

From: SC Gov News <GovNews@gov.sc.gov>

To:

Date: 6/9/2014 6:05:13 PM

Subject: Gov. Nikki Haley, Education Professionals Celebrate Passage Of K-12 Education Reform Initiative

Attachments: Education Reform Initiative.JPG



June 9, 2014

For immediate release

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Gov. Nikki Haley, Education Professionals Celebrate Passage Of K-12 Education Reform Initiative

Achieving The Promise Of An Equitable Education

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Governor Nikki Haley today joined education professionals and South Carolina business leaders in celebrating the final passage of her K-12 Education Reform Initiative, which was approved and funded by the General Assembly last week.

“With these historic changes, South Carolina has finally said that we’re going to educate all children equally – no matter where a child lives, they’re going to get a good education because that’s exactly what they deserve,” said Gov. Nikki Haley. “This education plan is not a one year fix, this has to be a constant effort and I want to thank all the teachers, education professionals, and legislators that worked side-by-side with us to help reach this important day.”

As announced in the 2013 State of the State address, and in recognition that real education reform would need to be driven from the bottom up instead of top down, the governor spent a year pursuing a bipartisan “Education Conversation” with the individuals, groups, and organizations most closely involved in educating South Carolina’s children. These efforts and conversations sought to identify the challenges facing public schools and the solutions to best overcome them.

Gov. Haley’s K-12 Education Reform Initiative is a direct product of these conversations and reflects the idea that it is time for South Carolina to take significant steps towards transforming its schools and educational system, ensuring all children are being equally prepared for college or careers.

“It’s clear that there have been disparities in the educational sector that needed to be addressed. Governor Haley set out on a mission to address those issues and we’re here today to celebrate the results,” said Dyisha Taylor, an Instructional Coach in Orangeburg’s 5th school district. “Because of her plan, she is making education equitable for all students. So as an educator, I would like to say thank you, because what you’re doing is making a difference one student at a time, and it’s an honor to have a governor that’s a woman of action.”

“The governor has set a new standard in economic development and job growth in South Carolina, and now, with this education initiative, she has set a new standard in transforming public education,” said Mike Brenan, BB&T President of South Carolina and member of the South Carolina State Board of Education.

“Economic development and education are two of the key pillars that are going to continue to make this state a great one.”

K-12 Education Reform Initiative Highlights:

- Makes important changes to South Carolina's school funding formula to provide a quality education for those living in the poorest communities. In recognition that the current K-12 funding formula is inequitable and outdated, this initiative revises the funding formula with recommendations made by the Education Oversight Committee, and will now allow funds to be distributed to the schools where they are most needed.
- Provides \$29 million for a reading coach program that offers funding to place a reading coach in every public elementary school in South Carolina. Ensuring that students are proficient readers before advancing them beyond third grade will improve their performance through middle and high school and reduce dropout rates.
- Provides \$29 million for improving bandwidth to school facilities, bolstering wireless connectivity within school walls, and furthering the push to ensure that every student has a computer or tablet. Modernizing technology and improving bandwidth will give students greater access to educational content and will help improve critical computer skills their future employers will demand. An additional \$4 million is also provided for teacher technology training.

To watch video of the governor's full remarks, click here: <http://goo.gl/jV00Np>

Attached is a photo of the event.

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