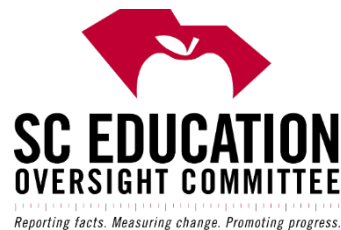


# SC Education Oversight Full Committee Meeting

April 14, 2025



# Welcome and Introductions

## Approval of Feb. 10, 2025 Full Committee Minutes

*April Allen, EOC Chair*



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# Special Presentation

## SC Child Early Reading & Development Education Program (CERDEP) 2024 Cost Report

*Dr. Orgul D. Ozturk Chair, Economics Dept.*

*Darla Moore School of Business, USC*



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# PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- Estimate the full cost of CERDEP provision
- Evaluate adequacy of current reimbursement rates
- Identify cost drivers and variation between providers
- Inform policy for program sustainability



# METHODS

- 1) Model-based estimates using provider characteristics
    - Used state and national data to estimate cost of inputs (teachers, building space, supplies, etc.)
  
  - 2) Survey data from 14 districts and 34 private providers
    - Sent survey to all 2023-24 providers with questions related to costs and program features
- Used both to assess per-pupil cost vs. reimbursement rate



# MODELED PROVIDER TYPES

Type	Setting	Teacher qualifications	Teacher pay level	Number of students
A	Public	Bachelor's	Public school	450 total / 150 4K
B	Private	Bachelor's	Public school	120 total / 40 4K
C	Private	Bachelor's	Child care sector	120 total / 40 4K
D	Private	Associate's	Child care sector	120 total / 40 4K

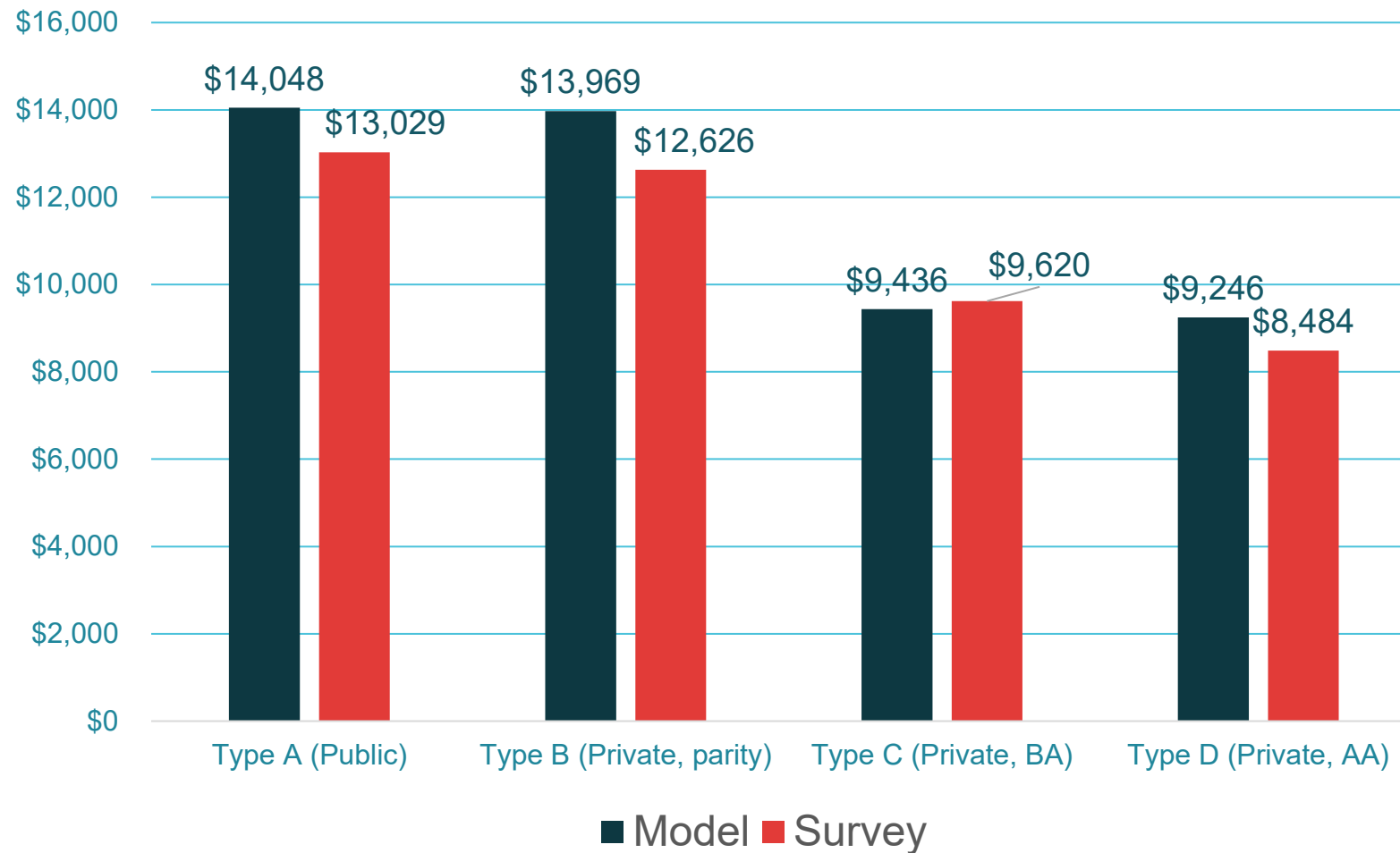


# MODELED PROVIDER TYPES

Type	Setting	Teacher qualifications	Teacher pay level	Number of students	Survey equivalent
A	Public	Bachelor's	Public school	450 total / 150 4K	Public high cost (75 <sup>th</sup> percentile)
B	Private	Bachelor's	Public school	120 total / 40 4K	Public low cost (25 <sup>th</sup> percentile)
C	Private	Bachelor's	Child care sector	120 total / 40 4K	Private high cost (75 <sup>th</sup> percentile)
D	Private	Associate's	Child care sector	120 total / 40 4K	Private low cost (25 <sup>th</sup> percentile)



# PROVIDER TYPES & PER-PUPIL COSTS





# COST DRIVERS

- Largest cost is staffing (40–60% of total costs)
  - Teacher wage rate crucial for estimating program cost
- Teacher qualifications and compensation
  - Public school salaries much higher than private child care teachers
  - Areas with higher cost of living have higher costs
- Class and program size
  - We assume full enrollment, but survey shows many have vacancies
- Ownership of facilities
  - Providers vary in whether they have rent/mortgage (8-12% of costs)

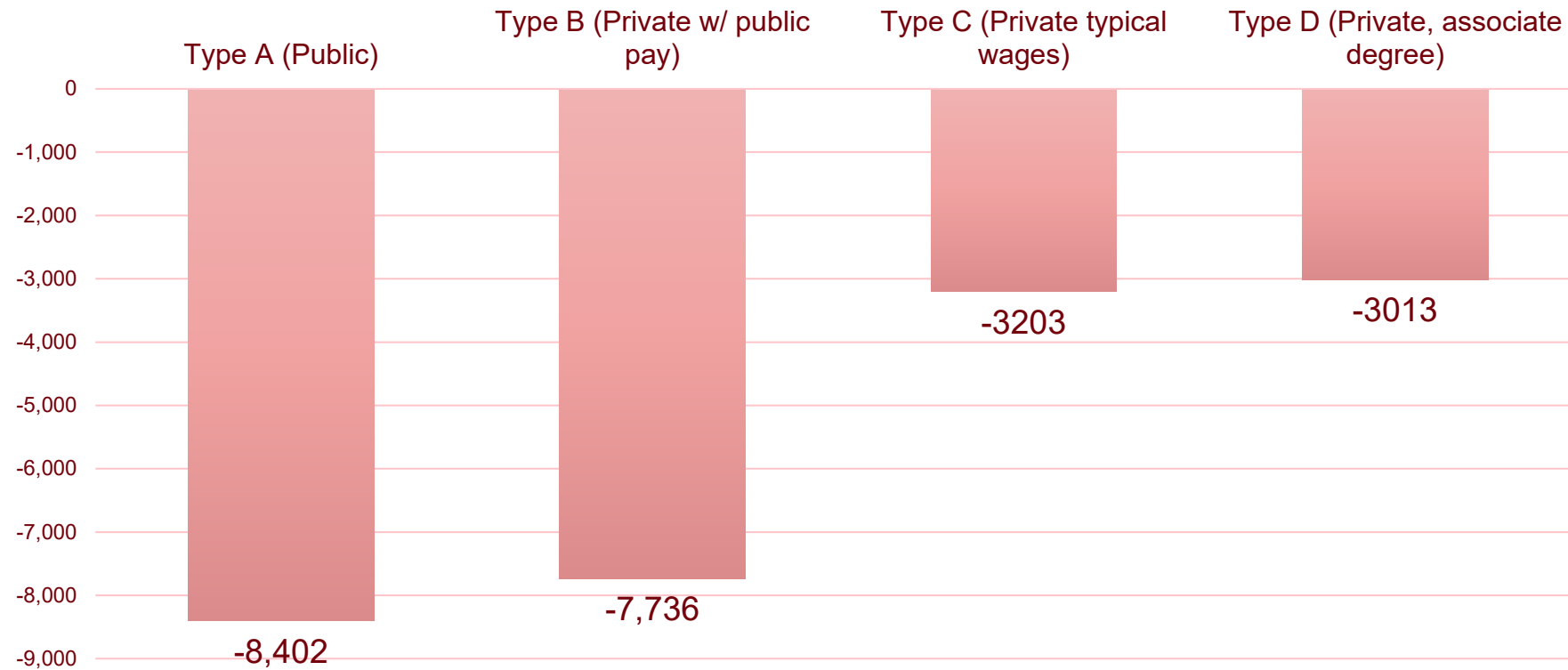


**Darla Moore**  
**School of Business**

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# PROVIDER TYPES & REIMBURSEMENT GAPS

Reimbursement Rate minus Total Costs



# SUSTAINABILITY INSIGHTS

- Lower cost of private providers driven by lower teacher salaries
  - Public school-level wages with benefits up to 45% of wages much higher than for private providers
- Higher education requirement for public providers leads to higher wages
  - Public lead teachers must have a BA; in survey over half have MA
  - Among private lead teachers, 67% have a BA
- Smaller class sizes improve quality but increase costs
  - 60% report vacancies



# POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Address teacher pay disparities
- Account for high vacancy rates
- Consider variable reimbursement rates and rate alignment with other public programs
- Align rates with inflation
- Define target share of cost to be reimbursed



# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Tie rates to teacher salaries/qualifications
- Assess causes of vacancies
- Differentiate by provider type and geography
- Continue supporting private providers with resources and training
- Update cost estimates annually
- Convene stakeholders to define fair reimbursement



# THANKS!

Jessica Brown, PhD

Assistant Professor of Economics

Economics Department

South Carolina EPiC



**Darla Moore**  
**School of Business**  
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# Academic Standards & Assessments (ASA) Subcommittee Report

*Dr. Patty Tate*



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**Information Item:  
State Funded Full-Day 4K  
Report for FY  
2023-24 & 2024-25**

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



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# Pursuant to Proviso 1.47:

Of the funds appropriated, \$300,000 shall be allocated to the Education Oversight Committee to 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. To aid in this evaluation, the Education Oversight Committee shall determine the data necessary and both public and private providers are required to submit the necessary data as a condition of continued participation in and funding of the program. This data shall include developmentally appropriate measures of student progress....The Education Oversight Committee shall use this data and all other collected and maintained data necessary to conduct 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 of students served in high-quality programs.

# What Are We Talking About?

## Terms

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### **CERDEP**

This 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 child care centers that adhere to program and quality requirements for CERDEP funding and serve eligible four-year-olds.

### **CERDEP 4K**

This is the term for CERDEP in public schools that are state funded and run by the local school district with the school district and SCDE as the reporting and oversight agency.

### **First Steps 4K**

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

### **Potentially Unserved**

This refers to students eligible for, but not accessing CERDEP. Some of these students may be accessing district-funded or other programs, or it may not be known. If a student is a Pupil in Poverty (PIP) and their 4K experience is either Unknown, Other Public 4K (non CERDEP), or Private 4K — the student is considered Potentially Unserved by CERDEP. Head Start students are not counted as CERDEP or Potentially Unserved.

# Changes to CERDEP

CERDEP Changes 2023-24 Fiscal Year:	CERDEP Changes 2024-25 Fiscal Year:	Proposed CERDEP Changes 2025-26 Fiscal Year:
<p>Proviso 1.48 specifies funding levels for public and private full-day 4K providers. The amendment increases the minimum reimbursement rate for instructional costs from \$4,800 to \$5,100 and increases the minimum reimbursement rate for transportation from \$587 to \$620 per student.</p>	<p>Data collected by the EOC from SCDE and SCFS will include average daily attendance data so that consistent enrollment may be determined. The SCDE shall also issue a unique student identifier for each child receiving services from public or private provider including CERDEP, Head Start, SC Child Care Scholarships, EIA, Title I, district-funded, and all other federal, state and local public sources.</p>	<p>A proposed proviso amendment would change the date of communicating the students on a CERDEP 4K waitlist from November 15th to September 1st.</p>
<p>At the request of the Office of First Steps, the amendment also eliminates the public private partnership program that allowed up to \$1 million to be expended on renovations.</p>	<p>1A.73.(SDE-EIA: Foundational Literacy Skill Training) Beginning with the current 2023-24 fiscal year, this proviso directs the Department of Education to provide training in foundational literacy skills to public school educators in kindergarten through grade three. The amendment expands the training to educators in state-funded four-year-old programs and allows the Department to carry forward funds as needed to provide the training.</p>	<p>At the request of EOC, a revised proviso was approved in the 2024-25 Appropriation Act that SCDE will provide a Suns ID number to all children receiving services from a public or private provider.</p>

# This Report Seeks to Answer

## Access:

1. How many CERDEP programs are in South Carolina?
2. How many four-year-old children in South Carolina are in poverty and eligible for CERDEP programming?
3. How many children are served by CERDEP in South Carolina?
  - How many eligible children are not served by CERDEP?
  - How many children are on a waitlist to access a 4K opportunity?
4. What is the financial investment in 4K?
  - Are financial reimbursements a contributing factor to lack of access to 4K?
  - How does SC compare to other states in early childhood investment?

# This Report Seeks to Answer

## Quality:

1. On national benchmarks of quality, how does South Carolina fare when considering quality preschool programming?
2. How does South Carolina measure quality?
3. What is the quality of CERDEP programming?

## Impact:

1. Are students who participate in CERDEP programming ready for Kindergarten?

In school year 2024-25, **56,741** students enrolled in kindergarten; of those students, **36,708 (65%)** are pupils in poverty.

**18,069** four-year-olds were served by CERDEP programming in the 2023-24 school year AND were enrolled in public kindergarten in the 2024-25 school year.

### CERDEP 4K

Of the 18,609 four-year-olds, **14,484 (79%)** were in CERDEP 4K

**12,392** were pupils in poverty  
**1,893** were not pupils in poverty

**10,181** were enrolled on both the 45th and 135th day of instruction of the 23-24 school year. Attendance data are not included.

### FIRST STEPS 4K

Of the 18,609 four-year-olds, **3,763 (21%)** were in First Steps 4K

**3,414** were pupils in poverty  
**340** were not pupils in poverty

**3,010** were enrolled for at least 120 days of instruction. Of those students **2,563** attended for 120 days or more.

### Head Start

Based on data received from the parent/caregiver kindergarten enrollment surveys for students enrolled in kindergarten during school year 2024-25, **1,201** four-year-olds in poverty were served in Head Start during school year 2023-24.

### Potentially Not Served

In the 2023-24 school year, there were **18,342** students potentially eligible for CERDEP programming who did not participate in CERDEP or Head Start.

# Access: How Many CERDEP Programs are in SC?

CERDEP 4K Classrooms		First Steps 4K Classrooms	
2023-24	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25
848	867	327	355
2024-25 School Year CERDEP 4K is available in all school districts <i>EXCEPT</i> Beaufort, Greenville, Horry, York 2, and SC Public Charter School Districts.		2024-25 School Year First Steps 4K is available in all counties <i>EXCEPT</i> Abbeville, Allendale Calhoun, Clarendon, Edgefield, Fairfield, and McCormick counties.	

# Access: How Many Children are on a Waitlist?

District Waitlist Counts 2021-2024				
District	2024	2023	2022	2021
Aiken	12	62	119	36
Anderson 2	8			
Anderson 3				17
Anderson 4		6		
Anderson 5	74		1	
Bamberg 3		5		
Barnwell 45	6			
Berkeley	34		75	52
Chester	10			
Chesterfield	22		28	11
Colleton			1	1
Darlington	10	52		
Dillon	6			
Edgefield				12
Florence 4				10
Greenwood 50		2		
Jasper	22	22		
Lancaster	12	16		
Laurens 56	6		5	
Lexington 1	105			
Lexington/Richland 5		3		
Marlboro			6	
McCormick				1
Newberry	30	6	40	19
Pickens	14			
Richland 2	7	8		
Saluda				6
Spartanburg 1		10		
Spartanburg 3				4
Spartanburg 5	11			
Williamsburg	12		20	
York 1			13	
York 3	5	10		
<b>Total</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>169</b>

\*Data from SCDE reported in the full-day 4K report over the past three years, and requested data received November 2024.



# Access: Are There Open Seats?

ABC Quality Rating	Number of Approved Classrooms:	Room Capacity for Students:	Students Enrolled	Available Seats:
A+	16	289	146	143
A	15	225	125	100
B+	43	762	496	266
B	121	2,013	1,234	779
C	103	1,655	947	708
Not Applicable or Not Participating	55	964	588	376
P (Pending)	2	40	23	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>5,948</b>	<b>3,559</b>	<b>2,389</b>

\*Data received from SCFS November 26, 2024.

# Access:

- South Carolina invested \$114,657,866 in fiscal year 2023-24 from the state's general fund and recurring appropriations from EIA dollars.
  - Largest investment in CERDEP to date
  - Projected carryforward is reducing
- Nationally, South Carolina ranked 37<sup>th</sup> in state financial investment to early childhood.
  - 41<sup>st</sup> when other funds are considered in addition to state funds

# Financial Barriers that Potentially Inhibit Access:

- SC Child Care Scholarship reimbursement rates *can* be higher than First Steps 4K rate in some circumstances.
- There is a gap between the true cost of 4K and CERDEP reimbursement rate
  - True cost of 4K ranges between \$9,000 and \$14,000 per student
  - Reimbursement rate is \$5,100

# Quality:

Policy	Requirement	Benchmark	Meets Benchmark
Early Learning & Development Standards	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Comprehensive, aligned, supported, culturally sensitive	Yes
Curriculum Supports	Approval process and supports	Approval process and supports	Yes
Teacher Degree	BA (public), AA (non-public)	BA	Not Yet
Teacher Specialized Training	Early Childhood Education	Specializing in pre-K	Yes
Assistant Teacher Degree	High School Diploma	CDA or equivalent	Not Yet
Staff Professional Development (PD)	15 hours/year, PD plans and coaching	For teachers and assistants: at least 15 hours/year; individual PD plans; coaching	Yes
Maximum Class Size	20 (4-year-olds)	20 or lower	Yes
Staff to Child Ratio	1:10 (4-year-olds)	1:10 or better	Yes
Screening and Referral	Immunizations, developmental; vision, hearing, health and more	Vision, hearing, health screenings and referral	Not Yet
Continuous Quality Improvement System	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	Structured classroom observations; data used for program improvement	Yes

# First Steps 4K Quality:

2023-24 School Year		2024-25 School Year	
A+ Quality Rating	14	A+ Quality Rating	16
A Quality Rating	14	A Quality Rating	15
B+ Quality Rating	41	B+ Quality Rating	43
B Quality Rating	111	B Quality Rating	121
C Quality Rating	56	C Quality Rating	103
Pending Quality Rating	27	Pending Quality Rating	2
No Quality Rating	64	No Quality Rating	55

# Impact on Kindergarten Readiness:

KRA Performance Level	PIP	% PIP	Not PIP	% Not PIP	All	% of All
Demonstrating Readiness	10,826	31 %	10,269	54 %	21,116	39 %
Approaching Readiness	13,295	37 %	5,510	29 %	18,838	34 %
Emerging Readiness	11,344	32 %	3,343	17 %	14,733	27 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,465</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,122</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>54,687</b>	<b>100%</b>

## KRA Performance Levels

### Demonstrating Readiness

A student demonstrates foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for a curriculum based on kindergarten standards.

### Approaching Readiness

A student demonstrates some foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for a curriculum based on kindergarten standards.

### Emerging Readiness

A student demonstrates minimal foundational skills and behaviors that prepare him/her for a curriculum based on kindergarten standards.

### Did Not Participate

The assessment was not complete; all items were missing.



# Impact on Kindergarten Readiness by 4K Experience

Pupils in Poverty Kindergarten Readiness by 4K Experience										
KRA Performance Level	Emerging Readiness		Approaching Readiness		Demonstrating Readiness		Did Not Participate		Total	
CERDEP 4K	2,693	22%	4,746	38%	4,645	37%	308	2%	12,392	34%
First Steps 4K	1,002	29%	1,355	40%	963	28%	94	3%	3,414	9%
Subtotal All CERDEP	3,695	23%	6,101	39%	5,608	35%	402	3%	15,806	43%
Head Start	450	37%	485	40%	239	20%	27	2%	1,201	3%
Other Public 4K	1,611	32%	1,788	36%	1,440	29%	153	3%	4,992	14%
Private 4K	510	21%	876	37%	932	39%	72	3%	2,390	7%
Unknown	5,078	41%	4,045	33%	2,607	21%	589	5%	12,319	34%
Subtotal non-CERDEP	7,649	37%	7,194	34%	5,218	25%	841	4%	20,902	57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,344</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>13,295</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>10,826</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>1,243</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>36,708</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Recommendations

- Increase enrollment efficiency for eligible students
  - Pilot 4K navigators to support families with children on a CERDEP 4K waitlist
  - Develop guidance on when students who do not meet the poverty threshold can be enrolled in CERDEP
- Increase CERDEP infrastructure using data to prioritize piloting efforts
  - Identify school districts with more than 20 students on a waitlist and verify an additional classroom is not needed or add an appropriate number
  - Pilot incentivizing private child care to participate in First Steps 4K
  - Reduce financial inhibitors to participating in First Steps 4K



# Recommendations:

- Continue to increase quality by meeting NIEER benchmarks (screening and teacher qualifications)
- Recruit families for available seats using additional marketing strategies
- Work with SCDE to access additional details in attendance data
- Publish additional papers about CERDEP that provide more details on specific topics

# Next Steps:

- 4K Data Dashboard at [www.dashboardsc.gov/prek](http://www.dashboardsc.gov/prek)
- 4K Waitlists: how they function and can they become more efficient for children and families
- Robust analysis using 4K assessment data and additional factors to determine the impact of CERDEP on student outcomes
- Academic outcomes correlated with participation in CERDEP including: graduation rate and third grade reading performance
- Collaboration with community and civic organizations to support early literacy efforts
- Teacher preparation and retention in 4K for both CERDEP 4K and First Steps 4K
- Screening efforts in 4K and recommendations to implement universal hearing, vision, and developmental screening and referral in CERDEP funded classrooms.

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# Information Item: Social Studies Standards Cyclical Review Update

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



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# Information Item: Beating the Odds Investigative Study Update

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



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# Executive Director Update

*Dana Yow, EOC Executive Director*



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# Cyclical Review of the Accountability System

Name	Affiliation
Melanie Barton	Deputy Chief of Staff, Senior Education Advisor, Office of the SC Governor
Whitney Broderick	Classroom Teacher, Anderson 1
Jennifer Cauthen	Director of Special Projects, Fairfield County School District
Michelle Caya	Asst. VP of Academic Programs, Trident Technical College
Dee Christopher	Superintendent, Anderson 4
Peter DeLorme	Retired Boeing Project Manager
Janet Graham	School Board Member
Josie Kate Hauptfear	Director of Secondary Instruction and Career and Technical Education, Laurens 56
Celestine Lavan	Executive Director of Elementary Schools
Sallie R. Lee	Former Member of State Board of Education, retired educator
Randall Lowder	Parent
Monique McDaniels	VP of Community and Workforce Development, Goodwill Industries of Upstate/Midlands SC
Laura McKinney	Senior VP of Talent and Workforce Development, Columbia Chamber of Commerce
Ashton Pearson	Executive Director at Midlands Business Leadership Group
Chelsea Richard	Director of Research and Strategy, SC First Steps
Buffy Roberts	Associate Superintendent, Office of Accountability, Charleston CSD
Frank Rodriguez	Superintendent, Beaufort County Schools
Terrye Seckinger	Commissioner, SC Commission on Higher Education
Ellen Weaver	SC State Superintendent of Education
Danielle Wingo	Director, SC Bureau of Maternal and Child Health
Meesha Witherspoon	Parent

# Timeline





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**August 3-4, 2025**  
**Beaufort, SC**

# Action Item: Nomination Committee for EOC Chair and Vice Chair

*Dr. Bob Couch*



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# Adjournment



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