



# GOVERNOR HALEY'S 2016 EDUCATION AGENDA

## Overview

Governor Haley will mark a third year of education reform proposals in 2016. This year's cooperative and bipartisan effort addresses some of the toughest issues facing education in South Carolina today – from basic governance and accountability, to safe schools, to transportation, to statewide access to technology. Governor Haley stands with local Superintendents, students, parents, educators, and members of the legislature, to announce another year of reform that moves South Carolina's schools forward.

The initiative spans six categories:

- Education Governance
- Funding the Basics of Education
- Recruiting and Retaining Effective Teachers
- Integrating Technology into Student Life
- Improving School facilities (attached)
- Reforming South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness (attached)

## Education Governance

Over the past decade, statewide elections have resulted in often Governors and State Superintendents of Education who did not share a common vision for the direction of South Carolina's schools. Instead of moving the state forward, a lack of coordination and common effort left educational priorities at the state level without direction and leadership.

The single most important reform that can be made to give South Carolina's children a leadership team with common vision and goals, such as the team Governor Haley and Superintendent Spearman have formed since 2015, is to give every Governor the ability to appoint the Superintendent of Education. This change would require the approval of South Carolina's voters. Governor Haley's 2016 education agenda proposes to place this question on the general election ballot in 2016.

This simple reform would bring South Carolina in line with 38 other states that do not elect their Superintendent of Education, giving the Governor a more direct role in selecting education leaders as follows:

- November 2016: voters choose whether or not to change the State's constitution to allow the Governor to appointment of the Superintendent of Education.
- 2016-17 Legislative Session: the South Carolina General Assembly ratifies the constitutional amendment if approved by voters and passes legislation to define the qualifications of the future Superintendents of Education.
- November 2018: South Carolinians election the Superintendent of Education for the last time.
- January 2019+ : Any vacancy in the office of Superintendent is filled by gubernatorial appointment.



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## **Funding the Basics of Education**

Governor Haley's 2016 education agenda focuses on the basics of education:

- Arriving to and from school safely and on time;
- Learning in a safe and clean environment;
- Receiving instruction from a qualified and engaged educator;
- Using materials that are current, and in good repair; and
- Empowering families to shape their child's education

To that end, many of the items funded in the FY 2016-17 Executive Budget address basic needs of students and schools, funding teachers, transportation, instructional materials, and furthering school choice.

### Education Finance Act

- The Education Finance Act is the predominant form of state funding to local districts, and places a high standard for funding individual educators in classrooms.
- The FY 2016-17 Executive Budget proposes \$165,345,377 to increase base student cost to \$2,300 and include a dual enrollment add-on weight to the formula (0.15 WPU/\$345 per pupil).
- The budget also consolidates the Aid to Districts line with the Education Improvement Act (EIA), further simplifying education funding through the elimination of another programmatic budget line.

### Transportation

- Conversations with rural superintendents indicated problems with recruiting and retaining school bus drivers at the current minimum salary of \$7.46/hour.
- The FY 2016-17 Executive Budget proposes \$19,200,000 to increase the minimum salary to \$10.96/hour.
- Governor Haley is also proposing \$3,500,000 to fund additional hazardous transportation routes around the state, to ensure that students are not walking to school in high-traffic areas and across dangerous crossings.

### Instructional Materials

- The FY 2016-17 Executive Budget proposes \$27,077,151 in a mix of recurring and nonrecurring funding for digital and traditional instructional materials.

### Innovation and School Choice

- School Year 2016-17 will welcome 7 new schools to the South Carolina Public Charter School District, now the 15<sup>th</sup> largest in the state.
- The FY 2016-17 Executive Budget includes \$11,547,128 in charter school supplements to accommodate district growth and maintain the per-pupil allocation at \$3,600 for brick-and-mortar and \$1,900 for virtual schools.
- Governor Haley's 2016 education agenda also provides \$1,178,760 for VirtualSC, adding 18 educators to an innovative program that supports public, private, and homeschool students.



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## **Recruiting and Retaining Effective Teachers**

The Rural Teacher Recruiting Initiative is a collaboration between the Governor's Office, the Center For Recruitment, Retention & Advancement (CERRA), the Education Oversight Committee, the Department of Education, and local stakeholders. It began with a small launch in 2015, including \$1.5 million in funding and a mandate for program development. With the funding available in that year, CERRA's in-district activities are limited to technical assistance with local recruiting, some critical area salary supplements, and funding for graduate level coursework for a limited number of educators. Governor Haley's 2016 education agenda proposes \$13.5 million in additional funding to scale-up the program, addressing persistent recruitment and retention challenges in South Carolina's rural and underserved districts.

District eligibility for the 2016-17 Fiscal Year will remain consistent at 12% average turnover over the last five years. The initiatives will support:

- Tuition for college students who teach 2 years for every year of subsidized education;
- Enhanced student loan repayment for recent graduates who agree to the same commitment;
- Graduate coursework and degrees for career educators, including opportunities for teachers' aides seeking certification, educators seeking specialization and other mid-career development programs; and
- Teaching mentors with technical assistance and salary supplements for mentors.

Consistent with implementation year activities, CERRA will continue to support school districts with tools such as the National Teacher Database and Teacher Cadet programs and will also set aside funding to promote competitive salaries in critical need subject areas such as math and science.

## **Integrating Technology into Student Life**

In 2014, Governor Haley committed to providing almost \$90 million in technology supports to districts over a three year period. These funds have been put to use, advancing 1:1 computing initiatives, improving broadband access on public campuses, and enhancing digital classroom learning. The FY 2016-17 Executive Budget funds the third year of this initiative, but also expands to underlying technology infrastructure and security for school districts.

While efforts to increase bandwidth to schools through the South Carolina K-12 Technology initiative and e-rate programs have been successful, some individual schools lack the internal IT infrastructure to support all of the students attempting to access technology inside the schools. The 2016 agenda addresses this in two ways. First, it recommends resources for the wiring and devices necessary to support school-wide internet access at peak levels. Second, it proposes that these devices be supported by network engineers in the Division of Technology Operations through the South Carolina Department of Administration for those districts lacking the internal IT support necessary to maintain the network.

Although most South Carolinians have access to the internet through a variety of devices, U.S. Census data indicate that in many of our communities 25% - 30% of people do not have access to high-speed internet at home. The 2016-17 initiative includes funding to support mobile high-speed internet access to 10,000 students in South Carolina at home. This is the first year in what will be a multi-year commitment to improving internet access statewide. This will allow districts to provide Wi-Fi hotspots to students as-needed so that the learning environment used in the classroom can be replicated in the home.