RECOMMENDATION 1:

Organize curriculum choices and school career counseling around career clusters, which allow students to reach their fullest potential. This change will involve amending the STWTA to replace academic pathways with career clusters that emphasize both academics and applied skills. The current system of two pathways, Tech Prep and College Prep, limits options and future career opportunities for most students.

THE ISSUE

The traditional secondary educational system is not meeting the demands of the contemporary job market, either in terms of knowledge or specific skills. Three presuppostitions about students exist:

1. That all students fit neatly into one of two diploma pathways (College Prep and Tech Prep), and that those pathways serve them well.
2. That all students, except some with special needs, have the desire, interest, and ability to go to a four-year college, and that a four-year degree is, indeed, the only sure path to career success.
3. That students are fully aware of all the career opportunities available and take course work related to careers that interest them.

These assumptions are sadly inaccurate. The two established pathways do not meet the needs of all students. They frequently fail to consider students' interests, talents, skills, and academic abilities, and they limit options by not allowing students to select a mix of technical and College Prep courses. The cluster system requires the same core academic knowledge for all students, regardless of their choice of career major, yet allows them to expand on it with tailored course work and electives.

THE GOAL

To broaden our view of education beyond traditional academic boundaries—specifically, to begin to see education as the precursor to employment and as driven by the student, rather than solely as intellectual enrichment driven by curriculum. The development of career clusters, which allows for more individualized education driven by students' interests and abilities; exposure to economic and labor market information; and involvement of parents in career decision-making, are all essential to this change.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

1. Implement the strategies/activities of the South Carolina Career Guidance Model.
2. Replace Tech Prep and College Prep pathways with individual educational and career preparation plans (specific to students' interests, goals, and abilities).
3. Require all high school students to choose, with parental input, a career major tied to work-based learning experiences.
4. Promote education and business partnerships to support career clusters/majors *(see Appendix 2B).*

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career clusters: a way of organizing and tailoring course work and work experience aroundspecific occupational groups (i.e. business or health services) that offer students core academics as well as activities that match their skills and interests

career major: like a college major, an area of study within a larger occupational field or career cluster

College Prep pathway (CP): a term used to represent a curriculum rich in theory that should best prepare students for a successful four-year college or university experience; students taking College Prep courses are part of this curricular pathway

Tech Prep pathway (TP): a term used to represent the curriculum centered around application of knowledge—specifically, using real-world problems and issues to best prepare students for an industry certification, two-year associate degree, or other postsecondary experiences; students taking Tech Prep courses are part of this curricular pathway

pathway: a way of categorizing the curricula and educational activities targeted at a student's specific academic or career goal, such as the career majors that are part of the sixteen career clusters

South Carolina Occupational Information System (SCOIS): career, wage, employment, and educational information about jobs, available to students in subscribing schools through interactive media

High Schools That Work (HSTW): a successful national initiative that stresses high academic and career and technology education standards based on ten key practices, including high expectations for students and offering them extra help and work-based learning opportunities

RECOMMENDATION 1 *continued...*

5. Restructure school departments, curricula, and instruction to support career clusters.
6. Incorporate workplace skills into the curricula taught to all students.
7. Determine which of the nationally recognized career clusters to offer, based on local, state, and regional workforce demands.
8. Establish professional development guidelines and training opportunities to assist teachers, guidance counselors, and other educators to adapt teaching methods that focus to support this new system.
9. Expand the use of the South Carolina Occupational Information System at all levels of education (elementary, middle, and high school).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S CAREER CLUSTERS

- **Agriculture and Natural Resources**
- **Arts, Audio-Video Technology, and Communications**
- **Business and Administrative Services**
- **Construction**
- **Education and Training Services**
- **Financial Services**
- **Health Services**
- **Hospitality and Tourism**
- **Human Services**
- **Information Technology Services**
- **Legal and Protective Services**
- **Manufacturing**
- **Public Administration and Government**
- **Retail/Wholesale Sales and Service**
- **Scientific Research, Engineering, and Technical Services**
- **Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Services**

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Career clusters are one way to meet the demands of both students and employers. Students can investigate specific career interests as they develop carefully constructed, personalized educational plans. Each student selects a major compatible with personal education and career plans; personal interests align closely with the cluster's subject matter and experiences. All students study core academic subjects such as English, math, and science, while business and industry partnerships and work-based learning heighten learning experiences, especially as they are tied to specific careers.

The *High Schools That Work* program is an example of a successful model of this approach *(See Appendix 2D)*. The state's Career Guidance Model will provide educators with information about cluster-related content, activities, and structure.

CONCLUSIONS

The U. S. Department of Education's career clusters are receiving national attention for giving all students the career knowledge, guidance, academic preparation, and flexibility to plan studies in line with their career goals and abilities. This structure supports accountability and makes learning relevant. Because each educational plan is individualized, it guides and motivates learning, aligns postsecondary educational goals, and ultimately prepares students for career success. In a nation where more than 100 companies closed and tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs in the first seven months of 2001, the state's students *must* understand their career options and receive the education they need to succeed.

HOW CAREER CLUSTERS WORK

Core Academics + Career-Smart Electives

6TH GRADE CAREER ASSESSMENT & PLAN*	**8TH GRADE** REVIEW / REVISE PLAN*	**9TH-12TH GRADES** ACADEMIC & CAREER PREPARATION*
Choose Career Cluster **(e.g., Engineering & Manufacturing)**	***Choose Career Major*** **(e.g., Civil Engineering)**	***Choose Next Step in Education*** **(e.g., Four-Year College)**

*Parental Input Here Flexible Decision Points

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Enforce the 1994 School-to-Work Transition Act (STWTA) through the creation of a Governor's Workforce Education Council reconstituted out of the existing School-to-Work Advisory Council. The new council will be charged with coordinating workforce education development in the state by overseeing implementation of these recommendations and compliance with the existing STWTA.

THE ISSUE

The STWTA is not being fully implemented, and there is no accountability for institutions and agencies responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the act. To successfully implement this act and the Task Force recommendations, as well as continuously improve the state of workforce education in South Carolina, there must be a commitment by state government. At present, education and business do not formally share information statewide or even provide input that results in significant changes to educational curricula or career development and work-based activities.

In addition, as a part of mainstream educational reform, workforce education must have a mechanism for accountability—an evaluative measure visible to the public and private sectors that can be used to determine the success of our students.

THE GOAL

To further South Carolina's economic development by creating a state-level structure that guides the delivery of workforce education-related curriculum and services to students, schools, and communities. Through enforcement of the STWTA, the structure will also guide employers in preparing graduates to meet their expectations as well as the entry requirements of postsecondary education.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

1. Develop a Governor's Workforce Education Council by reconstituting the existing School-to-Work Advisory Council. The council's mission will be to achieve systemic implementation of the STWTA (amended according to Task Force recommendations) and all other Task Force recommendations.
2. Establish an interim Implementation Planning Committee to act as a bridge between the Task Force and the proposed Governor's Workforce Education Council. After the transition, this committee should remain as a subcommittee of the council providing recommendations on priorities, sequencing, policy issues, funding analysis, and specific plans for implementation of the nine Task Force recommendations.
3. Identify additional agency leaders, organizational leaders, legislative representatives, and employers to serve on the council membership.
4. Appoint an independent businessperson and the Superintendent of Education as co-chairs of the council. They will report to the Governor.
6. Create and fund an Office of Workforce Education that is linked directly to the Governor and responsible to the Governor's Workforce Education Council.

***South Carolina School-to-Work Transition Act of 1994 (STWTA)*:** comprehensive legislation addressing the importance of preparing students to make well-informed career choices; the legislation states that students must receive instruction and experiences in career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation, including those featured in School-to-Work, such as mentoring, job shadowing, and applied academic instruction

Governor's Workforce Education Task Force: a task force appointed by the Governor in 2001 to review workforce development in South Carolina—specifically, the educational and delivery system implications

School-to-Work Advisory Council: a council of elected officials, educators, agency heads, and business representatives appointed by the Governor to monitor and support the implementation of the *1994 South Carolina School-to-Work Transition Act*

curriculum: a fixed group of studies required to achieve an educational goal and/or particular academic subject, e.g., College Prep curriculum

RECOMMENDATION 2 *continued...*

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career and technology education: educational programs and experiences that offer business and technical skills training in a variety of industry-certified and technically oriented careers

career plan: a student's personal education plan that specifies career goals, interests, skills, and talents that are associated with the prescribed curriculum in elementary grades and supported by curricula choices in the middle grades and high school—a plan that is developed in grade six as dictated by the *1994 South Carolina School-to-Work Transition Act* and revised each year thereafter until graduation

South Carolina Career Guidance Model: a guidance program for students that is composed of three areas of study: 1) learning to learn, 2) learning to live, and 3) learning to work

best practices: examples of activities, programs, or initiatives that have proven efficient and effective in providing educational opportunities, content, and accountability for students and educational organizations

Education Oversight Committee (EOC): an independent committee established by the Governor's Office to monitor compliance with and issues related to the *Education Accountability Act*

7. Increase the visibility of the Offices of Career and Technology Education and Adult and Community Education as part of the statewide workforce education delivery system.
8. With respect to STWTA compliance, emphasize work-based learning, education/business partnerships, and career development (career exploration, career plans, and related initiatives). Specifically:
   - Ensure that every student participates in a comprehensive work-based learning program that provides a realistic understanding of the work world;
   - Fully implement the South Carolina Career Guidance Model; and
   - Create a better system for developing integrated business partnerships with employers.
9. Require all middle and high school students to have a comprehensive career plan developed with participation of parents, counselors, and teachers.
10. Provide each student with the opportunity to have a mentor.
11. Conduct a statewide program audit of the STWTA by the Office of Workforce Education.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Although the full impact of the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) has not yet been realized, many successful aspects of the committee's work were incorporated into our recommendations. The committee's model emphasizes ways to coordinate a broad range of constituent groups and interests, pays special attention to community relations, and maximizes the use of information gained through standardized testing.

CONCLUSIONS

The *1994 School-to-Work Transition Act* was established to ensure ALL of South Carolina's students receive a rigorous, relevant education that enables them to lead successful lives. And it can do just this—if we enforce it. Since its passage, this legislation has had limited impact due to lack of enforcement; thus the full potential of its directives has not been realized. The proposed Governor's Workforce Education Council is the critical missing piece.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Curriculum should be aligned with current workplace needs to include academic, social, and applied content, and should be transferable among all educational institutions. All students should have a rigorous academic base and be able to apply academics in work-based situations.

South Carolina Curriculum Standards: standards developed by South Carolina educators to support instruction in our schools in the core curriculum areas of language arts, math, science, and social studies

THE ISSUE

For high school students to consider all of the academic options available to them, both students and their parents need assurance that whatever path the student chooses offers a road of educational and career opportunities. This kind of assurance is not possible, however, if classes and credits are not transferable between schools, which is currently the case in South Carolina's K-12, two-year college, and four-year college programs. Classes and credits in career and technology education programs are often nontransferable among institutions. Without a free-flowing transfer policy in place, students will continue to opt for whatever career path ensures a smooth educational and career preparation pathway, even if it is not the best match for their individual aptitudes and capabilities.

Compounding this problem is a mismatch between school curricula and workplace needs—a breakdown in the transition from classroom academics to workplace readiness. Academic standards in the workplace are higher and different than in the schools; technical reading and technical writing, oral communications, and applied statistics, for example, are highly valued in the workplace but currently downplayed in many high schools. And yet these competencies are proving to be critical for all jobs—as important for college graduates as for high school graduates who immediately seek employment.

THE GOAL

To establish a rigorous, relevant curriculum that is aligned with workplace needs and further strengthened by articulation agreements that ensure classes and credits are transferable between educational institutions without bias against career and technology programs.

articulation agreements: formal agreements between or among educational organizations (high schools, technical colleges, four-year colleges and universities) that align courses and career majors from one educational institution to another without loss of course credit or time for the student

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

1. Create statewide articulation agreements among secondary schools, and two-year and four-year colleges. Moreover, require that all college articulation agreements have statewide applicability, and that two- and four-year colleges accept all secondary applied academic courses recognized at high school graduation.
2. Establish transferability of dual credits recognized by two-and four-year colleges.
3. Develop measures to certify genuine equivalency in content and rigor for all career major/applied academic courses and a requirement that South Carolina's four-year colleges and universities routinely accept these courses provided all other entrance requirements are met.
4. ***Align graduation standards with fundamental workplace standards***. Amend the minimum requirements for a high school diploma to meet basic requirements for South Carolina employers. (This is further elaborated in Recommendation 6.)
5. Require each district to adopt and implement the statewide Career Guidance Model and performance guidelines.

dual-credit: credit given at the college level for courses taken while in high school

applied academic courses: courses taught, usually as part of the Tech Prep curricula, that stress concrete application of knowledge and skills

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6. Enhance career guidance activities in elementary and middle schools, and ensure that every sixth grade student has a career plan; the plan should be annually updated, with the help of the parents and teachers of the student, until graduation.
7. Improve school counselors' knowledge of career and education options through professional development mechanisms.
8. Measure and include on Report Cards how well students meet workplace skill standards.
9. Align all career and technology education courses with industry/professional certifications.
10. Offer a well understood career cluster/major implementation plan that enables students to pursue knowledge and skills and allows them to reach their fullest potential.

Report Card: issued for the first time statewide in the Fall of 2001, this document is used by South Carolina to ensure schools, districts, and students are meeting the state's standards for progress and performance in specific areas, such as student test scores, etc.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The *High Schools That Work* model *(See Appendix 2D)* provides a school-wide system to incorporate workplace needs into curricula and to meet industry certification requirements. It blends the essentials of college preparatory academics with technical studies in high school. It also uses a career major/employability skills model, which infuses workplace examples into the curriculum, eliminates the traditional Tech Prep and College Prep pathways, and incorporates the career portfolio concept, the use of teacher advisors, and School-to-Work activities.

Laurens County School Districts 55 and 56, the School-to-Work/Lifelong Learning Program, and area businesses have developed the *B-Best Model: Building Better Employment Skills for Tomorrow*, which evaluates workplace skills and translates them into training programs for unskilled workers as well as results in a practical, applicable K-12 curriculum.

"Education is the key to a good job, but only skills unlock the door to success."

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Educational standards and testing, such as PACT, Report Card, and end-of-course testing, should integrate the requirements of the School-to-Work Transition Act, as well as the Education Accountability Act.

THE ISSUE

Academic assessments are used to prove and, more importantly, improve how we educate our students. They are used to improve learning and student development by measuring the programs provided to students and by determining student progress. At present, however, there is little evidence that our state's key assessment methods—PACT, the Report Card, and end-of-course testing—adequately measure the success of applied academics. If the assessments are not measuring applied academics, as is believed, we will never reach the goals set for our students and schools.

THE GOAL

To ensure that academic, professional and school evaluations and assessments are focused on measuring appropriate performance and that these tools are useful in benchmarking progress, motivating higher achievement, and identifying barriers and problems.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

1. Examine the state's current assessment tools to determine if the skills and kinds of performance we are trying to measure match those needed to align with career clusters (See Recommendation 1).
2. Revise the PACT and end-of-course tests to include the skills employers value, such as the SCANS skills, those taught in character education, and basic math, reading, communication, and application of knowledge.
3. Incorporate into the Report Card a measurement of schools' and districts' School-to-Work Transition Act implementation.
4. Incorporate into the Report Card a measurement of schools' and districts' career development and guidance standards implementation.
5. Determine ways to integrate into the Report Card an assessment of students' progress toward professional development goals, including instruction in applied academics, remediation, learning styles, career development, and business internships.
6. Integrate applied academic content and skills into curriculum frameworks.
7. Include employability skills and readiness on high school exit exams.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The *High Schools That Work*/SREB model includes assessment tools that measure student, professional, and school progress toward success.

The National Skills Standards Board has developed Core Skill and Knowledge Standards that cross all occupational lines. These standards, and the various occupational skills standards now in development (only the Manufacturing Skills Standards have been completed), could be the basic framework from which South Carolina's new system is built. These standards are linked to the U.S. Department of Labor's and U.S. Department of Education's programs, and Congress has supported the development of this national system.

1998 Education Accountability Act ***(EAA)*****:** legislation passed in South Carolina in 1998 that challenges students, schools, and school systems to create and maintain high academic expectations that led to the development and promotion of South Carolina's first school and district report cards.

Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT): the South Carolina test developed to replace the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) and aligned with the state's curriculum standards

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS): a commission created by the United States Department of Labor to determine the skills that young people need to succeed in the world of work, such as negotiating, designing, and improving systems; using basic skills such as reading, writing, and arithmetic; serving customers; and having integrity

remediation: programs and activities that help students who are behind in specific courses or grade levels raise their skills and knowledge to the appropriate level

Southern Regional Education Board (SREB): based in Atlanta, this board represents Southeastern states in an effort to support educational initiatives such as *High Schools That Work*

RECOMMENDATION 5:

The State Department of Education must require courses in applied learning techniques and career development for certification and recertification for all educators. Higher education should play a role in providing sustained professional development that is tied to existing career development and work-based learning curriculum and methodologies.

professional development: training and informational sessions for educators and educational support staff that help them stay informed about current trends, issues, and best practices in their respective fields

work-based learning: an educational learning experience that directly involves students and educators in the workplace through mentoring, job shadowing, instruction in workplace competencies on the job site, and other activities; it is typically intended to strengthen skills related to specific career goals and/or interests

THE ISSUE

Few South Carolina colleges and universities with teacher education programs currently require courses in applied learning methods and work-based experiences. This gap leaves the educators of South Carolina with very little awareness of the broad range of careers available to students or of the specific level of education that the vast majority of South Carolina students will need for the high-skill, high-wage jobs of the 21st century.

Educators' knowledge of careers is often confined to their own firsthand career experiences. Many teachers go from high school to college to the classroom, with little work experience outside their field and only a limited understanding of the labor market.

THE GOAL

To develop a systematic way of ensuring that colleges and universities offer all pre-service teachers appropriate courses in applied learning methods and career development, and include work-based experiences as a part of the graduation requirements.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

1. Develop criteria through the State Department of Education for certification and recertification requirements that mandate, for all teachers, counselors, and administrators, at a minimum, coursework and demonstrated competencies in applied academics, learning styles, cooperative learning, teaching to multiple levels within a classroom, career development, and business/industry internships.
2. Develop required courses in applied learning techniques and career development for all prospective educators (teachers, counselors, and administrators) at postsecondary institutions.
3. Develop continuing education and professional development courses for teachers and counselors in applied learning and career development. Partner with business and industry to offer actual work-based learning experiences that would be accepted toward certification renewal.
4. Require all teachers to participate in a work-based learning experience for recertification.
5. Request that the General Asembly allow sufficient funding to offer professional

development recertification for all teachers and counselors.

RECOMMENDATION 5 *continued...*

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

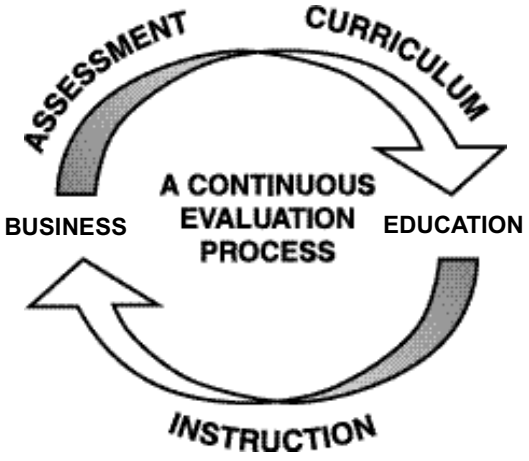
- South Carolina Education and Business Summit
- Statewide Career Development Video Series
- Applied Regional Conferences and Applied Training Institutes
- Educators in Industry Institutes

CONCLUSIONS

It is essential that educators be knowledgeable about careers and the level of education required in today's jobs in order to assist all students in making informed career choices. This includes being able to adapt teaching methods to meet the learning style needs of individual students.

DOES EDUCATION MATCH THE NEEDS OF THE WORKPLACE?

The Question for 21st-Century Educators



"Are we more interested in answering the question 'what did you take' or 'what did you do with what you took'?"

—Dr. Willard Daggett

RECOMMENDATION 6:

New doors must be opened for students at high risk of dropping out by offering additionaleducational opportunities that lead to gainful employment and lifelong learning.

THE ISSUE

South Carolina has one of the highest high school dropout rates in the country, exceeding 30 percent. No safety net exists to provide these students with the extra help and alternative instruction they need to develop fundamental employment skills and complete a formal high school education. The system has failed large numbers of students who are now behind academically; there is no comprehensive, funded, and accountable system to bring to them up to grade-level standards. Moreover, many parents, educators, and students are concerned about students being over age for grade level. In addition, there is no evidence that students retained are able to catch up academically by simply repeating a grade. A strong remedial program is needed.

grade level: a designation given to each student based on the ability to perform certain tasks in school, such as "first grade" or "first-grade level"

On a positive note, however, the public widely supports finding a solution to this problem. According to a recent public opinion survey, 95 percent of South Carolinians felt that it was important for our state to increase efforts to keep at-risk kids from dropping out of high school *(See Appendix 1G)*.

THE GOALS

Goal 1:

To provide students who might otherwise not complete high school with a legitimate educational pathway, appropriately challenging curriculum, work experience, and a transition into gainful employment and lifelong learning after graduation.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

target population: a specified, clearly defined group of individuals

1. Develop a framework for an additional district diploma pathway for students who are identified as potential dropouts and/or who fall within the target population for the framework.
2. Identify the target population of students based on standardized reading or math scores at or below the 25th percentile; failure to meet basic PACT standards in grades 6, 7, and 8; retention in one or more grade levels; being over age for grade level; and a demonstrated potential for achieving functional reading and math skills, as well as the "soft" skills needed for employment.
3. Establish specific guidelines for identified students, taking into account parental consent and safeguards against locking students into the pathway and/or creating a "dumping ground."
4. Require 24 units of credit, as specified in students' career plans, to attain the new diploma as follows: four units each of English, math, social studies, and electives; three units of science; and five units of career development (to include one job shadowing unit, one mentoring unit, one non-paid employment unit, one paid employment unit, and one other career preparation course).
5. Require that participating school districts demonstrate business and industry partnerships and document viable employment opportunities and work-based learning experiences to prevent the pathway from becoming a "dumping ground."

RECOMMENDATION 6 *continued...*

6. Develop mechanisms under the direction of the Governor's Workforce Education Council for those counties unable to create sufficient business and industry partnerships and viable employment opportunities.

7. Replace the high school exit exam with a student portfolio for those students in the new pathway, illustrating the students' academic and employability skills. The statewide 10th-grade exit exam should still be required and used to evaluate the student's placement in the new pathway. Success on the exam would indicate that the student's career plan should be reassessed.

8. Offer alternative assessment methods (e.g.,WorkKeys) as part of the new pathway.

9. Develop standards-based curricula to support delivery of fundamental employability skills and core academic content to the target populations.

10. Emphasize career clusters to challenge students to evaluate their academic skills, strengths and weaknesses, and talents. Career guidance and counseling should be an integral part of the curriculum.

11. Develop standardized communications materials to support the development of a district pathway, such as a videotape and diploma implementation manuals for administrators to use as informational and staff development tools, as well as resources for parents whose children might be identified for inclusion in the proposed pathway.

12. Require written, informed consent from students and their legal guardians following full disclosure of pathway information and time to reflect on the implications of selecting the pathway. Full disclosure should include addressing area businesses' acceptance and recognition of the additional pathway, special transportation needs, if required and/or provided, postsecondary educational opportunities, and related transitional issues.

student portfolio: a collection of student work indicating progress made in one or more subjects, activities, and/or programs; the portfolio is generally used as an assessment tool in order to make decisions about courses to be taken, assign grades, and/or recommend students for specialized programs or activities

WorkKeys: a system that identifies key employability skills that are crucial to effective performance in most jobs, skills such as reading for information, applied mathematics, listening, writing, and teamwork

BEST PRACTICES

Following a year of study and investigation into the potential of and/or need for an additional diploma pathway, a South Carolina ad hoc committee offered recommendations for a statewide, best practice model. These recommendations included a 24-unit course matrix and core curricula modules cross-walked with the state's Curriculum Standards. In addition to this effort, a number of school districts in South Carolina already offer district diploma pathways in addition to the Tech Prep and College Prep pathways. Richland District Two and Horry County School District are examples. Their district models and others like them, along with the ad hoc committee's work on a statewide model,offer direction for districts interested in investigating this recommendation.

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Goal 2:

To ensure all students perform at grade-level standards.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

1. Enact legislation, with funding formulae, that requires school districts to provide intensive programs to help motivate and accelerate learning for every student behind by one or more grade levels. Programs should include a variety of learning methods, technologies, and materials.
2. Identify successful program models through the State Department of Education for accelerating students that are academically behind. Discern what elements make these different and successful, and then disseminate this information through professional development materials and technical assistance.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The Report Card

CONCLUSIONS

It is critical that we meet the needs of all students. The current diploma pathways in South Carolina were developed to meet the needs of college-bound and technical education/college-bound students. These two pathways are not sufficient to serve all students. The high-risk dropout segment of the student population would be best served through an alternative diploma pathway *(See Appendix 2E)*.

We expect that the implementation of better standards and the adoption of the Task Force recommendations will decrease the number of students needing remedial programs. Moreover, many educational experts believe that the need for the additional pathway will similarly decrease over the next 10-15 years.

Adding this framework for an additional, specifically targeted district-based diploma will do the following:

- Better prepare all students to lead successful lives;
- Support the *1994 School-to-Work* legislation by offering an alternative diploma pathway to students who are currently unsuccessful in their efforts to experience academic success;
- Focus curricula specifically on the skills needed for success in the workplace, thereby supporting the business and industry partnership concept; and
- Help decrease the state's dropout rate.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Character education should be woven into the fabric of all schools to address the need for the development of appropriate attitudes such as respect, responsibility, and honesty. These skills are essential for every workplace and are, according to surveys of employers, lacking in many job applicants.

character education: educational content and instruction that includes strategies stressing the basic traits of good citizenship such as honesty, integrity, and responsibility

THE ISSUE

When employers in South Carolina are polled, either directly or through surveys, concerning the desired skills of future employees, the answer is always the same: Businesses want employees who model and practice positive character traits such as respect and honesty. Employers have indicated that these skills are necessary for employees to continue to compete in a global society.

THE GOAL

To ensure that positive character traits are integrated into the curriculum, modeled, taught, and practiced by students and teachers in the schools and districts of the state. The Department of Education must work in partnership with all entities related to workforce preparedness to accomplish this objective. The goal is not just character education, but graduating students with positive traits already integrated into their lives and habits.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

1. Offer training to teachers/administrators on how best to integrate positive character instruction into an already developed curriculum. This should not be a n "add on" for teachers.
2. Develop training programs for parents of students at all levels, and consider mandatory training for parents of students who are designated at risk.
3. Provide a professional development graduate level course on character education for teachers during the summer; make the course as rigorous as is allowed. Provide scholarships to teachers to encourage participation.
4. Include students, parents, educators, and members of the business community in initial planning efforts.
5. Develop a simple evaluation component.

BEST PRACTICES

South Carolina has two National Schools of Character Award winners. Schools of Character stand as the models of excellence in the integration of character education and provide leadership for other schools and districts interested in starting their own initiatives.

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THE TOP 10 SKILLS THAT WORK

- **Integrity & Honesty**
- **Team Player**
- **Listening Skills**
- **Responsibility**
- **Knowing How to Learn**
- **Self-Esteem**
- **Reading Skills**
- **Social Skills**
- **Reasoning Skills**
- **Ability to Allocate Time**

Marion School District One has two winners, Easterling Primary and Marion Intermediate. Spartanburg High School also has a strong character integration program that can be replicated and serve as a model. The high school program instills character education traits using service learning.

Through Boston University's Center for Advancement of Ethics and Character, three South Carolina four-year institutions—Wofford College, Converse College, and the University of South Carolina at Salkehatchie—offer weeklong graduate-level courses on integrating character education into curriculum and teaching methods.

CONCLUSIONS

South Carolina employers have repeatedly identified the positive character traits they want employees to have and sustain. If those traits are modeled by teachers and administrators and integrated into the everyday lives of students preparing for the workforce, the level of available and satisfactory employees should rise. This result should contribute favorably to the overall effort to prepare South Carolina's students for the workforce.

"The number one reason South Carolina employers reject a job applicant is for not meeting the basic education or experience qualifications for the job."

—Skills-to-Work 2000

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Establish regional service centers that offer a link between business and education and provide resources to surrounding areas. As the overarching service delivery system, the State Department of Education should also evolve to meet the changing needs of the state, as well as be aligned with the above recommendations, reporting quarterly to the Governor's Workforce Education Council.

THE ISSUE

The educational delivery system for workforce development in South Carolina is complex and fragmented, with gaps and overlaps among local schools and school districts; regional, state, and federal agencies; business and industry training programs; and colleges and universities.

THE GOAL

To develop a plan that ensures the effective, efficient delivery of high quality education and access to resources in all parts of the state. It is important to eliminate fragmentation and promote connectivity among school systems, as well as to establish a system of evaluation.

Such a plan would incorporate partnerships with business, address the different learning needs of students, arrange for orderly transitions between educational levels, and lay the groundwork for lifelong learning. Professional development, the appropriate use of technology, and better connections with higher education should all be incorporated into this delivery plan.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

1. Conduct a comprehensive study to evaluate the many service delivery systems offered statewide, such as Tech Prep consortia, regional One-Stop Shops, and math/science hubs, to assess whether overlaps and redundancies exist, and to determine whether certain systems should be realigned and/or consolidated.
2. Use the results of the study to develop an implementation plan that includes a compliance-related system of rewards and sanctions through the Governor's Workforce Education Council.
3. Four-year institutions with teacher preparation programs should be participants. The regional service centers' structure will be compatible with that of the Governor's Workforce Education Council, and 51 percent of the members of each service center's coordinating board will be business/industry representatives.

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The identification of Best Practices should be a component of the statewide study.

CONCLUSIONS

To encourage employers to maintain an on-going dialogue with the educational system, a single point of contact that serves as both a listening post for their needs as well as a resource must be established. More broadly, these regional service centers would serve a monitoring function, ensuring that the educational system keeps pace with the changes of the workforce.

A CALL FOR CONSOLIDATION

South Carolina's Career Delivery Systems

At present S.C. has:

- **85 District Offices**
- **40 Career Centers**
- **16 Tech Prep/School-to-Work Consortia**
- **13 Work Force Investment Boards**
- **13 Technology Centers**
- **13 Math/Science Hubs**

delivery system: any method or process of providing a service to students, usually related to educational benefits such as the *High Schools That Work* initiative that emphasizes high achievement standards in both academic and career and technology education

consortium: one of the state's sixteen regional partnerships made up of one of South Carolina's sixteen technical colleges, local school districts, and businesses in that area; the partnerships joined to further develop career and technology education—specifically, Tech Prep/School-to-Work—across the state

regional service center: a central location where all of a region's educational and professional services are located to better serve students and support educational programs, i.e. one building may contain the area's consortia, math and science hubs, and similar organizations

RECOMMENDATION 9:

A comprehensive, focused, and sustained statewide communications program should be developed to ensure all stakeholders understand the changes occurring in education and their role in implementing them.

THE ISSUE

Most people view education and educational reform through the lens of their own experience—for better or for worse. Their beliefs about educational goals are strongly held and cross a spectrum of viewpoints—from support for the three Rs only and concerns about "dumbing down" the curriculum to misperceptions about career and technology education and the mixing of academics and applied learning. Moreover, these beliefs are often deeply held and culturally reinforced.

The issues the Task Force raises in this report are in direct opposition to many of these beliefs, thus unfolding a true communications challenge: to persuade people to rethink how they view education. And without a comprehensive communications plan to inspire and inform public perceptions, the reality is that little real improvement is likely.

THE GOAL

To communicate with a wide audience of customers and stakeholders of the education system concerning the need for all students and adults to possess the rigorous training and relevant skills to function in our increasingly sophisticated workplace. This awareness campaign should build on the materials and messages delivered through the existing Carolina Careers program.

PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

1. Examine and explain the current workforce education scenario and establish a clearunderstanding of the need for change.
2. Conduct further research that examines currently held beliefs about education in South Carolina to use as a basis for creating a broad-based communications plan.
3. Develop a broad-based communications plan that builds upon the efforts and messages of the Carolina Careers campaign, targets what the research determines to be key audiences, and utilizes a strategic mix of marketing, advertising, and public relations to convey key messages and to achieve specific goals.
4. Use the Task Force recommendations as a framework from which to create specific communications goals.
5. Evaluate plan implementation against baseline data annually and determine whether goals are being met.

RECOMMENDATION 9 *continued...*

CONCLUSIONS

Workforce education issues are complicated, and there are no "quick communication fixes." This is not something one series of ads in the newspaper can solve; reshaping how people think about education—particularly how parents envision their children's future with respect to education—will be a process that, if done strategically and methodically, can play a major role in 21st-century success for South Carolina.

Another vital element in preparing tomorrow's workforce lies with postsecondary institutions. They must be willing to reevaluate the way they educate teachers as well as their requirements for admission. For example, colleges now accept courses in band and various arts as acceptable electives, but they do not accept such high-level career courses as CISCO networking and computer-aided drafting.

Achieving a world-class workforce in the 21st century will require systemic change, aimed at connecting the worlds of education and business in new ways.

See Appendix 2A for a summary of the Task Force recommendations and Appendix 1H for a full glossary of terms used in this report.