



SC EDTECH



Annual South Carolina State Meeting

United WE Succeed!

October 31, 2025

9:00 am-12:00 pm (Noon)

Ballroom D

Moderated by
Valarie Byrd | Wyatt Cothran

Agenda

01 Welcome and Ice Breaker

02 Organizational Structure Changes & Agency Updates

03 Highlights: 2025-2030 SC Strategic Technology Plan
Spotlights: School District Innovative Technology Supporting Teaching and Learning

04 Announcements and Closing Remarks

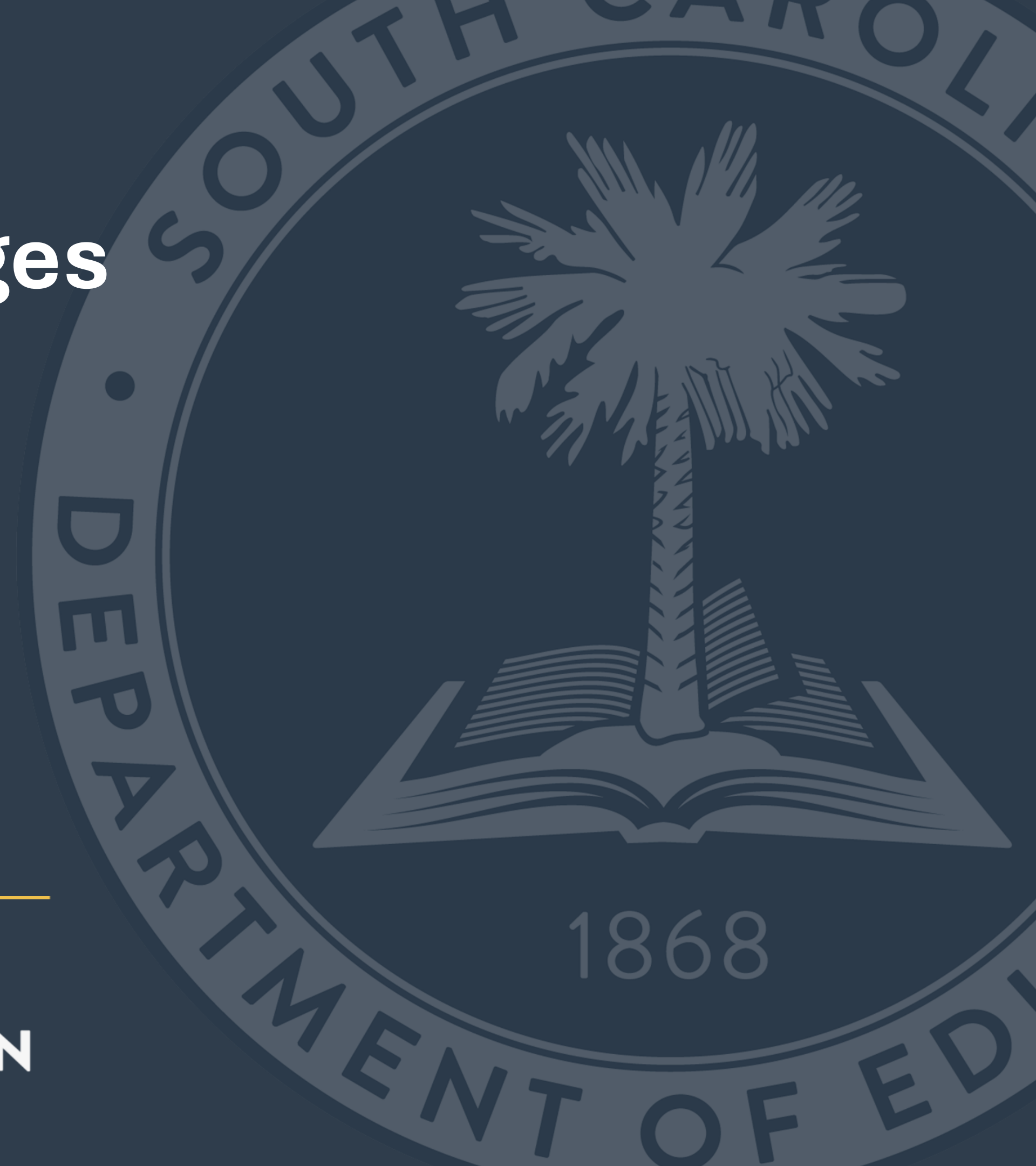


Organizational Changes and Agency Updates

Wyatt Cothran, Deputy CIO
Information Technology

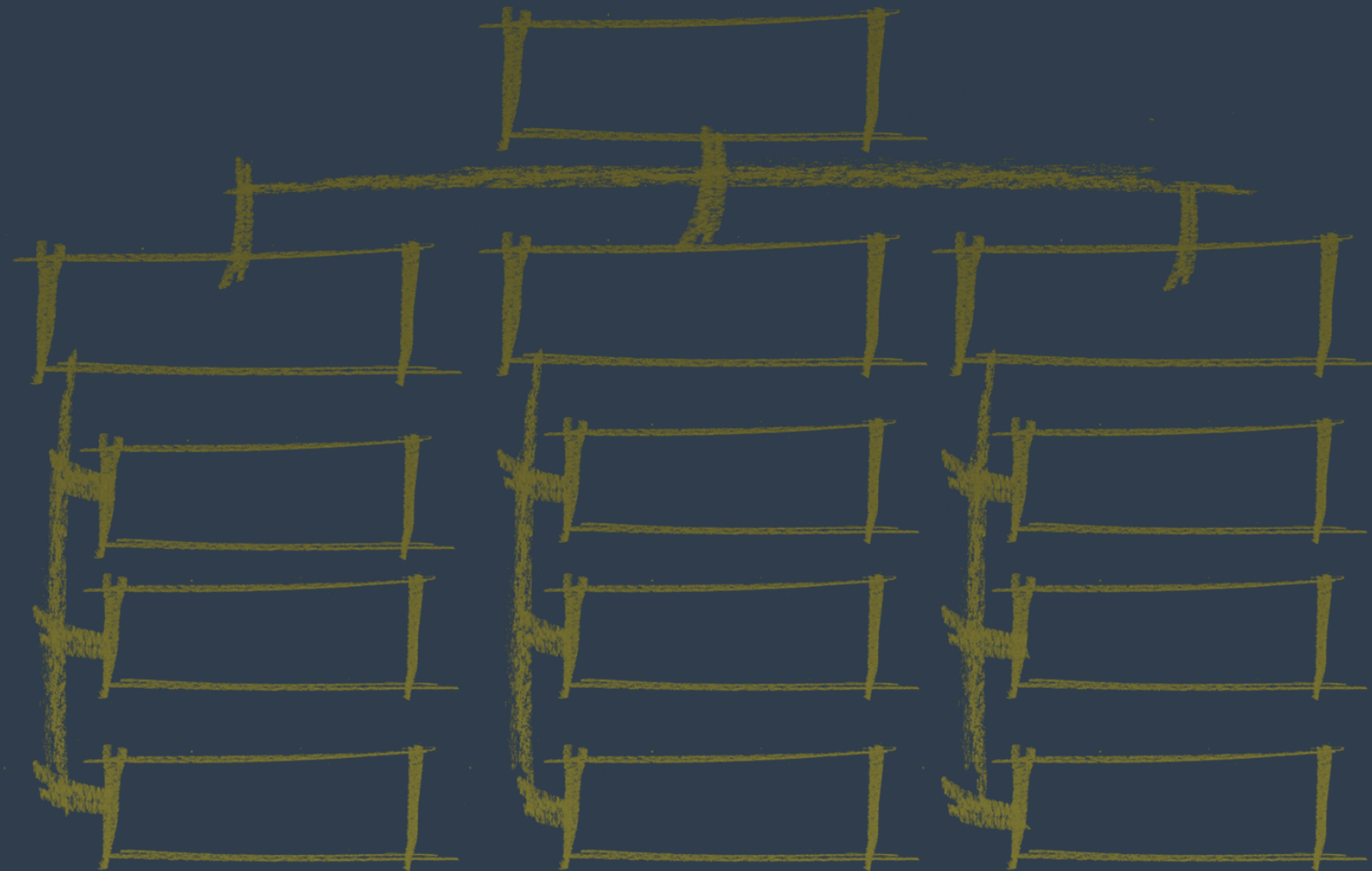


SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



South Carolina Department of Education

Organizational Structure Changes



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Agency Updates

- **SC Assurance Framework for Education Cybersecurity**
- **Projects**
- **Transportation**
- **Educator Services**
- **Instructional Materials**



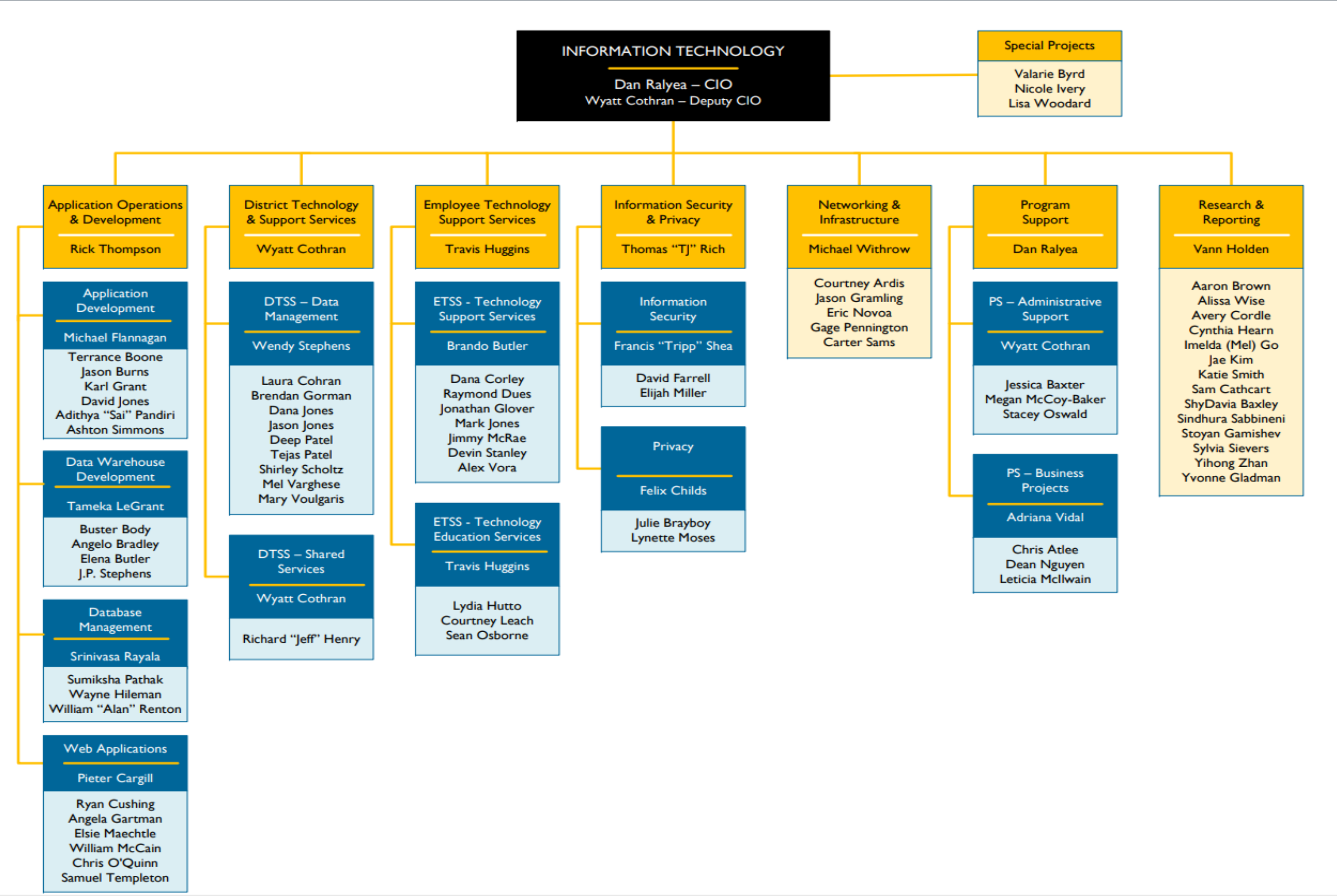
SCDE
Organizational
Changes

Wyatt Cothran

Deputy CIO



SCDE Information Technology Organization Chart



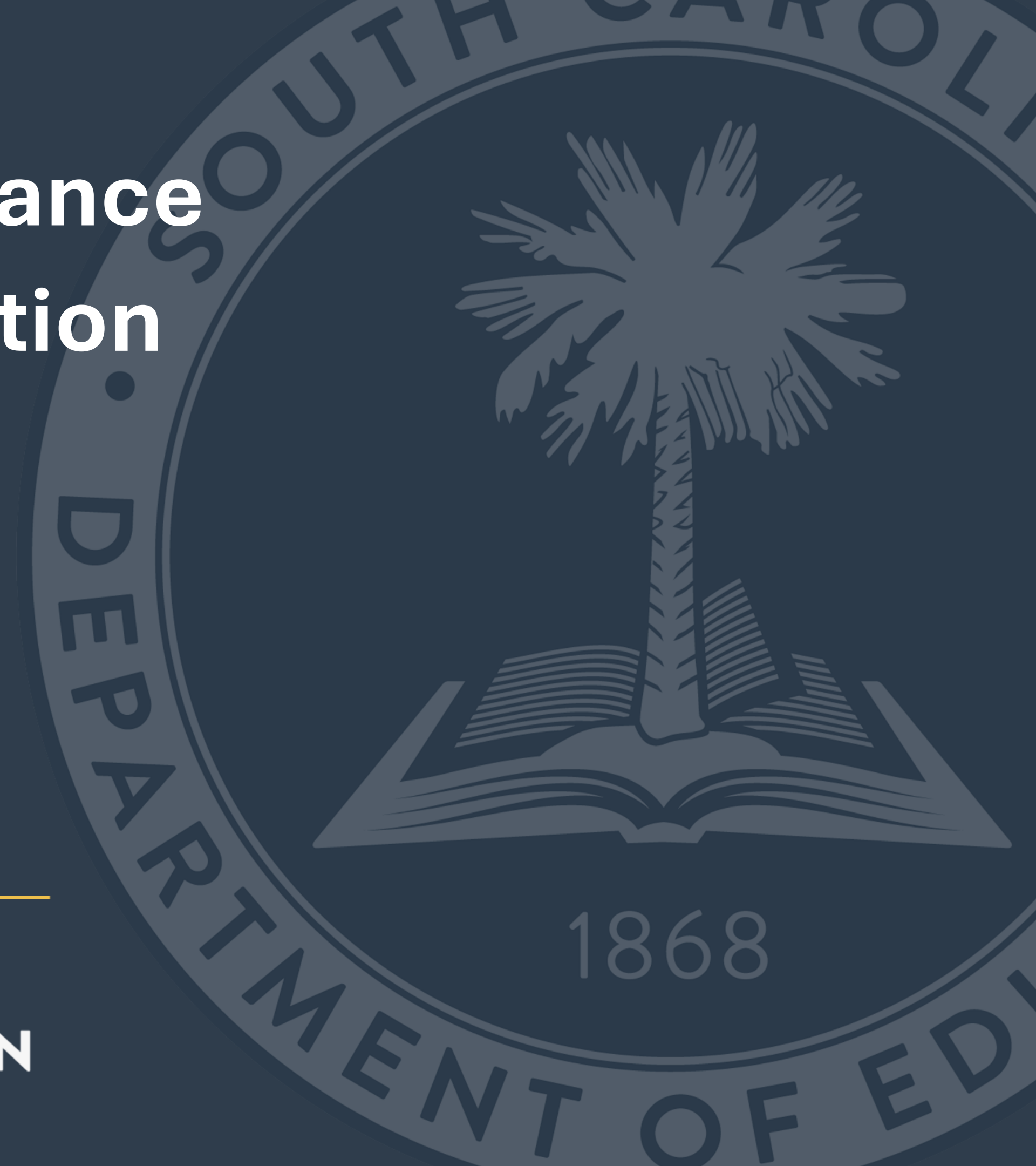
South Carolina Assurance Framework for Education Cybersecurity

TJ Rich

Information Technology



SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



SAFE K-12 Program

The SAFE K-12 Program is intended to enable SC K-12 schools and districts to implement information security programs through targeted guidance, solutions, and support.

The main goals of the program are:

1. Governance and supporting resources to establish a common security baseline for K-12 organizations
2. Consolidated purchasing and contract vehicles to enable K-12 organizations to make more cost- and resource-based decisions
3. Monitoring and information sharing among SCDE and the K-12 organizations to address common challenges in a more efficient manner



How SCDE is Implementing SAFE K-12

SCDE is working with various industry and government partners to implement the program while also involving the K-12 organizations to ensure that all stakeholders benefit

Ongoing efforts include:

- Selecting and educating K-12 organizations on Information Security Program and Resource needs
- Establishing a Service Catalog of potential technologies and capabilities that have been vetted and negotiated by the Agency
- Training K-12 Information Security stakeholders to better implement and operate their Information Security Programs



Success Factors

- Clear guidance and information sharing among stakeholders
- Planning and road-mapping for changes in both the K-12 landscape and program needs
- Unifying efforts to ensure that all groups can focus on what they do best

The SAFE K-12 Program is a partnership that needs everyone to do their part to ensure that Information Security is enabled across South Carolina.



Upcoming Milestones

2025

- CIS Critical Security Controls Workshop
- SAFE K-12 Program Charter and Policy
- Initial SAFE K-12 Service Catalog

2026

- Initial baseline assessments and data-gathering
- Partner workshops and demonstrations
- Planning and budgeting efforts for initial implementations



SCDE
Projects

Alex Farquharson

Executive Director of Agency Operations



Implementation and Support

Responsibility: *The Office of Implementation & Support leads cross-agency project execution, providing structure, tools, and capacity to translate strategic priorities into action. It supports the successful rollout of major initiatives by coordinating timelines, aligning resources, and maintaining project accountability across divisions.*

Services:

- Facilitates agency-wide and office-level project planning aligned with the SCDE Strategic Plan.
- Brings together cross-functional teams to drive collaboration, remove roadblocks, and ensure progress.
- Builds capacity in project management by coaching office teams and providing tools, templates, and support.
- Develops and maintains processes for consistent tracking and communication of objectives, milestones, and outcomes.

Customers:
SCDE Offices

Accomplishments:

- Established the agency's first formal project management office and defined its mission and operating structure.
- Supported multiple SCDE offices in developing and aligning their individual strategic plans to the agency's 3-year goals.
- Led recurring implementation meetings to ensure cross-office follow-through and performance tracking.
- Created processes, templates and workflows for task planning, goal alignment, risk management, and status reporting.



Key Initiatives

Initiative	Highlights
SAFE K-12 Program	SAFE K-12 stands for South Carolina Assurance Framework for Education Cybersecurity. The program aims to help districts implement foundational cybersecurity protections that are both effective and affordable. The program will be rolled out over several years.
SUNs Upgrade(v11-v25)	Replaces legacy V11 system. Target date for implementation Q1 2025, but subject to change based on validation testing and migration timeline.
Power School Performance Improvements	Ongoing efforts with Power School to address priority performance issues.
Technology Modernization Plan	The IT Technology Modernization Plan is a comprehensive, multi-year strategy (2025–2030) designed to transform the agency’s digital infrastructure, operations, and service delivery.
Salesforce Implementation	Initial focus on constituent management and communication tracking. Future phases to support Technology Modernization Plan.
Asana Implementation	Enterprise project management solution. Initial focus on strategic and operational portfolio but will be leveraged for work intake and management.



Office of Implementation and Support Contacts

Staff Member	Contact Information	Responsibilities
Alex Farquharson <i>Executive Director</i>	afarquharson@ed.sc.gov 803-734-3632	Office Strategy and Direction
Devin Waldrop <i>Team Lead</i>	dwaldrop@ed.sc.gov 803-734-2631	Strategic Projects Team Management
Jake Chapiesky <i>Team Lead</i>	jechapiesky@ed.sc.gov 571-217-0546	Strategic Projects Team Management



SCDE
Transportation

Mike Bullman

Director of Transportation

Office of Student Transportation



Office of Student Transportation Contacts

Staff Member	Contact Information	Responsibilities
Mike Bullman <i>Director</i>	mbullman@ed.sc.gov 803-734-8248	Student Transportation Policy and Legislation School Bus Specifications and Purchases 42 statewide school bus service facilities
Nakiaii Files <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	nafiles@ed.sc.gov 803-734-8244	Administrative Support
Bill Tindal <i>Assist. Director</i> <i>Business/Routing</i>	BTindal@ed.sc.gov 803-734-8252	Business and Fiscal functions Routing Oversight and Support
Darlene Heger <i>Fiscal Technician</i>	DHeger@ed.sc.gov 803-734-0701	Transportation Facilities and Operations Accounting
Luke Patrick <i>Assist. Director</i> <i>Vehicle Maintenance</i>	LEPatrick@ed.sc.gov 803-734-8250	Fleet Maintenance Policies, Procedures and Inspections
Crystal Leaphart <i>Assist. Director</i> <i>Driver Training/Safety</i>	crleaphart@ed.sc.gov 803-734-8245	Driver Training Policies, Procedures, Driver Training and CDL compliance



Office of Student Transportation Contacts...cont.

Staff Member	Contact Information	Responsibilities
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Justin Robinson <i>Program Assistant</i>	jtrobinson@ed.sc.gov 803-734-0447	District Routing and Routing Applications Support
Ryan O'Neal <i>Program Assistant</i>	roneal@ed.sc.gov 803-734-1640	District Routing and Routing Applications Support
Cynthia Southard <i>Program Assistant</i>	chsouthard@ed.sc.gov 803-734-8093	School Bus and Support Vehicle Administrative Support
Robert Hoffman <i>Area Supervisor (Area I)</i>	RHoffman@ed.sc.gov 803-609-2917	Area Supervisor (Field ops) Assigned Service Centers: Aiken, Brunson, Darlington, Florence, Latta, Lee, Lexington, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Sumter, Williamsburg



Office of Student Transportation Contacts...cont.

Staff Member	Contact Information	Responsibilities
<p>Wayne Eadon <i>Area Supervisor (Area II)</i></p>	<p>WEadon@ed.sc.gov 803-549-5549</p>	<p>Assigned Service Centers: Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Georgetown, Horry, Socastee, Summerville</p>
<p>William (Trey) Thomas <i>Area Supervisor (Area III)</i></p>	<p>wthomas@ed.sc.gov 864-225-4631</p>	<p>Assigned Service Centers: Abbeville, Anderson, Fairfield, Greenville, Greenwood, Johnston, Laurens, Newberry, Oconee, Pickens, Taylors</p>
<p>Nikki Tessner <i>Area Supervisor (Area IV)</i></p>	<p>ntessner@ed.sc.gov 864-838-2324</p>	<p>Assigned Service Centers: Cherokee, Chester, Chesterfield, Converse, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lower Richland, Spartanburg, York</p>



Student Transportation

Responsibility: *The Office of Transportation manages S.C.'s school bus fleet and transportation system, ensuring approximately 350K students are transported to and from school safely and efficiently each day. It oversees driver training, fleet maintenance, routing, and district coordination, while also supporting upgrades to vehicle technology, safety, and sustainability.*

Services:

- Maintain, inspect and service the state's approximately 6000 school bus fleet through a network of 42 statewide bus service centers.
- Develop state school bus specifications for SCDE and school districts.
- Execute strategic school bus purchasing aligned with the 15-year replacement cycle.
- Ensure safety, reliability, and compliance with federal/state statutes and standards.
- Centralized procurement and distribution of fuel and critical parts.
- Train thousands of drivers annually to meet rigorous safety standard and provide support to districts.
- Support school districts with routing expertise and staffing through a modern, statewide routing application that improves efficiency and service delivery.

Accomplishments:

- Completed over 28,000 annual school bus inspections statewide, ensuring safety and compliance.
- Implemented GPS, telematics, and a parent app, enhancing student safety, route efficiency, and stakeholder confidence.
- Procured 455 new buses in FY 2023–24, up from 212 the previous year.
- Diesel fuel consumption has been reduced by approximately 2.5 million gallons annually since fiscal year 2019–2020.
- Trained over 2,000 school bus drivers in FY 2023–24, strengthening district transportation capacity and safety readiness statewide.
- 98% of all school buses statewide are now equipped with air conditioning.
- Transformed the statewide school bus fleet into one of the safest and most efficient in the nation.

Customers:

SC Students | School Districts



Student Transportation

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Fleet Modernization Impact

- **Successfully** reduced the proportion of Type D buses from 55% to just 5.3%, saving the agency over \$75 million in new bus purchases over the past decade.
- **Reduced** annual service calls from approximately 16,500 to 6,500—an improvement that reflects significant gains in fleet reliability and operational efficiency.
- **Met** the 15-Year Replacement Cycle Requirement. We have successfully aligned the school bus fleet with the statutory mandate outlined in SC Code § 59-67-580.
- **Increased** average fuel economy by approximately 35% saving millions in fuel cost.
- **98% of the school bus fleet is air-conditioned**, significantly improving student comfort and contributing to a safer, more focused ride environment.

Fleet Efficiency Enhancements

- **Added** approximately 17,000 seat spaces across the fleet, allowing for greater student capacity without expanding the total number of buses.
- **Flat Floor & Track Seating** on Special Needs (S/N) buses provides greater flexibility for districts in configuring seating arrangements to meet diverse student needs.
- **Provides** a parent app to school districts, offering real-time bus tracking, notifications, and improved communication between families and transportation teams.
- **Reduced** scheduled overtime costs from \$1.1 million to approximately \$200,000 annually—reflecting improved operational efficiency and workforce management.

Fleet Safety Advancements

- **LED Headlights** installed for improved visibility.
- **360-Degree Camera Systems** to enhance driver awareness and safety.
- **Dual Stop Arms** to increase student protection during boarding and exiting.
- **Stability Control Systems** to reduce rollover risk and improve handling.
- **Fully illuminated** stop arms and headers for enhanced visibility.
- **Stop Arm Camera(s)** to capture and deterring illegal passing
- **Rooftop ID numbers** to assist emergency and law enforcement personnel in identifying buses from aircraft.
- **Forward collision** avoidance systems to prevent accidents.
- **Driver** tablets on all Special Needs buses. Installation is now underway for all General Education (Gen-Ed) buses, with progress continuing on schedule.



SCDE
Educator
Services

Sherry Schneider

Program Manager, Educator Services



Office of Educator Services Contacts

Staff Member	Contact Information	Responsibilities
Mary Hipp <i>Director</i>	mhipp@ed.sc.gov 803-896-0352	All OES Teams Policy and Legislation Certification Assessments
Sherry Schneider <i>Assistant Director</i> <i>Certification Team Lead</i>	sschneider@ed.sc.gov 803-896-0384	Educator Certification Required Credentials SC Educator System Access National Board
Alicia Gaither <i>Alternative Certification Team Lead</i>	agaither@ed.sc.gov 803-896-0332	Alternative Route Programs Candidate Eligibility Participant Progress
Jacki Walsh <i>Team Lead</i>	jwalsh@ed.sc.gov 803-896-0428	Educator Preparation
Becca Burg <i>Education Associate</i>	BFBurg@ed.sc.gov 803-896-0434	Educator Ethics Background clearance for all applicants NASDTEC reporting of disciplinary actions Certificate reinstatement
Michael Carothers <i>Education Associate</i>	mdcarothers@ed.sc.gov 803-896-2160	Exchange Visitor Teachers Critical Needs
Robin Amick <i>Education Associate</i>	ramick@ed.sc.gov 803-896-0474	CTE Work-based Teacher Certification





Certification Updates

2025-2026



Amendments to Regulation 43-64

New Certification Field: School Principal: PK–Grade 12.

- Principals certified in Elementary or Secondary may add this field by:
 - Completing one year of administrative experience in the complementary grade span, or
 - Completing an internship course in the complementary span.

Internships: South Carolina programs will update internship components to include full PK–12 coverage.

Timeframe: By September 1, 2026, all South Carolina principal preparation programs must align courses, field experiences, and internships to cover the PK–12 grade span.





The Educator Assistance Act

The Educator Assistance Act ([Act 12 of the 2025-26 Legislative Session](#)) became effective July 1, 2025, and includes provisions supporting educators in South Carolina. This omnibus legislation amends multiple sections of the South Carolina Code of Laws.



Educator Leave and the Educator Assistance Act

Leave Bank

Districts and charter schools must allow employees to **donate unused sick or annual leave over 60 days** to a shared sick leave bank.

Policies must define **eligibility criteria** for using the bank.

Unused Leave

Districts may pay certified and noncertified staff for **leave over 90 days** at fiscal year-end.

Applies only to leave accrued **after July 1, 2018**.



Educator Notification Requirements

Reemployment Notification

Districts must notify teachers of next-year employment **by May 1**.

Projected Compensation

Notice must include **minimum projected salary schedule**.

Final salary schedule provided after **state and local budget approval**.

Assignment

District must notify teachers of their school-year assignment at least 14 days before students return.



Teacher Professional Development and Staff Workdays

10 Staff Workdays must include:

- **4 days** for collegial professional development (content knowledge, teaching techniques, assessment).
- **2 days** for school opening prep — **self-directed, no meetings/trainings.**
- **4 days** for planning, academic plans, and parent conferences.



Just Cause Basis for Teacher Certificate Suspension or Revocation

Breach of contract was added to the list of “just cause” for certificate suspension or revocation.

Updates **Section 59-25-530** to address:

- District reporting requirements
- Certification sanctions
- Applicable exclusions



Lifetime Retired Educator Certificate

- **Certified Employment.** The new version of the Retired Educator certificate allows retirees to return to certified employment and maintain a certificate without having to meet renewal requirements. The previous version could only be used for substituting.
- **New Applicants.** Educators with a valid Professional certificate should wait to apply until the expiration year of that credential to apply.
- **Educators with the Retired Educator (Substituting) Certificate.** Office of Educator Services (OES) is in the process of updating these certificates to the new type, restoring the certification fields on the credential.
- Every 5 years an educator must submit a request to **Maintain the Retired Educator Certificate.**





Work Experience Credit For Educators

Act 29 of 2025



Non-Teaching Occupational Experience

Relevant Professional Experience. Non-teaching work experience directly related to the educator's certification field.

Guidelines & Procedures. SCDE will finalize State Board-Approved guidelines by November 2025.

System Updates. The South Carolina Educator Certification system is being updated to reflect these changes.





Noncertified Teacher Pilot

Act 30 of 2025



Eligibility and District Participation

Individual Eligibility Criteria

Participants need a relevant degree and five years of verified work experience. Enrollment in a certification program is required within three years.

District Application Process

Districts must submit detailed applications and designate a compliance facilitator.

Noncertified Teacher Limits

Schools can employ noncertified teachers in no more than 10% of positions and must register hires within 60 days.



Certification Fields

Elementary - Grades 2-6

Middle Level - Middle Level Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

High School - English, Math, Sciences, Social Studies, Business, Agriculture, and Industrial Technology.

PK-12 - Art, Music, Dance, Theatre, Physical Education, Health, and World Languages except ASL.

Excluded Fields

CTE Fields, Early Childhood, Special Education, ESOL, Literacy, Montessori, and Leadership are excluded from the program.



SCDE
Instructional
Materials

Paige
Mitchell

Education Associate, Instructional Materials



Office of Instructional Materials Contacts

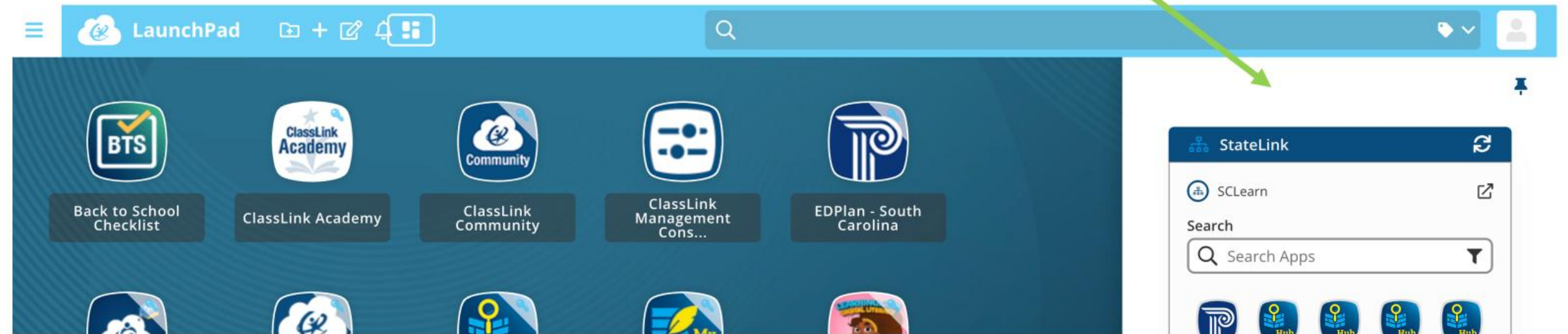
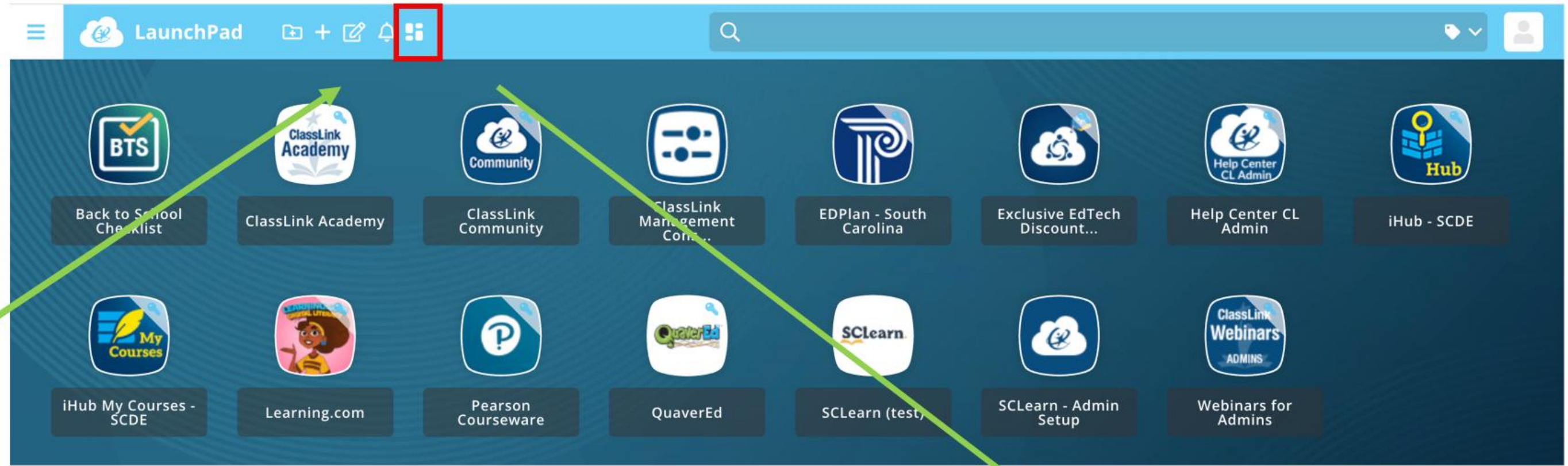
Staff Member	Responsibilities	Phone Number	Email
Nicole Barker	Textbook Adoption, Review Process, Districts' Selection and Publishers' Contact	803-832-8203	nmbarker@ed.sc.gov
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Vicki Standish	Textbook Adoption, Review Process, Districts' Selection and Publishers' Contact	803-832-8209	vstandish@ed.sc.gov
Paige Mitchell, Ed.D	Instruction Hub, Digital Resources Contact	803-832-8922	pmitchell@ed.sc.gov
Textbook Order Questions		n/a	textbookorder@ed.sc.gov



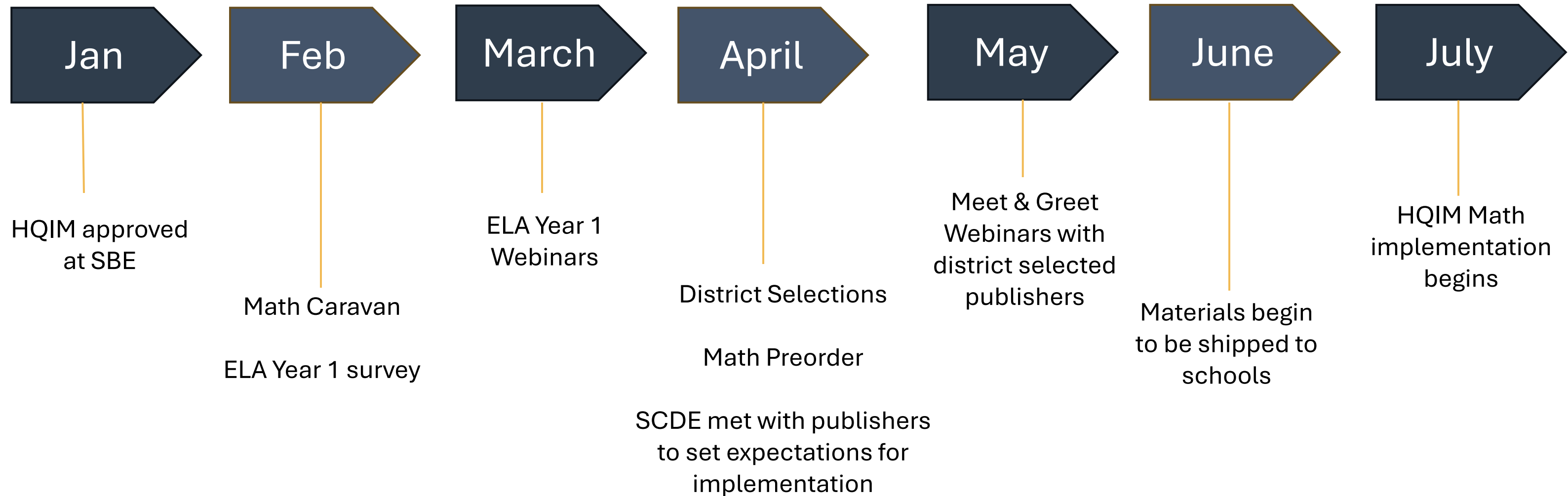
High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)

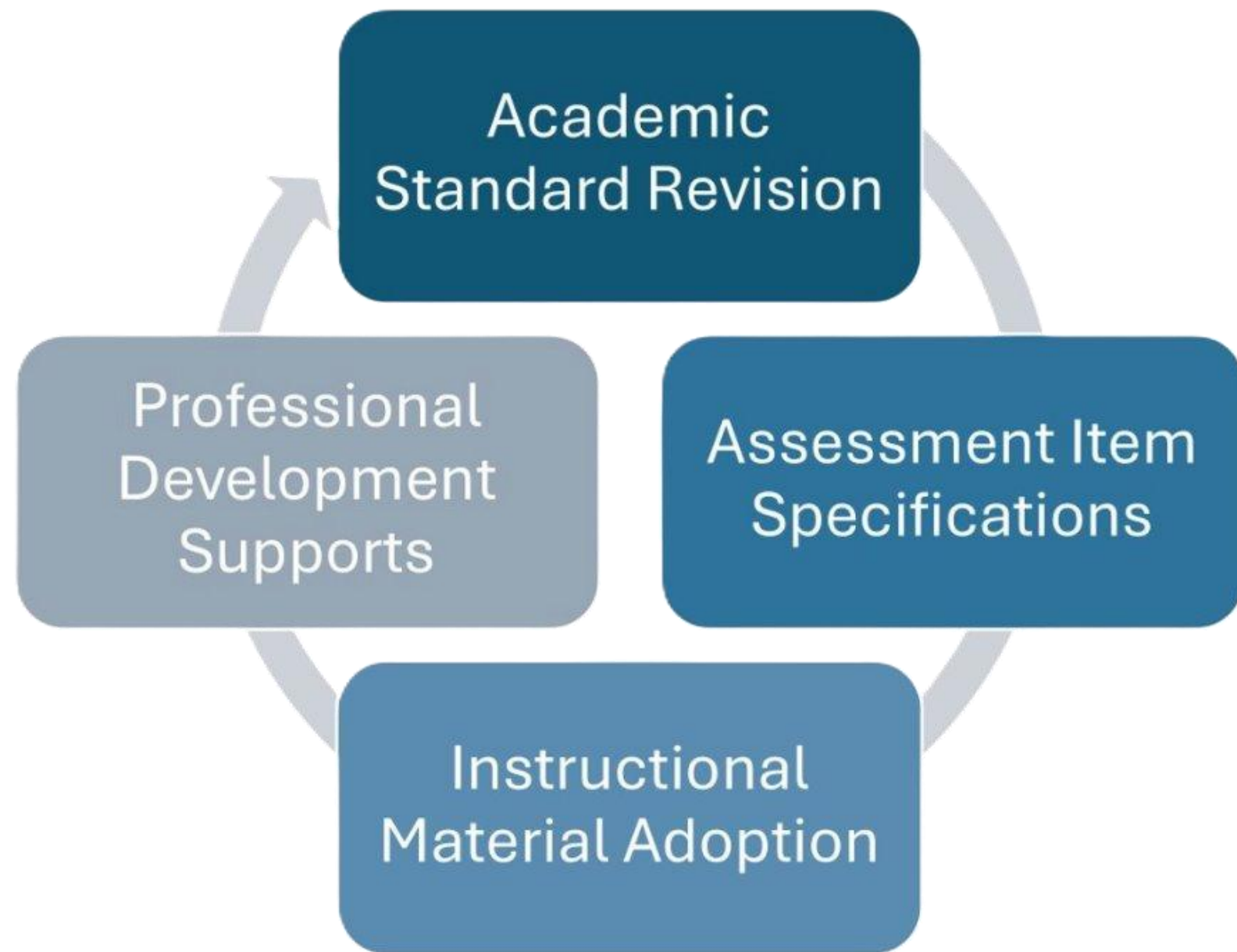
The Office of Instructional Materials provides comprehensive resources for educators and students, enhancing the educational experience across various disciplines. Our office curates and distributes high-quality instructional materials, including textbooks, digital resources, and supplemental learning tools, ensuring that both teachers and students have access to the most current and effective educational content. Our commitment is to empower educators with the tools they need to inspire and educate students, preparing them for success in an ever-evolving world.





HQIM Timeline for Math Adoption (2025)

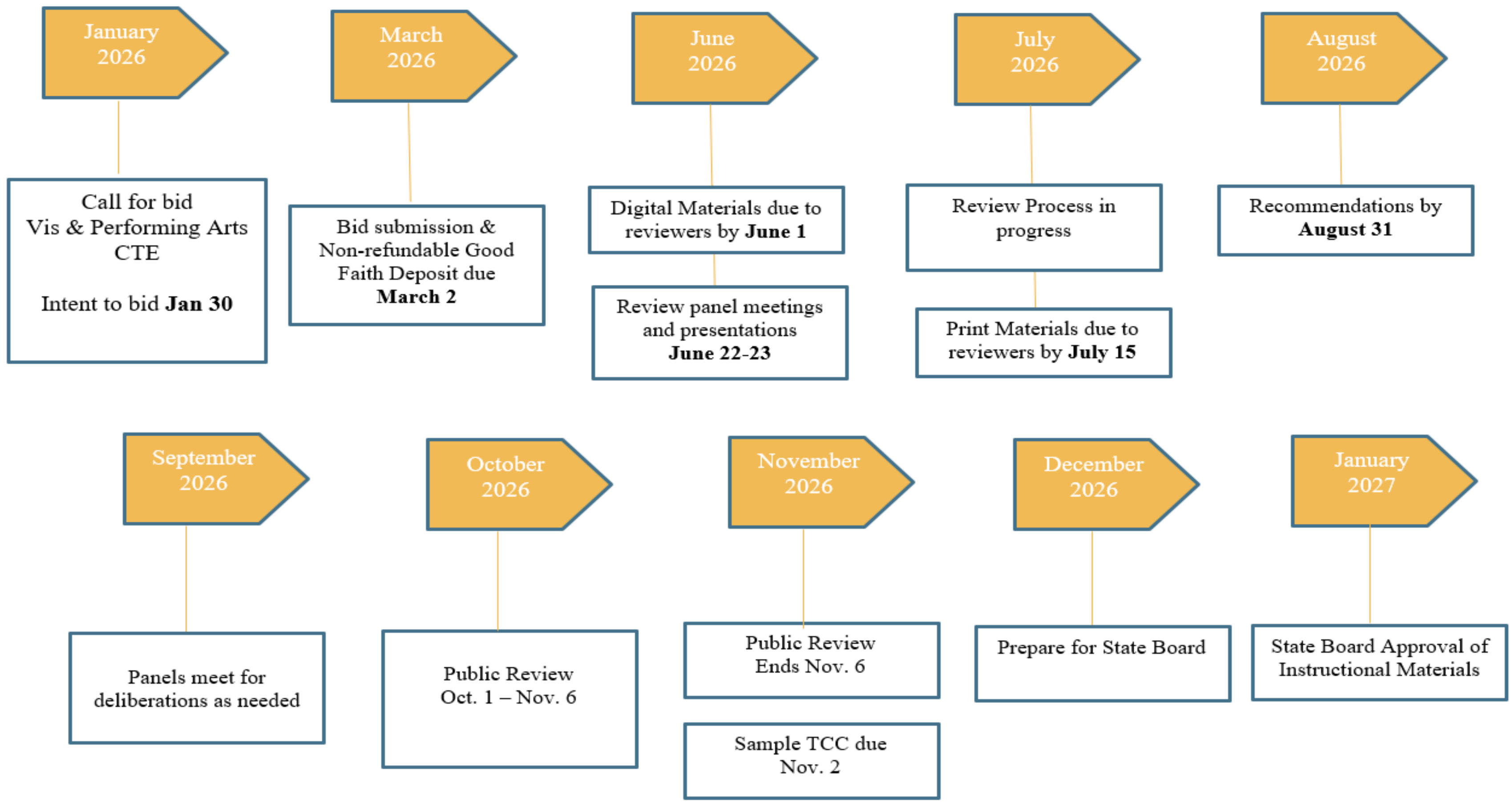




Goals:

- Build the capacity of everyone that supports schools from the state agency to support the aligned implementation of high-quality materials.
- This includes working with the Palmetto Literacy Specialists, Palmetto Math Specialists, Transformation Coaches, Curriculum Based Professional Learning (CBPL) Team

Instructional Material Review Process Timeline (Tentative)



Tentative Textbook Adoption Schedule

Content Area	State Adoption Year	Year Available
English Language Arts K-12	2023	2024-25
Mathematics K-12	2024	2025-26
Computer Education	2024	2026-27
Career & Technical Education		
Visual & Performing Arts	2026	2027-28
Social Studies K-12		
World Language	2027	2028-29
Science K-12	2028	2029-30



2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan & School District Innovative Technology Spotlights

Valarie Byrd, Senior Consultant
Information Technology

2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan



OVERVIEW



FOCUS AREAS

2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan

Presented by

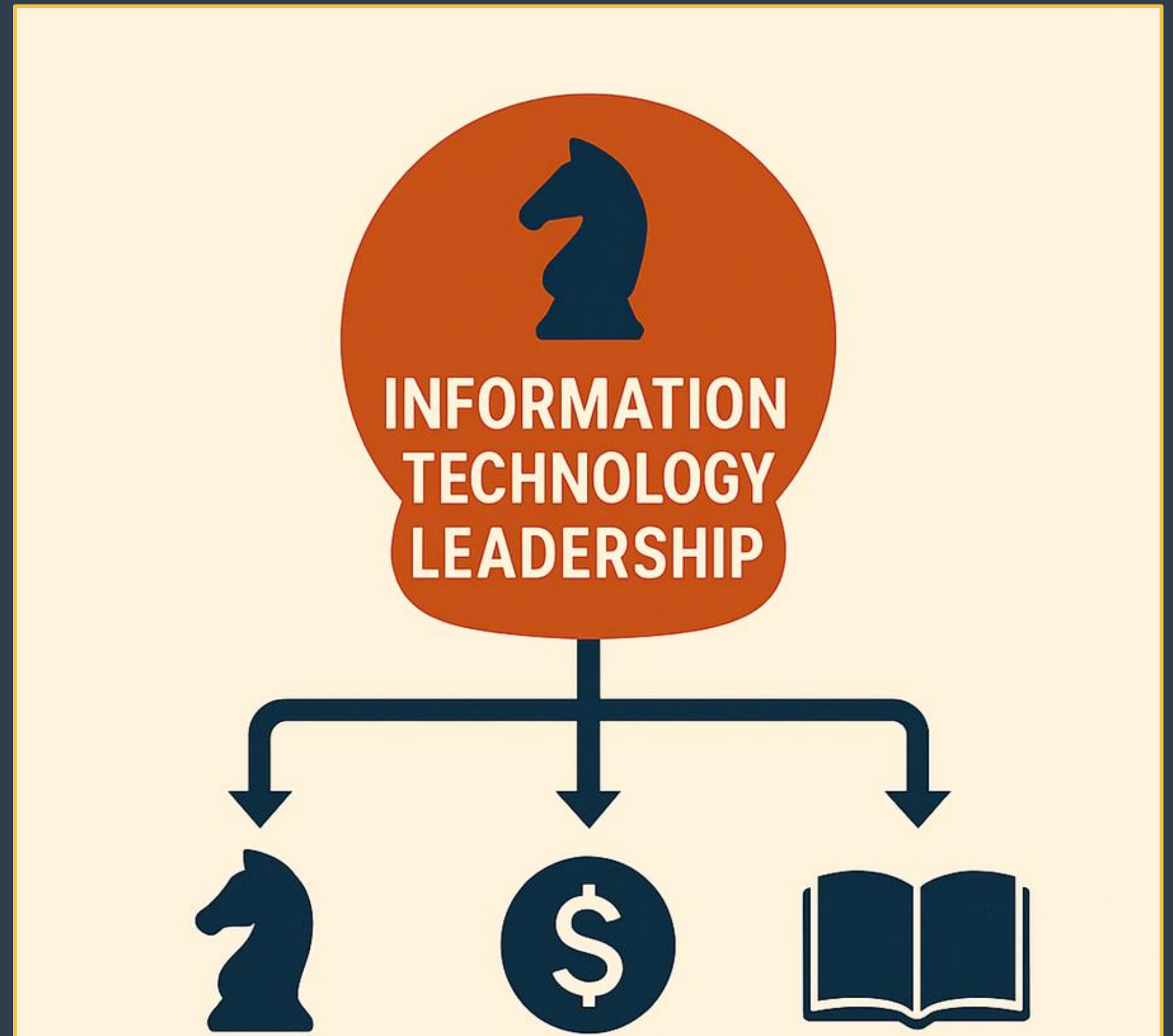
Carol Lunsford, District Workgroup Team Lead
Courtney Leach, SCDE Workgroup Liaison



2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan

Presented by

Nic Carrol, District Workgroup Team Lead

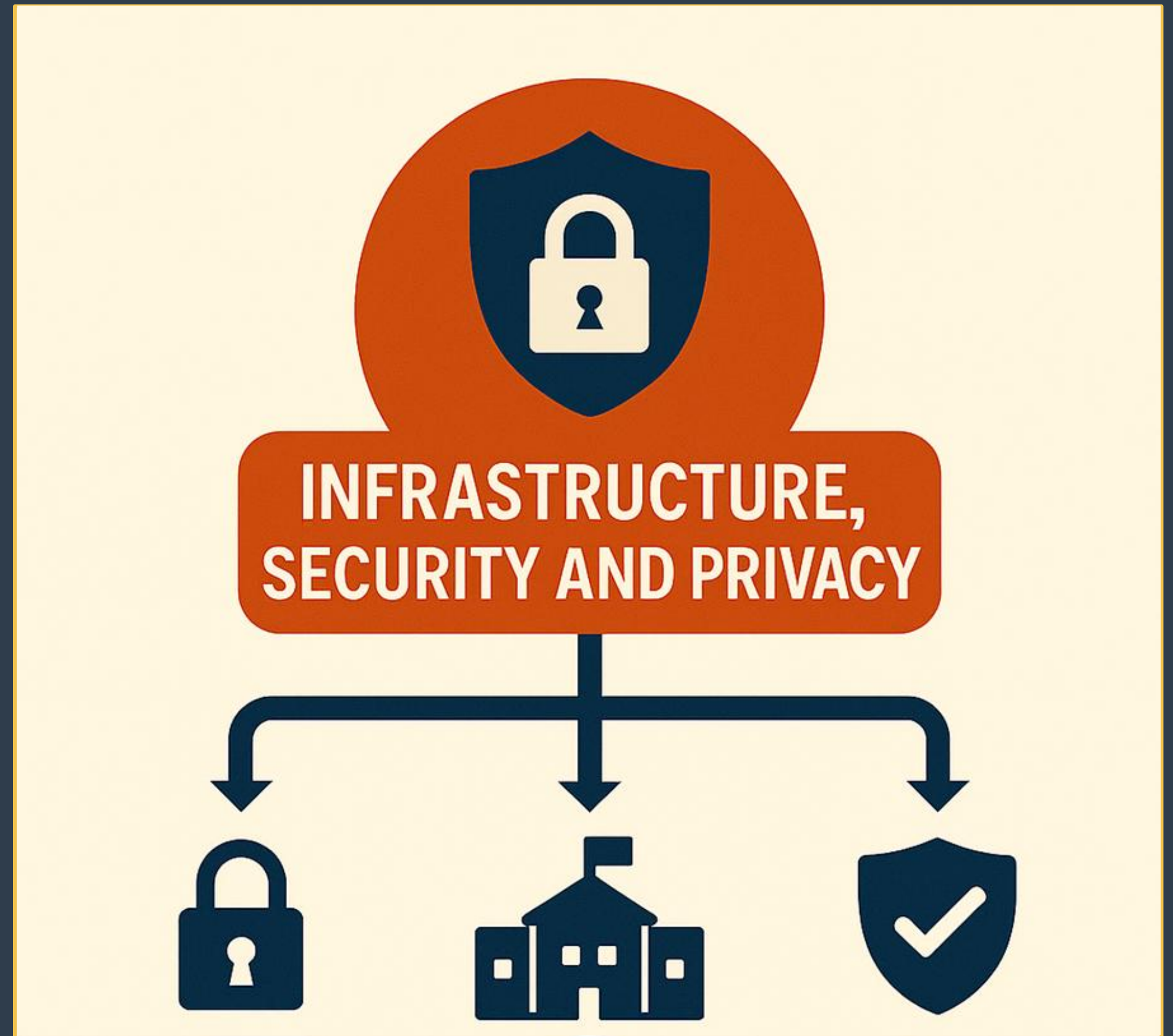


2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan

Presented by

Matt Hoffman, District Workgroup Team Lead

Jenny Garris, District Workgroup Team Lead

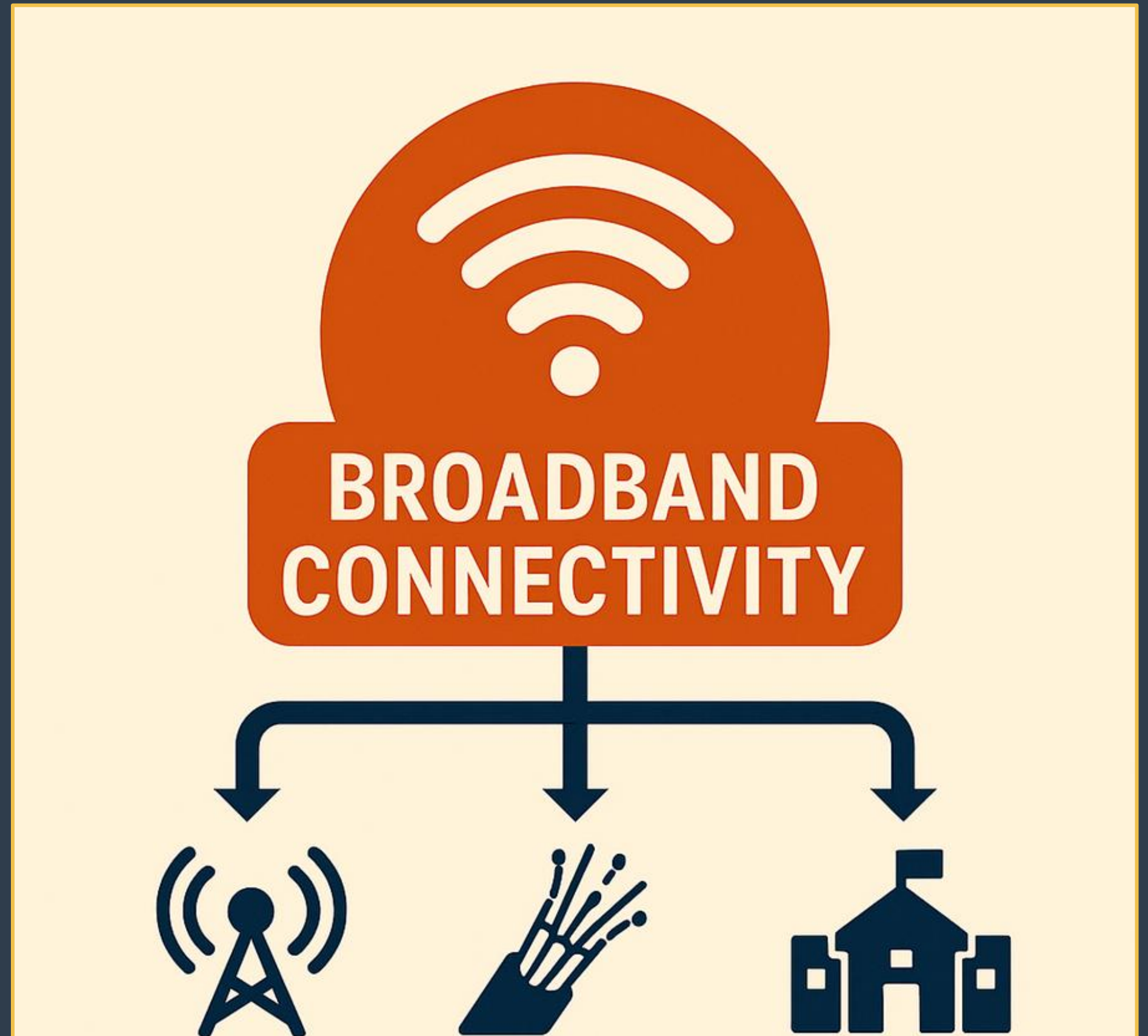


2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan

Presented by

Paula Yohe, District Workgroup Team Lead

Valarie Byrd, SCDE Workgroup Liaison



2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan

Presented by

Jeff Henry, SCDE Workgroup Liaison



2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan

Presented by

Jeff Henry, SCDE Workgroup Liaison



&



2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan

Presented by

Candice Coppock, District Workgroup Team Lead
Nicole Ivery, SCDE Workgroup Liaison

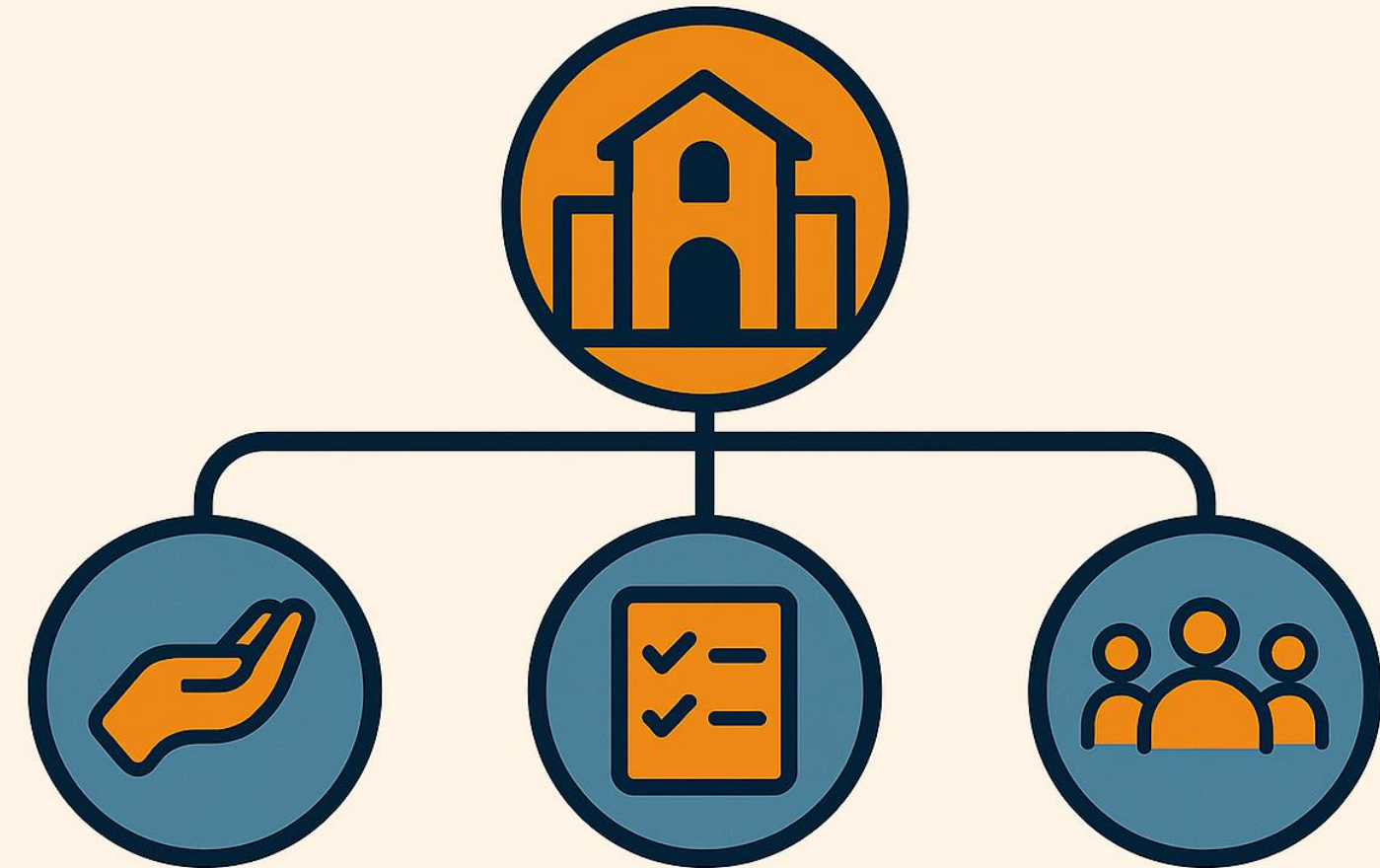


2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan

Presented by

Jay Lindler, District Workgroup Team Lead
Aveene Colman, SCDE Workgroup Liaison

STUDENT SERVICES

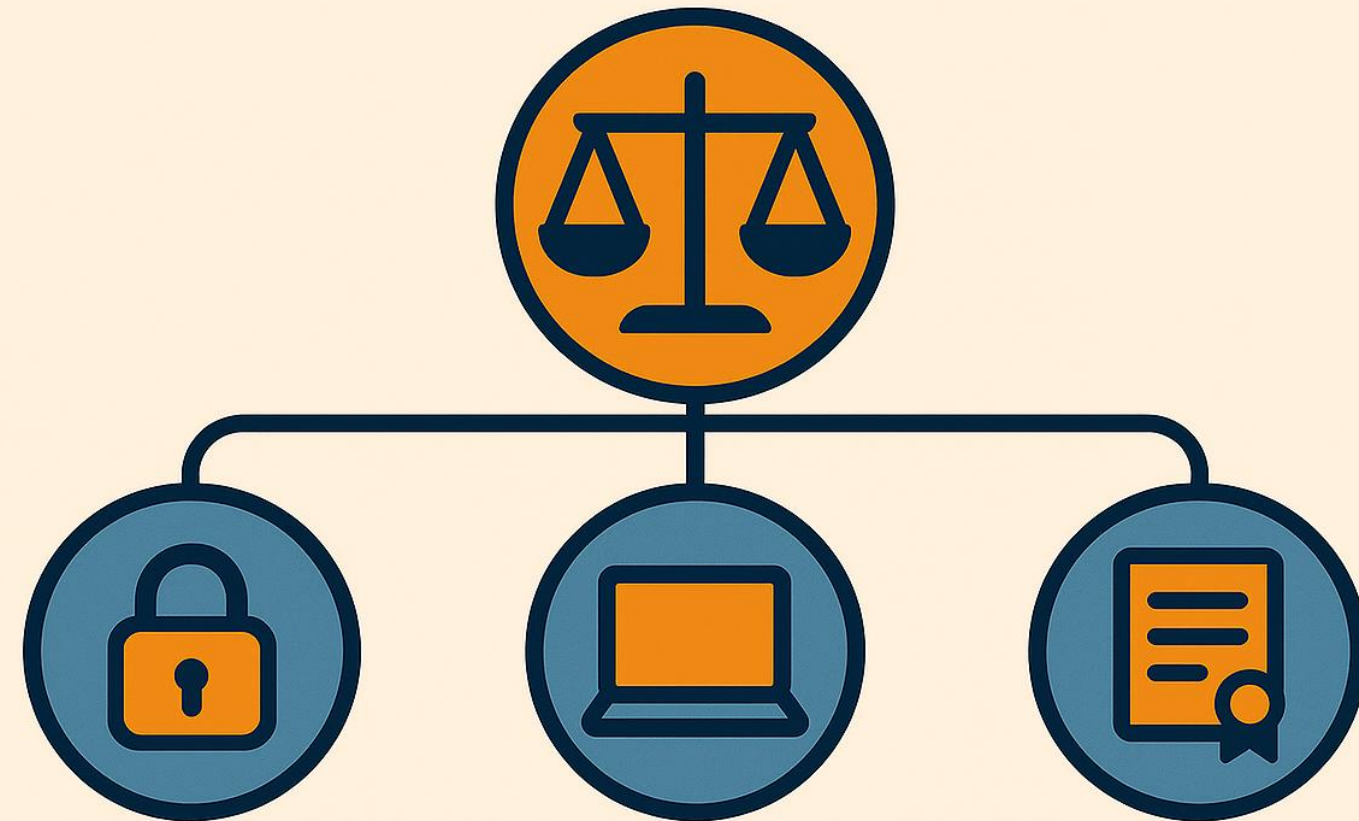


2025-2030 South Carolina Strategic Technology Plan

Presented by

Derek Berry, District Workgroup Team Lead

STATE AND FEDERAL LAW CONSIDERATIONS





Closing Remarks & Announcements

Hope to see you next year!

Myrtle Beach Convention Center (MBCC)

October 27-30, 2026





Thank

You!