



SOUTH CAROLINA CHAMBER of COMMERCE

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND PLANS FOR SOUTH CAROLINA

Summary of a Presentation to the Senate Education Committee by Jim Reynolds, Chair
of South Carolina Chamber of Commerce Education Committee
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The business community, working in collaboration with education leaders, advocates a comprehensive approach to education and workforce development that covers the spectrum of K-12, higher education and adult workforce training.

- From 2010 to 2030 jobs in South Carolina will grow by 16% while the traditional labor pool available to fill these jobs will grow only 7% based on current trends – a 9% gap that equates to 200,000 jobs without people by 2030.
- 85% of jobs require education beyond high school – technical college, four year college or technical training.
- If South Carolina's high school graduation rate matched the highest rate in the nation starting now, by 2025 the state's workforce will still be 120,000 people short.

South Carolina must prepare the pipeline through K-12 and higher education and also re-engage adult workers who are under-skilled and underemployed. Listed below are the key strategies identified by business and education leaders to ensure a competitive workforce over the next twenty years.

1. Invest in early childhood education to ensure students are prepared to succeed when they enter school.
2. Through the Education and Economic Development Act, known as Personal Pathways to Success, students and adults see the relevance of education to career choices and goals.
 - Career counselors guide individual graduation plans for all students beginning in the eighth grade. Students choose a cluster of study aligned with their career goals and plan courses to complete a major by graduation. Parent participation in the planning sessions is running 70% across the state, a dramatic increase in parent involvement. One mother in the Charleston area told the counselor: "This is the first time I have been called to the school when it was not a discipline problem. Thank you for helping my boy see a future for himself."
 - At Risk programs, proven to keep students on schedule to graduate, have been implemented in every high school in the state. In 2008, 21,000 students were enrolled in the programs. Two of the programs, Star Academy and Jobs for America's Graduates, have achieved a 90%+ success rate in keeping high risk students in school and moving to the next grade.
 - Dual credit courses provide a seamless transition to higher education. There are 11,000 high school students in the state enrolled in dual credit courses.
 - Twelve Regional Education Centers engage employers with students and adult workers aligned to economic development strategies in their regions. Using the

Connect2Business web-based platform found at www.scpathways.org employers are able to provide job shadowing and internships to students. At the same site, adult workers can access tools to explore careers, education and training and look for jobs. In February, public library staffs across the state were trained on Connect2Business to help the large influx of adults using library computers to search for jobs. The www.scpathways.org site, free to all in South Carolina, can connect people without jobs to the jobs without people.

- The Personal Pathways IT platform that includes the College and Career Planning System, the electronic Individual Graduation Plan, Connect2Business and Kuder Journey for Adults provides web-based education and career planning for students, parents, educators and adult workers. This data platform also provides data analysis to support economic development planning by county and by region.
3. The Technical College System connects adults to education, skills and jobs through its associate degree and certificate programs as well as Continuing Education courses. In addition, the following targeted programs partner with employers to get adults trained and into high need jobs.
- Through the Registered Apprenticeship Office at the SC Technical College System, employers are helped to set up federally approved apprenticeships for their employees improving recruiting, retention, productivity and quality. South Carolina is adding one new program a week and is starting to close a large competitive gap with neighboring states.
 - Through QuickJobs programs, technical colleges identify jobs that are in high demand and develop 3-6 month training programs in which qualified adults can gain the skills to fill the jobs with local employers. There are four pilot sites for this program and it needs to be expanded statewide.
 - Retool Carolina is designed to retrain existing workers for higher skill jobs to keep existing industries competitive and to attract new businesses to the state that require a higher skilled workforce. This program needs to be funded and implemented.
 - South Carolina's Adult Education system does a good job with the adults it enrolls awarding approximately 6,000 GED's per year. The state needs to be awarding 20,000 GED's per year and those GED's should be a seamless entry to education and training for higher skilled jobs. Having Adult Education more closely tied to the Technical College System is an important step in achieving that goal.
4. Four Year Colleges and Research Universities provide a foundation for the knowledge economy.
- The Endowed Chairs Program is a long-term investment in building research capacity partnered with private industry that can commercialize inventions and patents to create jobs in South Carolina. It is well designed, is beginning to show results and needs long-term commitment and funding.
 - Bridge and Reverse Bridge programs between technical colleges and four year colleges and universities enable students to acquire technical skills required by employers and liberal arts critical thinking skills so important in the knowledge economy. The IT industry highlights the importance of this blended education pathway.
 - South Carolina needs to expand access to needs based tuition assistance. The state does a good job with merit based assistance through the lottery scholarships. Many students needing to go to college cannot afford to continue their education

and as we re-engage the adult workforce in higher education, it is important that the state find ways to make higher education financially possible for many more people.

5. The State Workforce Investment Board working through the Workforce Development Office of the Department of Commerce has established a statewide strategic plan that encourages the local WIB's to increase emphasis on training and upgrading skills of the adult workforce served through the federal Workforce Investment Act. Working through One-Stops and in partnership with Technical Colleges, Adult Education, and community organizations, WIA is providing training for under and unemployed adults and youth to fill skill gaps and prepare the workforce for recovery. Training is focused on demand jobs such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, nuclear, and other local cluster initiatives.
 - From July 2005 through June 2008, adult participation in WIA increased 72%. During this same time period, the number of adults receiving training in WIA increased 47%. Youth participation in WIA experienced a 5% increase over the three-year period.
 - A signature program of the State WIB is the WorkKeys Career Readiness Certificate whereby adults and students can certify to employers their competence in reading and math skills needed on the job. Over 70,000 career readiness certificates have been issued in South Carolina, the third highest in the nation. More information about the program and about a free skill improvement curriculum can be found at <http://www.workforcesouthcarolina.com/>.
 - There is a need to align and coordinate workforce development programs and funds statewide. There needs to be a statewide strategic plan aligned with economic development goals. All agencies need to be convened to work collaboratively to increase effectiveness, reduce duplication and support economic development strategies of the state.

Economic development and education are completely entwined and South Carolina must have a comprehensive approach to education and workforce development that spans kindergarten to retirement. Leaders from the business community working closely with the leaders of the education and workforce development communities advocate strong commitment to these programs that are critical to this comprehensive strategic plan. As the Senate makes hard decisions regarding budgets for 2009-2010, we ask that this comprehensive strategic plan be a guide and that the following programs receive full support:

1. Sustain funding for 4K programs
2. Continue funding EEDA implementation
3. Continue funding Registered Apprenticeship program
4. Continue support for Endowed Chairs program
5. Establish Department of Workforce to coordinate statewide programs