



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District Superintendents

**FROM:** Ellen Weaver  
State Superintendent of Education

**DATE:** March 28, 2023

**RE:** Public Schools of Innovation Exploration Fellowship

We are excited to invite you and your team to join the new ***Public Schools of Innovation Exploration Fellowship***, a six-month learning experience that starts in May of 2023. This experience will share innovative ideas in education, provide networking opportunities with a variety of education leaders (state and national), and help you answer questions like:

- How does our district best sustain encouraging progress?
- How does our district best improve struggling schools?
- How does our district best innovate to meet community needs?

This learning experience is exploratory; it does not commit your district to any specific action or creation of a Public School of Innovation. For each participating district, we recommend a team of 4-6 that includes school board, district, educator, and community representation.

See details below. Please let us know if you are able to join by April 21, 2023. Due to the philanthropic support from the Coastal Community Foundation and other partner organizations, we are able to offer this opportunity at no cost to districts.

We know how challenging of a time period this is for district leaders. You are faced with new obstacles, and new opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic has left, and continues to leave, many of the state's most vulnerable students further behind than they have ever been, while also demonstrating how difficult the work of public education is even in the best of times. We appreciate the many ways in which you are rising to that challenge.

As Governor McMaster shared recently, "I was proud to sign legislation into law this year that gives even more of South Carolina's students the opportunity to learn and grow at a school of innovation. South Carolina is a hub of innovation in business, tourism, agriculture, and so much

more. Our approaches to education must also be on the cutting edge, and that starts in our local communities.” Being at the forefront of this exploratory initiative is one more demonstration of your willingness to engage in meaningful learning to explore bold new ways to serve your community and students.

There is additional information in the Frequently Asked Questions document, or you may contact our implementation partner, Empower Schools, at any time with questions. We hope you are eager to explore these questions and engage in this exciting work. **If so, please sign up by clicking on [this link to fill out a form](#) or by emailing [scfellowship@empowerschools.org](mailto:scfellowship@empowerschools.org).**

### ***Proposed Schedule***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Session Title and Format</b>
May 2023	Session 1: Innovating Effective Models <i>In person - Columbia, SC</i>
June 2023	Session 2: Why Innovation Matters
September 2023	Session 3: Identifying Community Needs
October 2023	Session 4: Setting innovative schools up for success
December 2023	Session 5: Using community boards to sustain innovative success
<i>TBD Fall 2023</i>	<i>Out of State Visit</i>
January 2024	Session 6: Building your vision for success
2024	Individual follow up discussions with participating districts