

**For Immediate Release:**

**Comporium and South Carolina Future Minds  
Announce Expanded “This School’s Got Talent” Competition  
*Hootie and the Blowfish* Members to Help Select Entertainment Finalists;  
“This School’s Got STEM” Contest Added to Find Science Talent**

**COLUMBIA, S.C.** – The search is on for South Carolina’s most talented students in the arts and -- for the first time -- science, technology, engineering and math.

The fifth annual “This School’s Got Talent” competition, sponsored by Comporium and SC Future Minds, expands this year with a new “This School’s Got STEM” competition to highlight budding scientists across the state.

**For more information:**

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“Creativity drives successful businesses and successful communities,” said Matthew Dosch, executive vice president of Comporium. “As a company committed to moving South Carolina forward, Comporium is delighted to encourage and reward students successfully channeling their creativity in science and the arts.”

Celebrity judges from GRAMMY Award-winning super-group Hootie & The Blowfish (HBF) will help select the top “This School’s Got Talent” entries, as they have since the contest began. HBF bass guitarist Dean Felber, drummer Jim Sonefeld, HBF Business Manager Chris Carney and Paul Graham, Tournament Director for the band’s annual golf tournament, will narrow down the pool of talent to a group of finalists.

“We’re constantly surprised and impressed with the passion, creativity and talent of students across South Carolina,” said Graham, former tour manager for Hootie and the Blowfish. “Since we have months before contest submissions begin, we’re really looking forward to seeing some terrific talent.”

Finalists in the “This School’s Got STEM” contest will be selected with help from members of the S<sup>2</sup>TEM Centers of South Carolina and representatives of South Carolina’s STEM businesses and industries.

There is no fee to enter, and both contests are open to any public school student in South Carolina in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. To enter, adults 18 or older may submit videos of students showcasing their skills on the South Carolina Future Minds Facebook page. Videos must be at least 30 seconds in length and may not exceed five minutes in length. Complete rules will be posted on the South Carolina Future Minds Facebook page.

“This School’s Got Talent” competition will open for submissions starting Monday, January 5 and ending on Friday, January 30.

Those interested in entering the “This School’s Got STEM” contest need to prepare videos of their projects to be entered starting Friday, February 20 until Friday, March 13.

Finalist videos from both contests will then be posted online and open to a public vote. The first, second and third place finishers in both contests will win \$500, \$250 and \$100 respectively.

The student or group deemed most talented in the arts will earn the opportunity to perform live before top education, business and government leaders at the “South Carolina Teacher of the Year Celebration” on April 22nd at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.

Winners of the STEM competition will be invited to attend the SC Teacher of the Year Celebration as special guests.

“South Carolina has some terrific talent in our schools, and this unleashes the very best of it,” said Trip DuBard, SC Future Minds’ executive director. “We’re also very grateful to Comporium and the Hootie members for helping raise the excitement of this contest to an entirely new level.”

The “This School’s Got STEM” competition is an outgrowth of a similar competition last year created by S<sup>2</sup>TEM Centers, based at Clemson University.

“We’re delighted to see this contest expand and grow, and really look forward to seeing the STEM projects that teachers and their student teams enter,” said Tom Peters, executive director of the S<sup>2</sup>TEM Centers.

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### **About South Carolina Future Minds**

South Carolina Future Minds is a 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting excellence in South Carolina’s K-12 public schools by partnering with corporate donors to find and support successful school programs. SCFM promotes innovation for excellence in public education by equipping and advocating for educators as they prepare South Carolina students to thrive in a global community. For more information on South Carolina Future Minds, visit [www.scfutureminds.org](http://www.scfutureminds.org) or join the SC Future Minds Facebook page.

### **About Comporium**

Comporium, Inc., headquartered in Rock Hill, S.C., is a diversified privately held communications company providing voice, video, data, wireless, security and advertising services. Comporium’s ventures include companies providing fiber transport and business solutions, data storage and managed services, smart devices and connected home/car services, and digital signage. For more information, please visit [www.comporium.com](http://www.comporium.com).

### **About Hootie and the Blowfish**

Hootie & the Blowfish formed in 1986 at the University of South Carolina by Darius Rucker, Mark Bryan, Dean Felber, and Jim Sonefeld. As of July 2010, the band had charted sixteen singles on various Billboard singles charts and recorded five studio albums; and their 1994 debut album, Cracked Rear View, was the 16th-best-selling album of all time in the US, having been certified platinum 16 times. They have sold over 21 million albums in the United States alone.

### **About S<sup>2</sup>TEM Centers SC**

S<sup>2</sup>TEM Centers SC specializes in designing differentiated learning experiences for districts, schools, and teachers. Their professional development services range from informing learners and leaders, to supporting instructional change, and innovating with school partners.

