This report – for the fifth consecutive year – documents little progress in how well we, as a region, educate our children.

As a result of our work, we’ve learned some things:

- We know it doesn’t have to be this way.
- We know every child has the ability to learn.
- We know systemic racism in education, and in other systems like housing and healthcare, is preventing significant numbers of children, through no fault of their own, from reaching their full potential.
- We know that despite the best efforts of many educators, the public education system widens the gap among White, Black and Hispanic children in every school.

Just reporting proficiency and readiness rates along with the 2025 targets – agreed upon by community leaders in 2016 – is no longer enough. It has become clear that insufficient attention to equity is the central issue impeding educational attainment.

This report first identifies how inequity shows itself across the continuum (pages 5-11), then transitions to actions and disruptions that are needed to cause public education to support the success of every child from birth (pages 12-13).

Systems change is hard, takes time and requires that all of us think and act differently with respect to equity for children.

Together, we can do better, and we have to in the interest of the region’s children.

**We Can Do Better**

**Words Matter:** In reading this report, it’s important to understand the terms below as we intend them.

- **Disruption:** [dis.rup.tion] The purposeful interruption in the normal course or continuation of some activity or process.
- **Action:** [ac.tion] The bringing about of an alteration or change through an act of will, by persuasion or through advocacy.
- **Equality:** [e.qual.i ty] Treating everyone and every group the same with no acknowledgement of historical decisions that led to unbalanced conditions.
- **Equity:** [equ.i ty] The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.
- **Racism:** [rac.is.m] The historical and current lack of fairness and opportunity based strictly on skin color.
- **System:** [sys.tem] The prevailing political or social order by which something is done.
- **Systems Change:** [sys.tem.s change] Shifting the conditions that are holding problems in place.
Treating each student the same – deploying nearly identical resources, dollars, talent and support – does not ensure all children receive the high-quality education they deserve (depicted above as equality). Children, through no fault of their own, are born into vastly different circumstances and have access to varying opportunities. Some, for instance, have access to wealth and social networks that ensure they thrive (depicted above as children on higher ground), while others battle the chronic stress of poverty, illness or disability (depicted above as children on lower ground).

True equity in public education requires the unequal distribution of resources to a far greater degree.
Each year, TCCC reports the region’s progress in education attainment from kindergarten readiness to college completion. Those results are displayed on the following pages in relation to the community’s 2025 targets. Other data – displayed here – are as important for a whole-child approach to education. A child’s needs should not be narrowly defined by what happens just inside the classroom or as measured by a test. The health, family life, housing and financial stability of a child should also be understood and become the shared responsibility of the entire community.

The tri-county region’s total population of 775,831 is comprised of 65% White, 26% Black, 6% Hispanic and 3% Other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Berkeley County</th>
<th>Dorchester County</th>
<th>Charleston County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>217,937</td>
<td>156,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Living in Poverty</td>
<td>25,085</td>
<td>15,362</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tri-county region’s total population of 775,831 is comprised of 65% White, 26% Black, 6% Hispanic and 3% Other.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tri-County Children</th>
<th>Public School Students</th>
<th>Children Under the Age of 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>113,481</td>
<td>47,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>38,105</td>
<td>13,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>11,066</td>
<td>4,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>56,541</td>
<td>28,243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 92,227 people living in poverty in the tri-county region, more than 30,000 are children.

- **88%** Tri-county residents with medical insurance
- **34%** Regional households with housing-cost burdens (spending 30% or more of income on housing)
- **$24,263** Median student loan debt for S.C. college graduates

Of the 514,144 adults in the tri-county region, 229,309 have an associate degree or higher level of education.


Note: For the purposes of this regional report, race and ethnic groups that make up 5% or less of the population are not shown. Race and ethnic classifications are those used by the U.S. Census Bureau and S.C. Department of Education.
Kindergarten Readiness

Children who arrive to kindergarten ready to learn are more likely to have a foundation that supports future learning and health.

Over the past two years, more than 9,000 tri-county children arrived unready to a kindergarten that is equally unready for them. It doesn’t have to be this way!

2018
Students Ready for Kindergarten

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2025 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.C. Department of Education, Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)
3rd Grade Reading and Math

Students who are proficient by third grade in reading and math are more likely to graduate from high school ready for what comes next.

3rd Grade Reading, 2018
Students Who Met Grade – Level Expectations

- Overall: 51%
- White: 68%
- Hispanic: 32%
- Black: 28%

Year-To-Year Trend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025 Target</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.C. Department of Education, SC READY Test results

3rd Grade Math, 2018
Students Who Met Grade – Level Expectations

- Overall: 57%
- White: 73%
- Hispanic: 44%
- Black: 35%

Year-To-Year Trend

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2025 Target</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.C. Department of Education, SC READY Test results

Over the past three years, more than 13,000 third graders in the region were identified as “not proficient” in reading. These students will likely fall even further behind, and the odds of them catching up are low. It doesn’t have to be this way!
Students who are proficient by eighth grade in reading and math are more likely to qualify for and pursue a postsecondary credential.

### 8th Grade Reading, 2018

**Students Who Met Grade – Level Expectations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year-To-Year Trend**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2025 Target</strong></td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.C. Department of Education, SC READY results

### 8th Grade Math, 2018

**Students Who Met Grade – Level Expectations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year-To-Year Trend**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2025 Target</strong></td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.C. Department of Education, SC READY results

Over the past three years, more than 14,000 eighth graders in the region were identified as “not proficient” in math. These students will likely have limited high school course and career opportunities. **It doesn’t have to be this way!**
Graduating high school was the foundation for economic and social success, but in today’s economy, most living-wage jobs require education and training beyond 12th grade.

On-time high school graduation rate, 2018

Overall: 85%
White: 89%
Black: 81%
Hispanic: 79%

Graduates ready for college, 2018: 42%
Graduates ready for work, 2018: 65%

Year-To-Year Trend

Graduates ready for college
Graduates ready for work

2016: 84%
2017: 85%
2018: 85%
2025 Target: 90%

Since 2016, nearly 7,000 tri-county students have graduated from high school deemed “not ready” even for work, let alone for college, rendering their diplomas relatively meaningless.

It doesn’t have to be this way!
Postsecondary Enrollment and Completion

Individuals who earn a certificate or degree are more likely to live healthier and financially stable lives than those without a postsecondary credential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High school graduates enrolled in a 2-year or 4-year institution (class of 2018)</th>
<th>High school graduates completed a 2-year or 4-year degree on time (class of 2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2025 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High school graduates enrolled in a 2-year or 4-year institution</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduates completed a 2-year or 4-year degree on time</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: On-time graduation means a 4-year degree is completed within six years and a 2-year degree is completed within three years. Source: National Student Clearinghouse

Over the past three years, more than 7,600 tri-county high school graduates did not enroll in college and are unlikely to qualify for the 60% of S.C. jobs that require a postsecondary credential. 

It doesn’t have to be this way!
PRESENT

Below are the tri-county region's 2018 readiness, proficiency and completion rates along the cradle-to-career continuum.

Kindergarten readiness 43%
3rd grade reading proficiency 51%
Math proficiency 57%
8th grade reading proficiency 44%
Math proficiency 40%
High school graduation 85%
College ready 42%
Work ready 65%
College enrollment 61%
College completion 35%

To learn more about TCCC's projects, please visit TriCountyCradleToCareer.org.

The data in this report confirm that we, as a community, have not provided the support that all children and their families need to be ready, proficient and successful in school. It doesn't have to be this way!
FUTURE

Below are the 2025 targets for achievement and readiness, established and supported by community leaders in 2016 as ambitious goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>2025 Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten readiness</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd grade reading proficiency</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math proficiency</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th grade reading proficiency</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math proficiency</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduation</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College enrollment</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College completion</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work ready</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each target includes a requirement that race disparities be reduced by half.

A community-based system that fails to serve children and families equitably, as this one has, requires disruption.

These targets, based on current trends and efforts, are not attainable.
Disruption

What Roles We Play

The public education system is doing what it was originally designed 100 years ago to do: educate middle-class, White children who, it was thought, all learn in the same way. If we want a modern system that educates all children, disruption is required, which means we, individually and as a community, must use an equity lens to think and act differently.

To align our region’s education policies and priorities to create a high-quality education system, we must each play a role:

**Students, parents and teachers (grassroots stakeholders):**
Organize and use your collective voices to express your dissatisfaction with the public education system directly to government officials, school district leaders and other decision makers, as well as those influencing decision makers (community engagers, organizers, advocates, researchers, media outlets, business leaders and funders).

**Community engagers, organizers, advocates, researchers, media outlets, business leaders and funders:**
Align around a common agenda (led by grassroots stakeholders), then put pressure on and hold accountable government officials, school leaders and other decision makers to fulfill their obligations.

**Government officials, school district leaders and other decision makers:**
Listen and authentically engage with grassroots stakeholders, then make decisions based on the aligned education agenda brought forth (not based on priorities that maintain the status quo or existing power structure).

What We Are Doing

TCCC is working with other organizations in the region and across the state to align on a common agenda of both local and state-level actions needed to reform education. Below are our agenda items:

1. **Opportunity and Access**

   We believe that to transform public education:
   - School boards should be permitted, supported and encouraged to use the School of Choice Law to create multiple schools that are free to innovate on behalf of students with the greatest needs.
   - Magnet and charter school admission practices should be changed to allow for a more diverse student population.
   - Attendance zones should be redrawn to accomplish greater diversity in schools and equity for students.

2. **Equitable School Funding**

   We believe the state should make the following changes:
   - Undertake comprehensive school funding reform with excellence and equity, not “minimal adequacy,” as the goal.
   - Increase teacher salaries immediately to at least Southeast region market standards.
   - Shift resources to where the need is greatest, increase millage caps based on population growth and give all districts budget autonomy.

   School districts should shift more of their discretionary resources (dollars, teachers, support staff, etc.) to where the need is greatest.

3. **Early Childhood / Pre-School**

   We believe all families should have access to quality, affordable pre-school (3K/4K).
   - To make pre-school affordable, the state should offer tax credits for employers and providers, as well as direct support for families in need.
   - If necessary, the region’s county councils should proceed on their own to determine how to provide affordable pre-school for all.

   We support the reorganization of state agencies to place programs supporting early childhood in a single department.
What You Can Do

Each individual can play a role in developing a modern education system that educates all children. Below are some ideas to get you started:

Learn

- Learn about the quality of schools in your neighborhood – whether your children attend these schools or not. Start by learning about your neighborhood schools at SCReportCards.com and meeting with school leaders.
- Read "Paradoxes of Desegregation: African American Struggles for Educational Equity in Charleston, South Carolina, 1926-1972" by R. Scott Baker and other literature to learn the history behind the many policies and systems still in existence that were intentionally designed to maintain unequal schools.
- Read The Post and Courier’s “Minimally Adequate” investigative series to learn more about persistent failures throughout South Carolina that are leaving students unprepared for the world that awaits them.
- Read the findings and recommendations outlined in “The State of Racial Disparities in Charleston County, South Carolina 2000-2015” by the College of Charleston’s Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture.
- Sign up for Racial Equity Institute training, hosted by the YWCA of Charleston, to better understand racism and how U.S. history has contributed to inequitable systems and organizations.

Act

- Get involved in the improvement of your neighborhood schools. Join the school’s Parent Teacher Association or School Improvement Council, volunteer and spend time inside the school, and interact with teachers and students (especially those of different races and ethnicities than you).
- Mentor. Be the caring and compassionate adult in the life of a child, in addition to your own children. Help foster the child’s passions and strengths, develop academic and personal goals, and grow interpersonal skills.
- Make equity, inclusion and diversity a requirement where you work, worship and play. Talk with your boss, pastor/clergy and friends about making sure all races, ethnicities, genders, ages, social classes, etc. are welcomed and have a seat at your decision-making table.
- Express your dissatisfaction with the current public education system, and hold leaders accountable. Attend and actively participate in school board meetings, city and county council meetings, town halls, surveys, debates and other forums about education.
- Cast your ballot. Research and question those running for public office, make an informed decision about who will make the education changes you desire and vote for those people.
- Volunteer with a non-profit organization working to improve education attainment, such as Charleston Promise Neighborhood, Communities in Schools, Distinguished Gentlemen’s Club, Lowcountry Youth Services, R3 Inc., Reading Partners, WINGS for Kids and others.
- Join and support groups that actively mobilize and amplify the voices of parents, such as Charleston Area Justice Ministry, Charleston RISE, Metanoia, Quality Education Project and others.
- Align your charitable giving to support sustainable interventions that will improve education.
Our Mission
Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative is a community movement in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties, SC, committed to improving educational outcomes for ALL students.

Our Vision
• Every child will be prepared for school.
• Every child will be supported in and out of school.
• Every child will succeed academically.
• Every child will graduate from high school prepared for either further education or employment in the modern workforce.
• Every student enrolled in postsecondary education will complete successfully and will enter a career.

Our Core Values
• We believe every child can learn.
• We believe every child deserves to be held to high expectations so that she/he may reach his/her fullest potential.
• We believe every child has the right to access the highest-quality public education available.
• We believe education is a community responsibility rather than simply being the responsibility of teachers, schools and school districts.
• We believe the best way to transform the tri-county educational landscape is through the collective impact that can be achieved by a coordinated, data-driven, community-wide collaboration centered on a common agenda for change.

Our Guiding Principles
Community Engagement
We seek the direct involvement of families, students and those with first-hand experience with educational barriers. This participation includes direct roles in decision-making with an appreciative inquiry approach.

Cultural Competence
We seek to integrate the varied forms of diversity into the thoughts, actions, systems and core values of all we do. Our work requires the intentional recognition, respect and value of cultural differences within our community and collaborative approaches that are welcoming and inclusive of those differences.

Equity
Supporting the success of every child requires us to ensure resources are focused on those who need them most.
Our Leadership

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Paul Kohlheim, Community Volunteer

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www.TriCountyCradleToCareer.org

Thank you!

Without our community partners and generous donors, including all members of the TCCC Board of Directors, this work would not be possible. Progress is only possible when we work together. Thank you to all of the families, students, educators, administrators, fellow non-profit organizations, businesses, service providers, volunteers, colleges and universities, churches and civic and philanthropic groups that have joined us in this community movement to improve educational outcomes for ALL students. We know that we can’t do this alone, and we appreciate your support!

This report was designed and published by Visual Infonomics Group, a subsidiary of SC Biz News, publishers of the Charleston Regional Business Journal.