



State of South Carolina

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

November 14, 2016

Dear Members of the General Assembly,

Next session the General Assembly has the opportunity to do something truly impactful for South Carolina students, serving their interests for generations to come: pass a resolution that, with voter approval, would move the office of State Superintendent of Education from an elected position to a cabinet position with advice and consent of the Senate beginning in 2023.

South Carolina is one of only thirteen states where Superintendent of Education is an elected official, wholly separate from the administration of the Governor. Instead of moving the state forward with a common vision for education priorities, this divided leadership structure can result in incompatible positions, a lack of coordination, and fragmented accountability for failures in our PreK-12 education system.

Over the past several years, with your help, South Carolina has taken significant steps towards transforming our educational system. We have changed the funding formula to take into account poverty, understanding that children should not be limited by where they live. Reading coaches are in every elementary school to support literacy achievement to ensure all students are reading at grade level before they are promoted to fourth grade thus setting them up for success later in school and in life. We have also invested in technology, allowing students to learn in a 21st century environment. And we have focused on recruiting and retaining teachers in rural areas of the state, following through with our commitment to make sure every child has access to high-quality educators. However, we have another vital step left to ensure that these measures continue into the future.

Now is the time to take action and let the voters of South Carolina decide. The most important thing we can do to create a real public education team and improve accountability is to make the Superintendent of Education a part of the Governor's Cabinet.

Since 2011, with bipartisan support, both the House and the Senate have introduced a dozen bills providing for the appointment of the Superintendent of Education, and have come close to passing it multiple times. Chairman Chip Campsen and Chairman Greg Delleney will pre-file companion legislation and we are asking for your support to ensure passage of this resolution during the 2017 legislative session.

As Governor and Superintendent of Education, we urge you with the fullest measure of our support to turn this decision over to the voters, empowering them to decide the future governance of our K-12 education system.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Nikki R. Haley in blue ink.

Nikki R. Haley

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Molly M. Spearman in blue ink.

Molly M. Spearman