EDUCATION

Education is the key to attracting residents to a community to live; education is key in building and sustaining an advancing workforce; and education is key in ushering in future generations of well informed, respectful, and engaging residents.

Public schools throughout the entire County are managed and operated by the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS). As of 2020, the school system consists of 24 elementary schools, 7 K-8 schools, 8 middle schools, 11 high schools, and 5 charter schools. In 2018 the school district had 37,576 students enrolled with a 14:1 student to teacher ratio. In Pooler there are 3 schools, Pooler Elementary, West Chatham Elementary, West Chatham Middle School. The CCRPI scores have been provided below for each school in Pooler for the 2018—2019 school year.

- Pooler Elementary School received a CCRPI score of 68.8, or D grading for the 2018—2019 school year.
- West Chatham Elementary School received a CCRPI score of 60.4, or D grading for the 2018—2019 school year.
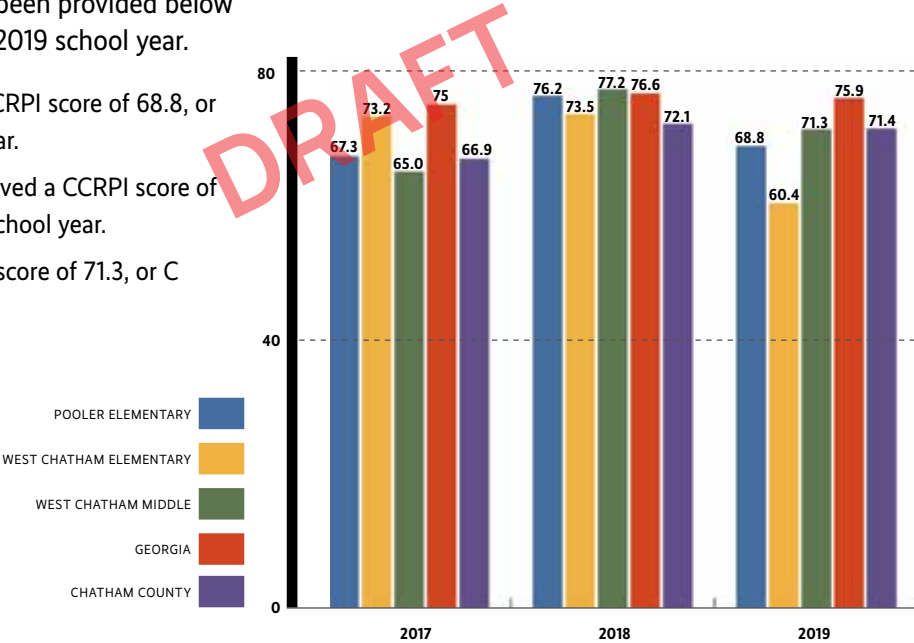- West Chatham Middle School a CCRPI score of 71.3, or C grading for the 2018—2019 school year.

CCRPI

The College and Career Ready Performance Index is a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform for all education stakeholders that helps to promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students.

—CCRPI

Figure 8.9−CCRPI Single Score 2017-2019

The report also noted that 40% of students who attend the SCCPSS are economically disadvantaged, meaning that they either live in a family unit receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, or have been identified as homeless, unaccompanied youth, foster, or migrant. Thirty-three (33) of the SCCPSS's schools are defined as Title 1 Schools in which children from low-incomes families make up 40% of enrollment. Being economically disadvantaged can prove to be a large obstacle for students on the academic, mental, and social.

A current trend which is aiding in the development of focus and improved behavior in students is mindfulness. Across the nation, many school boards have been introducing mindfulness to students. Mindfulness is a state of being that teaches one to live in the present and how to experience enjoyment with what is going on in the current moment. This can be taught through different measures such as: conscious breathing, sensory stimulation, guided imagery/meditation, and mindfulness through body movement. Schools in SCCPSS (Woodville Tompkins) have introduced yoga and mindfulness courses into their curriculums.

With the challenges and stressors many SCCPSS students may be facing stemming from their family lives at home, mindfulness can serve as a remedy teaching students to handle their lives in a healthy, constructive manner which can ultimately improve school performance. In addition to mindfulness, there are a number of things that can be taught to students to help them better navigate through life now and moving forward into the future.

TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

Schools in which children from low-income families make up at least 40 percent of enrollment are eligible to use Title 1 funds to operate schoolwide programs that serve all children in the school in order to raise the achievement of the lowest-achieving students.

—Department of Education

Teaching mindfulness to grade school children is a new trend that has shown to improve behavior and self-esteem

Education Beyond K–12

Life after high school presents many avenues to opportunity. Some may choose college or the military, many choose trade and tech schools, and some go straight into the work world. Whatever route a newly graduate, or any adult wants to take, Chatham County-Savannah has several options to choose from in preparing one for their career moves. Keeping an eye on growing industries in the area, such as manufacturing, coding, and film production may prove to be a safe way in fostering a local workforce to support such industries in the near future.

Regarding County wide public high school graduation rates and educational attainment for adults in the City of Pooler there has been gradual improvement. Figure 8.10 shows that the high school graduation rate in the County has increased over 6 percent in the past 5 years; this calculation only reflects the students who graduated within 4 years.

In Pooler, most people over age 25 held a high school diploma (including high school equivalency degree) or higher in 2018 (91.4%), while 37.1 % held a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree.

These are down slightly from 2009-2013, when an estimated 94.2% of residents had at least a high school diploma and an estimated 39.4% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Figure 8.11 illustrates the breakdown of educational attainment in Pooler.
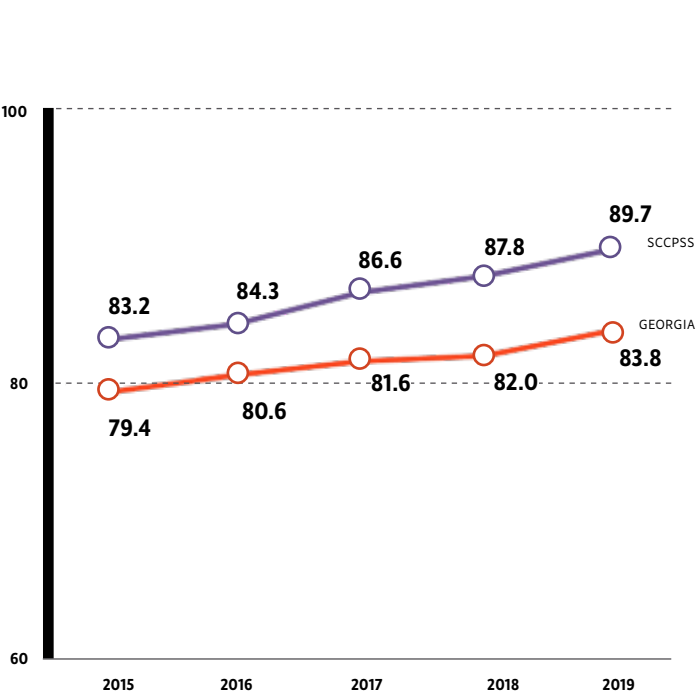

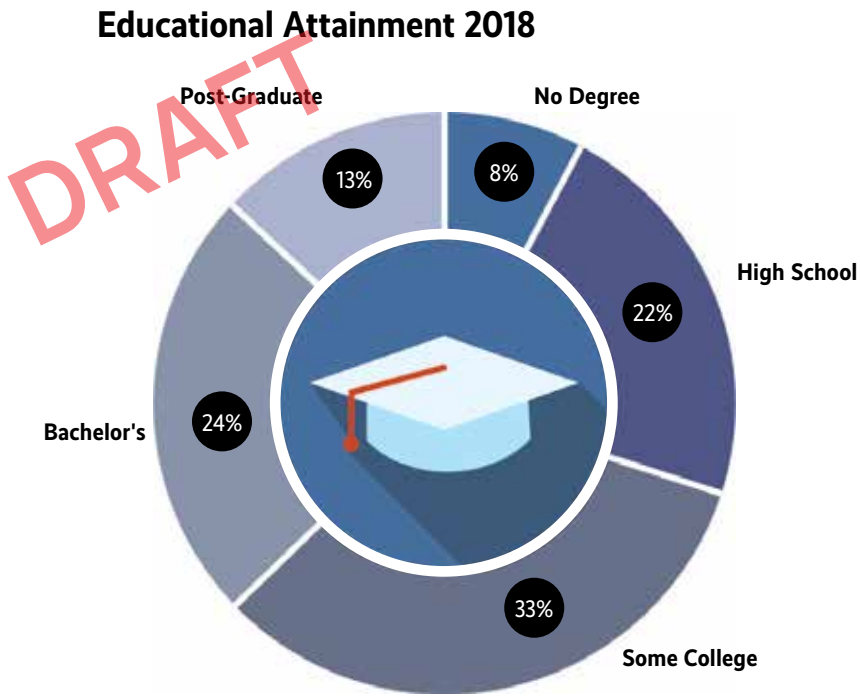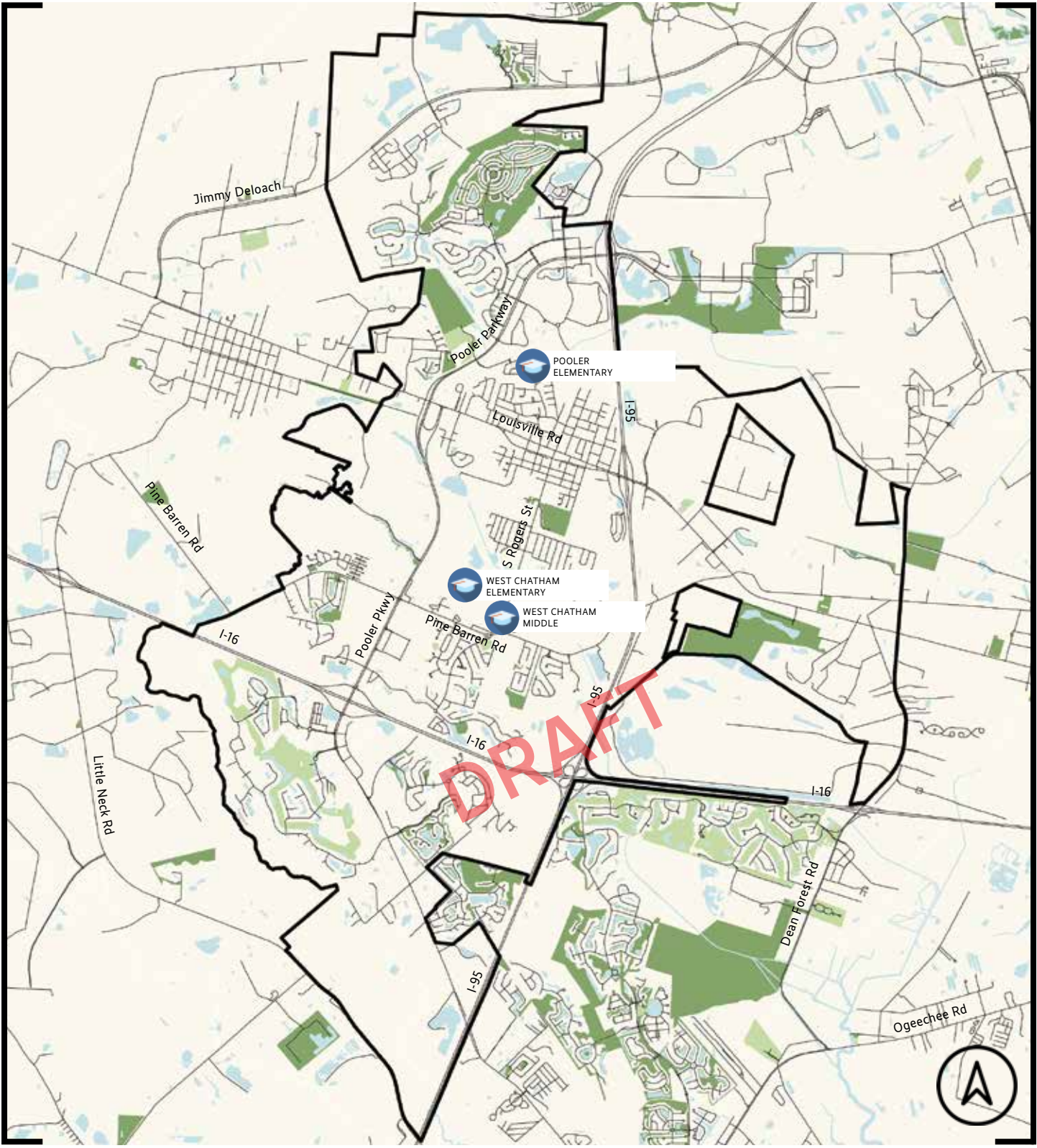
Figure 8.10–Graduation Rate Trend Chart 2015-2019

Educational Attainment 2018

Figure 8.11–Educational Attainment for People Over the Age of 25

Map 8.5–City of Pooler's Schools

Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD)

SCAD is a private, nonprofit institution founded in 1978 in the City of Savannah. Currently the school has numerous buildings and facilities located in different areas throughout the City serving its 15,000 students. SCAD has more than 40 majors and 75 minors, more than any other art and design university in the country Degrees offered are: Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Master of Architecture, Master of Arts, Master of Fine Arts, and a Master of Urban Design. The most highly enrolled majors in Fall 2017 were animation, fashion, film and television, illustration and interior design.

SCAD

SCAD celebrates cinematic creativity from both award-winning professionals and emerging student filmmakers. Each year, more than 63,000 people attend the eight-day SCAD Savannah Film Festival. The festival is host to a wide variety of competition film screenings, special screenings, workshops, panels, and lectures.

Savannah State University (SSU)

Known as the State's oldest historically black college or university (HBCU), Savannah State was founded in 1890. This public university is located in Savannah on a 201-acre campus, and offers 30 baccalaureate majors and degrees and 5 graduate degrees to its approximate 4,500 students. These majors are housed within four colleges: College of Business Administration, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, College of Science and Technology, and the College of Education.

Their Marine Science Program is the number 1 producer of both Master's of Science and Bachelor's of Science African American recipients in Marine Science. Also, SSU is home to the nation's first Homeland Security and Emergency Management program at an HBCU. The program is the only bachelor's degree program for homeland security/emergency management offered in the state of Georgia and in the region. Additionally, SSU boasts a broad athletic program which is part of SIAC, Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Georgia Southern University (GSU)

This public university, once known as Armstrong State University, recently consolidated with Georgia Southern University based in Statesboro, to become the Armstrong Campus of Georgia Southern University. The campus is located in the southside of Savannah, is attended by nearly 6,500 students, and offers over 50 majors at undergrad and graduate levels. The university's Water's College of Health Professional is one of the school's premier programs, having long been the largest producer of undergraduate health professionals in Georgia.

Georgia Tech–Savannah

In 2003, the Georgia Institute of Technology opened its satellite branch in the City of Savannah. The campus offers courses tailored to furthering the education and skills of established professionals. Programs consist of the Georgia Film Academy, K-12 programs, Leadership Training, and Military programs. In addition to providing opportunities for career advancement and education for professionals, Georgia Tech-Savannah has numerous partnerships within the region providing assistance to budding tech-entrepreneurs and manufacturing and logistics guidance for large corporations to name a few.

South University

South University was founded in Savannah in 1899 originally as Draughan's Practical Business College. Throughout the years the school has transformed into a larger university developing satellite locations spanning across several states as well as offering online courses to over 3,500 students. South University offers 9 programs which awards degrees at the associate, undergraduate, and graduate levels in areas such as nursing, pharmacy, public health, and more.

Savannah Technical College

Founded in 1929, this Savannah-based public technical college serves over 5,700 credit students and is a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia. The college offers both credit and non-credit programs designed to provide a skilled workforce to area employers. It awards certificate, diploma, and associate degrees in five academic divisions: Aviation Technology, Business and Professional Services, General Studies, Health Sciences, and Industrial Technology. The college's Economic Development division provides non-credit programs such as high school equivalency preparation, English as a Second Language, various workforce development programs for individuals, and corporate contract training. Savannah Tech has been ranked as the best community/technical college for active-duty military, their spouses, and veterans for many years.

SAVANNAH TECH

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

GEORGIA TECH-SAVANNAH

Live Oak Public Libraries

Live Oak Public Libraries provides programs and services in Chatham, Effingham, and Liberty Counties through 16 library locations and community outreach. There are 12 libraries in Chatham County, with one of those located in Pooler.

The Library's mission is to provide excellent, responsiveservice to enrich people's lives, support lifelong learning and build and enhance communities. Live Oak is creating tomorrow's library today to educate, inform, entertain and enrich the community. The Library is always open online at www.liveoakpl.org.

Live Oak Public Libraries is focused on increasing access, increasing community engagement and increasing organizational excellence and sustainability. The network believes that libraries are at the heart of every community, and strong libraries help create and sustain strong communities. Library services support early learning/literacy, educational success, economic opportunity and quality of life.

Live Oak Public Libraries is a member of PINES, the statewide network of public library systems serving Georgia. PINES (Public Information Network for Electronic Services), connects more than 300 public libraries in 54 partner library systems across 146 counties and gives library card holders access to more than 11 million books and materials plus online resources such as the GALILEO system, Georgia's virtual library. The portal gives users access to thousands of resources such as periodicals, scholarly journals, government publications, and encyclopedias amongst several other resources.

The aim of GALILEO is to provide equal access to information for all Georgia's residents —Live Oak Public Libraries

Benefits of the Library System

– Libraries are open to everyone

– Libraries support lifelong learning

– Libraries offer access to technology

– Libraries are community spaces

– Libraries are wherever you are

– Libraries are community partners

One of the City of Pooler's main capital projects to be completed in the next 5 years is the construction of a new full service library to be overseen by the Live Oak Public Library System.

Public Library Visits

Locations	2018	2019	2020
Bull Street Library	222,799	210,171	144,833
Carnegie Library	40,470	22,319	17,125
Forest City Library	17,486	16,654	10,521
Garden City Library	54,676	48,420	30,507
Islands Library	124,863	111,133	42,993
Oglethorpe Mall Library	134,877	110,791	74,207
Pooler Library	**68,422**	**73,835**	**55,970**
Port City Library	37,649	35,983	22,607
Southwest Chatham Library	183,372	133,178	93,165
Tybee Library	18,521	19,529	16,972
W.W. Law Library	52,143	42,666	23,729
West Broad Library	22,225	15,484	14,642
Total	977,503	840,163	547,271

Figure 8.12–Library Visit Trends

Public Library Wireless Internet Use

Locations	2018	2019	2020
Bull Street Library	14,166	85,440	78,884
Carnegie Library	3,557	14,300	13,077
Forest City Library	1,680	2,628	4,482
Garden City Library	5,833	12,940	10,963
Islands Library	7,742	23,380	5,521
Oglethorpe Mall Library	11,309	9,032	22,093
Pooler Library	**4,979**	**14,312**	**9,281**
Port City Library	2,352	2,832	8,767
Southwest Chatham Library	22,632	39,684	28,618
Tybee Library	1,376	956	2,708
W.W. Law Library	1	1,708	1,796
West Broad Library	249	336	2,448
Total	75,876	207,548	188,638

Figure 8.13–Wireless Internet Usage Trends

COVID–19 PANDEMIC EFFECTS

In calendar year 2020, with complications due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the library system saw reduced statistics compared to normal times but libraries still saw active use and patron engagement both in-person and online.

Libraries were closed briefly but then reopened to the public with safety measures in place to protect visitors and staff. Customers were able to browse and borrow items, use computers and internet, and enjoy virtual programs. The year 2020 saw and increase in the use of digital resources, such as e-books, and an increase in library card sign-ups.

Impacts of COVID-19 were seen in 2020 within the libraries' visitors and internet usage

EDUCATION GOALS

GOAL 1

Encourage and support real world work experiences and mentorships in public schools

Real world work experiences such as internships and apprenticeships can help students learn new skills, gain confidence, enhance networking skills, expose them to professional workplaces, build their resumes for college applications and future employment, and give them insight into potential career paths.

Similarly, mentorship programs can help better prepare students for employment and promote upward mobility by providing them with a long-term support system to help guide them in their growth and development. Providing students with these types of tools can significantly improve the likelihood of future successes.

Objectives:

– Create intern and mentorship programs in the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools through partnerships with community organizations, business leaders, and businesses

– Identify local graduates of the Savannah-Chatham County Public School system to mentor struggling students in order to show them a path to success

GOAL 2

Ensure that soft skills such as social and conflict resolution skills, and financial skills literacy, are being offered to parents and taught to all students

While it is extremely important for students to learn math, science, and language arts in school, it is equally important for their future successes for them to learn interpersonal and life skills. In order to be a good employee it is important to know the appropriate way to dress, act, and speak in the workplace. Knowing how to effectively manage time and how to resolve conflicts are valuable qualities as well.

Often times these lessons are not taught in school because it is assumed that students will intuitively know to behave appropriately or that they will have role models in their lives who have demonstrated these skills. However if neither is the case, they can be at a disadvantage as they enter the workforce. Providing curriculum to teach these skills to all students will allow them an easier transition into adulthood and the workforce.

Objectives:

– Create curriculum to provide parents with lessons on various soft skills. Identify most effective ways to make the lessons available to parents for their use- in person classes, through technology, etc

– Create curriculum to educate students on soft skills necessary to be successful in life and incorporate coursework in public schools requirements

– Provide counseling for parents and students in these areas as needed

GOAL 3

Promote parental involvement in their child's education

Parental involvement in school can play a significant role in the success of their children's education. Studies show that parental involvement is linked to better grades and behavior in the classroom and can improve teacher morale and communication between parents and school officials. Involved parents have a better understanding of the protocols and the organizational structure of the school system and are better equipped to advocate for their children when needed.

Unfortunately, time constraints, language barriers, and a lack of knowing how to get involved can make it difficult for parents to actively participate in their children's education. Efforts to eliminate barriers to parental involvement in schools will benefit teachers and students alike.

Objectives:

- Identify means to facilitate better communication between parents, teachers, and school leadership
- Identify barriers to parent engagement and work to eliminate them
- Consider programs to incentivize parental involvement
- Educate parents on school protocols and structures in order to make them better advocates for their children when needed
- Expand multi–language participation communication efforts to ensure non–english speaking family members can stay involved
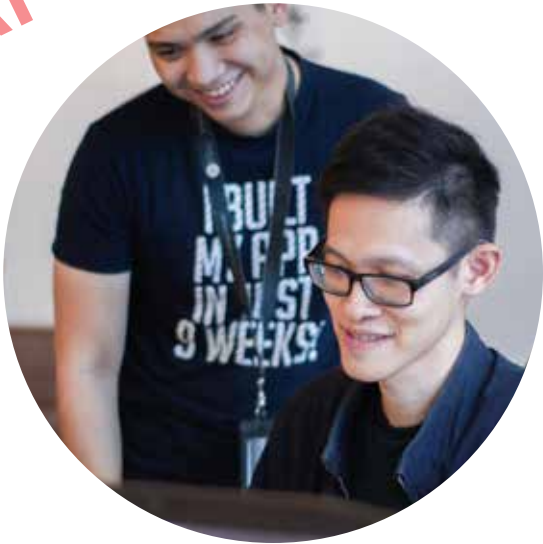
DRAFT

GOAL 4

Plan for changing populations, capacities, and overcrowding to increase the quality of education and performances at SCCPSS

A high-performing education system is a key ingredient for the future success of Pooler. Educational attainment unlocks future opportunities for personal and community growth for generations to come. As the population and demographics of the city changes, we must make efforts to meet these challenges and ensure that every student receives a quality education. The provision of education to students is a vital function of local government and SCCPSS alike to improve the education system for all students in Pooler.

Objectives:

- Include SCCPPSS school facilities and capital projects staff in the review process for multifamily and subdivision projects to ensure adequate school facilities to meet the needs of future development
- Locate schools at sites appropriate and accessible to the attendees
- Limit land use and operational conflicts between school sites and adjacent uses
- Retain the vitality of neighborhoods in proximity to new school facilities
- Promote health, safety and well-being of students in their commutes to and from school

DRAFT