, Kirwin Commission, Maryland's legislature passed the state's [Blueprint for Success](#) in February 2021.

Across the nation, business leaders are calling for a new kind of schooling. These efforts focus less on standardized test scores designed to measure 20th century academic outcomes and focus more on deeper learning and the soft skills young people need for the technologically-fueled jobs of tomorrow.

The Science of Learning and Development Alliance has worked to synthesize the evidence on how children learn. The Alliance's goal is to lay out a road map for transformational systemic change in education. This science points specifically to how teaching, learning, and schooling should be redesigned. It also sheds light on how various agencies, schools and communities can share resources to ensure that every student can and will succeed academically.

THE ANALYSIS OF WHOLE CHILD POLICY IN SOUTH CAROLINA

This new science of learning serves as bedrock for this exploratory report to investigate whole child education in South Carolina – its foundations, opportunities, and gaps.

Over the last decade, a number of school reform reports have addressed specific aspects of South Carolina's education system. For example, in 2019, [KnowledgeWorks](#), a national non-profit based in Ohio, conducted an opportunity analysis for South Carolina, assessing state policies related to personalized, competency-based learning. The authors made several important recommendations related to building capacity, empowering student learning, cultivating systems change, and ensuring quality. The KnowledgeWorks team noted the need for South Carolina to "invest in efforts to identify, learn from, and scale successful whole child strategies."¹⁰

In this policy paper that builds on the KnowledgeWorks analysis, the University of South Carolina, working with the [Learning Policy Institute](#), developed a pilot process to assemble the preliminary evidence. This report focuses on five core elements derived from this [new science](#). These elements can help South Carolina education leaders develop policies supporting evidence-based practice in school communities:

(1) executing a whole child vision for teaching and learning; (2) transforming learning environments; (3) redesigning curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (4) building adult capacity and expertise; and (5) aligning resources efficiently and equitably (see Appendix A for policy grid for each of the five elements).

The analysis in this policy paper results from an extensive document review of over 200 policies and reports from the SC Department of Education, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, and other state agencies (including mental health, social services, and commerce, and higher education commission). Expert opinions from 45 policy and school district leaders and other practitioners as well as a small group of high school students added to the analysis (See Appendix B for more details regarding the methodology).

In this report, we present data and insights by each of the five elements. Each section begins with an overview of what that element entails and how whole child education policy is typically different from the current system. Next we present illustrations of the status whole child policies in the state, organized by themes that emerged in our review. Each section closes with a series of foundations upon which to build, gaps that need to be filled, and opportunities to leverage to advance whole child education in South Carolina.



WHAT THIS REPORT IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

This report is intended to help South Carolina policy makers, education leaders, and practitioners better understand how a state can assess its whole child education foundations, opportunities, and gaps. The insights gained from this analysis are a prelude to building a roadmap for transformation with students and parents along with practitioners and policymakers, and business and community leaders.

Our analysis is an illustrative assessment of where South Carolina, and its education policies, is when it comes to whole child education. In this sense we do have an agenda – where is our state when it comes to whole child education and how might we make progress toward building a system of education that is more student- and family-centered, more effective and efficient. How do we transform education in ways that bypass long-standing policies and programs that have nibbled around of the edges of school reform?

However, this report does not represent all of the questions that must be asked and answered. The assessment detailed herein is not exhaustive – by any stretch of the imagination. The pandemic limited access to people and resources. We have sought to draw on the most up-to-date data and reports available. Yet, we are certain that there will be omissions.

This type of analysis has yet to be conducted for any other state. There was no proven roadmap for us. We have been learning how to do this work by doing it. In addition, the narrative and preliminary conclusions

are meant to be discussion starters and the beginnings of the conversations that need to take place among policymakers and practitioners, business and community leaders, and most important students and their families – the ultimate beneficiaries of public education. We also believe that much more work needs to be done to identify and explore barriers that have been surfaced as well as ways innovators in our school communities are addressing them.

Over the next several years, South Carolina will receive nearly \$8.9 billion from the latest federal COVID-19 relief package – an amount that is almost equal to the state’s general fund budget. The SC Department of Education, with its [ESSER dollars](#) of over \$2 billion, is investing more in early learning, addressing academics needs of students (with high dosage tutoring to students, identified through data), and expanding summer and afterschool programs. When educators and their community partners, including those in colleges and universities, put these investments together, they are creating a whole child system of education. Governor Henry McMaster, speaking in early June 2021, said it well:

I think we could jump ahead 10 years or so if we’re really smart about it. It’s a lot of money. We need to use it wisely to make transformative, once-in-a-lifetime investments that allow us to compete nationally and globally in the future.¹¹

This infusion of federal funds can help fuel education transformation. Leadership for not only school improvement but also system change is essential. Individual programs and reforms can enhance opportunities for children, and many of these interventions have proven that intellect and achievement know no ZIP code. However, a schools-only approach to improving teaching and learning will not help all students be ready for college and the jobs of a global, information-age economy.

Now is time for transformation and whole child education. The next section explores available evidence and examples of how South Carolina is executing a whole child vision for teaching and learning for its public schools.

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Executing a Whole Child Vision

element one

// We need to figure out how to foster a culture of collaboration and intuitive innovation across-the-board – in our educator preparation programs, SCDE, boards, district administration, and in the classroom, and more. And we need to balance these innovations with a good dose of common sense.

– A South Carolina Policy Leader (2021)

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SHARED VISION

Researchers have pointed to the deep-rooted relationship between out-of-school factors and the outcomes on standardized student achievement tests.¹ Across America, the last 20 years of PK-12 school reform have focused on enacting more rigorous curriculum standards, evaluating teachers, and placing more emphasis on high-stakes accountability – but with little academic progress to show for it.² Student test score results continue to lag and the differences among various student groups remain wide.³

Policy leaders are beginning to recognize that a *schools only* approach to achieving excellence for all students will not work. Schools must become hubs of communities. For children to be ready to learn, they need a wide array of essential supports and opportunities outside of school.⁴ Studies conducted over 40 years have demonstrated the importance of “systemic supports” of whole child education (or community schooling) in producing positive outcomes for students.⁵

However, creating and sustaining “systemic supports” demand new forms of collaborative action among different agencies, both in and out of the PK-12 schools. As pointed out by the Harvard Education Redesign Lab, cross-sector collaboration for whole child education requires “commitment and leadership over many years” as well as “stakeholders working together in new ways, disrupting traditional silos.”⁶

Establishing a statewide whole child vision typically begins with convening stakeholders across agencies and youth serving organizations (including health, nutrition, housing, juvenile justice, social services) as well as educators; other helping professionals; community, faith, and business leaders; and students and their families. The vision or strategic plan should be grounded in the [science of learning and development](#) and provide a roadmap to support young people from birth to adulthood. The roadmap should include elements of academic, cognitive, social and emotional, identity, and ethical and moral development as well as mental and physical health.

Establishing a statewide whole child vision also includes developing a strategic plan for distributing resources, developing partnerships, and evaluating progress toward achieving the vision. However, establishing a vision for whole child education needs to include tools and processes to assess the conditions for learning and development for children and youth as well as investing in a statewide data system that spans cradle to career. Successful whole child shared vision-setting also includes providing information, time, coaching, and other support for educators, other youth-serving professionals, and state agency staff on data collection, analysis, and use. At the state level, many leaders are doing this work through coordinating councils, in some cases called children’s cabinets, that seek to align policy and practices in service of the whole child.

A 2019 Wallace Foundation report on the importance of cross-sector collaboration concluded:

Among the core values highlighted by proponents of cross-sector collaboration are a balanced assessment of what schools can and cannot do on their own, a preference for having government agencies pulling together rather than protecting their own spheres of influence, a recognition that communities that work together to expand opportunity and investment will make more headway than those that expend their energies competing, and a commitment to evidence as a tool for improvement and measurement as a means to determine what is getting done.⁷

Whole Child Education is Not About PK-12 Educators Doing More

Whole child education is about ensuring every child develops not only high-level cognitive skills in the core academic disciplines, but also the requisite problem-solving, communication, and critical thinking skills that the rapidly growing global economy demands. Whole child education is rooted in the basic skills that schools have always taught, but it involves a great deal more.

Executing a whole child vision is **not about** teachers and administrators doing more than they are today to serve a child's academic, cognitive, physical, and behavioral needs. Whole child education **is about** redesigning the way schools and community organizations and agencies work together to serve those needs and accelerate student (and family) outcomes. Executing a whole child vision will make the work of educators more possible and the ambitious educational goals of South Carolina more achievable.

In some ways South Carolina is way ahead of other states in executing a whole child vision – with its [Profile of the SC Graduate](#) plus an array of efforts to bring together different agencies to begin making the vision come alive in the state's public schools. The analysis surfaced a number of key policies related to establishing a shared vision and developing it through Birth to Five programs, making progress in cross-sector partnerships, and using data to inform collective action. South Carolina has several examples of alliances designed to support the whole child.

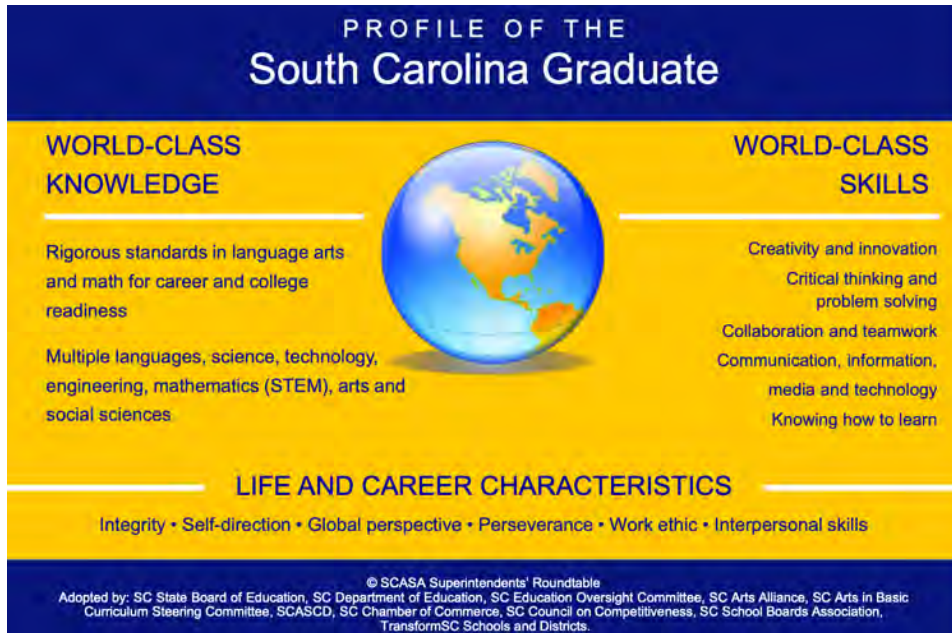
ESTABLISHING A SHARED VISION

In 2015, the State Board of Education with backing from the SC Chamber of Commerce and the SC Association of School Administrators, [approved](#) the Profile defining the knowledge, skills, and life and career characteristics that students must develop and demonstrate.

These include rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness, multiple languages, and STEM. The Profile also focuses on creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and teamwork, self-direction, work ethic, and global perspectives.

In 2017, the SC Department of Education created a diverse group of 700 education stakeholders to create competencies that emphasized student ownership, learning pathways, learner profiles, and flexible learning

environments aligned to the vision.⁸ The SCDE began to establish learning labs for educators to learn from each other.



With the Profile, the South Carolina created a bold vision for student-centered learning. Yet, many other elements of a whole child PK-12 system of education are not fully in place, or they are out of sync with each other. Although the state’s leading early childhood agencies and educators have made major strides toward moving from vision to action. However, like in many states, South Carolina does not yet have an integrated data system to report on progress and the shared accountability needed to ensure every child who graduates from high school is ready for college, career, and citizenship. This type of integrated data is a major missing piece in South Carolina’s efforts to realize a whole child vision for education.

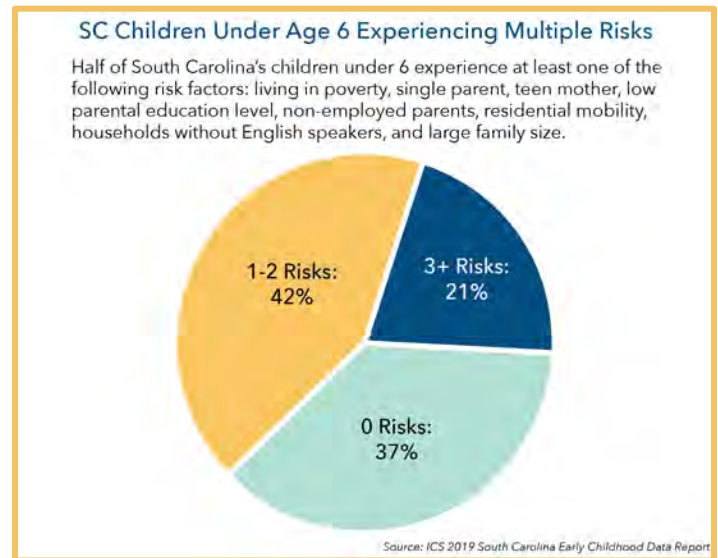
State agencies are working to coordinate, strengthen, and streamline services for children 0-5 across agencies and within communities. South Carolina has a strong foundation upon which to build – including the Profile as well as early childhood partnerships and the state’s longstanding efforts to establish an integrated student data system from cradle to career. In South Carolina, cross sector collaboration to serve the whole child is beginning to take shape, especially in early childhood, birth to age 5.

DEVELOPING A CRADLE TO CAREER VISION IN BIRTH TO 5

In South Carolina, a whole child vision for education has begun to emerge for the state’s 350,000 youngest children, from birth to age 5. In large part, the unique demographics and common risk factors facing the state’s youngest children are becoming more well known. For example, 1 in 4 children, birth to 5, live in poverty, and almost 30 percent are from low-income working families. Only 43 percent of the state’s families can afford infant care.⁹

Quality early childhood care is critical – given that that well over half of the state’s children under age 6 experience at least one risk factor that can readily suppress later academic achievement (see figure to the right).¹⁰

As of January 2019, there were about 2,500 licensed or registered childcare facilities in South Carolina – including religiously-affiliated, private, public, and home-based centers. All school districts in South Carolina offer some form of 4-year-old kindergarten. However, 50 percent of the state’s 3- and 4-year-olds are not enrolled in any preschool program.



Governor McMaster has proposed expanding state funded early childhood for every South Carolina school to ensure that all children from low-income families can attend full-day 4-year-old kindergarten.¹¹ Pre-kindergarten access in the state also will grow under this spending plan as budget writers added \$33.9 million for the program for 4-year-olds. This funding would allow for every school district in the state to have a needs-based 4K program. Before the 2021-22 school year, 21 of the state’s 81 school districts still did not have full-day 4K program.¹²

The SCDE has established a [wide array of efforts](#) to support kindergarteners – and their readiness for school (including the [Profile of the Ready Kindergartner](#)). State law requires the State Board of Education to adopt and administer a school readiness assessment.¹³ And the 2020-21 General Appropriation Act directs the SCDE to spend up to \$2 million in Education Improvement Act funds to administer the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to “each child entering kindergarten in the public schools.”¹⁴

In 1999, the state legislature established South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, a state agency intended to help improve school readiness for the state’s youngest learners, with a “results-oriented” and “public-private” approach. The agency offers services that improve children’s health, strengthen families, expand access to quality childcare, increase participation in 4-year-old kindergarten programs, and help transition rising kindergartners to school.¹⁵

The SC Department of Social Services, with its focus on birth to 5, has created an array of early care and education programs, supported in part by state and federal funding, including Head Start. The agency regulates approximately 3,000 childcare facilities to help providers build healthy, safe environments for children. DSS has established “good start, grow smart” early learning standards. DSS leadership has established South Carolina’s Quality Rating and Improvement System– which is mandatory for early childhood providers receiving a subsidy, with a goal of increasing transparency of quality of care.

However, only 50 percent of the state’s childcare centers participate in the QRIS – which measures quality indicators such as teacher-child interactions, classroom environment, family engagement, and staff educational attainment.¹⁶

The South Carolina-based [Institute of Child Success](#) produces critical data on the environmental factors impacting children ages 8 and under in South Carolina as compared to neighboring states North Carolina, Georgia, and the nation. ICS established a common early childhood agenda in 2019, with the [United Way Association of South Carolina](#), and [Children’s Trust of South Carolina](#) urging state leaders to support working families and improve access to high-quality preschool and child care, to improve student outcomes as well as keep children out of the child welfare system.¹⁷

Since 2015, the state has required that school districts administer the [Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#) to incoming kindergarteners to measure social foundations, mathematics, and well-being.¹⁸ In 2019, 39 percent of South Carolina’s children were at the KRA Demonstrating Readiness level, increasing 2 percent from the previous year. At the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, 48,521 kindergartners across the state took a modified KRA due to the pandemic. Approximately 27 percent of them tested at the “demonstrating readiness” level. The differences in the readiness between children living in low-income households (18 percent) and those in higher income homes (40 percent) was large.¹⁹ Other efforts, for example with the [Spartanburg Academic Movement](#), draw on the Early Development Instrument as a tool for measuring school readiness, which has been used for educators as well as community engagement for collective action.

Interviews revealed that different agencies have different visions for quality early childhood education, including what counts for developmentally appropriate practices. As one policy leader noted:

There is a disconnect between the profile of the high school graduate and the profile of a kindergartener. Some say we don’t spend time thinking about mathematical and critical thinking skills before the age of 5. Conversely, others say we don’t enough spend time on social emotional development after kindergarten.

First Steps, working with DSS and SCDE, is working to establish a whole child education vision (and coordinated action) for serving children from birth to 5. The aligned efforts are fueled by the South Carolina Early Childhood Advisory Council and funded through a federal grant which was renewed in 2020. Through this grant, state agencies are beginning to align the state, local, and federal systems with a unified birth through 5 vision for South Carolina (see [PPT](#).)

This grant is supporting the Early Childhood Advisory Council’s work to map a variety of services different agencies offer and will help identify opportunities for different state and federal programs to coordinate and collaborate. The ECAC is beginning the difficult work of mapping (see visual [here](#)) an array of programs

available to young children and their families so they can navigate a variety of agencies, websites, and funding to access high-quality early childhood.

In June 2020, DSS, SCDOE, and SC First Steps pooled funding to create and support the [Palmetto Pre-K portal](#). In addition, the Early Childhood Advisory Council is working on a strategy for [integrating early childhood](#) data in South Carolina – and currently including two initiatives, the Early Learning Extension and an update to [SC Profile](#). The efforts of the ECAC are a strong example of how a state’s birth to 5 sector can create a structure for diverse stakeholders to evaluate gaps in cross-sector services and issue guidance on how state agencies can coordinate and streamline services. In addition, the ECAC is now officially a part of a [national network](#) of state-level children’s cabinets that are typically made up of the heads of all government agencies with child- and youth-serving programs.²⁰

Also, DSS, through the [Build Initiative](#), has started to rethink revenue generation and allocation in the early care of children. With leadership from the state’s new director of DSS, a national public/private partnership selected South Carolina in late 2020, for a new, first-of-its-kind national program to redesign the state’s child welfare program in a child and family wellbeing system.

In addition, the federally funded Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership and Early Head Start Expansion Awards (in Columbia, Greenwood, Lancaster, North Charleston, and Spartanburg) are beginning to bring together school districts, First Steps, Head Start resources, and people to form *community hubs* of services and supports for children, families, and providers.

MAKING PROGRESS IN CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

A decade ago, a seminal Stanford Social Innovation Review article made the case that “large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations.”²¹ Cross-sector collaboration in education points to a “balanced assessment of what schools can and cannot do on their own” and a preference for “government agencies pulling together rather than protecting their own spheres of influence.”²²

A number of other statewide efforts seek to align child and family services. While the list below of cross-sector, whole child approaches is not inclusive, it does suggest a number of ways South Carolina can begin establishing a more seamless system of education through cross-sector collaboration in and out of schools.

- South Carolina has [14 community action agencies](#) around the state – many of them are Head Start grantees. They support cross-sector collaboration in local communities in more effectively delivering early care, housing, energy assistance and efficiency programs, crisis and case management, employment, income management, and nutrition as well as youth and senior programs.

- [SC Thrive](#) partners with organizations that provide direct services to people and communities. It has built [Thrive Hub](#), a web-based platform to help their clients “move from crisis to sustainability,” and they also help organizations employ all of their assets through a referral network.
- The [South Carolina Department of Children’s Advocacy](#), established by the SC General Assembly in 2019, champions advocacy, accountability, and service to improve outcomes for children served by nine state agencies. The department oversees the Guardian ad Litem Program, Foster Care Review Board and the Continuum of Care with a focus on providing intensive care coordination for youth.
- The [Children’s Trust](#) is the statewide organization focused on preventing child abuse, neglect, and injury. It has evolved over the years by bringing together an array of child-serving non-profits and building coalitions to serve young people and their families. The Children’s Trust organizes and works with the Annie E. Casey Foundation in support of the SC Kids Count report where the state ranks 41st in the nation in child well-being.

The Children’s Trust supports the [Nurse-Family Partnership](#), a home visiting program model that provides nurses for ongoing home visits for low-income, first-time moms. The nurses provide information about the care and support the new mothers can receive to have a healthy pregnancy, and they share resources related to child health and development, early education, and home safety. The [Strengthening Family Partnership](#) focuses on caretakers with children ages 6 to 11. During 14 weekly sessions, families learn how to develop positive discipline practices; stay resilient in tough times; improve communications skills; and assist children with social skills, relationships, and school performance.²³

However, this analysis revealed that, outside of the early childhood sector, there are few mechanisms to track policies and programs that are serving (or could serve) the whole child. South Carolina has no shortage of efforts by agencies and non-profits to support whole child/family service delivery. Yet, there are few policies and investments to ensure these efforts fit strategically within a comprehensive plan that addresses the needs of the whole child and family. Interviews revealed a number of reasons for these disconnects – most notably how each of these agencies are funded and how they compete to serve as many children and families as possible. As one policy leader noted:

We have a glut of non-profits, especially in the early childhood space. There are few incentives for them to work together. But in many ways, what keeps us from collective impact is more about organizational egos than even the lack of coherent policy.

In addition, a number of missed opportunities in the state – like Medicaid expansion – curtail opportunities to ensure more children are healthier. These missed opportunities also impact how schools can use these

federal dollars to pay for health services such as vision and dental screenings as part of a whole child approach to education.

For example, children covered by Medicaid are more likely to graduate from high school and college, have higher wages, and pay more in taxes as adults.²⁴ Researchers have found that “financing health insurance coverage is an effective education policy reform.”²⁵ According to Institute for Child Success, the national average for of Medicaid enrollees who are children is 43 percent. South Carolina is above the national average at 59 percent, but behind Georgia at 64 percent and North Carolina at 66 percent.²⁶ A policy leader who has followed and supported school reform in South Carolina for decades said:

We have to make sure everyone understands that the long-term solutions require cross-sector collaboration that we just do not have now.

USING DATA TO INFORM AND EXECUTE THE VISION

South Carolina’s 1200+ public schools collect and use a wide variety of data. The state uses PowerSchool, a single student information system, in all of the school districts to support the collection, storage and use of the required student data elements. For example, PowerSchool provides the data storage for students’ grades, attendance, demographics, and schedules. PowerSchool tracks student performance data and can serve as a tool to organize instruction within a district. However, interviews revealed that using the tool for integrated data to measure other non-academic factors is not common, and “often requires an additional investment by the school district.”

As discussed in Element 3, the state’s school report card does not address the extent to which students have access to rich learning experiences and opportunities – inside and outside of the traditional school day. The report card does surface some evidence related to general school climate and culture measures, such as discipline and chronic absenteeism data. However, these indicators do not point to the kind of learning environments that support whole child education (see Element 2). And currently there appears to be few indicators related to students’ access to and uses of technology and virtual learning opportunities.

Integrated Data Needed Now More Than Ever

The issue of integrating data becomes even more critical following pandemic-induced disruptions in teaching, learning, and caring for students. In the summer of 2020, a joint-data collection effort by SCDE, the SC Department of Social Services and SC Department of Mental Health revealed that, since the beginning of the pandemic, more than 7,400 South Carolina students were missing from school.

However, South Carolina is well positioned to establish a statewide data system that spans from a child’s birth to career entry. In the early 1990s, the (then) South Carolina Budget and Control Board received a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to link patient and client data with administrative data to develop a more granular understanding of trends and outcomes in the healthcare system. The grant, as a 2014 study revealed, “gave staff a reason to convene partners across a wide array of agencies and the

resources to complete the initial demonstrations of the integrated data system.”²⁷ Currently, the South Carolina Education Data System, as part of a nationwide effort and managed by the SCDE, can create and analyze public education data at the individual, course, institution, and system levels.²⁸

Despite progress, different rules and interpretations regarding the use and sharing of data stifle the effective policy analysis essential to understanding and transforming learning environments. Interviews revealed that concerns about privacy and confidentiality – HIPPA related to health and FERPA related to education – are the public reasons why little progress has been made. Yet, the interviews also revealed that there are too few incentives for agencies to collect and use data that may reveal weaknesses in certain programs. One policy leader said:

When it comes to education in South Carolina, our policy leaders are the worst investors. We find a great program, pass a policy, pour money into it, and then step away from it. We never study it. We never improve it. It is as if we are scared to look at data and performance.

Another policy leader noted:

The [Economic Development Act of 2005](#) set the stage for South Carolina to develop the kind of data system needed for what you are calling whole child education. However, we have seen resistance from both the (political) far right and far left about developing the data system that you are asking about. The far right folks are concerned about data that will make big brother government bigger, and the far left people are more concerned about tracking kids and privacy.

Interviews also pointed to several examples of how different researchers from different universities and institutes are involved in assembling integrated data. For example, with support from The Duke Endowment, the [Institute for Families in Societies](#) of the University of South Carolina led an interdisciplinary birth to 5 data project– [CHARGED3](#) – to identify relevant geographic patterns, at-risk areas, and community resources. The data system assembled includes information on birth outcomes and mortality, the ratio of children to child-serving primary care providers, food deserts by census tract, primary care health professional shortage areas), adverse childhood experiences, and more.

Also, the UofSC School of Public Health has received funding from the Duke Endowment to assess the state landscape to address social determinants of health. This includes assembling diverse data sources and developing a roadmap that focuses on local and state level efforts to address the underlying conditions affecting youth and families more effectively in the state.

At the same time, the Early Childhood Advisory Council is engaged in some of the same work to also build an integrated data system by supporting a [Birth through 5 Statewide Needs Assessment](#) funded by a USDOE Preschool Development Grant.

The process has led to important policy questions to determine statewide priorities/needs in three areas: early learning and development, health and well-being, and family and community.

The Early Childhood Advisory Council

Questions that an Integrated Data System Needs to Answer

- Where are the vulnerable and underserved children and families and what are their characteristics? *Including a specific focus on rural areas in SC, minority communities and undocumented families.*
- Who and where are the children being served and those awaiting services (unduplicated counts and waitlists)?
- Are South Carolina's children on track to succeed starting at birth?
 - Are they ready for kindergarten / demonstrate readiness in multiple domains?
- Where are the children located who are receiving necessary support services to ensure school readiness and success?
 - Are services available and are families using them?
 - Are there other opportunities, programs, and services they are eligible to participate in?
- What is the availability of high-quality early childhood education services and where are they located?
 - Are there differences in availability for different age groups (specifically, infant care)?
 - Are there differences in availability and support for children with special needs and behavior challenges?
- What are the rates of successful transitions across programs, along the continuum of birth-through-five services?

Source: Early Childhood Advisory Council

As one researcher who works with large data sets noted:

Much more work needs to be done to integrate siloed work and large volumes of data from diverse sources, ensure standardization and quality management of the data as well as take advantage of artificial intelligence and machine learning-based analyses for both policy and practice.

A policy leader said:

School districts hold a great deal of information about and data relating to PK-12 students. However, this information/data is not shared with people who work with the younger children.

BUILDING ALLIANCES FOR WHOLE CHILD / WHOLE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

In South Carolina, a number of promising county-wide and cross-school district and community collaboratives are well underway. National studies have found that despite a number of challenges, cross-sector collaborations “show promise for creating a new kind of venue to bring local partners together who often have not cooperated in the past and have even been in conflict.”²⁹ The state has a number of education consortia that offer ways for different school systems to learn from each other.

The [Low Country Education Consortium](#) supports multiple districts to share resources and talent for virtual learning academies, so each does not have to reinvent the wheel of innovation.

The [Beaufort County Human Services Alliance](#) brings together over 60 agencies and organizations for collective impact in addressing local needs of a community that includes a school district serving more than 25,000 students. The Alliance resulted from the long-standing work (since the mid-1990s) of the Collaborative Organization of Services for Youth. According to a policy leader, Beaufort County Schools

under a new superintendent has become a “major player” in developing the cross-sector collaboration needed to fuel whole child education strategies.

Most notably, the [Spartanburg Academic Movement](#) developed an “all-in partnership” of education, business, government, foundation, community, and faith leaders across their county. The partnership works in “pursuit of high levels of academic success for ALL of our children.” The SAM, which launched in 2008 as part of [StriveTogether](#) network, has its own data and developed what they call “shared case management” that establishes achievement goals for each learning stage and uses county-wide data to measure performance. SAM, with its collective impact model, may be on the cusp of establishing a comprehensive approach to whole child and whole community education. With its \$5.6 million investment from [Blue Meriden Partners](#), SAM is expanding its existing work inside of schools to building economic mobility through neighborhood partnerships and equitable access to resources in housing and for health.

In addition, the [Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative](#), launched in 2015, expanded its mission from school improvement to education transformation by creating a birth to postsecondary network to address the persistent and systemic educational inequities in the school communities of Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties. TCCC has joined the StriveTogether collective impact framework to create “a common vision, using data to hold each other accountable, taking collective action, and advocating for equitable, systemic change.”

In the spring of 2021, [ALL4SC](#) launched the [Whole Child Education Consortium](#) – comprised of Fairfield, Marlboro, and Berkeley counties– to develop prototype whole child cradle to career systems of schooling in these high need school communities. ALL4SC will be partnering with Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative and SAM as other districts are expressing interest in whole child education with schools as the hub of the community.

At the heart of whole child education is the emphasis on children learning in a positive school climate that simultaneously supports their academic, physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Various South Carolina state agencies, including SCDE, SCDMH and DSS as well as early childhood agencies, have started moving programs toward more whole child and whole family approaches of support. South Carolina Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman has established two new offices inside of the SCDE – one with a focus on students’ mental health and the other on social emotional learning. In addition, the Health and Social Rehabilitation General Fund portion of the State Budget increased 8 percent between FY 00-01 and FY 19-20, perhaps setting the stage for more aligned policy among social, health, and education agencies. However, the state will need to determine how to align policies in the historical context of decentralized schooling. As one policy leader said:

Whole child means more coordination and alignment, but South Carolina has a such a long history of decentralized education policy and practice.

A shared vision – fueled by more coherent policy and more stable, transparent funding – is the building block of whole child education that closes achievement and opportunity gaps and ensures every child meets the expectations of the Profile of the SC Graduate. Interviews with policy leaders suggested better communication can ensure a consistent understanding among key stakeholders as to what whole child education is – and what it is not. One policy leader noted:

Our business leaders are helping to shift the narrative, – and I believe more people are beginning to understand how investment in whole child can lead to greater impact economically.

Another policy leader said the definition of whole child education needs more clarification. He noted:

I believe most policy leaders and educators can support whole child education, but we need to make sure everyone is on the same page about what the concept really means.

Despite considerable foundations for whole child education, different state agencies – including education, social services, mental health, and juvenile justice – have established various visions for how they view and serve children and their families. Interviews suggested that different regulations for different agencies with different funding streams can lead to fragmentation and division, not coordinated and streamlined services. And in some instances, the current accountability systems may get in the way of shared vision and action for whole child education. As one policy leader noted:

Agencies are expected to focus on quantity, or numbers of children or families served. It is about how many seats did you fill. How many brochures did you distribute. There is little accountability for performance, and for the agencies and non-profits to work together.

South Carolina has some of the vision for whole child education in place. However, as the LPI playbook on whole child policy and practice noted, “There is no one formula for creating and sustaining these environments, but key structures can increase equity of experience, opportunity, and outcomes for all students.”³⁰

This analysis captures three foundations to build upon, three gaps to fill, and four opportunities to leverage.

The Essential Question: How can the state’s emerging Birth to 5, cross-sector agency partnerships serve as a model in firmly establishing a shared vision for whole child education, from early childhood to postsecondary?

Foundations

- A vision for whole child education can be anchored in part by the Profile of SC Graduate and its focus on competency-based, personalized education
- The [Education and Economic Development Act of 2005](#) and the policies supporting the South Carolina Education Data System
- Eight youth-facing state agencies serving Birth to 5 under the [Early Childhood Advisory Council](#) (ECAC)

Gaps

- Different agencies have their own visions, leading to fragmentation, division, and lack of coordination and collaboration
- Too few local examples of whole child system change are known and well documented to serve as pictures of practices for SC
- Integrated data are available, but they remain largely siloed in different agencies with limited incentives and mechanisms to use in a cradle to career system of education

Opportunities

- **Expand** on the work of ECAC to establish a similar body to align for K-12 serving agencies
- **Study and scale** community-based models such as [Spartanburg Academic Movement](#), [Tri-County Cradle to Career](#), [Beaufort County Human Service Alliance](#), and the recent development of ALL4SC’s [Whole Child Education Consortium](#) (as well as others that are continuing to surface)
- **Assist** school communities in using federal American Rescue Plan ESSER funds, which totaled over \$3 billion, to fuel whole child education innovations
- **Leverage** efforts to integrate data to advance cross-agency collaboration for whole child education

A shared vision for whole child education is a start but not sufficient. Element #2 explores the extent to which South Carolina has policies in place to advance transformed learning environments.

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Transforming Learning Environments

element two

// South Carolina has a lot of student discipline policy, but virtually no behavioral health policy.

– An education leader in South Carolina (2021)

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSFORMING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The [science of learning](#) points to how a young person's learning environment and their cultural context shape their brain architecture –impacting how they learn and develop. This same science also makes clear that strong, trusting relationships are essential to learning and development. States can support districts and schools in redesigning learning environments in a number of ways.

First, states can prioritize strong, stable relationships between students, staff, families, and caregivers by rethinking policies and providing guidance on removing impediments to and supports for relationship-centered school designs. This would include staffing structures and providing training, time, support, and funding for consistent communication between school and home.

Second, states can provide guidance (and create standards) that promote identity-safe schools and classrooms that foster diverse and inclusive learning environments (in-person, hybrid and virtual) as well as promote the use of evidence-based, data-driven approaches to improve school climate and foster strong relationships, community, and well-being.

Third, states can adopt and invest in evidence-based school discipline practices that are part of comprehensive mental and behavioral health services. State policy can promote approaches that develop skills among teachers and other adults serving children (including School Resource Officers and afterschool providers) which might include proactive skills for managing conflict and behavioral issues.

Fourth, states can invest in integrated systems of support to better serve the holistic needs of students and families/caregivers to identify existing community assets, adopt evidence-based integrated student support frameworks, and promote the use of early warning indicator systems to provide targeted services for students. States can also develop and incentivize local coordinating bodies as well as the development of [community schools](#) that integrate academic learning with the social, physical, and behavioral supports with agencies and organizations outside of the PK-12 education system.

Finally, states can provide high-quality expanded learning time to close opportunity and enrichment gaps by funding and supporting high quality expanded learning programs. This may include investments to expand before and after school programs that provide enriched learning, work-based and civic engagement opportunities, summer learning programs, and tutoring. States can invest in these programs in ways that also facilitate necessary communication and collaboration between in-school and out-of-school partners.

Over the last several years, South Carolina decision-makers have developed a range of incentives and supports for school districts and schools to accelerate a focus on prioritizing positive, caring, and consistent

relationships among students, staff, families, and communities. Notably, in May 2018, South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster signed Act 213 that requires the SC Department of Education to provide training for a statewide multi-tiered system of support framework. The law says the framework must contain a common data-based problem-solving model, on-going student assessment, and a layered continuum of supports using evidence-based practices. The SCDE has led a number of initiatives, including task forces dedicated to supporting the needs of students with learning disabilities – using nationally-recognized and evidence-based models (e.g., [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support](#) and [Universal Design for Learning](#)).

However, as the analysis revealed, state education policy focuses far more on disciplining students than on their behavioral health. South Carolina has a patchwork of learning environment policies; albeit some communities and schools have established evidence-based whole child learning environments. South Carolina seems to have no shortage of examples of more restorative approaches to school discipline and the mental health of children. Yet in South Carolina, children of color are far more likely to receive harsh discipline than their white peers. The interviews revealed that South Carolina educators have access to a great deal of data, including on school climate, but the indicators and measures are not always useful. The state has a robust afterschool alliance, but the support that young people receive after the school day are not necessarily aligned with the work of PK-12 teachers. And while policymakers and practitioners have sound basis for advancing more inclusive learning environments for both children and the adults who serve them, considerable shifts in policy are warranted.

The state has begun to move to restorative discipline practices, increase a focus on mental health, and develop more useful data-driven improvements in school climate. Growing models for integrated student support and community schooling are present. South Carolina is establishing an emerging vision and mobilizing more coordinated action to transform learning environments.

ESTABLISHING A STRONG BASIS FOR RELATIONSHIP-BASED SCHOOLING

With strong leadership from SCDE, more school districts are implementing an array of programs, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. The SCDE, often in close collaboration with the SC Department of Mental Health, has led efforts with other agencies to address the social and emotional part of academic learning. In the 2018-19 academic year, SCDMH provided school mental health services for over 16,000 South Carolina public school students in 700 schools through 16 Community Mental Health Centers.

The focus on the intersection of cognitive and behavioral development in South Carolina is fueled by some of the nation's experts, including Dr. Mark Weist of the University of South Carolina. Dr. Weist helped launch the [Behavioral Alliance of South Carolina](#) which organizes an annual conference on evidence-based practices for prevention and intervention of emotional and behavioral challenges in students. BASC also

The National Institute for Mental Health says that for children and young adults ages 10-24, suicide is the second leading cause of death. South Carolina's Department of Mental Health says the Palmetto State's child depression numbers are three times the national average.

This is where parents like Amanda Meyer (Greenville SC) say the schools can step in. "The district needs to mandate some sort of curriculum in the schools so that the students can be equipped with more than just a lifeline/hotline phone number," she explained.

Source: Fox Carolina News (2021). [Parents, students, advocates pushing for greater mental health awareness in Greenville County Schools.](#)

expands awareness for practitioners through monthly newsletters, webinars, social media, existing websites, and supports five school districts to directly improve behavioral health for students.

In addition, the SCDE has developed a range of programs focusing on trauma-informed practices and supporting students' mental health, well-being, and resilience.

The SCDE and the SCDMH have developed the [Magill Certificate Program](#) to provide access to mental health

services to students in all South Carolina schools. The certificate program's goal is to increase the number of well-

trained professionals available by 2022. As districts have improved broadband access in the midst of virtual learning, access to virtual mental health programs and tele psychiatry has also improved. With the pandemic's toll on everyone's mental health, South Carolina's public school students will need continued access to skilled professionals who can help them navigate the stress and anxiety both virtually and within the school building.

Molly Spearman, State Superintendent of Education, has [called for](#) a mental health counselor in every school and tele-psychiatry services available to all students by 2022. And while all schools have guidance counselors, entire districts in South Carolina have lacked a single full-time psychologist.¹

In addition, state policies in South Carolina focus far more on student discipline than on the behavioral health. And despite a growing focus on inclusive and safe learning environments, few policies focus on how school is organized so that adult professionals can know students and their families more fully and serve them more effectively.

South Carolina schools currently have one guidance counselor for approximately every 345 students. Although the state's ratios are better than those of the United States on average, [national guidelines](#) recommend one guidance counselor per 250 students. State Board of Education [policy](#) requires a student-to-guidance personnel ratio of 300 to 1 in South Carolina schools. Anti-bullying programs are available, and many districts offer training for teachers in cultivating communities of belonging in schools and classrooms. Many districts are instituting programs to support the social emotional needs of students. For greater cohesion between policy and practice, there must be new avenues for communities, including local and state providers, to learn from one another.

State policy efforts have set a vision for personalized learning for every child, yet more can be done to pay attention to how schools and their communities create the necessary flexible learning settings and spaces to meet diverse student needs. A 2021 analysis by SC-TEACHER, which is building a data infrastructure for the education professions in the state, points to concerning trends across all levels about the lack of a healthy learning environment in high poverty schools. Teachers from high poverty schools reported lower satisfaction with school climate items.² Transforming learning environments for students will require the transformation of working environments for those adults who teach and support them.

ASSEMBLING A PATCHWORK OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

The [Safe School Climate Act of 2006](#) requires each school district to adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The local school boards are expected to offer comprehensive rules, procedures, and standards of conduct for schools. Local policy must “involve” students, parents and guardians, educators, and community representatives in the process. The Act included a very specific orientation to disciplining students with its assurance that “no provision of (the law) may be construed to prohibit punishment of a student.”

A number of other policies relate to discipline, including expulsion and suspension of pupils as well as the prohibition of hazing at all public education institutions. The 2006 Act also prohibited the possession of paging devices by public school students under age 18. (The SCDE has a [compilation](#) of state policies related to student and school safety, including weapons, criminal activity, student discipline, school crime reporting, searches, and child abuse.)

More recently, in 2019, the SCDE issued a [best practices document](#) to support educators with student discipline. This established a uniform system of minimum disciplinary enforcement framed by three levels of student misconduct: *behavioral* defined by impeding orderly classroom activities, *disruptive* defined by activities directed against persons or property, and *criminal* defined by acts of violence to oneself or another’s person or property. A State Board of Education [regulation](#) includes a listing of possible consequences and/or sanctions.³

Much of South Carolina’s past state education policy has focused on reactions to discipline problems, with little attention to preventive approaches and behavioral health of students. In 2019, the [Safe and Supportive School Environment Act](#) (H3261) was introduced in the state legislature to “ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect” and “prohibited acts of harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability.”

While the bill did not pass, the SC Department of Education, with federal grant support, established the South Carolina School Climate Initiative to reduce high rates of drug- and violence-related behavior in schools and districts. SCSCI has worked with participating districts and schools to use annual school climate

survey data, plus discipline, incident, and other administrative data, to choose and implement interventions tailored to those districts' and schools' specific populations and needs. The SCSCI intervention specialists have used individualized plans to help schools assess their school safety and climate needs.

A 2020 Center for Disease and Control report found that South Carolinians are currently experiencing anxiety and depression three times the rate of the national average. New data from the SCDMH and the CDC shows the most at-risk group for suicide attempts is children ages 15 through 19.⁴

In 2019, the General Assembly also provided \$2.2 million in additional funds to hire more mental health counselors. Just before the pandemic, Governor McMaster, along with the leaders of education, mental health, and law enforcement, established a school safety [vision](#) that included having a school resource officer and a mental health counselor in every school.

"All can agree that areas of South Carolina's education system are in need of improvement. This year, I have worked with the legislature to raise teacher salaries, provide additional mental health and safety resources for all students, and reduce excessive testing that takes valuable time away from teaching.

Progress continues to be made, but much more needs to be done."

– Molly Spearman in statement to teachers, April 2019

During the same session, the SC General Assembly provided \$10 million to place school resource officers in areas of the state that could not otherwise afford them. This funding put trained law enforcement officers in 200 schools at a time when educators were seeking more mental health counselors. The interviews revealed that different districts use SROs quite differently. Some appeared to be quite effective and integrated into the school's learning environment. However, another education leader, who works in the field of behavioral health, noted:

It seems that more students are having mental meltdowns and can become violent. South Carolina schools have procedures in place, and the SROs are trained to de-escalate the incident and restrain the child. So what happens is that many kids are being restrained when they do not need to be.

Another education leader told us:

I know of one school district, rather large, and before the pandemic had on staff twice as many SROs as social workers.

The interviews also suggested there are few state policies focused on trauma-informed practices and many more related to discipline. A policy leader noted:

The real issue we have often is that teachers will call SROs for intervention for an unruly student, and then on the backside complain when they restrain the child, but that is the function of an SRO. A

teacher or an administrator can certainly intervene without calling in the SRO, it is their choice, so maybe we need to take a look at the intervention training they receive or lack thereof?

Despite the state focus on discipline policy and guidance, there is no shortage of programs to bring high-quality, evidence-based mental health services to children in school settings. This includes [efforts](#) of the Medical University of South Carolina, the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance, and the SC Department of Education with its [resources](#) to support educators in using evidence-based practices for the social and emotional needs of students.

In fact, even before the pandemic, the SCDE had placed a greater emphasis on ensuring that every school has a threat assessment team that shares information about students who may pose a danger to themselves or others and “to intervene and help the student of concern onto a more positive pathway.”⁵ Legislative support will be necessary to bolster these programs with state policy guidance around behavior health.

MOVING TO RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE PRACTICES

Educators across the nation recognize the importance of moving away from using often-damaging and ineffective zero-tolerance discipline policies and toward evidence-based restorative approaches to addressing conflict in schools. [Zero tolerance](#) refers to school discipline policies and practices that mandate predetermined consequences, typically severe, punitive, and exclusionary e.g., out of school suspension and expulsion, in response to specific types of student misbehavior—regardless of the context or rationale for the behavior.

Some South Carolina school districts, like Charleston and Richland One, have expanded training of teachers and other adults serving students to focus less on punishment for misbehavior and more on personal responsibility and healing relationships. The SCDE and its Office of Student Intervention Services have developed [workshops](#) for restorative practices training so educators can learn practical strategies for improving school climate and student outcomes by building healthy relationships.

Restorative discipline practices have emerged because of the [evidence](#) pointing to both improving school climate and safety and addressing the disproportionate adverse impact of suspensions of children of color. A study found that across the United States, 1.2 million Black students were suspended from K-12 public schools in a single

“As a district with a poverty index over 74 percent, we needed to equip all of our certified staff with classroom strategies to cope with the neurological impacts of poverty and the associated trauma...”

...Over the past two years, the district has aligned programming and other activities in a tiered and strategic approach to SEL. School communities are different, but their ultimate goals are engaging students and staff, maintaining a positive school climate with high expectations, and ensuring that students know that caring adults work in every building.

...We revised the student code of conduct so that level 1 offenses (minor infractions) now lead to activities such as mediation, community service and restorative justice, as well as training and information sessions for parents.”

– Craig Witherspoon
Superintendent, Richland District One (South Carolina)
In District Administration (March 2019)

academic year – and 55 percent of those suspensions occurred in 13 Southern states. Districts in the South also were responsible for 50 percent of Black student expulsions from public schools in the United States. This same report found that in South Carolina, Black students represent 36 percent of the school population, yet they account for 60 percent of suspensions and 62 percent of expulsions.⁶ Drawing on Office of Civil Rights [data](#), of all South Carolina students (2013-14) who received at least one out-of-school suspension, 57 percent were Black and 35 percent were white.

A national [study](#) found that elementary school-age Black children are 3.5 times more likely to be suspended or placed in detention than their white peers (after accounting for differences in income, education, caregiver support, special education services, and parental reports of misbehavior and family conflict). These [same inequities](#) can be found in preschool.

In the 2019 legislative session, the Stop the School House to Jail House Pipeline Act was introduced to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all students. The [bill](#) was to:

Provide that school districts shall adopt zero-tolerance policies that should not be rigorously applied to petty acts of misconduct and misdemeanors, must apply equally to all students regardless of their economic status, race, or disability, and that are intended to promote safe and supportive learning environments in schools, protect students and staff from conduct that poses a serious threat to school safety, encourages schools to use alternatives to expulsion or referral, among other things.

The House Judiciary Committee did not report the bill out, but most policy leaders and educator interviewed recognize the need for more restorative practices. Analysis revealed that more school districts are leaning into more restorative and less punitive discipline policy and practice. The interviews also suggested that without an overarching whole child vision, the districts may be implementing their strategies in isolation from their behavioral health programs that are emerging.

INCREASING A FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

While state policy continues to be grounded in disciplining students, not their behavioral health, focus on students' social emotional well-being is increasing in new programs and initiatives. In 2020, the [Social Emotional Learning Alliance for South Carolina](#) was established to promote and advance effective social and emotional health in all schools, families, organizations, and communities in South Carolina. The small non-profit, which is part of national network of state alliances, seeks to connect local stakeholders to learn about and share research, advocacy, and best practices. It also informs families, the business community, and the general public of the benefits of social emotional learning for developing skills that are vital for school, work, and life success.

A number of examples illustrate how the state and local school districts have begun to adopt evidence-based, data-driven approaches to improve school climate and foster strong relationships.

Key South Carolina stakeholders have joined CASEL's [Collaborating States Initiative](#) with a goal to “work with states and school districts to help ensure that preschool to high school students are fully prepared – academically, socially, and emotionally – to succeed in school, at work, and in life.”

Under the leadership of the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative, a cross-sector effort to support school-based trauma-informed practices is underway in Charleston, Dorchester, and Berkeley counties.

In addition, [ALL4SC](#), in partnership with the Fairfield County School District and National University, is preparing educators (and later parents and afterschool and early childhood providers) to use [Harmony](#), an evidence-based curriculum, and its teacher professional development program, [Inspire](#). This partnership is also using a universal screener to better understand students' risk status and guide the selection and implementation of tools and strategies.

With support from the [Hurst Foundation](#), several school districts in South Carolina are training teachers to use other social and emotional health curriculum to address students' non-academic needs.

United Way of the Midlands established [Resilient Midlands](#) in 2016 to bring together a coalition of public and private agencies throughout the Midlands to recognize the impact of trauma on children and families and respond collectively.

While the state has not established standards for social emotional learning, the SCDE has created a web portal to provide information, resources, and professional development for educators. The SCDE has also established an office with a focus on social and emotional health to de-silo an array of support services housed in different divisions of the agency and will work closely with the Office of Personalized Learning.

DEVELOPING MORE USEFUL DATA-DRIVEN IMPROVEMENTS IN SCHOOL CLIMATE

South Carolina schools are not without opportunities to assemble data on school climate. Schools are expected to use school climate and culture measures through [State Report Cards](#), including the school-specific student and family surveys and school safety indicators. Also, educators now have opportunities to use school and classroom specific growth measures through the [Rally Education Platform](#) that includes resources for analyzing data through the lens of equity and the capacity to survey and track student well-being.

South Carolina is one of a handful of states to include climate data from surveys of students, teachers, and parents on their school report cards. This came about in response to requirements of the state's Education Accountability Act of 1998. As part of their [evaluation](#), principals are expected to "conduct an in-school survey of the climate at their school to determine the atmosphere for collegiality, collaboration, satisfaction, well-being, and so forth" and "analyze results with a committee, and develop a plan to improve the climate as needed." However, interviews with education and policy leaders revealed that not all survey data are well utilized.

South Carolina has a unique, long-standing structure to support the use of data to improve school climate. The [SC School Report Card](#) revealed that 87 percent of parents who responded to the state climate survey believe their child "feels safe at school." However, far less (2 in 3) believe that their child's teachers and school staff prevent or stop bullying at school.⁷ Interviews with district leaders as well as teachers suggested that these data are not useful – due in part to limited response rates.

However, the Education Finance Act in 1977 established School Improvement Councils at each public school which have been a source of community-led, data driven conversations and actions to improve learning environments. These advisory boards of parents, students, educators, and community members: (1) provide input and feedback during the development of the school's five-year renewal (improvement) plan and annual updates; (2) assist in implementing school improvement programs and activities; and (3) monitor and report on progress toward improvement goals in the annual *SIC Report to the Parents* and the *SC School Report Card*. The role of SICs has continued to expand with the passage of the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act of 1993, the Education Accountability Act of 1998, and the Read to Succeed Act of 2014.

As of January 2021, approximately 12,000 individuals were serving as members of more than 1,100 SICs throughout the state. Parents elect each other. Students (ninth grade or above) and teachers do so as well. The school principal appoints community member representatives. While state law requires that every PK-12 public school to convene a SIC, the body is advisory only. Local SICs are not funded and do not have a budget. The SC-School Improvement Council, housed within the UofSC College of Education, receives funding annually from the General Assembly to provide training, resources, materials, and other assistance to local SICs statewide. The SC-SIC is well-positioned to lead the kind of school and community needs assessment supporting whole child education by bringing together existing partnerships and resources available (e.g. counselors, social workers, school psychologists, social-emotional curriculums, trauma-informed practices) to address the needs of young people and their families. A state policy leader shared:

Of the 1,100 SICs some are jam up, others not. I'd guess there is about a third doing great work, a third doing okay, and a third that need improvement in term of each quality category...it largely depends on the building leadership.

Another policy leader added:

The SIC process is a good one. But it all depends on the principals and their readiness and willingness to use the SIC in more transformative ways.

TIGHTENING THE CONNECTIONS TO AFTER SCHOOL LEARNING

The state has modest afterschool education policies in place and momentum from which to build. In 2018, the SCDE established [quality standards](#) to “foster guidance of what quality at a minimum should occur in non-licensed afterschool programs.” The state currently has about 1,400 programs supported in large part by the well-established South Carolina Afterschool Alliance that raises awareness, increases sustainability, and promotes the importance of quality afterschool and summer learning programs.

The 1,400 afterschool programs offer a variety of supports – with the vast majority focused on homework support (90 percent), followed by health and wellness (80 percent), computer training (79 percent), life skills (77 percent), reading and literacy (76 percent), arts and culture (60 percent), STEM (57 percent), and college and career readiness (16 percent). Students from 38 schools in rural and urban areas of South Carolina engaged in virtual reality, mobile app, and gaming programs through the SC Afterschool Alliance, in partnership with It-ology.⁸

South Carolina receives about \$19 million annually for afterschool programs. Most of these dollars are derived from the federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant program and distributed and managed through the SCDE. The remaining funding comes from fees paid by parents (approximately \$35-55 per week per child) and local grants (including from local United Ways). The SC Legislature allocates roughly \$1.2 million annually from various line items in the budget.

Interviews with policy leaders and providers revealed a number of challenges facing afterschool programs. One problem is the pressure of high stakes testing and how there is a disconnect between the practices of PK-12 educators and afterschool providers in providing academic support. One leader noted:

There is real pressure to teach to the test and this forced educators to create more boring places of learning, bleeding over into afterschool programs. We have real problems connecting our afterschool programs to what is happening in schools. Educators too often feel afterschool staff are lay people are not able to provide educational support that a certified teacher can provide. And most parents want their children to complete their homework in afterschool. At the same time, some principals have mandated that afterschool programs are not permitted to assist with homework. We just do not have afterschool policy in South Carolina.

However, with the availability of the federal COVID-19 relief funds, South Carolina has some opportunities for different agencies to test how they might work together in delivering more integrated student supports in both afterschool and in-school settings. For example, in April 2021, Governor McMaster allocated \$4 million to the Department of Juvenile Justice that will work in partnership with the South Carolina Afterschool Alliance to provide summer and afterschool programs to at-risk middle school students in primarily rural areas.

GROWING MODELS FOR INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLING

No state policies exist that specifically advance adopting evidence-based integrated student support as part of whole child and whole community education. And few state education policies are in place to facilitate necessary communication and deep collaboration between in school and out-of-school partners.

However, for almost a decade, the [Charleston Promise Neighborhood](#), modeled after the Harlem Children’s Zone, has been in place. Four schools in the Charleston district offer [KidsWell](#) providing children with quality health care right on campus and afterschool programs offering access to homework help, extracurricular programs, and an evening meal.

In addition, [Communities in Schools](#) has a long history in South Carolina, dating back to the late 1980s. Trained school-based professionals partner with teachers to identify challenges students face in class or at home and coordinate with community partners to bring outside resources inside schools. CIS locations in the Charleston, the Midlands, and Greenville areas have worked with local schools to bring wraparound services to a select number of at-risk students.

For example, the [Communities In Schools of Greenville](#) brings together a variety of funding sources and partners to serve high need students in ten schools in their county. CIS-Greenville is working with student support specialists and other professionals in these schools to keep students engaged, decrease absenteeism and suspensions, increase parental involvement, engage the community in student success, and ensure students are academically prepared to enter high school, college, and the workforce. CIS-Greenville has been working with the Greenville Health Authority Board of Trustees, and with \$1.68 million in support, to deliver school-based programming to students with a high number of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Powerful examples illustrate joint school-community efforts to provide integrated student supports – with leadership from the United Way. [On Track Greenville](#) is a clear example of cross-sector collaboration between the United Way of Greenville and the state’s largest school district. An Early Warning and Response System uses real-time data (attendance, behavior, and course performance) to identify students who are

beginning to disengage from school. The program then draws “on a coordinated team of educators and community experts to develop a customized plan to match the student with the right response interventions and then monitor his/her progress over time.” Since 2015, On Track Greenville has identified and supported nearly 2,500 students.

Also, [Resilient Midlands](#), also led by the United Way of the Midlands, is a coalition of agencies throughout the six counties to address Adverse Childhood Experiences and reduce constant exposure to toxic stress that negatively impacts childhood development.

In addition, some school districts have transformed their learning environments, including the use of student advisories or small learning communities within larger school buildings that nurture closer educator-student-family relationships essential to whole child education. For example, [River Bluff High School](#) in Lexington 1 has been architecturally designed and academically planned for a flexible modular schedule that is essential for student-led learning and integrated supports (See box).

“Instead of a traditional bell schedule, we wanted a new approach that provided space for students to develop skills such as time management, collaboration, and independent decision making. We wanted RBHS to be a place that empowered students and placed the leadership of learning into their hands. We wanted to create a true learning environment where time benefited both students and teachers...”

... The FLEX MOD approach has fostered more teacher-led collaborative planning time; exposure to post-secondary learning environments; additional one-on-one time between teachers and students during the school day; enhanced student collaborative learning experiences; stronger peer-to-peer and peer-to-staff relationships; improved interventions and learning support for struggling learners; wider use of best practices and blended learning techniques; and greater access to community resources during the school day.”

– Luke Clamp, principal, River Bluff High School
Reported in SCSAA blog, May 2019

Granted, the SCDE has increasingly emphasized the importance of whole child services and supports, including efforts to align education and mental health systems to improve educational outcomes. However, the department has placed less emphasis on the learning environment for teachers. There are no policies in place to support teachers’ well-being. And little policy is in place to spur innovations in teacher leadership – especially when it comes time to work with each other and with other helping professionals, including afterschool providers (See Element 4).

The disruptions of the pandemic raised a range of issues related to equity in opportunities to learn. The rapid shift to online teaching and learning prompted the SCDE to offer [guidance](#) on the number of instructional minutes per day and to ensure that “time assigned to instructional tasks should be developmentally appropriate.” In 2020, the SCDE recommended, as a guide for school districts, the instructional minutes for each grade level, suggesting minimum and maximum minutes.

EMERGING EXAMPLES OF TRANSFORMED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

In 2018, the SC General Assembly [recognized](#) the importance of whole child education – which at its core is about schools and community agencies working together to transform learning for the entire well-being of the student. Interviews and news reports suggested a wide array of whole child education models well underway in the state. Educations leaders talked about River Bluff High School in Lexington One with its flexible scheduling for students to lead their own learning and teachers to have more time to assist them in doing so.

Policy leaders were also apt to mention Meeting Street Schools – a public charter school with substantive private philanthropy to supplement per pupil allocations that state and local government provides.

One Emerging Model in South Carolina for Whole Child Education

In several interviews, the [Meeting Street Schools](#) were mentioned by educators and administrators as an example whole child education in South Carolina. Launched as a private school in 2008, the MSS has evolved into a public-private partnership with school districts in Charleston and Spartanburg 7. Four campuses now offer extended school day (7:30 am until 5:30 pm) and school year (190 school days versus 180 in other public schools), teacher home visits at least once a year, the integration of social emotional health with academic instruction, food service to families in need, and opportunities for many classrooms to be staffed by two trained teachers. High performing teachers can earn bonuses of \$5,000 to \$10,000 dollars annually.

In 2016, [Meeting Street Elementary @ Brentwood](#) in Charleston established a partnership with the [Medical University of South Carolina](#). This school-based clinic has a full-time nurse practitioner on staff to address students' physical and mental health needs, write prescriptions, and order lab work as needed.

MSSs operate under the jurisdiction of the school district but have much more flexibility and decision making authority on expenditures, the academic program staffing and the wraparound services that students received. The four schools combined serve about 1,350 students from early childhood (3- and 4-year-olds) through eighth grade. State test score data show that MSS students in Charleston achieve “somewhat higher” in ELA and “off the charts higher” in mathematics compared to other high poverty schools in the area.⁹ The success of MSS has prompted one district leader to report:

In our district, we try to do the best we can to provide these whole child education services. I am sure we can do better if we also could place two teachers in a classroom.

However, too little is known about the successful examples of whole child education in South Carolina. As one policy leader told us:

I believe whole child education can be embraced in South Carolina by people with a wide variety of views on our public schools. But we need more examples of what it looks like in our state, and we need the evidence.

In addition, interviews revealed that even successful programs with a focus on mental and behavioral health may or not be well integrated with a school's approach to students' academic and cognitive development.

Also, little state policy is in place to advance the future of schooling with the voices of young people and their families. As one student leader noted:

South Carolina's young people are its most under-utilized resource when it comes to school transformation. Students should be partners in co-creating the future of learning in our state.

The substantial infusion of federal COVID-relief funding for South Carolina's public schools in the summer of 2021 – approximately \$3 billion with few strings attached – offers an opportunity for more transformative approaches to schooling. As Terry Peterson, one of the leading architects of South Carolina's Education Improvement Act of 1984, said:

We can actually use this money to change the school day and afterschool and summers. Not everybody (educators) will do that, but some will. They have to be given permission and really nudged to be told it's not only OK to think out of the box, it's an expectation.¹⁰

In closing, this analysis captures three foundations to build upon, four gaps to fill, and four opportunities to leverage.

The Essential Question: How can existing school communities be supported across the state to routinely foster positive relationships and ensure that students and families feel safe and valued?

Foundations

- The [SC School Improvement Council](#) model, established in 1977, involves the community as well as children and families in addressing advancing student outcomes
- The [Safe Schools Act of 2006](#) addresses harmful behaviors in schools by involving students, parents, educators, and community representatives in establishing local policy
- [Act 213](#) of 2018 established training and support for a statewide multi-tiered system of support for students, using data-based problem-solving, formative assessments, and evidence-based practices

Gaps

- Too few opportunities for educators to learn about evidence-based practices and from each other
- Overabundance of mandated programs that tamp down the creativity of educators
- Student discipline policies that outnumber those addressing behavioral health
- No policies in SC that focus on relationship-centered school designs (including staffing structures) and training, time, support, and funding for consistent communication between school and home and teachers and other helping professionals

Opportunities

- **Expand** on the [SC Behavioral Health Alliance](#) and SCDE and SCDMH partnership
- **Study and scale** models such as [Meeting Street Schools](#) and its innovative partnership with MUSC, and [River Bluff High School](#) with its focus on student-led, project based learning
- **Draw** on the cross-sector collaboration successes of [OnTrack Greenville](#) to expand uses of real-time, comprehensive data to support students
- **Look to** [SC Afterschool Alliance](#) (and related organizations) to align values, expectations, and data in both in and out of school supports for the whole child

Effective whole child education is far more than just providing wraparound physical, mental, and social supports inside of schools. It is about integrating these supports with the school's mission of advancing academic achievement and deeper, more equitable learning. Next, Element #3 examines South Carolina's whole child orientation to curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

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Redesigning Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

element three

// It is estimated that nearly two-thirds of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate is not assessed.

– A SC policy leader (2021)

THE IMPORTANCE OF REDESIGNING CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

The [learning sciences](#) have established that people learn in deeper ways when they have opportunities to make “connections” that spur their curiosities and sustain their interests and efforts. The science has profound implications for the redesign of curriculum, instruction, and assessment – and the PK-12 accountability system that anchors both policy and practice. Students learn best when they actively construct knowledge based on their experiences, relationships, and social contexts. The assignments and learnings tasks that schools expect students to complete make a difference in the mastery of their academics. The science makes clear that “learning and performance are shaped by the opportunities to explore actions and ideas, receive feedback from others and the environment, and continue to refine and practice with assistance until mastery is achieved.”¹

Whole child education policy elevates the importance of students developing productive habits and mindsets as well as eliminates early tracking (particularly for PK-8 students) to ensure that all students have access to rich learning experiences often provided to those who are identified in gifted and talented programs. Whole child education places a premium on [performance-based tasks](#) that measure higher order thinking and deeper learning. These tasks are aligned to state standards, and teachers are developing and using tasks to demonstrate what students know and are able to do. **States can promote and support the development of rich learning experiences by investing in the development and adoption of high-quality curriculum frameworks, instructional materials, and assessments; supporting more authentic forms of assessment that focus on growth (not just proficiency); and adopting a comprehensive accountability system that draws on multiple measures in support of whole child outcomes and opportunities.**

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, states are [required](#) to report information included in their statewide accountability systems by student status. These include race and ethnicity, economic disadvantage, and language and special education status to illustrate where inequalities should be addressed. However, states need to ensure that districts, schools, educators, families, and students have ongoing access to opportunity and outcome data in a user-friendly format to coordinate whole child improvement efforts.

BUILDING ON THE PROFILE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GRADUATE

By establishing the [Profile of the South Carolina Graduate](#), the state has articulated an essential component of whole child education. The Office of Personalized Learning of the SC Department of Education has partnered with two national non-profits, [KnowledgeWorks](#) and [reDesign](#), to support schools in moving to more personalized learning and implementing Profile competencies in their school and district contexts.

SCDE has built a state-level framework around several strategic initiatives. These include not only personalized and competency-based learning, but also expanded learning with a focus on more student access to career and technical education, virtual options, world languages, the arts, advanced credit in middle school, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and dual credit coursework. In 2014, Act 284, [Read to Succeed](#) legislation, offered a more comprehensive, connected set of assessments, interventions, and professional learning for K-12 students with a goal of all students becoming proficient readers by the end of third grade.

For many school districts, Read to Succeed has been “ground-breaking” because of its comprehensive eight components:

1. State, district, and school reading plans
2. Focus on third grade progression
3. Summer reading camps
4. Provision of reading interventions
5. Requirements for in-service educator endorsements
6. Early learning and literacy development
7. Teacher preparation
8. Reading coaches

Source: Jasper County Schools

Interviews for this policy paper revealed that, while South Carolina is making progress in many ways, layers of long-standing state policies and regulations stifle the development of a system of deeper learning for every student. For example, teachers said they have too many curriculum standards they are responsible for teaching. As one district leader noted:

There is nothing wrong with the standards. But you cannot teach them all. Each subject has eight standards and multiple indicators, and now we have process standards. It is all good, but too much, and it is not helping teachers get to deeper learning. The standards lead to cursory learning, not deeper learning.

The interviews also revealed that many of the state’s schools are not organized for deeper, more equitable learning – a policy matter raised in Element #2. However, State Board of Education regulations have permitted schools to implement innovations. Schools can request waivers so educators can be more creative in meeting the standards and improving student achievement. The General Assembly passed [H 3589](#) in April 2021 that allows local districts to operate multiple schools of innovation.

Many schools are pursuing more personalized and deeper learning opportunities for students. However, interviews revealed that school innovation is often tamped down by educators who do not believe they have the agency to innovate. Interviews with educators revealed that many teachers do not innovate, not because they do not know how, but they often face the “fear of failure.” This pairs with high stakes accountability and the pressure to ensure their students score well on the state’s annual standardized tests of academic achievement.

Interviews also revealed that some schools do seem to navigate the state’s accountability system more easily and find ways to invent new, more personalized methods of teaching and learning. Yet, even when innovations emerge, there are few mechanisms for them to spread systemically across the state.

Overall, as a policy leader said:

We just do not have a lot of evidence on school innovation – and that goes for our charters as well.

Another policy leader noted:

South Carolina is a work in progress. We are working on a lot of things, and a lot of good things, but there is no systematic work being done in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

A [report](#) found that, during the pandemic, about 30,000 South Carolina students “had their education seriously interrupted this spring because they had no digital access after the pandemic closed down their schools.” However, in the midst of the pandemic, many schools developed innovations in teaching and learning.

A UofSC [study](#), published in the summer of 2020, found that about 1 in 4 of the state’s teachers reported that during the pandemic they discovered and used innovations in engaging students in real world problem-solving and used non-standardized student assessments.

Will the leadership of teachers be used in supporting innovations in the future of education?

The disruptions in schooling caused by the pandemic surfaced deep inequities in student and family access to digital learning in their homes. It also led to innovations (see box). The pandemic created new opportunities for SCDE to further develop [VirtualSC](#) – a free state-sponsored online program serving students currently attending public, private, and home schools in grades 7-12 and adult education programs. Many questions remain as to if and how South Carolina education policy can support the innovations needed in the aftermath of the pandemic.

UNPACKING THE CURRENT STATE OF STANDARD-BASED CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

South Carolina has many traditional curriculum policies in place. For example, each student must earn 24 units of credit to graduate from high school and pass a classroom examination on the provisions and principles of the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist papers, and American institutions and ideals. A school may award one unit of credit for an academic standards-based course that requires a minimum of 120 hours of instruction. A school may award one-half unit of credit for an academic standards-based course requiring a minimum of 60 hours of instruction and one-fourth unit of credit for an academic standards-based course requiring a minimum of 30 hours of instruction. Interviews with district and policy leaders revealed strong support for the standards and a more rigorous and demanding academic curriculum, including an increasing focus on Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate as expanded pathways to postsecondary and career opportunities.

The state primarily uses three on-track indicators – the National Assessment of Educational Progress, student performance in AP and IB courses, and exams – to measure college readiness. Since 1984, state

regulations require all secondary schools with grades 11 or 12 to offer AP courses. In 2020, over 31,000 students in the state took AP exams in 31 areas, with 62 percent receiving scores of “3” or higher. SCDE reports reveal that more high school students are taking AP exams (including Black and Hispanic students), and scores are improving.² In 2020, 1,236 students in the state participated in the IB Program.

Most school districts, as one policy leader said, use “strict pacing guides” to help teachers teach to the standards and prepare students for standardized achievement tests. Others have reported significant challenges related to the implementation of the College- and Career-Ready Standards – including those related to professional development and collective perceptions of faculty and staff. State policy mandates the use of standards. However, as a 2017 study of standards-based curriculum in South Carolina noted, local capacity to use them effectively is another matter.³

While State Board of Education regulations allow districts to submit a proficiency-based, system-wide waiver application to the SCDE, few do. As one district leader noted:

It is one thing to call for innovations in curriculum where students lead their own learning; it is another to support those innovations. That said, opportunities are in place, and there is much to build upon.

Despite the recent emphasis on competency-based learning, state policy emphasizes traditional grading and seat time requirements in recognizing students’ academic achievement. In 1999, the state adopted a [uniform grading scale](#) (A-F). The system for calculating GPAs and class rank applied to all courses carrying high school units of credit. The legislative mandate called for a task force to make recommendations to the State Board of Education to include, but not be limited to, the following: “consistent numerical breaks for letter grades; consideration of standards to define an honors course; appropriate weighting of courses; and determination of courses and weightings to be used in the calculation of class rank.”

The uniform grading policy solidifies traditional ways of measuring academic achievement based on seat time and the individual courses that a student takes – not the competencies they may develop.

In addition, students in honors classes can earn weighted credit hours if the course meets the criteria in the *SC Honors Framework*.^{*} Honors courses, which extend and deepen the opportunities provided by courses at the high school level, are designed for students exhibiting superior abilities in a specific content area. The honors curriculum places emphasis on critical and analytical thinking, rational decision-making, and inductive and deductive reasoning, which is not explicitly called for in college prep coursework.

^{*}It is the role of the local board to ensure that all elements in the framework are adhered to when the course is approved for extra weighting.

Also, since 1987, the state’s [gifted and talented programs](#) have been designed to identify students in grades 1-12 who demonstrate “high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas” and requires schools to offer an enriched curriculum that goes “beyond the normal” offerings. State policy calls for the G/T instructional environment to “encourage and nurture inquiry, originality, creativity, and flexibility” among students. The state offers additional funding; wealthier school districts can support more G/T students if they are willing and able to do so (see box).

Funding Gifted and Talented Programs in South Carolina

All categories of students identified and served shall be funded at a weight of .30 for the base student cost as provided in Chapter 20 of this title. Where funds are insufficient to serve all students in a given category, the district may determine which students within the category shall be served. Provided, further, no district shall be prohibited from using local funds to serve additional students above those for whom state funds are provided.

Source: SC Department of Education (2017). Gifted and Talented Program Overview

State regulations make it clear that aptitude test results alone can qualify a student for placement. While no single criterion can eliminate a student from consideration for placement in a gifted and talented program, the criteria favor those who are apt to score well on standardized tests. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 12 percent of South Carolina students are in G/T programs – and approximately three times as many white students than Black students are enrolled in them.⁴

Interviews revealed that the state’s G/T programs can undermine equity in curriculum for deeper learning. One district leader noted:

Currently state policy and funding for gifted and talented privileges students who have more resources at home and test well. Districts can only tap into funding if they implement only one of two models. We need others. And we also do not have the resources to train all teachers in the methods of gifted education. Our G/T programs can open the gate for more equity. However, it is not whole child education right now.

The interviews also revealed that these challenges to more inclusive and flexible learning pathways might have less to do with specific programs and more to do with expectations by parents (as well as others) for schools to sort students into A-F categories.

As one policy leader noted:

I know whole child education has a lot to do with mastery learning. Students should earn credit when they master the content. The time that it takes to master is less important. However, I can tell you something about parents of students who already are ahead. These parents have pushed back

on the state's efforts to advance competency-based learning. I hear parents say, "it is not fair that your Johnny got A after two tries, and my Johnny earned his A after the first test."

While the State Board of Education offered additional grading, testing, and curriculum flexibility during the 2020–21 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all statutory and regulatory requirements, including seat time and grade point average, have remained in effect for the 2021–22 school year. However, South Carolina has advanced expanding pathways to student achievement which could lead to developing more inclusive whole child education policies.

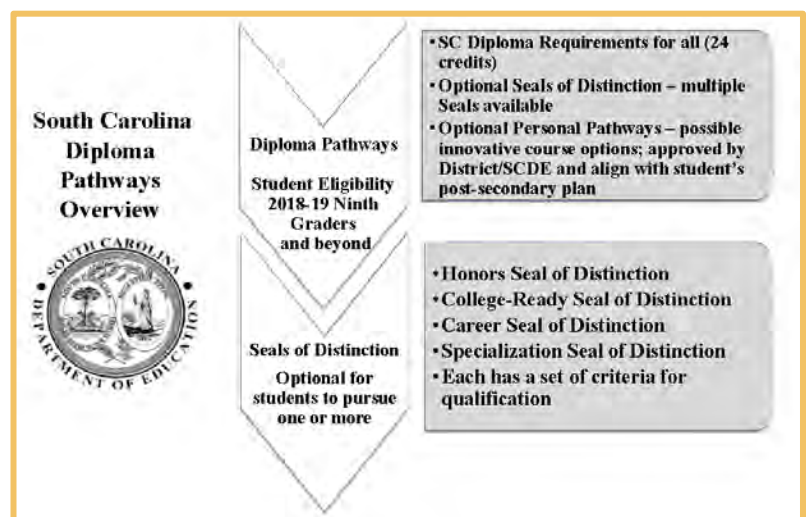
EXPANDING PATHWAYS TO STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

In South Carolina, the SAT or ACT and Ready to Work are required to assess students' college and career readiness. The state has also taken other steps to ensure that students have a wide range of pathways to implement the Profile – including a significant focus on expanding Career and Technical Education courses, career clusters and work-based learning opportunities in partnership with the state's businesses and industries.

Career clusters connect what students learn in school with the knowledge and skills they need for success in college and careers. These clusters also provide schools a way to organize instruction and student experiences around broad categories of occupations from entry through professional levels. Each career cluster identifies different pathways from secondary school to two- and four-year colleges, graduate school, and the workplace.

The Diploma Pathways Project emphasizes personalized pathways to postsecondary success. South Carolina high school students have the opportunity to earn graduation Seals of Distinction (see the graphic to the right).

The [Education and Economic Development Act of 2005](#) (next page) offered guidance for the State Department of Education to develop an extensive framework to guide school districts in organizing their high school curricula around career clusters and individual graduation plans.⁵ Many communities have drawn on the EEDA policy framework to spur innovations in curriculum with a focus on careers and not just college.



South Carolina, under the leadership of the SCDE, has focused heavily on expanding Career and Technical Education courses. Apprenticeship Carolina™, a division of the [SC Technical College System](#), offers a powerful model to prepare young people and adults for the future of work and help businesses and communities thrive economically. However, not all school districts have taken advantage of the potential public school-technical college partnership.

As one district leader said:

The idea is that every student has an opportunity to go to a center and they are within driving distance of one - either single or multidistrict.

The EEDA of 2005 specifies that...

In Elementary School: Students will learn about a variety of professions through career-awareness activities.

In Middle School: Students will explore careers to identify clusters of study relevant to their aspirations and abilities. Beginning in eighth grade: students will write and annually update an Individual Graduation Plan with help from guidance counselors and parents or parental designees.

In High School: Students will experience a variety of professional opportunities through job shadowing, apprenticeships or internships. In the 10th grade, students will declare a major based on their chosen cluster of study. Students will plan and prepare for post-secondary study, specialized training, or employment with input from parents or parental designees, educators, counselors, and the business community.

About 44,000 students are enrolled in the 44 centers across the state. All are required to track graduates. The [Anderson Institute of Technology](#) is one of the state's leading multi-district efforts offering a wide array of programs in aerospace engineering, electrical design and smart systems technology, global logistics, mechatronics, welding and sculptural design, and more. The curriculum is tightly aligned to the Profile, promoting student-led, competency-based (not test-based) learning. As one district leader said:

Here at Anderson, students own their learning. Unlike what is found in many of their traditional high school classrooms, they come in focused on their interests and are able to engage in project-based learning. We believe we are enacting the Profile.

AIT, which opened 2019, has state-of-the-art equipment, costing \$6 million, to give the students hands-on experience in a 145,000-square-foot building with large classrooms tailored to the needs of that coursework. Over 1200 of the combined districts' 10th-12th graders are enrolled across 20 different programs. An 11th grade student at AIT shared:

AIT provides many leadership opportunities to all students including internships, ambassador programs, and even clubs/organizations within AIT such as the NTHS (National Technical Honor Society) and HOSA (Future Health Professionals). AIT is a place that values each and every student's future while preparing them for life in the real world.

The state has, over time, expanded an array of apprenticeships for students. For example, [Apprenticeship Carolina](#), a program of the [South Carolina Technical College System](#), helps employers create demand-driven paid apprentice programs. Apprenticeships include 144 hours of job-related education. When apprentices complete the training, they receive a portable and nationally recognized credential. Apprentice Carolina [reports](#) over 250 youth apprenticeship programs and almost 36,000 apprentices. However, the interviews revealed students know too little is known about this type of career-ready education from the demand side and school-business partnerships know too little from the supply side.

Many students, particularly those from more rural communities, have limited opportunities to engage in work-based learning opportunities. As one policy leader told us:

South Carolina is a strong Career and Technical Education state. However, policy shifts are needed. Many students do not have time and access to workplace learning opportunities and the hours they are required to log.

Student access barriers such as lack of time due to completing other graduation requirements and transportation impede access. In rural districts, little industry in a local area means innovative partnerships and cross district collaboration along with additional resources, will be needed connect students to career and work-based opportunities. However, as one policy leader asserted:

All students must own their learning (to the best of their ability, of course). The career cluster and CATE are the missing link to engaging a lot of students.

GOING BEYOND PERSONALIZED LEARNING

To ensure personalized learning is a priority in the state, the SCDE formed the Office of Personalized Learning to grow a statewide network of local leaders committed to this vision. One policy leader pointed out:

When it comes to school transformation, the Office of Personalized Learning is an example of the kind of innovation needed from our state agencies.

In collaboration with local and national stakeholders, SCDE has developed a [Personalized Learning Framework](#) to help educators support students to meet the demands of the Profile. SCDE has created learning fellowships for educators (teachers, instructional

“By having a student-centered approach and personalizing for all children so they can achieve the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, we’re giving our kids opportunities to take advantage of the types of jobs that are coming to South Carolina. We’re making sure our students are not only ready to get the job because they have the content knowledge but be able to keep the job because they have the skills and characteristics to perform.”

*– Stephanie DiStasio
Director, Office of Personalized
Learning, South Carolina*

coaches, and administrators) who focus not only on academic knowledgeable, but also on the [competencies](#) young people need to succeed in the future of work and civic engagement. These include reading critically, expressing ideas, investigating through inquiry, reasoning quantitatively, designing solutions, building networks, using sources, learning independently, leading teams, navigating conflict, sustaining wellness, and engaging as a citizen.

Recognizing that educators are at different levels of readiness and implementation, the SCDE developed a multi-tiered system of support to personalize the learning opportunities for schools and districts – from exploration to launch to implementation. The Office of Personalized Learning also has established inquiry labs to create opportunities for educators to collaborate and share ideas, provide feedback, and investigate specific strategies which can be applied in their own schools or districts.

South Carolina is not without vivid examples of what innovative schools look like. River Bluff High School in Lexington School District One is one of a number of mentioned in interviews with policy and education leaders (see box). Both the design of the school – architecturally as well as pedagogically – lends itself to more personalized learning. River Bluff is one of seven [EL Education](#) (formerly Expeditionary Learning) schools in South Carolina, offering a curriculum anchored in inquiry learning combined with social and emotional learning and character development. ⁶

River Bluff High School, opened in 2013, was architecturally designed for innovation. The school layout is built for a flexible modular schedule. Instead of using a traditional bell schedule, school leaders took a new approach that provided space for students to develop skills such as time management, collaboration, and independent decision making. They “wanted RBHS to be a place that empowered students and placed the leadership of learning into their hands” and a “true learning environment where time benefited both students and teachers.”

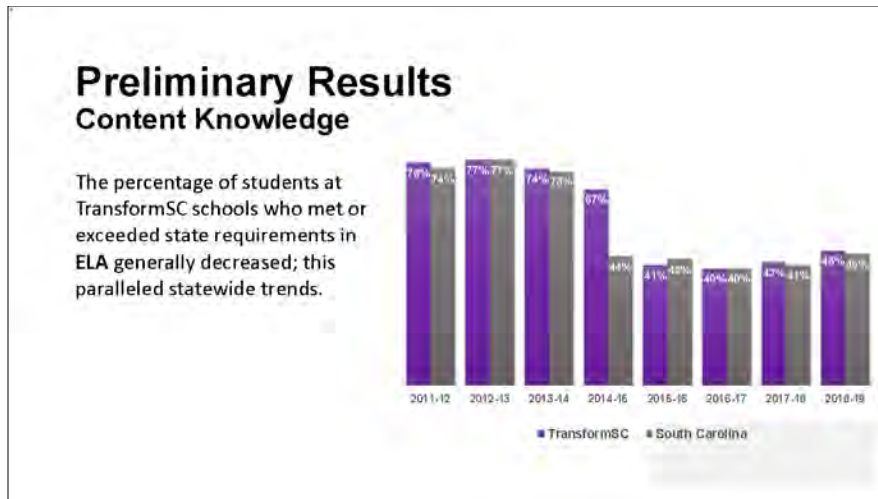
The school building itself, one of the largest in South Carolina at 540,000 sq. ft., was constructed with lots of windows, both for aesthetic reasons as well as to reduce the cost of lighting. Since all students (currently some 1,500 are enrolled in grades 9 - 12) receive their study materials online, rather than through textbooks, the school does not have any lockers. The school cost \$138.9 million to build and offers a variety of advanced classes, especially in the areas of multimedia arts and environmental law.

EL Education draws on an elevated “home room” or advisory model, called “CREW,” which is cited by students and teachers as a primary reason for the network’s academic and college-readiness success. Evidence shows how these schools outperform others on state assessments and graduation rates.⁷ A teacher leader noted:

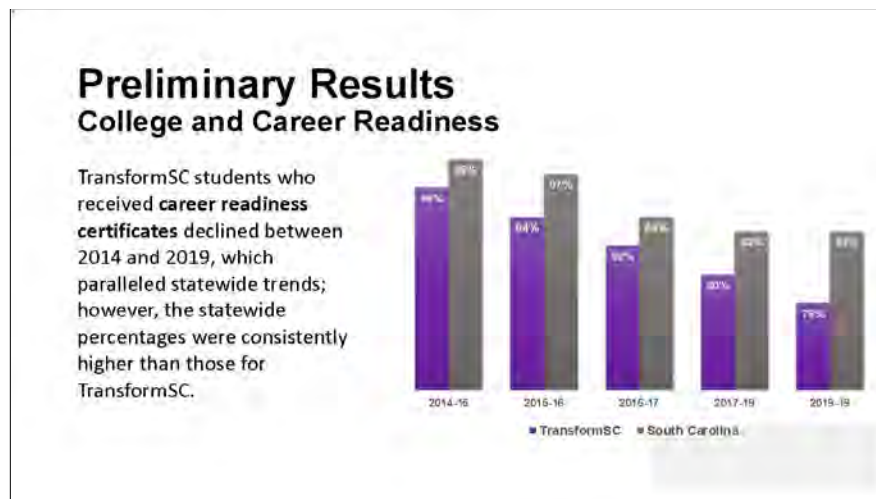
With CREW, we bring together a diverse group of students of the same grade level, who are working together to form positive relationships with each other and an adult educator over time. There are academic check-ins, but we also do a lot of team building and talking about current events and issues or how to prepare for life after high school.

However, much more needs to be learned by state education leaders about the personal learning innovations underway in South Carolina – including those supported by [TransformSC](#). This public/private initiative headed by business leaders, educators, and policymakers works with schools and districts to design, launch, promote, and provide transformative practices in the classroom. To date, TransformSC has supported a network of 72 schools from 25 districts in the state.

[The Riley Institute](#) at Furman University developed a database to identify trends associated with implementing innovative practices in the TransformSC schools.⁸ The research team, in its preliminary analysis, examined a range of student engagement, content knowledge, college/career readiness, and climate and culture measures comparing outcomes in the TransformSC schools and those statewide. The outcomes were generally mixed. However, on content knowledge measures, TransformSC schools did not fare as well as their traditional schools.⁹

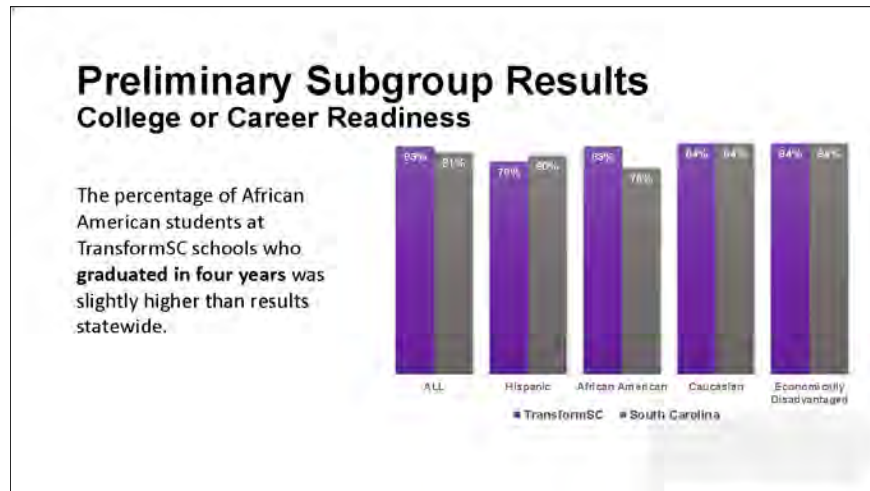


Source: Riley Institute (2019). Unpublished presentation.



Source: Riley Institute (2019). Unpublished presentation.

On the other hand, the students of color fared slightly better in TransformSC. For example, the percentage of Black students at TransformSC schools who graduated in four years was slightly higher than results statewide.



Source: Riley Institute (2019). Unpublished presentation

The Riley Institute is continuing to assess progress and is currently expanding the analysis. However, the 2019 KnowledgeWorks report on South Carolina’s efforts to personalized learning pointed to several potential explanations, including:

- Lack of innovative staffing structures;
- Insufficient resources needed to ensure high quality instruction tied to the Profile; and
- Limited training for educators on culturally responsive teaching practices and instruction that is “rigorous, student-centered and promotes students as agents of social change.”¹⁰

The interviews conducted for this analysis revealed that teachers and administrators have too few opportunities to learn from each other. While the SCDE, in collaboration with KnowledgeWorks, has created an online community where educators can find and upload learning resources and engage in online discussions regarding personalized learning, interviews showed that educators want more opportunities to learn from each other. As a principal said:

**We (teachers and administrators) learn to innovate by visiting each other’s schools.
We need more of this.**

DEALING WITH THE COMPLEXITY OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In South Carolina, the [Education Accountability Act of 1998](#), has provided the foundation and requirements for measuring the success of schools, educators, and students. The [South Carolina School Report Cards](#) provide information about school performance and a number of conditions in each school that bear on student outcomes. Indicators from the state’s report card include measures of academic achievement, student progress, college and career readiness, graduation rates, school climate and safety, and financial information (including percent of dollars spent on classroom instruction).

Each school receives an overall performance rating. The 2019 Report Card showed that 77 percent of school ratings across the state either improved or remained the same. Compared to ratings from 2018, 37 percent of schools increased by at least one overall rating, while 40 percent of schools held onto the same rating. The report also indicated that 17 percent of schools dropped by at least one overall rating.

The emphasis on student progress on the report card and those who score in the bottom 20 percent has been consequential. In many ways, it has forced schools to pay more attention to struggling students and subsequently address disparities among schools.

Interviews surfaced a number of issues. Many of them are identified in a January 2021 [report](#) from the EOC that focused on the challenges of serving students in the aftermath of the pandemic – including the need for more data on targeted interventions and professional learning as well as opportunities to learn (see box).

That said, the 2021 report surfaces the following types of academic data:

1. Academic achievement in elementary and middle school schools are assessed by the SC READY assessments in grades 3-8 English Language Arts and math, and SC-Palmetto Assessment of State Standards for grades 4 and 6 are tested in science.
2. The End-of-Course Examination Program provides tests in high school core courses and

Impact of the Pandemic: Recommendations from the SC Education Oversight Committee

- Provide support, increased instructional time, and targeted interventions, especially in mathematics, to students while school is disrupted and beyond
- Deploy strategies to find students not attending school and not engaged
- Provide tutoring services for students who are struggling
- Provide meaningful professional learning on remote learning for school staff
- Collect and transparently report student data around opportunities to learn and academic achievement in order to guide curriculum and instruction
- Craft policy to support students, especially those who are most vulnerable for learning loss

Source: *The SC Education Oversight Committee (2021). [Study shows SC student achievement impacted by COVID-19](#)*

for courses taken in middle school for high school credit. The EOCEP tests in Algebra 1 / Math for the Technologies 2; English 2; U.S. History and the Constitution; and Biology 1/Applied Biology 2. The end-of-course tests administered in Algebra 1 and English 1 meet the federal mandate for testing students in ELA and math.

3. State law requires a student growth or value-added measure with the expectation of progress based on how the individual students within the group performed compared to other students like them across the state. Measures of progress from these two groups of students are combined to create an index of student progress for the school.
4. South Carolina has designed a set of interim targets to acknowledge students who are on track to become proficient in English within a five-year period. Aggregate data are reported but not used for a rating. No existing state assessments are administered in languages other than English.
5. South Carolina measures student success based on science proficiency. South Carolina uses a cohort-based graduation rate, with any high school with a graduation rate of 70 percent or less deemed unsatisfactory, while those 90 percent or greater identified as excellent.

State policy calls for the EOC, working with the South Carolina State Board of Education and a broad-based group of stakeholders, to conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the state's accountability system with a focus on the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.¹¹ The EOC's most recent review in December 2020 pointed to several issues.

First, the EOC pointed out that the current system is not assessing the measures of world-class skills and life and career characteristics and the various pathways to success. Achievement gap data need to include all student groups, tie to a fixed and meaningful criterion, and measure progress toward elimination of gaps. And while the EOC concluded that an "extended graduation rate should have less influence than the traditional 4-year rate to maintain on-time graduation as the primary goal, an extended graduation rate alone should not decrease accountability scores."¹²

Second, some districts had problems with calculating rates, and others needed to take into the account that some students needed more time to graduate. Additionally, the assessment system does not measure problem-solving and critical thinking and does not allow for national and international comparisons.

Third, the state collects a range of data not used in the accountability system that could be included. The report pointed to the percentage of students passing the civics test, participation and passage rates for advanced courses, college applications, college enrollment, 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. The state has moved to one accountability system that meets all

federal and state requirements to collect new types of data, such as on trans-academic skills, post-secondary performance, and school conditions for success (what some call opportunity to learn standards).¹³

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

Source: Education Oversight Committee (2020). Cyclical Review of South Carolina’s Accountability System

Interviews surfaced a uniform belief that the state’s accountability system needs to be changed – for schooling of today as well as for whole child/whole community system of education. As one policy leader noted:

It is estimated that nearly two-thirds of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate is not assessed.

Other district leaders claimed that the state’s accountability system needs to be changed because it is a barrier to innovation. One district leader noted:

Testing is a real barrier. I just do not think we can convince teachers that they can teach with creativity and still get high test scores – at least not in the short run.

In referring to the importance of state’s standards in Algebra and biology as “gateways” for the future of work, one university leader pointed out how accountability tests are a major barrier.

It goes back to the tests. Most teachers’ instruction mirrors the assessment. There are exceptions. But engaging teaching is not the norm.

Conversely, interviews revealed examples of schools where teachers are not deterred by the state testing mandates. A principal from a high poverty, high performing, rural school explained:

I believe it is about teacher autonomy. And time for teachers to work with each other. It is not about individual autonomy but teams of teachers. Teachers have five hours of common planning each

week – all during the school day. Plus, we have an hour after the students leave giving elementary teachers 10 hours a week to work with each other. It begins with district office support.

Interviews surfaced other matters of whole child assessment policy. The state does not have a strategy for formative assessments – and how teachers can serve as catalysts for innovations in teaching and learning via classroom-based assessments that inform policy as well as practices. Before the pandemic, the Low Country Education Consortium (composed of Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, and Dorchester Districts 2 and 4) launched an innovative student assessment project that would include performance assessments, digital badging, and student digital portfolios demonstrating mastery of skills and dispositions that cannot be measured via traditional assessments. Yet, the state has not yet taken advantage of the Every Student Succeeds Act that allows states, and in some cases school districts, to redesign systems of assessments and accountability systems.¹⁴

In closing, the interviews revealed considerable insights into the complexity of how educators respond to current curriculum, instructional, and assessment (and accountability) demands. One teacher leader shared:

Our five habits of success are personal responsibility, growth mindset, collaboration, relationships, excellence and citizenship. Each semester students have to demonstrate these habits. They lead student-parent conferences. They talk about the mastery of their learning, not just their grades, but what have they learned this year, what has been something they're proud of, something that they have overcome, looking forward to, also goals that they have. I only wish this was actually reported on the report card.

Some schools have not been limited by the standards and assessments and have taken steps to ensure that teachers have the autonomy to make instructional decisions, including the pace of lessons, based on the need of their students. A principal, whose school has not been confined by the current accountability system, noted:

We do not mandate anything. We developed a streamlined, easy-to-use curriculum, and offer resources. And teachers have the freedom to teach. A lot of schools insist that teachers follow a script. Not here. Teachers lead here.

On the other hand, an education leader (who leads curriculum and instruction for her school district), noted:

We are asking teachers to teach differently and at deeper levels of learning. But we do not give them time to perfect their craft. We do not give them time to work with each in sharing expertise.

In closing, this analysis captures four key foundations to build on, six gaps to fill and five opportunities to leverage in order to redesign curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the state.

The Essential Question: How can the state create a network of whole child school learning communities, with incentives and supports for streamlining curriculum, elevating exemplary instructional models, and redesigning assessment?

Foundations

- [Profile of SC Graduate](#) sets the stage for deeper learning for every student
- [Office of Personalized Learning](#) at SCDE offers a unique learning community for educators across districts to learn from each other
- [Apprenticeship Carolina](#) and [Anderson Institute of Technology](#) serve as powerful models for project-based learning and cross-sector partnerships (PK-14) among school districts, technical colleges and businesses
- The SC State Board of Education has the authority to waive any regulation that may impede the implementation of an approved district strategic plan or school renewal plan

Gaps

- Few mechanisms to scale up the innovations in curriculum, instruction and assessment
- Little policy and funding available to support internships and apprenticeships in rural school communities where there are serious barriers to prevent student participation
- Deep disparities in Black and white students who participate in gifted and talented programs
- Lack of innovative staffing structures to deliver personalized learning
- Considerable data collected, but limited utility to improve classroom instruction
- Academic expectations of the Profile not measured by the current state tests and accountability

Opportunities

- **Establish** incentives to use school choice legislation so local districts and consortia operate multiple schools of innovation
- **Strengthen** the effectiveness of Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs), in place since 2005, to offer opportunities for students to lead and document their readiness for college and career
- **Ramp-up** the development of [VirtualSC](#) to create blended models of teaching and learning
- **Look to** [Read to Succeed](#) as an example of how South Carolina has established a statewide professional learning network that be applied to educator learning for whole child education
- **Improve** current accountability system to go beyond simply revealing gaps and also include whole child indicators as well as sufficient data to inform what needs to be done next

Over 25 years ago, Richard Elmore, a scholar of curriculum reform in the United States, made the case that getting to scale with good educational practices required new organizational structures so teachers would begin “increasingly to think of themselves as operating in a web of professional relations that influence their daily decisions, rather than as solo practitioners.”¹⁵ To support a shift to a whole child system, states must work to build educators’ and other youth-serving adults’ expertise related to whole child in more strategic approaches to professional learning. Next, Element 4 turns to building adult capacity.

ENDNOTES

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- ⁶ *The other 5 EL Education schools include 4 other Lexington 1 schools, and a Greenville Charter.
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- ¹² Domaleski, C., & Keng, L. (2020, December). *Cyclical Review of South Carolina's Accountability System: Accountability Framework Report*. National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment. https://dc.statelibrary.sc.gov/bitstream/handle/10827/37022/EOC_Cyclical_Review_of_South_Carolinas_Accountability_System_2020_pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
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- ¹⁴ Ambrose, C., & Wirth, T. (2019, November 23). Defining Student Success – More Than Just a Number. Low Country Education Consortium. <https://lowcountryeducationconsortium.org/2019/11/23/defining-student-success-more-than-just-a-number/>
- ¹⁵ Elmore R. (1996). Getting to scale with good educational practice. *Harvard Education Review*. 66 (1), 1-27. http://www.project2061.org/publications/designs/online/pdfs/reprints/5_elmor1.pdf



Building Adult Capacity

element four

// Classrooms in which deeper learning is the goal ... equip students with the skills to find, analyze, and apply knowledge in new and emerging contexts and situations and prepare them for college, work, civic participation in a democratic society, and lifelong learning in a fast-changing and information-rich world.... These conditions have created an ever-increasing demand for teachers (and administrators) who can meet the needs of today's students amid rapid changes in society and schooling.

– Learning Policy Institute (2019). [Preparing Teachers for Deeper Learning](#)

THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING ADULT CAPACITY

Whole child education requires PK-12 educators to work more closely with each other in using evidence-based teaching practices. It also requires them to collaborate with an array of early childhood caregivers, afterschool providers, and other helping professionals who can support their students' academic, physical, mental, and social well-being in and out of school. Whole child education cannot be fully realized without building adult capacity, and this has significant implications for how educators are recruited, prepared, developed, assessed, and compensated.

Whole child education requires both a deeper and broader analysis of the adults who serve students and their families and how they can work more effectively together.

States can design educator preparation systems to train teachers and administrators as well as other helping professionals who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to support students' whole child learning and development. States systematically can build adult capacity by:

- Strengthening educator licensure and certification systems, including those who teach the youngest children;
- Adopting proactive and connected teacher recruitment and retention strategies, including *Grow Your Own* programs to help find, develop, and prepare community members to teach;
- Reducing barriers to teaching such as standardized assessments that are not correlated with quality teaching practice;
- Developing new or supporting existing mentorship and induction models that highlight and integrate whole child approaches and mentor-teacher training and coaching;
- Promoting high-quality professional development linked to growth-oriented evaluations systems;
- Providing competitive compensation that values whole child teaching expertise and how educators can learn from each other;
- Bolstering high quality principal preparation and development that train school leaders in creating productive, professional, and collaborative school working environments; and
- Supporting educator and staff social, emotional, and mental health and well-being by gathering data from educators on school environments and working conditions.

South Carolina has 87,000 certified K-12 educators – including 42,000 classroom teachers, over 1,200 principals, 1,900 assistant principals, 2,300 guidance counselors, 1,100 media specialists, and other professionally certified administrators and staff.

The state also has an early childhood workforce of 12,600 educators including those who work in privately owned centers. These educators serve over 353,000 children under the age of 5. Interviews with education leaders revealed that most early childhood educators who teach infants and toddler (birth to 3) do so in private settings. Those who teach 4K children do so in a mix of private and public school settings. In addition, there are over 1,400 afterschool providers in South Carolina that hire adults with varying experience.

South Carolina has several signature teacher development programs in place. They have been anchored by an array of teaching policies put in place over time without much attention to coherence and impact. This analysis has focused primarily on the teaching policies impacting the state's PK-12 teachers and is grounded in existing, but still limited, data on the status of the profession. Less data is available (or readily accessible) about the non-certified educators who support children in afterschool and summer programs as well as early childhood teachers and PK-12 school administrators.

However, growing teacher and administrator shortages and [disruptions caused by the pandemic](#) give the state the chance to build on foundational policies and emerging opportunities. Now can be the time to build a more coherent system of teacher and school leader development for whole child education and deeper, more equitable, student outcomes tied to the Profile of the SC Graduate.

An EdWeek Research Center [survey](#) conducted between September 29 and October 8, 2021, found that 40 percent of district leaders and principals describe their current staff shortages as "severe" or "very severe" and more the 2 in 3 report a scarcity of bus drivers.

The analysis begins with what is known about South Carolina teachers, followed by several key themes including: preparing educators and assessing quality, addressing shortages with alternative pathways into teaching, building on effective recruitment strategies, deepening investments in teacher mentoring and induction, developing more effective evaluation and professional development policies, and improving salaries and working conditions.

Midlands teachers say COVID surge is taking a toll

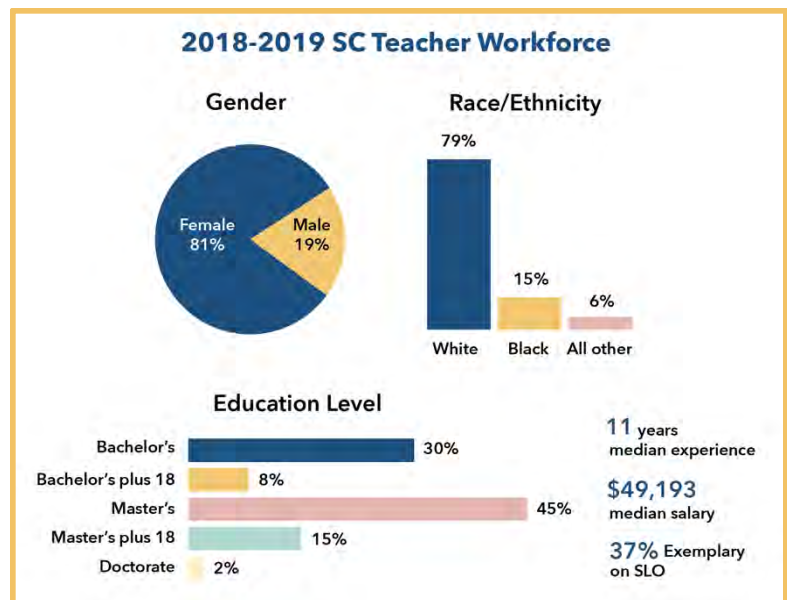
"Teaching has always been share your knowledge and your excitement and passion with the student. Now, we're sharing our knowledge, excitement passion with the student, constantly saying back up stay away, put your mask on. I don't know who's had it or who hasn't. I don't know who might be feeling poorly but still came to work, still came to school... We have excitement because we're all back together, but it is stress times 10... I always wonder if the student that was here last week that's out this week, will they be back next week? Will I see them again?"

--Dawn Gressette,
Calhoun County High School teacher
Source: Tabone, E. News19. August 21, 2021

DEVELOPING THE PROFILE OF THE SC TEACHER

Information about the state's teachers is widely available to track basic demographics, pathways into teaching, years of experience and salary, type of academic degrees earned and from which university or college. A profile of the state's teaching workforce, based on data from 2018-19, revealed that teachers are predominantly female and white and almost 1 in 2 have earned a master's degree. The median year of experience is 11 years, and the median salary is over \$49,000.

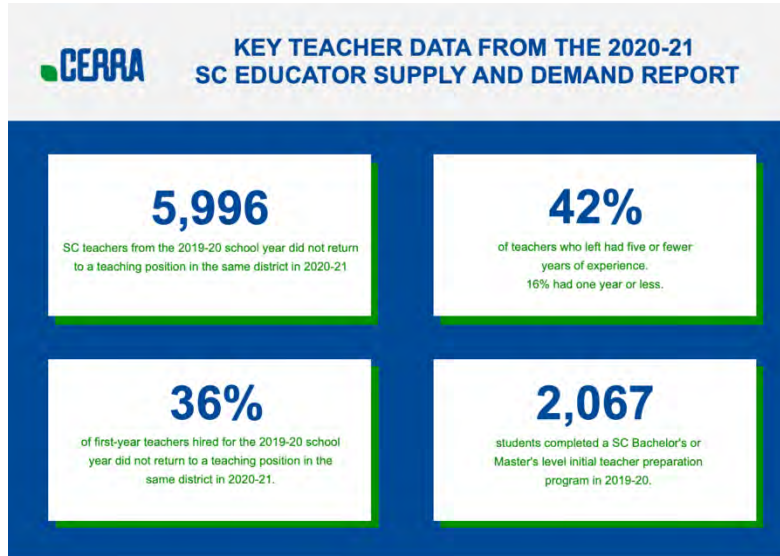
South Carolina tracks a variety of information about the state's teachers. The state report card requires information about two basic areas: certification pass rates for educator preparation programs and percentages of those fully certified to teach. Institutional report cards must include the percentage of its teacher education students who pass assessments of basic skills, professional knowledge and pedagogy, academic content areas, and teaching special population plus an overall summary pass rate. Universities that prepare teachers also compile data on the ability of completers to meet licensing (certification) requirements and to be hired for positions.



Since 2018-19, the Educator Preparation Provider at UofSC [gained access](#) to the newly implemented South Carolina Leadership, Effectiveness, Advancement and Development system. In addition to providing PK-12 student learning and development data, the system also tracks indicators of teacher effectiveness data through the Summative ADEPT Formal Evaluation of Classroom-Based Teachers results. South Carolina's school report cards report the percentage of teachers returning from previous years and an average three-year percentage of returning teachers. The SCDE produces [data](#) that displays the percentage of minority and low-income students who were taught by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

The [Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement](#), housed at Winthrop University, publishes an annual [supply and demand report](#) with much of its data about the teacher workforce from self-report surveys of district administrators. Its 2020-21 report noted almost 6,000 of the state's 55,000 teachers left their positions from the previous year. This report also revealed that 36 percent of the state's first year teachers did not return "to a teaching position in the same district." The CERRA reports have raised

awareness of teacher shortages in the state. A recent report found that “more than 500 vacancies remain in SC classrooms as teacher shortage crisis worsens” in the state.¹



While some useful information exists, much more data is needed about why educators are leaving the profession. One policy analyst said:

The latest report indicated we do not know why 1,753 teachers did not return to their district. Almost 1 in 5 teachers did not provide a reason for their departure. This is a huge amount of missing information.

Over the last several years, [SC-TEACHER](#), a teacher education research consortium based at UofSC, has started building a data system to understand how to build adult capacity for improving student learning and preparing every child for life success. With modest start-up funds from the [SC Commission on Higher Education](#), SC-TEACHER is developing the data infrastructure, tools and analytical capacity to assemble specific evidence on who enters teaching. This data includes a teacher’s pathway and institution of credentialing; how effective a teacher becomes; and what teaching and learning conditions help them improve, stay in the profession, and support long-term school improvement. These data can be used to better

A 2020 analysis by SC-TEACHER found that the average teacher attrition rate at high poverty schools was significantly higher than that in low- and medium-poverty schools. About 1 in 3 of the state’s public schools have had three-year teacher turnover rates of 20 percent or more – considerably up from less than 10 percent of schools four years ago. Some schools cannot find anyone – even through short-cut alternative certification programs – to fill the vacancies. While the median vacancy rate is only 1 percent – the range across schools is 0 to 19 percent. School districts with greater teacher vacancy rates tend to have lower student achievement in both English/language arts and mathematics. As a 2021 SC-TEACHER [report](#) concluded, “Vacancies are non-uniform, so must be the solutions.”

by decision-makers to understand and address the teaching, and the larger educator, workforce for whole child education where every student is expected to meet the expectations of the Profile of the SC Graduate.

What follows are *some* of the illustrative teaching policies relevant to building adult capacity for whole child education.

PREPARING TEACHERS AND ASSESSING QUALITY

South Carolina State Board of Education regulations require that all teacher education programs meet the national accreditation standards – with the SCDE establishing a partnership with the [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation](#). The [CAEP standards](#) focus on content and pedagogical knowledge, clinical partnerships and practice, candidate quality, recruitment, selectivity, program impact, provider quality assurance, and continuous improvement. The SCDE develops guidelines for educator preparation programs to meet the CAEP national standards, which require teacher education students to have a GPA average of 3.0, while allowing for a small percentage to have a 2.5 GPA if “compelling evidence exists.”²

The state requires educator preparation programs to provide evidence that candidates in all certification programs know, understand, and can apply South Carolina PK-12 academic curriculum standards in the area in which they seek to be certified. In addition, all prospective teachers must pass common exams, the Praxis series developed by the Education Testing Service. Candidates seeking full admission to undergraduate programs in South Carolina must earn passing scores on all sections of the state’s adopted basic skills and content assessments in order to be licensed to teach.

Interviews with key policy leaders suggest “continuing concerns” that university-prepared teachers are not ready to effectively teach students how to read. The SCDE provides guidance on literacy competencies for both elementary and secondary teachers.³ However, a recent report from the National Council on Teacher Quality pointed out that the Praxis reading and language arts subtests assess some, but not all, of the components of the science of reading instruction.⁴ However, very little data are available to assess whether or not newly minted certified teachers are prepared to teach – including the teaching of reading. However, one teacher education student interviewed shed some light on the [very hot topic](#) of preparation for the teaching of reading:

In my elementary education program, we learned a lot about the different components of teaching reading, but we are not taught how to put it all together in lesson plans that fit the students we are teaching.

On the surface, program approval standards appear to reflect the expectation for South Carolina teachers to address students’ diverse learning needs. However, those who hire teachers do not have a common

assessment to determine if new recruits have the requisite skills to teach diverse learners. In addition, the interviews with those knowledgeable of the state's educator preparation programs suggested the following: (1) early childhood programs focus more on candidates knowing children, their developmental needs and general pedagogy; and (2) secondary education programs place a greater emphasis on subject matter. However, the interviews did surface the sentiment that all programs pay too little attention to the interdisciplinary knowledge and skills teachers needed to support whole child education. The perceptions of teacher education policy and its impact were quite diverse. A policy leader noted:

State approved programs have to meet guidelines and standards set by the state and national accreditation – which fragments knowledge development into courses taught. We need more multi-disciplinary approaches to preparing teachers.

Another policy leader noted:

Our schools of education, as a whole, are not there yet in preparing teachers for the kinds of personalized learning called for in the Profile. And this surely is the case when it comes to whole child education where more skills are needed to address social emotional learning.

Still another said:

There appears to be a lot of focus on pedagogy, of the general kind, but not as much on how to teach your specific subject.

A district leader asserted:

Our educator preparation programs are far more focused on preparing students for teacher evaluation systems than the kind of whole child approach to education that we are discussing.

Colleges and universities assemble a great deal of data for both accreditation and federal requirements. However, policymakers have little evidence to inform legislative action – such as data on the quality of clinical experiences (and the teaching of literacy) as part of a comprehensive teacher education accountability dashboard. South Carolina requires teacher education candidates to complete a minimum of 12 weeks or 60 full days of student teaching. Plus, they are to teach independently a minimum of 10 full days in one placement or setting. Again, little is known about the impact of clinical training – although the interviews indicate both policy and education leaders uniformly believe that more hands-on training is essential. The state does require teachers who supervise “interns” (commonly called student teachers) be certified in the teaching area of the candidate.⁵

The certification processes, including student teaching or clinical requirements, can appear to work very differently for varied pathways into teaching. This can set different standards for different groups of teachers.

Policymakers often look at standardized tests, such as Praxis, to judge prospective teachers and their preparation programs. However, these tests are designed to assess minimal competence rather than predict the future effectiveness of teachers. The South Carolina State Board of Education has approved edTPA – a performance assessment – as an option for educator preparation providers to use to assess their candidates.

Policy rarely values the kinds of interdisciplinary approaches to training teachers and administrators. Policy often does not address how or allot time for PK-12 educators learn to work with other adult professionals from the community. Few incentives and opportunities exist for candidates to have a full year of clinical training, such as found in [teaching residencies](#). Several universities have established strong school-university partnerships through [Professional Development Schools](#). However, there are not strong incentives and resources dedicated to joint ownership of preparing teachers by school districts and universities alike.

In addition, South Carolina has 12,600 members of its early childcare teaching workforce. Few policies connect the work of these educators in daycare centers to teachers who teach 4- and 5-year-old children in public schools. However, interviews revealed that Florence 1 conducts professional development with all 4K and Head Start educators – demonstrating how different agencies work together in preparing and developing teachers.

South Carolina [policy](#) calls for every teacher to be learner-ready on day 1 of their career – able to ensure students can “think critically and creatively” and “collect, interpret, and use student assessment data to monitor progress and adjust instruction.”⁶ However, the review of documents and interviews with district and policy leaders suggest that determining if every educator is learner-ready is difficult – especially for whole child education. Current teaching policies rarely reflect the developmental nature of teacher development and effectiveness – e.g., where novices would not be expected to perform as effectively as seasoned experts in their field.⁷

ADDRESSING SHORTAGES WITH ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS INTO TEACHING

Across the nation, the number of students enrolling in educator preparation programs has declined – and South Carolina is no exception. From 2010 until 2018, the state’s university-based schools of education saw a 36 percent drop in enrollment.⁸ In South Carolina, 33 public and private universities prepare teachers and administrators in 36 different approved certification fields from agriculture to theater. There seems to be little policy in place to align and coordinate which EPPs prepare what kinds of teachers.

According to CERRA, about 2 in 5 newly hired teachers are new to the profession. Of those, about 25 percent are from in-state, university-based programs. In 2019-20, about 1,700 new hires received a bachelor's degree and certification from one of the state's colleges and universities. Another 370 candidates were certified with a master's degree. Twenty-nine percent were hired from another South Carolina school district, and out of state recruits accounted for another 23 percent. The rest of South Carolina's teacher supply came from its varied alternative certification pathways.

According to a 2021 CERRA report, South Carolina districts recruited about 1,000 teachers internationally. The only requirements for these teachers are to have the equivalent of a bachelor's degree and have taught in their home country with at least two years of teaching experience. For example, as was reported in 2018, in [some rural school districts](#) like Hampton County, over 1 in 3 (36 percent) of all its teachers are from overseas. Interviews with district leaders suggested that, while many of these international teachers are "quite good," others struggle with both pedagogical skills and the necessary cultural competencies needed to effectively teach South Carolina students.

In addition, several universities now offer alternative pathways while the SCDE offers its own, the [Program for Alternative Certification in Education](#). Also, two large school districts, Charleston and Greenville, offer their own approaches, as do three national programs – the [American Board, Teachers of Tomorrow](#), and [Teach for America](#). Each has its own way of certifying teachers through either an assessment and or a short summer training program before the recruits begin teaching.

These alternative pathway programs do not specifically address the knowledge and skills adults need to teach the whole child. For example, PACE has a specific purpose – "to enable degreed individuals, who otherwise do not meet certification requirements, to gain employment in the public schools in a PACE approved subject area teaching position based on their bachelor's degree concentrations and coursework."⁹ The rules are differ among pathways, and the productivity and expenses associated with them can be quite different. (See box.)

In 2020, UofSC launched [CarolinaCAP](#) as a non-degree pathway leading to full licensure for candidates in partner districts. The program creates a high-quality alternative route into teaching that marries the expertise of local teachers, schools, and districts with an institution of higher education – UofSC – and a national non-profit – the Center for Teacher Quality.

More on Alternative Certification in South Carolina

Since 2012, Teach for America has recruited and placed teachers for South Carolina schools. According to a 2021 *Post and Courier* [article](#), TFA has received \$23 million in state funding (\$2 million in 2012, \$3 million each year thereafter) but also has charged school districts a total of \$400,000 for placing and supporting the new recruits who enter some of the state's highest need schools. In 2019-20, only 41 TFA recruits were placed at an average cost of almost \$27,000 per new teacher.

The SCDE sponsors its own alternative certification program, PACE, which offers recruits, with no pedagogical preparation, ten days of summer training before they become a teacher of record (with two years of instructional support). PACE received \$315,000 in state funding each year between 2016 and 2020. In 2019-20, the program certified 384 first-year teachers (and 1,147 total) at a cost of \$275 each.

CarolinaCAP, still considered a pilot, is different from other programs in several respects. It is competency-based, using more customized professional learning experiences tied to the state teacher evaluation framework. Recruits engage in a summer preparation and support before entering classrooms as teachers of record. CAP recruits complete microcredentials focusing on core pedagogical competencies and content area-specific teacher knowledge. They gain expertise based on assessed needs of the school district and receive individualized support working with a trained CarolinaCAP coach.

As of spring 2021, the program had 226 applicants from diverse backgrounds and life experiences, with 48 already teaching in high need schools in 14 partner districts. The program's promise to develop a more diverse teaching profession is evident: 80 percent of candidates identify as Black; 18 percent are male, and 100 percent of candidates serve in schools where a majority (71- 92 percent) of students are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch. Over 3 in 4 candidates previously worked for the school districts which demonstrates the potential for a grow-your-own strategy to address the state's teacher shortage.

CarolinaCAP was originally designed for the new recruits to co-teach with an experienced veteran teacher in their first year of teaching. This [residency model](#) is similar to how doctors are prepared inside of a hospital. One university leader, working with these mostly rural districts, reported that school administrators have the "will" to develop co-teaching models for these new recruits. However, they just "do not know how to make it work in their current context, which includes teacher shortages."

Well-developed residencies cost more than quick-entry programs, but have been shown to recruit more diverse candidates and prepare more effective teachers who are more likely to stay in the profession.¹⁰ South Carolina does not have policies in place to support teacher residencies which could be designed to develop teachers as leaders for whole child education. UofSC and Furman University have established these more extensive clinically based models of teacher prep for at least some of their candidates. The UofSC residency model has been funded by a federal grant.

Interviews found that both policy and district leaders had mixed views of the effectiveness of both traditional and alternative program pathways into teaching. Most of their views appeared to be based far more on anecdote and opinion, not facts and evidence. South Carolina has had few mechanisms in place to convene educator preparation institutions to learn and share best practices with each other – especially related to the new demand on teaching and teachers. One policy leader gave this reason why education schools are not learning from each other:

The way South Carolina funds our schools and colleges of education they are forced to compete for students and programs. This keeps them collaborating with each other and also pushes them to duplicate programs.

A teacher educator noted:

There are really no mechanisms in place in South Carolina to prevent duplication across educator preparation programs, and with growing online courses and degrees it has gotten worse.

Both the documents reviewed and the interviews conducted for this paper suggested that if universities collaborated more in preparing teachers they may be able to produce more of the teachers the state needs while also preparing them more deeply and effectively.

BUILDING ON EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

South Carolina policy leaders have made efforts to assess how best to recruit teachers for high need schools. Since 2016, the state has invested approximately \$9 million annually for the Rural Recruitment Initiative, administered by CERRA. These funds are provided for any district, rural or non-rural, that meet the definition of high turnover rates which are currently set at 11 percent loss of faculty or higher.

Interviews with education leaders suggested that these districts struggle with the available supply of teachers with appropriate credentials who are willing to teach in their communities, citing the lack of social opportunities for potential recruits as well as lower starting salaries. CERRA offers the funding to school districts that have reported using the dollars for signing bonuses, salary supplements, and local new teacher mentoring efforts. Little data have been collected to determine the effects of the program.¹¹ (A new UofSC study is underway.)

In late 2017, a [task force](#) reviewed current research and best practices, received input from South Carolina teachers, and offered 29 practical recommendations. These included allocating stipends for teachers in high poverty areas, extending teacher salary step increases; and raising the current \$10,000 salary cap for retired teachers to teach in low-income communities.

South Carolina has solid recruitment programs upon which to build. For example, the state has a history of signature teacher recruitment programs, supported by state policy and funding. For example, since 1985, the state's [Teacher Cadet Program](#) has established a strong grow-your-own approach to encourage high school students to consider teaching as a career. Led by CERRA, the state has supported 71,000 cadets over the last 35 years, and they can be found in almost all of the state's school districts (and used as a model for programs in [39 other states](#)).

Each year about 3,000 high school students experience a year-long dual credit, college-level course aligned to professional standards (such as the [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards](#)). During 2020-21,

[33 percent](#) of the Cadets indicated they intended to pursue teaching after college. Importantly, 34 percent of Teacher Cadets who completed the program were students of color and 22 percent were males.

CERRA also supports a companion program, [ProTeam](#), launched in 1990, “to interest middle school students in the education profession before they become turned off to the possibility of a career in teaching.” During the 2019-20 school year, 1,571 students completed ProTeam, which was offered in 45 South Carolina middle schools.

In addition, since 1999, the General Assembly has funded the South Carolina [Teaching Fellows](#) Program to recruit talented young people into the profession. Up to 200 high school seniors receive fellowships for up to \$24,000 (\$6,000 a year for four years) while completing a degree leading to initial teacher certification. The Fellowship turns into a forgivable loan if the recruit teaches for four years in a South Carolina public school (or one year for every year they receive the Fellowship). A 2011 [report](#) (the most recent conducted) found that 71 percent of all graduated Fellows were employed in South Carolina schools, and over 50 percent of them were in high need schools. Again, very little is known about the Fellows. However, as one policy leader, said:

The Fellows are most likely the racehorses of our educator pipeline. We need to leverage their enthusiasm and willingness to serve.

The state’s [Call Me MISTER program](#), developed and led by Clemson University, seeks to increase the pool of highly effective Black male educators for the state’s public schools. Founded in 2000, the program runs in partnership with three historically Black colleges and universities. Since 2004, and with funding from the EIA, the program has graduated 221 credentialed Black men, with 95 percent of them still teaching (and the others in education administration).

Each of these efforts have some evidence of impact. However, there appears to be no policy framework for how these programs work together to recruit and develop teachers that South Carolina’s diverse students need. In interviews, both policy leaders and educators expressed concern about teacher retention, some recognizing the significant costs associated with replacing those who leave. Others expressed the need to learn more from the apparent successes of these programs.

[Research studies](#) have found that replacing a single teacher can cost a district between \$9,000 for rural districts to over \$20,000 for large urban districts. Other [investigations](#) have found that teacher candidates who are hired into same school type as their student teaching (or internship) placement are more likely to remain in teaching.

DEEPENING INVESTMENTS IN TEACHER MENTORING AND INDUCTION

Since 2000, the SCDE has established guidelines for teacher induction programs, with state policy requiring

districts to “provide novice teachers with comprehensive guidance, assistance, and written feedback throughout the school year on their strengths and weaknesses relative to state standards for teaching effectiveness.” State regulations mandate only one year of induction teacher support, while also defines a maximum induction period of three years regardless of district context.¹²

The SCDE has developed specific guidance for school districts to implement effective mentoring and induction supports.¹³ In 2017, [induction and mentoring guidelines](#) were amended to “reflect a movement toward teacher proficiency in fostering student growth, feedback from beginning teachers, mentors, and induction coordinators, and research on new teacher support” that align with the state’s ADEPT Standards, established in 2006 (ADEPT stands for assisting, developing, and evaluating professional teaching). According to these guidelines, induction support *should include* a district-assigned mentor for each novice teacher, mandatory orientation to the district, and a year-long induction program held within the hiring district.

National studies have found that up to 40 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years. In high-need subject areas and schools, the percentage can be higher.¹⁴ Research shows that teachers who participate in high-quality mentoring induction programs are more likely to remain in the profession.¹⁵ High-quality mentoring programs, for example, offer new teachers regularly scheduled collaboration with expert mentors and subject-specific supports for the classes they teach.¹⁶ However, no state policy addresses these program qualities. (According to CEERA’s 2018-2019 SC Annual Educator Supply and Demand Report, 34 percent of first-year teachers did not return to the same position for the 2018-2019 school year, and 25 percent no longer teach in any SC public school).¹⁷

South Carolina policies (and funding) only provide teachers with limited training to become mentors and no additional time in their teaching schedule for them to support the novices. School districts are required to submit annual data collecting feedback on the quality and effectiveness of the induction and mentoring program. SC-TEACHER has started documenting induction and mentoring practices in the state. Of the 81 school district plans, 51 had a two-year induction plan, and 18 offered induction and mentoring support for three years. Several universities, including Clemson, Newberry, and UofSC, have cobbled together various funding sources to mentor or coach their graduates in their initial years as teachers.

For example, the Carolina Teacher Induction Program, launched by UofSC in 2017, offers group workshops, coupled with personalized coaching and classroom support, to implement best practices ranging from behavior management to instructional strategies. The program intentionally focuses on supporting new teachers and not just getting them ready for their upcoming teaching evaluations. Over four years, CarolinaTIP has had a 98 percent retention rate of the new teachers the program has supported.¹⁸ However, little evidence is available on costs of effective mentoring policy and programs in South Carolina, and what is a reasonable investment to make.

Interviews revealed that school-based mentors face a wide range of responsibilities as they introduce novice teachers to the expectations, procedures, and resources within the school. The state funds school districts to provide mentor support for each new teacher – but the dollars are modest. One of the interviews suggested that school districts have on average about \$100 to \$200 of state funding per new teacher.

The interviews suggested that mentors primarily focus on the state’s teaching evaluation process in support of the new teachers. A district leader asserted:

There isn’t equal attention paid to both mentoring and inducting. Sometimes there is a focus on one at the expense of the other.

One policy leader noted:

Ensuring the well-being of teachers and their learning is a priority and a key to retention. We can do a lot more in South Carolina.

DEVELOPING MORE EFFECTIVE EVALUATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

There’s just no substitute for a well-trained, qualified live teacher in a classroom that cares about his or her students. If we could increase the size of that army by 20 percent, that’ll be what turns the corner for us.

– Senate Education Chairman
Greg Hembree, R-Little River

Source: [Post and Courier](#) (2021)

South Carolina’s approach to evaluating teachers and principals has been evolving to align with the Profile of the SC Graduate. The state requires districts to use its statewide evaluation system (Expanded ADEPT) or a local version that is equivalent and state approved. South Carolina requires that Expanded ADEPT provide teachers with clear, timely, and useful feedback. The evaluation process is anchored by the [SCTS 4.0 rubric](#) – based on performance standards designed and validated by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (see rubric on next page).

The state requires classroom observations, followed by a post-observation conference and written feedback, plus evidence of student growth. The state also requires teacher evaluators to be trained, which includes a comprehensive online certification exam. Only those teachers with an initial license are required to be evaluated annually. Continuing contract teachers are required to be evaluated on a "continuous basis" – with summative rating during the recertification year every five years.

The teacher evaluation system draws on multiple sources of evidence and focuses on core classroom practices but doesn’t explicitly support whole child education. Student growth measures (including student

test scores) are not an independent component of the process but a source of supporting evidence for the various standards.

SCTS 4.0 Rubric Indicators

Planning	Instruction		Environment	Professionalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructional plans ● Student work ● Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standards & objectives ● Motivating students ● Presenting instructional content ● Lesson structure and pacing ● Activities & materials ● Questioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Academic feedback ● Grouping students ● Teacher content knowledge ● Teacher knowledge of students ● Thinking ● Problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Managing student behavior ● Expectations ● Environment ● Respectful culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Growing & developing professionally ● Reflecting on teaching ● Community involvement ● School responsibilities

The state has developed Student Learning Objectives as “a tool for actionable reflection used in teacher evaluation systems as a student growth measure.”¹⁹ Interviews with policy and education leaders suggested that the new rubric and use of SLOs can provide a sound basis for linking the teaching evaluation process to student learning. One teacher leader noted that the SLOs can “really help us focus on growth” and “promote professional autonomy and accountability.” However, he noted that the evaluation process, and the SLOs, are often implemented unevenly across the state. In some cases, as one policy leader noted, teacher evaluation is a “check box” for teachers and administrators and often “not always effectively implemented.” Again, little evidence is available to explain differences across districts in the usefulness of the teaching evaluation process in which the state has made considerable investments.

One policy leader felt that the evaluation system is of limited use since “most teachers pass the evaluation.” Another claimed that “at least 90 percent” are rated as effective. Still another said:

There is a lot of time, money, and resources that go into the evaluation process. Perhaps these resources can be allocated to teacher mentoring and leadership.

Data on 4.0 rubric scores by district/school are not publicly available, and little is known about its impact on teaching quality and teacher leadership. A university leader, who has worked in a number of South Carolina schools, said:

I learned that teachers learn a lot more about improving their practice from peer observations, compared to the state’s formal evaluation process.

South Carolina does not have a statewide professional development strategy other than requiring teachers and principals to develop growth plans based on evaluation results. Most professional development is framed by the state’s policies on recertification (or licensure renewal) policies. Teachers and administrators must earn a minimum of 120 renewal credits within a set time frame to meet recertification requirements – which for most is a five-year period.

In South Carolina, most educators earn hours through college courses, training, and varied professional experiences (see [renewal credit matrix](#)). If an educator does not hold a master’s degree, at least 60 of these credits must be at the graduate level, earned at a regionally accredited college/university with a graduate teacher education program.

The state’s primary professional development focus has been on literacy with the 2015 Read to Succeed legislation. R2S requires that all certified educators earn an endorsement in reading as part of their regular recertification cycle and offers a sound basis for a statewide professional learning strategy.

In South Carolina, most professional development is seat-time based, with few ways to determine its impact. However, the SCDE has been piloting the use of [microcredentials](#) so educators can demonstrate the competencies they have developed. This has paved the way for a system of documenting and spreading the expertise of educators. The UofSC College of Education has established [CarolinaCrED](#) – offering state educators personalized professional learning experiences that includes a micro-credential platform for educators. KnowledgeWorks, working with the Berkeley County School District, has begun to experiment

with [teacher learner profiles](#) as a means for classroom practitioners to more formally lead their own learning. The SCDE has started awarding [continuing education units](#) for the microcredentials educators earn – yet to date few policy incentives exist for educators to lead their own professional learning.

SCDE’s collective leadership investment has allowed teachers and administrators from a small number of schools (now 24) to jointly create productive, professional, and collaborative school working environments. In partnership with CTQ, several of the collective leadership schools, such as Walker Gamble Elementary in Clarendon 4, have improved significantly. Walker Gamble has been named one of the state’s [Palmetto Finest](#), and evidence

How teacher leadership makes a difference at Walker Gamble

From 2018 to 2019, the percentage of fifth graders exceeding state standards increased from 8 to 30 percent. In 2020, Walker Gamble garnered a [Palmetto Finest award](#), in large measure because of engaging teachers as co-leaders of their professional learning and a shift in scheduling, so they had up to 10 hours a week to work with each other in improving outcomes for students.

The state’s collective leadership initiative collects teacher efficacy in each of the participating schools. Walker Gamble’s teachers, compared to the five schools in their cohort (#1), were far more likely to report that their “principal values the work I do at this school” and “collectively, the teachers and administrator(s) at this school can solve most any problem, no matter how difficult.”

suggests the importance of teacher leadership in improving student outcomes.

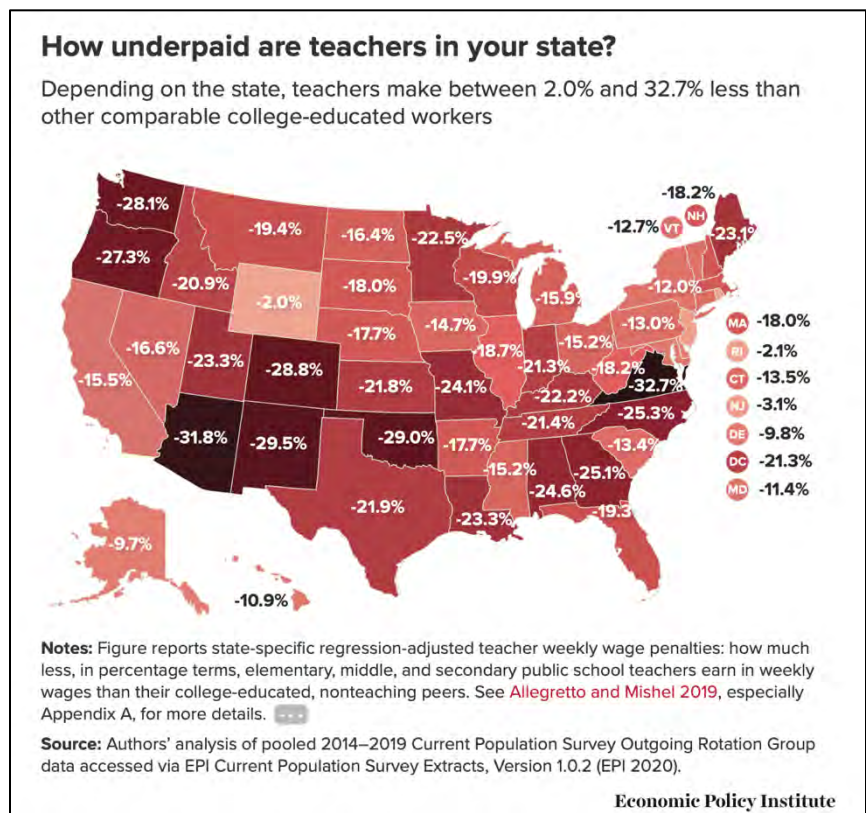
The interviews suggested other instances of teacher leadership in South Carolina, but there has been no formal recognition of these efforts.

IMPROVING SALARIES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Policy leaders in South Carolina have recognized the importance of addressing teacher salaries as a way for the state to combat teacher shortages. The EIA, enacted in the 1980s, required South Carolina teachers' salaries to be tied to the southeast average. Using projections from the SC Department of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs, in 2019-20 the average teacher' salary was \$53,329, slightly above the regional average.²⁰ For the 2021-22 school year, the General Assembly funded a \$1,000 increase for every teacher, plus their years-of-experience step increase. One analysis shows that South Carolina is ranked 40th in the nation in how much it pays its teachers.²¹ Other reports rank the state 29th or 33rd when salaries are adjusted for costs of living.

Like most states, South Carolina pays teachers on the basis of years of experience and college degrees and continuing education units earned, with little evidence of the impact of policies on the teaching profession. The state provides a minimum, [lock-step schedule](#) based on years of experience and education level attained. This schedule ranges from \$36,000 for a novice with a bachelor's degree to \$67,000 annually for a 23-year veteran with a doctorate. While only three districts pay the minimum, wealthier school systems can pay more for teachers through local salary supplements.

Calls to pay U.S. teachers more, and differently, are not new. A national study found that teachers, depending on a given state, make between 2 percent and 32.7 percent less than other comparable college-educated workers. According to one analysis, in South Carolina, the teacher pay gap is -13.4 percent – which is significant but not nearly as deep in nearby states of Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee.²² Despite the need to improve salaries, South Carolina policy leaders have done better than the state's neighbors.



Over 17 years ago, the Teaching Commission, founded by former IBM chairman and CEO Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., released a study calling for raising teacher salaries 10 to 30 percent at an estimated price tag of \$30 billion (at the time). The study also reported that top teachers should be paid \$100,000 or more.²³ More recently, studies have found that top performing school systems across the globe pay teachers between about 90 to 105 percent of the average salary received by college graduates across similarly trained professions. By contrast, U.S. teachers earn, on average, about 60 percent of what other college graduates are paid.²⁴

South Carolina has made considerable investments in support of National Board Certified Teachers, a rigorous performance assessment on par with how other professions assess and identify their most accomplished practitioners. A review of the best research available, assembled by the National Research Council, found that “teachers who earn board certification are more effective at improving their students' achievement than other teachers, but school systems vary greatly in the extent to which they recognize and make use of NBCTs.”²⁵

In FY2021-22, the legislature appropriated \$44.5 million for National Board Certified Teachers in South Carolina, and the program has been extended to accept new candidates. The General Assembly continued the salary supplement of \$7,500 level for any teacher who had been certified or completed the application process (as an initial candidate) prior to July 1, 2010. Teachers who applied and were certified after July 2010, “receive a \$5,000 salary supplement in the year of achieving certification.”²⁶

While a [report](#) revealed that the state has had over 9000 teachers achieve National Board Certification (and 6000 currently employed in districts, charters, or Career and Technical Education centers), South Carolina has no state policy in place to take advantage of their expertise. The distribution of NBCTs is highly uneven (see box).

Studies show that when specific *professionalized working conditions* are in place (e.g., time for teachers to learn with colleagues and opportunities to lead), teachers are more likely to stay, and their schools improve.²⁷ In top performing school systems around world, like Singapore, teachers have, on average, 15 hours of week inside of the school day, to collaborate with each other and lead from their classrooms.²⁸ The average U.S. teacher teaches almost twice as many hours, severely limiting their prospects to lead their own learning.

NBCTs are more likely to stay - and be more effective - but less likely to be teaching in high poverty schools.

A 2020 report assembled by CERRA found that the South Carolina's National Board Certified Teachers were less likely to leave the classroom. In 2018-19, the state's overall teacher turnover rate was 9 percent while only 3.6 percent for NBCTs.

In South Carolina, NBCTs are far less likely to be teaching in a low poverty school. Approximately 25 percent of teachers with three or more years of experience in Lexington 5 (low poverty) are NBCTs; in high poverty districts like Williamsburg and Clarendon 1 (high poverty) the percentage is zero.

In South Carolina, there is little consistent data on teacher and administrator working conditions to inform policy and practice related to school improvement as well as whole child education. However, evidence assembled in the past offers a way to proceed in the future.

South Carolina does not offer incentives for teachers to teach in high-need schools (other than its loan forgiveness program) and has no retention policies. However, almost 15 years ago, 300 of the state's National Board Certified Teachers engaged in a [project](#) to address the vexing problem of recruiting and retaining accomplished teachers in high-needs schools. Drawing on both empirical evidence and the insights of the 300 NBCTs, the research team surfaced a comprehensive set of recommendations, including recruiting accomplished teachers in teams to creating opportunities for them to lead without leaving the classroom.²⁹ Other researchers have documented why NBCTS are less likely to be found in high need schools – including less professional working conditions found in them.³⁰

In 2004, under the guidance of CERRA, independent researchers [conducted](#) a statewide working conditions study and found significant relationships between the teaching environment and student achievement. Since then, there has not been a statewide assessment of teacher working conditions although SC-TEACHER is currently conducting an exit study of the state's departing teachers. Preliminary findings of this study suggest that teachers who leave for other districts do so because of administrative leadership as well as the "reputation" of the school community to which they are moving.³¹

Whole child education requires rethinking what and how teachers are paid as well as the conditions under which they work. More focus on early childhood educators as well as other adults serving children and families is needed. However, the state has established foundational policies that now need to be aligned as a system of educator development if whole child education will be more the norm than the exception in South Carolina.

In closing, this analysis captures three key foundations to build on, five gaps to fill and five opportunities to leverage in order to build adult capacity in the state.

The Essential Question: How can the state utilize its most accomplished teachers, including but not limited to NBCTS, to build adult capacity for whole child education among PK-12 and other educators?

Foundations

- Signature teacher recruitment programs, with national recognition, include those focused on increasing the diversity of the educator workforce
- National Board Certified Teachers receive a salary increase of \$7500 for demonstrating accomplished teaching practices
- [SC-TEACHER](#) has begun to build integrated data in support of evidence-based educator preparation and development

Gaps

- Need for more comprehensive and coherent data to assess educator development policies and practices, including under-resourced mentoring and diffuse professional development activities
- Few incentives for higher education institutions to fully partner with each other and school districts
- Little information on teacher working conditions known to influence their retention and school performance
- Need for a teacher leader strategy tied to school innovation, deeper learning, and the Profile
- Minimal data on the other adults, including early childhood and afterschool educators, whose capacity also needs to be developed

Opportunities

- **Expand** existing alternative preparation programs to recruit and develop a more diverse teaching workforce in a more customized, competency-based way
- **Study and scale** micro-credentialing pilots as basis to support teacher-led, competency-based professional learning and advance a 21st century educator compensation system
- **Grow** from the success of [UofSC teacher induction program](#) (with its 98% retention rate) which offers an opportunity to rethink the state's current approach to mentoring
- **Utilize** teacher leaders (such as the state's 6000 NBCTs) to lead coaching and professional development that improves classroom instruction and fuels whole child education
- **Refine** teacher evaluation processes to offer opportunities for teachers to spread expertise tied to the science of learning and whole child education

The analysis presented considerable evidence on policies that affect building adult capacity for whole child education. However much more needs to be known about the teachers of South Carolina and the other educators and helping professionals who serve children in the state's public school communities.

Nevertheless, none of the first four elements can be fully addressed without thinking differently about how schools and their communities are financed for whole child education. And rethinking of school finance cannot happen without thinking differently about how resources can be aligned in ways that drive both effectiveness and cost-efficiencies. Element 5 looks at aligning resources.

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Aligning Resources Efficiently and Equitably

element five

// To reduce fragmentation and improve alignment across programs and funding streams, state and local leaders should provide tools and strategies for districts and localities to evaluate their needs and then combine and align school- based and community-based resources to support students.

– Aspen Institute (2021)

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALIGNING RESOURCES EFFICIENTLY AND EQUITABLY

Aligning resources and encouraging cross-partnerships can accelerate student learning and increase efficiencies in public education. Both are essential to whole child education. Most communities need assistance from both policy and school finance that “can tie frequently siloed programs and initiatives together on behalf of young people and their families.”¹ Whole child education cannot be sustained without intentionally valuing partnerships between schools and community advocates and agencies.

States can adopt an adequate and equitable school funding formula that prioritizes under-resourced schools and *the needs of historically underserved children and adolescents*. States can both adjust funding weights for specific student needs as well as allow for local flexibility on budgeting decisions tied to priority areas for continuous improvement. States can also conduct an assessment of the available federal, state, and local resources available across agencies and programs to provide a whole child support system from early childhood through adolescence into adulthood. In doing so, states can assist local school communities in strategically utilizing various federal streams – [ESSA Title I funds](#) (which target low-income schools and can be used to address resource inequities), [ESSA Title II funds](#) (which can provide professional development to build adult capacity), and [ESSA Title IV funds](#) (which can be used towards a wide range of programs including academic enrichment, school safety, and Full-Service Community Schools).

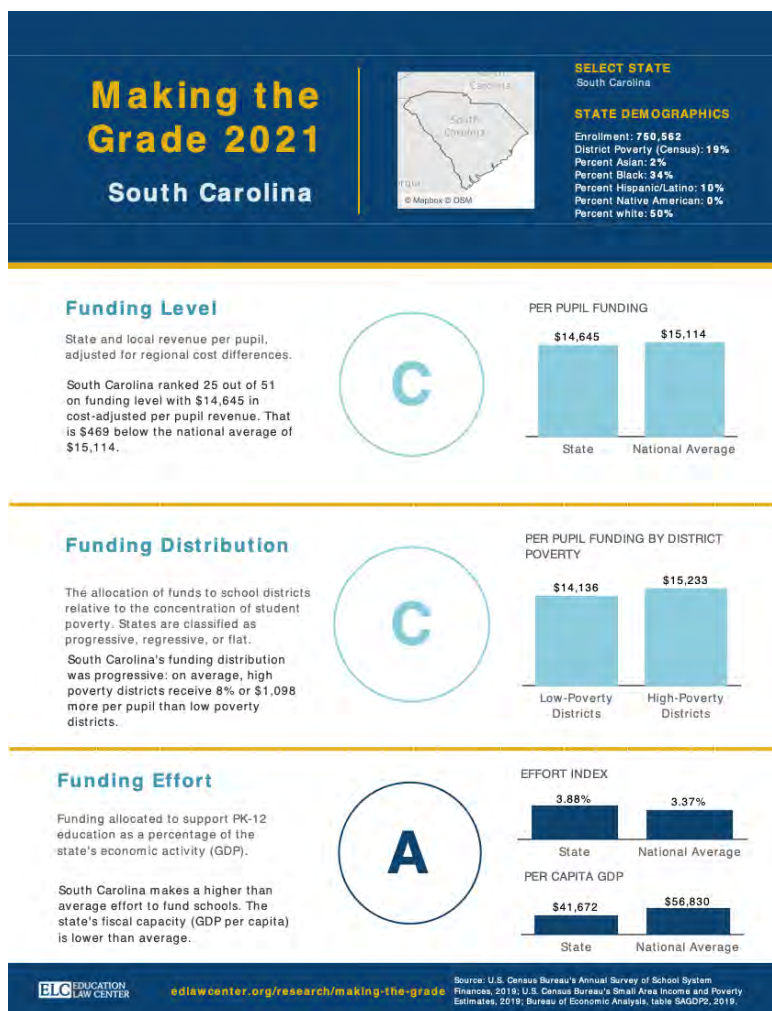
In particular, ESSA Title IV funds may be used to support local education agencies that are implementing plans to reduce exclusionary discipline or expand access to school-based counseling and mental health programs. In addition, the expanded use of Medicaid can support health- and mental health-related initiatives. The [National School Lunch Program](#) can ensure healthy meals at no state and local cost to all enrolled students. The [Center for Disease Control Healthy Schools](#) grants can fund programs and professional development related to improved nutrition and physical health.

In aligning resources efficiently and equitably, whole child education can both improve outcomes for every student and lower costs as well. For example, Return on Investment studies of community schools and integrated student support programs have rates of return from \$3 to \$15, depending upon the specific cost and benefits included.² However states need to create policy and funding to realize the ROI. As whole child education initiatives develop, states need to invest in capacity building, including staff to: a) coordinate services across individual schools and communities, b) collect and analyze data, and c) inform stakeholders. Studies have shown that going public with data and results assists policymakers and practitioners unlock new (and continued) funding and long-term sustainability.³

The Education Law Center publishes an annual condition of public education finance systems across the United States. *Making the Grade 2021* paints “a bleak picture” as many states primarily across the South and West have funding levels that are thousands of dollars per-pupil below the national average. The report’s authors point out:

Most states do not provide higher levels of funding to deliver the extra resources necessary to educate students from low-income families and students in high-poverty schools and districts. Importantly, many states simply refuse to make the fiscal effort required to adequately fund PK-12 education relative to their economic capacity. A handful of states – Florida, Louisiana, Nevada, and Tennessee – perform poorly across the board.”⁴

South Carolina fares better than a number of states in the South, making a higher than average effort to fund schools (ranked 25 out of 51 on funding level), and is somewhat progressive as poverty districts do receive more dollars per pupil than low poverty districts. Compared to other states, South Carolina received an A for effort from the ELC, given that its fiscal capacity (GDP per capita) is lower than the national average.



Source: Education Law Center (2021)

The interviews conducted revealed no shortage of opinions regarding school finance in South Carolina and the degree to which the system is sufficiently funded and equitable. Policy leaders and educators spoke to the debates over how much is spent on education as well as how those dollars are spent. However, the interviews revealed considerable consensus regarding the inadequacy of the current finance system

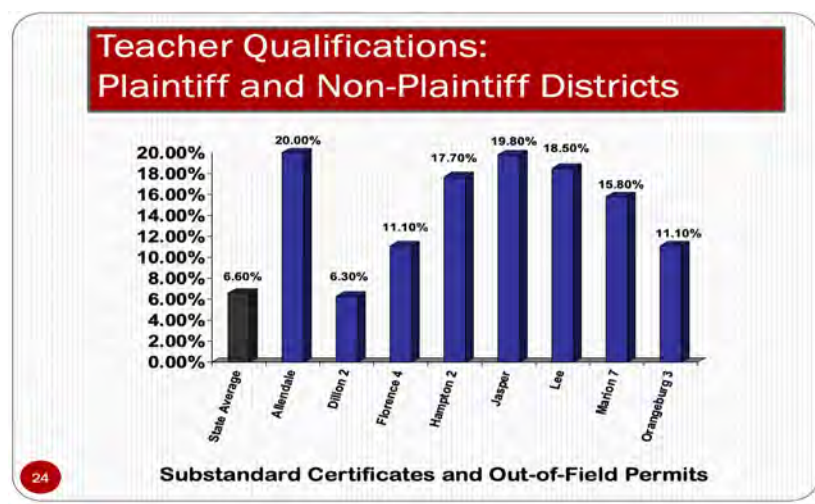
– especially given the new demands on public education and the challenges of preparing young people for life success and the future of work.

Almost everyone interviewed agreed that school funding exacerbates the misalignment and inequitable distribution of resources.. Interviews revealed that most policy and education leaders find the South Carolina school funding system to be exceedingly complex with different funding streams that have their own allocation methodology. A 2019 report from the Palmetto Institute concluded:

With so much of the funding dependent on factors other than student enrollment and characteristics, districts and schools have greater difficulty using funds in the way they feel best serves their students. South Carolina’s funding model places the focus on inputs, rather than student outcomes (emphasis in original).⁵

Both document reviews and interviews suggested that South Carolina’s education finance system is outdated given expectations of the Profile of the SC Graduate.

Education policy advocates have made several attempts to address these challenges. The most notable was the 1993 education finance lawsuit, *Abbeville v. South Carolina*. Over time, the lawsuit involved 40 small and rural plaintiff districts serving low income and minority students. The plaintiffs pointed to high transportation costs in rural communities and access to quality teachers in addition to per pupil allocations that did not accurately reflect funding needs. ⁶ (See below table for evidence of teacher qualifications gap presented in plaintiff and non-plaintiff districts.)



Source: Hart, L (2015). *Abbeville County School District v. State of South Carolina*; "How Did We Get Here and What Happens Now?" Presentation to the SC Association of School Business Officials.

In 1999, the State Supreme Court held that the South Carolina Constitution’s education clause requires the General Assembly to provide an opportunity for each child to receive a “minimally adequate education.” However, as reported in the media, the case has moved through the courts for nearly a quarter century. In

late 2014, a divided Supreme Court ruled that South Carolina had failed its constitutional duty to provide poor, rural children even a "minimally adequate" education. As the *Post and Courier* reported:

The justices ordered lawmakers to come up with a plan to fix it.... But instead of enacting systemic reform, lawmakers provided smaller fixes – and replaced two retiring justices. (In 2018), the court's new majority shifted course ... calling continued oversight "a gross overreach of judicial power."⁷

As Superintendent Spearman noted in an interview in late 2019:

We do need a new funding formula in South Carolina. In the 70s, every little town had a textile mill, and there was revenue coming in, so each local education district had some source of revenue that they could use to build buildings or to fund their local needs in education. That's not true anymore.⁸

This analysis is anchored by understanding the multiple sources of education funding and evidence, recognizing the inequities in South Carolina school finance, confronting inequities in the digital divide, as well as highlighting emerging developments for aligning resources for the whole child.

UNDERSTANDING THE MULTIPLE SOURCES OF EDUCATION FUNDING

The South Carolina state budget is comprised of three funds: General, Other, and Federal. Currently, South Carolina's largest General Fund appropriation is for the State Department of Education, which includes allocations to local school districts. Most of the primary state taxes and fees are appropriated to state agencies through the General Fund, including education and 11 social and health, and 21 higher education agencies.

For Fiscal Year 2021–22, the total state budget was \$31 billion, of which \$9.2 billion was from General Funds. More than \$4.3 billion, or 41 percent of the General Fund, was appropriated for education initiatives in South Carolina. Of the FY 2021–22 General Fund:

- \$3.5 billion was for K–12 education;
- \$987 million was for K–12 education as earmarked from one cent of South Carolina's sale tax;
- \$800 million was appropriated for colleges and universities; and
- \$597 million was appropriated from South Carolina's Education Lottery Account (\$68 million for K–12 education, \$528 million for higher education, and \$100,000 for other agencies).⁹

The passage of the Education Finance Act in 1977 remains the foundation of South Carolina's school funding. The EFA established a formula for calculating the cost of the average student's minimum educational needs and accounted for a district's property wealth.¹⁰ Over 40 years ago, the EFA committed the state to funding 70 percent of the cost of South Carolina's program of instruction in an average district. As required by law, school districts "must provide its required share of the base student cost of the defined

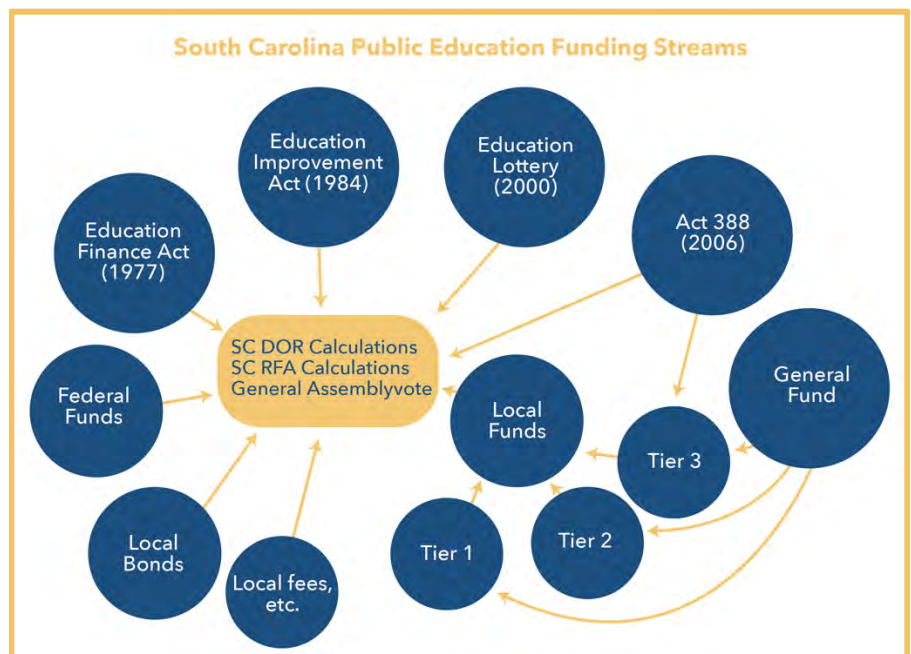
minimum program based on its district’s wealth and its index of tax-paying ability.”¹¹ The EFA also assumed a district size of about 6,000 students when today about 30 school systems serve 2,000 or fewer children.

In 1984, the Education Improvement Act increased the state sales tax rate from 4 to 5 percent in order to raise student performance in the basic skills, reward productivity, and construct new school buildings. The EIA funding supported more academic opportunities, more courses and programs, as well as teacher salaries tied to the Southeastern average. The EFA also extended the school year by 10 days. The EIA holds revenues in a trust fund and provides dollars to local districts based on programs which have different triggers to allocate the funds.

The EIA continues to fund a series of important programs including the Advanced Placement program, services to students identified as gifted and talented, and additional support for students not meeting state standards. EIA funds are also appropriated to the SCDE to perform several programs including the administration of federal programs, assessment, financial auditing, professional licensure, professional development, program leadership, and technical assistance. EIA programs are now viewed as part of basic educational services. These costs are not reflected in either school or district expenditures but are considered components of the state per-pupil expenditure.

Although not all EIA programs have survived, the state has maintained a separate revenue fund for the dedicated sales tax that continues to be used for increasing the level of South Carolina’s student achievement. Over the years, the EIA has remained a primary vehicle for comprehensive educational reform by stimulating other reform-oriented legislation such as the Target 2000 Act of 1989, the Early Childhood Development and Academic Assistance Act of 1993, and the Education Accountability Act of 1998. While these funds have been essential for school improvement, they have tended to encourage the financing of siloed programs that can work against whole child education.

Despite funding levels, federal, state, and local policies can undermine fiscal alignment across the state, creating funding opportunity gaps. As previously noted, interviewees generally described South Carolina’s education finance system as a series of disconnected funding streams, which can lead to inequities and undercut more coherent school improvement across the state (see figure to right).



Note: This figure is a simplified version of one produced by the Palmetto Promise Institute and the Aquita Economics Group. Original figure: acuitasecon.com/uploads/2015-1106-SCVision.pdf

A sizable proportion of education funding “is locked into specific districts, schools, staffing positions, services and programs.”¹²

A school finance expert noted:

Before Governor Haley* we had 74 different funding sources for schools. Now it is 55, but this is one of the causes of the siloes we have been talking about and how our education finance system undermines whole child education.

Over the last several decades, legislators have made changes to the state’s education finance formula with weights incorporated for schools serving students in poverty. However, no weighted funding for isolated or rural schools has been established. Current school finance policy debates in South Carolina, much like others across the nation, have focused on either redistributing existing resources or expanding them. One or the other. Not both.

Over time, EFA funding has shrunk as a percentage of total education spending. For example, in 2019, the Legislature spent 52 percent of its budget on education, a 5 percent reduction in funding, creating a shortfall of approximately \$400 million.¹³ And new changes to the funding formula have not counterbalanced what some analysts have viewed as historical funding inequities of the state’s public schools. School districts mainly use EFA funds to satisfy the local effort requirements of the law, to provide supplements to state and federal funds deemed appropriate by local communities, and to offer special initiatives or services with costs beyond the constitutional debt level.

In 2001, the state identified another source of funding to invest in public education – the lottery revenue to support PK-12 schooling. Proceeds from ticket sales, interest, and unclaimed prizes have generated on average more than \$300 million annually. These funds are also used to support the state’s scholarship programs (LIFE, HOPE, and Palmetto Fellows) as well as many other educational-related expenses such as transportation.

However, while the lottery has produced \$5.4 billion for education in South Carolina, almost 75 percent of these funds go to postsecondary scholarships. Some reports have shown that lottery revenue has primarily funded scholarships for wealthier students to attend the state’s colleges and universities.¹⁴ In addition, some documentation indicates that lottery funding has been supplanting dollars the state previously allocated. Before the General Assembly created the lottery, 57 percent of the state budget was devoted to education.

Concurrently, tax-base erosion remains a significant challenge to public school financing in South Carolina. Most notably, Act 388 of 2006 cut residential property taxes by about half and eliminated owner-occupied property assessment from school district tax levy calculations. This directly decreases local school funding

* Nikki Haley served as Governor of South Carolina from January 12, 2011 – January 24, 2017, before being appointed as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

appropriations, limiting property tax levies for educational operations, and shifts the burden of funding education to non-owner occupied residential property and businesses. The [local media](#) has acknowledged the impact of Act 388 on rural schools. A South Carolina school finance expert told us:

Act 388 of 2006 unhinged homeowners with kids from the taxes needed to support public schools. Property tax relief Act 388 benefited those with expensive homes. If you live in home and it is your primary, you do not have to pay taxes to schools for its operational cost. This decreases revenue availability at the local level – and it has hurt so many of our rural schools.

Other analysts have claimed that Act 388 forced school districts to rely on the “the volatility of sales tax revenues.”¹⁵ The reality is the General Assembly has rarely fully funded the EFA, and the formula requires updates to account for major shifts in the need for technology infrastructure as well as regional cost of living.¹⁶

RECOGNIZING THE INEQUITIES IN SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL FINANCE

With the EFA in 1977, the base student cost theoretically represented the funding needed to support a universal program of instruction.

Nationally, South Carolina is ranked 23rd in per-pupil spending at \$15,012 and 27th in per-pupil allocations.¹⁷ In 2018, the state’s mean total revenue per-pupil was \$13,358. In 2020, this rose to \$14,801.¹⁸ However, research, conducted in part for this report, found that while some districts are spending \$15,000 per pupil, most are spending much less.

South Carolina also accounts for the additional cost of educating specific categories of students by applying multipliers to the base amount to generate supplemental funding.¹⁹

Over time adjustments have been made to the weighted pupil units. However, these weights may not necessarily reflect the needs of the whole child. For instance, there is no weight to address in-school/out-of-school suspension rates or student access to teachers with specific content and curriculum expertise tied to the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

South Carolina Pupil Weights	
Category	Weight
K-12	
Base students	1.00
Students in residential treatment facilities	2.10
Weights for Students with Disabilities	
Educable mentally handicapped	1.74
Learning disability	1.74
Trainable mentally handicapped	2.04
Emotionally handicapped	2.04
Orthopedically handicapped	2.04
Visually handicapped	2.57
Hearing handicapped	2.57
Students with Autism	2.57
Speech handicapped	1.90
Pre-career Technology	1.29
Additional Weights for Personalized Instruction	
Gifted and Talented	0.15
Academic Assistance	0.15
Limited English Proficient	0.20
Pupils in Poverty	0.20
Dual Credit Enrollment	0.15
Source: SC General Assembly, 21-22 General Appropriations Bill (H.4100 part 1B).	

Much more needs to be known about the resources, services and policies needed to counterbalance the inequities in opportunities children experience outside of school – and how the community context can impact students’ trajectory within the pipeline of schooling PK-20.

A 2019 Palmetto Promise report asserted South Carolina school finance reform should include more dollars allocated to districts based on student characteristics and needs, rather than omnibus general programmatic purposes. The researchers concluded that: (1) expenditures are not directly tied to actual student costs; (2) revenue streams are unstable and unpredictable, causing significant budgeting challenges; (3) complicated funding formulas lack transparency and disguise inefficiency; and (4) current cost-sharing formulas do not promote fairness across districts.²⁰

In early 2021, Palmetto Promise developed an interactive [school district finance and performance dashboard](#) that pulls together data from across various state agencies for South Carolina’s 81 public school districts (including charters), into a single, accessible format to help shed light on a critical question. The tool provides information on how education spending line up with education outcomes.

However, to support a whole child education model, South Carolina would also require increased funding for access to apprenticeships and training tied to future employment and labor market fluctuations – especially for isolated rural areas where fewer opportunities exist. This could potentially include funding for the investment in cross-sector collaboration that can save money in the future. This type of funding could support whole child coordinated efforts, including new kind of professional educator who serves as a community-employment-schooling coordinator.

Inequities in school funding in South Carolina

For instance, in 2018, districts in close proximity to a city, or located in a city, had approximately \$343,535,714.29 in total revenue, while those districts located in rural areas of the state received approximately \$45,607,279.07. This is an almost \$300,000,000 difference in total revenue allocation between rural and city districts. Furthermore, when examining the total revenue per-pupil, rural districts received approximately \$800 less total revenue per-pupil, \$14,135, than city districts, \$14,952. Plausibly these differences are a function of poverty rates and the increase of federal funding for Title I schools, yet poverty rates in rural districts are higher, 89 percent, than city districts, 75 percent.

To that end, there are also total revenue differences between high-poverty and low-poverty districts. There is a \$132,868,757 difference in total revenue between those districts with greater than 50 percent poverty and those with less than 50 percent poverty. This funding gap is associated with gaps in state revenue allocations toward districts as state revenue for those districts serving greater than 50 percent of students in poverty receive \$70,503,612 less than those serving less than 50 percent of students in poverty.

– David G. Martinez, Assistant Professor, UofSC

This analysis of whole child policies in South Carolina suggests the need for discussions to hone in on funding new demands on public schooling to address workforce readiness in the third decade of the 21st century. What would it cost to sustain a robust and comprehensive set of education as well as health and social policies that attend directly to the out-of-school obstacles students (and their families) face? The work of First Steps and the Early Childhood Advisory Council has made clear the importance of funding multi-generational policies in support of whole child education.

As the Aspen Institute has noted:

Many programs focus solely on the child or the parent. The 2Gen approach does not focus exclusively on either children or adults because their well-being is directly interconnected. Instead, it takes stock of the family as a whole and uses a holistic, family-centered lens to understand the multiple dimensions of families and consider a variety of pathways for promoting positive outcomes.²¹

For whole child education to be possible, the funding system will need to address the intersectional nuances embedded in student demographics. For instance, how does the nature of high-poverty and English language proficiency impede content learning? Furthermore, how does the intersection of both hinder a student's ability to fully participate in a program of instruction? In this example, a student would receive funding to support learning barriers due to poverty, to support learning barriers due to English language proficiency, and to support learning barriers due to the interaction of both.

Even with whole child weightings, school districts need local flexibility on budgeting decisions to determine immediate priority areas beyond areas of need previously identified. School leaders, with acute knowledge of daily schooling operations, require more funding that is not earmarked at the state or district level. This could potentially help school leaders address immediate student, teacher, or facility needs.

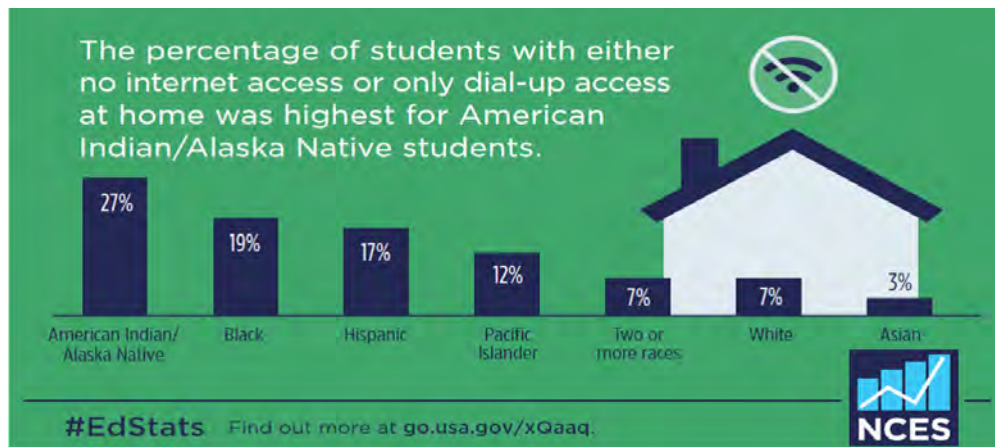
In addition, South Carolina does not provide weighted funding for district sparsity. The SCDE currently distributes rural and low-income school program (Title V) federal funds based on a formula to help rural districts meet the state's definition of adequately yearly progress. The state itself, however, has no mechanism to address funding associated with sparsity. South Carolina relies heavily on federal funds to counterbalance poverty and rurality. A state school finance expert noted:

Some school districts have less than 1,000 students, and then there is Greenville with 77,000. South Carolina has 30 rural districts with less than 2,000 students. We need a different finance system to take into account these very different contexts. The myth among policymakers here in South Carolina that one size fits all regardless of scale.

Ellen Weaver, chair of the Education Oversight Committee, pointed to a new model of student-centered finance reform anchored by the principals of flexibility, transparency, and fairness. Her recommendations included streamlined funding that valued increased autonomy to empower teachers and school leaders to innovate at the local level and meet the unique needs of their students and community. Weaver's model would also provide equal opportunity for students across rural and urban districts to have more customized educational experiences.²² The financing of whole child education requires equitable access to curriculum offerings (Advanced Placement) and enriched, and deeper learning opportunities that have been limited to some students (mostly of color and/or from low-income communities).

CONFRONTING INEQUITIES AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Prior to the pandemic, the digital divide for public education students was deep. As reported by Common Sense and the Boston Consulting Group, about 1 in 3 of the nation's 50 million K-12 students did not have access to high-speed internet or devices with the capacity to learn online from their homes.²³ A 2018 study by the National Center for Education Statistics found stark differences regarding internet access by the race and ethnicity of school-age children.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics (2018). [The Digital Divide: Differences in Home Internet Access](#)

South Carolina reported in 2020 that more than 190,000 homes statewide lacked access to high-speed internet, either because connectivity does not exist or residents could not afford to pay for access. In the midst of the pandemic (December 2020), the Federal Communications Commission estimated that 650,000 South Carolinians did not have access to broadband internet, including more than 552,000 people who live in rural areas and more than 97,000 people who live in urban areas.²⁴ More than 60 percent of the residents of six counties (Allendale, Chesterfield, Hampton, McCormick, Marlboro, Saluda) lack access to internet speed of at least 100 megabits per second. Another 2021 report indicated that an estimated 400,000 South Carolinians don't have access to high speed broadband that gives them access to a telehealth appointment or stream a video for a class.²⁵ These reports show that many South Carolinians live in internet and technology deserts.

During the pandemic, the SCDE acted quickly to secure Wi-Fi hotspots for more than 73,000 lower-income K-12 students with no internet at home enabling them to participate in virtual instruction. However, school district demand, and technological constraints, exceeded the support the SCDE could provide and many students struggled to fully participate in online learning due to weak signals and interruptions.²⁶ Five districts piloted datacasting using South Carolina Educational Television's network of broadcast towers to send lessons, assignments, and educational content to students with limited or no internet access.

Interviews revealed several barriers to internet for children and their families, including the physical and financial obstacles such as access to broadband and adoption as well as high subscription costs. Even if

students are assigned a district-owned computing device, disparities exist in out-of-school internet access, creating inequities in opportunity and access related to homework, digital make-up days, and student enrichment. However interviews illustrated a concurrent barrier – the lack of knowledge on how to take advantage of the internet for both education and economic opportunities. As one policy expert noted:

We can create demand for internet use in rural areas by engaging students, not parents. By engaging students, and preparing them to help their families in the use of these tools, we can both ensure they receive a better education, but ensure more opportunity for their parents and siblings. We need to not just offer devices and connectivity we need to prepare students to become IT directors of their homes. It will also create a potential career path for them.

South Carolina is making changes to address technological challenges. Just before the pandemic (February 2020), the SCDE developed its [2020-24 Educational Technology Plan](#) that promotes the integrated use of technology in the curriculum. Housed within Act 91 of 2019, the plan focuses on infrastructure and connectivity needs, online testing requirements, equipment, educational technology, digital literacy, and a statewide learning management system to connect teachers and students. By 2024, SC public schools are expected to have more accessible tools for “anytime, anywhere, any pace” learning. According to the SC Office of Regulatory Staff, the cost to fully connect the state with broadband is approximately \$1.4 billion.²⁷

Subsequently, the passage of the CARES Act, which allocated money to states for pandemic response, helped fund broadband expansion projects to connect residents to reliable, high-speed broadband. In July 2020, the SC General Assembly allocated \$50 million of CARES Act funding to the Office of Regulatory Staff to expand broadband infrastructure with a particular emphasis on expanding to rural communities. In August 2021, the accelerateSC Task Force proposed to spend over \$490 million of COVID relief for broadband expansion.²⁸

However, the lack of more coordinated education policy framework poses a challenge as local school districts are authorized to independently procure technology services in their district, resulting in multiple operating systems across districts. Additionally, IT staff skills across districts vary from a single certified media specialist to multiple staff with various industry certifications. Interviews suggested a greater need for district collaboration to address networking standards and greater opportunities for collaboration and shared services among school districts.

However, more coordinated approaches appear to be emerging. For example, all South Carolina school districts now have access to a Learning Management System – a software application used for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, and delivery of educational courses, training programs, or learning and development programs. Districts also now have access to the state learning object repository, a digital library for educational content.²⁹

The SCDE is working to align state, district, and school Learning Management Systems to share content, promote personalized learning, improve achievement, and enable students to meet the Profile of the SC Graduate. A policy leader noted:

Digital inclusion and access to the internet are two objectives the state should strive for. We have to address the racial disparities. We also need to have our broadband office with a state director with knowledge of education and the economy.

When the state passed its broadband bill in September 2020, Speaker of the House Jay Lucas was quoted as saying:

Expanded access equals expanded opportunity – something every South Carolinian deserves. Today is a good day, and a good start, for South Carolina.³⁰

However, it is one thing to bridge the digital divide; it is another thing to close the divide between the internet-haves and -have nots and ensure that policy interventions last beyond the pandemic.

EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS IN ALIGNING RESOURCES FOR THE WHOLE CHILD

School expenditures vary by grade configuration and school level. Formulas and policies provide allocations for programs and staff positions that are limited to certain grade levels. For example, funding for personnel, supplies, and transportation related to career development and counseling is allocated only for students in grades 6-12. There are also specific funding allocations for reading coaches and physical education teachers. In 2021, the state provided funding for every school to have a nurse.

Interviews revealed that the SCDE draws on Every School Succeeds Act Title I funds to target low-income schools, and ESSA Title IV funds to support academic enrichment programs. ESSA Title IV funds support school districts in reducing exclusionary discipline practice and expand access to school-based counseling and mental health programs. The SCDE also provides support to districts in using ESSA Title II funds for educators' professional development, federal Perkins Act dollars to strengthen PK-12 and postsecondary Career and Technical Education programs for students, and Child Care and Development Block Grant funds for child care subsidies.

For example, in 2020, the Department of Social Services allocated \$1.2 million in federal CCDBG dollars to SC First Steps to improve the quality of licensed child care centers that participate in the First Steps 4K program. SCDE has earmarked its Title II, Part A funds to help districts develop programs and strategies to ensure teachers can meet the South Carolina Teaching Standards. Also, the SCDE has supported school districts to draw on Medicaid funds to provide medical services for children as part of their special education plans. Some school districts, sometimes in partnerships with local United Ways, tap Corporation

for National and Community Service grants to draw on AmeriCorps members to address identified school and community needs.

Several efforts, including the Spartanburg Academic Movement, the Beaufort County Human Services Alliance, and On Track Greenville have a strong track record developing cross-agency means to deliver comprehensive services. Policy leaders still need additional information to create sustained funding plan that leverages existing staff and local expertise to align funding in support of the whole child. A policy leader said:

The financing of whole child education means that you have to combine resources already available, but our history of decentralization really works against whole child approaches.

The SCDE has shifted resources to ensure teachers have high quality professional development to learn and effectively integrate technology into their classroom, and provide virtual instruction. However, guidance counselors, social workers, and nurses also need professional development focused on delivering remote services. A new finance system can incentivize cross-sector and inter-district collaboration of resources. A policy leader said:

Our finance system is outdated, but it is about governance, governance, and governance.

Another noted:

Showing legislators how we use our current dollars more effectively is a path to greater investments that are needed in public education.

Whole child, student-centered funding, can build from state efforts through the EFA that provides state education funding for every child. Whole child funding can help to incentivize greater resource alignment to support innovation by educators and their communities. Whole child, student-centered funding that aligns resources can save public dollars while also highlighting crucial educational investment need areas.

In closing, this analysis captures three key foundations to build on, three gaps to fill, and three opportunities to leverage in order to align resources efficiently and equitably in the state.

The Essential Question: How can the state incentivize cross-sector partnerships in aligning financial and people resources based on demonstrated need and performance?

Foundations

- The [Education Finance Act of 1977](#) established the importance of weighted student funding to support the varied needs of different students
- Innovative funding proposals have been developed to support more equitable and transparent school finance
- Student digital access in school and home is recognized as a fundamental resource for 21st-century teaching and learning

Gaps

- Lack of aligned funding streams so that all children have access to all funds
- Need for better data and reporting on how resources are used across diverse programs in K12 and other related sectors such as social work and mental and physical health
- Updates needed to the weighted funding formula to reflect the demands posed by the Profile of a Graduate and whole child education

Opportunities

- **Leverage** ESSER funding as a way to encourage alignment of resources, i.e. mental health services
- **Foster** public-private partnerships to ensure equitable internet access for districts regardless of purchasing power
- **Employ** [Learning Management Systems](#) to better align resources around different program areas

A National School Boards poll of likely 2022 voters revealed that a majority had positive perceptions of their own public schools, and 59 percent support increasing funding for them.³¹ This analysis suggests that policy leaders can remove barriers and support administrative flexibility in the use of funding in exchange for a commitment to demonstrate deeper, more equitable student outcomes. However, policy leaders also need to provide clear guidance on and support for using resources in ways that support the whole child.

Aligning resources efficiently and equitably requires a hard look at both current financing and governance. As one policy leader said:

We need to do something different with the way we fund schools and the other agencies that support children. Doing so means we need to focus on governance, governance, and governance.

The next section summarizes some of the major lessons learned and explores the prospects for moving toward a whole child system of education for South Carolina, with implications for other states as well.

******Authors note: Fiscal analysis was completed using STATA version 17.0.104 and data aggregated from the National Center for Educational Statistics. This analysis uses traditional LEAs. Independent, private, and charter LEAs were excluded in this analysis and are not captured in the main database for fiscal analysis, as they are often small sample local educational agencies, structurally incongruous, and would not be comparable with traditional LEAs. Specifically, the fiscal analysis omits the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities, the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, South Carolina Public Charter School District, Deaf and Blind School, John De La Howe, Dept of Juvenile Justice, Dept of Correction N04, Charter Institute at Erskine, Felton Lab School of South Carolina H24, South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Will Lou Gray Opportunity. This analysis uses a modified method previously employed by EdBuild (2019). EdBuild (2019) employed a less than 25%, greater than 75%, variable split to determine variable differences. In this analysis, we use a greater/less than 50 percent for poverty. For geography, all rural, city, town, suburb NCES codes were collapsed into their respective categories. This analysis is not inferential; however, the information is pertinent. Finally, separate from this document, the fiscal analysis was computed using data and methodology provided by EdBuild. The data and analysis of this report is much more conservative in its estimated aggregate fiscal differences.

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Conclusions

// For me supporting the whole child in our schools requires enormous collaboration between faculty, families, and administration. Every child is different, thus to achieve the best outcome for a child it requires taking in consideration their physical and mental health and overall well-being. Are schools organized for this kind of communication – which is key to whole child education?

– An 11th grader from a rural school community (2021)

NO MORE NIBBLING AROUND THE EDGES OF SCHOOL REFORM

There is no shortage of diverse opinions concerning our public schools. However, hardly anyone seems to disagree over the fact that more children need to be ready for school, and more high school graduates need to be ready for post-secondary education and life and career success. And while the debates over how to achieve better outcomes for children can be intense, four school reform realities across the United States are emerging:

1. There is increasing [bipartisan support](#) for whole child education at the federal level where Republicans and Democrats agree that schools cannot improve academic outcomes for students without simultaneously attending to the out-of-school factors that undermine their capacity to learn. (See bipartisan House Resolution 756 of the 114th Congress [here](#).)
2. There is growing consensus that a *schools-only* approach to closing student achievement gaps will not work and accelerating learning requires more **cross-sector partnerships so every child reaches their full potential**.
3. There is a rich [science of learning](#) that offers a new narrative about how much more young people can learn and achieve under the right conditions and how schools need to be designed for them to do so.
4. There are opportunities for **whole child models of schooling, anchored in deep family engagement and schools as hubs of their communities to offer all students and parents more voice and choice in public education**.

Whole child education is about focusing on more than academic achievement. If students are to succeed academically and in life, schools must also attend to their social and physical as well as their cognitive, mental, and emotional needs. But this doesn't have to mean that teachers and principals need to do more than they are doing now. Not at all.

PK-12 educators alone cannot do the work that needs to be done. A schools-only approach will not suffice if policy and business leaders as well as parents and educators are to ensure the ambitious student learning outcomes (like the Profile of the SC Graduate) that have been established.

The last 18 months of pandemic-induced schooling have significantly impacted educators as well as the students and families they serve with uncertainties and emotional exhaustion. COVID19 – which has laid bare inequities in opportunities for young people to thrive and learn – has made a system of whole child education more important. In the future, schools must work more closely with their communities, businesses, and other agencies in personalizing learning so all students can reach their full potential. Partnerships among PK-12 school communities and other child- and youth-serving systems (early childhood,

afterschool, juvenile justice, health, and other fields) are now indispensable. And now more research, tools, and technologies are available to work with families as academic support to drive student learning.¹

Whole child education is not another program. Over the last several decades educators, students, and parents have been burdened by too many of them. Top-down school reforms, including decades of test-based accountability and more rigorous teacher evaluation, have not delivered the results that policy leaders had hoped to achieve. Whole child education is not about more nibbling at the edges of school reform. It is about building capacity in communities from the bottom up. It is about building a new education ecosystem co-created by young people and their families in partnership with educators both in and out of the PK-12 system. **It is about innovation and transformation as well as excellence and equity in education, from cradle to career. It is about every child – no matter if they are in a public, charter, or private school.**

Much like in other states, funding and governance in South Carolina often silo people and programs in youth-facing agencies and organizations. However, **the state has many programs related to and supportive of whole child education. There is just no place where all of the pieces of puzzle are put into place. Whole child education is about putting those pieces together as a system – from establishing a shared vision to aligning resources.**

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

South Carolina is well-positioned to take the next steps in pursuing whole child models of education. This exploratory analysis has highlighted 16 foundations to build upon, 21 gaps to fill, and 21 opportunities to leverage. This preliminary analysis is certainly not complete and there is more to the story that has yet to be told. At best, this report outlines the current state of whole child education policy in South Carolina and offers illustrates how key stakeholders can come together to define what success looks in the state.

Each of the five elements in the report bring up several questions:

1. How can the state's emerging Birth to 5, cross-sector agency partnerships serve as a model in firmly establishing a shared vision for whole child education, from early childhood to postsecondary?
2. How can existing school communities, informally recognized for whole child learning environments, be documented formally to identify more about what students and parents want and need in whole child education?
3. How can the state create a network of whole child school learning communities, with incentives and supports that capitalize on schools of innovation legislation in streamlining curriculum, elevating exemplary instructional models, and redesigning assessment?

4. How can the state utilize its most accomplished teachers – including but not limited to, NBCTS – to build adult capacity for whole child education among PK-12 and other educators?
5. How can the state incentivize cross-sector partnerships in aligning financial and people resources based on demonstrated need and performance?

NEXT STEPS

There is no shortage of ways to move forward. Unfortunately, as this report is being finalized in the fall of 2021, many educators and the students and families they serve continue to wrestle with the trauma of the pandemic and havoc it has wreaked on schooling. So many educators have not had the bandwidth to engage in the necessary community-based dialogue and deliberations essential to building whole child education practices that inform the local and state policies needed to sustain them over time.

Advancing whole child education in South Carolina means: (1) *documenting* what it looks like in a given community and state, (2) *engaging* students and parents as well as educators and helping professionals to define local opportunities and gaps in community schooling for deeper, more equitable learning, and (3) *building* on an emerging coalition of organizations and business leaders to establish a policy and practice roadmap for supporting whole child education from cradle to career.

Here's how:

Document. Community schooling is emerging in South Carolina through [ALL4SC](#) as well as other cross-sector partnerships. However, these efforts are not well known, and the evidence is scattered and not clearly communicated. A documentation process needs to embrace the principles of improvement science in ways that those from the community can assess, refine and adjust, and scale new approaches that can help power up schooling over time and inform the development of both PK-12 educators and other helping professionals. The same process needs to inform the development of local policy analyses to both engage and build more coherent strategies and use data to support the transformation process.

Engage. Policy leaders have a great deal to learn from students and their parents. They also have much to learn from many educators who have discovered and used whole child innovations – especially of late as the pandemic disrupted the traditional model of education. Building more effective whole child education policies will require deeper learning and communication among all stakeholders. And deeper stakeholder engagement needs to be anchored in identifying of root causes that contribute to the policy gaps, and developing potential strategies and solutions that need to be monitored and adapted over time. As we learned from the young people interviewed for this paper, communication among all stakeholders is key to developing the kind of whole child/whole community education system that they want to see in their school experience.

Build. In recent years, attention to local cross-sector collaboration has surged in communities across the nation – due in large part to evidence regarding collective impact of coordinating education and other services for children.² South Carolina is home to a growing number of school-community-university partnerships focused in some way on whole child education. These partnerships have the potential to identify common metrics and build a common action agenda. However, a long-term strategic plan and initial road map for developing benchmarks for reaching goals is necessary. South Carolina needs a comprehensive strategy to improve the life success of every child as well as the state’s economic competitiveness. This can only be done by transforming and aligning *all levels of education and workforce development with a focus on bettering the lives of everyone in every community* within the state. South Carolina is poised to do so.

With a “think big, start small, learn fast” approach to education transformation, several specific recommendations are proposed for both policymakers and practitioners.

- Develop a clearinghouse of evidence-based practices of whole child education in South Carolina and a venture capital fund for *school communities* to learn from each other in systemic ways.
- Create a set of common performance metrics for measuring progress and success in developing whole child systems of education in South Carolina.
- Establish pilot school districts that are willing to reimagine the education professions for whole child teaching and learning while also aligning resources equitably, and efficiency in addressing current teacher shortages.

Over the last several decades educators, students, and parents have been burdened by too many well-intended programs that have been implemented in isolation from each other. Top-down school reforms, including decades of test-based accountability and more rigorous teacher evaluation, have not delivered the results that policy leaders had hoped to achieve. Whole child education is not about more nibbling at the edges of school reform. It is about building capacity in communities from the bottom up. It is about building a new education ecosystem co-created by young people and their families in partnership with educators both in and out of the PK-12 system. It is about innovation and transformation as well as excellence and equity in education, from cradle to career and birth to the workforce. Every child deserves no less.

ENDNOTES

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APPENDIX A: A Policy Grid for South Carolina Whole Child Policy Analysis

Element 1: Setting a Whole Child Vision

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
<p>Policy Strategy 1: Convene Stakeholders to Develop a Statewide Whole Child Vision</p>	<p>1.1.1 To what extent has the state education agency, state board of education, or state legislature defined whole child education in policy, regulation, or resolution?</p> <p>1.1.2 To what extent is the state’s vision for whole child education grounded in the <u>science of learning and development</u> and provide a roadmap to supporting young people from birth to adulthood?</p> <p>1.1.3 To what extent do different youth facing state agencies – PK-12 education, social services, mental health, public health, and juvenile justice – communicate to the public regarding whole child education?</p> <p>Does the state have any formal alliances, consortia, or task forces focused on whole child education? Look for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If so, how is whole child education defined and used 2. Is there a process for revisiting vision and assessing impact? 3. How well known are these efforts? 4. What impact/influence have these efforts had on policy? <p>Have any institutions or organizations, with a youth-facing mission, developed and facilitated cross-agency collaboration in support of whole child policy and practice?</p>
<p>Policy Strategy 2: Assess Conditions for Learning and Development for Children and Youth</p>	<p>1.2.1 Has the state utilized data as tool inform and facilitate cross-agency vision and action toward whole child education – and how?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data are available? How are data-sharing agreements forged? How are these agreements codified in policy? • How are agencies supported in data collection, analysis, and use? • What are the policy barriers and opportunities for data-sharing to facilitate shared vision for whole child education? • How has the state PK-12 report card – including the use of school climate measures as well as academic achievement measures – fueled deliberations regarding whole child education? (See Element 3 and use of data in accountability) <p>1.2.2 To what extent does the state require school improvement “councils” – composed of key stakeholders including students, parents, educators, other helping professionals, and community, business, and faith leaders?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these councils operate and to what extent do they advance whole child solutions? • How do their deliberations inform a shared vision of whole child education -- locally and statewide? • How has formal needs assessments or accreditation practices informed whole child deliberations and policy?

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and “Look Fors”
Policy Strategy 2 (Continued)	<p>1.2.3 To what extent does the state have an action plan to ensure the whole child vision gets realized?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorization of action plan • funding for plan • Communications relate to plan (see 1.9) <p>1.2.4 To what extent does the state measure fiscal equity in order reveal any disparities in access by race, gender, English learner and special education status, and other student characteristics? (See Element 5)</p> <p>1.2.5 To what extent does the state measure equitable access to certified and experienced educators and other measures of educator quality – and what implications does it have for whole child education? (See Element 4)</p>
Policy Strategy 3: Establish Coordinating Bodies to Advance the Whole Child Vision	<p>1.3.1 To what extent does the state have a coordinating body for any aspect of the cradle to career education continuum?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does it operate? • What authority does it have? • What is the role of student and parent voice in establishing whole child education? • What is the role of front-line educators, social workers, afterschool providers in establishing a vision for whole child education?

Element 2: Transforming Learning Environments

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and “Look Fors”
Policy Strategy 1: Support Relationship-Centered Learning Environments	<p>2.1.1 To what extent has the state supported districts and schools in redesigning learning environments in ways that prioritize strong, stable relationships?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State-mandated class size caps 2. State-supported class size reduction initiatives 3. Available SEA guidance on implementing flexible staffing structures 4. Available SEA guidance on longer grade spans that reduce the number of school-to-school transitions, looping, and preschool transition plans. 5. Available SEA guidance on student advisories <p>2.1.2 To what extent does the state use school climate surveys in transforming learning environments?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation rates by group (teacher, administrator, student, parent) • Differences in responses by group (teacher, administrator, student, parent)

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
<p>Policy Strategy 1 (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder responses to how data (whatever is currently collected) are used to inform policy and practice • Kinds of questions asked by current surveys and kinds of questions need to be asked <p>[State provides schools and districts with a school culture/climate survey that provides quick-turnaround data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, to support continuous improvement of school culture and environments]</p> <p>2.1.3 To what extent does the state provide guidance on developing and maintaining home-school-family relationships?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available PD on conducting student-family/caregiver-teacher conferences and other school activities • State-provided translation services available to schools and districts • Recognition of effective school communities that establish and maintain strong home-school relationships • Policies that support and fund school-home faculty contact for parental involvement • Policies and training in support of using technology to encourage strong educator-parent communications and relationships
<p>Policy Strategy 2: Foster Inclusive Learning Environments</p>	<p>2.2.1 To what extent does state policy support identity-safe schools and classrooms that foster diverse and inclusive learning environments (in-person, hybrid and virtual)?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common definitions among stakeholders as to what are identity-safe schools • School climate measures • Student voice in local school councils • Students represented on state board of education • Teacher represented on state board of education • Represented from other helping professions on state board of education <p>2.2.2 To what extent does the state promote the use of evidence-based, data-driven approaches to improve school climate and foster strong relationships, community, and well-being? [see above]</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State provides schools and districts with a school culture/climate survey that provides quick-turnaround data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, to support continuous improvement of school culture and environments • State education agency has a specific team/unit focused on supporting safe and inclusive school environments and honoring linguistic and cultural diversity. • Unit provides guidance or creates standards that promote identity-safe schools and classrooms that foster diverse and inclusive learning environments (in-person, hybrid and virtual).

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
<p>Policy Strategy 3: Adopt Restorative Approaches to Discipline</p>	<p>2.3.1 To what extent has the state adopted and invested in inclusive, restorative, and educative approaches to school discipline practice and policy?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If state tracks disproportionality in discipline practices and supports schools and districts in using the data to address disproportionality. (see DE for example; other potential examples here) • State discourages the use of/referrals to law enforcement as part of disciplinary practices with students • State minimizes zero tolerance policies for minor offenses (including absences) (CA, TX, OH, CT - UCLA/LPI) • Prohibits suspensions in early grades, • Discourages the use of exclusionary policies • If exclusionary discipline is used, state minimizes the length and encourages the use of reengagement plans <p>2.3.2 To what extent does the state address students' physical and mental health needs?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments in critical mental and behavioral health services, social-emotional supports, and needed social services and staff (e.g., counselors, social workers, school psychologists, mentors). • Policies in support of teachers and other certified PK-12 educators working closely with community-based social workers and mental health providers? • Policies in support of common training and professional development for teachers and counselors, social workers, school psychologists, mentors as well as school resource officers? <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weightings in school finance formula • Aligned resources between education, mental health, juvenile justice for training <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State supports consistent (i.e., non-classroom specific) restorative practices through funding, training, and guidance • State supports for spread of best practices in restorative practices
<p>Policy Strategy 4: Integrated Support Systems</p>	<p>2.4.1 To what extent does the state invest in integrated systems of support to better serve the holistic needs of students and families/caregiver?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The kind of student data platform the state uses • What data are assembled • The academic, cognitive, physical, behavioral, social-emotional data measures and how they are assembled • How are the data used

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
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Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
Policy Strategy 4 (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the data are accessible • How families engage with a system of integrated student supports <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State adopted evidence-based integrated student support frameworks, such as multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) models to guide implementation in schools and districts and support improved practice at scale. • State guidance, technical assistance, resources, and tools to help districts ensure that the integrated student supports selected are tailored to meet the needs of students, families, and communities • State guidance on community schools that incorporate/require a high-quality approach based on the evidence of the "four pillars": 1) integrated student supports, 2) expanded and enriched learning time and opportunities, 3) active family and community engagement, and 4) collaborative leadership and practices • State policy that allows/encourages schools and districts to use community schools as a school improvement strategy for low performing schools/districts.
Policy Strategy 5: Provide High-quality Expanded Learning Time	<p>2.5.1 To what extent does the state invest in high quality afterschool programs?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectation to apply the key research-based principles of effective expanded learning time • Use of local, state, and federal funds for afterschool programs (how sustainable). Is there a database? • Afterschool program standards • How are 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative funds used? • Policies in support of integrated work of in-school and afterschool curriculum • Opportunities for appropriate data sharing as well as supporting joint training and professional development for PK-12 and afterschool educators? • Training for afterschool providers/mentors? • Mentoring for adults providers • Joint training among K-12 afterschool educators? (See Element 4) <p>2.5.2 To what extent does the state strategically blend and braid multiple funding sources to increase access and quality in early childhood?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives for different agencies to work together • 0-5 coordinating council • Voluntary v. required use of quality control standards for early childhood care • Pay for early childhood educators • Specialized training v. common training - and policies that support or undermine

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
Policy Strategy 5 (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies in support of sharing facilities and documentation of policies that serve as barriers • Policies in support of data sharing between Pk-12 and afterschool educators

Element 3: Redesigning Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments, and Accountability Systems

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
Policy Strategy 1: Promote Rich Learning Experiences	<p>3.1.1 To what extent does the state have an instructional vision and aligned practices that are intellectually challenging and include critical thinking, complex problem-solving, effective communication, and collaboration skills for every child?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared instructional vision widely understood and enacted <p>3.1.2 To what extent has the state invested in the adoption of high-quality curriculum frameworks, instructional materials, assessments?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that they are widely accessible to educators? Are they used? • Are the curriculum goals established by the state with the assessments that measure student learning and progress? • Do teachers have access to colleagues via online hub in using instructional materials aligned with curricular goals? • Are teachers prepared to support deeper learning and are designed for both remote and in-person learning? <p>3.1.3 To what extent has the state created opportunities for every student to have applied learning and personalized pathways (e.g., internships, career shadowing, CTE courses, independent studies, community service projects)?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the state offer a common competency-based curricula? • Does state offer logistical support for equitable access to internships, career shadowing, community service projects? • Does the state require and support personalized learning plans tied to and mastery-based learning progressions? <p>3.1.4 To what extent has the state eliminated policies and practices that promote early tracking (pre-k - 8) and replaced them with practices that ensure all students have access to rich learning experiences?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking policies for college-ready and honors track • Gifted and talented criteria and policies

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
<p>Policy Strategy 1 (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of inclusive access to enriched curricula (just access accessible to those in G/T) • Evidence of policy support for professional learning for educators aligned with personalized, competency-based curriculum <p>3.1.5 To what extent has the state established standards developing social and emotional competencies and guidance for academic integration?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State policy/regulation/recognition • Coalitions and their policy agendas • State funding and support for SEL • Guidance and supports for SEL at home with educators and parents working collaboratively
<p>Policy Strategy 2: Support Authentic Systems of Assessment</p>	<p>3.2.1 To what extent has the state adopted high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood assessments that shine a light on children’s needs and abilities from preschool through early elementary grade?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend data • Utility of data • How data used and perceived • How parents and families have access to data and collaborate in support of the child <p>3.2.2 To what extent has the state ensures that their statewide assessment efforts include <u>performance-based tasks</u> that measure higher order thinking and deeper learning?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment to state standards • Measure and incentivize high-quality and equitable teaching and learning practices in PK-12 • Where performance based tasks are used in the state • How they are used- and valued locally and by state <p>3.2.3 To what extent does the state accountability system offer a dashboard of measures - providing transparency about use of resources, opportunities to learn outcomes, disaggregated by student groups?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides support for districts in sharing tools and resources for quality assessment selection, development, and use • Supports innovative local efforts through waivers for innovation zones, funding for local assessment initiatives, and pathways for local assessment efforts to lead to meaningful credentials for students

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
Policy Strategy 2 (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shares guidance for high-quality local assessment data practices and policies (e.g., equitable grading, advancement/access to advanced courses, etc. • Provides support for validating locally developed assessments • Publishes exemplar assessments and vetted recommendations for technical assistance providers and assessment instruments; • Offer professional learning tied to meaningful data practices within classrooms, schools, and districts • Offer professional learning tied to meaningful assessment or curriculum development efforts, using model resources and curriculum, content-specific initiative • Provides guidance and professional development on the use of universal screening tools for social, emotional, and behavioral health issues to monitor students throughout the school year and connect them to needed supports (see Element 2) • Supports extended project-, community-and work-based learning assessments to measure deeper learning and character competencies, such as collaboration, communication, perseverance, etc.
Policy Strategy 3: Adopt a Comprehensive Accountability System for Continuous Improvement	<p>3.3.1 To what extent does the state’s accountability system include indicators that encourage high-quality teaching and learning in all schools and <u>opportunity to learn indicators</u>?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools for continuous improvement • Data that is useful for identifying and addressing problems that require attention • Student access to high-quality courses, instruction, and curriculum including advanced courses • College and career readiness (industry certification) • Educator quality and teacher professional learning opportunities • Resource access (e.g., access to devices, materials, internet) • Fiscal equity • The extent of racial, ethnic, and economic segregation • Access to high-quality early learning programs • Access to expanded learning opportunities <p>3.3.2 To what extent does the state accountability system promote shared responsibility among policy leaders and practitioners?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight committees shift from compliance to transformation • Use of data to make new investment • Use of data to abandon programs not working

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
Policy Strategy 4: Strengthen Distance and Blended Learning Models	<p>3.4.1 To what extent does the state support districts and schools with standards, guidance, models, training, and materials designed to increase student engagement in distance and blended learning?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies that shift from measuring seat time to engagement by rewriting attendance laws and regulations to allow for schools and districts to track student engagement through competency-based tasks • State guidance on creating learning hubs that transform community spaces for student support to ensure students with the highest needs have access to distance and blended learning when school buildings are unavailable

Element 4: Building Adult Capacity and Expertise

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
Policy Strategy 1: Design Educator Preparation Systems for Whole Child Learning and Development	<p>4.1.1 To what extent has the state developed strong educator licensure and certification systems for whole child education?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of development and learning of diverse learners in ways that incorporate the science of learning and development • Child studies required in capstone experience • Have performance base licensing standards been adopted? How have they been used? <p>4.1.2 To what extent does state policy encourage educator preparation institutions to learn and share best practices around what whole child practice?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State policies that encourage EPPs to share lessons learned as well as collaborate • How EPPs across the state use performance assessments and other evidence of preparedness <p>4.1.3 To what extent does state early childhood credentialing requirements reflect the complexity of teaching and caring for young children?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State policies that encourage every educator to meet quality standards of practice • State policies that offer competitive salaries for early childhood educators
Policy Strategy 2: Adopt Proactive Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategies	<p>4.2.1 To what extent does the state invest in increasing access to service scholarships and loan forgiveness programs that support economically underserved students in entering and remaining in the teaching profession?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on where experienced teachers teach and which classes do they teach • Data related to state-funded fellowships for prospective teachers

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and “Look Fors”
Policy Strategy 2 (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of federal incentives for teacher scholarships • Pipeline programs (e.g., Teacher Cadets) that supports diverse middle and high school students to consider entering the profession and develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositioned need to be accepted into state EPPs • Residencies focused on increasing supply, diversity, and quality of new teachers training to teach for extended periods of time <p>4.2.2 To what extent does the state invest in high-quality Grow Your Own Programs to help recruit and prepare community members to teach in local school districts?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial aid for candidates and partnerships to provide academic, counseling, and other programmatic supports • Integrating career-focused courses on education topics with school-based learning experiences • Supporting candidates as they complete their associate’s degree in furtherance of a baccalaureate degree and earn their teaching credential, which may include a 2+2 program • Local recruitment efforts to identify potential community members or paraprofessionals, after school program staff, or other school-based personnel • Internship experiences to learn alongside an expert teacher. • Dual enrollment credit for high-school pathway programs <p>4.2.3 To what extent does the state offer incentives that foster district partnerships with local EPPs to promote educator quality and diversity?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews of disproportionate impact of current licensure and certification systems, such as standardized assessments are not correlated with quality teaching practice, and that serve as barriers to attracting potential teachers of color. • Pilots of high-quality teacher performance assessments, which require candidates to demonstrate their ability to support learning and students and allow candidates multiple pathways to demonstrate competence, as a requirement for licensure or certification instead of standardized tests. <p>4.2.4 To what extent does the state offer competitive teacher compensation through a variety of strategies?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries aligned to regional averages for teachers as well as comparably prepared college graduates • Stipends and other forms of compensation targeted to teachers in high-need subjects and schools • Loan forgiveness—which effectively acts as a compensation boost • National Board Certification stipends or bonuses (use of NBCTs) • Career ladders or lattices • Use of performance assessments, including micro-credentialing to identify, recognize, and compensate teaching talent for whole child education priorities

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
Policy Strategy 2 (Continued)	<p>4.2.5 To what extent do states support districts in using Title II funds to recruit and retain teachers ready to teach and support the whole child?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State guidance in innovative use of Title II funds • Data use to guide policy development • Teacher working condition studies and surveys <p>4.2.6 To what extent does the state support high quality principal preparation and development?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of evidence (see four practices, or leadership behaviors, identified in How Principals Affect Students and Schools: A Systematic Synthesis of Two Decades of Research as essential to effective leadership) • State supported principal pipeline programs • Service scholarships for aspiring principals to participate in high-quality preparation programs, provide staff support to free up • Development and use of principal working conditions data • Support of simultaneously teacher and school leader development
Policy Strategy 3: Support High-quality Mentoring and Induction Programs	<p>4.3.1 To what extent does the state support high quality mentoring and induction?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How mentoring and induction defined • Extent to which state offers guidance and support for evidence-based approaches • Who mentors new teachers? • Training of mentors • Access of novices to mentors • How mentoring and induction funded • Differential funding for school districts with disproportionate percentage of new teachers • Prevalence of 8 elements of effective induction • Role of mentoring in supporting whole child pedagogical practices • Use of NBCTs in state as mentors • Differential supports for those serving under emergency certification or who enter less prepared
Policy Strategy 4: Promote High-quality Professional Development Linked to Growth-oriented Evaluation Systems	<p>4.4.1 To what extent does the state promote high-quality professional development linked to growth-oriented evaluation systems?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher evaluations based on authentic measures of teacher and administrator performance and growth • Value placed in and use of 360 evaluations (teachers assessing school leaders)

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
<p>Policy Strategy 4 (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations based on formal and informal observations and feedback conducted by trained observers using evidence-based protocols • Peer-to-peer observations • Use of evaluation in professional growth plans • Use of evaluation to promote individual growth as well as team performance • How evaluation evidence used to spread teaching experience tied to science of learning and whole child education • How schools organize schedules to support teacher collaboration • Investments in teacher evaluations and professional development • How professional development dollars are allocated and who decides • Extent to which policies supports teachers lead their own professional learning • Extent to which teachers are able to learn with other youth serving community partners • Use of NBCTs • How professional learning is evaluated and improved • How professional learning principles for teachers and administrators are applied to other helping professional serving children and families <p>4.4.2 To what extent do states support districts in creating new staffing structures (e.g. team teaching, flexible schedules, hybrid roles) to provide increased opportunities for teachers to participate in ongoing intentional collaboration with peers in and outside of their schools and with other helping professionals?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State guidance on and incentives for the formation of professional learning communities, interdisciplinary teaching teams, or co-teaching partnerships to foster peer-to-peer relationships and information sharing between staff • Non-positional leadership development for teachers and other educators who are not in formal leadership roles • Recognition of teachers as leaders (stipends, time, use of expertise) • Policies in support of career ladders or career lattices (with policy intention of developing more teachers, not just a few, as leaders) • Joint leadership development for teachers and school leaders (i.e. principals, asst. principals)
<p>Policy Strategy 5: Support Educator and Staff Well-being</p>	<p>4.5.1 To what extent do states support educator and staff social, emotional, and mental health and well-being?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and principal working conditions surveys and their use • Funding for educator well-being • Development of educator well-being indicators • Policies in support teacher recognition programs beyond district and state teachers of the year

Element 5: Aligning Resources Efficiently and Equitably

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and “Look Fors”
<p>Policy Strategy 1: Adopt Adequate and Equitable School Funding Formulas</p>	<p>5.1.1 To what extent has the state adopted an adequate and equitable school funding formula that prioritizes under-resourced schools?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptions of school funding in the state • Policy and educator views of adequacy of school funding • Calculations of district funding beginning with a uniform base level of dollars per student and then adjusting or weighting for specific student needs • Weighting calculations updated based on academic standards and opportunities to learn (e.g. internships) • Flexibility in local use of programmatic funding tied to identified areas of need and as determined by priority areas for continuous improvement
<p>Policy Strategy 2: Allocate Adequate Funding across the Developmental Continuum Beginning with Birth to Age 5</p>	<p>5.2.1 To what extent has the state allocated new funding across the developmental continuum to ensure children and families are supported from birth to age 5?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments to encourage cross agency collaboration (education, social services, public and private providers) • Investments in universal access to high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds in a way that supports socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, and linguistic diversity • Support parents in accessing full-day childcare • Provide funds that are commensurate with the cost of running a high-quality program and high-quality preschool • Invest in adequate compensation for the early learning workforce • Adding preschool to school funding formulas • How cross-sector funding of 0-5 influences other aspects of the cradle to career continuum
<p>Policy Strategy 3: Blend and Braid Federal, State, and Local Resources</p>	<p>5.3.1 To what extent has the state encouraged the blending and braiding of federal, state, and local resources to reduce fragmentation and improve alignment across programs and funding streams?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies in support of blending and braiding • Funding of coordinating council or children’s cabinet to provide guidance • State guidance on ways state agencies can coordinate and streamline services • State examples of using federal funding (Title I, II, and IV) in ways that support whole child education • State policies that incentivize the fusing of resources across agencies to provide dedicated staff, deliver comprehensive services, and create mutual accountability for whole child education outcomes

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
<p>Policy Strategy 4: Leverage and Align Federal Funds</p>	<p>5.4.1 To what extent has the state encourages the leveraging and aligning of federal funds?</p> <p>Look for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State education agency working with mental health, public health, and social services in leveraging and aligning federal funds • State use of Medicaid (and expansion) to support health- and mental health-related initiatives in schools <p>5.4.2 To what extent has the state used federal funding through the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act to strengthen k-12 and postsecondary CTE programs for students, support teaching as a high school career pathway as well CTE teacher development?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State incentives and additional supports for individuals with industry or educational backgrounds to become certified as CTE teachers, particularly in STEM-related fields; • State incentivizes CTE teachers to earn industry- or sector-specific certifications and credentials, such as in the STEM fields or other in-demand industry sectors or occupations; and • State strategy for building pipeline into the CTE profession by underwriting preparation for individuals from both industry and academic backgrounds
<p>Policy Strategy 5: Invest in Community Schools and Integrated Student Supports</p>	<p>5.5.1 To what extent has the state invested in new or additional funding in community schools and integrated student supports to better serve the holistic needs of children and families?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State guidance on community schools • State boards of education issuing policy resolutions to signal support for LEAs to take up a community school strategy • SEA creating and communicating common definitions, and help direct resources to support implementation • State investments in in-school support personnel (e.g., counselors, tutors, social workers, school psychologists, mentors) and supporting partnerships with community mental health providers • State investments in health and wellness screenings and services as part of community school strategy • State developing and coordinating policies that connect multiple initiatives such as multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) models to meet the needs of all young people as part of community school strategy • State using Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) grants to receive support from national service members (e.g., AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps VISTA) to address identified school and community needs • State using funding from the United States Agriculture Department (USDA) can support nutrition services

Policy Strategies	Research Questions and "Look Fors"
<p>Policy Strategy 6: Close the Digital Divide</p>	<p>5.6.1 To what extent is the state addressing the digital divide to ensure every child has access to appropriate technology and connectivity as well as usability?</p> <p>Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State investments in plans (and task force) and high level position to oversee implementation • State investments in partnerships that leverage more funding for targeted internet expansion in schools - connecting these efforts to other policy priorities for economic development, transportation, health care, and agriculture • Policy resolutions in support of universal access • State investments in public-private partnership that ensure access for every child and family - and support training program that technological tools can be used in the home • State use of supplement funding from the federal E-rate program to expand broadband access or utilize funding from COVID relief packages to purchase laptops • State investments in cross-district collaboration in addressing digital divide (especially important in rural communities and small districts with less internal capacity) • State use of common LMS as well as <i>professional development for educators to ensure the effective use of technology</i> for online learning both in school as well as at home and in afterschool and summer school settings

APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

A team of researchers at the University of South Carolina and ALL4SC, in collaboration with the Learning Policy Institute, developed the Whole Child Education Policy Grid by drawing on the science of learning in developing an initial set of evidence-based policy strategies for each of the five elements (See Appendix A). The team began by examining the evidence, anchored by the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD) as well as the Science of Learning and Development (SoLD) Alliance. Many of the initial policy strategies and research questions were derived from the SoLD's [Principles for Schools: Putting the Science of Learning and Development into Action](#).

The UofSC team assembled an interdisciplinary team of researchers from education, social work and behavioral health to pilot a process to assemble evidence of status of whole child education policies in South Carolina – using web searches, legislative databases, news articles, and interviews with key stakeholders.

Data collection commenced by drawing on 10 policy leaders from state agencies (K-12 and higher education, early childhood, mental health, social services, revenue and fiscal affairs, and commerce) as well as senior staff from the SC Education Oversight Committee and those who support the education committees of the SC General Assembly. These initial interviews were designed to inform these leaders of the project's intent, assemble their initial insights, and identify data sources as well as other key informants. Because of the vast majority of the data were assembled during some of most disruptive aspects of the pandemic, the team had very little access to education policy experts working at the SC Department of Education whose responsibilities in serving PK-12 schools shifted dramatically.

The analysis was drawn primarily from reviewing over 200 document reviews, highlighting policies and/or their relevance to whole child education, and 45 interviews with South Carolina state-policy and education policy leaders, business leaders, and educators. The team used both web-based searches and legislative databases to locate policy documents, based upon recommendations of key informants. News articles were searched to offer insights for the team.

The interviewees had reputational knowledge of the 5 elements: (1) executing a whole child vision for teaching and learning; (2) transforming learning environments; (3) redesigning curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (4) building adult capacity and expertise; and (5) aligning resources efficiently and equitably. They worked (or had worked recently) at the SC Department of Education, SC Department of Social Services, SC Department of Commerce, SC Department of Mental Health, the SC Higher Education Commission, First Steps (an early childhood agency), the Governor's Office, and the SC Education Oversight Committee as well as local superintendents, principals, teachers, social workers, other educators from early childhood non-profits, afterschool programs, technical colleges, and career and technical centers. Each was promised anonymity. (Any direct quotes used were found in published news articles or reports.)

Semi-structured interviews, based on the policy research grid, were conducted, ranging from 45 to 120 minutes to understand specific policy intent and implementation (when possible). The research team was asked to specifically identify policy foundations and opportunities aligned with the science of learning as well as what “on paper” appeared to be gaps based on the evidence as defined by the grid. Each interview was summarized with main themes, impressions, and summary statements about the development and enactment of varied state policies. The team members also offered explanations of the implications of enacted policy on students and families, again based on research evidence.

The vast majority of the data were assembled from March to December 2021.

In late Spring 2021, the team worked with the [Student Voice](#), a national non-profit, to support 12 high school students from a rural school district in order to better understand their expectations of and aspirations for public education. Their insights, while from a limited number of young people, were extremely helpful in making sense of the policy documents and interviews. Eight of the interviewees – including legislative staffers and district superintendents – also served as reviewers of the completed analysis and write-ups, serving as fact checkers but also offering further insight that contributed to the final report.

This policy report is illustrative and certainly not exhaustive, providing a snapshot of where South Carolina is while also suggesting what next steps could be taken to propel the state toward a more comprehensive system of whole child education.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This annotated bibliography is assembled by the research team to inform other state efforts to understand and advance a whole child system of education. What follows are the sources the UofSC-ALL4SC team found critical to its analytical efforts. A number of these resources provided direct evidence for the findings delineated in the 2021-22 whole child policy analysis for South Carolina.

INTRODUCTION

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (n.d). KidsCount Data Center. [Link.](#)

This premier source of data on children and families, the AECF provides a state by state portrayal of child well-being, drawing on 16 measures to pinpoint specific areas of concern and initiate targeted policy solutions as a result.

Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2020). Early Childhood Workforce Index 2020). [Link.](#)

This report provides a state-by-state look at policies and conditions affecting the early care and education workforce. This biennial report has tracked state progress since 2016.

Child Trends (2018). State of Early Childhood Data Systems Interactive Map. [Link.](#)

This web resource, published by the Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC), assesses states' capacity to link child-, family-, program-, and workforce-level data across early childhood education programs. This 2018 report on the status of state early childhood data systems (only 15 states reported linking individual early childhood workforce-level data across programs).

Civil Rights Data Collection (n.d.) Wide-Ranging Education Data Collected from our Nation's Public Schools. [Link.](#)

This web-based resource includes a national database on enrollment demographics, preschool, math & science courses, Advanced Placement, SAT & ACT, student retention, harassment or bullying, discipline, restraint or seclusion, school staff. school expenditures

Education Week (2021). Chances of Success. [Link](#)

This national report card grades states on the chances of success of its young people, drawing on 13 measures from early childhood to PK-12 academic achievement to adult outcomes. For a description of what these education indicators mean, [view the grading scale and methodology.](#)

Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). Educating the Whole Child: Improving School Climate to Support Student Success. Learning Policy Institute. [Link.](#)

This policy report reveals how schools can use research-based practices, informed by the new science of learning, to ensure student's wellbeing and development is central to classroom design

and how policy can support the scale of new practices.

Darling-Hammond, L., Bae, S., Cook- Harvey, C., Lam, L., Mercer, C., Podolsky, A., and Stosich, E.L. (2016). *Pathways to New Accountability Through the Every Student Succeeds Act*. Palo Alto: Learning Policy Institute. [Link](#).

This report provides an overview of key provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 and discuss research-based policies and strategies to leverage the new requirements and opportunities to re-think systems of accountability and support to ensure students are college, career, and life ready.

Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. (2020). *How Schools are Expanding the Definition of Student Success*. [Link](#).

This web source, from one of the nation's leading education philanthropy, provides insights from 10 schools used as case study to examine whole child education in practice.

Forum for Youth Investment (2021). *Design Principles for Community-Based Settings: Putting the Science of Learning and Development Into Action*. [Link](#).

This playbook suggests a set of design principles that were developed by a group of educators, practitioners, scientists, and parents, building on the knowledge we have today and the contributions of many in the field to nurture innovations, new models, and new enabling policies.

Joint Citizen and Legislative Committee on Children. (2021). *2021 Data Reference Book*. [Link](#).

This report, published in collaboration with the Children's Law Center of the UofSC School of Law, contains findings on a variety of issues impacting the well-being of South Carolina's children. JCLCC publishes this report, the Child Well-being Data Reference Book, annually.

KnowledgeWorks (2019). *South Carolina State Opportunity Analysis*. Unpublished document.

This report, commissioned by the SC State Department of Education, portrays the status of education policies related to personalized learning in South Carolina. Report not available online (contact ALL4SC for copy).

Learning Policy Institute. (n.d.) *Whole Child Education*. [Web]. [Link](#).

This website provides evidence on the impact of whole child education and informs the definition and framework provided for the South Carolina whole child policy analysis pilot. The LPI website includes a wealth of linked resources, including Governing Institute's [Why Education Needs a 'Whole Child' Approach](#).

National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.). *Common Core of Data*. [Link](#).

This web-based resource provides a comprehensive, annual, national database of all public

elementary and secondary schools and school districts, assembled by USDOE.

Science of Learning and Development Alliance (2021). [Link](#).

This website was created by the SoLD (Science of Learning & Development) Alliance to share their research reports and findings on the development of new science of learning and informed the South Carolina whole child policy analysis pilot.

Showalter, D., Klein, R., Johnson, J., & Hartman, S. L. (2017). *Why Rural Matters 2015-2016: Understanding the Changing Landscape. A Report of the Rural School and Community Trust. Rural School and Community Trust.* [Link](#).

This report provides information regarding rural education in South Carolina to give better and more equitable educational opportunities to rural areas.

Timar, T.B. & Kirp, D. (1989). Education reform in the 1980s: Lessons from the States. *Phi Delta Kappan* 70(7), 504-11.

This journal article summarizes South Carolina's most comprehensive school reform policy package of almost 40 years ago and its relationship to other education policy efforts across the nation.

Vegas, E. & Winthrop, R. (2020). *Global education: How to transform school systems?* [Report prepared for the Brookings Institution]. [Link](#).

This global report drawing on the impact of COVID-19 that has led to public recognition of schools' essential caretaking role in society and parents' gratitude for teachers, their skills, and their invaluable role in student well-being - but schools alone can address achievement gaps, now and in the future.

ELEMENT 1

Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina (2020). (rep.). *Schools of Innovation: A policy model for equitable education for South Carolina students.* Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina. [Link](#).

This report provides evidence-based solutions based on a single premise: all students are capable of learning; it is the environment in which they learn, the educators that teach them, and the parents and communities that support them, that must be willing to change and adapt.

Daro, D, Jarpe-Ratner, E, Karter, C, Crane, K, Bellamy, J, & Seay, K. (2020). *Child maltreatment prevention: A planning framework for action* [Google Document]. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. [Link](#).

This toolkit provides states and local communities specific assistance in formulating collaborative investment decisions across multiple options to promote child safety; identifying a common set of benchmarks to guide all high priority interventions and policy changes; and creating a set of

implementation strategies to more effectively move ideas into practice.

ENGAGE South Carolina. (2020). *ENGAGE South Carolina* [Slides]. Google Slides. [Link](#).

This presentation provides information to assist educators and families disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic by providing intensive outreach, engagement, and enhanced support for students in grades K-12.

Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011). *Collective Impact*. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 9(1), 36-41. [Link](#).

This seminal essay on how large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination in face of the reality that the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations.

Kania, J. Et. al. (2022). *Centering Equity in Collective Impact*. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. [Link](#).

This essay points out to the centrality of equity in the work collective impact efforts to address social problems. Five strategies in particular emerged as critical to establishing equity: (1) ground the work in data and context, and target solutions; (2) focus on systems change, in addition to programs and services; (3) shift power within the collaborative; (4) listen to and act with community; and (5) build equity leadership and accountability.

Kitzmiller, E. M. (2014). *IDS Case Study: The Circle of Love: South Carolinas Integrated Data System*. Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (ASIP), University of Pennsylvania. [Link](#).

This report provides information to illuminate and better understand the policy evolution and benefits of South Carolina's Integrated Data System.

Mitchell, R., & Lutz, J. (2020). *Introduction to JDAI in South Carolina* [Slides]. Google Slides. [Link](#).

This presentation demonstrates that jurisdictions can establish more effective and efficient systems to accomplish the purposes of juvenile detention.

State of Inclusion, Inc. (2021). *Childhood poverty Greenville county, S.C* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This report highlights several underlying trends which contribute to a persistent issue of childhood poverty in Greenville County.

***The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act: Consolidated State plan state of south Carolina*. (2018). [Link](#).**

This document outlines the world-class knowledge, world-class skills, and life and career characteristics necessary for children and our state to be successful in the global marketplace.

The South Carolina Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children. (2019-2020). *JCLCC background page* [Word Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides background on the Committee on Children which was created by statute to identify key issues facing the children of South Carolina and to offer policy and legislative recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.

The South Carolina Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children. (2020). *Committee on children 2020 annual report* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This Annual Report of the Joint Citizens and Legislative Committee on Children provides information to the Governor and the General Assembly in the consideration of policy, funding, and legislation that affects children.

ELEMENT 2

American School Counselor Association (2021). *Student-to-School-Counselor Ratio 2019-2020*. [Link](#).

This one-page brief provides a state-by-state overview of student to counselor ratios, drawing on the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Public Elementary/Secondary Education Survey," 2019-20

Barrett, S., Eber, L., McIntosh, K., Perales, K., & Romer, N. (2018). *Teaching Social-Emotional Competencies within a PBIS Framework*. OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. [Link](#).

This research brief describes how school personnel can teach social-emotional competencies within a PBIS framework to support systematic, school-wide implementation through one system, rather than trying to improve student outcomes through separate, competing initiatives.

Children's Bureau (2020). *Proof of Concept: Creating A Child and Family Well-Being System* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document offers a rationale to reshape child welfare in the United States and South Carolina with an explicit focus on prevention and equity, thereby reducing disparities in outcomes for children and their families.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2020). *CASEL'S SEL Framework* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding SEL which advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation.

Shapiro, C. J., Collins, C., Parker, J., Martinez, S., Olson, S., & Weist, M. D. (2020). Coalescing investments in school mental health in South Carolina. *Child and adolescent mental health*, 25(3), 150-156.

This paper shows that strong collaborations and communication efforts both within the university setting and between partners in education and community settings, along with engaged funders keen to enhance well-being of children, youth, and families statewide have set the stage for the growth and expansion of school mental health services.

Simkin, L, Charner, I, Dailey, C, Khatri, S, Thapa, S. (2021). *Stability and Change in Afterschool Systems, 2013-2020* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This report provides valuable information for cities reconfiguring and rebuilding the provision of afterschool services in the context of critical challenges.

Social Emotional Learning Alliance for South Carolina. (n.d.). *SEL4SC Recommendations to Accelerate Ed Task Force* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document questions what has been done or could be done to help SEL4SC to promote and advance social emotional learning in schools, families, organizations, and communities, and offers 10 recommendations to accelerate Ed Task Force in South Carolina.

South Carolina Afterschool Alliance (2020). *The Power of Afterschool: Making a Difference in South Carolina Report*. [Link](#).

This report summarizes a survey of afterschool programs in South Carolina, with technical assistance provided by the National Council on State Legislatures, serves as a model for how other states can assemble evidence on this important aspect of whole child/whole community education.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *Best Practices for Supporting Educators with Discipline* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document offers an overview of South Carolina Laws and policies related to effective student discipline, and can serve as useful tool for school and district leaders as well as teachers.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *South Carolina Family Engagement K-12 Framework*. [Link](#).

This document summarizes the legislative mandate for family engagement in South Carolina's K-12 schools, along with "strategies for success" as well as resources and tools for practitioners to use.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *Using Evidence Based Interventions & Practices: A Process Guide for Improvement* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information to improve South Carolina school's instructional practice and advance student learning.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2018). *Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) Grant Descriptive Study* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This report documents whether the primary school climate improvement goal of South Carolina's four-year Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grant, known as the South Carolina School Climate Initiative (SCSCI), was met or exceeded to reduce high rates of drug- and violence-related behavior in 23 schools across 13 school districts.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2018). *South Carolina Afterschool Quality Standards* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides a list of recommended "quality standards" for afterschool programs along with recommended research and other resources.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2017). *Expanded Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides an overview of how principals have been evaluated in South Carolina and a rationale for changes in policies and practices to improve their performance and effectiveness. State policy states that the evaluation process is to be professional, supportive, collegial, transparent, and developmental.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2013). *Selected South Carolina Student and School Safety Laws and Regulation* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides an overview of South Carolina laws and regulations for students and schools with a focus on include weapons, criminal activity, and student discipline.

South Carolina Department of Social Services. (2020). *Proof of Concept: Letter of Intent* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This letter, prepared by the South Carolina Department of Social Services, provides a child and family well-being system ensures that all children and families have what they need to live their best lives and reach their full potential.

United States Department of Education. (2020). *South Carolina Compilation of School Discipline Laws and Regulations* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This report presents school discipline-related laws and regulations for South Carolina as part of a nationwide compendium that offers links to education agency websites or resources related to school discipline and student conduct.

ELEMENT 3

Achieve. (2015). *A Review of the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This report provides a review of the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards (SCCCRS) for English language arts and mathematics, adopted by the South Carolina Board of Education on March 11, 2015, to replace the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Ambrose, C., & Wirth, T. (2019, November 23). *Defining Student Success - More Than Just a Number*. Low Country Education Consortium. [Link](#).

This website provides an overview of a South Carolina new student assessment pilot, drawing on how the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides states with an opportunity to transform education systems by developing new definitions of student learning that reports out on more than just a raw test score and for school districts to redesign their systems of assessments and accountability.

Big Picture Education Australia. (2020). *International Big Picture Learning Credential* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document summarizes the International Big Picture Learning Credential, a new, personalized form of assessment that evaluates and recognizes the capacities, experiences and qualities of secondary school graduates from diverse cultures and backgrounds more comprehensively than exam-based certification systems.

Domaleski, C., and Keng, L. (2020). *Cyclical Review of South Carolina's Accountability System: Accountability Framework Report* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding the South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee's key findings and recommendations for educational policy priorities and system design and implementation considerations and constraints.

Knowledge Works. (2014). *District Conditions for Scale: A Practical Guide to Scaling Personalized Learning* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information for districts to personalize learning for students as well as what policymakers can expect to see in innovative, student-centered, school environments.

Longshore, S. C. (2020). *Flexibility*. South Carolina Department of Education. [Link](#).

This web resource page provides information to South Carolina teachers and schools seeking to provide personalized learning experiences for students tailored to meet differing educational needs, environments and interests may seek flexibility.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2020). *The Nation's Report Card 2019 Reading State Snapshot Report, South Carolina, Grade 4, Public Schools* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides the statistical results of South Carolina's 2019 Grade 4 Reading test scores.

Petcu, S., Frakes, S., Hoffman, D., and Young, D. G. (2016). *Report on the State of College and Career Readiness in South Carolina: National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, Under the Direction of Center of Excellence for College and Career Readiness* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This report provides information on South Carolina's college- and career readiness standards which include the on-track indicators and measurements, accountability, and future goals for college- and career readiness.

Prevatt, D. & South Carolina Department of Education. (2020). *Creative Practices for Credit Accrual and Dropout Prevention* [Slides]. Google Slides. [Link](#).

This presentation provides information about South Carolina's practice for credit accrual and dropout prevention including the legislation and what to do in certain situations.

Scandrol, M. D. (2017). *Implementation of Common Core State Standards and South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards: Successes and Struggles*. (Doctoral dissertation). [Link](#).

This dissertation researches school administrators' attitudes towards CCSS/SCCCRS and their effects on the school level implementation of the Common Core State Standards/South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards.

South Carolina Council on Competitiveness. (2018). *TransformSC 2018 Impact Review* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This reviews from TransformSC provides an review of the impact of its efforts to ensure that every student graduates prepared for careers, college, and citizenship.

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). *South Carolina Alternate Assessments* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding South Carolina's alternate assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). *South Carolina Differentiated Accountability* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides a review of the standards needed for NCLB differentiated accountability pilot applications.

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). *South Carolina Diploma Pathways Overview* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides an overview of the different pathways to receive a South Carolina diploma.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2008). *The South Carolina Comprehensive Developmental Guidance and Counseling Program Model: A Guide for School Counseling Programs, Prekindergarten through Grade Twelve* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This guides South Carolina and its schools with a model for developmental guidance and counseling as well as school counseling programs.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2014). *ESEA Federal Accountability System Components* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides the basis for how South Carolina creates a composite index score of student performance as required by the ESEA Federal Accountability System Components in 2014.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2014). *South Carolina Academic Standards and Performance Indicators for Science* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides the academic standards and performance indicators for all grade levels in science for South Carolina for the 2014-2015 school year.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2015). *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides an overview of South Carolina's college- and career-ready standards for English language arts in the 2015-2016 school year.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2015). *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for Mathematics* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides an overview of South Carolina's college- and career-ready standards for mathematics for the 2015-2016 school year.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2016). *South Carolina Framework for Personalized Learning* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides the framework in South Carolina to personalize learning for students to graduate prepared for success.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2017). *Defined Program, Grades 9-12 and Graduation Requirements* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document present South Carolina school policies related to the defined academic program for grades 9-12 and graduation requirements for students.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2017). *Gifted and Talented Education Overview* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides an overview of the gifted and talented education provided in South Carolina for the 2017-2018 school year.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2017). *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards for Visual and Performing Arts Proficiency* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides the college- and career- ready standards for visual and performing arts proficiency for the 2017-2018 school year.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2017). *South Carolina Computer Science and Digital Literacy Standards* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding South Carolina's standards for computer science and digital literacy.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2017). *South Carolina Standards for Health and Safety Education* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding South Carolina's standards for health and safety education and what students should know and be able to do in the content area.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2018). *Gifted and Talented Best Practices Guidelines: Curriculum and Instruction* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides guidelines on the curriculum and instruction for the gifted and talented programs in South Carolina.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2018). *South Carolina Computer Science Standards for High School* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding South Carolina's computer science standards for high school students.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *District Proficiency-Based System Plan Evaluation* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document is an evaluation form for the districts of South Carolina to answer regarding having an approved proficiency-based system plan.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *SC Diploma Pathway Project* [Slides]. [Link](#).

This presentation discusses the project to determine the different pathways to receive a South Carolina diploma.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standard for World Language Proficiency 2019* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides the basis for South Carolina's College- and Career-Ready Standard for World Language Proficiency 2019 (based on the 2017 NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements)

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding South Carolina's college- and career-ready standards for social studies.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *South Carolina Uniform Grading Policy* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding South Carolina's uniform grading policy to teachers, schools, and school districts.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2020). *State Plan* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding South Carolina's 2020 State Plan for career and technical education for the U.S. Department of Education.

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This document provides the South Carolina English language arts priority and support learning standards for the 2020-2021 school year.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2021). *Work-Based Learning Implementation Guidelines* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This manual is created to assist all educators in building and implementing a strong work-based learning program that will prepare each student for a seamless transition from secondary education to postsecondary education, the military, and the workforce, where each student will be able to successfully compete in our global economy.

South Carolina Department of Education Office of School Transformation School Choice & Innovation Team. (2016). *Pathways to Personalized Learning* [Slides]. [Link](#).

This presentation provides information on South Carolina’s vision to personalize learning to allow students to graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and citizenship.

South Carolina Department of Education and SC Education Oversight Committee. (2020). *2019-2020 Accountability Manual*. [Link](#).

This manual provides information for South Carolina’s accountability for the annual school and district report card system for public schools.

SC Education Oversight Committee. (2021). *Prioritizing Strong Students and Schools as we emerge from the pandemic*. [Link](#).

This report from the South Carolina EOC provides analyses, updates and program summaries from March 2020 to February 2021 as well as the impact of the pandemic on student learning.

SC Education Oversight Committee. (2020). *South Carolina It Is Time to Expect More*. [Link](#).

This annual report from the South Carolina EOC reviews the program summaries and results from March 2019 to February 2020.

SC Education Oversight Committee. (2020). *South Carolina Students and Schools: Where Are We Now? SC’s Current Accountability System* [Google Document]. [Link](#).

This review provides information regarding South Carolina versus the national average in multiple areas including ACT and SAT scores and South Carolina’s current accountability and how it helps to improve scores.

SC Education Oversight Committee. (2018). *Guide to the 2018 SC School Report Cards*. [Link](#).

This document provides an overview and explanation of the key performance indicators of South Carolina’s 2018 School Report Cards.

SC Education Oversight Committee. (2017). *Single Accountability System: Report & Recommendations*. [Link](#).

This report from the South Carolina EOC poses recommendations for how the state can create an accountability system that will prepare students for college, careers, and civic life in the 21st century and reports on whether the Department of Education has been able to achieve it and provides recommendations on what can be done to help achieve this goal.

State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. (2016). *South Carolina’s Workforce Study*. [Link](#).

This document provides information on South Carolina’s workforce and what the state board for technical and comprehensive education can do to help prepare the state’s students for the workforce.

ELEMENT 4

Baker, M.. (2020). (rep.). *Induction Support of Teachers Across South Carolina*. SC-Teacher.org. [Link](#).

This paper discusses the challenges associated with teacher attrition and the need for induction support in South Carolina and reviews promising practices in the state.

Barnett, S. and Kasmin, R. (2017). *Teacher Compensation Parity Policies and State-Funded Pre-K Programs*. New Brunswick, NJ: the National Institute for Early Education Research and Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. [Link](#).

The research provides a state by state report on parity in early childhood educator compensation based on three components: salary, benefits, and payment for professional responsibilities.

Berry, B., Dickenson, T., Harrist, J., Pomey, K., Zheng, J., Irvin, M., Moon, A., and Hodges, T. (2020). *Teachers and Teaching in the Midst of a Pandemic: Implications for South Carolina's Policy Leaders*. [Link](#).

This research provides a review of teachers' working conditions in South Carolina, and offers evidence based recommendations for improving teaching and learning.

Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement. (2020). *Updated: Retaining SC Teachers Through National Board Certification*. [Link](#).

This research provides a summary comparing turnover rates of all SC teachers and those who are National Board Certified in the state.

Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, & Advancement. (2021). *South Carolina Annual Educator Supply & Demand Report (2020-2021 School Year)*. [Link](#).

This report provides detailed data related to educator supply and demand in South Carolina.

Economic Policy Institute (2018). *Teacher Pay Gap 50-State Comparison*. [Link](#).

The research provides state by state trends in the teacher wage and compensation gaps, published in 2018.

Fan, X., Pan, F., Dickenson, T. S., Kunz, G., and Hodges, T. E. (2020). *School-Level Factors Associated with Teacher Retention in South Carolina*. South Carolina Center for Excellence in Teacher Education Research. [Link](#).

This research surfaces the factors associated with retaining teachers in South Carolina and recommendations for strategies to retain teachers.

Learning Policy Institute (2018). *Understanding Teacher Shortages: 2018 Update*. [Link](#).

This web-based resources provides a state-by-state analysis of the factors influencing teacher supply, demand, and equity.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (n.d.). *South Carolina NBCTs*. [Link](#).

This website provides information regarding becoming National Board Certified in South Carolina including the cost and the opportunities of the certification process for accomplished teaching.

National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.) *The National Teacher and Principal Survey (NTPS) Dashboard*. [Link](#).

This web-based resource provides descriptive data from a system of related questionnaires on the context of public and private elementary and secondary education in addition to giving local, state, and national policymakers a variety of statistics on the condition of education and teachers and principals across the United States.

New Teacher Center. (2011). *South Carolina State Policy Review: Teacher Induction*. [Link](#).

This reviews the presence or absence of policies related to 10 key criteria that are most critical to the provision of universal, high-quality induction and mentoring support for beginning educators.

Palmetto State Teachers Association. (2021). *2021 Legislative Agenda*. [Link](#).

This document provides the upcoming South Carolina legislative agenda of the Palmetto State Teachers Association.

Partnership for Future of Learning (n.d.) *Teaching Profession Playbook: Building a Strong and Diverse Teaching Profession*. [Link](#).

This web-based document provides tools for advancing a stable and diverse teaching profession and ensuring that every student in every school is taught by a fully prepared teacher. It builds on decades of research into effective practices for recruiting, preparing, supporting, and retaining teachers; provides examples of local and state-level policies and initiatives; and includes model legislation and other helpful resources.

South Carolina Center for Excellence in Teacher Education Research. (2020). *Induction Support of Teachers Across South Carolina*. [Link](#).

This document provides a visual representation of induction support of teachers across South Carolina.

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). *2020-2021 State Minimum Salary Schedule*. [Link](#).

This document provides the state minimum salary schedule in South Carolina, based on degrees earned and years of teaching experience (maximum of 23 years).

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). Certificate Renewal Plan Professional Development Options for South Carolina Educators. [Link](#).

This document outlines how South Carolina educators can earn professional development renewal credits in order to maintain their teaching license.

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). *Teacher Preparation State Policy Profile*. [Link](#).

This report covers traditional route baccalaureate, traditional route post-baccalaureate and alternative route teacher preparation programs.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2006). *ADEPT Performance Standards: Classroom-Based Teachers*. [Link](#).

This document provides an overview of the ADEPT (teaching evaluation) performance standards for classroom-based teachers.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2016). *South Carolina Department of Education New or Modified Program Proposal Guidelines for Educator Preparation Programs for Public and Private Institutions of Higher Education*. [Link](#).

This document provides guidelines for both public and private institutions when proposing new or modified programs and to assure that these programs meet national and state requirements for university-based educator preparation programs.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2016). *South Carolina Teaching Standards 4.0 Handbook*. [Link](#).

This document provides a detailed overview of the South Carolina teaching standards, with guidance for school districts to follow.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2016). *South Carolina Teaching Standards 4.0 Rubric*. [Link](#).

This document provides South Carolina's teacher evaluation rubric used to assess teaching effectiveness in the state.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2017). *Induction and Mentoring Guidelines*. [Link](#).

This document provides state policy guidelines on the induction and mentoring of students in South Carolina.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2018). *Expanded ADEPT Process Manual*. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding the expansion of the ADEPT system and its new manual.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *South Carolina Educator Preparation Guidelines: Standards, Policies, and Procedures*. [Link](#).

This document provides guidelines for South Carolina educator preparation regarding teaching standards, policies, and procedures.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *Teacher Evaluation Resources*. [Link](#).

This website provides resources related to evaluating teachers in South Carolina.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2020). *South Carolina Co-Teaching Framework*. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding the South Carolina Co-Teaching Framework which provides guidance to educators to help them better understand and effectively implement the principles of co-teaching.

Swanson, L. (2020). *Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Teacher Self-Care*. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding self-care for teachers with advice and recommendations.

Tran, H. (2021). (rep.). *Retaining Teachers through Talent Centered Education Leadership*. SC-Teacher.org. [Link](#).

This research reports on evidence related to teacher shortages in South Carolina, pointing to the importance of administrator support.

University of South Carolina and CTQ. (2021). *Carolina Collaborative for Alternative Preparation*. [Link](#).

This document provides information regarding the University of South Carolina's non-degree pathway, CarolinaCAP, as an alternative route into teaching.

US Department of Education (n.d.) *State Title II Reports*. [Link](#).

The website provides state Title II reports, including critical measures of teacher preparation programs and insight into the K-12 teacher pipeline for policymakers and educators at all levels.

ELEMENT 5

Ardary, S. (2021, April 14). *Gov. McMaster allocates \$10.5M in GEER funds for charter schools, workforce development*. WIS News 10. [Link](#).

This news article explains how new funds for charter schools and workforce development will be allocated in an effort to improve COVID-19 recovery.

Aud, S. (2004) *An Analysis of South Carolina Per Pupil State Funding*. Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation. [Link](#).

This report, published in 2004, analyzes South Carolina educational funding, assessing variable versus fixed costs, and proposes a way to determine the precise portion of per-student funding the state provides based on the type of student and district.

Benson, A. (2019, October 8). *State Budget Office Rolls Out Revised Education Funding Formula*. *Index-Journal*. [Link](#).

This news article describes how South Carolina and its Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs proposed to revise the education funding formula.

Biddle, B., & Berliner, D. (2002). *A Research Synthesis / Unequal School Funding in the United States*. *Educational Leadership*, 59(8), 48-59. [Link](#).

This article reviews the disparities in school funding and connects those disparities to student achievement which is further evaluated by a comparison to other school funding strategies around the world.

Edbuild. (n.d.). *FundEd: Detailed Look at Each States Funding Policies South Carolina*. [Link](#).

This source outlines South Carolina education funding information including local revenue, student characteristics, and district characteristics.

Education Data Initiative. (2021). *U.S Public Education Spending Statistics*. [Link](#).

This web-based report compares state by state education funding and spending compared to global metrics.

Education Law Center (2021). *Making the Grade*. [Link](#).

This report grades each state on three measures of fair school funding – level, distribution, and effort and designed to assist policymakers, advocates and others as they answer a key question: How fair is public school funding in your state?

Education Superhighway (2021). *No Home Left Online: Bridging The Broadband Affordability Gap*. [Link](#).

This report offers a state by state profile of broadband access based on resources, accessibility, and choice.

Education Oversight Committee. (2020, December 15). *EIA and EAA Budget and Proviso Request for FY 2021-22*. [Link](#).

This report reviews the Education Accountability Act and Education Improvement Act programs

along with related budgetary information.

Good Jobs First. (2018). *The New Math on School Finance: Adding Up the First-Ever Disclosure of Corporate Tax Abatements' Cost to Public Education*. [Link](#).

This report reviews how corporate tax breaks lead to school districts receiving less funding which could otherwise be used to improve school environments and resources.

Hydrick, J., Bonala, J. (2020, November 16). *Broadband: South Carolina's Digital Divide*. SCETV. [Link](#).

This article examines broadband inequity across South Carolina school districts to highlight the challenges that many South Carolinians face.

Joseph, M. (2019). *Fairness & Opportunity: Bringing Student-Centered Education Funding to South Carolina Students*. [Link](#).

This report analyzes the fiscal aspects of education in South Carolina and explains why student-centered funding matters for students, parents, and teachers.

Kennedy, M. (2018, December 7). *Study says South Carolina schools miss out on \$318 million a year because of corporate tax breaks*. American School & University. [Link](#).

This article articulates the findings from the report conducted by Good Jobs First which analyzes the impact of corporate tax breaks on school funding.

League of Women Voters of South Carolina. (2010). *Putting It All Together: The Education Finance Act Piece*. [Link](#).

This paper synthesizes the Education Finance Act of 1977 and related school funding mechanisms to explain how the overall South Carolina school budgets are calculated.

McCann, A. (2020, August 5). *Most & Least Equitable School Districts in South Carolina*. WalletHub. [Link](#).

This report ranks South Carolina school districts from most to least equitable based on household income, and per pupil school district expenditures.

National Digital Inclusion Alliance (2021). *Policy Priorities 2021-22*. [Link](#).

This report offers policies priorities for state- and community-based digital inclusion programs increase their impact and serve those most impacted by the digital divide. NDIA's more than 600 affiliates are involved in 44 states. Their work informs the following policy priorities and, if implemented, would make significant progress in advancing digital equity.

Rutgers University (2019). *The Adequacy and Fairness of State School Finance Systems*. [Link](#).

A state-by-state report on school finance measures, presenting results for three key measures in this

system: effort, adequacy, and progressivity.

South Carolina Council on Competitiveness (2005). *A Historical Analysis of Funding for South Carolina's Public Schools.* [Link.](#)

This report provides a history of school funding in South Carolina, identifying barriers to more equitable funding, defining appropriate solutions, and recommending policies that support continued improvements in student achievement.

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). *Report of the Task Force on Funding for World Class Learning.* [Link.](#)

This report provides information on the Task Force on Funding for World Class Learning and their goals, standards, and future plans.

South Carolina Department of Education. (n.d.). *Education Finance Act of 1977.* [Link.](#)

This webpage contains access to the unannotated version of the Education Finance Act of 1977.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2019). *Funding Manual 2019-2020.* [Link.](#)

This manual outlines the criteria South Carolina school districts must follow for use of most education funds for the 2019-2020 school year.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2021, April 19). *FY 22 State EIA Expenditure Guidelines Office of Career and Technical Education.* [Link.](#)

This document points to South Carolina Department of Education guidelines regarding how public school districts can and cannot use Education Improvement Act funds related towards career and technical education for the 2022 fiscal year.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2021). *School Improvement Grants.* [Link.](#)

This resource reviews the South Carolina schools which have received school improvement grants including the intervention model, NCES school ID, and award amount.

South Carolina Department of Education. (2021). *South Carolina Educational Technology Plan.* [Link.](#)

This resource document includes the technology plan for South Carolina public schools from the year 2020-2024.

South Carolina Education Lottery. (n.d.) *Education FAQs.* [Link.](#)

This web-based resource contains answers to questions related to how lottery money is allocated and how it impacts public education from the classroom to the district level.

South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office. (2019). *Education Funding Model*. [Link](#).

This presentation focuses on the recommendations of the South Carolina's Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs related to PK-12 funding in 2020.

South Carolina School Boards Association. (2021). *Education Funding Overview*. [Link](#).

This webpage contains information regarding school funding equity, reform, and systems of operation.

Smith, O. (2019). *South Carolina Schools Are Not Underfunded*. Palmetto Promise. [Link](#).

This policy paper raises issues regarding how public school dollars are used, and makes the case for how funding decisions should be made at the local, and not the state level.

CONCLUSIONS

Henig, J. (2016). *Collective Impact and the New Generation of Cross-Sector Collaborations for Education*. New York. Teachers College. [Link](#).

This report shares findings from a nation-wide scan of 182 cross-sector collaborations in order to better understand and define the characteristics of cross-sector collaborations in education and whether they achieve their stated goals.