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COLLABORATIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2019

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Note: A previous version of this press release included an error in the teacher pay recommendation. The mistake has been corrected, and TCCC sincerely regrets the error.

TCCC recommends changes to innovative schools, teacher salary, early childhood

Lawmakers urged to make education reform a priority

North Charleston, SC – [Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative](http://TriCountyCradleToCareer.org) announced the first of what will likely be a series of actions needed to support the reformation of public education in the tri-county region and across the state. Education attainment in the region has shown almost no progress over the past six years, and TCCC has expanded its advocacy work to press for change.

These first three actions are the result of deliberations by TCCC's staff and Board of Directors, as well as ongoing consultation with various community groups.

1. We believe that to reform public education from within, local school boards should be permitted, supported and encouraged to create more than one innovative school per district. Legislative language should be included that directs this flexibility toward innovative models serving high-poverty areas and with community representatives at the decision table.

For example, districts are limited to one such innovative school under the terms of the School of Choice Law. In the tri-county region, only the Charleston County School District has created an innovative school.

2. We believe an increase in teacher pay to the Southeast region market average is the first step in improving teacher recruitment and retention. A 5% salary increase is required immediately, followed by a 15% increase over time to move toward the national average. Salary increases should be fully funded by the state.

The teacher shortage in schools and in the teacher-training pipeline has reached crisis proportions, and there is no doubt that pay is a critical factor. If the tri-county region is unable to assure a pipeline of qualified teachers, there is no possible way to close workforce gaps in other occupations.

3. We believe that focused attention by the state on early childhood development and education is a necessary step in support of education attainment for all. We support the reorganization of state agencies to place programs supporting early childhood in a single department.

~ more ~

www.TriCountyCradleToCareer.org

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The state of South Carolina has early childhood support programs spread across multiple departments, making coordination and alignment of these initiatives impossible. Reorganization is the first step toward increasing evidence-based programs, especially for children and families at risk.

“We strongly encourage our state lawmakers to make these necessary changes and to make education reform a meaningful priority,” said Laura Varn, a member of the TCCC Board of Directors and chair of the Board’s Advocacy Subcommittee. “It’s time we stand up for our teachers and our children as an investment in our future.”

Additional recommendations on more complex system-reform issues are likely, especially solutions intended to address inequity.

“The Post & Courier’s ‘Minimally Adequate’ series has set the stage for real reform to take place in South Carolina public education, and we cannot afford to squander the opportunity,” TCCC CEO John C. Read said. “These recommendations are first steps in the systems-change process. We intend to make additional policy and legislative recommendations, in partnership with grassroots community groups in the tri-county region, to the point of disruption.”

About Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative

Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative (TCCC) is a community-wide movement in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties, South Carolina, focused on improving the quality of life of its citizens and its workforce through education. Using data and focused community collaboration across a continuum from “cradle-to-career,” TCCC serves as a catalyst for widespread, systemic change, with the ultimate goal of increased success and economic prosperity for all.

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