

## THURSDAY 1:30-3

### PLENARY SESSION I

Hello everyone – and welcome to the 2008 NCTAF Symposium! I'm Tom Carroll, President of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future , otherwise known as NCTAF. We have an incredible turnout here—with over 235 people registered as of this afternoon, it's the largest symposium ever for NCTAF! We have people representing **two dozen** States and the District of Columbia, as well as Canada and the United Kingdom! It's great to welcome everyone here to the Nation's Capital, especially so soon after Independence Day and during this exciting election season!

I'd like to thank all of you for joining us – we have a great group once again this year. We have leaders from Congress, state legislatures, governor's offices, and state departments of education, --as well as district superintendents, local school leadership and national education organizations – corporate and non-profit

partners — and some amazing principals, teachers and students!

We are pleased to have you all with us, and we look forward to what I know will be a thoughtful and engaging dialogue over the next two days.

This past fall NCTAF introduced what we called “A Challenge to the Nation”—a Pledge we shared with our state coalitions and national partners. You’ll see this in your packet of materials, and it has set the tone for this symposium, “Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century U.S. Education System”. We can no longer expect our students to succeed in today’s global, interconnected, knowledge –based society if we continue to teach them in factory-era schools where isolated teachers are expected to work alone. The demands of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning require bold and creative thinking. The people here at this meeting are united in one thing: we all want our students to thrive and our schools to be places where every child is launched into a lifetime marked by a love of learning and continuous exploration, creativity, and intellectual, social, and civic responsibility.

NCTAF believes—and the Pledge affirms—this will happen only if we :

- Create schools that are genuine learning organizations by,
- reimagining the ways teachers are prepared,
- engaging them in careers that reward their collaborative success, and
- sharing accountability for success through assessments that measure what we value in student learning and growth.

That is what we are here for, and what we believe together we **will** achieve.

Now it is my great pleasure to introduce Secretary Riley, a man who has shaped the vision for greatness in America's schools through his years as Secretary of Education, as Governor of South Carolina, and in the work he continues to do in support of educational equality every day. You know, over a decade ago it

was Secretary Riley who raised the alarm that America's schools would need **2 million teachers** in the next ten years. Well, the nation met that challenge, hiring **two and a quarter million** teachers—but over that same decade we **lost 2.7 million teachers** as the cycle of teacher turnover drained our schools year after year after year. His wisdom matters now more than ever, and we are honored to have him open this symposium. Please join me in welcoming Secretary Richard Riley.