

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Erica Taylor
Chief Officer

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Contact:
Erica Taylor 843-937-6303

Media Release

Shared Future Project Continues CCSD Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

Charleston, SC – Discussions about equity and inclusion in Charleston County School District, recently identified in a Clemson University study, are the centerpiece of a collaborative process called Shared Future, which began its work last week with a 27-member team of stakeholders from diverse backgrounds.

In August, representatives from Clemson University's Office of Inclusion and Equity shared with the Charleston County School Board their findings from their Inclusion and Equity Study over a six-month research process. In addition to their findings, the Clemson team recommended that CCSD continue the work using local stakeholders and an outside facilitator to delve deeper into the concerns raised in their report.

The work will continue as part of the Shared Future Project, a process designed to integrate and build on results of CCSD initiatives such as the Clemson Study on Inclusion and Equity, the Charleston County School District's Strategic Plan, and Phase V of the Charleston County School Construction Plan, along with non-traditional approaches to education being discussed in the community, and required employment skills identified by the business community. As part of the follow through, the report recommended that a team of experts be created to determine what resources and management authority is needed to improve the performance of students and will be presented within three months. CCSD has contracted with Reos Partners to facilitate the Shared Future Project. Once plans are identified and created, with assistance from Reos Partners, CCSD staff and community members will determine how to implement the plans that address the concerns addressed in Clemson University's study.

The Clemson group's recommendations came after they conducted interviews and discussions with a wide range of CCSD stakeholders, including teachers, students, district personnel, and

community members. They researched and analyzed issues related to diversity, inclusion, and sources of tension throughout the district.

The Clemson study included these major recommendations:

- Close the gaps in performance and achievement
- Make school district governance more efficient, accountable, and credible
- Reform the system to ensure access to quality schools
- Engage community stakeholders
- Restructure utilizing the 2020 school improvement referendum as a catalyst to achieve equitable opportunities for all schools
- Follow through with action on the recommendations

The Shared Future Process

- Phase 1: Initiate the project – Deliverable: synthesis of the perspectives, concerns, and questions of leaders from across the system
- Phase 2: Construct the implementation scenarios – Deliverable: a set of 2-3 useful implementation scenarios/plans
- Phase 3: Implementing the scenarios/plans - Specific strategies for creating educational outcomes that have been considered through the lens of possible futures we may encounter in Charleston County

The Shared Future Team

A team of 27-30 people, along with Reos staff, convened last week to engage in the first of three, 3-day scenario workshops (Sept., Oct., Nov.)

The team includes those who are insightful, influential, and interested and who have the capacity to make things happen. Team members bring their thinking, experiences, and energy together to construct the scenarios. They are individuals who agree that something must change but they may vastly differ on what needs to change and how. The team is diverse in that from their different positions and perspectives, they can understand and influence all of Charleston County's communities and they come from all facets of diversity – age, gender, race, and ethnicity.

Reos staff will help the team through the various steps of the transformative scenario planning process.

The scenario team is building a shared understanding of what is happening in the system. The process requires team members to see not just their part of the system but more of the whole system, and to open up and inquire and learn.

The third step is for the team to construct a useful set of scenarios about what could happen in and around their system. To be useful, the scenarios must be relevant, challenging, plausible, and clear.

The fourth step is for the team to see what their scenarios tell them about what they can and must do. These conclusions may be about actions that they need to take to adapt to things they cannot influence, or about actions to influence things they can. These conclusions may be about actions that they need to take jointly or separately.

In the fifth and final step, the members of the team act, with one another and with others from across the county, to transform their situation. These actions can take any number of forms: campaigns, meetings, movements, publications, projects, initiatives, institutions, or legislation; private or public; short-term or long-term.

The activities of this step, more than those of the previous steps, will therefore generally not be able to be foreseen or planned during the current phase of the project.

Reos' role is not to advise or instruct, but to guide and support.

To date, Reo's has conducted dialogue interviews with the Scenario Team and has published an unattributed synthesis of the perspectives, concerns and questions of leaders across the district.

Funding for the Shared Future process came from the CCSD procurement card (P- card) rebate program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE EMAIL:

Don Kennedy, Charleston County School District, donald_kennedy@charleston.k12.sc.us

John Read, Cradle to Career, johnread@tricitycradletocareer.org

Maurice Washington, CEO Trust Management, LLC. management@bellsouth.net

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