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Measuring Change.

Promoting Progress.

SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

2025

Annual Report

EOC Members and Staff

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

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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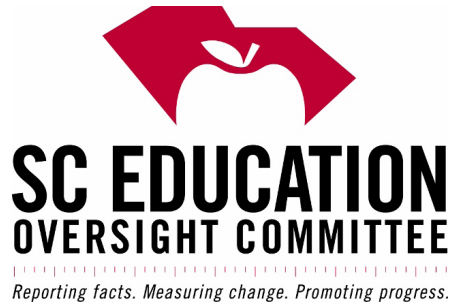
Who we are:

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.

CONTENTS

Greetings,

Thank you for taking the time to review the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee's 2025 Annual Report.

The EOC's mission is to encourage the continuous improvement of South Carolina's public education system. We fulfill this through overseeing the state's accountability system, providing Education Improvement Act (EIA) budget recommendations, conducting in-depth annual reports on state-funded programs, and helping to inform education policy.

This year's annual report highlights the work of our committee to achieve the above mission. In this report, you will find updates on the EOC's Education Data Dashboard – an initiative of the 2022-23 Appropriations Act which required the EOC to "interface with existing systems to provide school districts, schools, policymakers, families and the public with meaningful information on school district, school, and system progress." We were pleased to update our pre-K dashboard data to provide better insight into early childhood education.

This report also includes the EOC's findings and recommendations for the SC Teacher Loan Program, the Education Scholarship Trust Fund, the Rural Recruitment Incentive Initiative, the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children program, the report on SC Military Connected Students, and the Child Early Reading and Development Education Program. It is our hope that these summaries will provide the reader with a deeper understanding on the specific issue addressed in each report as well as give actionable steps that can be taken for efficiency and improvement.

As noted during this year's report card release, one in five SC students were chronically absent during the 2022-23 school year. After the negative impact this caused to student achievement was brought to the attention of education officials, the EOC was asked to look into chronic absenteeism. This report includes a summary of the EOC's assessment of the issue and future plans to help change public perception on student attendance.

We are also pleased to highlight in this report the recipients of our first annual Data Trailblazers Award. This award recognized schools that successfully used data to improve student outcomes. We were excited to acknowledge the hard work of those teachers and students.

Each of the reports highlighted in this year's annual report are available in their entirety on the EOC website 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.
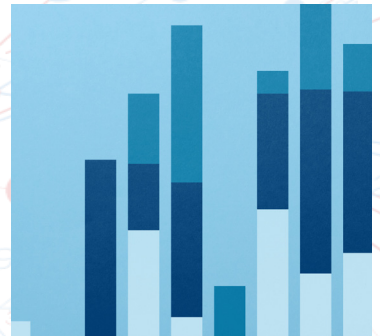
Best Regards,

April Allen

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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2025 Annual Report
Year in Review

Analyses, Updates, and Program Summaries from March 2024 to February 2025

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.

2024-2025 Highlights
EOC Data Analytics

• The EOC's Education Data Dashboard (dashboardsc.sc.gov) was updated for speed and enhancements to improve user experience and ease of access.

• EOC data analytics staff began work with the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) on pre-accountability dashboards for schools and districts to support continuous improvement, data quality, and transparency in the accountability process.

• A Report Card Simulator was launched to help schools and districts anticipate report card ratings and support continuous improvement on behalf of students.

• The EOC continued to support schools and districts using Clearinghouse data, with key points visualized on the Education Data Dashboard. The EOC also began securely sharing Clearinghouse data with other agencies to help support SC citizens and support the SC Unified State Plan for Education and Workforce Development.

• EOC staff refined and improved the EIA data submission process, allowing the necessary time for more nuanced analyses of EIA program efficacy.

• EOC staff improved internal processes and documentation to ensure continued operations across data systems and support preservation of necessary data and processes across years.

In the 2022-23 Appropriations Act, the EOC was directed to pilot an **Education Data Dashboard**.

The EOC was able to utilize existing state resources through using a shared service model for the dashboard website.

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National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker Data Files

The EOC has again made National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker Data Files accessible for SC public high schools in a secure portal. The files provide data on college enrollment, persistence, and completion within six years.

In 2022, The SC Education Oversight Committee purchased access to the National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker data giving SC public high schools access to graduation and enrollment data from the nearly 3,600 colleges and universities that participate in the Clearinghouse system, covering 97 percent of two-year and four-year colleges in the country. This allowed for the suspension of the college freshman reporting requirements of Section 59-101-130 of the South Carolina Code of Laws.
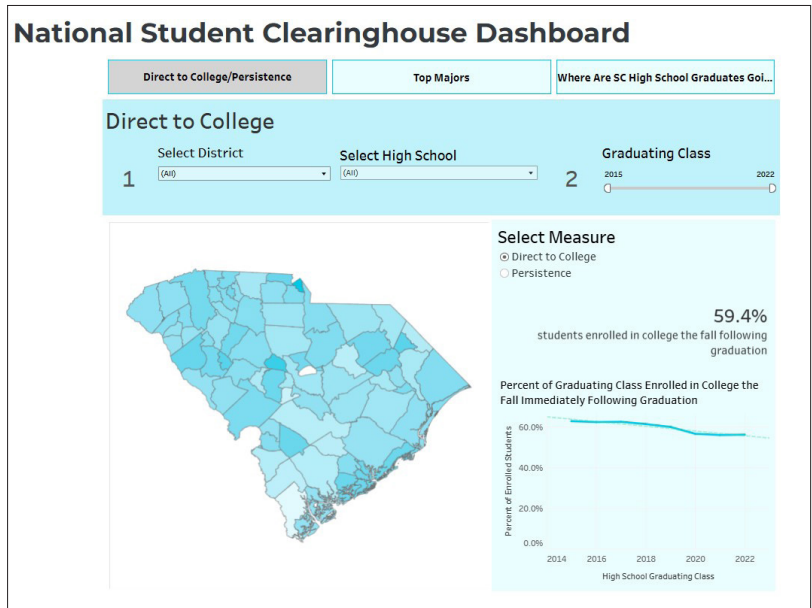
Interactive Map Showing Percentage of 2024 Overall Excellent or Good Ratings for Schools

This year, an interactive map showing the percentage of schools by county with Excellent or Good overall ratings was made available for use at Expect More SC (expectmoresc.com).

The map enables users to view the percentage of schools rated Excellent or Good by school district, county, SC House districts and SC Senate districts.

An Excellent or Good overall rating indicates the school's performance substantially exceeds or exceeds the criteria to meet the Profile of the SC Graduate – which focuses on developing world class knowledge, skills, and life and career characteristics.

Overall ratings for the 2023-24 school report cards are as follows: 232 schools received an overall rating of Excellent, 316 schools received Good, 477 schools received Average, 187 schools received Below Average and 49 schools received Unsatisfactory.

Visit Expect More SC for more information on SC School Report Cards.
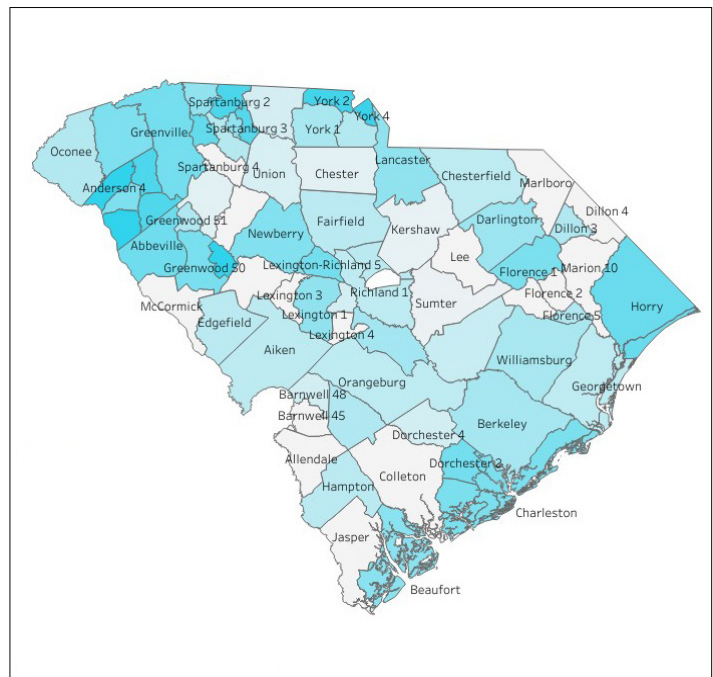
EOC Report Summaries

SC Teacher Loan Program (TLP) Report - 2022-23

Statute directs the EOC to perform an annual review of the SC Teacher Loan Program (TLP) and report to the General Assembly.

The TLP was authorized by the South Carolina General Assembly as part of the Education Improvement Act of 1984 and is a financial incentive program offering forgivable loans for the express purpose of encouraging talented and qualified state residents to enter the teaching profession in academic and/or geographic areas of critical need.

The full TLP annual report is at https://eoc.sc.gov/policy-makers under "Teacher Loan Program"

Findings and Recommendations on TLP Governance

TLP operations, funding and governance are stagnant.

- Direct the Teacher Loan Advisory Council to perform a critical review of the TLP's core components using the EOC's 2022-23 TLP Report.
- Perform a critical assessment of alignment, parity, and effectiveness between the TLP and other teacher recruitment initiatives.

Findings and Recommendations on Funding

The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) includes monies collected by the SC Student Loan Corporation from individuals who do not qualify for cancellation. Since 2018 the balance in this account has increased from $8,695,425 to $20,935,219.

- Direct RLF monies to refinancing student loan debt for certified teachers employed in SC public schools. Monies will also be directed to teachers for loan forgiveness in districts based on the number of teacher vacancies and/or the number of teachers of record uncertified in the subject area in which they are teaching.

Findings and Recommendations on TLP Data Collection and Quality

Data collection and reporting processes are labor-intensive, paper driven and include self-reported measures on some of the more significant data points. Disparate and loosely defined metrics used in the program reports make measuring impact and effectiveness challenging.

No data was available to evaluate or assess the percentage of individuals who receive TLP loans and teach in SC.

- Streamline and simplify the TLP application process and EIA Annual Program Report formats, aligning with agency reporting to CHE to the extent possible (i.e., to facilitate a clearer understanding of a program's purpose, deliverables, and cost/benefit; to identify/track progress, deliverables, data, and financials.).

Findings and Recommendations on the Teacher Pipeline

Sources of teacher hires: Alternative certification programs and international teacher hires are the only sources that have increased within the past year.

African Americans in the SC teaching force: 8.9% of Type 1 and Type 2 loan recipients were African American, which is lower than the 15.3% 2021-22 SC Teacher Workforce figure.

Males in the SC teaching force: 19.2% of TLP applications were from males, which is slightly less than the SC-TEACH Workforce figure for SC (19.6%). The male application representation falls below the 23% of males in the 2020-21 national educator workforce.

Research institutions enrollment numbers: The University of South Carolina has seen a 28% decrease from 2014 to 2023 in the number of enrollments in its bachelor level education program while Clemson University has seen a 57% increase; however, It should also be noted that in 2014, USC had more than double the bachelor level education enrollments of Clemson University.

Teacher Cadets continue to provide a significant source of TLP recipients: 51% of TLP loan recipients were Teacher Cadets.

- Assign responsibility to school districts to invest in their district's Teacher Pipeline.
- Increase focus on early teacher pipeline initiatives (e.g., ProTeam, Teacher Cadets, graduates with college and/or career readiness credentials), Bridge programs, etc.
- Rethink/reorganize Teacher Recruitment initiatives to clarify intent, identify and establish best practices and effective pipelines; establish common metrics and reporting requirements to be used for measurable results.
- Develop a cohesive, statewide and district level teacher recruitment strategy with specific goals and expectations for each component of the teacher pipeline.

EOC Report Summaries

Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF) Parental Survey Report

Pursuant to Proviso 59-8-110 (E), the EOC 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.

The full ESTF annual report is at https://eoc.sc.gov/policy-makers under "Education Scholarship Trust Fund"

Act 8 of 2023 was implemented in June 2023 to provide guidelines and evaluation of the South Carolina Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF) program beginning with the 2024-25 school year. Eligible students for ESTF are South Carolina residents who have attended a public school during the 2023-24 school year or had not yet been kindergarten-eligible due to age, and whose household income does not exceed 200% federal poverty rate. Eligible students approved to participate in the program could access a $6,000 scholarship distributed on a quarterly basis in the amount of $1,500 to be used on qualifying expenses approved by the (SCDE). On September 11, 2024 the SC Supreme Court ruled that tuition and fees for an approved non-public online Education Service Provider or course was found to be unconstitutional. On September 11, 2024 the SCDE halted use of ESTF funds for this use.

General Findings from the EOC's ESTF Parental Survey Report:

Survey responses from 243 parents/caregivers of ESTF participants yielded several findings. When participants were unsatisfied, it was often the result of how the program was implemented or changes related to policy as a result of outside influences. Dissatisfied participants also expressed frustration that initially accepted students were not able to use funds — either because they were never eligible due to age or enrollment in resident public school, or were rejected due to challenges with vendors not being approved. Satisfied survey respondents expressed the program supported their child and that access to the financial assistance was a huge benefit.

Respondents were also asked if they experienced a disruption in educational services funded by ESTF this year. This item was not completed by all potential respondents, but of the 178 who did, 37% reported yes, and the same amount reported no. Forty-five, or 25% of respondents reported that they did not yet experience a disruption, but they might. Of those who reported they may experience a disruption, most reported that was a result of the Supreme Court decision and changes to what ESTF funds could be used for. Another frequent topic that respondents listed for experiencing or anticipating a disruption was due to the eligibility requirement to not be enrolled in a school district of residency, when funds were distributed and families were approved in the first quarter.

EOC's Recommendations:

Prioritize Communication of Program Eligibility and Participation Requirements:

Despite efforts to communicate the requirements for participation in the ESTF program, many parents reported not being told they must attend a program outside of their school zone of residence. Several families who would be ineligible due to previously participating in private school or homeschool settings, and students in college were initially approved to participate and later unable to access funds for second quarter. Being removed from the program was illustrated to be more problematic than not being approved to begin with.

Confirm Eligibility Before Funds are Released on July 31st First Quarter Payment:

In accordance with Section 59-8-120 (E) it is recommended that SCDE confirm eligibility of enrollment in non-residential school, at the time of approval before quarter one payments (on or before July 31st) instead of accepting applicants and waiting to verify. This will ensure families accessing funds are eligible and won't experience a termination when eligibility cannot be confirmed.

EOC Report Summaries

Rural Recruitment Initiative (RRI) Funds Evaluation Report

The Education Oversight Committee is required by Proviso 1A.45 to complete an evaluation of the impact of the funds and incentives related to the Rural Teacher Recruiting Initiative. A completed evaluation is due to the House Ways and Means Committee, the House Education Committee, the Senate Finance Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the Governors Office no later than December 15 of the current fiscal year. This year's report was published in Dec. 2024.

Governor Nikki Haley's Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16 recommended the establishment of a Rural Teacher Recruiting Initiative with an initial allocation of $1.5 million from Education Improvement Act (EIA) revenues. This funding was intended to address the critical need for recruiting and retaining educators in areas facing high teacher turnover.

The full RRI annual report is at eoc. sc.gov/policy-makers under "Rural Recruitment Initiative"

General Findings from the EOC's RRI Report:

Forty-two rural SC districts met the eligibility requirements for RRI funds in 2023-24. The most frequently used incentives were recruitment expenses, mentoring/induction, certification support, alternative certification, and international teachers. Listening sessions with districts were scheduled by The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement with RRI districts in the spring and fall of 2024. EOC staff participated in the fall sessions. The following themes emerged:

- Several districts said they were still heavily using international teachers in relatively large percentages when reviewed against the total teaching positions in a district with percentages as high as 41%, 26%, 22% and 16%.

- In the fall, many of the districts reported zero (0) vacancies for 2024-25 while other districts reported small numbers of vacancies. Special education positions seemed to still be a challenge for some districts.

- Several districts reported they used website upgrade funds for regular maintenance of their websites, not necessarily for teacher recruitment purposes.

EOC's Recommendations:

Expand the Evaluation Effectiveness of Current Incentives:

Several incentives should be further analyzed to see if they contribute to teacher recruitment and/or retention. These incentives include recruitment expenses and website updates. Districts stated in the survey results they utilized website upgrades as general maintenance expenses, not necessarily targeting teacher recruitment. In analyzing available data, recruitment fair expenses often did not yield positive results for districts.

Facilitate Collaborative Analysis for Strategic Refinement:

EOC staff will continue to work with SC TEACHER to analyze data regarding the incentives as they relate to teacher recruitment and retention. SC TEACHER should have access to the 2023-24 data from the SCDE in the coming weeks; additional data will strengthen the data infrastructure and allow districts and policymakers to make recommendations and decisions using ROI data.

Implement Data-Driven Decision Making on Strategy Implementation:

The EOC, SCDE, CERRA, and SC TEACHER should regularly meet to continue analysis of the available data in an effort to refine the recommendations. It is recommended that this report be revised at fiscal year 2026.

Develop a Training Model for Districts:

A training model should be developed for districts that receive RRI funds to provide them with the strategies that would work best for each district using their individual data.

Empower Districts with Long-Term Planning Tools:

Districts should have their individual district data to develop individual long-term plans for the most effective use of incentives funds such as pairing strategies for maximum benefit. An example might be mentoring/induction and professional development.

EOC Report Summaries

Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children (ECENC) Program Report

Act 247 of 2018 requires the Education Oversight Committee to issue a report to the General Assembly documenting the impact of the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Program (ECENC) on student achievement. The report must include information on individual schools if at least 51% of the total enrolled students in the private school participated in the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children Program in the prior school year. The report must be according to each participating private school and for participating students, in which there are at least 30 participating students who have scores for tests administered.

General Findings from the EOC's ECENC Report:

1,460 students (253 new and 1,207 incumbent) participated in the ECENC program in 2022-23, and nearly 68% of the scholarship recipients are from households earning $100,000 or more annually.

Approximately 23% of ECENC recipients are from households earning $50,000 through $100,000, which is an increase in this household income range from last year. Approximately 8% are from households earning $50,000 or less annually. This data has been collected from the Department of Revenue and the full report published January 2024 can be seen in the appendix of the full report.

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.

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. Exceptional SC is a 501 (c)(3) that raises and accepts funds and reviews student grant applications for an ECENC grant.

The full ECENC annual report is at eoc. sc.gov/ecenc-program under "ECENC Reports"

EOC's Recommendations:

Several recommendations made in previous EOC reports still remain relevant in the evaluation of the ECENC program.

Convene the Advisory Committee of the ECENC:

Act 247 requires that the EOC establishes an advisory committee and states that the advisory committee shall:

1. Consult with the EOC concerning requests for exemptions from the curriculum requirements
2. Provide recommendations on matters requested by the EOC

This advisory committee, Department of Education, EOC, and/or the Department of Revenue may not regulate the educational program of an independent school that accepts students receiving scholarship grants pursuant to Act 247, however the committee is required and a meeting was held in June 2024. Members have agreed to meet and will: clarify the responsibilities of the Advisory Committee, hear from the SC Department of Education about implementation of the Education Scholarship Trust Fund, and determine next steps. The work of this committee and future steps will be provided in future ECENC Reports.

Offer Summative State Assessments to ECENC Students in Public Schools:

South Carolina students in private schools are not currently offered the opportunity to participate in South Carolina State Assessments. Examples of these assessments include SC-READY and End of Course (EOC) examinations. In the 2020-21, and 2021-22 ECENC Reports, a recommendation was made to allow students in private schools to participate in these assessments, and while that has not yet come to fruition, offering these examinations to students participating in the ECENC program would offer an assessment opportunity to determine ECENC program impact. It remains the recommendation of the EOC that ECENC funded students be offered the opportunity to participate in state summative assessments.

Consider Communication Around the ECENC Program and Other Scholarships:

Because the Educational Scholarship Trust Fund is in the first year of implementation and cannot be used in conjunction with ECENC funds by an individual student, it is the recommendation of the EOC to: 1. Remain informed about the implementation of the ESTF, and 2. Monitor if communication around the separate programs should be developed and distributed to prevent confusion. The EOC is involved in the evaluation of ESTF funds, per statute.

EOC Report Summaries

Report on Military-Connected Students in SC

In 2014, the General Assembly passed Act 289, the Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act to "enhance many quality of life issues for members of the armed forces" (Act 289 Preamble). **Part V requests the SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to develop an annual report on the educational performance of military-connected students.**

The full Military-Connected annual report is at https://eoc.sc.gov/policy-makers under "Military-Connected Students"

General Findings from the EOC's Military-Connected Report:

- The population of military-connected students within the past five years, from the 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 school year, has increased by 20%.

- During the 2022-2023 school year, 45.34% of military-connected students demonstrated readiness for the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment compared to 37.96% of non military-connected students.

- During the school year, military-connected students out-performed all students state-wide on End of Course exams in Algebra 1, English 2, Biology 1 and United States History and the Constitution.

- For the report, graduation rates were calculated from the graduation cohort base file for the 2022-2023 school year. The graduation rate of military-connected students was 93% compared to 83% of non military-connected students.

- During the 2022-2023 school year, military connected students were more likely to score Meets or Exceeds in Mathematics, ELA and Science.

- Due to the lack of a uniform Military Student Identifier collection protocol at the national level, states experience the inability to accurately capture and report data on military-connected students. Until processes are in place to identify military-connected students, the accuracy of reporting will continue to create ongoing reporting challenges; this reinforces the need for policies to formalize a standard MSI protocol.

EOC's Recommendations:

- Monitor the increase of military-connected students in SC schools, especially those who have experienced loss or trauma. Work with school-based liaisons and health professionals with specialized training to both identify these students and effectively support them.

- Work to incentivize school-based reporting of military-connected students within school district student information systems; better data quality will allow state policymakers to make decisions using better data.

- In collaboration with the SC Department of Veterans Affairs, include military-connected students as a filter on the SC Education Data Dashboard, allowing the general public to see data related to this student group. By surfacing the data visually, districts who currently do not report will be incentivized to change internal practices to improve data collection and quality.

EOC Report Summaries

State-Funded Full-Day 4K Annual Report 2022-23 & 2023-24

Pursuant to Provisos 1.48 and 1A.26, the EOC must report on the Child Early Reading and Development Education Program (CERDEP) using data from public and private providers. The EOC must utilize the data to create a research-based review of the programs implementation and assessment of student success in the early elementary grades along with information, recommendations, and a timeline for how the state can increase the number served in high-quality programs.

General Findings from the EOC's CERDEP Report:

- 57,804 Kindergarten students enrolled at the start of the 2023-24 school year. Of these students, 34,878 (60%) were considered Pupils in Poverty.

- Pupils in poverty who participate in full-day, state-funded 4K via CERDEP programming are more likely to Demonstrate Readiness (37%) on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) than pupils in poverty who did not participate in CERDEP (27%).

- Students with disabilities who participated in CERDEP scored Demonstrating Readiness at higher percentages (19%) that the average of students with disabilities (17%) demonstrating readiness.

- In the 2022-23 school year, 17,070 children participated in CERDEP (85% of these participants were pupils in poverty). In the same school year, 21,385 potentially eligible students did not participate in CERDEP.

- $106,698,962 was spent on 4K for the 20022-23 Fiscal Year, which is the largest investment to date.

CERDEP is the inclusive term for full-day, programs for four-year-olds administered by the SC Department of Education (SCDE) and the Office of First Steps (SCFS) funded by the state of South Carolina. It includes public schools, non-profit independent schools and childcare centers who adhere to program and quality requirements for CERDEP funding and serve eligible four-year-olds.

The full CERDEP annual report is at https://eoc.sc.gov/policy-makers under "Early Childhood"

EOC's Recommendations:

Expand Opportunities for CERDEP Access and Participation:

According to Rutgers University's National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) in May 2023, South Carolina ranked 11th nationally in access to 4K. While this national comparison is relatively high, there are still more than 11,000 students in poverty unserved by CERDEP or any other 4K program at low or no cost to parents.

Fund Additional CERDEP 4K Programs:

South Carolina ranks 37th in state spending and 40th overall in all total pre-K spending (state, federal, and local sources). Investing in additional classrooms will increase access and investment, and improve our national ranking.

Incentivize CERDEP Participation for Private Childcare Providers:

There are approximately 11,000 children who could access free full-day 4K and would benefit from increased opportunities. To facilitate provider recruitment efforts, it is recommended that a supplemental study be completed to identify potential incentives that would entice additional private providers to participate in First Steps 4K programming.

Use Waitlists Differently to Increase Enrollment Efficiency:

EOC staff conducted research to gain better understanding of the policies, procedures, and processes at the state, district, and school level for placing children on waitlists for pre-K programs. The findings from this research will be used for the EOC to convene all stakeholders to best determine the needed supports so that all eligible children can find 4K opportunities more efficiently.

MEASURING CHANGE

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

2024 SC School Report Card Background and Summary

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

The accountability system, which is 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 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.

During the 2024 school year, South Carolina public schools saw a slight increase in the number of students on grade level for English Language Arts and Math. Also, 44% of South Carolina public schools received an overall rating of Excellent or Good.

Areas of needed improvement noted by the EOC include closing the gap between SC's on-time graduation rate and the low percentage of students who are college-or-career ready, along with decreasing the state's chronic absenteeism rate which was at 22.5%.

SC School Report Cards are available at www.screportcards.com, and provide insights into student performance and school quality for the 2023-2024 school year.

The EOC's Expect More SC website provides indepth explanation to help parents, teachers and community members understand report card ratings and indicators.

Number and Percentage of Schools Receiving Overall Ratings by School Year:

Overall Ratings	Elementary Schools		Middle Schools		High Schools	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Excellent	161 (24.1%)	124 (18%)	70 (20.8%)	43 (12%)	48 (20.3%)	63 (25%)
Good	161 (24.1%)	187 (28%)	97 (28.9%)	87 (25%)	46 (19.4%)	42 (17%)
Average	240 (36.0%)	250 (37%)	134 (39.9%)	158 (46%)	68 (28.7%)	69 (27%)
Below Average	80 (12.0%)	86 (13%)	30 (8.9%)	44 (13%)	45 (19.0%)	56 (22%)
Unsatisfactory	25 (3.7%)	25 (4%)	5 (1.5%)	8 (2%)	30 (12.7%)	14 (6%)
Number of Report Cards	667	672	336	340	237	244

Note: Totals do not include Career Centers or Special Schools. Eighteen schools did not receive Overall Ratings.

Insights on 2024 Report Card Data

▶▶ There was a slight increase in South Carolina public schools that received an "Excellent" Academic Achievement indicator rating during the 2024 school year.

- 25% of public elementary schools received an "Excellent" Academic Achievement indicator rating, 17% of public middle schools, and 9% of public high schools.

> *The **Academic Achievement indicator rating** measures if students are meeting state standards in English Language Arts and Math using state summative assessment results.*

▶▶ While this year's on-time graduation rate remains high at 85.4%, only 30% of those same graduates were college and career ready.

- 32.5% of South Carolina public high school students in the 2024 graduation cohort were college ready.
- 69.6% of South Carolina public high school students in the 2024 graduation cohort were career ready.

▶▶ 1 in 5 of SC students were chronically absent during the 2022-23 school year.

- 23% of students statewide who were chronically absent in 2022-23 met or exceeded grade level standards in math compared to 47% of students who were not chronically absent.

> ***Chronic Absenteeism:*** *Missing 50 percent or more of the instructional day, for any reason, for 10 percent (or more) of the enrollment period. This includes excused absences, unexcused absences and suspensions.*

▶▶ The number of SC students in poverty has increased.

- 62.2% of SC students were classified as Pupils in Poverty in the 2023-24 school year.

▶▶ Statewide, only 43% of 3rd through 8th graders are scoring Meets or Exceeds Expectations on the SC READY Math test, which measures grade-level standards in mathematics. At the high school level, less than half of students scored- a "C" or better on the Algebra I End-of-Course Assessment.

What was new for the 2024 Report Cards?

High School Student Success (HSSS) indicator rating

The 2024 school year was the first that the High School Student Success indicator rating counted towards the overall ratings for South Carolina public high schools.

This rating demonstrates if high school students have earned the required 24 credits (four of which must be in English and four in math) to be eligible for graduation in four years, or shows if students have reached a successful high school outcome within five years of beginning high school.

The following are considered successful high school outcomes:

- Earning a regular high school diploma;
- Earning a GED; or
- Earning the SC HS Employability Credential.

The EOC aims for the accountability system to recognize the multiple, equally productive paths that students can use to achieve successful lives after graduation.

The On-Track to Graduate measure, which is part of the HSSS indicator, was developed based on research from the University of Chicago's Consortium on School Research. "On-track" students are more than three and one-half times more likely to graduate from high school in four years than off-track students. The indicator is a more accurate predictor of graduation than students' previous achievement test scores or their background characteristics.

Additional 2024 Report Card Data

Percent of SC public elementary and middle schools students *meeting or exceeding expectations* on SC READY by school year:

English Language Arts

2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
45.6%	42.4%	46.8%	52.7%	54.1%

Mathematics

2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
45.3%	37.0%	38.8%	39.6%	42.8%

Science

2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
49.1%	42.9%	46.0%	43.7%	Not measured this year

Percent of SC public high schools students earning a C or better on End-of-Course exams by school year:

English 2

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
67.4%	66.84%	67.4%	66.4%

Algebra I

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
34.6%	42.3%	44.86%	47.8%

Biology I

2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
49.2%	47.0%	39.3%	42.6%	42.9%	47.9%

U.S. History and the Constitution

2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
50.2%	47.1%	37.1%	39.3%	44.67%	41.5%

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

"Chronic Absenteeism is another area of significant concern for the EOC that must be addressed ... it has a negative impact on student achievement. It makes sense; if students aren't in school, it is unlikely that they are going to stay on track for success."

April Allen, EOC Chairperson,
2024 School Report Card News Conference

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.

2025-26 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 2025-26 prioritize improving student academic performance in mathematics and reading, and ensuring certified teachers are in SC classrooms.

The **Education Improvement Act** is one of several major steps South Carolina has taken to reform and improve its system of public education.
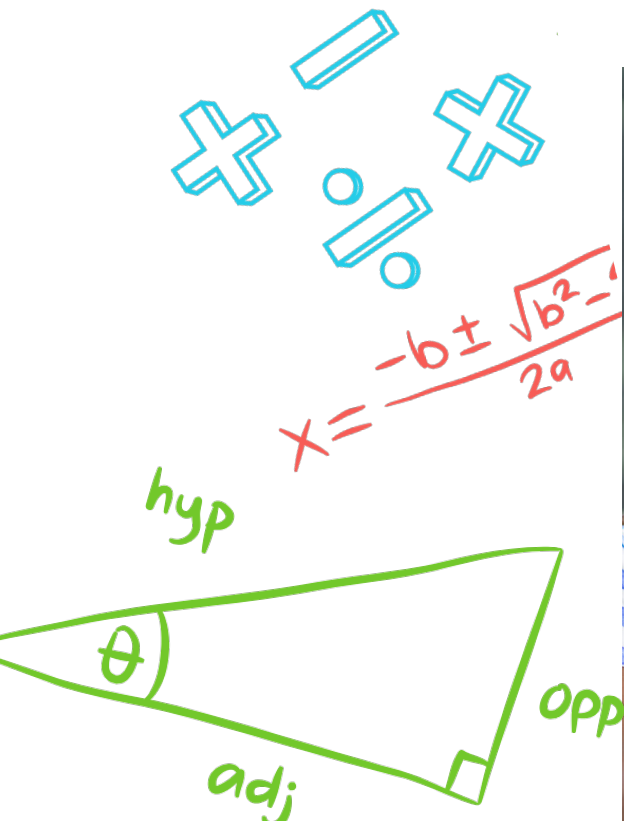
2025-26 EIA Budget Recommendations continued...

Teacher Recruitment and Retention

EOC recommends:

- **An increase of $1.4 million** to the Call Me MISTER program which corresponds to a $1.4 million decrease in the SC State University (SCSU) BRIDGE program which appropriates that funding to SCSU and Claflin for the purpose of recruiting teachers into the profession. Since 2020, the SCSU BRIDGE program, has produced 8 certified teachers while Claflin University has produced 2 certified teachers. The committee recommended that the monies be transferred to Call Me MISTER, which has produced 140 certified teachers since 2020.

- **An increase of $5 million** for Phase 2 of a Strategic Compensation Pilot, led by the SCDE.

- **An increase of $272,250** for a new Charter School Leadership Program led by the SCDE and an **increase of $4.6 million** for a School Leadership Accelerator.

Student Academic Supports

EOC recommends:

- **An increase of $30 million** for the SC Department of Education to serve additional students in Summer Reading Camps.

- **An increase of $250,000** for Reach Out and Read to expand their program statewide.

- **An increase of $356,500** to Science P.L.U.S. in the upstate to train more teachers in the new science standards.

- **A requested increase of $150,000** to the SC Council on Economic Education.

- The subcommittee also recommends **an appropriation of $6 million** for SC to join 10 states that have implemented the Dolly Parton Imagination Library statewide. The program would be implemented by an established agency or program.

The EOC recommended the following decreases in recurring funding, citing failure of the mentioned programs to produce intended results:

- A recommended decrease for Teach for America from $2 million to $1 million. The committee stated the rationale for the cut was a significant decline in recruitment of teachers in hard-to-staff school districts.

- A recommended decrease for STEM Centers SC from $2 million to $1 million. The committee stated the decrease was due to a move away from purpose which is training SC teachers in the teaching of mathematics.

Data Trailblazers 2024
celebrating schools that use data to promote progress

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. On June 19, 2024 the EOC announced the following recipients of the first Data Trailblazer awards:

- **Joanna-Woodson Elementary School** (Laurens County School District 56)
- **Lakeside Middle School** (Lexington County School District One)
- **Spring Hill High School** (Lexington-Richland School District Five)

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 ensures school staff are adequately trained in data security and privacy standards.

"Using data responsibly supports school leaders as they answer questions and take actions to help students succeed. This is the first year of this award competition, and we are thrilled to have the opportunity to showcase exemplar schools who are using data to help students and families. We congratulate each of the 2024 winners!"

- EOC Executive Director Dana Yow.

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.

Twenty schools, from fifteen school districts, entered the competition. Schools were judged by education professionals who scored each school based on a rubric. School information was hidden during judging.

The principals of each awarded school attended a 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.

Studying the impact of Chronic Absenteeism on student progress

Only 23% of students who are chronically absent are on grade level for math compared to 47% of their peers who are not chronically absent.

National rates of chronic absenteeism have steadily increased from 15% to nearly 30% in the past five years. South Carolina public schools have followed this trend with rates increasing the past five years from 13% to 22% during the 2023-24 school year.

In addition to empty classroom seats, chronic absenteeism negatively impacts academic achievement and student progress — consequences which put it on the EOC's radar.

"Any student in grade K-12 who misses 50 percent or more of the instructional day, for any reason, for 10 percent (or more) of the enrollment period. This includes excused absences, unexcused absences and suspensions"

- US Department of Education

According to the most recent SC READY Math data, only 23% of chronically absent students are on grade level for math compared to 47% of their peers. Similar SC READY ELA data corresponds with national research showing that children chronically absent as early as preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the third grade and are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.

The EOC is currently conducting research to implement the "Be Present SC - It's Not the Same Without You" public awareness campaign to help change student and parent perception on the importance of school attendance.

Project Timeline

April 2024

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

June 2024

EOC staff asked to do Chronic Absenteeism focus group.

July/August 2024

EOC sends out parent survey to recruit SC public school students for focus group.

October 2024

Communities in Schools SC helps to recruit students for focus groups. Focus groups carried out by Midlands Market Research.

December 2024

Focus group report presented to EOC full committee. Report featured on news media. EOC requests that EOC staff do a parent focus group.

January 2025

Second focus group of parents of SC public school students carried out. Parent and student surveys carried out to inform upcoming public awareness campaign.

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Military Readiness Task Force

In January 2024, the EOC created a working group of Military Recruiters, School Liaison Officers, School Liaison Program Managers, SC Purple Star School District Point of Contacts and Department of Education staff to define and measure the academic and physical characteristics of a "military-ready" student. This Military Readiness Task Force made recommendations to the EOC in June 2024.

The task force's key findings are as follows:

1. A lack of a basic understanding of civics, misunderstanding of military service (service in general) and opportunities, poor health/ low fitness levels, low academic achievement were cited as major reasons why recruiters and other military personnel are seeing a decrease in enlistment.

2. It is difficult for military readiness to be defined because of the different requirements for each branch of service, as well as fluctuations in standards that are impacted by recruitment needs.

3. SC currently uses the lowest published qualifying score (31) that any military branch uses for career-ready designation, although task force members noted that ASVAB scores are not consistently exclusionary.

4. There is not currently a quantifiable, widely used way to measure physical fitness and general health among K-12 students. This presents a concern since lack of overall health is cited as a deterrent to military enlistment.

5. Meeting military readiness markers, enlistment, or receiving designations such as Purple Star should be incentivized for students and schools.

Accountability Recommendations:

- Continue to incorporate military readiness as a career readiness measure in accountability system.

- Begin including military enlistment and/or entrance into an Officer Commissioning Program (i.e., NROTC, Naval Academy, Air Force Academy, etc.) as part of the Five-Year Student Success measure of high school accountability provided the data are provided from an authorized source and not self-reported by high schools or school districts.

- In the upcoming cyclical review of the accountability system, scheduled for 2025, consider the requirement of including a college or career ready measure as a requirement for graduation.

Physical Fitness/Accountability Recommendations:

- As part of the 2025 Cyclical Review of the Accountability System, consider the creation or procurement of a required assessment of physical health and fitness for students. This recommendation was seen as a way to amplify the growing obesity epidemic among children, compounded by decreased time outside and increased screen time.

Civics Education Recommendations:

- Support 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.

Awards and Recognition Recommendations:

- Work with the SCDE, SC Department of Veterans Affairs, and others to strengthen the measures by which schools and school districts are recognized as Purple Star Schools Districts and provide financial or other incentives when applicable.

- Include military designations and awards like Purple Star prominently on a school and/or district's Report Card.

- Continue to work with the SC Dept. of Education and others to assist recruiters and other military personnel reasonable and equal access to students and families in order to provide accurate information about military service and career options within the service branches.

- Work with the SC Department of Education and other state agencies to create a State award or certificate to be given to students who have chosen military service as a career path during the awards programs at their individual schools.

EOC Strategic Plan 2021-25
Summary of Strategies and Objectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategy II: Measure Change — *To more accurately and efficiently measure change, the EOC will refocus accountability to emphasize school improvement and the success of students.*

Objective D: Align system-wide (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.

EOC Strategic Plan 2021-25 Summary of Strategies and Objectives continued...

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

Objective G: Clarify the role of the Education Oversight Committee as the authority in 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.

2025 Cyclical Review

The accountability system for South Carolina public schools undergoes a cyclical review every five years. South Carolina Code of Law 59-18-910 designates that the EOC, along with the State Board of Education, conducts this cyclical review which will be instituted this year. Recommendations from the review must include a process for determining if SC public school students are graduating with the world-class skills and life and career characteristics of the Profile of the SC Graduate.

The following are priority topics for the 2025 Cyclical Review:
- Requesting time to determine the effectiveness of the accountability system's new measures (growth, on-track for graduation, stackable credentials).
- To address the disconnect between SC School Report Card overall ratings and the public expectations of ratings.
- To identify and correct the distortions or "gaming" of the accountability system.
- How to effectively communicate the accountability system to stakeholders.

The 2025 Cyclical Review will include a creating a Stakeholder Engagement Plan with constituent surveying, addressing the above priority topics, the creation of a state accountability advisory committee, and focused convenings.

The following are the six topics for the focused convenings that will take place statewide:
- High School Experience (to include measures of CCR)
- Awarding Performance of High Performing Schools
- Primary School Report Cards
- Multilingual Learners
- Public Expectations vs. Ratings
- CTE Report Cards

At the conclusion of this year's Cyclical Review, the Center for Assessment will provide a Capstone Report to the EOC following their work with the Cyclical Review Advisory Committee.

2024-2025 Media Coverage Highlights

[Data show where SC high school grads go to college](#)
Times and Democrat

[SC Education Oversight Committee releases annual evaluation](#)
WOLO-TV

[Education Impact: What do School Report Cards Reveal?](#)
Lake Murray News

[SC EOC report finds state-funded, full-day 4K improves kindergarten readiness](#)
SCETV

[SC has a surplus in teacher loan repayments as more exit the field](#)
SC Daily Gazette

[More SC teachers are opting to pay back loans than stay in teaching, report finds](#)
WCNC

[Joanna-Woodson Elementary School Recognized as Data Trailblazer by Education Oversight Committee](#)
Laurens County Buzz/ Go Laurens

[Spring Hill High School received 2024 Data Trailblazer Award](#)
Midlandsbiz

[What S.C. is doing to combat rising rate of students missing school?](#)
WISTV

[SC report cards show more students ready for careers but thousands still graduate unprepared](#)
Post and Courier

[South Carolina releases 2024 school report cards](#)
WACH-TV

[Post-pandemic surge in chronic absenteeism alarms South Carolina educators](#)
WPDE ABC15

[Why are SC students absent from school so much? A new report found some answers](#)
WLTX-TV

SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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