

## Panelists

Nonprofit: Karen Woodward, Superintendent Lexington School District One

Business: Jim Reynolds, CEO, Total Comfort Solutions

### 1. What, as succinctly as possible, is TransformSC working to accomplish?

We want to put significant resources into effective, proven education transformation and ensure it does not happen in isolation, but rather that a strong network will replicate and magnify effective innovation.

TransformSC's "R & D" prototyping approach is aimed toward shifting from an 20th system of learning to a new system of learning that is necessary to prepare our graduates for a different kind of workplace.

TransformSC will support grassroots innovators committed to public school transformation throughout the state with the aim of helping South Carolina's PK-12 system to dramatically increase the number of students graduating ready for career and college without remediation and with the necessary knowledge, skills and characteristics to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, both on Wall Street and Main Street.

### 2. Why – what are the particular challenges TransformSC is addressing?

South Carolina's schools, students and communities are unprepared for success in an increasingly complex and technological workplace

### 3. What are the essential, major elements of the TransformSC enterprise, e.g., major education, healthcare (including mental health, housing, employment)?

TransformSC will spur productive innovation by developing a "pipeline" of rigorously evaluated, radically innovative systemic approaches to education that are proven to prepare South Carolina's students with the knowledge, skills and characteristics necessary to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace, both on Wall Street and Main Street. It will create a statewide grassroots education network and share knowledge with them about these proven innovations, and it will advocate for policy changes necessary to support them.

- Build statewide coalition and grassroots network
- Identify desired prototypes and select sites
- Measure rigorously
- Share knowledge
- Support associated policy changes

### 4. What areas/communities does TransformSC serve? Characterize the community.

The state of South Carolina. Depending on the formula used, SC's high school graduation rate ranks between 41<sup>st</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation, with approximately 20,000 children dropping out of the state's high schools each year. The percentage of college-educated people is 39<sup>th</sup> nationally, and the state ranked 40<sup>th</sup> in median household income in 2010. This positions South Carolina

poorly for success in an increasingly complex marketplace, and that is reflected in the wellbeing of its population. In the past decade, South Carolinians lost more than \$5,000 a year in median household income -- about 11% -- between 2000 and 2012, even as costs of living increased. During that time, 300,000 more South Carolinians fell below the poverty line, set at a woefully inadequate \$24,000 for a family of four. That means one in five of the state's residents live in poverty, and more than 60% of our school children are eligible for free or reduced meals. Reflecting on those statistics, it is sobering to realize that economic mobility in South Carolinians' prime working years—that is, their ability to move up the income ladder—is among the lowest in the nation.

#### **5. When did TransformSC begin?**

TransformSC began work in early 2013. The steering committee which gave rise to it met throughout 2012, in response to an November 2011 request from the state Board of Education to create a steering committee to develop a plan to catalyze, evaluate and spread effective education innovations in the state.

#### **6. Who is involved – partners?**

- New Carolina (nonprofit focusing on SC economic competitiveness)
- SC Chamber of Commerce and leading businesses including AT&T, BB&T Bank, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Michelin N.A., Bank of America, Palmetto Health
- District Superintendents across the state
- SC General Assembly
- SC Board of Education
- SC Department of Education
- SC Education Oversight Committee (ongoing review of the state's education improvement process, assesses outcomes, and evaluates standards)
- SC Association of School Administrators
- SC School Board Association
- The Riley Institute at Furman (Institute working with education policy, statewide leadership development, and issues critical to the state's progress)

#### **7. What has TransformSC accomplished to date? What successes is it seeing?**

- Stakeholders coalition and grassroots network for sharing knowledge, improving practice and replicating successful innovation are in place and growing, operating on both a traditional and virtual platform
- Development of a specific description of the graduate we need , including knowledge, skills and "soft" skills
- Identification of the components of a new system of learning.
- Pilot sites implementing systemic innovations have been established throughout the state, including elementary, middle and high school models.

- Transformative elements being measured include project-based learning, evidence-based instruction and blending learning (part online, part on site)
- Rigorous evaluation system being put in place; indicators that will be measured include student engagement; affective skills such as critical thinking, communication, self-motivation and regulation; content knowledge; trajectory; and climate for change