



# STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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**TO:** Nikki R. Haley, Governor  
Hugh K. Leatherman, Sr., Senate Finance Committee Chairman  
W. Brian White, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman  
John E. Courson, Senate Education Committee Chairman  
Phillip D. Owens, House Education and Public Works Chairman

**FROM:** Dino Teppara, Esquire  
Director of Legislative and Public Affairs

**DATE:** December 1, 2013

**RE:** Proviso 1A.19 – Dropout Prevention and High Schools That Work

## **Dropout Prevention**

### **Program Contact Information:**

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## **Introduction/Background**

The Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 (EEDA) requires that 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. § 59-59-50) be addressed; and that “[s]chool districts must lay the foundation for the clusters of study system in elementary school by providing career awareness activities. To assist districts in meeting these requirements in 2012–13, SCDE set aside approximately \$3.5 million in EEDA funds to award to districts through the At-Risk Student Innovation Competitive Grant and the Summer Academic and Career Development Grant. Districts that received EEDA funds were required to implement or sustain evidence-based programs designed to assist students at risk of dropping out of school prior to graduation and/or not graduating on time.

## **Program Summary for School Year 2012–13**

- According to reports submitted by districts, all public high schools in South Carolina have implemented at least one evidence-based at-risk student program designed to ensure that students at risk of school failure receive the opportunity to complete the necessary

requirements to graduate with a state high school diploma and to build skills that prepare them to enter the job market successfully.

- During school year 2012–13, a total of 54 schools, representing 30 districts, received innovative grants to implement or sustain an evidence-based, at-risk student intervention model.
- To help mitigate regression and enhance English Language Arts (ELA) and math skills during the summer months, 22 elementary and middle schools, representing 13 districts, received Academic and Career Development grants.
- According to reports submitted by districts/schools, all schools utilized one or more of the at-risk indicators supported by research to identify their target population. [See Table 1.]

**Table 1**

<b>Number and Percent of Schools that Utilized a Specific At-Risk Indicator to Identify Their At-Risk Student Population</b>		
<b>At-Risk Indicator</b>	<b>Number of schools that included the indicator in the selection process</b>	<b>Percentage of schools that included the indicator in the selection process</b>
Attendance	102	41.23%
Behavior/Disciplinary Issues	92	37.25%
Academic: Grades	132	53.45%
Academic: Course Credit	96	39.90%
Academic: Standardized Tests	101	41.08%
Academic: Over-aged for Grade	71	28.68%
Limited English Proficiency	45	18.35%
Lack of Interest or Conflicting Interest	44	17.90%
Abuse - Physical and/or Emotional	20	8.19%
Socioeconomic Environment	70	28.15%
Homeless or without a Parent	28	11.45%
Teen Parent	28	11.45%

**Desired Outcomes**

- Regulations approved by the South Carolina 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/school. According to data input into PowerSchool, South Carolina’s Student Information System, reports received from districts/schools revealed the following outcomes:
  - Approximately 23,000 students participated in at-risk student programs during 2012–13 that were financially supported by EEDA and/or are included in the *At-Risk Student Intervention Implementation Guide*.
  - Of the 20,486 students identified as at-risk during 2012–13 and for whom current enrollment status is available, 19,839 (96.8 percent) are either currently enrolled in school (2013–14) or have graduated. [See Table 2.]
  - For 2011–12, the dropout rate for students who participated in an at-risk program funded or supported by the EEDA was less than the state average. [See Table 3.]

**Table 2**

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	Percent Remained in School or Graduated
2007-08	21,065	97.2
2008-09	32,623	96.1
2009-10	31,667	97.1
2010-11	34,148	98.7
2011-12	26,936	98.8
2012-13	20,582*	96.8

\*This figure does not include students for whom current enrollment status is unknown, nor does it include students who participated in Summer Academic and Career Development programs.

**Table 3**

Dropout Rate for Students Who Participated in an EEDA Funded and/or Endorsed Program

School Year	Dropout Rate	SC Dropout Rate
2008-09	3.88	3.4
2009-10	2.88	2.9
2010-11	1.29	2.8
2011-12	1.15	2.5

According to information provided in the 2012–13 End-of-Year and End-of Project reports submitted by individual schools:

- The average daily attendance for students who participated in EEDA-funded and/or endorsed programs during the 2012-13 academic year was 95.46 percent;
- The mean grade point average (GPA) was 2.14;
- Over 99.4 percent of the students completed an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP); and
- Over 1,100 elementary and middle school students participated in 22 Summer Academic and Career Development programs offered in 13 districts.

Additionally:

- 82 percent of the schools reported a decrease in discipline referrals for students who participated in EEDA funded and/or endorsed programs in 2012–13, and
- 90 percent of the schools reported a more positive attitude toward school and learning among participants.

### **Continuing Emphasis**

- The At-Risk Student Innovative Grant Request for Proposals (RFP) has been revised to:
  1. solicit proposals written on behalf of elementary and middle schools, in addition to high schools;
  2. require an increased emphasis on ELA, reading, mathematics; and
  3. require a minimum of one three-week intersession program designed to help mitigate summer regression that often impedes the continued progress of at-risk students.

### **High Schools That Work**

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#### **Program Overview**

High Schools that Work (HSTW) is an effort-based, school improvement initiative 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 fiscal year 2012-13, all HSTW funds must be allocated to participating schools. Therefore, the State Department of Education is no longer authorized to withhold a portion of the HSTW allocation for staffing and technical assistance purposes. Now, the department only disburses HSTW funds to the appropriate school districts. As such, SREB has established direct communication and technical assistance for the participating schools in South Carolina.

## **Training and Development**

### **New Site Training**

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) offered a New Site Development Workshop for those needing additional professional development in utilizing the framework. This workshop was required for new sites and highly recommended for sites that needed to reinvigorate school improvement due to staff turnover. The intention was for school leadership teams to include the principal, a counselor, and teachers from each grade level/academic area and career technical area. The two-day workshop involved the participants in a deep understanding of the framework of key practices and identified priorities for helping schools plan for continuous improvement. Teams left the training with a plan for working with the entire staff on implementing the design and improving school practices. Thirty-seven middle schools, high schools, and technology centers attended the workshop.

### **Mathematics Design Collaborative Training**

This training is designed to support mathematics teachers to change teaching practices in ways that build students' math reasoning and application while improving procedural fluency. Tools and resources included fully developed lessons with hands on materials designed to meet key standards in middle grades, Algebra One and Geometry. The training is delivered in three two-day sessions, and the first session has been delivered. Participants from 15 middle and high schools attended.