



ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

South Carolina Action Plan to Help More of its Young People Graduate High School, Ready for College, Work & Life

Name of Summit State or Community: [South Carolina](#)

Date and Location of Summit: [December 2, 2008 in Columbia, SC](#)

Geographical Area Covered by Action Plan: [Statewide](#)
(i.e. which county(ies), school district(s), etc.)

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I. Building Knowledge: Understanding Your State's or Community's Dropout & College-Readiness Challenges

(See Part 2 of Grad Nation, pp. 22-41, for help with this area of planning.)

1. What is your state's or community's current graduation rate? (please cite the source and methodology)

The current graduation rate for South Carolina is 74.9.

South Carolina's current methodology tracks each student entering ninth-grade for the first time through to high school graduation. Following individual students through high school provides a much more accurate picture of the success of schools in keeping their students in school to graduation.

Developed by: South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
Originally released in: *2003 Annual School Report Card*
Data Source: School-level data files

NCLB
Formula: Graduation Rate=
$$\frac{2004-05 \text{ On-time Regular High School Diplomas Issued}}{1^{\text{st}} \text{ Time } 9^{\text{th}} \text{ Graders } 2001-02, \text{ Adjusted for Transfers}}$$

Description: This formula divides the number of students earning a standard high school diploma within four years of entering high school by the number of ninth-grade students entering four years

earlier. This ninth-grade count is adjusted by subtracting those students leaving and adding those students entering the high school over the four-year time period. Transfers out of the district or school must be documented as a transfer to a state diploma-granting program. (Students transferring to a GED program are counted as dropouts.) Students graduating in summer school following their senior year are included as graduates. (South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, 2003)

2. What does both national and local data indicate about your state's or community's graduation and college-going rates over the last few years (e.g. over the last 2, 5 and 10 years)? Have the schools' rates been improving or getting worse? How do your local statistics compare with your state and the nation as a whole?

According to the South Carolina Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Reports, since 2003 the graduation rate average is 75.4%. South Carolina college-going rates are in the chart below.

	2006-2007		2005-2006		2004-2005	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Completers	40,171		38,141		36,354	
Total High School Completers entering Freshman Class	26,444	65.8%	24,997	65.5%	23,644	65.0%
4-Year College	16,056	40.0%	15,559	40.8%	15,118	41.6%
2-Year College	1,462	3.6%	1,375	3.6%	1,432	3.9%
Technical Degree Program	8,926	22.2%	8,063	21.1%	7,094	19.5%
Technical College Diploma/Certificate	1,049	2.6%	966	2.5%	1,214	3.3%
Other Schools	283	0.7%	280	0.7	344	0.9%
Gainful Employment	6,036	15.0%	5,753	15.1%	5,772	15.9%
Armed Forces	1,240	3.1%	1,209	3.2%	1,217	3.3%
Other Activities (Not defined)	5119	12.7%	4,936	12.9%	4,163	11.5%

3. Please describe what efforts have or will be taken to better understand the issues from key perspectives, such as parents and young people themselves. Explain what data analysis, surveys, interviews or other efforts have or will be implemented to build your knowledge base of who drops out, from which schools, when, and why. What is known, and what do you still seek to learn?

In South Carolina, the Education Accountability Act of 1998 specifies that “school report cards should include information in such areas as evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students.” To obtain these evaluations, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) has composed student, teacher, and parent surveys that are designed to measure perceptions of three factors: home and school relations, the school’s learning environment, and the school’s social and physical environment.

The parent survey was designed in 2001 to meet the requirements of the Education Accountability Act and the Parental Involvement in Their Children’s Education Act. Since 2002 the South Carolina Department of Education has administered the parent survey statewide to collect information on parental involvement and document on the annual school report cards parent satisfaction of the learning environment, home and school relations, and social and physical environment of their child’s school. Section 59-28-190 of the Parental Involvement in Their Children’s Education Act requires the

EOC to “survey parents to determine if state and local efforts are effective in increasing parental involvement.” Using the results of the parent survey, the EOC first issued a report in 2002 and subsequent annual reports in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006. The basic components of each report have remained the same over the continuum of reports though there have been different research questions analyzed each year.

Also, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has gained youth and young adult perspective on the dropout issue by conducting a series of focus groups on this issue and by administering a survey to Dropout Summit attendees. The attached are findings from both of these sessions. While findings and results varied slightly, the majority of findings suggest that students from all walks of life drop out of school. Participants surveyed knew of at least one person that had dropped out of school, and that person was a peer, family member, or acquaintance. Over half of the participants surveyed indicated that they had thought about dropping out of school themselves. Survey results list reasons for dropping out that support what the research suggests: teen pregnancy, peers dropping out, lack of support or motivation, not engaged in learning, the need to work, being truant, and having substance abuse issues.

II. **Rallying Your State or Community: Getting Buy-In to Address the Crisis**

(See Part I of Grad Nation, pp. 8-21, for help with this area of planning.)

1. What key data and message points have you developed around the issue to secure commitment from your community’s and state’s leaders and to mobilize the general public? What’s the impact of the dropout challenge on your economy, state or city budget, social services, employers, post-secondary institutions, etc? If you don’t yet have these data and message points, what are your plans to obtain them?

Each class of dropouts costs South Carolina \$207 million in lost revenue and lifetime earnings. This estimate is based on just one year alone. Multiply this number over several years, and it is easy to realize that it could be possible to fix the current economic downturn through correcting the problem with high school dropouts.

For instance, South Carolina’s economy would increase over \$150 million, from a combination of savings and increased earnings if just 5 percent more students graduate from our schools. High school dropouts pay \$60,000 less in taxes during their lifetimes.

Some of the most notable areas that are impacted by high dropout rates are

- **Employment**
- **Poverty**
- **Crime**
- **Healthcare**

Students that drop out of high school tend to have higher unemployment rates—72 percent—because of the lack of skills required to compete in the labor market. As a result, their health will likely suffer due to a lack of insurance.

The impact of dropouts on healthcare mirrors the other areas with approximately 80 percent depending on the government for healthcare assistance. The life expectancy of high school dropouts is ten years shorter than graduates, with their having higher rates of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

The cycle of poverty is magnified by the fact that high school dropouts earn \$260,000 less than high school graduates over their lifetime or \$9,000 less per year. This disparity in income only gets worse as you increase the education level, with college graduates earning \$1 million more in a lifetime. Once students quit school, they have effectively committed their lives to poverty.

The relationship between crime rates and high school dropouts has been documented for years, with approximately 75 percent of inmates being high school dropouts³. As a result, states have had to increase spending on law enforcement and prisons. It is estimated that nationwide, an increase of 5 percent in high school graduates would save \$4.9 billion in crime-related government spending.

The goal of South Carolina's plan is to

- educate stakeholders of the social and financial costs of high school dropouts;
- improve the number of students that graduate from high school; and
- provide a framework for stakeholders to assist in improving the graduation rate in South Carolina.

2. Who is serving or can serve as your state's or community's champion and chief spokesperson around the high school dropout issue? If multiple spokespeople are needed, which leaders – elected officials, business leaders, other local influentials – will be recruited?

Jim Rex, State Superintendent of Education

3. What is your state's or community's vision statement for your young people, related to their successful completion of high school and preparation for college and/or work? What is your quantifiable long-term goal (e.g. 10-year) for your dropout and college-readiness challenges? (*Example from Detroit: "Vision- All children and youth in southeastern Michigan graduate from high school prepared for life, work and postsecondary education. Goal- The 30 high schools in the region with dropout rates of 40% or higher will be transformed into small schools or learning communities graduating 80% of youth with an average ACT score of 18 within four years after entering 9th grade."*)

To achieve statewide prosperity, all South Carolina students obtain high school credentials and be prepared for post-secondary education and careers.

Established May 27, 2005, by the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA), *Personal Pathways to Success* is a program designed to better prepare South Carolina students for the workforce and post-high-school education through early career planning and an individualized curriculum.

Personal Pathways to Success empowers youth and adults by making education relevant to their aspirations and abilities, promising a better economy and quality of life for everyone in South Carolina. *Personal Pathways to Success* provides educational and career planning resources that bring together all South Carolinians—students, parents, educators, adult job seekers, and employers. The services offered provide strong support for South Carolina's workforce and economic development priorities.

III. Identifying Solutions: Considering and Prioritizing Potential Solutions to Comprehensively Address Your Local Dropout Challenge

The Alliance advocates four focus areas that we believe to be key in addressing the dropout issue at the state and local levels: **transforming schools** including through increasing curricular rigor and

relevance, **supporting young people** holistically with wraparound services, **developing effective policies**, and **employing data systems** as a dropout prevention tool.

(See Part 3 of Grad Nation, pp. 42-75, for help with this area of planning.)

1. Please identify your highest-priority strategies and/or reforms consistent with *Grad Nation* that your state or community will pursue in order to **transform the schools** that the majority of your local dropouts attend. For each priority, what would you need to do in the next 6-12 months to advance it? Is anything already underway locally to support it? What support or information would help you make better progress?

(Example from Tulsa: Provide comprehensive social supports at schools to deal with the issues of poverty and the generational dropout crisis. Move to a Community School model for middle and high schools which is currently done in elementary schools.)

South Carolina has approached transforming schools from a statewide perspective. Currently, there are several programs/policies that are being implemented at all levels of education that are intended to keep students in school, while preparing them for college, work, and life.

The At-Risk Student Committee of the Education and Economic Development Act Coordinating Council conducted extensive research and worked collaboratively with the National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson University for five months to identify "exemplary" and "promising" evidence-based models, initiatives, and programs from which districts and schools may choose to target at-risk characteristics among school populations and meet the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school or being poorly prepared to move to the next level of education or the workforce.

Over 40 models, initiatives, and programs were identified. The Committee, working with the SCDE's staff, developed a regulation to support the implementation of this particular component of the legislation beginning with the 2007–08 school year. The regulation provides districts and schools with implementation-related content and significant flexibility to recommend additional evidence-based models, initiatives, and programs for implementation.

The SCDE has also developed an implementation guide that contains the proposed models, initiatives, and programs. The guide also provides a matrix of model-, initiative-, and program-specific content for each of the 40 models, initiatives, and programs. During 2008–09, the SCDE piloted a data system that identifies students who will likely need the interventions.

To effectively implement *Personal Pathways to Success*, the EEDA mandates a variety of supporting initiatives, including

- *High Schools That Work*
The *High Schools That Work* (HSTW) model provides a closely monitored framework of goals and key practices to accelerate learning, including rigorous academic standards and out-of-classroom learning opportunities.
- Regional Education Centers
These regional centers will provide career planning services for students and adults, professional development for educators, and workforce education programs.
- Individual Attention for Students
High schools are mandated to hire more guidance counselors to achieve a ratio of one counselor for every three-hundred students, and counselors specializing in career guidance will help students plan their educations.

- **Protection Against Tracking**
EEDA includes provisions that protect students against being steered into pathways that do not fit their best interests.

Also, under EEDA, since the 2006–07 school year, middle schools and by 2007–08 high schools began providing students with the services of a career specialist who has obtained a bachelor's degree and who has successfully completed the national Career Development Facilitator (CDF) certification training or certified guidance counselor having completed the Career Development Facilitator certification training. This career specialist works under the supervision of a certified guidance counselor. Since the 2007–08 school year, each middle and high school now has a student-to-guidance personnel ratio of three hundred to one. Guidance personnel include certified school guidance counselors and career specialists who

1. coordinate and present professional development workshops in career development and guidance for teachers, school counselors, and work-based constituents;
2. assist schools in promoting the goals of quality career development of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade;
3. assist school counselors and students in identifying and accessing career information and resource material;
4. provide educators, parents, and students with information on career and technology education programs offered in the district;
5. support students in the exploration of career clusters and the selection of an area of academic focus within a cluster of study;
6. learn and become familiar with ways to improve and promote career development opportunities within the district;
7. attend continuing education programs on the certified career development facilitator curriculum sponsored by the state;
8. assist with the selection, administration, and evaluation of career interest inventories;
9. assist with the implementation of the district's student career plan or individual graduation plan;
10. assist schools in planning and developing parent information on career development;
11. coordinate with school counselors and administration career events, career classes, and career programming;
12. coordinate community resources and citizens representing diverse occupations in career development activities for parents and students; and
13. assist with the usage of computer-assisted career guidance systems.

In May 2009, as a follow-up to the dropout prevention summit in December 2008, members of the Coordinating Council, SCDE staff, educators, and business leaders met to discuss best practices and achievements to date under the EEDA. We will work to build on those successes to determine the next steps and further support needed to meet the objectives of EEDA, while further developing our statewide strategic plan for dropout prevention.

Under Jim Rex's administration, the Office of Public School Choice was created. The office provides support and resources for schools and districts implementing or expanding options that provide instructional choices for parents and students. These choices may take the form of "school-with-in-a-school" models such as Montessori or Single-Gender education. South Carolina is currently the only state committed to these efforts with a state-level coordinator for both these programs. School Choice options may also take the form of charter schools which provide an innovative instructional approach to educating students. Whole school models also include the Middle and Early College structure where students participate in high school and college courses concurrently while located on a college campus. This model provides students with exposure to and early successes within a college

atmosphere. The purpose of this model is to encourage students to further their education beyond high school.

Other statewide initiatives to bring diversity of instruction into the classroom included support for the International Baccalaureate, fine arts, environmentally based curriculum, and alternative school programs. The vision is to provide support for a wide variety of successful, quality programs in each district so that parents and students may choose the instructional program best suited to their learning needs and interest. The desired result is higher levels of student engagement and academic success through a learning environment focused on student needs and interests.

The SCDE has also proposed legislation that would require all school districts to create a plan to offer instructional options at all three levels of education. The committees creating these plans will include representatives from all stakeholder groups and must be implemented by the 2010–11 school year.

This legislation would also encourage neighboring districts to study the feasibility of cross-district transfers as well as transportation costs associated with those transfers.

2. Please identify your highest-priority strategies, programs, policies, and/or reforms consistent with *Grad Nation* that your state or community will pursue in order to **support young people**. How will more young people, particularly those most in need, receive wraparound supports in and out of school, such as tutoring, afterschool programs, mentors, social services, health care and others? For each priority, what would you need to do in the next 6-12 months to advance it? Is anything already underway locally to support it? What support or information would help you make better progress? *(Example from New York State: “1. Ensure that each student is connected to one caring adult in school, by structuring mentoring programs that can be implemented with limited resources. 2. Engage the community in the mentoring process, especially during afterschool hours. 3. Provide quality afterschool programs that can increase student voice and provide social, emotional, physical and intellectual support to youth. 4. Identify and enhance mechanisms of improving student engagement in the educational process.”)*

With the rise of globalization, and the low number of higher wage jobs, two gaps have developed in South Carolina. The first is the gap between the state’s per capita income as compared to the rest of the nation and neighboring states. Another gap exists between the knowledge and skills our workforce possesses and the requirements of available jobs in the future. As 85 percent of the jobs require education or training beyond high school, South Carolina students must be provided with

- exposure to the entire range of professional opportunities that exist;
- programs to help them choose classroom courses relevant to their aspirations and abilities;
- ongoing guidance and support from educators, counselors, and parents or parental designees; and
- experiential interaction with professionals in their chosen fields to understand job requirements and employer expectations.

With over 7,800 students in grades 9–12 dropping-out annually, and the prediction that most new jobs will require education or training beyond high school, it is imperative that South Carolina’s schools embrace the supplementary 3Rs.

- Rigor—Academic course work must be challenging and hold students to high standards of achievement.
 - Relevancy—Learning activities must have meaning and be a part of a greater plan to help students reach their goals.
 - Relationships—Students must feel connected to their teachers, mentors, or coaches.
3. Please identify your highest-priority policies or reforms consistent with *Grad Nation* that your state or community will pursue in order to **develop effective policies** at the local or state level that encourage high school completion and college readiness. For each, what would you need to do in the next 6-12 months to advance this priority? Is anything already underway locally to support it? What support or information would help you make better progress?
- (Select examples from New York state: “1. Encourage the Board of Regents to include service learning in the revised learning standards. 2. Provide a minimum of 5 hours of service learning training to all staff and administrators as part of the professional development plan to effectively implement revisions made to the learning standards to include service learning. 3. Provide universal health care, including mental health. 4. Short of that, ensure that 90% of all children without health care are enrolled in Child Health Plus. 5. Provide full-day Pre-K with transportation. 6. Develop Regents policies and regulations for meaningful student involvement in decision making in schools. 7. End out of school suspension in the next year.” Other example drawn from Grad Nation: “We will work with our state legislature to raise our maximum compulsory school age from 16 to 18 years old.”)*

Dr. Rex entered the office of State Superintendent of Education with five initiatives to improve public education that include

1. accelerating innovation in our schools,
2. increasing choice within our public schools,
3. refining our accountability system to ensure maximum results and minimum testing,
4. elevating and reinvigorating our teaching profession, and
5. providing fair and more equitable school funding.

Of the five initiatives, Dr. Rex appointed a 40-member statewide task force to work on fair and equitable funding recommendations to improve the statewide tax structure to provide all schools with the resources necessary to fund quality programs. The primary objective is to provide adequate support for all students to meet learning goals at critical points in the K–12 progression

Addressing the state's “minimally adequate” constitutional standard for public schools, the task force has called for a new Adequacy Program that would ensure sufficient funds to accomplish the state's goals for every student and school, and would provide districts with the flexibility to use those funds in ways that would benefit communities the most, allowing them to identify and fund the programs and services that best meet their needs. The new Adequacy Program would tackle the cycle of poverty with a new "poverty weighting" in funding formulas to address the special needs of students living in poverty, as well as communities with high concentrations of poverty.

4. Please identify your highest-priority strategies, programs, policies, and/or reforms consistent with *Grad Nation* that your state or community will pursue in order to **employ data systems** that identify those young people most at-risk for dropping out and drive appropriate supports and services. For each, what would you need to do in the next 6-12 months to advance this priority? Is anything

already underway locally to support it? What support or information would help you make better progress?

(Example from Iowa state: “Access multiple state agencies’ data, complete analysis and establish state level baseline and targets. State Team will provide relevant local data to Community Teams to assist in their planning and ongoing monitoring of progress.” Other example drawn from Grad Nation: “We will develop an early-warning system that tracks individual students starting in elementary school along key indicators, like attendance, behavior, and course completion, to help us identify and direct supports and services to young people most at-risk of dropping out.”)

South Carolina’s Potential Performance Report (PPR) provides a way for educators to select early and appropriate interventions for students who may be at risk of not advancing or graduating because of certain student characteristics. PPR is a new set of reports designed to meet the EEDA legislative requirements. The purpose is to inform educators of the at-risk characteristics evident in their student population. The specifications were determined from research conducted by the EEDA At-Risk Student Committee and will eventually meet reporting needs at the state, district, school, and student levels.

IV. Organizing for Long-Term Success: Getting the Right People on Board, Committing to Action, Ensuring Accountability, Securing Resources, and Tracking Progress over Time

(See Part 4 of Grad Nation, pp. 76-90, for help with this area of planning.)

1. What group or committee will coordinate and sustain the work outlined in this action plan? What leaders does it have from various sectors – business, education, nonprofit, government, faith, etc.? (Please submit group’s roster along with this plan.) Who else is needed? Who convenes the group, how often, and what sub-groups or committees does your effort need?

South Carolina has twelve Regional Education Centers (REC) led by a regional coordinator. All twelve REC advisory boards, comprised of over 300 legislative appointees, have been established. In each region, the REC convenes education, business, and agency leaders to develop strategies to more effectively connect students and adult workers to education, training, and employment opportunities.

Prior to the summit, we reached out to the Regional Education Center (REC) Coordinators to help us organize regional teams across the state. As a component of the summit, the twelve regional teams led by the REC Coordinators met to begin discussing the dropout issue in their areas. We provided a framework for the discussion and tools for the teams to use during the summit and once they returned to their regions. The teams have held follow-up meetings in each of the regions to continue the discussion and to work on regional planning.

2. What financial, human, and other resources are needed in order to begin acting on this plan? What resources are currently available, what will potentially need to be blended, and what new resources will need to be sought to do this work? Who might help secure additional resources to fill the gaps, and/or what funders (or others) may be approached? Will your state or community set a resource goal along with the outcome goal?

The regional teams are currently identifying and using existing resources in their communities while developing their strategic plans. Each of the REC Coordinators is also conducting a gap analysis to determine the specific needs in each community as part of their mission to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of information, resources, and services to students, educators, employers, and the community. These analyses will assist regions in identifying additional resources needed to implement their plans.

3. How will your community or state evaluate its dropout prevention efforts to ensure it is making a difference? What is the plan to monitor and track the progress being made on its developed goals? How will you maintain visibility around the local dropout prevention issue by reporting to the public on the progress being made?

Under the evaluation criteria for EEDA, all high schools must annually evaluate their dropout prevention models, initiatives, and/or programs using, at a minimum, the following criteria:

1. an identification process, including (where appropriate and based on the particular model, initiative, or program) the number of at-risk students identified and the specific risk factors identified;
2. the extent of parental involvement in the school's dropout-prevention efforts;
3. the number of students served;
4. a formative assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the model, initiative, and/or program; and
5. a qualitative assessment of desired outcomes.

Schools should establish desired outcomes or performance criteria based on the specific needs of the at-risk population identified and on the nature and structure of the particular model, initiative, and/or program they are implementing. Examples of desired outcomes among the target population include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. decreased percentages of truancy, absenteeism, discipline problems, and retentions;
2. increases in students' grade point averages; and
3. increased percentages of students who are on grade level and students who graduate on time.

Model-, initiative-, and/or program-specific data and SASI™ data elements should be used to assess desired outcomes on the basis of specific evaluation criteria. The state's SASI data management system can be used to collect, sort, and report data related to each student's attendance record; age and grade level; gender; ethnicity; grade point average; and retention, truancy, and dropout status.

Teacher and/or counselor assessments may be used to provide supplemental anecdotal documentation and insights related to the effectiveness of the model, initiative, and/or program implemented. A district or school checklist may be beneficial in the evaluation process.

All high schools must annually provide reports requested by the SCDE that relate to the implementation and effectiveness of models, initiatives, and/or programs addressing the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school. District and school report card contents must contain information on the disciplinary climate, promotion and retention ratios, dropout ratios, dropout reduction data, and attendance data. Districts and schools must be prepared to provide accurate and relevant data to the SCDE.

V. Staying Connected to the America's Promise Alliance: Identifying Long-term Interests, Priorities, and Points of Alignment

1. As part of our Alliance's goal to reach 15 million young people with more supports (i.e the Five Promises) by 2012, America's Promise has committed to resourcing and advocating for certain strategic priorities. Together, we are always looking for states and communities that share similar interests and that may provide effective models for policy and practice, investment opportunities and other points of alignment, including possible technical assistance from our Alliance partners. Please describe if your action plan has strategies specific to:
 - a. Focusing on the middle school years, especially providing service-learning and career exploration opportunities in and out of school

Because too many students leave the middle grades unprepared to take advantage of all that high school can offer and unable to be successful in career opportunities after high school, South Carolina has partnered with the Southern Regional Education Board's middle grades initiative. The initiative is designed to help states, districts, and schools look at what they expect, what they teach, and how they teach young adolescents to prepare for success in further education.

Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) is a network of schools, districts, and states committed to implementing 10 essential elements in a comprehensive improvement framework. The elements focus on a rigorous and challenging academic core curriculum for all students and on the teaching and learning conditions that support continuous improvement in student achievement. As a whole school reform framework, the ten essential elements include

1. English, mathematics, and science—An academic core that is aligned to what students must know, understand, and be able to do to succeed in college-preparatory;
2. a belief that all students matter;
3. high expectations and a system of extra help and time;
4. classroom practices that engage students in their learning;
5. teachers working together to plan, to develop, to coordinate, and to share;
6. support from parents;
7. qualified teachers who know academic content and how to teach young adolescents;
8. use of data to review and revisit school and classroom practices;
9. use of technology for learning to improve students' knowledge and skills; and
10. strong leadership who participates with teachers in planning and implementing research-based improvements.

All Students Matter is one of the key practices that addresses a support system for students. We encourage schools to have an advisor/advisee program in place so that each student has a relationship with an adult in the building, other than their regular guidance counselor or teacher. When we go to the schools to do technical assistance visits, we look at the guidance department to see what opportunities students are given to explore careers, job shadow, and learn about high school. We also make sure that the IGP process is being followed through. Another key practice is to communicate with parents and the community. We look to see if schools are trying to involve parents in all ways possible so that students will have a support system at home. MMGW also supports students having outside mentors who come in and work with them.

The South Carolina *Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW)* initiative is now being administrated in the same SCDE office with *High Schools That Work (HSTW)*. We are excited about the restructuring and believe the potential will strengthen both initiatives.

In the 2006–07 school year, there will be 61 South Carolina middle schools in the *MMGW* initiative. The initiative continues to grow steadily and in the 2007–08 school year there will be 75 middle schools in the state's network of sites.

To determine schools' progress toward implementing the comprehensive improvement framework, SREB uses an assessment process that combines tests, surveys, school visits, and other data collected by schools.

The most important tool that SREB uses to measure schools' and students' improvement is based on an assessment produced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). It consists of four sections: reading, mathematics, science, and a student survey. This assessment is administered every two years. Schools are required to participate in the *MMGW* assessment in order to remain in the SREB network.

In addition to the student survey, a teacher survey is also administered every other year. This survey results in a report that school leaders can use in prioritizing the professional development needs of their staff and in identifying classroom practices that do and practices that do not improve student achievement.

Schools in the *MMGW* network receive additional feedback through technical assistance visits by outside teams. The purpose of the technical assistance visit is to help school leaders and teachers identify changes needed to improve student achievement. Each state, in partnership with SREB, conducts a three-day visit every third year. Each visit results in a no-nonsense report of actions the school can take to advance student learning. *MMGW* sites complete a school data profile. This profile provides demographic and organizational information about the school and is completed by the principal, site coordinator, or someone assigned to handle this task. For the *MMGW* site, this information is gathered and presented to the technical assistance team members. *MMGW* staff members collect and use data from the above sources to develop reports that chart schools' progress. These reports are shared with school leaders to help them develop and revise school improvement plans. The reports show leaders how recommended improvement strategies are linked to student achievement.

With more and more South Carolina school districts expressing interest in joining the South Carolina Southern Regional Education Board's network, a regulated procedure must be followed. Schools/districts interested in becoming a *MMGW* site must first submit a written request stating interest in becoming a *MMGW* site and complete the South Carolina state application. Once the application has been received and reviewed by SCDE staff members, district superintendents will be notified. If selected to become a *MMGW* site, a Memorandum of Understanding will be filed with the Southern Regional Education Board. Each year, thereafter, the school district will be asked to sign a South Carolina Memorandum of Understanding. A site is considered active and in good standing when all annual requirements are met.

Learn and Serve America provides two grants to the SCDE to support efforts that engage South Carolina K–12 students in community service linked to academic achievement aligned with the state standards under the Accountability Act. Service-learning improves communities while preparing young people for a lifetime of responsible citizenship. In addition to providing grants, Learn and Serve America serves as a resource on service and service-learning to teachers, faculty members, schools, and community groups.

The SCDE Collaborative Corridors (C2) Competitive grant provides funding for original plaintiff districts in the Equity Lawsuit. This is one of two Learn and Serve grants from the Corporation for National and Community Service. One is a formula-based grant awarded to all states, and this is a competitive, school-based grant awarded to only nine states. Combined, we receive more than \$1.8 million dollars. The formula grant is for \$246,355 a year for three years, and the competitive grant is for \$350,000 a year for three years. We have established partnerships with the South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA), the National Dropout Prevention Center at Clemson, and the

University of South Carolina to institutionalize service-learning in a seamless preK–16 system. State Farm, the Kellogg Foundation, and the Education Commission of the States have provided additional funding to South Carolina for service-learning programs. State Farm is also providing monetary awards to our PreK–16 service-learning award recipients. Service-learning is included as a strategy in the Education and Economic Development Act and the agency’s ACT/SAT Improvement plan.

- b. Improving young people’s access to quality health care, including promotion of SCHIP and Medicaid public health insurance programs

The Office of School-based Health Finance (OSBHF) provides yearly technical assistance and training to school district personnel on Medicaid outreach through the School-based Administrative Claiming Medicaid program. Under this program, OSBHF staff provides district staff with data, resources, and strategies for identifying and facilitating enrollment of children who might be potentially eligible for Medicaid. For conducting certain outreach activities, the state Medicaid agency (DHHS) reimburses school districts for certain costs they incur while conducting outreach.

The 2008–09 SCDE Strategic Action Plan includes several performance goals related to Medicaid outreach. These include

- increase by 5 percent the number of school districts targeted for outreach events;
- increase by 10 percent the number of children identified for Medicaid eligibility based on free- and reduced-price lunch data and verification process; and
- increase Medicaid School District Administrative Claiming (SDAC) reimbursements by 1 percent annually. Districts receive approximately \$3.5 million annually from SDAC.

- c. Creating community hubs (e.g. schools, afterschool programs, community centers) where coordinated wraparound supports are available to young people and their families

Inside-Out Center for Learning (IOCL)

The South Carolina National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (SC NCTAF), the SCDE, representative superintendents and principals, the Riley Institute, and faculty from institutions of higher education in South Carolina have partnered to shape the South Carolina *Inside-Out Center for Learning (IOCL)*. The IOCL concept promises to transform schools into personalized learning and service centers within the context of the larger community and globalization. Ultimately, the IOCL will create centers where teachers want to teach, students who want to learn, and parents and community members want to be involved.

The IOCL, stemming from the *Map of Future Forces Affecting Education*, can help us reshape South Carolina’s future. The IOCL will serve as a “new frontier” of education and instruction: students will engage in personalized structures within the global context that address their individual learning needs and capacities while teachers work in vertical and horizontal teams to create innovative, standards-based, and personalized instruction. Bringing the world and community into the classroom through technology and recasting the school day and calendar will make learning a “24/7” experience for all learners. By centralizing services, including medical, mental, and dental care, into a central campus,

by using the campus as a center with various community stakeholders and services on the campus, and by maximizing use of the campus facilities, the IOCL will serve as a model of integrated, cost-effective educational services that lead to higher student achievement; higher teacher quality, recruitment, and retention; and increased community/parental satisfaction.

Specifically, the IOCL will transform school culture and public education through

- acknowledging the future forces affecting education,
- embracing the drive toward deep personalization for all learners,
- expanding the boundaries of teaching and learning in both time and space,
- establishing non-traditional roles for educators, and
- creating a seamless flow of resources between the community and school.

Forest Pond Elementary (Lexington School District 3) and Nevitt Forrest Elementary (Anderson School District 5) were selected through a rigorous process to implement the IOCL project. These schools and communities demonstrated tremendous capacity and commitment to creating a new and better learning environment for children. Through the generosity of the KnowledgeWorks Foundation and Michelin America these centers have been given planning grants to start their work. Both IOCLs are making tremendous progress in only a few short months and with very limited resources.

Since the program is currently in the implementation phase and has only received funding for planning at this time, the two IOCLs are implementing a great deal without funding. We cannot fully implement without securing external resources. South Carolina, however, is leading the way in creating the school of the future, as the IOCL concept is being lauded nationally for its innovation and integration of proven ideas.

21st Century Community Learning Centers Program

Currently in South Carolina, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program funding is supporting programs for 1500 elementary and middle school students through 107 community-learning center programs in 71 districts across the state. The office at the SCDE is currently reviewing over 300 grant proposals for summer enrichment programs that will be offered during summer 2009.

A community-learning center offers academic, artistic, and cultural enrichment opportunities to students and their families when school is not in session (before school, after school, during holidays, and/or during the summer recess). The programs' purposes are to

- provide opportunities for academic enrichment, including providing tutorial services to help students, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools, to meet state and local student performance standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and mathematics;
- offer students a broad array of additional services, programs, and activities, such as youth development activities; drug and violence prevention programs; counseling programs; art, music, and recreation programs; technology education programs; and character education programs that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program of participating students; and

- offer families of students served by community learning centers opportunities for literacy and related educational development.

d. Engaging parents and caregivers to increase graduation and college readiness rates

In accordance with the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act (SC Code Ann. §59-28-100), the SCDE has a staff "whose specific role is to coordinate statewide initiatives to support school and district parental involvement." Also, each school district has named a district parental involvement liaison to coordinate parental involvement initiatives and coordinate community and agency collaboration to support parents and families. The SCDE is a member of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins and as such receives information on best practices in increasing parental involvement and community partnerships. This and other information is disseminated to the district parental involvement liaisons via monthly electronic newsletters.

The SCDE collaborates with Head Start and AARP-SC to sponsor annual symposia for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. (We sponsor four each fall in various parts of the state.) We provide the grandparents with information on working with their grandchildren to increase the grandchildren's academic success and thereby increase the graduation rate.

Also, in accordance with the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act, the State Board of Education now requires school and district long-range improvement plans to include parental involvement goals, objectives, and an evaluation component.

e. Supporting young people in foster care so they graduate from high school prepared for college, work and life

Efforts for supporting students in foster care are implemented through collaboration with the SC Department of Social Services.

f. Developing young people's financial literacy

In 2005, the Financial Literacy Act (SC Code Ann. §59-29-410) was signed into law. This legislation states that financial literacy must be integrated into existing curriculum in grades K–12. The Financial Literacy Board of Trustees was created at the same time to provide oversight and raise funds to support the financial literacy program.

Since the legislation was passed, the SCDE has adopted the national financial literacy standards and aligned them to the state academic standards in English language arts, mathematics and social studies. The SCDE is in the process of creating guidelines for the instruction of financial literacy. Professional development will begin in 2009 to teach teachers how to incorporate financial literacy lessons into their classroom, pending adequate funding.

If your plan does not include any of the above but your state or community has strong interest in developing one or more of these strategies, please note accordingly.

2. How can the America's Promise Alliance best support your state or community with the implementation of this dropout prevention plan? The Alliance is interested in hearing how we can best assist you in your dropout prevention efforts, including resources we can provide, relationships

we can facilitate, and any other needs your community may have. *Please be as expansive and forthright as you can. We will use your feedback to ensure that the most useful resources are provided to our Dropout Summit states and communities through our website, training and technical assistance, and other means.*

As APA has taken the lead on bringing the dropout crisis to the forefront, it would be beneficial for APA to serve as the hub for states' best practices around this issue. APA has already hosted webinars and conference calls that include lead researchers on this issue. South Carolina would like to see a continued effort to provide leading research, data, programs, and best practices.

Funding opportunities are needed for implementation of future statewide/local summits to continue the discussion, strategic planning, and sharing of best practices. South Carolina is also interested in any technical assistance that could be offered through APA efforts concerning dropout prevention.