

Title: **Clemson may oversee school for troubled teens**  
 Author: BY SEANNA ADCOX Associated Press  
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# Clemson may oversee school for troubled teens

BY SEANNA ADCOX

Associated Press  
COLUMBIA

Legislators could put Clemson University in charge of a public residential school for troubled teens that is on the verge of losing its accreditation.

A proposal advanced by the House budget-writing committee would transfer oversight of John de la Howe School to the university on July 1, along with funding for the school that spends

\$92,000 annually per student. Clemson officials would be tasked next school year with evaluating turnaround paths for the sixth-through-10th-grade school in rural McCormick and reporting their recommendations.

"We believe Clemson has the expertise and background to go in and save that school," said Rep. Kenny Bingham, R-Cayce, chairman of the committee's K-12 panel. "I believe it's the only way to

keep the doors open."

One possibility, he said, would be turning John de la Howe into a public charter school sponsored by Clemson.

Both are land-grant schools. John de la Howe was founded as a farming school benefiting poor and orphaned children, as per the 1797 will of its namesake.

It has previously collaborated with Clemson on agricultural projects, said its president, Danny Webb.

But the proposal's chances are uncertain.

Clemson officials aren't commenting beyond saying it's under review.

Webb said no one at his school has been consulted at all.

"What we will continue to do is serve the state's most vulnerable students ... until a decision has been made," he said. "We

will continue to provide them a safe haven, so they can heal, grow and make lasting changes."

Rep. Shannon Erickson, who voted against the idea in committee, said there should be a thorough discussion among all

stakeholders, including the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Social Services, on what it will take to make the school successful.

Asking Clemson to study the issue is a waste of time, she said.

"Studying it for a year is just kicking the can down the road ... and these are children's lives at stake," said Erickson, R-Beaufort, a teacher.

State-supported since 1918, John de la Howe provides 24-hour care on its 1,200-acre campus for children with serious behavior problems. The school's roughly 70 em-

ployees include teachers and dorm counselors — one for every eight students, across three shifts, Webb said.

As of Thursday, the school housed 72 students, he said.

Legislators have questioned what to do with the school, a stand-alone state agency, for more than a decade.

In 2003, then-Gov. Mark Sanford recommended, without success, closing the school and sending its students to a military-like public school in West Columbia for at-risk teens. In 2014, Gov. Nikki Haley recommended putting the Department of Juvenile Justice in charge of John de la Howe.

A final decision on the school's status will be made before next month's State Board of Education meeting, according to the agency.

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Title: **HARVEST HOPE 35TH ANNIVERSARY GALA**

Author:

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**HARVEST HOPE 35TH ANNIVERSARY GALA** will be 6 p.m. March 11 at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, 1101 Lincoln St. Event will feature Blues Traveler and a presentation of a humanitarian award by Gov. Nikki Haley. Tickets are \$150 at [bid.co/events/harvesthope](http://bid.co/events/harvesthope). Proceeds will benefit Harvest Hope Food Bank.

Title: **If he cares about county, Washington will resign**  
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## EDITORIAL

# *If he cares about county, Washington will resign*

**Y**OU WOULD THINK an elected official who recently admitted in court that he didn't pay his state income taxes would do all he could to stay out of trouble.

You would hope such a person would be so embarrassed by his transgression and so determined to win back or maintain the public's trust that he would obsessively avoid the risk of being accused of another crime.

But Richland County Councilman Kelvin Washington apparently doesn't think that way. Mr. Washington, who pleaded guilty Feb. 10 to misdemeanor charges of not filing state income tax returns, was charged with felony DUI after his car crashed into another vehicle Saturday night.

Mr. Washington told law enforcement he had just one beer at a friend's house on Broad River Road before the crash, according to authorities. Yet, despite



saying he had just one beer, Mr. Washington refused to provide a blood sample until authorities obtained a search warrant, according to an incident report. Results of the test have not been released.

Like all defendants, Mr. Washington is presumed innocent unless and until he is proven guilty. He deserves his day in court.

We would be surprised if one beer resulted in a felony DUI charge. But given the public's erosion of confidence after his guilty plea last month, why would Mr. Washington consume any alcoholic beverages before driving? Why take that risk?

If Mr. Washington was driving under the influence Saturday night, his accident reminds us once again how dangerous that can be. Authorities say Mr. Washington drove into the back of a car at Bluff Road and MLK Boulevard when the other driver slowed down to turn left.

Authorities said there were no skid marks on the

road leading to the crash site.

The 22-year-old driver of the other car suffered a severe head injury and underwent surgery, according to a report. A passenger in that car suffered minor injuries.

After Mr. Washington's guilty plea and felony DUI charge, the public has no reason to trust his judgment and his ability to lead the county. Public confidence was already shaken after Mr. Washington, a self-employed engineering consultant with an electrical engineering degree from S.C. State University, said he lost track of paying his income taxes. He blamed the combination of the minutiae of life and his transition from one job to another.

All of us must deal with the minutiae of life. Most of us at one point in our careers transition from one job to another. But nearly all of us remember to pay our taxes.

Most of us understand the dangers of driving under the influence, and that makes most of us obsessive about avoiding the risk.

Our public leaders should match that behavior.

Richland County Council faces many challenges. They include providing the basics such as emergency medical treatment and land-use planning as well as deciding how much funding to give the Sheriff's Department and local school districts.

The current council has the added burden of leading the county's recovery from the October floods. It also has been under a cloud of suspicion since the state Department of Revenue in December questioned how the county spent money raised by the transportation penny sales tax.

The Department of Revenue said an audit uncovered potential public corruption and fraud in the program. County officials have disputed the report, and they have sent multiple letters to the department defending the program.

Even if county officials prove the agency wrong, the allegations have many taxpayers wondering if the \$1.07-billion, 22-year program they approved in 2012 is a boondoggle. The county faces the daunting task of

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convincing the public that the program isn't.

Mr. Washington's legal troubles make that task much harder because his diminished credibility hurts the entire council.

On Wednesday, Gov. Nikki Haley called on Mr. Washington and Solicitor Donnie Myers of Lexington County to resign because of their recent DUI charges.

Mr. Myers was arrested Feb. 22 after his car left a Lexington County road and hit a utility pole. It's his third alcohol-related charge in just less than 11 years.

If Mr. Washington cares about what's best for the county, its government and the people, he will follow Gov. Haley's advice. People must have confidence in their public officials. We doubt many residents now have confidence in him as a public leader.

Title: **Republican SC House leader rips Senate GOP roads bill**

Author: BY JAMIESELF AND ANDREW SHAIN jself@thestate.com and ashain@thestate.com

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## FIXING OUR HIGHWAYS

# Republican SC House leader rips Senate GOP roads bill

**"This plan kicks the can further down the road and into a giant pothole," House Speaker Jay Lucas says of Senate proposal**

**Senate returns Tuesday to take up roads plan to spend an added \$400 million a year on roads without raising state's gas tax**

BY JAMIE SELF AND ANDREW SHAIN

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A state Senate Republican plan to spend \$400 million on roads without raising the gas tax is on a collision course with the GOP-controlled S.C. House, despite winning the governor's blessing Thursday.

"This plan kicks the can further down the road and into a giant pothole," House Speaker Jay Lucas, R-Darlington, said of the proposal that Senate Republicans offered Wednesday, after

nearly a year of gridlock on a bill aimed at fixing the state's roads and bridges.

"It's not really a new idea, and it's not a solution," Lucas said of the Senate GOP plan, adding it is "unsettling" it took the Senate so long to get to this point.

**FROM PAGE 1A**

## ROADS

"You're leaving money on the table," said state Rep. Gary Simrill, R-York, who led the House's roads-funding plan.

Simrill and House Ways and Means Committee chairman Brian White, R-Anderson, also worry that coming up with an added \$400 million a

Senate Democrats expressed similar concerns about the proposal, which senators will debate Tuesday.

"Nobody who's honest will say that this ... fixes the roads problem. I think it's a fraud ... a fake," said state Sen. Vincent Sheheen, D-Kershaw.

"It's really just a Patch Act" that will "raid the general fund" and other state programs, said state Sen. Joel Lourie, D-Richland. "We're putting a small-to medium-sized Band-Aid on a large problem."

The Senate GOP plan to commit an added \$400 million a year in recurring state revenues to roads is unsustainable, some Republican and Democratic lawmakers said.

That surplus money is only as

reliable as the economy, they added. If the economy takes a dive – as it did during the Great Recession – the money will dry up, forcing deep cuts to roads and other state services.

The Senate GOP plan also fails to collect money from out-of-state drivers, who vacation in South Carolina or travel through on highways, several Republican legislators said.

**SEE ROADS, 8A**

**“NOBODY WHO'S HONEST WILL SAY THAT THIS ... FIXES THE ROADS PROBLEM.”**

*Sen. Vincent Sheheen*

year for roads from existing revenues could hurt the state's ability to put money in its reserve funds, key to the state's stellar credit rating.

"It is this year's solution," Simrill said. "It is not sustainable nor is it reliable."

For almost two years,

lawmakers have failed to agree on a long-term solution to meet the state's road-repair needs. Bringing the state's roads into excellent condition is estimated to cost more than \$1 billion a year. Instead, lawmakers have budgeted money toward roads in a piecemeal style

each year.

"We've been using general fund dollars to slap a Band-Aid on roads for three years in South Carolina, and the results have not been enough to keep our families safe or our economy thriving," said Lucas, whose chamber passed a roads plan

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last April that included the equivalent of a 10-cent-a-gallon gas-tax increase.

The House proposal went nowhere in the Senate. The bill failed, in part, because lawmakers learned they had an extra \$1 billion in state revenues to spend this year due to the resurgent economy. Fiscal hawks in the Senate insisted the state use that one-time surplus to pay for roads, filibustering the House plan.

With gas prices at near-decade lows, lawmakers have missed the best opportunity in years to raise the gas tax, last increased in 1987, said Sen. Ray Cleary, R-Georgetown.

"The more you use the roads, the more you pay," said Cleary, who co-authored a proposal that would have raised an

added \$665 million a year for roads by raising the gas tax and other user fees.

"Gasoline prices are not going to go down any more. So how are we going to raise the tax 4 cents when gas is \$2 or \$3 (a gallon)? Quite honestly, I think we kicked the can down the road."

Not everyone is opposed to the Senate GOP plan, which also shifts power to appoint the commission that oversees the state Transportation Department to the governor from lawmakers.

Gov. Nikki Haley posted her support in a Facebook message Thursday, calling the Senate GOP plan a "great thing" and "exactly what we need in South Carolina."

"Bring it home!" Haley exclaimed.

The Senate GOP plan also includes giving the governor far more power over the controversial State Transportation Infrastructure Bank, which critics say funds roads projects based on legislators' political clout, not the state's needs.

Some groups, including the S.C. Chamber of Commerce and anti-road Coastal Conservation League, praised the Senate Republican's plan.

But Lucas and one roads advocate said they did not understand Haley's reversal. Last year, the governor said she would support raising the gas tax in exchange for far greater income-tax cuts.

"Are we happy with it?" Bill Ross, executive director of the S.C. Alliance to Fix Our Roads, said of the Senate plan.

"No. But it's probably

the best we could hope for."

Ross, whose alliance is backed by business and tourism interests, said he expected more support from Haley after business leaders insisted the state's economy is being hurt by the absence of a sustainable plan to pay for road repairs.

Haley, in her final term in office, has made economic development a hallmark of her administration.

"It's kind of difficult to understand where the governor is coming from," Ross said.

"It could be ... where she just wants to go out as the governor that didn't pass a tax increase."

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## Fixing S.C. roads

*The House has passed a roads bill, and Senate Republicans hope to OK their plan next week. What the two plans would do:*

### HOUSE PLAN

- Increase the state gas tax by 10 cents a gallon
- Generate \$427 million in new money for roads
- Give the governor control of the state Transportation Department and State Transportation Infrastructure Bank
- Save the average taxpayer \$48 a year through income-tax cuts

### SENATE PLAN

- Put \$400 million a year in general fund revenues toward roads
- Give the governor control of the state Transportation Department and State Transportation Infrastructure Bank

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Lucas



Title: **Coal ash bill is signed; pipeline plan passes Senate**  
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# Coal ash bill is signed; pipeline plan passes Senate

Coal ash restrictions signed by governor

Senate passes bill that could derail western S.C. pipeline

BY SAMMY FRETWELL  
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A coalition of environmentalists and conservative politicians has scored legislative victories that many say will protect communities from coal ash dumping and unwanted petroleum pipelines.

Gov. Nikki Haley signed a bill Wednesday that is intended to prevent companies from depositing coal ash into construction dumps, which are not regulated as tightly as lined municipal solid waste waste dumps.

Pickens County residents have been upset since learning late last year that a North Carolina corporation wanted to use a proposed construction dump near Liberty for coal ash disposal.

That prompted Republican lawmakers in Pick-

ens County to introduce legislation limiting utility coal ash from being deposited in construction and demolition landfills, which take waste such as concrete, wood and bricks.

Coal ash is the toxic byproduct of producing power by burning coal.

It often contains arsenic, mercury and other poisonous materials.

"I am pleased to sign this legislation into law today," Haley said this week.

"It is absolutely essential that we protect our environment from out-of-state waste, and I'm proud to help bring these much needed protections into law."

MRR Southern officials, who wanted to dispose of ash in Liberty, were not available Thursday, but an attorney for the company

told The Greenville News recently that the legislation was "discriminatory." The Southern Environmental Law Center, the Sierra Club and Upstate Forever backed the legislation.

Meanwhile, the state Senate approved legislation Thursday that would prevent the Kinder Morgan company from condemning land in South Carolina for a proposed petroleum pipeline.

The bill now moves to the House, where it has support from Aiken-area lawmakers.

Kinder Morgan's pipeline would run from a terminal near Belton in Anderson County to the

Jackson area south of Aiken. It would then cross the Savannah River and wind through Georgia to

Jacksonville, Fla. An existing terminal near Belton that is affiliated with Kinder Morgan has in the past two years leaked petroleum, increasing concerns about the environmental impact of a pipeline through western South Carolina.

The bill would prohibit private petroleum companies not regulated by the state from condemning land.

"This goes a long way toward providing landowners with the tools they need to stand up for their property," Savannah Riverkeeper Tonya Bonitati-bus said, adding that property owners along the proposed pipeline route "are rightfully scared."

Kinder Morgan spokeswoman Melissa Ruiz said her company is disappointed in the legislation.



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**On Gov. Nikki Haley  
saying Donald Trump  
would not be the GOP  
presidential nominee:**

This locks it up for  
Trump!! That woman is  
wrong on everything she  
does. At least since she  
sold out to the RNC.

*- Jonathan Tollison*

The Wylie Pilot  
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Circ. 10882  
From Page:  
5  
2/16/2016  
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148  
**GUEST EDITORIAL**

# *Just go ahead and pass a roads bill*

By The Herald Editorial Board

Discussing what kind of roads bill the Legislature should pass might be futile when the Senate seems dead-set against passing any roads bill at all. Nonetheless, we agree with state Sen. Creighton Coleman, D-Winnsboro, who contends that passing a bill would be easier if paying for road repairs could be unlinked from income tax reform.

Coleman, whose district includes parts of Chester and York counties, said last week that combining the two issues is folly.

"We can debate income tax reform, but let's get the roads fixed. Tying them together will prolong it tremendously. Let's put politics aside and do what's right," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Harvey Peeler, R-Gaffney, whose district also includes parts of York County, is equally frustrated but takes a different approach to linking other issues to a roads bill. He argues that for any bill to have a chance of passing, it will have to include tax relief to offset an increase in the gas tax as well as restructuring of the S.C. Department of Transportation.

Gov. Nikki Haley has pledged to veto any legis-

lation that increases gas taxes unless it also drastically cuts income taxes and overhauls the DOT.

The House passed a bill last year that could avoid the governor's veto. A similar bill that would raise roughly \$800 million a year for roadwork by increasing the gas tax - which hasn't been raised since 1987 - and increasing vehicle sales taxes and license fees is in special debate status in the Senate.

But because of the antiquated rules of the Senate, debate on the bill has been stalled by opponents. And stalling this bill essentially has brought the business of the Senate to a standstill - preventing action on other crucial priorities such as ethics reform, educational equity and reform of the judicial selection process.

One argument is that the way to begin to dislodge this logjam would be for Democrats to acquiesce to Haley's demand to cut the state's top income tax rate to 5 percent from 7 percent over a 10-year period. But there are good reasons not to do that.

Foremost among them is the fact that most of the income tax relief would go to the state's wealthier taxpayers while the burden of higher gas taxes would hit low-income residents

the hardest, taking a higher percentage of their disposable incomes.

Another problem is that the proposed income tax, when fully phased in by 2025, would deplete state revenues by about \$1.4 billion a year. That would be offset somewhat by projected growth each year, but not enough to fully replace lost income tax revenue. And the cost of the tax cut would be far higher than the money raised through an increased gas tax and other fees.

There is no good reason to drastically cut the state's income tax rate. No evidence suggests that doing so would enhance the state's ability to attract new business investment, as proponents claim.

What almost surely would deter business growth is bad roads. As Coleman asserts, senators need to pass a roads bill, then deal with the issue of income tax reduction and reforming the DOT in separate legislation.

But that's not likely to happen. Too many senators worry that they would have to pay a political price for raising the gas tax without offsetting tax cuts.

We wonder what political price they will pay for not fixing the state's roads.

The Aiken  
Leader  
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From Page:  
1  
2/19/2016  
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## Candidates dote on Aiken County in days leading to Primary

As of press time, 5 of the 6 remaining Republican contenders had visited Aiken over the last 5 days. Senator Ted Cruz kicked off the blitz on Monday with a rally at the USC-Aiken Convocation Center. The event, which brought television personality Glenn Beck to stump on Cruz's behalf. Cruz's visit was followed by a rally in North Augusta on Tuesday for front runner Donald Trump. Trump's event was held at Riverview Park and drew capacity crowds for the venue.

Also on Tuesday, the Aiken County Republican Party

held it's Last word in the South Presidential Forum at the Convocation Center. Dr. Ben Carson and Governor Jeb Bush attended the event and fielded questions from a panel of moderators that included South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson, his father Congressman Joe Wilson, and SCGOP Chairman Matt Moore.

Wednesday, Florida Senator Marco Rubio made a campaign stop in Aiken at Odell Weeks before traveling on to Irmo, SC where he was endorsed by Governor Nikki Haley.





Charleston  
Chronicle  
Charleston, SC  
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From Page:  
1  
2/17/2016  
68128



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**Black Voters may not participate in Republican Primary, But Should Consider It**

By Barney Blakeney

Charleston County Republicans will go to the polls Feb. 20 to vote in the state's Republican Party primary election. And while party officials won't venture a guess how many Blacks will vote in the election, county GOP Chairman Larry Kobrovsky says the election is of extreme importance to the Black community.

"When you think that the next president could be selected in that process, the African American community and all segments of the community will be well served by participating," Kobrovsky said.

The Democratic Party has taken the Black vote for granted and its frontrunners are blatantly bargaining for Black voter support, he said. On the other side of the equation both major political parties have racially gerrymandered voting districts to a point where elected officials don't have to compete for votes. They're using the race card to prevent people from listening to each other and that's not good for the country, he said.

Kobrovsky said as the primary elections approach, voters should consider which candidate is best for America. Pointing to himself who is Jewish, Gov. Nikki Haley who is an Indian female and Sen. Tim Scott who is Black, Kobrovsky offered that the Republican Party also is diverse.

"Obviously we have different paths to success," he said. "But it's in nobody's interest to have racially divided political parties."

Dan Martin, one of the area's more prominent Black Republicans, said he doesn't expect that many Blacks will vote in the Republican primary, but he feels all the candidates in both major parties are qualified to serve as president. He encourages voters to do their homework and vote for the candidate whose ideology is more aligned with their own.

"You can't listen to the media and make a determination. Just because somebody declares themselves a member of a particular party, doesn't mean they have your best interest at heart. You have to look at their history to see where they have stood on the issues."

see **VOTERS** page 2





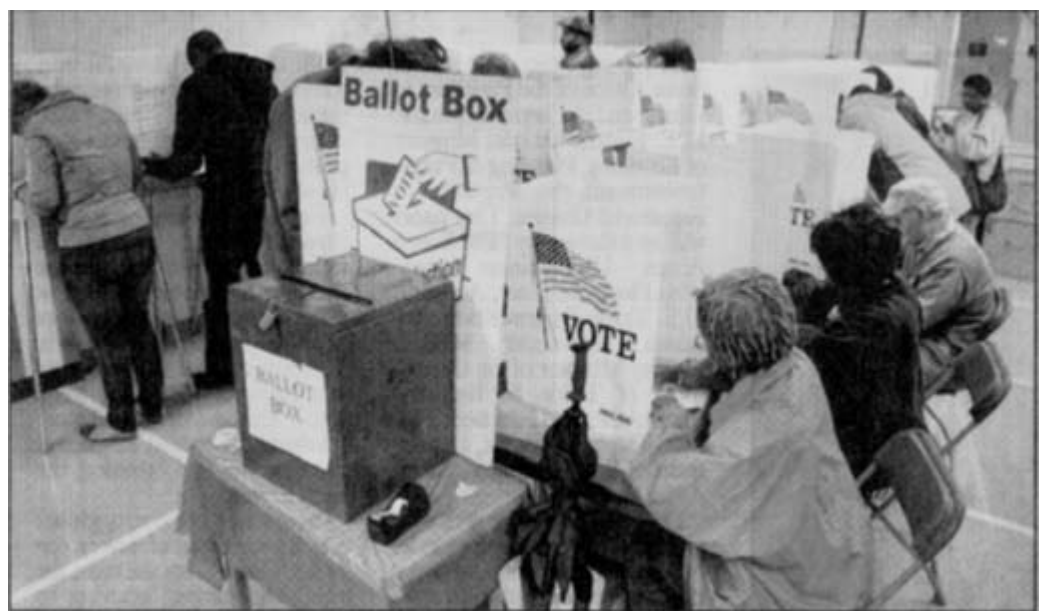
# BLACK VOTERS...

- cont. from pg. 1

People will say one thing when they're campaigning and do something else when they get in office.

"And you can't rely on the polls," he said. Several candidates have been counted out only to finish in higher than expected in the two previous primaries (Iowa and New Hampshire). "Anyone can vote in either primary without declaring themselves a member of that party," he explained.

Charleston  
Chronicle  
Charleston, SC  
Circ. 6000  
From Page:  
2  
2/17/2016  
68128



Chronicle-Independent  
Camden, SC  
Circ. 6854  
From Page: 3  
2/16/2016  
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# 148 Gov. Haley's education proposals

A few weeks back, superintendents in our state were invited by Gov. Nikki Haley to hear a briefing on her education budget initiatives, which she will ask the General Assembly to consider during its current session. Over the past couple of years, Gov. Haley has taken an increasingly "hands-on" approach to education. This is certainly a positive change from her predecessor.

## Superintendent of education

Gov. Haley is proposing voters have the opportunity in November to decide if the state superintendent of education should be appointed by the Governor after January 2019. Gov. Haley believes the current structure results in a lack of coordination and overall efficiency. Thirty-eight states currently give their governors the authority to appoint the state superintendent.

I worked under this kind of structure in Virginia, and I did find it more effective to have someone overseeing education who was in tune with the governor's vision for the state. This structure also led to the governor having more legitimate accountability for education. As it stands now in our state, the governor can simply throw up his or her hands and blame the superintendent of education. Not especially productive.

## Funding

Gov. Haley has proposed additional funding for technology, instructional materials, bus driver salaries and charter schools. The technology funding will help our district to continue to address networking and connectivity issues, especially in our older buildings. The district's technol-



ogy staff has done an exemplary job of leveraging state funding with federal E-rate funding to improve connectivity. The funding for bus driver salaries is also especially welcome and needed.

That said, I was quite disappointed that Gov. Haley only proposed an \$80 increase in Base Student Cost (BSC), a major funding stream for school districts. Our state currently funds BSC at a level \$500 below the legal requirement, a requirement legislators dodge through a curious mechanism called a budget proviso. (Don't get me started on the legislative branch not following its own laws.)

Restoring the BSC to the legally-required level would mean approximately \$5 million for Kershaw County. With \$5 million, we could restore just about every program and position cut during the economic downturn and restore salaries to where they need to be for us to be competitive again. I am hopeful that the General Assembly will consider restoring BSC with some of the \$1.3 billion in projected new revenue.

## Facility needs in rural districts

One of the major issues in the *Abbeville* educational disparity lawsuit was the grossly inadequate state of school facilities in poor, rural districts. Gov. Haley is proposing to use 1 percent of the state's General Bond debt to provide grants to these districts to upgrade facilities in amounts no larger than \$200 million. A committee that includes the governor, the chairs of the House and Senate education committees, the superintendent of education and the state director of administration would award these grants. A condition for districts to receive these funds would be compliance with a set of specific building standards and design features established by the state.

This proposal provides a practical and reasonable approach to solving a key issue in the *Abbeville* disparity lawsuit and a legitimate problem which exists in poor rural districts which do not have the tax base necessary to make reasonable upgrades to facilities. Kershaw County would probably not be eligible for these funds, although that

remains to be seen.

## Recruiting and retaining teachers in rural districts

A nagging long-term problem in our state has been attracting and retaining quality teachers in rural districts. Gov. Haley is proposing the state pay college tuition for students who commit to teach in these districts based on two years of teaching for every year of tuition paid by the state. She is also proposing state repayment of student loans or subsidizing graduate work for current teachers based on the same kind of time commitment to work in a rural district.

This is an innovative approach to solving a longstanding problem. My concern is the proposal, while giving strong and needed focus to the future, does not adequately attend to the present, to the people already working in our classrooms. The governor's proposal does not address the thousands of teachers in our state, including in Kershaw County, who absorbed two years of salary freezes because of the huge cuts in state funding which has not yet been restored. While the future is certainly important, loyalty to and consideration of people already in place is at least equally as important.

This is why attention to restoring BSC is so critical and why I am disappointed the governor's proposals do not begin to adequately address this area.

## Decreasing local autonomy

During the past couple of years, as our state has emerged from the recession, education funding initiatives coming from the governor and the General Assembly have focused on prescriptive "one size fits all" approaches, funding tied to specific purposes and programs determined in Columbia. Elementary reading coaches are a good example. While this initiative has produced some very positive results, I'm not sure this is the direction I'd want to go in every one of our schools because every



school is different and has different needs.	different needs. However, it is difficult for politicians to resist the temptation to target funding to programs they can point to when they are up for reelection. Does make for good stump speech material, though.	
There seems to be less and less emphasis on local autonomy and local solutions. I don't believe this is a good thing.		<i>(Kershaw County School District Superintendent Dr. Frank Morgan is a contributing columnist for the Chronicle-Independent, Camden, S.C.)</i>

Chronicle-  
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Camden, SC  
Circ. 6854  
From Page:  
3  
2/16/2016  
67078