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To: Mr. Dalton B. Floyd, Jr., Chair, and Members  
Commission on Higher Education

From: Ms. Susan Cole, Chair and Members  
Committee on Access & Equity and Student Services

**Consideration of SC GEAR UP  
State and County Profiles Study**

The South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Education and the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, was awarded a federal and state grant totaling \$6,403,101 in July of 1999 to develop a statewide Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness of Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) project. The program uses exciting and innovative activities as well as collaborations with partnerships around the State. GEAR UP provides both focused interventions in academics and personal development as well as interactive CD based programming with the goal of preparing students for going to and succeeding in college. GEAR UP and its partnerships focus on a broad statewide involvement component which reaches over 230,000 students in 69 school districts across South Carolina.

During the last three years the GEAR UP program has become increasingly aware of the many challenges within the schools along the I-95 corridor. GEAR UP personnel determined that in order to serve their constituents most effectively a study was needed that would identify the challenges and opportunities within the counties around the State. This study served to both determine the challenges of each area and to summarize what types of services are currently offered to each area.

Within the 2002 study are details on education, poverty, race, income levels, single family households, unemployment, scholarship recipients, the number of teachers teaching out of field, school report cards, and PACT scores as well as dropout and completion rates for each county in South Carolina. The study provides GEAR UP with the necessary information to continue to build services that encourage high school and college success.