

## 2009 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 09-S-17SC

**Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:**

**State:** South Carolina

Assign Program Category (applicant): **Human Resources/Education - Education** (Use list at end of application)

1. **Program Name** – School Report Cards Searchable Database
2. **Administering Agency** – South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC)
3. **Contact Person (Name and Title)** – Dr. Jo Anne Anderson, Executive Director
4. **Address** - 1105 Pendleton Street, Room 227 Blatt Building, Columbia, SC 29211
5. **Telephone Number** – 803.734.6148
6. **FAX Number** – 803.734.6167
7. **E-mail Address** – jander@eoc.sc.gov
8. **Web site Address** - <https://ssl.sc.gov/SchoolReportCards/>

**9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.**

The online searchable school report card service allows the public to perform searches according to individual interests and review public school performance using a variety of report card-related keywords, including school type, number of students, and school poverty level, among others. The information on the web site provides educators, parents, students, and the general public with a variety of statistics including student performance on state standardized tests, programs and services, student and teacher attendance, funding, and much more.

**10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 2, 2009 to be considered.**

The service was launched on January 28, 2008.

**11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?**

The online searchable school report card service was created to enhance the delivery of information provided in school and school district report cards.

While report cards are made available on the South Carolina Department of Education web site, they are not easy to find and there is no search capability to find specific information contained in the report card. The EOC has set a goal that by 2010, student achievement will be ranked in the top half of states nationally. Easily accessible and searchable information are key tools for improving South Carolina schools and energizing communities.

Before the online searchable school report card service was implemented, the EOC was tasked with creating custom reports when requested by citizens, media and public officials. The online service provides a significant time-saving tool by empowering the public with the ability to create, print and export their own custom reports.

## **12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.**

### A. Advanced Search

Key search components are provided to allow the public with easy access to data published on the annual school and district report cards along with search capabilities to fit their needs. Users can select one or more option(s) for comparison.

Search results are provided in a printer-friendly table format. All search results are also exportable to a comma separated value (CSV) format.

### B. Quick Search by School District:

All districts are listed alphabetically to allow a user to perform a search without worrying about knowing the name or correct spelling of the school district. Up to three (3) districts can be selected to allow for a side-by-side comparison.

Links to the PDF report card and trend analysis are provided for each district's search results.

### C. Quick Search by School

All schools are listed alphabetically to allow a user to perform a search without worrying about knowing the name or correct spelling of the school. Up to three (3) schools can be selected to allow for a side-by-side comparison.

Links to the PDF report card and trend analysis are provided for each school's search results.

### D. Map Search by South Carolina County

The user can select the South Carolina County of interest. Both a link to the district(s)'s information and a link to provide a listing of all schools within the county are provided.

When the user selects the "View Schools" link, a list, including a hyperlink for each specific school, is provided. Search results are provided in a printer-friendly table format. All search results are also exportable to a comma-separated-value (CSV) format.

### E. Administrative Tool

The administrative tool is designed to allow for easy management of tasks used to manage the school report card service. Tools include:

- The ability to import each year's rating, performance and poverty data.
- Management of EOC user accounts.
- Tool to link to the PDF report card to each individual school and school district.
- Tool to manage verbiage displayed on the school report card application.

**13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?**

While most states offer static school report cards through web sites, this service offer dynamic evaluation tools for schools and communities to use to review the performance of South Carolina public schools. Search capabilities are customizable to fit individual needs.

**14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)**

The School Report Card Searchable Database was developed and is maintained without the use of tax dollars or a state general fund appropriation. This is possible through a public/private partnership between the state of South Carolina and SC.gov.

There were no special material or technology purchases necessary to begin or run the project. SC.gov worked with business and technical resources from the SC Education Oversight Committee to provide transfer of necessary IT knowledge, environment and business processes.

**15. What are the program's annual operational costs?**

Maintenance and enhancements to the service are provided at no charge throughout the lifetime of this service. Through the partnership between the EOC and SC.gov, the state has benefitted from a cost savings currently estimated at \$50,000.00.

**16. How is the program funded?**

The School Report Card Searchable Database service was developed and is being maintained without the use of tax dollars or a state general fund appropriation. This is possible through a public/private partnership between the State of South Carolina and SC.gov.

**17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.**

No. This is an enhancement of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 federal requirements and the state's education accountability system.

**18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?**

No special equipment was used to operate and administer this program. The administrative tool used to maintain and update data is web-based. The data is housed in a SQL Server 2005 database on internal servers behind firewalls.

**19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.**

Offering static school report cards is not a new or unique approach, nor is offering limited search functionality. However, South Carolina's approach of offering customizable searches, multiple search options, and providing 5-year trends of key data elements are unmatched functionality from any other state.

**20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?**

We believe that the School Report Card Searchable Database service was the first in the nation to provide 5-year performance trends online for individual schools and school districts for key data

elements. South Carolina has tried to enhance the user experience by providing printer-friendly reports and search results that can easily be exported in CSV format.

The Illinois and North Carolina Interactive Report Card services were used as the benchmark for our service offering. Both the Illinois and North Carolina sites offer tremendous functionality which we used as the foundation for the South Carolina application.

**21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?**

Yes, all objectives of the service have been met.

**22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.**

The online searchable school report card service was created to enhance to delivery of information provided in school and school district report cards. Data that are easily accessible and understandable to public consumers are important tools for improvement in South Carolina schools. The customizable searches and available trend reports in the School Report Cards Searchable Database have allowed for greater accessibility for a variety of constituencies. Examples of the effectiveness of this service include:

- The South Carolina Realtors Association directs member realtors to the database, since many realtors counsel clients on the performance of schools;
- Members of statewide media who cover education have found the site to be especially helpful, allowing them to quickly track the progress of schools in their area.

**23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?**

The service will continue to improve and adapt as statutory requirements change.

**24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?**

The data reported in each state may vary. The front end of the service is extremely easy to duplicate. States will need to make modifications to the database to allow importing data in a format consistent with each state's data.

## 2009 Innovations Awards Program Program Categories and Subcategories

Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state's submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

### *Infrastructure and Economic Development*

- Business/Commerce
- Economic Development
- Transportation

### *Government Operations*

- Administration
- Elections
- Public Information
- Revenue

### *Health & Human Services*

- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

### *Human Resources/Education*

- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

### *Natural Resources*

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Water Resources

### *Public Safety/Corrections*

- Corrections
- Courts
- Criminal Justice
- Drugs
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety

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CSG Innovations Awards 2009  
The Council of State Governments  
2760 Research Park Drive, P.O. Box 11910  
Lexington, KY 40578-1910

### **Contact:**

Nancy J. Vickers, National Program Administrator  
Phone: 859.244.8105  
Fax: 859.244.8001 – Attn: Innovations Awards Program  
The Council of State Governments  
E-mail: [nvickers@csg.org](mailto:nvickers@csg.org)

This application is also available at [www.csg.org](http://www.csg.org), in the Programs section.

**Deadline: March 23, 2009**