



# REBUILDING SOUTH CAROLINA'S SCHOOLS

## Overview

South Carolina's children deserve to have their basic educational needs met, to include attending school in a safe and clean building. Governor Haley's 2016-17 education initiative proposes to address this need by developing a business process to evaluate, design, and fund schools in those areas that can no longer provide for education infrastructure.

## Challenges

South Carolina's many rural communities have seen both population and student attendance decline even as South Carolina becomes one of the fastest growing states in the nation. Declining populations and corresponding property tax base can drive the value of millage down to pennies on the dollar when compared to large and growing counties. Some school districts along the I-95 corridor may not be able to produce sufficient tax revenues to service a school facilities bond in the near future.

## Revitalizing Rural and Underserved Schools

Governor Haley's plan starts with a business process to first evaluate the condition of our schools statewide. This plan follows a course of facilities evaluation, creating a set of objective criteria for revitalization projects, prioritizing them, and funding projects in districts based on need and ability to pay. In this state-local partnership, the state would provide most, if not all, funding for school renovation and building projects, while local districts would construct schools in accordance with strict design and feature standards while also agreeing to certain financial constraints to ensure state funds are supplementing, and not supplanting, local funds.

Governance of this process would be a five-person committee, chaired by the Governor or designee, who will serve along with the Superintendent of Education, Director of the Department of Administration, and Chairs of the respective House and Senate education committees. This committee will oversee the evaluation, design, and funding of school rebuilding and construction projects statewide.

The FY 2016-17 Executive Budget proposes \$2.5 million for the Department of Education, in consultation with the Division of General Services at the Department of Administration, to contract with a facilities management specialist to create an accurate and comprehensive view of the condition of South Carolina's public schools.

Concurrently, the Department will contract to develop a stringent set of building standards or "templates", that allow school districts to build age- and size- appropriate schools, but with a defined set of amenities and basic layout. Complying with these standards is a condition of receiving funds.

Finally, Governor Haley proposes to set aside 1% of the state's General Obligation debt capacity for exclusive use of K-12 schools. Bonds may be initiated in annual lots no larger than \$200,000,000 upon recommendation of a majority of the committee, with the project list and principal amount forwarded to the State Fiscal Accountability Authority for final approval and issuance by the Treasurer.

School districts that benefit from such funding will enter into agreements with the state detailing the obligation of the districts to comply with procurement and construction standards, millage and other financial limitations as a condition of receiving aid, and maintenance schedules to ensure new and refurbished buildings are kept in good repair.