SOUTH CAROLINA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL COVID-19 IMPACT SURVEY

CONDUCTED ONLINE
APRIL 15 – APRIL 24, 2020

In partnership with the SC Association of Christian Schools (SCACS), the Catholic Diocese of Charleston, the South Carolina Independent School Association (SCISA), and the Palmetto Association of Independent Schools (PAIS)
There are around **350 independent schools** in South Carolina, serving between **50,000 and 60,000 students**. This represents **6-8%** of South Carolina’s total student population.

- Nearly **100%** of South Carolina students live **within a 30-minute drive** of at least one independent school.
- **79%** serve students with **special needs**.
- **57%** provide some form of **financial assistance** to students.
- The median **cost of combined tuition and fees** is **$5,210/year**.

*SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics; Exploring South Carolina’s Private Education Sector, EdChoice & Palmetto Promise Institute (2018)*
A total of **220 schools** received the survey. **157 schools** from every corner of the state responded for a **71% participation rate**.
COVID-19 IMPACT ON LEARNING

100% of South Carolina independent schools surveyed are engaged in some form of interactive distance learning.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCACS</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6,380</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCISA</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>19,313</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAIS</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5,006</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7,895</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>38,594</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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*Other = Montessori Materials Bins
I had a school head call me and tell me how proud he was of his teachers and their support for the school’s virtual learning platform. What was most telling about this story was that the head stated that the teachers that had resisted implementing this type of initiative into their traditional instructional pedagogy, were the first to embrace this new platform. When asked why they were so willing to implement this new protocol, they stated, "We will do whatever it takes to make sure our students get what they need to be successful."

This is a perfect example of why independent education is so great. Our instructors, schools, and parents love our students so much, they will sacrifice whatever they need to in order to provide outstanding academics and services to all of the students they serve.

– Dr. Spencer Jordan, Executive Director of SCISA
Many independent schools serve children that without significant assistance would not otherwise be able to attend. These families that sacrifice and struggle to earn enough to feed their children in many cases do not have adequate internet coverage, if any.

Mary Margaret Martin, Principal of St. Anthony of Padua School, Greenville, SC:

St. Anthony of Padua Catholic School, with 92% of its students eligible for free and reduced lunch, embraced virtual education with more barriers than anticipated. We quickly provided all students in our school a Chromebook or iPad. These same families needed food and secure interest access. Each family was paired with a local foodbank or Catholic Charities to ensure their nutrition needs were adequately met. In addition, we had to cover the internet expenses for a significant portion of our families that had fallen behind on their bills for several months. We continue to provide online speech therapy and other ABA therapies to students for our exceptional learners.
145 schools provided estimated financial losses for the 2019-20 school year.

- Projected losses range from $1,000 to over $5 million for individual schools or school systems
- The combined projected loss is currently $19.7 million

Most cited impacts:

- Loss of before- and after-school ("extended care") and summer camp programs
- Tuition refunds
- Tuition non-payment/Increased financial aid to families
- Student withdrawals
- Maintaining payroll for non-teaching and extended care staff
- Cancelled fundraising events
- Increased technology & other distance learning costs
- Additional cleaning expenses
- Food service programs
- Exceptional SC (ECENC) shortfall
- Reduced philanthropic donations
- Cancelled athletic events
**ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT**

**NEXT SCHOOL YEAR**

135 schools provided estimated financial losses for the 2020-21 school year.

- Most schools project a **10-20% reduction in enrollment**
- Projected losses range from **$5,000 to over $5 million** for individual schools or school systems
- The combined projected loss was **$33.6 million**

**MOST CITED IMPACTS:**

- Decrease in enrollment due to family finances (attrition)
- Decrease in new students and auxiliary programs
- Ongoing cleaning costs
- Anticipated reduction in philanthropic giving
- Technology upgrades to continue distance learning
- Significant need for teacher professional development for distance learning

- Anticipated restrictions of number of students in classrooms due to social distancing rules:
  - Possible need for additional teachers/staff, or
  - Potentially having to turn students away
- Possible maintaining of non-teaching staff during distance learning times
- Remedial education for lost learning time
- Increased student aid requests
COVID-19 IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT

10 schools have laid off administration

11 schools have furloughed faculty

31 school have laid off staff

At least 45 schools answered “not yet” to some potential combination of future administrative/faculty/staff job cuts.
20% of the students represented in this survey already receive some form of needs-based financial assistance.

Family and school budget crunches, paired with an expected decrease in philanthropic support, pose a real threat to these children continuing to receive the education their parents believe best meets their needs.
Impact on state & local budgets

Shrinking enrollment and potential school closures also impact public education budgets. Impact projection scenarios range from $31 million to over $100 million.

Average federal, state, and local public school spending for the 2019-20 school year is estimated at $14,383 per pupil. (SOURCE: SC Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Private School Enrollment, 2017-18</th>
<th>Estimated marginal cost for enrollment increase in public system (state plus local)</th>
<th>10% of private enrollment</th>
<th>Projected increase on state only (10% migration)</th>
<th>Est. total cost increase (state plus local) to absorb increase in students (10% migration)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>49,788</td>
<td>$11,772</td>
<td>4,979</td>
<td>$31,421,096</td>
<td>$58,610,226</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PK-12 Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>Fiscal Impact of Private School Students Entering Public Schools by % Figures in Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private School</td>
<td>Public School</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62,830</td>
<td>763,533</td>
<td>826,363</td>
</tr>
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</table>

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP?

• At least **89 schools surveyed** have applied for the SBA’s **Paycheck Protection Program**, with varying degrees of success.

• Under the CARES Act, South Carolina will receive significant Education Stabilization funds:
  
  o **$204 million** allocated specifically for **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief**. The law states that private school students **must** have equitable access to services provided by these funds, which will flow through the South Carolina State Department of Education (SDE) to local districts (known as Local Education Authorities or LEAs). It will be up to the LEA’s to ensure that private school students receive the “equitable services” the law dictates.

  o **$47 million** is designated to the **Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund** (GEER). This fund could be a critical lifeline directly to private schools, because it grants the Governor flexibility to include “education-related entities” and protect “education-related jobs,” including those at independent schools.
WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP?

• Provide private school teachers access to the same professional development opportunities around distance learning that may be provided to public school teachers.

• Create more virtual learning opportunities, such as Online Course Access, that could benefit all South Carolina students, including those at independent schools.

• Create sustainable funding mechanisms to support qualified students’ ability to attend a school of their choice, which empirical studies in states like Florida have shown improve public education and save the state money.
Coronavirus pandemic hits award-winning Split Creek Farm at worst possible time

LILLIA SHAYNE-PERRY | GREENVILLE NEWS

The coronavirus pandemic has taken a toll on businesses and schools alike, and the South Carolina agricultural industry is no exception.

In March 2020, Split Creek Farm, an organic and sustainable farm located in Anderson County, was named the 2020 National Young Farmer/Career Development Program Outstanding Young Farmer by the National Young Farmers Council. The farm produces a variety of fruits and vegetables, and they are known for their commitment to sustainable agriculture.

"Coronavirus pandemic has taken a toll on businesses and schools alike, and the South Carolina agricultural industry is no exception. Spring is the prime season for fresh produce, but the pandemic has disrupted supply chains and caused a decrease in demand. The farm is also facing challenges with labor shortages and increased costs for protective equipment. Despite these challenges, Split Creek Farm remains committed to providing fresh, local produce to the community. Keep your eyes on the horizon for more updates on this dynamic farm."

To read full article, click here.