Collective Impact

SAM CHAPTER 2 | SPRING 2016
The Spartanburg Academic Movement is an all-in "collective impact" partnership across Spartanburg County, South Carolina. It is a movement committed to increasing the importance we place on academic achievement from cradle to career.

This chapter tells the story of how collective impact works — from the "mind mapping" activity of SAM's collaborative action networks (left) to the eager faces of the children whose futures are at stake.

learnwithsam.org
THE TEXT CONTINUES...

“Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.”

So it is. We are born. And what is the single most important thing we can do to be the “hero” of our own life?

LEARN AS MUCH AS WE CAN.

In the absence of a determination to learn and to keep learning, our “station” in life will most certainly be held in the hands of others.

THERE ARE CRITICAL STAGES IN THIS LEARNING:

- Age appropriate development beginning at birth, leading to kindergarten readiness
- Learning to read in the primary years, preparing for “reading to learn” in the elementary years
- Comprehending middle school math, opening doors to sciences and math in high school
- Gaining personal skills, character development, and breadth of knowledge leading to high school graduation ready for post-secondary college and career education
- Preparing for and enrolling in college or a rigorous career certification program
- Persisting and competing post-secondary study leading to career success and lifelong learning

These six stages of learning are the focus of the Spartanburg Academic Movement. Their sequence, their linkage, and their importance for all of Spartanburg County’s children are supported by data and research, as we shall see.

Academic achievement paves the way for the self-determination implicit in Copperfield’s question. But, there is another reality of overarching importance in Copperfield’s question. This reality acknowledges, as Dickens does throughout the pages of his novel, that the “hero” status is not likely to be one’s own alone. It is supported – or thwarted – by surrounding clouds of circumstance: parenting, poverty, plenty, disability, opportunity, race, encouragement, literacy, technology, health, schools, neighborhoods, nutrition, experiences, access, and on and on.

These circumstantial realities and their interactions with academic achievement are the preeminent concerns of the Spartanburg Academic Movement. These circumstantial realities and their interactions with academic achievement are the preeminent concerns of the Spartanburg Academic Movement. The Spartanburg Academic Movement.

SAM IS BUILT ON THE BELIEF THAT WE ALL ARE PARTNERS IN THE SUCCESS OF THE EDUCATION ENTERPRISE ... OR WE SHOULD BE.

And the ambitions of us all – parents and families, employers, non-profits, foundations, faith communities, public officials, towns, neighborhoods – should be aiming in the same direction toward increasing the odds for significant academic achievement among all our county’s children at every stage of learning ... from cradle to career.

WITH THIS PUBLICATION, THE SPARTANBURG ACADEMIC MOVEMENT ENTERS ITS THIRD YEAR.

Two years ago, in spring 2014, we published SAM Preface, doing what all “prefaces” do: framing the Academic Movement and making the case for change in academic achievement ambitions across Spartanburg County. Using data drawn from long established statewide assessment practices, the Preface determined baselines and projected targets for increasing achievement at each stage of learning over the coming years, placing particular emphasis on children in poverty.

Then, amidst upheavals in assessment policy issued by federal and state Departments of Education, last year’s SAM Chapter 1 – Faces of Change (2015) chronicled rapidly changing testing practices imposed on our schools, putting the brakes on the Movement’s efforts to document year-to-year improvements in academic achievement. Indecision about how to test academic achievement of various stages of learning together with ever-changing ever-expanding federal and state assessment and accountability requirements, held the uneasy promise of more uncertainty to come.

This year’s report, SAM Chapter 2 – Collective impact, anticipates the emergence of a somewhat more rational assessment framework for the work of SAM, given several positive signs that accountability and control are increasingly likely to be left in the hands of the states and our school districts than has been the case in recent years. Changes described on pages 20-23 are likely to support the work of the Spartanburg Academic Movement in the years to come.

SAM has concentrated its attention throughout 2015 on a singular “collective impact” agenda: kindergarten readiness ... the first stage of learning. We will explore in this chapter the nature of “collective impact” work, and the process and products of that work within the Kindergarten Success Collaborative Action Network. And Chapter 2 will anticipate the launch of similar county-wide networks focused on SAM’s other county level outcomes.

The collective impact work of the Kindergarten Success Collaborative Action Network, and the changes forthcoming in accountability and control ... these are the two themes of SAM Chapter 2.
The "Business" of Education

**Education is Spartanburg County’s biggest “business.” Arguably, its most serious one.**

Consider: 50,000 students are enrolled in Spartanburg County’s seven public school districts, plus additional hundreds of students in our Pre-K child development centers. More than double these numbers are directly engaged with schools and centers as teachers, administrators, parents, and caregivers. And more than 15,000 are enrolled in our seven colleges.

Look beyond to the dozens of non-profits that directly serve students’ educational needs outside the classroom, playing vital roles in the education ecosystem: tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and other roles that are crucial, particularly for students in poverty and facing other challenges.

Over half of Spartanburg County has a very direct and very personal stake in the “business” of education.

...at least 60% of the 290,000 residents of Spartanburg County. And even the 40% of us who are not directly engaged as students, teachers, parents, or support service providers share a serious stake in strengthening the academic achievement of our young people. It is crucial for our county’s quality of life and our economic well-being in the years to come. The stakes are very high.

**Gradual improvement is not enough.**

National and global standards for innovation and competitiveness are increasing ever faster. Fortunately, new forces are at play in Spartanburg County giving us hope for more than gradual improvement: enlightened and determined district leadership, higher standards demanding improved instructional models, teaching talent up to the task, supportive technologies and instructional models, and Pre-K through 12 attention to the development of world class skills and personal characteristics in addition to breadth and depth of knowledge.

**Replacing “gradual improvement” with “transformative progress.”**

In Spartanburg County, as in communities across the country, the greatest barriers to transformative progress are in place outside the classroom: family stress, poverty, developmental and psychological challenges. Numerous nonprofits are at work on these barriers, but collaboration is a challenge.

This sense of shared responsibility is at the heart of the Spartanburg Academic Movement ... a county-wide movement ... a movement with a mission to elevate the academic achievement of every child, cradle to career.

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Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 2, 2016
SPARTANBURG COUNTY’S BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS A DEEP AND SERIOUS STAKE IN OUR COUNTY’S EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM.

YET BUSINESS LEADERS ARE OFTEN FRUSTRATED BY SLOW PROGRESS IN IMPROVING OUTCOMES.

Evidence of this was found in a study undertaken in 2009 by the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce noting that “too few citizens in Spartanburg County, South Carolina were sufficiently well-educated to assure competitiveness in the knowledge economy of the 21st century.”

The most striking data point supporting this concern was the percent of adults 25 and older having completed bachelor’s degrees: 19.2% ... this in comparison with a 22.7% state average and a national average of 27%. With high flying economies in the United States ranging upwards of 40%, the Chamber feared that Spartanburg County risked no longer remaining competitive in the economic development game.

The Chamber set an ambitious goal and labeled it the “40/30 Challenge” ... not 19.2%, but 40% of adults by 2030 ... doubling bachelor’s degree holders in a generation.

In 2010, the College Hub was formed and focused on efforts to increase the number of high school graduates choosing to go to college and adults returning to complete their degree. We have made some progress toward that goal (see page 33).

THE COLLEGE HUB BOARD RECOGNIZED THAT IN ORDER TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL AND SUSTAINED PROGRESS, OUR SHARED VISION MUST ADDRESS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT LONG BEFORE YOUNG PEOPLE CHOOSE TO GO TO COLLEGE.

Our vision must focus on every critical learning stage along the way, from the earliest years of childhood to post-secondary completion. Our vision must aim at a common set of achievement goals for each stage of learning; and seek to improve the quality and coverage of nonprofit services in support of these goals, identifying best practices and measuring results.

And our vision must expand to include not only the bachelor’s degree, but also rigorous alternatives including technical certifications, apprenticeships, associate degrees ... all of which can prepare young people for productive lives and careers.

In short, the vision must extend beyond a static “hub.” It must become a “movement” leading to a culture change across Spartanburg County supporting academic achievement for every child, cradle to career.

BUT HOW CAN SUCH A MOVEMENT BE FRAMED? AND HOW CAN CHAMBER AND BUSINESS LEADERS ENGAGE?

SPARTANBURG COUNTY’S BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS A DEEP AND SERIOUS STAKE IN OUR COUNTY’S EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM.

THE "EDUCATION" OF BUSINESS

The Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM) began in earnest as a collective impact movement in October 2013, with a public call to action launched at the corporate headquarters of Milliken and Company. Two hundred corporate and community leaders gathered with the county’s seven school superintendents and seven college presidents to consider the possibility of a partnership committed to the shared vision of advancing academic achievement across Spartanburg County, a commitment that could sustain and persist until the county’s academic achievement from pre-kindergarten through post-secondary completion was leading the state.

A cradle to career commitment. A generational commitment. A commitment that extends well beyond our schools and colleges to include partners of every stripe: educational non-profits, foundations, corporations, faith communities, neighborhoods, county and municipal officials, individuals.

The graphic is drawn from Multnomah County Oregon’s “All Hands Raised Partnership.” (Winter 2015). It illustrates the transition from minimum communication across educational non-profits to maximum communication and common purpose, all aiming toward collective impact on specific learning outcomes and the continuous improvement of each.
WHAT CAN “COLLECTIVE IMPACT” MEAN FOR BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT?

“Ironically, the way the business community commonly supports education can contribute to the slow progress. Much of business’ support is directed to nonprofit organizations that serve students outside the classroom. The tutoring, nutrition, counseling, mentoring, and other services that these nonprofits provide are crucial for the success of students affected by poverty. But in the typical town or city, each nonprofit addresses only one part of a highly interrelated education system. The nonprofits seldom collaborate with each other, rarely share common goals, and measure outcomes inconsistently. The result is service delivery chaos: some services are duplicated, others are missing, and great providers do not displace poor ones.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT AIMS TO CHANGE THIS PICTURE.

“In communities across the country, it is emerging as a new process and structure that shifts the service delivery system from chaos to coherence. It brings community leaders together from the school district, nonprofit organizations, government, parent groups, businesses, and religious organizations. It keeps these diverse stakeholders working together as they move from planning to implementation and beyond.”

“Collective Impact focuses on developing a common set of goals for pre-K-12 youngsters, improving the quality and coverage of services, identifying best practices, and measuring results. These four elements are critical for high performance. They make systemic change possible.”


THE LAP GAP?

“We hear about the achievement gap often. What I’ve noticed in the youngest students is what I call a ‘lap gap.’ At-risk students have not grown up sitting on someone’s lap, hearing books read to them, being hugged and comforted, and being introduced to the world of learning around them. That’s the ‘lap gap.’”

Fredric Logan, Principal
Cleveland Academy of Leadership

SAM’S CORPORATE FUNDERS

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StriveTogether® NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The StriveTogether network is a national alliance of “collective impact” partnerships working to improve education success for every child by bringing together cross-sector partners around a common vision. SAM is a “Sustaining” member of the network.

There are dozens of these collective impact partnerships across the United States building local collaborative action infrastructures to improve education outcomes for every child.

StriveTogether supports these partnerships with resources designed to help them create a civic infrastructure that unites stakeholders around shared goals, measures, and results.

Communities implementing the StriveTogether framework have seen improvements in kindergarten readiness, standardized test results, and college admission and retention.

StriveTogether® NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

StriveTogether has developed a theory of action built upon four key principles:

1. Community engagement
2. Minimizing disparities
3. Continuous improvement
4. Leveraging existing assets to get the job done

With these principles in mind, community partnerships like the Spartanburg Academic Movement are able to chart a path through StriveTogether’s Theory of Action from the early stages of formation through “Systems Change” and ultimately “Proof Point”, i.e., sustained behavior change with targeted achievement outcomes improving year over year.

Among the nation’s 65 StriveTogether partnerships, 27 have thus achieved “Sustaining” certification. SAM is one of those 27.

COLLABORATIVE ACTION NETWORKS

StriveTogether has established a continuum of benchmarks, serving to guide the work of member partnerships including the Spartanburg Academic Movement.

Across the continuum are four fundamental “Gateways” defining a partnership’s progression toward “Proof Point,” the point in time by which most county level outcomes are trending in the right direction.

By moving systematically through each Gateway – a process that Strive assesses and certifies in an exhaustive annual evaluation process – sustained impact and improvement over time are likely.

SOME OF THE BENCHMARKS MOST CRITICAL TO SUCCESS WITHIN EACH STRIVETOGETHER “GATEWAY” INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- **EXPLORING GATEWAY**
  - SAM is led by a broadly representative leadership Board that convenes around a cradle to career vision.
  - SAM’s Board selects community level outcomes and indicators against which to be held accountable.
  - SAM’s Board commits to provide key staff and operations to support the drive to improvement.

- **EMERGING GATEWAY**
  - SAM’s staff collects, disaggregates and publicly reports baseline data on community level outcomes.
  - SAM’s Board secures multiple years of funding to support operations and collaborative work.
  - SAM selects a continuous improvement process.

- **SUSTAINING GATEWAY**
  - SAM partners take action to improve the community level outcomes.
  - SAM’s Collaborative Action Networks (CANs) engage, developing action plans to improve specific community level outcomes.
  - Community is mobilized to improve these outcomes.

- **SYSTEMS CHANGE GATEWAY**
  - SAM puts in place comprehensive data system to collect and connect student level data across schools/nonprofits.
  - SAM engages in continual alignment of resources to impact community level outcomes.
  - SAM influences policies to enable and sustain improvement.

- **PROOF POINT**
  - Most of SAM’s indicators are consistently trending in the right direction.

WE ARE HERE.

The Spartanburg Academic Movement is certified as having accomplished the “Sustaining” Gateway.

It is presently at work on accomplishing the benchmarks that will warrant “Systems Change” certification within the coming year: positioning the Spartanburg Academic Movement among the nation’s leading Strive partnerships.

The “engine” of the Spartanburg Academic Movement, as with other Strive partners, is the “collaborative action network,” or “CAN” as SAM calls it. Note the CANs centrality in the Theory of Action within the “Sustaining” Gateway.

It is in the collaborative action networks where the critical work of SAM – the collective impact work – gets done.

SIX COUNTY LEVEL OUTCOMES

SAM, working together with Spartanburg County’s school districts, has identified six county level outcomes for which collective impact efforts in collaborative action networks are essential:

1. Readiness for kindergarten success
2. Early grades reading
3. Middle grades math
4. College/career ready high school graduation
5. Post-secondary enrollment
6. Post-secondary persistence and completion

Collaborative Action Networks (CANs) are launching around each of these outcomes, drawing together practitioners, researchers, and nonprofit support organizations aligned with a common purpose to pursue targeted, county-wide academic achievement goals for each stage of learning.
The Woodruff Study

Woodruff Primary School is a public “3K-through-second grade” school in Spartanburg District #4. Long known as a statewide leader in pre-K public education, the Kindergarten Success CAN chose WPS for an investigation of nearly 50 dependent variables and their relationship with success in 5-year-old kindergarten; e.g., impact of 4K and 3K participation, attendance/tardiness in 4K, mother’s education level, measures of poverty, ethnicity, access to technology, disability, and many other potential contributing indicators.

Child-level data (de-identified) on each of these variables were collected by 5K teachers at the end of the children’s 5K year, enabling cross-tabulated comparisons among potential contributing indicators and kindergarten success.

Major findings included a strongly positive relationship between 4K participation and 5K success, suggesting a county-wide effort to encourage 4K participation. Significant positive relationships were also evident given mother’s educational level, technology literacy in the home, 4K absence/attendance patterns, and developmental delays.

An executive summary of The Woodruff Study is available upon request from BThompson@samwiltsam.org.

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Overview of the Woodruff Primary School Study

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EARLY WINS
Without waiting for a birth-to-five data ecosystem to be fully assembled, or for the results of pilot studies to be confirmed, or for the state to settle on a common assessment, the Kindergarten Success CAN is at work on several early wins including ...
» On-line access to pre- and in-service training opportunities across the County open to public and private early childhood education providers
» Parenting and preschool resources readily available to parents and caregivers
» Promotion of developmental screenings and increased access to support services for children with delays

THE CONTINUING AGENDA OF THE KINDERGARTEN SUCCESS CAN
To date, as a product of “The Woodruff Study” and related pilot work, the members of the CAN have identified five “contributing indicators” to kindergarten success, together with some key “measurables” contributing to the advancement of these indicators. Project activities are being identified for each, together with projected implementation protocols and dates.

SOME KEY MEASURABLES

1. Developmental Screenings

» Number of unduplicated children screened with ASQ-3
» Percent of population screened during calendar year
» Percent of children identified with developmental concerns
» Percent of children connected to services

2. Pre-school Enrollment

» Percent of 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in preschool
» Number and percent of 4 year olds in Quality Counts preschools
» Percent of 4 year olds “ready” by end of 4K
» Family involvement

3. Teacher Quality in Quality Counts Centers

» Percent of early childhood professionals with bachelor’s degree or above

4. Access to Books

» Percent of children 0-5 enrolled in Imagination Library
» Percent of children engaged with “Reach Out and Read”
» Percent of children engaged with Public Library

5. Parent Knowledge

» Percent of parents knowledgeable about early childhood development and school readiness

Continuous Improvement is a central tenet of the work of this and other CANs. If participation numbers and percentages related to these five “contributing indicators” gain momentum, we should expect kindergarten readiness to increase over time. Emphases will shift among contributing indicators as data reveal the presence or absence of meaningful correlations. As the CAN continues to collect and analyze data, other contributing indicators may be added while some may be de-emphasized.

A NOTE OF CAUTION ...

What does “kindergarten readiness” really mean? Decades of research in child development make clear that young children learn actively. They play, they move. They use their senses, get their hands on things, interact with other children and teachers, create, invent. In the rush to measure kindergarten readiness, it is a mistake to shove play aside because its value is a challenge to measure. The capacities children must develop in preparation for success in school are related to social competencies, emotional controls, problem solving capacity, imagination, initiative, curiosity, original thinking. These are “make or break” in school and life. (See “Profile of the South Carolina Graduate,” pages 18-19.)

WHY IS “SOCIAL COMPETENCE” SO IMPORTANT FOR KINDERGARTEN SUCCESS?

A 20-year retrospective study, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and published in the July 2015 issue of the American Journal of Public Health, makes clear that “social competence among kindergarten students is a consistent and significant indicator of positive and negative future outcomes across all major domains as an adult: education, employment, criminal justice, substance abuse, and mental health. For example, kindergarten children who scored at the higher end of the spectrum for social competence were four times more likely to obtain a college degree than children who scored at the lower end of the spectrum.”

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

HOW OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ARE GETTING INVOLVED WITH SAM

Early in the Kindergarten Success CAN work, an emphasis on developmental screening emerged as an important contributing indicator likely to impact kindergarten readiness, identifying developmental concerns and securing early intervention services will help to reduce the number of children arriving unprepared for kindergarten.

A SAM partnership with Help Me Grow SC (HMG SC) has been established to enhance existing developmental screening efforts across Spartanburg County. HMG SC employs a comprehensive approach to focus systematically on meeting the full range of developmental needs of an individual child and family.

As a consequence of the work of the KSCAN, HMG SC is poised to be THE resource for information about early childhood development, developmental screenings, and service referrals in the County. A parent knowledge campaign about HMG SC will be developed and supported by SAM and its partners.

Deploying a continuous improvement methodology to improve educational outcomes is a unique and innovative component of collective impact work and the operation of collaborative action networks (CANs) across all StriveTogether partnerships.

BMW Manufacturing has been instrumental in providing invaluable Six Sigma continuous improvement coaching and expertise to our work. Not only has BMW committed staff from their Continuous Improvement Department to co-facilitate our first CAN (and now subsequent CANs), but they have also trained our Director of Collaborative Action Networks as a Black Belt in Six Sigma, and other SAM staff in process improvement strategies.

This commitment from a world class manufacturing leader right here in Spartanburg County sets an incredible precedent for corporate engagement in the cradle-to-career agenda of the Spartanburg Academic Movement.
THE PROFILE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA GRADUATE

The Profile is perhaps the most important state-wide academic achievement initiative. A collaboration of the State Superintendents’ Roundtable and State Chamber of Commerce, this Profile is built on three foundations: World Class Knowledge, World Class Skills, and Life and Career Characteristics. All of Spartanburg County’s seven school districts are aligning curricula – Pre K-12 – with the Profile.

WORLD CLASS KNOWLEDGE

1. Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness
2. Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

WORLD CLASS SKILLS

1. Creativity and innovation
2. Critical thinking and problem solving
3. Collaboration and teamwork
4. Communication, information, media and technology
5. Knowing how to learn

LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

1. Integrity
2. Self-direction
3. Global perspective
4. Perseverance
5. Work ethic
6. Interpersonal skills

Spartanburg County’s seven school districts are leading the way in the implementation of the “Profile” ... not only in high school, but across the Pre K-12 continuum.

Just as a student cannot wait until the junior or senior year in high school to gain “world class knowledge” in science, math, or language arts ... neither can the student expect to gain the “soft skills” in a senior year workshop. These “world class skills” and “life and career characteristics” are the product of home and school instruction from birth through the early grades and onward.

EVEN PRE-KINDERGARTEN? YES. TAKE A LOOK ...

In response to the South Carolina General Assembly’s support for comprehensive assessment to gauge children’s readiness for kindergarten, the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee prepared “Readiness Assessment Recommendations” in 2015.

The recommendations contain a “framework” illustrating specific skills and abilities that children may be expected to demonstrate upon entering kindergarten ... skills and abilities that relate directly to the “Profile of the SC Graduate.”

Sounds complicated, but it’s not. Check out the Pre-K “Profile” framework at: www.eoc.sc.gov/early/readiness/report, pp. 22-3.
ASSESSING EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

NATIONAL READING AND MATH SCORES IN 4TH AND 8TH GRADE MEASURED BY NAEP (NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS) WERE RELEASED IN FALL 2015, AND STUDENT LEARNING APPEARS TO HAVE STALLED.

NAEP is often called the nation’s report card because it is the only measure of student achievement given periodically to a sampling of students around the nation. The “truth-teller,” most agree, because it has no test prep industry or high-stakes consequence (e.g., school ratings, funding, salaries) that encourages teaching to the test.

Over the years 2003-2013, scores have generally climbed nationally. What happened in 2015? Math scores for 4th and 8th graders across the US dropped for the first time since the exam’s implementation 35 years ago. And 8th grade reading scores dropped, while 4th grade scores remained the same.

Explanations from state to state spin around the impact of federal programs (“No Child Left Behind,” Common Core, state waivers) and state policy differences, changing student demographics, and so on.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH IN SOUTH CAROLINA?
The trend in scores since 2009, on a scale of 0-500, is not good. The state has lagged the national average on math and reading year after year. And this year, South Carolina scores for 8th grade decreased compared to 2013, though scores for 4th grade reading increased, and scores in 4th grade math stayed the same. South Carolina has an opportunity to reverse this trend.

THE ASSESSMENT TIDE IS TURNING
Late in 2015, the US House and Senate passed and the President signed the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA), displacing the widely discredited “No Child Left Behind Act,” and the more recent excesses of “Race to the Top,” marking a transition from the federal government’s aggressive direct assessment of school performance to states’ and districts’ control.

Students will continue to be assessed under the new law and be held accountable for performance; but states are now largely free to determine how that will take place. Each state will be obligated to use “college-and-career ready” (CCR) standards and intervene when those are not met, but each will design its own standards and interventions.
HOW WILL SOUTH CAROLINA RESPOND?

Noting that “the recent passage of the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA) offers great opportunities for South Carolina and its students,” Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman is “proposing that we move to a more commonsense system that does not rely on high stakes tests and gives the best feedback and support for our teachers” (http://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/2015/12).

Secretary Spearman’s press release further notes: “states no longer have to tie educator evaluation to student growth as formerly required under ‘No Child Left Behind.’ South Carolina has already begun to implement an educator evaluation [for teachers and for principals], that is partially tied to student learning objectives. Student growth will continue to play a role in educator evaluation but it will not be tied to the results of high stakes testing.”

AND HOW WILL SPARTANBURG COUNTY RESPOND?

Spartanburg County’s seven school districts, working in concert with one another, have kept their focus on employing assessments that have the most meaning for understanding and improving student performance.

Of course, they have employed the assessments required of all South Carolina districts in past years – PASS, HSAP, etc. However, they also have gotten an early head start with their employment of other assessments that have national comparability – the ACT, for example.

Although the ACT series of tests were neither required nor funded by the state before 2014-15, some of our districts got a running start by self-funding them in 2013-14 to give their students experience with these nationally comparable assessments.

Innovation is in the DNA of today’s Spartanburg County Schools!

THE ESSA:

“...encourages states to focus on students’ opportunities to learn, as well as a broader range of outcomes – such as graduation rates, completion of college-and-career-ready coursework, and richer measures of student learning that evaluate the critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills essential for success in today’s society and workplaces. If this law is successful in rekindling state innovation, while focusing them on educational quality and equity, it could provide the shot in the arm the nation needs to reclaim the American Dream for the next generation of young people and their families.”

—Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond
Stanford University Professor Emeritus
President of the Learning Policy Institute

“All of Spartanburg County’s seven school districts recognize the imperative not only of state, but also of national comparability of their students’ academic performance; and, in this time of assessment transition, have been preparing themselves and their students with this objective in mind at every stage of students’ academic progress from kindergarten readiness through college and career ready high school graduation.”

—Dr. W. Rallie Liston
Superintendent of Spartanburg School District 4

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 2, 2016
LEARNING STAGE 1: Readiness for Kindergarten Success

What does it mean to be ready for success in five year-old kindergarten?

Simply, that a child is at appropriate developmental stages in social and emotional development, fundamental language and literacy skills, cognitive development, physical health, and motor skills.

During the 2014-15 school year, South Carolina launched its first effort to assess kindergarten readiness, using the “mCLASS: CIRCLE” assessment. CIRCLE focused only on the language and literacy domain, measuring vocabulary, letter naming, and phonological awareness within the first 45 days of SK.

For Spartanburg County, the percentages of the students scoring “ready” were 72.4%, 64.1%, and 17.2% for letter naming, phonological awareness, and vocabulary, respectively. No state-wide or national comparable data are available.

mCLASS: Circle Assessment FALL 2014

Spartanburg County

- Letter Naming
- Phonological Awareness
- Vocabulary

72.4% 64.1% 17.2%


SAM is employing the testing in place across the County during the 2014-15 year, and offering statewide and national comparisons where possible. We are doing so in the hopeful anticipation that, by this time next year, we will be on more stable ground with comparisons for each stage of learning firmly established across the County and the State, offering the means of tracking progress in future years, and having clear implications for comparisons with national data.

SO, FOR NOW ...
LEARNING STAGE 2: 
Early Grades Reading

Proficiency in early grade reading is a crucial milestone for students’ success in later grades. This chart shows the percent of students who met or exceeded state 3rd grade English Language Arts standards in Spartanburg County and in South Carolina as measured by the SCPASS Test (Palmetto Assessment of State Standards) through 2013-14.

Though Spartanburg generally surpasses the rest of the state on this standard, the percent of students meeting standards – following a period of marginal gains – dropped back into the sub-80% range during the 2013-2014 school year, a position occupied five years prior. (See Comments).

During the 2014-15 school year, the SCPASS assessment was dropped in favor of the ACT Aspire, which measured multiple academic subjects, and was nationally normed. On the “reading” portion of this assessment, Spartanburg students passed at about the same rate as the rest of the state, though these scores were very low: 31.5% and 31.8% for Spartanburg and South Carolina, respectively.

PASS 3rd Grade Language Arts Percent “Met” or “Exemplary”

Spartanburg County | South Carolina
---|---
2009 - 2010 | 81.1% | 80.1%
2010 - 2011 | 81.3% | 80%
2011 - 2012 | 81.8% | 80.5%
2012 - 2013 | 84% | 82.8%
2013 - 2014 | 79.4% | 78.9%

LEARNING STAGE 3: 
Middle Grades Math

Success in 8th grade math is critical for success in advanced math and science in high school and beyond. As with Early Grade Reading, the math portion of the SCPASS Test measured 8th grade performance based on South Carolina state standards. Following a period of upward trending years, both Spartanburg County’s and the State’s percentages of students meeting requirements slipped, though the County’s achievement continued higher than the State’s average.

And again as with Early Grades Reading, Middle Grades Math was assessed by the ACT Aspire in 2014-15, and the County showed 36.4% of students meeting national standards, with the State score at 32%.

PASS 8th Grade Math Percent “Met” or “Exemplary”

Spartanburg County | South Carolina
---|---
2009 - 2010 | 75.2% | 68.4%
2010 - 2011 | 74.4% | 69.3%
2011 - 2012 | 76.9% | 74.4%
2012 - 2013 | 74.4% | 69.6%
2013 - 2014 | 75.2% | 74.4%

Comments

Although the SCPASS Tests (assessing both Early Grades Reading and Middle Grades Math) have a long history in South Carolina, they were substantially revised for the last administration to be more directly aligned with new state standards and the expectations of the Common Core and, as a consequence, were more rigorous. This most likely explains the statewide and county declines, both of which were anticipated.

The ACT Aspire was adopted in 2014-15, in part because of its rigor (again, Common Core-aligned) and because of its comparability nationwide. Following a bid dispute between the developers of testing protocols, the SCReady Tests will replace ACT Aspire with new tests beginning this spring (2016). Use of the SCReady Tests appears likely to continue, according to the contract terms, for up to five years.

Advocacy

SAM advocates the importance of continuity for new tests coming on line this year and (hopefully) persisting over some years to come, providing a baseline against which to assess county-wide progress; together with the capacity to disaggregate data and observe change within cross-cutting indicators such as poverty. As importantly, the new tests must provide for some degree of national comparability. Absent that, the bi-annual NAEP (page 20) may be the only national benchmark that may satisfy the needs of our work.
The “Profile of the SC Graduate” (see pages 18-19), illustrates the expectation that a high school diploma means meeting not only “world class knowledge” requirements, but also “world class skills” requirements and important “life and career characteristics.” All of Spartanburg County’s schools are deeply engaged in assuring college and career readiness for all high school graduates. Graduation rates alone don’t tell the whole story. Unlike Early Grades Reading or Middle Grades Math, a single metric cannot adequately capture College and Career Ready High School Graduation. SAM is watching a combination of metrics including on time graduation rates, ACT WorkKeys results, ACT College Readiness results, and others.

**LEARNING STAGE 4: College/Career Ready (CCR) High School Graduation**

The “Profile of the SC Graduate” (see pages 18-19), illustrates the expectation that a high school diploma means meeting not only “world class knowledge” requirements, but also “world class skills” requirements and important “life and career characteristics.” All of Spartanburg County’s schools are deeply engaged in assuring college and career readiness for all high school graduates. Graduation rates alone don’t tell the whole story. Unlike Early Grades Reading or Middle Grades Math, a single metric cannot adequately capture College and Career Ready High School Graduation. SAM is watching a combination of metrics including on time graduation rates, ACT WorkKeys results, ACT College Readiness results, and others.

**ON TIME HS GRADUATION RATES**

On time graduation rates are on the rise, increasing county-wide and in all of Spartanburg County’s high schools. For 2015, the County’s aggregate graduation rate was 86.8%, compared with the state average of 80.3%. Also rising is the national graduation rate for 2013-14, the latest year available, hitting 82%, the highest on record.

State “Report Cards” for 2014-15 were recently released for every public school in South Carolina by the Department of Education (available at www.ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards). These report cards provide a progress report on how our schools and districts and students are performing on the “Profile of the South Carolina Graduate” including its “world class knowledge,” “skills,” and “characteristics.”

The “knowledge” and “skills” dimensions of the “Profile” are further reported through test score measures indicating readiness for college using the ACT College Entrance and the ACT WorkKeys tests taken by all 11th grade students in South Carolina for the first time in 2014-15. State Legislative Act 155 of 2014 eliminated the former high school exit exam requirement (HSAP), and instead required all students to take both the ACT exams.

**On Time Graduation Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Spartanburg County</th>
<th>South Carolina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009 - 2010</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 - 2011</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 - 2012</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 - 2013</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
<td>77.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 - 2014</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 - 2015</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments**

As graduation rates rise, concerns about the meaning of diplomas are also rising (see, e.g., “As Graduation Rates Rise, a Fear Diplomas Fall Short,” New York Times, page A-1, December 27, 2015). Citing illustrative data drawn from a district in South Carolina outside of Spartanburg County, the article reports that “in school districts across the country … the number of students earning high school diplomas has risen to historic peaks, yet measures of academic readiness for college or jobs are much lower.”

This same article points to positive reasons why graduation rates may be rising, most of which apply in Spartanburg County: “… a decline in teenage pregnancy rate … use of data systems to identify students with multiple absences or failed classes to educators can better help them … more chances to make up failed credits online or in short tutoring sessions without repeating a whole semester or more.”

**Advocacy**

SAM advocates an early launch of SAM’s College and Career Ready High School Graduation Collaborative Action Network (CCRHS Graduation CAN), with particular attention paid to tracking the full range of “contributing indicators” playing a role in increasing high school graduation numbers; and measuring the demonstration of “college and career readiness” through dual enrollments, post-secondary admissions, remediation requirements, persistence to graduation, and completion rates in post-secondary experience.
ACT WORKKEYS

ACT WorkKeys is a career-readiness assessment that was administered to all students in grade 11 during the 2014-15 school year. Results from this exam indicate a student’s readiness for foundational workplace skills. Many employers use the results to screen qualified job applicants for open positions.

South Carolina joins only three other states – Alabama, Michigan, and Wisconsin – in requiring WorkKeys testing of all students in 11th grade. No nationally comparative performance data are available for this same population.

ACT WorkKeys includes three components: “Applied Mathematics,” “Reading for Information,” and “Locating Information.” Spartanburg County students generally, though narrowly, exceeded statewide performance on two components, nearly matching on the third, earning a “silver” rating or better... a rating that indicates adequate preparation for at least 67% of jobs in the ACT WorkKeys database.

ACT COLLEGE READINESS

For the first time in spring 2015, all students in South Carolina were given the ACT College Readiness exam. According to ACT, “the benchmarks are scores on the ACT subject area tests that represent the level of achievement required for students to have a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in corresponding credit-bearing first-year college courses.”

Through Spartanburg County students score higher on each benchmark than do counterparts state-wide, the results show a need for higher expectations and achievement as students prepare for success in post-secondary study.

Comments

It is probable that Spartanburg County and the State of South Carolina will continue their use of the ACT WorkKeys assessment for all students in the 11th grade. Hence, these 2014-15 scores will provide a baseline for SAM’s continued tracking of both measures as partial indices of college and career readiness.

However, the ACT College Readiness assessment remains in the RFP stage and could yield to an alternative college readiness measure yet again.

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 2, 2016

ACT WorkKeys
(Percent of 11th Graders Earning “Silver” or Better)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Spartanburg County</th>
<th>South Carolina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied Math</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading for Information</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locating Information</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DURING 2014-15, ONLY 6 STATES PAID FOR ALL STUDENTS TO TAKE THE ACT AS 11TH GRADERS.

Though national comparison data are not now available, we can compare Spartanburg County’s scores among these six states, “apples to apples.”

Spartanburg County is marginally ahead of the state average, ahead of Mississippi and Nevada, but short of Kentucky and North Carolina, and well short of Colorado.

ACT College Ready Composite Score Comparisons
LEARNING STAGE 5: Post-Secondary Enrollment

It is clearly implicit in learning stage 4, “College/Career Ready High School Graduation,” that post-secondary certification is essential in today’s economy, whether that be a bachelor’s degree, an associate degree, or technical certification. The general trend of the County’s high school graduates enrolling in post-secondary institutions is upward; though from year to year, there are variances in the trend line, as demonstrated by the nearly two percentage point decline among 2013-14 graduates. Annual fluctuations may be accounted for by variables such as employment opportunity increases for high school graduates, and others.

Percent of Graduates Enrolling in Post-Secondary Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Spartanburg County</th>
<th>South Carolina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of Graduates Enrolling in Post-Secondary Institutions by Type

- **4-Year**: 38.3%, 36.6% | 28%, 25%
- **2-Year**: 11.7%, 5.9% | 19.4%, 20.6%
- **Technical**: 5.9%, 6.2% | 24.2%, 20.7%

LEARNING STAGE 6: Post-Secondary Persistence and Completion

Post-secondary enrollment is one thing. Persistence and completion is another. Measurement of these variables are challenging for our high school graduates. We can, however, keep our eye on the changing percentage of adults in Spartanburg County who hold post-secondary degrees.

The Associate’s Degree trend line illustrating the number of Spartanburg County adults 25 and older who hold this degree is growing somewhat; though, relative to state and the national percentages, it is remaining fairly constant.

The Bachelor’s Degree trend line illustrating the number of Spartanburg County adults 25 and older who hold this degree is growing, and gaining both on the state and national percentages, though there was a one-year decline from 23.3% this time last year to the current 22.6%.

On the positive side, since 2009, Spartanburg County’s rate of growth among bachelor’s degree holders age 25 and above is 18.9%, in contrast to the state’s rate of 8% and the nation’s rate of 7.9%.

Comments

Post-secondary “persistence” and “completion” rates for Spartanburg County’s own high school graduates requires individual student level tracking to the post-secondary institution that each attends, whether in-state or out-of-state.

Advocacy

SAM advocates for a subscription to the National Student Clearinghouse, enabling such tracking of persistence and completion of local high school graduates. SAM also advocates for a continued sharp focus on persistence and completion rates among local colleges.
WHAT'S AT STAKE

WHY IS ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IMPORTANT? WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Economic well-being, of course. The connection between academic achievement and career achievement is undeniably strong. Post-secondary certifications not only increase an individual's skills and productivity, but also signal to employers the capacity to pursue a challenge to completion. Those more educated are the more likely to have a meaningful career, to work more hours, and to earn more money.

According to the Center on Society and Health, people with a high school diploma or less have greater illness, experience more psychological distress, generate higher medical costs, and face serious health disadvantages: shorter lives, worse health, more risk factors, and diminished physical abilities. The same education that is important to work productivity on many fronts also signals to employers the capacity to pursue a challenge to completion. The more educated one is, the stronger these connections are.


Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Median Weekly Earnings in 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than a High School Diploma</td>
<td>$471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>$642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College, No Degree</td>
<td>$727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>$786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>$1,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
<td>$1,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>$1,624</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than a High School Diploma</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College, No Degree</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All workers 6.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A good education takes us beyond careers. It opens eyes to what life is principally about... its unpredictability, its contingencies, its opportunities, its disappointments.

EDUCATION GREATLY INCREASES THE ODDS THAT WE CAN BE, IN COPPERFIELD’S LANGUAGE, “THE HEROES OF OUR OWN LIVES.”

CLOUDS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Opportunity has been a constant theme in our national narrative, yet for too many children in Spartanburg County, the odds can overwhelm that opportunity, “clouds of circumstance” that aim their capacity to emerge as the “heroes of their own lives.”

POVERTY IS THE DARKEST OF THESE CLOUDS.

Children from low-income families dominate classrooms across the South Carolina, including Spartanburg County. In each of our seven public school districts, nearly two-thirds of children come from low-income families that struggle to meet basic needs, children who are eligible for free/reduced meal provision. The numbers are going up, not down: 66% this year vs. 58% reported in SAM Preface two years ago.

In addition to the many efforts Spartanburg County schools are putting into alleviating some of the effects of living in poverty (balancing funding across district schools, well-maintained facilities, fully supplied media centers, strong teachers in all schools, engaging pedagogies, digital access for all students), the rest of us – nonprofits, churches, philanthropy, foundations – must focus our most intense effort on helping kids who are tired and stressed; kids who live in homes without books or with parents having little education.

Poverty is the big challenge to academic achievement, cutting across all districts, neighborhoods, towns, and rural communities. The work of SAM’s collaborative action networks at each stage of learning is to target collective impact efforts in support of children in poverty.

WHAT'S AT STAKE | 35

Free/Reduced Meal Eligibility for 2014-15 Academic Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL DISTRICT</th>
<th>ONE</th>
<th>TWO</th>
<th>THREE</th>
<th>FOUR</th>
<th>FIVE</th>
<th>SIX</th>
<th>SEVEN</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ENROLLMENT</td>
<td>4,883</td>
<td>9,745</td>
<td>2,841</td>
<td>2,623</td>
<td>7,820</td>
<td>10,769</td>
<td>6,781</td>
<td>45,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBSIDIZED MEALS</td>
<td>3,071</td>
<td>5,956</td>
<td>2,076</td>
<td>1,865</td>
<td>4,729</td>
<td>7,329</td>
<td>4,993</td>
<td>30,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% OF SUBSIDIZED MEALS</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SC Department of Education. 2014-15 academic year data
WHY SPARTANBURG COUNTY?

BECAUSE IT IS A MANAGEABLE CHALLENGE.

Why not a region-wide “academic movement,” or a state-wide movement? Why Spartanburg County? Because it is within our power to pull it off.

THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

At every turn, Spartanburg County demonstrates its capacity to collaborate. We have been working together to perfect the model of collaborative action for many years.

Consider the “Community Indicators” project launched 20 years ago by citizen John Wardlaw, former trustee of the Spartanburg County Foundation, and implemented by the now-merged Spartanburg Partnership. … a project that now engages foundations, governments, and university partners in the on-going assessment of key indicators of well-being across Spartanburg County. SAM is the driver of one of these key indicators: academic achievement.

Consider the “Northside Initiative,” an important area of the City of Spartanburg long in need of significant revitalization. Now with major partners in place and its designation as a national “Purpose Built Community,” the work is underway, noteworthy for the remarkable convening of residents, institutions, organizations, and non-profits that have joined together for a singular purpose … the comprehensive transformation of a neighborhood long beset by poverty and its associated challenges. SAM is closely engaged with the public elementary school at the heart of Northside.

Or consider the “Way to Wellville” … a national challenge sponsored by the HICCup Foundation to develop new and innovative solutions that accelerate community health. Spartanburg is engaged as one of five U.S. communities sponsored by the HICCup Foundation to amplify health outcomes in five focus areas. Improving kindergarten readiness by ensuring that children ages birth through five have access to quality early childhood education – a core objective of SAM – is one of these “health” outcomes.

“I love the idea of working with the public elementary school at the heart of Northside. Consider the “Community Indicators” project launched 20 years ago by citizen John Wardlaw, former trustee of the Spartanburg County Foundation, and implemented by the now-merged Spartanburg Partnership. … a project that now engages foundations, governments, and university partners in the on-going assessment of key indicators of well-being across Spartanburg County. SAM is the driver of one of these key indicators: academic achievement.

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AND…THE POWER OF SEVEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Imagine a closed system in which rival organizations offer competing services to meet the needs of the same customer base. The only way for one to win is for others to lose.

Now, imagine a closed system in which rivals increase productivity because they meet the unique needs of different segments of that customer base. As Harvard strategy expert Michael Porter argues, such competition both supports higher productivity and expands the capacities of competitors as customer needs are better met.

Finally, imagine a system in which those same organizations, in addition to meeting the needs of their unique customer segment, share an overarching commitment to one big vision, a vision that extends beyond their own drive for reputation and accomplishment.

Public K-12 education in Spartanburg County with its seven school districts is just such a system.

Spartanburg’s districts are writing new success stories every day. They are constantly innovating to meet the unique needs of the students they serve. And, yes, they compete. Each superintendent knows other districts’ strategies and performance metrics as well as they know their own.

They also collaborate. Districts learn from constant communication with each other, sharing successful practices at every level to meet the unique needs of their own students.

Seven school boards know and represent their communities well, providing guidance and support to their administrations, rarely confounded by political agenda.

Nationally, average enrollment per school district is about 4,000, though median district size is even smaller. Enrollment across Spartanburg County’s seven districts ranges from 3,000 to 11,000. Even with seven districts, our administrative overhead cost per student is lower than the state average. Faculty-to-student ratios are richer. Faculty salaries, though not great, exceed state and neighboring county averages.

True, each district provides the same general services as the other. Yet each constantly evolves to meet the unique needs of communities it serves. Each focuses its educational strategies with a clarity that goes well beyond the capacity of an organizational monopoly … say, for example, a county-wide school district.

SAM Partners recognize that the most important movers of the needle are Spartanburg County’s seven public school districts. SAM’s vision to be the best educated county in the state can only be realized “at-scale,” carrying with it the success of nearly 50,000 students studying every day in Spartanburg County’s seven school districts.

We should remember the power within a system that is competitive yet collaborative, and committed to one big vision. That is the remarkable power of Spartanburg County’s seven school districts.

- John Stockwell, SAM Exec. Dir.

2015 FUNDING PARTNERS

VISION PARTNERS: $50,000 AND UP
- American Credit Acceptance*
- Miliken & Company*
- JM Smith*

MISSION PARTNERS: $25,000 AND UP
- City of Spartanburg
- Johnson Development Associates, Inc.*

STRATEGIC PARTNERS: $10,000 AND UP
- Bank of America
- The Barnett Foundation Trust*
- AFL*
- American Storage*
- Contec, Inc.*

TACTICAL PARTNERS: $5,000 AND UP
- Advance America
- Denny’s
- Inman Riverdale Foundation*
- Susu & George Johnson*
- Mary Black Foundation*

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- Spartanburg Water*

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- CH2M HILL
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SUPPORTERS | 39
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- Beth & Josh Thompson
- Sheryl Turner-Watts
- Upstate Family Resource Center*

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- Adult Learning Center
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- Arthur State Bank
- BabyNet
- Boys & Girls Club of the Upstate
- Carolina Alliance Bank
- The Care Law Firm
- Center for Child Advocacy Studies at USC Upstate
- Chapman Cultural Center / The Arts Partnership
- Citizenship Scholars Program
- City of Spartanburg
- City of Woodruff
- Cleveland Academy of Leadership
- Come Closer Spartanburg
- Converse College
- Duke Energy
- The Early Learning Center at Park Hills
- Fairway Outdoor Advertising
- First African Methodist Church
- Whitney Fisher
- Gatherimage Missionary Baptist Church
- Girl Scouts of SC – Mountains to Midlands
- Help Me Grow
- Help Up Works, Inc.
- Mary Lou Highway
- Hope Center for Children
- JM Smith Corporation
- Junior Achievement of Upstate SC
- Longleaf Holdings, LLC
- Mary Black Health System
- McCullough Therapeutic Solutions
- Meeting Street Academy
- Middle Tyger Community Center
- Mt. Noah Baptist Church
- Northside Development Corporation
- Nurse Family Partnership
- Palmetto Council, Boy Scouts of America
- Park Hills Early Learning Center
- Parkr Champion Construction
- Piedmont Care, Inc.
- Piedmont Community Action
- Pro Gin Dental
- Quality Counts
- R.I. Donnelly
- The Salvation Army
- SC Test Prep
- Sherman College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Spartanburg Community Indicators Project
- Spartanburg 7 Teachers Forum
- Spartanburg Community College
- Spartanburg Convention & Visitor’s Bureau
- Spartanburg County First Steps
- Spartanburg County
- Spartanburg County Public Libraries
- Spartanburg Herald-Journal
- Spartanburg Methodist College
- Spartanburg Preparatory School

*SUSU and George Johnson)
(In gratitude for the kindness of Mr. & Mrs. J.S. Dorrance)
(In memory of Missy Rowland Turner)

* Amounts received from asterisked Funding Partners represent one-third of a three-year commitment.

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 2, 2016
On January 26th, 2016, South Carolina’s Superintendent of Education, Molly Spearman (seated), visited staff offices, offering great encouragement and support for the work of the Spartanburg Academic Movement.

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» Alonzo Thompson
  Police Chief, City of Spartanburg

» Lindsay Moore (center left)
  Director of Communications

» Beth Thompson (left)
  Director of Collaborative Action Networks

» Ida Thompson (near right)
  Program and Network Manager

Collective Impact
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learnwithsam.org
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