



2020/21

Annual Report

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Chris Neeley

Superintendent

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Dear Friends,

What a year it has been in the life of the SCPCSD! As we bounce back from the pandemic across our state and nation, let me assure you that this was a year of progress for the district, public charter schools and school choice in South Carolina. Our schools are proving day in and day out that they thrive when challenged – they answer the call; and it's great preparation for our students' road ahead.

Our school partners are committed to playing a key role in this effort by offering high-quality, innovative choices for South Carolina families. However, they are not alone in this effort. Working with state leaders, we have advocated for and increased awareness for our schools all while respecting a core value of what makes charters so effective - autonomy. The impact of our schools and the achievements of our students are felt far and wide across the state, and the conversation surrounding where we can excel next is just beginning.

As I look forward to what lies ahead, I am filled with excitement at the prospect of working with state and community leaders, parents and educators to continue setting the bar for student achievement. Our portfolio of schools is growing, but so must our resolve to be accountable to our students, families, legislative leaders and the citizens of South Carolina. Using the dedication and perseverance we have gleaned from this year, I have no doubt that we will soar to new heights in our future.

One of my favorite quotes is by former U.S. Attorney General Bobby Kennedy: "Some men see things as they are, and ask why. I dream of things that never were, and ask why not." I like that quote because I believe we, as proponents of charter schools, are the "why not" people. Why not innovate? Why not exceed the status quo? Why not put #KidsFirst?

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Vision Statement

We envision a South Carolina where each child is academically equipped to reach their full potential in life.



Mission Statement

The South Carolina Public Charter School District authorizes, champions and supports the creation and advancement of innovative K-12 public charter schools that provide academic opportunities for every student in SC to reach their fullest potential.



Core Values

We value the unique talents and abilities of all students and hold high expectations for social, emotional and academic growth inclusively within the diverse population we serve. Our efforts are guided by the following principles:



Focus

We care deeply about the students and parents that our charter schools serve and are committed to bringing our best efforts forward to serve and support their successes.



Integrity

We are committed to upholding a culture that exemplifies the highest levels of honesty, respect, and dignity in all of our interactions and endeavors.



Equity

We are committed to advocating for and providing needed resources for diverse students throughout South Carolina to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve their highest academic potential.



Excellence

We strive to be second to none in creating, supporting, and sustaining district charter schools and are committed to being an efficient, effective, and resourceful district to achieve success.



Partner

We are committed to building and sustaining positive and healthy partnerships with our schools, communities and businesses to ensure that every student in South Carolina has access to a high-quality education.

History

The law makes clear why we exist. South Carolina’s charter school law was passed in 1996, and defined seven key purposes for charter schools, each of which connect to our strategic pillars and ground us in our principles to serve the students of South Carolina not just well – but to the highest possible level:

- 1 Improve student learning;
- 2 Increase learning opportunities for students;
- 3 Encourage the use of a variety of productive teaching methods;
- 4 Establish new forms of accountability for schools;
- 5 Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site;
- 6 Assist South Carolina in reaching academic excellence;
- 7 And create new, innovative, and flexible ways of educating children within the public school system, with the goal of closing achievement gaps between low performing student groups and high performing student groups.



The legislature created the South Carolina Public Charter School District (SCPCSD) in 2006 as a state-wide authorizer of new charter schools, schools transferring from local districts, and virtual charter schools. The SCPCSD is unique in that it is state funded and—unlike charters authorized by local districts—its schools can serve students from anywhere in the state. The SCPCSD is governed by an appointed board of volunteer leaders from various regions and cities from around South Carolina. Driven by parent demand, the SCPCSD has grown rapidly over the years. In the 2020-2021 school year, the district oversaw 33 charter schools, mixed with virtual and brick and mortar options, serving approximately 16,000 students statewide.



2020/21 Board Of Trustees



John Payne
Chairman



Cyndi Mosteller
Vice Chairman



Kathleen Bounds
Secretary



Kip Miller
Trustee



Randy Page
Trustee



Teresa Pope, Ph.D.
Trustee

Not pictured: Keith Callicut, Trustee

How Our Schools Are Funded

STATE EFA FUNDING

Distributed to schools via a per pupil formula. Consists of a base student funding amount + weighted student funding based on individual student characteristics.

2020-2021 base student cost funding amount:

- \$2,516 Base Student Cost
- Student funding weights: 1 - 2.57
- Add on student funding weights: 0.15-0.20

STATE EIA FUNDING

Distributed to schools based on categorical funding rules for certain programs. Examples include: teacher salary fringe benefits, nationally board certified teachers, students at risk of academic failure.

PROVISO FUNDING

As a unique statewide district, the SCPCSD does not have taxing authority to raise the equivalent of its local revenue. Annually, the SCPCSD requests a proviso funding amount from the SC Legislature.

2020-2021 Proviso funding amount:

- \$3,600 per pupil (brick and mortar charter)
- \$1,900 per pupil (virtual charter)

FEDERAL FUNDS

SCPCSD schools receive federal funds. The main sources include Title I funding for high poverty students and IDEA funds for students with disabilities.



Current Schools

- **Lowcountry**

Bridges Preparatory School
Cape Romain Environmental Education
Charter School
Charleston Advancement Academy
Lowcountry Montessori School
Palmetto Scholars Academy
Polaris Tech Charter School

- **Midlands**

Bettis Preparatory Leadership Academy
East Point Academy
Felton Laboratory Charter School
Fox Creek High School
GREEN Charter School of the Midlands
Midlands Arts Conservatory
Midlands Middle College
Renaissance Collegiate Academy
Tall Pines STEM Academy

- **Pee Dee**

Butler Academy
Pee Dee Math, Science and
Technology Academy

- **Upstate**

East Link Academy
GREEN Charter School of Greenville

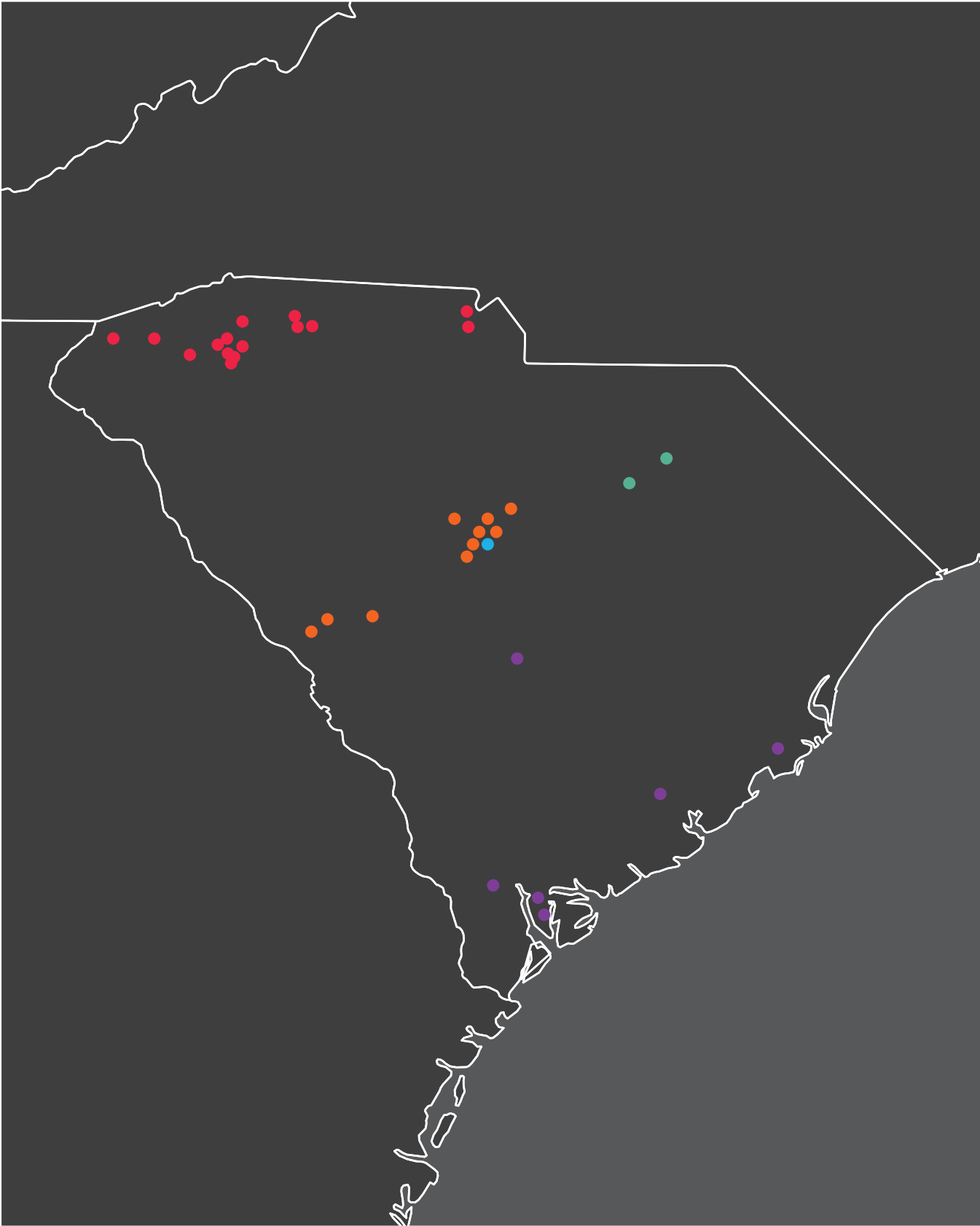
GREEN Charter School of Spartanburg
Greenville Technical Charter High School
Greer Middle College Charter High School
High Point Academy
Lakes and Bridges Charter School
LEAD Academy
Legacy Early College
Meyer Center for Special Children
NEXT High School
Riverwalk Academy
Spartanburg Preparatory School
York Preparatory Academy
Youth Leadership Academy

- **Virtual**

SC Whitmore School

- **Opening in 2021**

Compass Collegiate Academy
GREEN Lowcountry
Learn4Life North Charleston
Liberty STEAM Charter School
Lowcountry Acceleration Academy
Palmetto Achievement Center for
Excellence Academy





MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

In September 2020, the South Carolina Public Charter School District solidified a collaborative effort with the Charter Institute at Erskine to continue supporting South Carolina's students. As South Carolina's two statewide charter school authorizers, never has the responsibility of closing the educational achievement gap and growing schools where they are needed most in South Carolina been greater. To accomplish this, the SCPCSD and the Institute signed a historic Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that laid out why and how the partners will continue to have a profound, innovative and positive impact on students and families of South Carolina.

By standing shoulder-to-shoulder this year, the SCPCSD and the Institute presented a unified set of legislative goals to the South Carolina General Assembly, worked together to provide training and resources to schools and participated in shared services programming. By doing this work together, the SCPCSD and the Institute are fulfilling a collective vision to put "Kids First."

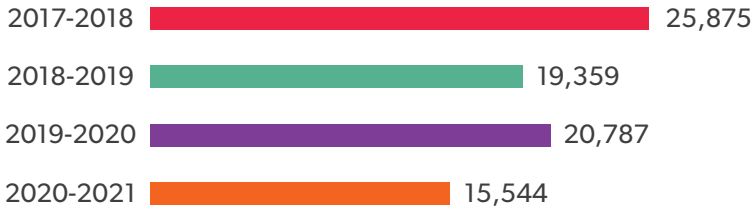




Our Schools By The Numbers

SCPCSD Enrollment

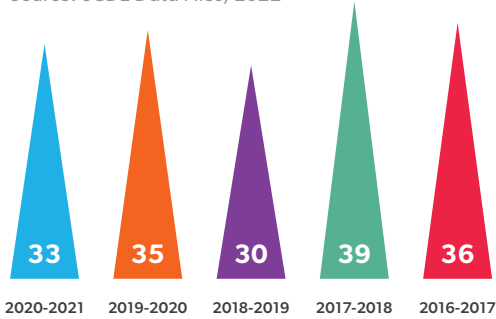
Source: SC School Report Card, 2022



33 Schools

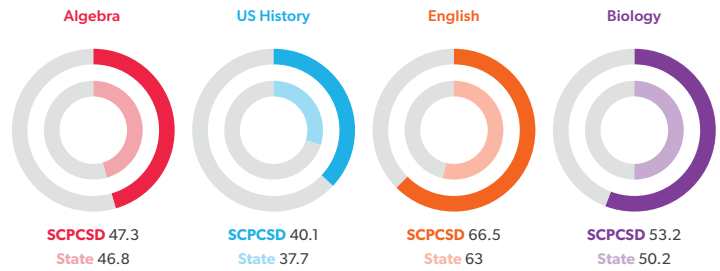
Number of SCPCSD Schools by Year

Source: SCDE Data Files, 2022



End of Course Assessments

Source: SC School Report Card, 2022



15,544 Students

2,000+ Staff & Teachers

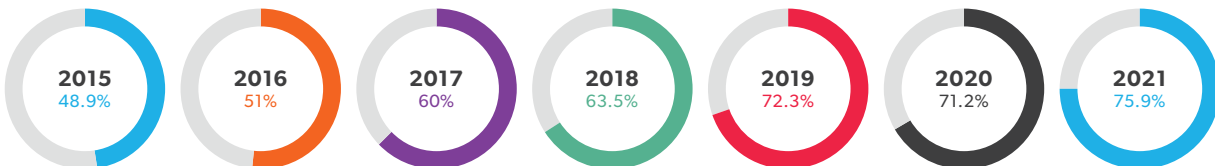
2021 SC Ready Meets/Exceeds

Source: SC School Report Card, 2022



SCPCSD Graduation Rate by Year

Source: SC School Report Card, 2022



Our Wins

Formative Assessment Offering

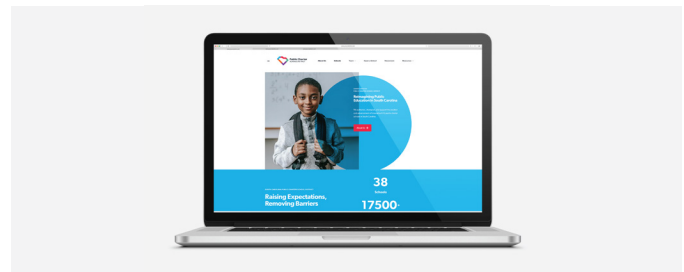
After much research and collaboration, NWEA's MAP Growth is the common formative assessment the district has partnered with for the 21-22 school year. MAP Growth ELA and Math will be offered to all students in grades kindergarten through ninth grade at no cost to the school. MAP Growth will be administered three times per school year: fall, winter, spring.

Strategic Plan

Created and implanted the 2021 – 2025 SCPCSD Strategic Plan to serve as a roadmap for enhancing the capability and capacity of SCPCSD to offer more innovative educational choices to the state of South Carolina over the next several years.

New Brand

The redesigned brand is made up of core elements—the name, logos, and colors—that work together to communicate the intended brand vision and personality to employees, brand affiliates and the public at large.



Community District Office

The office transition was driven by the leadership team to increase community presence of the SCPCSD, provide ease of access to school leaders and partners and promote the brand of the district locally and statewide.



Kids First Conference

The Charter Institute at Erskine and the South Carolina Public Charter School District partnered to host the inaugural Kids First Conference on September 28 and 29, 2021, in Columbia. The two-day conference, held at the Columbia Convention Center, was attended by over 400 charter school leaders and board members.



School Visits

Despite the ongoing pandemic, Superintendent Chris Neeley has visited more than half of the SCPCSD schools in the Lowcountry, Midlands and Upstate regions of the state to continue fostering relationships with school leaders and visit with students and staff members.



New School Wins

In August of 2021, the SCPCSD opened six schools located in Charleston, Richland and Sumter Counties. The portfolio of new schools includes the Midlands' first charter school for students with dyslexia, a STEAM school and a school with a year-round calendar.



COVID-19 Support

As we continue to battle COVID-19, SCPCSD created a pandemic task force that works hand in hand with school leaders to communicate daily with new information and resources. The SCPCSD tracked the virus, including contact tracing directly with the schools in liaison with DHEC. Because our schools are statewide, this task was enormous but a great support to our schools. Our schools were committed to staying open.

Sustainable Funding Formula

Working with state leaders and charter school partners, the SCPCSD is committed to creating a funding formula solution which focuses on all students—and will benefit all statewide charter school authorizers—in ensuring a stable, fair and sustainable system for the future that prioritizes students and their individual needs.

Corridor of Opportunity Initiative

The SCPCSD is working closely with business development leaders to strategically help grow schools in the Corridor of Opportunity and through the state's multiple Opportunity Zones. Together, with community leaders & educators, we will partner together to see three new charter schools open by 2025.



REVOLUTIONIZING EDUCATION
IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Our Four Strategic Focus Areas



Organizational
Development



Internal and
External
Communications



Operational
Excellence



Advocacy



ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The SCPCSD is demonstrating a strong governance structure with a diverse Board of Trustees responding to organizational challenges and opportunities to expand the agency's impact. In addition, the leadership team and staff is organized, aligned and developed so that they are better positioned to respond to an expanding network of charter schools while championing and supporting the collective needs of the schools within the SCPCSD Network.





INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

The SCPCSD leadership team is improving the flow of information across internal and external channels to ensure that accurate and timely information is shared with the Board of Trustees, staff and the SCPCSD Network. These improvements ensure transparency and that everyone has the information they need to support and advocate for the district and the SCPCSD Network.





OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

The SCPCSD utilizes best business practices to operate an efficient and effective district while supporting the growth and success of the district and the expanding SCPCSD Network. This includes offering innovative ways to support charter school network leaders and staff, growing the capacity of the district's staff, updating district operational policies and procedures, reporting outcomes, and maintaining a capacity building toolbox of school support services to leverage the overall impact of the district office across the state.



ADVOCACY

The SCPCSD expands its visibility across South Carolina by rebranding the district with clarity and consistency while coordinating targeted awareness strategies for current and future stakeholders in South Carolina. The district also develops advocacy tools to promote and support the successes and activities of local charter schools within the SCPCSD Network.



Public Charter
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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