Public-Private Partnership to Implement Comprehensive Scholastic Excellence Program in Hartsville, S.C., Public Schools

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Darlington County School District, S.C. Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, Coker College and Sonoco Join Forces to Launch New PULSE Program

Yale University's Child Study Center to Join Initiative with Pilot School Development Program in Four Hartsville Elementary Schools

Sonoco to Support Programs with $5 Million Grant

HARTSVILLE, S.C., Feb 21, 2011 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- An unparalleled public-private partnership has been formed to implement a comprehensive scholastic excellence program in Hartsville public schools that will expand curriculum opportunities and further improve student achievement through collaborative academic and social development initiatives.

The PULSE (Partners for Unparalleled Local Scholastic Excellence) Program is a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership involving the Darlington County School District, the South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics (GSSM), Coker College and Sonoco. Sonoco will fund the initiative through a $5 million grant that will be paid over five years.

"The P.U.L.S.E. program will set the standard for public school education in South Carolina. Through the opportunities and promise of this new initiative, the Darlington County School District can and will be counted among the very best school districts our state has to offer," said Dr. Rainey Knight, superintendent of education, Darlington County School District.

Yale's Child Study Center to Help Create Pilot Elementary Student Development Program

A key component of the Hartsville PULSE initiative will be the implementation of a pilot School Development Program (SDP) at four Hartsville elementary schools that is focused on improving academic achievement and personal development. The program will be created with the assistance of Yale University's Child Study Center Comer School Development Program, which was founded in 1968 by Dr. James P. Comer, Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry and associate dean of the Yale School of Medicine. The nationally recognized Comer SDP model has been successfully implemented in hundreds of schools in more than 20 states, the District of Columbia, Trinidad and Tobago, South Africa, England and Ireland. The pilot program will begin in the 2011-2012 school year in Hartsville's Thornwell School for the Arts, Washington Street Elementary, West Hartsville Elementary and the Southside Early Childhood Center.

In future years, professional development programs for educators and multiple service learning activities offered at Coker College via the growing Yale-Coker partnership will play a vital role in the continuing process of improvement in Hartsville.

"Development and learning are inextricably linked, but traditionally development is not intentionally addressed," said Dr. Comer. "The School Development Program enables educators, parents and families, and community partners to support development, integrate learning, and as a result, improve academic and behavioral outcomes."

Governor's School, Coker College to Provide Curriculum Excellence Program

The second PULSE initiative is focused on expanding scholastic learning opportunities for eligible students in Hartsville's secondary and high schools through collaborative teaching programs from the Hartsville-based GSSM and Coker College.

As an example, GSSM instructors will provide qualified Hartsville public school students with enhanced science, math and language classes, such as organic chemistry, advanced physics and Mandarin Chinese.

Coker College, a leading liberal arts private college also based in Hartsville, will provide college credit courses to eligible high school students in such programs as art, design, music, theater and dance.

"GSSM is a statewide residential high school for academically talented students that just happens to be located in Hartsville. As a result, there is no place we would rather make a positive educational impact than right here in our own backyard," says Dr. Murray Brockman, GSSM president. "As a national leader in science and math education, we are excited beyond words to help implement a program that will advance the students of Hartsville in a way that exposes them to new opportunities and inspires them to reach their full potential."

Brockman adds, "PULSE will be available to every student who meets the academic requirements, regardless of financial means, and it complements both local and statewide outreach programs already under way. Hartsville schools and our community's commitment to education will look dramatically different in the next five years thanks to PULSE."

"Students who aspire to scholarship at the highest levels can look forward to participating in intellectually enriching experiences in the fine arts under the mentorship of Coker's distinguished faculty and in our unparalleled facilities, including the Elizabeth Boatwright Coker Performing Arts Center, a jewel of Hartsville named for South Carolina's 'First Lady of Letters,'" said Coker College President Robert Wyatt.

"And, as pleased as we are to welcome our community's young women and men into Coker's classrooms, we are humbled by the knowledge that

working with Hartsville's brightest young minds and with one of our nation's strongest corporations will inspire us to strive for greater achievement as well," he said.

Sonoco's Targeting Education Improvement in its Hometown

Primary funding for the PULSE programs will come from a $5 million grant made over five years from Sonoco, one of the largest diversified global packaging companies. Founded in Hartsville in 1899, Sonoco employs nearly 1,800 workers and has more than 750 retirees and their families living in the Hartsville area.

"We have always had a strong commitment to improving education in communities where we operate, particularly in our hometown," said Harris DeLoach, Sonoco chairman and chief executive officer. "We believe we must continue to work with our public schools, as well as other centers for learning, to improve local educational excellence to ensure we have the workers we need to be competitive over the next century.

"In addition, we must do all we can to make Hartsville attractive to the others recruited to build our company and other businesses in the area. South Carolina, Hartsville and area businesses will not be able to grow without continued investment in education and economic development. That is why we are making this commitment to our public schools. Together we will all prosper."

About Darlington County Schools

Darlington County School District is a county-wide school district serving 11,200 K-12 students in 24 schools. The district offers students a wide range of educational opportunities, including seven magnet programs, a state-of-the-art technology school, an alternative school, and an International Baccalaureate high school. For more information, please visit our Web site at www.darlington.k12.sc.us.

For more information, contact Audrey Childers, Public Information Officer:(843) 398-2284 oraudreyc@darlington.k12.sc.us

About GSSM

The South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics (GSSM) is a two-year, public, residential high school in Hartsville, S.C., specializing in the advanced study of science and mathematics. GSSM serves 128 high school juniors and seniors through concentrated study of science and math, alongside rigorous courses in the humanities, to prepare graduates to excel as leaders in the state's 21st-century economy. In addition, GSSM reaches nearly 24,000 students across the state through several educational outreach programs. *Newsweek* and *The Washington Post* have ranked GSSM among the Top 20 "public elite" high schools in the country.

For more information, contact Kim Bowman, CEO, GSSM Foundation: kim@scgssm.eorg or (803) 240-6642

About Coker College

Coker College readies undergraduates for personal and professional success through a distinctive four-year program that emphasizes a practical application of the liberal arts as well as hands-on and discussion-based learning within and beyond the classroom. Coker is ranked among the "Best Colleges" in the South by *U.S. News & World Report* as well as *The Princeton Review*. Located in Hartsville, S.C., Coker is within two hours of the cultural, financial and recreational resources of Charlotte, Columbia, Charleston and Myrtle Beach. For more information, visit www.coker.edu.

For more information, contact Barb Steadman, Media Relations Director: bsteadman@coker.edu or (814) 397-9959

About the Yale's Child Study

Developed by child psychiatrist Dr. James P. Comer and his colleagues at the Yale Child Study Center in collaboration with the New Haven Public Schools, the School Development Program (SDP) is a research-based, comprehensive K-12 education reform program grounded in the principles of child, adolescent, and adult development.

For more information, contact Camille J. Cooper, M.Ed: (203)737-3834 or camille.cooper@yale.edu

About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco is a $4.1 billion global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with more than 300 operations in 35 countries, serving customers in some 85 nations. Sonoco is a proud member of the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. For more information on the Company, visit our Web site at www.sonoco.com.

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