

BOARD AGENDA ITEM

September 29, 2026

SUBJECT:

District Strategic Plan

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

District Strategic Plans are developed every five years using current research-based practices. The plans are approved by our School Board and must be submitted to the South Carolina Department of Education for final review and approval.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The Division of Instruction has prepared an overview of the 2026-2031 District Strategic Plan. This information will be used to gather feedback for the final draft of the plan.

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept Aiken County Public School District Strategic Plan presentation as information.

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District Strategic Plan
Areas of Focus
2026-2027 to 2030-2031

Area of Focus: Student Achievement					
Early Childhood/Primary (PK-2 nd)					
Performance Goal 1: By spring of 2031, 40% of our kindergarten students will demonstrate readiness to learn as measured by Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in the Language and Literacy Domain.					
Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment	34.7%	Target: 35.7% Actual:	Target: 36.7% Actual:	Target: 37.7% Actual:	Target: 38.7% Actual:
2030-2031					
Target: 40% Actual:					
Action Plan:					
- Explore options to increase 4K classrooms through tuition-based opportunities. - Provide Early Childhood LETRS training to all 4K aides. - Strengthen Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) by emphasizing a focus on learning, cultivating a collaborative culture with collective responsibility, and maintaining a results-oriented approach to improving student achievement. - Provide high-quality, job-embedded professional learning and differentiated support to build the instructional capacity of teachers and leaders through collaborative learning, coaching, and evidence-based practices which promote teacher directed, student-centered instructional practices to reduce screen time.					

Elementary Level (Grades 3-5)

Performance Goal 3: By spring of 2031, 75% of our students in grade 4 will meet or exceed state expectations in Science.					
Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030 2030-2031
SC Ready Science Data	43.4%	Target: 51.3% Actual:	Target: 59.2% Actual:	Target: 67.1% Actual:	Target: 75% Actual:
Action Plan:					
Implement and sustain a comprehensive science block grounded in the District's Instructional Framework to deliver high-quality, standards-aligned instruction that reflects the expectations of the South Carolina College and Career-Ready Standards and ensures academic success for every student.					
Strengthen Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) by emphasizing a focus on learning, cultivating a collaborative culture with collective responsibility, and maintaining a results-oriented approach to improving student achievement.					
Build a comprehensive assessment to drive instructional decisions, including common formative and summative assessments.					
Increase inquiry-based, hands-on science learning by engaging students in authentic scientific investigations aligned with the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Science Standards to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and scientific reasoning skills.					
Provide high-quality, job-embedded professional learning and differentiated support to build the instructional capacity of teachers and leaders through collaborative learning, coaching, and evidence-based practices.					

Middle Level (Grades 6-8)					
Performance Goal 1: By spring of 2031, 75% of our students in grades 6-8 will meet or exceed state expectations in English Language Arts.					
Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030 2030-2031
SC Ready ELA Data	52%	Target: 57.7% Actual:	Target: 63.5% Actual:	Target: 69.3% Actual:	Target: 75% Actual:
Performance Goal 2: By spring of 2031, 75% of our students in grades 6-8 will meet or exceed state expectations in Mathematics.					
Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030 2030-2031
SC Ready Math Data	22%	Target: 32.5% Actual:	Target: 43% Actual:	Target: 53.5% Actual:	Target: 64% Actual: Target: 75% Actual:
Performance Goal 3: By spring of 2031, 75% of our students in grade 6 will meet or exceed state expectations in Science.					
Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030 2030-2031
SC Ready Science Data	43.3%	Target: 51.3% Actual:	Target: 59.3% Actual:	Target: 67.3% Actual:	Target: 75% Actual:
Action Plan:					
- Develop and deliver professional development on effective research-based strategies in ELA, math, and science to include AVID strategies such as common text annotations. - Implement a common data-based approach to professional learning communities through the delivery of professional development and sustained coaching for administrators and teacher leaders. - Strengthen Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) by emphasizing a focus on learning, cultivating a collaborative culture with collective responsibility, and maintaining a results-oriented approach to improving student achievement. - Develop and administer standards-aligned, common formative and summative assessments for use in professional learning communities and to drive student achievement. - Engage lead teachers to create and realign resources to include common pacing guides, unit supports, and cross-curricular documents to support the full implementation of the extended instructional block. - Develop and provide a tiered system of professional development to address the diverse needs of administrators, teachers, and support staff. - Provide additional professional development and support to advance MTSS initiatives with a focus on support in core subjects to address student achievement gaps.					

- Provide high-quality, job-embedded professional learning and differentiated support to build the instructional capacity of teachers and leaders through collaborative learning, coaching, and evidence-based practices which promote teacher directed, student-centered instructional practices.

High School Level (Grades 9 –12)

Performance Goal 1: By spring of 2031, 75% of participating students will earn a grade of C or higher on End of Course Examination Program (EOCEP).

Data Source	Average Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031
SC State Report Card - EOC Data	Algebra 1 39.4% English 2 66.9% Biology 37.0% US History 42.8%	<u>Target:</u> Algebra 1 48.3% English 2 68.9% Biology 46.5% US History 50.9% <u>Actual:</u> Algebra 1 English 2 Biology US History	<u>Target:</u> Algebra 1 57.2% English 2 70.9% Biology 56.0% US History 58.9% <u>Actual:</u> Algebra 1 English 2 Biology US History	<u>Target:</u> Algebra 1 66.1% English 2 73.0% Biology 65.5% US History 67.0% <u>Actual:</u> Algebra 1 English 2 Biology US History	<u>Target:</u> Algebra 1 75% English 2 75% Biology 75% US History 75% <u>Actual:</u> Algebra 1 English 2 Biology US History	<u>Target:</u> Algebra 1 75% English 2 75% Biology 75% US History 75% <u>Actual:</u> Algebra 1 English 2 Biology US History

Action Plan:

- Implement a districtwide, standards-aligned instructional framework that emphasizes rigorous instruction, frequent progress monitoring, and targeted intervention to ensure students are prepared to earn a C or higher on End of Course (EOC) assessments.
- Administer common unit assessments aligned to EOC standards. Meet in PLCs to analyze results, identify students at risk of earning below a C, and implement targeted intervention and enrichment plans.
- Utilize Instructional Coaches and Curriculum Support Specialists in EOC courses to enhance instructional practices for student achievement.
- Structure allocations and professional development for Special Education and Multi-Language teachers to increase co-teaching opportunities in EOC courses.
- Employ teacher-directed student-centered instructional practices to maximize active learning and to reduce technology dependence.
- Utilize MTSS processes through standardized expectations and improved interventions, including staffing, to support student success.
- Provide high-quality, job-embedded professional learning and differentiated support to build the instructional capacity of teachers and leaders through collaborative learning, coaching, and evidence-based practices which promote teacher directed, student-centered instructional practices.

Performance Goal 2: By the spring of 2031, 90% of students will graduate within four years, with their ninth-grade cohort.					
Data Source	Average Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030 2030-2031
SC State Report Card	85.5%	Target: 86.7% Actual:	Target: 87.9% Actual:	Target: 89.1% Actual:	Target: 90% Actual:
Action Plan:					
- Identify and use a robust monitoring system that crosses all aspects of a student's pathway to success, to ensure students are on track to graduate. - Align district resources with individual student goals to promote student success. - Structure the IGP process to encompass MTSS, IEPs, 504, ILAPs, and student goal setting to facilitate student-led IGPs. - Cultivate strategic community alliances deepening student investment and participation to connect students to real-world applications of learning. - Increase student engagement through rigorous hands-on learning opportunities aligned to course standards, such as Project-Based Learning.					
Performance Goal 3: By the spring of 2031, 80% of graduating students will be classified as college or career-ready as measured by state-identified CCR indicators.					
Data Source	Average Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030 2030-2031
SC State Report Card	74.1%	Target: 75.5% Actual:	Target: 77% Actual:	Target: 78.5% Actual:	Target: 80% Actual:
Action Plan:					
- Implement a monitoring system for all high school students for Career and Technical Education course credit to increase pathway participation. - Leverage community partnerships to maximize internships and pathway access for career readiness. - Promote opportunities and student ownership for high achievement on WIN, ASVAB, SAT, ACT, and in career credentialing pathways. - Provide educator professional development on all components of College and Career Readiness and how to increase student readiness.					

Area of Focus: Gifted and Talented

Performance Goal: By the spring of 2031, we will increase the overall identification of GT students by 20%.

Data Source	Average Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031
Gifted and Talented Database	484	Target: 503 Actual:	Target: 524 Actual:	Target: 544 Actual:	Target: 589 Actual:	Target: 612 Actual:

Action Plan:

- Develop a gifted and talented steering committee to be made up of stakeholders of various roles throughout the district.
- Create an instructional plan to develop higher order thinking skills for K-5 students that include PBL, STEM, and STEAM.
 - a.) Provide professional development for K-2 teachers to focus on strategies for developing critical skills.
 - b.) Provide professional development for 3-5 teachers to focus on strategies for developing critical thinking skills.
 - c.) Provide professional development for secondary teachers through GT endorsement courses and AP coursework.
- Create and implement a plan for testing students for Dimension A in grades 3-5 that includes identifying alternative assessments for Dimension A that can be administered in grades 3-5 throughout the school year.

Area of Focus: Teacher/Administrator Quality

Performance Goal 1: By spring of 2031, we will increase teacher retention from 84% to 90%.

Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031
Retention Data (District and SC Teacher Data)	84%	Target: 85% Actual:	Target: 86% Actual:	Target: 87.5% Actual:	Target: 88.5% Actual:	Target: 90% Actual:

Action Plan:

- Provide support to teachers beyond induction year (3 to 5 years of support).
- Provide a structure to identify exemplary classroom teachers who will provide support for other teachers. (classroom management, shadow, (data bank of support areas)
- Develop a tiered system of master teachers that provides a stipend for their expertise and/or support of other teachers.
- Administer a PD satisfaction survey and use results to inform improvements.
- Administer an employee engagement survey and use results to inform continuous improvement.
- Implement new employee checkpoint surveys within the first 90 days.
- Leverage state survey data and support to examine teacher working conditions and exit trends, identify areas for improvement and develop targeted next steps for teacher retention.
- Use checkpoint surveys, stay interviews, and Stay Interviews to identify trends and proactively identify concerns.

Performance Goal 2: By June 2031, increase the percentage of educators rated “experienced” from 84% to 90%.

Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031
SC School Report Card	84%	Target: 85.3% Actual:	Target: 86.5% Actual:	Target: 87.8% Actual:	Target: 90% Actual:	Target: 90% Actual:

Action Plan:

- Enhance the mentorship program to provide instructional professional development and structured onboarding, including on-the-job training for aspiring leaders.
- Build virtual tutorial banks to support educators.
- Streamline organizational charts and provide support contact lists.

Area of Focus: Climate

Performance Goal 1: By 2031, we will increase overall perception of school climate from 7.23 to 8.21.

Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031
SC State Report Card	7.23	Target: 7.43 Actual:	Target: 7.63 Actual:	Target: 7.83 Actual:	Target: 8.0 Actual:	Target: 8.21 Actual:

Action Plan:

- Provide professional development on *Admin and Teacher Navigator*, and use the common data tracking system, to streamline data that is aligned to South Carolina accountability metrics.
- Engage an action team at each school responsible for a systematic review of school climate data including parents, teachers and students to identify data driven priorities.

Performance Goal: By the spring of 2031 we will increase student attendance by 10 percentage points.

Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031
SC State Report Card	74.9%	Target: 76.9% Actual:	Target: 78.9% Actual:	Target: 80.9% Actual:	Target: 83% Actual:	Target: 85% Actual:

Action Plan:

- Institutionalize a systematic approach to celebrating student growth, consistency, and improvement in school attendance for all students.
- Implement district resources and systems for continuous monitoring.
- Expand awareness of attendance thresholds and state regulations among all stakeholders.
- Equip school-based teams with evidence-based strategies and specialized training to combat chronic absenteeism as part of the MTSS process.
- Implement a district-wide communication and marketing campaign to emphasize the importance of regular attendance and its connection to student success.
- Create a district-wide restorative practices manual to serve as a companion to the Student Code of Conduct, offering schools alternative frameworks for managing behavior, training all administrators on how to appropriately implement the practices.

Area of Focus: Strategic Partnerships

Performance Goal: By 2031, we will enhance and streamline strategic partnerships to promote learning outcomes and grow the percentage of schools with overall Good or Excellent ratings on the SC State Report Card from 39% to 75%.

Data Source	Baseline	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031
SC Report Card Data	39%	Target: 46% Actual:	Target: 53% Actual:	Target: 60% Actual:	Target: 67% Actual:	Target: 75% Actual:

Action Plan:

- Identify a position/person(s)/team to establish and lead the initiative.
- Identify current resources and create a resource bank of established partnerships and opportunities.
- Establish partnership levels to identify the depth of the partnership and resources it can provide.
- Conduct needs assessment and prioritize needs by grade level and attendance area.
- Establish a Strategic Partnership Foundation/Consortium/Alliance to manage the strategic partnerships effort and establish new partnerships to help meet needs.

Area of Focus: Learning Environments

Performance Goal 1: By the end of the 2030-2031 school year, Aiken County Public School District will construct and renovate safe and accessible educational spaces based on the recommendations of a long-term facility study.

Action Plan:

- Consultation with school stakeholders to include special education, safety and security, educational administrators and teachers, and athletics.
- Establish a plan for implementing the outcomes from consultation meetings.
- Establish a budget and timeline to address the suggested implementation needs.

Performance Goal 2: By the end of the 2030-2031 school year, Aiken County Public School District will implement a learner-driven classroom model that increases student choice, collaboration, engagement, and ownership by incorporating flexible furniture arrangements and multiple learning zones.

Action Plan:

- Conduct a walkthrough of all common areas (lobbies, hallways, media centers) to identify and map underutilized square footage viable for overflow learning.
- Evaluate each classroom to identify fixed obstacles (sinks, built-in desks) and calculate the maximum "Reconfigurable Square Footage" available for student movement.
- Conduct a Furniture Mobility Inventory to catalog every furniture item in each room, tagging them by mobility type (Wheeled, Lightweight/Slide, or Fixed/Heavy).
- Commission a facility condition index.
- Create and implement a furniture, fixture, and equipment replacement schedule.

