

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District Superintendents  
Principals  
Public Information Officers

**FROM:** Todd K. Atwater, Esq.  
Deputy Superintendent and General Counsel, Division of Legal Affairs

**DATE:** June 2, 2026

**RE:** Innovation Grant Program Grant Opportunity

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) announces that the 2026–27 Request for Proposals for the **Innovation Grant** is now available online. Approximately \$9,000,000 in funding will be awarded on a competitive basis; the deadline to apply is **June 30, 2026**.

**Notice:** For the current fiscal year, Proviso 1A.56 requires that the Innovation Grant application be posted by May 30, 2026. The funding proviso for the 2026–27 fiscal year is yet to be finalized. Differences between the House and Senate versions of the proviso may result in this application package being withdrawn and reannounced at a later date, depending on the version of the proviso adopted. To be notified if this application package is withdrawn, please email [phcease@ed.sc.gov](mailto:phcease@ed.sc.gov).

The purpose of the Innovation Grant Program is to support innovative pilot initiatives in public school districts and schools that include the criteria

- (1) identification of key measurable benchmarks to raise student achievement and ensure all students are prepared to graduate college, career and civic ready;
- (2) innovative strategies to close student achievement gaps in reading and mathematics, with a focus on schools with an academic achievement rating of below average and unsatisfactory;
- (3) a demonstrated ability to implement the initiative or model as outlined in the application; and
- (4) a demonstrated ability to be both replicable and scalable with priority given to projects grounded in evidence-based practices that have significantly impacted student achievement outcomes.

Public school districts and schools that have high poverty and low achievement will receive priority for grants when their applications are judged to meet the criteria established for the grant program.

Innovation Grant Program Grant Opportunity

Page 2

June 2, 2026

Visit the [SCDE Grant Opportunities](#) webpage for updated information on grants, eligibility, application deadlines, and technical assistance. For more information about the Innovation Grant program, contact Phillip Cease at [phcease@ed.sc.gov](mailto:phcease@ed.sc.gov).