

## **Framework for Testimony Presented to the Education Policy Review and Reform Task Force**

On January 23, 2015, Speaker Jay Lucas created the Education Policy Review and Reform Task Force. According to Speaker Lucas, the Task Force is to “begin laying the groundwork for substantial, necessary education reforms.” Recognizing the myriad of thoughts and opinions regarding education throughout this state, Chairwoman Rita Allison and the Task Force have decided that citizens from across the state, especially the Plaintiff districts in the *Abbeville* decision, must be given the opportunity to share their thoughts.

Because the subject of education covers many areas, and the time and resources of the Task Force are limited, individuals who present to the Task Force are asked to do so within a framework designed to get information effectively and efficiently.

Recently, Transform SC completed a project entitled the **Profile of the South Carolina Graduate**. This project has been approved by the South Carolina Association of School Administrator’s Superintendents’ Roundtable, the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce, the Education Oversight Committee, the State Board of Education, and the Superintendent of Education. The profile sets out three areas of critical importance to our graduates: **World Class Knowledge, World Class Skills, and Life and Career Characteristics**.

With those areas in mind, these questions become crucial:

- Are the schools in your area producing high school graduates who have mastered rigorous language arts and math standards so that they are ready for college or careers?
- Do your schools offer multiple languages, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, arts, and social sciences?
- Is there creativity and innovation within the schools?
- Is there critical thinking and problem solving?
- Is there collaboration and teamwork?
- Is there communication, information, media, and technology?
- Are they learning how to learn?
- Are they learning integrity, self-direction, a global perspective, perseverance, work ethic, and interpersonal skills?
- What is the role of the local school district and your local community when it comes to education?
- What should the state do to support the local districts?
- If the local districts do not meet their responsibilities, how should the state respond?
- Should the state have a responsibility for local facilities, and, if so, what oversight should it have?
- How could school leadership in your area be improved?
- If you could change one thing about public education in South Carolina, what would it be?
- How can rural, low wealth districts improve the quality, stability, and effectiveness of its teachers to achieve the world class knowledge, skills, and life and career characteristics in the Profile of the Graduate?
- What can be done to support rural communities in building capacity for long term educational success by strengthening and sustaining collaboration among community, parent, business and education leaders?
- What critical areas need improvement in each level of schooling, especially for high-poverty students, to provide their students with high quality learning opportunities and experiences that put them on a path to achieve the Profile of the Graduate.
- What is working and what needs to be improved to provide high quality early childhood education with better family engagement, birth through age four, so that young children with risk factors are ready for school and to enter their path to the Profile of the Graduate?
- When students fall behind along the path to achieve the Profile of the Graduate, what additional family involvement and learning opportunities through afterschool and summer programs are needed?
- What changes in policies, regulations, and funding are needed to modernize the school transportation system so that rural students have shorter transportation times and more access to vocational, career and technology, and dual enrollment opportunities off campus, and quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities.

Before presenting to the Task Force, please keep this framework in mind. The General Assembly cannot cure every ill facing education, but it can act in the areas where it is best able. Answers to one or many of the questions will help guide the debate.