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Subject: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back | Exceptional Opportunity

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## This Week @ The Forum

April 12, 2014

### Education News

#### *Two Steps Forward, One Step Back*

Anyone who observes “how things get done” in Columbia knows if something actually moves, it never moves in a straight line. This week was no exception:

##### Read To Succeed...

This week, Read to Succeed bills **cleared both the House and the Senate**, making the crucial May 1 deadline. However, an expansion of **unproven pre-Kindergarten programs** was attached to the Senate’s bill. The House also took up bad amendments to allow “social promotion” to continue and to reduce the number of continuing education hours required for a reading teacher. The anti-retention amendment was soundly defeated, but the requirement for teachers was watered down. Now the bills cross to the other body and start the committee process over again. We believe a stand-alone Reading bill, based on Florida’s proven model, is the right path forward for South Carolina students and taxpayers.

##### Common Core...

In what came as no great surprise, this week the State Board of Education rejected the State Department of Education’s **recent proposal** to withdraw from the federally-funded Smarter Balanced testing consortium (SBAC). Thankfully, on Thursday, the House passed a bill doing just that. The House bill also would prohibit the sharing of student-level data, a key concern of many parents. This bill is another great step forward in the fight to prevent greater federal encroachment into South Carolina schools. We now await action on a similar bill by the Senate, which is rumored to be forthcoming.

The Forum also had a huge platform for our ideas this past Wednesday night when Dr. Oran Smith was a keynote speaker at *The Common Core Standards: Facts & Myths* at Coastal Carolina University in Conway. It was a great evening of discussion, with around 400 in attendance.

Forum Senior Fellow Dr. Oran Smith displays the Forum’s “How Common Core Went Wrong” report at Coastal Carolina’s Common Core Facts & Myths Symposium

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Dr. Smith is pictured here with the “other” Dr. Smith, fellow-keynote and former Florida Superintendent of Education Dr. Eric Smith

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On a Lighter Note...

This week, we learned that Charleston native Stephen Colbert will be taking over The Late Show for David Letterman. [WATCH](#) his hilarious riff on Common Core.

Exceptional Opportunity...

On Friday, two more deserving students received scholarships, thanks to the new Exceptional Needs Tax Credit Scholarship program and the generosity of South Carolina donors. Cardinal Newman chaplain Father Trapp provided beautiful remarks for the occasion, sharing the incredible joy and optimism with which these very special young ladies inspire their fellow students.

Rory wasn't taking any chances with her check...she was ready to grab that scholarship. Smart girl!

**Want to Help?**

To learn more about how you can support this great program, visit our friends at [Access Opportunity SC](#).

*Palmetto Policy Forum is an independent, nonpartisan educational foundation committed to policy entrepreneurship, consensus-building and transformative solutions to South Carolina's policy challenges.*

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