

Family Engagement Voice

Equity, Opportunity, & Excellence in Education

CFEC School Partner Program is in full swing!

Our CFEC Liaisons have hit the ground running, connecting with 17 SC public schools who are taking part in a statewide program to strengthen their family and stakeholder engagement efforts as a key strategy, to support continued recovery from the impacts of the pandemic on areas such as student academics, attendance, and behavioral and mental health.

The School Partner Program of the Carolina Family Engagement Center (CFEC) is a federally funded initiative to aid primarily Title I schools in leveraging school, community, and family resources in support of meaningful school-home relations and increased student achievement.

To participate in the program, state public schools with a poverty index of 60% or higher submitted applications – with approval from their school districts – agreeing to commit to a two-year period of high-quality training and technical assistance in family engagement provided by CFEC at no cost to the schools or districts.

The CFEC School Partner Program is composed of three (3) primary initiatives: a Schoolwide Stakeholder Partner program; a Teacher Partner program; and a Parent Leadership Partner program. These program “pillars” support family engagement capacity-building for both educators and parents. Specific strategies in each pillar will be selected in collaboration with participating schools to align with their academic and school climate goals.

The Parent Leadership Partner component works to strengthen parents’ ability to engage in their children’s learning and development in partnership with the school and to grow a supportive network of parents. This effort brings together groups of up to 15 parents for seven sessions built around CFEC’s Parent Leadership Partner workbook. Parents also work individually or in groups to create and implement a small project intended to address an education-related need in their school or community.

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CFEC is the Statewide Family Engagement Center for South Carolina. It is housed in the SC School Improvement Council at the College of Education at the University of South Carolina.

Anticipated outcomes from participation in CFEC’s School Partner Program include an increase in the number of effective family-school partnerships that support parents as active participants in their children’s learning and development, and improved school climate. Educators will have increased satisfaction with home-school relationships and a greater ability to use family engagement as a strategy for classroom and school improvement.

For families, envisioned outcomes include their increased satisfaction with home-school relations, stronger engagement in their children’s learning and development, increased capacity to engage in effective partnerships with their children’s schools, and greater participation in school decision and/or policy making.

Partnering for Progress - CFEC Eliminates Barriers to Family and Community Engagement

In October 2023, the U.S. Department of Education renewed the Carolina Family Engagement Center’s grant to serve as South Carolina’s Statewide Family Engagement Center (SFEC) under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). As we look back on our previous grant, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Aida Rogers, sat down with our staff, Liaisons, and partners to look at the incredible work that has been done across South Carolina in the last five years.

From tutoring and mentorship programs, and community partnerships with museums and school gardening programs, family engagement means better schools for all students.

To find out about the great work CFEC has done, [you can read, “Partnering for Progress” here.](#)

Current Participating School Partner Schools:

Pendleton Elementary
(Anderson School District 4)

**Joseph S. Shanklin Elementary
and
Whale Branch Elementary**
(Beaufort County School District)

Minnie Hughes Elementary
(Charleston County School District)

**Blacksburg Elementary
and
Gaffney High**
(Cherokee County School District)

Hartsville Middle
(Darlington County School District)

**Cayce Elementary,
Congaree Elementary,
and
Northside Middle**
(Lexington School District 2)

Newberry Elementary
(School District of Newberry
County)

Westminster Elementary
(School District of Oconee County)

Sheridan Elementary
(Orangeburg County School
District)

**Liberty Elementary
and
R.H. Gettys Middle**
(School District of Pickens County)

**Wellford Academy of Science
and Technology**
(Spartanburg District 5)

Rafting Creek Elementary
(Sumter School District)

A New Resource from CFEC to Support Districts in Engaging Multilingual Families!

Several years ago, CFEC initiated a conversation with multilingual learner (MLL) families and community organizations supporting MLL families to better understand how we could encourage increased levels of engagement with their children's schools. It became clear that access to interpreters and translators was an essential foundational component of all partnerships between MLL families and schools, and that this was an area where schools and parents needed additional support.

CFEC's new guide for public school districts (districts) on language access is an outgrowth of these conversations. Developed in partnership with Spanglish Consulting in Charleston, SC, this resource guide is intended to (1) increase awareness of federal laws requiring districts and schools to communicate with MLL parents in a language that they understand and (2) share tools and resources that can assist South Carolina districts in meeting their obligations to MLL parents generally and Spanish-speaking parents in particular.



This resource is currently available on the CFEC website at [Carolina Family Engagement Center - College of Education | University of South Carolina \(sc.edu\)](http://Carolina Family Engagement Center - College of Education | University of South Carolina (sc.edu)) or through the CFEC office.

We hope that this guide will help districts navigate the challenges they may face in complying with federal language access requirements. We also hope that it will inspire community agencies and organizations at the state, regional, and local levels to explore new ways to collaborate and support South Carolina school districts in meeting these requirements. Working together, in South Carolina, we can meet the challenges of language access and move our state closer to the shared goal of engaging all families in the learning and development of their children!

Congratulations to Lorilei Swanson - Digital Economy Ecosystem Dream Team

Join us in recognizing CFEC Liaison & Project Lead for the Upstate, Lorilei Swanson, as a member of the Digital Economy Ecosystem (DEE) Dream Team in Oconee County.

Most recently, Lorilei worked with the South Carolina Office of Rural Health and South Carolina's Rural Innovation Network to complete the DEE Roadmap. Their vision is to be a recognized innovation and collaboration digital economy hub by fostering a culture of inclusive, constructive dialogue and creative, place-based digital and tech solutions.

The DEE will provide tools and resources to anyone with a dream and raise the quality of life for all residents of Oconee County. Moving forward to achieve their Roadmap goals, Lorilei will be responsible for data collection and working with TriCounty Technical College and the School District of Oconee Career Center to create a Tech Talent Pipeline. Great work, Lorilei!

Congratulations to Laurann Gallitto Patel - SC Education Policy Fellow!

Congratulations to CFEC Liaison & Project Lead for the Midlands, Laurann Gallitto Patel, on her completion of the South Carolina Education Policy Fellowship Program (SC-EPFP)! The SC-EPFP is a 10-month professional development program for established and emerging leaders in education and related fields, designed to work toward the implementation of sound education policy and practice in South Carolina.

Laurann's cohort advocacy project was centered on addressing the SC teacher shortage by enabling DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), often referred to as Dreamers, interested in the teaching profession to receive in-state tuition and state scholarships/grants and be eligible for professional licensure in the teaching profession.

Laurann remarks, "During my time in the Program, we also made group visits to the SC Statehouse, various schools such as South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities and South Carolina School For the Deaf and the Blind, and met monthly to receive professional development and hear from professionals in the field of education. I truly enjoyed my experience meeting and learning from so many dedicated, passionate peers from across South Carolina and appreciate all the diligent planning of the facilitators, Tom Hudson and Bruce Moseley."



Upcoming Family Engagement Conferences

February 19-21

[National ESEA Conference](#)

March 7

[Palmetto Pre-K Spring Jamboree](#)

March 27

[Hopes & Dreams Conference](#)

April 5

[School Improvement Council Annual Conference](#)

April 16-17

[Southeastern School Behavioral Health Conference](#)

Professional Development Opportunities

CFEC recently released its [menu of family engagement professional development sessions and workshops](#) for district and school personnel for the 2024-25 school year. Unless otherwise noted, all sessions can be delivered virtually or in-person and are available statewide.

All of our sessions are grounded in the SC Family Engagement K-12 Framework (SC Department of Education 2019) (SC Framework); the Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships Version 2.0 (K. Mapp et al. 2019) ([dualcapacity.org](#)) (Dual Capacity-Building Framework); the Framework of Six Types of Involvement (Epstein et al.); current research; and the rich experience of CFEC's Regional Family Engagement Liaisons in the field.

These sessions are available upon request. You can schedule a session for your school or district by contacting Project Director Karen Utter at utter@email.sc.edu.

Foundations of Effective School-Wide Family Engagement

Foundations of Effective Family Engagement at the District Level

Evaluating Family Engagement:

It's About More than Counting the Bodies in the Building

The Essential Role of the Principal in Engaging All Families

**Taking a More Inclusive Approach to Family Engagement –
Building Blocks for Principals**

Family Engagement for Student Success at the Classroom Level

Family-School Communication Hamburger:

Effective Strategies for Communication between School and Home

Language Simulation:

Enhancing Communication with Multilingual Families and Learners

Listening to and Learning from South Carolina Families

**Linking Family Engagement to Student Learning and Development:
Strategies and Resources**

Engaging Families to Support Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

Building Trusting Relationships with Families

Using the Dual Capacity-Building Framework to Strengthen Family Engagement

Transforming “Problem Parents” into “Parent Partners”

Effective Strategies for Gathering Parent Input and Feedback

Coordinating the Family Engagement-

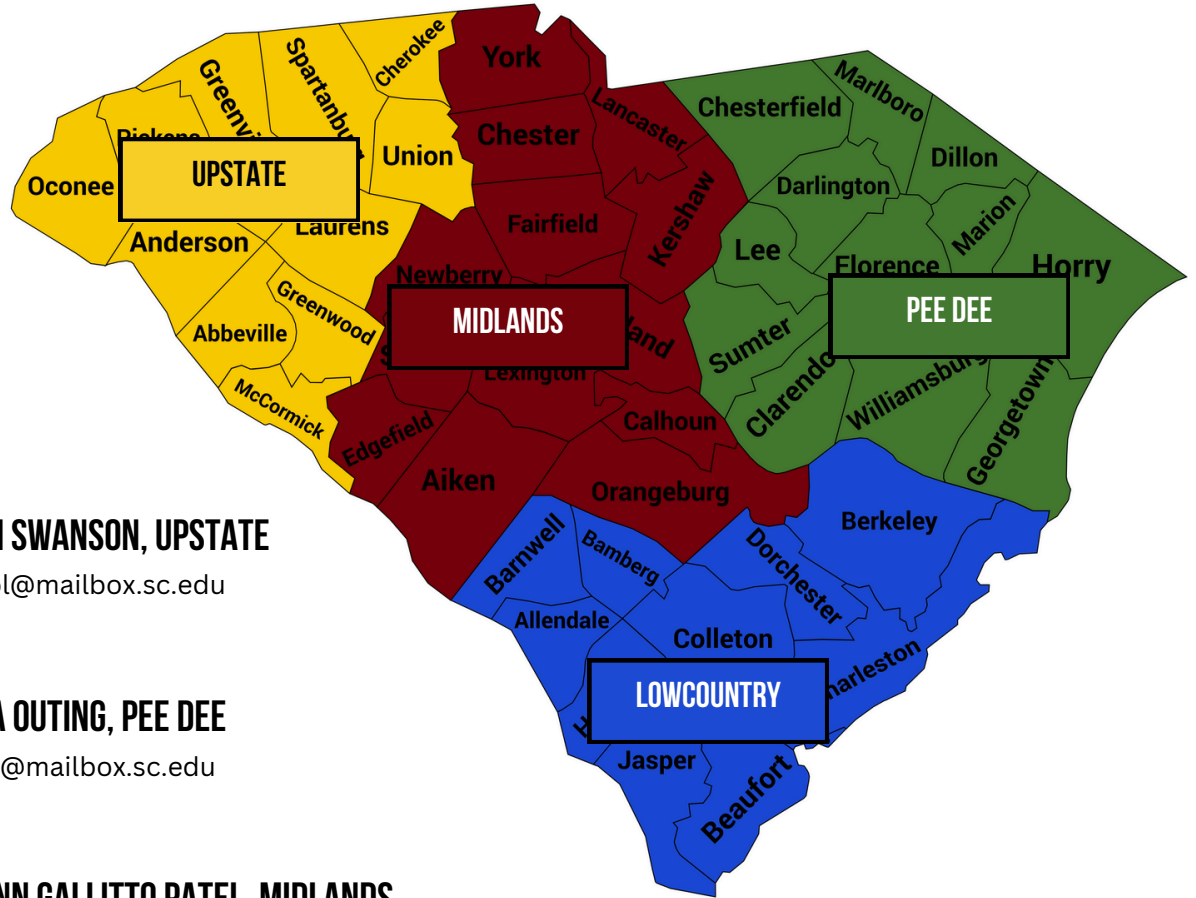
Related Requirements of Title I, Read to Succeed, and SC School Improvement Council

There is no charge for this service.

Renewal credits for certified administrators and teachers are available as indicated at the end of each session description.

*On request, CFEC can also provide schools and districts with customized PD sessions in family engagement.
[Contact CFEC Project Director Karen Utter for more information.](#)*

Regional Work Across South Carolina



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