



## A Study of the State of College and Career Readiness in South Carolina

The National Resource Center has begun work that leverages its experience and expertise in conducting large national surveys and partner with experts in K-12 administration and curriculum, particularly around college transition to carry out such a study. Recently, the Center was awarded a subcontract to carry out the research function for a newly established Center for Excellence in College and Career Readiness (CCR) in South Carolina. South Carolina is a state where pipeline issues are critical and are being actively addressed. The research conducted for the study will serve as a pilot for a survey of college readiness initiatives at a regional or national level.

### Survey of CCR Programs in South Carolina Schools

Between November 2015 and April 2016, the National Resource Center undertook its first survey of college and career readiness programs in South Carolina. The purpose of this survey was to gather information about the structure, goals, prevalence, and assessment of CCR programs in the state.

Principals and heads of schools at all institutions providing instruction in grades 6 through 12 were emailed a link to the web-based survey.

- » 642 middle and high schools were invited to participate
- » 143 schools responded (22.3% response rate)

<i>Characteristics of Responding Institutions</i>	
	<b>Percent of Respondents (n = 143)</b>
<i>School control</i>	
Private	88.1
Public	11.9
<i>Grade taught at school</i>	
6	47.6
7	53.1
8	53.8
9	59.4
10	60.8
11	62.2
12	59.4

**Objectives** - Among the most frequently named objectives included providing career exploration, developing college-level academic behaviors, developing critical-thinking skills, developing workforce-readiness skills, , and improving graduation rates. The least frequently named objectives for CCR programs and services included providing support for job application process, improving employment rates, providing job-matching services, improving college

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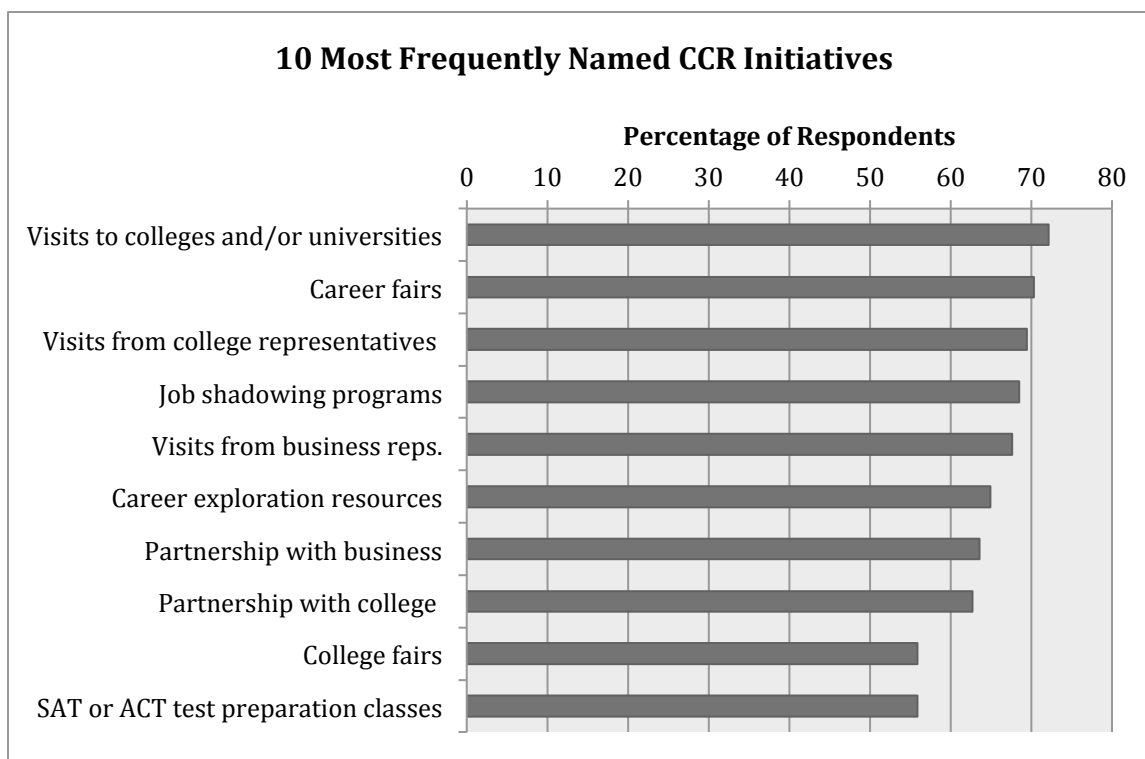
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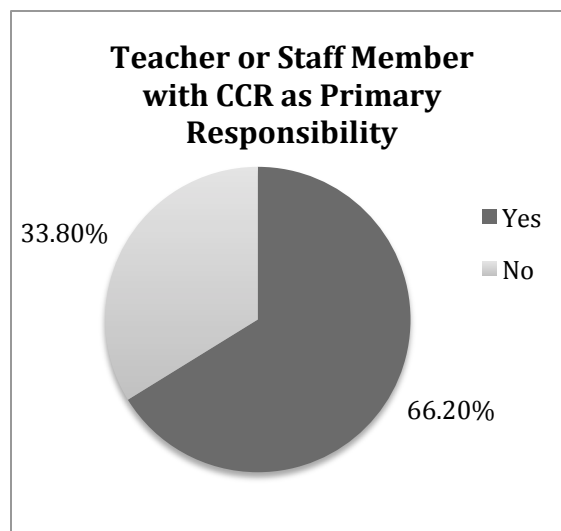
attendance rates, and providing job-specific training. Public schools more frequently named providing career exploration, developing workforce-readiness skills, and developing critical thinking skills as objectives, while over half of private schools identified developing college-level academic behaviors, providing support for the college application process, and providing college choice information.

**CCR programs, initiatives, and services** - Over 70 percent of respondents reported offering visits to colleges or universities and career fairs. Other frequently reported CCR initiatives included such career readiness programs as job shadowing and visits from business or industry representatives as well as other college readiness programs as visits from college representatives, assistance applying for scholarships, admission test preparation classes, partnerships with colleges or universities, and college fairs.

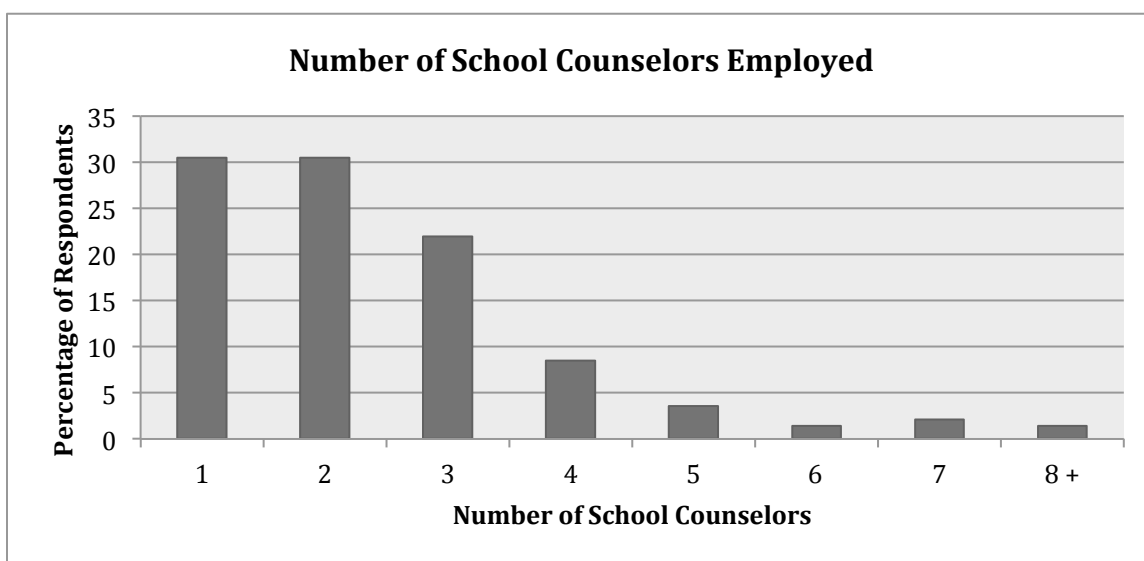
Partnerships were also fairly common as a majority of respondents reported engaging in collaborations with business or industry as well as higher education. College partnerships included such activities as dual enrollment programs, representatives from local colleges and universities provide assistance with application for admission, financial aid application, and ACT preparation. Other institutions described partnerships where representatives from college would come to discuss college and career options.



**Staffing** – When asked if schools had designated a teacher or a staff member to take on college and career readiness as a primary responsibility, 66 percent indicated that they had done so. Every private school in the sample reported designating an employee with CCR as a primary responsibility. Common titles of those with CCR as a specific responsibility included: career specialist, guidance counselor, school counselor, director of college counseling, and graduation coach. Moreover, 69 percent of respondents indicated that the staff members with CCR as a primary responsibility also had another responsibility at the school.



When asked about the number of school counselors employed at their schools, 83 percent indicated their schools employed 3 school counselors or fewer. Public schools more frequently reported employing more school counselors; the median number of counselors at public schools was 2 compared to 1 at private schools.



## Conclusion

South Carolina is at the point of incredible opportunity. To achieve the social and economic potential for the citizenry of the state, many diverse groups have elevated the need for creating graduates who are college and career ready to a priority. This can be seen in the many resources and efforts that are being mobilized to improve the educational environment to ensure postsecondary success. However, to take advantage of the moment of opportunity, it is time to take the individual star programs and create a connected constellation of focused efforts to improving indicators of college and career readiness in the state.