



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

April 11, 2018

Today, I declare a state of emergency in Williamsburg County School District, pursuant to the powers provided to the State Superintendent of Education under the Appropriations Act of 2017, Proviso 1A.12. After a lengthy review I have determined that this declaration is in the best interests of the students, parents, and taxpayers of Williamsburg County. Williamsburg County School District's continuous financial and programmatic issues in key federal program areas has resulted in the district's designation as high risk. The South Carolina Department of Education has attempted to work with the district since the 2014-15 school year to clear up deficiencies in federal programs; the district has failed to address substantial, systematic issues that have resulted in its loss and redirection of over \$600,000 that could have been used to provide specialized instruction to students with disabilities. In addition, under a new state law, the district has been given ten days to respond to a notice that a state of fiscal caution will be declared due to repeat negative findings by the district's independent auditor. On the April 2018 accreditation review, of the district's 10 schools and career center, only two are "all clear" for accreditation purposes. Seven have an "advised" accreditation status, one is "warned," and one is on "probation."

Unless intense action is taken immediately, the most vulnerable children of Williamsburg County will suffer. Every student has enormous potential and deserves the opportunity to be successful. The state of emergency will come with additional technical assistance from South Carolina Department of Education staff that will allow for significant improvements to be made in financial oversight of its various federal and state programs and growth in student achievement

I am designating Dr. Rose Wilder to serve in Williamsburg as superintendent, effective immediately. Over the coming days and weeks Dr. Wilder and I will be meeting with school and district employees, parents and community leaders in order to move the district in the right direction.

This decision is not one that I take lightly and comes after many months of reflection and discussions with staff, members of Williamsburg County School Board, the legislative delegation, and the Williamsburg County community. Our chief focus will be on improving the operations of the Williamsburg County School District and providing all students with the tools and resources they need to be successful.

Molly M. Spearman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Molly M. Spearman".

State Superintendent of Education