



Research and Evaluation Services

Office of State Strategies, Policy,
Research and Evaluation

Lee Posey, VP

Joe Tadlock, Director

Courtney Leidner, Senior Analyst

Keaton Markey, Analyst

Discussion Topics

- Who we are and what we do.
- Showcase SREB's Labor Market Dashboard.
- How labor market data can be used to streamline career pathways.
- How we can help you.

Who we are

Research and Evaluation is the newest program housed in the Office of State Strategies. Prior to May 2025, research and evaluation operated in the Office of School Improvement, and our predominant focus was on supporting K12 leadership and instructional coaches with data collection and reporting.

In that capacity, we administered numerous surveys designed to inform and direct SI services.

- Curriculum and Instruction Review (CIR)
- Career Pathway Review (CPR)
- Making Schools Work (elementary, middle, and high schools, and technology centers)
- Project-Based Learning (PBL)
- Teaching to Lead (T2L)
- Strategic Planning

Labor Market Data Hub

- State differences
- Usability
- Specificity

Present accurate and user-friendly labor market data in the region

Occupation Snapshot

Select a region
SREB

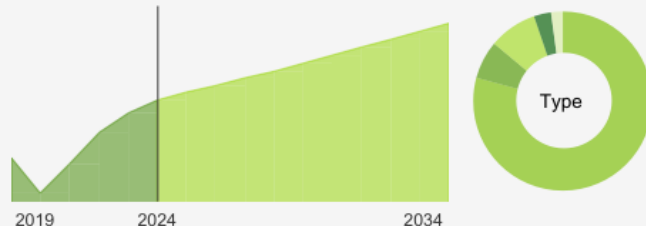
Select an occupation or group
Total - All Occupations

Hover for additional info

Employment

LQ* 1.00

62,295,266



Unemployment

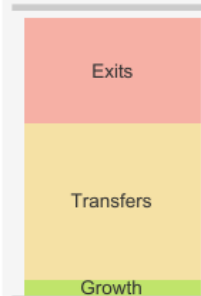
3.7%

Online Job Ads*

2,512,858

Demand

68,329,565

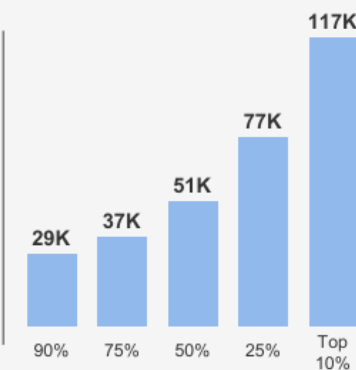


Wage

Show Adj. Wage



Entry-Level 32K
Median 51K
Experienced 83K



Education

Highschool 92%
Some College 65%
Bachelor's 39%
Master's 14%

Required Education -

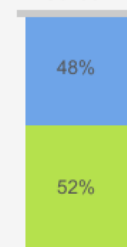
Years of Experience -

Underemployment* 14.1%

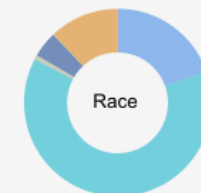
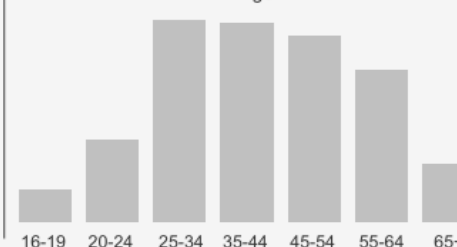
On-the-job Training -

Demographics

Gender



Age



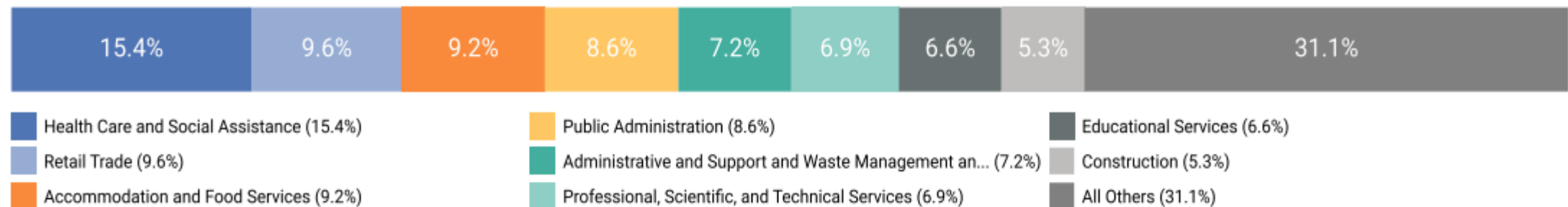
Hispanic/Latino 19.9%

Labor Market Reports

Industry Snapshot

The largest sector in Oklahoma County, Oklahoma is Health Care and Social Assistance, employing 80,620 workers. The next-largest sectors in the region are Retail Trade (50,238 workers) and Accommodation and Food Services (47,918). High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which a region has high concentrations of employment compared to the national average. The sectors with the largest LQs in the region are Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction (LQ = 4.26), Public Administration (1.85), and Utilities (1.19).

Total Workers for Oklahoma County, Oklahoma by Industry



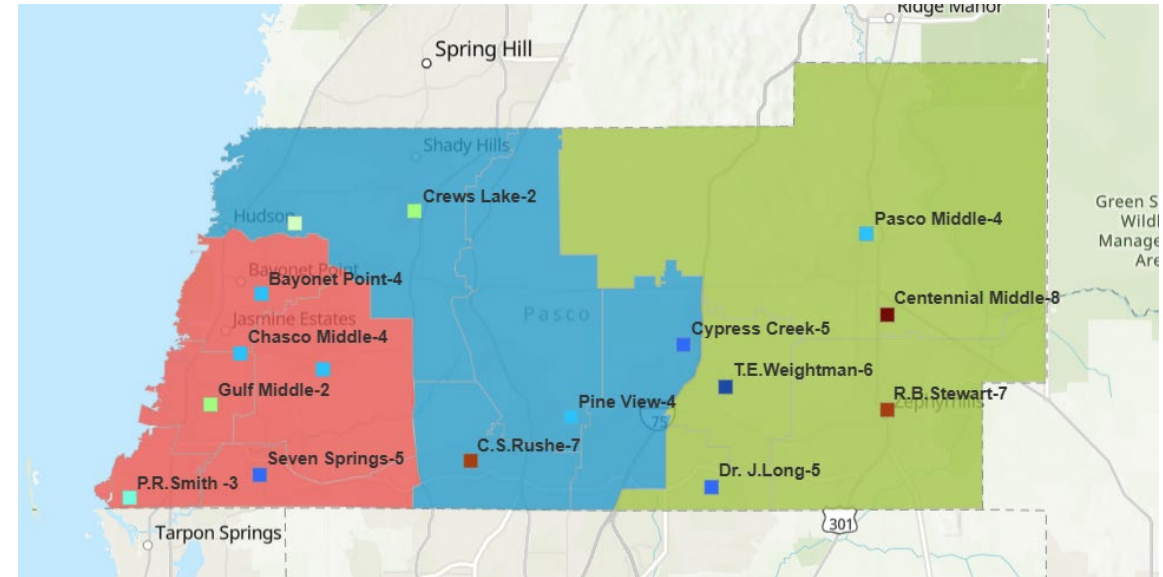
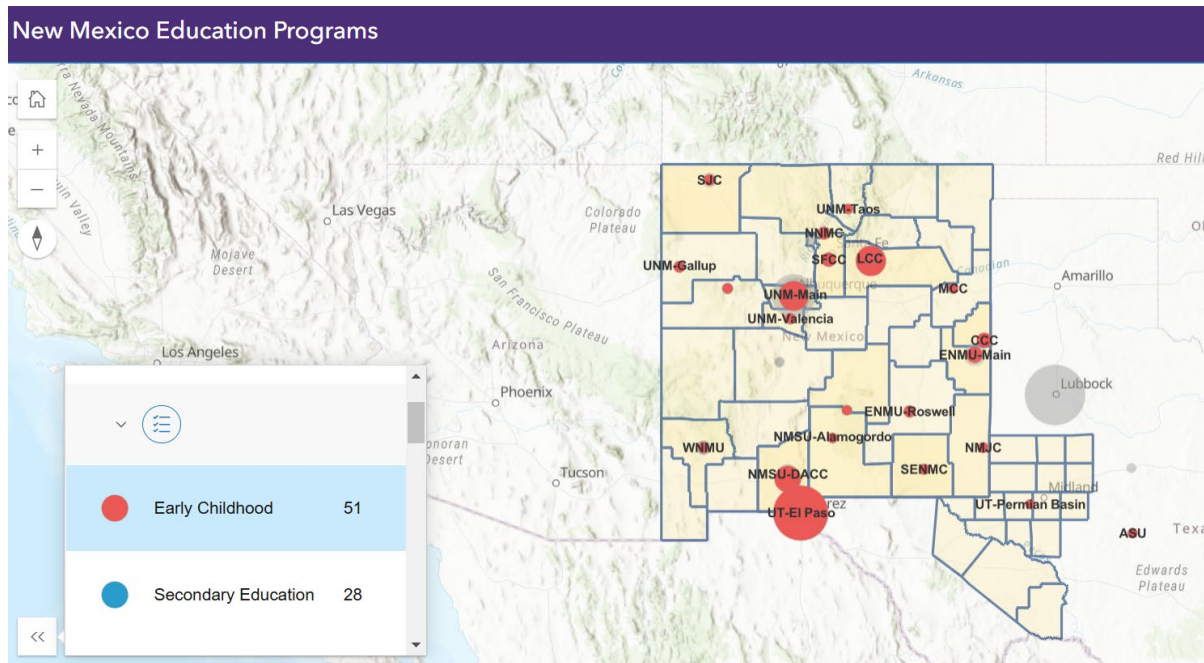
Source: JobsEQ®

Data as of 2024Q2

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Asset Maps

Example: Postsecondary Programs Location and Size.



Example: High School Clusters and Available Pathways.

Use Case: Labor Data to Streamline Career Pathways In South Carolina

Courtney Leidner, Ph.D.

The Beginning

In 2021, SC began an effort to restructure and prioritize credentials.

- Focus on “credential currency”
- **Align with labor market demands and workforce priorities**

A cross-agency collaboration began with members of the Workforce Development Council.

Industry Valued Credentials

The Goals

- Increase the number of public high school students qualifying as college and/or career-ready.
- Increase the number of students graduating with a high value credential.
- Increase number of employable individuals skilled for priority occupations in the state.

The Challenges

- A large list of credentials
- Credentials weighted equally
- Some credentials provided little value to students
- Difficult for employers to identify qualified candidates

Priority Occupations

Number by Career Cluster¹ and Education

Every career cluster has at least 2 priority occupations.

	Occupation typically requires for entry	
	High School diploma or less	Higher Education Credential
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	2	0
Architecture & Construction	20	4
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	3	1
Business Management & Administration	7	5
Education & Training	1	5
Finance	3	6
Government & Public Administration	2	1
Health Science	6	18
Hospitality & Tourism	11	0
Human Services	4	4
Information Technology	0	7
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	9	3
Manufacturing	15	0
Marketing	9	2
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	0	3
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	11	3



Steps to a Credential Refresh

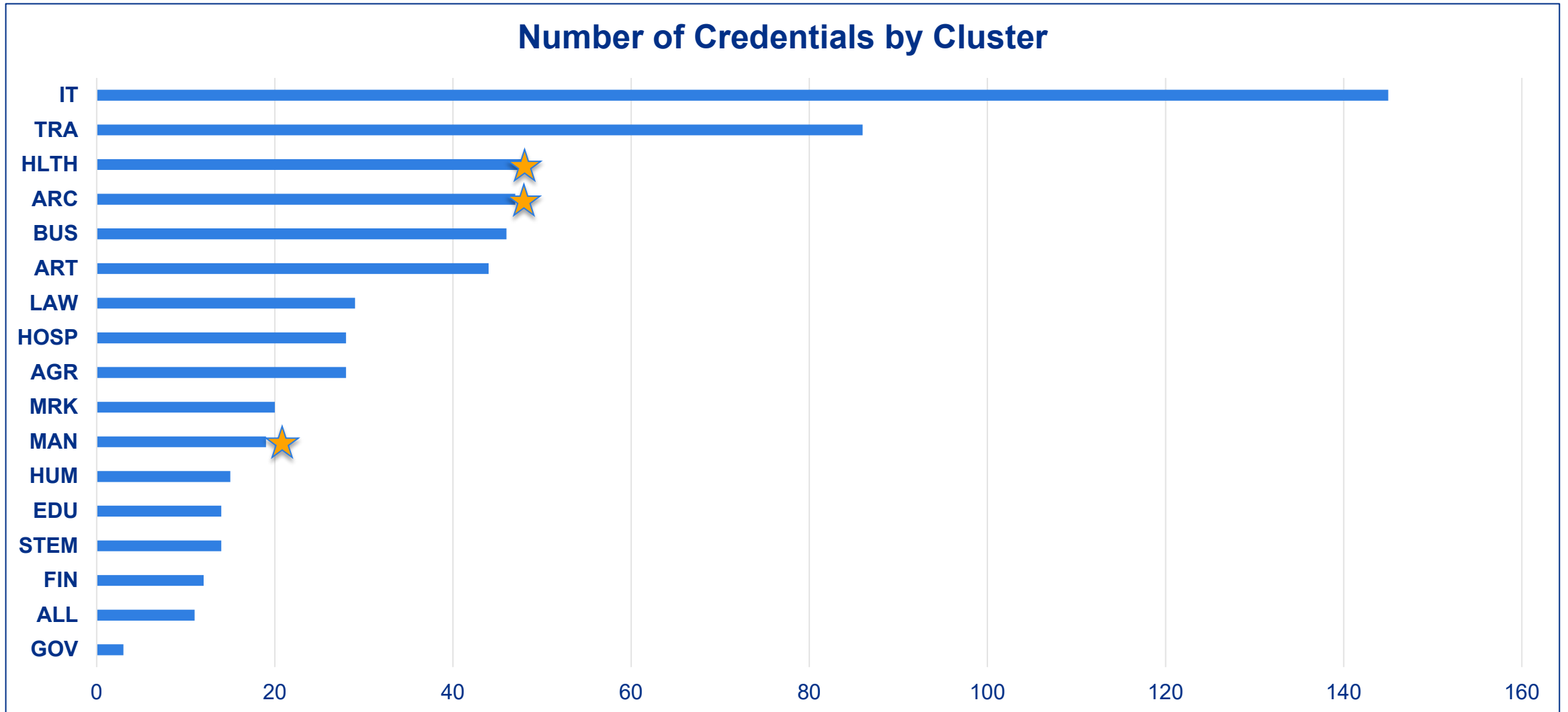
Credential List

Tiered System

Credential Library

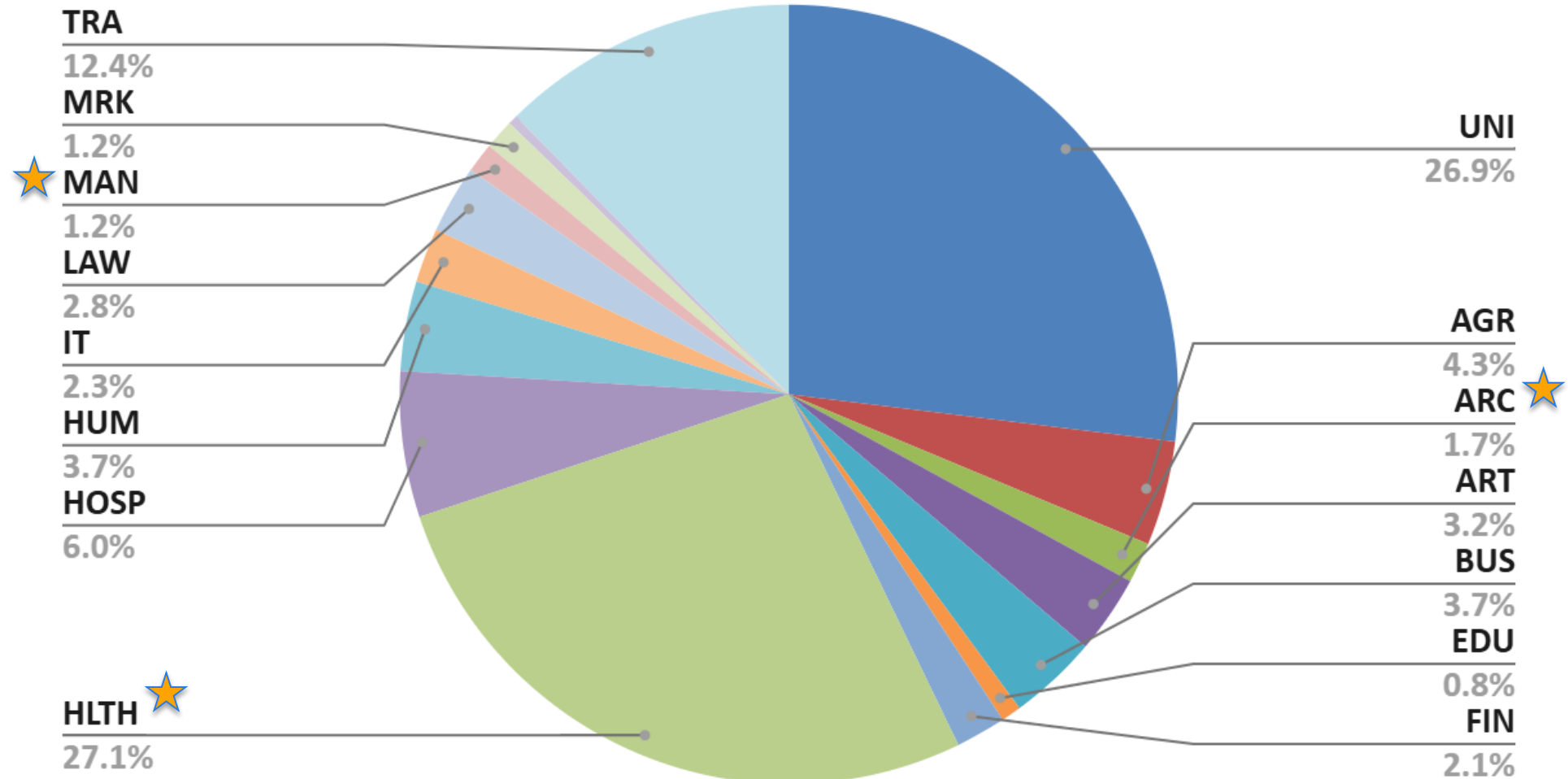
Process for Maintenance

The List – A review of Current Credentials



The List – Usage

SY23-24 Credential Usage by Cluster



Moving towards a Tiered System

The South Carolina Tiered Credential System is a structured framework that **classifies industry-recognized credentials** based on their alignment with ***workforce priorities, employer demand, and career progression opportunities***. It helps students, educators, and employers understand the **value** of different credentials in preparing individuals for high-demand, high-wage careers.

The system is organized into three tiers based on the economic impact, job market relevance, and career advancement potential of each credential.

Tier Descriptors

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Introductory	Intermediate	Career Ready
• Foundational Skills: Validates basic competencies for further education or training. • Regionally Recognized: Accepted by local industries but not a statewide hiring requirement. • Early Career Pathway: Earned in the first stages of a CTE program, leading to higher-level credentials.	• Industry-Aligned: Valued by employers but not always required for hiring. • Supports Career Pathways: Provides an employment advantage and job readiness. • Enhances Workforce Participation: Increases employability, but additional training may be needed for advancement.	• High-Demand Careers: Required for employment in priority, high-wage occupations. • Clear Economic Benefits: Leads to significant wage gains, promotions, or job retention. • Career Advancement: Recognized entry point into further education, training, and certifications.

Tiering Process

- The CCWD reviewed exam blueprints, course alignment, and demand for credentials to determine tiers in a 3-point system.
- CTE Program Leads provided feedback on the Tier Recommendations.
- Tiered system begins SY 25-26.

Annual Review and Maintenance Process



Future Credential Review Process

1. Application Submission – School districts submit applications to the SC Department of Education (SCDE) with employer documentation verifying the credential's employment value.
2. Three-Step Evaluation Process:
 - **SCDE Screening:** Ensures alignment with academic, technical, and workplace standards, plus links to postsecondary programs or apprenticeships.
 - **SC Department of Employment & Workforce (SCDEW) Review:** Confirms industry relevance and assesses if the credential leads to stable employment.
 - **Industry Review:** Employers verify hiring advantages, career progression potential, and recommend tier placement, especially for stackable credentials.

Technical Advisory Committees by Career Cluster Area

Ensure Alignment – TACs will bridge high school career pathways, postsecondary education, and workforce needs across South Carolina's 16 Career Clusters.

Provide Industry Expertise – Members will advise state agencies on labor market demands, essential skills, and credentials needed for in-demand jobs.

Diverse Membership – TACs will include business and industry experts (51% of members), postsecondary instructors, CTE directors and teachers, and workforce agency representatives.

Credential Review & Program Improvement – This fall, TACs will virtually evaluate high school CTE credentials, ensuring alignment with workforce needs and the new tiered credential system.

Ongoing Workforce Engagement – TACs will meet quarterly to refine program offerings, strengthen career pathways, and expand work-based learning opportunities.



Recommended Steps to Determine Impact

- Evaluation of Tiering impact
 - Pre/post comparison of credential attainment
 - Compare with similar states with no or different tiering systems
- Link credentials with performance on other indicators of academic performance
- Link credentials attainment with employment outcomes

Program Evaluation Opportunities

Previous Evaluations:

- Evaluation of the Florida Early Childhood Professional Development Program. Contracted by the Florida Department of Education. Tallahassee, FL.
- Realizing Educational Achievement Can Happen (REACH) Georgia Scholarship Program Evaluation. (2022, June). Contracted by the Georgia Student Finance Authority (GSFA). Atlanta, GA.

Potential Opportunities:

- North Carolina AI Impact Study
- Other opportunities in your states?



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Thank you.

Joseph Tadlock – Joseph.Tadlock@sreb.org

Courtney Leidner – Courtney.Leidner@sreb.org

Keaton Markey - Keaton.Markey@sreb.org

AI Impact Study for K-12 Systems

Using the Four Pillars to Evaluate Readiness and Guide Next Steps

Introduction

As artificial intelligence continues to influence every sector, K-12 schools are uniquely positioned to prepare students to thrive in an AI-integrated world. AI is not only reshaping the way work is done, it is transforming how students learn and how educators teach. This impact study aims to assess the readiness of K-12 systems to implement AI in meaningful, ethical, and effective ways, using the [Four Pillars of AI Guidance](#) as the organizing framework:

1. **Design cognitively demanding tasks with AI tools**
2. **Streamline teacher planning and administrative work**
3. **Support personalized learning with AI**
4. **Develop students as ethical and proficient AI users**

Informed by SREB's *Skills for an AI-Ready Workforce* report and supported by the *K-12 AI Needs Assessment* tool, this study offers a roadmap for evaluating current practices and identifying opportunities to scale AI usage that supports deep learning, equity of access, and responsible technology use.

Study Purpose and Approach

This study will be developed in collaboration with the North Carolina General Assembly's Fiscal Research Division. The goal of the impact study is to support state leaders in understanding how AI is being used in schools, what barriers exist to effective implementation, and where strategic investment is needed. The study will:

- Use the **Four Pillars** as evaluation categories.
- Use selected **survey questions** to understand current AI usage and identify schools for in-depth case studies.
- Provide suggested metrics and guidance for implementation in future impact studies.
- Identify **concrete actions** for implementing skills for an AI-Ready Workforce.

Choose Your Own (Research Evaluation) Adventure!

Table talk time – choose an education issue in your state that you'd like to see evaluated

- What are the *research questions* you would want to answer?
- What *data* is needed to answer your questions?
- *Who* would need to be involved?
- How would that data be *used* to evaluate and answer those questions?

What did you come up with?