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Collaborative Networks to Improve Outcomes in Kindergarten Readiness and High School Graduation

NORTH CHARLESTON – On Wednesday, March 11, the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative (TCCC) will host the first meetings of its Kindergarten Readiness and High School Graduation networks. These networks - composed of educators, administrators and leaders from business, non-profit, civic, health, government, faith-based and philanthropic organizations - are part of TCCC's collective impact approach to facilitating large-scale systemic change in the tri-county's education system.

With the support of TCCC, network partners will use established research, community-level data and local perspective to investigate the factors influencing kindergarten readiness and high school graduation rates. Partners will analyze what's working well in and out of the classroom, identifying unmet needs and recommending strategies to grow or adapt existing programs or to develop new programs to address unmet needs.

In addition to support from TCCC, each network will have the assistance of a trained facilitator to help guide the collaborative process and will be coordinated by a convening partner. According to TCCC CEO John Read, "Conveners and facilitators play important roles in this work by keeping the process moving forward and focused on results. They are uniquely positioned to engage and encourage collaboration across the diverse group of partners convened around each of these milestones."

The need for focused efforts around these two milestones was evident in TCCC's *2015 Regional Education Report*. Although kindergarten readiness is vital to later learning, 24% of tri-county kindergarteners are not proficient in vocabulary and 40% are not proficient in social and emotional development. Racial / ethnic disparities are apparent in vocabulary proficiency, which contribute to the achievement gap prevalent across the education continuum. While high school graduation rates have improved in recent years, the report also showed sharp contrasts in rates between racial/ethnic and socio-economic groups.

Based upon their ongoing commitment to early childhood development and their engagement with many organizations currently working in that sphere, Trident United Way has been selected to serve as convening partner for the Kindergarten Readiness network. The Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, a long-time champion for workforce readiness and advocate for experiential learning opportunities in high school, has been selected convening partner for the High School Graduation network.

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About the Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative

The Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative (TCCC) is a community-wide movement in Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties, South Carolina focused on improving the quality of life of its citizens and its workforce through education by collectively aligning resources and working toward common goals. Using data and focused community collaboration across a continuum from "cradle-to-career," TCCC works to build and implement strategies that will facilitate widespread systemic change, with the ultimate goal of increased student success and economic prosperity for all.