



**SPARTANBURG  
ACADEMIC MOVEMENT**

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**SUPPORTING ACHIEVEMENT  
COUNTY WIDE, CRADLE TO CAREER.**

**SAM PREFACE**

**SPRING 2014**



**SPARTANBURG  
ACADEMIC MOVEMENT**

# SAM PREFACE...

This document is the starting point of the Spartanburg Academic Movement. We call it "SAM Preface." Its purpose, as with any preface, is to chart the territory.

Next year at this time, we will publish "SAM Chapter One." And with each successive year, as the Movement gains momentum, SAM will publish additional chapters, extending three year goals, reviewing progress, and celebrating the academic accomplishments of the schools and the colleges, the families and the children of Spartanburg County.

-John C. Stockwell  
Executive Director  
May 2014

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# THE MOVEMENT

## WHAT IS "THE SPARTANBURG ACADEMIC MOVEMENT"?

**IS IT A POLITICAL CAUSE OR A FASHION OR A TREND? A RESTRUCTURING, A REINVENTION, A RELOCATION?**

**NONE OF THE ABOVE.**

It is a commitment shared by educators, leaders, and communities across Spartanburg County, South Carolina that our children will grow into well-educated, independent adults.

It is a commitment to increase the importance we place on academic achievement for every child, from cradle to career ... from pre-school to post-secondary completion.

It is a commitment to assure that our young people gain the education required for life and work in a post-textile economy, an economy that requires specialized knowledge to be successful.

It is a sustaining commitment across our urban and rural county of 288,000 people, linking the incredible resources we already have in place – our schools, colleges, and non-profit educational support partners.

It is a commitment to focus their unique missions on persistent and targeted gains in academic achievement at every stage of learning.

This commitment – standing alone among all the commitments we can make – will do the most to advance our indicators of community well-being: civic and public health, social and natural environments, and economic development.

*"I can think of no other program of the last half century that is more important or more critical to the health of our community and to our children and their children as SAM."*

**-George Dean Johnson, Jr.  
Entrepreneur & Community Leader**



## SPARTANBURG COMMUNITY INDICATORS PROJECT



For many years, Spartanburg County has reported progress on key issues that are the clearest indicators of quality of life, through the Community Indicators Project (SCIP).

The goal of the SCIP is to report data on community well-being, to inspire dialogue and strategy that leads to positive change within the County. SCIP is a collaboration of The Spartanburg County Foundation, United Way of the Piedmont, Spartanburg County, and the University of South Carolina Upstate.

SCIP tracks 6 indicators: Civic Health, Public Health, Social Environments, Natural Environments, Economic Development, and Education.

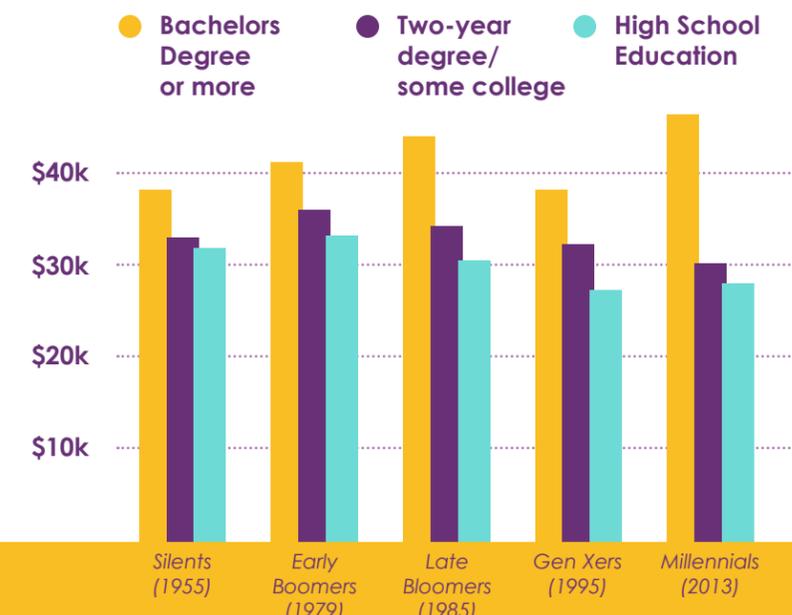
## OUR ROLE

SAM's role is to turn the "education indicator" into an "education movement"; and, in so doing, to drive the educator indicators upward. A very likely corollary of SAM's success will be positive changes in every one of the other five indicators as well.

Check out the Spartanburg Community Indicators Project at [StrategicSpartanburg.org](http://StrategicSpartanburg.org). Get the full reports. Volunteer to participate in the Project, share opinions, spread the word, and encourage others to do the same.

### EARNINGS OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH AND WITHOUT COLLEGE DEGREES

Income is not the only way of measuring the growing importance of educational achievement, but it is a reliable index. In recent years, the gap has widened between the earning power of a bachelor's degree holder and others, illustrating the growing importance of education in the "knowledge economy" of the new millennium.





# THE STORY

## FOR GENERATIONS,

**SPARTANBURG COUNTY WAS A TEXTILE-DRIVEN ECONOMY. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT WAS NOT A "CULTURAL VALUE."**

Most mills are gone. The demands of the economy have escalated radically, but commitment to academic achievement has not kept pace.

In 2008, the Chamber of Commerce assembled the "Task Force on College Degree Attainment," charged to examine the connection between economic development and educational achievement. At that time, 19.2% of adults 25 and older held bachelor's degree, with the state average at 22.7%, and the nation at 27%. Regions with dynamic economies boasted rates above 40%. Spartanburg County was not in the game.

Leading the list of Task Force recommendations was "The 40/30 Challenge" – to double the number of adult bachelor's degree holders to 40% by 2030.

In 2010, the Spartanburg County Foundation established and funded "The College Hub," a non-profit charged to address this single benchmark. The College Hub began its work by encouraging increasing numbers of young people to go to college and adults to return to complete degrees.

Though the "40/30 Challenge" remains the gold standard, the College Hub Board of Directors began to recognize that the challenge could not be realized unless all points on the academic continuum were advancing at the same time.

***In 2012, two developments motivated a change in the efforts of The College Hub.***

First was the College Hub's merger with another non-profit, the Children's Services Alliance. The Alliance, also launched in 2008, served as a network engaging pre-K providers and agencies.

The combined boards recognized that each had been working at extreme ends of the same education continuum. They also recognized that advancing academic achievement across the entire learning continuum was required if "The 40/30 Challenge" was to be realized.

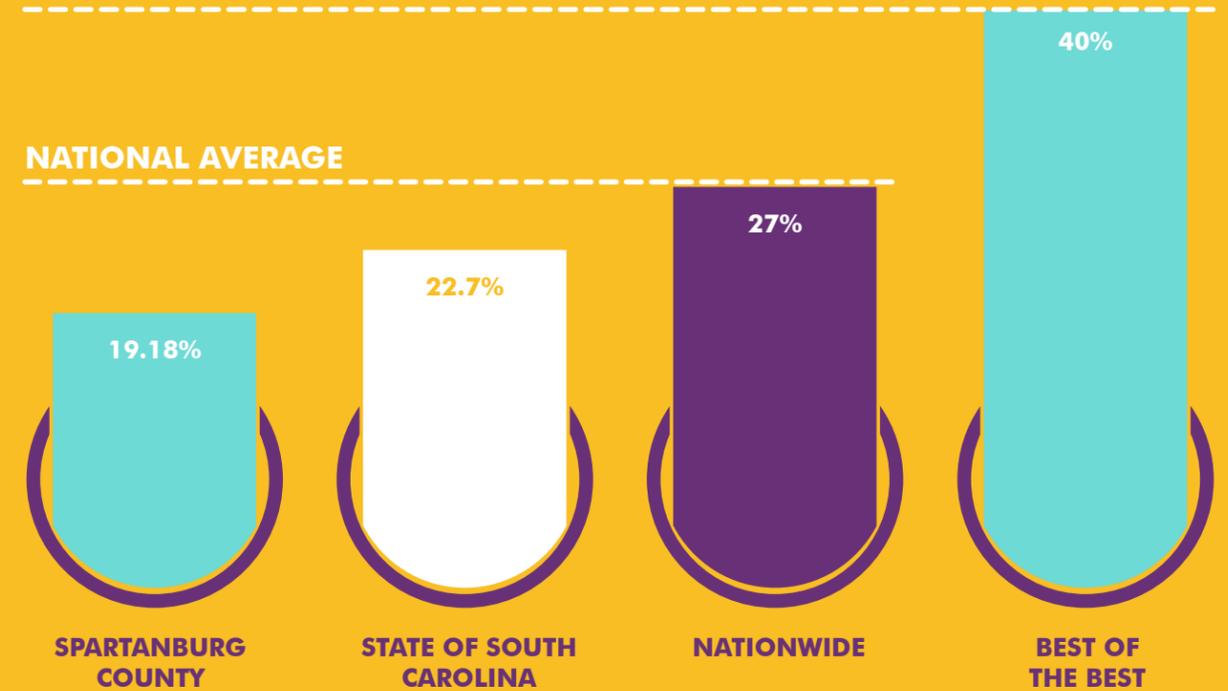
A second development was the discovery of "Strive ... Every Child, Cradle to Career," a collective impact model for community-wide change, developed and launched across the school districts of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.

With this discovery, everything changed for the College Hub: the challenge, the

## PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS 25 YEARS OR OLDER WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE.

### OUR GOAL

### NATIONAL AVERAGE



model, the goals, the strategies, the metrics, the objectives, the funding, the staffing ... even the name.

No longer just "college" or "kindergarten readiness." No longer isolated points on the continuum. Indeed, no longer a "hub" ... but a "movement." The Spartanburg Academic Movement.

Now, the Board and its growing number of Partners are asking citizens and institutions to "join the movement."

No excuses. Every child must be ready to learn to read when they enter school; reading to learn by third grade; succeeding in

eighth grade math to manage the rigors of high school math and science; graduating high school prepared to achieve a post-secondary credential.

Spartanburg County's schools are leading the SAM Partnership ... innovating, reinventing, accelerating, and delivering. And SAM is calling on the rest of the County – children, parents, neighbors, faith communities, employers, non-profits, foundations – to awaken to the crucial importance of academic achievement for every child, cradle to career.



# THE “StriveTogether NETWORK”

## StriveTogether

The Spartanburg Academic Movement replicates a national model – a “collective impact” model.

Beginning in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky six years ago, more than 300 leaders of organizations decided to focus

agreements were signed by educators, corporate leaders, foundations, governments, and faith communities.

“Strive” Partners developed “collaborative action networks” across sectors, pursuing specific performance targets.

Six years later, “Strive” is getting what it measures, including a 9% rise in kindergarten readiness, an 11% increase in high school graduation, and a 10% increase in college enrollment.

In recent years, the “Strive” model has been adopted by other communities across the country. Early leaders include Milwaukee, Portland, Twin Cities, Dayton, Dallas, Albuquerque, and others.

At present, there are over 75 “Strive Together” network member communities. Spartanburg County is among them.

In December 2013, SAM (previously certified by the Network as an “exploring” partnership) received certification as an “emerging” partnership. Presently, SAM is pursuing strategies that will position the Movement for “sustaining” partnership certification by the StriveTogether Network by the end of 2014.

Visit [strivetogether.org](http://strivetogether.org) for more information on the StriveTogether Network.



on a region-wide approach to improving student achievement. They named their collaboration “Strive ... Every Child, Cradle to Career.”

Rather than adding services or programs, “Strive” built upon existing assets. Its impact came from a shared commitment to data-defined targets of academic achievement at every level. Partnership

“What if enterprises across Spartanburg County – from major corporations to media, from foundations to faith communities, from non-profits to neighborhood associations – joined as partners, committing to a shared sense of purpose ... to ‘doing good’ for our children, cradle to career?.”

-Joe Salley  
President/CEO, Milliken & Company

“The feature of SAM that most energizes the superintendents of Spartanburg’s seven school districts is the ‘Partnership Agreement’ signed by growing numbers of leaders across the County, all committing their support to our efforts to drive academic achievement upward.”

-Ron Garner  
Superintendent, Spartanburg District #1





# THE MISSION

## SAM IS AN “ALL-IN PARTNERSHIP”

**WE’RE AN ALL-IN PARTNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, BUSINESSES, GOVERNMENTS, FOUNDATIONS, FAITH COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS ACROSS SPARTANBURG COUNTY IN PURSUIT OF HIGH LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT BY...**

- 1.** Measuring academic accomplishments that matter – cradle to career
- 2.** Setting achievement targets that escalate annually
- 3.** Aligning networks in pursuit of these targets
- 4.** Reporting progress with persistent regularity

## OUR VISION

**A COUNTY-WIDE CULTURE THAT VALUES EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT, AND A ROBUST ECONOMY THAT DEMONSTRATES THAT VALUE.**

## WHAT IS AN “ALL-IN PARTNERSHIP”?

The great treasures of Spartanburg County are its schools, colleges, and education non-profits. They support learning at every level, and make substantial differences in the educational lives of citizens. There is little need for additional programming.

There is great need, however, for a carefully structured effort to focus the entire community on a single set of goals, measured in the same way. And there is great potential in bringing together leaders across the County to intensify that focus by asserting their influence, support, and advocacy on the accomplishment of those goals.

Through alignment rather than isolation, through focus on measures shared in common, through sharing of best practices and working in concert ..., in short, through the collective impact of an “all-in partnership,” we can reach our academic achievement goals and create a county-wide culture that values and benefits from that achievement.



## SAM MOVES BEYOND INDIVIDUAL AGENDAS TO “COLLECTIVE IMPACT.”

Rather than addressing one point on the educational journey, the Movement seeks to coordinate improvements at every stage, from cradle to career.

And, rather than favoring one approach or program over another from stage to stage, the Movement creates “collaborative action networks” of educators and educational non-profits working at various learning stages, identifying best practices, learning from one another, and aiming toward the same improvement targets.

*“Like wildflowers, collaborative action network partners will continue to grow in their own way, rooted in their own soil and taking their own form, while oriented toward a single source of energy: county-wide targets of achievement. Collaboration can make all the difference.”*

**-John Stockwell  
SAM Executive Director**



# THE SAM PARTNERSHIP

## SAM GATHERS PARTNERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTY

**TRANSFORMING CHILDREN INTO EDUCATED, INDEPENDENT ADULTS IS THE JOB OF US ALL.**

The Movement is in the early stages of aligning Partners. About 100 have signed on so far; and we expect the number to double over the coming months.

Among the early signers of Partnership Agreements – listed near the end of this document -- are the following:

- » Seven school districts ...the first signers of SAM partnership agreements
- » Seven colleges and a growing number of independent schools
- » Education non-profits from pre-school through adult learning services
- » Faith communities and foundations
- » County Council and municipal governments
- » Corporations and small businesses
- » Service organizations and individuals

Some Partners are actively engaged in networks focused on improving performance at various stages of learning. Others are providing advocacy and financial support to the Movement. Still others have signed Partnership Agreements simply because they believe deeply in the purpose of the Movement and seek to add value wherever possible.

There is no limit to the numbers of Partners the Movement can engage. Every enterprise and individual with a deep interest in advancing educational achievement is invited to join by signing the Partnership Agreement and supporting the Movement by means best suited to its interests and character.



# JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

DOWNLOAD A "PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT" ONLINE AT [LEARNWITHSAM.ORG](http://LEARNWITHSAM.ORG)

*"The Spartanburg County Council voted unanimously to sign a partnership agreement with the Spartanburg Academic Movement. Council took this action without hesitation and in recognition that the academic achievement of our young people is one of the most important economic development investments we can make in the future of our county."*

*-Katherine L. O'Neill  
Spartanburg County Administrator*



**SPARTANBURG**  
• ACADEMIC MOVEMENT •

This is an agreement that aligns Partners and their organizations across Spartanburg County in support of the Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM), a long-term, sustaining, county-wide movement in pursuit of high academic achievement at every level from cradle to career.

This movement aims toward a significant generational gain in educational attainment, particularly post-secondary attainment; and toward a county-wide culture shift that places ever higher value on education.

Partners recognize that the economic competitiveness and social well-being of Spartanburg County is heavily dependent upon the workforce readiness and post-secondary achievement of its citizens.

Partners recognize that academic achievement rates at every level county-wide must move upward if post-secondary achievement rates are to improve substantially. No isolated intervention can accomplish this purpose. The challenge is large-scale; and large-scale, cross-sector collaboration is required.

Partners recognize that the large-scale providers in Spartanburg County are its public and private schools and colleges; and that it is only through them and in partnership with them that improvements "at scale" in educational achievement can be realized.

Partners support the pursuit of a shared set of achievement measures at each stage of the academic continuum, cradle to career; and to escalating targets of achievement on every measure, distinguishing Spartanburg County from its competitor counties across the state, the region, and the nation.

.....  
**PARTNER NAME + TITLE**

.....  
**ORGANIZATION**

.....  
**E-MAIL ADDRESS**

.....  
**PHONE NUMBER**

.....  
**ADDRESS**

.....  
**SIGNATURE + DATE**

## PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

### PARTNERS COMMIT TO THE FOLLOWING:

- To support efforts to ensure that every child in Spartanburg County is prepared for and succeeds in school, enrolls in some form of postsecondary education, and graduates and enters a career.
- To promote the effective use of data and commit to championing data driven decision-making; and to pursue agreed-upon trajectories and targets for continuous improvement on key metrics at each achievement level, cradle to career.
- To meet bi-annually as the "Partner Roundtable" to review progress toward goals, to "deep dive" into data and implications, to identify key issues for action, and to undertake appropriate support roles. Each Partner will make every effort to attend 100% of the Partner Roundtable meetings, and designate a permanent proxy to attend when they are unable to do so.
- Partners commit themselves or their designees to work as needed within collaborative action networks, which may be convened to pursue strategies for achieving results on priority outcomes.



The strategies of the Spartanburg Academic Movement are modeled after "Strive," a similar initiative launched in the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky MSA, which has experienced notable success. "Strive" models have since been implemented in several cities and counties around the country. For more information on the Strive network, visit [www.strivetogether.org](http://www.strivetogether.org)

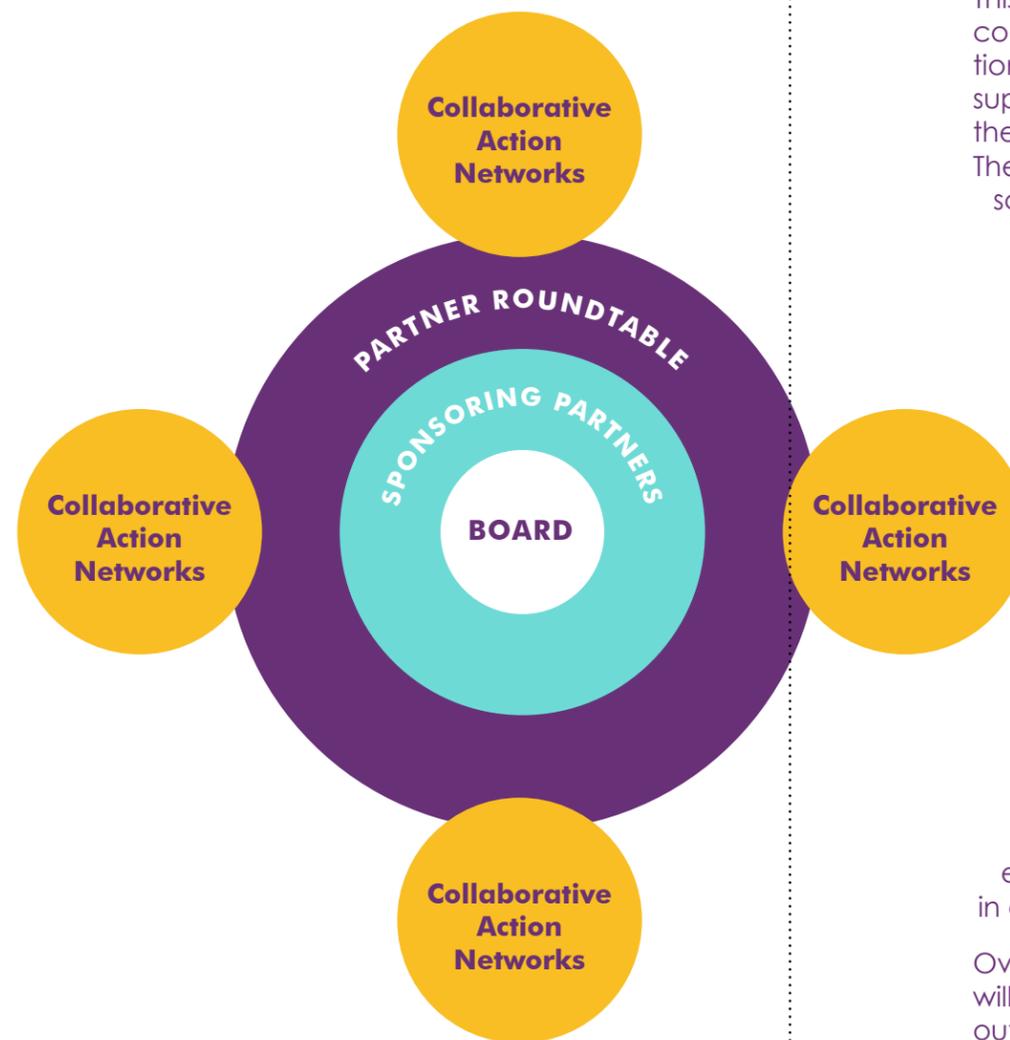




# HOW SAM WORKS

## SAM FOCUSES ON MEASURING AND SUPPORTING, ADVOCATING AND REPORTING.

- » In concert with school districts and educators county-wide, SAM focuses on academic performance at critical learning stages along the “cradle to career” journey, from school readiness through post-secondary completion.
- » SAM establishes achievement goals for each learning stage, and uses county-wide data to measure performance in the belief that we will get what we measure.
- » SAM develops and supports “collaborative action networks” of educators and education non-profits, working together to achieve these academic goals.
- » And SAM develops an active advocacy agenda supporting our county’s schools at every opportunity, and encouraging state and national policy in support of academic achievement in Spartanburg County.
- » Finally, in the spring of each year, SAM will publish progress updates on academic performance, and on Partners’ efforts to reach our county-wide goals.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(SEE PAGE 49)

At SAM's core is the Board of Directors, providing continuity to the Movement. The Board sets the long-term vision for the Movement, defines its mission, and develops its strategic plan. It recruits

partners, assists in raising funds to sustain operations, guides the work of the staff, and plays the central role in sustaining county-wide leadership commitment to the Movement.

## PARTNER ROUNDTABLE

This large and ever growing group is composed of individuals and organizations across the County committed to supporting, enlivening, and sustaining the Spartanburg Academic Movement. The Roundtable includes leadership in schools, colleges, non-profits, philanthropies, corporations, businesses, faith communities, and city and county governments.

Some members elect to be “Sponsoring Partners,” providing direct financial support for the Movement’s operations or specific collaborative projects. Members of the Board of Directors are numbered among the “Sponsoring Partners.”

For information on becoming a member of the “Partner Roundtable” or to be a “Sponsoring Partner,” visit [LearnWithSam.org](http://LearnWithSam.org).

## “COLLABORATIVE ACTION NETWORKS”

The tool SAM uses to establish and pursue achievement goals and to share best practices is the collaborative action network. Common to StriveTogether efforts around the country, these networks are composed of practitioners across related fields of educational endeavor, drawn from schools, colleges, and educational non-profits; and are convened to encourage measurable improvement in educational outcomes.

Over time, collaborative action networks will be assembled to focus on improving outcomes at various stages of learning, leveraging existing resources, and advancing best practices. For example:

- » School Readiness Collaborative Action Network
- » Third Grade Reading and Math Collaborative Action Network
- » High School Readiness Collaborative Action Network
- » Career Readiness Collaborative Action Network

If you are in a position to help SAM develop collaborative solutions to advance the metrics on one learning stage or another and wish to join a “Collaborative Action Network,” visit [LearnWithSam.org](http://LearnWithSam.org).





# SPARTANBURG COUNTY

## THE SEVEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

### DISTRICT 1

Inman/Landrum/Campobello and Northwest County

### DISTRICT 2

Boiling Springs/Chesnee and Northeast County

### DISTRICT 3

Cowpens/Pacolet and East Central County

### DISTRICT 4

Woodruff and Southwest County

### DISTRICT 5

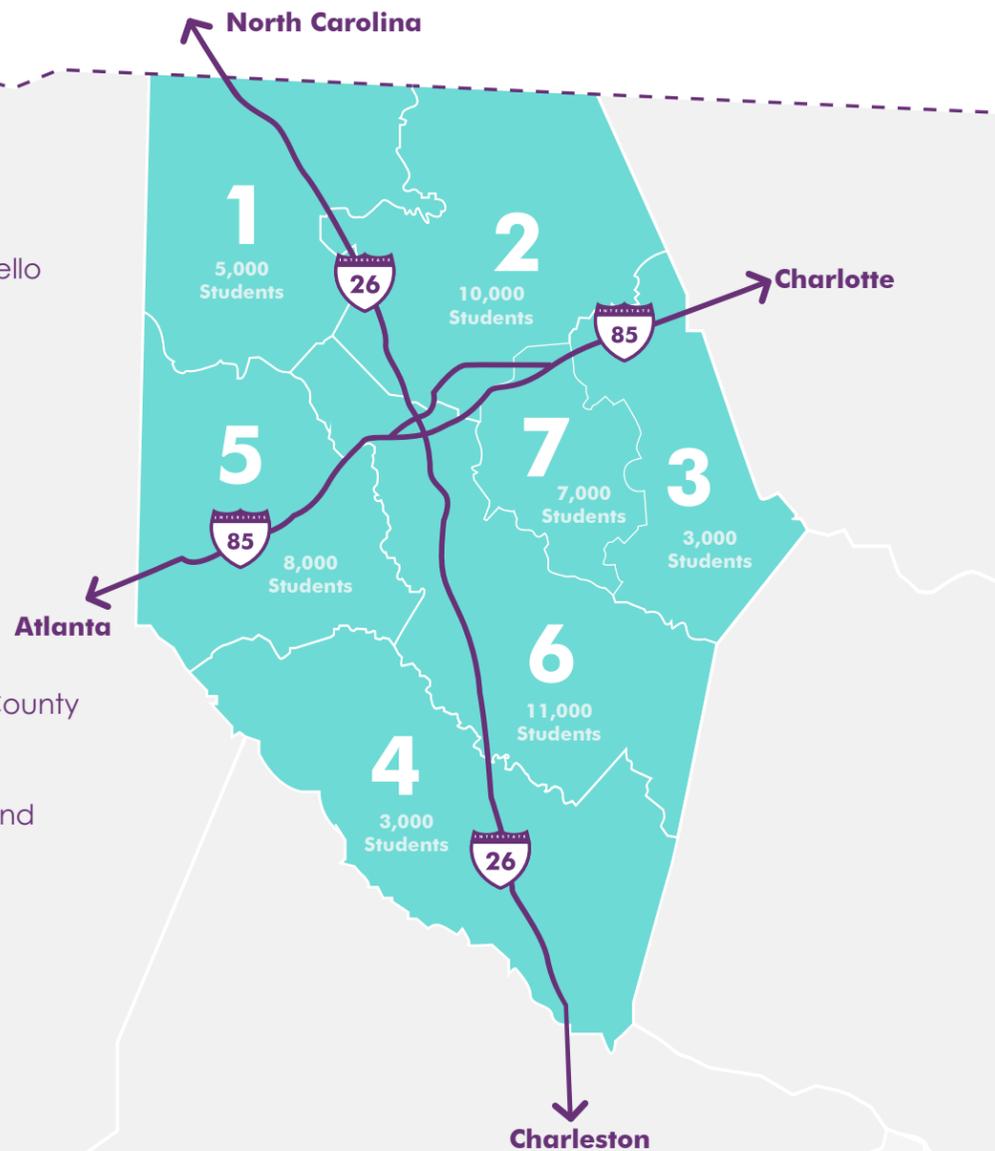
Lyman/Duncan/Wellford and Central West County

### DISTRICT 6

Westside Spartanburg City and Central County

### DISTRICT 7

Central and Eastside Spartanburg City



## ENROLLMENT IN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS RACE/ETHNICITY

SCHOOL DISTRICT	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	TOTALS
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	5,048	10,040	2,896	2,822	7,731	11,036	7,158	46,731
WHITE	4,184	7,365	2,183	2,118	5,218	5,150	2,363	28,581
BLACK	494	1,290	474	454	1,652	3,656	4,140	12,160
HISPANIC	242	887	164	218	630	1,687	403	4,231
OTHER	128	498	75	32	231	543	252	1,759

Source: State Department of Education, 180 Day Headcount, Pre-K through Grade 12, July 2013.

## SAM'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SCHOOLS

**THE FIRST SIGNERS OF SAM "PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS" WERE THE COUNTY'S SEVEN SUPERINTENDENTS AND ITS SEVEN COLLEGE PRESIDENTS.**

These are SAM's most crucial Partners. If an "at scale" impact on academic achievement is to be accomplished, it will be owned by the "at scale" providers: our schools and colleges.

**AMONG SPARTANBURG COUNTY'S GREATEST ASSETS ARE ITS SEVEN SCHOOL DISTRICTS.**

They are competitive, yet collaborative. They innovate; they learn quickly; they build on the successes of one another. Their operations are uniquely structured to meet the needs of the communities they serve. Each of our seven districts is among the leaders in the state on one measure or another. And each is very well led with capable and dedicated teachers and staff.

**OUR SCHOOLS ARE ALREADY DELIVERING NOTABLE IMPROVEMENTS IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.**

County-wide numbers on nearly all of SAM's core indicators have climbed every year, from 2010 to the present, and the upside gains beyond statewide averages are growing.

### SPARTANBURG'S 7 COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

- » **Associate Degree Colleges**  
Spartanburg Community College  
Spartanburg Methodist College
- » **Private Liberal Arts Colleges**  
Converse College  
Wofford College
- » **University of South Carolina Upstate**
- » **Post-Graduate Colleges**  
Sherman College of Chiropractic  
Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine



# INDICATORS AND MEASUREMENT

There are seven core indicators of the Spartanburg Academic Movement. They represent critically important “stages” in the educational lives of our young people; stages by which academic success must be achieved, or the consequences will be negative and life-altering.

- 1. School Readiness
- 2. Third Grade Reading
- 3. Third Grade Math
- 4. Eighth Grade Language Arts
- 5. Eighth Grade Math
- 6. High School Completion
- 7. Post-secondary Completion

Three-year rolling targets are proposed for each stage, leading toward achievement of the “40/30 Challenge,” the ultimate target metric of SAM.

*“... What you measure is what you get. More likely, what you measure is all you'll get. What you don't (or can't) measure is lost.”*

-H. Thomas Johnson, Ph.D.  
Quality Management  
Portland State University

## MEASURING IMPROVEMENT

### HOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT ARE WE ANTICIPATING FOR EACH OF THE SEVEN STAGES OF LEARNING? AND BY WHEN?

One option is to project where we want to be on each stage in a generation ... say, by 2030, as with the “40/30 Challenge.” Although this is a helpful way to picture our ultimate vision of the future, it is not useful in assessing the continuous improvement required to get us there.

Consequently, the Board of Directors has accepted its data team's recommendation to set a series of three-year rolling targets for each of the seven stages of learning. Successive annual “SAM Chapters” will assess progress toward these targets, and add additional “third year targets,” always keeping in mind the long-range improvement trajectories required to reach the “40/30 Challenge” ... 40% of adults with bachelor's degrees by 2030.

The three-year targets for each learning stage are:

#### SUSTAINING

an upward trajectory year after year;

#### CHALLENGING

ambitious and achievable

#### EQUITABLE

accounting for differential circumstances; e.g., household income

## VISUALIZING THE DATA

Throughout this document, current metrics and three-year targets will be presented in this format.





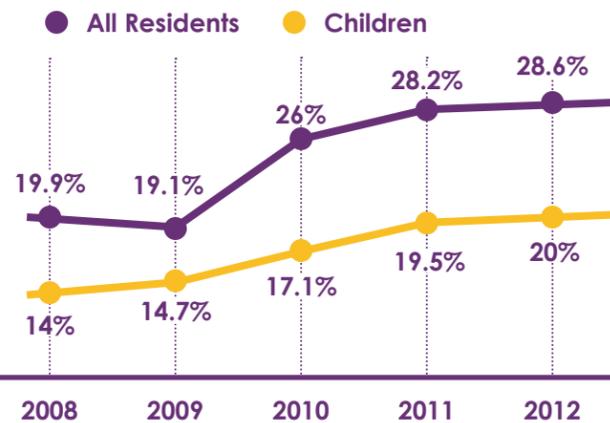
# HOUSEHOLD INCOME

## A CROSS-CUTTING INDICATOR

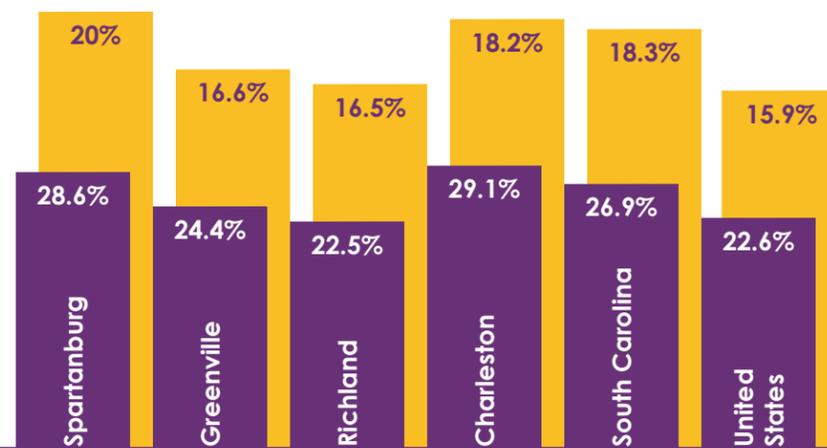
All things are not equal for children moving through the stages of learning. There are "cross-cutting" variables that interfere with progress. In Spartanburg County, household income is chief among them.

### SPARTANBURG RESIDENTS IN POVERTY, 5 YEAR TREND

According to 2012 U.S. Census data, 15.9% of the nation's population had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). In Spartanburg County, 20% lived below the FPL, while 28.6% of the County's children under age 18 (68,940) lived below the FPL. And poverty has increased annually in Spartanburg County since 2007.



● All Residents ● Children



### PERCENT LIVING IN POVERTY, 2012

Compared with peer counties (Charleston, Greenville, and Richland), the state of South Carolina and the nation, Spartanburg County has the highest poverty rate among all residents and – with the exception of Charleston County – among our children.

## STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR MEAL SUBSIDY

The most reliable indicator of low economic status among our public school children is the number for whom family income makes students eligible for free or reduced meal plans. The percentages vary across the County's seven districts; however, the numbers range above 50% in each district, with a county-wide average of 57%, one percentage point below the state average.

### ENROLLMENT IN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS SUBSIDIZED MEALS

SCHOOL DISTRICT	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN	TOTALS	STATE
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	5,048	10,040	2,896	2,822	7,731	11,036	7,158	46,731	728,486
SUBSIDIZED MEALS	2,693	5,236	1,835	1,631	3,903	6,534	5,031	26,863	424,634
% SUBSIDIZED MEALS	53%	52%	63%	58%	50%	59%	70%	57%	58%

Source: State Department of Education, 180 Day Headcount, Pre-K through Grade 12, July 2013.

### THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ECONOMIC STATUS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT EVERY STAGE OF LEARNING – CRADLE TO CAREER – IS SUBSTANTIAL AND REQUIRES SPECIAL ATTENTION.

Consequently, for every stage of learning, SAM will look not only at the county-wide performance of all children, but also at performance for children of low income households; that is, children in school eligible for free and reduced meals.

Without question, the gaps in the early years of the Spartanburg Academic Movement will be notable and disturbing. Working through the schools and non-profits, SAM's objective over time

will be to see those gaps close ... to see all children performing well, regardless of household income as a cross-cutting indicator.

Supporting academic achievement of children of low income families will be a special focus of SAM's "collaborative action networks."

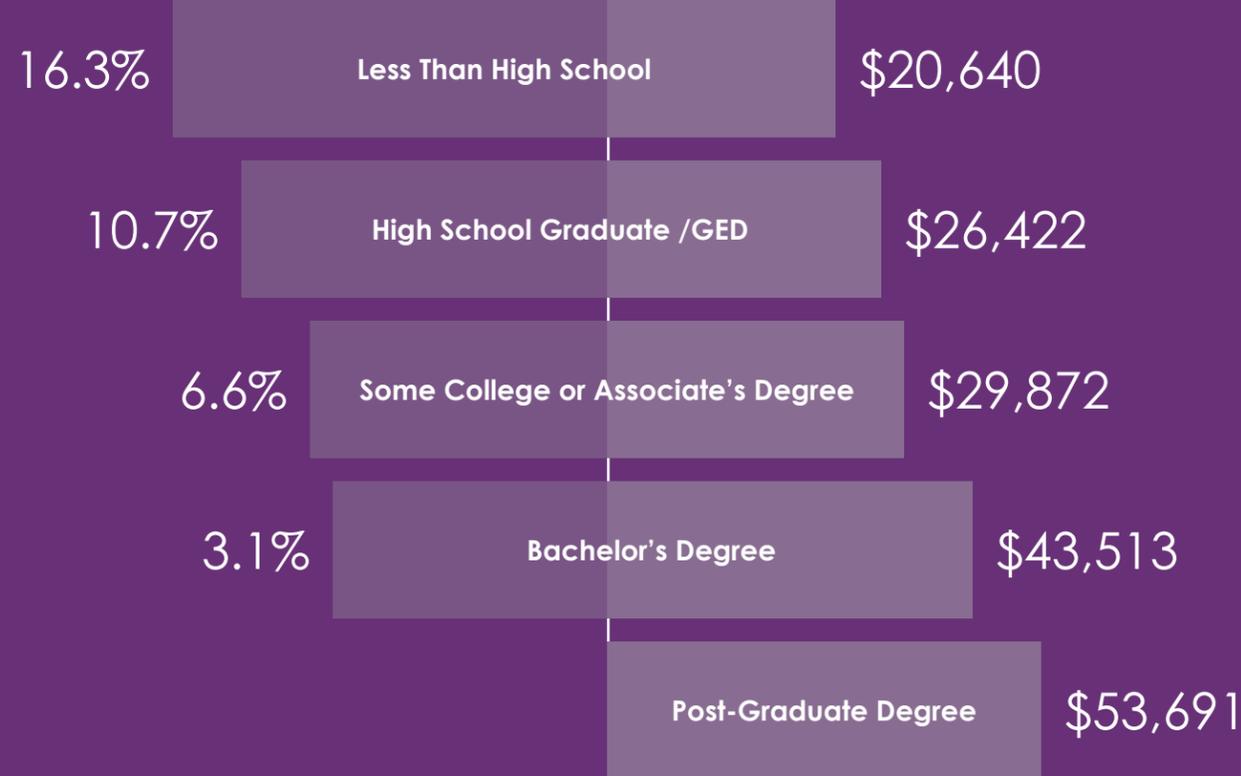


# POVERTY IS THE CHALLENGE

Poverty is both a predictor and an outcome of low educational attainment and poverty is the greatest challenge we face in advancing the Spartanburg Academic Movement.

## UNEMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

SPARTANBURG COUNTY RESIDENTS AGE 25+, 2012



## MEDIAN EARNINGS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

SPARTANBURG COUNTY RESIDENTS AGE 25+, 2012

# THE SAM DATA TEAM

Superintendents of Spartanburg County's seven school districts have each named a senior level officer to sit down together with a data coordinator from the SAM staff and the director of the USC Upstate's Metropolitan Studies Institute to form the SAM Data Team. This team establishes academic achievement targets and trajectories, and assembles the data used to assess accomplishment.

The Team's mission is to assure that all academic goals and achievement reports are solidly grounded in valid and reliable county-wide data.



*"Our county's schools represent our greatest responsibility and house our most important treasures – our children. High expectations shape their vision and – with our support – high achievement shapes their future."*

**-William Barnet III  
SAM Board Member  
CEO, The Barnet Company  
Founding Chair, SC Ed Oversight Committee**



In setting academic achievement targets, SAM is not alone in South Carolina. The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) is a group of educators, business people, and officials appointed by the legislature and governor to set standards for continuous improvement in the state's K-12 educational system.

The EOC's vision: "by the year 2020, all students in South Carolina will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete successfully in the global economy, participate in a democratic society, and contribute positively as members of families and communities" (EOC.SC.gov).



# SCHOOL READINESS

**“SCHOOL READINESS” IS THE FIRST AND, WE WOULD ARGUE, THE MOST CRITICAL OF THE SEVEN STAGES OF LEARNING FOR WHICH SAM WILL SET TARGETS OF IMPROVEMENT.**

**HOWEVER, SAM IS NOT YET IN A POSITION TO SET “SCHOOL READINESS” TARGETS**

## WHY NOT?

There is no consensus about what to measure. And one thing we know for sure: we will not get what we cannot measure.

## IS THERE MOVEMENT TOWARD CONSENSUS?

Yes. South Carolina is making important moves on the answer; and Spartanburg County is helping to lead the way.

United Way organizations state-wide, the Children’s Hospital Network, and others are pushing for a comprehensive early childhood policy in South Carolina, urging the State Legislature to give this agenda top priority attention in 2014.

And, South Carolina is one of ten geographically dispersed states comprising the “K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium,” pushing a national commitment to develop early learning assessment

processes giving teachers, parents, and policy makers effective and clear information on where children are in school readiness.

South Carolina’s Institute for Child Success is undertaking important work in defining and assessing school readiness and in offering guidance to policy makers; though they are careful to caution that assessments alone are not sufficient to demonstrate which early childhood programs, teachers, or curricula are effective in helping students to learn.

*“The research is clear that while all children can benefit from early education, children who are from low-income backgrounds reap the greatest benefits .... In light of limited funding, one question local and state policy makers might consider is whether South Carolina should focus its efforts on providing the highest quality program possible for [this] targeted population ....”*

**-Molly Griggs, M.Ed.  
Institute for Child Success  
“Public 4K in South Carolina”**

*“... In the United States, our hodgepodge of early childhood education programs takes the cake for fragmentation. Imagine being an elementary school principal, but not knowing whether your incoming kindergartners had been in any educational environment prior to age 5.”*

**-Clare McCann and Alex Holt  
edcentral.org**





*“The achievement gap opens up early in life and is persistent. Once a child enters school behind his or her peers, without costly and time-intensive interventions, it is unlikely that child will ever catch up.”*

**-Kim McAbee**  
Principal, Woodruff Primary School



## SPARTANBURG COUNTY'S LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENT

SAM has developed the “Toolkit for Kindergarten Readiness,” providing important developmental guidance to parents and early childhood educators, and information to kindergarten teachers about children’s pre-school learning experiences.

The Mary Black Foundation, a local funder, is emerging as a critical catalyst – locally, statewide, and beyond – in assessing quality early learning experiences for children. The Foundation serves on the “K-3 Formative Assessment Consortium” and the “SC Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Steering Committee.” The Mary Black Foundation is leading the early childhood movement in the County, and is joined by numerous partners including corporate and community leaders.

Through a partnership with Spartanburg County First Steps, the Foundation supports “Quality Counts,” a system of continuous quality improvement designed to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Since its inception in January 2012, “Quality Counts” has enrolled 41% of Spartanburg County’s 92 licensed early care and education programs (serving over 1,700 children). These programs receive a 1-5 star rating together with support and training to improve the quality of programs.



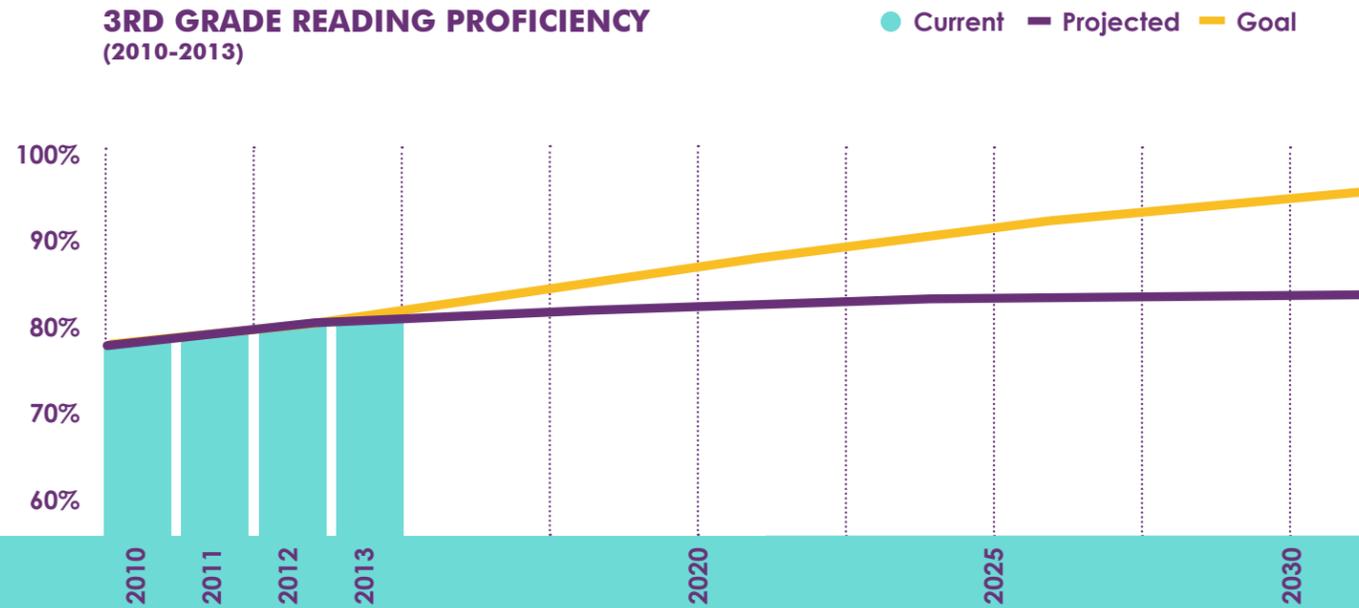
### THE MARY BLACK FOUNDATION IS ANCHORING SAM'S “SCHOOL READINESS COLLABORATIVE ACTION NETWORK.”

So, although SAM is not in a position to set “school readiness” targets in this document, we do anticipate that – through the work of the “School Readiness Collaborative Action Network,” “SAM Chapter One” will be published next year with three-year targets for improving important indicators of school readiness.

# 3RD GRADE

## READING

**3RD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY (2010-2013)**



**IF CHILDREN CANNOT READ PROFICIENTLY IN THIRD GRADE, THEY FALL BEHIND. AND THE ACADEMIC GAP WILL GROW EACH YEAR THEREAFTER.**

County-wide, 3rd grade reading proficiency has improved annually since 2010; and, each year, our average has moved ahead of the state-wide average. This trend is positive and, if continued at the same rate, will lead to a modestly improved “reading to learn” foundation for most of our 3rd grade children.

However, reading proficiency for 3rd grade children in low-income households lags notably; and this holds back the overall improvement curve, requiring much more aggressive targets in the coming years than the current improvement trend line predicts.

*“Teaching children to read is almost certainly the single most important measure we can take to fight income inequality.”*

**-Fred Logan  
Principal, Cleveland Academy  
of Leadership**

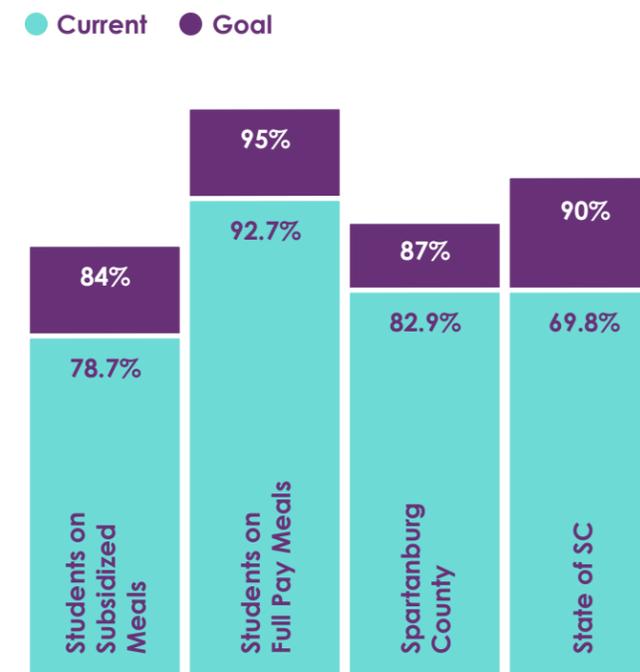
## BY THIRD GRADE, READING PROFICIENCY SHIFTS FROM “LEARNING TO READ” TO “READING TO LEARN.”

### “SUMMER SLIDE” IS ONE OF THE CORE CHALLENGES TO 3RD GRADE READING.

“Summer slide” is the name typically given to the loss of proficiency that occurs over the summer months. In contrast to children who have access to summer learning support, children in low income households are susceptible to loss of proficiency measured in weeks if not months each year; and the cumulative loss by the beginning of 4th grade may be a year or more.

Drawing on the collective impact capacity of numerous educational non-profits across Spartanburg County, SAM will organize the “Third Grade Reading and Math Collaborative Action Network” to focus efforts on helping children read well by 3rd grade, with particular focus on children of low income households.

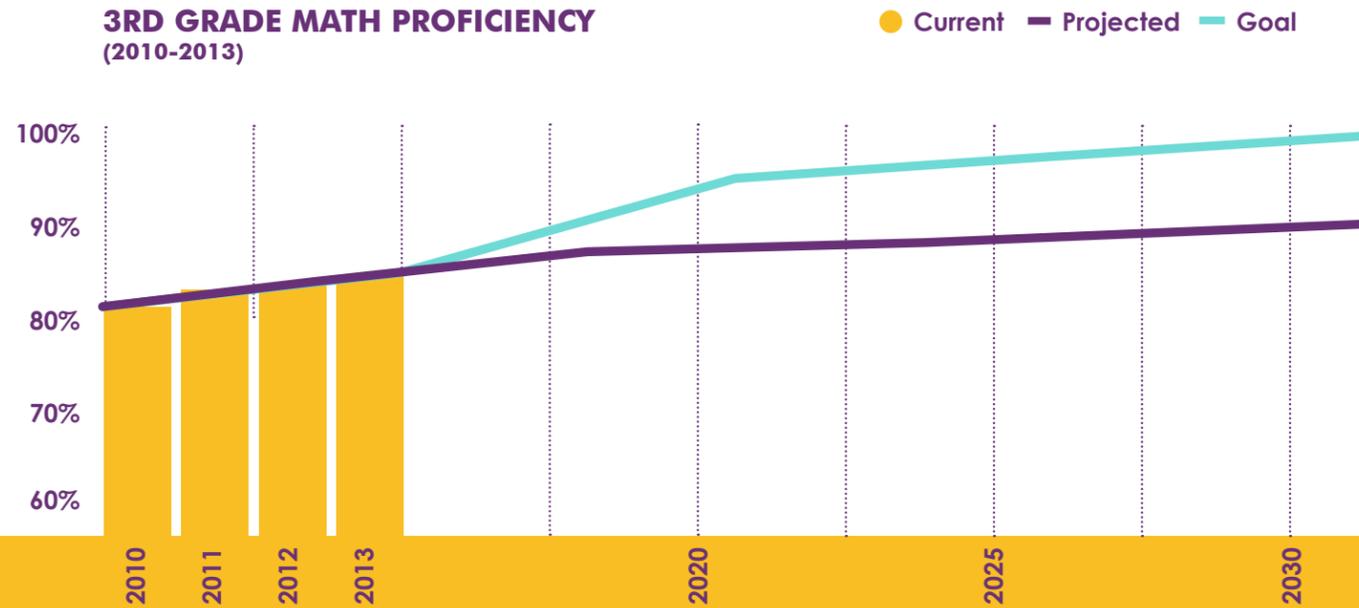
**3RD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY (2013) WITH 3-YEAR TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT**



# 3RD GRADE

## MATH

**3RD GRADE MATH PROFICIENCY (2010-2013)**



**THE END OF 3RD GRADE IS A CRITICAL MARKER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMPORTANT MATH SKILLS. IN SOUTH CAROLINA, 21% OF STUDENTS SCORED BELOW STATE STANDARDS.**

Though Spartanburg County 3rd graders fare somewhat better than the state average, there is some variability in county-wide scores from 2010-13. The trend, if continued over future years will rise slightly. A steeper climb in 3rd grade math scores is required in the coming few years to position Spartanburg County children for success in 8th grade math and high school math and science.



**AS WITH 3RD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY, "SUMMER SLIDE" IS A CORE CHALLENGE TO 3RD GRADE MATH PROFICIENCY.**

And, again, children in low income households experience greater loss in math proficiency than children with ready access to summer learning support. As with 3rd grade reading, the collective impact of educational non-profits across the County will be aligned to assist in addressing 3rd grade math scores through the work of the "Third Grade Reading and Math Collaborative Action Network."

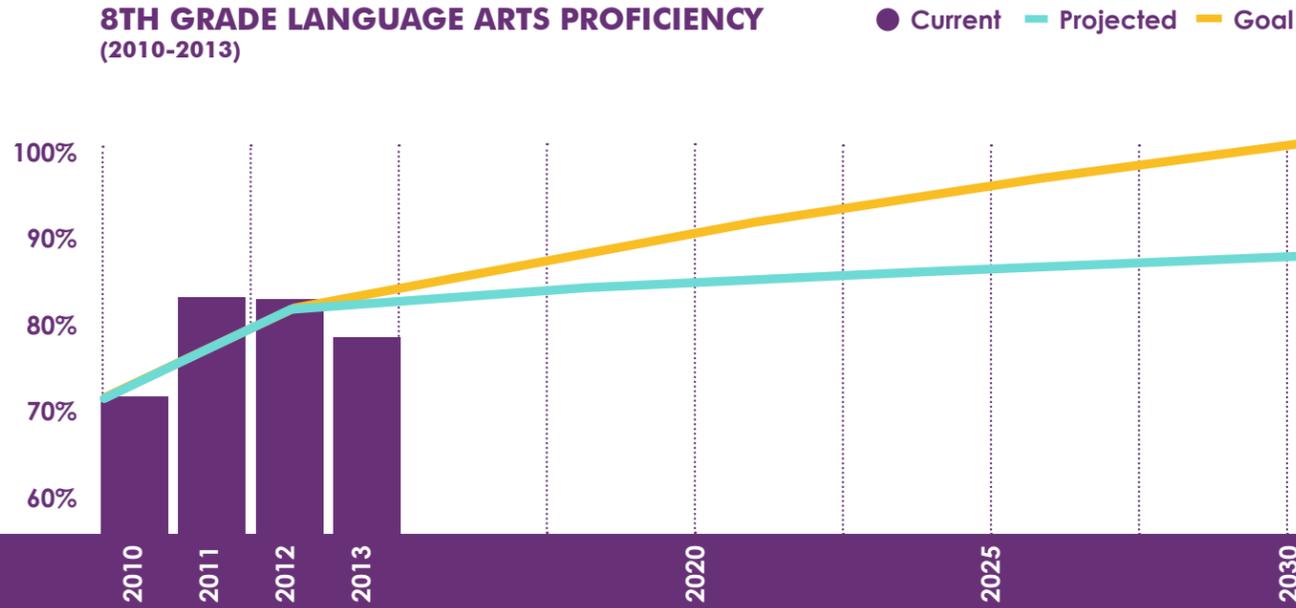
**3RD GRADE MATH PROFICIENCY (2013) WITH 3-YEAR TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT**



# 8TH GRADE

## LANGUAGE ARTS

**8TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS PROFICIENCY (2010-2013)**



### SUCCESS IN 8TH GRADE PAVES THE WAY FOR THE TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL.

And readiness for high school life is serious business, requiring a persistent focus on preparation for post-secondary education and careers.

### READINESS DEMANDS THAT STUDENTS BE ON TRACK IN 8TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS.

Though the overall pattern shows improvement in 8th grade language arts over four years, the trajectory is uneven. It must move upward more substantially to assure students' preparation for success in high school.

"The most secure way to predict whether an educational policy is likely to help restore the middle class and help the poor is to focus on the question: 'Is this policy likely to translate into a large increase in the vocabularies of 12th graders?'"

-E.D. Hirsch, Jr., Ph.D.  
Core Knowledge Foundation

## EIGHTH GRADE TO HIGH SCHOOL

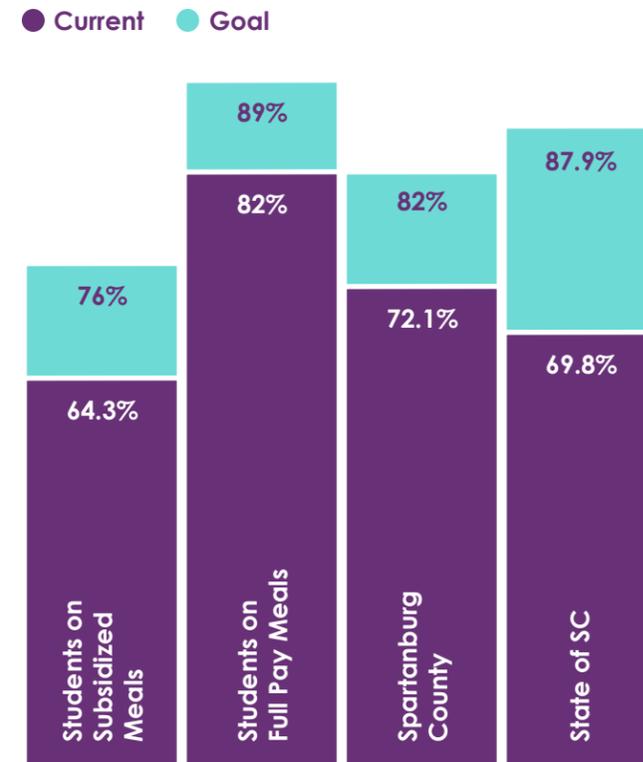
### HOW CAN WE WORK TOGETHER WITH SPARTANBURG COUNTY'S SCHOOLS TO CONTINUE THEIR SUCCESS IN PUSHING 8TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATH SCORES UPWARD?

Over time, of course, we can anticipate that rising 3rd grade reading and math proficiency will have a positive effect on 8th grade proficiencies.

In addition, SAM will encourage the focus of education non-profits on after-school and summer support programs in middle school math and language arts, with special attention to children of low income households.

This will be the purpose of the "High School Readiness Collaborative Action Network," soon to be launched by SAM.

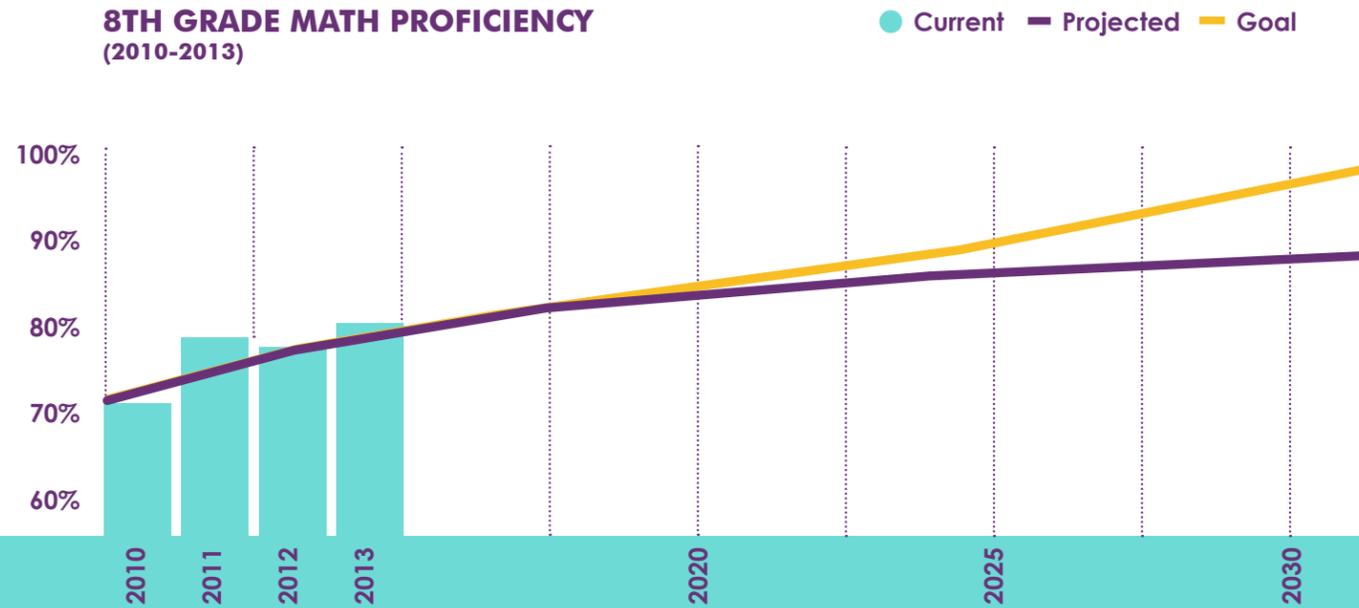
**8TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS PROFICIENCY (2013) WITH 3-YEAR TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT**



# 8TH GRADE

## MATH

**8TH GRADE MATH PROFICIENCY (2010-2013)**



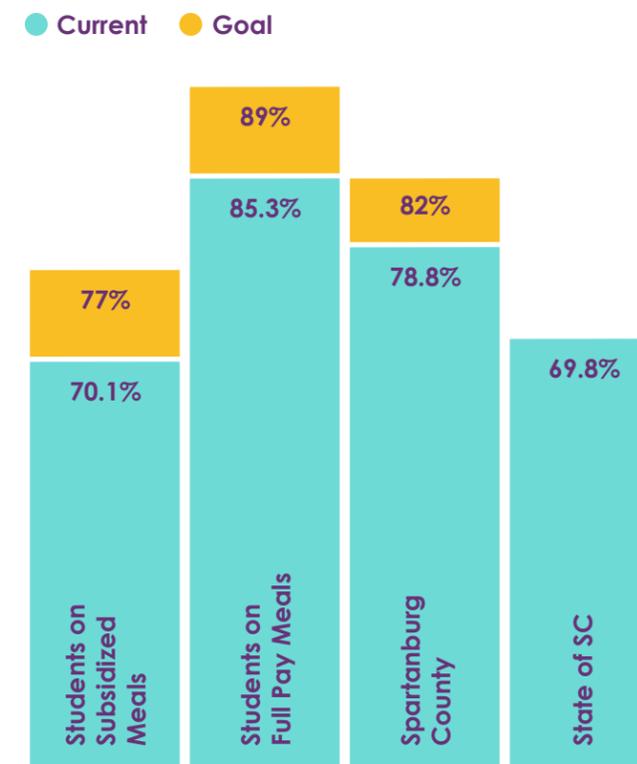
### SUCCESS IN 8TH GRADE MATH IS THE CRITICAL GATEWAY TO ADVANCED MATH AND SCIENCE IN HIGH SCHOOL.

Further, students who master 8th grade math fundamentals are more likely to complete college. And, the influence of high school students' math proficiency on later earnings has grown steadily over time.

Spartanburg County scores have improved over the last four years. The trend line, if continued, is rather promising. However, during the years beyond 2020, the trend must move more sharply upward in order to achieve the high school and postsecondary goals anticipated by SAM.



**8TH GRADE MATH PROFICIENCY (2013) WITH 3-YEAR TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT**



*"Competence in mathematics is essential for success in the workplace, which increasingly requires higher-level technical skills. The influence of high school students' math proficiency on later earnings has grown steadily over time, and students who master math fundamentals are more likely to complete college."*

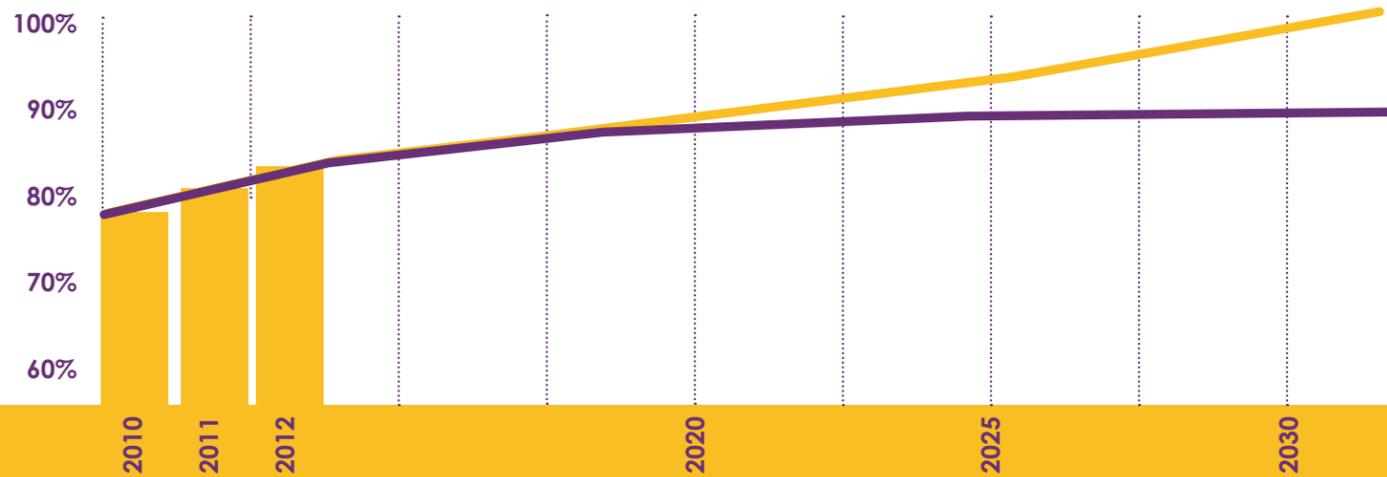
**-Kathleen Brady  
Metropolitan Studies Institute  
USC Upstate**

# HIGH SCHOOL

## COMPLETION

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION (2010-2012)**

● Current — Projected — Goal



## STUDENTS WHO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL ARE FAR MORE EMPLOYABLE AND EARN HIGHER INCOMES THAN THOSE WHO FAIL TO GRADUATE.

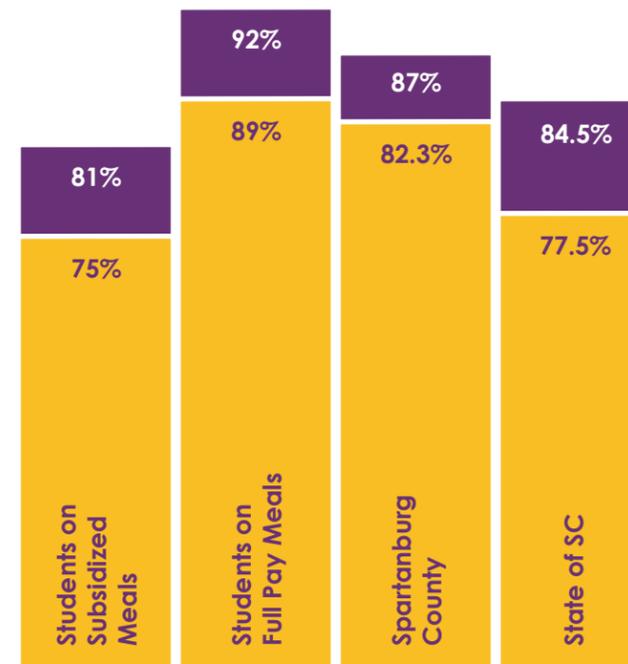
And, climbing high school graduation rates are absolutely essential to the post-secondary ambitions we hold for Spartanburg County.

Rates are trending upward across the County. Though this trend is positive and, if continued, will lead to significant gains between now and 2030, the trend must move upward somewhat more aggressively in order to achieve the post-secondary ambitions we hold for our young people.



**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION WITHIN FOUR YEARS (2013) WITH 3-YEAR TARGETS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

● Current ● Goal



## GRADUATION RATES ARE RISING

The South Carolina Department of Education measures on-time graduation rates as the percentage of students in a given class who graduate with a regular diploma within four years of entering the ninth grade.

Our public schools are moving us in the right direction and at a quickening pace, offering real reason for optimism; but also requiring a commitment to further work, especially on behalf of students from low income households



**SPARTANBURG COUNTY GRADUATION RATES HAVE CLIMBED EVERY YEAR SINCE 2006-2007**

# HIGH SCHOOL

## ASSESSMENT

### SOUTH CAROLINA'S GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, diploma requirements vary considerably from state to state. Some require as few as 13 Carnegie units and no exit exam (e.g., Iowa); others require up to 26 units plus an exit exam (e.g., Texas).

South Carolina requires 24 units plus passage of exit exams in math and language arts in order to graduate. Because our graduation requirements are more stringent than most, the state fares less well in national reports.

### THE CHALLENGES OF ASSESSMENT IN SOUTH CAROLINA

For three decades, South Carolina has employed the HSAP (High School Assessment Program) as its "exit" exams in Math and Language Arts. In recent years, Spartanburg County students have scored rather well with county-wide results on both exams improving yearly over each of the last four years, exceeding State averages.

As of April 2014, however, state legislation has eliminated the HSAP in favor of exams that better measure students' college and career readiness. Though final decisions remain unsettled, it is clear that, beginning in 2015, all high school juniors will take ACT's WorkKeys as a measure of career and workforce readiness, together with a second exam (yet to be determined) as a measure of college readiness.



### COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS: THE NEW STANDARDS

Over the past four years, Spartanburg County's school districts have been at work aligning their K-12 curricula with new state standards focused on "college and career ready" high school graduation. No doubt, this sustained effort is responsible, in large part, for persistent improvements in test scores across various learning stages noted earlier in this document.

Consequently, the baseline measures and the three-year goals we have established in this SAM Preface will shift with the introduction of new assessment protocols to be legislatively determined by summer, 2014 (though not yet announced as of this publication date).

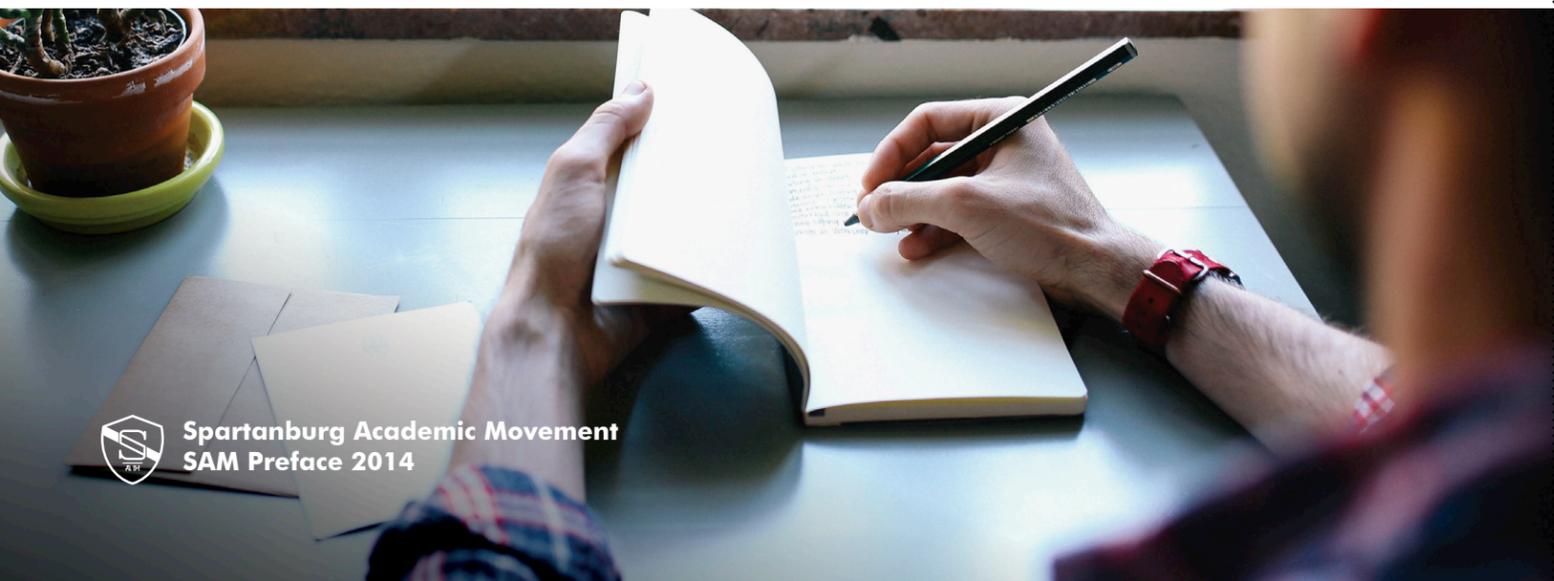
This curricular realignment will also require different approaches to assessment; not only at the high school exit level, but in 3rd and 8th grade language arts and math.

Of course, this will make "comparability" challenging as we move from SAM Preface to SAM Chapter 1.

### THE COMING CHANGES IN ASSESSMENT

These coming changes in academic assessment, though challenging, are good. First, our schools will be assessing academic achievement at all levels of learning with the high school graduation goal of college and career success. And, second, the

assessments employed in Spartanburg County and South Carolina will finally – we anticipate – be nationally comparable.



# POST-SECONDARY

## COMPLETION

### SAM HAD ITS BEGINNINGS AS “THE 40/30 CHALLENGE.”

Launched in 2010 by the Spartanburg County Foundation, the College Hub (as it was then named) targeted the “40/30 Challenge” – 40% of County adults over 25 years of age holding bachelor’s degrees by the year 2030.

Although SAM is now focused with equal emphasis on all core indicators from school readiness through postsecondary completion, the “40/30 Challenge” remains its “gold standard.”

## DOUBLING BACHELOR’S DEGREES IN A GENERATION?

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Spartanburg County’s adults have completed high school and associate degrees in roughly the same proportion as state, regional, and national averages. However, the bachelor’s degree holding rate of 21% is far below the national average of 27%; even farther below Richland, Charleston, and Charlotte averages of 35%; and very far below the 40%+ averages of truly high flying economic regions around the country.

Our bachelor’s degree numbers are dragging bottom; and, in so doing, are holding down our citizens’ earning power, limiting their economic class mobility, and threatening the County’s economic and social development potential.

SAM Partners believe that, for at least 40% of our high school graduates, bachelor’s degree attainment is crucial for a robust Spartanburg County economy.

## A BACHELOR’S DEGREE IS NOT FOR EVERYONE.

Indeed, extraordinary career opportunities are available in business and industry, trades and crafts, entrepreneurial and small business enterprises that do not require a four-year or graduate degree.

of some character is an essential prerequisite to the career opportunities of every high school graduate. For many, that attainment may be licensure, apprenticeship, technical certification, or an associate’s degree.

However, in the emerging knowledge economy, post-secondary attainment

## CAREER AND WORKFORCE READINESS

Numerous groups across the County are focused on “workforce readiness.” Some are driven by the burgeoning employment sector facing a shortage of well-prepared workers; others by the concern that every high school graduate be certified with employable skills ready to build a career. The Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce has attempted to bring these concerns together. SAM’s “collaborative action network” strategy is designed to accomplish this very objective.

The Chamber and SAM have agreed to form a network of educators, employers, and policy leaders to pursue strategies for achieving major advances in career and workforce readiness across Spartanburg County. Anchored by the Chamber, this collaborative action network will soon identify its members, form a charter, and get to work ... reporting to the Chamber and the SAM Boards.



# POST-SECONDARY

## IS THE "THE 40/30 CHALLENGE" ACHIEVABLE?

YES! CONSIDER THE COMBINED IMPACT OF THESE 5 OPPORTUNITIES

"It has been said that in order for our community to grow and thrive, there must first be a common vision for education in this community, and the change we seek is underway."

-Russell Booker  
Superintendent, Spartanburg District 7

1

### A RICHER PIPELINE OF COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS

It is entirely realistic to assume – as we reach our escalating targets of academic achievement for each of the core indicators from "school readiness" through "high school graduation" - that our numbers of college-bound students will increase substantially.

The State Commission on Higher Education reports a County increase in college enrollment of 19.1% from 2003 to 2012. In Spartanburg County, 67% of high school graduates entered college freshman classes in 2012. In SAM Chapter I, we will begin tracking enrollment trends against this baseline.

2

### MORE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Spartanburg County Schools are supporting dual college enrollment, Advanced Placement, and other college-readiness opportunities offering a head-start for well-prepared high school students to graduate with substantial college credits.

There has been a substantial increase in dual college enrollment opportunities across County high schools in recent years, together with growth in Advanced Placement enrollment, and senior year courses designed with college-level rigor. In next year's SAM Chapter I, we will begin tracking growth in these opportunities.

3

### GROWTH IN PERSISTENCE RATES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

The strongest predictor of college completion is persistence from the freshman to the sophomore year. Presently, as many as 1 in 3 students do not persist for reasons of family, finance, or academic difficulties. Generally, the more selective the institution, the higher its persistence rates.

Among colleges in the County, freshman to sophomore persistence rates range from 58% to 89%. All colleges have persistence initiatives in place. Beginning with next year's SAM Chapter 1, we will track improvement in persistence rates beginning with these baseline measures.

4

### A GROWING RETURN-TO-LEARN POPULATION

About 34,000 County residents have some college credits, but have not completed bachelor's degrees. Colleges working together with employers can greatly enhance opportunities and motivation for non-completers to become completers.

With the exception of some employer incentives and some aggressive return-to-learn programming by some of our colleges, few strategies are presently in place to capitalize on this promising bachelor's completion opportunity.

5

### INCREASING RETENTION & IN-MIGRATION OF COLLEGE GRADUATES

The question is often asked: "Where will the jobs come from for increasing numbers of college graduates; especially with current college graduates migrating out of the County to pursue careers?" (Recent historical trends reflect a 30%+ out-migration)

Increasing college attainment and increasing economic development are "iterative" processes. One leads to the other. As the number of college graduates climb, economic development climbs; and as economic development climbs, so, too, do the opportunities for in-migration and retention of college graduates.





# PARTNER GRATITUDE

## A SINCERE THANKS TO ALL WHO SUPPORT SPARTANBURG ACADEMIC MOVEMENT.

### K-12 EDUCATION

- » Spartanburg School District 1
- » Spartanburg School District 2
- » Spartanburg School District 3
- » Spartanburg School District 4
- » Spartanburg School District 5
- » Spartanburg School District 6
- » Spartanburg School District 7
- » Anderson Mill Elementary School
- » District 7 Teacher Forum
- » Early Learning Center at Park Hills
- » Main Street Academy

### COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

- » Converse College
- » Sherman College
- » Spartanburg Community College
- » Spartanburg Methodist College
- » University of South Carolina Upstate
- » Wofford College
- » VCOM Carolinas

### CORPORATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS & INDIVIDUALS

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- » Chapman Cultural Center
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- » City of Spartanburg
- » City of Woodruff
- » Contec, Inc.
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- » William Barnet & Son
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- » Woodruff Community Center
- » WSPA
- » YMCA of Greater Spartanburg





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OVER THE FOUR YEARS FROM 2010 THROUGH THE PUBLICATION OF THIS DOCUMENT IN MAY 2014, THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS, CORPORATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS HAVE GIVEN GENEROUSLY OF THEIR RESOURCES TO THE SPARTANBURG ACADEMIC MOVEMENT (SAM), OR TO ONE OF ITS PREDECESSOR ORGANIZATIONS: THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES ALLIANCE OR THE COLLEGE HUB.

## VISION BENEFACTOR

\$500,000

- » Spartanburg County Foundation

## MISSION BENEFACTOR

\$100,000 AND UP

- » JM Smith Corporation and Foundation
- » Spartanburg County's School Districts

## BENEFACTORS

\$20,000 AND UP

- » John and Nora Featherston Fund
- » Mary Black Foundation
- » Phifer/Johnson Foundation
- » Spartanburg County Foundation Comm. Fund
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- » Rotary Club of Spartanburg
- » Ms. Justine Russell
- » The Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce
- » Spartanburg Community College
- » Spartanburg Methodist College
- » University of South Carolina Upstate
- » Wofford College





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- » Metropolitan Studies Institute of USC Upstate
- » Ms. Lindsay Moore
- » NBSC
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**SPARTANBURG  
ACADEMIC MOVEMENT**



## SPARTANBURG ACADEMIC MOVEMENT

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