

MARCH 2008

# ANNUAL REPORT

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**SC EDUCATION  
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

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## STUDENT / SCHOOL / DISTRICT PERFORMANCE

### WHERE ARE WE NOW RELEASE

On December 10, 2007, the Education Oversight Committee released South Carolina's progress toward the 2010 Goal, which states that SC will be in the top half of states by the year 2010. The annual release provides evidence of the accomplishments of SC's students, schools, and the education accountability system. Dr. Andrew Sorensen, President of the University of South Carolina and Mack Whittle, President and CEO of South Financial Group, presented perspectives on the goal from higher education and business at this year's release.

This year's release showed South Carolina is achieving the goal in some areas. In 2007, South Carolina's achievement attained the following ranks:

**1** On the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests used as the Nation's Report Card:

4th Grade Reading	42 <sup>nd</sup>
8th Grade Reading	41 <sup>st</sup>
4th Grade Math	33 <sup>rd</sup>
8th Grade Math	28 <sup>th</sup> (in the top half of states)
4th Grade Science	33 <sup>rd</sup>
8th Grade Science	30 <sup>th</sup>

In 8th grade math and science South Carolina's gains are among the top five in the nation.

- 2** With respect to the Advanced Placement Tests, South Carolina is in the top half of states, ranking 22nd in the nation for participation and 23rd in the nation for the percentage of exams scored 3, 4 or 5;
- 3** On college admissions tests, although South Carolina's SAT improvement is among the nation's best, scores on both the SAT and the ACT remain 48th in the nation;
- 4** Regardless of the calculation method, South Carolina's graduation rate remains last among the nation.

### CHILD DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION PILOT PROGRAM - 4-K

In January 2006, the General Assembly commissioned the Education Oversight Committee to inventory and study all publicly-funded kindergarten programs for four-year-olds and to recommend the program that should be funded statewide for all children who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches. In March 2006, the Education Oversight Committee made a number of recommendations concerning the implementation of the program, now referred to as the Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP). The majority of the recommendations were implemented.

In FY2007 the General Assembly appropriated \$23.5 million for the first year of the two-year pilot program, and in FY2008 appropriated and authorized the use of carry forwards totaling \$25.0 million for the second pilot year.

In January 2008, the Education Oversight Committee released the Summary Report on CDEPP. Key points within the report include:

- + Based on December 1 student enrollment data for 2007-08, 3,756 children are served in public schools through the CDEPP program (an increase of 993 children from 2006-07). In private centers, 402 children are served (an increase of 93 children from 2006-07.)
- + In the 37 plaintiff school districts, it is estimated that 2,256 eligible four-year-olds are not being served in a publicly-funded pre-K program.
- + The SC Department of Education, which is responsible for CDEPP implementation in the public schools, is projected to expend \$17.1 million in FY 2007-08, 100 percent of the total appropriation.
- + In the current fiscal year, the Office of First Steps is projected to expend \$2.5 million of their \$7.9 million appropriation, leaving a projected carry-forward of \$5.4 million.
- + According to a facilities survey of CDEPP sites, public schools serving CDEPP children were at or near capacity. In contrast, 23 percent of private centers responding to the survey indicated they could serve an additional ten or more students.
- + The analysis of the *Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Third Edition* (DIAL-3) results in 2006-07 suggests that the eligibility criteria for enrollment in CDEPP (federal school lunch program and/or Medicaid-eligible) are identifying students developmentally at risk for later school failure.
- + Fifty-seven percent of the estimated population of four-year-olds eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch and/or for Medicaid statewide are being served by a federal, state, or local publicly-funded pre-K program.

“The CDEPP program is worth all of our efforts. The benefits of a full-day program to poor youngsters are undeniable...We put a lot of faith in the research that affirms that what these children learn now will have long-term effects.”

-- Dr. Mike Turner, Assistant Superintendent for Learning Services, Berkeley County School District

Future reports are scheduled for July 2008 and each January thereafter as students are followed through the elementary-secondary educational system.

## ACHIEVEMENT GAP

In April, the Education Oversight Committee staff published the annual study on progress toward closing the gaps in Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) achievement among different demographic groups of South Carolina students enrolled in grades 3-8. Sixteen percent (135 of 866) of elementary and middle schools were recognized for closing the achievement gaps in PACT ELA or math in 2006 for at least one historically underachieving demographic group. Three fewer schools were recognized in 2006 than in 2005, primarily because of lower Math performance in 2006 among African-American and Hispanic students and students receiving free- or reduced-price lunch. Although progress is being made, the sizes of the gaps are discouraging if South Carolina is to meet its 2010 achievement goal for all students.

“Expectations are high at Liberty and education is a shared responsibility that is valued. We have special children and teachers here.”

--Shaileen Riginos, Principal of Liberty Elementary, Pickens County (recognized five consecutive years as a “gap closing” school.)

In an effort to foster improvement efforts statewide, a study examining schools recognized four consecutive years for reducing the gap was conducted and released during the 2007 gap release. The Education Oversight Committee contracted with the SC Educational Policy Center (SCEPC) to

study the characteristics of these gap-closing schools.

The study examined the characteristics of 26 elementary schools using school report card indicators and school climate survey data gathered from students, parents, and teachers. The report identified the important role of a positive school climate that fosters the attainment of high student performance. Teachers in gap closing schools, for example, expressed more favorable opinions of schools, especially in the area of home-school relations.

## **REVIEW OF THE U.S. HISTORY AND CONSTITUTION END OF COURSE FIELD TEST**

In accordance with EAA, the Education Oversight Committee conducted a review of the U.S. History and Constitution End of Course field test during the fall of 2006. The review covered the technical quality of test items and their alignment to the course standards. The review found that the “field test appears to be well aligned with the academic standards, to make appropriate cognitive demands of students, to be generally adequate in technical quality, and to reflect very high expectations for performance.” Approval of the test, however, was delayed until additional data on student performance on the test could be obtained and information from U.S. History and Constitution teachers on their understanding of the course standards could be obtained and related to student performance.

In April 2007, a survey regarding the course academic standards was distributed to the 633 teachers of the U.S. History and the Constitution course identified by 84 of the 85 school districts in South Carolina. A total of 312 teachers (49.3 percent) responded to all the survey questions. The teachers’ responses to the survey were summarized and distributed to Education Oversight Committee members and to the members of the Instructional Leaders’ Roundtable for discussion and comment.

The results of the survey revealed major concerns about the difficulty of the test, which made it hard for teachers to differentiate levels of achievement. The following recommendations were adopted by the Education Oversight Committee in October 2007 and transmitted to the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE):

- 1 The SCDE should take actions to improve the alignment among the U.S. History and the Constitution course standards, the instruction of those standards, and the End of Course test. Prior to Education Oversight Committee approval, the SCDE should provide evidence for the enactment of those actions to the committee. The actions to improve the alignment may include, in addition to other possible activities:
  - + Examine the course standards and End of Course test to identify or affirm the essential content to be learned and tested;
  - + Complete the development of the Teacher’s Guide, including guides for effectively pacing instruction, to the U.S. History and the Constitution course standards and End of Course test.
- 2 Continue the administration of the U.S. History and the Constitution End of Course test as a field test and provide feedback to schools and districts on the performance of their students.
- 3 The actions undertaken to improve the alignment among the standards, instruction, and the test should be accomplished by June 2008 to allow for professional development activities with teachers during Summer 2008.

At its February 2008 meeting, the Education Oversight Committee voted to defer approval of the U.S. History End of Course test until student performance data for 2007-08 and final teacher support materials could be reviewed.

## **SOUTH CAROLINA ALTERNATE (SC-ALT) ELA AND MATH FIELD TEST**

As part of its responsibilities listed in the Education Accountability Act of 1998 (EAA), the Education Oversight Committee reviewed the South Carolina Alternate Assessment (SC-Alt) English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics field tests administered in Spring 2006 and Spring 2007.

The SC-Alt ELA and Mathematics assessments are designed for administration to students with significant cognitive disabilities. The SC-Alt ELA and Math field tests were reviewed through two sets of studies. One study examined the alignment between the SC-Alt ELA and Mathematics assessments and the state academic standards. The second

study was a technical review of the task and item data from the 2007 test administration.

Overall, the SC-Alt ELA and Mathematics assessments were found to be aligned with the South Carolina ELA and Mathematics academic standards and have acceptable technical quality consistent with the requirements of Section 59-18-320 A. In September 2007, the Education Oversight Committee recommended adoption of the assessments following the completion of a review of “flagged” items by the SCDE and the development and dissemination of updated professional development materials. In February 2008, the assessment was approved by the Education Oversight Committee.

## COMPUTER-BASED TESTING STUDY

During the 2006 legislative session, the General Assembly adopted Act 254, and with the adoption, approved many of the recommendations of the Testing Task Force. One recommendation of the Task Force was to conduct a study on the feasibility of computerized testing in grades 1-10. A contract was awarded to Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to conduct the feasibility study. Results of the study indicated that converting to computer-based testing would cost, at a minimum, \$54,250,000 for infrastructure and hardware costs; there would be additional costs for test development, item writing, comparability studies, additional staff, etc. The study also found that the vast majority of students spend 30 minutes or less on a school computer each day and that computer-based testing will not produce increased test scores unless instruction is technology-based. Should the state decide to implement computer-based testing, DRC recommends a multi-year rollout plan that would start with 7th grade science and expand each year to another discipline. The report from DRC was presented to a joint meeting of Education Oversight Committee and the State Board of Education. After careful consideration of the study and input from an advisory panel, the Education Oversight Committee recommended that the plan suggested by DRC not be implemented at this time until a study on the use of technology in instruction was completed and that minimal standards for computer hardware purchased with state funds were established and put into practice. Staff from the Education Oversight Committee, the South Carolina Department of Education, and the Chief Information Office of the Budget and Control Board are studying the instruction issue and will issue a report in late 2008.

## PALMETTO PRIORITY SCHOOLS EVALUATION

In accordance with the 1998 EAA provision, two levels of intervention are linked to a school rating of Below Average or Unsatisfactory. Schools in each of these two categories are evaluated through an external review process and required to obtain State Board of Education approval for an improvement plan. When a school does not make expected progress, which is based on the following two criteria: (1) attain a minimum absolute value of 1.8, and (2) increase the school’s absolute value .3 of a point, or improve the absolute rating at least one level, the State Superintendent is responsible for determining if he should assume management of the school.

With the publication of the 2006 school ratings, 16 schools rated Unsatisfactory were identified as failing to make expected progress. The Education Oversight Committee established an agreement with the SC Department of Education to evaluate these schools [designated as Palmetto Priority Schools (PPS) in spring 2007], and the students are to be monitored from 2007 to 2012.

The evaluation design is conceptually based upon the premise that student academic performance has four sources:

- 1 Home environment—encompasses structural characteristics (e.g., SES, racial/ethnic composition, residential patterns), parental involvement in education, parent-child interactions, neighborhood characteristics, parent psychological distress, and religiosity;
- 2 School climate—teacher expectations and beliefs about student achievement, administrative leadership, resources, institutional support, the degree of collegiality within the school, teacher job satisfaction, degree of teacher responsibility for student outcomes, teacher classroom management, and the amount of institutional change in recent years;

- 3 Student motivation for learning—academic efficacy and aspirations, school engagement, and motivation for learning and achievement; and
- 4 Health status—chronic illnesses, symptoms of distress (e.g., sleep difficulty, feelings of anxiety/depression, eating problems, agitation, and physical problems), and mental health issues.

### TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

To review the accountability system and to provide advice regarding its improvement, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was established and convened in Columbia on February 20 and 21, 2007. Prior to its meeting the TAC was provided with materials describing the South Carolina educational accountability system, examples of school report cards, and with copies of various studies of system components for its review.

In general, the TAC found the quality of assessments, the fairness and accuracy of the methodology used to calculate school ratings, and the rigor of the system to be acceptable. The TAC endorsed the recommendations of the Testing Task Force for improvement of the state assessments and noted that the inclusion of the graduation rate, in addition to assessment results in the high school ratings, was a strength. The inclusion on the report cards of survey results from parents, teachers, and students was also noted by the group as a particular strength of the South Carolina reporting system. The group considered a number of technical issues regarding the ratings and assessments and made recommendations regarding many of those issues.

### ACCOUNTABILITY MANUAL

Each spring the Education Oversight Committee staff produces the *Accountability Manual*, which provides detail on the ratings system for educators and interested individuals. Accountability Manuals are distributed to school and school district administrators each summer and contain the current data on formulas, expectations, procedures, etc. on the accountability system.



## STATE SUPPORT FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

### APPROVAL OF THE MATHEMATICS ACADEMIC STANDARDS

During the April 2007 Education Oversight Committee meeting, the committee considered and approved the revised Mathematics Academic Standards. At the June 2007 meeting the committee approved two amendments to the revised standards adopted by the State Board of Education in April. The approval completed the revision process begun in the spring of 2006. Implementation of the revised standards began with the 2007-08 school year.

### APPROVAL OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ACADEMIC STANDARDS

During the April 2007 Education Oversight Committee meeting, the committee considered and approved the revised English Language Arts Academic Standards. The approval completed the revision process begun in the spring of 2006. The State Board of Education has not given final approval to the revised standards, but the standards as approved by the Education Oversight Committee have been implemented as a field test for the 2007-08 school year.

### RETRAINING GRANT PROGRAM REPORT

Education Oversight Committee staff conducted a final review of the Retraining Grant Program. Through Proviso 1A.47 of the Fiscal Year 2007 budget, the program no longer exists as a separate program but is now part of the overall technical assistance appropriation per school. In 2006-07, 365 schools participated in the program; 111 schools new to the program received a \$10,000 planning grant and the remaining schools had carry forward money from previous years. The review found that the schools receiving the planning grant did not receive the funds in a timely manner, and that teacher and administrative turnover impeded the overall long-term impact of the program. Recommendations resulting from the final review included prohibiting schools from carrying technical assistance funds forward from year to year and more timely distribution of the planning grants.

### TEACHER LOAN STUDY

Education Oversight Committee staff completed the annual review of the Teacher Loan Program (TLP). The program continues to provide needed assistance to individuals seeking certification in a qualifying subject area or teaching in geographic-needs schools. The study noted a 15.2 percent increase in the number of applications over the last two years and an increasing number of qualifying schools. Recommendations to improve the program included a call for a Policy Board of Governance as part of the Commission on Higher Education to set goals, facilitate communication among the cooperating agencies, advocate for the loan participants, and effectively market the program. At the end of the 2007 session of the General Assembly, H3162, a bill to create a Policy Board for the TLP, had passed the House and currently awaits consideration by the Senate Education Committee.

### TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION TASK FORCE

As part of the Fiscal Year 2007 Appropriations Act, the General Assembly adopted Proviso 1A.66 requiring the Education Oversight Committee to “convene a task force to evaluate current teacher recruitment and retention policies, particularly those that impact on schools that have historically underachieved.” The Task Force began meeting in February 2007 and



“Mentoring is extremely important. We work so hard to get these young teachers. If they aren’t supported, we lose them.”

-- Terri Myers, Director of Personnel in Berkeley County School District

completed its work in September 2007. Among the findings of the Task Force were that teacher recruitment and retention is a complex issue for which there is no quick solution or “silver bullet” fix; South Carolina has a number of teacher recruitment and retention programs in place that are successful in many ways; South Carolina’s teacher preparation institutions and the alternative certification programs are not producing a sufficient number of graduates to meet the state’s needs; working conditions are a major factor in teacher retention; and salary is a factor in

teacher recruitment and retention, but increasing salary alone will not solve the recruitment and retention situation. Recommendations to address the situation included implementing a data collection system in South Carolina similar to the one implemented in Virginia to collect more accurate and definitive data on teacher recruitment and retention for research and development of policy in the future; expanding the marketing of the teacher recruitment and retention programs that presently exist in South Carolina through the responsible agency or sponsoring institution to increase the awareness and effectiveness of these programs, especially in the recruitment of males and African Americans; and conducting a study on teacher compensation, to include examination of innovative ways to increase compensation for teachers beyond traditional salary.

## SUPERINTENDENTS’ PERSPECTIVE ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In June, the Education Oversight Committee released the results of a study conducted to gain a better perspective on the role the school district superintendents in the state are playing at the school level with the planning, implementation, and assessment of the plans written under the Technical Assistance Program. The study, conducted by an independent, Columbia-based research firm, indicated that the technical assistance program was working well from the perspective of the 31 superintendents interviewed in the study. Those contacted were in a sample of 66 superintendents of school districts receiving technical assistance funds at least once during the 2005-06 school year.

Overall, superintendents reported close working relationships with the principals and tended to share similar views on goals and objectives. Through a “shared vision” approach, most superintendents reported that they didn’t do a great deal of influencing how technical assistance funds were being used at the school level. Instead, most leave the responsibility with the individual schools, only stepping in when they feel the scope of the plan is drifting outside of the district priorities.

“Our focus is on teacher quality. That is our challenge. No matter how much money is provided, we only have so many teachers certified in subject areas. There are only so many teachers in the market.”

-- A superintendent interviewed in the Technical Assistance Program Study

## FUNDING MODEL

During the fall of 2007, Education Oversight Committee staff updated the Education Oversight Committee funding model first presented in 2003. As updated, the funding model incorporates a base student cost of \$5,606. In addition, there are three separate and distinct weightings. (1) The first weighting is characterized as the general education weight and incorporates students in grades kindergarten through twelve, including all special needs students, students in vocational courses and homebound. (2) The second classification of weightings, compensatory, includes additional funding for students in poverty and non-English speaking students, both at a weight of .20. The weighting for non-English speaking students was increased to .20 to reflect the most recent expenditure data from other states. (3) The final classification, program weights, provides additional funding for students scoring Below Basic, students served in gifted and/or talented artistic and academic programs, and individuals in young adult education. The staff also analyzed alternative ways to calculate the base student cost using various district and school enrollment models. These models were based on the academic performance of districts. The analysis revealed that the base student cost would vary between \$5,159 and \$5,457 based on school level.

## **FLEXIBILITY STUDY**

Education Oversight Committee staff completed the annual review of fund transfers by school districts as allowed by budget provisos. Since Fiscal Year 2003-04, only seven school districts have not requested any transfers per the flexibility provisos. In FY2006-07, 58 percent of funds transferred were originally allocated to the Reduce Class Size program. Of these funds, 70 percent were reallocated to the Act 135 Academic Assistance Program. Most transfers occur during the last two months of the fiscal year, which raises the issue of whether school districts are using the flexibility proviso as an accounting tool to balance expenditures against available revenues at the end of the year instead of using the proviso to realign financial resources to meet the educational needs of students in a systematic manner. To date, there is no correlation between the use of the flexibility proviso and changes in either academic achievement by students or in school district Absolute ratings.

## **NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

The Education Oversight Committee studied the impact of the National Board Certification Program on the teaching profession and student achievement in South Carolina. The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was formed in 1987 to “advance quality teaching and learning.” The first national certificates in the United States were awarded in 1993-94, and South Carolina’s General Assembly first appropriated funds for the program in Fiscal Year 1998. For Fiscal Year 2008, the General Assembly appropriated \$ 51,885,838 to fund a \$7,500 salary supplement for teachers earning the certification, and to pay the \$2,500 application fee for teachers seeking the certification. For Fiscal Year 2001 and beyond, Governor Jim Hodges established the goal that South Carolina would employ 5,000 teachers with National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification by the end of 2005.

The Center for Educator Recruitment Retention and Advancement (CERRA) is the lead agency for the NBPTS program for South Carolina; the State Department of Education (SCDE) manages all fiscal matters through its Office of Finance. According to NBPTS, at the end of December 2007 South Carolina had the third highest number of National Board certified individuals in the nation (5,734, including 657 newly certified individuals in 2007), and at 12.1 percent, the second highest percentage in the nation. South Carolina also boasts the second largest number of African-American teachers who are NBPTS-certified. At the beginning of the 2007-08 school year, 4,547 individuals were earning all or part of the \$7,500 stipend; the remaining certified individuals were either serving in positions ineligible for the stipend, had retired or left employment without retiring, were employed in private schools, or were deceased. At the end of 2007, there were 2,199 individuals seeking certification; the success of those individuals will be announced in late 2008.

The study recognized that the research on the impact of National Board certification on student achievement is mixed, but recognized the impact of a strong teaching profession on student achievement.

## **PUBLIC CHOICE INNOVATION SCHOOLS**

The General Assembly, upon advice from the Education Oversight Committee, established a grant program to support the creation of Public Choice Innovation Schools in South Carolina and to provide for their evaluation. These schools are public choice alternatives for grade 4-8 students enrolled in the public schools with an absolute rating of Unsatisfactory or Below Average or students enrolled in public schools rated Average or above and who scored Basic or below on any two or more subject area grade level state assessments in grades 3-7 during the most recent scholastic year. The goal of Public Choice Innovation Schools is to demonstrate leadership in instructional, administrative or personnel practices yielding strong student academic achievement.

The grant is intended to be for a minimum of five years, upon annual certification of positive implementation by the State Department of Education. The first year of funding is for planning and start-up purposes and the remaining years of supplemental funding for operation of the innovation schools. Entities eligible to receive a grant are partnerships which include two or more of the following: a public school district, an educational management organization, a private corporation, a public or private institution of higher education, a consortium of public school districts or other public or private entities. In the applications process, partnerships must demonstrate at least one of the following strategies in improving leadership and academic achievement: changes in teacher compensation to address geographic or certification barriers and/or to offer performance incentives; utilization of novel leadership and administrative policies and procedures, to include preparation and certification of administrators; operational procedures and costs shared with other entities; continuous progress of students between grades 4-8; uses of time, space and technology in the instructional delivery of state academic content standards; or a combination of these strategies.

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

### EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE/SCDE REPORT CARD WORKSHOPS

In November, the Education Oversight Committee and the South Carolina Department of Education sponsored three Principal's Checkup Workshops for South Carolina principals. The workshops, held in Columbia, Greenville, and Charleston, focused on collecting quality data and managing it at the school level. Sessions were geared toward elementary/middle school ratings, high school ratings, and data collecting using SAIS and SIDS.

As a result of these workshops several of the participants have requested and are eagerly awaiting future workshops with information similar to that presented. Participants were enormously impressed how beneficial the data presented applied to their daily functions on the job.

"I found the workshops to be beneficial as confirmation as to the details of how I currently calculate report card simulation numbers. I think the workshops are invaluable to district Report Card Coordinators. The workshops should be presented to those folks on a yearly basis since new ones might be designated each year. The workshops were a good basis for understanding the calculations. It was great to have all of the offices present to hear our concerns and answer questions."

-- Debi Gilliam, Director of Testing and Report Card Coordinator, Berkeley County School District

### PAIRS

Launched in February 2005, Parents and Adults Inspiring Reading Success (PAIRS) is a project of SC's daily newspapers and is administered as a public awareness initiative of the Education Oversight Committee.

The mission of PAIRS is to encourage and support the achievement of reading literacy on grade level for every child in South Carolina.

Highlights of the year include:

- + Publication of a "Summer Reading" supplement in May, a follow-up to the previous year's pilot with The State newspaper. A total of 228,000 copies were printed and distributed in all copies of *Florence Morning News*, *Myrtle Beach Sun News*, *Orangeburg Times and Democrat*, *Seneca Daily Journal*, *Union Daily Times*, and *Spartanburg Herald-Journal*. In addition, multiple copies were provided to school districts statewide, every county library in South Carolina, and each PAIRS Affiliate. A teacher's guide to the supplement was provided free of charge to educators upon request.
- + Establishment of a redesigned website for the initiative, located at <http://scpairs.sc.gov/>.
- + Partnership with SC Afterschool Alliance to train new and established PAIRS Affiliate programs using

the publication *How to Start an Effective Out-of-School Time Program in South Carolina*.

- + Participation in the SC Afterschool Academies. PAIRS provided scholarship money for five affiliate programs to attend the two-day professional development opportunity sponsored by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

## COMMON GROUND

In February 2007, the Education Oversight Committee concluded an eight-month tour of counties “Looking Forward: Building Upon Common Ground in South Carolina’s Changing Environment,” Conversations were held in each SC county focused on individuals and communities using their influence and energies to unite around those areas where we agree.

Education Oversight Committee members studied the reports of the community meetings and identified areas of strong consensus:

- 1 As South Carolina becomes more diverse, schools are embracing change and innovation to ensure every student succeeds.
- 2 The success of all students depends on a community commitment to education and shared responsibilities among families, educators, and family members.
- 3 Collectively, groups and individuals should rise to the challenge of educating and impacting each student in South Carolina. A community framework consisting of communication, coordination, and collaboration is necessary so that all of South Carolina succeeds.

The results of the meetings yielded numerous examples of innovative programs and partnerships working across South Carolina. To assist in building a community framework, the Education Oversight Committee began the process of collecting information to establish an online “Community Resource Hub.”

## FAMILY-FRIENDLY STANDARDS

The Education Oversight Committee, in cooperation with the SC Department of Education, published the annual “Guide for Parents and Families about What Your Child Should Be Learning in School This Year.” The publication, available in both English and Spanish versions, provides current information on the standards in the four core content areas in grades K-12. In 2007, the publication was revised to be more “reader-friendly” with updated graphics.

## PARENT SURVEY

Education Oversight Committee staff completed the annual review of the Parent Surveys completed in accordance with the EAA. The review found that the number of parents returning surveys, 69,495, increased for the fourth consecutive year. Based on the results of the 2006 parent survey, parents continue to have an overwhelmingly positive perception of the learning environment and social and physical environment of their child’s school. And, for the first time since statewide administration of the survey in 2002, parental satisfaction with home and school relations exceeded 67 percent. The results were also consistent with prior surveys. Parent satisfaction with the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child’s school declined as the absolute rating of their child’s school declined and improved as the absolute rating of their child’s school improved.

Regarding parental involvement, the analysis revealed that the level of parental involvement was comparable regardless of the absolute rating of their child’s school. As in prior years, parents noted that their work schedule was the greatest obstacle to their involvement. Other obstacles to parent involvement were lack of transportation, family health programs, and lack of available care for children or other family members.

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLEMENT

Prior to the start of the 2007-08 school year, the Education Oversight Committee led an effort to produce a back-to-school publication to provide parents and families with tools and resources to support their children in the upcoming school year. The eight-page tabloid included information about supporting success at home and at school. Special sections addressed

tips for making the newspaper a fun learning tool, helping your child use the internet wisely, and recommended questions to ask at parent-teacher conferences. Current information about Personal Pathways to Success/Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA), along with a Parent Homework section, were included. The guide was published in each of South Carolina's 16 daily newspapers and *The Black News*, a statewide publication. Additional copies were distributed to every SC school district, pediatricians statewide, SC county libraries, Doctor's Care locations, and PAIRS Affiliates.

The Education Oversight Committee's partners in the 2007-08 project included the Commission for Minority Affairs, South Carolina Department of Education, New Carolina – South Carolina's Council on Competiveness, SC Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association, Total Comfort, and Doctors Care.

# IV

## ADVISORY GROUPS

### NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS REVIEW PANEL

Mark Bauerlein, Emory University  
Allen Berger, Miami University of Ohio (retired)  
Vicki Jacobs, Harvard University  
Sandra Stotsky, educational consultant, Fordham Foundation  
Dorothy Winchester, Indiana Department of Education

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS PARENT/BUSINESS/ COMMUNITY LEADER REVIEW TASK FORCE

Hannah Baker, West Columbia  
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Gloria Bockleman, Beaufort  
Beth Collins, Lamar  
Robert Gathers, Orangeburg  
Joyce Hill, Timmonsville  
John Macomson, Campobello  
Joseph McEachern, Columbia  
Donald Myers, Scranton  
Frances Patrick, St. George  
John Peoples, Blair  
Tom Roe, Greenville  
Phillip Taylor, Walterboro  
Beth Wells, Union  
Judith Wylie, Sumter

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS SPECIAL EDUCATION/ELL REVIEW TASK FORCE

Danielle Allen, Goose Creek  
Maria Beckner, Laurens  
Brian Blitch, Moncks Corner  
Lori Corley, Saluda  
Ann Cureton, Lancaster  
Donna Edmonds, Mayo  
Debbie Gunter, Swansea  
Patricia Hutchinson, Columbia  
Keturah Inabinett, Harleyville  
Andree Jaynes, Charleston  
Sharon Moss, Sumter

Kristy Powell, Conway  
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