



NEWS RELEASE

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“Charter Schools-Providing Hope, Opportunity and Options,”

September 14, 2009 Columbia, SC: Dr. Jim Rex, SC State Superintendent of Education will be delivering this keynote address at the first statewide conference of the Palmetto Charter Network (PCN) on Friday, September 18.

The speech coincides with an effort for South Carolina to participate in significant “Race to the Top” funding that is being distributed to states with a strong commitment to the growth of quality charter school choices.

A young organization, PCN is growing rapidly with a mission to support the growth of quality charter schools. “We are delighted that Dr. Rex is appearing at our conference at a time when the push for the development of quality charter schools is a national priority,” states Mike Sinclair, President of the PCN. “We are pleased to be working with charter schools throughout the state, the South Carolina Department of Education, the South Carolina Public Charter School District and South Carolina Families in supporting the mission of developing and sustaining high quality public school choices.”

Dennis Bega, the Regional Representative of the US Department of Education from Atlanta, is also appearing to address the group. His speech, “Race to the Top – A Charter School Challenge,” focuses on the same national priority as State Superintendent Rex, namely, increasing quality choices for families and children with the development of charter public schools. “Race to the Top Funding” for the States is being led by US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

PCN’s first statewide conference, at the Downtown Columbia Marriot, features more than 20 workshops for charter school leaders, teachers and board members. Several other nationally prominent charter school experts will be addressing the conference including Mickey Revenaugh, Founding Vice President of Connections Academy and current President of the North American Council of Online Learning (NACOL). Connections Academies works with SC Connections Academy, a second year virtual school in the state that enrolls more than 1,200 students.

Senator Larry Grooms will be honored as the State Legislator of the year at the event; this award is bestowed by the organization on the legislator who has been the most instrumental in supporting the growth of charter public schools in the state during the past year. Senator Groom’s support for an increase in funding for schools authorized by the South Carolina Public Charter School District

(SCPCSD) was instrumental in securing funding for more than 6,000 students attending SCPCSD charter schools. This was the only funding increase for any state supported organization during the last school year.

For more information about the Palmetto Charter Network please visit our website at <http://www.palmettocharternetwork.org> .