MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
FROM: Molly M. Spearman
State Superintendent of Education
DATE: March 10, 2020
RE: Reading Coach Funding

Pending legislation will give the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) the authority to employ reading coaches in schools with one-third or more of third graders scoring at the Does Not Meet (DNM) level on SC READY ELA. The SCDE identified the schools that have one-third or more of third graders in DNM as the Palmetto Literacy Project (PLP) schools on 2018 and 2019 SC READY ELA. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance on the hiring process.

Should this legislation pass, the SCDE will interview, hire, and evaluate all reading coaches in the PLP schools with 50 percent or more of third graders scoring at DNM on the 2019 administration of SC READY ELA. Reading coaches currently serving in these schools must reapply and participate in the interview process if they want to be considered for the position. Districts should make provisions to absorb the coach in a vacancy should they not be selected. It is likely that the number of coaches will be reduced; therefore, a reading coach may serve more than one school.

Under a separate memorandum, the SCDE will communicate to district superintendents of the identified schools regarding the application process and timeline for the interviews. Once the coaches are hired, they will be considered employees of the SCDE.

The SCDE will consult with districts to approve reading coaches in schools with 33.3–49.9 percent of third graders scoring at DNM on the 2019 administration of SC READY ELA. The funding for coaches in these schools will flow to the districts as it has in past years.
For schools that are not in the PLP and have fewer than one-third or more third graders in DNM, the district may use the reading coach allocation to continue supporting a coach, use the allocation to employ an interventionist, or provide professional learning opportunities that best meet the needs of literacy teachers in the district.

Should you have questions, please contact Dr. David Mathis, dmathis@ed.sc.gov, 803-734-2577, or Dr. Quincie Moore, qmoore@ed.sc.gov, 803-734-1426.