

Preparing Students for College and Career Success: South Carolina Opens Its First Two New Tech Network Schools

The KnowledgeWorks subsidiary uses project-based learning and will implement its STEM approach at Scott's Branch High and Cougar New Tech.

CINCINNATI, Ohio (PRWEB) August 19, 2013



South Carolina today opened its first two [New Tech Network](#) high schools, including one in a community that holds a historic place in U.S. civil rights history. Funding for the schools came through a \$2.9 million Investing in Innovation (i3) grant from the U.S. Department of Education, matched by local and national funders.

Cougar New Tech Entrepreneurial Academy in Walterboro and Scott's Branch High School in Summerton are now part of the network of 130 schools across the country. New Tech Network (NTN), a subsidiary of [KnowledgeWorks](#), uses project-based learning as the primary method of instruction. Students collaborate on meaningful projects that instill deeper learning skills like critical thinking, creativity, and communication in order to answer challenging questions or solve complex problems.

In December 2011, KnowledgeWorks was awarded a \$2.9 million grant by the United States Department of Education to create two STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) New Tech High Schools at Scott's Branch and Colleton County High. KnowledgeWorks partnered with the Richard W. Riley Institute at Furman University, Clarendon 1 and Colleton County School Districts, the University of Texas – Tyler, and the Evaluation Center at the University of West Georgia to execute the grant.

Former U.S. Secretary of Education and South Carolina Governor Richard W. Riley, a member of KnowledgeWorks' board of directors, said the success of the schools can have a transformative impact on education in South Carolina.

"There is a critical need for STEM education in rural areas of the United States, and we expect the growth of New Tech Network schools in South Carolina to have a dramatic, positive impact on our region," Riley said. "At New Tech schools, we see students working in teams, solving problems and taking responsibility for their learning. I am confident these students will become successful members of tomorrow's work force."

New Tech Network President Lydia Dobyms, who is meeting with education officials Tuesday in Columbia, said she is pleased about the progress made in the communities over the past two years to transform the schools.

"We believe each student needs deeper learning skills and competencies to succeed in college and career. Our approach to teaching and learning helps prepare students for the ever-changing workplace," Dobyms said.

"These first two New Tech schools, and those that will follow, will help transform the I-95 corridor into a Corridor of Innovation for education and economic development in the state," said Jacki Martin, director of the Riley Institute's Center for Education Policy and Leadership.

In March of 2012 United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan held a town-hall style meeting at Scott's Branch High School, praising the community and motivating students to succeed. The Clarendon 1 School District that includes Scott's Branch in Summerton was part of a federal case – Briggs v. Elliot -- over inequitable

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“ ... With the added focus on STEM and partnering with the community, we expect these schools to play a key role in helping students graduate prepared for college and the careers of tomorrow. ”

transportation in the late 1940s that became the foundation of the historic omnibus Supreme Court case known as Brown v. Board of Education in 1954. Scott's Branch High School was featured in the case.

KnowledgeWorks President and Chief Executive Officer Judy Peppler said the new schools hold the promise of a new way of thinking about education.

"New Tech schools are helping students learn how to think critically, work collaboratively and solve problems," Peppler said. "With the added focus on STEM and partnering with the community, we expect these schools to play a key role in helping students graduate prepared for college and the careers of tomorrow."

About New Tech Network

The New Tech design is a blueprint, accompanied by a set of core beliefs, tools, and strategies to help each school fulfill its purpose. New Tech design principles provide for an instructional approach centered on project-based learning, a culture that empowers students and teachers, and integrated use of technology in the classroom. Through extensive professional development, personalized coaching and access to Echo—a learning management system—NTN empowers principals, teachers, and students to develop compelling, relevant and meaningful learning communities.

About KnowledgeWorks

KnowledgeWorks is a social enterprise that is working in more than 40 states to improve the numbers of students who graduate ready for college or career by incubating innovative school and community approaches, influencing education policy, and engaging in education research and development. Our portfolio includes New Tech Network, EDWorks Partners and Strive. Follow KnowledgeWorks on Twitter. Like us on Facebook.

About the Riley Institute

The Richard W. Riley Institute of Government, Politics, and Public Leadership is a multi-faceted, non-partisan institute affiliated with the Department of Political Science at Furman University. Named for former Governor of South Carolina and United States Secretary of Education Richard Riley, the Institute is unique in the United States in the emphasis it places on engaging students and the community on three fronts, including public education, diversity leadership, and politics, policy and leadership.



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