LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Study of the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School: Executive Summary

The full report of the Legislative Oversight Committee's study of the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, issued on October 4, 2019, is available on the House Legislative Oversight Committee's webpage.

Recommendations

The **Committee has nine recommendations** arising from its study of the agency. These recommendations fall into four categories: (1) governance; (2) promising practices; (3) applicant pool; and (4) student experience.

Governance Recommendations to the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School

BOARD TRAINING	1.) Enhance the training required by S.C. Code §59-51-35, by adding topics on South Carolina state government processes, including but not limited to, procurement, audit, and finance.
BOARD EFFECTIVENESS	2a.) Investigate methods to ascertain the effectiveness of the governing body. 2b.) Add related board effectiveness performance measures to the measures reported on in the annual accountability report.

Promising Practices Recommendations to the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School

PROGRAM EVALUATION	3.) Contract for a formal educational program evaluation focused on correlating Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School's program structure and program implementation with its results.
	4.) Post any replicable promising practices, indicated by the program evaluation, to the agency website and notify the Department of Education, State Board of Education, Education Oversight Committee, and all education-related legislative committees.

Applicant Pool Recommendation to the South Carolina General Assembly

TARGET APPLICANTS	5.) Amend S.C. Code § 59-65-470 to require school principals to seek parental consent to release names and addresses of students who are at risk of not completing high school. With consent, principals must supply names and addresses of students who are at risk of not completing high school to Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. Failure to seek consent and/or provide Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School with names and addresses of students who have consented and are at risk of not completing high school may result in loss of base student cost for the school. The South Carolina Department of Education shall oversee any complaints by Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School regarding a principal withholding information and the Department may withhold base student cost from a district until the district complies.

Applicant Pool Recommendations to the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School

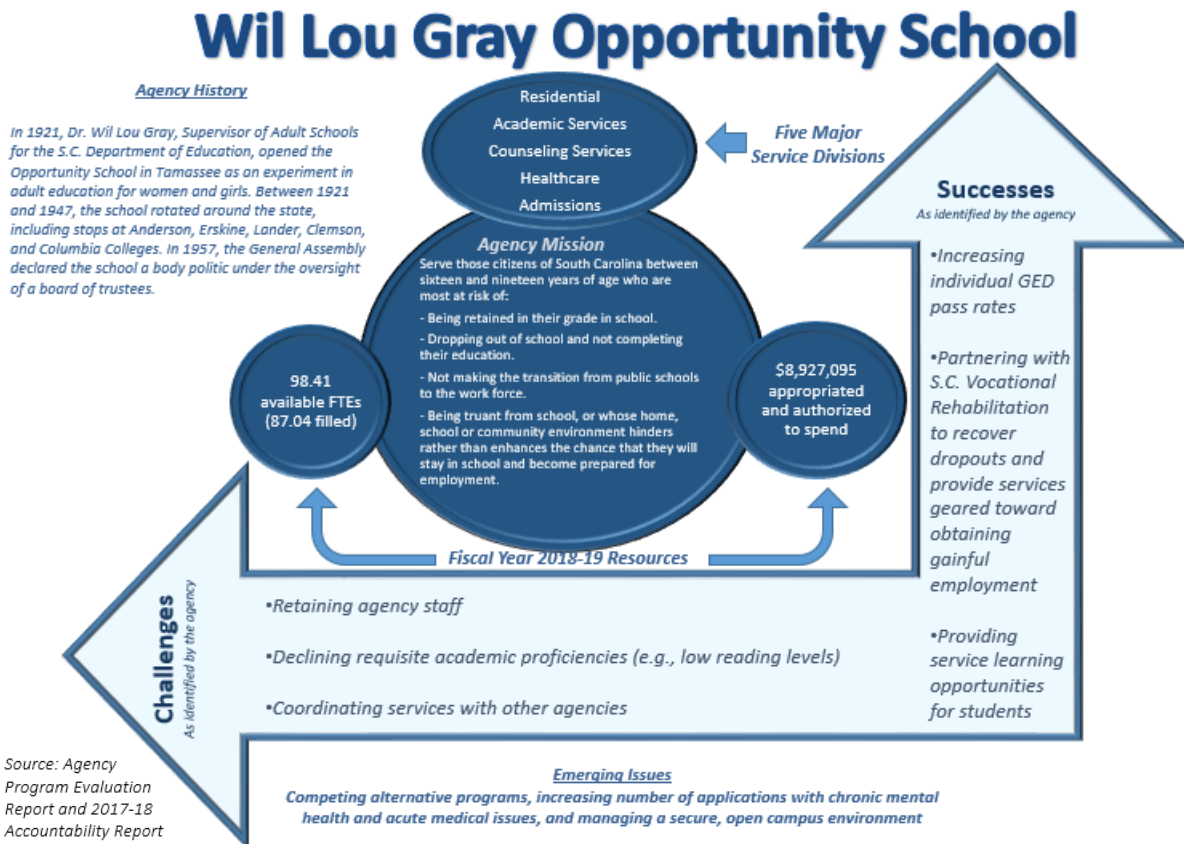|	
MARKETING STRATEGY	6.) Develop a system to track interactions with school or district personnel, by the type of interaction. Periodically use the data to ascertain what types of interactions have been successful, and where. Adjust the strategy if the data warrants.
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	7.) Amend the student application such that the demographic data collected on race and ethnicity is accurate. A potential source for categories is the United States Census.

STUDENT HANDBOOK	8.) Institute regular formal review of the student handbook and update when necessary. Ensure appearance and grooming rules are consistent with the most up-to-date Army JROTC (Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps) rules.
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	9.) Consider providing diverse community service options, which include both singular (i.e., one-time or event-based) and recurring (i.e., regular services at an organization) opportunities for students.

Internal Changes Implemented

During the study process, the agency implements three internal changes directly related to participation in the study process:

- Reviewing marketing strategies;
- Investigating raising the age limit from 19 to 21 because Wil Lou Gray is an adult education facility, and they have received interest from those that are 20 and 21; and
- Getting involved with the Department of Mental Health's Community Crisis and Response program so that there can be quick intervention for students with emergent mental health needs.[1]

Agency Snapshot

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[1] S.C. House of Representatives, House Legislative Oversight Committee, "Meeting Minutes" (June 11, 2019), under "Committee Postings and Reports," under "House Legislative Oversight Committee," under "Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School," and under "Meetings," https://www.scstatehouse.gov/CommitteeInfo/HouseLegislativeOversightCommittee/AgencyPHPFiles/WilLouGrayOpportunitySchool.php (minutes will be posted when approved). A video of the meeting is available at https://www.scstatehouse.gov/video/archives.php?key=9692&part=1.

Study Purpose and Methods

Determine if agency laws and programs:

> are being implemented and carried out in accordance with the intent of the General Assembly

&

> should be continued, curtailed, or eliminated.

Evaluate:

> the application, administration, execution, and effectiveness of the agency's laws and programs;

> the organization and operation of the agency;

&

> any conditions or circumstances that may indicate the necessity or desirability of enacting new or additional legislation pertaining to the agency.

S.C. Code Ann. § 2-2-20(B) and (C)

Study Process

- Full Committee schedules agency for study and gathers initial information
- Subcommittee investigates through meetings and information requests
- Subcommittee publishes report
- Full Committee considers Subcommittee report and may conduct further investigation
- Full Committee publishes report

Public Input

85 Responses to an online public survey

6 Constituents testify

Subcommittee Membership

The Honorable Joseph H. Jefferson, Jr. (chair)
The Honorable Neal A. Collins

The Honorable Patricia Moore (Pat) Henegan
The Honorable Tommy M. Stringer

Study Milestones

MEETINGS

Full Committee	Subcommittee	
5/3/18	1/31/19	2/28/19
1/14/19	2/12/19	3/21/19
9/27/19	6/11/19	

AGENCY REPORTS

March 2015	Seven-Year Plan Report
September 2018	Annual Accountability Report
November 2018	Program Evaluation Report

Legislative Oversight Committee

https://www.scstatehouse.gov/CommitteeInfo/HouseLegislativeOversightCommittee.php
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