

EdVISTA CARES South Carolina Initiative

Organization's Scope of Work: Mission, Focus, Audience Served

EdVISTA CARES, Inc. is a non-profit education company whose passion is to help disadvantaged students in the rural southeast master the “secrets of learning” and succeed in life. We foster meaningful learner-centered environments that engage hearts and minds through differentiated instruction and problem-solving modalities. The curriculum propels students to achievement as they *learn by doing*, rather than simply *learn about* content. Our breakthrough program dramatically increases student efficacy, academic proficiency, graduation rates, and workplace readiness. We evaluate all students and provide professional development programs that promote a collaborative community of professionals who teach for deep understandings of transferable big ideas and core competencies. Our proven student-centered approach develops critical reasoning tools to navigate a fast-changing, digital world.

Purpose of the Project: Impact on Decreasing Children's Vulnerability

Within the school culture, many often find no place for their talents: students with learning disabilities are marginalized; children from different home-cultures feel disconnected from academic demands; gifted individuals are bored, unchallenged, and misunderstood; non-traditional learners feel frustrated and anxious about learning. A generation of vulnerable students is being left behind (e.g., NAEP report: about 36 percent of 4th graders cannot read at a basic level). Prospects for gainful employment are in jeopardy. Connecting emotionally with all students, providing them with the tools necessary for entry into an ever-changing world, maximizing their diverse talents in the learning process, and scaffolding learning are vital mandates. This project centers on student efficacy within a learning community where students make unique contributions and learn the critical reasoning skills that are necessary tools to rise above poverty and disadvantage.

Project Overview: Summary

The project will evaluate all students, identify exceptionalities, and empower teachers to become student-aware in order to understand learner readiness, address academic challenges, and design instruction that personalizes and makes learning relevant. Instruction will provide rich opportunities for students to create complex meaning and connection, rather than simply recall discrete, disconnected information on demand. Project-based learning will provide students with practical applications of core knowledge across disciplines that will develop the tools for students to become independent learners who succeed beyond school. As a result of our breakthrough process, vulnerable students will receive necessary interventions. Within three years, standardized test scores will improve by 20 percent, graduation rates will increase by 30 percent, and college matriculation will grow by 20 percent. Students will be re-assessed tri-annually, and teacher training will be ongoing during the project and beyond.

The project is designed to change the culture of schooling in the rural southeast. To that end, EdVISTA CARES will continue to select counties in South Carolina that are in dire need. We will provide the teacher and staff training to test all students and design and implement curriculum that addresses the needs of students within a changing digital world. The culture of school will become one where teachers are part of a collaborative learning community and where all students feel valued, nurtured, and mentored to fulfill their potential. A focus on essential understandings on which students will build each year of their schooling will engage them in relevant subject matter and provide the opportunities to develop the skills to compete in a global marketplace.