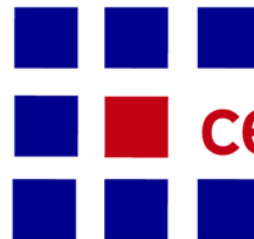# Researching Readiness: College and Career Preparation in South Carolina

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

center of EXCELLENCE

College and Career Readiness
at Francis Marion University

Meredith Love & Matt Nelson

Francis Marion University

Dallin George Young

National Resource Center, University of South Carolina

The Context of College and Career Readiness in South Carolina

"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" (SC EOC, 2013).

PROFILE OF THE
South Carolina Graduate

WORLD-CLASS KNOWLEDGE

Rigorous standards in language arts and math for career and college readiness

Multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and social sciences

WORLD-CLASS SKILLS

Creativity and innovation

Critical thinking and problem solving

Collaboration and teamwork

Communication, information, media and technology

Knowing how to learn

LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

Integrity • Self-direction • Global perspective • Perseverance • Work ethic • Interpersonal skills

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Adopted by: SC Arts in Basic Curriculum Steering Committee, SCASCD, SC Chamber of Commerce, SC Council on Competitiveness, SC Education Oversight Committee, SC State Board of Education, SC State Department of Education, TransformSC Schools and Districts.

transformSC
tomorrow won't wait for our students

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COMPETITIVENESS

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College and Career Readiness Efforts in South Carolina

- College Preparatory Courses
- Dual and Concurrent Enrollment
- Financial Aid and Scholarships
- TRIO Programs
- Programs at Higher Education Institutions
- Developmental and Remedial Programs

College and Career Readiness Efforts in South Carolina

Supported by a grant from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education under the auspices of the EIA Teacher Education Centers of Excellence Grant Program.

Goals of the Center of Excellence

- Serve as a statewide resource for P-20 initiatives

- Develop and implement best practices for promoting college and career readiness

- Provide opportunities for teachers and students to learn more about

  - Cognitive strategies

  - Content knowledge

  - Learning skills and techniques

  - Transition knowledge and skills

Partnership with The National Resource Center

- Investigating local readiness cultures
- Researching initiatives in the state
- Educating colleagues
- Facilitating conversations

Survey of CCR Programs

- Attempt to understand the diversity of programs in institutions of education supporting CCR efforts

- Conducted at the middle and high school level
  - 643 public and private schools in population
  - 141 respondents (22.5%) at time of analysis
  - Respondents representative of schools in population by sector (public vs. private) and grade levels

Promising Practices Narratives

- Attempt to understand depth and context of CCR efforts in SC schools

- Schools were contacted and asked to provide a case study or to participate in an interview

- 11 institutions
  - 4 traditional high schools
  - 2 charter high schools
  - 3 Career & Tech Centers
  - 1 Technical College
  - 1 School District
  - (All public)

What have we learned from our research on CCR in South Carolina?

Emerging Themes

1. Program success requires (re)defining college and career readiness

2. Students' attitudes, skills, and competencies can be developed

3. CCR goals must be connected to community, county, region, and state

4. Partnerships are crucial

5. Professional development and support is vital

(Re)Defining College and Career Readiness

(Re)Defining College and Career Readiness

- College readiness and career readiness are so fundamentally linked, they did not separate them in practice.

- Two flavors:

    1. All students should be prepared to enter the workforce, even those who go on to college

    2. College-level preparation will equip students with skills and abilities employers want

Types of CCR Programs

Public

- Career fairs (78.8%)

- Visits from business or industry representatives (78.0%)

- Job shadowing programs (73.4%)

- Career exploration resources (72.9%)

- Visits to colleges and/or universities (69.5%)

- Visits from college representatives (64.4%)

- Student clubs, organizations, or professional societies on careers (59%)

Types of CCR Programs

Private

- Assistance applying for scholarships (100%)
- Visits from college representatives (94.1%)
- Assistance filling out the Common Application (82.4%)
- Visits to college/university (82.4%)
- College application assistance, workshops for students (76.5%)
- College application assistance, literature (76.5%)
- Sat or ACT test preparation classes (76.5%)

(Re)Defining College and Career Readiness

- Challenges to common or traditional definitions of college and career readiness

- Perceptions of career training opportunities as inappropriate for the college-bound student
  - Named as a narrative and a "stigma" common among guidance counselors

(Re)Defining College and Career Readiness

- Need to update key stakeholders' understanding of skills, knowledge, and cognitive strategies necessary for both college and careers

  -Including members of the community, parents, teachers, and guidance counselors.

Students Can Be Developed

Students are…

- Capable of achieving more

- Challenged and supported

- Expected to take ownership of learning

- Engaged in authentic learning experiences

  - Real-world application

  - Leading to a credential

Students Can Be Developed

"The district mission says it all. 'Empower. Compete. Succeed'…. the school was designated as 'unsatisfactory'. . . a new principal held high expectations for all students and accepted no excuses from any stakeholder regarding student success. … Students had to know that stakeholders believed in them and their potential to excel."

- Principal, Calhoun County High School

Students Can Be Developed

"Students in this program are taught through real-world experiences that allow the students to learn the skills and knowledge that students in introductory college engineering courses learn. These skills include designing accurate drawings of structures in software that are used across the engineering industry. . . .In addition to teaching appropriate labor skills, students are also taught the logic and academic content behind these careers."

- Global Career Development Facilitator, Conway High School

CCR Goals Must Be Connected to Community, Region, and State

Objectives of CCR Programs

Public

- Providing career exploration (42.4%)
- Developing workforce-readiness skills (30.5%)
- Improving graduation rates (27.1%)
- Connecting students to community resources (24.6%)
- Developing communication skills (23.7%)
- Providing workforce-skills test preparation (12.7%)

Private

- Developing college-level academic behaviors (58.8%)
- Providing support for the college application process (58.8%)
- Providing college-choice information (52.9%)
- Developing critical-thinking skills (35.3%)
- Providing college admissions test preparation (29.4%)
- Providing college enrollment information (29.4%)

CCR Goals Must Be Connected to Community, Region, and State

- CCR initiatives aimed at meeting workforce needs of the community
  - Local manufacturing
  - Technological
  - Agricultural
  - or Tourism industries

Connecting with Business/Industry

Career Readiness Initiative	%	Rank (among career initiatives)	Median Age (years)	Median Reach (% of students)
Career fairs	72.6	1	6-10	81-90
Visits from business or industry representatives	70.4	2	4-5	51-60
Job shadowing programs	68.1	3	6-10	41-50
Visits to business or industry	51.1	5	4-5	31-40
Internship programs	28.9	7	4-5	11-20
Apprenticeship programs	17.8	9	2-3	<10
Co-op programs	14.1	10	6-10	21-30

Statewide Programs

- Statewide programs and policy have also had a profound influence on the shape of CCR programs
  - College Decision Day
  - ACT/WorkKeys
  - Profile of the SC Graduate

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Partnerships are Crucial

Partnership	Freq.	%
Partnership with business or industry	89	66.4
Partnership with college or university	82	61.2
Partnership with community (e.g., collaborations with city or county government, teaming up with a local civic organization).	66	49.3
Other partnership(s) (please specify)	8	6.0
None of the above	16	11.9

Partnerships with Businesses and Industry

These partners:

- Inform students about internships

- Offer students internships

- Come to classroom and describe their work

- Explain how to begin a career in their field

- Bring students in to see the company

CCR Initiatives with Business Partners

Specific CCR Program	Freq.	%
Career fairs	98	72.6
Visits to colleges and/or universities	96	71.1
Visits from business or industry representatives	95	70.4
Visits from college representatives	92	68.1
Job shadowing programs	92	68.1
Career exploration resources	89	65.9
College fairs	77	57.0
SAT or ACT test preparation classes	76	56.3
Visits to businesses and/or industry representatives	69	51.1
Academic skills development resources	65	48.1

Aiken County Career and Technology Center and MTU America

- MTU approached the school about an apprenticeship program

- Students can earn certifications from US and German certifying bodies

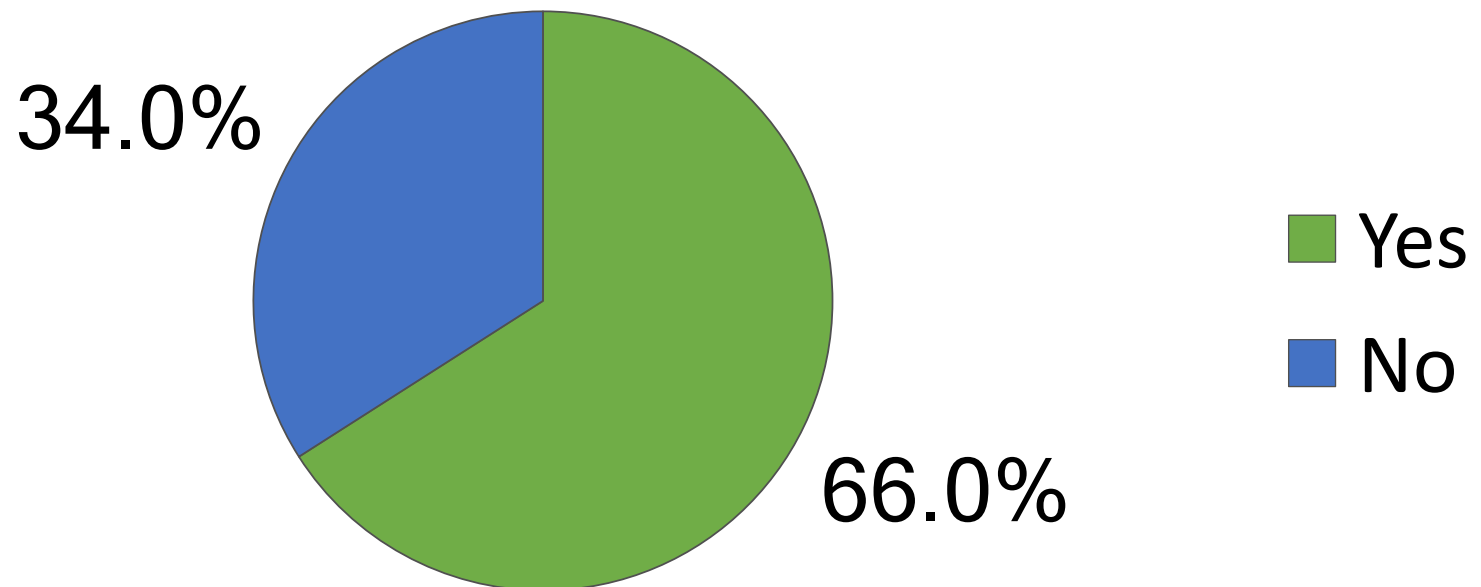- Connected to an increased effort to bring work-based learning opportunities to the school and the district

Center for Advanced Technical Studies Partnerships with Santee Cooper and Verizon

- Secured $100,000 to install solar panels at the school

- Students researching different aspects of the effectiveness of the solar panels

- Information shared with Santee Cooper

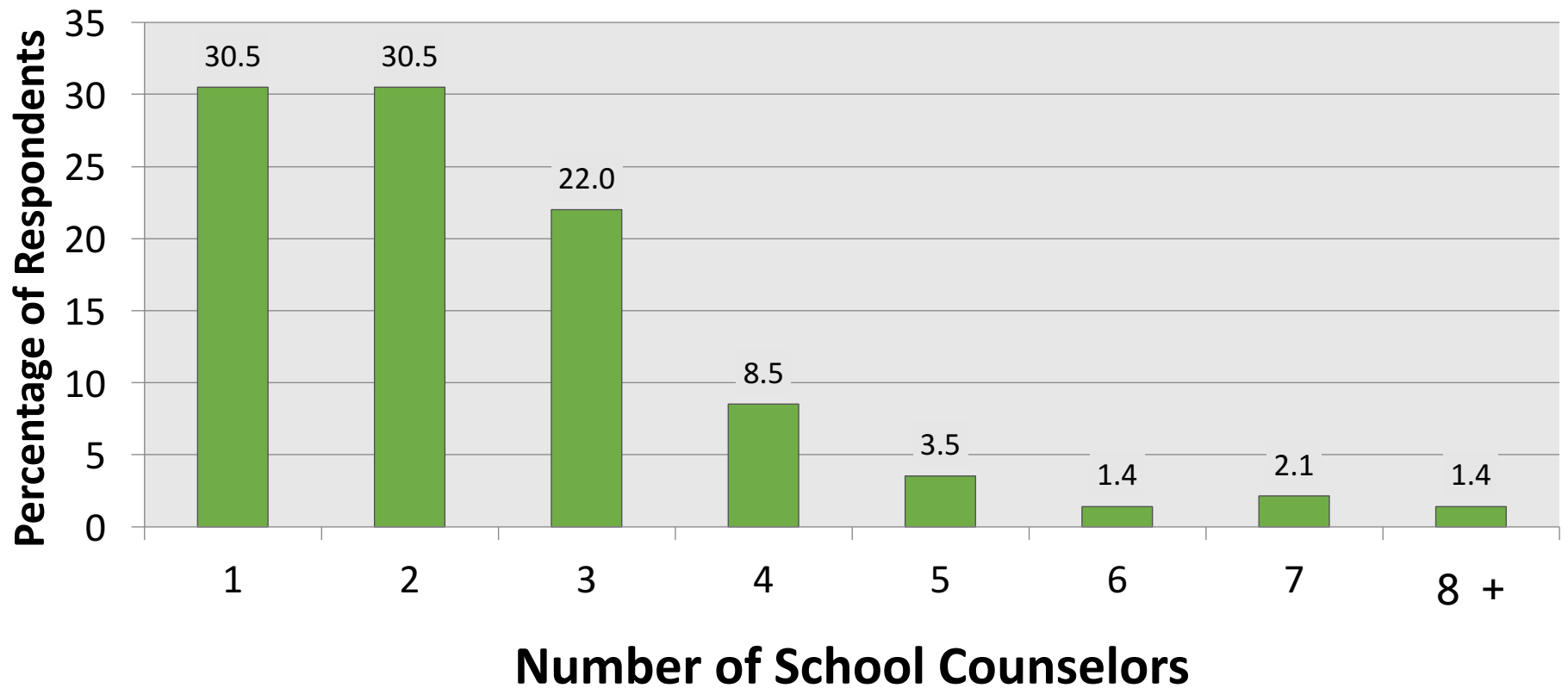- Verizon sponsoring summer camp for young women interested in STEM areas

Professional Development and Support is Vital

Professional Development and Support is Vital

Is there a teacher or staff member whose primary responsibility is college and career readiness at your school?

34.0%

66.0%

Yes

No

Professional Development and Support is Vital

- **Administration**
  - Administrators have the opportunity to set the tone for CCR
  - Administrators and policies can stand in the way of innovation

- **Staffing**
  - When key support staff leave, systems have to be redeveloped
  - Salary considerations to hire qualified teachers (e.g. health field)

Professional Development and Support is Vital

- Structural challenges
  - Distance from population centers
  - Timing events and opportunities

- Professional Development
  - Providing professional development opportunities for teachers, counselors, staff, administrators
  - Sharing good work in CCR programs has been a powerful way for work to be shared

Professional Development and Support is Vital

"We will address the local Chamber of Commerce this year and present our project. We also have shared this project at the Business & Education Summit in Greenville and at the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Conference in Nashville, Tennessee."

-Culinary Arts Instructor,
Fairfield Career
and Technology Center

Conclusions

- CCR programs and initiatives are responsive to local contexts, including the needs of students, families, and communities

- Stakeholders should be informed about the value of all readiness efforts (not just those labeled "college")

- Administrators and policy makers should be given opportunity to learn about promising practices

- Longitudinal research is needed on the effectiveness of initiatives and programs

Conclusions

Some questions:

- What stands out to you about these findings?

- What more would be helpful to know about college and career readiness in the state?

- How might these findings shape local practice and/or statewide policy?

Thank you!