STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
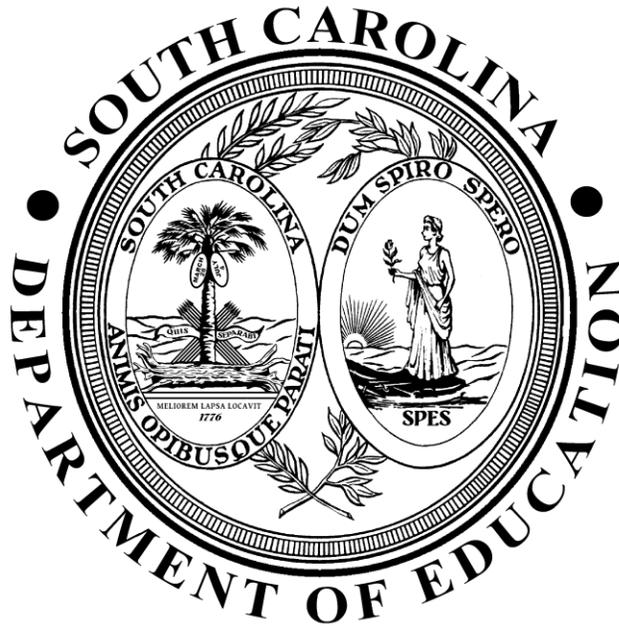# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

Annual Report on EEDA Dropout Prevention and High Schools That Work

Provided to the Honorable Henry McMaster, Governor
The Honorable Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr., Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Harvey Peeler, Acting Chairman, Senate Education Committee
The Honorable W. Brian White, Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Merita A. Allison, Chairman, House Education and Public Works

Pursuant to Proviso 1A.16 of the 2017–18 Appropriations Act

December 1, 2017

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Introduction: Reporting Requirement

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) provides the following report in compliance with Proviso 1A.16 of the 2017–18 Appropriations Act.

> 1A.16. (SDE-EIA: Dropout Prevention and High Schools That Work Programs) The Department of Education must report annually by December first, to the Governor, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, and the Chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee on the effectiveness of dropout prevention programs funded by the Education and Economic Development Act and on the High Schools that Work Programs' progress and effectiveness in providing a better prepared workforce and student success in post-secondary education. The department, school districts, and special schools may carry forward unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year into the current fiscal that were allocated for High Schools That Work.

This report contains two parts: a summary of programs under the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 (EEDA) and a summary of the High Schools that Work (HSTW) program. The summaries herein refer to implementation during the 2016–17 school year.

Part 1: EEDA

Introduction and Background

Per S.C. Code Ann. § 59-59-150, the EEDA requires that districts implement evidence-based programs and strategies that address the needs of students "at risk for being poorly prepared for the next level of study or for dropping out of school." Additionally, the EEDA stipulates that:

> [s]chool districts must lay the foundation for the clusters of study system in elementary school by providing career awareness activities. In the middle grades, programs must allow students to identify career interests and abilities and align them with clusters of study for the development of individual graduation plans. Finally, high school students must be provided guidance and curricula that will enable them to complete successfully their individual graduation plans, preparing them for a seamless transition to relevant employment, further training, or postsecondary study.

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-59-20(B). Research demonstrates that students who are on-track to graduate on time are at less risk of dropping out. During the 2016–17school year, to assist districts in meeting EEDA requirements and the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, the SCDE awarded over $2.87 million in competitive grants. These Preparing College- and Career-Ready Graduates grants went to twenty-two districts to serve students in approximately thirty-one elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as students enrolled in alternative school programs.

The SCDE also awarded funds to Lexington School District Two to implement after-school programs for elementary and middle school students with academic difficulty and to the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) to continue the Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina program at Spartanburg High School.

Finally, to further assist students at risk of not being promoted to the next grade level because of reading deficiencies, the SCDE allocated EEDA funds to support the Summer Reading Camp Community Partnership Grant, a grant program funded by the 2017–18 Appropriations Act and authorized by Act No. 284, 2016 S.C. Acts, Proviso 1.63.

Program Summary for School Year 2016–17

Over $2.8 million was awarded to twenty-two districts and DEW to serve students who attend one of thirty-two schools.
- Over ninety percent of participating schools were able to offer supplemental academic and career development assistance during the summer months.
- Over 1,455 students began receiving supplemental assistance for the first time during 2016–17 as a result of Preparing College- and Career-Ready Graduates grants.
- According to the end-of-the-year reports submitted by school representatives, the majority of students served as a result of Preparing College- and Career-Ready Graduates grants were selected because of academic, behavior, or attendance patterns which placed them at risk of academic failure (see Table 1).

Table 1. *At-Risk Indicators Used by Grantees to Select Students Served, 2016–17*

At-Risk Indicator	Percent of Schools Served that Included the Indicator in the Selection Process
Attendance	77%
Behavior/Disciplinary Issues	81%
Academic: Grades	91%
Academic: Course Credit	50%
Academic: Standardized Tests	23%
Academic: Over-aged for Grade	50%
Limited English Proficiency	36%
Lack of Interest or Conflicting Interest	59%
Socioeconomic Environment	50%
Homeless or without a Parent	50%
Abuse: Physical and/or Emotional	23%
Teen Parent	18%

Key Outcomes

Regulations approved by the South Carolina State Board of Education and the General Assembly in 2007 established desired outcomes or performance criteria based on the specific needs of the at-risk population and on the nature and structure of the particular model implemented in a district or school.

Each grantee incorporated at least one of the fifteen strategies that have the most positive impact on the dropout rate as identified by the National Dropout Prevention Center (NDPC) or selected a program from the NDPC's database of evidence-based model programs.

Data retrieved from PowerSchool, the state's uniform student information system, revealed the following outcomes related to the 12,360 students who participated in at-risk student programs during 2016–17 that were financially supported by the EEDA.

- Ninety-nine percent (12,255 students) of the 12,360 students identified in 2015–16 either enrolled in school during 2016–17 or graduated with a South Carolina high school diploma.
- Less than one percent (105 students) of the 12,360 students identified in 2015–16 dropped out of school in 2016–17.
- Over 1,750 students received supplemental academic assistance during the summer of 2016.
- The average daily attendance of these students was ninety-four percent.
- The average grade was eighty-two.

Outcomes associated with the implementation of evidence-based, at-risk strategies and models have been consistently positive:

- In 2015–16,[1] South Carolina's public school enrollment for students in grades 9 through 12 was 223,011. Despite this increase in enrollment of over 2,700 students from 2014–15, the state's dropout event rate declined from 2.6 percent to 2.3 percent. Over 480 fewer students dropped out when compared to the previous year.
- In approximately sixty-four percent (14 of 22) of the districts that received Preparing College- and Career-Ready Graduates grants, the dropout event rate declined (11 of 22 districts) or remained the same (3 of 22 districts) between 2014–15 and 2015–16.
- Since 2013–14, the dropout event rate for students who participated in an at-risk program funded or supported by the EEDA has been less than the state's average, despite serving students with factors indicating higher risk.
- For the last four years, the number of students graduating with a diploma within four years of entering grade 9 has continued to increase. For 2016–17, the state's graduation rate was 84.6 percent.

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[1] The 2015–16 year is the most current year for which dropout information is available.

- For the past five years, individual graduation plan conferences have been held and individual graduation plans have been developed for at least 98 percent of all students in grades 8 through 12 who participated in an at-risk program.

Based on the data received from the end-of- year reports submitted by Preparing College- and Career-Ready Graduates grant recipients:

- Approximately 120 high school students who participated in an EEDA grant-funded initiative at one of fourteen high schools scored gold, silver, or bronze on WorkKeys.
- Sixty-seven percent of schools reported a decrease in discipline referrals for participating students between 2015–16 and 2016–17.
- Sixty-two percent of schools reported that the truancy rate among participating students decreased by at least five percent between 2015–16 and 2016–17.
- Fifty-seven percent of schools reported an increase of at least 0.5 of a point in the mean grade point average (GPA) among participating students between the end of 2015–16 and the end of 2016–17.
- Approximately 400 high school students who participated in an EEDA grant-funded initiative at one of fourteen high schools passed at least one End-of-Course exam during 2016–17.
- Eighty-six percent of schools reported that participating students appeared to have a more positive attitude toward school and learning in 2016–17 than they had in 2015–16.
- One hundred percent of the participating students in grades 8 through 12 met with their school counselors to develop or revise their individual graduation plans during 2016–17.

To assist struggling students in Lexington School District Two, $500,000 was awarded to the district to continue existing after-school programs that were in jeopardy of closing.
- Over 230 students participated in the after school programs offered in Lexington School District Two.
- Each of the students who participated in the after school programs was promoted to the next grade level.

Over $400,000 was awarded to 18 districts and 2 organizations to support Summer Reading Camp Community Partnerships (SRCCP).
- Approximately 2,700 K–5 students were enrolled in summer reading camps during Summer 2017 as a result of the SRCCP. Approximately 48 percent of grade 3 students served (1,278 of 2,689 students) were identified as needing supplemental literacy instruction.
- Over 97 percent of grade 3 students (1,240 of 1,278 students) who participated in the SRCCP were promoted to the next grade level (see Table 2) in 2017–18.

Table 2. *2017 Summer Reading Camp Community Partnerships Outcomes*

	Participated	Promoted to Grade 4	Made Reading Level Gains	Regressed in Reading Level	Maintained Reading Level	Retained
Number of Grade 3 Students	1278	1240	846	40	260	12

All districts that received EEDA funds, directly or indirectly, were required to either implement or sustain supplementary evidence-based programs and activities specifically designed to assist elementary, middle, or high school students in being prepared for the next grade level or graduating on time. SRCCP support ensured that third graders at risk of being retained received effective supplemental support. Because of provided funding, the majority of participating students were promoted and over sixty-six percent improved their literacy levels.

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Part 2: High Schools That Work

Program Overview

High Schools That Work (HSTW) is an effort-based, school improvement initiative. HSTW is founded on the conviction that most students can master rigorous academic and career/technical studies if school leaders and teachers create an environment that motivates students to make the effort to succeed. Run by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the HSTW school improvement design provides a framework of goals, key practices, and key conditions for accelerating learning and setting higher standards.

For Fiscal Year 2017-2018, per Proviso 1A.68., (SDE-EIA: Career and Technical Equipment Funding Technology Education), are now together as one revenue code. Therefore, schools and districts are able to use the funds for equipment, Work Based Learning, and SREB's High Schools That Work initiative when building their local plan as it relates to the proviso. Specifically, Proviso 1A.68. (SDE-EIA: Career and Technical Equipment Funding Technology Education) reads: *Funds appropriated for Modernize Career and Technical Equipment Career and Technology Education will be distributed to school districts and multi-district career centers based on the prior year actual student enrollment for career and technology education courses, with no district or multi-district career center receiving less than $50,000. Funds may be expended for the purchase of career and technical equipment, the up fitting of facilities and the purchase of consumables, regional career specialists, and such evidence-based initiatives like High Schools that Work and Project Lead the Way. Each district must include in the district plan submitted to the Office of Career and Technology Education information on other career and technical equipment available. The district must include, at a minimum, equipment located at the career center and at the technical college, information on the alignment of equipment to current industry jobs and needs in the state as recommended by career and technical program advisory committees. District plans must include charter schools within the school district offering at least one career and technical education completer program. School districts and career centers may carry forward unexpended funds to be used for the same intended purposes to up fit career and technical facilities and replace career and technical program consumables.*

During 2016–17 the SCDE disbursed HSTW funds to the participating school districts. As such, the SREB has established direct communication and technical assistance to the participating schools in South Carolina. The total of participating schools in 2016–17 was 393 including 153 high schools, 163 middle schools, 19 career technical centers, and 58 elementary schools, academies, or charter schools.

Training and Development through SREB

Site Development Workshops/ Needs Assessment
The SREB provided a total of 48 days of professional development for Math Design Collaborative (MDC) and Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) Job Embedded Coaching for 192 participants from seventy-four high schools and middle schools. There was also a needs assessment completed for fifteen schools. Additional state services included presentations at the South Carolina Business and Education Summit. Eight hundred and eleven participants attended the HSTW Networking Conference and 60 participants attended the College and Career Readiness Networking event.

Enhancing Career Pathway Courses
The Enhancing Career Pathway Course focuses on building bridges from high school to postsecondary education and the workplace. A total of five training sessions, in which two educators participated, were held throughout different regions in the state.

Making Middle Grades Work

Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)focuses on improving classroom practices to improve student outcomes. There were five training sessions on the components of MMGW held in different regions throughout the state. A total of two educators participated in these sessions.

Analyzing and Improving Your Center's Industry Recognized Credentials
This workshop supports career and technical education sites in analyzing and improving their industry recognized credential offerings. A total of forty-five educators participated in two training sessions which were held at different regions throughout the state.

Math in Career and Technical Education
This workshop focuses on helping career and technology education (CTE) sites identify ways they can improve helping students utilize applied mathematics in preparation for college or a career. A total of thirty-six educators participated in four training sessions focused on math in CTE. The sessions were held at different regions throughout the state.

Project-Based Learning
Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional framework that supports educators in designing learning experiences for students that emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and inquiry skills. Six training sessions were held in different regions throughout the state. A total of eighty-nine educators participated in the sessions.

Key Outcomes

SC READY ELA and SC READY Math
A total of one hundred and sixty-eight middle schools participated in MMGW during the 2016–17 school year.
- The percentage of students scoring Exemplary on the SC READY ELA 2017 assessment exceeded the state average of 13.7 percent in 35.1 percent of the participating MMGW sites.
- The percentage of students scoring Meeting on the SC READY ELA 2017 assessment exceeded the state average of 26.3 percent in 36.3 percent of participating MMGW sites.
- The percentage of students scoring Exemplary on the SC READY Math 2017 assessment exceeded the state average of 19.3 percent in 29.2 percent of participating MMGW sites.
- The percentage of students scoring Meeting on the SC READY Math 2017 assessment exceeded the state average of 22.8 percent in 23.8 percent of participating MMGW sites.

Table 3 provides an overview of the percentage of participating MMGW school sites with student scores above the state average at the Exemplary or Meeting level on the 2017 SC READY ELA and SC READY Math assessments in South Carolina.

Table 3. *Percentage of Participating Making Middle Grades Work Sites with Students Scoring Above the State Average at the Exemplary or Meeting Level on SC READY ELA and SC READY Math in 2016–17*

Assessment/Subject Area	Scoring Level	Percentage of MMGW Sites Above State Average	Percentage of All Schools Above State Average[a]
SC READY ELA	Exemplary	35.1	30.6
SC READY ELA	Meeting	36.3	42.3
SC READY Math	Exemplary	29.2	29.4
SC READY Math	Meeting	23.8	26.0

Note. [a]Includes all middle schools, both participating and non-participating MMGW sites, in the state.

ACT Benchmarks

One hundred and fifty-three high schools participated in HSTW during the 2016–17 school year. The ACT, a college readiness assessment, was given to every South Carolina 11th grader in 2017 with the exception of those eligible for alternate assessments. According to ACT, benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject-area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses. Table 4 shows the percentage of HSTW sites with 40 percent or more of their students meeting the College Ready benchmark level for each subject compared to non-participating high schools and all high schools, including both HSTW sites and non HSTW sites in the state.

Table 4. *Percentage of Participating HSTW Sites with 40 Percent or More of Their Students Meeting the College Ready Level on ACT Benchmark Assessments by Subject Compared to All High Schools in 2016–17*

ACT Benchmark Assessment	Percentage of HSTW Sites with 40% of Students or More Meeting College Ready Benchmark	Percentage of Non HSTW Sites with 40% of Students or More Meeting College Ready Benchmark	Percentage of All South Carolina High Schools with 40% of Students or More Meeting College Ready Benchmark[a]
English	30.3	29.6	30.4
Math	4.8	9.9	6.8
Reading	9.7	14.8	11.8
Science	0	4.9	1.7

Note. [a]Includes all high schools, both participating and non-participating HSTW sites, in the state.

WorkKeys Assessments

ACT WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system measuring "real world" skills that employers believe are critical in the workplace. The assessment is given to every South Carolina eleventh grader with the exception of those eligible for alternative assessments. The assessment consists of three subtests: Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. Students can earn certificates at the Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze levels on WorkKeys assessments.The percentage of participating HSTW sites in which the 2016-2017 percentage of eleventh grade students earning platinum, silver or gold, by subject, on each WorkKeys assessments exceeded the state average compared to non-participating sites can be found in Table 5. A summary of the data points is provided below:

- 41.8 percent of the participating HSTW sites exceeded the state percentage of students earning Platinum, Bold, Silver, and Bronze level bronze on the Applied Mathematics assessment.
- 46.6 percent of the participating HSTW sites exceeded the state percentage of students earning Platinum, Bold, Silver, and Bronze level on the Reading for Information assessment.
- 38.7 percent of the participating HSTW sites exceeded the state percentage of students earning Platinum, Bold, Silver, and Bronze level on the Locating Information assessment.

Table 5. *Percentage Of Participating HSTW Sites with the Percentage of Students Earning Platinum, Silver, or Gold, by Subject, on WorkKeys Assessments Exceeding the State Average Compared to Non-Participating Sites in 2016–17*

Work Keys Assessment	Percentage of Students Meeting Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze Level Statewide	Percentage of Students Exceeding the State Percentage of Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze Earners Participating HSTW Sites	Percentage of Students Exceeding the State Percentage of Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze Level in Non-Participating HSTW Sites
Applied Mathematics	69.9	41.8	52.5
Reading for Information	91.6	46.6	53.8
Locating Information	72.6	38.7	50.0

End of Course Assessments

Academic data representative of the percentage of End of Course (EOC) tests in Algebra I/Math for the Technologies, English I, Biology I, US History and The Constitution, and all EOC tests in participating HSTW sites, that exceeded, average state performance by assessment are shown in Table 6. Average state performance is defined by the percentage of students scoring 60 percent or higher on each End of Course test statewide. A summary of data points can be found below:

- 23.6 percent of participating HSTW sites demonstrated a higher percentage of students scoring 60 percent or higher than the state average on the Algebra I/Math for the Technologies End of Course assessment.
- 26.6 percent of participating HSTW sites demonstrated a higher percentage of students scoring 60 percent or higher than the state average on the English I End of Course assessment.
- 43.6 percent of participating HSTW sites demonstrated a higher percentage of students scoring 60 percent or higher than the state average on the Biology I End of Course assessment.
- 40.6 percent of participating HSTW sites demonstrated a higher percentage of students scoring 60 percent or higher than the state average on the US History and Constitution End of Course assessment.

Table 6. *Percentage of End of Course Tests Participating HSTW Sites that Exceeded Average State Performance in 2016–17*

EOC Assessment	Percentage of Students Scoring 60% or Higher Statewide	Participating HSTW Sites Exceeding State Performance[a]	Non-Participating HSTW Site Exceeding State Performance
Algebra I/ Math	75.1	23.6	30.7
English I	77.0	26.6	46.2
Biology I	73.8	43.6	52.6
US History and The Constitution	67.9	40.6	41.0
All Subjects	73.6	29.7	39.7

Note. [a]Represents the percentage of HSTW sites with a higher percentage of students scoring 60 percent and above on the specified EOC assessment.

Graduation Rate

Academic data representative of the percentage of HSTW sites that improved their four year cohort graduation rate from 2016–2017 is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Percentage of Participating HSTW Sites Showing Improvement in Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate, 2016–17

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■ Percentage of high schools demonstrating improvement in rate

■ Percentage of high schools with stable or decreasing rate