

SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

A Position Paper
On The Improvement of Educational Opportunity in South Carolina

(Number Two)

The Commission on Higher Education adopted on November 3, 1983, a Position Paper on the Improvement of Educational Opportunity in South Carolina, setting forth its primary views on the current initiative to improve education in the State.

As the debate on the educational initiative has broadened and expanded, the Commission deems it desirable to elaborate on the views heretofore presented, and to inform the Governor, the General Assembly, and the public of its additional views on the issues which are presently being widely discussed throughout the State.

Because of the keen interest of the higher education community in any educational initiative, the Commission will continue to address proposals relative to educational enhancement in our State.

It is apparent and clear that the strength of higher education is directly related to the foundation and background established in our elementary and secondary schools. A strong emphasis on quality in elementary and secondary education will yield a marked improvement in the quality of students in our higher education institutions.

It is the purpose of this paper to emphasize strongly the following:

- (1) that the Commission fully supports the educational programs in the "New Approach to Quality Education" developed by the two blue-ribbon committees and publicly presented by the Governor;
- (2) that to have a major impact in improving educational opportunity in the State, the educational initiative will require additional revenue beyond that

being generated by current tax levies, from sources deemed appropriate by the Governor and the General Assembly;

(3) that, in addition to the initiative to improve elementary and secondary schools, we urge, with the support of the Governor, full formula funding of higher education with revenues realized from current and future growth.

(4) that these two major initiatives in education will move the State forward both educationally and economically.

The Commission has heretofore presented to the Budget and Control Board and to committees of the House and Senate its recommendations on an appropriate level of funding for the higher educational institutions.

In a review of developments to date, though, we find that the entire educational initiative may be in jeopardy because of disagreement on the method of raising revenue to finance the initiative, on the implementation of programs, or on the distribution of funds.

Paramount to all of those concerns, however, is the overriding belief that any one or a combination of those factors cannot be permitted to abort the current educational initiatives, in effect leaving South Carolina with no significant improvement in its educational system and in a weakened position to compete with other states which are vigorously moving forward.

We encourage all of the interested parties to join together in a conscientious and deliberative effort to formulate major advances for the best possible educational opportunities for our people. Additionally, we encourage the expeditious implementation of the educational programs proposed in the "New Approach to Quality Education" and full formula funding for higher education as endorsed by the Governor.

We contend that to do nothing is a step backward and is not an acceptable option. We do not believe that the people of South Carolina will tolerate inaction at this crucial time.