SC Education Oversight Committee Retreat

August 10-11, 2025

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.
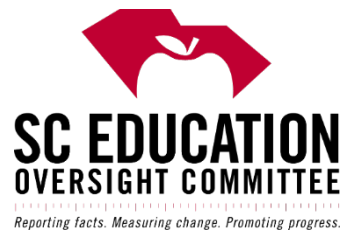
Welcome

EOC Chair April Allen

Opening Remarks

Beaufort County Schools Superintendent
Dr. Frank Rodriguez

Approval of Full Committee Minutes, June 9, 2025

EOC Chair April Allen

State Superintendent of Education Update

The Honorable Ellen Weaver

Can Strategies in Corporate Culture Assist in School Improvement Efforts?

Patrick M. Wright

Thomas C. Vandiver Bicentennial Chair in Business

Associate Dean, Corporate Relations

Darla Moore School of Business

Questions to Address This Afternoon:

- What is culture?
- Why is culture important?
- How do you manage culture?

Question

What is Culture?

What is Culture?

- "a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems"

  Edward Schein

  Organizational Culture and Leadership

What is Culture?

- What is meant by shared basic assumptions?

- What kinds of problems?

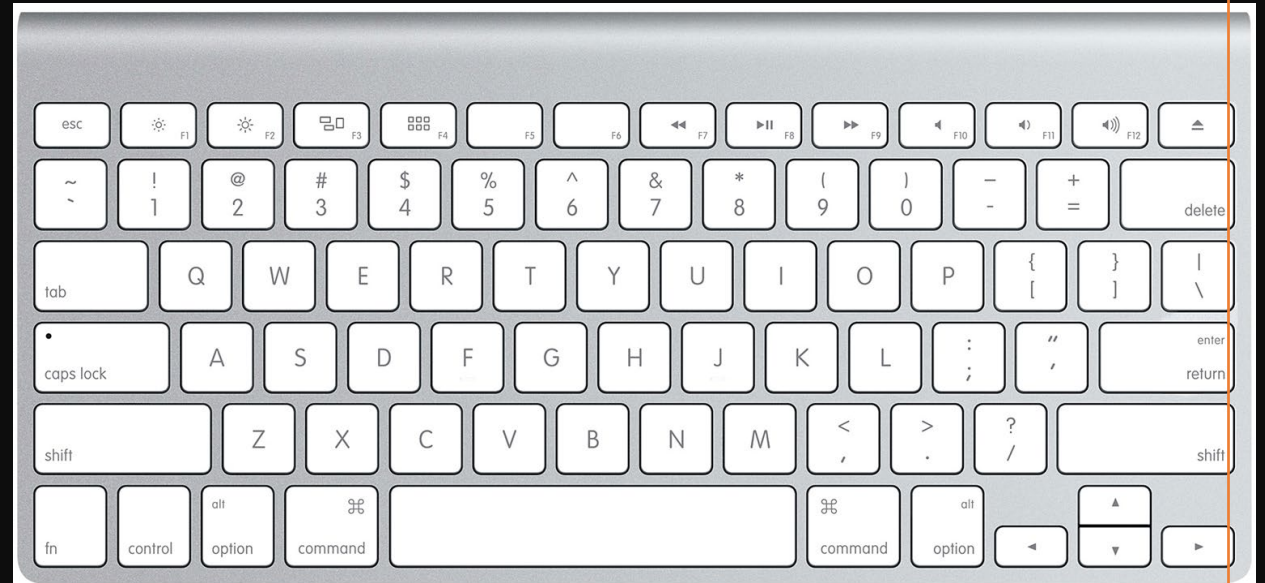- What is meant by "...perceive, think, and feel..."?
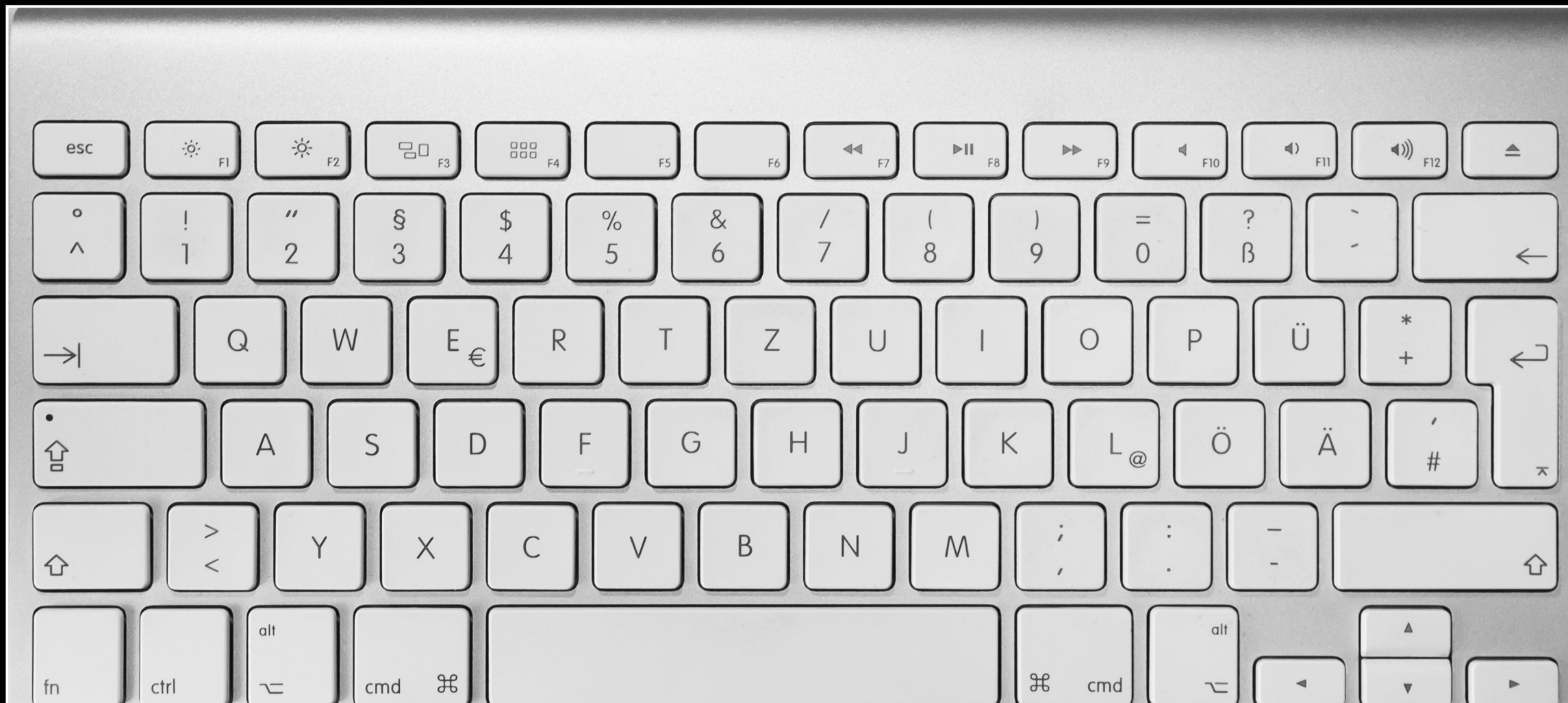
A Few Good Men and Culture

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4tLtC4L48O

"Culture is the agreed-upon way of doing things within an organization, usually because at some point those behaviors solved important problems"

What is this?

Why is this different?

Why not this?

Dvorak Keyboard
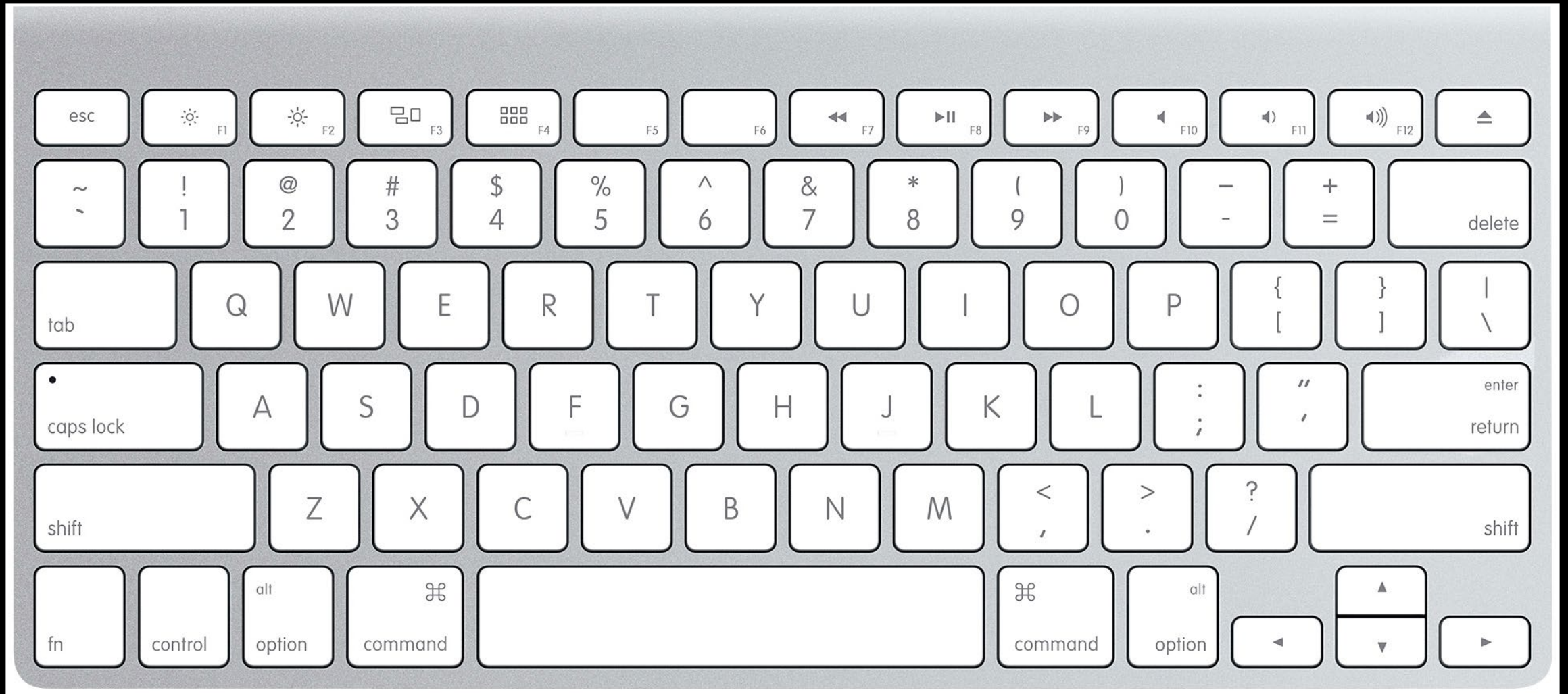
Why do we use this?

Why is Culture Important?

- What are some companies that you think have strong cultures?

- For each company, describe their culture...i.e., how do you know they have a strong culture

- What aspect of their culture do you think is the most important?

Service/Fun

Outdoors

Service

Service

Innovation/Change

Innovation

Integrity with customers

Why is Culture Important?

THE CULTURALLY ALIGNED WORKFORCE

A strong positive culture can enhance employee engagement by

+30%[4]

Companies with a Strong Culture Outperform Their Peers

Five-year TSR (%)

- Companies with a weak culture: 10%
- Companies with a mixed culture: 13%
- Companies with a strong culture: 24%

S&P 1200: 12%
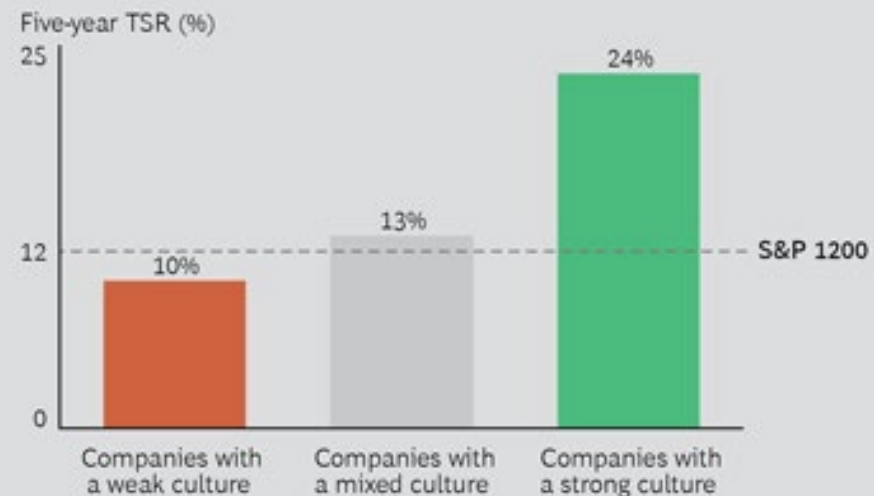
Source: BCG analysis.
Note: TSR = total shareholder return. BCG surveyed 75 public companies.

But...

- Are all cultures good?

Companies with Culture-based Problems

Insular

Sexist

Results at all costs

How attractive does this culture sound?

- *"Bruising."*
- *"Relentless."*
- *"Painful."*
- *"Frequent combat."*
- *"Burn and churn."*

Amazon's Culture

- That company is Amazon—and the scathing comments I quote above were part of a 2015 New York Times article examining its workplace.

- The piece reported on the "sometimes-punishing aspects" of Amazon's culture and its "purposeful Darwinism" approach to managing staff. It shared stories of employees crying at their desks, suffering from incredible stress, struggling to keep up with the intense pace at Amazon—or being fired for failing to meet the exacting standards and metrics set by management.

- **Is this a good or bad culture?**

Culture at Amazon

- "The company succeeds because it has a single, unifying drive behind its internal culture and its external brand. Amazon's distinctive organizational culture fosters a performance-driven environment that fires up employees to innovate in pursuit of an **outstanding, continuously-improving customer experience**. Its brand identity is based on delivering that same disruptively innovative customer experience."

- It is the fusion of Amazon's culture and brand that powers the company. Everyone is singularly focused on one thing: **excellence on behalf of the customer.** No one needs to expend extra energy figuring out what to do or how to behave to achieve what Amazon wants its brand to stand for in the world.

The Importance of Culture

- So, it's less about a good or bad culture, and more about a right or wrong culture depending on the extent to which it ties to those things valued by the customer or our most important stakeholders.

Why is Culture Important?

Shared -> common, integrated

Problems -> leads to common ways of solving problems, both external (dealing with customers) and internal (communication, cooperation, etc.)

Think, Perceive, Feel -> leads to shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors

IBM's Dress Code

How do you manage culture?

The significance of differentiation	**The power of narrative**	**The value of alignment**
The reinforcement of stories	**The importance of rewards/recognition**	**The criticality of redundancy**

Questions?

EOC Chair Update

April Allen

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Ongoing Projects

- Communication of new Stackable Credential System
- EIA Recommendations to the SC General Assembly
- Report Card Release
- Analysis of Rural Recruitment Initiative (RRI) Incentives
- Beating the Odds Investigative Study
- Be Present Public Awareness Campaign
- Growing Pathways for Students (GPS) Partnership with SCDE (visualization and reporting platform for schools)

Dates of Note for EOC

- Cyclical Review of the Accountability System (to the EOC December 2025)
- Social Studies Standards Review (December 2025)
- Teacher Loan Program Evaluation (September/October 2025)
- Alternative Methods of Instruction Evaluation (September/October 2025)
- CTE Report Cards (November 2025/February 2026)

Upcoming Projects

- Approval of SC READY Science, SC READY ELA, and English 2 EOC
- Strategic Planning (update in 2026)
- EOC/State Board Retreat (focused on assessment review process; tentative Jan 2026)
- Evaluation of ESTF
- Launch Years Partnership

Health of the Agency

- Hiring of EOC Operations Manager
  - Taking immediate steps toward reaching 100% compliance of risk/security IT assessment for State.
  - Taking over administration of accounts payable, human resources, and procurement functions as well as alignment with SC Dept. of Administration's shared service agency.
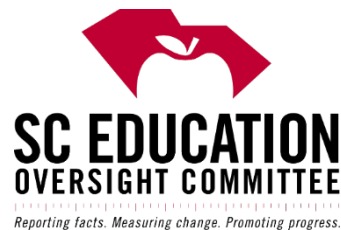
Adjourn

Beating the Odds Investigative Study

August 11, 2025

EOC Retreat

Why Did EOC Initiate BTOIS?

- What?
  - The EOC gathers, analyzes and reports on data from a variety of sources for continuous quality improvement.
- So what?
  - The EOC analyzes and interprets that data to understand it and what it means.
- Now what?
  - Next steps are planned using what was learned.

What Questions Drive Data Collected for BTOIS?

- In schools with high poverty, which covaries with low student achievement, what schools are beating the odds?
- What are they doing in these schools to get different outcomes?
- Are there patterns in South Carolina? If so, what are they?
- Can these practices be scaled up so all children in high poverty schools in SC are high academic achievers?

What is the Beating the Odds Investigative Study? (BTOIS)

- A multi-year study to examine why some schools with high poverty ratios also have higher than anticipated achievement
  - Exploration phase (Year 1): 7 partner schools, visited with focus groups and interviews of parents, teachers, administration, instructional coaches, community members and district leadership. Themes emerged to create a possible roadmap for other elementary schools to use.
  - Confirmation (Year 2): visit different partner schools that meet criteria to visit and complete interviews to determine if the roadmap is complete or flawed.
  - Repeat Exploration-Confirmation cycle with Middle and High Schools that meet the criteria.

Who are the Partner Schools for Year 1?

- Cleveland Elementary School, Spartanburg 7 School District
- Monaview Elementary School, Greenville School District
- Latta Elementary School, Dillon 3 School District
- Kelly Edwards Elementary School, Barnwell 29 School District
- Mathews Elementary School, Greenwood 50 School District
- Merrywood Elementary School, Greenwood 50 School District
- Waterloo Elementary School, Laurens 55 School District

Who are the Partner Schools for Year 2?

- Flat Rock Elementary, Anderson School District 3
- Honea Path Elementary School, Anderson School District 2
- Hopkins Elementary School, Richland School District 1
- Kershaw Elementary School, Lancaster County School District
- West Pelzer Elementary School, Anderson School District 1
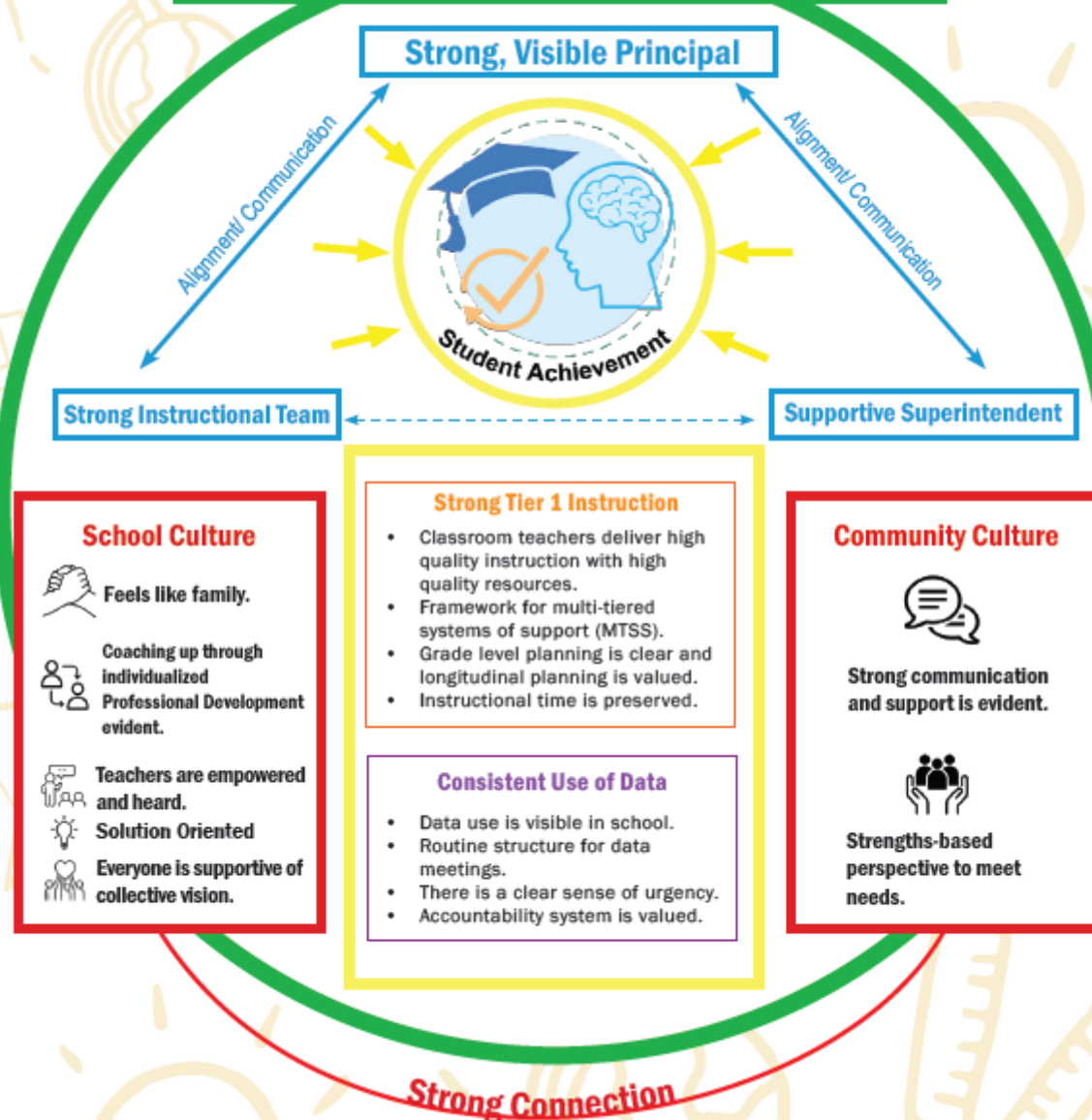
Themes:

- **Strong leadership**
  - Instructional Leadership team-strong principal-supportive superintendent
- **High expectations**
  - Solution oriented
  - Principal, teachers, student, and community consistently hold belief in students and adults/one another
- **Effective Teachers-Strong tier 1 instruction**
  - Classroom teacher delivers high quality instruction with high quality resources
- **Consistent use of data**
  - Data visible in school
  - Data drives instruction with sense of urgency
- **Culture: School culture**
  - Feels like family
  - Coaching up through individualized professional development
    - Coaching out is an option when needed
  - Teachers empowered and voices heard
- **Culture: Community culture**
  - Strength based perspective
  - Strong communication

Strong Leadership

Instructional Leadership Team-Strong Principal-Supportive Superintendent

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Strong, Visible Principal--What We Mean:

- Visible in school and community
  - Communicates clearly
- Approachable
- Uses data but not punitively
- Focus on achievement
- Coach up or out so the best team to meet school's goals is there.
- Creates strong school culture
- No excuses
- Holds her/himself and teachers accountable

Strong, Visible Principal—What it Looks Like:

- "Ignite development leaders"
- Access to the American Dream
- Five boards across the county

Instructional Leadership Team--What We Mean:

- Instructional Coaches are valued and respected
  - Develop trust and respect
- Aligned and working in partnership with principal and teachers
- Strong communication among teachers, principal, and district office
- Warm and approachable and able to support teachers
  - Keep teacher morale high
- Use data for school improvement and student achievement

Instructional Leadership Team—What it Looks Like:

- Data binders
- All teachers reported that they could seek support in classroom from coaches and administrative leadership.
- Develops trust and respect from teachers

Superintendent Support--What We Mean:

- Knows what is happening in the school/present
- Supports principal
- Sets high expectations and accepts no excuses
- Provides support when needed

Superintendent Support—What it Looks Like:

- One superintendent came to speak with us during budget meeting season just to "Come support the good work being done here."
- ....He became superintendent is really immerse themselves

deeply, really every facet of operations. And what that allowed him to do was increase the profile of the district, but also be in the know as things were happening in the community to properly advocate for (what is needed). And so following that model, I did the same thing.

High Expectations

"We're not going to love them into failure!"

High Expectations—What We Mean

- High expectations from superintendent, principal, teachers, students, and community
- High expectations and high support to meet them, no excuses
- Belief ALL students can achieve
- All students can meet behavior and character expectations
- Sense of excellence that everyone shares
- Solution orientation --There is no problem/quality/characteristic that can limit achievement.

High Expectations—What It Looks Like

- Students – on task
- Adults – visible, limited interruptions, no wasted time, expect high quality best effort

Effective Teachers—Strong Tier 1 Instruction

Communication and Consistency

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Effective Teachers–Strong Tier 1 Instruction
What We Mean:

- Classroom teacher delivers high quality instruction with high quality resources
- Framework for MTSS
- Grade level and longitudinal planning
- Instructional time preserved

Strong Tier 1 Instruction—What it Looks Like:
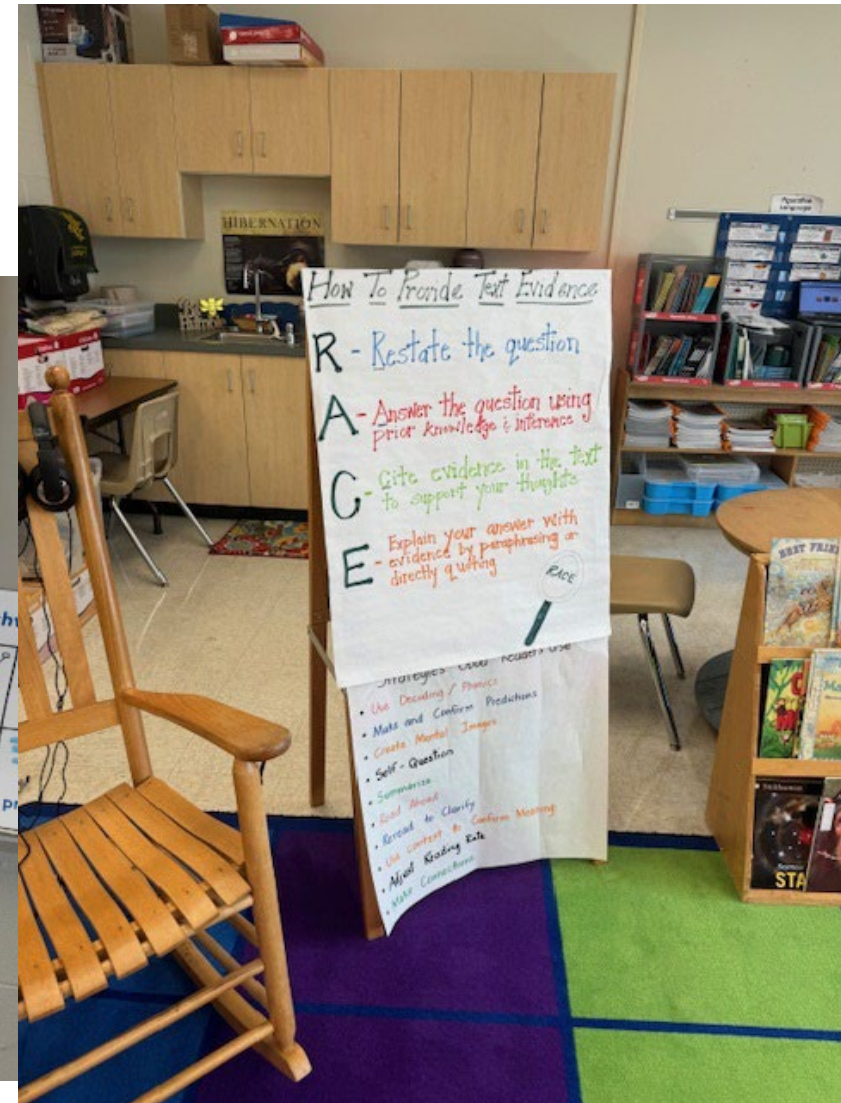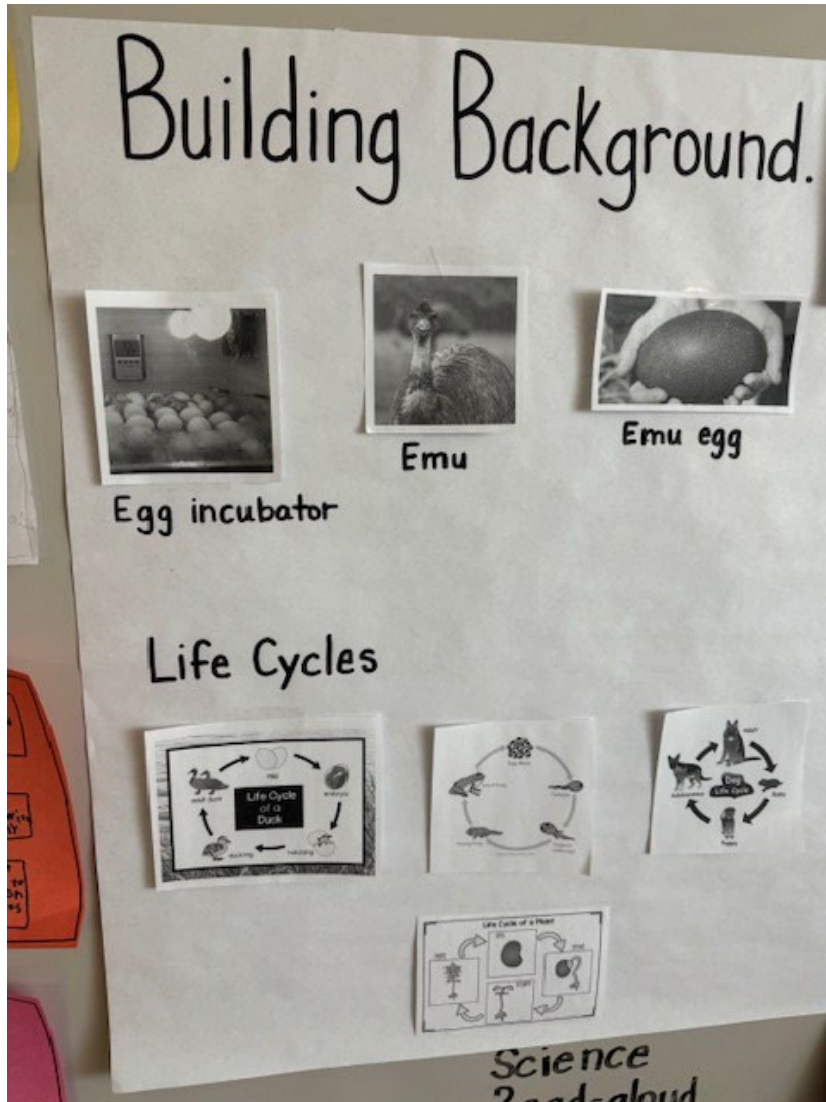
Consistent Use of Data

"We use these data sheets for every student in the school, and I have binders here and all the classroom teachers have them as well."

Consistent Use of Data—What We Mean:

- Data is visible
- Routine data meetings and progress monitoring
- Drives instruction with a sense of urgency
- Examined together—healthy competition
- Value and use the accountability system for continuous quality improvement
- Decision driven data collection

Consistent Use of Data—What it Looks Like:

School Culture

Inside the school

"It's like a family! We care about each other!"

"They're all our children"

School Culture—What We Mean:

- Strong relationships and authentic care for each other
- Teacher voice heard and valued
  - Unencumbered time
  - Schedule
- Coaching up through individualized professional development
  - Ask each other, coaches and principals for support
  - Grade level teams and longitudinal teams
- Celebration for successes balanced with consequences

School Culture—What it Looks Like:

"Big 5"
Critical Strategies to Empower Teachers to Do Their
Best To Prepare Students for the Test

1. Teach from bell to bell with a sense of urgency
2. Follow your classroom schedule and district pacing
3. Use your data and know your students (Progress Monitoring Notebook)
4. Small groups are pulled consistently and with purpose
5. Evidence of learning in classrooms (district look-for information, anchor charts, student work, etc.)

WATERLOO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Big 5
1. Show Evidence on your Thinking Paper
2. Circle or Underline Key Words
3. Eliminate Wrong Answers
4. Reread Passage and/or Question
5. Find Text Evidence to Support your Answer

Community Culture

Outside of School

"Everyone is committed to reaching a shared vision by doing the same things"

Community Culture—What We Mean:

- Strong relationships and utilization of all available resources
- Communication and safety
- School a part of community that does not supplant values and existing culture
  - Strength based perspective
  - Work together and share resources to achieve excellence/high expectations and meet needs

# Community Culture—What it Looks Like:

Findings of Note

- Reconciling differences in Year 1 and Year 2
  - Schedule
  - Sustainability
- State culture of support for building leadership

Connections with Research

- Eight Critical Elements of Organizational Life
- 5Essentials®
- Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty
- Visible Learning

# 8 Distinct Culture and Leadership Styles:
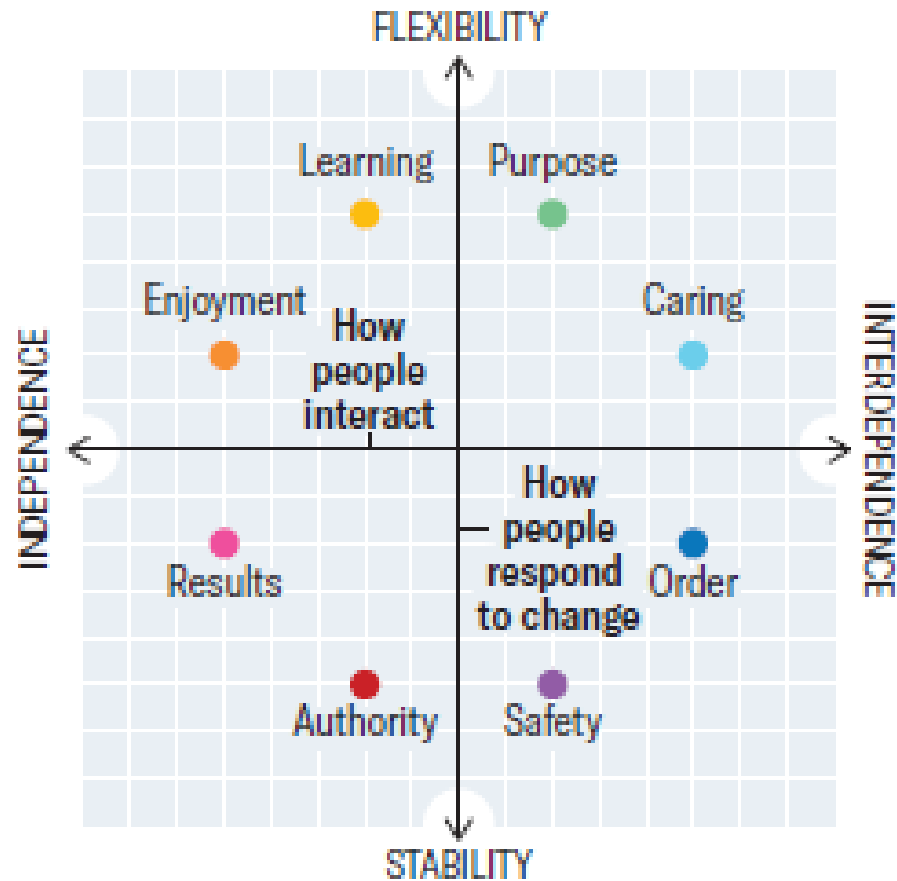
- Caring
- Purpose
- Learning
- Enjoyment
- Results
- Authority
- Safety
- Order

BTOIS Partner Schools Defining Cultures:

Culture Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
Purpose: purpose-driven, idealistic, tolerant	Appreciation for diversity, sustainability, social responsibility	Overemphasis on long-term purpose and ideals may get in the way of practical and immediate concerns
Caring: warm, sincere, relational	Strong teamwork, engagement, communication, trust, and a sense of belonging	Overemphasis on consensus building may reduce exploration of options, stifle competitiveness, and slow decision-making
Results: Achievement driven, goal focused	Improved execution, external focus and capability building, and goal achievement	Overemphasis on achieving may lead to communication and collaboration break downs with higher levels of stress and anxiety

5Essentials®
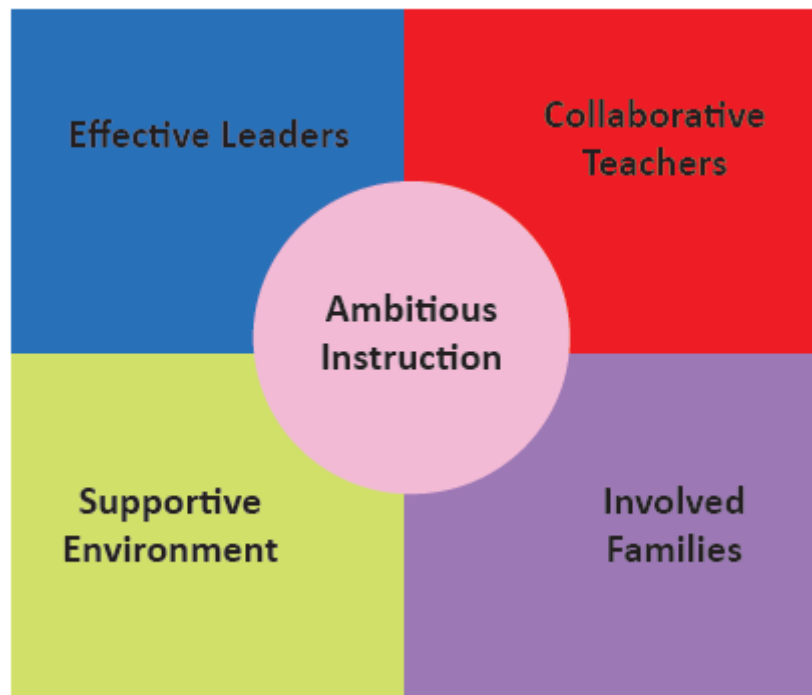
Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty:

1. Build relationships
2. Increase status
3. Grow emotional and soft skills
4. Understand the goals of behavior
5. Decrease Stress
6. Motivate-increase hope and expectancy of success
7. Motivate-increase value
8. Grow mindsets
9. Accommodate
10. Maintain high expectations
11. Decrease health impacts
12. Build family/community partnerships
13. Guide using ME strategies

14. Make learning fun
15. Build background knowledge
16. Grow executive function and memory
17. Align instruction and assessment
18. Purposefully teach
19. Explicitly teach
20. Question strategically
21. Use data to drive instruction
22. Infuse the arts
23. Use technology effectively
24. Grow language and literacy
25. Lead

Visible Learning

- 4 Big Ideas:
  - Climate First, learning second, achievement third
  - Students should drive their learning
  - Know thy impact
  - Collective responsibility for learning
- 11 Signature Practices: 1. classroom and school climate, 2. teacher clarity, 3. phases of learning, 4. teaching students to drive their own learning, 5. teaching with intent, 6. practice and over-learn, 7. feedback, 8. the power of the collective, 9.leading and learning, 10. implementation, 11.evaluative thinking.

Visible Learning Signature Practice and Best Practice Alignment:

Visible Learning Signature Practice	Best practices from the Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Students in Poverty
1. Classroom and School Climate	6. Motivate: Increase Hope and Expectancy of Success 7. Motivate Increase Value 8. Grow Mindsets 10. Maintain High Expectations
2. Teacher Clarity	9. Accommodate 15. Build Background Knowledge 17. Align Instruction and Assessment 18. Puposefully Teach 19. Explicitly Teach 21. Use Data & Feedback to Drive Instruction 24. Grow Language and Literacy
3. Phases of Learning	15. Build Background Knowledge 16. Grow Prefrontal Cortex Skills (Executive Function and Memory Trace) 18. Purposefully Teach 19. Explicitly Teach 20. Question Strategically

Continued:

Visible Learning Signature Practice	Best practices from the Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Students in Poverty
4. Teaching Students to Drive Their Own Learning	16. Grow Prefrontal Cortex Skills (Executive Function and Memory Trace) 18. Purposefully Teach
5. Teaching with Intent	18. Purposefully Teach
6. Practice and Over-Learning	16. Grow Prefrontal Cortex Skills (Executive Function and Memory Trace) 19. Explicitly Teach
7. Feedback	19. Explicitly Teach
8. The Power of the Collective	1. Build relationships
	10. Maintain High Expectations
9. Leading and Learning	25. Lead
10. Implementation	19. Explicitly Teach 21. Use Data and Feedback to Drive Instruction.
11. Evaluative Thinking	21. Use Data and Feedback to Drive Instruction

Next Steps:

1. Pilot strategies found to be powerful in the BTOIS grounded theory in schools that meet eligibility criteria but have an overall report card rating of Below Average or Unsatisfactory and study the outcome over three years of implementing strategies.

2. Ask school employees and parents to complete an organizational culture profile evaluation developed by Groysberg et al. This will provide additional data about leadership and culture within the school.

3. Conduct research on leadership transition and used to develop strategies to pilot in schools that meet BTOIS eligibility criteria with an overall rating of Excellent or Good.
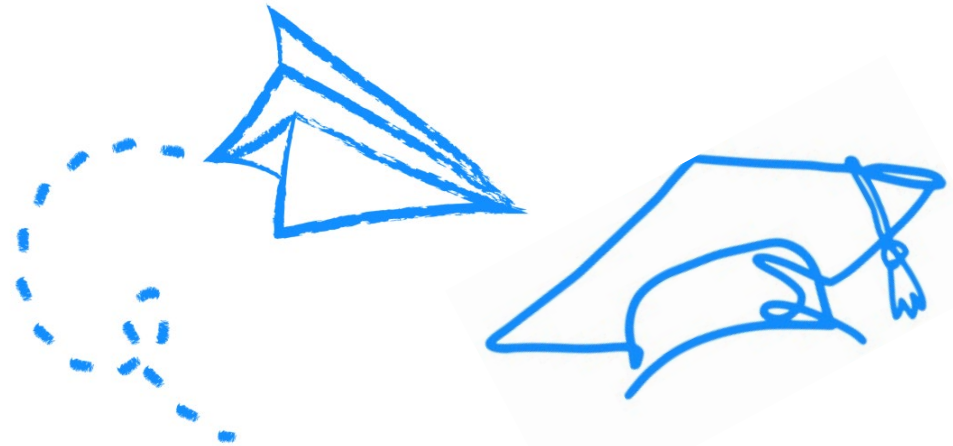
Next Steps Continued:

4. Using BTOIS partner school data, study middle school achievement of students who left BTOIS schools.

5. Study the academic achievement of 6th grade students in K-6th grade schools and compare achievement with similar students in 6th-8th grade middle schools. Examine school culture and student development in these contexts to determine strategies to pilot in middle school.
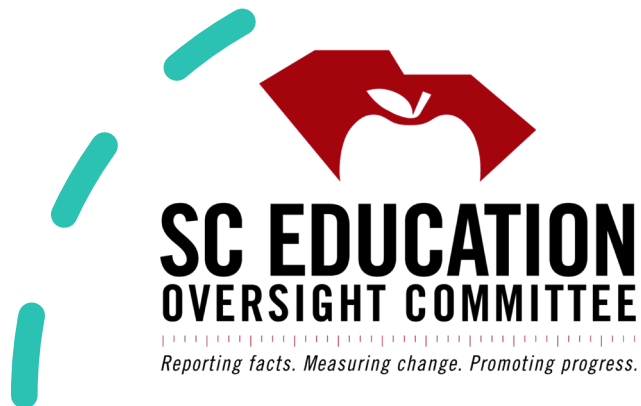
Beating the Odds Investigative Study Panel of Principals

Moderated by Chief Learning Officer

Dr. Salandra Bowman

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BE PRESENT S.C. ™

It's Not the Same Without You:

Supporting Excellent Attendance in SC Schools

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EOC Communications Manager Tenell Felder

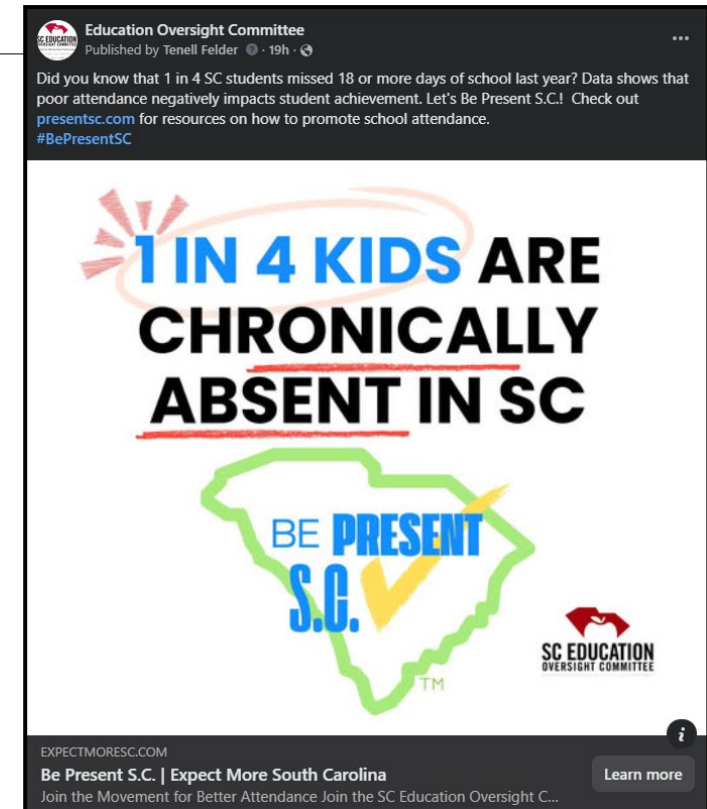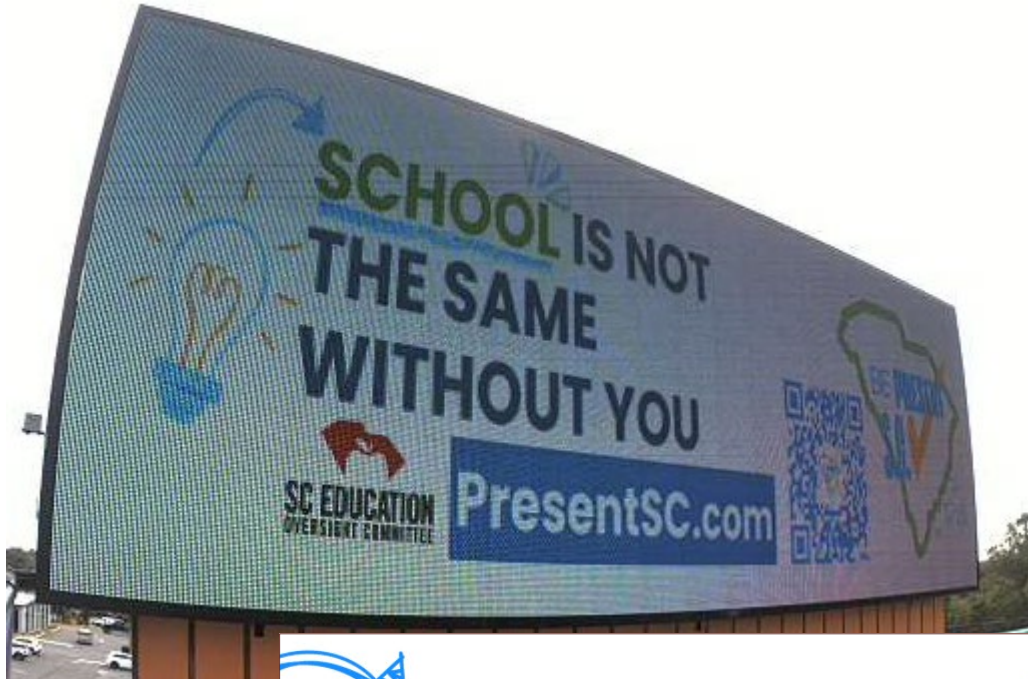# Be Present S.C. – July 28th Campaign Kick Off

"The goal is to impact mindsets to foster a community where every child attends school consistently, paving the way for academic success and a brighter future."

- Objectives

  - To Educate/Change Mindsets – "not the same without you" tagline

  - To Provide Resources and Support to Parents and Schools that encourage attendance

  - To get student buy-in!

    - Be Present S.C. Pledge

Statewide Campaign

TAKE THE PLEDGE!

VISIT **PresentSC.com** TO LEARN MORE

BE **PRESENT** S.C.

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

SCHOOL IS NOT THE SAME WITHOUT YOU

PresentSC.com

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Missing just **2 days** a month from school could make your child chronically absent

PresentSC.com

BE **PRESENT** S.C.

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Education Oversight Committee
Published by Tenell Felder · 19h · 🌐

Did you know that 1 in 4 SC students missed 18 or more days of school last year? Data shows that poor attendance negatively impacts student achievement. Let's Be Present S.C.! Check out presentsc.com for resources on how to promote school attendance. #BePresentSC

1 IN 4 KIDS ARE **CHRONICALLY ABSENT IN SC**

BE **PRESENT** S.C.

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

EXPECTMORESC.COM
Be Present S.C. | Expect More South Carolina
Join the Movement for Better Attendance Join the SC Education Oversight C...

Learn more

Statewide Campaign (continued)

School-level Campaigns

# 2025-26 Be Present S.C. Partner Schools (55)

- Display posters, banners, website badges and pledge certificates.

- Post about Be Present S.C. on school's social media.

- Have Be Present S.C. Parent and Family Information Sheets at the front desk.

- Provide photos of school's Be Present S.C. campaign efforts.

- Distribute pre-and post surveys to parents, families, and students so that we can determine if the campaign is changing attitudes.

School-level Campaigns: Honea Path Elementary
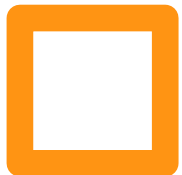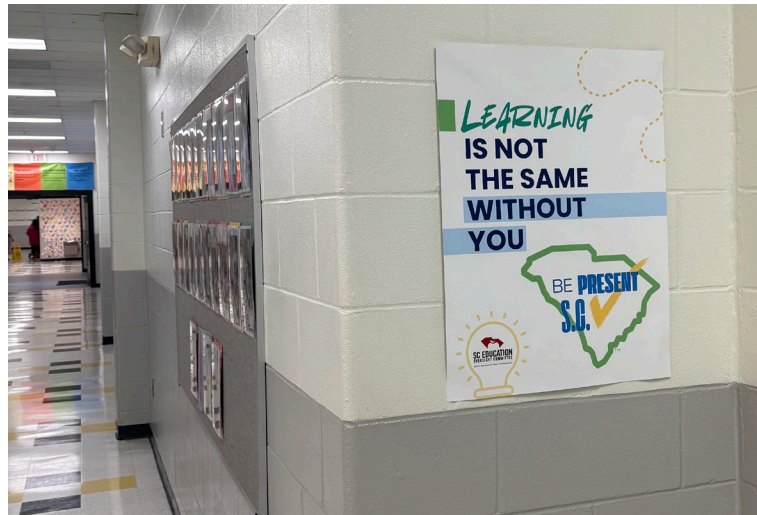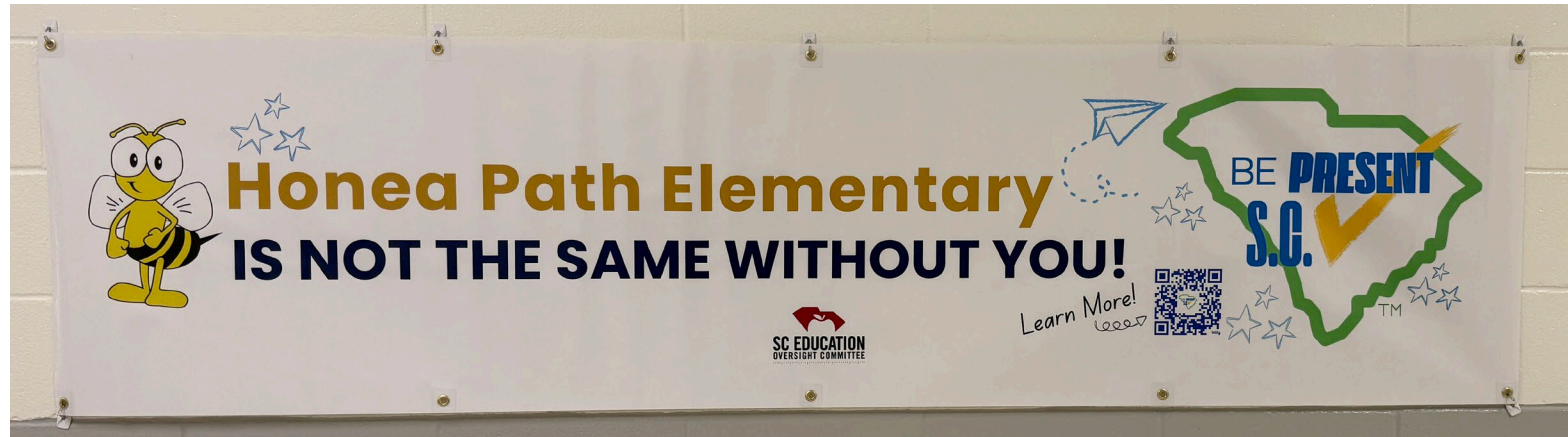
School-level Campaigns: North Charleston Elementary
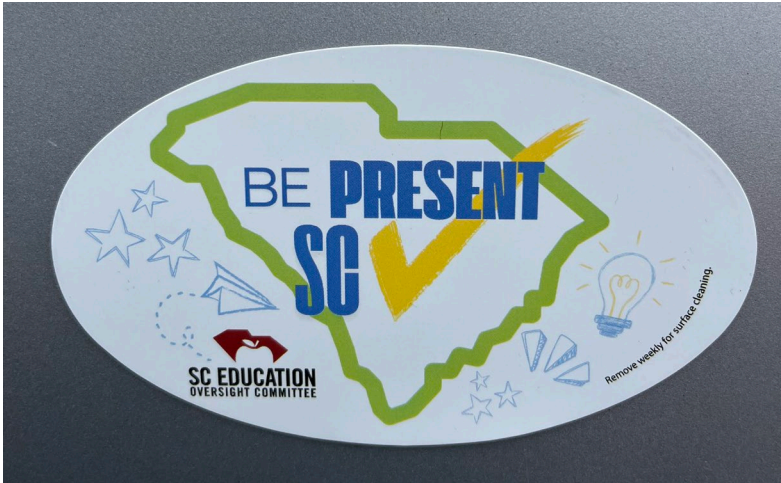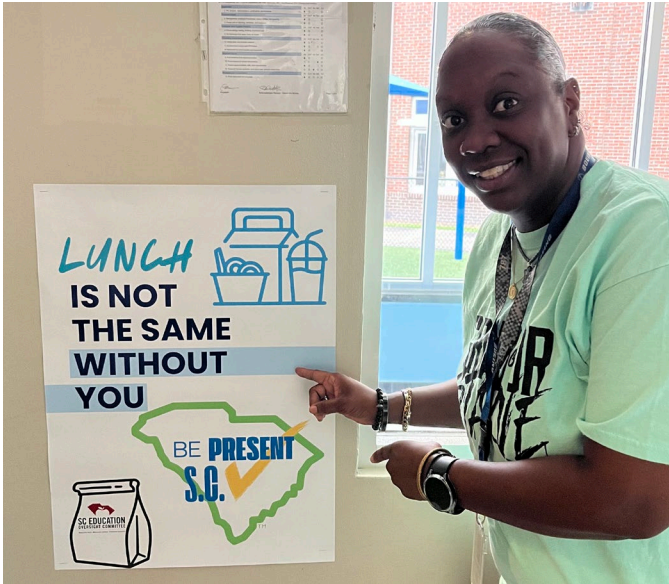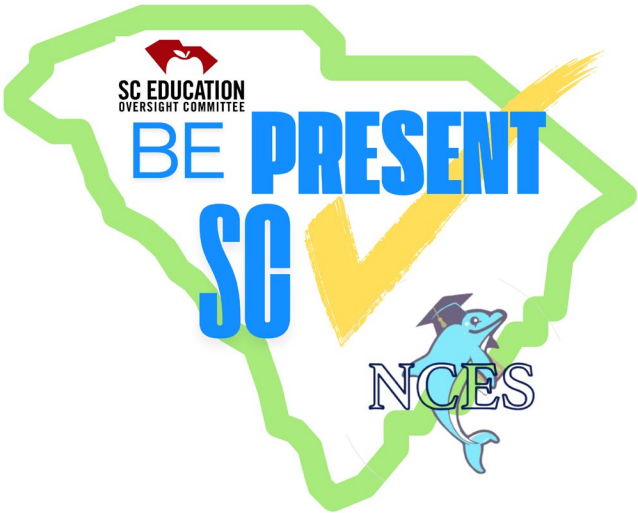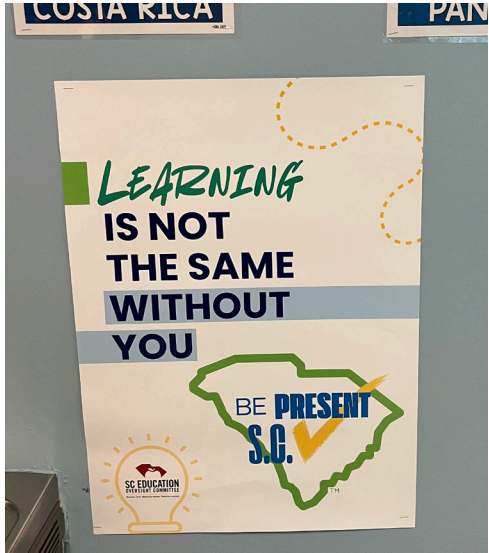
School-level Campaigns: Ridgeland Elementary
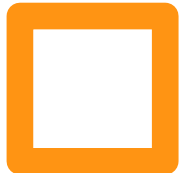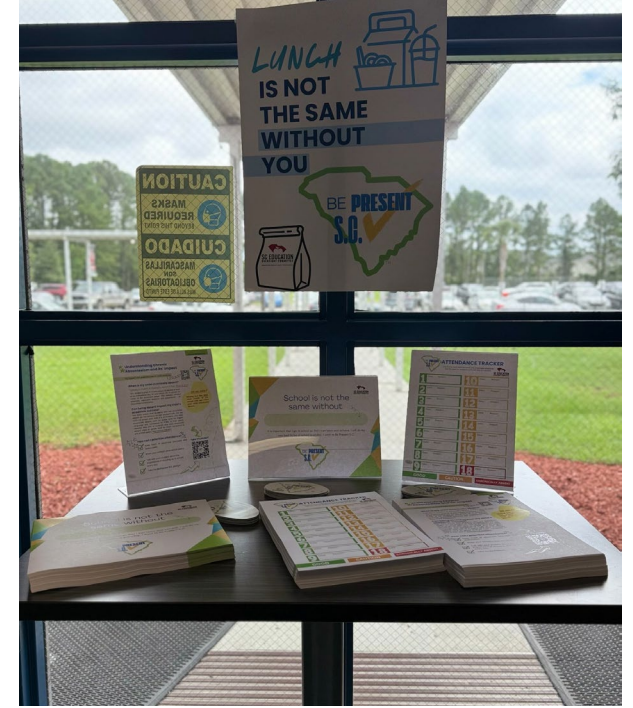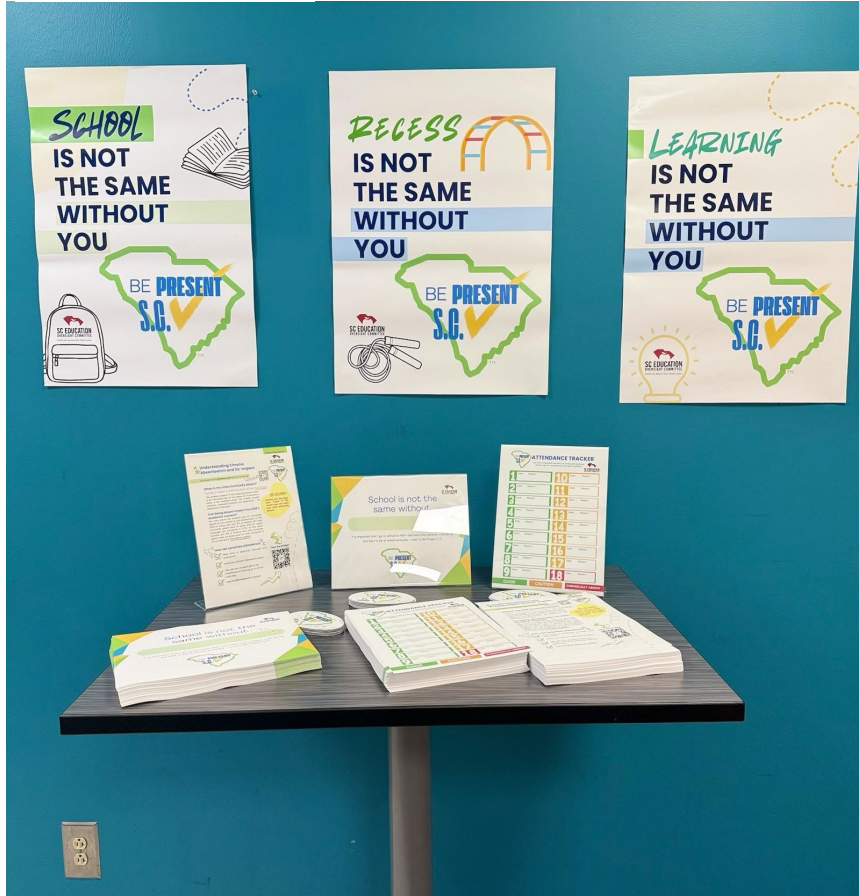
Be Present S.C. Resources

- Info Sheets: Tips to Support Student's Emotional Well Being (In partnership with USC and SC BHDD Office of Mental Health)

- Info Sheets: Resources on Wellness and Health (Attendance Works)

- Attendance Tracker

- Focus Group Reports

- Be Present S.C. Pledge Certificate
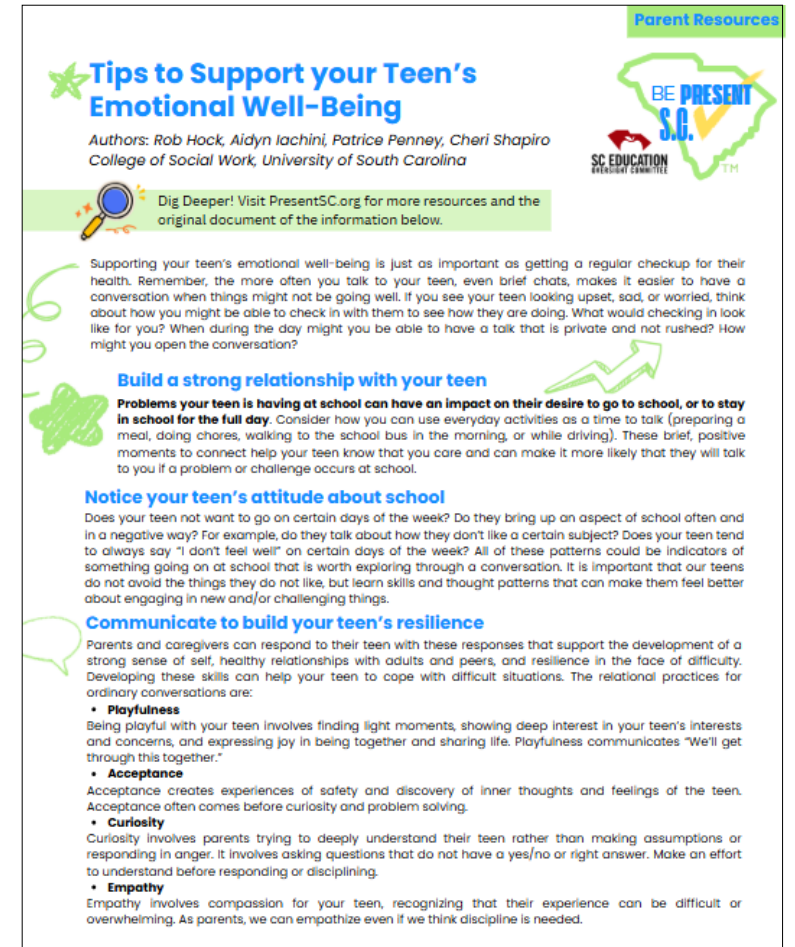
Next Steps …

- Be Present S.C. Essay Contest

- Library partnership

- Mall installation in January

Discussion/ Questions

Tenell Felder

EOC Communications Manager

ftenell@eoc.sc.gov

Launch Years/Partnership with University of South Carolina

Dana Yow

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2025 | Summer JAM (Jump Ahead in Math)

Welcome to Summer JAM!

USC launched Summer JAM on June 25, 2025. The six-week summer program helped students *Jump Ahead in Math*, learn how to navigate the Columbia campus, and meet new friends before fall semester. Best of all—*there was **minimal cost to attend**!*

Summer JAM ran from June 25 - August 1, 2025 and is no longer in session.

Summer JAM eligibility is based on your math test score and GPA prior to starting your freshman year. If you plan to apply for a future fall semester as a new freshman, you will be notified by USC if you are eligible to attend Summer JAM.

University of SC
Math Readiness Task Force

Launch Years Initiative

Working Together to Align Math Pathways

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USC Math Readiness Task Force

- USC Columbia has seen a significant increase in the number of students being placed into lower level math courses - Basic College Mathematics, Trigonometry, and Precalculus courses - in the past five years. The number of students placed into such courses in Fall 2019 was 1,015, while the number in Fall 2024 was 2,918 (a 187% increase).

- USC Columbia also conducted a data analysis that examined over 21,000 first-year, full-time USC Columbia students from Fall 2022 to Fall 2024 to identify factors influencing failure rates (DFW) in lower-level math courses. Key findings show that students with lower math placement exam scores, lower high school weighted core GPAs, and those from underrepresented or in-state backgrounds are more likely to struggle.

EOC/USC Summer JAM

- This summer, the EOC began working with USC Columbia on a partnership called Summer JAM (**J**ump **A**head in **M**ath), a six-week program designed to give students better math skills over the summer by them complete a math course with wrap-around services and support.
- The partnership is a unique research opportunity which involves studying the K-12 academic path of first-year freshman, as all participants are SC students fully admitted to the USC Columbia.
- These students, while admitted to the university, are not prepared for the rigors of postsecondary math. The primary outcomes of the project include:
  - Determine the access and opportunities that each student involved in the USC Summer JAM had while a student in SC high schools (each student's PK-12 academic "journey").
  - Specific to math, determine the level of rigor students experienced, examining coursework, modes of instruction, etc.
  - Determine the gaps that existed for each student leading to academic struggle.

Launch Years Initiative

Working Together to Align Math Pathways

Overall Goals

1. Developing, improving, and/or implementing multiple modern math pathways in high school that align with and feed into the higher education math pathways
2. Developing, improving, and/or implementing multiple modern math pathways in higher education that align with and follow from the high school math pathways
3. Measuring success and progress of math pathways implementation in your state
4. Providing students with the necessary information, choice, and opportunity to empower them to enroll in high school and postsecondary math courses aligned to their interests, aspirations, and career goals
5. Providing supports for all students to engage in on-grade-level math throughout high school and enroll in college-level math immediately upon matriculation into an institution of higher education

Leadership Team

Leadership Team: Convene a strategic leadership team, with two members identified as the state leads for the purpose of communicating with the Dana Center and their Launch Years Initiative liaison.

State leadership teams should include:
- At least two system-level K–12 representatives (e.g., Department of Education staff),
- At least two system-level higher education representatives (e.g., Board of Regents or Higher Education Coordinating Board staff),
- And someone who has the ability to request student-level data reports to be used by the leadership team and task force to make data-informed recommendations and action plans
- Other members should be recruited strategically to serve on your leadership team for a total of 6–8 leaders.

- August 15 Deadline

Presentation/Tour of Simulation Labs

EOC member Russell Baxley & Beaufort Memorial Hospital Education Director Joy Solomon

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EOC Chair Update

EOC Chair April Allen

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What's on the Horizon?

Ongoing Projects

- Communication of new Stackable Credential System
- EIA Recommendations to the SC General Assembly
- Report Card Release
- Analysis of Rural Recruitment Initiative (RRI) Incentives
- Beating the Odds Investigative Study
- Growing Pathways for Students (GPS) Partnership with SCDE (visualization and reporting platform for schools)
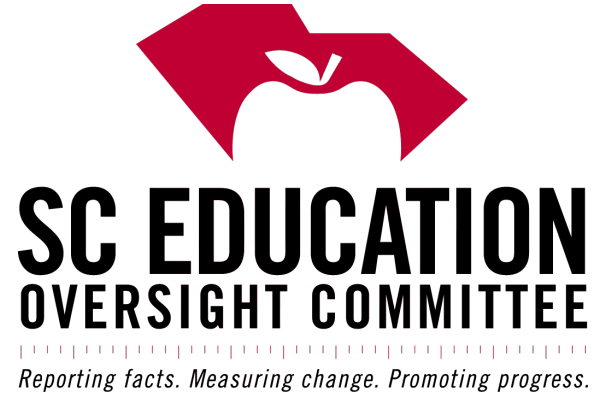
Dates of Note for EOC

- Cyclical Review of the Accountability System (to the EOC December 2025)
- Social Studies Standards Review (December 2025)
- Teacher Loan Program Evaluation (September/October 2025)
- Alternative Methods of Instruction Evaluation (September/October 2025)
- CTE Report Cards (November 2025/February 2026)

Upcoming Projects

- Approval of SC READY Science, SC READY ELA, and English 2 EOC
- Strategic Planning (update in 2026)
- EOC/State Board Retreat (focused on assessment review process; tentative Jan 2026)
- Evaluation of ESTF
- Launch Years Partnership

Health of the Agency

- Hiring of EOC Operations Manager
    - Taking immediate steps toward reaching 100% compliance of risk/security IT assessment for State.
    - Taking over administration of accounts payable, human resources, and procurement functions as well as alignment with SC Dept. of Administration's shared service agency.

SC Education Oversight Committee

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Adjournment