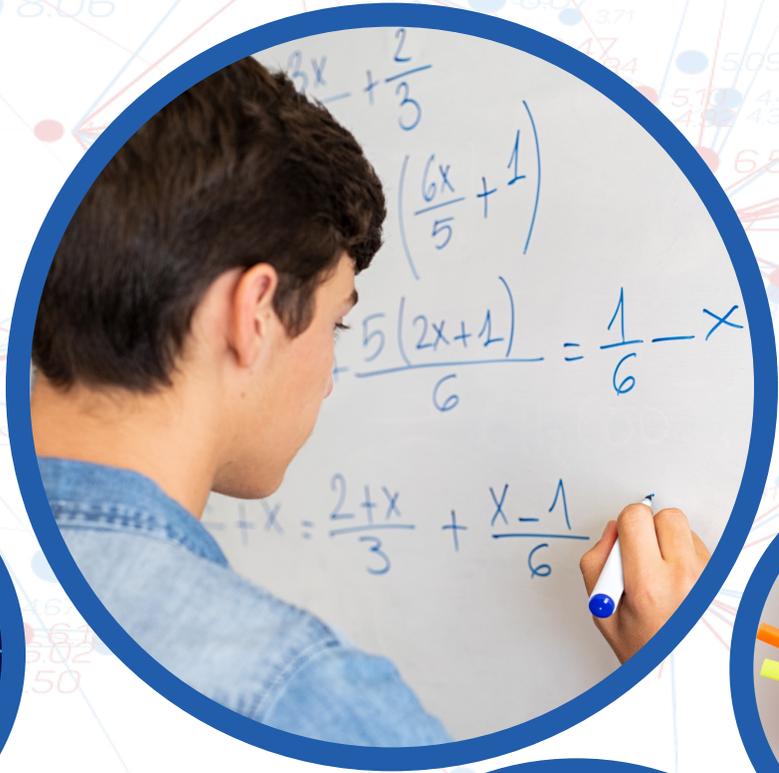




# SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.



# 2026 Annual Report

Reporting Facts.

Measuring Change.

Promoting Progress.

## Education Oversight Committee Members and Staff

(current 1/24/2026)



**April Allen**, Columbia, *EOC Chair*

**Dr. Brian Newsome**, Lexington, *EOC Vice Chair*

**Tammy Achziger**, Sumter

**Rep. Terry Alexander**, Florence

**Melanie Barton**, Columbia

**Russell Baxley**, Beaufort

**Rep. Neal Collins**, Easley

**Rep. Bill Hager**, Hampton

**Barbara B. Hairfield**, Charleston

**Sidney Locke**, Camden

**Melissa Pender**, Beaufort

**Dr. Patty Tate**, Rock Hill

**Sen. Ross Turner**, Greenville

**Ellen Weaver**, Columbia;

*Ex-Officio, State Superintendent of Education*

**Dana Yow**, Executive Director

**Dr. Matthew Lavery**, Deputy Director

**Dr. Rainey Knight**, Director of Strategic Innovation

**Dr. Jenny May**, Director of Qualitative Research and Stakeholder Engagement

**Hope Johnson**, Administrative Coordinator

**Gabrielle Fulton**, Data Visualization Specialist

**Tenell Felder**, Communications Manager

**Amina Asghar**, Data Engineer

**Crystal Garcia, MPA**, Operations Manager

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



# SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

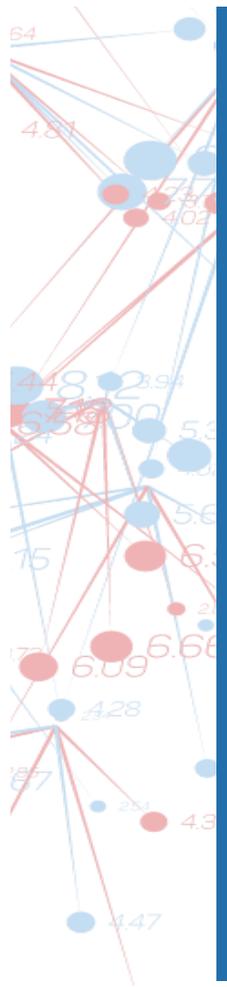
## Who we are:

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

## What we do:

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

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## REPORTING FACTS

2025-26 Data Analytics Update .... 6



## MEASURING CHANGE

2025 SC School Report Cards ..... 22



## PROMOTING PROGRESS

2026-2027 EIA Budget Recommendations ..... 24

Be Present S.C. .... 26

2025 Data Trailblazers ..... 28

EOC’s 4K Waitlist Pilot ..... 29

Accountability System Cyclical Review ..... 30

Social Studies Cyclical Review ..... 32

EOC’s Strategic Plan..... 33

# Greetings,

The SC Education Oversight Committee’s mission is to improve South Carolina’s public education system. We do this by overseeing the State’s education accountability system, making Education Improvement Act budget recommendations, annually reviewing State-funded programs, and supporting education policy decisions.

This year’s annual report highlights the work of our Committee.

2025-2026 was a particularly busy year. In addition to our usual duties, we conducted the cyclical reviews of South Carolina’s Social Studies standards and the review of South Carolina’s public education accountability system. Summaries of both reviews are included in this report.

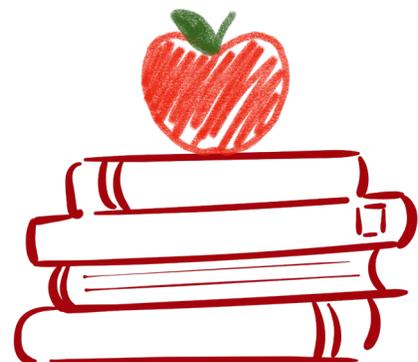
This report also includes the EOC’s findings and recommendations for several legislatively appointed reports including the SC Teacher Loan Program, the Education Scholarship Trust Fund Parent Survey, the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children program, the Waiting for 4K report, the report on SC Military Connected Students, and the Child Early Reading and Development Education Program (CERDEP) report. It is our hope that these summaries will provide the reader with a deeper understanding on the specific issues addressed in each report as well as give actionable steps that can be taken for efficiency and improvement.

We are also pleased to highlight a few of our studies and initiatives, including the *Beating the Odds Investigative Study*, which examined what high-poverty schools are doing to achieve strong academic results and our successful 4K Waitlist pilot, which helped place waitlisted students into 4K classrooms.

We are also excited about the success of our Be Present S.C.™ public awareness campaign with more than 6,000 students taking the pledge for excellent school attendance.

Each of the reports highlighted in this year’s annual report are available in their entirety on the EOC website: [www.eoc.sc.gov](http://www.eoc.sc.gov). We also would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the educators, policymakers, and others who have helped us accomplish this work during the past year.

## Best Regards,

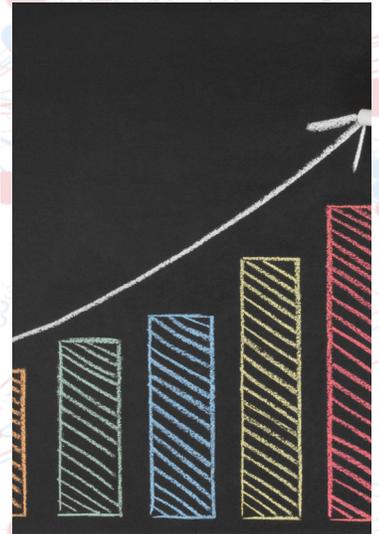




**SC EDUCATION  
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

*Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.*

# 2026 Annual Report Year in Review



**Analyses, Updates, and Program Summaries from  
March 2025 to February 2026**



# REPORTING FACTS

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

## 2025-2026 Highlights

### Education Oversight Committee Data Analytics

- **National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker Data Files**

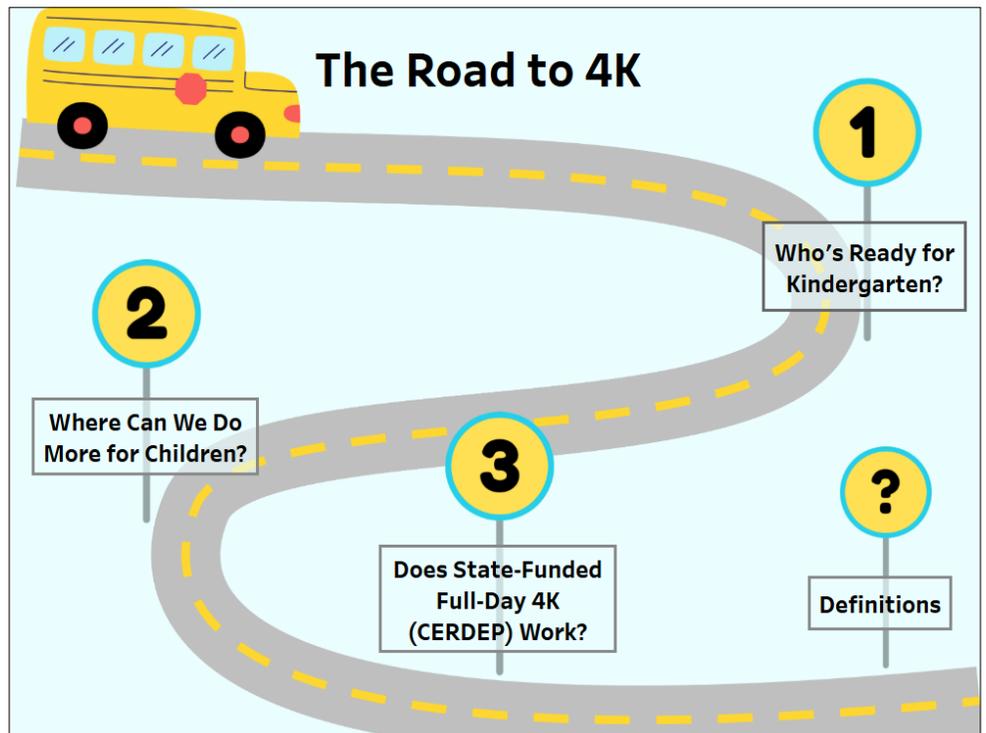
For the third consecutive year, the EOC has provided National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker Data Files to schools and districts—providing data on college enrollment, persistence, and completion within six years (2018-2024). Schools gained access to graduation and enrollment data from the nearly 3,600 colleges and universities that participate in the Clearinghouse system. This allowed for the suspension of the college freshmen reporting requirements of Section 59-101-130 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.



### DashboardSC - SC's Dashboard for Education

The EOC's Education Data Dashboard ([dashboardsc.sc.gov](http://dashboardsc.sc.gov)) continues to be updated for speed and enhancements to improve user experience and ease of access. The following are highlights from the latest additions to DashboardSC:

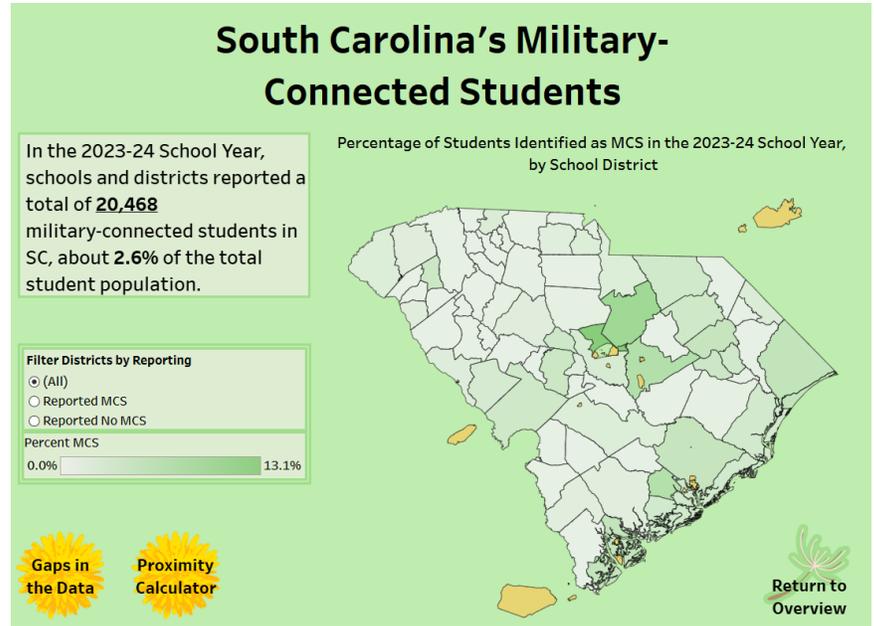
Our updated **4K dashboard** leads users through data that illustrates kindergarten readiness for pupils in poverty, pupils not in poverty, and readiness by 4K experience and district. The dashboard also explores how many eligible students are not being served by State-funded full-day 4K, and compares Kindergarten Readiness Assessment results between students who accessed State-funded full-day 4K and those who did not.



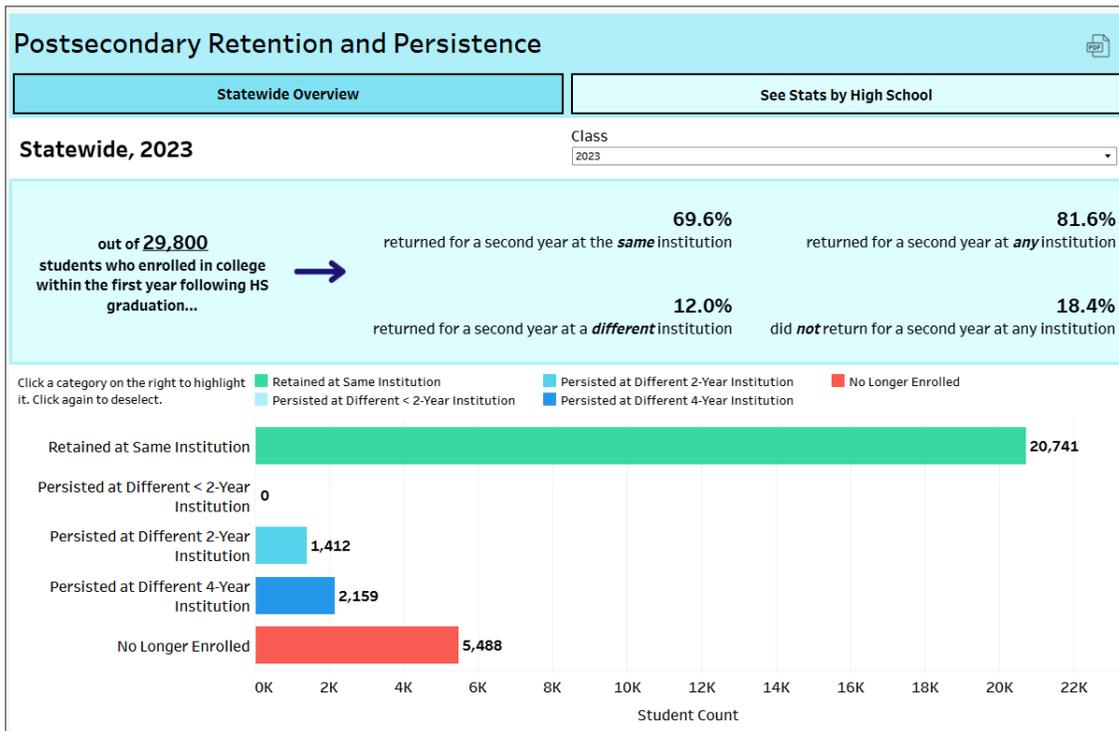
## Military Connected Students Dashboard:

The **Military Connected Students dashboard** visually illustrates the percentage of students identified as military-connected in the 2023-24 school year by district. Interactive features allow users to explore the following questions:

- How many military-connected students are in SC?
- Why do we identify military-connected students?
- How do we identify military-connected students?



## Postsecondary Retention and Persistence Dashboard:



The **Postsecondary Retention and Persistence dashboard** displays statewide and high school specific data on postsecondary retention rates at 2-Year and 4-Year institutions. Users can also apply a filter to search for information by high school class and school district. The **Postsecondary Enrollment dashboard** shows the percentage of South Carolina public high school students who took part in Dual Enrollment or enrolled in a postsecondary school in the fall after graduation or within the following year.



## SC Teacher Loan Program Report Summary

The Teacher Quality Act of 2000 directs the Education Oversight Committee to conduct an annual review of the South Carolina Teacher Loan Program (TLP) and to report its findings and recommendations to the South Carolina General Assembly.

The full [Teacher Loan Report](https://eoc.sc.gov/policy-makers) is at [eoc.sc.gov/policy-makers](https://eoc.sc.gov/policy-makers) under “Teacher Loan Program”



### Key Findings:

- TLP Type 1 applications and recipients continue to decline and are now at their lowest levels since at least 2010–11.
- Since the Teacher Loan Program began, about 34% of Type 1 borrowers (7,701 of 22,438) have fully canceled their loans by completing the teaching requirement.

### SC Teacher Loan Program

The South Carolina Teacher Loan Program (TLP) was authorized by the South Carolina General Assembly as part of the Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984.

The program offers three types of forgivable loans to encourage qualified state residents to enter the teaching profession in academic and/or geographic areas of critical need, which are defined annually by the State Board of Education.



## Key Findings:

- Compared to other options, the TLP is not well-utilized:
  - Only 10.2% of Fall 2024 Bachelor’s and Master’s level education program enrollees received TLP loans.
  - By comparison, 57.4% of undergraduates in education programs received HOPE, LIFE, or Palmetto Fellows Scholarships (not loans).
- More borrowers are paying back loans, not committing to the terms of loan forgiveness.
- The SC Student Loan Corporation reports that the ending balance in the Revolving Loan Fund on June 30, 2024 was \$23,032,296.

**EOC In The News:**  
[South Carolina teacher loan program sees \\$23M surplus as educators exit - WLTX](#)



## EOC Key Recommendations:

- Use last year’s TLP report to create a clear, statewide and district-level teacher recruitment strategy, with defined goals and expectations for each stage of the teacher pipeline.
- Develop a common set of key data points to compare TLP, Teaching Fellows, and LIFE/Palmetto Fellows Enhancement participants. Data should include all phases of the teacher pipeline.



- Restore fiscal transparency by publishing audited annual financial statements for the TLP, including TLP and Revolving Loan Fund balances, for the past three fiscal years.



## Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF) Report Summary

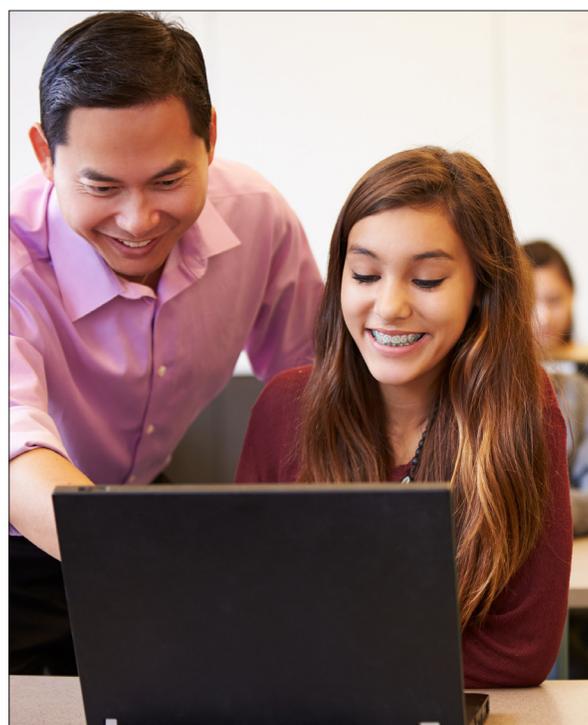
Pursuant to Proviso 59-8-110(E), the Education Oversight Committee and South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) must develop and administer an annual parental satisfaction survey for parents whose students were a part of the South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF). The EOC must provide a report of the survey results to the General Assembly by December 31.

### Education Scholarship Trust Fund

The Education Scholarship Trust Fund Program is administered by the South Carolina Department of Education and allows qualifying South Carolina families to apply for scholarships.

Scholarships are available for Kindergarten through 12th grade students.

The full [ESTF Parent Survey Report](#) is at [eoc.sc.gov/policymakers](http://eoc.sc.gov/policymakers) under "Education Scholarship Trust Fund"





## Key Findings:

*The Education Scholarship Trust Fund parent satisfaction survey was distributed to all ESTF families approved to participate using the Classwallet platform. Parents were instructed to complete the survey once per participating child, so that each child's experience could be captured.*

- Approximately **40%** of respondents identified funding as the program's top benefit.
- **27%** of parents were frustrated by what was not allowable and what vendors needed to be used. School uniforms, transportation, school lunch and field trips were most frequently described as weaknesses of the program.
- **57%** of parents stated financial relief as the reason for applying for ESTF funds.
- **31%** of parents were dissatisfied with the length of time for acceptance to the ESTF program, for approval for items/ services, or approval of a desired vendor to be approved to participate in the program.

### EOC In The News:

[As SC governor eyes voucher expansion, some parents say schools are taking advantage of the program](#)

- Post and Courier



## EOC Key Recommendations:

- Some students are receiving ESTF *and* ECENC funds, which is expressly prohibited in the law. It is recommended that SCDE staff implementing the ESTF program connect with Exceptional SC staff and determine a process to identify and prohibit students from accessing both funds, or that using both funding sources be made allowable.
- Home instruction is expressly prohibited in Act 11 as it was in Act 8, yet some surveyed parents report satisfaction being able to use ESTF funds for homeschool curriculum to provide home instruction to their children. This allowable use of funds creates confusion, so it is recommended that homeschooling be an allowable choice for ESTF, or that homeschool curriculum be removed from the allowable use of funds.
- It is recommended that 4K tuition be considered as an allowable use of funds, or that CERDEP eligibility be expanded to align with the ESTF financial threshold with students under 200% of poverty served first.





## Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Report Summary

Act 247 mandates the Education Oversight Committee issue a report to the General Assembly documenting the impact of the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children program on student achievement.

The full [ECENC Report](https://eoc.sc.gov/ecenc-program) is at [eoc.sc.gov/ecenc-program](https://eoc.sc.gov/ecenc-program) under “ECENC Reports”



### Key Findings:

- 1,401 students participated in the ECENC program in 2023-24. Data from SC Department of Revenue shows that approximately 66% of the scholarship recipients are from households earning more than \$100,000 annually.
- In the 2022-23 school year, 74% of students applying received grants. During the 2022-23 school year, students were funded at 20% of the tuition rate, and in 2023-24 were funded at 27%.

## Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children (ECENC)

The ECENC program provides grants and parental tax credits to students with exceptional needs attending private schools that meet specific eligibility requirements for approval by the Education Oversight Committee (EOC). Exceptional SC is a 501 (c) (3) that raises and accepts funds and reviews student grant applications for ECENC funding.



## Key Findings:

- In evaluating the impact of the ECENC program on student achievement and academic growth, there are challenges due to a lack of student level data and comparable assessments administered.
- ECENC schools are not required to provide individual student test scores for students who received an ECENC grant; compliance is monitored by receipt of aggregate scores from approved schools and information about what assessments are given to all students in the school.
- All approved schools administered assessments and maintained compliance; however, there is a lack of student level data to make comparisons or determine whether students have experienced measurable improvements as a result of the ECENC program.

## EOC Key Recommendations:

- Convene the advisory committee of the ECENC.
- Offer summative state assessments to ECENC students in public schools:
  - South Carolina private school students currently do not take state summative assessments. It is recommended that the state gather more information on which schools are interested in specific assessments and work together to decide whether ECENC schools can be included in future testing.
- Consider communication around the ECENC Program and other scholarships:



- The EOC recommends staying informed about how the ESTF is being implemented and monitoring whether clearer communication is needed for each program. If more communication is needed, it should be developed with SCDE and other partners.



## Beating the Odds Investigative Study Report Summary

EOC members and staff found that South Carolina data aligned with national research showing a strong link between poverty and lower academic achievement. One EOC member asked, **“Where is it going well for students in poverty?”**—leading to the Beating the Odds Investigative Study.

### Beating the Odds Study Criteria

- School enrollment must be greater than 100 students.
- Schools must have an “Excellent” overall rating with no “Below Average” or “Unsatisfactory” indicator ratings on the SC School Report Card.
- Schools must have a poverty ratio greater than or equal to 75%
- Schools must have open enrollment policies; schools of choice may be considered as long as transportation is provided, and enrollment is not contingent upon academic achievement or the evaluation of an application or audition.

The full [BTOIS Report](https://eoc.sc.gov/policymakers) is at [eoc.sc.gov/policymakers](https://eoc.sc.gov/policymakers) under **“Beating the Odds Investigative Study”**

Schools that met the four *Beating the Odds* criteria were identified. These schools were then grouped into partner cohorts of about six schools each, selected to best represent the state based on location, size, and other characteristics. Once each group was formed, district and school leaders were invited to take part in the study as partner schools.



## Key Findings:

- A strong leadership team was observed in each of the BTOIS partner schools. This team comprised of a principal, instructional leadership and a supportive superintendent.
- A culture of high expectations saturated BTOIS partner schools and influenced the community culture. In BTOIS partner schools, high expectations were maintained by the superintendent, principals, teachers, support staff, community members and students themselves through honest and respectful communication.
- All BTOIS partner schools displayed data on the walls and used data to celebrate growth and to make strategic decisions to increase academic achievement. Data visibility was central to use as a tool to make instructional decisions and monitor progress, but also to motivate students and teachers in a non-punitive way.
- Teachers, principals, instructional leaders and parents reported that the school felt “like a family.” The culture in the school was one of connection and support demonstrated by celebrations of incremental progress, informative and honest feedback, both positive and for corrective purposes.
- Effective teaching and strong Tier 1 instruction are closely tied to high expectations, shown through efficient scheduling, strong coaching, and thoughtful curriculum choices.

## EOC Key Recommendations:

- It is recommended that partner schools with new leadership are observed to see if high student achievement is maintained after transitions in leadership.
- Conduct further research on preventing leadership burnout and pilot intentional efforts for principal retention in schools with greater than 75% poverty.
- Pilot efforts in eligible schools with “Below Average” or “Unsatisfactory” overall ratings to see which parts of the BTOIS approach improve academic achievement.
- Use data from elementary BTOIS partner schools to see how elementary practices and skills affect student achievement in middle school.
- More research is needed on leadership transitions and keeping effective principals, and pilot efforts should be considered in Beating the Odds schools with “Excellent” or “Good” overall ratings.

### EOC In The News:

**Some SC schools perform well academically despite poverty barriers. Lawmakers want to know why. - WLTX**





## State-Funded Full Day 4K Report Summary

Proviso 1.47 mandates the Education Oversight Committee conduct an annual evaluation of the South Carolina Child Development Education Pilot Program and to issue findings in a report to the General Assembly by March first of each year.

The full [CERDEP report](https://eoc.sc.gov/policymakers) is at [eoc.sc.gov/policymakers](https://eoc.sc.gov/policymakers) under “Early Childhood”

### State-Funded Full Day 4K

CERDEP 4K is the term used to refer to full-day CERDEP programs in public schools that are state-funded and run by the local school district with the SCDE as the reporting agency. Historically, these programs may have been referred to as Public CERDEP.

First Steps 4K is the term for state-funded CERDEP in non-public school settings with SC First Steps as the oversight and reporting agency.



### Key Findings:

- In the 2024-25 school year, 56,741 students enrolled in kindergarten. Of those students, 36,708 (65%) were pupils in poverty.
- 18,069 four-year-olds were served by CERDEP in the 2023-24 school year and were enrolled in public kindergarten in the 2024-25 school year.



## Key Findings:



- During the 2023-24 school year, 18,342 students were potentially eligible for CERDEP programming but did not participate in CERDEP or Head Start.
- During FY23-24, South Carolina invested \$114,657,866 from the State's General Fund as well as a recurring appropriation of Education Improvement Act (EIA) dollars into CERDEP. This investment is the largest in CERDEP to date.
- Of all pupils in poverty who participated in CERDEP, 35% demonstrated readiness on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (37% CERDEP 4K, 28% First Steps 4K).

## EOC Key Recommendations:

- Increase enrollment efficiency for eligible students in CERDEP classes.
  - Pilot 4K Navigators to support families with children on a CERDEP 4K waitlist in finding a State-Funded, Full-Day 4K placement that best meets their needs.
- Increase CERDEP infrastructure using data to prioritize piloting efforts.
  - It was recommended to fund additional CERDEP 4K classes in the 2024 Report of State-Funded, Full-Day 4K. While the number of classes increased by almost 20 between last year and this reporting year, the number of children on the waitlist increased.
- Continue to increase quality by meeting the National Institute for Early Education Research benchmarks related to screening and teacher qualifications.
- Work with SCDE to access additional details on attendance data.

### EOC In The News:

**Thousands of South Carolina kids are missing free 4K. A new study may shed light on why.**

- WLTX





## Waiting for 4K Report Summary

As part of the Preschool Development Grant (PDG), Education Oversight Committee staff undertook a grant-funded activity to study the waitlist processes across all early childhood sectors for 4-year-old kindergarten, also known as 4K.

The full [4K Waitlist report](https://eoc.sc.gov/policymakers) is at [eoc.sc.gov/policymakers](https://eoc.sc.gov/policymakers) under “Early Childhood”

### 4K Waitlists

Data showed that more than 400 children in South Carolina spent time on a waitlist to access free, state-funded 4K. At the same time, there were over 2,300 available seats across the state.

Understanding waitlists and the most efficient enrollment processes to match children with a 4K seat they are eligible for protects the investment South Carolina has made in early childhood education.



### Key Findings:

- From the August 2024 survey, completed by CERDEP 4K district leadership, there were 32 districts (65%) with at least one school that had a student on a waitlist. Of these 32 districts with students on a waitlist, the number of students on the waitlist at each school in the district ranges from one to 178.



## Key Findings:

- Seventeen districts did not have a waitlist; of those, 11 (65%) had open seats, while 5 (29%) did not have a waitlist nor open seats; and one did not respond. There were 65 open spots in CERDEP 4K reported statewide in August of 2024.
- There are counties that have few or no licensed child care settings to serve children and families in any capacity. These counties include: Abbeville, Allendale, Calhoun, Clarendon, Edgefield, Fairfield and McCormick where there is not currently a First Steps 4K program.
- There are a minimum of four websites/online portals that families can use to access information about 4K. While these websites and portals offer a great deal of information and meet a variety of legislative requirements, they have not eliminated the need for alternative supports for families on waitlists.

### EOC In The News:

**Hundreds waitlisted for SC pre-K despite thousands of open seats, report finds**

**- SC Daily Gazette**



## EOC Key Recommendations:

- Improve data quality:
  - A system should be piloted\* that will immediately connect families to individuals at other programs for matching an eligible child with a 4K spot that meets their needs.
  - Information about why a parent might decline a different open 4K spot should be collected.

*\*See page 29 for more information on the EOC's 4K Waitlist Pilot*
- The waitlist should trigger a supported matching process and help collect enrollment data for 4K programs.
- Pilot a 4K Navigator position to support families on a waitlist in finding a free, full-day, State-funded 4K option that best meets their needs.
- Pilot a variety of strategies to move from point-in-time data to “real time” data communication to allow the waitlist to serve as a catalyst for a supported matching process to begin.



## Military-Connected Students Report Summary

The Education Oversight Committee produces an annual report on the educational performance of military-connected students as a requirement of Act 289, the Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act, which was passed in 2014 by the SC General Assembly.

### Military-Connected Students

A Military-Connected Student is a student with a parent who is a member of the Armed Forces to include the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard, which would also incorporate their reserve components (i.e., Army National Guard and Air National Guard, and Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Reserves).

The full [Military Connected Students Report](https://eoc.sc.gov/policymakers) is at [eoc.sc.gov/policymakers](https://eoc.sc.gov/policymakers) under “Military-Connected Students”





## Key Findings:

- The collection of military-connected status by school districts is improving. Commendation is given to Richland One School District; in 2020-21, three military-connected students were reported. For school year 2023-24, 406 military-connected students were reported.
- The performance of military connected students in SC exceeds the performance of non-military-connected students, based on the data collected by school districts and available in the Student Information System.
- It is difficult to reconcile data from different sources on military-connected students. Student Information System data show 14,124 public school students connected to active-duty personnel in 2023–24, while the total number of active-duty personnel in South Carolina in December 2024 was 33,477.

## EOC Key Recommendations:

- Identifying military-connected students helps educators support students who move often and change schools. South Carolina districts should collect this information during enrollment and include it in the Student Information System.
- In collaboration with the SC Dept of Veterans Affairs, include a data visualization including data related to this report on dashboardSC.sc.gov, the EOC’s Education Data Dashboard.
- Address the recommendations of the SC K-12 Military Readiness Task Force, adopted in June 2024.





# MEASURING CHANGE

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

The accountability system, overseen by the EOC, provides an overall Report Card rating to every SC public elementary, middle, and high school based on a 100-point scale.

The Survey Advisory Group (SAG) is an EOC initiative that convened last year to review the SC School Report Card's school climate survey. The group also discussed determining priorities moving forward. While the SAG will review surveys upon request for the EOC, the group has also determined that balancing the tensions between collecting usable data with which to improve schools, and not undermining ratings will be discussed internally so that any action steps can be identified and considered in light of the accountability review recommendations and new administration procedures.

## 2025 SC School Report Cards Background and Summary

South Carolina public schools and school districts have received School Report Cards since 2001.

The ratings, outlined in state law, are as follows: Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, and Unsatisfactory. Schools also receive indicator ratings on various criterion, such as Graduation Rate, Academic Achievement, and College and Career-readiness.

Highlights from this year's report card are as follows:

- Nearly half of SC's elementary schools are rated "Good" or better.
- The percentage of middle schools earning a "Good" or better for the 'Student Progress' indicator rating increased from 22% in 2024 to 40% in 2025.
- South Carolina's On-Time Graduation Rate is at 86.7%.
- The percentage of high schools earning a "Good" or better on the 'College/Career Readiness' indicator increased from 63% in 2024 to 75% in 2025.

Areas of needed improvement noted by the EOC remain closing the gap between SC's on-time graduation rate and the low percentage of students who are college and career ready.

SC School Report Cards are available at [www.screportcards.com](http://www.screportcards.com), and provide insights into student performance and school quality.

# Insights on 2025 Report Card Data

- Math is still an area where many elementary and middle school students need extra support—only 44% of South Carolina’s 3rd through 8th graders are on grade level.
- At the high school level, there was improvement—52% of high school students earned a “C” or better on the Algebra I End-of-Course assessment (up from 47%).
- While this year’s On-Time Graduation Rate increased to 86.7%, only 31% of those same graduates were college and career ready.
  - 33% of South Carolina public high school students in the 2025 graduation cohort were college ready.
  - 73% of South Carolina public high school students in the 2025 graduation cohort were career ready.
- 1 in 5 of SC students were chronically absent, meaning they missed 18 or more days in a school year.

The EOC’s [Expect More SC website](#) provides in-depth explanation to help parents, teachers and community members understand Report Card ratings and indicators. 



*“We are happy to acknowledge the EOC’s recent approval of the SC tiered credential system. As the system is fully implemented, we expect it will better prepare high school students for successful career paths and increase the ‘credential currency’ they leave high school with. By using data informed decisions, the EOC is committed to continuing to strengthen the accountability system to include measures that will better prepare students for the next step following graduation.”*

**April Allen, EOC Chairperson,  
2025 School Report Card News Conference**

## EOC In The News:



[Report cards released for South Carolina schools](#)

- SC Public Radio

[More SC students are graduating, but many aren’t ready for life after high school](#)

- SC Daily Gazette





## PROMOTING PROGRESS

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

## 2026-27 EIA Budget Recommendations

As required by state law, the EOC annually provides budget recommendations to the SC General Assembly that focus on the revenues generated by the one-cent sales tax, the **Education Improvement Act (EIA)**.

The EOC's budget recommendations for FY 2026-27 prioritize increasing teacher salaries and emphasize a needed return on investment for teacher recruitment programs.



The **Education Improvement Act** is one of several major steps South Carolina has taken to reform and improve its system of public education.

# 2026-27 EIA Budget Recommendations

## Teacher Recruitment and Salaries:

- A \$640,000 increase for the Teaching Fellows scholarship program to fund 20 additional four-year scholarships.
- A \$1,756,000 increase for the Teaching Fellows scholarship program to fund a \$4,000 increase in the current scholarship amount of \$6,000 for juniors and seniors in the program.
- An increase in special schools' teacher salaries of \$650,454, with remaining dollars going to the EIA line that funds all teacher salaries.

## Recurring Fund Recommendations:

- Teacher Career Ladder- \$1,400,000 million recurring funds
- Instructional Materials- \$10,000,000
- Instructional Support- \$77,526,384
- Project Read- \$250,000
- SC Council in Economics- \$150,000



## EOC In The News:

[Committee recommends boosted teacher pay, improving recruitment programs in South Carolina](#)

- WLTX

## Nonrecurring Fund Recommendations:

- School Safety- \$5,000,000

The EOC recommended the following decreases in recurring funding, citing a decrease in participants:

- A \$5,000,000 decrease to National Board

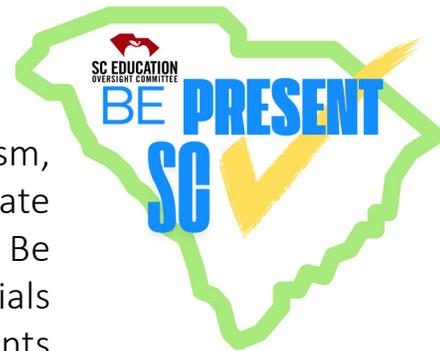
In addition, the Committee passed revisions to several provisos relating to the Teacher Loan Program Revolving Fund and a request that school districts participating in the EOC 4K Waitlist Pilot not be required to complete a student waitlist survey. EOC members also presented concerns on the low number of teachers produced from EIA-funded teacher recruitment programs, with the exception of Teaching Fellows which produced 177 teachers last fiscal year.



# Be Present S.C.™

The EOC's public awareness campaign to promote excellent attendance

After learning about the negative effects of chronic absenteeism, the Education Oversight Committee directed EOC staff to create a public awareness campaign promoting excellent attendance. Be Present S.C. messaging, parent resources, and campaign materials were created with the goal to raise awareness and help parents and students make school attendance a priority.



## 78 Be Present S.C. Partner Schools

- Be Present S.C. Partner Schools were asked to display Be Present S.C. materials, provide parents with resources, and encourage students to take the Be Present S.C. Pledge.



## 6.7K Be Present S.C. Pledge Takers

*"It is important that I go to school so that I can learn and achieve. I will do my very best to be at school everyday. I pledge to Be Present S.C.!"*

## 36+ Be Present S.C. Partner Libraries

**EOC In The News:**  
**[SC to launch campaign aimed at boosting school attendance](#)**

**- WISTV**

- 36+ libraries from across the state signed up to participate in Be Present S.C. to display posters and resources for students and parents.

## Be Present S.C. Timeline

### April 2024

EOC member Melanie Barton convenes a meeting on chronic absenteeism at the Governor’s office.

### June 2024

EOC staff asked to research chronic absenteeism. Over the next three months, students are recruited to participate in a focus group.

### Dec. 2024 - March 2025

Focus group report presented to EOC full committee. Report featured on news media. EOC requests that EOC staff do a parent focus group. Parent and student surveys carried out to inform upcoming public awareness campaign. Messaging developed.

### April 2025

Eleven Be Present S.C. Partner Schools selected and invited to participate in campaign based on chronic absenteeism data.

### June 2025

Be Present S.C. presentation at SCASA i3 conference. More schools express interest and are invited to participate in the campaign.

### July 2025

Be Present S.C. school campaign kicks off in 31 schools! Over the next six months, a total of 78 schools will join.

### January 2026

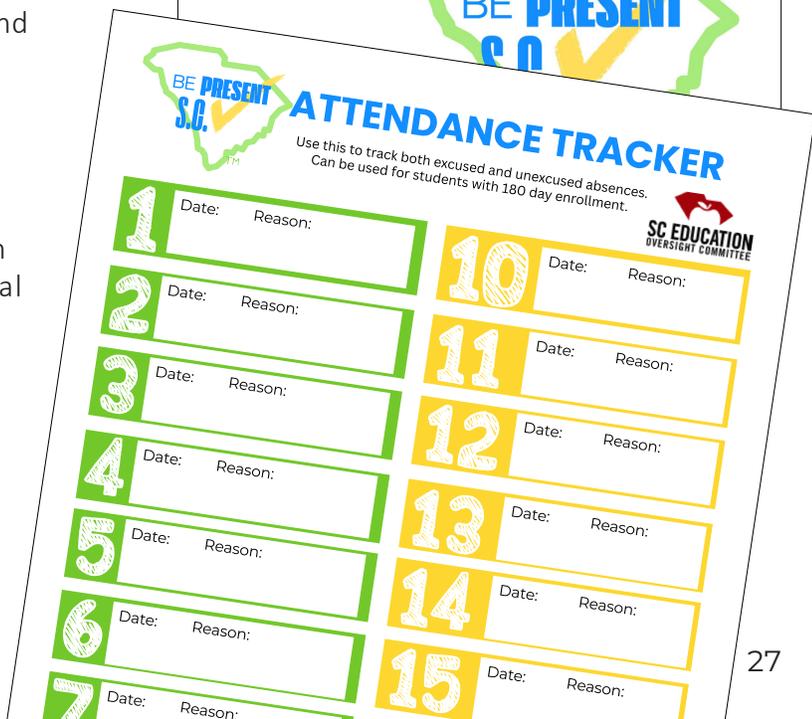
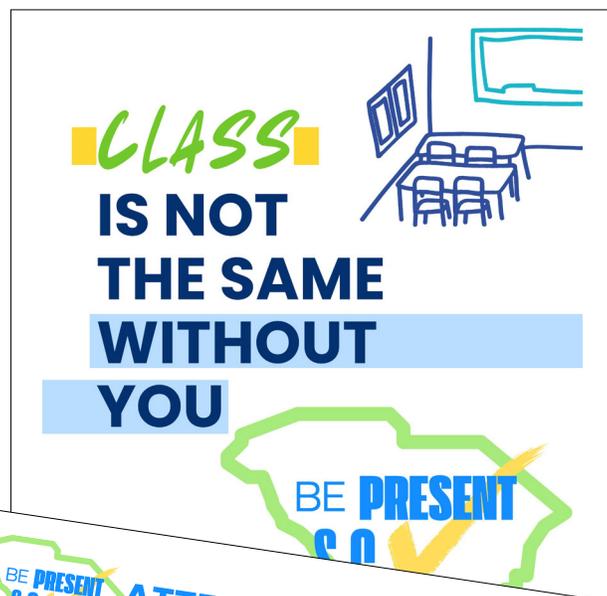
Thirty-six libraries across the state joined Be Present S.C., displaying posters and resources in their various branches.

“For the 2023-24 school year, only 37% of SC students who were chronically absent were on grade level for English Language Arts compared to 57.8% of their peers. Attendance matters!”

### EOC In The News:

**Editorial: Students won’t learn if they aren’t in school. SC has a plan to get them back.**

**- Post and Courier**





## Data Trailblazers 2025

### An EOC Initiative Celebrating Schools that Use Data to Promote Progress for Students

The EOC prioritizes encouraging the continuous progress of schools and students. Utilizing data to help achieve this goal is essential, and the EOC instituted **Data Trailblazers** to recognize schools that do so. The EOC announced the following 2025 recipients of the first Data Trailblazer awards:

**HB Rhame Elementary School** (Richland County School District 1)

**Glenview Middle School** (Anderson School District 5)

**Fort Dorchester High School** (Dorchester School District 2)

Award recipients were selected by judges for demonstrating how they successfully used data to improve student outcomes, helped families and caregivers understand student data, maintained a culture of school-wide data informed decision making, and incorporated practices that prioritized data privacy.

The principals of each awarded school attended an EOC full committee meeting to present how their school uses data to promote student achievement. Each was presented an award and a congratulatory letter from South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster.



*The challenge in education is not the lack of data, it's the lack of a clear system to make the data actionable and personalized for every student. Our school has transformed data into action primarily through the SWARM program... Data is the GPS for every student's academic journey.*

*- Glenview Middle School Digital Integration Specialist Ashley Pursley*



#### A Data Trailblazer school...

- ▶ **Assists educators** in accessing, interpreting, and communicating data while demonstrating improved student outcomes.
- ▶ **Helps families and caregivers** interpret their student's grades and assessment scores – and use that knowledge to help their student achieve academic success.
- ▶ **Establishes and maintains** a culture of school-wide data informed decision making with a goal of improved student outcomes.
- ▶ **Incorporates practices and policies** that prioritize data privacy and ensure school staff are adequately trained in data security and privacy standards.

#### EOC In The News:

**Fort Dorchester High School named 2025 Data Trailblazer by state committee**



**- Post and Courier**

# The EOC's 4K Waitlist Pilot

In April 2025, the EOC issued a report to illustrate the functional utility of the existing waitlist policies and practices related to offering children and families on a State-funded 4K waitlist with a different State-funded 4K opportunity. This research addressed the following questions:

- How are waitlists functioning?
- How many children are on waitlists instead of accessing 4K?
- What points of opportunity exist to ensure children are not spending time on waitlists when the school year is in session?
- Where should different practices be piloted?

This research primarily focused on CERDEP state-funded 4K programs

An important finding was that over the past four years, there are typically more than 800 open seats in First Steps 4K with 219 eligible four-year-olds on a CERDEP 4K waitlist. This suggests that most if not all of the children waiting for a spot at a school district could access the same quality early childhood standards, assessments and curricula in a private setting at no cost if they so choose.

Current waitlist practices require the local school district to submit student information to SCDE by September 1st annually. SCDE will then share this information with First Steps State Office and enrollment specialists will reach out to eligible families. Historically, this practice results in zero children being enrolled in First Steps 4K from the waitlist statewide.

## *EOC's Waitlist Pilot:*

EOC staff designed a pilot with support from SCDE and First Steps State Office with the goal of increasing access to the 4K opportunity to families waiting for 4K. First Steps refers to this pilot as “Filling the Seats” pilot and EOC staff is thankful for the district partners at Lexington 1 and Aiken School Districts, and State level leadership at SCDE and First Steps. The initial pilot resulted in over 20 children from 2 pilot districts being enrolled in First Steps 4K as a result of different and more frequent communication practices.

Instead of communicating with SCDE once annually, participating pilot districts shared information for families on the waitlist directly with First Steps State Office once weekly from July through September 1st. First Steps enrollment specialists reached out to families waiting for a spot, who then selected the best First Steps setting for their child or remained on the district waitlist. This practice was more successful in two districts enrolling children who would otherwise miss an opportunity they are entitled to, than the previous communication practices across the state over years. This pilot will be perfected and expanded in the next year.

*CERDEP 4K: administered by local school districts with compliance and oversight managed by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)*

*First Steps 4K: delivered in private child care settings, funded by the state, with compliance and oversight managed by the First Steps State Office.*



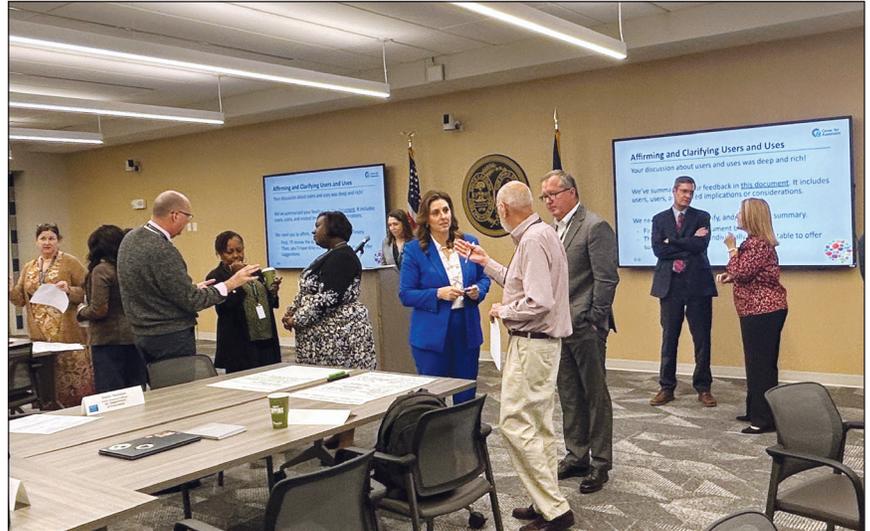
# 2025 Cyclical Review of South Carolina's Public Education Accountability System

## Legislative Directive:

Starting in 2020, the Education Oversight Committee, working with the State Board of Education and a broad group of stakeholders, were charged with reviewing the state accountability system a minimum of every five years. The Committee must report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly to improve the system and support better student and school performance.

Participants included the State Superintendent of Education, the Governor's designee, as well as parents, business leaders, community members, and educators.

The review included recommendations for how to determine whether students are graduating with the skills and career readiness described in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.



## South Carolina's Public Education Accountability System

"It is the purpose of the General Assembly ... to establish a performance-based accountability system for public education which focuses on improving teaching and learning so that students are equipped with a strong academic foundation. Accountability ... means acceptance of the responsibility for improving student performance and taking actions to improve classroom practices and school performance."

- Education Accountability Act

## The Accountability Advisory Committee:

The purpose of the Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC) was, in partnership with the EOC, to make recommendations to inform the work of State leaders working to continuously improve the design and implementation of South Carolina's school accountability system, while ensuring the system complies with federal and state requirements.

## The Process:

The AAC convened remotely in April 2025 for an orientation webinar to learn about the cyclical review process, the current South Carolina accountability system, and requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). In the following meetings, the primary focus of the AAC's work was to identify educational policy priorities, review key requirements and elements of the current accountability system, and, if deemed necessary, recommend changes to the accountability system.

## Recommendations:

### *Indicators*

- Explore alternatives for incentivizing test participation.
- Study the impact of student progress with respect to prior performance.
- Promote accurate understanding and use of student progress scores.
- Adjust the relative weight of the multilingual learner progress indicator.
- Examine whether the testing window can be expanded.
- Enhance reporting of multilingual learners' progress.
- Explore approaches to increase the influence of the employability credential.
- Recognize the Seal of Biliteracy in the college and career readiness indicator.
- Strengthen reporting on college and career readiness.
- Engage in ongoing research to validate and improve the college and career readiness indicators.
- Study alternatives for a more comprehensive and balanced assessment system.



### *Aggregation and Identification*

- Explore alternatives to create a more coherent and streamlined set of accountability designations.
- Review and potentially revise accountability performance standards.
- Adjust the relative weight of accountability indicators.

### *Reporting and Communication*

- Continue to invest in dashboards and data visualizations with a goal of enabling a wide variety of users to access, understand, and use the available information.
- Produce ancillary report materials and professional development to ensure that users can understand and use the information in the reports as intended.

### *Resources and Supports*

- Continue to route school improvement activities through district offices.
- Conduct research to look for shared characteristics of schools with federal support designations and those that exit such designations.
- The State should seek partnerships with institutions of higher education, parents, and community members, and others in efforts to continuously improve its support model.

# Cyclical Review of South Carolina’s College-and-Career-Ready Social Studies Standards

## Legislative Directive:

The South Carolina Education Accountability Act **requires the Education Oversight Committee to regularly review state standards and assessments by subject area** to ensure high expectations for teaching and learning. Each subject must be reviewed and updated at least once every seven years. After a review, a report with recommended changes is submitted to the Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education for approval. Once approved, the recommendations may be implemented.

## The Social Studies Standards Panel:

The Social Studies standards state panel consisted of 34 individuals from across South Carolina. The panel consisted of parents, social studies teachers, English Language Learner and exceptional education teachers, students, community members, and business representatives. The national panel consisted of seven social studies national experts.

## Panel Key Recommendations:

- The alignment guides are more concise, specific and more easily understood than the standards themselves.
- The content is appropriate overall.
- The introduction of civics and government in the early grades is essential for instilling values about civic participation.
- South Carolina and United States history content is rich and complex.
- The standards are informed by content and skills in national standards, especially in history.
- Standards reflect many of the ideas encouraged by national professional groups.
- The format of the social studies standards is consistent across grades.

## EOC Key Recommendations:

- Consider support of the removal of the State budget proviso that suspends the testing of social studies in grades 3-8 to promote the teaching of social studies and civics education.
- The expectations for students to “think like a historian” or “to interpret like an economist” are worthy goals, but are not developmentally appropriate in most grades. Instead, students in the early grades should learn the knowledge experts draw upon such as maps, stories, and timelines, then use that knowledge in the middle grades to describe cause and effect, and continuity and changes, and finally in high school, to reason like experts by analyzing evidence and evaluating interpretations.
- A strong alignment document to assist teachers in the teaching of the social studies standards is needed and should be incorporated into the standards. Greater alignment between the two documents would prove to be beneficial to teachers. The suggestion is to look at Kentucky’s social studies standards.

# EOC Strategic Plan

## Summary of Strategies and Objectives

### *Strategy I: Report Facts*

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

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

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

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

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

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

### *Strategy II: Measure Change*

**Objective D:** Align system-wide (Pre-K–12) accountability measures with characteristics of College and Career Readiness (CCR).

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

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

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

**Objective F:** Identify and reward school accountability success.

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

### *Strategy III: Promote Progress*

**Objective G:** Clarify the role of the Education Oversight Committee as the authority in Pre-K–12 school accountability.

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

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

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

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

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





1205 Pendleton Street  
Room 502 Brown Building  
Columbia, SC 29201  
[www.eoc.sc.gov](http://www.eoc.sc.gov)



*The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is an independent, nonpartisan group of 18 educators, business people, and elected officials appointed by the legislature and governor. The EOC enacts the South Carolina Education Accountability Act of 1998, which sets standards for improving the state's K-12 educational system. The EOC reviews the state's education improvement process, assesses how schools are doing, and evaluates the standards schools must meet to build the education system needed to compete in this century.*