

# A Promising Tomorrow for South Carolina Schools

## Giving Chester County New Hope

In 2014, the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled that educational equity must be ensured for school districts that are located in challenging economic areas in the state of South Carolina.

Since that ruling, Learning.com has partnered with the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee and Department of Education to provide districts with poverty indices of 80% or greater free access to digital literacy curriculum. There are currently 46 districts in the state that are eligible to participate, serving more than 150,000 K-8 students at 323 schools.

Chester County School District in Chester, SC was among the first of the eligible districts to participate. The K-12 district's territory is spread over a large geographical area, but enrollment is on the smaller side at 5,300 students, a high percentage of which qualify for free and reduced lunches.

## Less Is More

When Sharon Yarbrough took on her position as the Instructional Technology Coordinator at Chester, one of her first responsibilities included overseeing the implementation and use of technology in the schools. One discovery she made, when initially assessing the district's technology resources, was that they had many resources that essentially did the same thing.

"We needed to evaluate how to best utilize the funding we were receiving, and although we had many resources, we wanted to make sure that our students were accessing these programs and growing academically," said Yarbrough. "Another conclusion we reached was that even though many resources were available, students were not gaining the 21st century digital skills needed to be successful."



From there, the district needed to determine which software programs they wanted to continue with, and then examine which ones they needed to eliminate, to save on unnecessary spending.

During the decision-making process, what rose to the surface was the district's need to incorporate digital literacy and the need for resources to help.

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"We had to take a closer look at what we were using, and why we were using it. For us, choosing Learning.com was simple because it covered so many of the topics students needed, including word processing, keyboarding, online safety, and other digital literacy skills."

## A Promising Partnership

“Learning.com has greatly benefited my third-grade students,” said Rebecca St. Clair, a teacher at the Chester Park Center of Literacy through Technology (COLT). “Nearly all of my students completed the keyboarding and online safety lessons. Some students have mastered basic keyboarding skills already.”

Learning.com’s teacher and student user experiences were another high point for St. Clair.

“My students really enjoyed the interactive lessons and loved earning the certificates at the end of each course. As a teacher, it was extremely easy to track my students’ progress on the platform,” she said.

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St. Clair believes that Learning.com has played an important role in helping her students prepare for the SC Ready Assessment. As of the 2017-18 school year, all of South Carolina’s students in grades three through eight will be required to take the test in a computer-based format. So, ensuring Chester’s students have the skills they need to be successful has become a top priority.

## Toward Brighter Days

Yarbrough has a positive outlook for incorporating technology and digital literacy at Chester in the future. During the fall of 2017, the district trained over 130 teachers to use Learning.com so that the district can roll out Learning.com into more classrooms.

Chester will continue their use of Learning.com’s EasyTech curriculum for the 2017-18 school year and is looking to expand their implementation through Learning.com’s 21st Century Skills Assessment and project-based curriculum, Inquiry.

Through the changes the district has made to better leverage the technology they had, Yarbrough is now confident that Chester’s students will be better prepared for graduation and entering an ever-changing job market.

““ Our district has made great strides to prepare students for life after graduation. New business and new jobs are coming to our area, and I believe our students will be ready.”

**Sharon Yarbrough**

Chester County School District

## About Learning.com

Learning.com is a national leader in providing digital literacy solutions that help prepare students for online assessments, school, college and their future careers. The company offers a complete digital literacy curriculum for grades K-8 that engages students as they develop critical skills such as keyboarding, business applications, online safety, computational thinking and coding. Founded in 1999, Learning.com currently partners with one in six U.S. school districts and serves more than 4 million students each year. The company has earned more than 30 industry awards, including ISTE 2017 Best of Show, 2017 Award of Excellence from “Tech & Learning Magazine” and “The Oregonian’s Top Workplace” for 2017 and 2016.