

SOUTHEAST Comprehensive Center

at American Institutes for Research ■

American Institutes for Research (AIR) operates four regional comprehensive centers serving 13 states. The **Southeast Comprehensive Center** (SECC), funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, provides technical assistance (TA) to the state education agencies (SEAs) of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. SECC services are focused on building SEA capacity to support districts and schools to ensure that all students graduate from high school ready for college or a career. SECC provides support across several reform areas, including school improvement, educator development and effectiveness, early childhood education, and standards and assessments. SECC brings experience and expertise to engage stakeholders in policy design and implementation, providing research and content expertise to inform initiatives and plan for high-quality implementation and sustainability.

South Carolina



Promoting Equitable Access

SECC provides expertise in convening stakeholders to inform content, design, and implementation of policies and initiatives that promote equity. SECC has extensive experience in facilitating groups to achieve desired outcomes and synthesizing stakeholder input into clear, actionable recommendations.



Evidence-Based Technical Assistance

SECC provides expertise in identifying and compiling relevant and reliable evidence about what works in improving education outcomes. Extensive experience in applying evidence and research to inform decision-making and deep content knowledge allow SECC staff to provide strategic guidance in the development of policies and initiatives.



Implementation and Sustainability

SECC supports policy and initiative implementation through the development of a course of action. SECC has extensive experience with leading processes to assist state education agencies, districts, and schools in achieving specific tasks and outcomes outlined in the course of action, assessing progress, and documenting lessons learned to inform sustainability. SECC also provides support in developing guidance, training, tools, and other resources that are key to successful implementation and sustainability of initiatives.



Year 7 (October 2018–September 2019) Projects

PROJECT 1 | South Carolina Early Childhood

Purpose | To work with the South Carolina Department of Education's (SCDE) early childhood staff to provide appropriate school readiness resources and services to early childhood stakeholders and program providers.

Technical Assistance Approach | SECC assists SCDE with developing a statewide comprehensive literacy plan, including developing guidance with the state's multi-tier system of supports (MTSS) framework that must contain a common data-based problem-solving model, ongoing student assessment, and a layered continuum of supports using evidence-based practices.

PROJECT 2 | South Carolina Internal Systems

Purpose | To assist with reestablishing a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS), to support developing and implementing a holistic approach to managing and disseminating data among departments within the agency and external entities.

Technical Assistance Approach | SECC assists SCDE with developing processes and tools to manage and disseminate data among departments within the agency and external entities from and to local education agencies (LEAs), thus monitoring the communication and support system. This will be done by collaborating with the REL Southeast and SCDE staff thought partnering to establish a system for improving data-related supports (ownership, management, communication, etc.).

PROJECT 3 | South Carolina VirtualSC (Personalized Learning)

Purpose | To collaborate with SCDE to provide a database containing personalized learning resources, training, and TA for using the database. The goals of this project are to assist VirtualSC in supporting teachers in the areas of learner profiles, student ownership, learning pathways, and flexible learning environments.

Technical Assistance Approach | SECC supports teachers in providing differentiated supports for students to aid them in meeting the expectations of the profile of the South Carolina graduate. VirtualSC, REL Southeast, and SECC will design and populate a personalized learning resource database for VirtualSC teachers. VirtualSC teachers also will be able to contribute vetted resources to the database.

PROJECT 4 | Support for Implementing College- and Career-Ready Standards and Assessments

Purpose | To help SEAs strengthen their plans for implementing college- and career-ready standards (CCRS) and assessments.

Technical Assistance Approach | SECC supports SEAs in strengthening their plans for implementing CCRS and assessments via professional learning, facilitation, and provision of resources and learning opportunities through an online newsletter and webinars.

PROJECT 5 | Ensuring School Readiness Community of Practice

Purpose | To support SEAs and other agencies (birth to third grade) with early childhood (EC) initiatives and improvement efforts.

Technical Assistance Approach | SECC provides opportunities for cross-state collaboration, problem-solving, and networking via an interactive online site, online newsletter to deepen awareness of EC developments, and webinars in which states can participate in professional learning with experts in the field.

PROJECT 6 | Equity Dialogues: Increasing Opportunities to Improve Outcomes for Students

Purpose | To build the knowledge and skills of agency staff to support implementation of equity strategies by LEAs as the states implement their ESSA plans.

Technical Assistance Approach | SECC will facilitate one or more convenings of state and local leaders to share challenges and concerns in providing support to LEAs, share emails on topics of relevant interest, and provide a summary report of research-based strategies to address challenges faced by LEAs in implementing equitable educational opportunities across all student groups.



South Carolina

Highlights of Project Work in South Carolina (Years 1-7)



Low-Performing Schools Support

Developing SEA Support for Low-Performing Schools

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), with support from the Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC), developed a school improvement framework. SECC continued to provide support concerning the selection and use of evidence-based instructional practices based upon the SCDE evidence-based practices workbook, turnaround competencies for school leaders, and Center on School Turnaround strategies for rapid school improvement.

Low-Performing Schools Performance Management and Planning

SECC staff assisted SCDE in establishing a performance management system (Indistar) for identified low-performing schools (e.g., School Improvement Grant [SIG], Priority). This included developing monitoring and reporting tools and facilitating professional development in the use of Indistar as a continuous improvement process as well as a monitoring and reporting system. SECC staff facilitated a sustainability workshop and follow-up sessions to assist districts/schools in determining effective strategies and practices for continuation after funding streams end. SECC staff also assisted in planning and facilitation of a Technical Assistance (TA) Institute to support building the capacity of districts/schools to effectively implement improvement efforts.

Strengthening Systems of Recognition, Accountability and Support

SECC continued TA in the development of the SCDE System of Recognition, Accountability, and Support (SRAS) framework that describes how the SEA will do the following:

- Deliver differentiated services to districts/schools.
- Engage stakeholders in providing input around the quality of services provided by the SCDE to districts/schools.
- Continuously evaluate SRAS to make informed decisions about and effectively/efficiently deliver services.
- Ensure structures will be implemented at the SEA level to build the capacity of districts/school to lead the school improvement work at the local education agency (LEA) level.

Additionally, SCDE created a structure for ensuring these tasks are aligned with the tasks outlined in the state's flexibility waiver.

Strengthening SC Charter Schools

A major component of SCDE's vision for South Carolina was the development of high-quality choice options for parents, including charter schools. Current SECC staff assisted the Office of School Transformation's Charter School unit in reviewing and revising the charter school application and its process. SECC extended this support by leading the charter school office to finalize the newly revised charter school application and to develop and implement a peer-review process for new charter applicants.



Educator Effectiveness Support: Educator Evaluator Systems

SECC support centered on helping SCDE communicate with stakeholders about lessons learned in the SIG pilot, with plans for future support for the expanded 2013-2014 pilot and statewide implementation in 2014-2015. SECC assisted SCDE staff with development of guidance documents for the educator evaluation system (ESS), training materials for student learning objectives (SLO) training, and a toolkit for district and teacher use for various components of the educator evaluation system. SECC worked with SCDE staff to plan and develop materials for the Career and Technical Education (CATE) SLO training. Once the materials are developed, SECC staff will provide guidance and support for the TA session for CATE educators. Additionally, SECC led the development of exemplar personalized learning (PL) videos to assist SCDE with statewide implementation efforts. SECC staff also provided guidance and support for the TA session for CATE educators. During 2017-2018, SECC also assisted with garnering stakeholder perspectives regarding the role of SLOs in South Carolina's ESS. Based upon this work, the agency arrived at recommendations that informed their implementation next steps.



Personalized Learning

SECC partnered with the REL Southeast, the Center on Innovations in Learning, and the Center on College and Career Readiness and Success and provided training, resources, and TA on PL to educators and leaders in South Carolina. The goal of this project was to assist SCDE in supporting teachers and students in the areas of learning technologies, competency-based education, and personal competencies. SECC is assisting SCDE in the provision of a repository containing PL resources, training, and TA for using the database. The goals of this project are to assist VirtualSC in supporting teachers in the areas of learner profiles, student ownership, learning pathways, and flexible learning environments. Additionally, SECC led the development of exemplar PL videos to assist SCDE with statewide implementation efforts.



Internal Systems

SECC staff will support SCDE with reestablishing a statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) under the state's new reorganization and leadership. This project aims to provide support with developing and implementing a holistic approach to managing and disseminating data among departments within the agency and external entities.



Early Childhood

SECC is working with the South Carolina Department of Education's early childhood staff to provide appropriate school readiness resources and services to early childhood stakeholders and program providers.

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