

AGENDA

SC Education Oversight Full Committee Meeting

Monday, December 9, 2024
1:00 p.m.
Room 433, Blatt Building

- | | | | |
|------|---|-------------------|--|
| I. | Welcome and Introductions | April Allen | |
| II. | Approval of Full Committee Minutes
for October 14, 2024..... | April Allen | |
| III. | <u>Special Presentation:</u>
Presentation from 2024 Middle School Data Trailblazer Award Winner
Casey Calhoun, Principal, Lakeside Middle (Lexington One) | | |
| IV. | <u>ASA Subcommittee Report</u>
Academic Standards & Assessments Subcommittee | Dr. Patty Tate | April Allen
CHAIR |
| | <u>Information Item:</u>
Chronic Absenteeism..... | Tenell Felder | Brian Newsome
VICE CHAIR |
| V. | <u>EIA Subcommittee Report</u>
EIA Subcommittee Update | Dr. Bob Couch | Terry Alexander
Melanie Barton
Russell Baxley
Neal Collins
Bob Couch
Bill Hager |
| | <u>Action Item:</u>
2025-26 Budget Recommendations..... | Dr. Rainey Knight | Barbara B. Hairfield
Sidney Locke |
| VI. | Rural Recruitment Initiative Preview..... | Rainey Knight | Jeri McCumbee
Melissa Pender
Patty J. Tate |
| VII. | Adjournment | | C. Ross Turner, III
Ellen Weaver |

SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
Full Committee Meeting
Minutes of the Oct. 14, 2024 Meeting

Members Present (in-person or remote): April Allen, Rep. Terry Alexander, Melanie Barton, Rep. Neal Collins, Dr. Bob Couch, Rep. Bill Hager, Barbara Hairfield, Sen. Kevin Johnson, Sen. Dwight Loftis, Jeri McCumbee, Dr. Brian Newsome, Melissa Pender

EOC Staff Present: Amina Asghar, Tenell Felder, Gabrielle Fulton, Hope Johnson-Jones, Dr. Rainey Knight, Dr. Matthew Lavery, Dr. Jenny May, Dana Yow

Guest(s) Present: Dr. Matthew Ferguson, SCDE

EOC Chair April Allen opened the meeting and welcomed the new EOC Data Engineer Amina Asghar.

Next, Allen asked for a motion to approve the June 10 full committee meeting minutes. After the minutes were approved, Allen introduced the 2024 Elementary School Data Trailblazer award winner as the first agenda item.

The 2024 Data Trailblazer award recognized a South Carolina public elementary, middle and high school that exemplarily used data to improve student outcomes, help families and caregivers interpret their students' grades and assessment scores, and establish and maintain a culture of a school-wide data-informed decision making.

Thirteen elementary schools submitted Data Trailblazers applications for which Joanne-Woodson Elementary was selected as winner.

Joanna-Woodson Elementary School Principal Arneice Renwick was called forward to present how Joanna-Woodson Elementary used data to positively impact student achievement.

Principal Renwick thanked the committee for giving her the opportunity to present. She noted that when she began as principal, the school had a lot of data that was not being utilized.

She emphasized the importance of analyzing data from the following Data Sources:

- Teacher Assessments
- Attendance Rates
- Fountas and Pinnell
- Dreambox
- KRA
- MAP Fluency/MAP
- SC READY
- Linkit Benchmarks
- Teachers, parent and student surveys

Principal Renwick then highlighted key data findings, the first of which was attendance rate. Attendance rate data indicated that students who missed many days were not academically performing as well as their peers. Renwick reported that after interventions were put into place, Joanna-Woodson Elementary did not have any students on its' truancy list.

Renwick reviewed MAP and SC READY score data to help determine areas of weakness for students. She also pointed out that data indicated African American students, students of poverty and students with a disability were not performing as well as their peers – leading herself and teachers to discuss strategies to assist those populations.

Next, Renwick showed how Joanna-Woodson Elementary utilizes professional learning groups to help keep track of student progress using school interventionists to help students with reading and math.

Renwick also discussed utilizing parent/student conferences to discuss specific data points and areas of growth, as well as Parent Nights.

Following her presentation, questions were accepted.

Senator Kevin Johnson thanked Principal Renwick for her presentation and asked if she could provide any insight into why African American students and students in poverty are not performing as well as their counterparts and what innovations they are using for improvement.

Renwick replied that parents of these students were more likely not to graduate from high school while others have jobs that require them to work most of the time, leaving little time for school involvement. She also noted her observation that often African American students are not as motivated as their peers. She noted that African American students tend to do better when their teachers are also African American or when their teacher in general takes interest in them. She noted that growth has been seen at her school with students in poverty.

Senator Johnson then commented that from his observation, parental involvement is often lacking in those demographics. He noted that students tend to perform better academically when their parents are involved in school.

Next, Representative Terry Alexander asked what Joanna-Woodson's student/teacher ratio was.

Renwick responded they typically have smaller classroom sizes with about 1 or 2 teachers to 20 students.

Senator Dwight Loftis then asked if Renwick noticed students responded well to hands-on learning, to which Renwick replied that they did. She then referred to the school's Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program as being a method to provide students with more engaged learning.

Following questions, EOC member Melanie Barton presented Principal Renwick with a congratulatory letter on behalf of Governor Henry McMaster.

Following this, Allen called forward EOC Executive Director Dana Yow and EOC Deputy Director Dr. Matthew Lavery to present the Information Item of the 2024 School Report Card Release, noting that EOC staff did attempt to have the report card release on Oct. 10 so that the committee could hear a full report.

Yow shared that the report card release would take place at Pine Crest Elementary in Greenwood 50 with the SC Department of Education. She noted that South Carolina has seen a steady improvement in ELA performance yet student performance in math is stagnant.

Yow also addressed chronic absenteeism and thanked Barton for bringing the issue to the committee. She reiterated that rising chronic absenteeism rates was a national issue and that COVID negatively impacted both student and teacher attendance. She informed the committee that EOC staff would be conducting a focus group study on chronic absenteeism.

Yow then called forward Dr. Lavery to share his analysis of how chronic absenteeism impacted student outcomes during the 2022-23 school year.

Dr. Lavery defined chronic absenteeism using the federal definition – being absent, excused or unexcused, for 10% or more of the days that the student is enrolled. He then shared the following data:

- 23% of students in South Carolina were chronically absent in the 2022-23 school year.
 - Of this percentage, 15% of elementary students were chronically absent
 - 21% of middle school students were chronically absent
 - 24% of high school students were chronically absent

He noted that from those figures, one in five students missed more than 10% of the days they were enrolled at school. Dr. Lavery also noted a trend showing that chronic absenteeism rates increase by grade level.

Dr. Lavery then presented data on how chronic absenteeism rates impacted student achievement.

- 60% of students who are not chronically absent met or exceeded SC READY ELA, while only 40% of students who are chronically absent did.
- Less than half of chronically absent students met or exceeded SC READY Math
- Only 16% of middle school students who are chronically absent met or exceeded SC READY Math
- Only 8% of middle school students who were extremely chronically absent met or exceeded SC READY Math.

Dr. Lavery also presented data showing that students who are chronically absent who transfer to other schools also show low student achievement rates, as do pupils in poverty.

Senator Kevin Johnson asked about the racial demographics of chronically absent students to which Dr. Lavery responded that he could set up the data to do that specific analysis.

Next, Representative Neal Collins discussed state law regarding chronic absenteeism and stated that family court attorneys, judges and school district employees should hear the data Dr. Lavery presented to understand its' impact.

Ms. Yow also informed the committee that EOC staff looked at how chronic absenteeism has impacted every state across socioeconomic status.

EOC member Melissa Pender, Coosa Elementary Principal, stated that she has had to place many of her students on attendance contracts last year which includes speaking with parents. She also noted that many parents did not understand how teachers are negatively impacted by student absences.

Following this discussion, Barbara Hairfield gave the report for the Academic Standards and Assessments subcommittee. She stated that the subcommittee met on Sept. 16 and had two

information items from EOC staff regarding the Cyclical Review of the Accountability System Update and the EOC Strategic Plan update, as well as an action item on the Cut Score Concordance of College Readiness Exams.

There was then a motion to adopt the recommendations presented by EOC staff on the Cut Score Concordance. Motion passed.

After the motion passed, EIA subcommittee chair Dr. Bob Couch gave the September 16th EIA subcommittee report. Dr. Couch stated that after hearing the EOC's strategic plan, the subcommittee discussed implementing a process to handle new EIA funding requests. He then called forward EOC Director of Strategic Innovation Dr. Rainey Knight to discuss upcoming EIA budget requests for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Dr. Knight informed the committee that EIA budget hearings would take place on Nov. 18th at 10:30 a.m. and to inform her if there was a specific program they would like to hear from.

Following this, Chair Allen called an executive session to discuss a legal matter.

After the executive session, the meeting returned to open session to announce no action was taken. The meeting was then adjourned.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Date: December 9, 2024

INFORMATION ITEM:

Chronic Absenteeism Report

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

SECTION 59-18-1700. Public information campaign; development and approval; funding.

(A) An on-going public information campaign must be established to apprise the public of the status of the public schools and the importance of high standards for academic performance for the public school students of South Carolina.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

The EOC contracted out with Midlands Market Research to conduct focus groups of SC high school students regarding attitudes and norms regarding attendance. National and state data show a trend of absenteeism that is negatively impacting student performance.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

\$12,500

ACTION REQUEST

For approval

For information

ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Not Approved

Amended

Action deferred (explain)



FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH ON CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

METHODOLOGY

This report presents the findings of a focus group study conducted on behalf of the SC Education Oversight Committee. The primary objectives of the study were to better understand the underlying issues that contribute to chronic absenteeism and how South Carolina's public high schools can develop strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism.

Three online focus groups were conducted among South Carolina high school students on October 29 and 30, 2024. Among the 26 students who participated, seven missed 18 or more days of school last year and an additional four missed between 10 and 17 days.

In addition to the primary research conducted, this report includes some secondary research on the topic of chronic absenteeism.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SC Department of Education defines chronic absenteeism as “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 (and) includes excused absences, unexcused absences, and suspensions.”

Data from the US Department of Education indicates that national chronic absenteeism rates significantly increased following the COVID pandemic – from 15% in 2019 to nearly 30% during the 2021-22 school year. South Carolina mirrored national trends showing a significant increase in chronic absenteeism rates after the COVID pandemic from 13% in 2019 to 25% during the 2022-23 school year.

Chronic absenteeism contributes to negative educational outcomes for students.

According to the University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, children who are chronically absent as early as preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are [much less likely to read at grade level by the third grade](#). Students who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.

Focus group findings indicated that the high school students included in the study were not familiar with the term chronic absenteeism and did not know what it meant to be chronically absent. They seemed to be more familiar with truancy (both with the term and its definition). This is an important finding, as it identifies awareness of chronic absenteeism as an issue.

Finding a solution to chronic absenteeism is challenging because the reasons that a student might be chronically absent are varied, diverse and interrelated. For example, focus group discussions identified the following factors as contributing to chronic absenteeism:

- > The mindset that you don't need to be in school everyday
- > Bullying (in person and/or online)
- > Feeling the school environment is not safe

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- > Mental health issues
- > Physical health issues
- > Students who don't see education as a priority
- > Parents who don't see education as a priority for their children
- > Parents who do not see school attendance as a priority
- > Transportation issues
- > Teacher shortages/turnover
- > Teachers who are unprepared to handle high school students
- > Unstable living conditions
- > Drug and alcohol use (by students, parents or both)

Due to the number of factors that can contribute to chronic absenteeism and the fact that some are within the control of the student and/or school and some are not, addressing chronic absenteeism will often require a one-on-one approach so the underlying issue or issues can be identified.

Another important take-away is that many students do not feel enforcement around absenteeism in general is very strong. Some remarked that out-of-school suspension is not exactly a punishment for someone who is chronically absent. Similarly, several remarked that seat time is not a strong deterrent. In addition to consequences and enforcement, students also suggested high schools could do a better job of recognizing, rewarding and celebrating good attendance.

DETAILED STUDY FINDINGS

The remainder of the report follows the outline of the focus group discussion guide. The narrative includes verbatim quotes from students around the various topics covered. The verbatims have been edited in some cases for clarity, grammar, etc.

COMMUNITY AT SCHOOL

Students were asked if they felt their school had a sense of community and if they felt like they were a part of that community.

Involvement with a school, whether it is through sports or clubs, has a lot to do with how much a student likes his or her school.

That's what I love about my school is that I have the opportunity for that. So, I am in, I do theater, I do chorus, I do play two sports and I also am the head of four clubs or I'm on the office of at least four clubs. And I think that definitely builds community very well. I think it well represents that.

And last year I took dance – and freshman year as well – and I felt like most of us got along really well and it was really nice that we all had a common interest, so it was very enjoyable.

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When I get to school, my teachers, they'll greet me out in the hallway and be happy to see me and it feels like I'm glad to be there and they're glad I'm there.

What I like most about high school is the opportunities to just take initiative and do what you want to do. Join a club if you want to, join a club and all of the opportunities that are with higher education.

Oh yeah, I mean I love high school. I don't have any complaints. I like the sports, and I have good friends.

Well, I like lots of things. I like getting to hang out with all types of people and hang out with all my friends. I like learning the topics I like in class. It's very nice and I also like my teachers because they're really funny.

I have to say mine does [have a sense of community], it's at least one Friday of every month we have a thing called Greek Day. Basically, it's based off of Greek gods and each house is a different homeroom and we kind of do games in the cafeteria or gym to have one house win whichever game it is. And so, it's a pretty big thing for the entire community at PSA. So, I'd say that is definitely a thing there. Community.

Some recognize that community exists at their schools, but involvement in it – specifically too much involvement – can cause stress. At the same time, others say there is community, but they don't feel a part of the community.

I was just going to say at [my] school we have our student council, so they usually try to emphasize high school schoolwide participation with things like Spirit Week and all that. But it's definitely like, if you participate in that, then I guess you would consider yourself a part of a community. But for a lot of people that either can't do stuff like that or don't really see the fun in stuff like that, it can feel a little off at times. And then there's all the sports and things, so there's different branches of community at our school, but it's like, I wouldn't say there's an overarching community.

It definitely does [have a sense of community], but it's a big stressful commitment, especially if you're playing year-round sports or stuff like that. It's a big-time commitment.

At my school, I would definitely say that we have a sense of community, but I feel like there's really only certain people that are a part of that community. It's not inclusive and I don't think that I am a part of it. I guess I feel like it's probably the people that are really social and want to hang out with each other are a part of that community. And then there's other people that kind of feel outcasted I guess. And I guess I could say that I feel like that, but that's how it is at my school.

ATTENDANCE

Students were asked if they think they need to go to school every day during the week. This part of the discussion was interesting in that many students do not feel they need to be physically present every day.

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Some students who were in AP classes said it's better to be there in person in order to keep up. Others, however, tended to think it was pretty easy to keep up and get their work done online. This includes, for many, a feeling that you can catch up pretty easily if you skip a day. It is also important to consider if students' belief that they do not need in-person instruction to successfully complete class work was validated through their grades on those assignments.

I don't think that we need to go to school five days a week because we don't even have most of our teachers ... and the people there aren't very nice. The teachers are just mean. Most of them don't even have everything they need to do to teach. Last year I was taught by a substitute for English. I haven't had a normal English teacher in three years.

My sister and I are both given opportunities to skip school. Our mom likes to call them mental health days because given how much coursework we both are given in our individual classes, skipping school gives us a chance to reset.

I know for my schedule right now I have my first class in the mornings, broadcast, as an in-person class. And then my second block class is dual enrollment, so I can really stay at school, go home, do whatever, as long as I'm getting my work turned in.

I feel like in middle school it wasn't as important to go, but now in high school you have to go.

And I also take AP classes and honor classes like [name] mentioned and I don't think I could do most of the stuff that I do at school at home right now. I understand if you have one or two classes online or online pace classes or something like that, but I don't see any way I could do my whole high school journey from home.

I know personally for me, whenever COVID happened and we went online – I mean this was still in middle school – but my grades in the majority of my classes, they all fell significantly because I just couldn't keep up with online and I would've rather been in the class with the teacher asking for help rather than being at home behind a computer.

I actually just yesterday finished up all the coursework for a Business 105 course for the rest of the semester, so I don't have to worry about doing that anymore, which it's a hybrid in-person virtual class, so we don't have to attend the class as long as we're getting our work done, which has been really great for me. Then I can go have the extra time to go get a job or go hang out with friends or get other stuff done. I don't have to worry about sitting in that class when it's something I could just sit down one day and just knock it out.

For me that's kind of split because of my classes. I have two classes that are mainly in person, but they're easy for me to understand. But also, most of my teachers, they post copies of everything online and a lot of our work is online. So, I feel like since it's online, if you miss a day of school, it's going to be easy for you to still redo all that work.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM: WHAT IS IT?

This part of the discussion technically fell under attendance, but warrants being broken out. The high school students who participated in the focus groups were not familiar with the term chronic absenteeism and did

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not know the number of days associated with being chronically absent, or what type of absences counted towards chronic absenteeism. Students were much more familiar with truancy (both with the term and its definition, as well as the consequence of having to go to court). Students were asked, “when you hear “chronic absenteeism, what does that mean?” and “how many days do you think you might have to miss to be chronically absent?”

I haven't heard that term used before, but based off the words I can probably infer what it means.

I think I've heard it before, but never really paid any mind to it. But again, like he said, based off the words I can kind of picture what it means.

I feel like chronic absenteeism, the term chronic, when I think about it, it's something that gets really severe, like chronic pain or something. So, I feel like it would be your absences get so severe, like truancy can't even get to it, or you're just skipping days in a row and then you're going on and doing that multiple times in the year. That's what I feel like it would be.

I guess maybe past the 20 - 30 day mark you're really considered a chronic absentee.

I know 10 days in a row is truant, so I would guess probably around that number or higher.

I think it's 15 days. Unexcused?

But I know a lot of people that have a big problem with skipping. There are some kids in my classes who they'll skip every other day.

Students were also asked who they think is responsible for making sure students are in school each day.

I mean obviously it's your parents' responsibility since you're still a minor, but at the same time it's like if you're responsible for driving yourself to school, once you get to that certain age, it should be your responsibility, not theirs. They can motivate you and look after you, but at the end of the day when you leave to go to school, that's on you.

I think it's mostly your parents' fault and sometimes your fault.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM: REASONS

In order not to bias the discussion by providing any reasons, the moderator began this part of the discussion by asking, “what are some of the reasons a student might be chronically absent?” Follow-up questions and probes were asked later.

Students identified many reasons why students might be chronically absent, which include:

SAFETY

Safety concerns contribute to many students feeling uncomfortable at school. As demonstrated in the following quotes, violence, bullying (online or in person), etc. were discussed at length. This is an important finding.

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But another thing... I wish I could change about my school is my school is very unsafe. It's a lot of violent activity going on in my school, like a boy got stabbed last year, guns getting brought inside of school, a lot of blunts in the bathroom. It's just an unsafe school. So, I fear for my safety a lot.

But when you see in an academic setting, it's strange having people play music really loud in the hallways that are filled with curse words and things. That's just normal. That's high school for you. And then having people get into near fights almost every single week. You would hope you wouldn't see someone get punched in the face when you're trying to go to third period, but it just happens. And then of course people doing whatever, saying whatever, acting any kind of way in front of administrators, administrators not doing anything. It's just I guess the public high school experience.

For me, I don't really look at school as welcoming. The teachers aren't the best towards me. I guess it's just the school. I don't really feel safe most of the time because most of the shootings going on.

But I know the days that I chose not to come to school, it was normally because of the setting of people that I was like, I'm a friendly person, but that doesn't mean that everybody is going to be friendly towards you. And I had a group of people that weren't necessarily that friendly towards me and it made me not want to come to school. I just didn't want to put myself in that situation.

Safety in my high school is a really big issue because at my high school ... every other week we got to have metal detectors at the high school. So, I don't think many people want to show because safety in my high school is not really good. My high school is one of the worst high schools in my area, so I don't think that's why people want to show up every day because they're scared.

The drama, the arguments, the petty fights.

Somebody brought a gun to school last year consistently. I've heard about kids stabbing each other with pencils and pens and forks and whatnot.

I think safety can be an issue. Fights at my school every other day over nothing.

I think that technology has upsurged cyber bullying, but recently our school has been having an epidemic of Barstool accounts. And I don't know if you know what that is, but I can give a little – a Barstool account is basically a school, somebody in a school will take up the name of it and they'll be competing with other Barstool accounts. They both post photos of students back and forth, making fun of them, making fun of teachers, making a lot of accusations that are really harmful. And then also Instagram confession pages have been a really big thing in our school recently as well, that administration has had to step in to try to rectify it to the point that if somebody is on the page during school hours, they're going to be sent to the principal's office.

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MENTAL HEALTH

The topic of mental health surfaced quite frequently and is viewed by students as one of the biggest contributors of chronic absenteeism. Findings identify an opportunity for high schools to alleviate some of the factors that contribute to mental health issues such as concerns about safety at schools, bullying, the amount of homework assigned, etc.

I think [mental health is] the biggest factor now. I would say 10 years ago it would've been transportation, but now it's people feeling overworked or stressed.

Mainly because of my mental health. I've had a lot of problems with my mental health. Last year, I think I missed 30 days. So, sometimes I just feel super drained and it just makes it really difficult for me to get up, get out of bed and go to school.

I know in my friend group personally a lot of us missed a lot of days, especially my other friends. One of my friends, she spent half the year out of school, but it was medical stuff, but most of the time it was just she didn't feel like coming so she didn't come. And then I had one of my friends, she didn't show up one time just because she didn't want to come to school. She didn't feel like it, she couldn't get out of bed. So, things like that. The mental health... I guess she wasn't ready to handle school, so she just didn't come.

I definitely was absent a lot last year and I guess I'm on that track now for this year. Last year it was the same thing. I had a lot of appointments, braces appointments, mental health things. And then there was one week in February I went on a cruise, and I was gone for a week of school. So that kind of really messed me up. And then this year it's been a lot of mental health stuff that comes with being a senior.

Sometimes I think they skip just because it gets stressful for them at times, so they take a break and go skip it.

TEACHERS

Overall, students spoke highly of their teachers. While negative comments about teachers were not a major part of the discussions, topics like teacher shortages, the quality of instruction and the inability of some teachers to cope with high school students surfaced.

I mean it really depends on the teacher. I will say this, I'm speaking for a whole of our school. My school can barely even keep teachers. A lot of our teachers are in Texas. Teachers quit. We have empty classrooms all the time. We have people on Zoom meetings, we have a lot of online classes. They started making a lot of kids take online classes. A lot of us don't even really come to school anymore because they cannot find new teachers. But the teachers we do have, they're not that kind towards the students and our school doesn't listen. It doesn't listen to us until something bad happens. There's been multiple teachers that show signs of racism that have been caught on video being racist and saying the N word. They don't get fired, she's still here and that happened two years ago.

I have friends that skip specific classes. They don't want to be around that teacher.

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Most of the time I just keep my nose down, but I've had teachers, sexist teachers that look down on me just because a guy or I've seen racist teachers before. Obviously, it doesn't affect me as much, but I've seen on some of my friends and there's not much you can do about it. You can't go, there's no one really to tell about it or you can, but it's like nothing's going to happen.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation issues have long been associated with chronic absenteeism. From family issues and conflicts to a shortage of bus drivers, students talked about how transportation issues can make them be tardy or miss altogether.

I think transportation's a big deal because I got an early bird class meeting, I got to get to school an hour before school starts and one of the girls in my class, she's late every day, but it's not her fault. Her mom is a nurse, and especially in the medical field, your shifts can be long at night and having siblings and other people in your family and having to get those kids to school first can make you late for school. Also, people can miss the bus. I'm the only child and it's just me and my mom. So, I was blessed enough to not really be worried about school. But other kids, getting to school is a big deal. People's bus drivers can be late. Like I was saying, my school isn't really the best at being professional or put together.

I'm not absent. I am late. I'm a changed person. But last year I really tried to show up on time and it just wasn't working out for me. So, after 15 minutes you get mark absent.

I do know in my school district we have a big lack of bus drivers and whether they do come early or not, I know mine comes really early, but my neighbor down the street, we have two buses that come on our street for some reason. And I know her bus driver wasn't in commission for two weeks and she just didn't have a ride to school, so she didn't, didn't go to school for what?... seven plus seven - 14 counting weekends. But she didn't go to school for 10 days and they were all principal excused too, just because she didn't have a ride to school.

JUST DON'T CARE ABOUT SCHOOL

The high school students we spoke with talked a lot about students who "just don't care" about school. Whether it's the student, the parent(s), or both, education is not a priority for everyone. This problem is a particularly challenging one. Addressing some of the other issues like safety, teacher shortages and bus driver shortages could be straightforward. Changing perceptions that education is not important is more difficult to overcome.

They think this is the highest I'm going to get in my life, which is sad to think about, but they think this is the highest I'm going to get in my life. I can treat people however I want. I can say whatever I want. I can do whatever I want. I'm having fun right now, so I'm going to throw away everything and then bring down my friends with me. High school is just not the peak life. It's the beginning of your life.

I feel like if you excel in school then you don't really have a reason to skip. But at the same time, if you're doing bad in school and you really don't see the point and then that would lead you to just not show up anymore.

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All the people that I know that do it are juniors or seniors and they're either about to graduate or doing early graduation, so they're on their last few credits and don't really care.

Well, some people just don't care about coming to school. They just don't.

Yeah, I think it's the same at my school that some just they really don't care about their grades, or I guess their future in their life because they just don't show up and it doesn't matter to them.

Well, some they just don't think school is important. They'd rather stay home and if they go to school, they feel like it's just boring.

And sometimes I remember talking once to this one girl and her mom would just let her stay home when she didn't feel like going, which my parents would never do. So, I feel like some just they either don't care, or they don't feel like going.

One student suggested that some students might not value education because they see influencers making money online and think they will do the same.

I feel like it's just changed with how students see with all these people online showing off their money, thinking that a lot of them are going to make it big, which I'm not saying again, it's not impossible. It's just the fact that because of all the content that's online now, all the creators, all the kids are thinking, oh, I'm going to be a streamer. I'm going to be a YouTuber one day. It's going to be easy for me. I'm not going to have to worry about school. And they see these inspirational videos where they're like, oh, I failed college. I failed sixth grade. But look at where I am now. I feel like it's just people seeing that in general on social media, it's like promoted.

Students also recognized that it's not always the fault of the student. Some students live in homes where their parents don't prioritize education and/or live in a household that is not conducive to getting a good night's sleep, etc.

I definitely think home life has some involvement into it. Your parents just don't really care to push you to go to school or maybe you just don't care enough to actually attend and go to school.

Sometimes they could be having family issues, or they could be just not wanting to go or their parents just don't care what they be doing on their free time, so they just really want to come to school. Some they don't want to be there or they getting them bullied or something. Who knows?

Could have family problems and they can't go to school because they don't have anybody to take them.

I know some people whose family do not care if they go to school or not. It doesn't mean anything to the parents of these kids for them to go to school. So, they either go to school and do terrible, they just don't do anything or they don't go to school and have to repeat or make up. And like [name] said, sometimes there are bigger responsibilities. I know people that have to take care of their younger siblings or an older relative, like a grandparent

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PHYSICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS/ FAMILY HEALTH PROBLEMS

Although to a far less extent than mental health, physical health was mentioned as a factor as well.

However, an example of another thing is my sister, she got diagnosed with diabetes her junior year of high school and that had her out of school for weeks and weeks

I know from personal experience, my freshman year I was absent every other Friday because my grandparents were diagnosed with cancer. So, every other weekend we were driving up there to Tennessee to help them with cancer, their issues. And I know for me, I was kind of putting my classwork on the back burner for the time being because I cared more about spending the last couple of, at the time we didn't know if it was going to be days, weeks, months, so I valued the time with them more than my schoolwork.

CONSEQUENCES

An important take-away is that many students do not feel enforcement around chronic absenteeism is very strong. Some remarked that out-of-school suspension for someone who is chronically absent is not exactly a punishment. Similarly, several remarked that seat time is not much of a deterrent.

I've seen kids not show up for months at a time or weeks at a time and then they just show up. I have a current friend who hasn't come for weeks, hasn't shown up in weeks. I don't know if he still goes here anymore. Last year there was another guy that just wouldn't come for weeks at a time, and I don't know if he was punished for it. I mean I know he had to do afterschool stuff to make up the time, but he was never kicked for it. I haven't really heard of anyone being kicked at my school for missing so much time.

Yeah, we're supposed to have seat time, and I had 40 hours of seat time last year. I'm just going to be honest; I did have to do those 40 hours. It was supposed to be in person. I didn't do it. It was online. So, all I had to do was keep my Chromebook open on a certain tab for 40 hours, which was real easy over the weekend. And boom, I got my 40 hours. But that's not helping me want to come to school, I know I can just get away with it. They need to be more strict on it.

[Schools should] keep up with the absences.

Not really [when asked about consequences]. They just get late on their work, and they get zeros for it, but the school doesn't really care.

Ours is the same way. If you miss a certain amount of days, you have to do seats program, which is like you just go sit to make up the time, but it's not like there's some crazy repercussions for missing these days and stuff until once you get to a certain amount you're marked as truant, which is a problem obviously, but it's not like there's [big consequences].

But if you're skipping that many days of school, you don't care about your grades though. I agree with you [name], there's actually more repercussions for being tardy at my school than there is for just not going altogether. The biggest repercussion you would face is that you would have to go to court over truancy, but those days can be made up super easily. Like you guys said, you

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just sit down in a room for an hour or two hours and you've made up one or two blocks depending on how long your class times are.

I know a kid who missed two months consecutively and still was able to move on because he did so much seat time in summer school.

Make the policy on missing days more aggressive.

I think honestly tying in, I know in colleges attendance is graded. Having a system like that to where I know people are skipping, don't care about their grades as much, but if it's going to force you to repeat the grade or force you to drop out, maybe that would appeal more.

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

In addition to consequences and enforcement, students also suggested high schools could do a better job of recognizing, rewarding and celebrating good attendance.

Think if you provide opportunities for people to get congratulated when they do go to school. Our school used to do something called the tardy party, and it was if you were [present for] a consecutive amount of weeks, we would have a pep rally that you could go to or there was some sort of prize for coming to school, just having some initiative for people to actually want to consistently be there.

I think they should make school more fun, have more field trips and more pep rallies so people could want to have fun in school.

Others suggested schools do more to help students who are chronically absent.

Well, I feel like if some people struggle in class, maybe enacting more tutoring opportunities at my school, people can get a tutor through the National Honors Society. So, I feel like that would definitely help with people that struggle with their work.

Maybe if they're gone for a long while of time, maybe first ask the parents if they're okay because sometimes the parents are the reason why the kid is not there. Or if the parents didn't respond, then they could try and figure out what's happening. And also, most kids don't want to talk about any sort of traumatic experience. They have seen bullying, and their parents are arguing or something. So maybe have a place where the kids who have those type of things could talk to each other about it.

CONCLUSION

The underlying issues and factors that contribute to chronic absenteeism are varied, diverse and interrelated. Safety and mental health seem to be two of the biggest contributors to chronic absenteeism. Addressing the teacher shortage should be among the top priorities as well, as having adequately staffed schools will help address safety and, likely, mental health for both students and teachers. Finally, efforts around consequences for absenteeism should be enforced and schools should consider recognizing/rewarding students with good attendance.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Date: December 9, 2024

ACTION ITEM

Budget and Proviso Recommendations, Fiscal Year 2025-26

PURPOSE/AUTHORITY

SECTION 59-6-10 of the Education Accountability Act requires the EOC to “review and monitor the implementation and evaluation of the Education Accountability Act and Education Improvement Act programs and funding” and to “make programmatic and funding recommendations to the General Assembly.”

CRITICAL FACTS

The attached are recommendations from the EIA subcommittee, voted on December 2, 2024.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

- November 4, 2024: Held public hearing for entities funded by or requesting EIA revenues.
- November 18, 2024: Held public hearing for entities funded by or requesting new EIA revenues and convened to discuss EIA budget priorities. Subcommittee requested EOC staff compile priorities of EIA budget from the discussion and present recommendation for consideration at the December 2, 2024 meeting.
- December 2, 2024: Two additional programs presented to EIA subcommittee; subcommittee approved recommendations.

ECONOMIC IMPACT FOR EOC

Cost: No fiscal impact beyond current appropriations

Fund/Source: EIA

ACTION REQUEST

For approval

for information

ACTION TAKEN

Approved

Amended

Not Approved

Action deferred (explain)

EIA and EAA Budget and Proviso Requests for FY 2025-26

Approved by EIA and Improvement Mechanisms Subcommittee

December 2, 2024

Section 59-6-10 of the Education Accountability Act requires the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) “review and monitor the implementation and evaluation of the Education Accountability Act and the Education Improvement Act programs and funding” and to “make programmatic and funding recommendations to the General Assembly.” To meet this statutory requirement, the EOC required each EIA-funded program or entity to submit a program and budget report detailing the objectives and outcomes of each program for Fiscal Years 2023-24 and any additional requests for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

The EIA and Improvement Mechanism Subcommittee met on the following dates:

- November 4, 2024: Held public hearing for entities funded by or requesting EIA revenues.
- November 18, 2024: Held public hearing for entities funded by or requesting new EIA revenues and convened to discuss EIA budget priorities. Subcommittee requested EOC staff compile priorities of EIA budget from the discussion and present recommendation for consideration at the December 2, 2024 meeting.
- December 2, 2024: Two additional programs presented to EIA subcommittee; subcommittee approved recommendations.

On November 19, 2024, the Board of Economic Advisors (BEA) issued updated revenue projections for FY 2025-26. The BEA identified \$44,638,000 increase in EIA funds for FY 2025-26. Nonrecurring funds are estimated at \$87,000,000. The total monies requested from EIA programs (excluding the SCDE’s requested presented on November 4, 2024, totaled \$131,707,920.)

EIA Program Name	FY 2023-24 Appropriation	FY 2024-25 Appropriation	2025-26 requested change	2025-26 EOC EIA Subcommittee Recommended Increase/Decrease	Explanation
Education Economic and Development Act	\$8,413,832.00	\$8,413,832.00	\$0.00	No change	
State Aid to Classrooms	\$709,106,434.00	\$738,826,434.00	\$200,000,000	No change	
Industry Certifications/ Credentials	\$3,000,000.00	\$3,000,000.00	\$0.00	No Change	
Adult Education	\$17,073,736.00	\$17,073,736.00	\$0.00	No Change	
Arts Curricular Grants	\$1,487,571.00	\$1,487,571.00	\$0.00	No change	
Career and Technology Education	\$29,572,135.00	\$29,572,135.00	\$13,000,000	No change	
Computer Science Certification and Professional Learning	\$3,000,000.00	\$3,000,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Instructional Support for Districts (iHub/LMS/AMS)	\$0.00	\$3,794,751.00	\$10,000,000	No change	
Summer Reading Camps	\$7,500,000.00	\$7,500,000.00	\$30,571,200	\$30,000,000	Original SCDE Request; more students will need to be served through changes in Read to Succeed law.
Reading Coaches	\$9,922,556.00	\$9,922,556.00	\$0.00	No change	
Assessment/ Testing	\$27,561,400.00	\$27,561,400.00	\$0.00	No change	
Instructional Materials	\$20,922,830.00	\$29,856,586.00	\$20,000,000	No change	
Math Resources & Support	\$1,500,000.00	\$1,500,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Palmetto Math Project		\$10,000,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Reading	\$3,271,026.00	\$3,271,026.00	\$0.00	No change	
EAA Technical Assistance	\$23,801,301.00	\$23,801,301.00	\$0.00	No change	

EIA Program Name	FY 2023-24 Appropriation	FY 2024-25 Appropriation	2025-26 requested change	2025-26 EOC EIA Subcommittee Recommended Increase/Decrease	Explanation
Power School/ Data Collection	\$7,500,000.00	\$7,500,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
School Value Added Instrument	\$1,400,000.00	\$1,400,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Half-day 4K	\$11,513,846.00	\$8,513,846.00	\$0.00	No change	
CDEPP - SCDE	\$63,465,168.00	\$78,465,168.00	\$0.00	No change	
LETRS Training 4K	\$2,975,000.00	\$2,975,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Pattison's Academy for Comprehensive Education	\$1,513,514.00	\$1,513,514.00	\$0.00	No change	
Meyer Center for Special Children	\$486,486.00	\$486,486.00	\$0.00	No change	
Palmetto Excel SC Public School Charter	\$1,300,000.00	\$1,300,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Teacher of the Year	\$155,000.00	\$155,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Teacher Quality Commission	\$372,724.00	\$372,724.00	\$0.00	No change	
Teacher Supplies	\$17,755,350.00	\$20,455,350.00	\$0.00	No change	
National Board Certification	\$44,500,000.00	\$34,500,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
TeachSC	ESSER Funded	\$727,650.00	\$0.00	No change	
ADEPT	\$873,909.00	\$873,909.00	\$0.00	No change	
Professional Development	\$2,771,758.00	\$2,771,758.00	\$0.00	No change	
Technology	\$12,271,826.00	\$12,271,826.00	\$0.00	No change	
Family Connection SC	\$300,000.00	\$600,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
SDE Grants Committee	\$2,004,313.00	\$9,004,313.00	\$0.00	No change	
Strategic Compensation Pilot: Phase 2	\$0	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	Phase 1 funded from Lottery 2024-25
Charter School Leadership Program	\$0	\$0	\$272,750	\$272,250	

EIA Program Name	FY 2023-24 Appropriation	FY 2024-25 Appropriation	2025-26 requested change	2025-26 EOC EIA Subcommittee Recommended Increase/Decrease	Explanation
School Leadership Accelerator	\$0	\$0	\$6,725,000	\$4,609,250	
Literacy & Distance Learning	\$415,000.00	\$415,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Reach Out & Read	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	EIA subcommittee recommends approval of this increase of funds to Reach Out and Read.
Youth Challenge Academy	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Arts Education (SC Arts Commission)	\$1,170,000.00	\$1,170,000.00	\$3,830,000.00	No change	
Education Oversight Committee Agency	\$1,293,242.00	\$1,687,264.00	\$0.00	No change	
South Carolina Autism Society	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Science P.L.U.S.	\$563,406.00	\$563,406.00	\$16,594.00	\$356,500.00	EIA subcommittee recommends approval of this increase of funds to Science P.L.U.S. to train teacher in new science standards.
STEM Centers SC	\$2,000,000.00	\$2,000,000.00	\$850,000.00	-\$1,000,000	EIA subcommittee recommends reduction based on the Center moving away from original purpose of training teachers in math instruction.
Teach For America SC	\$2,000,000.00	\$2,000,000.00	\$750,000.00	-\$1,000,000	EIA subcommittee recommends reduction based TFA moving away from original purpose of recruiting teachers to hard-to-staff SC school districts.
SC Council on Economic Education	\$300,000.00	\$300,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$150,000.00	EIA subcommittee recommends approval of this increase of funds to SC Council in Economic Education.
Center for Educational Partnerships Agency (H270)	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Center for Educational Partnerships (SCMGI)	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Center for Educational Partnerships (SC-WIN)	\$182,500.00	\$182,500.00	\$0.00	No change	
Center for Educational Partnerships (SCEPC)	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$0.00	No change	

EIA Program Name	FY 2023-24 Appropriation	FY 2024-25 Appropriation	2025-26 requested change	2025-26 EOC EIA Subcommittee Recommended Increase/Decrease	Explanation
Center for Educational Partnerships (SC-SIC)	\$127,303.00	\$127,303.00	\$0.00	No change	
Center for Educational Partnerships (SCGA)	\$156,130.00	\$156,130.00	\$0.00	No change	
Centers for Excellence Agency CHE (H030)	\$1,137,526.00	\$1,137,526.00	\$0.00	No change	
Centers for Excellence (Citadel - Mathematical Literacy)	\$129,580.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	No change	
Centers for Excellence (CU-LEADERS)	\$128,596.00	\$128,129.00	\$0.00	No change	
Centers for Excellence (CC-APEC)	\$112,500.00	\$112,500.00	\$0.00	No change	
Centers for Excellence (FMU-TRIP)	\$129,768.00	\$80,449.67	\$0.00	No change	
Centers for Excellence (Lander- Science of Reading)	\$99,349.27	\$107,034.27	\$0.00	No change	
Centers for Excellence (Presbyterian- Science of Reading)	\$47,600.00	\$47,600.00	\$0.00	No change	
Centers for Excellence (Coker APEC- Alternative Certification)	\$120,000.00	\$112,500.00	\$0.00	No change	
Center of Excellence to Prepare Teachers of Children of Poverty - Francis Marion	\$350,000.00	\$350,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Centers for Excellence (Converse- Leadership Development)	\$83,745	\$113,652.64	\$0.00	No change	
South Carolina Program for Recruitment & Retention of Minority Teachers	\$339,482.00	\$339,482.00	\$0.00	No change	
SC State University BRIDGE Program	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$0.00	-\$1,000,000	EIA Subcommittee recommended these funds be transferred to Call Me Mister. Rationale: Poor outcomes in preparing SC teachers. Since 2020, SCSU program has prepared 17 total graduates (certified teachers.) In contrast, the Call Me Mister program has produced 210 certified teachers since 2020 at a much lower cost to the State.

EIA Program Name	FY 2023-24 Appropriation	FY 2024-25 Appropriation	2025-26 requested change	2025-26 EOC EIA Subcommittee Recommended Increase/Decrease	Explanation
Clafin University	\$400,000.00	\$400,000.00	\$0.00	-\$400,000	EIA Subcommittee recommended these funds be transferred to Call Me Mister. Rationale: Poor outcomes in preparing SC teachers. Since 2020, the Clafin program has prepared 2 total graduates (certified teachers.) In contrast, the Call Me Mister program has produced 210 certified teachers since 2020 at a much lower cost to the State.
Teacher Loan Program	\$5,089,881.00	\$5,089,881.00	\$0.00	No change	
Babynet Autism Therapy	\$3,926,408.00	\$3,926,408.00	\$1,570,563.00	No change	
Call Me MISTER	\$500,000.00	\$500,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$1,400,000	EIA Subcommittee recommended funds from SC State University and Clafin be moved to Call Me Mister to recruit teachers.
Regional Education Centers	\$2,452,000.00	\$1,952,000.00	\$500,000.00	No change	
CERRA Agency (H470)	\$755,781.00	\$955,781.00	\$0.00	No change	
CERRA- Rural Teacher Recruitment	\$7,598,392.00	\$7,598,392.00	\$0.00	No change	
CERRA- Pre-collegiate	\$670,905.00	\$670,905.00	\$0.00	No change	
CERRA- Teaching Fellows	\$4,509,039.00	\$4,509,039.00	\$0.00	No change	
The Continuum	\$2,500,000.00	\$2,500,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Carolina Collaborative for Alternative Preparation (USC CAP)	\$ 1,200,000	\$1,950,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Education Data Dashboards	\$3,500,000.00	\$3,605,978 (revised)	\$0.00	No change	
SC Future Makers/Tallo	\$0.00	\$1,250,000.00	\$0.00	No change	

EIA Program Name	FY 2023-24 Appropriation	FY 2024-25 Appropriation	2025-26 requested change	2025-26 EOC EIA Subcommittee Recommended Increase/Decrease	Explanation
Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG-SC)	\$2,000,000.00	\$3,000,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
SC TEACHER	\$1,000,000.00	\$2,000,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Save the Children	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,000,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Project HYPE	\$750,000.00	\$950,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
Project Read	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$50,000.00	No change	
TransformSC	\$400,000.00	\$400,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
First Steps to School Readiness	\$40,007,554.00	\$47,267,334.00	\$0.00	No change	
Palmetto Partners	\$125,000.00	\$125,000.00	\$0.00	No change	
NEW Statewide implementation of Imagination Library (serve children ages 0-5)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000,000	EIA Subcommittee recommends \$4 million of new dollars and \$2 million from deduction of TFA and STEM Centers SC lines to support statewide implementation of program through the Office of SC First Steps.
Projected EIA Revenue Growth for FY 2025-26 (recurring)				\$44,638,000	
EOC EIA Subcommittee 2025-26 Recommendation Increases/Decreases				\$48,068,000 -\$3,400,000.00	
TOTALS			\$ 303,786,107.00	\$44,638,000	

Projected EIA non-recurring funds: available \$87,000,000.

EIA Program Name	FY 2023-24 Allocation	FY 2024-25 Allocation	2025-26 requested change	2025-26 EIA Subcommittee Recommendation	Explanation
SCDE: Math Instructional Materials	\$0	\$0	\$95,000,000	\$87,000,000	EIA Subcommittee recommends that all non-recurring EIA funds be directed to Math Instructional Materials

EOC Proviso Revision Requests

FY 2025-26 (adopted by EIA Subcommittee 12/2/2024)

NEW DRAFT PROVISIO re: Use of revolving loan funds

1A. . (SDE-EIA Teacher Loan Program) Of the available funds in the Teacher Loan Program revolving account administered by the SC Student Loan Corporation, up to \$5,000,000 shall be made available to assist in refinancing student loan debt for all certified teachers employed in the public schools of the State. An additional \$5,000,000 from the revolving loan account will be made available to teachers for loan forgiveness patterned after the SC Teacher Loan in the following school 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: Bamberg, Allendale, Calhoun, Jasper, Lee, and McCormick, school districts that show a vacancy rate of 10% or greater based on the 2024-25 Teacher Supply and Demand Report.

This proviso deletion was prompted by the EOC's adoption of the SC K-12 Military Readiness Task Force Report adopted in June 2024. This deletion was a recommendation.

DELETE 1.72. (SDE: Standards-Based Assessments Suspended) ~~In the current fiscal year, the provisions of Section 59-18-325(C)(3) of the 1976 Code requiring science standards-based assessments of students in grade eight and social studies standards-based assessments of students in grades five and seven are suspended. Of the funds available due to the suspension of these assessments,~~

~~\$500,000 must be used by the Department of Education to fund educator professional development regarding the South Carolina Computer Science and Digital Literacy Standards. The remainder of the funds shall be used to pay for industry certification/credentials as approved to measure College/Career Readiness for purposes of the state accountability system.~~

This proviso amendment is a recommendation in a report on Rural Recruitment Incentive, due to the General Assembly on December 15, 2024.

AMEND PROVISIO 1A.45. (SDE-EIA: Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive) (A) There is created a program within the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) to recruit and retain classroom educators in rural and underserved districts experiencing excessive turnover of classroom teachers on an annual basis.

(B) During the current fiscal year CERRA shall publish eligibility requirements and applications for individual educators, school districts, and institutions of higher education not inconsistent with existing licensure requirements for each, but also including:

(1) Eligible districts identified by CERRA as experiencing greater than eleven percent average annual teacher turnover, as reported on the districts five most recent district report cards issued by the South Carolina Department of Education and are not one of the fifteen wealthiest districts based on the index of taxpaying ability, may make application to participate in the program.

(2) Individuals eligible for incentives shall be willing to provide instructional services in an eligible district in exchange for participation in an incentive detailed in item (C) of this section, pursuant to the obligations and restrictions stated for each.

(3) Institutions of higher education eligible to receive education funding as a component of recruiting incentives created pursuant to item (C) of this section shall not be excluded from participation in Teaching Fellows Program.

(4) Any incentives requiring individuals to relocate into an eligible district to provide instructional services shall not be made available to individuals providing instructional services in other eligible districts.

(C) Pursuant to item (A), CERRA shall develop a set of incentives including, but not limited to, salary supplements, education subsidies, loan forgiveness, professional development, and mentorship to be provided to classroom educators that offer instructional services in eligible districts and shall provide incentive options for eligible individuals at all stages of their careers, including high school and college or university students interested in entering the teaching profession and including individuals entering the field through an alternative certification pathway to include, but not limited to, PACE, ABCTE, Teach for American, and CATE Work Based Certification. At a minimum, the incentives shall include: (1) Development of a program for forgiveness of undergraduate student loans, not to exceed \$5,000 per year, for up to 7 years, for teachers participating in this incentive that achieve certification through an alternative pathway or who have a loan from an institution other than the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation or program other than the South Carolina Teachers Loan Program. (2) Development of a forgivable loan program for individuals pursuing graduate coursework in furtherance of a teaching

career, including enrollment in graduate level coursework necessary to seek additional credentialing or certification relevant to the participants teaching practice, or individuals seeking an alternative pathway to certification as a teacher.

(3) Support for the establishment and maintenance of a teaching mentorship program, including salary supplements for teaching mentors not to exceed \$2,500 per year. (4) Other technical support and recruiting incentives as developed by CERRA in conjunction with the Department of Education and the Education Oversight Committee consistent with the objectives of this section. (D) In addition to eligibility and application requirements, CERRA shall develop a process for recovering an amount equal to the incentives given to individual participants who fail to comply with the obligations associated with a relevant incentive in which they participate including, but not limited to, failure to complete a prescribed course of study, failure to obtain a relevant 17 certification or licensure upon completion of a course of study, or failure to provide instructional services in an eligible district for a prescribed period of time. (E) CERRA shall report by July thirty-first of the current fiscal year to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House on the incentives developed pursuant to item (C) of this section and make recommendations for attracting and retaining high quality teachers in rural and underserved districts. The report shall contain at a minimum eligibility requirements and application processes for districts and individuals, descriptions of and proposed budgets for each incentive program and an analysis of the number and demographics of individuals potentially eligible for each.

(F) Funds appropriated or transferred for use in the Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive may be carried forward from prior fiscal years and used for the same purpose. The Education Oversight Committee is required to complete an evaluation

of the impact of the funds and incentives related to the Rural Teacher Recruiting Incentive. 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 Governor's Office ~~no later than December 15 of the current fiscal year~~ by June 30, 2026.

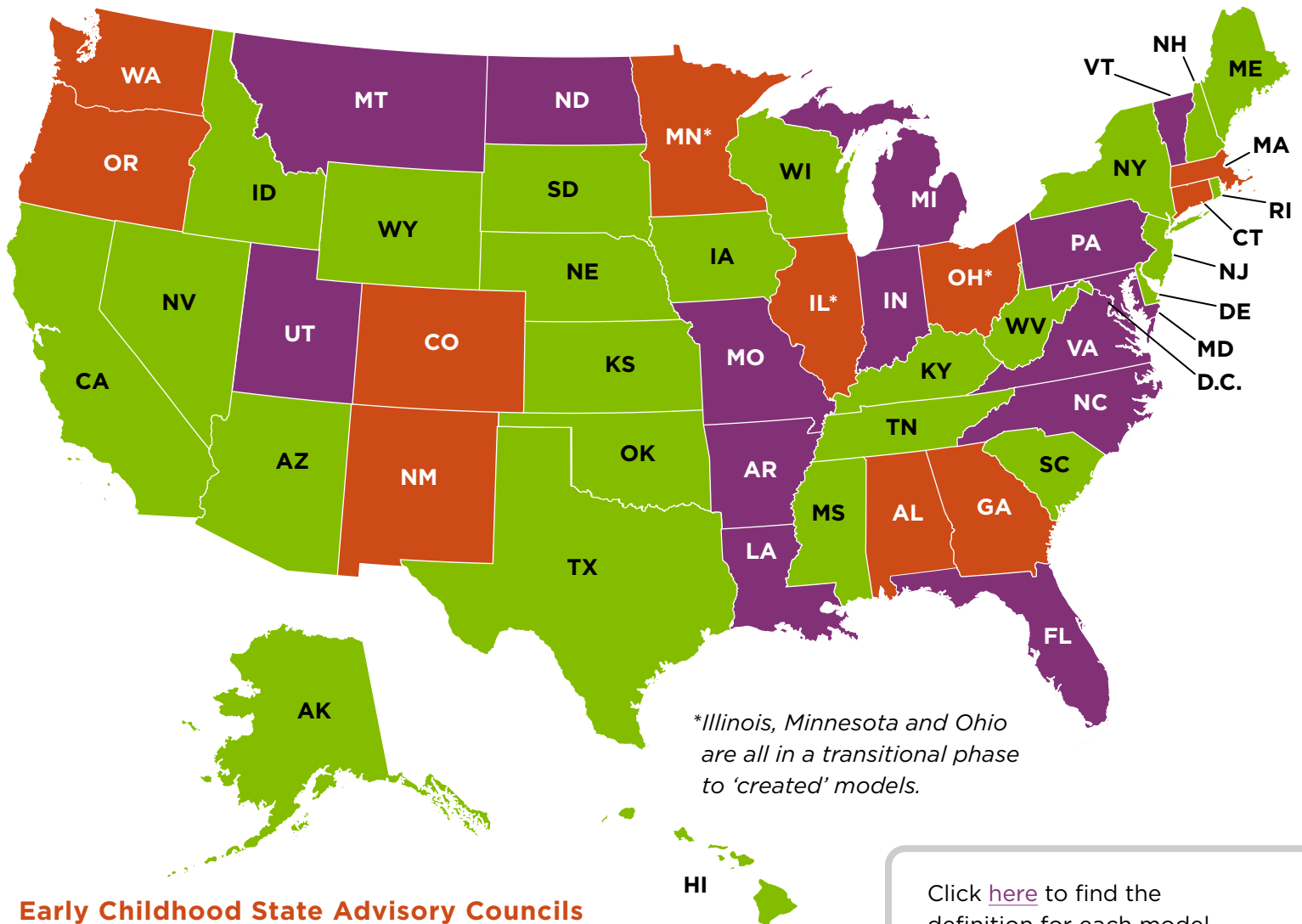
This proviso deletion is based on the EIA subcommittee's budget recommendations. The recommendation allocates funding to Call me Mister.

DELETE 1A.60. ~~(SDE: Bridge Program) Of the funds appropriated for Rural Teacher Recruitment in Fiscal Year 2024-25, \$1,400,000 shall be transferred to South Carolina State University for the implementation and enhancement of a BRIDGE program to recruit minority high school students along the I-95 corridor into the teaching profession by offering them, while still in high school, access to counseling, mentoring, on campus summer enrichment programs, and opportunities for dual enrollment credits at South Carolina State University for the purpose of preparing these students to major in education and to become future teachers along the I-95 corridor. South Carolina State University must utilize \$400,000 of these funds to partner with one or more institutions of higher education to establish a similar bridge program.~~

FYI

Early Care and Education Governance Models

Governing early care and education (ECE) systems is complex as multiple agencies oversee several programs and services that are funded at the state and federal levels. These programs and services all contribute to early development yet are often siloed — making alignment, coordination and funding distribution difficult. This fragmentation impacts states' abilities to provide equitable, cohesive and high-quality supports for young children and their families. While there is no evidence on the efficacy of various governance models, policy discussions and reform draw attention to these fragmented systems.



Early Childhood State Advisory Councils

A critical aspect of ECE governance is the early childhood state advisory council. This group sets the optimal vision for ECE in the state and creates accountability. State advisory councils are typically formed through statute or executive order as required by the Federal Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007 ([joint statement](#)).

Nearly all states have confirmed advisory councils that meet at least quarterly. Currently, only 26 states require or mention administrative staffing in their stated policies.

Click [here](#) to find the definition for each model.

- **Coordinated (25)**
- **Consolidated (14 + D.C.)**
- **Created (11)**

Previous counts from 2021:
Coordinated (29), Consolidated (13 + D.C.), Created (8).