**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO HONOR AND COMMEND STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION JIM REX FOR NAVIGATING SOUTH CAROLINA’S PUBLIC SCHOOLS THROUGH SOME OF THEIR MOST CHALLENGING TIMES.

Whereas, Jim Rex served as South Carolina’s sixteenth State Superintendent of Education from January 2007 to January 2011; and

Whereas, Jim Rex believed in the power of public education and pursued an ambitious agenda for systemic reform, guiding the State to new levels of success and national acclaim in a variety of areas; and

Whereas, Jim Rex sought to reform the state’s accountability system and led efforts to replace the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests and change the state’s school report card system; and

Whereas, Jim Rex - using a collaborative approach - created the Palmetto Priority Schools initiative and subsequently, the Turnaround Schools project to provide historically challenged schools from impoverished areas with assistance to improve student achievement; and

Whereas, under Jim Rex’s leadership, the number of teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has increased every year since 2007; a 2010 report by the National Council on Teacher Quality recognized South Carolina as the best state in the nation for identifying and retaining effective teachers and dismissing ineffective teachers; and the 2010 *Quality Counts* national report card ranked South Carolina No. 1 in the nation for improving teacher quality; and

Whereas, under Jim Rex’s leadership, South Carolina’s pass-rate for the GED reached the highest level in history in 2008, when 73.1% of participants passed; and

Whereas, college scholarship totals for South Carolina high school graduates have increased every year since Dr. Rex took office, with the Class of 2010 earning more than $916 million in scholarships, bringing the total amount since 2007 to more than $3.85 billion; and

Whereas, Jim Rex made public school choice a cornerstone of his administration, working tirelessly to implement a wide range of curriculum options for parents wishing to see their children educated in different learning environments - his efforts making South Carolina a national leader in single-gender education, and increasing the number of charter and magnet schools; and

Whereas, Jim Rex has made public school innovation a trademark of his tenure, evident by initiatives like Connectivity in the Classroom, One Laptop Per Child, the GreenStern initiative, online GED registration, the Digital Textbook Pilot, and the expansion of both High Schools That Work and Making Middle Grades Work; and

Whereas, Jim Rex has advocated for tax and funding reform, commissioning a task force to offer recommendations for reforming the state’s public school funding system, and calling upon the Tax Realignment Commission to study this issue; and

Whereas, Jim Rex displayed a commitment to turn the infamous Corridor of Shame into a Corridor of Hope and worked with business and community leaders from across the nation to procure federal and private funds to help rebuild 100-year-old J.V. Martin Junior High School; and

Whereas, Jim Rex made the safety and health of students a priority, joining with the non-profit group Darkness to Light to establish a first-in-the-nation program designed to help prevent child sexual abuse through education and public awareness and by training more than 38,000 teachers; and

Whereas, Jim Rex fought for legislation to pre-screen substitute teachers, to end improper conduct by school employees, to reduce violence, to fight gang activity, and to decrease underage drinking; and

Whereas, Jim Rex worked to improve the teaching profession by partnering with the Department of Commerce to provide grants to rural communities that have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers, working to provide low-interest loans and down payment assistance for teachers seeking to purchase their first homes, and working with public and private sector partners to launch a Teacher Renewal Center; and

Whereas, Jim Rex has been the most interactive State Superintendent in South Carolina’s history, holding more than thirty town hall meetings and utilizing advances in technology to communicate with and receive feedback from community members. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, commends State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex for navigating South Carolina’s public schools through some of their most challenging times.

Be it further resolved that Dr. Rex’s efforts will be recorded as having built on the successes of previous leaders, and having left the state’s public education system more innovative, more flexible, more accountable, and better equipped to meet the needs of its young people and opportunities of the twenty-first century.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to South Carolina State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex.

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