



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

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

FROM: Dino Teppara, Esquire
Public Information Director

DATE: December 1, 2015

RE: 1A.17. (SDE-EIA: Dropout Prevention and High Schools That Work Programs)

EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACT

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Introduction/Background

The Education and Economic Development Act of 2005 (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)).

To assist districts in meeting these requirements during school year 2014–15, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) awarded over \$3.3 million in EEDA At-Risk Student Innovation Competitive Grants and At-Risk Student Intersession Grants to approximately 30 districts to serve students in approximately 50 elementary, middle, and/or high schools. Districts that received EEDA funds were required to sustain supplementary evidence-based programs, specifically designed to assist elementary, middle, or high schools in being prepared for the next grade level and/or graduating on time.

Program Summary for School Year 2014–15

- During school year 2014–15, over \$3.3 million was awarded to 28 districts to continue serving students who attend one of 48 schools.
- Of the 48 schools served, the majority were high schools [see Table 1].

Table 1

School Type	Number Funded	Percent of Total Schools Funded
Elementary	11	25 percent
Intermediate/Middle	16	36 percent
High	19	43 percent
Alternative	2	5 percent

- According to the end-of-the-year report 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 Indicator	Percent of schools served that included the indicator in the selection process
Attendance	93 percent
Behavior/Disciplinary Issues	93 percent
Academic: Grades	96 percent
Academic: Course Credit	46 percent

At-Risk Indicator	Percent of schools served that included the indicator in the selection process
Academic: Standardized Tests	75 percent
Academic: Over-aged for Grade	50 percent
Limited English Proficiency	14 percent
Lack of Interest or Conflicting Interest	39 percent
Socioeconomic Environment	61 percent
Homeless or without a Parent	18 percent
Abuse: Physical and/or Emotional	18 percent
Teen Parent	14 percent

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.

Data retrieved from PowerSchool, the state's uniform student information system, reveal the following outcomes related to the 15,813 students who participated in at-risk student programs during 2014–15 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) and/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-nine percent (15,708) of the 15,813 students identified in 2014–15 either enrolled in school during 2015–16 or graduated with a South Carolina high school diploma [see Table 3].
 - 5,749 (37 percent) of the 15,708 were promoted;
 - 3,568 (23 percent) of the 15,708 graduated;
 - 4,994 (32 percent) of the 15,708 remained in school, but were retained; and
 - 105 (<1 percent) of the 15,708 were not enrolled in school for 2015–16.
- The average daily attendance was 94.76 percent.
- The average grade point average was 84.

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

- Each year between 2010–11 and 2014–15, over 96 percent of the students identified as at-risk have either reenrolled 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].
- Despite the increase in the number of students enrolled in South Carolina’s public schools between 2010–11 and 2013–14, from 207,314 to 216,818 (approximately 4.4 percent), the state’s dropout rate has declined from 2.8 percent in 2010–11 to 2.6 percent in 2013–14.
- Since 2010–11, the state’s graduation rate has continued to climb, from 73.6 percent to 80.1 percent in 2013–14.

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
2010–11	34,148	98.7 percent
2011–12	26,936	98.8 percent
2012–13	20,582	96.8 percent
2013–14	16,378	99.0 percent
2014–15	15,813	99.3 percent

Information in the End-of-the-Year Report required by schools that received EEDA funding reveal the following outcomes for 2014–15:

- Ninety-five percent of schools reported a decrease in discipline referrals for participating students between 2013–14 and 2014–15.
- Seventy-one percent of schools reported that the truancy rate among participating students decreased by at least 5 percent between 2013–14 and 2014–15.
- Seventy-one 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 2013–14 and the end of 2014–15.
- Approximately 950 participating high school students passed at least one End-of-Course exam during 2014–15.
- One hundred percent of schools reported that participating students appeared to have a more positive attitude toward school and learning in 2014–15 than they had in 2013–14.
- 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 2014–15.

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 FY 2012–13, all HSTW funds must be allocated to participating schools. Therefore, the 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 71 South Carolina districts joined the network in 2014–15: 182 high schools, 137 middle schools, and 25 career technical centers.

Training and Development through SREB

Assessment Data Workshop: Three regional HSTW Assessment Data Workshops were held in September 2014 in Greenville, Columbia, and Charleston. In Charleston the data workshop was presented concurrently as a site development workshop for high schools wishing to revitalize their efforts. The workshops were well attended with approximately 130 participants from 28 schools attending the HSTW/TCTW workshops and approximately 250 participants from more than 50 schools attending the Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) workshops. Additional state services included presentations at the South Carolina Business and Education Summit in June.

Professional Development in Mathematics Design Collaborative (MDC): Forty-seven mathematics teachers as well as school administrators and coaches from 12 schools (three high schools and nine middle schools) participated in the MDC workshop. School teams, consisting

of a mathematics teacher per grade level as well as a building administrator or other instructional leader, participated in three, two-day workshops.

Professional Development in Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC): Forty-six literacy teachers as well as school administrators and coaches from 10 schools (two high schools and eight middle schools) participated in the LDC workshop. School teams, consisting of English language arts, science, social studies, career and technical education (CTE), and/or arts teachers, as well as a building administrator or other instructional leader, participated in three, two-day workshops.

Technology Centers That Work (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 to meet requests for training on changes to the teacher evaluation system, which was attended by 36 teachers, and a series of two, two-day workshops on project-based learning attended by 36 teachers. Seventy-two total teachers were trained from 15 career centers.