

**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



Program Report on EEDA Dropout Prevention and High Schools That Work

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley, Governor
The Honorable Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr., Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable John E. Courson, Chairman, Senate Education Committee
The Honorable W. Brian White, Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Merita A. Allison, Chairman, House Education and Public Works

Pursuant to Proviso 1A.16 of the 2016 Appropriations Act

December 1, 2016

Table of Contents

Introduction: Reporting Requirement	1
Part 1: EEDA	1
Introduction and Background	1
Program Summary for School Year 2015–16.....	2
Table 1: Grants by School Type	2
Table 2: At-Risk Indicators Used by Grantees	2
Desired Outcomes.....	3
Key Outcomes.....	3
Table 3: Percent of At-Risk Students Who Remained in School or Graduated after Participating in an EEDA-Funded and/or Endorsed Program	4
Program Contacts.....	4
Part 2: High Schools That Work.....	5
Program Overview	5
Training and Development through SREB	5
Assessment Data/Site Development Workshop.....	5
Project-Based Learning in Career Pathway Courses	5
Accelerating Learning in the Middle Grades.....	5
Technology Centers That Work (TCTW) Training and Support.....	5
Program Contact Information:	6

Introduction: Reporting Requirement

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) provides the following report in compliance with Proviso 1A.16 of the Appropriations Act.

1A.16. (SDE-EIA: Dropout Prevention and High Schools That Work Programs) The Department of Education must report annually by December first, to the Governor, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, and the Chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee on the effectiveness of dropout prevention programs funded by the Education and Economic Development Act and on the High Schools that Work Programs' progress and effectiveness in providing a better prepared workforce and student success in post-secondary education. The department, school districts, and special schools may carry forward unexpended funds from the prior fiscal year into the current fiscal that were allocated for High Schools That Work.

This report contains two parts: a summary of programs under the Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 (EEDA) and a summary of the High Schools that Work (HSTW) program.

Part 1: EEDA

Introduction and Background

The EEDA requires that districts implement evidence-based programs and strategies that address the needs of students “at risk for being poorly prepared for the next level of study or for dropping out of school.” S.C. Code Ann. § 59-59-150. Additionally, the EEDA stipulates that

[s]chool districts must lay the foundation for the clusters of study system in elementary school by providing career awareness activities. In the middle grades, programs must allow students to identify career interests and abilities and align them with clusters of study for the development of individual graduation plans. Finally, high school students must be provided guidance and curricula that will enable them to complete successfully their individual graduation plans, preparing them for a seamless transition to relevant employment, further training, or postsecondary study.

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-59-20(B). Research demonstrates that students who are on-track to graduate on time are at less risk of dropping out. During school year 2015–16, to assist districts in meeting the EEDA requirements and the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate, the SCDE awarded over \$2.7 million in competitive grants. These Preparing College- and Career-Ready Graduates grants went to 27 districts to serve students in approximately 48 elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as students enrolled in Alternative School Programs. A grant was also awarded to the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) to implement a *Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina* program at Spartanburg High School. Districts that

received EEDA funds were required to either implement or sustain supplementary evidence-based programs, specifically designed to assist elementary, middle, or high school students in being prepared for the next grade level and/or graduating on time.

Program Summary for School Year 2015–16

- Over \$2.7 million was awarded to 27 districts and DEW to serve students who attend one of 48 schools.
- Over 90 percent of participating schools offer supplemental academic and career development assistance during the summer months.
- Over 500 students began receiving supplemental assistance for the first time during 2015–16.
- The number of elementary schools and alternative school programs awarded Preparing College- and Career-Ready Graduates funds increased (see Table 1).

Table 1: Grants by School Type

School Type	Number Funded	Percent of Total Schools Funded
Elementary	15	31%
Intermediate/Middle	15	31%
High	14	29%
Alternative	4	8%

- According to the end-of-the-year reports submitted by school representatives, all schools that received funds used one or more of the at-risk indicators supported by research to identify their target population (see Table 2).

Table 2: At-Risk Indicators Used by Grantees

At-Risk Indicator	Percent of schools served that included the indicator in the selection process
Attendance	76%
Behavior/Disciplinary Issues	86%
Academic: Grades	90%
Academic: Course Credit	38%
Academic: Standardized Tests	62%
Academic: Over-aged for Grade	43%
Limited English Proficiency	33%
Lack of Interest or Conflicting Interest	48%
Socioeconomic Environment	62%
Homeless or without a Parent	29%
Abuse: Physical and/or Emotional	14%
Teen Parent	14%

Desired Outcomes

Regulations approved by the South Carolina State Board of Education and the General Assembly in 2007 established desired outcomes or performance criteria based on the specific needs of the at-risk population and on the nature and structure of the particular model implemented in a district or school.

Data retrieved from PowerSchool, the state's uniform student information system, revealed the following outcomes related to the 15,117 students who participated in at-risk student programs during 2015–16 that were financially supported by the EEDA. Each grantee incorporated at least one of the 15 effective strategies that have the most positive impact on the dropout rate as identified by the National Dropout Prevention Center (NDPC), or selected a program from the NDPC's database of Model Programs, which is based on the evaluation literature of specific prevention, intervention, and recovery programs.

Key Outcomes

- Ninety-eight percent (14,940) of the 15,117 students identified in 2015–16 either enrolled in school during 2016–17 or graduated with a South Carolina high school diploma.
- Less than one percent (177) of the 14,940 students identified in 2015–16 was not enrolled in school for 2016–17.
- The average daily attendance of these students was 94.67 percent.
- The average grade was 84.

Outcomes associated with the implementation of evidence-based, at-risk strategies and models have been consistently positive:

- For the past five years, individual graduation plan conferences have been held and individual graduation plans have been developed for 98 percent of all high school students served in an at-risk program.
- Each year between 2011–12 and 2015–16, over 96 percent of the students identified as at-risk have either re-enrolled in school the year after they participated in the program or graduated at the end of the academic year in which they participated (see Table 3).
- In 2014–15, South Carolina's public school enrollment for students in grades 9 through 12 was 220,260. Despite this increase in enrollment of over 3,400 students from 2013–14, the state's dropout event rate remained the same, 2.6 percent.
- Since 2013–14, the dropout event rate for students who participated in an at-risk program funded or supported by the EEDA has been less than the state's average.
- Since 2013–14, the state's graduation rate has continued to increase, from 80.1 percent in 2013–14 to 82.6 percent in 2015–16.

Table 3: Percent of At-Risk Students Who Remained in School or Graduated after Participating in an EEDA-Funded and/or Endorsed Program

School Year	Number of Students Enrolled in a Program	Percent Remained in School or Graduated
2011–12	26,936	98.8%
2012–13	20,582	96.8%
2013–14	16,378	99.0%
2014–15	15,813	99.3%
2015–16	15,117	98.8%

Based on the data received from the End-of-the-Year Reports submitted by EEDA grant recipients:

- Forty-eight percent of schools reported a decrease in discipline referrals for participating students between 2014–15 and 2015–16.
- Forty-six percent of schools reported that the truancy rate among participating students decreased by at least 5 percent between 2014–15 and 2015–16.
- Forty-three percent of schools reported an increase of at least 0.5 of a point in the mean grade point average (GPA) among participating students between the end of 2014–15 and the end of 2015–16.
- Approximately 400 participating high school students passed at least one End-of-Course exam during 2015–16.
- Sixty percent of schools reported that participating students appeared to have a more positive attitude toward school and learning in 2015–16 than they had in 2014–15.
- One hundred percent of the participating students in grades 8–12 met with their school counselors to develop or revise their individual graduation plans during 2015–16.

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Part 2: High Schools That Work

Program Overview

High Schools That Work (HSTW) is an effort-based, school improvement initiative. HSTW is founded on the conviction that most students can master rigorous academic and career/technical studies if school leaders and teachers create an environment that motivates students to make the effort to succeed. Run by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the HSTW school improvement design provides a framework of goals, key practices, and key conditions for accelerating learning and setting higher standards.

As of FY 2012–13, all HSTW funds must be allocated to participating schools. Therefore, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) is no longer authorized to withhold a portion of the HSTW allocation for staffing and technical assistance purposes. The SCDE only disburses HSTW funds to the appropriate school districts. As such, SREB has established direct communication and technical assistance to the participating schools in South Carolina. Schools from 74 South Carolina districts joined the network in 2015–16. The total of participating schools is 432: 192 high schools, 189 middle schools, 32 career technical centers, and 19 elementary schools.

Training and Development through SREB

Assessment Data/Site Development Workshop

Five regional Assessment Data/Site Development Workshops were held in 2015 in Columbia, Greenville, and Sumter. The workshops were well attended with approximately 86 participants from 16 schools attending the HSTW/Technology Centers That Work (TCTW) workshops and approximately 127 participants from 26 schools attending the Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) workshops. Additional state services included presentations at the South Carolina Business and Education Summit.

Project-Based Learning in Career Pathway Courses

Fifty-one participants, including teachers and school administrators, from 12 high schools participated in two 2-day training sessions (total of four days of training) in a workshop on **Project-Based Learning in Career Pathway Courses**. The sessions were held at Chapman High School in Inman.

Accelerating Learning in the Middle Grades

One Hundred and Fifty-Five (155) participants, including teachers and school administrators, from 27 middle and elementary schools attended two 2-day sessions (total of four days of training) in a workshop on **Accelerating Learning in the Middle Grades**. There were four regional sessions held in Aiken, Campobello, Charleston, and Columbia.

TCTW Training and Support

In-state training provided to TCTW schools included a two-day workshop on **Seven Essential Teaching Skills for the 21st Century** attended by 32 teachers and a series of two

2-day workshops on **Project-Based Learning** attended by 12 teachers. A total of 44 teachers from 10 career centers were trained.

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