

Executive Summary

Description of the School System

Spartanburg County School District Four is simultaneously the smallest and largest district of the seven school districts in Spartanburg County. It is the smallest district in terms of enrollment with a student population of approximately 2,900. It covers the largest geographic area, as it encompasses 163 square miles in southern Spartanburg County. District Four borders two other Spartanburg districts, Districts 5 and 6, as well as the counties of Greenville, Laurens, and Union. District Four is strategically located along Interstate 26, which runs from Charleston to North Carolina, allowing easy access to Columbia at approximately 85 miles in distance. It is located in close proximity to I-385/I-85, which leads to Greenville and Atlanta. With transportation so accessible and other infrastructures in place, Spartanburg County officials project that the next area of significant growth will include Spartanburg District Four. According to the Spartanburg Herald-Journal (November 23, 2020), Woodruff City Manager Lee Baily indicated Woodruff has about 2,000 homes to be completed within the next few months. That figure includes homes scheduled within the city limits. There are other developments scheduled outside of the city limits, but within the school district. This number of additional families will have a tremendous impact on District Four and its resources.

District Four is located in the small town of Woodruff, which currently has approximately 4,200 residents. The district serves students who live within the city of Woodruff and in the surrounding rural communities, including Cross Anchor, Enoree, Green Pond, Crescent, and Switzer. Since all schools are located within the city limits, the district operates 24 buses to transport students to and from these rural communities each day.

Student counts have remained steady over the last three years at approximately 2900 students enrolled in preschool through twelfth grades. District Four serves students in four schools, which are located in close proximity to the District Office and each other. The four schools include Woodruff Primary School (PreK3 – 2nd grade), Woodruff Elementary School (3rd – 5th grades), Woodruff Middle School (6th – 8th grades), and Woodruff High School (9th – 12th grades). High school students may enroll in courses at R.D. Anderson Applied Technology Center, which is shared by Spartanburg Districts 4, 5, and 6.

In addition to the four schools that serve the PreK – 12th grade student population, other programs and services are available in Spartanburg Four. The Woodruff Childcare Center located at Woodruff Primary School serves infants and toddlers. It is funded through Early Head Start in collaboration with Spartanburg County First Steps. The Spartanburg County Adult Education program is also housed at Woodruff Primary School. It serves adults who are pursuing their GEDs. It offers morning

sessions on Mondays – Thursdays and two evening sessions to accommodate the needs of the adult learner.

Students may participate in dual credit classes and earn college credits on coursework prior to high school graduation. According to the 2019-2020 school report card, 99 students (28.6%) were enrolled in dual enrollment courses. Forty-five percent of 11th and 12th graders completed six hours of dual enrollment coursework. Students are also encouraged to enroll in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Woodruff High School emphasizes inclusion in these rigorous courses and maintains a high percentage of students enrolled in AP courses. In 2019-20, 293 AP exams were administered for 156 students, which was 45% of juniors and seniors.

District Four provides programs for students who may need additional supports outside of the regular school setting. These programs include the Spartanburg District Four Learning Center located adjacent to Woodruff High School where students receive individualized, computer-based instruction. Students may also be served at the Spartanburg County Alternative School. Special education students are served at the students' home schools, various satellite schools, McCarthy-Teszler, the Charles Lea Center, or the SC School for the Deaf and Blind depending on the identified needs. All programs are located within the Spartanburg County school districts. Eleven percent of District Four students are served through our special education program.

In addition to its rigorous academic programs, Spartanburg District Four offers 30 athletic teams for its middle and high school students. Over 51% of students in grades 7-12 participate in a sport. District Four sponsors the Woodruff Youth Football League (WYFL) for students in grades 1-6. This program averages 200 football players and 100 cheerleaders during a typical year. Athletic teams are routinely competitive for conference and regional championships. COVID-19 cut the athletic season short in March 2020. Even without the conclusion of spring sports, Woodruff High School had 39 South Carolina High School League Scholar Athletes. Twenty-nine athletes were named All-Region and five athletes were named All-State. Woodruff High School teams reached the playoffs in all nine sports that were played in the fall and winter. The previous year, in 2018-19, Woodruff High School had 33 South Carolina High School League Scholar Athletes. Five teams earned Region Championships, and six teams were Region Runner-Ups. Seven athletes were selected as Region Athlete of the Year, 69 athletes were named All-Region, and 14 athletes were named All-State. Woodruff High School teams reached the playoffs in 15 sports. Four coaches were recognized as Region Coach of the Year. Two coaches were selected to coach in the North/South All-Star game.

District Four also has award-winning arts programs. The visual arts program has produced the SC Archibald Rutledge winner and runner-up for numerous years, which provides scholarship funds to high school seniors. In 2020, Woodruff High School art students received 41 Southeast Scholastic Art Awards in the Scholastic Art and Writing Competition. Eighteen AP Art students won 41 awards that included

7 Gold Keys and 12 Silver Keys. The Woodruff Middle School Art Program enters artwork into the Piedmont Interstate Fair annually and are consistently awarded 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place honors. The performing arts program includes our Woodruff High School Marching Cadets. They routinely qualify for the SC Marching Band Competition. In Fall 2019, they placed 7th in the Upper State and 9th in the State. In addition to athletics and the arts, the schools offer numerous clubs and programs to meet the various interests of students, including WE Singers, 4-H Master Gardeners, Beta Club, Cub Club, Lego Club, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Future Teachers Association, Maroon on a Mission, and National Honor Society.

According to the SC Department of Education 135 Day Count for 2019 - 20, the student population of 2,902 represented 48.2% females and 51.7% males. Students identified in the following race and/or ethnic groups: Asian – 0.8%; African American – 14.1%; Hispanic/Latino – 6.2%; American Indian/Alaska Native – 0.4%; Two or More Races: 5.4%; Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander – 0.2%; White – 72.7%. In 2019-20, District Four's Pupils in Poverty listing included 1804 students (65.7%). In 2018-19, the listing included 1,792 students (67.8%).

The SC Department of Education approved a waiver request for all students to eat meals free of charge during the 2020-2021 school year. Meal status for 2019-20 indicates 63% of students qualified for free (54.4%) or reduced (8.6%) meals. This figure remained unchanged from 2018-19, as 63% of students qualified for free/reduced meals.

District Four currently employs 381 employees, including certified and non-certified staff members. According to the 2019-20 SC School Report Card, of the 174 teachers, 68.4% percent of the teaching staff hold advanced degrees. Continuing contract teachers make up 83.9% of the teaching staff, and 93.1% of them returned to their positions from the previous year.

Based on the *Kids Count* data for Spartanburg County, the median family income for 2014 – 2018 was \$57,526 and the 2019 unemployment rate was 2.6%. (Annie E. Casey Foundation and Children's Trust of South Carolina). Given the higher number of Pupils in Poverty in District Four, it is evident that family income is lower in Woodruff and surrounding rural communities than Spartanburg County as a whole. The website [Niche.com/places to live](https://www.niche.com/places-to-live) lists median household income in Woodruff as \$36,534. While families enjoy making their homes in Spartanburg District Four, many parents must drive outside of the attendance zone for employment in Spartanburg, Greenville, Laurens, and Union Counties. Local businesses and organizations, such as churches, grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, banks, police departments, fire departments, medical offices, and dental offices provide goods and services to the local community. However, there is a lack of industry in the area that would serve to employ large numbers of people and expand the tax base for the district.

Given the funding structure of schools in South Carolina, the expansion of the tax base is important. With additional homes being built in District Four comes the responsibility of educating the children in those homes. However, given the funding structures in South Carolina, additional homes do not generate additional funding for the schools. Industry is needed to substantially increase funding for schools. Financing high quality programs continues to be the greatest challenge for Spartanburg District Four, as programs require additional personnel, upgrades to facilities, and expanding technologies. With limited industry in our attendance district, Spartanburg District Four must continue to make careful and thoughtful decisions regarding spending.

The Coronavirus Pandemic disrupted teaching and learning when schools were required to close in March 2020. However, District Four seemingly fared better than many districts in South Carolina. Teachers and administrators worked hard to engage students in learning by utilizing learning packets and devices that were available. They communicated expectations for completed work and followed up with students to offer support. Learning packets were scheduled to be returned on a specific timeline and according to established procedures. However, the pandemic and remote learning caused us to realize the urgent need to become a 1:1 technology district. It also highlighted the community's lack of access to internet. Both issues required immediate attention.

After designating over \$800,000 toward technology needs, District Four is now a 1:1 district in preschool (4K) through 12th grade and hotspots have been provided to families without internet access. Students in preschool (4K) through 2nd grade utilize iPads, while students in 3rd – 12th grades utilize Chromebooks. The district currently uses Schoology as our Learning Management System (LMS) to provide a cohesive system for students, parents, and staff. Professional development and technology training were provided to administrators, teachers, students, and parents. They received training regarding devices, platforms, and the latest technological innovations. Each school already had a designated School Technology Coordinator who assisted staff members during the school day. In addition, a part-time Educational Technology Specialist was hired to support staff after school by offering individual help for specific needs or group sessions on designated topics. District Four is currently collaborating with the SC Department of Education and the Education Oversight Committee as a designated SC eLearning district. This designation places District Four in direct communication with state technology leaders and allows us to receive innovative professional development. This collaboration along with the recent investment in technology will advance District Four's virtual education offerings for our students.

District Four has a unique structure that results in significant benefits. It is considered a single attendance area district where all students attend the single school within a particular grade band and progress through the system together. This structure results in a close-knit community because students graduate with classmates they have known since preschool. This sense of family and community

causes graduates of Woodruff High School to return to Spartanburg District Four to raise their families years later. They value the high expectations, quality education, strong work ethic, and traditional values of District Four, the very qualities they want instilled in their children.

District's Purpose...Mission, Vision, Beliefs

Spartanburg School District Four exists to impact and empower students for the future through high expectations, academic rigor, supportive relationships, and the development of a strong work ethic in a safe and orderly environment.

Mission

Spartanburg School District Four...

Impacting and empowering students for the future through high expectations, academic rigor, supportive relationships, and the development of a strong work ethic in a safe and orderly environment.

Vision

We envision a district where...

- Student learning is a priority.
- Decisions are made in the best interest of students.
- Students graduate with skills necessary for the next phase of life.
- Staff and students feel safe, respected, and valued.
- Educators, families, and the community work together to educate our students.

Beliefs

We believe...

- Student achievement based on high expectations is our priority.
- Decisions should be made in the best interest of students.
- Students deserve highly qualified, motivated, and professional educators who are engaged in continuous improvement.
- Preparation for life-long learning in a global society is our purpose.
- Supportive, nurturing relationships maximize learning.
- Safe, well-maintained facilities enhance the learning environment.
- Family and community involvement are essential for student success.

District Four's purpose drives decision-making and is evident in numerous programs and structures throughout the district.

Safe Schools – District Four goes to great lengths to ensure that schools are safe places for students to learn. Learning environments must be physically and emotionally safe in order for students to learn at optimal levels. In order to create safe schools, Crisis Plans have been specifically designed for each school by a School Resource Officer (SRO). These plans include procedures for emergency situations,

including weather and security threats. They include protocols for specific personnel. The SROs train employees on these protocols each year.

Full-day Preschool (4K) – District Four believes success in the early years impacts achievement throughout the school career and life. In order to ensure success, full day preschool programs are offered to four-year olds in the district. From 2006 through 2013, the district primarily funded this program. In 2014-15, the district qualified as a SC Child Development Education Program (CDEP, now called CERDEP) district and began receiving state funding for its 4K program. In addition to the 4K program, Woodruff Primary School offers four half-day sessions for three-year olds.

Traditional Schedule – While many high schools across South Carolina have implemented the block schedule, Woodruff High School operates under the traditional schedule with a seven-period day. Most courses are year-long courses. We believe this full-day schedule with rigorous courses better prepares students for college and careers beyond high school.

Curriculum and Assessment Program – A challenging curriculum aligned with the SC College and Career Ready Standards has been developed by the teachers at each school. Teachers create engaging and relevant lessons for students that are standards-based. They utilize formative and summative assessments to measure students' attainment of the standards and to plan for individualized instruction. Administrators provide instructional feedback to teachers based on their classroom observations and use school level data in making program decisions.

Interventions, After School Programs, and Summer Programs – Intervention services are provided at all schools. Students at Woodruff Primary School (K-2) participate in tiered intervention services based on literacy data. Students at Woodruff Elementary School receive interventions and additional supports in literacy and math led by the school instructional coach and two certified interventionists. Woodruff Middle School has a literacy coach who works closely with teachers and students. Woodruff High Schools offers Language Arts Enrichment for students who enter below grade level. All schools offer after school programs each spring and summer. Selection for these programs is based on student achievement data.

Special Education Services – While offering a continuum of services for special needs students in District Four and throughout Spartanburg County, we believe most students are best served in the mainstream setting. It is our goal to keep students in their regular education classrooms and provide resources or other services throughout the day. For children who are better served in self-contained programs, they are mainstreamed as schedules and needs allow. Students with special needs have Individualized Education Plans (IEP), which include their specific goals.

Gifted and Talented/Advanced Programs – Second grade students take the qualifying assessments for South Carolina's gifted and talented programs, which begin in third

grade at Woodruff Elementary School. Students in third through fifth grades attend the SOAR program taught by a teacher with gifted certification one day per week. As students progress into Woodruff Middle School, they are grouped into advanced coursework and are able to enroll in English I and Algebra I and earn high school credits in 8th grade. At Woodruff High School, students may enroll in college prep or honors classes. Juniors and seniors are encouraged to enroll in dual placement and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

ESOL Program – District Four’s English Learners (ELs) primarily speak Spanish as their initial language. Teachers with ESOL certification work with students and their classroom teachers to meet the various needs of students outlined in students’ accommodation plans.

Athletics, Arts, and Extra-Curricular Opportunities – The district offers 30 sports teams over the fall, winter, and spring seasons for students in grades 7-12. Over 51% of students in these grades participate in at least one sport. The district sponsors the Woodruff Youth Football League (WYFL) for students in grades 1-6. Over the last several years, approximately 200 students participate in football and 100 students participate in cheerleading. The athletic program is very successful routinely producing conference and regional champions along with many scholar athletes.

The district places special emphasis on fine arts programs. Woodruff High School has a designated Fine Arts wing that houses its visual and performing arts classes. The District Administrative Office proudly displays decades of Art Purchase Awards, artwork purchased from students. The quality of the visual arts program is recognized across the state as Woodruff High School students consistently compete for top honors. The performing arts program produces a marching band that consistently rates high in marching band competitions and qualifies to compete in the SC Marching Band Competition. The choral program performs to high ratings each year at the Carowinds Choral Festival. In addition to these programs, each school offers numerous clubs and organizations to meet the varied interests of students.

Community Service – District Four models community service. Although many of our families can benefit from additional help, we teach our students the importance of giving to others in need. Individual schools host various fundraisers and drives for projects meaningful to their students. Schools have held canned food drives to support Helping Hands Ministries in Woodruff, an organization that provides food and other supplies to families. Woodruff Primary School sponsors St. Jude Trike-A-Thons to raise awareness and donations for cancer research. Woodruff High School’s Maroon on a Mission is a student-led organization that addresses needs within the community.

District Four has been successful in communicating its high expectations for students as evidenced by students’ academic achievements and their athletic,

artistic, and program successes. Stakeholders, particularly students and staff, acknowledge the district's high expectations at all schools and in all programs. District Four's purpose is clearly and frequently communicated through a variety of means, including daily conversations, formal and informal meetings, websites, handbooks, newsletters, and social media. Administrators and teachers set high expectations for themselves and their students. They realize the importance of establishing goals, expectations, and challenges for students in order to maintain excellence and to fulfill our purpose.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Spartanburg School District Four is a high-achieving school district with award winning schools. This had been quite evident under early federal and state report card ratings. However, beginning in 2014-15, districts and schools stopped receiving report card ratings. Districts and schools were not rated for state accountability purposes until Fall 2018 and then only schools (elementary, middle, and high schools) received ratings. Districts no longer receive ratings. The district and school report cards are listed below.

SC Annual District/School Report Card Performance:

- 2020 – Not Rated Due to School Closures/No Spring Assessments
- 2019 – Woodruff Elementary School (Good/57); Woodruff Middle (Good/50); Woodruff High (Good/65)
- 2018 – Woodruff Elementary School (Excellent/62); Woodruff Middle (Good/53); Woodruff High (Good/61)

A rating of “Excellent” indicates that performance substantially exceeds the standards toward progress. A rating of “Good” indicates that performance exceeds the standards toward progress.

South Carolina recognizes schools with high academic achievement and student progress by presenting Palmetto Gold and Palmetto Silver awards. Schools with grades that participate in state-mandated testing are eligible for these awards. In 2018, Woodruff Elementary was awarded the Palmetto Gold Award for “Excellent” academic achievement and student progress. In 2019, Woodruff Elementary School was awarded the Palmetto Silver Award for “Good” academic achievement and student progress. Woodruff High School was awarded the Palmetto Silver Award for a “Good” rating on 3 out of the 4 indicators and no rating lower than “Average” on the fourth indicator.

Woodruff High School has a high participation rate of Juniors and Seniors enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses (2018: 45.7%; 2019: 47.9%; 2020: 45%) with the percentage of Seniors passing an AP exam with a score of 3 or higher during their high school careers at 24.7% in 2018 and 23.9% in 2019. The data were not available in 2020.

Woodruff High School also offers dual credit courses. In 2018, 94 (26%) juniors and seniors were enrolled in dual credit courses, and 39.4% completed six hours of dual enrollment coursework with a grade of C or higher. In 2019, 92 (26.4%) juniors and seniors were enrolled in dual credit, and 52.2% completed six hours of coursework with a C or higher. In 2020, 99 (28.6%) students enrolled in dual credit, and 45.5% completing six hours of coursework with a C or higher.

In South Carolina, students are eligible for various levels of state scholarships if they meet the qualifying criteria. The percentage of Woodruff High School seniors eligible for the LIFE Scholarship in 2018 was 49.5%. In 2019, the percentage of seniors eligible for the LIFE Scholarship was 41.8%, and the percentage eligible for the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship was 6.2%. In 2020, the percentage of seniors eligible for LIFE was 40.3%, and 6% were eligible for Palmetto Fellows. In addition to these state scholarships, seniors are awarded a variety of other scholarships. In 2018 and 2019, 65% of seniors received scholarships. In 2020, 70% of seniors received scholarships.

District Four's ultimate purpose is to empower students for the future. Our success toward that purpose is evident in the College Freshman Report. The 2019-20 report indicates that 90.73% of post-secondary courses were passed by our 2018-19 high school completers. The 2018-19 report shows that 93.26% of courses were passed by our 2017-18 completers. The 2017-18 report shows that 93.05% of courses were passed by the 2016-17 completers who entered post-secondary institutions.

Schools in Spartanburg District Four have received state and national recognition. Woodruff Primary School holds national accreditation (2015 – 2020) through the National Associate for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which sets the standard of quality in early childhood education. The onsite program evaluation revealed that nine of the ten program standards achieved ratings of 100% while one standard received a rating of 95%. Woodruff Primary School was scheduled to be re-evaluated and re-certified in 2020, but the onsite visit had to be delayed due to the pandemic.

National publications acknowledge the rigorous academic programs at Woodruff High School. The US News and World Report 2020 rankings listed Woodruff High School among America's best high schools (#4,811 out of approximately 17,792 US public high schools, #45 among South Carolina's 245 public high schools, and #3 in Spartanburg County's public high schools).

Through recent strategic planning sessions, District Four has identified areas needing improvement and set goals in the following areas: student achievement, teacher/administrator quality, and school climate. Five-year goals were established with interim goals set on an annual basis.

Student Achievement Goals:

- By May 2025, 60% of economically disadvantaged first graders will score at or above the 50th percentile on MAP Reading.
- By May 2025, 50% of economically disadvantaged second graders will be projected to meet or exceed the benchmark on SC READY ELA/Reading.
- By May 2025, 50% of economically disadvantaged students in grades 3 – 5 will score meets or exceeds on SC READY ELA/Reading.

- By May 2025, 55% of economically disadvantaged students in grades 3 – 5 will score meets or exceeds on SC READY Math.
- By May 2025, 10% of students with disabilities in grades 6 – 8 will score meets or exceeds on SC READY ELA/Reading.
- By May 2025, 10% of students with disabilities in grades 6 – 8 will score meets or exceeds on SC READY Math.
- By May 2025, the total number of subgroups on all End of Course (EOC) tests (English, Algebra, Biology, US History) that score below the state average will decrease from five to zero.

Teacher/Administrator Quality Goals:

- By May 2025, increase diversity among certified staff from 7% to 12%.
- By May of 2025, the number of teacher certifications/degrees/endorsements at Woodruff Primary School will increase from 52 to 67.
- By May 2025, the number of teacher and administrator certifications/degrees/endorsements at Woodruff Elementary School will increase from 20 to 40.
- By May 2025, 15% of teachers at Woodruff Middle School will have obtained add-on endorsements, advanced degrees, and certifications.
- By May 2025, 90% of new teachers (within five years at Woodruff High School) will respond they were fully trained and informed regarding Woodruff High School's procedures, policies, and philosophy.

School Climate Goals:

- By May 2025, the percentage of teachers at Woodruff Primary School who agree that the rules for behavior are enforced will increase from 35% to 65%.
- By May 2025, the percentage of teachers at Woodruff Elementary School will agree that relevant professional opportunities are offered will increase from 39.5% to 65%.
- By May 2025, responses from Woodruff Middle School student surveys will indicate a 10% growth in student satisfaction in the areas pertaining to the social and physical environment.
- By May 2025, responses from Woodruff Middle School parent surveys will indicate a 10% increase in parent satisfaction with school-home relations.
- By May 2025, Woodruff High Schools' four-year, on-time graduation rate will be 86%.

Additional Information

Governed by a 9-member Board of Trustees elected at large, Spartanburg School District Four steadfastly focuses on its purpose to impact and empower students for the future. These nine members come together as one entity to make decisions solely with the needs of the students in mind. Based on that directive and the Board's high expectations, the Superintendent and his leadership team adhere to the highest standards of professional conduct and academic excellence. This sets the standard for all professionals throughout District Four. It also sets the tone for collaboration with various groups throughout Spartanburg County for the benefit of students.

The seven Spartanburg County Superintendents work closely together as they collaborate and share resources. They meet formally once per month to address the broader needs of the districts and implement state initiatives. Seven distinct districts that reflect the characteristics of their communities are able to provide services closer to the families and students being served. There is great value and accountability in leaders being accessible to the public that they serve.

For these reasons and the fact that some studies show the optimal size of a school district to be between 1,000 and 3,500 students (The Center for Policy Research at Syracuse University, 2001), we believe that Spartanburg County provides the ideal model of local control yet collaborative spirit. This combination of close connections to stakeholders and access to a broad array of resources provides families and students with the best of both worlds. Furthermore, we believe Spartanburg District Four is a fine example of the optimal-sized school district evidenced by its excellent achievement, numerous successes, and connection to its community. Students are truly empowered for the future in Spartanburg District Four.