

## Creating a Coherent System of Teacher and School Leader Development for Deeper, More Equitable Learning and Whole Child Education

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Across the nation, the pandemic has laid bare colossal inequities in opportunities for young people to achieve, accelerating the need for innovations in our public schools. As a result, the [community schools](#) movement is growing to serve as the hub of children's education and development, powered by shared leadership between schools and families and strong partnerships between health, social welfare, employers, and other sectors. Community schools, as an education transformation (not just a reform) strategy, is growing in South Carolina with the efforts of the [Spartanburg Academic Movement](#) (SAM) and the [Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative](#) (TCCC). Recently, [ALL4SC](#), an *Excellence Initiative* of the University of South Carolina (UofSC) is accelerating the idea by working to empower communities to reinvent schooling as well as reimagine the teaching (and school leader) profession for deeper, more equitable student learning and inform local and state policy to sustain school innovations over time. The South Carolina General Assembly passed [H 3589](#) in April 2021 that allows local districts to operate multiple schools of innovation.

The [developmental and learning science](#) has pointed to how new *whole child* school designs can create personalized opportunities for students to develop agency and grow academically. However, almost every state is facing teacher and administrator shortages as well as the need to develop adult capacity for whole child education. South Carolina is no exception. SC-TEACHER, *with new funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York*, is launching a research and development process to inform the reimagining of the education profession that addresses educator shortages and fuel school innovations in South Carolina schools. Our effort will:

- Document current UofSC teacher and school leader development innovations and how they can be aligned to support deeper, more equitable opportunities outcomes for students;
- Assess the human capital assets and needs of three school community partners and their readiness for the redesign of the education professions for school innovation; and
- Develop an evidence-based framework for South Carolina and inform legislative action for upcoming sessions of the General Assembly.

From October 2021 to June 2022, the research team, led by Barnett Berry and Tommy Hodges of UofSC, will [profile](#): the supply, demand, and quality of the local educator workforce and role of educator preparation programs; (2) how districts allocate people certified educators, substitutes, paraprofessionals; (3) recruitment and retention practices (mentoring of new recruits); (4) impact of educator evaluation processes; (5) use of professional learning dollars and how leadership is developed and utilized; and (6) prospects for alternative teacher and school leader compensation structures for deeper, more equitable learning outcomes for students.

The 9-month research and development process will involve work with several school districts, including several whom have demonstrated a commitment to working together to develop an evidence-based framework for action: Charleston, Fairfield, and Pickens have agreed to participate in this effort. Specific activities with district partners include:

- Interviews with district leaders (~3-5) to document HR policies and practices, in recruitment to retention — and to understand policies and practices;
- Work with district liaison to assemble documents for review;

- Two focus group interviews with teachers and school leaders, lasting no more than 80 minutes;
- A brief online working conditions survey (no more than 15 minutes to complete) to be administered to a small, representative sample of teachers and school leaders.

**The impact of data collection on district participation will be minimal, using available documents and data sets as primary sources as well as a small number of interviews with district leaders, teachers, and administrators.** Two outstanding former local superintendents, Christina Melton and Debbie Hamm, are serving as key consultants and range of UofSC faculty are contributing to the project (see list below).

The project will draw on the expertise of a statewide advisory board. We are seeking advisors, who can meet no more than three times (between November 2021 and June 2022, for no more than 90 minutes via Zoom each time), are knowledgeable of innovations in teaching policy, and interested in assisting in the development of the proposed framework. The purpose of the advisory board is to offer advice on: (1) identifying and interpreting data; (2) developing the framework; and (3) communicating the framework to policy leaders and practitioners.

We look forward to developing an evidence-based approach for a more coherent system of teacher and school leader development, and while we do not have preconceived notions, [the report](#) from Oregon's Council on Educator Advancement provides considerable insight. A [new paper](#) offers powerful evidence and narratives on the teacher leadership for whole child education is growing.



Current UofSC innovations include a mentoring program for early career teachers, a rural teacher residency pilot for career changers, a competency-based alternative preparation collaborative, an effort to use improvement science to advance professional learning for administrators, and an online professional learning delivery platform complete with micro-credentials as well a *campus-wide* strategy to support community schooling and whole child education.

Recently, the Carnegie Corporation of New York has made investments across the nation to deepen district-university partnerships to address local problems of practice (iLEADS) and foster collaboration between preparation programs, school districts, and state and federal policymakers (EdPrepLab). Our proposed effort will inform and be informed by growing attention nationwide to whole child education and the system of teacher and school leader development needed for it. UofSC, in partnership with the Learning Policy Institute, is piloting a preliminary analysis on whole child education policy for South Carolina, including a focus on *building adult capacity*. (Report will be available later this fall, which will inform this project.)

**SC-TEACHER project team members:** Angie Baum, Barnett Berry, Adam Brown, Shelly Curcio, Tammie Dickenson, Debbie Hamm, Tommy Hodges, Merrit Jones, Christina Melton, Peter Moyi, George Roy, Cindy Van Buren.