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OCSD 2026 Report Cards Show Strong Districtwide Growth and Rising Student Success

More schools move to Average or better as College and Career Readiness reaches 86.6%; All OCSD high schools have 100% CCR excellent rating; Lockett Elementary and Carver-Edisto Middle recognized among South Carolina's highest-growth schools

ORANGEBURG, S.C. — Orangeburg County School District's 2026 South Carolina School Report Card results show significant forward momentum across the district, with more schools earning ratings of Average or better, strong gains in Student Progress, continued improvement in graduation rates and exceptional College and Career Readiness results.

Adding to the districtwide success, Lockett Elementary School and Carver-Edisto Middle School have been identified as two of South Carolina's highest-growth schools based on the 2026 South Carolina School Report Cards. Representatives from both schools were recognized alongside state education leaders during a special celebration at the South Carolina State House, and the recognition comes as OCSD reports one of its strongest overall performance shifts in recent years.

Among the district's 26 reported school-level configurations, 21 — approximately 81 percent — earned an Overall Rating of Average or better in 2026. Four earned Excellent ratings, three earned Good ratings and 14 earned Average ratings. Among the 25 school configurations with comparable 2025 data, nine improved, 14 maintained their rating and only two declined.

Even more significantly, among those schools with comparable data, the percentage earning an Overall Rating of Average or better increased from 64 percent in 2025 to 84 percent in 2026 — a 20-percentage-point increase.

"These results tell a story of a school district that is moving forward," said OCSD Superintendent Dr. Shawn D. Foster. "We see stronger student growth, more schools moving out of the lowest performance categories, a graduation rate that continues to rise and college and career readiness that now exceeds the state. That progress reflects the collective work of our students, teachers, school leaders, support staff, families and community," Dr. Foster shared.

Dr. Foster continued, "We are proud of the progress, but we also understand that improvement is not a destination. These results give us evidence that many of our strategies are working while also identifying clearly where we must continue to concentrate our efforts," he said.

Lockett Elementary School emerged as OCSD's strongest-performing elementary school in the 2026 report card data, earning Excellent ratings in Overall Rating, Academic Achievement, Preparing for Success, Student Progress and School Climate. Lockett has earned either an Excellent or Good Overall Rating in every reported year since 2019. Lockett also made notable year-over-year gains. Its Student Progress rating increased from Average to Excellent, and its School Climate rating moved from Below Average to Excellent.

Because of those results, Lockett is recognized as one of South Carolina's highest-growth schools. Principal Chasity Fralix, Teacher of the Year Jordyn Kennedy, student Trace Dukes and parent Wayne Dukes represented Lockett during the statewide recognition.

"Lockett Elementary has demonstrated what sustained excellence looks like," Dr. Foster said. "Their success is not limited to one measure. We see achievement, growth, preparation for future success and school climate all working together. That is a testament to focused leadership, outstanding educators, engaged families and students who continue to rise to high expectations," he continued.

Also, in OCSD, Carver-Edisto Middle School recorded one of the district's clearest turnaround stories. The school moved from an Unsatisfactory Overall Rating in 2025 to Average in 2026. Its Student Progress rating made an even greater leap, moving from Unsatisfactory to Good, while School Climate improved from Below Average to Average. Preparing for Success also improved from Unsatisfactory to Below Average. Carver-Edisto is also among the two OCSD schools identified as one of South Carolina's highest-growth schools. Principal Karen F. James, Teacher of the Year Brittany Salley, sixth-grade student Micah Pahr, and parent and PTO President Kristi Pahr represented the school at the State House recognition.

"This recognition is a powerful testament to what is possible when students are challenged, educators are supported, school leaders remain focused and families stay engaged in the work," Dr. Foster said. "Lockett Elementary and Carver-Edisto Middle School have demonstrated that meaningful academic growth is the result of intentionality, consistency and a belief in what our children can achieve."

Dr. Foster added, "Carver-Edisto's movement from Unsatisfactory to Average overall, and from Unsatisfactory to Good in Student Progress, is significant. Turnaround work requires discipline, consistency and a school community willing to believe that better outcomes are possible. The work is not finished, but their progress deserves to be recognized and celebrated," Dr. Foster exclaimed.

OCSD's Middle Schools Show Districtwide Momentum

Carver-Edisto's improvement is part of a broader story unfolding across OCSD's middle schools.

In 2026, every OCSD middle school configuration earned an Overall Rating of Average or better. Carver-Edisto moved from Unsatisfactory to Average, while Bethune-Bowman Middle, Lake Marion Middle and William J. Clark Middle each improved from Below Average to Average.

Student Progress results were also particularly strong at the middle school level. Bethune-Bowman and Branchville earned Excellent ratings; Carver-Edisto, Hunter-Kinard-Tyler and Lake Marion earned Good; North Middle/High earned Excellent; and William J. Clark earned Average.

"This middle school momentum is especially encouraging because these years are so critical to a student's academic trajectory," Dr. Foster said. "Our students are demonstrating growth. Now our responsibility is to sustain that growth and accelerate it so that more students reach and exceed grade-level proficiency," he continued.

OCSD's Student Progress Is a Major District Strength

Across the district, Student Progress emerged as one of the strongest indicators in the 2026 report cards. Of the 19 elementary and middle school configurations receiving a Student Progress rating, 18 earned Average or better and 11 earned Good or Excellent.

Several schools made substantial gains. Lockett and Whittaker moved from Average to Excellent; Bethune-Bowman Middle moved from Average to Excellent; Carver-Edisto moved from Unsatisfactory to Good; and Lake Marion Middle improved from Below Average to Good.

"The growth data are important because they tell us our students are learning and moving academically," Dr. Foster said. "Our next challenge is to make certain that strong growth increasingly translates into higher levels of proficiency and Academic Achievement," said Dr. Foster.

Every OCSD High School Earns Excellent in College and Career Readiness

Perhaps the strongest systemwide result is in College and Career Readiness. For 2026, all seven OCSD high schools earned an Excellent rating in College and Career Readiness. At the district level, College and Career Readiness increased from 66.4 percent in 2024 to 75.1 percent in 2025 and 86.6 percent in 2026. OCSD is also one of only four South Carolina school districts with four or more high schools in which 100 percent of high schools earned an Excellent College and Career Readiness rating.

During that same period, South Carolina increased from 71.5 percent to 75.1 percent to 78.9 percent. OCSD therefore moved from 5.1 percentage points below the state in 2024, to matching the state in 2025, to 7.7 percentage points above the state in 2026. That represents a 20.2-percentage-point increase for OCSD in three years, compared with a 7.4-point increase statewide.

The seven schools earning Excellent are:

- Bethune-Bowman Middle/High School

- Branchville High School
- Edisto High School
- Hunter-Kinard-Tyler High School
- Lake Marion High School
- North Middle/High School
- Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School

Lake Marion High and Orangeburg-Wilkinson High both improved from Average in College and Career Readiness in 2025 to Excellent in 2026, while the district's other five high schools maintained Excellent ratings.

"For all seven of our high schools to earn Excellent rating in College and Career Readiness is something our entire community should celebrate," Dr. Foster said. "We want an OCSD diploma to represent more than completion. We want it to represent preparation, preparation for college, the workforce, military service, entrepreneurship and whatever path our graduates choose."

Graduation Rate Continues Upward Trend

OCSD's four-year cohort graduation rate increased for the third consecutive year, rising from 79.3 percent in 2024 to 80.4 percent in 2025 and 82.1 percent in 2026. While the district remains below South Carolina's 87.5 percent rate, the gap narrowed to 5.4 percentage points in 2026.

Six of the district's seven high schools earned an Average or higher Graduation Rate rating. Branchville High and North Middle/High earned Excellent; Bethune-Bowman, Edisto High and Hunter-Kinard-Tyler earned Good; and Lake Marion High earned Average.

"Every increase in our graduation rate represents young people who are completing high school with a greater opportunity to build the future they want," Dr. Foster said. "We have made progress for three consecutive years, and we intend to continue that trajectory," he said.

School Climate Improves Across the District

OCSD also experienced broad improvement in School Climate. Among the 25 school configurations with comparable 2025 and 2026 results, 11 improved, 11 remained stable and three declined. In 2026, 18 of 26 configurations — approximately 69 percent — were rated Average or higher in School Climate. OCSD Report Card Analysis[22]

Notable gains included Lockett Elementary moving from Below Average to Excellent; Carver-Edisto moving from Below Average to Average; Bethune-Bowman Elementary moving from Below Average to Average; Hunter-Kinard-Tyler Elementary moving from Unsatisfactory to Average; and Edisto High moving from Below Average to Average.

All seven middle school configurations earned an Average or higher School Climate rating.

“We know students learn best when they feel safe, connected, supported and valued,” shared Dr. Foster. “Improving school climate is not separate from academic improvement. It is part of the foundation that makes academic success possible.”

Additional Schools Demonstrate Strong Performance

- Branchville High School continued to stand out at both its middle and high school configurations. The middle school component earned Excellent ratings in Overall Rating, Academic Achievement, Student Progress and School Climate. The high school component earned Excellent ratings in Overall Rating, Academic Achievement, Graduation Rate, College and Career Readiness, School Climate and High School Student Success, with a Good rating in Preparing for Success.
- North Middle/High School maintained an Excellent high school Overall Rating for the third consecutive year, a significant trajectory after being rated Unsatisfactory in 2022 and Below Average in 2023. Its 2026 high school results include Excellent ratings for Graduation Rate and College and Career Readiness.
- Edisto High School improved from Average overall in 2025 to Good in 2026, maintained Excellent College and Career Readiness and Good Graduation Rate ratings, and improved School Climate from Below Average to Average.
- Lake Marion High School moved from Below Average overall to Average and improved from Average to Excellent in College and Career Readiness.

Progress With a Clear Focus on the Work Ahead

OCSD leaders emphasized that the report cards provide both reasons to celebrate and a clear roadmap for continued improvement.

“We are going to celebrate what deserves to be celebrated, and we are going to confront what needs to improve,” Dr. Foster said. “Those two things can happen at the same time. The data show that students are growing, more schools are improving and our graduates are increasingly prepared for their futures. They also tell us where we have to be more intentional,” Dr. Foster said.

He added, “The next phase of our work is to turn strong student growth into stronger proficiency and achievement across more schools. We will study what is working at schools such as Lockett, Carver-Edisto, Branchville, North and others, and we will use those lessons to strengthen teaching and learning throughout Orangeburg County.”

Finally about the 2026 report card release, Dr. Foster shared, “This is about building sustainable excellence across an entire school district. No matter the school, community or ZIP code, our students deserve high expectations, strong instruction and opportunities that prepare them to succeed. The 2026 results show that Orangeburg County School District is gaining momentum, and our responsibility now is to build on it,” Dr. Foster said.

Orangeburg County School District

The mission of Orangeburg County School District, the catalyst of innovation and excellence, is to ensure all students discover and develop their person, purpose, and platform through high-quality educational experiences distinguished by a culture of collaboration, equity, and inclusion; a creative learning environment with inspiring opportunities; a commitment to nurture the academic, physical, social and emotional well-being of all. Visit us online at ocsdsc.org

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