New Tech schools to expand to 6 more counties

Former Gov. Riley is driving force behind program

By Baker Maulsby, contributing writer

May 30, 2014 -- Melissa Crosby is convinced that innovations at the school where she teaches -- Colleton County High School -- are making a positive difference in the lives of teenagers. She is confident that good things are in store in the coming year at six more schools across the state.

Crosby, director of the Cougar New Tech Entrepreneurial Academy, and her students are part of an science-focused initiative sponsored and partly funded by the Richard W. Riley Institute of Government, Politics and Public Leadership at Furman University.

Scott’s Branch High School in Clarendon County School District 1 is the only other school in South Carolina that is currently part of the New Tech Network. But six other middle and high schools in four districts are working with the Riley Institute to become involved in the 2014-2015 school year.

Crosby said the New Tech concept in her “school within a school” seeks to provide students with the skills, information and insights to leave high school prepared to take on the 21st century demands of higher education and the modern-day workplace.

“We are helping them to show the ability to handle more responsibility,” she said. “The students are working in teams, working under project deadlines. They are learning to manage their time. They are doing things that normal 14- and 15-year-olds don’t do.”

Schools that will become part of the New Tech Network later this year include: Lake City High School, Florence County; McNair High Middle School, Florence County; Carolina High School, Greenville County; * J.L. Mann High School, Greenville County; * Myrtle Beach High School, Horry County; * Brookland-Cayce High School, Lexington County. (NNTN schools marked with * will be part of an existing school.

Part of a national program that intrigued Riley

New Tech Network is a nonprofit school development organization based in Napa, California. It works with states and school districts to create project-based programs that foster teamwork, leadership and creativity.

Riley became intrigued with the approach when he was the nation’s Secretary of Education under President Bill Clinton, said Courtney Nantz, project director for the Riley Institute’s Center for Education Policy and Leadership. He was eager to bring schools in his home state under the New Tech umbrella, she added.

Partial funding for the programs at Scott’s Branch and Colleton County high schools has come from a federal Investing in Innovation (i3) grant secured by the Riley Institute. But Nantz stressed local districts are providing the bulk of the funding for the New Tech Network programs debuting this fall.
Beyond the six schools slated to come aboard next school year, Nantz said at least a half dozen more will join in two years. The Riley Institute has not released the names of those schools yet because districts are still working to hammer out details and secure local support.

The Institute, in partnership with the S.C. Department of Education, will continue to support teacher training and to provide technical support for participating schools. But its role also includes building community and business support for the concept, Nantz said.

More hands-on learning ... and a recruiting tool

The New Tech Network is part of a trend to infuse hands-on learning and an emphasis in math and science into the traditional classroom. STEM, an acronym for Science, Math, Engineering and Technology, is a related curriculum that increasingly common in South Carolina schools.

Nantz said communities have so far embraced the New Tech Network because its schools reflect the realities of the business world.

“The New Tech approach has demonstrated since the mid-90s that project-based learning in an environment that mirrors the 21st century workplace is effective in all sorts of schools – rural, urban, suburban, high-poverty or not,” she said.

Colleton County High School principal Cliff Warren said business leaders in his community have been extremely supportive in the first year of the New Tech program.

“Business folks love it,” he said. “Our county’s economic development coordinator loves it. He brings people by to see what we’re doing. It’s a recruiting tool for our county.”

Baker Maultsby, a veteran reporter and teacher who lives in Spartanburg, is a new contributor for Statehouse Report.

**RECENT NEWS STORIES**

- 5/23: Budget battle easing
- 5/16: Haley administration’s “unique” food stamp proposal
- 5/9: Starving and carving state roads
- 5/2: DSS giving state another black eye
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**photo**

**Dirt road, Williamsburg County, S.C.**

More than 1,000 miles of dirt roads criss-cross the 937 square miles of rural Williamsburg County, says retired editor and photographer Linda W. Brown of Kingsstree, S.C. **See more pictures** of the rural South.

**legislative agenda**

**Germans in South Carolina**

Continued from previous edition

The number of new north-German immigrants (Neudeutsch) overwhelmed the small institutional base of the Aldeutsch community. In order to define their own path to success, a group of emergent Neudeutsch leaders created a diversified German-America in the city-one that was based in a blend of Aldeutsch, Charleston, and German forms. The organizations they started became the basis for the strong pan-German ethnic community that grew to its apex just before the onset of the Civil War. Clearly, the Neudeutsch and the Aldeutsch had reached an accommodation.

Charleston’s German-America was prosperous in the 1850s, with a German grocery or other retail store on almost every corner, its own newspaper (the Deutsche Zeitung), a firefighting company, several fraternal and sports organizations, six militia companies, and two Lutheran churches. Several more enterprising immigrants made the trek to develop a German colony at Walhalla in Oconee County, establishing hotels and other businesses, where the wealthy among Charleston’s Germans made their summer homes. Few problems were experienced during the anti-immigrant Know-Nothing period, simply because South Carolina’s German immigrants adopted the values-states’ rights and slavery among them-of their new homeland. During the Civil War, South Carolina’s Germans fought and died to preserve those values, resulting in their almost complete assimilation into South Carolina society.

The Civil War effectively ended German immigration to South Carolina, despite the state’s efforts to encourage it—in part from a desire to maintain a white voting majority. Separate attempts at promoting German immigration in the 1860s, 1880s, and early twentieth century brought negligible results. Later, both Charleston’s and Lexington’s German Americans opposed America’s entry into World War I. Once war was declared, however, they fully supported the cause. German American influence in South Carolina had waned, however, to the point that the Deutsche Zeitung ceased publication in 1917.

Estimated at 15,000 in 1775 and some 30,000 in 1790, Germans had once comprised more than twenty percent of the state’s free population. By 1870 their number decreased to 2,754, and by 1920, only 1,079 South Carolinians reported being “German-born.” South Carolina’s Germans were a
Conference committees head into final week

The last week of the two-year legislative session will see lots of behind-the-scenes wrangling and horse-trading as lawmakers try to get final approval on the 2014-15 budget, major ethics reform and other measures in compromise committees of House and Senate members.

- **Ethics reform.** A conference committee will meet 9:30 a.m. June 3 in the Statehouse's third floor conference room.

- **Cell phones.** A conference committee will meet 2 p.m. June 3 in the Statehouse's third floor conference room to discuss a measure limiting cell phone use when driving. More.

- **Bonds.** The Joint Bond Review Commission will meet 9 a.m. June 4 in 105 Gressette to discuss green building certifications, a DSS lease and several permanent improvement projects. More.

--- Excerpted from the entry by Michael Everette Bell. To read more about this or 2,000 other entries about South Carolina, check out The South Carolina Encyclopedia by USC Press. (Information used by permission.)

### Palmetto Politics

**Worth more than 1,000 words**

This picture kind of speaks for itself. In what was likely not a testament to the Harlem Globetrotters, the Legislators (pictured) reportedly beat the Lobbyists by two points, 49-47.

### Commentary

**D is for dysfunctional**

By Andy Brack, editor and publisher

MAY 30, 2014 -- By any reasonable measure, the General Assembly gets a grade of "D" for its legislative performance -- or lack thereof -- over the two-year session that soon draws to a close.

In this case, "D" is for dysfunction. Why? Because members of the legislature continue to thwart progress for the real needs of everyday South Carolina by paying just too much attention to nonsense and their own political hides. Where, one can easily ask, is real leadership that seeks to push the Palmetto State into the 21st century?

Of the 204 bills ratified and sent to Gov. Nikki Haley to be signed into law over the last two years, she vetoed only four, not counting certain parts of last year's budget. Of the remaining bills that became law, the vast majority dealt with the arcane -- state armories (four); wildlife(17), such as limits on how much tarpon can be caught daily; school-related measures (20), such as snow days or changes for specific school districts; realigned voting precincts or election laws (23) and miscellaneous local legislation.

diverse lot, and contributed much to the social, political, and cultural history of the state. As they settled, they brought their culture with them, and developed a unique blend of Germanic and South Carolina culture. Exemplified through such diverse manifestations as the state's Lutheran Church, folk art traditions, and the mustard-based barbecue sauce of the Dutch Fork area, South Carolina's Germans found ways to both adjust to their adopted homeland, and maintain their Germanic culture and traditions.

--- Excerpted from the entry by Michael Everette Bell. To read more about this or 2,000 other entries about South Carolina, check out The South Carolina Encyclopedia by USC Press. (Information used by permission.)

### Palmetto Priorities

Statehouse Report encourages state leaders to develop and implement Palmetto Priorities involving several issues to make the state better a better place.

Click the link to learn more about our suggestions for bipartisan policy objectives.

Here is a summary of our Palmetto Priorities:

**Correction:** Reduce the prison population by 25 percent by 2020.

**Education:** Cut the state's dropout rate in half by 2020.

**Elections:** Increase voter registration to 75 percent by 2015.

**Environment:** Adopt a state energy policy that requires energy producers to generate 20 percent of energy from renewable sources by 2020.

**Ethics:** Overhaul state ethics laws.

**Health Care:** Ensure affordable and accessible health care.

**Jobs:** Develop a Cabinet-level post to add, retain 10,000 small business jobs per year.

**Politics:** Have a vigorous two- or multi-party political system of governance.

**Roads:** Strengthen all bridges and upgrade state roads by 2015.

**Safety:** Cut the state's violent crime rate by one-third by 2016.

**Tax Reform:** Remove outdated special interest sales tax exemptions as part of an overall reform of the state's tax structure to be completed by 2014.

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### Your Commentary Sought

Every week in our new My Turn section, we seek guest commentaries on issues of public
Yes, there were some successes, most notably in education as lawmakers increased 4-year-old kindergarten funding by $25 million last year and are poised to do it again this year and they infused tens of millions into a reading program for early learners. But at what cost? As in many recent years, lawmakers didn’t follow the state’s school funding formula, which requires them to appropriate about $2,800 per pupil. Instead, the proposed budget calls for $2,120 per student. Multiply that by 708,231 expected students and it’s easy to see how schools got shortchanged ten times as much as the new funding will provide. Over the last six years, lawmakers have underfunded public K-12 education by more than $3 billion.

Another much-touted success was the new Department of Administration, a bill envisioned originally to give the governor more control over state agencies. But last-minute compromises eroded the real reform of the bill into little more than a name change -- kind of like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

Successes from 2013 included a big incentive package for Boeing, tax rebates to lure more movies to be made here, the new Public Employees Benefit Authority, a controversial photo identification requirement for voters and laxer rules to promote venture capital investment. In 2014, lawmakers got rid of a high school exit exam requirement, named a state fossil (the woolly mammoth) and toughened rules on drunken driving. And somewhere in all of that hoopla was the measure that lets folks take guns into bars and restaurants, yet another nod to America’s weird fascination with guns and more guns.

But look at all of the things that are missing in action:

- No Medicaid expansion to allow 200,000 people to get access to Obamacare.
- No reform of the Department of Social Services, which is under increasing attack for not protecting vulnerable children.
- No real reform of the state Department of Corrections, which is under a court order to improve conditions for the mentally ill.
- No systemic tax reform to better balance revenues, such as eliminating billions of giveaways from sales tax exemptions.
- No real efforts to deal with South Carolina’s hungry. Some 890,000 people in the state -- one in five -- get federal food stamps. Meanwhile the Haley administration wants a pilot program in three counties to curb people from getting them.

With less than a week to go in the session, two major pieces of legislation continue to vie for a compromise as lawmakers wheedle and cajole to get passage -- real ethics reform and more money for highways, which are in a pitiful state. Don’t be surprised if neither passes.

Legislators are generally good people. But the environment in which they work -- a state still gripped by a plantation mentality and a lack of a common agenda to push the state forward -- makes it hard to get tough things done. Add to that the ascendance of the narrow agenda of tea party and now reasonable people have a harder time solving real problems because they’re fending off more craziness.

Andy Brack is editor and publisher of Statehouse Report. He can be reached at: brack@statehousereport.com.

- 5/23: Could Dems, indys be secret GOP weapon?
- 5/16: Government in private isn’t acceptable
- 5/9: Drop Hitlerian rhetoric
- spending
- MORE BRACK: See our archives
South Carolina Hospital Association

The public spiritedness of our underwriters allows us to bring Statehouse Report to you at no cost. This week’s spotlighted underwriter is the South Carolina Hospital Association, the Palmetto State’s foremost advocate on healthcare issues affecting South Carolinians. The mission of SCHA is to support its members in addressing the healthcare needs of South Carolina through advocacy, education, networking and regulatory assistance.

Founded in 1921, the South Carolina Hospital Association is the leadership organization and principal advocate for the state’s hospitals and health care systems. Based in Columbia, SCHA works with its members to improve access, quality and cost-effectiveness of health care for all South Carolinians. The state’s hospitals and health care systems employ more than 70,000 persons statewide. SCHA’s credo: We are stronger together than apart.

• To learn more about SCHA and its mission, go to: http://www.scha.org.

❖ feedback

CHE says it didn’t break the law

To the editor:

I am writing in reference to the commentary concerning the Commission on Higher Education that appears in the current edition of the Statehouse Report under Palmetto Politics.

We are well aware of the state’s FOIA provisions regarding open meeting requirements (§30-4-60) and those related to keeping written minutes (§30-4-60). The commission, like many other state agencies, has a longstanding practice of including in its written record of meetings the attendance of both members and guests. In keeping with this practice, individuals attending the recent public hearings and subsequent business meeting of the Commission’s Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing were asked to sign in; however, no one was refused admittance if they elected not to sign in as requested. As a result, the commentary in your Report that individuals were denied access to a public meeting is false.

We respectfully request that you correct the misinformation in the Statehouse Report. Thank you for your attention.


Dear Ms. Carullo: With all due respect, there’s nothing to correct. The news item (not a “commentary”) did not say anyone was denied admittance. It said people were forced to “sign in to get access.” State law does not authorize an agency to require people to sign lists to attend meetings. On May 19, your agency was quite insistent about attendees signing in. We’d appreciate a reference to a provision in state law that allows you to make this kind of list. Section 30-4-60, which you mention, is pretty simple (20 words) and makes no reference to lists or minutes, as highlighted below. -- Andy Brack

SECTION 30-4-60. Meetings of public bodies shall be open.
Every meeting of all public bodies shall be open to the public unless closed pursuant to Section 30-4-70 of this chapter.

Keep up the good work

This is my first time to say this, but long past due. I love this Statehouse Report. It comes weekly to my email. Sometimes I don’t always get to read it, but I find it very informative for me and my business.
Keep up the good work. Thank you!

-- Steve Maginnis, Rock Hill, S.C.

Don’t keep your opinions to yourself. We love hearing from our readers and encourage you to share your opinions. But you’ve got to provide us with contact information so we can verify your letters. Letters to the editor are published weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity. We generally publish all comments about South Carolina politics or policy issues, unless they are libelous or unnecessarily inflammatory. One submission is allowed per month. Submission of a comment grants permission to us to reprint. Comments are limited to 250 words or less. Please include your name and contact information. Send your letters to:

• feedback@statehouserreport.com

❖ scorecard

From McConnell moving on to Koller must go

 téléchargement McConnell. It makes all of the sense in the world for Lt. Gov. Glenn McConnell to step down a month early so he isn’t pulled between his current job and the one he starts in July at the College of Charleston. Thanks for your years of service in the General Assembly. More.

 téléchargement Ethics. Our fingers are crossed that there will be major ethics reform as a conference committee meets next week, the last of a two-year session. Don’t throw away two years of work. Pass a bill. More.

 téléchargement Hutto. Pretty neat trick to get the Democratic Party’s endorsement before the June 10 primary. Of course, opponent Jay Stamper’s past didn’t hurt this move by the party. More.

 téléchargement Intelligent design. Hats off to several GOP state superintendent candidates for backing science and not falling into the non-evolution “intelligent design” trap laid by uber-conservative candidate Sheri Pew. More.

 téléchargement Koller. It’s time for DSS director Lillian Koller to read the tea leaves, pack her bags and hit the road. More senators are calling for her head ... and now the newspapers are catching on (finally). It certainly didn’t help that a report shows a third of DSS workers have high caseloads.

 téléchargement Fair. It’s blatantly wrong -- or shall we say un”fair” -- for Sen. Mike Fair to stand in the way of a bill that would reform the state’s 26-year-old sex education laws. Release the hold and allow the Senate to vote.

 téléchargement Nuclear waste. Thumbs down to the possibility of SRS taking a ton of German radioactive waste. More.

❖ credits

Statehouse Report

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