Continuous Improvement

SAM CHAPTER 4 | FALL 2019
SAM Chapter 4, Continuous Improvement, is the fifth annual report of the Spartanburg Academic Movement. Beginning with our preface, the collective publications provide an in-depth look at SAM’s progress as an organization and county-wide initiative.

*Digital versions of these reports can be found on SAM’s website learnwithsam.org*
SAM is aiming to move beyond sporadic evidence of "systems change" to "systems transformation," anticipating sustaining gains in academic achievement for the young people of Spartanburg County, with an increasing emphasis on closing equity gaps. To this end, SAM is supporting the application of "continuous improvement science" - so well-known in corporate sectors - across schools and community support providers. In the pages that follow, we highlight the beginnings of the continuous improvement/systems transformation story...

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SAM’S BOARD

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  President & CEO, The Arts Partnership of Greater Spartanburg

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» Allen Smith
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» Todd Stephens
  County Librarian, Spartanburg County Public Libraries

» Molly Talbot-Metz
  President, Mary Black Foundation

» Paige Stephenson
  President & CEO, United Way of the Piedmont

» Alonzo Thompson
  Police Chief, City of Spartanburg

SAM’s Board meets regularly to review data and chart the course of interventions with SAM staff.

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 4, 2019
SAM'S STAFF

Pictured left to right:

» Kim Atchley
  Director of Communications

» Savannah Ray
  Director of Educational Engagement and Partnerships

» Carment Levitt
  Director of Financial and Board Affairs

» Meghan Smith
  Director of College/Career Readiness

» John Stockwell, Ph.D.
  Executive Director

» Beth Thompson
  Director of Collaborative Action/Data Manager

» Mendy Mossbrook
  Director, The John T. Wardlaw Institute for Continuous Improvement

» Ida Thompson
  Director of National Network and Program Affairs

» Vivian Ann Shaver
  Continuous Improvement Coach

CONSULTANT AND INTERN SUPPORT

» Cheryl Broadnax, StriveTogether
  Director District Improvement
  Wardlaw Institute Training Support

» Dr. Glen Carson, Spartanburg School District 7
  Director of Assessment and Accountability
  Chair, SAM Data Council

» Justus Cox, Call Me Mister
  Intern

» Ron Fairchild, Smarter Learning Group
  Out-of-School-Time Consultant

» Dr. Uma Gupta, USC Upstate
  Associate Professor of Business Analytics
  Tableau Data Infrastructure Support

» Dr. Ashok Gupta, USC Upstate
  USC Upstate
  Adjunct Instructor
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» Chris Jordan
  StriveTogether Consultant
  Wardlaw Institute Training Support

» Melissa McCoy
  StriveTogether Consultant
  Wardlaw Institute Training Support

» Shipley Group
  Wardlaw Institute Training Support

» Aracelly Tello, USC Upstate
  Intern
THE STORY OF SAM

The Spartanburg Academic Movement formed and launched as a non-profit (501.c.3) in 2013, building upon two predecessor non-profit enterprises in Spartanburg County: the “Children’s Services Alliance” and the “College Hub.” The first was an alignment of early child development research and service providers; and the second, an effort to align services to increase the percentage of the County’s twenty-five-year-old population holding bachelor’s degrees.

The two groups did important work, but the Boards of Directors came to recognize that the agendas of each represented two distinct markers on a very long and complex cradle-to-career academic achievement spectrum, and that interventions along that spectrum must be aligned and targeted and shared collaboratively across Spartanburg County. This shared recognition led to a merger and rebranding as SAM, the “Spartanburg Academic Movement.”

A critical impetus to the merger was the establishment and early success of a collaborative action movement launched a few years earlier in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky, soon to be replicated in a few cities and counties around the United States. The movement was called StriveTogether and partnerships shared the tagline: “every child … cradle to career.”

The name, the tagline and the collaborative action strategies of StriveTogether aligned with the scope and the sense of purpose shared by Spartanburg County’s two merging boards. (See pages 9-10.) In 2013, SAM launched as a StriveTogether partner.

VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Through these six years of growth from launch to maturity, SAM has sharpened the focus of its work considerably, making it important to re-examine its vision, mission, and values … now a mature organization, working deeply and responsively across the County.

Statements of “vision, mission, and values” are easily skimmed over in reports such as this; yet, if they are well-considered and if their language gives clear direction to the work at hand, they deserve to be read and examined.

They explain the future that an enterprise like SAM dreams about (its “vision”), the work it will undertake to make that dream a reality (its “mission”), and the principles (“values”) that will guide its work. In the spring of 2019, SAM’s Board of Directors determined it was time to revisit and sharpen SAM’s vision, mission and values.
SAM'S VISION FOR SPARTANBURG COUNTY

ECONOMIC MOBILITY ANCHORED IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.
COUNTYWIDE...CRADLE TO CAREER

SAM'S MISSION: HOW WE GET THERE...

DATA
assembling and analyzing academic data, county-wide, cradle to career,

RESEARCH
identifying and testing interventions that advance academic achievement.

EQUITY
implementing interventions holding the most promise to close equity gaps.

ACTION
refining and scaling interventions through continuous improvement science.

MOBILITY
aiming for the vision: economic mobility anchored in academic achievement.

THE PROGRESS SAM MONITORS...

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

COLLEGE & CAREER READY / HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

EARLY GRADES READING

POST-SECONDARY ENROLLMENT

MIDDLE GRADES MATH

POST-SECONDARY PERSISTENCE AND COMPLETION
This annual report is dedicated to Milliken and Company

In 2019, Milliken & Company was named as one of the "World's Most Ethical Companies." In fact, it is one of only 8 companies, worldwide, to receive the distinction every year since the award's inception 13 years ago. This year's awardees hail from 21 countries and 50 different industries.

So why are we dedicating SAM Chapter 4 to Milliken?


SAM's values are highlighted on the next page. These drive our work - not only as an organization, but community-wide. They drive the "movement" that is SAM.

"At Milliken, our commitment to making a positive global impact begins locally. We work hand in hand with our neighbors and community partners to support programs that enhance education, spur economic development, and protect natural resources. Across the country and across the globe, we know that our success depends on the success of the communities in which we operate."

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 4, 2019
SAM'S VALUES

» recognizing the capacity of all children to learn from cradle to career and throughout life
» encouraging life skills and personal characteristics together with world class knowledge
» assuring equity and support in closing achievement disparity gaps
» employing data as a spotlight to illuminate interventions that work
» implementing continuous improvement to enhance and scale interventions
» honoring the work of schools and the support of parents and caregivers
» acknowledging academic achievement as essential to the vitality of Spartanburg County
» collaboration with partners and networks across the County that share these values

SAM'S VISION

Economic mobility anchored in academic achievement
... county-wide ... cradle to career

learnwithsam.org
Poverty and race are factors having strong correlations with academic achievement across the nation and the County. SAM’s unique data capacity enables the examination of these and other factors related to achievement data. Now, from any access point on the data continuum, a view upstream and downstream can identify patterns of success or challenge faced by students. This deep analytical capacity results in responsive collaborative action planning and engagement with partners who work together toward informed, improved and sustainable results.
COUNTY-WIDE ENGAGEMENT

Identifying and meeting the unique set of needs for over 100,000 individuals can occur only through deep community partnerships: parents, students, teachers, administrators, as well as nonprofit, government, business and civic program providers ... all working to do whatever it takes to ensure each child has the tools to build a strong, economically mobile future, anchored in academic achievement.

68 SCHOOLS, 7 DISTRICTS, 3,300+ TEACHERS

The support of all seven school districts, and the unique communities they serve, is essential for turning shared vision into reality, as is partnership with our local colleges. From data sharing to piloting and adopting interventions, and providing expertise to frame the work, school and community leaders are instrumental in the work to improve outcomes for all of the children we serve.

See SAM Ch.3 for the detailed story of SAM’s Data Bridge.
NATIONAL CONTEXT

The StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network

SAM is a member of the StriveTogether Cradle to Career network, a national movement impacting the lives of 13.7 million youth and counting. Network partners are aligned in pursuit of the StriveTogether national impact model with a clear purpose:

HELPING EVERY CHILD SUCCEED, FROM CRADLE TO CAREER, REGARDLESS OF RACE, ZIP CODE, OR CIRCUMSTANCE.

13.7 million children impacted

29 STATES + DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Each network partnership works to impact core outcomes along the Roadmap to Success:

Kindergarten readiness

Early grade reading

Middle grade math

High school graduation

Postsecondary enrollment

Postsecondary completion

Employment

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 4, 2019

* Graphics provided by StriveTogether
SAM'S WORK IS GUIDED BY StriveTogether's "THEORY OF ACTION."

In 2018, SAM was recognized as one of 11 partnerships nationwide designated as a "systems change" partnership. Spartanburg is now known as a "proof point" community across the national network. The result has been national attention (pg 19) and multiple site visits to SAM and Spartanburg from others seeking guidance for starting their own community-wide efforts to get better results for kids.

In the fall of 2018, StriveTogether introduced a five-year "stretch" objective for partnerships like SAM: the "Systems Transformation" gateway. Continuing to employ principles and pillars in place, future strategies will focus beyond "proof point" to the transformation of systems, effective in achieving SAM’s vision...

**ECONOMIC MOBILITY FOR ALL, ANCHORED IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.**

As SAM continues to work locally, key learnings are shared among Network members. The power of the StriveTogether network lies in being able to learn faster, together, increasing impact... for the

101,061 CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS IN SPARTANBURG’S CRADLE TO CAREER CONTINUUM (BIRTH-AGE 24)

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**The StriveTogether Theory of Action™**

**PRINCIPLES**

- **ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY**
- **ADVANCE EQUITY**
- **DEVELOP A CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**
- **LEVERAGE EXISTING RESOURCES**

**PILLARS**

- **SHARED COMMUNITY VISION**
- **EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING**
- **COLLABORATIVE ACTION**
- **INVESTMENT & SUSTAINABILITY**

**GATEWAYS**

- **EXPLORING**
- **EMERGING**
- **SUSTAINING**
- **SYSTEMS CHANGE**
- **PROOF POINT**
- **SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION**

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SAM In The National Context | 10
SAM is operating in the “systems change” gateway of StriveTogether’s Theory of Action, meeting the benchmarks of shared community vision, evidence-based decision making, collaborative action, and investment and sustainability, and opening the door to “systems transformation.”

This means SAM now has the framework in place, acting in alignment with other county-wide systems (e.g., family, health care, housing, employment), to advance its vision: “economic mobility anchored in academic achievement ... county-wide ... cradle-to-career.”

“In America, it’s often better to be rich than smart.”

So begins a major examination of academic achievement and career readiness undertaken by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. The central assumption tested in the study (the central assumption of the American Dream): “… that talent will be rewarded, regardless of where one comes from or who one’s parents are.”

Not so, the research makes clear.

Not so nationally, and not so here in Spartanburg County, with higher poverty rates than national averages for all with less than a Bachelor’s degree.

Why is it so important to concentrate attention on “economic mobility”? Because “economic immobility” in Spartanburg County is so intractable, and the generational poverty that results poses the biggest threat to academic achievement, here and elsewhere.

Academic achievement disparities introduced by race, particularly as race interacts with poverty, is a further threat to academic achievement. The relative poverty by population data is clear:

**Poverty by Race/Ethnicity***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>12.7%</th>
<th>26.6%</th>
<th>31%</th>
<th>35.7%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Neighborhood segregation by race introduces a further complicating factor.

The bottom line is simply that if we improve academic achievement for all, economic status, health outcomes, and multiple quality of life indicators also improve.

Such was the imperative behind the “40/30 Challenge,” an initiative launched by the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce in 2008 to double the number of bachelors degree holding residents. We are making progress, having moved from 19.2% to 23.8% (a 24% gain, but much work remains.

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**Spartanburg Academic Movement**

**SAM Chapter 4, 2019**

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1 Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Anthony Carnevale, Megan Fasules, Michael Quinn, Kathryn Peltier Campbell. “Born to Win, Schooled to Lose ... Why Equally Talented Students Don’t Get Equal Chances to be All They Can Be.” 2019.
Economic status, together with race, impacts every stage of academic achievement from pre-kindergarten to career across Spartanburg County. Consider the following:

» Vulnerabilities that children carry with them entering kindergarten are more frequent and intense from high poverty and racially segregated neighborhoods.

» Levels of achievement as children progress from kindergarten through third grade reading and middle grades math co-vary with both poverty and race.

» Achievement patterns differentiated by economic status and race persist as young adults enter high school.

» Race and wealth play a very significant role in determining likelihood to complete a college degree.

» Race and socioeconomic background are highly correlated with career success and economic mobility.

Interactions among income, race, academic achievement, and economic mobility in Spartanburg County are clear. These are not political issues. These are not liberal or conservative talking points. These are Spartanburg County’s hard data. These are our very own local realities.

And these are realities that we must recognize.

» What we do not recognize we will not discuss.

» What we do not discuss we will not examine.

» What we do not examine we will not remedy.

» And, what we will not remedy will grow worse.

According to our partners at the United Way of the Piedmont, “self sufficiency” is defined by a family having the income to meet all of their basic needs (housing, childcare, transportation, healthcare, food, and taxes) without any outside assistance.

Locally, for a family of four, $53,916 is the base for self-sufficiency, an amount more than double the Federal Poverty Level.
THE FOUR SCHOOLS PROJECT

A REQUEST TO SAM FROM TWO SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS THAT WE FOCUS RESEARCH AND INTERVENTION IN THE FOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS WITH THE HIGHEST POVERTY LEVELS LAUNCHED THE FOUR SCHOOLS PROJECT IN 2017.

This represents SAM’s first cross-district collaboration designed to impact student achievement with a particular emphasis on third grade reading. The cohort of schools embodies the deepest challenges faced in the effort to improve outcomes: the highest poverty rates combined with the highest risk racial/ethnic populations.

In year one, teachers received training to gain increased understanding and tools to use when responding to students in poverty and those experiencing higher rates of childhood trauma, another contributing factor impacting learning. SAM Partners, the United Way of the Piedmont and the USC Upstate Center for Child Advocacy, were deeply involved.

SAM staff and partners then identified Continuous Improvement (CI) Science as having the best potential for leading long-term change in student outcomes.

A grant from StriveTogether funded initial efforts and training for local educators in CI methodologies. CI coaches were hired to support the initial work in the four schools with attention given to breaking down State learning standards into student-friendly terms framed as “I CAN” statements, with teachers exploring methods for standards-based goal setting as well as data visualization and analysis to track students’ learning and guide modifications in teaching.

"I learned more than I ever imagined from this training and am excited about the possibilities."

-Thomas Webster, Principal, Drayton Mills Elementary

To analyze the impact of the early intervention, SAM compared growth across three years, analyzing for grade level and teacher-specific results. Data validated the history of low achievement and progress prior to implementation of CI practices. Over the last two years, there have been demonstrated increases both in growth rates and the number of classrooms demonstrating that growth. Overall, the three-year analysis demonstrates a shift in culture aligned with the shift in practices by the Four Schools Project with the launch of SAM’s continuous improvement training.

The work is now expanding into other schools across the County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>Poverty Index</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MARY H. WRIGHT</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLEVELAND</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JESSE BOBO</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LONE OAK</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

200+ local educators, coaches and administrators trained

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 4, 2019
John T. Wardlaw was a successful Spartanburg entrepreneur who had a passion for improving academic achievement across Spartanburg County, South Carolina. He applied his professional expertise in data tracking to the academic achievement of K-12 children across the County, school by school. He knew that tracking outcomes was a key to improving them. His efforts launched the “Critical Indicators Project” now expanded and known as the “Spartanburg Community Indicators Project,” serving to drive data centered collective impact efforts county-wide to improve community, from vulturial vitality to public health; the economy to education.

Based upon the early work in The Four Schools Project, Mr. Wardlaw’s family made a generous, designated gift to SAM to continue and expand what began with the Four Schools Project. This gift has led to a transformational approach in serving the community: the establishment of a professional training hub that offers free development support for educators and community members ready to use CI practices to impact educational outcomes.

On March 20, 2019, Mr. Wardlaw’s family members: the late Mary “Putsie” Wardlaw; daughter Saunders McCollum, with husband David McCollum; and granddaughter Ms. Ashley McCollum, an elementary school teacher, joined the celebratory launch of The John T. Wardlaw Institute for Continuous Improvement.

"I am working on several CI projects now: the impact of extra recess, reducing absenteeism, and the impact of teaching through grade-level teaching texts."

-Marquice Clark, Principal, Cleveland Academy of Leadership
NARROWING THE FOCUS

The broadest view of county-wide achievement is offered through analyses of annual state-wide assessment (currently SC READY) scores that demonstrates growth year to year at various stages of learning (see pgs 21-36).

MAP and STAR assessments used in Spartanburg County school districts provide growth rate percentiles for individuals as well as cohorts of students.

The focus of training and implementation of CI practice this year has been to improve the early grades reading outcome target: “all children reading to learn by 3rd grade.”

Classroom goal-setting based upon ‘unpacking’ State learning standards into student friendly “I Can” statements builds intentionality and focus on growth targets.

Studies demonstrate strong correlation between MAP and STAR growth and SC READY proficiency. The bar graph to the right provides further validation, clearly demonstrating marked impact of continuous improvement practices in the “Four Schools Project.”

The launch of The Four Schools Project and SAM’s CI intervention plan had a clear goal:

FIND A WAY TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENT IN OUR HIGHEST POVERTY SCHOOLS
CI: COMMUNITY-WIDE EXPANSION

With impact established in work happening within classroom walls and across district lines, community program providers and agencies, known as “adjacent sector partners,” are also engaged in expanding CI practices.

The earliest partners to embrace the shared vision and goals of CI science within their systems began leadership training in the fall of 2018. This “coalition of the willing” embraced goal setting, tools, and improvement tracking strategies, while also giving attention to equity as part of their organizational self-assessments and long-term planning.

The six-month leadership training program included agency specific application of CI practices, and alignment of project goals to one or more cradle to career outcome areas. Projects included:

**KINDERGARTEN READINESS**
- Parent outreach for Latinx children ages 0-5
- Improving early language development: LENA “Spartanburg Small Talk”

**EARLY GRADES READING**
- Reducing chronic absenteeism in high-poverty school
- Improving early grade literacy performance

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION**
- Improving STEM Proficiency in opportunity impacted youth
- Increasing collaborative action to reduce “Summer Melt”

**MULTIPLE OUTCOME AREAS**
- Increasing shared data access
- Improving frequency/quality of teaching interactions for youth in residential foster care programs

**CI LEADERSHIP TRAINEES**
- USC Upstate
- Spartanburg County Public Libraries
- Upstate Family Resource Center
- Middle Tyger community Center
- Hope Center For Children
- Citizen Scholars Institute
- School District 6
- School District 7

**CI 101 FOR LEADERS**
Community partners trained in the first level of CI strategy

- AccessHealth Spartanburg
- BirthMatters
- First Presbyterian Church Spartanburg
- Habitat for Humanity Spartanburg
- Hope Center for Children
- Junior League of Spartanburg
- Mental fitness, Inc
- Miracle Hill Ministries
- Partners for Active Living
- PASOs
- SC Works Greater Upstate
- Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce
- Spartanburg Community College
- Spartanburg County Public Libraries
- Spartanburg Housing Authority

Continuous Improvement | 16
Brain research has persuaded us that early childhood is the most critical period of human development. We now know the brain is the only organ not fully developed at birth and that 90% of brain growth occurs in the first 5 years of life. Now, let’s look deeper, and younger, at what happens from birth to three years of age. Did you know?

A baby’s brain connections for important functions (hearing, language, and cognition) peak during the first 3 years and early experiences will influence which connections will be strengthened and which ones will fade away.

The first 3 years is a time of great opportunity and great risk. Seizing on the opportunities we can begin to build a future with stronger families, healthy communities, a strong workforce and a robust economy.

With these realities in mind, Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM) joined five other communities from across the country to participate in the Prenatal to Age 3 Impact and Improvement Network being led by StriveTogether in partnership with the National Institute for Children’s Health Quality (NICHQ) and the Pritzker Institute for Children.

Other participating communities included Albuquerque, New Mexico (Mission: Graduate); Memphis, Tenn. (Seeding Success); Norwalk, Conn. (Norwalk Acts); Salt Lake City, Utah (Promise Partnerships of Salt Lake); and Tucson, Ariz. (Cradle to Career Partnership).

At the end of the 16 month PN3 Network, SAM’s developmental screening process was improved by:

- Increased efficiency by transitioning participating organizations from paper to online screening.
- Improved child care provider screening processes by encouraging rapid cycle interventions.
- Developed a plan to scale-up and expand the reach to include additional community groups to provide screening opportunities.

A Mary Black Foundation Grant for $90,000 was awarded to aid the expansion of the screening initiative and to move the administrative duties to a permanent home, Spartanburg County First Steps.

Through these efforts, SAM is deepening its work to get better results for families and children ages 0 to 3 across Spartanburg County.

1 Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child
EARLY CHILDHOOD

4K ACCESS AND QUALITY

With more than 19,000 children under the age of five living in Spartanburg County, two key factors rise above all others when considering the early care and education: access and quality.

As reported in Ch.3: Systems Change, SAM worked with Quality Counts, an initiative of First Steps of Spartanburg County, to improve quality in public 4K programs across the County.

Impressive results\(^1\) from the pilot year led to scaling the effort. Funds available through the SC Education Oversight Committee have made this intervention possible.

**Quality Counts Intervention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPATING CLASSROOMS</th>
<th>POTENTIAL IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The implications of this work are significant. Research linking high quality learning environments with kindergarten readiness outcomes, early grades reading outcomes, and outcomes for middle schoolers and beyond, validates Quality Counts’ approach as a major resource to impact SAM’s cradle to career outcomes.

\(^1\) SAM Research Brief 2018, Number 2, available at www.learnwithsam.org/sam-research

THE FRANKLIN SCHOOL

A community-wide, decades-long drive to build equity and access to the highest quality early care and education for children was realized with the opening of the $10+ million Franklin School in January, 2019.

Spartanburg can claim it as a shining example of “a really good thing,” happening in the Northside community that serves as a model, not just for other areas in the County to consider, but as nationwide model as the PN3 work continues.

The Franklin School can serve up to 180 children, in a state-of-the art center that engages children through Early-Head Start, Head Start, and State funded 4K, as well as private-play enrollment.

“This highlights the success story of an integrated community.”

-U.S. Sen. Tim Scott

"Everything with the school, from playgrounds and classrooms to common spaces and hallways, has been designed to promote curiosity and learning to help students make the most of their early years."

Shawna Bynum
Director, The Franklin School
NOT LONG AGO, IN SPARTANBURG, S.C., I VISITED THE OFFICES OF SOMETHING CALLED THE SPARTANBURG ACADEMIC MOVEMENT (SAM).

The walls were lined with charts measuring things like kindergarten readiness, third grade reading scores and postsecondary enrollment. Around the table was just about anybody in town who might touch a child's life. There were school superintendents and principals, but there were also the heads of Chamber of Commerce and the local United Way, the police chief, a former mayor and the newspaper editor.

The people at SAM track everything they can measure about Spartanburg's young people from cradle to career. They gather everybody who might have any influence upon this data - parents, religious leaders, doctors, nutrition experts, etc.

And then together, as a community-wide system, they ask questions: Where are children falling off track? Why? What assets do we have in our system that can be applied to this problem? How can we work together to apply these assets?

There are a lot of things I love about this approach.

First, it understands that life is longitudinal. Sometimes social policies are distorted by the tyranny of randomized controlled experiments. Everybody is looking for the one magic intervention that will have measurable effect.

But life isn't like that. Our actual lives are influenced by millions of events that interact in mysterious ways. And when life is going well it's because dozens of influences are flowing together and reinforcing one another. SAM tries to harness those dozens of influences.

Second, SAM treats the whole person. “The disease of modern character is specialization,” Wendell Berry once wrote. Sometimes schools treat students as brains on a stick who come to be filled with skills and information.

But children don't leave behind their emotions, their diets, their traumas, their safety fears, their dental problems and so on when they get to school. If you're going to help kids, you have to help the whole kid at once.

Third, and maybe most important, SAM embodies a new civic architecture, which has become known as the “collective impact” approach. Americans feel alienated from and distrustful toward most structures of authority these days, but this is one they can have faith in.

SAM organizes the community of Spartanburg around a common project. Then it creates an informal authority structure that transcends

“Helping our whole community begin to think about the way that all of the issues we work on in the nonprofit sector are linked and we have to work together.”

Chamlee Loscuito
Executive Director, HOPE Center for Children
public-sector/private-sector lines, that rallies cops and churches, the grass roots and the grass tops. Members put data in the center and use it as a tool, not for competition but for collaboration. Like the best social service organizations, it is high on empathy and high on engineering. It is local, participatory and comprehensive.

SAM is not a lone case. Spartanburg is one of 70 communities around the country that use what is called the StriveTogether method. StriveTogether began in Cincinnati just over a decade ago. A few leaders were trying to improve education in the city and thinking of starting another program. But a Procter & Gamble executive observed, “We’re program rich, but system poor.” In other words, Cincinnati had plenty of programs. What it lacked was an effective system to coordinate them.

A methodology was born: organize around that data, focus on the assets of the community, not the deficits; realize there is no one silver-bullet solution; create a “backbone organization” (like SAM) that can bring all the players together; coordinate decision-making and action; share accountability.

At one point the folks in Cincinnati noticed that their students were not coming prepared for kindergarten. The data suggested that the private pre-K programs were performing better than the public ones. So the public school system allocated some of its money to support other, private programs, making Cincinnati one of the first American cities to offer near-universal preschool. That’s a community working as one.

Collective impact structures got their name in 2011, when John Kania and Mark Kramer wrote an influential essay for the Stanford Social Innovation Review in which they cited StriveTogether and provided the philosophical and theoretical basis for this kind of approach.

Such structures are now being used to address homelessness, hunger, river cleanup and many other social ills. Collective impact approaches have had their critics over the years, in part for putting too much emphasis on local elites and not enough on regular parents (which is fair).

But a recent study led by Sarah Stachowiak and Jewlya Lynn of 25 collective impact initiatives found that these approaches do work, at least most of the time. StriveTogether, which is now led by Jennifer Blatz, is thriving. It’s just received a significant financial infusion from Connie and Steve Ballmer of the Ballmer Group.

Frankly, I don’t need studies about outcomes to believe these collective impact approaches are exciting and potentially revolutionary. Trust is built and the social fabric is repaired when people form local relationships around shared tasks.

In building working relationships across a community is an intrinsically good thing. You do enough intrinsically good things and lives will be improved in ways you can never plan or predict. This is where our national renewal will come from.

"A strategy for community problem-solving does an extraordinary job at restoring our social fabric."

I really appreciate the look at the whole child - the out-of-school, in school, community activities and different opportunities for children to build resiliency and trusted relationships.

Carey Rothschild
Director, Community Health Policy and Strategy
Spartanburg Regional Medical Center

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**KINDERGARTEN READINESS**

**THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT**

How do we know if children are ready to learn when they start kindergarten?

SAM’s Kindergarten Readiness Collaborative Action Network began its work with an exhaustive effort to find a tool that would provide a true picture of kindergarten readiness; one that could inform the community, parents, and caregivers of interventions that can improve readiness.

… Not a tool to tell kindergarten teachers how to teach, but to inform our community how best to support its children from birth to kindergarten, assuring their readiness to learn in school.

The “Early Development Instrument” (EDI), developed at McMaster University in Toronto, and now used nationwide in Canada and elsewhere, is the tool SAM has adopted and is implementing across Spartanburg County.

Spartanburg County’s 5K teachers are the heroes of this effort. In the late Fall, after having worked with kindergarten students for three months, these teachers answer an online set of questions about each child. That data goes to UCLA’s Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities and returns to SAM, mapping by Spartanburg County’s 60 census tracts the “vulnerabilities” children have brought with them to kindergarten.

In the column to the right are descriptions of the broad categories or “domains” of vulnerabilities with which children enter kindergarten. On the next page are “sub-domains” of these vulnerabilities.

Ideally, all children will be “ready” for kindergarten across all sub-domains. Though, overall, Spartanburg County’s vulnerability numbers do not differ substantially from national numbers (see below), when mapped by census tracts (page 23), it is evident that efforts to address these vulnerabilities is of great importance in locations across the County. The roadmap for action in the pre-kindergarten years by families and communities – census tract by census tract – is clear.

### Physical Health & Wellness

**Examples:** holds a pen, crayon, or paintbrush, manipulates objects, is over/under dressed for school activities, is too tired or sick to do school work, has independent bathroom habits most of the time

### Social Competence

**Examples:** respects property of others, listens attentively and follows directions, curious about the world and eager to play, plays and works cooperatively with others, shows self-confidence

### Emotional Maturity

**Examples:** volunteers to help, is able to concentrate appropriately, is not upset/anxious when dropped off, and invites others to join in play

### Language & Cognition

**Examples:** identifies at least 10 letters of the alphabet, experiments with writing tools, writes his/her name in English, reads simple words, is interested in games involving numbers, counts to 20, recognizes numbers 1-10 and geometric shapes

### Communication & General Knowledge

**Examples:** listens in English, communicates his/her needs to adults and peers, tells a story, articulates clearly, understands what is being said

---

**OF SPARTANBURG COUNTY CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SUCCESS IN KINDERGARTEN.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>National Sample</th>
<th>Spartanburg County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable (at or below the 10th percentile)</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Risk (at or below the 25th percentile and above the 10th)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Track (above the 25th percentile)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 4, 2019

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1 May not add to 100% due to rounding
### Developmental Domain/Sub-Domains

#### Physical Health and Well-Being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Domain</th>
<th>Not Ready</th>
<th>Somewhat Ready</th>
<th>Ready</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross and fine motor skills</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical independence</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical readiness for school work</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Social Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Domain</th>
<th>Not Ready</th>
<th>Somewhat Ready</th>
<th>Ready</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readiness to explore new things</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaches to learning</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and responsibility</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall social competence with peers</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Emotional Maturity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Domain</th>
<th>Not Ready</th>
<th>Somewhat Ready</th>
<th>Ready</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hyperactive and inattentive behavior</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive behavior</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious and fearful behavior</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial and helping behavior</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Language and Cognitive Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Domain</th>
<th>Not Ready</th>
<th>Somewhat Ready</th>
<th>Ready</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic numeracy skills</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced literacy skills</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in literacy/numeracy and memory</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic literacy skills</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Communication and General Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Domain</th>
<th>Not Ready</th>
<th>Somewhat Ready</th>
<th>Ready</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills and general knowledge</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VULNERABILITIES IN ONE OR MORE DOMAIN

Maps provide a context for data reflection and guide plans to use the data to address needs identified within neighborhoods and communities. They provide a visual snapshot of children’s kindergarten readiness in different census tracts.

Areas with lighter shading have a lower percentage of developmentally vulnerable children, while areas with darker shading have a higher percentage.

For more detailed maps, visit SAM’s website:

learnwithsam.org/the-early-development-instrument

“IT COULD BE THAT THE NEIGHBORHOOD, NOT THE INDIVIDUAL, IS THE ESSENTIAL UNIT OF SOCIAL CHANGE. IF YOU’RE TRYING TO IMPROVE LIVES, MAYBE YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT CHANGING MANY ELEMENTS OF A SINGLE NEIGHBORHOOD, IN A SYSTEMATIC WAY, AT A STEADY PACE.”

David Brooks
NYT Columnist

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 4, 2019
RESPONDING TO VULNERABILITIES

While many community partners are engaging in responsive action to reduce vulnerabilities demonstrated by the EDI, qualitative analysis of communities provides additional and essential insight needed for answering the “why” behind vulnerabilities and the “how” to ensure that interventions produce results.

Consider a child living in a community that has demonstrated high levels of gross and fine motor skill vulnerabilities among its children. That child and community may benefit from new playground equipment being installed nearby, providing increased access and opportunities to develop play-based motor skills. However, if there are barriers to the use of that equipment, for instance, concerns or misperceptions about community safety, a barrier exists to the potential impact of the intervention. These issues have nothing to do with school, yet that child may well come to kindergarten with a preventable barrier to success.

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT:
WOFFORD RESEARCHERS DIG DEEPER

SAM’s Director of Collaborative Action, Beth Thompson, presented results from the EDI to neighborhood groups participating in Spartanburg’s Way to Wellville initiative. From those presentations, two community advocates expressed greater interest in the data revealed from their neighborhoods in the Highland and Forest Park communities.

Further discussion with Way to Wellville partners identified a previously successful qualitative research model led by Wofford College students that holds promise for gathering qualitative data to answer a key question: “Why do the EDI data look this way?”

Dr. Laura Barbas Rhoden and Dr. Christine Sorrell Dinkins are faculty advisors leading grant-funded student research now underway gathering observations and interviews that will inform interventions being planned in response to EDI data. The team, assisted by early childhood faculty experts at USC Upstate have worked throughout the summer of 2019, with results expected this fall.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CONNECTION

Community program providers, many trained for Continuous Improvement through the Wardlaw Institute, have begun using EDI data and maps to plan, implement, and track interventions designed to reduce pre-k vulnerabilities.

SAM has set the following strategic CI targets:

GLOBAL AIM

All children enter kindergarten prepared for success in school.

SMART AIM

Kindergartners in Spartanburg County on-track/ready for school as measured by the Early Development Instrument to increase from 47% to 54% by 2021.

EQUITY AIM

The 10 census tracts with the greatest vulnerabilities in one or more domain will increase the % of kindergartners on-track/ready from 27% to 31% or greater by 2021.
EARLY GRADES READING

Reading to Learn

“Learning to read” happens when quality early care and brain development meet the teaching of literacy skills from kindergarten onward. By the end of third grade, proficiency is essential so that “reading to learn” is part of the everyday life of a child.

State level proficiency calculations remain SAM’s measure for assessing success in early grades reading though two key challenges persist when interpreting data:

» SC Ready, the State assessment, has been used consistently for 3 years. However, scale and scale score changes in earlier years yield precipitous and artificial declines between 2013 and 2015, with modest increases thereafter.

» While State proficiencies remain our measure and demonstrate the need for improvement, success in graduation rates of our high school students and strong college persistence data continue to indicate that our schools are building foundations for success.

Proficiency rates for children not in poverty remain higher than State and overall County proficiency, but have not demonstrated marked gains. Proficiency levels for children in poverty however, have increased significantly, raising overall County proficiency levels.

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 4, 2019
**What the Data Tell Us**

**THE POVERTY FACTOR**

Poverty is again validated as the greatest factor tied to county-wide achievement. These results demonstrate improvement in results for children in poverty, and, based on preliminary data from SAM’s intervention in the County’s four highest poverty schools (see pg 15) we anticipate even more gains when 2019 SCReady data are released.

**PERSPECTIVES BY GENDER**

Both males and females are demonstrating increasing proficiency however, males still lag behind. SAM’s data capacity is building and will soon provide multi-factor analysis so that we will know if additional factors, such as race/ethnicity and poverty are contributing to the overall lower rate of reading proficiency demonstrated by males.

**PERSPECTIVES BY RACE/ETHNICITY**

While proficiency for black students is increasing, it still falls markedly below that of white students. Though currently a smaller population group county-wide, the drop in proficiency for Hispanic students is alarming. However, within The Four Schools Project, one school with high populations of Hispanic students is embedding Continuous Improvement practices. Early gains there offer a cautiously optimistic expectations for 2019 results.
MIDDLE GRADES MATH

Laying the Foundation for High School Math

A mastery of mathematical foundations is essential for students as they prepare for high school level algebra, geometry, and beyond. Proficiency by the end of 8th grade readies students for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) coursework in high schools across the county. Math proficiency patterns mirror patterns seen in early grades reading. Children not in poverty attain higher than State and overall county proficiency, but have not demonstrated marked gains.

The longitudinal view of achievement is influenced by the same factors affecting early grades reading:

» SC Ready, the State assessment, has been used consistently for 3 years. However, scale and scale score changes in earlier years yield precipitous and artificial declines between 2013 and 2015, with modest increases thereafter.

» While State proficiencies remain our measure and demonstrate the need for improvement, success in graduation rates of our high school students and strong college persistence data continue to indicate that our schools are building foundations for success.

8th Grade Mathematic Proficiency

CORE OUTCOME
All students are proficient in math by the end of 8th grade.

Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 4, 2019
What the Data Tell Us

THE POVERTY FACTOR
Effort is still needed to increase county-wide math proficiency. Though gains can be seen, the greatest disparity is found for children in poverty.

PERSPECTIVES BY GENDER
Both males and females are increasing in proficiency, however, males still lag behind.

PERSPECTIVES BY RACE/ETHNICITY
A marked and alarming disparity exists among student racial/ethnic demographic groups. While black students have demonstrated a slight increase, their proficiency is less than half that of white students. Hispanic students are faring only marginally better but have demonstrated a decline in proficiency.
High School Graduation

Building upon strength

Spartanburg County graduation rates have remained particularly strong compared to State data. Our schools are demonstrating success in narrowing racial gaps as students move to graduation. Gender gaps are disturbingly high. County students in poverty are graduating at higher rates than the Statewide rates.

While the graduation rate stories are encouraging, they serve as a call for further analyses to ensure that equity is being realized and students in all demographic groups are graduating with the skills and characteristics of ...

The "Profile of The South Carolina Graduate"

**World Class Knowledge**
- Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences
- Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness

**World Class Skills**
- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Communication, information, media and technology
- Knowing how to learn

**Life and Career Characteristics**
- Integrity
- Self-direction
- Global perspective
- Perseverance
- Work ethic
- Interpersonal skills

Poverty and Graduation Rates

[Spartanburg Academic Movement
SAM Chapter 4, 2019]
# Charting Progress

## What the Data Tell Us

### 87.2%

County-wide Graduation Rate

### The Poverty Factor

Deeper analysis demonstrates a drop in graduation rates for students in poverty, while rates for students not in poverty have remained stable.

### Perspectives by Gender

Female students are graduating at consistently higher rates than males.

### Perspectives by Race/Ethnicity

While graduation rates for white and black students remain relatively stable, a decline is demonstrated among Hispanic students.
We must empower our young people with the tools to discern what is best for them and to follow their own path forward. If as high school graduates they move immediately into the workforce, we need to encourage employers to commit to on-the-job training opportunities that enable employees’ pursuit of advanced certifications and the economic mobility and residual benefits that come as a result.

Graduates receive mixed messages from well-intended parties about their best route to the future. Increasingly, the message is that “college isn’t for everyone.” Many students come to believe that they may be the “someone” implied and need not prepare for postsecondary certification, thus failing to complete the steps making possible the choices open to others.

South Carolina assesses college and career readiness through multiple qualifiers. To be designated college ready and career ready, a student must meet at least one qualification in each category. Challenges persist in determining if these qualifiers accurately represent the skills and characteristics outlined by the “Profile of the South Carolina Graduate” and mandated by SC law.

We must empower our young people with the tools to discern what is best for them and to follow their own path forward. If as high school graduates they move immediately into the workforce, we need to encourage employers to commit to on-the-job training opportunities that enable employees’ pursuit of advanced certifications and the economic mobility and residual benefits that come as a result.

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COMMUNITY-WIDE RESPONSE

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

One set of skills equally important for students moving into post-secondary studies and those entering the workforce, particularly into jobs that provide career ladders and opportunities for advancement, are the ...

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS

- Managing time
- Organizing thoughts and materials
- Paying attention
- Planning and prioritizing
- Getting started (task initiation)
- Staying on track
- Remembering what to do and when to do it
- Problem solving
- Self-reflection
- Managing emotions and impulses

Also referred to as “soft skills” and “social emotional skills,” assessment of these skills is difficult, at best. While it is hoped, and in some cases assumed, that those earning a high school diploma have developed these skills, current employers give mixed reviews on their attainment.

Spartanburg County’s high post-secondary persistence rate is cause for optimism; however, ensuring that students have opportunities to build these essential skills is a call for community-wide engagement to address the hours students spend outside the classroom.

IN A GIVEN YEAR, CHILDREN ARE AWAKE FOR ABOUT 6,000 HOURS. ONLY ABOUT 1,000 OF THESE HOURS ARE SPENT IN SCHOOL.

The balance of the hours provide a window of opportunity for the development of skills and abilities through good use of out of school time.

TAKING ACTION

SAM has recently organized a Collaborative Action Network (CAN) in partnership with the Mary Black Foundation’s CONNECT adolescent health initiatives, and several out-of-school-time program providers. The group exists for the purpose of improving, expanding, and sustaining high-quality after school and summer programs for low-income youth in grades 6-12.

Why? Because by sixth grade, children in poverty have likely missed out on key enrichment opportunities compared to their peers not living in poverty. Local students are reporting that the less they have to do, the more risky behaviors they engage in.

At the first annual Adolescent Health Conference, held locally in August 2019, youth shared examples that provided startling clarity: “risky” translating to “life or death,” referencing gang activity among peers.

“Out-of-School-Time” (OST) is defined by the Center for Disease Control as a supervised program that young people regularly attend when school is not in session.

Data guiding action of the OST Collaborative:

- 25,051 6th - 12th grade youth live in Spartanburg County.
- 12,917 (51.6 %) live in poverty.
- 1,832 out of 12,917 (~14%) young people living in poverty have access to OST programs.

Mission: All young people in Spartanburg County in grades 6-12 have access to high-quality after school and summer programs that build the skills and characteristics necessary for success.

5 Year Goal: Double the number of low-income middle/high school youth who have access to high-quality OST programs in Spartanburg County from 14% in 2019 to 28% in 2024.

1 based a CONNECT youth listening campaign
2 based a survey of the 19 largest youth service providers county-wide
Historically and nation-wide, post-secondary enrollment trends demonstrate an inverse correlation with the economy. If "good" paying jobs are available as soon as a student graduates high school, motivation lags for taking that next step toward building the foundation for long-term economic mobility: enrolling in a post-secondary program. However, "good" or "great" earnings for an 18 year-old rarely receive the same classification by a 40 year old with a family, nor do they provide security for managing economic shifts or provide a path forward for upward economic mobility.

» Enrollment for Spartanburg County students not in poverty dropped 6.5 points over six years, while enrollment for those in poverty dropped more than twice that amount - 13.2 percentage points.

» The results for black and Hispanic students is just as alarming. White student enrollment dropped 9.1 points, black student enrollment dropped 17.2 points, and Hispanic student enrollment dropped 19.7 points.

SAM’s post-secondary enrollment, persistence, and completion data has brought the reality into focus. And it isn’t a reality we expected, based upon the State’s "College Freshman Report."

From that resource, we had reason to believe that nearly 79% of our students were enrolling in college. For the most part, the report provided the "intent" to enroll picture, produced by students self-reporting their future plans.

Now we have the capacity to assess the difference, between intent and actual enrollment, which we call "Summer Melt."

SAM is a member of the National Student Clearinghouse, which provides data tracking for all Spartanburg County high school graduates, for eight years of post-secondary enrollment, anywhere in the nation, in any degree program: technical certification, two-year degree, or four-year baccalaureate. These tracking reports enable SAM to draw down important information about our graduates’ post-secondary activity, from initial enrollments to persistence from year to year... from institutional transfers to completion.

### County-wide Enrollment (within 1 year of high school graduation)

![Graph showing county-wide enrollment percentage from 2013 to 2018.]

### Enrollment by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Student Clearinghouse, Student Data Tracker
We also know where Spartanburg students are enrolling. Collectively capturing 30% of the enrollment for all County high school students over a six year period are:

- Spartanburg Community College
- Spartanburg Methodist College
- USC Upstate

The bright spot is that these institutions are all within reach and already committed to working to reduce melt; and with positive response from high school counselors to pilot interventions, there is growing energy surrounding efforts to improve these results.

Further analyses, from Student Data Tracker reports received in August 2019, serve to break down these data by multiple variables and provide focus for specific districts and schools where variances from county-wide data are evident.

In summer of 2019, SAM initiated an analysis of students at one high school with high potential for melt. Those students, at May graduation, reported plans to attend a 2-year college but had not received formal acceptances. Some had applied, some had not. While final results are pending, the ongoing support-by-text campaign demonstrates that students need more intentional “case management,” more access to support throughout the summer as well as a greater understanding of steps needed before actual enrollment is possible. SAM is committed in the coming year to driving this intervention forward.
FAILURE TO PERSIST MOST OFTEN HAPPENS BETWEEN THE FRESHMAN AND SOPHOMORE YEARS OF COLLEGE. THE DATA BRINGS GOOD NEWS ABOUT STUDENT PERSISTENCE. THE VAST MAJORITY OF SPARTANBURG COUNTY'S HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES, ENROLLING IN COLLEGE, ARE PERSISTING.

THE MESSAGE: OUR K-12 SYSTEM IS PREPARING GRADUATES WHO DEMONSTRATE THE SKILLS AND CHARACTERISTICS NEEDED TO PERSIST IN COLLEGE.

WHILE CELEBRATING THIS NEWS, WE MUST NOTE THE DISPARITIES THAT REMAIN AND TAKE ACTION TO REMOVE THEM. AGAIN, STUDENTS IN POVERTY ARE AT HIGHEST RISK FOR DROPPING OUT BEFORE COMPLETING THEIR PROGRAM, AND A DEEPER LOOK INTO PERSISTENCE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR IS INDICATED.

WITH MORE THAN 30 PERCENT OF OUR POST-SECONDARY ENROLLEES STAYING IN SPARTANBURG COUNTY, AND THE WILLINGNESS OF SAM'S PARTNERS TO DIG DEEPER, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVING PERSISTENCE RATES IS STRONG.
FOR THE FIRST TIME, SAM HAS A PICTURE OF THE REALITY OF OUR TARGET: COMPLETION OF A POST-SECONDARY PROGRAM WITHIN 6 YEARS.

While Student Data Tracker indicates that some of the class of 2013 remain enrolled, we now know that 37% have attained post-secondary certifications and degrees within 6 years.

Now the work begins to dig deeper into these data to address barriers to completion, particularly for our students of color who demonstrate the lowest completion rates.

QUESTIONS WE NOW ASK TO GUIDE OUR FUTURE WORK:

» What barriers for persistence and completion exist for our students of color?
» How can they be removed?
» Who is empowered to remove them?
Private and corporate donations have supported SAM’s operation since 2013. Giving is noted by funding level and by SAM’s operational years through July 2019. *Many funding partners have generously committed to 3-year giving cycles. **Grants have supported specific projects and initiatives.

### VISION PARTNERS: $50,000 AND UP
- American Credit Acceptance ¹,²,³
- JM Smith¹
- Mary Black Foundation ²,⁴
- Milliken & Company ¹,²,³,⁴,⁵,⁶
- Milliken Employee Campaign 2016⁴
- Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System ¹,²,³,⁴

### MISSION PARTNERS: $25,000 AND UP
- Johnson Development Associates, Inc. ¹,²,³
- OTO Development ¹,²,³
- Phifer Johnson Foundation ¹,²,³
- Pricewaterhouse Coopers ²,⁴
- Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce ⁴,⁵,⁶
- Spartanburg County School Districts 1-7 ¹,²,³,⁴,⁵,⁶
- Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System ⁵,⁶
- United Way of the Piedmont ⁵

### STRATEGIC PARTNERS: $10,000 AND UP
- Bank of America ²,³,⁴,⁵
- City of Spartanburg ²
- Mr. and Mrs. William Barnet III ¹,²,³,⁴,⁵,⁶
- Barnet Foundation Trust ¹,²,³,⁴,⁵,⁶
- BMW Manufacturing ¹,²,³,⁴,⁵,⁶
- Denny’s Corporation ⁶
- Joe Salley ³
- Pricewaterhouse Coopers ¹,²,³
- Pure Barre ¹,²,³
- The Zimmerli Foundation ²,³,⁴

### TACTICAL PARTNERS: $5,000 AND UP
- AFL ¹,²,³
- American Storage ¹,²,³
- Contec, Inc. ¹,²,³
- Denny’s Corporation ¹,²,³,⁵,⁶
- Inman Riverdale Foundation ²,³
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Many individual and community organizations became vision partners when SAM first organized. They understood the need for the work to be done to improve outcomes for children living across Spartanburg County. In the years since, many have participated in specific collaborative action(*) efforts. Some have also begun to participate in our Continuous Improvement (CI) trainings to reframe their internal projects toward collective impact targets.