

# Inside the New School Counseling and Career Guidance Model: What You Need to Know for 2026 and Beyond

Palmetto Education Summit

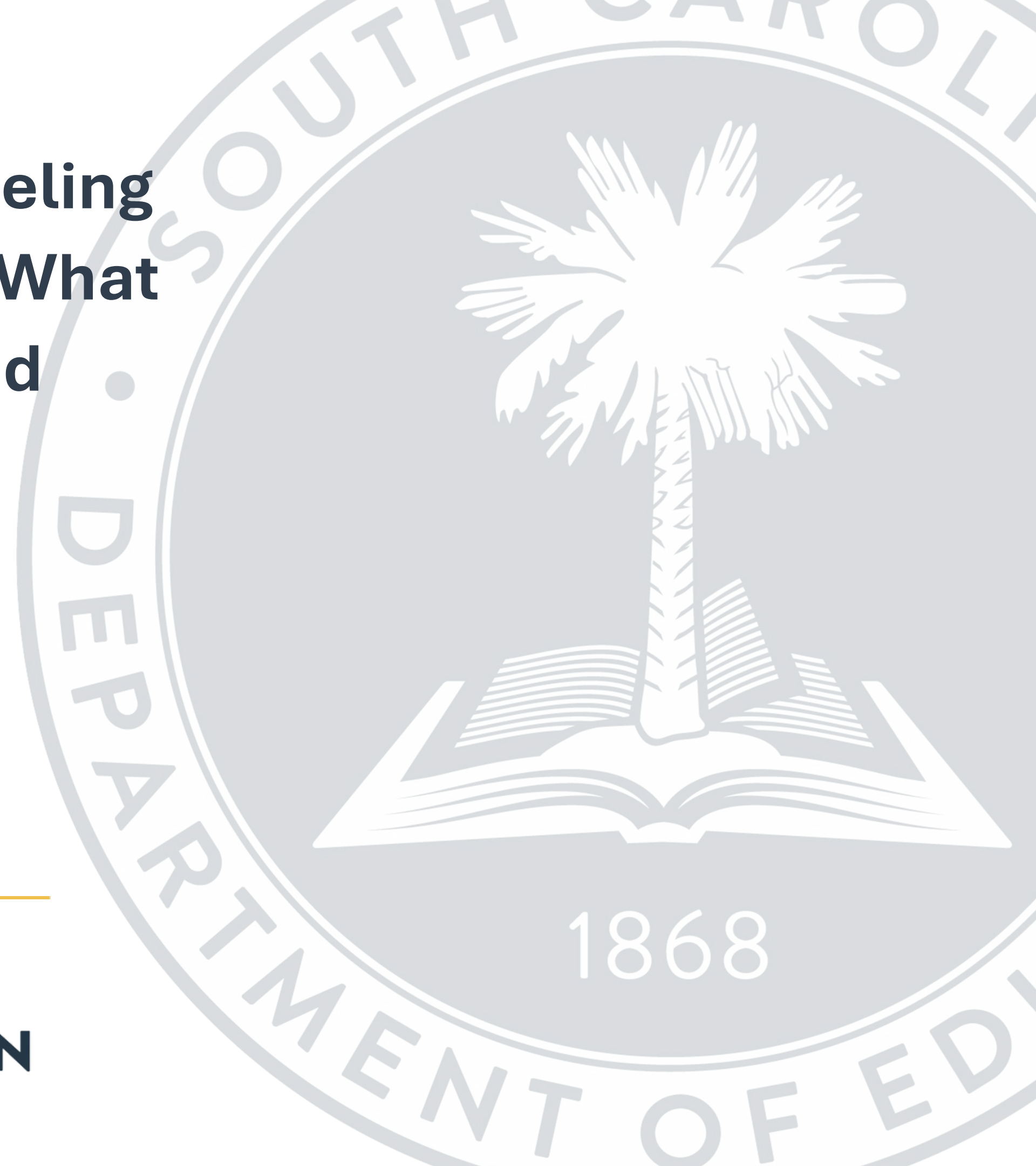
Dr. Erin Clarke, Office of Career Readiness

June 15-17, 2026

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SOUTH CAROLINA  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**



# Agenda

- **Welcome & Purpose**
- **The “Why” Behind the Model**
- **Overview of Key Components and Structure**
- **Implications for Practice**
- **Upcoming Opportunities**



# SCDE Office of Career Readiness

**Mission:** The Office of Career Readiness exists to ensure that every learner in SC can access a high-quality, workforce-aligned education pathway that leads to personal success and economic mobility.

**Vision:** To lead the nation in delivering transformative systems that empower every South Carolinian, regardless of background or age, to thrive in a dynamic, opportunity-rich workforce.



# START WITH WHY



# EEDA – Education & Economic Development Act

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## **South Carolina Code § 59-59-40 — Guidance and Counseling Model**

During the 2005-06 school year, the Department of Education’s guidance and counseling model must provide standards and strategies for school districts to use and follow in developing and implementing a comprehensive guidance and counseling program in their districts. This model must assist school districts and communities with the planning, development, implementation, and assessment of a school guidance and counseling program to support the personal, social, educational, and career development of pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade students.



# Who Makes the Model Work?

School  
Counselors

Career  
Guidance  
Personnel

Teachers

Principals

Districts

Boards

Families

# Model Domains & Foundations

## PROGRAM DOMAINS

### Learning to Learn

(World-Class  
Knowledge)

### Learning to Work

(World-Class  
Skills)

### Learning to Live

(Life & Career  
Characteristics)

## 8 MODEL FOUNDATIONS

Every student is worthy of access to a high-quality education that supports their personal, social, educational, and career development.

Resiliency and adaptability are essential for lifelong learning and success in a rapidly changing world.

Learning is a collaborative process that thrives when families, educators, and support systems work together.

Career readiness begins early and should be integrated into all levels of education.

Student agency must be fostered to support personal responsibility and informed decision-making.

Community and connection are vital to student well-being and academic engagement.

Personal-social wellness is foundational for academic achievement and future success.

Technical proficiency and online safety are critical components of modern learning and career preparation.



# Grade-Level Progression

Elementary – Build Foundations

Middle – Develop Skills

High – Apply Independently



# Connecting Our Work to the Profile of a South Carolina Graduate



## Learning to Learn

Focus: Academic development, inquiry, and readiness for college, career, and lifelong learning.

## World-Class Knowledge

Rigorous standards in ELA and math for college and career readiness

Multiple languages

Science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM)

Arts and social sciences

These knowledge areas support the academic foundation and **inquiry-driven** thinking that school counselors promote through **academic planning, study skills, and learning strategies.**



# Learning to Live

Focus: Personal-social development, character, and citizenship.

## Life & Career Characteristics

Integrity

Self-direction

Global perspective

Perseverance

Work ethic

Interpersonal skills

These characteristics define how students learn to navigate life, relationships, and challenges as **responsible members of their communities.**



## Learning to Work

Focus: Career readiness, professional skills, workplace competencies, and problem-solving.

## World-Class Skills

Creativity and innovation

Critical thinking and problem solving

Collaboration and teamwork

Communication, information, media, and technology

Knowing how to learn

These skills align with what employers identify as essential for success in any modern workforce—**teamwork, communication, technology fluency, and the ability to think critically and adapt.**



# Student Skill Benchmarks: Learning to Learn



Learning to Learn: World-Class Knowledge (WCK)		
Code	Indicator	I Can Statement
WCK-1	Use analytical thinking to make well-reasoned, informed choices	I can think critically about information to make smart, informed decisions.
WCK-2	Apply creativity to learning tasks and problem-solving	I can use creativity to solve problems and complete learning tasks.
WCK-3	Manage time, stay organized, and study effectively	I can manage my time, stay organized, and use effective study strategies.
WCK-4	Show initiative and ownership of one's learning	I can take responsibility for my learning and show initiative.
WCK-5	Leverage technical proficiency to deepen learning	I can use technology effectively to enhance my learning.
WCK-6	Hold high expectations for the quality of work	I can produce high-quality work and strive for excellence.
WCK-7	Set and monitor short- and long-term goals	I can set goals and track my progress over time.
WCK-8	Engage in rigorous coursework and challenges	I can challenge myself with difficult work and persist.
WCK-9	Make evidence-based decisions considering multiple viewpoints	I can evaluate different perspectives and use evidence to make decisions.
WCK-10	Participate in enrichment and extracurricular opportunities	I can get involved in activities that extend my learning.



# Learning to Learn: Domain In Action

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## Elementary

- Growth mindset & goals
- Study habits & help-seeking
- Skill-building (organization, coping)
- Early intervention & collaboration

## Middle

- Study skills (notes, time, test prep)
- IGP introduction & interests
- Continued interventions (as needed) to reduce barriers

## High

- IGP & course alignment
- Academic workshops & supports
- Progress monitoring
- Intervention & collaboration



# Student Skill Benchmarks: Learning to Work



## Learning to Work: World-Class Skills (WCS)

Code	Indicator	I Can Statement
WCS-1	Communicate clearly through speaking, writing, and listening	I can express my ideas clearly and listen to others effectively.
WCS-2	Build respectful, supportive relationships	I can build positive relationships with people who are different from me.
WCS-3	Foster positive connections with supportive adults and peers	I can connect with people who help me succeed.
WCS-4	Demonstrate compassion for others	I can show kindness and empathy toward others.
WCS-5	Choose actions reflecting integrity and respect	I can act honestly and treat others with respect.
WCS-6	Collaborate and cooperate effectively	I can work well with others to achieve a goal.
WCS-7	Exhibit leadership and teamwork	I can lead when needed and contribute as a team member.
WCS-8	Communicate needs, goals, and concerns appropriately	I can clearly share what I need, want, or am concerned about.
WCS-9	Demonstrate maturity and responsibility	I can act responsibly and appropriately for my age and situation.
WCS-10	Work effectively and respectfully with individuals from different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.	I can respect and collaborate with people from different backgrounds.



# Learning to Work: Domain In Action

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## Elementary

- Career awareness (community)
- Teamwork & problem-solving
- Digital citizenship
- Interest inventories

## Middle

- Career exploration
- Interest & skills assessments
- Career connections in classes
- Career fairs & speakers
- WBL experiences

## High

- IGP & program/pathway alignment
- WBL experiences
- Résumés & communication skills
- Partnerships (CTE, business/industry)



# Student Skill Benchmarks: Learning to Live



Learning to Live: Life & Career Characteristics (LCC)		
Code	Indicator	I Can Statement
<b>LCC-1</b>	Accept responsibility for choices and behavior	I can take responsibility for my actions and decisions.
<b>LCC-2</b>	Demonstrate self-discipline and impulse control	I can control my behavior and make thoughtful choices.
<b>LCC-3</b>	Work independently when needed	I can work on my own and stay focused.
<b>LCC-4</b>	Delay immediate rewards for long-term outcomes	I can be patient and work toward long-term goals.
<b>LCC-5</b>	Persist through challenges	I can keep going even when things are difficult.
<b>LCC-6</b>	Identify obstacles and overcome them	I can recognize challenges and find ways to solve them.
<b>LCC-7</b>	Use healthy coping strategies	I can manage stress and emotions in healthy ways.
<b>LCC-8</b>	Maintain balance across life commitments	I can balance responsibilities at school, home, and community.
<b>LCC-9</b>	Practice personal safety and boundaries	I can keep myself safe and set appropriate boundaries.
<b>LCC-10</b>	Navigate transitions and adapt to change	I can adjust to changes and handle new situations.



# Learning to Live: Domain In Action

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## Elementary

- Classroom citizenship
- Perseverance & problem-solving
- Goals & self-management
- Friendship & empathy

## Middle

- Self-direction & organization
- Peer relationships
- Decision-making
- Perspective-taking

## High

- Integrity & responsibility
- Civic engagement
- Balance & time management
- Self-advocacy & professionalism



# **Connecting Our Work to the South Carolina School Counselor Evaluation Rubric**



# School Counselor Proficiencies

- Planning (Program Design, Implementation, Lesson Planning)
- Program Management & Tools (Assessment, Progress Monitoring)
- Direct & Indirect Services
- Program Evaluation & Improvement
- Professionalism (Growing & Developing Professionally, Leadership, and Collaboration)



# Connecting Our Work to the MTSS Framework



# MTSS Framework



**At Tier 1**, school counselors provide universal supports for all students. This includes *classroom lessons, schoolwide programming, and prevention-focused efforts in academic, career, and personal-social development.* The goal is to ensure every student has access to essential skills and supports.

**At Tier 2**, school counselors provide targeted supports for some students. This might include *small groups, short-term interventions, or additional check-ins* for students who need more support to stay on track.

**At Tier 3**, school counselors provide intensive, *individualized support. This includes one-on-one, solution-focused brief counseling, individualized planning, and coordination with families and outside supports* for students with the greatest needs.



# Driving Student and Program Outcomes



# Using SMART Goals

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SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE,  
ACHIEVABLE



RELEVANT AND TIME-  
BOUND



FOCUSED ON STUDENT  
OUTCOMES

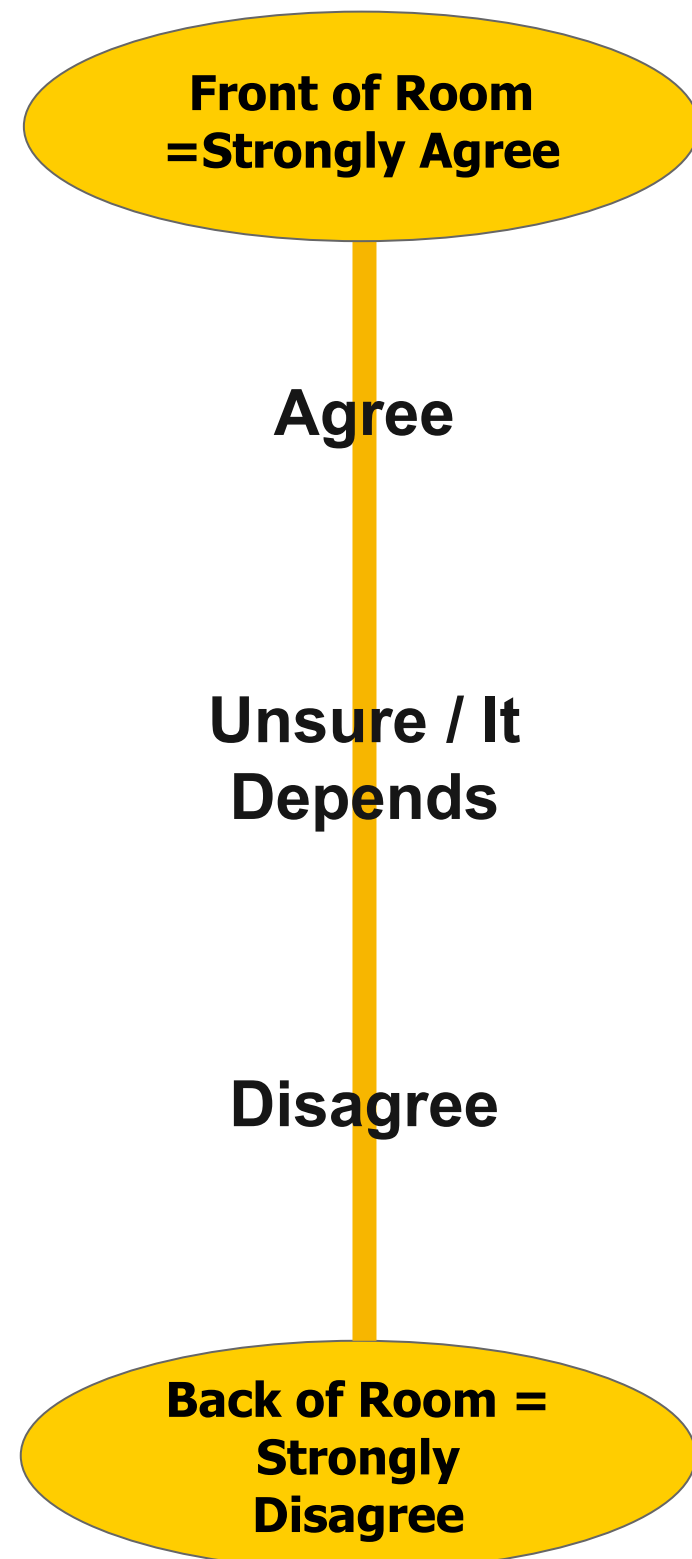
# Continuous Program Improvement

Reflection Question	Purpose	Application in School Counseling
Were SMART goals utilized?	Ensures goals were structured effectively	Review whether goals included all SMART components and were clearly defined using data
Was the goal met? If not, why?	Evaluates effectiveness of strategies	Analyze student outcome data and determine barriers (implementation, time, resources, student needs)
What are the implications for next year's goals?	Guides future planning and improvement	Adjust targets, refine strategies, or select new focus areas based on results
What implications do these results have for the program?	Connects outcomes to overall program effectiveness	Inform program changes, reallocate time/services, and strengthen alignment with MTSS and school goals

# Move Your Thinking Skills in Action



# Human Continuum



***Form a continuum based on the prompts:***

## ***Step 1: Listen to the Statement***

*I will read a statement about student skills benchmarks, program SMART goals, etc.*

## ***Step 2: Take a Position***

*Move to the spot on the continuum that best represents your thinking. Be ready to explain why you chose that position.*

## ***Step 3: Discuss Your Thinking***

*Turn to someone near you and discuss:*

- Why did you choose that position?*
- What evidence or experience supports your thinking?*
- Which student skill benchmark or foundation connects to your decision?*

## ***Step 4: Share Out***

*We will hear from a few people across the continuum.*

## ***As you listen, think about:***

*What perspectives are similar or different from yours?  
What new ideas are you hearing?*

## ***Step 5: Shift If Needed***

*If your thinking changes based on the discussion:  
Move to a new spot on the continuum.*

*Be ready to share what influenced your shift.*



# Implications for Practice



## School Counselors

- Lead implementation of the 3 domains
- Use Student Skill Benchmarks daily
- Focus 80% time on student services
- Drive outcomes using data

**Example:** A school counselor delivers a 6th-grade goal-setting lesson tied to benchmarks and tracks improved grades and organization.



## Career Specialists

- Deliver career awareness (K-12)
- Support IGP development
- Provide workforce/labor market insight
- Expand work-based learning access

**Example:** A career specialist partners with a local hospital to sponsor a middle level student for an on-site job shadowing experience to strengthen IGP career goals and post-secondary planning.



## School Administrators

- Protect school counselor time
- Align program to school improvement
- Support 300:1 ratio goal
- Use counseling data in decisions

**Example:** A principal removes duty assignments, allowing school counselors to deliver small groups or lessons, resulting in fewer discipline referrals.



## Teachers

- Reinforce student skill benchmarks
- Partner on lessons
- Support MTSS integration
- Connect content to careers

**Example:** An English teacher integrates presentation skills aligned to communication competencies within classroom instruction.



## District Leaders & SCDE

- Ensure alignment to law & model
- Provide PD & supplemental resources
- Monitor outcomes data
- Scale best practices statewide

**Example:** A district uses attendance and failure data to target counseling supports and improve graduation rates.



## Community & Business

- Provide work-based learning
- Partner with schools
- Support talent pipelines
- Offer real-world experiences

**Example:** A local company offers internships that increase student interest in high-demand careers and pathways.



## Families

- Engage in IGP process
- Support career exploration
- Reinforce skills at home
- Partner with schools

**Example:** During an IGP meeting, a parent helps their student select a dual enrollment pathway they didn't know existed.



# 3-2-1 Sticky Note Reflection



# 3-2-1 Reflection

**3 things you learned...**

**2 things you are excited about...**

**1 question you still have...**



**3**

What are three key takeaways or insights that stood out to you?

**2**

What are two ideas, strategies, or shifts you're eager to try in your school or counseling program?

**1**

What is one question, wonder, or area where you'd like more clarity?

# **Upcoming School Counseling & Career Guidance PD Opportunities 2026-27**



# Fall Regional Workshops Are Back!

Join us across South Carolina this fall:

**Upper Coast** – *Lake City, SC*  
**September 3–4**

**Lowcountry** – *Charleston, SC*  
**September 14–15**

**Upstate** – *Greenville, SC*  
**September 24–25**

**Midlands** – *Columbia, SC*  
**October 1–2**

**\*Participants only need to attend one day per region.**

Two workshop days are offered at each location to maximize statewide participation and minimize teams being out simultaneously.

*Additional details, including agendas and logistics, will be shared closer to the event dates!*



PRESENTED BY



## Career Readiness Webinars

Welcome to the Office of Career Readiness Webinar Hub



## Upcoming Webinars

- [Modernized Career Cluster Transition for School Counselors, Career Guidance Personnel & Teachers \(6/23/2026 - 1:00 pm\)](#)
- [Modernized Career Clusters Best Practices: Bridging Education & Work \(7/15/2026 - 11:00 am\)](#)

## Webinar Recordings and Resources

- [Modernized Career Cluster Transition: What is and is not Changing \(5/13/2026\)](#)
  - [Slides](#)



# Level Up Your Leadership!

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**Lead the Work. Shape the Practice.**

## **Site-Level Leadership PLCs**

- 1** **October 2026** | Launch & Align
- 1** **February 2027** | Reflect, Refine & Strengthen

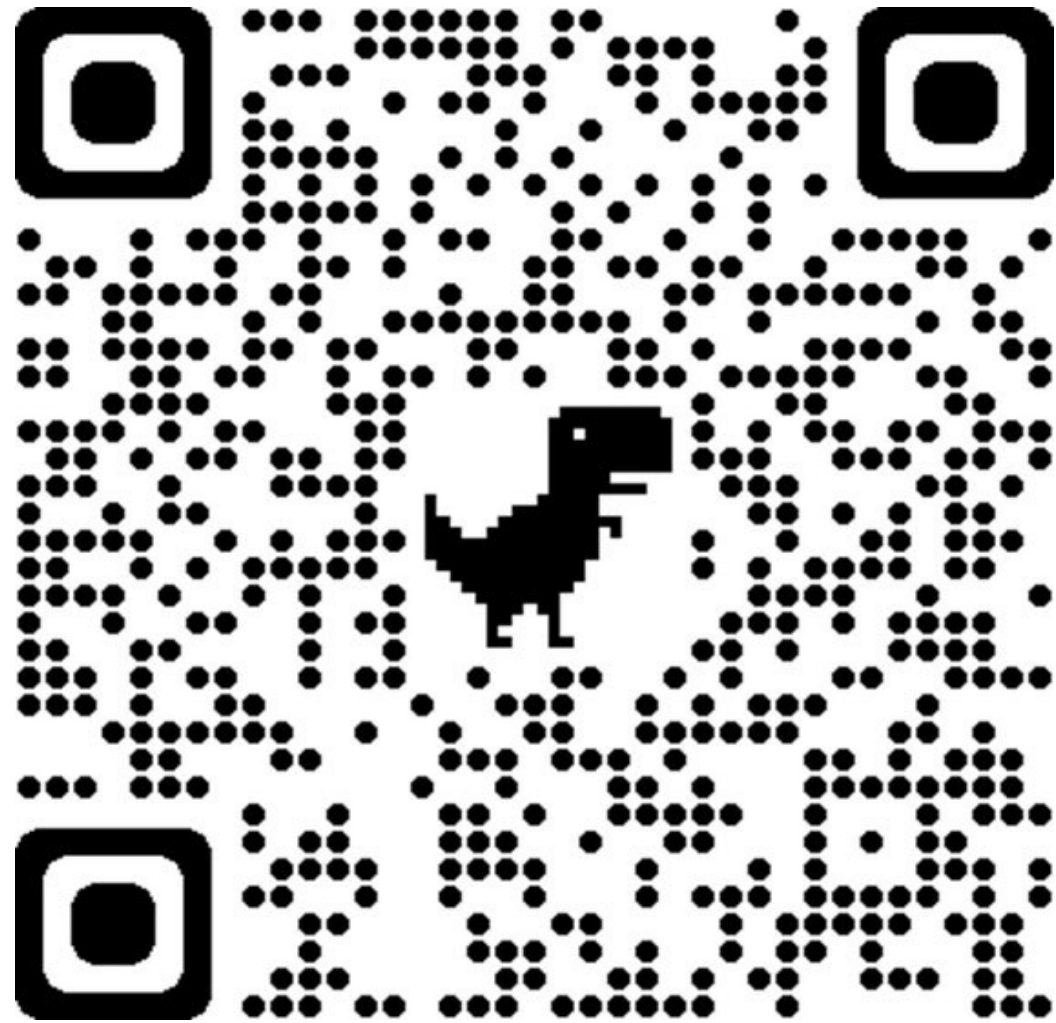
*3 Tentative Locations: Midlands, Greenville, & Beaufort!*



# Stay Informed

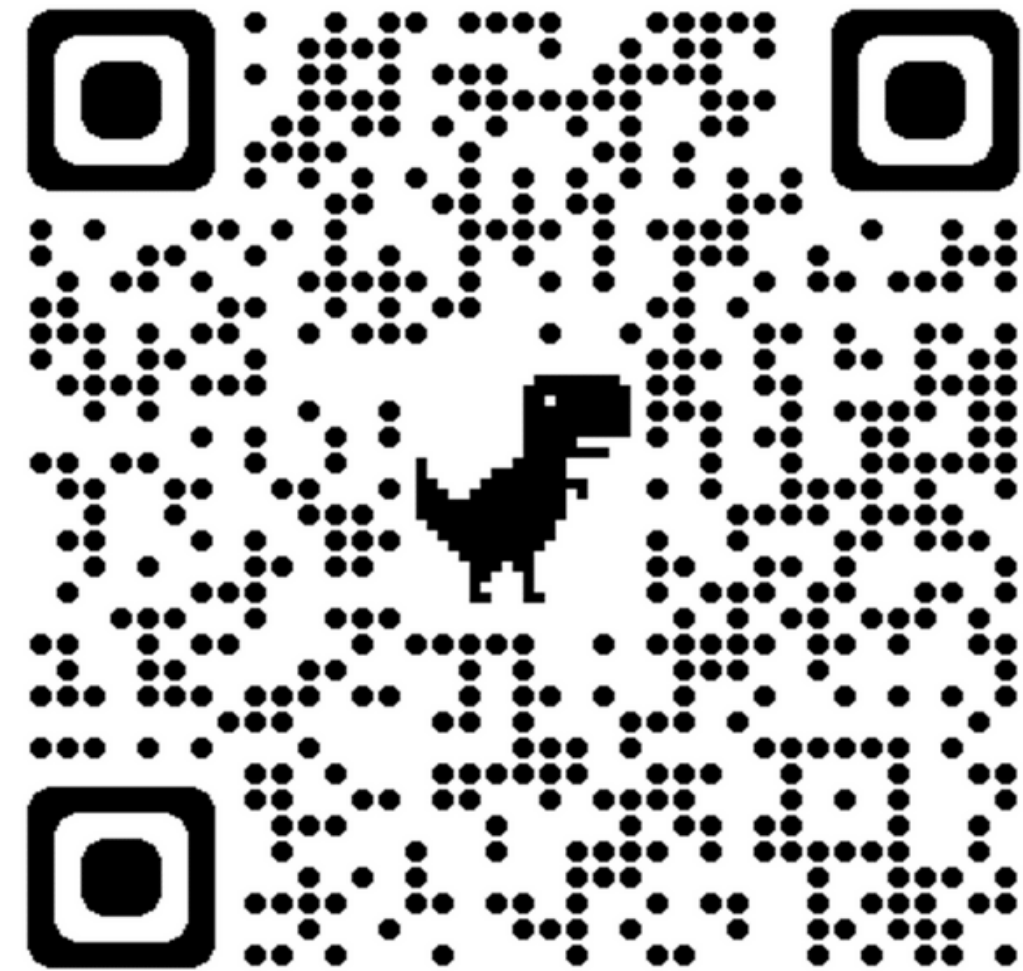
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## Listserv



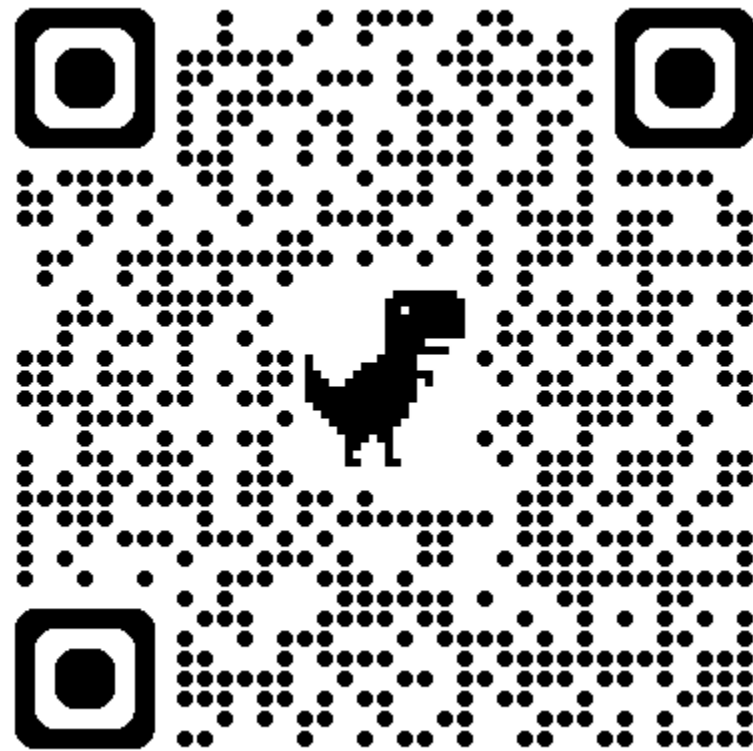
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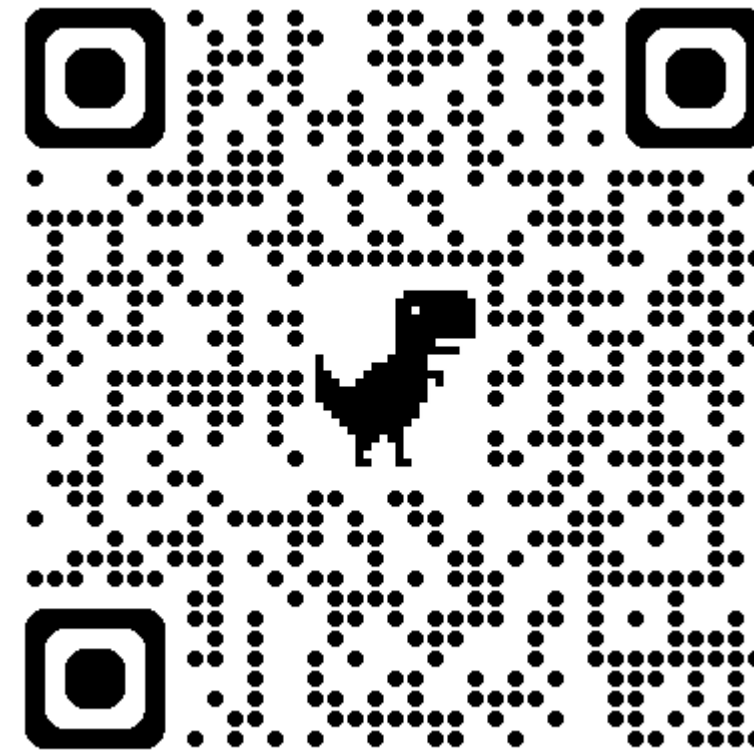


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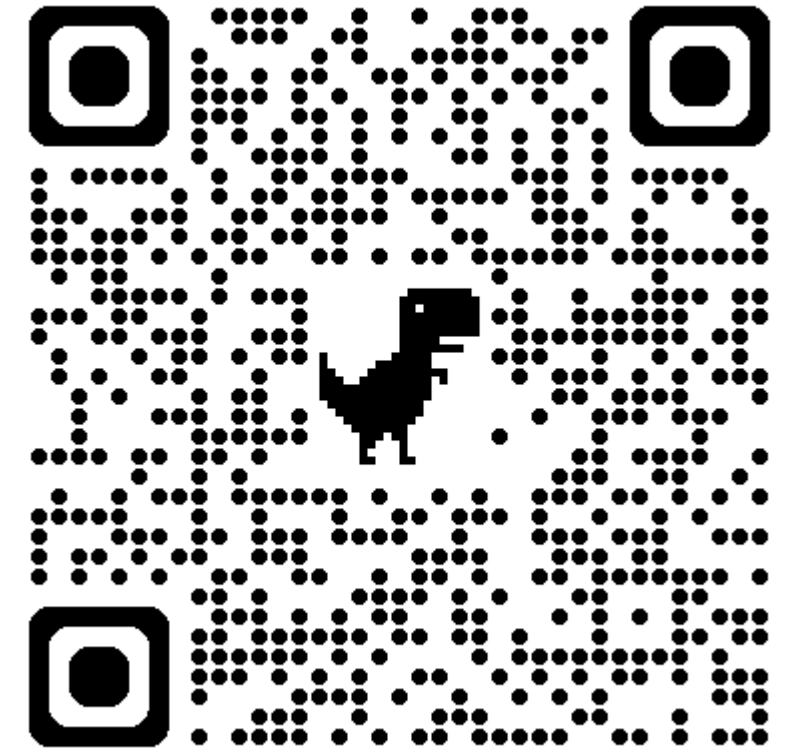
# Additional Career Readiness Resources



**Work-Based  
Learning**



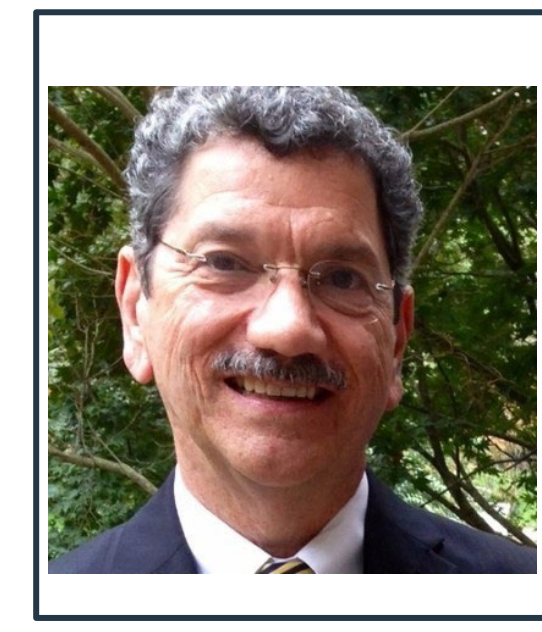
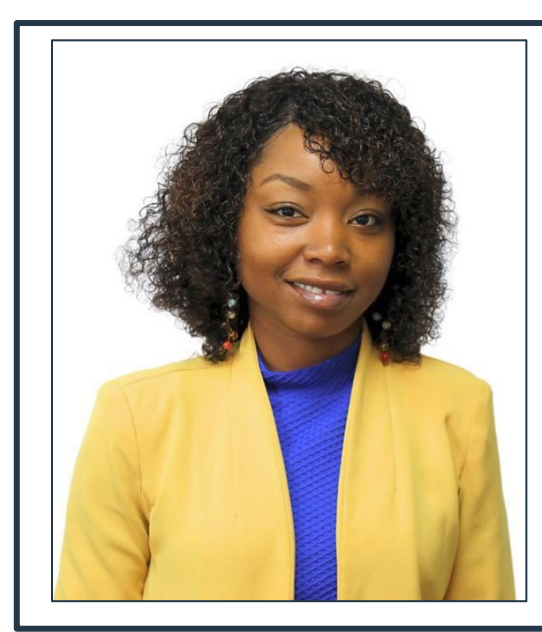
**SCOIS**



**Academic  
Accountability**



# Career Services and School Counseling Team



**Kama Staton**  
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# Feedback Survey

**Presenter:**  
**Dr. Erin Clarke**



[https://scde.formstack.com/forms/ocr\\_pd\\_feedback\\_survey](https://scde.formstack.com/forms/ocr_pd_feedback_survey)





# Erin Clarke

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