TransformSC Schools Share Early Results

Spring Conference Highlights Data from Four Schools

COLUMBIA, SC – TransformSC schools participated in the initiative’s spring conference, sharing progress after participating in TransformSC for one school year. From increased parent participation to increased student achievement, educators are seeing results.

“TransformSC’s coalition is impacting the public education system from the ground up,” said Pamela Lackey, co-chair of TransformSC and state president of AT&T. “Each of our schools and districts has innovative superintendents, principals and teachers stepping up to lead.”

Early Results: A Look at Four TransformSC Schools

Lexington District Four’s Early Childhood Center serves the rural communities of Swansea and Gaston and has an 86.9 poverty index. The Early Childhood Center has implemented an all-day Montessori model for three-, four-, and five-year-olds, along with a parent engagement program called “PALS.” According to a nationally recognized assessment called “Dial 3,” students’ motor skills increased 12%, language skills increased 9%, and concept skills increased 14%. Literacy scores improved by 10%, but the most dramatic progress was shown in parent engagement, which increased by 400%.

“The TransformSC initiative is unique because it aligns a coalition of support across the spectrum of development from early childhood to higher education,” said Lillian Atkins, Principal of Lexington 4 Early Childhood Center. “The Early Childhood Center is thankful for the opportunity to participate in TransformSC and unite with our peers around a common goal.”

Oakland Elementary School in Inman has implemented project-based learning for its 4K–4 grade students. The curriculum focuses on building skills like problem-solving and critical thinking. Using this model, Oakland Elementary earned the highest report card rating of all elementary schools in Spartanburg County. Its federal report card rating improved from 92.8 in 2013, to 99.9 in 2014. Oakland’s students are also achieving higher standardized test scores than its district average in English language arts, math, social studies and writing.

“TransformSC has begun to create a culture of innovation within schools and districts,” said Josh Patterson, Principal of Oakland Elementary School. “This new culture facilitates collaboration in developing new learning models and generates excitement among educators working to implement new approaches in the classroom.”

Whittemore Park Middle School in Conway, a school with a 98.8 poverty index, has implemented a blended learning model that helped the school raise its state report card grade from a ‘D’ to a ‘B’ in just one academic year. Whittemore-Park’s students receive a personal electronic device with a customized dashboard. The technology allows teachers to continuously monitor students’ progress and to personalize daily content for students. Twenty-two 6th graders mastered 6th grade math standards and moved on to 7th grade math last school year. Standardized test scores have improved in all student groups every quarter. Whittemore Park has been
so successful that the Horry County School District is planning to implement its model district-wide.

**Cougar New Tech Entrepreneurial Academy**, a school within a school at Colleton High School in rural Walterboro, implemented a nationally recognized project-based learning model for high schools called “New Tech.” Eighty 9th grade students are participated in the model last year, and discipline referrals among that group declined by 90%. Students’ average reading level increased by two years in just nine months’ time. Performance on the Algebra 1 end-of-course exam increased 12%, and there were 74% fewer failures due to absences.

**Profile of the South Carolina Graduate**

The TransformSC coalition of educators, parents, students, business leaders and policymakers is united around common vision: The Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. The Profile acts as a guide to the knowledge, skills and characteristics students need to be successful. It has been adopted by TransformSC’s network of 37 schools, the South Carolina Association of School Administrators, the State Board of Education, the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce and the Education Oversight Committee.

“For the first time in decades, educators, business leaders, policy makers, parents and students agree on a vision for the successful graduate. It will be a long-term effort for our early results to scale, but the momentum is incredible. We believe that with continued engagement of all groups in our coalition, we can make a positive difference across the state,” said Mike Brenan, co-chair of TransformSC and State President of BB&T.

**About TransformSC**

TransformSC, an education initiative of the South Carolina Council on Competitiveness, is a collaboration of business leaders, educators, students, parents and policy makers transforming the public education system so that every student graduates prepared for careers, college and citizenship. TransformSC schools and districts are designing, launching, promoting and proving transformative practices in the classroom. Currently there are 37 schools and 3 districts in the TransformSC network. For more information, visit www.sccompetes.org/transformsc.