SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

prioritizing
strong students and schools
as we emerge from the pandemic

www.eoc.sc.gov

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

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,

When we raised a glass to auld lang syne and turned our calendars ahead, no one could have predicted the chaos 2020 would hold for South Carolina students, families, and educators. On behalf of the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), I wish to extend a heartfelt "thank you" to everyone who has sacrificed to continue students' education under these incredibly difficult circumstances.

I would also like to commend EOC's dedicated staff—now under the leadership of our new Executive Director¬—Matthew Ferguson, who faced the unenviable challenge of moving and starting a new job at the onset of a global pandemic! The team's on-the-ground education experience, unwavering commitment to student success, exemplary initiative, and "can-do" attitude allowed the Committee to quickly pivot to engage critical questions around the impacts of COVID-19 on South Carolina's students and public education system.

In 2020, the EOC faithfully pursued our mandate from the General Assembly to report facts, measure change, and promote student progress. That included conducting the various studies and reports required by law that you will find listed in the following pages. I am grateful for the numerous task forces, focus groups, committees, and organizations around the state and nation that assisted us in accomplishing this work; many are noted in this report.

However, the significance of the EOC's education impact extends far beyond words on paper. Since its inception, clear-eyed foresight has been the hallmark of EOC's work, and 2020 proved no exception:

- Leading the Innovative eLearning Initiative

  In 2018, the Committee partnered with 15 school districts to pilot a high-quality eLearning program to allow continued instruction on inclement weather days. While eLearning was never intended to sustain months of virtual instruction such as we have experience in this pandemic, best practices culled from the eLearning initiative—as well as direct expertise provided by EOC staff to districts pursuing online remote learning for the first time—have proved invaluable and continue to guide the ongoing development of new distance learning capacity across the state.

- Reporting the Impacts of COVID-19 on Student Learning

  As a trusted, independent source of reliable information, EOC was commissioned to review the education challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19 and point to emerging best practices across South Carolina and the nation. Gathering a broad array of stakeholder perspectives through surveys, personal interviews, and robust data analysis, EOC delivered the first statewide look at COVID's anticipated impact on student learning. The findings were stark, if not surprising: seven (7) in ten (10) 3rd-8th graders are now projected to not be on grade level at the end of this school year. The EOC will continue to monitor and report on this crisis of learning, and lead and shape conversations about how to help South Carolina students recover and thrive.
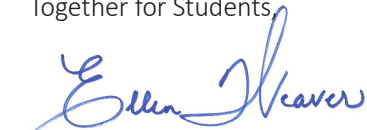
- Reviving Critical Structural Reform Conversations

  In 2001, a fledging EOC delivered reports detailing the urgent need for reform to South Carolina's education governance and funding structures. In the 20 years since, what was then urgent has become a five-alarm fire. Accordingly, the Committee has commissioned a new review of South Carolina's governance statutes and engaged in robust discussions around how to sustainably and equitably fund all students, including those in public charter schools. Look for these critical conversations to continue.

Education after COVID will never look the same. Indeed, this challenge may be South Carolina's golden opportunity to push our long-struggling education system beyond the limitations of outdated paradigms to foster greater equity, flexibility, and fulfill our responsibility to support every child, wherever and however they learn best.

The work ahead is daunting and will require strong leadership and tremendous courage. But the future of our students demands nothing less. The EOC remains committed to our mission to support and illuminate this urgent work.

Together for Students,

Ellen Weaver, EOC Chair

The Year in Review

Analyses, Updates, and Program Summaries
from March 2020 to February 2021

## 2019 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Analysis

The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), which provides information on children's preparedness for kindergarten, is administered to each child entering kindergarten in the SC public schools at least once during the first 45 days. In 2019, South Carolina schools began a third statewide administration of the assessment, which provides the only "snapshot" of kindergarten readiness in the state currently. Other states, like Maryland and Ohio, also administer the KRA, to kindergarten students.

The KRA is comprised of four domains:

- Language and Literacy: skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- Mathematics: skills such as counting, comparison, and sorting
- Physical Well-Being & Motor Development: abilities such as dexterity, muscular coordination, and balance
- Social Foundations: demonstration of following rules, asking for help, task persistence, and other skills necessary to the functioning within the kindergarten classroom

School Year	Number of Students	Emerging Readiness	Approaching Readiness	Demonstrating Readiness
Overall Readiness				
Fall 2017	54,927	26%	38%	36%
Fall 2018	54,904	25%	38%	37%
Fall 2019	55,694	24%	37%	39%

2019 Statewide KRA Overall Results 55,694 children

More information and downloadable resource:
https://tinyurl.com/1k4nbj79
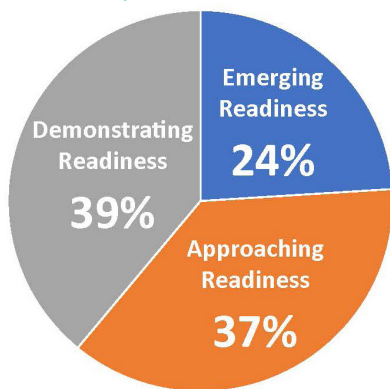
Key Results

- Scores from the 2019 KRA administration showed that 31 districts met or surpassed the overall state average for *Demonstrating Readiness.*
- Among White children, about 48 percent performed at the *Demonstrating Readiness* level on the Overall scale, while 29 percent of African American children and 24 percent of Hispanic children were at that level.
- KRA test results for students who attended a 4K program, either full or half-day, in a non-CERDEP eligible district were compared with results for students who attended a 4K program in a CERDEP-eligible district. Both groups showed slight increases in the percentage of kindergartners performing in the *Demonstrating Readiness* category in 2019 as compared to 2018. In CERDEP districts, 39 percent of kindergartners scored *Demonstrating Readiness.* In non-CERDEP districts, 42 percent of kindergartners who participated in 4K programs performed in the *Demonstrating Readiness* category.

What do the results of the KRA provide for policymakers?

- Provides information on state and county school readiness efforts, and trends over time.
- Provides information so that local communities can take action to support growth and development of all young children in South Carolina.
- Assesses state's efforts in language, literacy, math instruction and social, emotional and physical development.
- Provides policymakers information about the impact of full-day four-year-old programs funded with state investments of approximately $64 million each year.

Community Block Grant Program

In the 2019-20 Appropriation Act, the South Carolina General Assembly authorized and funded the South Carolina Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program in Proviso 1.64. For school year 2019-20, six initiatives throughout the state were awarded funding through the one-year block grant program.

In October 2020, the EOC received a report on the seven districts/consortia who received funding for school year 2018-19. Following an independent review of applicants by a grants committee, the recipients of the grants in 2018-19 were: Berkeley; Chesterfield; Greenwood 50; Lexington/Richland 5; Pee Dee Consortia (eight districts and Head Start; Spartanburg consortia ((five districts)); and York One.) Funding ranged from $84,156 to $240,050. The EOC contracted with USC and Clemson University to evaluate the impact of these grants.

Participation numbers for 2018-19 Grants

Overall Numbers

- 94 schools
- 248 classrooms
- 5,005 students
- 2,876 parents

Professional Development

- 857 professional development sessions or activities completed
- 131 professional development sessions or activities cancelled due to COVID.
- 1,253 educators or stakeholders participated

SC School Districts Awarded Community Block Grants by School Year

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020
Cherokee, $250,000	Cherokee, $10,000	Cherokee, $206,857	Berkeley, $113,650	Charleston, $85,580
Chesterfield, $250,000	Chesterfield, $10,000	Chesterfield, $105,613	Chesterfield, $114,410	Chesterfield, $132,100
Clarendon 2, $249,086	Lancaster, $164,000	Lancaster, $126,923	Spartanburg Consortia, $204,733	District Five of Lexington/Richland, $57,550
Florence 1, $250,000	Lexington 4, $201,000	McCormick, $147,283	District Five of Lexington/Richland, $106,889	Lexington One: $74,222
Florence 2, $239,000	Pee Dee Consortia, $250,000	Pee Dee Consortium, $187,350	Greenwood 50, $84,156	Pee Dee Consortia, $221,900
Jasper, $250,000	Richland 1, $118,000	Spartanburg Consortium, $128,724	Pee Dee Consortia, $240,050	York One, $77,179
Lexington 3, $216,437	Spartanburg Consortia, $142,000	York One, $97,250	York One, $86,112	
Spartanburg 7, $194,466	York One, $84,000			

Community Block Grant Outcomes: School year 2018-19

Berkeley

- Improved teacher-student interactions in targeted classrooms from baseline to mid-year in three domains of CLASS
- Improved district means on the PALS assessment in language tasks from baseline to mid-year

Chesterfield

- Expanded 4K in district by six classrooms to better meet needs of community
- Developed alignment between language/literacy and mathematics instruction in 4K and 5K
- Improved school-home partnership through repeated reading initiative based on common titles in classrooms that are also provided to families for at-home reading

Greenwood 50

- Increases in teachers' efforts towards relationship building with students
- Student referrals decreased by 61% from 2018-19 to 2019-20 when comparing August-March of each school year
- Increase in IGDIs in the areas of picture naming, counting, quantity comparison, and one-to-one correspondence

School District 5 of Lexington and Richland Counties

- Increase in total key practices from 55% at the beginning year to 85% at mid-year
- Increase in the number of teachers who improved key practices from 72% to 100%
- Decrease red flags observed from 30 at the beginning of the year to 6 at mid-year
- Decrease in the percentage of teachers with red flags from 31% to 7%

Pee Dee Consortia

- Approximately 85% of teachers scored a 75% or higher on the TPOT in Fall 2019
- Coaches worked with teachers in areas identified for improvement
- TPOT data over time indicated positive correlation between improvements and amount of professional development
- Social-Emotional Assessment Measure (SEAM) piloted with Florence 1 teachers; teachers shared SEAM data with parents and goals for each student with the parent

Spartanburg Consortia

- Expanded initiative to include eleven new 4K classrooms within three new districts
- Developed Quality Improvement Plans for classrooms based on ECERS-3 and CLASS scores that were used to focus professional development and coaching

York One

- More than 50% of children who participated in summer program demonstrated improved skills in letter/number recognition
- Parents who participated in Parent Institute indicated improved knowledge/skills
- Children enrolled in CERDEP outperformed a comparison group in reading skills at kindergarten entry with more than 70% scoring in the 40th percentile or above (compared to 59% of non-CERDEP participants)
- Children enrolled in CERDEP demonstrated similar mathematics skills to a comparison group with approximately 53% scoring in the 40th percentile or above

More information and downloadable resource: https://tinyurl.com/xg3ypgkn

Report of Publicly Funded 4K Programs

The General Assembly first created and funded the Child Development Education Pilot Program by a budget proviso in Fiscal Year 2006-07. In 2014 the General Assembly codified the program in Act 284 and renamed it the South Carolina Child Early Reading Development and Education Program. The program, referred to as CERDEP or state-funded full-day four-year-old kindergarten, provides full-day early childhood education for at-risk children who are four years of age by September 1. In school year 2018-19, eligibility is defined as an annual family income of 185 percent or less of the federal poverty guidelines as promulgated annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or Medicaid eligibility. Both public schools and non-public childcare centers licensed by the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) may participate in the program and serve eligible children. The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) oversees implementation of CERDEP in public schools and South Carolina Office of First Steps to School Readiness (OFS) oversees implementation in non-public childcare settings, including private childcare centers and faith-based settings.

This year's report, which was transmitted to the SC General Assembly on December 15, 2020, reflects the period in which the global Coronavirus pandemic significantly impacted enrollment, attendance and overall teaching and learning. The cohort of Pre-K four-year-olds served during the 2019-20 school year lost one-fourth of the school year in face-to-face instruction. Both enrollment and instruction in public four-year-old programs has been impacted in the 2020-21 school year, and it is reasonable to expect that a greater acehviement gap will occur as student progress through the grades.

In school year 2019-20, over 35,000 four-year-olds, or 61 percent of all four-year-olds in our state, lived in poverty. Just over 18,200 of these children participated in either CERDEP or Head Start; therefore, at a minimum, 51 percent of four-year-olds in poverty in South Carolina received a full-day, publicly funded, education program.

Summary of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Served Statewide, FY 2019-20, and 2020-21

	2019-20	2020-21
Public CERDEP Enrollment (45-day count)	10,561	7,822
Non-public CERDEP Enrollment (45-day count)	2,455	2,145
Total CERDEP Enrollment	**13,016**	
Total Head Start Enrollment*	5,188	
Estimated Number of Four-Year-Olds Served by CERDEP or Head Start	**18,204**	
Estimated Number of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty	**35,520**	
Estimated Percentage of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Served by CERDEP or Head Start	51.2%	
Estimated Percentage of Four-Year-Olds in Poverty Not Served by CERDEP or Head Start	48.8%	

* Head Start enrollment has been impacted by the global Coronavirus pandemic. The federal office has provided guidance regarding attendance recording and enrollment which precludes full reporting at the time of this report.

Recommendations: 2021 CERDEP Report

1. Continue to share waiting lists for the purpose of serving as many children as possible. SCDE should maintain a master list with schools, number of 4K classrooms, 45-day count and 135-day count enrollments and make available to the public and other agencies (through a website or statewide coordinator for 4K data collection). The OFS should maintain a list of provider classrooms with vacancies noted on October 1 and March 1. Continue to focus on increasing numbers of children served while reaching the efficiency of full classrooms.

2. While the ideal statewide system would have all state-funded, pre-kindergarten program operating in one office, this may be too ambitious at the current time. The recommendation is the designation of a 4K data collection office/center. With the input of all involved agencies serving 4K children using state monies as well as benchmarking other state models, a centralized place for the collection of information in similar formats, matched expectations including assessment data, hours of instruction, district of residence, level of teacher training, etc., be established. Therefore, the data and accountabilities help establish consistencies in programs and allow for research to provide the General Assembly meaningful information regarding investment in 4K in South Carolina.

3. OFS student enrollment data should include the student's district of residence. Inclusion of district of residence would improve the accuracy of the number of CERDEP students served as indicated by their district of residence.

4. The stable number of identified students living in poverty and small percentage increase in the overall population of four-year-olds must be addressed through continuing and expanding services to include more of the eligible population.

5. The current multitude of assessments used in Pre-K 4, kindergarten, first and second grade do not provide an accurate student growth continuum for teachers to use in determining next steps in instruction. Neither does it provide parents with substantive information regarding their child's progress, including the growth needed to meet third grade targets. Since the stated focus of Act 284 is a "comprehensive, systemic approach to reading," it is necessary to have a comprehensive and systemic assessment continuum established. Districts should be required to adopt or establish a continuum of assessment for students in Pre-K 4 through 2nd grade. The requirements of the choice should include growth measurements, correlation to the SC Standards and alignment with the SC READY third grade ELA. Private providers would use the same assessment "adopted or established" by the home district where the provider is located. Teacher professional development and student progress could be coordinated.

6. As soon as safely possible, crisis intervention instruction must begin for the cohort of students now in kindergarten (2019-20 PreK 4-year-olds). Perhaps, extended day during the last quarter of the School Year 2020-2021 can be established for students who were enrolled in the prior year cohort. Summer instructional events should be provided in face-to-face environments. Triage delivery should include meals, transportation and direct instruction in reading and math. The currently enrolled cohort of PreK-4, plus additional students in the qualifying districts should also be offered extended day during the last quarter and summer of 2021.


More information and downloadable resource:
https://tinyurl.com/1qp9ts2m

Remote Learning Study

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, on January 11, 2021, the EOC staff released a thorough review of the opportunities for innovation, lessons learned for future planning, and barriers to the success during emergency remote learning.

Using data from approximately 222,000 South Carolina students in grades 3-8 who took MAP Growth assessments in 2019 and 2020, it is projected that nearly 70 percent of those students will not meet grade level proficiency standards in English Language Arts and math in spring 2021. The "COVID Slide", as it is widely referred to, is expected to be more dramatic in mathematics, among elementary students and for students who are often identified as vulnerable, such as those living in high-poverty households or who do not have access to reliable internet access.

7 OF 10 STUDENTS
in grades 3 through 8 are projected NOT to meet grade level standards in ELA and math in spring 2021
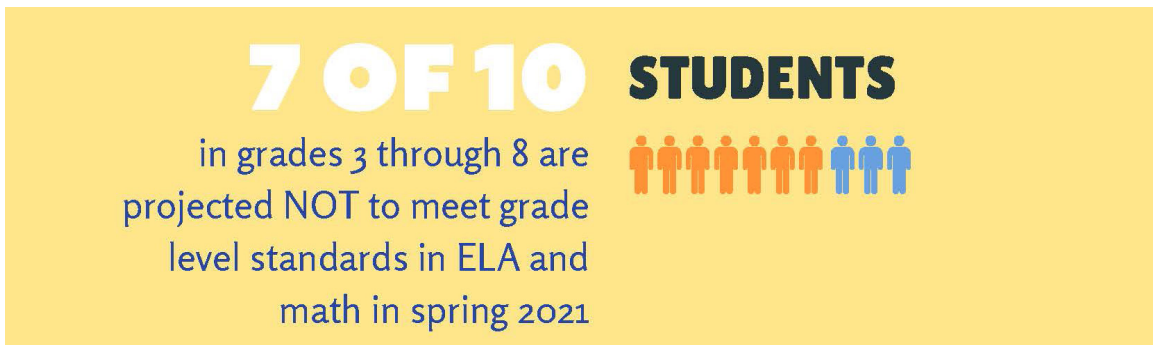
Impact on Student Learning

- 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 student with respect to instructional method.

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.

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.

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.

More information and downloadable resources:
https://tinyurl.com/1f0enzmz (Full Report)
**https://tinyurl.com/3k4k78sc (Report Brief)**

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.

Academic Recovery Camps

Section 5 of Act 142 requires districts to administer student assessments in reading and mathematics to students who participate in Academic Recovery Camps and directs the EOC to evaluate the camp's impact on student learning:

Of the students identified as needing intervention, far fewer students attended Summer 2020 Academic Recovery Camps (ARCs). The students who did attend ARCs came in with significant learning deficits. They did make gains in both reading and math although they remained significantly behind in grade level expectations once they completed the ARCs in Summer 2020.
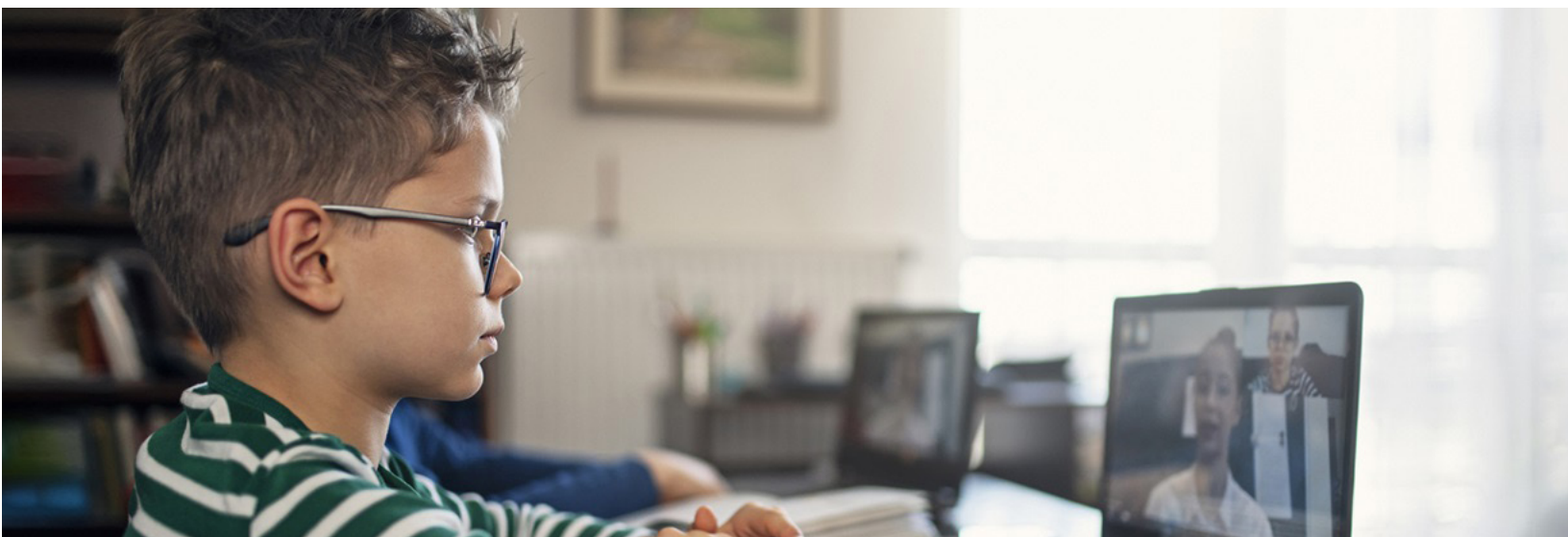
Survey of the Effects of Remote Learning in SC

In the Summer of 2020, the EOC surveyed South Carolina educators and parents on four areas related to remote learning. All of the surveys were distributed online; 847 educators participated as well as 263 parents.

Both parents and educators recognized difficulty related to the abrupt closure of schools in March 2020. In terms of delivery mode of learning, the most popular options were asynchronous lessons and distributing physical packets of materials.

The level of rigor was recognized as an issue in the surveys. Educators recognized activities at a lower level of rigor compared to in-person instruction. Parents viewed some work as largely "busy work." Student grades were reported by parents as largely the same at the end of 2019-20 as in previous quarters of the school year.

EDUCATORS

Top Benefits of Remote Learning in Spring 2020
- Concern for Health
- Worked as a team
- Proud to meet challenge

Top Challenges of Remote Learning in Spring 2020
- Students not turning in assignments
- Less rigorous lessons

Top Challenges of Remote Learning in Fall 2020
- Increased stress on teachers and administrators
- Failure of students to turn in work
- The amount of time needed to prepare lessons

PARENTS

Top Benefits of Remote Learning in Spring 2020
- Children able to work remotely
- Concern for my child's health
- School materials helpful

Top Challenges of Remote Learning in Spring 2020
- Working remotely with children at home
- No peer interaction
- Less rigor

Top Benefits of Remote Learning in Fall 2020
- Free meals for students
- Devices provided by school are functioning adequately
- Safety measures in place at school

Top Challenges of Remote Learning in Fall 2020
- Lack of social interaction for students
- Monitoring children's school work with family and work duties
- Increased stress on children and families

More information and downloadable resource:

https://tinyurl.com/bcrwl1ap

Rethink K-12 Education Grant

The EOC is a partner with the South Carolina Department of Education in the federal Rethink K-12 Education Model Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

South Carolina's application, titled *Return to Learn: Delivery Quality Instruction Virtually Anywhere*, once carried out, is designed to:
- Increase availability of remote learning resources to students and teachers in areas of SC that lack broadband access;
- Improve education resources for specific, identified gaps by developing and curating engaging, high-quality content;
- Increase teacher experience, confidence, and proficiency with remote learning technology and resources;
- Improve communication between families, teachers, and schools to support remote learning.

The EOC's portion of the grant is focused on communicating with parents and families.
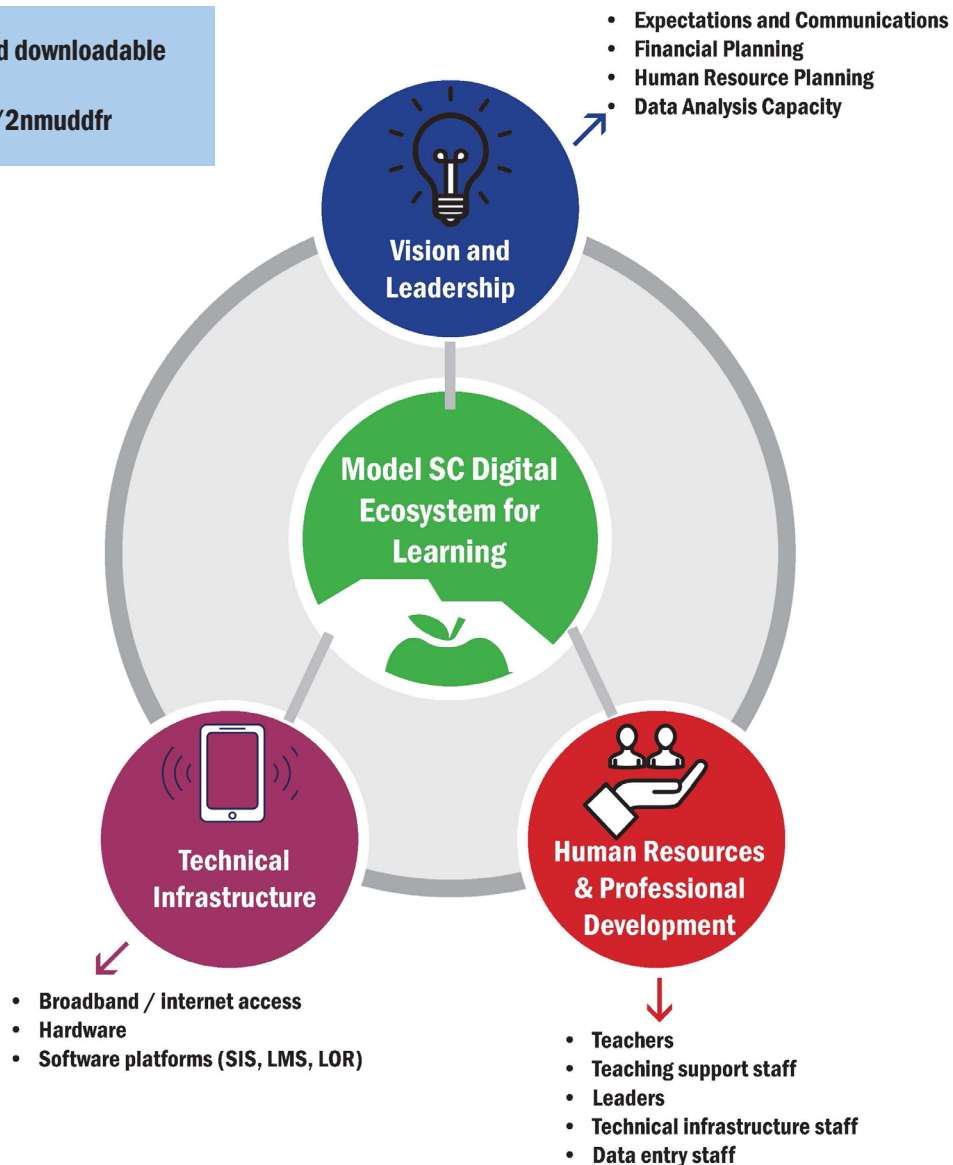
eLearning Pilot Project

Pursuant to Proviso 1A.69 of Act 135, signed by the Governor on May 18, 2020, to continue normal operations of state government, the EOC constructed and implemented the third year (2000-21) of a pilot program for alternative delivery methods of instruction during short term disruption of school, such as inclement weather, utility outages, etc.

For Cohort 3 (2020-21), it was originally planned to add an additional 10-15 districts and work towards the transition of the eLearning pilot to SCDE. However, because of school closures due to COVID and fall restart plans, EOC staff pivoted. Recognizing that many more districts would be required to offer some form of virtual instruction during emergency remote learning, it was decided to add an additional 27 school districts and 2 public charter schools through a streamlined application process. A Readiness Cohort was also created that would eventually include 18 districts. A process was established for a Readiness district to petition for eLearning status when the districts attained the elements identified as necessary for a working instructional technology environment. In August 2020, seven districts successfully petitioned to move from Readiness to the eLearning cohort. In addition, 15 districts joined the Readiness cohort during the summer of 2020.

Throughout the year, information and data were collected which substantiated the findings from Years One and Two. The capacity of the district to provide engaging and effective instruction in a digital environment depend on having a digital ecosystem within the district. A Model SC Digital Ecosystem for Learning (see below) was presented to the EOC in February 2021 which describes the necessary elements/components of a successful digital learning model. Behind each of the elements/components is an extensive organization of planning, processes, and professional development. The eLearning Project now will transition to the SC Department of Education for implementation.

More information and downloadable resource:
https://tinyurl.com/2nmuddfr

- Expectations and Communications
- Financial Planning
- Human Resource Planning
- Data Analysis Capacity

Vision and Leadership

Model SC Digital Ecosystem for Learning

Technical Infrastructure

- Broadband / internet access
- Hardware
- Software platforms (SIS, LMS, LOR)

Human Resources & Professional Development

- Teachers
- Teaching support staff
- Leaders
- Technical infrastructure staff
- Data entry staff

Impact of COVID-19 on school accountability

The impact of the pandemic on schools and accountability is far-reaching. Following the U.S. Department of Education's approval of a waiver of Spring 2020 assessments, the EOC voted to suspend school report card ratings for school year 2019-20. While the committee also recommended the suspension of ratings for the 2020-21 school year, they further emphasized that statewide testing of students continue despite the interruptions brought about by the pandemic.

Work on the Cyclical Review of SC's Accountability System continued, pursuant to Section 59-18-910 of the SC Code of Laws.

"Navigating these uncharted waters will require careful listening, clear communication, and a large dose of common sense. But keeping students and their learning needs as our North Star, we may also find unexpected opportunities to address long-standing challenges in new ways"

-- Ellen Weaver, EOC Chair, in a March 24, 2020 memo to EOC members

Cyclical Review of SC's Accountability System

Section 59-18-910 of the South Carolina Code of Law calls for the Education Oversight Committee (EOC), working with the South Carolina State Board of Education (SBE), and a broad-based group of stakeholders, to conduct a comprehensive cyclical review of the accountability system. One of the key charges for the cyclical review is to consider how the state's accountability system reflects evidence that students have developed the skills and characteristics outlined in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

Pursuant to this legislative mandate, the EOC and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) convened the South Carolina Accountability Advisory Committee (AAC), comprised of members who represented the interests and priorities of various educational stakeholders in South Carolina. The EOC and SCDE contracted with the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (the Center) to facilitate the cyclical review process. The AAC met a total of seven times from February to December 2020. The primary focus of the AAC's work was to identify educational policy priorities, discuss system design and implementation considerations and constraints, review key elements of the current accountability system, and, if deemed necessary, recommend changes to the accountability system. During the review process, the AAC was encouraged to offer innovative ideas for improving the existing accountability system and not be constrained by prior practices. However, the committee also attended to critical technical and operational considerations to ensure that the accountability system is coherent, defensible, useful, feasible, and compliant with state and federal requirements. The following two pages outline the AAC's key findings and recommendations.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR *REVISING THE ESSA SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM*

Develop and report new information related to achievement gaps in academic performance that:

- Includes all student groups,
- Is tied to a fixed and meaningful criterion, and
- Measures progress toward elimination of gaps.

Achievement gap measures should be prominently and clearly reported in a manner that is easily accessed and understood by stakeholders. Schools with achievement gaps that are large and persistent should NOT attain favorable ratings.

Evaluate the current school performance ratings to ensure they reflect clear, appropriate, and consistent criteria. This includes the following:

- Study the range of 'school profiles' for each rating level to certify these patterns are appropriate and consistent with the state's educational goals, especially related to equity,
- Revise performance expectations as necessary, and
- Clearly communicate the meaning of each rating in terms of the expected performance.

Consider the following changes to the graduation rate and college and career readiness (CCR) indicators:

- Evaluate and potentially adjust the weights of graduation rate and the CCR indicators, and
- Include extended (5-year) graduation rate, but with the following parameters:
  - Extended graduation rate should have less influence than the traditional 4-year rate to maintain on-time graduation as the primary goal, and
  - Extended graduation rate alone should not decrease accountability scores.

Career-ready credit should be awarded to qualifying students who earn the South Carolina High School Credential. The state should engage in ongoing evaluation and monitoring to ensure that students are not inappropriately routed to this option.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR *ENHANCING DATA COLLECTION AND/OR REPORTING*

The state should conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all career readiness measures to ensure patterns of participation and performance demonstrate that students are well-prepared for post-secondary career success. Evaluation results should be publicly and prominently reported.

The committee supports research, development, and implementation of a reporting initiative to better communicate *Conditions for Success* for South Carolina's districts and schools. This component should include factors such as:

- Educator quality, training, and competencies, including cultural competencies,
- Diversity of educator and leader workforce,
- Rates of disciplinary actions, such as suspension and expulsion, including for early learners,
- Access to resources within the community (e.g., mentoring programs, parent engagement, corporate partnerships), and
- Data to inform readiness and capacity for remote learning such as infrastructure (e.g., device availability, connectivity) and training.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR *ENGAGING IN FURTHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT*

Research alternatives for developing academic and trans-academic measures for students in kindergarten to grade 2.

Consider developing state guidance and standards for performance demonstration (e.g., capstone projects, service initiatives, research studies) for South Carolina high school students.

Evaluate alternatives for through-course assessment.

Assess whether the criteria for student progress, for both the academic content areas and English language proficiency, are appropriate.

Social sciences, especially citizenship, is not adequately addressed. Consider additional measures, perhaps for each grade.

More information and downloadable resource:
https://tinyurl.com/4y3cymdp

Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Program Update

The Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children (ECENC) program was created by the SC General Assembly (Act 247, signed into law on May 18, 2018) to provide grants and parental tax credit to eligible students attending approved schools. Within the law, the EOC is charged with determining the eligibility of schools within the program and evaluating the impact of the program on student performance.

More information: www.eoc.sc.gov/ecenc-program

Charter School Funding Project

Pursuant to Proviso 1A.59 of the 2019-20 General Appropriation Act, the EOC issued a report to the General Assembly in June 2020 regarding the funding of charter schools. The report focuses on establishing a funding model based on the principles of performance funding.

More information: https://tinyurl.com/14c9o5dl

English 2 End-of-Course Assessment Approval

In June 2020, the EOC approved the English 2 End-of-Course Field Test. The approval occurred after the results of the field test were reviewed for alignment with state standards, level of difficulty and validity, and for the ability to differentiate levels of achievement.

More information: https://tinyurl.com/1gnfejg8

Performance of Military-Connected Students

This report, produced annually per the direction of SC law, details the demographics of military-connected students; provides an update on the academic performance and school attendance of military-connected students in school year 2018-19; and summarizes the trainings for educators and families to enhance support of military-connected students at home and in school.

More information: https://tinyurl.com/2pvtqf3e

SC Teacher Loan Program

The Teacher Quality Act of 2000 directs the EOC to conduct an annual review of the South Carolina Teacher Loan Program This year's report examines the teacher recruitment and retention issues in South Carolina for fiscal year 2018-19.

More information: https://tinyurl.com/1ji2o4ja

2019 Parent Survey Results

This report, produced annually per the direction of SC law, details the results of the parent survey which is given to all parents of children in the highest grade of each school.

More information: https://tinyurl.com/2f3gypuu

K-12 English Language Arts (ELA) Standards Review

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 industry persons, as well as teachers of special education, to make recommendations on the K-12 ELA standards.

More information: https://tinyurl.com/9vjbvghd

Industry Credentials for Accountability

In December 2020, the EOC approved Industry Recognized Credentials for the 2020-21 school year, as recommended by the SC Dept. of Education. A total of 59 credentials were added and 15 were deleted from the previous year, and will be used to designate student career readiness in the current accountability system.

More information: https://tinyurl.com/5y4uiqi1

EIA Budget Recommendations

As required by state law, the EOC approved budget and proviso recommendations in December 2020 for Fiscal Year 2021-22. 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://tinyurl.com/6gd84jwt

ADVISORY GROUPS

KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT (KRA) ANALYSIS

Christine DiStefano, University of South Carolina

Fred Greer, University of South Carolina

Jin Liu, University of South Carolina

COMMUNITY BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM REVIEW, 2018-19

Leigh Kale D'Amico, EdD, University of South Carolina

Xumei Fan, MA, University of South Carolina

Anna Hall, PhD, University of South Carolina

Hall West, PhD, University of South Carolina

COMMUNITY BLOCK GRANT AWARD REVIEW, 2019-2020

Laura Bordeaux, Zeus

Christopher Cox, AOC Partners

Quantina Haggwood, Richland County School District One

Robin Harriford, EdVenture Children's Museum

Jean Hiers, Dominion Energy

Lynn Kuykendall, SC Department of Education

Peggy Torrey, TransformSC

REPORT OF PUBLICLY FUNDED 4K PROGRAMS

Mark Barnes, SC Office of First Steps

Michele Bowers, SC Department of Social Services

Wendy Burgess, SC Department of Education

Mary Lynne Diggs, SC Head Start Collaboration Office:

David Mathis, SC Department of Education

Georgia Mjartan, SC Office of First Steps

Quincie Moore, SC Department of Education

Taylor Seale, SC Department of Education

Martha Strickland, SC Office of First Steps

CYCLICAL REVIEW OF SC'S ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Jo Anne Anderson, community member

Melanie Barton, SC Governor's Office

Sandy Brossard; SC district instructional leader

James Burton, Continental Tires

Betsy Carpentier, SCDE

Chris Domakeski, Center for Assessment

Cynthia Downs, SC State Board of Education

Ian Feigel, SC parent

Wanda Hassler, SC school board member

Jessica Jackson, Boeing

Chandra Jefferson, SC teacher

Leslie Keng, Center for Assessment

Sarah Longshore, SCDE

J.T. McLawhorn, SC Urban League

Georgia Mjartan, SC First Steps

Brian Newsome, EOC member

John Payne, SCDE

Takesha Pollock, SC parent

Dan Ralyea, SCDE

Hope Rivers, SC higher education representative

Sylvia Sievers, SCDE

Molly Spearman, SC State Superintendent

Neil Vincent, SC district superintendent

SURVEY OF THE EFFECTS OF REMOTE LEARNING

Christine DiStefano, University of South Carolina

2019 SC PARENT SURVEY

Marisa Garcia-Quintana, Columbia

Cynthia Hearn, Columbia

MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENT REPORT

Kevin Bruch, Department of Defense State Liaison Office

Judy Glennon, Military Child Education Coalition

Cynthia Hearn, SC Department of Education

South Carolina School Liaison Officers

2018-19 TEACHER LOAN PROGRAM

Kathryn Crews, SCDE

Jennifer Garrett, CERAA

Cynthia Hearn SCDE

Mary Hipp, SCDE

Ray Jones, South Carolina Student Loan Corporation

Jeff Thompson, SC CHE

Jane Turner, CERRA

K-12 ELA STANDARDS REVIEW

Lorin Anderson, Columbia

Addy Aranda, teacher, Fort Mill

Melody Bradley, principal, Blacksville

Alicia Williams, teacher, Charleston

Amy Condon, teacher, Pawleys Island

Barbara Foorman, New York, NY

Kimberly Gibbs, community, Greenville

Carley Hansman, teacher, Chesnee

Amanda Hayes, spec. education, Dillon

Tom Henz, business, Hilton Head

Alejandra Hursey, ELL, Lake View

Annia Knight, community, Columbia

Nicole Kosinski, business, Sumter

Jacquelyn A. Malloy, Clemson

Staci Miller, spec. education, Pamplico

Lessa Owens, business, Greenville

Janie Neeley, parent, Columbia

Cassandra Poole, spec. education, Darlington

Latrece Quattleman, teacher, Graniteville

Kimberly Robson, teacher, Easley

Yamekia Robinson, parent, Lake City

Kelly Scott, parent, Rock Hill

Timothy Shanahan, Chicago, IL

Dywanna Smith, Elgin

Angela Spearman, teacher, Easley

Sarah Tew, spec. education, Hartsvile

Elizabeth Thompson, teacher, Hartsville

Kristina Turner, teacher, Anderson

Connie Williams, higher education, Folly Beach