



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

June 29, 2018

Today, I declare a state of emergency in Allendale County School District, pursuant to the powers provided to the State Superintendent of Education under the Appropriations Act of 2018, Proviso 1A.12. After a year of working in the District under a negotiated Memorandum of Agreement, I have determined that this declaration is in the best interest of the children and families of Allendale County. Under this new declaration, a Memorandum of Agreement will no longer be in place. I initially declared a state of emergency in June 2017; however, following litigation brought by the Allendale School Board, I agreed to work collaboratively with them. While the Memorandum was signed with the student's interests in mind, the focus of our attention in working with the Board has been, to my dismay, solely on the adults and has caused tremendous time and resources to be dedicated to appeasing their interests rather than improving classroom instruction and academic outcomes.

In 2016-2017 only 14.6% of Allendale students met or exceeded state standards in English Language Arts and only 13.9% in Mathematics and 12.9% in Science. Passage of End of Course tests were 36.2%, less than half of the state average. No students met ACT College Ready benchmarks on the 2017 ACT assessment. This level of poor academic achievement cannot continue. Every student in Allendale has the potential to be successful academically and have the opportunity to pursue their passions in college and careers. I know that this is possible with proper oversight and support.

In addition to the lack of student achievement, I am also concerned about financial and programmatic issues in several federal and state programs. With additional technical assistance from the Department staff, I believe Allendale can make significant improvements in financial oversight and provide a better return on taxpayer investment.

Dr. Margaret Gilmore has and will continue to be my designated superintendent, reporting directly to me, and will oversee all district operations. Dr. Gilmore will hold monthly meetings with parents and community leaders to keep them updated on our work and will continue to work alongside school and district staff to move Allendale schools forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Molly M. Spearman".

Molly M. Spearman
State Superintendent of Education