Reporting Facts. Measuring Change. Promoting Progress.

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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2022 ANNUAL REPORT

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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

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

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Dear Friend,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to once again lead the SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC) as its chairman – here's to the third time being the charm! I commend and thank Ellen Weaver for her capable leadership over the last two years. Under her direction, the committee started and finished a strategic plan process and hired a new Executive Director, Matthew Ferguson. In just a short while, both Matthew and Ellen have led the committee through some difficult decisions amid chaotic times.

Although the last two years have presented us with an unprecedented set of challenges in public education, I see progress and cause for hope as we navigate the changes to the education landscape. All decisions made by the EOC have been focused on the success of SC's students. We acknowledge that many students are struggling, and that challenges us to make informed decisions that will help schools continuously improve and lead to better student outcomes.

This annual report provides some of the highlights of some of the projects that are promoting progress in South Carolina schools and providing policymakers, families, communities and educators with the information they need to make informed decisions. Each of the reports highlighted in this report are available in their entirety on the EOC website, as are the other reports listed at the back of this report. I also thank the educators, legislators, and others who have helped us accomplish this work during the past year.

I am excited about the some of the new projects the EOC has embarked on. A new, interactive dashboard focused on early childhood readiness shows the capacity of surfacing existing data in a user-friendly, actionable way. The EOC's collaboration with the National Student Clearinghouse will be a game-changer for monitoring student success as students depart the K-12 school system. All of these projects provide us with a clearer picture of how to effectively help our students.

I want to thank SC educators for their work and the positive impact they have on the lives of children. They have the opportunity each day to unlock the potential of the young people they teach. The children are our inspiration to do the work we do – we believe in their potential, and we want every child to have the opportunity to succeed. Our goal is to provide an environment where there are no barriers to any child's success.

Best Regards,

Neil Robinson, Jr.

The Year in Review

Analyses, Updates, and Program Summaries from March 2021 to February 2022

Education Oversight Committee Strategic Plan, 2021-2025 Summary Strategies and Objectives

In 2021, the EOC created a strategic plan to guide priorities of the committee until 2025. Conversations about the plan began at the EOC's 2020 Annual Retreat and the EOC was guided by a governance audit, completed by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) in 2000. The following plan was adopted by the full EOC in June 2021.

Strategy I: Report Facts

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategy II: Measure Change

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

Objective D: Align system-wide (PK-12) accountability measures with characteristics of college and career readiness (CCR).

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

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

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

Objective F: Identify and reward school accountability success.

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

Strategy III: Promote Progress

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

Objective G: Clarify the role of the Education Oversight Committee as the authority in PK-12 school accountability.

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

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

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

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

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

SC Student Academic Performance: 2021 Report Card

Significant Takeaways:

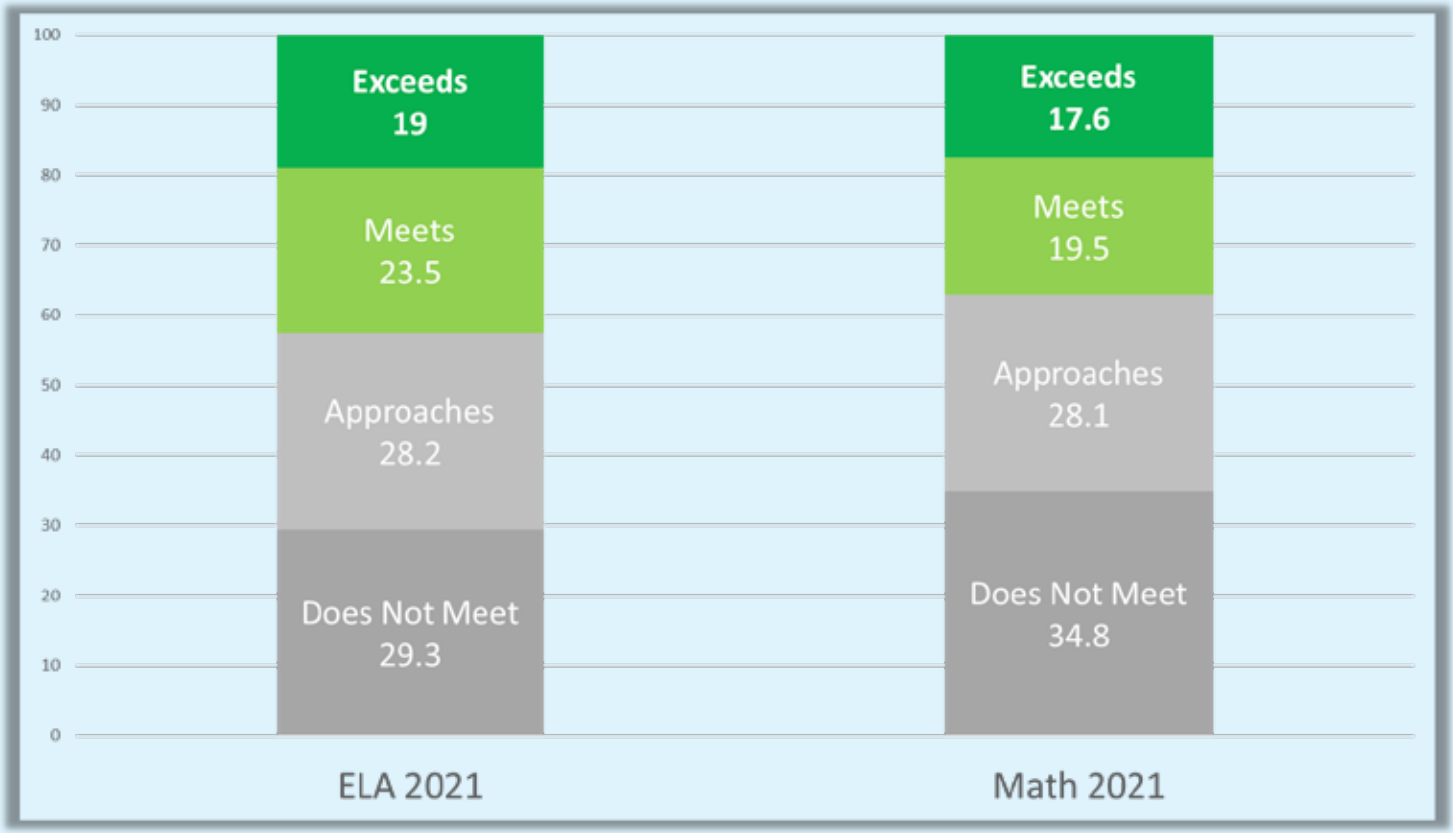
- Students who received education virtually were much less likely to be assessed on SCREADY in 2021.
- Pupils in Poverty were much less likely to be assessed on SCREADY in 2021, particularly at the district level.
- Significant achievement gaps continue to be present and seem to have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Poverty alone does not seem to explain this difference.

SC READY 2021 Results

- Only about 4 in 10 students in grades 3-8 met standard in math and ELA in 2021.
- Nearly 1/3 of students are scoring at the Does Not Meet Level, which is approximately 2 years below standard.

Math and English Language Arts (ELA) Results

- Math proficiency was more negatively impacted by COVID-19 disruptions than ELA proficiency.
- Less than 2 in 10 Black/African American students in grades 3-8 met standard in math in 2021.
- ELA student performance did fall after COVID-19 disruptions, but not to historical lows.
- Significant achievement gaps continue to be present in both ELA and Math.



Report of Public-Funded Full-Day 4K Programs

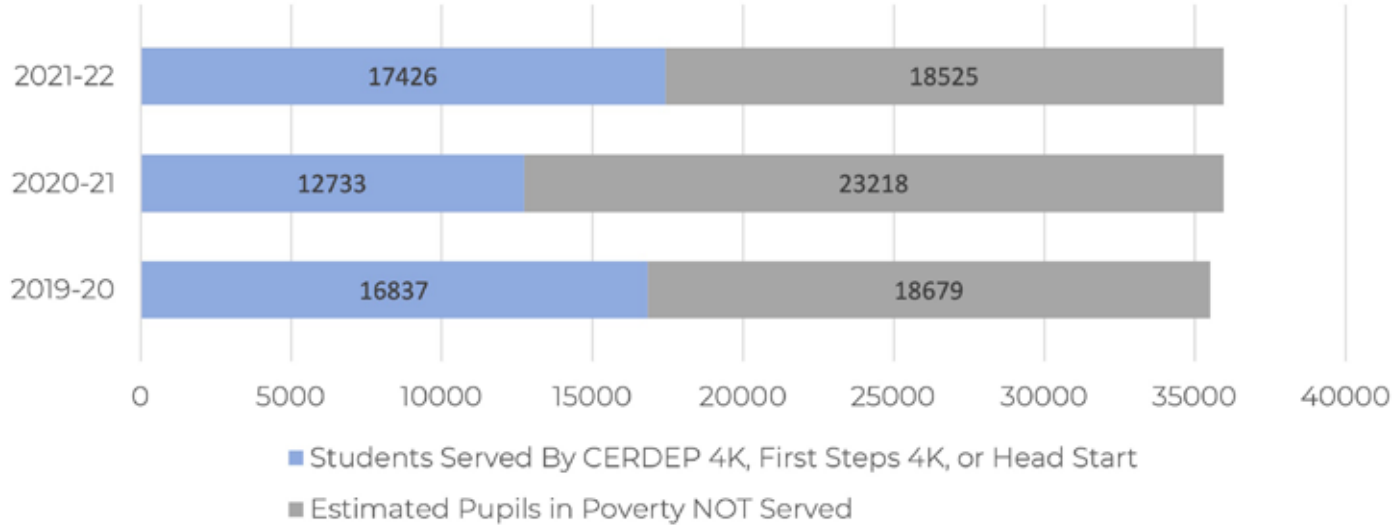
Since 2006, the SC General Assembly has invested in funding full-day kindergarten for four-year-olds in poverty. The program, which is in public and private centers, has been expanded over the years and now includes any eligible student in SC school districts, provided the district opts to accept funding.

Key Findings from this year's report include:

- In SY2020-21, 35,951 of the state's 57,030 four-year-olds (63%) lived in poverty and were at risk of not being ready for kindergarten.
- 52% of eligible SC four-year-olds remain unserved by CERDEP 4K, First Steps 4K, or Head Start programs, though they may be served by other 4K programs.
- In school districts that are eligible with no students participating in CERDEP, over 75% of estimated students in poverty are not being served by CERDEP 4K, First Steps 4K, or Head Start programs.
- The State's investment in CERDEP 4K is beneficial for student kindergarten readiness. Among kindergartners who participated in the 4K CERDEP, 23% tested at the Demonstrating Readiness category. Of those who were not enrolled in CERDEP 4K and Pupils in Poverty (PiP), 18% tested at the Demonstrating Readiness level.

$72,835,228	**Total CERDEP Investment for FY 2020-21, including projected Carry Forward**
$4,800	**Per Student CERDEP Reimbursement Rate**
$10,000	**Startup Cost Per New CERDEP Classroom with minimum student count**

Estimate of SC Pupils in Poverty Served and Not Served by CERDEP or Head Start



Recommendations: 2022 CERDEP Report

Recommendation 1. Expand Opportunities for CERDEP Access

Increase the student reimbursement rate to $5,100. An estimated 18,679 students who live in poverty remain unserved by CERDEP. Therefore, expansion efforts should focus on districts with a high percentage of eligible children, but who opt out of CERDEP. One barrier to this expansion is reimbursement rate; districts report that the current level of funding and the required teacher:student ratio do not always fully cover the cost of a classroom. If increased to $5,100, districts will be able to meet teacher:student ratios and fully fund more experienced certified teachers.

Explore mixed-ability, heterogenous grouping in CERDEP classrooms, building towards universal 4K eligibility. Research has shown that mixed-ability grouping benefits student achievement for students at all levels. Pilots should explore if heterogeneous class composition and professional development for teachers in differentiating instruction would improve quality in South Carolina's publicly funded 4K classrooms.

Recommendation 2. Evaluation of program quality

Evaluating the quality of the CERDEP experience should be central to the creation and scale of the program. Further research and evaluation should continue to consider improving and ensuring quality and quantity of publicly funded early childhood programming.

Recommendation 3. Evaluation of CERDEP 4K Assessments

Research should be conducted to analyze and define the constructs measured by the three CERDEP-approved assessments (e.g., PALS, Gold, and MyIGDIs), the degree to which the assessment constructs align across assessments, comparability of results, and the extent to which assessment results are indicators of Kindergarten Readiness. Due to the multitude of assessments currently used, it is harder to create an accurate student growth continuum that teachers can rely on. Therefore, a single statewide assessment would be ideal.

Recommendation 4. Expanded Coordination & Collaboration

CERDEP 4K and First Steps 4K should continue to expand coordination and collaboration efforts, including data sharing and shared professional development, in order to serve as many eligible children as possible. Efforts should continue to be made to provide parents information about the programs they may qualify for.

Though still in the early stages, the South Carolina Early Learning Extension has the potential to link data across several early childhood programs to K-12 educational outcomes.

More information and downloadable resources: https://bit.ly/EOC4K

Parent Survey Report, 2021

The Parent Survey was designed in 2001 to meet the requirements of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) and the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act. Section 59-18-900 of the EAA requires that the annual school report card include "evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students" as performance indicators to evaluate schools. Schools in South Carolina were closed on March 16, 2020. As a result, the Parent Survey was not distributed in the Spring of 2020. This report addresses changes to the Parent Survey first implemented in the Spring of 2021.

Future Changes to the Parent Survey

For the first time, in the Spring of 2021, the Parent Survey was accessible using electronic devices, including smart phones. With these changes, the survey is now annually available to parents of students at all grade levels, instead of limited to only parents of children at the highest grade level. The move to electronic presentation will also allow for content changes to be more easily implemented.

Other future changes include:

- **Following parental feedback, the survey will be shorter.**
- **Eliminating the item format with responses that ask about parent desires will make summarization and interpretation of results simpler.**
- **Changing the administration to electronic media provides greater flexibility in updating the survey.**
- **In 2022, the Parent Survey will be electronically administered on a new platform allowing for greater parent participation.**

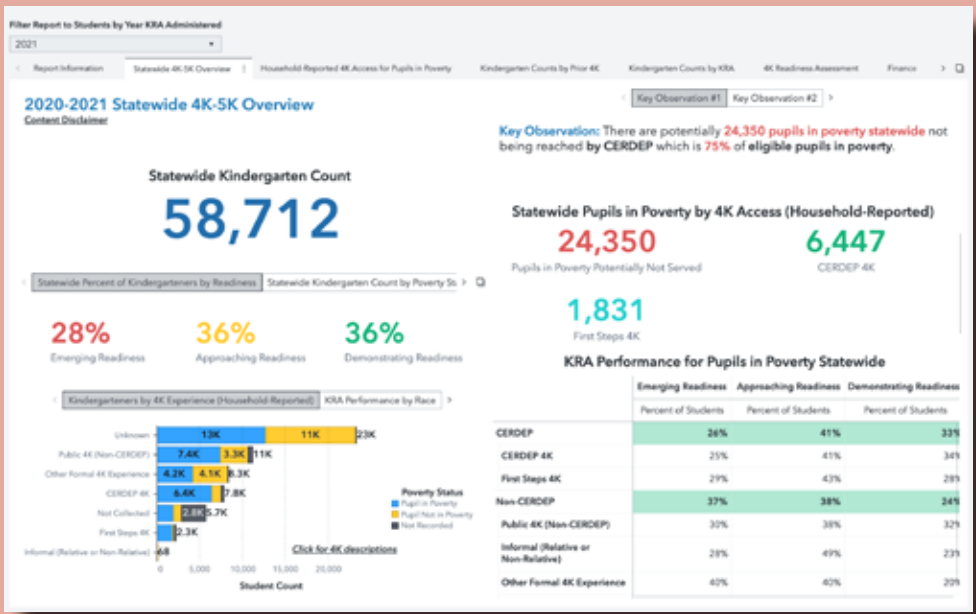
More information and downloadable resources:
https://bit.ly/ParentSurveyReport21

SC Education Data Dashboard

In February 2022, the EOC received the South Carolina Education Data Dashboard for 4K-5K Students, an interactive data display of 4K enrollment and 5K readiness throughout the state. For the first time in an online environment, this dashboard allows users to investigate the effectiveness of early education initiatives in our state, including state-funded full day 4K programs. Users can filter results by disability status, school location, poverty status, and English Learners status. And, data can also be filtered by county, school district, House district, Senate district, and Congressional district.

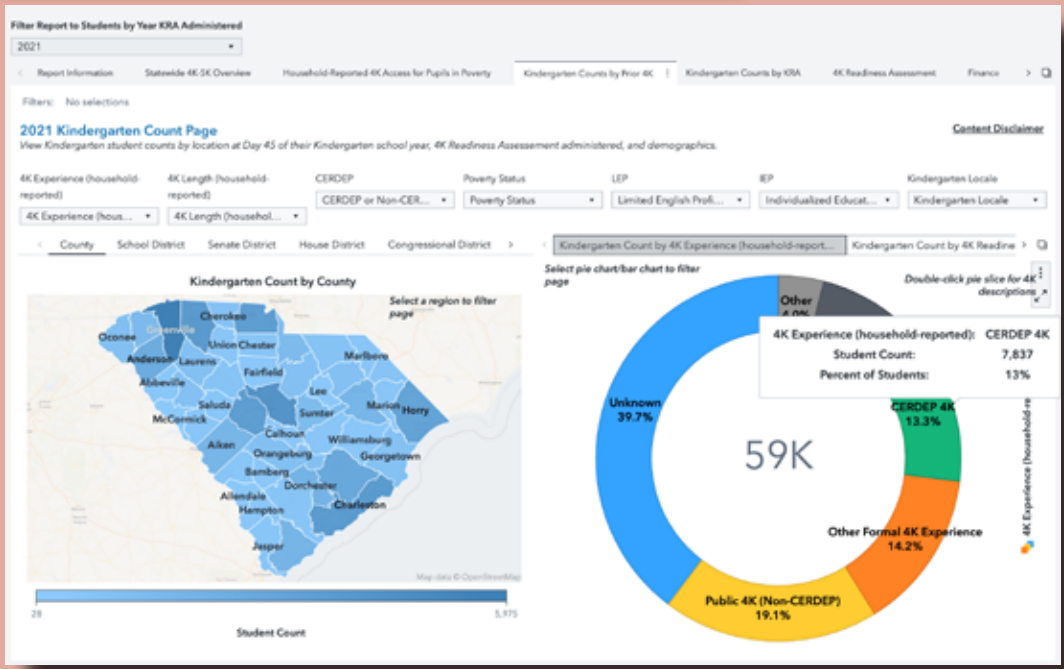
As part of its annual budget recommendations to the General Assembly in December 2021, the EOC requested recurring Education Improvement Act (EIA) funds be allocated toward a broader Education Data Dashboard which would interface with existing systems in order to document education attainment and growth and surface financial data.

The Education Data Dashboard showcases existing data in a user-friendly, accessible environment. Examples from the 4K-5K Data Dashboard include:



The Dashboard examines 2021 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) performance by 4K experience.

Users can filter information by county, school district, House district, Senate district, and Congressional district.

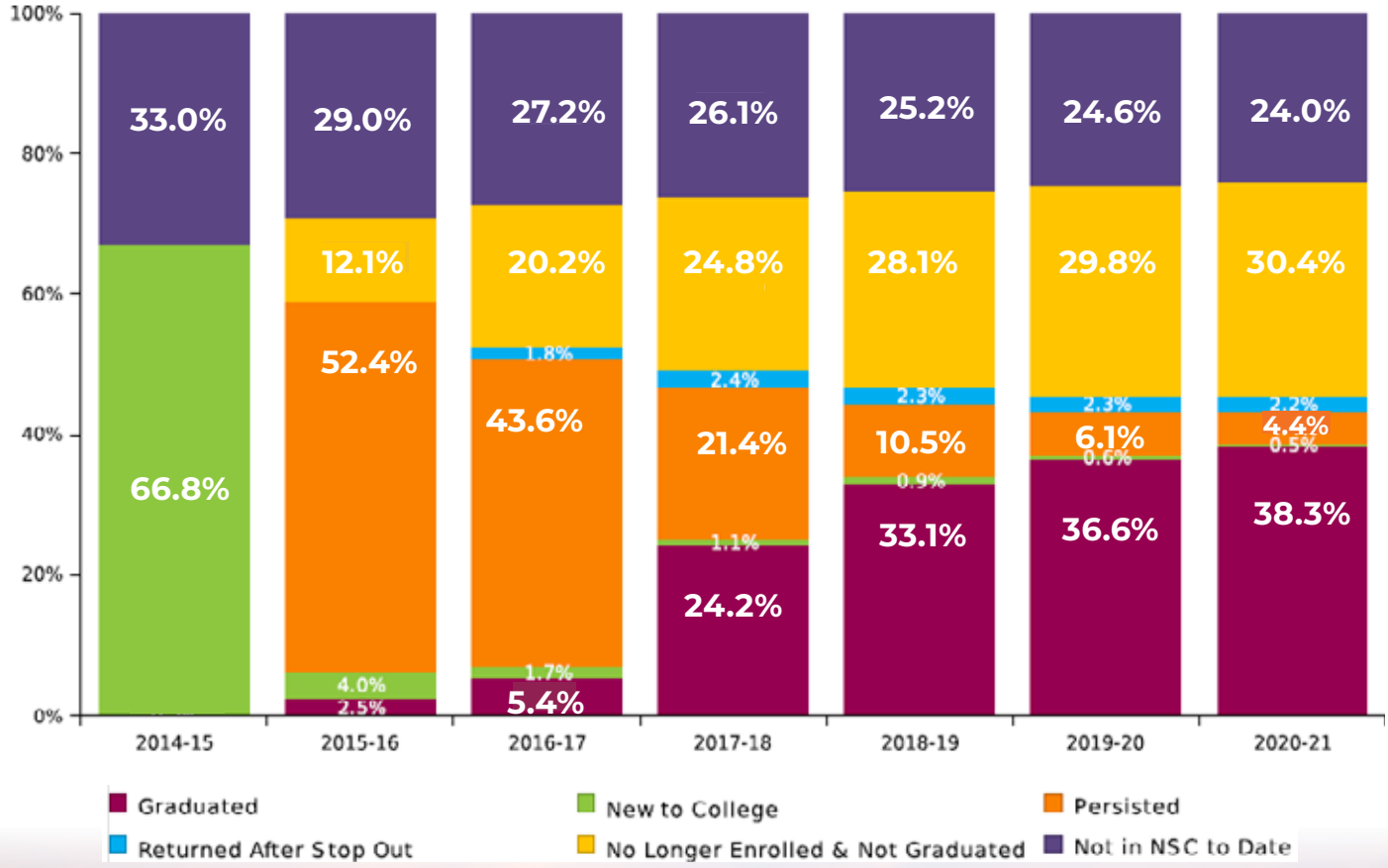


College Success of SC High School Graduates

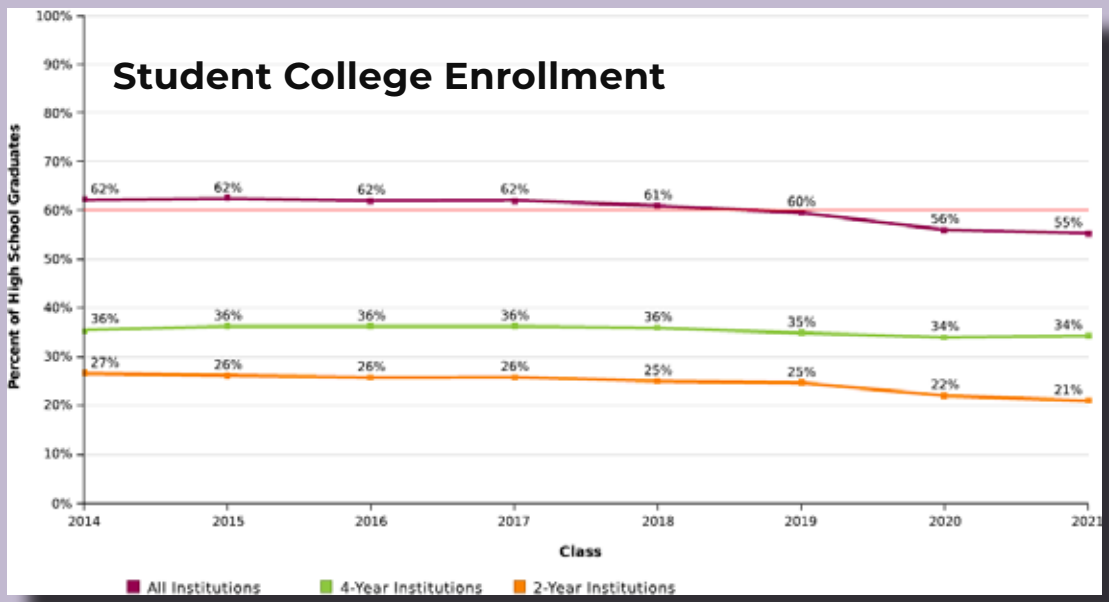
In February 2022, the EOC received its first look of data that show the college success of SC's high school graduates. The EOC purchased existing data from the National Student Clearinghouse, which has information on high school graduates' access, persistence, and completion rates across institution types (public, private, for-profit, international, career, and technical) regardless of state boundaries.

- The vast majority of SC students who enroll in college the first year after high school return for a second year of college.
- The transition between years 2 and 3 and years 3 and 4 are points at which students who do not have a degree seem less likely to persist in college.

Class of 2014 Postsecondary Enrollment and Progress



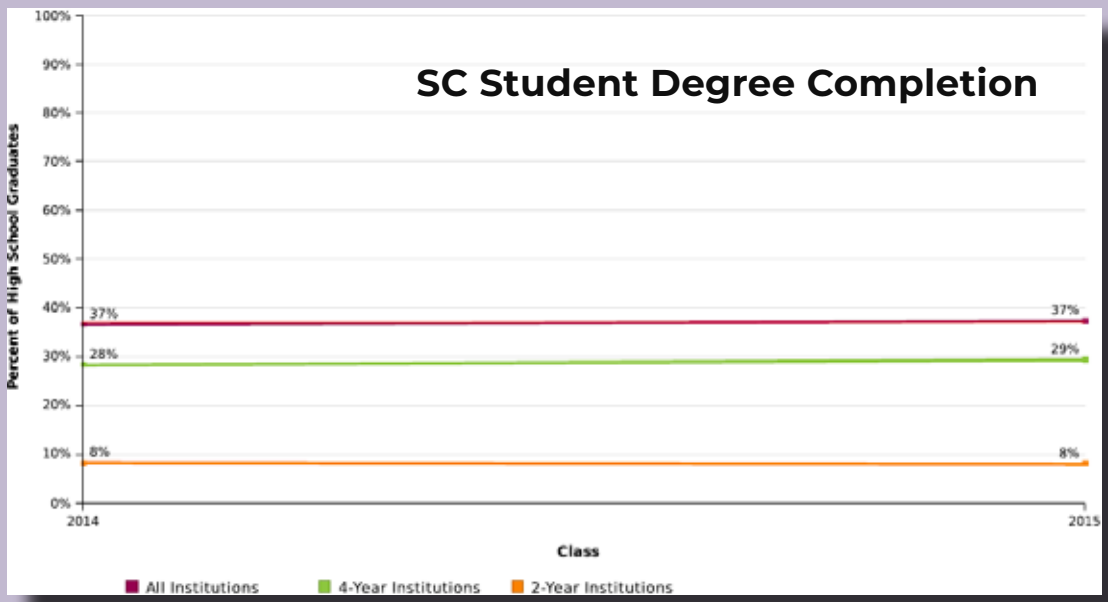
Percent of Students Enrolled in College the Fall Immediately After High School by Institutional Level



- On average, 60% of South Carolina graduates enroll in College in the Fall Immediately after high school.
- College enrollment has been negatively impacted during the period of COVID-19.

Percent of High School Class Who Completed a Degree Within Six Years by Institutional Level

- 37% of SC students who graduated in 2014 and 2015 have completed an associate's or bachelor's degree by the time they turn 24.
- There are meaningful differences in the proportion of degrees obtained by institutional type.



Review of Remote Learning's Impact on SC's Students

Recognizing the "unprecedented upheaval to the education of students in every corner of the state" and the need for a data driven approach to the state's response to COVID-19, the EOC staff undertook a thorough review of the opportunities for innovation, lessons learned for future planning, and barriers to the success during emergency remote learning.

Results from the study include:

Opportunities for Students

- Accelerated student access to technology across the state
- Investment in instructional technology resources by districts and the State
- Increased learning opportunities for students, flattening the classroom and providing a global perspective
- District virtual school offerings will remain, but state level guidance needed

Obstacles Identified

- Unequal distribution of internet access and 1:1 devices.
- Lack of a digital ecosystem to support long-term virtual instruction.
- Lack of clearly defined instructional strategies for forward progress in remote learning.
- COVID expenses will be recurring.

Impact on Student Learning

- SC students declined in projected proficiency and in median percentile rank in both mathematics and reading. The decline was most dramatic in elementary and math.
- Significant achievement gaps among historically underachieving students and their higher achieving peers continue to exist but do not appear to have widened during emergency remote learning.
- For SC students in a sample of 14 districts, there was no statistically significant difference observed in the COVID slide of students with respect to instructional method.

Emerging Issues

- Many vulnerable students are opting for virtual options while more resourced students are opting for brick and-mortar schooling.
- Concerns with reliability of assessments delivered remotely
- Recognition of the need for quality assessments to make data-informed decisions

7 of 10

in grades 3 through 8 are projected NOT to meet grade level standards in ELA and math in spring 2021

STUDENTS

based on analysis of SC students who took NWEA ELA and Math MAP tests in fall 2020.

Recommendations

- Strategically design and implement curriculum focused on student learning gaps and priority standards.
- Better coordinate efforts to accurately track student attendance, completion of assignments, and mastery of grade level standards.
- Require coordinated efforts and deploy strategies to establish communication with students who are not attending school or disengaging from instruction.
- Continue regular assessment of all students, allowing for individual and system academic performance to be monitored, guiding instruction and policy decisions.
- Continue to address disparities in learning opportunities by ensuring that supports, such as access to the internet and a device, are in place for students.
- Provide access to a robust virtual curriculum for students in remote learning.
- Provide tutoring services and extra interventions for students identified at-risk.
- Create a process to allow districts to develop and create innovative programs and/or community partnerships to provide after-school, summer, or Saturday ARCs in mathematics and reading.
- Provide meaningful and responsive professional development to staff to address needs in remote learning.
- Prioritize the return to face-to-face classrooms as soon as safely possible

More information and downloadable resources:
Part One: https://bit.ly/RLpt1
Part Two: https://bit.ly/RLpt2
Part Three: https://bit.ly/RLearningpt3

“Accelerated Learning: What It Is and How To Get There”

Presentation by Dr. David Steiner, Executive Director of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy, Professor of Education at Johns Hopkins University

During the August, 2021 retreat, the EOC conducted a symposium on learning loss due to COVID-19. SC Superintendents participated in a panel discussion about how they were operating effectively during challenging conditions.

As part of this symposium, Dr. David Steiner gave a presentation to EOC members and staff on the drawbacks of traditional methods of combating learning loss, such as remediation, and the benefits of acceleration in order to engage students with new content while integrating past content that may have been missed.

Remediation	Acceleration
Focuses on below-grade level content before moving to new learning. Educators emphasize isolated skills from past years’ standards.	Focuses on connecting unfinished learning with new, grade-level content. Rather than requiring mastery of past content before moving to grade-level subjects, educators address past content in the context of current learning.

Benefits of Acceleration

- Accelerated Learning strategically prepares students for success in current grade-level content. Acceleration readies students for new learning. Past concepts and skills are addressed, but always in the purposeful context of current learning.
- Effective acceleration ensures access to grade-level instruction. It gives students the most important skills they need to stay with their classmates at grade level.
- Implication: acceleration means homing in on just those critical skills that students need, week by week, to participate fully.
- Readies the student for new learning.

Dr. Steiner’s Recommendations Moving Forward

- **Use high-quality instructional materials in every subject.**
- **Focus professional development on supporting curriculum-aligned classroom instruction.**
- **Leverage diagnostic data to ensure precise support of important skills, using the curriculum’s content.**
- **Design systems to support acceleration.**

“Recovering from COVID: From Learning Loss to Acceleration”:
https://bit.ly/RecoverLearningLoss

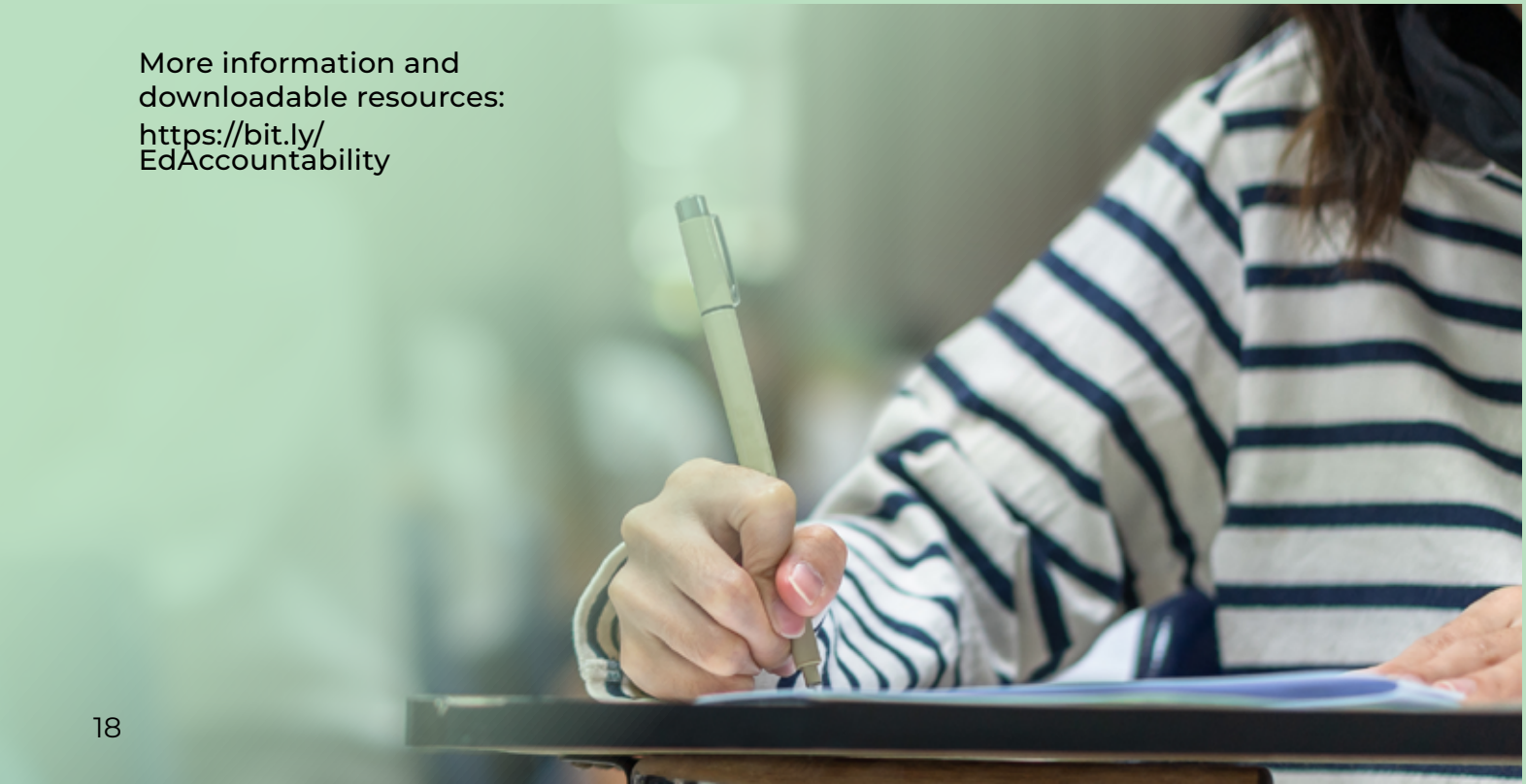
Recommendations to Education Accountability System, 2021-22

The EOC approved recommendations to the Education Accountability system for school year 2021-22; many of the decisions were based on recommendations from the Accountability Advisory Committee made in 2020.

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the resulting disruptions in teaching and learning, ratings were not calculated for the 2019-20 and 2020- 21 Report Cards. Ratings have been restored to Report Cards for 2021-22. Other changes for the current school year's system include:

- US History and the Constitution End-of-Course Exam Program (EOCEP) Excluded: Due to delays caused by the transition to a new version of the exam necessitated by the approval and adoption of the 2019 South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards, EOCEP scores in US History and the Constitution, and the corresponding SC ALT assessment in Social Studies, have been excluded from the Preparing for Success indicator for High Schools for the 2021-22 school year, though these scores will still be reported.
- South Carolina High School Employability Credential: The South Carolina High School Employability Credential has been added as a method by which certain students who receive special education services and who do not receive a regular diploma may be identified as Career Ready for the purpose of the College & Career Readiness Indicator.
- School Climate: Administration of the Student Engagement Survey stopped during COVID-19 and the contract with the survey vendor was discontinued on May 29, 2020. At its meeting on December 13, 2021, the EOC decided to use factor scores based on select items from the South Carolina School Climate Survey, which has been given to teachers, students, and families in the state for more than twenty years, for the Rating Points previously allocated to the Student Engagement Survey.

More information and downloadable resources:
https://bit.ly/EdAccountability



Standards Review

This year, the EOC finalized their review of the SC College- and Career-Ready Mathematics Standards. The recommendations were compiled under the advice of two review teams: a national review team of educators who have worked with national or other state organizations and a state committee composed of parents, business/community representatives, mathematics educators, and teachers of English Language Learners and exceptional education students. The state team was composed of individuals from various geographical areas across South Carolina. The recommendations were transmitted to the SC Dept. of Education as they began to convene writing teams.

The EOC also completed a review of the Grade 4 and 6 PASS Science Assessments with the assistance of SC Science teachers. The review was forwarded to the SC Dept. of Education to aid in the peer review process.

More information and downloadable resources:
https://bit.ly/CycMath
https://bit.ly/SCPASSscience

Community Block Grants Program, FY 2015-2021

In June 2021, the EOC produced a cumulative review of the EOC Community Block Grants Program, which was implemented by the EOC from 2015 to 2021. The review was designed to determine the extent to which the program fulfilled the intent and detail of the enabling proviso; ways in which success was defined and measured; grantees fulfilled their commitments, and, if not, why not; improvements achieved and if they were sufficient relative to the investments made; and program elements that should be continued or amended in future grant programs.

More information: https://bit.ly/EOCBlockGrant

Cyclical Review of SC Science Standards

Pursuant to Section 59-18-350(A) of the Education Accountability Act, the EOC and the State Board of Education (SBE) are responsible for reviewing South Carolina's standards and assessments to ensure that high expectations for teaching and learning are being maintained. The EOC worked with parents, business and community persons, as well as teachers of special education, to make recommendations on the K-12 Science standards.

More information: https://bit.ly/CycScience

ECENC Report

The ECENC program provides grants and parental tax credits to exceptional needs students attending private schools that meet specific eligibility requirements and that are approved by the EOC. This report includes information about the process for collecting results, participation and compliance of schools, and academic achievement of students who received ECENC grants in 2019-20.

More information: https://bit.ly/ECENCSC

e-Learning Pilot Project: Final Report

The EOC received the final report of the eLearning Pilot Project in 2021 as it was the third year of the program, and control of the program has been transferred to the SCDE. When schools closed due to COVID, EOC staff pivoted for eLearning Year 3. Recognizing that many more districts would be required to offer some form of virtual instruction during emergency remote learning, a streamlined application process was created. Thirty-one districts and public charter schools were added to the Year 3 cohort. A Readiness Cohort was also created that would eventually include 25 districts. The Readiness Cohort was for those districts interested in harnessing the potential of instructional technology but who lacked some foundational or technical requirements of eLearning. Dr. D'Andrea, who led the eLearning program for the EOC, documented that eLearning for the short term is not the same as virtual learning that is exclusively online.

More information: https://bit.ly/EOCeLearn

EOC FY 2022-23 EIA Budget Recommendations

As required by state law, the EOC approved budget and proviso recommendations in December 2021 for Fiscal Year 2022-23. These recommendations focus on the revenues generated by the one-cent sales tax, the Education Improvement Act. The committee's recommendations are dedicated to improving educational opportunities and outcomes for students and to supporting the teaching profession. The recommendations were forwarded to the Governor and General Assembly for their consideration.

More information: https://bit.ly/EIAbudget

Military Connected Students Report, 2021

As legislated by Act 289 of the Military Family Quality of Life Enhancement Act, the EOC is tasked with developing an annual report on the educational performance of military-connected students. This report is meant to provide an overview of demographics, academic performance, and school attendance of military-connected students as reported for the 2019-20 school year.

More information: https://bit.ly/MCStudentsEOC

Report on Alternative Instructional Methods

In February 2022, the EOC received a report from Dr. Lee D'Andrea documenting the alternative methods of instruction that have been implemented in SC school districts during the school year 2021-22. Data from the 45th day of instruction shows that 745,186 SC students were enrolled this school year in approved virtual programs, approximately 2% of the students statewide. About 34% of all students were in some type of temporary, virtual learning environment during the first 45 days of the current school year.

More information: https://bit.ly/EOCAltInst

Teacher Loan Program Report, Annual Report for FY2019-20

The Teacher Loan Program seeks to encourage talented, qualified potential teachers to enter the profession. As required by the Teacher Quality Act of 2000, the EOC conducts an annual review of the SC Teacher Loan Program. This report describes applicants and recipients to the program in order to examine teacher recruitment and retention in South Carolina.

More information: https://bit.ly/TLReportEOC

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Scott Turner, Greenville

Ellen Weaver, Columbia

Molly Spearman, Columbia, Ex-Officio, State Superintendent of Education

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