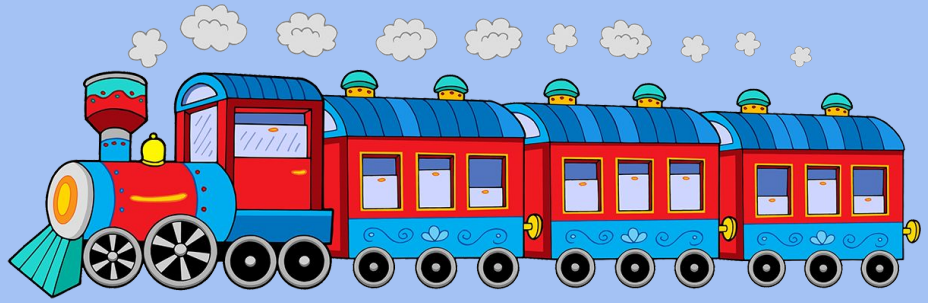
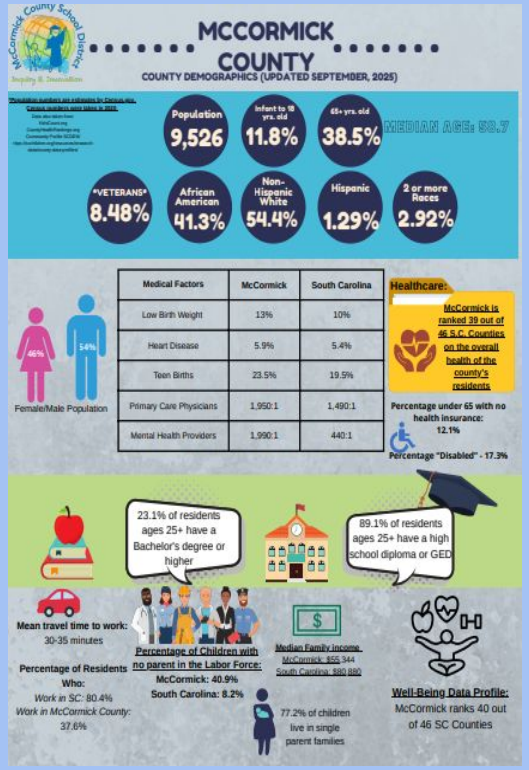
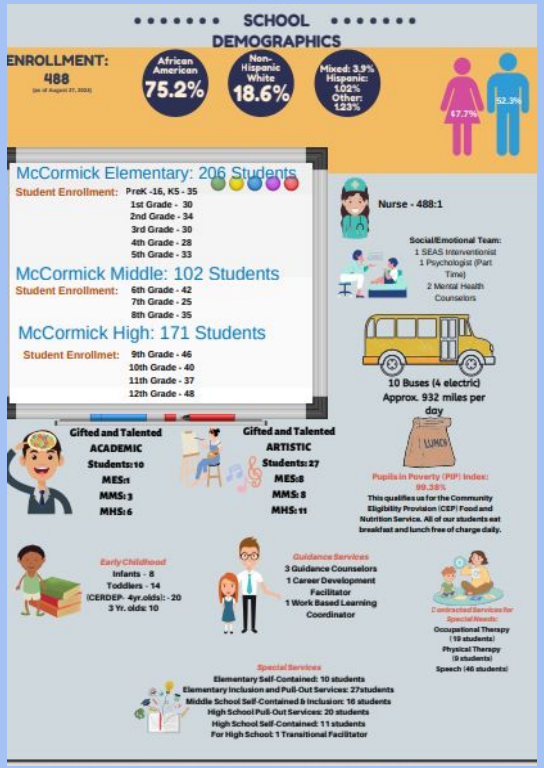
The Little Engine That Could: A School District Who Has Beat the Odds

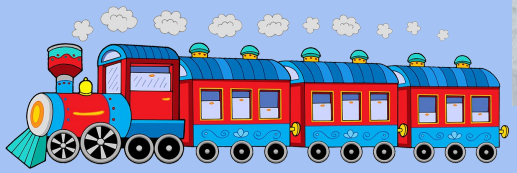
Dr. Jaime Hembree, Superintendent of
McCormick County School District



About McCormick County School District



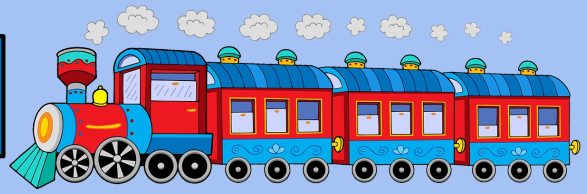




Small District, Big Heart

McCormick Early Childhood Center	32
McCormick Elementary School	194
McCormick Middle School	109
McCormick High School	168
Total Enrollment	541

Demographic Data



- Pupils in Poverty Rate is 99.38%
- Our entire district is Title I
- All students eat breakfast and lunch for free
- Demographic Break-Down
  - African American- 75.2%
  - Non-Hispanic White- 18.6%
  - One or More Race- 3.9%
  - Hispanic- 1.02%
  - Other- 1.23%



Federal Funding Sources

Title I	$427,925
Title II	$41,704.14
Title IV	$31,632.15
Reap	$23,162.68
CTE	$45,686.00
IDEA	$157,739.00
IDEA (Pre-School)	$17,499.00
CSI and ATSI	No longer on the list!
Grand Total	$727,848.97

A Vision Was Cast...

McCormick County School District

Inquiry & Innovation

Mission

TO PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR EVERY STUDENT

Vision

INSPIRING, CHALLENGING, AND PREPARING OUR STUDENTS FOR TOMORROW'S GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

WORLD CLASS CHIEFS







World-Class District Goals

Goal One: Provide World Class Instruction and Opportunities to Increase Student Achievement

Goal Two: Continue to Grow and Sustain a World-Class District Culture and Team

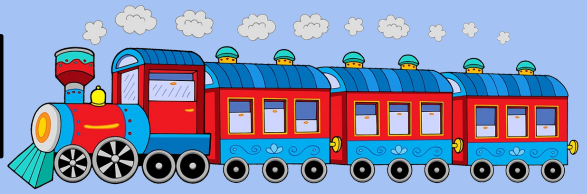
Goal Three: Provide World-Class Communication to Ensure Collaboration with Parents, Community Members, and All Stakeholders

Goal Four: Grow and Sustain World-Class Community Partnerships

Organizational Streamlining

- District based instructional coaches rather than school-based
- Redefined roles, to include a Chief Academic Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, Director of MTSS & Accountability, a Broadcasting teacher/Public Information Officer, a Special Education Instructional Facilitator and a Director of CTE
- District-wide processes and procedures
- Developed district instructional non-negotiables
- Aligned the various state-required plans to focus on our common goal

Staffing Recruitment



- Became creative with how we could attract teachers to come to our rural district
- Launched a salary study, resulting in our board approving a substantial raise for certified and noncertified employees
- Targeted Savannah Lakes, a retirement community within McCormick County, to hire retired teachers
- Added Incentives for teachers, such as a paid Master's program
- Board approval for signing bonuses in high need areas (Math, Science, Special Education)

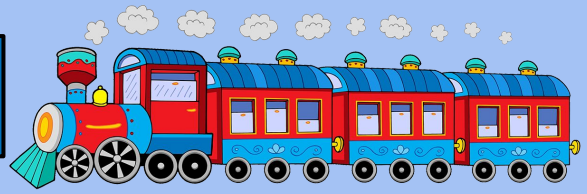
Intentionality With Federal Funding

- Primarily spent on salaries (people, not programs)
  - Two Interventionists at our elementary school (Title I)
  - One interventionist at our middle school (Title I)
  - Parent Coordinator (Title I)
  - Professional Development Coordinator (Title II)
  - Work-Based Learning Coordinator (CTE)
  - SPED Teachers (IDEA)

2026 Federal Funds 2025 Federal Funds 2024 Federal Funds

*In 2019, we paid $83,494.73 to Odysseyware Academy just out of Title One

Alignment of ALL Plans



- Superintendent Goals
- Principal PADEPP Goals
- Continuous Improvement Plans
- School Strategic Plan Goals
- Teacher SLO Goals

MHS Goal: By the end of May 2026, through PLC's and PLT's, McCormick High School will increase EOC scores in Biology, United States History, English II, and Algebra 1 scores by at least 3-5%.

ONE PLAN, CLEAR GOALS, CLOSE MONITORING...

RESULTS!!!

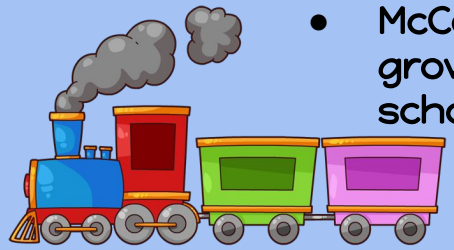
Current Progress

SO
WHERE
ARE WE
NOW?



Making History!

- McCormick County School District had the highest growth in the entire state on the SC Ready ELA assessment in 2024-2025!
- McCormick County School District had the third highest growth in the entire state on SC Ready Math in 2024-2025!
- McCormick Middle School has been named a "Beating the Odds" School from the Education Oversight Committee and will be featured in the report that is released this spring!
- McCormick Middle School achieved their first "EXCELLENT" rating in school history!
- McCormick Middle School had the highest growth in the entire state among traditional schools!



Current Trajectory

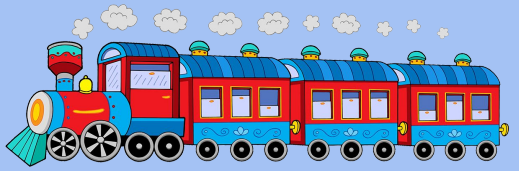
Accurate Reporting

Our consistent tracking and internal audits have allowed us to identify and eliminate any errors in reporting.

Ongoing Progress Monitoring

We update our data sheets and report card simulators each time we get new data. Real-time reporting for real-time decision making.

Currently Tracking One EXCELLENT, One GOOD and One AVERAGE on the 2025-2026 School Report Card!



Data Driven Teacher Teams

- Full transparency!!
- We shared the report card calculation process with teachers.
- We clearly communicate the data and its impact each time we progress monitor or update data.
- These data updates pair with their regular Professional Learning Team data discussions to guide instructional decisions.

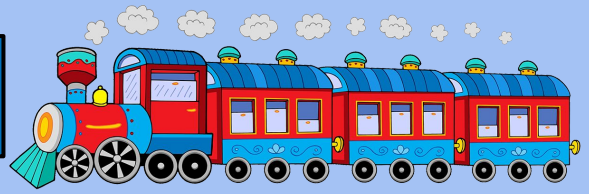




Data Driven Decisions

- Adjustments to pacing
- Adjustments to rigor of assessments
- Identification of bubble kids
- Adjustments to small group instruction

The 4 Critical Questions of a PLC at Work



What is it we want our students to know and be able to do?

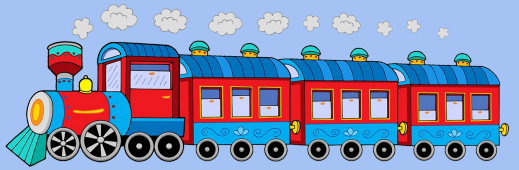
How will we know if each student has learned it?

How will we respond when some students do not learn it?

How will we extend the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?

A Mindset Shift Has Transpired...

We Think We Can, We Think We Can



How is MCSD Beating the Odds?

- Visible, Supportive Leadership
- Clear goals and aligned plans
- Federal monies match needs (intentional focus)
- Accountability tracking and teams
- Student ownership of data
- Data team process via PLC at Work

