

The Episcopal Church in South Carolina  
The Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina  
The Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston  
The Seventh Episcopal District, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church  
The South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church  
The South Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

An Open Letter to the General Assembly  
From the Fellowship of South Carolina Bishops Public Education Initiative

January 2018

Dear Members of the General Assembly:

In April of 2014 we issued a Statement on Public Education to the People of South Carolina. One of the goals of this statement was to name our belief that all children are created in the image of God and entitled to an excellent education. We know you share this belief. We recognize the work you as a body are doing to ensure all of our children receive the educational opportunities which are their right. Over the past few years, we have been gratified to join with you as partners in this work.

Knowing the many demands on you, we pray for you daily, individually, and corporately, as we gather to worship each week. We commend you for all that you do to better education in South Carolina. *Yet despite these efforts, we are still a long way from reaching the goal of excellent education for all of our children.*

Inequity in education delivery in our state cannot be remedied by the Legislature alone. The Courts cannot correct this injustice alone. Only together can we make a difference for the children of South Carolina. In light of the recent Supreme Court decision to end oversight of progress made, especially in rural schools, we renew our call to people of faith to join us in support of flourishing education for all children. It is now time for us to act where progress is on hold or stalled.

We reaffirm our commitment of our time and resources toward securing a first rate education for each child in South Carolina. The people of our congregations are resources, hundreds of whom tutor and mentor children. We can also call people into the vocation of teaching. We can support them when they respond to this call. We will continue to encourage people to pursue teaching as a vocation. We will freely offer the profession the respect it warrants.

Like you, we are aware of the hurdles for recruiting and retaining the best teachers: inadequate salaries, support of teachers and professional development. We seek action and improvement in all of these areas.

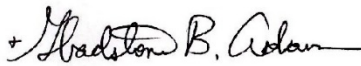
For example, we know as you do, that teacher salaries in SC fell from 39th lowest in the nation in 2013-2014 to 47th lowest in 2015-2016. It is clear that we must reverse this decline and compensate teachers at a competitive level.

We realize that the availability of technology is uneven in our school districts. Therefore, we support the Learning Management System and other technological infrastructure in our school districts where these resources are lacking.

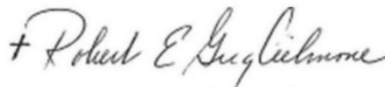
We believe it is our moral duty, and yours, to improve access to technology and excellent teachers in every classroom, because children without these resources will forever be behind those who have them.

We recognize the challenges of the delivery in all of these areas. Collaboration among districts will improve prospects of teachers and students in compromised parts of our State. We commend those who work across district lines to collaborate and consolidate resources. We stand ready to encourage these efforts in any way possible. We know this work will require all of us. We are here to work with you. We are calling on you to give this issue your greatest attention. We invite you to call on us.

Faithfully,



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in South Carolina



The Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo  
Bishop, Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Charleston



The Rev. L. Jonathan Holston  
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The Rev. James B. Walker  
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