

Creating a New Perception of Education: SC Minds@Work

By Otis Rawl, president and chief executive officer of the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the unified voice of business.



Otis Rawl

As I travel around South Carolina, talking to business leaders on a daily basis, it is clear that they feel education and workforce development - even among South Carolinians - has a tarnished and sometimes negative image. All too often, misleading facts are presented and, unfortunately, it is often the negative story that sells. As business and education leaders, it is our job to tell the

true story of education and workforce development in South Carolina, and we are doing that through a new campaign appropriately titled: SC Minds@Work. Our goals in this process include correcting and improving the awareness of South Carolina's actual education position and establishing a consistent message and brand for the state's workforce.

A sometimes overlooked key to economic recovery and reduced unemployment is education and workforce development. With the state's unemployment rate still in double-digits, it is imperative we focus on creating jobs. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, high school dropouts earn about \$8,000 less per year than high school graduates, and incarceration rates are close to double for high school dropouts compared with graduates. The unemployment rate for dropouts is almost 6 percent higher than those who graduate from high school. Therefore, the linkage between education and unemployment cannot be denied, and our students must understand this linkage and the opportunities they present within our education system.

If perception is reality, many of us believe South Carolina ranks near the bottom in workforce preparedness and education measurements, but nothing could be further from the truth. The state must continuously work to move education forward, but we are making progress in many areas. Negative perceptions of public education within South Carolina and outside of the state can damage economic development.

It is for this reason the Chamber has embarked on the
Council News - Vol. 33, Ed. 1, 2011

extensive SC Minds@Work marketing plan for South Carolina related to education. Our first step – public opinion research – was completed in 2010. The Chamber conducted a nationwide survey gauging perceptions of South Carolina. Here's what we found:

- Much of South Carolina's brand image is influenced by the fact that South Carolina is a Southern state. Forty-four percent of U.S. residents identify the South as having the worst image.
- Findings indicate South Carolina itself is a state that does not have a distinct brand image and tends to go unnoticed. Florida, Virginia and North Carolina clearly have the most positive brand images, consistently jumping ahead of their Southern counterparts on being "best" when it comes to factors such as:
 - Having the strongest economy
 - Being the best place to locate a business
 - Being progressive, etc.
- Conversely, Alabama and particularly Mississippi are consistently mentioned as being the weakest.
- The key challenges for South Carolina lie in creating awareness of a state that is largely unknown to the rest of the nation, and ultimately differentiating our state from other Southern states.

*(continued)
See "SC Minds@Work"
pg. 3*

In this Issue

- Director's Message..... pg. 2
- Honor Roll SICs..... pg. 5
- New SC-SIC Board Members..... pg. 5
- Annual SIC Conference..... pg. 6



Message from... the Executive Director

Cassie Barber, M.A.

So Much at Stake

For two hours I stood beside the statue of Strom Thurmond on the South side of the SC State House grounds to witness the inauguration of Governor Nikki Randhawa Haley. Our first woman and, as the daughter of Indian immigrants, first minority governor, was sworn in by our state's first female chief justice of the Supreme Court amid a sea of men. No other women took the oath of office that day. The historic day was made even more memorable by the uncharacteristic snow and ice that had coated the hundreds of chairs set up on the South lawn only hours before.

I was struck by the diversity I found when I searched the faces of the crowd. Governor Haley is a Republican and every elected statewide office holder is now affiliated with that political party so naturally many of their supporters were in attendance. But the story told by the crowd went far beyond a celebration of a political party. People from a variety of ethnic backgrounds were present: African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and people of Indian heritage mingled. Staunch Democrats, women in full length fur coats with matching pill box hats, disabled individuals, and men with pony tails and camouflage jackets – all were in attendance. Elderly people leaning on walkers. Babies in strollers. Official representatives of China, Germany, Mexico, Bulgaria and India were recognized. International opera tenor, Jorge Lopez-Yanez, who hails from the Upstate, sang the “Star Spangled Banner” with a melodious Hispanic accent.

Thunder boomed as fighter jets streaked the cloudless blue sky in celebration. As I gazed at their majesty my eyes were drawn to our flags whipping above the capitol dome, flying at half-mast in honor of those murdered and wounded in Tucson, AZ. It was then that I noticed the marksmen dotting the rooftops of the capitol complex buildings. Already chilled to the bone by the biting wind I suddenly felt even colder.

So why were we all there on such a frigid morning? Because this moment with its pomp, circumstance and ceremony, hope for and uncertainty about the future, shared pain and fear born of tragedy, symbolizes who we are as a nation, a state, and even as a school community. The newly minted governor spoke of her childhood in South Carolina, of being “different,” and seizing upon the opportunities that led to this moment in front of her parents and all of us as the youngest governor in the nation at the worst time we have seen since the Great Depression.

In her inaugural address Governor Haley said, “We have the opportunity to improve education and allow our children to be successful regardless of where they were born.” Whether you voted for Ms. Haley or not the future of our state and our children is at stake and each of us must do our part to ensure forward movement and success for South Carolina. What better place to make your personal contribution than your local public school? SC School Improvement Council is here to help you make the most of the time, talent and treasure you have to share with your greater school community.

(continued)
See “So Much at Stake”
pg. 4



SC-SIC Board of Trustees

Carlos Primus, Chair - Columbia
E'Lane Rutherford, Vice Chair - Pawleys Island
Dr. Virginia Alston Brown, Secretary - Sumter
Jeff Nicholson, Immediate Past Chair - Rock Hill
Gary Alexander - Blythewood
Mark Bounds - Columbia
Dr. Sandra Lindsay-Brown - Rock Hill
Ken Clark - Swansea
Rev. Joseph A. Darby, Jr. - Charleston
Sylleste Davis - Moncks Corner
Dr. Bruce Field - Columbia
Bob Grant - Spartanburg
Michael L. Guarino - Mauldin
Dr. Bob L. Hanley - Anderson
Bonnie King - Manning
Retha Ross - Darlington
Ellen Still - Charleston
Fred S. Washington, Jr. - Beaufort
Lina Wehbi - Columbia

SC-SIC Staff

Cassie Barber, M.A.
Executive Director

Tom F. Hudson
Associate Director

Claudia Wolverton
Public Information Director

Diane Jumper, M.Ed.
Senior Council Specialist

Karen Utter, J.D.
Council Specialist

Debra Williams
Business Manager

Council News is an award winning publication of the South Carolina School Improvement Council. Circulation 16,000+. Your comments and articles are welcome.

Contact **Claudia Wolverton, Editor**, at:

USC College of Education
Wardlaw Bldg., Suite 001
Columbia, SC 29208
Phone: 803-777-7658
Toll Free: 800-868-2232
Email: sic@mailbox.sc.edu
Website: sic.sc.gov

The University of South Carolina system provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education and employment for all qualified persons regardless of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or veteran status.

SC Minds@Work

(continued from pg. 1)

The 2010 survey also presented respondents with facts about South Carolina, particularly related to education and workforce preparedness. When presented with positive facts related to education and workforce development, perceptions drastically improved. Consider these facts that were presented to respondents last year:

- South Carolina ranks third in the nation in the number of teachers certified by the prestigious National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.
- South Carolina has implemented a program called Personal Pathways to Success, which provides educational and career planning resources that bring together all South Carolinians – students, parents, educators, adult job seekers and employers. Personal Pathways is becoming a national model.
- The national report card *Quality Counts 2010* ranked the state No. 11 in the nation for academic policy and performance.
- Companies such as BMW and Michelin have major operations in South Carolina, and Boeing is building a production facility for its 787 Dreamliner in the state.
- The total number of active registered apprentices in the state jumped by 111 percent, from close to 800 in 2007 to more than 1,600 in 2009.
- South Carolina has one of the most comprehensive endowed chairs programs in the country, designed to transfer the state into the knowledge economy.

Presenting the true facts related to education and workforce development can dramatically improve perceptions of the state, and the business community is committed to doing just that.

One program presented to survey respondents that is working in this state and we are truly proud of is the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) of 2005, now called Personal Pathways to Success. The General Assembly passed the EEDA with the goals of providing educational and career planning resources to students, parents, educators, adult job seekers and employers. Personal Pathways ensures that every single high school student in this state completes an Individual Graduation Plan (IGP) tailored to specific career clusters. This makes a student's transition to a higher education institution or the workplace more seamless.

Employers believe this legislation gives students leverage to become better educated in fields that best suit their desires, ultimately increasing competitiveness for existing and new businesses, as well as fueling economic growth and driving higher wealth for citizens across the state. Simply stated, if students can see the applicability and relevance of what they are learning, then more students will buy into South Carolina's educational system and prosper. It is a win-win situation for students, employers and all of South Carolina.

This landmark legislation has had amazing results, and students who began Personal Pathways in 2005 as eighth graders are now just one semester away from completing their education and the career planning process under the program. The results are very positive:

- Ninety-one percent of over 31,000 students who participated in an EEDA-funded or -supported at-risk student program in 2009-10 remained in school and were promoted to the next grade in 2010-11.
- Twenty-one of the 30 EEDA-funded or supported at-risk student programs utilized by high schools during the 2009-10 school year achieved a promotion rate of 80 percent or better and were recognized by the At-Risk Student Committee as being highly effective.
- Over 201,000 middle and high school students (97.2 percent) developed IGPs, choosing clusters of study and majors based on assessments of interest and aptitude, connecting their career goals to their education plans.
- Over 142,000 parents/guardians (71 percent) of students in grades eight through 11 attended IGP conferences with their children.

This landmark legislation is having amazing results. In Personal Pathways, we have a major education reform that works and is generating long-term economic and social benefits for South Carolina. Personal Pathways is an example of a story we need to be telling to those outside of the state and South Carolinians.

The preparedness of our future workforce is so important that the Chamber, the state's unified voice of business, makes education and workforce development part of the *Competitiveness Agenda*, the business community's annual list of legislative priorities. It is also the reason we have prepared and adopted rigorous 2020 Education Goals:

- Ninety-nine percent of all high school students will have electronic Individual Graduation Plans (eIGP). This is a key component of the EEDA that has both a direct and indirect influence on the dropout rate by getting students committed to a plan for graduation and involving parents during a critical time.
- Eighty-five percent of all South Carolina high school students will graduate on-time as measured by the U.S. Department of Education's Uniform Graduation Rate formula. The state Department of Education reports the 2008-09 on-time graduation rate to be 73.7 percent using the Uniform Graduation Rate formula.
- Eighty percent of South Carolina four-year-old, at-risk youth (free and reduced lunch) will complete 4-K. All South Carolina children need to be ready for first grade. Research shows that high-quality

(continued)
See "SC Minds@Work"

pg. 4

SC Minds@Work

(continued from pg. 3)

pre-school helps children's cognitive growth and enhances their future educational success, especially children from disadvantaged circumstances.

- South Carolina will be in the top five states in average fourth and eighth grade student NAEP score improvement. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments for reading, math and science are administered uniformly using the same sets of test booklets across the nation. The assessment stays essentially the same from year to year, which permits NAEP to provide a clear picture of student academic progress over time. By becoming one of the fastest-improving states, we will earn national and international recognition that will help drive our economic viability.
- Fifty percent reduction in the student achievement gap on PASS testing from 2009 results. The achievement gap is defined as the difference in achievement between the historically lower-scoring demographic group and the historically higher-scoring group at various performance levels. The expectation is that all groups will continue to improve, but the lower group's rate of improvement will exceed the higher group's rate, thereby closing the achievement gap.
- All high school seniors will have a WorkKeys, including soft skills, certificate. WorkKeys certification, including soft skills, accompanied by a high school diploma or GED provides important information to employers about the skill level and job readiness of a student. Because of the immediate need for this certification and its sparse current availability in high schools, the interim 2015 goal of at least 65 percent of the seniors completing the testing should be achieved.
- Fifteen thousand GEDs (including WorkKeys certification) will be awarded annually. Based on census data, South Carolina has 2,728,528 working-age (18 to 64) adults. Almost 16 percent (431,470) have not completed high school or obtained a GED. By 2020, we wish to reduce this percentage to 10 percent. To achieve this reduction, we must significantly increase the number of GED recipients. During the 2007-08 school year, adult education granted 6,399 GED and 7,964 WorkKeys certificates.
- South Carolina will have 10 times more businesses offering registered apprenticeships versus the 2009 baseline. South Carolina has historically underutilized registered apprenticeships as a workforce education and training model and has traditionally had fewer than 800 active apprentices in less than 90 registered apprenticeship programs. Since the 2007 establishment of the SC Technical College's Apprenticeship Carolina™ division, significant progress has been made.

- South Carolina will exceed the national average for adults holding two or four year degrees. Currently, 29 percent of South Carolina adults hold two or four year degrees, while the national average is 39 percent.

Sure, we have plenty of areas for improvement, but the fact is our education and workforce development efforts have a reputation they don't deserve. SC Minds@Work is a strategic plan for communicating with the desired audiences that incorporates education goals with the reality of our improvements. SC Minds@Work will correct and improve the awareness of South Carolina's educational position, establish a strong, consistent, positive image and brand for the state's workforce and launch a communications platform that encourages all audiences to speak from the same position.

I believe the business and education communities in this state are working together on priorities like never before. The business community is committed to cultivating a prepared and skilled workforce for the future and telling the true story of education and workforce development. You are some of the most important stakeholders, messengers and members of this coalition. No one is denying that we have issues that must be addressed. But, the truth is the ship is turning, and we need to help it maintain (and even increase) its speed. We need to build on our successes. How do we do that? I think the most important thing is to stay involved, engaged and tell the true story of education and workforce development in South Carolina. I ask you to make this commitment, and join the campaign today. We need your help. Begin by visiting www.scmindsatwork.com. Together, we can change the perceptions of this state.

So Much at Stake

(continued from pg. 2)

I urge you to attend the Annual SIC Conference (see page 6) on March 19 to learn how to set goals and priorities to ensure effective outcomes for the work of your Council. On February 23 we will co-sponsor a *Legislative Advocacy Day* (sic.sc.gov) to inform you about current issues facing the state legislature and provide opportunities to discuss them with your representatives. SC-SIC also offers district level advocacy trainings, school level goal setting sessions, and we are always available by phone or email to provide you with assistance as you do the important work of improving and supporting your local public school.

As symbolized by the diverse crowd at the inauguration braving ice and snow, with flags flown in the face of tragedy as law enforcement kept a guarded eye and military fighters circled the ceremony, we are a nation that is strengthened by our differences as we focus on our common goals for our children. Let us all pull together to bring our nation, state and schools back to a place of wellbeing.



SC-SIC Board of Trustees Names Five New Members

Five South Carolina education leaders have been named to the S.C. School Improvement Council Board of Trustees.

Elected to full three-year terms on the Board were Bob Grant of Spartanburg, Bonnie King of Manning, and Lina Wehbi of Columbia. Appointed to fill unexpired terms on the Board were Dr. Sandra Lindsay-Brown of Rock Hill and Dr. Bob L. Hanley of Anderson.

The SC-SIC Board is composed of 21 members from all corners of the state and acts in an advisory capacity to the S.C. School Improvement Council (SC-SIC), which provides services to more than 15,000 members of local School Improvement Councils in the state's 1,100-plus K-12 public schools.



Bonnie King

Mr. Grant is a career educator currently serving as principal of Jesse Boyd Elementary School in Spartanburg School District 7.



Bob Grant

Ms. King is Director of Public Relations and Coordinator of School-to-Work Programs for the Williamsburg County School District and serves as that district's SIC District Contact.



Dr. Sandra Lindsay-Brown

Ms. Wehbi is a French teacher and Department Chair at Eau Claire High School in Richland School District 1, where she has also served as the school's SIC Chair.



Lina Wehbi

Dr. Lindsay-Brown is the principal of The Children's School at Sylvia Circle, a public Montessori school in Rock Hill School District 3.

Dr. Hanley is Vice President for Student Development and Associate Professor of Education at Anderson University.



Dr. Bob Hanley

More information on all SC-SIC Board of Trustees members is available on the SC-SIC website, sic.sc.gov.

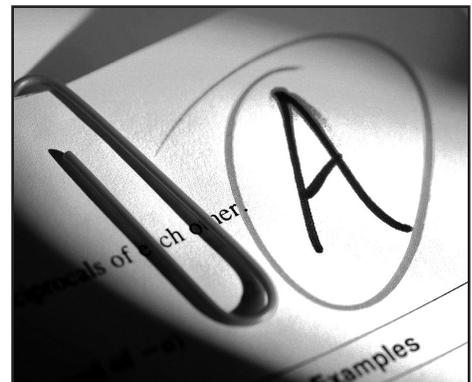
Twelve Councils Make SIC Honor Roll

Twelve SICs from across the state have been named to the S.C. School Improvement Council's 2011 Honor Roll for their significant efforts to foster civic engagement in public education.

These Honor Roll SICs will continue in the running for the SC-SIC's annual Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award. Named for the former U.S. Secretary of Education and South Carolina Governor and his late wife, the Riley School Improvement Award was created in 2002 to recognize the vital contributions made by the 15,000-plus local School Improvement Council members who volunteer in every public school in the state.

In alphabetical order, the 12 SC-SIC Honor Roll recipients for 2011 are:

- Baron DeKalb Elementary School** (Kershaw County School District)
- Brennen Elementary School** (Richland School District 1)
- Burgess Elementary School** (Horry County Schools)
- Doby's Mill Elementary School** (Kershaw County School District)
- Greenbrier Elementary School** (Greenville County Schools)
- Homewood Elementary School** (Horry County Schools)
- Jesse Boyd Elementary School** (Spartanburg County School District 7)
- Lakewood High School** (Sumter County School District 2)
- Midway Elementary School** (Lexington School District 1)
- Monarch Elementary School** (Union County School District)
- North Augusta Elementary School** (Aiken County School District)
- Sullivan Middle School** (Rock Hill School District 3)



Five finalists from this year's list of Honor Roll schools will be selected late next month, with one to be named as the winner of the annual Riley School Improvement Award. The award will be announced at the SC-SIC Annual Conference, March 19, 2011, in Columbia.

Ready, Set...



GOAL!

Learn how to achieve yours at the annual SIC Conference!

- How do you prepare achievable, effective goals?
- What priorities should lead the way?
- How do you decide?

Keynote speaker Brenda G. Thomas, Senior Program Facilitator at National Network of Partnership Schools, Johns Hopkins University, assists school districts with strengthening their programs of family and community involvement to increase student success.

When: March 19, 2011
Where: St. Andrews Middle School
Columbia, SC

At the March 19 SIC Conference, Ms. Thomas will conduct a professional development session to assist SICs in using a team approach to planning and implementing goal-oriented, research-based partnership programs that succeed.

Registration forms and further details coming soon to the SC-SIC website, sic.sc.gov.

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
P. A. I. D.
Permit 766
Columbia, SC

SC School Improvement Council
820 Main St., Ste. 001
Columbia, SC 29208

