The SMART STEP program was implimented to encourage high school students interested in the teaching field to challenge themselves by enrolling in an EXCEL class earning college credit while still attending high school. Students were enrolling in the Early Childhood Education Classes at Clover High School with the mind set that the purpose of the class was to play with the children enrolled in our on site Preschool Program. The Early Childhood Education classes are offered through the Career and Technology Department and I felt the focus of the classes should be on career preparation. I am kinestic learner and retain information when I have the opportunity to put into practice new concepts that I learn. I want my students to understand that we play with purpose. So I began by placing an emphasis on preparing lessons (play) to implement in the preschool. I have discovered that my students who struggle academically but truly want to teach young children are willing to tackle more rigorous assignments in the areas of reading and writing when the subject matter is of interest. They will do it for the children. The original program offered one three credit hour class on Safety, Nutrition and Health but has been expanded to include three additional college credit hours which fulfill the requirements for ECD101, South Carolina's Credentialling course for Early Childhood Education. Students must successfully complete our level one Early Childhood Education class, and pass a college placement test, to be placed in the program. Students must job shadow in an elementary classroom and a class for special needs students. They complete observations at child care centers observing infants and toddlers. Students are also required to plan and impliment three thematic units, in teaching teams of four in our on site Preschool Program. CPR and First Aid certification are also earned as part of the program. No teacher or classroom stands alone so students must complete community service hours. Students are also encouraged to join a professional student organization. Indicators that the SMART STEP program is meeting a need include students producing State and National gold level projects at FCCLA Leadership Conferences every year since the program was implemented, four of our graduates have been awarded the Teaching Fellows Scholarship and last but often the most afirming is feedback from the students who graduate and come back specifically to let me know that they are continuing their education.