

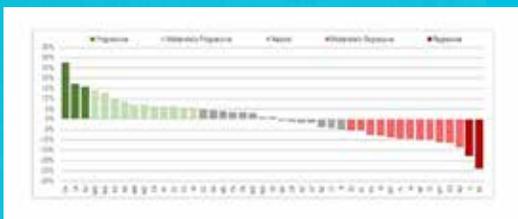
Scenario 1: 1835

A fixed point in time with no way forward

This scenario is characterized by a school system stuck in the status quo, producing the same results it has for many years. The changes to the education system are minimal and mostly cosmetic, ensuring that the system continues underserving students of color. CCSD engagement mechanisms are ineffective and contribute to the lack of trust from the community. Reforms to Act 388 fail, resulting in a lack of appropriate educational funding to operate schools. With no significant changes taking place, the current CCSD Board and constituent board structures remain in place. Conflict within the CCSD Board continues at the expense of the larger issues the school district faces. Division between public, charter, magnet and private schools deepens, and more charter schools are developed. Some of CCSD's predominantly Caucasian schools are listed as top schools in America, while people of color remain marginalized and continue receiving a substandard education. There are small pockets of change in areas of the county where communities come together to effect change, and some schools continue to diversify. The city economy remains strong for a while, but ultimately begins to decline as crime and unemployment grow and major organizations downsize or delay investments in Charleston. Overwhelmed by these challenges, parent and community efforts dwindle. By 2035, the accumulated failures of the education system result in a record-low enrollment in traditional public schools and an all-time high student achievement gap.



Funding per student in school districts serving the largest populations of Black, Latino, or American Indian students



Source: <https://edtrust.org/resource/funding-gaps-2018/>

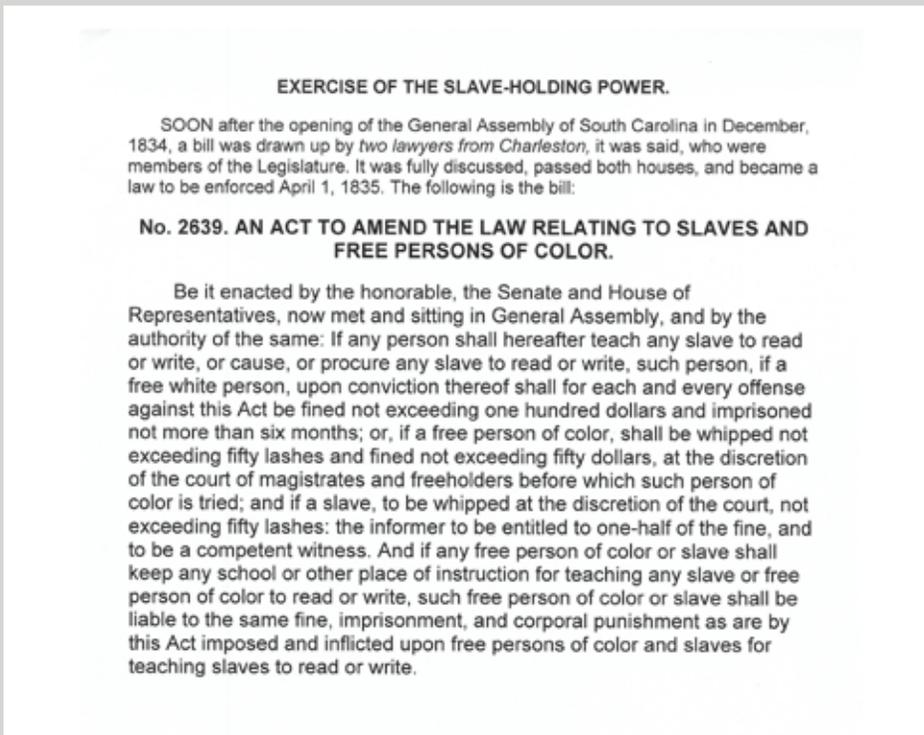
Funding Gaps 2018

School districts that serve large populations of students of color and students from low-income families receive far less funding than those serving White and more affluent students.

Data about these inequities have existed for years. Now, the attention of educators and activists is trained on this problem as they seek new solutions and partnerships.

In the U.S. today, school districts serving the largest populations of Black, Latino, or American Indian students receive roughly \$1,800, or 13 percent, less per student in state and local fund-

Pictured below is a South Carolina law passed in 1835 that made the education of “persons of color and slaves” a punishable offense.



“These patterns are troubling for many reasons, but particularly because research shows that many students of color start school academically behind their peers.”

From “Funding Gaps, 2018: An Analysis Funding Equity Across the U.S. and Within Each State”
The Education Trust

Political divisions remain

The structure of the Charleston County education system continues to operate multiple board systems: the CCSD Consolidated School Board and 8 smaller Constituent Boards within communities, as required by Act 340. As education results plateau, the CCSD Board of Trustees gets more involved, but is unable to reach consensus due to internal conflict. The boards continue to vote based on a small group of their constituencies’ wishes, and not toward a better system for all students. Citizens’ frustration grows as the CCSD Board continues to have a divided vote on major issues, ignoring ever-growing public input. The political divisions and animosity create a permanent lack

of respect between Board members. A new superintendent is hired after nearly every CCSD Board election, further adding to instability. Parents for whom the system is working overlook these issues. Other parents form community groups to try to improve the system, relying on each other more and more, building strong alliances. The accomplishments of these groups are noteworthy and commendable.

Schools slowly shrink

In 2018, CCSD regains its initial district-wide accreditation from AdvancED, and teacher salaries are increased. Despite this initial progress, constant administrative and teacher turnover

in the school district creates a lack of consistency, hurting education in the county. A teacher shortage contributes to a lack of trust in school administrators. As the repeal or modification of Act 388 fails, the lack of CCSD leadership and highly effective teachers becomes more apparent to the community advocating for improvements. A prolonged lack of educational funding necessary to cover basic classroom needs leads to additional teacher dissatisfaction and resignations. The State reduces school allocations, further impacting interventions, technology availability and teacher salaries, hurting small schools the most. The sum of all of these factors and the failure to enact the changes recommended by AdvancED in their initial

ing than those serving the fewest students of color. This may seem like an insignificant amount, but it adds up. For a school district with 5,000 students, a gap of \$1,800 per student means a shortage of \$9 million per year.

For school districts serving the largest populations of students from low income families, the gap is smaller but no less significant. Across the country, the U.S. spends approximately 7 percent — or \$1,000 — less per pupil on students educated in our nation’s highest poverty districts than those educated in the wealthiest. Again, for a school district with 5,000 students, this totals to a \$5 million short changing for our students who already have less.

Funding per student in school districts serving the largest populations of low income families



accreditation report result in a failed accreditation review.

There continue to be pockets of opportunity and hope for students excelling in apprenticeship and health care programs with community business partners in rural areas, but they are not available universally. High-achieving schools, mostly private, charter, and choice, continue to perform well. In these schools, students continue to thrive and be challenged. The use of technology in the education sector increases, which moves the District toward more virtual education, improving high-achieving schools' outcomes and producing mixed outcomes in lower-performing schools. The system continues as is, producing the same results it has for many years. By 2030, all metrics indicate a wider achievement gap. The District responds with a series of community engagement meetings where existing prejudices prevent CCSD from genuinely listening to the voice of the constituents and failing to enact any significant reforms. The challenges Charleston experiences continue to grow in scope and outstrip the efforts community groups and local volunteers can take on. As a result, student achievement, enrollment, and graduation continue to decline.

Some students continue to succeed; many do not

The ongoing issues with the public-school system prompt a decrease in enrollment. Parents that are able to, leave the public education system in favor of private and parochial schools. The number of public charter schools grows, with five new charter schools announced between 2020 and 2031. These schools are established with little input or attention to neighborhood needs or expected outcomes. The two-tiered system, that serves white students while underserving students of color, remains in place in 2035. Charleston still has some of the best schools in the country, while simultaneously having some of the worst performing and most segregated schools of the nation.

As the Charleston education system declines, students in the majority of the schools feel trapped. Student surveys periodically show that students are less interested in their education, feel like they don't matter, and that their needs are not supported by the School Board. Many students graduate and leave Charleston, having no strong connection to the city and no vision of a positive future for themselves here. Special needs students continue to be underserved by CCSD. There are limited resources available to meet their needs and the mandate to serve them is increasingly

underfunded. There are few gains in student achievement for students of poverty and color—even for those attending high-performing schools. Students from the public-school system have less social mobility and remain in Charleston with poor employment prospects. CCSD continues to partner with local businesses; yet these partnerships are decreasing due to a lack of trust in the School District. By 2031, the State of South Carolina reports an 80% graduation rate for CCSD with nearly no change in almost two decades. It is widely accepted by 2035 that the current system is not creating students ready to join the workforce, continue their education, or meet the societal challenges they are facing.

Racial integration remains elusive

Charleston's dual education system and gentrification continue to deepen the racial inequality the city has seen for decades. Although the US Census reports that the nation continues its path towards a more diverse population, and that by 2045 there will be a slightly higher percentage¹ of people of color than Caucasians, it is clear that the structures in place continue mostly benefitting white people. Community efforts are largely ineffective and, without the support of structural reforms, public protests and increased tensions become the norm. Attendance zones remain the same, making it impossible to counter the re-segregation of schools. Charleston becomes more racially and economically segregated and, by the early 2030s, a record number of students report dealing with racial issues. School violence and hate crimes against people of color, Jewish people, and students with different sexual and gender orientations increase as well, as do dropout rates, student discipline and mental health referrals, and youth suicide rates.

The economy is strong, until it isn't

Tourism continues to be a major economic driver in Charleston County. However, due to the lack of a qualified local workforce, larger companies recruit from other states or internationally. Small businesses struggle to meet the supply demands of large companies. The wage gap increases, bringing economic inequality and a higher rate of unemployment for local workers. Even as companies clamor for employees, African Americans still have the

¹ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/>

highest unemployment rates in Charleston County due to high incarceration, criminalization, and marginalization of their community. Local families struggle as home ownership remains out of reach, deepening the housing crisis. Neighborhoods, much like classrooms, continue to be segregated.

As the local population struggles, crime increases, hurting the city's reputation and further segregating the city. Many parts of Charleston flourish and become more affluent and white, increasing gentrification. Displaced people of color begin an exodus to parts of the county that are less desirable to them, further limiting their opportunities. As the readiness of the local workforce declines, some businesses struggle due to labor shortages. Local workers' organizing efforts are limited by existing right-to-work laws. Marginal salary increases are achieved, but productivity stays the same. Large corporations are also affected, downsizing their workforce and delaying investment. Boeing begins to outsource some components of their Charleston operations. Economic conditions worsen gradually and, in 2035, The Post and Courier reports the highest crime rate since 2010.

An uncertain future for children

By 2035, the conflicts within CCSD and its lack of significant reforms have resulted in an exacerbated 2-tier system where only some students succeed, while most lag behind. Lack of educational funding has left public schools stripped to the minimum needed to operate. Positive results brought about by parent and community groups' initial efforts have shrunk. The achievement gap is the widest recorded and the graduation and enrollment rates are at an all-time low. New established charter schools serve only a minor sector of the student population. High-achieving schools are mostly private, with barriers for students of color to access them. Public-school students have poor employment prospects. Charleston is more racially and economically segregated and school violence, racism, local workers' unemployment, and crime have surged. The education system has failed to prepare students to join the workforce, enter college, or integrate successfully in society.

