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**Subject:** "My SC Education Rally" and Proclamation Reading  
**Location:** South Steps, Statehouse  
**When:** 1/27/2015 11:45:00 AM - 12:00:00 PM

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**APPROVED BY:** NH on 1/16

**EVENT:** "My SC Education Rally" and Proclamation Reading

**DATE:** Tuesday, January 27, 2015

**TIME:** 11:45 AM (Rally begins at 11:30 AM)

**LOCATION:** South Steps, Statehouse

**LOCATION SET-UP:** Podium and Microphone

**ON-SITE LOCATION CONTACT:**

Ellen E. Weaver  
President  
Palmetto Policy Forum  
(803) 708-0673  
[Ellen@palmettopolicy.org](mailto:Ellen@palmettopolicy.org)

**SCHEDULING CONTACT:**

Ellen E. Weaver  
President  
Palmetto Policy Forum  
(803) 708-0673  
[Ellen@palmettopolicy.org](mailto:Ellen@palmettopolicy.org)

**PRIMARY STAFF:** Ashton Lee

**ADVANCE STAFF:** Zach Pippin

**PURPOSE:** Gov. Haley will give remarks at the "My SC Education Rally" to celebrate National School Choice Week and discuss why education choice is important to the future of our state. The Governor will also present her proclamation after her remarks (framed).

**PRESS:** Yes.

**PUBLIC:** Yes.

**INVITED BY:** Ellen E. Weaver, President, Palmetto Policy Forum

**ATTENDEES:** Expecting 500+ parents, student and teachers from all forms of education choice.

Superintendent of Education- Molly Spearman is confirmed to attend.

**INTRODUCED BY:** Ellen Weaver, President, Palmetto Policy Forum

**LENGTH OF SPEAKING:** 5 minutes of remarks

**SPEAKING ORDER/LINE-BY-LINE:**

11:00 AM March to Statehouse Begins

Band: Fox Creek Charter

POC: Mary Carmichael

Station volunteers to direct along march route & positioning students both in front of and on the steps at the Statehouse behind the speakers

11:15 AM DJ Playing Music/Dance Team Performing @ Statehouse

Dance Team: Coastal Leadership Charter

POC: Mary Carmichael

11:30 AM My SC Education Rally Begins @ Statehouse Steps

DJ: And now, please welcome to the podium President of Palmetto Policy Forum and our “My SC Education” emcee, Ellen Weaver...

11:30 AM Opening Welcome

Ellen Weaver: *[Thank you to attendees/electeds, planning partners (list of SC Coalition for Education Opportunity members), “Why we’re here today/why your voice is important,” insert some kind of “cheer line” to get the audience to respond, reminder to use event hashtags (#SCW, #SchoolChoice, #Ed Reform)...]*

Now, to present the colors, we are joined by the Youth ChalleNGe Academy Jr. ROTC. Youth ChalleNGe – a program run by the South Carolina National Guard – exists to provide struggling students with a second chance to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in life. Focusing on 8 core disciplines: Academic Excellence, Life-Coping Skills, Job Skills, Health and Hygiene, Responsible Citizenship, Service to Community, Leadership/Followership, and Physical Fitness – Youth ChalleNGe equips students with the confidence and discipline to achieve change and realize personal success.

Following the posting of the colors we will be led in the Pledge of Allegiance by students from the Lead Academy Charter School in Greenville. Lead Academy is an award-winning, free public charter school. Founded on the belief that all students can achieve at an exceptionally high level, regardless of background or circumstance, the Lead community shares 4 key values: Be Nice, Work Hard, Serve Well and Have Fun. Through Achievement Agreements and individual commitments to a minimum of 20 hours of community service in their surrounding neighborhoods, Lead truly IS leading the way forward for accountable, student-centered education excellence.

Please join me in putting your hand over your heart as the colors are presented.

11:35 AM Presentation of the Colors

Youth ChalleNGe Academy Color Guard

POC: CSM Michael Parker – 803-920-1768 (cell); [parkerm@tag.scmd.state.sc.us](mailto:parkerm@tag.scmd.state.sc.us)

*(Plan to arrive at 10:30 to run through logistics)*

11:37 AM Pledge of Allegiance

Lead Academy Charter Student

POC: Rodney Johnson – [rjohnson@myleadacademy.com](mailto:rjohnson@myleadacademy.com), Kate DiNatale – [kdinatale@myleadacademy.com](mailto:kdinatale@myleadacademy.com)

11:38 AM Introduce Student Performance #1

Ellen Weaver: We’re excited to be joined today by students from Jubilee Academy based

right here in Columbia. started in 1998 with the vision and personal funds of one person, Jubilee has grown into a year-round, full time, Christian Montessori school focused on breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty by turning the hearts and lives of inner-city children, youth, and families towards Christ.

Led by founding Director Sandee Hensley, the Jubilee students will be performing *God Bless America* and *This Land is Your Land*.

11:39 AM Student Performance #1 – Singing of *God Bless America* and *This Land is Your Land*  
Jubilee Academy  
POC: Sandee Hensley (Director) – 803-446-4191, [heartworksone@aol.com](mailto:heartworksone@aol.com)

11:43 AM Introduce Student “Thank You”  
Ellen Weaver: Thank you, Jubilee students!

*[Introduce Superintendent Molly Spearman if she can attend and thank other electeds who are in attendance and invite them to surround the podium, vamp on Empower publication, MySCEducation.com, [Tim Scott Senate resolution](#), working together, etc...if Gov. hasn't arrived yet]*

11:45 AM Gov. Haley Arrives

But before I have the pleasure of welcoming Governor Haley to speak to us, I'd like to once again welcome to the podium 4 students from Lead Academy Charter School who have prepared a special message for the Governor and all our elected officials who have joined us today.

11:44 Student “Thank You”  
Lead Academy Charter

11:46 AM Introduction of Governor Haley  
It's great to have a Governor in South Carolina who understands why school choice is an important part of providing every student with a high-quality education that fits their needs. Please join me in welcoming our Governor – and mother of 2 students herself – Nikki Haley to present her official National School Choice Week proclamation and share thoughts on why education choice is so important for the Palmetto State's future.  
Governor Haley?

11:47 AM Governor's NSCW Proclamation & Keynote Remarks  
POC: Nicole Priester – [NicolePriester@gov.sc.gov](mailto:NicolePriester@gov.sc.gov), (803) 606-2998 (cell)  
STAFFER: Ashton Lee – (803) 240-2266 (cell)

11:51 AM Take Group Photo – “Largest-ever SC Selfie”  
Ellen Weaver: Announce one serious and one fun “strike a pose” with yellow scarves, call all elected officials to center around the podium.  
Volunteers/Photog: Help direct the crowd

11:55 AM Gov. Haley Departs

11:56 AM Introduce Charter School Speakers  
Ellen Weaver: Thank you again Governor Haley. One type of choice we're celebrating today is Public Charter Schools – let's hear it from all our Charter School students! Charter schools are unique public schools that are allowed the freedom to innovate in exchange for strict accountability in advancing student achievement. They are publically funded, do not charge tuition and are open to ALL students. By fostering close partnerships between parents, teachers and students, charter schools have produced some of the top performing schools in the country.

Here to represent the growing charter school movement in South Carolina are 2 juniors from Charleston Charter School for Math and Science, Julia Grace Rink and Vivien

Coleman. Join me in welcoming them to talk about THEIR education choice!

11:58 AM Charter Student Speakers

Charleston Charter School for Math and Science

POCs: Mary Carmichael, Mary Allen (teacher – [mallen@charlestonmathscience.org](mailto:mallen@charlestonmathscience.org))

12:02 PM Introduce Virtual School Speaker

Ellen Weaver: Thanks Vivien & Julia Grace - great job! As technology advances, virtual education – both public and private – is becoming an important part of the education choice landscape. There are currently 6 tuition-free online public schools authorized in South Carolina, serving approximately 25,000 students. South Carolina students can even access virtual classes offered in other states!

Today we're joined by Tim Samsa, a virtual school teacher at SC Connections Academy, where he teaches Social Studies and was recently recognized as "Teacher of the Year!" Tim?

12:03 PM Virtual Teacher Speaker

Tim Samsa, SC Connections Academy

POC: Jay W. Ragley

12:04 PM Student Performance #2 – NSCW Flash Mob Dance w/ Audience Participation

Dance Team: Coastal Leadership Charter

12:12 PM Introduce Home School Speaker

Ellen Weaver: Wow – that's a tough act to follow – thank you Coastal Leadership Charter! But I know our next speaker is up to the task. Home schooling is an option with deep roots in our state. With 3 options under state law to structure the home school experience, many home school groups, resources centers and even the option to participate in public school extracurricular activities, home schools have blossomed around the state.

Here to talk to us about this growing option is home school parent Kathy Melchers, who also teaches at the Midlands Home School Resource Center. Please join me in welcoming Kathy to the stage!

12:13 PM Home School Parent Speaker

Kathy Melchers, Midlands Home School Resource Center

POC: Kathy Melchers ([kathy.melchers@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.melchers@gmail.com), 803-240-7007)

12:17 PM Introduce Private School Speaker

Ellen Weaver: Thanks, Kathy! Let's keep the momentum going with our last speaker, who is representing the wide variety of private schools in South Carolina. Private schools may be traditional or online, religious...and some private schools offer scholarships and tuition assistance. Recently, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a temporary proviso that provides tax credit scholarships to help children with exceptional needs afford to attend a school that best fits their learning style.

This exciting new program which currently has an \$8 million dollar cap is so popular, that the cap has already been met for this year! And the future of this program will certainly be on the minds of our Senators and Representatives in coming months.

Here today to talk about why private school options are so important for many students is \_\_\_\_\_ Carroll, a student here in Columbia at Cardinal Newman Catholic School.

12:18 PM Private School Speaker

\_\_\_\_\_ Carroll, student at Cardinal Newman Catholic School

12:22 PM Closing Remarks

Ellen Weaver: Thanks so much \_\_\_\_\_ for that eloquent report on choice at Cardinal Newman! Just a few announcements to close us out today:

- HUGE thanks to everyone who worked together to make this great event possible, especially the team at National School Choice Week who have supported our local planning efforts in an incredible way to make today possible. Let's give them a huge Palmetto State round of applause!
- We also are fortunate to be joined today by a number of state legislators – I don't want to leave anyone out by calling names, so if you'll make your way to the podium, we'd like to have you front and center for the "Largest-ever SC Selfie that we're going to take in just a minute!"
- This afternoon, I hope everyone here will take a minute to fill out one of these handy My SC Education cards (*hold up card*) and take it to your Legislators' offices to let them know why school choice is important to you! If you don't know who your legislator is, volunteers are stationed at \_\_\_\_\_ and can help direct you.
- And lastly, AFTER we retire the colors, if everyone will gather together here on the steps, we'll all face the Strom Thurmond statue to take the "Largest Ever SC-Selfie"!
- But now, if you'll join me in putting your hand over your heart one more time, the Youth Challenge Color Guard will retire the colors.

12:25PM Retire the Colors Ceremony

12:27 PM Rally Adjourns – DJ music

Afternoon On Your Own: Lunch/Lawmaker Visits/Cola Attractions (*State Museum, Zoo, etc...*)

**PROCLAMATION WORDING: (Ashton has the framed proclamation)**

**WHEREAS,** high-quality schools enable our young people to obtain the knowledge and develop the skills necessary to fill their position as the leaders of tomorrow; and

**WHEREAS,** an effective and accountable system of education plays a critical role in helping our children to be successful in a global economy; and

**WHEREAS,** South Carolina offers many outstanding education choices for students and parents, including public schools, public charter, magnet, and virtual schools, independent schools, and homeschooling, as well as exceptional teaching professionals who are committed to educating the children in our state; and

**WHEREAS,** providing children with multiple schooling options can help improve academic performance.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I,** Nikki R. Haley, Governor of the great State of South Carolina, do hereby proclaim January 25 – 31, 2015, as

**SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK**

throughout the state and encourage all South Carolinians to work together to improve the quality of education and expand access to highly effective schools for young people in the Palmetto State.

**SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS:**

- I have always said that the best way to a brighter future for South Carolina is through the education of our children, because they are our future workforce.
- We showed how dedicated we are to this cause when we were able to pass landmark education reform through the General Assembly last year, but we didn't stop there. Our Executive Budget this

- year proposes another round of investments that would further our state's commitment to our young people.
- But another way to make sure we are providing the best instruction possible for each individual child is to give them a choice as to where and how they are educated.
- There are currently 66 public charter schools in South Carolina serving approximately 26,000 students and growing.
- We're making considerable progress. In the Education Reform Initiative last year, we proposed, and the General Assembly supported, efforts to **increase per-student subsidies for students attending brick and mortar charter schools from \$3,250 to \$3,600 and for those attending virtual charters from \$1,700 to \$1,900.**
- And with the passage of Act 288 of 2014, charters will have the opportunity to take on our state's most challenging students without fear of reprisal, but charters will also generally be required to meet the same, if not higher, standards than their counterparts statewide.
- **According to a new report from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, released today, South Carolina is now ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the country for its charter school laws.**
- By making these changes, we're enhancing choice for our families. We're moving in the right direction and South Carolina's school children are the big winners.
- But there's more to do if we're going to continually improve our rankings.
- That's why the budget I released a few weeks ago continues our strong support of charter schools.
- **Specifically, we propose nearly \$12 million additional (21% increase over last year's act) in recurring funds to support continued growth in the Public Charter School District and nearly \$3 million to support development and expansion of the Department's virtual education program.**
- The success and development of the South Carolina's charter schools is a testament to how a small group of dedicated parents, educators, and policymakers can transform the landscape of education in the state for the better.